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BULLETIN

OF THE
RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOL. 10

APRIL, 1938

NO. 3



**ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**
Friday, May 6, 1938

at the
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN LIBRARY
MISS EVELYN CHASE, Librarian
Morning Session

10:00 GREETINGS

Dr. Royal Bailey Farnum
Director Rhode Island School of Design

BUSINESS MEETING

Reports of officers and committees
Election of officers

11:00 ADDRESS

Professor James H. Shoemaker
Department of Economics, Brown University

Afternoon Session

2:00 A NEW CODE OF ETHICS. Discussion led by

Francis P. Allen, Librarian
Rhode Island State College Library

2:30 MODERN ART

Professor Irving Cannon
Rhode Island School of Design

BULLETIN
of the
RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Published every now and then,
and designed to be of interest
to librarians of Rhode Island.

R. I. L. A. BULLETIN COMMITTEE
Mrs. Enid P. Hyde, Chairman
Westerly Public Library
Miss Mildred R. Bradbury
Providence Public Library
Miss Mary McIlwaine
Brown University Library

Vol. 10 April, 1938 No. 3

**THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL
OF DESIGN LIBRARY**

The Rhode Island School of Design opened its doors to students of the industrial and fine arts in the year 1878. From the beginning, it was realized that books, photographs and lantern slides were an essential part of the teaching equipment, so that it may be truly said that 1878 was the year when the Library was founded. The Museum also had its inception at this time, for the articles of incorporation stated one of the aims of the institution to be "the general advancement of public art education by the exhibition of works of art". Thus from the start the School of Design was collecting objects of art which later formed the nucleus of the present Museum, and it was also assembling books, periodicals, and pictures which are still treasured possessions of the present Library.

Naturally the Museum had the more rapid growth and by 1896 it was housed in galleries built especially for its use, adjoining the Waterman Street building which had been occupied by the School since 1893. Meanwhile the Library was housed in a corner of the large School Office, and cared for by a museum attendant. It was 1908 before the two thousand books and six thousand photographs were placed in two rooms on the second floor of the School Building, and given into the care of a trained Librarian. At this time the recataloguing of all material was undertaken and the special classification was created which is still

used for all books, pictures, and slides. Several years earlier, in 1902, the administration of the affairs of the Library had been entrusted to a Library Committee. This Committee realized very soon that the book collection would have to be developed with the needs of two very diverse users in mind: namely, the students in the school and the members of the museum staff. It is owing to their foresight that our library today is equipped to function both as a school and a museum library. The development of the book collection also owes much to one of these first Committee members, whose generosity, continued throughout every year since 1902, has made it possible for our collection to attain its present size and distinction. A glance at the gift plates in many more than half of our books reveals the name of Louisa D. Sharpe Metcalf, to whom we are sincerely grateful.

By 1925 the number of books had increased to six thousand, and the shelves were badly crowded. The library was at that time brought downstairs into rooms vacated by the Museum which had been moved into its own new building of forty-two exhibition rooms. It was only ten years, though, before the library was again outgrowing its quarters. Fortunately, plans for a new school building were afoot with a large reading room, stack, picture and slide room, and offices, all showing most promisingly on the plans. By the summer of 1937 these plans had become a reality and the Library was moved into its present spacious quarters in the College Street Building.

All our visitors are interested in hearing that the woodwork in the reading room is of teak imported from India. It is finished in its natural light brown color, without being stained as is customary with this wood. A dark brown cork tile floor and the American walnut furniture complement the lighter color of the teak. On the mezzanine grille is a Premier Rojo Alicante marble clock—a gift in memory of L. Earle Rowe,

former director of the School and Museum, who was for many years one of the Library's most helpful advisors. We are fortunate in possessing another reminder of Mr. Rowe; this is the index of art periodicals which he made throughout his life. By means of it, thousands of magazine articles are released for use which would otherwise be practically lost, since the H. W. Wilson Company did not begin indexing art periodicals until 1929.

The Library now contains 12,655 books, 18,557 mounted photographs, 11,514 lantern slides, about 6,367 post cards and eight vertical file drawers full of clippings. Seventy-five periodicals, including Museum Bulletins, are received regularly. The question is frequently asked if anyone outside the School of Design can use our resources. We are very glad to have outsiders use the Library for reference, but we are not able to lend books, slides, or pictures except under most unusual circumstances. It is a pleasure to have the Rhode Island Library Association meet at the School of Design and we hope that you will all enjoy visiting the School, the Museum and the Library.

Evelyn Chase, Librarian

R. I. L. A. MEETING AT THE R. I. SCHOOL OF DESIGN

The spring meeting of the R. I. L. A. to be held in the Library of the R. I. School of Design is an important meeting not only because it is the annual meeting of the Association, but also because several important items of business will come up for discussion. The program, too, is especially fine, and the R. I. School of Design is a most beautiful and interesting place to meet. Plans are being made to give members of the Association an opportunity to see the School and Museum. From twelve to one o'clock students will act as guides taking groups through the new building, and at the close of the afternoon session members of the Museum Staff will conduct a group through the Museum.

Important

Please use the Benefit Street entrance to the New Building. The Library is up one flight of stairs from this entrance.

PROVIDENCE RESTAURANTS NEAR SCHOOL OF DESIGN

- Anderson's, 2 Arcade
Bordeaux Cafe, 63 Dorrance St. 50c up
L. M. Carr Co., 107 Angell St. Luncheon about \$1.00
Child's Restaurant, 142 Westminster St.
Miss Dutton's, 48 Washington St. Plate luncheon 40c up
Handicraft Club, 42 College St. 60c up
Pheasant Coffee Shoppe, 151 Cushing St. 35c up
Katherine Sullivan's Sandwich Shop, 4 Market Square. 35c up
Svea Coffee Shop, 117 Waterman St. 35c up
Women's Republican Club, 63 Washington St. 35c up
Middle Street Cafe, 36 Middle St. Plate luncheon 55c up

SENATE BILL 53

The proposed bill for increased State Aid for Public Libraries in Rhode Island was introduced in the Senate on February 18 by Senator E. J. Fenelon, Jr. of Westerly, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance. On March 8 a Hearing was held at which time the members of the Committee on Relations with the State appeared before the Senate Committee and advised of the necessity of the passage of this legislation. On March 30 the bill was reported out of committee for recommitment, and at present that is where the matter stands.

DUES PAYABLE!

Miss Gertrude E. Brown, Treasurer, will be glad to receive the annual dues at this meeting. Why not come with \$1.00 in your hand?

Address Given by Prof. Herbert M. Hofford, Public Relations Officer of the Rhode Island State College, before the meeting of the Rhode Island Library Association at Kingston, R. I. on October 14, 1937

"THE THREE KEYS TO PUBLICITY"

George M. Cohan, Rhode Island's gift to Broadway, took the spotlight again with his interpretation of President Roosevelt in "I'd Rather Be Right." In choosing a title for this talk today I recalled a much earlier success of Mr. Cohan's "Seven Keys to Baldpate". At first, this title tempted me to coin a pun, something like "Three Keys to Bookplate", except that such a title wouldn't mean very much. Instead, "Three Keys to Successful Promotion of an Enterprise" would more nearly sound the keynote, indicating more directly the proper significance of an institution's public relations, because the organizations which look best to the public are those which make themselves look best to the public.

Interpreting an institution, a service, or a business should be taken more seriously. The post of publicity chairman is generally handed out as a consolation prize after major offices, so called, have been assigned. As a matter of fact, the publicity chairman should be chosen first. He is not merely an agent to carry canned copy to the editors. As in advertising, which is paid publicity, the preparation of copy is one of the last steps in a campaign of interpretation.

Publicity is essentially the dissemination of information for the public. It is the exposition of a product, a service, or an institution. It is an educational process.

One of the questions which your Association has before it, I have been told, is that of financial aid from the State. The fact that you must ponder this question, it seems to me, indicates that you have been backward, shy, or modest in telling your world the good news about libraries.

During the last few weeks we have been hearing things that cause us to

believe there are still some decent people in Rhode Island. Probably some of these decent people patronize your libraries. Undoubtedly more of them would if you told more of them more about your libraries. (The proportion of decent people should increase if we spent more on books and less on bookies.)

The intellectual batting average of the populace might be raised if its betting average were lowered.

The intellectual level of the public has been placed on the mental plane of thirteen-year-olds. This might appear true, if one considers how many persons delight in getting something for nothing—or for at least \$2.

Anyone who patronizes his library realizes that, instead of getting **nothing** for **something**, he actually gets a **great deal** for **nothing**, except the time which he spends there so well. If he has an occasional lapse of memory, forgetting to return a book when due, the fine incurred does not represent a total loss, because he at least has had the pleasure of reading, or the satisfaction of having added to his store of knowledge, or both. Two dollars can pay a lot of book fines, and in this age of efficient publishing, it can also buy a lot of fine books.

In recent years the circulating library has grown to be a considerable industry, I have been told. Taking a tip from the private circulating library, public librarians have been giving increasing attention to the demands of patrons who want to keep up with the Sunday literary sections lest their dinner conversation wilt and they are branded mental wallflowers. Librarians must often wince at requests for certain kinds of literature, and sigh at the thought of the additional income their circulating departments would enjoy, could they add the cheap epics that pass as romance among the chewing-gum trade.

Unfortunately, this class of trade doesn't know that the best romances are classic, that the most thrilling detective tales are not blood-and-thunder. A "Three Musketeers" and an

"Anna Karenina" dwarf our current **Love-in-the-hills** models, as an interstate bus dwarfs a kiddie car.

During the first semester English course at Rhode Island State College we try to inoculate our freshmen with the desire to read good books by giving them a double injection in the form of two book review assignments. Last year one boy asked me to suggest a title. I proposed Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment".

He stared at me, and after overcoming his temporary lock-jaw he said, "Is that by one of these Russians?" I assured him that it wasn't; that it was by one of **those** Russians, that the crime did not refer to communism, nor the punishment to a wholesale purge.

The boy was like most other secondary school products. His training in literature had been largely confined to dissecting Milton and Shakespear, to untangling Chaucer and to memorizing Washington's Farewell Address. When he turned in his report he said, "That was one of the most exciting books I ever read." After I read his review I knew he had found it fully as entertaining as Uncle Tom's Cabin.

I wonder if Dorothy Dix has ever suggested to her love-lorn communicants that they read "Anna Karenina". Besides being one of the world's greatest stories, it is also one of the world's fine sermons—the kind of sermon that seekers after romance should read before the plunge to Gretna Green, or to Reno.

Know Your Material

All of which leads up to the first key to an understanding of publicity—**Know Your Material.**

Your material—the subject matter of your publicity—is your library. If it is a free public library, it is a community enterprise, a local institution, and as such becomes a matter of concern to the local newspapers whose function it is to record the daily life and times of their community. Similarly, the library which is a part of an institution of learning has a quasi-public standing, and if it does interesting things like the John Hay library of Brown University—such as collect

Lincoln Manuscripts—then it provides news of interest. If it is purely a private library, making money for its proprietor, then the newspapers are not interested in lists of acquisitions, changes in personnel, additions to equipment. Editors regard such material, because it comes from a **private** business, as advertising. The same kind of material, coming from a public library, would be acceptable as news.

There is one clue in seeking publicity: use your imagination. Ask yourself the question, "Would that fact, or series of facts, interest me?" Developing that well-know but intangible proboscis of the anatomy, a nose for news, consists simply in trying to get the point of view of the other fellow—of **every** other fellow—of observing what your friends and neighbors talk about.

When Fred Fuller Shedd, late editor of the Philadelphia Bulletin, accepted the editorial chair of that paper, he found himself in a new country. After serving for many years with the Boston Herald, he transplanted himself to Philadelphia.

"Was there such a difference in the mode of life enjoyed by Bostonians?"—I asked him once. I couldn't see a wide difference between the Cabots and the Peppers, between the Lowells and the Biddles. As for the less blue-blooded people, I was sure that Judy O'Grady relished her beans as much in a William Penn automat as she did in a Cape Cod beanery.

"There was enough of a difference so that I found it necessary to try to learn, as quickly and as thoroughly as possible, why Quakers and Presbyterians for generations **thought** as they did. Tall office buildings and stores may make one city resemble another, but the **soul** of a city is in the **people** of that city. The folks who lived in Pennsylvania farmhouses were as distinct from those who occupied Cape Cod cottages as the types of architecture are distinctive", he said.

Mr. Shedd then explained that he solved his problem of learning all about Philadelphians and their city by

establishing "listening posts." That's what he called places in various corners of the city where he used to establish himself—cigar stores, book counters, factory gates, subway exits.

As customers talked with clerks, he listened to the conversation. Man is a creature of habit, and he buys his tobacco at the same store year in and year out. Between customer and clerk a friendly bond grows, so that in several minutes the two exchange remarks about the weather, the schools, municipal politics, and the local Winchellisms. After a year of this professional eaves-dropping, Mr. Shedd knew more about the Wanamakers, the Vares, and Fairmount Park than most Philadelphians know in a lifetime.

Anyone who wants to cultivate a nose for news must note what people talk about, because they talk of that which interests them. Editors have learned from experience that certain things are always of interest. Once you have learned what things in your library might interest people, tell those things to the editor, and he'll print that material because it has legitimate news value.

Public relations has another facet, though. Publicity, like charity, begins at home, and the internal relations are fully as important as the external. Big corporations have their own internal publications which they call house organs, and on those organs they play the tunes that maintain harmony within their organization. The large public library that has fifty persons on its staff must preserve good will among them if it is to operate smoothly. The public can sense discontent in a large organization. You have all had experience in detecting the difference in attitude of clerks in various department stores. Happy, satisfied clerks are not sullen or condescending to customers.

Know Your Media

The **second** key to an understanding of publicity is: **Know Your Media:** Media are the agencies used for building public relations. They are the

means of communication, such as the radio, the press, direct mail—postcards and letters, displays, such as posters and bulletins in the library itself. The Providence Public Library offers excellent models of efficient use of this latter medium. Exhibits are another effective medium, that build lasting good will for a library which is more than just a collection of tomes.

By taking a leaf out of the commercial advertisers' notebook, librarians may use still another means of insuring a steadier flow of books across the circulation desk. I refer to what advertisers call "reaching the younger generation". Tune in on your radio from 5 to 7 o'clock any evening and see how many programs are slated towards juvenile listeners. The theory is that if you sell them young, they stay sold until old. **Junior** is urged to order **Mother** to buy crispy golden cereal so that he will have a box top to exchange for a shiny, tin G-man badge. Next week mother must buy three boxes so Junior can send the tops in to win his first promotion. By the time Junior, three years later, has risen in the ranks to the post of Inspector of International Secret Police, he can't say anything else but "crispy, golden cereal". Librarians who tie-up their junior book sections with the schools are wisely taking the long view that today's readers of Elsie Dinsmore are tomorrows followers of "Three Weeks", or "One Night of Love."

But we hope they won't think it's a long arctic night and remain on that level. If they can be kept interested in reading, even though it is at **first** Elinor Glynn, they should develop better literary tastes. That's really a guidance problem for the librarians.

Librarians and teachers have several things in common. Both are concerned directly with that process we vaguely call education, and both are alike in hoping to find their just rewards in heaven. The processing tax, so to speak, needs revision, but it always seems that those persons having the power to revise sadly find themselves powerless. Were I not an English

teacher, and therefore supposed at all times to speak text-book English, I would say that they **pass the buck** instead of **passing the bucks**.

Although our ultimate reward may not be attained soon enough to enable us to keep up with the Joneses, yet there certainly is an **immaterial reward** in the satisfaction we derive from helping the true searchers after knowledge. You undoubtedly have at times been patient guides for long-haired book worms who thought they were seeking Truth. We teachers, year after year, face a new consignment of eager young people who are just beginning to awaken to the fact that there is an eternal question, What is Truth?—and they expect us to answer it in one class period.

But for every **other-worldly** bibliophile there are hundreds of persons coming into your libraries with a healthy curiosity, an eagerness to know about this and that, about internal combustion engines, about the language of the Narragansetts, about the difference between viosterol and vaseline. After you have helped these researchers in their pursuit of knowledge and happiness, you are rewarded by the look of benign satisfaction that illuminates their faces.

It may be trite to call you educators, but it is true none the less.

Another similarity between library and college is the need for public money to carry on the good work—or as commencement orators say, to **keep aflame** the torch of civilization. At times the flame burns dimly, even to the point of almost flickering out. When we receive letters from high school graduates in the historic State of Massachusetts, and the correspondents don't spell correctly the name of their sovereign State, we wonder what sort of fuel is feeding the torch,—whether it is oil for the lamps of China, or oil for the soap-box verbal acrobats. We wonder whether the Bay State patriots who annually revere Paul Revere, Concord and Lexington and Bunker Hill, might not revere

their glorious ancestors more by extending a greater reverence to current learning and a lesser preference to nostalgic yearning.

But we need not cross to our neighboring Commonwealth. Apparently patriotism takes a holiday in these Plantations, too. Just the other day my little girl, who is in the first grade, came home from school and sang half of "America", as well as I can. When I asked her if she knew what the words meant, she had no more idea of their meaning than would Dr. Damosch have of the moon coming over the mountain.

Of course I appreciated the patriotic motive in teaching thus early the principles of America, and I asked myself, Do our **high school** graduates know these principles? There was one way of finding out. I wrote the words of "America" on the blackboard, and told my freshman classes to point out the **word relationships** in the sentences—which words modified which, and where were the subjects of verbs, and so forth.

The result was far beyond my fondest fears. One student constructed the sentence to read: The pilgrim's pride rings from the mountain side. Another said there should be a question mark after the line, "Land where my fathers died". Another said greater emphasis would be procured if the words in the line "Let freedom ring" were changed to "Let ring freedom". He argued that "freedom" was the more important word, and therefore belonged last. Perhaps there was more truth to his logic than at first appears. In this land of ours, where the divorce rate provides subject matter for letters to the editor, the wedding ring **does** come before freedom—sometimes a year before, or if marriages are successful, it may be for as long as three years before.

And so, as **one** charged with the task of trying to reduce the rate of illiteracy, I apostrophized, "O Webster, where is thy victory! O Patriotism, where is thy sting!" It was sad enough that the students couldn't dis-

tinguish an appositive from an adjective; it was worse that after twelve years of public schooling, they hadn't yet learned to read. They know the words, but **who** or **what** was it that **of thee they sang?**

Please don't conclude that all high school graduates are on that level. The better half are above it. Even so, that still leaves a large proportion of you librarians impotent so far as the reading population is concerned.

Know Your Public

But you still have a large field of possible readers to cultivate. That brings us to the third admonition: **Know Your Public.** Find out who your readers are. Study the population which your library serves. Analyze the interests, the needs, the desires, the whole life of the people in your community. Diagnose their reading problems and then prescribe. Dr. Coy in Westerly would recommend different literary diets for her people than would Dr. Eddy in Kingston. Woonsocket interests are one thing; Newport interests are another.

Newspaper editors, who are past masters in knowing their public and in giving the readers in their circulation area what those readers want, have a word for it. They call it "knowing your public" LOCALIZING. They have found that the average person is most interested in affairs, events, and persons that most concern him. The wedding of one's neighbor causes more table talk than the invalidation of the NRA. A motor smashup just around the corner inspires more comment than 500 families made homeless by a flood in Brazil. It isn't that we lack sympathy for the stricken families; it's just that events nearer to one's orbit loom larger, if not in significance, at least in interest.

So there you have the three K's—nowadays its safe to confess publicly association with the three K's. For anyone finding himself in the position of interpreter, of expositor, this formula applies. K one—know your material—plus K two—know your media—plus K three—know your public—equals **knowledge by the public of**

what your institution and your services are. When your commodity is as excellent as the good which a library contributes to its community, you should realize that you **owe** it to the public to make your message a continuous story, a gospel of enlightenment—and the public will come to the library, find it a place of warmth and good cheer, a treasure house of knowledge that is a refuge in adversity and a haven in prosperity.

REMINDERS OF JUNE CONFERENCES

The Regional Library Conference of the Six New England state library associations will be held during the week of June 20th, at Manchester, Vermont. Among the announced speakers are Mr. Herman Henkle, Director of the Simmons College Library School, Miss Mary Ellen Chase, Mr. Walter Pritchard Eaton, and Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

Kansas City Conference: The sixtieth annual conference of the American Library Association will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, during the week beginning June 13, 1938. The American Library Association Travel Committee has selected the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Missouri-Pacific Railroad routes as the official routes for the Conference. A train is expected to leave the Pennsylvania (N. Y. City) Terminal at or about noon on Saturday, June 11th, arriving in Kansas City early Sunday evening. Two post-conference trips are being arranged—a four-day trip to the Ozark Mountains and a thirteen-day trip to Mexico City. Librarians who are planning to attend the Conference, are cordially invited to correspond with any member of the Committee for information on rates and schedule of trains and plans of the post-conference trips.

F. P. Allen, A. L. A. Travel Com.
R. I. State College, Kingston, R. I.