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Rhode Island Library Association

3-1934

Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 7, no. 1

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Recommended Citation

RILA, "Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 7, no. 1" (1934). *RILA Bulletin*. Book 36.
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Miss Gertrude
Barn
Librarian's Office

BULLETIN

OF THE

RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Vol. 7.

March, 1934.

No. 1

The ideal of offering opportunities to the masses and the ideal of developing great leaders are both essential to the philosophy of a democracy and to the philosophy that dominates its schools and libraries.

In times like these it is necessary for us to hold fast to the belief that the great tradition of knowledge and beauty and idealism is not the exclusive privilege of an elite but to devote ourselves unremittingly to making this cultural heritage available in the fullest possible measure to the greatest number of our people.

George E. Vincent,
Educator.

"ALPHABET" WORKERS IN THE LIBRARY

At the Deborah Cook Sayles Library, Pawtucket, three CWA workers have been arranging the shelves and have been helping out at the desk during the busy hours and in the evening.

The Boys' and Girls' Department at the Providence Public Library is to be decorated with appropriate mural paintings as one of the projects under the provisions of the NRA. Mr. Edward Dubuque of Pawtucket, who has studied in Paris and Vienna, has prepared an excellent set of drawings, which have been approved by the Rhode Island Committee, composed of L. Earle Rowe, Museum Director of the Rhode Island School of Design, and Royal B. Farnum, Educational Director of the same institution, and also by the library trustees. In the murals will appear many of the favorite characters of children's literature, both ancient and modern. They will be on canvas, and the painting is now being done in the stack of the Tockwotton Branch.

At the State Library, sixteen workers are engaged in compiling, arranging and sorting books under a CWA project. Half of the staff were originally employed as a State Emergency Unemployment Relief project.

A group of several library workers are compiling corrections and additions to the Union List of Serials. Divided into groups, they are checking the periodical holdings of the various

libraries, and have, up to the present, made considerable progress. The work is under the supervision of the State Librarian.

Two musicians, a recreational leader and a clerk have been assigned to the Westerly Library under the CWS. As a result, four additional story hours are now being carried on in outlying sections of the town by the recreational leader, as well as a gymnasium class for girls and women in the Library Gymnasium.

Sponsored by the library and arranged by the CWS, a series of nationality nights have been planned. In January, a Scotch evening was held; in February, the community sing emphasized American folk song; in March, there will be an Irish concert; in April, an Italian program.

Community sings are conducted both for the children and for the adults. The average attendance for the children's hours, Saturday afternoon, has been 300. Half of the time is devoted to group singing and the rest of the hour to a short program developed by the group. Out of the group a junior orchestra is being formed, and much of the music used by the orchestra is being arranged from the more difficult classics by one of the musicians in charge of the group.

A course in music theory is being taught by one of the musicians. It has proved most popular.

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
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PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY
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CLASSICAL HIGH SCHOOL, PROVIDENCE
MRS. DOROTHY H. HELLEN,
ELMWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY, PROVIDENCE

Vol. 7. March, 1934. No. 1.

"LOOKING BACKWARD"

THE A. L. A. IN RETROSPECT.

If anyone were to attempt to be general, brief and to the point, (which seems almost impossible under the circumstances, when myriads of impressions crowd in upon you in the course of one short week), he would perhaps speak thus and so of the 1933 A. L. A.—and as he spoke thus, he would probably feel that he should have spoken otherwise.

The speakers, on the whole, were noteworthy for their brevity and conciseness when such qualities were desirable, and, when the subject required a more extended period, alive and significant for the most part. (At least this was so in the case of the meetings attended by the writer. Heaven grant that it was so in all cases!)

Good examples of the brief and concise speech were found in the meeting of the periodicals division. The speaker on "The smaller library," Harriet C. Long of the State Library, Salem, Oregon, told how to select periodicals for a community of less than 20,000. In a crisp and intelligent manner she told how a tally had been kept of the number of times that a periodical was used, and a list compiled accordingly. A periodical list, she said, must be prayerfully made. Then the money that has been so spent is indeed well spent.

The speaker on periodicals for the special libraries had some interesting things to say about current news periodicals. She said of "Time" that "it enlivens the bare bones of statistical information," and seems to be accurate as to facts even though facetious. The speaker for the college and university library said that, with his periodical budget cut 20% and \$2000 to divide among 22 departments, the question was, Should each one share equally? He decided that the most up-to-date and aggressive departments should have the lion's share of the budget.

Among the longer speeches, one of the most stimulating was that by How-

ard Mumford Jones, Professor of English at the University of Michigan. His subject was, "The place of books and reading in modern society." Some of his wisest and wittiest remarks were as follows:

We insist that grandma, instead of tatting, keep up with the Soviets, Roosevelt and Einstein.

Under the new theory of economics, it is sinful not to waste time. But, if there is not enough to do, folks may, in sheer desperation, go back to pre-NRA conditions.

With to-day's craze for snap, speed and action, Professor Jones wondered whether it were worthwhile to sponsor reading.

There are three reasons for reading: for pleasure, for humanization and for socialization. In regard to the first reason, he believes that we make reading too serious; that library reading rooms are like railroad station waiting rooms or first-class funeral parlors. There should be, at the library, padded cells, or something of that ilk, where people may read and laugh without disturbing others. There should be a "Reading with Hilarity" series as well as a "Reading with a Purpose" series.

Books are the fundamental guardians of popular liberty in an insane and desperate world.

Another tendency noted in many of the meetings was an unwillingness to accept anything that was not thoroughly dissected and disapproved from every angle possible. The Visual Methods Round Table was a case in point. Here the members of the panel, in a good-natured manner however, almost jeered at each other over certain points. When someone hinted that library poster publicity might be valid from an aesthetic point of view, even if it did not circulate many books, and that you should never try to measure the numerical value of anything that you know is good, a scoffer arose and countered: "Yes, let's go on being satisfied. If we like it, it's all right." Another made the highly amusing, but hardly reassuring, remark that much library publicity looks like a wash hung out.

It may seem, from some of the above statements, as if no constructive suggestions were made. There were plenty, but it is often these little, good natured, destructive jabs that start one thinking and wondering; that challenge one.

Another meeting that impressed its audience, perhaps partly because it was not about library matters, but mostly because it informed by entertaining, was the one at the Art Institute, a joint meeting of the Art Reference Round Table and the Museum

Group of the Special Libraries Association. After listening to a paper on the history of the Institute from its earliest beginnings down to the present, the audience was revived by an illustrated lecture by the Assistant Curator, on the paintings being displayed at the Institute in connection with the Century of Progress Exposition. He was both amusing and stimulating. In speaking of El Greco, he told us of a conversation between two women that he had overheard. They were gazing at the artist's conception of the Spanish city Toledo in a storm. Said one to the other, "That's perfectly ridiculous. I've been to Toledo, (Ohio,) and it doesn't look a bit like that." The high points of this lecture were the remarks on El Greco, the Italian primitives and the modern French painters.

Those who attended the Children's Librarians' meetings found much about which to be enthusiastic, too. There was Dr. Caroline Heger's sturdy plea for co-operation with neighborhood agencies, and her theory that there is a direct connection between good health, good mental activities and good reading.

There was the Newbery award, made to Mrs. E. F. Lewis for her "Young Fu," and the talk, by the author, about her life in China.

At the meeting on radio programs for children, there was a violent discussion, especially when Miss Judith Waller, of the Chicago NBC network, stated that children preferred inferior programs; that good ones had been tried, but unsuccessfully.

Mary Gould Davis reported on the International Children's Room at the League of Nations Building in Geneva, with its excellent collection of representative children's books from all nations.

In connection with work with young people, the exhibit corner of the School Libraries Section was found to be most helpful, with its valuable suggestions for Book Week and other special exhibits, and its display of worthwhile books that may be bought in five-and-ten cent stores.

Outside of the business of attending meetings, many vivid and varied impressions were built up in one's mind, too. There were the contacts with people who, before, were only known by their name and fame in the library world. There was the opportunity to visit the A. L. A. headquarters and to get a close-up of its workings. Thus it was made to seem a more real and valid thing, and not just a place from which you are sent notices about dues and a concise and glittering enumeration of the benefits one and all may derive from your particular membership.

During the conference week, too, Marshall Field's arranged to display in the book department the original manuscript of Hervey Allen's colossal novel, "Anthony Adverse." Mr. Allen spent several hours in the department, on Saturday afternoon, autographing copies of the book.

There there was the struggle for life and for tea at the Illinois Host Building on the fair grounds. The room was comparatively small and the crowd was very large, at this reception for librarians. They say that librarians are gentle, harmless, retiring creatures. Anyway, they used to say that. Surely it would seem that that type has gone forever, to judge by the mighty struggle to get to the tea table. Or perhaps being in a crowd brings out something primitive in a person, no matter how gentle, harmless and retiring he or she may otherwise be. Anyway, whether they finally achieved tea or not those who were there managed to catch a glimpse of the winner of the Newbery Medal for 1933, and almost to hear Mr. Hervey Allen, who was entertaining a cold during the week and having some difficulty in making his voice behave.

Another thrill that surely came to most of those who attended the convention was that of finding people. Of course you could have them paged and hope that they might be milling about in the chaos of the hotel lobby, or you could run them to ground at their hotel room. These methods, however, were much too definite and prosaic. It was an infinitely more worthwhile adventure to sit in the lobby in your spare moments and wait quietly and patiently until you saw a long lost friend go by. Then there was the double thrill of a joyful and unexpected meeting.

And, of course, always in the background, and ready to obtrude itself at any moment when conference obligations were over, was the fun of finding your way around in a large city (even if you did finally get disgusted and take a taxi); looking up shows and eating places; and, crowning glory, the Fair! No matter how fiercely the wind swept in from Lake Michigan, or how footsore you were, you felt as if you were on top of the world when you were at the Fair. But it would take a myriad more of words than have been put down here already to tell about it. It is, in fact, another story.

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE.

The Library of Brown University reports the following items of interest:

The John Hay Library has had several interesting exhibitions lately: one being on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Allan

Poe, and another being "Paintings of North American Birds," by Rex Brasher, which was arranged under the auspices of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. The Poe exhibition is to be followed by one of books and manuscripts of Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, friend and admirer of Poe.

The Lincoln collection has been fortunate in having the loan of two Lincoln portraits; one a painting by Emanuel Leutze, and the other a miniature by Thomas Hicks.

Dr. Van Hoesen spoke in January at an assembly of the Columbia University School of Library Service on "The College Library." He also attended the Secretaries' Conference of the American Council of Learned Societies in Washington, D. C., the latter part of January.

Miss Esther C. Cushman, Curator of the Lincoln Collection, has an article on "The Books Lincoln Read" appearing in an issue of the New York Sunday Times.

Dr. Van Hoesen has recently been elected president of the American Library Institute.

The Deborah Cook Sayles Library, Pawtucket, reports an interesting Book Week exhibit. In order to carry out the theme, "Growing up with Books", five steps, decorated with brown crepe paper, were placed upon a table on which were also picture-books and picture story-books, for the youngest children. On the first step there were easy books for both boys and girls; on the second step, books for older girls; on the third, books for older boys; and, on the upper steps, non-fiction, consisting of travel, biography and history, for boys and girls who are still older.

To acquaint the parents and teachers with the latest editions of children's books, two talks have been given by the Children's Librarian, Miss Ernestine M. Baxter: one before the Parent-Teacher Association of the Fairlawn School, and the other before a similar organization at the Grove street School.

At the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Providence Public Library, Feb. 2, recognition was made of Professor Henry B. Gardner's 40 years of membership on the board, 26 years of which he served as President. Appreciative minutes were included in the records of the meeting, and, in the evening, a small dinner was held, in his honor, at which he was presented with a handsome silver loving cup.

Miss Bess McCrea, Assistant Librarian, and President of the Rhode Island Library Association, is recuperating from a severe attack of pneumonia. Her address is 5 Paseo Redondo, Tucson, Arizona.

There are the following recent staff changes:

Owing to the marriage and resignation of Mrs. Charles Hemingway (nee Helen Fitts), Librarian of the George J. West Junior High School Library, Miss Eloise Tabor, formerly at the Tockwotton Branch, was appointed to take her place. She has been succeeded by Miss Nancy Sloan at Tockwotton, while Miss Sloan's former position at the Wanskuck Branch is now occupied by Miss Eleanor Clark, from the Olneyville Branch. Miss Marguerite Nahigian has been appointed Acting Children's Librarian at the Olneyville Branch in place of Miss Clark. Miss Marion Walker, formerly an assistant in the Circulation Department at the main library, has also been appointed to the Olneyville Branch.

Due to the marriage and resignation of Miss Harriet Jackson, an assistant at the Bridgham Junior High School Library, Miss Dorothy Montanaro has been appointed to succeed her.

At the Rhode Island State Library, the Public Document Clearing House, organized in 1932, is preparing, as its first venture, a check list of session laws. The research work is being done in Providence by Miss Grace E. MacDonald, on behalf of the committee of which Mr. Herbert O. Brigham, State Librarian, is chairman.

The American Library Institute has recently elected Mr. Brigham as secretary.

The Rhode Island State College Library, Kingston, reports progress: tremendous growth in the use of the library as well as in additions of books. The circulation count for January was 1141 for use outside the building. Much reorganizing has been done in connection with the cataloguing of the books.

At the Westerly Public Library, the Council of Women's Clubs has sponsored a series of lectures on current events by Miss Eunice Avery of Springfield, with an average attendance of 160. A group of 75 registered for a course on Mental Hygiene given by Dr. Jacob Kasanin of Providence. So successful was this course that another series of lectures will be given early in March. In addition, the library is sponsoring a four weeks' course of lectures on Universal Religion, presented by Rev. Everett L. Washburn of Westerly, and a six weeks' course on Classical History, especially as it relates to our own times, presented by Miss Alice D. Coon of the library staff. A goodly number of people have been registered for these lectures, which are to extend from the middle of February through March.