

University of Rhode Island

DigitalCommons@URI

RILA Bulletin

Rhode Island Library Association

5-1968

Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 40, no. 1

RILA

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/rila_bulletin

Recommended Citation

RILA, "Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 40, no. 1" (1968). *RILA Bulletin*. Book 67.
https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/rila_bulletin/67https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/rila_bulletin/67

This Book is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in RILA Bulletin by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu. For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.

020.6
R346
V.40 #1
C.2

Vol. 40 — No. 1

BULLETIN
of the
RHODE ISLAND
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

May 1968

RECEIVED
MAY 24 1968



Iohn. Stradanus inuict. — Totus. — Galle excudit.

Program

TUESDAY, MAY 7, 1968

Westerly Public Library

- 9:00 a.m. Registration and Coffee Hour
10:00 a.m. Business Meeting
11:00 a.m. Everett S. Allen, Assistant to the Editor
New Bedford Standard Times

Central Baptist Church

- 12:15 p.m. Luncheon
2:00 p.m. John F. Leavitt, Associate Curator, Mystic Seaport

Westerly Public Library, Auditorium

- 3:30 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. Raymond P. Holden

Rhode Island Library Association Bulletin

Editor, RICHARD COMBS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	2
The Newport Public Library	3
Record Reviews and Record Selection	7
Library Administration and the Professional Librarian	12
Westerly Public Library	15
The Redwood Library	16
Officers and Committee Members	Inside Back Cover

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of all the members of RILA I want to thank its officers and committee members this past year for their work. Special thanks go to members of the Catholic and School library associations for working with us to bring our three groups into closer affiliation. We are all grateful to the trustees and staff of the Champlin library in West Warwick and the Westerly library for hosting the two meetings of this RILA year.

Whoever has the soul of a librarian will find joy in these two libraries. Indeed one of the best features of our twice-yearly meetings is the visiting of new or remodeled libraries. Don't you think it's a little amazing how many new and refurbished libraries we have had to visit in our small state? And how many more are being planned and built? And this is not counting the remarkable development of libraries in our elementary, junior high, and high schools, both public and private.

In regard to the Champlin and Westerly libraries, we see in one the charm of a beautifully remodeled older building, in the other the practicality of the new. Each one would seem right for its community. I wonder if any one connected with these places, whether trustee, employee or patron, would agree with a recent critic who sees the public library as "a basically purposeless agency" likely to "atrophy further and ultimately remain as a vestigial souvenir of another age."

Anyone confused about the basic purpose of his public library should read out state law, declaring that they shall "provide for the cultural, educational, informational and research needs of all citizens; that such free public libraries are an integral part of the educational system at all levels and a source for vocational information and continued learning following the period of formal education . . ." It is exciting to see our libraries of all kinds developing and working together to prevent atrophy and souvenirism. When we convey to others some sense of this excitement, we shall recruit the funds and the personnel to do the job as well as we know it should be done.

THE NEWPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

By Irene M. Carvalho

**This Library was Established
and Endowed by Christopher Townsend
who was born in Newport
February 15, 1807
and died
October 18, 1881**

So reads the plaque to the left just inside the door to the Newport Public Library. The generosity and public spirit of one man was the beginning of the public library at Newport, Rhode Island. To establish a "Free Library" for the use of the people of his native city, Mr. Townsend, a successful merchant, set about to carry out his plan. After years of deliberation he donated about \$50,000.00 of his fortune. Going to London he purchased 7,000 volumes as a beginning.

The first library building was secured from the Rhode Island Union Bank in three separate parcels. Built in 1815, extensive alterations were made in 1869-70. Located at 364 Thames Street, the building was fire-proof, of easy access and in every way well adapted for its purpose.

Mr. Townsend conveyed this property to the Trustees and enabled them to become incorporated. He also provided, in the event of a vacancy on the board, how that vacancy should be filled, and defined the qualifications of those who were to fill it. He secured the salaries and running expenses by endowment. Rents from other parts of the building not used

by the library also were used for its support and upkeep.

At this time there was in Newport the Newport Free Library. A group of people had joined together a few years before and collected 3,000 volumes for the use of the people of the City. On November 27, 1869 a meeting was held by the Newport Free Library and it was voted to present all their books to the new library to be placed in an alcove bearing the following inscription: "A Gift of the Newport Free Library, Founded A D 1865, Incorporated A D 1867".¹ Thus the Peoples Library of Newport, Rhode Island, opened with a total of 10,000 volumes. Dedication ceremonies were held in May, 1870.

On Mr. Townsend's death, with a collection totaling 25,000 volumes, the library received about one third of his Trust Fund with the Savings Bank of Newport as custodian.

The library is governed under a charter enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island in January, 1869, and amended in May, 1889. The charter provides for a Board of Trustees and empowers that body to hold real estate. The said trustees may nominate and appoint such other trustees as they may think proper, with the consent of the City Council of Newport. It further provides that the bylaws and regulations in relation to use of the library shall be subject to the approbation of the City Council, that the Trustees shall report once a year to the City Council, and that their records and accounts shall be

subject to the inspection of the City Council or its duly authorized officers or committees.

The Peoples Library was a success. For a number of years monies from the trust fund were sufficient. The building met the library's needs, circulation was up, and new books were added to the collection. A slip charging system was used. The people of Newport were receiving the benefits their benefactor had desired. It is interesting to note that one of the problems which did arise, 65 years ago, was the securing of a new librarian. In June, 1902, as was reported in the local newspaper, Mr. David Stevens, who had been librarian for about a quarter of a century had resigned.² The library was to be closed for about two weeks until the new librarian, a Miss Grannis, a graduate of Pratt Institute of Brooklyn, would take over. Miss Grannis was highly praised and her stay was greatly anticipated, but before the library reopened, she resigned because of ill health.³ On July 26, Miss Jane Gardner of New Bedford was hired. She also was a graduate of Pratt Institute and was "a cousin of Mrs. Frederick P. Lee of this City".⁴

Soon the building on Thames Street became too small and in the winter of 1912, George Gordon King offered his home in Aquidneck Park on Spring Street to the City of Newport (as a Christmas Gift) to replace the old structure.

Although not centrally located, the building was an improvement over

the now cramped quarters on Thames Street. The King home was completed in 1847, and was situated on large park-like grounds. Built of brick and brownstone, it is an interesting example of Victorian neo-Italian design. Renovation was done by Clarke, Howe and Homes, architects. By reconstructing the entire interior of the northeasterly portion of the building, a large stack-room, practically fireproof and capable of holding one hundred thousand volumes was built. Few changes were required elsewhere, except on the second floor where a small lecture room was installed.

On entering the main door on either side are alcoves containing shelves of books, over the shelves are plaques, the one on the left commemorating Mr. Townsend and on the right Mr. King.

Straight ahead is the main desk and a stairway leading to the children's room on the second floor. On the left of the main hall is the adult fiction room, and to the right the reference and reading rooms. The building was formally opened July 15, 1914 with a collection of 30,000 volumes.

In 1915 a children's librarian was added to the staff, and under her direction a story hour was held each week from November to May with increasing attendance through the winter months. There was a noted increase in Juvenile circulation. The library hours were from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. weekdays and to 9:00 p.m. on Saturdays except in July and August when it closed at 6:00 P.M.

There was a circulation of 48,564 books and 934 new registrations in 1916.

In 1917 the Trustees asked the City, as they had the year before, for proper protection, adequate lights and suitable walks for the park. They reminded the City Council that most public libraries are largely supported from public funds but the City of Newport had never been asked for money for support.

At this time a deposit station was opened in Coggeshall School for use of people living in the northern part of town, but in the three months that it was open only 320 books were circulated for home use.

In the Librarian's Report for 1919 was stated: "A system of registration has been installed this year which automatically eliminates from the index of borrowers the names of persons who have not re-registered within four years. By this means dead material is constantly thrown out and our total registration will henceforth represent only live names."⁵

On November 3, 1919, a deposit station was opened in the Point section of town and this was considered most successful. The following year it was moved across the street to a Variety store and another opened on Broadway. In 1921 both were closed and one opened at the juncture of Broadway, Spring, Bull and Marlborough Streets in the Clarkson's Studio. This year the closing hours at the library were cut back to 8:00 p.m.

May V. Crenshaw, the librarian

hired to replace Miss Reid who had resigned, introduced open shelves to Newport. In her annual report she stated: "Having never before worked in a closed shelf library, that is, where only a small part of the collection is open to the public, it is something of a shock to find myself in charge of a library of this type, and my first efforts were directed to proving to your Board the wisdom of giving readers access to a much larger number of books."⁶

The moving of the children's room upstairs and the use of double floor shelves gave more room for the whole fiction collection within browsing reach of the patron, and added space for non-fiction in the reading room.

With no support from the City, the library was unable to provide adequate services from its endowment and Community Chest, and a period of decline began which extended from the middle twenties to the nineteen sixties. There was a personnel shortage, hours were cut back and the branch library on Washington Square was closed.

In 1950 the City of Newport gave \$1,000.00 toward the support of the library. This was not enough, but it was a beginning. By 1960 it was increased to \$3,000.00 and in 1965-66 to \$15,000.00. In 1966-67 the City gave 42% of the library's budget or \$30,000.00 support to the library.

John Humphrey of Springfield Public Library was engaged in 1963 to do a survey of the library in order to determine the needs of the library for

better service. Mr. Humphrey's recommendations included sound financial support provided by the City to enable the library to offer to its patrons a comprehensive and useful collection of books and other materials; personnel competent to service the collection; an attractive building which would permit an efficient operation and a program of presenting its resources and services to the people.

A site study was undertaken in 1965 by Kenneth R. Shaffer, Director of Graduate School of Library Sciences, Simmons College. Mr. Shaffer stated the present building was incapable of adaptation either by renovation or addition; that the Aquidneck Park was located at the fringe of the business district while the best site for a central public library is in a prime business location. He said the interior should be attractive, informal, comfortable, and that adequate parking facilities are necessary.

As a result of these reports a referendum was held in June 1966 and the people of Newport voted 3 to 1 in favor of a \$900,000.00 bond issue for a new library building.

Increased financial support from the City has resulted in a vast improvement in the past two years. There are now seventeen staff members, three of whom are professional librarians and one pre-professional. The library is now open from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. New books have been added, fiction, non-fiction and reference. Close to one

hundred periodicals are subscribed to and a collection of records, tapes and films has been started. There is a circulating art collection which may be taken for a period of three months and renewed for three months. In November 1967 a Bookmobile was purchased.

It goes twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays to the housing projects in the far northern part of the City. Books now held number 44,000 including some from the original collection, with 13,000 borrowers. The switch from the Dewey System, which was started around 1914, to the Library of Congress Classification System is well underway. There is no Discussion Group at present but it is hoped one will be started in the near future.

Early in 1967 the name was changed from the People's Library to the Newport Public Library.

After ninety-seven years of service to the people of Newport, work on a new building was begun. Although it will also be located at Aquidneck Park and not more centrally located as recommended by Mr. Shaffer, this building, planned from the beginning as a library, and built only for that purpose, will be pleasant and comfortable. It will have a book capacity of 150,000, with open shelves so the library's entire book stock can be seen by the patron. It will have a Newport room for material of local significance; a children's room; microfilm readers; turntables for a new record collection and an auditorium seating 60 for community use as well as library program use.

The new Newport Public Library promises the kind of library service which the people of Newport need in order to keep pace with our changing times.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bayles, R. M., *History of Newport County, Rhode Island*

Catalogue of the People's Library, Newport, Rhode Island, May 1, 1870

Humphrey, John A., *A Study of the People's Library, April 15, 1963*

Librarian's Annual Report, the People's Library, 1915-1922

Newport Daily News, March 4, 1905; December 26, 1912

Newport, Rhode Island, Mercury, November 6, 1869; November 27, 1869; May 7, 1870; June 30, 1902; July 15, 1902; July 26, 1902

Shaffer, Kenneth R., *The People's Public Library, Newport, Rhode Island, a Site Study and Building Program, September 1965*

1) *Newport Mercury, November 27, 1869*

2) *Newport Mercury, June 30, 1902*

3) *Newport Mercury, July 15, 1902*

4) *Newport Mercury, July 26, 1902*

5) *Librarian's Annual Report, Peoples Library, 1918*

6) *Librarian's Annual Report, Peoples Library, 1922*

RECORD REVIEWS

AND RECORD SELECTION

By Vincent Bleecker

A circulating collection of musical and spoken recordings in a public library is no longer a rarity to the library world, though many of the public still express pleased surprise when they encounter it. True, there are many music librarians known personally to the author who feel there is

"no future" in a circulating disc collection, or that it is a "losing battle." By such remarks they are usually referring to maintenance costs and to public ignorance of the proper use and care of recordings, citing instances of unfortunate platters heat-warped to the shape of grandmother's double petunia, or even the unbelievable (but personally documented) lady who played all records from the library collection with a 78 RPM needle, "saving" her LP needle for her own collection. These librarians, and they are many, feel that recordings should be used only in the library and not circulate, or else they belong to the "tape" school, and are eagerly awaiting Columbia's perfection of the slow-

RHODE ISLAND NEWS

The only Wholesaler in the State of Rhode Island serving:

Libraries, Schools and Institutions in this Area for Nearly a Century

WE CARRY BOOKS
FROM ALL PUBLISHERS

LIBERAL DISCOUNTS

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

OFFICE SUPPLIES

STATIONERY

The Rhode Island News Co.

Div. of the American News Co.

Telephone 421-7649

55 Hope St. Providence, R. I.

speed "endless-loop" cartridge tape, which they feel will be foolproof. But apart from, or in spite of this disillusioned group, apparently most libraries do and will continue the "losing battle" for some time to come. Bernard Berelson¹ quotes a national survey done for the Public Library Inquiry by the Survey Research Center in 1948, in which 18 percent of the people interviewed said they would use a library phonograph record collection; 19 percent more said they might use it. It may be that this report gave impetus to the growing idea that libraries should provide such a service. At any rate, in 1954 the Helen Lyman Smith report² showed that, among the top ten adult-education services libraries would like to provide, recordings ranked first. Evidently many more librarians and trustees are searching for funds to enable them to jump on the dubious bandwagon. Hence, the topic of selection of recordings for a circulating library collection is by no means academic.

All librarians are trained in book selection; it is one of the most exciting "duties" in a library, and librarians approach it with great seriousness of purpose, attempting an idealistic balance of pride and prejudice, theory and compromise. Not all librarians, however, are able to bring the same qualifications to bear on record selection — unless, of course, they know music *and* the record field *and* the musical public. This knowledge has been specifically mentioned by Asheim in a list of skills needed by librarians in adult education work.³

Often there is an especially qualified staff member or members, or even a music specialist, but in a small library this may not be so. Many librarians, no matter how cultured or how many concerts and recitals they attend, simply are not qualified to evaluate the difference between a Toscanini and an Ormandy recording of the same piece, or to understand how RCA Victor's recording technique might affect the sound of a singer as compared to, say, London or Deutsche-Gramafon. Carter and Bonk discuss this problem grimly and at length, with a frightening list of qualifications for a record librarian:

Clearly the librarian without musical training or extensive listening experience buttressed by a sound and informed taste will be at sea in this rather special field . . . There are technical judgments of records which must also be made, in addition to purely esthetic judgments. The quality of the recording is of great importance: the presence or absence of distortion, faithfulness of sound reproduction, balance of the parts, levels of sound, etc., those items which might be called the "engineering" of the work.⁴

This is not to say that music is for specialists. Music was, is and ever shall be for all who care to listen, no matter what their critical powers or experience. But a librarian chooses records, as he chooses books, for a large number of people, not for himself, and he is paid to do this. Moreover, he would want to be able to

defend his choice. Carter and Bonk, again, bear out that "the librarian does indeed select for his community."⁵

In book selection in any field, there are two separate problems: first, knowing and acquiring the standard works, and second, evaluating the current offerings. This division may be made in the field of recordings, and is a comparable problem. Every collection, for instance, should have the Beethoven nine symphonies, or at least the 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th. But evaluating the new symphonies of Piston, Hindemith or Roy Harris is another matter.

But there is another aspect of record selection which makes it more complicated than book selection: the question of the performance of a given work. Could this be compared to the *edition* of a literary work? Perhaps. The editor of a standard literary work is often an intermediary between author and reader who, by means of interpretive notes, introduction, choice of format, omission or addition of material, enlightening comments, etc., subtly influences the reader's reception and understanding of the original work. As Helen Haines says, "an editor's authority, skill and purpose are often determining factors in selection."⁶ And the performer or conductor of a musical work, like an editor, also influences the hearer's reception and understanding. Granted that the hypothetical goal of most performers is to re-create the composer's idea and/or to realize the composer's intentions, each performer has his own idea of how this is to be done. Every organist, in playing Bach, firmly be-

lieves that he is re-creating the baroque style as it was known in Bach's time, but, apart from the vast differences in instruments, does Biggs sound like Videro, Fox like Dupre? Actually, in this field, sincere scholarship often produces astonishing variance in the resulting sound. And then, there are performers who knowingly make changes of one kind or another in the notes. Scherchen may tamper with the instrumentation of the Brandenburgs, or singers vary in their usage of Handel's or Mozart's embellishments — a book could be written on this. But apart from the scholarly approach, surely every concert listener has experienced the astonishment (pleasant or otherwise) of discovering the vast differences in two or more performances of an identical piece by different performers. Can this be compared, in speaking of books, to the work of an editor or translator? Compare the five or six more or less "standard" translations of the Odes of Horace. How shall we choose among them, or shall we offer them all to our public? The latter, of course, if possible. But how to choose among the 15 or 20 recordings of the Beethoven Fifth, unless the librarian wishes and is able to buy them all? Of course in some libraries, such as Enoch Pratt Free Library, "no effort is made to have several performances of selections for comparative purposes."⁷ Actually, one would have to make a rather great effort *not* to have several performances.

Open the Schwann catalog to any of the "three B's" and glance at the long lists of performances offered for sale

of most of these composers' works. Which company puts out the best? Does any company consistently manufacture the best discs? Can one trust Victor to offer a certain quality and London another, as a librarian expects varying kinds of standards from Harper's, Norton, or Philosophical Library? Within certain limits, yes. But not consistently enough to guide one's buying of records. Does any conductor, any singer or instrumentalist consistently and infallibly offer a performance worth buying on discs? Anyone but the emotional fan or hero-worshiper knows this is not so.

Thus it appears that the problem of selection of performance, as distinct from selection of title, is a very important part of record selection — and, unless one equates the performer with the editor of a book, there is no comparable problem in the field of book selection. It is with selection of performance that this paper is intended to deal.

After all, selection of title, in building a record collection, has been very well covered. With such works as Taubman's⁸ anyone can put together a very satisfactory list for a collection of any size or budget, to say nothing of the plethora of periodical articles on the same subject. But even without these aids there are always the monumental surveys of the musical literature — Grout on opera,⁹ Ulrich on symphonies,¹⁰ Lockwood on piano,¹¹ to name but a few, and every authority is ready to offer a hand-picked hierarchy of the great and near-great.

No, the real problem is in choice of

performance, not choice of the literature to be represented. And here, unless the librarian has personally heard the recording and is able to exercise a taste and judgment founded upon the many sets of values involved, plus his own idealism, he must turn to the critics.

Where are they found? First, in published discographies, in book form. Myers and Hill,¹² Clough and Cuming,¹³ Records in review,¹⁴ are all examples, and these are often assigned an important place on the reference shelves. Yet all of these seemingly ignore the very ephemeral nature of recordings, and so do librarians who keep them around as buying guides. For a collector of rare recordings they are useful. One who prizes his 78 RPM recording of Toti dal Monte's *Mad Scene* or Josh White's *Chain Gang* album is gratified to find them listed there. But where is the librarian to find these out-of-print treasures? Even the largest dealers have trouble keeping up with current releases, with no facilities for searching for items even five years old. And, once obtained, who in his right mind would circulate them?

A recording is rarely listed in Schwann as being available for more than three years. About one third of the entire stock listed there is withdrawn from the catalog each year as the stock is depleted, including many choice collector's items. By the time the cream of the crop has been selected, listed and published in *Records in review* many of the items are no longer available over the counter.

No, the advances and improvements in recording technique come too fast for book publishers, and even good recordings are more ephemeral than they should be. Besides, styles and tastes in musical performance change so rapidly that what is immortalized in print one year as "the finest Butterfly" or "the finest Tosca" may, a few years later, creak like an antique rocker. Record librarians in circulating libraries who are concerned with replacing worn-out items will bear witness to these facts. Thus, the real task of record selection becomes — *selection of a performance from among the current releases*. Which brings us to a consideration of sources much different from the published discographies — the current periodical reviews.

Current reviews can bewilder the reader searching for authority and infallibility. One feels much safer with book reviews — though why this should be so is not apparent, unless it is that book reviewing, through so many years, has developed a jargon which passes for communication, and there has not yet been time enough for the evolution of word-symbols for subjective reaction to the products of the recording art. Sheer musical criticism is nebulous enough, even from a Downes, Thompson or Taubman, and when reviewers deal with recorded sound as well, as in "the tone is inclined to be hard, and, in fortissimos, rather tight"¹⁵ or in discussing "variable balance," "clean sound," "dry sound," etc., the meaning is not apparent to the uninitiated, and not always to the experienced discophile.

Then, too, the reviewers are often such rugged individualists that a set of reviews of a given recording may run a long gamut from rave to ridicule. Thus the novice collector is understandably confused. The chances are that he will pay heed to that critic who simply sounds most authoritative, or who writes for the periodical to which he ascribes the most authority and reliability, or will give up reading reviews and, bravely and commendably, strike out for himself in making a choice.

There is a useful compass in charting a way out of the wilderness. Just as the *Book Review Digest* is helpful in compiling and summarizing reviews of books. *MLA Notes* offers an index of record reviews covering all important reviewing periodicals together with five reviewing symbols: plus for excellent, black dot for adequate, minus for inadequate, a square box indicating that no clear opinion was offered, and a double asterisk for reviews of length, detail and great study. It may be questionable whether all these varying types of reviews may be listed and summarized in a single list, and offered up as a meaningful commentary on a recording. It is also questionable whether all the periodicals indexed by *Notes* are of equal intrinsic value; this would be difficult to prove, except to personal satisfaction. As of this date no work exists, not even a chapter in a textbook on library science, on "How to review phonograph records." But the fact remains that, for most librarians who want to build even a small collection, the peri-

odical reviews of current releases are the only source of information.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) Berelson, Bernard, *The library's public*. (New York: Columbia University Press, c1949), p. 80.
- 2) Smith, Helen Lyman, *Adult education activities in public libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), pp. 22-3.
- 3) Asheim, Lester, *Training needs of librarians doing adult education work* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1955), pp. 17-23.
- 4) Carter, Mary Duncan, and Bonk, Wallace John, *Building library collections* (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1959), p. 110.
- 5) *Ibid.* p. 48.
- 6) Haines, Helen E., *Living with books* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 2d ed., p. 231.
- 7) Enoch Pratt Free Library, *Book selection policies and procedures* (Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1950), p. 42.
- 8) Taubman, Howard, *How to build a record library* (Garden City, New York: Hanover House, 1953).
- 9) Grout, Donald Jay, *A short history of opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947).
- 10) Ulrich, Homer, *Symphonic music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952).
- 11) Lockwood, Albert, *Notes on the literature of the piano* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1940).
- 12) Myers, Kurtz, comp. *Record ratings; the Music Library Association's Index of Record Reviews*. Ed. by Richard S. Hill. (New York: Crown Publishers, 1956).
- 13) Clough and Cuming, *The world's encyclopedia of recorded music* (London: London Gramophone Society in association with Sidgwick and Jackson, 1952).
- 14) High Fidelity, *Records in review* (Great Barrington, Mass.: Wyeth Press, 1955-).
- 15) "Analytical notes and first reviews," *The Gramophone*, June, 1961, p. 12.

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION AND THE PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN

By Charles Waddington

The relationships between top-level administration, middle management, and rank and file, or a library's administration, its department heads, and professional librarians will be examined in the light of ten points or special problems. The five points most relevant for the administration are 1) responsibility for accomplishment, 2) goal setting, 3) the art of supervision, 4) training for management, 5) the credibility gap, or how to increase the percentage of material in each communication that will be understood by the recipient. The five points most relevant for rank and file librarians are 1) development of a professional attitude and competence, 2) willingness to communicate in a meaningful manner, 3) graceful acceptance of supervision, 4) minimum standards for production, 5) willingness to take initiative. All these criteria apply to middle management as they supervise and in turn are supervised themselves.

The responsibility for accomplishment rests squarely with the head of any given organization. He should and can delegate work, and its organization and planning. However, he must control what is or should be accomplished, in other words the production. The major tool in achieving this is a system of clear and precise communications from the top down and its reverse, the latter being equally important. There is a definite "need to

know" for all staff members involved in a given organizational structure, up and down the lines of authority. All reports should be answered within a reasonable time limit — perhaps 24 hours to 48 hours. The old administrative ploy of leaving a problem or communication unanswered for months in the hope it will go away by itself should be ignored.

If we are to control accomplishment, we must know what we have in mind and what our aims are. The library must set its goals, both long range ones and immediate or short range ones. Naturally, each library will mold its goals to some extent on the wishes of the control group, e.g., university or college administration, board of trustees, etc. Hopefully, they will be tempered by professional knowledge and standards. Briefly, a library's goals can be divided into two main areas: the collection and services. First, consider the collection; we must establish its scope, e.g., what subject areas we should or need to collect and for each subject its depth of coverage. Tauber¹) lists five categories to describe various levels of collecting. They are a basic information collection, a working collection, a general research collection, a comprehensive collection, and an exhaustive collection. Consideration of the possibility of shared resources should be kept in mind here. Then we should also determine what media fall within the legitimate collecting scope for a library. Do we include not only all printed matter, e.g., books, periodicals, documents and microforms, but also

painting, films, tapes, phonograph records, photographs, and maps?

When and where does the library encroach on the function of other agencies? Should we only collect a certain kind of information media where we can begin to approach comprehensiveness? Will this comprehensiveness and its concomitant bibliographic control (or its organization) make our "total library" more meaningful than the sum of its individual parts? We could then lend parts of what is a meaningful organized whole of the total information complex and this would put emphasis on the fact that a library's first concern would be acquisition of and organization of information in its printed form.

Setting guidelines for a library's collecting scope provides the framework for its acquisitions policy and goals within that policy.

General goals for services will vary a great deal from one type of library to another. In college and university libraries, it is mostly assumed that the user or patron has a purpose in mind and finding material in the library is part of the educational process. Public libraries tend to stress the educational potential of printed matter or audiovisual materials with help in finding reading matter or information being offered. Both circulation services and reference services illustrate the need for quality and quantity controls of some kind. For the former you have queueing problems and accuracy of the system to contend with, for the latter you really cannot set a quantity goal, it would vary with the number

of patrons using the service, but some guidelines for quality control seem possible. For example, geneological questions are often ruled out automatically and often reference personnel may not answer questions as experts themselves, but must find the answer in some authoritative printed source. This is interesting when one considers today's emphasis on the total "information picture."

The art of supervising cannot, in most cases, just be left to an individual's intuition or his past experience, though both may play an important part. Supervising others must be learned, and this is really necessary on all levels from top-level administration through to training students to supervise other students (or pages). Three things are mainly involved; the staff's rights, it's responsibilities, and the constant communications necessary to establish these within the everyday work situation. A smooth operation will result if time is taken to communicate to all staff members what is expected from them and why it must be done in that specific way rather than in another.

Training people for management is a degree more complex than supervision which it includes. Here, I will just stress some highlights. Ability to see the total picture involving any operation and to consider new alternatives come to mind first, and the responsibility for accomplishment and the need to delegate work mentioned above. If you manage something your first task is always planning and supervising work of others, your day

should not include large portions of time devoted to comfortable and familiar routines so often used to fill time so that important and unpleasant decisions can be postponed.

The "credibility gap" is naturally not confined to libraries alone. What I mean is by "credibility gap" is the ability to constantly misunderstand what appears to be perfectly clear (even in written) communication. This is mostly the result of a refusal to listen. Clearly worded written memoranda filed for future reference and sent to all those with a "need to know" as well as making communications a continuing habit are two ways of combating this problem.

The second part of this article is devoted to the rank and file librarian under the assumption that he also is interested in being included in the library's decision making processes. How can this aim best be accomplished? For those right out of library school it may mean considerable extra work or study which should ideally include "theory" but where the emphasis really should be on how his library does things. No process in librarianship is so complex that the new librarian should not be able to master these routines within six months or one year. Once this is accomplished the new man is ready to think of suggesting changes which may possibly bring old library routines in line with the "new" theory in librarianship. The willingness to communicate in a meaningful way is essential to any accomplishment along these lines. A clearly written memorandum will do for in-

ternal library communications. Publication in the statewide or nationwide professional literature will demonstrate ability to formulate new ideas and the energy needed to express them. The latter, incidentally, will also help establish the new librarian's decision making potential in the eyes of his administration. He is just as important for the library's operation that rank and file librarians realize and accept supervision as a fact of work-day life, as it is for supervisors to be properly trained. Minimum standards are really a part of ones professional attitude. No librarian should be willing to waste his day or even part of his day in meaningless routines or without accomplishing some activity which will add to his professional competence and the library's goals. Finally, willingness to take initiative is important. There are objectives in any library which can only be accomplished through the drive and initiative of individual librarians trying to continuously implement librarianship as a profession.

The above is a brief summary of some important points in the relationship of the professional librarian and his administration. To implement or use these suggestions successfully will take considerable time and patience especially on the part of top-level administrators and results will probably be as varied as the different motivations of different individuals.

1) Tauber, Maurice F., Cook, Donald C., and Logsdon, Richard N. **The Columbia University Libraries** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 260-1.

WESTERLY PUBLIC LIBRARY

By Sallie E. Coy

The history of the library movement in Westerly dates back to the early 18th century. The first library in the Colony of Rhode Island was established in Newport in 1700. The second collection of books designed for public use was placed in the hands of the Westerly Town Clerk, Thomas Hiscox, in 1717, as the result of a bequest by Rev. William Gibson, a Newport clergyman. The content of the collection was not such as to create a public demand even in those days of religious mindedness, so the original circulation probably was not great.

The Pawcatuck Library Company, the first well organized group, was in-

For Your

**SJÖSTRÖM
LIBRARY
FURNISHINGS**

Write or Call

Rachel P. Hooper
6 DAVIS COURT
NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE
03060

Telephone 603-882-1451
(Boston) 617-325-6400

corporated in 1797, one of the earliest of the so-called "social libraries" in the State. In 1848, Henry Barnard, at that time School Commissioner of Rhode Island, personally selected and purchased 2,050 volumes for the Library, using the then enormous sum of \$1,100 entrusted to him by the Library Committee. A number of these books, bearing the old book-plate of the Pawcatuck Library Company, are still in the Westerly Library today.

Though this early institution had its ups and downs, the flame of interest was never quite extinguished. The Directors offered the Library many times to the Town, hoping it might become a town-owned public library free to all of the people and not just the property of the subscribers, but no definite action was taken.

In 1891 there was a strong sentiment for the erection of a Civil War monument in the center of the town. Just at this time Stephen Wilcox, president and founder of the Babcock & Wilcox Co. and a native of Westerly, proposed the erection of a Memorial Building, one that would contain a public library, rooms for the Posts of the Grand Army as long as needed, and other features that would make it a real community center. He offered land and a substantial sum of money provided that a similar amount be raised by the people of the town. Thus the structure was laid for the present library system of Westerly.

Generous gifts and bequests from the Wilcox family maintained the original building and Library, two large additions and the adjoining Wil-

cox Park without further contributions by the townspeople. The Children's Wing, a memorial to William D. Hoxie, a nephew of Mrs. Wilcox, was added in 1928, just as he had planned it shortly before his death. These plans were carried out by Mrs. Hoxie and his daughter, Mrs. Cornelius Middletown, as a memorial to him.

Because of its endowment, all of the services of the Library have always been entirely free, not only to the people of Westerly, but to the surrounding area, both in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Its administration is still in the hands of a private corporation which endeavors to interpret the spirit and wishes of its donors for the good of the community.

Since the Rhode Island Regional Library Plan went into operation in 1964, the Westerly Public Library has been the Regional Library Center for the South County area, continuing to serve a wide area under contract, as it had many years as a good neighbor.

THE REDWOOD LIBRARY

By Donald Gibbs

During his three year sojourn in Rhode Island Rev. Dr. George Berkeley, then Dean of Derry and later Bishop of Cloyne, described Newport in 1729 as "the most thriving place in America for business." This commercial success created in turn a circle of merchants whose wealth and cosmopolitan tastes permitted sufficient leisure for the cultivation of learning. Dean Berkeley's name is usually associated with the founding in 1730 of

a Philosophical Society in Newport, the purpose of which was the weekly discussion of "some useful question in Divinity, Morality, Philosophy, History, etc." As these discussions continued, attracting to them clergy, educators and men prominent in the affairs of the Colony, it became apparent that the community could not offer the sources for study required for meaningful debate. Trinity Church had a small library, and most of the members counted among their treasures a limited number of volumes which they made available.

Abraham Redwood, a member of the society, took steps to remedy this failing when, in 1747, he gave 500 pounds Sterling for the purchase of books. Redwood was born in 1709 in Antigua where he inherited a plantation which permitted him to live comfortably throughout his long life. He came to Rhode Island as a young man, married Martha Coggeshall of Newport, became a Quaker and lived in Newport and Portsmouth until his death in 1788.

Redwood's gift inspired others. Henry Collins gave the land and others subscribed 250 pounds Sterling for the construction of the building. Peter Harrison was engaged to draw up the plans, and the books which were received from London in 1749 were placed in their new home in the following year. The building, which is now a Registered National Historic Landmark, has seen two major additions made to it in the nineteenth century and one major and minor enlargement in the twentieth.

Modern librarians, faced with the painfully familiar question of rising book prices, can sympathize with the problems presented to those responsible for the selection of the first books to be purchased. Abraham Redwood's gift was a large one, the equivalent of almost \$25,000 today. We assume that the initial selection was based on booksellers' catalogues, but the purchase order sent to London in 1748 exceeded the funds available and retrenchment was necessary. The original collection was composed of 751 titles in 1,338 volumes. Bearing in mind that the books were selected as the basis of a working library for the use of learned gentlemen, it is interesting to note what this, the third proprietary library in North America, included and what it excluded. There were, of course, the standard encyclopedias and dictionaries, including numerous foreign language dictionaries and grammars. An emphasis was given to works on religion and morality, history, travel, law, medicine and natural history with the Greek and Latin classics well represented. Practical titles in such fields as horticulture, house building, bookkeeping and even distilling were included. The 1750 manuscript catalogue lists only one novel, JOSEPH ANDREWS, and that is disguised in the listing as a book of travel. There was almost nothing with a particular appeal to the ladies, and the use of the collection by children was obviously not contemplated. In the ensuing two hundred years more than half of the original collection has disappeared.

The last twenty years have seen an effort made to acquire by gift and by purchase replacements for the missing books so that today about three-quarters of the titles are in the collection.

The fortunes of the Library closely reflect those of Newport. The immediate pre-Revolution years as well as those following were bad ones for both. Rev. Ezra Stiles, librarian for many years before becoming president of Yale, and William Ellery Channing both record working in the Library for weeks on end with little or no interruption.

The history of the Library in the nineteenth century is one of steady but unspectacular growth. The name was changed in 1833 to "Redwood Library and Athenaeum." Lectures were given and it was during this time that most of the present collection of more than one hundred paintings, mostly portraits, was acquired. Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Robert Feke, Washington Allston, Charles Willson Peale and Rembrandt Peale are among the artists represented.

While the Redwood Library has had a long history it is today very much a part of the twentieth century. Since World War II the number of shareholders has risen to the limit per-

mitted by the charter. Subscribers, those holding memberships on an annual or monthly basis, are likewise at the maximum permitted by the Directors. A waiting list exists for both categories of membership.

The collection now contains 123,000 volumes and is growing at an average of 1,400 books yearly. About one-quarter of new purchases are adult fiction and one tenth are children's books. The collection is strong in the fine arts, history, biography and literature. Attempts are being made to strengthen such weak areas as science and technology and business. A special fund permits the purchase of contemporary poetry. Members have available to them approximately 1,200 phonograph records, both monaural and stereo.

The Library's future has been the subject of discussion by its Directors and staff. An addition for a new staff work area and for increased stack space is being contemplated. The problem of increasing the capital funds available for such expansion is a serious one for an institution that receives no municipal, state or federal funds. We hope that ways and means will be found to permit Abraham Redwood's vision of a library promoting "the good of Mankind" to continue for another two centuries.



