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Summer 1970

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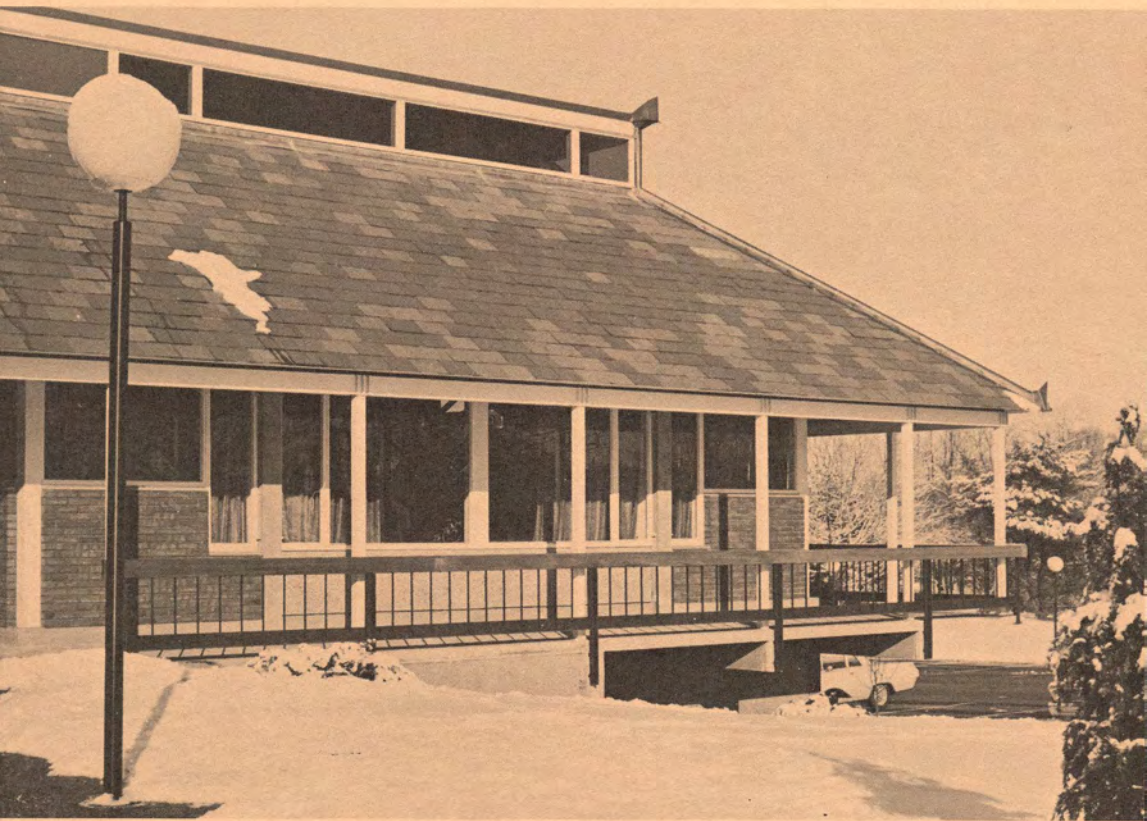
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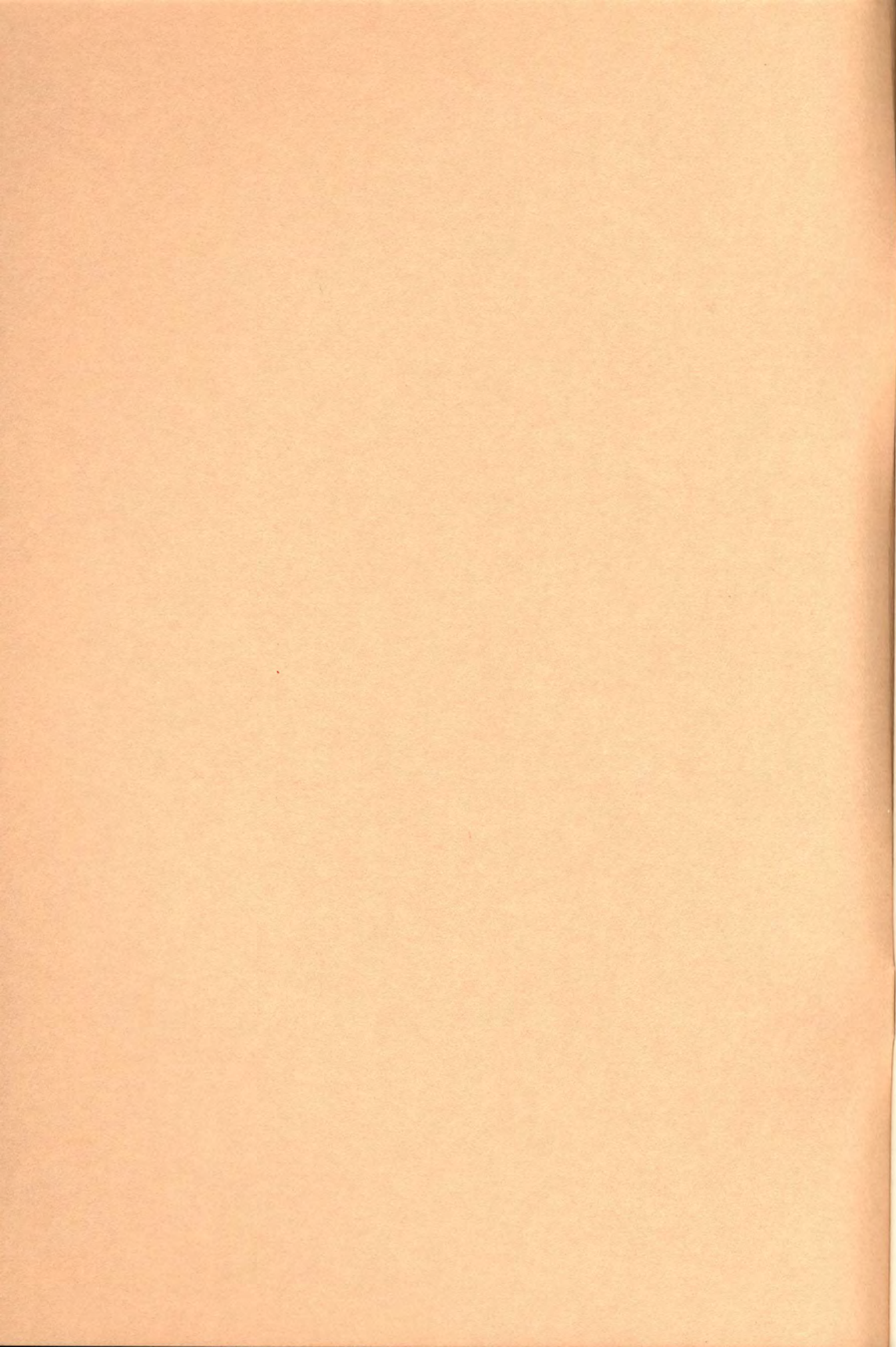
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BULLETIN
of the
RHODE ISLAND
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION





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RHODE ISLAND
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Vol. 42 – No. 3

Summer 1970

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vol. 42, No. 3, the Summer Issue of the Rhode Island Library Association *Bulletin*, marks a new departure. This is the first summer issue ever. It does not have a unifying theme, but does contain some very interesting articles.

Please do not feel that a certain form must be maintained. We are in a period of transition. Why not a "Letters to the Editor" section or a Checklist, or any innovations you feel might make your bulletin or your association more useful? I am sure that Mr. Richard Waters, the editor, would be glad to hear from you.

The October Bulletin will deal with various aspects of the Confer-



Charles W. Crosby

ence, which again will feature multiple programs. At least the date and place are firm. Providence Public Library and the Holiday Inn. Registration and coffee will be at the library, along with some of the meetings and all of the films. The other meetings will be at the Holiday Inn, just two blocks away, and the banquet and speaker's program will also be there. Hopefully, this centralized location will mean more people can attend some part of the all-day meeting. More particulars later. I am happy that Providence is host for the first time in six years. R.I.L.A. is becoming as difficult as A.L.A. to accommodate for a meeting. We have to think in terms of parking, restaurants, etc.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee was hardly formed when a censorship problem at Chariho needed attention. How your committee served will be one of the programs at the fall meeting.

I want to thank all the chairmen for their prompt attention to the formation of their committees. I do hope we can move in some areas such as membership and social action, and I also fervently wish that we all might practice a little tolerance. I am convinced we have more in common than in confrontation. Let's be big enough to accommodate our diverse opinions and our mutual interest in the betterment of our state association.

Charles W. Crosby

THE BEAT BEYOND BOOKS

by

Jane Goodwin

Warwick Public Library

The Hingham Public Library has a beat: a beat that can be heard in the sounds of voices and music that sometimes fills the air. Color moves before one's eyes in posters and displays; commanding the center of the main reading room is a painted tree that holds remnants of this year's decorated Easter egg contest. In this community the library is not a quiet retreat from the world but a center of activity moving with the times.

When I met Walter Dziura, the library director, he was standing behind the circulation desk charging out books and records and collecting fines. He spends much of his day visibly serving the public. During our conversation, several patrons interrupted to ask questions or express appreciation for material he had secured for them.

The Hingham Public Library is housed in a new building only three years old. The library's experiences with non-book media began about ten years ago with records, but lack of space prevented any expansion into other mediums. With the new building came new ideas. Jigsaw puzzles were the first innovation. Mr. Dziura admits they were something of a gimmick but they also served the senior residents of Hingham. His first collection of twelve Springbok puzzles disappeared from the racks in twenty minutes. His next order for twelve dozen puzzles was equally well received by the public, and puzzles remain among the library's hottest items. At first only the finest Springbok puzzles were included in the collection, but the public has been generous in giving their own; therefore the quality of the collection has diminished as the quantity has increased. The puzzles are kept in zippered plastic bags in their original boxes as long as the boxes hold together; then the cover pictures with attached pockets and cards are

kept with the pieces. Notes of missing pieces are kept with the puzzles and when the lost pieces hamper the challenge of the puzzle, it is withdrawn from circulation. Staff time is not used to check for missing pieces.

The library maintains a small 8mm film collection of both regular and Super 8mm films in color and black and white. Obtained from Blackhawk Films, the collection includes silent classics and cartoons. Mr. Dziura admits there are problems involved with the differences between 8mm and Super 8mm film but the films are popular and only four or five were on the rack at the circulation desk the day that I visited. Fines of fifty cents per day are assessed for overdue films to give more borrowers an opportunity to use the collection. Patrons are advised by the staff that playing music with the films peeps up the home showing. As yet, the slide collection at Hingham includes only art slides. Filmstrips, both silent and with records, are also popular items for home use. The library owns no 16mm films but can use the regional film collection and rents films for special series showings. No discrimination is made in circulating items for home, group, or classroom use.

Recordings form an important part of the library's resources. There is a reference collection and a circulating group of Spoken Arts records including plays, poems and stories as well as a collection of children's fairy tales on record. The Spoken Arts recordings are kept separate from the music collection and have their own listening and recording unit, a gift to the library. All types of music are represented on record. Mr. Dziura concedes that the theft of popular rock records has necessitated keeping only the dust jacket in the browsing bin and the record at the desk, but he tries to make tape recordings of all their holdings before the records circulate. Language learning aids, typing and shorthand records are also included in the phonographic record collection. The library has the facilities for recording their own tapes and making tape cassettes. The circulating tapes collection also includes commercial language and music tapes; the tapes are shelved in their own labeled boxes. Records are stored on shelves and in bins. No attempt is

made to keep monaural and stereophonic records separate. Head sets and listening units are available in the main reading room.

Hingham does not yet have an extensive art collection; but the library has a few framed Bro-dart prints, and although they are poor reproductions, they do circulate. The few graphics that the library owns circulate and expansion is planned, although the purchase of original works is expensive. A few posters left over from poster sales will be mounted for circulation. The second floor has a gallery area and works from local artists and traveling shows are usually displayed for viewing.

One of the unique features at the Hingham Public Library is a collection of Creative Playthings or "educational materials," as the director prefers to call them. All sorts of play equipment from puppets to microscopes are included in the collection. The toys are loaned for seven days to adults willing to take the responsibility of replacing materials damaged beyond normal wear. The toys are packaged in blue sailcloth bags with drawstring closures and housed in a cabinet in the pre-school area. Equipment is selected from a catalog which is a loose-leaf binder with pictures of each toy on heavy acetate-covered pages. Each picture is taken from the Creative Playthings catalog and clearly shows the original price of the toy. Each item is numbered in the catalog and each storage bag is tagged with a corresponding number. The play equipment is *only* for home use and may not be used in the library. Although originally the collection was a memorial gift, it must now be maintained with library funds.

In addition to the above resources, the library has cassette playback machines, tape recorders, projectors, a record player, and a camera to lend. Three guitars are available for circulation as well as simple musical instruments in the play equipment collection. The machines and instruments have varying loan periods and some require an advance service charge of one or two dollars.

Among the first eye-catching sights in the library are two double racks of paperback books for sale covering every topic from cooking to science to children's classics. Racks of cataloged paperbacks are scat-

tered throughout the library separate from these racks of books for sale. Although the director admits that the library loses many cataloged and salable paperbacks through theft, and the racks take staff time to stock, providing the books is a valuable service for the public and he judges the venture successful. As is true of all money making projects in the library, the money from the sales is channeled back into the collection. Sheet music is also owned and cataloged by the library and is ready for circulation. The library does not circulate "parlor games" such as monopoly, but Mr. Dziura does plan to add a permanent chess table for in-library games.

The library operates a varied media program for all ages. In April, a spring film festival for adults was held showing film classics. For such a series, films are rented, admission is charged, and usually the projectionist is the library director. Often, when a movie is shown, paperback copies of the story filmed are offered for purchase. Last summer a teen film series featured surfing and surfing posters were sold. Many of the children's film programs use films from the regional film cooperative and are free, as are the story programs for youngsters of all ages. In the summer, drama workshops are held in the meeting room, a quite adaptable room with movable risers, chairs, and a small stage. During Christmas vacation last year, a snack bar was operated in this room for college students, giving them an opportunity to meet and share experiences. Every afternoon at the Hingham Public Library, "Sesame Street" is shown on television for the children, and for special news events the television is moved to the lobby where patrons can watch as they come and go.

The new building lends itself to operating a variety of activities at the same time. The main reading room holds open stacks of books and media. Reading areas consist of several small units of chairs and tables around the perimeter of the room. The periodical collection is divided along subject lines and each subject grouping is in a reading area. The high school area has its own periodical and paperback rack located near the reference section. In a separate Browsing Room the large selection of foreign language magazines, expensive art books, and "sexy" fiction

is housed; smoking is allowed here and comfortable chairs make the room inviting. The children's room is divided into three areas; the junior high section has headsets usually tuned into the local rock radio station, as well as their own paperback book racks and shelves of books and magazines. The book shelves, chairs, and tables are all scaled down in the children's area that serves the elementary group. The pre-school area is an alcove decorated with colorful book displays. When I visited the room, the low table, cushions and tiny chairs (the room's third set of furniture) were spilling over with toddlers. A wicker double swing held two who were not interested in the picture books that lined the walls. The circulating toy collection is kept in a cupboard here, but a few special sturdy toys were scattered on the floor.

The entire library is carpeted, but still it is noisy and many complaints are heard about the lack of quiet space for study. An upstairs room is open for serious study and more areas are planned on the lower level. The library has received many gift books from citizens; if the library does not need the books, they are sold with discards for twenty-







five cents from an open shelf. The stack area of back periodicals is open to the public and therefore is often in disorder.

With a board of nineteen trustees, Walter Dziura puts into action a dynamic philosophy of full service to the library's patrons. He operates with four professionals, in addition to himself, and a frequently changing staff of non-professionals. In spite of the small staff, he feels that they are carrying on a much more active program than most public libraries. I asked why the library had added so much non-print material to their collection; he simply said that in our television oriented society, especially in an educated community such as Hingham, the library has to meet the people on their level and serve them with what they want, both with books and materials beyond the book. He looks forward to a time when the antiquated term "library" will be replaced with the label "resource center." He felt that the library was moving closer to its goal when a student called one day to borrow the library's cactus plant for a science project. The response of the community has been encouraging with several sizable memorial gifts and active Friends of the Library support. I thought the most interesting revelation of Mr. Dziura's library philosophy was stated when I asked what the library owned on microfilm or microfiche; he answered, "We can't afford anything more than *Time* on microfilm." It has been an administrative decision to build the non-print collection even at the expense of not maintaining an extensive offering of back periodicals and research materials on microfilm. The Hingham Public Library does not attempt to be a research center for the scholarly few; after carefully observing the needs of the community, Mr. Dziura has decided to offer the public materials useful to instruct and entertain the greatest number.

THE MAY, 1970 STUDENT STRIKE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY

by

David C. Taylor

Reference Librarian

On May 4th when students went on strike at the University of Rhode Island, the Reference Department quickly resurrected a bibliography compiled for the Moratorium for Peace last November. We also collected a shelf of fifty or seventy-five books on South East Asia, the War, and its ramifications. This shelf and the bibliography got some but not very much attention; perhaps fifty copies of the bibliography were picked up in two days.

As part of the strike the student assistants employed in the library stayed away with surprising unanimity. Although library business was slow, the books waiting to be shelved piled up rapidly and it soon became clear that the library would have to assign full-time staff members to shelving or be in serious trouble if the strike continued for more than five or ten days.

Meanwhile the library was singled out publicly at strike rallies as a prime target to be shut down. Threatening as this sounded, however, the point was emphasized over and over by strike leaders that there was to be no violence. A rally on the library steps May 4th was poorly attended (it was called for an awkward time, 6 P.M.) and was peaceful. Pickets at the main entrance and employer's entrance May 4th and 5th were polite and had no visible effect on staff attendance and little effect on users approaching the library.

On May 6th a delegation of student assistants met with George Parks, the University Librarian, indicating that they supported the student strike but wanted to change the intent of library student assistants from obstruction and non-cooperation to the making of the University Library into an information center for the strike and the issues behind

it. This suggestion was heartily agreed to.

The students and the Reference Librarians enthusiastically began setting up a "Free University Information Center" in the lobby immediately inside the front door and contiguous to a lounge area. Here were prominently displayed daily clippings from newspapers on the fast-breaking events on the campuses, the Capitol, and the battlefields of the nation. The shelf of books was expanded. Government documents were carefully selected for the table (Hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Vietnam War, etc.) and articles of historic importance were duplicated from periodicals. Many of these items began circulating from the Library Circulation Desk as rapidly as they could be put out. As complete a file as possible of campus newspaper issues and strike bulletins was secured and displayed. A suggestion box, a large map of South East Asia, and various posters were displayed along with a note suggesting letters to Congressmen and giving their addresses.

A note composed by students told of their reasons for setting up the display:

Members of the Community

Strike? Shut down? Escalation? Withdrawal? Certainly the above words mean a great deal more to our community and society than perhaps at any other time in man's history. Accordingly, it is imperative that we as members of an academic community be aware of all the *facts* concerning U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. To insure that relevant information is available, the workers at the Library have decided to return to work and set up and maintain an information center in the Library Lobby that would lend itself to the dissemination of factual material pertinent to the above issues.

Exercise your freedom to read and decide the issues for yourself. Don't act on hearsay, make use of the Library facilities to base your conclusions on fact.



In recent years at the URI library no display has ever had the attention this Information Center has had. Nearly every person goes to it the first time he enters the library. Many individuals spend thirty minutes or more reading and browsing, and check the display day after day for new items. Even now, seven weeks after it was first assembled, without a fever pitch of tension, the Information Center still attracts many browsers.

It has certainly been more successful than the project the Reference Department came up with on its own. Perhaps only students could speak to students with the same impact. At any rate, the students in deciding to make their protest a positive one, caught the true essence of the ideal of library service; making information free so that issues could be decided on the basis of facts, not preconceptions. The University and the library staff have benefited and can learn from that spirit.

THE LIBRARIAN AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

by

Robert M. Simmons

Rhode Island College Library

In this age of social consciousness, most librarians would reject the notion that libraries are ivory tower institutions. We would like to believe that libraries play a direct role in shaping the behavior of society. If this is indeed the case, librarians must share some of the guilt for social ills as well as some of the credit for social progress. In view of this relationship, some more serious questions lurk in the shadows. What are the responsibilities of the librarian if it becomes apparent that his society is perpetrating crimes against humanity? How do libraries contribute to such conditions, and what can they do to reverse the trend? Unless librarians are willing to take a stand on this issue, they can be judged no better than socially naive.

Administratively, most libraries are units of established governments on all levels, and like courts, legislatures, armies and police they perform certain functions to preserve the status quo. Private libraries, although not directly linked to government, usually serve the same ends, just as campus police often fashion themselves after municipal police. The specific function of the library is to disseminate information—information which entertains, information which educates and information which answers questions. The amount of support a library is likely to receive from its community is directly related to the degree to which this information reinforces and flatters the entrenched power structure. The more this information questions, criticizes or presents alternatives to the power structure, the greater is the likelihood that the library will be a target for repression. The *Berkeley Barb* controversy in Richmond, California illustrates the dynamics of this principle. The local establishment, in this case a group of mothers supported by the John Birch Society, succeeded in having the politically radical, sexually

liberated *Berkeley Barb* removed from the shelves of the Richmond Public Library. The librarian was threatened with physical violence and eventually was forced to resign. A broadside issued by the censors demanded a new librarian “. . . who is willing to comply with the mandate of the people.” (“The Richmond California Blues,” *Wilson Library Bulletin*, April 1969, p. 702.) Of course the many people in the community who advocated intellectual freedom were denied a voice in this mandate.

That libraries tend to reflect the power structures of their communities is a comment upon what is, rather than what ought to be. Understandably, vested interests work to promote their points of view and to exclude opposing points of view, and all too frequently informational institutions, libraries included, are willing to make concessions to this kind of pressure. In *Points of Rebellion* William O. Douglas warns of what will occur when universities do not exercise their potential for social criticism; his remarks may be applied equally well to libraries:

When the university does not sit apart, critical of industry, the Pentagon, and government, there is no fermentative force at work in our society. The university becomes a collection of technicians in a service station, trying to turn out better technocrats for the technological society. Then all voices become a chorus supporting the status quo; there is no challenger from the opposition warning of dangers to come. The result is a form of goose-stepping and the installation of conformity as king.

(William O. Douglas, *Points of Rebellion*, Vintage Books, New York, 1970, p. 16.)

If the aim is to serve justice rather than special groups, library activism should be non-partisan activism. Information resources ought to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Libraries need not decide which values are just; rather they should incite the evolution of just values by encompassing, within the broad limits of practicality, all values. *The New York Times* should be challenged by the *Berkeley Barb*, *Life*

should be confronted with *Evergreen* and *Pamela* should compete with *Fanny Hill*. Such contradictions make critical judgment possible, and critical judgment is a prerequisite for correcting social ills. By displaying the widest possible range of alternatives, the concept of inclusiveness can be a powerful catalyst for social change.

Since most libraries are organs of the establishment, it follows that if the establishment is stricken with the plague, its libraries will display symptoms of the same disease. Furthermore, the libraries will be responsible for spreading the disease through their circulatory systems. The difficult task is to relate these generalities to present day experience. There is no laboratory test to determine if a society is sick, and there is no electronic device to indicate if a particular event is an atrocity. There are some current circumstances, however, which should at least be considered in this regard: the killing of men, women and children in Vietnam (particularly the Song My massacre); the infection of the atmosphere with radioactivity levels which increase the rates of cancer and birth defects; the failure to enforce laws which would prevent the destruction of the environment; the failure to meet the basic needs of large numbers of people with regard to health care, food, housing, transportation and humane employment, when abundant resources for solving these problems are available; and the use of militia, police and secret agents to suppress dissenters (particularly the attacks on public assembly during the Democratic Convention and the killing of Black Panther Fred Hampton).

It would be unconscionable for a librarian, or anyone else, to continue routinely doing his job if he believed his society were in fact guilty of crimes against humanity. He would thereby be doing his little part to support the atrocity. The minimum step which he can take in this situation is to initiate a vigorous program to acquire and promote the use of materials which criticize and present alternatives to the powers-that-be. Since such a program goes beyond the tacit function of the library—exclusive support to the status quo—it is likely to be countered with attempts at repression. It might be said that if the

program does not produce such a reaction, it has not gone far enough.

If the reactionary forces are successful in removing the questionable materials from the library, the situation is indeed serious. A community which will not tolerate criticism clearly is sick and clearly intends to defend itself at all cost. At this point the differences are brought out into the open, and the consequences for defiance more certain. One possible response at this juncture is for the librarian to withhold his services. Since his institution is supporting injustice, and he has been unsuccessful in reversing the trend, he may refuse to participate in the process. This provides a personal solution but is likely to have little influence on the overall problem. He will be quickly replaced by someone who is willing to cooperate, just as the postmen were quickly replaced by obedient federal troops during the recent mail strike.

If a society is committing atrocities, is determined to continue committing atrocities, and is resolved to eliminate dissent, the alternatives for response are few. After the Song My massacre many Americans refused to believe that the event could have happened, while others accepted it as an unavoidable by-product of war. Most refused to accept any responsibility for the tragedy. If librarians truly desire to achieve social consciousness, they must be prepared to make more useful responses than these.

EXTRAMURAL REGISTRATION

An Experiment in Increasing Public Library Use

by

Richard W. Robbins

Director

Pawtucket Public Library

A number of special factors at the Pawtucket library have contributed to an almost embarrassingly low use by Pawtucket citizens. When I look at circulation statistics of libraries of comparable size, I am appalled at how low ours are in comparison.

What are the special factors resulting in underuse? First, there has been no quality library service in Pawtucket until quite recently. For decades this library was the laughingstock of the library world. Many local citizens still can't quite believe it would be worth their while to come here. Then too, there is the Providence Public Library nearby, and many citizens take advantage of their free card at the main library and the Rochambeau branch.

Adding to the problem is beautiful downtown Pawtucket. It is no exaggeration to say that many Pawtucket residents have never *been* in downtown Pawtucket. Now rapidly improving, it has been an unappetizing area, to say the least. There is no free parking for library patrons; a large percentage of patrons return to their car at a meter to find their time has expired and they have a ticket.

Then you ponder the correlation between educational level and library use: the more schooling people have, the more they want and use a library. The percentage of persons (1960 census) in Pawtucket who completed high school or more is 29.1. Compare New Rochelle, New York: 56.1; Evanston, Illinois: 67.3. Closer to home, Portland, Maine: 47.9; Brockton, Massachusetts: 43.9; Warwick, Rhode Island: 47.1. Right away you can see that our library use would tend to be low.

All the foregoing factors led us to try an experiment in extramural registration to attempt to broaden our clientele. But before discussing this experiment, let me say that we have been trying a number of other approaches, too: many programs (concerts, art exhibits, films, mammoth bashes like our Polish Night), bookmobile service and service to the homebound. We are open more hours than any other public library in Rhode Island. Finally, our collections are quite respectable. For popular books we rent from McNaughton and give what we think is good service.

For several years we have welcomed prominent persons to the city with a letter and a library card. A new clergyman, for instance, or a chamber of commerce executive. These persons usually start to use the library immediately. So the idea of mailing borrower's cards on a more random basis occurred to us—extramural registration.

We bought a thousand Gaylord cards, of a color entirely different from our regular cards. We chose a thousand Pawtucket residents who did not have cards, according to our registration files. These persons included 225 public school teachers, 50 lawyers, and 100 factory workers. The rest were selected geographically. For this we used the city directory and chose areas of high income, middle income, and practically no income (whose residents are largely welfare recipients).

A page and a volunteer did the work of filling out the application cards, writing names on the borrower's cards, addressing envelopes, etc. The letter accompanying the card was cleverly written by Richard B. Moses, then our coordinator of regional services. It was in the form of an invitation to library use from the Friends of the Pawtucket Public Library, and was printed on their handsome letterhead.

The cards were mailed out between August 15 and October 29, 1969. Persons manning all circulation points were alerted to record the number of the easily recognized extramural cards as they came in. This count was continued until January 31, 1970.

By checking the card number, as it was used, against the registration file of cards mailed, we could tell exactly who was responding to

our mailing. By January 31, about 5% of the cards were used. The average number of times these cards were used was two.

About the costs? Cards, \$28; postage, \$60; man hours, 150. Out-of-pocket expense, then, was \$88.

Now, what did the results show about the different classes of recipients of the borrower's card? The percentage of users was as follows:

Teachers:	8.4%
Lawyers:	5.4%
Factory workers:	4.0%

Others selected by geographic area: 3%. About 4% of the high-income and the low-income recipients came to use the library. The middle-income recipients gave us the lowest return.

The overall conclusions of this experiment?

1) A 5% return is not sufficient to justify a continuation of this broad type of extramural registration.

2) Extramural registration for teachers is definitely worth while, and should be done annually. It should include all Pawtucket teachers whether or not they live in the city.

3) Issuing cards to low-income persons might be worth while if co-ordinated with a program to advance library use sponsored by the Community Action or Model Cities agency.

What will be our next approach to increasing our usefulness to the citizens of Pawtucket? We have a few ideas . . .

DON'T FORGET . . .

FALL CONFERENCE

Thursday, October 29th

Holiday Inn and Providence Public Library

BAKER & TAYLOR OFFERS YOU MORE TO SERVE YOU BETTER

- 5,000,000 books in 4 regional warehouses.
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