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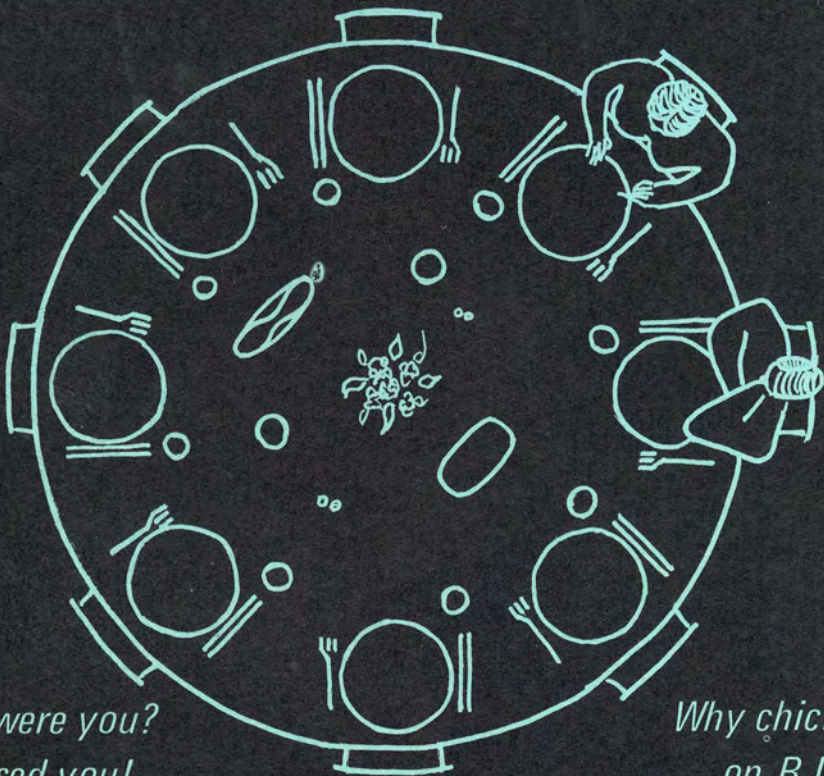
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BULLETIN

of

THE RHODE ISLAND

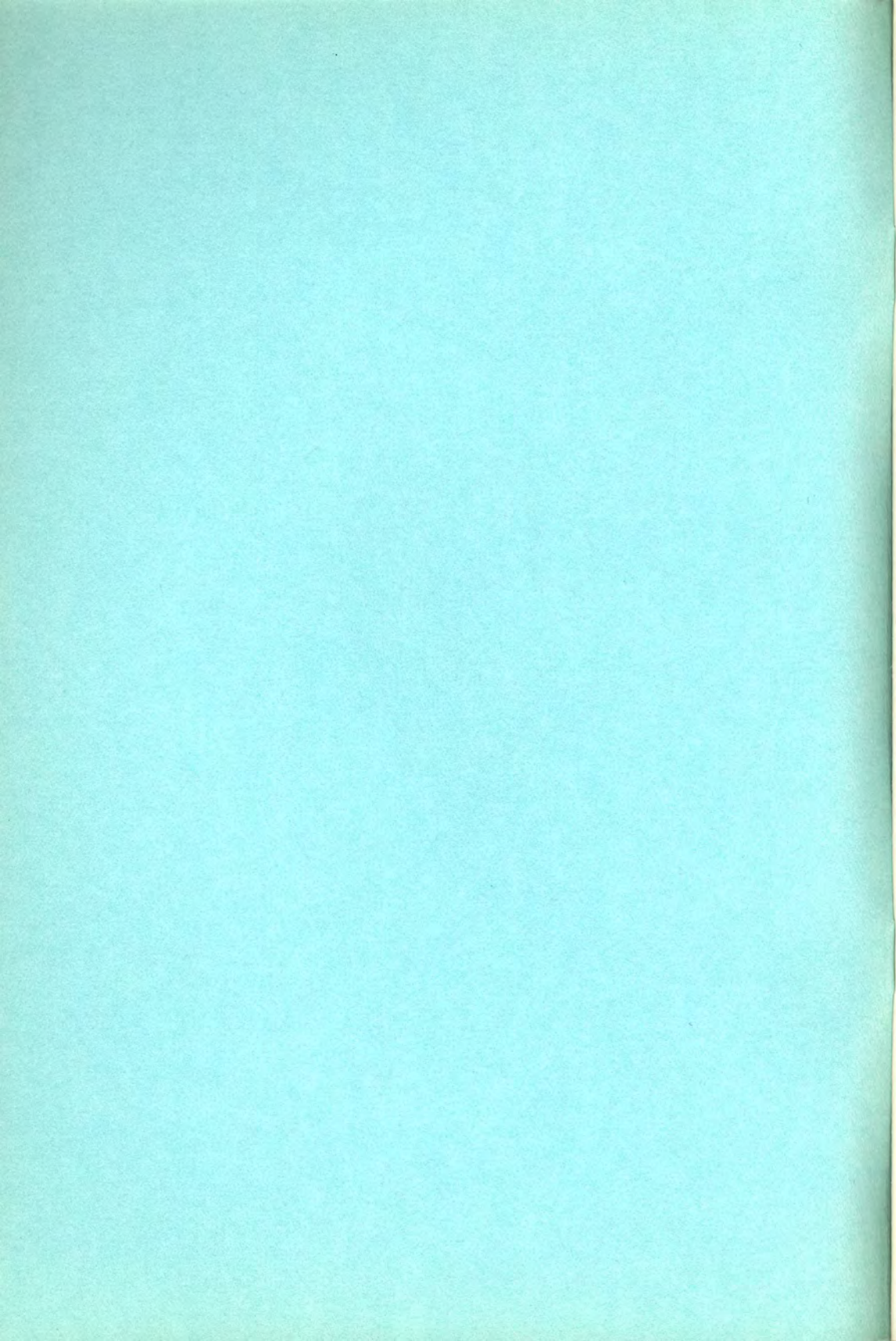
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



*Where were you?
We missed you!*

*Why chicken out
on R.I.L.A.?*

C.W. CROSBY



BULLETIN

of

THE RHODE ISLAND

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL

This issue is more than well-filled (what with conference articles, plus a few bonuses); therefore, illustrations, and editorializing by your new editor, are being cut to a minimum. You will find a few unconventional elements in this issue to which both the executive board and the publications committee are interested in your reactions. Don't disappoint us! The cover is meant to give you a jolt, as are some of the articles that follow it.

As I am new, shiny new, to this publication, let me request a name change for this *Bulletin of The Rhode Island Library Association*. It is such a bland, meaningless name! Look at other house organs, and the names they have— nearly all of them are as stodgy as ours. Let's break away! We need a distinctive name for our distinctive journal. Any suggestions????

Derryl R. Johnson

Providence Public Library

THE CONFERENCE

Postmortems, Postprandials and Postscripts

by

Charles W. Crosby

R.I.L.A. President

The fall meeting of the R.I.L.A. on October 29, 1970 began almost on time. Mayor Doorley didn't get to greet us but F. Charles Taylor, Librarian at the Providence Public Library, did. After a few brief announcements, the crowd sprinted to the Holiday Inn and the "Reaching the Unreached" program which was limited to forty people. Your reporter didn't make it, but hearsay has it that this hour and a half session was superior to the whole evening's show at N.E.L.A. The vociferous objections to the exclusive limitation to forty made a repeat performance mandatory for that afternoon.

Those who didn't make the action workshop could watch a fine program of films back at the Providence Public Library auditorium or browse through the excellent exhibits provided by twenty-seven exhibitors in the South Ballroom at the Holiday Inn. Kudos to William Alexander for his hard work. Each year our exhibit roster grows. This year in particular was a good year for display personnel as the South Ballroom was right on the axis to many of the meetings in the North Ballroom and was an attractive area for browsing or chatting with old friends and publishers' representatives.

Members broke for lunch and reconvened at two o'clock for the business meeting in the North Ballroom. The meeting began at 2:05 (something of a record) and moved briskly along to the main report of the president on the status of National Library Week in Rhode Island for 1971. The September 18 decision of the R.I.L.A. Executive Committee stated that:

- "1. The R.I.L.A. will not continue to fund National Library Week.
2. The R.I.L.A. will not expect the Public Relations chairman or any of his committee members to function as the Executive Director of National Library Week in this state.
3. The R.I.L.A. will not continue to act as a sponsoring agency for the distribution of National Library Week material throughout the state."

The president reported that this statement had been read at the National Library Week meeting on October 7 at the N.E.L.A. conference.

Though no vote had been contemplated by the Executive Board, an informal show of hands was asked for and a vote taken. An overwhelming majority favored the action of the Executive Board, two were opposed and three were undecided.

The report also included the fact that Maine, New Hampshire and Connecticut proposed changes in National Library Week. A regional theme is favored. A series of institutes may be proposed. Rhode Island will simply observe this trend and cooperatively plan for it, but not necessarily act on it this year. All six New England state presidents or National Library Week Executive Directors will meet with John Frantz at Nashua, New Hampshire on November 20.

Barbara Spence, originator of a community-owned ghetto library in the South Boston area was ill and a tape of an earlier workshop she was featured in was played in the Williams Room while Bill Alexander, Jim Giles, Jean Nash, Al Pereira, and Cynthia Neal gave their command performances to a large audience in the North Ballroom. Even though it was shortened to forty minutes, the action aspects of the workshop's group participation techniques were stimulating.

Meanwhile in the Williams Room students from St. Thomas Elementary School, Providence, presented a very interesting demonstration in storytelling to an enthusiastic adult audience. The youngsters' abilities were excellent.

Mrs. Barbara Wilson, Librarian for the Handicapped, Rhode Island Department of State Library Services, lectured in the North Ballroom on services to the handicapped and gave a large audience an opportunity to hear and see the services, programs, and material equipment available from the Department to the blind and handicapped throughout the state. Hopefully, librarians will be able to more adequately serve needy cases brought to their attention.

At the same time Mr. Joseph Fitzpatrick, Jr., of the Periodical Department, Providence Public Library, held a discussion and display in the Williams Room of off-beat periodicals which are not always available in public, school or college libraries. This was a great success and those attending sampled the periodicals quite liberally. Since no signs urged them to return the magazines, a great many seemed to have been borrowed on "extended loan."

Films were again shown from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. and all day long there were from 30 to 35 people enjoying these.

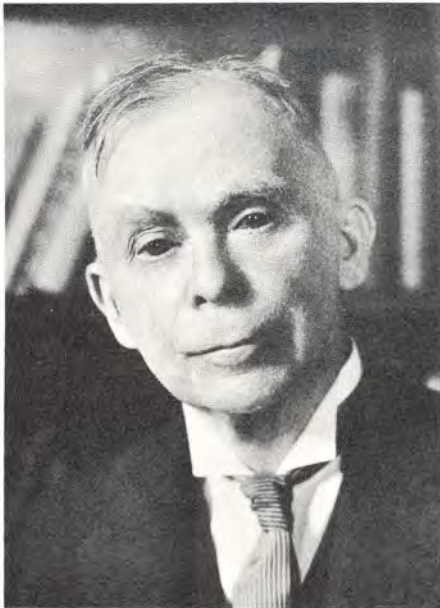
The Dutch treat cocktail hour in the main bar and in the Ballroom foyer was well attended and the dinner following promptly at 7:30 was attractively set and well-served to a very small seating of one hundred and thirty-five— hence your bulletin cover!! What was wrong? Was the price too high? Were you afraid to go out after dark? Did the absence of a bulletin fail to give the speaker enough advance prominence and publicity? Are there those of you who do not wish any longer to have a banquet and speaker? Was the day too long?

Mr. Arthur V. Curley, Librarian of the Montclair Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey, spoke for half an hour on the subject of "Social Responsibilities of Libraries and Librarians." He spoke quietly and succinctly on a whole range of our responsibilities as arbiters of taste and freedom. He then answered questions for three quarters of an hour. Something must have been said! I have never witnessed so long a question period before. Feedback and flack report that "He should get his own house in order before criticizing others," or "He talked too much about A.L.A.," or "Who cares about the new directions of A.L.A.?" or the opposite pole, "He was low-key, courteous, explicit, articulate, and the best R.I.L.A. speaker in the last five years," or "He was excellent, and sensitive to our needs," or "It was nice to hear one of the young new leaders on the national scene."

Such is the aftermath! One wonders whether to reach out for others doing a superior job elsewhere and invite them to speak here and share their ideas, enthusiasms, and programs; or do we go along in a "I want chicken salad and pleasantness and no mention of Viet Nam" and no more "hippie-type youngsters criticizing my library." The latter isolated point of view is very easy to obtain. No one needs to stir out of state, or region or even one's own library. National issues, youth movements and library needs can be ignored and provincialism can settle in as the great equalizer and the days can be all alike and routine and autonomy and self-perpetuation can be the grist to our mill. Who wants it?



The Providence Public Library occupied street-level rooms from 1880 to 1900 in this building below the Mowry and Goff School on Snow Street.



First Librarian, William E. Foster, 1877 to 1930.

Profile—

PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Unlike many public libraries, the Providence Public Library is a private corporation and was chartered by the General Assembly to operate as a public library in 1875. It is governed by a Board of Trustees whose members are elected for four year terms by the Corporation. The Mayor of Providence is an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees.

The library first opened its doors to the public in February, 1878. It was located on the second floor of the Butler Exchange. On opening day, the library assets were 10,307 books and funds of \$88,979, yielding an annual income of \$5,000. William E. Foster, a Brown graduate, was the first librarian.

Two years later, larger quarters being needed, the library was moved to rooms below the Mowry and Goff School on Snow Street. It remained in these quarters for twenty years.

As the library continued to grow, larger quarters were again needed. The Corporation secured the land where the present building is, and ground was broken and a new building was started.

As is not unusual with libraries, funds became short and it appeared that only a portion of the building could be completed. Mr. John Nicholas Brown gave the Corporation gifts amounting to \$268,500 to complete the building.

The new library, completed at a cost of \$387,000, was opened in March, 1900 with a staff of thirty-nine employees and a book collection of 93,000 volumes.

Through the next three decades, the library continued to grow and expand its public service. Starting with the first branch library in Wanskuck, it added the Tockwotton Branch. Then came Rochambeau, Smith Hill, South Providence, Mount Pleasant and Olneyville.

The culmination of the building program was the \$1,950,000 addition to the Central Library in 1954. When the addition was made it was the first time in the library's history that the City of Providence contributed funds for construction.

From its modest beginning in 1875, the Providence Public Library has grown to where it now has 546,000 volumes, with a circulation of over one million and an annual expenditure of \$539,000. The staff has increased from thirty-nine to 156.

The growth of the Providence Public Library can be said to be the work of three men. William E. Foster was the librarian from 1877 to 1930. This covers a span of fifty-three years and is one of the longest periods served by any public librarian.

Clarence E. Sherman assumed the position of librarian in 1930 and held this position until 1957. It was during Mr. Sherman's directorship that a major portion of the library's building program was accomplished.

Stuart C. Sherman succeeded his father as librarian in 1957. This is certainly another unique first for the Providence Public Library. Stuart Sherman is responsible for many of the outreach programs and other community services now being conducted by the library.

F. Charles Taylor was appointed librarian in 1968. He inherited a tradition of public library service, one filled with many innovations, that is outstanding. A look at some of the programs sponsored by the library show that the Providence Public Library will always be in the forefront of public library service.



The Providence Public Library Today.

REACHING THE UNREACHED:

The Conference on Outreach

by

Sally Evans

Pawtucket Public Library

Reaching the unreached is a familiar topic of meetings as well as one of the greatest problems in the library field. Recently we have begun to try to do something about this problem, or at least we're asking ourselves some questions. Who are the unreached? Why aren't we reaching them? Are we capable of reaching anyone? Is everyone willing to be reached? These were some of the questions that were running through my mind as I entered the meeting room at the Holiday Inn. I had heard about the Conference on Outreach held at Springfield and the follow-up session at N.E.L.A. I was hoping that this session could answer some of our questions.

I checked the program and noticed that those conducting this session were all experienced librarians in our state (Miss Nash, Miss Neal, Mr. Pereira, Mr. Alexander, and Mr. Giles). The session opened with a brief explanation then went into the black box theory led by Mr. Pereira. This is based on the concept that since we're afraid to go outside the lines of a box to do a puzzle we are also afraid to go outside the boundaries of our own lives to solve a problem. A simple, understandable concept, but brought out very vividly when you see a room full of college graduates unable to do a simple line puzzle because they don't want to go outside the imaginary lines they have made for themselves.

With the black box theory in mind, we were then told a bit about the Springfield conference by Miss Nash. As usual she did a marvelous job of condensing what had gone on in five days into the five minutes she had to tell about it.

Then came the listening part of the session. Not that we sat and listened, but that we talked and learned how to listen to others. This is actually a lesson in self control. Try it some time and find out that you don't really listen to what others are saying, and what's more, you don't really want to. The exercise is this: with three people— one presents a problem, one listens to the problem and tries to answer it, and one acts as moderator. Simple so far. Number one presents his problem; before

number two can answer it he must restate the problem to show that he has been listening, then he may answer. Number one must then restate the answer before making any comment, etc. Number three meanwhile can't say anything unless called on for clarification of a point. Sound easy, maybe a little bit dull? Try it. First you find that you have trouble listening word for word, then you find that it is frustrating to not interrupt or answer immediately, and then it comes to you that you really don't listen to others in your normal life. A very awakening exercise.

To me the session was a success. Did I find out the answers to my questions? Not really. But we found out more about ourselves, and that before we reach anyone we have to start breaking out of our self-made black boxes and listening to what others are trying to tell us (really Listening & really Hearing).

I had a very peculiar thought as we left the room that perhaps the librarians were unreachable rather than those of the community the unreached.

RESULTS OF THE REGIONAL SOCIOPOLITICAL PERIODICAL SURVEYS AND OFF BEAT PERIODICAL DISPLAY

by

J. T. Fitzpatrick

Providence Public Library

As librarians we are fully aware of the tide of social and political unrest that is currently sweeping the United States. However, few librarians seem to be aware of the abundance of periodical literature that is a result of and a reflection of this unrest. Consequently, only a small number of Rhode Island libraries have adequate holdings in periodicals of a sociopolitical nature.

Therefore, the Off Beat Periodical Display at the Fall meeting of R.I.L.A. was an attempt to inform librarians of the availability, variety, and value of these sociopolitical periodicals, and to encourage statewide use of the Providence Public Library's holdings in this area. Those viewing the display were exposed to some 350 different publications arranged in three groupings: right of center, left of center, and underground newspapers. The core of the display consisted of a list of representative titles providing a forum for a wide range of social and political thought. An attractive "Off Beat Periodicals" librarian's reference list was distributed to those who attended the display. This list included such right wing publications as *American Opinion*, *The Cross and the Flag*, and *The Plain Truth*. Publications of the established left included titles such as *Ramparts*, *The New Leader*, and *Evergreen Review*; and from the underground press *Good Times*, *Old Mole*, and the *Village Voice*. Also included were less known but pointedly opinionated titles in the fields of education, religion and black culture.

In conjunction with the display a survey of the regional libraries was conducted and a brief questionnaire was compiled for distribution at the Fall meeting of R.I.L.A. The periodical holdings of each region were checked against the Off Beat Periodicals list and titles of a similar nature were noted so that each library's strength in periodicals of a social and political nature could be measured. Several periodical librarians were questioned to determine their awareness of and attitude towards this type of publication.

The display, though somewhat disorganized, was well received and considered to be a success. However, many of the librarians in attendance reacted to the contents of the display as a child would to a strange new toy. Although they were made aware of these sociopolitical periodicals, little of lasting value was achieved and most likely little or no use of these periodicals will evolve as a direct result of the display.

The following results of the regional survey and returns from the questionnaire distributed at the R.I.L.A. display proved to be quite informative.

Twenty percent of the display questionnaires were returned, but many were either incomplete or of little consequence in evaluating periodical use. Only one library at the regional level held more than ten percent of the sociopolitical periodicals listed. Similarly, all public and school libraries that responded to the questionnaire reported holding fewer than ten percent of those periodicals listed. Two academic respondents, however, reported title holdings of thirty and fifty percent of the titles listed and mentioned many other titles of a sociopolitical nature that were held in their libraries.

To the additional questions asked in the survey and on the questionnaire, the answers were usually the same. The majority of libraries and librarians queried reported that the few titles that were currently held were seldom, if ever, used. They also reported that to their knowledge there was little, if any, demand for publications of a social or political nature.

Various objections were raised as to the desirability of the Providence Public Library serving as a central depository for sociopolitical periodicals and as a resource center to provide statewide use of these publications through interlibrary loan. The majority of librarians interviewed displayed a total lack of awareness of and interest in periodicals of a sociopolitical nature. Several librarians noted that patrons involved in research in a social or political area usually had citations to specific magazine articles and that these were almost always obtained from the *Readers' Guide*. The *Time-Life* orientation of both the student and the casual reader was also mentioned. All had their doubts as to the effectiveness of interlibrary loan, citing the probable delay in filling the request, and that in many cases patrons desired the materials for immediate use. They all were of the attitude that if such periodicals were in demand, they should be available at the individual library and not merely obtainable at the Providence Public Library through interlibrary loan. The lack of indexing of the majority of these publications was frequently cited as was the priority in the expenditure of library

funds.

One librarian remembered that a man had asked to see one magazine (*Ramparts*) that appeared on the checklist only to object to its presence in the library's collection. Another complained of the ecological waste involved in cutting down perfectly good trees to provide the pulp for the underground press, but saw a possible historical value to these publications. Thus, in one form or another, the majority of public and school librarians expressed their doubts as to the value of and demand for periodicals of a sociopolitical nature.

Unlike the majority of their peers, the two academic librarians who responded to the questionnaire reported that all sociopolitical publications were in constant use at their respective institutions and that there was a great demand for others of a similar nature. They also reported having other titles in the sociopolitical area and that inadequate funding had prevented purchase of more titles in the field. They stressed the need and desirability of a central depository at the Providence Public Library to be a saucer to catch their research overflow.

Judging from the above results, there would seem to be little, if any, demand for sociopolitical periodicals outside the academic atmosphere. This, however, is not



the case. The Providence Public Library holds sixty-five percent of the titles on the Off Beat Periodicals list and many others of a similar nature. They are primarily in demand by researchers of high school and college age.

Now, more than ever, we find American youth involved in the social and political problems of today. Thus for a great number of today's "turned-on" youth these periodicals are "where it's at." Unfortunately, the traditional image of the public library is instilled in the youthful mind and they do not normally think to look for the *Black Panther* or the *Berkeley Barb* at their local library. Today's student has already decided that, at least in some areas, the public library is archaic and cannot fill his needs. The sad cycle will continue when these students become tomorrow's middle class citizens and still never think to go to the public library for information or enjoyment, remaining unaware of the vast resources available to them there.

Another important point is that sociopolitical periodicals such as those on the checklist are often published by and geared to some segment of the unreached. Providing these people with reading material related to their own backgrounds and beliefs is, of course, one way to lure the non-user into the library. However, these periodicals are not just bait, nor are they luxury items. For it is the responsibility of the public library to provide material that reflects all sides of current issues, all facets of social and political thought. Periodicals are a forum for a much wider range of dissenting views than are books, and a more up-to-date source for who's thinking, saying and doing what now.

The librarians responding to the questionnaire and survey who felt that there was no demand for or need of these sociopolitical periodicals did not seem to realize that part of the librarian's function is to make people aware of materials that might be of interest— we can actively generate demand, as well as responding passively to it.

Socio political periodicals *are* of value, are being used at the Providence Public Library and are available for use at other libraries through interlibrary loan.

November 5, 1970

To the Editor, *Rhode Island Library Association Bulletin*:

The following presents an opposite point of view. I assume that you would have no objection to publishing this, so that the Membership may know of an opinion at variance with that expressed by the R.I.L.A. Executive Board.

Elizabeth G. Myer
Member, R.I.L.A.

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

The designation of a week in April as National Library Week has been an annual event since 1958 and has served as a concentrated period in publicizing library services, through a variety of themes and programs.

Some in the library world used the opportunity for a special push and focus. Some chose not to, affirming that a public relations effort should be a year long effort.

Until now "The Week" has officially survived in Rhode Island. Some really distinguished citizens have served as State Chairmen over the years; the professionals selected as Executive Directors by the State library associations have usually turned in a creditable record; lay persons have been involved on State Committees; and national free publicity, as well as local, has made a contribution.

At various times, here and there, a note of protest has been heard, against the one-week idea. Objections are, I should hope, entirely on principle. The extra amount of work entailed in planning the week and seeing it through would, obviously, not be a deterrent to its observance.

Philosophically speaking, the objectors may be entirely in the right. The same strenuous effort should run through all fifty-two weeks; but, practically speaking, could librarians maintain the same pitch all year?

Commenting on NLW at this point may be too late, but October was the time when the Executive Board of the Rhode Island Library Association reached its "independent" decision. Perhaps this was to be expected in the State of the "Independent Man." The R.I.L.A. Board is empowered by by-laws to act for the Association between meetings. On October 7th it announced abandonment of an observance of NLW in 1971.

At the October 29th fall meeting of the Rhode Island Library Association, the

President reported this action to the Membership. Some of the amusing contretemps were recalled. The significant accomplishments of particular years must have been unknown to the President of the Association, presiding. Members may have some questions now in mind about this action of the present Executive Board of R.I.L.A.

1. What research was done by the Board to assess the history of NLW in Rhode Island during the past twelve years and to evaluate it?
2. Were Executive Directors of these years invited to give their opinions?
3. Was this action so urgent that it needed to be taken by the Executive Board between meetings of the Association?
4. Was any thought given to preparing an explanatory, informational letter to members, prior to the fall meeting?
5. Was the decision reached in democratic fashion? Did the subject warrant a membership vote?

Perhaps it *is* time for a change. Perhaps Rhode Island should disassociate itself from participation in NLW, and find some new way on its own to emphasize and publicize library services.

No suitable program was, however, offered by the Executive Board of R.I.L.A. There was no debate, and there was no call for a vote. From one question, it was clear that the action by the Board affected only the year of its tenure. In response to another question, it was said that the action by the Executive Board was no dictum affecting a local or individual library's observance.

Whether this sounds the knell or is just an interruption in a twelve year observance, only time will determine. The method does reflect independent action of the Board if not democratic action by the Membership.

We must assume that the Board acted as representatives of the Association, of course objectively, with some foundation gained as to its total sentiment, or, better, opinion. In their official, representative capacity, the Board Members would not, in this or any other matter, act subjectively. The Rhode Island Library Association has come a long way since the early 1960's. Its officers are committed to serving the best interests of library development in Rhode Island, and deserve support for dedicating their time and effort to improvement. In a time of change, it is not easy for them to fulfill their responsibilities. Their decisions cannot please everyone; but, if decisions are reached objectively, in the light of knowledge available and evaluated with due weight given to the opinions of all the Membership, the decisions would have validity.

IMPRESSIONS OF TWO LIBRARIANS

Upon Arriving in Providence from Foreign Shores

by

Eileen Carnaffin & Maureen Duffy, Gates Head, England

Since arriving in the U.S.A. we have seen so many new sights (new to our eyes, at least), met so many new people and done so many new things that we could probably, given time, write a book about them. However, since we haven't the time to write it and you haven't the time to read it, a brief article will have to do instead.

Of course, the basic principles of librarianship remain the same everywhere, but methods of applying these principles vary from place to place. Though there are similarities in the British and American methods, there are more dissimilarities. We have found great concern here over 'reaching the unreached.' Librarianship seems to be seen as a more middle-class preserve here than it is in England, and so we think you have a greater gap between the staff and the public to bridge. We do have this problem, but to a lesser extent. We have been very impressed with the efforts made by library staffs here to get out and really get to know the communities they serve.

We find much more division of work into professional and non-professional tasks here. At home, where our own library system is much smaller than PPL, everyone tends to muck in together, especially in branches. We serve a population of just over 100,000 with a Central Library and five branches, plus a delivery service for household readers and a service to two local hospitals. We use the Dewey Decimal system, but our catalogues are divided into author and classified sequences. Gateshead Public Libraries do not have any machine-based systems, although many larger libraries in England do. Lack of funds is a problem there as well as here. All of our money comes from local rates, a property tax paid by all householders, although when a new branch is built a Government loan at preferential rates of interest can be obtained.

We think we have a lot to learn from some American ideas, such as the use of high-school pupils as messengers after school hours. This leaves the staff free for many more interesting tasks than fetching and carrying.

One of the more obvious difficulties American librarians have to face is the large number of different ethnic groups present in so many of your towns and cities. We have immigrants in England too, but many of them are from Commonwealth

countries where the dominant culture has, for a long time, been the British one. This means that we do not have, for example, such language problems as you have. But we think this also means that British librarians often forget that the dominant culture is not always the best-loved one.

Many of the problems that you have now, such as the spreading use of drugs and the racial tension, are still not regarded as urgent by many people in Britain— but in a few years they are going to become just as serious. We should be watching you closely to take guide-lines for our own solutions from the success, or failure, of yours.

Apart from problems, the way of life here is very different from that at home. The standard of living is much higher— although most prices here seem high to us, your salaries more than make up for the difference. People who have something to sell here provide service which is unheard of in England. Although England is supposed to be a nation of shopkeepers, many of the shopkeepers seem to feel that they are doing the customers a favour by allowing them into the shop, or should we say store. For example, most of the stores where we live close at about 6:00 p.m. every night except Thursday, when they are open until 7:30— and this is regarded as late night shopping! We were absolutely dumbfounded at the shopping malls that you have here. There is nothing like them at home, although we may catch on to the idea in about ten years' time. Of course, they are ideal for shopping with cars, out-of-town— but in England a car is still quite a luxury, not a necessity as it seems to be here. Several people who have been to England have commented to us on our bus and train services, which, if we may be permitted to boast, are better than yours. Our trains and buses are more frequent, cleaner and cheaper than yours. On the other hand, you can get more varied and more appetising meals more cheaply than we can in England. Whereas here there are plenty of middle-grade restaurants, in England we seem to go to two extremes— it's either dinner at the Ritz or fish and chips out of a newspaper (they taste better that way).

We find some American customs very enjoyable. For example, Hallowe'en in England is not a very remarkable event. Sometimes it slips by quite unnoticed, because we have Guy Fawkes' Day on the 5th of November and all the children get very excited about that for weeks before-hand. We don't have 'trick or treat' at all and we found it quite an amusing, if exhausting, experience to get up and answer the door every five minutes or so. English children ask for 'Pennies for the Guy' instead of sweets (candy); when they have enough pennies, they buy fireworks for Guy Fawkes'

night, when we have bonfires everywhere. We roast chestnuts and potatoes in their jackets in the embers of the bonfires and they always seem to taste better outdoors.

The recent elections were something completely new to us. We have never, even in General Election, been exposed to quite such intense political advertising. National elections may produce some advertisements in national newspapers, but the nearest we get to television advertising is a Party Political broadcast. Each party is allowed equal air time for these and they are used to indicate which policies the parties favour. But even these are only quarter-hour programmes put out once, or perhaps twice, in the weeks immediately before a General Election, and they are recorded speeches rather than commercials. In local elections, there is even less publicity— a few posters in house windows, a few loud-speaker vans in the street on election day— and that's all.

When we get home again, we shall probably die of cold, after getting used to the central heating here. Central heating is far less common in England than in the U.S.A., and even when it does exist, the temperature settings are much lower. The majority of houses we have visited here have basements providing extra space. Only very old English houses have a basement, and where these exist they are usually too damp and dark to be of any use. It seems strange to us to see so few brick-built houses, as in our area of England houses are built of brick or stone. The feature of English houses which we miss most is the flower-beds that are usually found in the gardens— even at this time of year, there are still roses, chrysanthemums and dahlias to be seen almost everywhere at home.

Although America is nominally English-speaking, we have almost had to learn a new language because sometimes we use the same words with different meanings. For example, what is a scone to us is a biscuit to you and what is a biscuit to us is a cookie to you. What we call a purse, you call a pocketbook, and what you call a purse, we call a handbag. Even worse, what you call an English muffin is something we never eat! It is also confusing to get into a lift— sorry, an elevator— on the ground floor, press the button marked '1'— and not move.

These things only make our visit more entertaining. Although in six weeks we cannot possibly see a lot of your country, we have already seen enough to know that we would love to come back again. Everyone has been so kind and hospitable and we have seen so many lovely places, that when we get back to England we may well act as unpaid publicity agents for you!

THE PHONE CALL

by

James R. Kennedy

Pawtucket Public Library

Date: Thursday, October 29, 1970

Place: Pawtucket Public Library Reference Desk

Time: 10:22 a.m.

Characters: Mrs. Gertrude Smudgins, library patron
Librarian

LIBRARIAN: Reference desk . . . May I help you?

SMUDGINS: Yes. Well, I'm Mrs. Smudgins and I wonder if you could take the time to tell me if you have the book that I'm looking for in your liebery?

LIBRARIAN: Why, yes! What is the title of the book?

SMUDGINS: It's *Island Man*, but I don't know who wrote it.

LIBRARIAN: Well, if you hold the line for just one minute I'll look in our catalog to see if we own it.

SMUDGINS: I'll wait forever to find it if I have to.

(a brief pause)

LIBRARIAN: Hello? I'm sorry, but we do not own the book that you're looking for. Would you like me to try to get it from another library for you?

SMUDGINS: Can you get it right now? I must have it!!

LIBRARIAN: It might take a few days. We'll place your inter-library loan request on our teletype system and if some other library in the state has *Island Man*, then you'll have the book, hopefully within a few days.

SMUDGINS: Oooooooooo! Wonderful! But don't try Providence Liebery. I already called them and they don't have it.

LIBRARIAN: Well, you won't have to call any further, Mrs. Smudgins, because we'll do the looking for you!

SMUDGINS: Do you have any other books on him?

LIBRARIAN: Books on whom, Mrs. Smudgins?

- SMUDGINS: Why, Tom's, of course! Everyone should have books about Tom's. He's a very famous man.
- LIBRARIAN: How do you spell Tom's, m'am?
- SMUDGINS: T-O-M-Apostrophe-S. That's how you spell it! I'll take anything about Tom's. But I'd like *Island Man* best if you can get it.
- LIBRARIAN: Just one minute please and I'll see if we have any other books about him.
- (a brief pause)
- LIBRARIAN: I'm sorry, but we don't have any other books about a man whose name is spelled T-O-M-Apostrophe-S. Do you mean St. Thomas?
- SMUDGINS: No, not St. Thomas. It's Tom's! He wasn't Thomas Aquinas. I know about him. I don't want him, I want Tom's!
- LIBRARIAN: Can you tell me anything about Tom's?
- SMUDGINS: I already know about him. I want to read it again.
- LIBRARIAN: Yes, but if you tell me about him then it might help us to find the book you want.
- SMUDGINS: You mean you don't know about Tom's??!! Everybody knows about about Tom's!
- LIBRARIAN: No, I don't know about him, could you please tell me something about him? Was he a religious man, or a political figure?
- SMUDGINS: No, Tom's was a common man, and he loved everybody. That's why he was so good!
- LIBRARIAN: Oh . . . What was he best known for?
- SMUDGINS: Oh, he was known 'cause he was a good man, he loved everybody in Ireland.
- LIBRARIAN: Do you think the title of the book you want could be spelled *Ireland Man*?
- SMUDGINS: No, it's *Island Man*.
- LIBRARIAN: Well, we'll process your request today and you should hear from us soon.
- SMUDGINS: I hope so! I've called three other lieberies and none of them have it. You're the first person who has given me any hope.
- LIBRARIAN: We'll do our best, Mrs. Smudgins. Thank you for calling. We'll let you know about the book as soon as we can locate a copy.

(end of conversation)

Place: Central Falls Library

Time: 10:35 a.m.

SMUDGINS: Hello? I'm looking for a book I want to read and I wonder if you could tell me if you know whether you have it or not???

LIBRARIAN: What is the book, please?

SMUDGINS: It's the *Island Man*, and you should have it. Everyone should have it because it's such a good book.

LIBRARIAN: Let me check our catalog, m'am.

(a brief pause)

LIBRARIAN: Hello, I'm sorry, but we don't have that book.

SMUDGINS: Well, could you ask the other librarian there if she knows where it is?

LIBRARIAN: I'm sorry, but she's at the Rhode Island Library Association convention today, and won't be in 'till later.

SMUDGINS: Where is it at?

LIBRARIAN: It's at the Holiday Inn in Providence this year.

SMUDGINS: Well, thank you. Bye!

LIBRARIAN: Wait, don't you want to request the book through inter-library loan?

SMUDGINS: No, never mind, I'll try again some other time. I'm in a hurry anyway.

(end of conversation)

Place: Holiday Inn, Providence, R.I.

Time: 10:45 a.m.

SMUDGINS: Hello!? Is this where all the librarians are meeting?

DESK CLERK: Yes, it is. Are you looking for someone?

SMUDGINS: Yes, I'm looking for the one that's got my book. Would you ask them all, "Who has the *Island Man*?"

Yes, it really did happen! This was one patron's solution to faster I.L.L. service in Rhode Island. (Not that we aren't pretty quick already, mind you.) And for your peace of mind, the following information: The book being sought was *The Island Man* by Tomas O'Crohan (Scribners, 1935, translated by Robin Flower) and was owned by the Providence Public Library. Mrs. Smudgins received the book by the end of that eventful Thursday.

NOTES ON AN AFTER DINNER SPEAKER:

Arthur Curley

by

Elin Hannigan Crowley

Peace Dale Public Library

The library is a conservator of humanistic values. If this is accepted, then social responsibilities— including commitment— must be seen as relevant.

The library, being public-owned, is responsible/responsive to its public; thus it would be difficult for it to take a stand on issues such as Vietnam. Associations of librarians, however, may do so. The wider responsibility for promoting humanism suggests, perhaps requires, involvement— hence, social responsibility.

We must make the distinction between the function and the purpose of libraries/ librarianship.

The need to preserve a tax-exempt status is an argument against social involvement. However, although legislation (involvement in) is prohibited to those with a tax-exempt status, librarians do lobby, but mainly for money.

The purpose of the profession, and of its associations, is the preservation of values. ALA says that intellectual freedom is its Number 1 priority. Yet money matters are the only issues that members get active for. ALA doesn't support its own priorities. ALA has a \$6.5 million budget, but the intellectual freedom office gets very little. The Freedom to Read Foundation is independent, and is tax-exempt, as are the AAUP and the ACLU. These groups support intellectual freedom, but ALA does not, for fear of losing its tax-exempt status. This attitude in itself is undermining the theory of intellectual freedom.

Another argument is that libraries are neutral. Yet the collections and staffs are not neutral; they basically represent one class. Now, libraries are reaching out more because money is tight. Their budgets have been cut, and they try being more responsive in order to get more money.

We bring the unserved in, but what do they find? White, middle-class values. Barriers (may be imagined, not intended) exist for minorities in libraries.

Don't start doing things, stop doing things. Cancel fines, rules, etc. We can't

change our attitudes, so we must change our staffs. Bring in a staff with rapport with the community. Equal opportunity isn't enough. Aggressive recruitment is a social responsibility. For too long the library has been protective of the values of a tiny segment of society, which too often is anti-black, anti-sex, even anti-literature. If we doubt that the middle is over-represented, read *Readers' Guide*.



*Arthur Curley, Director
Montclair (New Jersey) Public Library.*

ARTHUR AND THE RILA (and me)

by

Richard Moses

Roger Williams College Library

Arthur Curley was a wise choice for The RILA Fall meeting banquet, though several months ago I never would have guessed it. I worried a bit about Mr. Curley; worried, when we were recently united in some ALA committee work, about how we would get on— the same sort of worry that occurred to me when I first heard he was coming to Rhode Island, a certain province in the library profession.

Arthur was slick, an orator; I called him that pejoratively. I watched him and listened to him on the floor at national conventions rousing the rabble and making eloquent rhetorical pitches for involvement and support. In a way, he was beautiful; self-assured (as I never could be) and silver tongued. He could sway a crowd like a breeze over wheatfields.

And so we met and immediately were friends: Arthur Curley emerged as The RILA saw him, soft spoken, good humored, eloquent, confident to be sure, but never unaware of his own uncertainties. I had feared his sure-tongued eloquence, feared that he might simply turn off the wary New Englanders with his easy oratory; I underestimated both him and his audience. Charles Crosby was right, I think, when he paid Mr. Curley a compliment greater than either of them may have realized: there was more discussion after Curley's talk than after any other speaker in memory. Arthur Curley turned people on. By allowing as how the issues were wide open and needed every single person's involvement and decision, he brought them all inside. That's discussion.

What did he say? Fundamentally, I think, he was pleading for involvement: ours in our own profession, its directions and policies, and the profession's in the issues facing humanity and the world. Sounds quite logical, but he knows and we know it's logical all right but nearly non-existent in many quarters. He chided the American Library Association for pulling in its horns on the Intellectual Freedom issue and abraded them for recent decisions regarding entrance into the public forum on matters of national policy. Not only had the ALA refused to take a stand on the Southeast Asia situation, it had flatly refused even to discuss whether one should be taken. Fie!

says Curley. Others disagreed. A gentleman at a front table (one of the tables in front that had people sitting at it) felt strongly that the library should mind its own business — and he said so, a number of times. Another felt that the difficulty was not basically with members reticent to commit themselves, but in a confusion as to the nature and role of what purports to be a professional association but is in reality a diffusion of groups of libraries, groups of librarians, groups of trustees and groups of just plain folks. Who or what takes a stand and then who is it that says “Here we (who’s we?) stand (how?)?” The subject is one open to endless debate and Mr. Curley is obviously ready and able to engage any comers.

In the matter of intellectual freedom, which Mr. Curley feels has been abandoned by librarians, the point was raised that it was perhaps not the issue itself but conflict over the manner in which the issue was to be forwarded and supported that made for difficulties (and led to the now-famous walk-out at the Detroit Conference). Again, a subject rife with debater’s footholds, and one that had to be left up in the air— for someone else to field.

It is always a danger when listening to someone of Mr. Curley’s ilk that his stern words will be taken not only seriously but personally, a combination which can lead to unwonted defensiveness. Mr. Curley has talked all over our land, saying, I would imagine, substantially the same thing, and probably wherever he goes, folks think he is firing right at them and them alone. Invariably someone stands up and says, “What do you mean libraries should have more books on black history? [for example] Why, we have fourteen in our little branch alone, and then there are . . .” etc., etc. Mr. Curley is, of course, interested in the large picture; he leaves it up to his listeners to adapt and adopt, if they will, his thoughts. This sort of provincialism is exactly what Curley is talking about, the rather smug, just a trifle defensive outlook which helps us turn ourselves off when trouble looms. Mr. Curley is interested in the large picture, a picture which Rhode Islanders have a hard time seeing sometimes. Maybe we need more messages from the exterior and if they come as softly presented and as firmly centered as did Arthur Curley’s, there may be hope. Mr. Curley did a good job, he got some things started, in a way he put forth a challenge: where do we go now? What about the next RILA meeting? Can we allow ourselves to, for example, jump headfirst into one or more of the issues he raised and face them (instead of tabling the uncomfortable ones)? Or will we let the raised sand just settle again over our beached profession?

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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FALL MEETING

October 29, 1970

Holiday Inn,

Providence, Rhode Island

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 9:00 — 10:00 | Registration and Coffee Hour
Providence Public Library Auditorium |
| 10:00 — 10:30 | Greetings from host library |
| 10:30 — 12:00 | “Reaching the Unreached”— Panel discussion
North Ballroom - Holiday Inn |
| 10:30 — 12:00 | Film Showing
Providence Public Library Auditorium |
| 12:00 — 2:00 | Lunch |
| 2:00 — 2:30 | Business Meeting
North Ballroom - Holiday Inn |
| 2:30 — 4:30 | Film Showing
Providence Public Library Auditorium |
| 2:30 — 3:30 | “Service to the Disadvantaged”
North Ballroom - Holiday Inn |
| 2:30 — 3:30 | Storytelling
Williams Room - Holiday Inn |
| 3:30 — 4:30 | “Service to the Handicapped”
North Ballroom - Holiday Inn |
| 3:30 — 4:30 | “Off Beat Periodicals”
Williams Room - Holiday Inn |
| 4:30 — 5:30 | Catholic Library Association Business Meeting
LaSalle Room - Holiday Inn |
| 5:00 — 6:00 | Cocktail Hour
Foyer of Ballroom - Holiday Inn |
| 6:00 — 7:30 | Dinner |
| 7:30 — 8:30 | Speaker— Mr. Arthur Curley, Director
Montclair, New Jersey Public Library |

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