

CROSSFIRE

* * * * * BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY * * * * *

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LIBRARY TOURS GROW IN NUMBER AND SERVICE By Adrien Taylor

Many years ago the first lesson in the Library Skills class had those students look at a floor plan map of the Library Building and follow it on a self-guided tour. At the suggestion of Beverly Miller we stopped doing that -- people had told us about finding pencil sharpeners, waste baskets, and all sorts of things we thought weren't important and led us to believe that the floor plan map might not be as obvious about library materials and services as we thought it was. In place of this lesson we instituted the tours. These tours are typically offered from the first through the fifth weeks of the semester, including at least one week-end and two evening tours and have been generally well received. Over the years different classes or departments have either recommended or required students to take these tours.

Each semester, however, after we stop giving the tours a few students will ask for tours. Up to this time we've told them about any scheduled class tours we knew of and/or referred them to Janet Strong to see if she knew of a tour or

lecture they could join. It wasn't all that satisfactory from the point of view of the student.

Now that the Reference Department is not only at full staff but also has added a graduate assistant, we've decided to experiment this semester with more tours. More or less every two weeks there will be tours given on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. BethAnn Skamser and Larry Kincaid will be conducting these tours -- the sign-up sheets are in place in the reference room, and some signs have been put up to advise students of this service. We'll try it and see what the demand is and if it meets the needs of the late and/or desperate students.

CHARM IS THE ABILITY TO MAKE
SOMEONE THINK THAT BOTH OF
YOU ARE QUITE WONDERFUL.

UNDERSTANDING CONGRESS: A BICENTENNIAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

I attended the above named conference, which was sponsored by the U.S. Senate Commission on the Bicentennial, the Commission on the Bicentenary of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, on February 9 and 10 in the nation's capital. The conference was made possible by the financial contribution of the Carl Albert Center, The Dirksen Congressional Center, the Ford Foundation, the Gerald R. Ford Foundation, and the D.B. Hardeman Bequest in Association with the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library. The Conference was the first function commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Congress of the United States. Attendance was by invitation and I was one of two delegates from Idaho, the other being the Idaho Historical Society's historian/archivist emeritus Merle Wells. I assume that my invitation was a result of my connection with the Frank Church Papers.

The sessions were inaugurated by greetings from a number of the members of the Congress, and such dignitaries as James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress; Joseph Ross, Director, Congressional Research Service; and Don W. Wilson, Archivist of the United States. The first speaker, the Honorable Robert C. Byrd (West Virginia), hoped that the Conference would stimulate new research on the Congress. The Senator has written a book on the history of the Senate which is to be published this year. Byrd is considered to be an authority on Senate history. In his remarks Sen. Byrd stressed that "Congress is the people" and that the Congress's actions "reflect public opinion." Byrd was followed by Rep. Lindy Boggs (Louisiana), who replaced her late husband, Hale Boggs in the Congress. Rep. Boggs also addressed the need to promote the history of the U.S. Congress. She was followed by Senator Robert Dole (Kansas) who got off a couple of good jokes. Speaking to the gathering of scholars he said that "if you find out how Congress works call me collect." Later in his remarks he said that "those who love sausage and those who love Congress should never ask how it is made." The House minority leader Robert Michael of Illinois voiced concern about the bad publicity on the pay raise and what long term effect this incident would have on the Congress. It seemed to me that this was one of the hidden agendas of the Conference since most of the Congressional speakers spoke to this issue and to how responsive Congress is to the will of the people.

The second session, titled "What we ought to know about our national legislature," was chaired by David Broder nationally know syndicated columnist, and had a panel of five Congressmen. By the way, the meetings of the first day were held in the Senate Caucus Room which can seat about 500 people. Unfortunately there

is no rostrum in this room and it was very difficult to associate voice to a person so I was often not able to attribute comments to the commentator. The panelists were asked to comment on the best and the worst of Congress's actions. In my notes I have a few remarks that are worth repeating. Sen. Richard Luger (Indiana) stated that Congress is at its best when it represents the people (again responsive). Rep. Mickey Edwards (Oklahoma) considered Congress at its worst when it exercised its penchant for reforming others before reforming itself. Rep. Wyche Fowler, Jr. (Georgia) expressed concern about the vast changes that have occurred in Congress in the last 20 years and especially the increased roll it has taken in setting foreign and fiscal policy. Rep. Paul Henry (Michigan) supported the concept of the Congress as a friend of the American citizens and noted "where else would you turn when you have a problem." He also expressed some concern about the "public inquisition" that is the lot of the modern president; and on the legislative side the proliferation of subcommittees which makes it difficult to set priorities. One commentator noted that he was supposed to be at three meetings at the same time and that he as chairman had called for one of the meetings. The point that was made is that as a result of the difficulty in attending all meetings Congressmen left much of the work to their staff. In short they were really not well informed on the legislation that they voted on and depended on staff input on how to vote. The danger in this manner of functioning was demonstrated by comments made by the panelist who noted that he was at a party and was introduced to a young man whom he asked how long he had been working in Washington. The young man responded that he had been on the legislator's staff for three years. Such fragmentation limits participation in the legislative process and prevents accountability on the part of the Congressmen.

After the panelist made opening remarks there was a period of additional remarks and answers to questions which resulted in some useful but unattributable statements such as:

an explosion of the media has changed the way Congress functions. The media trivializes issues which sometimes makes the voters react when they don't really know the issues. Part of the problem is of Congresses own doing. Both parties have recording studios in the vicinity of the Senate and House office buildings where members can slip over and record a few choice words for the folks at home. These are then sent by satellite to the local stations and played on the evening news giving the impression that your representative is on top of

events when he or she was only reading a teleprompter.

rise of special interest groups designed to influence Congress. One commentator said that there are 800 bankers and 1,100 lawyers in Washington whose primary responsibility is to lobby Congress.

because of the media and special interest groups Congressmen get "mounds" of mail and someone has to answer this mail. This in turn means an increase in staff. Were it not for the word-processor it would not be possible to answer the volume of mail received.

accountability. This word was used several times. The panelist felt that there was too much responsibility for solving local issues demanded of elected officials and that it stretched Congressmen too thin, that they were in danger of government by whimsy. By way of explanation a panelist cited letters from pressure groups that said the issue that they are writing about was vital, but in fact it was vital for that group and not the nation as a whole. How do you respond to such groups?

constant need for fund raising for the next election (what more need be said?).

better use of time. This was a universal concern. Time was needed to read more of the legislation being considered and background material, before voting on an issue. Time was needed to go back to the home state and talk to the voters. One suggestion was to have Congress meet on a three weeks on and one week off-schedule so that more interaction with the voters can be undertaken. Sen. Luger said that he comes to work at about 6:45 am and goes home at about 7:00 or 8:00 pm. During an average week he has 1,000 visitors from his home state and he tries to meet with them all, and still keep up with his other obligations.

Congress does not do a good job of educating the voters by giving them the facts so that they can have a choice in making a decision and reporting their choice to their Congressman (it is my own view that every level of government has this failing).

After so much verbal feasting it was time for lighter fare. An evening reception was held in the Great Hall of the Library of Congress where elegant comestibles and libations were served. With such generous hosts who needs \$20.00 per diem for food when traveling out of the state.

Day two and the scene shifted to the House Caucus Room in the Cannon Office building. I should note that

both the Senate and House Caucus rooms are elegant, with enormous chandeliers and decorated ceilings. In earlier days they were used by the two parties to have meetings (caucuses) before voting on important legislation. Worth a look if you are in Washington. Entry to the three House and two Senate office buildings is unrestricted but one must go through a metal detector. When I went through the House detector the alarm rang so I put my keys, watch and change in a box tried again, and again I rang the alarm so I was searched by a hand held metal detector, to no avail. I went through again and, you guess it, I tripped the alarm. The guard then said stand close to the detector and swing your feet into it. I did and the bells went off again. The guard said I had metal arch supports in my shoes and passed me through. Why didn't I get dinged by the Senate alarm? Because, said the guard some detectors are more sensitive than others.

The second days sessions were presentations by scholars of written papers which were handed out to the audience so I did not take notes and I haven't read the papers yet (yes I did stay awake and listened - most of the time). The keynote address was given by David McCullough, historian of the Panama Canal and narrator of the PBS program "The Smithsonian World." He noted that his book about the Canal was on the table during the Senate hearings on the Canal and that pertinent pages were clipped for easy access. The book was referred to by members of both parties. McCullough challenged the audience to become more interested in writing the history of Congress and its members. He said that at present we measure history by the presidency while we forget that the "real" story is here, the Congress. He read the names of Congressmen and issues which he thought merited historical study. Among those were the Foreign Relations Committee, the Panama Canal issue, and the life of Frank Church. Guess who was at his side as soon as his presentation was over with a fresh copy of the Guide to the Church Papers? I took 6 copies of the Guide with me and was able to find eager takers for all of them.

One speaker, who did not use a prepared text was Steven Roberts of the NY Times, or as he introduced himself, the husband of Cokie Roberts of PBS and ABC. By the way Mrs. Roberts is the daughter of the late Hale Boggs, and Lindy Boggs who spoke earlier. Is there inbreeding in Washington? Roberts made the point that the Senate, which was once called a millionaires club, or more recently the Club, is no longer so clubby. The Tower nomination is a good example of the disintegration of the Club. In the past the nomination of a former senator would have passed the committee with smooth sailing. "Television," said Roberts, "has changed the cohesiveness of members and made them more independent." Members now speak to the press as free agents especially on TV. In the 1960's very few Senators had press secretaries and now many of them have two.

This independence makes it more difficult to control members and assure that they will vote with the party. This lack of cohesiveness is also reflected in their social life. Senators no longer socialize with each other, that is, go to a small dinner party at the home of a colleague. Most are too busy flying home for the weekend and don't have time for such amenities. Roberts bemoans this change because Senators no longer have the opportunity to exchange ideas in a relaxed setting. How this will all shake out is not clear but it portends for continued problems for the Senate.

I conclude with one thought by Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts and one by Thomas Jefferson. Frank was bemoaning the no-win situation faced by politicians. He told a story of when he was an alderman in Boston where he arranged for a swimming pool to be built in a poor neighborhood. Soon trucks were traveling up and down the street hauling dirt and delivering cement. The noise and traffic offend the nearby residents who complained to Frank. He commented to a fellow alderman that he has given them the pool and now they complain about the traffic. His friend responded that "everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die to do it."

While waiting for a friend in the Library of Congress Madison Building I saw this inscription by Thomas Jefferson:

LEARNED INSTITUTIONS OUGHT TO BE
FAVORITE OBJECTS WITH EVERY FREE PEOPLE.
THEY THROW THAT LIGHT OVER THE PUBLIC MIND
WHICH IS THE BEST SECURITY AGAINST
CRAFTY AND DANGEROUS ENCROACHMENT
ON THE PUBLIC LIBERTY.

Ralph Hansen

THE SATANIC VERSES By Salman Rushdie
By Ralph W. Hansen

Seldom has a book had such an explosive impact on the world as Rushdie's latest title. Because it has offended certain religious groups a reward of over \$5,000,000 has been offered to the person who murders the author. The publicity must be doing wonders for sales. On the other hand a French publisher, and perhaps others, have decided not to come out with translated editions. Meanwhile the author has sought police protection. What a chilling prospect for other writers who are working on books that might

be offensive to this or that group. Fearlessly the Library has acquired two copies of THE SATANIC VERSES. To help you understand the contents of the book, the description from the book's jacket follows.

Just before dawn one winter's morning, a hijacked jumbo jet blows apart high above the English Channel. Through the debris of limbs, drinks, trolleys, memories, blankets, and oxygen masks, two figures fall toward the sea: Gibreel Farishta, India's legendary movie star, and Saladin Chamcha, the man of a thousand voices, self-made self and Anglophile supreme. Clinging to each other, singing rival songs, they plunge downward, and are finally washed up, alive, on the snow-covered sands of an English beach.

Their survival is a miracle, but an ambiguous one, as Gibreel acquires a halo, while, to Saladin's dismay, his own legs grow hairier, his feet turn into hooves, and hornlike appendages appear at his temples.

Gibreel and Saladin have been chosen (by whom?) as opponents in the eternal wrestling match between Good and Evil. But which is which? Can demons be angelic? Can angels be devils in disguise? As the two men tumble through time and space toward their final confrontation, we are witness to a cycle of tales of love and passion, of betrayal and faith: the story of Ayesha, the butterfly-shrouded visionary who leads an Indian village on an impossible pilgrimage; of Alleluia Cone, the mountain climber haunted by a ghost who urges her to attempt the ultimate feat--a solo ascent of Everest; and, centrally, the story of Mahound, the Prophet of Jahilia, the city of sand--Mahound, the recipient of the revelation in which satanic verses mingle with the divine.

In this great wheel of a book, where the past and the future chase each other furiously, Salman Rushdie takes us on an epic journey of tears and laughter, of bewitching stories and astonishing flights of the imagination, a journey toward the evil and good that lie entwined within the hearts of women and of men.

BOOK REVIEW
By Janet Strong

As we plunge head long into automation of the Library we need to reflect on the impact of computers in our lives. Theodore Roszak asks us to do just that. He makes the distinction between information (data) and knowledge. The thrust of his book is that computers and the vast amounts of information that they can handle have blinded us to that distinction and that computers are not always the "friends" that we are led to believe they are.

Roszak points out that "the mind thinks with ideas, not information." His argument is that the "data processing model of the mind" that the use of computers forces us to conform to, will not

lead to new knowledge or the development of new "master ideas" for our society. He makes very cogent arguments for not teaching computer literacy until college. Roszak also warns of the malignant uses of computers to keep track of us as citizens of the United States.

The chapter on librarians is one to warm our hearts though - not only as a helping profession but as effective and proper users of computers and computer data bases.

This is a book to be read and considered and reread.

Theodore Roszak. The Cult of Information. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986. QA76.9 C66 1986

Infestation of Lice Closes Reading Room
Library of Congress Newspaper Area Shut

The Library of Congress' newspaper and periodical reading room-its most popular public reading room-was closed yesterday after a large infestation of head lice was discovered.

Room 133 of the James Madison Building on Capitol Hill will be closed until Tuesday while officials twice fumigate, then vacuum the large, comfortable room, according to Dr. Thomas A. Parker, an entomologist who flew from Philadelphia yesterday to advise baffled library officials. The thousands of newspapers and magazines in the collection will be frozen to kill any bugs nesting in them, he said.

Parker, a consultant who specializes in protecting museum and library collections from destructive bugs such as silverfish, said head lice infestations are not uncommon in public places such as schools and libraries, especially in the winter when the use of scarfs and hats can speed their spread. But the annoying creatures, which measure about one-eighth of an inch, do not spread disease, Parker said.

"The terms 'nit-picker' and 'go over something with a fine-toothed comb' all come from lice," Parker said, as he showed a visitor a microscope that enlarged the translucent, black-edged bodies of dozens of head lice floating in alcohol. Known scientifically as 'pediculus humanus capitis,' this head louse is an unattractive creature with unseemly habits. "They embed themselves on your scalp...and cause intense itching. They have stout claws that are adapted for hanging onto the scalp," Parker said. "Infestations are always very localized. It's not the sort of thing that gets into the air system of a building and spreads."

Library officials declined to speculate on how the lice got into the elegant, \$160 million marble building, which opened in 1980. The building has not encountered the problem before, a spokeswoman said. Two employees and several guards blamed the infestation on a man they believe to be homeless who comes to the room every day when it opens and pores over a dozen newspapers.

That a homeless person might have caused the infestation sparked much discussion among library workers and users alike, who expressed sympathy for homeless people but concern for themselves. "Hey, without my job, I'm one step away from being homeless myself," said one man who works in the reading room but asked that he not be named to protect his job. "But it's scary to me, I didn't know those people...[were] any kind of a health hazard.

Edward S. Flattau, a free-lance environmental writer who was turned away from the reading room yesterday, said, "You don't want to stomp on street people. On the other hand, you don't want them interfering with people's work-that's not right either."

Washington Post, December 22, 1988
By Victoria Churchville

MINI-REF UPDATE
By Adrien Taylor

The mini-ref areas on the third and fourth floor have proven to be so successful and popular that a third such area has been established on the first floor.

These collections contain relatively few titles, all related to report writing. Titles are purchased in multiple copies and are allowed to circulate for one week at a time. So far all titles housed in these areas have been in paper binding. Titles include the style manuals (Turabain, MLA, APA, and WBSU) and a couple on how to write a college term paper, along with a few copies of dictionaries and thesauri. Last semester there were times when every copy of the MLA, WBSU, and APA manuals were gone. Seeking to provide more and believing that having them only on the third and fourth floors didn't serve as many folk as we might, it was decided to buy still more copies (we'd started with 20 - 30 copies of each title). The theft rate is relatively high, the wear-out rate is extremely high. So, we decided to have a first floor mini-ref area for those students who only want titles to check out or who may be studying in the periodical or reference areas. This area is housed on the "back side" of the new book stack in the hallway just outside of the newspaper/microform area.

We've received many favorable comments from both students and faculty about this service. They do appreciate our efforts and take the time to tell us so.



Watch What You Say!

In the course of your conversation each
and every day,
Think twice, try to be careful of what
you have to say;
Your remarks may be picked up by
someone's listening ear,
You may be surprised at what some
people think they hear.

Things that you innocently say, or try to
portray,
Can be changed, and greatly exaggerated
along the way;
Many stories change for the worse as
they are retold
So try to keep any questionable remarks
"on hold."

May I give all of you some very sound
advice?
When you speak of others, say
something nice;
Try to say good things, regardless of
who is around,
If you have nothing good to say, don't
utter a sound.

You may find that an innocent remark,
in the end,
May lose you a close and valued friend.

—Henry Lesser

LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

The Special Collections department is now the home of the archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Idaho. On February 1, BSU received 35 cartons of records from Bishop David Birney and the archivist-historian of the diocese. Most of the surviving records date from the last 40 years, but there are some records from defunct parishes that date back to the late 19th century. BSU was founded by the Episcopal Church in 1932 as Boise Junior College. Special Collections holds two other Episcopal Church-related collections, the personal papers of Bishop Norman Foote and the records of the Christ Chapel Historical Society.

The months of January and February have been active ones for research in Special Collections. Researchers have used the Frank Church, Vardis Fisher, Eugene Chaffee, Robert Limbert, and Ernest Hemingway (deGroot) collections, as well as the university archives. While most researchers are either faculty or students at BSU, other researchers have included both in-town and out-of-town journalists.

The Maps Department recently acquired a partial set of Idaho county maps published by the Metsker Company. Twenty-four of Idaho's 44 counties are now represented by Metsker maps at BSU. The Maps Dept. already holds another popular county map series, the Big Sky maps.

Kim Youmans is the new Interlibrary Loan clerk as of January 16, 1989. (She is very grateful to have been given this position and she promises she will not leave it). She

graduated from BSU in 1987 and has been working at the Boise Public Library and Idaho State Library in the interim. She is still employed half-time at Boise Public as a department aid in reference.

Prior to graduation from BSU, she worked for three years as a student assistant in the BSU Library reference room.

Kim has a twelve year old son who has been blessed with a gift for athletics and a gift for gab. Her ambition is to take one vacation each year to a different, unforgettable place.

Claudia Scott is directing Out of Our Fathers' House for Women's History Week. Taken from Eve Merriam's Growing Up Female in America, the characters are all actual women from American history and uses the women's own writings. The play runs March 9 - 11 at 8:15 p.m. in the Hemingway Western Studies Center and is sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta, the history honorary society. Production coordinator is Deborah Roberts, graduate assistant in Special Collections.

CROSSFIRE is published by the Boise State University Library. Contributors to this issue are Ralph Hansen, Larry Kincaid, Gwen Pittam, Claudia Scott, Janet Strong, Adrien Taylor, and Alan Virta. Comments should be sent to Julie Stubbers, editor.

MI VIDA
By Larry Kincaid

I always find writing about myself a little awkward, but since I am eager to be known by my fellow workers as more than just another pretty face around the Library, I'll provide a few facts about my life, my interests, and my impressions of Boise and the Library.

I was born and raised on a small farm in Missouri in 1939. In 1951 I moved to Kansas City, where I attended high school. I graduated from Wabash College (Crawfordsville, Indiana) in 1961. That Wabash was an all-men's college may account (in part) for the fact that I married my high school sweetheart in 1959. By 1963, we had two daughters, one of whom has since had a daughter of her own and is expecting a boy in April.

I attended graduate school at John Hopkins, where I earned a Ph.D. in history in 1968. By that time I was already into my 4th year of teaching history at UCLA. The '60s were exciting, tumultuous, and, ultimately depressing and exhausting years for me, and as they drew to a close I decided that university teaching was not providing the life I then felt I wanted. In 1972, I resigned from UCLA.

For a couple of years, my family and I lived in Hawaii. Then we moved to Northern California, where I taught history from time to time and served as Executive Director of the Sonoma California Community Center. During the '70s, I devoted much of my time to writing and to the study of philosophy, psychology, and literature. I also developed a fondness for long-distance running.

During those years my first wife and I divorced, and I met my present (and future) wife, Margaret, whom many of you have met. We were married in 1982, and moved to Seattle, where teaching and studying again took up most of my time. I earned an MA in philosophy at the University of Washington, and in 1988 earned an MLS as well. Margaret, meanwhile, pursued her interests in art and weaving, and eventually became interested in architecture. She was accepted into the University of Washington School of Architecture last summer, and misses it dreadfully. She also has family in Seattle whom she misses.

She does, however, like Boise very much, and so do I... despite the fact that we drove right into the middle of the coldest, snowiest winter in years. We both were tired of the traffic and congestion of Seattle, and of the grayness. Even on its gray days, Boise is brighter than Seattle, and we relish that feature of the city. We also had grown tired spending more and more of every day in traffic. We love the fact that we now live only a 5 minute drive from the University, and that in most directions you can be out of town in 10 minutes. Finally, we both appreciate the friendliness everyone has shown us, and we look forward to getting to know you all much better. Now if Margaret could just find a drafting job that she loved (and that paid more than minimum wage), the circle of our felicity, as Thomas Jefferson said, would be complete.