

Report of the Assistant Librarian

THIS REPORT marks the anniversary of my first year as assistant librarian. The retirement of Frederick E. Bauer, associate librarian, precipitated significant changes in the organization of the Society, and I, along with all other staff members, felt both a personal loss with Fred's retirement and a sense of unease as to what the changes would mean.

My primary goal for the year was to work toward consolidating the library personnel into an involved and interactive staff. The library department heads have made progress toward this goal by meeting regularly as a group, by working together on budgets and the allocation of internal resources such as conservation time, by sponsoring informal lunches with our fellows and research associates, and by playing an increasingly active role in the intellectual life of the Society, especially with participation in the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture. Department heads have extended this interaction into their own departments.

As Eleanor Adams (appointed to the post of executive assistant to the director concurrently with my assuming the post of assistant librarian) and I looked ahead to our first year, we recommended to the director that the development of a sound position classification and compensation program was essential. In the last decade the number of staff members employed by the Society increased dramatically and it was clear that professional help was needed to plan such a program. Howard Tabor Associates, Inc., an affiliate of CMEA The Employers Association (the consulting firm that produced the management proposal for AAS last year), was hired in March to undertake this task. Ronald Mullett of the firm explained the process to our staff, who then completed the individual ques-

tionnaires with the assistance of Robert Hawkins. In August, the director received the position evaluation study and has just begun the process of reviewing it. Once the plan is adopted by the Council, we will be able to operate within a system that provides an objective means of relating the significance of one position to another within the Society, and we will have realistic ways of comparing the monetary value of AAS positions with other comparable ones in central Massachusetts.

Most of my time as assistant librarian was spent responding to problems that demanded immediate attention. For example, in August 1984, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued new standards regulating the use of ethylene oxide, a suspected carcinogen and mutagen. This regulation affects AAS because we use ethylene oxide as the active agent in the fumigating process with our Vacudyne document fumigator. Measurements of levels of free ethylene oxide at AAS have always indicated minimal readings, but in light of the new evidence of its toxicity and in light of the OSHA requirements regarding precautions in case of accidents, we made two changes in our fumigation practices. The first was to change our policy of routinely fumigating all new acquisitions. Instead, we now fumigate only those items that show evidence of mold or insect damage. Second, we moved the fumigator to an enclosed location that is ventilated by a dedicated exhaust system. We believe that these policy changes are necessary and consistent with both our interest in the safety of the staff and the protection of our collections.

The Society subscribes to and preserves journals of state and local historical societies that contain substantial articles on their regions. In April, I wrote to the librarians at all the state historical societies in the United States, except New England, asking them to send me a listing of the journals published in their states that regularly feature important articles of a historical nature. Thirty-two librarians responded (an impressive return rate of 73 percent) and suggested over 100 titles that were new to us. We have written directly to the journal

editors requesting sample issues and are now in the process of selecting those to which we want to subscribe.

A library automation committee was established to study, propose, and implement an automated cataloguing and bibliographic research system for the library. The committee consists of Joseph Macmanus, chair, Alan Degutis, and myself. We have had several meetings, including one with local IBM representatives. Our agenda has been divided into short, medium, and long-range goals, with implementation of 'Blue Sky' (Infornics's name for the editing system being designed for us and other libraries) as our immediate task.

I am a newly appointed member of the Archives and Special Collections Task Force of the Research Libraries Group (RLG). This committee is charged with examining issues associated with the automation of archival and manuscript repositories, and its scope includes all those activities that link special collections to RLG's principal programs. On a quarterly basis, I travel to Andover, Massachusetts, to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee of the Northeast Document Conservation Center, and on a monthly basis I attend Board of Directors' meetings of the Worcester Area Cooperating Libraries.

The past year has been one of consolidation and steady growth for the library departments, and the rest of my report summarizes their activities and achievements.

The work of the acquisitions staff continued at a busy pace with 6,077 additions made to our collections, over 4,000 catalogues and quotations searched, and 1,093 invoices processed. Carolyn A. Allen, acquisitions administrator, Joan Pingeton, assistant, and Mildred F. Nestor, a volunteer, will benefit in the coming year from a newly hired part-time clerical assistant. We need to find solutions to some long-standing problems. We want to increase the number of online orders, reduce the backlog of reviews and quotations, revise the standing order file, and implement computer assistance for the myriad statistics and records generated by this department.

There were several milestones for the Cataloguing Services Department in the fiscal year just ended: work on one grant-funded cataloguing project, American broadsides, was finished; work on another, children's literature, began; and the staff of our third project, the North American Imprints Program (NAIP), completed the cataloguing of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century North American imprints at AAS and directed their efforts toward cataloguing the holdings of other institutions.

The catalogue of the American broadsides project, which began in 1978 and was completed in April 1985, was funded by two successive National Endowment for the Humanities grants. A total of 7,643 broadsides printed between 1639 and 1830 were catalogued in machine-readable form over a period of six and one-half years. The project director and senior cataloguer was Carol Kanis. Joanne Chaison, James Cuffe, Alan Degutis, and Doris O'Keefe also worked on the project for varying lengths of time.

The Society received confirmation in March of the award of a major new grant of \$178,566 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to catalogue our collection of American books for children. The grant will support the creation of detailed machine-readable records for approximately 6,000 non-pedagogical works published between 1821 and 1860. These catalogue records, created on our in-house computer system, will be distributed nationally through the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). The project extends from May 1985 through April 1988, and we hope that a second grant will follow to catalogue the remaining works for the years between 1861 and 1876 as well as the separate collections of school-books and catechisms. I serve as project director. Richard Fyffe, formerly a cataloguer with NAIP, is the senior cataloguer, and Susan J. Wolfe, formerly with our Newspaper Cataloguing Project, is the cataloguer.

The Society's regular cataloguing staff of Richard L. Anders and Dorothy M. Beaudette continued to use the local data-

entry system for materials printed before 1831 and RLIN for later materials. These two systems function efficiently, but increased demand by cataloguers pushes both closer to the point of maximum utilization. We continue our contribution to the Library of Congress's automated authority file through the Name Authority Cooperative (NACO). We do not yet create these records at a computer terminal but anticipate that 1986 will see us automated and online in this area as well.

The cataloguing department roster is substantially unchanged from twelve months ago, but several staff members have new positions and responsibilities. With the completion of the broadsides project on April 30, Doris O'Keefe joined the Society's cataloguing staff as senior cataloguer on a full-time basis. Carol Kanis, who continues to work part-time although on maternity leave, supervises NACO activities, assisted by Dianne Rugh. Joanne Chaison, formerly with the broadsides project, returned to full-time status in May with NAIP and completed work toward a master's degree in library science in July. Also on the NAIP staff are cataloguer Pamela Meitzler and assistant cataloguers Margaret Donoghue and Paula Biegay. Department head Alan Degutis continued to represent the Society at RLG's Committee on Library Technical Systems and Bibliographic Control, and he served as a member of the Standards Committee of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries. In April he went to Toronto to attend the meeting of the International Committee of the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue.

We are closer to having online access for editing and limited searching of catalogue records produced on our in-house system. With the successful completion and installation of that system, termed 'Blue Sky,' our efforts in pursuit of better access to catalogue data will be directed toward developing programs for the production of COM (Computer Output Microform) catalogues. These will be dictionary catalogues, in microfiche format, with separate chronological, geographi-

cal, and printers' files. The catalogue of broadsides will also include a separate first-line index for poetry and songs, and the catalogue of children's books will also include a separate file of illustrators. Whether the first of these catalogues, that for broadsides, will be produced in the next fiscal year is not certain, but we expect that significant progress toward its production will be made.

At the end of last year Richard Baker, chief book and paper conservator, set two goals for the coming year in addition to regular conservation work: to prepare a preservation policy statement based on a survey of library collections, and to report on light levels in the building. As a major collaborative effort by the library curators, the assistant librarian, and the head of conservation, the preservation policy begins with a general statement that sets forth the principles and priorities of preservation at AAS. There are several appendices of specific Society procedures related to preservation, such as for circulation and interlibrary loans, and a final and major section that presents an assessment of the preservation needs of the Society's various departments. Actual conservation time (bench hours) for the coming year has been allotted among the departments and projects on the basis of this report, and curators will select items to be sent to the lab according to the priorities they developed with Mr. Baker. In conjunction with the preservation policy, the conservator submitted his report on light levels in the building. Two findings are noteworthy. First, the ultraviolet levels around the building are commendably low except on the Park Avenue side of the 1910 stacks, where the report recommends reglazing the windows with UV filtering plexiglass. Second, the level of illumination and total amount of exposure in the Council Room are too intense for valuable material, and the report recommends installation of blinds or drapes.

During the year, the conservation department staff oiled 395 leather bindings, made 178 boxes of various types, per-

formed 623 minor repairs, washed, deacidified and mended 2,228 sheets of paper, and bound or restored ninety-three volumes. These figures reflect a significant increase in productivity despite the departure in January of Sheba Haner, the department's intern. The two-year internship program was a great success both for the Society and for Mrs. Haner, who is now the first conservator to be employed by the Massachusetts State Archives. Kenneth Desautels of the conservation staff celebrates his thirty-first anniversary with the Society in October 1985, which distinguishes him as the senior member of our staff.

The activities of the Graphic Arts Department continued to be diverse, reflecting the nature of the collections. The Andrew W. Mellon Curator, Georgia Bumgardner, and her assistant, Audrey Zook, processed photographic orders, catalogued sheet music and lithographs, acquired new materials, assisted readers, and prepared exhibitions. In addition, Mrs. Bumgardner continued to work on the Catalogue of American Engravings Project, with Cynthia A. Walden inputting the records into our local data-entry system. Two volunteers have made significant contributions to the department. Eleanor O'Donnell indexed our portraits of Worcester citizens and has almost finished organizing the collection of Worcester views. Dr. Augusta Kressler, working with the sheet music collection, indexed the backlog of recent acquisitions and is now indexing by subject the collection of music with lithographed covers. Nine exhibitions were mounted in Antiquarian Hall during the past year, and the Society lent materials from its collection to nine other institutions.

Mrs. Bumgardner's term as chair of the RLG Art and Architecture Program Committee has ended, but she continues as a member of the steering committee. She served on the planning committee for the 1985 Dublin Seminar and was recently elected to the Board of Trustees of the Fitchburg Art Museum. She lectured during the past year on Ethan Allen Greenwood

and on print sources for schoolgirl art, and her article on print collecting was published by the McKissick Museum of the University of South Carolina.

The Manuscripts Department was the only library department characterized by major transition this past year. Kathleen A. Major, keeper of manuscripts, and Dianne Rugh, a temporary assistant, both worked part-time until December, when Barbara Trippel Simmons was hired as curator. Mrs. Simmons is an active member of New England Archivists and the Society of American Archivists. Her book *Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide* (coauthored with colleagues from her previous position at MIT) was published this spring.

During the year, Mrs. Simmons mounted an exhibit at the Society in honor of the 200th anniversary of Worcester's Second Parish (First Unitarian Church), surveyed the department for preservation needs, and wrote a collection policy for manuscripts. Early in February she was trained with staff from the Pierpont Morgan Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library in the use of the new machine-readable cataloguing format for archives and manuscripts (AMC) in RLIN. Use of the AMC format is an important and exciting development for this department and the world of manuscripts, for now Mrs. Simmons can create an RLIN record for new manuscripts as soon as they are acquired and then update the record when the collection is fully processed. The records for collections processed after the publication in 1979 of our four-volume manuscripts catalogue by G. K. Hall are slowly being modified and entered into the RLIN database. Our goal is to have information about all AAS manuscript collections available to researchers nationwide through either the published catalogue or the RLIN database.

In the Department of Newspapers and Serials, the regular staff includes Joyce Ann Tracy, curator, Audrey Zook, periodicals assistant, and Dennis Laurie, newspaper assistant. A few

statistics reveal departmental activities: 1,384 newspaper titles (at least 4,000 volumes from thirty-five states and eight foreign countries) were retrieved for patrons, a 30 percent increase over last year; 340 patrons were answered by letter or telephone; 300 catalogue cards were prepared for typing; the periodical section continued to be inventoried; and 300 retrospective periodical titles were catalogued online into RLIN by the curator. Acquisitions of newspapers and periodicals continued at a steady pace with purchases outnumbering gifts. In all, 109 newspaper titles were added (3,680 issues and forty-seven volumes), as well as ninety-eight periodical titles (119 issues and 134 volumes).

The first Society project for the United States Newspaper Cataloguing Project (funded by NEH) ended in January 1985, with 6,495 records entered into the OCLC system. The renewal grant will run until February 1987. The staff—including Joseph Macmanus, senior cataloguer, Martha Gunnarson and Anne Moore, cataloguers, with part-time help from project director Joyce Tracy—should be able to finish cataloguing the nearly 14,000 pre-1877 titles in the fourteen months remaining.

The year saw a number of improvements in the daily operations of the Readers' Services Department, all of which allowed the staff to spend a higher proportion of their time helping readers, answering reference questions, and improving access to collections. Keith Arbour, head of the department, Marie Lamoureux, assistant and genealogy specialist, and Cynthia A. Walden, library assistant, worked hard to ensure the continuance of our tradition of excellent service to all our readers. In March, our receptionists (Carroll M. Abbott, Bradford F. Dunbar, James J. Purcell, and Ernest A. Tosi) were lauded in *The Times Literary Supplement* article on the Society as 'courtly major domos who present the readers' register with the air of a trusted family servant.' The writer of the praise, a researcher from England, appreciated the difficult balance between warm

welcoming and careful screening that our receptionists always maintain.

On the statistical front, the readers' services staff paged and reshelved 17,016 volumes of printed books and pamphlets, and oversaw their use by 924 readers from forty-six states and thirteen foreign countries. We recorded 4,411 reader days.

The time the staff spent reorganizing collections brought not only better order to the stacks but also attention to a number of volumes worthy of special care. Mallory, Wheeler & Company's 1871 catalogue of keys and locks (an elephant folio of gleaming hardware printed in gold and silver) benefited from a thorough cleaning and oiling of its binding. *Ansel Adams's Sierra Nevada: John Muir Trail* (1938), the gift of Donald McKay Frost in 1947, was transferred to Reserve after Richard Baker restored its binding to the original white from the sadly soiled state in which we found it; and our set of J. O. Lewis's *The Aboriginal Portfolio* (eight of the original ten parts, published in Philadelphia between 1835 and 1836), one of the most magnificent of the nineteenth-century collections of American Indian portraits, was catalogued, boxed, and also transferred to Reserve.

My efforts in the coming year will be focused on completing and implementing, with the library staff, the projects discussed above. Also, with the director and librarian, I plan to write a gifts policy, a collecting policy, and a statement for potential donors on the implications of the 1984 Tax Reform Act. There will be many activities concerned with our upcoming 175th anniversary celebrations in 1987. And, of course, I hope to build upon what I have learned in the past year to improve the resources of the library and the activities of its staff.

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