

Report of the Council

APRIL 19, 1997

AS PRESIDENT of the Society, I have the distinct pleasure of wearing two hats; not only do I sit on the Council, but I am also a member of the staff. In preparing these semiannual Reports of the Council—in which I attempt to recount not only the recent activities of the Society, but also to share a bit of the spirit of this remarkable institution—I have usually spoken from my perspective as a councillor. Today I have chosen to wear my staff hat instead, and I wear it proudly. You will know from my previous reports that I think this staff is nothing short of terrific, but I fear that my praise for them may have painted a picture that is not altogether accurate. I have spoken of my colleagues so often by their collective name—‘the staff’—that one might be left with the mistaken impression that they are a homogenized, monolithic whole, without distinct features, unique talents, and differing opinions and perspectives. I can assure you they are not, but let me use the opportunity presented by this report to show what I mean.

For instance, were I to have asked John Hensch, our vice president for academic and public programs, to make suggestions as to the most important accomplishments at the Society over the past six months, he would have had me emphasize in this report how the fellowship programs are continuing to thrive, how the education programs have never been better, and how our publication projects are progressing nicely. He would also want renewed attention given to our highly successful initiatives to serve new constituents that are now flourishing under the leadership of Jim Moran, director of outreach. Our librarian Nancy Burkett, on the other hand, would have me devote the lion’s share of my time with

you today to news of the collections. She would remind me, no doubt, to remind you that there are four key parts of the library's mission: acquisitions (which has enjoyed a busy but rewarding buying season under the capable direction of acquisitions manager Jennifer Code), conservation (which is so ably directed by chief conservator Babette Gehrich), cataloguing services (headed successfully by Alan Degutis, who has just secured yet another NEH grant renewal, this one a \$340,000 grant to continue cataloguing imprints of the 1830s), and reference services (where credit for the Society's reputation as 'research heaven' is shared by many, but by none more than research librarian Joanne Chaison and director of reference services Tom Knoles).

While John and Nancy might differ ever so slightly as to whether the library or the programs division should receive top billing at AAS, there is much more on which they readily agree. They are in unanimous praise—as is everyone else on the staff, I might add—that we have a maintenance crew, headed by superintendent Donald Strader, which is without peer and without which we would be sorely pressed. Although they are few in number, the men of this crew are never short on giving extra effort to keep AAS shipshape. Also shipshape, Nancy and John would agree, is the state of the Society's finances, which are watched over carefully by the accounting team of Frances Bernard and John Roy. Thanks to watchful husbanding of our resources by the entire staff, I can again report that our operating income continues to exceed our expenses, that we maintain our adherence to the 5 percent endowment spending rule, and that the endowment has grown to almost \$35 million. While the stock market deserves some credit for that increase, it should also be noted that we have enjoyed exceptionally strong giving by our members and other friends in recent months—both to the annual fund and to the endowment. So strong has the giving been, in fact, that our vice president for development John Keenum intends to follow our donors' lead and continue to ask for more!

But neither John nor Nancy is writing this report, and I intend

to turn the focus instead to looking at our staff—piece by piece, person by person—and to offer some of my own observations as to why it is so often said that ‘the greatest thing about AAS is the people who work there.’ Foremost, it should be noted that AAS has a well-crafted organization plan, one that makes the place run well without the need for many layers of management. My colleagues on the staff know what they are supposed to do and they do it, but they never hesitate to help others no matter how busy they might be with their own assignments. That can certainly be said of our library page Tim Sheehan (who holds the job John Hench held twenty-four years ago) and Susan Motyka, our assistant curator of manuscripts (where Nancy Burkett began her AAS career, also twenty-four years ago), as well as Lorry Magnuson (who processes all our acquisitions) and Oliver Chapdelaine (who is not only a great maintenance assistant but also a dedicated amateur historian).

Yes, staff expertise pops up at every turn at the Society, and unlike at some other libraries, it is readily accessible to our readers. Cataloguer Russell Martin, for instance, developed an extensive database on the contents of almanacs as part of his dissertation research and regularly volunteers print-outs from it to researchers, many of whom had been previously unaware of the usefulness of the genre (or may have despaired of wading through the thousands of almanacs that we hold). Research associate Philip Lampi is equally generous with the fruits of his lifelong labors to compile and tabulate voting records from the early Republic. Likewise, editor of publications Caroline Sloat regularly proves herself to be an amazing reservoir of expertise on nineteenth-century farming, banking, retailing, and domestic life. Readers often single out for thanks Marie Lamoureux, our assistant head of reference services, whose knowledge of local and family history sources is unrivaled; assistant curator of newspapers Dennis Laurie, who has developed a special expertise in the largely uncharted field of amateur newspapers; and reference specialist Laura Wasowicz, who has introduced many seasoned scholars to

the rich opportunities for understanding American history and culture through the study of children's books.

I want to call special attention to the important work of the cataloguers at AAS, who are known widely as the best cataloguers of historical American imprints in the business. Consider for a moment what cataloguers do: not only do they faithfully describe the item in question, identifying its author and discerning its date of publication although neither may be given, but, more important, they incorporate into each catalogue record those clues that will someday lead a researcher to the book. In effect, the cataloguer is anticipating questions that have yet to be asked, and in so doing they must bring to the task an historian's eye for accuracy, authenticity, factual detail, relevance, and meaning. There are none finer at doing this than senior cataloguer Doris O'Keefe and cataloguer Su Wolfe, who together help us keep abreast of our acquisitions of antiquarian and current imprints. Working on our broadsides cataloguing project are Carol Kanis, Caroline Wood, and Paul Uek, who are working with great efficiency to bring these once-ephemeral items into the scholarly mainstream. Joining them in the cataloguing efforts at AAS are Anne Moore, Marilyn Butler, and Kathleen Haley, members of the exceptional team now adding to our on-line catalogue records for all the books and pamphlets we hold that were printed in the 1830s.

Rounding out this remarkable crew is our name authority specialist Dianne Rugh, who helps cataloguers, for instance, keep one particular John Smith who wrote a certain pamphlet distinguished from another of the same name who was a publisher or printer in the same era, critical little distinctions that insure that our catalogue remains an efficient research tool and not just an electronic jumble of names. Another current cataloguing project deserves separate mention here, bringing attention as it does not only to the names but also to the faces depicted in the Society's extensive collection of portrait paintings. Working closely with our curator of graphic arts Georgia Barnhill, art historian Lauren Hewes has joined the staff on a short-term appointment to ac-

comply with this important undertaking that will result in a handsome illustrated catalogue of the collection, thanks to the generous support of our member Charles B. Barlow.

Such talent and energy my colleagues bring to their endeavors. I am thinking most specifically of curatorial assistant Eileen Rodgers, who volunteers to videotape our special events, and of book conservator Amanda Hegarty and paper conservator Elizabeth Jorgensen, who bring art and science together to make the old, the ragged, the dirty, the weak-spined of our collection seem like new again. I also have in mind our acquisitions assistant Joan Pingeton, who has an unmatched talent for checking booksellers and auction catalogues with speed and accuracy—essential skills as we race daily against other collectors and libraries to be the first to phone or fax in our order for the items we want. Eleanor Epstein has so many talents that she has proven herself indispensable to three departments at once: acquisitions, cataloguing, and reference services. And about the talents of Ann-Cathrine Rapp, our events coordinator extraordinaire, I can hardly say enough; all of us here at the semiannual meeting in Denver can testify to her style and skill, as can anyone who has ever enjoyed one of the dinners, outings, meetings, or trips that she has arranged.

In celebrating the 'team spirit' of our staff, it should also be noted that the strength of many of these teams is in their diversity. The office of Academic and Public Programs, for instance, is the shared domain of administrative assistant Carol Medico (the youngest member of our staff) and office assistant Bill Young (who is, shall we say, safely past retirement age). Our team of welcoming receptionists—all active 'retirees'—bring to AAS three lifetimes of experience in helping people and solving problems for others, Bill Monroe as a school principal, Lewis Nassikas as a sales manager, and Dick Oliver as a personnel manager. That spirit of helping others is in evidence as one watches Carol Ann Mackey, secretary to the president, show the ropes to her new colleague Laurel Modeen, our wonderful new administrative assistant in

development. And when it comes to knowing the ropes, Carol Ann has earned her stripes, working nineteen of her thirty-five years for the Society. But hers is hardly the record for dedicated service to AAS; at this time there are eight staff members who could be termed 'twenty-somethings,' having now worked here for twenty-something years. And everyone of them comes to work with as much eagerness each day as does our newest staff member, Long Nguyen, who has just come enthusiastically aboard as a member of the maintenance department. In fact, it is the eagerness of the staff that has been the cause of the only slightly sour memo I have had to write to the staff. You see, Jim Amaral and the other members of the maintenance crew try to get all the mopping and vacuuming done before the rest of the staff arrive in the morning, and the note that I had to send around was in response to their complaints that the staff comes too early!!

If you have been keeping tabs on my name dropping, you will see that I have now mentioned by name every member of our fifty-person staff except one, that one that really makes us a staff, that keeps us all pushing in the same direction, that makes it such a pleasure for all of us to work at the Society. This as-yet-unnamed person began work at the Society on July 1, 1953, as a 'temp' when Mr. Shipton's secretary went on vacation. Over the next forty-four years she has filled many slots and today she is known as 'executive assistant to the president.' But a title alone cannot connote all that Eleanor Adams does for AAS as an institution and for the staff individually and collectively. She is more than the personnel manager, the office manager, the confidential advisor to all, the institutional memory; she is our friend. Eleanor Adams has given generously to the American Antiquarian Society, with her hands, her head, and her heart. When she retires this summer, Eleanor will go out with all the appreciation and recognition that she will permit us to heap upon her ever-modest head. It is her model of service to the Society to which we all aspire—although few among us will be able to match the length of

her tenure. We owe more to Eleanor than we can ever repay, but I hope that my testimonial today, permanently recorded as it will be in the annals of the Society, will be down payment upon that debt.

Ellen S. Dunlap

1997-98 AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY FELLOWS

*American Antiquarian Society—
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows*

Lesley Ginsberg, recent Ph.D., Stanford University, 'The Romance of Dependency: Childhood and the Ideology of Love in American Literature, 1825-70'; Fredrika Teute, editor of publications, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 'Life on the Margins: Margaret Bayard Smith's Vision of Early Washington Society.'

Mellon Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Kathleen Brown, assistant professor of history, University of Pennsylvania, 'Foul Bodies and Infected Worlds: Cleanliness and Cultural Authority in Early Modern England and America, 1500-1900.'

Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellows

Andrew Burstein, assistant professor of history, University of Northern Iowa, 'Sentimental Democracy: The Evolution of America's Romantic Self-Image'; Bret E. Carroll, visiting assistant professor of history, University of Texas at Arlington, 'Religion and Masculinity in Antebellum America'; Seth Cotlar, Ph.D. candidate in history, Northwestern University, 'In Paine's Absence: The Europeanization of American Political Thought, 1787-1803'; Carolyn Eastman, Ph.D. candidate in history, The Johns Hopkins University, 'Oratory, Print, and the Development of the American Audience, 1780-1850'; Harvey Green, professor of his-

tory, Northeastern University, 'Myth and History in American Literary and Material Culture, 1850-1910'; Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Ph.D. candidate in architecture, University of California at Berkeley, 'The Penitentiary as an Artifact of the Cultural Landscape—A Comparative Analysis, 1780-1860'; Michael Joseph, librarian, Rutgers University, 'McLoughlin Bros., 1858-1878'; Nancy Newman, Ph.D. candidate in music, Brown University, 'Good Music for a Free People: The Germania Musical Society in the United States, 1848-1854'; Elisabeth B. Nichols, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of New Hampshire, "'Pray Don't Tell Anybody That I Write Politics": Private Reflections and Public Admonitions in the Early Republic'; Joanne Passet, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 'The American Debate on Marriage: Religion, Gender, and Social Radicalism, 1850-1900'; Richard Rath, Ph.D. candidate in history, Brandeis University, 'North American Soundways, 1600-1800'; Alan Ruffman, president, Geomarine Associates Ltd., 'Historical Meteorology of the 1775 Hurricane'; Susan Ryan, Ph.D. candidate in English, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 'Race and the Language of Benevolence in Antebellum America'; Kevin Sheets, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Virginia, 'Latin America: The Dead Language, Schools, and the Culture of the Educated Man'; Carol J. Singley, associate professor of English, Rutgers University, 'Adoption in American Literature and Culture'; Phillip Troutman, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Virginia, 'Masters and Markets: Slave Labor and Slave Capital in Virginia, 1815-1865'; Walter Woodward, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Connecticut, 'The Magic in Colonization: Religion, Science, and the Occult in the Creation of New England Culture.'

AAS-American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Fellows

Patricia Crain, assistant professor of English, Princeton University, 'The Story of A: Alphabetization and American Literature from *The New England Primer* to *The Scarlet Letter*'; Warren

McDougall, Honorary Fellow, Department of English Literature, Edinburgh University, 'The Scots Book Trade to Boston and New York in the Eighteenth Century.'

American Historical Print Collectors Society Fellow

David Morgan, associate professor of art, Valparaiso University, 'Millennial Progress.'

Stephen Botein Fellows

Burton Bledstein, associate professor of history, University of Illinois at Chicago, '"By the Book": Reference and Information as Authority in Nineteenth-century America'; Susan S. Williams, assistant professor of English, Ohio State University, 'Writing Home: Female Authorship and Print Culture in America, 1820-1900.'

Joyce A. Tracy Fellow

Jennifer Hynes, visiting instructor in English, West Virginia University, 'Nineteenth-Century Women and the News: The Case of Elizabeth Stoddard.'

Research Associates

Mary Anne Lutz, associate professor of English, Frostburg State University, 'The Politics of the American Picturesque: Perceptions of Land and Native Americans'; Kent Ljungquist, professor of humanities, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, research for the Dictionary of American Literary Biography; Edward Pearson, assistant professor of history, Franklin and Marshall College, 'Plays, Playhouses, and Players in Early America, 1720-1825'; David Rawson, Ph.D. candidate, College of William and Mary, Virginia Prints and Imprints Through 1820.

Teachers and Librarians in Grades K-12

Mark W. Gale, history teacher, Coupeville High School, Coupeville, Wash., the rise of the anti-slavery movement in New

England; Marguerite Kirkpatrick, library media specialist, Logan County High School, Russellville, Ky., study of writings by young people to use in curriculum development; Karen Moran, social studies and math teacher, Auburn Middle School, Auburn, Mass., the first national Woman's Rights Convention held in Worcester in 1850; Stephen Simons, history teacher, The Peter Rouget School, New York, N.Y., cookbooks of the Early Republic.

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