

# NEWS

*from*



CLINTON - ESSEX - FRANKLIN LIBRARY  
PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK

DECEMBER 1964

CHRISTMAS - 1964

I've been taking a more than surreptitious look at the Christmas decorations that spring up, mushroom-like, in streets and shops along about Thanksgiving. At neon-lighted plastic lanterns of dubious Early English origin that hang cheek-by-jowl with outside styrofoam candy canes; at metal Santa Clauses that chortle "Ho-Ho-Ho" when you turn a key; at cleverly designed ads that exhort you to make it a Merry Christmas for your husband, wife, son, daughter, father, mother, mailman, delivery man, cat, dog, house and car. And I have got the message clearly: it isn't a Merry Christmas, folks, unless it costs money!

The gift catalogs that arrive daily addressed to "Occupant" get even more imperative. They alone can bring to the human breast that quiet yearning for a bathmat bearing the Season's Greetings to any guest that might stop in for a drink and remain for a shower. Theirs is the understandable pride that comes from being able to offer, for \$4.95 complete, a five-foot-five vinyl Santa for you to stuff with crumpled newspaper and (I quote) "prop to any desired position." Theirs too is the ultimate in garage door decor: a Kris Kringle face, six horrendous feet wide, with Underwriter Approved electric eyes that glow redly in the dark, causing nervous hiccoughs among the neighborhood kinder.

If you choose, you can sip your wassail from a mug cutely adorned with a roguishly winking Father Christmas, you can pass out cocktail napkins displaying Donner and Blitzen in varying stages of euphoria, you can even cover your mailbox with a knit-to-fit personalized holiday slipcover. But I am beginning to suspect there is madness in the marketplace; that the ad writers are running amok. Is it heresy to indicate that WHITE CHRISTMAS nalls after the fiftieth rendition? And this insistence on a pre-holiday atmosphere that stretches out for four long weeks, embellished to the saturation point with decorations in every nook and cranny, diminishes the impact and lessens the meaning of Christmas.

I remember the enchantment of Christmas Eve. The sliding doors that had shut off the other living room for a few breathlessly anticipatory days were then pushed back - and there was the Tree, glittering with silver and hung carefully with fragile, spun-glass ornaments. Each year it was new again, its beauty more treasured because it was so fleeting. It was a Tree to dream on; it was a Tree under which a child, surfeited with the overabundance and richness of Christmas, could curl up with a familiar, well-loved book of fairy tales and read himself into blissful tranquility.

And it is that kind of Christmas that we wish for you: a return to the wonder and belief of childhood, a return to trust in the message of "peace on earth, good will to men." A very Merry Christmas to you all!

*Mary Leggett*

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ADULT BOOKS AND SERVICES

ANTHONY F. VECCHIO, ADULT SERVICES CONSULTANT

Two novels of exotic setting and strange happenings: in Kōbō Abe's *WOMAN IN THE DUNES*, a schoolteacher on a beetle-collecting expedition takes what he believes to be a night's lodging in a house at the bottom of a depression in the sand only to find himself imprisoned with the lone woman occupant and impressed as a laborer in the never-ending task of staving off the encroachment of the omnipresent, ever-moving sands. In Katharine Scherman's *LONG WHITE NIGHT*, a journalist comes to the Arctic, supposedly for a day, to get to know the Eskimos and their culture and gets involved in sinister doings which keep him there somewhat longer, a radical understatement if ever there was one.

John Cheever is back again with a new compilation of his ever-perceptive and disturbing stories of our time.

Two attempts to probe and analyze troubled areas. Rudolf Walter Leonhardt's *THIS GERMANY: THE STORY SINCE THE THIRD REICH* is a keen and lively report on contemporary Germany. James V. Silver, a professor of history at the University of Mississippi since 1936, discusses the riots attendant on the admission of James Meredith to the University and the closed society which made them possible in *MISSISSIPPI: THE CLOSED SOCIETY*.

Senator J. W. Fulbright, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, gives his informed and judicious opinions on various issues involved in our foreign policy in *OLD MYTHS AND NEW REALITIES*.

Phyllis McGinley expounds lightly and sensibly on the joys of housewifery in *SIXPENCE IN HER SHOE*, a welcome relief from the torrent of books on the degradation of the American woman.

Charlie Chaplin, the clown nonpareil, writes not amusingly of his not so amusing life in *MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY*.

F A	Abe, Kōbo	<i>THE WOMAN IN THE DUNES</i>	Knopf, 1964	\$4.95
F S	Scherman, Katharine	<i>THE LONG WHITE NIGHT</i>	Little, 1964	\$4.95
SC C	Cheever, John	<i>THE BRIGADIER AND THE GOLF WIDOW</i>	Harper 1964	\$4.95
301.45 S	Silver, James V	<i>MISSISSIPPI: THE CLOSED SOCIETY</i>	Harcourt 1964	\$4.75
327.73 F	Fulbright, James W	<i>OLD MYTHS AND NEW REALITIES</i>	Random 1964	\$3.95
818 M	McGinley, Phyllis	<i>SIXPENCE IN HER SHOE</i>	Macmillan 1964	\$4.95
914.3 L	Leonhardt, Rudolf W	<i>THIS GERMANY</i>	N. Y. Graphic Society 1964	\$7.95

B Chaplin, Charles MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY Simon, 1964 \$6.95  
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YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND SERVICES

MRS. BARBARA DOH, YOUNG ADULT AND CHILDREN'S CONSULTANT

WHY NOT THE BOBBSEY TWINS? is the title of an article written by Margaret Beckman in the CHILDREN'S SECTION of the November, 1964, LIBRARY JOURNAL.

Mrs. Beckman is Director of Technical Services at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and a member of the Waterloo Public Library Board. In her article she answers the title question with three reasons.

The first is cost. "There is never enough money to buy all the new books the librarian would like to have, and so she has to select from the many titles published each year those which are to be added to the library." How true this is. No matter how small or large the library there is not enough money to buy everything, and in addition to purchasing the good, new books, a considerable portion of the annual budget needs to be set aside for replacements. These replacements are always fresh and new for the children who have just reached the right age for them.

Moreover, even if we could, would we want to buy everything? Speaking of the truly good books for children Mrs. Beckman says, "The authors spent time and gave of themselves in the creation of these books, not giving less because they were "only" writing for children. This cannot be said of the Bobbsey Twins. Mass-produced by hired hacks, the story outlined by one writer, the dialogue sometimes filled in by another, they do not fit the criterion that we should select the best when we can't buy all. If it is the responsibility of teachers and librarians to provide the best there is for our children, then surely no public funds should be spent on this sort of trash." It is important to add here that there are a number of other series books in the same category with the Bobbsey Twins, such as Nancy Drew, Cherry Ames and the Hardy Boys.

Mrs. Beckman's second reason is "a matter of time." She points out that "there are only six to eight years in which a child can read, as a child." There is a wealth of good literature for children to be read within this stringent time limit. And certainly there is not time for most readers to waste on the trivial. The author comments further that even if some of the missed books are read later on when the child becomes an adult, the effect is not the same. The growing-up process tends to dull the imagination which children bring to their reading. An adult reading WIND IN THE WILLOWS, CHARLOTTE'S WEB, WINNIE-THE-POOH or a host of other titles for the first time cannot duplicate the delight he would have experienced from these same titles as a child reader. The magic of childhood simply isn't there.

Finally, Mrs. Beckman objects to "the effect of Bobbsey Twin reading on youthful minds." She feels that there are a few excellent child readers who will read everything and learn from this widely varied reading experience what is worthwhile and what is not. But for a far larger group of children, this self-taught reading discrimination is not possible. Many children who become accustomed

to the mediocre do not make the transition to more challenging reading. According to Mrs. Beckman, "The many high school students who have to be cajoled and even forced into reading their six compulsory supplementary reading books are examples of children for whom childhood reading was not a stimulating or challenging experience. The disgraceful statistics which show that North American adults read far fewer books than do their English, Swedish, and Russian counterparts, can, I suggest be traced to the same cause."

There are those who contend that the high proportion of almost non-reading adults in the United States is due to our "action-oriented", rather than "passive-oriented" society. However, this would seem to be a fallacy since the Swiss, Germans, and Scandinavians are both highly "action-oriented" and high in their use and purchase of books. Mrs. Beckman's reason is more likely to be valid.

Mrs. Beckman summarizes her answers to the question this way, "If we feel that public funds can be spent on the mediocre rather than on books of lasting value; if we feel we can afford to waste any child's time and deprive him of his heritage of the world's children's literature; and if we feel that it isn't important that he be so excited by his adventures in reading that he carry the memories with him into adult life, then the Bobbsey Twins and Nancy Drew don't matter!"

#### HEADQUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

##### FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 4 - Mr. Berry, System Director; Mr. Robert Stewart, Associate Library Supervisor, Library Extension Division; and Mr. Allan Sevigny, Public Library Consultant, Library Extension Division; attended a meeting at the Essex Free Library, Essex, New York, to discuss mandatory hours of opening for this library and ways of increasing local interest by citizen involvement in the library. Present were trustees Mr. Wayne Lowe, Mrs. Katherine Noble, Mr. Elvin Cross, Mrs. Helen Goff, Mr. Sid Couchey, and Mrs. Donald LaBarge, Librarian. Teachers, parents, and interested townspeople also attended this meeting.

NOVEMBER 6 - Mr. Berry visited the Elizabethtown Library Association and talked over library services with Mrs. Henry W. Kurtenbach, Librarian.

NOVEMBER 11 - Mr. Berry was present at a meeting in Saratoga Springs of directors of four New York State library systems. Now that funds have been allocated under the Federal Library Services and Construction Act for service projects, the directors discussed the selection of a survey team that will examine the areas of responsibility for reference service of both the system library and the central library of each system. Other directors at this meeting were: Miss Florence E. Harshe, Southern Adirondack Library System; Mrs. Elena Horton, Ramapo-Catskill Library System; and Mr. William R. Weitzel, Finger Lakes Library System.

DECEMBER 2 - An orientation meeting planned around the coming survey of reference responsibilities will be held at the State Education Building, Albany, New York, for trustees and directors of both system and central libraries in the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library; Southern Adirondack Library System; Ramapo-Catskill Library System; and Finger Lakes Library System. Mr. Richard W. Lawrence, Jr., Trustee, and Mr. R. Edwin Berry, Director, will represent the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library. Miss Emma Walter, Director, and Mrs. John Colver, Trustee,

will represent the Plattsburgh Public Library. Miss L. Marian Moshier, Former Director of Library Extension Division; Mr. Giles Shepherd, Assistant Director in Charge of Readers's Services, Cornell University Libraries; and Miss Jean Connor, Director of the New York State Library Extension Division, will also attend this meeting.

DECEMBER 3 and 4 - Mr. Berry will attend a meeting of the Regents Certification Committee to be held at the Brooklyn Public Library, New York City.

JANUARY 4 - Mr. Berry will talk about libraries in Clinton County, their history and development, at a meeting of the Clinton County Historical Association.

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO MEET

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the System will be held on Monday, December 19 at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the Plattsburgh Public Library. Since the November meeting was cancelled for lack of a quorum, it is hoped that all trustees can be present at this meeting.

#### MEETING OF BOOKMOBILE COMMITTEE SCHEDULED

A luncheon meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 8, at the Witherill Hotel, for members of the Bookmobile Committee of the System Board of Trustees. Members of this committee are: Mr. Wayne H. Byrne, Chairman, Plattsburgh; Mr. Paul Vogan, Mooers; Mr. William A. Harvey, Saranac Lake; and Mr. Berry, Director of the System Library.

#### LIBRARY EXTENSION DIVISION PLANS PLATTSBURGH WORKSHOP FOR SYSTEM CONSULTANTS

Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library will be the first library system in the state to attend a Workshop for System Consultants to be held in Plattsburgh, December 16 and 17, under the supervision of the New York State Library Extension Division. Scheduled to direct this workshop are Miss Marian Vedder, Associate Library Supervisor; Miss Margaret Hannigan, Adult Services Consultant; Miss Esther Helfand, Young Adult Services Consultant; Miss Virginia Heffernan, Children's Services Consultant; and Mr. Allan Sevigny, Public Library Consultant. Staff from System Headquarters has been asked to participate in this new workshop on the duties, responsibilities, attitudes, and skills of system consultants.

#### SYSTEM STAFF VISITS MEMBER LIBRARIES

Mr. Vecchio, Adult Services Consultant, called at Chazy Public Library and Wadhams Free Library on November 16. He also visited the Elizabethtown Library Association on November 23. Mrs. Doh, Young Adult and Children's Consultant, called at the Dodge Library, West Chazy, on November 16.

#### DATE SET FOR DECEMBER TELEVISION PROGRAM

Mrs. Doh has prepared a holiday program of Christmas stories for pre-schoolers to be shown on Plattsburgh Television Station W P T Z, as part of Bird Berdan's program, ON THE LOCAL SCENE. This special program will be shown on Thursday, December 17, at 1:40 p.m. Be sure to keep this date open so that you can enjoy seeing and hearing this holiday presentation of Christmas stories.

On her November 17 television program, Mrs. Doh talked with Mrs. Emily Neville, the author whose book, IT'S LIKE THIS, CAT, won the 1963 Newbery Medal. Mrs. Neville told area viewers about her latest book, now completed and sent to the publisher - and also showed her award-winning book and the medal she received for it.

#### BI-MONTHLY CALENDAR PLANNED FOR THE NEW YEAR

With the start of a New Year at hand, we are planning a special bi-monthly calendar for librarians and trustees that will serve as a reminder of meetings, television and other special programs, delivery dates, etc., that we hope will be a help to you in planning your busy days.

#### AREA AUTHOR'S BOOK IN THE NEWS

THE TREASURE OF OUR TONGUE, by Lincoln Barnett of Westport, New York, is currently making news in the nation's book-reviewing media. Mr. Barnett's skillful and readable approach to the origins, derivations, and evolution of the English language and his defense of "good" English have brought praise from the critics.

Mario Pei, in the SATURDAY REVIEW, November 7, 1964, says that "the primary importance in a book such as Barnett's is his readable, intensely interesting style, his basically sound views concerning the language, and the sublime heights of irony to which he rises in his final chapter discussion of modern trends, not merely in the field of language but in all the realms of the intellect."

#### MEMOS FROM MEMBER LIBRARIES

##### DANNEMORA FREE LIBRARY

Mrs. Margaret Breyette has resigned as president of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Michael Ryan is the new president of the Board.

##### LAKE PLACID PUBLIC LIBRARY

A special award for the study of American and English history has been established for high school boys at Lake Placid Central School. Albert Hirst, a New York attorney who spends his summer vacations at Whiteface Inn, has offered four cash awards of \$25 each.

To be eligible, a student must read during the school year at least fifty volumes from the Lake Placid Public Library on American and English history- at least five of the books must deal with the period from 1763 to the administration of Andrew Jackson.

School officials are cooperating with Mrs. Florence Lamb, Librarian at the Lake Placid Public Library, and Mr. Anthony Vecchio, Adult Services Consultant for the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library, in preparing reading lists.

##### WEAD LIBRARY, MALONE

Mr. David Minnich, Librarian at Wead Library, sends word that Children's Book Week celebration was extended for an extra week to allow 47 classes from area schools to visit the library. A special collection from Headquarters was on

display for the event - and the librarian gave fifteen talks on the library and its use.

Members of the Library Council at Franklin Academy, Malone, have contributed time as assistants in Wead Library.

PLATTSBURGH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mrs. Lee Gregory has replaced Mrs. Donald Cluff as a volunteer worker in the story hour for pre-schoolers held each Wednesday at this library.

Christmas decorations for both the interior and exterior of the library are now being put up for the holiday season.

WADHAMS FREE LIBRARY

Hours of opening at this library have been changed to:

Wednesday	5:00 - 8:00
Saturday	2:00 - 5:00

WESTPORT LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Changes in hours of opening are also recorded for this library. They are:

Tuesday and Thursday	3:00 - 6:00 7:00 - 9:00
Saturday	3:00 - 6:00

*R. Edwin Berry, Director  
Mary G. Leggett, Editor*

