

THE MEDIUM

AN AGENT THROUGH WHICH ACTION TAKES PLACE

April, 1974

Quarterly

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The San Antonio Meeting of ARLIS/Texas

The second meeting of ARLIS/Texas was held on March 30, 1974, in the Alamo Library in San Antonio. This library is maintained by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas who were gracious enough to make a room available to us free of charge. Our appreciation is extended to Catherine McDowell, President of the organization.

Shelby Miller called the meeting to order at 9:30 and briefly discussed the agenda. It was moved and seconded that the reading of the minutes be dispensed with since they had been published in the Medium. Rebekah Connally gave the Treasurer's report which stated that of the \$19.00 collected at the first meeting, \$15.74 had been spent on printing and mailing. Each member then contributed \$1.00 which brought the total amount in the treasury to \$19.26. The Secretary then read an announcement from ARLIS/NA that each chapter will receive an allotment of \$1.00 per member attending the chapter meeting. A list was passed for those present to sign so that it could be sent to the executive board of ARLIS.

Jim Galloway announced he had received only four responses from the questionnaire printed in The Medium and urged those who have not already done so to answer it as soon as possible. He pointed out that more training seemed to be needed in foreign languages, art history, administration, the use of equipment, and the handling of film material. He noted universities in the North Texas area are more competitive in the Library Science area and that they would tend to offer more workshops and course work as required.

Lo Barr gave a summary of the events which took place at the ARLIS meeting in Detroit, and she presented several additional comments with regard to the meeting. This information is also available in the ARLIS/NA Newsletter.

Lois Jones, who has been appointed a member of the ARLIS/NA Standards Board, asked the chapter members what they thought a standards committee should do?

Shelby Miller responded that she hoped they would not make an ARLIS requirement for art librarianship. Several members discussed how their training related to their job. Lois Jones asked if

volunteer help is taking jobs away from qualified librarians? The general response was "no." Lois said a questionnaire will be coming to our libraries and to please answer it. Lo Parr pointed out that when the Standards Committee report is available, the librarian can use it to get more funding from a board of trustees or other financial source.

The next order of business was a discussion of the Union List Project. Shelby announced the Texas List will publish the Union List when completed, but pointed out that this list costs \$250.00 and contains scientific periodicals. The deadline for material going into this list is May 1. A representative from each area reported on the current status of their own list. Shelby said that the South Texas area was complete with the exception of one library. Deborah Cox reported that the Dallas-Ft. Worth-Denton area had received lists from all participating libraries except the Ft. Worth Public Library, which is forthcoming, and that these lists will be ready to Xerox on July 1. It was reported that a representative from El Paso is handling all of the area west of Ft. Worth and also trying to coordinate with Albuquerque. Joyce Hess said that the University of Texas has completed its list but could include subscriptions only, not holdings. Central Texas has not yet begun the project. Deborah Cox read a form submitted by the Kimbell Art Museum to be attached to the Union List. It will indicate library policies on lending, Xeroxing, and circulation. Everyone felt that this would be helpful.

Shelby stated we needed several committees to share the work load. She appointed Ilse Rothrock Chariman of the Union List Project Committee with herself, Shelby, and Margaret Galloway as members. Shelby appointed Lo Parr Chairman of the Membership Committee with Michele Locke as a member. A committee was also organized to plan the semi-annual meetings. Joyce Hess was made Chairman and a member from the city in which the particular meeting is to be held will be appointed.

The last order of business was the discussion of several questions on the agenda. Question 3: Should our chapter present a statement on Texas Art Libraries to the National Commission on Libraries? The answer was yes, a statement should be prepared by ARLIS/Texas and presented by Francis Smith of San Antonio.

Question 5: Libraries of institutions which publish exhibition catalogues supply information and annotations to RILA? This was generally agreed upon. Three members of ARLIS/Texas present do subscribe to RILA.

Question 1: Do any libraries automatically purchase all art reference materials? Are any libraries planning to purchase the Knoedler Library on microfiche? Of the libraries represented, none were definitely planning to purchase the Knoedler Library. The University of Texas does have a blanket order for all art reference materials.

Question 2: Are any libraries video-taping, or otherwise documenting, Texas artist's work? The group was enthusiastic about doing this and felt that not only Texas artists but exhibitors in Texas should be included. Jim Galloway pointed out that there are two major oral history programs in Texas, one being at N.T.S.U. Lo Parr mentioned that museums should make video-tapes at the openings of their exhibitions and that in some cases the T.V. stations will have already done this and prints are available.

Question 4: Does any library systematically collect and organize art school catalogs? Lo Parr said that she had started to collect as many of these items as possible for the Ft. Worth Art Museum. No other response said that they were doing the same.

Finally, future projects were discussed for our chapter. First, that of checking holdings in Chamberlain was postponed in view of the fact that a new edition is expected to be published soon. The second project, that of holding a workshop which might be organized at North Texas for the Spring, 1975, meeting in Dallas. Lo Parr said she was going to attend an equipment workshop in Nova Scotia the Summer of 1975 and thought we should postpone ours until the Fall of 1975.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch.

After lunch the remaining members visited the San Antonio Public Library. The Art Librarian, Frances Smith, showed us her collection of art books and the Exhibit Area for local artists. The program committee had made arrangements for us to visit the McNay Museum Library and view their fine collection. The meeting concluded after viewing the works of art at McNay.

Respectfully submitted, Rebekah Connally, Secretary-Treasurer.

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A number of our members worked on a letter to the National Commission on Libraries, as discussed in the San Antonio meeting. Frances Smith was scheduled to present our expressions to the Commission at San Antonio. After several long-distance phone calls we finally got it together. The letter is presented, in full, later in this issue of The Medium.

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Shelby Miller mailed the Editor a brochure from the Syracuse sponsored "A Seminar in Art and Museum Librarianship" This program was held May 20 to May 31st of this year. The program seems to be a well planned affair and perhaps we may model a similar program for this section of the country. The Editor will bring a Xeroxed copy of this brochure to our next meeting for discussion.

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Read Lois Jones' article, "Let Your Fingers Do The Walking," which may be found in the May issue of Museum Notes.

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BY THE ART LIBRARIES SOCIETY/TEXAS CHAPTER
TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE,
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, APRIL 24, 1974:

We, the members of the Texas Chapter of Art Libraries Society/ North America heartily endorse the comments which Dr. Wolfgang Freitag, Librarian of the Fine Arts Library of Harvard University, has already presented to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. However, some problems of art libraries in our Southwestern part of the country differ greatly from those of other areas.

Our problems are not so much costly duplication and competition as lack of holdings in art materials. There is NO major library for art in the area. Holdings are scattered among libraries of vastly differing political and economic bases -- including public libraries, public and private colleges and universities and public and private museums. We MUST coordinate and cooperate in order to serve our clientele even adequately much less well. One very desirable project leading to better service would be an inventory of holdings of all art materials in whatever form. ARLIS/Texas began compiling in September, 1973, a union list of art periodicals in Texas. Done without the aid of a computer, the periodical lists for the Houston and the Dallas-Ft. Worth areas are nearing completion, and the number of titles not held by any art library is appalling. Such scarcities are not a problem in the art powerhouse libraries of the Northeast.

With projects like this one, ARLIS/Texas is beginning to make progress toward the cooperation that all its member see as vital, but we do not have the power, politically or economically, to do the best job possible. Art is, unfortunately, a low priority item. The art library in whatever institution, but especially in public and academic situations, often has the lowest budget, both for materials and staff.

Helping to change attitudes toward the need for art information, is one of our jobs and perhaps not that of the National Commission, but art libraries must not be passed over in the National Commission's plans. The fact that according to its annual report none of the members of the National Commission deal directly with art materials is not lost to ARLIS/Texas.

We are all too aware that we have no strong framework in which to coordinate art information resources. ARLIS/Texas, a group of individuals interested in art librarianship, cannot afford the sophisticated systems necessary to truly analyze our collections for their strengths and weaknesses on either a Texas-wide or a Southwest region-wide scale. Our progress toward cooperation must therefore be slow and piecemeal and is further complicated by the vast distances between our art libraries.

What we need is basic to what all libraries need from the Commission. We need regional representation on a permanent basis. The National Commission should develop into a network of regional offices with adequate professional staffs to represent the information needs of that region to H.E.W. or whatever parent organization or independent national office in Washington, D.C. would be applicable. It is important that the needs of art information users and libraries be represented at such a regional level if not by a permanent staff specialist at least via strong channels of communication with regional ARLIS chapters and/or consultation with professionals who provide art information to those who need it.

In summary, ARLIS/Texas submits that there will be no substantive progress toward making "information equally available to all" unless regional problems and ideas are listened to on a permanent basis -- unless the "top-level agency in the Federal Government ... designated or created to develop, guide and lead the nation's effort to coordinate its library and information services" has permanent input from the various regions via active regional offices with their fingers to the pulse of their areas. If that kind of permanent line of communication is established, you can be assured that those of us representing art libraries and their users will not be shy about coming forward with our specific problems and needs.

Thank you,
ARLIS/Texas

(Prepared by: Shelby Miller, Jim Galloway, Lo Parr, and Bette O'Dell; Presented by: Frances Smith)
(Ed note: Citations deleted in order to save space)

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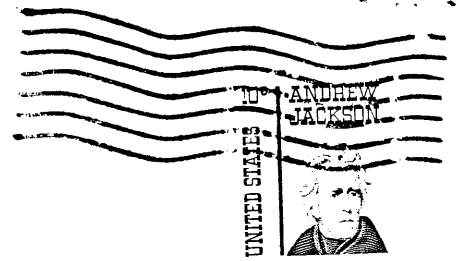
Please send all comments, articles, or whatever to:

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"What immense innovations are being wrought all around us now ... how can artists portray it all with the old means of art?" -- Berthold Brecht (Supplied by Michelle Locke)

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