The drawing that got James McNeill Whistler fired from the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1855 is the intriguing focal point of a small, select show of the artist’s etching at the Freer. Opened in May, the exhibition of 26 drawings and 16 canceled copper plates originally etched by Whistler from the museum collection will run for several more months. It is hung in the Gallery’s west corridor. Utmost accuracy was required by Coast Survey draftsmen, and the young Whistler found office routine boring. One day he proceeded to embellish the upper spaces of the official plate he was working on with tiny sketches of heads and figures. The production of “Coast Survey Plate No. 1,” as the spoiled plate is now known, along with Whistler’s tendency to ignore regular office hours led to his leaving the job just three months after he had been hired. Soon thereafter Whistler, just 21, departed for Europe and eventual fame. Whistling all the way perhaps.

It’s "Fun-damental!"
Smithsonian Will Head Up National Reading Program

By Mary M. Krug

Motivate a child to want to read and miracles can happen, says Jerrold Sandler, who has come to the Smithsonian to motivate children on a national scale.

Mr. Sandler is Executive Director of the new National Reading to Fun-damental Program (RIF), being established within the Institution under a two year grant of $283,000 from the Ford Foundation.

The program is an outgrowth of a District of Columbia experiment to provide free books, of their own choice, to school children and ghetto residents. But unlike the D.C. RIF program, in which books were distributed directly, the new national office will not be primarily in the distribution business but rather help communities set up and maintain their own local projects.

Mrs. Robert S. McNamara, wife of the president of the World Bank and Chairman of the local RIF project, will serve as chairman of a prestigious National Advisory Board for the Smithsonian-based program. Other members of the new Board will include Secretary Ray Lyman Wilbur, a noted public education program officer for the Ford Foundation.

RIF will operate as an independent unit in association with the Smithsonian, which will act as sponsoring and fiscal agent for the project. Sandler, however, will be actively exploring areas of possible cooperation with other SI offices.

One Smithsonian facility has already been actively involved in the D.C. RIF program. The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum has been a distribution point for books selected to relate to its exhibits, and is currently being used regularly during RIF’s summer program in Washington.

Mrs. Robert S. McNamara, wife of

Jerrold Sandler

The aim of the national project is to find the best ways to motivate the young learner to want to read, and to make paperback books and other reading material easily accessible so that he is able to read. At the same time he will be gaining the pride of ownership that deprived youngsters seldom have a chance to enjoy.

RIF will act as a clearinghouse and catalyst for already-existing book distribution programs. It will enlist the cooperation of publishers, education organizations and other public and private agencies whose interests are related to the aims of the program. It will help communities train personnel, build the necessary organizational framework, and set up fund-raising programs.

(Continued on page 4)

The Smithsonian’s newest field station is a multi-purpose astronomical facility of the Astrophysical Observatory high atop Mt. Hopkins, 40 miles south of Tucson, Arizona. That mountain peak is reflected in the concave dish of SAO’s most unusual instrument—a 34-foot gamma-ray collector. The large-surface light collector, really a mosaic of 252 polished glass mirrors, will search for sources of gamma-ray radiation in the heavens, a feat never attempted before from a ground-based observatory.
Problems Are 'Run Of Mill'
Nagel Discusses Portrait Gallery

by Benjamin Ruhe

With the opening of the National Port­r
trait Gallery just nine weeks away, the

Rachel makes a prophetic allusion to the
Marine Force will necessarily be among the first objects of her
crew. Dr. Nagel in the letter to Fleury
Mr. and Mrs. William McKay of Chevy Chase, Md., have given to the Smithsonian
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National

la s t and you ' d know how everything
world, in London, Edinburgh, and

says Dr. Nagel.

the opening of the National Portrait Gallery
approaches October 5?

"The run of the mill things that face any museum director," he says. "Our problems are those of a small staff with a big job." The staff numbers 28.

"Always there is a great flurry at the last and you don't know how everything will get done. But it always does." One plus factor the Gallery has had in its favor since the start is its building, the Old Patent Office Building.

"We're very lucky with the gallery," says Dr. Nagel. "They approach residential
scale, that is they are not overly
large. It is a building very well suited
to the job.

Dr. Nagel rates it one of the three most distinguished structures in Wash­ington. The other two, he feels, are the White House and Capitol.

As a former practicing architect before he turned to museum work in 1946, he likes the building's "simplicity, its recti­nity, its dignity. It has tremendous style."

He points out, too, that locating the National Portrait Gallery is not in con­formity with L'Enfant's original
plan to have a pantheon on the site.

Dr. Nagel was called to the establish­ment of the Portrait Gallery. Dr. Nagel had occasion to visit the three major portrait galleries in the world, in London, Edinburgh, and Dub­lin. He does not compare America's National Portrait Gallery with them.

"Well, our collection is a good one to start with, but ours has obvious weak­nesses. We are lacking many early port­raits, and they're the hard ones to come by. I personally am very reluctant to have copies of portraits made, but we may have to. But our building is better than any of them."

Asked about the appeal of the Gallery to the people of America, Dr. Nagel says: "We might as well be realistic about it. The National Portrait Gallery is not a place where people are going to come to see a great many delicately
[...]

The likeness of the sitter portrayed is a primary criterion applied in se­lecting portraits, and Dr. Nagel tells a story of "a good example of a valuable painting not being a masterpiece." Tour­ing the London portrait gallery, he was shown a drawing of the three Bronce sisters by, in Dr. Nagel's words, "their drunken brother, Brummell. He made it on a rainy day and he wasn't too gifted as a draftsman."

But since it is the only existing like­ness of the three literary sisters, he told the director: "It represents to us a picture of much fine gold. It is outstandingly important."

Dr. Nagel quotes the story to support his view that such things as good like­nesses and scarcity of available representa­tions are at least as important, to a portrait gallery, as sheer virtuo­sity in the painting.

"The thing I'm chiefly anxious to avoid," he says, "is to have people come and look at it in an art gallery and say, 'I wish I could view it as a gallery of American history.'

"If you predict the impact the gallery will have on the nation when it opens ("I honestly don't know at all") and pointing out that as of now there have been relatively few pre-opening vis­itors arriving for the grand tour ("The taxi drivers don't know where we are.") Dr. Nagel emphasizes that he considers the principal function of the gallery its audience. "A portrait gallery," he adds, "is a unique national

Mr. and Mrs. William McKay of Chevy Chase, Md., have given to the Smithsonian a letter (above) written by John Paul Jones to the Marquis de Flirey in 1787, when Commodore Jones was in Paris trying to recruit a crew. Dr. Philip K. Lendeberg, curator of NHI's division of naval history, notes that Jones makes a prophetic allusion to the U.S. Navy of the present when he stated in the letter to Flirey "if the new Constitution is adopted, as there is reason to expect, America will soon be a very respectable Nation, and the creation of a Marine Force will necessarily be among the first objects of her policy."
An expectant crowd of thousands which includes Secretary and Mrs. S. Dillon Ripley awaits an evening Festival of American Folklife concert on the Mall.

Scenes From The Folklife Festival

Half-Million Visitors Crowd Mall

The weather was great, the performances fine and everybody had fun. This year's second Festival of American Folklife on the Mall drew over a half-million visitors in its five-day run. People learned about the country's varied, intriguing folk culture. And the musicians, dancers and craftsmen in their turn saw Washington at its most hospitable. Praise for the sponsoring Division of Performing Arts was glowing. Wrote a mother of 10 who bedded her brood down on the Mall to see such as the Basque dancers and Mance Lipscomb perform: "We were feeling a common pulse with our varied heritage and loving every minute of it." Said a delighted Smithsonian official about next year: "There'll be more of the same—only bigger."

Top: The Sea Island Singers perform with verve. Left: Dollmaking fascinates two youngsters. Below: Wally Kiser and his mule grind sugar cane. Right: Arkansas musicians and Czech dancers on stage.

Photographs by Al Robinson, Harry Neufeld, John Warner
The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has given to the Smithsonian a plywood A-frame shelter from Reconstruction City. The family-unit dwelling, now at the Silver Hill facility, will be used in a future MHT exhibit on human rights, according to Keith Melder, curator of political history.

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The SMITHSONIAN TORCH
August, 1968

Info ’68 Gives Visitors The Personal Touch

by George Berkley

There was a time when visitors to the Smithsonian’s museums wandered the exhibition halls aimlessly—and enjoyed it.

Now they view the displays with direction and commentary—and enjoy it even more.

Not surprising, Nancy Brennan, a second-year summer intern in the Office of Academic Programs, and her “diplomatic” corps of student volunteers are giving our visitors “the personal touch.” It works.

This is the routine:

When a visitor on your enters the Fossil Hall in MHN, for example, a young co-ed wearing a chest banner marked INFO ’68 approaches head-on, introduces herself, and says the specimen is being observed. All this is done deftly and diplomatically.

The visitors always appreciate the assistance. Very few turn it down.

Miss Brennan, a 19-year-old sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania and coordinator of INFO ’68, explains that the host-guides “are part of the Smithsonian’s new look and serve as a personal communication of the atmosphere of the Institution.”

“Museums,” she says with remarkable authority, “are generally thought of as refuges for rainy days.” Her INFO ’68 corps has dispelled the notion. Smithsonian’s museums are alive, bright, and lively.

What do the visitors think? A young man from Ohio told the Torch that he liked the idea of a museum guide—especially a young girl—greeting him and explaining what were the various highlights of the specimen he was viewing.

“I felt welcomed,” was the way he put it.

Another said that he was pleased that “a museum of the Smithsonian’s national stature would bow to and helping little people—why it’s done back to the present (North Carolina).”

On the strength of that comment alone it would appear that the summer program will well worth it. But

by Ritchie Calder

Do Man and Machine Have the Same Mother?

The SMITHSONIAN Library American Heritage—Van Nostrand ($4.95)

Do Man and Machine have the same Mother?

“that volume,” says Secretary Bingham of the Department of International Scholarships, “rates a new series, marking a collaboration of the Heritage and the Smithsonian, which collects and occasionally creates that history.”

The book is the development of “the machine” from Stone Age to Space Age computer—over 160 pages, including 157 diagrams and pictures (many of them in color). No. 1 in the series, co-written by Ritchie Calder, one of Britain’s best and most versatile science writers (he now holds a chair in the Department of International Relations at Edinburgh University), wisely doesn’t try. He gives, instead, an undated and unchurched over-view (if there is such a word). His survey is brisk, clear, arresting, and occasionally debatable.

Sample quotes:

“the three requisites for technological advance...man...method...moment...”

“More great discoveries and inventions (drastically changing our lives) have occurred in the last fifty years...than in all previous history...”

“The Greek’s simple flute—lever, wheel, pulley, inclined plane, screw—still form “the basis of all machines...”

“We tend to think that some inferiority in technological intelligence was vested in Work and Man. It would be more realistic to recognize that the accessible coal and iron determined the nature of the First Industrial Revolution.”

Eli Whitney’s cotton gin had a dramatic impact on history.”

Dramatic and deadly: “The cotton gin, which had been slowly dying in the South...rapidly became profitable...”

“It is interesting to speculate what might have happened had Michael Faraday and Joseph Henry preceded James Watt. If early in the 18th century the world had been given electric motors and generators prior to the steam engine, then the self-evident primary source power would have been usable...countries with an abundance of falling water, rather than coal, would have had the decided advantage. David Livingstone simply would not have found his Victoria Falls; he would have been out looking for it.”

Joseph Henry, first Secretary of the Smithsonian, is well treated as “preeminent American scientist of his day,” he discovered independent of Faraday the principle of electrical induction...invented the first crude electric motor and the first crude telegraph,” and helped and encouraged Alexander Graham Bell. “You have the germ of a great invention. Work at it.”

Samuel P. Langley, third Secretary of the Smithsonian, gives shrift to the fifth grade after having led his students to the top of the galleried stairway of the Smithsonian by a gaily decorated truck, stocked with and help from the American Heritage-House of Books.

A number of pilot projects in key geographic areas will be set up, with the aim of reaching adults as well as young people. In the D.C. program, adults were reached by placing books in community facilities such as laundromats.

RIF got its start when Mrs. McNamara discovered that two boys she was tutoring in reading had never owned a book. At her suggestion, the D.C. Citizens for Better Public Education, Inc., in cooperation with the D.C. Congress of Parents and Teachers, Home and School Association, and the Action Committee for D.C. School Libraries set up the local program, under a Ford Foundation grant.

Its success is indicated by the case of Gregory Mack. Gregory entered the fourth grade with only a second-year-reading ability. In June he was promoted to the fifth grade after having led his class in reading. His principal, Mrs. Marsha RIF, and Gregory himself said, “I didn’t know how to read but now it’s fun.” In his second year, he got a job at a milk cart to help him. He’s been reading his reading books and reading every chance he gets.

One of the most effective means of distributing books so far has been the Funmobile. Each week last summer, the gaily decorated truck, stocked with and help from the American Heritage-House of Books, wandered the exhibition halls aimlessly—and occasionally debatable.

The National Reading Program (Continued from page 1)

At the same time, Sandler says, it be examining such basic questions as how books should be designed to make them appeal to young readers, how reading taste is developed and how learning ability of the child whose reading level is not up to his chronologi­cal age. Participants in the program are free to pick whatever book they want from among the more than 1000 titles offered. Some of the most popular volumes in the D.C. program have been The American Negro, the Peanuts books, and biographies of President Kennedy.

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