Bill Introduced to Establish Wilson Center for Scholars

by Mary M. Krug

Legislation has been introduced into the Senate which, if passed, would establish a Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars within the framework of the Smithsonian Institution.

In his message to Congress on the District of Columbia March 13, President Johnson called for a Center that could serve "as an institution of learning that the 22nd century will regard as having influenced the 21st."

"I recommend legislation authorizing the establishment of a Center to be operated by an independent board of trustees within the framework of the Smithsonian Institution."

S-3174, "A bill, "To Establish A National Memorial To Woodrow Wilson In The Smithsonian Institution" , was subsequently introduced into the Senate by Clinton Anderson and co-sponsored by J. William Fulbright and High Scott. All three are Smithsonian Regents.

The bill was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration. The President first espoused the idea of such a center in his speech at the Smithsonian Bicentennial Convocation in 1965. At that time he stated that the "institution financed by Smithsonian breathed life in the idea that the growth and the spread of learning must be the first work of a nation that seeks to be free."

"We can support Secretary Ripley's dream of creating a center here at the Smithsonian where great scholars from every nation will come and collaborate."

The Woodrow Wilson Memorial Commission, established in 1961 to recommend a permanent memorial to the twenty-eighth President, suggested in 1966 an Intrepid Center, to be composed of scholars, to be located north of the National Archives building. Its final report stated that "The Commission is impressed with Dr. Ripley's proposal that the Center be formally associated with the Smithsonian Institution as a bureau under the guidance of its own Board of Trustees, with its own Director and administrative staff."

The President then asked the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and the Temporary Commission on Pennsylvania Avenue to consider a study to develop the detailed plan for the Center.

The proposed legislation calls for the Center to be administered by a 15-member Board of Trustees, to be composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Secretary of the Smithsonian, three individuals appointed by the President from within the Federal Government, and eight appointed by the President from private life.

Among the powers which the bill grants to the Board in 1961 to recommend a permanent memorial to the twenty-eighth President, suggested in 1966 an Intrepid Center, to be composed of scholars, to be located north of the National Archives building. Its final report stated that "The Commission is impressed with Dr. Ripley's proposal that the Center be formally associated with the Smithsonian Institution as a bureau under the guidance of its own Board of Trustees, with its own Director and administrative staff."

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"Among the powers which the bill grants to the Board is the power to appoint such scholars, from the United States and abroad, and, where appropriate, provide stipends, grants, and fellowships to such scholars, and to hire or accept the voluntary services of consultants, advisory boards, and panels to aid the Board in carrying out its responsibilities."

"(2) solicit, accept, and dispose of gifts, bequests, and devises of money, securities, and other property; and upon receipt, be deposited with the Smithsonian Institution, and unless otherwise provided by the terms of the gift, expenditures shall be in the discretion of the Board for the purposes of the Center."

"(3) obtain grants from, and make contracts with, State, Federal, local, and private agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals; and"

"(4) acquire such site as a location for the Center as may subsequently be authorized by the Congress."

"Such a center," the bill declares, "symbolizing and strengthening the fruitful relations between the world of learning and the world of public affairs, would be a suitable memorial to the spirit of Woodrow Wilson . . .

Nicholas Szyszkiewicz (second from right), Director of S.I.'s Information Systems Division, puts the finishing touches on a computer tape, which Dr. Donald Squires (far left) Deputy Director of MNH, will take to The British Museum in London. This marks the first exchange of specimen data between museums in different countries, using computer techniques. Regional Creighton, senior systems analyst for the MNH project, looks on from the far right. Mr. Eugene P. Kennedy (second from left), Chief of the U. S. Office of Education's Library and Information Services Research Branch, is on hand to represent NIH, which is funding the project.
April Lunchbox Talks to Cover Africa to Moon

Lunchbox talks for April range from Africa to the Moon and include topics for the National Air and Space Museum. Wednesdays at noon on the second floor of the Castle, include:

April 3—Dr. C. Durant, III, Assistant Director, NASM, "Some Notes on the History of Rocket Development, 1900-1930."

April 10—Karl F. Maunten, Office of International Affairs, "An African Coun­try at the Crossroads — the Modern Sudan."


April 24—Dr. Brian H. Mason, re­search curator, Division of Meteorites, NHM, "Recent Meteorites I've Met."

May 1—Dr. John O'Keefe, assistant chief, Laboratory for Theoretical Studies, Goddard Space Flight Center, "Lunar Volcanism."

Herbert Deignan and Thomas Henry, two men with long and distinguished associations with the Smithsonian, died last month. Herbert Deignan was for­merly the Director of the Division of Birds and was annually awarded the Michael Henry Ford Memorial Prize for his book "Exploring the Land of Switzerland, Henry, 74, was a science writer. The two are remembered here by colleagues.

Herbert Deignan

Herbert Deignan's chosen field of sci­entific activity was in ornithology, with his major interests and contributions in systematic ornithology and the study of the birds of Thailand, where, with modern knowledge, he was one of the foremost authorities on birds in that country. He was one of the most influential ornithologists of his generation and is remembered for his contributions to the study of birds in Thailand, as well as for his tireless efforts to protect and conserve the country's natural resources.

Colleagues Recall Deignan and Henry

The details surrounding the event have long been known by Smithsonian staff members, including Captain Benjamin Townsend, who remembered Deignan. Townsend had been a student of Deignan's and remembered how much he had learned from him. Townsend also remembered how much Deignan had contributed to the study of birds in Thailand, and how his work had helped to preserve the country's natural resources.

Viking Incident Recalled

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The death of Thomas R. Henry, a famous ornithologist, was also remembered by the Smithsonian. Henry had been a long-time member of the Smithsonian Institution and had made significant contributions to the study of birds in Thailand. He was remembered for his tireless efforts to protect and conserve the country's natural resources.

The Smithsonian is a world-renowned institution dedicated to the study of natural history and the arts. It is one of the most respected institutions in the world and is known for its contributions to the study of birds and other natural resources.

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Social Biology Demands Attention, Dr. Ripley Says

The following comments by Secretary Ripley are taken from The Smithsonian Year, the annual report for fiscal 1967. The book, edited by John Lea of the SI Press, will be out April 10.

Some years ago, in conversation, the late Robert Oppenheimer remarked to me that he felt that men in the future would find the single area of greatest discovery in biology. Oppenheimer was of course thinking primarily of the then exciting discoveries in molecular biology, the end effects of which, while perhaps inevitably upon us, will not be revealed for many years. As a biologist, one might now question whether there is not another area where discoveries rather than refinements await us. To me, it seems that the single area which needs the greatest amount of attention from discoverers is that uncharted and almost unknown field which might be called social biology. The field is unknown and uncharted because it is not a specialty, and today most scientists are trained for narrow specialties. Biologists are concerned primarily with laboratory or field studies of animal and plant species. Sociologists are concerned primarily with the study of the origins and history and constitution of human society. In universities the departments of the two disciplines are usually in separate buildings, and in libraries the books they use tend to come from different parts of the stacks.

Scientists or Humanists?

In fact, sociologists labor under the disadvantage of being somewhat luxuriated; are they scientists or are they humanists? It is a symbol of the age that they should feel thus dislocated. It is of course unnecessary. Similarly, some thoughtful biologists tend today to feel slightly uncomfortable about being scientists. Science in the public mind has come to be associated almost exclusively with the physical sciences or with medicine. Scientists are white-coated men, either possessed of a Batman-like syndrome, about to fly off into space, or else all-knowing, wise versions of Dr. Kildare. In any case, biologists who have to do with physico-chemical processes involving the components of a single cell, or those who are involved with medical science, can perhaps feel closer to the physical sciences and to medicine.

But biologists associated with natural phenomena in gross, external terms, with population biology and the dynamics of large systems, and with much of what is today called ecology (a badly misused word in most cases) as well as paleobiologists and evolutionists—many of these sorts of biologists find themselves somewhat dislocated. Perhaps they are in danger of becoming humanists? Perhaps indeed the scientific sociologists and the humanist biologists are approaching each other, figures on a darkened and uncharted stage.

When one says that there is an area here which perhaps contains the single, greatest problem that man faces today, one is referring to problems of human morality. Henry James has said that to be a scientist is greatly troubled about the responsibilities and the integrity of science. Scientists and sociologists alike work in disciplines where study brings them a knowledge of the social consequences of the discovery of new technologies and of new principles about behavior. By training, however, most scientists tend to be cautious about ascribing broad implications to the results of narrowly defined and controlled experiments. Science-minded sociologists have to develop kinds of feelings, and often prefer to remain aloof from the dangerous area where theoretical results are correlated with non-controlled situations.

Responsibility to Speak

And yet there is a responsibility to speak out. As the conditions of the environment deteriorate, as the social disorders of the age deepen, the special relationship between the scientist's social responsibilities and his general duty of social responsibility grows critically. It has been said that, "If the scientist, directly or by inferences from his actions, lays claim to a special responsibility for the resolution of the policy issues which relate to technology, he may, in effect, prevent others from performing their own political duties. If the scientist fails in his duty to inform citizens, they are precluded from the gravest acts of citizenship and lose their right of conscience."

In 1847 Joseph Henry, meditating upon the course of the Smithsonian Institution, wrote: "To effect the greatest amount of good, the organization should be such as to enable the Institution to produce results in the way of increasing and diffusing knowledge, which cannot be produced by the existing institutions in our country." What is there that we in the Smithsonian can think upon which would illumine the basic problems confronting social biology? There are certainly three paths along which we might travel toward illumination: one leads to the study of terrestrial environment, another to the study of our social environment, and the third to the study of man as an evolving species.

The state of our age is graphically illustrated by the slow degradation of man's terrestrial environment. There is something inherently wrong with man's relations with his environment. Nature suffers continually in an undeclared war. Man, animated by hunger for profit or for spectacular action, continually erodes our landscape. Many feel indeed that this is appropriate, that man and nature can never live in harmony. Thomas Hardy said, "nature and man can never be friends." Must we then kill off our enemy and in so doing kill off ourselves? Biologists have a social duty to alert citizens to the inescapable results of such mass suicide. In this Institution we have in particular one great scientific resource to bring to bear upon this problem. Our sorts of biologists are concerned with the quality of the environment, for they are concerned with systems, with setting into categories organisms that are inescapably a part of the particular environments within which they, as species, live. The assembled data about species in relation to their environments assumes an historic and important relevance to the environment as it is today. That is, the recordings of systematists become a series of benchmarks against which modern environments can be gauged. To put it in crude terms we know for example that the American mountain lion was exterminated from all the eastern seaboard States by the late 1800s, except for the fastnesses of Florida and parts of West Virginia and Vermont. Today the principal population of mountain lions survives precariously only in parts of the Sierra Nevada and the high mountains of the West. We also know why. We know the food habits, the predator-prey food chain, the range requirements, the amount of "leaving alone" which a mountain lion requires in order to live and reproduce its kind.

In a similar way we know the requirements of a whole series of animal and plant species, and what happened to them when these requirements were not met. All these situations are similar in that a certain formula is involved. A proportion of one or another sets of conditions is required, without which a certain species will not survive. The declining ratio of natural man-made conditions over the continent creates multiple effects which can be measured or simulated through models. The results, when averaged against the resources of the planet, surely could tell us much of the ability of various species to survive. The results also tell us something of man's plasticity and tolerance, and of his ability to survive the changes he is introducing into the environment.

Standards for Survival

One of the keys to American success in foreign aid and indeed in any foreign relations will be the degree to which American planners pay attention to the knowledge of environmental problems already possessed by American scientists. At present there is little if any indication that aid planners or foreign policy planners have ever heard of ecology or that they would know how to talk to a systems biologist if they met one. And yet in areas of the tropical world today ecologists and systematists are far more capable of predicting the effects of change in the environment than are engineers and dam builders or agriculturists. The proposed International Biological Program—unknown to most planners or policy makers—has within it the capacity of mobilizing field biologists into a concerted effort to understand the present state of our terrestrial environment all over the world. The resulting information could be utilized in a way which might provide vital criteria, real benchmarks against which to set our standards for survival for the future. Our traditional economic and political aims, key survival and success, have blinded us to our own survival. Another disorder of this age is graphically illustrated by the decline of social and moral values in our cities. The problems of deteriorating environment and of social disorder are related. As the landscape suffers, man becomes less humane. As Eric Hoffer, speaking of our increased command over nature, says, "In many parts of the world the taming of nature by rapid industrialization has given rise to degrees of social barbarization." If man cannot live in cities as a humane individual, then he cannot survive. Thus social biologists have a duty to alert citizens to the inescapable results of urbanization.

In this Institution, a world center for anthropology, there should be a whole series of benchmarks which, interpreted by social anthropologists, could produce models of stress, crowding phenomena, aggression and hostility. Our view derived from these data could be of great use, indeed esynoptic.

THAT TIME OF YEAR

The first day of spring brought what was probably only the first of a steady stream of visitors who will pause for rest or reflection by the new MHT fountain. Secretary Ripley expects its waters to cool many a young tourist's feet when the summer months arrive.
The Defender,” by Thomas Lipton, will be in the opening display of sculpture in the Granite Gallery.

Smithsonian displays. Somebody else designs the layout in the Smithsonian, and then he seems to be discovered—he is quite of little workshop with bits of brass screwed around on scarred tables, and in the air a smell of hot metal.

John Wink: Small,ubby,fortyish,black-rimmed spectacles,ish,black-rimmed spectacles,hair aproaching a vanishing act. He came to Washington in 1829, owned by John Varden, and later assimilated into the National Collection of Fine Arts.

Washington in 1829, owned by John Varden, and later assimilated into the National Institute, the forerunner of the Smithsonian.

In fact, it is hard to find him. The government pays him not to be noticed. John Wink likes that. Unnoticeability is the keystone of his art.

You go into the Smithsonian through the underground vehicle entrance, past the loading platform and into the basement corridors, drift momentarily toward the smell of the kitchen, blunder into door numbers, and eventually you find John Wink lurking in an unsuspected little workshop with bits of brass screwed around on scarred tables, and in the air a smell of hot metal.

John Wink makes hooks and brackets and fastenings to hold up the specimens of history which the Smithsonian displays. Somebody else designs the layout in the display cases, but John Wink’s function is to mount whatever is to be displayed so that it is both pleasant to behold and gives a feeling of depth and movement.

This is not easy. A cup and saucer are pretty static, after all. Even a 100-year-old pair of spectacles can look pretty dull. Fragments of a rotted cannonball do not set the average person’s blood afire, and the most rahit gun buff might give a rare old rifle only a passing glance if it were displayed insensitively, as though carelessly left behind by somebody.

John Wink can make even a plain wooden mallet look as though it is about to leap out of the display case and bang things. Of course, he has to invent a way to do it. He has already discarded or improved on the Smithsonian’s old standard techniques of object display, and now he is playing the game one step ahead of his head. The secret is invention.

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A few rules exist, but they only make the game harder. A brass hook holding an old rifle upright cannot touch the metal of the rifle itself; a tiny dowson felt pad must cushion its grip. No awkward lumps may mar the symmetry of an antique plate. Bracket flanges cannot be chismously wrought, and must blend with the color of whatever they hold. For this reason, John Wink uses only silver solder, which can be polished. Sometimes he camouflages metal hooks and brackets with paint. He makes everything by hand, and no two pieces are ever the same.

He also works with wood and plastic. Glassware is displayed in clear plastic boxes of various shapes, and many of these John Wink makes himself. Plastic is not easy to work with because it is brittle and its edges are difficult to fasten together. Also, it acts as a prism, from certain angles, offering the eye distracting reflections. The whole business is very touchy and exacting.

One display, of early technical instruments, John Wink spent three months assembling, and it is a masterpiece. You never notice the little metal arms holding the compasses and the astrolabes in their niches lined with red fabric, and if you want to see the reverse side of something you press a foot treadle and a small motor turns the display panel around. A mirror has even been mounted so the underside of one instrument can be seen. Personally, John Wink appears to be a sort of personification of his work, which is just this side of a vanishing act. He came to Washington eight years ago from Lincoln, Neb., where he had painted theater scenery and worked at merchandising displays.

Once he owned his own ready-to-wear store, but he found it dull. No matter how cleverly the shirts were arranged in the window, the business was still essentially a matter of simply waiting for people to come in and buy them. So John Wink quit and went to work artistically and undetectably enshrining bits of history for the government.

It’s kind of recognition in reverse,” says John Wink, “the pleasure of it is knowing that people aren’t going to notice your work. It’s creative, but people never see it.”

Reprinted from the Charlotte, N.C. Observer

John Wink Would Rather His Work Go Unnoticed

by J. A. C. Dunn

NCFA Once Was National Gallery

The largest painting that the National Collection will exhibit is Alexander Liberman’s abstract work, Green Diagonal, measuring 7 feet 8 inches by 18 feet 4 inches. The smallest is Albert Pinkham Ryder’s Panels Song, approximately 5 inches by 9 inches. Works from the remarkable collection of sculpture by Elizabeth Powers will be displayed in a room recalling Powers’ original studio in Florence, Italy. This studio will open later in the year.

When Powers died 95 years ago, he left in the studio nearly 200 pieces of sculpture and a collection of letters to and from many of the famous personalities of the 19th century. In fact, it is about to leap out of the display case and bang things. Of course, he has to invent a way to do it. He has already discarded or improved on the Smithsonian’s old standard techniques of object display, and now he is playing the game one step ahead of his head. The secret is invention.

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