**Etching That Got James Whistler Fired**

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.

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**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 Improvement Fundamen­tal 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 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 of the Interior, Robert R. Preston; U.S. Commissioner of Education, Frances M. Bensinger; and the Director of the new RIF program 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, Executive Director of the Smithsonian Reading Improvement Fundamental Program (RIF), examines one of the first stacks of books to be distributed under this program.

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**Quest For The Presidency To Be Exhibited By MHT**

The technology may have changed, but the aims are still the same in the quest for the Presidency. Make the candidate’s name and face familiar to the public. Create a favorable image. A special exhibition showing how American candidates have pursued the nation’s top public office, from first announcement through inauguration, opens August 17 at the Museum of History and Technology. “The Quest for the Presidency” will be on display on the third floor of the MHT through 1968. It will be followed by an inaugural exhibit in January.

From George Washington to Lyndon Johnson the display will show the buttons, banners, broadsides and ballots that have been used in national elections. In addition to the techniques of individual candidates, there will be sections on political organization covering the history of political parties, growth of party symbols, and the national convention.

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**SI Press Issues**

**Last In Series Of Bird Bulletins**

by Virginia Barber

Bulleted series of bird bulletins is complete with two new volumes: "Virginia's Warblers" and "Eastern Wood-Pewees." Smithsonian Institution Press has published 15 bird bulletins on the birds of the eastern United States from the American Ornithology Series, beginning with "Creeper and Titmouse" in 1951. In the new volumes, more than 400 species of eastern birds are covered in about 1,800 pages. The volumes are intended for individuals and institutions interested in ornithology and bird conservation.

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**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.**

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**Back Issues of 'Torch' Available**

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

No. 8, August 1968

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**Archival Collections of the Museum of History and Technology**

To provide a reference for the study of technology in the United States, the Museum of History and Technology is planning an archival collection that will document the nation’s industrial history. The museum is seeking donations of oral history interviews, personal papers, photographs, films, and other materials related to the development of technology in the United States. The museum invites contributions from individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in the preservation of technological history.

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**Exhibit Call for Papers**

The Smithsonian Institution Press is calling for papers on "The Presidency: An American Institution." The press is seeking scholarly articles on the role of the presidency in American history, from the colonial period to the present. Articles should be submitted by January 1, 1969. Authors whose papers are selected will be paid a fee and will receive a copy of the final publication. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Publications Division, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. 20560.
Problems Are 'Run Of Mill'
Nagel Discusses Portrait Gallery

by Benjamin Ruhe

With the opening of the National Portrait Gallery just nine weeks away, the calmest man around is Director Charles Nagel.

As head of two major museums in succession over an 18-year period, he has been the opening route in many times and has even been involved in bigger shows. "Italy at Work," a showing of craft items by the Brooklyn Museum in the early 1950's, involved thousands of items.

"But then I had a much bigger staff," says Nagel.

What problems do face as 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 museum director in 1946, he likes the building's "simplicity, its rectitude, its dignity. It has tremendous style."

He points out, too, that locating the National Portrait Gallery where it is—conforms in spirit with L'Enfant's original plan to have a pantheon on the site.

Consequently, when the gallery is opened to the public, Nagel says, "the museum will be a landmark addition to the National 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 beautiful paintings. But it will be of great historic importance, and should become a major research center."

The likeness of the sitter portrayed is a primary criterion being applied in selecting portraits, and Dr. Nagel tells a story of "a good example of a valuable painting not being a masterwork." Touring the London portrait gallery, he was shown a drawing of the three Bronte sisters by, in Dr. Nagel's words, "their drunken brother, Bronte. 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 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 in and feel "It is an art gallery with no reason to view it as a gallery of American history."

"Unwise, I predict, to expect the impact 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."

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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."

Photographs by Al Robinson, Harry Neufeld, John Warner
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 19-year-old sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania and coordinator of "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 cap has helped Brennan and her 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 "personal"—especially a young girl—greeting him and explaining what were the various highlights of the specimen he was viewing.

"I felt welcome," was the way he put it.

Another said that he was pleased that "a museum of the Smithsonian's national stature would know how to greating and helping little people—"the way it's done back home (North Carolina)."

On the strength of that comment alone it would appear that the summer program is well worth it. But why aren't the students compensated for their time and expertise?

"I don't know," responded Miss Brennan, "how we could pay them in terms of the services they perform. We would go broke."

Nancy was a participant in the program last year, when it was known as "67, and this year it has been expanded.

Twenty-five girls were involved in the 1967 program; this year INFO '68 claims 150 young boys and girls. Most of the students are college-age with a sprinkling of high school seniors in the ranks.

Although most are from the Washington area, three guides are from California, Arizona, and New Jersey. Each is staying with family or friends here.

Miss Brennan said INFO '68, "an informal program" was successful that a special program will begin in the Fall and continue through the Spring in the National Air and Space Museum.

Currently, the program extends to the Museum of History and Technology and the Museum of Natural History, involving some ten exhibition halls.

The student volunteers are oriented to the hall to which they are assigned by the curator in charge of the exhibition. The guides are broken down into two shifts—9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The guides, who serve to supplement the popular and effective Docent Program, handle as many as 50 visitors an hour, depending on their initiative.

John Bingham of the Air and Space Museum's education department, who will coordinate the Fall program, said that he already has four students being oriented.

"It's hard to imagine," he says, "how a student can give a two-weekend orientation in a year to come down here and assist our visitors."

But Nancy Brennan will tell you: that's what it is all about and, while the program is designed to help others it also is a "program that makes the people involved in it."

Nancy Brennan

National Reading Program

(Continued from page 1)

At the same time, Sandler says, it will be examining such basic questions as how books should be designed to make them appeal to young readers, how reading test is developed and how learning capacity increases after the child is motivated to read.

A national book selection committee will help choose books that meet the interest and 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 500 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.

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-grade reading ability. In June he was promoted to the fifth grade after having led his class in reading. His principal attributed RIF, and Gregory himself said, "I didn't like to read but now it's fun."

In his home is a giant book of a milk crate to hold the books he has received from Reading Is Fun-damental.

One of the most effective means of distributing books so far has been the Funmobile, a brightly decorated truck, stocked with shelves of books and a small library for community summer projects. Children responded to the van's horn with the same enthusiasm that little girls show for a television ice cream wagon. The Funmobile is still in use and saw recent duty on several occasions.

The national program will have a great deal of freedom to create new techniques and try new approaches, Sandler says. "We will work with all of them—parents, committees—private organizations, local or Federal Government agencies, publishers and distributors, school boards, libraries, citizens foundations—anyone who can help."

Before taking on the RIF project, Sandler served for four years as Executive Director of National Educational Radiocast, and prior to that he was in the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. His background includes more than two decades in Mass communications, public relations and community organizations. His staff will include an assistant director and secretary, as yet unappointed, and Mrs. Jane Wagner, who previously directed the RIF program, as a part-time consultant.

Poor People's Hut

Turned Over To SI

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has given to the Smithsonian a plywood-and-foil shelter from Resurrection City. The family-type dwelling, now on the grounds of the Silver Hill facility, will be used in a future MHT exhibit on human rights, according to Keith Melder, curator of political history.