

The Association for Mormon Letters

1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84108

Vol. 5, No. 1

Newsletter

December 1980

THE AML AWARDS FOR 1979

The year 1979 was unusually fruitful for Mormon letters. Beyond the growing production of popular Mormon romances, Deseret Book and Bookcraft published their first novels. There appeared, in addition, a collection of short stories, two volumes of poetry, a saga, and even an epic poem. If we add to these the impressive number of poems stories, critical pieces, and plays published in 1979, we have perhaps a larger body of creative work by LDS authors than has appeared in any previous year. Much of this deserves recognition--work by Stephen Taylor, Randall Hall, Kristie Guynn, Emma Lou Thayne, Linda Sillitoe, Ann Best, Stephen Gould, Michael Fillerup, Dennis Clark, Iris Corry, Bruce Jorgensen, Clifton Jolley, Edward Geary, and others. Four works, however, have particular significance and were chosen for citation by the awards committee of the Association. They are listed here with snippets from the citations.

Criticism Prize. The finest critical article of 1979 was Cindy Lesser Larsen's "Whoever Heard of a Utah Poet?: An Overview of Poetry in the Early Church," Century 2 (Fall, 1979), "an essay which embodies the important virtues of our discipline: solid scholarship, an excellent grasp of subject matter, and the careful workings of a keen analytical mind." This critically perceptive survey of early Mormon poets makes an important contribution to Mormon literary history and is especially noteworthy as a model of undergraduate scholarship.

Fiction Prize. "At a time when Wasatch-front Mormons find themselves an ever-smaller minority in the expanding Church, the work of Béla Petsco is a sign of the future among us." Nothing Very Important and other stories (Provo: Meservydale Publishing Co., 1979), a series of linked stories featuring a central character, Mihály Agyar, an ethnic Hungarian from New York, is significant "not only because it is refreshing and insightful in its own right, but also because it is the first of its kind--an important modern fictional work by and about a Latter-day Saint reared outside the Wasatch-front cultural tradition."

Poetry Prize. This prize was awarded equally to two BYU English professors whose books appeared in 1979 under the imprimatur of the BYU Press. Marden Clark's Moods: Of Late "impresses as a reflective exploration of the most Mormon of topics, the relationship of family and religious experience. The energy of the poems lies in their gentle commingling of dark profundity and engagingly informed naiveté. Through them Clark has taught us that form indeed liberates, and that sonship may bristle at times with anger and cry out in pain, yet resolve in awe and celebration." Edward L. Hart's To Utah is a bringing together of forty years of poetic exploration. Hart's

"tribute and gift to those he loves becomes a tribute to his understanding of and devotion to the elements of his existence. Out of To Utah and his portrayal of the destruction caused by human frailty rises his sympathy for the pain of living and his faith in our ultimate success." His "reverence for the Word" resounds throughout To Utah, a book that "spans his years and illuminates ours."

READINGS SCHEDULED

A series of readings from recent work has been scheduled, and, as usual, all members and friends of the Association are invited to attend. The first reading will be held at the home of Lavina Fielding Anderson, 1519 Roberta Street (245 East) Salt Lake City on January 23, 1981, at 7:30 p.m. Levi S. Peterson, president of the Association, will read from his novel that is nearing completion. The second reading group was organized by Karen Lynn and will be held at the home of Kathleen Slaugh, 2251 N. Pleasant View Lane in Provo at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, February 6, 1981. Eileen Gibbons Kump, author of Bread and Milk and Other Stories, will read excerpts from her recent work. [For a review of Bread and Milk and Other Stories see the Newsletter of June 1980 (Vol. 4, No. 3).] The third group scheduled will meet on March 20, 1981 in Ogden. Details will be forthcoming.

Members of the Association living away from the Wasatch Front and wishing to plan such reading groups are reminded that material will be supplied by the Association. Address questions and requests to the Association well in advance, so that there will be ample time to select and send appropriate material.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Association for Mormon Letters session of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association annual meeting, Boise, Idaho, October 22-24, 1981 invites proposals. The session will not be restricted to one theme, however a couple of papers on Mormon writers of this current boom might be appropriate. The RMMLA requires that those presenting papers under its auspices be members of the association, a status easily achieved by the payment of dues (\$12.00 regular, \$8.00 student). Interested scholars may submit proposals of about one page to Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, JFS Institute for Church History, 50 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84105. Deadline for proposals is February 1, 1981. Of those proposals accepted deadline for completed papers is April 15, 1981.

The Association also invites proposals for papers to be presented at the annual symposium to be held January 23, 1982 (instead of in October) in Salt Lake City. Papers on all topics pertaining to Mormon letters are welcome. Detailed proposals should be sent to Prof. Stephen L. Tanner, English Dept., Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602. Proposals must be received by September 1, 1981.

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Will I Ever Forget This Day? Excerpts from the Diaries of Carol Lynn Pearson, edited by Elouise M. Bell. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1980. 130 pp. \$5.50.

That last bastion of privacy--our personal diaries--has been turned into a "program." From the pulpit, we are admonished to keep diaries; we are treated to snatches of personal diaries in sacrament meeting, we are urged to share our diaries in Relief Society, and our children are instructed in the rules and regulations of diary-keeping. I know whereof I speak, having been on the Diary Speaker circuit for several years now. My own diary-keeping goes back to my thirteenth year and is so extensive that I now have a large collection of beat-up loose-leaf notebooks, old ledgers, gold-tooled gift volumes, old school notebooks, and fat folders full of typewritten entries. I have been keeping diaries for so many years that I have taken to organizing them under titles: Diet Diary, Dream Diary, Travel Diary, Dialogue Diary, Depression Diary, Poetry Diary, etc. Not content to keep my habit to myself, I have passed it on to my daughter, who began her diary when she was in fourth grade and continues it as a sophomore at BYU. She and I are known in some parts as a Mother-Daughter Diary Duo--traveling about with dramatic readings and witty presentations based on our combined works. I must admit, however, that she has the advantage of me. She has read my teenage diaries, while I have never been allowed into hers, except as she chooses to quote them to me, always exclaiming, "Mother! listen to this! I can't believe I said this! Or thought this!"

Carol Lynn Pearson responded in much the same way when asked to publish her diary, started in her high school senior year and continuing to the present: "You're kidding. I said that? I did that? I felt that way?" Carol Lynn was persuaded to publish by her friend Elouise Bell, who as a teacher of college students and former member of the Young Women's Mutual Board, was charged with moving the diary program along. According to the introduction, when Elouise first approached Carol Lynn with the idea, Carol Lynn responded in her typically disarming way, "Just the fact that I have become somewhat well-known in Mormondom does not make the mundanities of my life any more significant than the mundanities of anybody else's life. . . . In my mind I see an intelligent person picking up the book as she wanders through her local bookstore and saying: 'My gosh, her diaries now. Who does she think she is?'"

And that is about what I said when I was handed a copy of this attractive book. It is not that I was offended by another title from my friend Carol Lynn Pearson, but only that I was worried: How could a still-living person publish her diaries, edited, no less, by another living person and not be--(a) censored and (b) part of a stultifying "program" which would just naturally kill off what I consider to be the main purpose of diary keeping in the first place: therapy.

So I read Elouise's introduction and Carol Lynn's introductory letter and decided to proceed. Though Elouise's reasoning--that young people should keep diaries so that "the angels may quote them" (as President Kimball has put it) was disquieting (diaries are supposed to be private--that's why they are such good therapy), I was convinced that Carol Lynn's reasons for keeping a diary were worth sharing: learning from one's own growth cycle, being honest about oneself and one's life, and best of all, remembering. "Will I Ever Forget This Day?" asks the title. The answer is, "Yes, I will, if I don't write it down."

As Mormons, we are commanded to keep a record of our people. It is comforting to think that our own personal lives, even with their sins and errors, are an important part of that record. Carol Lynn leads the way by being willing to serve as a model for Mormon diary keepers. The question is: Will others be inspired to take up the habit if they are not already hooked? I am not persuaded that people who have not already been trained to write as children or who are not otherwise addicted to writing will be moved to do so by this book, or any book. As a text in a class devoted to diary keeping, it could be useful --but a class in diary-keeping! I realize that such workshops are popular in the Church, but I am not convinced that they can do anything more than produce guilt. Besides, the minute somebody tells you now to write and what to include,

it ceases to fulfill its role as friend and therapist. But I am open to persuasion. I hope that people will read this book and become motivated to write. Which brings me to the second question: Who is the intended reader of this volume? Elouise speaks of the mutual and the young adult in her introduction, and most of her advice seems geared to the younger teenager. But Carol Lynn's diary is really the story of a grown-up young woman in her early 20s. Although touches of the lonely and the frustrated do occasionally come through, the picture of Carol Lynn is one of Success! Although her romances didn't work out very well (glossed over as they are and sketchily described), she wins every part she ever tries out for. Only a few failures are recorded here, and although the reader finds some self-doubt and sorrow, the overwhelming picture is one of a self-contained, disciplined young woman who has always known where she is going.

But I quibble. For those of us who grew up in the forties, fifties, and sixties, this book introduces a "good" Mormon girl who kept the commandments and who worried about her relationship with God and her place in his scheme of things. True, she is quite a bit more accomplished than most and independent enough to spend a year in Europe, with a side trip to Israel and a stint in a Kibbutz, where she manages to record the rhythm of a young woman's search for identity.

Though I would love to read the parts she and Elouise excised, I am convinced that the real Carol Lynn Pearson is standing up. I am glad that she was willing to turn her observant eye inward on herself to record "the twenty-one years of my own daily actions, my thought processes, my growth, my disappointments, my stupidity, my wisdom, my ignorance, my fears, my exaggerations, and a bit of courage" and to be thankful with her that she was able to see her whole life pass before her without having to die first. In spite of its limitations, this book presents an endearing and spirited account, a welcome opportunity to meet the young Carol Lynn Wright Pearson who has succeeded in preserving her sense of wonder. It is comforting to learn that the girl is truly the mother of the woman, a consistent clear-eyed writer, whose light shines through any bushel.

Mary L. Bradford

Emma Lou Thayne. Once in Israel. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980. pp. 80.

Months ago, when I first read the poems that were to become this collection, I knew that the work of Emma Lou Thayne had taken a new direction. Even then, in the initial-draft stage, the poems sang with a different music from that found in her previous books, Spaces in the Sage, Until Another Day for Butterflies, On Slim, Unaccountable Bones.

The same fine hand for detail is there, to be sure:

Burdened past its tedious step, a donkey
clutters the stone road with pebbles of sound.
They scatter among a minutia of camels, a settling of brass
and the dim swish of indistinguishable rugs
catching the sighs of dusty candlesticks.

("Having Shopped")

But there is a new weight, and a new richness of texture and tension even to lines which have an ostensibly descriptive function, as in "This time on the Via Dolorosa," wherein Thayne speaks to the throngs "beyond the Garden Tomb /below Golgotha /along this Way of Sorrows," and says to them, "You all have dusky faces /and eyes of black marble."

You turn exotic pages before me
from Bible stories Mother read
or from the National Geographic
stacked along the bottom shelf
in my far home. You acquaint me

routinely with the night
and with my own blue eyes.
In this old city your not caring
how I walk along your Wailing Wall
to stations I must pass, and have,
without knowing, makes
light of where I've been
and gives new ableness to going
where I have to go.

I follow the footsteps that gradually
appear like old ink,
its color insignificant
in moving me across this holy day.

The first of these stanzas could, perhaps, have been found in earlier Thayne poems, but the last two carry incense of having been made in new places, not geographically new alone, but artistically and spiritually. (The phrase "new ableness," however, remains as a wisp of one verbal idiosyncrasy of the poet's that I have always found jarring. Another example is the awkward "hungry possibles" from the earlier, and otherwise superb, "Cheyenne.")

We should point out that the format of this book is especially interesting: it pairs Thayne's journal entries from her trip to Israel with the poems that grew out of the specific experiences and entries. Thus we have relevant material for the study of how a personal genre (journal) becomes a public genre (poetry). Such is Thayne's versatility with forms that occasionally I prefer the journal entry to the poem, as in the case of an account of the visit to a Bedouin camp and a rare look into the women's quarters. For me, the journal, which speaks of "the stout woman of the tent with a smile brown at the gums [and] a magnificent sense of domain," of her "sand-shined pans," of the woman herself as "this protectorate of beautiful brown generations," who points to her own children "as if in the gathering of grapes," and then, to make sure the visitors understand that one boy is her own, "eloquently bares her brown breast and lays her brown hand over it," whereupon the visiting women are "stunned by the grace of the mother tongue"--all this reminds us of the grace of the writtentongue, of prose as well as poetry. The parallel poem, "The Bedouin Woman," is splendid, but for me, not superior.

It is unfortunate that anything should detract from the excellence of this collection, but the BYU Press has done just that with its careless printing job. From the beginning, there were problems with the Press ignoring the crucial pairing of journal entry and resultant poem, running them heedlessly on front and back pages so that one could not tell which poem grew out of which entry. That problem was corrected before the final printing. But even then, the first run had such a muddy, ugly cover that it was recalled and a new jacket quickly substituted. The pallid replacement is only a little better, however, and once we remove the dust cover, we find the book bound in temple-white with gold script letters--like a wedding guest-book. Don Thorpe's photographs are pertinent, but the reproduction is poor--dark, flat, the shading lost. Thayne should have had another publishing house, such as the fastidious Peregrine Smith Press, bring out this book for her to do it full justice.

Technical disappointments notwithstanding, Once in Israel is an important, joyous contribution to Mormon letters and worth a hearty hosanna from the AML.

Elouise M. Bell

The Association for Mormon Letters

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Newsletter

March 1981

ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETING

TO BE HELD IN WASHINGTON

In order to provide members of the Association living beyond the Wasatch Front an opportunity to participate in the activities of the Association, the AML spring symposium will be held in Washington, D.C. on April 25, 1981.

Those interested in participating in the symposium are requested to submit scholarly papers--at least detailed abstracts thereof--original fiction, poetry, or drama to Mary Bradford, 4012 North 27th Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22207 or to Chad C. Wright, Dunster F-14, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. A committee of readers will select the material to be presented at the symposium. Local arrangements are being made by a committee in Washington, and all inquiries, therefore, should be addressed to Mary Bradford at the above address. More detailed information will be announced shortly.

Members of the Association living in the eastern part of the United States are particularly encouraged to bring this symposium to the attention of all those interested in Mormon literature. Members, as well as friends of the Association are, of course, welcome.

WRITING CONTEST ANNOUNCED

The Center for the Study of Christian Values in Literature at Brigham Young University announces a writing contest in which cash prizes will be awarded. Entries will be accepted in several categories: short story, poetry, personal essay, and critical essay. Critical essays may either discuss literature from the perspective of Christian values or may address the subject of Christian (moral-religious) critical theory. Entries in all categories will be accepted in two divisions: student and non-student. Student entries should be accompanied by verification of student status in any public or private school (photo-copy of student ID for example).

All entries must be original and unpublished; they must be typed and double spaced. Poems must not exceed five pages; essays should not be longer than fifteen pages. No identification other than title should appear on entries. On a separate page, name, permanent mailing address, title of entry, division (student/non-student), and category should be listed. Entries will not be returned, so return postage should not be included.

Entries must be received before May 15, 1981, and winners will be notified after July 15, 1981. Entries should be addressed to Christian Values Writing Contest, English Department, Jesse Knight Building Annex, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.

Brother Brigham: The Man and the Prophet, by Eugene England. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980. 256 pp., including index.

In Brother Brigham, Professor Eugene England offers seven skillfully crafted tributes to Brigham Young, tributes to spiritual power made flesh. The offering is not only acceptable, it is commendable. In obvious personal admiration thoughtfully steeled by scholarship which includes a number of new sources, including many of Young's hitherto untapped holographic diaries and letters, England has done much toward putting us in touch with the "hidden, real" Brigham Young whose role in guiding the fledgling Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints permeates every organization, attitude, doctrine and policy of the modern Mormon Church.

In the seven "rather personal" essays, England combines into a well-written, well-fused whole the topics of "Young Brigham," "Brigham Young in England," "Brigham and Joseph," "Brigham as Moses: The Iowa Crossing," "Brigham as Moses: Into the Desert," "Brigham's Gospel Kingdom," and "President Brigham Young"--and the Brigham Young who emerges from these essays becomes, more than ever before, "a warm, fallible, humorous, loving father, husband, friend--that is, . . . a man, as well as a prophet of God." England gradually raises Young above the scholarly and popular stereotypes to present a man less mysterious and more human but no less awesome in his accomplishments.

Such greatness was less attributable, asserts England, to Young's natural genius, which would have flourished in any climate, than to his quintessential Mormonness, a condition which opened within him not only the practical genius but also the profoundly spiritual dimension of his personality, a combination which enabled him both to build chairs and speak in tongues, a combination sustained by his total love of the gospel message of the Restored Church, which led him to "do his best" all the rest of his days.

The unfolding of those manifold gifts which comprise Brigham Young is central to much of Professor England's discussion. Rising from the crucible of conversion, Zion's Camp, the British Mission, and Missouri persecutions, as well as from his unrelenting loyalty to Joseph Smith as the Lord's spokesman, Young's faith and gifts became refined to a point, England asserts, where he and the Prophet Joseph Smith shared fundamentally similar natures. England thus labors convincingly to refute the cliché which portrays Joseph as a visionary genius and impractical dreamer and Brigham as the practical doer and tough administrator. Like Joseph, Brigham was, insists England, a combination of vision and practicality stirred with profound spirituality. Joseph was the mentor, and Brigham the student--until the conferences of August, 1844, when the spiritual and practical mantles of Joseph became one in Brigham.

And when Brigham cried to the Saints on the Iowa plains, "Attention! the whole camp of Israel!" he not only concluded his apprenticeship but found his controlling image--in the likeness between ancient Israel and modern Mormonism. Like Moses, Brigham learned from his people, his enemies, and his circumstances and developed a pragmatism, a flexibility, a wisdom, and a hard-talk, soft-act philosophy which enabled him to find the right course for his people as well as to pare his lofty vision to meet the lesser realities of the Saints, who generally gave him absolute loyalty but often failed to follow counsel. But through it all, as England makes strikingly clear, the practical decisions were based in spirituality, in Brigham Young's determination to stay close to the Lord.

Brigham Young was, above all, a man of God. Understanding Young as a Kingdom Builder is impossible, England demonstrates, without understanding this fact. Young saw himself as the Implementer of Mormon religious principles, God's principles. It was Young as Implementer who secured for the Latter-day Saints the enduring actual and mythic power inherent in the present organization of the Church. Whether building railroads, temples, or meeting houses; or organizing conferences, the United Order, the quorums of the priesthood, or visits to the Stakes; or shaping such priorities in the lives of the Saints as steadfast loyalty, sacrifice, unity, personal worth and worthiness, Brigham Young, God's Implementer, left his spiritual vision emblazoned on the Church, and members of the modern Church can affirm George Q. Cannon's statement at

Brigham's funeral that the President not only left upon the Church "the impress of his great mind," but that the "time will come when the Latter-day Saints will appreciate him as one of the greatest Prophets that ever lived."

England's Brother Brigham adds more applause to that increasing swell of appreciation. It is a good book, a noteworthy attempt by an important LDS scholar to essay about biography. Herein lies the book's strength, for England, freed from a strictly historical perspective, is able to select data to support his fresh and special assertions, to essay, and the book therefore manages to examine and assert something significant about Brigham Young in a way which speaks to our times. England thus suggests a new and revised approach to LDS biography, the possibility of a thoughtful return to old subjects for new insights; he prefigures the day when other thoughtful scholars will feel comfortable in essaying about Church history for purposes other than factual history, important as such history will ever be.

But in England's approach lies also the book's greatest weakness, if it has such. On occasion England becomes more biographer than essayist, and the lines between the genres blur. So tellingly does England marshal his facts that the reader can forget he is reading "rather personal essays" and be misled into believing that the book is attempting a comprehensive biography--in 230 pages. It is not: there are too many important, intentional gaps, not the least of which is plural marriage, which England purposely avoided.

Still, England has advanced us toward a new kind of Mormon biography, a fresh way of looking at important data. But, just as importantly, he has advanced us toward an understanding of Brother Brigham, whom we are still tracking in awe and admiration along the memorable course that was his life, a course which, as England lovingly reminds us, has shaped the direction for much of what we treasure as modern Mormonism.

Richard Cracroft

Little Sins, by Patricia Hart Molen. New York City: Leisure Books, 1980. 206 pp. \$1.75 (paperback). May be ordered from the publisher, P. O. Box 270, Norwalk, CT 06852; add \$.50 for shipping costs.

"What was a nice girl like Florence doing in a Cuban bordello--stone cold dead? As the question from the cover indicates, this paperback is packaged to sell as a murder mystery, the kind one picks up in the supermarket or airport. Flossie Robertson, twenty-five year old journalist from Peadillo, Utah, has been sent by the New Woman magazine to cover the 26th of July celebration in Cuba. But on the day of the festivities which Flossie is supposed to be covering in Santiago, she is found murdered in a cheap Havana hotel that rents rooms by the hour, hit on the head with a bottle of rum. The story opens as Fred Wright, life-long friend and next-door neighbor of Flossie, is asked by the Robertson family to go to Cuba and retrieve the body. When Fred arrives in Havana, he discovers that Flossie's remains have already been cremated, so he sends home the ashes and stays to unravel the mystery of the killing. Sounds like a tidy, typical murder mystery plot.

But the book wants to be more than a typical mystery. As the author goes through the customary search-out-the-suspects-and-discover-the-murderer formula, she superimposes on this structure a gradual revelation of the relationship that has developed over the years between Flossie and Fred, and a look at their experiences within Utah Mormon culture, to show its part in forming them into the individuals they become. The second structure finally becomes more important than the first. One knows much more about Peadillo, Utah than about Havana, Cuba by the end of the novel.

The solution of the murder is almost incidental. The parts of the plot that deal with the discovery of the killer seem contrived and superficial, and finally are not very interesting, not untypical of a supermarket murder mystery. The value of this book is in the deeper material it offers about Fred and Flossie, an examination into the lives of two young adults of Mormon background, disillusioned with their faith and the people around them.

The juxtaposition of Cuba and Utah is possible because Fred narrates the novel and Fred is prone to reminisce. One of the book's chapters is entitled "The Unreliable Narrator, or Fred Takes a Detour." As a narrator, Fred is certainly unreliable and he is usually taking a detour. He is apt at any moment to go off on whatever subject suggests itself to his quick but unfocused mind. His allusions and asides are clever to the point of tedium and some of them just plain don't make sense. Despite those faults, however, Fred paints a fairly vivid picture of life in Peadillo.

In creating this imaginary Utah town in which one can recognize characteristics of Ogden, Provo, Logan, and Salt Lake City, if not the entire state, Molen manages to satirize just about everything there is to satirize about Utah Mormon culture. For instance, Peadillo is situated on a polluted lake, across from the Moriancumer Cast-Iron Rod Company. The local newspaper is the Peadillo Examiner (Flossie calls it the Substandard Examiner). In Peadillo there are both a college and a university--the Mormon-run Andrew Young College, a two-year school, named for either a son or a grandson of Brigham Young (there is a discrepancy in the novel on this point); and University of Northern Utah, the four-year school with a half-Mormon, half-Gentile population. The president of Andrew Young is Houston Cluster, a lawyer and "local interpreter of the constitution," who ensures the morality of his faculty by having their wastebaskets checked for Coke cans. The broadcaster of the church television station is Orson Spencer Knurd (silent K); wayward youth and other hardies are sent on "wild survival;" and C. Carey Lambert has a popular book out called I Raise You/I Call You, half of which is written on the right-hand side of the page, and the other half of which is upside down on the left-hand side of the page. One needs only a little exposure to Utah Mormon culture to see the reality behind this fiction.

As Fred seeks Flossie's killer among the Fidel-inspired Cubans of Havana (all of whom, interestingly, lack the hostility toward the United States and its citizens that I expected), he is reminded of Utah. The author's device is to have Fred compare the politically-converted Cubans, who are euphoric in their praise of Castro and post-revolution Cuba, with the religiously-converted Mormons who are just as zealous and singleminded in the defense of their faith. This comparison enables Fred to resolve his animosity toward the Mormons in his home town and leave Peadillo forever. The story is Fred's finally.

The book does have some problems. One of them is the way Fred tells the story. Another is the overall scheme. The attempt to join an in-depth look at Fred and Flossie with a lightweight murder mystery is not entirely successful. Molen can do either type of fiction well, as is evident from her serious stories "Skim Milk," "Mormon Miracle Pageant;" and "Always the Nazi War Criminal," and her three-part murder mystery currently appearing in Utah Holiday magazine. But the two types of material just do not come together well in the same piece.

It is my opinion that Patricia Hart Molen is one of our most gifted young writers and that she has a great deal to contribute to our literature. She is very skilled at development, at balance--the structure beneath the work--and she certainly knows how to tell a good story. I would hope, personally, that she will turn more of her attention to her deeper material in the future. Although, in the short run, serious fiction may be more difficult to publish, in the long run, it will be of most value to us and to her. as well.

Susan Howe

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June 1981

EAST COAST MEETING DRAWS ONE HUNDRED

AML's third spring symposium to be held on the East Coast drew "a hundred people on a Saturday afternoon during Education Week," an indication to the planners and organizers that the interest in Mormon literary topics can hold its own.

The sessions were cosponsored by AML and Dialogue; Mary Bradford, Dialogue's editor, made the local arrangements and conducted both sessions held on April 25th.

The first session convened in the spacious elegance of the House Budget Hearing Room in the Rayburn Building on Capitol Hill, beginning at 12:30 and ending with refreshments and conversation about 4:30. There was plenty to discuss from the five presentations that had been made.

Robert Wood of the University of Rhode Island gave an overview of the philosophy of states and forms of government with an analysis of where Mormon thinking seems to fall on the topic. Sandra Ballif Straubhaar prepared a presentation on Mormons in science fiction. Sandy passed out several science fiction novels to an audience largely unfamiliar with the genre, discussed such "Mormon connections" as Battlestar Galactica, and the work of science fiction professional Orson Scott Card, then analyzed some of the values strongly present in science fiction that would appeal to Mormons.

Susan Howe, the new editor of Cambridge's Exponent II, gave a progress report on the paper and discussed some trends for the future. One observer noted that she made "what would have been considered strong feminist statements," but presented them "so engagingly that it opened doors instead of slamming them." Marlene Payne, a Virginia psychotherapist, talked about the use of archetypes and mythology and some of their connections with Mormon thought.

Donna Hill's gripping report on how--and why--she wrote Joseph Smith: The First Mormon concluded the session, entralling listeners with her half-rueful confessions of how she got hooked on the project that soon stopped being a pursuit and began pursuing. (She will make the same presentation at the Sunstone symposium in Salt Lake City in August.)

Question-answer sessions followed each presentation.

In the evening, the group reconvened in Renee and Jack Carlson's roomy Potomac house for a potluck supper that turned out to be "unexpectedly delicious" and a delightful range of creative works. Donna Hill made a second appearance, reading a short story from a forthcoming collection about "scary animals with supernatural qualities." Her particular selection for the evening involved the touching story of a girl dying of cancer who is stubbornly waiting for a "messenger" that turns out to be a squirrel in Central Park.

Neil Chandler of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, read a story of a man having problems with his wife which surface in their sexual relationship. Carl Sandberg from the University of Minnesota read a long poem based on his early life in southern Utah.

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EAST COAST MEETING
(CONTINUED)

Two humorous presentations also enlivened the evening. Renee Carlton read a "hilarious" chapter from her book about Jack's recent election featuring the nominating convention, the speech-making, and Ronald Reagan's appearance in Utah. Ruth Furr of Springfield, Virginia, followed with the Mother's Day talk everyone has been waiting to hear--a satire--that will be forthcoming in Dialogue's women's issue.

The audience involved not only the "literati," but ward members, young couples, and those whose primary interest is politics and included people from Boston, New York, Connecticut, and Minnesota as well as those closer to home.

AML's thanks to Mary and her committee for a stimulating event.

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULED

Because of the difficulty--indeed the near impossibility--of finding a weekend without major conflicts, the fall symposium of the Association has been re-scheduled. It will be held on Saturday, January 23, 1982, on the campus of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

One of the major topics will be Mormon perspectives on literary theory. Papers or proposals on any topic, however, are invited. Detailed proposals should be sent to Prof. Stephen L. Tanner, Department of English, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602. Proposals must be received by September 1, 1981. Announcements concerning papers selected for presentation will be made by mid-October.

The Association is also sponsoring a session on Mormon literature and the annual conference of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association in Boise, Idaho, October 22-24, 1981. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, chairman of the session, will preside.

PROCEEDINGS DELAYED

The AML 1980-81 proceedings were scheduled to appear during the summer of 1981, but because of some unfortunate complications, they will not be published until later in the year. They will automatically be sent to all members of the Association who paid dues for the year 1980-81.

Though, perhaps, disappointing to some, the delay is not without its advantages. The papers presented at the Association session of the RMMLA meetings in Boise, Idaho will be included.

ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

After almost five years of existence, the Association has finally been officially incorporated under the laws of the State of Utah. The necessary papers to receive recognition as a non-profit organization have also been filed with the IRS. Beyond providing a new mailing status, this recognition will make it possible for the Association to receive contributions that are fully deductible for income tax purposes.

Levi S. Peterson, President	Council: Eugene England	Elouise Bell
Lavina Fielding Anderson, Pres. Elect.	Elizabeth Shaw	William A. Wilson
Stephen L. Tanner, Prog. Chairman	Candadai Seshachari	Chad C. Wright
Steven P. Sondrup, Ex. Sec.	Karen Lynn	Robert Rees

The Association for Mormon Letters

1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84108

Members of the Executive Council have determined that the membership dues for 1982 should be \$7.00 for individuals and \$8.00 for couples desiring joint memberships. Student memberships are \$5.00. Members of the Association are invited to renew their memberships for another year by filling out the form below and mailing it to the Association.

For the sake of efficiency and convenience, members of the Association planning to attend the sixth annual symposium to be held on Saturday, January 23, 1982, in the Auditorium of the Marriott Library at the University of Utah are invited to pre-register. The registration fee is \$1.00. Those planning to attend the luncheon to be held in the Panorama Room of the Student Union Building at a cost of \$6.00 must make reservations in advance. Although registration fees may be paid at the door, no luncheon reservations will be available at that time.

To pre-register and/or renew membership, detach the form below and mail with check or money order. The deadline for the receipt of luncheon reservations is Monday, January 18, 1982.

To: The Association for Mormon Letters
1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84108

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Enclosed please find _____ dollars for _____ membership(s) in The Association for Mormon Letters. The membership(s) is/are (please check) _____ individual _____ joint _____ student.

Number of Symposium Registrations @ \$1.00 _____ . Number of Luncheons @ \$6.00 _____ .

Total Amount for Memberships \$ _____

Total Amount for Registrations \$ _____

Total Amount for Luncheons \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

The Association for Mormon Letters

1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84108

Vol. 5, No. 4

Newsletter

November 1981

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULED

The sixth annual symposium of the Association for Mormon Letters will be held on Saturday, January 23, 1982, in the Auditorium of the Marriott Library at the University of Utah. This date was selected in order to avoid the many scheduling conflicts that arise in September and October.

As in past years, however, papers will be presented in a morning and afternoon session. Several papers on the general topic "Mormons and Modern Literary Theory" have been promised. Contrasting points of view will be represented, and topics as diverse as deconstructionism, moral criticism, and continental hermeneutics will be discussed as they may relate to a Mormon world view. Roger Miller, who is professionally involved with the problem of translation, will address the topic, "'Whoso Readeth Let Him Understand': Latter-day Scriptures and the Problem of Translation." A new feature of this symposium will be papers on the work of contemporary writers. Gloria Cronin, Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus, will, for example, present a critical-analytic discussion of the fiction of Eileen Gibbons Kump. Lorna Nielsen and Steve Walker will read from the poetry of Clinton Larsen; their presentation will be followed by an analysis of Clinton Larsen's place within the framework of modern Mormon poetry. An evening session at which a number of well-known Mormon writers will read from their recent work has also been scheduled.

A luncheon in the Panorama Room of the Olpin Student Union Building will be held. The presidential address and the awarding of the prizes for creative and critical writing will follow the luncheon. The Panorama Room can easily accommodate all symposium participants, but pre-registration will be necessary. The cost of the luncheon will be six dollars.

All members of the Association are cordially invited to register for and attend the symposium. Guests and prospective members of the Association will be, as always, most welcome. Advance registration forms are included with this newsletter.

SPECIAL SESSION HELD

A special session on Mormon literature was sponsored by the Association at the annual meeting of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association in Boise, Idaho on Saturday, October 24, 1981. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher organized and chaired the session. Karl Keller presented a paper entitled, "Fiction at the Mormon Fringe," in which he discussed the work of Robert Christmas, Franklin Fisher, and Joyce Eliason with particular reference to the language of their work. Richard Cracroft shed new light on an unknown side of a well-known figure in his account of B.H. Roberts as a novelist. Following up on some idea presented in a similar session a year ago, Steven P. Sondrup analyzed some of the potentially tragic dimensions of Mormon theology. Eugene England will chair the session to be held in conjunction with the 1983 convention in Salt Lake City. Those wishing to participate should address inquiries to him in care of the English Department, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.

MEDIA OUTLETS

One of the problems many Mormon writers dealing with Mormon themes face is the question of where to publish their works. Which publishers are interested in Mormon material? Which publishers will be able to market works written for a Mormon audience? These and many similar questions are frequently asked but rarely answered in a systematic way.

Mormon Media Market, a volume published by Al R. Young, Roger Reynolds, and Kenneth A. Haubrock is designed to answer these and many other queries. The volume is a directory intended for Mormon writers and composers of more than 120 publishers and producers who are interested in original Mormon literature and music. In addition to the names and addresses of such publishers, information on how to make initial contacts and how to submit material is included. This guide, though, is designed for more than just the professional writer and musician. It lists, for example, printers of family and personal histories, associations, contests, and conferences of interest to Mormons, along with some useful suggestions to anyone interested in seeing his or her work in print.

Mormon Media Market can be ordered from Cumorah Publishing Company, 572 West 440 South, Orem, Utah 84057.

READING SCHEDULED

Linda Sillitoe will read from her current fiction on Sunday, December 6, 1981, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Paul and Lavina Fielding Anderson, 1519 Roberta Street (240 East) Salt Lake City.

Levi S. Peterson, President	Council: Eugene England	Elouise Bell
Lavina Fielding Anderson, Pres. Elect	Elizabeth Shaw	William A. Wilson
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Steven P. Sondrup, Ex. Sec.	Karen Lynn	Robert Rees

The Association for Mormon Letters

1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84108

Newsletter

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

OF THE

ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS

Marriott Library Auditorium University of Utah Salt Lake City
Saturday, January 23, 1982

Dear Member:

This newsletter packet contains a condensed program of the upcoming symposium of the Association to be held on Saturday, January 23, 1982, in the auditorium of the Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

It also contains copies of the new articles of incorporation and of the new by-laws. These have been filed as official documents with the State of Utah and with the Internal Revenue Service of the Federal government. (Thanks to these documents, the Association has tax-exempt status with the IRS and your contributions beginning with 1981 are deductible.) The articles and by-laws now need the approval (or amendment if desired) of the members of the Association assembled in the business meeting of the symposium. Please read the articles and by-laws and come prepared to discuss and vote on them at the business meeting.

This packet also contains the slate of officers nominated by the nominating committee. One person for each open office has been nominated. Nominations are acceptable from the floor at the time of the business meeting. A list of remaining officers and board members is attached.

I look forward to seeing you at the symposium on January 23rd.

Levi S. Peterson
President
Association for Mormon Letters

THE ASSOCIATION FOR
MORMON LETTERS

Newsletter

Page 2

SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR OPEN OFFICES FOR 1982

President elect (first vice president):	Candadai Seshachari Ogden
Program chairperson (second vice president):	Linda Hunter Adams Provo
Board member, three year term:	Clifton H. Jolley Salt Lake City
Board member, three year term:	Jay Fox Provo
Board member, one year term:	Linda King Newell Salt Lake City

The officers whose continued service during 1982 has been determined by prior elections are Lavina Fielding Anderson, Salt Lake City, president; Levi S. Peterson, Ogden, past president; Steven P. Sondrup, Salt Lake City, executive secretary-treasurer; Elouise M. Bell, Provo, board member (two years remaining); William A. Wilson, Logan, board member (two years remaining); Karen Lynn, Provo, board member (one year remaining).

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS

We the undersigned, natural persons of the age of 21 years or more, acting as incorporators of a corporation under the Utah Non-profit Corporation and Cooperative Association Act, do hereby adopt the following articles of incorporation for such corporation.

ARTICLE I

NAME. The name of the corporation hereby created is THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS.

ARTICLE II

DURATION. The corporation shall continue in existence perpetually unless sooner dissolved according to law.

ARTICLE III

PURPOSES. The corporation (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the Association) is organized as a nonprofit corporation exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes. In particular the purposes of the Association are:

1. To foster scholarly and creative work and interest in the field of Mormon letters and to promote fellowship and communication among scholars and writers interested in Mormon literature.
2. To engage in all other lawful transactions which a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Utah might do, accomplish, or engage in.
3. The foregoing enumeration of specific purposes and objects shall not be held to limit or restrict in any manner the powers of the Association, but shall be in furtherance of and in addition to the general powers conferred by the Utah Non-profit Corporation and Cooperative Association Act and by all other laws in the State of Utah, all of which powers this nonprofit corporation shall have.
4. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the Association shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

ARTICLE IV

RESTRICTIONS. No part of the profits or earnings or assets of the Association shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP. The Association shall have members, and membership shall be open to all persons who shall pay dues as directed by the bylaws of the Association or by resolution of the Association duly adopted. Members shall not be individually or personally liable for the debts or obligations of the Association. The bylaws shall set forth the classes of members, the qualifications and rights of members of each class and provide for termination and forfeiture of rights of members of each class and provide for imposition of dues, assessments, or other charges on members.

Each member whose dues have been currently paid shall be entitled to a vote in all elections and other business affairs of the Association.

ARTICLE VI

GOVERNING BOARD AND OFFICERS. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a governing board called the Board of Trustees. The initial Board of Trustees shall consist of the three persons whose names and addresses appear below, who are duly elected officers in the Association for Mormon Letters. Following the first year of operation under these articles, the Board of Trustees shall consist of all duly elected officers of the Association.

The officers of the Association shall consist of a president and such other officers as the bylaws shall call for, which shall not be less than three. The officers shall be elected by the membership of the Association in such manner as provided for by the bylaws.

The initial Board of Trustees shall consist of the persons whose names and addresses follow:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Lavina Fielding Anderson | 1519 Roberta Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115 |
| 2. Steven P. Sondrup | 1346 South 1800 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103 |
| 3. Levi S. Peterson | 1561 25th Street
Ogden, Utah 84401 |

ARTICLE VII

ADOPTIONS AND CHANGES. These articles of incorporation shall be amended only by approval of a majority of voting members of the Association in attendance at a meeting which has been announced by mail to all members of the Association postmarked at least fifteen calendar days in advance of the meeting.

The bylaws which have hitherto been established by the membership of the Association for Mormon Letters are recognized as valid and operative by these articles of incorporation. The bylaws shall be amended or repealed only by approval of a majority of voting members of the Association in attendance at a meeting which has been announced by mail to all members of the Association postmarked at least fifteen calendar days in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

DISSOLUTION. This corporation may be dissolved only by action of a majority vote of the members present at a meeting which has been announced by mail to all members of the Association postmarked at least fifteen calendar days in advance of the meeting or by the operation of law. In the event of dissolution, none of its assets shall be distributed to any of its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons. Upon dissolution, all assets shall be distributed to one or more domestic organizations or societies engaged in activities substantially similar to those of this corporation and which has established its tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code or subsequent provision of the internal revenue code.

ARTICLE IX

PRINCIPAL OFFICE. The address of the initial principal office of the Association is:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Steven P. Sondrup | 1346 South 1800 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84108 |
|-------------------|--|

BYLAWS

ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of the Association for Mormon Letters, established by its articles of incorporation which have been officially filed with the State of Utah, is to foster scholarly and creative work and interest in the field of Mormon letters and to promote fellowship and communication among scholars and writers interested in Mormon literature. These bylaws are established to define policy as directed by the articles of incorporation.

Section 2: Membership and dues

As directed by the articles of incorporation, membership shall consist of persons who have paid annual dues; each person whose dues have been currently paid shall be entitled to a vote in all elections and other business affairs of the Association.

These bylaws establish that annual dues are payable by January 1st of each year. The categories of membership and the dues appropriate to each are:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Annual dues</u>
Regular	\$7.00
Student	\$5.00
Husband/wife	\$8.00
Sustaining	\$50.00
Benefactor	\$100.00

Section 3: Nomination and election of officers

The officers shall be nominated by a committee selected by the Governing Board of the Association which by the articles of incorporation consists of all duly elected and appointed officers of the Association. A slate of candidates shall be presented to the membership at an annual meeting of the Association which has been announced by mail postmarked at least fifteen days in advance of the meeting. Nominations shall also be accepted from the floor during this meeting. The eligible members present shall elect the officers by majority vote.

Section 4: Officers, terms, and duties

According to the articles of incorporation, the officers of the Association shall consist of a president and such other officers as the bylaws shall call for, which shall not be fewer than three. These bylaws herewith establish the following officers.

ARTICLE VI

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ARTICLE IX

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Steven P. Sondrup	1346 South 1800 East Salt Lake City, Utah 84108
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