

Minutes of the American Philatelic Society Board of Directors Meeting

February 16 - 18, 2000, Portland, Oregon

Third Session - February 18, 2000 Attendees:

Board of Directors: President Peter P. McCann; Vice Presidents: Gordon Morison, Charles Peterson; Secretary Janet Klug; Treasurer Nancy B.Z. Clark; Directors-at-Large Jeanette Knoll Adams, Lloyd de Vries, Ann M. Triggler, Wayne Youngblood. Not present: Immediate Past President John M. Hotchner and Vice President Diane Boehret.

Staff: Executive Director Bob Lamb.

Guests: George Kramer, Dr. Charles Lowry.

President McCann called the third session of the APS Board of Directors meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. in room C120 of the Portland Convention Center in Portland, Oregon. He introduced Dr. Charles Lowry, APRL consultant.

American Philatelic Research Library

Lowry: It is clear that the APRL is at the point where it must have more space. There are several ways to do this. There could be a small addition that would cope with some of the problems of collection space. A stopgap method is not unfeasible, but it is not defensible. Lowry's written report tried to demonstrate why it was not defensible. Many of the fundamental problems with work flow and organization of technical services as they are presently constituted will not be served with that sort of an addition.

Staff efficiency is going to figure increasingly on how well the library does. The great libraries of the future will be those with great staffs. The reason for that is because we are looking at a complex information environment. It gets more so every day. It is not just electronic issues. Intellectual property issues are becoming extremely complex and difficult to manage. Staff does not need to be wasting time because they are physically organized in a poor way. They need to be as effective as possible, because that is the most expensive component in the library. The collection costs are a small part of the budget because so much of it is donated or exchanged.

The question about efficiency is a critical one. If you walk into most physical spaces in most technical services in libraries, those backroom operations that most patrons don't get into, you would find the appearance of disorder, particularly in a place where you have to store large scale gifts. Those appearances may give one the impression of that it could be better organized. The answer to that is that it probably could, but it wouldn't really give any appreciable space that would be required to forestall an addition for any length of time.

Secondarily, there is the relationship between APRL and APS - the teaching functions such as Summer Seminar. It makes the APS a strong point for support of the discipline and hobby of philately. That figures highly in your thinking. The addition has to aid and abet that process.

It is most critical in the addition that the library work very closely with the architect and think through the physical organization of that facility so that the staff is provided with exactly the kind of space it needs to organize its work. That means that periodicals are together in a single processing area. The workflow is simple, and the staff is not moving from one space to the next. Presently most staff have two work spaces. Some have three. Any kind of library work flow has to be systematic. The less

systematic it is the more human effort has to go into it. Much can be done in the design phase to obviate that and correct some of the problems so as to maximize the human resources.

It is important that the future of print collections be taken into consideration. We do not know how quickly we will get conversion to electronic formats as the original basis for publication. In higher education, technical journals are being born electronic. We know conversion will happen, but we don't know when. Philately has a small publishing area. Press runs for books are small. Journals have small circulations. The result of that is that it is much more difficult for the movement to electronic to occur. It will be a more extended time before philatelic journals will be born electronic and available for their entire lives electronically. If that happens, APRL will need more space. The way to get more space is to not necessarily build a bigger building but to build a space that is capable of taking live loads up to 300 pounds per square foot so that you can gradually put in compact storage and adjust to the rate of change no matter how fast it is.

The growth of the collection is about 50 - 50 books and journals. The wisdom today is that books are not going to be replaced very quickly. Books are just ergonomically the way to organize linear reading and much of reference. It is not likely to be converted to electronic any time soon. All predictions of how quickly we will move to electronic have been wrong. It has not happened as quickly as we thought it would. Adaptability to technology is another area of critical importance. A good architect with a consultant in telecom and utilities will be able to give you a facility that will allow you to do the things you need to do with information technology in the future.

Triggle: Will the proposed plan for the library be structured so that there could be a type of storage sub-basement which would have the right conditions to maintain collections that come in prior to processing and integration in the main library.

Lowry: If you have a need for a small storage space it could certainly be a remote storage area such as that provided staff won't have to negotiate it very often. That is a reasonable step to take, but would depend on the topography of the space. The current basement may not be adequate for conversion to HVAC and compact movable storage. That is an easy thing to test.

Adams: The plan presented yesterday to the Board included doubling the present basement and doubling the previous addition. If the current basement were doubled, then would it be useful space? In the written report Lowry indicated it was not very useful space now.

Lowry: Being contiguous is critical in a small staff. There is not very good contiguous space now. Staff is working on the main floor and in the basement. Figuring out how that would work from a staffing point of view so that staff is not split between floors when they are doing team projects would be difficult. An option would be to consider a large space at a sublevel or basement level where all the technical services can be housed. That is an alternative, but you have to move all those staff to that one place.

De Vries: The architect indicated it wasn't a good idea to have people working regularly below ground.

Lamb: We don't have that large a staff. If you end up with two people working in the basement, they get unintended messages about their worth.

Lowry: That is a social-psychological aspect of this but it is certainly true.

Klug: In the written report, Lowry mentions that efficiencies can be achieved in the current space. What are those efficiencies?

Lowry: They are small efficiencies. In a work area where there is a recent gift stacked four feet high in boxes, this creates two problems. The first is clutter that is hard to manage. The second is that it is an inefficient way to work on that collection. Gini Horn is already doing something about that by installing some new shelving in some of the areas on the floor. In some measure some staff reorganization might be done. These efficiencies won't go very far in redeeming the situation, but it can create some small efficiencies. There is a very uneven pattern of gifts. Sometimes you may receive a tractor trailer load. To completely physically reorganize stored collections that are being processed as gifts so that everything is tidy is just about impossible.

Morison: The architect provided a design for a two-storied facility, actually one story and a basement next to the existing expansion from ten years ago. With what has been said about keeping everyone on the same floor, would it be better to double the space on the same floor and not put the basement on?

Lowry: The storage needs are not such that you have to double that space, especially if you make the new space compact movable shelving compatible. The ideal is to keep the staff as contiguous as possible because of the multi-tasking that they do. It is not impossible to think about having the public collection on two floors, one on top of the other. That is another option that has not been given any consideration. It is a small collection, but it is not unfeasible to do that. You would need an elevator, which adds cost.

Triggle: Some of our members are getting on in age and are not going to want the collection to be on two floors.

De Vries: The architect indicated that the existing structure could not hold another story and that only the new section could be built up with a second story. A very small part of the library section will be new and therefore capable of containing another story.

Lowry: Inquired if the architect was proposing that the new wing have the floor capacity for compact movable storage and that the public collection moves into that area.

[The Board assured him that was what was being proposed.]

Peterson: We are aware there are public access problems if we move the public collection into multiple stories.

Triggle: If we use more computers in the public access areas compared with the tables we have now, would we need more or less space?

Lowry: When you put computers in a public library you need more space not less. The work area is enlarged by the footprint of the technology itself and workstations with good sized screens which are certainly going to be the norm. The footprint is getting larger, and if you add a printer you need much more significant space for staff and patrons to work.

Triggle: If you add closed stacks, wouldn't that help at all? At the moment we have open stacks and open tables. If we go on the computer we would have more closed stacks because we would be getting our information from the computer.

Lowry: To use closed stacks, particularly if you have to do staff paging for users, there is not enough staff to do that. It is one of the reasons why libraries moved from paged collections to open stack collections. It inconvenienced users, but the main reason was because staff overhead for paging was impossible. This collection is small. It would inconvenience users a great deal if you devised a system in which they had to ask for materials.

De Vries: If things aren't changed in the library, is there a point in which the current setup stops working?

Lowry: Two years. You will have to add double-faced sections to the stacks you have in the public areas, decreasing utility in the public areas. You can do a few things with the efficiency in the tech services area, and Lowry recommends that this opportunity be used to learn how to do that, so that they can use this thinking in the specifications of the new facility. Lowry did not know what would happen after two years.

Lamb: Discussed this with Horn in case the Board did not approve construction of a library addition. APRL would take away more of the tables in the seating area and keep bringing the shelves out and pushing the shelves closer together.

Lowry: You are below standard right now.

Youngblood: What will happen during construction? Will they need a staging area?

Lowry: This will be a challenging piece of addition because it means you build a new building and refurbish the old building. It will be very difficult to serve anybody during this period. Staff will have a tremendous amount of pressure on them. You will have to take a lot of measures that will require effort such as covering collections, and moving them more than once in order to accomplish this. You may even have to move some materials off site temporarily in order to give yourself the necessary working space.

Adams: Are there any efficiencies to be gained from weeding the collection?

Lowry: We looked at that. One of the problems is that the library has a policy of retaining three copies of monographs. It doesn't attain that. Less than half the collection is even two copies. The only way to adequately do that is to look at the circulation of materials. Because this is principally a lending library, maybe the standard should be two copies. If you got rid of your third copies, it might not get you anywhere. It might be useful to gather data from the Inmagic system to see what actual use is like. That data could be used as a guide for putting third copies, and in some cases even second copies, in storage.

Adams: Was surprised from reading the report at how quickly the auction catalog collection grows and thought perhaps some of the old catalogs lose their utility over time.

Peterson: The old catalogs are the ones to be the most concerned about. It would be difficult to determine which were no longer needed. There is value in having a complete run to show the history of an auction house. It is part of the history of the hobby. It has taken on a collectible genre of its own.

George Kramer: The report stated that a second building was not feasible because it would separate staff, but where do we go next when we need another addition?

Lowry: The question always seems to be one of how to make this addition for the library the last that will ever have to be built. It is a vexing question for a library manager because there is no evidence that it is ever going to end. Maybe the eventual progress of information technology will free us from this regime of always needing more space. The best way is to be sure that the area of greatest growth, the collection, is covered by the capability to convert it to compact moveable storage. The larger space you have that has the 300 pounds per square foot live load capability, the better position you will be in to extend the life of the library addition. Libraries are traditionally built with either a 15 or 20 year horizon. They tend to be stretched further than that by doing just what you are doing with APRL, and that is gobbling up the public spaces. You do that to your own detriment. The best possible solution is to move

to a conversion of compact movable storage. The new ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements are not terribly difficult to achieve, but they do cost something. With compact movable storage you don't have to pay attention to them anymore. Technically there are no aisles. You get a lot of efficiency with it as compared with necessary space when you have an ADA compliant facility.

Kramer: The two segments of our operation that tie together are expertizing and the library. Administration does not necessarily have that much to do with the library. We also don't comply with fire regulations. Maybe there is a gas extinguishing system we could use.

Lowry: There is a system called halon. Halon capabilities are now against the law because of the ozone problem. They are being taken off the market. There are some new systems called Mist-A-Fire. It is designed for libraries, but the cost is higher than a standard sprinkling system. That price will come down. When a sprinkling system comes on it drowns the fire. In the process it also drowns the books. It is the most serious damage to library collections when there is a fire. The Mist-A-Fire system creates a very fine mist that suffocates the fire so that the books are not doused in the process.

Kramer: The point is, we could build a separate building for expertizing and the library and have everyone else stay in the present building. The two buildings could be connected by a covered walkway.

Peterson: Kramer did not see the drawings for the architect. The plans call for modular segments that can expand if needed. It does allow us some flexibility.

Lowry: You are about to put the library through a mini hell in making an addition and refurbishing the space that is adjacent to it. It will be a tough job and will have an impact on Society users. If you built the library in a separate building and moved it out, you could then refurbish the rest of the building with a lot less problems. That is one alternative to think about.

McCann: A lot of our thinking will have to do with the cost.

Lowry: Even with the addition, whatever you build for the library should take into account things like HVAC, state-of-the art Mist-A-Fire systems. Then the library could move into the new wing and you could remodel the old library areas for alternative uses. They would still be contiguous.

Triggle: The idea Kramer brought up is one we hadn't considered. Triggle asked Lamb to address that.

Lamb: It was one of the first ideas we looked at and was rejected because of its poor command and control reasons. We have a small staff of 45 people who would be spread in two buildings. Activities in the Society are fairly well integrated. Education, and Editorial are in the library all the time. The library is in finance all the time. If you put these people in two buildings you can imagine the traffic running back and forth. It undermines the notion of a place of common interest that can attract philately.

Lowry: That is probably the case, but it is worth considering.

Youngblood: Suggested the meeting rooms could be placed in the basement. That would enhance the contiguous space in the library and gain the efficiencies Lowry recommends.

Lowry: You have to have a flexible notion in the beginning of how you are going to use the space. The problem is that you can very quickly get locked into a specific design concept and it may not be the best design concept. It pays to be imaginative at the very beginning.

Kramer: A new building will be about 20% cheaper per square foot because of the fact that walls are going to be knocked down. As far as cost efficiency is concerned, adding to the present building is not

the way to do it, especially if you are looking to make the library and expertizing state of the art. This is going to require much more change to the present structure than people realize. It is going to be very expensive. It would be much, much cheaper to build a new building and connect the two.

McCann: What we had presented to us yesterday was a concept by the architect. What we asked the Committee to do is come back to us in a few months with something that is feasible. We asked the Chairman of that Committee to cost it out for us. We are very concerned about finances. The sense of the Board is that it is an interesting idea, but we don't know if we can afford it. We can't write a check for it. If we do this we have to raise the money separately from our current finances.

Clark: Would building a separate building give us a problem with tax status?

Lamb: No. What is being done in the facility that determines the tax status. Actually, on second thought, it might. We have a public library and that is tax free. Everything is in a library-owned building, it might be stretched.

Lowry: If the library owned both buildings it shouldn't be a problem.

When you are talking about an addition versus a new building, you may be talking about a distinction without a difference depending on how close the facilities are together and how the connecting hallway works. You can give the effect of an addition in a physically separate building.

What your committee has been charged to do is the right thing, that is, to go out and look at all the possibilities while keeping in mind the obligation of raising the money and come back with a plan that makes good sense.

One of the things Lowry hopes he has done is to give the Board the tool to convince the membership that this is the right thing to do, that everything has been thought about and this is the time. It gives APS the opportunity to do something entrepreneurial and important for the hobby. You want to be sure you get a building that is priced right. You don't want something that is grandiose. At the same time you want something that is highly functional and aimed at the future.

De Vries: Are there grants for building libraries?

Lowry: No. Carnegie hasn't given grants to libraries in 50 years.

Triggle: Believed there were grants for maintaining library collections.

Lamb: We explored what the state could do for us. Pennsylvania does have a small commission that assists museums. We are not a museum. We would have to establish ourselves.

Triggle: Through a similar program, Triggle was able to get three days of technical help with a consultant.

Lowry: Was not optimistic about finding funding outside APS membership. That is where the resources are. What is important is the way in which you fund the facility. The strategy you use may be one of raising partial funding. There are only a couple of ways to attack the problem without having the total amount in hand.

You have a case. It is a fabulous library for philately. You get set back on your heels every once in awhile by finding a nugget you don't know about, and this is one of those. It is extraordinary. One of the things you have that has great promise for the future is a series of small indexing collections that various

collectors have poured their life into. They are in the library now, and they are really good targets for conversion to online systems to build better access to the literature. That would be a great project. You may actually find some money for some technology work on that.

Lamb: We are actually doing that. If you look on the website you will see that there are additions being made all the time.

McCann: Thanked Dr. Lowry for coming to discuss this with the Board. He has given us the ability to have the credibility to tell the membership that we need to do something about the library and to have a perspective other than our own. This has been very helpful to us.

Motion: To adjourn. Moved by Clark. Seconded by Klug. Passed unanimously.