

NEWS

MEETING BREATHES LIFE INTO ASSOCIATION OF MORMON LETTERS

By Dan Maryon

The Association for Mormon Letters held an awards banquet and annual business meeting 1 April in Salt Lake City, presenting writing awards for 1987, hearing readings by award winners, and sustaining new officers and board members for 1988. While reports of AML's death are only slightly exaggerated, the group plans to resume a regular schedule of activities during the coming year and increase membership, which has dwindled from a high of over 300 to about 70 current members.

The annual banquet, held at the

home of Steven Sondrup, began with a business meeting to discuss the current state of the Association. Begun in 1976, AML has sponsored an annual symposium since 1977 and awards prizes each year in imaginative and critical writing. A newsletter and annual journal have been published, but interest has dropped sharply in the last three or four years, and only six submissions were received for the 1987 journal, according to Sondrup. The East and West coast AML symposia that have been held in the past are no longer organized, and the 1988

Utah symposium was cancelled when no proposals for papers or readings were received. Typical of this year's activity rate, only twenty people attended the 1988 banquet.

William A. Wilson, chair of BYU's English department, was named president for 1988, and Levi Peterson, professor of English at Weber State College, will serve as president-elect. John Tanner, assistant professor of English at BYU, is the immediate past president, and gave the presidential address as part of the evening's program. In addition to current board members Gloria Cronin, Dean Hughes, and Bruce Jorgensen, Linda Sillitoe and Ken Hunsaker were named to the board, with a sixth member yet to be confirmed. The board and new officers will decide what form future meetings and publications will take.

Possible changes in AML's meetings and publications were proposed during the meeting, and include cosponsoring events with other symposia (such as SUNSTONE, Mormon History Associa-

tion, and RMMLA), holding monthly readings open to the public, publishing an annual bibliography, and producing a combination newsletter/journal.

The 1987 writing awards given at the meeting are:

Critical Writing: Bruce W. Jorgensen, "Romantic Lyric Form and Western Mormon Experience in the Stories of Douglas Thayer," *Western American Literature* 22:1 (May 1987).

Personal Essay: Mary L. Bradford, *Leaving Home* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books).

Poetry: R. A. Christmas, "Self Portrait as Brigham Young," *Sunstone* 11:4 (July 1987).

Short Story: Darrell Spencer, *Woman Packing a Pistol* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Dragon Gate).

Novel: Linda Sillitoe, *Sideways to the Sun* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books).

For additional information on the Association of Mormon Letters, contact: Steven Sondrup, 1346 South 1800 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84108.

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

By Sharee Hughes

THE ANDREW JENSEN SOCIETY a weekly Salt Lake brown-bag lunch group named after the early twentieth-century assistant church historian, where historians present works in progress, has been denied permission after fifteen years to continue meeting in a room off of the LDS Church Office Building cafeteria. They are looking for a new (free) downtown location.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MORMON COUNSELORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS (AMCAP) will hold their semi-annual conference on 29-30 September, just preceding the LDS General Conference. The topic of the conference is "Change." For more information contact AMCAP, Counseling Center, 149 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.

HELP: HOMOSEXUAL EDUCATION FOR LDS PARENTS was recently removed from the status of a Church program under LDS Social Services. The organization is petitioning Church leaders to be reinstated. For more information contact Donna and Charles Payton, 1131B Larkin Way, Napa, CA 94558, 707/255-2629.

THE JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION awarded three individuals for their contributions to Latter Day Saint history: Best Book to Stephen LeSueur for *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*; best article award to Les Gardner for "Great White Father: Gilbert J. Walker and the [RLDS] Church in the Hawaiian Islands" (publisher?); and a special award to John Horner for his play "The Kirtland Rehearsal." The

Association's 1988 Annual Meeting will be held in Nauvoo 23-25 September. Proposals for papers should be sent to Paul Edwards, Temple School, The Auditorium, Box 1059, Independence, MO 64051.

THE MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION has announced a call for papers for the 1989 annual meeting which will be held 11-14 May in Quincy, Illinois, and include a day-long trip to Nauvoo, Carthage and Warsaw for site papers at restoration projects. The conference theme is "Mormons in Illinois: A Sesquicentennial Consideration." Papers and complete sessions will deal with the conference theme and other aspects of the history and culture of Mormonism and its divergent groups. Proposals should include the topic, historical methods to be employed, significance of the study, and a one-page vita on each participant. Proposals should be submitted by 1 September 1988 to Program Chair, Roger D. Launius, 1001 East, Cedar Street, New Baden, IL 62265.

THE UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY is displaying the exhibit "Silver in the Golden State" in the Grand Lobby of the Rio Grande Depot in Salt Lake through 7 October. The Society's annual meeting will be 14-15 July, followed by the second annual pie and ice cream social on Saturday, 16 July. For more details call 801/533-5755.

The Sunstone Calendar will appear in the news section of each issue. Notices for the calendar should be sent to Sunstone Calendar, 331 South Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1137.

UPDATE ON THE COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH'S PRESIDING QUORUMS

WHEN PRESIDENT Spencer Kimball announced the reorganization of the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1975 the move inaugurated a half decade redefining the roles and responsibilities of the new quorum, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. The result is a committee system of general authorities which exercises substantial oversight of the church headquarters and general programs and is designed to keep the focus of the Church on its stated three missions: to preach the gospel, redeem the dead, and perfect the saints.

Church organization was not always complex. In the 1930s the First Presidency directly supervised many departments and apostles served as general presidents of the auxiliaries. In the 1960s the priesthood correlation movement restructured the Church administration bringing all departments and auxiliaries (some of which had become quite autonomous) under priesthood direction. Coupled with that, the growth of the Church has required the Quorum of the Twelve to assume direct administration that the First Presidency once did.

In 1977 the First Presidency announced that they had made an organizational distinction between the ecclesiastical affairs of the Church and the temporal affairs (although those terms are not now the Church "buzz words" they were then). Under the direction of the First Presidency, ecclesiastical affairs were to be administered by the Quorum of the Twelve and the temporal matters (buildings and welfare services) by the presiding bishop. As a result, youth programs were transferred from the presiding

bishop to the Twelve.

On the ecclesiastical side there are three "executive councils" which direct the affairs of the Church: the Missionary Executive Council, the Priesthood Executive Council, and the Temple and Family History Executive Council (formerly the Temple and Genealogy Executive Council). Apostles are assigned by seniority to one of the committees. The senior apostle on each council serves as chair. Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy who act as the executive director of a Church department also serve on the council which directs their department. (See organizational chart for committee assignments.)

These councils directly supervise both the Church bureaucracy and "priesthood line" leaders of the Church. Like Congressional committees, these councils give programs and policies a detailed general authority review, which explains why some apostles seem particularly active in a certain area. Each council also supervises one third of the areas of the Church, giving them direct authority over the Church's hierarchal priesthood line. For each area presidency, one apostle on the council is identified as the "first contact" person (see chart for area assignments).

Overseeing these three councils is the Correlation Executive Committee, whose membership consists of the chair of each executive council and the presiding bishop. The chair of this committee is the president of the Twelve or, if for some reason he does not serve on the committee, the senior apostle on the committee. This influential committee of the three or four sen-

ior apostles directs executive councils and hence most programs of the Church. In addition, the Correlation Department, which approves all Church materials for publication, reports to this committee. One particularly influential branch of the Correlation Department is Research and Evaluation, which conducts highly sophisticated studies on the Church in areas such as membership activity and conversion processes. Obviously, the chair of this committee can be very influential; because of the activist nature of the current chair, some in the bureaucracy call him the "de facto" Church president.

This committee structure places the Quorum of the Twelve in a position to actively "regulate the affairs of the [church] in all nations" (D&C 107:33). Indeed, many informed Church staff describe the management of the Church's departments without mentioning the First Presidency. When asked about the role of the Presidency, one senior bureaucrat with years of Church Office Building experience replied, "That is the great secret." Another jokingly stated, "In this Church we made a distinction long ago between presiding and conducting." Others explain that there is an extensive informal decision-making system that is not reflected in organizational charts.

LDS Public Communications spokesperson Jerry Cahill explains that preliminary decisions made by the executive councils are approved in a weekly meeting of the Twelve and the First Presidency. According to him, the structure of that meeting's agenda is the three missions of the Church and the specific items come from the executive councils. Nevertheless, items that received an hour discussion in an executive council may get five minutes at this meeting. (For a detailed description of the administrative meetings of Spencer Kimball's presidency see President N. Eldon Tanner's speech, "Administration of the Restored Church," in the 1978 April *Ensign*.) However, members of the First Presidency

are able to exercise control through the crucial committees they chair, including the General Welfare Services Committee chaired by President Thomas S. Monson (which oversees the functions of the presiding bishop), the Personnel Committee, the Church Board of Education chaired by President Gordon B. Hinckley (which oversees Brigham Young University and the Church Educational System), and the all important budget committee, the Committee on the Disposition of the Tithes, which meets once a year.

In addition, the Brethren have a loyal bureaucracy which sincerely attempts to implement their will. Many Church administrators report that the latest talks by the prophet and his counselors are frequently referred to by general authorities and analyzed by employed staff for direction in administering programs.

If the historically ambiguous role between the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve is now fairly clearly delineated, the role of the First Quorum of the Seventy is still uncertain and the boundaries between them and the Twelve, with whom they are doctrinally equal in authority, continue to shift. Shortly after the Quorum was reorganized, the differences in quorum responsibilities were explained by assigning the setting of vision to the First Presidency, policy to the Twelve, and administration to the Seventy. The seven presidents and other seventies were made directors of the Church's main departments and the presidency began making administrative decisions. Very soon, however, the apostles began to sense that they were too distant from "regulating the affairs" and the executive councils were created to direct the departments, giving the Twelve greater supervision.

Currently seventies now fulfill their scriptural injunction to act "under the direction of the Twelve...in regulating all the affairs of the church" (D&C 107:34) on an individual basis. As area presidents, auxiliary heads, and department directors they report to mem-

bers of the Twelve on the executive councils. However, the quorum seldom has the opportunity to act as a united group. In a way, the former title "assistant to the Twelve" is more descriptive of their duties than "member of the First Quorum of the Seventy." There is a monthly quorum meeting for members in Salt Lake, and after each general conference there is a quorum meeting in which information is disseminated but no decisions are made. (One seventy in an overseas area presidency is hoping to serve his entire five-year term without attending a quorum meeting.) Apparently, when the seven presidents meet they do some coordinating, work on specific assignments from the Twelve, but outside of training new members, they do not direct the work of the members of their quorum.

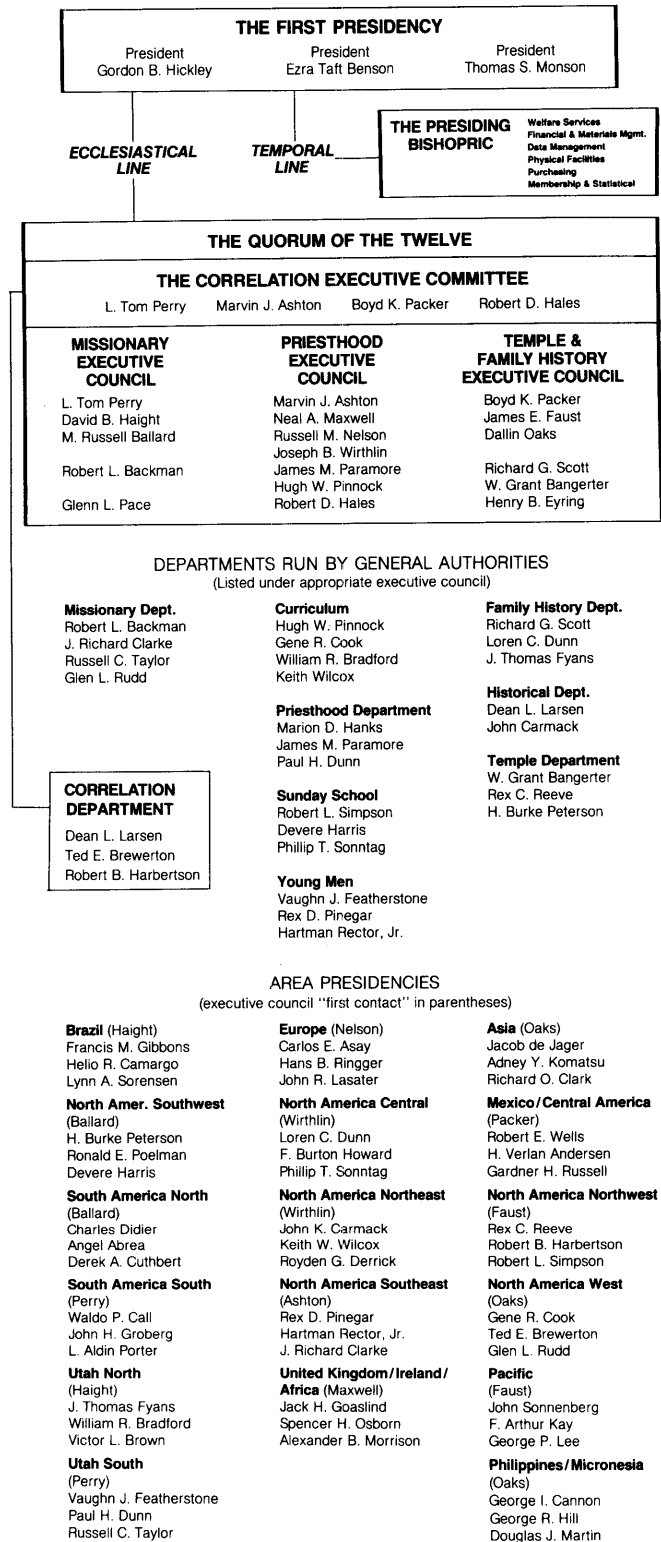
In addition to the above major committees and councils there are numerous other general authority committees, which are usually chaired by an apostle and frequently have seventies as members. A sampling of them include the Boundaries and Leadership Changes Committee, the Special Affairs Committee chaired by Elder David B. Haight (press and governmental relations), the Leadership Training Committee chaired by Elder James E. Faust (for general authorities and stake and local leaders), the committee on the restoration of temple blessings and cancellation of sealings (it reports to the First Presidency).

Even for Church Office Building employees, it is difficult to understand the organization of the general authorities. The Brethren are very secretive about their inner workings. Currently, no organizational charts are available even for the bureaucracy. For the general church member, no listing of general authority responsibilities and organization has been published since a 1979 *Church News* story announced the executive committees, as they were then called. Although the accompanying chart is accurate as of late as April 1988, it is undoubtedly now out of date

(there are rumors of major reassignments in August). Reportedly, one reason for the dearth of information on the presiding quorums is to avoid emphasizing the process and personalities over the content of their deliberations.

Terminology is important in Church administration. For example, when a seventy directs a department, he is the *executive* director and his counselors (who are also seventies) are *managing* directors; however, when a non-general authority is the director he is only a managing director. The term "administer" is now out of favor; several apostles have become attached to dropping the "ad" and simply "ministering" to the Church.

With the growth and entrenchment of the committee system, the decision-making processes of the general authorities have become more collaborative. When President Gordon B. Hinckley was a counselor to Spencer W. Kimball he easily dismissed a reporter's question about the possibility that Ezra Taft Benson might lead the Church in an ultra-conservative direction if he succeeded to the presidency. Dismissing the idea that one person alone could lead the Church in a new direction, Elder Hinckley said that the question showed no understanding of the consensus decision-making processes of the Church's leaders. In the years since, the nature and power of that process have become increasingly apparent.





New Swimsuit



Old Swimsuit

BEACHING THE WHALE

AFTER YEARS of complaints about the school's chaste but regulation black double-knit swimsuits for women, affectionally called the "whale," BYU's Physical Education Services commissioned a new speedo look designed to lure back boycotting co-eds. The navy blue, cross-straped, open-back suits are made from lycra, which pulls on much more easily than the old nylon suits. The new suits will be phased in gradually; individuals who forget their BYU I.D. cards will be issued the old suits, which pull on tight and embarrassingly expand in the water.

PRUNING BROWN'S HETERODOXY

ALTHOUGH THERE is no question that former First Presidency counselor Hugh B. Brown believed and in private conversations frequently said his famous quote, "We are not so much concerned with whether your thoughts are orthodox or heterodox as we are that you shall have thoughts," apparently he did not say it at the 1969 BYU devotional where he is reported to have said it. The quote appears in the original manuscript of the speech, which the *Church News* used for its report, and it is in the *Dialogue* published version, which Brown approved, but it is not on the BYU-issued audio tape. Is this a Tapegate controversy with an 18 second gap?

THE TOP TEN GOLDEN OLDIES

SALT LAKE fine and rare book dealer Curt Bench reports that the current top ten requests for out-of-print LDS books are: (1) N.B. Lundwall's *Temples of the Most High*; (2) Joseph Fielding Smith's five-volume *Answers to Gospel Questions*; (3) Hugh Nibley's *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, An Egyptian Endowment*; (4) The Primary Association's *A Story to Tell*; (5) Melvin Cook's *Science and Mormonism*; (6) Spencer Cornwall's *Stories of Our Mormon Hymns*; (7) Don Corbett's *Mary Fielding Smith*; (8) Joseph Fielding Smith's *Man, His Origin and Destiny*; (9) John A. Widtsoe's *A Rational Theology*; and (10) Sydney B. Sperry's *Voice of Israel's Prophets*.



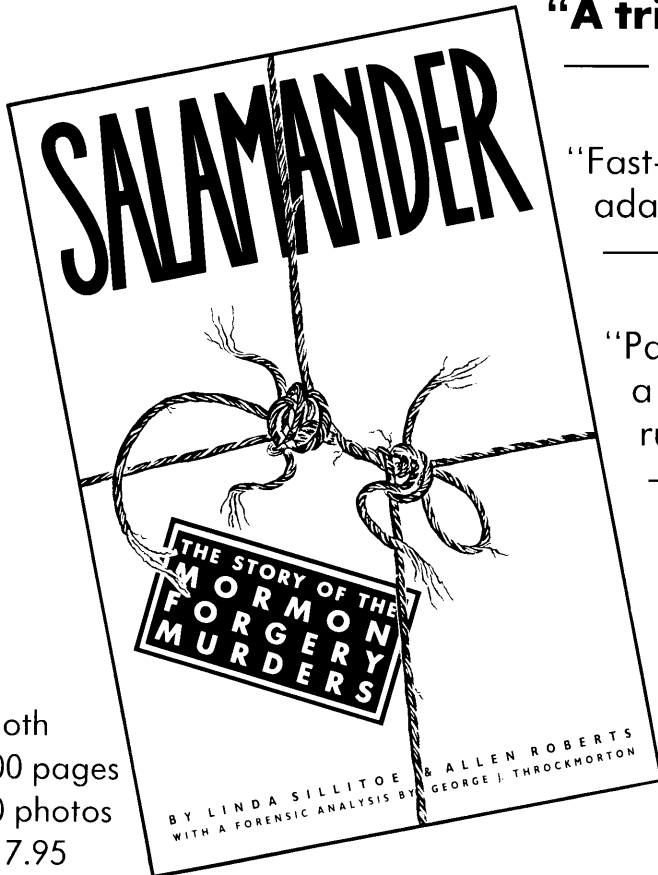
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— Melvin M. Belli, Sr., author of *My Life on Trial*

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