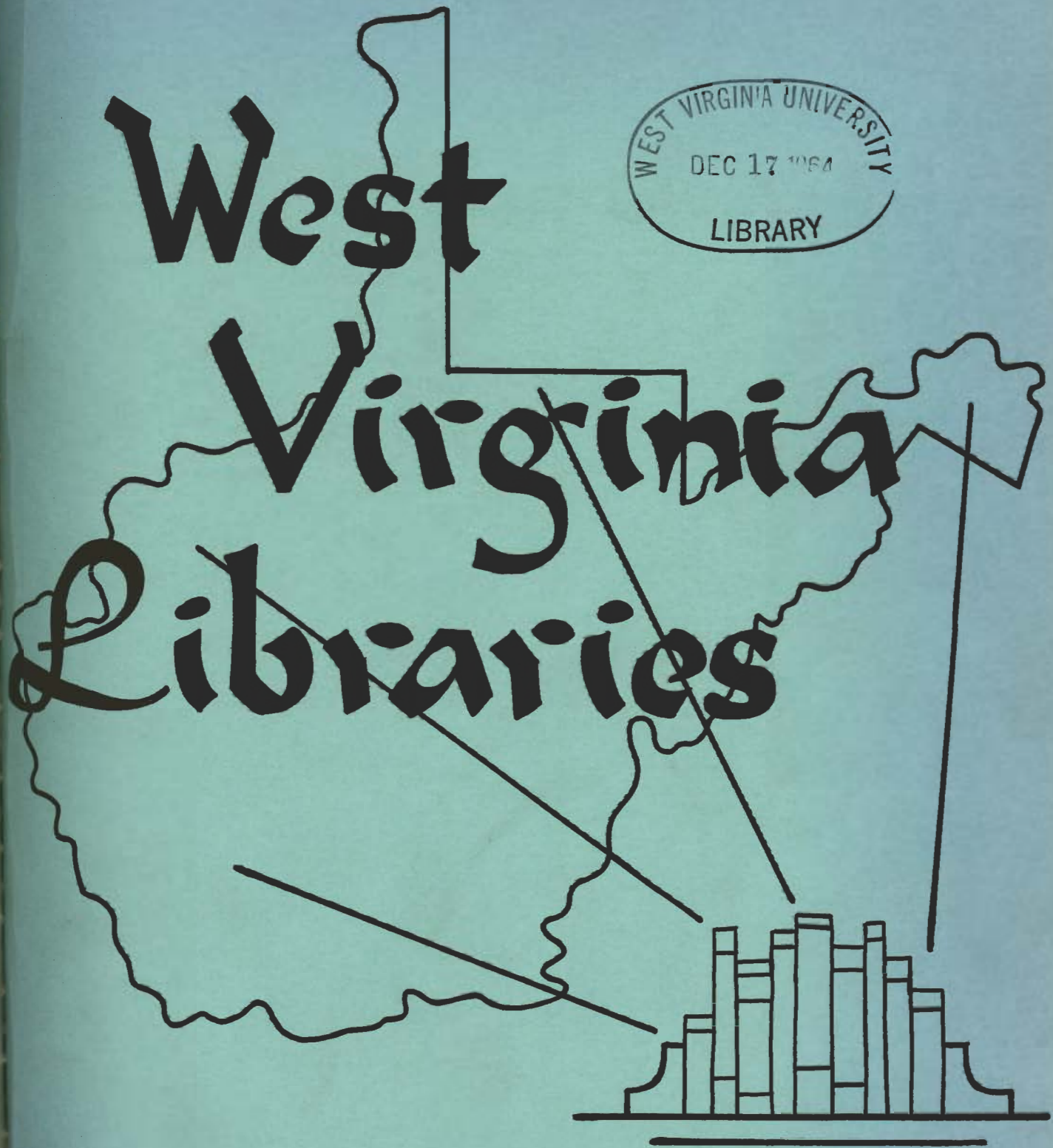


WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY  
DEC 17 1964  
LIBRARY



# WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES

VOLUME 17  
NUMBER 4

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER  
1964

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WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES is the official organ of the West Virginia Library Association. It is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. Contributions and other communications should be addressed to the editor and should be received no later than the first day of the month in which an issue is to appear. Subscription is included with membership dues. Annual subscription to non-members is one dollar.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Those of you who were unable to attend the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the W.V.L.A. in Clarksburg, October 17 & 18, missed a fine Conference. Neither time nor trouble was spared in making it a beautiful affair and the program was both interesting and informative. A bouquet to the Clarksburg Committee!

Enough of the past--let's take a look forward to some coming events. First, the West Virginia Library Commission has some big plans for the future which include the construction of a brand-new library building near the Capitol, using the old "2004 Quarrier Street" address as part of the site. Steps have been taken to secure the necessary funds from the State to match Federal appropriations, with the State paying one third, the Federal two thirds. Second, the Commission has undertaken a comprehensive study of all existing libraries in West Virginia, in order to plan more successfully for expanding library service in the future. You will be hearing much more about this study as it gets into full swing.

Our Annual Conference for 1965 will be held in Beckley next October 8 & 9. Also, we hope you will be happy with the decision reached at the Clarksburg meeting to schedule our 1966 Conference at the Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs. A date has been reserved for us, the first week end in November.

Another year is just about over, and the time has come to wish you the joys of the Christmas Season, and a Happy and Successful New Year.

Mary Louise Graham, President  
West Virginia Library Association

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ON WRITING: BRASS TACKS

Agnes Smith

This essay is one of the most difficult pieces of expository writing I've ever attempted and was a lot of fun to write. But when I finished I wondered whether hearing it would be as difficult as writing it, and whether you would have fun listening. Shop talk is seldom interesting to those who don't work in the same shop. Then I remembered I'd had you in mind all the time I was writing, and that one of the points I tried to make is that you and I, all readers and writers whether in or out of school, are working in the same shop. The name of the shop is The English Language.

A solemn subject? A boring employment? No. I want you to have at least as much fun listening as I had writing, if possible. Don't hesitate to laugh aloud if you wish. Parts of the essay were put in to encourage laughter. But be patient with me, too, where the going is rough. It is hard to write about writing. Try it yourself once. This is my once.

On Writing: Brass Tacks

Some time ago, in a paper I wrote on reading, I declared that there are two kinds of reading: (1) reading for information, and (2) reading for pleasure.

I now declare that there are two kinds of writing: expository writing and creative writing. Or, I might say without contradicting myself, writing is a craft and writing is an art, a fine art I have said it and I'll say it again, writing is both a craft and a

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Miss Smith read this essay before a group of high school students who were attending a workshop for library assistants being held at West Virginia University, August 2 - 8, 1964.

fine art. The same medium, words, and the same tools, brains and hands, are used in both these activities. But when I say "brains and hands" I don't mean only the cerebrum, the cerebellum, and the central nervous system, in conjunction with the five senses and the hands. I mean the whole physical person, plus those mysterious attributes we call the heart, the mind, and the spirit.\*

Already things are becoming rather complicated aren't they. More complicated than you know. A little star has appeared at the end of that paragraph, an asterick, which means a footnote comes in here. But I won't interrupt myself or distract you, now. I'll postpone the asterick until the end of the essay. There will be only one footnote.

Maybe we can achieve a less cluttered view of the two kinds of writing through an analogy with the craft of woodworking and the fine art of sculpture in wood.

Pretend we have here the well-cured trunk of a beautiful black walnut tree. The section is ten feet long and, to be extravagant, 18 inches in diameter at the smaller end. We have sawed it in half. One half we'll give to a cabinet-maker, one half to a sculptor.

After dividing his wood into boards of appropriate thicknesses the cabinet-maker will construct a desk, following his own design or adapting a traditional design. Whether original or adapted, the finished piece--if it holds together--will be a useful object of practical value.

The sculptor and his portion of the walnut tree experience a different relationship which will vary as the sculptor and the

shape of the wood vary. (By the way, a woodcarver who copies works of art may be a clever craftsman but he is not an artist.) So. An original work of sculptural art would be a useful object which serves no such practical purpose as a desk. The effects of a work of art on its "users" may be mental, physical, spiritual, or all three, but not practical. For instance, to look at a piece of sculpture could make you happy. Happiness may, now and then, be impractical but few persons would contend that happiness is useless.

We're as far off on this tangent as we need go for the present, but before we leave we should remind ourselves that a fine work of craft often causes in the observer a happiness somewhat similar to the happiness caused by a work of fine art. Similar, but not the same.

You've long since seen the likeness between the cabinet-maker and his practical furniture and the expository writer and his informative writings, between the sculptor and the creative writer. I've used the analogy not because I wanted to run you around Robin Hood's Barn but because I want to emphasize by contrast the qualities of the medium writers use in the practice of their arts and crafts.

Will you glance again at those handsome pieces of black walnut? How solid and self-sufficient they are! How firmly they establish themselves in Space and Time! Notice how the sculptor and the cabinet-maker are standing off to gaze at them and to think, "How lucky I am to have that to work with!" In the sculptor's case the walnut tree may have developed in such a way that the instant the sculptor glimpsed his section itself suggested to him the form

