

Smithsonian: Innovative Leadership Carries New Programs to Inner City

Washington is a city in which the cautious bureaucracy usually prevails. This general stuffiness explains why, in the last 4 years, the Smithsonian, under the innovative leadership of ornithologist S. Dillon Ripley, has been so appreciated. Ripley and the Smithsonian have helped bring a sense of joy to life in Washington.

For instance, this week the Smithsonian sponsors "The Festival of American Folklife" on the Mall, which will begin with a square dance and includes folk-music workshops and concerts; exhibits of crafts such as wool-shearing, blacksmithing, and doll-making; sales of food cooked in the traditional ways of the Southwest; and demonstrations of skills such as butter-churning and the making of sassafras candy and sorghum molasses. Previously, the Smithsonian has staged kite-flying contests and has sponsored manned balloon ascensions on the section of the Mall between the Capitol and the Washington Monument. For the last two summers it has

run a cheerful merry-go-round in front of its main offices.

The spirit of joy generated by the Smithsonian is also very apparent when one visits its most recently opened museum—the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum—located in a poor section of southeast Washington. It is only a few minutes' drive to the neighborhood museum from the grassy Mall and the grandeur of the Smithsonian's main buildings, but the short drive takes the visitor into a different world—one in which the stateliness of the downtown museums seems foreign.

Ripley has thought a good deal about how museums can begin to reach out to the great majority of people. He believes that museums have a "preliterate" function which, in many ways, is more important educationally than the learning derived from the printed word. He thinks museums have much to offer both the affluent and the poor, but he believes that people from poorer backgrounds often feel hostile to the

idea of getting dressed up and coming to a fancy museum.

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum is a major effort to try to bridge the gap between the great (often undisplayed) collections and talents of the Smithsonian and the residents of a somewhat isolated Washington neighborhood. The neighborhood museum opened last September, under the directorship of John R. Kinard, a graduate of Howard University who had worked with youth groups in the Anacostia area. If anything, the museum has been even more successful and has more quickly acquired a life of its own than its founders in the Smithsonian had anticipated.

One measure of its success in the community is the fact that, although the Smithsonian did not expect the museum to be able to supplement its finances through contributions from a poor neighborhood, it has managed to raise about \$8000 from the neighborhood in the past few months. Before the neighborhood museum was created, some people at the Smithsonian feared that it might be subject to disfiguration or theft. In its 9 months of operation, however, the museum has yet to suffer any theft or breakage of the objects on display, and at no time has the museum been marred, even during the period of disorder in April that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum operates on the principle of freedom. There is no admission charge for any museum activity, the museum is unguarded, and it is open 7 days a week. Visitors may freely touch the museum objects.

Since the museum opened last September, more than 70,000 people have visited it, officials estimate. Among the visitors have been Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and boxing champion Muhammad Ali. Surprisingly, it is not only the children from neighboring schools who have frequented the museum. Busloads of children from the Virginia and Maryland suburbs have also been brought to see its exhibitions, despite the fact that there is a wealth of important collections to be found closer at hand, in the center of the city.

One of the reasons why the museum attracts people from outside the immediate neighborhood is, undoubtedly, because it is "fun" to visit. There is a permanent zoo and the children are welcome to help feed the animals at meal times. Another permanent exhibit which attracts children is a replica



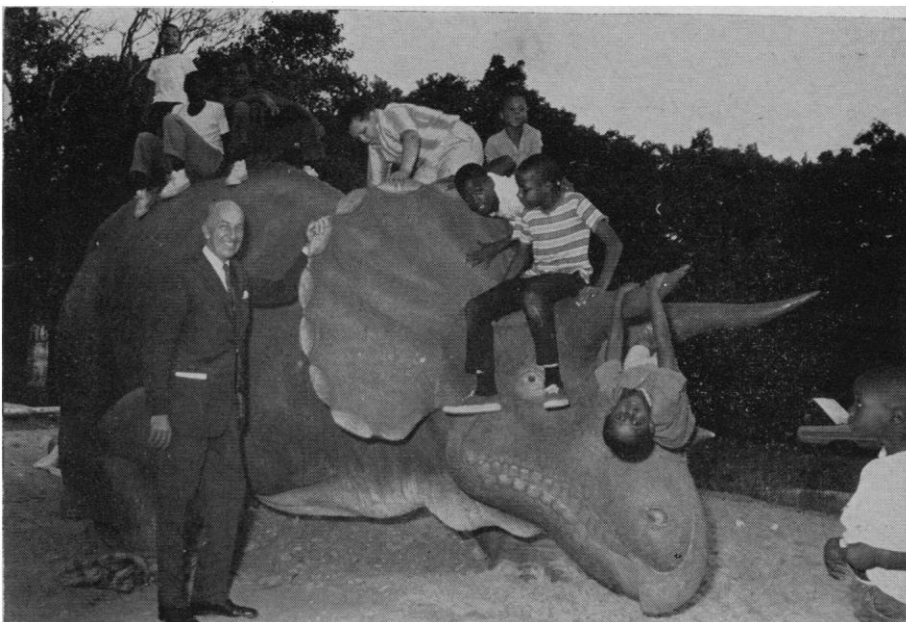
S. K. Osei, a Ghanian, explains the use of African artifacts during the exhibition "This is Africa" held last month at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. The museum is located in southeast Washington, in a building which was once a movie theater.

of a general store and post office of the 1890's, where a child can set himself up as storekeeper for the benefit of his friends. There is also a permanent exhibit of skeletons which can be disassembled and assembled.

The activities of the museum are centered around major changing exhibitions. At least two of these, one on Negro history and the other on Africa, seem to have induced neighboring schools to devote greater attention to these subjects. During the past 6 weeks the exhibition "This is Africa" has featured films, lectures, an African food fair, and programs of African drumming, dancing, and singing, as well as a display of African art and artifacts. Most of these artifacts were drawn from sources outside the Smithsonian.

Another feature which may help explain the popularity of the museum in its neighborhood is that neighborhood residents play a large part in running it. This direction comes not only from adults but also from teen-agers. Neighborhood boys helped finish the interior of the museum, and a youth council of 20 members was later established. One member of this council, Joyce Washington, describes the museum as "almost like a home away from home for us." Miss Washington says that the museum is "not like hitting the books; it's educational but it's fun." She thinks the museum gives an important outlet to the energies of neighborhood youth: "We really want people to know there are things we can do besides rock and roll." Some of the members of the youth council have been hired as summer employees of the museum; one of the tasks they have assumed is that of escorting younger neighborhood children on educational tours of the city, including trips to the main museums of the Smithsonian.

The neighborhood museum has acquired a good deal of local momentum, but since the Smithsonian is a low-budget institution, the funding for its Anacostia branch is something of a problem. Running the museum is proving more expensive than had been anticipated (it will probably cost about \$100,000 in its first year), and the desire for additional activities and classes continues to expand. The Irwin-Sweeney-Miller Foundation of Columbus, Indiana, recently gave the neighborhood museum a \$21,000 grant to be matched one-for-one from contributions; the museum has currently raised two-thirds of the necessary sum. In the



Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley and some of the users of the Smithsonian's neighborhood museum, shown with "Uncle Beazley." The placid Triceratops spent 3 months beside the neighborhood museum in southeast Washington after its opening; "Uncle Beazley" has since returned to his home in front of the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History on the Mall.

coming year, the museum is planning to run a large exhibition on Negro history, as well as scientific exhibitions.

The Smithsonian wants to found new neighborhood museums in other sec-

tions of Washington, if it can raise the necessary funds. One of Ripley's hopes in establishing the Anacostia museum has been that other cities will be encouraged to establish their own neigh-

Palomares To Get Desalting Plant

The State Department has announced plans to build a water-desalting plant in Palomares, Spain, where four hydrogen bombs were dropped by accident in 1966 when a B-52 bomber collided with a refueling plane. The desalting plant will be paid for from Defense Department contingency funds; the cost is estimated at \$150,000.

The American gift follows a 2-year study aimed at removing the psychological and political shock of the Palomares mishap. State Department officials said that after consultation with the Spanish Foreign Ministry, it was mutually decided that a desalting plant would be of economic benefit to the Palomares region. At present, the southeastern Spanish village obtains water by cart from surrounding areas.

State Department officials said that there was no evidence of any contamination of freshwater sources as a result of the accident. The U.S. Air Force, however, did settle claims totaling more than \$600,000 to Palomares residents, and fishermen and farmers are still filing lawsuits. When the B-52 crashed, the hydrogen bombs did not explode, but two of them broke open releasing plutonium oxide particles. Fields were affected and one bomb was lost off the coast for 80 days, restricting the operations of fishermen. In a clean-up program, AEC-supervised Air Force teams scraped off the affected topsoil and recovered the lost bomb.

U.S. Charge d'Affaires William W. Walker and Spanish Foreign Minister Maria Castiella signed the agreement for building the desalting plant in Madrid on 25 June. The plant, which will have a 70,000-gallon-a-day capacity will be operated as a public utility. The water will be sold to the villagers for about one-fifth of the present cost of water in the area.—M.M.

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **NSF BILL:** The house last week completed final congressional action on a new legislative charter for the National Science Foundation. The bill, which was originally introduced by Representative Emilio Q. Daddario (D-Conn.), passed the House last year but was returned to bring it into conformity with a number of Senate amendments. The most significant of these provides for annual authorization hearings for the Foundation (*Science*, 10 May 1968). The House accepted the amendments following a brief debate in which Representative George Miller (D-Calif.), chairman of the Science and Astronautics Committee—which will handle the authorization bill—assured budget-minded members that the annual bill will spell out the NSF program in detail and will not simply state a lump sum for the Foundation's activities. In the House, Daddario will probably handle the bill. The Senate situation is less clear, but the authorization will be handled there by the Labor and Public Welfare Committee and may come under the chairmanship of Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), whose special subcommittee on science handled the Daddario bill. At the same session, the House also gave final approval to the Standard Reference Data Act, which authorizes the expenditure of \$1.8 million for the National Bureau of Standards to assemble and disseminate various technical data.

● **SONIC BOOM:** The Senate Commerce Committee approved on 27 June a House-passed bill requiring the Federal Aviation Administration to prescribe standards and rules for control and abatement of sonic boom. On the same day, the House Appropriations Committee eliminated the \$233 million asked by President Johnson for supersonic transport development. Because of delays in design and construction of the SST, this action is not expected to have any immediate effect, but may reflect some congressional uneasiness. Earlier last week, a study committee of the National Academy of Sciences recommended that a special study be made of human response to sonic boom. The Human Response Subcommittee, chaired by Raymond A. Bauer of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, warned that while sonic booms may cause no direct damage to hearing, "indirect physiological re-

sponses, however, can result from the startle produced by sonic booms of even moderate proportions." The report is available for \$2 from the Printing and Publishing Office, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.

● **CARIBBEAN RESEARCH:** The Caribbean Research Institute is currently developing a program of ecological research on Anegada Island in the British Virgin Islands. Further information is available from Edward L. Towle, director, Caribbean Research Institute, Box 1826, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

● **FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION:** At an "emergency meeting" called on 21 June by the New York Academy of Sciences to consider means of preventing deep slashes in federal support for research and development, scientists warned that the nation will face serious consequences if it lets science efforts slip. Keynote speaker Linus C. Pauling said that a serious cutback in science research "would be an act of national folly." Geneticist H. Bentley Glass and Minoru Tsutsui, New York Academy of Sciences president, expressed the same sentiment. Somewhat different views were expressed by Representative Lester L. Wolff (D-N.Y.), Walter S. Baer of the Science and Technology Office, and Margaret Mead. Baer says federal funds are being leveled, not cut back. Wolff and Mead say scientists have acted too late and too quietly.

● **SEABORG REAPPOINTMENT TO AEC:** Glenn T. Seaborg has accepted reappointment as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, but, at his request, it will be for a 2-year term rather than the full 5-year period. Seaborg, who has served as chairman since 1961, told a congressional committee in a confirmation hearing on 26 June that, because of financial considerations, he will not accept a full term. The job pays \$30,000 a year. President Johnson has also announced the renomination of Commission members James T. Ramey to a new 5-year term. Ramey's present term expires on 30 June 1969. Even with the Seaborg and Ramey reappointments the five-member commission is still one member short.

borhood museums. So far, inquiries have come in from museum directors across the country, and two neighborhood-type museums have been started in New York City.

Before the Smithsonian began operating its neighborhood museum, Ripley told *Science*, "I realize that it may fail and that everyone may laugh at us for trying it, but I don't care. We're just going to go ahead and do it." It is obvious that no one is laughing about the neighborhood museum, except perhaps in pleasure at its success.

The visitor to the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum emerges to the same world of poverty and blighted human hopes. But he has, at least for the time he has been there, again sensed that direct participation in the excitement of learning and achievement can add some measure of joy to all our lives.

—BRYCE NELSON

Student Aid: Standardization Sought in U.S. Government Stipends

Two separate government studies have started movement toward standardizing traineeship and fellowship grants of various government agencies. The most direct result, so far, is a recently issued policy statement by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW),* which makes several important changes aimed at standardizing that department's grant programs.

The studies—conducted by the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Division of Grants Administration Policy at HEW—sought to find the variations in awards and then to seek ways to eliminate those variations. "It was not a question of standardization for standardization's sake," a Bureau of the Budget (BOB) spokesman told *Science*, but rather an attempt to make the various federal programs less competitive and contradictory.

He said that the GAO report, which was submitted to the Budget Bureau, will have done its job if HEW "gets its house in some kind of order." After that, he said, it becomes a question of priorities. Since HEW accounts for some 80 percent of all federal traineeship and fellowship grants and, according to the GAO report, some 90 percent of the standardization problems, with HEW in order, the BOB spokes-

*The policy statement, "Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Student Support," is part of HEW's recently published *Grants Administration*. It can be obtained for \$4 from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.