

P R O C E E D I N G S

COUNCIL MEETINGS

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

June 13 and 17, 1938
Municipal Auditorium
Kansas City, Missouri

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MONDAY MORNING SESSION

June 13, 1938

The first A.L.A. Council Meeting, held in conjunction with the Sixtieth Annual Conference of the American Library Association at Kansas City, June 13-18, 1938, convened at ten-fifteen o'clock, Mr. Harrison J. Craver, President of the Association, presiding.

PRESIDENT CRAVER: The Council will please come to order.

The first item on the agenda for this morning is the report of the Special Committee on Application for Affiliation presented by the Theater Library Association. In the absence of the Chairman, I will ask Mr. Milam to present the report.

... Secretary Milam read the report of the Special Committee on Application for Affiliation, copy of which was retained by him ...

PRESIDENT CRAVER: You have heard the report of the Committee. Will someone move its adoption?

MR. JAMES I. WYER (State Library, Albany, New York): I am wholly ignorant as to the character and purpose, or aim of this new body, and would be grateful for a little information. Possibly some of the other Council members have as little information as I have, particularly as to whether it is a professional or a commercial association.

PRESIDENT CRAVER: I think I can answer, Mr. Wyer, that it is not a commercial organization. It is an organization of librarians who are in charge of theater collections and similar material in various libraries in the country, and who have felt that they, like some of the other specialized groups, had certain problems which they wished to discuss which hardly fitted into the ordinary program of a meeting of this kind.

They felt it desirable, though, to keep their contact and their close affiliation with the librarians in other fields, and so have applied, as various other groups have done, for affiliated position.

MR. JAMES I. WYER: Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CRAVER: Is there a motion? What is your pleasure in regard to this report?

MR. MILTON J. FERGUSON (Chief Librarian, Public Library, Brooklyn, New York): Mr. President, I move the approval and the adoption of the report.

MR. LAWRENCE HEYL (Acting Librarian, Princeton University Library, Princeton, N. J.): I second the motion.

... The motion was voted upon and carried ...

PRESIDENT CRAVER: The next item of business is a report by the Committee on Chapters and Sections, on petition from the Boston Library Club.

SECRETARY MILAM: The Committee on Chapters and Sections is composed of Milton E. Lord, Miss Louise M. Hunt, and Mr. Charles H. Stone. Mr. Stone writes that at the request of Mr. Lord he has prepared this recommendation with regard to the petition of the Boston Library Club for affiliation with the A.L.A. as a chapter. Due to his connection with the petitioning organization, he and Miss Hunt asked that I formulate the recommendation and present it. It represents Miss Hunt's and my ideas, and Mr. Lord made no suggestions of any kind.

... Secretary Milam read the report by the Committee on Chapters and Sections, copy of which was retained by him ...

PRESIDENT CRAVER: You have this report before you. The proper action for the Council to take would be to approve or disapprove the report. May I have a motion from someone for action?

MR. CARL RODEN (Librarian, Public Library, Chicago): I move that the report be approved.

JR. JAMES I. WYER: I second the motion.

... The motion was voted upon and carried ...

PRESIDENT CRAVER: The next item of business is a report from the Committee on Honorary Memberships, composed of Miss Josephine Adams Rathbone, Dr. Harry Lydenberg, and Mr. Louis J. Bailey, Chairman.

... President Craver read the report of the Committee on Honorary Memberships, copy of which was retained by the Secretary ...

PRESIDENT CRAVER: I may say that the election of honorary members is a matter for the Association as a whole in a general session. It can only be presented for such an election by the Council, and before this can go to the General Session, it will be necessary for this Council to nominate Mr. Collins. What is your pleasure?

MR. FRANK P. HILL (Consultant, Public Library, Brooklyn, New York): I move that Mr. Collins be nominated for honorary membership.

... The motion was seconded, voted upon and carried ...

PRESIDENT CRAVER: The next item of business is the forum discussion upon the reorganization of the American Library Association, which will be managed by Mr. Charles H. Brown, Chairman of the A.L.A. Committee on Activities. Mr. Brown, I will turn this meeting over to you.

... Mr. Charles H. Brown assumed the Chair ...

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Mr. President and Members of the Council: I don't expect to manage this discussion at all. This is to be an impromptu discussion, and each member is to give his own thoughts and his own ideas. We don't expect to save the A.L.A. in the next thirty minutes. We don't expect to reach any definite conclusions in our discussion. We do hope to present certain ideas which I hope you will think about.

There are certain proposals made, some of them in conflict, which we should like to call to your attention, and then

we hope that you will go back home and think about these various proposals, get your state library associations to discuss them.

Some of them will do away with many of the activities of the state associations, if adopted. We would like to have you organize committees in your state associations to consider these proposals.

It has been the policy of the Third Activities Committee to go out in the field and obtain the opinions of all members we could come in contact with, from those of junior assistants to those of chief librarians, to collect all the ideas we could before we formed any opinion.

The discussion is divided into two sections: One has to do with regional associations--the membership of the A.L.A. running down through the regions and the larger states. The second part of the discussion has to do with the special groups of librarians--school librarians, college librarians, law librarians. These are organized in three different arrangements. You have an independent national library association; you have the affiliated national library associations; and then you have sections; and then the A.L.A. We are going to discuss these types.

I want to say a word about my colleagues on the program this morning. Someone asked how we picked them. We tried to take a cross-section of A.L.A. We have New England; we have California; we have the South; we have chief librarians and we

assistants in large public libraries. We have old-timers like Mr. Sherman and we have two people attending their first A.L.A. meeting. We have tried to get a cross-section of the membership of the A.L.A.

The program is not cut and dried at all. We have not rehearsed. We have discussed some of our ideas. There will be an opportunity for persons from the floor after the first section of the program and after the second section.

Now I am going to ask Mrs. Leidendecker some questions. This is your first meeting outside of California?

MRS. ANNE F. LEIDENDECKER (President, California Library Association; Librarian, Science and Industry Dept., Public Library, Los Angeles, California): Yes.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You have been President of the California Library Association?

MRS. LEIDENDECKER: Yes, this last year.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: What is your position?

MRS. LEIDENDECKER: Head of the Science and Industry Department of the Los Angeles Public.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: The California Library Association had certain ideas in regard to regional association. What was your idea in regard to this regional and district organization of the A.L.A.?

MRS. LEIDENDECKER: We have taken action in California at our meeting just two weeks ago on reorganization, accepting

principles for reorganization. A special committee will be appointed to revamp the Constitution and By-Laws to incorporate these new ideas, and that means a more direct contact with the rank and file in the state. California is so far-flung and our membership is very large. We have 1,816 members and 107 institutional members, which makes a large membership. But we have only 800 A.L.A. members.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: About fifty per cent.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: Rather less than half, because each institution means five members.

We have a registration of 873 at the State meeting just two weeks ago. At the district meetings we have a very large attendance. Even up in the Gold Coast Country we had over 115, and in another district we had about 300. These districts are a part of the state organization. They will be more of a part under the reorganization.

The district presidents, elected in their districts instead of appointed by the state president as they are now, will be members of the state board, or the council, as you call it in the A.L.A. In that way we will have a direct representation of the districts in the state. Then we feel that there should be that same direct representation from the state or regional area into the A.L.A., so that there would be this direct chain and a democratic voice be allowed from a small district anywhere, or a state, if they were a part of the regional

set-up and if their officers were directly a part of the whole and had a voice in setting the policies for the whole. Of course, that means, Mr. Brown, that we should have integrated dues, and that is what we are doing in California.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Then all members of your state or regional association would automatically become members of the A.L.A. Is that right?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: That is what we feel would be the way to do it.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: The smaller unit would be the district in California, and it would be from the district to the state, thus to the regional and then to the A.L.A.? And you would have your Council elected by these organizations, with certain members being elected in proportion, I suppose, to their membership?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: I think very definitely that the president of the region or state, whatever geographical unit is set up, should be officially a member of the policy-making board of the American Library Association.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: That is the Council.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: But the regions would differ according to membership, and if pro-rated, some districts might have only one and some others might have four or five.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: I think that could be taken care of

by delegates. The elected officials could be the Executive Council, as it were, and then the delegates officially elected as to membership number from any area, with a vote and a voice, would have that vote and a very definite official representation in a council.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You have the Council elected by the regional associations. Now it is made up to a certain extent of ex officio members, if I am correct: the chairmen of standing committees, vice presidents of the A.L.A., members of the Executive Board, and some elected nationally. You would replace all these by these regional association elections?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: We feel--at least it has been the idea adopted in California--that we should start on that and we could make it the governing body of the American Library Association or of the state or the region, that these elected officials should be directly responsible for the carrying out of policies adopted at a convention or an official meeting.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Now, Mrs. Leidendeker, you have about 1,800 members in California. Half of them are members of the A.L.A. If you require membership in the A.L.A. to include also the membership in the region and the state, you have to increase your dues. How many of the 900 members not members of the A.L.A. would drop out entirely if you increased their dues from three to four dollars?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: I think we would have to be careful

about the amount. We have already adopted an amendment to prorate the dues which provides that the dues are going to be paid on a salary range basis.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: A service basis?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: We have already adopted that, because we are going to prorate it back to the districts in order to develop that direct contact with the rank and file of the librarians in the district, many of whom cannot come to a state meeting, to give them a worth-while program, to see that a state official is at the district meeting so they will have this direct contact. In order to do that, to let them have better programs, to develop more worth-while meetings, we are sending back a proportion of the dues right now (next year) directly to the district according to their membership, giving a minimum base. I think that could be done straight through. We are not going to arrive at a professional status, to speak on matters with competence and authority, until we have all librarians as members. I think the A.L.A. would probably have to bring their dues down so that not it would not be more than three dollars for the low salary group.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Three dollars including state dues?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: State, region and national dues.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Rising to ten dollars for the high salary group?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: They all felt that the rank and

file should have a voice. I think that is the reason for the serious bucking at dues. The rank and file feel they have no voice. They have nothing to say. Their ideas have no opportunity for expression. If they felt they were a part of the whole, I think the two or three dollars, when translated into terms of the price of a movie, would be acceptable.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You are giving much more to your people through your district organization. This is really a form of decentralization.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: Yes, making them feel a part of it so that if they had a bright idea, they would have a route to take it straight up to the top.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Your regional organization in a way would replace the state--not entirely, but to some extent.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: No, it would not. Each time it gets up to a larger unit there is an added strength. A policy would be tried out in a district, just as we have been doing for the last two or three years, and then it would be taken to the state and adopted as a worth-while library project for the state; and then that should be brought to the A.L.A. to see whether that worth-while project would go all over the country.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: I am thinking of the Pacific Northwest. You have the Pacific Northwest Association, which is a regional association and includes a number of states and British Columbia. What becomes of the Pacific Northwest Regional Library

organization when you have your state organization?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: I think the state in that set-up would take the place of our districts in California, or if we divided up a little farther, in the Pacific Northwest the state would be a unit instead of a district.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: The same system would hold.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: And then the president of the state, instead of the presidents of our districts, would be on the board of the region.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: How many regional organizations have you now in the United States? You have the Pacific Northwest.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: The Southwest, including Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: They must have taken on the Mississippi River as the western boundary of the United States.

Then there is the New England Regional Association. We are going to ask Mr. Sherman to say something about that. We have a Southeastern, a Southwestern. There is a number of regional associations formed.

Then you believe in a classified dues system somewhat lower than what the Membership Committee recommends, on an ability to pay basis.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: Yes, I do. I think that is an encouragement.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You feel that if there were dues not

over two and one-half or three dollars, including membership in the state, regional and national, you would not lose many of your members if this reorganization plan went through?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: I really don't believe we will. We are trying it out this year in California. We have started these per ratio dues. We will tell you a little bit more about it this next year. We do feel that when we have brought to them this plan, it will work. There is a great enthusiasm because they feel that they are part of it and they are going to have something to say. Really, I don't expect at all that we will lose any members. I think we will gain members.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: I hope you are right. One more point: We have found that very few Californians have come to the annual meetings of the A.L.A. As a matter of fact, we know that the majority of the members does not come to the annual meetings. We have 15,000 members, and there are only two or three thousand at a meeting. Even our largest meeting attracted only one third of the A.L.A. What is the feeling of your Association about these meetings?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: We are so far away, and it does cost a great deal to come because most of the meetings are in the East or the Middle West. I feel very much that if we had accredited delegates from our associations, either in regions or in states, whichever way the geographical set-up was made, it would be possible for a district to help defray the expenses

for delegates to come. They are the ones to take action. Then as many other members as could possibly come, would come.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You would continue the annual meeting for the A.L.A.?

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: I would like to see biennial meetings, and then have the regional meeting the alternate year. In that way we would keep much closer to each other. The A.L.A. officers could come to the regional meeting and get a little closer and know each other and be able to form policies much more realistically, instead of theoretically as it is done now.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You would have a biennial meeting of the American Library Association; and on alternate years you would have the meetings of the regional associations attended by officers of the A.L.A.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: At least one or two officials.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: So the members in California could look upon the President of the A.L.A.

You might read the resolution adopted by the California Library Association.

MRS. LEIDENDEKER: "It was voted at the California Library Association that we go on record as approving in principle the following suggestions:

- "1. Further development of regional units.
- "2. Biennial meetings of the American Library Association and the regional unit on the alternate year.
- "3. A scheme of graded membership with graduated dues.

"4. A reorganization of the American Library Association Council."

Now at that meeting, remember, we had 873, and our theater was filled. The four items of that resolution were unanimously adopted.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Now, Mr. Sherman, I believe a New England Association is to be formed.

MR. CLARENCE E. SHERMAN (Public Library, Providence, R.I.): We expect to form an association. We go to Vermont next week. The plan is on foot to establish a permanent regional organization.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: What are the purposes of that association?

MR. SHERMAN: It is merely to make more permanent and more assured the informal regional meetings that we have held on such years as the American Library Association has held its meeting at such a distant point that the attendance from New England has been small.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You reinforce Mrs. Leidendeker's feeling about regional meetings. I wish you would tell us your opinion on these California proposals applied to New England. You have a different set-up. You have strong state associations; you have a limited area with many members of the A.L.A and many libraries. If you had a New England Regional association with the state association part of the regional, how would it work out?

to the special groups?

MR. LAWRENCE HEYL: During the year all questions which bother individuals are referred to chairmen of committees. It seems to me it is logical therefore to have the Council composed of chairmen of committees. It is a counterpart to what goes on all the time.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Mr. Heyl says he believes the Council should be composed of the chairmen of committees. There is this objection to it. In California the chairmen of committees are appointed by the Executive Board, and then the Council meets. It is a rather closed organization. It is not democratic, and if the Council is the governing body of the association, the members of the Association should have the right to say who are members of the Council. I would not favor a house of representatives appointed by the President and his cabinet. I prefer to have one elected. Some think it is very bad to have the President appointing the Supreme Court judges. So long as you have a council made up of ex officio members and chairmen of committees appointed by the Executive Board or the President, you are not going to have a democratic organization.

MR. SHERMAN: I agree in part with the first speaker on the floor, that these affiliated organizations and committees have a very definite function, and I am not too excited about striving for complete democracy. There isn't any such thing anyway. A blending of the present arrangement, perhaps giving

MR. SHERMAN: May I say at the beginning that I am not an official spokesman for New England, but I have been asked to participate in this program. I wouldn't want any New Englanders to feel that I am delivering their opinion. I am trying to bring to this discussion my personal opinion and a sketch of the opinion from the presidents of the state associations. There are some who are trying to find out from this meeting what the implications may be. It must be realized and considered at the very beginning, whether we are favorable or unfavorable to a decentralization movement, that decentralization on the surface seems to offer more to the local unit.

The beginning of this idea came about very naturally. Isolated libraries decided to join with other libraries and through their representatives--and in some instances, trustees--form an association; and through that other associations have grown up. The national association started when we were, relatively speaking, a lot of people, outposts in bibliographical worlds, and we came together in that way.

The associations of many professions, such as those of physicians and lawyers who are individuals and not often definitely associated with an institution in which there are many people in subordinate capacities, have state associations and their members are welcome to join and become better in their careers. We cannot get far away from the principle that any movement for decentralization or nationalization which forgets

larger libraries. I have heard such people make that statement.

There was a time when we seceded for state rights, but when we joined again, we wanted to stay, and I think that would be the feeling in connection with the American Library Association, that we want to belong to the union. With that in mind, I think any policy that the American Library Association approved would be promoted by the southern librarians.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Oh, yes, Mrs. Douglas, but that isn't the point. What we wanted to know is, how can you help us to find the best solution? We would like to hear your ideas on that.

MRS. DOUGLAS: I think the first thing you are going to have to do is to get down in the local places and just work the thing out. We have sold a great many things. We have sold a great many undesirable sets of books; maybe we could sell something that is desirable.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Perhaps Mrs. Rossell could help you on that. I think that is a big problem. Thousands of these small libraries all over the country will have to be sold. We will have to give them attention. Sherman can look after himself; he doesn't need anything.

MRS. DOUGLAS: We would like him to cooperate with us. We need some help.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Are there any questions from the floor in regard to this phase of our discussion before we go on

the little public library in a small town in New Hampshire or North Carolina as the focal point of interest will be of little value. It isn't what is going on in this meeting here or what will go on next year in San Francisco that is important. I think we should go slowly, although we are wise in considering this matter.

There is one test: What will any movement do, not for the A.L.A. membership, not for revenues for this Association, but for the libraries, wherever they may be, the big ones too? What will it do for any library which engages in the plan? Our public libraries are not the property of the members of the American Library Association; they are owned and operated by a community in most cases, and that community is interested in specific community purposes. We cannot forget that.

There are some critics who feel that the school teachers have taken over the school system of America, and some critics are not altogether satisfied with the way it is going. They believe it has got out of the hands of parents and tax payers. I am not here to discuss that, but we should have that charge in mind, and keep it from being laid at the door of the American Library Association.

The test, I think, will be: What will it accomplish for each library concerned? We have heard what California would like to have accomplished by centralizing and then decentralizing, by sending back aid, advice and experience to the local

associations or the national association do to help these libraries? And what about the trustees of those libraries who don't come to the national meetings and very seldom come to the state meetings?

MRS. DOUGLAS: Well, since we have heard from you I tried to discuss that with some of the southern librarians from public libraries, and I have had some especially helpful suggestions from Miss H. Marjorie Beal of the North Carolina State Library Commission. She seemed to feel that the librarians in the southeastern part of the United States would be interested in a set-up with a comparable arrangement to the one which Mrs. Leidendeker proposed. In thinking it over, I am wondering whether or not to begin with the national and regional.

We would first have to interest the librarians in these smaller libraries in the state library association, which they can actually see and understand before they are ready to participate in a national organization which they feel is composed of people who are so superior from the library standpoint. They think of the national association through the articles in the Bulletin as being people who have had a great deal of training and experience in the library field; whereas, they are faced with the small library in a small town.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: They may feel that the A.L.A. does not understand their problems.

MRS. DOUGLAS: They think of it in terms more of the

association which otherwise might not be capable of visualizing those possibilities.

In New England we want to know a great deal more about it before we believe we should change a time-honored system. We would like to know more about the future.

I have indicated that in our part of the country we are interested in regional meetings, and I can't see how anyone could imagine that they are not inevitable, with the growth of this Association and the kind of meetings we have to hold. The New York Conference was a very striking example of how big and cumbersome and how confusing our Association gatherings can be, when we have such a good meeting and such a good program at a central point that we attract so many people. As a stimulation to those of us who believe in librarianship it has good value, but we must get more than that from a week's exertion.

The biennial meetings, I believe, are supplementary to a well established and closely affiliated system of regional conferences, and regional associations would be a great step forward. If this movement which we are discussing today could do no more than that, it would be very profitable indeed. For years we have talked about biennial meetings. I remember at the 1924 conference of the American Library Association at Saratoga Springs, I had the temerity to introduce a resolution that we have biennial meetings. I recall that one gentleman off stage said that he opposed it because he thought we were meeting often

representing public libraries in the South also, for the time being; not officially, but you are trying to give us a point of view of libraries in the South.

MRS. DOUGLAS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You have a regional association, the Southeastern?

MRS. DOUGLAS: We have the Southeastern Library Association which is accustomed to meet biennially, and in that respect would easily fit into a scheme whereby the American Library Association met biennially.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: What is the relation of the Southeastern Library Association to the state associations?

MRS. DOUGLAS: I think it has no direct relation to the various state associations. The Southeastern Library Association is composed of a group of interested southeastern librarians who meet together and welcome any newcomers each two years. We have no membership other than our registration dues.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: No membership fees at all? How do you maintain your meetings? Through registration fees?

MRS. DOUGLAS: Through registration dues, and if we need a little extra, we sort of reach down and take it out of our pockets.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: What is your idea? You have small libraries, possibly getting forty or fifty dollars a month. These libraries need encouragement and help. What can the state

enough, and that twice a year would be too much. (Laughter)

Later it was rejected and we had a sort of referendum and that was rejected; but I think it is coming up often enough that sometime it will be successful.

We have changed conditions as compared to the time when the A.L.A. was formed--distance, size, confusion, expense, and even now in some of our communities the question before the city councils as to whether library employes may have time off to go to such meetings.

The exchange of ideas, too, is no longer centered about the gathering of librarians. We have our headquarters, our Bulletins; we have our local associations and their publications and the Library Journal. It isn't so essential that we gather every time the calendar comes around. And so it seems to me that biennial meetings of the American Library Association with regional associations closely affiliated, and with official visitations by the A.L.A. office at the regional meetings would be real progress and thoughtful development.

There must be, if this idea of joining through the cutting down to the local associations and bringing them up through to the national association can be accomplished, a slow filtration movement. I don't think any manifesto we might issue today would go very far.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You think the idea is worth study.

MR. SHERMAN: Indeed I do.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: And it may be something we shall get to some ten or fifteen years from now.

MR. SHERMAN: I should think we would do better. I think the increase in dues will be a difficulty. In these days it is quite a considerable matter, and we have to indicate that they are going to get their money's worth. That is a practical American expression, but I think it has as much meaning in 1938 as it ever had. I think with those comments I have at least represented my own opinions, and I believe some of New England.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: I think there is a vein of agreement between Mr. Sherman and Mrs. Leidendeker.

We found in California that fifty per cent of the people at the district meetings never attend even the state meetings. The only way we can get the people from libraries in New York and Sauk Center and some of those places is through some larger organization--at least in the Midwest and California.

There is a vein of agreement between your remarks and Mrs. Leidendeker's, although with your New England point of view you agree with me that we cannot rush this thing through this morning.

Mrs. Douglas, you tell us who you are.

MRS. MARY PEACOCK DOUGLAS (Director, School Libraries, Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N.C.): I think he has me on the spot. I am Director of School Libraries for the State of North Carolina.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: You are too modest. You are here