

Letters to the Editor



Happy Birthday To Us!

Thank you for ten good years of service to my mind and my spirit. My subscription has occasionally lapsed, but my interest never has. Nor my appreciation. Every good wish for continued success.

Carol Lynn Pearson
Walnut Creek, Cal.

Dialogue was doomed from the outset, for it was founded on a contradiction—The Mormon intellectual. No way could it bridge that gap.

Brave attempts were made with each issue by editors and writers, but the result was generally much glitter and much cowardice: a nice look to pretty superficial material.

The funny thing about *Dialogue*—now looking back over its ten years—is the paradox that while it strove to be in the vanguard of ideas and issues, it almost always seemed rather retarded. Not just that so many of the numbers came out awfully late, nor that quite a number of problems got resolved long before *Dialogue* got to them, but that most of the issues raised in *Dialogue* aren't really issues any more; in some cases, they were resolved in the Middle Ages, in other cases in the early twentieth century—and Mormons seem not to have noticed. Should have been named *Dialag!*

Karl Keller
Former member, Board of Editors
La Mesa, Cal.

Not long ago a militant, obsessed feminist historian came up to me and asked if I had heard about the extraordinary issue of *Dialogue* on sexuality. She suspected that as a student of Mormon history I might have come across the publication. She thought that as a social historian I ought to get a copy and read it. Thoroughly “fascinating.” With a modest cough I informed her that (ahem!) I had helped launch the first issue.

Her reaction astonished me. Here was a psychologically sophisticated, left liberal intellectual who viewed Mormonism as an amalgam of fundamentalist obscurantism, Roman Catholic reaction and old-style sectarianism at the flying-saucer level of credulity. And yet, with some wonderment to be sure, she was seriously reading a Mormon publication. She was amazed that Mormon men and women could honestly confront fundamental social issues and the results of scientific research and serious scholarship—and that, for example, *Dialogue*, associated with this most patriarchal, heterosexual, family-centered set of beliefs, could open the door on the homosexuals in its own closet!

My explanation, of course, was simple: intellectual honesty and intellectual courage. These are rare qualities even in the best known secular highbrow publications. *Dialogue* has maintained these qualities for ten years and has displayed them in outstanding prose and sparkling graphics. Americans, and especially non-Mormons, can be grateful for the very few *Dialogues* published in our time.

Congratulations on ten years of rare excellence! Warmest best wishes for the next ten!

Professor Mario S. De Pillis
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Congratulations on your forthcoming 10th Anniversary! I have been a devoted reader of *Dialogue* during its entire existence.

Dialogue has survived the chilling effect of official sanction by the General Authorities of only certain Church periodicals. During its short history, *Dialogue's* editorial offices have traversed the entire country seeking a permanent home. Rumors of financial demise have failed to stop publica-

tion although sometimes issues have been long in reaching subscribers. *Dialogue* has overcome these obstacles because it has provided to its interested LDS readers an opportunity to gain "intelligence" on important socio-religious and political subject matter which have often been ignored completely, or superficially treated, by official publications. I have particularly appreciated *Dialogue's* commitment to presenting several perspectives when exploring non-"canonized" subject matters. This, of course, is consistent with pre-Salt Lake City Church publication history when articles about these issues presenting differing points of view were sometimes presented side by side. Apparently, the Church now no longer sanctions or promotes this type of meaningful dialogue on sensitive subjects.

Richard K. Circuit
La Jolla, California

Letters to the Editor

more thanks

Thanks so much for your serious attempt at an honest and penetrating study of the gospel and its application to life. *Dialogue* has shown me it is possible to maintain both personal integrity and Church allegiance. I have enclosed a \$20.00 check to bring that reminder home regularly.

Don Ashton
Salt Lake City, Utah

counseling

My husband spends a great deal of time in his family practice counseling couples on sexual matters. The serious problems that confront him are solved by patience, understanding and an attempt to develop a deep, mature love with mutual sexual pleasure being just one of the means to this goal. Sex is not the primary goal itself, contrary to the bombardment of the media that would have us believe that sex is the major purpose of life.

Brother Cannon's article was excellent and I hope guidelines will be forthcoming from the Church on a matter which certainly affects everyone in the Church.

Sylvia Jutila
Fortuna, California

comments on the news

I was deeply interested in the Spring 1977 issue. The format was appealing; the variety of the threads woven into the fabric of the one-theme-issue was quite fascinating. I sensed the many judgment problems which *Dialogue* presents to its editors.

The review of "Indian" was perceptive and very well written. The contrasting "image" articles made lively reading. While the *Deseret News* article was well written and informative, it left me with an undercurrent feeling of depression concerning the paper's failures: the diminishing circulation, the staff's disappointment in the selection of the new editor and manager, the failure of *Today* to meet expectations, and the like. It seemed to me that Mr. Swensen had it in—somewhat—for the new editor and manager. I was also sorry that he did not commend some of the really good women writers who handle subjects of real import. It is a real change from not too long ago when the women's efforts were pretty much confined to reporting weddings, parties and other social events.

Ramona Cannon
Salt Lake City, Utah

image clarification

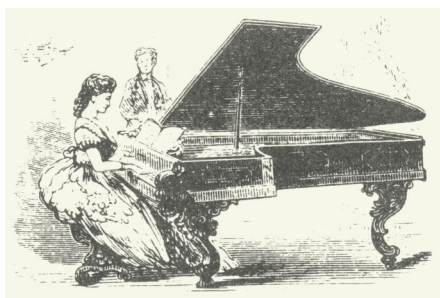
I believe that some clarification is in order with regard to my article "Illustrated Periodical Images of Mormons: 1850-1860," published in the Volume X, No. 3. Confusion was created in the second paragraph of page 88 by deleting some of the text and repeating some lines from the previous paragraph. Lines four, five and six of paragraph two should have read: "Mormon males mustering female recruits (see illustration 7).²⁰ A much more imaginative set of cartoons introduced comic figures.²¹ Brigham Young's public image was not enhanced by his caricaturization as the dull, piggish caretaker of. . . ." The effect of the textual problem was (1) to confuse the contribution of *Leslie's Weekly* and *Harper's Weekly*, (2) eliminate the reference to illustration seven and (3) delete the numerical references to footnotes 20 and 21.

Gary L. Bunker
Provo, Utah

Thanks to John Willis for his letter about ERA. He expresses what I have long felt—and does it so well. Being a member of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, I have studied the part our ancestors—especially the women—played as leaders in our church!

Thanks to all of you fine young people for the work you are going.

Lola Merrill Webster
Rexburg, Idaho



was mozart a prophet?

I have enjoyed very much the antiphonal letters on the “Is Bach a Mormon?” theme. As a young professional musician-composer in the LDS community, struggling, however slightly, to contribute to the development of a viable Mormon music, I am grateful above measure for the generous space and warm discussion you have devoted to music and the other arts, especially in your very fine music issue of last year.

Following the recent blitz of our region by the LDS musical, I was again drawn to the perceptive comments of the youthful Mozart on the music of his day—He complains of those gifted contemporaries who, though they should be advancing the cause, are instead “seeking to win applause by writing stuff so inane that a cab-driver could sing it”. (See the letter to his father, Dec. 28, 1782.) As my Book of Mormon teacher is fond of remarking “It seems to be speaking to our own day, doesn’t it?”

If Bach *is* a Mormon, then Mozart is a prophet—the same abuses he saw in his day seem to be plaguing the rise of our own culture. If we, as composers of the

Mormon community do not—dare I say it—repent of “stuff so inane,” the day for music worthy of our name will doubtless have to wait for the millenium. Such a Mormon music, whether in concert hall, theater, or chapel, will not merely be “uplifting”—it will exalt; it will be the music of which it might honestly be said, “Faith cometh by hearing”.

There is a price to pay in reaching these heights. But writing “cab-driver music” will never reduce the fare.

Michael Hicks
Los Altos, California

P.S. Cabbies please forgive the allusion.
(It was Brother Wolfgang’s idea.)

new publisher

I found of particular interest your recent article: “If It’s Written By A Living General Authority It Will Sell” since I, too, have just joined the ranks of the self-publishing Mormon authors. My contribution is a short novel about Mormon missionary life entitled *Elders and Sisters*. I, like many others, first tried the church press, but was refused not so much because it was fiction, as because I needed to make my characters “less human, and more equal to the task”.

Knowing that no returned missionary could relate to a book of fantasy, and feeling that it was only a disservice to the prospective missionary to portray the missionfield as nothing but a series of faith-promoting experiences, I stuck by my original script.

Fortunately I had a brother with loyalty and sufficient money, and a superb editor with publishing knowledge, and I took courage from the pioneering efforts of Doug Thayer, and others. Now my book is off the press,—and between housework, canning, and nursing my fifth baby, I’m typing letters, visiting bookstores, and wondering just how I’m going to make the church members aware of the book’s existence.

I sense a bit of a nightmare ahead of me, yet take heart from hearing a bishop say, “This should be required reading for every priest in the Church.” I particularly appreciated the expression of a former compan-

ion: "Thank you for writing that book. Many of the problems I had never known were shared by others." That, I think, has been one of the important roles that *Dialogue* has played during the past ten years,—letting readers know that there are others out there who share their thoughts and feelings. May you continue to do so for many more years to come.

Gladys Farmer
Provo, Utah

inflation

While having dinner recently here in New York City with Mayor Koch and Governor Carey I had occasion to show them two issues of *Dialogue* I just happened to have with me. "Sexuality & Mormon Culture" (Vol. X, No. 2) caught Mayor Beame's attention; "Mormons & the Media" (Vol. X, No. 3) had the governor sitting on the edge of his chair. My attention was diverted for just a moment by a question from President Carter. After responding in my customary, precise fashion, I turned back to the Mayor and the Governor only to find they had both vanished along with the two issues of *Dialogue* mentioned above. In their place were two New York City notes. These I enclose with a request that you use them, along with the \$5.00 I also enclose, to pay for the issues appropriated by the Messrs. Koch and Carey.

Robert L. Brinton
New York City

Ed. Mr. Brinton must convince President Carter to do something about inflation (or New York City's negligible negotiable instruments), so that \$5.00 will pay the cost of printing two issues of Dialogue.

on the air . . .

"The Church as a Broadcaster" is a well-written and thorough coverage of the subject. My interest stems from my work as a relatively new attorney in the FCC's Broadcast Bureau and from that viewpoint, a few comments:

First, the text on p. 26, and the table on p. 27 do not agree. KSEA-FM (formerly

KIRO-FM) is in Seattle, not Skokie, Illinois. The city of license of KBIG-FM is Los Angeles not Avalon.

Second, it may be of interest that the Church has recently received Commission approval of the purchase of KRLD-FM, Dallas, Because the church already has seven FM stations (the maximum allowed), it has sold KSL-FM for \$857,000 to Roy Simmons' a Salt Lake businessman. This rather modest price suggests that KSL-FM is not extremely profitable, and perhaps not central to the Church's mission in broadcasting.

Third, I have been amazed at the fever of hate towards the Church which has been generated by a few righteous exercises of the "broadcaster's wide discretion." If a product advertised on The Herb Jepko show fails to restore an old man's youthful vigor as promised, it's all the fault of the scheming, money-mad Mormon Church. The bulk of these letters are taken for what they are—the work of crackpots who have nothing better to do than vent their spleens to the FCC.

The Commission almost never denies renewal of a station's license for broadcasting too much of this or too little of that. Denials are based on egregious wrongdoing such as fraudulent billing, and occur with respect to fewer than ten stations a year out of over ten thousand. It is my feeling that the Church could present considerably more religious programming over its stations than it presently does without running afoul of its obligations vis-a-vis the FCC. It would, however, have to make correspondingly larger amounts of time available to other denominations.

Broadcasters are required to propose programming responsive to the community of license, and the Church would, I think, find a wide market for programs aimed at strengthening family life, combating drug abuse and providing wholesome recreation, and meeting other needs frequently revealed when applicants and licensees ascertain "community problems". And finally, relatively few hear Spence Kinard and the Choir. One well-meaning neighbor asked me how many wives I had. She had seen Alex Joseph on TV. . . .

Barry D. Wood
Arlington, Virginia

**brigham's blunder or brilliance . . .
continued**

The puzzle regarding the decision of the Saints to evacuate Nauvoo on 4 February 1846—in mid-winter, instead of waiting “until grass grows and water runs”—has an answer if we consider the factors involved. It was neither “Brigham’s Blunder” nor “Brigham’s Brilliance,” as Jack Worlton implied in his letter (Spring ‘77). It was a decision based on overwhelming circumstance, and, partly, on misinformation from authoritative sources. I went into this subject at length in my book *Nightfall at Nauvoo*.

Here, briefly, is the scoop:—

Our historians have tended to overlook the two key pieces of the puzzle: (1) Sam Brannan, and (2) the condition of the ice on the Mississippi.

Brannan was in New York, arranging to transport a shipload of Saints from there to San Francisco Bay. In attempting to get a mail contract, he became involved with a coterie of 27 Washington politicians who saw in the Mormon migration a chance to make a killing (It was claimed that President James Polk was a member of this group.). There was considerable sentiment against allowing the Saints to leave Illinois, for fear they would join forces with the Mexicans or British, with whom the United States was involved in boundary disputes, or that the Mormons would enlist the Indians in a war against the Nation. Brannan was told that unless Brigham Young signed an agreement to give title to half of all land settled by the Saints to the political coterie, President Polk would prohibit the Mormon exodus, and would order the army to come upriver from New Orleans to Nauvoo to disarm the Saints and leave them at the mercy of local mobs.

Brigham Young and the Twelve never for a moment considered knuckling to this attempted extortion. However, they were convinced that the threat was genuine. Brigham Young didn’t accept Sam Brannan’s unsupported word. He sent three men east to investigate. In addition, Governor Ford of Illinois, who had urged the Mormon exodus to California, had recently informed Brigham that the Federal Army would prevent the exodus. A number of eastern news-

papers confirmed this. And the army was mobilizing; it was the eve of the Mexican War.

As to whether or not troops actually were at New Orleans waiting for the river ice to break in order to go upriver to Nauvoo—how was Brigham to investigate this? The Mississippi was the channel of communication, and it was frozen solid. It would mean an overland trip of some two thousand miles in mid-winter to check the report. There wasn’t time; and news would be outdated by the time it was received.

At a tense meeting of Church officials held at Brigham’s office on the upper floor of the temple, the brethren, with pistols on the table, considered the situation. Opposition had mushroomed into a solid front by the people of nine Illinois counties, united in determination that the Mormons must go. Mob attacks were increasing. Extremists and hoodlums could now burn homes and haystacks with impunity, looting Mormon property and driving away livestock, in a popular sport called “wolf hunts.” Morley settlement, south of Nauvoo, recently had been raided by a mob who burned twenty-nine houses, while Mormon families fled into the brush and hid throughout the night in a drenching storm.

The internal situation had degenerated. An underworld element had infiltrated Nauvoo. Though 500 police were on the city force, it had been impossible to root out the undesirables. Hosea Stout, chief of police, reported at the meeting that a plot was afoot to assassinate the Twelve. Stout couldn’t guarantee their safety, because spies had infiltrated his own police force.

At this meeting it was decided not to sign the extortion deal, but to say nothing about the decision to Brannan. This would gain time and maintain leverage at Washington as the coterie maintained hope that the deal would go through. Meanwhile, Brigham put the people of Nauvoo on four-hour alert. On 4 February 1846 the exodus began.

What determined this date? Why was it imperative to evacuate the city in mid-winter? There is only one answer which fits the facts—the condition of the river ice. The Mississippi had frozen solid early in December. As long as the ice remained, no

army could travel upriver to Nauvoo. However, in January there was a thaw. The *Warsaw Signal* reported that the ice might begin breaking up any day. The ice did begin moving in late January. There would be a period of several days before the river could be forded at Nauvoo, and several more before it was navigable for the expected army at New Orleans. Brigham waited as long as he dared, then ordered the Saints to begin the exodus.

Before the end of February, however, an extreme cold snap froze the river again. It was impossible to turn back, nor did the Saints want to. They were finished with Illinois, headed for Mexican territory and expecting freedom in the west.

Thus it was neither "Brigham's Blunder" nor "Brigham's Brilliance." He and the Twelve made a decision based on circumstance; they cannot be faulted if the signs of an early spring proved false.

Samuel W. Taylor
Redwood City, California

I write in response to Jack Worlton's letter and question as to whether the Nauvoo exodus was a blunder or brilliance on Brigham Young's part in Vol X, No. 3. The question cannot be answered for sure as no one knows now, or knew then, just what the United States Government actually would have done. The bulk of the evidence, however, is on the side of Brigham Young.

No doubt, the decision to leave early was made because Brigham Young and his advisors had become convinced that the United States Government intended to prevent them from leaving, or to relieve them of their arms and give them a military escort.

Mr. Worlton says that a rumor passed to Young by Samuel Brannan was the only source of his information. Early Church history tells us that during the month of January 1846, he received information from several sources to the effect that they would be prevented from leaving if they waited. They are as follows:

a. The sheriff of Hancock County told Young that Governor Ford had swallowed his words in which he advised the Mormons to seek a new settlement in the distant west, and had ordered Major Warren of the Illinois militia to prevent

them from leaving in the spring.

- b. Young received a letter from the Attorney General of Illinois stating that the Governor and General John J. Hardin were in favor of declaring martial law in Hancock County. Such a decree would require that the exodus be conducted only under government supervision.
- c. A letter was received from Samuel Brannan in New York to the effect that the Federal Government did indeed intend to prevent them from leaving.

On the eve of the exodus, the *New York Sun* printed an article on the danger of allowing a large body of well armed people to leave the country and said, "They will become formidable enemies to the United States either in California or in Oregon and the Government should look to the matter in season."

Brigham Young was an intelligent man and certainly knew the risks involved in leaving in the middle of the winter. He decided to take the risk and the ultimate losses involved rather than possibly lose all by waiting and being prevented from leaving or have the movement sabotaged by a military escort.

My grandfather was among those who left Nauvoo with President Young. He kept a diary and I find nothing in it to indicate that he felt that a wrong judgment had been made.

Murray C. Harper
Lewiston, Idaho

