

# Letters to the Editor

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Since reading the last issue of *Dialogue*, ibid not feeling too good. I think I'm sic. I figure maybe it's the cf, so idem tell my wife I'm going to see the doc. But she says my symptoms are the exact op cit. Trouble is too much *Dialogue*, she says, so she takes the magazine and loc cit away with her mad money.

Anyhow, I stand in awe of the new scholarship. When an article requires from 50 to 100 footnotes, I wonder how B.H. Roberts got by with not more than two dozen in the 457 pages of his *Rise and Fall of Nauvoo*. And what a relief it was to read K-Lynn Paul's "Passive Aggression and the Believer," without breaking the train of thought 99 times with footnotes. I doubt that this means he doesn't know what he's talking about. Otherwise, your mag is the greatest.

Samuel W. Taylor  
Redwood City, California

*Editor's Note: Actually, there is a small groundswell (started, we believe, by the National Footnote Society of America) in favor of converting to the Footnote style throughout the entire journal. That way, dedicated do-it-yourself scholars could provide their own text!*

The Autumn issue is terrific! It was worth the wait to have the articles on Spalding to complement the Book of Mormon pieces which made it timely and topical. K-Lynn Paul's brief piece was first rate, Hugh Nibley's "Bird Island" priceless, and Margaret Munk's "Caridad" sensitive and engaging. Good luck with the next one.

Fred Esplin  
Hershey, Pennsylvania

As one serving on a full-time mission I find *Dialogue* a refreshing change. Though I find very little within *Dialogue* that I can utilize while proselyting, nevertheless, it is a stimulant to my mind which allows me to "meditate upon the deeper things" occasionally.

Thank you for a very informative issue (Vol. X no. 4) which answered my

questions regarding the so-called "Spalding Theory."

Sure love you folks!

Elder Alan Schapel

I am writing you to express my delight at the new issue of *Dialogue*. The issue was impressive. It was thick. It was, while not artistic or creative, at least a solid visual success (absent were the annoying design errors of some previous issues). And best of all, it was interesting. Somehow you managed to gather significant scholarly articles that were surprisingly readable—I was positively dragged into Walker's "Liberal Institue" article: History made savory for history-haters! Well, you have at last shown me that you can really do it. This is *Dialogue* in the tradition of Volume I. All I can say is, production schedules be damned! Give us a *Dialogue* like this as erratically as you wish—it is worth the wait!

Gene Hurst  
Provo, Utah

Congratulations on the Book of Mormon issue. I would say this is one of the issues of the highest quality yet produced in the ten years.

Lester Bush has done his usual superb job. Margaret Munk's piece was one of the most affecting in some time. All of the articles and reviews were substantial and tasteful. As for "Among the Mormons," Bro. Stathis has done an outstanding job with his listing. I'll pass on another compliment which probably will not reach you directly, this from a friend in the Midwest: "The worth of the latest issue of *Dialogue* runs the gamut from the tears and laughter of "Caridad" and "Bird Island" to the thought-provoking, even revolutionary articles of Stan Larsen, Edna Bush, and others . . . If this keeps up, \$20.00 per year may be entirely reasonable. The number of subscribers may even increase!"

John L. Sorenson  
Provo, Utah

The Book of Mormon issue is very good,

although I find it impossible to get worked up over Spalding. Sorenson's article interested me very much—that's a field I'd like to know more about. Nibley's "Bird Island" is wonderful, wonderful! I laughed aloud all the way through. The RLDS "reader's edition" of the Book of Mormon sounds like a fine idea—why don't we do something like that? Munk's "Caridad" was so painful, it is almost a misnomer to say I enjoyed it, but I did. All in all, I enjoyed this issue very much.

Robin Hammond  
Massachusetts

I can't say enough good about the last issue of *Dialogue*. The articles were such a nice mixture of tone and content. Hurrah and three cheers to you all.

Judi McConkie  
Salt Lake City, Utah

While I am in agreement with everything that *Dialogue* says in the few issues that I have read, I don't agree that it should be written in magazine form, available to anyone who wishes to purchase it or has it given by well meaning friends. Paul was perfectly right when he said that milk must be given before meat and some new as well as old members are not at this stage of digestion in their testimony. To these people, the magazine is no help and in my opinion could do a lot to shake testimonies that are in the process of being strengthened by careful handling. I feel that one can't look at it from an intellectual point of view only (and I must admit that it is fascinating reading). One can't always "say it all." I personally have made the same mistakes that I think *Dialogue* makes and I've suffered the consequences of upsetting good but shallow thinking people. I have now grown older and I hope wiser and I hold my tongue unless talking to a friend.

Lola Smibert  
Frankston, Australia

#### kudos for wordsmiths

I thank *Dialogue* for its exemplary courtesy, which I wish other publications would copy.

An essay of mine was submitted to *Dialogue*, not by me, but by my brother-in-law. He wanted to submit it, and I consented then put the matter out of my mind. But *Dialogue* returned the essay at

*its own expense* (unheard of, I assure you!) along with specific criticisms by assigned readers. A law school professor and a biological scientist, independently of each other, read the essay and made comments on an excellently devised form *Dialogue* uses to evaluate submitted materials. Although your readers did not understand the aim of the essay—how could they have known the author had not submitted it? Their criticisms have proved helpful in predicting public response and irritation.

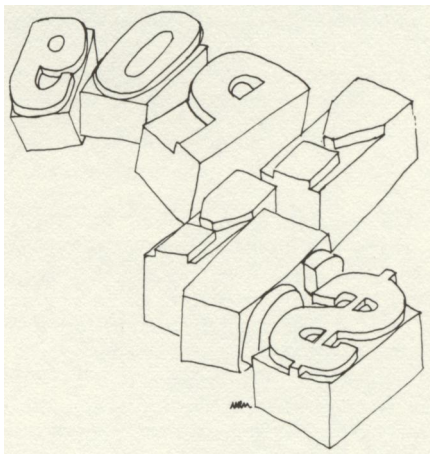
*Dialogue's* professionalism shows clearly at every step of this adventure. Larger magazines are haughtier magazines, and this loses them more capable writers than they will ever know. It also damages their subscribers. *Dialogue* makes a superb effort to obtain the services and loyalty of wordsmiths, and this fact, were it only more widely known, would bring them in in droves.

Thos. Wingate  
Salt Lake City, Utah

#### anniversary thoughts

*Dialogue* has sustained us for the past 10 years. One article which we returned to again and again is Richard Poll's, "What the Church means to People Like Me," in which he categorizes active church members into two types. The first are the Iron Rodders who see the gospel as a handrail to the kingdom which defines each step of the way. The second are the "Liahona" Mormons who see the gospel as a general guide in making their own decisions.

Our experience living in certain unnamed places suggests a third category, best exemplified by the word *steel*. If one recalls the properties of steel—it is



harder and more rigid than iron—the connotation is clear. These are the people for whom the word of the Lord is not sufficient, so they add to it to make it more rigid and harder to live. These people generally view themselves as “stainless,” hence the new category—Stainless Steel Rodders!

K-Lynn Paul  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

I cannot let your tenth anniversary pass without thanking the hundreds of persons for the thousands (millions?) of people-hours that have been lovingly donated to bring *Dialogue* to life and keep it going. My eternal thanks to Wes Johnson and Eugene England for having the courage to found the journal, and to Bob Rees for his unerring leadership. And now, Mary Bradford, you have delighted my feminist soul by successfully moving the operation east and assuming the reins. Only those of us who have regularly nursed publications to life, agonizing over the deadlines and then exulting (privately) over the finished product, can truly appreciate the investment of self each issue represents.

A personal footnote: I think the reason that the continued existence of *Dialogue* is so important to me is that it *is* no longer crucial to my existence as a Mormon. But ten years ago it was—the fact that there were other members of the Church like me out there somewhere, plus dozens more who are much more highly educated and sophisticated, was much-needed reassurance that there was indeed room in the Church for a girl like me. Ten years later, faith carries me through some spots where intellect wears thin (as well as vice-versa!), but I keep thinking of that next generation of Mormon youth, my own offspring among them, who need to know that *thinking* and *questioning* is okay. So carry on! I know that the work is worth doing.

Mary Ellen Romney MacArthur  
Pasadena, California

I believe that I am accurate in remembering that Vol. I, No. 1 was published in 1966. That means according to your subscription flyer that it's taken 12 years for *Dialogue* to get through its first decade. I would like to subscribe to *Dialogue*, to invest \$15 or \$20 in it. I would even have given gift contributions to it of \$30 or \$50, as have been periodically

requested, but I don't have faith in *Dialogue*. In the intervening years since 1966, the summer number may come out in December, or be bypassed, or rushed to a hasty and inferior publication, because the periodical seems to be sloppy in reaching its deadline dates for copy submission, press, or publication—or all three.

You have a good magazine. I've enjoyed its insights, fine articles, and even found the letters to the editor which at least for a time in *Dialogue's* history was an amusing forum into which rabid Mormons and axe-to-grind Mormons would release their venom and see their “brilliant” diatribes in print.

Your move from California to Virginia—perhaps it has corrected the situation; perhaps there are new editors, better businessmen at its head. But I need to be convinced and I wish to be convinced. Please convince me.

Randall V. Douglass  
Eugene, Oregon

Editor's Note: *We have sent Brother Douglass what we hope is a convincing show of strength—the last three issues.*

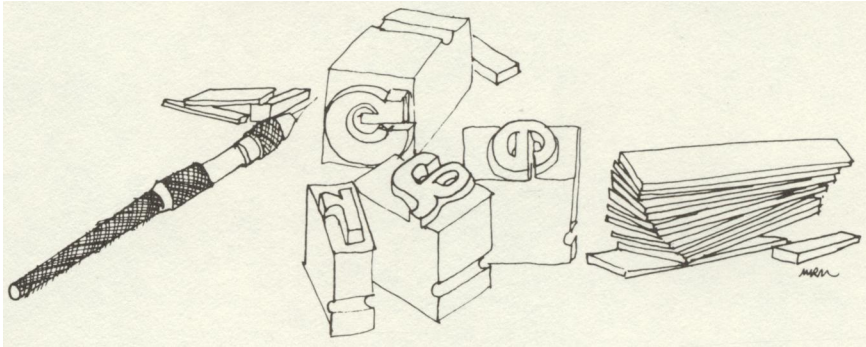
#### iwY in new york

The obvious underhandedness and bias of the leaders of the New York International Women's Year (IWY) conference was felt by most of the women in attendance who didn't happen to be in support of ERA passage, abortion and homosexual rights. Some of my Mormon sisters and the rest of the more conservative sector of the conference participants felt “picked on” and excluded from the real “meat” of the conference. The real learning for me, however, was in observing how the Latter-day Saints at the conference involved themselves with and responded to the rest of the conference participants.

The first time I heard of the New York IWY Conference in Albany was a week before the conference in Sunday morning Relief Society. Our bishop indicated to the sisters that the Stake President and Regional Representative had just recently become aware of the conference and felt the necessity of urging all able sisters to make arrangements to attend the conference in Albany the following weekend. The same invitation was extended to the priesthood brethren since both male and female residents of

New York could register as voting participants. I am still confused as to why no one in the ward knew about the conference until a week beforehand. At any rate, the bishop's invitation was so strong, that although only New York residents with valid drivers licenses were allowed to register as voting participants, I felt compelled to borrow one of the member's license who would not be able to attend herself. The bishop indicated that while those of us who went to the conference were not going as represent-

"Women and the Family" and listened to the presentation and discussion, I was quickly made aware of the diversity of background and experience in the individuals attending. For the Mormon women in attendance, family life and the relationships created therein are heavenly, sacred, and the means whereby happiness and joy are obtained in this life and the life to come. A good many other women attending the workshop were supporting and proposing federal government intervention in family life



atives from the Church but as New York citizens, arrangements had been made for LDS conference participants to stay with members of the Albany Ward while attending the conference. Other LDS groups attending the conference, on similar short notice, were explicitly instructed not to mention our affiliation with the Church while attending the conference. The Church was there, however, organized under the direction of the Regional Representative. Arrangements had been made for LDS groups to have a general meeting place in the office of the Citizen's Review Committee located in one of the buildings on the Capital Mall in Albany where we received housing assignments, information as to where we were to be at all times during the conference and a schedule of general meetings as an LDS group while attending the conference.

During these scheduled meetings a daily schedule was distributed and we were given instructions as to where we should be throughout the day. In some cases, small groups with similar views were invited to join us. Of special concern were the Saturday seminars where, in many cases, changes proposed by the conference were discussed and voted on. We were urged to attend certain seminars. As I sat in the first workshop, called

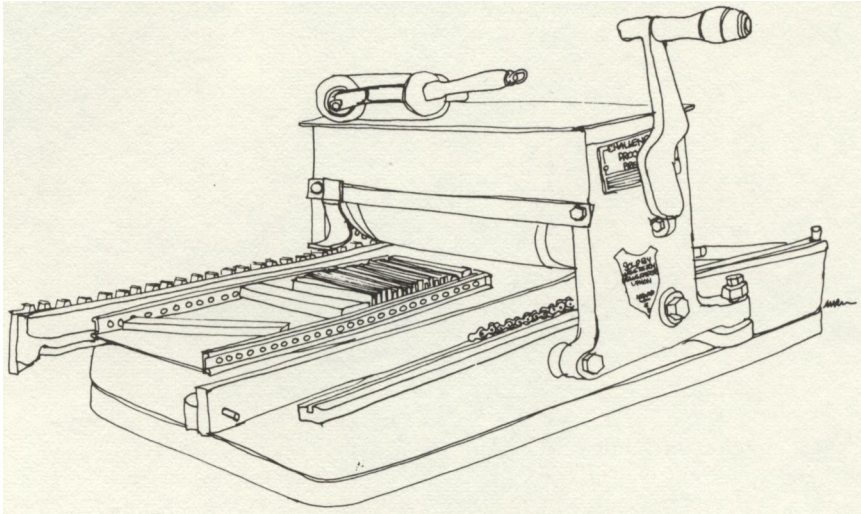
(such things as requiring husbands to pay their housewives one-third of their salary, and government supported child care centers). To them, family life had been a living hell characterized by severe financial problems, unruly children and, in some cases emotionally and/or physically abusive husbands. The presentations by Phyllis Chesler, the controversial feminist writer, and Judith T. Younger, professor of law, were offensive to the sector of Mormon women, who took advantage of the somewhat rude manners prevailing at the conference so far, and booted the presentations, with the result that Ms. Younger stormed out of the room. After the presentations, the workshop was open for discussion. Mormon women defended the proper role of the family in more of a testimonial, disregarding the fact that they were addressing their remarks to women who were not LDS, might not have a workable relationship with their husbands regarding home management, and who might sincerely believe that the only hope for the continuation of the family was through federal government intervention.

A second workshop I attended, called, "The Legal System and How It Affects Women" was recommended by the Regional Representative and his steering

committee in hopes that the ERA would be discussed and voted on. Two attorneys presented their views (Kathleen Peratis, in support of the ERA and Monrad Paulson, opposing the ERA) and then the floor was open for discussion. While most of the female participants from the floor expressed their views in support of the ERA, about five LDS men "representing their wives" spoke out against

when no one from our group would admit to being affiliated with any organization.

I also questioned the involvement of the priesthood in the conference. In the organizational approach the Church chose to take in the conference, I feel that it should have been the Relief Society's responsibility to organize and assist the sisters as they attended the confer-



the amendment. In spite of the discussion, no vote was taken as to whether or not the ERA should be passed.

While my eyes were certainly open to the obvious underhandedness of the conference leaders in attempting to thwart the efforts to any group opposing the changes proposed, I found myself questioning the Church's proper role in such a large-scale crusade; the role of the priesthood in the conference, and the causes of the seeming ineffectiveness of the Mormon women.

With respect to the Church's role at the conference, I found it hard to reconcile the discrepancy between the individual role we were told to play before leaving for the conference and the role as Church members we actually played at the conference. Perhaps a tightly organized group was the most effective means of offsetting the numerous opposing feminist groups who were obviously organized and in control of the conference, but I found myself resenting the fact that I had to relinquish my individual concerns upon arriving at the conference in favor of a restrictive group role. Outsiders must have been suspicious

ence under the direction of the Regional Representative. I can only speculate as to why the priesthood lead, instructed, and spoke for the women attending the conference. Perhaps it was felt that there was too little time to organize the group under the leadership of the Relief Society. Perhaps the brethren saw this conference as a threat to the traditional status of women in general and allowed their protective instincts to take over. Perhaps some of the women felt more comfortable in a follower's role. In any case, I felt that the effectiveness of our group as LDS women was hindered by the extensive role the priesthood chose to take. I keenly felt this when LDS men (instead of their wives) spoke out on certain issues during the course of the conference.

Although the conference was clearly more than a mere local event, many of the tendencies we express as LDS women in community involvement became apparent. Not only did we come to the conference unprepared to discuss the issues logically, resulting all too frequently in emotional subjectivism, but there seemed to be little desire to acquire appropriate knowledge on the issues. Many

of the LDS women seemed content to accept church policy and had little desire to back it up with solid argument. It was refreshing to hear a registered nurse with five years experience in an abortion clinic give medical reasons as to why abortion was not a sound or safe alternative.

Our tendency to be a rather closed, comfortable society, together with this general lack of knowledge makes it nearly impossible for us to effectively deal with problems generally foreign to our Mormon culture. This disability frequently leads to swift and inaccurate judgment of others. This ostensibly benign ignorance, stemming from sheer indolence, compounded by the Church's failure until recently to emphasize the necessity of such community involvement, has frequently inhibited LDS women in their efforts to make a valuable contribution to their communities.

As an individual, I found the conference enlightening and discouraging at the same time. On the bus headed back to New York City, I resolved to no longer use church involvement and the general business of living as my excuse for ignorance when it came to community affairs, but I had to fight the desire to find a nice quiet retreat in the mountains, void of any such community.

Elizabeth B. Ricks  
Arlington, Virginia

#### on contributors

Why not reinstitute the practice of including a brief section providing some biographical information on the authors in each issue. I have had three people talk with me about this last issue and all of them asked questions about one or more of the authors. I am trying to keep people apprised of Dialogue and urge them to subscribe.

M. Gerald Bradford  
Santa Barbara, California

Please let us know a little about *who* is writing the articles. I thought the "Notes on Contributors" section was worth the pages devoted to it.

Rick Sharp  
Gardena, California

Editor's Note: *"By our fruits ye shall know us," seems to be the motto of most of our contributors. Even when they are willing to furnish us with interesting facts about themselves, these facts are*

*often out of date by presstime. We are still keeping the option open, however, and if any of our readers wish to correspond with any of our writers, we shall be happy to bring them together.*

#### mormon leadership study

The Institute of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara is pleased to announce the formation of a long-range study entitled, "Mormon Secular Leaders."

G. Wesley Johnson of the History department at UCSB will direct the project, assisted by M. Gerald Bradford of the Religious Studies department at UCSB. We wish to bring this study to the attention of interested scholars, particularly LDS scholars.

Those desiring additional information can write to the investigators in care of the Institute of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California 93106.

Walter H. Capps, Director  
Institute of Religious Studies  
University of California,  
Santa Barbara

#### corrigendum

One correction is essential to the article "Common Beginnings, Divergent Beliefs." In the submitted manuscript a key concluding sentence read, "Should Joseph Smith's direct descendants die out, the RLDS will *not* likely turn to the Hyrum Smith line. . . ." Somehow, in the editing process, that sentence became, "Should Joseph Smith's direct descendants die out, the RLDS will probably turn to the Hyrum Smith line." The omission of one word was a grave error, in my estimation, specifically because the authors intended to quash the somewhat uninformed predictions of some "Utah Mormons" who like to think that the RLDS have no other options than to turn to unification through the Hyrum Smith line. It is our considered opinion that that will *not* occur.

Douglas D. Alder  
Logan, Utah