

# INFORMATION BULLETIN

Vol. 47, No. 22

May 30, 1988

## Howard Nemerov Is Appointed Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry

Librarian of Congress James H. Billington has announced the appointment of Howard Nemerov as the third Poet Laureate of the United States. He will succeed Richard Wilbur, effective in September.

In making the appointment, The Librarian of Congress said: "Howard Nemerov has given America a remarkable range of poetry, from the profound to the poignant to the comic. He is also an outstanding critic, essayist, fiction writer, and teacher. It is a happy moment for poetry that Howard Nemerov will become our new ambassador of the 'republic of letters,' and a fitting successor to Richard Wilbur and Robert Penn Warren in the American laureateship."

Howard Nemerov has received the Pulitzer Prize in poetry (1978), the Theodore Roethke Memorial Prize for Poetry (1968), the National Book Award in poetry (1978), and the Bollingen Prize for poetry (1981). He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Born in 1920 in New York City, Mr. Nemerov received his A.B.

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*Howard Nemerov, Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress designate. Mr. Nemerov begins his tenure in September. (Photo by Herb Weitman, Washington University, St. Louis.)*

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degree from Harvard University in 1941. He has taught at Hamilton College, Bennington College, Brandeis University, and Hollins College. In 1969, he became the Fannie Hurst Professor of Creative Literature at Washington University in St. Louis, where he is now the Edward Mallinckrodt Distinguished University Professor of English.

Among Mr. Nemerov's collections of poetry are *Image and the Law* (1947), *Guide to the Ruins* (1950), *The Salt Garden* (1955), *Mirrors and Windows* (1958), *The Next Room of the Dream* (1962), *The Painter Dreaming in the Scholar's House* (1968), *Gnomes & Occasions* (1973), *The Western Approaches* (1975), *Sentences* (1980), *Inside the Onion* (1984), and *War Stories* (1987).

Mr. Nemerov has also written the novels, *The Melodramatists* (1949), *Federigo, or The Power of Love* (1954), and *The Homecoming Game* (1957), and collections of short stories, including *A Commodity of Dreams* (1959), *Stories, Fables & Other Diversions* (1972).

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The *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* is issued weekly by the Information Office of the Library of Congress and distributed free of charge to publicly supported libraries and research institutions, academic libraries, learned societies, and allied organizations in the United States.

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Bruce Tapper, Editor

## Library Hosts Conference on Christianity and The Cultural History of the Eastern Slavs

The Library of Congress has hosted a major conference on the impact of Christianity on the culture of the Eastern Slavs, in connection with the millennium of Russian Christianity, on May 26 and 27.

Scholars, art historians, musicologists, theologians, and librarians from around the world convened to participate in the panel discussions for the one-and-a-half-day conference. The topics of the three panels were: "The Impact of Christianity on the History of Russian Music"; "The Impact of Christianity on the History of the Russian Visual Arts"; and "The Religious Book Culture of the Eastern Slavs." The Library of Congress conference is part of a series of meetings being held in the United States this year to celebrate the millennium of the adoption of Christianity in 988 A.D. by Vladimir, the ruler of Kievan Rus', and the people he ruled.

The Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington, who is himself a noted scholar of Russian cultural history, opened the conference. He also chaired the panel on "The Impact of Christianity on the History of the Russian Visual Arts." Other panel leaders were Milos Velimirovic, University of Virginia, and Edward Kasinec, New York Public Library. The keynote speaker was the Reverend John Meyendorff, dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, N.Y.

A number of Soviet scholars, some of whom are the leading authorities in their fields, participated in the conference. Their presence provided not only an opportunity for fruitful interaction with Western colleagues, but also a forum in which the Soviet Union's incipient "internal dialogue" on its own religious history can

continue. Many of these same Soviet participants attended the historic millennial conferences in Moscow in May 1987 and in Leningrad in February 1988, which examined the theology and spirituality of the Russian Orthodox Church by bringing together for the first time since 1917 scholars from the Soviet Academy of Sciences to discuss purely religious questions with scholars from the Russian Orthodox theological academies. Dr. Billington also spoke at both conferences.

The topics that were discussed at the three panels were chosen with care to address aspects of Russian culture that have attracted little scholarly investigation in the West. The panel on the visual arts, for example, devoted major attention to Russian icon and fresco painting. These two art forms, which together represented the finest flower of Russia's medieval civilization, have remained relatively unstudied in the West, and Western art historians have generally lacked the competence in Byzantine Greek and Old Church Slavonic needed to investigate them thoroughly. It is hoped that this panel and subsequent publications resulting from it may help to catalyze Western scholarly interest in medieval Russian religious art.

Also in commemoration of the millennium of the adoption of Christianity by Vladimir of Rus', the Library of Congress has prepared an exhibit of approximately 50 items from its extensive collections of Russian, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian materials, which are on view in the Great Hall of the Thomas Jefferson Building until October 9. The exhibit tells the story of Vladimir's decision to adopt Christianity and its effect on the cultural, literary, and religious life of the people of Rus' for the next 1,000 years.

CONSER (Cont. from p. 219)

serial records with clear instructions for complex, as well as routine, situations and for current AACR 2 serials cataloging."

The CEG "package" includes the best-selling base text (and binder), dated January 1986, priced at \$30; Update 1, dated December 1986, priced at \$15; and Update 2, dated July 1987, priced at \$10. All may be ordered from the Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, Washington, DC 20541.

Symposium (Cont. from p. 219)

and interdisciplinary approaches if librarians and information specialists are to succeed in the information age. (Dr. Suzuki, a graduate of the University of Michigan, served as head of the Asia Library, University of Michigan, and on the faculty of the University of Hawaii School of Library and Information Studies before his appointments first as university librarian and then as president of the Kyoto institution.)

Eichi Kurahashi, deputy director, Tokyo Institute of Technology Library, in his paper on "The Science Information System and the Academic Library Staff in Japan," examined problems arising out of the attempt to develop a National Science Information Center now linking 40 university libraries. These include the tendency of individual libraries to develop unique systems of automation as well as to resist programs of shared cataloging and union catalog development, all pointing to the need to change the individualistic "mentality" of library staffs long accustomed to local methods and procedures.

Next, Setsuko Koga, Aoyama Gakuin University, spoke on "The Science Information System and Library Science Programs." Prof. Setsuko Koga first noted that massive changes in society, education, and technology are pushing university libraries to develop science information systems, and then analyzed ways in which the

"new librarians" required to operate such systems should be trained. She also suggested ways in which curricula and continuing education courses could be altered to bring about necessary changes in library education in Japan.

The final speaker, Serafin D. Quiason, commissioner, Presidential Commission on Culture and Arts, the Philippines, presented a paper titled, "Academic Librarians in Southeast Asia: Now and Beyond 2010 A.D." Dr. Quiason, the former director of the National Library of the Philippines and a historian, pointed to the need for academic librarians to become again a "body of learners" adapting to far-reaching technological changes sweeping the region, so that they might better be able to preserve the cultural legacy of the past and "extend, through interlinked systems, their services to primary access points like the homes, offices, and the network of libraries."

This was the third annual international seminar organized by Dr. Suzuki and his colleagues in an effort coordinated by Professor Zensei Oshiro. The first covered "Library Collections" and the second "Use of Library Resources." Whether a fourth seminar will be convened has not yet been decided.

—Warren Tsuneishi

Laureate (Cont. from p. 218)

His collections of essays include *Poetry* (1966), *Reflections on Poetry and Poetics* (1972), *Figures of Thought* (1978), *Journal of the Fictive Life* (1965), *New & Selected Essays* (1985), and *The Oak in the Acorn* (1987).

Howard Nemerov served as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1963-64. Mr. Nemerov's most recent appearance at the Library of Congress was on March 30 and 31, 1987, at the Consultants' Reunion, an event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the position of Consultant in Poetry, in which he read from his work, along with other

former Consultants in Poetry.

During his tenure as Laureate Consultant, Mr. Nemerov will give a public poetry reading and a lecture, will advise the Library of Congress on its literary programs, and will recommend new poets to be recorded for the Library's Archive of Recorded Poetry and Literature. In addition he will be available, with the approval of The Librarian of Congress, for service to other government agencies for particular ceremonial occasions, to the extent possible.

Mr. Nemerov will occupy the position of Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress created in 1936. The chair, established with an endowment from the late Archer M. Huntington, was changed by a provision of Public Law 99-194, sponsored by Senator Spark M. Matsunaga (D-Hawaii) and enacted in December 1985, that redesignated the Library position as "Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry."

## AMERICAN TREASURY

PRODUCED BY CBS NEWS  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

This week's question, drawn from the CBS News "American Treasury" series, broadcast each weekday at 3:57 p.m. (EST) on the CBS Television Network, is:

**One of America's greatest short story writers was also a convicted criminal, writing under a pen name. Who was it?**

The answer to last week's question is:

Winslow Homer began his career as an illustrator for *Harper's Weekly*, reporting from Civil War battlefronts. Winslow Homer's drawings were studied for their details of a soldier's everyday life by Stephen Crane while writing *The Red Badge of Courage*.