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### Bulletin; NYSATA v. 24, Folder 1-1, 1973

New York State Art Teachers Association

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**ED. NOTE:** *The following articles are responses by a few of NYSATA's former presidents to the events and experiences during their tenure of office. During the long hours of frustration and hard work, one wonders if it was ever worth becoming president of this organization. But in the times of success and triumph, one does admit that it WAS worth it all. Looking back on those years, the frustration and failures dim, and only the bright memories shine through.*

*Join us while we reminisce for a while with a few of our former presidents and give them the privilege that they have so admirably earned as they wielded the helm of this organization. This is their moment for just a bit of nostalgia.*

## JOSEPH PAGE

1950-51

Memories of my affiliation with the genesis of this Association endure, even after a quarter of a century, and an attempt at precis may present too much of a challenge. However, I recall meetings, in Syracuse, of Art teachers from all sections of New York State who shared concern for the need of a professional state association. Their plans were adopted by the majority of Art teachers at subsequent regional meetings of the New York State Teachers' Association. All of this represented remarkably successful grass roots planning and organization.

The second year of NYSATA became my responsibility and I had the enthusiastic support of many, including Elbert Ryerson, Stanley Czurlis, Ruth Allison Kerr, Louise Sanger Pollard, Emma Lange, Mort Raych and the omnipresent Ray Henry.



The first four NYSATA Presidents, left to right: Morton Raych (4), Elbert Ryerson (3), Joe Page (2), Bernard (B.J.) Rooney (1). 1953



Ruth Allison Kerr (Cortland), Vincent Popolizio, Joe Page (Long Island)

Columbia University and New York City's Statler Hotel were the sites of the Second Annual Convention in 1950. NYSATA had no treasury at that time and I recall Ray Henry sharing my real concern that the financial commitment for the convention might become our personal debt. Following the registration for the convention Ray and I tallied the receipts and discovered that NYSATA was solvent. In our exuberance we tossed the money in the air - and reveled in the shower!

The fledgling NYSATA's major achievement in its second year was the establishment of Art Education in the New York State University colleges. The unavailability of Art courses for my students at the state colleges (while their classmates registered for History, English, Languages, Home Economics, Science, Industrial Arts) defined a priority that became my crusade for NYSATA.

Bert Ryerson (NYSATA Vice-President) and Louise Pollard (NYSATA Secretary) accompanied me to the office of the New York State Commissioner of Education. He agreed to the substance of our presentation and expressed his concern about the absence of Art from the curriculum. He assured us that, before the beginning of another school year, Art Education would be introduced into the program of at least one unit of the State University of New York - and that others would follow in subsequent years.

Shortly thereafter the Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Knox, met



**Ernest Flemming, Director of Art (Utica),  
Art Talmadge, Binney & Smith 1953**



**Mildred Holman, Gretchen Gleseke, Art  
Teachers - Bennett H.S., Buffalo 1952**

with me in New York City to review the Art curriculum that was proposed, to be offered at New Paltz when college opened in September. 1950 was the year of NYSATA concern for a new and creative course of study to supplant a static Art syllabus. Vincent Popolizio had only recently come to the State Education Department and he provided invaluable assistance and support to the Syllabus Committee. Probably only a few recall that, prior to Vincent Popolizio's involvement, the Art courses in the New York State secondary schools consisted of "Rep" I, II, III, IV and Design I, II, III, IV - all, literally, taught by the numbers.

The year of my presidency was one of financial austerity, as Ray Henry can testify. The Newsletter was prepared by Louise Sanger and me. We also mimeographed the Newsletter, collated and stapled it, addressed the envelopes and conveyed them to the post office.

I like to believe that NYSATA, from the beginning, had a purpose - and a dedication to that purpose. Certainly Art, in 1950, was only beginning to become identified with academic areas of the curriculum. And, just as certainly, Art is now established in the curriculum of secondary schools and colleges, even to the point where many colleges grant Advanced Placement credit for the high school study of Studio Art and Art History.

All of this represents a dramatic index of the progress since my tenure when Art was not even provided in the State Colleges of New



Katherine Henry, Ray Henry, Ruth Allison Kerr. 1952



B.J. Rooney, Director of Art, Buffalo; Herb Stienke, Director of Art, Albany. 1952

York and Vincent Popolizio was our lone representative in the State Education Department.

I am convinced that every Art teacher who has been allied with NYSATA has provided support for the remarkable progress in this quarter of a century of Art Education in New York State.

## **ELBERT W. RYERSON**

**1951-52**

The convention was held at the Mark Twain Hotel, Elmira, N.Y. This was the third convention and NYSATA was just beginning to grow. We were still struggling for recognition and membership.

As I recall, there were seven "Firsts" in this year of our growth which I doubt anyone recorded as such and my secretary finally convinced me to throw all that "old stuff" out. Looking back, here are some - correct me if I'm wrong.

1. First professionally printed Newsletter, with photos of on the spot reporting. In those days the President and secretary edited, mailed and acted as the executive committee.

2. First time a committee, jointly selected by NYSATA and the State Department gave us representation in policy making at State level.

3. Ratification of the new constitution. About 6 weeks before our first New York Convention, Joe



**Ernest Flemming & Bert Ryerson**



**Geo Kimak, Bert Ryerson, Ruth Allison, Art Talmadge, Binney & Smith**



**Bert Ryerson, Ruth Allison Kerr, Bill Milliken.**

Page, president, called asking me as Vice President to Chair a committee to write a new constitution and have it ready for presentation at our meeting. This was done but each section had to approve it.

4. First full blown convention involving the commercial houses. The convention, held in the Mark Twain Hotel, was patterned after the Eastern Arts Conventions. There was symbolism rampant throughout. There was a theme for each general session and a new symbolic design behind the speakers table. I recall Rod Squires was in charge of this and in the rush of changes he was caught putting up a huge aluminum spiral as the entire group sat and watched. (Embarrassing moments.)

5. Architectural consultant established. At this time there were no specific requirements or recommendations on art rooms except for square footage. B.J. Rooney, then Director in Buffalo, agreed to meet with any school district planning new construction and draw up plans for the art department.

6. Full news and radio coverage. I'm not sure this was a first, but the news media decided we were important enough to have reporters at our meetings and important persons were interviewed by the radio and a record made for use with PTA's and groups.

The seventh one escapes me but I recall we were delighted that Dr. Landis of Syracuse threw her support with us and the head of the art department of Pennsylvania came to our convention with enthusiastic support. The Artmobile was intro-



NYSATA meeting with the State Education Department



State Education Department meeting, May 1952



State Education Department meeting.



Left to Right: Unknown, Ruth Allison, Bert Ryerson, Joe Page, Ray Henry.

duced sometime in here by Geo. Kirnak.

As previously stated, at this point the president and secretary were the two key persons responsible for running the activities for the entire year, this included membership, business manager, Newsletter and publications, convention location and planning, etc. It was a busy and hectic year and Ruth Allison Kerr, Secretary, deserves equal credit for any achievement there may have been.

## **MITCHELL SIEGEL**

**1961 -62**

This was the first year that NYSATA took its convention to a resort hotel. It was held at the Concord in the Catskills. The theme of the convention was "Architecture: The Forgotten Art in Art Education." This was the first convention to have a single art theme. One of the most interesting happenings at this convention is that the second vice president was elected from the floor. This had never happened before at a convention.

## VIGGO HOLM MADSEN

1964-65

The Sixteenth Annual Convention of the New York State Art Teachers Association was held at the Park Sheraton Hotel, New York City, April 21 - 24, 1965. Cass Cetnarowski was convention manager and Ida Shimans was program chairman.

During the year that proceeded that convention, the following events occurred:

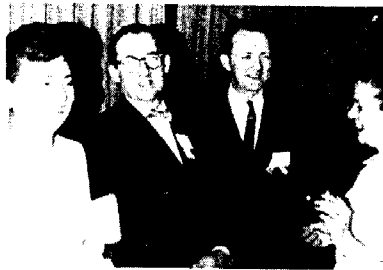
Bill Milliken retired from service and Art Talmage, beloved art salesman, passed away.

Art education was on the move. President Lyndon Johnson and Governor Nelson Rockefeller established a national and state council on the arts.

Vincent Papolizio fought for an art regulation to include art as a necessary subject in the elementary curriculum. The NYSATA president and other art educators met in Albany to bring pressure for the raising of the art education department to "Bureau" status within the State Education Department. There was also an effort made to require the inclusion of an art room in every new elementary school.

The college directory, which had been previously published by Fred Pilkington, was updated and revised for a second edition by Ernest "Drew" Mills.

The NYSATA Newsletter was initially edited by Don Gladwin, who resigned at mid-year. Subsequent issues were "guest-edited" by



Left to right: Libby Lester, Viggo Madsen, Clyde Snyder.



Clarence Tsui, Larry Garfinkel and Kish Matoba.

My personal feelings during the 1964-65 year were that I wanted very much to be of service to NYSATA and do the best job possible. My wife helped me endlessly trying to keep up with correspondence, putting out a Presidential Newsletter, which was intended to be a one page monthly letter telling of the latest efforts of our ten or more committees and other relevant news.

I must regard the convention with mixed feelings. I believe that with the hard work of Cass and Ida we presented a top notch program. However, we encountered the World's Fair with all the problems and pleasures it encompassed. Hotels were overbooked, the city was crowded, prices were high and there were many distractions which pulled the crowd away from the convention itself. We took advantage of what the City had to offer by including in the program an evening at the Ballet and a meal in a fine New York restaurant. We offered demonstrations by some of the leading craftsmen in the U.S. and a fine panel from the New York Times. It was the first NYSATA convention to offer in its program a candid and open discussion of the special problems of black students and black artists.

It is significant I think, that this was our last convention held in New York City and from the look of things, may well be the last. There are just too many problems, from dealing with union

demands to finding hotel space that is affordable by most of the membership, to make holding conventions there practicable.

## ROBERT C. JENNETTE

1970-71

It seemed that my year of office started long before July 1, 1970, what with Convention planning and meetings starting long before that time.

Our Convention, "Confronting the 70's" was held at Grossinger's that year, and we hoped to introduce many new things into the Convention to stimulate the Convention participants. "Environments", conceived and constructed by members, took on varied and interesting forms. Howard Conant, assisted by several of his students, developed an environmental painting, which was extremely well done. Many smaller workshops featured techniques and methods, with involvement of the participants. A very provocative session by Robert Doty on the Albany South Mall Project brought about some fiery comments from the audience. Drew Mills' presentation "Status of the State" and Bert Towne's "Ceramic Cheeseburger" enjoyed long and stimulating lives as they were presented again and again around the state months after the Convention was over. Fred Rosasco, Convention Manager, my wife Helen as program chairman, and George Weinheimer, Convention planning committee chairman, worked long hours to



President Bob Jennette (R) and parliamentarian Leland Gage (L).



Registration: 1970 Convention. Helene Miller, Richard Janson, and Libby Lester.



September 1970 Executive Council meeting.

make the Convention a success. It had the largest attendance in the history of NYSATA Conventions.

One of my efforts was to publish a bulletin which would be a professional magazine, enlarged from a newsletter status, and containing pertinent information about the profession, as well as the organization. As editor, with the assistance of my wife as assistant editor, I developed a bulletin which grew in design (and size!) and became one of the best state publications in the nation.

Probably my most vivid recollection of that year, along with the Convention, was a bout with hepatitis. We weathered the storm, and during that time we were extremely proud to announce that the Commissioner's Regulations would now include a statement that art would be included in the program in the elementary grades. It was a giant step forward for the profession, and for the organization, for NYSATA was instrumental in affecting that inclusion in the Regulations. Members were notified by a special mailing, and Dr. Vivienne Anderson gave us a personal note of commendation.

I felt we made great strides during that year. We began negotiations with NAEA for a public information TV movie, which was later to become a reality and is aired today across the nation. Of course, there were many things that didn't get done, but we can be proud of what did happen. I owe a great deal to the able assistance of the Executive Committee and to the committee chairpersons who helped so ably that year.



Bob Jennette receiving plaque from commercial exhibitors from Joe Scariota.