

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

Published monthly, except June, July, and August, by the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Entered as second-class matter March 13, 1920, at the postoffice at Harrisonburg, Virginia, under the act of March 3, 1879.



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Manuscripts offered for publication from those interested in our state educational problems should be addressed to the editor of THE VIRGINIA TEACHER, State Teachers College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

READING INSTITUTE BEGINS JUNE 20

THE first annual Reading Institute to be held at Madison College will occur during the second week of the summer school beginning June 20. Campus laboratory classes will demonstrate reading procedures, the library staff will hold a general exhibit of children's books, and publishers will display basal and supplementary readers. Other special features are a lecture by Dr. Nila Banton Smith, nationally known reading expert, open forums on reading problems, and laboratory demonstrations of the new machines for studying eye-behavior.

The College now owns a telebinocular, an ophthalmograph, and a metronoscope; these will be in use all summer with the faculty committee in charge. During the Institute the companies originating these machines will have trained experts on campus. Students and visitors will have opportunity to consult these specialists concerning their own eye problems. Teachers wishing to bring elementary or secondary school children for diagnosis will have the oppor-

tunity to do so. Requests for appointments should be sent to Miss Katherine M. Anthony, Director of the Training School.

THAT THEIR EDUCATION MAY CONTINUE

THE valedictorian of the graduating class of every senior high school in the United States this spring will receive again a year's subscription to *The Reader's Digest* with the compliments of the editors of that publication, according to an announcement in its May issue.

The editors of the *Digest* are repeating last year's offer in furtherance of their expressed desire "to encourage education as a continuous and expanding process, carried on long after the classroom is left behind." They believe that the need among the young people soon to graduate from the high schools of the country for vital contact with the living, quickening thought of their day will be greater than ever. That the *Digest* can help fill this need has been made clear, they feel, by the enthusiastic response to their last offer received from nearly 8,000 high school principals, and from parents and students.

There will be about 20,000 senior high school valedictorians this year, and the *Digest*, anxious to present a year's subscription to each one, urges that the attention of all high school principals be called to this offer.

MEETINGS OF INTEREST TO ENGLISH TEACHERS

For the benefit of the many teachers of English who will attend the National Education Association convention in New York City the week of June 27, the National Council of Teachers of English will conduct conferences on English the first three afternoons of the week. On Monday afternoon this will take the form of a joint meeting with the Department of Secondary Education, of which Ernest D. Lewis is chairman.

The topics for Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, announced by Max J. Herzberg, program chairman, are "Socializing Trends in Secondary Education as they Affect English Teaching," and "Matter and Manner in English Teaching." Dean Henry W. Holmes of Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Dr. H. Wayne Driggs of New York University, Professor William Y. Tindall of Columbia University, Jules F. Seebach, program director of the Mutual Broadcasting Company, and others will be heard at the conferences.

An additional program feature will be a spelling bee to be conducted by Paul Wing of the National Broadcasting Company. Mr. Herzberg has also arranged to have available for teachers attending the National Council conferences a limited number of guest tickets for broadcasts of the leading radio companies.

An exhibit of early English books and of autograph manuscripts of English authors will be held by the Morgan Library for visiting English teachers during the convention week. The New York Public Library, The Grolier Club, and Teachers College Library will also have special exhibits.

THE TEACHER'S LETTER BOX

Dear Letter Box:

My eighth-grade boys seem to be getting worse and worse in class. They are so smart-alecky; and when I tell them they must stay in or give them any other form of punishment, it only makes them worse. Some of them need a whipping, but my principal says corporal punishment isn't permitted. What advice can you give us?

SALLIE SMITH

Dear Miss Smith:

Someone has said that mischief is the pupil's protection against idleness and boredom, and after long years of observation I agree with him. So that is the place I should begin in working with these eighth grade boys. That is, I would make the school-work so real and worthwhile that there would be neither time nor desire for "smart-alecky" conduct.

Now for some practical suggestions for first steps. Study your children, especially the ones that seem to be the leaders. Make written notes as to their interests *outside of school*. Then study your community thoroughly, listing all educative opportunities, aesthetic, social, historical, and industrial. Pour over the Aims of Education in *Tentative Course of Study* until you have definite plans for guiding each and every one of your pupils. From the list of objects and processes in your environment check off those which best meet these three conditions:

1. They relate to the interests of eighth-grade pupils in general and yours in particular.
2. They offer opportunity to use at least some of the subject matter in the books available.
3. They furnish a starting point for activities needed to provide best possible growth.

Your next step is to get some real jobs started. There is no set way. Take the pupils into your confidence, hunt something that needs to be done in the school or community, make a rough plan, collect needed information, get together and discuss your partial results, and so on. That is, go at it with the children's help and in a simple, natural way. To illustrate what I mean by things needed, you might study methods used for heating homes. You might map your community for places of interest and get ready to give accurate, complete directions to visitors. Your county newspaper would welcome a series of short articles about such places. Your county fair would make a place for kodak collections, picture maps, homemade guide books, and collections of old objects.

Such activities as described above cannot be well done without much subject matter. Nor can the pupils do an honest job characterized by good craftsmanship without growth in fundamental work tools such as computing, drawing, speaking, and reading.