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## A Brief History of CCLM/CLMP

AN AMERICAN INVENTION, the literary form known today as the “little magazine” emerged early in the twentieth century. Small, independent presses evolved in tandem, and by publishing year 2001–2002, the thirty-seventh annual edition of the *International Directory of Little Magazines & Small Presses* listed over five thousand entries. A goodly number of these by and large nonprofit literary enterprises, like others come and gone over the past one hundred years, owe their existence to external funding sources. In the forefront of directing financial support to literary magazine and small-press publishing, the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines (CCLM), enlarged in 1990 and renamed the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses (CLMP), has advanced the literary arts and aided individual writers in the United States for more than thirty-five years.<sup>1</sup>

Pivotal in the national, nonprofit, membership-based literary arts service’s inception, founding member and first secretary (1967–72) Jules Chametzky had the idea for CCLM’s original title. A longtime champion of literary and artistic endeavors that fall outside the mainstream, his role in the naming and ascendance of the organization mirrors the inchoate *raison d’être* of the little-magazine movement in general. A CCLM report commissioned by the Ford Foundation and published in 1975 suggests how.

According to the document, the little magazine came about as “the product of idealistic editors, publishers, and writers who were rebelling against [commercial] publishers’ indifference to unknown writers and their conservative attitudes toward the development of new means of expression” (2). Noncommercial from the outset, these forums for diverse views and styles pub-

lished prose, poetry, criticism, and political commentary while surviving “on their philosophy of altruism or the support of patrons and friends” (2-3). The term “little magazine” as applied to such publications came into coinage around the time of the First World War. It pertained not to size, content, or the fact that contributors were rarely paid but to readership, suggesting a “limited group of ‘intelligent’ readers who could recognize the avant-garde” (3). Many great modern and postmodern authors were later “discovered” in the “littles,” including Ernest Hemingway, Anais Nin, William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, Ishmael Reed, and Sherley Anne Williams.

The ensuing decades also ushered in writers and mavericks who became thriving independent publishers, notably James Laughlin, who used inherited money to found New Directions in 1936 in New York City; and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who in 1955 launched City Lights’ Publishers in San Francisco on a shoestring (Feldman 4). More recent literary projects echoing the fiscal sensibilities of these progenitors include *Glimmer Train*, which Susan Burmeister-Brown and Linda Davies began in Portland, Oregon, in 1990, and support with their own private funds; and the nonprofit, California-based poetry miscellany *Free Lunch*, established by Ron Offen in 1988 and providing subscriptions “free to all serious poets living in the U.S.A.” Ferlinghetti meanwhile remains loyal to his own pioneering ethos, advising artists and writers who came to hear him read at Woodstock Poetry Festival 2002 to eschew “government grants.” But competing for audiences in a publishing arena presently dominated by ten multinational media conglomerates—all with annual revenues in excess of \$16.5 billion and peaking at a \$129-billion high for General Electric (“The Big Ten”)—most “littles” and small presses cannot afford the luxury of the Beat granddaddy’s financial integrity.

Another mid-century, noncommercial-arts visionary, Chametzky co-founded *The Massachusetts Review* in 1958 (Volume One, Number One, came out in 1959) to promote offbeat, nontraditional, and under-represented literary and intellectual talent. As the magazine’s fortieth-anniversary issue declares, MR

was committed to “diversity from the start.” Its then thirty-one-year-old co-founder sought with Sidney Kaplan, its co-editor, to recognize, represent, and give voice to African Americans, Native Americans, and other “so-called minority and ethnic” groups, including feminists and those exploring “the story of the Holocaust” (Chametzky, “Preface” 456). Soon after launching the magazine, Chametzky banded with like-minded individuals, who wished to secure publicity, growth, and solvency for the “littles.” Together they engendered CCLM, “the first organization in the history of America set up solely to aid the noncommercial literary magazines in the country,” as then president William Phillips noted in his report of 1969 (2).

As the inaugural secretary of CCLM, Chametzky was de facto its first historian. Piecing together a chronology from his reports and remembrances, the genesis of the organization emerges. “CCLM grew primarily out of the efforts of an earlier group, the Association of Literary Magazines of America (ALMA),” the one-time recorder documented in his first annual report (4). ALMA had formed in November of 1961, in St. Paul, Minnesota, at a meeting sponsored by the *Carleton Miscellany*, initiated by its then editor Reed Whittemore and partially subsidized by the McKnight Foundation (4). “I got a call from Whittemore to come to St. Paul and meet with other magazine editors, somewhat of a sentimental journey for me,” Chametzky, a University of Minnesota PhD alumnus, recollected in an interview. Representatives of nineteen magazines and several publishing concerns attended. “It was an extraordinary meeting,” the then *MR* managing editor continued, citing among the assembled literati Victor Navasky, Allen Tate, Robie Macauley, and Robert “Bobby” Bly, who put out a poetry magazine called *The 50s*. “He was thinking of changing the name to *The 60s*. I subscribed and we became lifelong friends.”

Over the course of several days, the ALMA members met in separate groups in a downtown hotel. “The people from the little magazines—we were discussing promotion, circulation, money—all those collective problems,” Chametzky recalled. “But the ‘big shots’ were in another seminar room and came up with a

statement of lofty goals, setting up a split between the established journals and the littles.”

The organization continued to meet every two years, but by the close of 1965, after four years of existence, it was kaput. Commenting on its contributions to the social history of independent publishing in America in his two-year report of 1969, the former CCLM secretary noted:

ALMA had succeeded in bringing together, in an unprecedented and rather historic way, for mutual exchange, information, [and] support, members of the diverse and various literary magazine community—perhaps thereby helping to create a sense that it was a community—and on occasion dramatizing for the public the fact and importance of their existence [4].

Despite the group’s decision to formerly disband, “little” editors continued to cast about for funds, without which they believed “the literary community would cease entirely” (4). To resurrect and strengthen its esprit de corps would require a savior. A succession of brief, CCLM disciplinary annals penned over the years laud a group of men as filling this breach, but few mention the woman without whom the organization might never have arisen: Carolyn Kizer.<sup>2</sup> “I give her full credit,” Chametzky stated unequivocally.

When Lyndon Johnson established the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities as government agencies in 1965, Kizer, former editor of *Poetry Northwest* and a longtime active member and officer in ALMA, was appointed Director of Literary Programs; Ralph Ellison and John Steinbeck joined her on the board. As Chametzky related, it was Kizer who had the “original impulse” to channel money from the federal government to little magazines and pay authors out of the pot. Convening in New York City in February of 1966 to discuss “fresh methods” for funding the literary arts, she met with Whittemore and Chametzky, former members of ALMA’s executive committee; and William Phillips, editor of *Partisan Review* and spokesperson for the Council of Literary Magazines (CLM), “an informal grouping of five of the better-known literary magazines in the country” (4). Also present was Caroline Rand

Herron, *PR*'s managing editor. Kizer recommended that the editors draft a proposal for her to present to the NEA and see what would come of it. But sensing the wisdom of first uniting ALMA and CLM as a single nonprofit entity, Chametzky, who had been ALMA's elected president from 1965–67, said, "Let's put together both our organizations." The agreed upon merger's first order of business that day was selecting a new name.

Six years earlier, in the wake of the historic February 1, Woolworth lunch counter sit-in, staged to end racial segregation in the American south by four black freshman students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had formed (West 46–47). With student activism against escalating U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War about to explode nationwide, Chametzky thought of SNCC (which he pronounces "snick") in suggesting to the founding delegates, "Let's call it the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines." As he acknowledged to me regarding the moniker, "Behind it was SNCC—but I wouldn't have said it out loud to Phillips; he was somewhat conservative."

By spring of the following year, a three-page statement of intent and request for a grant was submitted to the NEA in the name of CCLM and signed by the executive committee of ALMA (Chametzky, Whittemore, and George Plimpton, editor of the *Paris Review*) and CLM members (Phillips and Macauley, former editor of the *Kenyon Review*) (Chametzky, "Annual Report" 4). Their application was denied. Nevertheless, CCLM pushed to establish itself as a nonprofit, continuing through the summer to secure public or private funds and making a second appeal to the NEA. In December, the Endowment approved a matching grant of \$50,000, and CCLM was underway.

A few weeks later, the national Office of Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C., issued in perpetuity a Certificate of Incorporation to the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines, making official its not-for-profit educational and charitable intent. Dated January 4, 1967, the five-page document lists nine articles of incorporation, chief among them to: advance the literary arts; aid

noncommercial literary magazines, individual artists and writers; enhance literary and artistic standards, including of production; provide for literary projects and conferences of writers and editors; and give awards, scholarships, fellowships, grants, and other forms of aid and encouragement to literary magazines, artists, and writers. CCLM also proposed to open an information center, replete with a library to accumulate periodicals (including magazines and newsletters) and other resources deemed important to the literary magazine and small-press community.

Alone in bringing a semblance of diversity to the mostly Anglo-cast of five men who signed the certificate of incorporation and constituted the initial CCLM Board of Directors (including Whittemore, Phillips, Macauley, and Carl Stover of the National Institute of Public Affairs), Jules Chametzky's name was misspelled on the charter, an "s" typo-ed in place of "z." The slip-up unwittingly presaged the Council's early growing pains on the road to becoming the inclusive organization the *MR* editor presciently envisioned back in the late 1950s.

Accepting an offer of free office space and administrative assistance from the National Institute of Public Affairs while searching for private funds to match the Endowment's grant, CCLM operated out of a Washington office from June of 1967, to October 1968 (5). "We now met in Washington in comfortable chairs," Chametzky reminisced about the period. Kizer and Whittemore secured the organization's first substantial private grants, and groundwork for its subsequent programs was laid. During its inaugural year, CCLM boasted a budget of approximately \$125,000, issuing grants ranging from \$250 to \$3,000 to thirty-eight magazines ("CCLM Biennial Report 1972/1973" 1).

Phillips meanwhile was lobbying to move CCLM headquarters to New York City; Stover opposed the idea. Ultimately Chametzky, who viewed Manhattan as a Mecca of multiethnic literary arts activity and thus a more appropriate location from which to discharge services and dispense funds, helped Phillips "pry it loose." CCLM encamped first to a New York office donated by Coal Credit Company and then to the American National Theater and Academy.

During this early period of movement and growth, CCLM kept afloat due to the efforts of just three board members, Chametzky, Whittemore, and Phillips. Recognizing the need to broaden the group's base beyond its largely East Coast stronghold, they sought out editors from different geographic regions of the country to create a Board of Consultants to act in advisory capacity on general policy and to consider specific project requests. Early consultants included Charles Newman, editor of Chicago's *TriQuarterly*, and writer Russell Banks among the Midwest contingent, and George Hitchcock, founder and editor of West Coast publication *Kayak*, from Santa Cruz. A system of rotating grants committees drawn from the magazine community was thus established (Chametzky, "Annual Report" 5). For a time the reconstituted CCLM leadership, numbering thirteen, met every three to six months at different locations in New York to make decisions about giving out money. "Phillips was a great operator in the city and with Caroline Herron's help would get us space," Chametzky elaborated.

At one fateful meeting, twelve board members sat in assembly in a New York location and the CCLM secretary was the last person to come in the room. "One of you will betray me," he joked, to ease unspoken tensions. Someone, perhaps Charles Newman, replied, "All of us, Jules, all of us!" For as Chametzky explained to me, "Back then, editors were competitive, but we were trying to cooperate and mostly did." Voicing a perceived stumbling block to the pending success of CCLM in promoting the eclectic spectrum of journals and writers emerging on the literary arts horizons, Chametzky next proposed, "We don't have any black writers or journals."

Phillips replied that the *MR* editor suffered from "white guilt."

Chametzky lobbed back that it was more like "white responsibility." As a result of his initiative, in 1968, CCLM appointed as "special members" to the board a three-person Ad Hoc Committee on Black Literary Projects to oversee the funding of African-American magazines, writers, and artists. They included A.B. Spellman, editor of *Rhythm* and a former Morehouse

College faculty member; David Henderson, editor of *Umbra*; and Michael Thelwell, director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a writer whose work recently had appeared in the landmark *Best Stories by Negro Authors* (1967), edited by Langston Hughes.<sup>3</sup>

Launching the Black Literary Projects section of CCLM coincided with a tumultuous, uncertain period in U.S. history. Unrest on college campuses in the name of Black Power, Women's Liberation, and the Peace Movement was mounting, and many CCLM-sponsored magazines and writers had begun to speak out against the Vietnam War. Added anguish followed the Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy assassinations. The outcome of the 1968 presidential election loomed, and CCLM board members worried that the steady flow of largesse from Washington would evaporate. As it happened, Norman Sherman, press secretary to presidential candidate Vice President Hubert Humphrey at the time, had been a graduate school friend of Chametzky's at the University of Minnesota. Jules and Anne Halley had gotten married in the Shermans' living room and Anne was godmother to their child. Chametzky called the political aide and arranged to meet him in Washington, prodded at the insistence of presiding CCLM president Phillips, who attended the meeting along with Caroline Herron.

Seated in Sherman's living room, the CCLM secretary voiced the fear that if the Democrats lost the election his organization would lose its money. Sherman assured him, "We'll give you double."

But Chametzky, a Eugene McCarthy Democrat, insisted that they "get serious." Talk turned to Vietnam, and the magazine editors tried to convince Sherman to get Humphrey to move from the LBJ position and attempt to carry the left-progressive vote. Richard Nixon won the race, and a funny thing happened on the way to the White House. "He gave CCLM *four times* the amount of money; to this day, we still don't understand that," Chametzky mused in repeating the story.

The increase in federal funding coincided with CCLM's

physical move, in December 1969, to 80 Eighth Avenue (intersecting with Eighth Street, on the border between Greenwich Village and the section known as Chelsea), an expanded facility. Alongside the geographic change, women began to move into the organization's leadership in marginal ways. Behind the scenes, following the departure in less than a year of David Bournes, Caroline Rand Herron, always an important voice in the organization, became CCLM's second executive director, overseeing day-to-day operations with staff assistant Lois Theodorou. A woman would not break the upper ceiling of the organization until January 1, 1970, when June Degan, sister of poet George Oppen and then publisher of the *San Francisco Review* (associated with New Directions Press), became a consultant to the board. Finally, Beat poetry grande dame Anne Waldman would sit on the primary board of directors and poet Siv Cedering Fox serve as a consultant in 1972-73—the only two visible women in the leadership besides Herron in as many years. By 1976, with poet Leslie Silko among the headcount, only four out of seventeen CCLM board members and consultants were women.

Despite race and gender imbalances within its directing body, the late 60s and early 70s also ushered in a time of strong federal funding for CCLM, almost half the money coming from the NEA. Able to re-grant funds directly to various literary magazines, the organization's boon to the independent publishing world—past and present—cannot be overstated. CCLM grantees with addresses (many listed as New York apartment numbers) as of December 31, 1969, numbered just over one hundred; as of August 2002, the active membership roster exceeded 350. Many listed in 1969, such as *Love Letter* (Berkeley, California), *0 to 9* (New York, New York), *Pebble* (Lincoln, Nebraska), *Mele* (Honolulu, Hawaii), and *Transpacific* (Ft. Collins, Colorado) long since have disappeared, or like *Burning Deck* (relocated from Durham, Connecticut to Providence, Rhode Island) reconstituted as small presses. Others possessed staying power, ascending to now national prominence, including along with *MR*, *Antioch Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Shenandoah*, and

*Hanging Loose*. Still somewhat politically stymied during its nascent existence, when Manhattan's Lower East Side Beat-poetry legend Ed Sanders applied for money for his *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts*, CCLM replied, "No—we can't give it to you," according to Chametzky.

At the time, the board's deliberations regarding funding concerned more than an individual publication's supposed aesthetic merit. An anecdote Chametzky tells about those days lends a point of reference to this subject. A short time after Nixon's first presidential victory, Michael Straight, a White House cultural liaison contacted CCLM, requesting a meeting with its presiding officers. The Washington representative traveled to New York for the occasion, meeting Chametzky and others at a Spanish restaurant near the Chelsea Hotel. CCLM membership then stood above two hundred magazines, and the U.S. president was displeased with much of their content.

"You're getting all this money and they're all against the Vietnam War and Nixon. He's like a cornered rat—he can be very dangerous," the liaison warned the frontline of the literary avant-garde.

In narrating these events, Chametzky conceded that no visible consequences came of the implied threat. "It later came out that Straight had himself been a communist in the 30s in England," he speculated as to why CCLM kept its funding.

Also during the early Eighth Avenue years, as secretary Chametzky documents in his 1969 "Program Activities" report and according to my interview with him, under the leadership of William Phillips and Caroline Rand Herron, CCLM orchestrated and funded pilot projects that raised the visibility of the literary arts for decades afterwards. It set up its first on-location public library (a 26' x 21' room containing fifteen shelving units); established the College Contest Literary Magazine awards (now defunct); and formed relations with the Modern Language Association, exhibiting a selection of literary magazines at their annual national meeting. Additionally, the Council created a New York City reading series called "Poetry in the Park," which drew ethnically and economically diverse participation, including

from under-privileged inner-city grade school children. With the help of the Poetry Center of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA, it sponsored evenings of discussions and readings with writers and magazine editors. CCLM also published the *Handbook of Literary Magazine and Business Production*, a model for CCLM/CLMP's latter-day annual *Directory of Literary Magazines and Presses*.

By 1972, the budget for CCLM had climbed to approximately \$400,000. Pleased with its funding growth, the organization likewise was scrambling "to respond to the whole range of literary magazines, a remarkably diverse gathering in this country, and ... sought to keep factionalism and ideological biases out [its] judgments" when it came to re-granting and awarding prizes ("CCLM Biennial Report 1972/1973" 1-2). Along with lending support to established quarterlies, CCLM grew more receptive to "new magazines, new voices, new forms," its list of grantees burgeoning to include the likes of *Aphra* (a feminist journal), *Fiction* (a tabloid publishing experimental stories), *Quetzal* (an American Indian magazine), *Gay Sunshine* (a homosexual tabloid literary journal), *Holy Beggars' Gazette* (a literary magazine exploring Hasidic teachings), and *Nkombo* (an African-American magazine with ties to the Free Southern Theatre of Louisiana) (2).

"We were trying to be more democratic," Chametzky concurred about the changing nature of CCLM. "Every other meeting the board of directors tried to gather someplace outside of New York. Every time we went to one of these areas the little magazines would come out of the woodwork and accuse us of being New York elites." Infighting among the organization's leadership also was brewing. According to Chametzky's recollection, then *Antioch Review* editor Lawrence Grauman, slated to write a history of CCLM, called him "looking for the dirt." The *MR* editor further claimed, "He wrote and threatened me; the piece never got written." As the direction of the organization grew more diffuse, Chametzky resigned as secretary in 1972. "I also wanted to do more writing," he admitted.

CCLM did continue to grow through the 1970s, with federal

funding in the form of a “block grant” from the NEA (the literary arts service’s underwriter since inception), reaching nearly half a million dollars by 1980 (“CLMP Narrative” 1). “In 1980, CCLM began its first ongoing effort to diversify its funding base by seeking support from the private sector” (“Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines” 1). The move was perhaps more necessary than mercenary, since the Ronald Reagan presidential administration would in its early years yank the block grant away from the re-granters, pulling it back-in-house at the NEA (“CLMP Narrative” 1). Among private funding sources during the 80s, CCLM counted Exxon Corporation, the *New York Times*, the Mobil Foundation, and the Liz Claiborne Foundation. Likewise a prominent corporate sponsor, the General Electric Foundation established the G. E. Foundation Awards (1983–1989), a groundbreaking program offering direct support for young and emerging writers that has since become pro forma in the world of sponsored giving to the literary arts, as even a cursory glance at a recent issue of *Poets & Writers* assures. Over the life of the G. E. Foundation Awards, winners comprised a diverse group, including Natalie Kusz, Sigrid Nunez, Gregory Kolovakos, C. D. Wright, John Yau, Rita Dove, Julia Alvarez, Andrei Codrescu, Tama Janowitz, and Paul Hoover.

CCLM’s services to literary magazines similarly shifted in focus, making inroads into the commercial world with projects to increase advertising in, and sales of, small magazines as a means of revenue. The organization itself meanwhile pitched for funds in a public way—for instance, by a placing an ad in *Newsweek* that listed the names of twenty-eight well-known modern authors above the plea: “The literary magazines that first published these great writers are going out of business. Unless you help.”

Meanwhile, the squabbling Chametzky encountered within the organization during the early 70s had not necessarily abated a decade later. In fact, critics were circling in the late 70s and early 80s, generating what a file in the present-day CLMP archive labels “bad press” in commentaries with names like “Factions Divide Small-Press Movement,” “Insidious Intermediaries,” and “Perfidy.” In 1979, Len Fulton, founder and

editor of *International Directory of Magazines and Small Presses*, led the charge, accusing CCLM of self-interest and implying that founding quarterlies such as *MR* and *Partisan Review* were among its “five or six customers on five-figure twice-a-year grants” (3). A year later, Richard Kostelanetz wrote of serving as one of five elected judges to “participate in disbursing funds to literary magazines” and discovering “certain omissions” regarding applications (22). For his part, Nicholas Nyary, then executive director, conceded in a trade journal opinion piece that in its early days CCLM “appeared as a plausible agent” to the Nixon-Ford governments who funded it, “because it represented the East Coast, liberal, Anglo-Jewish literary establishment”; but he also asserted how, from the outset, “this leadership was contested by heirs of the Sixties” (12). Still, Nyary pronounced the small-press movement of the 80s “troubling,” hoping the literary climate could survive the decade’s “heavy bureaucratic hand” (12).

According to CCLM’s own record keeping (audited by Samuel Shedler, Certified Public Account), the year prior to Jules Chametzky’s formal parting from the organization, “a total of 291 grants were made, ranging from \$50 to \$8,575” (“CCLM Biennial Report 1972/1973” 1). Between 1967 and 1984, it awarded over \$3.4 million to more than 1500 different magazines, from larger, more established university quarterlies to small regional journals. But seven years after Fulton raised the issue of accountability for disbursement of funds, in 1986, CCLM would in fact act “as fiscal agent for 18 magazines and literary projects for a total of \$152, 461,” according to information certified by its annual independent audit (“Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines” 5).

Change was inevitable at CCLM, including geographic relocation to a four-office, rent-free space at 666 Broadway, donated by *Harper’s* magazine. In 1989, following an exhaustive search headed by then board member and *New Yorker* editor Alice Quinn, a Midwesterner named James Sitter joined the organization as executive director (Bergholz 1). CCLM was then at a crossroads. On his watch, the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines would redirect its mission to advocate more broadly

in the field of literary publishing, enlarging its membership to include independent presses and undergoing a name change in 1990 to the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses (CLMP). Sitter, a former director of the Minnesota Center for Book Arts who had many working-years experience in the industry as a book buyer, small-press distributor, and consultant, foresaw the 1990s as a “fertile time for independents” (Andrews 11). He moved to make consultants available on a subsidized basis to little magazines and small presses, recognizing the need to provide technical assistance to independents in the field as “crucial” in the coming decade (11). CLMP’s newly affirmed mission was to help literary publishers, as well as to consider technological trends in publishing and small press distribution.

The reconstituted literary arts service later found a new home at 154 Christopher Street in the Chelsea district of Manhattan, still its base of operation today. CLMP headquarters fills a small office space, where young, hip, and unaffected staffers conduct business from within Dilbert-style cubicles, an office dog begging for bites of deli sandwiches underfoot. A terrific magazine rack—as vivid as any in a blockbuster bookstore—rests just inside the entrance door on the right, doubling as a display to promote the buying of CLMP magazines online (shipping and handling paid by the literary arts service). Crowning jewel of the location, a modest library of archival and current publications by CLMP members occupies the freestanding, left-rear corner of the layout.

As if living out a certain fantasy of writers, critics, and others in the literary arts world, the CLMP staff has whittled the archive containing its organizational history down to half a filing cabinet drawer, letting the trail run cold at 1990, as I found on a visit to their offices in July of 2002. “Here are some newsletters,” Jeffrey Lendorf, CLMP’s current executive director offered me with a disarming smile, all of them dated from the past twelve months. By tracing the organization’s textual transition from original typed, hand-corrected paper documents through to desktop-published, fine-paper stock brochures, I would have to deduce a probable chronology of the CCLM/CLMP on my own. But

first he would join me briefly at a long conference table in the library to chat about recent development at the nonprofit.

“Our goal is to get writing to readers,” Lependorf, who hails from a classical music and literary arts consulting background told me, explaining that literature has special needs and special audiences differing from other kinds of publishing. “The reason why almost all new poetry is in the hands of independent publishers and not coming out of big houses is due to the simple fact that a poetry book will not sell as well as a self-help or cook-book.” Consequently, providing technical assistance that demystifies processes between writers and publishers—mainly printing and distribution—is central to the organization’s current mission of delivering literature to mass audiences.

Among visible innovations, CLMP has added on-line publishers to its membership base in an effort to support “New Media,” including sound-image readable texts, e-books, and other electronic methods for getting literature into print or circulation. A movement to extend the reach of the organization is likewise ongoing. “Why not make it an international community because of internet access? It’s a way for our publishers to get their literature overseas, across borders, and vice versa,” he enthused, acknowledging that multiethnic literature of the United States started in “little” literary magazines, an observation to which *MR* stands in testament. “There’s a need for a diversity of voices,” he continued, echoing the sentiments of CCLM co-founder Jules Chametzky but with a postmodern, global twist: The indie-publishing world, historically viewed as “alternative” when compared to negative-connoting “commercials,” should now work in partnership with the economies of conventional publishing to engage new, worldwide audiences. “We now see this as an eco-system between large publishing and small,” the executive director said. “It makes sense to go back and forth between the worlds. We’re trying to broker more relationships, making this mutually beneficial. Some people are ‘farmed out’ to the big presses from the indie-media. It makes sense for people to have more books to read.” Potentially broad-reaching authors, publishers, and titles served by the organization roll off his tongue nonstop.

Recognizing the reigning zeitgeist, he held up a literary journal called *One Story*, its eponymous contents a selection entitled “Sensitivity” by fiction writer Todd Pruzan—the very same volume later profiled and pictured in a publishing brief printed in the October 14, 2002 issue of *Newsweek*.

Making his exit, for the remainder of the afternoon the director obligingly lent me the privacy of the on-site library, where I sat surrounded by recent issues of the two hundred-plus member magazines to which the organization subscribes and dozens of current literature volumes published by small-press members (Aging books and journals periodically are passed along to the New York Public Library to make way for the new.) A writer could spend hours among CLMP’s collection, browsing and reading in the narrow room circled by framed poetry broadsides. As I rose to admire the offerings, *West Branch*, *The Reading Room*, *Barrow Street*, *3rd Bed*, *Poetry*, *Calyx*, *Fence*, and *Rattapallax* all caught my eye. I dawdled over Laurie Foo’s *Bingo Under the Crucifix* (2002), a collection of pop stories inspired by tabloid headlines from the likes of *People* magazine and published by Coffee House Press of Minneapolis. Finally, I stood before a neat row of little magazines with *The Massachusetts Review* printed along the spines, glad for the hand that Jules Chametzky had in securing their station on the shelf.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>I wish to thank Jeffrey Lependorf, Executive Director of CLMP, for granting me access to the organization’s archive, housed in their offices at 154 Christopher Street in New York City. I likewise am indebted to CLMP staff members Katherine Sarkis, Robert Casper, and Jessie Koester for providing me on-site assistance.

<sup>2</sup>George Plimpton, in charge of the pilot “literary project,” an anthology of American literature derived from literary magazines and sponsored by the NEA, was an early though not founding member of CCLM.

<sup>3</sup>A companion volume, *Children of the Night: The Best Short Stories by Black Writers 1967 to the Present*, edited by Gloria Naylor, was published in 1995 by Back Bay Books, an imprint of Little, Brown and Company. As a side note concerning the eventual desegregation of governance amid CCLM: the writers Ishmael Reed and Lorenzo Thomas served as members of its Board of Directors in 1976.

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