



Rural Library Service Newsletter



Vol. 6 No. 3

Aug. 1986

Kids Are Rural, Too!

A conference entitled "Library Services to Rural Children" was held on March 21-22. Sponsored by the Iowa State Library, it was held at the Conservation Education Center at Spring-Brook State Park near Guthrie Center. Approximately 75 librarians attended the 1 1/2 day event.

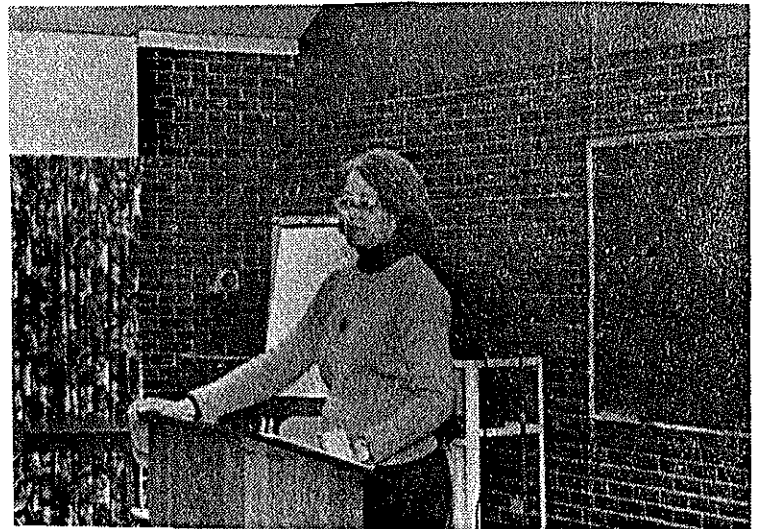
The conference was designed for children's librarians, & public library directors responsible for children's services in rural communities. Its purpose was to provide an educational opportunity for planning & developing children's services in rural areas. In addition, the conference provided an opportunity for librarians to meet & get to know other rural practitioners & for the development of informal networks among the participants.

Conference speakers were Margaret Bush, Professor in the Graduate School of Library & Information Science at Simmons College, Boston, MA; & Barbara Will Razzano, Children's & Young Adult Services Consultant, New Jersey State Library, Trenton, NJ.

Marilyn Nickelsburg of the State Library of Iowa introduced the conference by pointing out some of the strengths & weaknesses of children's services in Iowa's rural libraries. A survey had been sent to all children's librarians &/or directors responsible for children's services, asking what areas they felt needed improvement, & what problems they encountered when attempting to deliver those services.

Results of the survey indicated that a large number of Iowa libraries provided reference services, library instruction, opportunities for class visits, & programming--including reading programs (statewide summer reading & others), films, art/crafts, puppetry & pre-

school story hour. Areas in which librarians felt improvement or help is needed include working with parents, development of policies for collection development, meeting individual needs of children, & developing cooperation with other agencies. Problems frequently encountered in the rural situation were staffing shortages, lack of money, & transportation in isolated communities.



Margaret Bush of Simmons College, Boston, delivered the opening address to the conference.

The history of children's service in the U.S. was reviewed by Margaret Bush in the opening address to the conference. She noted that during the 1950's & early 1960's most libraries based their philosophies of service to children on tradition & idealism. This often meant that the heaviest emphasis was placed on reading aloud & on building quality book collections. Children's services were most often aimed at school-age youngsters through 8th grade, & children were expected to use only the children's area of the library. Only the "best" books were selected and thus was done with the book & reviews in hand. There were very few

services for preschoolers or older children.

During the late 1960's & early 1970's philosophical & economic changes made a great impact on libraries. There began to be a heavier emphasis on preschool services, perhaps due to the beginning of the Head Start program. A great deal of money was available for the development of school libraries, which effected a shift in the perceived need for services to that age group at the public library. And there was tremendous growth of interest in non-print materials both in the schools & in the public library. In addition, a rise in social consciousness brought renewed interest in outreach services & intellectual freedom.

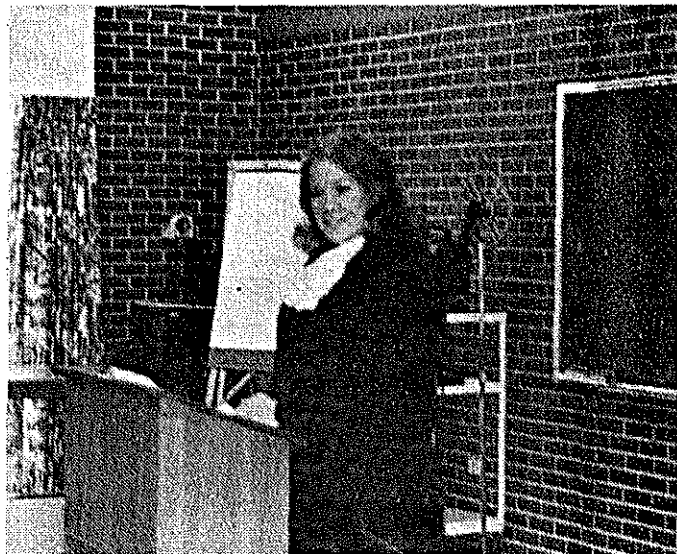
Today, changes in childhood, money matters, the content of librarianship, & the philosophy of service to children have once again created a need for review of children's services. The number of children as a percentage of population, the increase in poverty & in child abuse, missing children, suicide & the abuse of drugs & alcohol are coupled with a decline in learning & reading skills & a lack of commitment on the part of children. The current economic situation, including tax reform, has also contributed to the problems facing children's librarians today.

There does not seem to be as much focus on books & story telling, perhaps due to a number of factors: increased participation in management & planning by children's services staff, the influence of technology, community awareness & outreach, increased services to parents & family members, service to children through other adults such as day-care givers, & the influence of non-print materials. Additionally, libraries are serving younger & younger children, with the result that they are also being "lost" at increasingly lower age levels.

Barbara Razzano addressed the role of the children's librarian, noting that the size of a public library has no bearing on its impact in the community. She quoted statistics which show that 82% of libraries nationwide serve populations of 25,000 or less, & 1/3 of those are under 10,000 population. Twenty-one percent of adults in libraries are there to bring their children & 85% of current adult library users were users as children. While studies were not able to show that using the library as a child led to use as an adult, they have proven that people who did not use the library as children do not become

library users as adults--a strong argument for the former premise.

Quality library service requires planning, a knowledge of the community, the best possible use of available resources, & a balance of service offerings which will best serve the community. These requirements must apply to all areas of service, including materials, facilities, & the planning process.



Barbara Will Razzano, consultant for the New Jersey State Library in the area of children's & young adult services.

When selecting library materials for children, excellence should be the major criterion. Where limited resources are a problem, they should be used to get the best quality literature available.

Selection should be done using professional review sources (such as School Library Journal, Horn Book, Booklist, & the Kirkus Review) & when possible by in-hand examination of books.

Important elements of a library's collection development plan are a gift book policy & regular weeding. Studies have shown that a well-weeded collection will result in a 33% increase in circulation.

The choice of format should be print first, in order to encourage reading abilities & literacy. The school's media collection should be examined & a balance of materials provided in order to meet the needs of the community. Shared collections, cooperative purchasing & coordinated collection develop-

ment with other libraries, schools & community agencies will aid in accomplishing this balance.

Items to consider when evaluating library facilities include access, promotion & staffing. Access refers to library hours, identification & location of materials, as well as physical access. The facilities should invite use by being attractive & uncrowded. Displays, face-out shelving, etc. can provide promotion of the children's area in a way that is not time-consuming or expensive.

Limited staff time is generally a given in children's services. Despite this, requirements for staff members include a liking for & understanding of children, appropriate training & continuing education, & regular, specifically assigned duties & responsibilities for children's service in order to provide continuity & an understanding of special needs.

Planning is a vital part of children's services. Often, librarians just let children's services "happen" using available resources & shaping them into services. First, librarians must understand what is available in the community--schools, other agencies, the library, regional system backup, etc. The librarian can't do everything & so must make choices. Ideally, those choices result in a balance of services, with the library providing the best & most unique of them.

The planning process involves a review of past years' services & objectives as a tool for developing new objectives & programs. The library's plan of service should include a mission statement, broad goals, measurable objectives & specific activities. In developing this plan librarians need to know where they currently stand, & what resources inside & outside the library can be tapped. Statistical analysis can provide answers to the first: circulation, attendance at programs, numbers & types of reference questions asked & answered, etc. Librarians should also attempt to determine how much time was spent on each of these activities. When itemizing available resources librarians must include both library resources (including regional & state libraries) & community resources (demographics, library-type resources of other organizations, other youth agencies, etc.)

The library's goals will fall into four areas: collection development, information services, programming & outreach. These should be arranged

in priority order for the local community: then library staff may brainstorm ways of reaching their goals. Evaluation is a vital part of this process. It is necessary to stand back & look at the library to see if it has improved over time, then review & revise the plan of service accordingly.

In her second presentation, on Models for Children's Services, Margaret Bush stressed the need for librarians to look at their institutions, their communities & themselves. Evaluation of the strengths & weaknesses of library activities, services & collections provides information on the current status of library service in the community. An analysis of the community is also important & should include information on what percentage of children the library is reaching, what other agencies exist, & how the library can reach children & families through other organizations.

Self-evaluation by librarians can reveal strengths & weaknesses by detailing what is being done, what the librarian would like to be doing, what frustrations exist, & what should be taking place but isn't & why not.



Librarians from Minnesota, Delaware, Wisconsin & Nebraska, as well as from Iowa, attended the conference on Library Services to Rural Children.

Communication & contact with other professionals is often a problem for librarians serving rural areas. One method of overcoming this is to develop networks, both formal & informal, which would allow for sharing ideas as well as airing frustrations with peers. There are many resources available

for networking. These include the regional systems, state libraries, State Library Associations & their sections (Children's & Young People's Section) library schools as well as other librarians in the local area.

In addition to the speaker's presentations, the conference included several sessions in which participants were asked to do certain activities which pertain to the planning & provision of service to children. These included drafting a philosophy of service for children; & identifying strengths & weaknesses, & listing activities for improvement of children's services.

Developing a philosophy of service for children requires librarians to think about four basic premises: AUDIENCE--who are we serving? NEEDS---what will we do for them? LIBRARY RESOURCES--what do we have? ROLE OF THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN. In small group discussion, participating were asked to consider these four ideas & to share their conclusions with the entire group. Each group was charged with the task of writing a statement of philosophy for "their library".

A major element of the workshop was a session during which participants were asked to review one of four case studies & to note its strengths, weaknesses & areas where more information would be helpful in evaluating the service program of each case study. The initial review was done in small groups; upon completion of this activity, the case studies were considered one at a time by the whole group. For most of the case studies, the conference participants cited lack of training &/or poor attitudes on the part of the librarian, lack of community awareness, inadequate public relations & coordination with other agencies, & perceived inadequacies in collections, as well as lack of planning as the chief weaknesses.

Later on, participants were again asked to form small groups to discuss & list the strengths & weaknesses of rural libraries in general, keeping in mind the areas of collection development, information services, programming & outreach. In addition, the question was asked, "If this (rural library as defined) were your library, what specific activities would you do next year to improve on the identified weakness?"

The final session of the conference was a question/answer panel discussion. The participants were allowed to ask whatever questions they wished about providing children's services (or library services in general) in rural areas. Marilyn, Margaret & Barbara fielded the questions with suggested courses of action, resource materials available, etc.

This conference provided both an overview of the history & philosophy of serving children in the public library, & an opportunity for librarians to do some of the activities involved in planning for children's services.

In addition, the participants were able to interact among themselves, sharing ideas, questions, frustrations & problems with others facing the same situations. They were able to go back to their libraries with a better understanding of what needs to be done in order to provide quality library service to the children in the communities.

by Marlys Cresap, Consultant
Northwest Regional Library



Rural Library Service Newsletter

Editor: John M. Houlahan

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Rural Projects Funded in Wisconsin

In the February 1986 issue of Rural Library Service Newsletter, it stated there would be a future article on the status of Federal & State grants for rural library service. This issue looks at Wisconsin as one of the many states that is funding rural projects. For their fiscal year 1986-87, Wisconsin's LSCA Advisory committee recommended \$75,000 be set aside for rural library service projects. The response was 18 libraries requested over \$200,000. Eventually 10 grants were awarded totaling \$81,000. The monies went primarily to regional & county library systems. By allocating to these larger units a large number of small libraries could benefit. As an example the Portage County Library headquartered in Stevens Point was the second largest project funded with grants of \$11,410. The project was principally aimed at its branches in Rosholt (pop. 574), Bancroft (pop. 842), & Almond (pop. 537) & the 29,000 persons who live in the county's rural areas. Its major goals were to improve access to all library services, expand material collections, increase the range of services, & raise the level of awareness of library activities throughout the rural communities.

These goals were met in a number of ways. Access was improved by initiating book deposits to offset the libraries' limited hours. A major component of the project was the acquisition of reference materials and high use, high interest children's titles. A listing of the reference titles follows this report.

Other materials bought were supplies to make puppets, flannel boards & portable puppet stages.

Funds also were available to help local practitioners attend formal & informal courses ranging from reference services to Story Telling & Book Telling. To increase library awareness, planning & programming committees are being formed using school staffs & other members of the communities.

For additional information on the Portage County Library project contact: Laurie Bauck Portage County Public Library, 1325 Church St., Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481. For information on the other 9 Wisconsin projects contact Don Lamb at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division of Public Libraries.

The following list of reference materials was compiled by Laurie Bauck for the Portage County Public Library LSCA Grant.

These items were selected after a review of "A Bare Bones Reference Collection", "Suggested Reference & Research Books for Small Public Libraries", "The Basics: Paperback Reference Book", "Reference Books for Small & Medium-sized Libraries", "Reference Service for Children & Young Adults" and "Reference Books for Children".

Ms. Bauck said that all of these adult & children's reference tools can be purchased at a total price of under \$1,800.00.

PORTAGE RURAL COUNTY REFERENCE LIST

Basic Reference Collection:

World Book Encyclopedia
Websters Ninth Collegiate Dictionary
World Almanac
Emily Post's Wedding Etiquette & Planner
Places Rated Almanac
Readers Digest Family Legal Guide
American Medical Association Family Medical Guide
Atlas of Wisconsin
Goode's World Atlas
McNally Road Atlas
Webster's Biographical Dictionary
Guinness Book of World Records
Taylor's Guide to Gardening
Statistical Abstracts

Children's Reference Materials:

Raintree Illustrated Science Encyclopedia
Land & People - Grolier
Rand McNally New Concise Atlas of the Universe
Atlas of the Presidents
Enchantment of America--Set of Books about each state
National Geographic--Books for Young Explorers
National Geographic--Books of Mammals, Vol 2
Golden Nature Guides--7 titles

WISCONSIN LSCA RURAL LIBRARY SERVICE PROJECTS
Waukesha County Library System - Library Services to Rural Residents. Indianhead Library System - Storyhour Training Project. Portage County Public Library - Rural Library Service In Portage County. Dane County Library Service - Farm Aid Collection. Winding Rivers Library System - Video by Mail.

Wisconsin Library System - Rural Library Reference Collection Development. Marathon County Public Library - Mass Mailing to Rural Residents. Kenosha Public Library -

Improving Bookmobile Service to the Rural Population. Lakeshore Library System - Expanded Library Services to Farmers.

Aids for Selecting Picture Books

In her First column entitled SLICE for Oregon's Small Library Round Table Newsletter (SLRT) Mary Ginnane reviewed selection tools for choosing well illustrated children's picture books. Her advice was "if you don't have the time or budget to review and buy children's picture books on an ongoing basis, check these tools to learn about the creme de creme of picture books each year."

Hornbook, every June issue.

FANFARE, THE HORN BOOK'S HONOR LIST, selected from books reviewed in the preceding year. Divided into categories: Picture Books, Fiction, Non-Fiction, Of Interest to Adults.

Booklist, every January 15 issue.

CHILDREN'S REVIEWERS CHOICE from books reviewed preceding year. Categories: Picture Books, Fiction, Non-Fiction.

Booklist, every March 15 issue.

NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOKS from books published the preceding year. This list is divided into books for Young Readers & books for Middle Readers. Short annotations aid in determining the quality of the pictures. The NEWBERRY & CALDECOTT AWARD BOOKS included in same issue.

Booklist, November 15, 1985.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNGEST CHILD: UPDATE is a revision of list printed in the November 1, 1983 issue of Booklist. List contains 70 recommendations of the best books for toddlers & preschoolers.

School Library Journal, every December issue.

BEST BOOKS selected from books reviewed preceding year. List is alphabetical by author for all age levels & includes suggested grade levels, e.g. PreS-Gr2 or PreS-Gr4.

Wilson Library Bulletin, every issue.

PICTURE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN, written by Donnarae MacCann & Olga Richard, authors of The Childs' First Books. Monthly indepth reviews of 4-8 books.

Children's Books: Awards & Prizes. New York: Children's Book Council, 1979. OSL Call #028.52 Children 1979. Contains the New York Choice Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year for 1952-78. Update by checking the Christmas Books issue of the New York Times Book Review. Book also lists other prizewinning children's books.

Illinois Establishes Rural Life Task Force

A newly-established task force aimed at shaping life in rural 21st century Illinois has been named. The Governor's Task Force on the Future of Rural Illinois involves consultants from Southern Illinois University (SIU), Western Illinois University, Northern Illinois University & the University of Illinois.

The group will hold hearings, gather data and prepare a report titled "Rural Illinois 2000" for the state legislature by January 1987.

SIU's team will focus on the topics of health care and social services. WIU will be examining transportation and economic development and the University of Illinois will study agricultural production and agribusiness. NIU will look at education and local government. Lt. Gov. George Ryan is Chairman of the Task Force.

Daily Egyptian,
June 13, 1986.

ETC....

CREATE A LIBRARY CELEBRATION!

The May 1986 issue of Iowa Municipalities carried a lengthy, "how-to" article entitled "Organizing a Community Celebration." Author Carol Koschmeder is a member of a nonprofit community betterment group that sponsors the annual Turkey Day Festival in Grafton, IA. (pop. 250). Average profit over the last 15 years has been \$3,500. The article covers organizing the event with step by step details, committee assignments, as well as guidelines for preparing news releases. For a copy of the issue write: League of Iowa Municipalities, Suite 100, 900 Des Moines St., Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Phone (515) 265-9961. Excerpt Follows:

"Entertainment...The list is endless. Some that we have used or considered: Cookout Contest, Theatrical Groups, Flower Shop, Films, Slide Shows, Barbershop Quartets, Sky Divers, Hot Air Balloons, Shriners, Clowns, Puppet Show, Turkey Races, Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest, Junior High & High School Band Performances, Square Dance Demonstration, Depot & Heritage Museum Special Tours, Varied Industry Display & Sale, Art & Craft Shows & Demonstration, Tournaments: Horseshoe, volleyball, softball, tennis, Talent Shows, Dance School Performances. Contests... tractor pull, arm wrestling, tug-o-war, pick-up pulls, chuckwagon races, out-house races, tri-cycle races, bathtub races, Penny Pitch, Fortune Teller, Magician, Dunking Machine. Flea Market, Ethnic Food Stands, Country Store, Puppet Store, Photo Show, Bake-off Contest, Chicken Drop Game, Needlework Contest, Celebrity Auction, Strolling Musicians, German Bank, Car Smash, Queen Contest, Bingo, Dances...Teen, Old Tyme, "50's," Disc Jockey, Photographer taking pictures of people in "theme" related garb & setting. Turkey Calling Contest, Food Drying Demonstration, Pet Parade, Rides on Miniature Train.

Children's Activities...Since most celebrations are aimed at the entire family, it is important that a committee plan special activities for the day with a special appeal for youngsters. Examples might be: relays, face painting, balloon animals, fish pond, balloon dart throw, ring toss, coins in sawdust, big wheel races, basketball pitch, children's zoo, clowns, films, puppet shows, magician, fortune teller, train ride, pedal cars, & commercial carnival, etc., pony rides, helium balloons."

East Central Regional News May/June 1986

KELLOGG FOUNDATION AWARDS \$4.1 MILLION FOR RURAL EDUCATION, INFO SERVICES TO LAND-GRANTS

"A \$4.1 million series of grants to help provide better lifelong education opportunities for residents of rural communities has been made to land-grant universities in four states. The 4-year grants were made by the U.K. Kellogg Foundation to Utah State University (USU) & Utah State Library, Colorado State University, Montana State University, & the University of Wyoming.

USU will coordinate the multi-state project, called Intermountain Community Learning & Information Service (ICLIS).

The funds will be used to provide new courses, programs & information services for rural community residents & make them available through their community libraries, according to Glen Wilde, coordinator of the project. Wilde is associate dean of the college of humanities, arts, & social sciences at USU.

Montana State will establish the Project for Adult & community Education to promote cooperative efforts for the other universities in academic training & research on the adult learner & lifelong education.

The project will utilize modern communications technologies to span the distances of western states & provide service currently unavailable in rural communities. Supporting technologies for delivery of information include computers, electronic blackboards, & closecircuit television."

Agricultural Libraries, Info Notes,
April, 1986.

CAN RURAL COMMUNITIES SURVIVE?

The Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations has published a study which shows that declining farm land values are putting heavy pressure on the local tax base & that when combined with federal aid reductions, rural governments will be forced to raise taxes or cut essential public services. If you would like a copy of the study, "Governing the Heartland: Can Rural Communities Survive the Farm Crisis?", contact the Subcommittee at (202) 224-4718.

Center for Rural Affairs
July, 1986



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