



Rural Library Service Newsletter



Vol. 3 No. 2

May 1983

Rural Trio Stars at PLA

At the March, 1983 Public Library Association Conference in Baltimore, there were 3 major programs devoted to rural library service. These programs were sponsored by PLA/SMLS Rural Library Service Committee; the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, Clarion, PA.; and the Carroll County Library in Westminster, Maryland. Over 250 U. S. and Canadian Librarians were in attendance for one of the 3 programs.



Above some of the 35 librarians who attended the Carroll County (MD) presentation on library services to the farmer.

Describing the PLA program "Rural Libraries, Coming Out of the Country" as a conference within a conference, Karl Nyren reported the following in a recent issue of LJ/SLJ Hotline.

"A daylong program at PLA/Baltimore provided an expedition into a library world that is terra incognita to many, if not most, librarians. It was presided over by Bernard Vavrek of Clarion State College's Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship,

the pioneer in mapping out this new frontier.

The uncertainties: surveys fail to make clear just what is meant by a rural library by criteria of population, inclusion in a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area or not, relevance of farm or non-farm interests, and status as a completely independent institution or one with varying degrees of support from library systems, county libraries, and state libraries.

Special Factors: Rural libraries may serve clients with strong economic concerns, both domestic and international; their way of life may today be unsettled by the impact of "weekenders" and by attendant gentrification that demands of the library both a diesel manual and a Dinesin biography. They may



Ann Wisner (l) Carroll County (MD) and Jeanne Trice, Caroline County (MD) spoke to rural librarians about a material collection for the small farmer and development of an agribusiness directory. The two spoke at one of the PLA/Baltimore sponsored tour stops.

also have little or nothing to do with farming and a lot to do with small business and industry.

Marketing will work for them as well as for other libraries, if by marketing is meant the study of community needs and the promotion of materials suited to answer those needs.

Books by mail programs are distributing huge volumes of library materials to users often widely scattered, and doing it more cheaply than by any other means. They use both vendor-created catalogs and library-created catalogs to publicize collections of widely varying magnitudes.

Librarians for rural service: one view holds that specialists, with the study of rural sociology and the experience of living in rural areas, are essential, and decries that rural librarianship has so far had little career appeal. Another holds that the future lies in "information centers," where information will be sold. Both look hopefully to a new federal interest in rural libraries as embodied in the National Rural Information Service Development Program."

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(Photo: Ruth Schaefer)
Clarence Coffindaffer (l), South Dakota's State Librarian and Ellen Hellard, Kentucky State Library were the principal speakers at the rural library service committee program, Traditional and Non-Traditional Delivery Systems for Geographically Remote Areas. Coffindaffer described his state's experiments in communications and education using teleconferencing. Hellard spoke on

Kentucky's long term use of bookmobiles to serve rural Kentuckians. She noted that bookmobile is a very visible service which allows for flexible schedules and the expansion of new programs.

Rare Books Crop Up

A year from now, three organizations (The Library Company, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, The American Philosophical Society) will publish a joint checklist of their materials in American agriculture, natural history, education, and philanthropy through 1860. These fields "are virtually uncharted by scholars and bibliographers," Wolf (Edwin Wolf of the Library Company of Philadelphia) said. "We are buying choice items cheaply, because there has not been much of a market for them, although picture books on horticulture and gardening do sell. Richly illustrated books on grapes and wine were among the coffee-table books of their time and still are for those who can afford them.

In agriculture, old books are turning up on such basics as how to grow, how to manure, how to raise animals. The early Pennsylvania Germans put out many books, some written by farmers, others by scientific experts. Historians who are writing about nineteenth- and eighteenth-century farms and planners who are reconstructing or recreating them often consult Library Company archives."

"Portrait" (An article on rare books librarian Edwin Wolf) Joseph Deitch, Wilson Library Bulletin, December, 1982.

AV Help Sought

I am chairman of the Small Public Library Roundtable of the Utah Library Association. We are looking for a slide/tape program or a video presentation that would show small and rural librarians what good library service can be for their area. One of our goals for the next year is to start an educational process for the librarians in small public libraries.

If you are aware of any program that is currently available I would very much like to hear about it. Thank you for your help.
Russell Shirts, Washington County Library,
50 S. Main St., George, Utah 84770.

Library Needs in Rural America

Ever since colonial times libraries have been the principal source of culture and information in rural American communities. If successful democracies require an informed citizenry, then rural libraries have certainly helped promote and preserve democracy. In the more recent past federal funds from the Library Service and Construction Act (LSCA) have brought bookmobiles and Books By Mail to the countryside, services matched in importance only by the Federal Rural Electrification programs of the 1930s. Both turned on lights --in the homes and minds of rural America.

Today, when access to computers and data banks constitutes information wealth, and hence economic and political power, the development of multi-type library networks and low-cost electronic links has enormous significance for all those Americans--more than half our people--still living in a rural setting. Rural America, indeed rural communities all over the world, stand to benefit most of all from today's technological innovations, and it is this knowledge which persuaded the White House Conference on Library and Information Services to advocate the establishment of such networks.

In a democracy, libraries also provide us with intellectual insurance, our best "safety net," by preserving us from a disastrously hard fall onto the rocks of poverty due to lack of access to useful knowledge. Library resources can shed light on precedents and promise to any user the enrichment and expansion of the mind, no matter how distant he or she is from a large urban center. Libraries are now becoming nodes in a vast national network, agencies through which learners of all ages can independently find challenge and gain experience in making the myriad intellectual connections required to participate in progress across the entire spectrum of human accomplishment. To do this properly, all libraries must be able

to identify the existence of pertinent documents of value to their patrons.

With ten new items added each minute to automated catalog systems in the Library of Congress, multi-type and multi-state library links offer people orderly, cost-efficient, and convenient access to material. If libraries continue to link with public broadcasting, literacy programs, information programs of agencies such as the Social Security Administration and others in the Departments of Labor and Commerce, with adult education groups, archives, schools and community colleges, etc., then the local community library could eventually become a one-stop shopping center or an electronic mail-order-catalog center for all family and community information needs, regardless of location in city or country.¹

All 58 states and trust territories do not, however, receive the same per capita funding for library services. This inequity places rural communities in double jeopardy because these communities rarely receive a compensating quantity of other economic and cultural resources, and they suffer from inadequate tax bases to boot. Although library bookmobile and school bus drivers can certainly attest to rural poverty and deprivation, the invisibility of rural poverty further compounds the problem.

Libraries can and do bring absolutely essential information to a dispersed rural clientele, especially to the isolated poor. Poverty among the rural elderly is almost twice that among the urban elderly.² Surely health information programs, large-print and talking books, data transmission on home television screens, friendly visitor reader service, and respite programs can help this group.

The same complex cluster of problems that plague poor urban families affect rural families living below the poverty level--lack of adequate health care, nutrition, and employment opportunities; excessive school drop-out rates; inadequate job skills; insufficient day care for the increasing number of single-parent households; low expectations brought about in part by ignorance of how to improve their lives. Isolated from the economic mainstream, rural families lack the mental "transportation"

to get to roads that lead somewhere.

The Task Force of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIST) has been promoting programs the conference recommended and monitoring their progress. Members reporting back from their respective states and territories confirm the hunger of rural people for library services and their ingenuity at gaining and supporting the services they desire. Some focus on children; some collect and disseminate agricultural and ecological information; some preserve unique cultural or racial heritages which might otherwise disappear altogether. Many report a strong desire on the part of local people to organize and effect their own changes.

Rural schools in particular have difficulty supporting the type of educational program that larger school districts take for granted. Per pupil expenditures for curriculum enrichment and transportation strain the limited tax base in many rural schools. While resource sharing has always characterized rural communities, they simply lack resources to share.

In New York State 25 percent of all elementary school students have limited access to library resources and little or no contact with a professional librarian. In addition, many students outgrow their school libraries. No single library can serve all the information needs of any user. School libraries are no exception, even if they receive funding support from federal programs.

Three years ago the New York State Legislature funded 12 school library pilot projects and two inter-system cooperative networks. This meant, for example, that students and teachers in rural counties around the Rochester area had access, through the Rochester Area Resources Exchange (RARE), to materials in other school libraries, Rochester's Public Library System, Academic libraries, and special libraries such as the Xerox and Eastman Kodak corporate libraries.

The third year of evaluation shows that school library systems have shared more than 37,000 books through interlibrary

loan, for a potential savings of nearly a quarter of a million dollars, which these loan materials represented. And equally to the point, such loans mean that people used materials they probably would not have used otherwise. The school library systems developed specialized collections for use by students, teachers, and adults needing high-school-level materials and contributed 369,000 entries to union catalogs.

In New York's rural North Country, 90 small school districts in 5 counties joined together to form the Champlain-Adirondack Interlibrary Network (CHAIN) (described by Barbara Doh in *CLIC QUARTERLY*, Vol. 1, No. 3). A regional advisory committee, working with Stanley Ransom, Director of the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, has completed its first six goals--including a computerized listing of local history resources, specialized collections of other cultural institutions, and a listing of volunteers who are experts on local history to work in schools and on school fieldtrips. The CHAIN Advisory Committee is now studying possible improvements in its communications and delivery systems and cooperative efforts with the Plattsburgh Public Television Station. The latter includes a series, *Adirondack Journal*, for viewing in homes, schools, and libraries.

The Southern Tier Regional Library System collaborated with the Appalachian Regional Commission and a consortium of schools in a four-county area along the Pennsylvania border to bring televised instruction into all schools. Member libraries distribute pamphlets with maps that show local residents how to pick up the PBS programs.

Regional cooperative educational centers, in establishing the hundred-plus translator system which stretches across the southwestern part of the state, have won a waiver from the FCC so that they can not only receive and repeat a distant public television signal, but they can also interrupt that signal to originate local programming over the translator. This local-origin capability enables each community to address its particular needs on various issues such as politics, education, conservation, etc.

As public libraries and television modify their programs to accommodate nontraditional

learning populations, it will be vitally important to ensure that rural communities --or at least one central location in such communities, like the library--receive public television and radio signals in order to take advantage of data processing and the broad range of cultural and educational programming that will become part of the normal fare of public broadcasting.

We need the rural people throughout our nation contributing their energy, knowledge and skills to our economy and our culture. Developing the library networks which technology makes increasingly feasible can help to bring this about.

Reprinted from CLIC Quarterly, March 1983, Page 38-40. (Ed. Note. The article author Laura B. Chodos is Regent for the state of New York. She is vice-chair of the Regents Cultural Education Committee, which addresses policy affecting libraries, museums, public broadcasting, archives, educational institutions, mass communications, and over 600 historical and cultural education organizations. Regent Chodos is Chair of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Task Force, a member of National Citizens for Public Libraries, and Governing Board Director of the Citizen's Library Council of New York State.)

NOTES:

1. Margaret Warden, Testimony before the Joint Congressional Hearing on Changing Information Needs of Rural America, July 21, 1982. Washington, D.C.

2. New York State Senate Task Force Report, Old Age and Ruralism: A Case of Double Jeopardy (Appendix D).

Abstracts from Current Rural Library Literature

"DEMOGRAPHIC AND NUMERIC FILES USED IN ANALYZING THE U.S. AGRICULTURAL SECTOR" by Willona Graham Goers & Diane K. Johnson. (National Online Meeting Proceedings, Learned Information, Inc., 1983.)

"Agriculture is one of the largest industries in the United States. It is a dynamic & often volatile sector of the American

Industry, affecting a wide range of related industries. Agricultural information is not only increasing in volume, but in complexity. Marketing data, plant location information, development of transportation lines, commodity data & the sheer number of people to feed are all examples of vital information needed by those in agriculturally-related production.

The purpose of this paper is to improve the access to agricultural data by defining & outlining the application of demographic & numeric databases, which may be used as tools to analyze, predict & achieve a fuller understanding of the industry of agriculture."

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"BEGINNING AN OCLC PROCESSING CENTER: A GUIDE FOR RURAL MULTI-TYPE SYSTEMS" by Robert W. Audretsch & Kathleen Wassenaar. (Colorado Library, March 1983)

"After a few false starts the processing center was launched in 1979. The initial decision was made simply to supply sets of catalog cards. A full-blown processing center was judged to be uneconomical as the system consists of only very small libraries. (At the end of 1981 the average Three Rivers Public Library had book expenditures of \$14,600 & circulation of 46,000.) What follows then is based primarily on the experiences of one federated multi-type system supplying only card sets to its three academic, 15 public, 16 school and three special library members. In addition, a number of OCLC processing centers in Colorado, Kansas & Utah have been kind enough to share their experiences."

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"THE MOVEABLE LIBRARY: SERVING MIGRANT FARM WORKERS" by Rachael Naismith. (Wilson Library Bulletin, March 1983, pp. 571-575.)

"Some problems, such as poverty & racial prejudice are deeply-rooted characteristics of migrant life. In attempting to confront these injustices, the individual librarian can do little more than develop a personal emotional coping mechanism.

Other impediments to library service, such as illiteracy, lack of English-language

skills & physical inaccessibility due to distance & lack of transportation, have been successfully circumvented in some innovative ways."

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"A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL: REFERENCE SERVICE IN THE SMALL PUBLIC LIBRARY" By Bernard Vavrek. (Library Journal, May 15, 1983, pp. 966-969.)

"For instructors of reference service, it is much more pleasant to talk about the Auden papers at the New York Public Library, on-line catalogs, MARS, & Samuel Green, rather than about the Summerville (PA) Public Library that only a few years ago entered the mainstream of library life by having a telephone installed. There is no glamour associated with being "telephoneless" and attempting to be a community information center. Still, reference

service is provided in the small libraries of the United States as well as the large. The purpose here is to selectively describe some of the factors that illustrate the perception and provision of reference service in the small rural public library."

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"ALASKA'S FLYING LIBRARY" By Nancy Ferrell. (Library Journal, Mar. 15, 1983, pp. 554-555.)

"Where other libraries operate bookmobiles to supply library service to those distant users, Alaskans fly the materials. Considering the size of the state, the small total population (about a quarter of the size of Miami, Florida) plus the terrain and weather, the effectiveness of a vast highway system is limited. Flying is more practical."

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ETC...

PLA PUBLISHES PROCEEDINGS OF RURAL LIBRARY SERVICES PROGRAM

The proceedings of the Public Library Association's (PLA) Rural Library Services Committee program at the American Library Association's 1982 Annual Conference has been published as a PLA monograph. The proceedings of "Research and Reality: Library Services to Rural Populations" includes an Introduction by John Houlahan, Director of the Northwest Regional Library in Sioux City, Iowa; "A Study of Rural Library Use" by Lisa deGruyter, Director of the Blue Grass Regional Library, Columbia, Tenn.; "The National Rural Libraries Reference Survey: A Preliminary Report" by John W. Head, School of Library Science, Clarion State College, PA.; "Rural Public Libraries, The Invisible Institution" by Terry L. Weech, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois, Urbana; "Research & Reality, Comments on the Three Research Papers" and "Books-by-Mail" by John D. Hales, Jr., Director of the Suwannee River Regional Library System, Live Oak, FL; and "The Effect of Publishers' Book Promotion on Rural Library Use of In-

terlibrary Loan" by Thomas J. Hennen, Jr., Director of the Racine County Library System, Racine, Wisc.

The proceedings are available from the Public Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611, for \$7 (PLA member); \$9 (non-PLA member).

MICROS IN THE ADIRONDACKS:

The Southern Adirondack Library System in New York reports on the progress of a micro-computer program funded by a \$41,000 state grant to this rural area. The project makes extensive use of volunteers; it started with a two month period for the recruiting and training of the volunteers, followed by a series of Open Houses for the public which drew over 400 interested adults.

The eight participating libraries report heavy demand for time on the Apple II+ micros and heavier demand for instruction, especially in programming, than can be handled. In addition to the general public, the program is promoting long term use of its micros by community groups, small businesses, nonprofit

organizations, and museums. The project's newsletter is available from Marcene Rose, Project Coordinator, SALS, 22 Whitney Place, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

LJ/SLJ HOTLINE - May 2, 1983. p. 5

REMOTE ALASKAN TOWNS HOOK UP TO VIDEOTEX

Students in public schools and university extension programs in remote Alaskan communities will benefit in several ways from a Broadcast Teletext distribution system "unlike any other in the world." Based on a New American videotex standard called Presentation Level Protocol, the system will be delivered to the communities via the Learn Alaska Instruction Telecommunications network.

Students in the outlying areas already communicate with their teachers via audio teleconferencing; television broadcasts and 1,500 Apple II micros also transmit course material to them.

The new system will provide students with teletext decoders for their televisions. Instructors will then be able to audio-conference and display related course materials in videotex at the same time, creating a near-normal classroom environment.

Project directors predict the system structure will be valuable to the more than 1,000 television stations and affiliated agencies in North America that provide educational programming.

American Libraries - May, 1983, p. 298

NAL RETIREMENT ANNOUNCED

ALA member Richard Farley retired as Director of National Agricultural Library. Joseph H. Howard was appointed Acting Director while continuing as assistant librarian for processing services at the Library of Congress.

American Libraries - Feb. 1983 - pp 112.

FARM POPULATION AT AN ALL-TIME LOW

The Nation's 5.8 million farm residents represented only 2.6 % of the total population in 1981, according to this year's

Farm Population report. Prepared cooperatively by the Census Bureau and the Department of Agriculture, this annual report offers a detailed portrait of the nation's farm residents--their age, sex, race, fertility, employment status, and family income.

In 1920, the farm population made up 30.2% of the population. By 1950, the proportion had dropped to 15.3 percent. The decline continued, and in 1960 the percent fell to 8.7 and, in 1970 to 4.8.

"Farm Population of the United States: 1981," Current Population Report, Series p-27, No. 55 (Cat. No. C3 186: P-27/55), is available for \$4.50 from GPO.

Data User News - Feb., 1983 - pg. 8

RURAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES AVAILABLE FROM CLARION

"Books and Theses Relating to Public Libraries: A Selected Survey".

"Reference Librarianship and the Small Library: A Selected Survey"

"Rural Library Service"

"Books and Articles Relating to Community Development and Community Analysis"

"School-Public Library Cooperation"

"Public Relations and the Public Library"

"Administration of the Small and Medium Operations"

"Books by Mail and Bookmobile Service"

"Technical Services"

"Friends of the Library"

"Library Trustees"

The bibliographies are \$1.00 each and can be obtained by writing:

The Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, School of Library Science, Clarion, PA. 16214.

SEPARATING THE FARM FROM THE FARMER

The most recent data on farm population shows that for the first time in U. S. history, most people who work on farms (53%) don't live on one. As recently as 1970, only 37% of people employed on the farm were nonfarm residents, and in 1930, the figure was only 13%. Moreover, about 44% of the people employed in agriculture are wage and salary employees, not self-employed farmers, and 80% of them don't live on a farm. These figures represent the continuing trend toward an owner-worker division in agriculture, and separation of people from land.

Center for Rural Affairs - April, 1983.

COMPUTER CONTEST

Coon Rapids, Iowa (pop. 1,448) recently sponsored a computer contest for youngsters. The children were divided into four age groups: first and second graders; third and fourth; fifth and sixth; and seventh and eighth. Two Radio Shack TRS-80's were used, one belonging to the library, another to a trustee.

A computer game other than one owned by the library was used to test the children's skills. On the one computer the youngsters were taught how to play the game and then tested on the second. Those scoring the highest total points in each age category were declared the winners.

Prizes were \$1.50 for first place, \$1.00 for second and fifty cents for third. Additionally books were given to the library with the winner's name inscribed.

Thirty-seven youngsters participated in the contest. Based on the response the library expects many more children to participate in future contests.

The two most popular computer programs in the library for the TRS 80 are Pinball and Math Bingo. Other popular games are Spanish baseball and Crossroads. The library also owns Personal Finance, Typing Tutor, Music, Quasar Commander, Chess, and Spectacular, and subscribes to Popular Computing and TRS-80.



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