



Rural Library Service Newsletter



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U.S. Farmer Has a Rich Crop of Information Sources

Rural Library Service Newsletter recently held a conversation with Bill Determan, a farmer from Early, Iowa (population 670). Bill's Northwest Iowa farm has 480 acres of which 440 is in corn and soybeans. He also raises annually between 2,500 & 3,000 hogs. Following his graduation from Iowa State University in 1969, he worked two years for the Farmers Home Administration. He began full time farming in the Spring of 1971. He is married and has two children. His wife Susan, who has an MLS from the University of Minnesota, is head librarian of Early's Public Library. Following is RLSN edited and condensed version of Mr. Determan's comments on the general status of agriculture & on farmers information needs and information sources.

"I started farming in the booming 70's. Of course then we didn't know how good it was. In 1971, when I started, corn was around \$1.10 a bushel. In 1972 because of agricultural hardships in Russia, corn went up to \$2.00 - \$2.50 a bushel & soybeans rose from a range of \$3-4 up to \$5-\$7. These rises occurred while production costs remained about the same as they had been in 1971. But then the production costs started to climb while the prices such as those for corn stayed within the \$2.00 to \$3.00 range. In time the production costs surpassed the prices the farmers received. Interest rates once at 8 & 9% were now at 13, 14 & even as high as 18%. By 1983 it cost nearly 51¢ a pound to raise a hog while the farmer was only receiving 47¢. With less profitable farming, land values plummeted. From the Summer of '83 to the Summer of '84, land dropped a \$1,000 an acre. Land once going for \$2,500 an acre was

available for \$1,500.

Land values dropped because there wasn't any money to make it work. The amount of money received for product didn't cover the expense. Before the "Bust" people were saying 'they're not producing anymore land, therefore I better buy it today before it becomes even more expensive.' Now farmers say 'if the land can only produce this much revenue then I better only pay this amount for it.'

Another economic problem is the strong American dollar. The American Farmer produces more than can be consumed in this country. Therefore he needs overseas markets. But the strong American dollar hurts the foreign purchasing power. A weak American dollar would help America's Agriculture.

The most important decisions a farmer makes are those in marketing. By marketing I mean determining the right times to buy and to sell. My chief aids in making these decisions are newsletters, magazines, the radio, agricultural experts and my broker.

Sample newsletters that aid a farmer in a market decision would include Pork Industry Outlook, Commodity Close Up, Pork Pro, Pro Farmer, Doane's Agricultural Letter, and Land Owner. Some of my more valuable journals would be Farm Future, Farm Journal and Wallace Farmer.

Also the radio is a good source for marketing information with its daily farm market shows and its market and commodities report.

There are however many other publications available for the farmer. Almost every

cattle & hog breed has its own journal. Examples of some of the Beef titles would be Angus Journal, Polled Hereford World, Short-horn Country, & Simmental Shield. Hog titles include Chester White Journal, Hampshire Herdman, and Landrace.

Magazines are a good source for marketing and for general Agricultural information. For more specific needs, the extension office provides good nonpartial information. But even here there is short comings. While it is nonbias, frequently they don't provide the most up to date information. There is a time lag between the introduction of a new product and the Extension completing its research and reporting its findings on the new product. The Extension office is frequently reluctant to give very specific recommendations preferring to steer a mid course in order to stay out of trouble.

The obvious choice for current news on new products is the representatives for the seed, chemical or equipment companies. Frequently they are backed up by the company's agronomist to help answer your specific problems. Unfortunately this information is biased toward their company's products.

Besides the print and nonprint media and experts from the extension office or from one of the agricultural industries, another aid in making decision are computer services. Presently institutions and agencies like banks and the Extension Office may provide as a service the computer hardware and software to operate farm marketing programs. There is also in our particular area five (5) different commercial services that will provide computing assistance from simple book-keeping to running a farm enterprise.

However for the small farmer the personal computer may not be needed. I know one farmer who bought a computer over a year ago and it is still sitting in its packing crate because he hasn't had the time to learn how to use it. There is one local computer dealer who will only sell

television sets rather than the regular computer monitor for he says 'after the novelty wears off at least they will be able to use the TV.' From an economic viewpoint the time spent in learning how to operate the personal computer may not be as cost effective as using one of the already established services.

A source for marketing information which the farmer will probably almost never think of using is the library. First of all there is no tradition of the farmer using the library for his agricultural problems and with the wide variety of sources available there is little need for a new one. Furthermore, the information problem for the farmer is not one of too little information, its a problem of too much."



Bill Determan is typical of today's farmer with a personal library of over 20 different agricultural subscriptions.

A CHANGING RURAL WORLD

"When Ronald Reagan was born in 1911, almost a third of Americans worked on farms. Now barely one in 30 works the land, & most analysts expect even fewer farmers in the 21st Century."

Life After 2000: How We'll Soon Earn Out Living.

Barbara Moffet -

National Geographic News Service

Lemars Daily Sentinel - December 31, 1984.

Turning Delinquent Borrowers Into Good Samaritans

BY: Tom Simpson - Lemars (IA) Public Library

Overdues are a recurring nightmare for librarians. For large libraries the problem can reach gargantuan proportions, but in small libraries it doesn't take too many to take a real bite out of already modest collections.

The LeMars Public Library serves a community of 8,300 people in Northwest Iowa. We have a collection of just over 26,000 volumes. At the end of 1984, we counted more than 500 items which were between four weeks and one year overdue. We had another \$2,000 worth of uncollected fines on books which had already been returned.

We thought about having a "fine amnesty" as a way of inducing people to bring in overdues. We ruled it out, however, as both unfair and counter-productive. An amnesty would be unfair to the more responsible borrowers who dutifully pay their fines, while "scoff-laws" would get off scot-free. And it would be counter-productive in the sense that would be telling people, "If you've got a book that's long overdue, just wait until the next amnesty period and you won't owe a cent!"

The uncollected fines were also a concern. The money would be nice, but since it's not considered in our budgeting we weren't really counting on it. More important was the integrity of our fine policy: if fines are charged they should apply to everyone, not just those who pay when they return their overdues.

One of the biggest barriers seemed to be the punitive nature of fines. How can we take the sting out of paying fines and encourage people to return overdues, while preserving the integrity of the system?

It was December of 1984, and the plight of the Ethiopians was in every news broadcast. It seemed like an ideal conjunction of needs - - the Ethiopians needed food and we needed a way to enable people to feel good about paying fines and returning overdue material.

"Fines for Food" was born.

After checking with the board of trustees and the City Attorney, we decided to establish a three week period in which people would be allowed to contribute to Ethiopian relief in lieu of paying fines. They would even be able to write off their payments as charitable contributions. And we would generate valuable publicity - - both for the African famine situation and the library's need to retrieve long overdue materials. We hoped that the novelty of the idea and its unique appeal would encourage people to get into the spirit of "bringing the books back" and make the extra effort of checking their bookshelves, under their beds, and behind the couch for anything marked "LeMars Public Library."

The publicity was great! We received excellent coverage in the local daily newspaper and on the local radio station. In addition the story was picked up the Sioux City Journal and the Des Moines Register, which covers the entire state of Iowa. Best yet was an excellent news feature by a Sioux City TV station. It was aired on four separate news broadcasts and presented the library as alive, innovative, and in need of help in retrieving overdues.

Notices were sent out to everyone with materials overdue for between four weeks and one year and to everyone with unpaid fines on overdue material they had already returned. A dozen volunteers worked a full day tallying fines, filling in form letters and addressing envelopes. We got a gallon jar from a local restaurant and set it out on the Circulation desk. We even put a couple of dollars in it to prime the pump. Posters were displayed around the library and special bookmarks were distributed.

We were off to a grand start. The mayor brought in a book that was two days overdue; but when we told him that it was still within our one-week grace period (so there was no fine due), he was really

disappointed and dropped a handful of change in the jar anyway. Others would drop in a dollar or a five and tell us to "keep the change." One man sent an overdue book from Colorado along with a check for \$10. Even though our notices only went out for material due in the past year, one book due in 1982 came back during the program.

"Fines for Food" ran between January 11 and 31, 1985. During that time 146 of the over 500 items we targeted were returned. It wasn't as good as we hoped, but it was still good. We thought. But when counted up how many additional items had become four or more weeks overdue during that three week period, we counted 148! We ended the program with two more overdues than we had when we started!

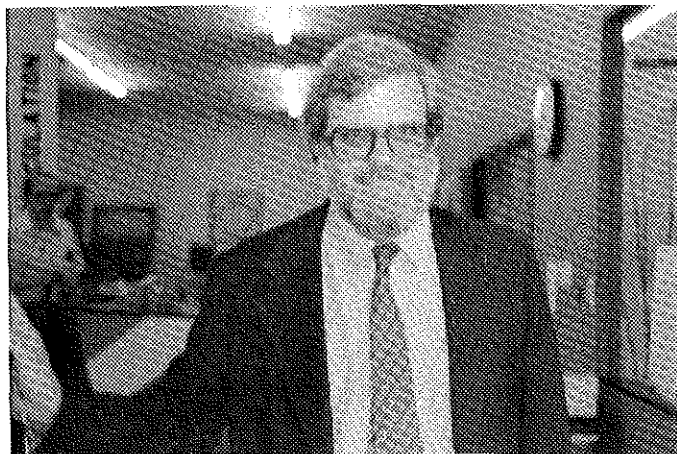
The total fines collected was \$289.57. We had determined at the start of the program that we would send the contributions to Church World Service, a highly regarded relief organization that is one of the principle agencies channeling food to the people of Ethiopia. It was a pittance compared to the enormity of their need, but it was easily five times what we would normally take in as fines during a three week period. We had to remind ourselves that if enough people gave a pittance

Was it worth it? Maybe that question can be answered better now (it being the middle of April) than it could two and a half months ago. Circulation during January was up a full 12%. Overdues in March were down 15%. Who knows whether it's Spring cleaning, or a delayed response to "Fines for Food." People have continued to pay fines at a higher rate - March fines were up 22% - so maybe we were successful at least in creating a more positive feeling about paying fines.

Businesses have statistics on the likelihood of collecting overdue accounts after a certain periods of time. It could be that material that is four or more weeks overdue is beyond retrieval - it will either find its way back to the library

or it won't and what we do doesn't have much bearing. It's a discouraging thought.

We will press on nonetheless. Next year we'll make another all-out effort, or maybe we'll retool the whole program. Our resources are too important and replacing them is too expensive - to shrug off the problem of long overdues. Maybe, when we get a computer



Tom Simpson, Director, LeMars Public (IA) Library welcomes the return of overdue items under his "Food for Fines" project.



Rural Library Service Newsletter

Editor: John M. Houlahan

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Rural Staff Development Featured at ALA Conference

"The OUTHOUSE (and Inhouse): Non-Professional Staff Development and Training" will be presented on Sunday, July 7 from 2-4 pm at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, according to PLA/SMLS Rural Library Services Committee Chair John D. Hales, Jr., and Program Committee Chair Paul Deane, Jr.

The program's unique format is aimed at providing resources and expert advice on the development and use of tools for non-professional staff development. A keynote speaker will be followed by five small group discussions. In addition, bibliography and local program resource lists will be distributed. The program will provide an opportunity for conference-goers to interact informally with program presenters and to browse among sample program resource materials on display.

Sue Gallagher, Assistant Director of Public Services at the Tacoma, Washington Public Library will be the key-note speaker, discussing the non-professional staff development program materials and videotapes developed for ready reference and business reference. This program is a past recipient of the H.W. Wilson Library Staff Development Grant Award.

Following the keynote address, program attendees may visit one or more small discussion and display summaries of five successful staff development programs from around the country. Presenters and topics include Sue Mahmoodi (Minnesota State Department of Education), self-study training manuals on self-assessment and collection development; Shirley A. Smith (West Virginia Library Commission), children's services, cataloging, and other training courses as part of the statewide Annual Library Skills Institute; Nancy Bolin (Maryland State Department of Education), reference communications skills training; Nabia

Taran (Southern Maryland Regional Library), Maryland's regionally coordinated Library Associate certification program; and Jane Bryan (Jackson-George Regional Library System, Pascagoula, Mississippi), Librarians Improve from Training - - LIFT - - the 1984 H.W. Wilson Library Staff Development Grant award winner.

The PLA/SMLS Rural Library Services Committee is compiling an extensive materials and human resource list of local, regional, and statewide programs dealing with library staff development. The lists will be available at the July 7 Conference program. Suggestions for additions to the annotated list are welcome, according to Committee members.

"We want to make this resource as useable as possible," according to Program Committee Chair Dean, by including contact names and brief summaries of successful programs which might be replicable in other libraries.

"Rural library services can benefit greatly, we feel, from networking and sharing of practical ideas such as will be presented via interactive discussions, displays, and resource lists at the 'OUTHOUSE (and Inhouse)' program," stresses Rural Library Services Committee Chair John D. Hales, Jr., Director of the Suwanee River Regional Library in Florida.

For further information about the Conference program, or to submit staff development resource list descriptions, contact Committee member Brenda Pacey, Lincoln Trail Libraries System, 1704 W. Interstate Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61821, (217) 352-0047.

The Bookmobile Stop

This occasional column will report on people, places, and events which are associated with providing Bookmobile Services.

The newsletter of the Winding Rivers Library System in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, notes that hard decisions are ahead for the library "as funding continues to tighten." One possibility is the phasing out of films in favor of videotapes; films cost four times as much as tapes and their use is dropping.

Another possibility is dropping bookmobile service, "our most expensive public service," and replacing it with a less expensive alternative for delivering library service to rural areas served by the 7 county system.

- - Hotline April 23, 1985

The Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship is about to distribute a survey questionnaire on bookmobiles in libraries of all sizes and types. Of particular interest are libraries which have either abandoned or instituted bookmobile service. The Center is at Clarion University, Clarion, PA 16214.

- - Hotline March 4, 1985

The State Library of Ohio is sponsoring the three day workshop "The Rural Bookmobile! Going Strong After Eighty Years." The conference will be held in Columbus, Ohio on June 19-21, 1985.

Specifically designed for directors and administrators of bookmobile programs in rural areas, the conference will offer the following: A) An examination of contemporary rural America and implication for information delivery. B) A profile of rural bookmobile services, administration and finance based on 1985 information. C) Suggested methodologies for analyzing rural bookmobile users, their needs and information seeking behavior. D) Individual

assistance in planning an evaluation of your program and its alternations.

For more information and registration material write: Rural Bookmobile Workshop, State Library of Ohio, 65 South Front St., Columbus, Ohio 43215, Telephone (614) 462-7061

For further information on rural bookmobile service read Norma McCallan's "Delivering Systems and Programs, Library Trends" Spring 1980 pages 525-561. For an article on the personal and personable service aspect, there is J.P. Marden article "Give Me a Home Where the Bookmobile Roams" in Rural Libraries Vol. IV, No.III 1984.

RURAL MULTITYPE SCRUBS HOSPITAL PROGRAM

The American Library Association Conference program on delivering library services to rural hospitals has been cancelled. The proposed program was reported on in the February issue of the Rural Library Service Newsletter. (RLSN) In place of a discussion on health service there will be a report on the cooperation between the Federal Agencies NCLIS and the Department of Agriculture.

Gerry Sophar of NCLIS and the Department of Agriculture will speak on these two agencies joint rural information project. Additionally he will report on the Department of Agriculture proposal to create a National Advisory Board on Rural Information needs. His presentation will be given at ASCLA's Rural Library Cooperative Discussion Group meeting at the American Library Association Conference. The meeting will be in Chicago, Monday July 8th at 2-4 p.m. The meeting site was not available at the RLSN May Publication deadline.

For more information about this program & the activities of this ASCLA group contact the Group Chairperson, John Christianson, Traverse Des Sioux Regional Library System, 100 East Main Street, Mankato, Minnesota 56001. Telephone (507) 625-6169.

MI Multitypes Meet

The First Michigan Conference on Rural Libraries was held April 17-19, 1985 at the Hidden Valley Club, Gaylord, Michigan. Two-hundred and six (206) Michigan Librarians from all types of libraries attended the three day workshop. Underscoring their diversity were the program presenters: James Fry, Director, Michigan State Library; a team of educators from Clarion's Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship; a local community college that provided AV, music, and tape recording support; a health science librarian who demonstrated Medline; and the Regional Library Cooperatives who helped to underwrite the costs and hosted proceedings. Prominent in attendance were librarians of combined school/public libraries, one person staff libraries, and librarians from small communities. All but 4 were from towns less than 26,000 with 44 of them from communities between 0-3999.

In addition to its diverse rural audience, the workshop conference revealed some interesting statistics. By a show of hands 33% of those assembled had to pay their own way with a substantial number having also to pay the wages of their substitutes. 50% of them receive no job fringe benefits and for over 30 this was the first workshop or continuing education program they had attended. The August 1985 issue of the Rural Library Service Newsletter will feature pictures, stories and additional reports on this highly successful workshop. Also to be reported on is the Coalition that was formed as a result of the conference and its 5 point program. For readers who can't wait for more information and details you may contact Susan Williams, Northland Library Cooperative, 316 East Chisholm, Alpena, Michigan 49707, Telephone (515) 356-1622. Tapes of the conference programs are available at cost. Additionally Rural Libraries, a publication of the Center for Study of Rural Librarianship is considering publishing the conference at a later date.

MO Begins Rural Center

On Dec. 8, 1984 the University of Missouri-Columbia launched the Center for Rural Library Development. The Center's Coordinator is Dr. Roy Evans of the University's School of Library and Information Science. Their short term goals have been established to guide the current activities of the Center. 1) Establish a semi-annual newsletter as a vehicle of communication relative to rural behavior in Missouri. 2) Establish and coordinate a statewide committee to provide leadership interest in rural development in Missouri. 3) Determine need for continuing education relative to rural libraries in Missouri.

The Center's first step was the creation of The Rural Library Development Newsletter. It's to be published in March and October of each year. It's intended to serve as a vehicle for communication about current issues, trends, and related information concerning rural libraries in Missouri and elsewhere. The Volume I, Spring 1985 issue describes the origin and the factors which lead to the creation of the New Rural Library Center. Also featured was an update on Missouri and federal legislation, and a questionnaire seeking profile information on Missouri libraries. To learn more about the Center or to receive its publications contact - Dr. Roy Evans, School of Library and Information Science, 104 Stewart Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65211, Telephone (314) 882-4044.

ETC. . . .

Urban libraries seek help in establishing rural fees--a request has been received by Rural Library Service Newsletter for information on how urban communities can determine fee rates to charge rural communities and unincorporated areas who do not have public libraries.

A large midwest metropolitan consortium of city and suburban libraries are negotiating with rural governments to continue serving rural patrons. The local rural governments have rejected paying the cities' per capita funding averages. The urban consortium seeks information on criteria, other than per capita cost, used to assess rural & unincorporated areas. Information on either successful or unsuccessful formulas would be helpful. Information should be sent to: John Houlahan, Northwest Regional Library, 6th and Jackson Streets, Sioux City, Iowa 51105.

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Survey results released on rural reference service.

Sharon Stine Eckert of Iowa State University has released the report 1984 Reference Survey of Iowa Rural Public Libraries. This document is based on data gathered for a Certificate of Advanced Study Project (CAS) from the graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois-Champaign. The complete CAS Survey report is entitled The Pluralism of Rural: A Survey of Reference Service in Iowa Public Libraries Serving a Population of Less than 2,500.

Findings reported in Eckerts abridged report included information on total operating budget (the range was \$500 to over \$35,000 per year); staff size; number and types of reference questions; and most essential reference titles and types owned. Additionally there is a comparison of Iowa Statistics with the National Survey done in 1981 by Bernard

Vavrek of the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship. For a copy of Eckerts reference report contact John M. Houlahan, Northwest Regional Library, 6th and Jackson, Sioux City, Iowa 51105. (712) 279-6186.

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Pathfinder on Farming: Issues and Policies is available free by writing to Maeve Clark, Ames Public Library, 210 - 6th Street, Ames, Iowa 50010.

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Fort Hays State University is sponsoring the Eleventh Conference on Literature for Children and Young Adults. It will be held in KANSAS CITY the week of June 17 - 21, 1985.

The theme of the conference will be: "Our Heritage Through Literature: Preserving the Past, Exploring the Present, Planning for the Future."

Speakers will be:

Jean Fritz: author of outstanding pieces of historical fiction.

Kathryn Lasky: author of historical fiction and "real" stories.

Paul O. Zelinsky: Illustrator, 1984 Caldecott Honor Book.

N.M. Bodecker: poet and illustrator

Patricia Reilly Giff: author of stories to motivate young readers, reading consultant.

Alfred Slote: author of sports stories & science fiction.

Russell Freedman: author of outstanding non-fiction.

Pre-conference workshops are planned for June 14-16. Darrel Hildebrant, Library Media Specialist, will teach PUPPETRY and Letty Raines Watt, Library Media Specialist will teach STORYTELLING.

The conference & each workshop is offered for 1 hour graduate or under-graduate credit. For further information contact Mrs. Donna Harsh, Education Department, Fort Hays State University, 600 Park Street, Hays, Kansas 67601-4099.



RLSN

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

