

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 349 990

IR 054 171

AUTHOR Vavrek, Bernard, Ed.; Whitney, Loralyn, Ed.  
 TITLE The 21st Century: Proceedings of the Wilson Symposium on the Future of Public Libraries (Omaha, Nebraska, September 26-29, 1990).  
 INSTITUTION Clarion Univ. of Pennsylvania. Coll. of Library Science.  
 PUB DATE 92  
 NOTE 188p.; This conference was jointly sponsored by the Wilson Foundation and the Nebraska Library Commission.  
 AVAILABLE FROM Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, Department of Library Science, 166 Carlson, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, PA 16214 (\$15.95).  
 PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Change Agents; \*Change Strategies; Cooperative Programs; Distance Education; Futures (of Society); Information Networks; \*Information Technology; Library Automation; Library Personnel; \*Library Role; Literacy; \*Public Libraries; Resource Allocation; \*Rural Areas; State Libraries; \*User Needs (Information); User Satisfaction (Information)  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Small Libraries; Vendors

ABSTRACT

The 11 papers in this collection were presented at a symposium that was jointly sponsored by the Wilson Foundation and the Nebraska Library Commission. The papers are: (1) "The Small Library in an Era of Multiple Transformations" (Michael Marien); (2) "Community Needs and the Rural Public Library" (Don A. Dillman); (3) "Looking at Rural Libraries Through Rose-Colored Glasses" (John Houlahan); (4) "Planning for Community Change and the Librarian's Role" (Daryl K. Heasley); (5) "Library Technology Through a Wide-Angle Lens" (Karl Beiser); (6) "Cooperating To Meet Specialist Needs: A Rainbow of Public Library Services Encompassing Everyone in the Twenty-First Century" (Jim Kirks); (7) "Dynamics of Future Cooperation" (Jan Ison); (8) "Distance Education, Rural Libraries, and Personnel Development" (Dan Barron); (9) "Future Staffing Requirement: Some Considerations" (Nancy J. Busch); (10) "What Needs To Change" (Sue Parker); and (11) "Lots of Services" (Mary Jo Godwin). (KRN)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

ED349990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



The 21st Century:  
**The Wilson Symposium**  
 on the  
**Future of Public Libraries**

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Bernard Vavrek

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

TR 054 171



Wilson Symposium on the Future of  
Public Libraries: Proceedings

Edited by

Bernard Vavrek and Loralyn Whitney

Published by

The Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, Department of Library Science,  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania, 1992.

## PREFACE

These Proceedings would not have materialized without the cooperation of the H. W. Wilson Foundation and the Nebraska Library Commission, who were instrumental in jointly sponsoring the conference, "The 21st Century: The Wilson Symposium on the Future of Public Libraries," in Omaha, Nebraska, on September 26-29, 1990. A special thanks, also, to the presenters at that conference whose comments may be found in this compilation.

Loyalyn Whitney deserves particular thanks for helping to edit these proceedings. Her enormous talents and articulate manner have been of great support to the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship. Anne Denio served as the typist for this document, and her resourcefulness is likewise appreciated.

Bernard Vavrek  
Director

## Index

	<u>Page</u>
The Small Library in an Era of Multiple Transformations Michael Marien	1
Community Needs and the Rural Public Library Don A. Dillman	31
Looking at Rural Libraries Through Rose-Colored Glasses John Houlahan	49
Planning for Community Change and the Librarian's Role Daryl K. Heasley	63
Library Technology Through a Wide-Angle Lens Karl Beiser	73
Cooperating to meet Specialist Needs: A Rainbow of Public Library Services Encompassing Everyone in the Twenty-First Century Jim Kirks	97
Dynamics of Future Cooperation Jan Ison	123
Distance Education, Rural Libraries, and Personnel Development Dan Barron	139
Future Staffing Requirement: Some Considerations Nancy J. Busch	147
What Needs to Change Sara Parker	159
Lots and Lots of Services Mary Jo Godwin	173

## **"The Small Library in an Era of Multiple Transformations"**

by

**Michael Marien**

When Bernard Vavrek recruited me last February, he was looking for a futurist to provide a broad view of the next decade or so and the implications for small public libraries. He had no idea that I was also a trustee of a small public library in a rural town. When I mentioned this coincidence, it was immediately clear to both of us that I must attend.

There are dangers, though. Futurists are disruptive enough when they question general assumptions about what is possible, probable, and preferable. But a futurist with specific, albeit limited, knowledge of small libraries will naturally have some opinions about small libraries.

I should clarify the relationship between my two roles of futurist and library trustee. It's a lot like horse and rabbit stew, where you take potatoes and vegetables, and mix with one horse and one rabbit.

After receiving my doctorate in interdisciplinary social science at Syracuse University, I spent the past 20 years as an idea broker for future-oriented information. In 1979, I initiated Future Survey, published monthly (with annual cumulations) by the World Future Society in Bethesda, Maryland. Over the past 12 years, I have prepared some 11,000 abstracts of professional and popular articles, books, and reports on forecasts, policy proposals, and trends, while working in my home office next to an apple orchard in LaFayette, New York, a sprawling, hilly,

middle-class, exurban community of 5200 people and one traffic light, located about ten miles south of Syracuse. It is host of the LaFayette Apple Festival, held every year in early October and for those who savor Americana, LaFayette is also the home of The Cardiff Giant, a sensational 1969 hoax. At first, the giant was thought to be a petrified man. Further investigation revealed that the giant was actually carved from Iowa gypsum and deliberately planted at the end of Webster Road, where I live.

In contrast to 20 full-time years as a professional futurist, I have spent only 5 years as a library trustee. At about one afternoon per month, all things considered, that amounts to 6 full-time equivalent days per year, or over five years, one month of FTE experience. This isn't much, of course, and I have a lot to learn about the world of libraries.

### **Futures-Thinking and Futurists**

Before I make any substantive statements about possible and probable futures, I'll begin with some demystifying statements about futures-thinking and futurists.

First, like eating or parenting, thinking about the future is something that most of us do. Some of us do it well, some do not. Some care about eating, and parenting, and shaping the future; others do not. We have nutritionists and gourmets to advise us how to eat better, and child care experts to advise us on child-rearing. Futurists advise us on possible events (what might happen), probably events (what is likely to happen), and preferable events (what we would prefer to happen).

Second, unlike nutritionists, child psychologists, librarians, and most other

professionals in our increasingly credentialed society, a futurist needs no special qualifications. A futurist is anyone who says that he or she is a futurist, and/or someone who is seen as such. (Megatrends' author John Naisbitt, for example, does not call himself a futurist but is seen as such because he writes best-sellers that pander to some people who want to feel good about America without taking serious action to make it better.) There are only a couple of hundred people in the country who call themselves futurists, per se. But there are thousands of environmentalists, policy analysts, technology assessors, social thinkers, and strategic planners who take a long-term, multi-disciplinary view of current affairs. The handful of high profile popular writers may give you a wrong impression of futurists, as a group.

Third, the ideal futurist is a generalist who looks at demographics, the economy, environmental issues, social and political trends, and technology. In fact, most futurists confine themselves to one or perhaps two of these areas. The ideal futurist should also try to avoid the extremes of Pollyanna and Cassandra. But if one looks only at the economy and technology (especially in narrow terms), one is apt to be optimistic. And if one looks only at socio-political issues and environmental problems, one is apt to be pessimistic.

Fourth, when forecasting what is likely, futurists do not use crystal balls or magic methods, although an occasional techno-twit may try to convince you these methods exist. The future is very uncertain in many respects; and it has never seemed more uncertain than in recent years. Most forecasts on most matters are likely to be wrong or partially wrong. So instead of thinking of a standard that is

close to perfect, like an airplane pilot making a safe takeoff and landing every time, think instead of a baseball player. A good one bats .300, getting a hit about 3 of every 10 times at bat. A poor one bats .200; the difference is one hit in every ten times at bat. But the playing field for futures-thinking is getting foggy, so both good and poor players are not going to do as well.

### **Not-So-Wild Cards**

To illustrate the uncertainties that we face, I'll begin with a list of high-impact possibilities that we may face in the next decade or so. Some have a likelihood of a "wild card" (2% possibility for a joker in a deck of cards, or 4% for one-eyed Jacks); others are "not-so-wild" (10, 20, even 30% or more possibility). Viewed together, there is a high likelihood that at least one such "megaevent" will deeply influence the 1990s.

In late 1990, a possible megaevent is underway in the Middle East. This has to be at the top of any list. There is anxious uncertainty about whether there will be a war at all or when it will come. And if there is a conflict, it may last anywhere from days to years, it may be a very destructive "jihad" or relatively non-destructive, it may be financially ruinous or relatively affordable, and it may or may not be a turning point in world history.

Aside from this ugly possibility, consider ten more potential megaevents which may occur by the year 2000:

- \* Detonation of one or more nuclear weapons, by accident or by terrorists

(probably a greater possibility than that of military use, in that some 50,000 warheads are still in place);

- \* A worldwide Great Depression, with unemployment over 20% in advanced nations;
- \* Rapid climate change at a far greater rate than suggested in the 1980s by greenhouse theorists;
- \* An earthquake greater than 8.0 on the Richter scale in California or perhaps in the eastern or midwestern US (experts estimate a 40% probability of occurrence within the next 30 years);
- \* Dan Quayle will become president following the sudden demise of President Bush;
- \* Another oil supply crisis as great or greater than the supply interruptions of 1973 and 1979 (quite possible if a long war breaks out in the Middle East); or, on the upbeat side, an energy technology breakthrough (major advance in production of hydrogen, nuclear fusion, or solar cells);
- \* A Mexican socio-political upheaval (of Mexico's 87 million people, 42% are under 15 years old, in contrast to 21% in the US);
- \* Mutation of the AIDS virus so that it is spread by respiratory droplets;
- \* Undisputed contact with real extraterrestrials, as a result of the greatly enhanced search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) in the 1992-2000 period (this may or may not be transformative, beneficial, or of durable interest);

\* New techniques to retard or stop the aging process, that will accelerate the trend to an "aging society" and redefine who is "old" and when one should retire from the work force.

This is my top-ten list of the most important low-probability, high-impact events. It serves as a reminder of the uncertainties that we face. I do not seek to play Cassandra, but most of these potential events tend to be negative. Some can be roughly anticipated (earthquake forecasting has been improved in recent years); others such as accidents, assassinations, and scientific discoveries will always remain more uncertain. Consider two major unanticipated megaevents which took place during the past year or so: the momentous triple breakthrough in Europe -- the collapse of Communism, the democratization of Eastern Europe, and the destruction of the Berlin Wall; and, just as an era of disarmament in the world seemed at hand, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. These events were not foreseen by any of my acquaintances.

My emphasis on possible futures seeks to illustrate the hazards of thinking about the future. Confining one's thinking to trends alone and a single probable future is a nice way to avoid uncertainty and unpleasantness. It is not sufficient. To take intelligent action in shaping our communities, our institutions, and our societies, we must think fully about the future, warts and all, as best as we can, recognizing the foggy playing field and low batting averages. But there are some things we can say about the present and the future with a fair degree of confidence.

## **An Era of Multiple Transformations**

An adequate view of a probable future must consider at least five broad categories: the economy, the environment, social and political trends, and technology. A variety of major transformations are taking place -- and may soon take place -- in each of these categories, with largely unanticipated megaevents adding further complications to an already complex situation. Overall, these major changes add up to "an era of multiple transformations." Obviously, if we do not seek to understand these changes as best as we can, we will not be able to take intelligent action in shaping the future.

### **1. Macro and Micro Demographics**

The first broad category to consider is numbers of people, or, if you will, potential producers and consumers of information. One simple but overlooked reason why so much information is available today is that there are more and more literate people in the world.

The macro-demographic outlook can be readily understood, but it is not pleasant. World population is presently at 5.3 billion people. By 2020, world population will be up by nearly 60%, with about one billion added in each of the next three decades. This will be a period of unprecedented growth. It took 60 years to add the last three billion human beings (1930-1990); the next three billion will arrive in only 30 years. Some 90% of this population increase will be in the Third World, especially in its already overcrowded cities (Haub 1990). Mexico's population, for example, will grow 64% by 2020 (from 87 to 142 million), in contrast to an 19%

increase in US population (from 249 to 294 million). Thus, the number of Mexicans for every 100 Americans will grow from 35 to 48 in this 30-year period, and the number of immigrants is bound to increase.

These macro-demographic projections are fairly certain. The figures may be lowered somewhat by war, famine, AIDS and other plagues -- all of which, unfortunately, are likely, at least in the Third World. And the numbers might also be lowered by a breakthrough in birth control technology and its distribution. On the other hand, future population levels may be higher than expected (or the decreases offset due to new medical technology that saves lives, and new biotechnology that extends life spans by perhaps a decade or more.

The micro-demographic outlook within America's states and counties is more fuzzy. Preliminary data from the 1990 Census show losses in rural areas, but this is spotty. Iowa lost 5.1% of its population in the last decade, while Nebraska held about even (a slight gain of 0.2%) and Kansas gained 4.4%.

New York State had an overall growth in the 1980s of only 0.4% and I live in a county that lost 0.5%. But the largely rural counties to the east and north of my county gained 4.8% and 5.8% respectively. Although my home county lost 0.5% of its population, the population of LaFayette zoomed up by 18.8%.

So, in considering the future of rural America, one has to discriminate among "rural" areas. Exurban communities such as LaFayette are gaining population as suburbs become congested and inner cities become more dangerous places (even though many downtown areas are being rebuilt). Living in LaFayette is, for some,

the best of all possible worlds, because it combines the beauty, the peace, and the quiet of the countryside with easy access to amenities of a modest-size city.

Other rural areas, far away from a city of any size, are not doing as well, as the farming sector continues its consolidation. A recent book by an Iowa City journalist reports on the rise of "America's Rural Ghetto" in a "Broken Heartland" (Davidson 1990). Recent reports in the New York Times describe destitute states (two-thirds are presently in the red) resorting to "a kind of economic triage" in deciding which rural communities to save, and some rural counties are on the verge of bankruptcy ("With Rural Towns," 1990; "County vs. State," 1990). Newsweek offered a gloomy view of six northwestern states (Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and eastern Washington) as a "terrain of increasing destitution" ("America's Outback," 1989). I am not sure if rural poverty and the urban-rural gap is more pervasive than the US Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty noted in its 1967 report, The People Left Behind. But I would not be surprised to hear that things have gotten worse.

And so there are two types of residents in America's rural areas: urban people who move to rural areas and expect high quality services (including good libraries), and the natives who have been "left behind." The first demographic trend reflects a general movement toward "counterurbanization" in the advanced countries of the world (Champion 1989). The poverty experienced by the native rural population mirrors the rural -- and urban -- poverty in much of the Third World, which may well become more serious as population soars in the next three decades. In turn, this will

influence world events, and the quality of life in America and its rural areas.

## **2. The Environmental Crisis**

The second of five broad issues that deserve consideration are the natural resources. In many areas of the Third World, poverty and the environment are closely intertwined, each impacting the other. Our relatively affluent society, a wasteful and polluting lifestyle, has been creating a mess of mega-proportions.

We are faced with global climate change, ozone loss, tropical deforestation, disappearing or declining species, soil erosion, desertification, acid precipitation, toxic wastes, nuclear wastes, an overload of solid wastes, outdoor and indoor air pollution, marine pollution, freshwater pollution (and scarcity or threats of scarcity in some areas), noise pollution, food pollution, and (according to a few lonely critics) pollution from electromagnetic fields.

Increasingly, we need to concentrate our efforts on shaping a sustainable society and a sustainable world. And threats to environmental well-being will increasingly be seen as threats to our "national security."

Much has been written on environmental problems and the need for sustainability (Future Survey 1990; Future Survey Annual). Public libraries of all size that are not making the best of this literature available to their patrons are being delinquent.

## **3. The Fragile Economy**

The third issue that concerns futurists is the US economy, which is increasingly becoming part of a rapidly-forming global economy. But our economy is

not in robust condition.

Many institutions and industries in the private sector have been undergoing extensive changes, inflicting extensive pain on both individuals and communities. Most institutions in the public sector are not as prone to quick change; many are subject to prolonged crisis from underfinancing and/or an overload of demands. The criminal justice system (courts, prisons, probation services) is grossly overloaded, particularly due to the war on drugs (Future Survey 1990). Health care is facing a growing cost crunch from an aging population, expensive technology, waste, fraud, excessive litigation, and AIDS, and the health sector's share of the GNP has risen from under 5% in the late 1940s to 11.5% today, with expectations of an increase to 15% by the year 2000 (Future Survey 1990). And transportation systems are becoming more and more congested, as spending for the upkeep of infrastructure falls short of actual requirements.

This assumes that the state of the American economy will continue in its fragile and overall mixed condition, with a conglomeration of booms and busts, depending on industry and location. But, in the past few months, there has been widespread talk about the onset of a recession, especially due to the Savings and Loan crisis. And this was before Iraq invaded Kuwait, creating even more expenses to add to the Federal deficit. A few writers argue that, nevertheless, there will be an economic boom in the 1990s. But fortunes could just as easily turn the other way, with not only a severe recession, but another Great Depression (Futures Research Quarterly 1990).

Hard times seems likely for most public libraries, at a time when they are struggling to keep up with the proliferation of information and technology. The small public library may be deeply loved and "The best bargain in town," but it will have to struggle still harder to make its case. It will have to become an even better bargain.

#### **4. The Fragile Social and Political Condition**

The fourth area futurists are concerned about is the quality of life in America. Is it getting better or worse? I think that many arguments can be made that it is getting both better and worse, and certainly that little or no progress has been made in the last decade or two. Until the mid-1960s, there was a widespread and unquestioned sense of progress in the development of our society -- a sense that we were an affluent and well-educated society on a roll, and it was clearly understood that we were the leading nation in the world. There is now widespread doubt, both here and abroad, about American leadership in the 1990s, and we seldom think of ourselves as affluent or well-educated (despite the growth of many positive economic indicators, 5% annual growth in the travel industry, and more and more people attending college). To some degree these indicators are hollow, or they are offset by personal insecurity, loss of community and environmental amenities, broken families, neglected and abused children (and/or more awareness of neglect and abuse), and the stress from an accelerating pace of life.

At the same time, ours is increasingly an information-glutted society, an "age of infoglut" (Didsbury, Jr. 1982). But has the growth of information made our lives

better? Or is it possible that our inability to manage and utilize the flood of information has much to do with our present societal condition (Marien 1984)? Or, to paraphrase a common put-down, "If we're so smart, why ain't we rich?" And this leads us to technology, the last of the five major issues or trends that futurists study.

##### **5. The High-Tech Multi-Revolution**

There is no doubt whatsoever that many dramatic changes have taken place in our physical technologies. And many more changes are in store.

We are witnessing the beginning of a revolution in biotechnology that is creating new medical techniques, new species, and raising many questions about life - especially its beginning and end. Robots are just beginning to appear, and as they become widespread in the decades to come, they will raise more questions about the definition of humanity. A quiet revolution has been taking place in materials, creating many new possibilities and destroying old markets. Military weapons are becoming increasingly fearsome, and this new breed of weapons may yet be used. And, although no notable breakthroughs have occurred in energy technology, we will probably enter a post-oil era within the next few decades.

In recent decades, the greatest technological revolution by far has occurred in the area of information technology (IT). The computer offers new ways to store, manipulate, and distribute information. The power of television has been greatly amplified by cable, satellites, and VCRs, and we are spending more time in front of the small screen. The telephone has become portable and more prevalent and telephone companies offer a plethora of new services. As a result, we are using the

phone more. In the 1980-1987 period, total time spent on the phone in the US grew by 24%, while the population grew by only 7% (The New York Times, October, 1989).

A broad range of IT impacts should be considered. In a recent essay (Marien 1989), I listed 60 actual or potential impacts of various information technologies (largely computers), on seven basic spheres: crime and justice, economy and work, education, government, health, international relations, and the individual, and assessed them as positive, negative, or ambiguous. In summary, many of the positive effects work together to enhance our ability to understand and manage a complex world. But this may be more than offset by the negative potentials of computer crime and a dossier society, the aggravation of rich-poor differences within and between nations, and the fragmentation of understanding caused by infoglut.

My IT essay was appropriately subtitled, "You ain't seen nothing yet." The IT revolution continues to unfold, for better or for worse, and nothing can stop it. I predict that satellites of Sky Cable will provide high-quality TV reception to remote areas by 1994 ("Spoils of a Good," 1990), a computer-communications link-up of the world will be implemented by ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), and automatic language translation will be perfected by some country. The Japanese, of course, are working on it.

I fully agree with Don Dillman that "the people left behind" in rural areas are at a disadvantage in the information age, and that rural areas must modernize their communications networks (Dillman et al 1989; Hudson & Parker, 1990; Parker, Hudson, Dillman & Roscoe 1989).

We can see a preview of the techno-future for some more affluent rural areas in the "telecottages" that are being pioneered in Scandinavia. The first of these high-tech rural facilities serving communities with populations of 1000 or more was initiated in Sweden in 1985. There are now 28 "telecottages" in the four Scandinavian countries, 26 more are planned for these countries, and similar installations are in the planning stages in several other countries (Harrison & Ovortrup 1989).

But up-to-date hardware and access to the burgeoning world stockpile of information is not enough. I wish to re-emphasize the problem of information overload or infoglut (Klapp 1986). To paraphrase the well-known complaint of the dying occupants of a lifeboat in mid-ocean, "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink," we are increasingly facing the challenge of "Info, info everywhere, and what's a man to think?" Are we dying, too? Think about it.

### **The Small Library in An Age of Infoglut**

I could go on and on about the multiple changes that are taking place in our society and our world, as well as the changes that ought to take place. It is both the best of times and the worst of times, featuring awesome threats and opportunities.

Our era of multiple transformations is not merely of intellectual interest -- although it certainly does challenge the intellect. It is an elementary issue of civic concern. If we understand the threats and opportunities we face, we are more likely to make wise choices for ourselves and our children. If we don't understand the demographic changes in progress, the stresses currently placed on our natural

environment, that our institutions are overloaded, that our economy is fragile, our society is divided into the haves and have-nots, or the threats and opportunities that the new technologies offer, we are likely to make dumb choices, or to be dumbfounded and directionless.

Continuing adult education on topics related to current affairs is not simply an amenity, it is our nation's educational priority. The adults of today will be making fateful, future-shaping decisions over the next decade, in the areas of business, community life, and government. Educating young children is important, but if we cannot bequeath to them a viable society when they become adults in the next century, our investment is squandered. Yet adults have fewer educational opportunities than any other segment of the population, and civic education is one of the most neglected areas for education at all levels, despite the widely held belief that citizens in a democracy must be well-informed (Pratt 1988; Boulding 1988). America's citizens are not well-informed; in the words of media ecologist Neil Postman, "We may well be amusing ourselves to death," (Postman 1985).

And now for the crux of my presentation: what role does the public library play in helping citizens to understand our era of multiple transformations? My answer is that the library plays virtually no role in this. Of course, there are some books available that explain the multitude of public issues that we face. Unfortunately, civic education is not a priority; indeed, it does not seem to be recognized as a library function. The two examples that follow support my thesis.

First, I examined several recent issues of the Wilson Library Bulletin, and I

did not find a hint of any of the momentous transformations that I have mentioned in any of the articles or the advertisements. In the June 1990 issue, a full-page ad on page 3 urges us to "Take a Look Into the Future Today With GALAXY," but on reading the fine print, I found that it described the new integrated library system from Gaylord. This is representative of many of the articles that are concerned with new technology for libraries. Much emphasis is given to books for children and young adults, and there are monthly columns on "Science Fiction Universe" and "Murder in Print" (an illustration of "amusing ourselves to death"?).

I mention Wilson Library Bulletin because the editor, Mary Jo Godwin, will address this Symposium. But the same can be said for all other library periodicals, e.g., American Libraries and, especially, the technology-oriented journal and bulletin of the American Society for Information Science. The March 1990 issue of American Libraries did have a glossy insert, sponsored by the ALA Council which urged all librarians to join in celebrating Earth Day, and to encourage citizens to learn more about the environment at the library. A bibliography listing about 70 references was included.

The problem, I suspect, is not with Wilson Library Bulletin or any other library periodical, but with library school culture, which is a subset of the pervasive academic culture that generally extols the narrow, the trivial and the non-practical (Future Survey 1990). The organization of knowledge along the lines of the standard academic disciplines (under broad headings such as arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences) may be fine for an academic library. But public

library collections should be organized differently, especially if one wishes to promote civic understanding, which requires an interdisciplinary approach. The 17 basic categories and 59 sub-categories of Future Survey Annual illustrate an alternative problem-oriented categorization of information (Marien 1990). I am not suggesting that you return to your libraries and overthrow the Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal System in the interests of civic education. But it is possible, and desirable, to place overlays on the present organizational systems in order to improve bibliographic access and promote better public understanding. This can make the library more useful, and increase user appreciation.

My second example illustrates the public library's role in promoting civic education. Utilizing my grassroots connections, I prepared a "Small Library Civic Affairs Quiz," that poses four reference questions a concerned citizen would be justified in asking:

1. "Can you recommend a recent book that provides a good, authoritative overview of global population/resource/environment issues?" [I had in mind the State of the World report by Lester R. Brown and colleagues at the Worldwatch Institute, now in its 8th annual edition from W. W. Norton; The Global Ecology Handbook from the Global Tomorrow Coalition (Beacon Press, April 1990), a companion to the Fall 1990 PBS television series, "The Race to Save the Planet"; or World Resources 1990-91, the fourth biannual edition of an authoritative overview from the World Resources Institute in cooperation with two UN agencies (Oxford, August 1990).]
2. "Please suggest a good book describing the solid waste/garbage problem."

[I was thinking of Louis Blumberg and Robert Gottlieb, War on Waste; Can America Win Its Battle With Garbage? (Island Press, August 1989).]

3. "What is a good book for citizens who are concerned about the problem of groundwater pollution?" [This is certainly a problem in rural areas since 90% of them depend on groundwater. I was thinking of The Poisoned Well: New Strategies for Groundwater Protection by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (Island Press, October 1989), which covers this vexing problem in a thorough, yet intelligible manner.]

4. "Cite a good book for parents who are concerned about educational issues and school reform." [I was thinking of Jeannie Oakes and Martin Lipton's Making the Best of Schools: A Handbook for Parents, Teachers, and Policymakers (Yale, March 1990).]

Here are four very basic current issues in which any citizen with an inquiring mind ought to be interested. I asked the Director of the LaFayette Public Library these questions, and she humored me by spending a couple of hours searching for answers. She did not come up with a single one of the books that I had in mind. She suggested some books that I am not familiar with and other books that are inferior to the ones on my list, in my opinion.

I wish to emphasize that our librarian in LaFayette is quite competent. The quiz merely highlights the fact that she lacks reference tools that could pinpoint the best books on these important topics, and I doubt that such tools are available. Now,

admittedly, this is toe-in-the-water research, and the survey instrument ought to be expanded, refined, and given to more librarians. But I hope you begin to catch my drift: "Info, info everywhere, but what's a man to think?" To combat the infoglut, we will need to come up with better systems for organizing information.

In the age of infoglut, the small library should be encouraged to provide educational tools for people, so they can control their own destinies. And this leads to another small-scale toe-in-the-water experiment that I conducted in LaFayette; the guide to "Books for Your Health."

During the last four or five years, there has been a proliferation of non-technical books on health-related topics, written by experts for a general audience. But there are also books specifically devoted to Alzheimer's disease, backache, epilepsy, herpes, hospices, osteoporosis, stroke, etc., to mention just a few topics. A library literate consumer could, of course, fish around in Books in Print or Forthcoming Books for a book to meet their need. But the point at which an information need is felt is in the doctor's office. So why can't a doctor, with the aid of a catalog, prescribe a book as well as medication? With the cooperation of the LaFayette Family Health Center located just a few hundred yards from the library, I prepared a draft version of an annotated guide to 125 recently published health books (Marien 1988). The Health Center's physicians, as well as library patrons, have used the guide. The next step is to update it, and get it published in an attractive format and distributed to clinics and libraries. Two recent articles on health education make no mention at all of the potential contribution of libraries

(Couto 1990; Merriam & Cunningham 1989). I hope that this attitude will change in the next few years; cooperation between libraries and health care professionals could benefit everyone involved -- patients, physicians, publishers, and libraries. Again, this is a way to add value to the library and make it more useful.

The fact that the natural connection between the health care field and public libraries has been overlooked reflects a more general problem: the educational potential of the library has been overlooked. Since we are meeting in Nebraska, I'll give an illustration from a Nebraska document, A State for All Ages, prepared by new Horizons for Nebraska (Armstrong 1988). This future-oriented document, prepared for the State Legislature in 1988, seeks to revitalize the state by developing leadership, enhancing economic opportunity, fostering a superior quality of life, strengthening human capital, and reconnecting Nebraska and its communities. Of the 44 recommendations for action within these five categories, many involve education, but only two mention public libraries. Could there be more opportunities for libraries? I think so.

### **Conclusion**

Now I will draw together some of the disparate themes on which I have touched.

There are at least four messages of importance that public libraries should glean from this presentation on our "era of multiple transformations":

1. Our society -- indeed, the entire world -- is going through a time of turmoil, with many problems and opportunities. The need for citizens to understand

the choices we face and decisions that must be made is, perhaps, more important than ever before. Denying that these problems exist will simply aggravate our condition.

2. This is also a time of financial stress, and many governments are facing grave deficits. Libraries will be vulnerable. The more useful they can be to the greatest number of people, the more political friends they will acquire. But even with this support, some libraries will not survive. It is not simply a matter of convincing a community that the public library is "valuable" (whatever that means), a rather difficult task proposed by Bernard Vavrek (Vavrek 1989). Whatever it is, the public library must prove worth in cost-effective ways.

3. Institutions are reinventing themselves, or ought to be reinventing themselves. This includes the library, which should be reconceptualized not only as a community information center, but as a Community Learning and Information Center. Indeed, national models of such a center for rural areas are being developed by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in Colorado, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming (Chobot 1989).

4. Books are good. Reading is good. But more information and better methods of information delivery will not necessarily be of long-run benefit to individuals or society. We may only be digging the same holes deeper. Serious attention should be given to flagging information that is crucial for empowering individuals to control their lives and intelligently shape their communities. If such information were easily accessible, citizens would be more supportive of libraries.

With these four broad messages in mind, I would like to conclude by mentioning six library-related ratios or balances that, I hope, will be considered by this Symposium.

1. Big vs. Small Libraries. I believe that public libraries are important institutions, and that we need both big libraries and small libraries. The virtue of the small library is that it is close to its patrons, and it is friendly, as only a small institution can be. In a small community, a library may be small in size, but it looms large in the minds of its patrons because it is often the only library for miles around, and the only cultural institution. It need not have a large collection (the figures for holdings are generally meaningless, because much of what is held is out-of-date or trivial). It is important to acquire the basic volumes, and then to have access, both physical and intellectual, to everything else in the ever-widening world of information. And rather than offering just dry and dreary bibliographies and indexes, libraries can offer access to interesting items like the Burpee seed catalog or the L. L. Bean clothing catalog that enter millions of American homes.

2. Children vs. Adults. There is a tendency to give more emphasis to children's programs than to adult programs. One reason is because adult education is still undervalued in our society. Nearly all adults engage in learning projects; the majority of these are self-directed. But many adults do not characterize their activity as learning because they have been brainwashed to assume that learning only takes place in school, and that the only important learning is for academic credit (Tough 1979).

3. School Budgets vs. Library Budgets. To continue this line of speculation, the status and funding of public libraries might be enhanced if they were seen as learning centers, and if their budgets were contrasted to those of schools. If a community spends \$500 or \$1000 per capita to educate children, why shouldn't they spend \$10, \$20, \$50 or more per capita for continuing education at the public library? Why shouldn't a librarian receive the same salary as a school teacher? Public library trustees need some guidelines for budget preparation.

4. Entertainment vs. Edification. Libraries are a source for serious information, but they also distribute leisure reading material and, increasingly, videos. Circulation at the LaFayette Public Library is up by 10-20% over last year, apparently due entirely to our new video collection. I am not against light reading or video viewing for leisure, but I think it might be useful to watch the ratio of entertainment vs. edification, the same way that a nutritionist warns of junk food vs. nutritional foods. Desserts are nice, but they should be balanced by fruits and vegetables.

5. Professional vs. User Determination of Needs. I think that neither an "elitist" approach nor a "populist" approach should be used to determine library needs. Both should be used. It is all well and good to ask users whether they get the services they want. Bernard Vavrek surveyed users and found that 91% believed that their needs were satisfied on the day of their visit (Vavrek 1990). A survey of professionals, however, might reveal more potential services than patrons ever imagined were available. We do not determine needs in health care or education

solely on the basis of client demand. In determining what libraries should do, the tendency of professionals to find more unfilled needs (and thus to create employment opportunities) should be balanced against the tendency of patrons to underestimate what services are available to help them meet their information needs.

6. Rhetoric vs. Reality. Finally, libraries, as well as other institutions, invariably paint a pretty picture of what they do. This practice of equating lofty goals with attainment is a widespread fact of life. There will always be a gap between rhetoric and reality, but I hope that the gap can be closed for all institutions: that teachers will, in fact, teach, physicians heal, correctional institutions correct, and welfare agencies attend to the well-being of individuals. In the case of libraries, there is frequent linkage with a viable democracy. I would like to quote from a recent issue paper prepared for the New York State Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services, "Libraries are vital in creating an informed citizenry" ("Steps into the 1990s," 1990). In the future, I hope that this will be true, and that we will all acknowledge it.

And in the near future, I hope that some of these ideas stimulate you to strive toward creating a better future for small public libraries. Small libraries are beautiful, or they can be. I hope that they prosper.

## NOTES

Carl Haub, "2050: Standing Room Only?" The Washington Post 8 July, 1990, C3. Haub is with the Population Reference Bureau in Washington, which publishes the very useful World Population Data Sheet each year.

Osha Gray Davidson, Broken Heartland: The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto. New York: The Free Press, September 1990.

"With Rural Towns Vanishing, States Choose Which to Save," The New York Times, 3 January 1990, P1. Also "County vs. State on Bankruptcy Issue." The New York Times, 10 September 1990, B7.

"America's Outback," Newsweek 9 October 1989, pp. 76-80.

President's National Advisory Committee on Rural Poverty, The People Left Behind. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967.

A. G. Champion (ed), Counterurbanization: The Changing Pace and Nature of Population Deconcentration. London: Edward Arnold, 1989 (distributed in US by Routledge).

See Future Survey 12:10, October 1990; 12:6, June 1990; 12:2, February 1990; and the ten volumes of Future Survey Annual.

Future Survey, 12:9, September 1990.

Future Survey, 12:8, August 1990, esp. Victor R. Fuchs, "The Health Sector's Share of the Gross National Product," Science, 2 February 1990, pp. 534-538.

Future Survey, 12:8, August 1990.

"The Likelihood of Economic Collapse" (Great Debate II) in Michael Marien (guest editor), "The Great Debates: Environment, The Economy, and National Security," Futures Research Quarterly (World Future Society), 6:1, Spring 1990. (Transcript of three debates held at the World Future Society's Sixth General Assembly in Washington, July 1989.)

My first use of "age of infoglut," and the first that I know of, was in my essay "Con-Communication and the Future," in Howard Didsbury Jr (ed), Communications and the Future. Bethesda, MD: World Future Society, 1982, pp. 62-68.

Michael Marien, "Some Questions for the Information Society," The Information Society, 3:2, 1984, pp. 181-197.

"With Phones Everywhere, Everyone Is Talking More," The New York Times, 11 October 1989, A1.

Michael Marien, "IT: You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet," in Tom Forester (ed), Computers in the Human Context: Information Technology, Productivity, and People. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, October 1989, pp. 41-47.

"Spoils of a Good Air War," U.S. News & World Report, 10 September 1990, p. 75.

Don A. Dillman et al., "Rural Barriers to Job Creation Remain, Even in Today's Information Age," Futures Research Quarterly, 5:4, Winter 1989, 43-55. Also see: Heather E. Hudson and Edwin B. Parker, "Information Gaps in Rural America: Telecommunications Policies for Rural Development," Telecommunications Policy, 14:3, June 1990, 193-205; Edwin B. Parker, Heather E. Hudson, Don A. Dillman, and Andrew D. Roscoe, Rural America in the Information Age: Telecommunications Policy for Rural Development. Lanham, MD: University Press of American/Aspen Institute, November 1989.

Steve Harrison and Lars Qvortrup, "Information Services for Rural Communities: The 'Telecottage' Project," Prometheus (Department of Economics, University of Queensland, St. Lucia 4067 Australia), 7:2, December 1989, pp. 303-315.

Orrin E. Klapp, Overload and Boredom: Essays on the Quality of Life in the Information Society. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986.

Richard Pratte, The Civic Imperative: Examining the Need for Civic Education. New York: Teachers College Press, 1988. Also see: Elise Boulding, Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World. New York: Teachers College Press, 1988.

Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business. New York: Viking, 1985.

Future Survey, 12:8, August 1990.

Michael Marien (ed), Future Survey Annual 1990. Bethesda, MD: World Future Society (4916 St. Elmo Ave.), 1990.

Michael Marien, "Books for Your Health: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography of Health Books Available Through the LaFayette Public Library and the Onondaga County Public Library." LaFayette, NY: LPL, July 1988 (23p draft).

Richard A. Couto, "Promoting Health at the Grass Roots," Health Affairs, 9:2, Summer 1990, pp. 144-151. Also see: "Health Education," Chapter 38 in Sharan B. Merriam and Phyllis M. Cunningham (eds), Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1989.

Rod Armstrong, A State for All Ages: Report of the First Phase, New Horizons for Nebraska. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Legislative Council, Legislative Research Division, November 1988.

Bernard Vavrek, "What Is the Public library's Impact?" Wilson Library Bulletin, October 1989, p. 73.

Mary C. Chobot, "Public Libraries and Museums," Chapter 28 in Sharan B. Merriam and Phyllis M. Cunningham (eds), Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1989.

Allen Tough, The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning (Second Edition). Austin, TX: Learning Concepts (2501 N. Lamar), 1979. (The first edition of this seminal work in studying how adults actually learn, and how they could be better helped, was published by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, in 1971.)

Bernard Vavrek, Assessing the Information Needs of Rural Americans. Clarion, PA: Clarion University of Pennsylvania, College of Library Science, 1990.

"Steps into the 1990s: An Issue Paper for the Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services," New York State Conference on Library and Information Services, Cultural Education Center 10C47, Albany, NY 122390. 20 August 1990, 7 pp.

## EPILOGUE

### The 20th Century Transformation from Library to Community Information Center

	Early and Mid-20th Century Library	Late 20th- and Early 21st Century Community Information Center
Societal Context	Agricultural/Industrial Era; Strong nation-state	Service society; emerging global economy; era of multiple communities (local, regional, etc.) and multiple transformations (technological, intellectual)
Information Context	Relative small and static body of information/knowledge	Ever-expanding world of info./ knowledge; infoglut
The Small Library	Static collection of books, largely from the community	Books and other materials from outside the community; videos, CD-ROM, data services; need to discard out-of-date material
Inter-Library Alliances	Few, if any	Extensive networking; interlibrary loan; linkage in regional systems
Library Director's Role	Keeper of the books	Community educator; information broker generalist (similar to family physician)
Education of Director and Staff	Little or none beyond high school	MLS/college degree, and/or continuing education/training for all
Trustees/ Governing Board	Community elite with little or no knowledge of library	Local professionals with skills to help library; continuing education/training increase desirable

Funding	Bake sales and donations	Local, Regional, and state government increasingly tied to schools
Management	Not considered, or informal methods	Budgets, goals output data, feedback from community via questionnaires; some fee-based service
Overall Vision	None - more of same	Future-oriented; evolving to stay abreast of burgeoning information society -- and to give access to it

## **"Community Needs and the Rural Public Library"**

by

**Don A. Dillman**

It is important for me to begin by stating very clearly that I am not a librarian. Thus, it would be rather presumptuous of me to tell you what a library in a rural community should or should not be as we approach the 21st century. Instead, I would like to do two things today. First, I want to talk about the changing nature of rural America. Then, in the last part of my presentation, I want to discuss the implications these trends hold for rural libraries. I would like to speculate with you about how libraries might help meet some of the emerging information needs of rural Americans. The position I will take is that rural communities have some very unique information needs, and no one is meeting them -- not the public schools systems, not the Cooperative Extension Service, not the public libraries. All of the would-be information providers in rural communities face an incredible challenge in this era.

For many years I have been a fan of James Michener. There is something fascinating about an author who uses one word titles -- Hawaii, Chesapeake, Texas, Alaska, Caribbean, etc. Many years ago, while on a long overseas trip, I read his book, Centennial, which is about a fictitious place in northern Colorado. The book begins by describing formation of the earth's crust and includes a discussion of how veins of gold became a lasting part of that crust. In the next 1,000 pages, Michener describes eras in which different species dominated the landscape; dinosaurs, large beavers, the first horses, the first humans. Then he relates the story of the great

Indian nations, the first European explorers, the trappers, the settlers, the ranchers with longhorn cattle, the shepherders, the range wars, the raising of Herefords, the emergence of cross-breeding on ranches, and the environmental movement of the 1970s. The most striking thing about that book, to me, is the idea of constant change. As one reads through that book and moves from era to era, it becomes evident that in each era someone or something is doing its best to preserve the status quo while the unmistakable signs of change appear everywhere. When I finally finished the first 1,000 pages, I laid the book down for a time and began to reflect. What is it that makes me think that time is going to stop here and our present era will be preserved in its present condition? Yet, as I look at people in our society, I often think that what we are doing makes more sense than the efforts of the first trappers or the ranchers who raised longhorns -- we are trying to preserve what exists and make little effort to prepare ourselves for the next era.

I consider myself a professional in midcareer. When I was growing up in southern Iowa, agriculture was dominant. During a recent trip back to my hometown, I discovered that one farmer was now farming the farms of five different families that were there when I was growing up. Also, that county is no longer dependent upon agriculture, according to USDA statistics. Fewer than 20 percent of the people make their living directly from farming. When I left that town to go to college there were no zip codes, the interstate system was just being developed, there were no reliable birth control methods, and there were no area codes for telephone service. But we did have calculators. I recall one calculator I was assigned to use

in college and, at the time, it was a real honor because this calculator had a square root function. The calculator weighed more than 50 pounds and cost more than \$650. The university had a computer, but its capacity was only 64k, one-tenth the capacity of a back-up computer I have in my office in the basement of my home. The typical family of that era consisted of dad, who was employed outside the home; mom, who worked in the home; and two or three kids. McDonald's existed, but we did not yet know it served "fast food" and would be competing with the likes of Wendy's and Burger King. There was no environmental movement of which to speak. Advertisers promoted smoking as a sign of maturity. The definition of a good diet was more meat and fewer vegetables. Japanese products were considered cheap imitations of good U.S. products.

If anyone has any question about whether times are changing, simply reflect back on what it was like when you were growing up and then ask yourself, "What is it going to be like when we move into the next century?" That is what I want to discuss. In this century, rural communities in the U.S. have undergone three stages in social and economic development. These are the stages of community control in the first third of the century, mass society in the middle third, and now the information age.

### The Community Control Era

Prior to 1920, rural life was community centered. People seldom needed to venture outside their home communities. Rural communities tended to have small,

homogeneous populations of farm families or people dependent on agriculture. Churches, schools, and social activities dictated community norms. "What will the neighbors think?" was a powerful agent of behavioral control in most rural communities.

Farms and most other businesses were family owned and operated. Rural communities were largely self-contained and a few local leaders handled transactions with the outside world. Community development depended on self-help projects and local resources. Churches, medical facilities, schools, and Social welfare agencies were locally initiated. Rural areas were relatively isolated due to poor transportation and communication facilities, thus reinforcing community self-sufficiency.

### Mass Society

The mid-20th century witnessed an assault on tightly knit neighborhoods and communities on nearly every front. Automobiles, paved roads, and telephones dramatically expanded personal mobility and social contacts. More people could afford to travel. National corporations routinely transferred local business managers. The expansion of educational opportunities and for students and those serving in the armed forces, opened the nation and the world to rural residents.

The U.S. became a mass society. Hierarchies became the model for businesses and social service agencies. Local representatives reported to regional representatives and so on up the corporate ladder. The federal government increasingly extended its influence on American life, affecting areas from education

to transportation.

The building of a mass society produced much homogeneity. People across the United States ate Cheerios or Wheaties for breakfast, drove Ford or General Motor cars to work, and watched the evening network news. The same products were consumed in Havre, Montana, as in New York City.

Rural communities were no longer isolated from urban centers. Relative economic independence was replaced with tight-knit interdependence. Rural community development efforts centered around attracting large industries or tapping federal and state funds for large rural development projects. Rural community development efforts were largely designed and financed by outside interests and aimed at standardizing services nationwide.

### The Information Age

We are now making the transition to the information age. Dramatic improvements in computers and telecommunications are enhancing our ability to identify, sort, retrieve, transmit, create, and apply information. Compared to previous eras, the information age is establishing itself with phenomenal speed.

In this information age we can have precise information when and where it is needed. Information is being substituted for time, labor, and energy in the production of goods and services. Information is a raw material as well as a product. The information society affects the production, distribution, and consumption of tangible items. Agriculture and industry progress by producing more products faster

than ever while using fewer people, less energy, and fewer natural resources. This use of information underlies our movement from a mass society to an information age society of options, where multiple lifestyles and modes of doing things coexist.

The substitution of information for other resources has been going on for decades. What is new is the degree to which this is happening and the kind of knowledge that is being used. Throughout this century, information has been used to permit the substitution of energy and natural resources for human labor. Now information is being substituted for all three.

Airline travel provides an example of how information is substituted for labor and energy. Through today's computer systems, flight and seat reservations can be confirmed within seconds, even for flights originating in other parts of the world. At the airport check-in, boarding passes for a flight and any connecting flights are typically issued, eliminating further paperwork. Computerized reservations and check-ins require less labor. Monitoring of anticipated flight loads allows for efficient use of aircraft and fewer wasted meals. The incredible variety of fares that encourage full, and therefore, fuel-efficient flights could not be managed without today's computer-telecommunication systems. Thus, information technology has reduced energy consumption and labor costs throughout the air travel industry.

The information age also allows for greater selection in the area of consumer goods. We are approaching the day when no two cars in the United States will be identical. Computerized assembly lines make it as easy to customize as to mass produce identical products. Information can save production costs because automobile

and other manufacturers' businesses need no longer maintain huge inventories and, instead, may schedule components to arrive only hours before they are used on the assembly line.

It is now common practice to produce a few products, see what sells and then shape products to consumer preferences, thereby substituting rapid communication and assembly for warehouses and mass production. Tomorrow's electronic catalogs are more likely to be attached to a production line than to a warehouse. Thus, information systems can be substituted for other production inputs, so that the products are shaped to individual preferences and needs.

The information revolution has helped usher in a true world economy. In our global society, goods and services traded among countries doubled from \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion between 1976 and 1980. The United States is striving to maintain its manufacturing base by substituting information for other resources. New satellite communication technologies coupled with jet airline travel have decreased information and product lag time between the U.S. and other countries. The immediate transfer of information has enabled other countries to understand, project, and meet U.S. consumer demand.

Rural areas of the country were originally settled because that is where the natural resources, farmland, forests, and minerals were found. As the economy matured and mechanized, fewer jobs needed to be close to the resources. The proportion of the U.S. labor force employed in agriculture and extraction industries has declined throughout most of this century as a result. For a time, manufacturers

in search of lower wage scales helped absorb the excess rural labor force by moving their factories to rural areas. That still happens, but not on the same scale as before. New rural jobs will now be concentrated in one of the service industries, will involve information work, and will have a strong connection outside the community where they are located. Consider the following points:

- . Job creation has become divorced from natural resource industries. Only 2 percent of the population now live on farms, and this number continues to drop.
  
- . The proportion of the U.S. labor force directly involved in manufacturing has declined from a peak of about 50 percent in 1920 to approximately 20 percent today, and is likely to decline further.
  
- . By the end of this century, two-thirds of U.S. workers are expected to be employed in the information industry and the education field in jobs ranging from answering 800 phone numbers, to processing insurance records, to writing software programs.
  
- . Many service industries can market their products long-distance, and are not restricted (as previously thought) to servicing local businesses.

- . More and more U.S. jobs have a foreign connection, for example, receiving component parts for assembly or processing and targeting finished projects for export markets.
  
- . Jobs are more likely to be created by small, rather than large, organizations. Trends toward downsizing of large organizations through contracting out some production and better access of small organizations to information about contract opportunities are among the reasons.
  
- . Forty percent of equipment expenditures in the United States are for telecommunications and computer equipment, compared with 20 percent 10 years ago, confirming that access to information and the ability to act on it are key factors affecting worker productivity.
  
- . In 1981, there were 5.9 million computer work stations in the United States. The number had climbed to 33 million by 1987, and by 1995 will likely rise to 60 million. If so, 9 out of 10 white-collar jobs will involve a computer work station.

Rural America has little choice but to connect with the nation's telecommunications systems so that its businesses can compete. However, urban centers, already connected to the infrastructure, may use the system to divert business from rural communities before rural businesses develop the skills to expand

their service boundaries.

In the past, rural areas have been slow to accept new ways of doing things. In addition, urban areas are more likely to be the source of innovations. Innovations are born in subcultures of large urban centers, spreading outward from those centers to communities beyond. Innovative ways of doing things generally spread from urban to rural areas.

Rural communities are slow to adopt innovations because existing information systems are difficult to penetrate. Rural communities tend to place a high priority on modes and types of information delivery better suited to earlier eras than the present information age.

Associating with the same people or the same families over several generations tends to narrow one's focus to the base local knowledge and de-emphasizes the need to seek, sort, and use information about distant places and ideas. Information needed by entrepreneurs, such as how to identify, supply, and monitor niche market opportunities, will come mainly from outside the community rather than over the backyard fence or from lifelong friends. The rural community is by nature homogeneous and more limited in its information base than the urban community. Thus, rural communities are at a disadvantage in developing information age businesses because they fail to develop the elaborate business and social networks that would enable them to compete with their urban rivals.

### Implications for Rural Libraries

The information needs of rural people, whether they realize it or not, are quite different than they used to be. In the community control era, libraries were brokers of information and importers of ideas into communities where local knowledge was the primary source for information needed to get through life. Libraries were established in these communities as agents of change, designed to enrich the local culture and to encourage identification with the larger U.S. society. The public library played an incredibly important role in the early years of this century.

The mass society era brought about interesting changes. Our society was faced with the challenge of providing all people with access to the same major sources of information, whether Encyclonaedia Britannica or Life magazine. The prevailing philosophy seemed to be that everyone needed the same basic information sources if they were to succeed in life. Thus, greater homogeneity across communities was encouraged and libraries became places to store those basic sources of information. This situation led us to judge a library's success by number of volumes owned and the amount of available square feet.

The information era provides a quite different challenge to libraries. The challenge now is to help people get to the source of information they need that will help them deal with their concern of the moment. Isn't it time we stop thinking of libraries as repositories of information and begin to think of them as access points to the work? The library skills that are most needed as we approach the 21st century are the ability to utilize computers and telecommunication systems to connect with data bases and information sources outside of the community.

## Instrumental vs. Expressive Orientation

Several years ago I helped establish the Partnership for Rural Improvement, an effort that involved many institutions attempting to serve rural residents of Washington State. I remember two librarians who served on that board -- one I found very fascinating while the other was, perhaps, a bit less enjoyable to have lunch with. The one who fascinated me brought a book with him to every meeting and whenever the discussion involved issues he found uninteresting, he read his book. When we went to lunch, and I mentioned a book I had read, there was a good chance that he had read it, too, and he would usually begin his response by saying, "Well, there are problems with how that book is written," and then he would proceed to critique the book, including my favorite James Michener novels.

The other librarian was not nearly so fascinating to converse with, but he always listened intently to our discussions. When a question was raised that required an answer, his response would be, "I'm sure I can find that out somewhere for you," and a few days later I would get the information in the mail or get something telling me where I could find that information. These two librarians illustrate the difference between an expressive and an instrumental orientation to information.

I can envision the future role of rural libraries as primarily expressive, placing an emphasis on literature and leisure time opportunities for patrons. I can also envision a rural library system that is primarily oriented toward instrumental concerns, that is, trying to help local people make decisions that have direct economic

significance. If one's concern is primarily to help communities cope with economic distress, find new ways of bringing businesses into communities, and help people deal with their day-to-day problems, then I think a community would benefit by having a local library with an instrumental orientation. On the other hand, a community consists of primarily older people, those not employed out of the home, and those looking for interesting ways to spend their time, then this calls for a different kind of library staff and different facilities.

I want to be quick to say that I think both roles are very important ones, and this leads to my next point. It is important that rural libraries each find their niche and then do everything within their power to fill that niche. The institutions that get into trouble in the information age are those that try to be all things to all people. By trying to serve everyone, you may end up serving no one well. Perhaps you should leave the instrumental activities to another institution. Or, perhaps, the expressive orientation should be left to someone else.

Finding a niche. If I were to suggest a niche for rural libraries, frankly, I would suggest focusing on a particular clientele group to whom elements of both the instrumental and expressive orientations would be important. The orientation that I would suggest is to focus squarely on the socialization of young people. It is this issue, more than any other, that worries me when I think about the future of rural communities and the people who live there. Poverty is increasingly a single-parent phenomenon, that is, a very large proportion of young people are being raised in

single-parent homes. Among those children with two parent families, frequently both parents are employed outside of the home, putting a premium on time available to focus on the development of their children.

There are about 80,000 households on welfare in my state, and the state spends in excess of \$1 billion per year in welfare support. Most of these households are on the Aid for Families with Dependent Children Program. Often when people think of single women on welfare they think of large families and teenage mothers. Nothing could be further from the truth. In our state the average woman on welfare is 29 years old, has only one or two children, and 60 percent of these women did not finish high school. An economist might say this society is doing a terrible job with respect to the development of human capital.

We do have a very high drop-out rate in our public school system. This drop-out rate comes at a time when jobs for most people require the ability to comprehend and use information.

Another trend I have noted in recent years is the increase in welfare households in rural communities. In some places in the United States, this has occurred because of a weakening rural economy. In other places it is simply the result of migration from cities to the countryside. Housing is cheap in rural areas compared to metropolitan areas. Thus, if someone is on welfare, and they lack the skills needed to obtain a job that pays a reasonable wage, they move to a rural community in an effort to get their welfare check to go further. As a rural sociologist, I am extremely concerned that rural communities are becoming sanctuaries for people

on the fringe of society -- and that scares me.

One of the niches rural libraries might consider filling is to aid in literacy development and the socialization of young people in local communities. By discussing welfare, I have perhaps focused on the extremes of my concern, but of all the issues we face with respect to the long-term success of U.S. society, I would put the socialization and literacy development of our young people at the very top. If public libraries were to accept this challenge, it might lead to some very innovative thinking about hours of service, about the role of computers, and about after-school programs.

Bringing people to computers. Yet another issue that concerns me is how to encourage rural people to make greater use of information technologies. A computer in every household is not a dream that every person would buy into, but computer access needs to become a fundamental right in society. I have been intrigued with experiments in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark that have set up experimental telecottages in rural communities. Community buildings have been equipped with microcomputers and other advanced technologies in order to provide local residents with computer literacy skills and advanced information services. This concept needs to be explored on an experimental basis in the United States. The public libraries should be involved in this movement.

## Conclusion

I have made some modest suggestions, I think, with respect to library services that will meet the needs of rural communities in an information age. I think that libraries face a challenge in deciding whether to orient themselves primarily to the expressive side of people's lives or primarily to the instrumental side. Rural libraries need to find their niche and to serve their clients. I have suggested young children as a target group that deserves attention, but one could choose others. I have also pointed out the benefits of computer technology for libraries.

My guess is that many of you will protest, "We don't have the money!" or, "Our current clientele won't let us change," and your unspoken comment is, "I don't have the skills to do it." If that is your response, I am not surprised. Most people are reluctant to accept substantial change. Also, I am aware that, when it comes to expending public funds, libraries rank quite a bit lower than do bridges, fire protection, roads, and other community projects. And, as a whole, I expect that libraries are one of the most poorly funded of our important rural institutions.

Thus, I want to share with you a rather personal experience I went through this week. I am an advisor to a national leadership program. After accepting the advisorship, I was informed that participation required going on an Outward Bound experience. In short, that meant being taken up to Leadville, Colorado, (elevation 10,000 feet) where I have spent the last five days just prior to coming to Omaha. On the first day of camp the 10 members of the patrol to which I was assigned were

asked to solve several problems which all seemed impossible to solve when we started. However, much to my amazement, we solved all of them. The next day we were taken to an outcropping of rock and asked to climb a 90 foot cliff using technical rock climbing methods. I won't tell you what went through my mind, but I will say I climbed the rock, twice. After rappelling down from the top, my knees had some difficulty holding me up. On the third day we were assigned to climb one of three mountain peaks. The one I chose to climb with a group of eight others was Mt. Galena, which is about 13,000 feet high. Much to my amazement I made it to the top along with six others.

The next morning, several of us reflected on the previous day's experiences. I talked to one of the group leaders about why some people did not make it to the top of the mountain and/or succeed at some of the other experiences. I wanted a logical, scientific explanation having to do with the elevation. Finally, our group leader said, "Well, I've seen a few cases in which I think it might have been physiological, but for almost everyone it is simply psychological. That's what keeps people from getting to the top of the mountain." As I left the outward bound camp and came to Omaha last night, the most memorable part of the entire experience was learning how we tend to set our own psychological limits and prevent ourselves from transcending them.

Before last week, I might have agreed with you and said, "Yes, funding is a problem, and even though the library needs to change, we just don't have the resources to do it." It is a lot harder today for me to accept that. Thus, I would like to suggest to you that rural libraries can be anything you want them to be. But, in

order for that to happen, you've got to want it to happen and not defeat yourselves in the process. I simply want to say, go for it. If you really want to change rural libraries, you can.

## "Looking at Rural Libraries Through Rose-Colored Glasses"

by

John Houlahan

Today I would like to discuss three issues that deserve the attention of rural librarians:

1. Our view of rural libraries is colored by the type of story we tell.
2. Rural Libraries differ from urban libraries in significant ways.
3. Rural libraries, like their urban cousins, are experiencing changes with regard to their competition, patrons, products, and technologies.

I am going to examine these issues under a microscope, through a crystal ball, and with rose-colored glasses. With the aid of a microscope, we can view rural libraries as they are today. The crystal ball will show us the future. By wearing rose-colored glasses, we can see the rural public library as we want it to be.

If we put rural libraries under the microscope, what do we see? The Digest of Education Statistics for 1980 reports that approximately 6,800 of the nation's public libraries are located in towns with less than 25,000 residents, and 5,400 libraries are located in communities with 10,000 residents or less. And 46% of the nation's libraries are located in cities with 500 residents or less.

According to the publication Assessing the Information Needs of Rural Americans (1990), the average user of the rural library is:

- a. Seven out of 10 times a woman, approximately 44 years old
- b. Seventy-two percent of the women borrow books for themselves only, 28% of the women borrow for someone else.

- c. The average user reads seven books per month, and 82% read magazines regularly.
- d. The most frequent reason given for visiting the library is to check out best sellers.
- e. Rural residents defined their information needs as follows: best sellers, information on educational programs, information about health/medical services, information on decisions of local government, and local news.
- f. There is a gap between the daily information needs listed above and the local library's ability to meet them.

The microscope reveals signs of new growth in rural libraries. Long overlooked, rural libraries steadily gained attention in the '80s at the state and national levels. States from Oregon to New Jersey now have small library associations. Colorado recently devoted a special issue of its library association journal to the subject of rural libraries. Some state libraries, like Oregon and Washington, have added rural library specialists to their staffs. At the national level, library media has devoted more attention to rural concepts. In 1988, Public Libraries featured a special issue on rural libraries. Library Journal has published a column on small libraries and Mary Jo Godwin of the Wilson Library Bulletin attended the Omaha conference both as a presenter and a reporter.

National library organizations have also responded to rural issues in recent years. Ten years ago the Public Library Association established a rural library service committee under its Small and Medium-Size Library Section. Since then, there have been programs at the national conferences on issues of concern to rural libraries. PLA recently announced the formation of two new committees: a

committee designed to involve small and rural library personnel in PLA chaired by Don Reynolds, Central Kansas Library System; and a committee for paraprofessional and clerical library staff chaired by Jane Kolby, South Dakota State library.

I would like to commend a leader in the field of Rural Librarianship, Dr. Bernard Vavrek, Coordinator of the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. The Center is well-known for its research efforts, for its publications, and its workshops sponsored locally and in places like Omaha. Two of the Center's publications are "required reading" for any rural librarian: the Center's journal, Rural Libraries, and the bimonthly Rural and Small Library Services Newsletter.

The microscope can help us to look beyond the statistical profiles of rural libraries and their patrons, beyond the increasing attention granted rural libraries by state and national library associations. We can focus on the genuine article, individual libraries in communities like Laurens, Iowa, and Rico, Colorado.

The Laurens, Iowa, Public Library is firmly committed to bringing cultural activities to its rural community of 1,600 people. Laurens Public Library Community Enrichment Fund was established specifically to provide cultural programs within the library. Working with area schools, local agencies, and a neighboring library, Laurens has hosted a wide range of cultural activities. The Fund brought a puppeteer and storyteller to two rural communities for a week to present daily programs for children and evening performances for adults. Chamber music concerts, performed by an area symphony, are frequently sponsored. Grants obtained from the

Iowa State Arts Council and Humanities Board have paid for traveling arts exhibits.

Live stage shows are among the most ambitious events performed in the library. For the past few years, players from the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis have performed. A touring company from the Riverside Theatre in Iowa City recently presented a Jules Feiffer Comedy and hosted afternoon workshops. A Riverside actress remarked that this was the troupe's first opportunity to perform in a public library. She commented that dramatic works can be experienced as literature or as theatre, "We see it as off the page and onto the stage." Imagine all these cultural activities taking place in a small public library in a very rural section of northwest Iowa.

One of Laurens' neighboring towns, Pochantas, is a partner in bringing cultural activities to this rural part of the state. In 1988, Pochantas Public Library brought Betty Mahmoody, author of Not Without My Daughter, to the area. Hundreds of people jammed the school auditorium for this library-sponsored program. To my knowledge this was the only time that a city council canceled its regularly scheduled weekly meeting in order to attend a library program.

Rico, Colorado, and its neighbor, Dive Creek, are the only incorporated communities in Dolores County, Colorado. They are 35 or 40 miles apart. Since there is no direct route between them, it is necessary to travel 75 miles to go from one town to the other. Rico was once a prosperous mining town with a population in the thousands. Today it has a year-round population of about 50 that swells to more than 100 during the summer. While Rico may sound quaint and funny, it is no joke.

A few years ago, Rico's library won Colorado's Project of the Year Award for a computer literacy program. Rico proves you don't have to be big to be a winner.

With the microscope, we can focus on some of the characteristics that distinguish rural libraries from their urban counterparts. One of my colleagues, Colorado librarian Roger Baker, observed, "In a one person library my patron can be assured that I am at least familiar with his or her special needs. A personal history can sometimes compensate for a lack of expertise . . . this sort of "getting by" experience exemplifies the way in which small libraries deal with special populations. And frankly, it characterizes more of our activities than we realize." I think the management philosophy of "getting by" is one shared by and easily recognized by many rural librarians.

Placing the microscope aside, what can we see in the crystal ball? What is on the horizon for rural libraries? Americans are reading more these days. The book Lifetrends reports that 57% of the adult population used a library in 1987. That represents a 12% increase in the number of adult readers from ten years earlier. Despite growing up in the TV age, baby boomers constitute a substantial share of these readers. Lifetrends states that, if this group continues to take pleasure in the printed page, their support could sustain consumer book sales well into the next century. The search for reading material will also draw them into libraries. The future looks bright for authors, due to this growing readership. Megatrends reports that more than 200 institutions now offer Master's of Fine Arts degrees or doctorates, in contrast to the few dozen programs that were in existence 12 years ago. This

growth in the number of writers may help to explain why the number of new books published rose from 41,000 in 1977 to over 55,000 in 1988. More people are reading magazines these days, too. Library book circulation has risen 21% in the last eight years.

The largest percentage of book readers tend to be college educated females. From 1970 to 1987, the percentage of women who completed 4 or more years of college doubled. Teens represent another significant group of readers, a fact some public libraries have overlooked. Constance Mellon conducted a study of 9th graders in rural eastern North Carolina. This study examined five categories of teenagers: academically gifted, college preparatory, general students, special education students, and Chapter 1 students (those with lower reading scores). 82% of the teenagers surveyed indicated that they read in their spare time. Almost all of the gifted and college preparatory students read in their spare time, but so did 70% or more of the general and Chapter 1 students. This data has particular relevance for the public library. According to the survey, the teenager's primary source of reading material was the school library. 90% of the teenagers surveyed answered the question, "Where do you get the things you read?" with the response, "at the school library." A further challenge to our view of the teenager as a nonreader is the fact that 83% of teenagers spend money on reading materials (Mellon 1987).

One of the growth areas in the publishing industry has been the demand for large print books. For example, Jerry Gerber, author of Lifetrends pointed out that sales of Reader's Digest large type editions increased from 189,000 in 1980 to over

500,000 in 1988. Once a special library item, large print books are now a growth product among volumes sold in regular bookstores and malls. The breakthrough came in 1983 when G. K. Hall and Company made an effort to market its line of large-print books to the general public. G. K. Hall now publishes 200 titles a year and derives 30% of its revenues from large print materials. Gerber also predicts that the demand for large print will continue to grow, along with the demand for books on audio cassette, as our population ages.

Given the growing numbers of books being published, increased readership and growth in library book circulation, the future of libraries looks bright. However, there are those who would disagree. In his recent Library Journal article, Joseph Speiler stated:

"I think many publishers fear that books are no longer the fundamental mechanism by which people engage issues. When I was a copyboy for the New York Mirror, just a few weeks before Hemingway's A Moveable Feast was published, it was all that people talked about . . . No writer commands that sort of attention today. It's a commentary on culture, on the rise of television, on the disappearance of the ethical spine that gave education its structure in the United States. At one time, learning how to read was a moral good. I don't think that you can blame publishers or writers or editors or agents. We've all done this. How far the process will go, I don't know. I don't foresee the disappearance of books -- perhaps they will be attractive to a smaller and smaller audience" (Speiler 1990).

In addition to the decline of the "moral good," readers have more information formats from which to choose. Other products have become more popular with consumers. Small rural libraries like Gilmore City, Iowa, (population 626) are staying open on Friday nights to meet the weekend demand for videos. Somers, Iowa, (population 220) experienced a greater demand for Nintendo games and so the library

opted to provide these rather than videos. By the end of 1990, nearly half of Iowa's public libraries will have CD-ROM players.

Many librarians are burdened by the addition of new product lines: CD-ROM products, videos, video disks, and other materials. They are faced with learning about the new hardware and software, as well as finding the money required to purchase the material. Librarians cannot reduce book purchases enough to offset the cost of information in other formats. These are add-on costs to material budgets, not substitutions.

If libraries feel overextended now, the future will tax their resources even further. George Por remarked:

"If you're complaining about the info glut of the '80s, brace yourself for the big bang of the '90s. It will be an explosion of information unlike anything we have ever seen. Never before has there been such a variety of electronic media, information tools, and strategies available... The big bang is brewing in the advanced research labs for superchips, artificial intelligence, hypertext, multimedia, operating systems, optical mass storage, neural networks, and high speed digital transmission. The combined cross impacts of these technologies . . . will be dramatic, touching the very fabric of every information based economy and culture."

One cannot look at the future without considering automation. The commonly held perception of rural libraries is that very few of them offer online catalogs, online database searching, online Interlibrary Loan or use computers in the library. Rural libraries are not as automated as urban libraries. In 1988, Illinois had 419 libraries in towns with 10,000 residents or less. Of these, only 58 libraries had automated circulation systems.

In the September 1990 issue of Illinois Libraries, Deborah Diller wrote, ". . .

what constitutes a non-automated library has become blurred with the advent of technology into our everyday lives and workplace. While many rural libraries are considered non-automated in the popular sense, computers are used in hundreds of rural libraries and are being used in a variety of ways" (Diller 1990).

The Northwest Iowa Regional Library is engaged in an LSCA project, NOWNET. Twenty public libraries have PC computers, printers, CD-ROM stations and telefax machines to facilitate interlibrary loan, resource sharing, and coordinated collection development. Only two of the 20 have automated circulation systems. Many have cataloging software and PCs for patron use.

Technology is increasingly playing a larger and more significant role in rural libraries. And for some rural communities, technology is neither new nor minor, as the following examples demonstrate. The North Carolina Information Network (NCIN) offers electronic mail/bulletin board service and access to major commercial and public databases. Rural public libraries are heavy users of the network. One bulletin board lists every contract put out for bid by the state government for the purchase of goods and services, and for highway and other construction projects. This enables rural residents to bid on state business and it brings business, jobs, and tax money to rural areas. There are 25 bulletin boards distributing information over the network for state agencies. This allows rural libraries to provide vital business and technological data to patrons, in addition to traditional library materials. The network has introduced microcomputers and software applications of every sort into almost all rural public library systems in the state.

Caldwell, Ohio, (population 1,935) houses the Southeast Regional Library Center. The Center serves 400,000 residents in 26 library communities in a 10-county, 4,000 square mile area. The state library of Ohio is developing CLSI online circulation and catalog systems for 15 libraries within the Center's service area. The Brilliant, Ohio, (population under 1,000) Public Library has terminal access to the Center's CLSI and OCLC systems. Interlibrary loans and reference questions are sent by telefax to the Center. Telefax has been used in some of Ohio's rural libraries for the past 14 years.

Fred Kilgour, a founder of OCLC, observed in the publication Libraries in the 1990s: What the Experts Expect, that library users are not going to become more and more sophisticated in terms of expecting information. Instead, the user will become more and more satisfied. And libraries are going to have to be able to make their patrons satisfied or there aren't going to be libraries because there certainly will be competitors.

Kilgour stated that libraries frequently failed to satisfy the user. In studies of academic libraries, it was determined that 40 out of 100 times, patrons do not get what they want (Kilgour 1990). Future competitors such as the electronic book will offer patrons access to an item 100% of the time. Now that is satisfaction!

To satisfy patrons, libraries will have to supply information so that people get what they want, when they want it, and where they want it.

In addition to technology, another issue that is receiving a lot of attention is

education -- especially the education of our rural librarians. Arthur Clark wrote that corporate education in the U.S. already involves as many people as all the nation's colleges and universities. Schooling that corporations provide for their employees is now the fastest growing segment of the education field.

One can make the case that one of the fastest growing segments of the library education market is formal and informal educational opportunities for the rural library practitioner. Jim Walsh of the Washington State Library recently compiled a list of basic library skills programs offered in 36 states. These programs included Alaska's Program for the Library Manager Without a Library Degree, Colorado's Leadership Institute for Staff of Small Public libraries, and Oregon's Small Libraries Education Service.

This presentation has viewed rural libraries under a microscope, in the crystal ball, and through rose-colored glasses. There is a fourth way to view rural libraries - as paradigms, or institutions that fit into a rigid mold. There is an inherent problem in viewing the rural library as a paradigm. If we let our preconceived notions about rural libraries hinder our thinking or restrict our vision, outsiders who do not share our views will redefine libraries, and change the rules of the game. Future changes for libraries will come from without, rather than from within.

Outsiders are creating new rules and regulations in a number of fields. Today science is forcing us to think differently about motherhood. Consider the case of the surrogate mother who is not genetically related to the baby she is carrying. Does giving birth to the baby make her the mother? Or is the genetic parent the real

mother? New roles are being written for rural libraries, too. They are being written by funding bodies, other information providers, recreational and cultural providers, service agencies, and social forces. Learn to recognize the new rules and the rulemakers. Do not wear a blindfold. Welcome these new players and revise your gameplan, if necessary.

We have examined rural libraries under the microscope, in the crystal ball, and through rose-colored glasses. Under the microscope we see a growing readership, expanded product lines, a larger role for the rural library in the national library community, rural libraries receiving more attention in the library education market, and the need for rural librarians to be good rural citizens.

Rural librarians who view the future through rose-colored glasses see changes in library services and operations as evolutionary. In their view, expansion and improvement of services already offered is advisable, rather than the introduction of radically new services.

Others foresee a different future. In 1989, the Los Angeles County Public Library reported that the number of reference questions asked by patrons exceeded the number of library materials checked out. Gary Strong, California State Librarian, cited a 1979 California study that showed more citizens sought information from libraries than from radio, TV, and other sources. A 1985 California study confirmed that more and more people were turning to libraries as sources of information. In the future, the old paradigm that defined libraries as repositories for local collections will be challenged by new models that will emphasize resource

sharing and electronic access to information over ownership of materials.

Richard Sougherty made the following statement about academic libraries, but it applies to all types of libraries:

"Libraries need to appreciate the importance of better access to collections and information as contrasted with today's emphasis on the availability of stand-alone local collections. Today's ownership is viewed as being much preferable to access to remote collections, but as a librarian becoming increasingly dependent on each other's collection, access services must assume greater importance."

Rural libraries of the future will have to adapt to new technologies, information products, and services. They will also need to work toward improving patron satisfaction. John Philips has coined the expression "automation dividend." He believes that much of our national library funding has gone for first and second generation automation to meet the needs of the haves, the current library users. He question, "What are we doing for the non-users to bring them in? What about the disenfranchised, how are we satisfying them?"

Fred Kilgour related that he once asked to check out a library book overnight that was part of a non-circulating collection. The staff member at the circulation desk told him that he couldn't check the book out because the rules said so! Kilgour told this employee that the primary rule should be, "Satisfy the user!"

Something called "small mouth disease" prevents some rural libraries from succeeding with their patrons. Every time the librarian open his or her mouth, they say, "We can't do that because we are too small." It should be the goal of the nation's rural and small libraries to wipe out small mouth disease in our lifetime. Small mouth disease has been wiped out in libraries in Laurens, Iowa, which serves a

wonderful role as a cultural provider, and in tiny Rico, Colorado, recipient of a computer literacy award. And then there is Gallia County, Ohio, a community that has equipped its bookmobile for rural users with a computerized circulation system, a photocopier, radiowave reference service, and a telefax. Rural libraries should adopt this slogan:

**BEING SMALL IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR NOT BEING GOOD**

# "Planning for Community Change and the Librarian's Role"

by

**Daryl K. Heasley**

This paper presents a brief overview of the changes impacting rural and small town America, suggests a set of change agent roles appropriate for rural librarians, and offers a paradigm designed to help librarians implement those change agent roles.

## **Part I: Overview**

"Change, diversity, and complexity best describe contemporary rural America" is the opening statement of Lapping, Daniels, and Keller's book, Rural Planning and Development in the United States (1:1). Further, a document published by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development states:

Rural localities are beset by an increasingly complex set of economic, social, environmental, and political forces stemming from both the U.S. metropolitan and global societies. National and worldwide economic restructuring, with or without the complicity of national and local politics, produces shifts in local economic and natural-resource infrastructures. Other forces, endemic to the fabric of American society, place increasing demands on local institutions to provide more effective services while receiving decreasing public support. Institutions for education, health care, youth and family services, families at risk, social equity, elderly and handicapped care, and infrastructural maintenance and improvement, are additional pressures to change and reorganize for greater effectiveness.

While rural localities are affected by these forces, they often lack the individual and organizational resources, expertise, and problem-solving skills required to deal effectively with their situations. Many rural localities have

volunteer, part-time leaders and managers, while their urban counterparts engage full-time professionals to deal with public issues. Efforts to maintain and improve the viability and well-being of rural areas must be guided by an awareness of such structural imbalances.

An essential fact faces most rural localities: As development occurs, many small and rural communities are falling behind their metropolitan and suburban counterparts in dealing adequately with the issues at hand. Moreover, policies and practices intended to enhance rural and small communities have been fragmented or ineffectively implemented.

Structural and economic changes are creating new opportunities for rural economies while at the same time making them more vulnerable. Transportation and information linkages in rural areas are creating new patterns of employment, marketing, and other ties; but the rapidly increasing use can strain the physical infrastructure of these localities.

Environmental pressures, economic opportunities and challenges, and other changes will require greater human capital and institutional capacity. Our most critical resources for managing changes in rural areas are knowledgeable people and the viable groups they form (2:12).

Based on the preceding considerations, what is the Librarian's Role in Planning for Community Change?

---

Prepared by: Daryl K. Heasley, Ph.D., CCD, Director, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, and Associate Professor, Rural Sociology, The Pennsylvania State University, 104 Weaver Building, University Park, PA 16802 for The 21st Century: The Wilson Symposium on the Future of Public Libraries, Omaha, NE, September 26-29, 1990.

## **Part II: The Librarian's Role: Change Agent/Facilitator for Community Issue Resolution.**

Change occurs when the residents of a community are dissatisfied with the current situation. In small and rural communities not everyone is unhappy with the current situation and those who want change seldom agree as to what solution is most desirable. How can the public librarian -- either professional or volunteer -- help community residents cope with change, diversity, and complexity?

In his book Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education (3) Ron Havelock provides an approach that librarians can utilize in their communities to help their clientele resolve the many complex, diverse, and technical problems they face. According to Havelock, librarians (or other citizens or civic groups) can play one or more change agent roles. These roles, that of (1) catalyst, (2) solution giver, (3) process helper, and (4) resource linker (3:8, 9).

I see multiple roles for the public librarian with regard to helping community residents deal with challenging public issues. First, librarians are ideally suited to the role of **resource linker** as it is a role they perform daily within the library system. Regardless of the public issues demanding resolution, effective problem-solving requires the bringing together of needs and resources. "Resources" can be of many kinds: knowledge of solutions, knowledge and skills in gathering data, formulating and adopting data for a specific issue, and expertise on the process of change itself. People with time, energy, and motivation to help may also be considered as resources. A very special and underrated change role is that of the "linker," i.e., the person who brings people together, who helps clients find and make

the best use of resources inside and outside their own system.

Second, rural and small town librarians are skilled as **process helpers**. On a daily basis, they provide valuable assistance to their clientele by acquiring relevant resources, selecting appropriate resources for resolving problems, suggesting adaptable solutions, helping clients recognize and define their needs, and helping them set appropriate goals for satisfying these objectives. It is a process that librarians can adapt to help the residents of small and rural communities resolve community-wide issues. Librarians can play a valuable role in their communities by serving as process helpers.

Third, librarians can be "active listeners" with regard to the concerns expressed by clientele. What do they want to change? Librarians can help citizens express and focus their dissatisfaction in order to energize the problem-solving process. Thus, the librarian becomes a **catalyst** for resolution of issues that concern the community. Again, librarians perform this role daily within the confines of the library. Simple transference to community wide issues is called for.

Fourth, librarians have ideas about possible solutions for community concerns and can play the role of **solution giver**. These solutions may be based upon personal experience or facts contained within the library. I argue strongly for basing solutions on facts. **The library is the best place to find facts.** Be assertive in this role.

By balancing this combination of roles to achieve the appropriate weighing of each for a particular community issue -- whatever it may be -- librarians perform a vital role in their communities beyond that which may be perceived by others. My

plea is that since librarians represent such a professional/volunteer resource, and can access the resources of the local library -- with its worldwide bases from which to draw -- their role must be expanded beyond the walls of their building and mobile truck. I hope I have succeeded in convincing librarians to play these change agent roles at the community level, in addition to playing them daily while discharging their role as librarian.

### **Part III: A Paradigm for Implementing Community Coordination for Resolving Public Issues.**

The process model I have found extremely useful for this task has been provided by two Iowa State University colleagues. The Mulford and Klonglan (5:1-12) model focuses on creating coordination of resources among the various individuals and organizations within (and outside) the community needed to resolve a community issue.

The process model contains the same steps librarians perform in order to use the resources of the library to help resolve the concerns of their clientele. These steps include: (1) defining the problem, (2) identifying who is "key" to work on solving the problem, (3) determining the level of commitment these key resources bring to the problem and, if negative, strategizing to move it to positive, (4) moving commitment to coordination of resources, (5) developing a plan-of-work, (6) implementing the plan-of-work, and (7) evaluating the results and determining the follow-up necessary. In outline form, the steps look like this:

I. **What is the Community Issue?** \_\_\_\_\_

II. **Listing of key organizations (individuals) and their resources which are needed for problem resolutions.**

List the key organizations needed to work on the community issues.

What resources does each organization have that you need?

Resources Possessed (be specific i.e., which personnel, what kinds of information, endorsements, materials or agreements?)

III. **Obtaining Commitment to the Community issue.**

Community Issue Commitment

- Org. 1
- Org. 2
- Org. 3
- Org. 4
- Org. 5

List the 5 key organizations to be coordinated in the same order as listed in Step II. Is organization committed to the community issue? Write "yes" or "no" beside each organization listed.

If "no," how would you get organizations committed? Which decisionmakers? Which strategies would you use?

- Org. 1
- Org. 2
- Org. 3
- Org. 4
- Org. 5

IV. **Obtaining Organizational Consensus for a Coordinated Effort.**

**Coordination Commitment**

- Org. 1
- Org. 2
- Org. 3
- Org. 4
- Org. 5

Is each organization willing to take part in a coordinated effort?  
Write "yes" or "no" beside each organization listed above.

If "no," what strategies would you use to get organizations committed? List these strategies beside the appropriate organization.

### V. Developing a Plan-of-Work

What are the responsibilities of each organization, what resources will each commit, and when will the resources be needed? List these responsibilities, resources, and dates beside the appropriate organization.

- Org. 1
- Org. 2
- Org. 3
- Org. 4
- Org. 5

List the answers to these questions beside the appropriate organization.

1. Who will monitor the plan-of-work?
2. How will the plan-of-work be monitored?

### VII. Evaluating the Results

How and who will evaluate the results of the plan-of-work?

	How?	Who?
Short term:	_____	_____
_____		
Long Term:	_____	_____
_____		

Where do we go from here?

Cycle repeats as appropriate. Some organizations may change or the resource mix needed by the same organizations may change or the issue may be resolved and need no further allocation of resources at this time. Remember as change occurs, new

issues appear, create dissatisfaction, require a process to help ameliorate the dissatisfaction, and so it goes.

I have argued that the rural and small community librarian is a critical and vital player in helping his or her clientele/community understand change, plan to resolve that change, and evaluate their efforts.

The task demands the highest level of scholarly research as well as delivery of useful products to support and maximize the local educational outreach effort. The rural library is uniquely adapted to serve rural America. This unit must work together with other units in the rural community that wish to direct change. If a balanced strategy of guided change is to result, this effort must focus on the relationship of individuals, families, institutions, and communities to the environment. In the end, a viable rural community is one that has strength demographically, economically and socially. Such strengths depend on equitable distribution of and access to goods and services. The effort required to develop these strengths in rural communities is considerable. The rural librarian endeavors to improve the educational climate of his or her community. The library is a valued and respected organization within the community. Now is the time for librarians to capitalize on these strengths by assisting with the resolution of community concerns.

**References  
(Cited)**

Lapping, M., T. Daniels, and J. Keller, Rural Planning and Development in the United States; New York, NY, The Guilford Press, 1989.

Heasley, D. (ed.), "Key Rural Development Issues and Trends for the Twelve States and the District of Columbia Northeast Region: Redirections for the 1990s." University Park, PA, The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, 1990.

Havelock, R., Change Agent's Guide to Innovations in Educations, East Lansing, MI, Michigan State University Press.

Mulford, C. and G. Klonglan, Creating Coordination Among Organizations: An Orientation and Planning Guide, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, North Central Regional Extension Publication 80, Publication Distribution. C1978.

**(Additional)**

Mazie, S. (ex. ed.), Rural Conditions and Trends, Premier issue, USDA/ERS, Washington, D.C., Spring, Vol. 1, No. 1.

Garber, S. (ed), Program Guide, Public Affairs Leadership Program, Community Affairs Section, CES, Penn State, University Park, PA, Nd.7

## "Library Technology Through a Wide-Angle Lens"

by

**Karl Beiser**

For the last five or six years I've been deeply involved in working with computers in libraries -- mostly small computers in small libraries. Planning, executing and supporting a statewide union catalog on CD-ROM (now installed in 230 libraries) has been exciting and instructive, not to mention exhausting.

I am amazed by the range of levels one must master in order to develop an understanding of this technology. It is like flying over that Iowa farmland on the way to Omaha. The rectilinear grid of roads reflects obvious intent on a large scale, and a consistency enforced by the surveyor's activity. Yet here and there, the roads jog, or disappear, breaking up the pattern. Water courses intrude, reaching wavering green fingers across the flat landscape.

Of course, the landscape only looks flat from an elevation of 20,000 feet. The irregularities make sense when you're on the ground and can see the hills up close, the deserted farmsteads absorbed by a neighbor, the signs announcing county borders. On the other hand, when you are on the ground you no longer see the overall pattern, incomplete though it may be.

I welcome this opportunity to share some of my thoughts on the use of technology in smaller libraries. Out of necessity, I'll adjust my focus from time to time and zoom in to provide a detailed close-up, then widen the focus in order to examine broader concerns.

You may have noted that most of the previous speakers talked about technology. Each time that happened, my pen was poised to cross out paragraphs in my presentation. Only a couple have been axed to avoid redundancy, so far. In general, it doesn't hurt to repeat important points more than once, anyway.

Indeed, technology is a major social concern. Developing technologies present us with several challenges: applying it to full advantage in the economic sphere, coping with the inevitable cultural and psychological changes it creates, keeping up with the latest innovations, and teaching our children what they need to know about it.

Dictionaries provide many definitions for the term "technology." I will discuss two of them. An acceptable, albeit basic, definition is simply, "the practical application of knowledge." Hmmm. That raises a question: "How do I deal with the problem of practically applying what I know?" Doing that sort of thing is a genuine and ongoing challenge; but applying what we know about gathering, organizing and providing access to information is what librarians get paid for. We could say, "We have met the technologists, and they are us."

By focusing on technology as the "practical application of knowledge" rather than the implicit aspect of scientific paraphernalia, we can separate our innate fascination and/or dread of complicated devices from the role technology performs with regard to library services.

My second definition of "technology" represents the popular meaning of the term. "Technology" can be thought of as the collection of processes, techniques,

machines and abstract constructs involved in accomplishing a broad range of related tasks.

"Computer technology," for instance, is an economical verbal shorthand by which one can refer to anything involving computers -- without having to know anything at all about the concepts, organization and terminology of the field. Used in this everyday context, the term "technology" is an instrument that is every bit as compact as it is imprecise.

We'll look today at where things stand with regard to the use of various technologies; how those collections of processes, techniques, and devices are evolving; and what libraries, and those responsible for their operation, must do to sensibly determine how to employ technology to improve service.

#### **WHERE THINGS STAND NOW**

"Library Technology" can be a misleading term. Cataloging books, determining classification numbers, physically processing materials, and creating and maintaining records of material usage are all practical applications of knowledge, our first definition of technology. Since these are processes specific to libraries, there can be no doubt that they constitute library technologies. It is hard to get excited about them, though. After all, they lack the cachet of the new. Anyway, we already know our way around these processes. How can they constitute something sufficiently confusing and esoteric to deserve the label of "technology?" To paraphrase Groucho Marx, it can't be a technology if even I understand it!

Let's look at some equipment-intensive library technologies to see if we can

learn anything. All of the following are, or once were, considered to be cutting edge library technologies: CD-ROM discs, fax machines, compact audio discs, video software, answering machines, personal computers, tape recorders, cordless phones, any kind of telephone, cable television, any kind of television, memory typewriters, typewriters generally, phonograph records, electricity. Whoops, I almost forgot. There's also that radically innovative low-power, portable, random-access, read-only, high density, text-oriented storage device -- the book. It was on the cutting edge once, too.

None of these inventions resulted from an intent to create something specifically for library purposes. They were adopted by, and just a few cases slightly adapted to, the needs of libraries when someone realized their potential for doing library tasks. Library technology is, therefore, any technology that can be made to assist libraries in fulfilling their mission -- to accomplish the tasks set for them by their users and by their governing bodies.

As the previous list indicates, there are many technological marvels that might be included in our discussion. At the core of current development, however, lies the machine that can be made into other machines -- the computer.

People are smart, but slow. Computers are fast, but exceedingly dumb. If only computers would do what we mean rather than what we say, we would make a very well-matched team.

For better or for worse, computers are unfailingly literal. They operate according to lock-step logic. Unfortunately, the logic is mostly internal and not

readily interpreted by the layman. One's early experiences of computers may well parallel those of the first-time viewer of a cricket match, or someone who eavesdrops on a conversation in Swahili. There is obviously a rational system at work. Figuring out how to interpret what is happening presents a challenge, however.

The imprecision of the terminology used in computer science adds considerably to the beginner's confusion. How can it be that a logically based area of endeavor can tolerate multiple, sometimes contradictory, definitions of terms like "application," "compiler," "directory," "environment," "software," etc. The answer to this, and much else, lies in the nature of computer-generated reality.

Incidentally, have you heard the term "virtual reality?" The concept involves the simulation of a completely unreal physical environment through computer-driven visual, auditory and movement controls. Imagine fitting your entire body inside a Nintendo power glove and moving your limbs in order to travel through a simulated 3-D universe of totally synthetic design. In a few years we should be able to experience this for ourselves.

The fact is that those who design, engineer and program computers regularly reinvent the world. Within that technological realm, that computer program or hardware device must exhibit internal consistency. One can rename entities, define relationships between them, set all manner of complex processes in motion, all with the modest constraint that the parts of the newly invented system work properly one with the other, that inputs from and outputs to the outside world be in the requisite format for use, and that no really big laws of physics or logic be violated.

For someone used to creating new worlds, forging new words and grafting new meanings onto old ones is entirely natural. About all a novice can do is accept the practice and rely on context and comparison to reinforce one's initial impressions of meaning.

The next thing to realize is that knowing the rules of computer operation is similar to mastering such trivia as, for example, the names and circumstances of origin for every breed of long-haired cat in the world. There are some broad concepts that must be comprehended before one can understand what a computer can do and how to learn to make it operate. Yet, depending on what you are doing and what kind of hardware and software you are using, you may need to know an unreasonable number of arcane, idiosyncratic facts.

Most of these little factoids are individually easy to learn. For instance, users of IBM-compatible computers can echo test line by line from the screen to the printer, when working at the DOS prompt, by pressing Control-P or Control-PrtScn. Pressing the key combination a second time turns off the echo.

That wasn't hard to say. If you've been there before, you either already know about this minor feature, or you can file it away in the back of your mind for future reference. But computer novices don't find it so easy. They may not know what is meant by a DOS prompt, or they may be confused by the similarity of the Control-PrtScn and the Shift-PrtScn command. The latter prints a snapshot of the current screen. Some may not know that you can hold down the Control key as long as you want then just touch the PrtScn key once, in a manner similar to the Shift key. And

what is all this "echoing" stuff? No wonder that after a half dozen or so such helpful explanations, the eyes glaze over.

I would like to say a word or two about the politics of computing. The Macintosh platform was designed by Apple Computer to make things simple and easy for users from their first day at the keyboard. Indeed, the mouse's utility as a cursor positioning tool and selection device drastically reduces the need to use the new, alien keyboard. Except for some people whose learning style seems irrevocably character-based, and another group whose hand-eye coordination makes mousing around drudgery, most users find that learning to use a Macintosh is very easy, like walking up a gradual slope. Users of IBM-compatible systems are presented with several short, abrupt steps followed by a steep ladder which leads to the next level.

Once one is able to turn on the computer and start running programs -- a circulation system, a database manager, a word processor -- the dynamics change, however. Eventually one must understand the applications of software in order to succeed. If you can make the software do what is required, you will be satisfied. In the Mac world, the system by which one runs a program through its paces is strictly molded on the initial user interface. Mac programs from virtually every vendor share many similarities in the way in which actions are selected, executed, and the results delivered.

In the IBM-compatible world, however, every software designer feels free to reinvent the wheel. Too many do, ignoring existing adequate, widely adopted methods. On the other hand, some discover even better ways of doing things. The

challenge IBM users face is learning to use the software they need. If a user can do that in an amount of time and to a degree that is acceptable to him or her, the early advantage of the Mac disappears. In other words, ease of use is a system level responsibility in the Mac universe, and a program-level responsibility in the IBM world.

We have the makings for long philosophical debate here. Is the easy user interface of the Mac the entree the rest of us need to gain the advantages of personal computing for ourselves and our institutions? Is it a liberator of minds and triumph of esthetics? Or is the Mac a closed system that stifles creativity through flexible design requirements and a selling price substantially higher than that of many IBM clones? Which is the Chevy and which the BMW? What is the meaning of freedom and responsibility, form and function? I would like to conclude this section with a Deborah Norville quote, "Well, that's very interesting and I'm sure we'll be hearing more from both viewpoints in the future."

Our personal reactions to these characteristics of computers vary widely. Many people have discovered that they are closet computerphiles. Once the notion that only math geniuses can use computers is debunked, these people exhibit a new-found aptitude. For some it is the creative potential that beckons, others enjoy the power and control that computers confer. Either way, they find the devices exciting.

But beware the kamikaze computerist, the person -- perhaps even you -- so enamored of the devices that they neglect routine tasks in order to play with their new toy. I vigorously contest the notion that real librarians don't program. However,

I know from experience that a failure to keep computer activities in perspective can make one extremely unproductive as a librarian.

The opposite pole is represented by the computerphobe, the individual who feels a deep unease and dread in direct proportion to the proximity of a computer. Veterans of math anxiety should realize that computers do not require users to exhibit math skills. A general notion of consistency and cause and effect is sufficient.

Others feel a general self-consciousness in their learning efforts as adults. For them, the opportunity to practice in private can be every bit as important as the provision of organized training sessions. Most people fall in the middle, however, as a general rule. Most have no strong affection for, or any real antipathy toward, technology. They are involved in getting things done and are interested in technology as a tool. If it works, the tool is good. If not, they may complain about it, then go on to something else. Whether you are interested in computers or not, professionally you must be interested, if for no other reason than to be sure you know all the facts when you decide not to adopt a certain technology.

I'll zero in for a few moments on the most common mistakes new users make. Your first decision should not be "which computer should I buy?" You are asking for trouble if you don't first analyze your operation, identify the areas where technology might improve things, and evaluate alternative solutions and the software required for each task. Only then does the question, "What computer should I buy?" come into play.

Don't pretend the learning curve doesn't exist. It does, and long term success

depends on not rushing things which can create unnecessary anxiety for yourself or other new users. Never trust a crucial task to a new computer and a novice user. Technology doesn't do the work, people do. While the adoption of new methods should be encouraged, it shouldn't be imposed. The resulting resistance will nearly always guarantee failure.

Remember, you will never buy your library's last computer. Sometime in the future you will reach a point where whatever you are doing now could be done much better with new equipment, and you will buy something else. This is particularly true with respect to circulation and online catalog systems, and you should be budgeting for the next system from the day you start using the first.

Don't forget to budget for new versions of the software packages you use. Upgrades usually cost 10% to 25% of the original retail price of a package. It is usually very beneficial to acquire major software upgrades. You may wish to budget for hardware upgrades as well -- an additional or larger hard drive, a high resolution color monitor, an efficient tape storage device, CD-ROM drive or other hardware likely to be of interest down the road.

If you will be using a computer for a storage-intensive application, buy disk storage sufficient to provide room for growth. Your needs will quickly outgrow your equipment, if you try to squeeze them all into a limited system. Budget 100% over what you think you need, and you'll still be happy in a year or two.

Be careful not to buy equipment that is inadequate for current or short-term needs. Be equally careful not to buy overly expensive equipment that can meet needs

that won't exist for several years -- in a few years the added power will probably cost half as much as now. If it is a case of now or never, then buy a system that will meet your future requirements.

Base your purchase price on the real needs of your library, the quality and reliability of available local expertise, and what you will need from a dealer in terms of support in order to fill in the gaps.

As you are learning, don't bang your head against a stone wall for long. It is bad for morale, and will not solve the problem. Leave the problem for awhile. Sleep on it. Come back fresh in the morning and take another look. Call your dealer, local resource person, or anyone else who is knowledgeable and can answer your questions over the phone.

Don't ignore training. Provide training opportunities as needed for novice staff: budget for expense travel and workshop fees, participation in continuing education programs dealing with computers. Arrange mileage reimbursement and time off for employees who visit other libraries where the same systems are used.

Don't lose your sense of proportion when thinking about library technology. If you have \$500 a year to spend on books, do not spend \$4,000 to automate circulation. Don't spend 50% of your budget for a product that represents 2% of your output. Be particularly honest with yourself when costing out the application of expensive technology for such services as interlibrary loan.

Don't be afraid to ask dumb questions. Indeed, the only really dumb question is the one that goes unasked.

Computers and related technologies haven't been around long enough to generate any eternal verities. Fifteen-year-old catch phrases will have to do. ASSUME NOTHING! If you need it, chances are it isn't included. Fix one thing and another problem will appear.

Time, in the computer dimension, is elastic. To predict the arrival of custom software, take the projected delivery, convert it to the next larger unit of time, and double it. For instance, there's a good chance that something due next week will show up in one month.

Assess your needs, find appropriate software applications, then buy the hardware: Buy for a particular, articulated purpose, not just to "have a computer."

Hardware goes down in price 20 to 30% per year. A perverse corollary is that the computer you should buy will always cost the same. I've owned four computers since 1981; an Osborne 1, a Leading Edge Model D, a turbo XT and a 386SX machine. Each has cost me between \$1,800 and \$2,000, counting out of pocket funds and the proceeds from sale of the previous computer. The latter two machines I assembled from components. I'm just a \$2,000 computer person. Your library may well be a \$3,500 computer library.

Standards are always good -- well, almost always. Without standards there would be no CD-ROM industry. Without the defacto standard set by IBM, the personal computer world would be far more chaotic, and the applications fewer and far more expensive than they are. Standards can be restrictive, however. Premature standards in a rapidly changing area of technology will be as successful as nailing

Jello to a tree. Imagine what aviation would be like if a rigid standard requiring two wooden propellers and limiting the number of passengers to 10 had been adopted in the '30s. I am suspicious of efforts that attempt to standardize the multitude of disparate search strategies used by CD-ROM databases. I am also cheered by the knowledge that if the standard doesn't accomplish anything worthwhile for a large number of people, it will die and good riddance. The best kinds of errors are those that are self-limiting and self-correcting.

Standards are not unnecessary. They are needed. Ad hoc standards -- developed by users -- are the best kind.

### **WHERE TECHNOLOGY IS GOING**

Technology evolves along a ballistic trajectory. By knowing where it started and where it is at this time, we can predict with reasonable accuracy where it will end up. But there are discontinuities -- unforeseen obstacles interrupt the flight path. And there are external forces that can throw the progression off target.

In general, technological advances increase production capability, cut production costs, make products more compact or allow machines to operate faster, more powerfully, more conveniently, or more accurately.

One can subsume just about all of these characteristics under the concept of "bandwidth." Defined as the amount of information transferred per unit time, bandwidth recognizes the human social impulse to communicate ever more quickly, intuitively and comprehensively with others. Any technology, indeed any institution,

that does this at a reasonable cost is a winner.

Let's look at some technologies that will be important to libraries in the coming decade. Telecommunications advancements are reaching more and more communities, dramatically increasing the volume of information that can be received from and transmitted to remote locations. But while the electronic equivalent of an interstate highway system is being constructed (NREN is the federal legislative proposal of interest to libraries right now) we will have to cope with the existing secondary road structure for many years to come. In the meantime, we must insure that we can get through the toll booth and onto the 4-lane, if we need to.

If high-speed, low-cost telecommunications becomes widely available, the pendulum may swing from software run on stand-alone personal computers to centrally organized time-sharing systems. Distributed systems offer diverse benefits; the army of individual users who have sampled the old stand-alone systems will be easy to convert.

Watch CD-ROM (Compact Disc Read-Only Memory) technology. While its take-off has been slow, it is ascending at a pretty steep angle right now. There is no better medium for storing data, unless its originators have a new product in the development stage. Desktop publishing will come into its own and offer increasingly complex data manipulation capability in the future.

Sooner or later, the monumental task of converting the mountains of valuable older printed materials in our culture to machine readable format must take place. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is getting better at a rapid clip. Combined with

an economical medium capacious enough to hold the result of OCR scanning, CD-ROM most likely, one has the makings of a low budget, high value republishing effort.

Magnetic storage technology looked like a sitting duck three or four years ago. The limits appeared to have been reached in designing reliable hard disk storage devices. Anything bigger than 40 MB was big, bulky, not terribly reliable and very expensive. Obviously, erasable optical drives were the wave of the future. Yet here we are in the future, with 600 MB magnetic devices advertised for \$3,500 in mail-order catalogs and the prospect of erasable optical drives continues to decline. Optical devices just haven't had the window of opportunity they require -- a period of high prices and little competition.

Combine powerful new text-searching software with the capacity of optical or large magnetic storage devices, add "fuzzy search" capabilities to locate near matches, and you have a tool for libraries with serious implications.

Watch out for electronic bulletin board systems, too. Their features are multiplying daily. "Door" technology makes it easier to run programs remotely. Database add-ons allow powerful searching of large and complex databases. Groups of BBS's have united to form powerful underground telecommunications networks, some international in scope. To share views on an issue nationally, by making a local phone call, join an echo conference on a local BBS. Some networks can pass a message around the world in a couple days, at no cost to you!

Some see a vague, disreputable aura around this hacker-dominated subculture.

"Hacker" is a neutral term, like "librarian." It refers to something you do. If you "hack" you work on problems, you try to find out how things work. All hackers do not break into systems and spread computer viruses. All librarians are not felons simply because one librarian took a tire iron to the town manager's station wagon!

You should also keep an eye on the consumer-oriented computer services area. Compuserve polished off The Source, but now it is challenged by two heavyweights. Sears and IBM offer Prodigy in just about every large and medium-sized town in America now. For a flat monthly fee, rather than the per minute charge of Compuserve, users get access to a wide variety of information and services. The flat fee idea is great. If enough people find the services valuable, we may witness the birth of a business every bit as large and pervasive as the cable television industry.

While it is eye-catching, Prodigy is also slow and dumb. Or maybe it just looks dumb because it is slow. I'm using Prodigy on a trial basis, and if it is always as slow as it has been in the past, I certainly won't renew. Most likely, the hardware is experiencing growing pains as it strains to handle the load of new users.

General Electric, another mom and pop store, has a dark horse entrant called GENIE in the computer services race. Beginning October 1, GENIE will switch over to a flat monthly fee for everything but its computer-oriented round-tables. The fee is \$4.95 per month! And that allows users to send electronic mail to anywhere GENIE is available, including Germany and Japan, at no extra cost! The computer-oriented services cost \$5 or \$6 per hour. Considering its low cost and range of services, GENIE has a lot to offer.

Application development is a euphemism for programming. And programming is getting simpler. Apple's Hypercard, dBase IV and its clones, and Toolbook for Windows each in its own way, make life easier for the library applications developer. Yes, most librarians can program given such rich and supportive software tools.

### WHAT TO DO

Personal computers allow users to take control, make decisions locally, and realize the benefits of accessing and manipulating information. To those who have socialized to yearn for a centralized world of information -- the beneficent united, world database in the sky -- personal computers appear at times like anarchists' weapons, dedicated to bringing the emerging information monolith to a squeaking, grinding electronic halt.

This has not yet proven to be the case. Giving everyone access to computer power has yielded a bounty in productivity and creativity. Yet within this democratic, chaotic brotherhood, compatibility, the ability to exchange data with the rest of the world is generally appreciated as a necessary feature of most software packages.

### MARC

In libraries, as elsewhere, one can be creative within a framework of standard practices. Chief among library standards is MARC, the Machine Readable Cataloging format defined by the Library of Congress more than two decades ago. That bloodless, seemingly convoluted set of rules for precisely describing books and other materials is the key to exciting new possibilities in smaller libraries. Because of

MARC, one can rapidly build accurate and richly descriptive library catalogs by matching local holdings against a national database of pre-existing catalog records.

By utilizing the resources of databases that contain cataloging records such as those maintained by the Library of Congress, various commercial firms, and library groups, local libraries can save time and offer patrons improved access to their collections.

The acronym MARC, (**MA**chine **R**eadable **C**ataloging) sometimes called USMARC, refers to a specific format used in cataloging. Sloppy, brief or incomplete cataloging is sometimes called "full MARC cataloging." It is "full" in the sense that it fully follows MARC conventions for marking those data elements that are present. The word "full" means nothing at all with respect to whether particular elements are included. Before you buy full MARC records from a book jobber, or buy a cataloging tool from some other source, get detailed specifications on the cataloging practices followed in creating the file.

Ask whether the AACR2 conventions are followed. Ask if subject headings are added, and if so, whether these are Sears or Library of Congress subject headings. Try to get a list of the MARC tags -- 100, 245, 260, etc. -- that are always filled in. Ask for a printout of 10 or 20 typical records.

### **MICRO ILS**

Once upon a time, the online integrated library system was an expensive, mini-computer-based, time-shared system. A race of increasingly capable micro-computer-based systems has recently been developed: Catalog Plus, Winnebago, MOLLI, and

the Columbia Library System are just a few of the names that dominate the automation market for smaller libraries. Honed through years of use in school libraries, the packages have been elaborated to offer most of the functions that minicomputer-based systems offer. As the tidal wave of PC development vastly improved hardware performance, the micro packages were expanded for use in larger environments.

Like purveyors of other tradition-bound systems, old line library vendors have had to take notice of the challenge from below. Today a competently executed, frequently updated and extended software package runs on a 80486 microprocessor with a local area network attached, can serve a half-dozen users for much less than the six-figure price tag it would have carried a few years ago. Actually, it might work as well for far more than a half-dozen users when the software vendors catch up with the new capabilities of the 386 and 486 processors with megamemory attached. Once again, the smaller library has the opportunity to take control, to buy and run a locally-owned system where once the sharing of a single large system might have been the only alternative.

For many smaller libraries, owning and operating their own local system may be economically and logistically attractive. As those local systems grow and mature, options for linking them will also mature. Linking in order to communicate, particularly with respect to the sharing of materials, is a worthwhile endeavor. It need not require joint ownership where local ownership is easier and cheaper, however. In other words, use network for communications, use local systems for

operations.

## PRODUCERS

Back in the days when publishing involved paper, it was pretty clear that libraries were in the distribution business. An author created a work, a commercial firm edited and handled all the production and marketing details, a library purchased the book and circulated it to patrons until it fell apart.

In an electronic age, roles are not so nearly delineated. Commercial publishers assemble references to printed materials and sell access to them in the online and CD-ROM media. Libraries create and maintain library catalogs of references to printed materials. Many also create local periodical indexes using computers. There is no clear line distinguishing the commercially originated electronic publications from those created by the library. When a library offers to share such information with other interested parties, it enters the publishing arena.

Groups of libraries could very easily pool their efforts to produce some mammoth products. Given the emergence of desktop database publishing, wide distribution on CD-ROM is within one's grasp. Whether you want to take advantage of this opportunity or not is up to you. Certainly, library consortia ought to be listing this possibility on their agenda for the next few years.

Technology is an "imaginator," to coin a word. It is a bundle of potential that forces us to use our imaginations to examine possibilities not previously considered. Computer-based information retrieval should jolt us out of the rut of

thinking only in terms of what is physically possible and make us strive for innovations that will push libraries into the next century. In an electronic environment there is no reason why one shouldn't assign 37 subject headings to a book if they are deemed useful. Why not enter the table of contents as part of the notes contained in the cataloging record? Why couldn't the Library of Congress, with the urging and support of the library community, work with publishers to create standard format summaries of printed materials for distribution in MARC format?

Why don't we ask periodical publishers to create standard format MARC records for journals that list every article contained in every issue and contribute them to an inexpensive national distribution service?

Closer to home, the indexing of local newspapers and other regional publications could be improved. If the local newspaper is electronically editing, full-text indexing is a possibility.

Technology is the enabler, it gives us a way to confront all those black holes in library service that we have lived with for so long.

### **LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS**

In order to help our libraries survive and thrive, we need to address the library's function in society first. Libraries collect, organize and make available the information that people want and need. Preservation, protection and defense of the physical institution as we now know it should come second.

I suggest that we allow a renewed vision of how best to perform the library's role dictate changes in the way we do things. We shouldn't draw the wagons into a

circle in an attempt to protect the status quo. As professionals, librarians have to get deeper into sales. Once we are convinced of the benefits of change, we must work to create a consensus of public opinion regarding what needs to be done. Librarians should be aware; critical, yet imaginative; evaluative, yet visionary; skeptical, yet enthusiastic.

Libraries cannot be everything to everyone. We know that already. Networks and consortia, reference information clearing houses and other structures may be able to help libraries serve their clients, if funds can be wrung out of some source or other on an ongoing bases. But local libraries have no choice, other than to specialize if they are going to do anything well. What should they specialize in? They should specialize in general practice, or its equivalent in the library world.

They should focus on the everyday information needs, the common, garden-variety information needs of the local populace. However, librarians should assume responsibility for broadening their services, when possible. The provision of skilled online database searching service is not a responsibility that every library can or should assume. Acquiring a knowledge of what such services offer, how they work, and how an individual can access them most certainly is of importance.

Like the general medical practitioner, the librarian in a small or rural library must know the symptoms that require specialized treatment, have an idea what specialized treatment is available and from where, and be willing to make an informed referral to another resource -- one which will meet the need. One cannot examine, dismiss and forget the possibilities the technology suggests. One must

remain watchful for the crucial change in capability or price that will make the option meaningful to our operation and to those we serve.

Change is good. Ride the wave. Don't be paralyzed by its continuing movement. Technological innovations that make products faster, better, more compact, cheaper, more feature-laden is all good. Don't worry that today's purchases will look bad tomorrow. That is the nature of things. Enjoy this wondrous embodiment of the dream of progress -- everyday in every way, the technology is getting better and better.

The librarians of today and tomorrow need a background in "liberal technology." They also need a tolerance for ambiguity, a sense of humor, and they need to be demanding consumers. Yet they must leave themselves open to vision. Librarians should be aware; critical, yet imaginative, evaluative, yet optimistic; skeptical, yet enthusiastic.

Learn what is out there. Make contacts in your community with people who are plugged into these new resources. Adopt the products that are really worthwhile for your clientele. The library is a connector; it should form a link with the databases and networks that can help it serve its clientele.

Is programming part of the librarian's standard job description? Is it good exercise, or a misuse of professional skills? Is it true that a librarian who programs for his/her library has a fool for a boss? Librarians who like programming need to be on guard; they can get carried away with the fun of it all. On the other hand, we probably do a better job when we have fun at work, as long as the work has

something to do with whatever it was we were hired to do.

## CONCLUSION

I will conclude by making some key recommendations for implementing technology in libraries:

- \* Develop and maintain your awareness of concepts, products and trends.
- \* Be critical of the benefits and drawbacks a particular technological solution offers.
- \* Remember that you should decide what library technology is needed rather than some vendor making the decisions.
- \* Technology is no more good or bad than a typewriter or a hammer. It is a tool and we need to know how it works so we will know how best to use it.
- \* Training and educational opportunities are crucial in learning to make decisions. A major function for consortia and state agencies should be the development of a liberal technology perspective.

# Cooperating to Meet Specialist Needs: A Rainbow of Public Library Services Encompassing Everyone in the Twenty-first Century

by

Jim Kirks

## Introduction

This paper was written at the suggestion of Dr. Bernard Vavrek, who found the idea of cooperating to meet special needs intriguing. I have found it to be an invitation to embark on a journey into the future that has consumed much of my time and energy.

My search for citations in library literature on the topic of public libraries cooperating to meet specialized needs yielded few citations; on-line searches did not yield many citations specific to the topic, either.

The most useful source for information was the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a Division of the American Library Association (ALA). Through their list of referrals, I reached Grace Lyons, Chair of Libraries Serving Special Populations (LSSPS), who promptly sent me Portraits of Library Service to People with Disabilities by Lovejoy (1989), a book that will interest librarians planning to offer services for people with special needs. In addition, Miss Lyons referred me to Mary Roatch, who served for many years on the staff of the Phoenix Public Library, and, after retirement, began a new career as a consultant on library services for special populations. Mrs. Roatch furnished me with a draft of her article on the library's Special Needs Center, and other extremely helpful materials.

Other literature on cooperating to meet special needs is scarce. Therefore, I have conducted group and individual interviews with knowledgeable librarians at the national, state, regional, and local levels. The surveys and interviews were heuristic, and did not represent scientific research projects. However, I must confess that I didn't survey fortune tellers. The people I consulted were chosen because they were accessible and willing to talk. Some librarians were reluctant to meet with me since they found it difficult to make plans more than one day in advance. Ken Dowlin, San Francisco City Librarian, advised that librarians can't look ahead more than five years into the future because technology is developing so rapidly.

### **Definitions**

"Cooperating to meet specialized needs" was a phrase that often elicited the question, "What do you mean?" Definitions for these terms are derived from California Library Laws, 1990. I use the word "cooperating" as shorthand for a cooperative library system that consists of two or more jurisdictions that have entered into a written agreement to carry out a regional program of service.

The term "specialized needs" refers to the exceptional needs of any underserved population segment (such as the geographically isolated) not adequately met by traditional library service patterns. Other examples of underserved population segments include the economically disadvantaged, "the functionally illiterate", the non-English-speaking, or those whose knowledge of English is limited. Additional categories are the institutionalized, physically challenged, or the shut-in.

In California, public library systems must use some of their state reference

program funding to address the needs of the underserved. In Nebraska library systems address these needs on a voluntary basis. Library systems in other states fall someplace between. An examination of the current objectives established by California Library Systems reveals eighteen underserved populations which will receive some help to meet specialized needs. These include children, young adults, youth-at-risk, African Americans/Blacks, Hispanic/chicanos, Asians, and Native Americans. Other unserved populations targeted for special services include speakers of limited English, the physically disabled, rurally isolated, and institutionalized. Additional populations slated for attention are the deaf/hearing impaired, partially sighted, adult new readers, homebound aged, Vietnam veterans, and recent immigrants.

One example of the initiative to recognize special group needs has been the Nebraska Library Commission's project to place information on AIDS in public libraries. Lovejoy describes many other exemplary programs in libraries across the country for people with special needs.

Nationally, we have seen varying changes in the quantity and variety of library service available to such populations. Federal funding provides regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped. In some states, Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) funds have made possible innovative projects for specialized clientele. The North State Cooperative Library System (NSCLS) has shared its expertise in the area of rural children's library services through a training resource manual, and for the past several years the Center for the Study of Rural

Librarianship has displayed the Children's Services Correspondence Course (1986) at ALA conventions. This publication is available from NSCLS. Harmon (1990) in American Libraries regularly features and highlights useful resources for literacy and special services. Federal, state, and local funds can help public libraries, especially those in rural areas, which are often operated for limited hours without adequate funding by untrained staff. Therefore, regional cooperation is necessary to make specialized services and resources widely available to underserved populations.

### **Trends**

Continuing social change makes it difficult to influence change for the better -- rather than the worse -- if for no reason other than it's harder to hit the bull's eye on a moving target than on a stationary one, especially a target that has significantly changed its shape from what we learned in school (Wygant, Information and the Future, 1988, p. xi).

Barbara F. Weaver, (1986), Assistant Commissioner of Education and New Jersey State Librarian, identified five of the ten megatrends described by Naisbitt (1982) most likely to have an effect on libraries in the twenty-first century:

#### **Industrial Society to Information Society**

Libraries have traditionally been collectors and purveyors of information. The commercial value of information is now so great that libraries can expect to participate in only a small portion of the information market.

### **Forced Technology to High Tech/High Touch**

Libraries, like other institutions, will convert their operations to a far more technologically sophisticated format. This will enhance the traditional role of libraries as community centers and locations where there can be one-on-one interactions between an information broker and an information seeker.

### **Centralization to Decentralization**

Rural areas place great value on autonomy. Libraries in many states are independent, locally controlled units, which can attain dramatic improvements in service through technology, without loss of community control. Decentralized service, with linkages to state, national and even international resource, is now possible.

Wes Doak, Oregon State Librarian, believes that innovation will require more than funding; it will require unique changes at the local library or system levels in the twenty-first century. This will mean fewer broad brush strokes. Your local library may initiate developments formerly made at the state or federal level in the twentieth century.

### **Institutional Help to Self-Help**

Again, advances in technology mean that libraries will have access to a wide variety of information sources online. Also, individuals can tap into these resources at home through their own computer terminals, obtaining needed data either by direct subscription or by some linkage with their local library. Many sources now requiring the intervention of a professional librarian will be accessible directly by the individual end-user.

Traditional courier delivery can delay the receipt of materials to rural libraries and hence to their users. Linda Wilson, Merced County Librarian, believes that electronic transfer of information to the user will allow for fewer library outlets and will revolutionize the delivery of information to such areas. Fax capability will be essential to the acquisition and distribution of information; many people in rural areas already having or soon will have their own fax machines.

### **Hierarchies to Networking**

Technology is breaking down the traditional structures by which people get information. Since we need to interact regularly to solve problems, we must develop ways to connect disparate systems, and implement the necessary changes. Libraries already have changed long-standing procedures for handling the flow of information. Computerized databases allow direct access to information sources formerly reached only through time-consuming referrals. Institutions which now share library resources have staff members trained to protect their institutions' interests while making materials available on the most generous possible basis.

Sharing of limited resources is bound to increase. Multitype systems can supply reference, interlibrary loan, video circuits, continuing education and database access to their members. Providing cooperative access to the growing base of knowledge is an essential role for such systems. Small and medium sized libraries, of course, benefit more than large libraries which loan more material than they borrow. In many cases large libraries are called upon to share their expertise with smaller libraries, too.

Networking can be among community groups and organizations as well as with other types of libraries. The Peninsula Library System (PLS) in California is working on building coalitions. Linda Crowe, Director of PLS, believes that the library needs to be a part of the community rather than remaining a fringe operation. A library system can spearhead community planning efforts, and address issues such as the economy, housing, education, work force and the quality of life.

Still another form of networking has the librarian fulfilling other roles in city or county government. City librarians in California's Peninsula Library System, are occasionally called upon to function as a labor negotiator, or head of another governmental department. Bay Area Library and Information System member, Hayward Public Library, takes over that city's public information function during local emergencies.

### **Aging of America**

Another trend already affecting libraries is the "graying of America." As the average population age of the United State rises, will libraries direct more and more resources to older people? Libraries must, however, consider distributing their resources fairly between older people and younger people as children and youth are increasingly a minority.

The balance of power among generations has become skewed. The elderly make up 12% of the nation's population, yet they get 56% of the nation's entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare. Demographers report that persons over 85 years of age are the fastest growing segment of society. Librarians will need to

address the information needs of the elderly, who vary in capabilities, interests, and type. The elderly are a well organized pressure group. Almost as many people belong to the American Association of Retired Persons as belong to the Republican Party, according to data presented in Reinventing the Future (1989).

Young people frequently are the losers when resources are reallocated in some of California's public libraries. Often there are no professionally trained children's librarians or paraprofessional staff with some expertise in delivering such services. In addition, there is a shortage of financial resources for the development of children's services. Luis Herrera, Deputy Director for Extension Services of the San Diego Public Library, notes that young people will always need an introduction to literature. It is difficult for libraries to provide this at current levels of funding.

Children often have limited access to library resources at their local schools. Libraries were phased out in some California districts after Proposition 13 passed. If there is no school library, it follows that there is no library instruction. Lack of such libraries is linked to a high student drop out rate at the secondary level. The lack of library contact experienced by many of California's youth poses a worrisome question for the state's librarians: of what use will the public library be to these children when they grow up?

### **Illiteracy**

Illiteracy is another trend that affects libraries. Experts estimate that one out of five adults lacks the reading skills needed for most jobs above the entry level, and for coping with the many complexities of modern family life. In an attempt to

address this problem, the California State Library made grants to local libraries of \$3,000,000 for adult literacy tutoring programs, and \$600,000 for family literacy programs in this fiscal year to encourage new adult readers to utilize library services with their children. Since that is 28% of all the funds distributed for regional and other California Library Services Act programs, it is a significant library commitment to fighting illiteracy. Library usage may increase, as a result of significant efforts in literacy tutoring. The North State Cooperative Library System is trying to find ways to encourage new adult readers and their families to use library and information services. To date, we have only partially met our goal. We must do so for:

In the library is the diary of humanity, the autobiography of man, the record of all that he has done, of all his imaginings, all of his experiments, failure and success alike. Here is the . . . wisdom which, applied but for one day, would change our imperfect society into one better than we can fashion out of dreams (John Cotton Dana, 1856-1929. 1930, p. 5).

### **The Information Needs of the Underserved**

This paper has highlighted some major trends and activities which will affect library services for persons with specialized needs during the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. Carlson, et al., (1990), and selected California librarians, have identified eight types of information needs:

1. Survival includes jobs and income, housing and health, as well as transportation, social services, nutrition, and drug or substance abuse.

2. Life skills addresses career advancement, small business, and a variety of how-to subjects.

3. Legal/political pertains to citizenship and amnesty, general legal information on matters such as divorce, contracts and home buying, community development, and political action.

4. Assimilation covers English as a second language and life in the United States.

5. Maintenance of ethnic and racial heritage promotes pride in cultural roots and ancestral languages.

6. Education spans learning and literacy for all ages.

7. Entertainment encompasses hobbies, leisure reading, and recreation.

8. Other information includes a variety of miscellaneous subjects.

### **Meeting the Information Needs of Special Populations**

The Phoenix Public Library Special Needs Center, an example of an exemplary program, has adopted six policies to achieve its mission:

1. Create a resource information center that will provide comprehensive educational information for people who are blind or visually impaired, speech or hearing impaired, or physically or mentally handicapped.

2. Supply and enhance library accessibility to the population served using the newest technological advances in electronic communications for people with perceptual or motor impairments.

3. Train library users with disabilities in the use of the new tools of communication using adapted computers.
4. Provide a work place for library users with disabilities to create data and assimilate information.
5. Show to the community -- that is, employers, schools and rehabilitation agencies -- that new technology can enable people with exceptional living challenges to function on a competitive basis with other community members.
6. Be a networking center for agencies, advocacy groups, schools, employers and people with disabilities through newsletters, programs, meetings, referrals, bulletin board systems and a compilation of resource directories.

### **Importance in Meeting Specialized Needs**

There is a growing population of persons with special needs. Randall (1987) stated that:

By the first quarter of the twenty-first century, one in three U.S. residents is expected to be a member of a racial or ethnic minority group. In the urban and metropolitan centers, the numbers are expected to exceed 50 percent (pp. 86-93).

According to Roatch (in press), new medical techniques and health attitudes are making it possible for more persons with special needs to survive. She estimates that twenty percent of the population has some kind of disability which makes it difficult to function as a "normal" person.

Libraries need to provide information and services to families, friends, and professionals who work with the physically challenged people, as well as to the individuals themselves.

In addition, one in five Americans is likely to be functionally illiterate. By providing services to meet specialized needs, and services to other formerly unserved segments of the community, the library can ultimately serve a majority of the population.

### **Barriers to Serving Special Populations**

Librarians need to acknowledge that there are multiple barriers to the effective provision of services, or any library service at all, to special populations. Barriers identified by the California State Library and Carlson et al., (1990) include:

1. Cultural, ethnic and racial barriers . . . when library staffs and programs are not sympathetic to groups and individuals who differ from the middle class, Anglo clientele most familiar to them.
2. Reading itself is a barrier to the significant portion of the adult population that is functionally illiterate.
3. Fiscal barriers . . . underfunded services, the imposition of library fees, and higher transportation costs for the public can prevent free access to library and information services.
4. Widespread barriers in point of service . . . perpetuates inadequate service or collections and disinterested staffs.

## **Critical Gaps to Close**

Carlson et al., (1990) identified four gaps that need to be closed:

1. The Information Gap. Most libraries simply do not know enough about the character or pace of changes taking place within their own communities.
2. The People Gap. There is a basic and growing skilled staff shortage in the face of the continuing growth of special populations.
3. The Resource Gap. In California, and possibly in other states and communities, funding has not kept pace with inflation. Libraries have the same relative level of funding that they had more than a decade ago.
4. The Leadership Gap. Some libraries responded with positive actions to meet the information needs of their communities, recognizing how the resident population has changed. These libraries have enjoyed continued growth in use and earned the political and financial support of their community leadership. The stereotype of librarians as meek, unassertive individuals does not fit the profession nor today's requirements.

## **Lowering Barriers and Closing Gaps**

Regional library cooperatives and local libraries can undertake steps to welcome special populations and provide for specialized services. The following activities can assist in lowering barriers and closing gaps:

1. Organize awareness seminars. Design such seminars to promote sympathetic understanding of the cultural, ethnic, racial, physical, and other differences of special population segments within our society. If specialized materials

and services are lacking or inadequate, seek support from one's community to help meet the need. The Bay Area Library and Information System (BALIS) is receiving LSCA funds for a Bay Area Youth-at-Risk Project. Another LSCA grant funded a 2-day conference on developing library collections for California's emerging majority. The co-sponsors of this conference were BALIS and the School of Library and Information Studies and University Extension, University of California, Berkeley. Exhibitors at the resource fair for the conference included many small businesses serving ethnic populations. Demand for places at the conference exceeded space available and 88 persons had to be turned away. This shows the need for seminars on selecting library materials for multiracial, multicultural communities. Katie Scarborough edited a collection development manual for the conference which librarians can order.

2. Set up literacy programs in your community. California has sponsored a variety of literacy programs. The California State Library can provide lists of projects and resource persons as well as resource materials. Preparing a resource list for our region is an NSCLS goal this year.

3. Maintain the principle of free access to information for everyone. Work with community groups and agencies to obtain improved funding for special needs, but continue to serve those unique populations at current funding levels. Any focus on services which generate income should be kept low key.

4. Seek to place libraries nearer concentrations of special populations, with hours to meet their needs.

5. Inspire library staff to restore the spirit of service and pride in working for the community, if such spirit has lagged.

6. Structure services to meet collective as well as individual needs. Achieve this through adequate funding, community involvement, and an understanding of the life experience of target clientele.

7. Close the information gap by getting up-to-date information. Maintain contact with public and private agencies that have both accurate and current data. Seek the help of the community itself to determine what changes are underway. Maintain a data base which reflects these changes. Do a community analysis on a three- to five-year basis. All these actions can help close the information gap.

8. Close the people gap by hiring a culturally aware, and multilingual, skilled staff. Select employees that are sensitive to special needs patrons.

9. Close the resource gap by increasing funding, and remodeling or expanding library facilities. If additional funds or space are not available, the library should consider redirection of resources to provide services to more community members.

10. Close the leadership gap by dealing with the barriers to library use. Barriers include inadequate hours and/or outreach, materials, and staff; limited physical access; poor security; gain political support and attract funding through careful planning and a program of community analysis and needs assessments. Have a strong, clearly defined sense of what constitutes good library service. Direct your energies and those of your staff to achieving that level of service.

## **Legal Mandates**

Legal mandates have been established to provide equal access to information for people with special needs. These laws include the American with Disabilities Act and the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (P.L. 200-407). As information centers, libraries will benefit from the technological assistance these laws will provide for people with unique needs.

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides a comprehensive national mandate for the prohibition of discrimination against individuals with motor and perceptual challenges, and provides enforceable standards to address this problem.

Both the passage of the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act in 1988, and the development of regulations for its implementation in 1989, gave power and impetus to developing access technology. Late in 1989, nine states received funding under the Act to develop statewide consumer programs.

## **Technological Advances**

Advanced computer technology can help all types of libraries provide equal access to information resources for people with special needs. Each year brings new advances in technology for the disabled, as well as advances in the provisions of increased multilingual or multilevel access to information. Librarians need to keep their files up to date and welcome new technology, so consumers can receive accurate information. However, librarians should not discard elements of current technology, already in place in library centers, that are still useful.

Librarians should insist on products that feature predictable pull-down menus which foster easier voice access, standardized software access, and the straightforward American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) text.

Voice and braille displays for computer information, data bases, and bulletin boards provide access to information for blind and visually handicapped library users.

When technology makes fax machines that are able to "talk," library users may be able to call libraries via their own talking computers and receive information from on-line networks at home.

As a matter of course, by the twenty-first century libraries will send data for instant computerized braille production via a modem to a braille production center.

Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) units may have a visual display so users can lip read the message sent across telephone lines. More information about library services for the deaf community can be found in the guidelines edited by Day (1990).

There may be adaptive computer centers around the country that will loan out special devices which the disabled can use experimentally for job accommodation or classroom education.

### **Conclusions**

Regional cooperatives, state libraries, and national organizations currently working together stand on the threshold of an exciting and challenging time in library history. Our cooperation goes beyond developing programs to serve library users with special needs; it seeks to strengthen resource-sharing networks. We can,

through cooperative efforts, disseminate knowledge of library access programs, and share demonstrations of the latest technological advances suitable for our uniquely varied clientele.

Cooperating to meet specialized needs is a circle within a circle, best illustrated by Edwin Markham's poem, "He drew a circle and shut me out. . . we drew a circle and took him in."

Let us envision circles within circles of wide ranging efforts, technologies, and programs; a rainbow of services meeting the specialized needs of everyone in the twenty-first century.

## References

- California Library Laws, 1990. (1990). pp. 10-11. Sacramento, CA: California State Library. (Distributor: California State Library. P.O. Box 942837, Sacramento, CA 94237-0001).
- California Library Services Board Agenda Packet. (1990, August 15-17). Sacramento, CA: California Library Services Board. (Distributor: California Library Services Board. Library-Courts Building. P.O. Box 942837, Sacramento, CA 94237-0001).
- Carlson, D. B., A. Martinez, S. A. Curtis, J. Coles, & N. A. Valenzuela (1990). Adrift in a Sea of Change. California's Public Libraries Struggle to Meet the Information Needs of Multicultural Communities. Sacramento, CA: Center for Policy Development. (Distributor; California State Library. P. O. Box 942837, Sacramento, CA 94237-0001).
- Day, J. M. (Ed.). (1990). Guidelines for Library Services to Deaf People. The Hague, Netherlands: IFLA. (Distributor: Editor, Gallaudet University Library, Washington, DC).
- Harmon, C. (1990). The Source: Selected Resources for Current awareness. American Libraries, 21 (8), pp. 781-85, 787, 789, 791.
- John Cotton Dana, 1956-1929. (1930). Newark, NJ: [s.n.].
- Lovejoy, E. G. (1989). Portraits of Library Service to People with Disabilities. Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co.
- Marquand, B. K. (1990). Special Report: Library's Future Uncertain as County Faces Bankruptcy. American Libraries, 21 (8), p. 709.
- Monsour, M. (1989). Referrals. Chicago, IL: ASCLA. (Distributor: Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. A Division of the American Library Association. 50 East Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611).
- Naisbitt, J. (1982). Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives. New York: Warner Books. North State Cooperative Library System. (1986).
- Children's Services Correspondence Course. Rev. ed. Willows, CA: NSCLS. (Distributor: Author, 259 N. Villa, Willows, CA 95988).
- Randall, A. K. (1987). Library Service to minorities. In The Bowker Annual of Library & Book Trade Information. 32, pp. 86-93. New York: Bowker.

Reinventing the Future: Global Goals for the 21st Century. (1989). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Roatch, M. (in press) II. Established programs C. Phoenix Public Library Special Needs Center. Library Hi-Tech Journal, Project EASI issue.

Staff. (1990). LSCA Awards Announced. California State Library Newsletter. (116), p. 3.

Weaver, B. F. (1986) Vision 2000. Looking Ahead at New Jersey libraries. A Report to the Commissioner of Education Projecting the Status of Library Service in New Jersey by the Year 2000. (Report No. PTM-No. 500.53) Trenton, NJ: New Jersey State Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 563).

Wygant, A. C. & O. W. Markley. (1988). Information and the Future: A Handbook of Sources and Strategies. New York: Greenwood press.

### Additional Selected Reading List

- America's New Best Sellers, How Independent Bookstores Are Shaking Off the Chains. (1990). U.S. News & World Report, 108(15), p. 41.
- Aronoff, C. (1988). Libraries in the 21st Century: Rethinking a California Institution. Western City, 164(9), pp. 25, 26, 81.
- Bay, B. (Ed.) (1987). Trustee Tool Kit for Library Leadership. Sacramento, CA: CALTAC California Association of Library Trustee and Commissioners. The California State library.
- Brin, D. (1990). Earth. New York: Bantam Spectra.
- Cetron, M. J. and T. O'Toole. (1982). Encounters with the Future: A Forecast of Life into the 21st Century. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Cuesta, Y. J. (1990). From Survival to Sophistication, Hispanic Needs = Library Needs. Library Journal, 115(9), pp. 26-28.
- Doyle, J. (1990, January/February). A Radical Prescription for Libraries. Pacific Southwest Regional Medical Library Service Newsletter, 181, pp. 1, 2, 7.
- Dunhill, P. (1968). Dust Gathers on the Public Library. The Reporter, 38(12), pp. 34-36.
- Ecenbarger, W. (1990). America's Public Libraries. The Elks Magazine, 68(8), pp. 20-21, 34, & 38.
- Farrell, E. (1990, March 16.). Planner Aims to Make Blakely Swartz a 'Model Town for the 21st Century.' Chico Enterprise-Record, Sec. A, p. 1.
- Flinn, J. (1990, February 25). Video Playground of the Mind, Computer Wizard Creates 3-d 'Reality.' San Francisco Examiner, sec. A, pp. 1 & 16.
- Foreign Policy Association. (Ed.). (1968). Toward the Year 2018. New York: Cowles Education Corp.
- Fowler, D. (1989). Rural Information Needs. Rural Libraries, IX(2), pp. 27-30.
- Freiberger, P. (1990, January 14). The Whiz. San Francisco Examiner, Image, pp. 5-8, 24.
- Green, L and T. Shryer. (1990, March 12). Column One: Saving the Temples of Literacy. Los Angeles Times, Sec. A, pp. 1, 11, 12.

- Greiner, J. (Contr. Ed.). (1990). Professional Views: Technology in Public Libraries. Public Libraries, 29(3), pp. 145-153.
- Govan, J. F. (1988). The Creeping Invisible Hand: Entrepreneurial Librarianship. Library Journal, 113(1), pp. 35-38.
- Johnson, D. (Contr. Ed.). (1990). P L S S. Public Libraries, 29(1), pp. 56-58.
- Johnson, J. (1990, March 18). 21st Century Comes Home. San Francisco Examiner, Sec. F, pp. 1, 7.
- Markoff, J. (1990, January 30). Bell Labs Prototype Holds Promise of Faster Computers. San Francisco Examiner, Sec. A, pp. 1, 20.
- Levine, B. (1990, August 5). Techno-tykes Get a Second Chance. San Francisco Examiner, Sunday Punch, p. 3.
- Reardon, P. T. (1990, March 16). \$300 Million Computer Map a Powerful Tool: Census Bureau's Creation Has Every Street in the Country. San Francisco Examiner, p. 4.
- Smith, P. (1990, March 18). Coming of Age: Old Age as a Growth Industry. San Francisco Examiner, This World, p. 3.
- Staff. (1990). Tips: Trends and Issues for Planners. California State Library Newsletter, (111), p. 8.
- Staff. (1990). We Thought You Would Like to Know, California Families. SCAN/INFO, 2(6), p. 5.
- Staff. (1990). Tips: Trends and Issues for Planners. California State Library Newsletter, (114), p. 5.
- Stansfield, B. D. (1988). Serving Hispanic Persons: The Cross-Cultural Border Library Experience at Fabens. RQ, 27(4), pp. 547-561.
- Starr, K. (1990, April 29). Out of This World. San Francisco Examiner, Image, pp. 36-38.
- Thomas, L. (1990). Can a New Suburb Be Like a Small Town? U.S. News & World Report, 108(9), p. 32.
- Townley, C. (1988). Human Relations in Library Network Development. Hamden, CT: Library Professional Publications.

- Trainor, R. (1989). The Pedestrian Pocket: An Idea Whose Time Has Come? Western City, 165(10), pp. 24-28, 108.
- White, H. S. (1988). White Papers: What Price Salami?: The Federal Process of Contracting Out Libraries. Library Journal, 113(1), pp. 58-59.
- White, H. S. (1990). White Papers: Libraries and Librarians in the Next Millennium. Library Journal, 115(9), pp. 54-55.
- Wright, K. C. and J. F. Davie. (1989). Library and Information Services for Handicapped Individuals. (3rd ed.). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.
- Young, V. G. (1988). The Library Trustee, a Practical Guidebook. (4th ed.). Chicago, IL: American Library Association. pp. 26-29, 115-127.

## Acknowledgements

The following individuals generously donated their ideas and time to this project; their cooperation contributed greatly to this article.

Geoff Armour, Assistant City Librarian, Carlsbad Public Library, Carlsbad, CA.

Henry Bates, County Librarian, Mendocino County Library, Ukiah, CA.

James Billington, The Librarian of Congress, and staff, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Nancy Brower, Assistant County librarian, Butte County Library, Oroville, CA.

Craig Conover, Library Consultant, Union City, CA.

Linda Crowe, Director, Peninsula Library System, San Mateo, CA.

John Michael Day, Director, Gallaudet University Library, Washington, DC.

Wes Doak, State Librarian, Oregon State Library, Salem, OR.

Nancy Eager, Public Services Coordinator, Hayward Public Library, Hayward, CA.

Carol Gardner, Reference Librarian, and staff, California State University, Chico, Chico, CA.

Liz Gibson, Planning Consultant, California State Library, Sacramento, CA.

Debbie Gonzalez, Florida Dept. of Corrections, Tallahassee, FL.

Antonio Gomez, Information Center, Black Gold Cooperative Library System, Santa Barbara, CA.

Patricia Harper, Reference Librarian, North State Cooperative Library System, Eureka, CA.

Dennis Hart, Development Officer, San Diego Public Library, San Diego, CA.

Luis Herrera, Deputy Director, Extension Services, San Diego Public Library, San Diego, CA.

Susan Hildreth, County Librarian, Auburn-Placer County Library, Auburn, CA.

Bennett Jacobstein, Library Systems Manager, Hayward Public Library, Hayward, CA.

Terry Jackson, City Librarian, San Bruno Public Library, San Bruno, CA.

Katherine Jagoe, Coordinator for Library Programs, Association for Higher Education of North Texas, Richardson, TX.

Kathy Jensen, County Librarian, Lake County Library, Lakeport, CA.

John Jewell, Microsystems Consultant, California State Library, Sacramento, CA.

Cliff Lange, City Librarian, Carlsbad Public Library, Carlsbad, CA.

Tim Lynch, Chief, Library Development, Nebraska Library Commission, Lincoln, NE.

Grace Lyons, Librarian, Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, District of Columbia Public Library, Washington, DC.

Joseph McElroy, Director, Serra Cooperative library System, San Diego, CA.

Ruth Metz, Director, and staff, Bay Area Library and Information System, Oakland, CA.

Annette Milliron, Administrator, North Bay Cooperative Library System, Santa Rosa, CA.

Ann Piascik, Institutional Library Consultant, Rhode Island Department of State Library Services, Providence, RI.

Susan Rawlins, City Librarian, and staff, Willows Public Library, Willows, CA.

Mary Roatch, Consultant Library Services for Special Populations, Phoenix, AZ.

Linda Salz, Assistant City Librarian, Daly City Public Library, Daly City, CA.

Judith Segal, Coordinator, Black Gold Cooperative Library System, Ventura, CA.

Vaugh Simon, Director, Inland Library System, San Bernardino, CA.

Louise Shannon, Editorial Consultant, Chico, CA.

Sue Soy, Coordinator, South State Cooperative Library System, Downey, CA.

John Sullivan, City Librarian, Daly City Public Library, Daly City, CA.

Josephine Terry, County Librarian, Butte County Library, Oroville, CA.

Bernard Vavrek, Director, The Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, Clarion  
University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, PA.

Barbara Will, Network Coordinator, California State Library, Sacramento, CA.

Linda Wilson, County Librarian, Merced County Library, Merced, CA.

Kathryn Wright, Regional Consultant, California State Library, Sacramento, CA.

# **"Dynamics of Future Cooperation"**

by

**Jan Ison**

## **I. Introduction**

When I was asked to be a part of this program, I chose the topic "Dynamics of Future Cooperation." An appropriate subtitle for this presentation is "The Value of the Small Library in Building Strong Networks." Let me state now that when I discuss "cooperation," I refer to cooperation among all types of libraries and that the small libraries I refer to may be academic, public, or special libraries. The problems facing them are quite similar, in my opinion.

### **A. Value of Cooperation**

Today I will discuss the most frequently cited benefits of cooperation. Unfortunately, these benefits are seldom realized by the member libraries of cooperative organizations. I intend to show that we need to implement programs to carry out our stated values and that the dynamics (i.e., the energy or activity) of cooperatives needs to change before their members can reap the benefits of networking. Networks are based on the premise that all libraries have something to contribute to a cooperative organization. This implies that each library is of value to the network.

## **II. BACKGROUND OF RURAL VALUES**

### **A. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

Because I grew up on a farm near a small town in Kansas, I respect the values and

traditions of rural America. Throughout my life, whether I lived in Kansas, Montana, Colorado or Illinois, I have found these same values in existence. These values include independence, self-sufficiency, not borrowing money, paying off debts as soon as they are accumulated, a deep respect and abiding love for the land, respect for government, and respect for family. These values have had to change due to the changing economic climate of rural America. However, the underlying elements are still there. Increasingly, rural residents share a sense of isolation and feel that they have less and less control over their destiny.

#### **B. What Have Rural Values Meant for Cooperative Efforts?**

Cooperation, as we know it today, was not readily accepted in many rural areas. There was a fear that the state would dictate community programs and the types of materials that a community could offer. It is not surprising that this happened, when we consider the values previously identified. Even though the fear of being dictated to was not realized, that fear hindered cooperative efforts.

### **III. LIBRARY COOPERATION**

#### **A. Background on Library Cooperation**

Library cooperation programs began throughout the US in the late 50s and early 60s. For the most part, they were an outgrowth of the Federal LSA programs. Even though there was a fear of cooperation, much of the emphasis was on rural libraries and the improvement of rural library service. Some of the programs that grew out of this era were bookmobile service, rotating collections, rental collections for libraries, and Books-By-Mail. One could describe these as direct service programs for

clients rather than programs designed to strengthen our rural libraries.

### **B. Resource Sharing**

The backbone of cooperation is resource or information sharing. This is the area that I want to concentrate on today. Since cooperation was first proposed, its proponents articulated that all libraries have something to contribute to a network and that it is important to share resources. However, since the inception of cooperatives, member libraries have had little opportunity to take advantage of the resources that are located in small libraries.

### **C. Top Down Approach**

Developing resource sharing networks has been a top down initiative. In the early days of cooperatives we developed union catalogs listing the resources owned by libraries. We started this project with the largest library in the network and then worked down to the smallest. We imagined we would be able to satisfy the vast majority of interlibrary loan requests if we knew what was owned by the larger libraries. Before we were able to include the holdings of every library, large or small, in these union catalogs several things happened:

1. Large libraries found their resources were tapped too heavily. Therefore, they had to buy more materials in order to meet the needs of their local clients and the demands made by smaller libraries. To alleviate this problem, the lending libraries demanded and received compensation as resource libraries.
2. New technologies came into existence and the manual union catalogs

quickly became obsolete and, at the same time, very expensive to maintain. The new technologies offered other format options for union catalogs, -- the book catalog, the microfiche catalog, and finally the automated online catalog. Now we have the CD-ROM Union Catalog. Each new technology came with a price tag: Converting existing catalogs to the new format was expensive but gave us quicker and better access. This meant that the dollars that might have been devoted to bringing the smaller libraries into the mainstream was used once again to buy new technology for the big libraries. By the time we got around to the small libraries either the money ran out, another new technology came along, or the projects were no longer "innovative" and, therefore, not worthy of state or federal funding.

#### **IV. PROBLEM - SMALL/RURAL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS WERE UNDERVALUED.**

##### **A. Rural Libraries were not valued by other member libraries in their cooperatives.**

During my 18 year career in cooperative library organizations, I have frequently seen the staff of smaller libraries defer to that of larger libraries, or to the administrative personnel of the cooperative organization. Librarians and trustees may be so awed by the resources owned by large libraries that they cannot comprehend that the small library is also of value to the cooperative. It is a common misconception. When one looks at a library with less than 20,000 volumes and compares that to a medium-sized public library with over 100,000 volumes, the difference is overwhelming. The staff from the small library will usually assume that they don't really have much to

contribute. Librarians in small libraries are pleased when they can report to boards that they lent materials, but they really are not aware of the importance of their collections to the cooperative. Perhaps some of this can be attributed to their isolation and some to the misconception just described.

### **1. Responsibilities**

While most small libraries now are happy to lend, I have observed some reluctance to participate in resource sharing as an ongoing activity. After all, it is "fun" to lend when only a few requests are made each year, but sharing becomes a burden when the traffic increases. Small libraries have very few employees and have not, until now, had employees who were trained to lend the materials. The libraries must take responsibility for this activity. I firmly believe that when we institute a two-way resource sharing network, smaller libraries will lend proportionally more than the large libraries. That is, they will probably not lend as much as the larger libraries in total numbers, but the loans will be greater in proportion to the size of the collections. Accepting this responsibility represents a big step for rural libraries, since it conflicts with the traditional rural values of self-sufficiency, independence and not borrowing.

### **2. Large Library Perspective**

Recently in Lincoln Trail, the Director of one of the larger libraries opposed the idea of creating a MARC-based automated catalog for smaller libraries in the system. He suggested that it was too costly for the small library, that the larger libraries did not need to know what was in the smaller collections anyway, and that the residents

could find what they needed in the smaller libraries simply by browsing. This person believed that the only thing the smaller libraries needed was a CD-ROM version of the largest library's. Unfortunately, this reflects a commonly held belief, one that is difficult to overcome, since for over 20 years we have not allowed small libraries to make a contribution to their cooperatives.

### **3. Cooperatives**

#### **a. Database Access**

How many times have we suggested that libraries in communities with a population of less than 5000 people should catalog their materials in MARC format and make them available on nationwide databases? More often than not we have suggested that they should purchase catalog card sets, and we never make the effort to get those records into an online database that would permit easy access. My colleagues at the Illinois Valley Library System are to be commended for their project that put OCLC in many small libraries in the early '80s. Those libraries are now in the mainstream, and have MARC-based systems that can be downloaded into online systems.

#### **b. Empowering Locals/Cooperatives Fears**

Administrative personnel in cooperatives have contributed to the small libraries' lack of self esteem. For example, it is far easier for system personnel to handle interlibrary loan transactions for a member library than to empower local staff to do it for themselves.

## V. CONTRIBUTIONS OF RURAL LIBRARIES, IF ACCESS IS AVAILABLE

### A. Local Example

Those of us who are committed to the philosophy of cooperation and resource sharing believe that each library has unique resources to contribute to the network. Larger libraries just have more unique materials. Each of these unique collections has a contribution to make in providing resources to the masses. For instance, there is a library in the Lincoln Trail Library System that owns a complete collection of Harlequin Romance Stories. This collection was highlighted in the New York Times in the early '80s and is, as far as I know, unique in Illinois, if not the entire country. At one time Lincoln Trail determined to add the holdings of that collection to our shared computer database. Staff members were sent 70 miles to this library and a computer terminal was installed. This "experiment" in adding that collection to the database ended soon after it began due to a shortage of funds.

### B. Interlibrary Loan

#### 1. Fiction

Interlibrary Loan is the primary method used to facilitate resource sharing. According to a 1987 study of unmet needs of ILLINET libraries, Interlibrary Loan requests for fiction materials represented 31% of all canceled requests. It was further revealed that of those fiction requests that were only searched within Illinois, 68% were canceled because there were no known locations. For those fiction requests that were searched outside of Illinois, 58% were canceled for the same reason. We clearly are not meeting the demand for fiction materials that are undoubtedly on the shelves

of the rural library. However, we have determined that fiction requests are low-priority interlibrary loan transactions and that libraries should meet the demand for new materials locally. Meanwhile the larger library may buy many copies of popular books to meet their local demand when they could borrow some of them from smaller libraries and use the dollars to purchase other more unique resources. Certainly, I will agree with the director of a larger library who contends that the patrons want to browse shelves to find most materials, but how much browsing can a patron do if the books are all checked out and there is a waiting list of two to three months? Wouldn't the patron rather wait three days and get it from another library than wait three months? Wouldn't it be better to pay to enter these items in the automated databases (not just locations, but shelf status) so that we could maximize the use of Interlibrary Loan?

### **C. Reciprocal Borrowing/Best Sellers Example**

Perhaps some of you believe that current best sellers should not be available for Interlibrary Loan. You contend that it is the responsibility of the local library to have those available to their patrons, since they are in constant demand. I agree that the patron of the local library has the right to these resources during the time that they are in high demand. However, I have reservations about declaring an entire class of materials ineligible for interlibrary loan just because it may be in high demand in one library. The truth of the matter is that many small or rural public libraries purchase the best sellers in order to meet local demand. However, the local demand is not as heavy as in larger libraries, and the materials soon fall off in

popularity locally while they remain in high demand in other communities. Two months ago I visited a library to attend a board meeting. After the meeting, I visited with the librarian and looked at the new book shelf. The library serves a population of 4200 people, has over 17,000 volumes, is open over 30 hours per week and is not automated. I found Scott Turow's new book Burden of Proof on the shelf. It was number one on the best seller list at the time. I had just purchased a copy two days before because I did not want to wait two months to get the copy my library owned or pay a rental fee at another library. Next to that was Tony Hillerman's new book Coyote Waits. It was also on the best seller list. Both books had been circulated, but were on the shelf waiting for another reader. I asked if I could borrow the Hillerman book, if the demand was not too great. The librarian replied, "Go ahead, we loan anything to anyone." She quickly checked the book out on my local library card (our libraries have a reciprocal borrowing agreement) and I went home with a new best seller that would have taken me months to get at my home library. My point is that the book will be used in the small library but the demand for it will have decreased locally long before it decreases at a larger library. However, we currently have no way of knowing that the book is in that library if it is on the shelf. The problem is that we have limited access to the collections of this library and other small libraries unless they have automated catalogs. It is currently easier and more cost-effective to reserve materials from automated libraries than to search blindly in the non-automated libraries for the same materials. However, our clients would be better served if we had the same access to the small library that we do to the larger library.

### **D. Statewide Interlibrary Loan Example**

In reviewing the statistics for our automated database, we discovered that the largest library on the automated system borrowed 1552 items from the other libraries (all smaller) and lent 2117 items. Yes, they loaned more than they borrowed, but it is not the great disproportionate number that one might expect. They lent 36% more than they borrowed. Another library in a community with a population under 20,000 lent 50% more than they borrowed. Actually they lent more to the largest library than they borrowed from it. In addition, several other smaller libraries loaned about the same number of items as they borrowed.

In another more dramatic example patrons of the University of Illinois borrowed over 157,000 items from other libraries, more items than the University loaned to other libraries. And this library owns over seven million volumes.

## **VI. THE SOLUTIONS**

### **A. Online Database**

Certainly the idea that we should automate small libraries, as well as larger libraries, is not a new solution to the issues and problems that I have raised. It is not flashy and not cutting edge. I don't mean to imply that this has not taken place in some areas, but it happens far less often than it should in order to make resource-sharing effective. I believe the gap between the haves and the have not libraries is widening with every new technology that is introduced and with every year that passes. We must begin to assimilate small libraries into databases at the same rate

that we assimilate larger libraries. We must accept the fact that the type of bibliographic database that will be supported must be set by national standards. It will not be feasible to have different standards for smaller libraries than for larger ones. The top down initiative that we have been using for years is, in my opinion, only partially successful. I estimate that more than 75% of the small public libraries in Illinois do not have automated catalogs. We are giving rural libraries a greater means of accessing local and state databases through personal computers and modems and this is a very positive move. However, we must give them the opportunity to reciprocate, instead of being only borrowers. The larger libraries are now demanding reimbursement for loan transactions. So where is the money going? Are we to continue to fund the larger institutions at the expense of the smaller ones? It is going to be difficult to obtain state and local funding to automate smaller libraries. The political clout is clearly in the corner of the larger institutions and the on-going costs of automating are going to require a change in financing and budget priorities for the smaller libraries. We have to make that choice; there is no alternative.

### **B. Computer Access to Information**

We must be able to access the collections of libraries of all sizes. However, there is another obstacle that must also be overcome before the problem of access is solved; systems can be chosen by rural libraries. While the ideal concept of a database that includes all libraries has great appeal, the individuality and needs of local libraries must be recognized and respected. Therefore, we must take the step to create

interfaces that will allow us to access the databases of other libraries. At Lincoln Trail we have worked for the past three years to develop software that is end-user friendly for the patron and that permits access to six different databases that all use the same search strategies. The software is being tested and will be released to public libraries in the state of Illinois within the next year. The project has a drawback: the automated bibliographic databases we have interfaced do not include the holdings of the majority of our rural libraries.

### **C. Taking Responsibility**

Rural libraries will need to lead the fight to get their holdings converted to machine-readable format so that a database can be created, one which will make their collections accessible to other area libraries. Budgets will have to be re-evaluated. Money will be needed for telecommunications costs, as well as for the cost of having records converted to machine-readable form. There will also be hardware expenses. Libraries will need to purchase public access terminals. Rural libraries must be prepared for increased demands for service. Not only will there be increased demand for Interlibrary Loans, but usage of collections will increase. The rural library will be increasingly a supplier of resources. The local library will not be able to relinquish its responsibility to supply high demand materials and other services that traditionally have been offered. The cost of these innovations must be shared by local, state, and national agencies.

## **VII. THE CHANGING DYNAMICS**

### **A. Different Structure**

The dynamics of cooperation would change dramatically if we proved that all member libraries are valuable to the network. Then resource-sharing would not entail solely a top down distribution of resources. Two-way cooperation will give us an entirely different perspective on resource sharing. Small libraries will gain stature within resource sharing networks. The requests submitted by those libraries will not be looked at as unessential to the process. Small libraries will be contributing members and, in many instances, may provide more resources than they borrow.

### **B. More Demands on Cooperatives**

Cooperatives already receive many demands from member libraries. However, in the reconfigured system the demands will intensify. There will be a greater need to have well defined protocols, standards and expectations. Methods of locating and delivering needed materials will have to be enhanced. The cooperatives often assume these responsibilities. If we give rural libraries access to larger collections, we have to be able to deliver those resources quickly and efficiently. We have to monitor the traffic and ensure that we are all living up to agreements. The dynamics of the cooperative will change. I estimate that cooperative personnel will de-emphasize ownership of resources and emphasize resource-sharing initiatives among member libraries.

### **C. Different Focus When Working Together**

There will be a different focus when large and small libraries begin to work together.

I anticipate that we will see small libraries offering more suggestions for services and programs. Fewer of them will automatically defer to the "expertise" of the staff of cooperatives and larger libraries. Small libraries will be major players at the table. Small libraries may become net lenders, a big change from the current situation. The small library will have a sense of self-worth, will be aware that what they buy will be of value not only to their community, but to the larger library community. Local people will see their community library in a new light. I hope that this will give the rural community a new pride. There will be more camaraderie among librarians and more respect.

#### **D. Economic Sense**

While the costs of the project described may seem high, I do not believe we can let this opportunity pass libraries by. Library development is crucial, if rural communities are to achieve economic viability. In 1988, Lincoln Trail conducted a study of the impact of public libraries on the economic well-being of communities. The study of 100 libraries in Illinois revealed that public libraries are an important ingredient in attracting new jobs to the community. When our rural libraries offer complete access to their collections and the collections of other area libraries to their patrons, this economic impact will be further strengthened.

### **VIII. THE CONCLUSION**

Rural and small libraries can no longer afford to be second class citizens in cooperatives. They cannot afford to continue to be perceived by the library community as the have-nots, they cannot afford to be perceived as libraries that have

no materials worth sharing, and they cannot afford to have networks or consortiums be the agencies that represent their interests. They have to be their own advocates, and be aware of the value their library has to the network. My case has been stated in rather simplistic terms today. I am fully aware that there are many elements that have to be investigated in order to change the "dynamics of cooperation" and to truly bring us to the realization that all libraries can make a valuable contribution to their cooperative.

No library is without value. The challenge that faces multitype library cooperation in the next two decades is getting staff in all sizes and types of libraries to admit the necessity of creating automated online databases that will allow the population to access the resources of all libraries. Once we do that, the dynamics of cooperation will change.

## "Distance Education, Rural Libraries, and Personnel Development"

by

**Dan Barron**

"In the industrial age, we go to school. In the information age, school can come to us. This is the message implicit in the media and movement of distance education." By-line for The Online Journal of Distance Education and Communication.

Jason Ohler's by-line is a good basic definition of distance education: simply bringing education to the people. I compare it to bookmobile service. DE is not a new concept. In fact, we can trace it back to the early Chinese who sent teaching packages to the local province officials so they could learn how the Emperor wanted things to run. In the United States, Anna Eliot Ticknor began breaking down the educational barriers of distance and tradition around 1973 by offering women the opportunity to learn in the home through her "Silent University." Thomas Foster used the newspaper to help teach safety concepts to coal miners and the Chautauqua University took the famous "traveling Chautauqua" across the nation to spread its message of literacy, reading, culture, and discussion. William Harper established the first university department of correspondence study at Chicago and in Wisconsin William Lightly began what remains one of the premier distance education programs in the United States. Almost as soon as radio was invented in the Twenties, educators in New York, California, and Chicago used it to reach out to students. In the Thirties, Iowa educators beamed out art, foreign language, and girl scout classes.

In 1888, a year after he opened the doors to the School of Library Economy at Columbia College, Melvil Dewey called for the development of correspondence courses

for librarians not able to attend his program. In the Twenties, C. C. Williamson, who later took Dewey's place at Columbia, was a strong advocate for correspondence courses and directed the correspondence program until Columbia adopted a policy that did away with all correspondence courses. Correspondence study has never been held in high regard by library educators or the American Library Association. In the Thirties they disparaged correspondence study. In the Fifties, the ALA included a specific statement in their standards for accreditation that disqualified credits earned through correspondence study from counting toward an accredited master's program.

Today there are 60 library schools with ALA accredited programs. These schools are not equally distributed across the United States. According to Kathleen Heim, there is an "acute personnel shortage" which has been reiterated by representatives from almost every type of library and specialization in the profession. There are those who disagree, and even suggest that a shortage will stimulate governing bodies to increase salaries and recruit a different "breed" of librarians. There are approximately 10,000 public libraries in the United States. In California alone, there are over 6,000 schools and only 2,000 of them have school library media specialists. Add to this number 10,000 special libraries, 5,000 academic libraries, and 64,000 other schools with only 54,000 media specialists and it is not difficult to see why huge continuing education deficit exists.

Public libraries in remote areas are at an even greater disadvantage. The critical shortage of librarians engaged in providing services to children and young

adults is exacerbated by the fact that many of those who want to work with children and young people prefer to stay in urban areas. Also, many rural libraries cannot afford a specialist in this area and end up making do with a person who has earned few credit hours in children's literature. Dr. Bernard Vavrek, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, also points out that there are other service gaps in rural areas, especially in the areas of reference work and technical services. I would add to that the need for adult services, particularly adult literacy education and also GED programs and other continuing education programs that can help adults make the life and career transitions that sociologists tell us happen on the average of four to five times in a person's life.

Based on my observations formed over the past twenty years, I know that governing agencies have a tendency to "make do" when the ideal proves a little more difficult to attain. I argue that those who favor reducing the pool of potential candidates for library positions in order to raise salaries and generally grope for a better image suffer from the Ostrich Syndrome. I contend that there is a vicious cycle of expectation operating in the library world in general, and in many public library communities in particular. The lack of education on the part of those currently working in libraries, especially in rural libraries, is a severe deterrent to good library and information service. The communities that are served by these well-meaning, but less-educated librarians do not get the types of services that would make them demand more. In other words, the community does not know what it is missing. The idea of raising taxes to support services that they do realize are needed

is ridiculous. Therefore, the staff remains small, the salaries remain low, and few people are attracted to the area in order to work in the library. Also, we must remember that what a person needs to know in order to fulfill responsibilities in the contemporary world is very different from that which was required even ten years ago. To get along in the world today we need information literacy skills, and to master management techniques. The problem of inadequate library service begins with the lack of initial education available and is compounded by a lack of continuing education opportunities.

Two fundamental problems arise from this discussion which are very real and have the potential of hindering, if not damaging, public library service in the United States: the lack of accessible education and the reluctance or inability on the part of those who could provide that education to do so.

Library and information science programs have attempted to meet the unique needs of those who have not been able to attend regular classes on an academic campus. Evening classes, one-day-a-week classes, weekend classes, summer classes, and intensive class sessions over a short period of time are all efforts to accommodate part-time and distance students. Some schools send faculty to sites away from the home campus by car, plane, and boat. Others have set up satellite campuses and have even taken entire degree programs to remote areas of a state or to states that are not served by an accredited program school. Since the Seventies, some schools have used telecommunications technology to bridge the distance. Telephone connections have served several programs including those offered by Oklahoma,

Wisconsin-Madison, LSU, and Alabama. In the Eighties several schools began exploring the use of open and closed circuit television, as well as videotapes. Some library schools have even produced and offered televised classes which are delivered by satellite communication.

Today's distance education differs as much from yesterday's correspondence study as contemporary courses differ from those taught in Dewey's time. But some individuals and faculties are still reluctant to embrace the concept of distance education for library and information science. A significant proportion of their concerns stem from their deeply felt commitment to quality education -- doing what is best for the student and the profession. Specifically, they are concerned about the student losing something by not being part of an academic community in an academic environment, that there will not be sufficient resources to support the student's out-of-class learning, that they will not be socialized into the profession, that the overall quality of the experience differs to much that the student does not get a complete education. Although few would object to the idea that basic information of a clerical or routine nature can be taught off campus, many would contend that distance education has only limited potential for delivering instruction in the concepts and broader knowledge required by professional programs. Others object because they fear the loss of autonomy, or resent the encroachment on their turf or change itself.

The demonstrated successes of other professional groups who have utilized distance education including business people, computer scientists, doctors, engineers,

nurses, and pharmacists will only partially allay these concerns. What is needed are actual demonstration projects that help to clarify the difference between quality distance education and make-do training. Far too few people are conversant with the technology, processes, and research base from which modern distance education operates.

A major problem facing distance education in library and information science is faculty recruitment. Most schools have more than enough students to keep faculty occupied in regular classrooms. Traditional teaching methods are often used by these faculty because they have neither the time nor the incentive to experiment with new approaches or teaching methods. Faculty involved in providing distance education in television may be required to become team members working with technical and creative support staffs, and will probably have more students and a whole new range of hassles. It is easy to see why distance education may not appeal to many faculty members.

The purpose of LISDEC is to provide a number of alternative ways for both traditional and non-traditional student groups to access quality LIS education. The Consortium will collect and disseminate information on a variety of currently available and emerging instructional delivery systems, will experiment with them, and provide staff development training in the use of these systems. Many of the systems the Consortium will be working with will be electronically based and will involve a number of converging technologies including cable television, E-Mail, Satellite, video cassette and video disk, and other telecommunications networks

integrated with more traditional print technologies. LISDEC is a response to the need for educational alternatives demonstrated by those persons who are otherwise qualified to do graduate work in LIS, but who are constrained by the barriers of time, geography, physical disability, and personal and professional responsibilities not faced by the traditional student. It is also as a response to the needs of more traditional students in traditional programs where the availability of additional faculty, in a wide variety of subject areas, will provide enrichment, supplementing an existing strong curriculum and catalog of courses.

The Consortium stemmed from discussions among LIS educators and got its major impetus from a planning grant received from Jones International Ltd., the corporate parent of Mind Extension University: The Education Channel and 16 other subsidiaries in the communications industry including Jones Intercable which is among the top ten cable television operating companies in the United States. Glenn Jones is the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Jones International, Ltd., which has contributed over \$1 million to the Library of Congress as a grant to support the Global Library Project. The GLP will produce library-related information and instructional programming for librarians and the public to be cable cast one hour each day on MEU. The project also calls for the exploration and development of other media that will "take full advantage of the unique resources and capabilities of the world's largest repository of knowledge and information."

The initial planning meeting for LISDEC began at the University of South Carolina in November 1988. Besides LIS educators, the group included

representatives from COA and NCATE, Jones International, and individuals with technical and managerial expertise in telecommunications and distance education. Since that original planning meeting, other meetings were held prior to the 1989 ALA conference in Dallas and during the 1990 ALISE conference in Chicago. Deans and directors of ALA accredited program schools, related associations, and agencies were sent reports of each previous meeting with invitations to participate in the meetings.

LISDEC will not solve all of the education problems faced by the rural public library, but it will offer alternatives that may help to break the vicious cycle of negative expectations associated with library service.

## **"Future Staffing Requirement: Some Considerations"**

by

**Nancy J. Busch**

I'd like to begin by exploring why the topic, "Future Staffing Requirements: Some Considerations," is among those being examined during this symposium. Those of you here today, as well as many others in our profession have, over the years, discussed and debated at length ways in which to improve the overall quality of library and information service. With few exceptions, most of us would agree that the people who practice this profession are the key ingredient to the ultimate quality of our services.

The variety in the quality of library services available to the public can be likened to the range of choices we face when we hunger for food. We can satisfy that hunger in many ways. On the one hand, we can spend a few minutes driving through one of several fast food establishments, picking up a prepackaged, mass produced, fairly inexpensive meal. In many cases the person handing out such a meal receives a higher hourly wage than many rural public library directors. On the other hand, we may spend several hours lingering over a gourmet meal of fresh, locally produced foods, carefully prepared by a master chef. Where we eat may depend on how much money and time we can afford to spend, the availability of certain types of restaurants, and what we have come to expect in the way of nourishment. Regardless of the size of our appetites or how well developed our palates may be, the role of the people who prepare our food will determine if and how

well our hunger is satisfied. So it is with library and information service.

There are two major components to the thoughts that I would like to share with you today. I would like to first take a look at the "big picture" by providing an overview of what we know or suspect may be true about current as well as future library staffing needs, particularly in rural public libraries. Secondly, I would like to explore what each of us can do individually or locally to address some of those needs, so that we can leave this conference with a personal action agenda as well as a collective one. Speaking from personal experience, I find the global issues to be overwhelming at times and so much identify small steps that I can take every day in order to feel a sense of accomplishment.

When analysts consult the crystal ball in order to view future personnel supply and demand in our profession, it reveals a fuzzy picture (or, in Michael Marien's terms, a "foggy playing field"); however, we can still attempt to make out some of the faces. We know that shortages of librarians and information professionals exist, particularly in certain types of libraries and in certain types of positions such as youth services and children's services. The King Research study on supply and demand published in 1983 also predicted shortages of librarians to fill positions in rural public libraries.<sup>1</sup>

In a recent article Helle Bering-Jensen summed up the supply and demand situation this way:

Education and jobs: they are a lot like beer and potato chips; they rarely seem to come out even. The current shortage of librarians is a case in point. Noted [in] a 1986 editorial in Library Journal, "The sudden critical shortage of children's librarians . . . points up a chronic

problem in our field: our apparent inability to predict, in an accurate and timely fashion, the need for librarians in various types of libraries and specialties."<sup>2</sup>

The actual numbers of graduates from library science master's programs dropped substantially from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, thus decreasing the overall supply. We also know that most graduates of library programs are place-bound or tend to stay in the area in which they attended school, so that parts of the country without graduate library programs tend to suffer even greater shortages. Kathleen Heim offered further insight into this matter in the 1988 ALA report entitled "Librarians for the New Millennium," First, she noted that ". . . the ideal number of librarians has never been calculated and the actual number needed could be much larger if other factors come into play, [hence] . . . in the abstract the need for librarians is enormous."<sup>3</sup> For example, if the library profession were able to mandate a certain number of positions requiring the master's degree in every public library, the number of librarians needed would be greatly expanded. The library profession, however, has yet to develop an optimal librarian-to-client ratio, such as those developed by our colleagues in the teaching profession. Secondly, Heim noted that, if librarians and information science professionals want to increase opportunities for employment, they must assume a leadership role by demonstrating their worth to society.<sup>4</sup> Reports of difficulties in finding librarians to work in metropolitan areas such as New York and Los Angeles speak not only to the shortage in the number of librarians in the labor pool, but also to the growing importance that quality of life considerations, such as safety on the job, have in our recruitment and

retention efforts. Although enrollments in graduate library programs across the country are up, we can still expect the current shortages to persist and possibly worsen. A danger in having so many shortages is the erosion that occurs when positions requiring master's degrees are filled by those having fewer credentials, who are willing to work at lower salary levels.

Findings from my own recently conducted national survey of rural public library directors, point out several areas of concern for future staffing requirements. To briefly summarize some of those findings I combined the typical characteristics of rural public library directors as reported in the survey. In this particular study, "rural" was defined as a community with a population of 25,000 or less, not located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The rural public library director is a married, white female about fifty years old with a high school diploma or some college education. She works and lives in a community of around 4,000 or so (although about 14% of directors reported living in communities separate from the ones in which they were working). She has been living in that community for over twenty-five years and most likely grew up in a community of less than 25,000.

If she was not born in the area or did not move there with her parents while still a minor, the rural public library director probably came to the area for her job or more likely for her spouse's job. She has been director of the library for nine years and odds are more than one in three that she had worked in that same library for more than five years prior to taking on the directorship.

The rural public library director is somewhat more likely to be employed full-time than part-time, with an average annual salary of around \$19,000. About 2% are volunteer or non-paid directors; however, given the fact that there were both full and part-time directors earning less than minimum wage, a much greater percentage could be considered volunteers in a sense. Her total household income is likely to be less than \$30,000 a year. Around 8% reported total household incomes of less than \$10,000 per year which is below poverty level according to 1989 Federal Income Guidelines. The paid benefits she is most likely to receive are vacation days, reimbursement for travel to library-related meetings, sick leave and continuing education. Paid health and life insurance benefits and retirement pensions are far from the norm for directors who are part-time employees.

In spite of what would appear to be less than optimal working conditions (i.e., low wages, poor benefits, or the lack of career advancement opportunities) the rural public library director is very satisfied with her job as a whole and with the quality of life in her community. She expects to remain in her position for at least another one to five years. If she does leave, she would most likely move to a community of roughly the same size within her state. As to the type of work she would choose if she left her position, she is likely to go into another public library situation, unless she is preparing to retire (about 29% of the directors reported they would retire after leaving their current positions).

At the time when this survey was conducted in March of 1989 -- less than 5% of rural public library directors were looking for new positions. This suggests a

rather low turnover rate among this group of librarians. However, this figure does not represent the actual number of turnovers that occurred, rather what people were thinking about doing or hoping to do at the time. As many rural public library directors pointed out, they were not the sole deciders, or even the primary decision-makers, in regard to their future plans.

The following comments from a part-time MLS-degree Director who expected to remain in her position for at least another twenty years, address some of the realities facing a rural library director:

I do not anticipate ever seeking another position unless, for some reason, my husband's income is not as stable as it is now. Because his income can provide for all our needs, I enjoy the "luxury" of working and paying for child care. For the first time, my income in 1988 was over \$10,000. Money or benefits do not provide the enticement that keeps me working. A fabulous board, a great staff and a community that supports the library tremendously are the pay-offs I receive. It does concern me to know that I could not hold this job and support my family were something to happen to my husband. That also concerns me for someone who might come into my position were I to leave. I am paid for 94 hours per month, I work between 110 and 170 -- the excess above 94 being uncompensated. I am setting a precedent which I would not want someone else to inherit. I've tried to cut back, however, and I am then unsatisfied with what goes undone. . .<sup>5</sup>

Findings from this study also suggest that rural public library directors fit into certain categories. These are offered for your consideration:

1. **Natives:** Rural public library directors who are natives of the area in which they are living and working, having either been born there or moved to the area when they were children. They may have moved away for a period of time but then returned. This group seems to account for the largest number of rural public library directors. Homegrown directors tend to be older, have less formal education and stay in their positions longer. They also tend to be predominantly located in the smaller communities.

2. **Transplants:** Rural public library directors who came to the area for their spouse's job or their job or because they sought out a smaller community or particular geographic location in which to settle. They seem to adapt well to the area and put down roots. They tend to be younger and have higher levels of education than native rural public library directors.
3. **Transients:** Rural public library directors who are mobile professionals. They tend to have higher levels of education, are younger, and have career-related goals. In this study, they appeared to be the smallest group. They tend to stay in their positions for shorter amounts of time, are more likely to have been recruited externally and tend to be working in the larger rural communities. They are also likely to view their positions as stepping stones to other library-related positions.

(The full report of the findings of this survey are now available from UMI.)

Building on this summary of present and future staffing considerations, how do we go about setting personal and collective action agendas that will help us improve the staffing legacy that we leave to the profession?

There are seven steps I would propose as a modest beginning. These are the kinds of steps that each of us can resolve to take when we return to our homes, that actions will provide us with some sense of direction or mission.

1. We can take a renewed look at the realities of our local situations and how they affect the ebb and flow of staff. In doing so, we need to determine the things over which we have some control and let go of the things we cannot control. For example, the location of a community is a factor beyond our control, but how and where we advertise vacant positions can be controlled or improved. For me, recognition and acceptance of uncontrollables is a key step in achieving some sense of personal empowerment and hope for changing a situation. Those engaged in other professions such as law, medicine, the ministry, teaching, and social work could

assist us in identifying both the limitations and strengths of our communities.

2. We can try to do a better job of finding good matches for the current positions we have, and try harder to identify new people to recruit for the profession who have the skills and attitudes that we feel will advance the quality of our services. We can recommit ourselves to the profession by serving as mentors, becoming involved with library education programs in our states or regions, and consciously seeking out good prospective candidates for the field. I think of the library and information profession as a relatively small gene pool. This has several significant implications. One is that we should try to attract the best and the brightest into the gene pool and the other is that we should learn to get along with one another, because we never know where (or with whom) we might end up working.

Dan Barron's talk, coming up next on our agenda, will look at delivery of master's degree courses to remote locations and will, I'm sure, address the newly formed LISDEC (Library and Information Science Distance Education Consortium). As a sneak preview, I would like to share these words from the first issue of LISDEC LINKS, the Consortium's newsletter dated September, 1990:

Back in the Sixties and Seventies we drew a lot of excitement from the concept of Social Responsibility. We went to the people and tried to meet their needs with alternative library and information service. Today we have a similar opportunity, to take quality education into areas of the country where little or none exists, to help educate those who work or want to work in libraries in those areas. I believe that we can begin a victorious cycle, helping people to help people who in turn, will become advocates of more funding for materials, salaries, and development.<sup>6</sup>

The creation of LISDEC offers us a unique set of opportunities to become more

active partners in library and information science education.

3. We can work harder to keep good people in our libraries and information centers, as well as in the profession. I know of many examples of excellent librarians who are no longer practicing the profession for a variety of reasons. We cannot afford to lose such people. Retention, in general, may be an area over which we have little control, but I believe we should make an effort to draw these people back into our ranks in some capacity.

4. Since we all agree that there is a need to improve compensation for librarians, pay equity or comparable worth issues need to be tackled by each of us on the local, state, and national level. Our sustained efforts to leave an inheritance of improved salaries and benefits, wherever we are, will be one of the most important factors in bringing about ultimate change in the quality of library and information service.

5. We can reinvent our roles as librarians in our communities and in the profession as a whole. As Herb White noted in a recent article, "Libraries as good as their users demand will never be very good . . ." Likewise, librarians as good as our users demand will never be very good. Therefore, it is up to each of us to create a new set of expectations and a new understanding of our role for the public. To accomplish this, we need to look at our reflections in our local communities and at the larger library community.

6. We need to find ways to restore and refresh ourselves in our professional and personal lives, in order to remain positive and hopeful. The stresses of library

and information work may differ in nature from rural to urban areas, but they are just as intense in the small town as in the city. Finding ways to reduce stress and recapture the enthusiasm and vision that brought most of us to this profession is essential and needs to be built into our daily lives.

7. Finally, we can re-establish our priorities, placing the recruitment and retention of well-paid and well-educated personnel at the top of our lists. As we consider the future of public libraries, let us think first and foremost about the kind of people we will need to meet the challenges of the future. Our profession is determined by people rather than by buildings or materials. It is shaped by the people who design and deliver library and information services, as well as by the public who need and use those services. Without the best people leading and staffing our libraries across the country, the public may never know the difference between a McDonald's and a Chez Panisse.

### Endnote

- <sup>1</sup> Library Human Resources: A Study of Supply and Demand, A report prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics and the Office of Libraries and Learning Technologies by Kind Research, Inc. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1983), pp. 120-121.
- <sup>2</sup> Helle Bering-Jensen, "Plenty of Jobs, Too Few Librarians," Insight, 13 June 1988, p. 58.
- <sup>3</sup> Kathleen M. Heim, "Librarians for the New Millennium," in Librarians for the new Millennium (Chicago: American Library Association, 1988), p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Nancy J. Busch, "Factors Relating to the Recruitment and Retention of Library Directors in Rural Public Libraries in the United States" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1990), pp. 173-74.
- <sup>6</sup> Library and Information Science Distance Education Consortium, LISDEC LINKS vol. 1., no. 1, September 1990, p. 3.
- <sup>7</sup> Herbert S. White, "White Papers" Library Journal, vol. 115, no. 15, 15 September 1990, p. 58.

## "What Needs to Change"

by

Sara Parker

Let us begin by conjugating the noun "change." This is the way we conjugate the noun "change:"

\*I lead change;

\*You must recognize change;

\*Some things "gotta" change.

We are here because we are change agents. Some of us, if we work for state libraries, have this specification in our job description. Some of us incline to it naturally. Some of us are change agents because of fear. Our greatest fear, perhaps, is that, in the 90s, libraries will become museums.

As change agents, how can we encourage our colleagues to embrace the necessity for change? If gentle persuasion doesn't work, one can resort to stronger measures.

All of us have an obligation to recognize change. It is the obligation to understand our culture and our society in the 1990s. It will be, for us, a time of incredible change. Whether you read Megatrends or listen to futurists, you need to train yourself to recognize change, and recreate your library everyday to keep pace with change.

This brings us to the last part of the conjugation, some things "gotta" change. Therefore, I give you a discourse on seven things which I believe have to change.

This presentation is a synthesis of several elements: my major worries, the talk of our profession, comments from our critics and our fans, and some minor nitpicking.

First -- Libraries have to stop doing things that make them look crazy. This thought is not original with me. It is the third most important lesson I have learned in almost 30 years of being a librarian. My friend, Abe Abrabson, from Missoula, Montana, taught me that libraries should not look crazy. Let me tell you how they look crazy in Missoula, Montana. When people go to the library at the University of Montana at Missoula in order to check something out, they take it to the circulation desk. The person behind the circulation desk says, "I can't check that book out to you; however, if you go across town to the public library and request the book on interlibrary loan, I will send it over to the public library and you can pick it up there." It does, of course, sound crazy to be told to get in a car and drive across town and wait three days to get the book. Taxpayers know that they fund both the University of Montana and the Missoula Public Library, and so we, in essence, ask them not only to waste time and gasoline, we ask them to pay for the extra staff at the Missoula Public Library, who take that interlibrary loan request, verify that it is indeed at the University of Montana. And we ask them to fund the staff at the University of Montana who must find the book, package it up and send it on its way to the public library. Often we expect patrons to pay a fee for delivery service and then we often expect them to pay an interlibrary loan reimbursement fee for some cost recovery to the University of Montana for the loan of that book. Forgive me, Missoula, Montana.

Let me tell you what we do in Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania we have a statewide program that enables us to teach information skills to high school students. We call it LIN-TEL and it teaches them how to search online databases in their high school libraries. We produce, upon graduation, people with outstanding information skills, and we send them into communities, or academic institutions in which the librarian does the searching for them, or into communities in which there is no searching at all.

I visited a small community library in a small town. They were delighted because the State Librarian was coming to the library at a time when they were having a preschool story hour. Most of you do preschool story hours. I've seen lots of pre-school story hours. I used to do them myself. This was the most dreadful preschool story hour I have ever seen. Four women, probably mothers, and the librarian sat with their eyes glued to a television set watching a segment of "Reading Rainbow." Eight or ten preschoolers did a variety of things. Several of them stared at the TV set, looking bored, a couple of them rambled around the room, while others looked at books. One toddler with a book in hand went up and tugged on the librarian's skirt to get her to read the book and the librarian brushed the child away. It was so painful, I had to leave.

What would happen if the Mayor or a member of the City Council who administers funding for that library walked into the library at that particular moment? If they had called that program Intellectual Stimulation for Worn Out Women, the Mayor and the City Council would know immediately what libraries do

and why libraries are important. It wasn't called that, it was called a preschool story hour and it made the library look crazy.

More than anything else, I think we have to change our image. If you will take a conscientious look at your library, you may indeed find policies that make the library look crazy. If we are to keep public libraries viable, and if there is to be a future for public libraries beyond the 1990s, they have to look good. They have to look like winners; they can't look crazy.

Second, we have to become sophisticated about money and about power. There is a general consensus that librarians spend public money better than most other branches of local government. Matched against this is a not uncommon belief about librarians -- that they are naive about finances. I find this to be true. For the past 14 years I've been in a position to see librarians spend money. You know we shop for "remainders." We certainly can't prioritize our budget requests. We just held a Governor's Conference in Pennsylvania. We have 13 Resolutions before the Legislature, all asking for funding. These Resolutions have not been prioritized. If we go before the Legislature with 13 funding requests at a time when most states have deficits, we will look crazy. We believe the politicians when they tell us there isn't any money. The police department doesn't believe that, the fire department doesn't believe that. They don't come in with the assigned budget cuts. We have to be sophisticated enough to know there is always money for some things. We are too willing to comply. We try to operate programs on the low amounts we are given. We would do better if we said, "We can't do it at that price."

We are naive about money, and we are naive about power. Let me ask how many of you belong to the country club? As librarians, most of you know who your local politicians are. But librarians need to know who really wields power. It is more important to know who got the officials elected, who contributes to their campaigns, and who can influence particular decision makers.

We have to project the image that we are comfortable with power. We should be sensitive to the way we talk, dress, move our bodies and conduct ourselves. We have to know alternative ways to power and we have to come to grips with the fact that we have been a woman-dominated profession and sometimes power has to be exercised through the distaff.

I remember a time when the program that reimburses the Denver Public Library for statewide services was well on its way to not being funded. The Denver and suburban legislators were contesting the issue. It looked as though we would lose an incredibly important program. The State Librarian called a woman working in a small public library in eastern Montana, a woman without a degree, and that librarian called an elderly woman in that community. The next day we saw a Key Member of the House with a long thin strip of paper tucked in his cowboy boot. It was obvious when he pulled it out there were seven or eight names on that list. He went around the floor talking to people. As he talked to each one, he crossed the name off and put the list back in his cowboy boot. When he crossed off the last name, he signalled the Speaker and the program for Denver went through. That's power.

Getting sophisticated about money is easy. We have learned the Dewey Decimal System, we can learn to read a balance sheet or an audit. We can hire good accountants and we can look over their shoulders.

Learning about power and developing a political sense is much harder. We have to watch the powerful. We have to associate with the powerful. It often feels like trying to impress a blind date. We have to look for mentors. There are people who will help us. Often they are people on our boards, and in our friends' groups and there will be clues when people are ready to help us have access to power.

Third, we have to change the way we think about library materials. Since the invention of the printing press, we have been responsible for collections that are printed on paper. We are not even close to realizing what digital information means. We think narrowly in terms of bibliographic or abstracting databases, yet practically everything we have today is published electronically, composed and typeset electronically. If we are hopelessly ill, we want the physician to use an online pharmacopeia and we are horrified if he or she grabs the Physician's Desk Reference. But when we think about leisure reading, we want something we can read in the bathtub or at the seashore and the book is still the most efficient portable mechanism we have for storing information. I agree for this point in time, but someday I think I'm going to wear James Michener like a beauty patch on my temple. Those who read Braille have always read by their senses. We will someday be reading by electronic impulses.

What has to change is the paradigm. We have to accept that the ratio of publications printed on paper will diminish in comparison to other information storage media in our collections. I was quite surprised the first time I heard Dr. Linberg of the National Library of Medicine address the issue of preserving the retrospective body of knowledge, i.e., all of those thousands of volumes that we've accumulated since the days of incunabula, and converting them into digital form. So the next time I saw some of my high tech friends from Carnegie-Mellon and Lehigh, I asked them to predict how long it would take before the complete body of knowledge was converted into digital form. Their estimate was 40 years. That's not very long.

What has to change is that we have to view the development of electronic information resources as a revolution in information as basic as that caused by the invention of the printing press. Books will be an ever-diminishing part of what we supply to the public. We have to create linkages between books and the other information sources. The revolution will affect the design of our buildings. We have to restructure library budgets. We list book expenditures on the capital side of the budget, and put allocations for our electronic information under operating expenses. We have to address the important public policy issue that money spent for books yields a capital asset in a community, often an important one in terms of the quality of life in that community and economic development. Digital information will be a capital asset only in those libraries that are bold enough to subscribe to electronic databases; otherwise it will be temporary use, a consumable, budgeted like the money we spend for other consumables.

Fourth, if the preferred medium for information is digital, we must overcome our apathy toward telecommunications and delivery systems. In general, librarians have not been concerned about telecommunications. We complain when the phone bill goes up and that's about all we do. Let me see a show of hands.

\*How many of you have a satellite dish on your library?

\*How many of you know where the nearest uplink is?

\*How many know who has the new OCLC telecommunications contract?

\*How many know what NREN stands for?

\*How many use Internet?

Most library transmission is analog. If you have really kept up your baud rate, you transmit stuff at the rate of 9600. We are talking now of high speed data transmission networks; 300,000 pages per second. The entire Encyclopaedia Britannica can be transmitted from New York to Miles City, Montana, in one second.

If it is our business to provide access to electronic information, we have to have cheap telecommunications. It is an issue of public policy. It relates to whether we are information rich or information poor. The Constitution made the Postal system a right. We have no public right to modern telecommunications. We are dependant upon regulatory commissions at the state and national level and we are dependant upon competition among carriers in the private sector. Whether or not we will be able to afford the telecommunication costs involved in providing access to information resources is a critical issue and we have to change our apathy about that issue.

Fifth, we have to recruit, reward, and keep our best people and we have to weed out losers. I don't think we're doing that. We have too few students in our library schools. Our library schools are dying. There are not enough perks available for our good people. Salaries are terrible. Salary increases are minuscule. Many supervisors don't give praise or write commendatory letters. Some of our best and brightest are leaving public libraries to become school, academic or special librarians, or they are leaving the profession.

Let's look at the other end of the spectrum. There are librarians who hide in the stacks, who snarl at patrons at the reference desk, who dress like they're about to clean out the barn. There are librarians with the attitude that the taxpayers owe them a good living; they won't get up and help a child find a book. We weed books. We often don't weed people, and wrong people may be a serious threat to the future of libraries.

What needs to change? We have to take individual personal responsibility and we have to keep our personal tally sheets. Sometimes I am asked at job interviews, "How many have you fired?" My answer to that is, "Everyone who needed it." I have never been asked the question, "How many people have you promoted?; how many people have you helped get a better job?" My answer to the question is the same, "Everyone who deserved it." We should make a personal effort to interest the right people in our profession. We also have to stop looking at library degrees and realize that many of our best personnel are people employed by small libraries who do not have degrees, or are volunteers. We keep them mending books in back rooms when

we should send them to library school or ask them to testify in front of city councils.

Sixth, we need to get our library development and our library service house in order. Each of us has been taught to believe in "larger units of service." We believe in strong central facilities. We believe in strong regional operations. We believe in big branches, rather than small ones. We believe in bookmobile stops that are busy, rather than deserted.

By believing this, we run counter to something deep in the human spirit or in the human community. People simply want a library. They want it close and they want it to belong to them. In spite of opposition, people want to establish libraries as soon as there are two or three houses together.

This raises a question. Do we really, really know how to provide good library service in rural areas?

What needs to change is our willingness to come to grips with this issue, and to facilitate the important work being done. The Public Library Association has given us an important focus: getting the library service house in order. It is slowly convincing public libraries they can no longer be all things to all people. The limited resources have to be applied to carefully chosen roles and missions. Some librarians have found successful answers to the issues of library services. We have to be open to new ideas and let go of the attitude "It won't work here, because we are unique." Bad libraries can harm the image of libraries; they will be particularly harmful in the 1990s as good libraries struggle to offer more electronic information resources.

Last, what has to change is that we must give up our halos and listen to our critics. People love libraries. Even people who don't use libraries support them and believe they are important. Because libraries are loved, there is little incentive to change.

In order to be more practical, we can turn to the theory of co-dependance. Co-dependance means that those who love alcoholics may, in some psychological way, help them drink. People who love libraries, may in some psychological way, hold them back. The people who will help us build good libraries are those who criticize, those who are angry, those who don't come in the door. These are the people we should listen to and often don't. We listen to people who tell us how good we are. As State Librarian of Pennsylvania, I did not enjoy being called to the Governor's Office to hear what had to change about the State Library. We have an angry user in our library. Actually we are driving that user crazy. This man gets so agitated and so angry he has a habit of storming into offices. I'm gone frequently, so it took him awhile to catch me. But when he did, everything else on the calendar was set aside and I listened to that user, and everything he told me was important and everything he told me was absolutely right, as was the Governor's Office.

We have a great opportunity in our Governor's Conferences to listen to people talk about libraries. As we select delegates, it's important to choose people who will give us a fresh perspective. Once, when I was talking to a crowd about our Governor's Conference, someone in the audience stood up and gave a long tirade about how attendance at the Governor's Conference should be restricted to librarians.

This is how I answered him. If we want to drink clean water, we don't expect a conference of water treatment plant directors to give us clean water; if we want to walk safe streets, we don't expect a convention of chiefs of police to give us safe streets. Public policy must involve the public.

It is important to give up our halos because in the history of library service up to this point, we had a monopoly on managing information, both its storage and provision. We don't have that monopoly anymore. Not when we live in an information age. As we enter the sixth millennium of library service, there are many more players in the game. There are other information professionals out there. Often we live in absolute ignorance of their existence, or we are unwilling to acknowledge their presence or to build coalitions.

I'm proud the state library in Montana hired a botanist -- not to answer reference questions, but to build a database. I believe that database is going to save the state library. In most places the database is not in a library, it's in a department of Natural Resources. Such work in Montana got me admitted to the highest echelon of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation when they chose a consulting firm to survey geographic information system needs. No other work has been instrumental in giving me entree into information policy in Pennsylvania. I try not to wear a halo around these new partners and I listen to them. It's critical for keeping libraries a part of the information system in the 1990s.

We have an incredible decade ahead of us. I'm excited about library service in the next decade and I'm honored to be a part of this symposium.

Let me close with again the conjugation:

\*I lead change;

\*you must recognize change;

\*some things "gotta" change.

## **"Lots and Lots of Services"**

by

**Mary Jo Godwin**

Thank you Lauren. You know I really envy her. It must be great to be director of a library where you get to audition rather than interview the staff.

It is a pleasure to be here and to be a part of this wonderful conference saluting and celebrating rural libraries and librarians. This is my first trip to Nebraska, and I hope it won't be the last. I've met some enthusiastic librarians who appear to be enjoying their work and finding creative ways to practice librarianship.

I hope Lauren's introduction helped to validate why I'm here. I've gotten some pretty strange looks from people who've read my name tag and wondered what someone from the Bronx was doing at a rural library conference. I realize it might be stretching the point if I ask you to consider it ample justification for my interest in the future of rural libraries, the fact that I work in the Bronx--an area that was once upon a time, long before Bonfire of the Vanities, a rural oasis with bountiful crops and grazing cows. Before moving to New York City, my professional library experience was centered in a medium-sized county library with one branch and a very busy bookmobile. Before becoming a librarian, I was the beneficiary of rural library service from this very bookmobile as it made regular stops in my hometown--population 350--(I wanted to be sure to get that figure in since I've noticed there seems to be an undercurrent of competition to establish who is the smallest of the

small.) So you see it is with both a personal and professional rural background that I appear here today as editor of the Wilson Library Bulletin.

When Bernie asked me to speak, he didn't tell me I had to talk for an hour. There are only two topics that I could possibly bore you with for an hour and they are dogs and libraries. My knowledge of dogs has a rural connection too and if you had rather hear the speech I wrote about thirty years ago on dogs for the county 4H public speaking contest, I think I can recall most of it.

Which will it be dogs or libraries--you decide?

Aside from killing about two minutes, I really do have a purpose behind asking you to decide the topic of discussion. It illustrates what this conference is about and it is essential to the issue of library services. It is the realization--THAT WHEN YOU DON'T MAKE THE DECISIONS THEY GET MADE FOR YOU.

If you, the librarian, aren't the active decisionmaker when it comes to determining what services your library will provide in the future, others will surely decide for you.

You have already heard from other speakers about ways to look into the future, areas where change is needed, and the importance of taking risks. Let's spend a few minutes seeing how these ideas relate to library services. Being an editor I have noticed that the title Bernie selected for this part of the program ends with a question mark. It is the only discussion topic of this symposium that does, so I am assuming (How's that for risk taking) that I get to ask all of the questions about library services and you will come up with the answers. If that's O.K. with you I

would like to ask you to think about the following statements that came across our desk at the Bulletin from the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System. This system publishes a wonderful newsletter called "The Wrapper," this is from the Spring 1990 issue which addressed how library officials might respond to attempts by local funding bodies to reduce library funds because the library is perceived as less critical than other services.

When dollars are on the line this is what they suggest: "Ten Reasons Library Service is Essential to a Community"

1. The library's collections and services are a necessary component of the local school and college program, and essential to independent learning efforts by residents of all ages." How many of you agree with this statement? Disagree?
2. Studies have shown that children who read maintain and improve their reading skills better than those who do not, particularly over the long summer vacations. Over vacations and on evenings and weekends, the public library is the only library available to the school child. Agree? Disagree?
3. Specially designed library programs, reader services, and collections introduce young children to the world of reading, stimulate young minds, and help create a life-long interest in learning. For children of preschool age, the public library is the only library available. Agree? Disagree?

4. The library is often the only readily available local source of comprehensive information needed by people for personal, family, and job related purposes. Agree? Disagree?
5. Individuals save money when they use their library by borrowing materials rather than buying them, and by becoming more knowledgeable on consumer spending; personal finance; home and auto repair, and many other skills. Agree? Disagree?
6. The community's economy benefits when business people use library resources to make wise business decisions, employees use it to improve their job skills, or the disadvantaged use it to help break the cycle of poverty. Agree? Disagree?
7. Libraries are a municipal service readily available to all. In a year, more people will use the services of their public library than the services of most other municipal departments. Agree? Disagree?
8. Much of the libraries reference material is not publicly available elsewhere in the community nor could many of the reference books be purchased at local book stores. Agree? Disagree?
9. The public library is a major contributor to the community's quality of life. Large-print books and books on audiocassette can be essential to those with handicaps while

popular reading materials are in high demand by a large segment of the population.

Agree? Disagree?

10. The library is not just a collection of books; service is what makes a library. The collection itself is of little use unless a skilled, knowledgeable staff is available to organize and maintain the collection and help people use it. Agree? Disagree?

If you nodded agreement to the ideas set forth as to why library service is essential to a community, then I am going to risk another assumption. 1. That you are cooperating with your local educational institutions and offer materials and services to complement their programs as well as providing opportunities, and/or materials for independent learning. 2. That you have children's materials in the collection, sponsor summer and afterschool activities to encourage young people--that is toddlers through high school--to read, and that you are open on evenings and weekends. 3. That the collection is current, balanced, and accessible, 4. That you actively market the library to the community as a whole and target special groups such as the elderly, the unemployed, the handicapped, and the economically disadvantaged. 5. And that you have qualified staff.

I find it very interesting that these aspects of librarianship are the same ones that have been predominant in the editorial content of the Wilson Library Bulletin. As some of you may remember the Bulletin has just completed a year-long observance

of its seventy-fifth anniversary. In reviewing the articles and features that have appeared in the magazine during those years, the editors and I discovered that reference services, children's services, outreach services, and public relations were the areas of continuing emphasis in the magazine. Keeping in mind that the Wilson Library Bulletin's mission and purpose as put forth in volume one number one seventy-five years ago was to be "a clearinghouse for information and ideas about the practice of librarianship," in other words a filter through which the flow of information about libraries and librarianship passes."

But our charge at this conference is not to look back, but to consider library services for the future. Basing a preparation for the future on past experience is basically a passive activity. Trying to predict or anticipate events and adjust accordingly isn't the best way to develop library service. The question we must ask ourselves is not what we can expect to happen in the future, but rather what we want to happen in the future. As other speakers have said, we have to put ourselves into the equation for the future. Ken Macher, writing in the journal Association Management made the following observations: "Executives who manage organizations on the basis of experience only are primarily administrators. They tend to the tasks and events that have characterized their associations in the past, with the goal of being secure and preserving the organization.

After all, change is frightening. Because change threatens their security, these executives tend to make conservative decisions. (This conservative orientation is often encouraged by their boards of directors.) By doing so they create an environment that

breeds a chronic sense of financial impoverishment as well as a perceived poverty of possibilities."

If we take the other approach, I call it the Field of Dreams approach to the future, we envision rather than solely predict. We create a desired future in our imagination by capitalizing our assets and overcoming obstacles. Macher says that executives who manage with power, creativity, and hope are "Leaders before they are administrators. They provide vision and inspiration.... Their primary motives are service and usefulness."

But before we can consider the services for the future, we've to be clear about our library's mission and our philosophy of service. To express it in sixties terminology, "we've got to find ourselves." Or in the words of today's generation, "Get a life." We've to be able to put down on paper or better yet carve it in stone over the library entrance where everyone, staff and patrons alike, can see it and read it daily, a brief carefully worded explanation of the library's purpose. Here's an example that is eloquent and clearly stated. I didn't write it, but I wish I had. "The mission of the library is to provide the means by which people of all ages, interests, and circumstances may avail themselves of the recorded wisdom, experiences, and ideas of others. In support of this mission, materials are assembled, organized, and made accessible to all; opportunities for personal, educational, cultural, and recreational enrichment are offered; collections, services, and programs are developed to respond to individual and community needs; a skilled staff and the latest technologies are employed to facilitate and enhance the use of library resources. By committing

themselves to excellence in all facets of the library's service and operation, the board of trustees, management, and staff of the library reaffirm the democratic ideals upon which the American public library is founded." Doesn't that give you goosebumps?

Having articulated the library's mission we must go further and develop strategies of service that include specific measurable performance goals. This is when the fun really begins and we can prioritize and brainstorm and put together action plans. Deciding on the mission answers the "why" and the "what" of our libraries. Now we have an infrastructure to support the services.

I can't begin to tell you how important I think this process is to the success and survival of the small rural public library. Macher goes on in his article to talk about a connection between a strong mission statement fostering forward thinking and adds that as individuals we need to be a part of something beyond ourselves, of which we can be proud. We need to "believe that the institutions with which we affiliate...have standards. We want to know that they are committed to service, that they do not seek gain at the unfair expense of others, that the work force is treated with respect, and that the public is told the truth."

I would like to suggest a book you might find interesting while you're engaging in mission writing and strategy development for your library. The title is Perspectives on the Small Community: Humanistic Views for Practitioners by Emilia Martinez-Brawley. National Association of Social Workers, 1990.) Is anyone here familiar with the book? I liked it because the author approaches the study of a small community from a generalist standpoint. She combines social science theory with excerpts from

a variety of books and small town newspapers. The book focuses on the positive aspects of living in a rural area such as community pride and the retention of traditional values, as well as the negatives such as the lack of anonymity and confidentiality. I was disappointed that there is no mention of libraries. The information center the author talks about most often is the local barber shop. Nevertheless, I think you'll appreciate the theory more because of its close proximity to the literary references.

Now that we have composed a mission statement, and understand where we want to go, we are ready to look to the future, not as Marshall McLuhan described, "through a rear view mirror," not with just rose-colored glasses, but with a plan of action.

Lots and lots of services is probably not the route the small library will take. Rather we will have lots and lots of options. Through cooperation, resource sharing, coalition building, and of course, telecommunications and information technology, the small rural library can empower its users. I'm not convinced, as Dr. Marien suggested in his opening remarks, that we have to reconceptualize the public library. I view it as trying to be more creative and innovative in our organization, planning, promotion, and in improving communication among librarians, the community they serve, and those who create the resources, and control the coffers. We must be careful to ensure that there is liberty, justice, libraries, and access for all. Thank you.

Since a few minutes remain of my allotted time, and so the Dean from Clarion can go home and tell her grandson that at a meeting of librarians, someone did read

her a story, I would like to read to you from the book I cited, Perspective on the Small Community by Emilia Martinez-Brawley. Beginning on page 108 she describes the romantic vision of rural life with an excerpt from Booth Tarkington's The Gentleman from Indiana, first published in 1899. It depicts the small town as the place where morality prevailed, where community spirit flourished, and where people were able to create close genuine and lasting relationships. Tarkington's Plattville, Indiana was a microcosm of society.

"The Gentleman from Indiana is the story of John Harkless, a newspaper editor, and his involvement in the small town of Plattville. Harkless chose to return to Indiana after some years spent in the big cities of the East. 'I always had a dime sort of feeling that the people out in these parts knew more, had more sense and were less artificial, I mean--and were kinder, and tried less to be somebody else, than almost any other people anywhere.'(Tarkington, 1900a, p.182). Harkless had returned to Plattville in search of Gemeinschaft [lasting personal relationships]. He did not accuse city folk of cruelty or disloyalty, but he did not feel that the city was his community. He needed a personal community."

"Although a sense of the romantic ideal pervades Tarkington's writing...[you] will recognize the pervasive communal elements of small-town culture, elements that, although often ignored by ...practitioners, must be understood and appreciated. The following excerpt illustrates these elements.

## THE GREAT HARKLESS COMES HOME

The Harkless Club of Carlow wheeled into Main Street, two hundred strong, with their banners and transparencies. Lige Willetts rode at their head, and behind him strode young William Todd and Parker and Ross Schofield and Homer Tibbs and Hartley Bowlder, and even Bud Tipworthy held a place in the ranks through his connection with the "Herald." They were all singing.

And, behind them, Helen saw the flag-covered barouche and her father, and beside him sat John Harkless with his head bared.

She glanced at Briscoe; he was standing on the front seat with Minnie beside him, and both were singing. Meredith had climbed upon the back seat and was nervously fumbling at a cigarette.

"Sing Tom!" the girl cried to him excitedly.

"I should be ashamed not to," he answered; and dropped the cigarette and began to sing "John Brown's Body" with all his strength. with that she seized his hand, sprang up beside him, and over the swelling chorus her full soprano rose, lifted with all the power in her.

The barouche rolled into the Square, and, as it passed, Harkless turned, and bent a sudden gaze upon the group in the buckboard; but the western sun was in his eyes, and he only caught a glimpse of a vague, bright shape and a dazzle of gold, and he was borne along and out of view, down the singing street.

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
As we go marching on!

The Barouche stopped in front of the courthouse, and he passed up a lane they made for him to the steps. When he turned to them to speak, they began to cheer again, and he had to wait for them to quiet down.

"We can't hear him from over here," said Briscoe, "we're too far off. Mr Meredith, suppose you take the ladies closer in, and I'll stay with the horses. You want to hear his speech."

"He is a great man, isn't he?" Meredith said to Helen, gravely, as he handed her out of the buckboard. "I've been trying to realize for the last few minutes, that he is the same old fellow I've been treating so familiarly all day long."

"Yes, he is a great man," she answered. "This is only the beginning."

"That's true," said Briscoe, who had overheard her. "He'll go pretty far. A man that people know is steady and strong and level-headed can get what ever he wants because a public man can get anything, if people know he's safe and honest and they can rely on him for sense. It sounds like a simple matter; but only three or four public men in the country have convinced us that they are like that. Hurry along, young people."

Crossing the street, they met Miss Tipps; she was wiping her streaming eyes with the back of her left had and still mechanically waving her handkerchief with her right. "Isn't it beautiful?" she said, not ceasing to flutter, unconsciously, the little square of cambric. "There was such a throng that I grew faint and had to come away. I don't mind your seeing me crying. Pretty near everybody cried when he walked up to the steps and we saw that he was lame."

Every one meant to shake hands with him, and, when the speech was over, those nearest swooped upon him, cheering and waving, and grasping at his hand. Then a line was formed, and they began to file by him, as he stood on the steps, and one by one they came up, and gave him hearty greetings, and passed on through the courthouse and out the south door. (pp.366-370)

Thank you very much.

SOURCE:

Tarkington, Booth. "The Great Harkless Comes Home." in The Gentleman from Indiana (pp. 346-384). New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

Standing on the outskirts of the crowd, they could hear the mellow right of Harkless's voice, but only fragments of the speech, for it was rather halting, and was not altogether clear in either rhetoric or delivery, and Mr Bence could have been a good deal longer in saying what he had to say, and a thousands times more oratorical. Nevertheless, there was not a man or woman present who did not declare that it was the greatest speech ever heard in Plattville; and they really thought so--to such lengths are loyalty and friendship sometimes carried Carlow and Amo and Gaines.

He looked down upon the attentive, earnest faces and into the kindly eyes of the Hoosier country people, and, as he spoke, the thought kept recurring to him that this was the place he had dreaded to come back to; that these were the people he had wished to leave--these, who gave him everything they had to give-- and this made it difficult to keep his tones steady and his throat clear.

Helen stood so far from the steps (nor could she be induced to penetrate further, though they would have made way for her) that only fragments reached her, but what she heard she remembered:

"I have come home.... Ordinarily a man needs to fall sick by the wayside or to be set upon by thieves, in order to realize that nine-tenths of the world is Samaritan, and the other tenth only too busy or too ignorant to be. Down here he realizes it with no necessity of illness or wounds to bring it out; and if he does get hurt, you send him to Congress.... There will be no other in Washington so proud of what he stands for as I shall be. To represent you is to stand for realities--fearlessness, honor, kindness.... We are people who take what comes to us, and it comes bountifully; we are rich--oh, we are all Americans here!

This is the place for a man who likes to live where people are kind to each other, and where they have the old-fashioned way of saying "Home." Other places they don't seem to get so much into it as we do. And to come home as I have today.... I have come home...."

CLARION  
UNIVERSITY