NOTE: Barbara Doh, Children's and Young Adult Consultant, is collaborating with Mary Leggett, the editor of the C-E-F newsletter, on a series of comprehensive reviews of children's books. These reviews, which will be accompanied by suggestions for books for further reading, may be used as guidance material by librarians and by children themselves. This article is planned as an introduction to the series.

READING GUIDANCE FOR CHILDREN

Jimmy deposited EDDIE AND LOUELLA on the return desk and beamed up at the librarian.

"That was a good book," he stated firmly, "Will you find me another one like it?"

This scene, or a variation of it, repeats itself every day in every library, a golden opportunity for the librarian to guide Jimmy (and Jane, too, for that matter) to books that provide rich reading experiences. For this is reading guidance: the joint and voluntary participation of both child and librarian in finding "the right book for the right child at the right time."

There are those children who ask the librarian for help; there are also those who never approach the librarian except to return or to check out their books. The crux of the matter is to reach both, and to make sure that, with the librarian's help, each child leaves the library with the book that is right for him.

The essence of guidance is not just satisfying the child; it is more than that. It is a means of widening his horizons and helping him to develop discrimination in choosing books to read. Although parents and teachers may help with reading guidance, it is the prime responsibility of librarians, for under their supervision lies the large, well-chosen book collection to which the child comes of his own volition.

It is up to the librarian to make the library a place where a child finds an open door to knowledge, to pleasure, and to wonder.

While the librarian usually concentrates on one child at a time, there are
times when it is possible to discuss books quite informally with two, three, or
more children. Larger groups may be approached through the media of book talks,
television or radio programs, posters and bulletin board displays, or through
annotated lists that can be distributed to them.

There are, of course, certain indispensable requirements for "good" reading
guidance. The book collection should contain only worthwhile books and none of
the trivia. Good book selection makes the job of reading guidance easier. The
librarian must know her books - and read them. There is no substitute for first-
hand book knowledge. Children will enjoy the librarian's ability to tell,
extemporaneously, the exciting or dramatic parts of a story, to stop at the point
at which suspense urges the child to read the book himself, to know the background
and people in a book. It is a grave mistake for a librarian to pretend she's read
something children see through because quite easily and lose faith in the
librarian.

Reading is the answer for the librarian who wants to guide her juvenile readers:
reading children's books, books about children's books, and annotated lists of books
for children. This is how she learns what is good, and what is better. This is
how she learns to pick out books that mean reading growth to children.

The librarian, then, reads unwaveringly. She talks to children, thus becoming
acquainted with the differing levels of reading ability and the different kinds of
books a child may want to read. What are good "dog stories?" "Horse stories?"
What books incorporate several elements that lead a child to a wider variety of books?

Children are people. They must be recognized as individuals, with their own
interests, with their own likes and dislikes, with things that have a special
importance for them. Remembering a child's name means to him that the librarian is
aware of him as a person. Is reading hard for John? Are the books he's been reading
too easy for Joan? Does Martha like to read or does she consider it just an
extension of her schoolwork? It does help to know the general characteristics of
children at the various age levels, but actually, it is the synthesis of book
knowledge and child knowledge that makes "good" reading guidance possible.

There is nothing more discouraging to a child than to be given a book that is
far beyond his reading capability. Talking to him, watching what he selects by
himself, these things tell the librarian what level of reading a child needs. Here
the clarity of the text, size of print, quality and number of illustrations in a
book should be considered in selection.

It is equally important to guide the child who stays at a level that is, in
effect, too easy for him. The librarian's job, in this case, is to offer books
that meet his interests and yet provide, subtly, enough impetus for him to want
to move on to a higher level of reading.

The reluctant reader is a special case. We must be offered a "sure-fire"
book, one with instant appeal, for him, geared to his interests and easy for him to
read, easier for him, perhaps, than the reading he does in school. The librarian
must be ready to supply this for the reluctant reader and to have in readiness
other books he can read.

As for the child who will read only one kind of book, it is just as well to let him go along with this for a while. With luck, he may become satiated and turn to something else. He might be guided to a book that combines his favorite "dog story" theme with a story of some historical period; to a "horse story" that also tells about one of today's sociological problems; such as racial prejudice. The librarian should keep in mind the fact that while girls will read about both boys and girls, boys will seldom read about girls.

But what if, after all of this, the child rejects the librarian's recommendations? Then it is time to do some soul-searching: Have I listened to the child? Do I honestly know what he wants to read about, what books he wants to find? Have I thought of him as a person? Do I know children's books and my collection well enough to be able to guide him?

Very often, children are receptive to suggestions from their contemporaries. Encourage them to tell their friends about the books they liked reading. Much information can be gleaned from children who need only a little encouragement to pass on their enthusiasm for a certain book. They can be a valuable aid to the busy librarian to help her spread the gospel of good books and the pleasure to be had from them.

Let's go back now, for a minute, to watch our hypothetical Jimmy who is now happily leaving the library with HARRY AND KISSY and MR. TOPPER'S PENGUINS tucked under his arm. We have seen for ourselves how the fortuitous combination of child, librarian, and the "right books has turned out to be another rewarding exercise in reading guidance.

Barbara M. Spell
Mary G. Leggett

HEADQUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

SYSTEM DIRECTOR RESIGNS

Mr. R. Edwin Berry, Director of the System Library, has announced his resignation from that position, effective in March. He has accepted a position with the Library Extension Division of the New York State Department of Education, where he will administer a newly created Program Standards and Materials Unit.

Among his duties as head of this unit, Mr. Berry will evaluate and analyze library standards in the state; advise library systems on management and organization; and supervise publication of THE BOOKBIRD, a monthly state publication for librarians.

Mr. Berry has been with the Erie County Library System since 1962. During his years as director, a second bookmobile was added for reader service to this area. Also added during this time was an increasing amount of reference resources and materials at both the system library and its central library, Plattsburgh Public Library.
Announcement of the appointment of a new director will be made by the Board of Trustees at a later date. In the interim, Mr. Anthony F. Vecchio, Assistant Director, will serve as Acting Director.

THREE R'S MEETINGS HELD

A meeting of the chairman of the North Country Reference and Research Resources Council, Dr. Roger Greer, with Dr. M. Frances Breen, Librarian at State University College at Plattsburgh, and Mr. Berry, Director of the three county library system, was held at the Plattsburgh college on January 8. Purpose of the meeting was to investigate further into the survey of institutions in the northern six counties of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Jefferson...a survey that would identify these institutions and their current and potential reference and research needs. Dr. Greer is Librarian at State University College at Potsdam.

Mrs. Rose Waddell from System headquarters attended a second meeting of the Council in Watertown on January 18. A paper describing the project and its application to this area is being distributed by Mrs. Mary G. Parker, Librarian at Canton Agricultural and Technical College. Mrs. Parker is secretary of the organization.

TRUSTEES' MEETINGS

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library was held January 16 in Plattsburgh. Present were Mrs. Daniel T. Manning, Sr., AuSable Forks; Mrs. Lincoln Barnett, Westport; Mrs. A. J. Hecht, Plattsburgh; Mr. W. Hustace Hubbard and Mr. Richard W. Lawrence, Jr., Elizabethtown; Mr. Claude H. Clark, Bloomingdale; Mr. Paul Vogan, Mooers; Mr. John Stock, Tupper Lake; and Mr. William A. Harvey, Saranac Lake.

The next meeting, scheduled for February 6, will be the annual meeting at which officers of the board will be elected.

BOARD MEMBERS MEET WITH SYSTEM DIRECTOR

Three members of the Board of Trustees met with Mr. Berry at headquarters on Wednesday, January 27. Present were Mrs. Allan Everest and Mrs. A. J. Hecht, Plattsburgh; and Mr. Richard W. Lawrence, Jr., Elizabethtown.

SURVEY TEAM VISITS SYSTEM


Mr. Giles F. Shepherd, Assistant Director of Readers Services, Cornell University Libraries; Miss Lucille Wickersham, former Assistant Director of the Springfield, Massachusetts, Public Library; and Miss L. Marion Moshier, former Director of New York State Library Extension Division, met with Mr. Berry, Director
of the System, and with Miss Emma Walter, Director of Plattsburgh Public Library, central library for the System. The team consulted with Miss Walter, Mr. Berry, and the staff, on the kind of collection the System was trying to build up at its central library; how it was being used; and what ways could be devised to improve reference service. The team also checked the methods used by headquarters in handling requests from bookmobile patrons and member libraries.

Members of the survey team also visited Peru Free Library, AuSable Forks Library, and Keeseville Free Library.

In early April, the survey team will make a return visit to the System. The written report of the four system survey which will conclude the project is expected to be ready in May.

Cited as a major factor in speed of handling requests from members was the fact that member librarians could make free telephone calls to headquarters on matters involving subject requests. On checking with some member librarians, it was discovered that not all member librarians were aware that this could be done - and that permission to do so had been in effect for some time. May we please remind all member librarians that they may call headquarters, reversing the charges, when they have a subject request from a patron?

TELEVISION PROGRAM REMINDER

Please check your C-E-F calendar for month of February as a reminder to tell your trustees and patrons that Mrs. Doh’s television program for children will be presented on W P T Z on Thursday, February 11 at 1:40 p.m.

ANNUAL REPORT TIME

Annual reports from all member libraries are due before February 15. Please send yours in to headquarters now. In line with reports, you might be interested to know that 15,499 books were processed by the system in 1964; 294 films were loaned to organizations in the three counties, with a film attendance of 8,684. Bookmobile circulation went up in 1964 - reaching a total of 157,385, almost 6,000 more than the previous year.

DIRECTORY OF MEMBER LIBRARIES COMPLETED

We have completed a directory of chartered member libraries, cooperating libraries, and book stations in the three county system. They will be sent to each library on the regular delivery schedule.

A new and more comprehensive film policy statement is being included with the directory for each library.

HISTORY OF LIBRARIES IN THE SYSTEM

Research has been completed on member libraries in Clinton County and we plan to use the material from time to time in the newsletter. Further research will be done on member libraries in Essex and Franklin counties for the same purpose. A copy of the completed article on each library will be sent to the librarian for her
files.

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

The system has ordered posters, bookmarks, and other promotional material for National Library Week, which will be celebrated April 25 - May 1 this year. Materials will be distributed to all member libraries for their use in planning displays, special events, etc. in their libraries.

SYSTEM STAFF VISITS MEMBER LIBRARY

Mrs. Rose Waddell, Head Cataloger, and Mrs. Doh, Children's and Young Adult Consultant, met with Miss Madelia Buck, Librarian at Wells Memorial Library, Upper Jay, on Thursday, January 28.

STAFF CHANGES

Mrs. Carolyn Trivellino of Saranac has joined the headquarters staff as typist. We have a new piano: Tony Cincinelli of Plattsburgh. Nancy is a junior at State University College at Plattsburgh.

LOST, STRAYED, OR STOLEN

Five Junior Library Guild selections for December, belonging to Dodge Memorial Library, were reported as missing. They were mailed out in December but have not, at this date, arrived at their proper destination. Will anyone having information about the following books please call headquarters?

- Newbery
- Alika
- Rosetta
- Linnicott
- Alderman

STORMY KNIGHT

MEMORANDUM FROM MEMBER LIBRARIES

CHAZY PUBLIC LIBRARY - New officers have been elected to the Board of Trustees of this library. Mrs. Gerald Sweet is now President, Mrs. Elizabeth Fulton, Vice-President, and Miss Grace Gordon, Treasurer.

HAMMOND LIBRARY, CROSS PARK - Officers and new members were elected at a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. John S. Miller, Jr. is President of the Board; Mr. Fred B. Walsh, Secretary. Mrs. Gillis Bigelow was appointed to the Board, and Mrs. Herbert Burrows was made librarian to replace Mrs. Dailey, who has moved from the village.

ESSEX FREE LIBRARY - Officers and new members were also named at a meeting at the Essex Library. Mr. Ted Calloway became President of the Board and Mrs. Katherine
Noble the Treasurer. New members are the Reverend Robert Bishop, Dr. John B. Fine, Mrs. Harry A. LaPine, Mrs. Paul MacDougall, and Mrs. Elizabeth L. Brankman.

PLATTSBURGH PUBLIC LIBRARY - The library reports a gift of 60 long-playing Masterworks records from Columbia Records, New York City. The records will be added to the already large collection owned by this library and available to residents of Plattsburgh.

SARANAC LAKE FREE LIBRARY - The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of this library will be held Wednesday, February 3, at 8 o'clock in the evening. This meeting at Hotel Saranac is the only one open to the public during the year. Officers of the Board will be elected. The program also includes movies from the Kolegester collection of former winter carnivals at Saranac Lake, and slides of last year's spectacular St. Regis fire.

ADDENDA: You may have been as confused as we were at the three different addresses given for National Library Week in three different periodicals - all of which led us to believe that N.L.W. had miraculously been given the gift of tri-location and prompted the following:

TO YOU, NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK, WHEREVER YOU ARE...
* at 58 East 40th St.
   New York City
   (ALA Bulletin, Jan., 1965) or

* at 58 West 40th St.
   New York City
   (Top of the News, Jan., 1965) or

* at Church St. Station
   P.O. Box 272
   New York City
   (Publishers Weekly, Jan. 11, 1965)

I sent a letter out to you
But back it came, and lord knows who
Had stamped across the envelope
"No such address". I tried to cope
And checked back in the ALA
(Their Bulletin) - to my dismay,
It gave the address I had tried
To no effect...I thought you'd died
And that, by April, we would be
Draped all in black, dear ones, for thee!
Sadly, I turned to TOP OF THE NEWS
And found you again; I was badly confused,
For they listed you at 40th West
While PUBLISHERS WEEKLY thought it best
To cast their vote for Church Street Station;
I paused in silent consternation:
Now I knew you were somewhere - and still composes mentis,
My problem is this: Since my natural bent is
To read every word in professional journals
And regard these same words as gold nuggets and kernels
Of wisdom embellished with infinite graces -
I BELIEVE when they say you're in three different places!

M. Leggett

R. Edwin Berry, Director
Mary G. Leggett, Editor