

PROMOTION + PUBLIC RELATIONS = PUBLICITY

1.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

THE KEY

“Isn’t it wonderful,” one of the Directors of National Library Week Steering Committee was saying, “that (BIG MOVIE MOGUL) is serving as Citizen Chairman for California? . . .” On and on went the talk about the good fortune of that state to have such an illustrious person work with the librarian who was serving as NLW Executive Director for California. Other large Northern, Mid-Western, and Western states were singled out for praise at the annual Mid-Winter Business Conference of the American Library Association. All that was fine and deserved; but I noticed that the states called on for reporting activities were talking in terms of plans to be made. Long before this time, Georgia had already been attracting considerable national attention for its public library development; so as Executive Director of Georgia’s National Library Week, I fully expected to be asked about our State proposals for celebrating NLW. This didn’t happen. Finally I jumped to my feet in behalf of my state: “In Georgia we began planning last fall and are well underway. The Citizens Chairman is Abit Massey, one of our state’s brightest young businessmen, who was first recognized nationally as Vice-President of the U. S. Junior Chamber of Commerce, which originated Operation Library on a nation-wide basis.

“Abit (Lucile Nix’s nephew) has been working with us for several months now outlining and preparing for a broad program in Georgia. We have one hundred fifty busy local committees including librarians from all kinds of libraries. We have the cooperation of state-wide news and communication media. Our special projects touch all age levels. Everything points to a fine NLW.”

As I sat down I had the satisfaction of hearing a gasp go over the crowd and a murmuring of "ah's" and "oh's" interspersed with "unbelievable! One hundred fifty committees?" Well, I thought, Georgia may not be the most prestigious state in wealth measured by greenbacks, but we are busy getting the job done.

What we were doing in the West Georgia area was a sample of exciting things that had been happening all around the state not only for the year in question but also in the past. I know this to be fact because I was serving as Georgia NLW Executive Director for the third year. In 1959 Dr. M. D. Collins had served as our Georgia Citizens Chairman. In 1960 and 1961, Abit Massey served in that capacity. Every year we promptly set up active committees all over the state.

Our own Regional Young Adults joined Senior Adults in 1961 in preparation of feature articles: Books That Linger, The Challenge to Youth of Librarianship As a Career, Importance of the Public Library To The Community, Hope Chest of Books, West Georgia College Pre-Masters Library Training Program, The Role of the Trustee In A Dynamic Regional Library Program, to name a few. The Staff at Headquarters spotlighted the Student Library Assistants through the news media — press and radio — as well as in special clinics. The Regional Library Board joined the Staff in inviting all governmental units to visit the libraries on a Special Recognition Day or a Know Your Library Week. The Mayors issued NLW Proclamations (as did the Governor). We prepared special tapes spotlighting services of all kinds of libraries to be given via radio daily. We made talks to civic, cultural, and educational organizations.

Activities like this have definitely played a major part in establishing the West Georgia Regional Library System as a coordinated program. Such recognition does not come easily. Staff and Board and Friends of the Library have worked at it all the time.

Invariably at the college I organized the Library Education class with a chairman named by the class, and several groups, the latter electing their own leaders. A topic for a cooperative class project was chosen and various aspects of it assigned to different groups, involving indepth study and research. For a brief time in each class period (two and one-half hours) we shared. Each group was permitted to meet in its own circle, then report progress to the entire class. Discussions were led by the chairman.

Later in the year, each group under direction of the leader had to refine its material, outline and develop it, then ready it for submission to the class. The chairman and all leaders had the responsibility

then of working the various group papers into a cohesive production to be mimeographed and lightly bound for practical use. (A copy was always filed with the college.)

One year the class I taught chose **Promotion of the School Library** for its topic. The front of the booklet they prepared bore a line drawing of a character with book in hand and megaphone at mouth, with this message: "Read all about it!"

I was very impressed with the Foreword written by this class (Remember: no student was a librarian as they were all teacher volunteers.)

"The school library should be the pivot point in the total school program. In the final analysis, it is only another potential area for good, unless a challenging program is undertaken, inspired by real purpose and retooled by constant evaluation.

"Once the goals are decided upon, promotion is the key to a successful school library program. There are several factors involved. Nothing of course serves the cause better than good service. . .

"Orientation, Publicity, Creative Activity, Good Service — all are inter-related; yet each is significant and should be considered as an effective medium of promotion. . ."

How true this is in all libraries! As my college class had put it: . . . "promotion is the Key . . ." The public library which proposes to move along in the mainstream of community life must constantly promote its philosophy, its goals, its activities, along with its materials. Publicity has been a focal point in our successful library story. Of course we have always kept in mind that there are two broad aspects of publicity. One — which I will be necessarily delineating through this whole story in some detail — is derived from programs; cooperative efforts; service; philosophy, attitude, activity on the part of staff and boards; the very atmosphere and appearance of the library and its grounds — all of which within themselves have kept the name of the library "in the news" to some extent; or effected recognition of the library on the part of the general public.

The other aspect of publicity which we have utilized constantly is the special effort to announce library activities or services via the news media, by printed information cards or sheets, through notices on bulletin boards in the library, or exhibits of materials, and by special announcements at group meetings.

Any part (or all) of these types of publicity naturally resulted in further spotlighting of our library by others. As I have said, for the first twelve years or so after our library System was started in 1944,

educators and librarians from many states and representatives from over a hundred counties came to study our system, our services, and our program in action.

About two years after the Regional System was started, Nora Beust, a Specialist in School and Children's Libraries in the U. S. Office of Education, and the compiler of **Best Books for Children**, visited us. She gave me much encouragement — as did Gretchen Schenk, author of **COUNTRY AND REGIONAL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT**; Helen Hiatt, noted journalist and foreign correspondent for the **NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE**; Marion Gilroy, Supervisor of the Regional Library Division in Saskatchewan, Canada; W. G. Buick of Australia; A. E. Browning, Deputy State Librarian of Tasmania. All were interested in seeing what we had accomplished in rural and regional library development.

Dr. K. R. Kalia, Director of the Department of Education in India, whose visit was made possible under a grant by UNESCO — stayed long enough to accomplish an indepth study. His purpose, he told me, was to devise a Pilot Library Project for India, based on our program, with headquarters at New Delhi.

Voice of America brought in a team led by Sonny Fox, who enthusiastically interviewed the staff and patrons in the area, taping the story of the West Georgia Regional Library, including a day on our Bookmobile. The story was translated by the Voice of America Staff into fifty-eight languages for transmitting around the world.

In 1954 we welcomed one of the most popular visitors we ever had — Eleanor Phinney, a Research Specialist for Rutgers University, who was shortly thereafter appointed Executive Secretary of the Adult Services Division for ALA. Eleanor spent two weeks in our area studying our library program, observing it in action, and gathering information to write a book. Her stated purpose was "to identify the common elements in the planning and management of adult education programs in libraries which have achieved general success (community response and reasonable accomplishment of goals). The practical purpose was to put into the hands of all librarians the means by which they can study and plan for their own library situation." An additional stated purpose was to "furnish teaching materials to use in library schools to improve the instruction of adult education staff members."

West Georgia Regional Library was one of five libraries in the eastern quarter of the U. S. chosen to participate in the case study. Eleanor's specific interest in our situation was to discover something of the effect of the American Heritage discussions upon the thinking of participants as well as upon the general promotion of the library

services in the daily lives of adolescents and adults. The background for our program was exciting to her because the State of Georgia under the guidance of Lucile Nix had formulated an excellent plan for state-wide participation in the American Heritage ALA program. Eleanor amazed me with her rather calm assimilation into the groups which gathered specifically to talk about themselves as a part of the discussion groups. Her resulting book — LIBRARY ADULT EDUCATION IN ACTION, published by ALA in 1956, was given a fine review by LIBRARY JOURNAL.

Following this national publicity, many other librarians and educators found their way to Carrollton to see what we were doing; but not a single one was more delightfully received nor more admired than was Eleanor Phinney.

As I look back on the visits of such distinguished librarians, authors, educators, government officials, journalists, I am reminded again that we were truly pioneering — experimenting in the world of Rural Libraries, attracting so much interest that our fledgling effort became known far and wide. It makes me very proud that our beloved State took the lead in this innovative rural library program and that our own local leaders in the West Georgia area quickly seized the opportunity to make it possible.

A great contributing factor to our effective promotion of library service has been the fact that the leaders of our communities have always been well represented on the Regional Library and Branch Library Boards. No Director or Head Librarian has been so fortunate as I in having the official governing authority as a partner. Any stature we have attained can first of all be attributed to the fine vision and support of the official Board Members who walked with us every step of the way. So supportive were they that it was as though the Trustees were with us in person in every activity, whether it related to a national, regional, state, or local purpose. They have been proud of our work with professional associations and agencies, and said so, recognizing that what we were doing was bringing prestige to our own library system and to the state. They frequently took leading roles in Association activity. If the Georgia Library Association's offices called on a lay member or professional to carry out a special assignment, there was never once a negative response.

Louise Green served as Chairman of West Georgia Regional Library Board when our fine headquarters was built. She also served in several important capacities, such as Chairman of the Nominating Committee for the Trustees Section of the Georgia Library Association; and Chairman of the Fourth District Georgia Citizens Library Committee.

Andrew McGukin was the outstanding Chairman of the Neva Lomason Building Committee, as well as Chairman of the West Georgia Regional Library Board; and Chairman of the Arrangements Committees for the North Georgia Trustee Institute.

Hubert Griffin was considered for top Trustee Award in 1958 by the ALA Committee who had the responsibility to select the two outstanding Trustees in the country, because of his superb job as Chairman of the West Georgia Regional Library Board, for his regular participation in the Georgia Citizens Library Committee, and particularly for his amazing leadership in Operation Library Programs (especially the Tournament of Books Festival.)

Annette Winn took a leading role in numerous workshops and institutes sponsored by the Public Library Division of the Georgia Department of Education. She initiated the plans for beginning and expanding the Lithia Springs Public Library and finally in the building of a new library.

All such activities afforded our Board Members opportunities to meet and work with outstanding Trustees and renowned citizens in Georgia and the nation.

Names of great people like Delmas Wheeler, Virginia Young, Dr. John E. Clouse, Germaine Krettek, Sara Srygley, Jo Severinghouse, Ann Woodward, Betsy Harrington, Elmo Ellis, and Grace Stevenson — to name a few — crept into discussions not only at Board meetings but in wider circles as our trustees met and learned to respect such unselfish and capable leaders. The results of these relationships have added to the development of our program as well as to the spreading of our public library story-in-action.

Even with the blessing of our Official Board, the constant encouragement and counselling of our Georgia Public and School Library Consultants, all this state, regional, and national promotion which ultimately so enriched our services, would never have transpired without a Staff dedicated and faithful to the daily and well as the special responsibilities. They gave substance to our library's philosophy and ideas. They have truly made West Georgia Regional Library what it is today. The willingness to work together and accept special Staff assignments as well as the absolute belief in our goals have given the West Georgia Regional Library Staff the ability to succeed. Newell Spangler, Office Manager, frequently participated in library institutes, both for practicing librarians, library school students, as well as for high school student library assistants; Edith Morehead, Children's Librarian, held many story-telling workshops. She also served one biennium as Secretary of the School and Children's Section

of Georgia Library Association. Fannie Mae Davis has long been a consultant on the history of Douglas County.

Angie Cook helped to develop the Carroll Adult Coordinating Council, which was the brainchild of our Library Staff, bringing together once a month representatives of all agencies working with adults, to pool ideas and cooperate in carrying out programs.

In the early years of our development in the region Mary Baxter and Rudene Hollingsworth were ever my strong right arms, managing all bookmobile services in our five counties. Helen Bailey became something of an authority in bringing all agencies in the extension services in close harmony with one another. Evelyn Pope, Lillie Digby, Ann Garrett, Doris Kaylor made good public relations in direct service come alive from the youngest to the oldest citizens in our area. Rudene Hollingsworth became (and is) one of the best Reference Librarians I have ever seen.

Leroy Childs, who succeeded me as Director of West Georgia Regional Library, served in many important capacities, at home and elsewhere, among them: Coordinator of service to Negroes in the segregation era; on the Board of Directors of Carroll Chamber of Commerce; member of the Board of Registrars for Carroll County; Representative to the Georgia Council on Advisory Public Library Committee for State School Superintendent; Treasurer on the Governor's Pre-White House Conference on Libraries and Information Series Committee; Chairman of the Library Development Committee for the Georgia Library Association as well as Treasurer of the Association; Sixth District Representative on the Georgia Governmental Relations Committee.

In a word, the Headquarters Library members of my staff deserve a great deal of credit for our success story. Through their dedication, the record has been made and recorded.

A significant part of any Regional Staff is its Branch Librarians, who in most instances are appointed by their own Board. Without their devotion to the library's over-all program, none could succeed. Some of the work they do, often on limited budgets, never ceases to amaze me. A case in point is Carol Brown, former Librarian of Warren P. Sewell Memorial Library of Bowdon.

Even before her Library's "Open House", Carol was holding orientation teas for all civic, cultural, educational, and social clubs in her town and the surrounding communities.

When we trained her for the assignment, we had to tell her something only once. She **thought** on the job. She recognized the role of

the Regional Library and Bowdon's role in the enterprise.

When the Bowdon library opened, she already had begun formulating a program. Her philosophy was truly a reflection of my own: the beautiful building is a civic accomplishment; yet without a program it is but brick and mortar — a skeleton without a soul. Carol worked with all age groups. She began book-reviewing hours; Christmas Decoration Clinics; film forums; drawing classes; discussions on the history of Bowdon and on Indians and artifacts in the area.

Carol Brown could be classified as the ideal Branch Librarian with the right philosophy in action. She saw the Library as the center of community activity. It was not always easy for her in the early stages; but she showed sound judgment at all times, keeping a quiet tongue and a confident manner.

Looking back as I now do upon the recognition of our Regional Library and its expansion and enrichment, the true expression of gratitude should rightly be given to the Staff. Some have been more effective than others of course; however, each has had a part deserving of commendation and praise.

2.

GIVE-AND-TAKE

Just what is the specific purpose of all the scurrying around to promote the public library program, you may wonder. Often to a certain degree, promotion and good service are two faces of the same coin; for one certainly would be the counterpart of the other. We had to "sell" the idea to the people that the public library would be an asset to the community. Only by so doing can we secure adequate tax support. The selling job, both a **saying** and a **doing** proposition, was continuous.

Just where and how did ours begin? Even before we had books, much less library buildings, we had the people. I hope you already see that it was to the people that I turned. It is my own nature to be outgoing, to love people; so it was with great expectation in the fall of 1944 that I moved into the mainstream of life in Carroll and Heard Counties.

Usually I was alone, but I was never lonely. As the days and weeks went by, people began to recognize their "library lady." I was making friends and sharing with them — first borrowed materials, then our own books. As I drove all over, I always leaned out of the car window and waved — at old or young, black or white; furthermore, I was **happy** doing this.

I could not offer much in the way of individual library service in those early stages of our development; but I hoped to become an image in the consciousness of the public. It would have taken decades of time for me to develop our service had I not also utilized the medium of organized activity to get to the people.

Hello! Listen to this was my posture as I visited every community that had a meeting place — a clubhouse, a school, explaining who I was and what libraries were all about. I made contact with every public official, explaining our goals. I offered my time as a speaker or as a resource person for cultural, educational, or civic meetings. All groups heard me say again and again that I had a firm conviction that the Public Library should reach beyond walls into the heart of community life. I tried always to leave the thought with them that the Library was to be an Educational Institution concerned with all our people. I stated frankly that we were beginning with little other than a dream and the determination to make the dream become a reality. Everywhere I met with that marvelous warmth and affection that one can experience, I veritably believe, only in rural America, especially in the South and in our own state. Under such circumstances I found myself opening my heart and mind to the people, becoming more deeply involved with their concerns. The response was a deluge of love and gratitude! This outreaching of hands and hearts made me resolve even more to serve within the circle of community life. I never paid too much attention to the term "public relations". I had within me a longing to bring the library and the people together.

As the months and years rolled along and we added other counties to our region, demands upon my time to make speeches at various meetings increased. I took advantage of every request, because it was invariably my custom to bring some phase of the library program or books into the presentation. Often I was allowed to choose my own subject. In any event, I made myself available as a resource person and without fail, brought something of the library world into the program.

Once many years ago, I was asked to give a graduation baccalaureate sermon at an elementary school in the country.

"Do you know who this is?" I asked the Principal. He guffawed at that.

"I just might tee off on Hawthorn's **Great Stone Face**, you know."

"That will be all right," he replied. "We are in trouble. Our speaker was to be the Reverend 'So and So', but he has come down with something like appendicitis. I have to get a speaker quick and you have never turned us down."

"Well, I tell you," I said, "I'll come out and speak if you will let it be known that your Regional Library has again served the purpose of your community — that is, if the speech is OK, but be very quiet about the Library if I fall on my face."

"Agreed!" he said. "In addition, we'll give you a fine country dinner. We're 'spreading' at the school."

That is not the only time I found myself involved in Sunday morning business in the pulpit. In the late winter of 1954 West Georgia College asked me to arrange a Sunday program at Old Camp Church to introduce Mr. Habrish Seth, Executive Officer of a Special Project from India. Mr. Seth and his wife were in Carroll County for six months to study agricultural methods. The Seths knew the library program; as a matter of fact, they had been on the Bookmobile with us.

It was at the time of the Seths' visit that I really began to enjoy a pleasant friendship with Ralph McGill, the notable editor of **The Atlanta Constitution**, who had great admiration for Dr. Ingram, and was a party to the plan to bring the Seths to America and Carroll County.

I decided it would be interesting that Sunday at Old Camp to have Mr. Seth explain his religious faith (he was not a Christian) and then draw members of the congregation into a discussion of the differences and similarities of Hinduism and Christianity. It was stimulating experience.

After the church hour was over, we stopped to chat with ten or fifteen members, who remained to talk personally with the Seths. I shall never forget what a kick Mr. Seth got out of the question one small boy posed as he looked the stranger from India up and down:

"Where's your bow and arrow?"

I remembered another time when the Seths and I were on a trip to Center Point Public Library Center at Huckeba's Store, after a jolly good conversation including the storeowners, the Huckebas, several rural citizens both black and white, my Bookmobile staff, and me — Mr. Huckeba said to Mr. Seth:

"Have you ever eaten sorghum syrup?"

"What it is?" Mr. Seth asked. "I know nothing about it."

"Wait. I'll just give you a jar of it." Turning to Mary Baxter of our Staff, he said:

"Here. You present it to him."

Mr. and Mrs. Seth were delighted, but had to ask, "How do you eat it?"

Often I found there was a definite hold-over from friendly give-and-take to a serious need for library services. I never had a finer business friend than Jimmy Holmes, a prominent Carrollton merchant, who had no hesitancy in calling on the library frequently to find answers for some knotty problem. Once, early in the morning, for instance, he called to say:

"Edith, I always think of you when I need help. I have a letter here from a business firm in Rome, Italy. It is in Italian and I can't make it out. If I bring it to you, will you see what you can do with it?"

"Of course," I said. "Shall I run up to your store to get the letter?"

"Oh, no, I'll be right there to bring it to you."

When he handed it to me and I looked it over, I explained that whereas Italian is one of the Romance languages (I had studied Latin throughout high school and college) I could not do an adequate translation. There was enough difference to stump me. I reminded him, however, that a "good librarian does not have to know all the answers. She knows where to go to get them." If he would leave the letter with me, I promised to get a translation for him immediately.

After Jimmy had left the library, I put in a call to our State Readers Services (then known as Extension Services) explaining to Lucile Nix, the Chief Consultant, that I wanted to get a translation immediately for a businessman in Carrollton. Just at that point, a dozen school and public state-level educational supervisors from all over the Southeast came in to attend a meeting in the department. Lucile called me back to tell me she was turning the request over to a staff member (and in those days — as now — there weren't many of them) to pursue. They would get back to me as soon as possible.

Well, not satisfied with waiting, I sat down at my desk to ponder alternative help. Suddenly I recalled that Bobby Moore, a young Carrollton Businessman, and a World War II veteran, had married an Italian girl. I knew her pretty well as she had begun to frequent our library. I called Julie and asked her about bringing the letter to her for translation.

"I'm coming to the library this morning," she said. "I'll be right there and I'll be glad to help you."

The question had to do with a piece of garden sculpture. Jimmy's order had been understood except for the term "statue". Further explanation was needed before the company could ship exactly what he desired.

Julie, upon first reading the letter, midway through it, burst into laughter. Puzzled, I said:

"What gives, Julie?"

"Look. Right here in the middle of a paragraph about the order, he breaks the thought to say, 'I have just returned from the Riviera. Have you recently been to the beach?'"

She then translated line by line while I wrote in English just below. I assured Julie she was a fine resource person, to stick around to handle all Italian needs. Before noon, I was ready to tell Jimmy that his problem was solved.

"Edith, I tell you again," he said. "You people just can't be beat!"

"All in a day's work," I laughingly replied.

We have always worked very hard to maintain the trust and respect of our business men and women. One satisfactory experience creates additional requests for help. This constitutes good public relations which is a requisite to good service, and eventually "sells" the public library and its programs to everyone.

Long ago we established a fine camaraderie with West Georgia Mills of Whitesburg, a town, sixteen miles or so from the Carrollton headquarters. The officials and I became quite good friends via telephone, to the thorough satisfaction of us all.

I recall once we were asked by West Georgia Mills personnel to try to find out when a hardware show would be held — possibly, he said, in the early fall; where it would be, he thought in New York — just maybe; what the registration fee would be; and whom should he contact to get the mill into the show, etc.

"I'm sure we've got you this time," he laughed as he spoke to one of my staff. "We've just waited too late to do this."

The staff member searched for the information in vain. We just didn't have the current reference tool to answer it. I came in shortly after this and she related the problem. I promptly headed for the

nearest hardware store, where I asked to see the latest issue of any hardware magazine. There it was, spelled out in detail: what, when, where, how. Returning to the library, I called the mill and asked for my friend.

“Got a pen and paper handy?” I nonchalantly queried. “Take this down” — and I rapidly poured into his surprised ear all the data he needed to enter West Georgia Mills in the national exhibition.

“Well!” he sputtered. “Where did you get all that?”

“I don’t give out trade secrets,” I laughed. “It should be sufficient for you that you have your need answered and that you have West Georgia Regional Library standing by, always ready to serve.

Good “public relations” first of all implied “good service.” To quote a well-known axiom: “What you **do** speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say.”

3.

ONES OR DOZENS

I am finding it more and more difficult as I put my thoughts to paper, to draw a line between good public relations through effective services and cooperative programming on one hand and publicity on the other. They are, as I have said, in a sense counterparts. I have always been aware that a library is a cold institution if it does not relate to the people — their needs, and their dreams. Attitude is part of it. Keeping the public informed about all facets of the library program is imperative. Making a constant effort to attract and hold the attention of the area people is necessary.

The very early contacts were easy ones. Speaking to the P.T.A. organizations in the Forties and Fifties was the best means of communicating to the largest number of rural people — both men and women. Home Demonstration Clubs of course were comprised of women working in their own communities to learn and to share programs and activities for the betterment of home and community life. They seemed humbly grateful to have any part in activities that would improve home and family life. (This was evidenced by the decision of the Demonstration Clubs to purchase a Demonstration Bookmobile for the PUBLIC LIBRARY DIVISION of GEORGIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.) The purpose of our library effort was to enrich life as they saw it. Their support and loyalty was wholehearted and constant. We never gave up on a request for

“library” help from any of these Demonstration Clubs or from their fine Council. We rushed materials to any club meeting to answer expressed need. Years later, when we occupied our beautiful Neva Lomason Memorial Library, which has a fine, sizeable meeting room, we called upon these ladies to share with the public, through such activities as quilting bees, home preparations for Christmas decorating, garden flower arranging for special events, and weaving baskets, etc. They invariably responded. As we developed Branch Libraries, the same things happened in their programs. Our story of service got around by word of mouth, as well as by news media reports.

Through these two types of organizations — (P.T.A.’s and Home Demonstration Clubs) — I encountered not only community leaders but also the followers. First we set up exhibits of books and invited the members of the groups to look over the collection after the meetings. Soon, however, I was being asked “to be” the program or to take part in the program. I never declined unless there was a conflict in dates.

This traveling on my part predated the day of the wild element as we have been experiencing recently. During my tenure, I had only two frightening experiences while traveling alone to give programs. One incident happened in broad daylight, around ten o’clock, when I was on my way to make a speech to a county teachers association, driving the library station wagon, clearly marked “West Georgia Regional Library, Carrollton, Georgia.” As I rounded a bad curve, I came upon a long line of slow moving traffic; so I dropped back slightly. Up behind me came a truck from an Atlanta wholesale business.

The truck driver decided to pass, even though we were coming on a blind hill, disregarding the safety of any oncoming vehicle, as well as any car on our side of the road in the line. As luck would have it, a car approached us, going rather rapidly towards Carrollton. To avoid a head-on crash, the truck driver cut right back into our line just in front of me, pushing my vehicle off the road. I was fortunate that the ditch was not deep enough to cause a bad wreck.

Traffic behind me stopped until I was safely back on the road. I immediately speeded up to try to get the tag number of the truck, but there were so many old tags and signs across its back that I could not find it; so I pulled on up at a safe straightaway and passed the truck, looking sternly at the driver. Though I said nothing to him, I know the driver read my feelings on my countenance.

I continued along without further to-do; however, suddenly I realized the truckdriver was furiously chasing me. I speeded up as much as the wagon would allow (I always felt that little puddle-jumper was surprised.), all the time looking for a safe turnoff point to get away from the truck. I was about five miles away from the small community of Sand Hill with a crossroads in it. I intended to pull off the highway with no forewarning; but as I rounded the curve into the center of the village, I noted that the traffic pattern was such that a sudden turnoff would endanger people's lives. There was nothing I could do but continue.

Meantime, a car behind the truck speeded up and at the crossroads, the driver passed the truck, getting his car between the truck and my little library-on-wheels. By glancing in my mirror I could see this car was weaving back and forth to keep the truck from passing to get me again.

I knew that some three miles further on was a five-road junction, which Old Timers call "Little Five Points." I decided to try that turnoff but not to signal it till the last possible moment. I did and the car protecting me quickly turned off too, stopping behind me to block off the truck should it try to follow. The latter was forced to speed on past the store where I had finally pulled up. As the truck raced on, the driver of the car and I both got a good side view, with the business name clearly painted on the side of the truck. I was momentarily badly shaken. The friend-in-need came to my car and said,

"Miss Foster, you may not remember me, but I am a member of Carrollton Kiwanis Club and certainly know you. You know that truck was after you, don't you?"

I said, "Yes, the driver pushed my Station Wagon off the road back yonder just beyond the intersection of Highways 166 and 61."

"I saw it," he said, "and realized you might need help. Where are you headed?"

"Douglasville, to make a talk," I told him.

"Well," he promised, "I'll follow you on to Douglasville, that is part of my territory and I am enroute now to Douglas County."

"I'm going to turn off here on this cross-country route," I said, "to avoid that truck in case the driver is waiting somewhere on the main roads."

Mr. West (my friend) then went into Boggs' Store (he later told me) to call the Georgia State Patrol. After taking the receiver

down to make the call, he hung up because he realized I had gone on as I was afraid of being late for the meeting.

When I saw through the rearview mirror that his car was topping a rise to catch up with me, I stopped, waiting, to let him know I had my bearings and was all right. He explained that I should have called the Patrol Headquarters so the truck could be stopped before it got out of Carroll County.

"No," I told him. "I hope you will understand but that was a black man driving. If I make an issue now of this, considerable publicity will follow. I am trying to develop a confidence in me on the part of our black citizens. I have promised to help them through library service and not to belittle or cheat or bemean them, if they will trust me. I am not hurt. I even may have aggravated the matter by trying to get his tag number."

"Well, the little wagon is easily recognized," he said. "Promise that you will come back by Patrol Headquarters and at least report the happening against any further harassment." This I promised to do — and did.

When I returned to Carrollton, I decided to go by the Sheriff's office in the Courthouse to report the incident. He urged me to let him prepare a warrant, but I declined. I still think I did the right thing. I chose to remain silent and I feel confident that in so doing, our library effort continued to receive the good will of our black citizens, who believed in our sincerity and ability to do what we said we would.

The other distressing incident occurred at night. I had gone to Lithia Springs, some thirty-five miles from Carrollton to handle a film forum for the P.T.A. A social hour followed the meeting. This took some time, after which I talked privately with Annette Winn, Principal of the School, and Vice-Chairman of the West Georgia Regional Library Board of Trustees. It was exactly eleven o'clock when I left Lithia Springs for home.

I carried our portable 16mm projector to use because I was familiar with it and found it easier to thread. As I left, I placed the machine on the floor directly behind the driver's seat. I drove from Lithia Springs to Douglasville on U. S. Highway 78 but then turned on to State Highway 5, wanting to get on a less congested road to make better time.

As I braked just about a mile south of Douglasville, the projector turned over with a bang. Not wanting to risk damage to the expensive equipment, I pulled up the emergency brake, left the motor idling,

and stepped out to right the machine and brace it. Both doors were open. Just then over the rise came a car truly flying. I was clearly outlined by all lights including a bright glow from the full moon.

I quickly jumped back into the wagon, locking the doors, and moving hastily on. That car chased me for eleven and one-half miles! The driver tried to run me off a fill, to jam me, to pass me. I do not as yet know exactly how I avoided a devastating wreck. I recall that I said to myself, "Take the collision. No fills!"

Thinking about possible houses where I might get help at that hour, I sped on to the intersection of Routes 5 and 166. At this point, for some inexplicable reason the car chasing me circled and sped back towards Douglasville, but not before I could see by moonlight that two white men were in the car. That was the end of that — and the end of my traveling long distances at night.

I remember that only two years after I had started the Regional Library System, a group of gardeners called upon me to assist the local club in a project. This was an opportunity and I seized hold of it.

With approval of the Carrollton Library Board and the help of the Carrollton Garden Club, we set up a Garden Center in the Carrollton Branch Library, which was in City Hall. Mrs. H. H. Word, then President of the Carrollton Club, approached me about adding books on gardening to the local collection. In talking with her I discovered that both the Georgia and National Garden Clubs annually gave awards for the garden centers (books) selected as the best on the state and the national level. Local members wanted to try for such an award. We agreed to work with them in setting up the Garden Center.

A committee was appointed. I challenged the club to donate funds toward the purchase of books, which we would match from our library budget, if the books could be made available for use in the region. This was agreeable and books were bought to balance the collection. The club called in a photographer to get pictures to be sent to Georgia's **Garden Gateways** sponsoring the contest, along with the cooperative story, the checklist of titles, and the application for consideration of the top award.

To the joy of not only club members but also the Regional Library Staff our entry won the Georgia Trophy. Immediately the substantiating material was sent on by the Georgia Federation of Garden Clubs to be judged nation-wide. There the Carrollton Public Library Garden Center won the National Trophy. Thus good public relations and fine library service, provided to be excellent publicity.

For years the Douglas Public Library Branch Staff has made the library available for the Douglas County spring flower show. I saw the flower show each year and was highly pleased with the way it always related to the library and its purposes. The publicity and good will were worth every moment of sacrifice and effort put into the project.

The senior citizens are one segment of our society that the library has always striven to serve. We never plan an annual program of services that does not include them. We just try to work things out in consideration of their infirmities, tired eyes, dependency upon others, and transportation, etc.

One of the earliest efforts to reach as many Senior Citizens as possible was a weekly thirty minute library radio series called **Golden Age**, on WLBB. In the advance publicity, I explained that the purpose of the radio program was a "bit of service to the so-called **Golden Age** and that we hoped the program would be of interest not only to those of three score and ten but also to all who sometimes became a little weary in well-doing, or who liked to browse through old scrapbooks."

I invited all listeners to share their favorite poems, stories, etc., with others by sending me a copy of them to be used on the air, making the program a many-sided amateur production. The response was great. For some time I had been writing a weekly column for the **CARROLL COUNTY GEORGIAN**; so sometimes I coordinated the written and the spoken efforts. We continued this program for several months then switched to a more personal approach to working with Senior Citizens by organizing an Armchair Travelers Club, a write-up of which appeared in **ALA Bulletin** in June, 1959.

By this time I had on my staff a very unusual young matron who was superlative in public relations — June Hart Wester. June brought the sort of personality to the library program that makes friends from every direction. We worked together to select the countries to "visit", to book good films for our purpose, to get people who had a firsthand knowledge of the areas and at the same time were known to show respect for the age group involved. We prepared a "Passport" for each participant, bound in simulated leather, which was duly stamped at the beginning of each "trip". The gold seal of the library was on the front of the passport, which contained eight pages. The whole program was named "Book's Tour."

Data included such clever information as, "Visas must be obtained by you before entering each country:

An Open Mind

A Keen Interest

Some Background of Country Gained by Reading of Books, Periodicals, or Viewing Movies

“Restricted Items — Prejudices, Misunderstandings, Fixed Minds, Race Superiority, Dislikes

“Customs Regulations — Remember some things new to you are the customs in other countries and they may be unlike the customs of our country. Respect their customs as you wish them to respect yours

“Countries visited —”

Since we had no Library meeting room at that time we had to find a meeting place. My mother offered our home. June worked on arrangements for each program and made plans to get each Senior Citizen there if transportation was necessary, as it always was in some cases. We got co-sponsors whenever it was feasible. It built up good public relations and invariably kept the Library before the people.

The good news will get around if the library patron has been served efficiently and pleasantly. Nothing can possibly supplant the importance of the happy user in spreading the gospel of the public library.

I grant you that the librarian must be dedicated to giving good library service, must accept the individual as he is, must genuinely care about people and must know the library collection and services; otherwise, the patron will turn away from the library with his problem unanswered, with his need unfulfilled, with a sense of frustration.

Sometimes the patron did not know exactly what he or she wanted.

One of our Branch Librarians, Fannie Mae Davis, was asked by a young patron one day for the book “**Quiet Thing**” by Jack London. Confident that what he really meant was “**White Fang**”, she nonchalantly offered it to him with no fuss or bother, to the great satisfaction of the reader. Another day our Bookmobile Staff, overheard two little girls giggling as they stuck their heads inside to say,

“We want that **ROBERT AND PLUTO.**”

“**ROBERT AND PLUTO?**” one of the Staff questioned.

“Yes’m.”

“Are you wanting a Disney book?”

“No’m”

“Well, is it a dog story?”

In disgust the child said: “Aw you know that book about that man on that island that had that black slave!”

“Oh, you want **ROBINSON CRUSOE.**”

After the book had been checked out for them at the store, the kids explained that their teacher had been reading it aloud in their schoolroom but had to stop at a crucial time in the story.

This type of mistaken request happens daily. Nothing big was made of it, since we wanted everyone to feel comfortable and important. The result invariably was a warm relationship.

We heard about a German family moving into our community. Shortly afterwards, the husband received a very serious burn over most of his body at work, necessitating that he remain in the hospital several months. Hearing about it, I contacted him at the hospital, giving him some American magazines which could be discarded. Realizing that the family had been in this country only a short time and would enjoy reading material in German, I communicated with the West German Embassy in Washington, arranging for books, newspapers, etc., from Germany to be mailed to him while he was confined to the hospital. Do you doubt the gratitude of that family?

Frequently I discussed individual needs with the Georgia Public Library State Consultants, as I did in the case of a fine-looking young man who walked in for a private conference “with the head librarian.”

“I am just out of a mental institution,” he said, talking quietly. “My doctors there said all I need now is more self-confidence. ‘Go to your public librarian and explain your situation. You will get help’, I was told. Can you help me?”

I almost quailed before the seriousness of this specific application of bibliotherapy; but I calmly assured him we would work up a whole packet of materials for him, follow on his reactions, and go from there. With state counselling, and several talks with my family physician, we moved ahead to answer his need. It wasn't a simple assignment, however. We were as usual subconsciously concerned with the image of the library, as well as with answering properly this unusual need.

Many times these personal requests afford us constant surprises and joy. It is not always a face-to-face service. The telephones at headquarters and branches, ring with service requests hundreds of times a day.

A year or so ago a call was transferred to the Reference Department and the patron informed Rudene Hollingsworth at the beginning of the conversation that she had been making trash cans out of egg cartons, and after making fifty-one, she wanted to try something else.

"Do you have patterns?" the person unknown to us asked.

"Sorry. We have no patterns," she was told, "but . . ."

"What about all those things in that room at the library?" she broke right in.

"We have a hobby show going on now," Rudene explained. "People have brought in things they have made but they don't belong to the library. It is an exhibit."

Then Rudene explained that the library did have books about making objects of craftsmanship.

No, she said, that wouldn't do. Her eyes were too bad for much reading, but she could take patterns and use them. Besides, she added, she had books. Some friends had given them to her.

"I have a friend," she said, "who brought me a book. It says in there to consult your public library. If you don't have what I want, why did the book say consult your public library?"

"We have a good many books on crafts that might interest you," Rudene kept on gently urging.

"How much are they?" she wanted to know.

The librarian explained that the library lends free.

"Well, she sighed, "I have too many ailments to get over there, but my son-in-law could come."

"All right, fine," she was assured. "He can register and get a borrower's card."

"Oh, honey," she said, "he's just as honest as I am."

Rudene explained patiently how easy it is for someone to get a card.

"Well," she answered, "that's mighty nice of you. **I want something to tell me how to make flowers.**"

At last we discovered her need which, incidentally, was answered and we found a new patron who made some of the dull routines in librarianship a minor problem. How wonderful are the appreciative users! Why, indeed, suggest consulting your public library if the library cannot get you the answer you need.

We know it is also imperative in developing good patron-library relationships, to know just when to let the patron alone if he prefers to look out for himself, asking help only as he finds he must.

Two of our users were at the Neva Lomason Memorial Library not long ago, at the same time, something that had not occurred before. Both Senior Citizens, lived counties apart, and were quite different in personality and attitude. It was a strange encounter. One came in several times a week. He was what we call "a browser, who enjoyed looking over many different types of books and other reading materials. He usually stayed at the library several hours each visit. The other one came only when he had a definite reason. Both were in their 80's. (I'll call the frequent user Mr. Smith and the special occasion user Mr. Jones. The names have been changed to protect the "guilty").

Mr. Smith, who was pretty deaf, had been in the library for quite some time, enjoying browsing through first one book, then another, quietly tending to his own business, sitting at a table in the middle of the Reference Room. Mr. Jones came in and went right to the Reference Room where he reached up to pull down some books of an encyclopedia set. This was standard procedure for him. He obviously felt that he could satisfy his curiosity for himself. Our Reference Librarian practicing good librarianship, knew Mr. Jones wanted to be left alone.

Some moments passed before Mr. Jones put the volumes back on the shelf, hesitated, looked around, and spotted Mr. Smith. He walked right over to him, interrupting his browsing, but not apparently disturbing his serenity at all. They shook hands, then Mr. Smith said (Remember, he's **very** deaf!) loud enough that other patrons as well as staff on duty as far away as the Circulation Area, heard him:

"Well, I've been taken for other people, but never for **him**. (We didn't know whom,) What do you do?"

"I make pictures of men over 100 years old. I haven's had much to do this week. I did go out to the cemetery and make one of a tombstone."

Mr. Smith asked, "Do you mean a hundred year old man was under that tombstone?" (Rudene said she had thought she knew Mr. Smith well, but right then she discovered he has a sense of humor.)

"Yeah. He lived to be 100."

A moment lapsed, then Mr. Smith said:

“One time I was mistaken for another up in Tennessee. I was just walking down the street and a car pulled up. Somebody leaned out of the window and yelled: ‘Come on, Doc?’ I didn’t pay attention ‘cause I wasn’t Doc. He kept on yelling and finally that man pulled his car over, jumped out and ran over to me. He grabbed a-holt o’ my arm and said: ‘Come on! Doc. My wife is having the baby’.

“You know, I almost had to go and deliver that baby? He just wouldn’t believe I wasn’t Doc. Ain’t that something?”

Mr. Jones said, “Well, well, I do say. A Doc, huh?” There was a pause while both men laughed fit to kill (everybody joined in), then Mr. Jones, seeing Rudene walking towards the bookstacks where he had examined the encyclopedia volumes, turned to her and asked for a medical book. Rudene told me later that she sensed the time was at hand when Mr. Jones realized if he were to get his purpose answered, he must turn to the librarian for guidance. He had stalled long enough.

She found him a medical dictionary and moved away. He stood there looking in it, then turning, walked over and handed her the book. When she said she hoped he had found what he wanted, he said,

“Yeah. I found out I ain’t crazy . . . They just think I am.”

Knowing when to take over and when to leave the patron alone, when to laugh and when to hide one’s amusement and properly practicing this knowledge, is an art. It is public relations at its best and carries its own built in potential for good publicity.

We built a bridge with individual and with group which after thirty-two years, was extended and reinforced across the stream of everyday life in our region. We put this wide-spread “togetherness for good library services” to a severe test in the late Fifties when we produced our fabulous Operation Library — A Tournament of Books Festival. The result was more than dramatic in many ways.

4.

“DAY-LONG CROWING”

By this time we had begun to enjoy continuous publicity. In October of 1957 occurred a phenomenal experience that illustrated the high regard of our library program in the hearts of our people and it may very well prove in time to be the most unique library

activity ever jointly undertaken in this country. It took a year in the planning and a day in the doing.

Late on the afternoon of October 2, 1957, Dr. I. S. Ingram, standing on the steps of the College Administration Building talking to J. Carson Pritchard, the Director of Adult Education, and the Chaplain, said (referring to me):

“What will she do about the outdoor barbecue tomorrow if this rain continues?”

“Carson replied (he later said to a group of friends, including me): “Oh, you needn’t worry about Edith Foster. She said she’d prayed it wouldn’t rain; so it wouldn’t **dare** rain! She’s in some sort of cahoots with the Lord!”

To tell the truth, I **have** been walking sort of circumspectly ever since that very Special Day because I promised Providence that if it just wouldn’t rain at the wrong time and spoil our Big Barbecue and Parade, I’d be good the rest of my life. I knew it was too much to expect **no** rain, for the wet stuff had been pouring down for two weeks. When I said “at the wrong time”. I was talking about the “outdoor portion” of our Day of Days, which is by way of saying, the glamorous part of our fabulous Library Festival — A Tournament of Books, during which the National Library spotlight was on the West Georgia Regional Library. As I reminisce, I find myself still caught up in amazement at the success of this gigantic production.

Though I had considered it before in a sort of yearning way, the idea of seriously undertaking the festival first came into focus while I was participating in a two-week institute at Wisconsin State College, Milwaukee, in the late summer of 1954. This institute had been one of the most vital experiences of my early career as a librarian. On the general theme: **Informal Education Through Libraries**, it was sponsored by the Wisconsin Free Library Commission under a grant from the American Library Association. At the conclusion of the institute, Robert Ake, Consultant for the Connecticut Department of Education; Muriel Fuller, Consultant of the Michigan State Department of Education; and I, as participants, were given the assignment of summarizing the institute through a panel discussion. In the course of our give-and-taks, Muriel said something of profound importance. I took her words with me: . . . “when you get too far ahead of the group with whom you’re working, you are no longer a leader. You are just alone.

Then the fabulous Gretchen Schenk. Coordinator of the Wisconsin Institute, in her concluding summary, brought my whirling thoughts into line as she cautioned that we not try to move off into too many

directions, having been confronted with so many ideas at the institute, thus dissipating our forces; rather, sit down with paper and pencil, and list priorities.

I returned with a firm conviction that if West Georgia Regional Library was destined to make its mark, I must take it step by step, carrying our people along with me. With paper and pen I sat down to list the immediate priorities and up popped the number one need: a library building. I needed additional assurances now, before any definite plans were set into motion, that in separating our library *per se* from West Georgia College, the people would accept our independence, approve such action, and give tax support to secure and to maintain regional headquarters as a public institution.

Through means of a festival, I asked myself, could we spotlight the library program across county lines so that at a given time we could gain the attention of people from all segments of our society — to become “the talk of the town”? What sort of festival should it be? Who of the public would help us plan and carry it out? How could we finance it? What time of year should it be held? Where would it take place?

All during the fall of 1954 and 1955, I kept the idea of a festival in focus. In the summer of 1955, an event transpired that would shortly bring about a healthier climate for most Public Libraries across the nation and would play a big part in our successful effort to get our own Library Headquarters.

On August 8, the Arkansas Jaycee Board of Directors, following an effort by the West Memphis Jaycees in the early summer to secure a one mill tax levy to support public library improvement, adopted “Operation Library” as its chief priority. Every conceivable type of library support was undertaken by that civic club in Arkansas from assisting with tax support measures to building construction.

Roger Babson, the famed economist, made this statement which was to be quoted from coast to coast: “The most valuable asset of your community is its Public Library — not its swimming pool, ball park, or golf course.” Jaycee Chapters across the nation were galvanized into positive action to remedy the deplorable library situation brought to light by the 1955 Congressional hearings on proposed legislation which ultimately resulted in the Library Services Act, amended later to become the Library Services and Construction Act.

Georgia Jaycee Board of Directors hopped right on the idea of sending it out on its list of approved priorities, with Carrollton Jaycees moving promptly to get in touch with me to learn what the library

needed and how Carrollton Jaycees could help. Their fine President, Bobby Holmes, invited me to come to their next dinner meeting as their speaker. I talked of the need for our own library. They understood we just could not build this overnight, but they were ready to cooperate in any project I would recommend as a step in the right direction.

I told them of my dream to have a library festival. They could sponsor it as an **Operation Library** project. "If you will pledge your support and help at the proper time, I will outline a proposal for a library festival."

The Jaycees voted unanimously to take a leadership role in the proposed festival. They would await word from me to organize the effort. The Regional Library Board approved, and my Staff was enthusiastic. I then decided to talk with the public library consultants of the State Department of Education.

"It is a terrific idea!" they said. "Nothing like this has ever been done by a library in the country. Think of the publicity the Jaycees will enjoy from this, as well as your library. Go ahead with your plans. You can rest assured we are interested and will help you all we can."

Our regular services and programming proceeded uninterrupted; but every day or so without fail, our staff and Board members discussed possible plans for the festival. I wanted to have a pageant based on book characters in the morning at the College Auditorium, involving every school in the region.

"You write the pageant," one of my staff said. "Do it in rhyme." I agreed.

The question here was: how to get all the schools to participate. One night in the wee hours as I pondered about it, the answer came to me. Let each school pick its own book, poem, story, what-have-you — select the child or children to take the part, and get its own interested P.T.A. members (or parents) to prepare the costumes and bring the children to take part in the pageant to Carrollton. In my thinking I elaborated on the idea: The setting will be a Library. The idea will be that in the stillness of the night, characters would step out of the books' pages to have a party. Get a craftsman to construct a "book" about nine or ten feet tall, out of which the characters would step onto stage. A Reader would give the jingles as each book character suddenly appeared. (Later in the plans, that "Reader" became "Miss Once-Upon-A-Time" — name of the pageant.) To draw the **Public Library Division** of the **State Department of Education** into the program, we invited Miss Roxanna Austin, State Consultant, young

and attractive, with a fine speaking voice, to take this role. I could hardly wait to get to the library the next morning, to try my idea out on the staff. They all loved it!

"We'll want a big parade, too," I threw in after we had wrung the discussion of the pageant dry. "If we plan the makeup of the participating segments, the Jaycees will work out all technical details and manage it, I know."

We certainly should plan an evening hour with a librarian as guest speaker who is well-known in America and abroad. The finale will of course be presentation of awards and citations by the Jaycees."

Meantime Dr. Ingram had assured me that the college would cooperate with us fully. "Feel free to call on our Faculty to help if you need them. When you set your date, let us know promptly so we can place it on our calendar and avoid conflicts in scheduling."

I had already made contacts all over the region to see what support I could expect. I talked with business men; with P.T.A.'s; with civic and cultural clubs; with church groups and leaders. Nowhere did I have a negative response.

In late 1956, I went back to talk with the Carrollton Jaycees about our proposed program of activities. I asked that the Jaycees take the leadership in making and carrying out specific arrangements, calling the Festival by their own slogan — Operation Library. I would come up with a theme in the near future. They promptly named a Festival Planning Committee, with an outstanding young attorney and civic leader, Aubrey Gilbert, as Chairman, to work with us.

At that time J. Hubert Griffin was Chairman of our Regional Library Board. He and all the other members were solidly behind our project; for they realized that future progress demanded that we improve our facilities and budget if we are to assume the true role of a public library.

Eleanor Phinney, one of the country's greatest library research specialists, had told us that our weakness was in working with the individual. She had made it clear that she understood why this was true. We simply could not accomplish the quality or quantity of service while operating out of a small space, without proper facilities, too small a staff, and practically no budget, etc. We knew she was correct. We simply had to have a headquarters where we could build collections of materials to answer individual needs, to develop a Reference and Research Department, to offer Reader's Guidance, and to give all sorts of other service to the patrons. My Board was convinced as I that if we could produce a gigantic festival with busi-

ness, cultural, civic, and educational agencies participating fully, we could prove that our library program had reached maturity and was now ready to operate and function as an institution "on its own" with sufficient funding from the participating cities and counties.

Meantime I kept chewing on ideas for a theme for the Festival. Finally it came to me: "A Tournament of Books"! I was ecstatic, to say the least. Upon reaching the office of the Public Library Division to report, I just said the words: "A Tournament of Books". All the consultants loved it. Upon my return I called my Executive Board Members. They said: "That's it!" The staff was gleeful. When I reported the idea to the Jaycees, they thought "Operation Library: A Tournament of Books" was perfect.

By way of preliminaries, the Jaycees immediately took out a half page advertisement in the local papers:

"Carrollton Junior Chamber of Commerce endorses the broad, constructive program of West Georgia Regional Library because

An enlightened citizen is a better citizen.

Developing citizenship is the ultimate motive of any worthy library service for no community is greater than the members.

The alert public library cooperates with all agencies for public good.

The public library has a responsibility in the shaping of a wholesome community philosophy."

We settled down to work: a joint meeting was held with the Jaycee Planning Committee and West Georgia Regional Library Board to go over the proposed plans — pageant, parade, evening presentations — and to set a date for the festival. We set October 3, 1957, as the Operation Library Day. Various working committees were set up, with a Jaycee on each.

Specially prepared bookmarks for preliminary advertising were widely distributed, bearing this jingle:

Operation Library

We'd be proud

To have you come

'N' join the crowd.

Tell ever'body!

Pass the word:

"Remember the Big Day —

October 3rd!"

Printed stationery carrying our caption was used in all correspondence, with special notices to key people and organizations not only in our area but over the entire United States, announcing our plans.

Some of the Festival activity and publicity involved such things as: local radio programs at WLBB, beginning in the summer and climaxing with an on the spot broadcast of the parade; throughout the summer television programs on Atlanta ABC and CBS T.V. station affiliates, with the Jaycees, the Director of West Georgia Regional Library, the Mayor of Carrollton, the President of West Georgia College, the Director of local Chamber of Commerce featured; a barrage of correspondence to invite important personages outside the area to be on hand; and weekly publicity through the local press to keep the general public informed step by step on the development of the project.

We decided the Big Day would involve four events: (1) the pageant "Once-Upon-A-Time" would be presented in the auditorium at West Georgia College, (2) followed by the barbecue out in a grove of trees on the campus.

In the afternoon at 3 o'clock in Downtown Carrollton, the Jaycees would direct (3) Floats on Parade: A Tournament of Books, with celebrities reviewing from a stand to be built in the center of Adamson Square. At eight in the evening, (4) an address would be given by a famous librarian, and awards and trophies would be presented by the Jaycees to the winners of the afternoon parade, with Georgia Jaycee's own Abit Massey of the National Board of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, as our special guest.

Late in the afternoon of October 2, the heavens opened again as they had been doing for two weeks, drenching the whole state down to the eleventh layer. The Jaycees fired off this telegram to Ray Moore at WSB-TV:

WESTERN UNION

Ray Moore

WSB-TV Weatherman

Dear Ray The Carrollton Jaycees in special session have unanimously elected you chairman of a special committee in charge of weather for our Operation Library Parade October 3rd at 3:00 pm STOP There are 100 floats, bands, and marching units entered in this tournament of books parade not to mention the thousands of people who will be on hand to witness this spectacle STOP You are urgently requested to do something about this lousy weather we are having STOP Either stop this rain or come on down here Thursday with a truckload of

umbrellas STOP Expecting much sunshine.

Bill Wester, Parade Chairman
Carrollton Jaycees

Ray read the wire on the 11:00 pm news with this comment: "Now isn't that a sneaky way to get publicity?" So — out on the weather went the news . . . It paid off, as next day we had both TV and Radio coverage, as well as representatives of eight magazines and newspapers present making pictures and writing stories.

Of great interest should be the fact that we had **no rehearsal** for the children in the Pageant. I had prepared instructions for our adult assistants to use in priming each child **just moments before he or she** stepped through The Book. About ten of the public school people on the committee in addition to most of my Staff, were there to tell the children what to do. I had "talked through" the lines several times with the two exceptional children who were the Hobbits in the pageant. These very brilliant youngsters, Carol Green and Jan Roush listened carefully to my explanations and were ready to keep things moving on stage, doing this with finesse and aplomb. People were astounded when they learned the pageant had not been rehearsed at all.

The rain around Carrollton quit before pageant time. Our outdoors barbecue jointly sponsored by the Jaycees, the Kiwanians, and the Lions Club of Carrollton, the Regional Library Board, and West Georgia College, was great fun. To add to my joy, Bob Freeman, one of the publishers' representatives and a close friend, was on hand, using his car to help get people to and from the college. I had not asked him to do this. Bob Atwood, another publisher's representative — a love of a person — brought some of our distinguished author-guests over from Atlanta. These spontaneous gestures of cooperation brought the publishing world right into the heart of our committee. I never will recall the "ups" of A Tournament of Books without thinking of our many friends in the publishing world!

The Jaycees did a magnificent job in planning and managing the parade. The Douglas County Chapter (newly organized under the sponsorship of the Carrollton Jaycees and directed by their fine President, Ed White), joined the Carrollton Chapter under the Presidency of Lee New, along with Aubrey Gilbert, Bill Wester, Dudley Crosson, and other key Jaycees, in working out the Douglas County participation, and in handling the details of the parade that day, as well as the evening program. The other agencies involved in planning these events included West Georgia Regional Library, West Georgia College, numerous civic clubs, industries, cultural and social clubs, churches,

public schools, the Georgia State Department of Education (Public Library Division), rural improvement clubs, several library associations, Girl and Boy Scout Troops, 4-H clubs, the LaGrange Motorcycle Police, the Georgia State Patrol, the City of Carrollton, and the Carroll County Sheriff's Office.

Special guests on the Reviewing Stand included Whitlow Wyatt (baseball great), Medora Field Perkerson (author), Dorothy Scofield (author), Grace Stevenson (the Deputy Director of the American Library Association), Dr. M. D. Collins (the State Superintendent of Schools), Congressman Jack Flynt, Ann E. Lewis (Publisher of the **Georgia Magazine**), State Representative Edd Duncan, Mrs. Mercer Poole (Chairman of Radio and Television for the Garden Clubs of Georgia), Mrs. Haschel Vannard (Editor of **Garden Gateway**), the reigning Miss Georgia, Jody Shattuck — and Susan Hayward.

My close associate and friend among the Georgia Library Directors — Byrd Ivester, one of the three original "guinea pigs" in the state program, who created the Northeast Georgia Regional Library at Clarkesville — had come down early on October 3rd to see the pageant, as well as the parade. As the clouds began to threaten again moments before the parade got under way, Byrd had taken her stance on a corner of Adamson Square, where she easily could see the Parade pass and also have a clear view of the Reviewing Stand. She told me later that my Board Chairman, J. Hubert Griffin, had rushed by her, enroute (it turned out) to Griffin's Department Store to get a supply of umbrellas to keep the special guests from a threatened drenching. Upon his return, as he pushed through the crowd at the corner, some viewer — not knowing Hubert — said:

"What an enterprising young business man!"

Come to think about it — it **was** enterprising to get in a position to get to protect Susan Hayward's red head from the weepy skies! (She later on was to serve for three years as an Honorary Board Member). Hubert was a good business man — and he certainly was one of the finest library trustees that Georgia or this nation has ever had.

There were approximately one hundred groups in the parade, including marching units and bands. Themes for the floats varied from single poems, like **When the Frost Is On the Punkin'**; to the historically famous Atlanta Constitution penman, **Bill Arp**; from a pantomime of **Elvis Presley** in action to **Mother Goose** and various little Gooses. All the floats were carefully planned and prepared. One was unique and stark in its appearance. Midway in the parade, there appeared a horse-drawn wagon. On the seat were two women. Behind the seat was an old apple crate, turned into a bookcase, which housed a variety

of volumes. On top of the case was a de-leaved tree limb about two feet high, with particles of Christmas tinsel interspersed about the twigs. The theme was: **Every Day Is Christmas.**

The marvelous Gentrys (and the Greys I learned later), had called Teallie Kent at Centralhatchee to contact me for permission. I was delighted to have our country Bookwagon participate. It rained so much, however, that the little settlement was buried in mud. They then called Teallie to find out whether or not a family in Roopville could substitute for the book-loving people way out there in the country. The friends had a wagon identical to the one used by the Gentrys. We said it would be fine, to go ahead. **Every Day Is Christmas** was the idea, and to anyone there that day who loved books enough to recognize the hunger that goes along with reading, this just might have been the outstanding float in the parade — though of course it won no trophy. It was too shockingly simple; but when you've said "Books Make Christmas Every Day", you've said it all! (with apologies to something.)

George Morman, Head of the Drama Department at West Georgia College, was the Master of Ceremonies on the Reviewing Stand. Using a loudspeaking unit, he introduced the celebrities and announced each unit as it passed in review. (After the parade, from the Reviewing Stand, with umbrella protecting from the rain, which by that time was falling in a steady drizzle, Susan Hayward signed autographs for about thirty or forty minutes.)

The Jaycees used walkie-talkies throughout the afternoon most efficiently to keep things moving and in order. Through their excellent management, everything went off like clockwork. By this time I had been standing up and flitting about all day. My feet were stumps but my! that full heart of mine was dancing to a happy tune. I was ready, I thought, for a fine dinner with committee leaders, state consultants, and our lovely guest speaker for the evening — Mrs. Grace Stevenson, Deputy Director of the American Library Association; but somehow, my cup was already overflowing!

Grace Stevenson, our featured speaker for the evening part of our Operation Library Festival, was also to be our guest for two days and the importance of her presence was not lost to the library or the adult education worlds. (Grace at the time was President of the National Adult Education Association of the United States.) She gave a brilliant address on "Old Wine in New Bottles". I was deeply grateful for her commendation to our people for working together to make the West Georgia Regional Library possible, for supporting its purposes and philosophy, and for emphasizing the importance of in-

dependent thought in our democratic society. (The next evening Grace was guest speaker at a dinner in her honor planned by the "College in the Country" — the famous adult education informal program originated by West Georgia College.)

Jaycee Aubrey Gilbert presided at the evening Operation Library festivities, introducing special guests on the rostrum, including Abit Massey. Lucile Nix, the Chief Library Consultant, Georgia State Department of Education, introduced Mrs. Stevenson. Aubrey, assisted by fellow Jaycees from Carrollton and Douglasville, presented loving cups and plaques, as well as certificates of merit, to all the winners in **The Tournament of Books Parade**. It was a fitting climax to a most rewarding affair.

Frequently I was asked by "outsiders" just what I hoped to gain by this time-consuming one-day extravaganza. A Librarian associate of mine (from the State of Wisconsin) had said: "The idea of a day-long library celebration **sounds** good, but I fail to see how you will benefit from it."

Samray Smith, the Editor of the **ALA Bulletin**, asked me to state why we sponsored the festival, for publication in the March, 1958, issue. I stated that **Operation Library: A Tournament of Books** was the greatest example of good public relations that I ever knew in the area of library services. Charlie Reynolds, the National Chairman of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, said of our **Operation . . .**

"It is the most dynamic promotion I've heard about — terrific is not the word!"

Our public relations posture was greatly enhanced following this effort. In 1958 I was asked to serve as liaison between ALA and the U. S. Junior Chamber of Commerce on the national Operation Library Joint Project.

Celestine Sibley writing about our festival in her **Atlanta Constitution** column late in September, just a day or so before our **Operation Library: A Tournament of Books**, said we "were out for a day-long crowing." We were. I think we woke up the whole barnyard.

So what? So we got our first library building within ten months following the Big Day. I think there was hardly an individual, an institution, a business, an organization, a local government agency that was not in some manner in or touched **by** the project. It was a fine example of "togetherness". It resulted in Publicity with a capital P — and if that isn't **promotion**, I give up.