Across Towns and Across Times: Library Service to Young People in Rural Libraries 2002

By Lisa Bitterman

The original article "Across Towns and Across Times: Library Service to Young People in Rural Libraries" was written by Ristiina Wigg and published in *Library Trends*, Vol. 44, No. 1, Summer 1995 on pages 88 thru 111. The focus of this article will be to update and compare information in Wigg's article to that of rural youth services librarianship in the year 2002.

Between 1995 and 2002, youth services librarianship in rural communities has stayed the same in many ways; however, new challenges and issues have brought change to library services for young people. Changes in demographics, technology, and expectations for libraries have led to new ways of looking at librarianship.

Characteristics of the Rural Community

Ristiina Wigg's article provided a definition of rural by J.D. Stern that is still valid: "a settlement with a population smaller than 2,500 or population density less then 1,000 residents per square mile." It is important to remember that rural populations can be found in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties (Wigg, 1995, p. 90).

Stereotypes about what rural America is like abound. One of the most prevalent is that all rural residents live on farms and have little access with the outside world. Carol Perroncel (2000, p. 30) in her paper, "Getting Kids Ready for School in Rural America", states otherwise. "Fewer then one in ten rural people live on commercially active farms and two-thirds are employed by either manufacturing or service industries." Perroncel holds that "growth in rural employment is occurring primarily in hotels and tourist operations; financial, health, legal, and government services; and retail and wholesale trade" (Perroncel, 2000, p. 30).

In her 1995 article, Wigg described issues facing rural schools that are also applicable to rural libraries:

- the wide range of economic situations in the community
- high poverty levels
- restricted funds

- younger and less educated teachers and principals compared to those in other areas
- remote location
- limited opportunity to continue educational training (Wigg, 1995, p. 90)

Two issues facing the rural community that were not mentioned by Wigg in 1995, but have more recently come to prominence are homelessness and migrant families. In her article "Homeless Children: Addressing the Challenge in Rural Schools", Yvonne M. Vissing (1998) reports that homelessness is usually seen as an urban issue that faces primarily single adult males when in fact "rural homelessness is as prevalent as urban homelessness." She writes that "homelessness... presents a more pressing challenge for rural than urban educators because of the higher rate of homelessness involving families and children" (Vissing, 1998). Vissing suggests that communities, libraries, and schools need to have resources to meet the needs of both the homeless child and adult. Having materials on heath-related topics, career resources, as well as, books, electronic resources and other materials to meet homework needs are necessities (Vissing, 1998). Rural librarians must remember that poverty in rural areas creates transportation problems and makes the luxury of an Internet connection unlikely (Boyce, J. & Boyce, B., 2000, p. 50).

Migrant workers and their families are another group on which librarians need to focus time and effort. "In some areas, migrant workers move in and out of the community as they perform temporary or seasonal work, sometimes settling in the community and bringing with them their own languages and traditions" (Perroncel, 2000). To better serve this population, librarians should consider acquiring culturally diverse materials, making materials in foreign languages available, and hiring a bilingual staff member.

Rural librarians need be creative in their efforts to provide services to their populations. They have to consider various locations such as schools, community centers, and other places where they can gain access to un-served community members. Promotion of library services is important, but simply posting a flyer in the library window will not get the job done. Providing information to the community can be a challenge, but by making library services available to the public through cooperation with local businesses, schools, and community centers the challenge can be overcome. Providing bookmobile outreach and books by mail service, as well as, creating satellite locations are some ways to do this. Rural libraries wishing to provide services to the entire rural population face many challenges, including limited budgets, staffing problems and time management issues.

Characteristics of Youth Service Librarianship in Rural America

According to a NCES 2000 survey, 2,583 public libraries serving populations of 2,500 or less have been established in the United States. The NCES, Report 2001-307, (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2001) reported that, nationwide, the circulation of children's materials was 612 million, or 36% of total circulation. Attendance at children's programs was 46 million.

New York is a state with a large rural population. Wigg reported in 1995 (p. 91) that "over half of New York's public libraries served communities with populations of 5,000 or less" and "of those...90% reported no librarians with a Master's degree." According to *Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 1998, NCES report 2001-307*, New York had 446.1 librarians without a MLS degree from an ALA accredited institution and 3,373.2 with Master's degrees from an ALA accredited institution (NCES, 2001, p. 60).

Another state with a large rural population is Montana. The NCES reports that Montana has 79 public libraries and 34.6% of the total circulation is children's material. There were 38.2 paid full-time staff members who hold a Masters degree from an ALA accredited schools and 100 paid full-time staff with no degree (NCES, 2001, p. 60). Sixty-Six public libraries in Montana have no staff members with MLS/ALA degrees (NCES, 2001). According to Wigg's 1995 article (p. 91), Montana had only six professional children's librarians working throughout the state. In 2002, Diane M. Gunderson (personal communication, March 20, 2002), Data Coordinator for the Montana State Library, reported in an e-mail communication, that Montana still has 79 public libraries – 29 branch libraries and 19 youth services librarians to provide service to children in these buildings; only one youth service librarian in the state has a MLS degree.

In her article, Wigg (1995) mentions a 1988 study summarized by P. Feehan, which reported the following about state-level youth consultants in her 1995 article:

- Number of states with full-time youth services positions 12 (25%)

- Number of states with part-time youth services positions 24 (47%)

- Number of states with no youth services positions 10 (20%)

- Number of states with youth services position vacancies
  4 (8%)

To find out the state of affairs on this topic for 2002, a brief survey was written and sent via e-mail to the 50 state library data consultants in February of 2002 to ask the following questions:

1) Does your state have a full-time youth services consultant?

2) Does your state have a part-time youth services consultant?

3) Does your state have a vacancy for a youth services consultant?

4) Does your state level youth services consultant work part time in the public libraries to provide services to children in the community?

Of the fifty statewide data consultants, 37 state-level data consultants or the youth services consultant responded to the survey. One state-level data consultant did not answer the questions, but directed the inquiry to the NCES website instead.

The 2002 survey shows the following about the number of state-level youth services consultants based on the 37 responses:

- Number of states with full-time youth services positions
  25 (68%)

- Number of states with part-time youth services positions
  5 (14%)

- Number of states with no youth services positions
  6 (16%)

- Number of states with youth services position vacancies
  0 (0%)

- Number of state youth services consultants who work part-time on library services
  11 (30%)

The Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives reported, "We have two full-time Children's and Youth Services Consultants and a full-time secretary to assist us" (C. Baughman, personal communication, February 26, 2002). It was also reported that, "training, program development, and grant monitoring for rural libraries are the main things that we do" (Baughman). Carolyn Ashcraft (personal communication, February 26, 2002) from the Arkansas State Library wrote, "On my staff I have two professional library program advisors. One of those is dedicated

to children's services. She oversees the development of the statewide summer reading program, sits on the committees for Arkansas' children's book awards, and offers assistance to the public library staff across the state whenever requested." Carolyn goes on to say that a small portion of the children's professional's time is spent as a "consultant to the state's institutional libraries (in the human development centers, prison, etc.)" (C. Ashcraft, personal communication, February 26, 2002).

In 1995, Wigg wrote (p. 107), "a number of states provide children's services grants that assist rural libraries to initiate new services." In order to address this issue, two additional questions were asked on the 2002 email survey to statewide data coordinators in order to provide a comparison.

5) Does your state provide children's services grants that assist rural libraries to initiate new services?

6) Does your state provide continuing education and support to librarians in rural communities?

In answer to question five, 23 or 62% said that their state provided children's services grants to assist rural libraries in initiating new services. Thirteen (35%) said that their state did not provide children's services grants that assist rural libraries to initiate new services and one did not respond to the question.

One change in funding from 1995 to 2002 has been the replacement of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) with the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The LSTA is where most of the money for such grants comes from. Barbara Huntington of the Wisconsin State Library remarked on her survey (personal communication, February 16, 2002), "This is primarily through LSTA. The majority of Wisconsin's libraries are in rural communities. There are areas of the state that have severe economic problems in rural areas. When we distribute grant funds, one of the things we look at is the overall poverty level as expressed by the number of free and reduced lunches provided for children. So yes, some of the LSTA money is targeted for youth services in poor rural communities."

In answer to the last question, regarding provisions for continued education 31 of the 37 respondents or 84% said their state provides continuing education and support to librarians in rural communities. Four (11%) said they did not provide continuing education and support to librarians in rural communities and two did not respond to the question.

Barbara Huntington (personal communication, February 26, 2002) in responded to the last question said, "Wisconsin provides money to seventeen regional systems. One of the requirements for the systems, by state law, is to provide continuing education. So yes, the division provides the money to the system with the understanding that one of the things they are going to provide is C.E. (continuing education) training. Typically, the systems have training of one kind or another monthly. Sept-May, most do not have programs in the summer because the libraries are extremely busy then with summer reading programs for the kids. In addition, Division staff is [sic] often the speakers at the C.E. training sessions. I will be going out to do trainings, at least twice in 2002 to systems that primarily serve rural areas".

These statistics show that in a rural setting there is rarely going to be a librarian whose sole responsibility is youth services. Most of the time, the librarian who handles youth services will also fill many other positions. It is important, therefore, for librarians who will be working in rural settings to receive adequate training in youth services.

Training and Continuing Education

One of the challenges for an individual in a rural community wishing to obtain a degree in the library science field is the physical location of the limited number of universities offering MLS degrees. The American Library Association, as of April 19, 2002, lists 56 schools across the United States and Canada offering a Masters of Library Science degree or a Masters of Library and Information Science degree (American Library Association, 2002). One way to resolve this problem is for individuals to take advantage of the Internet and attend one of the 38 schools that offer a partial or completely online masters degree program.

The University of North Texas and the Texas Woman's University offer a cooperative MLS program. The universities offer the MLS program using a combination of Internet, interactive video, and live off-campus courses (Madden & Grover, 2001). The students decide which university they wish to enroll in and which courses meet their scheduling needs. Courses can be taken through either university (Madden & Grover, 2001).

According to Mary Sommerville (1998, p. 51), universities should include more training in youth services, in particular, to address the needs of at risk children. Although many universities cover storytelling, they neglect program development for children and outreach. Marketing these services is another issue that is rarely covered (Sommerville, 1998, p. 51).

Funding

According to Harris (1999, p. 33), rural librarians need to be "aware of both resources and limitations" in the community. The librarian who is creative in how he or she finds funds, either through grants or some other resource, will be more successful in procuring the monies needed for library operations (Harris, 1999, p. 33).

One possible source of funding for children's materials is the Libri Foundation. The Libri Foundation was started in 1989 by Barbara J. McKillip to aid rural libraries in obtaining children's books for its libraries. "Since October 1990, the Foundation has donated over $1,700,000 worth of new children's books to more than 1,500 libraries in 48 states" (Libri Foundation, 2002).

Another resource available to small and rural libraries in New Hampshire and Vermont is the Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF). "CLiF provides sponsorships for the purchase of books for children up to age 12 for public libraries in towns with populations under 5,000" (McDougall, 2002).

Another avenue for funding is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates have made a commitment of $250 million towards "expanding access to technology" and "creating new advancements in knowledge" (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

Computers in Rural Libraries

The NCES reports that the United States has 1,638 public libraries serving populations of 1,000 to 2,500 people, and of those, 1,025 (62.6%) have access to electronic resources; 1,313 (80.2%) have Internet access; and 19.8% don't have Internet access. There are 945 public libraries serving populations of 1,000 or fewer in the United States. Of these, 394 (41.7%) have access to electronic resources; 525 (55.6%) have Internet access; and 44.4% don't have Internet access. (NCES, 2001, p. 57). According to a survey conducted by Robert Flatley (2001, p. 12), The majority of users are adults, 31% are teens and 4% are children.

Rural residents not only rely on the resources found at the public library, many rural residents rely on technology services provided by their bookmobiles. Annette Lockwood (1996, p. 32) reported in her article "Bookmobile Provides Home-School Students with Regular Library Periods": "Online card catalogs, cellular telephones, fax machines, and other high-tech features are already the norm on some bookmobiles." Lockwood goes on to say that, "the advantages of these upgrades are especially tangible to home-schooling families who need information on a wide range of subjects."

Rural libraries face the same issues as urban libraries when it comes to the new technology resources. Shortage of money to purchase, maintain and update the equipment and software is one of the major problems. Setting aside adequate time to train the staff and public on how to use the equipment and resources is another of the major problems. Space limitations make deciding where to put the equipment a challenge. Perhaps the most important decision is which resources to purchase in print format and which to purchase only online or in an electronic format.

Librarians in 2002 have faced many technology-based challenges, but one of the most volatile issues regarding children is filtering. The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was passed by Congress in December of 2000 and has been a hot topic for debate ever since. The CIPA "place(s) restrictions on the use of funding that is available through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), and on E-Rate discount program for libraries and schools who provide Internet services to children under the age of 17" (Federal Communications Commission, 2001). The CIPA would require schools and libraries to develop Internet safety policies and add technology that blocks or filters certain materials from being accessed through the Internet (Federal Communications Commission, 2001)

The Role of the Director in the Rural Library

Directors in rural libraries wear many hats and are responsible for many duties. In 1995, Wigg (p. 89) stated that, in addition to regular director duties, "the director has to know the adult as well as the children's collection, be able to recommend a good mystery, help students research topics, choose picture books for story time, publicize the library, work with elected officials, and raise funds." Even in libraries where there are volunteers to handle the children's programs, the director is ultimately responsible for the planning (Johnson, 2000, p. 46). Many times, collection development, ordering and cataloging for children's, young adult and adult material fall on the director's shoulders. This has not significantly changed since 1995.

Time Management

One of the most challenging issues facing youth librarians in 1995, according to Wigg (p. 91), was finding the time to plan. "Many youth librarians, especially in rural communities, do not have the opportunity to focus only on youth services; they need to be trained to work with the adult patrons as well." During a personal conversation with youth services librarian Ellen Miller (personal communication, April 4, 2002), at the Hummelstown Community Library, Ellen stated that finding time for planning is still the number one difficulty she is facing. Miller said,

"youth services librarians are responsible for planning and implementing programs for individuals from birth to 18, collection development for the building as well as other locations; outreach services to home school students, public schools, private schools, daycares and nursery schools; participating in community literacy events, and working with adult patrons."

Implementing Standards and Evaluation

It is very important, as Wigg mentioned in 1995 (p. 94), to incorporate standards for public libraries. Wigg wrote about using output measures to determine the library's effectiveness as well as taking the time to review journal articles, books and other sources that that provide examples of "ways in which methods for evaluating youth services may be adapted for use in one-person libraries" (p. 94).

At the 2002 Public Library Association (PLA) conference in Phoenix, Arizona, a conference session entitled "Libraries Change Lives – Oh Yeah? Prove It!" given by Karen Matylewski (2002) on the importance of using outcome-based evaluations, and common evaluation processes, myths and truths. Matylewski stated that libraries should measure and evaluate "to know if a program meets its purpose, to improve programs, to guide management, to communicate a programs impact, and to satisfy a funder's need to know." During the PLA session, Matylewski stressed repeatedly, that if it is discovered that a program or a service is not meeting its goals or the program is not needed then the program should be terminated without regard to its age.

Collection Development

According to Harris, rural librarians need to stay informed as to the needs and wants of the community they serve (Harris, 1999, p. 33). According to Wigg, in 1995 (p. 95), the librarian must balance the need for children's materials, which include not only books, but also materials in other formats, such as CD-ROMs, videos, and books on tape, with the other needs of the library. In addition to those materials mention in Wigg's article, librarians in 2002 need to find money in their budgets to purchase DVDs, books-on-CDs, books on cassette, music CDs, electronic encyclopedias and databases. The new book and audiovisual collections need to include foreign language materials for multicultural groups in the area.

One of the decisions that Wigg (1995, p. 95) wrote about was whether children's librarians should purchase print or CD-ROM versions of encyclopedias. Children's librarians in 2002 still face this decision. Another issue for today concerns online databases. There are a wide variety of databases for children available including, but not limited to,

Big Chalk and Searchasaurus. Searchasaurus and Big Chalk include parent and teacher resources, in addition to articles from youth magazines, photographs, and maps.

Electronic resources and databases are great if the library has the available funds to purchase them. In some cases, the library may be able to receive assistance from their state library to help with the purchase of databases. When deciding whether or not to purchase a resource only in an electronic format, librarians need to consider the fact that not all children have access to a computer except at the library and may have trouble getting to the library to use the electronic resources. For many rural residents who rely on outreach services including bookmobiles and books-by-mail programs, these formats may not be a viable option. Therefore, when deciding whether to purchase print or non-print resources, librarians need to consider the residents in their communities.

Multicultural Service

The public library provides services to different sections of the community, and many of these specialized populations need specialized services (Johnston, 1993, p. 280). The most rapidly growing population in need of specialized library services is the non-English speaking community members.

During the 2002 PLA conference, Michael Shapiro, president of Libros Sin Fronteras, stated that there were 31.3 million Hispanics in the United States in the year 2000, and it is projected by the year 2050, that there will be over 98.8 million Hispanics in the United States. Barbara Hoffert concurs with Shapiro in her article "Book Report 2001: The Budget Shift" (1992, p. 132) when she says, "an important growth area for most libraries is foreign-language collecting, with Spanish language works not surprising taking top honors." She also lists French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and Polish as languages of importance in library collections.

Cooperation with Schools

Judith and Bert Boyce's article, "Far From the Library, A Special Set of Challenges," (2000, p. 50) describes the coordination between the West Baton Rouge Parish Library and the local school district. They utilized library card registration, a reserve library, space to display outreach collections in classrooms and the cafeteria, and class visits. They go on to say (2000, p. 50), "without question, the weekly and biweekly schedule of service... is labor intensive; but the fact is that books are circulating, students are reading, teachers and school librarians are becoming familiar with library resources, and the public library is now visible in rural areas and in homes where reading has been absent." Between 1995 and today,

libraries have developed another way to reach children and parents. The library's webpage has become an important vehicle for making the library visible. Johnson (2000, p. 50) sums up cooperation of schools and libraries by writing, "libraries would be wise to establish close ties with local schools, for this is how and where children (usually) learn about the library."

Some rural communities are combining public and school library facilities. Wigg (1995, p. 104) pointed out in her article, "barriers to combining school and public libraries mean that many schools and communities are not candidates for combined facilities; however, merging small budgets may make a difference."

Summer Library Programs

Wigg's article (1995, p. 104) stressed the importance of Summer Reading Clubs in 1995 and said they were a vital part of most public libraries programming during the summer months. Vermont, Montana, Louisiana, and New York are just a few of the states that Wigg (1995, p. 105) described that have organized programs to make it possible for rural libraries to participate in statewide summer reading programs. In 2002, statewide reading programs in Tennessee, Take a Ride on the Reading Railroad; Ohio, Your Library: The Greatest Show in Town; and New York, Splish Splash Read!, are several examples of the summer reading programs that are being created for the libraries through statewide cooperation.

Like many states "the New York State Library partners with a public library system and a statewide committee of youth services librarians to develop a programming manual with a compelling theme, attractive poster and engaging, educational activities" (The New York State Library, 2002). "This programming kit is distributed to all 1,200 public library, branch library and reading center locations in the State, making available a professional quality reading program to every community, no matter how small or remote its library may be" (The New York State Library, 2002).

One can clearly see that in 2002, summer reading programs are still an important part of public library service to rural library youths during the summer months and that state libraries are still providing summer reading programs for public libraries in their state.

Preschool Patrons

A preschooler for the purpose of this paper is a person between the ages of three and four, a toddler is a person between the ages of one and two, and an infant is a person between birth and one year of age.

Preschool story hours are, "a way to develop the mind through reading, creative language, listening skills, and imagination" (Harris, 1999, p. 30). As in Wigg's 1995 article, Linda Johnson (2000, p. 47) agrees that today, "preschool children and their parents are [still] among the library's best and most loyal customers." Johnson (2000, p. 47) again in agreement with Wigg goes on to say that, "in many rural areas parents find that the library and its programs are the only community institution that has free resources and materials selected especially with the needs of young children in mind." In rural communities, not all preschoolers and their parents can travel to the library and this is where outreach becomes an essential part of library service to the community. Johnson (2000, p. 58) wrote about a program at the Beautmont Library District called The Story Machine. Through the Dial-A-Story Machine children can take part in reading programs by accessing a story a week over the phone.

Sherri Smith, Assistant Superintendent of the Lower Dauphin School District, has applied for and received a three-year grant from the Communities that Cares Program to develop a strategy to prevent violence in the community. As part of the grant, a literacy outreach program for underprivileged preschoolers and their families in rural communities is currently being developed. During a meeting with Smith (personal communication, March 18, 2002) she said, "I chose the rural community because I felt that the majority of agencies that provide outreach services to young children and their families focus on the urban environment." The Communities that Care grant will cover the cost of the bookmobile, services for the bookmobile, the salary for a consultant for three years, and the cost of books. Volunteer youth services librarians from the Dauphin County Library System and the Hershey Community Library will assist with providing story times, literature, and library resources. Eventually a nurse will be brought on board to provide immunization to the children during the bookmobile visits, and other professionals will help develop programs to help parents gain better parenting skills.

Collaborating with health care centers to reach preschoolers is an important part of outreach services for all libraries including rural libraries. The Reach Out and Read program and the Good Start program are two outreach programs like the outreach Born to Read and Mother Goose programs mention in Wigg's article. Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a program in which pediatricians give books to infants when they visit during their six-month-infant clinic visit. "Parents learn that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to help their children love books and to start school ready to learn" (Reach Out and Read, 2002). "Ascension Parish Library provides books and staff members to read to children waiting for their appointments on well-child clinic days

in Donaldsonville, Louisiana" (Boyce, J. & Boyce, B., 2000, p. 50).
"A Good Start [program] introduces families attending well-child clinics
to good parenting practices in health care, The importance of reading
to very young children is stressed during the library's lap-sit performances
and by the unit's nursing staff as they monitor their young clients heath
and development" (Boyce, J. & Boyce, B., 2000, p. 50).

Another collaboration opportunity is between libraries and rural daycare
centers. Judith Boyce's article, "Far From the Library: a Special Set of
Challenges", describes literacy resources with which to provide "rural
child caregivers, who are often limited in their knowledge of children's
literature. These resources can be used to help make story times better
for children and easier for caregivers (Boyce, J. & Boyce, B., 2000, p. 50).

Home Schooling and the Rural Library

Susan Walton wrote in a 2001 article (p. 19) that, "literature yielded
no statistics on the geographical dispersal of home school students, [but]
they are a definite presence in small town." She goes on to say, "librarians
who work in small and rural libraries are familiar to these families"
(Walton, 2001, p. 19). Public libraries have a great deal of information
to offer home school families including print and non-print resources.
"Parents who home school quite often use the public library as a source
of learning materials. Visiting the library and attending programs gives
children and youth an opportunity to meet other children in social
situations, something they may miss if they are educated at home"
(Johnson, 2000, p. 49). Usually, the books that home-schoolers need are
in related to curriculum or recreation (Boyce, J. & Boyce, B., 2000, p. 50).
"In their coursework, home school students have textbooks covering basic
subjects, but frequently look to the bookmobile to supplement these
in specialized areas" (Boyce, J. & Boyce, B., 2000, p. 50).

To reach home school students who cannot come to the library,
youth services librarians need to make outreach an essential part of their
profession. According to Annette Lockwood (1996, p. 32), there are more
than 500,000 home schoolers and it is allowed in all fifty states. Annette
Lockwood writes about an outreach program in her article "Bookmobile
Provides Home-School Students with Regular Periods." She writes,
"the bookmobile of Central Pennsylvania, Lancaster County Library
provides the equivalent of a regular library period to rural and small-town
students who are schooled at home" (Lockwood, 1996, p. 32). The article
goes on to say that a "small scale library on wheels follows a schedule
calculated to reach underserved patrons of all ages, it has become a special
year-round resource for some 800 plus home schooled children residing in
Lancaster County" (Lockwood, 1996, p. 32).

Elizabeth Manning's article, "Floating Bookmobile" published on the Alaska Libraries website (2002), discusses the unique way that Lenora Arnold, a migrant education specialist to 1,150 children, reaches migrant school aged children during the summer in Bethel, Alaska. Manning wrote in her article about the migrant children who go to the Kuskokwim River fish camps to assist their parents throughout the fishing season and therefore do not have access to reading materials. Lenora explains in her interview with Manning that, "the boat starts a couple of weeks after school dismissed in the spring and makes a circuit up and down the river through most of the summer, returning to Bethel every couple of weeks to restock the boat" (Manning, 2002). Lenora Arnold goes on to say in her interview that, "It's a lot of work but worth it. Reading has become part of life in the fish camps. Arnold said she expects that soon it will translate into better academic success" (Manning, 2002).

Teen Patrons

Teens, for the purposes of this paper, are individuals between the ages of twelve and eighteen. Walton explains in her article (2001, p. 15) about teens that, "services to young people [in public libraries] usually include teens and children in the same programs." "Libraries, like parents, schools, and the rest of society, seem not to know what to do with this group that consist of not-quite children who are also not-quite adults" (Walton, 2001, p. 15). Walton goes on to say in her article (2001, p. 17), "libraries tend to count programming for teens as allowing them [teens] to volunteer at other programs." Statistically, teens are usually included with the children, which makes it difficult to track how many teens are actually using the library and attending the programs.

Librarians can find a multitude of new programming ideas for teens in several resources including, but not limited to, *VOYA* magazine, YALSA list serves, and books like *Yikes, Teen Programs*. A group of teens can work together with the staff to establish teen advisory groups to assist with the creation of teen programs and the selection of material selection for the teen section of the library.

The article, "Teens Bullish on Public Libraries," overviews two national surveys from March – July 2000 on teen use of the public library; the surveys were conducted by the Graduate Department of Clarion University (Vavrek, 2002). According to the article, teens are using the library in a similar manner to adult patrons. "Fifty-eight percent of those surveyed used the services of a public library or bookmobile within the last six months and 77% over the last year (Vavrek, 2002)". Of those who didn't use the library, 64% said they use their school library or get what they need from the Internet (Vavrek, 2002).

In the survey, the question of how teens are using library technology was addressed. "Teens use of the library's technology was typically related to searching the online catalog for books or other materials (76%), or the Internet (79%). Ninety percent of those using the Internet did so for school or class assignments and 63% for enjoyment or hobbies" (Vavrek, 2002).

The Pioneer Library System of upstate New York has increased the use of the library by teens by "focusing on increased merchandising and physical changes to the layouts of the library teen spaces"(Bolan & Wemett, 1999, p. 322). The Pioneer Library System suggests that librarians do the following to improve services to teens:

- direct marketing to teens,
- evaluate existing programs,
- create a young adult area,
- arrange materials in a logical manner,
- vary seating,
- make sure the collection is up to date,
- put together displays that are attractive to teens,
- keep technology up to date, and
- make sure the staff knows how to deal with teen patrons (Bolan & Wemett, 1999, p. 322).

In addition to those listed by Bolan and Wemett, it is very important to ask the teens in the library what they would like to see in a Young Adult/Teen area and how would they like it to look.

Future Challenges

Mary Sommerville's article, "Facing the Shortage of Children's Librarians: Updating the Challenge," focuses on a survey sent to 24 public librarians across the United States on the recruitment and retention of children's librarians.

The children's coordinator from the Brooklyn Public Library responded in her survey that they (Brooklyn Public Library) often lose children's librarians many times to public schools due to higher salaries and summers off (Sommerville, 1998, p. 50). Like the Brooklyn Public Library, within the last three and a half years, the Dauphin County Library System, with both rural and urban libraries, has lost three of its eight children's librarians to the public school systems and two children librarians to management positions. Among the factors that influence recruitment are, "salary and amenities, proximity of an accredited library school, and attractiveness of the surrounding area" (Sommerville, 1998, p. 50).

New challenges facing children's librarians are "services to the economically disadvantaged, often including outreach and service to children who do not have English as their first language" (Sommerville, 1998, p. 54). If one does not employ a bi-lingual librarian, it can be difficult to market programs, events and available collections to the non-English speaking community. Many times in order to reach these two groups of people, the librarian needs to leave his or her comfort zone of the building and get out into the community to speak to the people to see what resources are needed at the library.

Virginia Walter's article entitled, "The Once and Future Libraries: Ten Ways to Create Libraries That Will Meet the Needs of Tomorrow's Children," focuses on the importance of children's librarians; the importance of evaluating the future needs of children in the public library; and what role the children's librarian needs to play in this process.

Several key points according to Walter's article (2001, p. 50-56) to include were:

- "make connections (network)",
- "become salespeople and promote children's library services",
- "evaluate current programs and services and decide how they will change to meet the future needs of children",
- "expand beyond the circle of children's librarians and discuss children's issues with administrators, ALA leaders, government officials, marketing experts",
- "help change your library from a bureaucracy to a place where communication flows from the top down and from the bottom up",
- "work with graduate schools to create classes that meet the needs of youth services professionals", and
- "complete research projects showing the importance of summer reading programs, literacy and children's programming".

Resources

Multitudes of sources are available to youth services librarians whether they are working in the outskirts of Alaska, the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky, or the rural farmlands of Iowa. Journals like *School Library Journal, Publisher's Weekly, KIRKUS* and *The Horn Book* are available on-line.

The Internet Library for Librarians is a portal for librarians looking for information about librarianship. This is one of many sites that contain a wealth of information for librarians. Included in this particular portal website are sites on ready reference including bibliographies, directories,

encyclopedias, sites on various divisions of librarianship including cataloging, automation, archives, preservation, and special collections, accessories sites such as library email lists and newsgroups, Internet tools, and library journals. In addition there are a wide variety of other links dealing with librarianship. The website, Librarian's Yellow Pages, is a buyer's guide for all things needed in a library, from books to furnishings.

Conclusion

Since Ristiina Wigg first published her article "Across Towns and Across Times: Library Services to Young People in Rural Libraries," things have changed and yet they have stayed the same in many ways. Wigg's 1995 definition of rural remains the same, but areas of employment are changing from agricultural to the hotel and tourist industry. Several new problems have gained prominence in rural areas including the homelessness of families and the high rate of drug use by teenagers.

Many rural library directors are still responsible for everything from running the library to providing programming and developing the for both the adult and youth patrons. Librarians with an MLS are especially rare in youth services. Youth services librarians, like many others in the public library field, are finding that their time is always in great demand.

It is as important in 2002 as it was in 1995 to take the time to incorporate standards in public libraries, develop an awareness of the communities needs and from this information develop the libraries programs and collections. Constant evaluation of programs eliminates programs that aren't working and helps implement those that are.

Youth services librarians in 2002 have to make many decisions related to collections including whether they will purchase print or non-print materials. In addition, many decisions related to databases must be addressed. Balancing collection needs with limited budgets is one of the biggest challenges.

Schools and public librarians are still working together. Librarians need to change the way that they look at children and teens when it comes to collection development and programming at the library. Teens need a place for themselves and programs that are designed specifically for them. Outreach, including programs like Reach Out and Read, Born to Read, and bookmobile service are a vital part of library service, especially in rural areas.

Funding for rural public libraries is as challenging as ever. Grants from the Libri Foundation, CLIF and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are a step in the right direction for assisting libraries obtain

the books and technology that they need. Bringing technology to the library is only the first step. Libraries need to find the time to convert their materials to an electronic format, train the staff and public on how to use the technology and then find ways to continue funding the technology. Technology brings another huge debate brewing across the nation called the Children's Internet Protection Act that would force public libraries to filter all Internet terminals or lose precious funding.

Educational opportunities since 1995 have changed tremendously. Schools are now offering on-line degrees, and students from across the county can be in the same class and still be close to home. Universities are offering more technology courses in the field of librarianship. They usually offer courses in storytelling, but there are, as yet, not many courses on how to develop a program or the marketing aspect of youth services.

Youth services librarians need to break away from the traditional way they look at services to youths in their libraries. They need to take an active role in marketing the programs and services available at the library, assist in the development of training and educational opportunities, and help develop a communication system in their library that allows communication to freely flow from the top down and vise versa.

Youth services are perhaps the most important aspect of libraries. For, through them, librarians are given an opportunity to develop the next generation. By developing strong programs and keeping the focus on the patron, rather than getting sidetracked by other issues, libraries can create dynamic change and possibilities. Nowhere is this more apparent than in youth services, no matter where or when they may be.

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