

Today seems truly historic! Our first Regional Library staff meeting.

The hour we can use for this purpose is short. The number of matters to be presented--many. Today, therefore, we may not have time for as much discussion as I would like.

First of all, I wish to read my letter of appointment, from the board. You know I'm acting librarian and not behaving as one usually does with such an appointment.

" Your application as head librarian of the Yakima Valley Regional Library was read at the organizational meeting of said library board today. You were elected as acting librarian of the Yakima Valley Regional Library District and your duty in said office commences as of March 1, 1951.

By virtue of your new office, you are vested with full responsibilities to proceed with the placing of the personnel of the staffs of both libraries, and to make arrangements for the best use of the facilities of both libraries at your disposal. Full-speed-ahead for the setting up of the regional library of the County of Yakima is the wish of the Board. "

Secondly, May I express my pleasure in having the opportunity of working with you? Each of you has demonstrated his interest and loyalty in library service. Some of you have given years of service through good years and bad. If, together, we can work through the Regional Library to develop the library service of our dreams, if we can together demonstrate the truth of the idea that libraries serving a larger unit can give more and better service without an increase in cost--if we can demonstrate that given reasonable support library service will prove its value-- it will be a thrill to share in the fun with you. If we run up against tough going--it will be less tough because you have proved your ability to take the rough with the smooth.

*Interpolate. Mayor*

Before going into the matters of business, there are a few fundamental points I wish to mention. Cornerstones of library service our Regional library should offer.



First of all, we are giving public library service. That means that each person is a V.I.P. Our job is to meet the particular need of each person who gives us that privilege. We must meet each person where he is. If a good story is his or her need, we should help him find it. If technical material or scholarly material is his need--our job is to supply it. Every time a person walks out of our central library- our branches or off our bookmobiles without either the material he wanted or the feeling that we will move heaven and earth to get it for him, we have failed. We have been hired by him to do a job we have not performed.

In order to give that kind of service, we have to be genuinely interested in people, in ideas and in books. We have to be resilient. Some people irritate us--but we dare not let them know it. - Some are going to talk another language-- but we must make an effort to understand.

In order to give that kind of service, we must be as efficient in our routines as it is possible to become. Mis-filed cards become bottle-necks. Errors cause both us and the people we serve embarrassment and loss of confidence.

We need to have our work organized so that we have the proper equipment and work-space to do it. We need to know what is being done-where- so that in case of emergencies we can cover a schedule whether it be on the bookmobile or at the desk. We need to know the strengths on the staff. The value of a staff is that the public gets all the benefit of all the strength and none of the weaknesses of us as individuals.

The biggest job of all is to keep our vision on the large over-all view while taking care of the minute detail which is so necessary.



Now briefly--These are the basic foundation stones:

1. Each person we serve is a very important person.
2. We must be flexible and resilient enough, smart enough, adaptable enough to meet the needs of each person in turn, tho the range of needs will be from the ridiculous to the sublime.
3. We must plan our work so our routines are as simple as possible, we are as exact as possible and our equipment and work-space adequate.
4. We must have a large view even while working with a small detail.

For the present we shall have to continue to be two staffs, slowly merging together. To facilitate that merging, we shall plan a one-hour staff meeting alternate Wednesday mornings at 8:00 o'clock.

Starting as soon as possible--probably tomorrow, I would like to schedule individual conferences with you. In those conferences, I would like you to tell me improvements you think are possible in the work you know best. I would also like to know what work you would prefer to do in the Regional Library and what work you would prefer not to do.

We need to have a committee start to work studying salaries and working on a salary schedule for our Regional library to submit to the board. There should be a board member on that committee. If you would be willing to serve on such a committee let me know. I'll announce the appointments the first staff meeting after the board meeting.

Even in the past week, we have seen how each problem is related to other problems. We are desperately trying to get the physical work-space set up in the proper buildings. As soon as the bookmobile department can be moved into its permanent quarters the catalog department will be able to organize and move leaving more space for the circulation and reference work.



As soon as we can get over the physical labor involved in all that, we hope to concentrate harder on the deepening of the quality of all our services. We need an enlarged children's program--reaching out in area and over a larger age group--pre-school to young adult. We need an enlarged reference service. A reader's advisory program for adults. We need to be thinking and planning constantly --but first the physical layout must be improved and necessary changes made.

We have to do the best with what we have. Let's learn to put our best foot forward. Our building may be old and inadequate but let's try to eradicate its dinginess. Be looking for possible improvements. If we re-decorate let's use color boldly. Let's see that at least we get the parts of the outside of the building painted white that should be painted white.

Let's remember how we like to be treated when we go elsewhere. We enjoy having people smile at us. We enjoy having our little foibles remembered. Can we do as well by others as they do for us?

I recently consulted a Seattle doctor whom I had not seen for 6 years. He is now chief of staff of the Swedish hospital.--so you know he is a busy man. but he greeted me by name--asked if I were still in the high school library. No doubt, he consulted my record before seeing me, so that his memory would be refreshed on those small points --but you would never have guessed it from his voice and expression.--they were genuine and friendly. While he is a surgeon of first rank--he knew the little mechanical aids of heel height and tongue thickness which were effective. Can we be as discriminating and use either great skill or little devices as needed? I hope we can at least strive toward that goal.

Next Sunday evening at 7:00 here in this building, we want to have a staff party. I've invited the Regional Board. We thought husbands and wives of board and staff members should be included. We will need an entertainment committee, a refreshment committee and clean-up committee.



Now I have come to a task which is unpleasant. It was my hope that as problems arose to be solved we could have a committee study them and present their findings to us. Last week you filled out a questionnaire. There was a diversity of opinion as to whether bookpockets and date slips should be in the front of the back of the book and whether large or small book cards should be used. While the majority (and fortunately it was not a solid city vs. a solid county bloc) favored the large book-cards and the front of the book, there were enough dissenting votes that normally I would have turned it over to a committee.

I'm on the spot. I'm the only person who had a hand in the policy of large cards and front placement. You cannot be blamed for doubting my honesty or wondering a bit when I say that because of certain administrative problems involved we shall start changing to the large cards and front placement.

These, however, are the facts which are forcing me to action. The supply of small book-cards is practically exhausted. Uniformity within a system is much desired. The problems involved in changing to the front and to the large cards are fewer than vice versa because the active book-stock involved in the change is smaller and the outlets of service fewer.

However, the most important reason is that I sincerely and honestly believe that if a careful study were made by the opposing minority, they would as a result of their study, favor the change. Time and motion studies have been made which show the front placement to be more efficient. The large cards are more adaptable to all our needs.

We hope to accomplish the shift with as little extra work to you as possible. Of course, it will not be easy for you to change your habits. I realize that. but at least I will try not to add everything to you. We shall hire two girls to type up new cards and pockets for each days circulation. As the books are returned the pockets and date slips will be pasted in before they are shelved. My present plan is to start with the adult circulation department, then the children's room and finally the bookmobile.