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Motorized Librarians Brave Weather to Serve Wide Area

Snow and icy roads can't hold back the bookmobiles of the Yakima Valley Regional Library.

The motorized librarians may be forced to make a few detours, as in the past, but they don't plan to cancel any of their 129 far-flung stops from the Wenas cattle country to the hop-and-mint land around Byron.

Braving nippy temperatures to meet the bookmobiles in January, February and March will probably be a record turnout of book-readers. The three months are the busiest of the year for the bookmobile crew, and are expected to meet a new high in 1952.

"The men have started coming back to the bookmobile," Miss Charlotte Hyre, bookmobile librarian, said. "They were too busy working in the spring and summer. Now they have time, and the whole family will be reading."

Nothing Formal

Heavily-bundled patrons flock in from all directions on Bookmobile day.

"It's not formal—they come as they are," Miss Hyre said. "The women often come directly from wash tub or house cleaning. Youngsters come in on bikes or horses, or walk to the bookmobile."

Junior may be seeking Boy Scout material, while his mother wants a light love story or a book on crocheting. Pop may ask for a book on pruning.

"They'll take lots of books on travel and biography, and good novels, too," Miss Hyre said.

Thousand a Day

One bookmobile during the winter months may be issuing up to 1,000 volumes a day—nearly as many as circulated by top branch libraries in a month. In the first 11 months of the year the bookmobiles circulated 217,686 books, compared to 158,546 for the Yakima Public Library and 112,644 for branch libraries in smaller communities.

Miss Hyre said librarians "can't hope to carry enough books on the bookmobile to fill all requests."

But if a substitute volume won't do, the librarians jot down the request and fill it on the next trip. They either get the desired book from the Regional Library's big stock in Yakima or from other libraries through a loan service.

Some patrons, who formerly lived in the Old World, want books in foreign languages. The library can supply some of these from its own small collection of paper-bound French and Spanish books acquired earlier this year. Others may be borrowed.

Shelves Scanned for Reading Material



PATRONS EAGERLY SCAN shelves of bookmobile for new books during stop at Wide Hollow road west of Yakima. The vans carry slightly less than 2,000 books and nearly half of them are loaned on some of the busiest days.

—Republic photo

Short Vacation

While the 20 schools included on bookmobiles runs are closed for the holidays, the bookmobile staff is taking a short time-out now for work on machines and resupplying of books. The bookmobiles will be back on the roads after New Year's.

Drivers are David Grajeda, Marvin Raymond and James Pottinger. Working full-time on the bookmobile library crew are Miss Hyre, Miss Shirley Heaton, Miss Jeanne Verran and Miss Eleanor Wilson. Most other workers in the Regional Library also spend part of their time on bookmobile duties.

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MISS CAROL TRIMBLE, head of Yakima Valley Regional Library, says bookmobiles now account for 45 per cent of the books circulated by the library in the city and county.