

The Piedmont Triad Library Council: Profile of a Confederation

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The Piedmont Triad Library Council (PTLC) was begun in December, 1973, as an outgrowth of a **Regional Library Services Study** performed by the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments (PTCOG).

Loosely organized as an association of ten public library systems in North Carolina Planning Region G, the PTLC carries out a variety of cooperative projects, financed by contributions from member libraries, augmented by PTCOG revenues. The member library systems are: Central North Carolina Regional, Davidson County, Davie County, Forsyth County, Greensboro Public, High Point Public, Hyconeechee Regional, Northwestern Regional, Randolph County and Rockingham County.

The original **Regional Library Services Study** is a fairly typical planner's analysis of library facilities and services in the Piedmont Triad Region. The study suggested ways of improving services through interjurisdictional cooperation in specific projects. PTLC libraries are not obligated to participate in each project, though they do contribute to funds or projects through the dues structure.

Reciprocal Borrowing

The foremost cooperative effort inaugurated by the Council is reciprocal borrowing. Through this mechanism, each library, in a formal agreement signed by its governing body, agrees to honor the borrower's card used by any other public library in the region. It is the obligation of the "home" library to cover the costs of any lost books.

Unfortunately, statistics in the libraries are not kept in such a way that documents the impact of reciprocal borrowing. The Greensboro Public Library and Forsyth County Public Library each estimate that they lend over 100 books per month to patrons taking advantage of the service. Reciprocal borrowing has received favorable newspaper publicity.

The Film Co-op

The film co-op is an excellent example of the "pick and choose" nature of PTLC projects. Nine of the ten systems participate in the film co-op, a mechanism set up to facilitate the borrowing of 16 mm films. A patron of any library has access to all the film collections by virtue of the reciprocal borrow-

ing agreement. In practice, however, it is generally more convenient to have a film mailed to his "home library." The film co-op functions in much the same manner as a conventional interlibrary loan.

In addition to the borrowing of films, the co-op provides for joint previewing and a cooperative acquisitions program. Initially, it was thought that film titles would not be duplicated unless experience dictated heavy demand. This concept has evolved to the current practice of purchasing multiple copies of those films expected to be in great demand (based on the judgments of the audio-visual personnel at the various libraries). Actually, very few duplicate titles have been purchased.

A beneficial side effect of the joint preview sessions has been the informal in-service training in audio-visuals received by newcomers from the more experienced staffs of the larger libraries. In another aspect of the film co-op, films purchased by some of the smaller library systems (e.g., Northwestern Regional and Hyconeechee Regional) are housed with the collection of the High Point System or Forsyth County System and serviced by their staff. This is done because the expense of cleaning and editing equipment, necessary to keep the films in good repair.

Indeed, the largest single problem of the film co-op is the length of time required to transport a film between its storage point and its use point. At this time, no economical alternative to the U. S. Postal Service has been found. The statistics of film use indicate that there are nearly 2000 showings of films borrowed through the cooperative each month, with audiences approaching 10,000.

Union List of Serials

The Library Council has now compiled a second edition of a **Union List of Serials**. The patron can either request a copy of the needed article via interlibrary loan, or go to the holding library himself. While some attempt has been made to keep use statistics, there has been no way to monitor public use without librarian assistance. Copies of the second edition were sent to community colleges in the region and also to business libraries. The reaction from both has been favorable, particularly from businesses.

In-Service Training

The most important single activity of the PTLC has been its in-service training workshops. Ranging from one day sessions on projector maintenance to three day seminars on business reference, the programs have provided training on a level that any single library system would have been hard pressed to provide. Workshops have been held for both professional and non-professional library staff. Continuing education units have been awarded for several of the workshops giving PTLC library staff an opportunity in obtaining the necessary credits for recertification.

Over 300 librarians have participated in the workshops, which have included general reference, North Carolina state documents, business reference, children's services, census publications, local history, and genealogy. Instructors have been drawn from the faculty of the School of Library Science at University of North Carolina at Greensboro, from University of North Carolina Department of Archives and History, and the U. S. Bureau of the Census, as well as from the state's community college system.

Finances

For the first three years, PTLC members assessed themselves \$240/year, with the Council of Governments providing matching funds to pay a part-time staff coordinator, as well as providing clerical and general administrative support. The FY'78 budget more accurately reflected the COG financial contribution.

PTLC BUDGET, FY 1978-1979

Expenses:

Personnel	\$3,000
Fringe benefits	215
Travel	330
Professional Services	2,000
Meeting & Conference Expenses	200
Total Direct Charges	6,015
Total Indirect Charges	2,285*
GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES	\$8,300

Sources of income:

PTLC member contributions	\$2,650
COG contribution	5,680
GRAND TOTAL INCOME	\$8,300

The COG contribution is far greater than the budget figures show, however. The neutral ground provided by the COG umbrella has been instrumental in promoting the cooperative ventures of the PTLC. Because it has no vested interest, the COG can prod members when a similar push from another library might appear as an intrusion. In addition, the opportunity to present the successes of the PTLC to the COG delegates, who are all the "movers and shakers" in their home communities, is a public relations goldmine for libraries.

*Indirect charges include office space, postage and telephone, supplies, etc.

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