

# Foreword

In the opening chapter of J. D. Salinger's *RAISE HIGH THE ROOF BEAM CARPENTERS*, we are told the story of Chiu-fang Kao, a man who was a discerning judge of horses. He sent to Duke Mu of Chin a message stating that the Duke was to receive a dun-colored mare of noble breeding and great quality. When the horse arrived, it was a black stallion. Chiu-fang Kao, in his quest for greatness in the selection of horses, had forgotten color and sex.

Librarians are charged with the task of selecting instructional materials, and unlike Chiu-fang Kao, few rely only on their intuition to help them build their collections. They depend upon selection aids, the judgements of reviewers, the advice of marketers, interchange with others in the profession, and the guidance of advisory committees.

School media coordinators form Media Advisory Committees composed of subject area or grade level representatives to ensure that the materials selected will meet the curricular needs of the students served. However, as any school media coordinator can attest, there are other forces which play a role in the selection process.

There are selection policies written by the board of education which must be considered. There are citizens who find certain materials objectionable and who suggest that schools should remove those materials from circulation. There are constraints imposed by budget which often force school media coordinators carefully to prioritize faculty requests before ordering.

In light of all the forces which come to bear upon the school media coordinator in the selection process, three articles are presented in this issue of *NCL* to provide insight into the selection process and to give direction to the selection of materials for very specific instructional needs.

The first article, *BOOK SELECTION METHODS IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES—A SURVEY OF PRACTICES IN NORTH CAROLINA*, analyzes the extent to which specific selection aids are used by school media coordinators in the state. While the research was undertaken in 1979, it still sets a point in time against which substantive study can be done. The second piece, *FOSTER CHILDREN IN THE JUNIOR NOVEL*, provides an annotated bibliography to aid school media coordinators in the selection of materials which provide role models for pre-adolescents. The books reviewed include those found under the subject heading, "Foster Children" in major selection aids. The third article, *MEDIA CENTER PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED IN NORTH CAROLINA*, assesses the media center programs which serve gifted children including a survey of materials acquired for programs for the gifted student.

A fourth article to be published in a future edition of *NCL* will examine the selection policies in North Carolina and the issues of censorship and First Amendment rights.

It is important continually to assess the selection policies for schools. With internal and external forces applied to the school media coordinator, and with selection policies receiving close scrutiny by boards, parents, and special interest groups, we as school media coordinators must somehow assure that Chiu-fang Kao's gift for unbiased judgement always endures.

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