

# Workshop Words Worth Recall

## LIBRARY TRUSTEESHIP

First and foremost, the trustee must believe in the library. The public library is one of the community's greatest assets. It serves every man, woman and child regardless of age level, vocation or special interest. The library provides the stimulus and means for continuing education after formal schooling has ended.

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Libraries have for centuries enjoyed a kind of sanctity as repositories of knowledge. Today, they are called upon to be living agencies of communication, rather than inert storehouses of information.

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The library is an economic asset to a community in that it can attract business and industry as it is often indicative of the quality and progressiveness of the community.

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A library trustee must know and understand the operation of the library. Without this knowledge all is for naught.

A good beginning for the trustee is a conference with the librarian and a "cook's tour" of the library, including the behind-the-scenes. Familiarize yourself with the library. The trustee must know the goals and objectives of the library; the short and long range plans. Are there any specific immediate problems? Is the library meeting the needs of its patrons? Is the library contributing to the social, economic, and cultural life of the community it serves?

Attendance at library board meetings is a must. It is not only for the importance of transacting the business of the library, but also to keep abreast of the operation, progress, and activity of the library.

The prime responsibility of the trustee is to understand that the library board of trustees determines policy and that the librarian administers the library within the policies. This is of utmost importance for an effective trustee-librarian relationship.

*Remarks by Ann Woodward, Atlanta Public Library, Board of Directors, Friend, and formerly a Trustee, made at Library Trustee Workshop, April 6-7, 1979, Burlington.*

## DEVELOPING THE LIBRARY'S HUMAN RESOURCES ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT, MAY 21, 1979

*NCLA-RASS Workshop on Staff Development, May 21, 1979*

Barbara Conroy is a well known consultant on staff development and the author of *Library Staff Development and Continuing Education* (Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1978). The remarks below summarize the first presentation by Ms. Conroy entitled, "Foundation for Staff Development in Libraries."

A question frequently asked is what is the difference between staff development and continuing education. Barbara Conroy helped clarify these definitions by explaining that staff development is improving the competency of individuals; helping people to do their jobs better. Staff development involves learning with the application of what is learned. Staff development strengthens the organization's ability to fulfill its mission. Often it is part of the early years of a person's career and continuing education picks up and grows in the later part of one's professional life. Staff development is organizationally centered and continuing education is person centered.

Just as we would not let our library building fall apart, a library staff must be nurtured to be most effective. A competent staff will deliver better service. People who are not growing on the job can eventually become a destructive force within the organization. Staff development helps us to understand the roles of individuals and how they fit together as contributing members of the organization. Staff development is evidence of care and concern by the library.

Though staff development can be thought of as beneficial to the library there are problems that should be noted. Staff development will inevitably bring about change; a change from the previous situation. Change often produces anxiety and stress. A staff development program can not be all things to all people. It can probably never be done to everyone's satisfaction. An understanding of this must be kept in mind when the cost factors of staff development are examined. Often in libraries, we feel we can not do something unless all staff benefit equally. In the case of staff development we must always keep in mind that ultimately the organization will benefit and therefore indirectly all staff will too.

It is up to everyone in the organization to take some of the responsibility for staff development. It can neither be imposed from the top or coordinated solely by staff. Additionally, there are many other agencies outside the immediate library who can be looked to in order to provide staff development. These include the state library, library associations, and library schools.

There must be some distinction made between a staff development program and staff development activities. A program is a coordinated effort that involves a needs assessment, a planning effort, a budget, some evaluation of the effort, and a clear understanding on the part of staff members of the purpose of the program. The activities are those individual parts that make up the program. Some activities frequently mentioned are orientation for new staff, filing instruction, training in new technology, and job rotation. One good place to start looking for ideas for staff development activities may be the

performance evaluation. Performance appraisal can indicate what a staff member does not know or where he or she might need training to become more effective.

Finally it must be noted that there are some barriers to staff development. A spoken priority that a program be implemented may not be backed up with money or administrative guidance. The staff may rely on external motivators and not become involved in or responsible for staff development activities. The training skills gained are not widespread and the staff does not see the benefit in attending the programs. Evaluation of past efforts may not have taken place so there is not a clear understanding of what worked well and what did not.

The remainder of the workshop focused on description of some libraries' efforts in staff development and more practical sessions on techniques for organizing a program.

Carol Nielson

### **Lodwick Hartley** **Plum Tree Lane**

In a review in Raleigh, N. C.'s *News and Observer*, reading *Plum Tree Lane* was compared with "thumbing through one of those old, treasured, family photograph albums and suddenly seeing the sepia-toned pictures come alive." Indeed, the images created in author Lodwick Hartley's "fictional memoir" concerning his growing up in Bayesville (thinly disguised Batesburg), S. C., at the turn of the century are vivid and sensitive.

Dr. Hartley, educated at Furman, Columbia University and Princeton, was for 27 years chairman of the English Department at North Carolina State University. Now in retirement, he lectures occasionally and continues his writing. Scholarly writings include books on Laurence Sterne, William Cowper and Katherine Ann Porter. His essays, short stories, poetry and reviews have appeared in numerous publications.

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