

Trustee Association Seeks New Members

By MRS. W. H. MAY, JR.

There are more than 1,200 trustees of public libraries in the state of North Carolina. Of that number only 46 have become members of the North Carolina Library Association. The goal of the North Carolina Association of Library Trustees is to have 400 members by 1957. You may say this is a great many to get in so short a time, but there are ten membership chairmen working in ten districts of the state to get it done. Librarians in each library could also help by encouraging each member of the board not only to become a member of the Association but to be active in the Association. Just as there are some librarians in the state who are not members of the Association because they have not been urged to join, so there are many trustees who have never realized the opportunity they have to work for library development through the Association.

At the annual meeting of trustees during the North Carolina Library Association meeting in High Point in the fall of 1955, the trustees decided to rename their section of the Association so that it would identify more clearly the group and its connection with the Association. They became "The North Carolina Association of Library Trustees." As such they are a section of the North Carolina Library Association and receive fifty cents per member from the Association.

Already trustees have been appointed to nearly all of the major committees of the Association by the Executive Board. They are: Membership, Mrs. R. M. Ray, Oxford; Committee for Conservation of Newspaper Resources, Mr. George Stephens, Asheville; Scholarship Loan Fund, Mr. W. Clary Holt, Burlington; and *North Carolina Libraries*, Mrs. W. H. May, Jr., Burlington.

Many trustees attest to the fact that their interest in libraries in general has been awakened when they have joined in activities with trustees of other libraries through work in the Association. They begin to see the library they serve as a part of a great library system and the inter-dependence of all libraries. It becomes more than a budget, a staff, a building, books and operational problems for their own library or library system—it becomes a matter of cooperative effort for all libraries. So many trustees have helped to interpret the needs of the local libraries to their elected representatives when the General Assembly of North Carolina has had under consideration the State Aid to Public Libraries appropriation. In the past few years trustees have begun to take an interest in the Library Service Bill now in Congress which will provide help to so many people all over the country but in particular those states which have large rural populations.

Until the meeting of the North Carolina Library Association in High Point little attention had been given by a certain library board to what was being discussed about the Library Services Bill now before Congress. Two members of this board attended, for the first time, a state wide meeting where they heard discussion of the bill by Julia Bennett of the Washington office of the ALA, the Chairman of the North Carolina State Library Board, Dr. Roy B. McKnight, and other people around the luncheon table. Later in the trustees' section meeting, further discussion of the bill was the final spark which sent them home to do something about it. Questions had been answered, not only in the light of the library at home but also, in terms of what would happen to libraries everywhere. They had been taken out of their own library and had been thinking of all libraries. As a result they came home and planned to contact their representative in Congress before he would get back to Washington. Four of the six mem-

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bers of the board made the trip to the home of their Senator a few days before Christmas and had a very satisfactory talk with him pointing out what they felt would be the advantages of having such a bill passed and of the help it would be to the local community in plans which were already made for their library. In turn, they had the viewpoint of their Senator from a first-hand conversation and were able to think of ways in which the appropriation in the Library Services Bill would be helpful in all parts of the country. Some of his general attitudes regarding the federal government and its relation to the states come out during the conversation.

Trustees of North Carolina's public libraries have contributed much to the libraries they serve as board members. By working cooperatively through the North Carolina Association of Library Trustees they will achieve even more. The progress of even the wealthiest library in the state is in some ways dependent upon the progress of the poorest library.
