

Library changes expected from state aid cuts

NT 5/25/82

State aid to libraries is being cut but the amounts remain unclear as the Legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee continues to hold hearings on the budget submitted by Gov. Thomas Kean.

The budget contains reductions in four of the five categories of aid, according to Henry Michniewski, head of the Library Development Bureau in Trenton.

The largest category per capita is \$5,040,000, representing a 7.8 percent decline from last year, he said. And area aid is listed at \$1.5 million, a 9 percent decrease.

This means that Woodbridge may receive \$127,000 in total aid, a

reduction of \$16,000 from last year, according to Library Director Edwin Beckerman.

Per capita aid was \$82,000 last year but has been projected to \$72,000, Beckerman said. In addition, area aid which totaled \$61,000 could be cut to \$55,000.

The Library Board of Trustees, he said, may ask the municipality to restore part or all of the \$16,000 but conceded this would be difficult in light of the CAP limitations on municipal spending.

Another alternative could be staff cutbacks. He noted, for example, that the staff has been reduced from 157 to 129 since 1973, partially due to

cuts in state aid.

"We are reviewing our fee structure," he said. Fees for non-residents and for borrowing audio and visual equipment have been increased. And free service was discontinued earlier this year to residents of five surrounding communities comprising the Woodbridge Regional Area — Carteret, Edison, Metuchen, Perth Amboy and South Amboy.

In Old Bridge, Library Director Sara Eggers said if the Kean budget is adopted, the township will lose \$5,000 in state aid, bringing its share of funding to \$42,886. A total of \$47,886 was expected.

Last year, the library received

\$37,730 and in 1980 the figure was \$50,905.

Hours of operation have been cut from 48 to 28 hours a week and from 24 to 12 hours a week at the Laurence Harbor and Old Bridge branches, respectively, over the past few years, she said.

The staff, which totaled 29 in 1979, is now down to 24 and could reach 22 this year, she said.

No staff or service cuts are expected at Edison and Carteret libraries, according to officials.

Florence Logan, Edison library director, said she had no idea what the new state aid figure would be. It was \$51,415 last year.

Carteret Library Director John Rindone says he expects to receive approximately \$7,500, which is about the same amount he received this year.

"I see no cuts in service and I'm not planning to lay off personnel," he said.

Dolores McKeough, director of the Matawan-Aberdeen Library, said she received \$19,090 last year and "I hope at least we receive the same. (However), I understand that state aid is to be reduced."

She declined to comment on any specific reductions in staff and/or service, saying that is a decision to be made by the Library Board of

Trustees.

All the directors expressed the hope that a bill restoring full funding to libraries will be passed by the Legislature. Under full funding, a community receives \$1 in state aid for each of its residents. The current level of funding is at 70 percent of that formula.

Rindone urged library users to contact members of the Joint Appropriations Committee and seek a restoration of full funding. They include Sen. Laurence Weiss, chairman; Sen. Gerald R. Stockman, vice chairman; and Assemblymen Robert C. Janiszewski and Barbara F. Kalik.

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NOT TO BE TAKEN
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Middlesex Co., Libraries

Municipal libraries in state are divided into six regions

HA 63/85
The New Jersey Library Association, in accordance with the New Jersey Library Network law, has divided the state library system into six regions which will eventually allow every library in the state to belong to a region network.

In January 1984, the New Jersey Legislature passed and Governor

Thomas Kean signed legislation to create a statewide, multitype library network. Its goal was to offer all New Jersey citizens equal access to library service.

Under the new system, one network will link all types of libraries — academic, corporate, government, institutional, medical, public and school. Libraries will share resources through voluntary membership in regional cooperatives. As a member, a library will be able to find out what material is available in area libraries, and then borrow or arrange for a user to borrow them directly from another library.

The old network, which operated for the past 18 years, provided funding under the supervision of the State Library Board of Trustees. Grants were given to 26 libraries throughout the state on the basis of how "strong" a public they served. These area libraries were then responsible for dividing funds for smaller local libraries as they saw fit.

In the new system, state funds go directly to the six Regional Library Cooperatives. Decisions regarding the distribution of funds, grants and contracting of new members will be directly handled by the cooperative committee. These cooperatives will have representation from every type of library in the region which, theoretically, assures a more equal distribution of funds.

The new system also provides a new way to locate materials. Previously, materials were located on a vertical basis — a person seeking information would have to begin at the local level then proceed to area and state levels. Today, the cooperative committees are working to establish a computerized horizontal reference system which would allow people to locate material at nearby libraries that had never before been indexed.

The six cooperatives were divided on the basis of population, (each contain at least 1 million people), into the following regions: Region 1 — Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex and Warren Counties; Region 2 — Bergen and Passaic Counties; Region 3 — Essex and Hudson Counties; Region 4 — Middlesex and Union Counties; Region 5 — Mercer, Monmouth and Ocean Counties; and Region 6 — Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties.

Presently, region 4 is the only region to be officially recognized under the New Jersey Network law. The other regions hope to be established and recognized within the year.

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Frustrating and costly ^{HN 11/16/84} *Middlesex Co., Libraries*

If Highland Park residents are frustrated and upset, they're entitled. Not only will their Public Library be closed for another three weeks while potentially hazardous materials are removed from the ceiling, but also they face footing a hefty bill for the emergency repairs.

There's no getting around the necessity for making the repairs, of course. The problems with the library's ceiling — which was found to have been coated with an easily combustible chemical sealant, applied over a layer of asbestos, that is now flaking — have to be remedied. If the cost of the repair work is \$85,000, which is the preliminary estimate, then that's how much the borough will have to ante up. And until the ceiling is re-done, obviously, the library will have to remain closed to the public, as it has been since the problem was discovered a month ago.

In the meantime, library patrons have borrowing privileges at several other municipal libraries in the county, and that's some consolation. But if Highland Park residents are frustrated about the inconvenience and unhappy about the expense of the repairs — think how many *books* \$85,000 would buy! — who can blame them?

Time to lend libraries a hand

HN 41183
It couldn't happen at a worse time. The demand for library services is booming. Thanks first to inflation and then to the recession, people who once thought nothing of buying all the best-sellers and subscribing to a raft of magazines have discovered the attractions of the free public library. People who are out of work have discovered that libraries have invaluable — and free — job-hunting resources. So the withdrawal of this area's two largest libraries — East Brunswick and New Brunswick — from a reciprocal borrowing arrangement with 11 other municipal libraries is a real blow to thousands of people who have come to enjoy and depend upon the great wealth of material their library cards have made available.

But it isn't surprising that the libraries of East Brunswick and New Brunswick have pulled out of the borrowing network. The same economic forces that have increased library usage have affected library budgets. While the cost of materials has soared, library funding has declined. The two libraries have concluded they simply cannot afford to remain in a borrowing system that adds to their costs when they are facing budget shortfalls.

Plainly, it's time to lend libraries a hand. Municipal budgets (from which libraries draw about 85 percent of their support) are tight, of course. And the state (whose total support for libraries has declined from \$10 million in 1975 to \$7 million this year) is a well-known budget basket case.

But if we want libraries — if we want adequate library service — we have to ante up the money for them. And now, when they're most needed, is the time to lend libraries a hand.

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Township of Edison



Office of the Mayor

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the ability to read is critical to personal freedom and the maintenance of a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, literacy is basic to individual survival and the achievement of one's potential; and

WHEREAS, the public libraries of Middlesex County established and funded a strong program to offer private literacy tutoring in libraries; and

WHEREAS, that program, Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex, recruits and trains tutors and provides tutoring services directly to persons desiring increased literacy skills, including English as a second language; and

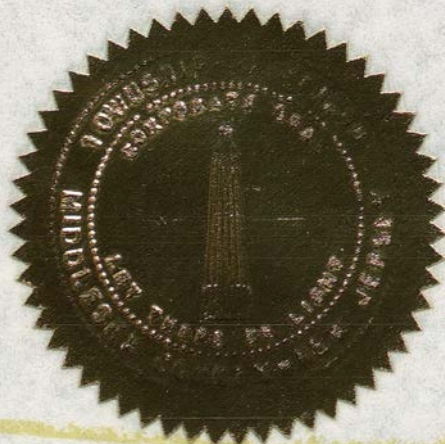
WHEREAS, in 1991, this program is celebrating its eleventh year of service to the residents of Middlesex County; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Edison and the Edison Township Public Library thanks the volunteer tutors for their commitment and efforts, salutes the adult learners who are achieving their personal goals through literacy and congratulates the Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, H. EARL RUPPERT, ACTING MAYOR OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EDISON, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, do hereby proclaim the week of April 21 - 27, 1991, as

"LITERACY WEEK IN EDISON TOWNSHIP"

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the Township of Edison, New Jersey, to be affixed this Tenth Day of April, in the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-One.



Attest:


Township Clerk


Acting Mayor of Edison

ASK AT DESK

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Library director appointed

NT 12/19/90
WOODBIDGE Catherine Ann O'Connell was leery about stepping into the shoes of a "legend," but she said she's gotten over that fear and is looking forward to serving as the second director of the township's public library system.

O'Connell, a Maryland native, lured from Saginaw, Mich., where she headed the public library system for the past six years, was introduced yesterday as the successor to Library Director Edwin P. Beckerman, who is retiring at the end of January.

Beckerman, who served as library director for 27 years, built the public

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MIKE SYPNIEWSKI/The News Tribune

Catherine O'Connell, the new director of the Woodbridge Public Library.

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12/19/90

12/19/90

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ASK AT DESK

(Cont'd. from preceding page)

Library director hired

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library system from a coalition of eight private libraries.

Library Board President Robert Ruezinsky said O'Connell was selected from 36 applicants.

"We are very fortunate to have her," said Ruezinsky. He extolled her for her community activities and membership in professional associations.

O'Connell said she will not make any major changes right away. She said she will spend much of her time getting to know the staff and community.

She said the Woodbridge library system is recognized nationwide for its excellent service to the community, and the motto she will follow is: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

O'Connell, 44, plans to move to Woodbridge with her two cats, Sneakers and Marmalade, in January. She said she hopes to find a residence close to the main library on Route 35, because she is a workaholic.

She is scheduled to begin work Feb. 4 with a starting salary of \$60,000.

O'Connell serves on the board of the Public Library

Association. She also has been active in the American Library Association, the Michigan Library Association and the Maryland Library Association.

During her six years in Saginaw, she was a member of a downtown revitalization organization and the Rotary Club. She also served on advisory boards to the Saginaw Community Hospital and was a co-chairwoman of an annual festival.

O'Connell grew up in Glen Burnie, Md., a Baltimore suburb, where her parents, T. Edward and Claire, still reside.

She began working in libraries at age 16, serving as a page in a branch of the public libraries of Annapolis, Md., and Anne Arundel County.

She earned a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Maryland and a master's degree in library science from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana.

Before moving to Michigan, O'Connell was employed by the Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown, Md., for 12 years.

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Middlesex Co.: Libraries

(Cont'd. from preceding page)

Librarian wrote the book

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show how inadequate the collection had been when he came aboard. He told the Rotarians that one chemistry text was published in 1913, adding that it was one of the few books on the subject.

Today the library system, which became fully automated last year with a computerized bar-code system, boasts a book collection of 360,000, Beckerman said.

The full-time staff has grown to about 100 employees and the system operated this year with a \$4 million budget — of which the township contributed \$3.5 million.

In the beginning, Beckerman said there was some concern that the township was looking to close the private libraries and build one library complex.

But these fears, he said, were soon assuaged, as the township worked to incorporate the neighborhood libraries as branches of the system.

Beckerman credits former Mayor Walter Zirpolo, who hired him, for the success of the public library system in Woodbridge.

"It took political courage to move this thing forward from nothing to something of value," Beckerman said. He said his job has been enjoyable because of the support he has had from township officials throughout his 27 years as director.

Early in his tenure, he faced some political opposition because of public outcry over certain books being offered by the library.

Retiring director led modernization

Beckerman said some people felt that public money should not be spent on books that contained vulgar language or sexually explicit material.

He remembers two books in particular that were scorned by some members of the public — Terry Southern's "Candy" and Hubert Selby Jr.'s "Last Exit From Brooklyn," which he called "the most brilliant, revolting book I ever read."

"In many ways, it was a vile book that talked a blue streak," Beckerman said of "Last Exit From Brooklyn."

"It had something to say, but pulled out all the stops in saying it," Beckerman said these books "tested" the library system.

"It forced us to examine what we thought the public library's role should be," he said.

He said books are accepted into the library's collection based on how they fare in literary reviews, not on how well they are liked by the library trustees.

He said if the critics believe a book is good, the public ought to have the opportunity to read it.

Beckerman, himself an avid reader, said he became a library director because it was a job he felt comfortable doing.

He said he is most proud of two unique,

though short-lived, programs that the township library system developed under his reign.

One is a Head Start program, for pre-school children of needy families, which in the 1960s operated out of the library administration building — a building the township leased on Rahway Avenue.

He also pointed with pride to a federally funded program in the 1970s that provided tutoring services to children and adults through the library system. He said the program helped tutor 4,000 children in two years.

Although he's retiring, Beckerman isn't taking life easy. He said his calendar is booked for the next few months.

He said he received a call on Thursday from Gov. Jim Florio's staff, informing him of his nomination to an unpaid post on the Advisory Council of the Division of State Library, Archives and History. The appointment requires state Senate confirmation.

He plans to teach a course in library management at the Rutgers Library School beginning next month and hopes to write a book on the subject.

Beckerman said he will continue to do consulting work for libraries.

Beckerman also serves on the State Library Association's Government Relations Committee, which he has chaired in the past, and currently chairs the Middlesex County Human Services Council.

In his free time, he said, he plans to travel and work on his golf game.

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12/17/90

12/17/90

Librarian wrote the book

Retiring director
launched modern era

By DEBORAH PRIANTE
News Tribune Staff Writer

NT 12/17/90
WOODBIDGE Township Library Director Edwin P. Beckerman thought he made a big mistake when he came to Woodbridge in late 1963 to interview for a job as head of the township's newly created public library system.

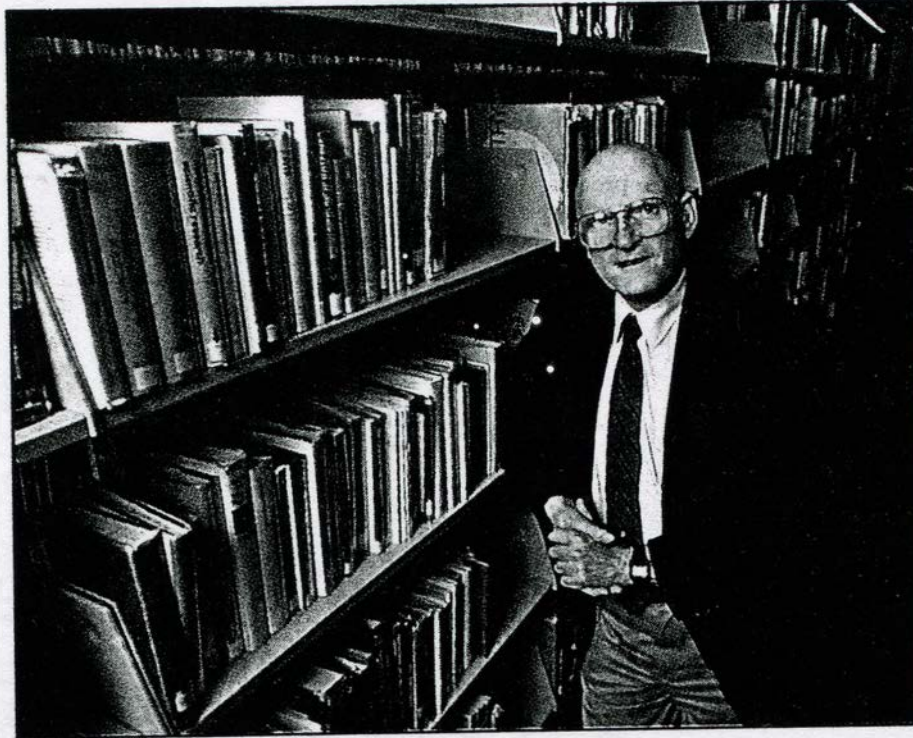
A New York City native, Beckerman said his first view of the township — downtown Main Street — didn't quite match up with his mental image of a community of 84,000.

"I remember thinking to myself: This is really not for me," Beckerman said.

But when he appeared for the interview, he quickly changed his mind. Assisting township officials in the selection process was someone Beckerman knew very well — Dr. Ralph Shaw, a former dean of the Rutgers Library School and founder of the Metuchen-based Scarecrow Press.

"I knew I wouldn't be wasting my time in Woodbridge," he said, since the town leaders had the foresight to call upon an expert to advise them.

And wasting time is one thing



The News Tribune

Edwin P. Beckerman, Woodbridge Township's library director.

Beckerman did not do.

The 63-year-old director, who will be retiring on Jan. 31, turned a loose-knit coalition of eight private libraries into the township's free public library system, headquartered off Route 35.

Today the library has nine branches, including the Woodbridge Main Library, erected in 1974 — one of five libraries built under Beckerman's leadership.

The Library Board tomorrow will introduce Beckerman's successor — Catherine O'Connell, who was lured from Saginaw, Mich., where she has

headed the public library system for the past six years.

When Beckerman took over as director in January 1964, the libraries had little funding and a limited book collection. He said the eight private libraries had between 60,000 and 70,000 books, of which 20,000 were worth keeping.

Much of the material was outdated or ragged, he said.

In a speech before the Woodbridge Rotary Club in 1966, Beckerman tried to

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Stores view libraries as opponents for video cassette rental customers

By WINIFRED I. COOK
Home News consumer writer

Libraries throughout the state are offering video cassette rentals, only charging minimal fees to cover the costs of insurance. Retail rental outlets, already squeezed by intense competition with other stores, are concerned.

One retailer with strong objections to libraries renting cassettes is Diane Leonhardt, co-owner of Front Row Video, Route 18, East Brunswick.

"Libraries are funded by the taxpayers, and books should be the primary purpose for using any money. I object to the libraries starting a business venture. They are competing with businesses which have invested a lot of money in their businesses," she said.

Ms. Leonhardt said she feels the libraries offering cassette rentals are catering to only about 5 percent of the population, since she said industry statistics show that percentage owns cassette recorders at this time. "Everyone can use books, and that's what public libraries should urge people to use," she said.

There are four library groups, or circuits, now circulating cassettes. The most experienced is the N.J. Library Video Cassette Circuit, headquartered in the

Woodbridge Library. In existence for almost three years, there are nine member libraries, extending geographically from Woodbridge south to Gloucester County. These include Princeton, South River, Cherry Hill, Hamilton, East Brunswick, Camden and Woodbridge. Each library is charged \$1,000 for membership in the circuit.

William Spangler, coordinator of audio-visual services for the Woodbridge library, serves as president of the circuit.

Using the Woodbridge experience as a model, the LIVE circuit of Somerset County, with 12 members; The Video Circuit (TVC), with seven member libraries; and the newest group, the Northern N.J. Video Circuit, with 30 members, have been formed. Members of the Somerset group are Lakewood, Franklin, Sayreville, Bound Brook, Mendham, Bernardsville, Bernards Township, Chatham, Morristown, Pequannock, Madison and Bedminster. Members of the TVC group are Cranford, Westfield, Metuchen, Old Bridge, North Brunswick, South Brunswick and Hunterdon County Library, Flemington.

Some retailers, like Richard Cullen, co-owner of Video Junction in Leonia, said the libraries are "capitalizing on the vi-

deo business at the expense of the local merchant."

Librarian Spangler disagreed. "We've actually increased their business. When we don't have the cassette someone wants, we always refer them to a local retailer," he said.

Cullen said stores can't offer tapes for the same low prices libraries are charging. "They (libraries) can do it because they are funded by the taxpayer, and they don't have the overhead to meet," he said.

The difference between store and library rental costs vary.

Front Row Video, for example, charges \$5.99 for a three-day rental of a film, and on each Monday, there is a special of two films for \$8.50 for three days. Mrs. Leonhardt, the co-owner, said that when a customer rents nine films, the tenth film is free.

Retail stores sell the tapes for anything from \$29.95 to \$120 each.

Each library is able to charge what it wants for rentals and to loan the cassettes for whatever period it chooses.

Libraries in the N.J. Library Video Cassette Circuit are charging \$1 per cassette to cover insurance. If the cassette is lost, renters are charged the cost of the cassette, which ranges from about \$30 to

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VIDEO

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as much as \$130 for "Star Wars."

In this circuit, there is a box of about 35 cassettes in each of the 12 library-members available for renting. The boxes switch libraries every two months, with a whole new group of cassettes available, Spangler explained. About 10 of the tapes are for use by the Beta system, while the rest can be used by VHS systems.

Spangler said, "We hardly feel that 35 tapes circulating out of the library are a

real threat to the retailers. I feel that we complement the store more." Over the two-month period that the box of cassettes is in the library, Woodbridge has circulated about 250 cassettes.

The box contains not only popular films, but also self-help programs, and educational films. So far, "Star Wars," and "The Attack of the Killer Tomatoes" have been the most-requested films, Spangler said.

The Metuchen library which belongs to the TVC group will begin lending cassettes on Oct. 1, and will charge \$1.50 for a 48-hour period. The North Brunswick Library charges \$1.50 for a three-day

loan, and charges 25 cents an hour for overdue returns, with an additional \$1 for each day. Only those 18 years of age or older are permitted to rent the cassettes.

The Somerset county circuit charges \$1 for two nights, and the cassettes change each four weeks. There are about 20 cassettes which circulate, plus another 30 that belong to the library system, said Marci Wybanickof of the library staff.

Ms. Wybanickof pointed out, as did other library personnel, that in most cases, the cassettes were purchased by "Friends of the Library" organizations. "We've not used any taxpayer money to make purchases of cassettes," she said.



Home-News Photo by Dick Costello

LIBRARY TAPES — North Brunswick Library members, as well as those in other libraries throughout the state, can borrow video cassettes for minimal rates. Some retailers feel their business is being hurt because they charge higher rental rates. At left, Assistant Librarian Barbara Pancza showing Marty Earley a tape.

Middlesex County: Libraries

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Interested in the latest video? ^{Middlesex} Check it out at local library ^{Co.-Libraries}

HN 11/17/88
By **TED SERRILL**
Home News staff writer

As video rental outlets proliferate in specialty stores, supermarkets and convenience stores, another source of videos has rapidly gained in popularity in recent years — public libraries.

Home videos, in fact, are "incredibly popular" among borrowers, says Franklin Library Director Patricia Nivison.

Libraries cannot stock enough hit Hollywood movies, classic films and children's movies. Educational, travel and "how-to" videos, which usually cannot be found in video stores, are an increasingly larger portion of almost every library's collection.

Many librarians say they believe that they are not in competition with commercial video rental outlets, although libraries do attract a few video borrowers who are not interested in taking out books.

Most libraries have so few theatrical titles in comparison to video stores or supermarkets that competition is not a thought that librarians take seriously. Nor do they hear any complaints.

Libraries do generally charge less than commercial outlets, but patrons have to take potluck in renting theatrical films. Few, if any, libraries will take reserves on such cassettes. Anyone who badly wants to rent a title would have a better chance of finding it at a store than in his or her local library.

Because of small budgets aided by fewer state and municipal dollars than librarians

would prefer, most libraries take advantage of one or another of the several video distribution circuits that have developed across the state.

A typical library will take between 70 and 90 new titles at a time. Every two months, these are replaced by a new batch of the most recent "hot-ticket" movies, as well as children's movies and educational features for the family.

Few libraries to date have built much of a permanent stock. One exception to the rule is The Library in East Brunswick, which has more than 2,000 titles of all types, including two copies of the lengthy Civil War documentary, "Shiloh."

Last year, about 110,000 loans were made, says Assistant Director Sharon Karmazin.

East Brunswick's foresight

East Brunswick, formerly the area library for southern Middlesex County, has been stocking videos since 1980, and was one of the first libraries in the state to recognize the coming popularity of the video cassette.

Now, thanks to the generosity of the MacArthur Foundation Library Videos Classics Project and a \$3,000 contribution from the East Brunswick Friends of the Library, it will obtain 100 hours of Public Broadcasting System programming that normally would cost about \$30,000, says Karmazin.

Library patrons this fall will be able to begin borrowing noted series, such as "The

Ascent of Man," "The Brain," "Heritage: Civilization and the Jews," "I, Claudius," "The Living Planet," "Vietnam: A Television History" and "A Walk Through the 20th Century with Bill Moyers," as well as seven Shakespearean plays on film.

Franklin has 1,000 titles of adult and children's films, excluding duplicate copies of hits, and about 300 additional educational and instructional videos, says Nivison. It started building its collection in 1984 and makes about 700 movie loans a week.

Most of the non-theatrical videos, which may be borrowed for two weeks, circulate non-stop. "I think we only have about 15 on hand today," Nivison said recently.

Woodbridge, although Middlesex County's largest municipality, has a considerably smaller collection at its library. It currently makes about 350 assorted titles available at the main library and another 120 among four branches, says Bill Spangler, the audio-visual coordinator. The library just purchased 150 new classic titles as well.

As a leading member of the regional library cooperative called LINX, Woodbridge will be the base library for a new service, VUELINX, that will start Sept. 1. More than 500 non-theatrical cassettes, including much PBS material, will be on hand for township residents, as well as available to be loaned out to other member libraries, he says. The tapes are now being purchased.

"People are beginning to discover that there is more out there than feature films,"

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Librarian Sandy Cige

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VIDEOS

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HN 11/17/88
says Spangler. "Although there is small interest at this point in non-theatrical titles — we have one in our collection on how to change a faucet washer — there is a growing groundswell of interest."

New Brunswick, like most libraries, has a small permanent collection and makes use of a video circuit, says Emma Enoch, circulation department head.

However, New Brunswick residents who are Japan buffs have a special treat: 60 non-theatrical titles donated to the library by that nation in recognition of New Brunswick's sisterhood with a Japanese city.

Open borrowing is the current rage among most libraries. A cardholder in a Middlesex or Union County library can borrow books from many other libraries in those two counties.

However, the open-borrowing concept has not been extended to videos. Interest in tapes is so widespread that most libraries restrict loans to local residents, sometimes including out-of-towners who choose to pay annual memberships.

Some libraries, such as Woodbridge and Piscataway, charge nothing for borrowing a video overnight. Most libraries do charge something, but less than video

stores. On the other hand, because libraries' stocks are smaller and demand is no less than at commercial outlets, finding a particular popular film at a library may be accomplished only rarely.

Most libraries do not permit reserves of videos because this imposes too much work on their staffs. East Brunswick and Franklin are among libraries that accept reserves on less popular, non-theatrical tapes.

Old Bridge charges \$1 a day for any cassette; New Brunswick, South Brunswick and Edison, \$1 for two days, and Highland Park, \$1.50 for two days. East Brunswick imposes a \$1.25 insurance charge, and allows cassettes to be borrowed for three days.

Nominal fees

Franklin charges \$1.50 to borrow a movie for two days. Non-theatrical titles are free of charge and may be borrowed for two weeks.

East Brunswick, New Brunswick, South Brunswick, Edison and Old Bridge are among the libraries at which only adults aged 18 or over may borrow cassettes, even instructional/cultural titles.

Sometimes, as in New Brunswick's case, this is because the circuit that supplies the feature films requires a minimum borrowing age of 18, says Director Leila Cayci.

Edison is one library that affirmed that policy, says reference librarian Molly Davis-Bright, be-

cause damage to tapes can be costly. The library does not want to place cassettes in the hands of younger card-holders who may be more careless.

Highland Park and Piscataway are among the libraries that allow younger borrowers to take out tapes, if parents provide written, blanket permission.

"We don't do any censoring," says Highland Park Reference Librarian Jeanne Gallo. Parents take the responsibility if they want their children under the age of 18 to borrow tapes.

Franklin also requires parental permission for younger borrowers to take out feature films, which include R-rated movies, but allows even the youngest children to take out non-theatrical cassettes.

Many libraries, says Woodbridge's audio-visual coordinator Spangler, agree with the Freedom-to-View policy of the American Library Association. "They don't restrict anything to anyone."

Nevertheless, none of the eight Middlesex and Somerset County public libraries queried allow R-rated movies into any hands below the age of 18, at least not without parental permission.

Woodbridge observes the MPAA rating system and will not loan an R-rated tape to anyone under the age of 18, but will lend PG- and G-rated films, as well as non-theatrical cassettes, to youngsters of any age.

Library film screens darkened by cuts

By **WAYNE F. YOURSTONE**
News Tribune Staff Writer

NT 11/26/90

State Library funding cuts have temporarily pulled the plug on film programs at many Central Jersey libraries.

And while the films may reappear in the spring, a state official predicts that their days will be numbered by the increased use of videotape cassettes.

Robert Drescher, head of the State Library's library development bureau, said yesterday that recent state spending freezes have caused a delay in providing money for 16mm movies for distribution to local libraries through statewide film and resource centers.

But Drescher also said about \$210,000 will be made available this spring to revive the program.

Meanwhile, local libraries, which were notified of the cutoff earlier this month, are suspending programs that depend on the films.

"It's a heartbreaker for me," said Dolores Chupela, head childrens' librarian for the Edison Public Library. "This affects our entire Film Fun program [for pre-school children] because it was based on these films."

The Edison library system offers that program to nearly 200 children weekly. The new program began this week and will continue to mid-February.

Parents of Edison preschoolers in the program learned about the elimination of the films this week.

"I'm very disappointed," said Edison resident Eveyln Kelton,

See **SPENDING FREEZE** Page B-2



Children's librarian Carolyn Cullum at North Edison branch.

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Spending freeze hurting area libraries

Continued from Page B-1

NT 1/26/90

They're forced to curtail film programs

the mother of two preschool daughters. "It's been a very good program and it's a good introduction for children to the library.

"They can color pictures while watching the films and learning that books are their friends," Kelton said. She said the films keep the attention of some children who ordinarily might not be able to sit still and listen to the reading of a book.

"It's disappointing, but most parents seem to understand," said Carolyn Cullum, children's librarian at the North Edison branch facility. She said other programs would be offered to substitute for Film Fun.

Clinton van Buren, audio/visual coordinator for Old Bridge Township's library system, said he also uses films provided by

the state in programs offered for adults. Van Buren said he plans to use at least one alternate source: He lives in Middletown where the local library has 16mm films available for loan.

Old Bridge Childrens' Librarian Barbara Gordon said she uses films once or twice a month in her preschool and after-school programs, and will have to devise other programs to fill in.

William Spangler, audio/video coordinator for the Woodbridge library system said state funding cutbacks began last year, but that a lobbying effort by librarians resulted in some money from the State Library's discretionary fund being made available to keep the film programs afloat.

Spangler said the void cannot easily be filled in by substituting for the reel-to-reel films with video cassettes.

Public performance rights are included in the price of the 16mm films, Spangler said. But those rights, in most cases, are not contained in the cost of the video cassettes, which therefore cannot legally be shown in a library or school.

"Professional librarians are lobbying with the film distributors that we need public-performance rights and cheaper videos," Spangler said.

Spangler also said that a 16mm projector costs about \$1,500 while a video projection system can cost about \$4,000.

Drescher said the film centers like the

ones in New Jersey will have to be "more aggressive" in making licensing agreements with the film companies so that videotaped movies can be shown in libraries.

"We think there will be enough 16mm films for the next three years to satisfy libraries and still allow us to put money into videos," Drescher said. "There will be an orderly transition to total video over the next three to five years."

"There are some good childrens' series based on picture books with public performance rights," said Brenda Berger, head of media services at the East Brunswick Public Library.

"Most libraries cannot afford the large projection system to show videos," Berger said. "And if we show videos that children can watch at home, that isn't providing a good service," she said.

Reading machine aids the blind

NT #123182

Middlesex Co. Libraries

By MARK S. PORTER

News Tribune staff writer

WOODBIDGE — The township public library is the recipient of a remarkable machine, a \$30,000 device that literally reads books aloud for blind and visually-impaired people.

The Kurzweil Reading Machine is capable of converting printed or typewritten material into understandable speech. The device uses an optical system to recognize symbols on a page and vocalize the words.

The main library, on George Fredrick Plaza, off Route 35, is one of seven libraries in the state that received one of the reading devices through a state library grant.

Two librarians, Jean Retkwa and Leslie Keiser, have been trained to operate the machine and instruct new users. They demonstrated the device last night to a group that included blind persons and staff members from the Rahway Public Library and Metuchen High School Library.

According to Ms. Retkwa, the Kurzweil machine "is the single most important development for the blind since braille."

"Out of 40,000 books published annually, only 350 are converted to braille," Ms. Keiser said.

She noted that while other books and literature are transcribed onto "talking books" — cassettes or discs that contain popular stories or novels recorded aloud by professional speakers — textbooks and more obscure or esoteric literature is not available.

"There are loads and loads of fiction that will never get put into a talking book, or be transcribed into fiction," Ms. Keiser said.

The reading machine affords an

Library device vocalizes printed word

opportunity for a blind person to "read" almost any book.

The device was created by Raymond Kurzweil, who brought out his first model in early 1975. His production company, which is now a subsidiary of the Xerox Corp. and based in Cambridge, Mass., is producing a third-generation reading machine.

There are three parts to the device: a self-contained computer; a scanning device that resembles a small photocopy machine, where the book is placed; and a hand-held keyboard the size of a telephone book, with about 34 buttons and four levers.

An opened book is placed on the glass surface of the scanner. A camera underneath the glass — an "optical character recognition" unit — "reads" the letters, links them into words, figures the pronunciation and converts the words into vocalized statements.

Ms. Keiser said, "It's like a little man in there looking up on the ceiling. We put the book on the ceiling and he reads it."

The machine, upon demonstration, proved itself far from infallible. It occasionally mispronounced a word, or re-read the same line.

The synthesized speech is somewhat jarring, too, until one gets used to it. But the machine is capable of inflections and questions, and its program avoids monotones.

Ms. Retkwa said there are no residency requirements for the use of the machine.



Blind reader

TNT photo by Ed Pagliarini

Woodbridge librarians Jean Retkwa and Leslie Keiser check out the Kurzweil Reading Machine, which reads books aloud for blind and visually-impaired people, at the Woodbridge Main Library. The women have been specially trained to operate the \$30,000 device.

No drastic cuts planned by area public libraries

NT 12/24/82 Middlesex Co.: Libraries

By AL FEMIA

News Tribune staff writer

While the fiscal crunch is forcing city libraries to close or cut back in services, the picture is not as bleak for several communities in Middlesex and Monmouth Counties.

No drastic actions are contemplated at this time, according to an informal survey conducted by The News Tribune. Much depends on the outcome of the budget squabble going on in the legislature in Trenton.

"At this point it's very difficult to tell what the situation will be for the budget next year," said Edwin Beckerman, director of the Woodbridge library system. "It is tied up with what happens with the funding fight in Trenton."

The operating budget for 1982 totaled \$2,179,219 and Beckerman foresees approximately an eight or nine percent increase in the 1983 budget, exclusive of personnel costs.

Preliminary meetings have been held with the township's administration "but nobody at this point knows what the state aid will be."

In the past two years, the township has lost \$40,000 in state aid. It received \$136,795 this year. If there are any reductions in state aid to the municipality or library next year, there is the risk of cutbacks in the system, Beckerman said.

A half-million dollar bond issue was approved by the voters a couple of years ago with \$300,000 allocated for books and related materials, he said. The last of that money will be gone by the end of 1983.

The Monmouth County Library in Freehold, which services 40 of the 53 communities in the county, fiscally is in "not too bad shape," according to Assistant Director Anna Stuhl.

"We serve as a backup for these libraries, providing them with books, materials and programs," she said. "They have free borrowing privileges at any of the (10) county branches."

Asserting that the proposed budget for 1983 has not been finalized yet, she added the hope that there would be no cutback in services.

"We do get state and area aid and the funding fight in Trenton will affect us," she said.

"Cities are harder pressed than we are because we have ratable growth and they do not," she said. "They are suffering more than we are."

"We are facing difficult times," said Michele Breef, director of the Perth Amboy library. "We are buying more paper(back) books than hard bound to conserve (on the cost of) books. We are trying not to cut the quality of books."

In addition, she said supplies are being purchased when needed instead of stocking up as was done in the past.

The library lost \$3,000 in state aid, reducing the amount it received to \$32,740. In the proposed \$225,832 budget submitted to the city administration, restoration of the \$3,000 is being sought, she said. Ms. Breef described the 1982 budget of \$213,617 as "bare bones," adding that the proposed 1983 edition reflects increases in salaries, longevity and "not really much of an increase in total running."

Staff, hours and library materials all have been cutback in Rahway, according to Director Arthur Sudayll. In addition, "we haven't been able to purchase major equipment."

The 1982 budget was \$322,000, he said declining to go into figures for 1983 because salary negotiations are underway. Additional reductions will be made "only if forced to by cuts," he said, adding that they would be in materials not in staff.

In South Amboy, indications are that there probably will be cuts in books, hours and services, according to Director Joyce Brookman. A budget proposal for about \$100,000 — the 1982 figure — will be submitted. "That's all we can hope for," she said adding that a seven percent cost-of-living increase will be sought.

An optimistic picture was painted in Edison.

"To be very honest, we don't anticipate any closings or having any layoffs," said Library Director Florence



EDWIN BECKERMAN
Woodbridge director



JOHN RINDONE
Carteret librarian

Logan. "I can't complain with the '82 (\$771,400) budget and I don't anticipate any major problems at this point."

Declining to go into actual amounts, Logan said the 1983 budget should be about 8.5 percent more than 1982.

"In the last year or two we have come a long way in making the powers that be know we are here and what we are doing," she said. "We got a long way to go to build the library system to what it should be. Our main building (on Plainfield Avenue) needs to be enlarged."

"We can't have branches all over the place and that's why we have a 40-foot bookmobile. Edison is spread out and we try to cover all the areas."

In Sayreville, Director Donna Blaszkas said she was very happy with this year's \$100,000 operating budget and believes the 1983 edition will come to about \$118,000.

"The only thing that has happened is one clerk and one professional

(librarian) have left and hopefully the professional will be replaced," she said. The staff totals 15 persons.

In Carteret, reserve state aid funds helped pull the library through a three-year fiscal crisis in the borough, said John Rindone, director.

During that time, the library did not receive the maximum five percent permitted under the state's cap law. He hopes that will be rectified. Rindone also pointed out that since 1979, the library budgets declined each year, reaching \$115,000 this year which was \$200 less than in 1979.

Consequently, approximately \$130,750 will be sought.

Marlboro is constructing a half-million addition to its branch library on Library Court off Wyncrest Road, said Director Jeanette Rice. Its expected to open in late April.

The library's current capacity is 28,000 books and materials. With the new addition, the library will be able to distribute close to 60,000, she said.

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The
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Region

MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 1984

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Middlesex Co. Libraries

Shelved plans frustrate librarians

By VANESSA JOHNSON
Home News staff

SOUTH PLAINFIELD — Although it has been more than a year since the Borough Council refused to bond for the expansion of the local library, the shelved plans have continued to frustrate both library and municipal officials.

The 20-year-old structure on Plainfield Avenue is running out of collection space, has employees working in cramped quarters and has dilapidated cooling and heating systems. Within the next few weeks, however, a new cooling system is expected to be installed.

Last year, the borough was faced

with a large tax increase — partly because of bonded indebtedness — and decided against bonding for the expansion, putting plans on hold.

"We have a full set of plans on hold for the expansion from last year as a result of the Borough Council's decision," said Patrick McDonald, chairman of the Library Expansion Committee. "It is frustrating because the need has existed for several years.

"The expansion takes money and the availability of money is not always there."

McDonald explained that when the library was constructed in 1964, it was as part of a three-part plan that

"The expansion is sorely needed and one of these days we are going to have to do something."

— Bernard Conlon

South Plainfield Councilman

called for eventual expansion of the building.

The first phase provided for construction of the existing building; the second, for a mezzanine deck for additional collection space and the third phase called for expanding the building.

"Now we're at the third part of the plan," said McDonald. "It would cost

roughly \$1.5 million to construct and building costs continue to escalate."

Although rated highly by the council as an important project, its costliness has kept officials from proceeding.

"The library is bursting at the seams," said Councilman Bernard Conlon. "The expansion is sorely needed and one of these days we are

going to have to do something.

"You know the need is there but the money is not, and the (bond) indebtedness has not dropped that much so we can do it that way. Unless we can find another building in town, it will just take time."

The library, which was founded in 1935, moved to its existing facilities in 1964. An addition would increase the library's size from its current 6,600 square feet to 14,400 square feet.

An alternate plan, recently hinted at by Mayor Michael English, would mean constructing a new library on vacant property near the existing facility. English, who has asked the council to consider that plan, said

the library building then could be used to house some of the other cramped municipal agencies now located in Borough Hall.

"The library is inadequate," the mayor has said. "It's too small. We've wanted an addition for years."

"The police department is overcrowded. They have no investigation rooms. They have to use someone's office for investigations. They (the police) could be moved over there (in the library.)"

During the past three years, the estimated cost of the project has steadily increased. In 1982, the projected figure was \$1.1 million; last year, \$1.3 million and this year, \$1.5 million.

Metuchen introduces Middlesex Co.: Libraries new salary ordinance

NT 4/3/84

METUCHEN — A salary ordinance for various non-union employees, including a \$39,194 annual salary for the borough administrator, was introduced by the Borough Council last night.

A public hearing on the ordinance is set for 8 p.m. on April 16 in the Council Chambers at Borough Hall.

The administrator's proposed salary represents an increase of \$2,219 from last year.

The proposed ordinance also calls for salaries for borough clerk/tax collector/treasurer, \$29,840 up \$2,340 from last year; secretary of the Department of Health, registrar of vital statistics, \$16,240 up \$920; recreation director, \$15,216 up \$861; and the head dispatcher \$18,020 up \$1,020.

The ordinance sets a salary schedule for full time employees, ranging from \$8,450 to \$34,215.

Included in the list of proposed wages for part-time officers and employees are: the assessor, \$6,050 per year; borough prosecutor, \$6,400; and the code enforcement and zoning officer, \$16,500.

Proposed wages for full time library employees are: library director, \$28,076; reference and children's librarians, \$16,062 each; adult services librarian, \$11,146; library assistant I, \$11,418; and library assistant II, \$10,612.

The ordinance also sets wages for 1984 for part-time library employees, seasonal pool employees and seasonal employees.

Middlesex County: Libraries Libraries aren't just books



CARL D. FORINO/The News Tribune

With the help of Judy Yurenda, Joseph Wagenhoffer checks out a few of the items available at Middlesex County libraries.

"When the boys entered this humble but impressive building, they entered an area of profound and almost frightening silence. It seemed as if even the walls had become speechless, and the floor and the tables, as if silence had engulfed everything in the building. There were old men reading newspapers. There were town philosophers. There were high school boys and girls doing research, but everyone was hushed, because they were seeking wisdom. They were near books. They were trying to find out..."

From Chapter 6 —
At the Public Library,
from "The Human Comedy,"
by William Saroyan, 1943

By ELIAS HOLTZMAN
News Tribune Staff Writer

There are still high school boys and girls doing research at the library, and old men reading newspapers, and perhaps even town philosophers. And there still is that certain library hush.

But libraries are not what they used to be.

They are changing with the times.

Today, at various Central Jersey libraries, a patron can borrow compact discs, videos, cassettes (talking books), framed artwork, tools, computers, hand puppets, Berlitz language courses and audio visual equipment. And that is just a partial listing.

Libraries are increasing their services

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anymore!

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to the homebound, and making their facilities more available to the hearing and sight-impaired.

They are conducting outreach programs to bring their services to the community. And their meeting rooms are bringing community groups into the libraries.

They are assisted in many cases by grants and the state library system, and by active boards of trustees and Friends of the Library groups, which support them as a positive factor in modern community and cultural life.

Edwin Beckerman, Woodbridge's library director since the inception of that community's municipal system 24 years ago, said that key changes in the last three or four years resulted in technical advances "taking shape much faster than we thought they would."

"Certainly, the use of the computer has revolutioned everything — enabling us to answer questions for material we don't have in the library, material we can access over the telephone," Beckerman said.

"The profound thing that has happened to libraries is that they have expanded just beyond their four walls. They now depend on resources which are statewide and even national."

"I think," says Beckerman, "that we're dealing with more format, but the fundamental purpose hasn't really changed: to provide people with access to information — to enable people to make judgments about the society in which they live, to give them greater insights into themselves and other people."

"To use Shakespeare's language," Beckerman continued, "To hold a mirror up to nature."

And libraries are holding that mirror up to nature — and at an earlier age.

They are conducting programs to bring in younger and younger users. East Brunswick has a program for parents and their infants 6 months to a year old.

The Children's Room in the Woodbridge Main Library has an Apple IIc computer which is in use constantly by young people, usually assisted by their parents.

There are summer and daily story reading programs — a carryover of an old and honorable library tradition.

Irwin Pashkin, the coordinator of the Woodbridge Main Library, is in constant touch on the main floor with the staff and the public. He has his eye on the reference desk, the periodicals, the stacks.

"We're not just a warehouse for books and information," says Pashkin. "We

See LIBRARIES Page B-8



East Brunswick Assistant Director Sharon Karmarzin with compact discs.

Libraries offer more than books

Middlesex County: Libraries

Continued from Page C-1

and the public. He has his eye on the reference desk, the periodicals, the stacks.

"We're not just a warehouse for books and information," says Pashkin. "We have a responsibility to promote the cultural interests of the community."

In the Old Bridge Library, a person wanting to learn how to use a computer can come in and, with some initial assistance from the librarian, sit down and practice.

Sara Eggers, library director at the innovative facility, says this method is used by people wishing to enhance their job prospects. Ms. Eggers also was responsible for the grant enabling the library to lend out hand and power tools, audio visual equipment, video games, science and hobby material, as well as what is now becoming the norm: cassettes and videos.

Ms. Eggers has no problem in justifying the lending of tools from the Old Bridge Library:

"We feel that in a sense information is a tool, and we're in the business of providing information, and to some extent, amusement."

"Books, records, tapes are just different ways of communicating different kinds of information, and we feel that knowledge is a tool. We're lending knowledge; why not tools themselves?"

Ms. Eggers has not experienced any negative feedback from other libraries, or even from commercial rental agencies, about the library's program, initiated in 1978.

She is, in fact, aware of libraries — though not in the area — now lending lawnmowers and sewing machines.

Libraries have been profoundly affected by the advance in technology, and appear to be using technology to make the system more available to the average user. Thus, the LINX (New Jersey Library Network Exchange) system, a regional cooperative in which most Middlesex and Union County libraries are tied in together to allow residents of their counties to borrow from any of the participating libraries.

And if a book is not available through the LINX system, libraries have at their disposal a computer-based system called OCLC (Online Computer Library Center), which searches libraries throughout the United States for the book.

Libraries are packaging their products — books, periodicals, display racks — more attractively

and colorfully. And they are making the facilities themselves more comfortable and colorful.

And there usually is a display of local talent: artwork, photography, special collections. In East Brunswick there currently is a display of the Raritan Photographic Club, with striking black and white photographs.

In Edison there is a display of a collection of fans. In Old Bridge there is a display of two students' collection of memorabilia attached to the 50th anniversary of Superman.

And there are continual eye openers: Walk into the East Brunswick Library and you're met in the lobby by a Marx Brothers poster, with a cartoon balloon and a typical Groucho remark: "I read a book in my pajamas last night. How it got in my pajamas I'll never know." The poster then guides you inside to a theme display on "Comic Relief."

In the Woodbridge Main Library, centerpiece for a nine-member branch system, one encounters head-on the information desk, busy, busy, busy, answering telephone and patrons' queries. The Woodbridge Library has complete census reports, with a breakdown of all 50 states. It is a depository of federal and state documents.

The up-to-date library today has large-print and "talking books." Woodbridge also has a Kurzweil Reading Machine, a device that reads text for the sight-impaired, transposing it into "voice" — although in a monotone. (The machine is not in general use because of extensive training required. It was donated about five years ago by the state library system.)

In Old Bridge, the patron is met almost immediately by the selection of income tax forms — it's the season. There also is a sign nearby: "Please don't ask the librarian tax law questions."

Hard right is the children's room, where a mural depicts storybook characters such as Dorothy and other characters in the "Wizard of Oz," and Mary Poppins.

As you walk into the East Brunswick library, you see a display of pop-up books. The display was put together after Assistant Library Director Sharon Karmazin saw an exhibition of pop-up books at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York.

In East Brunswick, Ms. Karmazin proudly displays the paperback section — with its up-to-date and filled racks; the Young

Adult section — "It's a whole new genre," she says — and the compact disc and media and video section. She notes that East Brunswick has between 2,000 and 3,000 videos, as well as 650 compact discs, which are replacing LP records in popularity.

In addition, the East Brunswick Library has a television cable studio, Channel 8, and staff members produce municipal programs which are broadcast to the community.

In almost every library, there are bulletin boards crowded with announcements and flyers. There will be copying machines and change machines if you don't have the 15 cents or 10 cents the machine requires. Table tops will have bus and train schedules. There will be little packets telling you the advantages of enlisting in any of the armed services.

Middlesex County College brochures tell of its activities, and the Crossroads Theater of New Brunswick tells you of its latest production.

In Edison, a patron at the newly expanded main library on Plainfield Avenue — the library just added an additional 10,000 square feet — would discover that the large plastic container near the check-out counter was for supermarket coupons.

Edison Library Director Susan Krieger speaks highly of another service: the bookmobile, now making stops to include seniors, along with its other stops on its tour of the township.

Another device used by libraries is the "circuit" — in essence, an arrangement by which libraries will exchange some of their own material to others on a temporary basis to enhance their collections.

A hands-on device made available to patrons in several area libraries is the Info Trak II, a terminal allowing a patron to conduct a computer search for articles in more than 400 popular magazines from January 1984 to the present.

Metuchen, Old Bridge and East Brunswick have the Infotrac IIs, and they are popular, while Woodbridge, which is in the forefront in many other areas, retains the adequate but less sophisticated microfilm scrollers for magazine article index retrieval.

Most libraries these days have their share of microfilm for newspapers and other publications, and many have microfiche, on which pages and pages of text are miniaturized on 4- by 6-inch film.

In Metuchen, Library Director Melody Kokola is aware of touches which add to the human experience: She keeps a glass-caged gerbil. The patrons like it.

"There used to be two," Ms. Kokola says. "They were called Peanut Butter and Jelly, and one of them died. We don't know if it was Peanut Butter or Jelly."

On this day, Peanut Butter (or Jelly) was asleep in a small brown furry ball, on a shelf above the encyclopedias. Children were busy nearby in their studies.

They were not whispering. "We try to keep their voices down to a low roar," Mrs. Kokola said.

Apparently, with all the other changes at libraries, the "shush" index has changed too.

Librarians: Get a court order to read records

By MICHELE J. KUHN
News Tribune Staff Writer

NT 12/20/88

When a law enforcement officer stopped by the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan several months ago, it wasn't to borrow a book.

The officer requested information about the types of books a particular cardholder borrowed. The answer from library officials was a simple "no."

"Our reply was twofold. Our record-keeping system makes it virtually impossible to determine what books an individual borrows, and, secondly, we wouldn't do it. It's unconstitutional," Monmouth County Library Director John Livingstone said.

No one is going to get it without a court order, he emphasized.

Increasingly, librarians nationwide resist requests for records of what books, films, or other materials their patrons check out. They say the borrowings

could be misinterpreted, placing innocent people under false suspicion.

Reports of a spate of witchcraft rituals troubled one Ohio community so much they became a priority to the police, and investigators soon turned to a rarely tapped source: the library.

In a Louisiana parish, or county, the police chief wanted the names of those who had checked out library materials on the occult, not because there was a problem "but just in case there might be one in the future."

"This first came up about eight or 10 years ago. There were instances when FBI agents were checking up on who was reading what," said Edwin Beckerman, director of the Woodbridge Public Library.

"Our attitude was to cooperate with anyone with a court order that a law

See **LIBRARIANS** Page B-2



"It's a kind of spying on the reading habits of Americans and we're just not going to do it."

Edwin Beckerman
library director

Librarians won't disclose records without court order

Continued from Page B-1

enforcement agency had gotten. That's a legal requirement," Beckerman said.

"A law enforcement agency can get a court order ... but fishing expeditions are another thing. The library community will not go through its records to see who reads certain types of books," he said.

"It's a kind of spying on the reading habits of Americans and we're just not going to do it," Beckerman said, adding that police have never asked for such information from the township library.

Although there is no formal policy against releasing such information in Rahway, librarians there also would refuse to divulge who takes out what.

"Our approach is we would deny any request unless it was accompanied by a court order," Rah-

way library director Arthur Sudall said.

"One of the freedoms in this country is that an individual can have access to any information they desire without being held accountable to anyone," Sudall said.

Said Patricia Gandy, library director in Perth Amboy: "No one's ever approached us during the 10 years I've been here.

"It's understood that patron requesting reference materials has a right to privacy," Gandy said.

Roberta Canavan, Linden's library director, agrees.

"I would not be prone to giving out any private information ... because it's just that, private," Canavan said.

Said Ohio Library Association executive director Bonnie Beth Mitchell, "If people really understood what they could get about other people ... by tapping their library records, we'd be out of the

library business."

In Ohio, where an Open Records law does not exempt library records from public scrutiny, librarians have proposed legislation to make the records confidential. Thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia already have such a statute, requiring a court order to release the records.

"We're not obstructionists," said Judith Krug, director of the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom in Chicago. "We just want to be sure the police or anybody else just can't walk in half-cocked for no good reason."

Krug said the organization has fought since 1970 against releasing records.

She cited the Louisiana case, calling the police chief's request "absolutely ridiculous," and she recalled a librarian at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pa., who spent 15 days in jail in the early

1970s for refusing federal investigators' demand for the records of Vietnam war protesters Daniel and Philip Berrigan.

The case was one of the factors that led to Pennsylvania's decision to pass a confidentiality law, she said.

Besides Ohio, the states that do not have library confidentiality laws are Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Texas, although attorneys general in the latter two states have issued opinions favoring confidentiality.

In the Ohio battle over the Open Records law, law enforcement lobbyists say library records are a valuable if rarely used investigative tool they will not relinquish.

The Ohio Library Association, however, calls public access to the records a loophole in the law and an assault on the First Amend-

ment.

The difference of opinion has forced many of Ohio's 250 public libraries to adopt policies that contradict the law. In 1983, one librarian nearly landed in jail for his defiance.

The Ohio Library Association and the Ohio Library Trustees Association, with 4,100 members between them, drafted legislation that would make patron records confidential, permitting their release to police only under a court order.

The measure cleared the state Senate but has been stalled by opposition in a House committee — and now Mitchell said amendments have changed the bill so much the library groups no longer support it.

The amendments, backed by the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, would, among other things, eliminate the

court-order requirement.

The OLA plans to re-introduce its bill next year.

The FBI also is interested in the reading habits of library patrons and has tried to recruit library personnel around the country to watch their patrons, according to recently released federal records.

An FBI agent visited the University of Cincinnati library in 1985 and again in 1986 to check the reading lists of two Soviet citizens, said the American Library Association. Both times, the agent's request was rejected by head librarian Dorothy Byers.

The American Library Association this year launched an effort to pass federal confidentiality legislation that would have covered library records and other services. The bill died when Congress adjourned.

Librarians to answer questions after hours

HN 10/29/91 Middlesex Co. Libraries

By ROMEL J. HERNANDEZ
Home News staff writer

Quick, answer the following questions:

When was the last time the Boston Red Sox won the World Series? What pop group had a 1970 hit with "Love Grows Where My Rosemary Goes"? Can you name the capital of Madagascar?

Answers will come later, first the news:

Starting Friday, the New Jersey State Library will begin a new after-hours service that hopefully will help residents around

the state settle bar bets, finish homework or just satisfy general curiosity.

The toll-free "New Jersey Nightline" — 1-800-922-2233 — will be open until midnight seven days a week and operate out of the East Brunswick Library. The U.S. Department of Education has provided \$150,000 to fund the service in its first year.

"We're hoping to increase access to public libraries," said East Brunswick librarian Cheryl McBride, the project's manager.

"It'll be more than trivia," McBride said.

See **ANSWER**, Page B2

ANSWER

Continued from Page B1

"It's for people who need information to prepare for a job interview the next morning or students having a hard time with their homework. We'll expect a little bit of everything."

Maryland is the only other state in the country with a similar program, McBride said. She noted that hotline averages 35 calls per hour.

The service will be staffed by two librarians Monday to Thursday from 9 p.m. to midnight and Friday

to Sunday from 5 p.m. to midnight. Queries will be limited to general-reference questions to which answers may be found in five minutes.

"With increased numbers of two-income families and single-parent households, the need for access to information during non-traditional times of the day has become more important than ever," McBride said.

Answers: Led by pitcher Babe Ruth, the Sox beat the Cubs 4 games to 2 in 1918. Edison Light-house scored the hit, the only one of its short career. Madagascar's capital is called Antananarivo.

Library computer may help you read all about it

By DAVID M. LEVITT
News Tribune Staff Writer

NT 9/18/88

MIDDLESEX COUNTY It'll be easier to find books in Middlesex County libraries — and harder to get away with not bringing them back — once a computer linkup approved Thursday night is in place.

The county Board of Freeholders last night awarded a \$582,207 contract to Utlas International Inc. to install a mainframe computer and software at Middlesex County College that will link 15 local libraries: members of Libraries of Middlesex Automation Consortium.

And it'll help keep you from not bringing your reading back

ASK AT DESK

The system will enable any member library to keep track of book inventories at any other member library, and to place orders for books it doesn't have on hand, said Donald R. King, the consortium's automation consultant.

It will also allow libraries to keep track of "delinquent patrons," who habitually return books late or don't return them at all.

"Most library patrons are no problem, but we have a few who may exhaust their library privileges at one library, then go to another," said King. "With this sys-

tem, if they're delinquent in one library, they will be delinquent in all others."

Under the agreement between the county and the consortium, the county will purchase the central computer system, while the member libraries will be responsible for buying terminals and equipment to tie them into the mainframe, as well as maintenance costs.

King said the group has received a \$100,000 grant from the state Department of Education's State Library to defray local libraries' costs to join the system.

The county floated a \$600,000 bond last year to cover the computer cost, said Jack Garber, county purchasing agent.

Sara Eggers, president of the consortium and Old Bridge library director, said the new system will save librarians the searching and paperwork involved in ordering another library's books.

"If you have the old-fashioned book card system, you might have to go through a half-mile of book cards just to find out whether a book has been checked out," she said. "It gets ridiculous."

The consortium will supplement the State Library's nationwide linkup system, which enables a local library to request materials from member libraries across the nation over a toll-free 800 phone number.

The system is expected to be operating by early next year.

Besides Old Bridge and East Brunswick, other members of the consortium are Edison, Highland Park, Jamesburg, Metuchen, North Brunswick, Piscataway, Plainsboro, Sayreville, South Amboy, South Brunswick, South River, Spotswood, and Woodbridge.

Libraries hope to hook readers with movies

ASK AT DESK

By WISAM ALI

HN 3/29/89

Home News staff writer

SOUTH RIVER — The South River Public Library, in conjunction with 12 other libraries in the county, hopes to resurrect the dying art of reading by — believe it or not — showing free movies once a month.

"It's an experiment to bring back the book," said Library Director Janice Haraz. "We hope to promote the book by using some other form of media to entice people to read."

Despite appearances, this is *not* a film series, stressed Haraz.

"It's all about books, a push to make them more popular."

The experimental movie presentation will involve showing a film based on or associated with a popular book followed by a short, informative book review to whet the audience's appetite for more, said Chris Cosimando, a librarian at the South

River Public Library and the coordinator of the project.

The movie, Agatha Christie's "Ordeal By Innocence," starring Donald Sutherland, Faye Dunaway and Christopher Plummer, will be shown on Monday, April 10, at 10:30 a.m. at the public library on Appleby Avenue.

"First we'll show the movie and then we'll advertise the book," said Cosimando. "For example, we'll explain to them that if they liked this movie, they may like this book and if they like that book they may enjoy this one and so on."

Cosimando, like all librarians is an avid book lover and is troubled by the public's waning interest in reading.

"When someone walks into the library, and heads straight to the videotape section without even glimpsing at the book shelves, it's really annoying," said Cosimando.

"You want to just shout, 'Hey guys, this is where it all started — BOOKS! Don't forget that.'"

Cosimando said she has been giving "book talks," at the library for nearly three years and admits with a sad chuckle that she has had little success.

According to Haraz, although 10 people might sign up for a library program or series, usually one or two people show up for the actual event.

'An experiment'

"This is an experiment in more ways than one," said Haraz. "It's a push to make books more popular, but it's also an experiment to see if anybody comes."

If the experiment gets off the ground, the other 12 libraries in the circuit may begin sponsoring similar projects in their municipalities, said Cosimando.

The experiment is part of a large project known as the Large Print Circuit, a coalition of 12 libraries in the county, including South River, Edison, New Brunswick, South Brunswick, North Brunswick, and Old Bridge, which banded together three years ago to purchase nearly 400 large print books.

"We decided to share the books and rotate them to one another every three months because no one wanted to take a chance alone," said Cosimando, noting that in terms of popularity, large print books are at the bottom of the barrel.

According to Cosimando, large print books are the only available alternative for people who can't or don't want to read books with smaller type. Large print books are good for kids, senior citizens, the middle-aged and Cosimando's favorite — exercise bike fans who can

prop the book on their handlebars and read while they pedal.

Part of the reason the public did not aspire to read large print books when they first hit the market several years ago was because they were more than just large — they were gargantuan, said Cosimando, and thus impossible to carry around.

"They were as big as Life Magazine and weighed about five pounds," she said. In addition the titles chosen for large print books were as dull as dishwater, said Cosimando.

But the times are changing. Today there is better selection of large print books available, including titles from the best seller lists, like Sidney Sheldon novels and best of all — large print books are smaller than they used to be so they're easier to carry around, said Cosimando.

Libraries extend Middlesex Co., Libraries borrowing privileges

NT 11/24/84

The East Brunswick and Metuchen libraries have extended borrowing privileges to Highland Park Library cardholders for the length of time the Highland Park Library is closed pending the removal of asbestos and combustible insulation.

They join the other public libraries in the area which already honor Highland Park cards: Cranbury, Dunellen, Franklin Township, Jamesburg, Milltown, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, Old Bridge, Piscataway, Sayreville, South Brunswick, South River and Spotswood.

In addition, the Highland Park High School Library will be open to the public, with limited public library services available, during the following hours:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday:
10 a.m.-9 p.m.

Wednesday and Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Highland Pak Library programs

will be held as scheduled in the following locations:

"Open Chapter," a workshop and support group for creative writers, will be held at the High School Library on Tuesday, Nov. 27, and Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m.

The Book Discussion Group will meet every Tuesday morning at 10:45 a.m. at members' houses.

A holiday performance for children by Creative Theater Unlimited will be presented on Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. in the Middle School Auditorium.

A news release stated that public library books should be returned to the book drop on North 5th Avenue, Highland Park. Records, cassettes and other materials should be kept until the library is reopened, the release said. No overdue fines will be charged while the Highland Park Library is closed, the news release stated.

Park residents given OK to use 6 libraries

Middlesex Co. - Libraries
HA 11/18/84

HIGHLAND PARK — The Public Library and its patrons have six neighborly neighbors who have added their own municipal libraries to the ones Highland Park cardholders can use until the library is cleaned of its asbestos and flammable cellulose ceiling.

The East Brunswick, Metuchen, Dunellen, Franklin, Sayreville and Spotswood libraries have extended borrowing privileges to Highland Park library users until the cleanup is completed.

Borough officials have not announced a date for the reopening, but the \$85,000 project is expected to take up to three weeks.

The other area libraries open to borough patrons are New Brunswick, North Brunswick, South Brunswick, Milltown, Cranbury, Piscataway, Old Bridge and South River. The Edison library is available for reference use.

In addition, the Middle School and High School libraries are open on a limited basis to adult patrons.

The borough library was closed Oct. 19 after the cellulose sealant in

the building's ceiling was discovered to be flaking and easily combustible. The borough hired Gatarz-Venezia, a New Brunswick architectural and planning firm, to coordinate the removal work.

Regular library programs will be held in the following locations:

- Open Chapter, a workshop for creative writers, Nov. 27 and Dec. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at the High School library.

- The Book Discussion Group will meet every Tuesday at 10:45 a.m. at member homes. Information is available by calling 572-3400.

- A holiday performance for children by Creative Theater Unlimited will be presented Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. in the Middle School auditorium.

Library books should be returned to the outside book drop on North Fifth Avenue.

Records, cassettes and other materials should be kept until the library is reopened.

No overdue fines will be charged while the library is closed.

For more information, call Borough Hall at 572-3400.