



Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

IRWIN O. SEXTON

CHANGING PATTERNS is the keynote of mobile library service, and this flexibility provides all librarians with a truly versatile tool for better service. The whole library system is quickly drawn into the picture with the acquisition, or even the contemplated acquisition, of one mobile unit.

Business failures throughout the United States run into the thousands each year, and one of the chief reasons for this is the lack of initial planning and investigation. Libraries seldom go bankrupt, but costly failures do occur in extending service because of negligent planning. To further guarantee success, work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, County Commissioners, and other local groups who can offer tangible help. Just because mobile library locations can be changed is no excuse for a hit or miss location of stops. Actually, preplanning may reveal better ways of providing service than by using bookmobiles. For example, books by mail might provide even better service at a lower cost in some sparsely settled or remote areas. Sears, Montgomery Ward, and other mail order houses have found this method effective. With merchants providing floor space for the catalog case and with the use of simplified forms this type of service could work.

Essential to all planning for and initiation of service are detailed maps. Local planning bodies, engineering offices, or the Board of Education may already have valuable information showing population by area, traffic flow, and natural barriers, but if this is not readily available then it must be prepared by the library staff from the latest census reports. Utilize every resource to aid in graphically clarifying the needs and requirements of those individuals to be served. Remem-

The author is Director, Oklahoma City Public Libraries.

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

ber too that mobile service can be helpful in testing reader potential for the determination of future branch sites.

Checking details before and during the establishment and operation of bookmobile service is an endless task, but the competent administrator can through delegation locate the problem areas and formulate policy to aid in their solution. To help in the over-all planning the following check list of factors to be considered is presented.

Determining in advance the total effect of bookmobile service on the rest of the system is not always possible, but the administration needs to be aware and alert to the gradual or sometimes radical shifts in staff requirements. If the bookmobile, for example, draws large numbers of children in the summer months with a resulting lack of patronage at other agencies, then some staff from these agencies could be temporarily transferred to the bookmobile for the summer months. An unexpectedly heavy usage of the bookmobile might well result in a depleted book stock. If this occurs some shifts in departmental or agency book budgets to the mobile unit might prove necessary.

Foremost among the problems to be solved before the mobile units go into operation is scheduling. Not only a matter of geography and population centers, scheduling must also take into consideration service to special groups or organizations. The possibility of service at schools will immediately present itself. Even in areas where public schools have libraries there is a question of supplementing the library collections for private and parochial schools, but adherence to the public library standards recommends that service directly to schools should be avoided unless additional funds are made available for this service. Sometimes, however, librarians are required to provide this type of service as a means of expediting the over-all library program. An effective way to assist schools and at the same time maintain public library standards is to provide the same type of book collection as would normally be available at a community stop. Every effort should be made not to yield to local pressures in purchasing books to specifically supplement the school curriculum. The mobile unit's policy toward schools will, of course, be influenced by the library's over-all policy. As in other problem areas preplanning for the bookmobile can help the administrator to reevaluate and perhaps redefine over-all policy.

Balancing the bookmobile's book collection presents an interesting challenge, for a fluid book collection is essential to all mobile library operation. An attempt to maintain a separate collection for mobile

libraries invariably will result in high overhead. A small permanent collection of standard titles for adults, children, and young people can logically be made a part of the mobile library's stock, but even this should be kept general. By making mobile libraries an integral part of the library system it is then possible to borrow heavily from main and branch libraries to make every book in the system actively available for mobile library users. This admittedly involves manpower and a keen awareness in the mobile library staff of the total library collection. Routines of handling bulk transfers of books have been handled in many different ways, but Topeka, Kansas, library has probably achieved the ultimate. Their mobile library loading dock is built to permit book trucks to be rolled from the loading platform into the mobile library. The complete changing of the total book stock can be accomplished in minutes.

Where major shifting of the mobile collection is impossible there are alternative methods to insure a fluid collection. At least one section on the bookmobile should be reserved as a rotating subject section. This will permit the library staff to easily introduce mobile library users to the total scope of the library's collection. Picture and easy books likewise need to be changed often, for young readers can quickly read through a large number of titles. Changing the collection is simply handled in library systems with large numbers of mobile units by rotating the vehicles that serve a given area, but even the smallest of units can enrich their collection by changing one small box of titles each day. The gradual shift of titles from one stop to another also adds to the usefulness of each book. One title can circulate several times in one location before it remains on the bookmobile to go on to the next stop. This natural rotating requires no effort from the librarian, but awareness and alertness is necessary. It also follows that new books should not be added on a certain fixed day and stop.

Administration policy is essential in those systems where a large loan of books from other agencies in the system will be required for the stocking of bookmobiles. This type of loan must be clearly understood by all members of the library staff, for without complete cooperation much dissatisfaction can develop. As better service to the general public is the desired goal, those directly responsible for maintaining the book collection should be brought in to discuss and formulate the basic principles involved.

The mechanics of handling such large loans must also be worked

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

out carefully to provide necessary information to all concerned. This in itself can do much to prevent any staff resentment. Time limits for these loans should also be established with a simple, but workable follow-up procedure. Varying methods have been used for the handling of this type of loan, but essential to all of them is simplicity. Only that information which is vital to the smooth operation of the library should be recorded and ideally no records at all need to be kept. This is possible if the borrowed books are simply stamped with the date when they should be returned to the lending department or agency. This procedure may sometimes be frustrating to the lender, but most other systems become extremely involved in detail and the expense rises accordingly.

Because of budget and space, book selection is a limited but a highly necessary and important activity for mobile library service. All book selection tools should be routed to bookmobile personnel. These, if possible, should be marked to indicate the items which have been selected for purchase within the system. This will permit the mobile library staff to keep abreast of current publications, and to see what is being purchased. The mobile library staff should be included in book meetings if they are a part of the library's program. The general book selection policy used to guide those responsible for book selection should, of course, apply also to the mobile library personnel. The procedures used by the mobile library in purchasing and selecting can be the same as those used by branches. The total dollar figures for bookmobile books bears little or no relationship to the total library's book expenditure, for the very nature of the mobile library service involves heavy interchange of books from other agencies.

Paperback books are one means by which the mobile library can increase their subject coverage as well as the total number of titles. Even if not generally used by the system, it would be well to consider them for mobile use. Present day techniques make the reinforced paperback durable for mobile library use, while at the same time shelf space is saved.

Whether or not to buy prebound children's books is already a matter of established policy in most libraries. If the library does not, it might well reconsider the problem when planning for mobile libraries. Buying prebound or having publishers' bindings replaced on children's easy and picture books frequently justifies the additional expenditure, but in many instances the publishers' library binding is durable enough

to withstand fifty or sixty circulations. Prebound books are not essential, but their durability has many advantages.

If space is available books relating to sex and marriage should be included among the mobile library's regular collection. No special housing should be required. However, the collection must be extremely well chosen and only a representative collection needs to be included. These remarks might well apply to other subject areas as well. The point to remember is that the mobile unit's collection should be a well balanced one and certainly not devoted solely to books for recreational reading.

The inclusion of magazines on bookmobiles is rarely done although successfully used by the St. Louis County Library as described by S. W. Smith, elsewhere in this issue. There are several reasons why this material does not lend itself to this kind of service. The space required simply is not available. Many librarians feel that the short life of a given magazine does not justify the space required. The preparation time can not be justified and the back issues are for all practical purposes useless once they have been removed from the unit.

Attempting to provide reference service on a mobile library can be extremely frustrating for the librarian involved. Because of lack of time and space not more than one shelf of reference tools should be carried. A *World Almanac*, a one volume encyclopedia, a dictionary, a book of quotations, a state historical guide, an atlas, and such other reference tools as seem desirable to the librarian should be included on the one shelf. Answers to requests for information not carried on mobile libraries can be delivered at a future date, or they can be mailed directly to the individual desiring the information. Where periodical articles are involved the library's photographic service could be utilized.

The method of taking requests on mobile units varies. Some librarians prefer taking a written request for materials, while others ask the patron to phone their request to the main library. In the latter instance the proper department prepares the necessary material and routes it to the mobile library's headquarters for delivery at the designated area stop. Reference service can not be ignored nor taken too lightly, for frequently the mobile library is the only library facility for many miles and the only contact the patron has with library services. Any method of providing reference service should also allow time for the staff to prepare it. If the mobile library staff handles this, then sufficient time must be given for them to be in the library. If

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

the main library staff handles mobile library requests, then in all probability this work can be done in a routine manner at slack times.

Presumably all services of the library are available to mobile library patrons, however, the library administration should ascertain the feasibility of providing for delivery of items not normally carried on the mobile units. Where space permits phonograph records are sometimes carried as a regular item though more often are considered a special service. A test shelf of records would quickly indicate borrower interest. This could be expanded into one shelf for adults and one shelf for children's records.

Framed pictures as a special service could present a problem in bulk that would hamper normal public service. Pamphlet materials can be handled in the same way as is used throughout the library system. A one or two drawer vertical file can be used or two shelves of the regular book shelving can be adopted for the file folders especially made for this purpose. Even a limited pamphlet area is useful because all items included can be both valuable for information and popular in reading appeal. Films usually are scheduled for twenty-four hour loans and thus do not lend themselves as a mobile service. However, occasionally as a convenience to borrowers films could be either delivered or picked up in this manner in cooperation with the film department. The pickup of ceiling book projectors at mobile stops could be handled by mobile units, but only if the staff and space requirements can justify this very specialized service. A well formulated administration policy on special materials will provide the mobile staff with a set of guides to ease their decision making while giving public service.

Policies in public libraries differ widely on the use of signs to guide patrons to different subject areas. The over-all policy of the library will usually prevail on a mobile unit. However, even if signs are not generally used circumstances may require special provisions for extremely busy bookmobile operations. Where every available source of assistance is required for the provision of minimum service then perhaps signs could help to alleviate some of the congestion. Today attractive durable plastic signs are available for a relatively small cost. These are particularly helpful, in fact necessary, where books are shelved by reader interest. Parents and children alike frequently are confused if children's books are not marked as to school grade. However, librarians are reluctant to limit and restrict a book's use through this narrow classification. In all probability, the question

of designating the reading level of books should be appraised and evaluated by any library providing bookmobile service, for unless the mobile staff is able to give total reading guidance additional aids will be required. The public is entitled to an explanation of any procedure that is designated to simplify service.

Local situations will, in all probability, be the chief governing factor in the establishment of a policy of story hours from mobile units. Story hours have been successfully held under trees, or in the shade of the unit itself, or in nearby buildings. The traditional value of the story hour should be weighed carefully with both past and present experience being considered, for mobile service should attempt to provide every library service that can logically be offered. This is particularly true where library users have no contact with library service other than through mobile units.

The following paragraph is only for those administrators and children's librarians who believe in summer reading games and the discussion is primarily limited to those individuals who believe that a summer reading game must require either an oral or written report! If this type of program is scheduled for any part of the library system then it must automatically include the mobile units. Here conceivably, a problem will develop for large numbers of children at any one location can present the staff with an impossible service situation. Some libraries have solved this problem through the use of volunteer staff to do the clerical routines, thus freeing the trained librarian to broaden her service program.

Although most librarians have discarded the ribbon shelving of children's non-fiction on the top shelves and children's fiction on the bottom shelves, this system should not be discarded without some consideration for bookmobile use. A slight adaptation could place adult books on the top shelves and children's books on the lower shelves. Such an arrangement would permit all books to be within easy reach for both adults and children.

Bookmobiles offer a special, if not a romantic appeal to both adults and children, therefore, volunteer help is often available and with a minimum amount of training this free assistance can be valuable to the total library system. Unfortunately, indiscriminate use of volunteers without preliminary training can be hazardous. All volunteers must realize their importance to the successful bookmobile operation, for failure of volunteers to meet a schedule can be disastrous.

The flexibility of mobile libraries presents an ideal opportunity to

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

provide direct service to specialized groups such as business and labor. Bookmobile stops, for example, have proved successful in Kansas City at a large steel mill and a steel fabrication plant. The principle upon which this service was established is sound, for it provided the machinery necessary for giving direct service to a group that is sometimes difficult to reach. Arrangements for the service were made jointly with both labor and management. One section of book shelving was devoted to books of interest to men and specifics relating to their job, promotion possibilities, and hobbies. Management was amazed to find their employees avoided mysteries and westerns. When the service was organized management was fearful that employees would be borrowing this type of material and reading it on company time. Their concern could have materialized, but it did not. The service was appreciated by both management and labor, and the results were quite satisfying to the library administrator. However, each library administrator must decide for himself whether or not he is justified in using this direct approach. Some administrators will place this service in the same category as direct service to schools, while others will accept it as a means of expanding and extending library service in areas that can benefit tremendously from the use of books.

Other specialized groups which might receive direct service from the mobile library are homes for the aged and orphanages. If the stops are open to anyone in the area then certainly this specialized service can be justified. This justification, however, would preclude serving such institutions that are completely isolated from the general public. The library needs of the community and the library's financial ability to meet these needs will probably combine to be the determining factor as to how much and what kind of service can be provided.

Mobile units can be adapted, where schedules permit, to service deposit collections, but the administration must work out all details for a smooth operation. Will the collections for the deposit stations be chosen by the extension division? Will the books be selected from the mobile library's stock? These are only two of the many questions which have to be answered. Lines of responsibility and authority should be clearly drawn and the mechanics of servicing should be simplified as much as possible if the decision is made to let the mobile library handle the servicing of stations.

Serving areas with a low standard of living requires much patience on the part of the library staff, and the full cooperation of the library administration. In these areas children frequently are not

taught at home about the care that is necessary in handling library books. New books frequently come back marked, smudged, and torn. Here, too, there is a high percentage of overdue books. Despite these factors service to these areas is essential to our social development and the rewards for giving this service far outweigh any disadvantages. Frequently librarians are tempted to overstock on light and ephemeral books in providing this service. It is not necessary, although certainly some of these materials should be included. In serving this group as any other the librarian has an obligation to provide books suitable to the educational level of the individual borrowers. In this work, the lack of simply written material in many fields of interest is keenly felt.

Circulation procedures pose questions for the administrator as well as the staff. Is uniformity throughout the library system important or can mobile units differ is the basic one. Established procedures can cause complications. For example, in Oklahoma City two mobile units were acquired on a minimum budget. To put these bookmobiles in operation books were borrowed from the main library and branches with the hope and expectation of using hand charging, but this was not practical since the system had previously adopted a microfilming charge system which eliminated all book cards. The job of securing duplicated book cards severely limited the flexibility of the rapidly expanding program so the Wayne County charging system was considered. Here, there was fear (which was later justified) that sufficient floor space was not available for patron preparation of the charge slips. The problem was solved by renting the necessary microfilming equipment.

Helen Geer discusses seventeen different charging systems in her book¹ and since its publication there have been other systems devised and put into operation by public libraries. Any of these can be made to work effectively on a mobile unit if it is fast enough to handle the volume.

Charging systems that require slipping of books can slow down the return of the books to the shelves and in effect restrict the workable collection on the mobile unit, but where the volume of business is not great the problem of slipping becomes negligible.

Circulation statistics do not necessarily need to reflect the types of books borrowed, but a spot check should be made at least once a year. Capable librarians can very accurately gauge the use of their materials, but the yearly check will involve very little effort and it is a sound procedure. Circulation and other statistics should prob-

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

ably be uniform with other agencies in the system in order to contribute to the library's statistical picture.

If borrowers' identification cards are used they should either be mailed or issued on the spot to bookmobile users. This simplifies the problem of carrying on the mobile units large quantities of unclaimed cards. The expenditure for the mailing fee is negligible in the light of the good will it promotes and the savings in time for the bookmobile staff. Here too the total library system is affected for if cards are mailed from the mobile units they must also be mailed to branch library patrons. The problem with branch patrons conceivably is not as critical because of the longer hours of opening, but at least the service of mailing the card should be available to any resident who desires it. The cost for 10,000 cards will amount to \$400 in postage alone, but the filing and reclaiming of 10,000 cards could easily cost over four cents each.

Fines in general should be uniform throughout the entire library system. If it is an accepted premise that fines are a penalty for failure to keep within the restrictions as outlined by the library administration, then the individual should be held responsible for each day that he has books overdue. This may seem harsh in areas where only weekly or longer mobile service is available, but any change from the system's fine policy for mobile units might very well adversely affect the patron's attitudes when he borrows books from other agencies in the library system. However, each library administration can, at its discretion, set different standards of fines for different types of service, (i.e.) some libraries charge two, three or five cents a day for main library books and a flat rate of five or ten cents for each scheduled stop missed on the mobile library. Fines are primarily designed to encourage the return of books and the return of books is essential to the successful operation of a mobile library operating on a limited stock. Mobile units frequently lack staff and time to pursue overdue books as is done in main libraries and branches, and the daily fine provides an incentive for prompt return of library materials.

Today practically all library systems permit the return of material at any outlet. This policy can be complicated with mobile service because of the storage problem, but the convenience to the patron will offset any difficulties.

Protecting library books in bad weather is the responsibility of the borrower, but some libraries have found paper sacks, specially printed paper bags, and even newspapers worth-while accessories

on bookmobiles. This service can be justified by considering the necessity for the patron to leave the bookmobile once books have been selected.

A keen awareness of community growth and development is particularly important to all bookmobile librarians, for both rural and urban populations are constantly changing. This shifting is sometimes dramatic and obvious, but frequently it is subtle and difficult to detect. The alert library staff must not only be prepared for the changes and the resulting change in scheduling, but they also can prepare their borrowers for necessary changes.

Each community should develop its own criteria as to what constitutes a valid stop. Schedules should constantly be re-evaluated and re-appraised in view of these criteria. There may be extenuating circumstances justifying the continuance of service which does not meet the system's general requirements, but this fact should be recognized by the total system when it exists.

There are several ways in which a stop can be changed. The time of the stop can be lengthened or shortened; the period of the day can be shifted as little as an hour or two hours and still make a significant change in the results. A major shift from morning to afternoon or evening can open new possibilities for patronage. Changing the day or frequency of the stop can likewise affect the results. Also, the effectiveness of the publicity program can easily influence the stop status.

Few changes in the scheduling of fixed units such as branches are made in most systems, but the mobile library units might perhaps be subject to more changes. For example, some mobile libraries have different winter and summer schedules. There may be areas where this is advantageous, but where possible a set mobile library schedule is preferable. The changing of schedules each season of the year will confuse many borrowers, while the stability of one schedule will instill confidence and encourage regular use. Scheduling around legal holidays is a problem that has to be faced by the mobile library, as well as the total library system. If done on an annual basis so that patrons are given advance notification, poor public relations can be avoided.

In some localities mobile service can be interrupted during Christmas week for major service and overhaul of the mobile units, but normally these maintenance procedures can be incorporated into the regular service schedule. The administration has the responsibility

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

for determining how much and what kind of maintenance service is available for mobile libraries late at night and on Sundays. All night servicing of units or Sunday mechanical work, even at a time and a half expenditure, is definitely desirable over an interruption in service. Large cities present a hazard to moving mobile units during rush hours. Where practical changes in location should be scheduled to avoid this complication.

How long should a stop be? The answer to the question is dependent upon the population of the area served. Stops have been known to be ten to fifteen minutes in length and in other instances are expanded to a day or two days. An isolated city housing area can be adequately served in forty-five minutes. A small rural community might complete their book transactions in twenty minutes, while a stop at a major location in the city could take all day to serve its residents.

Reader interest should also be considered in determining the length of a given stop, for frequently the mobile library staff is the only contact that some individuals have with books and with people who are interested in books and reading. Caution: this interest should not be confused with the intentions of those individuals who simply like to visit.

The scheduling of all stops should take into consideration the hours that will best suit the time available for the people in a given community. Children obviously can not use the bookmobile if it arrives only when they are in school, and areas that serve working parents will receive little use if the bookmobile arrives in the morning or afternoon. Service to retired citizens can best be accomplished by morning and afternoon stops, but few areas will fall completely within this classification.

Determining the area served by a given stop can easily cause confusion, for today ardent library users will not hesitate to drive their automobiles a considerable distance to secure books from two or three different locations. Quantity of public transportation can also affect a stop. Experience with the individual community can in some measure govern the estimate for the area to be served by a single bookmobile stop. Knowing the driving habits and reader interest can sometimes be of help, but there is no set rule for predetermining the exact area.

Evening stops are usually quite popular in urban areas and they are desirable because of the increased possibility for family use. Morn-

ing and afternoon bookmobile stops are the most difficult to plan. If the units are parked near schools with teachers and students making frequent or regular visits and the collection is stocked with supplementary curriculum materials this is providing school service. This is not necessarily undesirable for sometimes there is a distinct advantage in offering public library service with the cooperation of school people. Morning stops are frequently slow, but in certain types of areas they can be quite productive. Mothers with small children, for example, find that the morning service does not interfere with nap time.

Rural salesmen frequently discover that they must call on a customer who is in an isolated area and a man on commission is reluctant to spend his time on a prospect that might not be able to pay his own way. This situation can also affect bookmobile library service, for travel time of two hours to service a very small group of people can not only deprive others of better service, but it also can be very expensive to the library. The library administration must therefore consider all factors in mapping the initial inclusion of isolated areas.

Parking on public and private property and broad insurance coverage will immediately concern the library administration in the legal responsibility for operating mobile units. Insurance coverage will depend on the library's governing unit, but regardless of how insurance is handled there must be arrangements made for meeting all possible situations. The bookmobile, while in transit, must be covered and the public making use of the facilities likewise needs some protection. The limits of liability must, of course, conform with state requirements.

When parking the unit on private property the library can be requested to sign a release agreement with the property owner. Such an agreement is primarily designed to free the property owner of any responsibility of damage to property or individuals using this library facility while it is on his land. Such an agreement could expedite the securing of authorization of using private parking lots for library purposes. Local law enforcement officers should be contacted for authorization and clearance for the use of limited parking or restricted parking areas, and for overnight parking of book trailers. In some locations restrictions and limits are waived for library use, but in others strict adherence to the law is demanded.

Bookmobile headquarters have been established in practically every conceivable manner and place. Ideally, they should be located in a relatively large area and situated near the center of the area to be

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

served. Bookmobile routes can, in most instances, be the chief governing factor in the location of the headquarters. The requirements of the headquarters itself will depend upon the size of operation. There should be storage space for books. There must be sufficient work space for the clerical operations, and there needs to be parking space for the bookmobile itself. In the simplest terms this is all that is required.

In the matter of dress for mobile staff there might conceivably be an exception to the total system's requirements. Weather conditions frequently necessitate warmer dress or cooler dress than is required in a large library building. This situation has been simplified in the St. Louis County Library by the use of summer and winter uniforms for the bookmobile library staff. They are both neat and attractive and worth the added cost although staff members sometimes resent wearing uniforms provided by the library system. Normal good taste is expected in the appearance of all of the staff. The rag-bag appearance obviously is not acceptable, although the informal atmosphere of the mobile library may influence the staff to relax their standards of dress.

Housing for bookmobiles is not essential to their operation just as a garage is not essential to an automobile, but the added protection can extend the life of the mobile unit enough to justify even rented housing. In addition to protecting the unit itself there is an added advantage of simplifying the staff's problems of working with the units when they are not on the road. Housing, however, is not necessary if large expenditures are involved or if the unit can only be housed on weekends.

In very large rural areas over-night lodging of the bookmobile staff provides the best answer to continued and uninterrupted library service, but there must be a clear statement of policy about the provision for adequate quarters with expenditures prepaid for all staff members involved.

Providing in advance for emergency repairs and substitution for illness of drivers and staff can, on occasion, save much time and energy. The inconvenience and disappointment to the library patron when a scheduled stop is missed can sometimes be explained, but through careful planning the necessity of an explanation can be avoided.

As for repairs, the mobile library staff should be authorized to make expenditures not exceeding a figure set by the library admin-

istration for emergency repairs. Preplanning in this area will permit the mobile unit staff to act with some dispatch. This figure should provide for minor repairs and assistance in getting the unit started.

Staff substitutions for emergencies can be handled most easily at the headquarters location. Obviously, not all emergencies can be handled by such a policy, but the bulk of this kind of problem can be met with very little thought. The work week for the bookmobile staff is no different than assigning a reference librarian to a public service desk.

Should the bookmobile librarian be expected to spend all of his time on the unit in direct service or should time be allocated for other library work? The answer here is not simple, for ideally bookmobile librarians need to have a breadth of experience far greater than simply providing books to bookmobile patrons. Staff limitations both in quantity and quality complicate the length of assignments, but even in restricted areas there should be a set plan for exchange of headquarters and mobile staff assignments.

Communications from headquarters to the mobile unit can be simplified by arranging to have on file the telephone number of the telephone nearest to the bookmobile stop. This list of telephone numbers should not be used indiscriminately, but the list should be available to all individuals who will have need for it. Two way radio communication has worked out satisfactorily in those areas where money is available and the installation of a regular telephone is also possible, but again the expense is high.

Technical processes will not be particularly involved in the establishment or the operation of mobile library service, for few if any changes will be necessary above and beyond the standard library procedures. The administration must, however, determine whether or not duplicate book cards are needed. The extent of the headquarters card catalog and shelf list requirement should ascertain the need for card catalogs and/or shelf list on the mobile units themselves.

Embarrassment to the administration and staff can easily be the end result if detailed planning is not a permanent part of the total operation. For example, a portable radio playing rock and roll and a half filled coffee cup will not impress the general public with the serious purpose of library service. Establishing policy for the mobile library system in the greatest of detail is extremely practical and worth-while. The constant pursuit and follow-up of all phases in the

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

total library system's operation will produce for the library and the public excellent results without confusion.

References

1. Geer, Helen T.: *Charging Systems*. Chicago, American Library Association, 1955.