

These Women Live, Not Exist



Tape technician Mrs. Judith Creech copies a book on tapes for cassettes. Tapes, now supplemental, are the library's fastest growing service.



Mrs. Robert Jones of the Library staff proof-reads a volunteer-produced braille book. The Library of Congress sets the standards for the copies which are locally produced.

The difference between living—and merely existing. This is what the State Library Services for the Blind and Handicapped provide, according to one blind reader.

The facility at 1314 Dale Street in Raleigh serves approximately 11,000 readers in both Carolinas with its multitude of services, which include talking books and magazines, books on cassette tapes, braille books and large-type books—all provided free and by mail. These are the services that mean so much to the blind and handicapped—the difference between living and simply existing. And Marian Leith, enthusiastic director of the Special Services Division of the North Carolina State Library, declares, "We're just teeming with project ideas."

Pointing to a shelf loaded with books of all subjects, the director explains, "These large-type books are mostly printed in England." The books, printed in 18-point-type for partially sighted readers reflect subjects for a wide variety of age groups. Mrs. Leith mentioned that these are popular with residents of nursing homes and the elderly, but noted that there is little flexibility in the titles available. "We just can't get enough," she said. "So few companies print large-type books."

The major services offered on Dale Street is the talking books division—serving approximately 8,500 of the 12,000 legally blind in North Carolina. "It's just like the public library," Mrs. Leith observed, "except these books are on records." And patrons receive their books by mail.

The talking book collection is huge—containing EVERYTHING except textbooks or technical material—a total of about 5,000 titles in 65,000 containers of talking book records and cassettes. Extensive card files carefully catalogue each reader according to his likes, dislikes, age, educational level, etc., with the books chosen by the reader by numbers. For the borrowers who do not specify a particular title, but simply request "mystery," or "historical fiction" or "religious," the task is a little more complicated.

"We try to bring book and reader together," Mrs. Leith commented. "We do a pretty good job, but sometimes have to guess." She pointed out that it takes about a year for the librarians to learn the selective process—matching reader and talking book. "And all our librarians are avid readers themselves, so are familiar with what's available," she explained. The director observed that experience plays a major role in the selection, as well as concern for the individual reader.

"We get to know our people pretty well," she added. "Some (readers) even drop notes and letter in the (mailing) containers." She also mentioned that despite their care, occasional mixups do occur. Some learned physician once received a third grade book, and now and then some older person will receive one of today's popular novels—and be thoroughly shocked! The mailing containers,

with library-supplied players, Mrs. Leith predicts that in 10 years cassettes may supplant talking books. A cassette, she explained, plays about the same amount of time as a record—each side is about 45 minutes on each side. Various books, of course, have more than one record or cassette. "War and Peace, for instance, has four records or tapes," she remarked, "and Gone With the Wind has three."

The only children now served with cassettes are kindergarten age through third grade. One of Mrs. Leith's plans for the future is to expand the service to dyslexic (children with reading difficulties) and mentally retarded children beyond third grade.

But the library offers many books in braille for children, as well as the talking books. Also offered are the "twin-vision" books for a sighted parent and a blind child or vice versa, which feature braille and print on facing pages.

A function of the Library of Congress, both the talking book machines and the talking books are furnished to qualified readers free of cost and free of postage. They're even repaired free of charge by the Telephone Pioneers of America, utilizing volunteer help. Battery operated machines serve homes without electricity.

A whole new world was opened to blind readers in 1931 when President Hoover signed the Pratt-Smoot Act making the service to the blind nationwide. Later, in 1962, the act was amended to delete the word "adult" thus permitting service to children as well as adults. In 1966, Congress enacted laws extending national books-for-the-blind service to all persons unable to read conventional printed materials because of physical or visual limitations (these include paralyzed individuals, those in iron lungs or other medical devices, amputees, etc.).

In addition to all kinds of books, the library provides magazines on the records and cassettes. "Readers Digest and Newsweek are probably the most popular magazines," the director pointed out. "We have about 1,000 copies of each." Other magazine selections run the gamut from National Geographic to Jack and Jill and Ranger Rick for children.

The talking book machines utilize three speeds—eight, 16 and 33 revolutions per minute, with magazines most usually recorded at the 8 rpm speed. Magazines are reproduced all three ways, Mrs. Leith pointed out (braille, talking books and cassette tapes), "but not all on each type."

The three-speed talking book machines are easy to adjust—if a blind reader puts on a record and it sounds "like Donald Duck" Mrs. Leith explained that all he has to do is switch to the next speed.

Books on tape are a fast growing service, the director mentioned. So far, tape is a supplement since the service is new, but is fast catching up. The service now offers a limited number of reel-to-reel tapes for those readers with tape players of their own; and cassette tapes,

color coded for the sighted staff, carry both braille and printed labels. There is no wrapping or addressing for the reader—when he's ready to return the talking book, he simply slips the pre-addressed card from the slot on the front and turns it over. A hole punched in the right side indicates to him which side (of the address card) is showing.

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Tarheel Students Off To College

More than half the students who graduated from North Carolina high schools last spring went on to higher education.

This is one of the findings of the Survey of 1972 High School Graduates prepared by the State Department of Public Instruction.

The survey revealed that 70,342 students graduated from public high schools during 1972, a record number. That's an increase of 2.1 per cent over the previous year. Charlotte-Mecklenburg graduated the largest number, 4656. Tryon had the fewest, 64.

The percent of graduates continuing higher education was 58.1 percent, about the same as in 1971. 30.9 percent enrolled in senior colleges, 22.7 percent entered junior colleges, community colleges and technical institutes, and 4.6 percent entered private trade, business, and nursing schools.

From the Class of '72, 3.9 per cent joined the military services, and 28.1 percent are gainfully employed.

Information is not available on 9.8 percent of the '72 graduates.

A total of 35,624 females and 35,628 males graduated in 1972.

The survey also shows that 67.5 percent of the students who were in the fifth grade in 1964-65 went on to graduate from high school. Wake County retained the highest percentage of its fifth graders, 84.7 percent. At the other end of the scale, only 47.6 percent were still around to graduate in Halifax County.

Hendersonville sent the highest percentage of its graduates on to senior colleges, 63.7 percent. Clay County had the fewest, 5.3 percent. Wilson County had the highest percentage entering community colleges and technical institutes, 38.9 percent. Asheboro sent the fewest, 1.9 percent. Clay County had the highest percentage going to junior colleges, 21.4 percent, while Rutherford, Lincolnton, Madison and Pasquotank each sent .5 percent to junior colleges. Asheboro had the highest percentage of graduates entering trade, business, or nursing schools, 21.9 percent. Caldwell had the fewest with .2 percent.

Maxton sent the greatest number to military service, 12.8 percent, and Shelby the fewest with .3 percent.

Alexander County has the highest percentage of its graduates gainfully employed, 64.5 percent. St. Paul's has the fewest, 1.1 percent.

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Notice of Public Hearing

Take notice that the Board of County Commissioners of Perquimans County, N. C., in compliance with Chapter 153, Article 20A, Section 266.2 will on Monday the 7th day of May, 1973, at 10:00 o'clock A.M., at its Regular Meeting Place in the Courthouse in Hertford, Perquimans county, N. C., hold a PUBLIC HEARING on a proposed Ordinance for the CONTROL AND REGULATION of SUBDIVISIONS in Perquimans County, N. C.

All interested citizens are urged to be present for the Hearing.

Dated and Posted this 13th day of April, 1973

By order of the Board of County Commissioners of Perquimans County, N. C.
JULIAN C. POWELL,
Clerk to the Board.