

1970 Publicity Scrapbook Summary

Note: Significant newspaper articles, brochures, photos, and other items from the scrapbook are filed by subject in the archives.

HCL Use

Traffic surveys conducted Oct. 19 and Nov. 17 showed that on average some 6,500 persons use Hennepin County library services each day. The surveys were designed to help determine staffing needs each hour and use trends. (*Hennepin County Family*, December 1970).

System News

Automation: On May 25, HCL became the first library in the state to install BaTAB, a system designed to automate book ordering functions. (*Hennepin Reporter*, May 1970).

Technical Services Director Mitch Freedman announced plans to centralize all the information found in the 23 community library card catalogs into one book catalog. (*Hennepin County Family*, May 1970).

New Circulating Materials: On April 1, five libraries (Brooklyn Center, Edina, Excelsior, Penn Lake and St. Louis Park) began loaning stereo **tapes**. Each library had a collection of 50, 25 titles on cartridges and 25 on cassettes. HCL was one of the first libraries in the country to offer pre-recorded tapes for circulation. (*Hennepin County Family*, April 1970). The tape collection was expanded by 50 tapes due to the 97 percent approval rating of the initial collection, according to Lora Landers, materials selection. (*Hennepin County Family*, May 1970).

On Dec. 2, HCL began loaning **8mm films**. The Brooklyn Center, Penn Lake, St. Louis Park and Wayzata libraries each offered a collection of 100 films. (*Hennepin Reporter*, December 1970).

National Library Week: HCL staff dressed as book characters to call attention to National Library Week. Some examples: Edina's Dorothy Dunn as Lolita; Long Lake's Adele Dalen as Wizard of Oz scarecrow; Brooklyn Center's Nancy Romslo as Little Red Riding Hood; Crystal's Carol Baaken (Goudy) as Mary Poppins; and Technical Service Director Mitch Freedman as Midnight Cowboy. (*Hennepin County Family*, April 1970).

Personnel: David R. Smith was hired to coordinate the 24 community libraries in the HCL system. (*Minneapolis Tribune*, March 7, 1970). Library Director Robert H. Rohlf was named to the five-member jury that would choose the design of the Chicago Public Library addition. (*Hennepin County Family*, April 1970). Four HCL staff members hired during the past 15 months came from the Library of Congress – earning HCL the nickname “the Midwest branch of the Library of Congress.” Those staff: Mitch Freedman, technical services director; Robert H. Rohlf, director; Edith Scott, head cataloger; and Jerry Pennington, systems analyst. (*Hennepin County Family*, October 1970).

Summer Program: Ethel Olson, children services, coordinated HCL's most successful summer program for children. Attendance for the program, which ran June 14-Aug. 14, was 12,000, compared to 4,000 in 1969. Thirteen libraries participated, offering “Sounds of Music,” (including Excelsior Librarian Roger Burg playing his handmade harpsichord), “A is for Art” and animal care programs. Six reading centers offered stories and puppet shows. (*Hennepin County Family*, October, 1970). HCL's two bookmobiles presented storytimes under

the big yellow umbrella at parks in the county. During a day, for example, a bookmobile might visit eight parks in Richfield. (*Hennepin County Family*, May 1970).

Plastic Book Bags: County libraries began giving plastic book bags to patrons who borrow several books. The article stated, “the three-color plastic book bags will be used for a few months on an experimental basis.” (*Minneapolis Star*, June 25, 1970).

Children’s Book Week: Overflow crowds came to hear Bob Duerr from Como Park Zoo show and talk about the zoo’s alligator, black cobra and tortoise. Programs were presented at the larger libraries, including Edina and Brooklyn Center. (*Minneapolis Star*, Nov. 16, 1970).

Expanded Library Hours: Bookmobile service was increased from once a month to every three weeks. (*Post newspapers*, Jan. 1, 1970). New open hours each week at the largest libraries totaled 60, at the medium libraries 55, and at the smallest libraries 20. The new schedule brought more uniformity to the hours systemwide. Overall, there was a 55-hour increase each week, with no additional staff. (*St. Louis Park Sun*, Sept. 3, 1970).

User Survey: A survey was conducted Oct. 29-Nov. 5 in the nine Lake Minnetonka area libraries to determine where users were coming from. The self-service survey involved red push pins and maps; information gathered was used to identify trends and help determine library locations. (*Hennepin County Family*, December 1970).

Nonresident Fee Increase: The County Board approved the increase in the cost of an annual HCL card from \$10 to \$15, effective Jan. 1, 1971. The new rate did not apply to individuals eligible for library cards at MELSA-member libraries. (*Minneapolis Tribune*, Dec. 14, 1970).

No Juvenile Fines: The County Board approved a policy to no longer collect fines on overdue children’s materials, effective Jan. 1, 1971. MPL also adopted the no-juvenile-fines policy, beginning in 1971. In 1970, each library system collected an estimated \$5,000 in fines on overdue juvenile materials. (*Minneapolis Tribune*, Dec. 30, 1970).

Construction Program

Planning for new libraries was a major focus in 1970 under the \$20-million construction program authorized for Hennepin County Library by the 1969 State Legislature. Initial plans called for 17 new community libraries and four new area libraries. Planning and construction in 1970 included the following. Note that final names are used in this list...those libraries with an asterisk (*) had not yet been given their final name in 1970.

Augsburg Park:* Plans for possible expansion of the Richfield Library in 1973 were discussed at the Richfield Planning Commission. (*Richfield Sun*, Feb. 5, 1970). Richfield was the first community in the county library system to build its own facility exclusively for library service. St. Louis Park, Brooklyn Center, Edina, and Bloomington (Penn Lake) followed Richfield’s lead. (*March 26, 1970*).

Brookdale:* The plan for expanding the Brooklyn Center Library at 5601 Osseo Road into the north area regional library was given preliminary approval by the Hennepin County Board. Three homes and a big yellow barn would be purchased and removed to accommodate a 50,000-square-foot library. Total cost of the project was estimated to be \$2.3 million, including land, construction costs, books, furnishings and landscaping. Construction was not expected to begin until 1973, with completion expected some time in 1974. (*Brooklyn Center Sun*, Aug. 20, 1970).

Golden Valley: Construction bids opened May 19 were lower than expected. The cost was projected to be \$382,176 – about \$26 a square foot. (*Golden Valley Post*, May 28, 1970). The library’s design consists of seven octagons to take advantage of the “irregular site.” (*Golden*

Valley Sun, May 27, 1970). Groundbreaking took place the week of June 10. (*Golden Valley Sun*, June 17, 1970). Major progress was made on construction and May 15, 1971 was set as the target date for opening. (*Hennepin Reporter*, December 1970).

Oxboro:* HCL and the Bloomington Park & Rec Department were at odds over the location of a new Hennepin County library in east Bloomington. The library wanted the library at 91st and Portland, the Rec Department did not want to lose ballparks. (*Bloomington Sun*, Aug. 27, 1970).

Penn Lake: The new library opened Jan. 26, 1970 at 8801 Penn Ave. S. The opening marked the beginning of the 17-building, \$20-million expansion program by the county library system. (The city of Bloomington had started the project before the HCL expansion program was approved). (*Minneapolis Tribune*, Jan. 22, 1970). Penn Lake was dedicated Feb. 8. (*Bloomington Sun*, Feb. 12, 1970).

Plymouth: The County Board approved a three-acre site near Plymouth's 15-acre civic center site. The site was just north of Hwy. 55, about a mile west of Interstate 494. Plymouth offered to sell the site for about \$9,500. (*Minneapolis Tribune*, May 12, 1970).

Ridgedale:* The County Board approved a six-month option on a 8.54-acre site for a \$3.325-million west area regional library. The site was on Parkers Lake Road – on the northwest corner of the intersection of Highway 12/Interstate 394 and Interstate 494. The option gave the county six months to determine if the site was worth the \$120,000 purchase price. (*Minnetonka Sun*, Feb. 26, 1970).

Rockford Road: HCL and the City of Crystal were working on acquiring a three-acre site adjacent to the municipal building at 42nd and Douglas Ave. The new library would replace both the library in the Crystal Shopping Center and the Robbinsdale Library (*Sun*, Jan. 14, 1970). The building was expected to cost \$400,000. (*North Hennepin Post*, Sept. 3, 1970). The land was acquired and bids were expected to be let in March 1971, with construction to begin in April 1971. (*Hennepin Reporter*, December 1970).

Southdale:* The County Board approved the purchase of a 9.16-acre site in Edina for \$595,400 for the south area regional library. The site at 70th and York Ave. S. is now a gravel pit. Construction of the 50,000-square-foot library will start in the fall, with opening expected in 1973. (*Minneapolis Star*, Dec. 29, 1970).

Westonka: The Library Board approved a two-acre site on Commerce Blvd. for a new 8,000-square-foot library. It was considered a good location because it was between two public schools and across the street from housing for the elderly. The new library's budget was \$240,000. (*Wayzata/Plymouth/Minnetonka Sun*, Dec. 3, 1970).

City-County Library Merger and Reciprocal Use Contract

Merger: As of Feb. 14, 1970, merger talks between HCL and Minneapolis Public Library had not begun because the Minneapolis Public Library Board had not named merger committee representatives. HCL Board President Peter Heegaard, Minnetonka, named himself and E.J. Cooper, Robbinsdale, as HCL Board members on the committee. Heegaard wanted a draft of the bill to be ready by fall 1970 so that it could be taken to the 1971 Minnesota Legislature. The 1969 Legislature instructed city and county officials to prepare a merger plan. Bruce Smith, MPL Board president, said the “merger has been in a state of flux ever since the county library board appointed Robert Rohlf as its director last fall.” The objectors said they were afraid Rohlf would become the head of the merged system instead of the city library director (Ervin J. Gaines). City library board member Ralph Forester presented his ideas for merger, calling for the transfer of all MPL assets to the county at no

cost and for all city employees to become county employees. A seven-member library board would run the merged system, with five members appointed by the Hennepin County Board and two members elected at large. The library board would hire and fire the director; the County Board would have final budget and construction authority. (*Minneapolis Star*, Feb. 14, 1970). Hennepin County Board Chair Jack Provo wrote a letter to MPL Board president Bruce Smith threatening to cut off county funds to the city library if the city doesn't get moving on city and county library merger talks. Some MPL board members said they might answer Provo's threat by locking Minneapolis Library doors to suburban patrons. (*Minneapolis Star*, May 7, 1970).

Reciprocal Use Contract: MPL calculated that HCL owed MPL \$826,000 to cover the use of city libraries by suburban residents (more suburban residents were using city libraries compared to city residents using county libraries). Under the reciprocal use agreement, however, a credit was given for operating expenses and for the first time HCL sought to include book purchases for new libraries as part of operating expenses – thereby lowering payment to MPL by \$84,000. (*Minneapolis Star*, Sept. 18, 1970). The MPL Board vowed to close its doors to suburban residents Jan. 1, 1971 unless HCL paid what MPL said was a fair share of library costs. MPL also said HCL would have to move its headquarters out of MPL unless it paid a fair rent beginning Jan. 1. HCL Board President Peter Heegaard said the loss of approximately \$800,000 to MPL (which has a total budget of about \$4.5 million) would “knock the props out from underneath them.” He said the County Board determined the HCL budget. (*Minneapolis Star*, Sept. 30, 1970). MPL and HCL officials planned to meet in late October to settle the reciprocal use contract; HCL wanted to pay \$84,000 less than the \$830,000 MPL wanted. Peter Heegaard said a merger of the two systems would be the answer and he proposed that legislation be passed in the 1971 Legislature so that merger could take place Dec. 31, 1971. (*Minneapolis Star*, Oct. 18, 1970). An editorial stated: “Cooperative city-county library service has been successful in other metropolitan areas, but here the county and city systems seem to be moving away from cooperation... The one benefit we can see in the current squabble is that it should call public attention to the need for legislative action to provide a single Minneapolis-Hennepin County library system. (*Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 7, 1970).

Individual Library News (except construction, see above)

Brooklyn Center: Puppet shows were immensely popular – presented by children's librarian Nancy Romslo and librarian Patrice O'Shea. Brooklyn Center was third busiest library in the system. (*Post Newspapers*, Oct. 14, 1970).

Edina: An editorial in the Sun newspapers recommended that the Edina sell its library building (at 4701 W. 50th St.) to the county – thus remaining in the HCL system and retaining “access to books from anywhere in the world... Even Edina isn't an island.” (*Sun Newspapers*, March 12, 1970). The Friends of the Edina Library expressed strong support for the Edina Library remaining in the county system. (*Edina Sun*, Oct. 22, 1970). The fate of the old Edina library site – on W. 50th St., about a block west of France Ave. – had been under discussion for two years, with a citizens group advocating that the site be turned into a park. Edina National Bank, just east of the site, had offered the village \$50,000 for the 150-by-14-foot site for use as a parking lot or possible future expansion. Mayor Art Bredesen said “\$50,000 is one mill” and noted that the location might attract an “undesirable element” to Edina. (*Minneapolis Star*, July 23, 1970). The Village of Edina voted to go ahead and sell a

portion of the old library site to Edina National Bank. (*Edina Sun*, Oct. 8, 1970). Thirty-two new framed art prints were added to the Edina circulating collection, bringing the total to about 300. (*Edina Sun*, Jan. 8, 1970). Famed wildlife photographer Les Blacklock presented a program April 2. (*Edina Sun*, April 1, 1970). Bradley Benn displayed his handmade harpsichord at the Edina Library. (*Minneapolis Star*, July 8, 1970).

Richfield: David Waldemar was appointed librarian, replacing Mena Dyste, who had served as community librarian for 16 years. Dyste became head librarian at St. Louis Park Library, where Waldemar had been. (*Sun Newspapers*, March 26, 1970).

MELSA Reciprocity Starts

Beginning May 1, 1970, anyone eligible for a library card from the Minneapolis Public Library, St. Paul Public Library, Anoka County Library, Hennepin County Library, Ramsey County Library or Scott County Library could borrow books and other materials from any of these five library systems without the usual non-resident charge. The Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) was called an “experiment in library reciprocity” and it was initially funded by state and federal grants made available by the Minnesota State Board of Education.

Hennepin County News

Bonds: Hennepin County Commissioners approved the sale of \$5.1 million worth of bonds to start the library expansion program and new General Hospital. Three million dollars of the bond issue went to purchasing libraries in Brooklyn Center, St. Louis Park and Bloomington and to start construction of new libraries in Crystal, Golden Valley and Mound. (*Minneapolis Star*, Jan. 20, 1970).

Assessed Valuation: An increase of 20 percent was recorded in the assessed valuation of property in Hennepin County. Valuation in larger suburbs increased more than 25 percent due to a “paper increase” made by suburban assessors to account for the sharp inflationary rise in the market value of property. (*Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 17, 1970).

1970 Census: Hennepin County gained 113,000 more residents compared to 1960, according to the unofficial 1970 census results. All the gains occurred in the suburbs as the city of Minneapolis lost 50,000 residents. Biggest gains were in Bloomington (up 31,000), New Hope (up 20,000), and Brooklyn Park (up 16,000).

1971 Budget: The County Commissioners approved a 1971 budget of almost \$199 million, requiring a tax increase of nearly 20 percent. Of the \$48 million increase, only \$12.3 million of the increase would be raised through property taxes; the rest would come from federal funds and various fees and charges. The total property tax bill for the owner of a \$24,000 house would be \$769 (assuming school, city and other taxes remain the same). In 1970, Minneapolis paid 42 percent of the total taxes and the suburbs paid 58 percent. (*Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 25, 1970).

County Approves Pants Suits: County Administrator Stanley Cowle issued an all-department memo allowing women to wear pants “with a coordinated tunic, vest, blouse or jacket.” Final authority on pants suit suitability rested with supervisors. (*Hennepin County Family*, December 1970).

Compiled by Linda Jennings, November 2008

