

Scotts Valley Librarian Works At Interesting All Readers

By John Wheeler

A former school teacher who volunteered as an unpaid worker at Scotts Valley library four years ago has turned a small room filled with long rows of books at the end of a shopping center into a bright, warm world where children can follow any of the multi-colored threads of the mind into make-believe or fact.

"I am anything but a molder of children's minds," Mrs. Dorothy Howard declares. "I only help them find their own interests and throw in a little help over the rough spots when necessary."

Mrs. Howard's idea of a little help includes running a book club for children, setting up pictorial and model displays which run the gamut from pottery to old cars, becoming the library for Scotts Valley elementary union school during the winter, teaching children to use reference materials and introducing them to the Dewey decimal system as well as logging in and out the 170 books which cross her desk on an average day.

The trim, vibrant, iron-gray haired woman always has an easy, humorous way with her young patrons even though her days seem to go into extra innings more often than not. While talking with her, even the most casual observer can not help catching the enthusiasm which Mrs. Howard directs into her job.

"I feel one of the finest things I can do for children is to show them that there is a path beyond the unrealistic cliches of TV and afternoon radio adventure serials," she said.

However, her work with children is a job she largely moulded for herself. Mrs. Howard also serves the adults of the area with whatever books she has available and orders the rest from either the main library in Santa Cruz or through the state library in Sacramento.

"Combining all our resources we are able to tap a reserve of more than 550,000 books," Mrs. Howard claims. In addition to the ordering, she does some research for her adult customers. One who planned a trip to South America last year received a report based on information that Mrs. Howard prepared, from writing various Latin American consulates.

The young charges begin their visits to the library as soon as they learn to read in the first grade. They are then allowed to come in and begin to read on their own and discover some of the uses of the library. One of the teachers at the elementary school will send her pupils to the library next year for reference work which will include learning how to use almanac, dictionary, encyclopedia, and catalogue file.

Throughout the school year

Librarian Handles 'Regular' Clients



Mrs. Dorothy Howard checks out books to two of her regulars, Janet Roselius, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Rosel-

ius, and Steven Vance, son of Mr. and Mrs. James A. Vance, in the Scotts Valley branch library which serves as cultural center of the small mountain

community. Mrs. Howard started at the library in 1953 as an unpaid volunteer and has stayed on to head the branch.

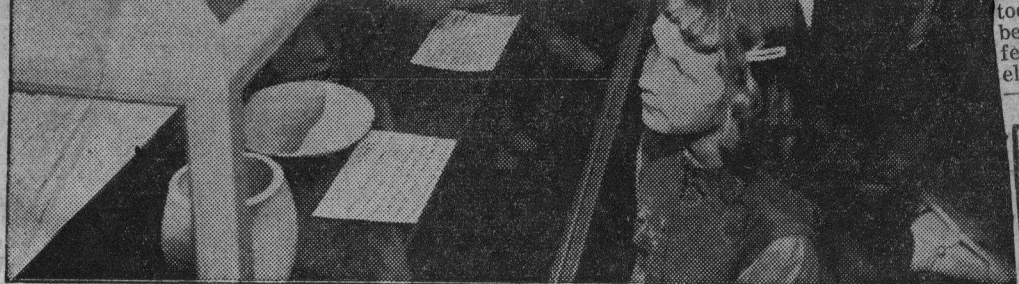
Scotts Valley Youngsters Study Display Case



fifth-grade students visit the library in batches of five or six for a short briefing on the card catalog, rudiments of the Dewey decimal system and distinguishing between fiction and non-fiction.

All during the interview for this story, a constant stream of children flowed through the library. Mrs. Howard said that on some days more than 100 books are stamped in and out for children alone.

Mrs. Howard said that she knows at least 300-400 children by their first names, and the reading level and tastes of a greater part



Five Scotts Valley youngsters line up before the pottery-filled display case which Librarian Dorothy Howard calls one of the branch's best drawing cards. Changing the display as often

as time permits, Mrs. Howard said the case gives children and adults alike ideas for reading. Standing at the case is Joan Cole, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Cole; behind her are Teresa

Vance, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James A. Vance; her sister Tina; Gail Roselius, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Roseius and Toni Foster, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Foster.

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of them. These last two she tries to weigh in suggesting books so children will be neither bored nor over-awed.

"I believe county libraries fill

a very real need in fringe communities where interest in reading and what is going on in the world is just as active as it is in cities and large towns," Mrs. Howard declared.

"County libraries also have an advantage in their small size since it permits things to move on a personal basis. I certainly have more of a chance to give individual help to children. When one of them is having problems with reading, I can sit down with them and we can try it together."

During the summer the library operates an aggressive program to encourage reading, offering pins and certificates as each child's list of books grows.

To add another book to his list, the child must first give Mrs. Howard an informal oral report during which some rather pointed questions usually come up, according to one 10-year-old girl who was waiting in line to check out a large book on insects.

Mrs. Howard added that in one session she asked what a dinosaur was. After looking up the root words dino (terrible) and saur (lizzard) the child went on to dig out other species of prehistoric animals and finally drew pictures of all of them.

"I hope in this way to help develop adults who can adequately meet their environment. Children need to develop their own interests with a minimum of adult channeling. All I want is to see a fledgling desire to learn and think," the librarian asserted.

Oil paintings and water colors stud the walls of the library, many from the local area. The exhibition includes still lifes, abstractions, modern impressionistic, portrait and landscape. The artists appear to change their canvases occasionally.

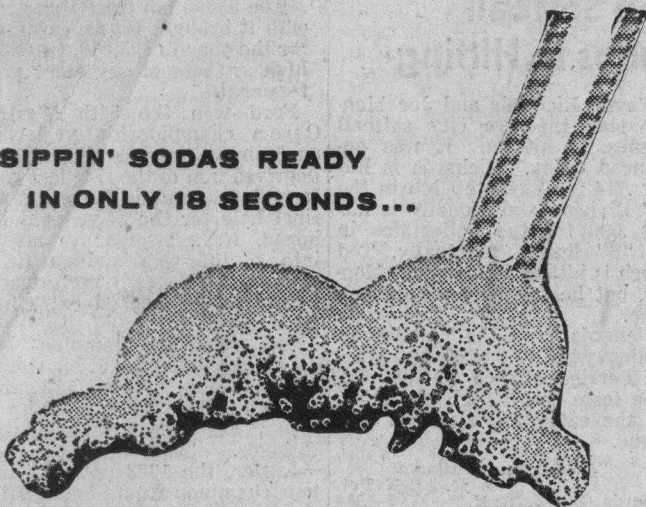
The reactions from the youngsters are sometimes startling.

"I can do as well as that," some claim. To which the stock reply is always, "Try it and then I'll hang it up, too." A few hours later, paper and caryon sketches appear on the table.

Another child states with complete simplicity while staring at some distorted impressionistic arrangement of human forms:

"I think some people feel like those people look."

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