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ABSTRACT

Libraries and information centers are rapidly becoming an integral part of American Indian life. Individuals, organizations, and tribes have come to the decision that libraries and the information services which they offer are necessary to meet Indian goals. Although these goals may vary widely from improved access to education, cultural information, information on available social services, to leisure reading, they are all based in a component or institution designed to process information--a library. Eleven guides have been developed to summarize the state-of-the-art in Indian librarianship in a series of brief, practical guides. Each guide discusses basic policies, initial steps, or discreet activities essential to successful Indian library service. The guides present three basic types of information: societal coping skills, basic considerations for implementation, and descriptions of services unique or critical to Indian libraries. Guide 1 briefly discusses establishing initial contacts with the Indian community. It emphasizes how to cope with societal differences in Indian communities. Definitions are given for library, information, and Indian community. Five sources for further reading are also cited. (NQ)

Working With Indian Communities and Agencies To Establish Indian Library Services.

Rosemary Ackley Christensen

Guide 1
Part I

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PREFACE

Libraries and information centers are rapidly becoming an integral part of Indian life. Indivrduals, organizations, and tribes have come to the decision that libraries and the information services that they offer are necessary to meet Indian goals. These goals may vary widely, from improved access to education, cultural information, information on available social services, to leisure reading. They are all based in a component or institution designed to process information - a library.

As yet, only limited resources are available to meet this fast growing demand. Funding must usually be garnered from other programs. Professionally qualified Indian librarians and trained Indian technicians are in critically short supply. Books and other informational resources still contain racist information. Experience in developing programs and services which meet the local community's needs is slight. Specific sensitivity to Indian ways and alternatives is just developing as library and information services develop in Indian communities.

The purpose of these guides is to provide initial direction and provide alternatives to those planning or engaged in developing Indian library and information systems. Each guide discusses basic policies, initial steps, or discreet activities that appear to be essential to successful Indian library service. Each guide gives the reader basic direction and alternatives for development in his locale.

The reader is strongly advised to recognize these guides for what they are - ideas and programs that have been successful in the communities where they are used. They will not solve all the problems of Indian library service. They will provide the reader with some ideas, programs, and concepts to be considered in light of informational needs in the specific Indian community to be served.

Three basic types of information are presented in the guides: societal coping skills, basic considerations for implementation; and descriptions of services unique or critical to Indian libraries. These guides are supplemented by the Appalachian Adult Education Center's, Library Service Guides. The excellent Appalachian guides deal primarily with services in small communities.

Coping skills are given in two guides, (#'s 1 and 2). Organization and implementation will be discussed in five of the guides (#0,3,9,10, & 11) which cover: funding, organization, assessing needs, materials selection, and training. Five guides will discuss services unique or critical to Indian Library Service (#4,5,6,7, & 8). These guides cover: cataloging, urban services, adult education, program elements, and information services.

Charles Townley, Editor

I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Library, the word conjures certain images in the librarian's mind consisting perhaps of a building filled with books, other media materials meticulously catalogued in many small drawers mysteriously labeled with fragments of English words and guarded by library staff who, more often than not, ask for quiet, and when one wants a book, are quick to ask, "where is your card" and if one wants a magazine, are told "you can only take out the old ones", and the room has seating arrangements built around tables with hard straight back chairs and it is open only during certain hours...which is why, perhaps, Indians use the public library or the school library sparingly if at all.

The term-library-needs a new definition. It should be a place where members of the Indian community can go to for materials to further their tribal knowledge, or non-Indian knowledge or whatever kind of information the tribal person wishes to locate. It should be a place not already defined in the librarian's head, but with careful listening, and listening again and asking the right questions the librarian will help make the library one meant for Indians, used by Indians. The Indian library should have comfortable furnishings and be a comfortable place. A modicum of rules should exist. A smoking area should be designated and as many elder Indians chew tobacco, spitoons should be provided in the smoking area. Books and other library materials should be viewed not as ends in themselves to be displayed, catalogued, treasures piled here on earth but should be seen as tools, as a means to information. Treasures piled here on earth eventually rust and must be thrown out. How much better if they are given out, are used, are even removed to be used somewhere else.

Information should be provided the Indian community on an easy access basis on a variety of issues. A needs assessment could be taken on what information the community desires. Information needs could then be catagorized and materials could be found to provide the needs. Both Indian and non-Indian information ought to be provided. Care should be taken to provide information through various means. If the first language in the community is the tribal language then information should be given in that language. Blurbs announcing library services should be in the tribal language with English interpretation provided. An information person should be available in the library. This person should be bilingual (if necessary) and know the manners observed in the community. In many communities it is important to observe certain courtesies to the older people. Information is not only what you provide but how you provide it.

Know the language requirements to be understood, know the customs, the local manners and make an effort to provide the information at the time and within the space the Indian community accepts and uses information.

Indian community, the controversy over who is an Indian and how one identifies an Indian continues. Librarians should not allow themselves to be put in the position of deciding who is an Indian. In most communities, (although not in urban communities) there is an elected or otherwise recognized Body politic who governs the Indian community. An Indian community can be a geographically enclosed community such as the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians governed by the tribal council with a chairman or it can be a loosely affiliated group of people who share a common reservation upbringing or are enrolled in a tribe but live in an urban area such as St. Paul, Minnesota; Chicago, Illinois, or Seattle, Washington. Frequently there is an Indian neighborhood in cities, but just as frequently Indians are scattered throughout the city area. American Indian political scientist, Dr. Frances Svensson, University of Michigan in her monograph entitled, The Ethnics in American Politics: American Indians, devotes several pages to a discussion of who is an Indian. She discusses three separate categories; racial, cultural, and social. Another book to read for help in understanding who is an Indian is The Right to be Indian by Ernest Schusky available through The Indian Historical Press, Inc., San Francisco, California for $2.00. Dr. Svensson's article is available from Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1973. Also depend on the local Indian governing body for a definition of the Indian community.

Dr. Svensson says:

> Who, then is an Indian? Clearly, there are many answers, dependent on who is asking and for what purposes. For the United States government, racial and to a lesser extent cultural (so far as reservation residence expresses a cultural orientation) factors are primary. For the Census, social definition is sufficient. From the point of view of most reservation people, even after several hundred years of attack by European society on the foundations of Indian communalism, Indian identity is tied up in membership in a specific tribe, kinship bonds among its members, familiarity with cultural traditions, appearance. They are suspicious of those who claim an Indian identity too easily, who think an Indian is anyone who wears feathers and beads, who suddenly appears when benefits and claims settlements become available. Indians amongst themselves often refer unfavorably to the emergency of such "instant Indians," as well as to those whose Indianness is literally no more than skin deep ("Apples" i contemporary Indian parlance - red on the outside and white on the inside). They also express a sense of being able to "feel" who is Indian and who is not. While probably few Indians could pinpoint the behavioral characteristics which define Indianness, virtually all Indians agree that such patterns exist. The fact that the existence of an Indian style of behavior is generally accepted,

however much vagueness and disagreement there may be as to its definition, places limitations on Indian social and political behavior in the non-Indian world. He who acts in a non-Indian way risks losing his constituency. Therefore, in the political arena, it is not a racial or cultural identity which alone determines the Indian actor; instead, it is the complex interaction between these factors. At its heart, Indianness is a state of being, a cast of mind, a relationship to the Universe. It is undefinable. (Page 9)

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The art of communication may be your biggest problem. Indians are aware of the services libraries may be able to offer at least as far as the general concept of libraries are concerned. Librarians, however, ought to make a special effort to put together an attractive brochure or statement emphasizing the kinds of services that libraries can offer to Indian citizens. The statement ought to be printed in English and the tribal language. As services other than books are available through libraries, these services ought to be made known to the general Indian public. One of the needed services that Indian communities will use if libraries offer it, is books and materials on legal matters concerning Indian affairs. Pamphlets are available from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, books such as Felix Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law as well as Charles Kappler's book Treaties and Agreements of the United States of America with Indian Nations ought to be available as reference materials. Additionally, the library ought to have bibliographies available listing pertinent materials interested persons can obtain, through interlibrary loans. Such a service is especially pertinent to tribal people who are attempting to educate themselves, educators working with schools and community people who serve on the variety of boards that exist in Indian country. Although, Indians are aware they need information, they are unsure how to approach the librarian or others who may have access to the information. Further, many non-Indian librarians are not aware that the above mentioned services exist. Librarians ought to make themselves aware of these special services available on Indian-related materials. For example, the University Microfilms Center located in Ann Arbor, Michigan has a special bibliography on Indian-related doctoral dissertations available on microfilm or microfiche. It would be appropriate for Indian libraries to have these bibliographies available along with appropriate machines.

The various Historical Societies with their accumulated wealth of material, can be made known to the Indian community. Librarians might begin by making themselves aware of the history of the surrounding community, locating materials on the community from whatever sources are available including local and state historical societies and the National Archives in Washington. Perhaps a display of the local history could be planned with in-

vitations to the local Indian governing body to open the exhibit or have a ceremony opening such a display. Be sure and invite the local tribal chairman or whoever the local Indian leaders are. The best person(s) to begin communicating with is the local recognized tribal leader(s). Ask permission to speak to the rest of the community, ask advice on how to proceed. It is important that librarians observe a few courtesies that may be different from white society. Always be courteous to older people. Elders in the Indian community are respected for their wisdom gained from experience and Indians are trained to exhibit respect to elders even though one may have more education or degrees than the older Indian person. Women librarians should be especially careful to not show an overly aggressive manner to tribal leaders. Indians generally, and especially Indian men do not care for overly aggressive women. Do not tell Indian people what to do, ask their advice, offer assistance, but don't tell anyone what to do and do not emphasize your book learning. It is important to remember that Indians may speak in a slower manner so don't be in a hurry to interrupt. Many older Indians raised in a traditional fashion will not respond further if once interrupted during conversation. It is noticable in white society, that interruptions are common and apparently acceptable. Begin listening again if you wish to communicate with Indian community members. Some tribal people may use anecdotes, stories, or seemingly irrelevant statements to communicate on a particular issue. This kind of communication is slower, but interaction is accomplished and communication is effective. Listen, be slow to speak, don't interrupt (especially for elders) and listen to Indians. In order to establish good communication be aware of the physical surroundings used for meetings. If you are responsible for a meeting be sure to invite parents and their children. Indians are not bothered by having children around and prefer to go to meetings when they can bring them along (in most communities). Provide ashtrays and serve refreshments. Indians are hospitable people, traditionally, and they expect hospitality from people that invite them to meetings. Therefore, serve coffee and perhaps, sandwiches, or dessert. Try to arrange informal seating arrangements away from the ubiquitous rigid rows. Try for a circle, if possible and make sure the older people have the most comfortable chairs.

A PROBLEM OF SKILLS

Indians, contrary to stereotypes, are not dumb people uncaring about their children or their daily livelihood. Ask how the library can help, ask what services Indians may need, then put together an array of services that can be provided through the library. Some services that can easily be provided but that may not be usual services at libraries could be, interpreting services (reading English to a non-English reader, such as in letters received). Tribal people whose first language is Indian, who perhaps speak enough English to get by but who can't read English are really handicapped when it comes to everyday bureaucracies. A simple water bill statement may not be understood or worse may be misunderstood and feared. Such a service should

cost nothing, and it would take little time for persons on duty. This service could be provided on a daily basis for the Indian community. Depending on staff time, letterwriting services may also be provided. Libraries can provide meeting rooms for community meetings. It can offer research, referral and retrieval services as constraints allow. Whatever services the Indian community identifies, the library should examine its staff, its time, its resources and then present to the Indian community exactly the services it can provide and which must be referred to other agencies. It is important to make clear what the library can do and what it cannot do. However, arbitrary cutoffs should not be made until a complete, honest evaluation is done of the needs of the Indian community and the resources, time and funding the library can offer to these needs. In order to provide a real service, it may be necessary to allow some here-to-fore standard sacred requirements for libraries go hang until the real needs of the Indian community are met. It may not be necessary to catalog every acquisition immediately and cataloging perhaps can be less extensive than standard practices. Remember, it you don't provide what the Indian community needs, they won't use what you do offer.

A PROBLEM OF MONEY

Money is always a problem. Sometimes Indian community members have ideas and know funding sources unknown to non-Indians. Ask them, but don't expect the purse of the tribal council to be deep, wise and handsome. Sometimes, funds can be obtained through councils, but usually council funds are limited and life support needs come first for tribal money consideration. Refer to the Guide to Funding Sources for American Indian Library and Information Services compiled by Rebecca Cawley and obtainable through National Indian Education Association, 3036 University Avenue, S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota or U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Library Services, Washington, D.C. 20240, 1974. Be aware of funding that can be obtained through the Indian Education Act described in the Guide, especially under Part B of Title IV, described on page 48. There are proposal deadlines for the federal funds and these dates must be observed. Part B deadline is usually at the first of the year in late January or February. The date is set each year by the Office of Indian Education and published in the Federal Register. If you are going to send a Title IV-proposal Part A or B or C, you will need to begin the process sooner than a few weeks prior to the deadline date. Title IV proposals mandate Indian participation. In order to meet the mandate of Part A, for example, the proposal must come from a school district, have a parent committee selected by the Indian community and have a publicized public hearing for the Indian community. These activities take time. Part B proposals usually need Indian sponsorship. Again, these activities take time. Indians expect their participation and cooperation will be asked prior to deadlines so they will have adequate time to ponder the proposal, make their statements and make decision on whether or not to sponsor or participate in the activity. Proposals, of course, should be written with the

active participation of the Indian community. Don't make the mistake of going to them with an already written proposal. No one likes to be asked to be a rubber stamp, Indians especially are tired of being asked to accept, in total, concepts written and conceived by non-Indians for the benefit of Indians. However on the other hand, don't expect the Indian community to have the necessary expertise to write the proposal. It is sometimes necessary for others to assume the actual writing responsibility. However, Indians can and will give ideas for the proposal, suggest changes, react to written objectives and generally say how and what they want if they are asked in time. Possibly some members of the Indian community may be able to help write proposals, but many times, Indian community members who are skilled in this activity may not have time. Professional librarians who are acquainted with proposal writing can provide a great service to the Indian community if they will share this skill with Indians.

WHY BOTHER?

The problems librarians may encounter in working with Indian communities to establish Indian libraries and information may seem insurmountable. But take heart, it is not. With a modicum of good will, some flexibility and a minimum of courtesy, Indians and non-Indians can interact for the benefit of any enterprise. And who knows, perhaps, the information you finally are able to present to the Indian community fitting their needs can be a small step in helping Indian communities attain their place in the sun. Information and communication given in a helping manner can do more to improve relationships between Indians and non-Indians than any of the previous help the B.I.A. attempted to give in all its years. If just one librarian helps just one person in the Indian community achieve something of importance to him then all of the help Indians have given white people from the first time they touched the shores when corn was given to starving whites, to the saving of someone's head in early times, to the help each of the early explorers received from their Indian guides, will have been repaid in some small measure. Indians are in the final analysis citizens of the United States and as such ought to have the same services received by other citizens. But because Indians are culturally different, have different lifestyles and live in a different manner, speak a different language and use different methods of communication, it behooves the offerer of the service to take cultural differences into account. Therefore, if the quality, caliber of services are to be as high and competent as any white citizen expects from his local library, then, the librarian must study the process of service, amend it where necessary and then trust that the end result, the actual service does indeed serve the Indian person as well as the services offered the white community. As to "why bother", it is your job!

III. THE INDIAN WAY OR HOW INDIAN COMMUNITIES FUNCTION AND MAKE DECISIONS

In order for librarians to promote services in a way acceptable to the Indian community it will be necessary for the librarian and other staff to have some notion of how Indian communities function and make decisions. One of the old bromides, known by Indian professionals and non-Indian veterans of Indian affairs is that, it is true that all Indians are individuals. Indians differ in tribal affiliations, language, cultural matters and lifestyle. According to D'Arcy McNickle, The Indian Tribes of the United States (Oxford University Press, London, New York, 1962, p. 5) it is estimated that 300 Indian languages were spoken in the area north of Mexico at the time of contact (by White man) and he estimates at least half of that number are still in use. The languages spoken that differ from one to another are an indication of the real differences that exist between American Indian tribes. Other differences occur as some tribal members remain on the reservation, others travel to urban areas, and others elect to assimilate so entirely into white society they no longer consider themselves Indian. Indians differ as to economic levels just as non-Indians do. Although many Indians are poor, being poor does not necessarily mean that one's way of living reflects only the economic level. Indians are culturally different regardless of economic class. Nancy Lurie in North American Indians in Historical Perspective (Random House, New York, 1971) discusses the contemporary Indians mentioning behaviors in common of many tribal people.

> "...there seem to be very old common Indian elements that have always transcended local differences of lang je and culture and that can be properly termed Pan Indian." (Page 444)

She discusses a "persisting cluster of core values and related, predictable behavior that give Indian people a commonality of outlook they do not share with people of European cultural tradition." Lurie discusses ten characteristics but perhaps her first is most germane,

> "...There is preference and relaxed patience for reaching decisions by consensus. While often baffling to the white observer, the process is patterned, and Indian people of widely varying tribal backgrounds are able to conduct business together according to mutually understood "rules"." (Page 444)

Stuart Levine in The American Indian Today (Everett Edwards, Inc., 133 South Pecan Avenue, Delano, Florida 32720, 1965) discusses the Indian way of arriving at decisions by consensus using the American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 as a case in point.

> "...Indian people tend to behave in such the same way in their relations with the dominant culture, and particularly with government agencies...a great deal of decision-making is a matter of personal conversation, give and take, and practical compromise. It is precisely this process at which

Indian people are most skilled." (Page 6)

Stuart summarizes by characterizing most Indians as solving problems by bargaining and negotiation with flexibility and pragmatism foremost.

The Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian issued a report titled, The Indian America's Unfinished Business compiled by William A. Brophy and Sophie D. Aberle. The entire document is recommended as an introduction to Indians and an overview of basic kinds of information about Indians albeit light on the matter of assigning chapters to Indian authors. The report covers many areas of Indian affairs especially congressional activities during the many years of Federal-Indian relations but the introduction is especially pertinent. The authors mention immediately how important it is for Indians to be totally involved in any program designed for Indians.

> "No program imposed from outside can serve as a substitute for one willed by Indians themselves. Nor should their ostensible consent to a plan be deemed sufficient. Such "consent" may be wholly passive, indicating only a surrender to what seems unavoidable; or their consent may be obtained without their full understanding for before they are either able or desire to shoulder additional obligations. What is essential is to elicit their own initiative and intelligent cooperation." (Page 4)

This introduction labeled Indian values and attitudes discusses some of the major behavior differences Indians exhibit compared to non-Indians. Anyone attempting to understand Indian decision making ought to be aware that Indians are first, different, from other tribal groups, but Indians share some common values which may mean that Indians arrive at decisions in a different manner than non-Indians. The Commission report emphasizes two ideas, that of unity or mutual assistance and a reverence for Mother Earth. Each individual voluntarily works with the community (on which rests status as well as personal security.) Commission authors say this selflessness derives from the community venerating elders and their wisdom. However, the Commission cautions that these conceptions, are not consistently achieved. Modifications and exceptions to the norm exist in every group. Which is a simple way of saying that although Indians differ from one tribal group to another, from Indian to Indian within the tribal group and although Indians hold some ideas and possible behaviors in common still it also means that many Indians arrive at decision making in an entirely different manner than white folks but perhaps using the same outer shell such as meeting together, and possibly using some semblance of Roberts' Rules of Order. Indians and Indian behaviors cannot be generalized in an acceptable fashion for white folks to make up rules for easier interaction or to facilitate their understanding of the Indians. Perhaps the Commission said it best when they advised,

"...neighbors and local officials must make it a point to help the Indian participate on a basis of equality in their political and economic life. Let them not expect him to conform to their image of how he ought to be, but accept him as the fellow human creature he is, with freedom to shape his own life as they do." (Page 5)

IV. FIRST CONTACTS

Meet the community in the acceptable way in Indian communities. Contact the tribal council, the chairman or someone on the council. Ask for time on the agenda of the next tribal meeting. Ask them to advise you how to proceed. Ask if there is an appropriate subcommittee of the tribal council you ought to meet with, or another tribal branch of government, or another organization in the Indian community such as a parent committee or an advisory group to the local school. Just about every Indian community has some branch of government. Follow up on contacts advised by the tribal council. If they advise none, then make your own contacts but ask their blessing on your endeavors. If the council is unable to give you ideas on whom to contact, try the local school. Ask if there is a local parent committee, a Johnson O'Malley committee. Most communities have such a committee. Ask who the chairman is, and ask the chairmans permission for space on the agenda for the next meeting. Go slow and carefully. Proceed with caution. Try not to be overly aggressive. Do not show your anxiety at new customs, and do not show surprise at things strange to you. If you show surprise at something that is foreign to your upbringing, Indians will just laugh at you, and the stories will get around the community. News travels fast in the Indian community as in any community. Indians speak of the moccasin telegraph. The moccasin telegraph lives! and it is fast, efficient and reliable.

V. DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP

One of the most difficult items in your search in working with Indian communities to establish Indian library and information services is determining community interest. The first item is to make sure the community understands what you are trying to do. Then you can begin assessing community interest. One of the most thorough and effective ways open to people interested in assessing interest is to visit people in their homes or have them visit you in yours to speak of common interest. If you are new in the community this may be a bit difficult unless you have some local people help you. Ask your local contacts you have developed by now through the council or related agencies to advise you of key families to visit. If such an approach is one you rather would not take you could put on a feast and invite the community to it and tell them of what you are trying to do. A feast is the time honored way of many Indian groups to announce a venture, to assess opinions or to ask for help. A feast should feature as many Indian foods as you can obtain. Ask for the names of Indian women that will help you arrange and cook

the feast. Depending on your budget it would be good public relations to hire some Indian women to organize and cook and serve the feast. Such a person can also be responsible for obtaining wild meat if such is available, as buffalo, venison, wild turkey, fish, or another Indian food. Most Indian tribes recognize fried bread as a pow-wow food and this is a good item to feature. In the Midwest, wild rice should be served as well as some form of corn soup. Your menu will vary depending on the part of the country you are in but depend on your local contacts for advice. The best money you can spend is to hire a person to organize your feast. This way you will make yourself and your project visible to the Indian community in the [illegible]ssible way. Also see if you can find a responsible Master [illegible]onies. Such a person should be known in the local Indian c[illegible]nity. This person would be in charge of the program. Do not yourself assume this task unless you are very sure of yourself and your knowledge of the Indian community. A good master of ceremonies can make or conversely, a bad master of ceremonies can break your feast. Tell the master of ceremonies what you wish to accomplish during the feast, give him/her all the necessary information, sit back and relax. The feast, the generosity of providing good food and a good program will give you the ears of the community. Ask them for specific comments on what kind of feedback you wish to obtain. Do not expect you will get the feedback immediately. The feast is just to introduce yourself and your program to the community. Tell them of your program and tell them you will visit them later regarding their ideas and their interest. Then attempt to set up a visiting schedule for yourself with whomever you can schedule visits with. During the visits, after the people have had a chance to think about your program, you can then assess their interest. Again depending on your budget, bring a small gift with you on your visit. Be sure and accept graciously the hospitality you may be offered when you visit the Indian community. Don't forget the small gift. It could be something as small as a package of cheese, a box of candy, apples or a pretty candle. But bring something. If nothing else, offer your host a cigarette. Tobacco is an important item to many Indians and with many tribes, tobacco still has a religious significance and can bless a meeting or a visit.

ESTIMATING LIBRARY CAPACITIES

Decide on what the Indian library and information center will hold after you assess community interest. It is possible you will need to prioritize your capacity concurrently with the interest of the Indian community. It is possible that what you as a librarian thinks important to the Indian community, the Indian community will find totally unimportant. In other words, don't rush to fill your library with the standard reference materials such as two or three kinds of encyclopedias when the Indian community would like a section of Indian law/treaties reference shelf. Remember the needs of the white community and the needs of the Indian community are different. Therefore, assess your space available, ask the Indians what they will use in the way of services and make out your priority list. Also

depend on the advice of your Indian contacts. Meet regularly with community groups. If necessary organize a library committee made up of Indian people. Actually organizing a library committee is a good idea but don't demand a library committee.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Maintain your contacts and developing relationships with the community, it is wise to attend as many community meetings as possible. Do not pass up local pow-wows or other such social gatherings. Indians welcome visitors to these events, and it is a good opportunity to meet the people and more importantly become known to the community. However, before you attend all community gatherings nilly, willy, ask your tribal contacts whether or not it is appropriate. For example, it might be possible that religious meetings (native religion) may be closed to non-believers. In other communities it is okay. So check with your local experts so you don't commit a social faux paux right off. When you are at community meetings, wait until you are asked for your opinion before you speak out. As non-Indians are naturally aggressive they tend to dominate Indian meetings, they are not aware of manners of not interrupting slow speakers, and they commit other such sins, therefore, it is wise to keep quiet until asked for your opinion. In some Indian communities, it is not unheard of for newcomers to be new for several years. They are silent for that long at meetings before it is considered seemly for them to open their mouths. However, when your opinion is asked for, give it and then resume your apprenticeship. Don't think it weird if there are moments of silence at meetings, this occurs frequently, and it is not unusual. Don't think you have to fill the silence void. Sit and enjoy it.

WRITING A JOINT STATEMENT OF NEEDS AND AN ACTION PLAN

The most important thing to remember in writing a statement of need and an action plan is, do not have a preconceived agenda. Indians do not like to be asked to rubberstamp projects (ostensibly designed to help Indians) written from preconceived notions of white people. The statement should be a real joint statement. The action plan should be also a joint venture. This does not mean, however, that the Indians on whom you are relying for consultation and advice will do the actual writing of the statement and the action. Be prepared with probable statements or objectives, ask for responses, changes and additions. Emphasize in your demeanour you are presenting ideas for reaction, not a plan for adoption. Frequently, some of the best interchange can come from well planned joint meetings to draw up goals, objectives and action plans if you have no preconceived notions when you begin, are not stuck on one way of doing things and are ready to rewrite, following the meeting. Your committee, or community reactors can possibly be a great help in finding material resources for you. Frequently Indians know of written materials unknown to librarians.

The action plan should be ratified in some way by the

Indian community. Perhaps this is the time for another feast. Again get advice from your sounding group, or the tribal council or both on how to proceed in getting the entire community to view your action plan document. Possibly, it can be ratified through the elective process, whatever you do, make a real attempt to present it to all segments of the Indian community. If there is a community newspaper, you might have an article written about your plan of action, and ask for reactions from the community in the article.

VI. DO'S AND DON'TS

Your first and foremost goal is to serve the Indian community, their needs, their informational desires, not yours. If you have done a good job of communicating with the community, assessing their needs, soliciting and receiving their help in writing up a plan, then you will not need any further admonishments on what you should do and not do. Do listen and listen hard to Indian people and don't become an Indian expert.

VII. FURTHER READING

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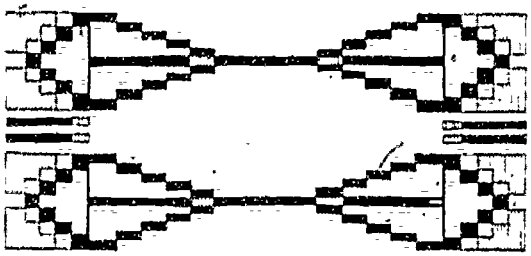

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