

# Keep that professional touch

Compiled by  
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## Publications and Promotions

The beginning of a new year has dawned and greets you revitalised and enthusiastic with a myriad of plans and intentions for interesting projects, professional growth and renewal in your library - just waiting to be put into action.

Before this enthusiasm is destroyed by demanding holiday makers, reopening of schools, budget constraints and staff problems, draw up a planning schedule! You need not even go far for inspiration, because the Central Collection stocks a variety of videos to facilitate orientation sessions, in-service training and team-building activities which will certainly contribute to positive changes in your library.

Experienced staff can also gain from viewing these videos as it can be used as background to discussions, suggestions and strategies to fine-tune a variety of procedures necessary for the running of an organised library with a high standard of service delivery to patrons.

## Attitudes

### Counter action

The exterior of a library building can present a formidable barrier to a potential user, a situation often exacerbated by the seemingly confusing way relevant information is presented once the individual is inside.

Above all, the unhelpful behaviour and negative attitudes of library staff can be off-putting in the extreme and, if not corrected, can totally negate the image all libraries try to create - of being enjoyable places to visit, where the staff is welcoming, interested and efficient. This video, made by staff

from the Tameside Libraries and Arts Department, and students and staff from the Manchester Polytechnic's Department of Library and Information Studies, presents a series of typical incidents in which borrowers are treated in an off-hand and discourteous manner. The correct approach is meant to be discussed during follow-up training sessions.

### Counter action two

Made in cooperation with the Department of Library and Information Studies at the Manchester Polytechnic and Tameside Libraries and Arts, this continues the theme of the first mentioned video entitled **Counter action**. Once again it takes the form of a series of case studies in which the effects of poor staff attitudes and behaviour are contrasted with those resulting from a more helpful and positive approach. There are six specific sections:

- attitudes to the physically disadvantaged
- telephone procedure
- uniformity in library procedures
- staff attitudes in a multicultural society
- handling disruption in the library
- inter-staff relations.

The video is intended as a training aid to be used to explain the contribution staff can make

towards creating and maintaining a good public image of the library.

## Working with children

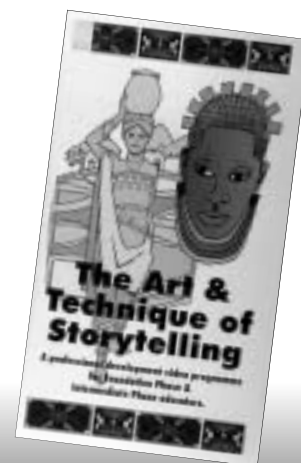
**Kids like us: children under five and Camden Libraries** / producer, Grace McElwee; director, Michael Trask.

It is important that children be introduced to books at an early age and in the London borough of Camden the libraries provide a wide-ranging service for under fives. Although these children have not yet learned to read, they can take part in a surprising selection of activities, including story hours, play groups and make-up sessions.

This video sits in on some of these activities, showing how small children and their parents are made to feel welcome in the library environment. It visits various branches and a number of children's librarians and other experts comment on their experiences.

## The art & technique of storytelling

Produced with the assistance and professional input of three librarians from Cape Town City Libraries, this video deals with the educational value of storytelling. It starts with the viewer sitting in on Roni Kramer's interpretation of Verna Aardema's **Bimwili and the zimwi** and then joining in on a discussion between her, Susan Potgieter, Lulama Langeni and



Vahahangwele Mulaudzi as they comment on the value of storytelling in schools and elsewhere.

These benefits are manifold, ranging from improving one's vocabulary and the pronunciation of words, to a story's ability to make us think, visualise and feel. There is a brief mention of the kinds of stories that exist, after which Lulama Langeni illustrates the telling of a cautionary tale not based on a book. Finally the panel discusses the selection of a story and the essential preparation, with Susan Potgieter demonstrating it further by her reading of Val Biro's **Die drie rammetjies rof**. Many other details come up for discussion and the video comes complete with a study guide in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa.

### Book care

**Operation book care: the care and repair of books** / director, Tom Evans.

Declining library budgets and increased purchase prices mean that books and periodicals are becoming increasingly valuable. The need to preserve them and thus extend their shelf life is therefore becoming of paramount importance. This training aid shows the ways in which printed materials in libraries come under constant attack from a variety of sources and how preventive measures can be taken to reduce the effects of this assault. Its main purpose is to make library staff aware of how the incorrect handling of books can cause damage, how this can be avoided and how simple repairs can be undertaken in the library itself.



**Slow fires: on the preservation of the human record** / producer and director, Terry Sanders.

For centuries, libraries all over the world have been the custodians of knowledge, safeguarding a vast amount of recorded information and preserving a wealth of human experiences for subsequent

generations. At times these treasures have been threatened by major disasters, such as fires and the floods that struck Florence in 1966, but today they are endangered by a more insidious enemy, one that operates from within. Because of the use of acidic chemicals, the paper on which books and other manuscripts were written are deteriorating at an alarming rate. This film is intended to alert the general public to the situation and provides a wide-ranging introduction to the nature of the problem. Various librarians and conservation experts discuss the issues involved, from the preservation of the works themselves to modern methods of retaining the information they contain. Amongst those who comment are authors James Michener and Barbara Tuchman. (This programme is also available on 16mm.)

### Library orientation

**The mind's treasure chest: an educational feature film** / producer, George Elder; director Harry Nathan Gottlieb.

Jack Patterson, a rather arrogant and precocious high school pupil, is running for the presidency of the student council. His opponent shows up his ignorance in the history class and Jack feels that the only way to win the election is to present the best possible talk on the next assignment, which will be on Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis. Arriving at the school library, he is completely at a loss until a fellow student takes pity on him and agrees to help him find his way through the large collection of books,



indexes and other aids available. Staying behind after the library closes, they are later joined by the school librarian, who had been troubled by a seemingly missing volume from a periodical index. Through her, they even gain entrance to the university library and after a night of frantic research a chastened Jack is able to deliver his talk. This is very likely the most elaborate library film ever made and presents a very comprehensive introduction to its use. It won an award at the Chicago International Film Festival.

### Other useful titles

**The academic edge: learning how to use your library**

**The Cape Provincial Library Service**

**The future of print**

**Natal Provincial Library Service.**

Set your plans in motion and request these titles from the Central Collection today. May you reach new heights in your library during 2004!

*Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, Film/Video/DVD Selector*

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