

## Suburban Life

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(F&amp;A)

## Volunteers keep talking books in constant repair

By Lorraine McClish  
staff writer

The conference room of Farmington Hills Branch Library is reserved from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesday of the month throughout 1986, a reservation that has been renewed every year since 1980 for the Telephone Pioneers, who utilize the space repairing the machinery and equipment used by the handicapped.

"Our experience in the telephone company just lends itself to our getting together to do this," said Leigh LaChapelle, one of about 15 retired Bell Telephone employees who repair from 800-900 Talking Books machines each year in the library's conference room.

LaChapelle does not think of his twice-a-month visits to the library as work to be done, nor does he think of himself as a volunteer worker.

"This is a social event for us," he said. "We used to do this individually. Take the machines home and repair them in our own basements. Now we brown-bag it to the library. We help one another with problems that one or the other may have more experience with. The library has given us storage space so we don't have to lug any equipment with us and we make a party out of it."

Magazines as well as books are recorded on the special machines in the Oakland County Library for the blind and physically handicapped, housed in the local library. They are available for the blind as well as anyone who has difficulty in holding a book.

IF UP TO 900 repairs a year sound like a large number, LaChapelle says, "Think about it. If you have defective eyesight or a physical handicap you are much more likely to spill the coffee on the book, knock it over, hit it off the table. I think that number would be about average for any library (of its kind)."

But the local library is far ahead of its sister libraries in the repair department.

"As a rule there is a pile waiting for us and we keep up, even if we have to schedule another day in the month to do it. The (Michigan School for the Blind) library in Lansing is stocked to the ceiling they are so far behind and I've heard the same thing is true for the library in Wayne County," LaChapelle said.

The keeping-up earned the Telephone Pioneers who work here the "Volunteers Helping All to Read in Michigan" Award from the Michigan Lions Club last fall.



Telephone Pioneers who gathered this month to work on the Talking Book machinery are (clockwise from bottom right) Jerry Sauer,

Leo Hawkins, Mike White, Leigh LaChapelle, Web Luginbill, Harold Lyons, Gerald Lingio and Frank Howell.

But Talking Books is not all the Pioneers repair. They repair whatever machinery in the library that needs repairing, and as the work load increases so does their skill.

In one instance they modified a Braillewriter machine to allow a deaf woman to know when she was reaching the end of her typing space. Normally a bell rings seven spaces before the end of the line. That machine is now wired so a light comes on the same time the bell rings.

In another instance the group was called upon to repair an outdated telephone switchboard so a company could put it on display in working order.

"That took a while but we did it," LaChapelle said.

TELEPHONE Pioneers of America are long-service employees, both active and retired, who have been in the industry for at least 18 years. The company thinks of the Pioneers as "an honor society of men and women who have

contributed to the progress of the industry and who are still preparing the way for others to follow."

It's been in existence for 74 years, now has about 602,000 members and is the world's largest voluntary association of industrial employees.

Pioneers are involved in a large range of charitable activities, but work for the blind and handicapped are notable priorities for the Wolverine Chapter, based in Southfield.

"The Pioneers encourage those of us

who can to repair the books, and this is all over the U.S.," LaChapelle said. "I think most of us who are doing this now never had seen a Talking Book before we started this and some didn't even know such a thing existed."

The group that gets together here never spend time on any formal business meetings.

"One person might order parts and another take care of re-charging batteries. But there are no officers. Everybody's in charge," LaChapelle said.



Elementary students at Woodcreek Elementary remember three members of the Gupta family, killed in an air tragedy last June, through this recently completed mural in their

school's media center. Shashi Gupta was a bilingual aide with Farmington Public Schools.

## Mural dedicated in their memory

Woodcreek Elementary students have an enhancement to their media center — and a vivid memory of fellow students Amit and Arti Gupta who were killed with their mother, Shashi, in an Air India plane crash in late June.

A recently completed mural

honoring the three was done with a \$1,000 donation from the Farmington Hills' father Sudhir Gupta. The donation was officially accepted by the Farmington Board of Education Tuesday, Dec. 17.

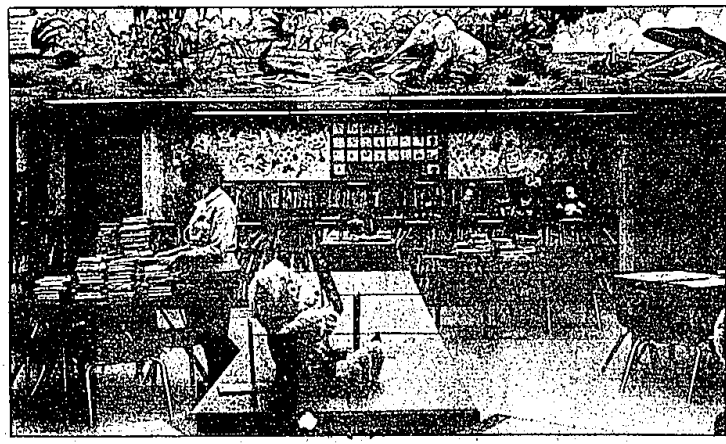
The mural depicts storybook, ani-

mal characters from Rudyard Kipling's "Just So Stories," and names the family members who perished.

Shashi Gupta was a 35-year-old bilingual aide with the school district for two years, prior to her death. Daughter Arti was 10 and son

Amit was 6.

They were traveling to Bombay, India, to visit family, when the Boeing 747 carrying 329 passengers crashed into the sea off the coast of Ireland, killing all passengers and crew on board.



AT RIGHT: Media Specialist Addie Levine sorts books at the Woodcreek Elementary media center below a mural done in honor of the Gupta family. Three members of the family were killed in a plane crash last June.

Staff photos by  
Randy Borst

## Question of guilt Accused accomplice chronicles 30 years of social upheaval

By Joanne Whittaker  
staff writer

NEVER GUILTY, Never Free," the book that grew out of the 1983 murder trial of Ginny Foat, the former California NOW president, is a fast trip through 30 years of social upheaval that at times resembles a ride on a runaway roller coaster.

Within the space of a few pages the reader concludes that here indeed is a book any mother with an ounce of sense will insist that her teen-ager daughter reads.

To be sure, Ms. Foat's description of her life as naive Virginia Galluzzo, a runaway from New Paltz, N.Y., and the lurid details of her subsequent life as unwed mother, battered wife and embittered feminist contain hundreds of examples that should convince any smart kid that for her own good she should stick with the straight and narrow.

To be sure, Ms. Foat's book is a success. Any one reading Foat's 300 page "effort" to tell the truths that courtroom testimony or press coverage seldom reveals ("Random House, \$17.95) could hardly help thinking her lucky stars that she isn't Ginny Foat.

However, at issue, and never resolved to the reader's satisfaction, is the question, is Ginny Foat guilty of murder, or is she innocent of being an accomplice in the death of Moses Chayo?

With assistance from award-winning free-lance writer Laura Foreman, Foat explains there are an equal number of reasons why she didn't follow the rules daughters of working class Americans were expected to obey in the conservative '50s. Among the more compelling, she says, was the realization that merely being a female meant doors were shut tight on any hope of advanced education, a career or fulfillment of personal ambition.

Now, after standing trial as an accomplice in a sordid murder in which she is alleged to have lured Chayo out of a New Orleans bar to his death, Ms. Foat seems to have finally come to the conclusion that she should have responded to her youthful frustrations in a somewhat different manner.

ALTHOUGH the question of guilt is never completely resolved, the book is compelling for its insight into the middle class family lifestyle of the '50s in which the strong, kindly father was allowed to lead his adoring daughter to

the basement for a whipping. It is also insightful of a criminal justice system that dresses incarcerated women in girlish pinafores and where judges congratulate them for behaving themselves. It also offers an insider's view of the often misunderstood feminist movement's appeal to a disparate group of women.

With Laura Foreman's assistance, Ginny Foat gives an articulate description of her emergence from total dependence on a male-dominated world, in her case there were four husbands, to the joy of independence and discovery that she can live alone without further fear that her accuser, handsome, sophisticated con artist turned alcoholic, crazy Jack Sidote, can pursue her any further through the courts.

The transformation has been so complete, she explains, that she can live and travel in freedom despite the fact that he was paroled from a 25-year prison sentence in early October.

Still, the book leaves a nagging series of questions. Given her devil-may-care lifestyle with Sidote and her subsequent determination to survive, even succeed to a position of political power and notoriety, has Ginny Foat really become a new person as a result of her travels? Or, has she succumbed to rich financial rewards much in the style of a variety of lawbreakers who have gone the book route since Watergate?

Foat says "no" to the latter. She did not want to write about her life or her ordeal, despite a personal need to address the inaccuracies of the daily reporting that followed her through the course of justice.

"After I was arrested," she says, "it was a Kafkaesque situation. People were calling me asking for the rights to the book, to a movie. Movie producers were calling, publishing houses were calling all the time I was thinking I might spend the rest of my life in prison."

It was friends, she says, who finally talked her into agreeing to a contract by asking her how much she thought her court costs were going to be.

"I said about \$200,000, which was just about right. It was actually \$270,000. There was no way that the \$27 I had in the bank was going to cover that, so I sold the rights to my book. I didn't think that I'd ever write the book."

The writing began, she explains, after discussing with friends what the point of her experiences had been.

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