What Do I Do With All These Books?!

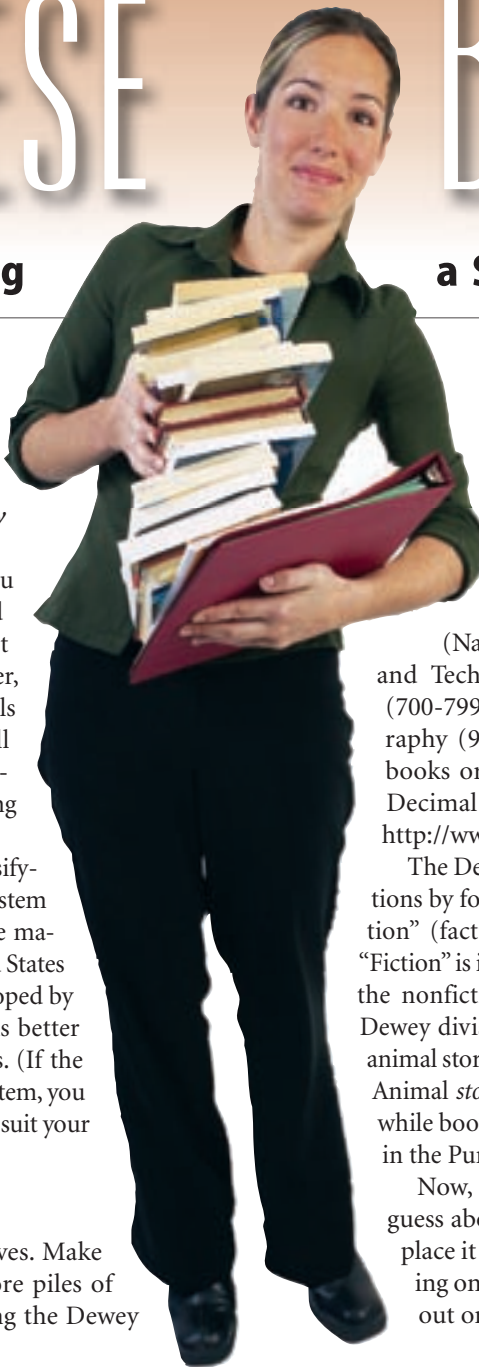## Tips for Organizing   a Small School Library

The library at your school desperately needs to be organized, and you've been assigned to do the job. Though willing, you really don't know where to begin.

Here are some ideas to help get you started. Of course, ideally you would have a trained or paid librarian at your school to do this. However, many Seventh-day Adventist schools do not; therefore, this article will focus on guiding the teacher or volunteer in setting up a smoothly functioning library for a small school.

Whatever the size of your library, classifying it according to the Dewey Decimal System is the best approach, in our opinion. The majority of elementary libraries in the United States use this system rather than the one developed by the Library of Congress (LOC), which is better suited to research and academic libraries. (If the schools in your country use a different system, you can adapt most of the information here to suit your needs.)

Step One: Sorting

First, take all the books off the shelves. Make room on the floor for about 11 or more piles of books. Post signs for each section, using the Dewey Decimal Classification system, which will make things easier for you later: Computer Science, Information, General Works, and Reference Books (000-099), Philosophy and Psychology (100-199), Religion (200-299), Social Sciences (300-399), Languages (400-499), Pure Science (Nature) (500-599), Applied Science (How To and Technology) (600-699), Arts and Recreation (700-799), Literature (800-899), History and Geography (900-1000), Biography (B), and Everybody books or easy picture books. You can find Dewey Decimal Classification summaries (lists) online at http://www.oclc.org/dewey/resources/summaries/.

The Dewey Decimal System is divided into two sections by format: "Fiction" (story format); and "Nonfiction" (factual, technical, and informational format). "Fiction" is included in the Literature (800) section, while the nonfiction books are distributed throughout the Dewey divisions. A question that usually arises is, "Do animal stories go in the 'Fiction' or 'Nonfiction' section?" Animal *stories* fit better in the Literature (800) section, while books with *factual information* about animals go in the Pure Science (Nature) (500) section.

Now, pick up one book at a time. Make a quick guess about the pile where the book should go, and place it there. Evaluate each book, rather than relying on previous classifications. Do not try to weed out or discard any books at this point.

BY AUDREY MAYDEN CAMPBELL AND JOY UEHLIN PALMER

Don't feel overwhelmed by this task. It won't take long. Try to recruit someone in your community or church to help. Just remember that you have the final say, since you will have to live with the decision.

Once the books have been sorted, set the picture books aside for later. You will deal with these differently, for two reasons: (1) the information is too varied to catalog in the main collection, and (2) the teachers and students needing these books must be able to find them in a separate area.

Step Two: Weeding Out Books

Now, choose one stack, and pick up the top book. Ask yourself these questions.

How old is this book? Is the information outdated?

Is this book in good condition? If not, can it be repaired? Is it worth being repaired? If it can't be repaired but contains information you need in the library, put it on a list to repurchase. Compare this book with others in the same section. (This is why you shouldn't weed while sorting.) Now you have a complete picture of that section and can make an informed decision. *Does the library have other better/more recent books on this subject? Do we need this book?* Be sure to eliminate all records of weeded-out books from the card file/computer records.

Does this book deserve shelf space in our library? It is better to have fewer books and some empty shelf space rather than cramming in books to fill a shelf and retaining out-of-date or inappropriate books.

Does this book support the curriculum? If not, evaluate it carefully to ensure that it is "shelf-worthy" for other reasons.

Is this book suitable for the age level of children in the school?

Does this book espouse Christian principles?

After evaluating each book, place the discarded books in a box. When every book from a pile has been sorted and evaluated, arrange the "keepers" in rough Dewey order on the appropriate shelf, and place a strip of paper across the shelf to keep the books from being removed. You aren't finished with them yet, but at least they are organized.

Continue this process with each pile on the floor. Once all the books are sorted, weeded, and shelved, move to Step Three.

Step Three: Classify

1. Dewey Decimal Classification for Main Collection

Next, put spine labels on each retained book. Each label must include (1) the Dewey number and (2) an author notation, which can be as simple as the first three letters of the author's name. But where do you find the Dewey number?

Look in the book for the "imprint" or "verso" page, which contains publisher information, ISBN numbers, and much more. Older books usually had this information on the back of the title page; recently, publishers have been putting it at the back of the book. You may not want to use the entire Dewey

number. For example, on the imprint page from a book titled *Whaling Season: A Year in the Life of an Arctic Whale Scientist* by Peter Lourie,[1] the Dewey classification is 599.5'276, quite a long number. The apostrophe after the decimal between the *5* and the *2* indicates that the shortest option is to use only the first four numbers (599.5).

The method above works for most new books in English and other languages, but you also may have some older titles in your collection that do not include this information on the imprint page. You can find their Dewey numbers at http://catalog.loc.gov/. You may have to select from a list of sound recordings, paperbacks, hardbacks, videos, or DVDs with the same title. Or there could be multiple editions with different authors or illustrators. Inserting your title will bring up its Brief

Record, which includes four tabs: "Brief Record," "Subject/Content," "Full Record," and "MARC tags." Clicking on "Full Record" will usually produce a Dewey number labeled "Dewey Class No."

Ask to borrow Dewey Decimal classification books from a public library. Although somewhat intimidating, they can be very helpful. In the front of the books, you will find summaries of the Dewey divisions, which will guide you through the sorting process (Step One). The summaries can also be found online at http://www.oclc.org/dewey/resources/summaries/.

For a small fee, you can purchase most books pre-cataloged.

You may be fortunate enough to have a librarian in your area who will volunteer his or her time to help catalog books.

2. Colored Dots for Picture Books

Picture books and easy readers are usually fairly thin and contain many illustrations. These used to be called "Easy" books, but many libraries now use the term "Everybody" books since not all of them are simple to read, and they appeal to a wide range of people. (For the rest of this article, the term "*E*" books will refer to "Everybody" books rather than electronic books.)

Consider using colored dots for the picture books (800 section). If it is important to your library users to be able to readily

access animal stories (813), for example, consider purchasing special spine labels from a library supplier that feature the picture of a horse for the horse books, a dog photo for the dog books, and so forth. (This refers only to *Literature* books about animals. The Dewey system will automatically separate the *informational* books.)

At our school, we use colored dots to organize our "E" books. First, we create spine labels with "E" and the first letter of the author's name. We then sort them into sections similar to the Dewey divisions, which reveals where we have "holes" in this section. Maybe you have lots of "E" books, but after sorting them, you realize that you have very few "E" technology books. That is an area you need to focus on when purchasing new books.

Here is the breakdown we use for colored dots, which tend to fit the "E" books better than a strict Dewey system.

Pink Dot – Bible Stories, Religion
White Dot – Animals That Act Like People, Fantasy and Folklore
Light Green Dot – General Science
Dark Green Dot – Nature
Orange Dot – Technology
Dark Blue Dot – Books About People
Light Blue Dot – Books About Pets
Red Dot – Numbers and Counting Books
Purple Dot – ABC Books
Yellow Dot – Poems, Rhymes, and Songs
Black Dot – Easy Biographies
Light Blue Star – "I Can Read" Books (Easy Readers)

Note: If you decide to color code your whole library rather than using the Dewey classifications, you should still use the Dewey subject arrangement. Keep in mind that this creates a new problem. If you decide to subdivide the 700 section (into crafts, music, and/or sports), you will then need another level of division. This will require a LOT of colored dots!

Dots can be found at any office supply store, but for a wider variety of colors and sizes, check with a library supplier such as Highsmith. (We like their Prelaminated Grab-a-Dots and Grab-a-Stars.) Pre-laminated dots can be attached to clear sticker tape, eliminating the need to affix clear book tape over the dot. With other types of dots, you will need to cover them with transparent book tape to ensure that they stay in place. We use the ¼-inch dot and ½-inch star because the small dot fits nicely on the thin spines of the "E" books. Check with a library supplier in your area to see what is available.

Leveled Books

The required books for your school reading curriculum (in the North American Division, the elementary reading program is called "Pathways") are best kept in the classroom rather than the main library. That way, these "leveled" books can be quickly located. Leveled books aren't the primary focus of a school library. If your library does need to house these types of books, it would be best not to use colored dots or strips of colored tape to indicate the different levels. Instead, obtain white stickers, and write the level number on each sticker, which will make them easy to recognize on the shelf. Place these books in their own special section. If the leveled books *must* be integrated into

the library, use white spine labels with the call number, which will help students locate the level they need.

Step Four: Process

Create labels for each book, using the information you have located. Library supply catalogs have many options for labels. Choose the type and size that work for you. If you are automating your library and plan to use the program to generate labels, choose a spine label that is compatible with the software. Our automation program produced labels with very small print, so we made a template in Microsoft Word that allows us to switch to a larger-size font. A general purpose label with silver foil

Illustration 1

Illustration 2

backing works best. These labels are manufactured to withstand the heat from printers and also to adhere tightly to the books.

Once you have obtained the classification number for your book, you will need an author notation in order to alphabetize the books within the Dewey classifications. The easiest way to do this is to use the first three letters of the author's last name.

Label the Everybody books with the letter "E," plus the first

three letters of the author's last name. If you are concerned that the letters will not fit on the spine, use only one letter for the "E" books. (See Illustration 1.)

The "Fiction" or story format section can be labeled as Dewey number "813," "F," or "Fic." For libraries that prefer not to use the word *fiction*, the number "813" for the story format books is a good alternative.

After entering the information, print the labels, and place them on the books. It looks neater to attach the labels at the same location on every book. We put the colored dots at the top of the spine. This makes them inconspicuous yet easy to refer to for reshelving. (See Illustration 2.) Our spine labels are placed one inch from the bottom of the spine. (See Illustration 3.) Because the ink wears off fairly quickly, we also put a clear label protector over each spine label.

Manual Check Out and Card Catalog

On the inside cover of each book, you will need a pocket, a book card for patrons to sign when they check out the book, and a date-due slip. The pocket and card should have identical labels that list the author, title, and the call number (the same format as the Author Card label in the card catalog). The book check-out card should also have a space for the due date and the patron's signature.

When a book is checked out, the cards can be filed according to "Date Due." Use a check-out box (referred to as a "charging tray" in library vendor catalogs) and tabs for each month, along with one set of tabs labeled 1-31 for the days of the month. File the book cards alphabetically by author behind the appropriate date tab. When the book is returned, the Date Due slip will help you find the card. Check the box regularly, collect the cards, and file them in the front of the box behind a tab labeled "Overdue."

Even if you already have a good card catalog, you will still need to update your cards as you go. Continue making new cards to fit into your card catalog.

Illustration 3

If you are organizing a brand-new library and will not be automating it, you will need to set up a card catalog. If you are not a librarian, this can be quite daunting. You will need at least three cards (Author, Subject, and Title) for each book. (See Illustration 4.) We suggest printing multiple copies of the book pocket information on address-size labels to stick on the cards. Modify this information slightly to create Author, Subject, and Title cards. The information on each card can be as detailed or as limited as you like (Author, Subject, Title, and Call Number must be on the card, but you can also include publisher, city and date of publication, number of pages, and a short summary of the book). File the cards alphabetically by the first letter on the card. You can either file them all together or separate the cards into the three sections (Author, Subject, and Title) and alphabetize them within each section. Be consistent in how you organize your card catalog.[2]

Automating Your Library

If you automate your library, you will not need a card catalog.

Before selecting an automation program, research various options online to find the one that will work best for your li-
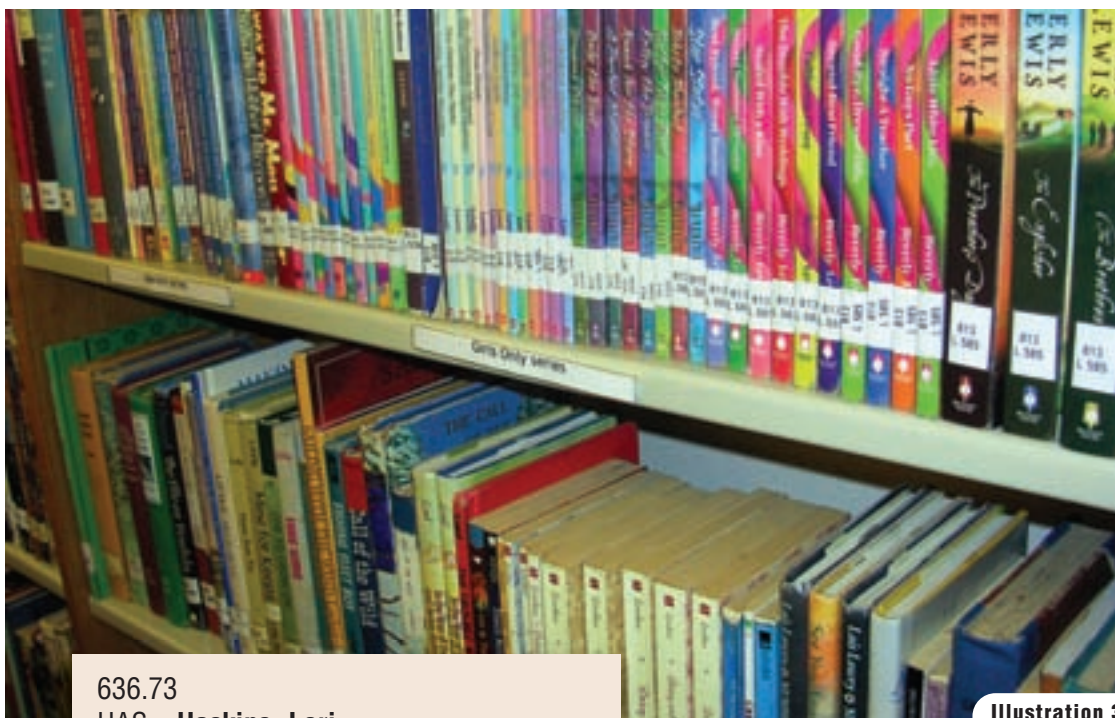
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HAS   **Haskins, Lori**
          Sled dogs; Bearport Publishing
      2006 32 p

Author

636.73   Sled dogs
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Title

636.73   DOG HEROES
HAS   **Haskins, Lori**
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Subject

Illustration 4

brary. Fee-based and free systems are available. Using the search term "library automation systems" or "integrated library systems," peruse what is available. Two programs recommended by the North Pacific Union are *Readerware* and *Resource Mate 3.0* or *Resource Mate 3.0 Plus*. Both of these programs can easily handle a small library. One library in our area was automated by a program written by a local church member.

After selecting an automation program, purchase spine labels and barcodes that work with the software.

Supplies

Below you will find a list of supplies needed to organize your library. Order these well in advance because you will need them on the day you begin.

Summary

In summary, to have an up-to-date, well-functioning library, you will need to sort and weed your books, classify them according to the system you choose, attach labels and stickers to each one, and set up a system for locating them on the bookshelves—whether it be a card catalog or computer automation.

It is a lot of work, but you and your students will enjoy using the finished product.

Most of these processing supplies and the optional supplies can be obtained from a library vendor. We use Scotch 845 book tape made by 3M and available from library vendors. It is more expensive, but it does not dry out or damage the spine of the book. The two-inch width works well for many library purposes. We use it for minor book repair, to reinforce paperback spines and edges, and for other small jobs. ✎

SUPPLIES TO BE ORDERED AHEAD OF TIME

Automation System
  a. Patron cards
  b. Patron bar codes
  c. Card holder or box for patron cards
  d. Automation program of choice
  e. Scanner
  f. Computers—minimum of two recommended—one for the data station (students should not have access to this computer) and at least one more for student searches
  g. Barcodes to accompany your automation program

Card Catalog System (if not automating)
  a. Catalog cards—Subject, Author, and Title cards for each book
  b. A-Z Divider tabs for card catalog
  c. Book cards
  d. Book pockets
  e. Date slips
  f. Date stamp/Ink pad
  g. Check-out box (Charging Tray)
  h. Month and Day tabs

OTHER SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR PROCESSING BOOKS

1. Processing supplies
  a. Clear label protectors—for spine labels and barcodes
  b. Spine labels
  c. Inside labels/school address labels
  d. School stamp
  e. Clear book tape
  f. Colored dots

2. Cleaning supplies—for cleaning shelves and dusting books
3. Book shelves
4. Optional supplies
  a. Book jacket covers
  b. Book plates
  c. Bookends
  d. Shelf labels
  e. Plexiglas sign holders
  f. Book easels
  g. Classification labels—Adventure, Animals, Caldecott, Newbery, etc. for spines

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RESOURCES

Melvil Dewey, *Dewey Decimal Classification*, Joan S. Mitchell, Julianne Beall, Giles Martin, Winton E. Matthews, Jr., and Gregory R. New, eds. (Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, 2003).

Dewey Summaries: http://www.oclc.org/dewey/resources/summaries/.

Dewey Number Source: http://catalog.loc.gov/.

Readerware Library Automation Software: http://www.readerware.com/.

ResourceMate Library Automation Software: http://www.resourcemate.com/.

Highsmith Library Catalog : http://www.highsmith.com. 1-800-835-2329.

Cynthia Drawbaugh, "Card Catalog." *LiBEARy Skills: Grade Four Through Grade Six* (Minneapolis, Minn.: T. S. Denison, 1990), p. 14.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Peter Lourie, *Whaling Season: A Year in the Life of an Arctic Whale Scientist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin for Children, 2009). Imprint page.

2. These instructions are very simple and sufficient for the small library. If you wish to delve deeper, you can locate detailed instruction books on cataloging and filing.