

Area libraries keep RICK staff busy

By NANCY TAYLOR

Hub Staff Writer

KEARNEY — Libraries and media centers in 37 Central Nebraska counties keep RICK busy.

RICK is really three full-time people and a number of student staff. The acronym RICK translates into Reference/Interloan Center at Kearney. RICK's home is located on the second floor of the Kearney State College library.

VALERIE KRZYWKOWSKI directs the staff, who serve 301 public, school, college and institutional libraries and media centers in a strip of counties from the Nebraska-South Dakota border to the Nebraska-Kansas state line.

Requests for interlibrary loan materials and answers to questions, some quite off-beat, rose by 14 percent in 1985-86. Krzywkowski said RICK processed 12,759 requests, including 11,035 interloan and 1,724 reference requests.

TRANSLATED, THE figures mean busy days for the RICK staff. On an average day, the library specialists receive 80-90 requests a day or 1,600-18,000 per month from media centers in the Meridian and Republican Valley Library Systems.

"The people are always out there asking questions," the director said. "It certainly keeps the day interesting."

In July, for example, RICK received calls for a list of schools on how to become a dog trainer and who wrote the music played in recent Ernest and Julio Gallo wine commercials.

"WE CAN ANSWER the majority of questions using the college library resources," Krzywkowski said. "If not, we go to other sources with specific information, associations or companies."

Even though the service has access to all kinds of resources, Krzywkowski said there are some questions whose answers are tough to find, including:

When was Jesse James born, and when did marry and die?

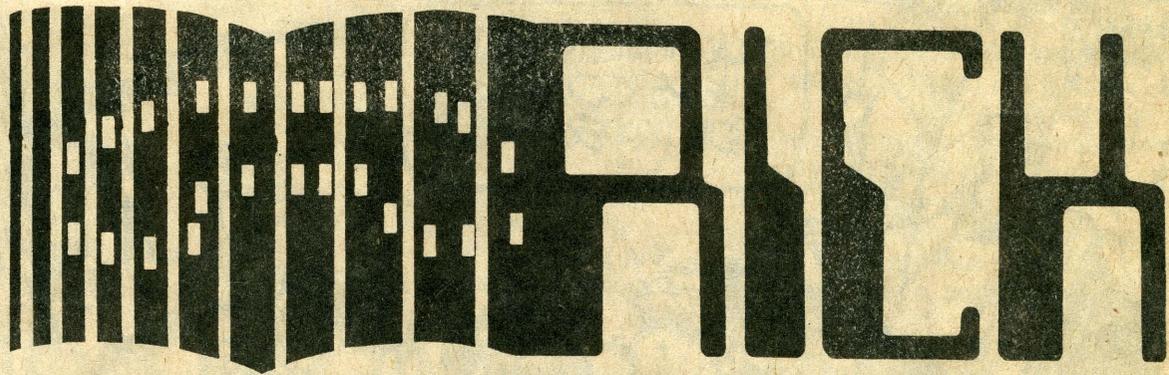
How do you build a satellite dish from scratch?

What is the molecular structure of aspartame sweetener?

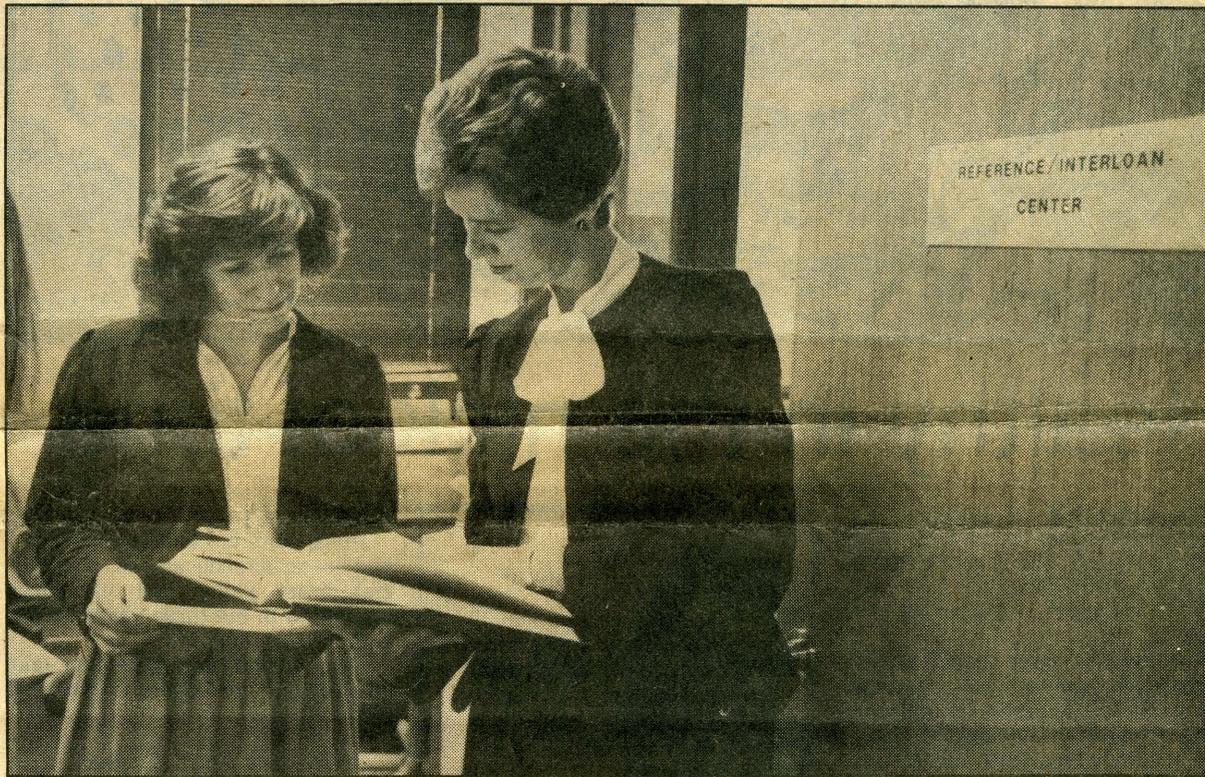
Many more requests call for books or journal articles.

REGIONAL LIBRARIES that subscribe to the service may phone RICK on a WATS line or use an electronic mail service to make a material request.

Krzywkowski and her staff first try to locate the item at nine major public libraries in the Meridian and Republican Valley systems. Kearney Public Library, KSC's Calvin T. Ryan Library and the Holdrege Public Library are among the nine.



REFERENCE/INTERLOAN CENTER AT KEARNEY



Hub photo by Nancy Taylor

REFERENCE/INTERLOAN Center of Kearney (RICK) staff member Celia Taft, left, and director Valerie Krzywkowski review a reference book as they seek an answer to a question called in by a school library.

If necessary, they may use state and national telecommunications systems and computerized data bases to locate the materials. The lending library then sends the material directly to the user's library or media center.

HEAVY USEAGE of RICK indicates to Krzywkowski the service is vital to the rural region.

RICK began operations in 1984. It remains a unique service as the only centrally located interloan/reference service at a college library in the state.

"I think the increase really shows we are necessary," she said. "They need books and library materials not only for their lives, but their education."

"THE FIRST MONTH that we started we had somewhere between 400 and 500 requests. We thought that was a lot at that time," the director added. "As people got to know what we were doing and schools began classes, we had 1,400 to 1,700 requests."

Demand for service fluctuates around the calendars of public schools. Krzywkowski said RICK receives a large number of requests for journal and periodical articles from school librarians for student projects and term papers.

"We can tell when school is open and students are doing science fair projects, papers and enrichment projects," she said. "They can do more because we are able to supply materials."

ACCORDING TO HER 1985-86 annual report, Krzywkowski said the requests placed by libraries and media centers ranged from one to 603. Of the total, 54 percent came from public libraries, 43 percent from schools and 3 percent from college and institutional libraries.

In addition, physicians, teachers and best-seller readers ask for books and information. Krzywkowski chuckles when she says the staff can tell when a Phil Donahue talk show has spawned requests on a personal topic.

One school discovered it could obtain copies of materials to prepare for speech contests through RICK at a minimal cost.

Once someone discovers one service, it will likely lead to another, she said. "That's, I think, how it grows."