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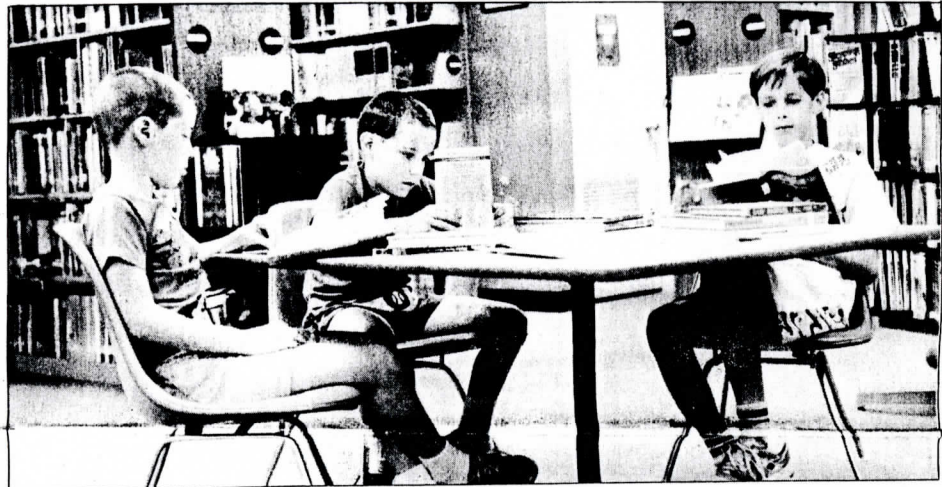
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Andrew, Philip, and Matthew Wenger (left to right) enjoy reading the same books, they do agree that the program has a lot to offer. the Decatur Public Library's summer reading program, "Station READ 1990." Although the brothers don't like

'Station READ 1990' Is Definite Hit For Library's Summer Reading Program

Text, Photos By Diane Thompson

Like most brothers, they don't agree on everything. Philip Wenger, 9, likes reading mysteries. Andrew, 11, likes reading about animals and Matthew, 13, likes science fiction. But the three brothers, from the Lutheran Schools of Decatur, do agree that the Decatur Public Library's summer reading program, "Station READ 1990 on your dial," is great.

Station READ 1990 is primarily designed to teach children to enjoy reading. Any child with a Decatur Public Library card or whose parent has one is eligible to participate. Katie Gross, the director of the program, said that even children who cannot read yet join the program and have stories read to them.

A child comes and checks out books at the library or bookmobile. They read or have somebody read to them at home and then record what they have read with a librarian. Gross said, "We want children to read books that are fun and interesting for them." But she added that they ask children to read on their own level.

Gross said that one reason the program is successful is because parents like for their children to be involved in organized activities. Another motivation for children are the prizes.

Children in the program are rewarded after reading a certain number of books. In June, readers could receive a folder, a McDonald's coupon, a pencil and puzzle sheet, and a pass to Paul's Puttin Place. In July, readers can be rewarded with a ticket to a storyteller, hanging up their name in the library or bookmobile, a button, a coupon from Rax, and with a poster. At the end of the program readers will



Katie Gross -- "We want children to read books that are fun and interesting for them."

help motivate them. The three Wenger brothers agree that the advantage for older kids to read is for the enjoyment. The prizes are an extra treat, they said.

Gross said that they separate the prizes into months so that the children do not try to finish the program in one day. Competition is also cut down between children. "Our objective is for children to enjoy reading," Gross said. She also commented that competition takes the fun out of reading. But because competition is a motivator, the elementary schools do compete. They do not, however, compete for the most books read, but for the most readers.

Another part of the program that children really enjoy are storytimes. Separate storytimes for preschools and school age children, combined with film programs, provide more educational enjoyment for children each week.

One of the main rewards for reading this summer is a ticket to see a storyteller. After July 1, children who have read 15 books or have had 25 books read to them are eligible to attend a storyteller concert.

Michael Parent, a professional storyteller for 12 years, will be at the library July 31 and August 1 for school age children. Parent combines stories with music and juggling. He grew up in Virginia with his bilingual, French-Canadian family. Parent has performed at the International Colloquium on Storytelling in Paris, the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesboro, Tenn., at the Smithsonian Institute, and at other festivals and schools around the country. He will perform a separate program for young adults and adults on Aug. 1.

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