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On Riding Tailwinds

It is certainly true that video diversions of all kinds for kids today suck up the oxygen in out-of-school learning space that could otherwise go to book-reading and Libraries. In contrast, back in Murrysville Community Library's founding year, 1922, video distractions were limited. But, the Woman's Club that started the Library could only have offered kids' books on some small scale anyway, the entire collection being tiny; and it wasn't ready for kids' programming yet.

Over a centennial, all has changed, with the emergence of talkie films, radio, TV, and Dick Tracy phones. The headwinds have gotten worse especially with the ubiquity of hand-held phones from age K-6(?) and up. Yet, Libraries in the WLN today do well attended children's programming, and a few are even tackling the task of programming for teens, despite what seems like a daunting uphill climb. With Murrysville Community Library celebrating its centennial this year, that is a big story about change and challenge, too, for the next centennial. If you have children, you will relate to our anonymous poet who wrote of the challenge of even decades ago, when teevee was the main distraction.

Supposed

Tucked in the far corner room 'a where we live
a Mom's not able to peek across a main hallway,
 'n shadows dark the windows facing west,
from a sugar maple tree; it's where we play
 we three,
where we go to stare the life
 from an old teevee:
me 'n a little red Carrot cub,
 'n Marc all wrapped in Tweety's hug,
a forever unzipped yellow bird
leaking stuffin' balls on Mom's clean rug,
 marking the telltale path by which he came;
near grown-up Jay has Koko on a special chair,
bear who's just a shadow of his old stuffed self,
but it's me anyway who always brings him there.
My on'y Carrot, he's supposed to always heed
the urgent whimperin' plea of real live doggy,
 'n walk her even when it's cold with rain,
no mind the stuffin' gets so awful smelly soggy;
Tweety's not supposed to move, nor leak at all,
so it's Koko's job to fetch and make the leash,
to open up the outside door,
which tiny little Carrot can hardly even reach.
Though not one of the rest 'a us
 is even slightly Tweety-leaky,
we never ever supposed to move at all,
 'cause in the way we watch teevee shows
we're not supposed to hear our doggy call.

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So, my centennial toast for this week goes to all those Children's Librarians and Youth Services Coordinators out there who have found the tailwind to ride such an array of successful, live programming for kids like these. Considering what else has happened in the 100 years, this is a remarkable achievement. Bravo!

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