

Shenandoah Valley Herald 10-10-83

Decision due on county library

\$55,000 plan advanced by study group

By DONNA BAKER

If local government approves, a centralized library could become a reality in Shenandoah County by next summer.

A member of an ad hoc committee formed to study the feasibility of a centralized library will submit proposals to the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors later this month.

In an interview Thursday, Mrs. Warren B. French Jr. said results of an initial study which began last spring will be made public at the Nov. 23 meeting of the board.

The committee is prepared to ask the local government to allocate more than \$55,000 for the project.

Mrs. French says the library committee does not expect the allocation to be made until the next fiscal year when the county's 1984 budget is compiled.

The amount of funds needed locally to operate the library is based on hiring a professionally trained librarian at a salary of \$10,000 annually; a library assistant who will earn \$8,500; two clerk typists with a combined salary of \$14,000, and fringe benefits which total 11 percent of salaries.

The committee has estimated it will need an additional \$500 from the local government to buy books and magazines, another \$7,048 for equipment and supplies and \$11,000 for operating expenses, including rent, electricity, phone, heating, janitorial service and insurance.

The committee will request \$24,800 in state funds.

The library committee is composed of 5 to 17 members. Hanna McLay, an employee of the state library, is the group's consultant.

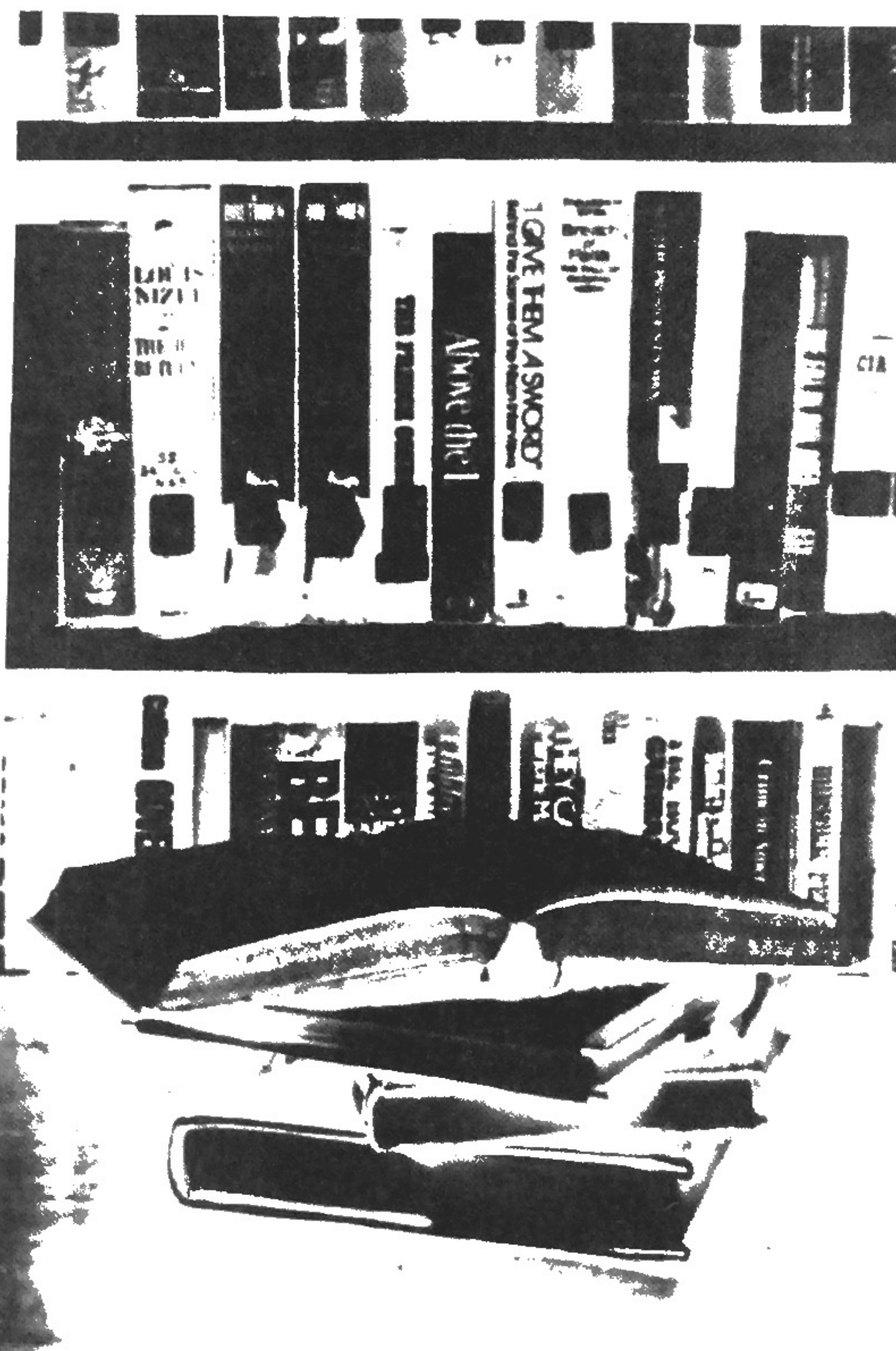
Besides committee members and their consultant, supervisors Dennis Morris and Martin Helsley were appointed in August to meet with the committee.

Mrs. French stresses that the public library is not a threat to independent community facilities already in existence.

Although the board of Strasburg's community library has delayed an effort, those at Woodstock, New Market, Fort Valley, Mt. Jackson and Strasburg have given the public library their approval.

*'We hope someday
to have a beautiful new library'*

— Mrs. French



Shenandoah County is one of the counties in the state which currently do not have centralized libraries.

Mrs. French said the Strasburg library, like Woodstock's, is "home-endowed." And like leaders of the Woodstock library, those at Strasburg fear that earlier donations might be lost if they endorse the public library.

That, Mrs. French contends, is of undue concern.

She stresses that each community should "keep their own monies."

And, she asserts, the central library will offer "have more advantages than disadvantages."

According to Mrs. French, a community library will remain open and basically do "everything the way we have been doing."

The positive aspects, says Mrs. French, include having a librarian, the ability to buy books at a discount, and a centralized library will enable facilities to obtain books on loan from the state library.

Mrs. French says although the centralized library would do "everything," the strong point would be reference material, an area in which she believes the county is "very lacking."

If state funds are approved, Mrs. French says 20 percent of that must be used to buy books.

Mrs. French also notes that when supervisors allocate money for the project, it will open the door to donations from private sources.

But for now, says Mrs. French, the United Library System of Shenandoah County really needs, is an office.

"It's too early to talk about a new building," she adds, "that would be down the road."

She adds, however, "We hope someday to have a beautiful new library."

Mrs. French says that if a resident has property he or she would be willing to donate for a central library "that would be just great."

Mrs. French recalls driving children to Harrisonburg and Winchester because reference material was not available locally.

Her objective for today's generation is to provide it with the resources for education.