

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

CITY LIBRARIAN'S ANNUAL REPORT - FISCAL 1973/1974

The most prominent characteristic of the fiscal year just concluded has been the effort of the library to maintain an adequate level of service while contending with the problems attendant upon a severe financial problem. Adequate fiscal support and management, practically speaking, are anterior to all other considerations in the provision of library services. During the past year a shortage in budgeted funds combined with imperative need to provide, through underspending, for a carry-over balance for fiscal 1974/75, resulted in a critical situation calling for drastic action in the curtailment of services. The Evans Branch, which for the past decade had been declining in use was closed May 26. In mid January the Central Library reduced its hours of service by closing on Mondays. Although the book budget had been reduced by \$50,000 from the previous year, stringent economies in acquisitions were practiced in order to save part of the allocation to be applied toward materials in fiscal 1974/75.

The decline in book purchases, hours of service, and staff inevitably had a considerable effect upon the extension of service to the people of Decatur. For the first time since 1966/67 I must report a decline in circulation. But, in light of difficulties besetting the library, it is with considerable satisfaction that I report that circulation loss for this year has been held to 6/10 of 1%. Total circulation for the year amounted to 477,426 items compared with 480,350 items the previous year. That circulation has virtually held steady under these conditions can be attributed in large measure to the staff of the library who out performed their previous records in their assiduity meeting the needs of the public. Patron contacts by the staff this year numbered 72,552, which represents an increase of 11,311 over the previous year. The distribution of these statistics will be dealt with in those sections that treat the various divisions of the library.

Adult Services

General projects carried out by this division of the library include public programming, preparation of booklists, scheduling of library facilities such as the auditorium, representing the adult services of the library to community groups, scheduling and giving book reviews, etc.

During the past year eleven groups availed themselves of the library's meeting facilities for regularly scheduled meetings held at monthly or more frequent intervals. In addition, eight other groups used meeting rooms for a specially prepared public program. In all, 2,243 people attended meetings in the library during the year.

Adult Services also initiated film programs on a regular schedule this year. During the fall a series of documentary films was exhibited. The series ran for 13 weeks and was attended by 595 people. In the spring a series of feature films was shown on a semi-monthly basis. Five movies based on well known books were shown to a total audience of 199 patrons. The series was co-sponsored by the Rolling Prairie Library and the rental expense was born by that library. Planning and publicity was undertaken by the Decatur Public Library.

Book reviews on Cable TV were given on a regular basis by staff of Adult Services until November when it was discontinued since we had then begun to cut back library staffing in anticipation of reduced hours of service.

Ten annotated reading lists were produced by adult staff as well as brochures to advertise special programs such as "Family Night at the Library" and National Library Week, at which times the Library invited exhibits and demonstrations of handicrafts, hobbies, collectables, and the like by a number of individuals and organizations in the community.

The Home Reading Department reports a marginal loss in circulation of printed materials: 241,033 vs. 243,338 in 1962/73. There has, however, been a general increase in the circulation of non-printed materials: 16 and 8mm films, cassettes, phonodiscs, framed prints and the like.

As an indication of the effect of the reduced book budget, an interesting statistic may be cited from the report of the Home Reading Department: during the fiscal year the department received 6,944 items into its collections while ordering only 3,294. The larger number received resulted from the processing of an arrearage in the Catalog Department, but it demonstrated dramatically the effect on acquisitions of the curtailed book budget. It also provides a partial clue to the maintenance of circulation on a near-par basis with last year despite the reduction in budgeted book funds and betokens a greater decline in 1974/75 when there will be no arrearages to provide a cushion to declining book purchases.

Reference Department services have registered an overall gain this year. For a comparison of the level of activity in the Reference Department, see graphs (VI to IX) appended to this report, which demonstrate drastically the increased levels of service in Reference questions answered, direction aids to readers, and total patron contact by members of the Reference Department.

One of the services provided by the Library and administered by the Reference Department is Inter-library Loan: when the library cannot supply requested material from its own collections, patrons have the option of requesting that the item be borrowed from another library. These Inter-library Loans have increased this year by 50%; from 373 items in 1972/1973 to 572.

Important elements in the collections of the Reference Department are the Government Document Depository and the Directory Collection, both of which

are heavily depended upon by local business and industry. The document depository collection increased this year from 37,228 pieces to 38,241 pieces. These items are supplied free of charge to the Library by the Government Printing Office and in return the library undertakes certain responsibilities for the maintenance of this partial depository for the use of people in the area. Our present goal for this collection is an inventory of 70,000 - 75,000 pieces.

One of the more heavily used reference collections is the directory bookstock and an important component in these resources is the telephone directory collection. This year the telephone directory collection has been expanded so that it now includes out-of-state cities of 75,000 as well as most communities in Illinois. The collection now numbers 344 out-of-state and 130 Illinois directories. The college catalog collection numbers 478 catalogs after withdrawing 398 and adding 353 during the year.

Circulation in the Youth Department amounted to 27,112, down by 7% from last year, a disturbing statistic inasmuch as Youth Department circulation was already low, given its mission and the intended popularity of its collections. During the year the Youth Assistant visited Lakeview High School where she gave nine half-hour talks to students and met with the school librarian to discuss areas of cooperation. She also provided teachers at other schools with some printed booklists compiled by Adult Services Division.

Other activities to draw teen-agers into the department included playing phono-records and showing 8mm films in the Department after school at various times of the year. Little interest was aroused by these efforts.

The following table summarizes briefly the total activities for the Home Reading, Reference and Youth Department in the Central Library:

| | <u>1973/74</u> | <u>1972/73</u> | <u>1971/72</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Circulation | | | |
| Non fiction | 157,499 | 155,398 | 135,156 |
| Fiction | 110,646 | 166,595 | 111,108 |
| Professional Assistance | 18,153 | 17,272 | 16,326 |
| Directional Assistance | 36,291 | 31,386 | 30,515 |
| Books reserved | 3,123 | 2,365 | 2,697 |
| Microfilms used | 3,058 | 3,411 | 5,035 |
| Inter Library Loan requests | 580 | 373 | 504 |

Monthly comparison of activities for the past two years for each department in Adult Services is also provided in Graphs I - XI appended to this report.

The Children's Department circulation which had been lagging slightly for most of the year, recovered during the last two months so that it demonstrated a marginal increase of approximately 100 books, an increase of about 1/10 of 1%. But much of the activity in the Children's Room was of a nature that did not reflect itself in circulation statistics, the nature of it being public programs designed to entertain children and to demonstrate that the library is a "fun place" to go. The emphasis was consequently on public programs which emphasized puppet shows, film programs, sing-a-longs and the like. In presenting these programs the Children's Librarian had the enthusiastic support of individual volunteers as well as organizations such as the American Association of University Women.

As the following comparative table indicates, the level of activity in the Children's Room shows a very considerable general increase over the previous years in public programming and attendance. At the same time there is a corresponding decline in reading guidance and service to the individual patron.

Children's Department
Comparative Statistics

| | <u>1973/74</u> | <u>1972/73</u> |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Story Hours | 84 | 17 |
| Attendance | 2,303 | 311 |
| Stories told | 200 | 63 |
| Film Showings | 104 | 3 |
| Attendance | 2,229 | 108 |
| Class visits to library | 87 | 85 |
| Attendance | 1,820 | 1,898 |
| Other group visits | 53 | 16 |
| Attendance | 1,707 | 206 |
| Staff visits to schools | | |
| No. of Schools | 3 | 0 |
| No. of Classes | 14 | 0 |
| Readers Guidance | 3,968 | 8,828 |
| Directional Information | 5,542 | 3,536 |

A very important development - one considered by good libraries to be as significant as reader guidance and story hour - was the initiation in March of school visits by the Children's Librarian. In the extension of public library service, it is of utmost value to go where potential patrons congregate: for children, the obvious place is school and school visits should represent the major extramural effort of the Children's and Youth services. It is hoped that this program can be pursued in coming years.

The Extension Department was affected by a number of changes during the year. Of principal importance is the fact that the department has come under immediate professional supervision for the first time in several years. As the new department head gains familiarity with the collections and institutes a program of in-service training, positive improvement in circulation and services may be expected. Although circulation in Extension was down 4% this year - from 97,822 items to 94,957 - there are encouraging signs to point to.

Circulation on both mobile libraries showed significant gains: 10% for Unit 547 and 34% for Unit 548. Service was extended in the fall to the Concord Apartments for senior citizens, and the mobile library schedules were modified to include service stops at St. John's Elementary School, Holy Family School, St. Thomas School, and Our Lady of Lourdes School, and the Moundford Terrace apartment complex.

The modest decline in Extension circulation can be more than accounted for by the closing of the Evans Branch at the end of May. Evans normally would account for 21% of Extension circulation. Excluding Evans circulation for the comparison, Extension showed a gain of 21%.

Extension Department operation was also hampered for more than seven months by vacancy and rapid turnover in the position of driver-clerk on Unit 548, caused by resignation of an experienced and well qualified driver in August. A temporary emergency replacement was hired who left after two weeks. Civil Service certified a replacement driver to us who worked less than one month before illness forced his absence which eventually led to his resignation. There was no driver-clerk from November until April 4 when Civil Service finally certified a new person for the vacancy. Class "D" licenses are necessary in order to operate the vehicles and recruitment for the position within the requirements of the Civil Service Commission is difficult. Both the Extension Department Head and the Library Maintenance man have qualified for "D" licenses in order to cover for emergencies, vacations, etc.

The Circulation Department probably articulates more closely with the public in more sensitive areas susceptible to adverse public reaction than any other department in the library. It is therefore to the considerable credit of the Circulation Department that the work has been performed unobtrusively.

Circulation Department reports that the per item increase in overdue fines resulted in some complaints, but that overall the increase to 10¢ per item has been well received by the public. During the year the Circulation Department issued notices for 19,983 overdue items: 70% was for Main Adult materials, 17% for Main Juvenile materials, and 13% for Extension materials. Other activities of the Circulation Department include processing of 10,989 patron registrations, searching and retrieving 3,517 items for which reserves had been left, and answering 28,898 phone calls to the library and directing them to the appropriate department or person. Since Central library circulation was approximately 367,000 books, it is evident that Circulation Department staff spent considerable time filing in the neighborhood of 81,500 IBM packs as well as discharging from the files and placing a similar number of IBM packs in the pockets of books.

Other information of interest relating to the Circulation Department would include the institution of a 7-day grace period for overdue materials, during which period no fine would be collected. New forms have been introduced for reporting lost or stolen borrowers cards. A new system for handling loans to the Rolling Prairie Library has been set up. A new method of searching reserves - which is hoped will prove more effective - has been put into operation. And another tub for IBM packs has been installed in the Circulation workroom. The space problem resulting from growing requirements for filing book circulation packs is critical and a change in circulation control system grows more imperative. Meantime, study of alternate means of circulation control, begun a year ago, continues: one possible option under serious consideration will involve the use of mini-computers, which will be discussed later in this report in a section on DPL relationships with Rolling Prairie Library system.

The Exhibits Program of the Staff Artist covers a range of multifarious activities ranging from design of booklists to working with individuals and groups in the community to provide a showplace for their activities and accomplishments. These displays are generally used to call attention to library services or to exemplify uses of various materials in library collections. Through the involvement of community groups or the resources of our patrons, the Staff Artist is enabled to provide a diversity of display material far beyond the capability of the library acting alone. In addition, the materials exhibited frequently are of value in their own right, while providing an opportunity for extra-mural cooperation and public relations.

Statistically the Staff Artist reports: 18 entry window displays; 25 table displays; 7 exhibits in the semi-permanent "bookstore" display; 13 showcase displays; 8 book displays at Books Between Bites; 14 dome table exhibits. In addition, the Staff Artist did general design or cover layout for 11 brochures, 14 bookmarks, and 18 booklists and lettered a total of 269 miscellaneous signs, directions, labels, etc. Other activities include making a puppet stage and 10 puppet heads for use in the Story Hour Room, conversion of old bookmobile steps to display unit, providing decorations for such activities as "Family Night at the Library", arranging an art exhibit for National Library Week and a children's art exhibit for National Children's Art Month.

This has been an outstandingly productive year in Technical Services as the comparative monthly Tables (I - III) appended to this report indicate. The Order Department reports only 10,311 books received this year compared with nearly 16,500 the previous year and there were also declines in receipts in other categories, but the enormous materials selection effort of the previous year had left a very considerable arrearage. The management of this arrearage

was the responsibility of the Order Department which also performs pre-cataloging searches on new material. The Order Department's Serials Unit also experienced an incremental workload of some significance resulting from an increase in periodical subscriptions.

The Order Department ordered and processed invoices in the amount of \$49,703.97 for books during the past year. Expenditures for periodicals amounted to \$8,147.63. Microfilmed material, primarily for periodical literature, cost an additional \$1,171.60. Expenditures for audio-visual materials, which were ordered for the most part in fiscal 1972/73 but received during the past year, amounted to \$606.34. The final category of materials expenditures is for Library of Congress publications utilized by the Catalog Department. These materials cost \$3,613.76.

The Technical Services Division of the library is normally described as that division responsible for ordering, cataloging, classifying, assigning subject descriptors, and preparing for the shelf new library materials. It would be a more accurate description, however, to say that Technical Services is responsible for the acquisition and description of library materials, the organization and control of library collections, the development of access into these resources, and the preparation of materials for patron use. The latter definition includes all of the operations given in the prior definition, but places them in the perspective of a much more comprehensive and complex task involving as it does not only newly acquired material, but all resources of the library; involving not only specific items, but collections of materials; involving not merely the materials themselves, but also very importantly descriptions, indexes, and complex systems of references to these materials. Thus the processing of new materials is just the tip of the iceberg in describing

the work of this division and principally the work of the Catalog Department which is the largest unit in the division.

During the year the Catalog Department cataloged a record number of books - 16,448 as compared with 15,716 - and in so doing eliminated an arrearage of more than 6,000 items. Cataloging of selected other materials also increased significantly: new microfilm cataloged increased, for example, by nearly 600%; and 4,381 sheets of microfiche, a resource new to the library this year was cataloged. Particularly impressive from the professional point of view were the 3,739 items for which time-saving Library of Congress descriptive cataloging and subject assignment were unavailable and for which original cataloging was performed in house.

In addition to the cataloging, classification, and subject assignment for new books, the Catalog Department continued its on-going work on the established collections: work on the conversion to Library of Congress subject authority list continued; 1,204 books were recataloged; 645 books were transferred between library departments (largely as a result of closing Evans Branch); 7,676 books were withdrawn from the library collections. A good index of activity in the Catalog Department would be the amount of cards filed in the departmental and public catalogs in the year: in 1973/74 Catalog Department staff filed more than 70,000 catalog cards.

Since the Catalog Department has responsibility of inventory statistics, it is appropriate at this point to include data respecting the growth of the collections. Although expenditures for materials declined in fiscal 1973/74 while coincidentally activity in systematic materials retirement increased markedly, a substantial growth in collections occurred. The classified collections grew from 217,011 volumes to 225,836 volumes. Unbound periodicals grew from 6,646 to 6,896 bibliographic volumes. Microfilmed periodicals now number 4,658 bibliographic volumes. The library film collection numbers 72

films and the library record collection, in phonodisc and cassette format, numbers 1,251 items. The library currently subscribes for 827 periodicals.

In line with what has become a tradition, the Mending and Processing Unit performed prodigiously in production while maintaining high standards of performance. With the completion of the systematic overhaul of our collections accomplished during the previous two years and the consequent departure of staff funded by the Emergency Employment Act, the Mending and Processing Unit has become essentially a one-person operation with perhaps three hours of part-time help daily. It is beyond my capacity therefore to explain the accomplishments of the year and I merely note without comment that the Unit has mended 11,081 books, bound 1,908 paperbacks, and processed for circulation 6,139 issues of periodicals in addition to preparing new books and packing them, preparing books for the bindery, maintaining bindery records - statistics for which are to be found on Table II appended to this report.

The library's relationship with Rolling Prairie Library with which it is affiliated continues to strengthen. During the past year through the reciprocal borrowing privileges extended by DPL to patrons of other libraries in the Rolling Prairie System, the Decatur Public Library loaned a total of 33,568 items. In addition, RPL borrowed for recirculation on Inter-Library Loan another 1,589 items.

For the past couple of years the Rolling Prairie Library and Decatur Public Library have had an arrangement for a cooperative acquisitions program: DPL has selected and processed materials in the fields of business and technology to a limit of \$15,000 in expenditures. In return for the cost of selection and processing, Rolling Prairie has placed these materials on permanent loan to DPL. Additionally, RPL has undertaken part of the cost of processing by placing a cataloger on loan to this library. During the

past year the subject and material restrictions on this Permanent Loan Collection has been relaxed to include a substantial part of the Dewey Decimal schedule: Lincoln Library in Springfield is responsible for acquisition of a Permanent Loan Collection for another substantial part of the decimal schedule. Such joint projects point the way to more comprehensive subject coverage in central Illinois with consequent improvement in Inter Library Loan capabilities.

Another important area of cooperation is currently under investigation: the shortcomings of the circulation control system currently in use in the Library are well known, and change to a different system has been discussed for more than a year. One of the more interesting developments in recent years has been the use of mini-computers to accomplish various library routines. The use of mini computers by the Rolling Prairie Library, Lincoln Library in Springfield, and the Decatur Public Library, for circulation control purposes, if feasible, will at the same time open up a host of cooperative possibilities amongst the three libraries which would result in greatly improved library service for all patrons in the area. The mini computer system under consideration eliminates the need for specialized computer-trained staff, a specially air-conditioned environment for the machine, and the like, while providing not merely on-line circulation control but, in fact, total inventory control as well as immediate access to this information for all three libraries by any patron in any one of the three libraries.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not conclude this report to the Board with a word of appreciation for the Staff with whom I have worked. It has been a difficult year for staff for a number of reasons, not least of which has been the high turnover, during which periods between loss of staff and employment of new personnel a reduced work force must contend with an

unreduced workload. A new Head Cataloger was engaged this year but her services were lost after a few months due to extended illness. During the year a new Reference Librarian and Children's Librarian were engaged but by year's end they had submitted resignations, the one to accept a position of Reference Consultant in Rolling Prairie Library, the other to accept the headship of a larger department in Pomona, California. As noted above, Extension Division was without one of its driver-clerks for the better part of the year. Other departments experienced, of course, normal turnover resulting from pregnancy and the like. The termination of personnel funded by the Emergency Employment Act occurred during the year. The Collection Maintenance Project was nearly completed at the time of loss, but other programs had to be carried on by regular staff. Fortunately the problem was alleviated somewhat by other programs such as the Neighborhood Youth Corp and the cooperative employment plan which is federally funded for student aid and administered by the Community College. Such programs allowed the library to extend the potential of its Temporary Salaries Account while at the same time cooperating in socially useful programs. A library is of course no better than its staff. The staff in the Decatur Public Library is very good; it is a committed staff, dedicated to the public service. This year, as it has been true for past years during my administration, I have received compliments from the public on no other aspect of the library as much as on the quality, helpfulness, and pleasant demeanor of the staff.

I wish to thank the Friends of the Decatur Public Library for their continuing interest and support of the Library's goals and programs. Most particularly I thank them for their gifts of useful furnishings and equipment and for the excellent programming that characterizes their on-going Books-Between-Bites reviews. My associations with the Friends are inevitably occasions of warm satisfaction.

Decatur Public Library is most fortunate in its Staff, in its Friends, and last but not least, in its Board of Library Directors. I wish to thank the Board for their labors, their understanding, the library standards they insist upon, and their spirit of resolution and commitment. These qualities have made my work easier and it has been a pleasure working with them to achieve a better library.

APPENDIX

Circulation in Home Reading Department:

- Graph I Fiction & Non-fiction: 1973/74 compared with 1972/73
- Graph II (a) Total circulation: monthly comparison of 1973/74 with 1972/73
(b) Total circulation: 12 month average compared monthly with previous year
- Graph III (a) Monthly volume of professional assistance to patrons compared with previous year
(b) Monthly volume of materials reserved compared with previous year
- Graph IV Periodical Circulation, 1972-1974
- Graph V Monthly circulation of phonodiscs and pamphlets compared with previous year

Reference Department Activity:

- Graph VI (a) Monthly volume of Reference questions compared with previous year
(b) Interlibrary Loan circulation figures: monthly comparison with previous year
- Graph VII Monthly volume of directional assistances
- Graph VIII Use of microfilm readers
- Graph IX Total reference activity compared monthly with previous year

Youth Department:

- Graph X Fiction and Non-fiction 1973/74 compared with 1972/73
- Graph XI (a) Total circulation: monthly comparison of 1973/74 with previous year
(b) Professional assistance to readers: monthly comparison with previous year

Technical Services

- Table I Comparative chart of materials cataloged on monthly basis
- Table II Comparative chart of materials transferred, re-cataloged, withdrawn and processed on monthly basis
- Table III Comparative chart of Order Department activities