

City Librarian's Report

For the March 17, 1994 Meeting

of the

Decatur Public Library Board of Trustees

To quote from the Adult Services Monthly Report, "February was noticeably busier than previous months, even though circulation may be down from last year. Students were in after school, nights, and Saturdays doing reports and finding information. Learning FRED and Info Track were necessary for many of the users. Many of the requests dealt with African American history and people, different countries, United States presidents, and of course, science fair projects. With staff on vacation and sick leave the staff left worked hard to keep up with the pace." This sets the tone for the month, it was busy, and at times frightening, and while material circulation was the same as last February, professional assists, which can be very time intensive, were up 32.2%.

It was frightening, in that the week of February 27th saw increasingly unruly crowds of young adults, in the Library and on the Library's front sidewalk. Wednesday evening March 2nd saw these crowds get out of hand. As a result, and as a temporary measure, a second off-duty policeman has been employed giving the building an officer on each floor for Monday through Friday evenings. The Decatur Police Department has been contacted and has worked with the Library in diffusing several potentially violent situations. These youth activities are thought to be gang related and individuals have been observed carrying weapons on the library's premises. As an additional part of the effort to restore a safe operating climate to the Library, discussions are being held with community leaders to seek long-term solutions to this problem.

During the month 59 volunteers gave 182 hours of service to the Library.

With prompt work by Children's Division staff the Library was able to release booklists on the Newbery and Caldecott award books within days of the 1994 awards being announced. These booklists are attached to this report and are an indication of the many quality informational pieces that library staff produce each year.

A civil service register has been completed for the Head Page position and the Library Assistant positions and these positions will be filled within the next few days. In addition the vacant Head of Extension Division position will be posted for in-house applications. I am working with a grievance from the union concerning the in-house transfer of an individual to fill the vacant clerk-typist position in the Administrative Office. Other vacant positions are being filled as soon as civil service requirements permit.

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During the month twenty-two school groups visited the Childrens division. In February 1992 eight groups visited the division and in February 1991 thirteen groups visited. This years total represents a substantial increase in library visits. Of these visits eleven schools brought classes for a storytime and tour and eleven came to do research or to check out materials. The latter eleven visits were from parochial or private schools.

There were twenty-four storytimes with 215 in attendance and eight lap-sits with 119 in attendance. Katie Gross visited a SPARK class at Johns Hill, two prenatal clinics at St. Mary's and two clinics at Dr. Lynch's office for Decatur Memorial Hospital. While at the clinics, she spoke to expectant parents about the importance of reading to their children, and encouraged them to get a library card. In addition 38 SPARK contacts and 43 Baby TALK contacts were made during the month.

The Technical Division is field testing new OCLC software. This software should improve access to OCLC through the local area network in the division. They have pulled all of the books waiting for withdrawal from the Extension Division and are working hard on year end book acquisition and cataloging.

As of Monday, March 7, 1994 84.6% of the fiscal year had been completed and the Library's budget was 81.7% expended or encumbered. At the same time the revenue for the fiscal year was at 101% of the amount anticipated.

During the month, several staff attended classes at Richland Community College on computers and computer applications. Katie Gross attended an all day workshop on Children's Reference Services in Champaign. Most staff participated in workshop sessions scheduled by the Library's Staff Development Committee on Change and Transition given by Laura Cornille-Cannady.