

**Annual Report Of The
City Librarian
For The Fiscal Year Ending
April 30, 1994**

This report begins as did last year's with an expression of appreciation for all those individuals whose contributions and dedication to the Library and its user community have made the past year a successful one. Without the presence of a dedicated and hard-working staff, the Library would not have been able to accomplish the programs and services that it did. Additional thanks go to the Library Board of Trustees, Mayor and City Council, City Manager and City Staff for their assistance and support throughout the year.

In this information age, change remains a part of the everyday life of any public service organization. This is particularly true of a public library, and the Decatur Public Library is no exception. The first part of this report will be dealing with the changes faced by staff and users during the past year.

A major change occurred on July 15, 1993 with the installation of F.R.E.D. (Fast Resources Easily Demonstrated), our new on-line public access catalog. In one day's time, the one source since the Library's beginning on August 10, 1875 for locating what the Library owned was replaced by 16 computer terminals where individuals may search to locate items in our collection. In preparation for this monumental change, the Adult Services staff spent many hours during April through June of 1993 receiving training on F.R.E.D. and in preparing training workshops and informational materials for our users. Staff spent considerable time during the year in assisting library users with F.R.E.D., particularly in explaining and demonstrating the combination subject search strategies now available. The system has worked well in the 10 months since its introduction and has received many favorable comments from our user community.

Another major change of the past year was the implementation of a staff reorganization plan in November of 1993. This plan took 12 departments and replaced them with 6 divisions. Two areas were most affected by this change. In the public service area, the Reference and Adult Services Departments were merged into an Adult Division, placing all adult area public services staff together. With this change has come a coordination of public service desk operation on both floors of the library and a desk schedule that allows more concentrated time for staff to perform non-desk related duties such as material selection and collection evaluation. Our technical staff was the other area most affected by reorganization. There the Catalog, Order, and Processing Departments were combined into the Technical Division. This change has put all areas responsible for the acquiring and cataloging of library materials in one organizational area, resulting in increased efficiency and improved communication.

Another result of the library's staff reorganization occurred in January 1994 with the implementation of a Board-approved management staff pay plan, which for the first time placed

library staff in a performance-based pay plan. This represents a considerable change in how management staff compensation will be determined.

Changes more visible to the Library user during the year include placing video tapes in clear plastic boxes so that the original video carton with its content information is available for user information, the sale to the public of the Library's framed print collection and the expansion of the Library's large print collection into the space vacated by the framed prints, improved and increased building signage, placing compact disks into plastic sensitized containers to allow direct public access to these materials, the rearrangement of many collection areas to improve user access, increasing the InfoTrac terminals from one to three units, installing a baby changing station in the basement women's rest room, and improved lighting in the main floor stack areas. Many of these changes took considerable staff time and some, such as the compact disk project, involved more than one library division in their implementation.

Changes less visible to the public but just as important to library operations included installing a back-up air conditioning system for our computer room, completing the local area network in the Technical Division, replacing the floor joists on bookmobile 547, installing a new supply air duct for bookmobile 548, and installing new brake linings on the freight elevator.

An important operational change took place on July 23, 1993 when the first contract with our bargaining unit employees was signed. This contract covering the two year period of May 1992 through April 1994 was the result of several years of hard and difficult bargaining, and marked the beginning of a new era in library operations. As the year ended, this contract expired without a new contract in place. It is hoped that the current negotiations can reach a swift conclusion and a new contract can be reached.

During the year, the Library had an eight-week trial period of Sunday hour service. From the end of September through the second week of November, the Library was open on Sundays from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. While Library usage did not substantially increase overall during this trial period, the Sunday hours were a heavy use period. User surveys and personal observation during the trial indicated substantial support for continuing Sunday service on a regular basis. Planning is now underway to begin regular Sunday hour service this fall, pending contract resolution with our bargaining unit employees.

Use statistics for the past year indicate that building attendance was down, material circulation was down, and professional assists (or questions asked of staff which are non-directional in nature) were sharply up. Attendance at the main library totaled 347,159 visits, down 3.5% from a year ago. Total circulation for the year totaled 796,537 items, or 2.8% less than one year ago. Circulation at the main library totaled 644,499 items, or 4.7% less than last year. Circulation in the Extension Division's bookmobiles and outreach stations totaled 152,038, or 6.3% above last year's circulation. Professional assists for the year totaled 69,268, an increase of 21.4% over a year ago.

What can be learned from the above figures? The first is that new technology such as F.R.E.D. and the increase in InfoTrac stations result in more informational requests being made of staff. While some are basic questions as to how F.R.E.D. operates, many more are time-intensive and result from the user's ability to more comprehensively search our database to find needed materials. Thus staffing patterns in public service areas may need to be reexamined as we gain more experience with F.R.E.D. The above statistics also indicate that part of the decline in circulation can be directly related to fewer visits to the main library during the year. Another part of the decline could be related to user's experience with the on-line catalog, which through the ability to narrow material search requests could be permitting individuals to satisfy their informational needs with fewer materials. The increase in circulation for the Extension Division can be directly related to the increased availability of audio-visual materials for bookmobile circulation. The decline in building attendance is of concern. Attendance was lower in 9 of the 12 months with only the months of October, November, and December showing an increase over last year. However, the bulk of the attendance decline occurred from January through April of 1994. While January was an unusually cold month, in February we had problems with disruptive youths in the building which resulted in the hiring of a second off-duty policeman for evening security duty. Word got out that the Library was not a safe place to go after dark, and I feel that this was largely the cause of our attendance decline the rest of the year. How do you turn this situation around? It is symptomatic of the community of which we are a part and will take more than action on our behalf to correct.

During fiscal year 1994, the Library added 17,738 items to its collection. This represents an increase of 1,693, or 10.5% over a year ago. Of even greater significance is that of this total, there were 9,872 individual titles added, an increase of 22% over last year. This means that fewer duplicate copies of materials were added to the collection than in past years. This also means more staff work in that individual titles take more work to add to the collection than do copies. During the year, \$302,244.35 was spent on library materials, or \$3.60 per Decatur resident. The Library currently has 640 periodicals in its collection. Our collection is meeting more of the needs of Decatur's residents as indicated by the fact that interlibrary loan requests received from DPL users totalled 2,836, a decrease of 5.9% from last year.

To keep the library's collection current and in good condition, 13,078 volumes representing 3,430 titles were withdrawn during the year, 3,802 paperbacks were bound, 9,696 periodicals were processed, 10,734 items were mended, and 3,898 jackets were replaced. In addition, the processing staff is relabeling books for the fiction and local history collection to better enable users to locate needed materials. So far staff has processed 415 books for the local history project and 1,441 books for the fiction project.

While, as indicated above, total library circulation was down over last year, the Circulation Division processed 5,616 new borrower's card registrations, up 48% from a year ago. A total of 23,851 first overdue notices, 5,770 second notices, and 3,997 final bills were sent out. Division staff placed 5,997 holds on materials for library users and answered 39,742 phone calls. At year's end, the Library had 55,511 registered borrowers who had used the library since January 1991. This

figure represents 66.2% of all Decatur residents and is an indication of the heavy community use the Library receives.

The Children's Division produced two new bibliographies, "Women in Aviation" and "The Civil War", and updated the Newbery and Caldecott book lists. Mary Lou Dwyer, Library Assistant, developed a new preschool concept book list which was distributed to all Decatur schools. The division reported that there were 201 group visits with a majority of the visits for both a story time and a tour. There were 489 SPARK (Super Parents Are Reading to Kids) coupons picked up by parents and 374 Baby TALK contacts. The 1993 summer reading program drew 1,772 children.

2 386,025 The 1993/94 budget projected expenditures of \$2,439,769 while revenue was anticipated at \$2,331,025. The anticipated shortfall of \$108,744 was to be drawn from carryover funds. Due to an increase in revenue as a result of increased state aid funding, reimbursement for grant funds expended in fiscal year 1993, a decrease in expenditures due to extended staff vacancies during the year, and savings in utility costs, the actual revenue received was \$2,426,002.30 and expenditures were \$2,404,713.33 for a balance of \$21,289. The Library was also able to transfer \$81,050.92 to its capital fund.

As the attached list indicates, the Library's meeting rooms continue to receive heavy use. Seldom does a day go by without the Board Room or the Auditorium being used by community groups and scheduling can be a difficult proposition. As mentioned in last year's report, any remodeling to the building needs to include these facilities as a high priority item.

The attached charts provide a comparison of library use and costs for the past five years. Trends found on the charts are again the increasing number of informational requests of staff, the decreasing main library attendance and library circulation mentioned earlier, a decrease in the percentage of budget spent on staff salaries while an increasing percentage of budget is spent on staff health insurance and benefit costs, and, indicative of the technological age in which we live, an increasing percentage of the budget is spent on computers and computer-related equipment.

There are several concerns that need to be mentioned as we close this fiscal year. The first is that our building has been in use for over a quarter of a century since major renovation has taken place. Carpeting needs to be replaced, the heating and air-conditioning system needs a major overhaul, and library service areas need to be reassessed in light of technological advances and community changes. During the year, discussion was begun on these needs by the Board of Trustees and the Library Foundation, and, with the recent appointment of a Long Range Planning Committee, I hope that this coming year will see substantial progress in planning for needed facility renovation and change.

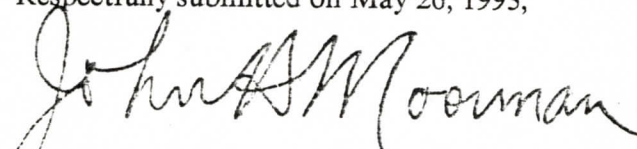
The second concern is with our on-line computer system. With the installation of F.R.E.D., the GEAC Libs 100 system we use for both catalog and circulation functions has reached capacity.

There is demand for more user terminals within the building, more access ports for in-home access by library users, and response time for cataloging and other functions has slowed appreciably. In addition, with the current system, we are unable to load outside information databases on the system so they too can be searched from public access terminals. Planning for an upgrade to our system needs to be done in fiscal year 1995.

As the year drew to a close, the Library's new Long Range Planning Committee began its work. The committee, composed of Board members, community members, and library staff, is charged with developing a new five year plan for the Library. In a period of rapid change, planning is difficult and the committee has much work and thought ahead of them before an end result is reached. At its last meeting, those present heard Marlene Deuel, Deputy Director of the Illinois State Library, remind the group that before any thought can be given to building, staffing, or other needs, we must determine what the Library is to provide in the way of service and then build our plan on the provision of that service. Her comments got to the heart of what we do. We are a public service agency, and to be successful, we must provide the information and related services our users need in a manner and time that is convenient for them. To accomplish this, we must always be a close part of the community we serve and be actively involved in that community. This past year has seen an increase in library staff involvement in this community. Staff members have actively participated in community organizations as varied as the Human Services Agency Consortium, Project READ, Metro Decatur Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Decatur Council, Decatur Advantage 20/20, and the Rotary and Sertoma Clubs. In addition, library staff have carried library programs and services to many schools, church groups, and community groups.

As I close this report, I wish to again express my thanks to the library staff. For it is your hard work and dedication which make this Library the quality institution it is. I look forward to working with each of you in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted on May 26, 1993,


John A. Moorman, City Librarian