

*City Librarian's Report*

**For the April 21, 1994 Meeting**

**of the**

**Decatur Public Library Board of Trustees**

Volunteers are an important part of the Library's operation. They provide assistance to Library staff in many ways, from shelving materials, manning the Shilling Local History Room, assisting with business operational questions in the BIC, and delivering materials to home-bound library users. Many of our volunteers come to us through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. For the calendar year 1993, 2,129.50 volunteer hours or an weekly average of 40.95 hours of service, were supplied to the Decatur Public Library through this program. Of the 61 agencies using RSVP volunteers during 1993 the Library was 13th in the number of volunteer hours of service. Marilyn Shroyer, Volunteer Coordinator for the Library is continually looking for individuals to fill volunteer slots. For the month of March 60 volunteers provided 255 hours of service to the Library.

This past month has seen a good number of staff changes. Steve Craven was hired as Library Assistant and Judy Ellison hired as a 1/2 time Library Assistant. April Partee was promoted to Head Library Page and Terri Garren promoted to Library Clerk I (1/2 time). Lee Wiley was transferred from the Circulation Division to Library Clerk Typist (1/2 time) in the Administrative Office and Darlene Ruskin became a full-time Telephone Page. On May 15th Karen Anderson, Head of Circulation Division will assume her new duties as Head of Extension Division. I have begun the process to find a new Head for the Circulation Division.

The Library is working with several community groups on projects which, when completed, will substantially increase the Library's information provision capabilities. With a project completed in the past week, the Library is now a location where students and parents may contact the Homework Hotline. Due to assistance from Illinois Power, Ameritech, and the Decatur Herald and Review, there is now cubicle on the main floor with a phone directly connected to the Hotline. The Decatur Herald and Review is providing this service at no cost to the Library. Additional projects include the provision of a community information and referral service, and a possible grant project in cooperation with local literacy providers.

On Wednesday April 13th, the Library participated in the annual Library Legislative Day in Springfield. This year for the first time, the first floor of the State Capital was turned into a demonstration library where 48 libraries of all types brought informational materials, computers, and video television to show legislators the wide variety of information and services libraries provide to Illinois citizens. The Decatur Public Library business materials from the BIC for its display. During the day, at the request

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of Bridget Lamont, Director of the Illinois State Library, I testified before the Illinois Library Finance Task Force on alternative methods of funding public libraries and the difficulty of library district conversion for large municipal libraries.

Basic circulation statistics for the month of March indicate that total circulation was down by 4.8% over March of 1993 and year-to-date figures are down 2.6% from last year. It is interesting to note that while main library print circulation was down by 9.3% and non-print circulation down by 9.9% the extension division showed a 12.2% increase in print circulation. I feel that some, if not most, of this decrease in circulation can be tied to the decrease in attendance at the main library. This March's attendance figure is down by 6.3% from March of last year, and our year-to-date attendance figure is down by 3.1%. It should be noted in way of comparison, that March of 1993 had the highest monthly attendance for any month since statistics were first kept in September of 1981 and March of 1994's attendance was still the fourth highest figure for any March during this time period.

One important factor in the decline in attendance was touched on in last month's report and that is the increasing perception on the part of Decatur residents that downtown Decatur is not a safe place to go in the evening. As Joan Bauer indicated in her monthly report; "I have had many comments from the public that they do not feel safe when they are "downtown" in the evening." This was only heightened by our experiences with building security during late February. Since that time, however, with the additional off-duty policeman added to evening security duty our facility has had few security related incidents. However, this perception remains and is something we will have to deal with.

The Technical Division reports a busy month during which 891 book titles were added, the highest monthly total for the fiscal year. A demonstration of the new GEAC Acquisitions module was attended on March 29th. This module is schedule to be released with version 2 of LIBS 100+ and we are considering it for future use. Work was begun on modifying the standing order database so that it can be used by both Cataloging and the Order departments to keep to-to-date information on all of our standing orders and cataloged serials. During the month 482 paperbacks were bound, and 1,102 items mended.

The Children's Division reported twenty-three groups visits for the month. Of the twenty-three groups, eighteen came for storytimes as well as tours and browsing. Five classes came for research or to check out materials. There were seventeen programs offered including eight lap-sits with 154 in attendance. Twenty-five Baby TALK contacts were made and sixty-four SPARK papers given out. The science fair book display was still being used on a daily basis. Planning is underway on the 1994 Summer Reading Program and Madcap Productions of Cincinnati, Ohio has been engaged to give three puppet performances for a grand finale of the program on Tuesday, August 2nd.

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As of Friday April 15, 1994, 95.9% of the fiscal year had been completed. On this date 92% of the Library's budget had either been expended, or encumbered and revenue had reached 102% of projections.

Our McNaughton lease program continues to be popular and the collection circulates over 300 items a month providing assistance in getting popular titles into users hands with less waiting time than would otherwise be possible. In response to user requests and suggestions, we have also added titles in the religion area which have proven popular circulating items.

Due to staff changes in recent months, our substitute list which is drawn upon to cover vacations, illnesses, and emergency situations has very few individuals on it. Major efforts will be made to recruit additional individuals for this list to bring it back to the numbers needed to meet our needs.

In closing this month's report, it is always a pleasure to announce new library users to the world. Two members of our Library Board had family additions during the month. Congratulations go to Patricia Williams for a daughter; Allison Grace born on March 30th and Stanley Sitton for a son: William Patrick born on April 13th.