

City Librarian's Report

For the February 18, 2000 Meeting

of the

Decatur Public Library Board of Trustees

As one of the home service delivery people was sick in January, Lee Wiley and Karen Anderson ended up doing the deliveries. Karen commented; " We had only four stops to make, but I had set aside an afternoon and we needed nearly all the time allotted. Those four deliveries just reinforced the value of our outreach service. Many of our people live alone, don't drive, and our volunteers are a bright spot in their day. They look forward to that day each month, and it is hard to get away when they ask," can't you just set down for a few minutes?"".

We continue to have maintenance problems with the bookmobiles. Bookmobile 549's generator has not worked properly and it has been off the road for several school stops during the month as a result. However, getting it to act up for the repairman is another matter. The library's 4x4 has had front end work done and the Ford van has had a new thermostat installed. Bookmobile 548 is scheduled to go back to the shop for the completion of work on the trailer bottom.

Larry Harris and his staff have spent time this month replacing the worst of the bookmobile remote site electrical hook-ups.

During the month, staff from the Extension, Technical, Circulation and Adult Division have visited the Lincoln Library in Springfield to meet with library staff there concerning the operation of the DRA Automation Network. I also met with Nancy Huntley, the director of the library to discuss system operation with her. I will be making a recommendation to the board this month concerning our possible participation in this system.

The Technical division indicates that the library made it through the Y2K transition without any problems. Carol Slater has finished her project of identifying database item records with no call number and adding call number and price information to these records. During the month, there were 2,529 changes made to the database. There were 676 periodicals processed, 757 items mended and 280 book jackets replaced.

Christine Stern, head of circulation division, did a study of 10 central Illinois public libraries to see how they keep and update hard copies of patron registration forms. She found that 7 out of 10 keep the hard copy records and that 6 out of 7 update them as the patron waits. She is looking at ways that the library can improve this process and provide better and quicker public service to our patrons. She is also looking at the possibility of doing away with date due cards for material checkout and providing each patron instead

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with a list of material borrowed on his/her account. This would free staff to have more time to devote to direct public service. During the month 25 accounts were sent to the credit bureau and 199 actual library items retrieved through this process.

The government documents section now has its own computer for internet and CD access. This workstation has already been used by patrons to access such resources as the Illinois Administrative Code, census and zip code market information. The local history room has a new staff person: Winifred Diller, who will work 20 hours a week and is paid through Title V funding through the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging.

The page department with assistance from maintenance staff completed a rearrangement of the new-magazine shelving into two long rows, leaving plenty of room in between for patrons to browse and for maintenance to move cleaning equipment through. In response to considerable user complaint about the recent practice of putting only the most current magazine on these shelves, plans are being made to change back to the old system of putting out the most recent six issues.

Stack shifting has been completed in the 600's and 700's as well as in the mystery and fiction areas. With these shifts, our collection arrangement should be stable for a while.

Amy Fuller has worked on several displays, including a small display area near the YA fiction area called "Theme of the Month". January's theme was humor and February's is romance. She did a major display in the central area for Black History Month and did a YA display dealing with African Americans in literature.

Planning continues to the finale to Teen Read Week on February 26, 2000 when Kathryn Harris will be here to portray Harriet Tubman and prizes will be awarded to the successful teen readers. So far 132 individuals have signed up for the program and 73 have finished with 147,107 pages being read so far. Over 20 schools and several homeschoolers have been represented by entries so far.

The highlight of January for the children's division was the employment of Julia Martin to fill a position vacant since October. As Katie Gross indicated to me; "You don't know how much knowledge you possess as a staff, until you start training a new employee. It also brings the departmental idiosyncrasies into sharp focus, as you try to explain the occasional odd practice, such as organization of the toddler books."

The children's division is offering pre-school storytimes Mondays at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in February and March and primary grade storytimes on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. February - April. The Sunday programs are an experiment.

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Sixteen groups visited the children's area for storytimes and/or tours. Preschoolers come with six Head Start classes and a Home-Based Head Start class. There were six elementary classes and adult groups for tours included the child and family division of HSAC and Beta Phi. Baby TALK programs were well attended with an average of 21 people at Baby TALK times and 22 at Lap-Sit programs. There were 28 Baby TALK contacts recorded.

Displays in the children's division included a 2000 Year of the Dragon display, a Martin Luther King display and displays of snow and winter books.

Three staff members attended a CPR refresher course during the month. Amy Fuller attended a video conference workshop called "Internet Power", where she learned useful tips on Internet searching which she plans to put together in a handout sheet.

George Roberts read to students at Brush College School. Dayle Irwin gave library programs to a Lutheran church women's group, a Kiwanianne group and the Soya Chapter of the American Business Women's Association. Amy Fuller presented the January "Books Between Bites" program on T.S. Eliot and did a tour for the Macon County Medical Auxiliary on January 18. Sue Hemp gave a tour to 30-35 members of the BW Chapter of the PEO organization.

From January 14-18 I attended the Mid-Winter meeting of the American Library Association. I serve on the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the Association and on the Public Library's 2000 Conference Program Planning Committee. While at the meeting, final touches were put on the planning for the upcoming conference to be held in Charlotte, North Carolina the end of March. At that conference, a colleague and I will be giving a program on public library construction.

I have also spent time this month working with board members, our leasing agent and potential tenants on the possible lease of space in our upper level. I am working with area master gardeners on a master plan for grounds development. They are planning to have a proposal ready for the March 2000 board meeting.

As of February 9, 2000, 78% of the fiscal year had been completed. Expendures and encumbrances stood at 77.3% of budget. During January, 26 volunteers provided 179 hours of service to the library.