

MOSES GREELEY PARKER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

1985 saw the beginning of many services at the Moses Greeley Parker Memorial Library. At year's end, however, the question remained: "How will this department be able to respond to this community's demand for increased library services?" In the years since the passage of Proposition 2 1/2, the Library Department has been granted no growth relative to the total municipal appropriation. Since this limitation dominates every attempt to extend library services, this community and its local government need to keep this fact constantly in view as they make budgetary policy relative to the Library Department.

During FY86, the Town supported the Library at \$6.08 per capita, an amount far below the average for comparable communities, despite the fact that the performance measures for the M.G.Parker Library indicate that the output of this department is well into the average range, compared against these same towns.

At the Annual Town Meeting of June, 1985, the voters accepted a figure of \$152,070 as the municipal support of the Library for FY86. This figure is, once again, below the 1% of the previous year's appropriations at which the Town is obligated to fund the Library by the terms of the 1922 A.T.M. action. The Library's share of the town's financing has been eroded without redress since 1980; this erosion is not in the best interests of the town as a whole or of the public the Library serves directly.

In all probability, the State will require that Dracut's Library be open 63 hours per week as of July 1st, 1987, in order to receive State Aid, which last year amounted to 12% of our operating budget. In order to achieve these additional hours, and maintain adequacy of service for FY88, the Library requires the additional personnel that were first requested in the FY86 budget. The addition of such personnel will still not return us to our 1982 level of staffing, despite the increased workload, but it will be a start.

In this past twelve months the Library has: added programs and services; increased circulation and community usage; and continued to respond to patron demand. But we cannot continue to add services in response to demand without accompanying increases in funding. Highlights from the Library's performance in the past year include the following: circulating tickets to the Merrimack Repertory Theater; continuing and expanding the storytimes to twice weekly; adding evening hours of operation on Tuesday nights; beginning online operation; hosting the Great Decisions Foreign Policy discussion group series; hosting Aerobics classes; Cabbage Patch Day; National Library Week activities; Summer Reading Program; Crafts classes; beginning a regular program of deposit collections in underserved areas, such as Collinsville, the Senior Center and the Housing Authority; adding the first free access to the Rollins Dracut Information Channel in a public place; installing the first public access terminal in Middlesex County to connect with the Merrimac Valley Library Consortium; and many other events too numerous to mention in particular.

In terms of bottom-line performance, we achieved a higher circulation of materials, a higher rate of attendance, and we answered a higher number of reference questions.

The Library enjoyed the support and aid of many individuals and groups, particularly the Friends of the Library, the Junior Friends, Rollins Cablevision, and the Dracut Arts Council; in its turn, the Library played host to many groups, including the Rotary, the Boy Scouts, the Post Card Club, and the Historical Commission. On the whole, the Library Department fulfilled its goals for 1985, as outlined in the 1984 Annual Report.

In the year to come the Library plans to pursue, if possible, the following priorities:

- to plan for further extension of library services to underserved areas in the town;
- increase circulation and attendance per capita towards the 25th%ile for towns of our size;
- to increase patron usage of and familiarity with the Browsing Terminals;
- to increase hours of operation towards the minimum for towns of our size;
- to pursue adequacy of funding in response to the community's demand for library services.

The Library Director and staff are planning in 1986 to provide, as much as possible, the same or better quality and level of service in each library program. Chief among these regular programs are our collections of circulating fiction and nonfiction, the twice-weekly storytimes, the computer, educational, and crafts classes, our information and referral services, and the outreach services, such as our deposit collections in various areas of the Town, that bring Library services to the community.

The Long-Range Plan of the Moses Greeley Parker Memorial Library shall continue to be to fulfill the information needs of Dracut residents, in the most cost-effective and locally-responsive manner possible. However, we cannot forever do more and more with less and less. At the end of 1985, we are moving forward with the town, but we can only move within the limitations of the town's budgetary policy relative to this department.

Respectfully submitted,

David D. Davis, Jr.
Library Director