

MOSES GREELEY PARKER MEMORIAL LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

The year has flown. If you remember, in the fall of 1995 Roger Patenaude directed the installation of perimeter drains around the Library. These drains have certainly been tested over the past year and a half and, thanks to the hard work of all involved, the lower level of the Library remains dry. It is time to pursue renovation. After we examined the Library buildings, reviewed the surveys and looked carefully at the feasibility study, the Trustees decided we needed an architect to help us create the best possible Library for Dracut. A great deal of expertise would be needed to develop a plan combining the lovely 1922 building, the 1978 building and the needed new space. The Director was told to create a proposal and enter into the final competitive LSTA grant round Dracut's request for planning and design money. This proposal required us to project our needs a full twenty years into the future and state what we expected the M. G. Parker Library to contain and provide for the over 33,000 population. The final submission would be judged by a panel and funding for the winners would be administered by the State Board of Library Commissioners. Community input and volunteer photographers were part of the large grant proposal. In September, 1996 we learned that the maximum amount possible for planning and design, \$20,000.00, was awarded to Dracut and, since the Town had already agreed to match the awarded amount, we could begin our search. We will need a qualified architect who, taking everything into consideration, would create a library building that would please the community. The search is slated to begin in late winter.

Also in September of 1995 the Library began an experiment. The community wanted more open hours. What interested the Trustees and the staff was that the majority of survey responses indicated that an early opening had appeal. The Library is now open 64 hours a week- four days of twelve hours, from 8:30 am to 8:30 pm and two days of eight hours from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Though we are the only library in the Merrimack Valley open so early, in September of 1996, after a full year of testing, the experiment became permanent. Our patrons are at the door and waiting at 8:30. We also began having a trained reference person on each night and every Saturday. That was very successful. Unfortunately, our reference person moved to a full time job and we have not been able to find a replacement. This caused a problem not only for reference but in the young adult area where she was beginning to develop a collection and thoughts of programs. We hope to replace her very soon.

Our children's programs continue to increase. Thanks to a grant from the Dracut Arts Council, during 1996 the Library presented many wonderful performers. The story hours and after school programs have also increased and still more are requested. Fantastic Fridays during the summer and Super Saturdays during the fall drew many children and we look forward to continuing the programs. All in all close to 4,000 children took part in over 163 programs. A busy children's room.

Technology is growing at the Library and we find the various data base products in steady use. The CD-ROM work station allows patrons to search for business phone numbers throughout the country, research topics in health, seek all sorts of information about animals, collect materials on different countries and use a general encyclopedia. One of the newest additions is the internet connection available for public use. We have one workstation with full graphics, the other is strictly text. The periodical index is also a great advantage. We have access to over 6,000 magazines with more than 3,000 full text articles ready to print and take home. I would have to say that the M.G. Parker Library has become a very, busy, rapidly changing place to visit. In addition to a rapidly growing book collection, the library also houses almost over 1,600 videos, 600+ compac discs, a wide variety of magazines and at least 790 unabridged and abridged audio books for all ages. We are always looking for way to become the best library you could visit. As usual, we ask that if you don't see it you ask for it. If it is possible, we will get it from somewhere.

For the Board of Trustees
John Katin - 1999
Mary Lee Matthews -1997
Francis Zabierek- 1998

Respectfully Submitted
Susan A. Schwarz, Director