

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT
ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

1987 was another year of much innovation at the Library.

Because they are accountable to the taxpayers, public libraries regularly include performance statistics in their annual reports to provide information about their activities during the year, and to offer some basis for their budget requests. Positive performance statistics point to the cost-effectiveness of a library's operations.

This year, our main tools of performance measurement, circulation and attendance, were once again up strikingly (13.5%). This contrasts with the degree of increase in local funding for the Library, which was up only 1.7%. Therefore, all the new Library services which were introduced in 1987 (among them circulating videocassettes, compact discs, and additional Museum passes) were funded by State and Local grants. Our future success in obtaining these grants, however, depends upon a continuing local commitment of matching funds.

The total number of all Library materials issued to users was 85,468 items. The number of Library cardholders continues to grow at a dizzying pace, with more than 1,000 people per year applying for Library cards for the first time. This rate of increase in the level of public demand should therefore result, under our democratic form of government, in significant increases in local funding, in order to make a reasonable response to this demand on the local level. In fact, this response is the only way to sustain the current growth in volume, number, and quality of services.

In addition to our daily service to hundreds of individuals, many groups enjoyed the direct benefit of their use of the Library's resources and facilities; including among them the Rotary Club, the Post Card Club, various town boards and departments (through their use of the Library's Multi-Purpose Room), the Fuel Assistance Program of Community Teamwork, and the Stay and Play playgroups. The Library in turn benefitted from the help and support of several groups, including especially the Dracut Police, Fire and Highway Departments, and the other units of Town Government, the Dracut Arts Council, the Friends and Junior Friends of the Library, and others. For all this help and support we at the Library are sincerely thankful and appreciative.

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

- to increase circulation and library use per capita towards the 50th percentile;
- to install three additional Public Access Consortium terminals;
- to continue expanding the breadth and depth of the Library's collection of materials, in response to the demands of library patrons, especially in the media of videocassettes and digital audio.
- to continue to assertively promote the Library as, among its many other roles, this community's primary information resource and its primary recreational reading center.

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Library Director