

ANNUAL REPORT 2001
MOSES GREELEY PARKER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

2001 was a year of change. We learned more than we ever expected about construction, telecommunication, and unfortunately, terrorism.

Early in the year, as reported in the 2000 Annual report, the huge binders containing all documents needed for the Construction Grant were submitted to the State Board of Library Commissioners. Securing the Moses Greeley Parker Memorial Library placement on the Construction List was essential. It was a long wait but, our place on the list was assured and I resumed breathing. My part, creating the document that would obtain a place for Dracut in the Construction Funding, was complete. Now the reality of a New Library Building sits in other hands.

In late fall we discovered our telecommunication link between Dracut and the main database was too small. Instead of every transaction being recorded, we lost data during the transmission creating a public relations nightmare. Fortunately our patrons understood the problems and we quickly moved from a 56k to a 256k line. It was and is costly but where snails once crawled, we now fly through transactions. Fortunately, we had the new lines before December of 2000 when the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium moved to the new vendor. Patrons now have options that never before existed. Today everyone can search the holdings of over thirty libraries, find the item wanted, be it book, video, audio book, compact disk, CD-ROM or magazine, and request it be sent to Dracut, all from the comfort of home. The link to these libraries is through our web site, just access www.dracutlibrary.org and away you go. Our databases provide answers for simple homework problems, links to carefully researched sites for health related topics you can search from the privacy of your home and open doors to many different fields. All you need is a valid library card from your home library and, since over eighteen thousand Dracut residents have library cards, it is obvious that library use is growing. All work is not done from home however. The "in Library" use of the Internet and reference databases has grown almost beyond our ability to handle the traffic. We averaged over 530 users a week on our computers and that is a lot of foot traffic. With the help of the Reference Librarians most searches ended up in the success column. For the patrons who visit the Library, over 126,000 last year, we keep our collection as up to date as possible. Each month finds us adding at least five or six hundred items. It is only thanks to the continued escalation of borrowing by our patrons that we still find room on the shelves for the new items. If all 78,828 items were on our shelves, there would not be room for anyone in the building. I know our collection of audio books is unrivaled but from comments made, the combination of rapid filling of requests and the books we own make for a pretty happy borrowing group. Now if only we could convince you, the patrons who don't visit us yet, that the Library can help with almost anything you need, we would feel successful.

In October of 2001 we received a \$7,500.00 grant from the State to create and house special kits. These kits will contain materials to augment the elementary school curriculums and will provide not only books but also hands on materials to assist students in their studies. We are working with the Curriculum Coordinator, teachers and principals to include the best items available and hope the kits will become an

integrated part of the Dracut School System. Since the Library is the second arm of the educational hug, it is nice that we are able to increase our direct participation in the education of our children.

The children's room played host to a number of performers during the year attracting many families. If you combine those programs with the story times for the all children ages newborn through sixth grade, we provided over 5,000 children with an introduction to reading. In addition to these programs, the summer reading again had a tremendous response. This year we worked to attract the Junior and Senior High students over the summer and thanks to the sport groups throughout the local and Boston area, we were able to provide prizes to those reading more than the required items. Local merchants continue to provide treats for the younger readers and the success of the program is partly due to their continued assistance in providing these rewards.

Respectfully submitted for the Board of Library Trustees
Susan A. Schwarz, Director

Board of Library Trustees

James Ace -- 2004

John C. Katin-- 2002

Mary Lee Matthews-- 2003