



# 1990 Annual Report

L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



# OSCAR Arrives

The staff of the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library began the new decade by taking on a major challenge—the development and introduction of OSCAR (On-Screen Catalog and Resource), a computerized “card catalog.” With computer terminals placed around the library, OSCAR helps the library user quickly and easily identify books, magazines, videocassettes, children’s materials and much more. Getting this system up and running took a great deal of planning and preparation, and seeing it at work is both exciting and satisfying.

## OSCAR’s Beginnings

The process really began in 1983 with the installation of a computerized circulation system based on Virginia Tech Library System computer software. During that year, the staff placed barcodes on all materials and entered information on each item into the computer. Since then the computer system has been used to check items out and back in, to keep track of overdue materials and to reserve items. With the addition of computer terminals at the information desks, staff assisted library users in finding the materials they needed. This system also has been used since 1983 to catalog new items as they are received and, as of 1990, to manage the ordering of materials.

Early in 1990, planning began for extending the use of this powerful tool directly to library users. A committee made up of library staff, Indianhead Federated Library System representatives and community members was charged with making a computerized card catalog a reality. But before this idea could be brought into the world, it needed a name. After many proposals were considered, the acronym OSCAR, standing for On-Screen Catalog and Resource, was adopted.

## Users’ Comfort a Goal

One of the committee’s first tasks was changing the computer software to make it more “user friendly” to library patrons. Easy-to-understand instructions were developed and some terminology simplified. Computer equipment and furniture were selected, ordered and set up; training sessions for staff were held; publicity was written to let everyone know that OSCAR was on the way and what to expect. Volunteers were trained to help OSCAR users during the first few weeks. Above all, it was important that people should be as comfortable using OSCAR as they were using the old card catalog.

By fall, OSCAR was ready to test. Library users were picked at random to try the new system and offer their advice and

criticisms. That process helped smooth out the last of the rough spots, and OSCAR was presented to the public in a brief ceremony on December 5.

## It Works!

No one involved with this project could have predicted the level of success and acceptance OSCAR enjoyed from the beginning. Library users discovered the advantages of OSCAR right away and, with surprisingly few exceptions, found it easy to use. Comments were overwhelmingly positive as volunteers and staff worked individually with OSCAR users who needed help. Many of our users explored the new freedom and flexibility the computerized catalog offered, using the instructions appearing on the computer screen and flip charts that provided other information.

The advantages over the old card catalog are many:

- OSCAR provides a more complete, up-to-date list of what the library offers. Information about all library materials—books, magazines, books-on-cassette, videocassettes—becomes part of the computer system from the moment they are ordered.

- An OSCAR computer screen provides not only the author, title and location for any library item, it also indicates if it is checked out.

- Besides subject searches, powerful keyword searches are possible, something the card catalog could not do.

- With terminals throughout the library, including locations in Children’s Services and on the second floor, information is always at hand. The need for library users to return again and again to the card catalog on the first floor is eliminated. With this

improvement, along with the speed and simplicity of OSCAR, people are spending less time and finding more books and other materials.

Everyone involved with this project is proud of the success of OSCAR. Teamwork, dedication and extra effort by many people have allowed the library to use today’s technology to provide the best possible library service. The future holds more challenges for the library. Plans are being developed to make dial-up access to OSCAR possible through personal computers in homes, schools and businesses. Such innovations make these exciting times at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The installation of OSCAR marks both a major service improvement for our library users and a national trend toward providing library services in electronic formats.

Even before OSCAR, we had developed an electronic directory of information about local service agencies and organizations called AIRS (Area Information and Referral Service), which we also provide in an abbreviated printed form.

Besides OSCAR, we continued the trend in other ways. Through a gift from the Friends of the Library, we recently set up a microcomputer-based version of *Books in Print* for public use, which has more powerful searching capabilities than the printed version. As the year closed, the Reference Unit also installed the electronic InfoTrac system, which provides a more effective and faster method for searching for important magazine articles.

This growing demand for services in electronic formats, however, will increasingly strain the library's financial resources. The popularity of books and other print media, as well as for audiovisual items, remains high, as 1990's circulation figures showed, with a 4.9 percent increase over the prior year.

In other developments, the Countywide Library Services Agreement was ratified for another five years, guaranteeing important library services for our users who live outside the city. Planning for the interior redesign and renewal of the library was begun through the generosity of Eileen and Mel Cohen and the L.E. Phillips Family Foundation and will continue into 1991. Federal grant projects to improve children's reading readiness and services to the Hmong were undertaken with marked success.

The activities of the Friends of the Library continued to grow during 1990. The volunteer work of the Friends, along with their political and financial support of library projects, has made the Friends an essential part of the library's program of services. We greatly appreciate the Friends' efforts on the library's behalf.

*Mark Morse, Library Director*



## 1990 ANNUAL STATISTICS AND OUTPUT MEASURES

Total Circulation: 760,261  
• *Circulation per capita 8.4*

Total Registered Borrowers: 29,239  
• *Registration as a percentage of the population served 32%*

Turnover Rate (*number of times each item is circulated*): 3.3

Reference Questions Answered: 45,734

Volunteer Hours Contributed: 1,671

## LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Robert Fraser, President  
Dan Enright, Vice-President  
Dorothy Atkinson, Secretary

Janis Haywood  
Christel Jorgensen  
Donald Marjala  
Carol Olson  
Fred Urmann  
Craig Voigt

## LIBRARY COLLECTION

At the end of 1990, the library collection included:

Books .....	203,565
Browsing books .....	16,025
Phonograph records .....	4,553
Audiocassettes .....	3,669
Compact discs .....	1,375
Books-on-tape .....	1,051
Videocassettes .....	2,152
Art prints .....	163
Slide tapes .....	53
Software .....	61
8mm films .....	32
16mm films .....	274
IFLS films .....	310
Periodical subscriptions .....	519
Microforms .....	759
TOTAL .....	234,561

# Financial Report (PRE-AUDIT)

For the year ending December 31, 1990

BEGINNING BALANCE, JANUARY 1, 1990 .....\$ 37,019

## Receipts:

City of Eau Claire .....	\$ 1,381,750	
County of Eau Claire .....	276,403	
Indianhead Federated Library System .....	106,979	
Fines and Fees .....	68,682	
Grants and Gifts .....	31,121	
Miscellaneous Revenue .....	44,725	
		<u>\$ 1,909,660</u>

## Disbursements:

Salaries and Benefits .....	\$ 962,817	
Contractual Service .....	315,381	
Materials and Supplies .....	277,798	
Debt Service .....	113,885	
Capital Expenditure .....	186,150	
Miscellaneous .....	25,425	
		<u>(\$1,881,456)</u>

BALANCE .....\$ .....65,222

Reserve for Appropriation to 1991 Budget .....(17,420)

Transfer to Gift Reserve Fund .....( 4,650)

Transfer from Gift Reserve to Capital Projects .....0

ENDING BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 1990 .....\$ .....43,153

## Thanks to Our 1990 Donors!

9th District Women's Club

Ted and Kathleen Balcom

Guido Cecchini

Charter Bank

Chippewa Falls Public Library

Chippewa Valley Music Teachers

Chippewa Wildlife Society

Cora Rust Owen Memorial Trust

Cray Research

Eau Claire Service League

Financial Ad Group

Finishing Touch

First Interstate Bank

Fraternal Order of Eagles Auxiliary

Friends of the L.E. Phillips Memorial  
Public Library

Gramac's For Her

Leonard Konrad

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne P. Lindquist

James V. Moravek

National Mutual Benefit

Northern States Power

Otter Creek Garden Club

L.E. Phillips Family Foundation

Chris Renzelman

Wisconsin CATV-Cablevision

Wayne Wolfert

Women of Moose