

A FINANCIAL AND STAFFING ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
MILL VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Michael D. Cooper

Nancy A. DeWath

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## I. Introduction

The Mill Valley Public Library, like many other public libraries, is facing serious financial problems. The growth in funding of the library is slowing down, and the library must make difficult decisions with regard to how the quality of service is to be affected by the change in financing.

The purpose of this report is to provide a financial and staffing analysis of the library to provide management with data on which to base more objective decisions about resource allocation. It is not the purpose of this report to make those decisions. This study is, at best, preliminary, and must be used as a tool that, with thorough knowledge of the Mill Valley Public Library, the public it serves, and the goals that it has set for itself, can be used to aid the decision making process. The recommendations put forth herein are neither overly specific nor all-inclusive, and should not be construed as if they were meant to be either of these. The conclusions can be summarized in four parts:

1. The library is currently a very good library for its size and population served but unless additional funding is found it will not be able to maintain its quality.
2. The library is serving more of Marin County than just the city of Mill Valley and is not being fully compensated.

3. The cash flow problem does require a reserve fund but \$25,000 is a more reasonable amount than the \$35,000 suggested.
4. The staffing pattern should be studied to more fully utilize existing staff but not with the purpose of cutting back.

Throughout the analysis it is assumed that the objective of the library is to meet the information needs of the community. Translated into objectives for the library, it is assumed that the library wants to expand its information supplying activities; most immediately, its goals are to maintain or improve its level of service to the community, remain open the same number of hours per week, and improve its book and periodical collection.

## II. Statistical and Financial Background

### Collection, Circulation and Reference

The library collection has grown steadily (Figure 1) and now stands at about 75,000 volumes. Circulation, however, has had an erratic pattern over the last ten years (Figure 2) and currently appears to be declining. This can be partially explained by the increase in the loan period from 20 to 28 days three years ago. Also, the novelty of the new library building may have worn off.

The number of reference and reading aid transactions also increased through 1970-71 (Figure 3). But in 1971-72 there was a drop from 70-71 of an average of 66 questions per month for a 10.7% decline. Preliminary figures for 1972-73 indicate that this decline is continuing.

### Expenditures

Figure 4 shows the pattern of the past ten years' total library expenditures, salary expenditures, and materials expenditures (books, periodicals, etc.). As of 1971-72, salaries constitute approximately

Figure 1  
Size of Book Stock 1962-3 to 1971-2  
Mill Valley Public Library

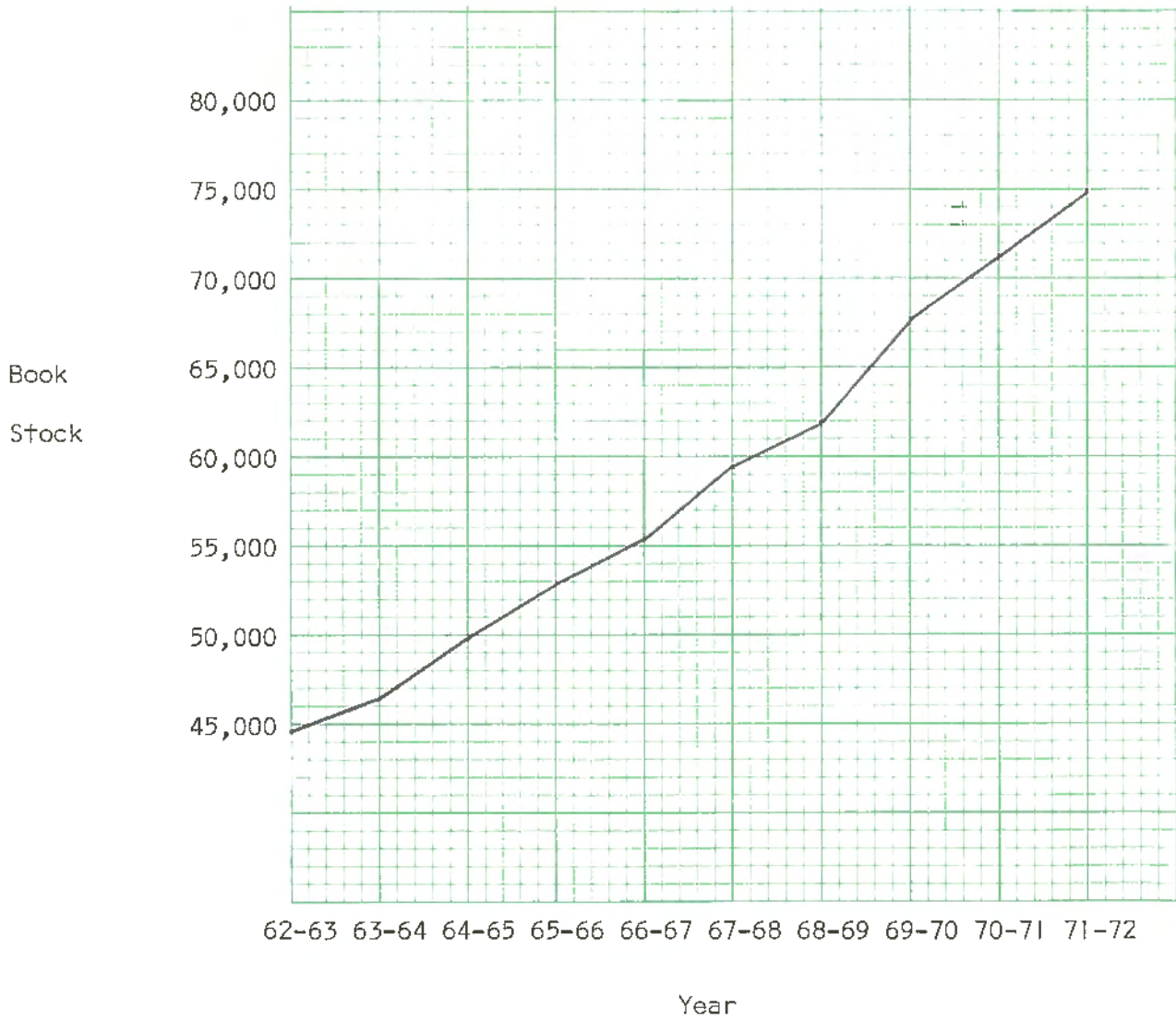




Figure 2  
Total Circulation  
Mill Valley Public Library

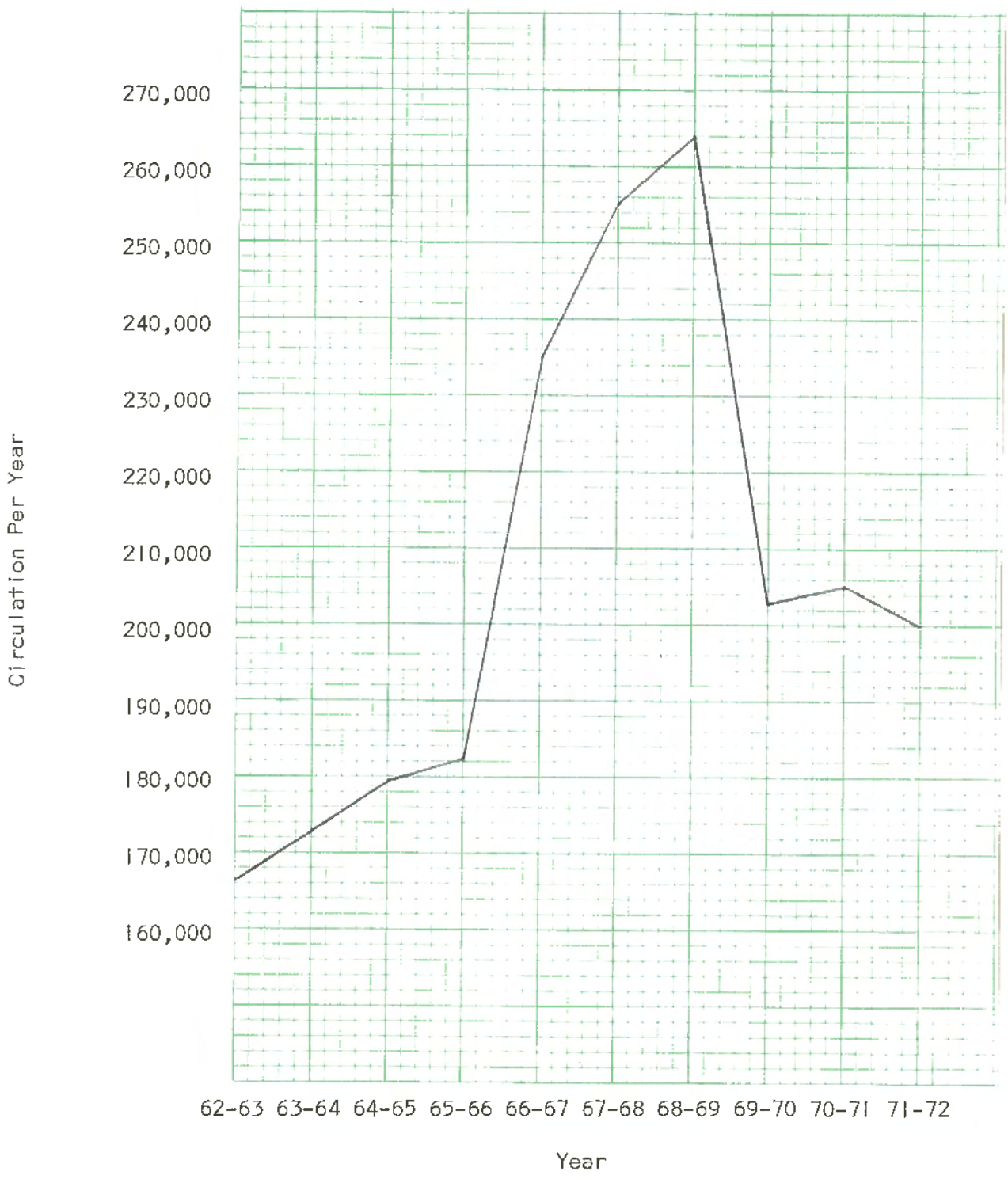


Figure 3

Reference and Reading Aid Transactions  
Mill Valley Public Library

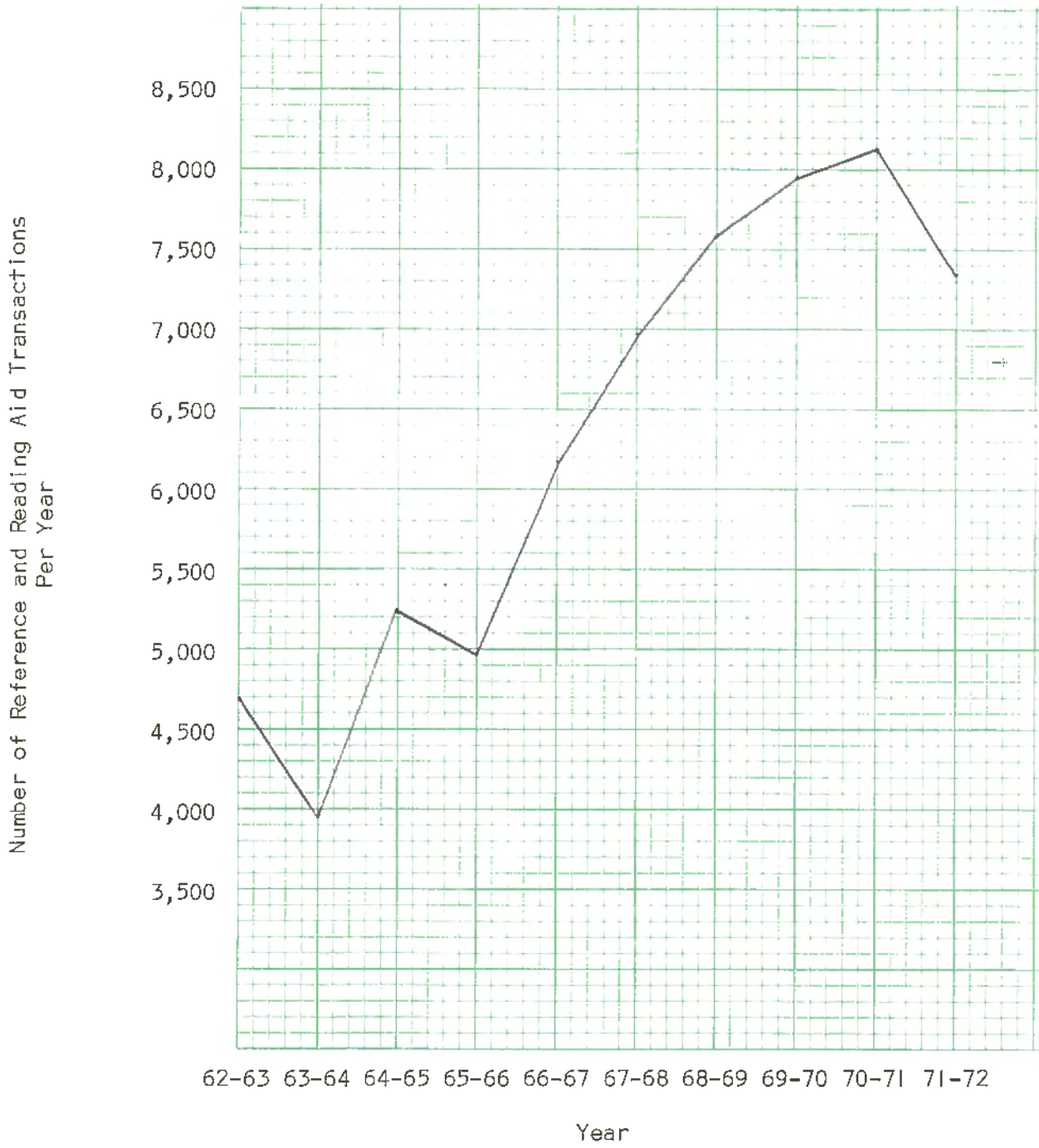
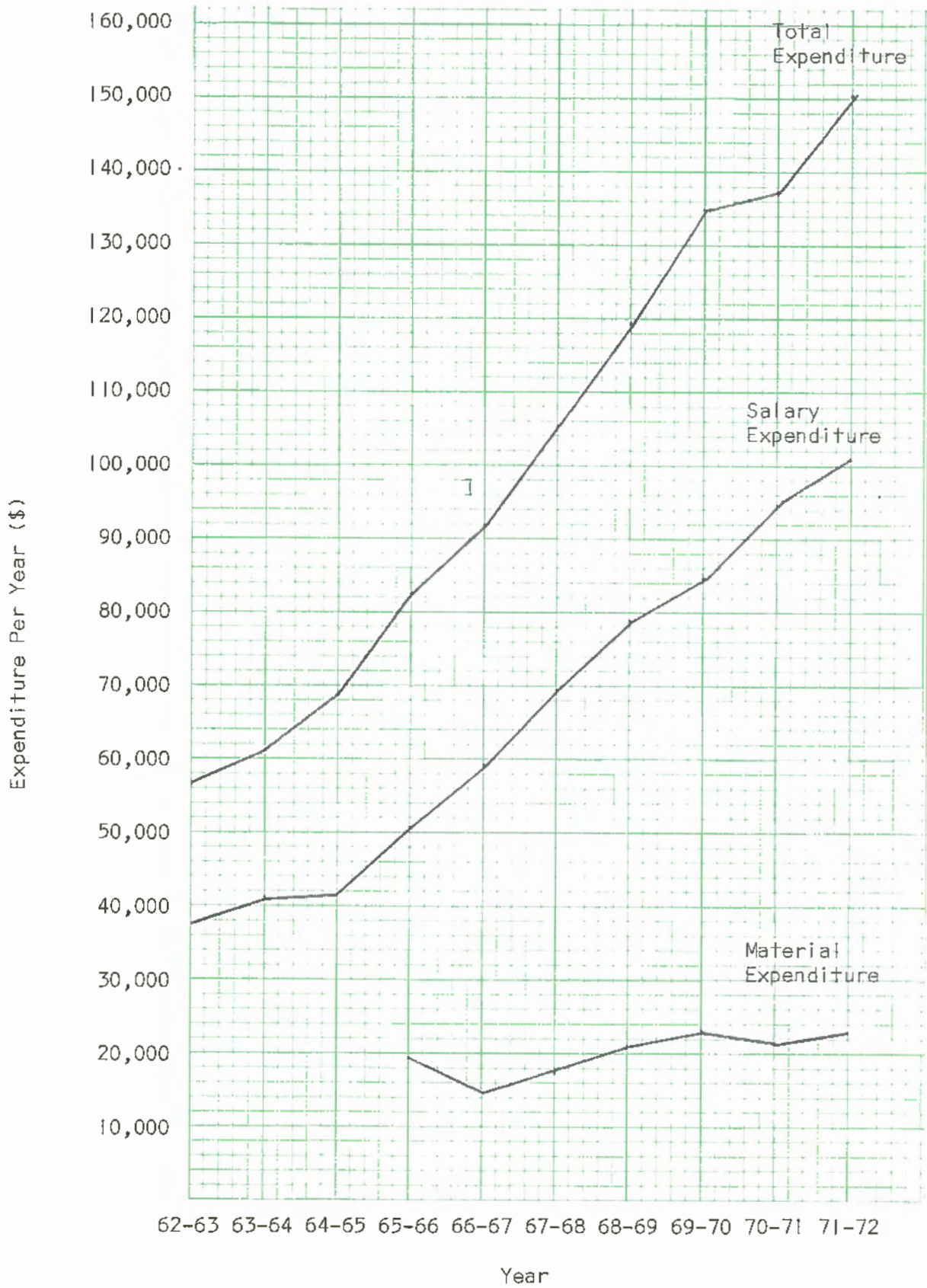


Figure 4

Mill Valley Public Library  
Expenditures



73% of total expenditures and materials about 15.8%. For public libraries in California for the year 1971-72, the average salary expenditures varied from 65.4% to 68.5%, as shown in Table 1; the Mill Valley Public Library expenditure is about 4.5% above the average for its population category of 10,001 to 25,000 inhabitants.

The increases in library expenditures from year to year were relatively consistent until 1969-70 (see Table 2). In 1970-71, however, there was only a 1.9% increase over the previous year's funding, and then a 9.1% increase from 1970-71 to 1971-72. The library expenditure as a percentage of total city expenditure has remained within the range of 6.2% to 9.6% (Table 2).

To gain perspective on these quantities, it is useful to compare library expenditures to the expenditure of other city departments, and to various national price indices. Table 3 shows the relative expenditure by the city of Mill Valley on Parks and Recreation, Police, and Library service. In the eleven year period 1962-63 to 1972-73, Park and Recreation expenditures increased 340%, Police expenditures increased 240%, and Library expenditures increased 170%. One must interpret these amounts as reflecting the spending priorities of the citizens of Mill Valley.

The purchasing power of the library has been seriously eroded by increasing materials costs, as shown in Table 4. The index of book prices compiled by Publishers Weekly shows that prices have increased 54% (index value 154) from 1967 to 1972. During the same

Table 1

Average Salary Expenditure As a Percent  
of Total Operating Expenditures for California  
Public Libraries, 1971-72, by Size of Libraries

Population of Area Served	Number of Public Libraries or Systems in this category	Salaries as a Percent of total library Expenditure
Under 10,000	23	65.4
10,001 to 25,000	40	68.5
25,001 to 50,000	33	67.0
50,001 to 100,000	40	67.5
Over 100,000	36	63.0

Source: News Notes of California Libraries, 68:1 (Winter, 1973).

Table 2

Mill Valley  
City and Library Expenditures

Year	Percent Increase in city expenditures over previous year	Percent Increase in Library Expenditures over previous year	Library Expenditures as a percent of total city expenditure
1962-63	N.A. <sup>(1)</sup>	N.A.	6.26
1963-64	1.4	16.8	7.21
1964-65	11.3	7.1	6.94
1965-66	13.8	16.3	7.08
1966-67	7.9	11.6	7.25
1967-68	- 9.8 <sup>(2)</sup>	13.4	9.61
1968-69	-27.7	14.9	9.31
1969-70	11.4	12.8	9.42
1970-71	8.2	1.9	8.87
1971-72		9.1	6.62

(1) N.A. - not available

(2) Represents a decrease from previous year

Table 3

Changes in Expenditures for Selected Mill Valley  
City Departments

Department	Department Expenditures as a Percent of 1962-63 budget	Department Expenditures as a percent of 1972-73 budget	Percent Increase in expenditure 1962-63 to 1972-
Parks and Recreation	8.4	13.5	340
Police	10.2	13.0	240
Library	6.3	6.4	170

Source: California State Controller. Annual report of financial transactions of cities of California, 1962-63, and City of Mill Valley Budget 1972-73.

Table 4

Indexes of changes in United States prices, Mill Valley  
City Expenditures, and Mill Valley Public Library Expenditures

(1967 = 100)

Series name	1972-1973 Index Value
U.S. Consumer Price Index 12/72	127.3
U.S. Wholesale Price Index 12/72	122.9
<u>Publishers Weekly</u> Index of Book Prices	154
Mill Valley Total City Expenditures	171.5
Mill Valley Public Library Total Expenditures	146.8
Mill Valley Public Library Materials Expenditures	135.6
Mill Valley Public Library Librarian I Salary	136.6



period the library's expenditures on library materials have only increased 35.6%. Similarly total city expenditures have increased 71.5% during this shorter period while total library expenditures have increased 46.8%.

Another way of looking at the library is through comparative analysis of the Mill Valley Public Library with other public libraries in California. Table 5 summarizes the results of comparing the 1971-72 Mill Valley Public Library statistics to those of 171 other public libraries in California. Mill Valley is in the population category 10,001 to 25,000, and there were 40 California public libraries in that category. Of those 40, 32 had less circulation, 15 answered fewer reference questions, 34 had a smaller book stock, and 36 added fewer volumes during the year in question than Mill Valley. With respect to expenditures, 31 of the 40 libraries had total expenditures less than Mill Valley, 32 had smaller salary expenditures, and 35 had smaller materials expenditures. Finally, with regard to staffing, 31 had fewer librarians and 35 had fewer non-librarians on their staff.

A number of cautions should be made before attempting an interpretation of the data. With respect to staff size, these figures represent number of people employed, not full time equivalent personnel. Secondly, there are not generally agreed-upon definitions of what constitutes a volume added, circulation, or a reference question. It is unlikely that these definitions were applied consistently by

Table 5

Comparative Analysis of Mill Valley Public Library With Other  
Public Libraries in California, 1971-1972

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Characteristic	Number of Libraries Having Specified Characteristic Relative to Mill Valley for Given Size of Population Served				
	Population Less Than 10,000	Population 10,001 to 25,000	Population 25,001 to 50,000	Population 50,001 to 100,000	Population greater than 100,000
Number of Libraries or Library Systems Serving Each Population Category	23	40	33	40	36
Less Circulation than MVPL	21	32	8	0	0
More Circulation than MVPL	0	6	25	40	35
No Answer	2	1	0	0	1
Answer Less Reference Questions Than MVPL	10	15	2	3	1
Answer More Reference Questions Than MVPL	0	15	22	23	30
No Answer	13	9	9	4	5
Smaller Book Stock Than MVPL	20	34	15	1	0
Larger Book Stock Than MVPL	0	4	18	39	35
No Answer	3	1	0	0	1
Smaller No. of Volumes added Than MVPL	19	36	10	1	0
Larger No. of Volumes added Than MVPL	1	3	23	39	36
No Answer	3	0	0	0	0
Smaller Total Expenditure Than MVPL	20	31	7	0	0
Larger Total Expenditure Than MVPL	1	8	26	40	32
No Answer	2	0	0	0	4
Smaller Salary Expenditure Than MVPL	21	32	11	0	0
Larger Salary Expenditure Than MVPL	0	7	22	40	32
No Answer	2	0	0	0	4
Smaller Materials Expenditure Than MVPL	20	35	7	1	0
Larger Materials Expenditure Than MVPL	1	4	26	39	32
No Answer	2	0	0	0	4

Characteristic	Number of Libraries Having Specified Characteristic Relative to Mill Valley for Given Size of Population Served				
	Population Less Than 10,000	Population 10,001 to 25,000	Population 25,001 to 50,000	Population 50,001 to 100,000	Population greater than 100,000
Fewer Librarians than MVPL	11	31	15	7	0
Same No. Librarians as MVPL	0	3	7	4	2
More Librarians than MVPL	3	2	10	27	33
No Answer	9	3	1	2	1
Fewer Non-Librarians than MVPL	15	35	18	7	3
Same No. Non-Librarians as MVPL	1	0	1	1	1
More Non-Librarians than MVPL	0	2	14	30	31
No Answer	7	2	0	2	1

Source: News Notes of California Libraries 68:1 (Winter 1973).  
 Comparisons to Mill Valley Public Library have been computed.

the reporting libraries. Thus the data may not be strictly comparable.

Aside from the possible inconsistencies in data gathering, it is clear that the Mill Valley Public Library is in the top quarter of those libraries reporting serving 10,001 to 25,000. This is consistent with the demands and the habits of the community being served. It is even more interesting to note that the Mill Valley library compares favorably with libraries serving a population of 25,001 to 50,000. This deduction is consistent with the pattern of circulation usage observed later in Table 6 and 7. In those tables it will be shown that a high usage of the library comes from people outside Mill Valley.

In summary, the service activities of the library, as measured by circulation and reference questions, have been declining in the past two years. The pattern of funding of library activities has been erratic, and the materials budget has not kept pace with price increases. One can not say which is the cause or which is the effect.

### III. Financial Issues

There are several financial problems that are facing the library.

These include:

1. The present property tax formula has not kept pace with the library's growing needs, so alternative sources of revenue are needed.
2. Heavy non-resident use requires that the city's tax revenues be supplemented directly or indirectly by these users.
3. The library has continual cash-flow problems.

#### Alternative Sources of Revenue

The State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972 is intended to provide direct grants to state and local governments. There is wide latitude in what a governmental unit may do with the money. It may be used for property tax relief. Alternatively the funds can be used to pay for maintenance and operation of public safety, environmental protection, public transportation, health, recreation, social services, financial administration, and libraries.

With the decline in federal support for libraries, a strong case can be made for the use of Revenue Sharing funds for libraries.

### Non-Resident Use of Mill Valley Public Library

The extremely pleasant physical surroundings of the Mill Valley Library, combined with a very good book and periodical collection, and a lack of other large libraries in Southern Marin County, result in heavy use by non-city residents. Table 6 summarizes the results of three surveys of library use as measured by circulation. The results indicate that between 38.2% and 48.7% of all circulation is to non-residents of Mill Valley.

Another measure of non-resident use of the library is the number of applications for library cards that come from residents outside the city. Table 7 indicates that from 34.0% to 49.7% of the applicants were non-residents for the current five months in the 1972-73 fiscal year.

With the advent of centralized processing of circulation records for most Marin County libraries, information is now available on the relative size of Mill Valley's circulation. Table 8 shows that for the past eight months, total circulation in the county has varied between 72,441 and 88,404 per month. Of this total, Mill Valley's circulation has varied between 18.0% and 22.4%. This is further evidence that the Mill Valley library is serving patrons other than its own residents.

Table 9 adds further evidence to the fact that the library is serving a population larger than its 12,942. The table indicates

Table 6

Use of Mill Valley Public Library By  
Non-Residents of Mill Valley

Date	Time period for survey	Total Transaction in sample	Circulation by Mill-Valley Residents		Circulation by Non-Mill Valley Residents	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sept. 1967	3 weeks	4,206	2,600	61.8	1,606	38.2
April 1968	1 week	1,975	1,013	51.3	962	48.7
Sept. 1968	1 week	1,734	899	51.8	835	48.2

Table 7

Residence of Persons Applying for  
Library Card at Mill Valley Public Library

Time Period	Total Number of Applicants during time period	Applicants who are residents of Mill Valley		Applicants who are Marin County Residents	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
December 1972	320	211	66.0	109	34.0
January 1973	632	393	62.1	239	37.9
February 1973	406	233	57.4	173	42.6
March 1973	348	198	57.0	150	43.0
April 1973	239	120	50.3	119	49.7



Table 8

Monthly Circulation Statistics of Libraries  
Participating in Marin County Circulation System

Date	Total County Wide Circulation	Mill Valley Library Circulation	Mill Valley Circulation as percent of Total County Circulation	Marin County Civic Center Library Circulation	Corte Madera Library Circulation	Novato Library Circulation
Sept. 72	66,493	14,439	21.7	11,071	12,728	17,143
Oct. 72	73,146	16,420	22.4	12,722	13,786	17,777
Nov. 72	76,395	16,933	22.2	12,553	14,568	17,771
Dec. 72	62,179	13,587	21.8	10,744	11,974	14,468
Jan. 73	88,404	19,184	21.7	15,217	16,916	20,595
Feb. 73	77,923	16,080	20.6	14,523	14,631	17,736
Mar. 73	88,054	18,692	22.3	16,407	16,025	20,175
Apr. 73	72,441	13,030	18.0	13,834	13,708	16,666

that there is an area with a population of at least 26,900 (excluding Bolinas and Marin city) that is not being served by any other library, potentially 29,116 who might reasonably use the Mill Valley Public Library; 2.4 times the population of the city of Mill Valley.

Thus if the city's library expenditures are compared with those of libraries serving a larger population, the comparisons are not unreasonable. The only major difference is in non-librarian staff employed. Here one can only subjectively indicate that Mill Valley has eight regular non-librarian staff members, and nine library aids who work a very small number of hours each week. If the statistics on personnel were given in terms of full time equivalence employees, a more meaningful comparison could be made.

Recently the Mill Valley Public Library entered into an agreement with the Marin County library system to receive certain services in return for serving Marin County residents without charge. The most notable results of this agreement have been the addition of a quasi-computerized circulation system and the loss of non-resident fees.

The financial analysis indicates that the library's more urgent need is cash not services; it seems likely that the library would not have bought outright the new circulation system but that is the effect of this agreement.

Table 9

Population of Potential Area Served by  
Mill Valley Public Library: 1970 Census<sup>(1)</sup>

Census Tract No.	Brief Description of Area	Population
1270	Mill Valley	4,421
1261	Mill Valley	5,834
1262	Between Mill Valley and U.S. 101	3,043
1282	Homestead Valley, Muir Woods	3,897
1282	Muir Beach, Tamalpais Valley	5,083
1321	Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Bolinas Lagoon	1,389 <sup>(2)</sup>
1290	Marin City	1,622 <sup>(3)</sup>
1250	Richardson Bay	2,827
Total		28,116

(1) This chart is not intended to imply that the Mill Valley Public Library does indeed serve the census tracts indicated. Rather it is indicative of the potential area served.

(2) Bolinas has a library with circulation per month ranging between 422 and 763 during the period 8/72 to 4/73.

(3) Marin City has a library with circulation per month ranging between 156 and 386 during the period 8/72 to 4/73.

### Flow of Funds

One issue currently facing the library is timing expenditures to eliminate the deficit that is now common in the library's account.

Contrasting and even contradicting demands are placed on the library's accounts:

- the overwhelming majority of total expenditures must be paid on a regular monthly basis: salaries, and less urgently, telephone, utilities, etc.;
- the book expenditure is not large but is of major importance, and is controlled by the publishers' custom of announcing new titles in batches in the spring and again in the fall; users understandably want new books as soon as possible after publication;
- revenues peak with the April and December tax bills.

Table 10 details selected Mill Valley departments' expenditures for wages, salaries, and fringe benefits. From this table it is clear that the library faces similar problems in meeting payrolls as do other departments. Thus the library can not argue for continual deficits because of high labor costs relative to other departments. Since the timing of revenues and expenditures is fairly inflexible, the need appears to be for a reserve fund to cushion these variations. The library can, however, suggest a revision in the fund balance that it is expected to keep. Table 11 shows the library's account

Table 10

Labor Cost as a Percentage of Total Expenditure  
for Selected Mill Valley Departments  
1972-73 Budget

Department	Total Budgeted Expenditures for 1972-73	Total Budgeted Employee Service 1972-73	Employee Service as Percentage of Total Expenditures
Police	313,666	278,846	89.0
Fire	250,056	203,976	81.5
Parks and Recreation	333,562	211,318	63.2
Library	153,878	112,618	73.2

balance at the end of each month during 1971-72 and most of 1972-73. The final column in the table presents the account balance assuming a carryover of \$14,185 from the end of the previous fiscal year. Only once in the nearly two year period did the account balance reach close to -\$35,000. It may be appropriate to revise the required reserve amount in light of the past fund balances.

Table II

Ending Fund Balance of Mill Valley Public Library  
by Month, 1971-72 and part of 1972-73

Month	Library Account Balance 1971-72 (1) (\$)	Library Account Balance 1972-73 (1) (\$)	1972-73 Balance assuming carryover of balance of 6/30/72 (2) (\$)
August	- 1,200	- 3,284 <sup>(3)</sup>	+ 10,901
September	- 14,788	- 8,593	+ 5,542
October	- 24,939	- 35,073	- 20,938
November	- 16,371	- 48,761	- 34,626
December	- 26,959	- 27,411	- 13,276
January	- 4,791	- 8,520	- 5,615
February	- 16,101	- 18,649	- 4,513
March	- 5,090	- 29,528	- 15,393
April	- 15,729		
May	- 7,949		
June	- 14,185		

#### IV. Staffing

As of May 1973, the Mill Valley Public Library was open 60 hours a week (10-9 M-Th , 10-6 F-Sat). During this period public service tasks must be performed. These tasks include staffing the circulation, reference and children's desks, and paging and shelving materials. In addition, the staff must perform technical processing. This section of the report analyzes the library workload and describes the tasks performed and the job classification of the individuals performing the tasks.

In order to determine the relative daily workload of the circulation staff, an analysis of the daily circulation statistics from September 1972 to April 1973 was performed. During that 33 week period there were 22 weeks during which the library was open a full six days or for which complete circulation statistics were available. Table 12 displays the results of the analysis. The table shows, for example, that the highest circulation (rank 1) occurred on a Monday during nine of those 22 weeks. There were 16 weeks out of 22 during which the lowest circulation (rank 6) occurred on a Friday. Based on the past history displayed in Table 12 it can be concluded that Saturday and Monday are high circulation days and Thursday and Friday are low circulation days. Tuesday and Wednesday fall between the two groups. Any changes in the staffing of the circulation desk should take this pattern into account.



Table 12  
 Ranking of Days by Circulation Activity  
 Mill Valley Public Library

		Number of weeks that day achieved rank						Total Weeks
		Highest circulation on this day			Lowest circulation on this day			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Day	Monday	6	10*	2	3	1	0	22
	Tuesday	2	3	6	6	3	2	22
	Wednesday	5	2	8*	5	1	1	22
	Thursday	0	2	3	5	10*	2	22
	Friday	0	0	1	0	5	16*	22
	Saturday	9*	5	2	3	2	1	22

Additional evidence of usage patterns is available from a library user study conducted during October 1971. Table 13 indicates the results of the survey. The highest use takes place between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. (1) The lowest use was between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. This information should also be used in making staffing decisions.

Table 14 summarizes the current staffing pattern for the library. A number of observations can be made. First, there is always one person assigned to the reference desk when the library is open. Second, the pattern of highest evening usage (Table 13) is reflected in the current staff schedule of two people at the desk in the evening. Third, heavy staffing on Saturday is obviously warranted (see Table 12). However, the high staffing on Wednesday afternoon does not seem to be necessary and may be a carryover from the time when all books in the Mill Valley Library were due on Wednesdays. It is conceivable that only one person be assigned to the circulation desk on Thursday morning.

An alternative method of analyzing staff utilization is by examining the tasks performed by each job classification. Table 15 is a breakdown of how employees spend their time with respect to two activities--staffing the circulation and adult reference desks. The two Librarian II's carry the major responsibility for reference activity. They are aided by the Children's Librarian (Library Assistant III) and a Library Aide. The three Library Assistant I's

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(1)

Note there is some difficulty in interpreting the results as presented in the table because the time intervals are not of equal size. Also there is no indication of the extent to which children are represented in the sample.

Table 13

## Time of Day Library is Used

Time Interval	Number of people using library			
	Questionnaire Completed at desk	Questionnaire completed by mail	Total Responses	
			Number	Percent
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	93	37	130	19.9
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	111	75	186	28.5
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM	59	31	90	13.8
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	113	84	197	30.2
Other responses	17	33	50	7.6
Total	393	260	653	100.0

Source: Mill Valley Public Library Public Opinion Survey October 1971.

Table 14

Staffing Pattern of Mill Valley Public Library  
Adult Reference Desk and Circulation Desk

April - May 1973<sup>(1)</sup>

Hour of Day	Activity	Number of staff members performing indicated tasks on the specified day. (Including those on call)					
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10-11	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	1	2	2	1+1	1	3
11-12	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	1	1+1	1+1	1+1	1	3
12-1	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	1	1+1	1+1	1+1	1	3
1-2	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	1+1	1+1	1+1	1+1	1+1	3
2-3	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	1+1	1+1	1+1	1+1	1+1	3
3-4	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	2	1+1	2	1+1	1+1	3
4-5	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	2	2	2	1+1	1+1	3
5-6	Reference	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Circulation	1+1	1+1	2	1+1	1+1	3
6-7	Reference	1	1	1	1		
	Circulation	1+1	1+1	1+1	1+1		
7-8	Reference	1	1	1	1		
	Circulation	2	2	2	2		

Table 14 (continued)

Hour of Day	Activity	Number of staff members performing indicated tasks on the specified day. (Including those on call)					
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8-9	Reference	1	1	1	1		
	Circulation	2	2	2	2		

(1) Note "1+1" means one person on desk and one person on call.

Table 15

Number of Hours Worked by Mill Valley Public Library Staff  
at Reference and Circulation Activities

April - May 1973

Job Classifi- cation	Average number of hours worked per week	Average number of hours worked at circulation desk per week		Average number of hours worked at Adult Reference Desk
		At Desk	On Call	
Librarian II <sup>(1)</sup>	35			11½
Librarian II	35			26
Library Asst. III	35	8½	3	10 <sup>(2)</sup>
Library Asst. II	28	3	7	9
Library Asst. I	35	22½	3½	
Library Asst. I	35	14	7½	
Library Asst. I	28	19½	2	
Library Aide II	(3)	9½		
Library Aide II	(3)	7½		
Library Aide II	(3)	3½		
Library Aide II	(3)	2'		3

(1) Acting City Librarian.

(2) At children's desk answering Adult Questions.

(3) Wage personnel.

(4) Numbers in this table represent averages and do vary from week to week.

have as their primary duty to cover the circulation desk. Note however that the number of hours each spends at the desk are not equal.

The actual hours worked by each staff member indicate an additional issue. While one Librarian II may work an entire day at the reference desk, the Library Assistants are often assigned for one or two hour blocks of time on the desk. Some compromise between very long and very short desk assignments might be more appropriate and more productive.

Table 16 indicates the job title of the individual or individuals in the library that perform selected tasks. A number of suggestions might be considered with respect to this task assignment. First, filing of catalog cards could be done by a properly trained Library Assistant. Second, the circulation desk could be staffed with more Library Aides instead of Library Assistants.

Table 17 presents the results of another type of comparison. On the basis of the nine characteristics of public libraries described in Table 5, an attempt was made to find specific public libraries most similar to Mill Valley. Each of the 170 other public libraries was compared to Mill Valley with respect to circulation, number of reference questions answered, book stock, volumes added, etc. This table (Table 17) represents the subjective judgment of the analyst with regard to the similarity of other libraries to Mill Valley. Out of the 170 libraries, four were determined to be most similar to

Table 16

Selected Library Tasks Performed by  
Mill Valley Public Library Staff

	Library Activity	Job Title of Person Performing Specified Task						
		L II	LA III	LA II	LA I	SC III	L.Aide II	L.Aide I
	Materials Selection	x <sup>(1)</sup>	x <sup>(2)</sup>		x <sup>(3)</sup>			
	Gift Collection Maintenance	x						
	Pamphlet File Maintenance	x						
Technical Processing	Materials Ordering					x		
	Materials Receiving		x <sup>(2)</sup>		x	x		
	Cataloging	x						
	Processing Catalog Cards			x	x			
	Filing Catalog Cards	x	x <sup>(2)</sup>					
	Binding Activities		x <sup>(2)</sup>	x <sup>(4)</sup>				x
Collection Management	Circulation Desk		x	x	x			x
	Overdue Notice Handling			x	x			
	Plastic cards for books			x				
	Inter-Library Loan			x	x			
	Collection weeding	x	x <sup>(2)</sup>					
	Shelving							x
	Shelf Reading							x
	Paging							x
	Reference Desk	x	x	x				x <sup>(5)</sup>
Administration	Account (General & Payroll)					x		
	Clerical Activities					x		
	Scheduling			x				
	Coordinate Volunteers			x				

## Footnotes

- (1) Adult materials and phonograph records  
 (2) Childrens materials  
 (3) Phonograph records

- (4) Supervise mending  
 (5) Has M.L.S. Degree



Table 17

Comparison of Mill Valley Public Library to  
California Public Libraries with Similar Characteristics

1971-72

Characteristic	Name of Library				
	Mill Valley	Carlsbad	San Marino	Lodi	Visalia
Circulation	183,262	174,494	185,465	193,386	174,516
Number of Reference Questions	6,722	6,186	N.A. (1)	9,880	N.A. (1)
Total Book Stock	75,059	75,160	68,424	72,038	79,938
Volumes Added this year	5,160	6,386	3,931	5,202	5,321
Total Expenditure (\$)	144,922	132,341	170,718	148,854	162,459
Salary Expenditure (\$)	105,659	88,541	126,760	112,926	98,671
Materials Expenditure (\$)	24,053	25,000	20,488	24,062	37,426
Number of Librarians	5	5	5	4	3
Number of Non-Librarians	17	10	7	12	22

(1) Not available

Source: News Notes of California Libraries 68:1 (Winter 1973)

Mill Valley, and even then there are differences. For example, Carlsbad and San Marino are similar with respect to most of the characteristics but differ in total salary expenditure. Lodi is similar except in reference questions answered, and Visalia differs in materials expenditure. Carlsbad and San Marino both serve populations of 10,001 to 25,000, while Lodi and Visalia serve populations in the range 25,001 to 50,000. Staffing comparisons indicate Mill Valley high in numbers of non-librarians relative to Carlsbad, San Marino and Lodi, but low relative to Visalia.

## V. Recommendations

In order to meet the objectives of high quality in library service the Mill Valley Public Library will be faced with difficult decisions. This section of the report summarizes some of the observations and recommendations of the study in hopes that they will aid in management decision making.

### Financing

The library is facing severe financial problems. While municipal funding levels are relatively high for a city the size of Mill Valley, they are relatively low for a city library serving more than double that population; it does not seem fair for the Mill Valley taxpayer to bear the full burden of support. The citizens of Mill Valley are entitled to a continued high level of service. In order to maintain this level of service the library board must take an active role in obtaining additional funds.

### Specific Recommendations

1. The Board should pursue its request for Revenue Sharing funds with the City Council and City Manager.
2. The Board should begin a renegotiation of its contract with the County of Marin through the County Librarian. There

appears to be ample evidence that the city is providing county residents with library service and that present recompense is inadequate. The city should seek adequate compensation for this service from the county.

3. The Board should begin negotiations with the City Manager to establish a reserve requirement less than \$35,000. An amount closer to \$25,000 might be more realistic, in light of past library account balances. Only once in two years did the account reach a \$35,000 deficit.

### Staffing

The most important asset that the library has is its staff. They are hard working, enthusiastic, and dedicated to their jobs. They have been with the library for many years and their experience is extremely valuable. Any action such as dismissal of permanent staff can only have a damaging effect on the morale of the remaining employees and the effectiveness of the library. This strategy should be avoided at all costs. The suggestions incorporated in Section IV above regarding staffing should be interpreted as guidelines for full use of current staff, and not for determining 'inessential' personnel. There are no inessential personnel in the Mill Valley Public Library.

While the financial problems of the library are pressing, alternative interim solutions can be adopted to meet the difficulties. These solutions are no substitute for obtaining adequate financial support from the city and particularly the county.

#### Specific Recommendations

1. The present Acting City Librarian be appointed to the position of City Librarian. It is apparent that the Acting City Librarian is technically competent, and has the support of the staff.
2. All efforts should be made to obtain adequate funding to finance a full time Librarian I position (to replace the promotion of the Librarian II to City Librarian). Lacking the funding, the Library should, on an interim basis, appoint a half time (20 hours per week) Librarian I.
3. When at all possible, Library Aides should be used to staff the circulation desk. This will free the Library Assistants to perform other tasks and reduce the cost of operating the circulation desk.
4. The use of volunteers in the library should be expanded. There are a number of activities that could be initiated or aided by volunteers. These include:
  - a. Assistance to the Children's Librarian. The Children's Librarian is essentially a staff of

one running the entire Children's program.

Carefully selected volunteers could be advantageously used in this area and the results would be of considerable benefit to the community.

- b. Newsletters. Volunteers could be used to develop newsletters to be distributed to the community and announcements for the local press.
- c. Outreach programs could be initiated to serve people not currently receiving library service.
- d. Film and Lecture series<sup>1</sup> could be organized by volunteers.

#### Other General Recommendations

- I. Communication.
  - a. The Library Board should hold periodic meetings with the full library staff to discuss problems and issues raised by both parties.
  - b. The City Librarian and City Manager should hold periodic discussions to clarify their respective positions and improve communication.
  - c. The County and City librarians should hold periodic discussions on items of mutual interest;

the agreement between Mill Valley and Marin County should be continually reassessed.

2. Library Board

- a. The Library Board in consultation with the City Librarian should take an active role in supporting library activities with the City Council and City Manager. This should be a year-round activity.
- b. The Library Board should monitor the performance of the City Librarian to insure that further financial crises are avoided.

3. The Friends of The Library organization should considerably expand its role. It should aim toward providing additional financial security to the library. In addition, it should broaden the base of community involvement in it and encourage membership from all sectors of the community.

4. Library Statistics. In order to justify continued support, the library needs to keep an adequate statistical portrait of its performance. Certain modifications are suggested.

- a. Record the city of residence of people asking reference questions.
- b. Record the number of reference questions asked, by time of day they are asked.
- c. Sample circulation transactions to determine the time of day that they occur.

- d. Request the County Librarian to undertake periodic analyses of the circulation records of the library. Information to be gathered would include types of materials borrowed and demographic data about the users of the library.

#### 5. Technical Processing

- a. The workload involved in the implementation of the new circulation system is beginning to taper off. In order to insure minimum difficulties in ordering and validating plastic cards, the Library and County staff should hold meetings to agree on standards for quality control of the cards. This has been a serious problem in the past.
- b. The proposal by the County of Marin for a Microfiche card catalog system should be carefully evaluated before any commitment is made. Evaluation should consider, at the minimum, user acceptance of the system, cost, loss of local control of card catalog, and frequency of update of the catalog.
- c. The library should actively commit itself to support of the technical processing activities of the North Bay Cooperative Library System. Preliminary analysis indicates that this system is highly beneficial to the library.