

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 21, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 73 : BURKE LIBRARY TWO YEAR OPERATIONAL STATUS REPORT

At the February 10, 2004, Council meeting, Vice Mayor Pepper asked about the status report on the Burke Library, and the need for more library books, more tables, bicycle racks and fixing potholes in the driveway at Burke.

This memo transmits the report from the Director of the Alexandria Libraries, Patrick O'Brien, in response to Council's request for a status report on patron usage of the Burke Library two years after its renovation and reopening in March 2002.

According to the Library report, Burke opened with a collection of 18,000 books that has since grown to 32,500 books. In the next couple of years, the collection will continue to build to the 45,000 level, the same capacity that the original Burke was designed to hold.

The Burke Library staff affirms that the facility is equipped with sufficient tables to accommodate patron usage and additional tables are brought out of storage as needed. Burke is in the process of obtaining bicycle racks and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services has recently completed repaving their driveway.

The Burke Library report is attached (Attachment 1) and also includes results from a user satisfaction survey taken at Burke Library in January 2004, as well as a report of the use of this facility by the Alexandria City Public Schools. Both organizations recommend continuing the shared use of this facility.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Alexandria Library

MEMORANDUM

OMB
ALEXANDRIA VIRGINIA
2004 APR -9 A 9:43

DATE: April 7, 2004

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Patrick M. O'Brien, Director of Libraries



SUBJECT: BURKE LIBRARY TWO YEAR OPERATIONAL REPORT

The following report on patron use and satisfaction with the services of the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch was requested by the Alexandria City Council when the reopening of the facility was approved. The report is formulated from usage statistics, a January 2004 ten day user satisfaction survey, input from the original members of the advisory group of residents who helped plan the services and features of the branch, and input from members of the Friends of the Burke Branch and the branch library staff.

Burke Branch Two Year Report

After being closed for more than two years, the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, newly renovated, refurbished, restocked and restaffed, reopened to the public in March 2002. The 10,000 sq. ft. branch operates on the upper, street level floor. The Alexandria City Public School System's Office of Instructional Technology and Office of English as a Second Language operates on the lower level.

From the library card registrations, usage statistics, and the results of a January 2004 patron survey, the library succeeded in fulfilling the neighborhood community needs and satisfied those needs very well. In the first year of operation the branch issued 1,962 new library cards to residents and another 2,180 cards through February 2004. The branch circulated 86,196 items to more than 105,000 visitors during its full fiscal year operation from July 2002 through June 2003. Through the first half of this fiscal year, while use in other branches is relatively flat, Burke's visitors are up by 19% and circulation is up by 21% over the previous

year. Statistics through February 2004 indicate that Burke has now leveled off with a monthly average of about 10,000 visitors.

With a collection one third the size of the Barrett (Queen St.) Branch, the Burke Branch generates two thirds the circulation of Barrett. Burke opened with a collection of 18,000 that has grown to 32,500, thanks, in part, to former Council Member Bill Cleveland's last minute "add" of \$15,000 for more books for Burke in this year's budget. The collection will continue to build to the 45,000 level, the same capacity that the original Burke and the Duncan Library were designed to hold. The accompanying statistical bar charts showing Burke's place among the four branches clearly indicate that it is approaching the use levels that the Library anticipated during planning.

Another measure of use suggested by one of the Burke Advisory Group members is the average percent of the library's collection in circulation or checked out for home use. Based on the February 2004 circulation figures, Burke topped all of the four libraries. 17.8% of the Burke collection was checked out followed by Duncan with 14.7%, Beatley with 11% and Barrett with 9.8%.

The 14 computer lab, the meeting room, and children's programming have proven to be very popular with the community. With an automated sign up system for the computers, statistics show that they are all in use more than half of the time the branch is open. A variety of free computer classes are offered in the lab every month. They are always filled to capacity. Heavy student use of the branch occurs daily after Hammond Middle School dismissal. An after school homework help and mentoring program began with the 2003-2004 school year.

From a cost effectiveness and efficiency point of view, overall branch efficiency may be measured in two ways. Measuring from cost per walk-in user or cost per circulation, based on the first half of FY04, Burke ranks second lowest in cost per patron visit at \$4.18 and second highest in cost per circulation at \$4.84. These figures are mutually exclusive, not cumulative. The same average operational cost per month is used for both measures. The Library's average cost per patron visit through the first half of this fiscal year is \$4.58 and the cost per circulation is \$3.82. An operation expenditure comparison for the branches and Library is appended.

The Burke Branch conducted a patron satisfaction survey for 10 days at the beginning of January 2004. Some 154 patrons took the time to fill out the 23 question form. Bar charts with all results are appended to this report. Many respondents also added written comments and concerns, overwhelmingly favorable and thoughtful. All comments, unedited, are appended as well.

Overall results from the survey show that the Burke Branch is satisfying patron needs very well. The following are some highlights. 50 % indicated that they use the branch weekly and an unusual 14% say they use it daily. 88% responded that the branch was extremely or very important to them and 92% found the staff to be extremely or very helpful and courteous. 88% said hours of service meet their need extremely or very well. While 51% said the book collection met their needs very or extremely well, some 41% indicated it only met their needs somewhat. 39% were very or extremely satisfied with the periodicals collection with 25% being somewhat satisfied. 36% were very or extremely satisfied with the reference collection with 27% somewhat satisfied. 78% were very or extremely satisfied with circulating service and 65% were extremely or very satisfied with the library's reference service.

While only 55% indicated that they were extremely or very satisfied with the children's services, that has to be balanced against 41% to whom the service did not apply. The same holds true for the 53% extremely or very satisfied with the Internet and software service, 34% responded that it did not apply. 79% indicated that they were extremely or very satisfied with the library's online services. Interestingly, a third of the users indicated that they use the library's online services from home or work, a clear indication that these 24/7 services are becoming an integral part of modern library service. 54% were extremely happy with reference librarians' answers and 39% were very satisfied with them.

93% of the respondents indicated that they use other libraries besides the Burke Branch. Of those respondents 67.5 % also use the Beatley Central Library, 25.2% use Barrett (Queen St.) and 11.4% use Duncan. Because of the branch's proximity to neighboring counties, 22.8% also use the Arlington libraries and 19.55% use the Fairfax libraries.

Finally, and of most importance to the Library, respondents were asked about **overall satisfaction with the Burke Branch** and 41% responded extremely, 47%

very, 6% somewhat. The Burke Branch and the Friends hosted a gala two year birthday party on Saturday, March 6 with storytelling, face painting, a book sale, music by the Irish Breakfast Band, authors, and refreshments. More than 300 were in attendance and the comment that was heard most often was, "This is what a neighborhood library is all about."

With ample space to serve the community and shelving room for the collection to expand to capacity over the next five years, the Library strongly recommends continuing operation of the Burke Branch in its current configuration and continuing to share the facility with the ACPS. An ACPS assessment of their use of the facility is appended.

Appendices

1. Operating Expenditure Comparison
2. Comments or Concerns about Burke Library Services
3. Burke Library Survey Results - Bar Charts (16 pages)
4. Burke Library Usage Statistics March 2002 to February 2003
 - ▶ Circulation
 - ▶ Patron Visits
 - ▶ Children's Programs
 - ▶ Children's Programs Attendance
5. Burke Library Usage Statistics March 2003 to February 2004
 - ▶ Circulation
 - ▶ Patron Visits
 - ▶ Children's Programs
 - ▶ Children's Programs Attendance
6. Alexandria City Public Schools Burke Report
7. Burke Branch Advisory Group - February 18, 2004 Meeting Attendees

Operating Expenditure Comparison

FY04 YTD Expenditures as of December 31, 2003

	Barrett	Beatley	Burke	Duncan	TOTAL
FY04 YTD Personnel Exps.	313,755.02	657,088.33	169,184.47	209,118.42	1,349,146.24
FY04 YTD Non-Personnel Exps.	120,663.58	325,003.85	73,088.17	59,933.17	578,688.77
TOTAL Expenditures	434,418.60	982,092.18	242,272.64	269,051.59	1,927,835.01
Avg. Expenditure/Month	72,403.10	163,682.03	40,378.77	44,841.93	321,305.84
Total YTD Patron Visits	75,347	192,277	58,022	95,528	421,174
Average Monthly Patron Visits	12,558	32,046	9,670	15,921	70,196
Average Monthly Cost/Patron Visit	\$5.77	\$5.11	\$4.18	\$2.82	\$4.58
Total YTD Circulation	73,760	290,922	50,108	89,676	504,466
Average Monthly Circulation	12,293	48,487	8,351	14,946	84,078
Average Monthly Cost/Circulation	\$5.89	\$3.38	\$4.84	\$3.00	\$3.82

Comments or Concerns about Burke Library Services

CATEGORIES:

General :

1. It's such a satisfaction to have Burke back in our community; I felt quite lost without it.
2. I'm glad this library is here. It contributes to a greater quality of life for me and my family.
3. I'm so happy to have our neighborhood library open again!
4. The library is very convenient as to where I live.
5. We love having this library back in our neighborhood!
6. My child is in 1st grade, and this is our library of choice.
7. We are so thrilled you are here. The library is a really cozy, quiet and welcoming place for us. We home school so we need you! We have a 1st grade son.
8. We love you here, Stay!
9. Successful, Knowledge
10. I enjoy the Burke Library
11. Keep up the good work! (3)
12. Outstanding addition to the community, not only for me, but for the intermediate students at Hammond across the street.
13. I love the Burke library!
14. Please keep this location open! Very convenient!
15. In general, Burke library is good and satisfiable.
16. Location is fine for me and children, and services too.

() - # of times comment repeated.

17. Glad to have this library here!
18. You are very good. Go ahead.
19. I love coming here weekly.
20. Excellent, Thank you.
21. Wow!
22. Happy New Year!
23. Love libraries!!
24. Please continue funding them!! These libraries are an invaluable resource for the community.
25. Library is too small.
26. It should be open on holidays.
27. The library should be open on Sundays, for it is on this day most people have time to appreciate the services of the library most. At least 10 am to 5 pm.
28. Any chance of patrons "petitioning" for Sunday hours?
29. Wish it could be open on Sundays.
30. Library hours should be extended.
31. Would like Sunday 1pm to 5 pm.
32. Need longer hours on Friday and Saturday and open on Sundays.
33. I very much regret the change from the recent Alexandria Library system and the lack of public input into the changes. I cannot express adequately my anger at the persons responsible.

Staff:

1. Helpful
2. They're quite efficient, considering the fact that I just moved in and find it easy to move around. Keep it up!
3. The staff is very helpful.

4. Extremely friendly, helpful, and surprisingly large and varied collection.
5. I enjoy being able to talk to Burke's international multi-ethnic staff. It's such a healthy contrast to the provincialism of much of the U.S.A. today.
6. The program for children " My 1st Story Time" is the best. The lady that conducts the program, Mrs. Barnett is a great teacher for the children.
7. Excellent librarians. Very courteous and helpful. Children's librarian is wonderful.
8. Library staff who phone to notify us of books requested are always professional and helpful.
9. You do have excellent instructors! Please offer Microsoft Office.
10. Sometimes desk staff closes 5 minutes before the hour.

Collection:

1. System is very responsive to purchase suggestions.
2. I am learning to read Italian on my own. Collections at Burke & Queen are especially useful.
3. I would like to thank you for the great service in this library for all team members, also I hope that I will see periodicals from other languages in the library.
4. Has small collection of books.
5. Recommended books (New Fiction & Non-Fiction) should be on wall shelves. Extremely difficult to see all books.
6. New books by popular mystery writers hard to find, if here at all.
7. Not enough mysteries.
8. Books on tape too often missing a tape, mixed with another book, or damaged. Little interest shown when this is mentioned to staff.
9. More Books on Tape, Please!
10. Bring more movies.
11. More audio-visual collection on Languages and Fine Arts. (Operas etc.) would be nice.
12. More Books on CD please.

13. Few talking books for adults or children. Never recovered from the closure period.

14. Staff needs Customer Service Training. Burke has a lousy collection of everything. But it's across the street from my apartment so I use it.

Services/ Procedures:

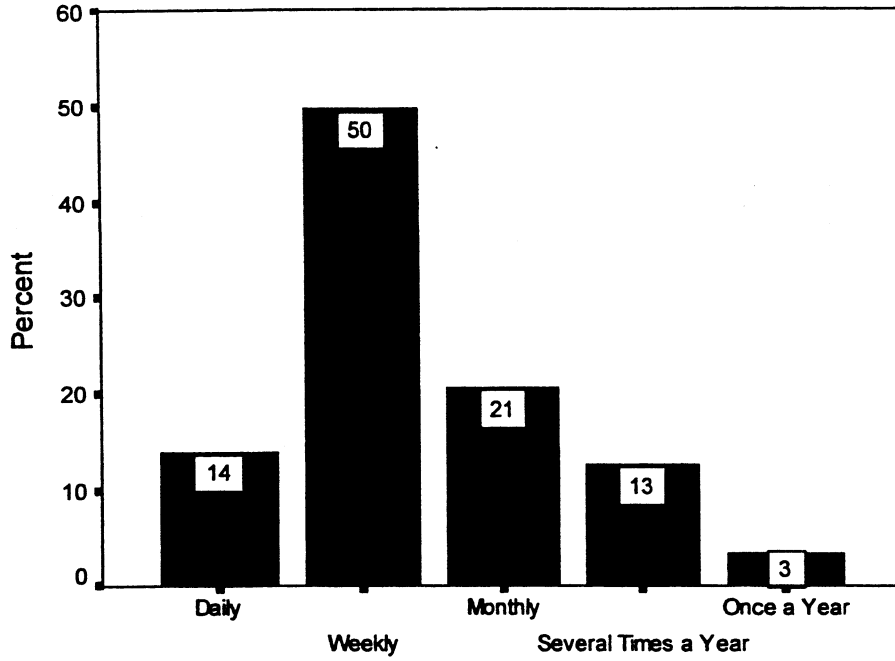
1. I am satisfied with all the services and so I am grateful.
2. The reserve system is very good.
3. This library service has very much satisfactory to me for the past one year I have been visiting it.
4. I love Burke! Our family uses it frequently. The only complaint I have (very minor) is that sometimes it seems to take the computer a while to process returned books.
5. I was billed for an overdue book of which I had returned one month before. I called and was told they can't find it. I ask the librarian to go look again and sure enough it was there. She said it was on top of some shelf. I was disappointed because I was asked to pay. If it wasn't found, then what?
6. My only complaint is that I check out more than one book. Only one due date slip is printed. Prefer one for each book.
7. Do not like the "Books Due" printout. Like to have card in each book. However, not a big concern since I can go online to see what is due.
8. I like this library a lot and come generally 2 -3 times a month. Maybe the Internet sessions a day could be repeatable after a certain time a day or before a certain time. Whatever are one hour usage...if any.
9. As people come to read or use the computer/ internet facilities, a reasonable quietness/ tranquility should be observed. In the computer room, kids bunch up and make noise. And during the evening (5 pm - 9 pm) when the library is full, the security are not there to help the librarians. Their services should be extended until the library closes.
10. Some kids are noisy and cell phone rings in the computer room.
11. The computer area is always noisy. There seems to be a lack of adult presence in this library. The high school kids are somewhat loud and disturbing in this library. The Central Library and Duncan are more controlled than Burke.
12. Library too noisy – Lacks " Library Atmosphere" – study room availability an improvement. Periodical area often looks messy.

13. I really enjoy but sometimes it gets a little loud.
14. Make children behave or ask them (and their parents) to leave!
15. The Internet access, online databases, and other software applications seem to be down a lot. You need some work in this area.. When it works, I use online services at home and work.
16. Today you ran out of server connections for awhile.
17. Prefer Burke Library over Beatley Library. Smaller and more compact- easier to find stuff. Atmosphere of a neighborhood library. Staff very friendly and helpful. Would be helpful to have a better sign in situation when Internet computers are all taken. Also need computers like at Beatley to tell you the status of Internet computers and when they will become free.
18. Need more computers.

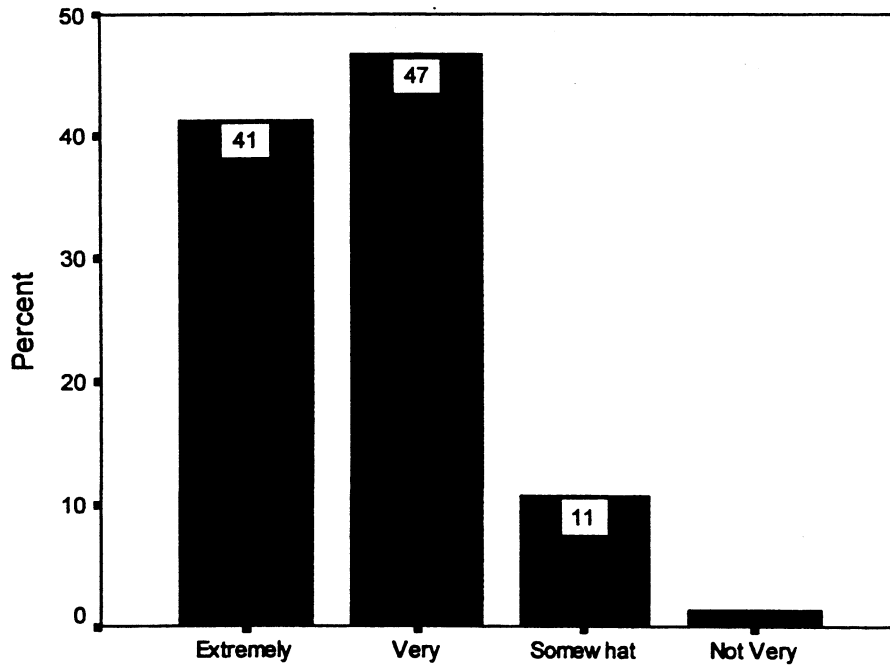
Building:

1. It needs plain tables where you can do writing and research- not with just computers which take up space.
2. Could use air-conditioned computer room; shades for windows; and more computers.
3. State a definite date when School Board will be forced to give up bottom space and return it to the library. Lack of space (with only one floor) eliminated the many wonderful children's movies and stories. No room for books. Thousands of people petitioned to reopen this library- but it is so incredible limited now compared to what it used to be. Make the schools move out.

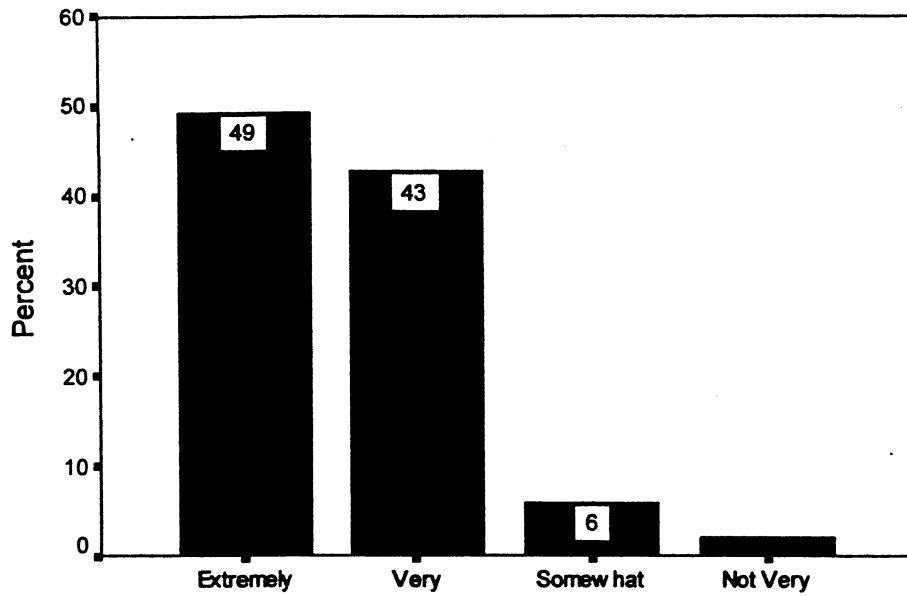
How often do you use the Burke Library?



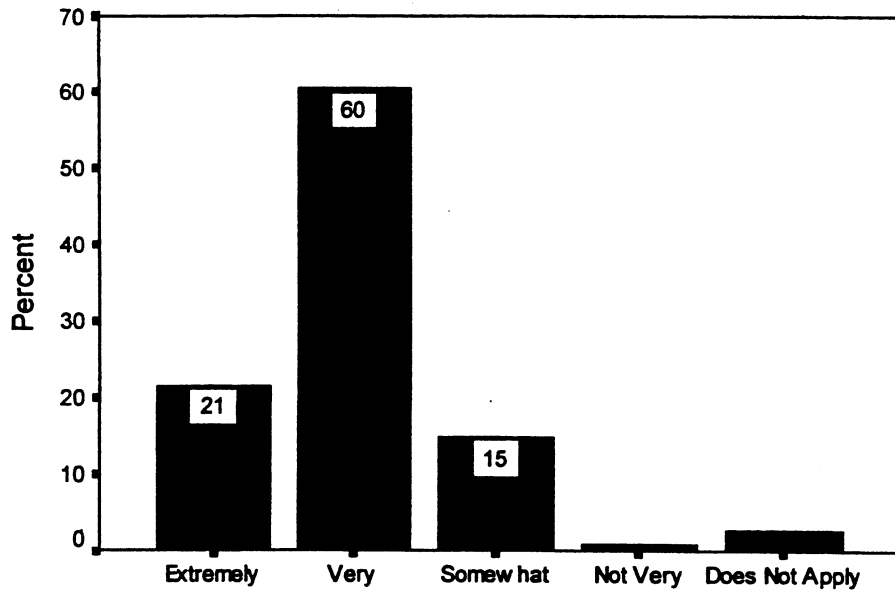
How important is the Burke Library to you?



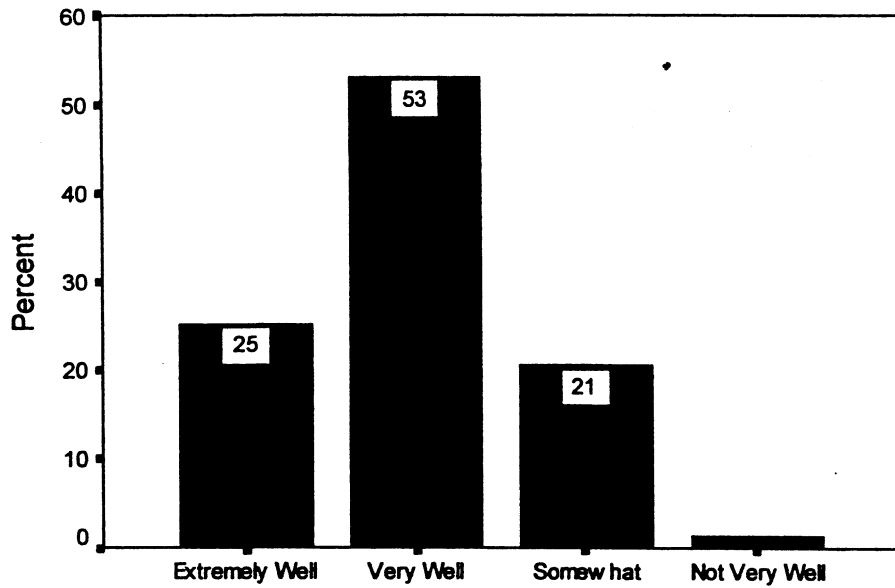
How helpful and courteous are our Librarians/Staff?



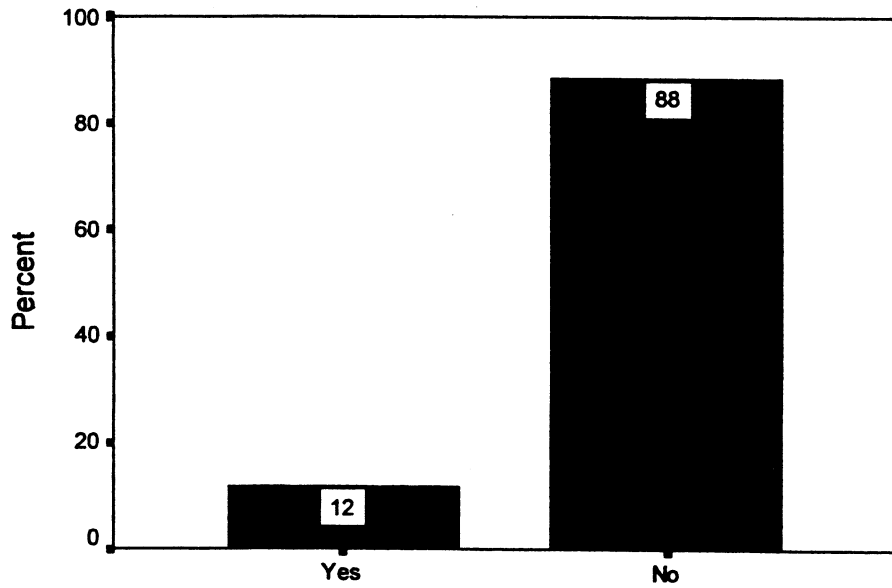
How helpful are our library displays and directional signs?



How well do the Burke Library Hours
meet your needs?

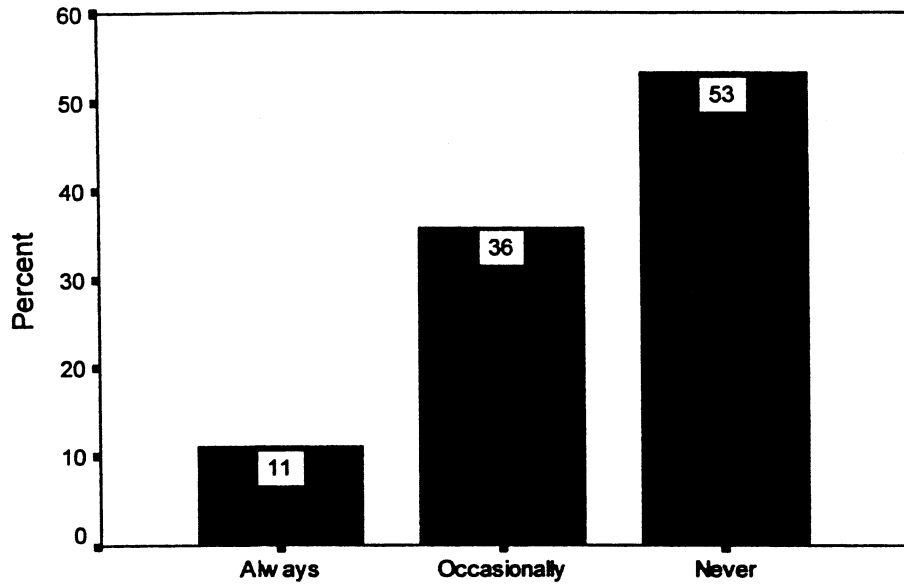


Are you a member of our
"Friends of the Burke Library" group?

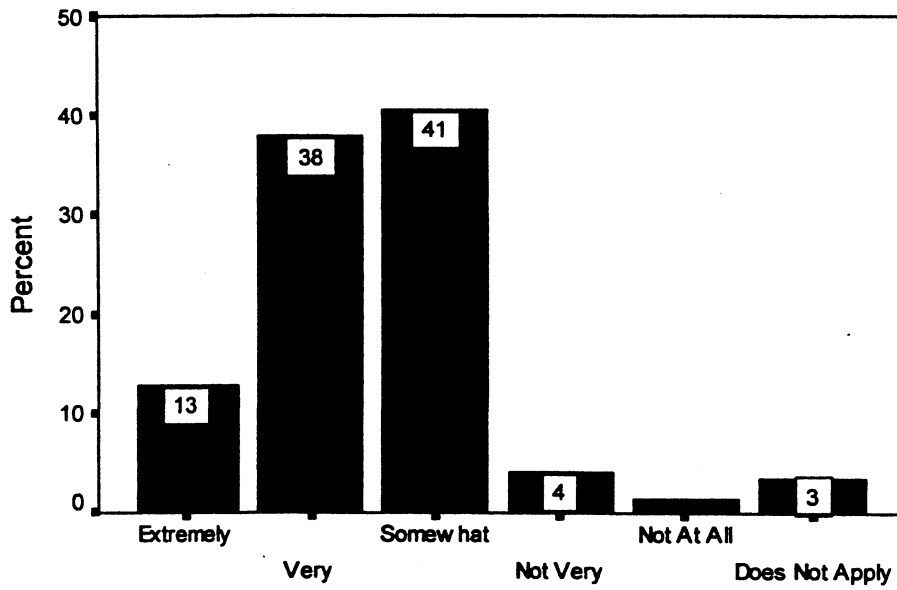


Burke Holds a book sale twice a year.

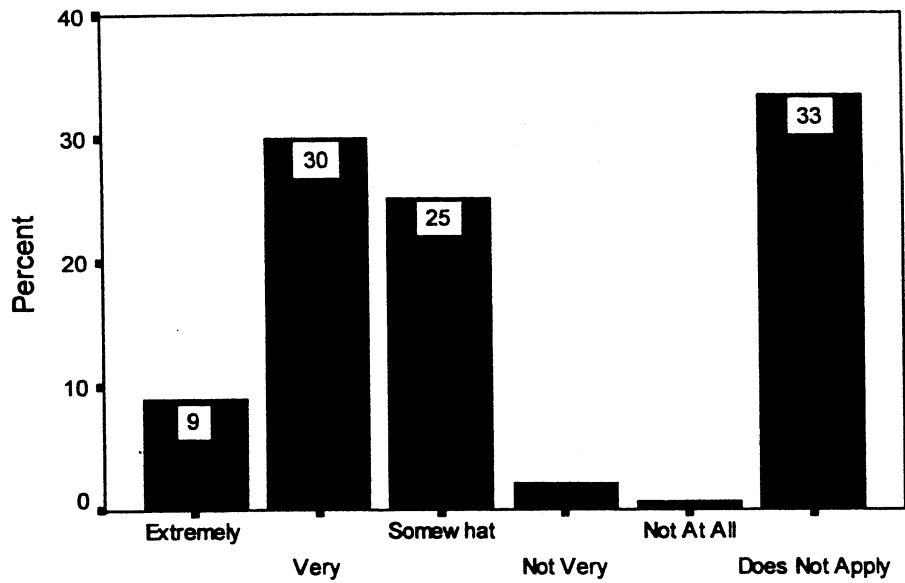
How often do you attend?



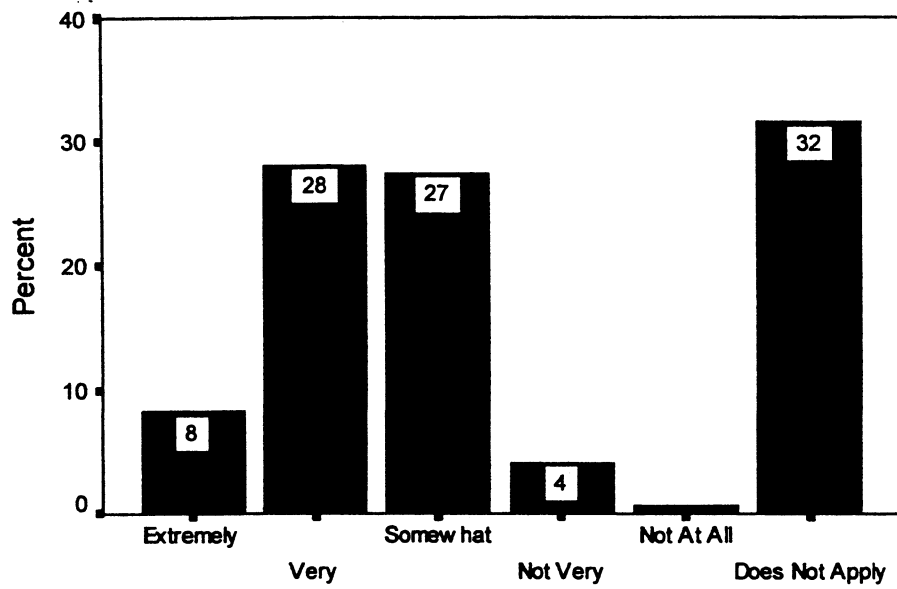
How satisfied are you with our book collection?



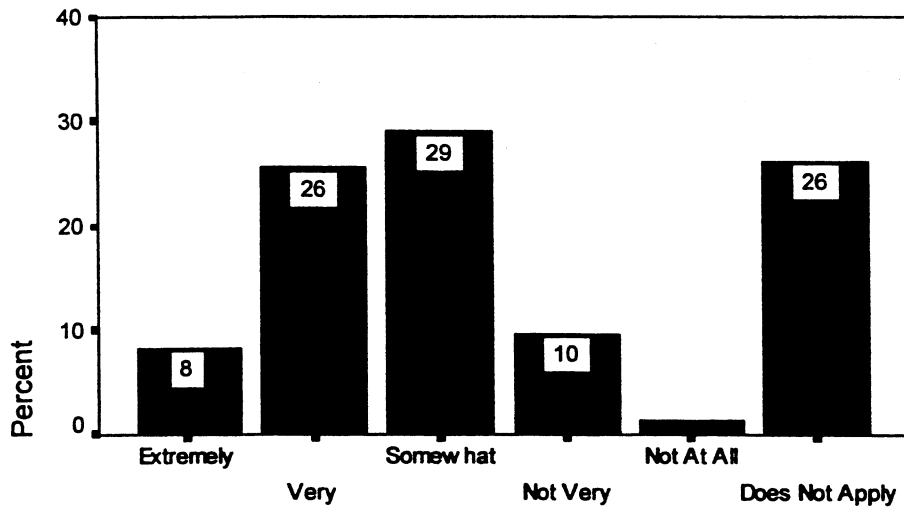
How satisfied are you with our
periodicals collection?



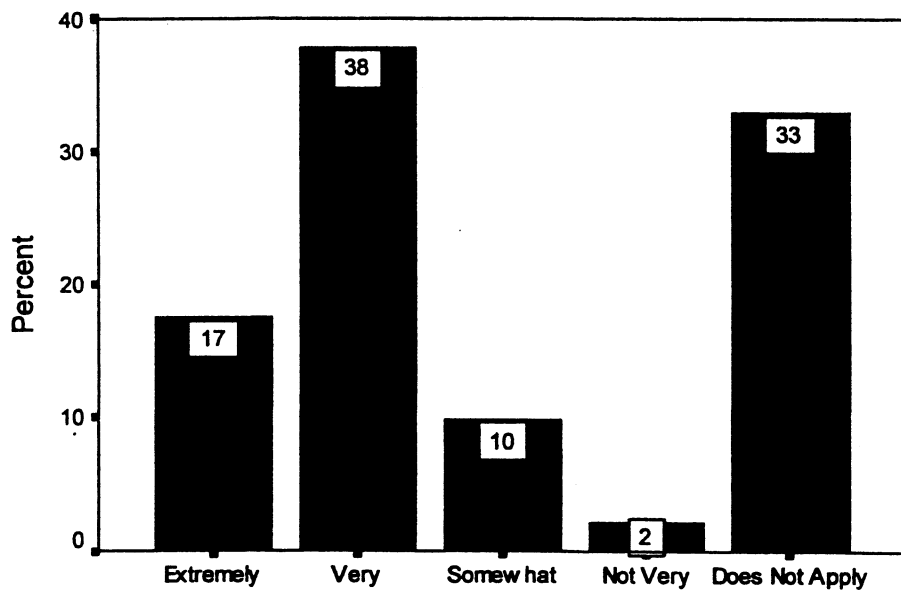
How satisfied are you with our
reference collection?



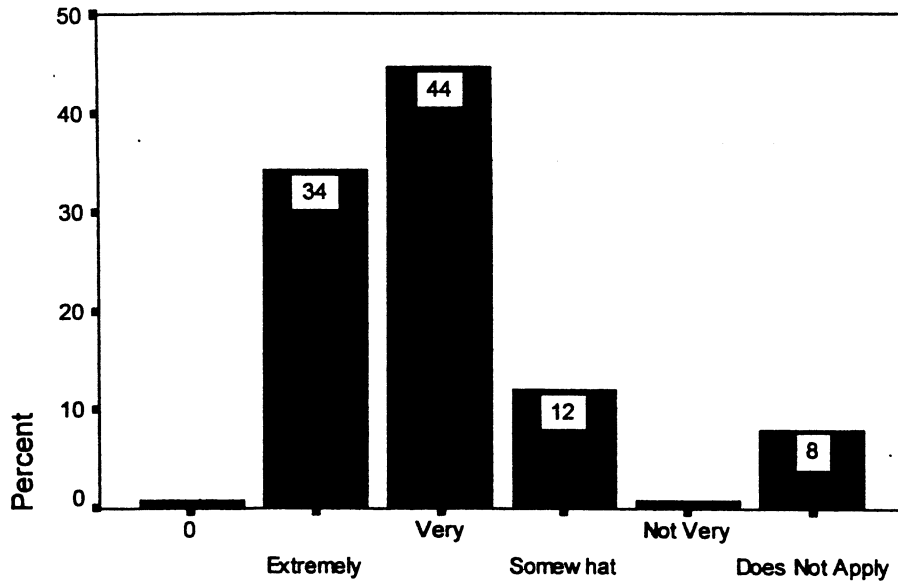
How satisfied are you with our
audio-visual collection
(CD's, tapes, videos, etc.)



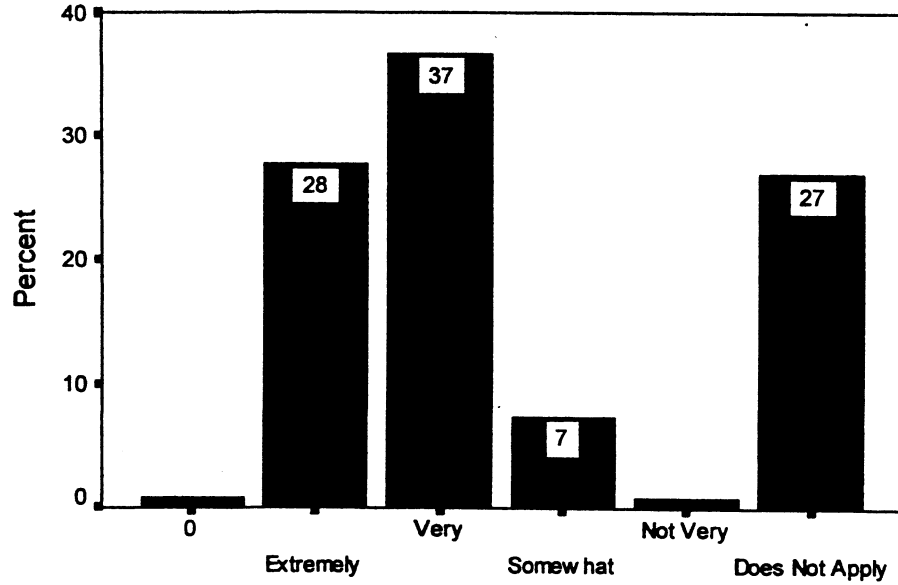
How satisfied are you with our
online databases?



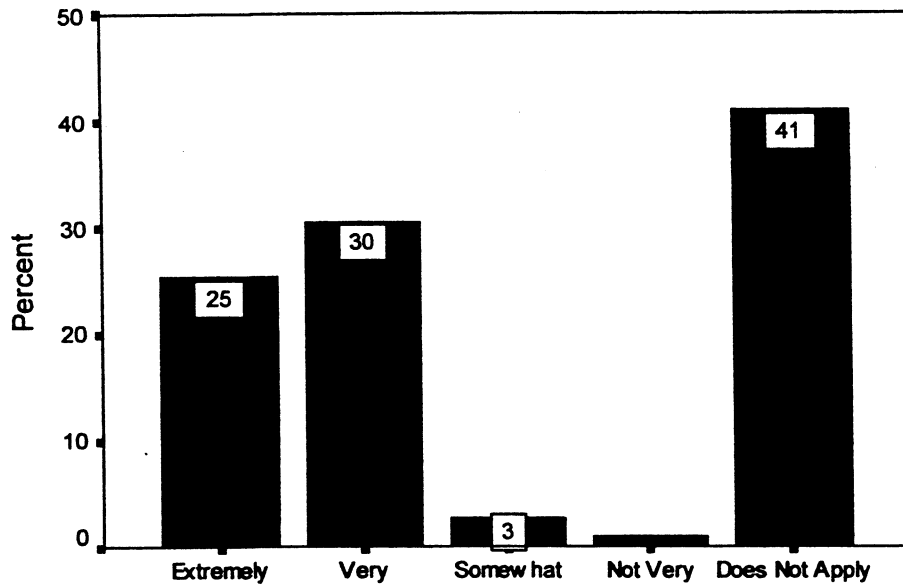
How satisfied are you with our
circulation services?



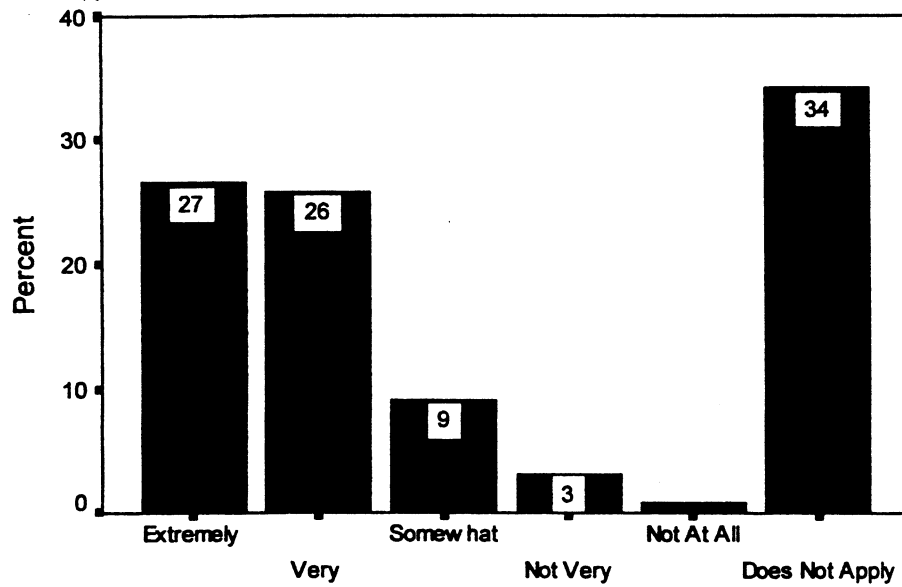
How satisfied are you with our
reference services?



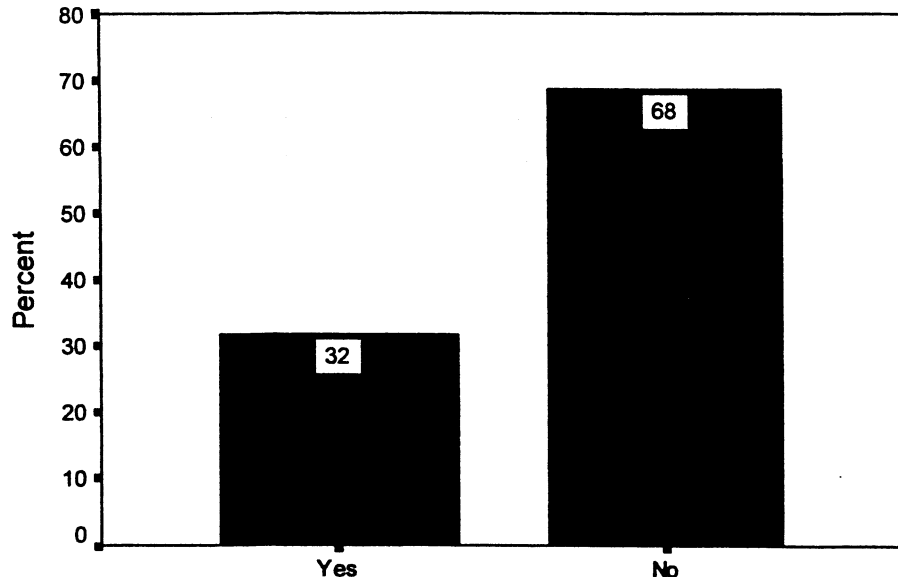
How satisfied are you with our children's services?



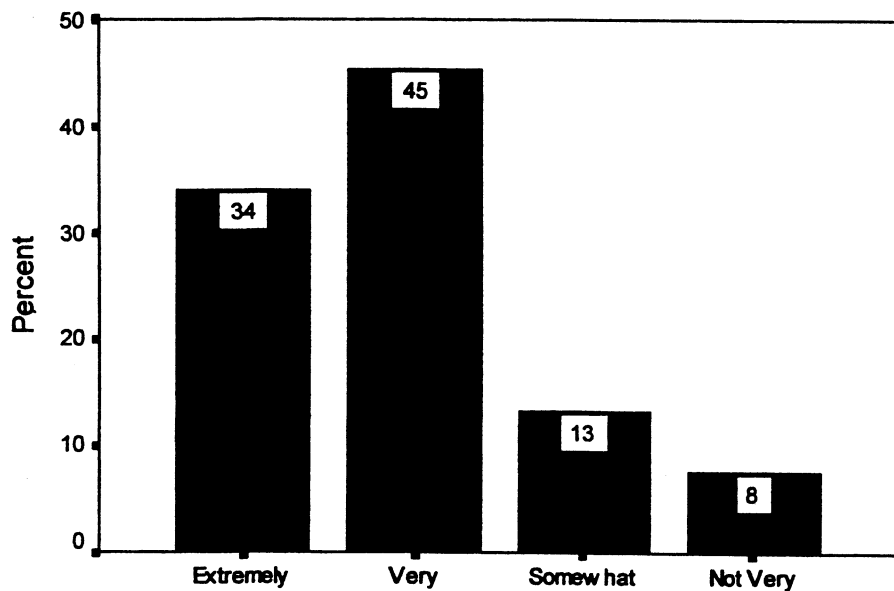
How satisfied are you with our public Internet access and other software?



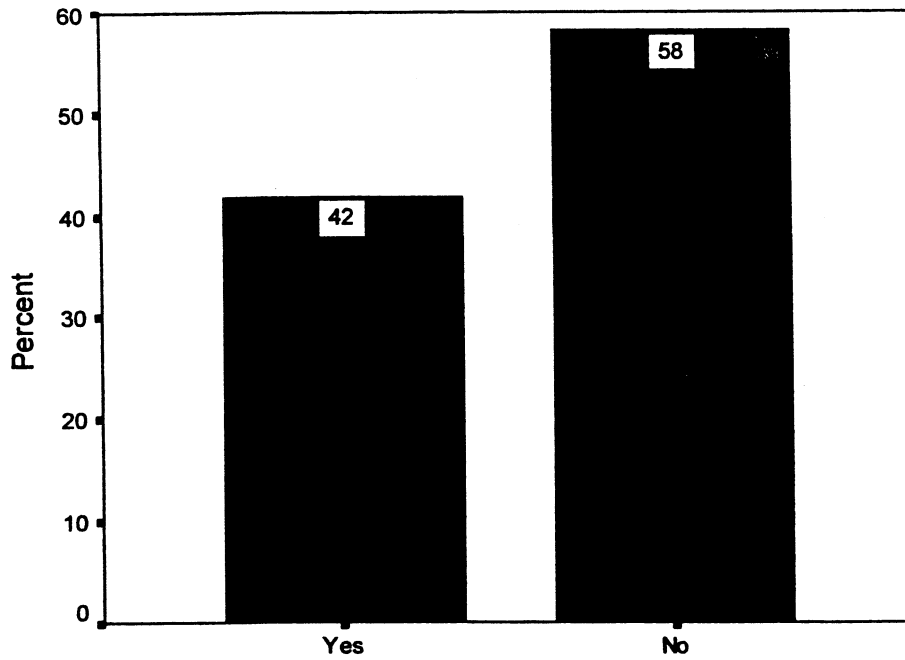
Do you use our online services
from home or work?



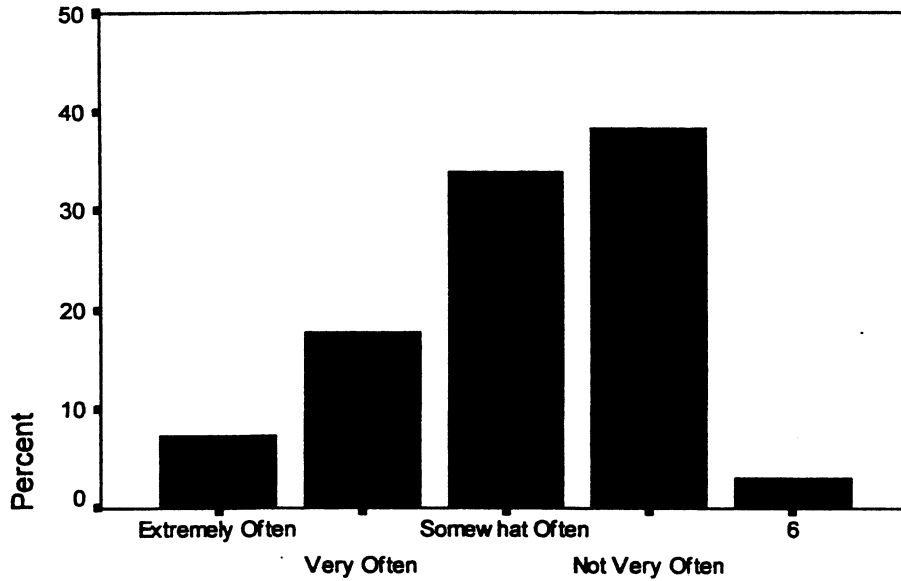
How satisfied are you with our
online services?



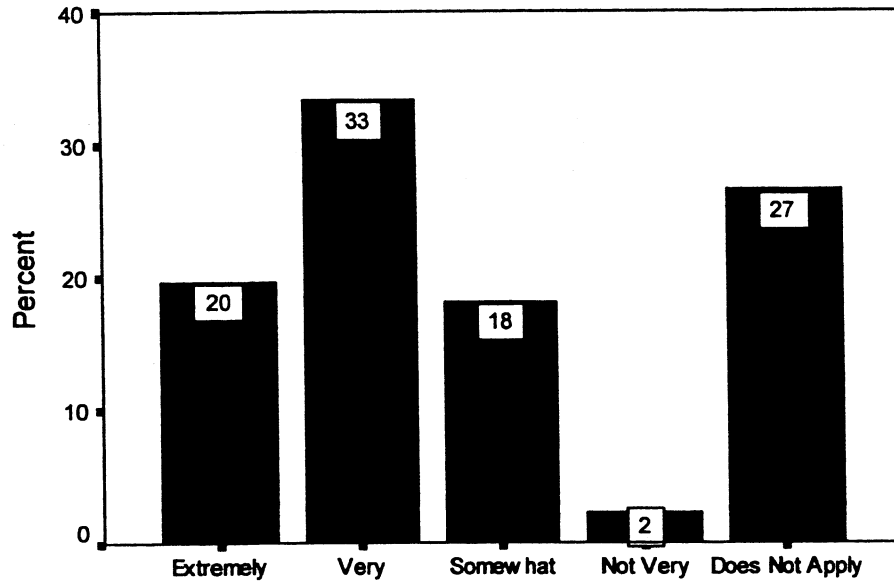
Have you used our reserve system?



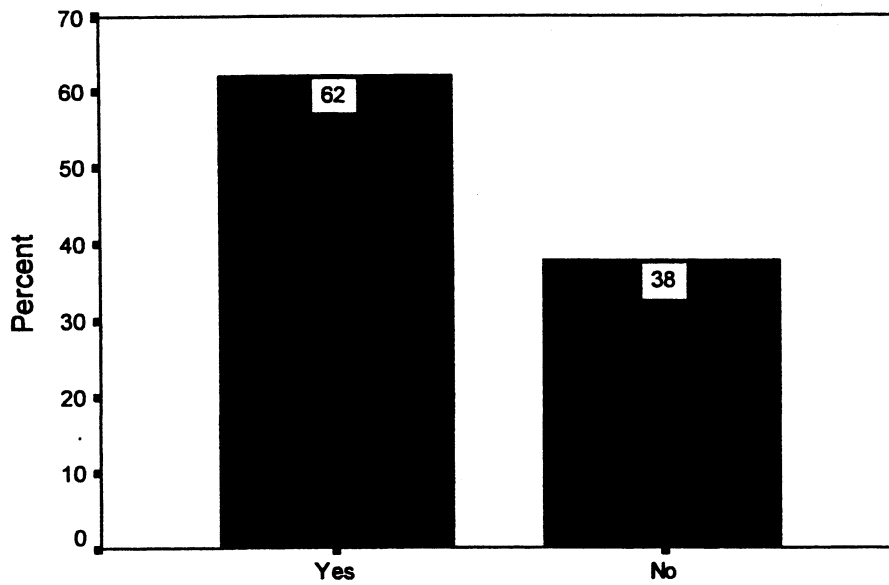
How often do you use our reserve system?



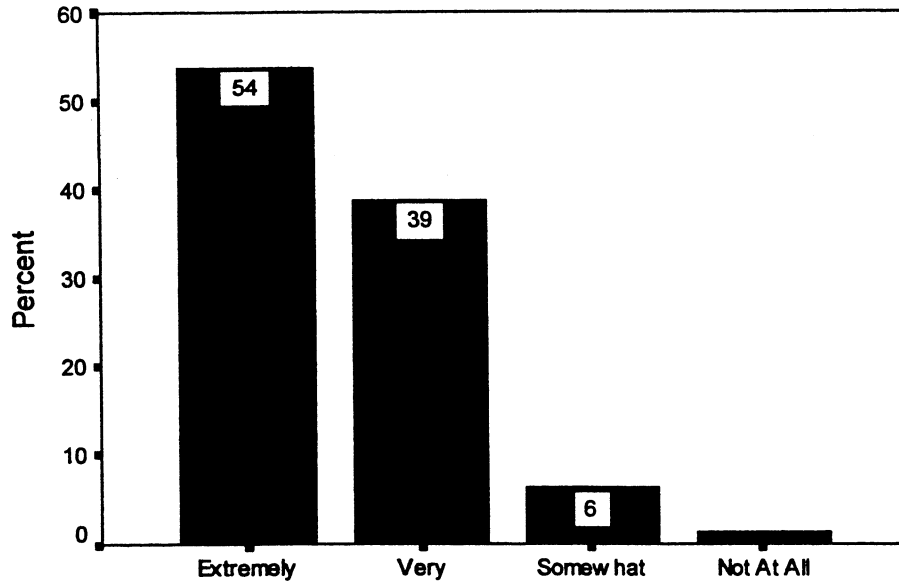
How easy is it for you to find materials in the library in order to answer your questions?



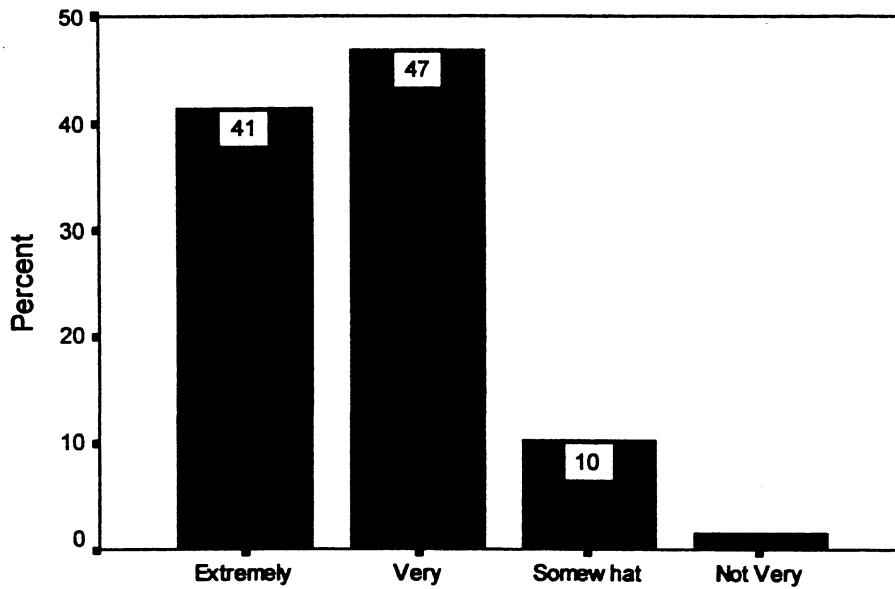
Do you ask our Reference Librarians for help?



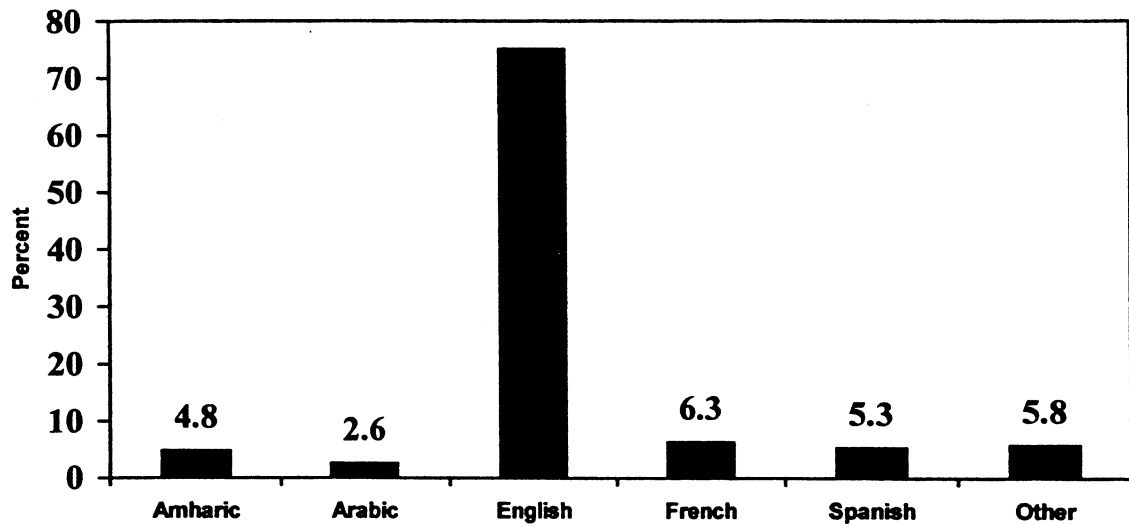
How satisfied are you with the answers that our Reference Librarians give you?



How satisfied are you with the Burke Library in general?

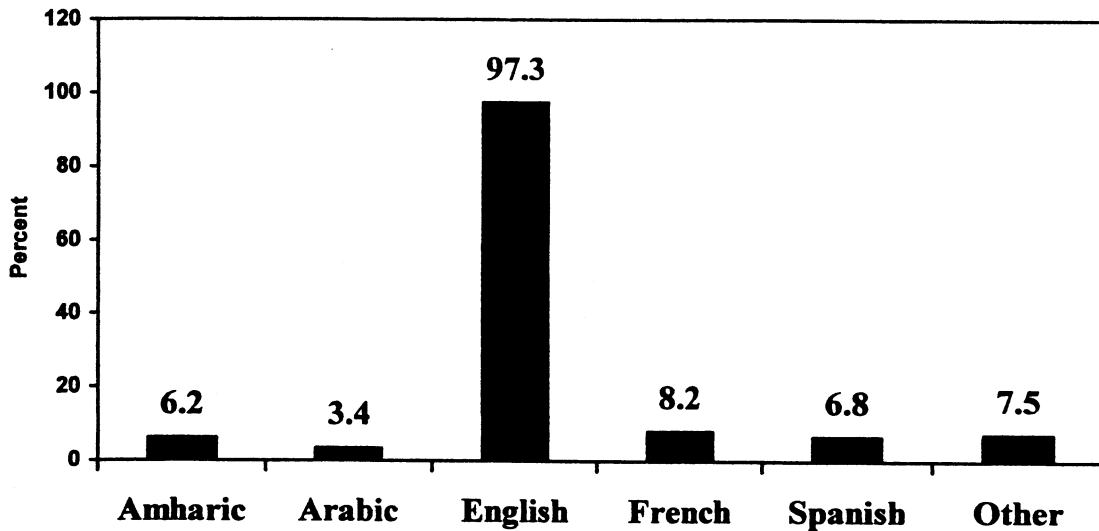


What languages do you enjoy reading?



Percents based on number of responses.

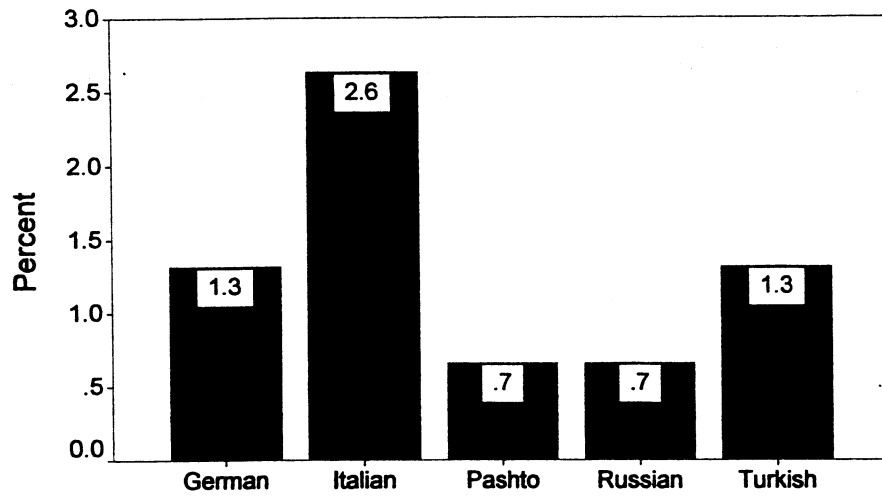
What languages do you enjoy reading?



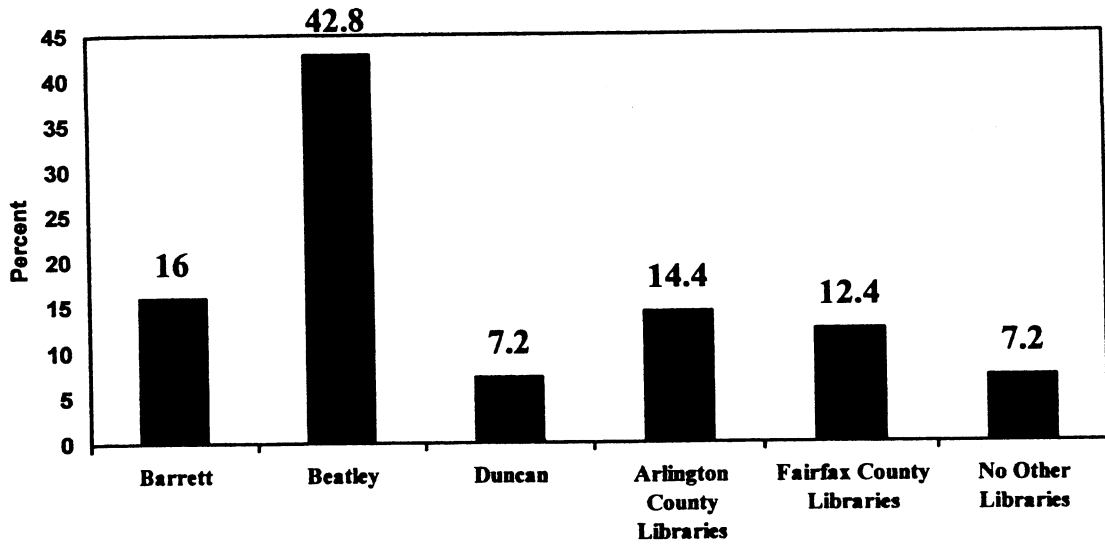
Percents based on the total number of respondents.

Languages written in from those who chose
the "other" category to the question:

What languages do you enjoy reading?

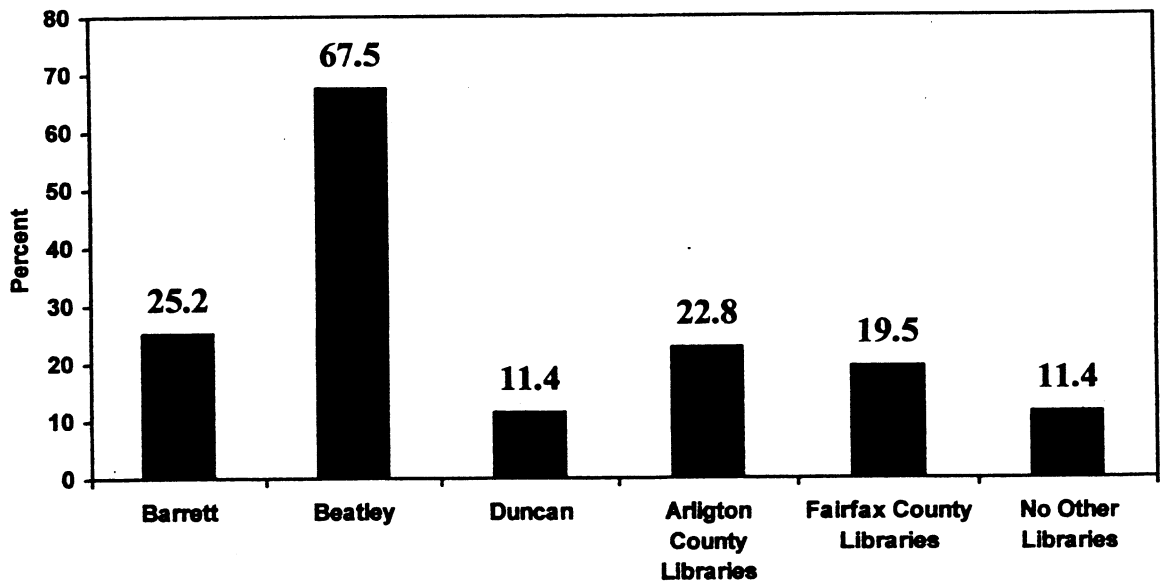


What other libraries do you use?



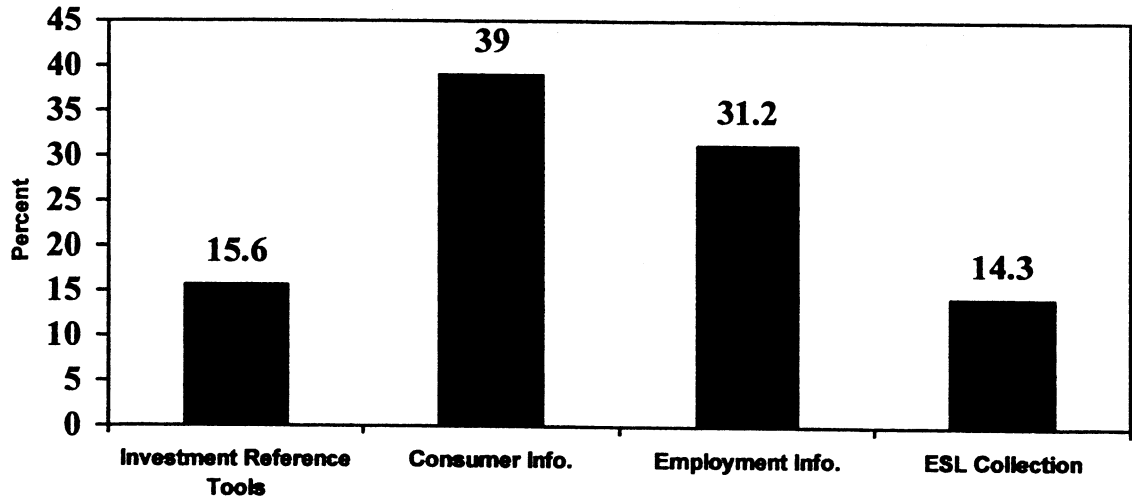
Percents based on total number of responses.

What other libraries do you use?



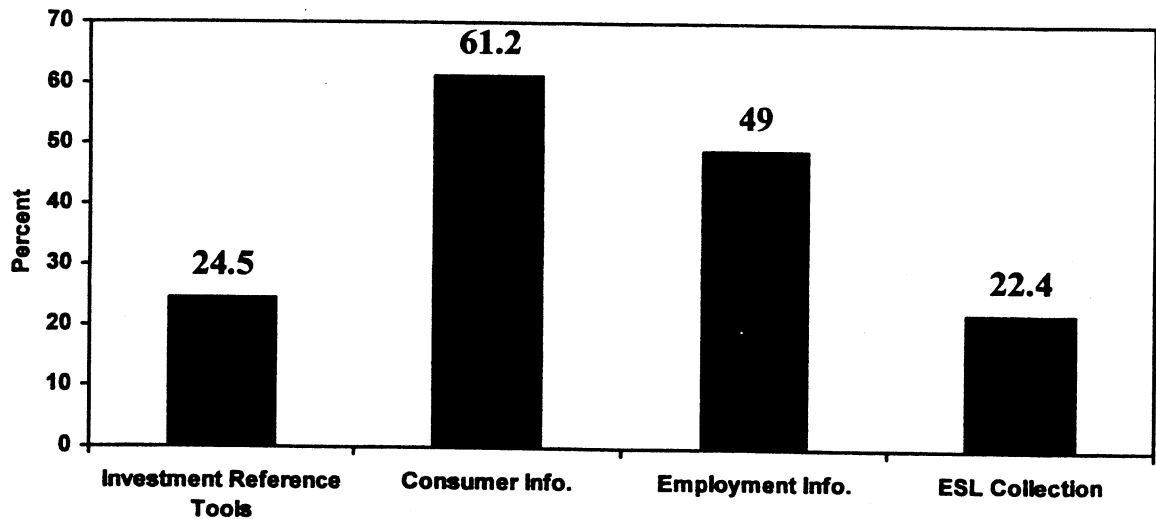
Percents based on number of respondents

Do You Use the Following Special Collections?



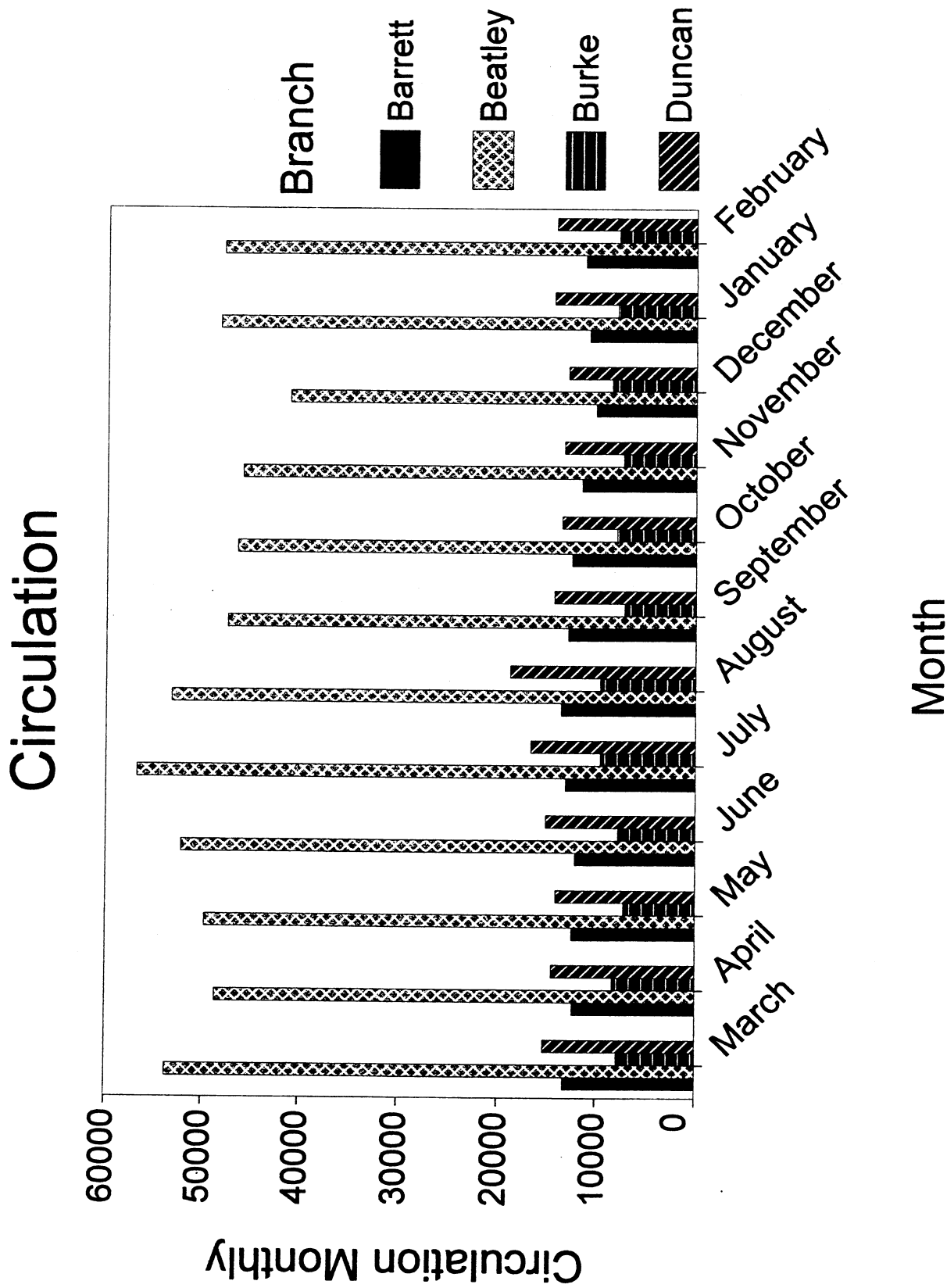
Percents based on number of responses.

Do you use the following special collections?



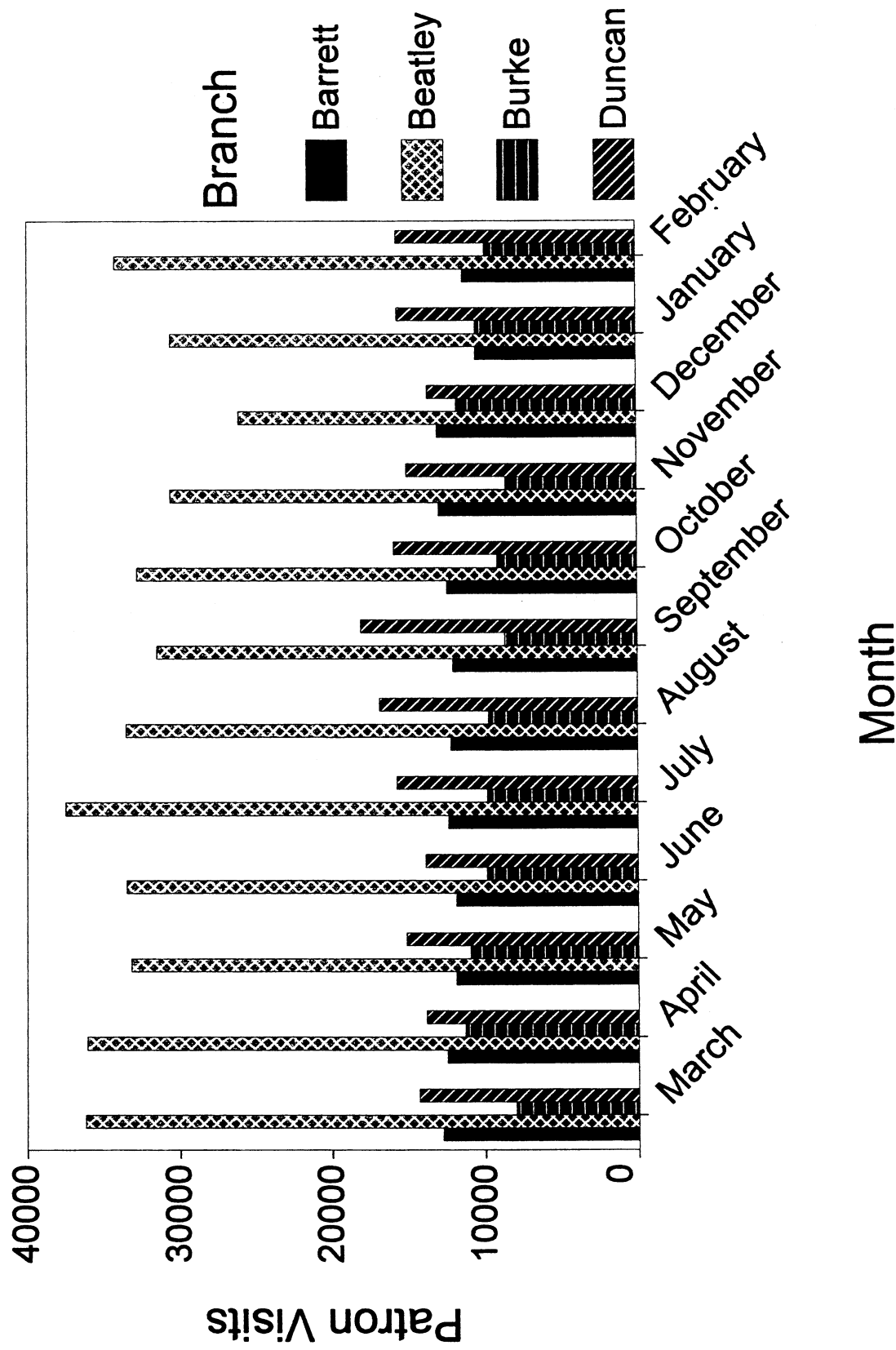
Percents based on number of respondents.

March 2003 to February 2004



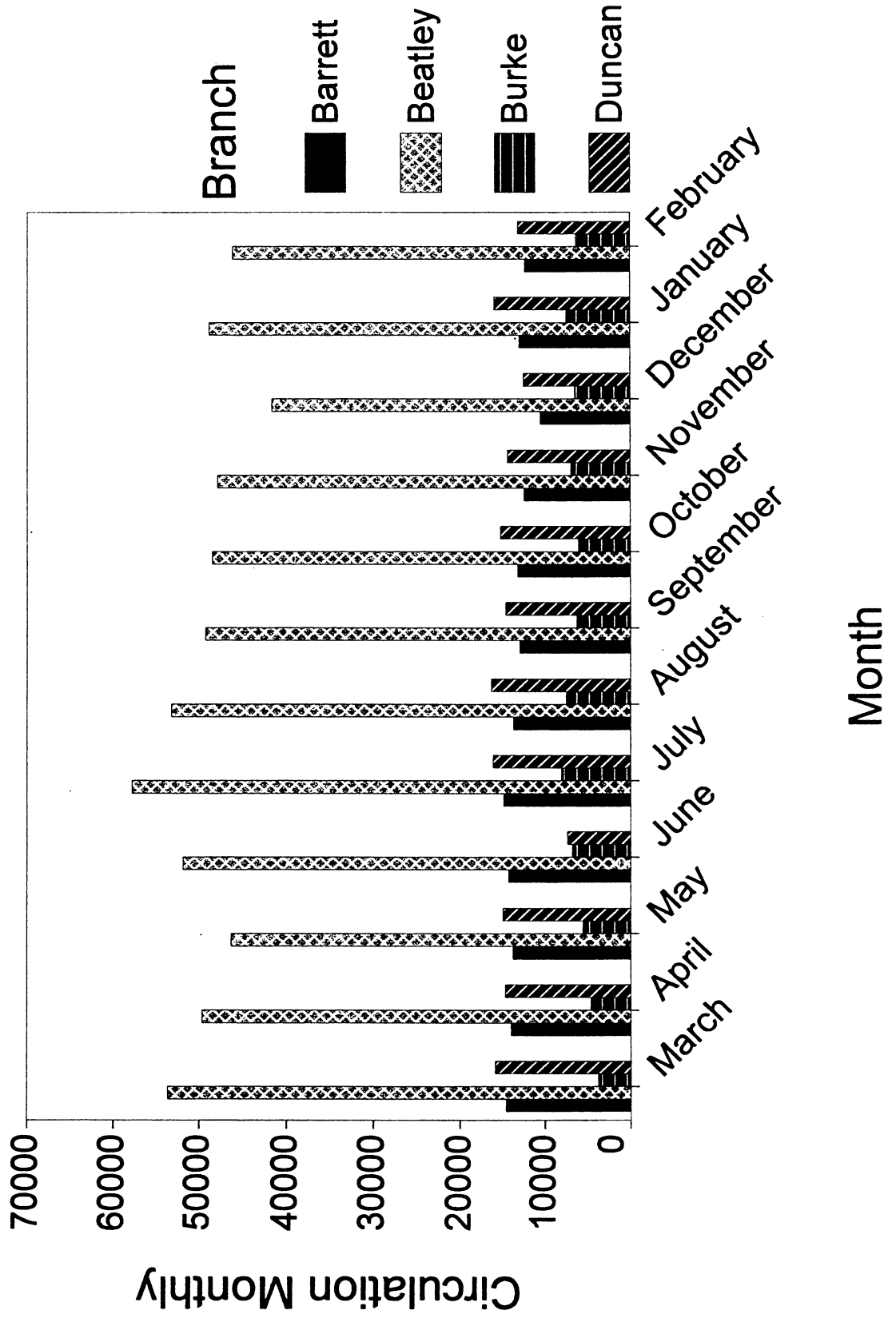
March 2003 to February 2004

Patron Visits



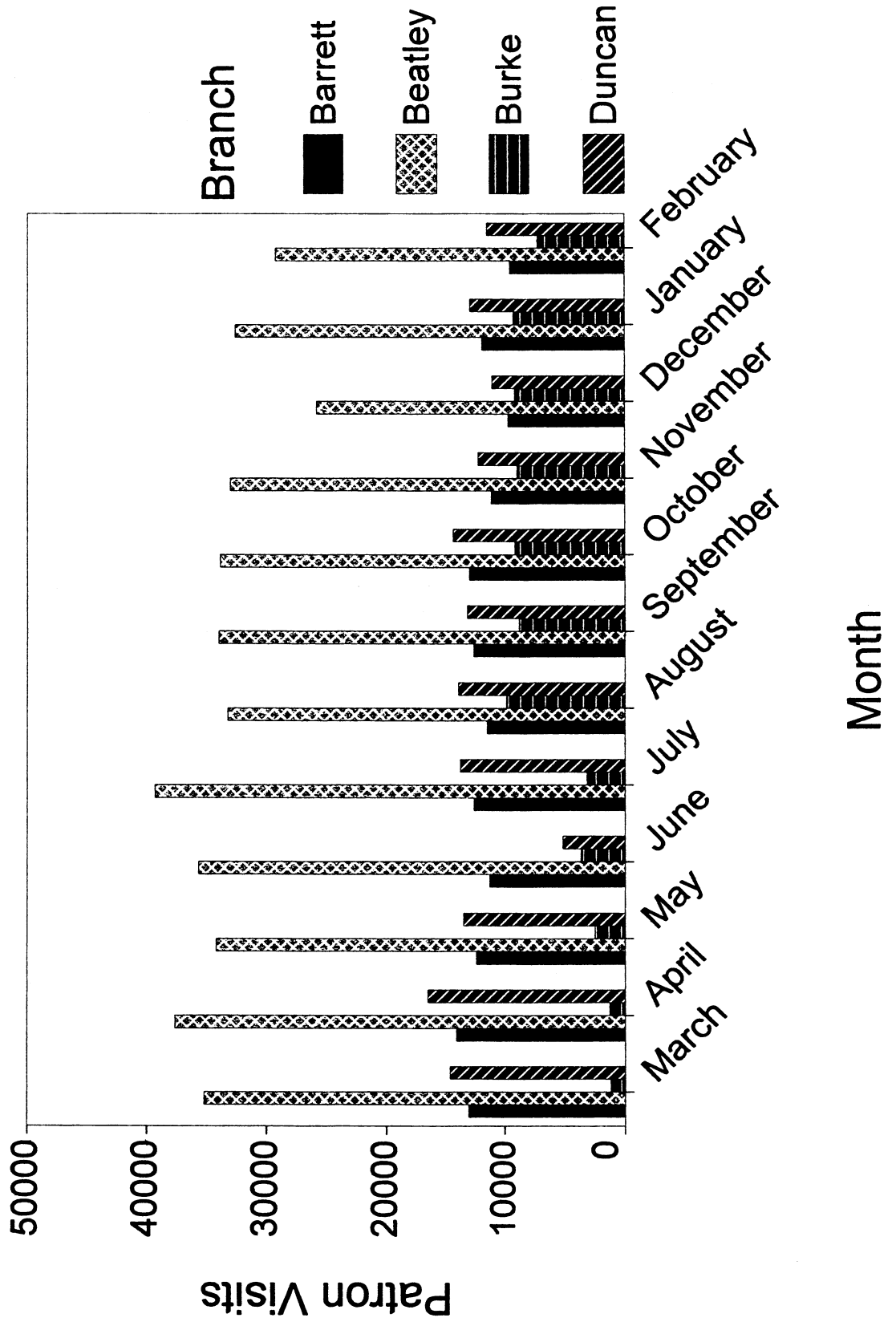
March 2002 to February 2003

Circulation



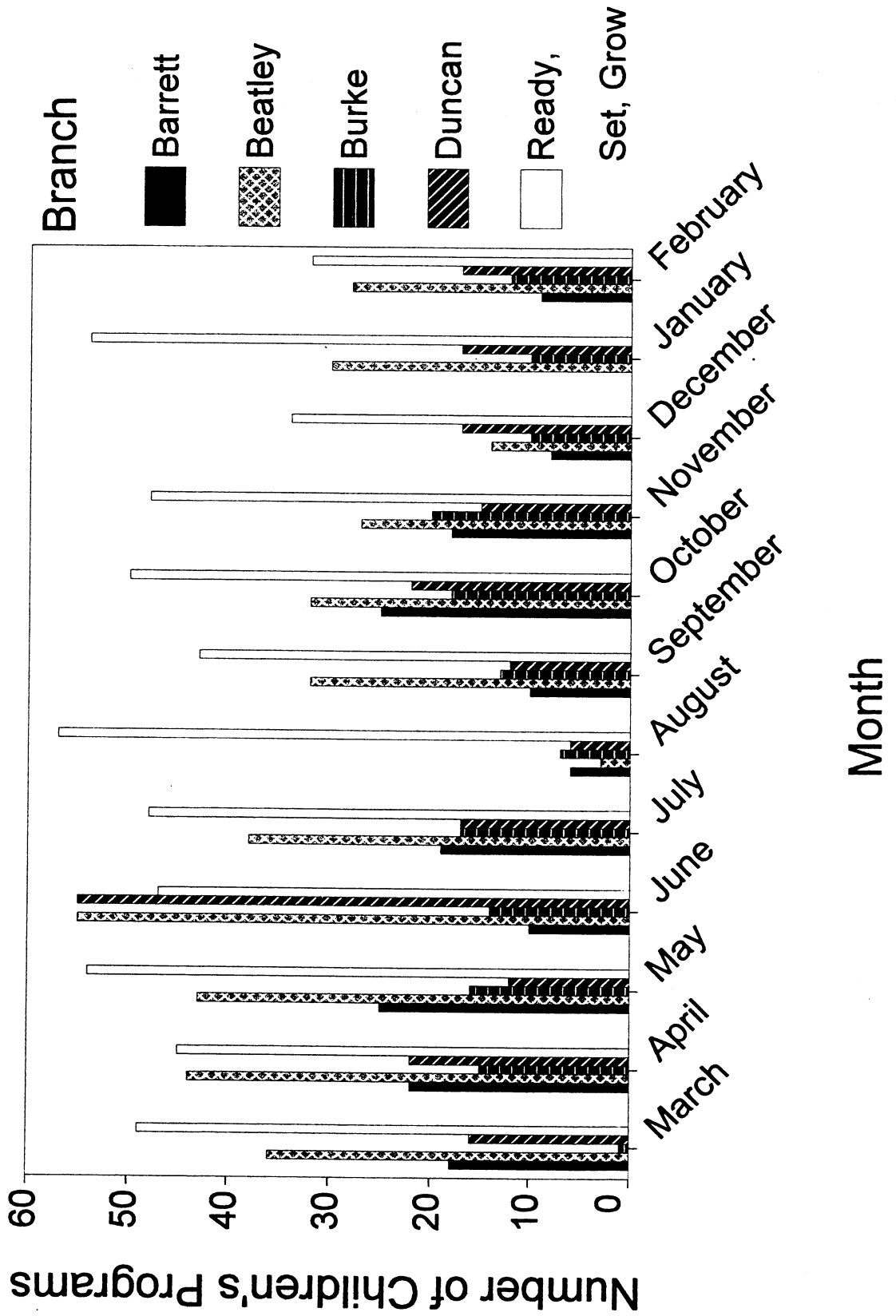
March 2002 to February 2003

Patron Visits



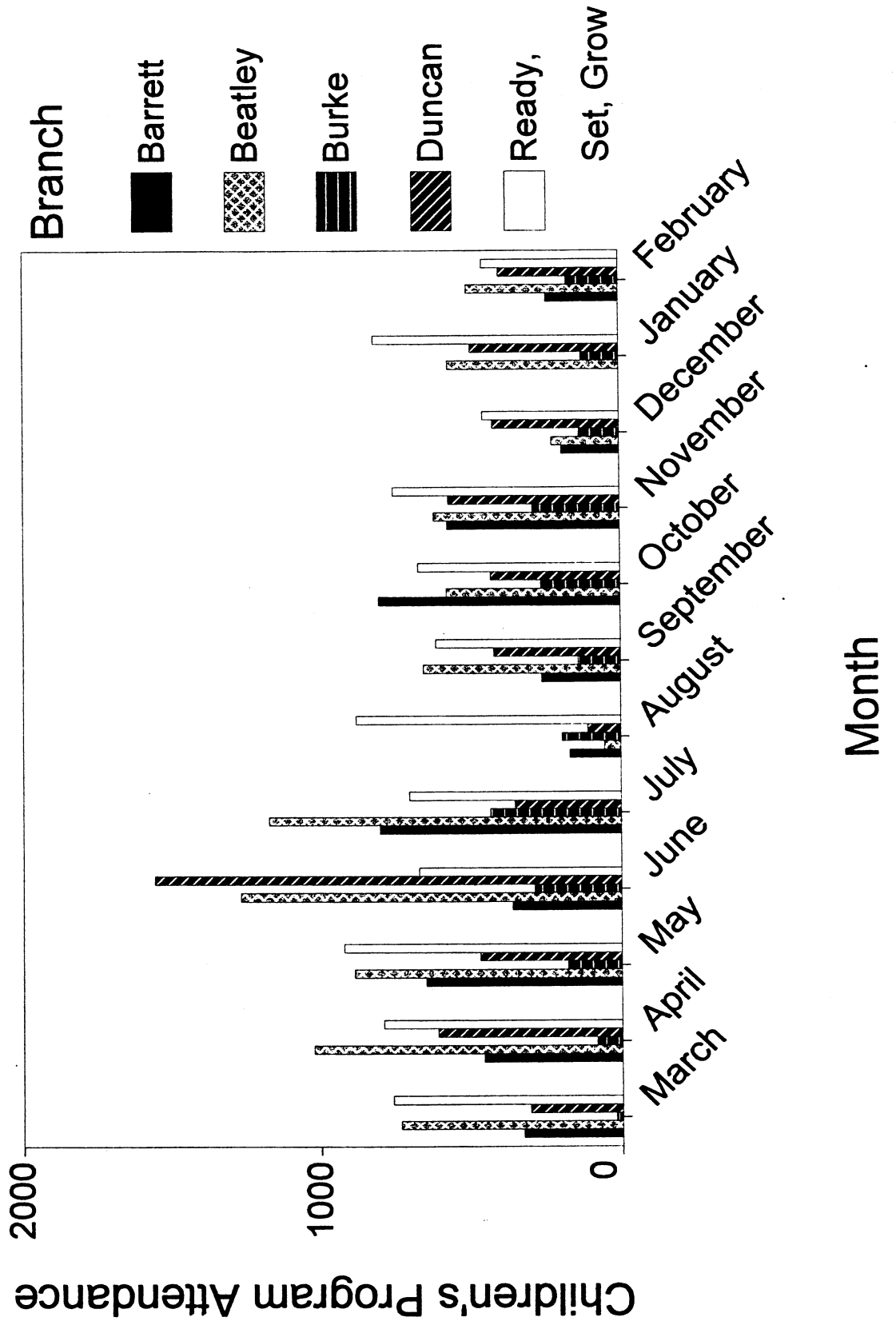
March 2002 to February 2003

Children's Programs



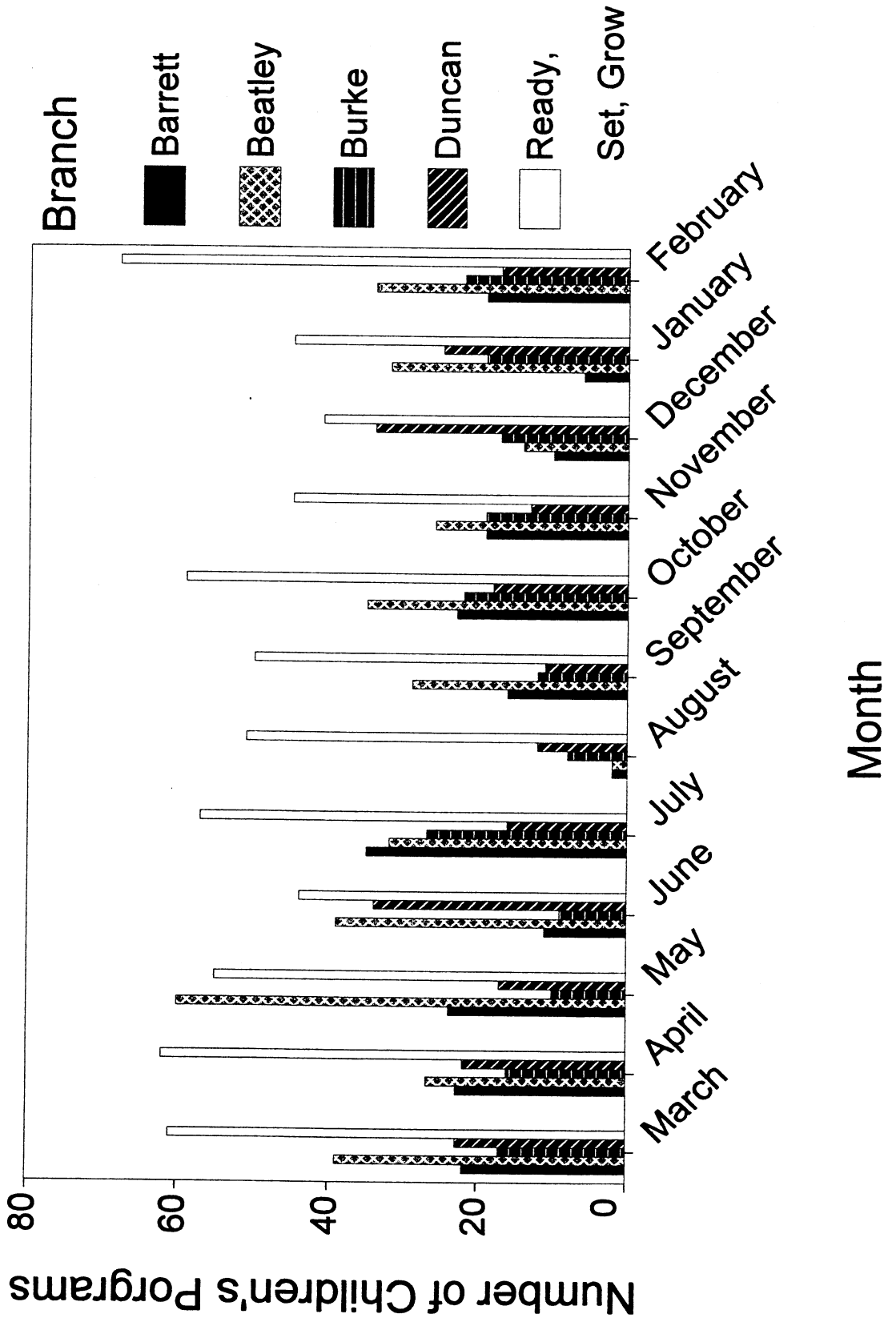
March 2002 to February 2003

Children's Programs Attendance



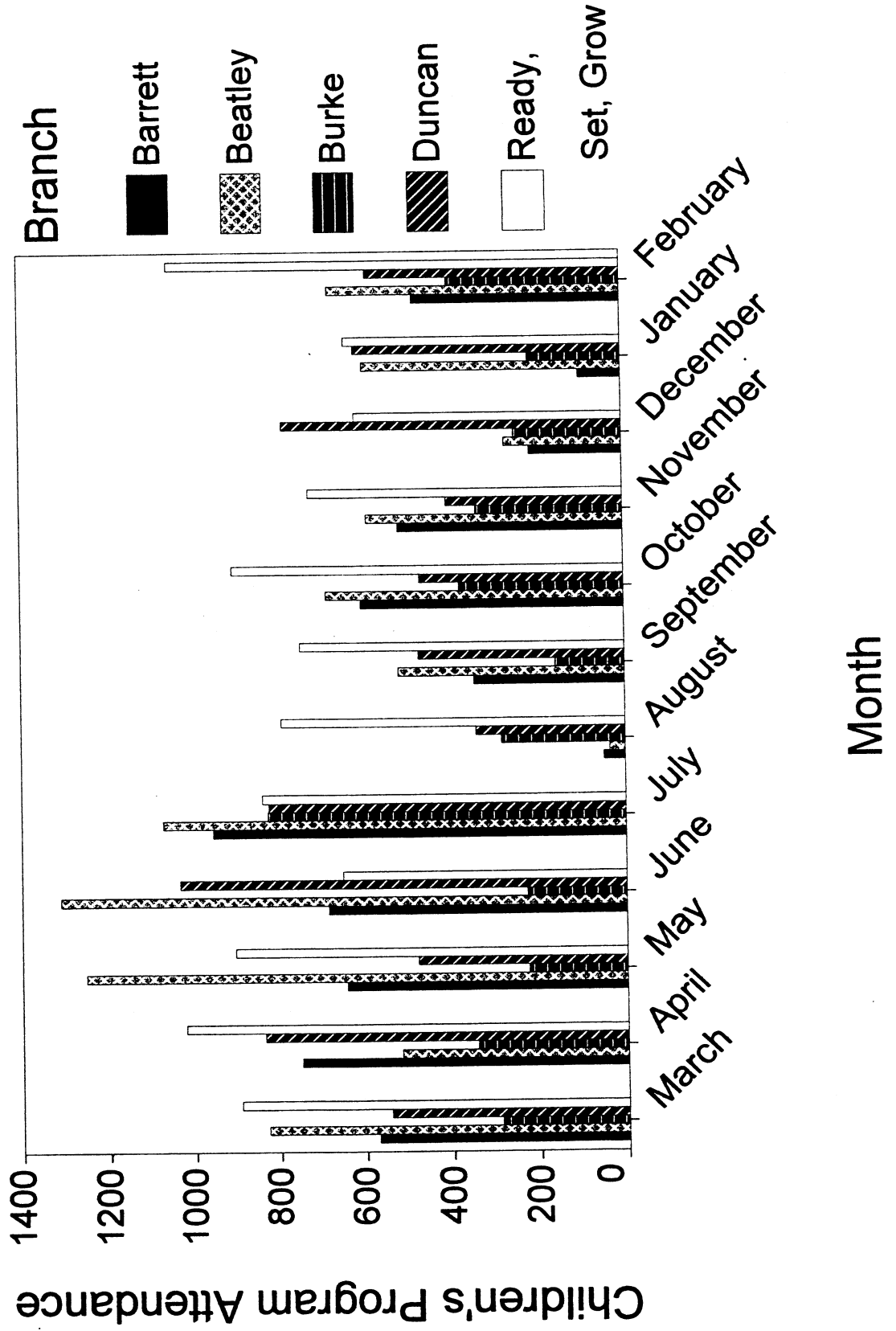
March 2003 to February 2004

Children's Programs



March 2003 to February 2004

Children's Program Attendance



Alexandria City Public Schools Burke Report

The allocation of space in the Ellen Coolidge Burke branch library for the Alexandria City Public Schools is 7100 square feet. The English as a Second Language Department occupies 2200 square feet and the Library Media Center which houses the Nicols Professional Library and computer training labs, occupies 4900 square feet.

The Nicols Professional Library houses over 4000 books, professional journals and periodicals, over 4000 videos, and audiovisual materials to support instruction. The library has a complete collection of ERIC (U.S. Department of Education's Educational Resources Information Center) documents that date from 1982 to the present and can be accessed on Microfiche. This school year alone (since September 2003), ACPS staff has checked out over 400 videos (keeping in mind that as many as 120 students may view a single video) and over 500 volumes. It is important to keep in mind that staff members are able to access a great deal of information via the Internet, so circulation of books is not a good indicator of Media Center use. In addition to the collections, the Media Center serves as a materials preparation resource for teachers and houses two laminating machines, Ellison dies for creating instructional materials, a poster machine, a copier, a digital lettering system and a meeting space for teacher use. Averages of 35-40 teachers use the Media Center and the Nicols Professional Library each week. Many staff members access the Nicol's collection on-line from their schools and submit requests for materials via phone or email. Materials are then sent to the schools for staff use.

The resources available to ACPS staff at the Nicols Professional Library are not the only attraction. The space at Nicols is frequently used for meetings (weekly) and for staff development sessions. Study groups use the facility because of the availability of reference resources.

The two computer training labs housed in the Library Media Center each contain 16 Apple or PC computer workstations and a presentation area. The labs are used for training on a daily basis by various ACPS departments. On most days the labs are used from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. and workshop participation can range from 5 to 16 participants in each lab. This valuable training resource has been used by other groups such as university classes who work in tandem with ACPS staff to provide various trainings.

The Burke location has made it possible for our English as a Second Language (ESL) Department to serve parents and students of English language learners in an ideal situation. Having a central registration and assessment site such as the one established at Burke has many advantages. Students can register and complete their English language proficiency testing with one visit. Trained, experienced bilingual (English/Spanish) staff can both provide information to parents and also be sure that all students are counted for applicable federal and state funding sources (such as LEP – Limited English Proficiency, immigrant, and refugee). At this site there is adequate parking and convenient access to public transportation. The western location is ideally located for the majority of families of LEP students since the City's west side LEP population is approximately double that of the east side.

The approximately 2,200 square feet of space includes an adequately sized, attractive waiting area; office space for the ESL curriculum department; LEP student records storage; a meeting and work area for staff meetings and curriculum development (space which is used for registration or seating during busy registration periods); and a quiet testing area where students' English and mathematics proficiency is assessed. Having the Burke space available has solved a problem that has persisted since the 1986 establishment of central LEP student registration – finding space which is attractive, convenient, and large enough to accommodate the large numbers of LEP families.

The actual number of student registrations per month has varied over the past year from 39 to 257, with a monthly average of approximately 100 students. These figures do not, however, adequately reflect traffic through the office because more than one family member usually accompanies registering students, and there is additional traffic from people who make more than one trip or who come to ask for information. The best estimate of traffic is that tripling the number of student registrations.

It is hoped that this space will continue to be available to benefit LEP/foreign-born families, who now constitute approximately 25 per cent of the ACPS enrollment and the large numbers of ACPS staff members and other groups who benefit from the services provided in the Library Media Center. If the Burke Branch Library were expanded to include the first floor in the space occupied by ACPS, requiring the relocation of the ESL Department and the Library Media Center, an alternative location would have to be leased since there is NO vacant space in the school system to house these programs.

**Burke Branch Advisory Group
February 18, 2004 Meeting Attendees**

Advisory Group members:

Patricia Bates
Myra Halpin
Betty Kozak
Karen Parker Thompson, ACPS
Joe Gerard (absent, out of town)

Friends of the Burke Branch and residents:

Susan Dressner
Vic Culver
Bill Dickinson
Patricia Becker
Marilee Becker
Robert Becker
Jack Richards

Staff:

Nelson Cuellar, Branch Manager
Frances Barnett, Youth librarian
Patrick O'Brien, Director of Libraries