

Times Union

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# Bell Library Moves Into New Facility

BY TERESA SMITH  
Times-Union Staff Writer

MENTONE - Light flows into the spacious confines of Mentone's Bell Memorial Public Library.

"It's just like, wow," board of trustees president Cal Jackson said of the move from cramped quarters in the 2,670-square-foot block building at 306 Broadway to the former Frank Manufacturing building on the corner of Main Street and Broadway.

Now patrons and staff have 8,131 square feet, including a second floor, in which to browse and work.

Entering a building decorated in inviting natural colors, visitors are greeted by an open atrium with natural light from a row of second-story windows.

Librarian Lorna Klein has plans for that space.

"I'd love to see a scale model of a Bell helicopter there," she said.

The old library was built with a \$20,000 grant to the town from the estate of Lawrence D. Bell, Mentone native and famous aviator. Bell requested the money be



Photo by Teresa Smith, Times-Union

Librarian Lorna Klein stands on the second floor of Mentone's Bell Memorial Public Library overlooking spacious new facilities.

used for a suitable memorial to his parents, Isaac and Harriet Sarber Bell.

The town council decided to establish a new library, naming it in the Bells' memory.

"It's so beautiful," Klein said of the rehabilitated factory. "It's so large, people just come by to see it. We've had visitors from all over the country."

More visitors will stream in this weekend as Mentone hosts its annual Egg Festival.

In addition to the library, a senior center and day care will be housed in the 14,362-square-foot building.

Each year the Chamber of Commerce's festival committee designates a recipient of various fund-raising efforts.

This year the library, senior center and day care will benefit from the proceeds.

Patrons of all ages can enjoy the main library, the young adult area and the children's library, where the little ones have a room all their own.

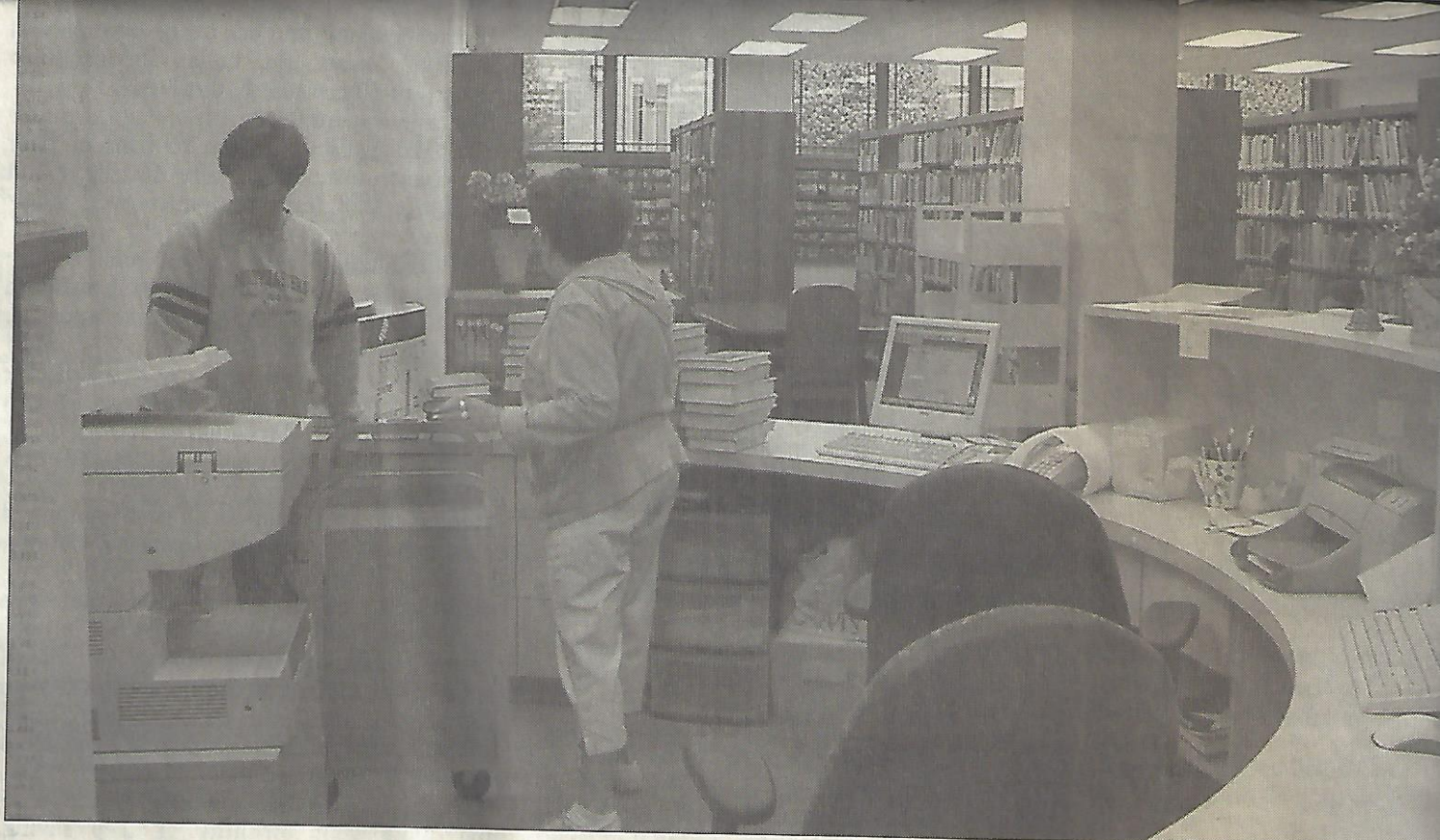
Klein can't wait to get the summer reading program, Camp USA, started.

"We can have book clubs, discussion and writers groups," she said of future plans.

The library closed for two weeks in April to reopen April 28.

Both Jackson and Klein expressed their gratitude for the Friends of the Library group.

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Mentone Bell Public Library employees (L to R) Shelly Krueger and Jean Pritchard work in the library's circulation area. The staff moved into the spacious new quarters at the end of April. Reconstruction of the former Frank Manufacturing building at the corner of Main Street and Broadway gave the library about 8,000 square feet, with plenty of space left over for a senior center and day care operation. *Photo by Teresa Smith, Times-Union*

# Library

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"There were always three or four people cataloging and packing during the day while we were closed," Jackson said and more in the evenings. "Books are heavy, there was an incredible amount of tonnage to move. The Friends have done a wonderful, wonderful job."

Friends of the Library held several fund-raisers over the last couple of years and will staff a book sale at the "old" library during the festival.

The Friends have taken on the task of landscaping around the building, too, with several new plantings in the last week.

Several other groups, including students from Tippecanoe Valley High School, also helped move the books, videos, periodicals and computers to the new facility.

Jackson, a four year board of trustees member, remembers all the starting and stopping they went through to establish the new space.

"There were so many little wrinkles and red tape that stopped it," he said, recalling the \$250,000 Build Indiana funds renege by the state.

"When you just step back, look at the building, the change in the downtown, you see what a nice facility it is. You step back and say, 'Wow, it's great.' We're so very, very pleased."

Plans to rehabilitate the Franks building began with former librarian Madelyn Fisher in the mid-1990s.

There were numerous matters to resolve with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management because the building was a former manufacturing site.

Grant monies were held up pending many environmental testings at the site.

"It's a great addition to the community," Jackson said. "We're grateful to the chamber and all members of communi-

bookkeeper. Staff members include Tara Bradley, children's librarian Shelly Krueger, Martha Phillips, Madeline Treiber, Cathy Whetstone, Gretchen Wadkins and Anne Wise.

The library plans to be open during the Mentone Egg Festival, closing for the parade, which begins at 11 a.m. Saturday.

Regular hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.



## VIKING VIDEO



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Photo by Teresa Smith, Times-Union

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"It's a great addition to the community," Jackson said. "We're grateful to the chamber and all members of community. I think everyone can take a lot of pride in the building and feel ownership for it."

Other board of trustees members include Roger Moriarty, Jill Gross, Marjorie Sanders, Dottie Hoffer, Brandon Spitter and Honey Kuhn.

Jean Pritchard is administrative assistant, Deb Hiers is

bookkeeper. Staff members include Tara Bradley, children's librarian Shelly Krueger, Martha Phillips, Madeline Treib, Cathy Whetstone, Gretchen Wadkins and Anne Wise.

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