

WHAT'S NEW SINCE 1971 by Marian R Bauman, Director

When this library opened her doors in 1971, she was decorated in the latest colors and outfitted with the newest in library furniture. Although the chairs have all been replaced, the tables are the original Buckstaff library furniture.

Carpeting in both upstairs and downstairs has been replaced twice since the original building opened with bright gold carpet on both floors in 1971. Furniture was avocado green and hot orange, which were the “new” colors in 1971. The carpeting downstairs before this current pattern was a dull grey that did not wear well. Upstairs, the Children’s department flirted with a mauve and burgundy color scheme for most of the 1990s until renovations last year.

A “Neptune” –themed mural was painted by the Gifted and Talented Art Class of the Middle School, overseen by art teacher Amanda Burr Fitzpatrick, on the back stairwell in October of 2005, helping to decorate that space for future generations. A plaque there commemorates their efforts.

Although the Children’s department got a new circulation desk and wall storage in the renovations of 2010, as well as a new location that allows better monitoring of the elevator and stairs, the adult department still has the original solid oak circulation desk. A small cut-down for handicapped access was made on the north end of the desk when it was refurbished in 2009 with an edgy Formica top, bringing it into the new millennium.

All of the library lighting ballasts were replaced in 2003, and new reflectors and more efficient fluorescent bulbs mean that it is much easier to study or find what you are looking for. This project was done with a 50% matching grant from the utility company.

When the library opened in 1971, there was no curb cutout for handicapped access into the library. The ramp was finished in 1981, as well as 3 parking

spaces for residents with disabilities. A handicapped-accessible restroom was added in 1993, and the drinking fountain was retrofitted to dual heights in 2003. When the non-fiction was moved to the addition last year, shelves were configured to allow ease of wheelchair access down the aisles.

In 1990 the bathroom in the children's department was retrofitted with a new child-sized toilet, and in 2008 the Lobby restrooms were pressure-washed, and new toilets, sinks and graffiti-resistant partitions were installed.

The exterior of the building has remained the same until 2008 when the Friends partnered with the Jumping Brook Villas Garden Club and our "Curb Appeal" project was completed.

Smoking was also allowed in 1971, in office areas, although it was never allowed in the public areas of the library. It was finally outlawed in public buildings in 1986.

Books were not readily available in Large Print back then, but the library did have a couple of huge, awkward Braille books. Users with vision problems can now listen to over 2,000 CD books. One of the reasons that the addition was needed was space for all of the new media formats that residents expect. In 1971 we did not check out movies, audiobooks, or video games. Instead of music CDs, people would check out LP albums.

There were no public computers until the early 1990s when a single computer with magazine articles was available to the public. Various state and other grants allowed purchase of the 14 public computers we now have. The only printer in 1990 was a dot-matrix pin-feed printer. Now, printers are all networked and jobs can be sent to color or black and white printer/copiers.

We automated the library in 1995, with circulation, cataloging and configuration all being done on computers, and no more manual filing of cards.

In 1998, our 286 model computers were barely running Windows, which was a huge step up, as our first computers required us to know DOS. We installed a T-1 line for internet access for the 10 computers, 8 downstairs and 2 upstairs that were available to the public. A \$16,000 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation allowed us to add four more computers and a new server, eliminating most waiting times for computer access.

In 2003 the Friends of Neptune Library were revitalized and started having meetings. The proceeds from their huge 3-day book sale the next year were used to purchase a light box sign in front of the municipal building to promote library programs.

Library cards that once were cardboard with a metal plate were replaced first with a red and white barcode card when the library automated in 1995, then with the extremely popular blue key-chain cards in 2005.

In anticipation of municipal meeting rooms being closed due to renovations, in 2007 we reconfigured our workspaces and made an extra meeting room available to the public. This meeting space is in constant demand and heavily booked. The following year 395 programs were held at the library with attendance of 5,677.

Our 40-yr old staff kitchen area was renovated by Tim Bauman with cabinets and countertops from Home Depot in 2008 when the old unit rusted away.

Although there have been many updates and additions to the library, the one thing that hasn't changed is our ability to provide excellent service with a smile!