

County Doubles Its Reading Options With New Libraries

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Brunswick Countians and visitors can add to their opportunities for relaxation and fun two, count 'em, brand-new libraries.

Residents of Oak Island and Leland, give a cheer for persistent crusaders in both areas who have talked, organized, planned and cajoled to bring these facilities to fruition.

The G.V. Barbee Sr. Library and the new Leland Public Library are open. The two buildings, each approximately 4,800 square feet in size, but with different architecture and floor plans, cost nearly \$1 million.

For Edith Tillman, a leader in Leland's efforts, that struggle has seemed endless. "It all started in 1979," she related, "when I asked (State Rep.) David Redwine for \$2,000 from the state to kick off the drive for a library. I had just moved here and found there was nearly nothing in the way of a library; I had grown up with good libraries."

What Tillman found was a collection of old books in a small mobile unit, formerly used by a bank on the corner of Village Road and Old Schoolhouse Road. Under the jurisdiction of a board of trustees living in Southport, it got short shrift from that board and no attention from the county, according to Tillman.

"Nothing would have ever happened if some of us here in Leland hadn't started raising money," she said. Their efforts produced \$60,000 from residents of the community; later, when Leland incorporated, its town government, along with Bellville and the state, boosted the total to \$200,000.

Much later, in 1992, when Brunswick County took over the library system, \$1.5 million was allocated from county funds for the two new constructions and for renovations to existing libraries in Shallotte and Southport.

"We've gone through a long process," Tillman said of the Leland library. "We had a different plan originally, but finally we handed it all over to the county. The progress has been much better that way and helped us get more money from the community."

The neat new red brick building next to Leland's Town Hall is centrally located and a more inviting place to read than its predecessor, whose contents were moved

there on opening day.

Oak Island, on the other hand, had no library at all before the lovely G.V. Barbee Sr. building rose on Long Beach Drive. A hard-working organization, the Oak Island Library Boosters, got to work early in 1991, educating the public about the need.

Ann Hines, former president of the group, said most people don't realize the tremendous population growth that has occurred on Oak Island. While Southport, Shallotte and Leland, with a collective population of 5,135 residents, each has its own library, Oak Island includes three beach communities where 4,725 people live without one.

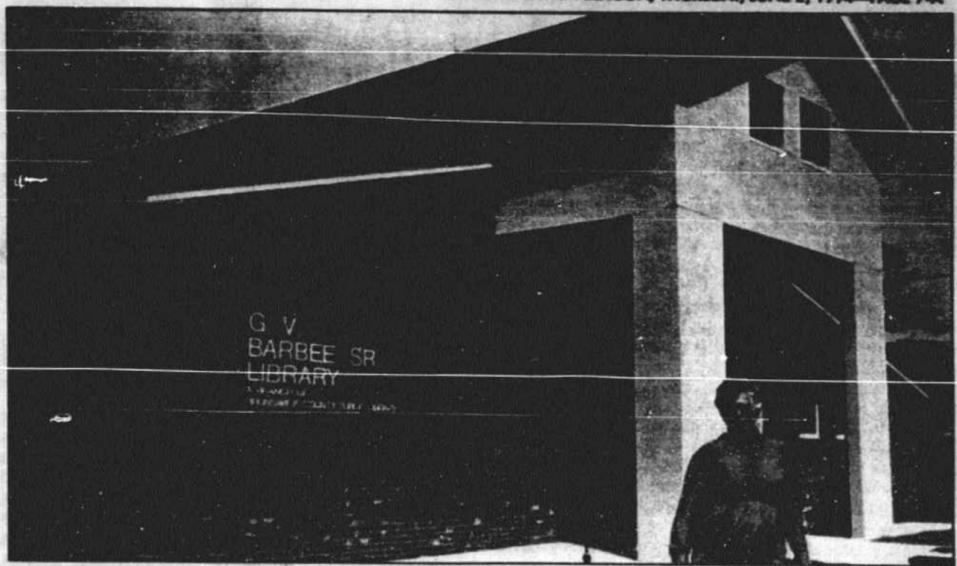
A brochure published by the Boosters proclaimed, "There has been no reading or study resource nearby for our students or for the elderly or working parents whose children need a library after school." Hines said the public responded positively to the campaign for funds. Five lots were given by Gibson Barbee Jr., and two others from United Carolina Bank, while the Boosters raised \$45,000 toward the project.

This effort paralleled that of Leland, and the county's library board chose an architect whose designs were approved by local organizations and the board. While interiors of the two libraries are similar, there were opportunities for individual preferences. Hines said Oak Island folks wanted a meeting room, while that was not a priority for Leland residents. As a result, a modest workroom can double as meeting space in the G.V. Barbee Sr. building, which also boasts a quantity of glass in its walls, while Leland's use of glass is minimal.

Neither has computerized its book selection, though Hines lamented, "I really wanted it."

One computer will be placed in each library, however, for word processing use by the public, and Hines said tutors will be on hand each afternoon in the Oak Island facility to help school children. Other equipment will initially be moved there from the Brunswick County Library in Southport, which will close for a few weeks during renovation. Southport personnel, too, will run the new library until August when four permanent and four temporary employees will be hired for both facilities.

The county policy for book checkout is that anyone



ANN HINES poses in front of the G.V. Barbee Sr. Library, a product of her efforts and those of Oak Island residents, assisted by county and state funds.

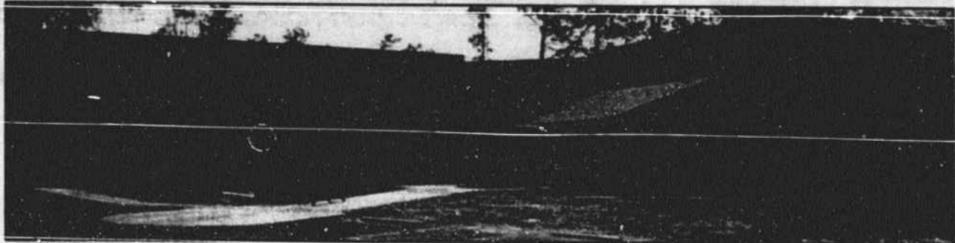
without a driver's license and proof of Brunswick County property ownership must pay \$25 to take materials from the library. "We've just had so much loss of books that were taken out by visitors and not returned," Hines explained. Anyone, however, is welcome to come in and read.

Both facilities are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, those hours extended to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays. Saturday hours are 9 a.m. till noon and Sundays are 1-6 p.m.

In addition to the two new buildings, nearly \$600,000 is being spent in renovations on libraries in Shallotte and Southport. Each of these facilities is being expanded.

The Brunswick County Library will be the largest in the county with 5,760 square feet, while the West Brunswick Library will remain the smallest, with 2,232 square feet.

Maurice Tate, county librarian, began laughing when questioned in mid-April about construction progress. "I'm laughing to keep from crying," she said, then explained, "I'm responsible for the outcome, but I'm not really in control." Although plans for closing the Southport facility and moving its equipment and personnel were under control, she said, she had no idea of opening dates. "I don't have the keys yet. Furniture hasn't arrived," she said.



THE NEW LELAND LIBRARY is a far cry from the cramped mobile unit where books have been distributed for 20 years.

Two Injured Slightly In Collision With Turning Car

Two persons sustained minor injuries last Thursday, May 26, in a two-car accident that happened at 5:30 p.m. on Holden Beach Road approximately 2.2 miles east of Shallotte.

Brandy Dawn Lackey, 18, of Morganton, was driving west on N.C. 130 in a 1993 Ford when the driver of an approaching eastbound 1984 Cadillac attempted a left turn into a private driveway in Lackey's path, according to the report filed by N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper R.L. Murray. Lackey's car struck the turning Cadillac in the right passenger area.

Carolyn Watts Smith, 41, of Shallotte, the driver of the Cadillac, and one of her three passengers, Shawn Smith, 13, also of Shallotte, were transported to The Brunswick Hospital with complaints of injury. Lackey was not injured.

Damage to the Ford was estimated at \$3,800, and to the Cadillac, \$200.

Trooper R.L. Murray charged Watts with making an unsafe movement.

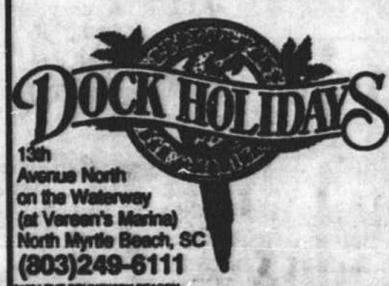
No injuries and little damage were reported last Monday morning, May 23, following a minor accident at the intersection of McMilly Road (S.R. 1320) and Lads Road that involved a school bus.

Brunswick County Schools' bus driver Carrie Hill, 40, of Shallotte, had stopped her 1987 Ford school bus in the eastbound lane of McMilly Road at about 7:50 a.m. to tend to students on the bus when the bus rolled into the front end of a car stopped behind it.

Damage to the bus was estimated at \$100. Hill told Trooper J.H. Kerr she thought the bus was in neutral gear, when it was actually in reverse. No charges were filed.

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