

PART 1 OF 2

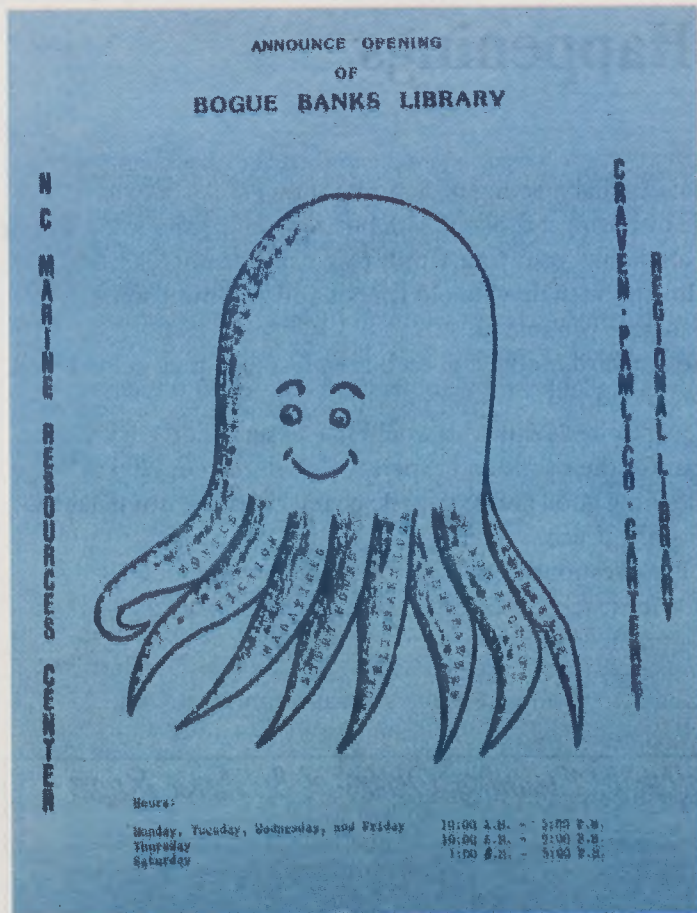
# Bogue Banks Public Library: More Than Just Books

By Deb Frisby

## HISTORY STORIES

Reflections of Pine Knoll Shores

*In recognition of the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Bogue Banks Library, the History Committee presents a two-part series highlighting the library's history and contributions.*



Program for the opening of the Bogue Banks Library in 1981.

—Courtesy of the Pine Knoll Shores History Committee

The library in Pine Knoll Shores had a humble beginning.

Early on, a van provided by the Carteret County Public Library brought reading materials to the island. Later, a room in the marine science center housed a collection of books and a small staff before it moved into a building in the center of town.

In September 1973, when Bogue Banks was still sparsely populated and Pine Knoll Shores was newly incorporated, Nettie Murrill of

Yaupon Drive hosted the Carteret County bookmobile for monthly stops. The van would park in front of her house for 45 minutes so residents could visit the traveling library. Nettie must have enjoyed those visits that brought friends and neighbors to her street. She had been listed as a “wonderful friend” of the Webb

Library in Morehead City, near where she lived before moving to the island. Now she was in a small way part of bringing library services to her community.

Thanks to research by History Committee member Walt Zaenker and a mention in the *Shore Line*, we also know the bookmobile that visited Pine Knoll Shores in 1973 was run by the Carteret County Public Library and staffed by two people—a driver and a librarian. The service started in 1947, using a truck with side panels that opened to display the books, and later used a van that served as a mobile room. No mention of a date for the first visit to the island could be found. Although the number of bookmobiles has diminished with the increasing cost of gasoline and accessibility brought by the internet, the bookmobile, once an innovative and cost-effective way to bring library services to rural areas, was the only way residents of Pine Knoll Shores had access to library services without leaving the island until September 1981.

The library first opened in a section of the NC Marine Resources Center (now the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores), chosen for its central location to serve both residents and visitors to Bogue Banks. A cooperative venture with the Craven-Pamlico-Carteret Library provided reading materials and staff to supplement the marine-related materials already available for use onsite at the aquarium. A federal grant funded the operations for three years, allowing the purchase of books and supplies and the hiring of two staffers, Valerie Jones as librarian and Olga Hedrick as her assistant. Library services beyond lending books increased with the help of volunteers, and regularly scheduled children's programming began, including the popular annual Storytelling Festival. When that funding expired, the Carteret County Board of Commissioners and island communities helped fund the library operations.

A permanent location to house the books was a welcome change from monthly visits, but the aquarium was also growing in popularity and needed the space it lent to the library. In 1988, the director of the aquarium, Dr. Ned Smith, asked the Carteret County Public Library Board of Trustees to find another home for the Bogue Banks branch.

Carteret County commissioners agreed to purchase space on the ground floor of a proposed building in the only commercial area of the town, Pine Knoll Village, at the corner of Pine Knoll Boulevard and Highway 58. Construction began in 1989. Fundraising efforts by the newly formed Friends of the Library provided over \$40,000 to furnish the new space that opened on May 20, 1990. The county asked the island towns to fund operational expenses while the county completed paying the construction costs. At that time, an interim Board of Directors formed to govern the operations until the Carteret County Library Board of Trustees resumed governance in 1994. The library was fully automated soon after, and access to the county-wide library collection was then available to all.

The library continued to grow and fill the new space. Its collection had grown from 2,000 volumes to more than 10,500 titles by 1998. When Hurricane Bonnie visited the island that August and tore the roof from the building, many books sustained water damage. Fortunately, only 599 were lost while the rest were preserved by moving them into freezing storage to prevent any mold. The space was emptied so restoration could take place. It took nine months of work by the staff, county officials, the Friends of the Bogue Banks Library and various individuals.

Growth continued with a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2001, which provided funds for additional computers for public internet

(Continued on page 27)