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## READ all about it! Lanesboro Library hosts grand-re-opening and dedicates Rose H. Bell Room

By Lisa Brainard

If the **Lanesboro** community is an example, small town libraries are alive and well.

In fact, to paraphrase a famous quote, while it may take a community to raise a child, it also takes a community to invigorate - and renovate - its **library**.

After a two-week closure during which 90 volunteers boxed and moved books, painted walls, installed new carpet and more, and returned books to their relocated shelves - everyone was ready for the **Lanesboro Public Library's** grand re-opening the evening of Jan. 17.



Ready to help cut the ribbon for the grand reopening of the renovated Lanesboro Public Library on Jan. 17 were, from left, Friends of the Lanesboro Library chair Anna Loney, staff members Laura Gudmundson and Eliza Mitchell, library director Tara Johnson and board member David Hennessey. (Republican-Leader photo by Lisa Brainard)

A flat-screen television mounted on a wall showed photos of the work that was done. **Library** director Tara Johnson, from behind her relocated checkout desk, welcomed a crowd of around 70. As someone in the audience noted, "One-tenth of the town is here."

Volunteers handling the **library** renovation donated 325 hours, said Johnson before a group of **library** staff and leaders of the **library** board and the Friends of the **Lanesboro Library** stretched a red ribbon and then cut it to dedicate the project.

### Rose H. Bell Room

One highlight of the evening was the dedication of the "back room" - often used as a meeting room and now stocked with children's books - as the Rose H. Bell Room.

Bell's daughter, Mary Bell Neuman of New Hope, recalled her mother's love of books and her joy in promoting them, "To my mother, reading was like breathing.

She said all five of Bell's children inherited the passion for books. Bookshelves lined most every wall in their home.

And Bell shared her passion for books with others. Neuman recalled that when some of the boys who were her students wouldn't read, she overcame the problem by giving them comic books. They'd find them interesting - and then move on to other books.

When the family sold her books at a house sale, Neuman said former students came up to them and said, "She was our inspiration."

Neuman smiled and stated, "It warmed our hearts."

Regarding the room named in Bell's honor, Neuman said, "Each of my siblings said to thank you."

They all plan to see the "beautiful place" when gathering for a centennial reunion at the family farm over the summer.

## Memories of Bell

Then, Nancy Huisenga of **Lanesboro** took the floor, holding an embroidered wall hanging that stated, "Librarians are novel lovers."

Huisenga explained her first job was in a **library** in Minneapolis. Her mother also worked in a **library**, where someone gave her the wall hanging. It passed through the family to Huisenga, who just had to give it to Bell when she saw her enthusiasm for books and reading.

After Bell's death, her family gave the wall hanging back to Huisenga. But she was at the **Lanesboro Library** to place it where it rightfully should be: in the new Rose H. Bell room.

Five of those present at the **library** raised their hands to note they'd been taught in **Lanesboro** by Rose H. Bell. Some were from her greater Horihan family clan. Horihan was Rose's maiden name.

Two of Bell's nieces remembered time with her. Sister Eleanor of the Franciscan Sisters in Rochester said Rose had lived with her Granger family in Minneapolis. "We'd always have reading hour," she commented.

Maureen Anderson of **Lanesboro** said for graduation, Rose would give each of them a dictionary. "I still use it," she noted.

## Taking a look around

Scott Dixon, and Stela Burdt and their child Kieran Dixon, 1, were checking out the Rose H. Bell Room, when former **library** director Drue Ferguson stopped in to say hello and admire the new digs.

Former **Lanesboro Library** staff members Elizabeth Olson, now **library** director at Preston, and Sue Ann Kinneberg of Preston said the **library** looked good. Kinneberg said it had come a long way from the days when the **library** was located in the small space by the city office.

Refreshments were enjoyed by all before one final item capped the grand re-opening night's activities. Names were drawn and Kathy Thiss of **Lanesboro** won a Nook Simple Touch Reader.

Other grand re-opening activities include an E-books seminar Thursday, Jan. 26, from 7 to 8 pm. Bring your e-book reader and learn how to download books on loan from the **library**.

Also, you can make an artistic "altered book" Friday, Jan. 27, from 4 to 6 pm and Saturday, Jan. 28, 10 a.m. to noon. Bring an old book you're ready to discard or grab one from the pile, and turn it into a visual work of art.

Materials on hand and guidance from Art Teacher Krista Flaig will help you create your own homage to reading and libraries. Take your artwork home or leave it for the **library** to consider adding to a new lobby display it plans for later in the year. Kids under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Lanesboro Public **Library** hours are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 6 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 to 8 p.m.; Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and closed on Sundays. Contact the **library** at (507) 467-2649.