Woodbury Library Reopens This Weekend After Growing In Size & Services

An opening celebration of the Woodbury Public Library will be held November 9 starting at 2 pm. Town and library officials will be on hand for a brief dedication ceremony. The works of five Woodbury artists will be displayed in the new library gallery, and the library staff will be on hand to show visitors around the new facility. The Funky Butt Jazz Band will perform and refreshments will be served.

When the enlarged, renovated building opens this Sunday, many people are bound to be surprised at the interior results, most everyone having already been pleasantly surprised at the exterior. For one thing, stacks, adult circulation desk, librarian's office, reference area, historical and genealogical section — the heart of the library — all are located on the main floor of the new wing, and spacious as it is, the atmosphere is warm and cozy.

The old library wing, by contrast, seems much smaller than it did before the renovations. In fact, it seems impossible that the entire collection ever fit into this wing. Furthermore, the interior of the old wing no longer looks old.

The main floor of the old building now houses a small but impressive lecture room and art gallery, with a projection room and kitchenette. The space is cleverly conserved by the use of sliding panels that serve both to block the windows during films and to support pictures for art shows. Upstairs is a workroom for library staff, with lots of room and counter space for book processing and repairs.

"Visually, the building is lovelier than we imagined, and also we love the feeling and ambiance of it," reflected Library Director Jill Smith.

At Last A Place To Sit

But what, after all, will people be able to do in the new facility that they couldn't do before? First and foremost, explains Mrs Smith, people will at long last be able to sit down and read books. "That's the greatest change," says Mrs Smith. Whether you want to do some serious research or simply to browse through magazines, you will now have a chair to sit in and adequate light to read by. The old library did not have an adequate place to display periodicals, much less study carrels or enough seating, as the new facility will have.

Mrs Smith said that she hopes the library's list of periodicals will be expanded, though because of high prices, at a more conservative rate than originally planned. The library now offers 60 different magazines. The reference collection contains only between 300 and 400 volumes, but there is now enough room for as many as 2,000 volumes. There is also plenty of room for more volumes in the main collection.

Another great difference in the new facility is that now special library programs, speakers, films, and exhibits can be held in the building itself instead of in church meeting room or at the Town Hall.

"We even hope to have concerts," Mrs Smith said.

But one of the greatest changes is on the second floor, the children's library, probably the most innovative part of the new building. Special reading nooks, book bins, activities room, unusual windows both to the outside and to the adult library below are among the special features.

Woodbury not only has a new children's library, but a new children's librarian. Ann Bumstead has been at Willimantic Public Library for the past seven years, having received a BA from the University of Connecticut and MLS from the Rhode Island School of Library Science. Library assistants for the children's library are JoAnne Peveria and Diana Walker.

Full-time circulation librarian is Kathy Renna with assistants Donna Rowland, Casselane Merrill, Judy Platt, and Joanne Seymour.

Library hours starting Monday are as follows: Monday and Friday from 10 am to 5:30 pm; Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am until 9 pm; Wednesday 10 am to 5 pm; and Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm.