

The Mapleton Branch, not quite 100 years but counting

By Susie Voth

The Mapleton Branch of the Siuslaw Public Library wasn't always housed in its current location on Riverview Avenue. Longtime residents of the Upper Siuslaw area probably remember when it was squeezed into the space currently occupied by Mapleton Caffeination Station.

In 1993, the Siuslaw Public Library District was enlarged to include the communities of Mapleton, Swisshome, and Deadwood. Lynn and Mary Hood graciously rented the 500 square-foot space to the library district for a nominal fee. The branch library opened for business on May 17th, during Rhododendron weekend. It was staffed by volunteers and under the direction of Susan Gale. It was opened for only four hours a day and upon closing, the key was left with the proprietor at Frank's Place. The branch library remained in this location for three years.

Eventually the community decided that the location was less than desirable, especially for children. There was too much traffic. A committee was formed to research alternative locations in Mapleton. The Lion's Club building was identified as the most likely location however it needed major renovations. Fortunately, the community was supportive of the idea and a bond issue was passed.

With money to spend, a core group of Lion's Club members and community volunteers undertook the daunting remodeling task. Carpeting was installed, walls painted, bookshelves built, furniture and computers acquired. The Mapleton Branch of the Siuslaw Public Library opened for business in the new location in 1996.

According to Library Director Meg Spencer "The Mapleton branch is a special community asset: this library is the single source for free and open wi-fi in the upriver community, it is a space where children from the Upper Siuslaw area receive a free book each month until they begin school, and where an excellent reading program helps stop the summer learning gap. Funding from the Lane County Cultural Coalition will also bring historic photographs of Mapleton and the surrounding area into the Library for a permanent display. But, perhaps my favorite thing about Mapleton is watching the two

regular library clerks, Susie Voth and Stephanie McNutt, pick out special titles for each patron that walks in the door!"



Mapleton Library at Mapleton Lion's Club, 2009

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Congratulations to the Siuslaw Public Library on its 100 year Anniversary!

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