



Cake made and decorated by our favorite local baker, Jennie Brown. Photo: Erin Galbraith.



The Ruch Library lobby mural was created by Lilli Ann and Marvin Rosenberg, with the community creating the tiles in the Rosenberg's Applegate Valley studio. Photo: Erin Galbraith.

## Ruch Library History: Part Two Here's to the next 40 years!

BY THALIA TRUESDELL

(To read Part One of this story, see page three of the Fall 2024 *Applegater*.)

From the earliest grassroots efforts to form a library in Ruch in 1982 through the subsequent years of creating and sustaining our little library, we embraced this invaluable community resource and source of wisdom.

However, we needed a better location.

When the Library Bond Measure passed in May 2000, the new Ruch Library became a possibility. The county purchased three acres adjacent to Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS). Throughout 2000, locals raised \$114,000 for library enhancements: a study room, an additional 1,000 square feet in the Teen Area, and an enlarged—double the size!—Community Meeting Room.

A design team was formed, and fundraising ultimately brought in \$154,000. Construction on the building and a walkway between the school grounds and the library started on February 8, 2002.

Under the direction of Applegate artists Lilli Ann and Marvin Rosenberg, all ROCS students and staff, the construction crew, and enthusiastic volunteers made ceramic tiles to imbed in cement sections on the walkway. Homeschooled children created tiles for a mural on the A-Frame Bookstore. Later, adults in the community gathered at the Rosenbergs' studio to create tiles for the mural in the library lobby.

Schoolchildren spent months against the fence, watching the construction with anticipation. Everyone watched the lodgepole-pine frame reach to the sky, and, finally, on January 2, 2003, doors opened to the public! The windows! The light! Hooray for the Design Team! The A-Frame Bookstore, the “only used bookstore between Jacksonville and Grants Pass,” opened for business.

The sunny library quickly became the hub of the community, with the Community Room accommodating 80 people, who came for programs, classes, workshops, author talks, celebrations, movies, and even popcorn. ROCS classes came for research, book talks, and to check out books. Our dream had come true.

Then, in April 2007, all Jackson County libraries closed for lack of county funding. The ballot measure to keep our libraries open failed a month later.

The Friends of Ruch Library (FORL) rose to the challenge and created an informal lending library in the A-Frame Bookstore, allowing community members to access the donated books. Janis Mohr-Tipton asked the county administrator how the two unincorporated communities, Ruch and Applegate, could have a voice. She then assembled 100 community members to create a formal document for presentation. The administration decided to keep all the rural libraries open based on this document.



Ruch Library displays its entire pictorial history in a scrapbook. The library's logo (at right) was printed on T-shirts and individually hand-detailed by members of Friends of Ruch Library to raise additional funds for the new library. Photo: Erin Galbraith.

In October 2007, Jackson County Library System (JCLS) reopened all its branches under a private company, which enabled the Ruch Library to be open eight hours a week. Janis became the branch manager for the Ruch and Central Point libraries. In 2009, Betsy Brauer became the Ruch Library branch manager.

At her interview for the job as librarian, Janis convinced the new management that Ruch needed more hours for the number of people they served. JCLS agreed to proceed if the community could also help. FORL began fundraising again in 2008 to provide four additional hours on Saturdays. FORL provided \$12,000+ annually for six years. Thank you to the community for supporting this service!

In April 2011, Thalia Truesdell became the branch manager, and ROCS classes began making weekly library visits for a mini literary experience and book checkouts. Every student had a library card and used it!

By 2015, all the hours were funded by the newly formed Jackson County

Library District. FORL was free to expand both programming options and the stock of books.

In 2018, realizing that not all ROCS children could access the crude path from the school to the mosaic walkway, “Library Lane, Road to Reading” was built, enabling access for all.

FORL expanded its reach by organizing an inviting “Book Barn,” which houses over 10,000 titles and opens on the first Saturday of each month. Additionally, the A-Frame Bookstore is open on library days.

When COVID hit, libraries and schools remained open as much as public safety allowed, and much of the time, we were able to interact with the school. We coped.

Megan Pinder became the branch manager in May 2023 and continues to offer JCLS programs, community classes and events, a preschool playgroup, movies, a Seed Library, and much, much more. Come in and help us create Ruch Library History, Part Three!

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