

23 - 1980 - 1989

Library in Ben Lomond needs a new librarian

The Ben Lomond Community Library is once again in need. A volunteer head librarian-director for the all-volunteer library is being sought.

The job description goes something like this: "They have to be creative — able to do everything. A manager. A good fund-raiser. Someone who likes kids. A hard worker, and they have to like books."

So says Faye Ellis of Ben Lomond who, for almost four years, has been head librarian and chairwoman of the non-profit corporation which runs the small library on Mill Street.

She's stepping down in January to devote more time to historical research on the San Lorenzo Valley and is looking for someone to fill her shoes.

Without such a person — or several people — the library is in danger of closing, she said.

It wouldn't be the first closure, but it could be the last. The library was kicked out of the Santa Cruz city-county library system in 1980. Volunteers restacked the shelves and have run the library for almost four years.

The approximate 300-member library group has expanded the number of books from about 3,500 to about 5,000 and has extended the hours from three afternoons a week to five afternoons a week.

The library got \$8,000 in revenue-sharing funds one year from the county; the money was used to paint and spruce up the library. It also got \$500 from the Bank of America and smaller donations from other businesses, said Ellis. Ongoing financial support has come from \$3-a-year family/individual membership fees.

Since moving out from under the county wing, about 100 people have worked at the library. Between five and 15 librarians work there on a regular basis, according to Ellis.

"It was very exciting in the beginning. We created the library," Ellis said. The group tossed out

county library rules and transformed the library from a dark, dingy place to a homey library where people come in "just to sit," said Ellis.

At first, Ellis devoted about 30 hours a week to the library — trimming roses, ordering books, training volunteer librarians, cleaning the building and fund raising. She also has filled in for other volunteers as needed.

The Jan. 4, 1982 storm hurt. The library building itself was not damaged (although water got in the furnace), but a number of the patrons and volunteers were hit hard by the disaster, said Ellis. Patrons moved and some volunteers stopped work. "That made a lot of difference."

Ellis said she never intended to make a career out of being a volunteer librarian and has hoped someone else would take over the job. Her efforts during the past two years to find that person have proved unsuccessful.

She's still hoping someone will step forward, but she has become discouraged. "I am kind of discouraged. It's a lot to expect."

Without a head librarian/director, the chances of the library's staying open are "probably not that good," she noted.

Ellis said she will quit Jan. 1, 1984. The volunteer librarians now working have agreed to continue "for awhile," she said.

More than the library would be affected by its closure. The building is held in trust for the community. That trust — the Brooks Trust — is administered by the county Department of Parks and Recreation, said Ellis. The Ben Lomond Park and the adjoining Wilder Hall are also held in the same trust.

Without the library, ownership of the library, park and Wilder Hall all go to the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District, said Ellis.

For more information regarding the volunteer position, phone Ellis at 336-2381.