

Downtown Community Proud Of Downscale Library On Main Street

By Greg Hernandez

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While the Main Street Library doesn't have the huge book selection or myriad of resources that are available at the Huntington Beach Central Library, the smaller building's charm and accessibility keeps a steady stream of local residents happy.

Located in the heart of downtown, the Main Street branch was built in 1951 and was the city's main library until the Central Library was built on Talbert Street in 1975.

"This is a community library. It is used by a lot of people who live downtown," said Marianne MacKenzie, branch manager.

"We get a lot of young people who don't know how to drive, mothers who find it easy to find

parking and older people who are used to this library.

"They feel secure here and like the atmosphere of a community library, it's very intimate," said MacKenzie.

In addition to a vast selection of books available for checkout, Main Street Library houses a small bookstore, sponsored by Friends of the Library, where used books can be purchased for less than \$1.

The library has also begun to rent out videocassettes. A library card allows a patron to check out films for 48 hours for either \$1 or \$2, depending on how current the film.

During the school year, part of the building is used for Model
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United Nations meetings, where local high school students study and debate international issues.

Silent auctions on old and rare books are often held at the library with proceeds applied to building improvements and programs.

At the center of all the activity is the cheerful MacKenzie, who became branch manager of Main Street Library two years ago. Since then, she has made the

place her own.

She regularly schedules exhibits in the front foyer section, has organized a video room for Coastline Community College students to view their lessons, and is working on re-decorating the children's book section.

She also keeps up on the latest best sellers and knows what books her regular patrons like.

"If we get a book in that I think they might like, I might

give them a call and let them know it's here. That's not something you get in a bigger library because it just isn't possible.

"Running this library is like running your own business. It needs a lot of tender, loving care."

Library hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Library cards from the Central, Banning or Graham branches can be used at the Main Street location.

