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COMING MONDAY

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WOWS FOR THE BROWSE

Public Library opens with a stairway to heaven

By DAVE KITCHELL
Pharos-Tribune staff writer

For once, a Saturday afternoon at one of the quietest places in town was anything but that, and there was good reason for it.

The Logansport/Cass County Public Library officially opened a 6,000-foot addition to a crowd of more than 200. The thing they wanted to check out most was not a book, but the place that showcases them. A

History of Public Library:

- Opened as a Carnegie Library in 1909
- Original building burned in 1941
- Rebuilt in 1942
- First addition completed in 1962
- Second addition completed in 1982

\$1.14 million addition marked the continuation a 60-year trend. Every 20 years since the library burned down, the library has been involved in a major construction project.

Philip C. Shih, library director, said in a dedication ceremony prior to a ribbon-cutting ceremony, that he wants the library to become a place where people come to spend more time and get a feel for what is contained within the walls.

"We are continuing a rich library tradition and continuing a culture that is and has always been deeply ingrained in the culture of Cass County," said Shih, who has been director since 1974.

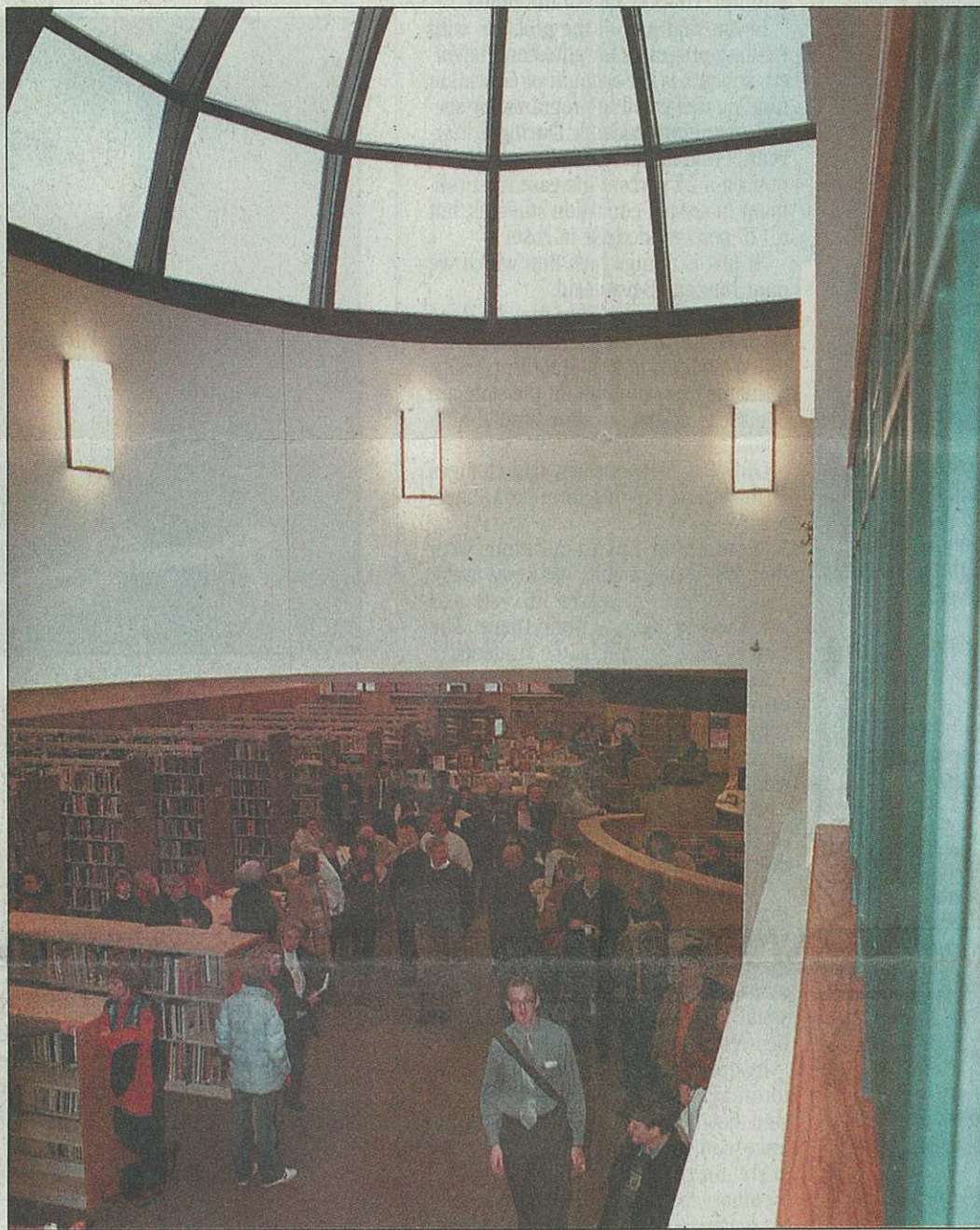
Shih said Logansport and Cass County are places that value "knowing, learning and self improvement" and local residents come to the library to find answers.

Robert L. Justice, a Logansport attorney and the immediate past president of the library board, credited Shih for the completion of the project.

"Because we kept Phil, we have this addition," he said. "The new addition has been a monument to the careful husbandry of his office."

For visitors such as Cindy Rose and her twin 10-year-old daughters, the day was special far beyond the three port-hole windows that are part of the north end of the children's book section.

"I think it's wonderful that they could



Pharos-Tribune photo by Ryan Baker

THE FINISHED PRODUCT: More than 200 people attended an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday marking the official opening of the new addition to the Logansport/Cass County Public Library. The curved staircase overlooking the library floor is just one of the features included in the \$1.14 million building project.

Public Library Board:

- Leo Burns, president
- Tim Herd
- Alan Hildebrandt
- Robert L. Justice
- Patrick McNary
- Kim Steele
- Shelia Thompson

do it without going to the city and getting any financial help. It's quite an accomplishment," said Rose, whose oldest daughter works at the library.

"We've been coming here for 15 years. We'll be coming as much or more now," she said.

Mike Montgomery, one of the architects for the project, credited Easterday Construction of Marshall County for its work. He said Easterday responded when the project presented challenges, and there were many in a compressed construction site made complicated by the slope of a hill and overhead power lines. In the end, the project represents value, he said.

"It's probably the best million dollars any library we've ever worked with has ever spent."

Justice, who presented remarks on behalf of the board, said "This library

is a part of us and all that we have been."

Logansport and Cass County have produced many successful people who have gone on to careers in politics, entertainment, religion, architecture and virtually all other fields, and the library is part of the reason why, he said.

"Can we really claim that drinking the water of the Eel and Wabash rivers account for all these achievements? Not very likely. But we can say that the atmosphere of Logansport did not stifle their abilities."

"This is where the atmosphere of Logansport and Cass County to some extent is made. This library is one source. It's also a gateway to which its patrons journey into the past, into the present and also into the future."

—Robert L.

Justice
Logansport/Cass
County Public
Library Board

Tragedies could lead to new law

■ Fire marshal says alternative exits important.

By DAVE KITCHELL
Pharos-Tribune staff writer

Gary Smith of Logansport finds a strange parallel between his grandfather who were coal miners and his son who is in a rock band.

That parallel is the risk in their lives. A parallel he thinks about after club incidents in Chicago and Rhode Island that left more than 100 dead.

"Our son, Aaron, has decided to pay rent by playing guitar in a band signed to a California recording company. The band is a hard working group. In January alone, they played 24 east and west clubs in 28 days. They are very aware of the establishments they play are losing money or have borderline profitability. They assume that these places are safe but understand that corners are often cut to make these clubs affordable to a targeted audience.

"Both of my grandfathers were southern Indiana coal miners. What a strange parallel that both my grandfathers and my son understand that they couldn't resist if they priced themselves out of the market," he said.

"If anybody thinks this is all good, think again. Each night is a shot at fire or another night of sleeping in their vehicles."

"Can we balance perfect safety with affordable venues for younger wallets? A perfect world, maybe. One of my grandfathers died of a disease called "black lung" yet my family understood that this was an acceptable risk."

Wilbur Bingaman of Logansport is a performing artist who can help their audiences know where to escape in an emergency — and should be required to do so and repeat it. And, he says, why should any band need to set off fireworks inside a building?

"I think whenever there's a concert or showing of any type, there should be fire. If a group is good enough to show they don't need any gimmicks," he said.

State Fire Marshal Tracy Boatwright, who formerly represented a portion of Miami County in the Indiana General Assembly,

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