



Robert J. Pavuchak/Post-Gazette photos

The chairs and lounge furniture have been renovated in the children's room at the Northland Library.

Northland Library takes on a fresh, new look

There's a lot of oohing and ahing going on at Northland Library these days.

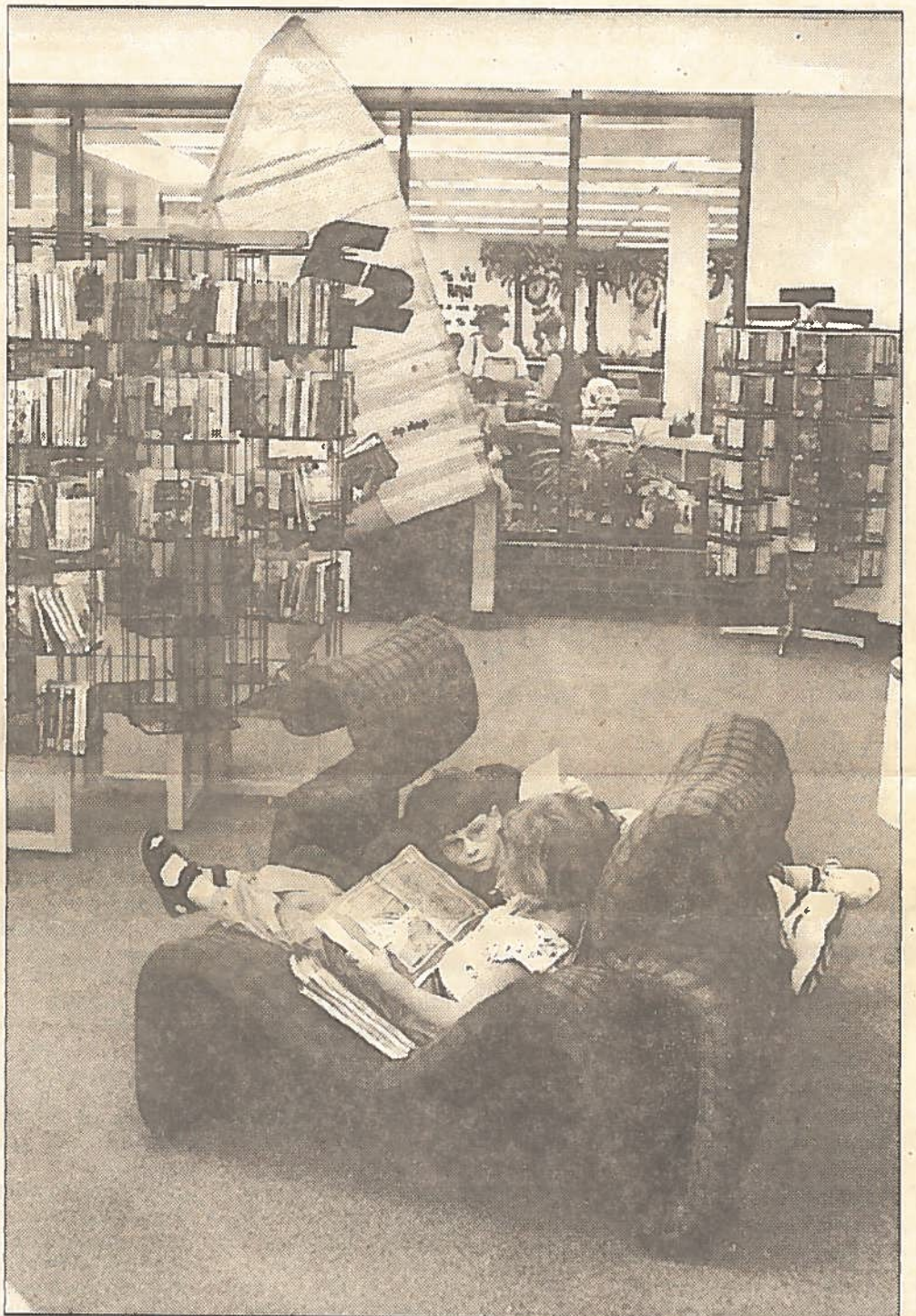
After 17½ years, the library finally was able to finance a \$130,000 renovation that resulted in a clean, fresh look for the building.

During the two-week renovation in late May, approximately 250 pieces of furniture and 110 meeting-room chairs were reupholstered, and 30 tables and countertops also were cleaned. About 3,200 square yards of carpet was laid in the 30,000 square foot building, and a handicapped ramp and walkway were rebuilt.

The project was the result of many volunteers' hard work and donations from library clubs, residents and businesses.

The staff decided to make the project fun and divided themselves into three teams, according to tasks they could handle, using the team names Aardvark, Armadillo and Anaconda.

Three members of a library team talked with Staff Writer Tawanda D. Williams about the renovation of the library, which serves residents of Ross, McCandless, Marshall, Bradford Woods and Franklin Park.



Matthew Lohman, 5, of McCandless, and Emma Meller, 5, of Bradford Woods enjoy reading, while reclining in newly cleaned S-shaped furniture in the young adults room at the library.

Diane Illis, communications officer:

We started some days at 7 a.m. and other days at 8 a.m. because we wanted to be here when the moving and carpeting crews were here. The people on the committee would come in early and get the coffee done.

They would then make up the daily schedule of what needed to be done. So that meant you would talk to the carpet people and say, "Now, where are you heading?" Then we'd talk to the movers, and say, "OK, we need to clear this out."

Originally, we didn't have the three teams set up, and that's how we tried to divide up the tasks. It seemed the more we got into it, the more people gravitated toward what they could do or what they were more interested in doing.

What the teams were were just a random drawing of everyone on staff. There were slightly more than 40 staff members involved. We didn't want one large group of people wandering around and saying, "Now what do we do?"

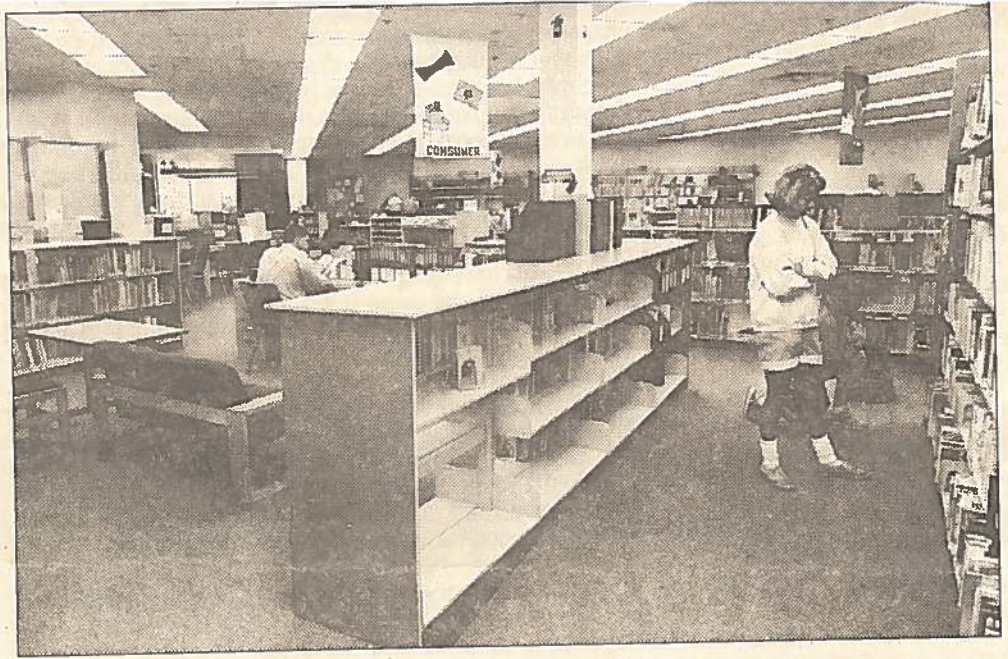
There were the Armadillos, and they couldn't lift anything, so they might go and clean chairs, and maybe the Anacondas who were supposed to be cleaning chairs would send over their strongest people to start hefting the couches. So, that's the way things usually divided up during the day.

Beth Lawry, children's and young adult services librarian: We tried to intermix abilities and departments so that we would get a chance to work with people in other departments that we don't normally see or know what they're doing. This way, you were working with everybody on the staff, so you got some time to spend with other people, which I think is really helpful.

It helps everybody to realize what else is going on, and just to remember there are other people in the background doing other things all the rest of the year that you forget.

From the Children's Department point of view, we chose this time to re-arrange and restructure the department because we had some goals that we wanted to meet. We figured we should take advantage of having a moving company here.

One of the major things we had to do is work on compliance with American with Disabilities Act. And so a lot of the shelving that wasn't exactly corrected, we corrected to meet the guidelines. We created some seating for disabled people that we didn't



Amy Beck of Ross Township makes a selection from the stacks in the adult section. The main adult section features new counter-tops, furniture, lounges and banners hanging overhead highlighting do-it-yourself books.

have before.

Part of the other goal was that certain parts of the collection needed additional room. Some of them are going to be expanded based on receiving the Regional Asset District money. We took the entire picturebook collection and totally restructured that area. So we created additional shelving and additional space because not only are we going to get more books, that area is heavily used by our population.

We created a new homework space, which we did not have, and got a brand new counter tabletop work area. We also moved up a collection of beginner readers near the fiction area and created a readers' lounge. So, there were a lot of collections that moved and physical rearrangements of the room.

Laura Shelley, library director: The books were supposed to be moved by the moving company, but we found there was other stuff we needed the moving company to do that was on our list. And, so we kind of made trade-offs along the way. We had upholstery to clean, we had painting to do. We had moving of furniture to do, and we

had to clean shelves and dust books.

It's been 17½ years since we moved in here. And it's the first time we've been able to get new carpeting. As we started realizing what all new carpeting meant, it meant that we had to do some other things.

The last thing we wanted was to have new carpeting, and have everybody say, "Boy, does everything else look dingy." So it meant painting, but at the same time we figured we'd work on hitting other areas.

For instance in the children's department, one of the things they did was put two 15-foot long trenches in the floor so that we could put in a conduit. Down the road, we're going to end up with an on-line catalog. We would have to run strips of wire from the ceiling down to the tables to put computers on. So we tried to plan for some of that, and we did the same upstairs, drilling holes to get the cable in place.

Outside, our brick wall had been really hit by the winter a couple of years ago, and it was cracking. Plus, the ramp wasn't quite in line with ADA compliance. We figured it'd be best to get that done before the walk fell over on somebody.