

NEW HOURS at Friends Bookstore!

Bloomington may be changing architecturally before our eyes, but the perennial pleasure of browsing among used books has been preserved in the bookstore operated by the Friends of Monroe County Public Library, located on the first floor of the Main Library at 303 East Kirkwood Avenue. The store is now open five days: Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00 to 7:00, Friday and Saturday from 11:00 to 5:00, and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00.

Enter the library atrium from Kirkwood, and on your right you will see a well-lighted storefront displaying colorful merchandise, beyond which are shelves of books, CDs, and DVDs as well as magazines, comics, pictures, collectibles, games, literary socks, tote bags, and T-shirts in white, navy or free-spirited multi-colored tie-dye, featuring the library's iconic bears. You can also purchase Bear Bucks for in-store purchases in denominations of \$1 and \$5 as gifts, or you may buy a gift certificate in any amount. And whatever you purchase at the store's bargain prices, all profits go to support programs and acquisitions of Bloomington's award-winning library.

Under new management, the Friends' Bookstore is in its latest stage of evolution since the early days of weekly sales, mainly of library discards, set up in the atrium. Since then donations from the public have increased inventory exponentially, first leading to a permanent store at the back of the first floor open two or three days a week, to, most recently, the new store with hours expanded to five days, and First Sunday storewide half-price sales, offering even better deals than the store's everyday low prices.

Of special interest to many is the Big Sale held in the spring and fall in rooms 1B and 1C on the first floor. All sale items are half price or less and on Sunday may be purchased by the bag or box for even lower prices. On Monday, leftover items are free with donations welcome. The 2018 Spring Big Sale is scheduled for Thursday, April 12 (Friends of the Library only) through Monday, April 16 (free day). There is also an annual sale at the Ellettsville branch, which is suspended this year as major remodeling and expansion of the building will soon be underway.

The current bookstore was integrated into the design of latest major renovation of the Main Library, completed in 2014, in order to increase visibility and invite the public to drop in. Books and other merchandise are added daily, so there is always something to discover. If you haven't checked it out yet, be sure to come in at your next opportunity. If you are already a customer, be sure to come back and see what's new.

Donations are always welcome and can be brought to the Main Library, the drive-up, or the Ellettsville branch. For large donation pick-up, call (812) 349-3083. Except for the manager's position, the store is staffed with all volunteers, making more resources available to support library programs. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Sue Sater via <https://mcpl.info/> or call (812) 349-3050.

If you are not already a member, you are invited to join the Friends of the Library and become part of this group's active efforts to build the library's collection and provide special programs for all ages. Learn more at the Friends' website, <https://mcpl.info/friends>.