

The ENTERPRISE BUSINESS

A reader's paradise at the Manchester Mill

■ *Local used-book shop is a comfortable respite.*

By **Marsha Johnson Chartrand**
Editor

What started as a part-time venture and labor of love has become increasingly full time for Jesse O'Jack.

Books: Silver Rose, L.L.C., which opened last summer in the Manchester Mill, is consuming more time for O'Jack than he originally anticipated and he recently decided to open an additional office for his legal practice in the mill.

"I eat fast," he said with a chuckle, in response to a question about how he manages to get everything done while covering two businesses. "And actually, it's quiet here ... I always bring in a few things to do."

The bookstore originated

as a three-generation family project, with O'Jack, his mother, Diane Ashley Barlow, and his children, Evan and Bronwyn.

Barlow is the author of "Ishmael Munch," a children's story about an adopted lamb trying to discover his true identity. Ishmael, a real sheep that still lives at O'Jack and Barlow's Sharon Township home, "sort of started it all," Barlow admits.

Evan O'Jack, who loves books, particularly science fiction and fantasy, wanted to work in a used-book store, so when his father discovered the space at the mill almost a year ago, it seemed like just the right spot to open a store of their own. With dozens of hand-built shelves to accommodate the thousands of books they found at yard sales, estate sales and other selected outlets, the store opened as a work in

progress

As fall and winter progressed, Books: Silver Rose, L.L.C., became a growing part of the mill's retail traffic and activities.

And while he runs the store as a business, it is also a hobby for O'Jack and his family, all of whom have a love for books.

"While I was in law school, I ran a book store and I was in the book business for several years," he says. "This was not something I had to figure out by myself.

"I hope to teach the business to my son and daughter as well."

The store is still a work in progress, he adds.

"The people who come in seem to like the feel and the look," O'Jack said. "It's a good location.

"What I hope is that it will be nice enough to attract people to drive here for a visit."

The comfortable atmosphere of the historic mill on the banks of the River Raisin is an inviting spot for a used book store. With a few nooks and corners perfect for browsing and a window overlooking the river, readers may easily find a perfect book to relax with in an overstuffed armchair. The children's area has a window looking out on to Adrian Street and is equipped with floor cushions and a small table.

A staple of used-book stores usually are paperback books, but Books: Silver Rose has more than paperbacks. The store has a distinctive focus on its healthy selection of history books and a growing collection of rare books.

While finding the right books that will sell can be a time-consuming project, it's part of the labor of love for O'Jack.

"You just have to know



Diane Ashley-Barlow, whose book, *Ishmael Munch*, is available at Books: Silver Rose LLC, held a reading last weekend at the Mill, co-sponsored by Manchester Candy & Co. The event went well, with about 25 children and their parents who came to see the lambs, listen to the story and partake of refreshments.

what to buy ... and what not to buy," he says. "I do like history, so I have developed a good collection of history books."

The store also buys used and rare books.

And of course, fans of "Ishmael Munch" can purchase copies of Barlow's book there, too.

Books: Silver Rose, L.L.C., is located at 201 E. Main Street in the historic Manchester Mill. The shop is closed Mondays; open from 3 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, noon to 8 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays; noon to 7 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays.