

**2022 Summer Reading Program**

June 1 - July 31

Sign-up begins June 1



All ages can dive into reading this summer to win prizes! Sign-up with the Beanstack app or ask us for help.

# Riding into Town

## Best-selling Pony Express author coming to St. Joseph for speaking events

For 18 short months in 1860 and 1861, the Pony Express connected the eastern United States to California before folding in bankruptcy. But it retains a firm hold in the American psyche more than 160 years later.

Author Jim DeFelice understood that in 2016 when he was driving the Pony's route while researching his best-selling book **West Like Lightning: The Brief, Legendary Ride of the Pony Express**.

"The great thing about the Pony Express is that it's a story about the Old West, and they're all good guys," he said. "They're helping build the country. It's something you can feel good about in our history."

"And, let's face it, horses. What's not to like about horses?"

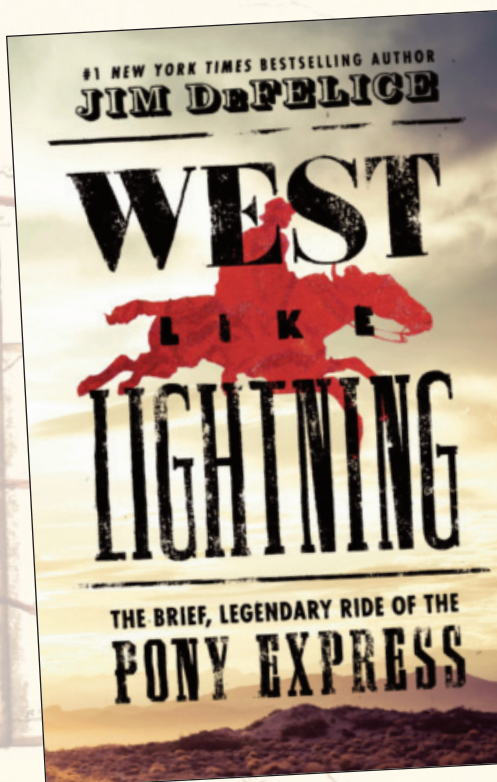
### Several events to choose from

DeFelice will be in St. Joseph on Friday, April 1, and Saturday, April 2, to speak at the Pony Express Museum, Rolling Hills Library and St. Joseph Public Library to mark the Pony's 162nd anniversary.

He will speak at the museum at noon April 1 for a luncheon celebration of the 100th anniversary of KFEQ-AM radio. Tickets cost \$14.99 for singles and \$25 for couples and include a box lunch. Purchase tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/272228190847>.

At 6:30 p.m. April 1, DeFelice will present a public program at the Belt Branch Upper Story, where the Friends of the Library will be selling his book. No registration is needed.

On April 2, he will have a book-signing at 10 a.m. at the museum, 914 Penn, and then take part in a virtual



**Jim DeFelice drove the Pony Express trail from Sacramento, Calif., to St. Joseph in 2016 as part of his research for his best-selling book.**



program at 2 p.m. for St. Joseph Public Library. The link to participate is <https://sjpl.librarymarket.com/defelice>.

The Belt Branch will have extra copies of the book to be checked out beginning in early March.

### Founders had bigger ambitions

In his book, DeFelice describes the route riders took for 1,900 miles, who those riders were, the rise and fall of a businesses model that was dubiously financed and the enduring legacy of the Pony Express. He drove the trail from Sacramento, Calif., to St. Joseph and talked with

museum curators, local historians and historical re-enactors and also tracked down original documents to convey the full scope of the enterprise against the wider background of the U.S. Postal Service,

American finance, the Gold Rush and the impending Civil War.

"The thing about the Pony Express that surprised me was how smart and ambitious the business people behind it were," he said about the plans to use the Pony Express as a lead-in to a nationwide delivery service. "These guys were in it for a lot more than just delivering a few pieces of mail across the country."

Even though the Pony Express failed, it remains an inspiring story because it's a story that pits man against nature, daring to ride across open country in all conditions.

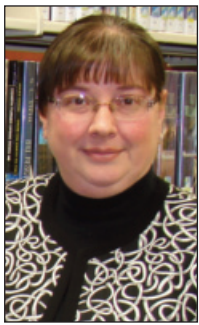
"You talk to kids about the Pony Express and they get

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# Numbers or Words?

For libraries, we take pleasure and find comfort in both

There's a kind of mythology out there that word people are not number people, meaning people who like books and literature are not the same ones who like data and statistics. I like books and numbers both, thank you very much, and I don't think I am the only one.



**Michelle Mears**

Rolling Hills  
Library Director  
[mmears@rhcl.org](mailto:mmears@rhcl.org)

For some, numbers are solid and truthful. The number of books and other materials checked out from Rolling Hills Library in FY2021 was 305,931, and that is that. But does that tell the whole story? A number by itself means very little. If you knew that the previous three comparable time periods were 341,420 and 342,949 and 313,352 then you might have a different idea of what that first number is trying to say. And then you must set it in the context of COVID, which gives it a whole different meaning.

I'm happy that we only dropped about 10% in checkouts given the extreme conditions we have faced since March 2020 and that the numbers are back on the rise. Considering we did not have any in-person programs for more than a year, it is amazing that the drop wasn't significantly higher than that. People check out books when they come to the library for a program.

In the same time period, our digital usage more than doubled, from 19,984 to 47,679. It looks like some people filled their need for books and reading online, which made that number go up, and some did without and made our checkouts number go down. And that makes me sad, thinking about people who needed books but didn't get them.

We like to measure things in libraries. Checkouts, computers, wi-fi users, foot traffic ... if you can count it, we keep track of it. Counting things is soothing and straightforward, unlike opinions and emotions. Sometimes we place too much importance on a number and wanting to see it grow. Bigger must be better, right?

The problem with measurement is that we can rarely see the effect we have as a library. Meaningful results are more than just numbers. No one comes back to tell us, "Hey I got into Harvard because I used your library once when I was 5." It is the sustained and repeated use of a library that develops habits and skills. The relationships we form with our users are not easily quantifiable. So, we try to tell stories when we can and in the absence of a good story, we use the best available numbers.

Did you know we processed 806 passport applications in the past year? And 1,158 the year before that? What a long, strange trip it has been, but it's getting better all the time.

## Other ways to reach and follow us

Text the library at **816-287-9828** using these keywords, and we'll help with your account:

**Status** for account information    **Renew all** to renew everything on your account

**Renew due** to renew overdue items    **Help** for a list of available commands  
or text anything else to start a conversation with a librarian.



[www.goodreads.com/group/show/397463-rolling-hills-library](https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/397463-rolling-hills-library)



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## Browse

a quarterly publication from  
Rolling Hills Library that is  
sponsored by the Friends of  
Rolling Hills Library

## Rolling Hills Library

[www.rhcl.org](http://www.rhcl.org)

### Belt Branch

1904 N. Belt., St. Joseph  
816-232-5479  
HOURS: 9-8 Mon-Sat  
12-6 Sun

### Savannah Branch

514 W. Main, Savannah  
816-324-4569  
HOURS: 9-7 Mon-Fri  
9-5 Sat/12-5 Sun

### Business Office

1912 N. Belt, St. Joseph  
816-236-2106

### Bookmobile & Outreach

1912 N. Belt, St. Joseph  
816-205-7100

### Michelle Mears

Library Director

### Alan Stolfus

Browse editor

## Board of Trustees

### Elbert Turner Jr.

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### Mary Beth Thomas

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Cosby

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St. Joseph

### Cindy Jones

St. Joseph

### Ken Rosenauer

Country Club Village

*The board generally meets  
at 5:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday  
of each month.*

## Friends of the Library

The Friends support the library through  
volunteer and fund-raising efforts.  
The Friends board meets monthly.

## Rolling Hills Library Foundation

The Foundation strives to provide  
financial support for large  
endeavors and future growth of the  
library by seeking substantial gifts from  
patrons and supportive foundations.





## Family Concert: Tom Meehan

Just because St. Patrick's Day has passed is no reason to stop celebrating your Irish heritage. Meehan will perform Irish folk songs for all ages to enjoy.

2 p.m. Wednesday, March 23, Belt Branch

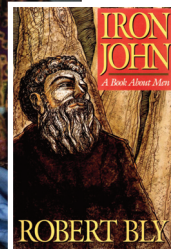
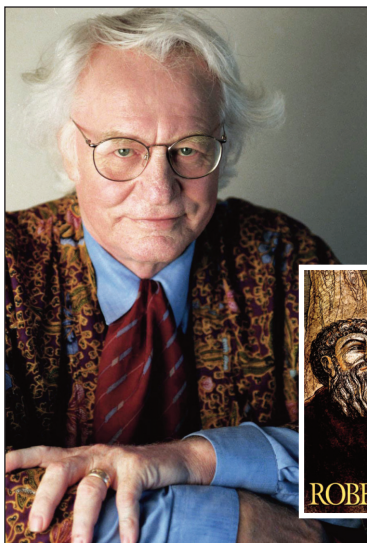
# Farewell, Mr. Bly

Sacrifices were made to bring the poet to St. Joe, but looking back it was worth it

*Long before he became our resident poet and Books Revisited manager, Hans Bremer arranged for the renowned poet and essayist Robert Bly to do a reading and an educational talk in St. Joseph. Bly passed away Nov. 21, 2021, just days before the winter edition of Browse was printed. Here now is Bremer's remembrance of those three days.*

As a practicing poet and musician, it's easy to take my artistic history for granted. Locally, I'm able to share the same atoms as Thomas Hart Benton's painting **Persephone**, pause near the Hannibal fence immortalized by Samuel Clemens. Every Missouri burg has its festivals, its museums and its figures to celebrate. If I leaf through my local press, or channel surf PBS, I'm allowed a glimpse of our culture, and the more prominent names in every artistic discipline become, if they aren't already, commonplace.

Why then would a poor bard (myself) decide to sell his personal library to bring another literary figure into our community? Well, Robert Bly wasn't just any literary figure in 2003. Bly had electrified the men's movement in 1990 with the bestseller **Iron John: A Book About Men**. He'd followed it with **American Poetry: Wildness and Domesticity** and **The Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart**. If



these three fascinating volumes weren't enough, Bly had published countless collections of poetry relating to the Upper Midwest, had vehemently protested the war in Vietnam, had been a successful editor, translator and captivating performer. More importantly, he'd been Harvard

roommates with the writers Donald Hall and George Plimpton, had saved the poet James Wright from a nervous breakdown and was immortalized by Richard Hugo in **31 Letters and 13 Dreams**. To me, he was iconic.

And available. Not every writer wants to be. When I inquired, Bly's assistant gave me his normal reading fee, what air fares might be and what accommodations Bly might deem necessary. When the proceeds of my library's liquidation fell a tinge short, I went to my friends. If everyone pitches in what they can afford, I told them, a magnificent poet will appear. In \$5, \$10 and \$20 increments, my friends stepped up to the proverbial plate. Missouri Western added what it could to procure a Friday afternoon panel discussion. It still wasn't enough to meet Bly's preferred fee.

What remains of the story is part of my own artistic history, a bright snippet of St. Joseph literary lore and

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### For Robert Bly

I was your host and chauffeur for three days of Chinese take out and chill glasses of dry gin. You answered your rented door in misbuttoned, cotton pajamas a bit shrunken for your lanky wrists. Thinning wisps of Scandinavian white snaked out and around your alert ears.

I feared nothing near you, the gentle warrior brandishing his acute pen.

To and fro we drove in my tiny Ford, our knees thumping against the shift. You never once complained, grabbing at my forearm as you explained the sniping brutality of Allen Tate 40 plus years before. An ancient battle still slashing your craw. Your lost friend Jim kicking the bottle,

retrieving it,

breaking down again at your farm. The harm of academy banter, you said. You couldn't forgive the snide from anyone. I nod in agreement, even, now. This morning. In the black wave of your passing. A cluster of stars charging the moon under a quite still banner.

— Hans Bremer



## Eating From the Garden

Children eat fewer fruits and vegetables than in the past, which can lead to health problems. Heather Johnson with the Andrew County Extension Office will show students in fourth grade and older how to grow vegetables and teach them the importance of eating healthy. Advance registration required. 4 p.m. Thursdays, March 24-May 12, Savannah Branch

## Gower girl so excited about reading she goes to bed with books

Not sugar plums, but books, fill one of our young Bookmobile patron's dreams.

Six-year-old Brynleigh Porter is a regular visitor to the Bookmobile's bi-weekly stops in her town (along with her brother, Beckham) and has a true love of books and reading. In fact, she's got such a love for them that she barely has any room in her bed for



sleeping. Her mom, Leigh, says it's hard to keep Brynleigh from piling them into her bed each night.

Brynleigh, a kindergartener, is learning to read this year. Her mother recently sent us a second picture (below) showing the first book Bryn read by herself. It was **I Had Ten Hats** by David McPhail, which she checked out from us on the Bookmobile.

— Janis Curran  
Bookmobile staff member



# Videos & More

## Arts agency, library team up to present online series for kids

Elementary students who are home-schooled or who enjoy extra learning opportunities can take part in a three-week series of fun educational videos that Rolling Hills Library is providing hands-on programs for in March.

The Performing Arts Association of St. Joseph is sponsoring the free video series from Page Turner Adventures, a longtime creator of stage shows and videos for children, from Feb. 28 through March 18.

STEAM concepts, language arts skills and social emotional learning are the subjects of the series that uses plenty of humor to hold kids' attention. One hundred minutes of original video content will be provided each week.

The series uses theater, storytelling, art and comedy to teach social, emo-

tional learning and language arts skills. Children don't passively watch a show but become the main character in the stories. Along the way they learn about story structure, character, setting, conflict, vocabulary and more.

Rolling Hills is offering these free programs in the Belt Branch Upper Story:

**The Science of Theater & Movies** – 4:15 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, and 10:15 a.m. Thursday, March 3.

**The Mixed-Up Fairy Tale** – 4:15 p.m.

Wednesday, March 9, and 10:15 a.m. Thursday, March 10.

**The Great Pizza Contest** – 4:15 p.m. Wednesday, March 16, and 10:15 a.m. Thursday, March 17.

To watch the video series, call the Performing Arts office at 279-1225 or email [info@paastjo.org](mailto:info@paastjo.org). No registration is needed for the library programs.



## Bly provided books to replace those sacrificed for him

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the reason I wept openly when the headlines started to appear with news of Bly's passing. After being informed about my shortage of funds, Bly accepted my invitation to visit here. Sacrifices, our sacrifices, garnered Robert's respect.

I've written several poems about that weekend, and I'll continue to do so until I manage to commit all the particulars to

a published page. There are snapshots of Robert holding my first born (who is now 20). The books I sold were replaced with signed ones Robert eagerly handed me in appreciation. I cherish these, as I cherish my recollections of what many thought impossible, but what matters most in this time of grief is the gracious act of the prestigious to share his art. It meant the world, and it still does.





Belt Branch staff dressed up like children's book character Waldo to bring some cheer to a cold day in January. Where in the world did they get their outfits?



Miss Janet, Mary and Jill show off some of the 761 pairs of socks the Savannah Branch collected to win the 2022 Sock Fight against the Belt Branch, which gathered 643 pairs. Library staff and patrons donated the socks from Dec. 1 through Jan. 15. The socks were given to local agencies that work with the homeless, others in need and area schools. Miss Mary is holding the very prestigious Sock Fight trophy, which will be on display through 2022 at the Savannah Branch.



Everyone, including kids, their parents and Miss Sarah (hidden behind the flying snow), enjoyed playing in the "snow" on Jan. 22 in the Belt Branch Story House. It was a great way to have fun without going outside in the cold weather.

Santa Claus listens patiently as this little guy explains what he wants for Christmas, while his family members listen during the Milk & Cookies With Santa event on Dec. 10 in the Belt Branch Upper Story.



Library craft classes aren't always for kids. Helen Nguyen made a snow globe on Dec. 7 at the Belt Branch ...



... and Velda King-Mays made pinecone creatures on Jan. 7 at the Belt, too.



## Chronic Pain Self-Management

Mosaic Arthritis Community Services will discuss how distraction techniques, sleep, fatigue, breathing methods and exercise can affect pain and how you can find relief from pain in this multi-session program. Registration is not required. 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays, March 2-23, Savannah Branch

Health issues kept Brittany Smullin from finishing high school. But now she's ...

# First in Her Class

Brittany Smullin would have graduated from Benton High School in 2010 but illness kept her out of school so much she didn't have enough credits.

Earning that diploma is – *or was* – something she always wanted to accomplish. But her options for doing so as an adult were limited in St. Joseph. Until now.

The 30-year-old Savannah resident was one of the first people to register for the Excel Adult High School, an online accredited diploma completion program, when it became available in December through Rolling Hills Library. Two months later, she had completed her final six classes and earned her high school diploma.

"I thought I was going to cry," she said about seeing her diploma arrive in the mail.

### Program being tested in Missouri

The Missouri State Library has partnered with the educational publishing company Gale, part of the Cengage Group, to provide the online high school to Missouri libraries as a pilot program. Rolling Hills and St. Joseph Public Library are among the first nine libraries offering it.

Adults ages 18 and older must apply for the program through the libraries and have 24 months to complete the classes. Previously earned high school, GED, HiSET or TASC credits can be applied to ExcelHS, potentially cutting the time needed to earn a diploma – as Smullin proved, becoming the first Excel graduate in Missouri.

"Luckily, I have a good support system," she said. "I'm a stay-at-home mom and when my husband (Calen) came home from work, he'd take care of the 4-year-old (Denver) and I'd study."

Smullin hit the books for a couple hours at a time and worked her way through such classes as U.S. government,



**Brittany Smullin is the first graduate in Missouri of Excel Adult High School, an online program. That's Denver, her 4-year-old son, holding her diploma.**

math, public speaking and health and fitness.

"I liked it and it worked out for me, but I'm really happy that it's done," she said. "I was stressed out about it," worried that she had been out of school for too long.

Excel is set up like a regular high school with courses that have their own tests to pass and credits to earn and no final cumulative-knowledge test like the HiSET, which some students find difficult to pass.

Students work at their own pace, and Excel's veteran teachers and academic support staff are readily available through email and phone calls. One-on-one tutoring sessions can be arranged and success coaches call to check on students' progress.

### Best option so far to help adults

Rolling Hills had worked for more than two years to provide laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to help adults to

pass the high school equivalency test (HiSET) but had few people interested in the opportunity and no one pass the test. Library director Michelle Mears believes the Excel model is better for helping adults go back to school.

"When this program came along, we really felt this was offering something with a higher value – a high school diploma is something people want to accomplish – and this not just an equivalency degree," she said. "This is a high school diploma."

With public computers to use, Wi-Fi hotspots to check out for home use and online educational resources, libraries should be seen as educational institutions that are helping adults learn and improve their lives, she said.

Rolling Hills started with five "seats" for students that are being sponsored by the Friends of Rolling Hills Library. Smullin has used one seat, and there are four

**Continued on Page 7**





### Movie: Deej

Teens and adults are invited to watch the award-winning documentary about David Savarese, a nonspeaking autistic teenager who is a college graduate. Information about local autism resources will be available. **2 p.m. Saturday, April 9, Belt Branch**

New graduate's advice:  
Just do it, and you will  
be proud you did it

From Page 6

students still working toward their diplomas. Mears has asked the Friends to sponsor four more students.

Interested adults can learn about the program at <https://rhcl.org/high-school>. As part of the application process, they will interview with a library staff member to gauge their ability to prepare for classes and then take an Excel life skills prerequisite course.

Smullin hopes having her high school diploma will lead to better job opportunities, and she's considering maybe going on to vocational school to learn a trade. Her advice to adults who don't have a high school diploma is to make the effort.

"Sign up and do it," she said. "Do the work and you'll be so proud of yourself, because I am."

Library staff are planning a reception for Brittany and her family at the Savannah Branch in the coming weeks.

"This milestone should be celebrated," Mears said, "and we hope it inspires others to see that it can be done."

## Women's Work

History programs to look at suffragists, Native American doctor

In recognition of March being Women's History Month, the Belt Branch is presenting two programs that look at the first Native American female doctor in the United States and northern Missouri women's contributions to the suffrage movement.

Dr. Dee Ann DeRoin will present a program about Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte and contemporary medicine in native communities at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 9.

Picotte was a member of the Omaha tribe who became a doctor and a social reformer in the late 19th century. She campaigned against alcohol on the Omaha reservation in Nebraska and for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis, which had no cure at the time. In her career, she served more than 1,300 patients in a 450-square-mile area.

DeRoin is a member of the Ioway Tribe of Kansas who has more than 30 years experience in family medicine. She is currently a consultant to the University of Missouri- Kansas City School of Medicine and its program in St. Joseph to encourage and recruit



**Dr. Dee Ann DeRoin (left) and Dr. Elyssa Ford will speak at Women's History Month events at the Belt Branch**



native students to consider medicine as a career. In 2008, the International Women's Forum recognized her as a "Woman Who Makes a Difference."

At 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, Dr.

Elyssa Ford, an associate professor of history at Northwest Missouri State University, will present the talk "Soothing the 'Savage Hearts of Man,'" which is co-hosted by the Missouri Humanities organization.

Ford will speak about how rural Missouri women played an important role in the suffrage movement. While national and eastern women's organizations were more prominent in the efforts to secure women's right to vote in the late 1800s, Midwest suffrage groups knew rural areas also were important to the cause. From Kirksville to Maryville, rural Missouri communities were having their own debates about voting rights. National proponents were invited to visit to build support for suffrage – but sometimes enraged their audiences – while local supporters also worked to secure the right for women to vote.



### Books Revisited

The Friends of the Library Bookstore

Offering used and rare books, music and more!

1906B N. Belt 816-205-7125

12-5 Monday, 9-5 Tuesday-Friday & 9-6 Saturday

DeFelice also has written several books with military topics

From Page 1

excited," he said. "The story resonates with everyone, but especially with the kids."

DeFelice has had more than 15 books on the New York Times Best Sellers lists, with several portraying modern military heroes. He was a co-author of **American Sniper**, the autobiography of Navy Seal Chris Kyle, and **American Wife**, the memoir by Kyle's widow, Taya Kyle. He has written a biography of World War II-era Gen. Omar Bradley and a memoir about World War II Army medic Ray Lambert. **West Like Lightning** was a finalist for the Western Writers of America's 2019 Spur Award for best western historical nonfiction.

# Spring Special

Serve this cheery cherry dessert at your Easter gathering

## Cherry Bundt Cake

Cake:

3 large eggs  
3/4 cup full fat sour cream  
1/3 cup unsweetened apple sauce  
1/3 cup oil  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 15.25-ounce box vanilla cake mix  
1 3.4-ounce package instant vanilla pudding mix  
1/2 cup warm water  
1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling

Frosting:

4 ounces cream cheese, softened  
1/2 tablespoon salted butter, softened  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour Bundt pan and set it aside.

In a large bowl, combine eggs, sour cream, apple sauce, oil and vanilla then

mix until smooth.

Add cake mix, pudding mix and water and mix until combined.

Spread half of the batter into the greased pan, leaving a slight valley in the batter.

Spoon pie filling onto the batter but be careful the filling does not touch the sides of the pan. Top with remaining cake batter. Bake for 45-55 minutes depending on your oven. Cool for 15 minutes and invert onto a cake plate. Cool completely.

For the frosting, combine cream cheese, butter and vanilla and gradually beat in powdered sugar until smooth. Drizzle it on the cooled cake.



Information about all library programs can be found at [rhcl.org](http://rhcl.org).

St. Joseph, Mo. 64506  
1912 N. Belt  
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