

Sayonara, Sandra
Savannah Branch manager
checking out after 30 years / Page 3

Lessons to Learn
Children's books offer mature
messages for the times / Page 6

Another New Library Service
Several library staff now trained
as notary publics / Page 7

Silver Lining Playbook

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, the library learned how to adapt

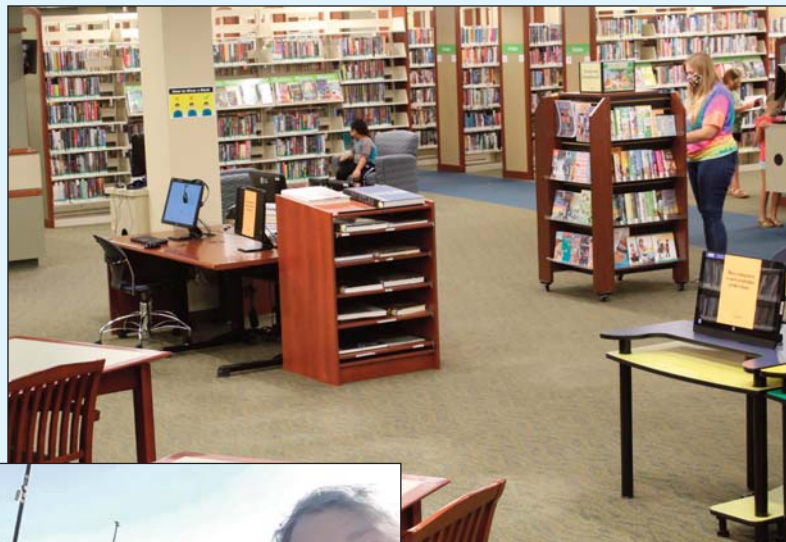
If there is a silver lining to the coronavirus pandemic that has left its mark on Rolling Hills Library and the world, it's that there have been plenty of learning opportunities.

The library took advantage of many of those chances and added new pages to its playbook. Library users have embraced the changes, but also aren't visiting the branches as often as they did in the past. It's not for the library's lack of trying to get them in the doors.

"I think we've done very well (adapting)," library Director Michelle Mears said. "We worked really hard to balance patrons' and staff's safety with the need to provide library materials to patrons. But it was difficult, very difficult, especially at the beginning."

When the library closed in March, plans were developed quickly to offer Curbside Pickup service to get materials to patrons without them coming into the branches and E-Cards, which give non-library card holders a way to use the library's online and electronic resources on their own computers and devices. Both projects were instant successes.

Next, library staff created virtual Storytimes and craft projects for families to participate in via social media. Then came free Virtual Meeting Rooms for patrons to connect with friends, family and work colleagues by using the library's online Zoom meeting platform.



ABOVE: A quiet Belt Branch on a Friday afternoon in mid August. LEFT: Belt Branch staff member Angie Holmes hands a sack of books to Barb Dalrymple, aka The Cake Lady, who was one of the earliest adapters to the library's Curbside Pickup service.

Finally, staff created Phone Stories for youths to call into the library to hear books being read by library staff members.

"Historically, when an economic downturn hits, library usage goes up, and we very much wanted to provide services to patrons," Mears said. "We just knew people needed something to read and to listen to and to view."

After an initial surge of visits when the library

reopened in late May, the number of library users coming into the branches slowed over the summer. The 2020 Summer Reading Program drew 1,356 participants with 847 completing their summer goals. In 2019, 2,791 youths and adults signed up with 1,447 completions.

"Traffic and usage is down quite a bit, and we really don't know why," Mears said. "We think some people are still sheltering in place and maybe some parents are keeping their kids home to keep them safe. Without the regular summer programs with the performers, maybe they didn't feel like coming to the library. And that really makes us sad, because we know kiddos need to read during the summer."

Please turn to Page 7

Post-Pandemic Puzzle

Someday we'll be able to say again 'Come in and stay awhile'

Right now, I begin to wonder if we will ever get past this pandemic. Just when it seems like we had it under a bit of control, it is spreading again. Maybe we all should have stayed in shelter a little longer. Hindsight will tell us later what we could have done better, but for now Rolling Hills Library is determined to provide the best darn library service we can.

For us at the library, the operative word is "service." Being a public service organization, we have a strong desire to serve our communities and will bend like a pretzel to find a way to get it done. The question is, how to do it safely? We went from recommended to required masks, and a small number of people got quite upset over that. Why people would refuse to do such a small thing with such a big impact is beyond me.

I have never felt that curbside service or circulation of materials in general involved any kind of substantial risk. Studies have shown that little active viral matter is detectable past two or three days on library materials like book jackets and DVD cases. This is an airborne virus, and most reports conclude it is most likely passed in the air between people within enclosed spaces.

Unfortunately, a lot of what we do as a public library happens in enclosed spaces. We have made a great effort over the past couple of decades to make the library a part of the community's "living room." We created a space for you to sit and stay for a while, but then with COVID-19 we turned around and said "Come in quick and leave as soon as you can."

I spend my time dreaming of a library with a drive-up window, outdoor seating, maybe an atrium, and a beautiful green lawn to have programs outside. I wish for windows that would open to allow in

summer breezes, even if it is on the warm side. But humidity is bad for books and air conditioning is kind of important, so our libraries feel empty and lonely right now.

I believe people in libraries, and society in general, will be able to gather in groups again and we will all have learned valuable lessons about science, illness, hygiene, and just exactly how much community means. We miss you and can't wait to welcome everyone back to our shared spaces when it is safe to do so.

Michelle Mears, *Rolling Hills Library Director*
mmears@rhcl.org

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

 facebook.com/RollingHillsLibrary

 twitter.com/RollingHillsLib

 www.instagram.com/Rolling_Hills_Library

 www.pinterest.com/rollinghillslib

Browse

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

Rolling Hills Library

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

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The board generally meets at 6 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.



19th Amendment Essay Contest

To celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the 19th Amendment giving women voting rights, St. Joseph Persisterhood and the library are having an online essay contest for high school and college students. The submission deadline is Oct. 12. Details available at rhcl.org/essay-contest.

Saundra Signs Off

Longtime Savannah Branch manager recounts her 30-year career with library

By Saundra Keiffer

Savannah Branch manager

On Labor Day weekend 1990, my husband John and I, our 3-year-old twins Audrey and Alex, and four fluffy cats packed up everything in a U-Haul van and drove out of the hills of the southeastern Ozarks, where I had been the reference librarian at Ozark Regional Library in Ironton, Mo. We drove all day to the edge of the prairie in St. Joseph for my new position as children's librarian for the River Bluffs Regional Library Belt Branch.

I inherited a children's room with a full wall painting of a green dragon with a heart at the tip of his tail and a worn children's collection that I was asked to transform into a better one. I conducted four weekly Storytimes and craft programs in that little room and journeyed to Head Start centers throughout St. Joe and the region as well as many day cares, preschools and classrooms doing Storytimes and puppetry.

I worked solely at the Belt until the library break-up in the early 2000s. At that point, many River Bluffs staff members went over to St. Joseph Public Library, leaving us with a limited staff and a return to our first name, Rolling Hills Consolidated Library. I was asked to take on

children's programming at the Savannah Branch because their children's library assistant had left. I continued this mad dash up and down Highway 71 for about three years.

In 2005, I was asked to take the Savannah Branch

manager position when Melissa Middle-swart retired. I have enjoyed the small-town vibe and have loved doing Storytimes, craft and art programs for adults and children, special programs such as summer tea parties, and supervising a wonderful staff.

Over the years we have seen many changes, including a building addition in 2005 and a renovation in 2017. New technology has presented its joys and challenges, and we have had new staff, new directors and new programs as trends have changed. What remains the same is our patrons' interest in books and learning and their love of our library.

Now, after 30 years at Rolling Hills, I am retiring on Friday, Sept. 11. As for my plans, I will be weathering the storm of the virus and doing a lot of gardening, fiber crafts, running my online fiber shop, reading, cooking and hopefully a little sightseeing.

I also hope to set up a Little Free Library on the sidewalk of our home in the 27th block of Monterey Street when the virus has passed. Once a librarian, always a librarian.



In her 30 years with Rolling Hills Library, Saundra Keiffer has worked with quite a few staff members, including (top) the

current group of Jill Weaver (left to right), Janet Phillippe, Kalyn Smith, Dana Prater, Paula Reed and Ellie Twombly. Saundra made her mark at the library as a leader of youth programs and adult craft programs.





When the Summer Reading Program came to an end, 1,356 youths and adults had signed up with 847 reaching their reading goals. There also were a lot of happy faces when the prize winners were announced. Here are some of them and more can be found on the library Facebook page. **CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT:** Peter Bartulica, Savannah grand prize winner Cole Menard, Carol Sparks, Azariah Allen, Susan Reeves, Dominic Ortega, Izabella Hernandez, Zion Gelman, Grace Corey and family, Finley Cleary and Bookmobile grand prize winner Kennedy Purvis, who also was getting her new library card. Grand prize winners received \$100 Walmart gift cards.

Library Scenes
June - August 2020





The Friends of the Library board of directors welcomed new members and selected new leaders for 2020-2021 at its July meeting. Left to right: New board member Barb Heath, vice president Galen Johnson, secretary Cindy Soper, treasurer Donna Bonnel and president Karen Steeby. Not pictured are board members Gail Tyler, Connie Johnson and Cindi Kerns.

Ida B. Wells



Women's Suffrage & the 19th Amendment

Dr. Evan Hart, assistant professor of history at Missouri Western, will introduce teens and adults to the people and efforts that worked 100 years ago to give women the right to vote. This is a Facebook premiere event, no registration needed. 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, Virtual Branch

Lessons for All

Children's books remind us that no matter our color, people are people

With the national movement for racial justice focusing attention on divisions in society, we asked **MidCity Excellence chief executive officer Kimberly Warren** to recommend a book that could provide some needed perspective. She chose two children's books to review.

Skin Like Mine by Latashia M. Perry was initially a delight to read. The illustrated pictures by Bea Jackson were vibrant and

the concept was

inviting as it embraces different shades of skin in each person.

Perry had a good concept in trying to explain how rich and beautiful different skin colors or shades could be. But when reading the book to other African Americans, I was told by one woman she disliked how Perry referred to the different hues or skin color as it related to food.

For example, it is derogatory to call someone an "Oreo" cookie when referring to people of mixed race. But a lot of Blacks refer to their skin color as it relates to coffee. This book used references to various concentration of melanin as it related to peanut butter, brownies, dark chocolate, caramel and cookies and creme.

At the end of the story, we see kids getting along and

interacting in a positive manner with kids of diverse racial backgrounds. I believe because it is a kid's book, children may not read more into the references as an adult would. But just keep this in mind that every person of color may have different offenses due to their history of acceptance or rejection in life.

Overall, I liked the book and believe that it will be a good item to lead to further discussion.

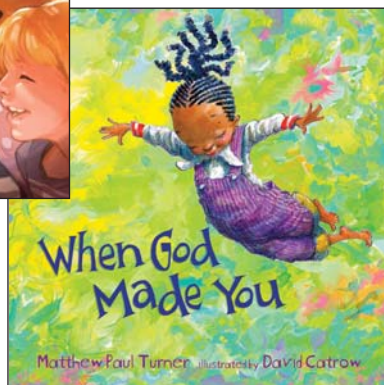
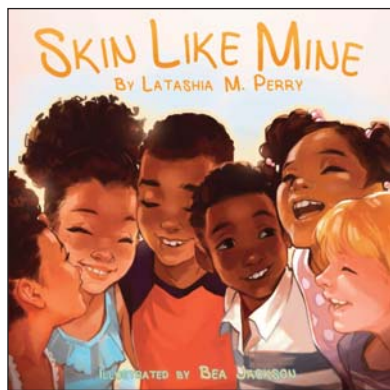
David Catrow's beautiful illustrations for **When God Made You** by author Matthew Paul Turner immediately grabbed my attention. The

cover shows a beautiful Black girl flying with a head full of cornrows and curls. She looks happy and confident.

The storyline was captivating and celebratory of each child's unique gifts. Another thing I really enjoyed was that the story shows all ages and how the main character

moves with different groups of people in the community.

I think this is a perfect children's book to help understand more about God and the higher purpose that we have to better our world. A delightful read!



Book Review

New Juvenile Books @ the Library

- At Last! The Kansas City Chiefs' Unforgettable 2019 Championship Season by Matt Derrick
- Patrick Mahomes by Jon M. Fishman
- Kansas City Royals: Stars, Stats, History and More by K.C. Kelley
- The Best of Iggy by Annie Barrows
- Awesome Dog 5000 by Justin Dean
- Beverly, Right Here by Kate DiCamillo
- Monstrous: The Lore, Gore and Science Behind Your Favorite Monsters by Darlyn Beccia
- In Search of Dinosaurs by Dougal Dixon
- Titanosaur: Discovering the World's Largest Dinosaur by Jose Luis Carballido
- The Princess Who Flew With Dragons by Stephanie Burgess
- Dog Driven by Terry Lynn Johnson
- I, Cosmo by Carlie Sorosiak
- 1919: The Year That Changed America by Martin W. Sandler
- Between Worlds: Folk tales of Britain and Ireland by Kevin Crossley-Holland
- Scary Stories for Young Foxes by Christian McKay Heidicker
- Zach and Zoe Mysteries: The Lacrosse Mix-Up by Mike Lupica
- The Lego Book by Daniel Lipkowitz



Witches: A Historical Perspective

The Salem witch trials weren't the only time women were accused of sorcery and spells. Dr. Angela Haas, associate professor of history at Missouri Western, will discuss witchcraft and superstition in pre-modern Europe in a Facebook premiere event. Haas will answer questions in the program's chat. No registration needed. **3 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 13, Virtual Branch**

Pandemic protocols will continue through remainder of 2020

From Page 1

With schools shutting their doors early this spring, students were out of school longer than normal for the summer. And that provided longer time for the summer slide in reading skills.

Looking forward to the fall, the library will continue Curbside Pickup, E-Cards, Virtual Meeting Rooms, the Phone Stories and staff-generated virtual programs. There will be no in-person programs or meeting rooms open to the public. Masks will be required for staff and users, and users will be encouraged to keep their visits to 30 minutes or less.

Mears doesn't foresee any financial difficulties for the library due to the pandemic, unless it would be taxpayers defaulting on their December payments. Just in case, the library has created a more conservative 2021 fiscal year budget that is designed for that possibility.

Looking forward, Mears believes the library will return to its normal operations but with some new features.

"The library is still going to be a place for the community to gather, and we'll have in-person programs and Storytimes and book discussion groups like normal," she said.

Now we wait to learn when that will be.

Take Note

Library branches now offer notary public services

Voter registrations. Passport applications. Now add notary public to the types of services Rolling Hills Library offers to the public besides helping people find something to read or watch.

Several staff members at the Belt and Savannah branches have completed training to be notary publics and can witness and authenticate the signing of certain types of documents, administer oaths and take some affidavits. They also will be able to notarize mail-in ballots for the November elections.

The notaries are available during library hours on a walk-in basis. No appointments are needed, so it's best to call ahead to see if a notary is available before coming to the library. No fees will be charged for notary service.

"Our mission is to serve the residents of Andrew and Buchanan



Andrew County Deputy County Clerk Paula Richter swears in Savannah Branch library assistants Kalyn Smith and Janet Phillippe as new notary publics.

counties, and we believe notary public services is something we can easily offer," said library Director Michelle Mears. "A lot of people think of banks first when they need a notary. But with bank lobbies being closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, people may be having trouble finding a notary. We can help them now."



Virtual Meeting Rooms

When you can't meet in person, you can have FREE meetings with up to 300 people by using the library's Zoom Pro system. Information available at rhcl.org/virtual-rooms.

PHONE STORIES

TELEPHONE TALES

Short stories for preschoolers as read by library staff members!
(816) 205-7695

CHAPTER-A-WEEK

Elementary students can hear longer books one chapter at a time!
(816) 205-7697



Choc Full of Chocolate

This chocolate Bundt cake with a chocolatey glaze won't last long after it's set out

If you love chocolate, you're going to enjoy this dessert. The Cake Lady says it's a versatile cake that you could serve at many events. Library staff just hopes she makes one for us to sample soon.

Chocolate Chocolate-Chip Cake

- 1 box German chocolate cake mix
- 1 (3.9 oz.) instant chocolate pudding mix
- 1 cup sour cream
- 4 large eggs
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup warm water
- 2½ cups semisweet chocolate chips
- ¼ cup heavy cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 12-cup Bundt pan.

Whisk cake and pudding mixes in a large bowl. In another large bowl, with an electric mixer on medium speed,

beat sour cream until lightened, about three minutes. Beat in eggs until well combined. Add oil and warm water; beat until smooth. Reduce speed to low. Beat in combined cake mix and pudding mix in two batches until no lumps remain, about three minutes. Stir in two cups of chocolate chips while reserving ½ cup.

Bake until a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean, about one hour. Let cake cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes, then remove from pan and allow to cool completely.

For a cake glaze, stir together heavy cream and remaining chocolate chips in a microwavable cup and microwave for 1 minute at 50 percent power. Whisk until smooth then pour over cake and enjoy.



Books Revisited

The Friends of the Library Bookstore

Offering used books, music, new book-related gifts and more!

1908 N. Belt 205-7125

Hours: 9-6 Monday-Saturday

Information about all library programs can be found at rhcl.org.

St. Joseph, Mo. 64506
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