

# Library Connections

The MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY Newsletter

ISSUE 07  
Fall/Winter 2020

## New Grand Bay Library Now Open

by Veronica McCoo, Grand Bay Manager

**M**OBILE Public Library has some exciting news to share: We have opened our 11th library. Located in the Grand Bay community, the new library is in the old Grand Bay State Bank building.

Our mission is to support literacy and connect our community, and the addition of a new library in the Grand Bay area expands our mission to more citizens. The library offers access to computers, audiobooks, eBooks, magazines, movies, children's programs, a meeting room and much more. It also has access to our system's collection of over 700,000 physical items.

Librarian and manager Veronica McCoo and her staff are ready to welcome and be welcomed by the Grand Bay community. They look forward to participating in community events, festivals and outreach opportunities in the south Mobile County area. Thanks to the collaboration between the Citizens for a Better Grand Bay and

The Friends of the Grand Bay Library, the necessary funding was raised to make this new library possible. We are grateful to be part of such a welcoming community.

The library's hours of operation will be Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The library will be closed on



Wednesday and Sunday.

The beautifully renovated and upgraded new home of The Grand Bay Library & Museum is located at 10379 Freeland Ave. at Potter Tract Road in the heart of Grand Bay.

## Margie Calhoun Named New Director

**M**MARGIE Calhoun, former Assistant Director of the MPL, was recently appointed as Director. As Director, Margie is responsible for planning, coordinating and evaluating all activities of the library system. She has a bachelor's degree in Clothing and Related Arts from Tuskegee University, and a master's degree in Library Science from the University of Michigan.

Margie has an extensive career of 35 years of experience with MPL. Her first job with MPL was Reference Librarian at the Monte L. Moorer Branch. Subsequently, she managed the Toulminville Branch, Cottage Hill Branch, West Regional Library, and the Ben May Main Library prior to becoming Assistant Library Director in 2017 and then selected for Director in 2020. One of her greatest career accomplishments was serving on the Library Expansion Committee which raised \$22 million

dollars for a new Toulminville location, a new West Regional Library and expansion of the Ben May Main Library. Margie's long career at the library uniquely positions her to lead MPL forward with a wealth of experience, while being adept to changing times and public needs.

With the locations now open after a time of closure during the pandemic, Margie is looking forward to seeing the residents of Mobile county in person again. The library is here to serve the community, and she is delighted to lead its charge.



# The Library Has Outdoor Events for the Community

by Cherold Rhodes, Children and Youth Services

**P**ROVIDING opportunities for the families of our community to connect in meaningful ways and have educational and entertaining experiences is a continuing goal for youth services staff. Because of health concerns surrounding large, indoor gatherings, MPL is now hosting outdoor events and programs. At these events families can have fun outdoors, and safely connect with their community while also visiting the library.

Story Quest was the first outdoor event provided during the summer months. A Story Quest is an outdoor reading adventure for children and adults to enjoy. Laminated pages from a children's book are attached to stands and placed outside the library. Participants follow a path through the story, enjoying sensory activities between each page. A craft related to the story is



available to take home and complete. The Parkway Branch Library has less outdoor space, so the staff opted to provide a Story Window as another innovative way to provide educational and entertaining experiences outside the library building.

As the library goes through the phases of safely reopening, more and more outdoor events are becoming available. Storytime on the Patio, Morning Under the Oaks, and Polar Express Under the Oaks are a few examples of outdoor programming already underway. Details about outdoor events can be found

on the Mobile Public Library events calendar on our webpage, on our social media platforms and through MPL's mobile app. We hope to see you at one soon!



## New Library Board Members Appointed

**T**HE Mobile Public Library is pleased to announce the following new board members: George M. Hunter, Harris Oswalt, Jr., Sandra Wiley and Rebecca Williams.

The MPL board is appointed for a 4-year term by members of the City Council representing each district of Mobile. These members are responsible for approving the library's budget, policy oversight, contracts, construction or leasing

of facilities, and employment of the Director. The board typically meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

In addition to the new members mentioned above, the following individuals serve on the board: Brenda J. Jackson (Chairman), John P. Browning (Vice Chairman/Treasurer) and Dr. Arnold Luterman.

Thank you to all board members for their dedication and hard work!

# Past, Present and Future at LH&G

by Elizabeth Theris-Boone, Local History & Genealogy Manager

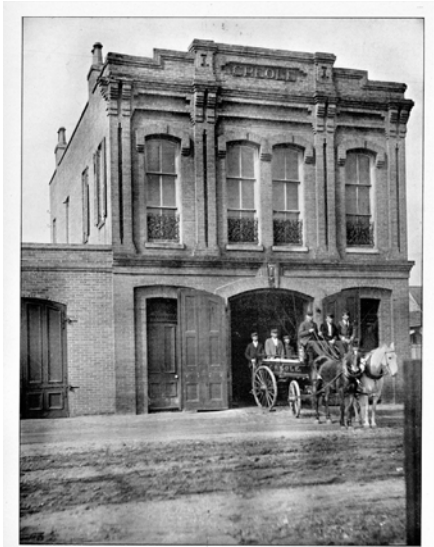
**A**FTER the library's closure in March, the Local History & Genealogy division turned its efforts toward large time-consuming projects to further the accessibility of our collections, including organizing the stacks, writing finding aids and indexing Mobile Register obituaries from the 50s and 60s. We even created a new collection in the Digital Archives, "1918 Influenza Pandemic in Mobile," which follows Mobile Register coverage of the pandemic from October-December 1918. Give it a look if you are curious to see how, or whether, 100 years has changed the way we respond to a pandemic, a shutdown, and the gradual lessening of restrictions. Find the Digital Archive at [digital.mobilepubliclibrary.org](https://digital.mobilepubliclibrary.org).

While we continued to provide remote research assistance, we puzzled over how we might expand our services and reach out to the community. We decided to introduce our very own Mobile Public Library Local History & Genealogy Facebook page. Follow us for photos, newspaper articles, oral history clips and other gems from our collection, featuring the historical, the humorous, the quirky, all things Mobile. Watch our tutorials on getting started in genealogy and on using the Newsbank database, and struggle through our attempt at making a digital escape room.

We started accepting 2-hour research appointments in July. Keeping health and

safety in mind, we have continued to "ask that you mask," quarantine items for 72 hours after use, and we dutifully and diligently disinfect.

As we slowly but surely came as close as we could to a resumption of regular services, we pondered, what are we missing? Programs, of course! While it is certainly true that streaming on Zoom can feel a little strange and is susceptible to any number of technological mishaps, the benefit lies in our favorite thing: accessibility. If you are unable to tune in to a program at its scheduled time, most of our videos stay up on our Facebook page and are available for you to view whenever you wish. Check out the Sept. 25 program "The Lost Family: How DNA Testing is Upending Who We Are," a fascinating interview with author Libby Copeland about her book, which explores the culture of genealogy and the science of DNA testing while tracing one woman's unusual results and ensuing search that becomes a genetic detective story.



CREOLE STEAM FIRE CO. No. 1.  
45 North Dearborn Street.

Throughout October, we partnered with Mobile Creole Cultural & Historical Preservation Society to bring you "Creole Family Reunion: Revitalizing Mobile's Creole Past." Funded by a grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, the program celebrates Mobile's rich Creole history and includes a special premiere of "A Living Legacy," an oral history video interviewing the surviving members of Creole Fire No. 1, who belonged to the company prior to integration. Find recordings of these programs on our Facebook page and the MCCCHPS Facebook page.

Call us, email us, check us out on Facebook, and finally, come see us!

## Accelerated Reader (AR) Book Bundle

**O**UR new Book Bundle service started this year and has been a hit with families and children. We have recently expanded this service to include Accelerated Reader (AR) books.

It can be hard to find books on the library shelves that are the correct level assigned by teachers. Let us pick them out for you. Fill out our short

questionnaire and get an AR level-specific book bundle that will contain five titles from your chosen number range. The books will be sent to your requested library location for you to pick up within a few days.

Learn more about all four types of Book Bundles on our website under "Kids" and then "Book Bundles."

# The Bookmobile is Back on the Road With a New Look

by Erin English, Bookmobile Manager

**T**HE Mobile Public Library's Bookmobile has a new look! Working with Intelligent Design Studio of Mobile, the Bookmobile has a new vibrant, fun and memorable design. The Bookmobile's new wrap features Mo, a friendly monster working hard to get to some of the books inside. Mo succeeds in checking out those books with the help from his monster friend Bee.

Our Bookmobile & Outreach Services provides library services to the residents of the city of Mobile and Mobile County who have limited or no access to



the library. The Bookmobile is a valuable asset to these residents, traveling as far north as Mount Vernon and Citronelle, and as far south as Dauphin Island. Area residents needing a

library card can acquire one from the Bookmobile staff. Users can request specific materials to be brought next time, arrange for pick up of items at a library location

and the return of materials. Bookmobile staff also provide story times and crafts to children.

Weekly routes are resuming with various stops all over the county. Mo and Bee are excited to meet you! Due to COVID-19, Bookmobile staff will set up a table in front of the bus outside. Patrons will not be allowed to board the Bookmobile. However, staff will pull an author or title from the bus for you.

For more information or to request a new stop, please call 251-470-1778 or email us at [bkm@mplonline.org](mailto:bkm@mplonline.org).



## West Regional Library to Host P. H. Polk Photography Exhibit

**W**EST Regional Library will be hosting "Unframed Images," an exhibition featuring 14 reproductions from the works of renowned African American photographer Prentice Herman "P. H." Polk. Housed in Tuskegee Institute's archives, the images have been exhibited at leading museums and galleries throughout the country. Free and open to the public, the exhibition can be viewed from Jan. 8 to March

1, 2021. "Unframed Images" is a partnership of Tuskegee University, Mississippi State University Libraries and the Southern Literary Trail.

Polk, a native Alabamian, was born in Bessemer. He served for several years as head of the Tuskegee Institute's department of photography. His photographs depict early 20th-century African Americans from all walks of life, including Martin Luther King Jr.,

George Washington Carver and farmworkers in rural Alabama.

The library is also hoping to hold a photography contest for adults during February; entries to be displayed in a walking tour throughout the library. We hope to encourage exploration of Polk's technique to tell a riveting story with a camera lens alone. Further details of the contest will be announced on the library's website and social media.

# Good Reads & More: Your Next Book

by Carly Akers, Acquisitions Librarian

**W**ITH so many choices available, finding your next new read can be overwhelming. The Mobile Public Library's "Your Next Book" service is here to help!

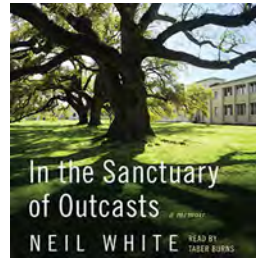
To use "Your Next Book," visit [mobilepubliclibrary.org](http://mobilepubliclibrary.org)



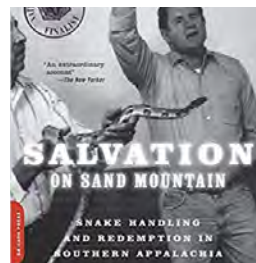
and go to the upper right side of any page to click on the link. From there, you can specify which format you prefer, be it regular or large print, electronic or audiobook. The short questionnaire also asks what books, authors or genres you like or do not like, and what you're in the mood to read next. You even have the option to request that any recommended physical titles be placed on hold for you to pick up inside our libraries or curbside at participating locations.

To get the best matches, it is important to be as specific as possible on the form so that librarians can make your day with your next favorite read. Turnaround time for the service is typically 48 hours. Who knows? Maybe your new favorite genre, author or title is just a few clicks away.

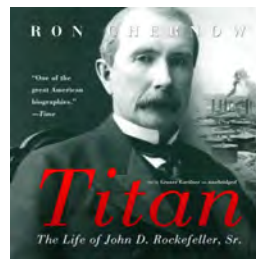
In the meantime, check out these great nonfiction books you may not have heard of yet:



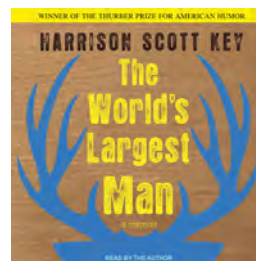
"In the Sanctuary of Outcasts" by Neil White



"Salvation on Sand Mountain" by Dennis Covington



"Titan: Life of John D. Rockefeller Sr." by Ron Chernow



"The World's Largest Man: A Memoir" by Harrison Scott Key



"Truevine" by Beth Macy

# Beanstack App

**H**AVE you downloaded the Beanstack app? Beanstack is an app to help you track your reading and participate in reading challenges.

Regularly find yourself browsing titles and wondering whether you've read something? You can easily log what you're reading by scanning the ISBN barcode with your phone and later search your reading log in the app to see what you've read already.

Beanstack can also be a lot of fun. The Mobile Public Library regularly runs reading challenges through Beanstack. This past summer, teens and adults completed challenges, earned badges and won prizes through our Summer Reading Celebration reading challenge on Beanstack.

We have an ongoing "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" challenge. Children who complete the challenge receive a medal and certificate to celebrate their achievement. People of all ages can expand their horizons by participating in Cicely Lewis' "Read Woke Challenge" which is running through the end of the year. And if the current challenges aren't your cup of tea, there's always a new challenge in the works.



# Homework Help at Your Fingertips

WHILE school is looking quite different in 2020, the library is here to help. MPL offers a wide variety of homework help and most of it can be accessed wherever you are as long as you have internet access.

One of the most helpful resources we provide to our patrons is called Homework Alabama. This service provides free homework help, tutoring and test prep virtually. Homework help and tutoring is available from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. for students in K-12 schools and also college-level coursework for 60-plus subjects. Each tutor is a background-checked and certified teacher, so you can feel safe using the live tutoring option via camera.

If you need assistance in writing a paper, then you should definitely try its 24/7 “Writing Lab” and “Drop-Off Reviews.” You can upload your paper to the website, and a tutor will review it and send it back to you with suggestions and corrections. The “Writing Lab” and “Drop-Off Reviews” services feature a 12-hour turnaround time, so even if you are pushing your deadline, there is still an opportunity to get the help that you need from [HomeworkAlabama.org](http://HomeworkAlabama.org).

# MPL Activity During Closure

SERVICE	TOTAL
Curbside deliveries	37,055
Reference questions (email and phone)	67,716
Digital downloads	167,461
Virtual programs	1,381
Virtual storytimes	144
E-card applications	2,975
Book Bundles	627
Database searches	2,370,077
Website views	879,405



*Free Homework Help,  
Tutoring and Test Prep  
for Alabamians!*

  
Homework  
Alabama.org

INFORM

ENTERTAIN

INSPIRE

**Our mission is to support literacy and connect our community.**

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