

# Library Connections

The MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY Newsletter

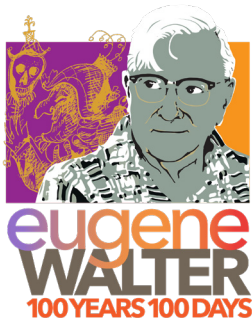
## Let's Celebrate: 120 Years of Library Service

ISSUE 09  
Winter 2022

by Valerie Longa, Public Relations Officer

**T**HE Mobile Public Library (MPL) first began serving the community in 1902. This year we recognize our anniversary of 120 years of service, and we are pleased to invite the public to celebrate this major milestone with us. With 11 library locations across Mobile County and a Bookmobile, we are here to serve our community. Visit your favorite location to take advantage of the library's materials, services, resources and programs.

In celebration of our anniversary, we're showcasing the library system's history with an exhibit and plethora of events. We are delighted to welcome back The Mobile Opera and its Afternoon of Stars event. This partnership has been in place for over 20 years. We invite you to hear the stars of Mobile Opera performing favorite songs and arias - theirs and yours - from *Tosca* on Sunday, March 13, at 3:00 p.m. at the Ben May Main Library's Bernheim Hall. On Thursday, May 12 at 4:00 p.m. we will dedicate the Ben May Main Library as a Literary Landmark in partnership with the Downtown Mobile Alliance and United for Libraries. We will host a plaque unveiling ceremony and reception to honor



host local author events featuring Mobile-born author Roy Hoffman and Alabama's

the life of Mobile's "Renaissance Man," Eugene Walter, who is buried steps away from the library in the Church Street Graveyard.

Additionally, MPL is excited to



Poet Laureate, Ashley Jones. Visit the West Regional Library on Tuesday, April 5 at 6:30 p.m. for Roy Hoffman's presentation on his new novel, *The Promise of the Pelican*. The Virginia Dillard Smith Toulminville Branch Library will welcome Ashley Jones on Saturday, May 14. A writing workshop for youth will take place that day. Visit our online calendar for full details and event times.

As the library celebrates this anniversary, we're also pleased to be operating at our full-service model after closures during the pandemic. Our locations are staying open for evening hours on select weekdays; the Ben May Main Library and the West Regional Library are both open until 8:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Also, the Ben May Main Library is open on Sundays from 1:00-5:00 p.m. This means you have more opportunities to check out books, work on school projects, apply for jobs and conduct research.

How fortunate we are to live in a community that has had a library in place for over a century. We're looking forward to making this anniversary outstanding and are thrilled to celebrate with all of you!

# Friends of the Mobile Public Library Hosted An Evening with Patti Callahan Henry

by Marian Ponder Special Events Coordinator

THE Friends of the Mobile Public Library hosted their annual meeting on Thursday, January 20 featuring the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of sixteen novels and podcast host, Patti Callahan Henry. In 2019, she received two awards for her book, *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* - both the Alabama Library Association's award for Fiction Book of the Year, and the Christy Award for Book of the Year. In 2020 she received the Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer of the Year. This was a hybrid event that took place at the Ben May Main Library's historic



Bernheim Hall and was made available virtually through Zoom.

Patti Callahan Henry spent her early childhood years in Philadelphia and moved to south Florida with her family at age twelve where she found the sanctuary of

libraries which helped her understand the power of storytelling. Patti attended Auburn University for her undergraduate work and Georgia State University for her graduate degree. This former pediatric clinical nurse specialist and mother of three now writes full-time and lives in both Mountain Brook, Alabama and Bluffton, South Carolina with her husband.

Writing under the name Patti Callahan, *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* was released in 2018 followed by two more novels in 2021 - *Surviving Savannah* and *Once Upon a Wardrobe*. Callahan spoke to the audience candidly about her journey in becoming an author, her writing process and the background research for writing these three novels of historical fiction. She explained how the motivation for *Surviving Savannah* was completely different from the other two works that are directly related to C. S. Lewis. *Surviving Savannah* was based on the true story of the shipwreck of the steamship Pulaski, known as "The Titanic of the South." The subject matter of this book was of no interest to Callahan until she finally read an article that a local mariner in South Carolina had been asking her to read for years. She described, "how sometimes it feels like a story wants to be told," and said that was true

of both *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* and *Surviving Savannah*.

She spoke about *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* being her favorite childhood book, and how during her research for *Becoming Mrs. Lewis*, she noticed parts of C. S. Lewis's life that seemed connected to scenes in his most famous children's book. She told the audience she had never heard anyone talk about those similarities, and said that was the impetus



for writing *Once Upon a Wardrobe*. The Haunted Book Shop provided copies of this enchanting and tenderly imagined story during the book signing that followed Callahan's thoroughly engaging Q&A session. For those still interested in purchasing a signed copy of *Once Upon a Wardrobe*, please visit The Haunted Book Shop at 109 Dauphin St. or call 251-348-7668.

The Friends of the Library hosted a brief business meeting to elect officers for the board of directors and adopt a budget for 2022. If you are interested in becoming a member, please visit [www.mobilepubliclibrary.org/friends](http://www.mobilepubliclibrary.org/friends). If you would like details on how to become a board member, please email [mobilealfol@gmail.com](mailto:mobilealfol@gmail.com).



# New Teen Space Dedicated at the West Regional Library

WEST Regional Library opened a new Teen Space with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the morning of Dec. 9, 2021. Mobile Public Library was excited to have Mayor Sandy Stimpson and City Councilman Ben Reynolds attend and share a few words with the crowd. MPL is glad to offer young people a dedicated space for homework, research, reading, entertainment, creating friendships and more. Safe, enriching environments are

critical for our young people, and West Regional's Teen Space is the latest free, after-school option in the Mobile area.

Gina Wilson, manager of the West Regional Library, said the following in an interview with Fox10:

"This is important for teens as they age out of day care and after-school care. Where do they go? So they have an option to come here now. And while they're here, we can provide programming, services, answer their questions, help them



find information, and we can help with schoolwork. So this is a win-win for everyone who uses the library."

The Ben May Main Library also has a dedicated area for teenagers, as well as a state-of-the-art Maker Lab with a 3-D printer, wood etching machine, and vinyl cutter. Both libraries want to raise awareness of these spaces for local teens. If you have teenagers in your life, be sure to let them know all the library has to offer.



## Save Money With Your Library Card

ARE you aware of all the ways you can utilize your library card? They are free to anyone who lives in Mobile County and surrounding counties. With your library card you can borrow:

- Books
- Audiobooks
- Magazines
- Movies
- TV shows
- Music

You may be pleasantly surprised to find that your card can save you money. If you're looking to cut down on your entertainment spending, a library card could be exactly what you need.

We offer content online, allowing you to borrow whatever's available

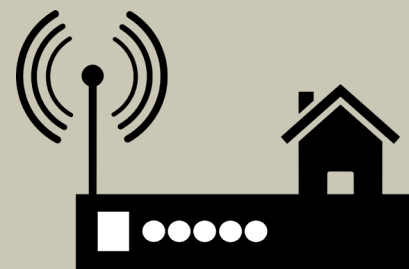


without having to leave home. With the apps Hoopla and Kanopy you can stream free movies and television shows.

We also offer a variety of research databases covering stocks, healthcare, business, investments and more. For K-12 and college/university students, homeworkalabama.com provides free homework help and even test prep for the SAT/ACT.

If you live in the rural community of Grand Bay, the library there lets locals check out hotspots and chromebooks for use at home. These hotspot and chromebook checkouts are a pilot program that MPL is looking forward to implementing across the library system in the future.

Need a library card? Visit your nearest library or you can get a temporary one online at [mobilepubliclibrary.org](http://mobilepubliclibrary.org).



# Updated Teen Service: Bookish Bags Become Bookish Boxes

by Zach Basler, Teen Services Librarian

**T**HE Teen Services department launched a new book subscription service called Bookish Bags in October 2020. The premise was based on several models of popular paid subscription services, but we wanted to remove as many barriers as possible. The main difference between traditional subscription services and our Bookish Bags was that our service was completely free to our patrons. The Bookish Bag program was a huge success, but we still wanted to find ways to make it both better and more accessible.

In November of 2021, Bookish Bags became Bookish Boxes. The service now more closely resembles an actual book subscription service, and has been made available to more patrons. Preteens and teens ages 9-18 can fill out our online form and receive a monthly Bookish Box. The

only requirement is having a library card.

One of the most important improvements we made was to implement an actual subscription model. After a one-time signup through the online form, patrons will continue to receive a Bookish Box delivered to their designated library. Patrons can change their preferences for number and type of books, as well as their pick-up location. Really enjoyed that



book we sent you last month and want to read more like it? Just fill out the form and we will update your preferences.

Patrons will be notified when their Bookish Box is available for pickup. Books within the box will be checked out and returned like any other library book. The box also includes giveaways such as custom stickers, buttons and 3D-printed objects all made in our Maker Lab at the Ben May Main Library. For example, in January, the Bookish Box included a 3D-printed version of the Martin Luther King Jr. monument in Washington, D.C., commemorating his birthday. With our amazing 3D printers, we can print just about anything!

We hope our preteen and teen patrons will continue to use and love this service as much as we love offering it. This is another way Mobile Public Library continues to adapt and innovate in order to provide access to information for our community.

## Do You Think You Know All the Library Has To Offer?

by Carly Akers, Acquisitions Manager

**M**PL has a wide variety of materials, resources, services and programs. Here are a few highlights:

**Do you see something you think the library should have in its collection?** You can suggest items for purchase. Complete a purchase suggestion form from our website. While our collection development team may not be able to purchase every item, it never hurts to ask!

**Are you looking for something out of print or otherwise unavailable for purchase?** Try Interlibrary Loan (ILL). It is a service through which

you may borrow materials (music, DVD, books, articles) from another library. The catch? You might have to be patient. ILL items can come from anywhere from Alabama to Maine or even from outside of the country, and can take 6 weeks or more to arrive.

**Are you ready to finally convert those old home movies?** No need to send them off to a costly service. Visit the memory studio at Local History and Genealogy. Convert VHS or VHS-C to DVD, or cassette tapes to CD and MP3 free of charge. All you have to do is provide the discs or flash drives and call 251-494-2190 to

make an appointment.

**Have you always wanted to learn a language?** With your library card, you can learn one of 163 languages from your desktop or mobile device with Pronunciator. You can log in with a PC or mobile device, and learn to speak Mandarin on your daily commute.





# Financial Resources Through MPL

by Jill Stewart, Adult Services Librarian

**W**E all have times when financial questions come up and we have to make a decision. Aside from “Should I keep a budget?” Yes, and “When should I start saving for retirement? ASAP,” there is no one right answer to any of these questions. You have to do some research, weigh the pros and cons of each option, and make the best choice for you and your family.

Here at MPL, we have a good number of resources available to help with the research and planning portion of that process.

**Weiss Financial Ratings Guides** - Available both online and in print, these are concise explanations of various topics related to financial planning. Their titles include: Buying a Home, Saving for Your Child’s Education, Making the Right Healthcare Coverage Choices, Consumer Guide to Automobile Insurance, How to Start a 401(k), and many more.

These guides give a quick overview of what a financial product is, how it works and any key terms you need to know. They also offer tips and tricks, planning worksheets, and ratings of different companies you may be considering.

**Valueline** - This is an online database of investment information and education. Valueline includes “Valueline University,”

which is a collection of articles and videos explaining how investing works and what you need to know to get started.

If you are ready to invest you can look up a particular stock, fund, or other investment product to see what their history looks like. Valueline also has a stock screener, which allows you to search for possible investments based on your preferences, e.g., you could search for stocks that pay dividends.

**Universal Class** - This platform provides online classes in a wide range of subjects including a variety of classes on finances and money management. It offers classes in debt reduction, investing, estate planning, retirement planning and more. These are multipart lessons with reading materials, video lectures and assignments, as well as a real professor to answer questions and offer feedback on your work.

These classes are ideal for those who want to get an in-depth understanding of a particular subject in a structured class environment. Universal Class is also an accredited educational institution, and you will earn continuing education credits (CEUs) for any courses you complete.

Don’t forget that we are a library. In addition to all the great online resources we offer, we have a large number of print books available for checkout that cover various financial topics or offer advice from your favorite financial guru.



**WEISS  
FINANCIAL  
RATINGS**

a financial product is, how it works and any key terms you need to know. They also offer

## Celebrate National Library Week with Us

**N**ATIONAL Library Week will take place April 3–9, and the Mobile Public Library invites you to get connected with your local library! National Library Week is an annual celebration highlighting the valuable role libraries, librarians, and library workers play in transforming lives and strengthening our communities.

The theme for National Library Week 2022, “Connect with Your

Library,” promotes the idea that libraries are places to get connected to technology by using broadband, computers, and other resources. Libraries also offer opportunities to connect with media, programs, ideas, and classes—in addition to books. Most importantly libraries also connect communities to each other

Overall, the theme is an explicit call to action—an invitation for

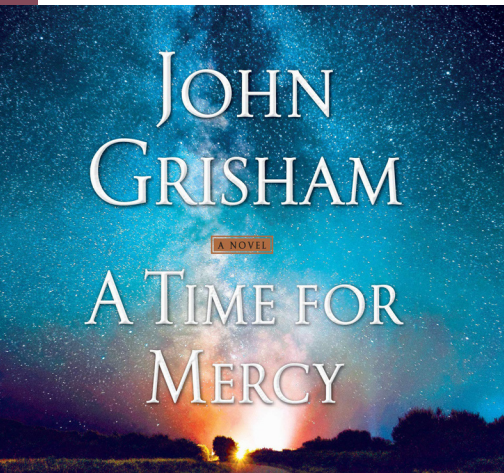


communities to join, visit, or advocate for their local libraries.

# Most Popular Books of 2021

by Lisa Barnes, Adult Services Librarian

WHAT books did Mobile read in 2021? Based on Mobile Public Library's most checked out titles, Mobilians have diverse and excellent taste. John Grisham's third installment in the Jake Brigrance series, *A Time for Mercy* came in at number one for fiction. Over 400 people



checked out this classic legal thriller. Another thriller, *A Gambling Man* by David Baldacci, came in second place. Nearly 400 people check out this second novel centering Baldacci's popular WWII veteran, Aloysius Archer. Rounding out the top three in fiction is the always popular Kristin Hannah. Her bestselling novel, *The Four Winds*, takes place in Texas in 1934 and was checked out only four fewer times than Baldacci's second-place entry.

In nonfiction, Mobilians

flocked to one of the most popular Southern authors currently publishing, Rick Bragg. Bragg's *Where I Come From: Stories of the Deep South* came in first. In this memoir, Bragg examines life in the Deep South with honesty, wit and deep affection. Coming in second - and how did such a popular author just now appear on this list? - is James Patterson.

His *Murder of Innocence* is the fifth in a true-crime series. In this volume, Patterson and co-author Max DiLallo examine the global manhunt it took to put Andrew Luster behind bars. The third-place nonfiction book is *Greenlights* by Matthew McConaughey. You read that right; actor Matthew McConaughey wrote a memoir in 2021. It was a weird year.

Nonfiction, in general, checked out less than fiction. While fiction's No. 1 checked out hundreds of times, Bragg's *Where I Come From* checked out just 89 times.

In December, Mobile Public Library held a poll to declare MPL's Best Book of 2021. The surprise winner in Fiction was T.J. Klune's *Under the Whispering Door*, a book that didn't crack the top 10 for checkouts. It's also interesting



because Klune's novel is firmly in the fantasy genre, a genre that also didn't make an appearance in the top 10. This implies that check outs equal an interest in a topic, story or author, but not how the reader will feel about the book in the end.

The nonfiction selection was a more obvious winner, *Mobile's Porch Parade: The Oldest Carnival in America Celebrated a New Style*. A book sure to become a Mobile classic reflecting our passion for "les bon temps" and this unique moment in history.

What was your favorite book of 2021? And perhaps more importantly, did you read *Greenlights* and if so, is Matthew McConaughey about to become the cornerstone of American literature? Please tell us; we need to know/prepare.

INFORM

ENTERTAIN

INSPIRE

Our mission is to support literacy and connect our community.

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