

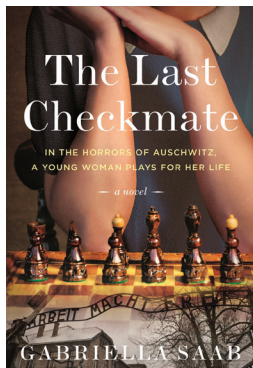
Library Connections

The MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY Newsletter

Friends of the Library to Host an Evening with Author Gabriella Saab

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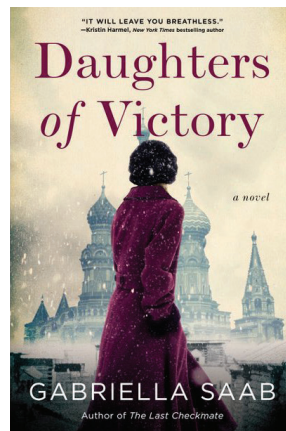
THE Friends of the Mobile Public Library (FOL) will host their annual meeting on Thursday, Jan. 19 at 6:30 p.m. with local author Gabriella Saab. Ms. Saab will speak at the Ben May Main Library's Bernheim Hall about her acclaimed book, "The Last Checkmate," as well as her newest novel,



"Daughters of Victory." A brief FOL business meeting will precede the presentation.

Gabriella Saab graduated from Mississippi State University with a bachelor of business administration in

marketing and lives in her hometown of Mobile, Alabama, where she works as a barre instructor. She is of Lebanese heritage and is one of the co-hosts of @hfhchitchat on Twitter, a recurring monthly chat and community celebrating the love of reading



and writing historical fiction.

"The Last Checkmate" is available to check out at any of our 11 library locations. Amazon provides the following summary of the novel: "A young Polish resistance worker, imprisoned in Auschwitz as a political prisoner, plays chess in exchange for her life, and in doing so fights to bring the man who destroyed her family to justice."

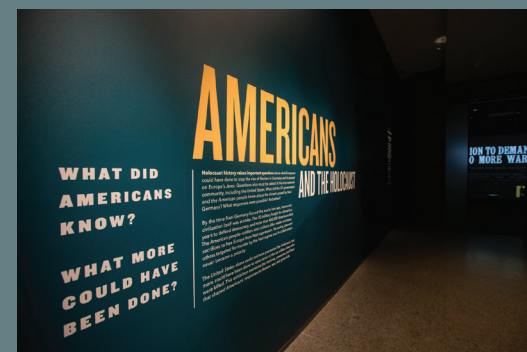
Another feature of this year's annual meeting will include a presentation of awards to local teen winners of the Maryln Schwartz Creative Writing Contest. Following Ms. Saab's presentation, a reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres will be held in the Armbrecht/Briskman Meeting Room. Books will be available for purchase from the Haunted Book Shop, and Ms. Saab will be available for signing. The FOL annual meeting is a free event open to all.



Coming Soon to the Ben May Main Library: "Americans and the Holocaust"

"AMERICANS and the Holocaust," a traveling exhibition that examines Americans' responses to Nazism, war and genocide in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s, will arrive at the Ben May Main Library in mid-May and be on display until June 23. The exhibit asks, "What did Americans know, and what more could have been done?" The exhibition also presents stories of individual Americans, some of whom took actions that went against the grain at the time, daring to

rescue Jews from Europe. "Americans and the Holocaust: A Traveling Exhibition for Libraries" is an educational initiative of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the American Library Association.



Mobile Public Library's 120-Year History Exhibition

by Valerie Longa, Public Relations Officer

THROUGHOUT 2022, Mobile Public Library (MPL) celebrated its 120-year anniversary with a variety of signature events and closed



out the year with a history exhibit. The history exhibit launched at Government Plaza in mid-December and will be on display through Jan. 18. It showcases the evolution of the library system, as well as some key moments in time, and what occurred to bring MPL to this present day as a leader in promoting literacy and connecting the community.

One of the major aspects of reaching more citizens in Mobile County is operating libraries in close proximity to where people live, work and play. From the start of MPL in 1902 with "The Little Library" on the corner of Conti and Hamilton streets

in downtown Mobile, to opening the newest location, the Grand Bay Library in 2020, the exhibit highlights the past and current locations that have comprised MPL. With city and county leaders working within Government Plaza, it makes it an ideal place to launch the exhibit and share the stories of how



our stakeholders have helped the library to succeed in serving the community.

The exhibit was designed



and created in-house by MPL's webmaster, Lori Boyer, with information provided by various staff members. Having this history archived allows MPL to have a clearer path forward as libraries continue to be beacons of knowledge, inspiration and entertainment. We agree with author Gloria Feldt's sentiments that "Knowing your history can give you the tools to shape your future."



Book Clubs Foster Friendships

THERE have been a wide variety of surveys over the past few years about making friends as an adult. Although the exact statistics vary, they all agree that it is a struggle. One common suggestion for overcoming this difficulty is to join a book club.

MPL hosts book clubs online and in person. Our historical fiction book club, A Page in

Time, is one of two that meet at the West Regional Library. The other is the Reader's Choice Book Club. Bayside Book Club offers a hybrid option where participants can attend in person at the Parkway Branch Library or virtually on Zoom. A complete list of book clubs are available on our online calendar.

If joining an established



group is somewhat intimidating, don't worry. New perspectives added to the group keep the conversation interesting. New members are encouraged to join and are always welcome!

History of the Semmes Regional Library

An Interview with Dianne Moore

HOW did you get involved with helping to establish a library for the Semmes community?

Caresse Fincher, Diane Moore, and Terri Nelson, were contacted to meet with then-Mobile County Commissioner Stephen Nodine and then-MPL Director Spencer Watts in the summer of 2007. The Mobile County Commission and the Mobile Public Library were committed to funding the site development and operational costs for the library, but that was not enough. We as a community needed to show that we were motivated and vested in the efforts to secure a branch library in Semmes. As a result, the Semmes Library Committee was established and had one primary goal. The goal was to raise \$300,000 to purchase approximately 20,000 to 30,000 items needed to fill the shelves for the Opening Day Collection. The Semmes Library Committee was composed of a diverse group of nine community leaders with varying expertise: Caresse Fincher, Diane Moore, Terri Nelson, Kim Leousis, Pastor Vint Norris, Carolyn Owens, Ann Phillips, Mary Rodning and Paula Webb.

Why did you think a library was needed in Semmes?

Growth in the Semmes area was then and continues to be tremendous, with a population of about 30,000-plus people, including a high concentration of preschool and school-age children. Semmes and the surrounding rural communities of Wilmer, Georgetown and

Tanner Williams have eight public schools and one large private school that would be serviced by a local library. These nine schools number approximately 10,000-plus students. The distance from a proposed new branch library to other Mobile Public Libraries is at least 13 miles away. The residents in the surrounding communities had to drive up to 30 miles to utilize library resources. It also meant that, with rare exceptions, school field trips were the only time many of our disadvantaged children experienced the opportunities provided by a public library.

Once the Semmes Regional Library was opened, what are some of your favorite memories?

One very fun memory is the "Love You Forever" Mother's Day Brunch, presented and sponsored by the Semmes Library Committee as a fundraiser to support the expansion of the Semmes Branch book collections. We had a light brunch and featured "A Stroll Down Memory Lane ..." with fashions through the decades. The event is still talked about in our community. Another favorite in my memory is the Semmes Branch Library opening in September 2009 when the nine-member Semmes Library Committee was presented the Harris-Perry award by the Mobile Public Library for volunteer service in raising more than \$350,000 in a little less than a year for the Opening Day Collection. It was a proud evening for our committee and appreciated.



Are there any moments in the history of this library that you would like people to remember?

I would like for our community to remember that the establishment of the Semmes Library is a story of how Semmes and the entire area came together to secure a library which stands as a cultural and literary landmark to everyone who uses it or passes by. Residents from Semmes and the surrounding rural areas who represent all ages and economic levels benefit exponentially from the resources, information and programs that are offered. Community leaders and supporters joined together to support a massive used book drive. Individuals, businesses, corporations, foundations/grants, government officials and local schools contributed. A beautiful and visible donor wall and naming opportunities for rooms within the library were established to recognize sizable contributions. The list goes on about the efforts accomplished to make the Semmes Library a reality. Working as a team with the Mobile County Commission and the Mobile Public Library, our community banded together, stood together, and got the job done. Nothing represents progress, education, the arts and culture like a library.

Supporting Students: Library Programs and Services

WITH recent test scores showing local schools struggling with the pandemic learning gap, many students, teachers and parents feel overwhelmed. Library services offer families a source of support, as well as a place to express creativity, expand learning, be entertained and inspired, and connect with the community. When families turn to their local libraries, they'll find a plethora of ways to be engaged.

Science shows that 80% of brain growth happens by the age of 3. Studies have confirmed that children who are read to and hear more words will have an increased vocabulary and be better prepared to recognize words when entering school. Libraries can help with early development and getting children ready for kindergarten. Once children are in school, libraries continue to help students reach benchmarks and stay on track with grade-level learning. Here is a list of some of the library's programming and resources to help develop early literacy skills:

• **1000 Books Before Kindergarten Program**

— This helps to strengthen language skills and build vocabulary. Track the number of books using an app or paper log. One book a day adds up quickly and for each 100 books read, the child receives a small reward. At the end of the challenge, the child receives a certificate.

• **Storytimes** — Storytimes are offered weekly at various library locations and incorporate such activities as movement, dancing, songs and arts and crafts. Storytimes help children develop facility with letters, numbers, shapes and other areas of learning.

• **Board books, picture books, beginning**



reader books and audiobooks —

Resources are available for all types of readers. Board books are made for little hands to turn the pages easily. Beginning reader books are great for those newly learning to read. Children can listen to audiobooks during car rides and as alternatives to screen time.

• **Educational toys** — The toys offered for checkout at Mobile Public Library locations are intended to foster self-confidence, language and motor skills, with a subset of toys for children with special needs. The library's collection is full of toys that focus on critical learning skills and creative learning experiences. The toys are geared toward ages 0-10 years, with categories including baby and toddler, active play, learning skills, logic/spatial reasoning, literacy and pretend play.

• **Book Bundles** — Let library staff know what types of books interest your kids so they can pick out a selection for you. Pick up the books at the front desk for easy, quick checkout.

The Mobile Public Library system includes 11 locations across Mobile County with a wide variety of resources, materials, services and programs available for free to the community. No matter a child's age, they're eligible for a free library card if they live in Mobile and surrounding counties. Taking children to the library can be a fun, free outing for the whole family. It's also a great option for extended family to spend quality time with the young ones in their life.

Reading is an essential skill for success in school and later in life. Developing early literacy skills makes it easier for children to learn to read. Children who enter school with these skills have an advantage that remains with them throughout their school years. MPL wants parents, teachers and students to know we are here to support them with the resources they need to succeed.

INFORM

ENTERTAIN

INSPIRE

Our mission is to support literacy and connect our community.

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