

Budget Right-Sizing

Voters will have chance on April 2 to lower library tax levy / Page 3

History is the Topic

Missouri Theater, Shakespeare Chateau to be explored in Belt talks / Page 6

Opening Move

Library to have inaugural chess tournament on June 8 / Page 7

Building for the Future

New library will be in development planned at east end of Faraon

After more than a year of searching for the right site to build a new library to replace the Belt Branch, a purchase contract is under review and work has started on building plans. If all goes well, the new branch could be open by early 2026.

The building will be in the new development where the University of Missouri-Kansas City also plans to build a School of Medicine facility at the east end of Faraon Street, across from Mosaic Life Care.

Library Director Michelle Mears said the library was seeking a piece of ground three to six acres in size that was accessible, affordable and relatively flat to minimize site preparation costs. The location had to be in the library's taxing district, which meant the site would likely be either east of Interstate 29 or south of U.S. Highway 169.

"It took us quite a while to find this piece of land," she said. "It drew our attention because of other development in that area."

The four-acre lot will be at the end of a new road to be built south of Faraon into the development. The building will be located near the east side of the lot so it will be visible from Riverside Road.

The project calls for a 36,000-square-foot building that houses the library, Bookmobile office and garage,



A rendering of the library's southeast corner.

Administration Office and the Friends of the Library's used bookstore, Books Revisited. It also will have offices for supplemental services such as passports and notaries, meeting and study rooms, outdoor spaces and possibly a walking path around a run-off retention pond. The estimated building project cost is \$16 million.

"We have over half of that amount in reserves and will issue certificates of participation to fund the remaining amount," Mears said. (See story on Page 3.)

Sapp Design Architects of Kansas City is the project architect and was chosen for its experience with libraries. The firm has designed more than 25 new libraries or library renovations in Missouri and Kansas, with the majority of those in the Kansas City area.

J.E. Dunn Construction of Kansas City is the construction-manager-at-risk. It will work with Sapp through the design process to create the best plans and build the library at a guaranteed maximum price. The contract with Dunn includes a goal for local contractors to be used for at least 40 percent of the project.

After the new library is built and moved into, the

Continued on Page 7



The main entrance would be on the library's west side.

Future Forward

A new library can lead others to invest in our city's growth

As you have been reading, the Rolling Hills Library is about to embark on a big project to build a new facility from the ground up in a new location. The reasons are listed in the article, but I wanted to review why it is important to have a modern, updated library to serve our district.

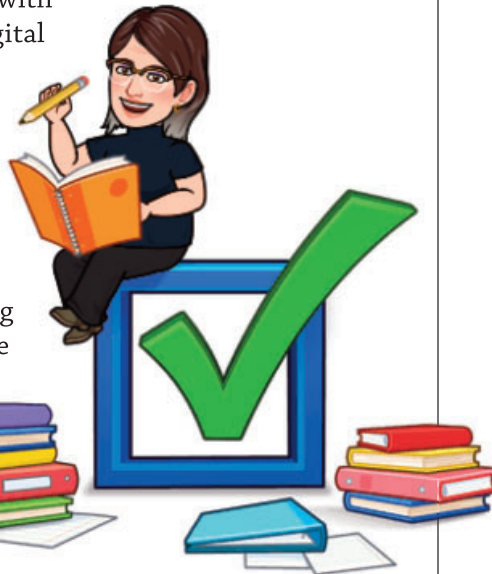
Public libraries are not the stereotyped service you see in cartoons, with endless rows of dusty books and staff who are obsessed with silence. Our collections have expanded to include digital books and audios as well as fishing poles, cake pans, board games, and Wi-Fi hotspots. We need a place to keep these collections that also serves as a community gathering space.

People also want a place that is bright and inviting and has all the conveniences and amenities they expect or desire, such as drive-up windows, green space for outside events, plentiful rooms for studying and community events and even kitchens that can be used for teaching and learning. Look at the new libraries built by Mid-Continent Public Library on the Missouri side of Kansas City and by the Johnson County Library on the Kansas side. Our users want and need these same things – convenience, efficiency, and visually pleasing surroundings.

It is not just about how it looks, but also how it works. Having all services and spaces on one floor helps with safety and security for staff and library users. Spending less time going up and down the elevator means we have more time to serve the public. New heating and cooling units and controls are not only more efficient and use less energy, but they can also help us be healthier and reduce the spread of germs. Having electrical outlets and network cables in all the places we need them keeps all the technology running smoothly and lets us put efforts into being more creative with our visitors, like adding all the cool tools for making and creating things for all ages, not just for young people.

No one will invest in our community if they don't see us investing in ourselves. This project can be a catalyst for other organizations to take this same leap into the future and provide PEOPLE with the PLACES that grow PROSPERITY. Public libraries ought to reflect all of the community and create a place where everyone wants to live and work. An investment in a library is never a bad bet, and everyone is a winner!

Michelle Mears, Rolling Hills Library Director
mmeears@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.



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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

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

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St. Joseph

*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.



Book Buddies Reading Dogs

You know dogs can't read, right? That's why kids are needed to read to the Pony Express Therapy Dogs. Not only do they love being read to, but reading to dogs helps kids improve their reading skills and build their confidence in reading. 4-5 p.m. second Tuesdays at the Belt Branch.

Back to the Voters

On April 2, Rolling Hills Library will ask that its property tax levy be reduced

Five years after passing a tax levy vote that secured its funding for the next 20 years, Rolling Hills Library wants to "right-size" the overall levy by reducing the amount by 3 cents and ending the sunset term on one half of the levy.

On Tuesday, April 2, voters in Andrew County and parts of Buchanan County will be able to vote on the issue. The library passed a renewal of the sunset portion of the levy in August 2019 with 80% voter approval.

Now the library is seeking to lower the total levy because it has found it can continue providing a growing collection, educational programs and modern resources for its users at the lower amount.

"We are not asking for an increase, only to combine our operating levies into one and decrease the total from 31 cents to 28 cents," library Director Michelle Mears said.

The move is important for building the library's planned new St. Joseph location that would replace the Belt Branch, 1904 N. Belt. To fund the project, the library would use reserve funds for about half of the costs and issue construction bonds for the other half. But to issue bonds, the sunset needs to be removed to assure the bonds could be paid across a reasonable term and leave

enough tax funds for annual operations.

"Without this change, it would be like a person buying a house on a 15-year mortgage instead of a 30-year note. That makes those payments kind of steep," Mears said.

Mears also commented on the overall library budget: "Inflation has had an effect on library budgets, like every-

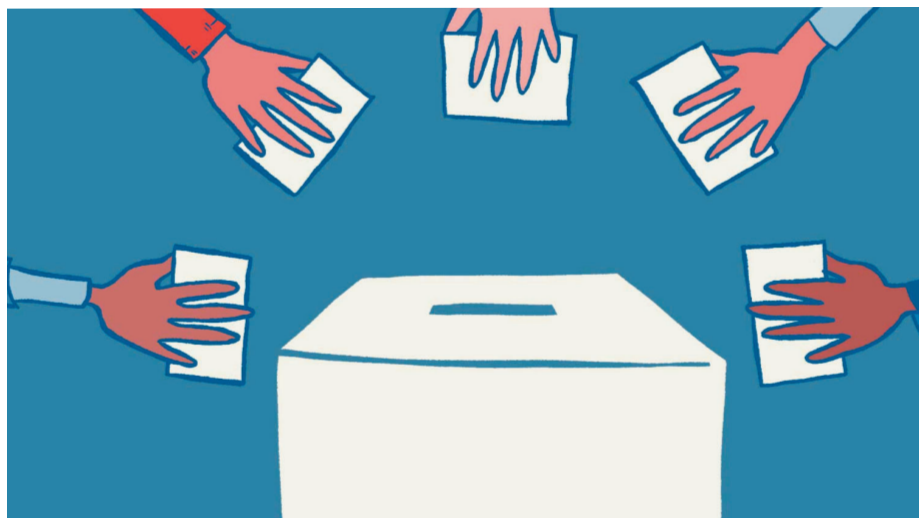
thing else. In order for staff salaries and benefits to keep up with minimum wage and be comparable with local employers, the library needs stable funding. We can't make long-term commitments or plans with sunset levies."

The project to build a new facility

will proceed even if this levy vote fails, and the library board has the option to try again at a later election date. A shorter repayment term could lead to cutting the size of the project to have lower bond payments, which could make future building expansions and associated construction costs more expensive.

Wednesday, March 6, is the last day to register to vote in the April 2 election. Property owners within the Rolling Hills district do not pay taxes for St. Joseph Public Library, as property owners only pay a library tax for the districts where they own property.

For more information about the levy issue, visit rhcl.org/levy-info or call Michelle Mears at 816-205-7000.



Just the Fax, Ma'am

Sometimes, you need to fax a document but aren't sure where to turn. The Belt and Savannah branches offer public fax service. It costs \$1 to send the first page and 50 cents per extra page and 10 cents per page to receive.



Library Scenes

December 2023 - February 2024



Brendan Hughes and Suraiya Osborne were the two youngest readers at the African American Read-In on Feb. 4 in the Belt Branch Upper Story. Brendan read the biography "I, Matthew Henson: Polar Explorer," and Suraiya read her original poem "America," a look at racism and growing up bi-racial.



Library staff members show off their personality colors during an exercise at Staff Development Day on Jan. 10 in the Upper Story.

Isabella Miller thanks the people who helped her earn her high school diploma using the library's Excel Adult High School program at her graduation ceremony on Jan. 18 in the Belt Community Room.



ABOVE: Santa Claus gets a hug from one of his fans during the Parents as Teachers Family Night on Dec. 13 at the Savannah Branch. BELOW: Santa had a lapful of kids when he met families on Dec. 8 and 9 in the Belt Upper Story.



ABOVE: Parents Tammy and Kenny Lewis teamed up with their son Cody Stanton and daughter Tenique Hays to take first place in the Belt's Puzzle Race on Jan. 29. RIGHT: Ten days later on Feb. 8, Tammy and Tenique (in rear) joined Carroll Potter (back to camera) and Linda Freemyer to win the Savannah Puzzle Race in 21 minutes, 3 minutes faster than the Belt's winning time.





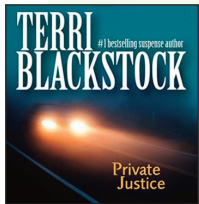
Throw Your Paper Clutter in the SLAMR

Professional organizer Mindi Smith, aka Ms. Cheapskate, will provide tips and tricks to take control of your paper clutter at home and at the office. 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 25, Belt.

Book Reviews

Five-book series has drama, mystery and spiritual message

If you like adventure, mystery and intrigue, you may enjoy the Newpointe 911 series written by Terri Blackstock.



The five books are set in a small, tight knit community near New Orleans and follow the lives of emergency services personnel including police officers, firefighters and EMTs, their families and friends.

There's plenty of drama, both in the various workplaces and in the lives of the characters. In addition to the life and death situations they often find themselves in, there also is a good measure of romance when attractions between the characters lead to deeper feelings. The books are full of twists and turns as well as Blackstock's characteristic spiritual encouragement.

If you want stories that don't make you blush and have a lot of action, try the Newpointe 911 series of No. 1 **Private Justice**, No. 2 **Shadow of Doubt**, No. 3 **Word of Honor**, No. 4 **Trial by Fire** and No. 5 **Line of Duty**. We have all 5 in large print editions.

— Paula Reed
Savannah Branch library assistant

Wishful Reading

Missouri author strikes gold with first novel; second book coming soon

If you are looking for a fun, quick read, check out **The Wishing Game** by Meg Shaffer.

The main character is Lucy Hart, a struggling teaching assistant who would love to adopt young Christopher, a student who so needs a home. Unfortunately, Lucy is short on funds and doesn't qualify to adopt Christopher.

At just the right time, Lucy receives an invitation from Jack Masterson, aka The Mastermind, the famous author of the Clock Island mystery series she read as a child. The invitation is for a contest for four young adults who read the Clock Island series as children. The winner will receive the rights to the latest Clock Island book that Masterson finally wrote after many years. In order to win, the contestants must solve riddles, games and deal with other mysterious happenings.

The book is very easy to read with the readers being able to play along by trying to solve the riddles that are part of the contest. The characters are very likeable making it difficult to put down the book because you want to see what will happen next.

First-time author Shaffer teaches at



Stephens College in Columbia, Mo. She shares that she grew up loving **Charlie & the Chocolate Factory**, and I can certainly see a similarity between her book and that classic.

I highly recommend this book to everyone because I think it will be a classic one day. I'm also looking forward to Shaffer's next book, **The**

Lost Story, which is due out in July.

And, Hollywood, how about making **The Wishing Game** into a movie? Hint, hint!

— Rochelle Greenwood
Belt Branch library assistant

Preview: In **The Lost Story**, two friends go missing in a vast forest, only to reappear six months later with no explanation for where they'd gone.

Fifteen years later, one is a reclusive artist who has no memory of what happened during those months. The other is a famed missing persons' investigator. With his abilities, he is the one person who can help a woman find her sister, who vanished in the very same forest.



**Register
to Vote!**

Library staff can help you register for upcoming elections. Ask us for details!

March 6 is the last day to sign up for the April 2 election.

July 10 is the last day to register for the Aug. 6 primary (if needed).

Oct. 9 is the last day for the Nov. 5 general election.





Clue Escape Room

Professor Plum? The Maid? Someone else? Figure out who, where and with what to make it out of this Clue board game experience. **All day Saturday, April 6, Savannah Branch;** register at events.rhcl.org/event/10038408. **All day Friday, April 12, Belt Branch;** register at events.rhcl.org/event/10001290. **All day Saturday, April 13, Belt;** register at events.rhcl.org/event/10001291.

Program Potpourri

Local history, pop culture books, women business owners featured in spring events

A variety of speaker-led library events are planned this spring, including such topics as the morals represented in the Harry Potter books, the experiences of women business owners and cemetery headstone cleaning.

At **6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 13, at the Belt Branch**, Women's History Month will be celebrated with a panel program highlighting the challenges and successes of St. Joseph women who started their own business ventures. Featured speakers include Dana Ekstrum of Manic Snail, LaTonya Williams from LaTonya Williams Photography and Sara Markt of SMart Architecture + Design.

Isobel McGowan, owner of the Shakespeare Chateau Bed and Breakfast, will share her story of preserving one of St. Joseph's architectural treasures at **7 p.m. Tuesday, March 19, at Belt**. McGowan bought the house in 2012 and restored it to its original glory. Now a non-profit organization, the Shakespeare Chateau Guild, is working to raise \$5 million to buy the house and its adjoining property to secure its future.

Another treasure of St. Joseph's history will be discussed at **6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 26, at Belt**. Frank

Polleck will speak about the history of the Missouri Theatre, where he has worked behind the scenes for more than 40 years. Designed by theater architects Boller

Brothers of Kansas City, the building was completed in 1927 and has Art Deco and Moorish details.

At **5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 28, at the Savannah Branch**, cemetery preservationist Kurt Jordan will discuss his work at the Greenwick Cemetery near Amazonia and the proper methods of cleaning headstones. He has been working at the cemetery for several years after learning of his relatives buried

there. Jordan is trained in repairing and resetting headstones and is planning on offering in-the-field training at the Savannah City Cemetery for anyone interested in the topic.

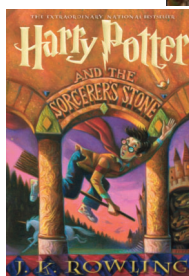
Pop culture literature will be the topic of two Belt events in April. The first is "Muggles, Wiz-

ards and Merpeople: Moral Status in the Harry Potter Universe," a talk by Missouri Western philosophy professor Dr. James Okapal, at **6 p.m. Thursday, April 11**. The presentation traces different ideas about who is, and who is not, in the moral community in the Harry Potter novels, movies and related media. Okapal's research focuses on

Continued on Page 8



A headstone that Kurt Jordan repaired and cleaned in Greenwick Cemetery near Amazonia.



- Why Fathers Cry at Night by Kwame Alexander
- A Living Remedy by Nicole Chung

New Biographies @ the Library

- Field Notes for Surviving a Family Cult by Michelle Dowd
- LeBron by Jeff Benedict

- White House by the Sea by Kate Storey

- Forager:

- Chita: A Memoir by Chita Rivera
- A Mystery of Mysteries: The Death of Edgar Allen Poe by Mark Dawidziak
- The Forgotten Girls: A Memoir of Friendship and Lost Promise in Rural America by Monica Potts
- True West: Sam Shepard's Life, Work and Times by Robert Greenfield
- The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams by Stacy Shiff
- Agent Josephine by Damien Lewis

- Enough Already by Valerie Bertinelli
- The Wind at My Back by Misty Copeland
- The Man Who Could Move Clouds by Ingrid Rojas Contreras
- King, A Life by Jonathan Eig
- Queen of Our Times by Robert Hardman
- Leg: The Story of a Limb and the Boy Who Grew From It by Greg Marshall
- Untold Power by Rebecca B. Roberts



Button Bouquets

Teens and adults can welcome spring by creating fun bouquets using buttons, wire and salt shakers in separate classes at the Belt Branch. All material provided.

Teen class: 2 p.m. Thursday March 28; register at events.rhcl.org/event/10054458.

Adult class: 11 a.m. Monday, April 22; register at events.rhcl.org/event/10054748.

Library makes opening move for having annual tournament

The library will launch its first-ever chess tournament on **Saturday, June 8**, featuring a U.S. chess Federation-rated section and an open section for all ages and skill levels who are not USCF members.

The first of four rounds, Swiss style, of this free tournament begins at **10 a.m. in the Belt Branch Upper Story**, 1906A N. Belt. Doors open at 9 a.m. for players to register if they have not done so already at events.rhcl.org/event/10041386. USCF memberships can be purchased on site if needed.

Awards will be handed out at 5 p.m. and consist of first, second and third place medals for each section with an additional prize for first place in each section.

Bridgid Reeves, the library's technology services librarian, is planning for the tournament to be an annual event. She began thinking about having a tournament after taking over the library's Chess and Checkers Club in 2017.

Back then, the club had a core group of dedicated

members who gathered to talk chess and play games, she said. But when the pandemic hit in 2021 and forced the library to suspend public programs and events, participation declined and thoughts of a tournament were shelved. The club's future was in jeopardy.

"Just as I was about to throw in the towel, a few people new to the area since the club's heyday began coming in to check out the club," Reeves said. "A few of the old members started coming back, and a home-school chess club found out we meet here to play. People started coming back, and the club began to grow again."

Reeves, who was a member of her middle school and high school chess clubs growing up, revised her dream and sought USCF membership for the club so it could offer rated tournaments.

"Chess brings people together and fosters a sense of community and even cooperation. It seemed to me that sharing this hobby, or sport depending on who you ask, would be a great addition to the community as a whole."

A building built to be a library

From Page 1

are currently located, will be sold. "It should be an attractive investment for someone who wants to own retail space," Mears said.

As a consolidated library serving two counties, Rolling Hill's Buchanan County location almost always has been on the Belt Highway. The Belt Branch was on the eastern edge of St. Joseph in the 1970s, which was a relatively rural area. But as the city pushed eastward, the library that served the rural parts of Buchanan County was surrounded by more and more retail and

library-owned Rolling Hills Plaza strip mall, where the Belt Branch, Administration Offices and Books Revisited

residential growth.

Any Rolling Hills facility should be located in the part of the county where property owners pay Rolling Hills taxes, Mears said. And the library should be more visible than it is now, located in the bottom of a strip mall with a virtually hidden south entrance on one of the busiest streets in the city.

"When is the right time to build a new library? Now, because costs will just keep going up," Mears said. "We've done the best we can with what we have, but we want to build the kind of library our patrons and taxpayers need and deserve."

"This feels like this is a good time to do this project. People will be amazed at what we can be when we are in a building that is designed from the start to be a library."



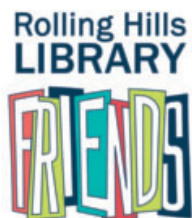
Books Revisited

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



Administrative Office
1912 N. Belt
St. Joseph, MO 64506

Barb Dalrymple is The Cake Lady

Key Lime Pie Poke Cake

Cake

1 box white cake mix
1¾ cup water (I use milk)
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
4 eggs

Filling

1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk (not evaporated)
¾ cup whipping cream
½ cup Key lime juice or regular lime juice
1 teaspoon grated lime peel
4 drops yellow food color
1 drop green food color

Frosting

1 container whipped vanilla frosting
2 teaspoons grated lime peel
Garnish with fresh strawberries, Key lime slices or lemon leaves if desired

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Spray bottom only of a 13x9-inch pan with baking spray with flour.

In large bowl, beat cake ingredients with electric mixer on low speed for 30 seconds, then on medium speed 2

minutes, scraping bowl occasionally. Pour into pan.

Bake 27-33 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Cool for 5 minutes. Use a wooden spoon handle (¾-inch to ½-inch in diameter) to poke holes almost to the bottom of cake every ½ inch, wiping handle occasionally to reduce sticking.

In medium bowl, stir together filling ingredients (mixture will be thick). Pour over cake, spreading evenly over surface and working back and forth to fill holes. (Some filling should remain on top.) Refrigerate for 1 hour.

Spread frosting over cake and sprinkle with lime peel then garnish as desired. Store the cake loosely covered in the refrigerator.



Barb also is a Rolling Hills Library retiree who has made cakes for her friends and former co-workers for decades

Sarah Maas novels topic of April 18th talk

From Page 6

the intersection of ethics and literature with interest in theories of moral status and friendship.

A week later at **6 p.m. Thursday, April 18**, Missouri Western English instructor Jennifer Jackson will speak about the fantasy and young adult writer Sarah J. Maas, who is author of the Crescent City, A Court of Thorns and Roses and the Throne of Glass series. Her books have sold more than 12 million copies and are published in 37 languages. In March, Jackson is presenting her S.J. Maas paper at the Popular Culture Association's national conference.