

Difference Makers

Meet three women who work to make St. Joseph a better place / Page 3

Slow-Burn Mystery

This book has many characters who have many secrets / Page 6

Chess Tournament is Back

Second free USCF-rated tournament coming in June / Page 8

Digital Days

E-book checkouts are growing – and are the future of library access

By Michelle Mears
Rolling Hills Library Director

In 2024 by all measures, checkout of digital items from public libraries reached record levels.

Remote usage of library collections took a big leap in 2020 during the pandemic and have been increasing 15-20% each year since. In the most recent fiscal year, Rolling Hills Library users checked out 64,135 digital items, which was 17% of the total circulation of items.

Our patrons still love their printed books, but digital is catching up quickly. So far this year, usage of print items is down 8% while digital checkouts are up 20%.

What are e-books?

E-books have been around for more than 25 years in public libraries. E-book is a generic term that refers to electronic copies of print materials and includes digital audio (e-audio) and e-magazines. If you like to read words on a page, an e-book will recreate that setup with a layout on the screen device of your choice where you read from top to bottom and turn simulated pages.

E-audio is slightly different in that you don't have to be able to read it off the screen but access files that play on your mobile device or connect through Bluetooth or other means to your car, your stereo or even your television. Usage of e-audio has been growing at the fastest rate

of all types of digital checkouts and only looks to get bigger as time goes on.

You also can view or listen to e-books on your mobile phone. For those who like to read words on a page, a tablet is usually more comfortable with a screen

about the size of a hardcover book. Some people have a dedicated e-book device, like a Kindle from Amazon where all it does is store and show e-books. Others use iPads or Samsung tablets to read or listen to e-books.

So many choices

We wish it was easier for library users to get e-books, but part of

what the publishing industry wants to do is create "friction" in the process. If it was too easy, they speculate, no one would ever buy their own copy of a book. We know this is not true. Access to library books, both print and digital, drives sales of books because people discover new authors and series and then buy them for themselves.

For the most part, we follow the same process in the digital world that we do in print,

which is called "one copy, one user." Each person can only use one digital copy of an e-book at a time, as if it was a physical item. When your checkout period is over, it moves on to the next person or just becomes available again.

Rolling Hills Library has many vendors for e-books and e-audio. The main resources or apps are Libby, Boundless, and Hoopla. Each of these are listed on our website,

Continued on Page 7



*Rolling Hills Library
users checked out
64,135
digital items in the
library's 2024 fiscal
year*

Well, Well, Well ...

Study shows visiting libraries makes people feel better

Reading is a leisure activity for the most part. Some people read as a part of their job (unfortunately, working in a library does not pay you to read), but once you are done with schooling most people who voluntarily read do so because they enjoy it. Now we know that it's also good for their well-being.



A study done by the New York Public Library of nearly 2,000 users reported overwhelmingly positive effects of public library usage. People said that visiting the library resulted in calm and peaceful feelings (92%), increased their desire to learn new things (90%), and supported their personal growth (88%). In addition to the benefits for individuals, respondents also indicated that they had a greater sense of optimism about the future, more feelings of empathy towards others, and felt that they are a part of a larger community around them.

Now you might say, wait a minute, that seems a bit biased. One of the biggest public libraries did a study and showed they are doing good things. We don't need a research study for that, we know we do good things. Well sometimes it is good to have the data to back up your claims, and we've got it.

We collect comment forms from library users to both inform the provision of services but to also measure how people are feeling about the library. We send out random email surveys to ask users if they would recommend the library to friends and family, which results in a measurement called the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Anything above 50 is considered good. Our scores are consistently in the 90's. We know that people like us, and we know we make a difference in people's lives. Please ask for a comment form at a service desk and share your story with us, we love to hear them.

It's one of the reasons why we are excited about the location of our new building in St. Joseph. Being located close to the center of health care in our community will give us more opportunities to show the connection between literacy and improved life outcomes. Checking out books for leisure reading, doing crafts, and listening to lectures all contribute to increased wellness and greater satisfaction with daily life. We look forward to having outdoor spaces and access to walking paths for fitness.

It is a trying time for many in our community. The library can offer a sense of hope when all else seems dark. It can give you a sense of direction, make you feel useful, connect you to others in the community, and give you a moment of respite when you need to escape the stress of reality. We really are doing good work.

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

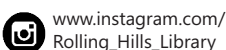
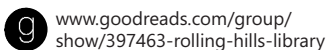
Other ways to reach and follow us

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.



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

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The board generally meets at 5 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.



Live Concert: Irish Folk Music

Local musician Tom Meehan brings Irish melodies for all ages to enjoy. It's one week before St. Patrick's Day, so dress in green if you want, and come have some fun celebrating! **11 a.m. Monday, March 10, Belt Branch**

Seniors can learn how to write their memoirs

"It's never too late to start."

That's Debra Butterfield's advice about writing memoirs and something she will discuss in the "Senior Memoirs – Getting Started" class at 10 a.m. Friday, May 9, at Belt.

Butterfield is a published author and editor and will provide ideas and possible first steps for writing your memoirs or helping a loved one write theirs.

Writing a memoir isn't something most people do, but they should consider it.

"They don't think of themselves as a writer, and they also might think 'there's nothing outstanding in my life. I just lived a normal life,'" she said. But a memoir "leaves behind memories for your family they might otherwise not have."

Two craft events set for adults with disabilities

All Abilities Programs are tailored to the interests and ability levels of adults with disabilities, which could include crafts, games and exploring the library.

At 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 6, participants can turn painted canvases into their own creations by adding paint, embellishments, Modge Podge and other fun artistic mediums. The library will provide aprons for participants to wear.

At 10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 8, participants will use Perler Biggie Beads to create and melt together designs. Library staff will use irons to melt the beads.

March event will feature women who are working to improve St. Joseph

To recognize Saturday, March 8, as International Women's Day, the Belt Branch is



LEFT TO RIGHT: Ann Irvin, Cheyenne Dorrell-Giles and Marcela Villaseñor Hamilton

having a special event highlighting a few of the many women working for positive change in St. Joseph.

At 10:30 a.m. in the Belt Community Room, three women will discuss their work and efforts in this event open to all. Light refreshments will be served.

Ann Irvin is the president and CEO of Sparkle Peach, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides resources such as menstrual hygiene products, bladder incontinence products and educational resources on feminine health. Ann followed in her mother's footsteps, becoming active in the community and committing

herself to giving back. Cheyenne Dorrell-Giles is the executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters St.

Joseph, an organization with the mission of supporting a child's "biggest possible future by matching them with a caring, adult mentor in a one-to-one friendship." Cheyenne is also an actor, musician and an artist whose beadwork connects her with Indigenous ancestors.

Marcela Villaseñor Hamilton's commitment to St. Joseph is evident in her volunteering in ways to support youth and families with local resources, serving actively with her church, supporting immigrants as they adjust to their new communities and connecting people across languages and cultures.

Building Project

This photo from Feb. 11 shows work has begun on our new St. Joseph library site. The live camera is now available at rhcl.libnet.info/building-project.

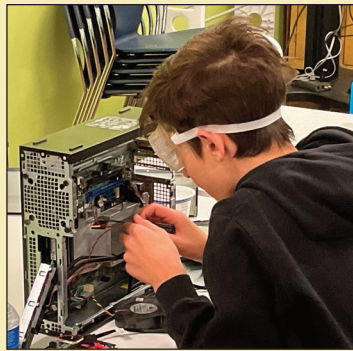


LearningExpress Library

Practice and prepare for tests such as the SAT, ACT, CDL, citizenship, real estate, nursing, firefighting and many more. Students from 4th grade to college can improve basic learning skills in math and English. **Recursos para hispanohablante también. Find LearningExpress under Basic Skills at rhcl.libnet.info/online-learning.**



Library user chatting during a kids' scavenger hunt: "You all are making a real difference here." Staff member: "We love what we do." Adult: "It shows." – Patron Comment Form



Teens had the chance to dig into old library equipment in the Teen Tech Take-Apart event on Dec. 12 at the Belt Branch. This guy gets an A for effort.



We treat our library volunteers well throughout the year. They enjoyed a potluck Christmas dinner on Dec. 12 in the Belt Upper Story, and the lucky ones left with table prizes. That's Cheryl Meeks heading home with the gnome from her table.



The Savannah Branch took part in Library Shelfie Day on Jan. 22 by taking pictures of people with the library shelves.



Families could have cookies and milk with Santa on Dec. 6 and 7 in the Belt Upper Story. ABOVE: A mom watches over her son making a Christmas craft. RIGHT: That's Mrs. Claus (aka Miss Sarah) sitting in for this family's Christmas picture.



Somebody wasn't quite sure he liked being held by the big guy in red at Family Night with Santa on Dec. 10 at Savannah.

Library Scenes

December 2024 & January 2025



Dr. Seuss Escape Room

The Cat has lost his Hat! Can you help him get it back? Test your puzzle solving skills in this escape room for all ages. **BELT BRANCH** dates: Friday, March 14, register at events.rhcl.org/event/12794247; Saturday, March 15, register at events.rhcl.org/event/12794248. **SAVANNAH BRANCH**: Saturday, March 29, register at events.rhcl.org/event/12794248.

Rivers run through this historical novel

What is the history of one single drop of water? A raindrop evaporating into the clouds, a tear falling and mixing with a river?

“Water remembers. It is humans who forget,” writes author Elif Shafak in **There Are Rivers In the Sky**.

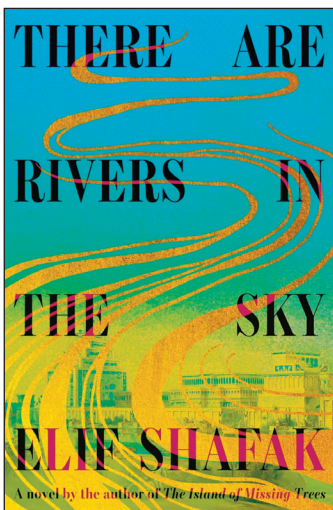
This historical novel starts in the ancient city of Ninevah on the banks of the River Tigris in

Book Review

Mesopotamia. Out of the ruins of the great library comes a poem, “The Epic of Gilgamesh.” This poem and a single drop of water, which remanifests across centuries, binds together three lives through three time-lines.

1840 London: Arthur is born into poverty by the River Thames but has a brilliant, perfect memory. His gift earns him an apprenticeship with a publisher, where one book – “Nineveh and Its Remains” – catches his interest. Nineveh and the ancient cuneiform writing system that was used to write several languages of the Ancient Near East become his life’s work.

2014 Turkey: Narin is a 10-year-old Yazidi girl who is slowly going deaf. She and her family travel to Iraq so she may be baptized. The rise of the ISIS terrorist group and



the destruction of her ancestral home along the River Tigris, also Arthur’s final resting place, keep her family from realizing their dreams.



Elif Shafak

2018 London: Zaleekah, a hydrologist, moves into a houseboat on the Thames. She is recently divorced and deeply depressed. Her uncle, who raised her after her parents died in a flood, loans her a book about her homeland,

“Nineveh and Its Remains.” The book and a cuneiform tattoo for water change everything for her future.

The intertwining of these three lives throughout the centuries is fascinating. The search for meaning in our past, the desire to interpret history and piece together the puzzles from our ancestors, and the importance of water and how it unites humans and ties us to the land is the story that unfolds in **There Are Rivers In the Sky**.

I think many people will enjoy this beautifully written historical novel.

– Jennifer George, technical services manager

Free AARP Tax-Aide Program available until April 15 in Belt board room

AARP is offering free federal and state tax preparation help through April 15 on Tuesdays in a library board room upstairs from the Belt Branch.

Tax-prep volunteers will be available from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesdays in the board room at 1908B N. Belt. Appointments can be made by calling 913-229-6025.

The AARP Tax-Aide Program provides this service for taxpayers with low-to-moderate incomes. There are no age limits, but emphasis is placed on serving seniors.

Information about what documents to bring and how tax returns are prepared is available in the Frequently Asked Question information at www.aarp.org/money/taxaide.

driving tests

Prepare for your Missouri driver’s exam by looking over practice tests and informational resources Driving Tests has available for car drivers, motorcyclists and commercial vehicle drivers. Knowing what’s coming down the road will help you get that license sooner! Find Driving Tests at <https://rhcl.driving-tests.org/missouri>.





St. Joseph 1815 to 1899

Jerrad Hardin from St. Joseph Museums will offer a look back at St. Joseph's growth and changes from the French Louisiana era to the Decade of the Bicycle. 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, Belt Branch

Who, Oh Who ...

When a 2nd family member vanishes from a summer camp, who knows what?

The God of the Woods by Liz Moore starts in 1975 when a camp counselor discovers a 13-year-old camper missing from her bed. It's not just any camper, it's Barbara Van Laar, the daughter of the wealthy family that owns the camp.

Book Review

And Barbara is not the only Van Laar to have disappeared from the campgrounds.

Barbara's brother, Bear Van Laar, disappeared 14 years earlier when he was out for a walk with his grandfather. His case is closed, but the community around the camp is hesitant to believe the mystery is solved. The Van Laars employ most of the surrounding town's population, which adds an extra layer to the power dynamic of the community.

The novel has a huge cast of characters, and we get to see many of their points of view. While the main story is set in 1975, we get multiple flashbacks, which creates a very layered story. We get details from everyone, including Alice Van Laar (Bear and Barbara's mother).

Louise Donnadiou is a working-class local who is dating the Van Laar's godson, John Paul McLellan, and is the

camp counselor who discovered Barbara missing. Through Louise and her relationship with John Paul, we are shown the major class differences between the town and the Van Laars.

The only "outsider" that is close to the Van Laars is TJ Hewitt, the groundskeeper/director of Camp Emerson. Her father, Vic, was the director when Bear disappeared. The Van Laars keep too many secrets to be too close to anyone.

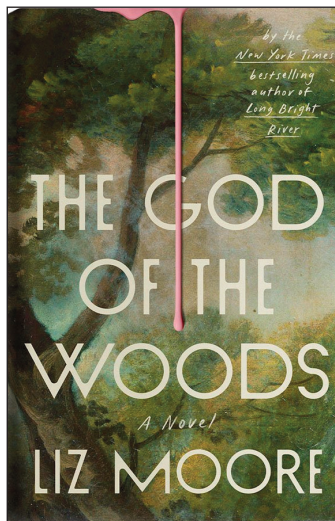


Liz Moore

While this book has a lot of twists and turns, it has some direct themes. It shows the class disparities between the "haves" and "have nots." It makes us think about who we keep secrets for and the toll those secrets cost us.

I would recommend this book to anyone who likes a slow-burn, multilayered mystery with family drama. At first, I found it difficult to keep all the characters straight, but Moore weaves the timelines, characters and locations perfectly.

— Leah Holt, Savannah Branch library assistant



New Romance Books @ the Library

- The Seaside Homecoming by Julie Klassen
- The Autumn of Ruth Winters by Marshall Fine
- Beg, Borrow or Steal by Sarah Adams
- Storybook Ending by Poppy Alexander
- B is for Bonnet by Shelley Shepard Gray
- Housekeeping by Karisa Chen
- The Silver Fox by Barbara Delinsky
- Wedding Dashers by Heather McBreen
- Lie for a Million by Janet Daily
- Saved by the Matchmaker by Jody Hedlund
- Temple of Swoon by Jo Segura
- Grimstone by Sophie Lark
- Close Knit by Jenny Colgan
- Accidentally Amy by Lynn Painter
- Order of Swans by Jude Deveraux
- Deep End by Ali Hazelwood
- Flirting With Disaster by Naina Kumar
- Remember When by Mary Balogh
- Into the Sunset by Mary Connealy
- A Song to Drown Rivers by Ann Liang
- Confounding Oaths by Alexis Hall
- A Great Marriage by Frances Mayes
- The Banned Books Club by Brenda Novak
- A False Start by Elsie Silver
- The House Keeper's Secret by Iona Grey
- Perfect Fit by Clare Gilmore
- The Most Wonderful Crime of the Year by Ally Carter
- Falling for Gage by Mia Sheridan
- The Friend Zone Experiment by Zen Cho
- Love Redesigned by Lauren Asher



Fairy Gardens

Come design your own fairy garden in this class for adults, teens and youths ages 6+ with an adult. All supplies provided but bring your own container if you like. Register at events.rhcl.org/event/12841302. (Register each person individually.) 5:30 p.m. Thursday, May 1, Savannah Branch

E-books are great, but they're also expensive for libraries

From Page 1

and the titles available are also listed in our online catalog.

Libby is used by MoLib2Go, a shared collection from 118 Missouri libraries with the most titles, but wait times are longer. Boundless is a group of 20 northern Missouri libraries that have a smaller collection of more popular items, and its wait times are shorter.

Hoopla has the most variety of items and includes streaming video and digital magazines. This collection is different in that there are no wait times. Everyone who wants to read, listen to, or watch an item can do so because the library has to pay per usage. There are lower monthly limits on Hoopla to keep the library's costs down.

More e-books can be found with Tumblebooks, Audio-BookCloud, TeenBookCloud, and Flipster. You can get electronic copies of magazines on Libby or Flipster. Some of our vendors offer access that requires a live internet connection to read or listen to, like the BookCloud sites.

If you aren't really a "reader" that's OK, we still have items for you, too.

Our newest service with an app is Freegal, where you can stream five hours of music a day and download three free songs per week. Or for those of you who like to binge watch, you can stream films, concerts, and educational videos from Stingray Qello, IndieFlix, or The Great Courses with a 7-day pass from the Libby app.

Accessibility rocks!

One of the best things about digital access is that there are features that make the experience more adaptable for different users. You can often change type size, screen

brightness, or other features to make reading easier.

E-books and e-audio are great for travel, because you can "carry" multiple titles on the devices you were planning to bring anyway, like your smartphone or tablet. E-audio is also good for working in the garden or walking the dog.

If you need help getting started with e-books, make a one-on-one appointment with our library staff to learn how to use your specific device. Download the apps needed or visit our website at rhcl.org for more information.



Digital is here to stay

Don't you love when a story starts with "back in the day...?" Well, some of us remember when it was high tech stuff for libraries to have record albums for checkout. Then it went to cassettes, CDs, and now downloadable audio.

Digital isn't just another format waiting to be replaced by something more advanced. This is the future of library access, especially for popular materials. Digital files do not wear out or fall apart. No one can tear a page out of an e-book or spill coffee on one.

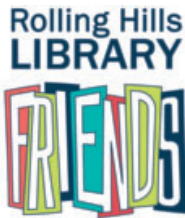
The only fly in the ointment is that licensing terms mean libraries pay more for e-books than consumers do, and we can only buy access for a limited period of time – and that's not right. Bigger chunks of our library budget are spent on buying the same e-books over and over again, not because they are broken but because they have expired and are still in high demand.

If you have not tried an e-book, give it a whirl. You might be surprised at how far technology has come and realize it is often the perfect solution when you have nothing to read. But remember, you can always check out books and videos in person at any of our branches.



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

Cherry Chocolate Chip Poke Cake

1 15-oz. white or vanilla cake mix (make sure it's a 15-ounce mix)
¾ cup milk
1/3 cup vegetable oil
½ of maraschino cherry juice from a 10-oz. jar
3 large egg whites
1 teaspoon almond or vanilla extract
1¼ cups mini chocolate chips
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
10 chopped maraschino cherries, plus more for garnish
1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
1 8-oz. container Cool Whip
3 tablespoons hot fudge sauce, for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Spray a 9x13-inch pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the cake mix, milk, vegetable oil, cherry juice, egg whites and almond extract. Beat all ingredients together until well combined.

In a small plastic bag, combine the mini chocolate chips with the

flour and shake to coat the chips. Gently fold the chips and the chopped cherries into the cake batter, reserving a small handful of the chips to sprinkle on top. Pour batter into the prepared pan. Sprinkle the remaining chips over the top of the cake.

Bake for 22 to 25 minutes. Check the middle of the cake with a toothpick to see if the cake is done. If the toothpick comes out clean, it is done. Cool completely.

Use a wooden spoon or a small round object to poke holes all over top of the cake. Pour the can of sweetened condensed milk over top of the cake, spreading evenly. Allow it to soak into the cake before topping. Spread Cool Whip over the cooled cake and garnish with hot fudge and cherries.



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

Library's second free USCF chess tournament set for June 14

Bridgid Reeves might as well call "checkmate" on the library's first-ever chess tournament last June, which attracted 21 players in the U.S. Chess Federation-rated section.

"Last year we had a few rocky moments, but we learned a lot, and we're looking forward to this year being even better," said the leader of the library's Chess and Checkers Club.

Registration is open now for this year's tournament, planned for Saturday, June 14, in the Belt Branch Upper Story. Doors open at 9 a.m. for players not yet registered, and the first round will begin at 10 a.m. USCF memberships can be purchased on site if needed.

The free tournament will include at least two sections, one for USCF-rated play and one open for unrated players. The rated section may be divided into two sections based on rating if more than 20 players register in advance. Each section will have four rounds, Swiss style, with G/45;5d time control.

Players should arrive early to check in. Awards consist of first, second and third place medals for each section.

Register for the tournament at events.rhcl.org/event/12731760.