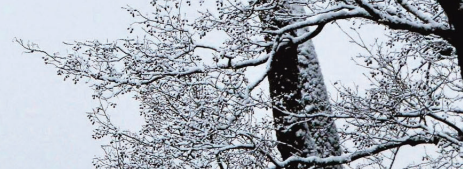


Sweet Fundraiser
The Cake Lady's 100th recipe
inspires a Friends cookbook / Page 5

Running Through the Pain
Library staff member finds solace
in St. Joseph Marathon / Page 7



Digital changes coming

Library replacing multiple apps to continue with one new platform

By Michelle Mears
Rolling Hills Library Director

I hope that many of you have at least tried an e-book or e-audio on your mobile device or computer. If you haven't, now might be a good time to give it a whirl. If Santa brings you a new tablet or upgrades your phone, you can try out one of our online services.

But you need to know there are changes on tap for our "virtual" branch to make it simpler to use and more enjoyable.

To give you some background, it hasn't been all that long that Missouri libraries have been offering e-books to users. Our library started around 2011 with the MoLib2Go consortium, which is provided by OverDrive. Today their app is called Libby and is our most used e-book resource. Usage of e-materials on all our online platforms has been steadily climbing after years of slow growth and now it is up about 20% over last year.

Just like potato chips, it's hard to limit yourself to just a few, so over the years we added more and more online services. During covid, when physical access to the library was limited, we added some digital resources to our virtual branch so people would not be without books during a difficult time. Also like potato chips, it's usually too late when you realize you have had too many.

The library needs to go on kind of a digital "diet" to streamline our offerings and keep to our budget for books and other resources.

Here's what's going down

We are going to end some of these app services and combine them into one new platform. Libby will continue

to be available, but Boundless, Hoopla, and Blackstone will end in December 2025, and CloudLibrary will take its place. We understand that some of you may be upset about this decision, so let me explain.

First, pricing for digital titles is much higher than the same titles in print. Where we might pay \$18 for a hardcover book with our negotiated discounts, the e-book version could be \$60 for only 24 months of access, and the e-audio version can be as high as \$120 each.

For an "always available" resource like Hoopla (no holds or waiting), we pay an amount per checkout between \$.99 and \$3.99. Our Hoopla usage started out at six titles per user per month, went up to 12 during covid, back down to

six earlier this year, and now we are down to just three and our monthly bill is still close to \$5,000 per month, just for Hoopla. That is more than 20% of our total collection budget for the whole year. Hoopla has become unsustainable.

Second, people tend to load just one app on their device and stay with that even if it means they miss out on some great stuff on other platforms. Only the savvy users will switch between different apps and search for titles in multiple places. One solution to this is to reduce the number of apps we offer so they can access more from fewer "visits" to the virtual branch.

We understand there are many people who are voracious readers, but again we have to impose limits so we can serve the greatest number of users with the funds we have available.

Finally, we have leveraged our sharing networks so our



Continued on Page 5

Dealing With It

Building a new library comes with big decisions ... and anxiety

Have you seen the Gwyneth Paltrow movie **Sliding Doors**? It's an odd little flick about how your life would be different if you made different choices or were set on a different path if you caught or missed a single train. I sometimes think about this idea, of how I ended up in St. Joseph as director of this library. Was it fated or just a result of random acts?

I don't know the answer. All I can do is work each day to make the best library I can for the people we serve and the staff who work here. We have made decisions and spent the money and now we are on the cusp of something new – moving into and opening the new Riverside Branch. This is something that maybe happens once (maybe never) in a library director's career. It's not something we are taught about or prepared for, so a lot of it is learning as we go and figuring stuff out along the way.



I find myself alternately overwhelmed by the details of this project and determined not to get bogged down in the stress of moving. It will be what it will be. C'est la vie, as the French say.

But then the little voices start whispering ... what if Google Maps never gets the street address added so people can find us? What if the moving company doesn't show up? What if the furniture does not get delivered on time? What if we don't have enough books? (Of course, who can ever have enough books?)

Then I take a deep breath, and then another, and just move forward one decision at a time. No need to panic. The decisions we make are important to the work we do, but no one will be physically injured or permanently harmed. So, the anxiety level does not need to go full tilt if the paint colors are slightly different than I thought they would be. Whatever happens, it is nothing that can't be changed or fixed.

I do ask that you give our staff a little bit of grace during these next six months. None of us have done this before. Even the Savannah Branch staff, who don't have to do any of the moving stuff, are concerned about being swamped when they are the only branch open. Patience may be in shorter supply, so please give us a little extra moment to pull it together and serve you the best we can. In addition to moving we have to continue ordering materials and planning programs for next year's Summer Reading Program, "Unearth a Story."

We will be ready to move when the day comes and open just as soon as we can. There will be hiccups along the way, and we will deal with them as they come. But you know what they say, "Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition."

Michelle Mears, *Rolling Hills Library Director*

mmears@rhcl.org

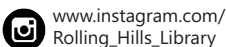
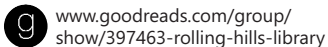
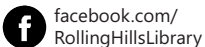
Other ways to reach and follow us

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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Library Director

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St. Joseph

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.



Winter Reading Program

"Birds of a feather read together" is the theme for the 2026 program that begins Jan. 1 and ends Feb. 28. Participants can record their books using bingo cards available at the Belt and Savannah branches and the Bookmobile or online using the Beanstack reading challenge platform. Get five in a row on the bingo card or Beanstack and you'll get a free book and a prize!

A beloved author and one of Santa's elves are the topics of December events

Winter Wonders

Winter brings its own type of events to the libraries, with most offered to get you in the holiday spirit. Here's what's coming this season:

Holiday Crafts and Games – From 10 a.m. to noon Monday, Dec. 1, at Savannah Branch, Kelly Todd from MU Extension and 4-H will start the holiday month with a morning of crafts and games. Register at events.rhcl.org/event/14956555. Ages 5 and older. All supplies will be provided.

Milk and Cookies With Santa – From 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 6, in the Belt Branch Upper Story, families can snack on milk and cookies, make holiday crafts and have pictures taken with Santa Claus and Mrs. Santa.

Sensory Sensitive Santa – Santa will meet with sensory sensitive individuals and families 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, in the Upper Story. If you have questions, concerns or want to share how we can best serve your loved one, call 816-232-5479.

Elf Party Family Night – Andrew County Parents as Teachers and the library invite families with kids of all ages to enjoy games, crafts and meet one of Santa's elves from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 9, at the Savannah Branch.

Jane Austen's 250th Birthday – The legendary author who penned classic novels like **Pride and Prejudice**,



One of Santa's elves is coming to the Savannah Branch, and Jane Austen will be celebrated on Dec. 16, her 250th birthday at Belt.



Emma and **Sense and Sensibility** would be 250 years old on Tuesday, Dec. 16. Her books offered a critical and often comical look into the lives of people living in England's Regency era. Join us from 5:30-7:30 p.m. that day in the Belt Community Room to celebrate Jane by making a "classic" velvet Christmas ornament, enjoying birthday cake, sipping tea and being entered to win a fun door prize.

This event is open to Austen fans 12 years old and older. Register at events.rhcl.org/event/14651339.

Noon Year's Eve – Families of all ages won't need to stay up late to ring in 2026 on Wednesday, Dec. 31. Celebrate the New Year's coming early with crafts, games and a balloon drop that begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Savannah Branch.

Snowman Crafts – Teens and adults can make snowman crafts at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, at Savannah. All supplies provided. Register at events.rhcl.org/event/14848972.

Drop-In Winter Crafts – Kids can make a variety of winter crafts from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 19, at Savannah. Children 8 and younger will need an adult with them. All supplies provided.



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

September-October 2025



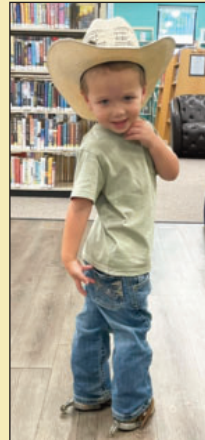
Abe Lincoln dropped into the Savannah Branch on Halloween.



Meanwhile, Halloween at the Belt is a weeklong holiday. "When you have as many costumes as we do, we have to stretch it out," Miss Sarah says.



Miss Jill had a colorful crowd for Story-time on the day before Halloween.



Mr. Tregg is one of the Savannah staff's favorite cowboys. He always wears spurs that jingle-jangle. That's cowboy clown Tregg in the Halloween photo, too.

Work trucks, cranes, tractors and other work vehicles invaded the Belt parking lot (Sept. 19, top) and the Savannah parking lot (Oct. 14, below) for two Touch-a-Truck events. The Belt event featured a 115-ton crane that extended its boom 80 feet. The Savannah event (below) brought in vehicles from the community, including fire and law enforcement vehicles, utility trucks and buses.





Teen Tech Take-Apart

Ever wondered what's inside the computer, phone or other electronics? We'll provide the tech items and the tools to take them apart. Open to ages 12 to 18. Register at events.rhcl.org/event/14581066 4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10, Belt Branch

Friends of the Library have a sweet fundraiser

With the Winter 2025 edition of Browse, Barb Dalrymple had provided her 100th cake recipe for the library's newsletter. Her first recipe in the newsletter was in November 2011.

Barb began her Rolling Hills Library career volunteering in 1981 and became a part-time employee two years later. That's when she started bringing cakes to work on Mondays and for coworkers' birthdays. She moved up to the cataloging and ordering books position in 1984 and retired in 2015 as acquisitions manager.

Even though she doesn't work now at the library, she still provides Belt staff members with birthday cakes and an occasional why-not cake. We all appreciate it when she does.

"It's just what I do," Barb says about baking cakes for



others. "It makes me happy that someone else is happy."

To show the library's appreciation for all of the cakes through the years, the Friends of the Library have created a dessert cookbook, **The Cake Lady & Friends**, that will be available for \$12 beginning on Black Friday, Nov. 28. The books can be purchased at Books Revisited and the Belt and Savannah branches.

The cookbook is a collection of 150 cakes, pies, cookies and candy recipes with most of them coming from Barb. Library staff members, Board of Trustees members and Friends members provided the rest.

Barb's first published recipe was the Orange Juice Cake (page 25), and her 100th recipe was the Pumpkin Spice Heath Bar Cake, which is not in the cookbook but can be found in the 2025 Winter newsletter at rhcl.libnet.info/newsletters.



CloudLibrary has some of the best features Hoopla has

Continued from Page 1

users can get the benefit of more than we can afford on our own. Libby is a shared resource across 110 Missouri libraries, which puts a lot of value into the pot but also results in longer wait times because more than 2 million people are sharing those titles.

CloudLibrary is also part of a consortium but will be shared among less than 20 libraries and will offer some of the best features of Hoopla, such as having graphic novels, streaming video and no reserves for some titles. Users will also be able to recommend titles to purchase,



and we certainly want to buy things we know will get checked out.

We know that many of you have enjoyed Hoopla for the past five years and hope you will give CloudLibrary a try when it launches in mid-December.

These days public libraries have to be nimble and ready to make a change when circumstances change. We continue to work hard to serve you and welcome your feedback and input. You can send any questions, concerns or feedback to us at help@rhcl.org.

Thank you, and as always, (H)Appy Reading!



INDIEFLIX

IndieFlix is a streaming movie service offering pop culture favorites, box office hits, award-winning films, documentaries and shorts. With a 7-day pass, you'll arrive at the IndieFlix homepage with access to content. Go to OverDrive Libby, sign in and then go to the Extras menu to use IndieFlix.



Gentle Movement for Seniors

Jessica Bledsoe with Andrew County Health and Safety Coalition and Evolve Studio will lead these classes that focus on safe, low-impact exercises using chairs to improve flexibility, strength and balance. **10 a.m. Fridays, Dec. 12 & 19, Savannah Branch**

Author back with an 800-page+ fantasy

Between the covers and within these pages of the new fantasy novel **King Sorrow** there be dragons and trolls and ghosts. But it begins with a small group of college friends and

Book Reviews

a bargain with King Sorrow. Author Joe Hill is the son of author Stephen King, and this is his first novel in 10 years ... and it is epic!

No good deed goes unpunished. Arthur Oakes finds himself mixed up with a drug ring. From an act of kindness, loaning his hoodie to a young lady, he comes to the attention of a group of drug dealers who decide to expand their money-making prospects.

Arthur is a librarian at Rackam College in Maine, where they house many old and rare books. In the worst crime imaginable to Arthur, he is made to steal books for the villains to resell.



There is one book, bound in human skin, and full of dark magic. Arthur and his friends use the book to summon King Sorrow, a dragon, who will get rid of their enemies by Easter. They make the bargain and are marked with a disappearing dragon tattoo before they turn over the dark book to the enemy. As with most dark bargains, Arthur and his friends get more than they bargained for.

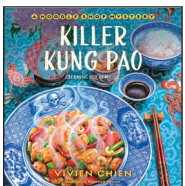
Hill explores many true-life issues of social injustice going on in the world today, as well as historical tragedies through folklore, magic and fairy tales. Politics, gender, big tech, war and greed, Hill leaves few big issues out of this sprawling fantasy read.

King Sorrow is gripping, creepy, menacing and fantastic! It is nearly 900 pages or 26 hours of audiobook listening, but I highly recommend you check this one out.

– Jennifer George, Technical Services coordinator

Foot bath turns deadly in cozy mystery that's easy to listen to

In author Vivien Chien's **Killer Kung Pao**, the sixth installment of the Noodle Shop Mysteries, amateur sleuth and restaurateur Lana Lee witnesses a car accident outside her family's restaurant. What at first appears to be a minor incident, snowballs into a contentious fight between the two women involved.



Lana comes across the two women again at the neighboring beauty salon. What begins as another tense encounter, ends in murder by electrocution. Who would have thought a foot bath could be so deadly? Of course Lana can't help her curiosity and is deter-

mined to find the murderer.

Killer Kung Pao is another solid entry in this cozy mystery series. While the story revolves around the happenings at an Asian shopping center in the Midwest, the eccentricities and bickering of the characters may be familiar to readers who have ever been part of a small, connected community.

I listened to this story on Hoopla (the books are also available on the Libby app) and thought the narration was solid. The fun and charm of Lana and her fellow characters was enough to make this book a relatively quick and enjoyable listening experience.

– Joelle Blair, Belt Branch public services librarian

New Fiction @ the Library

- The Girl From Devils Lake by J.A. Vance
- Framed in Death by J.D. Robb
- The Last Letter by Rebecca Yarros
- Lie in the Tide by Holly Danvers
- It Happened One Summer by Tessa Bailey
- End Game by Jeffrey Archer
- In the Time of Five Pumpkins by Alexander McCain Smith

- Circle of Days by Ken Follett
- The Academy by Elin Hilderbrand and Shelby Cunningham
- Brighter Than Scale, Swifter Than Flame by Neon Yang
- Two Seconds Too Late by Dani Pettrey
- All That We See or Seem by Ken Liu
- Four Ruined Realms by Mai Corland
- Birds, Strangers and Psychos by Lee Child, Sophie Hannah, et. al
- The Devils by Joe Abercrombie

- A Constant Love by Tracie Peterson
- The Ghostwriter by Julie Clark
- Give Up the Night by P.C. Cast and Kristin Cast
- The Indigo Heiress by Laura Frantz
- Land of Dreams by Lauraine Snelling
- The Librarians by Sherry Thomas
- The Lost Baker of Vienna by Sharon Kurtzman
- A Ruin, Great and Free by Cardwell Turnbull



Music & Musings

On the second Monday evening of the month some of this area's talented performers and poets gather to share their music and literary talents with a friendly audience. Come listen! 6-8 p.m. Mondays, Dec. 8, Jan. 12 & Feb. 9, Books Revisited.

Library staff member finds solace in taking on his first marathon

Running Through the Darkness

I had become intimately aware of my body's mediocrity in high school. You gain that awareness when every gym class activity involves a lot of running. The mile, the PACER, basketball, flag football, indoor soccer. I watched my classmates float by, while I wobbled along with bile in my throat.

Physical activity filled me with so much hate, all aimed at myself. "You fat loser. Why can't you run for more than a minute? Why can't you be like them? Why are you even here?" This vitriol impeded me for years, but, be it my desire to improve myself or my stubborn, stupid, masochistic personality, I kept moving every day. In time, my daily walks were interspersed with bursts of speed. A change was coming.

Then my grandmother died.

On the morning of her funeral, we had to take a detour. Noyes Boulevard was cordoned off for the second annual St. Joseph Marathon. It was just another annoyance. "These idiots. Why today? Don't they know? Idiots." The hate was spilling.

In the maelstrom of fog and grief, I became intimately aware of the edge. The darkness. The fall I might not come back from. With my mind in that muddled state, my body, for no conscious reason, kept going.

What were solemn marches over fallen leaves became speedy, slippery, painful trots over ice. The breezy spring winds propelled me through those sweltering summer runs. What started as barely one-minute jogs became five



Sheldon Smith nears the finish line of the 2025 St. Joseph Marathon on Sept. 27 after more than four hours of running and some walking.

minutes, then 10, then 30. The lungs that once screamed at any discomfort became kinder to me. They allowed me more time outside.

A year later, I became one of those marathon idiots.

The starting line for the St. Joseph Marathon on Saturday, Sept. 27, was overflowing with people. The only goal I had was to cross the finish line before the six-hour cutoff. Anxiety made any goal seem impossible, and the doubts threatened to grab me, but standing in that line, surrounded by those people, I listened.

They were from all over the nation. Some were regular marathoners, others were first-timers like me. A thin, elderly lady was treating this like a fun run, while a man in his early 20s was attempting to qualify for the Boston Marathon. Distinct people. Happy people. My doubts were brushed aside.

I finished in four hours and 45 minutes. A mediocre time by professional metrics, but I was content. The encouragement I got from the volunteers, onlookers and other runners was electric, but there was a pleasant calm at the end.

My legs were creaking, but someone swiftly put a water bottle in my hand. There was a band playing bouncy country music. The cloudless sky accompanied a cool afternoon. It was a lovely day to be outside.

– Sheldon Smith, Technical Services assistant



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

Barb Dalrymple is The Cake Lady

Chocolate-Filled Red Velvet Cupcakes

Cake

1 1/3 cups flour
1/4 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
1 T unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 cup unsalted butter at room temperature
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp almond extract
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 T liquid red food coloring
1 tsp balsamic vinegar
1/2 tsp baking soda

Sift together the flour, baking powder, salt and cocoa powder and reserve. Cream the butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat the extracts and the egg into the butter mixture. Whisk together the buttermilk and red food coloring. Alternately and gently, beat the flour mixture and the buttermilk into the butter, just until mixed completely. In a small bowl, combine the balsamic vinegar and baking soda until fizzy, then quickly fold into the batter. Divide the batter among the cupcake paper and bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool 10 minutes before removing from pan.

Chocolate Filling

1 cup semisweet or bittersweet chocolate chips

1 cup and 1 tsp heavy whipping cream

1 tsp corn syrup

Bring the cream and corn syrup to a simmer over low heat in a small saucepan or microwave-safe glass measuring cup. Pour the cream over the chocolate chips and let set for about 3 minutes. Stir until smooth with a spatula. Pour into mustard or ketchup-style squeeze bottle and reserve in a warm area of the kitchen.

Cream Cheese Frosting

8-oz package of cream cheese, softened

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

1/2 cup heavy whipping cream, ice cold

3/4 cup powdered sugar

Beat cream cheese and vanilla until smooth. With the whisk attachment, beat in the powdered sugar, then slowly beat in the heavy cream. Beat until thick enough to frost the cupcakes, adding more powdered sugar if needed to thicken.

Wrap the rounded handle of a wooden spoon with plastic wrap, then poke a hole through the center of each cupcake. Fill each one with a squeeze of the chocolate sauce, then chill for about 10 minutes. Frost each cupcake with cream cheese frosting, using a piping bag or just spooning some on. Enjoy within 24 hours for freshest taste.

These will be nice for any holiday party. Enjoy!



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