Baldwin County Library unveils new bookmobile during National Library Week

Bookmobiles have served county for more than 40 years

The Baldwin County Library celebrated National Library Week with the unveiling of new bookmobile to serve residents throughout the county.

The bookmobile formally entered service on April 11 for National Bookmobile Day with a bus tour and meet and greet with librarians. New patrons could also sign up for library cards, and refreshments were enjoyed by all in attendance.

For more than 40 years, the Baldwin County Bookmobile has delivered information, technology, and resources for life-long learning to county residents from all walks of life.

The new bookmobile is a 2008 Mercedes Sprinter van with low mileage. The van previously served as a mobile brain trauma unit. The Baldwin County Library purchased the bus with a grant from Impact 100 Baldwin County and had it refurbished by Mobile Genius Clinic. Local artist Daryl Evans with Rogue Creative designed the graphics. The bus offers a collection of 1,500 books, cds and dvds and maintains a schedule which allows the bookmobile to make more than 30 stops every two weeks.

“The new bookmobile is a local effort,” said Liz Reed, director of the Baldwin County Library. “The funding came from Impact 100 of Baldwin County, an organization that awards grants to local 501(c) 3 organizations. The graphics were designed by local artist Daryl Evans, and Ray and Gloria Shores, the former bookmobile library assistants, are back to administer the new program.”

Libraries are the heart of every community, and bookmobiles play a vital role for the library by bringing valuable resources to library patrons. The Baldwin County Bookmobile serves people of all backgrounds, providing access to almost every service that patrons find in the library, including reader advisory services, access to new and classic literature, movies and music.

Part of National Library Week, National Bookmobile Day is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA), the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services (ABOS), and the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL).
The Winfield Head Start preschool program celebrated Dr. Seuss’s birthday with a trip to the Winfield Public Library. Library staff provided tours to children and their parents, talked about services available at the library, and explained how to obtain a library card. The visit was capped with a surprise birthday party for Dr. Seuss, and children were treated to a reading of his book, *Happy Birthday To You!*

Above, Winfield Public Library staff dress up like Dr. Seuss characters from *The Cat in the Hat*

Left, children gather on the floor for story time before enjoying cookies and snacks
Hurricane Season
written by Lauren K. Denton
Released April 3, 2018

Review by Heather Cover, Homewood Public Library

Betsy and Ty Franklin own and run a dairy farm in southern Alabama. College sweethearts, they married early and settled easily into their life together. The only thing missing is children. After multiple fertility treatments failed, Betsy and Ty gave up the dream of having a full house. They’re trying to move on, but while Ty seems unfazed, Betsy has carefully constructed walls around her heart to keep it from breaking apart - walls that also keep Ty out.

Those walls start to crumble at the beginning of summer when Betsy’s wild child sister, Jenna, calls to ask a favor: If her two young daughters could stay at the farm for a couple of weeks while Jenna attends an artist’s retreat? Betsy never could say no to Jenna, and soon her house is filled with the stampeding of feet and childish laughter. Each day hurts a little more for Betsy, and her heart pulls the children in beyond her defenses to give her a glimpse of a life she will never have.

Meanwhile, Jenna’s two-week stay at Halcyon art retreat has turned into a chance to reclaim part of herself she thought lost. When her first daughter was born and the father split, Jenna stashed her camera away to settle into single motherhood. Now she has the chance to learn from an award-winning professional photographer who thinks she has a talent and drive to launch her career. She knows she’s imposing on her sister, but she can’t give up this chance. As two weeks stretch into four, then six, Jenna wonders if she’ll truly be able to merge her artistic side with her old life.

Hurricane Season is told by Betsy, Ty, and Jenna in alternating chapters. Rather than causing confusion, this style creates a sense of intimacy between the reader and the characters. We know that Ty is consumed by worry and concern that he is afraid to express. We understand why Betsy isn’t the same person she was before her fertility issues became the focus of her life. We find out, well before Betsy does, that Jenna isn’t the wild, carefree girl she used to be, and maybe she’s smarter - and stronger - than anyone realizes.

The plot of Hurricane Season is motivated more by the characters themselves than by outside forces acting on them. The story, therefore, is deceptively slow-moving. Readers with a little patience will find that they’ve been inextricably pulled into the novel and don’t want to leave, which has as much to do with Denton’s descriptive, straightforward prose as it does with the characters she’s created.

There are several side plots interwoven into Hurricane Season, one of them being the worse-than-usual weather predicted for the area, another is glimpses at a farm worker’s romance. These distractions provide the reader relief from the sometimes heavy emotional content while also adding dimension — and a true Southern feel — to the novel.

Like Denton’s other novel, The Hideaway, Hurricane Season is multilayered and unfolds slowly to hook readers with its well-written plot, fully-developed characters, and quintessentially Southern feel. My advice is to take your time with it and enjoy its prose. Readers who are used to fast-paced, plot-driven novels might want to look elsewhere.

Recommended for: Anyone looking for a good beach read and readers who gravitate toward women’s fiction.

Things to Note: There’s nothing graphic or salacious in this novel, but it does touch on infertility and violent storms.

Have story ideas or suggestions for upcoming issues?
Contact Ryan Godfrey at rgodfrey@apls.state.al.us or 334-213-3909.
Did you know that the Alabama Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (BPH) also assists walk-in patrons?

Amanda Trawick, who joined APLS on March 16, recently served her first walk-in patrons as the newest librarian on staff.

Allen Lang and his wife, Barbara, visited BPH with a long list of requested talking book titles, and Amanda wasted no time in pulling their order together.

On average, the BPH library mails more than 500 talking book titles daily to residents in 63 Alabama counties. Two subregional libraries in Huntsville and Talladega serve the remaining four counties.

Together, BPH serves more than 7,100 Alabamians who are blind, have low vision, or have various mobility impairments.

If you know anyone who might qualify for this free service, call the Alabama Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at 334-213-3906.
The Albert L. Scott Library in Albertville filled March with a variety of programs. Here's a sampling:

Right, Homeschoolers stretch and strengthen with Charity Waldrep from Shelby County 4-H. The program improves physical fitness and aerobic capacity.

Bottom right, Toddlers and their families welcome spring with professional storyteller Jennie Bunton.

Bottom left, Children display projects at their March Pete the Cat Book Club Meeting.
Homewood transforms to Hogwarts for Harry Potter Book Night

The Homewood Public Library recently participated in the international Harry Potter Book Night. Stations run by Teen Advisory Board members included the Niffler Coin Hunt, Pin-the-Sock on Dobby, and Meet & Make a Beast.

Russellville Library holds tailgate with local author

The Russellville Public Library recently held a tailgate and book signing with area author Missy Richey.

Richey — a teacher at The Capitol School in Tuscaloosa — wrote and illustrated the children's book, Big Al, Big Al, What Do You See? with assistance from several second and third graders at her school.

Big Al made a special appearance at the event, and an autographed football, courtesy of Nick’s Kids Foundation, was given away as a door prize.
Satsuma Library invites authors for book signing events

The Satsuma Public Library recently had two book signing events with local authors Linda Knowles and Paula Webb.

Knowles is the writer of several romance-tinged adventure novels, and she shared details on her most recent book, *Always Jess*. Attendees asked Knowles questions about her writing process, and she even shared a sneak peek of her next book.

Webb is a government documents reference and outreach librarian at the University of South Alabama. She decided to write a book on Mobile’s history through the Civil War after coming across several letters, manuscripts, and newspaper articles while doing volunteer work. Her book, *Mobile Under Siege*, brings to light the hidden treasures and untold stories of Mobile’s history otherwise lost to time.

Teen engineering program expands to more locations in Birmingham

The Birmingham Public Library’s after-school program, Teens Engineer BHM, is currently offering free workshops to interested youth now through May 3.

A partnership between BPL and the UAB School of Engineering, last year, the library received a $95,000 two-year grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham to expand the program to more locations in Jefferson County.

The Birmingham Public Library will offer the teen engineering program in more libraries across the city over the summer.
Having Easter fun

Above, Woodville Public Library’s preschool reading group celebrated Easter with an egg hunt and a story on March 21. Refreshments and goodie bags were handed out to all children in attendance.

Above, the Easter Bunny made a surprise appearance during Lawrence County Public Library’s story time for photos just before the children went on an egg hunt (right).