Outreach.

Alabama Regional Library for the Blind Director Angela Fisher Hall discusses library services with an attendee of the 2018 Disability Expo in Montgomery. See related story on following page.
The Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (BPH) was one of more than 80 vendors to connect face-to-face with hundreds of individuals eager to learn about various disability services in Central Alabama.

The 2018 Disability Expo, held May 8 at Montgomery’s Eastmont Baptist Church, served to connect the community with an array of services to assist persons with disabilities.

BPH Director Angela Fisher Hall said, “Outreach programs provide a great way to share information about our services. We had a great time and gave out a number of applications.”

The free event was sponsored by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), the State of Alabama Client Assistance Program (SACAP), and Eastmont Baptist Church.
“Ripped from the headlines” has never been a more accurate description for a book than it is for Nora Roberts’ Shelter in Place.

On a typical Friday night, Simone walks out of the mall’s movie theater restroom when she hears the gunshots. She assumes it’s the soundtrack of the movie she’s missing until she nears the theater door to see a wild-eyed, bloody man fall in front of her. She calls 911 — she’ll always be remembered as being the first to call — and hides in the bathroom while two shooters continue their killing spree.

Reed is using his break time to chat up Angie, the cute girl working a sunglasses kiosk, and make plans with his best friend, who works at the nearby GameStop. Reed is rushing to get back to work on-time when he hears the shots, then the screaming. He sees a laughing teenage boy firing shot after shot into innocent bystanders, and he calls 911 as he, and the toddler he’s saved, hide in the sunglasses kiosk – near Angie’s lifeless body.

Years pass, and the survivors of the shooting are still putting their lives back together. Reed has become a police officer, and silently keeps tabs on all of the people who survived that night. Simone has become an artist, putting all of her passion into her art and very little into her life. Then, as the anniversary of the shooting spree draws closer, survivors begin to die. Someone is targeting those who lived through the terror of that day, and this time no one is safe.

Shelter in Place pulled me in quickly and kept me page turning. Main characters Reed and Simone are believable and sympathetic, and they are given equal time in the novel. Their stories develop somewhat individually before coming together around halfway through the book. Secondary characters are equally interesting and help move the plot along, providing sounding boards and external motivation when the characters *ahem, Simone* need a kick in the pants.

While a good third of the novel takes place during the time of the shooting, at its heart Shelter in Place is exploring what happens after the bullets stop. Roberts delves into this question, following not only the survivors of the attack, but the effect on the families of the guilty. It makes for an entertaining, and thought provoking, read.

Nora Roberts’ standalone fiction is becoming more and more like her J.D. Robb novels each year. I would categorize Shelter in Place as dark romantic suspense, though not as dark – or graphic – as her last standalone, Come Sundown. There’s also not as much romance in Shelter in Place as I have come to expect in Nora Roberts’ novels. While romance is prevalent, the focus is more on the efforts of the main characters to rebuild and reclaim their lives.

Recommended for: Readers who enjoy Roberts’ alter-ego, J.D. Robb, will also enjoy Shelter in Place, as will patrons who enjoy true crime, thrillers, and suspense – though this is likely lighter fare than many of the titles in those genres. Fans of Roberts’ lighter romances, such as Inn BoonsBoro, the MacGregors, etc., may not enjoy this darker plot line.

Things to Note: This novel has sex scenes between consensual adults, scenes of violence and murder, and strong language.
Alabaster youth enjoy Star Wars Day fun ...

“May the fourth be with you.” Approximately 50 Star Wars fans of all ages came to the Albert L. Scott Library in Alabaster for Star Wars Day on May 4.

Activities at the library included a Star Wars Lego station, Star Wars craft creation station, A Jedi Library with Star Wars-themed books, and a spaceship photo station for children to enjoy.

The library also featured Star Wars memorabilia on display for the event, courtesy of area collector Carter James. Several fans came to the library dressed in costumes, while library staff provided masks to others to help them join in on the dress-up fun.

James Spann, chief meteorologist with ABC 33/40, recently spoke to a crowd of more than 100 people at the Albert L. Scott Library about spring weather safety.

Homeschool students, First Baptist Church of Alabaster kindergarteners, and area residents all learned about weather science, severe weather safety tips, weather balloons, weather satellites, and forecasting.

After the event, library staff surprised Spann with a special cake decorated with his photo to thank him for his time and expertise.
Ragland Library display honors local heroes

The Ragland Public Library recently added a local heroes display to honor U.S. military veterans.

The ‘Our Heroes’ display started with a Facebook post requesting veterans’ photos. Submitted photos and names are printed and attached to flag paper as a permanent display fixture in the Library.

Another display, which honors U.S. veterans killed in service, adorns a bulletin board each Memorial Day.

Opp Public Library hosts writer/teacher for book signing

The Opp Public Library recently held a book signing with Loraine Maher, author of *Finny the Goldfish: The 4th Grade Mascot*.

Maher is a retired fourth grade teacher from Michigan who lives in Covington County during the winter and spring.

Geared towards an elementary audience, Maher’s book tells tales drawn from her real-life experience as a teacher.

The book is illustrated by Anita Ellis, who also lives in Opp.
Winfield Library patrons ‘up-cycle’ crafts

Reduce, reuse, recycle.

The Winfield Public Library recently hosted an ‘up-cycle’ crafting night where attendees made new treasures out of old and discarded items.

Notebooks were fashioned out of obsolete computer floppy disks. Old and scratched vinyl 45’s were repurposed as dream catchers, discarded film strips found new life as earrings, and well-worn keyboard keys became keychains.

“The kids enjoyed it so much,” said Winfield Public Library Event Planner Emily Allison, “we will be offering another program with more to offer coming up this summer.”

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