Teens enjoy the new Fairhope Public Library Maker Space for putting together crafts and creating projects while learning circuitry, 3-D printing activities, robotics, and tearing down electrical components.
This month, Alabama Public Library Service welcomed its newest employee, Jay Mims, as the new head of the agency’s information technology division.

Mims comes to APLS with 14 years of state service in the technology field. He spent the vast majority of that time at the Alabama Department of Human Resources, where he started as a helpdesk analyst, and was promoted to travelling technician, project coordinator, and eventually to team manager.

Prior to his service at DHR, Mims began his career in IT by spending 13 months on the information services division helpdesk at the Alabama Department of Finance.

Mims said that one of his first projects at APLS is to reorganize the IT division to better serve Alabama’s public libraries. He will also soon upgrade the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) system within the Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to better serve patrons in Alabama in the event there is an issue with the main system used by the U.S. Library of Congress.

Looking ahead, Mims wants to directly help our state’s local libraries build better websites, establish standards for quality computer equipment, and enhance wireless securities.

“I invite anyone who has an issue or a question to give us a call,” Mims said. “We are growing our information technology division to better help you.”

You can reach the APLS helpdesk at 1-800-723-8459, ext. 3986, or by emailing helpdesk@apls.state.al.us.

Meet APLS’ new IT manager

Satsuma celebrates recent graduates

A senior tea for Satsuma High School’s Class of 2018 was held at the Satsuma Public Library on May 7.

Satsuma Library Assistant Director Evelyn Butler organized the event with help from several community partners including Friends of Satsuma Schools, the Satsuma Library Board, the Satsuma Public Library Foundation, the Satsuma Library Club, and members of the Satsuma Art Guild.

In addition, the Satsuma Public Library Foundation awarded two scholarships to area graduates who also volunteered to tutor elementary students in the library. Kennedy Booth of Satsuma High School volunteered more than 40 hours, and Anna Grace Price of Saraland High School volunteered more than 30 hours.

Congratulations to the graduates and scholarship recipients!
Sweet potato pie, peach pie, red velvet cake, 7-Up cake — oh my! *Pies from Nowhere* is a vivid and engaging book that introduces children to a little-known (outside of Montgomery, at least) figure from the civil rights movement. Georgia Gilmore and her “Club from Nowhere” sold baked goods and other delicacies to help financially support the Montgomery Improvement Association that backed the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Laura Freeman’s illustrations in the book are dynamic, rich, and realistic. Her colors saturate each page and really serve to draw readers into the story. Of course, Freeman is no stranger to bringing history to life through her work. She also collaborated on *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* (2018) and *Fancy Party Gowns: The Story of Fashion Designer Ann Cole Lowe* (2018).

As author, Dee Romito is clearly devoted to the topic and the tale of Georgia Gilmore, Rosa Parks, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Her story stays faithful to historical events and is conveyed through a window of realism and truth.

Though the bus boycott itself did have some tense moments, this book steers clear of depicting them in its illustrations, with an exception of a scene showing Rosa Parks behind jail bars. Instead, *Pies from Nowhere* chooses to focus more on the movement’s organization and showcases important faces and personalities from history.

Though this is Romito’s first foray into books based on historical fact, she has written several other “chapter book” style works including *Postcards from Venice* (2018) and *No Place Like Home* (2017). The intended audience for this clever little history is preschool to grade three, but even older children and adults can find merit in the story. As a special bonus, the book even features one of Gilmore’s own recipes for pound cake, written so that children can bake it.

The text also contains a lengthy Author’s Note with more detailed information about Georgia Gilmore and her influence on the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

This picture book comes highly recommended for lower school and public libraries, but academic libraries with a connection to the civil rights movement, Montgomery, or a strong elementary education program might also consider adding it to their collection.
All-new Pelham Library holds grand opening

More than 500 people came to see Pelham Public Library Director Mary Campbell cut the ribbon at the grand opening of their community’s new public library on May 17.

At the ceremony, all of the speakers formally thanked former director Barbara Roberts for laying the groundwork to establish Pelham’s new library.

“Barbara was instrumental in convincing the city that a new library was needed,” said Campbell. “Though she retired before she fully realized her vision, the turnout at the ribbon-cutting certainly proved her right.”

Among those in attendance for the library’s opening were Pelham City Council members Maurice Mercer, Rick Hayes, Mildred Lanier, Beth McMillan, and Ron Scott; City Manager Gretchen DiFante; State Reps. Arnold Mooney and Matt Fridy; and Pelham Library Guild President Debbie Parrott.

Fairhope Library offers ‘charming’ reader rewards

As part of April’s National Poetry Month, the Fairhope Public Library challenged all children to memorize and recite a poem to receive a colorful book charm made on their 3-D printer.

The charms were a huge hit with the kids and several students returned each week of the month to recite a new poem and win a new charm.

Parents commented that reciting poems was developing good public speaking skills, and they appreciated that their children were so enthusiastic to share all they learned.

The Fairhope Public Library plans to offer charms for successful completion of their summer reading challenges. The summer charms will have various music-related shapes.
Four young African-American students from Central Alabama walked into the then-segregated Montgomery Public Library on March 15, 1962.

Robert L. Cobb, Katherine James, Arthur Hails, Jr. and Fred D. Taylor were all simply trying to use the facility, but that right was denied to them due to a city ordinance. The events that followed ultimately led to a court case, Cobb v. Montgomery Library Board, and the peaceful desegregation of Montgomery’s main library.

Over 50 years later — and as part of the Alabama Bicentennial — the Juliette Hampton Morgan Memorial Library hosted “Reading, Race and Redemption,” a panel discussion on the desegregation of public libraries in the Jim Crow South.

More than 60 patrons came to the May 3 event to listen to panelists Dr. Wayne A. Wiegand, author of The Desegregation of Public Libraries in the Jim Crow South; Dr. Toby Graham Patterson, author of A Right to Read: Segregation and Civil Rights in Alabama’s Public Libraries, 1900-1965; and Montgomery County Archivist Dr. Dallas Hanbury.

Dr. Howard Robinson, local historian and Director of the Alabama State University Center for Civil Rights and African-American Culture moderated the discussion. For the event, the library also hosted original 1962 protestor Rev. Dr. Fred D. Taylor.

Taylor, Hanbury, Robinson, and Suzanne Horton, head of reference and information services at Morgan Library also visited Booker T. Washington and Carver High Schools the morning before the panel to speak with teenage students about becoming politically active.

The program opened with greetings from Head Librarian Tim Berry and Assistant Library Director Karen Preuss, and was followed by a special presentation by Michael Briddell, director of public information and external affairs for the City of Montgomery, who represented Montgomery Mayor Todd Strange.

Dr. Robinson set the tone of the panel discussion with a brief reflection of the climate of library usage between 1949 and 1962 by black citizens in Montgomery and ended with reflections from Rev. Taylor and acknowledgements by Montgomery City-County Public Library Director Jaunita Owes and Horton.

The program was made possible through a grant from Alabama Public Library Service (APLS).

Montgomery’s Juliette Hampton Morgan Memorial Library has been completely renovated with state-of-the-art technology and new furnishings.

The library, which closed for the renovation in early February, was celebrated with a gala on April 19 and a ribbon-cutting on April 23.

Assisting Library Director Jaunita Owes in re-opening the library were Mayor Todd Strange, Commission Chairman Elton Dean, city council members, county commissioners, library board members, and the joyful public delighted to have their library open once again.
Fairhope Library ‘visits’ Sonoran Desert in National Park storytime series

The Fairhope Public Library taught kids how to properly say “Saguaro” in their new National Park series, which continues throughout the summer months.

The series, offered to children from 5 to 12 years of age and their parents, is held on the third Saturday of the month. The first meeting provided an introduction to National Parks, trail keys, park rangers, and the significance of our many national treasures. Other meetings feature a different park, and involve stories and crafts on that park.

Right, children make Saguaro torn paper art projects after learning about Arizona’s Saguaro National Park in Fairhope Public Library’s ongoing storytime series.

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