Updates From the Friends of the Mobile Public Library

by Kathy Hamilton, FOL Vice President

The board of directors of the Friends of the Mobile Public Library (FOL) has been busy assessing needs and reorganizing since the departure of retired, seasoned members. We are seeking new members and recruiting chairpersons for our various committees in order to provide assistance and increase the services and resources of the Mobile Public Library system. We are in need of active volunteer members to assist with planning and executing programs, events and fundraising. Here are some of the actions the Friends have taken thus far this year:

- We have secured a date, location and author for our next annual meeting in January 2023. Our author is Gabriella Saab, who resides in Mobile and has published an electrifying novel titled “The Last Checkmate.” We encourage you to read ahead and join us on Thursday, January 19 at 6 p.m. in Bernheim Hall. for an author presentation and book signing.

- To encourage young poets, the Friends co-sponsored the annual Poetry Slam-a-Rama competition held at the Virginia Dillard Smith/Rama Center’s Reptile Show on April 11-14.

- We are in the process of planning a writing contest for high school students on the topic “What does the U.S. Bill of Rights mean to you?” To recruit new members and volunteers, we tabled at the Mobile Literary Festival on May 14 at the Ben May Main Library.

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- If you are interested in organizing, recruiting and/or working, please contact us at: VolunteersMobileFOL@gmail.com. We need you!

Registration for the Mobile Public Library’s (MPL) Summer Library Celebration is now open! Register at any Mobile Public Library location or online at smlc.mobilepubliclibrary.org. All registrants will have a chance to win prizes.

- June 6-9: Didgeridoo Down Under
- June 13-14: Musician Gabe Willis of Paw Paw’s Medicine Cabinet
- June 15-16: Musician Ryan Balthrop
- June 27-30: Mobile Baykeeper: Down by the Bay
- July 11-14: Environmental Studies Center’s Reptile Show
- July 18-20: Juggler Ron Anglin: Quite a Catch
- July 25-28: Bubble Lady Kit Killingsworth

Make the most of your summer with the Mobile Public Library. For more information, including times and locations of the special performances, please visit smlc.mobilepubliclibrary.org or call 251-340-1458.

Summer Library Celebration Is Here!

by Valerie Longa, Public Relations Officer

Registration is free and open to all!
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Fun events for all ages including reading challenges, special performances, crafts, games, movies, book clubs and more.

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Chromebooks and Hotspots Now Available Across MPL System
by Veronica McCoo, Grand Bay Library Manager

The Mobile Public Library’s mission is to support literacy and connect our community. In an effort to further connect with our community, through a grant received from the Alabama Public Library Service, MPL has obtained Chromebooks and hotspots to be checked out to the public free of charge. These Chromebooks and hotspots will help bridge the digital divide by making the internet readily available for school-age children, as well as adults who are seeking to improve their lives. Chromebooks and hotspots are available for checkout for a two-week time period at 10 Mobile Public Library locations. This technology provides online access to benefit those families in the county who are most underserved by internet providers.

Kaleidoscope Exhibit Connects Patrons with the Life of Mobile’s Renaissance Man
by Carly Axers, Acquisitions Manager

Mobile Public Library is participating in a citywide collaboration for the 100th birthday celebration of Mobile’s own “Renaissance Man,” Eugene Walter. Hailing from Mobile, Walter was known worldwide as a poet, author, gourmand, puppeteer, actor and theater costume designer. After living in Europe and New York, Walter returned to Mobile in 1979, where he was active in the arts community until his death in 1998. Mobile Public Library launched an exhibit titled Kaleidoscope: The World of Eugene Walter at the West Regional Library in the month of March. It is now on display at the Ben May Main Library until June 16. The Kaleidoscope exhibit is a partnership between the library and the University of Alabama, Auburn University and the Southern Literary Trail, and it highlights Walter’s work in costume design. Included in the exhibit are text panels from the Southern Literary Trail outlining Walter’s life and career. Watercolor sketches of productions housed in the vault at the Local History & Genealogy Department of the library, as well as Mardi Gras costume designs from Auburn, are also on display.

Panels about the process of costume design are accompanied by tutus on loan from the University of Alabama Theatre and Dance Department. Walter’s fondness for dressing his felines in tutus is reflected in a children’s element of the exhibit that invites younger visitors to design a costume on our free cat template. Youth are welcome to design their cat in costume at the Ben May Main Library or take it home and return it to become part of a library display. Bringing the whimsy full circle, visitors of all ages can have their photo made by posing in a cutout of a dancing cat in a tutu designed by local artist and library staff member Jaime Lee.

A Vision of Reconciliation with Ben Raines and Clotilda Descendants
by Marian Ponder, Special Events Coordinator

In 2021, June 19 became a federal and state holiday known as Juneteenth National Independence Day to commemorate the post-Civil War emancipation of enslaved African-Americans. On Saturday, June 18, the Mobile Public Library is proud to present a signature event exploring the recent global attention Mobile has received for our unique history in the slave trade and how our response going forward will shape our community. Ben Raines, the award-winning environmental journalist, filmmaker, author and charter captain, who discovered the wreckage of the Clotilda in April 2018, will discuss his book “The Last Slave Ship: The True Story of How Clotilda Was Found, Her Descendants, and an Extraordinary Reckoning” at 2:00 p.m. in Bernheim Hall at the Ben May Main Library. He will be joined on a Q&A panel by Darron Patterson and Joycelyn Davis of the Clotilda Descendants Association, along with Vickii Howell, founder of the M.O.V.E Gulf Coast Community Development Corporation. They will discuss the importance of how our future actions will help to define the character of our community and the quality of life for all of the residents of Africatown and Mobile.

After the book talk, the group will then take questions from the audience. Following the Q&A, there will be a reception in the Armbracht/Briskman Meeting Room, where Raines will sign copies of his book, with sales provided by The Haunted Book Shop. For more information, please email Marian Ponder at mponder@mplonline.org or call 251-494-2298.

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Summer Computer Classes at the Ben May Main Library
by Lisa Barnes, Saraland Public Library Manager

Get ready to develop your computer skills at Ben May Main Library this summer. Main offers Computers 101 on Monday, June 6 at 10 a.m.; Internet 101 on Wednesdays, June 8 and July 13 at 10 a.m.; Microsoft Word Basics on Tuesdays, June 14 and July 12 at 10 a.m.; and Microsoft Excel Basics on Thursdays; June 16 and July 13 at 10 a.m.; Internet 101 on Monday, June 6 at 10 a.m.; Internet 101 on Wednesdays, June 8 and July 13 at 10 a.m.; Microsoft Word Basics on Tuesdays, June 14 and July 12 at 10 a.m.; and Microsoft Excel Basics on Thursdays; June 16 and July 13 at 10 a.m.; Internet 101 on Monday, June 6 at 10 a.m.; and Microsoft Excel Basics on Wednesdays June 29 and July 27 at 10 a.m.

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Library Connections
The MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY Newsletter
ISSUE 10 Summer 2022

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Library invites the public to participate in a wide variety of activities for all ages including special performances, reading challenges, crafts, games and more. The celebration lasts all of June and July with the following special performances:

• June 25-28: Bubble Lady Kit Killingsworth
• June 27-30: Mobile Baykeeper: Down by the Bay
• July 11-14: Environmental Studies Center’s Reptile Show
• July 18-20: Juggler Ron Anglin: Quite a Catch
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The grand prize drawings will be done at the end of the summer. One lucky child and teen will receive a Nintendo Switch and game, and the adult winner will get a beach pack, complete with a rolling cooler. May the odds be ever in your favor. Happy reading!