

NEWS

From the Library

From the Director's Desk



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DATES TO REMEMBER:

November 23-24 — All branches will be closed to celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday

December 24-25 — All branches will be closed for Christmas

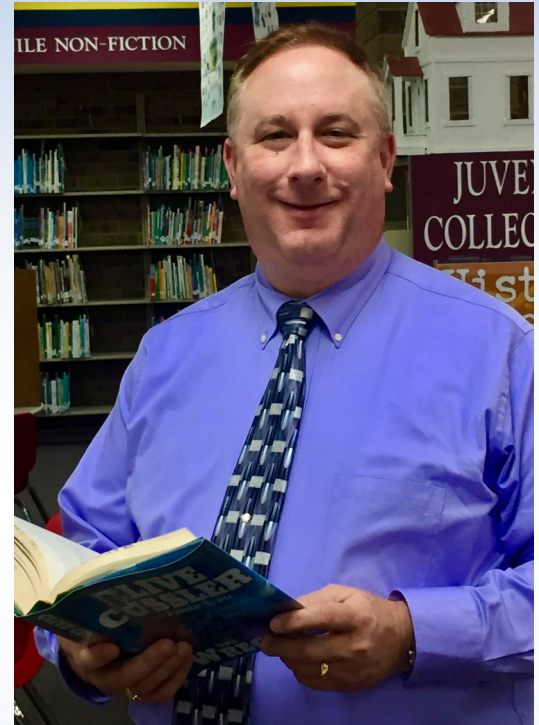
December 31 & January 1 — All branches will be closed to celebrate the New Year

As I approach my first holiday season in northeastern Arkansas, I would like to thank the communities of Mississippi County for making my family and me feel welcome and at home. I have been spending a fair amount of time getting to know local leadership and the regional economy via the day to day business of running the county-wide library effort, as well as through participation in the Blytheville Leadership Institute. As I continue to become acquainted with the economic and cultural environment of the County, I am looking forward to working with the Library Board to do some long-range planning.

This planning will involve a review of the System's mission as we continue into an increasingly digital society. With the mission in mind we will create initiatives to improve, add to, and perhaps even remove some of the things that we currently do. So, what may the libraries of the System look like several years down the road? That is a pretty complex question which precipitates a fluid and quite speculative answer.

As a starting point I would like to offer you folks some of same thoughts that I offered to the Board in the cover letter that accompanied my application for the Director's position earlier this year. Here are some key quotes from that letter...

I believe that communities are increasingly viewing the role of the public library as a "community living room." The resources that the library makes accessible can be used to generate improvement, imagination, and/or expression in addition to offering recreation. Events and exhibits can be organized to showcase community



Mr. Lowell Walters, Director of Mississippi County Library Systems, smiles with one of his favorite books.

culture. Community musical performances, dramas, art and photography shows, book talks, game nights/competitions, and writing competitions are just a few events that the library may host and/or sponsor. Public libraries are increasingly collaborating with entities such as local museums, businesses, civic organizations, departments of parks and recreation, community centers, and education institutions to offer customer programming that reasonably complements the goals and efforts of the greater community. All of this should be done with the goal of continuing to generate meaningful and recognizable value to tax-paying customers, philanthropists, and potential financial

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stakeholders.

The library can be a comfortable, non-threatening place where people may come together to address changing, life-long learning needs such as basic computer skill development, self-education/research ability, technology fluency, and/or media literacy; to conduct civic business; to support small business development; to study and complete work required for online degree programs; to discuss recreational reading interests; to develop skills associated with avocational interests such as those needed to enjoy certain hobbies and crafts; or to converse about a life changing event over a cup of coffee. These sorts of functions can bring together people of all ethnicities, religious beliefs, cultures, and interests.

Library spaces may now offer environments of productivity and collaboration. Many libraries are deploying "maker spaces" which offer customers certain production-oriented hardware and machinery. Customer adoption of these spaces may indicate a new role for libraries as a "community workshop."

The advent of digital repositories provides opportunity for libraries to build community archives and special collections of strategic importance to be accessed without geographical barriers. If a library is the documented owner of certain resources, such items may be digitized and offered to the world creating strategic value for the library as a storehouse of unique resources and for the community as a special place in the world.

These are some of "things" that I think the System should drive toward in the months and years ahead. Something that we are doing immediately is to attempt to increase our visibility to our customer base. Watch for our logo to appear on the System's literature and website -- and even on the vehicle I drive all over the County. (Certainly, feel free to call me out on any hazardous driving habits!)

I have also filled our vacant PR Specialist position with Mrs. Beth Roberts. In addition to being the editor of this newsletter, Beth will be working directly with me to coordinate our website and social media presence, and she will assist the System's management team with our programming planning and efforts. Thus written, allow me

to introduce Beth.

Beth brings to the System experience in both education and administration. Her experience in education comes from both Greene and Garland counties. Her stay in Garland County allowed her to maintain a very active relationship with the public library. Beth's experience in administration comes from several non-profit settings as well as Christian ministry: she is also the wife of Reverend Zach Roberts of Blytheville's First United Methodist Church.

Beth and Zach have two kids, John and Lauren. Beth's leisurely interests include playing with her children, making homemade bread, knitting, and reading historical biographies. She is currently reading through biographies of all of the United States' Presidents. Beth looks forward to "raising the awareness of the benefits of a lifestyle of reading," and is "excited to get to know all the people of Mississippi County."



**Beth Roberts, new Public Relations Specialist for the
Mississippi County Library System**



Customer on Center Stage

When she moved to Osceola, AR in 1974, Mrs. Pat Vaughn knew she needed to visit the library. An avid reader for most of her life, Mrs. Vaughn made sure that the library was one of her first stops when she began to tour the County that would become her home for the next five decades. "All the librarians over the years have been so good to me," Mrs. Vaughn recalls. "I've known them all over the years.

When we used to have to pay overdue fines, Elizabeth Rose would always keep track. She'd call me when I had a book that was about to be overdue, just so I could run it back in before I got a fine. She was always so good about looking out for people that way." The library has become a sort of second home for Mrs.

Vaughn, who frequently makes trips to the Osceola branch to pick up a new book: she sometimes reads three or four books a week!

Now that she can keep books out a bit longer, Mrs. Vaughn likes to share her copies with a neighbor, Ms. Marilyn, who can't get out to the library as frequently as she once did. "I'll often just call up to the library and tell Denise [Hester] that I'm

taking this book or that over to Marilyn. She'll check them back in and then out again for me, so that I don't have to drive up there. That way, if there's a book I know Marilyn will like, I can just walk it over to her." Mrs. Vaughn has also been known to come borrow books specifically for others in her community; she laughs as she recalls her neighbor's refrain, "Pat critiques my books!"

Now widowed after a happy marriage of 51 years, Pat Vaughn leads an active life in her community. She raises beautiful flowers in an extensive yard, is a dedicated member of First United Methodist Church of Osceola, and travels to Jonesboro, Memphis, and all over Tennessee to attend professional concerts and plays, as well her favorites: performances by her grandchildren. Even with all her activities, Mrs. Vaughn carves out plenty of time to read. She prefers a real book, one she can curl up with and dive into, rather than an electronic book that can

tire the eyes. Her favorite time to read is the late afternoon and early evening: the time that used to be filled with energy as husband and children returned home now feels empty without the retreat of a good book. "I love a great story, or a series, where I can follow the characters from one book to the next," Mrs. Vaughn explains, as she thinks about some of her favorites, "when

everything around me is quiet, I can open a book, and transfer myself into the happenings. In the afternoons, a book is my friend." Pat Vaughn has an eclectic taste in books. Some of her favorite authors include Karen Kingsbury, Danielle Steele, and Sherryl Woods. She loves to read great works of historical fiction, especially novels that cover the pre-Civil War Era or tales of Amish life, such as those written by Beverly Lewis. Mrs. Vaughn often peruses the Bestseller and New Release sections at the library; if a book is going to be made into a film or tells a true-life tale, she's the first to snatch it off the shelf.

"When I see there's a movie based on a book, I run to the library and try to read it before the movie comes

out," Mrs. Vaughn explains. "When you've read the book, you're always disappointed in the film! Once you've seen something, it's harder to read it. But when you read the story first, you get to visualize everything on your own: the scene in my head is so much better!"

Mrs. Vaughn values the personal connections that community brings, and is glad to find "a real community, and help from the librarians here. They make this library a personal place, where there's a relationship; it's not *all business*, like so many places now." She stresses that the library is a place of connection, where librarians who know her personally are glad to reserve a book they know she'll love, and call to tell her the title she's been hoping for has arrived. The Mississippi County Library System loves Mrs. Vaughn, too, and looks forward to many more years of finding her great books to read!



Customer on Center Stage Pat Vaughn smiles in the Osceola branch with a book that describes her favorite towns in Mississippi County

Plain & Fancy Quilt Raffle



Plain and Fancy Quilters pose with Director Walters, holding the donated quilt

What do you do when your library needs a new roof? Organize a fundraising drive, of course! Local quilting group, the Plain and Fancy Quilt Club, worked diligently to provide a beautiful handmade quilt for a raffle benefitting the Mississippi County Library System. Beginning in June, Quilt Club members chose the design, purchased supplies, and finished their work in just two months! Ms. Francis

Powell, club President, said "We all worked together and got this done quickly. The library is a wonderful place to meet, and we wanted to be able to help." The quilt is king-sized, and is of the 9-patch set on the diagonal design. Quilt Club members raffled tickets to win the quilt: at \$5 for one ticket or \$20 for 5 tickets, the group soon raised \$882 to donate toward much-needed repairs of the Blytheville branch's roof! Our big thanks to the Plain and Fancy Quilt Club for their generosity!

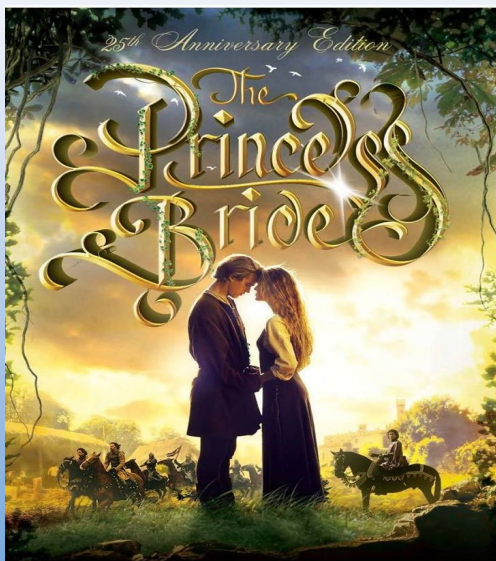


Beautiful king-sized quilt handmade for the MCLS raffle by the Plain and Fancy Quilt Club

YA Forever Book Club

You don't have to be a teenager to enjoy Young Adult Fiction. In fact, it often takes an adult with a full range of life experience to truly appreciate the themes a good Young Adult book explores. Novels such as Madeline L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* stand out as classic works that reach across the boundaries of age and speak to the human condition. The YA Forever Book Club celebrates the often-overlooked treasure of Young Adult Fiction, and seeks to help readers of all sorts understand that a simple narrative does not necessarily indicate simplistic thought.

On the second Tuesday of each



November's featured book will be *The Princess Bride*

month, members of YA Forever Book Club meet at the Blytheville branch of the Mississippi County Library System to share a drink and a donut, and discuss the featured book. Over the last few months, they've read a wide range of books, from the *Throne of Glass* trilogy by Sarah J Maas, to the *outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, to *The Summoner* series by Taran Matharu. November 14th, they'll be featuring William Goldman's *The Princess Bride*, an adventure tale that was a 1987 major motion film. December 12th, YA Forever Book Club will discuss *Let It Snow*, a compilation of three interconnected holiday romance novellas, variously written by John Green,

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Chat with an Author

In October, the YA Forever Book Club hosted a public Skype Chat with Taran Matharu, author of *The Summoner* series, an epic fantasy that follows a young man named Fletcher as he struggles to harness his newfound powers, discover the truth about his past, and grow into his role as a fighter in the war against evil. Born in London, United Kingdom in 1990, Mr. Matharu became a popular fiction writer online, before publishing his works into a series and hitting the New York Times' Bestseller list with the second novel of *The Summoner* trilogy, *The Inquisition*, in 2016.

Taran Matharu was generous to donate his time and advice to the enthusiastic fans who gathered to speak with him. They were able to chat about his published books, gain a sneak preview of his upcoming works, and learn about the author's life and interests. Randy Newman, event organizer, was impressed with Mr. Matharu's personable attitude and by his genuine excitement to talk with fans: "He really cares and appreciates his readers. He reads a lot himself, and is always looking for new ideas. It was great to see how passionate he is about his writing."

Be sure to keep an eye on the Library System's website, www.mclibrary.net, and Facebook page, *Mississippi County Library System*, for news of upcoming events and opportunities to engage with published authors and local readers.



Taran Matharu, author of the series *The Summoner*, participated in a Skype chat with MCLS Customers



MCLS Customers and Young Adult Book Club members enjoy a Skype Chat with Taran Matharu

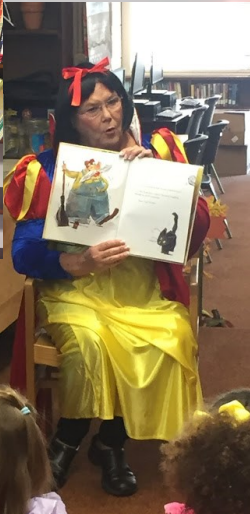


(Book Club Continued from page 4)

Maureen Johnson, and Lauren Myracle. The YA Forever Book Club is open to readers of all ages: come out and join the fun!

Look for upcoming Book Club dates and books on the Mississippi County Library System's Facebook page. Want to host a Book Club of your own? Contact a librarian at your local MCLS branch to help you get started!

Wilson



The Wilson Branch hosted trick-or-treaters from several area schools. Librarian Linda Dawson read spooky tales and gave treats!

Osceola



Librarians Denise Hester and Karen Harrison provided a trunk for Carroll Smith Elementary's Trunk-or-treat!

Halloween Happenings



Children made a Fall Craft at Keiser's Halloween celebration. Keiser branch has a monthly Arts-and-Crafts time; look for announcements on Facebook!

Branch managers from all Mississippi County Library locations gathered to stuff treat bags with candy and a MCLS informative card; Blytheville branch librarians (and the Blytheville Courier editor) brought books their character would enjoy to the Library's booth at Trick or Treat on Main.



Keiser

Blytheville

Directory

Blytheville Public Library

200 North Fifth Street

Blytheville, AR 72315

Phone: 870-762-2431

Fax: 870-762-2442

Monday-Friday

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Saturday

10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Sunday

1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Osceola Public Library

320 West Hale Avenue

Osceola, AR 72370

Phone: 870-563-2721

Fax: 870-563-6550

Monday-Friday

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Saturday

10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Sunday

1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Keiser Public Library

112 East Main Street

Keiser, AR 72351

Phone/Fax: 870-526-2073

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Leachville Public Library

105 South Main Street

Leachville, AR 72438

Phone/Fax: 870-539-6485

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Manila Public Library

103 North Dewey Avenue

Manila, AR 72442

Phone/Fax: 870-561-3525

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Wilson Public Library

1 Park Street

Wilson, AR 72395

Phone/Fax: 870-655-8414

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.



Mississippi County Library System
200 North Fifth Street
Blytheville, AR 72315

