

HCLS Lighthouse

Newsletter of the Harrison County Library System



Oct 15, 2003

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Library Contract to be Renegotiated

As you may have read in the newspaper, the City of Biloxi has requested that the members of the Harrison County Library System get together this coming year and renegotiate a system wide contract for library service. This request has come about primarily as a result of concerns about the level of support provided by the various funding agencies.

As you probably know, we are funded by a variety of entities and the proportion of each one's contribution varies dramatically. This is, of course, the central problem, and Biloxi believes that it is assuming an unfair burden. Currently, our per capita funding, from all sources, is approximately \$15.00. The national average is \$33.00 per capita. Obviously we are not a "rich" library system and, when you realize that almost 16% of our operating budget comes from state and federal grants, it is obvious that our local funding level is quite modest. It is, in fact, a testament to the technological efficiency of our operation that we have been able to keep our personnel costs at a level of only 61%. Most library systems average around 70%.

The current percentage breakdown of local support for the basic cost of running the various branch libraries, when compared to the overall cost of operation is: Biloxi = 82%; Gulfport = 58%; Pass Christian = 48%; and D'Iberville = 33%. The remaining costs are provided by Harrison County and state and federal grants. Obviously, there are inequities here and hopefully a revised contract will help to provide a workable system that is fair to all.

Our existing contract was written in 1994 and reflects the political, economic, and demographic realities of that time. Obviously, a lot has changed in Harrison County since 1994 and a new contract should take these changes into account. Because there are so many interested parties it will be difficult to get everyone to agree to the needed changes, but the Harrison County Library Board and I will give it our best. However, to be successful we will need your help, so any advice and counsel you may have will be greatly appreciated.

Robert Lipscomb, Library Director

Computer Games a Great Learning Tool at HCLS Libraries

If you hear giggles, uproarious laughter, or exclamations of excitement coming from the children's area of the library, don't jump to the conclusion that your child is misbehaving. He or she could be trying out the new games that have recently been installed on all HCLS children's computers. The new software offers our young library users a fun way to learn computer skills along with the basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, if you ask the children, they will say that they are playing games filled with sights and sounds and imaginative challenges.

Our system's libraries have offered a limited number of computer games for children in the past. However, with this new upgrade provided by the HCLS Computer Department, a total of 18 titles were purchased specifically for the children. Some of the games are appropriate for our preschool patrons, while others are targeted at elementary and middle school students. Additionally, some of the programs offer the child the option of working up through levels of difficulty, so that after mastering

basics, he or she will be challenged to keep learning more.

As you can see from the list provided below, the games have solid educational value while being fun and exciting for the kids to play. So, if you hear some whoops and hollers coming from the children's section, please remember that learning really can be fun, especially during a visit to your favorite HCLS library!

A few of the titles:
Amazon Trail: Rainforest Adventure
Carmen San Diego's Great Chase Through Time
Dr. Seuss Cat in the Hat
Magic School Bus: Flight, Solar System, Whales
Math Muncher's Deluxe
Read, Write, Type

*Sheila Peters, Head Librarian
Pass Christian Library*



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Packing up

The Margaret Sherry Library is undergoing a 7200 square foot expansion, and the existing 6800 sq. feet of building is being renovated. This is an approximately \$700,000 dollar project, financed through State bond money, matched by the City of Biloxi, with an additional \$100,000 from Harrison County. Almost the entire additional space that is being added is public area for the use of the library's patrons. The library had to be closed for two months for the construction company to complete this project.



As is usual, when you are moving or doing anything else which requires intensive time and effort, the pack up process at Margaret Sherry was plagued with many difficulties. All of the usual problems presented themselves along with staff, who needed to take vacation, have a baby, get sick and other assorted things. Imagine! Then there were patrons who simply do not understand why you need to close; *so what if they are taking down the entire ceiling and all the lighting and busting out concrete walls.* And of course this is the most appropriate time to tear up Popp's Ferry Road for the road widening process.

The Margaret Sherry Memorial Library "pack up" turned out to be much less of a nightmare than was anticipated, thanks to the wonderful staffers from the Mississippi Library Commission



who volunteered to come down and pitch in. John Batson, Kathy Buntin, Lynn Sherdin, Gene Fleming, and Melissa Wright spent 3 days of their very valuable time helping with the inventory and packing of books. My staff and I enjoyed working with this group, and are proud to have them on our side. They worked hard and kept their sense of humor while doing so.

The construction is going very well and is right on schedule. Lloyd Moon Construction is our contractor for this project. They have been the epitome of cooperation and consideration, and have

done excellent work on the building. Grand opening of the new facility should be around the first or second week in November.

This new library will be an asset not only for the community surrounding it, but also for the entire Library System.

*Kathy Sparkman, Branch Manager
Margaret Sherry Memorial Library*



L-R: Chipper McDermott, Alderman-at-Large; Gordon Burton, Chair, HCLS Board of Trustees; Prima Plauche, President, MLA; Library Staff: Sally James; Sheila Peters; Jan Delaune; Jerry Sellier

Pass Christian Library Celebrates 30 Years of Service

Sunday afternoon, September 14, the Pass Christian Library hosted a celebratory reception for guests and library supporters. The library staff and Friends of the Library members served cake, homemade goodies and punch to over seventy attendees in commemoration of thirty years of library service to Pass Christian and the surrounding community.

On display during the reception were guest books with signatures of library supporters from past celebrations. The library building was dedicated in 1973, and anniversary parties were held in 1983 and 1998. Also available for viewing was a sample of the new carpet that will be installed throughout the building in January 2004. This marks the closing of the "New Carpet Fundraising Campaign" that was launched in January 2003. Special recognition was given to the campaign contributors: County Supervisor Marlin Ladner and the Harrison County Board of Supervisors, The Ralph Avrill Powers Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Shockley, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Fenton.

Ms. Sally James, Children's Librarian, was presented with a plaque in recognition of her twenty years of service. "Miss Sally" is

well known to the children of The Pass, and many return from college to drop in to say hello to the librarian who nurtured them with her story hours throughout their childhood. During her years as Children's Librarian, Ms. James has also served as Interim Head Librarian five times.

*Sheila Peters, Head Librarian
Pass Christian Public Library*



2003-2004 Juvenile Programs at Orange Grove

PreSchool Storytime	Wed / Thurs – 10AM
AfterSchool Program	Tuesday – Twice a Month – 4PM
HomeSchool Parents	To Be Announced
ToddlerTime	To Be Announced

Orange Grove Children's/Youth Services Librarian, Lori Hawkins, will be busy this year with programs serving various ages of children in the Orange Grove area. Of course, the familiar preschool storytimes will continue as will an after-school time for Grades K-4. Last year home schooling parents met to discuss curriculum, successes, problems, etc., and they will continue their meetings this year. At the end of the school year the parents in this group held an end-of-year party at the library for their enthusiastic students. While the parents are holding their meeting, Lori has a storytime and a filmstrip, movie or craft with the children. A new age group for Orange Grove will be toddlers – ages 18-24 months (this group should be fun!). The children will enjoy storytelling, finger plays, music and other activities.

*Gwen Farned, Branch Manager
Orange Grove Public Library*

The Harrison County Library System currently employ 20 or more years, and 6 employees have

Name	Current Position	Yrs	N
Murella Powell	LH/G Librarian	31	S
Celia Barrett	Head Librarian	28	D
Janice Spencer	Branch Manager	28	L
Marie Deere	Acquisitions	27	M
Diane McGee	InterLibrary Loan	24	F
Linda Beasley	Acquisitions	22	S
Charline Longino	Head Librarian	21	N
Deanna Plummer	Cataloger	20	H

Way Back When

In 1973 Richard Nixon was president. The price of a gallon of gasoline was 39 cents. A first class postage stamp was 8 cents. Skylab, the United States first space station was launched, and Secretariate became the first Triple Crown winner in Thoroughbred Racing.

For many of us, 1973 doesn't seem like that long ago. But actually that was 30 years ago. Can you remember where you were in 1973? Or where you worked? Murella Powell can. She was working right where she works today.... at the Biloxi Public Library.

Murella came to work at the Biloxi Public Library on March 15, 1973. Actually Murella was coming back to work at the library. Her career with the public library began during the summer of 1957. That's right, May 1957! Murella had just finished high school when she began working at the library. After working at the library for one year, Murella left in May 1958 to get married. Remember, in the 1950's most women stayed home and managed the daily routines of the home. Murella has been an employee of the Biloxi Public Library and the Harrison County Library System for a combined total of over 31 years.

Murella was a frequent visitor to the library, before and after the time she worked here in the 50's. She has many interesting stories of how libraries were, and how they've changed over the years. I hope to share some of these with you, along with stories from our other long time employees.

The purpose of this article is to bring special recognition to our employees who

employs 75 people. Ten of these have been with the library and have been here between 15 to 20 years.

Name	Current Position	Yrs
Ally James	Children's Librarian	20
Deborah Lundy	Branch Manager	20
Linda Brown	Head Of Circulation	19
Mary Louise Adkinson	Head Of Circulation	18
Frank Murphy	Reference Librarian	17
Stanley Hastings	Reference Librarian	17
Nancy Soder	Head Librarian	16
Herbert Caliste	Reference Asst	15

have put in many years with the library, to take a trip through time (so to speak), and to reminisce about how things were at the library "way back when".

In 1957 the Biloxi Library was in a Spanish style building on the corner of Lameuse and Water Streets. Murella tells us, "In '57 and '58 we processed the books ourselves. We painted each book with clear shellac and stood them on end on newspaper to dry. Then we printed the call number on the spine with an electric pen that dispersed white ink, and we checked books out with a stamp on the end of a pencil.

She goes on to say, "In 1973 we no longer shellacked the books but we were still using the pencil with the stamp. From that system we progressed to a manual stamping machine. There were no separate departments, except for children's. There were three full time staff and two part time staff for bookkeeping and filing. We all pitched in and did everything. We answered reference questions, checked out books, shelved books, maintained the shelves, etc. We also took care of interlibrary loan. I worked in the morning and early afternoon in the adult department, then went upstairs and took care of [the] children's [department] during the after school hours. I also worked with the kids and told stories, etc. during the Tuesday and Saturday morning story hours."

"In 1976, the head librarian gave me the responsibility of developing a Local History and Genealogy collection. I started with a few books on a shelf donated by the Daughter's of the American Revolution and an old photograph album [with] pictures of Biloxi. The first LH&G department was in a tiny room off of the adult dept. I was given a desk under a window in a hall leading to the bathroom. I still had to do my regular work, but from that time I mainly concentrated on building the collection. I began collecting oral history in 1976. [The] Biloxi Library was the first public library in Mississippi with an oral history program.

"When we moved into the present Biloxi Library building in 1978 and joined the Harrison County Library System, I had a small room off of the reference department.

I worked as both LH&G Librarian and assistant reference librarian. I had a small office upstairs where I transcribed oral histories, ordered books, answered mail, etc. During the early 1980s, the reference librarian retired and I acted as reference [librarian] for about a year.

"On March 8, 1983, the Mayor and City Council of Biloxi passed a resolution making the LH&G department the Biloxi City Archives. In 1994, my department had grown so that I was moved to the upstairs balcony. I still pitched in at [the] reference [department] when needed. In 1999, my collection had outgrown the balcony and was moved to its present location. (Author's note: The LH&G Department is currently located in the south wing of the first floor.) That year the Gulfport genealogy book collection was combined with Biloxi's, making it the center for this type of research in the Harrison County Library System. Today, the Local History and Genealogy department is considered one of the finest in the state of Mississippi, and is known via the internet all over the U. S.

"Personally, I have had deep satisfaction in my work. I have grown with the library from pencil stamping to computers. I have been fortunate to have directors that have given me a free hand and allowed me to fully develop my department to its present state of excellence. Working with the public for 30 years I have witnessed many wonderful, strange and unusual events. Including a baby being born on the floor in the old building, and in this present building, a person having a heart attack and being revived by a staff member. I wouldn't have missed any of it."

Murella is currently the Local History/ Genealogy Librarian at the Biloxi Public Library. She can be reached at (228) 374-0330 or email to m.powell@harrison.lib.ms.us. For more information about the history of the Harrison County Library System, please visit our History page at: www.harrison.lib.ms.us/history/history_outline.htm.

Please look in future issues for more interesting stories from Murella and our other long time employees.

Larry Stull,
Systems Administrator

Harrison County Library System

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Libraries and Their Hours

Biloxi Public Library
139 Lameuse Street
Biloxi, MS 39530-4298
(228) 374-0330 FAX 374-0375
Mon-Thu 9:00—8:00
Fri & Sat 9:00—5:00

D'Iberville Public Library
10391 Auto Mall Parkway
D'Iberville, MS 39540-3750
(228) 392-2279 FAX 396-9573
Mon & Tue 9:00—8:00
Wed - Sat 9:00—5:00

Division Street Study Center
595 Division Street
Biloxi, MS 39530-2303
(228) 435-2435
Mon-Fri 3:30—7:30
Sat 1:00—5:00
Summer Hours: 1:00—5:00

Gulfport Public Library
1300 21st Avenue
Gulfport, MS 39501-2081
(228) 863-6411 FAX 868-8413
Mon-Thu 9:00—8:00
Fri & Sat 9:00—5:00

Isiah Fredericks Study Center
3312 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Gulfport, MS 39501
(228) 868-7149
Mon - Thu 2:30—7:00
Fri 2:30—5:30
Summer Hours
Mon - Fri 9:00—5:00

**Margaret S. Sherry
Memorial Library**
2141 Popp's Ferry Road
Biloxi, MS 39532-4251
(228) 388-1633 FAX 388-0920
Mon & Tue 9:00—8:00
Wed - Sat 9:00—5:00

Orange Grove Public Library
12031 Mobile Avenue
Gulfport, MS 39503-3175
(228) 832-6924 FAX 832-6926
Mon, Wed, Fri 9:00—5:00
Tue, Thu 9:00—8:00
Sat 9:00—5:00

Pass Christian Public Library
111 Hiern Avenue
Pass Christian, MS 39571-4311
(228) 452-4596 FAX 452-3247
Mon-Thu 8:00—6:00
Fri 8:00—5:00
Sat 9:00—5:00

West Biloxi Public Library
2047 Pass Road
Biloxi, MS 39531-3125
(228) 388-5696 FAX 388-5652
Mon-Wed 9:00—8:00
Thu - Sat 9:00—5:00

Holiday Hours : All Libraries will be closed: Tuesday, November 11 for Veteran's Day; Thu-Sat, November 27-29 for Thanksgiving Holidays; Thursday, December 25 for Christmas; Thursday, January 1 for New Years