

Libraries hope community reads together

By Reid Glenn
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On Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., simultaneous events at Washington Public Library, East Central's Means Library and all branches of the Scenic Regional Library kick off the first of what organizers hope will become an annual Community Reads event.

Aimed at casual to avid readers of any age, Community Reads' purpose is to encourage reading and discussion in the communities the partnership serves. This year, the libraries are giving away 1,300 free copies of "Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley. For younger readers, the graphic novel "Gris Grimly's Frankenstein" and picture book "Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein" are for sale or available to check out. Digital copies of the books will also be available.

"We had a lot of fun doing the programming," said Megan Maurer, assistant director of Scenic Regional Library. "We had a lot of fun putting the event together but we really wanted to get more people involved and we wanted to appeal to a wider audience and also to get different ages involved."

Organizing the event and the month-and-a-half-long program is



Ready to read

Scenic Regional Library staff, from left, Linda Ault, Megan Maurer, Sarah O'Daniel, Christy Schink, Becky Jacquin and Amanda Feldmann pretend to read Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" March 8 in Union. "Frankenstein" is this year's community read novel.

Missourian Photo/Julia Hansen.

a committee of members from the four-way partnership between Scenic Regional Library, ECC, Washington

Public Library and Neighborhood Reads bookstore in Washington.

The organizations have collective-

ly spent about \$12,000 to organize the event and purchase books to give away," said Maurer.

To those interested, Maurer suggested exploring a website built specifically to showcase program guides, videos, puzzles, and the dates for book discussions, which will be held at various locations around the region until the event ends April 30.

Visitors to thiscommunityreads.org can also learn about a planned escape room and writing contest, all themed around the 1818 novel. Maurer said not to panic about the study guides uploaded to the website, however, there won't be any pop quizzes — unless you're a student reading for class. She said, in total, there are over 104 individual events and programs over the next seven weeks.

"We have a variety of programs," Maurer said. "We have art programs. We have cooking programs. We have an escape room planned. For kids, we have a team trivia night planned. We also have a Franken-toys event planned where, kind of like the movie Toy Story, you can take different toys apart and put them together to create something new. Of course, we're going to have book discussions at all of our locations."

"So, there is stuff really for everyone," she said.