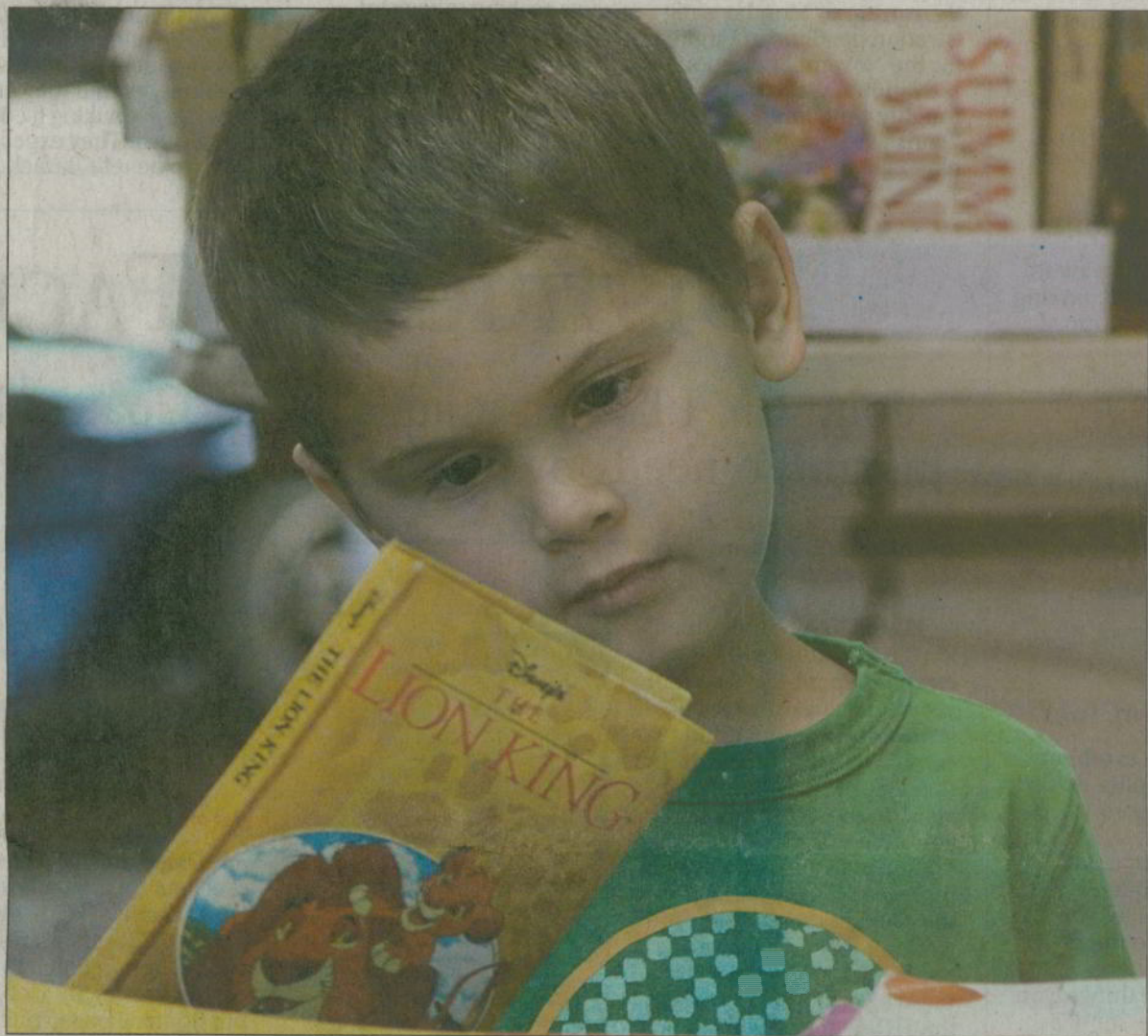


A NOVEL IDEA



Above: The Book Fair on the Square was sponsored by the Cobb Community Service Board, a local agency that provides mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services to more than 13,000 residents annually. **Left:** Austin Whited, 4, of Marietta, examines a copy of Disney's *The Lion King* while attending the Book Fair in the Square on Saturday afternoon with his mother, Jamie Whited. The book fair featured nearly two dozen national authors, book discussions and signings, a children's character parade and other activities.

Staff photos by Daniel W. Varnado

Authors, book lovers come together on the Square for literary event

By Marcus E. Howard
Marietta Daily Journal Staff Writer

MARIETTA — The written word was foremost on the minds of those who turned out for the Book Fair on the Square in Marietta on Saturday.

The inaugural event featured two dozen local and national authors, book discussions, book signings, activities for children, vendors and a used book sale.

It was sponsored by the Cobb Community Services Board, a public agency created by state law that provides mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services.

The book fair and a fundraiser dinner on Friday are part of Mental Illness Awareness week, which runs from today through Saturday. The idea behind the fair was to raise awareness and promote inclusion of people with disabilities. Proceeds from the fair go toward CSB's foundation, the Center for Community Based Partnerships Inc.

"We didn't want to do a golf tournament, jog or an evening gala, so we said let's bring in writers who have written positively about mental illness, addiction or disabilities," said Doug Crandell, an award-winning author and director of CSB's Supported Employment program for people with disabilities.

"Then as we had committee talks. Some



Kirsten Smith and daughter Angel White, 3, of Douglasville, look through children's books.

people said 'let's make it a family day,' so that's why you see so much out on the Square."

Among the published authors at the fair was Rachel Simon — author of "Riding the Bus with My Sister," a bestselling memoir about her sister who has developmental disabilities and published by Plume — taught seminars on creative writing at the Theatre in the Square. Author Katherine Noel, who wrote a book

about a family that has to deal with the effects of a member with bipolar disorder called "Halfway House," published by Atlantic Monthly Press, led a seminar on how to write a novel.

So many great novels by Southern writers have a character who has an addiction, disability or mental health issue, Crandell said.

"Books sometimes portray people with mental illness, disabilities or addiction in a positive way, and then sometimes they don't," he said.

Amateur writers who showed their books at booths at the fair included Samuel Morris, 63, of Conyers, the author of a self-published book about his Vietnam War experience titled, "Incoming Rounds."

"This book is a diary that I kept while I was over there. It's a day to day journal of myself and my combat unit out in the field," said Morris, who served with the Army's First Cavalry division in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968.

"It's a synopsis of what I went through, and how I faced the daily trials and tribulations of the war."

Book fair spokeswoman Cathy Lipsett said organizers hope to make the fair an annual event.

"For a first year, I think its been a very good turn out," Lipsett said.

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