Fontenot to speak for National Library Week

Mary Alice Fontenot, veteran newspaper woman and Louisiana author, will speak at St. Joseph School on April 18 at 1 p.m.

Fontenot's speech will be one of the highlights planned for National Library Week.

Fontenot is best known for her juvenile series, Clovis Crawfish. The story of the creation of Clovis Crawfish has been called everything from the Louisiana folk hero to the Cajun ambassador for the children of Acadia.

First published in 1961, seven of the nine Clovis Crawfish titles have been re-issued by Pelican Publishing Company with an eighth title to be released this fall. Once all nine titles are again in print, Fontenot plans to add new stories to the series.

As a substitute kindergarten teacher in Eunice, Fontenot recalls a boy who brought a live lizard to school tied to his belt loop. To restore order, Fontenot began to make up stories about lizards and other creatures, explaining their real life characteristics. The children quickly became interested and soon began bringing all kinds of animals to class.

That's when Fontenot decided books about animals that children were familiar with would be a good idea.

At first the main character wasn't always a crawfish, but Fontenot later decided on a crawfish since it represented Acadiana.

Clovis Crawfish symbolizes the Cajun people of south Louisiana. It represents the traits that are common to Acadiana—concern for others, willingness to help with problems, and the courage to tackle situations that threaten the lives and happiness of friends.

Fontenot is currently employed as a contributing editor with the Heartbeat, a publication of Louisiana State Newspaper chain.

The public is invited to attend as Fontenot shares her tales on April 18 at 1 p.m. at St. Joseph School.