

Coldwater *Daily Reporter*, Saturday, August 15, page A2:

## McNeil wins short story contest at library



**Denise Yennie awards Nancy McNeil as the winner of the Branch District Library's short story contest.** COURTESY PHOTO

Coldwater *Daily Reporter*, Wednesday, August 19, page B4:

'QUILTS TALK TO ME'

## Passion turns into profitable venture

By Julia Baratta  
For GateHouse Media

COLDWATER — Sue Houchen of Litchfield has a passion for quilts and has turned it into a way to make a little extra money. She creates quilts and does presentations about the history of quilting, and she recently brought her quilts and presentation to the Branch District Library.

Houchen began her sewing career when she was 7 years old, when her grandma taught her to sew. She made fashion doll clothing with the assistance of her grandmother and her 4-H leaders in Litchfield. Her quilting occupation came several years later, after she retired from being a home economics teacher.

After Houchen remarried, her interest in quilts was amplified, as her new husband's fascination with antiques began to complement the collection.

Soon, they were collecting various textile-related items to decorate and use within their home. Currently, they have a number of needle cabinets and spool cabinets that they make use of, and a loft where Houchen likes to display a myriad of old fashioned tools and equipment.

Houchen has delved into the history of quilts, as well, and shared numerous references to quilting through the years. During barn raisings in the old days, the women would often hold a quilting bee as the men were working. The participants of the work bees would come together for a meal and fellowship, before



Sue shows the attendees a few of her original quilts. JULIA BARATTA PHOTOS

returning to the work at hand.

Unfortunately, people lost interest in making and appreciating quilts as the years went by. In the 1970s, a new revival was emerging with an interest in many of the home arts and needle works. The bicentennial that was celebrated in 1976 truly inspired a new generation to enjoy the art of quilting.

And as recent as 2013, quilting has become recognized as an art form. The Grand Rapids Art Prize competition awarded the top prize to a 5-foot by 20-foot, four-paneled, panoramic quilted picture called "Sleeping Bear Dune Lakeshore" during that year.

Houchen's presentation included many slides of various quilts, and a number of examples were displayed on the tables surrounding the room.

One exceptional quilt



Dave Houchen shares the quilts with guests during the presentation.

was a redwork signature one made in 1899 in Falmouth, Kentucky. Her great-great-grandmother purchased a block for it and embroidered a group of signatures. It was then added to the quilt and the blanket was completed

and raffled off. Her grandmother had purchased the winning ticket and became the new owner of the fascinating piece. Houchen intends to send it back to Kentucky, where it will be appreciate for its historical value.

Coldwater Daily Reporter, Friday, August 21, page A1:

TWO POSITIONS AVAILABLE

# BDL to fill director, public services position

By Christy Hart-Harris  
Twitter: @ChristyTDR

COLDWATER — The Branch County District Library Board called a special meeting Wednesday night to discuss filling two open positions at the Coldwater branch.

The first position needing to be filled was that of Evette Atkins, former director. The circumstances of Atkins no longer holding the position as director over all branches in the district was not made clear at the meeting.

The board — consisting of president Erica Ewers, vice president Benjamin Jewell, secretary-Union Township Marilyn Johnson, city of Coldwater representative Daniel Gordon, Quincy representative Susan Smith, Bronson representative



**Kate Pohjola Andrade (far right) discusses organizational chart structures with the Branch District Library Board.** CHRISTY HART-HARRIS PHOTO

Lewis Uhrig and county-wide representative Martha Watson — has been working with Kate Andrade, director of Woodlands Library Co-Op.

Andrade discussed restructuring the branch's organization by eliminating the number of personnel who directly report to the director.

“I think that was a lot of Evette’s frustration, she had too many people directly reporting to her and she got so caught up in the day-to-day muck,” Watson said.

Assistant director John Rucker is currently the acting director and said, “I think we need to keep the idea of adding someone to

oversee the branch managers. They are all doing a great job and really do not require any help, but it will take five people away from directly reporting to the director.”

The board did discuss the possibility of adding a managerial-type position

**SEE BDL, A5**

## BDL

From Page A1

to oversee the individual branch managers of Algansee, Bronson, Quincy, Sherwood and Union Township.

“I think this something we need to consider,”

Jewell said. “We need to know if the funds are there to pay for an additional position.”

The board agreed and created a search committee to discuss that issue, along with the possibility of using an employment service which specializes in libraries.

Lastly, the board approved a “Resolution of Intent to Terminate Existing Lease Agreement with the City of Coldwater.”

“We have to give a one-year notice, per our agreement,” Jewell said. “This lease will be up in September 2016.”

According to the

resolution, the BDL Board wants to remain at the location, but is looking to negotiate an updated lease.

The next scheduled meeting for the BDL board is at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 21 at the Lucille E. Dearth Union Township Branch Library.

Coldwater Daily Reporter, Tuesday, September 8, page A8:

THE LIST

# 4 historical sites in Branch County you must visit

By **Christy Hart-Harris**  
Twitter: @ChristyTDR

1. Bronson Branch of the Branch District Library (Bronson Public Library)

Located at 207 Matteson St., Bronson, this Carnegie Library was built in 1924 and was commemorated as a historical site on Sept. 28, 2000.

2. State Public School at Coldwater

The State Public School

furnished temporary support and instruction for dependent and neglected children and was opened on May 21, 1874. Located at 620 Marshall Road, the school was listed as a historical site on May 13, 1981.

3. Union City Iron Furnace

The furnace, constructed by the Union City Iron Company, still stands at M-60 near Waterworks Road in Union Township. The company produced

iron from Union and surrounding townships, and on Feb. 14, 1963, was named a historical site.

4. Quincy Branch of the Branch District Library (Quincy Township Public Library)

The library is located at 11 North Main St., Quincy, and was erected in 1910 with money donated from the estate of C.W. Bennett. It became a historical site on April 25, 1988.



**Bronson Branch of the Branch District Library (Bronson Public Library)**



**State Public School at Coldwater**



**Quincy Branch of the Branch District Library (Quincy Township Public Library)**



**Union City Iron Furnace**

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