

The holiday season means that, though our libraries are as busy as ever, I don't have a lot of new things to report.

Facilities

Christina and I met with the general contractor for the Coldwater restroom project. Materials are being ordered and they expect to start the first week of January. The work will be done in a couple phases, with each phase taking a couple of weeks, starting with the 4th floor restrooms. There is a pile of gleaming new fixtures in the Director's office waiting for the project to begin!

Sherwood Branch Contract

There is nothing new to report yet. The transition in elected personnel on the Village Council has slowed things down a bit. There have been no happenings since our committee met on November 15 to answer questions from the Village. I have spoken by phone with a couple of people on the Village board and now expect they will discuss the contract changes at their January meeting.

IT Department

The IT department assisted with finishing up our annual purge of long-inactive patron accounts, as well as with publishing over 60 newly-scanned historical books to our online historical archive. I have been working on the list of year-end IT tasks and have also begun the months-long process of moving 21 years' worth of content from our old staff web site to the new.

Meetings

Coldwater Advisory Board, Library of Michigan Directors.

Submitted by John Rucker

Technical Services

End-of-year projects are in full swing! As part of our annual catalog cleanup, we're focusing on removing missing items—those that library staff can't locate on the shelves. For 2024, 200 missing items were removed from a total collection of 110,885. This number will be included in the December statistical report. Next up is addressing lost items, which are items checked out by library users but not returned.

In addition to these tasks, we're eagerly anticipating the arrival of larger shipments for the bookmobile, which should be here any day now!

Programming

My last session of Morning Book Club wrapped up with a fantastic read, [This Tender Land by William Kent Krueger](#), which I highly recommend to anyone who enjoys historical fiction!

In 2025, I'll be launching a new book club called Books on Tap at Trainwreck Grill & Ale House. We'll meet monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. The first book for the new club will be [The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon](#). This is only one of many great [book clubs](#) that BDL is offering across the district!

Meetings and Webinars

- Kiwanians Club of Coldwater
- ALA Book Club: Ryan Dowd's The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness

Library Marketing Conference

Meagan Marsh and I attended a 2.5-day marketing conference in St. Louis with 450 attendees from various libraries. It was a fantastic opportunity for networking and learning, and I attended the following sessions:

- Maximize Your Library Impact with Strategic Collection Promotion
- Balancing Acts: Navigating Sensitive Community Topics with Grace
- Revising Automated Emails for a Better Brand Experience
- Social Media Strategy Survivor: Outwit, Outplay, Outlast
- Beg, Borrow, Steal: Finding and Implementing Ideas for Library Outreach

- Email Essentials: Increasing Patron Engagement through Marketing
- From Brand Guides to Wayfinding and Websites: Creating Consistent Customer Experiences
- Building Buy-In: Change Management Strategies for Library Marketers

Some of the key takeaways were:

- Learned how to engage our community with the collection, reaching readers in the places where they are both looking for reading suggestions and places where they didn't even know the library could help them. Connect the library user by highlighting related materials, programs, and events based on their interests.
- LibraryAware, a service provided by Novelist, has provided [benchmark email metrics for libraries](#). These insights give us a clearer idea of the engagement we should aim for with our monthly newsletter. To improve email performance, we could implement tactics such as segmenting our mailing lists, using a double opt-in process, and making the emails more personalized.
- Effective visual merchandising and strategic displays can significantly boost circulation and patron engagement. Use both social media and in-library signage to highlight key resources.
- Since not all patrons are comfortable with digital tools, distributing printed materials—like bookmarks with library contact information—can help connect with offline communities and ensure broader engagement.

Meagan has already started applying some of the new social media strategies she learned, and we're already seeing the results. One of her recent posts, featuring [awkward family photos of library staff](#), was a huge success, receiving 220 likes, 51 comments, and 28 shares. This post is a great example of how fun, personal content can really drive engagement.

Submitted:

Kimberly Feltner