

## **Personnel**

I join Sarah and Kimberly in welcoming new clerks to the Quincy and Coldwater Branches, Tracy Shaw and Bobbie Holifield, as well as our temporary clerks for the summer. I have joined Kimberly, Jess, and other BDL staff helping out at Branches as we help cover training and people away for Spring Institute

## **Bookmobile Launch**

As Cheryl notes in her Outreach report, our Bookmobile starts operation in two weeks. I want to extend to Cheryl my deep thanks and admiration for all the work she has done these last three years leading up to this moment! She has done so much planning, preparation, and now implementation and loading materials on the vehicle. However much work you think it might have been, it was much more, I assure you!

I also join Kimberly in lauding all the extra cataloging work that Toni and Laura have done to get well over a thousand new items ready for circulation.

## **MERS Transition**

Meetings, calls, and emails aplenty continue as we progress with the MERS transition. We have a final transition date set now for moving our assets from Nationwide to MERS: July 24. There are a number of little oddities between now and then that we still have to resolve, but no show stoppers. New deposits have not begun yet due to a hiccup at Taylor, Plant, and Watkins, but we are hopeful that this problem will be fixed for the next payroll.

## **Facilities**

Our quarterly visit from Orkin with sniffer dogs was this past week, and we had pest hits at 5 out of 6 branches. The sizes of the areas affected, and the numbers of items, were thankfully smaller this time around. Materials from affected areas were treated immediately and Orkin will be back to spray those areas soon.

The restroom modernization project in Coldwater is basically done, and we are very happy with the results. Once again, Christina chose colors and finishes that look really nice while staying true to the character of the building.

I am still trying to get quotes for repairing the hole in soffit, along with other rotting wood up there at the Coldwater Branch. Foulke Construction has indicated that they will likely be too busy with upcoming school projects to bid on this, so I am trying roofing companies, among others. Foulke is still working on the porch barrier, which is being painted now to match

before they bring it out to install. They are also conferring with the Coldwater Building Inspector to make sure everything is up to code on the approved entryway gate.

At the new Algansee Twp. Hall they are almost ready to move into the new building. Finishing up the septic is all that is needed for the occupancy permit. Then work can start on the library renovations. It remains to be seen if we'll be able to be in the new library by our September meeting, as hoped. The community is interested in helping to move the collection to keep costs down. Book moves are deceptively difficult, but with a collection this small I am willing to go that route. I have been in contact with our movers about renting their specialized boxes and dollies that they use for libraries.

## **Coldwater Brownfield Development Plan TIF**

Coldwater City Council passed a Brownfield Development Plan to rehab 7 existing properties and develop the new neighborhood off Western Avenue using tax increment financing (TIF). Brownfield redevelopment is actually the only type of TIF that libraries cannot opt out of under state law, so BDL will not see tax revenues on the resulting development for a period of about 7 years. The City estimates this will be about \$18,000 that we won't receive over the 7 years, so not a huge deal if estimates hold. And, of course, the idea is that future tax revenues from the development will more than offset our short-term losses.

## **IT Department**

Curtis is continuing the deployment of new computers and updating old ones. We have been working on the tech for the bookmobile, including network connectivity, computers, printing, RFID, security cameras, and more.

Frontier Communications has begun work on our new fiber connection for the Sherwood Branch, and I am very excited about that!

## **IMLS**

The federal Institute for Museum and Library Services had massive layoffs this week. IMLS doesn't provide any direct funding to BDL, but MeLCat is 2/3 funded by IMLS. MeLCat is paid a year in advance, so there should be no change in services before 10/1, the start of the state's fiscal year. After that, nobody knows yet. If the state can't pick up the difference, statewide materials borrowing is threatened along with all the amazing electronic resources MeL provides. Library of Michigan is canceling training and mentorship programs due to IMLS layoffs and the general uncertainty in federal funding that supports a lot of what they do. Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has sued the Trump administration over this dismantling of IMLS.

## **Meetings Attended**

Kiwanis 90th Anniversary Celebration, Algansee Twp., Union Twp., Coldwater City Council, Coldwater Advisory Board.

Submitted by John Rucker

## StoryWalk

I am excited to share that a second StoryWalk location in Coldwater is a go! The new location will be at Waterworks Park, which offers a longer path for families to enjoy while reading a children's book. The City of Coldwater and CBPU, which maintains the park, have already signed off on the project, and installation is slated to be completed by May.

This is a collaboration between the library and the Altrusa Service Club of Branch County. Both organizations will work together to select titles for the StoryWalk, as well as maintain it moving forward. This expansion of the StoryWalk program is a great step in enhancing our community's access to reading and literacy initiatives. Similar goals to the Heritage Park StoryWalk, like offering bilingual books and engaging activities accompanying the book, are going to be used at Waterworks Park.

## National Library Week

During National Library Week (April 6-12), we focused on engaging with our library users to learn what draws them to our library. We collected comments from patrons about what they love most about the library, which will be shared in our Comments and Publicity Report.



Additionally, we chose to spotlight the Bookmobile, which is gearing up for its first route in May. The new library card featuring the Bookmobile was released. Additionally Bookmobile staff were spotlighted on social media. The Bookmobile has generated a lot of excitement, and we look forward to seeing it serve more people around the county!

## Technical Services Department

The Cataloging team has been working diligently to balance the cataloging of new materials across our six library locations, along with the task of cataloging an extra 1000-plus items for the Bookmobile. A special thank you to Laura and Toni, our two catalogers, for their hard work on maintaining the library's catalog.

**Personnel**

Welcome to BDL Tracy Shaw (Quincy) and Bobbie Holifield (Coldwater)! We onboarded two temporary clerks, Jessica Kelley and Amanda Steele, that will be helping out during our busy summer season!

**Meetings/Trainings/Webinars**

- Kiwanis Club of Coldwater
- Kiwanis 90th Anniversary celebration
- City of Coldwater Board Meeting

Submitted:

Kimberly Feltner

- Our 2025 One Book One County is a wrap! We had over 30 patrons show up to discuss *My Murder*. There were a lot of strong opinions about the book over the course of the seven discussions we did, and surprisingly, the vast majority of those that didn't enjoy the book liked it much better after talking it out with others. It was, as always, an absolute delight hosting this annual event with Jeanne Berg.
- The planning for the 2025 Summer Reading Program is nearly complete! Branch Managers, Coordinators and other staff will meet to finalize plans on April 21.
- The Summer Reading Kickoff Party is June 1 from 5PM-7PM at Heritage Park. The kickoff is carnival themed, and will have a host of fun and exciting activities!
- I attended the Branch County Community Foundation meeting this month and am looking forward to BDL's presentation on the Community Calendar there soon!

