

## Service Population

The 2020 official census numbers are finally out. Our service area (Branch County and Allen Twp. of Hillsdale County) has fallen somewhat. The 2010 numbers were 46,905. Our new count is **46,464**. In addition to our statistical report, these numbers are used for State Aid payments, vendor pricing, and more. Speaking of State Aid, the FY 2022 numbers have finally been released, more than six months late. Our new rate for this year is \$0.487980 per capita, somewhat higher than what we guessed in our 2022 budget.

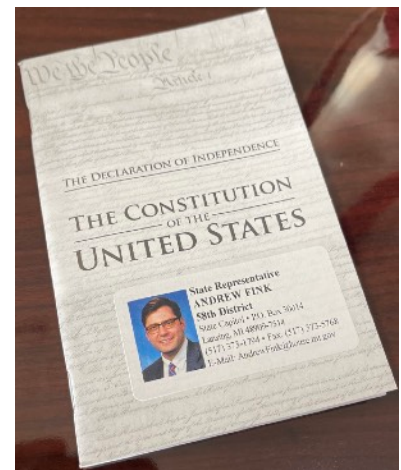
## Patron Purge

As detailed in her report, Kimberly led an effort to catch-up with our needed deletion of expired patron records to conform to our recently-update Privacy Policy. You will notice that our patron count is lower on our monthly statistical report, and this is why. Some vendors base their pricing on register patrons, so there are many reasons for keeping this number updated and accurate.

This project involved staff at many levels, including IT Department working with our Evergreen catalog support to finish the job. Many thanks to all involved for completing this large and tedious job in record time! Getting back on an annual purge schedule will make future purges much less of a chore.

## "1st Amendment Audit"

A second BDL branch was visited by so-called "1st Amendment Auditors", when they came to the Bronson Branch this month. Again, kudos to library staff for following training, being kind and welcoming, and for being...boring! They left after a brief visit with no incident. Also, tangentially related, thanks to State Rep. Fink for recently providing pocket US Constitutions to the library free of charge, along with other civics materials that we are able to make freely available to our visitors.



## Millage News

Kimberly and I have started a month-long Library of Michigan webinar series on the topic of conducting all aspects of a millage campaign. Our own lawyer, Anne Seuryck is even one of the presenters. Obviously, with this being a millage year, the timing couldn't be better. Anne has worked with us to provide the draft resolution and ballot language you see in your packet this month.

The BDL management team has started talking to groups about the upcoming millage and will do so in earnest once we have an approved resolution, ballot language, and confirmation from the County Clerk that everything is in order for the August ballot. We are also thinking of our informational strategies in light of what we are learning in the millage webinar.

## Library Staff News

This is a dynamic time for the library right now! Lisa Wood, who first started with the library in 1998 and has been Quincy Branch Manager since 2001, announced her retirement. Her last day will be on March 30th. Lisa has requested that we have no reception for her, but I do hope you'll join me in recognizing her many years of excellence to the library by approving the resolution in this month's packet.

As the library is getting busier (at last!), Lynnell Eash will be returning to focusing solely on the Bronson Branch, so we are also looking for a new Alganssee Manager. Both positions are posted in a wide variety of print and digital media, and we hope to begin interviews by the end of the month.

Two additional long-time BDL staff have also provided notices of retirement in the next couple of months, so we'll also be looking to fill a couple of additional vacancies soon.

Christina Holibaugh will be joining BDL next week as our new Coldwater Branch Manager. We are very excited to start this new chapter at the Coldwater Branch!

## Bookmobile Project

Outreach Manager Cheryl Lawrence continues to be hard at work planning this project. Worldwide supply chain issues are affecting our efforts, but we are starting to get solid quotes to evaluate. Inflation is also affecting things, and we will probably need to request more than originally planned for this project and conduct a budget amendment.

As part of her research, Cheryl has made good use of regional libraries who recently debuted their own bookmobiles. At right see a photo from our wonderful visit to Jackson District Library, where we were treated to a wealth of information by their incredible staff.



## Other Meetings

This past month has seen numerous meetings with the Coldwater DDA, as they kick off their Michigan Main Street initiative. I also attended meetings with the Algansee Twp., Quincy Twp., Coldwater City Council, County Commissioners, Library of Michigan Directors

## Technology Plan Purchasing

Supply chain issues have complicated this annual task for a 3rd year running. Many of the computers purchased are here and being prepped for deployment now. However, about half of the items have not been able to be ordered yet. We should be able to complete ordering by the end of the month, and expect to have most items, if not all, in hand in April. The updated cash registers are here and deployed at 5 out of the 6 branches as of this writing.

## Other IT News

The Coldwater Board of Public Utilities finally finished its upgrade of the fiber optic Internet line to the Coldwater Branch. Sunday I did all the routing work to make our servers and services work with the new connection information, so we started the week with an Internet speed 20 times greater than what we had before. The effects on network traffic were immediately enjoyed in our busiest location. Our router is rated for even higher speeds, so we should be in a good space for many years to come.

After months of wrangling with our contacts at Verizon, we finally got some attention and motion on replacing a number of lost or malfunctioning Wifi hotspots. We should be back up to our maximum possible to circulate soon, as we head into travel season when they get very popular.

## COVID-19 Update

Thankfully, there is not a lot to report this month, and with no potential action items on this topic, I am moving this update into my Director's Report. There have been no known cases of covid in the last month, and no use of the temporary leave policy.



Plexiglass barriers have been removed at Algansee, Quincy, and Sherwood, and partially removed at Coldwater. The decision to remove some now was based on the relative business of branches and the comfort level of staff to the idea. Where removed, patrons and staff alike appreciate the cleaner look and being able to see and hear each other better.

If case counts stay low, I plan on removing all the barriers by June. We are not getting rid of the them at this time, just putting them in storage for now in case they are needed again.

We are keeping a cautious eye on the Omicron BA.2 variant and will consider restoring the barriers or an employer mask mandate if the situation warrants it.

Submitted by John Rucker

At the end of February the Children's Services Coordinator, Valerie Albright, and I presented to the Altrusa Service Club. We went over current library services. Valerie presented on our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. She also provided an overview of our still very popular Grab and Go craft kits. I reviewed our digital services and the group was very excited about Hoopla and Libby. Also, we announced the return of the Bookmobile to Branch County!

I, along with several other staff, got a tour of the Jackson District Library's bookmobile. This amazing vehicle houses almost 2000 items that have been at after-school programs, parades, and parks! The staff at Jackson were so helpful in answering all of our questions. We definitely got some great information and ideas for BDL's project.

I attended a webinar from the Public Library Association, "Facing the Challenge: Intellectual Freedom in Libraries". This event included representatives from public and school libraries. They spoke on the attempts at censorship currently sweeping the nation. None of our local schools have trained libraries on staff. If a local challenge were to happen, the public library may need to provide information to the school. This webinar shared how important these relationships are to protect everyone's right to read. At BDL we are well prepared to deal with any issues with the Materials Selection Policy. We will also be reviewing internal procedures at the March Staff In-Service day.

A big project in the last month was the removal of long-expired patron records. All 6 branches had a list. They had to pull and verify over 9,000 registration cards that had been expired for at least 5 years. I have to admit I thought this project would be several months of work. Coldwater alone had almost 6,000 cards to pull. The staff exceed my expectations and did an outstanding job completing the project in less than one month. This is part of our Privacy Policy and will be done on an annual basis.

I started a month-long millage workshop put on by the Library of Michigan. The last session is on our staff training day. The final topic is "Tools for a Successful Millage Campaign". We have invited all the branch managers to view it as a group with us. The more staff that have this training in their toolkit, the better.

I had an amazing meeting with Outreach Coordinator, Cheryl Lawrence. We discussed the upcoming Library By Mail program. I shared my findings from research I had done several years ago. She brought up several points to review before the final program is released. I look forward to seeing what she comes up with.

At the March Branch County Partner Meeting, I reported our two current open positions. The various social organizations reported being busier in the last month. This holds true here at

BDL as well. Visits seem to be increasing, storytimes are gaining new attendees, and books are moving. It is a great time to be working at the library!

Submitted,

Kimberly Feltner

- The One Book One County BDL book discussions were last week and this week. Jeanne Berg and I led discussions at Union City, and twice at Coldwater. This week will be at Bronson and Quincy and our Sherwood branch will hold the last discussion next week on March 31st. There is still time to read it, and BDL patrons can check out *Written in Bone: Hidden Stories in What We Leave Behind* by Professor Dame Sue Black at most of our branches and also on Hoopla!
- I attended a Cultivating Community meeting with John Rucker at the Branch ISD building on 2/22/2022. Lots of information was discussed and we are very excited about what BDL can do to enhance this community partnership!
- Attended the Branch County Community Network meeting on March 16, 2022.
- The Summer Reading Program 2022 is right around the corner, and will be here before we know it! The Kickoff Party will be held at Heritage Park on June 2, from 4PM to 6PM. Details to come soon!

Submitted,

Jessica Tefft