

Summer Reading Program

As we near the close of this year's summer reading program, all I can say is a heartfelt THANK YOU to our wonderful BDL staff who really ran with the dinosaur theme to create magic, whimsy, and fun for kids and adults alike. Ben Lyon did wonders again with his coloring sheet this year, and his life-sized triceratops head that currently graces the wall of Kids' Place at the Coldwater Branch is something to see in person!



Personnel

Posted Positions

After taking turns for a number of months now to drive the bookmobile, we have posted to hire again for this position. Additionally, we have posted for the clerk position at the Union Twp. Branch. Meghan Babbitt is moving up to a professional librarian position with Pennfield Schools, and while we are sad to see her depart, we are so happy for her future prospects.

Employees on Leave

Traci is currently on a planned leave of absence from the Sherwood Branch. Branch Clerk Casey is doing a great job keeping things running smoothly, and thanks to Traci for making sure Casey was well prepared for the job.

Jessica, one of our substitute clerks who usually is very active with us during Summer Reading, had a medical emergency and has been out for a couple of weeks now. Our hearts go out to Jessica and her family as they navigate this, and we hope to see her back to full strength soon!

Announcing the New Bronson Branch Manager

BDL's own Alisha Morris was selected to be the new Bronson Branch manager. A graduate of Bronson High School, Alisha grew up using the Bronson Branch with Lynnell as her librarian. And while that is a fun coincidence, we are excited at the potential moving forward as Alisha makes herself at home at the Bronson Branch and begins to implement her own vision. Alisha and Lynnell will have about 3 weeks of overlap, and BDL management have already begun branch manager training.

Lynnell's Retirement

Which brings us to Lynnell's retirement a week from today. I know I'm not alone when I share just how much I'll miss this dynamic person. For the more than two decades I have known her, Lynnell has been a powerhouse of energy and ideas, seasoned with mischief and mirth. Occasionally, as shown in the photo at right, she can even take her job seriously!



After 17 years with LaGrange County Public Library in Indiana, Lynnell joined BDL in the early months of 1999. By the end of the year, she was the Branch Manager of the Algansee Branch and soon moved the library to a bigger set of rooms at Dove's Store just in time to add public computers to the library for the first time. By 2004, Lynnell was Branch Manager at both the Algansee and Sherwood branches, spreading her enthusiasm to opposite ends of the county.

In 2006, Lynnell succeeded Carole Maddox, who had retired after 30 years as Bronson Branch Manager. Never content to be still, Lynnell quickly oversaw two major expansions at the Bronson Branch during her time, with the help of the Friends of the Library and others in the community: the elevator lobby to make our old Carnegie library accessible to all, and the media center to have a better place for studying, meeting, and using computers.



Throughout her years at the Bronson Branch, there was a clear through line with Lynnell's librarianship: do excellent work, but keep it fun! Her sense of humor has shined through all aspects of the job. Always cracking jokes, Lynnell can get you smiling even on a bad day. And for a great example of her trickster side...let's just say I pity the contractor decades in the future doing renovations in the basement when they find the surprises

Lynnell left for them under the stage and buried in the cement. I hope I'm still around to hear about their reaction!

Throughout her 20 years as Bronson Branch Manager, Lynnell has been active with the City of Bronson and Bronson Township, with the historical society, chamber of commerce, and more. Her steady hand guiding the library has cemented the reputation that the Bronson Branch is both a valuable community partner and a safe, welcoming space where everyone can learn, have fun, and even find a sympathetic ear.

Please join us at the Bronson Branch next Friday, July 24, from 5pm-7pm for an open-house celebration of Lynnell and her time with the Branch District Library, and tell her yourself how much she meant to you, too.

Facilities

Air Conditioning

The air conditioning issues mentioned last month are mostly solved, if not completely fixed. As Lynnell notes in her Bronson Branch report, Good's was out this week to replace the air conditioner that the BDL Board approved last month. At the Algansee branch, the problem was identified (the contractor never wired it up!), but it hasn't been fixed just yet. Thankfully, though, the other HVAC unit in the main part of the library has been able to keep the remainder of the building not too bad. And at the Coldwater Branch, our computer controls specialists in Kalamazoo remoted in to take care of a configuration issue for us.

Air Quality

This past week has seen the worst air quality in Michigan in the past 20 years, due to the Canadian wildfires. Having the air conditioning working has been a big help here. Due to the need to keep the vehicle open for services, and the lack of comprehensive filtering compared to a building, I canceled the bookmobile's appearance as a "booth" at Bronson's Polish Festival. The guidance from the Federal Government at [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov) is that the air quality is hazardous and that **"Everyone"** should stay indoors and reduce activity levels" [emphasis in the original]. We will decide about participating in Saturday's parade closer to parade time after looking at the pollution levels.



Union City Road Work

The Village of Union City is working all around the library these days, from renovations to the park and amphitheater next to the library, to all the downtown streets. Things are dusty and hectic, but we are open and people are still able to get to us via the sidewalks!

Heavy Rains

Uncommonly heavy rain and strong winds in early July caused water ingress at the Algansee and Coldwater branches. At both locations it was a question of weather stripping and caulking needing some touch ups. The township should be seeing to the issue at Algansee and we'll need to get A1 Door to come work on the threshold and plate glass on the west side door at Coldwater. One of the west windows was leaking, too, possibly also a caulking problem. That one is going to take a contractor, or at least a lift rental. We'll have to see what our options are.

Quincy Township Exit

We have confirmation that the Quincy Township Board will be leaving the basement of the library to set up offices at the Quincy Village Hall. The Township will be building an addition there. A conversation with the township supervisor is in order to see what plans are with respect to the library.

Orkin Visit

Happy to say our most recent Orkin dog inspection turned up very little: no hotspots on the bookmobile or at Quincy or Union Twp. We had small hits at Sherwood, Coldwater, and a single chair at the Bronson branch. Materials and surfaces are being treated as per usual.

IT Department

I conducted a planned replacement of a server at the Bronson Branch. Curtis and I mounted a TV in the meeting room of the Algansee Branch. I worked on our upcoming Aspen Discovery Layer launch.

Meetings Attended

Michigan Library Directors, MERS, Bronson City Council, Bronson Friends of the Library, multiple meetings on Aspen Discovery Layer with Equinox Open Library Initiative.

Submitted by John Rucker

Aspen Discovery Layer

As mentioned in last month's report, July marks the start of several major projects, including the implementation of our new Aspen Discovery Catalog Layer. Staff have participated in multiple training sessions to learn the system's backend, and our first implementation meeting was held this week. We have been assured that this project is relatively straightforward and will be one of the easiest things we ever start! I am going to hold them to that statement. While Aspen offers many features, we'll launch with a core set of tools by the end of August and introduce additional enhancements in phases as staff and patrons become familiar with the new interface.

Meetings

Kiwanis Club of Coldwater

Aspen Discovery

MERS/Empower

Submitted

Kimberly Feltner

- The 2026 SRP Coloring Contest ended on July 1st and it was so difficult to determine a winner but alas, a team of 6 staff did just that. Congratulations to our 3 winners!
- It is wild to think that the 2026 Summer Reading Program will end next week! As always, the Summer Reading Program has had hundreds of participants, and loads of attendees at our programs. Our staff has done an incredible job implementing programs all summer, and I am so grateful for all they do!
- Two week after SRP ends, the 4-H county Fair will arrive. Cheryl will be there all week, and will be accompanied by a variety of staff members every day.
- The 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Graduation will be held on August 22 at 11AM. As of right now, we have 7 graduates and three that are very close to completing. This event is one of my favorites, and I'm so excited for it!
- Attended two Aspen training sessions and the BCCN meeting this past month.

