

BRANCHING OUT



a publication of



New Director On Board

In November, 2003, the Branch District Library board appointed **Bruce Mills** to the position of Director, replacing **Frank Hemp-hill**, who had been at the BDLs helm for two and a half years. "I'm so glad to be here," says Mills. "I was aware of Coldwater from working at the college, but I never knew how nice the people of Branch County could be."

Mills comes to the BDLs most recently from Kellogg Community College, where he worked as a Technical Services Librarian and User Education Librarian for the past 13 years. The state "budget crunch" caused his job to be eliminated at the college. Prior to KCC, Mills worked at Comstock

Township Library in the Kalamazoo area, where he has lived for most of his life.

"The commute doesn't bother me at all," says Mills. "During the short time I lived in Houston, travel time was more than an hour and a half *one way*, so this isn't so bad." When asked if a move to Branch County was in the future, he replied, "That remains to be seen for now. Though I would *love* to move here, selling a house in Kalamazoo is rather difficult just now. We'll see what happens in as time goes on."

Mills is married with three children, one of whom is still at home. He has two grandchildren. When asked how he likes the job so far, he said,



BDLS Director, Bruce Mills

"There's a whole lot to learn. The setup of the district is pretty complicated, but the library staff has been really helpful all the way. They have truly made my transition into this position as painless as possible. They're a great group to work with."

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Serving Branch County in:

Algansee

Bronson

Coldwater

Quincy

Sherwood

Union City

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It's *That* Time Again!

With the new year comes **tax time!** If you're the kind of person who wants to do the taxes yourself, the library is the place to pick up all the forms you will need to complete that all-too-unpleasant but neces-

sary task.

Although the printing of many of the forms was somewhat delayed this year, a full selection of both state and federal forms was in place since early February. There is no charge for preprinted



forms. The staff will also help you print forms from the Internet, if you need them. sooner.

Library Going Wireless

The Branch District Library is currently in the planning stages to set up wireless hotspots at all the BDLs branches. This change will provide increased access to the Internet at the library in several ways.

The immediate advantage library users will notice is that the former clutter of computer cables near the workstations will be much neater. Not only will the wireless network allow us at the library to place our workstations at a wider variety of locations, but also anyone with a wireless-enabled laptop will be able to bring it to the library and take advantage of our high-speed Inter-

net connection.

In addition, library users will be able to access a large number of high-quality periodicals and databases while in the library.

In spite of the move to wireless, one thing will remain the same: the quality of the Internet experience will not seem any different to the users in terms of speed than with our older wired network.

The BDLs staff are working to implement this change as soon as possible. We hope to have these wireless hotspots in place by the time school is out.



Reach out to the Internet with our new wireless connections

We Dare to Compare

An interesting report has just been published by the Online Library Computer Center, a leading library services corporation. In OCLC's words, "[t]his report, ***Libraries: How they stack up***, provides a snapshot of the economic impact of libraries. The report contains some interesting comparisons of library economics and activities to other sectors, professions and destinations in the worldwide economy."

For example, did you ever wonder how



"Did you ever wonder how library services compare to the business activities of Amazon.com?"

library services compare to the business activities of Amazon.com? To find out about that and many other comparisons, get the report at:
<http://www.oclc.org/index/compare/>

More Large Print on the Way

One of our best library collections is about to get even better! Thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous benefactor, Branch District Library will be expanding its large print book selections.

Large print books are available in a wide variety of formats and subjects, ranging from current best sellers to romance, mystery and other perennial favorite genres.

Not just for seniors, large print books can offer a "vacation for your eyes" at any age. No matter what your interest, take a look at the large print collection, located just across from the circulation desk on the ground floor. You may be surprised!

Also, our new large print additions are arriving at a perfect time, as we prepare a new service for the homebound of Branch County. More to come...



Large print books can offer a "vacation for your eyes"

From the Director's Desk

I knew becoming a library director could *really* change my outlook on life, but I never understood how much!

As you may know, a part of public libraries' income in Michigan comes from penal fines—the fines that people pay to the court. Depending on the library, this can amount to a lot of money.

I've worked in several public libraries before, so this came as no surprise to me. What *did* surprise me was my reaction to a report in the *Daily Reporter* that decried an increase in crime in Branch County during the last few months. I was *delighted* to read the news! That response truly got me to

stop and think. I have always prided myself on a certain liberality of spirit that helped me to try to look for the best in my fellow human beings.

I tried to justify it all by thinking about the many new materials we would be able to purchase with the money. Our new DVD and music CD collections could grow at an even faster rate. Think of all the children's books those fines could bring in!

A couple of weeks later, I received more evidence at how twisted my mind was becoming when I heard a news story from Finland. Apparently, traffic fines there are charged based on the guilty party's income, allowing the au-



Hello? ... Bill?

thorities to assess a fine of \$45,000 to a Finnish Internet billionaire! That got me thinking that maybe we could try this out in Branch County. If only someone could challenge Bill Gates to a drag race out on U.S. 12...

Upgrade of Library Public Computers

Thanks to a generous donation from the Gates Foundation, all public terminals now have *Microsoft Office 2000 Premium*, the *Encarta Reference Suite 2001*, and *Streets and Trips 2001*. This donation has an approximate market value of **\$68,000**.

Other changes include:

📖 New PCs have been installed in the Coldwater, Bronson, and

"This [generous donation from the Gates Foundation] has an approximate market value of \$68,000."

Quincy branches.

📖 All terminals in all branches are now running Microsoft Windows XP.

📖 Assorted other productivity and artistic software has been installed on all terminals in all branches.

📖 All terminals in all branches have new optical mice.

📖 More robust internet filtering is in place on all terminals in all branches.

News from the Branches

In order to meet the deadline for publication of this inaugural edition of the latest incarnation of *Branching Out*, news from the branches was not available in time. That will *not* be the case in future editions. Each one of our branches is the pride of its respective community and the hub of many exciting activities every month. We can't wait to tell you more about it!



10 East Chicago Street
Coldwater, MI 49036
Phone: 517 279-8039
Email: director@brnlibrary.org

Find us on the web at:
<http://www.brnlibrary.org>



Our Mission

The mission of the Branch District Library System is to provide the residents of Branch County with library collections and services to meet their educational, informational and recreational needs. This includes the traditional book formats well as CD-ROM, online collections and access to the Internet.

The Board is committed to serving people of all ages, with a special emphasis on children and youth.

National Library Week, April 18—24

It's National Library Week, a time to rediscover all that our libraries, librarians and library workers have to offer and why there's something for everyone @ **your library**.

Libraries provide a world of opportunity for all people, regardless of your age, income or background. Whether you're checking out the latest bestseller, getting homework help or using the Internet, the library has the resources and staff to help you find what you are looking for.

As a special event this year, libraries in Michigan will be celebrating NLW with *One State, One Book*. Libraries across the state will be using the book *Barnyard Song* by Rhonda Gowler Green in a wide variety of activities. At the Coldwater branch during this time, Kids' Place will be transformed into a barnyard! We encourage all community



members to come check us out! National Library Week 2004 marks the fourth year of The Campaign for America's Libraries, a public education campaign sponsored by the ALA and libraries across the country to speak clearly about the value of libraries and librarians in the 21st century. More than 10,000 libraries in all 50 states are being reached by @ **your library**®, The Campaign for America's Libraries.

National Library Week is a great time to see what's new at Branch District Library and how librarians and library workers can provide you with the resources and services you need when you need them.

From the classics of literature to the latest Internet resources, the doors of your local Branch District Library locations swing wide to greet you. All you have to do is stop in.