

# Branching Out

a publication of



## Wireless Service Begins

**W**ireless Internet services history was made at Branch District Library on Thursday, June 17 when **John and Judith Purse** of Bradenton, Florida connected their laptop computer to the Internet in the Reference Room. The Purses were visiting the Coldwater area for an extended stay at Coldwater Lake. The system performed flawlessly for them, and so impressed them that they made a generous contribution to the library system! Though they were assured that

the wireless Internet service was available free of charge, they insisted. "We own property in Michigan and enjoy donating to Michigan libraries," said John Purse, well aware of the tax benefits such a gift would bring.

The Purses have asked to remain on our mailing list, to be able to see how things are progressing here. Needless to say, that was a small enough favor to ask!

Wireless service is available to anyone with a portable computing device in the Coldwater building.



*Our First Wireless Users*

One reminder—as is the case with all library computing equipment, the wireless service will be filtered in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) to inhibit access to inappropriate Internet content.

This service will be coming soon to all our other branch locations.

Volume 16, Issue 2  
**Summer 2004**

Serving Branch County in:

 **Algansee**

 **Bronson**

 **Coldwater**

 **Quincy**

 **Sherwood**

 **Union City**

## Our New Employees

by Heidi Rawson

**Patricia Rothrock** joined the Bronson Branch as library assistant at the end of May. Pat has worked as a classroom paraprofessional and cross-guard for the Bron-

son Schools and will continue to substitute this coming school year. Her hobbies are reading, cooking and gardening.

**Gina Horn** joined the Sherwood Branch

as library assistant in May. She grew up in the Sherwood area, and graduated from Bronson High School. She has also worked as a paraprofessional for the Union City

Schools.

Gina is doing some factory work this summer and will be very happy when school is back in session!

## Summer Fun @ the Library

Additional Material by Heidi Rawson and Leo Lehman

The Algansee Branch has been working with the Summer Reading Club theme of "Discover New Trails at the Library". The program was contract based and the kids determined themselves how many books they thought they could read. Readers won prizes like Branch County Fair passes and McDonald's coupons. They also got their name in a drawing for every 100 pages read and drawings were done every week for various prizes. There was also a drawing at the end of the program for a special prize.

Algansee also offers story times for ages 4-12 at the Algansee Library and story times on Wednesday afternoon at the Kinderhook Township Hall. The story times include reading a book and then doing a craft on a topic related to the Trails theme. Some topics included camping, using a horse to travel, exploring, and wearing various hats. The Summer Reading Club awards party was held July 31 and featured a storyteller, Michael Pelarski.

The Bronson Branch was very busy with all the youngsters reading their books to qualify for



*Professor Anson Pantz!*

a chance to win a Summer Reading Program award. In addition to a Porcelain Bride doll for the lucky girl and a Spiderman pillow for the winning boy, each entrant received a coupon from McDonald's and tickets to the Branch County Fair. Every child that completed the program was also given a book. The books were donated by the Friends of the Bronson Library as just one of the many projects the group supports.

Bronson's Summer Reading program ended on July 23rd with an awards party at 1:00 PM. The kids were treated to an appearance by Professor Anson Pantz



*The fun stacks up!*

from the Kalamazoo Nature Center. The Professor uses humor, props and audience participation in a zany experience of natural history interpretation.

The Coldwater Branch and Felpausch sponsored a cup stacking program featuring Jim Merrills. Mr. Merrills demonstrated his considerable skill, and gave the children a chance to try cup stacking on their own. Over six hundred children were signed up for summer reading at Coldwater, with two bicycles from McDonald's and other prizes



*A Hercules beetle makes friends*

given away at the final party.

The Quincy Branch played host to Charlene Rucker and her collection of insects at their Summer Reading Program party on July 17th. Insects were on the party menu as well! Professor Anson Pantz (Pete Stobie) from the Kalamazoo Nature Center will be visiting Quincy Branch on Tuesday, August 3rd at 1:00 PM.

The Sherwood Branch worked with the Summer Reading Club theme of "Discover New Trails at the Library". Readers won prizes like Branch County Fair passes and McDonald's coupons.

Sherwood offers separate story times for ages 3-7 and 8-12. The story times include reading a book and then doing a craft on a topic related to the Trails theme. The Summer Reading Club awards party will be July 29 and have a carnival theme.

Union Township Branch signed up over one hundred for their reading program, and held their Summer Reading party on July 24th. Prizes for the party were sponsored in part by a grant from the Branch County Community Foundation.

## From the Director's Desk

by Bruce Mills

I need to take a break from the usual frivolity of this column to let you know about two serious issues that we are dealing with here at the library this summer. The first of these issues involves a recent Freedom of Information request sent to dozens of Michigan libraries by Okemos law student **Caleb Marker**. Mr. Marker would like all the libraries contacted to send him a list of their patrons' names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. He claims he is

trying to create a profile of Michigan library users.

If this sounds like an abuse of the Freedom of Information Act, we would heartily agree with you. Fortunately, the Library Privacy Act of Michigan makes libraries *exempt* from this sort of action without a court order.

Mr. Marker plans to try to overturn the Library Privacy Act, an extremely unlikely possibility. We will keep you informed as needed on this event.

The second issue involves the

Children's Internet Protection Act, which took effect on July 1, 2004. I want you to understand that the Branch District Library System has been in compliance with this law, which requires filtering of all library Internet content, since January 2004.

Although the library community as a whole is against filtering Internet content, we at BDLS want to protect your children from harmful Internet content. Besides, as of July 1, it's the law!

## Staff Profile — Sonja Harris

by Heidi Rawson

Sonja was born in Bluffton, Ohio. Her parents moved to Michigan when she was a child, stopping first in Allegan County. Sonja graduated from Kalamazoo Central High School, the historic building on Westnedge Avenue. While in High School she walked up the "Hill" to attend the Speech Clinic at Western Michigan University. She actually had some of her classes from Charles VanRiper, the man considered the father of modern speech therapy. VanRiper also wrote books under the pen name of Cully Gage so, unknown to Sonja, she had an early contact with the literary side of Michigan!

Sonja's parents moved to Branch County in 1960 where Sonja's mother taught at Quincy Elementary, teaching 4th through 6th grade from 1960-1973. Sonja's father worked for the State of Michigan, first in Kalamazoo and then transferring to the State Home

here in Coldwater. Sonja worked at various Goodwill Stores around Michigan, settling in as the manager at the Marshall store from 1966 until 1980 when she found it necessary to come to Coldwater to care for her father. Sonja has a brother Doug that

*Next year we will ... celebrate Sonja's 20 years with us!*

also lives here in Coldwater.

Sonja started working in our library in a volunteer capacity from 1985 until 1997 and then had the opportunity, provided by Experience Works, to continue in an employed capacity. Experience Works is a national, nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services for mature workers. Established in 1965 as Green Thumb, it was renamed Experience Works in 2002.



Sonja likes to read and watch television when she is not busy cleaning her apartment and she has a goal of traveling around the United States. Sonja says the part she loves most about her job is putting away the books. She checks the shelves for accuracy and does several other odd jobs as needed. Next year we will be very glad to celebrate Sonja's 20 years with us!

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## Wireless Service FAQ

by John Rucker

**Q. How can I use the wireless internet access?**

A. Wireless access uses the WiFi standard. Most users can simply bring their wireless-enabled laptop computer or other wireless device to the Library and turn it on. The computer will automatically recognize our wireless network. If your laptop does not have wireless built-in, you can install a WiFi-compatible network card. The Library's network uses the 802.11g WiFi standard, which is backwards-compatible with older 802.11b wireless cards. The Library cannot guarantee your equipment will work with the Library's network.

**Q. How does it work?**

A. Wireless access points located throughout the Library communicate with your wireless device. You should be able to connect almost anywhere in the building. When your wireless network card senses a signal, a message appears on your screen indicating a wireless network is available, called **Branch Dist. Lib. Public Access**. Connect to that network, then you're done.

**Q. Will I need any special settings or passwords to connect?**

A. No special encryption settings, user names, or passwords are required.

**Q. Is my information safe while using wireless?**

A. Information you transmit and receive online is **not** protected while using wireless, unless you are connected to a web page that employs encryption (stores, banks, etc.). Keep this in mind if you are accessing sensitive business or personal information. Anti-virus protection on your laptop is **your** responsibility.

**Q. Are there any restrictions on my use of the internet?**

A. Wireless users agree to abide by the Library's Internet Acceptable Use Policy, which prohibits abusive or illegal activity while using the Library's internet service. You may view web sites and check email with programs like Eudora or Outlook. All other internet traffic is blocked to prevent abuse. To send mail you'll have to use a

web mail service, like Yahoo! or Hotmail. Also, web pages will be filtered to block pornography, in compliance with state and federal laws. Wireless access will be available only during normal Library hours.

**Q. Can I print while I'm using wireless?**

A. Printing is not available. If you need to print, please save your work to a disk, or email files to yourself, then use a Library workstation and send print jobs to a printer.

**Q. Can the Library help me configure my computer?**

A. Sorry, everyone's computer is different and **you are responsible for knowing how to configure your own equipment**. The Library cannot be responsible for any changes you make to your computer's settings. If you need additional assistance, you may need to contact the hardware or software manufacturer.