

Branching Out



a publication of



Library Declares Amnesty

December is always a special month at the library, but this year, it will be even more special as the Branch District Library System agrees to forgive all fines on overdue items. There is a small catch, though.

During the month of December, library patrons with overdue items may have fines forgiven for a donation of at least one non-perishable food item (preferably canned) per late item, along with bringing the item back to the library.

Not included are over-



Our overdues expert, Lynell, gets ready for amnesty

due items already returned, or any collection agency fees users might have accumulated. The actual overdue fees will be forgiven.

For library patrons who would like to participate but have no overdues, all sorts of nonperishable food

items will be accepted as well. At the end of the month, proceeds from the food collection will be donated to area food pantries.

So, bring back overdues to save money and help out the less fortunate. During the month of December, no matter how you look at

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Serving Branch County in:

 **Algansee**

 **Bronson**

 **Coldwater**

 **Quincy**

 **Sherwood**

 **Union City**

Our New Employees

by Heidi Rawson

Angela Anderson started working after school at the Circulation Desk at Central in May. She is in the 12th Grade at Pansophia Academy and has the second highest grade

point average in her class! In her spare time she is studying Japanese in hopes of going to Japan one day to live and study. She also enjoys reading fantasy fiction.

Becky Williams started at Circulation in September. She grew up in Livonia and came to Coldwater in 1980 when her husband's company moved the family here. Becky

took classes for a nursing degree but has never officially worked in that field although those skills have been handy in her main occupation of raising her four children!

Computer Changes, They Are A-coming...

By John Rucker

Soon, the library's public computers will have easily-accessible **media bays**. These bays will allow patrons to use all sorts of digital media with our computers. You will be able to read and save to USB disks (keychain drives, thumb drives, etc.), as well as popular digital camera memory cards.

Also, every branch now has a computer station with a **flat-bed scanner** for our patrons to use. This will go great with the graphics software already installed on our computers. Finally, we have replaced most of our 17-inch CRT monitors in



our public areas with **17-inch flat-panel LCD screens**. They are easy on the eyes and will save space on the desks.

We have lots of new and exciting plans for technology at Branch District Library. Keep watching for further information.

A Year of Outreach Services

By Heidi Rawson

Last spring as our large print collection saw some nice growth, after receiving a generous donation earmarked for that collection, the library began to investigate how we could better promote these materials to our community. We investigated placing collections of materials for periods of time in places where senior citizens gather and as a result have developed the Branch District Library Outreach Program. In an effort to be good stewards of the library's resources we work in close coordination with the program people at our local nursing homes and through other agencies that serve people, senior citizens or not, who are unable to come to

the library for whatever reasons! We have found the audio and video portions of the collection



Heidi Rawson with Pines Senior Respite Clients

are also very popular with those that we serve.

Currently we have small book carts at The Drows, The Laurels, Maple Lawn and Masonville and

also deliver materials to the Senior Respite Program at the H. and C. Burnside Center. We

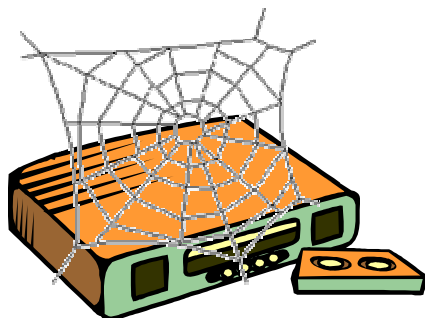
make a trip to the Community Action Agency every week where the Meals on Wheels program volunteers deliver books to individuals. We have contracted with several other agencies that have agreed to deliver to their clients too. Those programs are CHC Home Health Agency, Visiting Nurses and Senior Services. We would endeavor to serve anyone who needs this service so if our readers know of any individuals in addition to other homes or agencies that would like to participate in our program please let us know here at the library.

From the Director's Desk

by Bruce Mills

It's that time of year again, when for many of us our generosity far exceeds our cash-flow. While this may be great for our local economy, being on the receiving end of all this largesse creates its own set of problems at times.

Every holiday season at our house, we quickly realize that we have absolutely run out of room for any more "stuff." I try to encourage everyone to get rid of something for each new thing that comes into the house at the holidays. It never works, of course, resulting in a



house that is about to explode. If you have that problem, I have a possible solution for you. If you have books, VHS videos, DVDs, music CDs or other media that you would like to get rid of, think

about donating it to the library. You may be giving it away, but when you share it at the library you can still use it *almost* whenever you want, too!

Though many have made the switch to DVD video, VHS videos remain in great demand at the library. We never charge for our materials, as long as they're returned on time.

We can't really help you with all those old clothes that are too small now, but if you want to get rid of books or other media, consider us their "home away from home."

Staff Profile —Virginia Brown

by Heidi Rawson

Virginia Brown was born in Coldwater. Her father immigrated to the United States at the age of 9 months, the youngest, of 14 children, from the Netherlands with another sibling born after they arrived in this country.

Virginia started coming to the Coldwater Public Library as a young child where librarian Alice Weiler, helped form her decision to become a librarian. This would be passed with her own influence when Virginia became the school librarian at Quincy High School! The term "mentor" was not widely used then, but that is definitely the role that she played in this author's life!

Virginia went to Coldwater High School and worked at the Coldwater Public Library as a page, shelving books. She started her professional education with two years at Adrian College and Western Michigan University where she took the classes to become a

public librarian. Back in Coldwater with her Bachelor's degree, she was employed for two years as the assistant librarian working with a couple of different directors. In 1966, Virginia married her husband, Dave Brown and the library was so sparsely staffed during

Last summer Virginia had the opportunity of a lifetime in going to Senegal

those days that it was necessary to close the library on the day of the wedding!

She began working as a school librarian for the Quincy Community Schools in the fall of 1967 and retired from there in 1998. After starting at Quincy, Virginia continued her education to earn her teaching certificate, and eventually went on to earn her Master's in Library Science.

During her summers off from the school system, she continued to

maintain her connection to this library by filling in in an acting director capacity.

Four years after retiring from Quincy High School, Virginia had the opportunity to return to familiar surroundings at what is now the Branch District Library.

Last summer Virginia had the opportunity of a lifetime in going to Senegal for a library project with former director Dee Knapp and her husband, Larry, minister to missionaries around the world. Virginia was excited by this opportunity to travel, and they spent from July 12 until August 10 enduring extreme climate to enter information into an automated card catalog for a local school. She found the country to be very beautiful and the people there to be appreciative of their assistance!

Branch District Library is very fortunate to have a staff person with the knowledge and experience of Virginia Brown!

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



Bits and Pieces

New Hours in Union City

The Union Township branch of Branch District Library in Union City has made a change in their hours, to try to serve area users at times when they are available. The new hours are:

Monday: 2:00—7:00
Tuesday: 9:30—5:00
Wednesday: 12:00—5:00
Thursday: CLOSED
Friday: 9:30—5:00
Saturday: 9:00—12:00

Union Township residents have long requested Monday hours, so this change should make lots of people happy.

New Online Database

For the first time, Branch District Library will be offering a unique online database both at all library branch locations and also available on the Internet from patrons' homes. *HeritageQuest* will offer those interested in genealogy a wide selection of resources, in-

cluding "census data, family records, local histories and other primary sources" for those researching family histories. Also recently added to the collection is Revolutionary War veterans benefit applications. Service for this new product will begin in January 2005.

