

**Mid-Michigan Library League
Director's Report
August 2020**



Special Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many things have changed in our world. Public libraries were ordered to be closed for three months, and then to have a plan for reopening after June 8th that includes how the library will be sanitized and open safely with social distancing, mask wearing, and barriers at service points. Many libraries have chosen to reopen slowly, offering curbside service as the first step. MeLCat and RIDES were suspended, but recently finally resumed. Most of the MMLL libraries are open again to the public, but have limited hours and capacity. Some are using appointments for library and computer use, some use doorbells or restaurant buzzers to remind patrons of time limits, etc. We have ordered and distributed PPE such as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer, and have tried to help members to keep current with the over 160 Executive Orders signed by the Governor.

Most conferences and in-person trainings have been cancelled or postponed. It is unclear when we will be able to gather again indoors with more than ten people at a time, socially distanced by a minimum of six feet. Teleconferencing systems are heavily used these days, with Zoom being the most common. Boards are meeting virtually, and programs offered online. Online resources are being used heavily, and patrons are grateful for eBooks, eAudiobooks, and streaming movie and music services. Schools were closed and have plans to reopen with options for in-person instruction as well as online, and much effort has been made to provide Internet and devices for those without. The lack of rural broadband is more apparent than ever, as so much government information, unemployment filing and resources, education, and access to essential services happens online.

Administrative:

- Board members, groups they represent, year term ends, officers for FY20
 - Group 1 – Mary Edens –20
 - Group 2 – Susan LaBelle –20
 - Group 3 – Patti Colvin, Vice-Chair –20
 - Group 4 – Diane Eisenga –22
 - Group 5 – Eric Smith, Chair –21
 - Group 6 – Lois Langenburg, Treasurer –22
 - Group 7 – Valerie Church-McHugh, Secretary –22
 - Group 8 – Sarah Welch –23
 - Group 9 – OPEN
- Advisory Council
 - FY20 Co-Chairs – Debra Greenacre (Manistee) and Mary Barker (Pentwater)
 - Informal meetings have been held Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. via Zoom during the *Stay Home/Stay Safe* order and biweekly since.

Continuing Education:

- All in-person trainings have been cancelled or postponed, including national conferences, state conferences and workshops, and MMLL events. Many options for online training have been offered, with the conferences going virtual or available on demand via archived webinars and training modules.

- Brian Mortimore, who was to do an in-person workshop for us on HR topics, is open to rescheduling for the fall. Members asked for him to present an online training, perhaps in an archived presentation they can view at their convenience. We are waiting to see if he will be able to provide this for us.
- Library of Michigan has held Friday Zoom meetings for directors each week – very helpful for obtaining guidance and discussing issues during the pandemic. They have provided regular Youth check-ins. MLA and MCLS have also offered regular Zoom meetings and trainings.
- The MCDA – Cooperative Directors Association – joined together to present an online training by Maxine Bleiweis called “Big Disruptions Can Lead to Big Opportunities” – helping attendees cope with change due to the pandemic and visualize library service in the future.

eResources:

- OverDrive purchased the digital services portion of Recorded Books, and they are currently working on migration plans for moving the digital content from RBDigital to OverDrive. See the FAQ pages about these changes [HERE \(https://resources.overdrive.com/rbdigital-acquisition-faqs/\)](https://resources.overdrive.com/rbdigital-acquisition-faqs/). The [Up North Digital/OverDrive](https://www.upnorthdigital.org/) consortium has been doing well under reorganization. We are asking MMLL libraries not currently in the consortium to join, since the RBDigital service will end for us after September 30, 2020. We hope to be able to subsidize some of the costs of Up North Digital for our members, but it is unclear what will happen with state aid in FY21.
- The RBDigital collection of over 30,000 instantly downloadable eAudiobooks is still available to all members of MMLL. The link to this service is <https://wmlpmi.rbdigital.com/>. The e-Magazine service and Transparent Language Online are also currently available at that link, and we will be informed when the content is moved over to the OverDrive platform.

Grants:

- Eleven libraries were funded in the first round of the mini-grant program and fifteen libraries were funded in the second round, for a total commitment to our members of \$15,000 (<https://www.mml.org/a/grants>).
- The CARES Act grant program, run by the Library of Michigan to fund PPE supplies/service and digital inclusion supplies/service (<http://mi.gov/LSTA>), funded 28 of our 36 member libraries.
- MMLL received a \$5,000 H.O.P.E. grant from Michigan Humanities to assist with RIDES payments for members. We received the money and have submitted the final report.

Tech Assistance:

- FY20 began with each MMLL member library holding four hours of credit for computer services from Cory Walker, “Emergency Geek.” Many hours remain to be used.
- See the [website here](#) for how to contact Cory and arrange for your needed service.

Member Libraries:

- The Luther Area Public Library has a new director: Amy Shank.
- LeRoy Community Library has a new director: Laura Jacobson-Pentces

- Glen Lake Community Library is going to close in order to move into their recently expanded and remodeled library, leaving their temporary location, the “Limebrary” behind. They should be set to open in Empire on September 8th.

In the News:

- As of this writing, 170,769 people have died in the United States from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Michigan has seen 6,555 deaths and 99,856 confirmed cases so far. (<https://ncov2019.live/data>)
- The CDC gave initial information on how to handle library collections during the pandemic, and since it was not comprehensive, the IMLS has funded a study that is still in process, the REALM project. See WebJunction at <https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/COVID-19-research-project.html>
- Efforts are underway to encourage all states to allow voting by mail, but the president is trying to de-fund the USPS.
- The US Census is still underway, with enumerators again trying to complete the count. The president is trying to end the attempts early, and to not count anyone without citizenship, which is a departure from the constitution.

Other:

The eleven library cooperatives in Michigan receive their revenue from state aid to public libraries (PA 89 of 1977). Co-ops are 100% state aid funded (public libraries hover around 10% of funding from State Aid), so the state budget heavily impacts our budgets. Many of us are drafting budgets to anticipate cuts to state aid in FY21. Several are doing 50% reductions in revenue, some are doing 25%. We are presenting three versions of the FY21 budget for MMLL, one at full revenue, one at 75% revenue, and a third at 50% revenue. If these cuts happen, we can use fund balance, but tough choices must be made. See the FY21 draft budget in the Board packet.

Travel/Meetings:

No travel.

Zoom, Zoom, Zoom meetings galore.

~ Sheryl

Sheryl L. Mase
MMLL director