

Mid-Michigan Library League Director's Report May 2020

Special Note: On March 16, 2020, Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued [Executive Order 2020-9](#), directing the temporary closure of many public places (bars, restaurants, theaters, museums, etc.) including public libraries. See the pandemic resources posted on the website at <https://mml.org>.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many things have changed in our world. Public libraries have been closed for nine weeks, and this is week ten. There have been extensions of the *Stay Home/Stay Safe* order and many executive orders since. The current ending date of extension that includes libraries is May 28 ([Executive Order 2020-69](#)).

Many cancellations have been announced, including the annual ALA conference which is now going virtual, June 24-26, see <https://2020.alavirtualevent.org>. The Olympics were postponed by a year, many professional sports are on hold, as are major festivals and gatherings. MeLCat statewide resource sharing is currently suspended, as is the RIDES statewide delivery.

Libraries must all create *COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plans* before they can re-open, and all are working on their re-opening plans and any policies that must be approved by their Boards. Examples are being shared, and we expect Clare Membiela will create a template for use by those who cannot afford to pay for their policy creation by an attorney. Anne Seuryneck of Foster, Swift, Taylor & Smith in Grand Rapids has offered trainings and much support as well.

Hand sanitizer, face masks, nitrile gloves, and touchless thermometers have been ordered on behalf of member libraries, and we are working out distribution of these materials. The PPE is in high demand, so we are doing our best to get supplies on hand for library re-opening.

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.

Advocacy:

- The Michigan Library Association [Advocacy Day](#) that was set for Wednesday April 22, 2020 was cancelled.

- The American Library Association [Legislative Day](#) in Washington, D.C. that was to take place May 4-5, 2020 was cancelled.
- Instead, these organizations have sent out information on how to advocate with legislators electronically. The CARES Act and other necessary funding mechanisms are being set in place, with nearly \$1 million in LSTA funding coming to Michigan.

Continuing Education:

- The Loleta Fyan Small & Rural Libraries Conference that was to be held at the Grand Traverse Resort April 13-15, 2020 was cancelled. Online programs are being created from content that was scheduled for the conference. “SRLC Presents” events are listed on the Library of Michigan CE calendar, <http://www.michigan.gov/libraryCE>.
- The Beginning Workshop was cancelled and rescheduled for May 12-14, 2021.
- The Storytelling for Presenters workshops were presented in two locations – Alden and Ludington. The final two had to be cancelled, as did the HR workshop that was to happen May 14th at the Cadillac library. Brian Mortimore is open to rescheduling for the fall.
- 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 – created a document on considerations for reopening libraries, posted here: <https://tinyurl.com/mcda-covid>.
- Weekly opportunities for webinars and Zoom meetings have been included in the “pandemic” newsletters, which have been compiled weekly in April and May. These are posted on the website with the newsletter archives.

eResources:

- The [Up North Digital/OverDrive](#) consortium is doing well under reorganization. It is a valuable resource at all times, but especially while libraries are closed and MeLCat is not running.
- The RBdigital collection of over 30,000 instantly downloadable eAudiobooks available to all members of MMLL. *Don’t forget to put the link on your website and let patrons know about this service! <https://wmlpmi.rbdigital.com/>. It has been under-utilized during this time!
- Also at the same link via RBdigital is Transparent Language Online (TLO), a great resource for language learning that is being used more frequently since libraries have closed.

Grants:

- Both rounds of the mini-grant program have been awarded (<https://www.mml.org/a/grants>). Unfortunately, due to the number of cancelled events and uncertainty, many of the projects will not work out (summer reading kick-off performers, travel to conferences, etc.). The committee is in agreement that those funded libraries may substitute another project so they may still receive funding.
- The CARES Act grant program was announced for Michigan libraries to fund PPE supplies and service, and digital inclusion supplies and service. <http://mi.gov/LSTA>
- The H.O.P.E. grant from Michigan Humanities is open to libraries and will fund up to \$10,000 for operational funding. MMLL received \$5,000 to assist with RIDES payments for members. <https://www.michiganhumanities.org/michigan-humanities-organizations-pandemic-emergency-grants-h-o-p-e/>

Tech Assistance:

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

Member Libraries:

- Most libraries have retained staff who are working at home, with very minimal time spent at the library on essential tasks, such as doing payroll and paying bills.
- The Luther Area Public Library is currently without a director. I have been working with Jody Lucas to assist with the website and Zoom Board meetings.
- The Reed City Area Public Library is currently without a director. Jennifer Thorson is interim.
- The Chase Public Library laid off the director during library closure.
- The LeRoy Public Library hired a new director, Laura Jacobson-Pentces. Sigrid Robertson will retire after training Laura.
- Leelanau Township Library has a new director – Cora Schaeff.
- Bellaire hired Cindi Place after Jane Gyulveszi retired.
- Morton Township hired Juliane Schafer after Mary Ann Lenon retired.

In the News:

- To date 91,060 people have died in the United States from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Michigan has seen 4,891 deaths and 51,142 confirmed cases so far.
- 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.

Other:

The Library of Michigan updated the Public Library Financial Management Guide and added a series of short videos as well. You can find the new guide and the video series at https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/0,9327,7-381-88855_89735_89754---,00.html.

Travel/Meetings:

4/14/20 – Weekly informal directors’ meetings (Advisory Council) have been held via Zoom.
5/6/20 – Northern Latitudes Distillery – picked up 7 cases (4 gallons each) of hand sanitizer(!)
Zoom, Zoom, Zoom meetings galore.

~Sheryl

Sheryl L. Mase
MMLL director