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*Library of Michigan's Quarterly Newsletter*

Summer 2007

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# News from Nancy

State Librarian Nancy R. Robertson

Open the newspaper, flip on the radio, or turn on the TV these days and chances are you're in for a dose of doom and gloom. To hear some of the local media tell it, Michigan is the land of vanishing opportunity and bleak horizons. While I will concede there is ample cause for concern in the Great Lakes State, I would also like to point out there is real reason for optimism and more than a few pats on the back, and our libraries have much to do with that!



In early June, I attended – along with about 200 community supporters – the dedication of the newly designed and greatly expanded Alma Public Library. Dedications like these are, by their very nature, inspiring: a fresh start, a new perspective. They also remind me to maintain sharp focus on the many, many good things happening daily at Michigan libraries, despite the collective challenges our statewide community faces. In spite of the reality of said challenges – severe budget cuts, staffing issues, reductions in materials and programming support, and difficulty voicing our relevance in changing times – the positive spin, the positive reality, is that Michigan's libraries continue to matter to Michigan residents, and for very good reason.

Many communities celebrate libraries for their architectural beauty. Libraries are often praised for the sheer volume of their collections, the growing square footage of their buildings, or the number of residents with library cards. These, certainly, are measures of success.

However, it really all comes down to one thing: the customer experience. Whether a patron is in your building or paying a virtual visit through your homepage, he or she must “leave the library” a satisfied customer. When libraries effectively provide – and often predict – what the customer needs, libraries don't have to argue their relevance, they simply exemplify it!

Michigan libraries of all types are already doing the right things when it comes to building customer loyalty. By reaching out to residents and demonstrating just how much libraries can and do serve customer needs, the more involved the community becomes in the well-being of the library.

Many Michigan libraries are creating programming and activities for children, 'tweens and teens, as well as for the expanding population of seniors and the impending wave of baby-boomer retirees, a population that will have new needs and expectations.

Most Michigan libraries provide common gathering areas (many including wireless Internet access) for patrons, as well as for community organizations and business groups who might have, in the past, thought that the library was a **good** thing, but not necessarily a place they would likely utilize themselves.

We're all keenly aware of the serious challenges facing Michigan. I believe Michigan's libraries are an essential part of the solution. In shifting from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, libraries are there. We provide the information Michigan residents need to help them re-tool their careers, research job markets and educational opportunities, and navigate unemployment as smoothly as possible.

I can't say everything I want to say in this small space. Suffice it to say that Michigan's libraries are in these ways, and so many more, elemental to the sustainability of our local communities and our state. To me, that's very good news indeed.

*Nancy*

## Delegation Advocates for Michigan Libraries in Washington, D.C.

A group from Michigan was among the 420 library supporters from 47 states who took part in the 33<sup>rd</sup> National Library Legislative Day in Washington, D.C. in May, speaking to members of Congress about what libraries need to help them continue serving as key resources for their communities.



*U.S. Representative Candice Miller (left) and Suburban Library Cooperative Director Tammy Turgeon*

Michigan's delegates – Detroit Public Library Public Affairs Officer Beth Bogdanski, Public Libraries of Saginaw Director Trish Burns, Ed McBride and Helen Wilbur of Thomson Gale, Cyndi Phillip of Grand Haven Area Public Schools and Suburban Library Cooperative Director Tammy Turgeon – especially promoted MeL and talked about the importance of e-rate funding to their libraries.

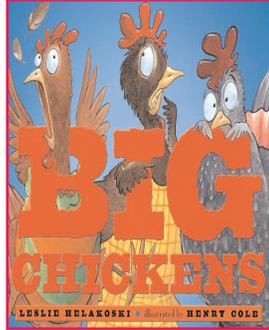


## Michigan Reads! 2007, Featuring Big Chickens, Kicks Off Aug. 25

*\*Cover reprinted by the permission of Penguin Young Readers Group*

This year's Michigan Reads!, the annual one-state, one-children's-book program presented by the Library of Michigan and sponsored by Target, is coming your way in just a couple of months.

*Big Chickens* – written by Michigan resident Leslie Helakoski and illustrated by Henry Cole – will be the featured book for 2007. The age range for the program has been expanded this year to include children up to second grade.



Michigan Reads! 2007 will kick off with the Target Children's Book Festival, presented by Target and the Detroit Free Press, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Aug. 25th at Kensington Metropark in Milford. The event is free and open to the public. An anticipated crowd of 5,000 will enjoy this day featuring readings, storytelling, demonstrations, appearances by national/local authors and story characters, activity workshops and book-related merchandise. *Big Chickens* author and illustrator, Leslie Helakoski and Henry Cole, will be on hand to engage the audience with their book and "everything chickens!"

During the month of September, Helakoski will tour the state, presenting Michigan Reads!-sponsored programs at libraries and schools. The schedule, once finalized, will be posted on the Michigan Reads! Web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/michiganreads>.

*Big Chickens* follows four timid chickens on a humorous romp through the woods, as they manage to overcome obstacles and ultimately conquer their fears. For more information about this book and author Leslie Helakoski, visit <http://www.helakoskibooks.com>.

The Library of Michigan is partnering with other organizations in order to reach a wider audience and ensure the continued growth and success of this program in years to come. A very generous sponsorship from Target allows us to provide Michigan Reads! kits on a widespread basis.

In early August, public libraries, Head Start and Michigan School Readiness programs, and schools serving grades K-2 will receive kits that will include:

- a hardcover copy of the book, *Big Chickens*;
- a brochure on early literacy for parents and caregivers;

- the Resource and Programming Guide (produced specifically for Michigan Reads!);
- a set of stickers to give to kids as they participate; a poster; and an insert on starting a book club (by Target).

Program materials and other resources also will be available on the Michigan Reads! Web page (<http://www.michigan.gov/michiganreads>).

Michigan Reads! began in 2004 as a new approach to the community-wide, "one book" programs gaining popularity throughout the country. While most of these efforts focus on adults or teens, Michigan Reads! is unique in that it aims to boost early-childhood literacy by featuring a book geared specifically toward young children. The program aims to promote the value and benefits of reading early and often to children, to encourage family bonding through reading and to increase awareness and usage of Michigan's public libraries as excellent resources for learning.

Annually, a title is selected based on literary merit, readability and appeal to children. Preference is given to a Michigan or Great Lakes children's author. Previous titles have included *Barnyard Song* by Rhonda Gowler Greene in 2004 and *Bed Hogs* by Kelly DiPucchio in 2006.

## Unlocking Your Family's History: 2007 Abrams Genealogy Seminar July 20-21



*Some of the 340 attendees of the Library of Michigan's March 2007 genealogy seminar*

The Library of Michigan, in collaboration with the Mid-Michigan Genealogical Society, will present the 2007 Abrams Genealogy Seminar on Friday, July 20 and Saturday, July 21. Designed to help both beginning and experienced genealogy researchers get the most out of their work at the Library of Michigan and throughout the region, the seminar will feature a keynote address by Colleen Fitzpatrick, author of *Forensic Genealogy* and *DNA & Genealogy*.

Participants can mix and match programs from two seminar tracks:

- Resources available in the Abrams Foundation Historical Collection at the Library of Michigan.
- Genealogical and historical collections at selected libraries and archives from across the state.

The \$35 registration fee includes attendance for the seminar and keynote address, a boxed lunch on Saturday and a seminar syllabus highlighting resources in each subject area.

Mid-Michigan Genealogical Society members are eligible for a discounted registration rate of \$20. To register, please print and mail the registration form, available at [http://michigan.gov/documents/hal/lm\\_Abrams\\_Registration07\\_197569\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/hal/lm_Abrams_Registration07_197569_7.pdf).

The seminar will include tours of the Library of Michigan and Archives of Michigan, as well as sessions on the following areas of interest.

- *Beginning Your Genealogical Research*
- *Do's and Don'ts of Researching Cemetery Records*
- *Finding Ontario and Quebec Vital Records at the Library of Michigan*
- *Genealogical Research at the Library of Michigan*
- *Genealogical Research in the Kalamazoo Area*
- *Genealogy Research with Naturalization Records*
- *How Can a Family History Center Help You?*
- *Navigating the 1890 Gap: Michigan State Census Records*
- *Research at the Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library*
- *Research at the Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University*
- *Researching There When You Are Here*
- *Treasures of the Archives of Michigan*
- *Utilizing the J. William Gorski Polish Genealogy and Historical*
- *Collections at the Library of Michigan and Archives of Michigan*
- *Your Best Find: Share Your Success Stories*

To learn more about these sessions or to register, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/familyhistory>. For more information about the seminar, contact Randy Riley or Kris Rzepczynski at (517) 373-1300, TTY at (517) 373-1592 or the Michigan Relay Center: (800) 649-3777.

## Nominate Your Library for \$5,000 State Librarian's Excellence Award

Does your library provide top-notch service to its customers? If you can answer "yes" to that question, your library could be the next recipient of the prestigious State Librarian's Excellence Award, presented by the Library of Michigan Foundation. One Michigan library that exemplifies customer service will win \$5,000 in privately raised funds and a distinctive trophy. Two libraries also will receive Citations of Excellence, which come with a \$1,000 prize and a small trophy.

The awards will be presented Nov. 8 at the state librarian's luncheon during the Michigan Library Association annual conference at the Lansing Center.

Hantz Group, Inc. will, for the fourth year in a row, sponsor the State Librarian's Excellence Award. Edward Surovell Realtors will sponsor the Citations of Excellence.

All types of libraries throughout Michigan are eligible to receive the State Librarian's Excellence Award and the Citation of Excellence. The nomination deadline is Sept. 7, and nominations may come from library directors, trustees, administrators or members of the public.

Criteria for the award include: demonstrating that the library provides new, innovative and superior services to its customers in a cost-effective manner, with a can-do attitude and by always delivering on promises; demonstrating the library's commitment to high standards of service through staff dealings with customers and synergy within the staff through a coordinated approach to supporting customers; and demonstrating that the library is a team player through its collaborations in the community.

The full nomination packet – including nomination form, criteria and submission guidelines – will be available on the Web at <http://www.michigan.gov/lmfoundation> or by calling the Library of Michigan Foundation office at (517) 373-1297. Entries should be sent to:

Library of Michigan Foundation  
P.O. Box 30159  
702 W. Kalamazoo St.  
Lansing, MI 48909

This year's selections will be determined by a committee including the state librarian and one representative each from the Michigan Academic Library Council, the Library of Michigan, the Michigan Association for Media in Education, the Michigan Library Association Trustee Roundtable, the Special Libraries Association and the public library community.

## Saluting the 2007 Michigan Notable Books

The Library of Michigan Foundation's annual "Night for Notables" on April 14 was a rousing success. The evening began with a reception at Governor Jennifer Granholm's residence in



Left to right: First Gentleman Daniel G. Mulhern, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, former Governor William G. Milliken and Helen Milliken.

honor of the 2007 Michigan Notable Books and their authors. The authors had the opportunity to mingle with Governors Granholm and Milliken and to see their Notable Books added to the library at the governor's residence.

Following the reception, a sellout crowd enjoyed a lively Night for Notables program featuring former Michigan Governor William G. Milliken and Dave Dempsey, author of 2007



Michigan Notable Books authors attending the 2007 Night for Notables. Back row, left to right: Jeff Alexander, Gijsbert (Nick) van Frankenhuyzen, Dave Dempsey, Keith Taylor, Dean Kuipers, Steve Lehto, Loren Estleman. Front row, left to right: Gloria Whelan, Lee Boisvert, Karl Bohnak, Anna-Lisa Cox, Martin Herschok, Paul Finkelman, Sue Stauffacher, Alison Swan, Anne-Marie Oomen.

Michigan Notable Book "William G. Milliken: Michigan's Passionate Moderate." Guests also had the opportunity to meet and have books signed by many of the Notables authors. A portion of the evening's proceeds will be used to support the Library of Michigan's special collections and programs.

Throughout April and May, many of the 2007 Michigan Notable Books authors also took their stories on the road, visiting libraries throughout the state – 67 stops in all – to talk with the public about their books. The 2007 Michigan Notable Books program was sponsored by Borders, Cooley Law School, ProQuest, Auto-Owners Insurance Company, Fifth Third Bank, LaSalle Bank, Daniel and Victoria Arbour, the Library of

Michigan, the Library of Michigan Foundation, the Michigan Center for the Book, the Michigan Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Schuler Books & Music. Media partners for this project were WKAR and the *Lansing State Journal*.

For more information about Michigan Notable Books program, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/notablebooks>.

## Children's Author Sarah Stewart Wins 2007 Michigan Author Award

The Michigan Library Association Author Award committee has honored Sarah Stewart, author of such beloved children's books as *The Gardener* and *The Library*, with the 2007 Michigan Author Award. Sponsored by the Michigan Center for the Book – a program of the Library of Michigan – and the Michigan Library Association, the award is presented annually to a Michigan author in recognition of his or her literary merit.

Sarah Stewart has written five children's books – *The Money Tree*, *The Library*, *The Gardener*, *The Journey* and *The Friend* – all illustrated by her husband David Small. Her books, especially *The Gardener*, have been recognized with many honors, including a Christopher Award, a First Place Juvenile Literary Award from the Friends of American Writers and selection as a Caldecott Honor Book, American Booksellers Book of the Year (ABBY) Award Honor Book, *New York Times Book Review* Notable Children's Book of the Year, *Publishers Weekly* Best Children's Book of the Year, *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year and American Library Association Notable Children's Book.

Stewart said that she has always been fascinated by books and that her favorite childhood havens included her local library and a large closet in her parents' house where she would read and write poetry. "I am still the same day-dreamy, shy child who, more than anything else wanted to write some sequence of elegant language that would, upon being read, change the world," she said.

Born in Texas, Stewart now lives in Michigan, in a historic home on a bend of the St. Joseph River, where she continues to pursue her lifelong passions – reading, writing and gardening.

The Michigan Author Award will be presented at the Michigan Library Association "READ Between the Lines" conference in Lansing on Friday, Nov. 9. Tickets are available to attend the award presentation luncheon and hear Sarah Stewart speak; for more information, visit the Michigan Library Association Web site at <http://www.mla.lib.mi.us>.

For more information on the Michigan Author Award, please see <http://www.michigan.gov/mcxfb> or <http://www.mla.lib.mi.us/maac>.

# Library of Michigan Loses Longtime Staff Member

Brent Duncan, a 30-year employee of the Library of Michigan (LM) Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (SBPH), died on May 15, 2007 after many years of battling childhood-onset diabetes.



Brent started working at LM as a permanent employee Oct. 18, 1976 as a library assistant. He had worked the previous two summers (1975 and 1976) as a temporary employee. Brent, married, earned a degree in agricultural economics from Michigan State University (MSU), and had a son (Matt) and a daughter (Katie) while working at the state library. Matt and Katie were both students at MSU at the time of his death. His wife, Kim, continues to teach at Elmhurst Elementary School in Lansing.

Colleagues and co-workers admired Brent for his respectful and caring attitude. He helped library peers and patrons with patience and a great sense of humor. Brent was a wonderful person to work with. He will be deeply missed. For those who wish, donations can be made to the Michigan Kidney Foundation or the American Diabetes Association.

year old on June 30! Shortly before that, on June 20, MeL celebrated the addition of its 2,000<sup>th</sup> resource – the Great Lakes Folk Festival, added by MeL selector Lucy Roehrig of the Novi Public Library.

MeL would like thank all of the Best of the Web selectors for their efforts in reaching this goal.

MeL Best of the Web focuses on Web sites that are Michigan-centric, that is, resources about our state or some aspect of Michigan's people, economy, culture, environment, health or government. Also included are national and international resources particularly useful to, or that add to the quality of life of, Michigan residents.

## Visit Michigan with MeL!

MeL Best of the Web offers information on a wide variety of Michigan festivals - art festivals, film festivals, book festivals, gizzard fests, agricultural and county fair locators and more. MeL has a full tourism section devoted to highlighting Michigan as a travel and tourism destination, from the Tahquamenon Falls Wilderness Excursion in the U.P. to the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids to the Detroit Science Center.

Check out the great summertime destinations Michigan has to offer through MeL Best of the Web. You can search across all the categories at once by clicking on the button labeled "Click here to search all of Best of the Web" at the top of the Best of the Web page. And if you need a Michigan travel or guide book, be sure to check out MeLCat.

## *MeL—The Library Made with Me in Mind*

## MeL Best of the Web Marks First Year, 2000th Resource Added

MeL Best of the Web, the librarian-selected collection of Internet resources available at <http://mel.org>, celebrated two milestones this summer. First, MeL Best of the Web turned one

### MeL by the Numbers

As of June 2007:

- Total libraries are participating in MeLCat: 141 (34 academic, 101 public, 17 K-12, 1 special and 1 tribal)
- Items available in MeLCat: 23 million (7.3 million bibliographic records)
- Average weekly MeLCat requests: 6,562
- So far in 2007, MeL has had 144,360 requests, with a fulfillment rate of 89.9 percent

## 'Rural Libraries 2.0' Recap

A total of 482 people attended the 2007 "Rural Libraries 2.0" conference – held at the Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City May 7-9 – with about 400 taking part in the sessions that covered the Rural Library Sustainability Project (RLSP) curriculum, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. RLSP (<http://www.webjunction.org/do/Navigation?category=11131>) is WebJunction's three-year project designed to provide rural library staff with resources to address their unique challenges and responsibilities.



Now that the conference is over, we want to keep the conversation going. Attendees can participate in online follow-up discussions on WebJunction's Michigan Forum for Rural and Small Libraries at <http://webjunction.org/forums/forum.jspa?forumID=332>. The conference's blog, at <http://rlc2007.blogspot.com>, continues to be updated as well.

Conference keynote speakers included:

- bloggers Michael Stephens of Tame The Web (<http://www.tametheweb.com>) and Jenny Levine of The Shifted Librarian (<http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com>);
- Maureen Burns, a local favorite who inspired us with her humor and words of wisdom;
- Jo Dereske, the Michigan native who writes the Miss Zukas mystery series about, you guessed it, a librarian;
- Josie Parker, Michigan Library Association president-elect and Ann Arbor District Library director, who shared her insights about Michigan's libraries and communities;
- and Roger Mendel, director of the Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative, who – in keeping with the traditional close of the conference – read a letter written by Marian T. Librarian from Lake Neverwuz. Check it out on the conference blog! You will laugh. Hard.



Barbara Platts of Munson Healthcare presents "Serving Health Information Needs in an Era of Consumer-Driven Healthcare."



From left to right: Maureen Burns, conference keynote speaker; Sheryl Mase, director of statewide services at the Library of Michigan; and State Librarian Nancy Robertson.

Attendees at the 2007 Rural Libraries conference.

## Web Junction: An Online Community for Library Staff



Where minds meet.™

WebJunction (<http://webjunction.org>), a cooperative of library staff sharing online resources, aims to enable relevant, vibrant, sustainable libraries for every community. The site is defined and created by the people who visit, participate, and contribute resources, comments and ideas. WebJunction's community of library staff shares your needs and concerns and can provide useful assistance.

### What can I do at WebJunction?

- Take an online course (most are free!) to learn how to use a variety of software products as well as how to design a Web site, how to search the Internet, how to reach underserved youth and many other topics.

- Keep up your professional skills and certification level with continuing education classes.
- Get advice on current areas of interest, such as setting up a wireless network in your library, how to write a grant proposal, how to market your library, how to troubleshoot your public computers and how to encourage participation at your library.
- Discover funding sources you may not know about for library programs and materials.
- Stay in touch with colleagues and stay updated on current issues of interest to librarians around the state and the country, such as the USA PATRIOT Act, CIPA and filtering, and collaborating with other libraries and institutions.
- Read other libraries' policies and procedures for ideas when writing or updating your own.
- Keep up with the political, the funny, and the latest on BlogJunction.
- See sample job descriptions from other states for a variety of positions ranging from assistant director to maintenance to young adult librarian.
- Explore various technological options for your library and get advice on how to prioritize projects.
- Learn about monthly topics such as dealing with difficult situations, marketing services, and buying hardware and software.
- Post questions or ideas for articles, topics, resources or columns.

### Why should I register at WebJunction?

Registration is free. WebJunction does not share information about you with any third party. If you register, you can enroll in online courses, participate in online discussions as well as evaluations that help shape WebJunction's future, receive the WebJunction e-newsletter and communicate with other WebJunction members through private messages.

Even if you do not register, you can read messages posted in discussions and use articles, how-tos, handouts and worksheets.

## Summer Reading Program 2007 and 2008

Libraries across Michigan are in full swing of the Summer Reading Program, with activities, events and celebrations related to the theme **Get a Clue @ YOUR LIBRARY** for kids and **YNK — You Never Know @ YOUR LIBRARY** for teenagers. The Library of Michigan has teamed up with 40 other states in the national Collaborative Summer Library Program (<http://www.cslpreads.org>) using the same theme for 2007. We are collecting statistics for 2007 Summer Reading Program on our Web site at [http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17451\\_18668\\_34169—,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17451_18668_34169—,00.html).

### Theme for Summer 2008

The general concept for 2008 will be bugs/garden/food, with slogans of *Catch the Reading Bug* for kids and *Metamorphosis at your Library* for teens.

## Legal-Ease

### A Few Words About Public Libraries and MPAA Ratings

By Lance M. Werner

Movie ratings from the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) generate some concerns among my friends working in Michigan's public libraries. I occasionally get questions from the field about the legality and public expectation of libraries to prohibit minors from circulating movies with PG, PG-13, R and NC-17 ratings.

#### MPAA Ratings

The MPAA is a private organization whose activities are not governed by any state or federal law. Movie ratings are offered as a service to MPAA members through the MPAA-administered Classification and Ratings Administration (CRA). It is CRA that assigns a particular rating to a movie as a guide of age appropriateness for viewers. Filmmakers who wish their films to be rated submit them voluntarily to CRA for review and movie rating assignment.

## A Question of Authority

Whether libraries are obligated to have circulation practices consistent with MPAA ratings rests on the question of legal authority. I have repeated one fundamental legal premise time and again regarding library authority – that is, as governmental entities, library boards, employees and agents have no inherent powers. They possess only those limited powers given them by the state constitution or by state statute or powers that are necessarily implied from there. *Hanselman v Kileen*, 419 Mich 168, 351 NW2d 544 (1984). Translation: library boards, directors, staff and volunteers can only do something if there is a law that says they can do that thing.

Determining the legal authority to act is important for two primary reasons in relation to this question.

The first reason is because the question of ratings often boils down to whether something is considered obscene or harmful to minors (both categories of speech are not constitutionally protected). What is notable is that the authority to determine whether or not something is obscene or harmful to minors rests solely with a court. Neither library boards/employees/agents nor the MPAA can make the decision, because there is no legal authority to do so. The MPAA rating is, and has been intended only as, a guide and never as a legal mandate.

The second reason that authority is fundamental to this question is that although Michigan's public libraries must adhere to section 6 of the Michigan Library Privacy Act (1984 PA 455, MCL 397.606), which requires libraries to take steps to prevent minors from accessing via the Internet obscene or sexually explicit material that is harmful to minors, it does not authorize libraries to restrict minors' access to other library materials. In fact, because there is no legal authority that enables libraries to restrict minors' access to library materials that fall outside of the purview of section 6, restricting materials could conceivably be considered an infringement of minors' constitutional rights.

## Conclusion

Let me be clear, I am not advocating furnishing minors with materials rated PG-13, R or NC -17. I think that circulation of these materials should be administered in accordance with parental expectations, by the parent, not by the library. Although there may be some public expectation that Michigan's public libraries should act *in loco parentis* with respect to restricting minors' access to movies, there is no legal authority to do so.

If you have any questions, please contact the Library of Michigan's library law specialist at (517) 373-1299.

# Many Libraries Have Perfected the Art of Attracting Customers

*by Sarah Lapshan, public information officer,  
Department of History, Arts and Libraries*

With the proliferation of home computers, handheld devices, cell phones and Wi-Fi, most of today's information consumers have developed a "gotta have it now" mindset. Unfortunately, some have adopted the attitude that libraries are where the books are, nothing more.

That way of thinking has prompted staff and administrators at many libraries to focus – and rightly so – on the array of services, programs and learning opportunities that should make just about any library customer stop and ask, pleasantly surprised, "I can do *that* at my library?" Yes, you can! In some cases, it is the unexpected that will bring lapsed customers and new customers into your library.

A number of libraries have ventured out into newer territory while some have been doing it for decades: inviting more of the community into their doors through the use of art exhibits and programming and strategic partnerships that make such arts and culture programming possible and sustainable for repeat engagements.

Joan Smith of the Hope Borbas Okemos Library (part of the Lansing area's Capital Area District Library) said her library has been showcasing the arts for more than three decades, with the scope and number of exhibits and partnerships growing over the years.

"The Okemos Library has partnered with the Okemos Art Patrons for many years on a month-long art exhibit each fall and an awards reception," said Smith. "The OAP assist the Okemos School District's art teachers, enabling them to bring many forms of visual arts to the nine district schools.

They sponsor and produce a community calendar each year, which is sold to raise funds for their projects."



*Librarian Eric Stanton, with members of the winning "Battle of the Books" team, in front of the August First Sunday Gallery Walk quilt exhibit at the Okemos Library.*

Smith said the art used in that calendar comes from the art of K–12 students who have been specially selected for the honor. That artwork forms the basis of the Okemos Library’s October art exhibit, with displays in the children’s, teen and main parts of the library. The students’ teachers, friends and family are invited to a reception honoring the artists’ achievements, drawing in many first-time library visitors and demonstrating in a very public way the cooperation between the library and local school district.

The Okemos Library has also participated in the Greater Lansing area’s First Sunday Gallery Walk, which showcases galleries, museums, libraries, community venues and a variety of special exhibitions.

“I work with a committee of local artists to adjudicate and schedule the exhibitions, which have focused on Michigan artists but have also – because of our proximity to Michigan State University – drawn artists from throughout the U.S. and from other countries,” said Smith.

Smith said the library works hard to utilize art that is of interest to the broadest base of patrons and that complements library programs and events. “In the summers, we work with artists who appeal to families and all of the children who are at the library for the summer reading program,” said Smith.

She noted that the library’s first gallery walk exhibit showcased quilt artist Linda Kuhlman, who creates children’s picture book characters and scenes that she utilizes in her storytelling. “Her exhibit was so popular that we have asked her to coordinate a quilt exhibit for us each August,” said Smith. “Each of her quilt exhibits has a theme and each brings new patrons into the library.” There’s the added benefit that, because of such exhibitions, professional artists are able to share their work with new audiences and further sustain their livelihood.

Folks at the Farmington Community Library (FCL) know a thing or two about having art for patrons’ sake! An eight-week exhibit featuring an extensive collection of original paintings by Joye Opoku Ofei, a native of Ghana, West Africa, was a true lesson in collaboration.

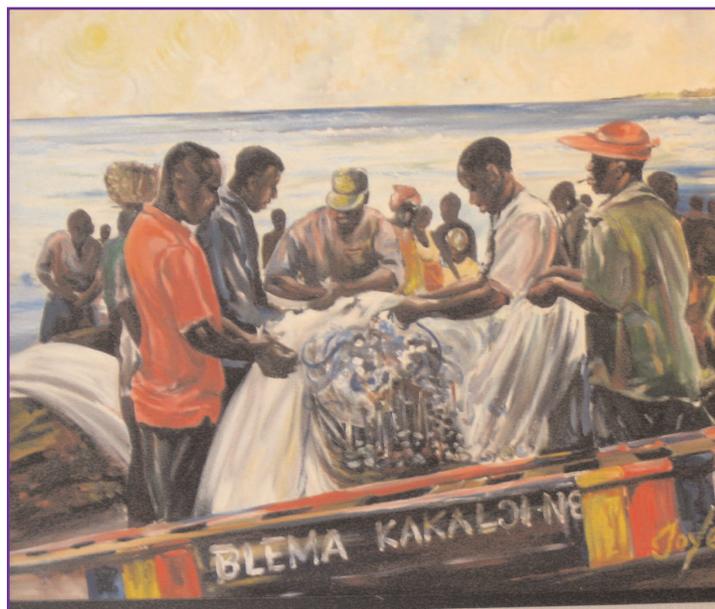
Through the initiative of a patron, Rochelle Danquah, who also happens to be the director of education and public programs at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, this unique exhibit was born. Mr. Ofei had done several art workshops and exhibits at the museum and when library staff extended the offer to exhibit at the library, Mr. Ofei was very enthusiastic, offering more than 40 original paintings for display.

The paintings depicted still-lives, frenzied dancing, ceremonial events, seascapes, landscapes and many portraits of people. “Mr. Ofei covered our walls with unbelievably vibrant colors and even provided a brief description of each painting to give context,” said Tina Theeke, FCL director. “With his help, our facility was transformed into a sunny African village and visitors spent several wonderful weeks among the people, places and culture of West Africa.”

Theeke noted that the exhibit was held in cooperation with Farmington public schools and the community’s Multicultural Multiracial Council, and perfectly timed to coincide with Black History Month.

Exhibit planners took things a step further, adding a program of West African dance performed by local troupe, Thiosane Performing Arts Company. Comprised of 8- to 13-year-old students, Thiosane danced, sang and drummed for a standing-room-only crowd in the library’s auditorium. All in all, the African-themed programming resulted in 300 new library visitors, Theeke estimated.

Just as Michigan’s economy struggles to right and redefine itself, libraries will have to continue to make the case to the public that libraries are not only relevant but they’re doing more than ever before. Libraries are – and should be recognized as – so much more than “where the books are.” As you plan for programming and exhibits for the coming years, consider giving local artists a seat at the table. You’ll be glad you did!



A piece of original artwork by Ghana native Joye Opoku Ofei, whose work was displayed as part of an exhibit at Farmington Community Library.

# Happening at HAL

## Experience 'Pure Michigan' This Summer at HAL's Fun Family Destinations

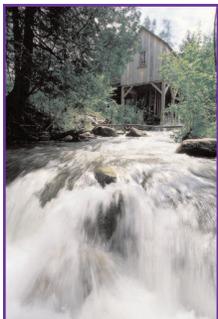
Looking for some fun, educational family destinations to suggest to patrons, or maybe for your own summer vacation plans? The Department of History, Arts and Libraries (HAL, at <http://www.michigan.gov/hal>) is a great place to start. Families can take a fascinating voyage through Michigan's past by visiting the sites of the Michigan Historical Museum System, Mackinac State Historic Parks or Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve.

Step back in time with Civil War, World War II and Revolutionary War-era encampments, watch vintage baseball games, see woodcarvers and blacksmiths at work, enjoy an old-fashioned shopping experience at the new Walker Mercantile, check out the amazing new technology of "Science on a Sphere" at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center and much more. Click on the "Experience Pure Michigan" button on the HAL home page to learn more about all the fun summer events at these sites throughout Michigan.

### MACKINAC STATE HISTORIC PARKS

<http://www.mackinacparks.com>

Beauty and history await you at Mackinac State Historic Parks. Historic sites include two forts, a lighthouse, a water-powered sawmill, a blacksmith shop, homes, and churches where you can step into the past and experience time periods from the 1770s to the 1910s. Our natural sites contain some of the most striking scenery in Michigan. Mackinac State Historic Parks are situated at the crossroads of the Great Lakes, where the Straits of Mackinac separate Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas.



*The creek powers the water-driven sawmill at Historic Mill Creek.*



### MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM SYSTEM

[www.michiganhistory.org](http://www.michiganhistory.org)

*Costumed interpreters at Fort Wilkins help visitors learn about mid-19th-century army life on the northern frontier.*

This summer, discover the fun and fascination of Michigan's past at a Michigan Historical Museum site near you. The 11 museums and historic sites affiliated with the Michigan

Historical Museum in Lansing - located throughout the state from Cambridge Junction to Copper Harbor - offer unique and enjoyable experiences for visitors of all ages to explore Michigan's rich heritage. These museums and historic sites tell the stories of the people who shaped this state - iron miners, French missionaries, lighthouse keepers, Victorian-era children and others. These stories, along with a variety of family events, craft demonstrations and hands-on activities, help visitors make a personal connection to the past.

### THUNDER BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY AND UNDERWATER PRESERVE -

[www.michigan.gov/thunderbay](http://www.michigan.gov/thunderbay)

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve protects one of the nation's most historically significant collections of shipwrecks. Preserved by the cold, fresh water of Lake Huron, these submerged cultural resources are time capsules linking us to our collective maritime past. The 448-square-mile site, the only freshwater national marine sanctuary in the U.S., contains a collection of over 100 shipwrecks, spanning over a century of Great Lakes shipping history. The sanctuary's Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in Alpena offers visitors the opportunity explore shipwrecks in real time via live video feeds, discover the Great Lakes' rich maritime past through innovative exhibits, and learn how underwater archaeologists work to preserve historic shipwrecks.



*Underwater work at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve.*