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Executive Director Report, October 2023

Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Safety and Security in Illinois Libraries

Following the September 15 meeting with Illinois Library Directors who had experienced threats at their libraries, RAILS organized a second opportunity for RAILS library directors to discuss library safety and security on October 5. My sincere thanks to the directors who attended and shared their experiences in order to help RAILS member library directors prepare for this unprecedented moment. I also wrote a summary of the meeting, including potential takeaways for directors and shared with the Directors List on October 6. Our colleagues at the Illinois Library Association also attended the meeting.

ILA staff are also planning an additional resource for libraries, with RAILS staff Joe Filapek and Dan Bostrom contributing to these efforts.

On October 11, an individual was charged with multiple felonies related to fake bomb threats in the northern suburbs. Skokie police say additional charges may be filed.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is offering a free program "[Responding to & Investigating Hoax Bomb Threats & Swatting](#)" on October 24th at three separate times: 2pm, 4pm, or 7pm. Registration ends on October 23.

I will also be attending the Library Journal Directors Summit preconference on Safety and Security on November 8. I hope to learn more valuable information to share with Illinois libraries.

Banning Book Bans: Comment Period on Public Act 103-0100 Now Open

The Secretary of State's proposed amendments related to [Public Act 103-0100](#) prohibiting book banning appears in the [September 8 issue](#) of the Illinois Register beginning on page 87. The comment period for these proposed amendments runs **through October 25**. RAILS will publicize these proposed amendments to our membership and encourage any feedback on the impacts of these rule changes.

Book Challenges on the Rise: Support Your Freedom to Read Event

I was honored for the opportunity to be a panelist for the Book Challenges on the Rise: Support your Freedom to Read event organized by the Vernon Area Public Library and co-sponsored by more than 75 libraries across Illinois. This October 2 virtual event was moderated by syndicated columnist Heidi Stevens and featured Secretary Alexi Giannoulias, authors Jarrett Dapier and Jasmine Warga, and myself. Discussion focused on the state of book challenges, Illinois' legislative response, and the implications of censorship. More than 700 people attended the event, which was not recorded.

RAILS Minute

The most recent [RAILS Minute](#) focused on several current topics, including Banned Books Week program with Secretary Giannoulias and a reminder to submit public comments on Public Act 103-0100. We also discussed the recent increase in library bomb threats and some developments about statewide broadband access in Illinois. Thanks to Digital Marketing

and Communications Specialist Ola Gronski and Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom for all their continued work on this offering.

Deals & Discounts Webinars/Demos

RAILS members can find information, trial access, and pricing on all deals and discounts by logging into the [RAILS Deals & Discounts page](#).

Swank Group Purchase Sign-Up and Renewal

[Swank](#) Movie Licensing USA offers RAILS public libraries a special, discounted rate for the annual public performance license. RAILS public libraries currently participating in the RAILS group purchase or libraries who are not covered by a Swank license must renew/sign up for the group purchase between October 1-November 30. During the sign-up period, libraries can view pricing and opt-in to the deal by signing into the RAILS [Deals & Discounts page](#). The license is valid from January 1 - December 31, 2024.

BookBrowse for Libraries Sign-Up and Renewal

Now is a great time for RAILS public libraries to join the group purchase for [BookBrowse for Libraries](#), an award-winning readers' advisory resource for librarians and their patrons. The RAILS group annual subscription begins on January 1, but new libraries who sign up between now and November 30 will gain access to BookBrowse for the remainder of 2023 for no additional cost. Libraries will be invoiced for a full year's subscription (January 1-December 31, 2024) for BookBrowse in January.

Career Online High School (COHS)

[Career Online High School](#) is an 18-credit, vocation-based high school completion program. The following table provides the latest information on the use of the program as of September 30.

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
405	177	112	60%/53%

Explore More Illinois Update

[Explore More Illinois](#) is RAILS' statewide online cultural and recreational pass program. As of September 30, 426 Illinois libraries participate: 333 RAILS public libraries and four community colleges, 88 Illinois Heartland Library System public libraries and Chicago Public Library. There are 66 attractions.



In September 2023, 2,288 reservations were made in Explore More Illinois. The most popular downstate and suburban attractions in September were Brookfield Zoo (499), Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe (199), DuPage Children's Museum in Naperville (25), Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford (16), and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield (15). The most popular Chicago attractions in July were the Art Institute of Chicago (440), Museum of Science and Industry (266), Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (245), Field Museum (215), and Chicago Children's Museum (89).

The College of DuPage joined the Explore More Illinois community college pilot program in September and is currently testing with library staff. The pilot program also includes Illinois Central College (Peoria), Lincoln Land Community College (Springfield), and Oakton Community College (Des Plaines/Skokie).

The 40th Chicago International Children's Film Festival joined Explore More Illinois this month.

eRead Illinois Update

The Axis 360 platform that hosted the eRead Illinois collection officially transitioned to the Boundless platform on September 26 and 27. Overall the transition went smoothly. A handful of libraries experienced minor issues. Anna Behm fielded several questions from eRead Illinois member libraries about the transition, as well as how to access support resources.

Anna Beam, Joe Filapek, Monica Harris, and Leila Heath met with Bharat Mirgan, Curt Leppert, and Anna Curtis from Baker & Taylor on September 27 at Burr Ridge. They discussed the Boundless roll out as well as current projects and initiatives.

Baker & Taylor hosted six training webinars – three for school libraries and three for other library types - about Boundless for eRead Illinois member libraries on August 2, 8, 15 and on September 6, 12, and 14. The training incorporated updates Baker & Taylor has made to the platform based on feedback they received from eRead Illinois member libraries. 503 people attended these sessions.

Anna Behm attended PrairieCat's PUG Day on September 29. She gave a demonstration of Baker & Taylor's new Boundless platform including new features and functionality, as well as a general overview of eRead Illinois. Over 60 people attended the presentation.

Use of RAILS E-Resources

eRead Illinois Axis 360 Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
September 2023	20,919	16,178	37,097
FY 2024 (July 2023 – June 2024)	53,398	47,457	100,855

Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
September 2023	1,819
FY 2024	4,810

Find More Illinois

Find More Illinois is an interlibrary loan platform that provides access to a growing number of library holdings in one seamless interface. Libraries of all types and sizes can join, no matter what kind of catalog software they use. Find More Illinois is growing quickly, which makes it an even better resource for all participating libraries to expand the materials available to their patrons.

The new [Find More Illinois webpage](#) is live. The participating libraries page has a new layout which substantially improves navigation, with all participating libraries in a linear list. By clicking on the library's name, a drop down appears that provides the name of each branch, name of municipality, link to library's website, and the name of their shared catalog.

RAILS Social Media Engagement

See the report at the end for info on our September social media engagement efforts.

Models best practices in equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion

It's Not Them, It's Us: Understanding and Addressing the Factors that Negatively Impact the Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention of BIPOC Librarians

This [presentation](#) for RAILS members on September 26 addressed the recruitment, hiring and retention of Black, indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), focusing on what library leaders can do to address these issues in their organizations and how to implement inclusivity and belonging practices in the workplace. The breakout room discussions were not recorded.

RAILS Climate Team Meetings Resume

The RAILS Climate Team continues to work on issues of RAILS internal culture with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion for all RAILS staff. After a summer pause, the group met on October 19 and welcomed four new members to the team. Emphasis is placed on teamwork, a supportive learning environment, sharing of resources, and opportunities for deep discussions. The Climate Team has also been focused on staff engagement in a hybrid organization over multiple locations. The Climate Team works directly with EDI consultant Biz Lindsay-Ryan.

Collaborating for Digital Equity and Inclusion

This [presentation](#) for RAILS members on October 12 focused on how libraries can play an important role in the digital equity and inclusion ecosystem. Topics covered include definitions of digital divide, equity, and inclusion and the relationship between them, real world examples with takeaways, and how to adapt these concepts for your library.

Assist member libraries in preparing for the future

ARSL Conference

From September 20-23, Jessica Barnes, Anna Behm, Joe Filapek, Jody Rubel, and Anne Slaughter attended the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Annual Conference in Wichita, Kansas. Highlights included sessions on how library staff can work with elected officials on library advocacy, revitalizing Friends of the Library groups, dealing with materials challenges, and marketing via email newsletters. Additional favorites included sessions about the practical application of AI tools in the library world and how libraries can use data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau through the American Community Survey. The team also networked with staff from the Illinois Library Association, Illinois Heartland Library System, PrairieCat, the State Librarian of Ohio and RAILS libraries.

AISLE Conference

October 1-3, Anna Behm, Dan Bostrom, Janette Derucki, Joe Filapek, Ola Gronski, Monica Harris, Jody Rubel, and Nikki Zimmerman attended the AISLE conference in Champaign. Anna gave a presentation about eRead Illinois and the role school libraries have played in its success. Dan Bostrom gave a presentation on what RAILS can do for school libraries and library workers, and presented with colleagues from IHLS, the Illinois State Library, and the Illinois Library Association about the School Library Workers Symposium. Janette Derucki presented on the School Library Advocacy Through Education (SLATE) Project. RAILS greeted a number of conference attendees at the RAILS booth throughout the conference.

Broadband for Libraries

Illinois is a leader in support for broadband expansion and digital equity and libraries serve as critical partners in these efforts. CARLI, Illinois Heartland Library System, and RAILS have joined together to build a cohesive statewide library voice related to role of libraries in digital equity and broadband funding. RAILS Director of Technology Anne Slaughter

and IHLS IT Director Troy Brown will present a call to action for all Illinois libraries at the President's Program and the Illinois Library Association's Annual Conference on October 25.

Upcoming Continuing Education Events:

Departures & Arrivals: Succession Planning for Libraries" Webinar, November 2

Libraries are like airports with continual arrivals and departures of key staff. In order to have takeoffs and landings go smoothly, directors and trustees need to prepare for the departure of a director by creating a succession plan. This webinar will cover what the current director and board must prepare prior to the onboarding of a new director. Attendees will receive a checklist for new library directors and a sample succession plan. [Register for this webinar on Thursday, November 2, 10:30–11:30 a.m.](#)

"Conflict De-escalation in the Workplace" Webinar, November 7

Conflict de-escalation requires patience, a willingness to listen, and an ability to see the humanity in everyone. You'll learn how to identify potential conflict before it escalates and how to connect with others by validating and de-escalating their feelings—even if you don't understand them or agree with them. This webinar is on Tuesday, November 7, 9:00–10:30 a.m. [Register via L2.](#)

"Navigating the Legal Landscape of Social Media" Webinar, November 15

Libraries, like other government entities, are increasingly turning to social media as an efficient and effective way to communicate about library meetings, activities, and events. As this practice continues, library officials and employees should be aware of the legal issues that can arise in connection with government use of social media. Attorney Julie Tappendorf will discuss best practices for compliance with the Open Meetings Act, FOIA, records retention laws, copyright protections, and the First Amendment, provide guidance on the moderation of comments, and discuss legal issues with employee and library official activities on social media. This webinar is on Wednesday, November 15, 10-11 a.m. [Register via L2.](#)

Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

eRead 10th Anniversary Party at ILA Annual 2023

We're celebrating the 10th anniversary of eRead Illinois Axis 360 at the ILA Conference in Springfield. Join RAILS and IHLS on **Tuesday, October 24 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.** at BOS Center's North Terrace for some drinks, food, and fun.

Illinois Organizations Co-Host First-Ever School Library Workers Symposium

2023 was the first year for the Illinois School Library Workers Symposium (ISLWS). This event was designed for individuals who are working in school libraries with no formal library education, certified or non-certified, paraprofessionals, and those considering getting a school library endorsement.

This event took place on Wednesday, September 20, 2023. It was held entirely online via Zoom. It was co-hosted by the following organizations:

- Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE)
- Illinois Library Association (ILA)
- Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS)
- Illinois State Library (ISL)
- Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)

Over 300 people registered for this event and more than 250 people participated live. PDH credits were available to those who requested them. Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) issued more than 300 hours of credit. Organizers will be meeting again in November to discuss changes for the 2024 version of this event.

Thank you to the following 2023 planning team members:

- Jeanné Aken
- Dan Bostrom
- Valerie Brunner
- Leah Gregory
- Jenna Griffith
- Fiona Griswold
- Gwen Harrison
- Tracy Hubbard
- Kate Kite
- Ellen Lawrence
- Becca Leslie
- Mary Jo Matousek
- Aimee Miller
- Carol Naughton
- Amanda O'Rourke
- Sia Paganis
- Stacy Palmisano
- Kristin Pekoll
- Megan Rasmussen
- Deb Will

Dan Bostrom Elected to SLA Board of Directors

Two Illinois representatives – RAILS Member Engagement Manager Dan Bostrom and Rachel Cole – were elected to the Special Libraries Association (SLA) Board of Directors last week. Bostrom and Cole were two of the four candidates elected to three-year terms. Their terms will begin in January 2024.

As members of the Board of Directors, Bostrom and Cole will have the opportunity to influence and shape the future of the SLA. They will actively contribute their knowledge and insights to advance the mission of SLA: to promote and strengthen its members through learning, advocacy, and networking initiatives.

October Meeting with AISLE, CPS, IHLS, ILA, and ISL

RAILS has monthly meetings with representatives from the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), Illinois Library Association (ILA), the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) and the Illinois State Library (ISL) to discuss ways we can work collaboratively to support school libraries.

October meeting topics included an update on RAILS' school library data project now called SLATE (School Library Advocacy Through Education), materials challenges and developments with the launch of Unite Against Book Bans in Illinois, an update on Illinois legislation that affects libraries, a review of the September 20 Illinois School Library Workers Symposium, and annual conferences for AISLE and ILA. The next meeting of the group is November 7 at 4 p.m.

RAILS Staff & Service Center News

The Return of RAILS Staff In-Service Day

After a four-year hiatus, RAILS staff across all five service centers came together on October 11 for our staff in-service day. Seventy-eight staff members convened at the Northern Illinois University Conference Center in Rockford for a day focused on fun, engagement, and re-connecting with colleagues. Some of the highlights included:

- A presentation from the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois Therapy Dogs Program. Executive Director Bruce Erickson shared details about the program and how their therapy dogs help put children at ease who are having to testify in court.
- Games! During the morning staff played a rousing game of "RAILS Family Feud" and in the afternoon had the opportunity to participate in a cornhole tournament.

- Delivery staff from all service centers held a joint meeting to receive a demo of the delivery data dashboard designed by our own Wayne Dixon. At the same time, RAILS office staff participated in talk table conversations on a variety of topics including productivity tips, work-life balance strategies, and the potential implication of artificial intelligence.
- Breakout sessions: Staff were able to select from a variety of afternoon breakout sessions with topics including mental health, using Canva, stretching and meditation, and a presentation from the International Women's Baseball Center in Rockford.

With many staff attending their very first RAILS in-service day, it was a wonderful day for strengthening connections and building new relationships!



Looking Ahead to November

- **November Service of the Month and Board Development topics – Anne Slaughter will present on LLSAP Support and Joe Filapek will present on EDI programs and services**



All Staff In-Service Day

October 11, 2023

8:00 to 9:00 am	Breakfast	Room 215/217
9:00 to 9:15 am	Welcome from Monica Harris	Room 215/217
9:15 to 9:45 am	Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois Therapy Dog Program Description on page 2	Room 215/217
9:45 to 10:30 am	Family Feud RAILS Style	Room 215/217
10:30 to 10:45 am	Break	
10:45 am to Noon	Delivery Staff Department Meeting Office Staff Table Talks	Room 100 Room 215/217
Noon to 1:00 pm	Lunch Served	Atrium
1:00 to 1:40 pm	Breakout Session 1 – Choose one. Descriptions on page 2 International Women’s Baseball Center Stretching & Meditation with Renya Live Like Roo Fleece Blanket Tying Bags Tournament #1	Room 200 Room 202 Room 215/217 Atrium Patio
1:40 to 1:50	Break	
1:50 to 2:30 pm	Breakout Session 2 – Choose one. Descriptions on page 2/3 Canva for Libraries Adler Planetarium Presentation Mental Health and the Workplace Bags Tournament #2	Room 200 Room 202 Room 215/217 Atrium Patio
2:30 to 2:45 pm	Break	
2:45 to 3:30 pm	Staff photo and Closing Remarks	Atrium

9:15 to 9:45 am

Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois Therapy Dog Program Room 215/217

Bruce Erickson, founder of the volunteer [therapy dog program](#) that serves Winnebago County and Boone County, will explain why he created the program, its uses and benefits, and the program's recent efforts to expand across the state. Also, he will be accompanied by Remi, his certified therapy dog.

1:00 to 1:40 pm **Breakout Session 1 – Choose to attend one of these topics**

International Women's Baseball Center Room 200

In this 80th anniversary of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, Ryan Woodward will explore the legacy of the Rockford Peaches and efforts by the International Women's Baseball Center to preserve their history. He will share his experience in partnering with other organizations and creating original events, such as Women in Baseball Week, to both honor the sports pioneers of the past and create future opportunities for others interested in all areas of baseball.

Stretching & Meditation with Renya Room 202

To begin with, we will do some gentle stretches to re-energize after lunch and sitting, followed by a brief introduction to meditation, meditation instructions, and a seated meditation session lasting about 20 minutes. A perfect activity for the introverts among us!

Live Like Roo Fleece Blanket Tying Room 215/217

Live Like Roo provides support and financial assistance to families whose pet faces a cancer diagnosis. Besides the numerous funds/programs available to these families and their pets, Live Like Roo sends care packages to provide some comfort to these animals. These care packages include toys, treats, a handmade card, and a hand tied fleece blanket, which you will help make in this breakout session.

Bags Tournament #1 Atrium Patio

Need a break? Pick a partner and throw stuff! Toss some bags in a traditional game or compete in the RAILS tournament for glory. Tournament rules have been modified to accommodate more players. See Eric outside the atrium for a scorecard and more details.

1:50 to 2:30 pm **Breakout Session 2 – Choose to attend one of these topics**

Canva for Libraries Room 200

In this beginner workshop, we'll guide you through the exciting world of Canva Pro, the ultimate design tool for creating eye-catching graphics, posters, presentations, and more. Say goodbye to generic templates and hello to professional-grade designs that will make your

library stand out from the rest. At the end of this session, participants will be able to design a program flier, t-shirt graphic, and an infographic.

Adler Planetarium Solar Eclipse Presentation

Room 202

In this fun educational session, we'll cover a bit of eclipse-related history, what eclipses are, when to look at the October 14th and the April 8th eclipses, and easy ways to view the eclipses safely.

Mental Wellness in the Workplace: Reduce Stress and Enhance Focus Room 215/217

In today's fast-paced and demanding world, work stress and mindfulness are crucial topics affecting many people. Work stress can have negative effects on both your physical and mental health, causing issues such as headaches, insomnia, anxiety, depression, and burnout. However, practicing mindfulness can help you manage work stress by bringing your attention to the present moment, reducing negative emotions, enhancing focus, and improving workplace performance and overall well-being. This breakout session will discuss mindfulness, its benefits for mental well-being, and ways to incorporate it into your daily routine. It will also include mindfulness exercises you can do at work to help reduce stress and enhance focus. Practicing mindfulness can improve your quality of life and work more efficiently. Presenter Jennifer L. Patterson, Psy.D., LCPC, JPI Psychological Solutions

Bags Tournament #2

Atrium Patio

Need a break? Pick a partner and throw stuff! Toss some bags in a traditional game or compete in the RAILS tournament for glory. Tournament rules have been modified to accommodate more players. See Eric outside the atrium for a scorecard and more details.

Thank you for attending the RAILS All Staff In-Service Day!
Watch your email for an evaluation survey.

A big thank you to the Staff In-Service Committee that has worked hard over the last several months to plan this year's in-service day: Eric Bain, Dan Bostrom, Joe Filapek, Emily Fister, Krystle Goebel, Renya Krempl, Barb Miller, Robert Morgan, Mary Kate Murray, Stacy Palmisano, and Bill Stone

Giving to charity builds and strengthens community.

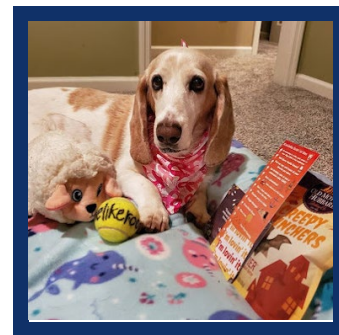
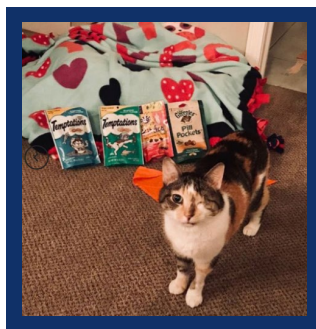
The Live Like Roo Foundation and the Northern Illinois Food Bank were selected as the two non-profit organizations to donate to for this year's staff in-service. You are welcome to bring a **monetary donation** to the in-service day. Please do not bring any donation items such as food or pet toys. The monetary donations will be equally distributed between the two organizations.



Live Like Roo provides support and financial assistance to families whose pet faces a cancer diagnosis. Thank you to Krystle Goebel for introducing us to this fantastic organization.

Your contribution will go toward vet services, care packages, fundraising events, and a small amount to administration costs. The care packages include toys, treats, a handmade card, and a hand tied fleece blanket, which staff will make in a breakout session today.

[The Live Like Roo Foundation](#) is an Illinois nonprofit corporation that has received IRS recognition of federal tax-exempt status as a public charity under Section 501(c)(3).



**NEIGHBORS.
EMPOWERED.**

PROVIDING THE FOOD OUR NEIGHBORS THROUGHOUT NORTHERN ILLINOIS NEED TO THRIVE.

At Northern Illinois Food Bank, we focus on delivering food and healthy eating services to the Northern Illinois community. As part of the national Feeding America network, we serve our neighbors in 13 counties by providing 250,000 meals per day.

SEPTEMBER 2023: analytics

● Facebook

● Instagram

● Twitter

● LinkedIn

followers



August 2023

September 2023

2,341

2,371

1,301

1,323

1,406

1,408

1,074

1,132

reach



August 2023

September 2023

10,276

8,933

1,998

1,967

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

impressions



August 2023

September 2023

N/A

N/A

8,354

6,820

6,887

4,886

2,781

3,045

engagement



August 2023

September 2023

2,882

1,898

547

413

N/A

N/A

158

120

SEPTEMBER 2023: top posts

railslibraries

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

"Our kids have the right to read without worrying about somebody checking over their checkout histories with a red pen."

I S L W S 2 0 2 3

Webber, Kristina

1/5

View insights Boost post

Liked by deerfieldlibrary and 75 others

railslibraries Over 300 school library workers from around the state came together on Zoom today for the Illinois School Library Workers Symposium... more

RAILS

Published by Ola Gronski • 12 September at 08:37

New Director Announcement 🎉
Welcome Christina Keasler to Dixon Public Library!

CHRISTINA KEASLER
DIXON PUBLIC LIBRARY



RAILS Libraries
@RAILSLibraries

Thanks to an IMLS grant awarded to [@AdlerPlanet](#), approximately 100 solar viewers will be delivered to each RAILS public library.

Viewers will be distributed through RAILS delivery in early September. Thank you to Adler for involving RAILS in this grant opportunity!

SOLAR VIEWERS
coming to RAILS public libraries

Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)

1,133 followers
2w •

The freedom to read is a fundamental American right. Tune into the Book Challenges on the Rise: Support Your Freedom to Read program on Monday, October 2 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. ...see more

BOOK CHALLENGES ON THE RISE: SUPPORT YOUR FREEDOM TO READ

Monday, October 2 at 7 p.m.
Live on Zoom



Consortial Reports

October 16, 2023

Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI/I-Share)

The CARLI Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 16, in-person in Champaign, Illinois.

New I-Share Libraries

CARLI has started adding new I-Share Libraries. As of July 2023, Saint John’s College of Nursing (Springfield) and Illinois College of Optometry (Chicago) were added to I-Share. Starting in October our “Class of 2024” will begin their migration: Chicago Theological Seminary (Chicago), City Colleges of Chicago (Chicago), College of Lake County (Grayslake), Elgin Community College (Elgin), and Prairie State College (Chicago Heights). We expect their migration and integration into our Resource Sharing to be completed by July 2024. CARLI has hired two University of Illinois iSchool Graduate Assistants to assist with this migration. We are excited to have them on board.

SCOERS Grant Opportunities

CARLI has held three rounds of grant opportunities to distribute funds from the Illinois SCOERS (Support for Creation of Open Educational Resources) Grant received from the U.S. Department of Education. Through this grant funding, Illinois SCOERS will provide access to open textbooks and personalized learning tools for entry-level courses in high demand. Much more information is available on the CARLI website: <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/collections-management/IllinoisSCOERS>

Student OER Survey

Related to the Illinois SCOERS project, CARLI is currently undertaking a survey of students at individual institutions (with the help of librarians at those institutions) to help gain insight into the need for OER (Open Educational Resources). More information can be found on the CARLI website: <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/illinois-course-materials-survey-student-perspective>

CARLI & University of Illinois Press Pilot Program

CARLI and the University of Illinois Press have embarked on a 5-year pilot program to provide access to the UI Press journals to all CARLI libraries. The initiative is funded by the University of Illinois System Office of the Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs and provides access to over 40 journals.

Cooperative Computer Services (CCS)

New and Potential Members

Warren-Newport: WNPL went live over Labor Day weekend. CCS is completing a project retrospective.

Mount Prospect: CCS will begin onboarding Mt. Prospect Public Library in November for an October 2024 go live.

Waukegan: Executive Committee has recommended Waukegan membership to Governing Board. Governing Board will vote on their membership in November.

Find More Illinois Investigation

CCS is investigating consortium membership in Find More Illinois. Governing Board will vote on potential membership in November.

IT Support

Due to an unplanned staff absence, CCS will be working with Outsource IT Solutions Group for office network and hardware support. Service to member libraries for Polaris-related issues will not change.

October is Leap Month for Cataloging and Serials Staff

Over the last two years, Innovative has added cataloging and serials features to Leap. CCS is gathering constructive feedback from technical services staff on what is working well and what can be improved when it comes to these Leap features.

To help gather feedback, CCS staff have planned a month of Leap activities for cataloging and serials staff. The activities include:

- Completing the Cataloging in Leap and/or Serials in Leap online courses.
- Using Leap to perform different tasks during the month, and recording your constructive feedback on the “Rose, Buds, Thorns, Questions” worksheet.
- Group activity and discussion at the November Cataloging and Metadata Management Technical Group meeting.

Pinnacle Library Cooperative

In August, Innovative migrated our hosted Polaris servers to a new environment. The process took about 15 hours, but we were fortunate to complete the project Sunday evening/Monday morning while libraries were closed. The new servers are hosted within the Clarivate/ProQuest family.

In response to the rash of bomb threats that libraries have been receiving, we have temporarily removed the Unique Chat widget from the public catalog and all library websites.

Continuing our focus on succession planning, Matt has completed a turnover document and distributed it to all board members. This document is meant to guide the board in the event of an unexpected absence of the Pinnacle Director. It contains passwords, links to resources, and descriptions of administrative procedures to assist with the transition/absence.

We've made a job offer for the vacant Member Services Librarian position! The candidate is expected to start in early October.

PrairieCat

Onboarding: Winnebago Public Library

PrairieCat continues to work with the Winnebago Public Library to onboard them into our consortium. Currently, their go-live date is scheduled for mid-January. They are coming to PrairieCat from a stand-alone TLC system. Winnebago will be joining us as a fully participating member.

PUG Day

PrairieCat's annual PUG Day was held on September 29th. This was our first in-person conference since 2019, and we had over 280 attendees. The keynote was delivered by Mia Henry from Freedom Lifted. Freedom Lifted supports justice-centered leadership development through online learning, training, and coaching.

This year, PUG Day attendees could choose from 19 different sessions ranging from leadership issues, non-resident cards and Card for Kids, FOIA and first amendment issues, updates on software features from our ILS vendor and many more topics relevant to library staff and directors. We thank our members who presented, RAILS, and Joe Filapek especially, for contributing to PUG Day again this year.

PrairieCat Support Website

Over the last year, PrairieCat completely redesigned our support website (<https://support.prairiecat.info>). We continue to refine this work and hopefully will be able to bring additional features live in the coming year.

Software Updates and Data Cleanup

We are very close to officially launching our new Discovery software, Innovative's Vega Discovery. This process has been a long one, but the software is at a place now where we feel it is ready for patron use. We are tentatively scheduled to begin cutting over in early November.

PrairieCat recently purchased Springshare's CRM product. This hosted CRM will allow us to consolidate the copious data we have about our members into one easily accessible and searchable interface. We are beginning the process of configuration and hopefully will have this product up and running shortly. We look forward to replacing numerous spreadsheets with one interface.

We will also shortly be hiring a part time, temporary cataloger to assist with database cleanup projects. As we have grown in the past few years, and now in addition to the Vega go-live, we find that we have several cleanup projects from previous data merges that need to be addressed. PrairieCat cataloging staff felt that it would be advisable to hire a temporary cataloger to assist with this cleanup in a timely fashion.

Rock River Library Consortium (RRLC)

No report.

Resource Sharing Alliance (RSA)

RSA Independence Project and Fee Structure

The RSA Independence Project (RIP) is now in full swing. The RSA Board is working with RAILS to set up some 3rd party consulting. We're also investigating hiring a 3rd party communications consultant to help

get the word out in a formal and cohesive manor. We've returned to our lawyer draft one of the Intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between member libraries that will form the 'new' RSA. We've working on draft one of the new RSA Bylaws. The RSA Board is revising RSA's fee structure as well. All three documents – IGA, Bylaws, and fee structure – will be rolled out on July 1, 2024. This will formally migrate RSA from a 501c3 Not for Profit to an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality. We don't expect much push-back on the IGA or Bylaws. The new fee structure will be painful to many member libraries no matter what formula we choose to move forward with. This is our major area of concern for the conversion.

RSA Support Site

Our new support site, <https://support.librariesofrsa.org> is not only live, but is now considered our primary support site, and is being improved daily. We've added many new pages including a detailed Independence Project page, a page outlining all reports created and sent out by RSA's many products and more. We're hearing very positive things in our feedback from members.

Library User Cleanup

RSA staff are working with each of our 143 member libraries to reduce the number of expired users in the system. We've sent reports with patrons expired more than two years ago and no outstanding bills on their account, and a report of patrons expired three years or more ago with less than \$25 in non-lost or damaged item bills, and no collections bills on their accounts. In total, those reports listed out about 95,000 expired patrons. Members review and remove patrons they wish to remain in the system for various reasons, then RSA staff bulk remove the rest.

Temp Record Cataloging Process

The Cataloging Department completed cataloging our once large backlog of new items without records earlier this year. We've moved on to upgrading temp records of items with no matching OCLC records in our system. The new temp record process for items without matching records is saving members hundreds of hours a month in item submissions, reduces the number of duplicate submissions for the same title, and has greatly increased the speed RSA staff can upgrade these items to full OCLC records.

School Library Staff Training

RSA's Member Services Department is working with our new school library staff to schedule visits and training. We're back to holding in-person training events, in-person new Director and informational visits, and generally just getting back out there. Members appreciate our attendance in their libraries and are volunteering to serve as regional training locations for group sessions.

System Wide Automated Network (SWAN)

Mobile App Evaluation

Beginning this fall 2023 we will conduct an evaluation of the landscape of catalog mobile apps. We are currently using BLUEcloud Mobile as our supported app, but we are encouraged by recent developments in LiDA, the companion app to Aspen Discovery. Moving to LiDA would give patrons a consistent experience with search and account management across platforms, and development of new features has been as frequent as we see with Aspen. Though we're most interested in LiDA at present, our evaluation will not neglect other offerings, including the new Library App released by SOLUS this year, and our existing BLUEcloud Mobile app.

MessageBee “Phase 2” Development

Now that we are fully migrated to the MessageBee platform for voice, SMS, and e-mail patron notifications, we have concluded what we have been informally calling “Phase 1.” We now have a short list of adjustments planned and future developments we are tracking. During “Phase 2,” we have reduced our regular meetings with Unique Management, but we will continue to meet monthly to receive support and advocate for development of the platform that will serve our members.

- Deployed a new “reports only” tier of access to the MessageBee portal in response to member feedback
- Tracking member and patron feedback on the loss of autorenewal notifications to determine if this is something we need to build out
- Completed migration of phone notifications from SWAN Central portal to individual libraries
- Monitoring development of features for direct SMS messages to individual patrons and lists with plans to implement if possible

Infographic on Value of SWAN Membership

The Decennial Act statement SWAN provided its public library districts prompted a discussion at the June 2023 membership meeting about the benefits of SWAN with cost savings and cost avoidance perspectives. SWAN will provide an infographic for member libraries on the benefits of membership to coincide with July 2024 membership fees.

Managed Detection and Response (MDR) with Arctic Wolf

We have completed the onboarding process with Arctic Wolf, a provider of security monitoring, threat detection, and response. The suite of services we have purchased includes a collection of training materials for staff. These are designed to raise awareness of cybersecurity and provide SWAN staff with the tools to recognize cybersecurity threats, such as phishing attempts.

Continued Support Site Development

SWAN recently migrated the Support website (support.swanlibraries.net) to hosting with Pantheon, and then upgraded the Support website to Drupal 9 from the previous end of life version. Drupal 9’s end of life is scheduled for November 2023, so we plan to further upgrade to Drupal 10 before the 2023 year is out. We will investigate migrating the SWAN patron site (www.swanlibraries.net) to Pantheon as well.

Ticketing System & CRM Investigation

Our current ticketing system, OTRS, is no longer meeting our support needs. The included tools for reporting, categorization, prioritization, and trend analysis are all either rudimentary or non-existent, and the version of OTRS we currently use is no longer supported. This year, we plan to do an evaluation of alternative services. Beyond a straightforward help desk solution, we are interested in tools that integrate customer relationship management (CRM) and possibly a documentation platform. A more robust system can help us to tune our member support services, reduce response time, more easily provide access to documentation and training options, and give us the analytical tools we need to determine where members are struggling to adjust our support strategy accordingly.

SWAN Headquarters Evaluation & Move

The lease for 800 Quail Ridge Drive ends November 2024 and SWAN will consider a downsize of the commercial office space. Searching for a new space will entail selecting a representative for SWAN to

assist with the search, as well as negotiating a new lease. We have some preliminary work that gives us some square footage of a downsized space, which will also mean SWAN will need to deaccession some of the office furniture that will no longer be needed. Conversations with commercial tenant services have indicated that SWAN should begin this work in March 2024, after selecting our commercial real estate representative.

Network Infrastructure Updates

As we are beginning to plan for hardware retirements and the eventual relocation of SWAN headquarters, we have been taking an active look at our on-premises network infrastructure. Some of our internal systems are approaching end of life, however, as most of our critical systems are now hosted, our approach will be to take a lighter “footprint.” Once completed, this project will significantly reduce our on-premises footprint and effectively bring all our critical systems into our cloud infrastructure. This will not only provide better reliability of systems, but also ensure that we’re as flexible as possible when it’s time to relocate.

Strategic Planning

Our next phase of 5-year strategic planning will begin in earnest in calendar 2024. This will entail forming a SWAN Board committee to create an RFP document, review proposals, and select a strategic planning consultant. The process from that point will include feedback from membership and SWAN staff.

SWAN 50th Anniversary

SWAN was established in 1974 and in 2024 the organization will turn 50 years old. The strategic plan initiative could be incorporated into a celebration of what libraries in Illinois have built cooperatively. The 50th anniversary could coincide with new office space, and a new five-year strategic plan.