

**Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative
Director's Report
October and November 2023**

State Budget/State Aid:

State Aid

- On October 1, the Annual State Aid reporting portal opened for Public Libraries. Libraries must lock their final report information no later than February 1, 2024. MMLC has 5 libraries who have locked their State Aid for this year, and 15 more libraries who are working on their State Aid reports.

Cooperative Services:

- MMLC 2023-2024 Technology and Innovation Grants are now available to Public Libraries members. Public Library members are invited to fill out the application and submit it at their earliest convenience. If you have any questions, please email Irene and Eric.
- Lewis & Knopf Auditors are currently finishing the Annual Audit for FY 2022-2023. The Annual Audit report will be presented to the MMLC Board of Trustees at the January 11th meeting. The meeting will be held at Community District Library – Corunna branch beginning at 5:30 p.m.
- The next Advisory Council Meeting will be held on February 6, 2024, via zoom at 10 a.m.
- Eric will be attending the MLA Think Space again this year. *Future-Ready Libraries* is the theme. Future-ready librarians peer beyond basic service to pursue innovation and iterative design. They honor the legacy of classic librarianship while embracing a contemporary vision. Fiscally responsible and infinitely responsive, future proof libraries do not rest on their hands or their laurels. They stake a claim on the shifting landscape of relevance and solve the right problems for their patrons. Topics covered will include:
 - Artificial intelligence
 - Deconstructing barriers to access
 - Building future focused spaces
 - Fostering resilient workplaces
 - Questioning the why behind our policies
 - Reimagining the library of the future

Michigan Cooperative Directors Association (MCDA):

- The Cooperative Directors, MLA and Clare Membiela (LM Library Law Consultant) will be conducting a *Trustee Training* during the MLA Advocacy Hour on February 15, 2024, beginning at 6 p.m. It is hoped that this start time will allow more Board Members to attend. The session will be recorded as well.
- Carol Dawe from Lakeland Library Cooperative reported that the Patmos Library passed a 3-year millage with a 63% approval rate.

Library of Michigan (LM): Randy Riley, State Librarian

- Recommendations from the Library of Michigan have been sent to the State HR department for hiring staff, including options for Shannon White's former position as the Library Development Manager. They are not sure how long it will take to hear back from HR.
- The State Library management and staff are in the very beginning of their discussions on the 2025 LM Budget. They anticipate requesting 7 new positions.
- 2024 Nights of Notable will be Saturday, April 20, 2024, with Author Steven Mack Jones.

Michigan Library Association (MLA): Debbie Mikula, Executive Director of MLA

- MLA is working hard with Freedom to Read legislation ([Advocacy Hour: Michigan Freedom to Read Act](#)). Next year, they are planning to introduce legislation which discusses the actions librarians, library workers, and advocates can take to protect intellectual freedom and the right to read.

- MLA has done another EPIC-MRA poll with some new questions. They have seen a 9% increase in support against Book Banning since the last poll.
- MLA Annual Conference was held in Kalamazoo in October. Attendees gave overwhelmingly positive reviews.
- MLA Advocacy Day will be held on April 16, 2024, at the Capital in Lansing.

Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS): Scott Garrison, Executive Director of MCLS

- MCLS is working with libraries in Indiana on creating *Let Freedom Ring*, which will be the equivalent of Michigan's *Right to Read* program.
- Due to lack of competition for delivery services in the UP, MCLS had to accept a 15% increase in Rides for the UP area.
- MCLS is doing something new with the Virtual Dialogue series for 2024! They are planning to bring together specific groups of library staff from across the two-state region to give space and time for those with similar challenges and opportunities to meet for dialogue on topics of interest to them. The first Virtual Dialogue of 2024 will be on Wednesday, Jan. 17, from 10:30 a.m. to noon Eastern (9:30-11 a.m. Central). We invite any staff member, of any role, in any small and rural library in Indiana or Michigan to join us on Zoom.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

MMLC Administration:

- Irene and Eric attended FOML Board, Budget and Finance Committee and Executive Committee meetings in October & November. Irene & Eric worked with FOML Treasurer, Charles Hanson to develop and present the 2024 Annual Budget proposal.
- The October Advisory Council Meeting was held at Grace A. Dow Memorial Library in Midland with Clare Membiela as our guest speaker. Thank you to Miriam for hosting the meeting and providing snacks. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to tour the newly remodeled library.
- Eric attended the MCDA DEI meeting.
- Eric attended the LM update in October. The November Update was canceled because it fell on Veteran's Day.
- Eric participated in the CALL meeting with the Lapeer County Librarians.
- Eric attended the MLA Annual Conference in Kalamazoo.
- Eric started his annual library visits, so far, he has had the opportunity to visit:
 - Northwood University Library in Midland
 - Jennifer Dean (UM – Flint Library Director) was in Midland that day also, and the three of us enjoyed a nice meeting.
 - Community District Library
 - Shiawassee District Library
 - North Branch Township Library
 - Goodland Township Library
- Eric attended the MLA Advocacy Hour that showed the draft legislation for the Michigan Freedom to Read Act.
- Eric attended both MCDA meetings.
- Irene attended the Association for Rural & Small Libraries Advocacy Training workshop '*13 months of Advocacy for Small & Rural Libraries*'
- Irene attended the '*TLN Adult Services Performers Showcase*'
- The 2023-2024 MMLC Preferred Performers List was developed and shared with members.

Special Events

TLN TECH FORUM 2023

Eric attended the TLN Tech Forum 23 where library security and AI were the main topics. Aaron Witt was the opening speaker talking about security. He is founder/lead consultant at A-Train Tactical, LLC. Their [website](#) says 'Our Active Threat consulting firm specializes in helping organizations prepare for, responding to, and recover from critical incidents.' Aaron shared some great stories about incidents his company has dealt with. Then we broke into different sessions like CrowdStrike or Cyber Attack Prevention. The next breakouts were Security and Privacy in the RFID Workplace or Broadband Horizon in Libraries. The closing keynote was Rhonda McGinnis, Librarian III at WSU who did her presentation on AI, and demonstrated using AI to answer questions. It was a very good presentation on the basics on AI and how Librarians can use it to improve their jobs.

MLA 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Eric attended the Annual MLA 2023 Annual Conference '*Connecting the Dots*', held in Kalamazoo. They had some great keynote speakers, Abra Berens who is a chef, former farmer, and writer. She opened the conference talking about her life and how she would use the libraries at all the stages of her life. Another Keynote speaker was Ellen Hopkins, an author who spoke on why controversial books must remain on library shelves. She has experience with this topic since she is one of the most banned authors in the US. The closing Keynote Speaker was Stephen Jackson, Director of Equity and Anti-Racism at Oak Park Public Library. He spoke on Restorative Practices which are a set of values, beliefs and guidelines that lay the groundwork for engaging with individuals both within and outside of the organization. They had many great sessions for people to attend including MLA Advocacy updates (Open Meeting Act updates being one of them. This legislation has been postponed like many things have been since the election). We had a few MMLC members who spoke on different subjects at the conference: Jill Sodt from Mott, Amy Churchill from LDL and retired FPL director Kay Swartz. MLA did a great job providing activities for people to take part in during the evenings like a Bar Crawl, Awards Ceremony, and appetizers at the Kalamazoo Public Library. These extra activities allowed attendees the opportunity to network with colleagues. Next year, the Annual Conference will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort, in Traverse City October 16-24, and will include a Small, Rural Libraries Pre-Conference on October 15. More information on the Annual Conference and the Small, Rural Libraries Pre-Conference will be shared in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Palmer
MMLC Director