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Kevin Pazour

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Members

Kristy Merritt

Roger Rhodes

Stu Summers

Legal Counsel

Clay Patton

Library Director

Jesse Butz

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System
103 Jefferson St.
Valparaiso, IN

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pcpls.org

BOARD MEETING AGENDA: Wednesday, December 18, 2024

NOTICE: The Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees will meet on December 18, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. for its regularly scheduled meeting at the Valparaiso Public Library, 103 Jefferson Street, Valparaiso, IN 46383.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

The public comment session is provided as an opportunity for patrons to address the Board of Trustees on matters related to agenda items.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of the Minutes from November 20, 2024
2. Financial Report
 - a. Treasurer's Report
 - b. Approval of the Claims Register
3. Approval of Communications
 - a. Friend's Report
 - b. Director's Report
 - c. Patron Comments

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:

1. Employee of the Year Awards
2. Kouts Roofing Bid Award
3. Portage Construction Bid Award
4. ADA Door bid for Portage
5. Library Gardens Update
6. Health Insurance Renewal
7. AdTec E-Rate Category 2 RFP Contract Proposal
8. Attorney Contract Renewal
9. Technology and Internet Use Policy Draft
10. Account Policy Draft
11. Craftsman Community Maker Lab MOA
12. Library MOU Update

Any other items

Adjournment

Signature Session

Future Meetings: (Dates and times subject to change) 4:00 P.M.

- January 15, 2025 - Valparaiso Public Library
- February 19, 2025 - Valparaiso Public Library
- March 19, 2025 - Valparaiso Public Library

Porter County Public Library System

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for Dec 18, 2024

The regular meeting of the library board of trustees was called to order at 4:01 pm at 103 Jefferson St. Valparaiso, IN 46383. Olga Granat presided.

Members in attendance included Olga Granat, President; Kevin Pazour, Vice President; Kristy Merritt, and Roger Rhodes. Paul Knauff arrived late at 4:11 pm. Julie Giorgi and Stu Summers were absent. Also in attendance: Director Jesse Butz, Library Attorney Clay Patton, and Assistant Director Inge Kokidko & Finance Manager Hayley Scott. Remote attendance was facilitated via Google Meet.

Public Comment

No public comment was given.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from Nov 20, 2024

Financial Report

 Treasurer's Report

 Approval of the Claims Register

Approval of Communications

 Friends of the Library Report

 Director's Report

 Patron Comments

Motion: Kristy Merritt moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

Discussion: Communications reports were summarized. Two recent contract additions were noted.

Vote: The motion was carried with 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Employee of the Year Awards

It was recommended to award a one-time wage adjustment of \$1,500 to 10 exemplary employees.

Motion: Kevin Pazour moved as recommended. Kristy Merritt seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

Vote: The motion was carried with 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Kouts Roofing Bid Award

It was recommended to award the bid to the low bidder of ATJ's Home Improvement for \$95,000.

Motion: Roger Rhodes moved as recommended. Kristy Merritt seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

Vote: The motion was carried with 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Portage Construction Bid Award

It was recommended to award base bid #2 for general construction to Hasse construction at \$179,400; base bid 1 to Korellis roofing at \$492,853 ; and ad alternate #1 to Korellis Roofing for \$482,853.

Motion: Kristy Merritt moved as recommended. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

Vote: The motion was carried with 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

There was additional discussion of the quit claim deed, parcels, and insurance claims.

Motion: Roger Rhodes moved to do a title search on the parcels we're going to take over. Kristy Merritt seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

Vote: The motion was carried with 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

ADA Door bid for Portage

It was recommended to move forward with Trout Glass & Mirror for \$28,600, with an option not to exceed \$40,000 as final selection of materials had not yet been completed.

Motion: Kevin Pazour moved as recommended. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

Discussion: Discussion included which doors were included in the project.

Vote: The motion was carried with 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Library Gardens Update

Approval was requested to purchase a Circle R security camera cable run for \$1,575.17; two "READ" bicycle racks, and a spider garbage can, not to exceed \$11,000; four butterfly musical features, and a caterpillar, not to exceed \$12,000. Paul Knauff arrived as this discussion began.

Motion: Kristy Merritt moved to approve. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

Vote: The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

Health Insurance Renewal

A discussion of health insurance quotes, negotiations, and outcomes were discussed. Several options that had been considered from multiple providers were outlined, including an explanation of the Surest health plan, and the Franciscan health clinics plan. It was recommended to approve the UnitedHealthCare health proposal, to keep all current ancillary benefits, and to enter into the agreement with Franciscan, pending legal review.

Motion: Kristy Merritt moved as recommended. Paul Knauff seconded the motion.

Discussion: It was clarified that benefits review occurs annually.

Vote: The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

AdTec E-Rate Category 2 RFP Contract Proposal

The E-Rate category 2 funding cycle and eligible services were summarized, as well as the need for new access points and switches. It was recommended to approve a contract with Adtec to coordinate a bid process to secure network upgrades and access e-rate funds.

Motion: Kevin Pazour moved as recommended. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

Vote: The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

Attorney Contract Renewal

Rate increases were summarized. It was recommended to renew the agreement with current legal counsel Clay Patton.

Motion: Paul Knauff moved as recommended. Kristy Merritt seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion followed.

Vote: The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

Technology and Internet Use Policy Draft

A draft of a new Technology and Internet Use Policy was summarized, including supplementary documents and family tools to facilitate internet safety.

Account Policy Draft

A draft of a new Account Policy was summarized.

Craftsman Community Maker Lab MOA

It was recommended to send the glowforge to Craftsman Community Maker Lab in exchange for marketing of the device, and passes to the lab that the library can circulate to the public.

Motion: Kevin Pazour moved as recommended. Paul Knauff seconded the motion.

Discussion: Equipment care and maintenance provisions were clarified.

Vote: The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

Library MOU Update

Additional findings from a retrospective analysis show that patrons belonging to library districts for which we have local reciprocal agreements owe more than our own patrons or other nonresident patrons. It was recommended to rescind these local reciprocal agreements with Lake County Public Library, Crown Point Public Library, and Westchester Public Library.

Motion: Roger Rhodes moved as recommended. Kristy Merritt seconded the motion.

Discussion: Clarification on how this intersects with other recent changes to reciprocal services was given.

Vote: The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

Adjournment

Motion: Kevin Pazour moved to adjourn. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Paul Knauff, Secretary, Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees

Hebron



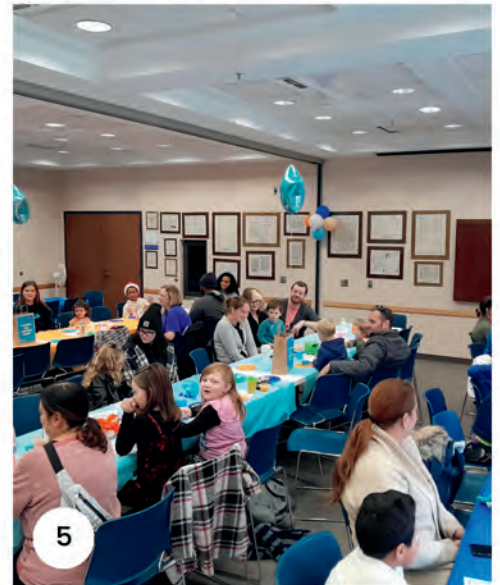
- 1 We learned and talked about gratitude and thankfulness in Storytime, then we made a big chain of all the things we appreciate!
- 2 Family Game Night brought families together to play and learn about what the library can offer them.
- 3 Today's Lego Club STEM Challenge was the Great Turkey Escape, and this patron got creative with how to catch that bird!
- 4 Book Babies got our smallest patrons out and socializing with one another after a fun story.
- 5 These amazing artists learned about Maud Lewis and her folk art landscapes. And then got to paint their own!

Kouts



- 1 Books, Blocks, and Balls taught these little ones all about moving toys of different sizes.
- 2 This group became fast friends during Lego Club while planning how to build unique creations.
- 3 Lego Club focused on Superheroes this week. This teen got creative and planned a whole base for his new character!
- 4 Emerging Readers Book Club brought these readers together to make some art and taught them how to relate it to their seasonal book this week.
- 5 Student artists exhibited their work at the branch for the Kouts Elementary art show. (The artist pictured is adding flair to their artwork name tag.)

Portage



1 Willow Creek Middle School students engaged in reader's advisory during a "Book Tasting" activity at this month's Book a Librarian visit.

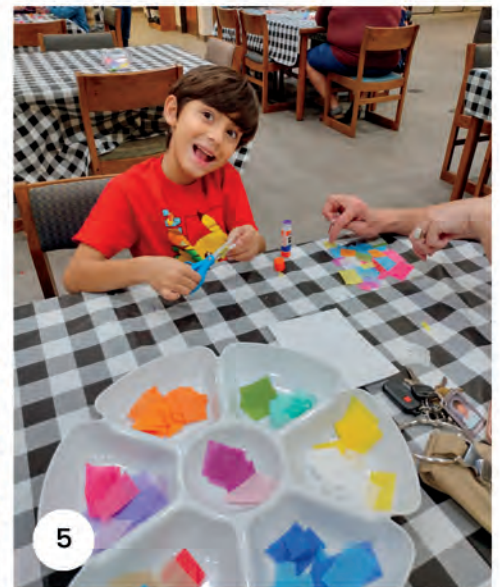
2 Nerf Night was a blast with new friends and challenging targets!

3 Bright Minds Preschool paid a visit to the Portage Branch, where their guardians learned about library services and events.

4 Seed crafts got our patrons creative while learning all about how plants grow!

5 Bluey Books and Breakfast was a hit!

South Haven



- 1 This craft was perfect for the entire family to join in and get creative.
- 2 Election Day brought rain and record polling numbers. Branches adapted to create sheltered space for voters as they waited to cast their ballot.
- 3 This patron enjoyed crafting Winnie the Pooh after learning all about colors and what happens when we mix them.
- 4 One of our most popular STEM programs is Lego Club; students engage in collaborative engineering, storytelling and practice public speaking skills.
- 5 Crafting projects brought generations of a family together as they worked to make a larger collaborative art piece!

Valparaiso



- 1 Critical early literacy skills are at play as toddlers create artwork together at the Toddler Painting program.
- 2 Art is for all ages! Adults have an opportunity to relax and meet new friends as they work on a new skill during Watercolor & Unwind.
- 3 Paint & Pour builds community and creativity while practicing skills; adults follow a painting tutorial to create an Autumnal landscape.
- 4 Families joined their little ones in learning about all the different ways you can use pinecones for out of the box art!
- 5 Lego Club always brings families out to mingle, make new friends, and build on their collaborative STEM skills.

in Our Community



- 1 Shirely Heinze Land Trust partnered with PCPLS to coordinate a Volunteer Work Day at our South Haven Branch. The day exceeded all goals!
- 2 Shirley Heinze Land Trust staff led the volunteer day with education about environmental restoration and stewardship, and the connection to PCPLS.
- 3 Caleb the Comfort Dog is the *paw*-fect companion to read with. PCPLS expanded our Paws to Read partnership and now hosts Caleb at 3 branches.
- 4 Our team worked hard to install winter StoryWalks at our library gardens in Portage, South Haven and Valparaiso. Two more coming soon!
- 5 Our littlest readers had so much playing and learning at Books, Blocks, and Balls. This wonderful partnership program is now hosted at all five branches!

November 2024 Director's Report

Overview

As the days start to shorten, the temperatures dip, and the holidays gear up in November, patrons often struggle to come into the building and our numbers dip. This year however, we have bucked that trend with a strong showing.

- Despite being open less hours, our door count was up by over 2,200.
- In another encouraging trend, physical books were up 7%, the second time in three months with an increase in physical materials.
- While ebooks have continued their multi-year trend of increase, that percentage of increase has begun to slim and is in the single digits for the sixth consecutive month.
- Meanwhile eAudio has risen to the point where for the first time ever, eAudio has surpassed eBook circulation in a month.

Important Upcoming Dates

- December
 - 4: Friends of the Library Meeting
 - 18: Library Board of Trustees Meeting
 - 20: Winter Wonderfest - Portage
 - 24: Library Closed
 - 25: Library Closed
 - 31: Library Early Close 5:00 PM
- January
 - 1: Library Closed
 - 15: Library Board of Trustees Meeting

Personnel

- Ending Employment
 - Penny Huizenga, Valparaiso Branch, 7/2016-11/2024
 - Alia Dresher, South County
- New Employment
 - Alexandra Maciel, Marketing Assistant
- Promotions
 - Corine Bazyluk and Emily Earl at the Valparaiso branch were promoted to full time.
 - Payton Igras was promoted to G2
- Interviews
 - Jack and Sarah M. interviewed two potential staff for South County.

Finance Notes

- The budget benchmark for the end of October is that 91% of the budget should be expended. So far, 76.1% has been spent, and we're on target to be within our estimated budget.
- The Library earned \$36,775.55 from Investments in November. Trust Indiana had a rate of 4.8%, while Centier had a rate of 4.07%.
- Hayley, Inge, and Jesse met with GIS insurance reps for our annual pre-renewal meeting. At this meeting, we reviewed our full benefits package and possibilities for enhancements.
- Jesse met with a representative from Powers Health regarding possible benefits enhancements.
- Jesse met with an energy consultant recommended by the Valpo school district on a possible energy audit that will help us make strategic choices on green enhancements.

Subscription/Contract Renewals

- Subscriptions
 - New
 - None
 - Renewals
 - None
 - Cancellations
 - None
- Contracts
 - New
 - Chicago Tribune Online - \$1,200.00
 - Renewals
 - The Athletic - \$1,000.00
 - Help Now & Job Now - \$5,000.00
 - Cancellations
 - None

Buildings & Grounds

- Jack attended the Hebron Town Council meeting this month and was able to get the variance application fee waived. He will be working on the rest of what is needed for the application and then meeting with the Hebron Zoning Appeals board in January. During the meeting, the Hebron Town Council expressed how excited they were about the garden and how they would be glad to help whenever they could. Jack was also able to make a new connection with a potential community partner.
- More features were delivered to the Kouts branch for their library garden. Everyone is excited to watch the garden continue to take shape.
- The Shirley Heinze Volunteer Workday at the South Haven branch in early November was a smashing success. 13 volunteers participated, and the crew hit all their goals for the day, and were able to restore much of the wooded area to the West of the South Haven branch. Volunteers also had an opportunity to learn more about Shirley Heinze

Land Trust, the importance of invasive species control, and the connections between conservation and PCPLS stewardship.

- Jesse had a working meeting with the Portage Redevelopment Commission regarding the Irving Street Trail construction. Jesse was able to give the commission and working group members a tour of the garden and how we plan to use it.
- Jesse and Inge met with a vendor regarding possible shelving and furniture changes for the Portage Branch. We continue to look for ways to optimize our collection and spaces in a way that will enhance the patron experience.
- Jason and Aiden have been working to decorate the exterior of our facilities for the Holiday season. We have ordered new decorations for South Haven and Portage. We hope to have them up very soon.
- Jason and Aiden haven't let the colder weather keep them from making progress as they install instruments at the Portage Library garden.
- Our sprinkler inspection at Valpo determined that we need to add a special anti-freeze to the system to ensure we have no ruptures in the colder months. This repair will be completed as soon as possible.

Technology

- New and improved security cameras have been installed at Hebron. It was a smooth transition, and the new cameras have been an improvement over the old system.
- Replacements for the last of our Windows 10 computers have been purchased, as Windows 10 will no longer be supported in October 2025.
- Bookable tech help appointments are now live on our website. Patrons will be able to schedule appointments online without having to first call the branch.
- The AV equipment in South Haven in the main meeting room was updated, and they no longer need to use the AV carts or projector. Everything needed for a presentation is mounted to the wall.

Community Engagement

- PCPLS partnered with the American Heart Association, Porter County Health Department, and PowersHealth to provide potential life saving health screenings and resources about blood pressure, heart health, and diabetes to patrons at all five branches. These health screenings will continue through the end of the year and into the first quarter of 2025.
- PCPLS was invited to attend the Valparaiso Family YMCA's Healthy Family Day, where our team discussed the importance of literacy for child development and health with 152 new faces. Quite a few people had never heard about the Imagination Library program before, and were excited to sign up their little ones.
- Dawn and Jack attended the Kouts Lions Club this month. The Kouts Lions Club not only renewed their children's book club partnership with the library, but also will be donating \$4000 to the Kouts Library Garden for five of the StoryWalk® boards.

- Jesse and Sarah attended Greater Portage Chamber of Commerce's awards dinner, where the Portage and South Haven branch's gardens received an award for community enhancement.
- The Portage and Valparaiso branches are drop off sites for Toys for Tots gifts through the holiday season.
- Two PCPLS branches acted as polling sites on Election Day, with record numbers at polling sites this year. It was a busy day at both branches, and both branch teams did a fantastic job adapting their indoor spaces to provide patrons shelter from the rain as they waited to cast their ballot.
- All PCPLS teams came together to explore ways to make Home Delivery expansion more scalable through resource sharing, community partnerships, and adding delivery days and trained volunteers. Teams will begin testing expansion in December, and this will continue through the first quarter of 2025. Feedback from home delivery patrons continues to roll in and reinforces what a positive impact it has on their lives.
 - "Thank you so much for including additional books for me. I really needed them. I've been going through something I can't even explain. Thanks for helping by supplying the books. I can't imagine life without them. I sure appreciate this service that the library offers."
 - The granddaughter of one of our home delivery patrons called from her home in Arizona to let us know what a great service we offer, and how much she appreciates all that we do since she isn't nearby. It has been a bright spot for her grandmother when she receives her new library books every month.
- Jesse met with the Valpo Noon Kiwanis executive committee to talk about partnership opportunities regarding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.
- Jesse met with the LibraryIQ product team to look at demographic assessment tools that will allow us to analyze circulation trends and library usage on a much deeper level. This will assist in our marketing and outreach efforts as we identify non-users and lapsed users that may benefit from our services.
- Jesse met with an executive from Frontier regarding broadband efforts in Porter County. Jesse will be delivering a report to the Porter County Commissioners in the coming weeks.

Social Media Engagement

- The total reach for social media and newsletters during November was 89,323.
- Facebook:
 - 7,102 followers with a reach of 8,198.
- Twitter:
 - 578 total followers.
- Instagram:
 - 1,560 followers; 6 posts and a total of 653 impressions.
- YouTube:
 - 158 total subscribers; PCPLS videos had 45 views this month.
- Pinterest:
 - 85 followers with a reach of 12.

- Newsletters: Our e-blasts were opened approximately 78,783 times.
- TikTok: Our TikTok now has 1,002 subscribers with 1,501 total views this month.
- PCPLS' Virtual Customer Service Team interacted with 91 patrons.
- Google: 2 new five-star reviews
 - "Everyone there is kind and helpful."

Youth and Teen Services

- There are 3,188 children registered in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Porter County. So far 582 have graduated since the 2023 launch.
- Lanette delivered a generous donation of knitted hats to Geminus Early Head Start. These hats were received from home delivery patrons to be distributed.
- Pre-registrations opened for the Winter Flurries Reading Challenge.
- The Community Engagement team updated three StoryWalks with a seasonal refresh of the books and PCPLS promo; *Winter Lullaby* was installed in the Valparaiso Rotary Garden, the *Wishing Tree* was installed in the Portage Garden, and the *Strangers in the Woods* Storywalk was installed in the South Haven Garden. The other two StoryWalk locations, at Butterfly Meadows Park and Sunset Hill Park, will be updated by the team in December.
- The Porter County Community Foundation donated 2 additional Books, Blocks, and Balls kits to North and South County branch teams. This strong partnership continues to offer engaging and popular early literacy activities with child development experts on hand at these monthly events that rotate between all branches.
- This month, several schools took advantage of PCPLS' "Book a Librarian" tool, which is a terrific connection for library promotion in schools.
 - Two visits to Portage schools, reaching out to preschool, elementary, and middle school children to promote the library and our resources.
 - Kate L. and Kayla L. held a fantastic storytime at the Hebron Hawks Preschool. We were very glad to be invited back with this Book-a-Librarian program. We look forward to returning in December.
- Art abounds in North and South County through our school partnerships.
 - The Kouts branch hosted another Kouts Elementary School art show this month, with artwork from all of the 2nd grade classes. This month's theme was artwork based on the book "If the Dinosaurs Came Back" by Bernard Most.
 - The Portage Township Elementary schools hosted an Art Reception at the Portage Branch.
- Book clubs for younger audiences are gaining momentum at our South County branches.
 - The emerging reader and tween clubs in Kouts went very well this month, gaining more attendees. Parents and kids alike have been loving the book selection and are looking forward to next month's book picks.
 - The Hebron branch launched a new book club featuring a graphic novel buffet. Kids and parents enjoyed learning how these books promote literacy and a love of reading; leaving them excited to explore new authors and series.

- STEM Lego programs continue to grow in popularity across the county.
 - The Hebron branch had a lot of fun at their Lego Club this month. The Great Turkey Escape STEM Challenge had kids and their parents creating different and intuitive ways of either capturing their Thanksgiving turkeys, or helping them escape. The most popular contraptions were the turkey catapult and 'pulley with string' traps.
 - Steven at the Valpo branch has evolved the Lego Club to include more STEAM elements. He has incorporated building challenges into each club meeting, while still offering a free build component at the end.
 - Allison at the Valparaiso branch used the Youth Services display case to market our bimonthly Lego Club programs. She decorated the display case with large Lego graphics and posted flyers advertising upcoming Lego Clubs. The case itself is full of Lego creations that kids built the last time the program met.
- The Kouts branch held their annual after-Thanksgiving interactive movie. This year was Polar Express. The kids had so much fun blowing their train whistles and following along with the movie.
- The Valparaiso Youth Services team, including Emily, Corine, Liz, and Melaina, is progressing on various projects, nearing completion of picture book reorganizations and resolving crowding in EZ readers. They set a positive example for newer staff. Natalie, Kim D., and Shayla are also engaged in multiple projects, showcasing enthusiasm for Youth Services and care for patrons. Exciting prospects lie ahead for them!
- Amanda Koeppen hosted Bluey Books and Breakfast at the Portage branch. Book breakfasts are popular among our little patrons and their families, we always get a full house with these programs.
- A patron visiting the Valparaiso Youth Services department paid the staff a wonderful compliment this month: "Another successful scavenger hunt. We really enjoy coming to the library. You all do a fantastic job, and these will be memories for a lifetime. We really appreciate what you guys do."

Adult Services

- The Kouts Book Club, led by Nancy T., had a great time talking about the best books of 2024 and discussed what books they are excited to read in 2025.
- South County is planning new shelf layout projects for the new year that will help with accessibility and better merchandising.
- Bethany at the Valparaiso branch has started onboarding new volunteers from the waitlist. Our newest volunteer, Jan, has been helping with shelf straightening as part of our Adopt-a-Shelf program. We have also welcomed back Lily, who will be helping with tasks in Youth Services.
- Steven at the Valparaiso branch has created a system for auditing staff shelving accuracy on an annual basis.
- Patrons continue to show interest in displaying their work on the Community Art Wall at the Valparaiso branch. The autumnal photography showcased in November was a great feature.

- The CD collection at the Valparaiso branch has been relabeled to make it easier to identify where different genre sections are. This will make browsing and shelving much easier.
- Staff at the Valparaiso branch are shifting nonfiction, Large Print, and Fiction collections to maintain neat stacks and create space for face-out display easels. We are excited to add more face-outs soon!
- Rachel Siska took on the project of backshifting, cleaning, and reorganizing the fiction and nonfiction shelving in South Haven. The completed project will help the collection and shelving units look nicer and more cohesive.

Collections

- Our collections team successfully coordinated an Evergreen upgrade the weekend of November 23 & 24. During upgrades it can be challenging to maintain services while the ILS is offline. Thanks to careful preparation and staff training, the upgrade was completed with minimal interruption of library services.
- Inge and Elizabeth met with Backstage Library Works to discuss the reorganization of the library's physical collection. This is a large project that without outside help could potentially take several years to complete, and would demand a significant amount of staff time and resources. We are seeking services from Backstage that may expedite these important improvements to our collections.

Genealogy

- The Genealogy Department reopened on Fridays starting November 1st.
- Genealogy team members assisted patrons with a variety of requests including, but not limited to, information about Burns Ditch, marriage applications, obituaries, naturalizations, and property records.
- Chris H. has been working on the next Chamber of Commerce article.
- PCPLS and the Northwest Indiana Genealogical Society (NWIGS) collaborated to present an all day Beginner's Genealogy workshop on November 16th. This was a well-attended event that hosted several different speakers on the subject. Attendees toured the Genealogy department during the event's lunch break to see all of the resources it has to offer.
- Chris M. is wrapping up the index of deed book #1. Her next project will be indexing an obituary book.
- Kathy is back to working on the Miller collection after finishing up another family history project. She has offered to speak at the April NWIGS meeting on using newspapers in your research.