

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR
TERI DUGAN
MARCH 2025**

- I had a great time connecting with Mary Drew Powers, the library director from Whitefish on March 3rd. It was nice to get together and share about things that are happening at each of our libraries. We decided to make it a monthly event!
- FVCC Library director, Morgan Ray, and I met on March 4th. Morgan and I had a really productive time sharing and exchanging ideas about our libraries. I appreciate the wonderful network of local libraries that I have to connect with. Morgan and I decided to also make our check ins a monthly event.
- The online monthly training provided by the Montana State Library for new library directors is something I continue to attend. The cohort meets and discusses various training topics each month. Some recent topics were library federations and library programming ideas.
- The FY26 budget has been a large portion of my time this month. The county has new software they are implementing and there have been some delays as they work out the bugs. Currently, I'm writing the performance measures and workload indicators that are due on Monday. These reports are very similar to the public library survey that is provided to the State Library each year in October and are included in the county budget that is finalized in August.
- Executive Director of the library foundation, Sara Busse and I continue our bi-weekly check ins. It is very helpful for each one of us to connect and share everything going on in each of our organizations. Currently, I am working on writing our annual FY26 Foundation grant request.
- On March 11th, Branch Manager, Liz Camarillo and I attended the Columbia Falls Chamber luncheon. Lisa Blank, the executive director for workforce development at FVCC was the speaker. Lisa shared the strategic approach that FVCC has in building partnerships with local businesses and institutions to meet workforce needs in our area.
- Trustee Wheeler and I attended a Kalispell Chamber luncheon on March 18th. The city of Kalispell's Growth Policy Plan was the topic. Various speakers discussed the growth of Kalispell and land use within the city.
- Each month I attend a department heads meeting held by Flathead County. Pete Melnick, the county administrator runs these monthly meetings. We received updates on the FY26 budget process, the county migration to Microsoft 365 Outlook, and health insurance updates. Each manager gives updates as to what is going on in their particular department of the county. It is always nice to connect with my peers at the county.
- Cushing Terrell hosted a Kalispell chamber Coffee Connect on March 14th in which Trustees Cuthbertson and Wheeler and I attended. There are so many folks that are new to the area to connect with and share about the library. After the mixer, we sat down with David Koel and Jessica Murray from Cushing Terrell to discuss obtaining preliminary renderings for a new Kalispell library on the mall property.

TRAFFIC COUNTS- FEB 2025
Kalispell- n/a
Columbia Falls- 4,298
Bigfork- 1,736

TRAFFIC COUNTS- FEB 2024
Kalispell- 12,438
Columbia Falls- 4,447
Bigfork- 1,576

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR
SAM CROMPTON
MARCH 2025

To keep our patron and staff computer networks up-to-date with vendor support, software updates and hardware warranties new switching equipment and licensing has been ordered, received and installed. The hardware replacement work was required in Kalispell and Columbia Falls on equipment that was ten years old and classified end-of-life by the vendor. The old hardware will be returned to Cisco Systems as part of their 'Take Back' program for environmentally sound disposal, with no cost for shipment. There are a few residual cabling issues to solve in the Kalispell server room but other than that untidiness, the upgrade went smoothly and transparent for patrons & staff.

The Sensource people counter above the south door in Kalispell developed an intermittent reporting problem in February and finally stopped working altogether. This equipment was over ten years old as well and long out of warranty so ordered and installed a replacement from Sensource. All counts therefore in Kalispell for a few weeks include only the front entrance resulting in about half as much as actuals during the down time.

Purchased and configured a new (refurbished) desktop staff computer for Columbia Falls replacing a staff use laptop. With staff stations being used more and more frequently the previously deployed laptops weren't practical anymore. Space is such a concern in the staff area, laptops were originally thought to be the best solution.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH LIBRARIAN
LUNE AXELSEN
MARCH 2025

It's spring and that means new art exhibits at the library. I had the pleasure of working with artists to move two shows and bring in a whole new exhibit. Local muralist, Joel Niles, moved his show to the Bigfork location, and I moved local birder and wildlife photographer, Larry Youmans, show to the Kalispell location. And in Columbia Falls, we brought in a new group of artists called the Plein Air Painters of the Flathead. It's a wonderful display of local scenery through the lens of different oil painters. All exhibits are on display through May, 2025. This program continues to be beneficial for local artists who get exposure, as well as patrons and staff who enjoy the change of scenery. Plus, it generates revenue for the library. One painting sold from the Plein Air exhibit in the first week.

Last week we hosted our final Poet in our Montana Poet Series, Melissa Kwasny, in the Bigfork Community Room. I promoted it the same as all of the others and turnout was good. Although I was unable to attend this event, I was told that attendees were engaged and the poetry was amazing. Based on the success and engagement this series generated, we hope to bring more poets into the library in the future.

This month I've been working on promoting upcoming events that the Library Foundation has sponsored for National Library Week. Each library location will be hosting a Story Concert, where local storytellers share their true personal experience stories through spoken word. I have designed posters, social media campaigns, I will send out a press release and speak on the radio about the event.

Social Media Snap Shot

Our following on both Facebook and Instagram continue to grow. On Facebook our Content Interaction is up by 40%. That means people are commenting, liking and sharing our posts more. Our IG story reach is lower this month due to less content being posted as I was focusing on moving art shows and updating our brand on several platforms. I expect all engagement to grow over the coming months as my team resumes focus on our social media goals.

Social Media Stats:

- **Facebook:**
 - 176 New Followers this period (3% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Facebook Content Interaction:**
 - 2,945 people interacted with our content this period (40% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Instagram Followers:**
 - 23 new followers this period (1% increase in the last 28 days)
- **Instagram Story Reach:**
 - 2515 accounts reached this period (27% decrease in the last 28 days)
- **Website Pageviews:**
 - 19,965 views this period (14% increase in the last 30 days)

COLLECTION SERVICES LIBRARIAN
KAT WILSON
 MARCH 2025

February 2025 Circulation Statistics

	February 2025	February 2024	February 2023	February 2022
Juvenile	16444	16692	15647	15760
Young Adult	992	1163	706	846
Adult	11783	13331	12523	13164
Overdrive ebooks	4223	4688	4418	4316
Overdrive audiobooks	7100	6901	6166	5204
Overdrive magazines	1806	1554	503	368
Total	42348	44329	39963	39658
ILLs Borrowed	58	52	25	47
ILLs Loaned	45	43	29	33
Outgoing Partners Crates	278	340	278	246
Incoming Partners Crates	295	332	296	281

Lakeside and Marion FY25 Circulation Statistics

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Lakeside	230	204	191	185	135	109	152	149				
Marion	N/A*	N/A*	7	6	5	12	12	4				

*Marion closed first week of June through August.

**TEEN LIBRARIAN
STARR WHITE
MARCH 2025**

FEBRUARY'S ACHIEVEMENTS:

Here is a recap of our attendance:

Scene (All locations): 46

Switch Days (All locations): *We have decided to stop tracking Switch Days attendance.*

Gem Wall (Bigfork; Kalispell): 204

Fandom (Kalispell): 7

LVL-UP (Kalispell): 8

Challenge Accepted (Kalispell): 12

Columbia Falls Junior High School Outreach: 8

Sketchbook Painting (Bigfork): 1

MARCH:

Battery Recycling Program

Our Battery Recycling Program continues to be a tremendous success! We have collected over 300 pounds of batteries since the program started, a big win for sustainability and our community.

Young Reader's Choice Award

Voting for the Young Reader's Choice Award (Grades 4–12) is officially underway. This is always a fun event that gives young readers a chance to have their voices heard and vote for their favorite novels.

Summer Experience

Our Teen Team is deep in the planning phase for Summer Experience 2024. We are working hard to put together a lineup of exciting and enriching programs for teens. More details coming soon, stay tuned!

CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN
BECCA JOHNSON
MARCH 2025

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT UPDATES

The Youth Services team is staying busy with weekly programs for all ages, visiting groups on field trips, outreach events and getting serious about summer reading planning!

EARLY LITERACY STORYTIMES (0-5 YEARS)



We incorporate songs and movement between stories for multiple reasons. The kids love using props like scarves and egg shakers which gives opportunity to practice following directions. Singing reinforces the important literacy skills of phonological awareness.

FEBRUARY ATTENDANCE STATS

Kalispell: 317(11 programs)
Columbia Falls: 206(11 programs)
Bigfork: 177(8 programs)

WEDNESDAY WORKSHOPS/CLASS VISITS (6-10 YEARS)

Float or sink LEGOS, shaved crayon art, chain reactions, and favorite table games such as *Guess Who* were just a few of the fun workshops offered in February!

FEBRUARY ATTENDANCE STATS

Kalispell: 82 (4 workshops)
Columbia Falls: 93 (4 workshops)
Bigfork: 43 (4 workshops)

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

FRIDAYS WITH THE RANGERS (BIGFORK) – 10 CHILDREN

We kicked off our first program with Flathead State Parks Rangers in February and for more this spring. Kids in grades 3-5 can participate in a variety of activities led by a Park Ranger that explore science, nature, ecology and wildlife. This first activity had kids dissecting owl pellets!

SENSORY PLAY SATURDAY(KALISPELL) – FEBRUARY 8

80 children and 58 adults

OUTREACH

HEADSTART – 55 CHILDREN

I read *If I built a school* by Chris Van Dusen to the 4 classrooms at Head Start during their building themed week. These preschoolers were the most enthusiastic and welcoming bunch! I also met with a small group of parents to give an overview of library services.

READ ACROSS MONTANA – 94 CHILDREN AND ADULTS

East Evergreen Elementary invited us to join their *Read Across Montana* family event. I enjoyed reading stories aloud to rotating groups of children and parents while Coral made new library cards and answered questions!

PUBLIC SERVICES LIBRARIAN
TONY EDMUNDSON
MARCH 2025

On Friday, February 28, the Public Services Team gathered for an in-house training on our local history resources. I shared with the team some history about these resources, and how we have handled research requests through the years. We went over valuable on-line resources that have local obituaries, military and census records, maps, and more.

After the on-line portion, we split into groups, with Jennifer Desch showing microfilm, Josh Braach on maps, Kelly Dougherty with our Montana Files, and myself in Special Collections. Staff rotated through these stations and heard what these various collections have to offer with some specific examples of noteworthy or favorite items.

This training was requested by staff, and was well received. The library's collections have so much to offer about the story of the Flathead, from Native Americans and pioneers, and the individuals and organizations that made the Flathead into what we see today.

With the help of Advisors and Materials Handlers, we have accomplished a shelf shifting project along the outer wall of the Kalispell Adult Nonfiction collection that increased shelving capacity by 25%. There have long been empty shelves along the stacks of the outer walls that were felt to be too high to use, as it would put books out of reach of many patrons. After some shifting and testing in a sample area, we found a reasonable adjustment could be made to use the empty shelves at a slightly lower height, without having to push the bottom shelves too low. The results look great, and will allow us to add many books on history, especially Native American, United States, and Montana history.

COLUMBIA FALLS BRANCH MANAGER
LIZ CAMARILLO
MARCH 2025

The Land to Hand's Free the Seeds Fair was busy and energetic! Deidre and I got to host a booth, and we got to meet and connect with many members of the community. Deidre designed a Gardening Bingo card that we passed out, and we hope will encourage patrons to visit the library and pick up a garden tote bag as a prize. Kylin also attended and led a story time for children, incorporating interactive activities and sensory play.

Head Start in Columbia Falls asked that we host another story time session. During her visit, Kylin read to 35 children. We are always happy to do that for Head Start. Kylin also reached out to Buffington Dental, and they donated 50 toothbrushes to our story time patrons. All our Wednesday Workshop kids, and our preschool families got to take one home. I do want to add a thank you to Liza, who has been instrumental in helping manage the energy of our busy and lively story times. We've had a few this past month.

On the adult programming side, the Herb Starter Zone was a remarkable success, generating 225 engagement clicks from a diverse audience. We're excited to see how the community responds to our upcoming Watercolor Community Earth Mosaic Zone in April.

Library advisor Taryn Morgan has submitted her resignation as she prepares to graduate in May and transition into a career more aligned with her degree. Her last day will be May 7th. We will certainly miss her, but we wish her all the best in this next chapter of her life!

Additionally, we've brought on a new weekly volunteer from the CFHS Special Education Department. The student volunteer, accompanied by his Para educator, will be in on Wednesdays for a half-hour volunteer session. He has already been in a few times, and we are happy to have him helping our team.

We have removed the ImagineIF Libraries logo and banner from our door and windows to make room for the new design. I am in conversation with Teri about what decal design would work best, but in the meantime, we are covering our windows to the staff area with cafe curtains.

**BIGFORK BRANCH MANAGER
ADULT PROGRAMMING LIBRARIAN
DEIDRE MCMULLIN
MARCH 2025**

This month we hosted our third Montana poet laureate lecture through a grant from Humanities Montana and supported by the Flathead Library Foundation. Melissa Kwasny was the Montana Poet Laureate in 2020 with another Montana Poet, M.L. Smoker. Kwasny and Smoker traveled to museums around the state and wrote descriptive poems about the pieces found in the museums. We had a good turnout, once again showing that there's a taste for this kind of programming in the valley. We have an opportunity to apply for two more poet speakers through the Humanities Montana program, and we are looking in to that possibility.

This week I attended the Bigfork Chamber of Commerce Sundowner event held at the Bigfork Senior Center. They have recently expanded their space, and I was eager to connect with them and see how they're serving seniors in the area. I followed up on that visit by joining their weekly lunch, and connected with some of their board members and director, Rocky Feckete. Now that the Bigfork library is fully staffed I'm anxious to get out in the community more and make these kinds of connections.

This month we also started a new program aimed at kids in the upper elementary range, cohosted with rangers from the Wayfarers unit of Flathead Lake State Park. This program is hands on and playful, with a different science theme each time. We had one session about owls, and another about trees. Both sessions had about 14 attendants, which is a great number! The park doesn't have an indoor classroom area like other State Parks such as Lone Pine, so outside of the summer months it's tricky for them to connect with kids. We will partner with them two more times before the summer season starts.