

BENZONIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

NEWS FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL



Josh White performed for Benzie County children at the Mills Community House on June 24th

Dragons & Dreams & Daring Deeds

This year's Summer Reading Program, *Dragons, Dreams, & Daring Deeds*, has been a success! Children and teens, both local residents and summer visitors throughout Benzie County participated.

The public libraries of Benzie County teamed up to encourage and reward children and teens for summer reading. The participating libraries were Benzie Shores District Library (Frankfort), Benzonia Public Library, Betsie Valley District Library (Thompsonville), and the Beulah Public Library.

To kick off the season, the four libraries jointly sponsored a performance by musician Josh White. The audience included about 125 children and adults. Each library then held a series of weekly story hours with a combined audience of over 700 children.

Five hundred and eleven children participated in the first county-wide Summer Reading incentive coordinated by volunteer Helen Dewey. Helen visited schools to "booktalk" and to promote the program. Pumped up and ready to read, 294 kids finished reading the required number of books and received their coupon books for prizes.

Of the students who finished the reading program, 129 attend Benzie Central Schools, 67 attend Frankfort Elberta Area Schools, 15 are home-schooled, and 62 were summer visitors. The rest were preschool age or in local private school. (continued on page 4)

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Helping Hands

Betty Wilcox has been volunteering at the Benzonia Public Library since June, 1989.

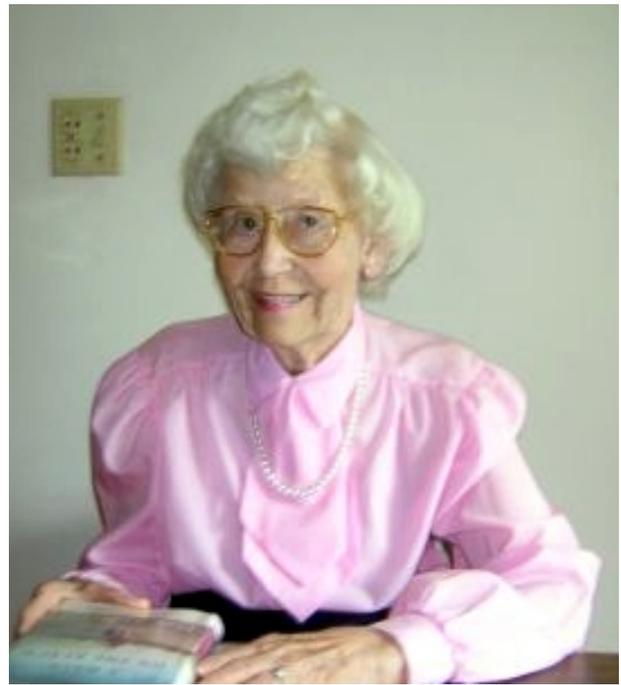
If you have ever been late in returning your library books, you have probably heard from Betty. In addition to checking in and out books and shelving returned items, Betty calls to remind you if you have overdue items that have mounting fines.

No stranger to hard work, Betty retired from the USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service after 37 years of service. She then began to offer volunteer services to the library and also provided bookkeeping services for a home health care agency.

Although very busy with family, Betty chose to volunteer at the library because she likes getting out and being around people. Her ties to the library building are strong. Betty fondly remembers attending her high school banquets, dances, and operettas performed on the stage still standing on the upper level of the Mills Community House. Betty was in the first class that graduated in Benzonia High School's "new gym" in 1941.

Betty and Leo Wilcox have been married 60 years..so Betty had no difficulty talking Leo into creating a new Book Return sign. Over the years, Leo has had other library projects too, because Betty, in addition to volunteering with Librarians Mary Jo Johnson, Roxane Miner and Marjorie Porter, served as a Library Board Member.

Thank you, Betty, for your assistance! You are a joy to work with!



Betty Wilcox

CHECK IT OUT!

AUDIOBOOKS ON CD!

The Friends of Benzonia Public Library have purchased a CD audiobook subscription for those of you who enjoy listening to a good read and no longer have tape players!

Come and check out some of the current audiobooks on CD like *Rococco* by Adriana Trigiani, *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger, *Summer of Roses* by Luanne Rice, *Always Time to Die* by Elizabeth Lowell, *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles, or the *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

The subscription plan, provided by Landmark Audiobooks, allows the library to order new titles regularly and return audiobooks when interest has waned.

In addition to the subscription audiobooks, the library has purchased a few titles and added donated CD's to the audiobook collection.

TechNews

As the season changes from summer into autumn, folks in the community experience changes also. Whether you live in the area, are visiting, or run one of the many businesses that thrive on tourism, the fall is a melancholy time when we are thankful for a more relaxed schedule, but miss the visitors' faces, warm weather and bustling activity.

In the library, no greater change occurs at the end of summer than that of internet activity. During the months of June, July, and August, over 1600 people signed in to use one of the library's three public access computers. While many of the users were regular, year-round library users, summer brings in scores of visitors who are away from home and in need of a connection!

Why the need to stay connected? The reasons vary as much as the people who walk through our doors. We cringe at the thought of a vacationer so attached to work that a few days cannot pass without checking in with co-workers. But most of those workers brought their laptops to enjoy the wireless service the library provides. While the library does not log actual sites visited, between the questions and the thank yous, it isn't difficult to see why people need internet access even while on vacation.

FAMILY-The smiles on grandparents' faces were unmistakable as they viewed young gymnasts, little leaguers, and dancers. Current technology allowed some proud relatives to view events on the day they occurred. In addition, one mother was able to keep up with her daughter in Germany and others with soldiers in Iraq. After Katrina devastated parts of Louisiana and Mississippi, anxious relatives sought out information about family, friends, and property.

TRAVEL-Many internet users this summer booked air travel, printed out boarding passes, arranged for car rental or personal transportation to and from airports all over the world. Others just checked on weather forecasts for Mackinac Island and planned their vacation excursions.

FINANCES-Bills need to be paid even when we are away from home. Deadline details involving college enrollment, stock purchases, and online banking continue to draw users in who would rather be sailing!

FUN RESEARCH- While some of us might consider all research fun, the joy on couples' faces participating in GeoCaching (a global positioning game) or of a grandpa helping a very precocious eight year old find pictures of carnivorous plants is verification that the internet is a valuable research tool offering a world of information at our fingertips.

Year round patrons who use our connection have the same internet needs as visitors. In addition, they were looking for new pets or collectibles, getting the latest information on a newly diagnosed condition, or applying for jobs.

Having this many PC users pass their fingertips over the keyboards has presented its challenges, but the library has managed to keep up with the traffic with a minimal amount of gridlock. This year, we started using timers to ensure that those waiting were treated fairly. We tried to keep the printer filled with paper, the PC's free from viruses, and the language set to English. The library offers a valuable service; and thankful visitors who stuffed money into the donation jar and shared their delight in being able to stay connected constantly reminded us of this.

The summer is over. The number of visitors is waning. The staff still uses the timers, but rarely does anyone have to end his session after just thirty minutes. We are seeing the same faces every day. The printers and settings need less attention. We will miss the happy faces of visitors who were able to stay connected as we enjoy the slower pace that fall brings!

Registered participants had 10 weeks in which to read books and earn rewards. Children in preschool through 6th grade were asked to read 15 books. For younger children, books could be read to them. Teens entering 7th through 12th grades were asked to read 8 books (because their books are generally longer).

Twenty-four businesses throughout Benzie County provided free and reduced price items as rewards for the summer readers. An additional sponsor paid for printing coupon books and reading logs.

Gayle Rice at Kilwin's of Frankfort said over 140 kids redeemed their coupons for free ice cream. One little girl looked up and down the rows of all 32 ice creams for quite a long time before asking, "You mean I can have any one of these I want?" It took her several minutes to decide on a flavor!

Many merchants commented on how cute the young children were as they came in to redeem their coupons. Jeanne Cole of Pinecroft Golf described the fun she had with the six-year old who came in with his Dad and his Grandpa to redeem his coupon for a free bucket of balls on the driving range.

Brenda Case of the Cherry Hut said they made a "big deal" of the kids as they came in for their free cookies and had lots of fun with them.

Julie Bretzke of Nugent Ace Hardware, who gave out free flashlights for program completion, described seeing kids striding purposefully down the streets of Frankfort with their coupon books in one hand and the Sleeping Bear Realty book bags on their shoulders.

The libraries experienced increases in book borrowing and in library cards issued. We hope the teachers notice that students are returning to school with their reading skills warmed up and ready to go!

The libraries of Benzie County hope to repeat this program next summer. Several new sponsors have already volunteered to participate.

**Benzie County Libraries
2005 Summer Reading
Program Sponsors:**

- High Meadow
- Betsie Valley Fitness
- Cherry Hut
- Community Drug
- Crescent Bakery
- Crystal Crate & Cargo
- Crystal Mini Golf
- Kilwin's
- Crystal Mountain
- Crystal Lake Adventure Sports
- Rosie's Country Cafe
- Family Markets
- Vacation Trailer Park
- Honor/Frankfort Building Supply
- Shop -n- Save
- Cory's Cones
- Frankfort/Elberta Chamber of Commerce
- Lake Ann Grocery
- Hungry Tummy
- Kountry Kettle
- McDonald's at Benzonia
- Nugent Ace Hardware
- Pinecroft Golf
- Sleeping Bear Realty
- State Savings Bank
- Friends of the Libraries

Thank you!!

Support Your Library by Joining the Friends.

Please make checks payable to

Friends of Benzonia Public Library

P.O. Box 445

Benzonia, Michigan 49616

2006 Membership Dues

Individual	\$5.00	_____	Patron	\$25.00	_____	Business/Professional	\$35.00	_____
Family	\$10.00	_____	Contributing	\$50.00	_____			
				or more				

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ I WOULD LIKE TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER. PLEASE CALL ME. _____

All Membership Dues and Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.