

## Executive Director's Report February 2026

### Abraham Lincoln: A New Birth of Freedom

On February 12, patrons celebrated Abraham Lincoln's birthday with an in-person visit from the president, portrayed by Kevin Wood. Speaking entirely in character, he shared stories about his political path, the divisive issue of slavery, his presidency, the Civil War, and his personal life. In one humorous moment, he asked the audience to silence their "pocket telegraph machines," reminding attendees that cell phones did not exist in the 1860s. The audience was fully engaged throughout the presentation and many stayed afterward to speak informally with "President Lincoln."



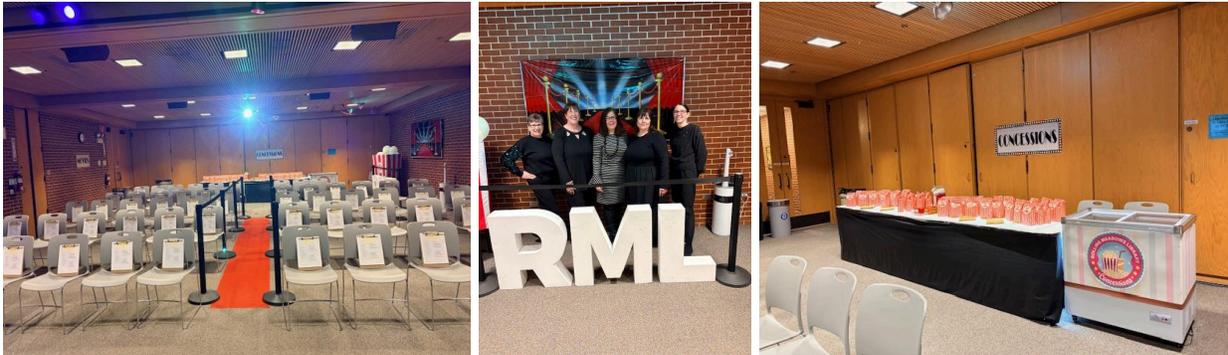
### Mark Twain The Musical

On February 15, the Library hosted Mark Twain The Musical, which drew 97 attendees for a unique blend of storytelling and music. Warren Brown portrayed Mark Twain, sharing humorous anecdotes about Twain's life and times while capturing the writer's distinctive personality and wit. The performance was accompanied by musician Mark Dvorak of the Old Town School of Folk Music, who played banjo and performed songs from Twain's era. Afterwards people thronged around Mark Twain, eager for more stories, feeling like they were actually with the humorist and writer.



### **Let's Talk Oscars**

Readers' Services staff hosted the Library's 4th Annual Let's Talk Oscars program on February 21, highlighting the 2025 Academy Award nominees in the six major categories. The event was designed to recreate the atmosphere of an Oscar celebration, with theater-themed décor and a concession stand where attendees received popcorn, a candy bar, and bottled water. A runway, themed backdrop, and oversized popcorn bucket provided fun photo opportunities during intermission. Following the program, attendees completed ballots predicting the Oscar winners, with a gift basket to be raffled off after the live telecast on March 15.



### **The Essential Houdini**

On February 17, the Library presented The Essential Houdini, performed by William Pack. The program explored the life and legacy of Harry Houdini while incorporating humor and historical context. Pack, also a skilled magician, performed several impressive demonstrations including Houdini-style escape stunts such as freeing himself from handcuffs and a straitjacket. The presentation also featured an impressive display of newspapers, programs, flyers, replicas of Houdini's handcuffs, and the only known recording of Houdini's voice.



**Youth Services Programming**

Youth Services staff presented over 30 programs during the month, offering a wide range of educational and recreational opportunities for children and families in the community.



### **A Library Bakery**

In February, Youth Services introduced a new Imaginization Zone play theme featuring a bakery. The interactive space encourages imaginative play, and staff look forward to seeing the creative “baking” adventures children come up with.



### **Bookmark Coloring Activity**

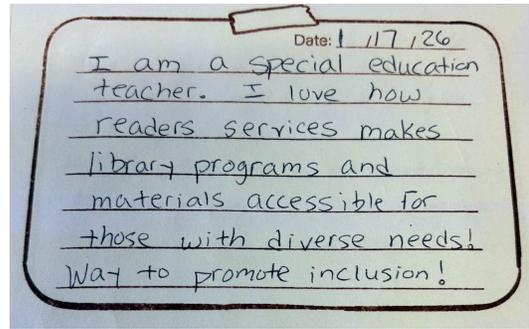
From February 6–18, Reference Librarian Nana hosted a drop-in bookmark coloring activity in the Reference Department using leftover supplies from the Creative Coloring Club. Patrons of all ages were invited to take a moment to create a Valentine’s or winter-themed bookmark for a loved one or celebrate Lunar New Year by coloring themed bookmarks and activity packets.



### **Donation from Roxane Summers**

As a thank you for the Library hosting her photography exhibit and assisting with flyer printing, Ms. Roxane Summers donated \$100 to the Library. We are very appreciative of her generosity and her ongoing support of the Library.

## Glowing Reviews



## Cook County Property Tax Revenue Update

As a follow-up to the delayed second installment of the 2025 Cook County property tax distribution, the Library has continued to receive additional payments, most recently on March 5. Since the previous update, the Library received \$346,776, bringing the total collected for 2025 to \$4,311,659, or approximately 95.6% of the amount expected.

Historically, the Library collects very close to 100% of the levy, so we anticipate receiving most of the remaining balance as additional distributions are processed.



## 2025 Annual Audit

The Library has begun its annual audit for FY2025 with ATA Group and auditor Paul Inserra. Staff have provided the requested documentation and responded to all follow-up questions from the auditors. A few items are still outstanding as the process continues, including actuarial information from IMRF that is provided through the City. Otherwise, the audit is progressing smoothly and we remain on track for a clean 2025 audit.

## Illinois Public Library Annual Report (IPLAR)

In February, Executive Director Jack Bower completed the Illinois Public Library Annual Report (IPLAR) with assistance from staff across the library. This annual survey collects detailed data on library finances, collections, staffing, programming, and services, and is used by the Illinois State Library to track statewide library activity, distribute certain state funding, and inform planning and policy decisions. The report must be submitted within 60 days of the end of an Illinois public library's fiscal year.

### **ALA Professional Development Budget & Finance Course**

Executive Director Jack Bower completed the six-week Budget & Finance course in February as part of the American Library Association Certified Public Library Administrator (CPLA) program. The course focused on core elements of library financial management, including the relationship between budgeting and strategic planning, developing program and capital budgets, evaluating funding sources, and effectively presenting financial information to governing boards. This course is one of seven required to earn the CPLA® professional certification. Jack also began the Current Issues course at the end of February as the next step in the certification program.

## **In the Community**

### **District 54 Multicultural Celebration**

Youth Services staff Alex E. and Laura G. represented the Library at the District 54 Multicultural Celebration, where they introduced library services and resources to families in the community and connected with new residents.



### **Rolling Meadows Fire Department Strategic Plan**

The Rolling Meadows Fire Department is currently developing a new strategic plan and reached out to several community stakeholders for input. At the request of Fire Department staff, Executive Director Jack Bower has agreed to participate in discussions to provide feedback from the Library's perspective. Jack will represent the Library and is happy to share any input or expectations that Library staff or trustees may have as the Fire Department works through its planning process.



### **City Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee**

The City of Rolling Meadows invited the Library to participate on the Steering Committee for its Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan, a planning effort being conducted in partnership with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). Executive Director Jack Bower attended the kickoff meeting the evening of February 25 at City Hall and will represent the Library on the advisory group. The committee will meet periodically throughout 2026 to help guide the project, review draft materials, support community outreach, and provide local insight as the City develops recommendations to improve safety, connectivity, and accessibility for people walking and biking in Rolling Meadows. As an avid bicycle rider and regular Rolling Meadows pedestrian, Jack looks forward to contributing to the process and helping ensure residents are aware of opportunities to provide feedback.

## **Department Highlights**

### **Youth Services**

The Winter Reading Challenge, Make Your Mark, was a strong success with 258 participants in English and 33 in Spanish.

### **Readers' Services**

Readers' Services participated in an R.L. Stine Watch Party on February 24. Staff created a themed book display featuring R.L. Stine read-alikes and view-alikes for teens and adults, and offered related crafts and activities. The virtual program featured R.L. Stine discussed his career and was made available to more than 800 libraries nationwide.

### **Technical Services**

Technical Services staff attended a profiling consultation meeting at CCS offices in Lincolnshire. The team also participated in a virtual CCS check-in meetings to discuss cataloging standards and profiling questions.

## Special Services

Special Services highlighted ESL resources, Black History Month materials, and the R.L. Stine Watch Party at Rolling Meadows City Hall. Staff also installed the Spring StoryWalk, Bear by Natalia Shaloshvili, and hosted the Library's first Illinois Libraries Present watch party on February 24 featuring R.L. Stine.



## Circulation

Please refer to the Circulation Monthly Statistical Report for the latest data.