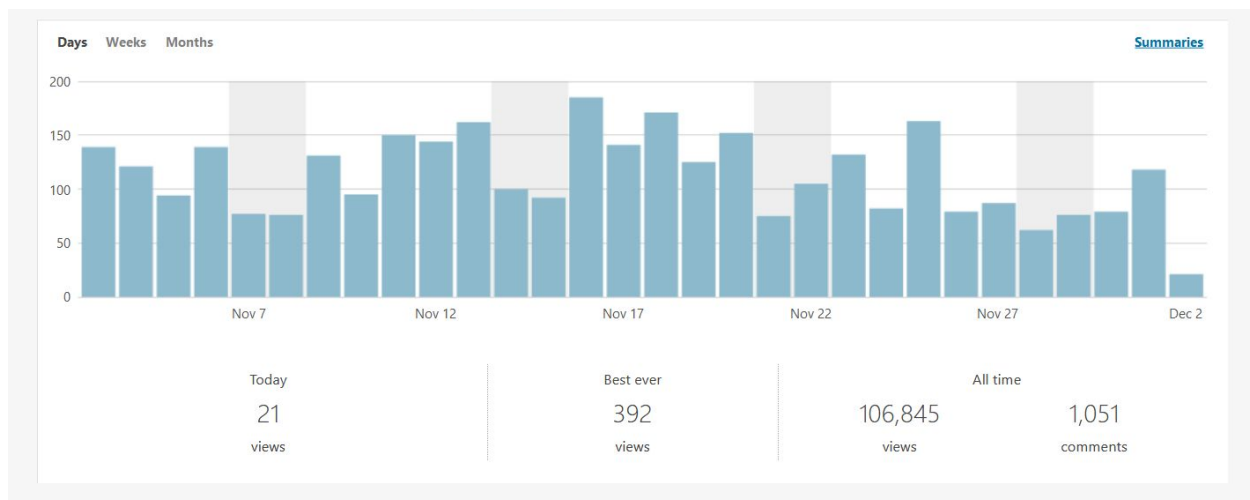


CMLE December 2020 Director's Report

It's been a busy time for everyone here! We've been talking with members about different strategies they can use to keep serving members while they are working at a distance, and other issues important to libraries in this challenging time. We've also been recording podcasts, to try to get ahead on episodes, so we will have more time to focus on our new grant program and our strategic planning process. Everything is, of course, different right now; but we can always proceed with more work to help support our members.

I am really pleased with the connections we are able to make with our web content, as many of our members are working from home again.

This is a chart showing our daily stats over the last few weeks:



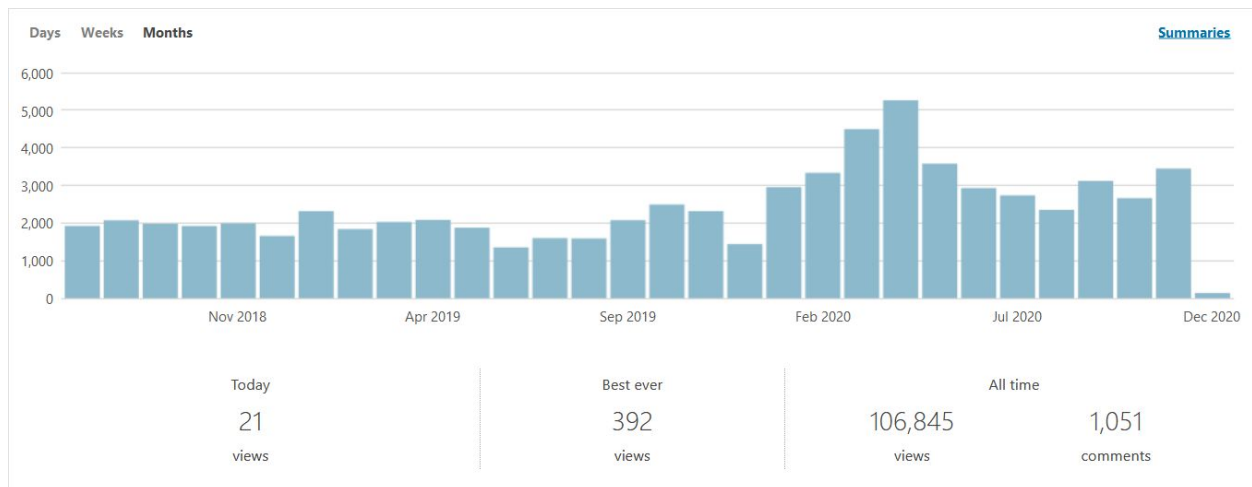
On an average day, I'm pleased when we get to 100 visitors. One new thing that has happened lately, is that our weekend numbers stay relatively high as our members are working at home. Prior to the pandemic, our weekend numbers would, understandably, drop down to maybe 20 people a day. The majority of our members are part-timers, in buildings that are not open evenings and weekends; so it seems reasonable to think they would not be looking at our material while they were not at work. I cannot be sure if this shift is a reflection of people working more hours, blending their work/leisure time more frequently, or just that people are interested in our content and are spending more time reading it even while not at work. But, I'm happy to see this trend.

This chart looks at our stats on a weekly basis:



You can see in this chart when a lot of our member schools closed their physical buildings, or went to a more distance version of their hybrid plans. As November progressed, and people were spending more time working from home, or working in buildings with very few students, they spent more time on our website. I have been working to get out daily content that will be relevant to our members, especially those in schools. It is always an important part of our mission to help those members, who tend to be working alone or in very small numbers, to feel connected to us and to each other. I think these stats are showing that they are making those connections, and I'm pleased to see it. Even over the summer, our numbers did not fall off as dramatically as they usually do, and that is great news for the outreach work we are doing.

And this chart shows our monthly website visits, over the last few years:



You can see clearly here where the quarantine started. We immediately - literally the night before all of our schools closed their buildings - started putting out content for them to share. Every single day, including weekends, for the rest of the school year, we posted a page of activities for kids of all ages. We shared these with members (or anyone!), and encouraged them to share them with their communities. We were really trying to take some burden off members, as everyone scrambled to figure out ways to serve community members online. It

was a huge amount of work, but it looks like all the work we have been putting into providing information and resources for members is paying off.

Our podcasts have likewise seen an uptick in the number of downloads/listens. These are the latest stats from our training podcast: Linking Our Libraries. Right now this is on hiatus, with weekly short Browsing Books episodes dropping every Tuesday so subscribers continue to get new content every week.

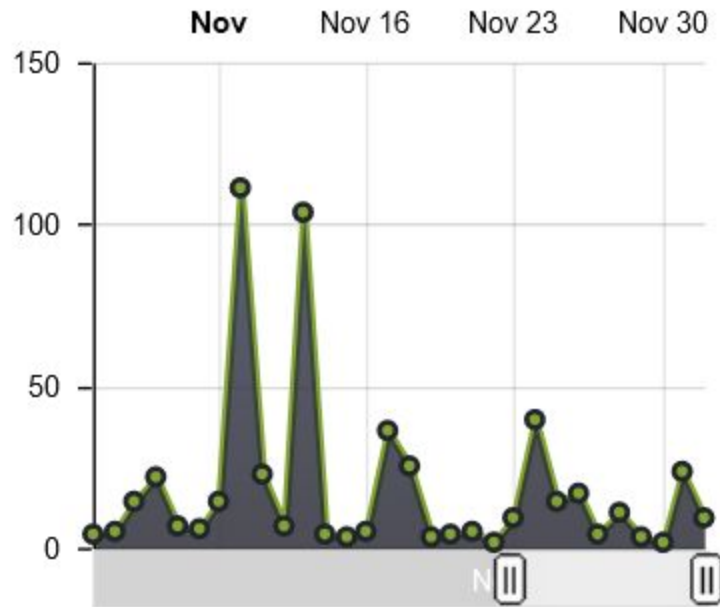
This were the episodes from the most recent season - Season Seven:

Bonus	Aug 24	Reopening Libraries: Safety
701	Sept 3	Digital Skills
702	Sept 10	Basics: Foundations of Library Profession
703	Sept 17	Bethany: Reopening School Libraries
704	Sept 24	Basics: Copyright/Open Access
705	Oct 1	Basics: Programs
706	Oct 8	Ariel: Reopening Public Library
707	Oct 15	Basics: Collection Development
708	Oct 22	Basics: Services
709	Oct 29	Basics: Social Media
710	Nov 5	Basics: Instruction

We are currently building the training classes to distribute for each of these topics, to go along with the other classes we are distributing.

This is a snapshot of our latest Linking Our Libraries stats:

Downloads	
Dec	33
Nov	518
Oct	496
Sep	818
All Time	10,941



This is our current season of Browsing Books episodes:

Date published	Episode number	Park Name
Nov 10	1	Garden Island State Recreation Area
Nov 17	2	Lake Shetek State Park
Nov 24	3	Carley State Park
Dec 1	4	William O'Brien State Park
Dec 8	5	Myre-Big Island state park
Dec 15	6	Split Rock Lighthouse
Dec 22	7	St. Croix State Park
Dec 29	8	Kilen Woods State Park
Jan 5	9	McCarthy Beach State Park

Jan 12	10	Nerstrand Big Woods
Jan 19	11	Cascade River park
Jan 26	12	Judge Magney State Park
Feb 2	13	Fort Snelling State Park
Feb 9	14	Hayes Lake State Park
Feb 16	15	Savanna Portage State Park

In each episode, we have an interesting fact about the park and we share six books related to that topic. This week's episode is: "[William O'Brien State Park](#) was established in 1947. There is a lot to do in this park, year-round. In the winter you can go ski and snowshoeing. Celebrate the winter weather with a book about someone enjoying winter outdoor activities!"

The books we share in this episode are:

- [Ice in My Veins](#), by Kelli Sullivan
- [The Shortest Day: Celebrating the Winter Solstice](#), by Wendy Pfeffer
- [In the Midst of Winter](#), by Isabel Allende
- [Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend Of Betrayal, Courage And Survival](#), by Velma Wallis
- [Fast into the Night: A Woman, Her Dogs, and Their Journey North on the Iditarod Trail](#), by Debbie Clarke Moderow
- [The Snowman](#) (Harry Hole Series), by Jo Nesbo

We have recorded the next season of episodes for this podcast, so we will be ready to drop those on schedule. The time it takes to record these is not much - we're keeping them to about ten minutes; the time to put together the webpages, the scripts, find the books, to do the audio editing, and to get everything published on our host site is longer. So recording them in batches, in advance, will let the rest of the work get done more quickly.

After that season, Season Six, we are finished with the state parks and will switch to looking at counties across Minnesota. I have a list of every county, and a prompt prepared for each, so we will be ready to record episodes for that when we get there.

Our Reading With Libraries podcast is our Reader's Advisory podcast, with material about a different genre each week. We are currently dropping episodes for Season Six. For the most part, our Guest Hosts choose the genres they want to talk about, and we are always looking for genres we have not covered, or that need more time and attention.

This was a tough one to record. I thought this would be an easy time to get people as Guest Hosts with us, since everyone is now pretty experienced at using Zoom. But we need people with headphones and a microphone, to make the sound quality good enough that we can distribute it; and that's been a challenge. It's been a challenge in general to get people as Guest Hosts - understandable as everyone is doing extra work right now. So we are cutting this season a little shorter, to avoid having quality issues with the content. (Eleven episodes instead of fifteen.) We will still have plenty of episodes to distribute at least one each week, instead of the two we distribute each week.

Nov 12	1	Contemporary Fantasy
Nov 19	2	Beach books
Nov 26	3	LGBTQ fantasy/scifi
Dec 3	4	Historical Fiction
Dec 10	5	Sports Fiction
Dec 17	6	Winter Romances
Dec 24	7	Libraries and Librarians
Dec 31	8	Psychological Thriller/Horror
Jan 7	9	Winter Mysteries
Jan 14	10	Pandemic
Jan 21	11	Minnesota

Here is the snapshot of RWL stats:

Downloads	
Dec	28
Nov	836
Oct	656
Sep	814
All Time	17,394

