



Sapientia, Virtus, and Amicitia

By Kathy Irwin, Dean of University Libraries

CMU's seal is an iconic landmark that often appears in campus photographs, especially of incoming freshman and graduating students. During President MacKinnon's investiture on April 4, 2025, he mentioned CMU's seal and the three words that appear on it: Sapientia, Virtus, and Amicitia. He noted that in addition to preparing students for careers, CMU prepares students to live a life of purpose. A life filled with wisdom, character, and friendship is a well lived life.

The current seal was based on a design by CMU student, Lyman "Pete" Ketzler. According to a CM Life article dated September 30, 1955, Ketzler won a seal-design contest. However, a CM Life article on October 20, 1978, stated that President Anspach reached out to the art department to find someone to design the university seal, and they recommended Ketzler. President Anspach asked Ketzler to create a crisp, elegant design that embodied CMU's values and character. After the State Board of Education approved the design, President Anspach sent Ketzler a check for \$35. In a CM Life interview published on October 12, 2017, Ketzler reflected that he was humbled "to know that I have designed something that will last long beyond my lifetime."

CMU Libraries embodies the ideals engraved on CMU's seal. Through its circulating collections and preservation of Michigan history, the library provides access to current and historic information allowing people to learn about today's world and benefit from the wisdom of past generations. CMU students, faculty, staff, and community members can access these collections and generate new knowledge for future generations. The library demonstrates its character by welcoming all learners and researchers, offering personalized services, curating information that is accurate and reliable, teaching about intellectual property rights and citation practices, collaborating with university and community partners, and stewarding resources. Finally, the library fosters friendship and community through its welcoming environment, supportive employees, engaging speakers and exhibitions, and providing a convenient location for academic support services.

Libraries are vital cultural institutions that curate, preserve, and make accessible intellectual and cultural knowledge. Libraries are physical and virtual platforms where members of a community can learn, discuss, share, interact, and create. As a Friend of the Libraries, you support CMU Libraries' efforts to serve learners and researchers and create welcoming spaces and programs for our community. Thank you!



In This Issue:

Happy Retirement Jody Dittenber!	2
FOTL Appreciation Event: Liza Mundy	2
A Transformative Year for Arts & Exhibitions at Charles V. Park Library	3
C.S. Bliss and Company Business Records and Family Papers are now accessible to researchers	4
Build It Yourself: Bay City's Aladdin Company	5
Congressionally Funded Newspaper Digitization	6
2025-26 Art Exhibitions	6
The Affordable Course Materials Project .	7
2025 Fall Clarke Speaker Series	7
Libraries Awarded Go Grant Funding	8

Happy Retirement to Jody Dittenber!



» Jody Dittenber, the Dean's Office supervisor, retired on March 17, 2025. We wish her a fond "A hui hou," until we meet again. Pictured from left to right: Brad Stambaugh, Tim Peters, Sam Hakoyama, Jody Dittenber, Denise Fanning, Kathy Irwin, Katrina Himebaugh, and Denise Pahl.



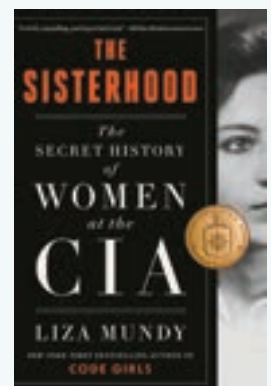
Friends of the Libraries Appreciation Event

featuring journalist and author

Liza Mundy

Liza Mundy is an award-winning journalist and the New York Times–bestselling author of five books including her latest work, *The Sisterhood: The Secret History of Women at the CIA* (2023). Her narrative nonfiction aims to engage, delight, and inform readers by providing a compelling take on important parts of American history that have long been overlooked, expanding our collective understanding of our past by telling true stories of the people, often unsung, who shaped our world.

The Sisterhood recounts the true story of the women espionage officers—tough, brilliant, resilient—who helped build the world's foremost spy agency. *Booklist* and *Kirkus* called it “a story that deserves to be told about women who deserve to be remembered.” Pulitzer-Prize winning author Steve Coll called it a “rip-roaring read about spycraft” that rewrites our understanding of the events before and after the 9-11 attacks.



A Transformative Year for Arts & Exhibitions at Charles V. Park Library

By Denise Fanning, Art Coordinator

The past year has marked an exciting chapter in the evolution of the Arts & Exhibitions program at the Charles V. Park Library. With each new season, we have expanded our efforts to present dynamic, museum-quality art experiences to the Central Michigan University community in the Baber Room Gallery.

Recognizing the distance to the nearest major art museums, our mission is to bring high-caliber, thought-provoking exhibitions and artist talks to central Michigan. By featuring artists from across Michigan and the United States, we are proud to create access to contemporary visual art that reflects a wide range of voices, identities, media, and perspectives and offers viewers opportunities to engage with art that both challenges and inspires.

This past year, we were honored to host several nationally acclaimed artists. Brooklyn-based sculptor LaKela Brown, recently named one of *The New York Times*' top 10 artists to watch, brought her powerful work exploring Black culture and iconography to our gallery. Detroit artist Scott Hocking, known internationally for his large-scale installations in museums and urban landscapes, created a transformative site-specific work in the Baber Room that left viewers awe-struck. Brown and Hocking have received extensive recognition in leading art publications and news media and are represented in museum collections across the country and beyond. All visiting artists have delivered inspiring public artist talks, and each has contributed unique insight and technique to the broader conversation around contemporary art and cultural storytelling. You can access the recorded artists' talks online at cmulibrariesart.omeka.net.

Currently on view is a profoundly moving exhibition by Cleveland-



based sculptor Kimberly Chapman, titled *Eighty-Six Reasons for Asylum Admission*. Using delicate porcelain as her medium, Chapman's work is inspired by the often-overlooked histories of women institutionalized in asylums without consent. The show powerfully connects past injustices with ongoing conversations about gender, power, and mental health.

This exhibition reflects the deeper goal of our programming: to invite our audience into new ways of seeing and understanding.

Over the past year, our shows have explored themes such as identity through cultural and historical lenses; Michigan agriculture and the intersection of science and art; environmental shifts and the human imprint on landscapes; contemporary artifacts born of neglect and decay; mythology reinterpreted through modern objects; food and adornment as cultural storytelling tools; and the history of institutional medical treatment for mental health.

Again and again, we hear from students and community members that these exhibitions and artist visits leave lasting impressions. Whether by sparking personal reflection, encouraging new dialogue, or inspiring

creative experimentation, the impact of art is clear. Many have shared that the Baber Room Gallery has become a place of both inspiration and transformation.

We are grateful for a recent generous gift from longtime supporters Sarah and Daniel Opperman, which enables us to continue growing and expanding our arts programming. This investment in the future of the arts at CMU Libraries ensures that we can continue to provide enriching exhibitions and maintain our commitment to a thriving, inclusive cultural arts community in Mount Pleasant. Their generous support speaks to the arts' vital role in education and community building. As we look ahead, we're excited to continue showcasing compelling voices, fostering creativity, and offering exhibitions that challenge, connect, and inspire.

We invite you to visit the gallery, experience the current show, and join us for future programming. Your presence and engagement help make our programming a vibrant part of campus life and community.

*If you are interested in supporting art programming at the Park Library, please consider giving a gift to the Library Arts and Culture fund: **giving.** cmich.edu/libartsandculture.*

C.S. Bliss and Company Business Records and Family Papers are now accessible to researchers

By Marian Matyn, Archivist

After twelve years of my and many students' efforts, the C.S. Bliss and Company Business Records and Family Papers is finally completely processed and described, making it globally accessible to researchers. The collection, 1879-1935, and undated, totaling 90 cubic feet, documents Michigan lumber baron Charles S. Bliss (1859-1944), his family, friends, and diverse personal and business interests in financial, legal, and tax records, and business and personal correspondence and receipts. Among his business interests were logging and lumbering, banking, real estate, railroads, agriculture, and rentals mostly in Gladwin, Midland, and Roscommon counties, as well as Saginaw, Vanderbilt, West Branch, and the state of Arkansas.

His lumber camp pay orders are a major source of information about working class people not documented in other records. Lumbermen, their jobs, hours, and wages are detailed in the pay orders. These men worked in teams with friends or extended family members. Bliss also employed a few women in various capacities, including a stenographer.

My History 583 students processed and described most of the personal correspondence and financial records of Bliss family women in the collection, including C.S. Bliss' sister, Della, his three wives (Mary, Lenora, and Gertrude), and daughters, Jean and Georginia, who was adopted. Their papers reflect their personal interests and aspects of their daily lives and pursuits. Among these materials are receipts for the three Mrs. Bliss' personal clothing and care items, name cards, sewing materials, and household goods; receipts for lace, clothes and sheet music from Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Montgomery Ward's catalogs, and curtain sample materials. A recent student assistant



» Examples of Mrs. Bliss' receipts in Box 108 for dry goods, clothes, household goods, and name or calling cards.

processed tax receipts for Fillmore County, Minnesota, and the Penoyer Farm, Saginaw, Michigan, for Lenora A. Bliss, and the Miscellaneous Account Books of Mrs. Gertrude Bliss, and Correspondence to Mrs. Bliss from Miessner Institute of Music, 1930.

Archives processing student, Natalie Armstrong, processed the last few boxes of the collection, which included West Branch Baseball Club Records, 1919-1927 (scattered). Bliss, a baseball fan, made West Branch his headquarters for his business activities, investing heavily in real estate there, and serving as director of both the West Branch Club and the Northeastern Michigan Baseball League (NMBL). The Saginaw Baseball Club and the Detroit Baseball Club are also documented in the collection. The NMBL, which had teams from Saginaw to Alpena, operated from 1916 to 1986. Bliss resigned as director of the West Branch Club and NMBL "for business reasons" on June 3, 1927. A 1919 receipt is one of several items showing materials purchased for the West Branch Club. Bliss' resignation letters list officers and leaders of the NMBL only.

The Treasurer's Records of School District Number 4, Butman Township, Gladwin County, 1913-1917, is the lone

example of school records in the collection. Bliss operated a major lumber camp for decades in Butman. The Bliss family moved to Butman Township in 1905 to live on a farm. Later, they lived on a farm near Gladwin. This record reflects their involvement and impact on the communities in which they lived.

The Bliss' Gladwin Farm and Cattle Company records, 1910-1927, and the West Branch Dam Farm Reports, 1910-1918, record production totals of crops. Bliss raised pedigree stock animals and dogs and tried experimental farming techniques and crops based on advice from specialists at the State Department of Agriculture and Michigan Agricultural College, now Michigan State University.

Oversized materials in the collection include blueprints of Bliss Park in Saginaw's 14th Ward, and the C.S. Bliss Estate in Saginaw, 1909; and a tracing on greased paper of the Pere Marquette Railroad Lines in Saginaw. Bliss shipped his products via this railroad for decades.

For further information, please access the finding aid at clarke.cmich.edu/csbliss

Build It Yourself: Bay City's Aladdin Company

By Bryan Whitledge, Clarke Public Services Librarian

For hundreds of thousands of Americans, their American Dream involved constructing their very own kit home. Kit home aficionados from coast to coast love the homes ordered through the Sears or Montgomery Ward catalogs and built by the owners. However, before and after Sears began and stopped offering build-it-yourself homes, there was the Aladdin Company, headquartered in Bay City, Michigan. The company provided design plans, partially constructed materials, and furnishings for buyers to build their homes. For 75 years, Aladdin produced over 75,000 kits. Bungalows, four squares, cottages, and ranch-style models proved popular with people who wanted to build their homes with all the amenities of custom-built dwellings.

A Michigan Family-Owned Company with National and Global Impact

Brothers William and Otto Sovereign founded the Aladdin Company in 1906. Bay City, the site of Aladdin's company headquarters and first flagship mill, produced kits shipped throughout the Midwest, Great Plains, and New England. Due to the company's early success, Aladdin opened mills in Oregon, Florida, Mississippi, and North Carolina, enabling quick direct-to-customer service across North America. The manufacturing methods, affordability, style, and advertising savvy of the Sovereign family made Bay City a hub for advancements in residential construction.

Aladdin kits were also the building blocks for planned communities across the globe. The Austin Village, constructed with 200 "Special Chester" kits shipped to Birmingham, England, in 1917, is just one such effort. Aladdin also helped communities rebuild after disasters, such as when they sent kits to Japan after the Great Kanto Earthquake.



A Single-Pooch Residence

Aladdin's advertising and mail-order catalogs were key to the business's success. The company used pithy slogans, colorful images, and customer testimonials to give prospective buyers confidence in the Aladdin brand. One such advertising gimmick, seemingly created as a tongue-

in-cheek joke, led Aladdin down a previously uncharted path for the company - dog houses.

In 1976, a customer was intrigued by a "new" model in the Aladdin catalog. There, in his very own Read-Cut home, was Kippy, a dog. The customer, Mrs. Peterson, wrote to Aladdin Co. asking if she could order a doghouse. Bill Sovereign, president of the company, replied that he was "in the house business - people houses." However, because Mrs. Peterson lived nearby, Aladdin agreed to create the doghouse kit. Mr. Sovereign asked Mrs. Peterson for specifications, and she replied with the dimensions and some custom shingle and paint requests. Several weeks later, workers from Aladdin arrived in Edmore with the doghouse, and constructed the single-dog residence in Mrs. Peterson's yard.

Aladdin Supports the War Effort

Individuals and companies across Michigan participated in the war effort during World War II. Detroit's automobile and affiliated manufacturing plants are famed for converting from cars to tanks and trucks to bombers. In Bay City, the Aladdin Company supported the Allied Forces by doing what they did best—making kits to construct places to live. Instead of single-family homes, the war effort needed barracks, mess halls, officers' quarters, and more.

Aladdin quickly adapted, and in 1942, the company shipped various military buildings kits to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The site of old Fort Brady (1822-1893) along the St. Mary's River near the present-day Soo Locks complex was one of many strategic U.S. military sites. The Aladdin kits were constructed around the Locks complex around the time the MacArthur Lock opened in 1943. The Locks—a vital piece of infrastructure—needed protection, and Aladdin was ready to help with the effort. A photo taken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on June 27, 1942, to document the construction of the new lock, captured a truck delivering another Aladdin kit to the Ft. Brady site.

The Clarke's current exhibit details these stories and more regarding how a family-owned company from Michigan's Bay area contributed to the history of residential construction. Enjoy *Build It Yourself: Bay City's Aladdin Co.* through the end of December 2025 in the Clarke Historical Library's exhibition galleries.

View Aladdin Catalogs from 1908 to 1963 on the Clarke Digital Collections site, clarke.cmich.edu/AladdinCatalogs

View the hand-written sales indexes tracking the receipt numbers for sales from the Bay City mill from 1914 to 1981 on the Clarke Digital Collections site, clarke.cmich.edu/AladdinSalesIndexes

Congressionally Funded Newspaper Digitization

By Carrie Marsh, Clarke Historical Library Director

Newspapers are among the most enduring records of Michigan's history and are essential resources to discover stories that you would not find elsewhere. How were Michiganders affected by the American Civil War, the Great Depression, or two world wars? How did Michigan towns navigate economic changes over the century? An important source to help answer these and many other questions is our newspapers.

In 2022, the Clarke received a Congressional earmark of \$135,000 to digitize historical Michigan newspapers and make them openly accessible online. With these funds, between January 2023 and March 2025, Clarke staff digitized portions of 17 newspapers amounting to more than 250,000 newspaper pages.

Among the digitized titles was *Iron Ore*, founded by geologist and mining authority George Newett in Ishpeming. *Iron Ore* not only covered the Ishpeming area's mining activities, along with other local news, but it also reported on mines throughout the U.S. and the world. The *Clare County Cleaver*

has been reporting local area news and events since 1881, making it the oldest continuing business in the county. The grant allowed us to fill gaps in the *Clare County Cleaver* online between 1976 and 2004. The *Monroe Commercial*, founded in 1840, was one of the longest running papers in the county. Issues of the *Monroe Commercial* published between 1859 and 1885 are now online thanks to the grant.

The 17 newspapers in this project are openly accessible in the Clarke's DigMichNews database, digmichnews.cmich.edu, where everyone - community members, families, students, teachers, genealogists, and others - can research Michigan's rich history. We are grateful to Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow for championing the Clarke's project and including it in the 2022 omnibus bill.

If you are interested in supporting historic newspaper preservation, consider giving a gift to the Clarke Historical Library Microfilm and Digitization Program: giving.cmich.edu/chlmicrodigi

2025 -26 Art Exhibitions

MIRA BURACK | *Sleeping in the Mine* | September - December 2025 | Baber Room Gallery

New Mexico installation artist creates large-scale wall collages inspired by ancient memories, intimacy with nature, and nurturing wounds to the land.

CENTRAL SUSTAINABILITY | *Sustainable Art Exhibition* | October 2025 | 3rd Floor Exhibition Space

A juried exhibition of student work exploring concepts of sustainability.

LAUREN GERIG & REBECCA CASEMENT | January - March 2026 | Baber Room Gallery

Two-person collaborative exhibition of paintings and sculpture exploring material experimentation and speaking to individual and collective memory and impact.

GUSTAVO AYALA | March - May 2026 | Baber Room Gallery

A series of vibrant paintings exploring intersections between masculinity and marginalized identities.

ANIMATION SENIOR SHOWCASE | May 2026 | 3rd Floor Exhibition Space

A series of original drawings and storyboards from the behind-the-scenes creations of feature animation films by graduating senior Animation BFA students.

The Affordable Course Materials Project

By Stephanie Mathson, Coordinator of Library Research and Instructional Services and Ariel Wiborn, Course Reserve and Copyright Specialist

In 2022-23, college students spent an average of \$1,212.00 per year on textbooks (Educationdata.org). Unfortunately, 65% of students surveyed did not buy textbooks due to costs, 25% worked extra hours to afford these materials, and 11% skipped meals to buy course materials.

In 2020, the University Library established the Textbooks in the Library program to provide print or electronic copies of books for courses with high enrollment, failure, or withdrawal rates. Print books are available for checkout, and eBooks are accessible online. Although the program has been beneficial, library staff members wanted to do more to support students.

In 2023, a library committee investigated Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives at other MAC schools. OER materials are licensed through the Creative Commons and allow users free perpetual access and the right to retain, re-use, revise, remix, and redistribute the materials. The committee hosted a webinar for CMU faculty and staff about OER in April 2024. Faculty attendees who submitted a review of an Open Textbook in their subject area received a \$100.00 professional development stipend.

During the past academic year, the committee piloted the Affordable Course Materials Project (ACMP) to encourage more faculty to adopt free or low-cost materials (less than \$50/student) for a course they teach regularly. Nine faculty members from five of CMU's colleges were accepted into the program. After

revising and teaching the course, they will receive a professional development stipend ranging from \$500.00 to \$1,000.00. Two of these faculty members had already begun working with their subject librarians to select OER, Open Access (OA) materials, and library-owned resources, then taught their revised courses during spring semester 2025.

Dr. Elizabeth Meadows revised and taught Psychology 200G, Psychology for Living Your Best Life, this spring. She reported, "On the very first day [of the semester], one student made a point of stopping me after class to say how much she appreciated having the open-access readings and not having to pay for anything for this course." Dr. Meadows collaborated with librarian Rui Wang to choose readings from OpenStax, the NobaProject, OER Commons, and an OA journal article, as well as a Hidden Brain podcast. The free materials supported the course objectives well, and Dr. Meadows appreciated having many quality sources from which to choose. Previously, students would have paid \$45.00 to rent or \$188.00 to purchase a textbook for the course. However, the 40 students enrolled in the course collectively saved \$4,660.00 due to the ACMP. Dr. Meadows is investigating adopting OER and other free resources for her other courses.

Dr. Brittany Bayless Fremion taught History 496WI, a writing-intensive research seminar for History majors, this spring. Previously, she would assign



students four textbooks totaling about \$100.00 per student. Librarian and archivist Marian Matyn purchased eBook copies of those textbooks for the library's collection, saving each student \$100. Additionally, students used journal articles available through the library's JSTOR database and items borrowed through Documents on Demand. Dr. Fremion said, "Students were both delighted and relieved that they did not have to purchase books for the course, which is a capstone class for undergraduates and research seminar for graduate students." She added that the books supported course objectives very well and noted that "the ease of hyperlinking assigned materials in the syllabus and course Blackboard shell made it possible for students to quickly find materials." Dr. Fremion fully intends to continue using Open Access materials and library-owned resources in her courses to help reduce the cost of higher education for her students.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the OER Committee plans to continue the Affordable Course Materials pilot project and investigate the needs of faculty interested in publishing open textbooks.

Clarke Speaker Series Fall 2025

Speakers will be announced mid-August.

Scan the QR code to visit clarke.cmich.edu/speakerseries for event details.





Charles V. Park Library
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
Permit No. 93

Support the Libraries!

Scan or visit **library.cmich.edu/giving**
to give your gift, today. Thank you for your support!



Libraries Awarded Go Grant Funding



- » CMU selected the Libraries' Go Grant proposal, "Innovative Learning through Technology," which is a collaboration among several library departments and OIT to increase student access to cutting-edge technology and enhance their digital literacy skills.

Pictured from left to right: Katie Edmiston, Kyle Loos, Ann Kucera, Randy Claypool, and Hytham Dali.

CMU is an Equal Opportunity Employer and institution. CMU does not discriminate against persons based on age, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, sex, sex-based stereotypes, sexual orientation, transgender status, veteran status, or weight.