

Winter Reading Challenge with Beanstack

Submitted by Tammy Kruger

The Beanstack *Winter Reading Challenge* runs January 1-31, 2026. This challenge comes **with prizes!** The top three performing libraries will receive a gift card, as well as a plushie of Benny the Bean.

To help level the playing field, since our North Dakota libraries come in all sizes, libraries will compete in the following categories:



1. Most readers registered
2. Highest completion rate of registered readers
3. Most minutes per reader logged

To Do This Challenge

Participants read minutes and complete activities to check off bingo squares. (The activities are simple. Some examples include reading with a warm drink and finding a cozy place to read.)

How to Sign Up

Registering for *Read with Benny: Winter Reading Challenge* is easy!

1. Visit NDSL's home page at www.library.nd.gov.
2. From there, go to the Patrons tab along the top and select Programs. The first program listed is Beanstack.
3. Either sign-in or create an account.
4. *Read with Benny: Winter Reading Challenge* will show on your Beanstack home page. Select and register for this challenge.
5. Start reading and completing activities!



*Disclaimer: Libraries that use their own Beanstack accounts are not eligible for these prizes.

[Sign Up](#)

Library Joy Week

Submitted by NDLA

NDLA is partnering with NDSL to organize our first annual Library Joy Week February 1-7!

What is Library Joy Week?

It's a week to celebrate library joy and give North Dakota libraries a chance to educate the public on all the good we do through a fun celebration!

How your library celebrates Library Joy Week is completely up to you, but our goal is to highlight how libraries spark joy to their communities, patrons, and staff. Whether that's by hosting an inter-generational storytime, borrowing a STEM Kit from the State Library, or turning your library floor into a game of giant checkers, the possibilities are only limited by your imagination.



NDLA and NDSL are also working on creating a downloadable promotional toolkit that will be distributed to all libraries the first week of January.

If you have an idea for how to spread library joy, send it to the NDLA Advocacy Committee at legislators@ndla.info.

2026 Summer Reading Trainings

Submitted by Tammy Kruger

Are you ready to *Unearth a Story* with a CSLP Summer Reading Training event?

The following libraries will be conducting trainings during February and March:

Mayville Public Library

February 13 (11:00 AM-1:30 PM) - Lunch will be provided

Heart of America Public Library (Rugby)

February 16 (9:00 AM-11:30 AM)

Carrington City Library – February 17

(11:00 AM-1:30 PM) - Lunch will be provided

Washburn Public Library

February 27 (10:00 AM-12:30 PM)

McKenzie County Public Library (Watford City)

March 2 (11:00 AM-1:30 PM) - Lunch will be provided



What comes with Summer Reading Trainings?

1. Time spent with other librarians discussing their plans for Summer Reading 2026
2. Swag from the CSLP store
3. A walk through of CSLP's manual and resources

Unable to make it to an in-person training? No worries! NDSL will be hosting a virtual training on February 18 from 10:00 AM to 10:45 AM.

Registration closes on December 31 at 5:00 PM.

Register before December 31

The North Dakota State Capitol Window Christmas Tree and New Year Display

Submitted by Al Peterson

If you have ever driven past the North Dakota State Capitol at night during the holiday season, you would see a Christmas tree design using the windows of the capitol. On New Year's Day, the windows display the year.

The Christmas tree window lighting began in the mid-1940s using paper shades to color the north and south window openings. Plastic shades were purchased in the late 1950s, and colored plastic shades are still used today to create the tree. There are a total of 88 shades used to get the Christmas tree on both the north and south side of the building. Each side North and the South has 20 red and 24 green shades to create the tree. The New Year numbers tradition started in the mid-1970s with lighting the numbers on the north and south sides of the building. Then in the late 1980s the windows on the east and west sides were illuminated to highlight the New Year.



These displays continue a tradition of celebrating the holiday season at the State Capitol. Included with this article is a picture of the tree for those who haven't seen it in person.

January NDSL Webinars

[WordPress Q&A](#)

Tuesday, January 13 (1:00 PM - 2:00 PM)

[Copyright: The Not-So-Scary Version](#)

Wednesday, January 21 (2:00 PM - 2:45 PM)

[Public Libraries Survey Walkthrough](#)

Wednesday, January 28 (2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)

Upcoming Webinars

Digital Dimension

By Trevor Martinson

Genealogy Resources

Snowed in for the foreseeable future? Too cold to go outside? Then it might be the perfect time to tackle that genealogy project you've been thinking about. But where to begin?

About two years ago, I shared some of the resources that I use when assembling biographies, especially for the [Political Prairie Fire](#) collection on Digital Horizons. I'd like to expand on that list and switch the focus to genealogy.

So, back to where to begin an online search. I often like to start with the [North Dakota Biography Index](#) (NDBI) from NDSU Archives. This is a searchable database, containing nearly 250,000 names from over 800 North Dakota books. Its website says searching "will enable you to quickly determine which publication to consult for biographical information." Simply run a search by name or publication, and hopefully you'll get some results. If you do, the NDBI will list the book (or books) where the person has a biography. It may even let you know the page number.

[Continue Reading](#)



Best Books of 2025

Art has the power to change your life, as Louisa learns in Fredrik Backman's *My Friends*. Louisa is a young artist trying to find her way when she comes into possession of a famous painting, a beautiful depiction of the ocean with three people tucked into a corner. Most people dismiss the figures in the painting, but Louisa becomes obsessed with learning who they are and why they're there, an obsession that will lead her across the country and into the story of four teenagers from almost thirty years ago.



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Bookish Seasonal Traditions

Submitted by Tammy Kruger

Jolabakafloð

Jolabakafloð, or "the Christmas book flood" is celebrated in Iceland. This event began during World War II when paper was one of the few materials not rationed. People exchange books on Christmas Eve; they then spend the night reading. In modern day, Icelanders receive a book catalog, called Bokadindin, in November. This magazine contains new releases just in time to order for Jolabakafloð (Bellorin, 2024)!



Fika

Fika, or Swedish coffee break, is celebrated daily throughout the year. Fika offers moments to slow down, appreciate the good things in life, and reconnect. It can be taken with others, as well as done alone. During December and January, families often use Fika time to read together and discuss what they read. (Brones, 2015; Rizzo, 2024).



[Continue Reading](#)



New Library Science Books at NDSL:

October-December 2025

The State Library has added more professional development resources for all types of libraries. Explore these valuable resources as soon as time allows.

Each first link provides publisher information and a book summary. Notes I provide are based on skimming the title, book content, or summary.

[Elevating the School Library: Building Positive Perceptions through Brand Behavior](#) (2024)

- Authors Susan D. Ballard and Sara Kelly Johns spoke about this book at the **October Tri-Conference in Grand Forks**
- Explains what a library brand is
- Focuses on the impact, influence, and integrity of the library's brand behavior
- Provides resources for branding, rebranding, or adjusting a school library's brand



[Request or Place a Hold](#)

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Exploring Copyright, Fair Use, and Public Domain

Dictionary.com, defines fair use as reasonable and limited use of copyrighted material so as not to infringe upon copyright. While the definition may be understandable, actually applying fair use can be more complex.



I attended a webinar hosted by Niche Academy in which Sara Wolf presented [Figuring Out Fair Use](#). Sara, an author and professor, provided educators and librarians with strategies and resources for guiding others in making fair use decisions and using copyrighted material ethically.

Sara explained that fair use applies when dealing with material that is:

1. Copyrighted
2. Not covered by a license such as Creative Commons
3. Not otherwise exempted under exceptions such as distance learning, interlibrary loan, or reproducing materials for individuals who are blind
4. Not already permitted for use by the creator

Continue Reading



Wade and Vernon Lovdokken restored four benches at the [Leach Public Library](#), in memory of their parents, Ulrich "Spade" and Cora Lovdokken

[Wishek Public Library](#) received a donation of chairs for the library from the Blattner Company

Science Across America

STAR Net

As America celebrates its 250-year anniversary in 2026, HHMI Tangled Bank Studios and STAR Net are launching a new campaign to help libraries highlight the history of scientific achievement in our country and the local connections to science in our communities. **SCIENCE ACROSS AMERICA**, the newest campaign from *Spark of Science@ My Library*, invites libraries to showcase local scientific advances, engage communities in a discussion about how local science is relevant to their lives with focused Community Dialogues, and host educational and inspirational activities that shine a light on the past, present, and future of science in our lives. All materials are free to participating libraries.



We are looking for at least two libraries from every state and territory to participate. Applications are due by January 9, 2026.

[Learn More & Apply Today](#)

Kit of the Week

The Financial Launchpad: A Financial Literacy Kit for 3rd Through 5th Grade

This kit, designed for 3rd through 5th graders, addresses financial literacy concepts to help students make informed decisions about their money, avoid financial pitfalls, achieve short- and long-term financial goals, and reduce stress around money. There are 6 sections, complete with games, activities, and lesson plans.



Section 1: Wants vs. Needs; Section 2: Money Values and Making Change; Section 3: Budgeting; Section 4: Banking; Section 5: Earning Money; Section 6: Home Connections and Additional Activities.

This kit includes a binder with lesson plans; "Who has correct change?" game with 30 cards; "I Have, Who Has" game with 30 cards; large laminated copies of seven bills and five coins; 12 dice; and three books: "Not-So-Common Cent\$" by Sarah Wassner Flynn; "Money Quest: Secrets of the Treasure Chest" by Palina Kalinkina; and "Rock, Brock, and the Savings Shock" by Sheila Bair.

[Reserve This Kit](#)

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www.library.nd.gov

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