

## Crossroads: Change in Rural America

**Opening Ceremony**  
**Saturday, October 26, 10:00am**  
 VBDL Webster Memorial - Decatur

**Capturing the Past: Identification and Care of Your Photos**  
**Saturday, October 12, 10:00am**  
 VBDL Webster Memorial

**Made in the Mitten with Diana Stampfer**  
**Thursday, October 17, 6:30pm**  
 VBDL Webster Memorial  
 Made possible with support from Michigan Humanities

**Hobby Farming in a Small Town**  
**Saturday, October 19, 11:00am**  
 VBDL Antwerp Sunshine Branch

**Windshadow Farm: Artisan Cheese**  
**Saturday, November 2, 12noon**  
 VBDL Bangor Branch

**Bloomingtondale: Past and Present Exhibit**  
**October - December**  
 VBDL Bloomingtondale Branch

**History of Fruit Farming with Paul Rood**  
**Friday, November 15, 3:00pm**  
 VBDL Covert Branch

**History of Gobles Walking Tour**  
**Saturday, November 9 10:30am**  
 VBDL Gobles Branch

**Lawrence: Then and Now**  
**November 2 - 23**  
 VBDL Lawrence Branch



## Smithsonian Comes to Decatur

The Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit, Crossroads: Change in Rural America, comes to VBDL Webster Memorial, Decatur, for seven weeks, beginning October 18. The exhibit is made possible with support from Michigan Humanities,


The library, at 200 North Phelps Street, is one of six sites in Michigan expressly chosen to host Crossroads as part of the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street program.

According to Local History Librarian Amy Druskovich, the exhibit provides the opportunity for the community to reflect on its history, present and future.

"Americans have relied on rural crossroads for generations," Druskovich says. "Despite the massive economic and demographic changes in the past century, our small towns continue to focus on new opportunities for growth and development. Crossroads is designed to start conversations about what makes our community unique and what the future may hold for us."

The exhibit consists of five free-standing kiosks and one interactive digital kiosk. Topics include education, access to services, commerce, agriculture, infrastructure, and demographic change.

VBDL's seven locations are offering complementary displays and programs in support of the Smithsonian exhibit. [See sidebar at left]

 **Smithsonian** For more information, contact the library at 269.423.4771 or email info@vbdl.org.



## "The Farmer is the Man" Kicks-off Crossroads

Singer/songwriter and roots musician, Chris Vallillo (at right), presents, The Farmer is the Man, during the opening event for Crossroads: Change in Rural America, Saturday, October 26, 10:00am, VBDL Webster Memorial, Decatur.

Vallillo's presentation immediately follows the ribbon-cutting by local, state, and, hopefully, national dignitaries. The performance, written specifically for the Smithsonian exhibit, showcases songs that chronicle and celebrate farm life.

The two-time Illinois state scholar performs on six-string and bottleneck slide guitars and harmonica. He weaves original, contemporary and traditional songs and narratives into a compelling and entertaining portrait of the history and lifestyles of the Midwest. Learn more about Chris at <https://www.chrisvallillo.com>.

Van Buren County Farm Bureau is supplying activities for kids beginning at 11:00am. Refreshments provided by the Friends of VBDL. The event is made possible, by Michigan Humanities, and is free and open to all.



# Southwest MI Reads

1,000 Books  
Before Kindergarten

## The James Bond Phenomenon

**Bond, James Bond.** An identifying statement like no other since the fictional, British secret agent introduced himself in Ian Fleming's 1953 novel *Casino Royale*.

Since Fleming's death in 1964, eight writers have carried on the Bond tradition, including Southwest Michigan Reads 2019 visiting author, Raymond Benson (at right). The author of six, original 007 novels presents "The James Bond Phenomenon," Tuesday, October 1, 6:30pm, at the Lawton Community Center.



Benson was the third - and first American - writer to be commissioned by the James Bond copyright holders between 1996 and 2002. His titles include *Zero Minus Ten*, *The Facts of Death*, *High Time to Kill*, *DoubleShot*, *Never Dream of Dying*, and *The Man with the Red Tattoo*.

Readers of suspense novels are likely to recognize Benson's name for his Black Stiletto saga, *The Secrets on Chicory Lane*, and *In the Hush of the Night*. His newest book, *Blues in the Dark*, is scheduled for release in October.

Copies of Benson's books are available at each of the sponsoring libraries: Dowagiac District Library, Hartford Public Library, Lawton Public Library, Marcellus Township Wood Memorial Library, Paw Paw District Library, South Haven Memorial Library, and Van Buren District Library.

The Dowagiac Ladies Library Association and the Friends of the Van Buren District Library have provided additional support for the free event.

For updated information about related activities, look for Southwest Michigan Reads on Facebook, contact the nearest participating library or email [info@vbd.org](mailto:info@vbd.org).



## 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten goes online September 1!

<http://vbd.org/beanstack.org>

Create an account!  
Add a reader!  
Start logging!  
Redeem prizes!



Download the Beanstack Tracker mobile app and use the scanner to log books using ISBNs!

## Fall Story Time

VBDL Antwerp Sunshine Branch  
Wednesdays and Thursdays at 10:30am  
September 4 - Dec. 12



VBDL Bangor Branch  
Wednesdays at 10:00am  
September 4 - Dec. 18

VBDL Bloomingdale Branch  
Thursdays at 10:30am  
September 5 - December 19

VBDL Covert Branch  
Tuesdays at 11:30am  
September 3 - December 17

VBDL Gobles Branch  
Wednesdays at 10:30am  
September 4 - December 18

VBDL Lawrence Community Branch  
Wednesdays at 11:00am  
September 4 - December 18

VBDL Webster Memorial - Decatur  
Wednesdays at 10:00am  
September 4 - December 18

Saturdays at 10:00am\*  
\*Story Time goes bi-lingual  
the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month

VBDL.org

## Southwest Michigan TCWC 2020

The Southwest Michigan Teen Creative Writing Challenge is set to get a jumpstart on the 2020 competition.

The submission period for next year's challenge begins November 1 and continues through January 31, 2020.

All entries in the Challenge's four categories - Fiction, Poetry, Comics, Cover Art - will be judged by March 13, with winners announced the week of April 13. The 2020 Award Ceremony is Saturday, June 20, 2:00pm. Location to be determined.

The earlier start will allow sufficient time to format the winning entries for publication.

To date, the Challenge is sponsored by Cass District Library, Dowagiac District Library, Lawton Public Library, Marcellus Township Wood Memorial Library, Paw Paw District Library and Van Buren District Library.



## Southwest Michigan Writers' Conference

A day for aspiring writers of all levels!

Saturday, October 26  
9:00am - 4:45pm

Niles District Library, Niles MI

Get back in the game with  
FREE ONLINE TUTORING!

9am - 12 Midnight  
VBDL.org's  
eLibrary

The  
Princeton  
Review®



Van Buren District Library

Bangor - Bloomingdale - Covert - Decatur - Gobles - Lawrence - Mattawan