President’s Message
By Scott Vrieze, 2019 WLA Board President

From the President’s Desk (like I haven’t been wanting to write that all my life!):

The new WLA year has begun at a feverish pace! The team working on the Fall Conference has been in full planning mode for some time, and we are looking forward to a great conference this year. Leah Langby, 2019 WLA Conference planner, is doing a brilliant job of keeping everything (and me) on track for delivering a great fall event.

Our theme will revolve around inclusion and all that the word might mean. We are trying to be aware of the need to live up to our values as an association and a profession, and provide a welcoming space for a diverse range of people and perspectives. This is hard but rewarding work for us, since it challenges us personally and professionally to be our best selves. We will inevitably make mistakes in this process, and may disagree on the best path forward. However, I believe libraries are uniquely positioned to have exactly this kind of difficult conversation, both within the association and in the communities you serve. These are the types of community conversations we want to have in our libraries, whether in public libraries or in educational settings.

Having said that, I encourage libraries to offer their space to local Wisconsin Assembly and Senate representatives. Many of us have meeting rooms or spaces within our buildings that are ideal venues for listening sessions that provide opportunities to have conversations with your representatives. It has the added benefit of giving you an opportunity to demonstrate how amazing your library services really are, and provides tangible evidence of taxpayer dollars at work in local communities. And they’ll thank you for being so accommodating. Win!

Among the issues we are working on this year, one of my goals is to help the association’s work in being inclusive of library staff from all types of libraries. Whether you work in special, academic, public or school settings, the association should reflect your concerns and needs. There is a perception that WLA largely serves the interests of public libraries in the state, with academics coming second, and special libraries a distant third. This perception tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as academics and special librarians decide not to become members or don’t participate in the work of the association because it’s not “relevant” to their work.

I would respond that WLA is only as responsive as WE make it. It is a member-driven, member-powered organization that can have the exact character we want it to have. Together as a community, we can make WLA what we need it to be!
Hello, Trustees, Friends and Library Colleagues.

Welcome to a new year. The start of a new year is always a great time to reflect and think about what we want to do better, both personally and professionally. The New Year offers us a chance to start fresh, set new goals, or in some cases, make significant changes in direction. Sure, we can commit to new resolutions any time, but this is the time of year more than any other when we think about how we can make improvements. The same is true for running an association.

This year we celebrate the 128th year of the Wisconsin Library Association. Like each of the 2.5 million associations in America, we exist solely as a result of the energy, innovation and dedication of our membership. Last year, through your support and effort, we grew membership, increased the number of non-members attending our conferences, expanded our effort to collaborate with like-minded organizations and laid the groundwork for a successful budget year. Now we begin again, with many of the same themes.

As the new year begins, we hope you will ask yourself, “Who within my professional circle is not a WLA member?” Talk to those individuals and help introduce them to the great benefits and opportunities of being a member in their state association. Please put those spring and fall conference dates into your calendar now, with two electronic reminders. Consider inviting a friend (or maybe two) to join you. If you are a Library Director, contact your Legislator to inform them about the great meeting space that your library can offer for listening sessions. The Legislator gets an audience, you get to showcase the value that your library provides for the community and the association gets another library supporter at the State Capitol.

Let’s all put forth our best effort to follow through on those personal resolutions, as well as our commitment to building a stronger association.

I agreed to run for WLA Treasurer because I have been actively involved with WLA for over ten years now and felt I could bring some good experience and also some new ideas to the Board. My goals for serving on the WLA Board are to be a conduit for WLA members’ concerns for the organization and to “get things done.” At our first WLA Board meeting, Plumer stressed the importance of being a “working board” - we were expected to help complete projects and get involved with starting new ones. This completely matched my expectation of “getting things done.” As I have found throughout my involvement with WLA, I am always impressed with the professionalism and passion of my fellow library colleagues and I am honored to work with the outstanding individuals who are part of the WLA Board. Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you have ideas or suggestions for WLA; I’d love to hear from you!
Library Legislative Day
Despite the snow, Library Legislative Day on February 12 was another successful opportunity for library advocates across the state to discuss the value of libraries with their legislators. Pictured here is Winding Rivers Library System Director Kristen Anderson meeting with Representative Jill Billings.

Leadership Orientation
On January 11, WLA section leaders and conference committee members met at DeForest Public Library for the annual Leadership Orientation. Led by WLA President Scott Vrieze, the group reviewed 2019 Strategic Priorities, were introduced to the WLA resources available to them and spent the afternoon discussing ideas for the 2019 WLA Annual Conference. To top it off, everyone ate lots of pizza and other excellent treats.
Division & Section Updates

**AWSL**  
*(Association of Wisconsin Special Librarians)*

Association of Wisconsin Special Librarians member Anne Moser will be the kick-off speaker for *Door County Reads 2019*, which will focus on *Death and Life of the Great Lakes* by Dan Egan and *Wintering* by Peter Geye. Senior special librarian for the Wisconsin Water Library, Anne will keynote the event on February 3 in Egg Harbor and will give a talk about plastics in the Great Lakes at the Ephraim Library on February 7. This is cross-library collaboration between academic, special and public libraries. Anne has been busy sharing her knowledge, expertise and artistic abilities throughout the state. See more information about the events on the SeaGrant website.

At the Wisconsin State Law Library, we know that legal information needs can change as quickly as the news. Whether it’s helping you track down the existence of law or legislation, navigating government agencies or finding plain language sources that discuss the law, we can help you. Librarians and public library users can call or email us, or stop in for more in-depth research. There’s no question too small! We’ve created public service desk fliers that are easy for libraries to print and distribute on our website. Librarians also qualify for a free Wisconsin State Law Library card! Apply here.

By Jaime Healy-Plotkin, Wisconsin State Law Library

**WAAL**  
*(Wisconsin Association of Academic Libraries)*

WAAL is gathering information on its annual conference and would like your feedback. We are looking at ways that attendees and the organization can save money by moving the conference to college and university campuses, with the option of housing in residence halls. Please click on the link to answer this short survey so that we can better serve academic librarians in Wisconsin.

By Eric Jennings, McIntyre Library, UW-Eau Claire

**TSS**  
*(Technical Services Section)*

The Technical Services Section has outlined three key goals for 2019:  
- Hold an in-person TSS meet-up  
- Publish a newsletter  
- Sponsor WLA Conference programs

By Amy Gannaway, South Central Library System

**WISL**  
*(Wisconsin Small Libraries Section)*

Small Library Meet-up  
April 16 at 11am-1pm  
Lakeview Public Library, 112 Butler Street  
Random Lake, WI

Join staff and directors from small libraries to meet, chat and share info. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Library Association’s Small Libraries (WISL) unit. You don’t need to be a member to attend!

By Marge Loch-Wouters, WLA Past President

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**Thank You to the WLA Conference Committee**

Many, many thanks to the 2018 WLA Annual Conference Committee for doing an outstanding job creating a fabulous event in October! Throughout 2018, this group worked tirelessly to meet aggressive deadlines, manage expenses and create a memorable educational experience for all.

The effort certainly paid off with glowing reviews from attendees and a record number of sponsors. The association is grateful and fortunate to have this level of dedication and commitment from our volunteers.
GET INVOLVED WITH WLA
By Betsy Bleck, Oconomowoc Public Library and Nominating Committee Chair

As chair of WLA’s Nomination Committee, I would like to encourage you (yes, you!) to become more involved in WLA!

Perhaps you are a new member, and you want to network and build professional skills. Perhaps you are a more seasoned member and are ready to expand your role in this great association. Maybe you have attended conferences and observed WLA leaders at work and thought, “Hey, I could do that!” Or maybe, like me, you have seen WLA leaders doing their thing and thought, “Ugh, I could never do that! I’m too (fill in the blank: busy; shy; busy AND shy; allergic to meetings; prone to nervous hives).” I am here to tell you: if you doubt that you have what it takes to be a WLA leader, you are wrong! If I can do it, you can too. Like librarianship itself, WLA has positions for every skill set and personality.

There are so many ways you can enhance your involvement in WLA. You could start with a one-time gig, such as being a room monitor at a conference. Or maybe you are ready for a longer-term commitment, but don’t really want to do a lot of meetings. In that case, you could join the Awards committee, which has just a few meetings per year, but makes a huge contribution to the organization. Or maybe you are ready to really dive in and run for a board position. All of these roles are vital to the health and vitality of WLA, and we would love to have you.

What’s in it for you? Tons! You will meet great colleagues from all over the state, develop your professional network, build new skills, be of service to your field and have a lot of fun at the same time.

There are a few options to get started: Visit the “Careers” tab on the WLA website and click “Get Involved,” which will take you to a brief survey of your interests. If you have filled out this form in the past, why not update it this year? The second option is to contact me, and I will be happy to help you find a position that would be the best fit for your schedule, interests and strengths. Please feel free to contact me any time at bbleck@cooney.lib.wi.us or 262.569.2193, extension 207. I’m looking forward to hearing from you!

Is Your Library Accessible?
By Brian Peters, IndependenceFirst & Angela Meyers, Bridges Library System

Accessibility (noun)
The quality or characteristic of something that makes it possible to approach, enter or use it. (Cambridge Dictionary)

What does accessibility mean to you? To many, it means the ability to enter a place or use a thing without barriers. Sounds simple, right? But it’s surprisingly complex, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has a guideline, the 2010 Standards, that helps document what needs to be done to achieve accessibility. Anyone, including a person with a disability, should be able to arrive at the library, navigate within, have access to computers, copiers, microfiche machines, etc. and be able to use the restroom. Those are things we all take for granted, but many people with disabilities struggle with access barriers like these because too much of our built environment was not designed with people with disabilities in mind.

A number of member libraries in the Bridges Library System are undergoing accessibility studies and learning what barriers exist in their facilities. Here are a few things the studies are focusing on:

• Approach: Think about the route into the library, throughout the library, into the restrooms, study rooms and meeting rooms. Consider how one would approach specific elements like self-check-out machines, copiers, service desks, computers, catalog workstations, etc. Does the route have a width of at least 36 inches or more? When using or operating something, is there clear space of 30” x 48” for a wheelchair? Knee and toe clearance under at least one table, desk or workstation for someone in a wheelchair?

• Information Conveyed: Signs should be visible. This ranges from accessible parking signs at a minimum of 60 inches above the ground to permanent room signs with high contrast letters, tactile information (raised text) and Braille. If a room or a route is inaccessible, is there signage informing people where an accessible route or room can be found?

• Safety: Are rugs and mats a tripping hazard? Are edges curled or easily caught and flipped in a foot sweep test? Are there protruding items more than four inches from the wall between 27” and 80” above the floor that someone with visual disabilities could walk into? Or more likely, someone texting and walking? Are restroom sink pipes wrapped in insulation to prevent burns or scratches on knees?

• Reach: Are all operable parts within reach of someone in a wheelchair, between 15” to 48” above the floor (older items prior to 2012 can be 9” to 54”)? Examples include soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, operable parts of self-checkout stations, copier buttons, coat hooks, etc.

• Ease of Use: Can people easily use things? For example, can someone with severe arthritis open a door? Is it a knob or a lever handle? Is the door opening force more than five lbs.? Does it close too quickly, potentially hitting the person trying to get through? Are faucet handles easy to manipulate? Are there door pulls on both sides of an accessible stall door?

This is just scratching the surface of what one has to think about when considering a building’s overall accessibility. While there are resources available online to assist libraries, a professional trained to do accessibility surveys can spot barriers that many would miss. The Bridges Library System worked with IndependenceFirst and Society’s Assets, Inc., two Centers for Independent Living, to perform an accessibility survey at many of their libraries. Each of the eight Centers in the state has staff trained to perform accessibility surveys. More information can be found at www.wis-il.net.
New Director Spotlight

An Interview with Dominic Frandrup, Director of Antigo Public Library

Jill: First question. When did you start at Antigo and what was your position before? (OK, that was two questions.)

Dominic: It’s all good. :) I started at Antigo Public Library in August of 2017. Prior to that, I was Assistant Director at Waupaca for 9 years. (Thank you LinkedIn for the reminder!)

Jill: Why did you decide to become a library director?

Dominic: I became a director because I knew I had the potential to be a strong and compassionate leader in Libraryland. Thankfully, Antigo Public Library has given me the opportunity to prove that I can fulfill those roles.

Jill: What is one thing you would tell a library director stepping into the role for the first time?

Dominic: It’s a demanding job so don’t make the director decision lightly. You have to do it because it’s your passion. Otherwise, it’s not worth the paycheck. For the first six months or so, it’s like drinking from a firehose because there is so much to learn and it can be overwhelming. After about a year it’s still a garden hose. There’s always more to learn and improve.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions. There is a huge support network out there; your library staff, your library’s board, other directors, your system staff, DPI, etc. who want you to succeed. Use them like a reference collection…which you may not have anymore depending on your library. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. When they inevitably happen, own them. Apologize, and move forward. We learn more from our mistakes than our successes so eventually we’ll all be brilliant!

Your staff is the library’s most valuable resource, not the stuff. Take care of your staff first because your staff takes care of your patrons. Without your patrons, you have an empty library and a community that needs a mental boost. Thankfully, reading is a guaranteed way to raise a person’s IQ! You can fundraise for stuff, but it’s more difficult to fundraise for wages.

Jill: What is something you didn’t expect about your new job (good or bad)?

Dominic: All the relationship building and political maneuvering which is required. Some days your entire work product is trying to turn a poor relationship into a positive one. There isn’t always a pile of things you can point to at the end of the day and say “I accomplished that”. Many days you will be pointing to a person and saying “I helped them”, or “I created a library ally in that person.” The amount of positivity you need to bring to the position is huge. Take care of yourself so you can bring your A-game. Some days that A-game may be buried under a pile of weeded non-fiction, but that’s always the goal.

Jill: Tell us a funny/heartwarming story you’ve experienced so far.

Dominic: When I started this position my staff were afraid to step into my office; they would just lean on the door jamb like there was a force field there. So I started keeping Dove dark chocolates in my desk drawer. (Everyone knows dark chocolate is healthier than milk chocolate.) Whenever a staff person brought me a question I gave them one and I’d say, “Thanks for asking. Let’s figure it out together.” When they came up with a solution to a problem, I gave them one and said, “Good job. I wouldn’t have thought of that.” When they dealt with a difficult patron and they handled it well, I gave them one and said, “Wow, that was intense. Let’s hope they are happier tomorrow.” One day I had a staff member start crying when I gave them a piece of chocolate. When I asked why, they said that no one had ever made them feel so appreciated before. The simple act of taking the time to say “good job” or “thank you” had such a huge impact . . . or it could have been that they just like dark chocolate.

Jill: And for fun- what are you reading right now?

Dominic: Right this minute? Your email, Jill. :) But for fun, I’m working on a couple: “The Electric State” by Simon Stalenhag and “The Fork, the Witch and the Worm” by Christopher Paolini.

Thanks, Dominic!

Are you a new director or do you know one who would love to tell us what it’s really like? Email Jill at jfuller@bridgeslibrarysystem.org to be featured!
Connecting Schools to Digital Library Content

In the spirit of work at the national level through ALA’s State Ecosystem Initiative and the new Public Library & School Library Collaboration Toolkit done through collaborative efforts of AASL, YALSA and ALSC, WEMTA, WLA and DPI are working together to support and foster communications and collaborations among Wisconsin public and school librarians in order to better support the communities we serve. Each quarter we will share a resource, strategy or example with you that could be used as a talking point in your community. Please use these ideas to initiate or continue to build relationships with public and school librarians.

The Wisconsin School Digital Library Consortium (WSDLC) and the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) are two fun, easy-to-use ways to promote year-round literacy with students when they use school and public libraries. The WSDLC, launched in January 2018, provides digital audio and ebooks to over 130,000 students in over 100 districts across Wisconsin. The WPLC, which was used as a model for WSDLC, provides a collection of over 77,000 digital and audio ebooks to Wisconsin residents through their public libraries. The WSDLC has three collections to serve elementary, middle and high school students that contain a total of over 7,000 copies of over 4,200 unique titles. These collections are available to schools and districts at a low cost and covered by district Common School Funds, to help provide equitable access to digital materials throughout our state. The content and platform for the WSDLC is provided by OverDrive, and access is made easy through the Sora App.

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) provides e-content to patrons through the WI Digital Library via the Libby App, so why should public librarians become familiar with the WSDLC? And why should school librarians learn more about WPLC? Because these resources provide great opportunities for public and school library partnerships!

- Both the WPLC and WSDLC use the same vendor and the apps for each audience are similar. There is no need for training staff or patrons.
- There are lots of materials available during the summer within the WSDLC. The wait time for titles is minimal, so this helps keep the reading momentum going with students when they are not in school and prevents “summer slide.” Also, the Sora app makes it easy to track and reward reading progress with a badging system, as well as allowing the ability to curate summer reading lists.
- Many of the school-age patrons in public libraries will already be familiar with the look and feel of the WSDLC collections; however, they may not know they can access the titles at their public library, too.
- School librarians can benefit from helping students access the WPLC because it effectively extends the list of available digital resources for students and faculty without needing additional training.
- By working together to cross promote these resources, both schools and public libraries gain potential users for their collections. Even more importantly, you provide valuable connections between the lives of children in and out of school.

For more information or questions regarding WSDLC or WPLC, please connect with your school or public librarian, or reach out to WiLS.

This message is brought to you through the collaborations of Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association (WEMTA), Wisconsin Library Association (WLA), and DPI School and Public Libraries. If you are interested in working on future tidbits or have other suggestions for collaborations, please contact Marge Loch-Wouters (WLA) or Michele Green (WEMTA).

JOIN THE WLA/WEMTA NETWORKING GROUP

By Marge Loch-Wouters

A WLA/WEMTA (WI Education Media & Technology Association) networking group was started last year to explore collaboration between our associations. A small group of leaders in both organizations has been meeting regularly to share information with each other. One collaboration we would like to develop is sharing free professional development opportunities sponsored by each association with each other. Many school librarians partner closely with their public, academic and special libraries-as partners, trustees, collaborators and innovators. If your unit is developing webinars, meet-ups, projects or other learning opportunities that you think your school library colleagues in WEMTA might be interested in attending or learning about, please feel free to email the details to me at lochwouters@gmail.com. If it is an event (meet-up, webinar), the earlier you can get me the information, the easier it is for WEMTA leadership to share with their members. Thanks!
Innovation Feature:
The Tallest Building in Town Podcast
by Steev Baker & Shauna Koszegi, Sun Prairie Public Library

[The Tallest Building in Town theme music]
00:01
Steev: I was the Director of a small, rural library for 15 years, and I felt there should be a way for libraries of all sizes to hear about new ideas and discussions in the Wisconsin library community. As blogs, message boards and email groups started to fade into the pre-smartphone era, I thought it would be fun to create a podcast for and about Wisconsin libraries. It wasn't until I moved to Sun Prairie and met Shauna that my crazy idea started to seem possible.

00:22
Shauna: I had been collecting audio in my free time without a clear purpose in mind, and was interested in podcasting but had no idea how I'd fit it into my new position as Adult Services Librarian. A year goes by and we're approached by our director, learning that the library had a radio show that was soon ending. We share a building with our local media center that houses a radio station. All of a sudden, we were asked if we wanted to start a show the following week. Originally I thought the podcast could act as an outreach tool for the Sun Prairie community, while also being a space where Steev and I could share stories about Wisconsin public libraries. But that was too much content for a 30 minute window, which is the length we're constrained to.

01:02
Steev: We got a crash-course in radio-room production. Our first episode was recorded live on the radio in November of 2017. I don't know how people usually produce podcasts, but I assume they have more than a name, hopes and dreams, and a working knowledge of digital audio workstations. I feel like the entire year was one long experiment.

01:12
Shauna: Working so quickly each month has been wild, but it's fun trying different formats for the show and also learning a lot about workflow in this medium. As a two person team with many other full-time librarian commitments, it's strange and exciting that we've managed to keep it going. I've enjoyed learning who is listening, because technically we'll never really know who's out there. (cue X-Files music). But I've had patrons tell me about their favorite episode, learned that a professor was sharing it with students at Madison's iSchool, and received emails from colleagues who had their staff listen to spark conversations about library trends and topics. Ultimately I realized that we should focus on our audience being library folk, but ensure that it's still accessible to those outside of the library profession.

01:20
Steev: One thing is certain—we never have a lack of ideas for stories. Lack of time has been limiting, but we're looking forward to seeing how we can tighten up our techniques and we're dedicated to making the best podcast we can make with the resources we have.

[The Tallest Building outro music fades in]

The Tallest Building in Town is a monthly podcast that celebrates Wisconsin libraries through storytelling, interviews and thoughtful discussion of contemporary and historical issues. It is produced in the studios of the Sun Prairie Media Center and is available on iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify and Google Play. Find out more at www.tallestbuildingintown.com.