

Things I've Learned Over the Last 40 Years

*By Mark Arend, Assistant Director
Winnefox Library System*

After almost 19 years at Winnefox and over 21 years before that at the Williams Free Library/Beaver Dam Community Library, I am retiring this fall. Here are a few nuggets I've picked up; I'll leave it to you to decide if they're nuggets of wisdom or of something else.

Printed books are probably not going away anytime real soon. If a newly-introduced format has any staying power it will carve out a place for itself with the reading public. Audiobooks are a good example; at times they are more convenient than printed books and become the preferred format for some purposes. The audiobook itself has gone through several versions, as LP records gave way to books on tape, which in turn gave way to CDs and now digital audio. Similarly, ebooks have an advantage over printed books for some purposes. But printed, bound books are still a dominant format and nothing yet introduced shows signs of displacing them.

Check back tomorrow, though. Technology continues to evolve rapidly and something better may be just around the corner.

If libraries want to remain useful to our communities we have to change. Technology changes and society changes. We have to as well. Sometimes the change is uncomfortable, but we have no choice. The only alternative to change is death.

Public libraries have a tremendous potential to help people to improve their lives. The information and support they receive at the library can help people complete their education, get a job, start



(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

a business, or get through major health or legal problems.

People who use and value libraries need to speak up. Your municipality and county aren't going to adequately fund libraries because they think libraries are good places. We need to make the case, over and over again.

Libraries need to develop partnerships with other community organizations. Partnerships don't add to your effectiveness, they multiply it.

Libraries need to be an *active* part of the community. The director should be involved in community organizations. The library needs to have a presence at community events: the Farmer's Market, the Business Expo, Kids' Day.

We touch people. Those people who hang around the library, who are in every day? It could be a kid, a senior citizen, a homeless person? The only smile or kind word they get that day may be from that library staff member.

What we do has not changed. How we do it has. Libraries have always collected and stored information for people who need it. We help them to find what they need and to choose between the useful and accurate information and that which is not. When I came back to



Wisconsin our library had books, newspapers and magazines, LP records, and 8 mm movies. The vertical file (file cabinets filled with pamphlets, clippings, and maps) was an important resource. Much of this is now gone, replaced with CDs, DVDs, and online resources. But we're still doing the same thing: connecting people with the information they need.

Wisconsin Library Association Conference

Registration for the 2019 WLA Conference is now open. It comes early this year, October 8 – 11 October, and will be at a familiar location: the Kalahari Convention Center in the Wisconsin Dells. As usual, there will be some great programs of interest to trustees. Schedule and registration information are on the WLA site:

<http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/events-conferences/annual-conference/wla-conference-home>

Takeaways from Trustee Training Week 2019

By Bradley Shipp, Director
Outagamie Waupaca Library System

Wisconsin Trustee Training Week was developed in 2014 by Jamie Matczak at the Nicolet Federated Library System with the goal of providing high-quality webinars to public library boards, friends, and trustees in Wisconsin. It is now coordinated by the South Central Library System, and is supported by all sixteen public library systems in Wisconsin. Support is also provided by the Division for Libraries and Technology and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

This year, five webinars were presented, one at noon each day the week of August 12-16. These are some takeaways from two of the webinars. I can't wait to watch the rest!

Governing Libraries that Inspire Investment presented by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

- The World Happiness Report identifies four pillars of great communities: Sustainable and Equitable Socio-Economic Development; Environmental Conservation; Preservation and Promotion of Culture; and Good Governance. The library can contribute to all of these.
- Know your community inside and out. Support local like nobody's business. What makes you unique is what makes you an inspiring investment.

- Learn more about equity, diversity, and inclusiveness. Help all to be heard.
- Libraries create social cohesion and community resilience. Speak about that in multifaceted ways to connect with as many people as possible.

Free is Key: Ensuring your Library is Meeting its Mission presented by Dawn Wacek.

- Does your library mission statement include any of these words: free, open, access, all, enrich, improve, whole, success? 74% of webinar participants said yes.
- How many members of your community live below the poverty line, qualify for free and reduced lunch, have a disability, are homebound, are elderly, or experience homelessness?
- Life happens. We're all late sometimes. Some of us can pay our fines and continue to use the library as we always have; others make one mistake and lose access. Fines are roadblocks for the people who need us most.
- Fines are detrimental to your library, and the revenue isn't worth it.
- Thinking about going fine free? Start with conversations; get buy-in from your community.

These bullet points barely scratch the surface of the information provided in the Trustee Training Week webinars. If any of them have piqued your interest, you can find the archived webinars complete with closed captioning on the Wisconsin Trustee Training Week web site: <https://www.wistrusteetraining.com/archive>.



Welcome to Clairelynn

Clairelynn Sommersmith will be the new Assistant Director at Winnefox beginning this fall. She comes to us from the Princeton Public Library, where she oversaw a successful capital campaign and a building expansion.

FAQ

Our village clerk attends library board meetings and would like to vote. Can she?

No. Only trustees appointed by the village president and approved by the village board (or those appointed by the county chair and county board) have voting rights. We sometimes are asked a similar question about members of the city council appointed as a “liaison” to the library board. The answer is the same: only properly-appointed library trustees can vote.

Have questions? Bradley at OWLS

Contact us and we'll try to help.

bshipps@owlsweb.org
920-832-6368

Save the Dates – 2019

Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Annual Conference

October 8 – 11

Kalahari Resort & Convention Center,
Wisconsin Dells

<http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/events-conferences/annual-conference/wla-conference-home>

Editors: Mark Arend

or email bshipps@owlsweb.org
OWLS: Bradley Shipps, 920-832-6368

If you have questions, comments or suggestions for future articles, send them to:

Trustee Tale is written and distributed by Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS) and Winnefox Library System (WLS). Distribution to your board is funded by your home system.



Winnefox Library System
106 Washington Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54901-4985