

Adult Services Librarian Report November 2025

Programming

Paranormal Night

A group of presenters from Fox Valley Paranormal led by Ashley Mittag shared the haunting details of how a paranormal investigation works. The group brought a variety of instruments to show how the process works, discussed real examples from haunted local sites in Wisconsin, and had time for audience questions and answers. The event was well attended, with about 25 people coming out to hear about the process.

Book Talk: Wrecked The Edmund Fitzgerald and the Sinking of the American Economy

County Executive Tom Nelson and professor emeritus of History at Lawrence University Jerald Podair gave a book talk on their new book *Wrecked: The Edmund Fitzgerald and the Sinking of the American Economy*. The book and event were timely, as November 10th was the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the famous ship. The book discusses American industrial policies that doomed not only the Edmund Fitzgerald, but Midwest manufacturing as well. Unfortunately, I was in Madison attending WLA or I would have liked to sit in on the talk. The event was moderately attended, and patrons were interested in the subject, a handful of them staying 20 minutes past the end of the program asking questions.

County Executive Tom Nelson showing off his and Jerald Podair's feature on the front page of the Times-Villager. The picture used in the article is from the event at the library.



Bingo!

Jenny tried something new on Saturday, November 15th. She hosted a family bingo program that blew away all our expectations. 75 people came to play and win some prizes! We have had gaming programming for quite some time now, but I didn't realize that bingo was so popular. We will certainly be having it again!



*The fantastic turnout for our first ever Bingo event
led by Jenny!*

WLA

Ashley, Sarah, and I attended WLA in Middleton, WI during the last week of October. The event was held there two years ago as well. We all attended a variety of panels; the highlights of panels I attended are described below.

Notable Reports

A group of librarians gave a talk about reports that came out this year on a variety of library related subjects from various sources. Much of the information wasn't directly relevant to KPL, but Kayla Mathson spoke on a topic that was interesting, the Overdrive/Libby situation. Libby is renowned for its long wait times for ebooks and eaudiobooks. A Partner Analysis Review of OverDrive in 2024 compared library systems in other states with between 3.2M and 7.5M people in their service areas. (The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium has 5.9M). The two most interesting takeaways to me are as follows:

- Over a 12-month period library systems who spent 5x what Wisconsin does on Overdrive have an average wait time of 66 days, compared to WPLC's 62.3 days.
- Other system's spending makes up 15-35% of their total collection expenditures, while WPLC libraries are only 10%. A more efficient use of taxpayer dollars considering the wait times are lower than those spending more.

A sidenote regarding this: On Friday November 13th I volunteered to be on the Advantage Funding Committee, which will decide if or how much the libraries in OWLS will fund our Overdrive advantage account, in an effort to reduce hold times for patrons.

Lessons of Leadership

Alissa Fial shared her experience of the various leadership positions she has held as a mid-career librarian. As I am a mid-career librarian whose career may venture into the leadership realm in the future, I took away a surprising number of useful insights. Her insights stemmed partly from social scientist Brene Brown's book *Dare to Lead*, and her BRAVING system, which stands for boundaries, reliability, accountability, vault (no secrets or exclusive groups), integrity, nonjudgement, and generosity. By following these principles, a leader can build trust with their team more effectively. She also shared lessons on what not to do, such as expecting to know all the answers, oversharing, trying to solve every problem, and being afraid to make mistakes.

Adult Programming Ideas

Three librarians from Pauline Haass and Waukesha Public Libraries shared their recent successes with various adult programs they hosted. All of them were inexpensive to run and still drew a fair amount of patron attendance. Ideas included a plant and plant cutting swap, a tiny art community paint, and a Hot Ones-style interviewing of department heads while eating progressively hotter hot sauces.

Lead the Change: Library Directors Q & A

This session was hosted by Christina Jones and Cindy Fesemeyer who are the authors of the upcoming book *Small Public Library management 2nd Edition*. They lead an interactive panel that required the directors in the room to put sticky notes on a board underneath heading consisting of common issues they have been encountering in their libraries. By far the category with the most issues dealt with troublesome employees. Budgetary concerns and advocating to city council for your library were the next most common issue.