

Assistant Director Report September 2026

Polaris

First Month

The first month of Polaris has gone stunningly well regarding our staff and the new software. Staff that only work at the library 3 to 5 times per month were able to pick it up within their first day on desk without frequent calls for help or the need for a full-time staff member to accompany them. Despite some initial reservations about using the software, every single staff member impressed me with the speed at which they took to the software. They are all to be commended for maintaining a positive attitude during this tumultuous time!

This isn't to say there hasn't been any issue with the new software. Largely it has been a success but there have been a few issues, the most notable of which are listed here:

- Infosoup is greyed out and unusable until users accept or close out of a small cookie notification at the bottom of the screen. This affects the catalog computers in the library too. This causes frequent questions from patrons who think the website is unusable.
- There is currently a delay between the status of an item in Infosoup and in Polaris Leap. Only staff can see the up-to-date Polaris Leap information, so patrons are viewing incorrect item statuses (ex. an item might be sent out to a library, but its status is still on shelf).
- There is general confusion about account blocks in the software. Nearly every notice that pops up for staff to read about an account is called a block in Polaris Leap, despite only certain kinds of notices actually blocking accounts.

Clarivate is aware of these issues and is working on fixing the delay issue. They have been made aware of the problems the other two issues are causing, and they may address them in the future. However, if these are the only major issues we have with migrating to a new system then I think we can consider it a success!

Staffing

Library Assistant – Circulation Position

We offered the position of Library Assistant – Circulation to current On Call library staff member Samantha Kestler! She began the new position in the first week of September.

New Hire Trainings

Additionally, we hired two new On Call Library Assistants. Alan Voss retired from Waukesha County after serving as a police officer and detective for 28 years and Crystal Thiel comes to us with teaching experience in La Crosse and Hilbert WI. Training began on September 8th and we welcome them to the library.

Strategic Plan

Surveys and Focus Groups

The surveys and focus groups have concluded. Again, I extend a special thank you to board members who participated in the focus groups! I have summarized the data from the surveys and focus groups and indicated which suggestions have already been implemented this year. Staff met on September 15th and began the process of reviewing the data. We reviewed our old strategic plan, discussing what we have accomplished, and looked through about half of the survey and focus group data to decide what to focus on for the next three years. There will be many more meetings on the topic through the end of the year.

Materials

Book Repair

Sarah and I attended a book repair clinic organized by Angela Schneider, hosted by Demco, and held at the New London Public Library on August 24th. This was the second book repair clinic I attended, the other being about three or so years ago. In both clinics I learned of the benefits of the library having a book re-binder to repair books that can't be glued or taped. After the first clinic I wanted to gauge how many books can't be fixed with glue or tape before justifying the purchase. There were enough books over the years that couldn't be fixed that I determined a book re-binder to be a wise purchase for the library. This is due in part to the frequency in which our children's graphic novels binding's fail. This is our fourth most circulated collection and a significant number of them simply fall apart, sometimes after only a few circulations. This machine will un-bind, then rebind any book with new glue. I expect it to pay for itself within the first year of use.

Library Hardware

Self-Checks, RFID Pads, and Gates

We were expecting to receive our new self-checks and RFID pads on Monday August 24th. Unfortunately, the shipment was delayed, and they were delivered on Monday August 31st. Even more unfortunately, the delivery was severely smashed during shipping and we refused the delivery due to poor condition. We informed Bibliotheca and they sent out another shipment which was delivered in good condition on Friday, September 11th. We have requested a new installation date and are currently waiting on word from Bibliotheca. We are still expecting the automated material handling system (AMHS) towards the end of this year.