

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

February 2025

Karol Kennedy – Library System Director

New Bridges Trustee: We are pleased to welcome Glenda Dolphin to the Bridges Library System Board. Glenda was appointed by Waukesha County in January to fill a mid-term vacancy. Glenda is a Town of Merton resident currently serving on the Town Hall Library Board.

Annual Reports: I spent many hours answering questions about and reviewing library annual reports. I offered a virtual walk-through of the annual report for any interested directors. Reports are due Friday, February 28th. Several library reports have already been completed. The system annual report is due on March 31st. This will be on the Bridges board agenda in March.

Jefferson County Library Contracts: In November, I prepared and distributed the 2025 contracts to Jefferson County libraries. These were due to the Jefferson County by February 1st. All have been successfully completed and submitted.

Library Legislative Day 2025: We had a great day in Madison on February 11th. Thank you to everyone who joined us! I was proud to see 38 registered attendees from Bridges Library System. Another registration record! We are fortunate to have such engaged individuals in our library system! All attendees are encouraged to send handwritten thank you notes to the legislators and aides they met.

Library Board Presentations: I attended the Delafield Public Library Board meeting in January and will be attending the Waukesha Public Library Board meeting in February. My presentation includes information about system services and library funding, with a focus on county funding for libraries.

System Director Search: The Search Committee met January 27th to review the job description and posting, a stakeholder survey, evaluation rubric, the search timeline. The position was posted on February 3rd, and applications will be accepted through 8:00 AM on February 24th. The stakeholder survey was sent to member library directors, system staff, Bridges trustees, and trustees of the Jefferson County Library Board.

Coordinator of Library Development Search: This position was posted, and applications were accepted through January 31st. A strong pool of candidates applied. We are in the process of reviewing candidate qualifications and scheduling interviews.

Mellanie Mercier – Automation Coordinator & Assistant Director

Cloud Nine Reservation: Late last year we began the process of moving 17 libraries over to a new time management system for their public PCs that is cloud based. We currently have 3 migrated and are working with the vendor to set up a group training on the software for the remaining libraries.

LX Starter: We have also been working with libraries to move their CAFÉ notices over to a new product from our vendor called LX Starter. LX Starter modernizes the look of the notices and allows for links, pictures, announcements, etc. Pewaukee was the first library to go live on Monday February 10th.

Vega: On January 27th Innovative gave us access to the new public discovery layer called Vega. Shawn, Beth and I have been very busy working on the setup before letting the libraries learn how to use it. We are anxious to be able to share it with everyone, until then here's a sneak peek.

The screenshot shows the cafe Bridges Library System website. The header includes the logo, "Bridges Library System | Select a Library", and the URL "cafebridges.org". Navigation links include "All", "Get a Library Card", "Digital tools", "Wisconsin's Online Library", "Kid's Choice", and "Childrens Catalog". A search bar is present with a magnifying glass icon and the text "Search". Below the search bar, the text "Library Memory project Hero" is displayed. The main content area features a large graphic with the text "LIBRARY MEMORY PROJECT" and "An initiative of Bridges Library System". The graphic includes a stylized open book with flowers above it. Below the graphic, there is a navigation bar with "Library of Things (showcase group)" and tabs for "My Bookshelf", "Bookmarks", "Saved Searches", and "Showcases". A note below the navigation bar reads: "(a hero is an element that libraries can add to their catalog, I have it labeled to show the new terms)".

Laurie Freund – Coordinator of Library Development

Upcoming SEWI Opportunities: Mark your calendar for these webinars, workshops and meetups. Details and registrations for some of these will be coming later.

- February 19th: [Materials Concern Preparedness](#) webinar
- March 6th: [SEWI Spring Adult Public Programming Meetup](#)
- April 16th: SEWI Youth Services workshop
- August 22nd: SEWI Library Directors Retreat
- September 29th: SEWI Fall Adult Public Programming Meetup

Be sure to check the statewide [Professional Learning calendar](#), found on the SEWI Libraries website for additional upcoming offerings.

Bridges Adult Public Programs Grant: Just a reminder that Bridges member libraries have an opportunity to apply for a grant that can help support the public programs that are geared toward adults in your community. Details, forms, and links to additional resources can all be found on the [Bridges Adult Public Programs Grant](#) web page in the staff section of the Bridges website. Application deadline is April 30, 2025.

Bridges Adult Services Meeting: The group met on a cold January day at Waukesha. Beth Bechtel shared examples of books that were AI generated books in printed and ebooks formats and bootleg DVDs with video resources to help library collection development selectors spot those. Discussion focuses continued with other collection development aspects and ideas for future discussion topics. A summary

was sent to the Bridges Adult Services listserv. Please note the next upcoming meeting dates for this year:

- 9:30-11:30 am, August 13th at Pewaukee Public Library
- 1:30-3:30 pm, November 5th at Oconomowoc Public Library

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Inclusive Services

New Calendar: The [Library Memory Project](#) is now using Library Calendar for its events, including registration. Thank you to Kelly Nelson at Pewaukee Public Library for setting up the calendar and getting all the participating libraries on board.

New application: Mellanie Mercier and I have collaborated with Waukesha County to develop a new application designed to manage attendance and generate reports for the Library Memory Project. Libraries began entering attendance data in January. We are now in the final stages of development and testing.

StoryCorps/Community Voices of Jefferson and Waukesha County: Bridges Library System has collected over 200 recordings with StoryCorps. We are now building on that collection under the name *Community Voices of Jefferson and Waukesha Counties*. Beth Bechtel and I have worked to add 185 public recordings to [Recollection Wisconsin](#) for improved discoverability. These recordings will soon also be available through the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA).

Jail Materials: I delivered the 2024 reading materials purchased by Bridges Library System for the Waukesha County Jail. The 150 new books will be stored in the jail's classroom, where inmates will have access to check them out. I also met with the jail liaison, a WCTC instructor, to explore additional ways Bridges Library System and its member libraries can support the educational and recreational reading needs of incarcerated individuals.

Youth Services

Meetings:

- I facilitated a virtual Teen Think Tank meeting with 7 library staff members. We discussed recent program successes from the fall and shared plans for upcoming winter programs. Additionally, we covered collection development processes.
- Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) invited Bridges Library System to participate in their Mock Awards event at Milwaukee Public Library's Mitchell Street Branch. Several Bridges member libraries joined in this day-long event, where we discussed some of the best books of the previous year. Plans are underway for a joint MCFLS-Bridges Mock Awards event next year.
- The next [Youth Services Meet Up](#) is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25th at 1:00pm at Oconomowoc Public Library.

- Kids' Choice voting is underway and will close on February 12th. Winner and runners-up will be announced on February 14th. The [Kids' Choice Nomination Selection Meeting](#) is scheduled for Thursday, March 6th at 4:30pm at Delafield Public Library.

Professional Development: I've begun the Standards of Service Excellence (SOSE) program through Waukesha County. This 1-2 year, self-directed learning program is designed to enhance skills and knowledge. To date, I've completed the Strengths Finder 2.0 evaluation and one session titled *Communication Fundamentals: How to Communicate Better* (Udemy) as part of the Interpersonal Communications Module. I also viewed a recorded webinar titled *Public Library Services for Incarcerated People*, coordinated by San Francisco Public Library.

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Library Visits and Meetings: In the last month, I visited Johnson Creek and Big Bend libraries. In Johnson Creek, the cataloger and I worked on creating brief bibliographic records. In Big Bend, I assisted with Shawn Carlson's demonstration of Leap, the web app option that can be used instead of the Polaris client.

I attended the Adult Services meeting coordinated by Laurie Freund. I talked about self-published books from Amazon, open copyright print-on-demand books, and AI-generated books. I shared examples of these kinds of books that had recently needed original cataloging.

CAFÉ is working towards providing a public catalog discovery layer this year. I was part of the CAFE meeting with Innovative to kick off our Vega Discover project. In the last few weeks, I attended Mellanie Mercier's regular in-house meetings to share project progress and findings on how to make Discover work best for our libraries and their patrons.

CAFÉ Catalog Cleanup: This month I manually edited about 60 bibliographic records with Unicode character strings where there should have been punctuation. Those bib records were in use by multiple libraries. For the bib records in use by only one library, I emailed catalogers to make the corrections for their titles.

Library materials can sometimes be accidentally marked as new for many years. This is likely to happen either because those materials need a catalog code edited or because they have been mis-shelved. I provided instructions for catalogers to find lists of those old "new" materials.

I started a project to determine which of our 65 Polaris import profiles are not in use so they can be deleted. Although import profiles are not seen by public catalog users, they are used by some library staff. Removing unneeded profiles will increase our ability to find the correct ones faster.

Continuing Education

The Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference session "Small Spaces, Big Opportunity: Reorganizing to Increase Circulation" provided many good tips for collection management, especially for our smaller libraries. I attended the conference's opening keynote and four sessions.

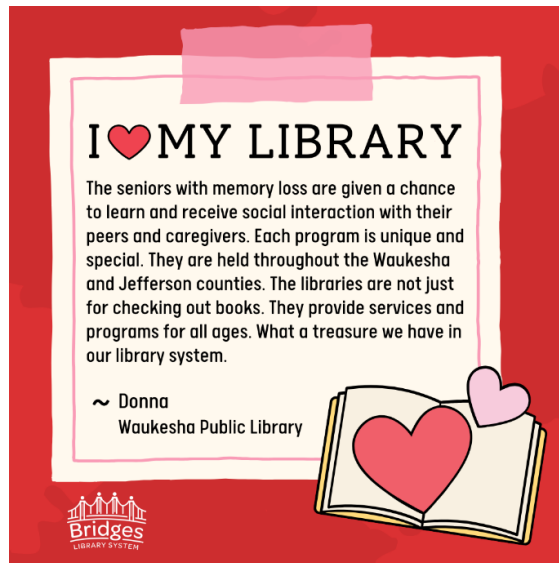
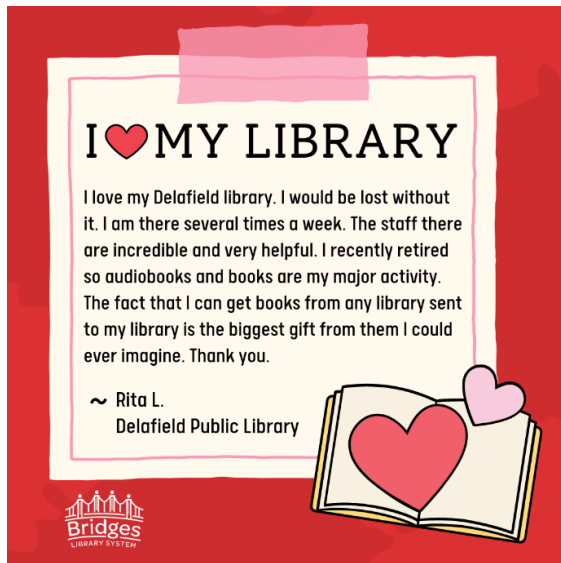
Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Frost & Found: Virtual Library System Trivia: The event is in the final week with 700 quizzes completed so far. The four quizzes will close on Friday, February 14th. The 12 winners will be selected the week of Feb. 17th from participants that scored 4/6 or higher on the quizzes. Play online:

bridgeslibrarysystem.org/frost

Celebrating Library Lover’s Month: We're sharing some of the love we've received from our patrons throughout February to celebrate Library Lover's Month! Look for these on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Share your love here: <https://bridgeslibrarysystem.org/member-libraries/advocate/>



Library Legislative Day

I created three “hot topic” flyers to share with legislators on February 11th in Madison for Library Legislative Day. They highlight great stories from patrons and stakeholders about the positive impact of libraries in the community.

- [Homeschoolers](#)
- [Older Adults](#)
- [Workforce](#)

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

Bridges LIBRARY SYSTEM

Bridges Library System Supporting Older Adults

LuAnn C. with her parents, Joe and Helen, at a Winter Bingo Memory Café at Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson.

Our family members have taken advantage of the purposeful, easy-to-use, all-in-one, Memory Kits put together and provided by Dwight Foster Public Library. These kits are a spot-on collection of activities, games, music, and crafts—with each kit featuring topics familiar to those with memory loss—like those that stimulate cognitive skills, bring back memories, or allow those with mild to moderate memory loss to express their creativity. I have taken great advantage of these Memory Kits for my mom, and they provide a handy and effective afternoon of quality time together! She has particularly benefited from the crafts and cognitive activities contained within.

LuAnn C.
Dwight Foster Public Library
Fort Atkinson

We cut the cord a number of years ago. Our public library system offers a vast array of AV materials, so we can watch some of the most popular movies and TV series on DVD at no cost to us. In addition, the online database of publications like *America's Test Kitchen* and *Consumer Reports* is very useful. Altogether, our library resources have saved us thousands of dollars in streaming and online subscription fees. Very cost-effective for retired seniors.

Ann S.
Brookfield Public Library

The seniors with memory loss are given a chance to learn and receive social interaction with their peers and caregivers. [Memory cafés] are held throughout Waukesha and Jefferson counties. The libraries are not just for checking out books. They provide services and programs for all ages. What a treasure we have in our library system.

Donna S.
Waukesha Public Library

Memory Café attendees at Waukesha Public Library.

Contact Us

Bridges LIBRARY SYSTEM
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24 Member Libraries
211,142 Library Card Holders
6.045 Million Items Borrowed

Professional Development: I attended a free webinar on January 15th on email marketing that was excellent. Although it was geared toward for-profit businesses, it offered many valuable takeaways.

- “Email Marketing Mastery for 2025: Boost Engagement, Deliverability, and ROI. “

I participated in the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference on January 23rd and attended two of the sessions on the internal communications track. They both provided great tips and strategies.

- “Crucial Conversations”
- “Embodied Communication”

In the News:

- Delafield Public Library is hosting a Memory Café April 5: [Freeman Article](#)
- Bridges offering Frost & Found Virtual Library System Trivia:
 - o [Freeman Article](#)
 - o [Urban Milwaukee Article](#)
- Watertown Public Library’s Film Festival: [Watertown Daily Times Article](#)

January/February Newsletters:

Marketing Magic:

- February 7: 50% Open Rate
- January 17: 59.78% Open Rate
- January 3: 65.91% Open Rate

Monthly Bridges:

- February 12: data to come
- January 7: 49.08% Open Rate

Legislators:

- February 12: data to come
- January 14: 23.53% Open Rate