

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

December 2025

Brittany Larson – Library System Director

2025 Staff Evaluations: Staff evaluations for 2025 have been completed and discussed with staff. A big thank you for their exceptional work this year! I had my performance evaluation with Board President Linda Ager and Vice-President Betsy Forrest on December 4th and we developed the goals that will be presented at the December meeting.

Bridges Staff In-Service: The Bridges staff in-service occurred on November 20th. We discussed work styles, 2026 plans, and took part in a team building activity.

Jefferson County Contracts: The Jefferson County Board approved the 2026 budget request in November. After the approval, we prepared the 2026 library contracts. They have now been approved by Jefferson County staff and have been sent to the Jefferson County libraries for their approval. These contracts need to be signed by the library and municipal officials and returned to Jefferson County by February 1st.

Professional Development: I attended the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) conference at the end of October. I focused on sessions related to library standards, policy, staff and workflow management, and intellectual freedom. I also am ending my 3-year volunteer commitment to WLA this year with the Outreach Services Roundtable. I ended my term by presenting to library staff from across the state on the topic of intellectual property and library programming.

Budget Transfer: I presented a \$80,750 budget transfer from the Fund 210 operating budget to the personnel budget to cover the unanticipated retirement payouts for two employees. We were able to cover this through being under budget in a variety of areas including software subscriptions, delivery costs, DPI covering a software cost, etc.

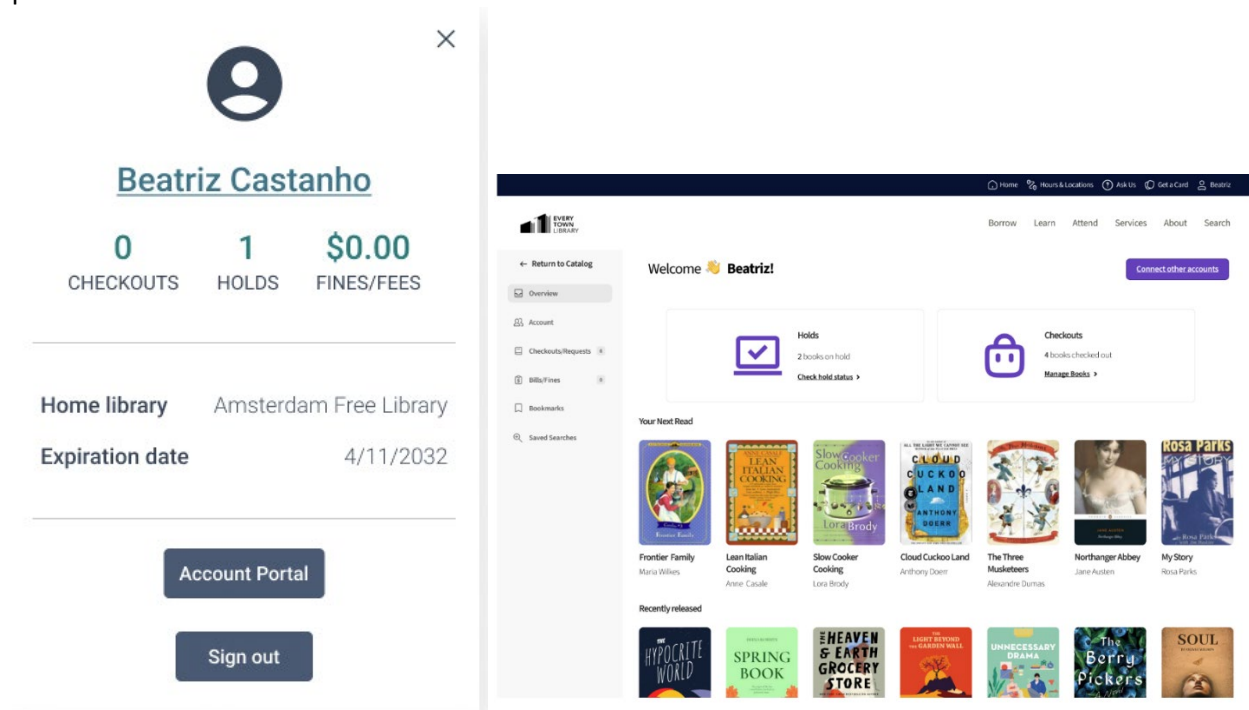
Closed Border Meeting: Wisconsin statute 43.17 (11)(e) requires that any library that does not serve residents across a library system boundary meet at least once a year to discuss the situation. A meeting between Menomonee Falls and the Village of Germantown was held on November 11th. The Menomonee Falls Public Library doesn't serve the residents of the Village of Germantown (Monarch Library System) since they don't receive any reimbursement for providing services. Because counties only fund use by residents who live in municipalities without libraries (TNR), this situation is not addressed by cross-county funding requirements. As a result, libraries are allowed to deny service to those residents across a library system border if they don't receive reimbursement.

Waukesha County Act 150 Committee: The fifth Waukesha County Act 150 Committee met on December 9th. The main topics discussed included the County distribution formula and the minimum to exempt standards. The next meeting is January 13th. I am continuing to work on crafting the narrative draft and preparing library service models based on committee requests.

Save the Date: February 10th is Library Legislative Day in Madison!

Mellanie Mercier – Automation Coordinator & Assistant Director

Changes are coming! A new year brings a new patron account interface to the Café catalog. Around January 6th or 7th the patron account portal that is on the bottom blue bar of the Café catalog will be moving to a button under the log in information at the top upper right corner. Users will also be able to connect to other accounts through this portal, either as a one-way connection (parent to child) or do two-way sharing between accounts where both people can see each other's accounts after sharing pass phrases to connect.



Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

Bridges Adult Services Meeting: 15 adult services librarians met at the Oconomowoc Public Library in November. We talked about the 2026 Bridges Adult Programming Grant, the new LawDepot database available in 2026, materials ordering with the closure of Baker & Taylor, and programming ideas.

SEWI Libraries, Sustainably Growing Your Summer Library Program: This in-person workshop was held at the Brookfield Public Library and brought together 32 adult and youth services libraries to talk about what their summer could look like from a sustainability lens. Dawn Tevis from the LaCrosse County Library facilitated this workshop.

Upcoming 2026 Events

- **Bridges Adult Services Meetup, February 18 – Virtual**



Adult and Youth Services Librarians collaborated ways to make their upcoming summer library programs more sustainable.

- **SEWI Libraries Maker Meetup, March 19** – Whitewater Public Library

Professional Development

- QPR for Suicide Prevention Training from NAMI Rock County
- Meetings that Matter Webinar – Niche Academy
- Internet Connect Librarian Conference – Attended a variety of webinars on topics related to technology

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Inclusive Services

I staffed a table at the Three Pillars Senior Resource Fair to promote the Library Memory Project. Engaged with over 40 individuals and established connections with several other vendors. Supporting Jennie F. at Oconomowoc Public Library and Journey21 in creating a new program for individuals with developmental disabilities aged 15 and older. The program, inspired by the memory café model, will launch in February and occur bi-monthly. We'll assess the program's impact mid-2026 to consider potential expansion to other member libraries.

Youth Services

I facilitated a Teen Think Tank Meeting at Pauline Haass Public Library (Sussex) attended by four library staff serving teens.

Coordinating the scheduling of 72 family programs and 24 teen programs for member libraries for Summer 2026.

Professional Development

Active Listening and Customer Service (Standards of Service Excellence through Waukesha County); Teardrops on My Trademarked Library Program (WLA's Outreach Services Roundtable); Partner Summit: Building Bridges, Creating Impact (Waukesha County Public Health), Q4 Security training: Staying Safe from Seasonal Scams (Waukesha County), Universal Design: Inclusive Approaches to Public Librarianship (Collaborative Summer Library Program), Sustainable Summer Reading Workshop (Southeastern Wisconsin Libraries), Web Accessibility: Three Things You Can Do Right Now (NY State Library).

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Meetings & Library Visits

When the CAFE Catalogers group met virtually on November 18, discussion included decision making for self-produced books, machine generated notes in bibliographic records, and making video games findable by console in the CAFÉ catalog. We also talked about the cataloging of "light novels," which are a Japanese publishing format for fiction of around 50,000 words, accompanied by manga-style illustrations.

At Alice Baker Memorial Library in Eagle, I worked with a staff member on finding or creating a bibliographic record for the CAFÉ catalog if one does not already exist.

CAFÉ Projects

Last week, I worked with Backstage Library Works for our quarterly update of bibliographic and authority records. More than 6,600 bib records were edited and improved, and more than 2,705 new authority records were added to the catalog. While Backstage's costs have increased slightly, our overall costs for working with them for data maintenance is going down because I no longer send OverDrive bib records to them for improvement. Vega Discover can access our OverDrive offerings without having those titles added to the CAFÉ catalog database.

Cataloging Class

I received \$1,000 from a portion of the 2024-2025 LSTA cataloging grant, to be used to support cataloging best practices. With these funds, Bridges offered a pilot program for four library staff members to attend Library Juice's "Introduction to Cataloging" online course. In November, catalogers at four Bridges libraries took the class and I hosted weekly virtual check-in meetings. In each meeting, we discussed class assignments and other cataloging questions. Attendees reported the class to be adequate for general cataloging information and that the weekly meetings were very useful. This pilot project was a success, and I plan to offer this in 2026.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Advertising

The systemwide YouTube "Expect the Unexpected" pilot campaign will be ending on Dec. 31, 2025. I am very pleased with the impressions and the engagement/view rate is very good at 51.94%! View rates vary, but the overall average is 29.24% to 31.9%. I look forward to working on more advertising on YouTube in 2026.

6-Days	43-Days	68-Days (Dec. 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encountered 2,074 times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encountered 25,225 times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encountered 42,455 times
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engaged with or seen in its entirety 1,052 times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engaged with or seen in its entirety 12,607 times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engaged with or seen in its entirety 22,050 times
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clicked on 16 times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clicked on 174 times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clicked on 269 times

Media Opportunity

I am working with Fox 6 News to coordinate a reoccurring segment featuring libraries on their new streaming newscast called the Wisconsin Live Desk. It airs weekdays on the Fox 6 website from 12:30 - 3:30 pm and then saved onto [YouTube](#). The interview will be a 10-15 minute Zoom call and we'll highlight "5 Things" around a theme each month. I am aiming to rotate libraries. So far, we will be at Mukwonago Community Library in December and New Berlin Public Library in January. Details to follow!

Collaborative Advertising

I am talking to Deb at Milwaukee County Federated Library System on ways we can coordinate our advertising next year to make a bigger impact with our investments.

Google Interior Photo Tours

I am nearly done with the 360 photos for all 24 member libraries Google Profiles. In January, the tours will be added to the [Find Your Library](#) webpage.

- Elm Grove – Dec. 5
- Whitewater – Reopened on Dec. 8, photoshoot coming soon!

Web Accessibility Project

The Department of Justice updated the regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The rule has updated the technical requirements for state and local governments (including public libraries) to follow to make sure that their websites, apps, emails and social media are accessible to people with disabilities. Entities serving a 50,000+ population have until April 24, 2026, to comply. Smaller entities, serving a population with less than 50,000 have until April 26, 2027, to comply. I am working on making a timeline, training plan, checklist/tracking sheet, and toolkit for Bridges to ensure we are in compliance by the deadline. I am also working to create a toolkit to support member libraries.

Professional Development

- **November 11-13: Library Marketing and Communications Conference (LMCC)**

I attended a variety of great sessions at the conference that offered useful information and resources. The session on Website ADA Compliance was great and will help me create tools for our system. I also created a toolkit for member library staff of the slides and resource materials from the presentations I attended and from others that sounded great that I could not attend.

- **November 18: Tech Talk Website Meeting**

I attended the State Cohort's virtual meeting to talk about website accessibility and scheduling hands-on training sessions. Dates coming soon.

In the News:

- Whitewater Public Library Reopens on December 9: [Press Release](#)
- 16 citizens deliver public comments in support of Library: [Watertown Daily Times Article](#)
- Library rejects endowment tap for budget relief: [Watertown Daily Times Article](#)

[News Archives](#)

Newsletter Data: Industry standard/goal is 44% Open Rate

- Marketing Magic:
 - December 5: 53.57% Open Rate
 - November 21: 59.52% Open Rate
 - November 7: 63.1% Open Rate
- Monthly Bridges:
 - December: to come
 - November 7: 53.26% Open Rate
- Monthly Legislators - November 21:
 - Legislators: 33.33% Open Rate
 - Staff: 36.59% Open Rate