

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

February 2026

Brittany Larson – Library System Director

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 27th. 25% of 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 2026 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 2026: We had a great day in Madison on February 10th. Thank you to everyone who joined us! There were many library directors, library staff, Friends of the Library members, and library trustees from Bridges Library System. They all come with unique and powerful stories to tell about the importance of public libraries in our communities! All attendees are encouraged to send handwritten thank you notes to the legislators and aides they met.

Waukesha County Act 150 Process: I have spent many hours this month updating the draft from the January Committee meeting and other administrative tasks necessary to prepare for the February 3rd public hearing (including meetings with directors and trustees to answer questions and public hearing invitations as required by statute). While the Waukesha County Library Boards consider the proposed statutes, I will not work to prepare for the County Board presentation.

New County HR Representative: The Bridges Library System has a new Human Resources Representative, Ashley Fischer, due to a retirement. We met with her at a staff meeting recently for introductions.

Database Management Librarian Search: I am currently evaluating the job description, duties, and skills for this position and speaking with HR about the new recruitment process that exists with the transition to Workday. I will provide updates on the status of this process as they become available.

Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

Bridges Adult Public Programming Grant – The application period for the Bridges Adult Public Programming Grant is now open. Libraries may apply for and receive up to \$500 reimbursement for adult program costs such as presenter fees and supplies. Applications will be accepted through May 1. This has proved to be a valuable grant over the past several years.

Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference – The Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference was held January 21 & 22. This is a two-day virtual conference for library staff throughout Wisconsin featuring two tracks of learning each day. Bridges supports this conference monetarily as well as by providing backup hosting for several of the sessions. This year’s conference had a variety of engaging topics and saw good live attendance.

SEWI Planning – Plans are underway for 2026 SEWI Libraries events, including a social-emotional learning youth services workshop, de-escalation training from NAMI Southeast Wisconsin, and several library staff meetups.

Upcoming 2026 Events

- **SEWI Libraries Maker Meetup, March 19** – Whitewater Public Library
- **SEWI Libraries Social-Emotional Learning Storytimes, March 23** – Franklin Public Library
- **SEWI Libraries Intergenerational & All Ages Programming Meetups**
 - **April 20** – Dwight Foster Public Library (Fort Atkinson)
 - **April 23** – Cedarburg Public Library

Professional Development

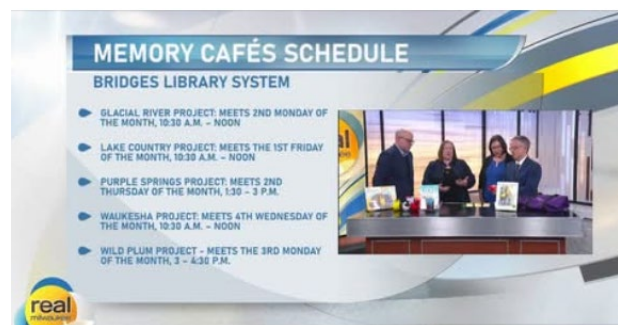
- LiFT: The Reference Interview Online Training
- WWWWC: RISE (Really Incredible, Simple, and Easy) – Webinar – Web Accessibility Training
- Generative AI & Library Collection Development Policies – Webinar
- Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference – Various Sessions

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Inclusive Services

Jail Materials: 2025 reading materials purchased by Bridges Library System for the Waukesha County Jail were recently picked up. The new books will be stored in the jail’s classroom, where inmates will have access to check them out.

Library Memory Project: Emily Heller of Bridges arranged a live interview on Fox6’s Real Milwaukee morning show. Jennie Fidler from the Oconomowoc Public Library and I shared about memory cafes and memory care kits available at our member libraries.



Youth Services

Meetings:

I facilitated a virtual Teen Think Tank meeting with 8 library staff members from 7 libraries. The next Teen Think Tank Meeting will be on Wednesday, April 15 1-3pm at the Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson.

Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) and Bridges Library System hosted their Mock Awards event at New Berlin Public Library. Several Bridges member libraries joined in this day-long event, where we discussed some of the best books of the previous year.

Kids' Choice voting is underway and will close on February 13. Winner and runners-up will be announced on February 16. The Kids' Choice Nomination Selection Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 5 at 4:00pm at Delafield Public Library.

The next Youth Services Meet Up is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24 at 1:00pm at Town Hall Library.

Professional Development

Wild Winter Wisconsin Web Conference Sessions: How Does Anyone Do All of This? Practical Organizational Strategies for Library Leaders; Managing Library Collections; Book Talk 101: Engage, Excite, and Empower Readers. In addition, I watched an archived webinar titled Neurodiversity in Library Spaces. I also completed Q1: Knowb4 training titled Defining Security Awareness and Social Engineering Foundations.

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Library Visits and Meetings

This month I visited Johnson Creek, Menomonee Falls, and Town Hall libraries to work with newer catalogers on using Polaris to import, review, and add bibliographic records into the CAFÉ catalog.

The virtual CAFÉ cataloger meetup included discussion of arrangement of MARC fields, processing materials in-house vs. working with vendors for pre-processing, titles newly in the public domain, and Vega Discover updates.

CAFÉ Catalog Cleanup

Each week I search for and correct bib records with the author's name out of order in the MARC 100 field. There are usually three or fewer bib records that need this correction in the MARC 100 field. This month I completed a long-term project of correcting more than four hundred bib records that had the same problem in the MARC 700 field. Going forward, names in both the

MARC 100 and 700 fields will be checked regularly. Now that there is no backlog, I anticipate the number of ongoing problems will remain low.

Continuing Education

I attended the *Cataloging in Leap* online forum provided by the Innovative Users Group. Attendees discussed their staff's use of Leap for cataloging and came up with a wish-list of functions to help catalogers more easily use the software. The same was done for Leap's acquisitions functions, with the plan to share both lists with Innovative. The hope is that both cataloging and acquisitions in Leap will be made more robust and useful for library staff.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

Library Legislative Day

Many system staff, member library staff, trustees and friends will be attending Library Legislative Day on February 10 at the Capitol in Madison. Attendees are encouraged to thank legislators for funding libraries and share their library stories. Bridges will be sharing a flyer about libraries supporting lifelong literacy. [See the flyer.](#)

Library Lover's Month

We are celebrating Library Lover's Month with fun social media posts each week throughout the month. The posts are designed for people to engage in a fun, easy way. Check out the ["I love my library more than" post](#) and the [Perfect Match post](#).



Fox 6 News - Wisconsin Live Desk

New Berlin Public Library's Delaney Dorothy and Tiff Kelly joined Fox 6's Wisconsin Live Desk show to share all the fantastic ways to celebrate Library Lover's Month at local public libraries in February.

[Watch New Berlin's Wisconsin Live Desk segment.](#)

AM 620 - "What's on Tap" Radio Interview

Waukesha Public Library will be the first member library to take part in our newest advertising campaign. Director Bruce Gay will be interviewed by Sandy Maxx about the library's 130th Anniversary and more on Feb. 20th. The show will air at a later date to be determined.

Web Accessibility Project

I will be hosting the first Marketing Meetup of 2026 on February 16. We will be talking about digital accessibility for library websites, emails and social media. The goal is to help libraries prepare for the Digital ADA Compliance deadline of April 2027.

WLA 2026 Conference

I am serving as the Publicity Chair for the WLA Conference. I have met with the committee a few times and have designed the logo to be used in all communications and laid out the publicity plan for the team to follow.



**Rooted in
Community**

2026 WLA Annual Conference

In the news:

- Angela and Jennie shared about Library Memory Project and memory cafés: [Real Milwaukee](#)
- Waukesha Library awarded \$10K gift from Carnegie Corporation: [Waukesha Freeman Article](#)
- Dwight Foster saw more than 81,000 visits in 2025: [Daily Union Article](#)

[News Archives](#)

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

- Marketing Magic:
 - February 6: 43.47% Open Rate
 - January 23: 51.81% Open Rate
- Monthly Bridges:
 - February: TBD
 - January: 48.7% Open Rate
- Monthly Legislators:
 - February: TBD
 - January 28:
 - Legislators: 27.78% Open Rate
 - Staff: 37.5% Open Rate