



**OSTHOFF RESORT**  
Elkhart Lake, WI  
April 27-29



OSTHOFF  
RESORT & SPA



**CONFERENCE CHAIR**

*Roxanne Staveness,  
Rio Community Library*

**WAPL 2026 Features:**

Sessions organized by  
**areas of interest**

**Networking opportunities**  
with library colleagues

**Breakout sessions** with  
library professionals sharing  
best practices and new  
innovations

**Keynote sessions** focused  
on a diverse array of  
contemporary topics  
important to the public  
library community



Welcome to the 2026 Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries Spring Conference. Our theme is Libraries As A Test Kitchen.

Kitchens hold a special place in my life—just as libraries do. In many homes, the kitchen, much like our libraries, is a place for gathering with family and friends, working on homework/the budget, finding a quiet moment before the world wakes up, and practicing the magic of creation through cooking/programming.

How many of us have read a recipe or watched a cooking show and then tried to recreate it ourselves? Or attended a conference, live or virtual, and asked how can we do that here? I know I have—and while there have been some spectacular failures, there have been many more successes.

Our 2026 conference, Libraries As A Test Kitchen, is an opportunity for us to experiment, learn new “recipes,” and bring fresh ideas back to our libraries. Whether those recipes are for innovative programming or something delicious to share at home, this is our time to explore, create, and grow.

I look forward to meeting many of you, sharing ideas, and exchanging recipes—both for library programming and for the kitchen.

Roxanne Staveness  
WAPL Conference Chair

WAPL CONFERENCE 2026



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[www.wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl-spring-conference](http://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl-spring-conference)

# WAPL SPONSORS

WAPL gratefully recognizes our 2026 conference sponsors for their generous support of this year's conference. Their partnership helps bring library professionals together from across Wisconsin to learn, share ideas, and build connections. We deeply appreciate their commitment to the library community and the important role they play in making this conference a success.



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Learn more and register: [www.wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl-spring-conference](http://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl-spring-conference)



## WAPL 2026 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Schedule is subject to change. Complete session descriptions and speaker information can be found on the WAPL conference app or at <https://wla.memberclicks.net/wapl-spring-conference>

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### Monday April 27th

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1:00 PM-3:00 PM	<i>WPLC Board Meeting</i>	<i>Villa Gottfried Room</i>
3:30 PM-5:30 PM	<i>SRLAAW Meeting</i>	<i>Villa Gottfried Room</i>
4:00 PM-6:00 PM	<i>Registration Open</i>	<i>Grand Libelle Coatroom</i>
5:00 PM-7:00 PM	<i>Welcome Reception</i>	<i>Palm Garden A B C</i>

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### Tuesday April 28th

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7:00 AM-5:00 PM	<i>Registration Open</i>	<i>Grand Libelle Coatroom</i>
8:00 AM-9:00 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Grand Libelle Ballroom A&amp;B</i>
9:00 AM-10:00 AM	<i>Welcome and Keynote Speaker Debby Waldman</i>	<i>Grand Libelle Ballroom A&amp;B</i>
10:00 AM-10:30 AM	<i>Book Signing and Break</i>	<i>Grand Libelle Ballroom A&amp;B</i>
10:30 AM-11:30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>From Information Hubs to Health Partners: Preparing Wisconsin Libraries for Overdose Response</i></li> <li>• <i>Inside the Public Library Standards Makeover</i></li> <li>• <i>Introducing the Intellectual Freedom Toolkit</i></li> <li>• <i>Lunch On The Library Lawn: A Community Powered Lunch Program at the Rio Community Library</i></li> <li>• <i>Organize &amp; Prioritize</i></li> <li>• <i>Ready Set PreK: Social-Emotional Learning as the Foundation of Preschool Readiness</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Grand Libelle E</i></li> <li><i>Grand Libelle D</i></li> <li><i>Palm Garden D</i></li> <li><i>Villa Gottfried A</i></li> <li><i>Villa Gottfried B</i></li> <li><i>Grand Libelle F</i></li> </ul>
12:00 PM-1:00 PM	<i>Luncheon Keynote Speaker Lindsay Starck</i>	<i>Grand Libelle Ballroom A&amp;B</i>
1:00 PM-1:15 PM	<i>Lindsay Starck Book Signing</i>	<i>Grand Libelle Ballroom A&amp;B</i>

## WAPL 2026 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

1:15 PM-2:15 PM

- *Chicken Soup for the Library Soul: An Interactive Presentation About Food Programming* Villa Gottfried B
- *Kindle Kindness, Community in Action* Palm Garden D
- *Managing Change: Transform at the Right Speed* Grand Libelle F
- *Moving Beyond the Manual: Keep Staff Engaged During and After Orientation* Grand Libelle E
- *Preparing For A Library Capital Campaign* Grand Libelle D
- *Supporting Early Literacy and Vision Health: The Your Amazing Eyes Storytime Program* Villa Gottfried A

2:30 PM-3:30 PM

- *What's Cooking?: Lessons of a Library Test Kitchen* Grand Libelle D
- *Build Your Brary: A motivational engagement and outreach bootcamp for every library.* Villa Gottfried B
- *Experiment with recycling news about your library!* Palm Garden D
- *Simplifying to Prevent Burnout* Grand Libelle E
- *Using Generative AI for Project Management* Villa Gottfried A
- *How Do You Know What The Future Holds For Your Library? Plan!!* Grand Libelle F

3:30 PM-4:00 PM

Refreshment Break Grand Libelle Ballroom Foyer

4:00 PM-5:00 PM

*At the Movies with Librarians: One Adaptation After Another* Grand Libelle Ballroom A&B  
sponsored by University of Milwaukee Wisconsin school of Information Studies

6:00 PM-8:00 PM

*WAPL Social Hour* Elk Lounge

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*Wednesday April 29th*

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7:00 AM-12:00 PM

*Registration Open* Grand Libelle Coatroom

7:30 AM-8:30 AM

*Breakfast with Keynote Speaker Kris Turner* Grand Libelle Ballroom A&B

8:45 AM-9:45 AM

- *Beyond Basic Book Clubs: building engaging reading groups for all ages!* Grand Libelle D
- *BadgerLink Resources in Your Test Kitchen* Villa Gottfried A

## WAPL 2026 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

- *Classics Everlasting* Palm Garden D
- *Fun(d)raising for Libraries: From Carnegie to Barbie* Villa Gottfried B
- *Library Meeting Rooms, Displays, and Exhibits (oh my!)* Grand Libelle E
- *What Do YOU Think? : Empowering Your Team To Think and To Act* Grand Libelle F

### 10:00 AM-11:00 AM

- *Don't Praise the Machine: Prompts and Queries for Effective GenAI answers and outputs* Grand Libelle E
- *Make Your Storytime SENSEational: Strategies for Effective Sensory Friendly Storytimes* Grand Libelle F
- *Empowering Kids as "Cultural Chefs" via Community Story Labs* Villa Gottfried A
- *Going on a Digital Diet: When PDFs become the restricted ingredient* Villa Gottfried B
- *Open Books Open Worlds: building bridges through a sister library partnership* Palm Garden D
- *Responding to ICE at the Library: Real World Approaches* Grand Libelle D

### 11:15 AM-12:15 PM

- *More Than Play: Gaming in Public Libraries* Grand Libelle D
- *Prioritizing Culture for a Healthier Team* Palm Garden D
- *Reimagining Summers: Building Community Based Summers* Villa Gottfried A
- *Slice, Dice and Advice: Ideas on Tween Programming and Tween Leadership Rolls.* Grand Libelle F
- *Small but Mighty: Makerspace Programming in a Small Library* Villa Gottfried B
- *The Psychology of Change Management* Grand Libelle E

### 12:15 PM-1:15 PM

*Closing Luncheon* Grand Libelle Ballroom A&B  
*with Keynote Speaker Bobbi Newman*

### 1:30 PM-3:00 PM

*Afternoon Tea at the Elkhart Lake Civic Center*  
*tour the Elkhart Lake Public Library and Visit the Village Shops*



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# MEET THE SPEAKERS

We're excited to announce this year's keynote lineup for WAPL Conference 2026: Library as a Test Kitchen—four dynamic voices bringing fresh ideas, inspiration, and practical insight to the conversation.



Lindsay Starck

Wisconsin-born and “raised in the Milwaukee Public Library,” **Lindsay Starck** is the author of *Noah’s Wife* and *Monsters We Have Made*—a Minnesota Book Awards finalist and Wisconsin Library Association Literary Awards winner. Her short prose has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *AGNI*, and more, and her story “Baikal” (published in *New England Review*) won a Pushcart Prize.



Kris Turner

**Kris Turner** is Associate Director of Public Services at the University of Wisconsin Law Library. He oversees reference and circulation, plus the development of the Law Library’s website and digital repository. He also teaches Legal Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Law Practice and co-teaches Advanced Legal Research—courses recognized as a Bloomberg Law finalist for Law School Innovation (2024).



Debby Waldman

**Debby Waldman** is a journalist, book reviewer, and author whose children’s books have been recognized by best-of lists from Bank Street College of Education and the Canadian Children’s Book Centre. Her picture books *A Sack Full of Feathers* and *Clever Rachel* are PJ Library selections. She has also freelanced for outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and more—writing on topics ranging from mental health to culture.



Bobbi Newman

**Bobbi Newman** is an author, speaker, consultant, and educator who helps organizations create healthier, more equitable work environments. She’s also the founder of ThriveLib, a virtual conference dedicated to advancing well-being for library staff across the profession. Bobbi is the author of *Fostering Wellness in the Workplace* and editor of *Well-Being in the Library Workplace: A Handbook for Managers*.



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# Special Events

## Welcome Reception

Monday, April 27 from 5:00-7:00pm  
Palm Garden A-B-C

Connect with fellow attendees over hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Participate in a trivia contest to win fun prizes and show off your "Inner Chef" at our themed photo booth.

## WISL Meetup

Tuesday, April 28 during breakfast  
Grand Libelle Ballroom

Start your Tuesday morning with connection and conversation at the WISL Meetup during breakfast! Look for the WISL table.

## At the Movies with Librarians

Tuesday, April 28 4:00-5:00pm  
Grand Libelle Ballroom

Grab your popcorn and join us for this fun conference tradition! Enjoy trailers and lively discussion about upcoming book-to-movie adaptations. Sponsored by University of Wisconsin Milwaukee School of Information Studies.

## WAPL Meetup

Tuesday, April 28 6:00-8:00pm  
Elk Room Lounge

Who says librarians have to be quiet? Join the WAPL Board for a relaxed, drop-in evening of connection—your way. Settle into the Elk Room Lounge for casual conversation, simple games, and a welcoming space to unwind.

## Afternoon Tea and Cookies

Wednesday, April 29 1:30-3:00pm  
Elkhart Lake Public Library

Wrap up the Conference with afternoon tea, a visit to Elkhart Lake Public Library and time to explore nearby village shops.

## WLA 50-50 Raffle

Support the Wisconsin Library Association Foundation and take a chance at winning big! Tickets are \$2. Purchase your tickets at the Welcome Reception, Tuesday breakfast and breaks, and Wednesday breakfast. The winner will be drawn at lunch on Wednesday (you do not need to be present to win).

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*Tuesday 9:00 AM-10:00 AM*

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**Welcome and Keynote Speaker Debby Waldman** – Grand Libelle Ballroom A&B

*Debby Waldman*

**Laura Ingalls Wilder, Laurent de Brunhoff, and Radon Monitors: A Keynote about the Impact of Libraries and One Writer's Gratitude for that Gift**

I'll speak about the many ways in which libraries have impacted my life and career choice, some of which I've understood for years, some of which have become clearer to me in hindsight. I'll also discuss the way that libraries have changed over my lifetime, from a place where I went for books to a place that I now understand provides refuge in a multitude of ways. For me it's still a place to get lost in the stacks, but for the homeless people in my city, I've seen it become a place where they can interact with public safety officials without fear of abuse. I go to my local branch for books, but I have friends who go for cooking lessons and radon monitors. I've always thought of libraries as big buildings constructed of brick or granite: sturdy and dependable. Those were the libraries of my childhood and youth. And libraries continue to be sturdy and dependable, but in my lifetime I've come to understand that they are living, flexible entities that change and adapt and adjust to meet the needs of the moment.

Debby Waldman is a journalist, book reviewer, and author. Her children's books have been translated into Chinese, Korean, and Russian, and have been named to best-of lists by Bank Street College of Education and the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Her picture books *A Sack Full of Feathers* and *Clever Rachel* are PJ Library books. *Clever Rachel* was also adapted into a play and is available in script form.

An ex-pat American, Debby has lived in Edmonton, Canada, since 1992, freelancing for media outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Parents*, *Reader's Digest Canada*, *Wired*, *NBC*, *The Bittman Project*, *Kaiser Health News*, *U.S News & World Report*, and the *Edmonton Journal*, where she was a columnist for five years. She writes about a wide range of topics including mental health and culture on *Substack*.

Debby has also co-written two books for parents of children with hearing loss. She works part time in a writing center at the University of Alberta.

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*Tuesday 10:30 AM-11:30 AM*

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**Introducing the Intellectual Freedom Toolkit** - Palm Garden D

*Hannah Good Zima, Nicolet Library System*

In an era of growing challenges to library collections, programs, and policies, equipping library staff with the right tools is more critical than ever. This session offers

an introduction to the WLA Intellectual Freedom Toolkit, a resource developed by the WLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee. Designed for librarians, trustees, and community members, the Toolkit provides guidance and resources to help navigate intellectual freedom issues. Additionally, the session will provide a supportive space for participants to learn from each other by sharing their experiences, asking pressing questions, reflecting on challenges, and developing strategies to protect and promote intellectual freedom within our communities.

### **Organize & Prioritize** - Villa Gottfried B

*Rachel Arndt, Rachel Arndt Consulting*

Hustle culture may demand optimization, but this session is all about simple systems. We all have unique motivation and learning styles with differing strengths and challenges. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to organizing and prioritizing. Individuals can be successful by personalizing their approach to their strengths. Beginning by defining distinct archetypes, the breakout session offers a variety of realistic approaches to managing time, priorities, space, and wrangling tech. With time and space conquered, creativity and effort can be channeled into the highest priorities.

### **Inside the Public Library Standards Makeover** - Grand Libelle D

*Kristie Hauer, Nicolet Library System, Nick Demske, Racine Public Library, Jaime Healy-Plotkin, UW-Madison iSchool, John Thompson, IFLS Library System*

Join members of the Public Library Standards Steering Committee for an inside look at the ongoing statewide effort to update the Wisconsin Public Library Standards. The Committee will share progress highlighting emerging themes, draft recommendations, and areas of exploration. Attendees will also be invited to participate in guided discussion and provide feedback to help shape the Standards revision. This session offers a valuable opportunity to learn, contribute, and engage with the future direction of library service expectations across the state.

### **Lunch On The Library Lawn: A Community Powered Lunch Program at the Rio Community Library** - Villa Gottfried A

*Roxanne Staveness, Rio Community Library*

The Rio Community Library hosts a seven-week summer lunch program alongside its Summer Reading program, serving meals on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays beginning with the start of summer school. Funded entirely by donations, eight partner organizations each take a week to purchase, prepare, and serve meals. With no eligibility requirements, the program emphasizes food access and community connection over compliance. The Library supplies materials, games, and activities, including live animal and stuff-a-bear programs. Attendance

peaks early, reaching 120 meals per day. In 2025, 1,300 lunches were served over 20 days. The program strengthens partnerships, community engagement, and year-round support for the Library's mission.

**From Information Hubs to Health Partners: Preparing Wisconsin Libraries for Overdose Response** - Grand Libelle E

*Jessica Geschke, Clinton Foundation*

Public libraries are trusted, free, welcoming community spaces where individuals of all ages and backgrounds seek safety, information, and support — including people at risk of overdose. As substance use continues to impact communities across Wisconsin, libraries are increasingly encountering overdose emergencies on-site. Equipping every public library with Overdose Aid Kits that contain naloxone ensures staff and community members can respond quickly to save lives while reinforcing libraries' role as hubs of public health and community care. This session explores why naloxone access in libraries is a practical, compassionate, and life-saving strategy that strengthens community safety and response readiness statewide.

**Ready Set PreK: Social-Emotional Learning as the Foundation of Preschool Readiness** - Grand Libelle F

*Alison Loewen, Mead Public Library*

Ready Set PreK builds social-emotional skills to help children and caregivers

navigate the preschool transition. This session highlights how libraries can support routines, emotional regulation, separation, and confidence through play-based activities and caregiver guidance. Attendees will learn practical strategies, toolkit components, and programming ideas to help families feel prepared and supported, while positioning libraries as trusted early learning partners.

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*Tuesday 12:00 PM-1:00 PM*

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**Keynote Speaker Lindsay Starck** - Grand Libelle Ballroom A&B

*Lindsay Starck, Associate Professor at Augsburg University*

Lindsay Starck was born in Wisconsin and raised in the Milwaukee Public Library. She is the author of the novels *Noah's Wife* (2016) and *Monsters We Have Made* (2023), a finalist for the Minnesota Book Awards and winner of the Wisconsin Library Association Literary Awards. Her short prose has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *AGNI*, and the *Southern Review*, among other places; her story "Baikal," published in the *New England Review*, won a Pushcart Prize. She currently writes and teaches in Minneapolis, where she lives with her husband, her daughter, and her cattle dog.

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*Tuesday 1:00 PM-1:15 PM*

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**Chicken Soup for the Library Soul: An interactive presentation about food programming** - Villa Gottfried B

Amy Waldman, Milwaukee Public Library (MPL)

Participants in this hands-on session will learn the basics of food programming at MPL, along with the tools, supplies, and skills needed to deliver hands-on instruction followed by a communal brainstorming session and conclude with a chance to get their hands dirty in the most delicious way possible – a simple sample project. The session will include a short presentation about the Charlie Cart project. Participants will leave with the confidence to bring food programming into their libraries.

**Kindle Kindness, Community in Action** - Palm Garden D

*Martha Russ-Bauer, Schreiner Memorial Library*

Kindle Kindness started as a way to spread kindness intentionally in a small, rural community. The initial, overarching goal of creating this group was to cultivate kindness by building meaningful community connections. The group holds regular meetings and plans events that take place around the community to raise awareness and motivate community members to consider kindness in their daily lives. One

great success this group has achieved is jail visits at the Grant County Jail to promote literacy, life-long learning, and advocate for library use as a community resource that all are welcomed to utilize.

**Supporting Early Literacy and Vision Health: The Your Amazing Eyes Storytime Program** - Villa Gottfried A

*Samantha Butler, Prevent Blindness Wisconsin*

This session will equip attendees with practical tools and strategies to successfully implement Prevent Blindness Wisconsin's Your Amazing Eyes Storytime Program in libraries of any size. Attendees will receive step-by-step guidance for program implementation, explore creative approaches for adapting activities to meet diverse audiences and community needs, and learn effective partnership and outreach strategies to connect with schools, childcare centers, and community organizations. The session will also highlight evidence-based techniques for engaging children through interactive, hands-on learning experiences.

**Moving Beyond the Manual: Keep Staff Engaged During and After Orientation** - Grand Libelle E

*Kelly Davis, Waukesha Public Library, Therese Lyons, Waukesha Public Library*

How do you keep staff informed and engaged after orientation and who does that? Enter THAMS (Thursday Morning

Education Sessions), HAPPS (weekly staff emails), AMs (Monday Morning Check ins). How do we come up with the topics? How do we ensure that all staff receive training? What other methods of communication do we employ to keep staff informed and engaged? Find out how our experience with THAMS and HAPPS and see if these strategies can help your staff feel even more engaged.

**Preparing For A Library Capital Campaign -**  
Grand Libelle D

*Colleen Rortvedt, Appleton Public Library,  
Karen Rose, Kara Sullivan, WLA*

Successful capital campaigns require strategic preparation, starting with feasibility studies to assess community trust and test financial goals. Essential strategies include securing early leadership gifts, engaging municipal partners, and utilizing transparent messaging to address real-world obstacles like inflation or scope reductions. Throughout the session, the Appleton Public Library's journey serves as a case study for adapting a campaign amidst shifting scopes and public scrutiny. By prioritizing multi-year donor engagement and board readiness, libraries can sustain momentum, ultimately strengthening their annual funds, volunteer engagement, and long-term community impact far beyond the physical construction.

**Managing Change: Transform at the Right Speed -** Grand Libelle F

*Christina Jones, Monona Public Library Board, Cindy Fesemyer; Fesemyer Consulting, LLC*

Cindy Fesemyer and Christina Jones, co-authors of *Small Public Library Management 2nd Edition*, discuss managing changes-- large and small, fast and slow-- in a library setting. Topics will include facilities, customer service, working with stakeholders, and strategic planning, providing a good overview for new library leaders and a nice refresher for more experienced professionals. Bring your questions!

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*Tuesday 2:30 PM-3:30 PM*

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**Experiment with recycling news about your library! -** Palm Garden D

*Elizabeth M Timmins, Muehl Public Library*

The presenter will share how a library story idea can be shared across media channels and how to enlist the help of staff to bolster certain stories. The presenter will show examples of capitalizing on local and library annual cycles of events for quick, engaging, cohesive content. Participants will be invited to share their marketing success stories, too. Work smart!

**How do you know what the future holds for your library? Plan!! -** Grand Libelle F

*Cindy Fesemyer, Fesemyer Consulting, LLC,  
John Thompson, IFLS*

In this highly interactive session, planning consultants John Thompson and Cindy Fesemyer share their experiences with strategic planning and facilities planning as tools for future growth of your library's programs, services, partnerships, and facilities. An overview of the strategic and facilities planning processes will leave you with a good idea what to expect if you decide to walk the planning path. Plentiful Q&A time means you can get your questions answered by any and all of the experts in the room.

**Using Generative AI for Project Management** - Villa Gottfried A

*Margaret Murphy, UW-Madison*

Library programming is a project—whether it's launching a new service, piloting technology, or planning a community event. This session uses a fun, familiar “test kitchen” metaphor—planning a Thanksgiving meal—to walk through the full project management lifecycle, from idea to wrap-up. With Betty Crocker and real-world library examples, participants will see how generative AI can support everyday project work by reducing planning effort, improving clarity, and freeing up time for creativity and community impact. The session emphasizes practical, human-centered AI use that scales for libraries of all sizes and roles.

**Simplifying to Prevent Burnout - Grand Libelle E**

*Krista Blomberg, Rib Lake Public Library*

While most families look forward to summer for rest and relaxation, historically it has been the opposite for public libraries. It's not uncommon for public librarians to experience burnout with programs, summer reading, and performers during summer months. But, does it have to be this way?

In this session, Krista Blomberg from the Rib Lake Public Library will share how they re-evaluated their 2025 Summer Library Program by simplifying bingo cards, eliminating registration, and adding fresh community energy. In addition, learn how libraries can share the load by working with others in the community and how to explore grant opportunities.

**Build Your Brary: A motivational engagement and outreach bootcamp for every library.** - Villa Gottfried B

*Jason Anfinson, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse / Murphy Library*

In this inspirational workshop, designed to maximize patron engagement, participants will become idea generators, event co-creators, and program producers. Be an engagement and outreach leader who develops participatory events, partnership programs, and community collabs that elevate the value of your library. Areas of interest will focus on fusing art, music, games, and social crafts into programming. Generate ideas, create activities, organize events, and design meaningful and memorable engagement and outreach

programs in this motivational breakout session led by “Information Jason” Anfinson, the Student Engagement and Outreach librarian in Murphy Library at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Build Your BRARY.

**What's Cooking?: Lessons of a Library Test Kitchen** - Grand Libelle D

*Khorye Huffman, Waukesha Public Library, Michele Gagner, Waukesha Public Library, Paula Mason, Waukesha Public Library*

In 2021 Waukesha Public Library tripled its community room space and added a demonstration kitchen. Having space to present cooking-centered programming was a great opportunity for these presenters. But they had a lot to learn!

Over the past five years, Waukesha Public Librarians have planned and facilitated staff-led and contracted cooking programs for adults, teens, and children. They'll share the challenges and the successes they've experienced with:

- Staff-led programs versus contracted programs
- Food safety
- Budgeting
- Incorporating cooking into other programming
- Keeping expectations realistic
- Creating a framework for kids' cooking programs
- Ideas for libraries without kitchens

Join them as they spill the tea on cooking programs at Waukesha Public Library!

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*Tuesday 4:00 PM-5:00 PM*

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**At the Movies with Librarians: One Adaptation After Another - sponsored by University of Milwaukee Wisconsin school of Information Studies** (sponsored by University of Milwaukee Wisconsin school of Information Studies) - Grand Libelle Ballroom A&B

*Rachel Arndt, Rachel Arndt Consulting, Angie Bodzislav, Spooner Memorial Library, Erin Foley, Adams County Library*

Rated G - For General Audiences. The panel will discuss books being made into movies slated for release in 2026. After enjoying exciting trailers, panelists will analyze how well (or poorly) these books may translate to the screen. Panelists will also rate films previewed at previous conferences. Grab your popcorn and join us for this fun and popular conference tradition!

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*Tuesday 6:00 PM-8:00 PM*

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**WAPL Board Invites You to the Really Loud Librarians Mixer – Elk Lounge**

**Mix and Mingle... No Shhh! Who Says Librarians Have to Be Quiet?**

Join the WAPL Board for a relaxed, drop-in social designed for connection your way. Chill in the Elk Room Lounge with casual conversation, simple games, and opportunities to connect—whether you're

feeling social or just want to recharge. No pressure, just good company and a warm, welcoming space to unwind and be part of the mix.

Cash bar available.

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*Wednesday*  
*7:30 AM-8:30 AM*

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**Breakfast Keynote Speaker Kris Turner -**  
Grand Libelle Ballroom A&B

Kris Turner, UW Madison Law Library

**Teaching Information Literacy in the Age of GenAI: Librarians at the Tipping Point**

It's been more than three years since ChatGPT changed how we interact with information. As GenAI tools have evolved, the ongoing opportunities and challenges that the newest iterations present are clearer than ever. However, what will happen next is equally unclear. Librarians stand at the forefront of the debate about how to educate and integrate these ethically complicated but potentially game changing resources. As the world pivots to include more AI-generated content, it is incumbent on librarians to rise to the challenge and thoughtfully engage with our communities about how to competently assess and efficiently use these powerful tools. We are in a moment of immense change and as information professionals, librarians can serve on the vanguard of a new frontier of information literacy: GenAI literacy.

Kris Turner is the Associate Director of Public Services at the University of Wisconsin Law Library, where he oversees the reference and circulation departments, as well as the development of the Law Library's website and digital repository. He teaches Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Law Practice Technologies and co-teaches Advanced Legal Research, which were selected as a Bloomberg Law finalist for Law School Innovation in 2024. He was selected as a Library Journal Mover and Shaker in Spring 2025. He, along with Law Library Director Bonnie Shucha, has presented to thousands on the importance of ethical and effective use of GenAI tools.

Kris has served as the Presidents of the Wisconsin Library Association, the Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin, and a number of committee and programming roles for the American Association of Law Libraries. He has written articles focused on library outreach, the law of libraries, space and contracts law, and leadership transitions. Before joining UW Law, he worked at Madison Public Library and the Forest Products Laboratory Library.

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*Wednesday*  
*8:45 AM-9:45 AM*

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**BadgerLink Resources in Your Test Kitchen**  
- Villa Gottfried A

*Jen Champoux, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*

BadgerLink is Wisconsin's Online Library, the statewide collection of trusted and reliable databases and electronic resources available to all Wisconsin residents for more than 25 years. Maybe after all these years BadgerLink resources wouldn't seem as nimble and valuable as when they entered the kitchen, but the presenter will share a few newer tools and gadgets that can get any chef librarian cooking with gas!

**Library Meeting Rooms, Displays, and Exhibits (oh my!) - Grand Libelle E**

*Colleen Rortvedt, Appleton Public Library, Teresa Schmidt, DPI*

Meeting room and display policies raise important questions about constitutional concepts such as First Amendment rights and limited public forums. This program will help you connect these high-level principles to your day-to-day policy and practice, as we consider how to manage different types of spaces, address challenging situations, and establish reasonable rules that can be consistently applied. While this program cannot provide legal advice, it will provide helpful information you can use to assess and update your library's policies and procedures. This session is offered as part of ALA's Law for Librarians program.

**Classics Everlasting - Palm Garden D**

*Sarah Kyrie & Arlo Paust, Blanchardville Public Library*

Dust off the jackets of those classics and get them circulating once again! Blanchardville

librarians LOVE their classics and work to get readers excited once again. Hitting all ages, from babies at storytime, to teens after school, to adult book groups, Sarah Kyrie and Arlo Paust will share their passion and tips for why the oldies really are goodies.

**Beyond Basic Book Clubs: building engaging reading groups for all ages! -**

Grand Libelle D

*Lizzy Lowrey, Katie Coffey, Beth Gabriel, Kimberly Luedke, Fionna Rausch, Milwaukee Public Library*

When it comes to book clubs, we've tried it all! Presenters discuss successes and challenges engaging readers through archival deep-dives, art extensions, and reaching niche audiences including the romance-obsessed, classics-lovers and history buffs. We'll also share how we include our youngest readers in book clubs of their very own!

**What Do YOU Think? : Empowering Your Team To Think and To Act - Grand Libelle F**

*Michelle Dennis, Hedberg Public Library*

Lots of management training resources say we need to "empower our staff." But what does that really mean? How do you really do it? From hiring the right people for the right job, to teaching, coaching, supporting, and correcting, Michelle will share experiences from her more than 40 years of leading people and building teams, and lead a

discussion to help you discover and share your own power in management.

**Fun(d)raising for Libraries: From Carnegie to Barbie** - Villa Gottfried B

*Theresa Stevens, Sun Prairie Public Library Foundation*

In this presentation, Theresa will cover the fun in fundraising through hilarious and heartwarming stories, and share insights on tried and true (or failed) fundraising efforts that can be applied for a single purpose fundraiser or mini-campaigns that can be integrated into a capital campaign. Attendees will leave with examples and templates to kickstart their next fundraiser!

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*Wednesday*  
*10:00 AM-11:00 AM*

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**Don't Praise the Machine: Prompts and Queries for Effective GenAI answers and outputs** - Grand Libelle E

*Kris Turner, University of Wisconsin Law Library*

GenAI tools have passed beyond the initial hype and excitement phase and are starting to settle into a resource that professionals are expected to use. In this session, the presenter will discuss practical and effective uses of GenAI tools. The session will focus on how to interact with the tools, which tools best aligns with a given task, and guardrails to put in place while using these powerful but imperfect tools. All parts of our

professional and personal lives will be touched by GenAI and this session will help you better understand the potential and limits of their uses.

**Make Your Storytime SENSEational: Strategies for Effective Sensory Friendly Storytimes** - Grand Libelle F

*Mariah Smitala and Sara Griffin, Hedberg Public Library*

As librarians, we try to create programs and spaces that are welcoming for all. Translating that to making all storytimes sensory friendly is a lovely idea in theory, but in practice it can exclude the very audience we are trying to reach. Instead, create a storytime that goes beyond welcoming neurodivergent children to centering their specific needs. You'll learn how to:

- Create a storytime space where neurodivergent children and their families will flourish.
- Develop a storytime outline utilizing sensory-inclusive practices.
- Reach your target audience and keep them coming back.
- Bring these techniques to other spaces and programs at the library.

**Empowering Kids as "Cultural Chefs" via Community Story Labs** - Villa Gottfried A

*Ajanta Chakraborty, Bollywood & Culture Groove*

What happens when children move from being passive readers to active creators? In

this "Test Kitchen" session, bestselling author Ajanta (Maya & Neel's India Adventure series) shares a "recipe" for transforming traditional author visits into dynamic "Community Story Labs." Learn how to facilitate workshops where kids "mix" family histories and culture into new digital and physical media. Attendees will walk away with a scalable toolkit, including story-mapping frameworks and sensory prompts, to help young patrons "cook up" their own identity-based narratives. Turn your library into a vibrant lab where every child's unique flavor is published and celebrated!

**Responding to ICE at the Library: Real World Approaches** - Grand Libelle D

*Jocelyne Sansing, Middleton Public Library, Katherine Elkhart, Northern Waters Library Service, Molly Smiltneed, Attorney*

When agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enter a public library, staff need to know how to respond calmly and lawfully. This session highlights how library leaders are navigating these situations in real life. Presenters will share approaches to staff training, handling interactions, and basic legalities.

Learning Outcomes: At the conclusion of this session participants will be able to:

Understand at least four ways libraries are successfully preparing for and responding to ICE encounters

Know practical steps to ensure responses are clear, consistent, and lawful

Use strategies for training and communication that help staff feel supported and confident in real-world situations

**Open Books Open Worlds: building bridges through a sister library partnership** - Palm Garden D

*Holly Selwitschka, Kimberly Public Library*

Discover how a sister library partnership can expand your library's impact beyond borders. This session shares the story of building an international connection between libraries and the meaningful cultural exchange that followed. Learn practical steps for starting a partnership, nurturing relationships across distance, and creating programs that engage your community while fostering global understanding. Attendees will leave with ideas, resources, and inspiration to build their own bridge—connecting readers, cultures, and communities through the shared power of libraries, stories, and learning. Whether your library is large or small, you'll gain tools to begin creating an open world through open books.

**Going on a Digital Diet: When PDFs become the restricted ingredient** - Villa Gottfried B

*Erica Brewster, Wisconsin Valley Library Service*

One of the most life-changing challenges can be cutting a major food group from your diet. Likewise, it can feel impossible to live

without PDFs, a staple of our digital document pantry. In this “test kitchen” session, we examine why PDFs often fail WCAG 2.1 AA standards and how overreliance on them undermines accessibility. Participants will explore practical alternatives to PDFs, learn core techniques for structuring accessible content, adding meaningful link and image descriptions, and how using templates improves workflow. Attendees will leave with tested methods, clear guidelines, and tools to ensure their digital documents are usable by all patrons.

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*Wednesday*  
11:15 AM-12:15 PM

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**Reimagining Summer: Building Community Based Summers (BCBS)** - Villa Gofffried A

*Jeni Schomber, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Kelly Wochinske Milwaukee Public Library*

BCBS is a learning framework designed to help libraries build strategies to work with their communities to provide summer programs and services that are inclusive to all. Grounded in equity, BCBS supports libraries in reimagining summer services to be more responsive, collaborative, and rooted in local needs.

By exploring the deeper purpose—or “why”—behind their summer services, and by examining who is involved in shaping them, BCBS facilitators will inspire

attendees to reexamine current library policies, programs, and services with a focused commitment to equity. This process prioritizes the BCBS Core Principles of building authentic relationships, creating a culture of reflective practice, continuous learning, and rethinking internal systems.

**Slice, Dice and Advice: Ideas on Tween Programming and Tween Leadership Rolls.**

- Grand Libelle F

*LoriAnn Snow, Neenah Public Library*

Learn how to create outside of the box programming for tweens that provides space to think creatively, promote self-esteem and leadership skills.

Take part in learning how this presenter started their first tween program with 33 participants in the spring of 2022, that grew to 105 in the fall of that same year. And how she leaned into that growth momentum to build a successful Teen Advisory Board.

Join in this session to discuss ways to build and maintain tween engagement and learn how to start a Teen Advisory Board for your library.

**More Than Play: Gaming in Public Library -**

Grand Libelle D

*Maura Flanagan, Pauline Haass Public Library, Jenny Sessions, Verona Public Library*

Bringing games and play into your library can feel like a daunting undertaking, but it

doesn't have to be. Libraries can and should build exciting and educational communities through gaming. From tabletop roleplaying games like Dungeons & Dragons, to circulating board games, break in kits, and mystery kits, we will highlight accessible, scalable ways to get started – no experience required. Attendees will learn how gaming can foster literacy, critical thinking, STEAM learning, creativity, social-emotional skills, and so much more. Walk away with confidence, ideas, and examples that prove investing in play is investing in your community.

### **Small but Mighty: Makerspace**

**Programming in a Small Library** - Villa Gottfried B

*Kaushalya Iyengar and Sarah E. Thompson, Town Hall Library*

Three years ago, Town Hall Library launched a Makerspace with a donated 3D printer, a few tables, art supplies, and a vacant corner of a storage room. Today, Town Hall Library's Makerspace has grown to more than double its original size and features creative programs and activities for library patrons of all ages - all without any building expansions, additional staff, or budget increases.

Learn about how this small library's Makerspace became one of their most popular programming spaces and how librarians use this space to connect with library patrons of all ages through innovative programming and creative space management.

### **Prioritizing Culture for a Healthier Team** - Palm Garden D

*Angie Bodzislav, Spooner Memorial Library*

This session shares practical strategies for building resilient, engaged teams through Monthly Wellness Challenges, transparent decision-making, and deliberate protection of team culture. Attendees will learn how to empower staff, create opportunities for growth and togetherness, foster positivity, protect uninterrupted work time, and reframe check-ins and performance reviews to support development. Practical examples and tools will help librarians at all levels implement sustainable practices that boost morale, productivity, and retention.

### **The Psychology of Change Management** – Grand Libelle E

*Rachel Arndt, Rachel Arndt Consulting*

"The only constant in life is change." – Heraclitus. Changes are all around us in the workplace: policy, procedure, technology, and tools. Working through change can cause stress, disruptions to service, and mismatched expectations. Preparation can help offset these impacts and support successful transitions. This breakout will provide attendees with strategies and tools to manage the psychological effects of change and approaches to support colleagues and patrons during changes. Information will also include an overview of change management principles and frameworks.



**Winner pulled at lunch on Wednesday!**  
You do not need to be present to win.

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