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## REPORT FROM YOUR PAST CHAIR

By Lisa Abler, AWSL Past Chair

Happy Fall, AWSL members! I hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving holiday and have been able to take advantage of some of the beautiful, milder days we have had recently. Your AWSL board and members have a number of updates for you regarding our summer and fall activities...please continue to read for details!

The 2017 WLA Annual Conference took place at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells this past October. AWSL was a presence at the event, sponsoring conference programming and hosting a business meeting luncheon. In addition, we continued our annual conference tradition of hosting a special library tour with a visit to the International Crane Foundation and its library. A special thanks to the Foundation's Dr. Rich Beilfuss, President and CEO, and Betsy Didrickson, Information Services Manager, for sharing their time, vast knowledge and infectious enthusiasm with us. If you were unable to attend the tour in person, be sure to check out the article and photos in this issue for your own inside view!

Earlier this fall, AWSL participated in the UW iSchool's (formerly, SLIS) orientation. The iSchool holds a Professional and Student Organization Fair for incoming students at the end of August. Kris Turner and I were thrilled at the number of students interested in special libraries at that event and at our follow-up AWSL social on the Union Terrace in mid-September. We hope to build upon that interest and encourage interaction between future information professionals and our special library network by reaching out to the new WLA Student Special Interest Group, formed by students from the iSchool at Madison and UW-Milwaukee's SOIS.

AWSL is very pleased to have Amy O'Shea (Online Librarian, Broadview University) return as AWSL Secretary for another year, and to welcome Jaime Healy-Plotkin (Cataloguing Librarian, Wisconsin State Law Library) as our newly elected Chair-Elect. Learn more about Jaime in our Q & A article!

As always, if you are interested in getting involved in AWSL, attending our events or contributing to our newsletter, please reach out! We enjoy talking with and learning about you and your special libraries and would love to invite you to participate in our group.

Enjoy the rest of the year!

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## REPORT FROM YOUR WLA BOARD LIAISON

By Kris Turner, AWSL Board Liaison

Hello AWSL! Just when you thought you were rid of me, I reappear! Now that I have finished my three year cycle as Board President, I am beginning a three year run as your Board Liaison. If you remember nothing else from this article, please remember that you can always check-in with me about any concerns or questions you may have about AWSL or WLA in general. I represent you on the Board, and so I want to make sure that your voices are heard!

The Board meets roughly every two-to-three months, with our most recent meeting being held on Tuesday, October 17th, as the WLA Annual Conference began. Usually, I update the Board with the goings-on with AWSL, and I am always proud to discuss the numerous tours, socials, newsletters and scholarships that we provide to our members each year. For this meeting, however, the Board had a full plate of items to discuss, starting with the Budget.

WLA, in recent years, has run a deficit. For the past several years, this deficit has been papered over by using money from reserves to cover the shortfall. Once again this year, the budget was in the red by approximately 43,000 dollars. This is a large deficit to run, and one would make WLA unsustainable if it were to continue. This deficit is largely due to the decrease in members and the lower conference attendance in recent years. The Board decided to approve the budget 'as-is' with the shortfall to bring more awareness to the problem and to make it a priority to fix this issue. In January, there will be a Board retreat where the Board will discuss solutions to fix this issue and begin to act on fixing the budget. This is obviously a very important discussion, and I welcome any ideas or insights you may have into solving this very complicated problem.

The Board also discussed Memberclicks and communication. There have been problems recently with emails being held up in the approval queue and others that are not sent out at all. Without communication, WLA runs the risk of losing even more members, since members may not see the benefit of staying with WLA if they are not hearing about the great events that WLA puts on. As a part of the WLA Board retreat, we will be discussing creating a Communications Committee to explore the best way to contact members, the best and most cost-effective programs for doing so, and how to reconnect with former members to bring them back into the fold. This issue is closely related to the budget question and I expect that both problems will have to be solved for either to be solved. I look forward to the discussions about these problems, and again, encourage you to contact me if you have any questions, ideas or concerns about these topics.

It was not all doom and gloom at the Board Meeting! Over the summer, the first WLA Leadership Development Institute was a great success. Since this was the first time WLA was putting on the Institute, the Board was prepared to build off it and make it better next year, but it proved to be a very positive experience right out of the gate! There were over 30 attendees who learned from professionals outside the library world about how to best approach management, work with others and generally be great leaders for libraries. I attended a dinner on the first night, and heard many positive comments from the attendees. WLA will be holding their second Leadership Institute this coming summer, and I strongly encourage you to attend if you are at all interested in becoming a leader in your own library or in the library community.

It will be a challenging and interesting year on the WLA Board, and I look forward to many more fruitful and productive discussions that will pave the way for WLA to move forward with a positive budget and a growing list of members. Again, if you have concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [Kris.Turner@wisc.edu](mailto:Kris.Turner@wisc.edu). I am grateful to serve as your WLA Board Liaison, and thank you for the opportunity!

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## VALUE OF A WLA MEMBERSHIP

By Anne Moser

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I wanted to write to share an anecdote that speaks to the value of membership in an organization like WLA. I understand that sometimes members feel a professional association does not provide tangible return on investment. I think my experience shows that a membership could lead to a relationship that is difficult to put a monetary value on but is immensely helpful.

A number of years ago, I was the AWSL liaison to the WLA Board and each meeting I would sit in the room with Marge Loch-Wouters. Through this board work, I got to know Marge and I asked her to be a member of my program's Advisory Committee on Outreach and Education. The Water Library participates in education and outreach related to the Great Lakes and water resources and specifically works with children ages three through 9. In the years that Marge agreed to be on the committee, she has provided me with a wealth of support and expertise about children's programming that has improved my work immensely. She also shared her expertise and knowledge of the latest best practices in working with children in library settings. She has mentored me when I have faced challenges in this work. She helped me to brainstorm the direction of this work while our program was doing strategic planning (this was especially helpful as I was constructing my four-year work plan). Finally, she attended an all-day committee meeting where we hashed out the entire education and outreach work plan and her insight and feedback was invaluable to me and other staff on my team.

This example illustrates how a relationship build through WLA might come from surprising corners of the association. I have been very grateful for Marge's willingness to get involved and to help me.

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## MEET YOUR NEW CHAIR ELECT

### Name

Jaime Healy-Plotkin

### Position

Cataloger Librarian at the Wisconsin State Law Library in Madison, Wisconsin

## Describe your current job

I create original catalog records and copy catalog materials including legal treatises, government documents, and periodicals as well as maintain our electronic resources records. All of the librarians at the Wisconsin State Law Library rotate throughout the week to provide reference assistance by phone, email, and at our public reference desk.

On top those duties, I am the President of the Madison Public Library Board and represent that board on the South Central System Library Board of Trustees. I have had a long commitment to service to my community, especially the library community. Public and special libraries have an important connection and I am happy to bring my experience to both areas.

## Previous professional endeavors

My library career has made its way up and down State Street and around the Capitol Square in Madison, mostly within technical services. I worked at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Archives and Research Center, UW Libraries, including Memorial Library and the Kohler Art Library, and the Wisconsin Historical Society. I have experience in large and small libraries and found my interest lies within small, special libraries.



## Why did you decide to work in the library profession?

I love to organize.

## What is the favorite part of your job?

Organizing! Cataloging has these wonderful rules to make items more accessible with common terms and I love to piece them together.

## What is the least favorite part of your job?

As part of my job is to provide reference assistance, my least favorite part is realizing that I cannot help everyone with every question asked. At times a patron will contact us asking for what is considered

legal advice and as a librarian I am not qualified to give that advice. The information I provide is not always enough to satisfy the patron and that is a frustration for me.

**Do you have a role model as a librarian?**

I do not have one librarian in mind, but over my years of working in libraries and with library boards, I have tried to glean knowledge from all the great directors and librarians with whom I have worked.

**What is your favorite book of the last year?**

I recently enjoyed a fun non-fiction book by Michael Ruhlman titled *Grocery* talking about the habits of grocery stores and its customers. He has a creative way of engaging his readers in subjects that could be rather dry.

**What is your dream vacation?**

A trip to France, which would include time in Paris to visit the museums and walk along the Seine, followed by relaxation in Southern France where I can sit at a café eating pastries and drinking a café crème while reading.

**What are your hobbies?**

Outside of my library activities, I am a certified postpartum doula. I help mamas and babies adjust to life together after birth. You can check out what this means at my website *Little Treasures Postpartum* [www.ltpdoula.com](http://www.ltpdoula.com) I also enjoying reading, walking, and spending time with my husband and six year old daughter.

**Is there anything else you would like to share with your fellow AWSL members?**

I am excited to have been elected the AWSL vice-chair/chair-elect and I look forward to working with this group of special librarians.

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## **AWSL TOURS THE LIBRARY AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION**

By Nell Fleming

This fall at the WLA conference we at AWSL were delighted to offer a full tour of the International Crane Foundation along with a tour of their special library that is normally available by appointment only for the rare few who actually have a specific research need. The weather was beautiful and the facility was really impressive. The Crane Foundation's commitment to preserving all fifteen species of

cranes from the Black Crown to the Whooping Crane is immense. Cranes are found around the globe and this preservation is a massive undertaking often halted by local skirmishes. Just when one place starts to recover such as Rwanda, another is blocked like the Sudan. The temperature is a challenge for some species from warmer climates and pairing without breaching the integrity of the program is challenging, yet without a mate other challenges present themselves for some species. It is a constant dance for the staff to maintain balance as well as respond to local and global crisis such as the recent flooding in Houston.

Although past visitors mentioned the cranes being very vocal, on this day perhaps they were enjoying the weather because all was quiet. The local cranes also roost just outside of the facility and was an interesting sight to see as well. The trail is partially made of multi-colored glass pebbles and the sun made them sparkle. Our tour guide, Richard Beilfuss or Rich, the director of the Foundation, was so thorough and as is expected we could have stayed all day and never tapped the deep well of knowledge he has.

Betsy Didrickson, Information Services Manager, then showed us around the Foundation's library. The Ron Sauey Memorial Library for Bird Conservation acts as a global clearinghouse for biologists and researchers and yet very little of their holdings area accessible electronically. Most requests are retrieved manually and sent, otherwise long distance travel to obtain the information is required. They welcome any and all manuscripts, articles and new research on cranes and though their actual stacks are quite compact their building is a beautiful educational center and study center for scheduled events only.

If you didn't make this year's tour we highly recommend individual tours next time you are in town.

Images from our visit to the ICF Library are included at the end of the newsletter.

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## YOUR AWSL BOARD

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Images from the ICF Library Tour

*All photos by Lisa Abler, except where noted.*



A Sandhill crane pauses for a close-up



Betsy Didrickson, Information Services Manager

*Photo of Betsy Didrickson by Carrie Doyle*



Inside the Sauey Memorial Library stacks



Entrance to the Ron Sauey Memorial Library at the International Crane Foundation



AWSL tour participants were treated to beautiful views of International Crane Foundation property on a gorgeous fall day



A brolga crane poses for admirers



The grey crowned crane proudly displays her magnificent crest