

ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN SPECIAL LIBRARIANS | AWSL

A DIVISION OF THE WISCONSIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Leadership

CHAIR ELECT 2024
Steven Rice

CHAIR 2023
Val Magno

PAST CHAIR
Anne Moser

WLA BOARD LIAISON
Carrie Doyle

Committees

CONFERENCE PLANNING
Team Awesome AWSL!

NEWSLETTER
Carol Hassler

Next Business Meeting

The next business meeting of AWSL will take place on December 8.

Join us for AWSL town halls! See page 2 for more information about our upcoming town hall and 2024 planning meeting. All AWSL

Celebrating Anne Moser

At this year's WLA annual conference, we were excited to celebrate AWSL's own Anne Moser, who received the WLA President's Volunteer Award. Anne was recognized during the Awards & Honors Reception during the October conference in Middleton.

Anne is the Senior Special Librarian at the Wisconsin Water Library & Education Coordinator at the Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute. Her award profile on the WLA website recognizes her as being "well known and well-loved among public librarians all around Wisconsin, and their patrons, for the cheerful, fun and educational programs



she presents on STEM and water-related topics ... Ann is a person who seeks connections with all types of agencies, institutions and people in the pursuit of sharing understanding and educational opportunities about the Great Lakes and the people who live near, and depend on, the Great Lakes." She has worked tirelessly to help libraries of all types make connections with science, art, and learning. Her work as an educator, mentor, and volunteer has enriched libraries and their patrons throughout Wisconsin and the Great Lakes region.

We thank Anne for her participation and leadership with AWSL, and applaud her well-deserved recognition!

Lead a Town Hall!

Would you like to lead a Town Hall for your fellow special librarians? To sign up, contact Anne Moser at akmoser@aqu.wisc.edu

Join our Board!

Becoming a member of the AWSL leadership team is a great way to meet new people and to provide opportunities for your fellow special librarians to get together to have fun, to learn, and to socialize. Being an AWSL leader is a great way to get in some professional development in a low-key, low-stress, high-reward way. The time commitment is minimal. The board meets twice a year: once in the spring and once at the annual WLA conference in the fall. All other duties can be completed remotely.

Share Your Stories & Pictures!

Do you have a story to tell about your library or collection? How are you helping your users? What programs are you offering, or what does your space or collection look like? Send us your stories and pictures to include in our next newsletter!

Email the newsletter chair, Carol Hassler, at carol.hassler@wicourts.gov.

wisconsinlibraries.org/awsl

AWSL December Town Hall

Please join fellow AWSL members for a meeting on Friday, December 8 at 10:30 AM. We will share 2023 accomplishments and make plans for 2024, including setting a schedule for 2024 Town Halls. Please join us for year-end camaraderie and the opportunity to help make AWSL great in 2024.

Details for the Zoom meeting:

Topic: AWSL Planning for 2024

Time: Dec 8, 2023 10:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

[https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/94061483957?](https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/94061483957?pwd=aTNSOWhEb3BjbDVWc0M0UFIJcGFIZz09)

[pwd=aTNSOWhEb3BjbDVWc0M0UFIJcGFIZz09](https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/94061483957?pwd=aTNSOWhEb3BjbDVWc0M0UFIJcGFIZz09)

Meeting ID: 940 6148 3957

Passcode: 227618

Please contact Carrie Doyle if you have any questions or concerns.

carrie.doyle@wisc.edu

608-890-4575

Book recommendations from the AWSL Social

AWSL had a great time at WLA, and loved connecting with librarians from around Wisconsin. This year, we held our social event between daytime and evening programming at the WLA annual conference. We enjoyed snacks, a book swap, and great chats with existing members and new folks dropping by the event. Thanks to all who contributed and stopped by, and made our social event such a success.

As part of our social, we asked for book recommendations. A book recommendation also earned entry into our fabulous gift basket giveaway. Check out all the great book recommendations on the next page.

The winner of our gift basket giveaway was Maureen P.H. *(Pictured right)*

Hoot, by Carl Hiaasen

"It's adorable and heartwarming. Good for a car trip."

-Maureen P.H.



About AWSL

The Association of Wisconsin Special Librarians (AWSL) is a division of the Wisconsin Library Association. Established in October 1986, AWSL exists to focus on the activities and issues of special libraries and librarianship and to provide a forum for exchange of ideas among persons involved with special libraries and collections.

Membership

Membership is open to all WLA members. Anyone who maintains a specialized collection of materials is considered a special librarian – whether they're a trained and certified librarian managing a library's special collection, or a person in charge of specialized materials in a church, museum, prison, hospital, corporation, foundation, newspaper, government office, or other organization.

Join AWSL

Make the most of your WLA membership and join AWSL through the WLA website:

www.wisconsinlibraries.org/awsl

Book Recommendations (Continued)

American gods, by Neil Gaiman

"Neil Gaiman is my favorite author. I love how the book brings the old gods and America's new gods together! (And they go to House on the Rock.)"

- Lynette O.

Witch of wild things, by Raquel Vasquez Gilliland

"It was a romance novel that also incorporated a robust family dynamic storyline. Excellent characters, setting, and magic! A great spooky autumn read."

- Michelle F.

The very hungry deer

"Cute. Shows how impactful kindness is."

- Sarah W.

Stardust, by Neil Gaiman

"A wonderful adventure novel that creates a fantastic world that includes love, magic, and witches."

- Hope C.

The electric war, by Mike Winchell

"Great YA title for anyone interested in the electric tug of war between Tesla, Edison, and Westinghouse. It was a quick and understandable read."

- Laurie O.

Book lovers, by Emily Henry

"An emotional and sensitive reflection on love, life, and family relations. Made me sob."

- India N.

The magic fish, by Trung Le Nguyen

"A beautiful graphic novel about identity, family, and cross generational storytelling."

- Tori T.

Ready player one, by Ernest Cline

"80's nostalgia meets adventure in this page turning quest."

- Maura F.

Abraham Lincoln, vampire hunter, by Seth Grahame-Smith

"Great, fun way to read history, and a good example of alternative history."

- Tammie B.

Ordinary grace, by William Kent Krueger

"I thought the small town dream was fairly reflective of the time period but the overall death count seemed excessive given the town's population."

- Dominic F.

Book Recommendations (Continued)

The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street, by Karina Yan Glaser

“A great start in a series of books about a loving family full of precocious children who live in New York City and go on adventures in the community.”

- Amy C.

The sentence, by Louise Erdrich

“So, so great. Local, about current events, COVID era, George Floyd, etc. So good – indigenous issues too! Because Louise Erdrich is so great.”

- Catherine B.

Cloud cuckoo land, by Anthony Doerr

“Ancient Greek language / history meets sci-fi meets historical fiction... So, so good!”

- Chloe H.

Ocean’s echo, by Everina Maxwell

“Delightfully developed space opera with romance and military/political intrigue. The stakes in this drama are high, but the story never loses its focus on the two main characters, their developing relationship, and explorations of self.”

- Carol H.

Thanks to everyone for their amazing contributions!

Chair Report

By Val Magno

The WLA conference went very smoothly. Nice hotel, food was good, and people were great! Thank you to all the organizers and helpers that made it possible for attendees to enjoy the presentations.

I would also like to thank all the vendors who support librarians and provide us with the specialty products we need to serve our customers. I invite you all to go back to Whova using the PC portal (https://whova.com/portal/webapp/wlaan_202311/sign_in/) and check out the virtual vendor booths, now that you have time to view and consider your options.

One of my favorite presentations was the AWSL panel (Becoming a Special Librarian: Different Paths to a Unique Library Career), where Steven Rice, Eva Stefanski, and Anne Moser, as well as host Kristopher Turner, talked about their eclectic adventures leading them into the AWSL division and feeling at home in the “Special Library” milieu. *(Pictured right)*



I am glad the slides and handouts from a number of sessions are available at on Whova (https://whova.com/portal/webapp/wlaan_202311/Documents), because I could not possibly go to all the sessions I wanted to!

Chair Report (Continued)

I think it is important to remind everyone that 1) you can join more than one division and 2) everyone is welcome in the Special Libraries division because we have people who deal with all kinds of information and artifact collections. Anyone who collects, curates, organizes, describes, analyzes, evaluates, explains, or works in other ways with collections of information are what I call information jockeys – we ride the information highways and try to get our sponsors to win in the race to finding the best information at the best price.

This conference reminds me of all the reasons I love working as a librarian. I get to live my values. I went to a Purposeful Life seminar and the premise was that happiness stems from living your values. If you can identify the top five values that are important to you and find a way to live those on a weekly or daily basis, you will be living your best life. Working in a library lets me live my values of teaching, learning, creativity, community service, and organizing ideas and information.

For more information:

Will a purpose-driven life help you live longer?

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/will-a-purpose-driven-life-help-you-live-longer-2019112818378>

Association Between Life Purpose and Mortality Among US Adults Older Than 50 Years

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2734064>

“A growing body of literature suggests that having a strong sense of purpose in life leads to improvements in both physical and mental health and enhances overall quality of life.”

Chair Elect's Message

By Steven Rice

What am I doing here? Am I even a librarian? I work at a county museum!



Those questions have been rattling around in my brain for two years, ever since I first took the leap of joining WLA and embracing my place in the wider world of libraries. That isn't surprising. Special librarians shape our own worlds. We blaze trails, build structures around ourselves, find nooks and crannies to grow into. We often work alone. Doubt can come easily. Working in a new position, without a professional library background, they came especially easily for me.

What I could not have anticipated at the beginning was AWSL. I have never met a group of people with whom I have so little and so much in common. Our institutions couldn't be more different. We have wildly varying skills, duties and professional paths. And yet, we are united by something. A vibe, an energy, something exciting and inspiring.

Special librarians are audacious. We have a confidence born of struggle, of needing to fit in, of using our skills and our outlook to transform the most unexpected places. We are not defined by the institutions we inhabit, but by the impact we have on our institutions. That is true of all librarians, but of us most of all.

Chair Elect's Message (Continued)

This year's WLA annual conference was an incredibly affirming experience, but the memory that will stay with me most is the AWSL panel presentation. What a privilege to sit with such amazing colleagues, sharing very personal stories of how we came to Special Librarianship. We spend too little time reflecting on our profession, and far too little time celebrating our achievements. When we take that time, when we step outside our walls and see the extraordinary impact we make every day, the results are transformative.

My name is Steven Rice, I am a special librarian, and I am thrilled to chair AWSL in 2024. Let's have an audacious year together.

Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

WLA Annual Conference Tours

By Eva Stefanski

One of my favorite things about attending the WLA conference is the AWSL-sponsored Special Library Tour. This year we were fortunate to have two tours – one to the Wisconsin State History Archives Preservation Facility and one to the Wisconsin Braille Library.

Wisconsin State History Archives Preservation Facility

The Wisconsin State History Archives Preservation facility opened in March of 2018 and contains 182,803 GSF (gross square footage) of space on four above ground levels. It houses collections from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Wisconsin Historical Society in a multi-zoned, specialized, temperature and humidity-controlled environment that is impressive to behold. If you like enormous spaces filled with artifacts and boxes as far as the eye can see, then this is the building for you. You can have your photo taken inside the Oscar Meyer Weinermobile and see an original glider planes used by the International Crane Foundation to teach crane migration. *(Archived film pictured top right)*

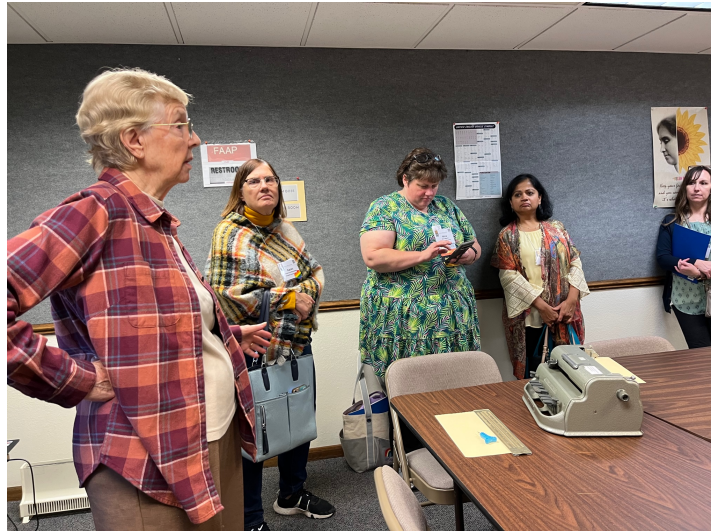
The scale and breadth of the collection is massive, but what impressed me most was the inclusion of a traditional care suite and outdoor ceremonial space for use by Native American tribes. *(Pictured bottom right)* These spaces were designed to respect Native American tradition and ease the process of repatriation. I truly appreciated that in the vast expanse of that facility, space and thought were allocated to the importance of respecting the cultures that create and potentially still own many of the artifacts being preserved today.



WLA Annual Conference Tours (continued)

Wisconsin Braille Library

The Wisconsin Braille Library and Transcribing Services tour was a much different experience and was one of the highlights of my conference this year. (Pictured right) Visiting the library and learning about the history of braille and its place in servicing the literacy needs of the blind and visually impaired was an impactful way to more deeply understand issues around accessibility and inclusivity in public spaces and libraries. We received a thoughtful introduction to braille transcription from transcription instructor Connie Risjford who provided a demonstration of writing braille on a transcription machine. We talked about the frequent inaccuracy of public signage and the importance of having your braille signs validated by certified transcribers. The tour also included a visit to the library and a discussion about the accessibility of braille books and a demonstration of how children's books are overlaid with braille so they can be read together by both sighted and blind family members. This tour taught me so much about honoring and assisting underserved communities and I left with enormous respect for those volunteers like Connie who dedicate many hours to creating resources for the amazingly resilient population of blind and visually-impaired readers.



Report from the AWSL representative to the WLA Board of Directors

By Carrie Doyle

When his term started in January, WLA President and AWSL member Kris Turner, along with the rest of the WLA Board of Directors, identified four strategic priorities for 2023. The strategic priorities are: State Budget Requests; Bylaws & Organization Manual; Intellectual Freedom; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

State Budget Requests: Every two years, the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor work together to produce the biennial budget. Executive Director Laura Sauser, President Kris Turner, the Library Development and Legislation Committee, along with many others, worked very hard to secure priorities for Wisconsin's libraries. Thank you to them, and to the governor and legislators who voted to support Wisconsin libraries in a big way.

Bylaws & Organization Manual: The membership recently voted to approve the new [WLA bylaws](#), which will go into effect January 1, 2024. A review of the Bylaws had not been conducted for many years and an update was needed. Board members will tackle revising the beast that is the Organization Manual in 2024.

Intellectual Freedom: The Board approved the creation of the Intellectual Freedom Standing Committee earlier this year. The committee conducted an Intellectual Freedom Survey this fall. The committee was

Report from the AWSL representative to the WLA Board of Directors (Continued)

very pleased with the number and quality of responses and is currently analyzing the results. The Intellectual Freedom Special Interest Group continues to meet to hear speakers and learn from each other. All WLA members are welcome to join in.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: In July, Board members participated in a retreat, facilitated by Sarah Schlosser of the UW-Madison Division of Extension. It was an enlightening and productive session where we worked to create a shared understanding of what we mean when we say WLA is committed to DEI and then created a set of next steps to take action on DEI as an organization. One product of the retreat is the WLA Belonging Survey, which all members are encouraged to complete and which closes November 28. The WLA Board will use the survey results to inform the design of strategies to support WLA members in feeling a sense of belonging, that they are valued, that they have something to contribute, and that they benefit from membership. The Board's goal is that a sense of belonging leads to members' active participation in WLA. Look for a link to the survey elsewhere in this newsletter.

In this report, I have tried to provide a fairly comprehensive report on what the WLA Board has been working on this year. The other part of my job as liaison is to facilitate communication of suggestions and concerns that AWSL members may have back to the WLA Board. AWSL is fortunate to have a dedicated representative on the WLA Board of Directors. Please send your ideas!

Find your Why

By Val Magno

Recently I've seen posters and t-shirts with "Find your Why" as a self-motivational prompt. Looking into what the new trend suggests for this, I noticed a nice summary of this in the article "How to Write a Personal Why Statement With Template and Examples" on Indeed.com (<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/personal-why-statements>)

The Indeed.com statements are about helping and inspiring others. That's good for an interview elevator speech. But what is your real *why*? How about "To give me a reason to get out of bed each day," or "To keep my mind busy so I don't get bored and depressed," or "To make enough money to retire from work with confidence that I would not be broke by 84". Luckily, you can have more than one "why" - both public whys and private whys. It is easy to create questions that leave you at a dead end. If that happens, back up and ask a different why.

Personally, I find "Asking Why 5 times" to be a useful process. Wikipedia summarizes "Five whys (5 whys) as "an iterative interrogation technique used to explore the cause-and-effect relationships underlying a particular problem. The primary goal of the technique is to determine the root cause of a defect or problem by repeating the question 'Why?' five times." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_whys)

A related technique, the "5-Whys" method, can also help you figure out why an action didn't work the way you expected, by putting yourself in another person's position and asking yourself why they acted the way they did. Considering what other people might be thinking and feeling is one of the roots of compassion. Why not try it today?

Send us your stories and pictures to include in our next newsletter! Email the newsletter chair, Carol Hassler, at carol.hassler@wicourts.gov.