

OWLS Director Report

September 21, 2023 OWLS Board of Trustees Meeting

Conclusion of Summer Library Board Visits

Bradley and Mike attended the Marion meeting on 7/20 while Kristin attended the Weyauwega meeting. Bradley attended the Kaukauna meeting on 8/22. Bradley and Diane will attend the final board visit of the summer at Waupaca on 9/20. We visited 13 out of 17 OWLS member library boards this summer. Libraries that were missed this year will be prioritized for 2024 summer visits. Those are: Iola, Little Chute, New London, and Seymour.

Systemwide Meetings

Marion Public Library hosted an in-person meeting of OWLS Directors on Thursday, August 31st. Bradley, Chad, and Kristin attended as well as representatives from 14 member libraries. Topics covered included results of the statewide compensation study, updates on library building projects, the OWLS web site redesign, and intellectual freedom. Michelle, an intern at the Muehl Public Library, presented *Ukraine War Stories* as an example of a visual novel.

New London Public Library hosted a youth services meeting on Friday, September 8th, led by our new youth service liaison, Stacy Dietzler. Kristin attended along with children's librarians from 10 member libraries. Topics included Beanstack, the State Park Pass program, the InfoSoup Road Trip, take home kits, and the summer library program. APL brought their used laminated story walk books to share with other libraries.

OWLS hosted an in-person AAC meeting on Friday, September 15th at Little Chute Public Library. This is our first exclusively in-person AAC meeting since the pandemic. We plan to hold these annually in September. Twenty out of thirty OWLSnet libraries were represented. Amanda, Bradley, Chad, Dave, and Molly attended from OWLS. Topics included data circuit updates, implementing multi-factor authentication for director and branch manager email accounts, the OWLS web site redesign, the InfoSoup Road Trip, training opportunities, the OWLSnet Borrowers' Card Program, forming a new resource sharing committee, and the results of the CARL/Bibliocommons satisfaction survey. At the November meeting, we will hold a vote on whether OWLSnet should begin a migration exploration process in 2024.

Programming Grants

Kristin reports that the youth services meeting included a discussion of programming grants. The overall response to the changes we made this year was very positive. Libraries were happy with the options to use funds into the fall and for events geared to all ages, rather than just summer programs for children. One library mentioned that they would prefer being able to use the entire \$700 at once for expensive performers because performers like that are still very

popular in their community. They hosted multiple Bubble Wonders shows and would have liked to devote their entire grant portion to that. However, other libraries reiterated that performers aren't necessarily a focus for them anymore. This led to discussion on the emphasis on collaboration in the grant policy and brought up a really interesting point. Several libraries pointed out that even if they're not collaborating with other libraries on these big, expensive performers, having a more flexible grant allowed them to do different types of programs that led to other types of collaboration, such as with their parks department or other community organizations.

Update on Director Searches

We were very pleased to welcome Michaela Woodward as the new director at the Shiocton Public Library in August. Michaela has completed orientation visits with Bradley, Dave, Chad, Kristin, and Amanda, attended her first AAC meeting, and been assigned a mentor director. We expect the director search in Little Chute to wrap up in October. Bradley is serving on the hiring committee for the Sturm Memorial Library in Manawa. Their timeline projects hiring a new director in November.

Conferences

Kristin will be attending the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) meeting in Wichita this week. Amanda and Chad will be attending the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Conference in Middleton October 25-27.

In lieu of a silent auction, the WLA Foundation will host a basket raffle at the conference. The proceeds will help support the foundation's initiatives and priority areas, including scholarships, the Libraries Transform legislator poster project, and the annual conference opening keynote speaker. Library systems are encouraged to donate items, such as themed baskets, to the raffle as part of a friendly competition. The library system whose donation raises the most money (collects the most raffle tickets) will win a traveling trophy to proudly display at their office until the next WLA annual conference comes around.

Chad and Amanda have proposed a Dungeons & Dragons themed basket. Chad will donate dice sets and painted miniatures, Amanda will crochet an owlbear, and Bradley will donate a Blu-Ray of the recent movie. We propose using funds from the miscellaneous expenses budget line to purchase copies of the 3 main books and a treasure box to serve as the basket at an approximate cost of \$150. A library could use this basket to launch a D&D program.