

ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN SPECIAL LIBRARIANS | AAWSL

A DIVISION OF THE WISCONSIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



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NEWSLETTER

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MEMBERSHIP

Carrie Doyle



Chair Report

by Amy O'Shea

Greetings All,

As we are all aware, these are very unique times that we are living in. I imagine each of you, like me, is wondering how Covid-19 will impact your library in the coming months, if not years. I have been contemplating how to safely work with volunteers and staff members as well as the visitors to my library and the gardens.

I've been considering patron access to materials: allowing only one walk-in visitor at a time or having the library open by appointment only. I've tossed around the idea of suspending the ability to check out materials, providing gloves along with hand sanitizer for library use of materials, and am trying to figure out where to set up a station to disinfect materials after they have been used. These restrictions to library access are challenging for me.

What I love about the library is the community it creates: parents reading to their children, grandparents teaching their

Call for AWSL Board Members

Are you interested in getting more involved in AWSL? Serve as AWSL Vice-Chair and collaborate with the Board on how to best serve our members. The Vice-Chair position leads to the Chair and Past-Chair positions and is a three year commitment. New vice-chairs work with the guidance and support of the current and past chairs. 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. For more information contact Amy O'Shea: aoshea@cityofmadison.com

Submit a Program to the WLA Annual Conference!

The deadline to submit a program to the WLA annual conference is May 29, 2020.

The conference will be held in Green Bay from October 27-30 at the KI Convention Center.

This year's theme is STORYTELLING, and you can refer to the WLA Conference page for more information about proposals and themes.

<https://wla.memberclicks.net/wla-annual-conference>

grandchildren how to use the card catalog (yes, Schumacher Library still has a card catalog), school groups learning about plant anatomy, artists researching botanical illustrations, and garden visitors stopping in to ask about the magnificent plants and flowers they have spotted while strolling Olbrich Gardens. How to continue creating a warm space and welcoming library community in this new age of social distancing and the fear of contracting, or passing on, a virus that can be deadly to many, is a challenge that I never thought I'd encounter in my career.

I am hosting my first virtual volunteer meeting next week. We are skipping any formal library training and opting to celebrate National Poetry Month with a Coffee and a Poem meeting. I hope my volunteers will join even if they don't have a poem as I miss seeing them on a regular basis. At the end of the month I will host my first virtual book club. I already had over 20 people signed up, but after the event was shared on social media I've gotten 5 more RSVPs. People are craving connection and content, two assets libraries have always been rich in. Once again the medium of delivery has changed, but we are not new to these changes. I hope that each of you can find creative solutions to the challenges that Covid-19 has brought to our professional worlds, and as librarians have always done in the face of change, embrace and evolve because of it!

IMLS COVID-19 Webinar

Check out the IMLS's webinar training: Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-Based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections

<https://www.ims.gov/webinars/mitigating-covid-19-when-managing-paper-based-circulating-and-other-types-collections>

Report from the WLA Membership Committee

by Carrie Doyle

I have the honor to serve as the Vice-Chair of the WLA Membership Committee for 2020. Things have gotten off to a bit of a slow start for the Membership Committee this year due to the pandemic, but our work does continue. I would like to ask for

Join the Membership Committee

If you are interested in serving on the Membership Committee, please contact Carrie Doyle carrie.doyle@wisc.edu or Hannah Bunting, WLA Membership Coordinator bunting@wisconsinlibraries.org.



Steenbock Library Tour

Mark your calendars for a tour of Steenbock Library on July 23 at 4 p.m. Enjoy a tour of the library and socialize with other AWSL members. Watch the listserv for updates and details.

Next Business Meeting

The next business meeting of AWSL will take place during the WLA Annual Conference. Join us at the Hyatt Regency Green Bay & KI Convention Center, October 28, 12-1:30 p.m. Watch the listserv for updates, including the location of the next meeting.

your help with a few projects currently underway, with more projects to come later in the year.

The first thing is that the Membership Committee is looking for members. Serving on the Membership Committee is not a heavy time commitment; we usually meet for an hour once a month (online or by phone). Lately much of the work of the Membership Committee has been concentrated on supporting campaigns focusing on membership growth. We also work to foster inclusion within the Association of a broadly diverse membership.

If you are interested in serving on the Membership Committee, please contact me (carrie.doyle@wisc.edu) or Hannah Bunting, WLA Membership Coordinator (bunting@wisconsinlibraries.org)

The main project the Membership Committee is working on right now is coming up with genres of different types of current and potential WLA Members, then determining what would attract them to WLA, and how WLA membership does/would benefit them. For example, what value would a solo special librarian working for a corporation derive from membership in WLA? How about an accidental librarian, who perhaps does not have an MLIS but is working in a special library, or the library of a religious institution? What value do they derive from WLA membership?

I can guess, but it would be better if I heard directly from you. How does your membership in WLA bring you value? Or maybe, what do you value most – attending conferences? Connecting with fellow special librarians through outings like tours or through MemberClicks? Learning more about what AWSL members are doing via the AWSL newsletter? Please let me know. Your input will help us tailor messages, and perhaps services, in the future. Thank you for considering. Send comments to carrie.doyle@wisc.edu.

WLA Board Liaison Report

by Kris Turner

What a very different spring this has been – I hope that everyone and their loved ones are safe and healthy as the world works its

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 who are special librarians or who have an interest in special libraries.

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

way through the COVID-19 Pandemic. Beyond the obvious health concerns, libraries have been forced to confront other questions ranging from access to information to remote work to budgetary questions. Sadly, many of these do not have answers yet and if they do, they are ones fraught with difficult decisions.

WLA has released two letters of support for libraries and librarians in recent weeks. First, WLA called for all public libraries to close as a precaution to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Second, the WLA Board approved a message to send to trustees and other library administrators advocating for continued payment of library staff who are working remotely or unable to work. It's my hope that this letter helps to keep library staff working, paid or otherwise employed until this is all over and we get back to our old "normal." This letter was not meant just for public libraries but ALL libraries – if you or your special library is closed, open, furloughed, or whatever and you seek guidance from WLA, please just let me know and I'll pass on what I can to you and get more information for you.

In other COVID-19 news, you probably saw that WLA had to cancel our three smaller in-person events: WAPL (public libraries), WAAL (academic libraries) and SSCS (support staff). These were all slated to take place in the next month or two and it was simply not feasible to have the conferences occur during the current health crisis. If you were registered to attend any of these, you will be getting a refund for your registration fees. WLA has two other in-person events that are currently in flux but are still slated to take place. First, the Leadership Development Institute that normally takes place in August is still on but decisions on that will be made in the coming weeks.

Second and probably most importantly to AWSL members is the status of the Annual Conference, which is currently scheduled for the end of October in Green Bay. As of now, this conference is scheduled to take place as usual. However, as with many things, there are many unknowns and things are changing rapidly. The Conference Leadership will be meeting with WLA Leadership in the coming weeks to determine what the plan is going forward. While October seems like a long ways away, there are already plans underway for the conference ranging from a Call for Proposals (send one in!) to committees seeking out local arrangements and sponsors. Additionally, the loss of the spring

conferences means that the Annual Conference may have to pick up sessions that would have been otherwise presented at these conferences. There are a lot of moving parts and even more questions that can't be answered yet! The bottom line for now is that the conference is still on but to watch for emails from the WLA Leadership about any changes to the conference plan.

Yet another aspect to the COVID-19 pandemic is financial. Associations large and small are facing challenges to their bottom line as they lose money-making conferences. This could be exacerbated in the library world where membership may be paid for by employers who no longer have the means to pay for professional memberships. Ironically, WLA's finances were looking healthier than they had in years before this pandemic occurred. Membership was up, investments were up and conference revenues were up. Now we are not sure what will happen. That is an all-too-common refrain in this article, but the biggest question mark is just how much WLA will suffer from losing conference revenue and if the membership income will be affected. Remember that WLA is here to support you and your library at the personal, professional, and legislative level. If you ever want to discuss the value of your membership and why you should get involved (or at least stay a member! please feel free to reach out to me at Kris.Turner@wisc.edu.

This was not a very bright and uplifting report this month, I know. But let's try and find some silver linings. I have heard that many libraries had a 'rush' to clear their shelves before they closed – it's hard to prove the value of a library better than that! And if nothing else, the amount of support that librarians have shown for each other in these unprecedented times has been amazing. It's great to be part of a community that has such close connections and works for the betterment of everyone. With that in mind, hang in there – we're all here for you. Always feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have for the WLA Board. It can be related to special libraries or not – I want your voice heard and I am more than happy to bring your concerns to light. Please stay safe and stay healthy. We'll get through this together.

Share Your Stories & Pictures!

Do you have a story to tell about your library or collection? How are you helping your users during the current health crisis? 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. Send articles and photos by Friday, August 7.

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<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/library-electronic-ebook-e-book-1666702/>

<https://ecalsforstudents.cals.wisc.edu/2018/10/03/10-things-to-love-about-steenbock-library-2/>