

## **WVLS Post-Conference Report**

### **Jamie Matczak**

**1. Please highlight three sessions from the conference. What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?**

***Innovation on a Shoestring: Free & Cheap Tools***  
***Louise Alcorn and Christa Porter***

Louise and Christa broke this presentation down into several technology categories - stock photos, privacy, graphic design, etc. I had heard of several of the tools they had mentioned (Canva, Piktochart, Trello), but some were new to me (Unsplash), or hearing about them again makes me more curious to try them. I'm glad they talked about signing up for sites that are "free," because they really aren't. There is always something, as a consumer, that we are giving up. These organizations want our data and what to know what we like. Louise and Christa also emphasized that some tools are worth spending a little money on, such as Survey Monkey.

I enjoyed this presentation because several of these tools I can introduce to WVLS libraries as Digital Byte topics.

***Making the Most of the Space You Have***  
***Lauren Stara***  
***Massachusetts Libraries***

Lauren works for Massachusetts Libraries and also specializes in building projects. All of her tips had photos to go along with them, which I think is helpful when we are talking about library space. The tips that she shared that I found most helpful were:

- "Stuff" fills space. Be careful about saying "yes" to library donations if it's something you won't use. Stacks of broken furniture or old computers should be removed, because we don't have the space to keep these things around.
- "Flexibility" is key. This applies to furniture and spaces. She is leary of libraries developing permanent maker space areas, as what will these areas look like in 10 years? Will they be used? Needed? Also, ditch the 4-6 person tables. Have 2-person tables that you can push together.
- Portability matters. When shopping for furniture, shelving or mobile units, make sure it can be moved by 1-2 people. Never buy something that you haven't lifted or moved yourself.
- Quality is important. Yes, you could go to Ikea and buy cheaper furniture, but will it last for five years? Buy stuff that is meant to be used and will withstand the test of time.

***Libraries and the LGBT+ Experience***  
***Presented by: Jennifer Stickles & Tina Dalton***

Jennifer and Tina both work at libraries in New York, and while I thought that their experiences would be more suited for larger libraries, I was wrong. I thought their presentation points were on topic, especially with small and rural libraries. This presentation was important for me to attend because it opened my eyes to how we can make our libraries more inclusive. Inclusivity has been talked about a lot, and this was a good way for me to see how small libraries can do small things to make a difference.

**2. Please highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session. Did you talk to someone you didn't know at a session? Sit next to someone at a luncheon and have a meaningful conversation? Visit with an exhibitor? How did this experience affect your overall outlook of the conference?**



The five WVLS representatives - Dominic, Erica, Heather, Lorelee, Teresa - and myself, all took a field trip to Ben & Jerry's Factory and received a tour when the conference sessions were finished on Friday. The factory was a 30-minute drive from Burlington, and Teresa was able to transport us in her rental car. After the tour (and ice cream!), we all went out for dinner in downtown Burlington. We had great discussions, about libraries and things in life, and shared a lot of laughs. By the time all of us had returned home on Sunday, I felt we had created a lifelong conference bond.

What I love about these "out of conference" experiences is that the six of us would likely not have had this time together had we not all attended the conference. It was beneficial for all of us to get to know one another, and the group could ask me questions about WVLS services in a non-intimidating way.

**3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?**

The first thing that I have done is ask three people to speak for the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference in 2020, all in the "Small Libraries" track. The topics have a nice variety, and I think the presenters will do a great job of giving their presentations over the web.

The second idea that resonated is being more aware of inclusive services in small libraries. I'd like to try to incorporate more inclusivity topics in workshops and in Digital Bytes.

The third idea came from Heather's suggestion to have scholarship winners get together before a conference. What a fantastic idea! This is something we will plan on implementing before the ARSL Conference in Wichita in 2020.

**4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees? Assistance from WVLS?**

I feel like the tools and support are in place for me to implement these ideas. It's just a matter of me carrying them out and developing them.

**5. How might your conference experience been improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?**

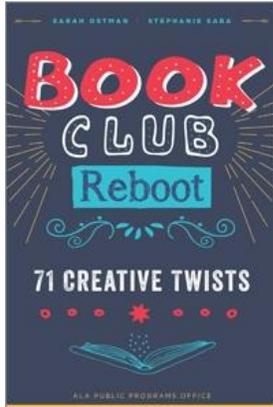
The ARSL Conference is growing in participation. When I attended my first conference in 2008, the attendee count was less than 400 people. This year, there were 750 participants. I think word has gotten out about the benefits of this conference, and how good it really is for small and rural libraries. While it's awesome that so many people attend, I couldn't help but notice that with more people, lines are longer, sessions are more crowded, hotels fill up more quickly, etc. Are the larger crowds diluting the conference experience? I spoke with attendees from other states about this, and they felt the same. While this isn't something I can control, I did provide honest feedback on my evaluation. I still think ARSL is one of the best, if not the best conference out there for small and rural libraries, and would still recommend it.

## WVLS Post-Conference Report – From Heather Bain, Branch Coordinator-MCPL Hatley Branch.

### 1. Please highlight three sessions from the conference.

What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?

The very first session I attended was titled “Book Club Reboot: Creative Twists on the Reading Groups We Know and Love,” and was presented by Sarah Ostman from the ALA Public Programs Office and



Stephanie Saba from the San Mateo County Library and are the authors of the book “Book Club Reboot: 71 Creative Twists.” This session was all about different options for a new book club, new ways to invigorate your current book club, or add a new book club entirely. I very much enjoyed the information given, even though a majority of the ideas given I know wouldn’t be of interest to my patrons or I simply wouldn’t be able to do, one idea that really stuck out was a “Free for All” book club where patrons read what they want and give a short summary or review of the book. This idea is talked about more below as one of the things I am going to try and implement within my library. The presenters made to sure include us in the discussion and get our ideas and what we are all currently doing or had tried, as well gave us

examples from their book. They gave us just enough of a taste of what was in their book that I am currently looking to see if I am able to get a copy to see what else was included. By making the session interactive and not just talking at us, it made it meaningful and made sure that we all knew that we are in the same boat as far as either needing to revamp, add or change up our book clubs.

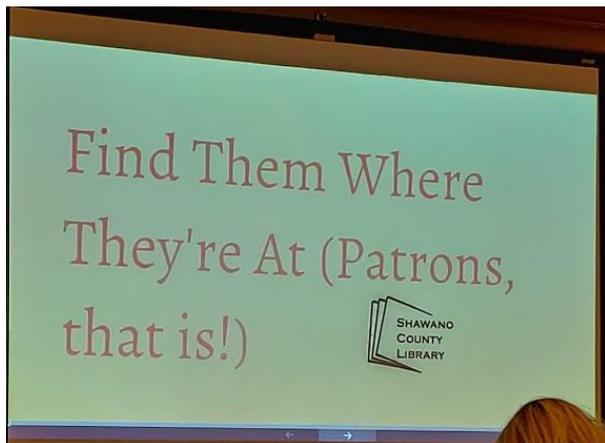
On the second day I attended a session titled “Displays on Dime” given by Kacee Garner, a clerk at the Earlville Free Library in Earlville New York. I attended this session mainly with the intention of walking

away with ideas on how to maximize our limited display space but walked away with so much more! The presenter was energetic and knowledgeable and had the greatest catch phrase “FREE from my home” meaning a majority of the items used within her displays to make them pop were things that came from her home or the homes of other staff members to help cut down on any costs. The presentation itself, while all done through PowerPoint was engaging in the sense that she provided pictures of some of her displays (ones that were popular and not so popular) as well as where and how she got



some of the more obscure ideas. I walked away with tons of awesome and creative ideas, from what to a display to where displays can go (got to think outside the book). I have already started creating new displays and will hopefully start adding more of them and switching them out more often.

One of the last sessions I had the opportunity to sit in on was titled “Find Them Where They’re At (Patrons, that is)”, which was presented by fellow Wisconsin Librarians Wendy Rosenow, Kristie Hauer, and Mikki Moesch of the Shawano County Library.



This was a great and informative presentation on how to make your libraries visible within the community and making those great partnerships. They talked about thinking outside the box and looking at area festivals/celebrations, the Farmer’s Market, or even just doing a special story time or program at a local park. A big thing they made sure to mention was that at certain events they have a selection of materials for patrons to browse through and check out right from that event. While Hatley is in a unique situation, where we don’t

have many events that go on close by, one of the things that we could do if allowed is to host an event at a local park or see about doing a story time at the closest festival to us (Ringle Days which is in October). I definitely walked away with ideas and got the feeling that the presenters were very passionate about doing outreach in a variety of ways which made it engaging for the attendees.

2. Please highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session. Did you talk to someone you didn’t know at a session? Sit next to someone at a luncheon and have a meaningful conversation? Visit with an exhibitor? How did **this** experience affect your overall outlook of the conference?

There were several experiences I had throughout the conference that really stood out to me afterwards, but two really stuck with me even a few weeks after the conference had ended.

My first experience happened even before arriving in Vermont. While waiting for my connecting flight at the Chicago airport, it quickly became apparent that we were all going to the conference! The ones that had attended before were quickly willing to share their past experiences. While on the plane I was seated next to a vendor and across the aisle from a lady that was traveling from Arkansas. All three of us got to talking and was a great time. Once we landed and while waiting for the bags, the lady from Arkansas asked if I had a ride to the Hotel, I was planning on taking the shuttle, but instead ended up taking a cab that she had already reserved as she didn’t want a cab to be wasted on just her. Throughout the conference we kept running into each other and talking about what we had seen and learned. The vendor I sat next to on the plane would also see me throughout the conference and called me his “plane buddy” and made sure that I was enjoying my time. These two people made me realize how lucky I was to be able to attend, meet such amazing people and that while yes, we were all there to learn from the sessions we were also there to network and making some, hopefully, lasting acquaintances. It showed me how welcoming and open a group of small/rural librarians can be and that vendors really do pay attention to who they see and talk to.

The second was my interaction with one of the vendors. I enjoyed stopping and talking to all the vendors and seeing what they brought but there is one that really stands out to me that made me realize how much they put into these events and really like to get to know who they are talking to. I had

the opportunity to stop and chat with Pam Saxelby and her Husband of Saxelby's Childrens books LLC. They were not pushy sales people they truly just wanted to make us aware that these books exist and that she is willing to travel to do story times and talk to children and parents about her books, which are adorable. I think I ended up just talking to them for quite some time, come to find out that they have family Stevens Point, where I live, and they travel there to visit family! Afterwards I did see them in the hotel restaurant one of the nights watching the Packers/Bears game and then again on my flight leaving Vermont and each time they made a point to see how I was doing and to ask how I was enjoying myself. This vendor, in particular, I felt went above and beyond the call of being vendor by interacting with us and making those connections. By making those connections it brought the overall conference experience even higher by helping to make the environment welcoming and fun!

3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?

As stated above in the answer to question 1, I am working on implementing a "Free for All" Book Club. The Tuesday after returning from the conference I broached the subject with my current book club members about trying out a "Free for All" book club, they were all very receptive but were all in agreement that adding a completely new book club on top of the existing one would be a lot, especially when we have been adding new members quite regularly. So we came up with a compromise to try it and will be trying a "Free for All" session in June in place of our normal session. While I know that this is more than 6months out, we have discussed this opportunity and I have already submitted the event and it is on the calendar! If this session is a success myself the book club members have decided that we will try it out twice a year at first and possibly in the future add more sessions or make it a completely separate book club.

I am hoping to implement a "Try VR" program but am still trying to figure out the logistics. While going

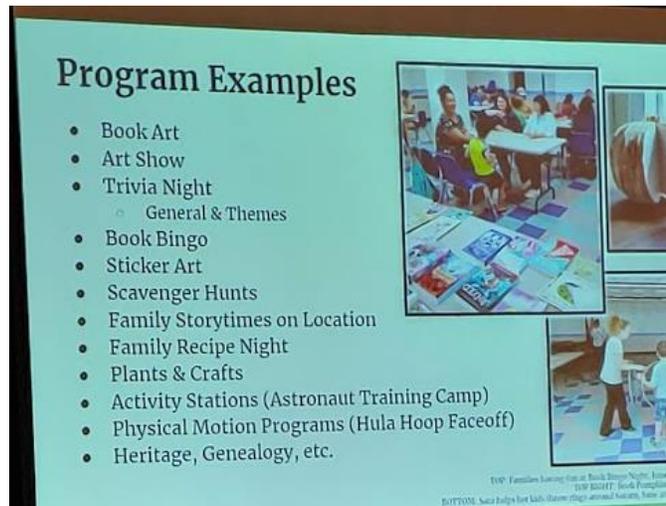


around and talking to all the vendors, many of them had giveaways that we could sign up for. I was fortunate enough to have signed up to win a "Merge Cube" from the TLC SmartTECH Booth and I won! I had never heard of a "Merge Cube" but have come to find out it is actually a very cool VR item. Since I had never heard of this or even dealt with VR in general, I am thinking that many of our patrons have little to no experience with VR as well. I have asked my staff and other staff within MCPL and have come the conclusion that I should do some sort of weeklong "Try VR" program but am not sure how to do it, as most VR sets need a phone with apps downloaded. I am currently waiting for the Google Cardboard kit from WVLS to try those out at well and see what is needed. I am hoping to get this program set up for a week sometime in January or February to give patrons something to do during the cold

winter months and would love to be able to show the Vendor that the item I won is in-fact being used 😊

One more item I am hoping to start implementing in the New Year is programming that is not geared necessarily towards one age group but all ages so as not to inhibit or exclude anybody. We do a quite a bit of programming geared towards just adults or just children but what happens when a family that crosses a variety of age groups want to participate but we don't have any way of making the craft/program harder or easier for the family members? There was a session I attended titled "The Age Limit Does Not Exist: Combining Youth and Adult Services into Unique Programs" presented by Jessica Hilburn and Becky Stahl of the Benson Memorial Library in Pennsylvania, where it

was all about their success in making programs all ages and not just geared towards one. This got me thinking about our programming and how if we were to create programs that were not limited to one age group would we get more participation, would it be attractive to our patrons? Well the answer to that is we don't know until we try! One the great ideas that came across was an Art Show, where patrons of ages bring in any form of art they want to show off by specific time and then it goes on display for all to see for a couple of weeks and that is all there is to it. Other ideas is making crafts that are similar in theme but have various difficulty levels to appeal to all ages. So am I going to implement some new "All Age" programs starting in the new year, one being, hopefully, an Art Show leading up to the summer program theme of "Imagine Your Story." The picture next to this paragraph includes some other awesome ideas from the presenters as well.



4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees? Assistance from WVLS?

Only one of the three items I am looking to implement will really need any support. That would be the one about implementing the "Try VR" program. I am not sure how much support can be given or who would be able to help. The biggest hurdle I currently see is how to make it inclusive for everyone, as most VR if not all, require a smartphone with apps downloaded. That would be figuring how to make it so that patrons are able and willing to bring their own smartphones with them and then download the apps or have smart devices/phones on hand with the apps already downloaded on them. How do I make it inclusive and accessible for patrons that don't have a smartphone/device? I think I have an old phone that still works but one may not be enough. I am still waiting to see what all comes in the Google Cardboard Makerspace Kit that WVLS has as well. If anybody has any ideas/thoughts I will gladly accept them!

5. How might your conference experience been improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?

This conference was very impactful and meaningful. The one downfall, for me at least, was not knowing the other WVLS attendees. I feel like it would be beneficial for all attendees to get together before attending the conference. This would help us to feel better about possibly trying to find flights or to travel together, as well as possibly to help cut down on costs of the hotel by sharing a room. As the

other attendees were the Directors of their respective branches and I am a branch coordinator within the Marathon County Public Library, I do not attend the director meetings, so had no clue what anybody really looked like. By helping all attendees to at least meet once, I feel like it would be even more impactful after the conference ends because we would all feel more open to sharing ideas, outcomes (good or bad) from things we saw and tried out, and asking each other for advice. When we did want to meet up I felt a bit out of place but was quickly welcomed into the group and hope to continue growing a working relationship with all of them.

Thank for the opportunity to attend this wonderful, engaging, and educational conference. I came back with a lot of information. I hope to be able to attend future library conferences to continue learning and growing as a librarian and branch manager.

## WVLS Post-Conference Report

*Erica Brewster*

*Demmer Memorial Library*

1. *Please highlight three sessions from the conference. What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?*

### **A. Stork Story Time, Jennifer Jordebek, North Liberty, Iowa**

A fully packaged program that promotes daily routines while families are still expecting. The toolkit materials make it possible for any library to rebrand the program and an online portal provides a resource for accessing information and podcasts, etc. The presentation described the types of partnerships the library pursued to identify expecting parents in the community. The toolkit program is an entirely out-of-library information delivery program, but there are in-library programming ideas as well.

For the Demmer: Unlike North Liberty, Iowa, we do NOT have a blossoming population of expecting parents. However, it is even more important that we help engage the young families we do have. Most young parents are still new to the idea that reading to an unborn child can be as important as reading to a child before kindergarten. The 100 books before birth approach could be used with families already active in the Demmer Library. Something we do have in our population is a large number of new grandparents. The in-library classes (infant CPR, etc.) could be a good expansion on the program to provide early literacy and engagement for grandparents who haven't been around an infant in a long time.

### **B. The Smart Spaces Process: co-create and transform with your community, Betha Gutsche**

Session introduced the principles of design thinking and how it is used with libraries to engage communities in describing what programs/facilities they want to see in their communities or library.

For the Demmer: The library may have just completed a building project, but the community of Three Lakes is reeling from a winter where two anchor businesses were lost to fire in one month, one alone representing 13% of the entire sanitary district's income – right after the sanitary district completed a multi-million dollar upgrade project.

Our community is struggling with some big questions about the viability of the downtown area and how best to approaching rebuilding and redesigning. I am part of a UW-Extension program that is working on a community engagement process. This session had some very specific ideas and techniques for using and interpreting results from design thinking activities done in the library which are now immediately applicable to our process. Simultaneously, our library board is taking on strategic planning and we are planning to incorporate activities in our process.

### **C. From Paper Airplanes to Critical Thinking**

Not all STEM and coding learning requires a computer or even electricity. Session used basic, offline, non tech-based techniques to demonstrate the essentials of the language of coding:

algorithm, decomposition, pattern recognition, abstraction, etc. Folding a paper airplane is following an algorithm – writing an algorithm to perform a basic real-world task is basic coding.

For the Demmer: we partner with the school FAB LAB and volunteers from the Model Railroad Club to present an annual “Make It! Camp” to 12 – 18 year-olds. This session had applicable techniques, tools, and resources for the camp curricula, plus for other activities done without the high-tech resources of the FAB LAB.

2. *Please highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session. Did you talk to someone you didn't know at a session? Sit next to someone at a luncheon and have a meaningful conversation? Visit with an exhibitor? How did **this** experience affect your overall outlook of the conference?*

I specifically focused on time with other WVLS and Wisconsin librarians/staff to talk about how they are dealing with challenges small and rural libraries face specifically in our part of the world – and what resources they found from sessions or exhibitors that they thought interesting or useful. It is extremely useful for me to have a better understanding of how other libraries are addressing real issues and creative ideas that others are using.

I also enjoyed spending time exploring Burlington and seeing the lifestyle amenities in a community that (other than mountains) that resembles northern Wisconsin. One of the biggest threats to small, rural communities is the aging population and attrition of young people. Burlington resembled a “Madison, WI of the north” and it was interesting to see what sorts of infrastructure and social/recreational services were being used by the more age-and-culturally diverse population while still retaining a small-town feel.

3. *As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?*

- Incorporating specific “design thinking” approaches to several initiatives: our library’s own strategic planning initiative, strategic planning at Antigo Public Library and into a “kit” being developed in a pilot project with WVLS, and a Design Wisconsin initiative being implemented in Three Lakes in partnership with UW-Extension throughout 2019 and 2020.
- Adding “off-line” coding activities to the 2020 Make It! Camp curriculum.
- Engage recently retired elementary and literacy teachers in implementing the Stork Storytime early literacy initiative and engaging grandparents in promoting early child literacy. May seek to collaborate with all libraries in Oneida County.
- Bonus item: as the WVLS training coordinator was reviewing presenters to invite for upcoming webinars, I’m now familiar with some topics and speakers and will be more likely to encourage my staff to participate in online training opportunities.

4. *What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees? Assistance from WVLS?*

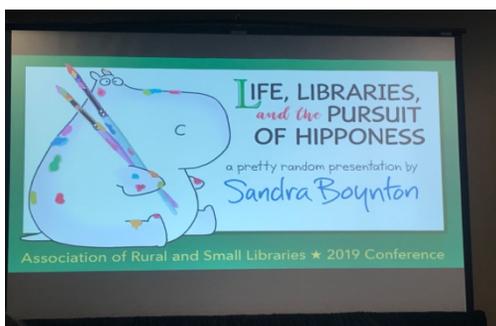
- Cooperation from our strategic planning workgroup (including library board), facilitator, and staff to add and implement select design thinking activities and interpretation to the overall strategic planning process.
- Training on “unplugged” coding activities for staff and volunteers implementing the Make It! Camp.
- Cooperation from local hospitals and county health department in identifying pregnant women for Stork Storytime program and collaboration with other Oneida County libraries (Rhinelander, Minocqua).

5. *How might your conference experience have been improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?*

Overall, this is one of the better conference experiences I have had in my professional career. It was generally well-organized, the ARSL conference app was very useful for quick references and updates to the daily program, and we received plenty of support from Jamie Matczak at WVLS to make sure we were able to make the most of our conference experience. The sessions were relevant to work in a small, rural public library, and presentation quality was mostly good – or it was easy to leave a session and find a more useful session to attend.

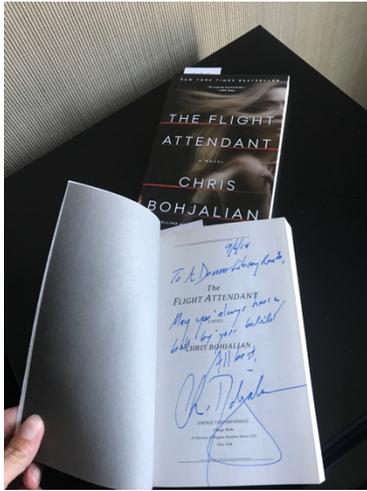
If the topic conference pre-session had been more relevant to my daily work, I may have chosen to attend the additional day-long session. As it was, however, I feel I got as much as I could as a first-time attendee. I thank WVLS for this opportunity and how it will impact library services at the Demmer Memorial Library in the near future

### Pictures

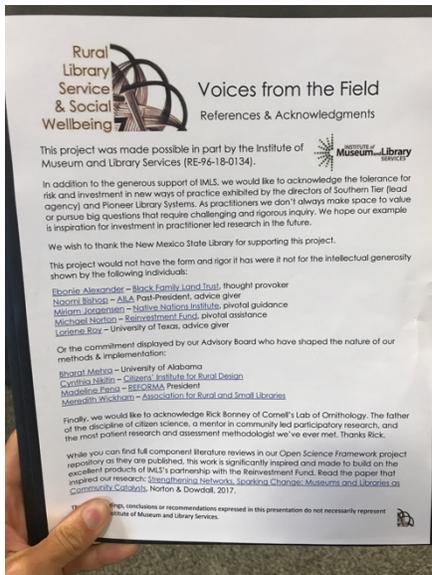
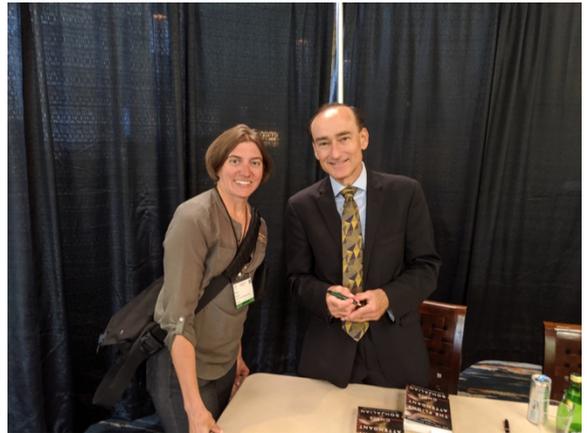


*Sandra Boynton keynote and book signing*





Chris Bohjalian keynote and book signing



Current IMLS study on impact of rural libraries as "anchor institutions." Includes Plum Lake Library in Sayner, Wis.



*"E" is for Erica and an Engaged library*



*Fun directional signs in children's area at the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, Vermont*



*Beyond maple syrup - Vermont cans sap!  
Why didn't we think of that?*



*A bikeable city - amenities of a northern city.*

## WVLS Post-Conference Report

*Dominic Frandrup  
Antigo Public Library*

1. Please highlight three sessions from the conference.

What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?

--

### **Find Them Where They're At (Patrons, that is)!**

Wendy Rosenow (Speaker) Shawano County Library

Kristie Hauer (Speaker) Library Director, Shawano County Library

Mikki Moesch (Speaker) Shawano County Library

Description: With our main library in the exact same spot for over 55 years, staff challenged themselves to 80 outreach activities in 1 year after still being amazed at frequently hearing "I didn't know we had a library in town!" and "Hey, when was a library built here?!" Since then, Shawano County Library has increased its outreach efforts by nearly 25% in just 3 years. This session will cover successful outreach efforts (and a few less successful ones!), including planning, implementation, and budget. From presentations to parades, book giveaways to elderly programs, photo booths to escape rooms, and storytimes to historical events, travel along with Shawano's reigning Scarecrow Content winner as we share how we've crisscrossed our service area and often piggybacked on other community events, lessening our own workload to great success demonstrated through higher awareness of our library's services leading to increased funding in recent years.

\*What made this session meaningful to me was the amount of outreach Shawano County libraries were able to accomplish. It was cool to have a neighboring county library present at a national conference as I didn't know they were going to be there at the time of registration. I was able to talk with Kristie after the presentation and during a lunch speaker about some of the challenges and opportunities specific to rural Wisconsin not covered in their presentation. Travelling to Vermont in order to network with a peer a county away was something I didn't expect but was very fortuitous.

--

### **Closing Speaker: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich: Executive Director at the Mid-Hudson Library System (NY)**

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (MLS, LEED AP) currently serves as the Executive Director at the Mid-Hudson Library System (NY) where she assists 66 public libraries in the areas of leadership, funding and facilities and is an adjunct professor at Long Island University. Rebekkah is the author of Sustainable Thinking: Ensuring Your Library's Future in an Uncertain World, Resilience, the Handbook for Public Library Directors in New York State, the co-author of the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State, and is the sustainability columnist for Library Journal. Rebekkah co-chairs both the New York Library Association's Sustainability Initiative (NYLA-SI) and the American Library Association's (ALA) Special Task Force on Sustainability and serves as an advisory board member to the Center for the Future of Libraries

at ALA. Named a Library Journal Mover & Shaker, Rebekkah is a frequent national presenter on the topic of leading libraries forward in smart, practical and effective ways.

\*What made this session meaningful to me was the passion she had for libraries and librarians as activists especially in the area of sustainability, which was the focus of her keynote. Traditional library training was to try to be neutral in regards to information regardless of topic. However this seems to be changing a little within the library profession to be more “social activists”, which relies on peer reviewed science and as an information professional would be resources I’d guide patrons to anyway. I like the change and the opportunity.

-

### **Stork Storytime Helps Libraries Deliver Literacy**

Jennifer Jordebrek (Speaker) Assistant Library Director, North Liberty Community Library

Description: The Stork Storytime initiative (previously Womb Literacy) is an expecting family education initiative that encourages families to develop a daily reading routine before baby arrives, learn about early literacy skills and empowers caregivers to be more confident in their role as a child's first teacher. Attendees will learn about the variety of programs that have been developed including the Reads program, a yearly Expo, monthly Talks podcast and a free online Reads Toolkit for librarians. The Toolkit empowers even the smallest of libraries in implementing this program, saving them valuable time and resources.

\*What made this session meaningful to me was the idea of predictive services. Of being in touch with patrons and being able to promote programs to them before they, or someone they know, will need them. Discussing this thought with another conference goes after the session, options for delivery of items to patrons post-surgery. APL already delivers to people during the winter when travel can be tough for patrons with mobility issues, but this was a fresh twist on how outreach is important to our patrons. Partnering with the hospital has been a challenge due to HIPPA but marketing the library outreach services has been given a new twist as we think of more ways to help our patrons before they might need our services.

2. Please highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session. Did you talk to someone you didn't know at a session? Sit next to someone at a luncheon and have a meaningful conversation? Visit with an exhibitor? How did **this** experience affect your overall outlook of the conference?

The experience other than attending a conference session that had a large impact on me was when I rented a bike in downtown Burlington and was able to ride 20 miles out Causeway Park on a rail-trail which extends almost all the way across Lake Champlain. I used this time to re-center and think about the conference sessions I had attended. I was able to make plans on how to implement some of the ideas I had observed, and think about who I would talk to without the distractions of the conference center. It was a windy and gorgeous day riding the path that extended to far into the lake and greatly benefitted my wellbeing and helped me rejoin the conference the next day in a refreshed and more focused state after transferring my post ride thoughts to my to-do list.

3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?
  - a) Looking at expanding our outreach services to post-op patrons who may need deliveries for a short time while they recovery from surgery. Need to find an inroad with the hospital to distribute fliers of services, and make connections with patients. Another goals is to work with pre-natal patients to start reading to their babies prior and post birth.
  - b) Re-messaging library impact in the community, not just programs, but how we influence the community. Telling the stories of APL's patrons to community members and funding bodies.
  - c) Expanding services and programming outside the library. Will specifically target our local farmers market as that group regularly utilizes our meeting room.
  
4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees? Assistance from WVLS?

Staff support, time and money. And/ or reprioritization of current staff/ money. My library board is supportive of change and new ideas, but we have to determine what services to drop in order to add new ones within our current funding. The Library Trustees has these types of discussions regularly while attempting to juggle political realities. We will be making priorities for various services a focus of our library strategic planning process in 2020.

5. How might your conference experience have been improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?

Perhaps my conference experience would have been improved or impactful to me if I would have been able to read between lines a bit more for a couple of the session descriptions. There were a couple of "Choice A" sessions that sounded fantastic but I wasn't getting a lot out of and so went to a "Choice B" session for that time slot and ended up being much better for me. I saw others doing this as well, so it's something I'll keep in mind for the future.

To start with, I'd like to thank Wisconsin Valley Library Service for providing me with the scholarship that allowed me to attend the Association of Rural and Small Libraries conference in Vermont. It was a valuable experience on many levels and so much of what I learned is helping me to make the Owen Public Library stronger and better.

I have so many stories I'd like to share but I'll try to stick to the form and keep this a reasonable length!

1. *Please highlight three sessions from the conference. What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations most effective and meaningful to you?*
  - a. Book Club Reboot: Creative Twists on the Reading Groups We Know and Love presented by Sarah Ostman and Stephanie Alba gave me some great ideas for my book club but also solved a problem I've had for a while. After the presentation I stopped to talk to the presenters about a problem book club member. This person thinks they always have the answers, likes to hog the speaking floor and is rude when expressing their opinion of books they don't like when other book club members say they enjoyed those same books. Sarah and Stephanie said that the club should make rules about who speaks and when. In one case, we changed a question we ask every month, "What else did you read this month?" to "What was the best thing you read this month?"
  - b. Libraries and the LGBT+ Experience, presented by Tina Dalton and Jennifer Strickles was fascinating and inspiring. Tina and Jennifer shared their experiences both with programming for the LGBT+ community and in dealing with unaccepting co-workers. In recent months I have talked with more library patrons who identify as part of the LGBT+ community and I am excited to understand their viewpoint more and to facilitate a better library experience.
  - c. Feeding America: Gardens, Seed Exchanges, Summer Meals, and More!, presented by Noah Lenstra was enlightening. There wasn't a lot of structure to the presentation but many audience members were fans of the presenter and familiar with his promotion of healthy choices in the library. Noah began the presentation but it soon turned into a discussion of ways and means. It was so exciting to hear about the many good programs that work in libraries.

2. *Please Highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session.*

I sort of embraced a different attitude with this conference than I have with those I've attended in the past. I allowed myself to relax a little rather than rushing from session to session. This gave me a chance to chat with presenters, vendors and other attendees. I went to fewer sessions but I got more out of the ones I went to. It was a good trade. One particularly good experience was with the representatives for Findaway products. I had noticed a problem with our juvenile audiobooks.

Many of the children who want them have no way to listen to them. CD players are going the way of tape players as more of our audio content comes through streaming. My granddaughter loves audio books and I took the time to find her a CD player and a good set of headphones. I've tried adding the Overdrive app to her Kindle but it is locked down tight and I don't know the password. I've told her mom to add the app, but it hasn't happened yet. Then shortly after school started my granddaughter told me recently that no one in her class knew what an audio book was. I started thinking about it and how both CDs and streaming were not widely available to elementary age students. That's why I decided to talk to the Findaway people. They showed

me both their playaway examples and a new product called a Wonderbook, which combines an ink and paper book with an audio component. I think this may be a great solution to the problem of providing audiobooks to younger patrons.

3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next 6 months?

From Book Group Reboot, I got the confidence to take more leadership in our book club. The book club was started by a patron so up until the conference I let her run the club. And she is great at it in general, but there were a few areas that needed a firmer hand, such as in dealing with that problem member and planning ahead so we can get the books we need on time. A couple of weeks after the conference we had our “organizational” meeting in the fall when we are supposed to choose books for the rest of the year. I came armed with a variety of topics and books to suggest. We not only made out the schedule for the rest of the year, but all the way through May of 2020. I hope this will allow for better meetings with more meaningful discussion. Also, I am having a representative of Reading Group Choices, whom I met at the conference, send me copies of their bookmark that lists “Guidelines for Lively Book Discussions.” I hope these small changes will have a big impact on the quality and vitality of our book discussions.

I considered some pretty big ideas from the session on LGBT+ Experiences, including creating an LGBTQ+ and Allies support group but in the end I’m going to start with one small change and hope that it will make an impact. With board approval (already obtained, informally) I am going to change our small, single stall restrooms so they are no longer designated by gender. They will simply be labeled “restroom” rather than “men” and “ladies.”

One day at the conference, I got delayed and was late for the session I wanted to go to. I debated whether to just skip this session and then noticed a presentation in progress on the open Petit Dejeuner Terrace and I was drawn in. Representatives from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine were giving a demonstration on Finding Reliable Health Information with Medline Plus. I’d heard of this resource before but thought it was a paid subscription database. I was excited to learn that it was free and to see how much more it had to offer than Web MD. I plan to use Facebook and perhaps create a flier to encourage patrons to try out Medline Plus.

This did not come from a workshop, but after talking with the Findaway representatives and sampling their products, I plan to make room in my 2020 budget to start a small collection of Wonderbooks.

4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things?
- I need support from my book club and so far, they have backed me up on this!
  - I have the support of my library board for this. I just need the support of the city workers to help me make the physical change.
  - Promoting a “new to me” resource is something I can do on my own.
  - Here, I need the support of my board and the city when they pass the final version of my budget.
5. How might your conference experience have been improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?
- Conferences are exciting and exhausting and overwhelming. It is impossible to pack in everything they have to offer in just a few days. I can’t imagine any way that WVLS could have

improved the experience. It occurs to me though, that there are certain skills to making the most out of a conference and I'm starting to learn them. Perhaps, if you have new conference goers, you could give them some tips. I'd be happy to write up a blog post if you think that would be helpful.