

October 2, 2020

Dear MCPL Public Library System Task Force; MCPL Board of Trustees; and Marathon County Extension, Education and Economic Development Committee Members:

My name is Jamie Matczak, and I am the Education Consultant for the Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS). Before joining WVLS in 2018, I served as the Interim Director, Assistant Director, and Education Consultant (2006-2017) for the Nicolet Federated Library System (NFLS) in Green Bay, where I served 42 libraries in eight counties throughout Northeast Wisconsin.

I take my work very seriously. When people ask what I do for a living, I say, "I serve and help public libraries." It is a simple answer, but it is at the heart of what I do. Unlike most of the WVLS team, my office is located offsite from the resource library, a situation that is similar of staffs in 13 of 16 public library systems. I can be reached easily and quickly by phone or email, and I make a point to respond to all inquiries from member library colleagues within 24 business hours.

Like many in the WVLS community, I am very concerned with the possibility of Marathon County Public Library (MCPL) leaving our system to join South Central Library System (SCLS). What unsettles me even more are the [MCPL administration letters \(under Staff Training\)](#) included in the September 21 MCPL Task Force packet, and subsequent comments from the MCPL Director during the MCPL Board meeting that followed. The comments about continuing education that MCPL receives have me concerned and confused, because this was the first time I heard about dissatisfaction. Before addressing this, I wish to point out that I agree with this statement in the September Task Force Packet: *SCLS provides a wide variety of specialized hands-on training and conducts workshops in-person and via web conferencing.* I have worked with Jean Anderson, the SCLS Continuing Education Consultant, for a number of years. I consider her a colleague and friend, and she does excellent work in this area.

WVLS also provides specialized hands-on training, workshops in person, and web conferences. In my almost 15 years of experience in the library profession, I have:

- Coordinated over 150 web conferencing events on a variety of topics for libraries
- Coordinated over 80 in-person face-to-face workshops
- Produced over 20 in-person trainings for libraries larger than MCPL
- Produced over 50 digital trainings as part of the Digital Byte series, that libraries can view at any time (several of which are shared by SCLS staff for SCLS member libraries in its blog, [Tech Bits](#))
- Created coursework for five different classes on behalf of the iSchool at UW-Madison since 2014
- Presented at over 30 statewide events and national conferences on topics in the areas of marketing, social media, communications, personnel, and technology.

There is also additional training being coordinated by my WVLS teammates in the areas of web design, cataloging, graphic design, public speaking and more.

I communicate continuing education and training opportunities with MCPL administration and staff via:

- Weekly email correspondence called Monday Mentions
- WVLS Monthly Newsletter
- Blog Posts via the WVLS website

Given the magnitude of MCPL's desire for relevant continuing education and training opportunities and the criticisms about the WVLS continuing education service program, I am surprised that I have not received any suggestions or ideas for improvement from MCPL administration and staff. Surveys are sent

out at least once a year gathering feedback to our members CE and training needs. Is MCPL staff participating in these? One of the letters in the September MCPL Task Force meeting packet states: *SCLS has a deeper and broader level of service and experience.* What kinds of service and experience is MCPL staff looking for?

If MCPL administration and staff do not believe that my work has met their needs, here is what I can and would like to do:

Attend quarterly meetings with MCPL management on continuing education and training needs, statewide and national resources.

Coordinate a series of hands-on training specifically for MCPL staff needs (As the Continuing Education Coordinator for NFLS, I coordinated and presented on a year-long training series for Brown County Library staff)

Organize a yearly workshop for MCPL staff, an opportunity I offered to MCPL Administration in 2018 (I coordinated something similar for Brown County Library and its 100+ staff from 2011-2017).

I'm hoping the attached letters will convince you that if MCPL is not receiving continuing education and training to the level that they need and expect, it's not because I don't have the ability or the willingness to try. These letters also reiterate that when it comes to continuing education and training - as in areas of marketing, youth services, consulting, and technology – public library systems work together. We collaborate. We share resources and expertise. I would enjoy collaborating with MCPL to plan opportunities to meet the staffs' continuing education and training needs.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email and the attached correspondence. I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have, regarding continuing education and training for our member libraries.

Sincerely,

Jamie Matczak (she, her, hers)
Education Consultant
Wisconsin Valley Library Service
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September 28, 2020

To: Marathon County Extension, Education and Economic Development Committee
MCPL Library System Task Force
MCPL Board of Trustees

From: Marge Loch-Wouters, Southwest Wisconsin Library System Youth Consultant, 2018 Wisconsin Library Association President and 2010 Wisconsin Librarian of the Year

Re: WVLS Continuing Education

I was highly dismayed to learn recently that the administration of the Marathon County Public Library feels that it doesn't have advanced support for Continuing Education (CE) opportunities with the Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS).

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the level of excellence in the provision of Continuing Education by WVLS and its staff, particularly their Education Consultant, Jamie Matczak. To introduce myself to you, I have over 40 years of experience as a public librarian in Wisconsin (retiring from full-time work in 2015) and recently retired after seven years as an adjunct lecturer for UW-Madison, teaching graduate library courses for the iSchool. I continue to work as a consultant.

The quality of the CE and training coming out of WVLS is outstanding. The *Digital Bytes* series of over 60 videos is a well-regarded resource not just in WVLS but also around the state. There are multiple examples of collaborative workshops and CE efforts among all 16 library systems that Jamie has helped coordinate as well as pitched in, to bring to WVLS libraries. The [Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference](#), coordinated by Jamie for the last 8 years, has brought national experts on management, leadership, diversity and a host of other topics together for an outstanding educational opportunity for beginning and advanced librarians in libraries of ALL sizes in Wisconsin.

Jamie is one the most highly regarded Continuing Education consultants for libraries in our state. Her ability to plan, organize, inspire, seek out expert voices from inside and outside our state and coordinate vital CE is greatly admired. Her outstanding work at WVLS was preceded by her outstanding work at Nicolet Federated Library System, based in Green Bay. She is a consummate collaborator - always seeks input and is a great listener and brainstormer when she is approached with ideas for potential content.

I am aware of her great work, because, like most public library systems, WVLS opens their CE opportunities to interested library staff throughout Wisconsin. Staff from all sizes of libraries have been able to access WVLS online/web content as well as attend workshops (just as other WVLS members are welcome virtually and in-person at system CE offerings around the state). This strong cross-pollination in learning means that in Wisconsin libraries have access to many fantastic opportunities.

Based on the number and quality of these collaborations and opportunities, I have a difficult time understanding why MCPL library staff have not been able to benefit from or utilize WVLS CE. I worked for a number of years at La Crosse Public Library (also a resource library for the Winding Rivers Library System, WRLS, based in La Crosse) and many times our LPL staff not only participated in WRLS CE but also presented as part of WRLS workshops to share our expertise. We understood that our library's ability financially to support attendance at CE opportunities within the system and, more widely, at other WI systems and beyond, gave us a unique perspective: we could both learn and share with and

from our WRLS peer libraries. That was the strength that made our system resource library CE learning so vital.

Jamie is a stellar example of the best that a library system can offer in a Continuing Education and training consultant. I believe we have this strong CE presence in WI because of her support, collaboration and leadership. WVLS is considered one of the powerhouses of continuing education for libraries of all sizes in the state, and MCPL is fortunate to have her as a resource.



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September 25, 2020

To the Marathon County Extension, Education, and Economic Development Committee; the MCPL Library System Task Force, and the MCPL Board of Trustees:

I was surprised to read and hear that the Marathon County Public Library director and staff were unsatisfied with the continuing education offerings of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service. Jamie Matczak, the Education Consultant at the Wisconsin Valley Library Service is well-regarded among her continuing education peers across the state. Her work is consistently innovative, responsive to the needs of the librarians she works with, and of very high quality. People from all over the state participate in the webinars she develops. I regularly refer library staff from the IFLS area to the Digital Bytes trainings she and her colleagues have produced.

All 16 of Wisconsin Public Library Systems do not compete with each other in the area of continuing education, but rather freely share ideas, access to programs, and offer both financial and tactical support. The Wisconsin library systems' continuing education consultants work together as a team, sharing ideas and programs and collaborating to bring speakers and events that would be difficult to accomplish as a single system. Jamie has always been an extremely valuable member of that team. She has innovative ideas, including the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference, now in its eighth year. She has the skill and attention to detail to keep the ball rolling on large and small projects alike. She listens to the librarians she works with and is sensitive to their needs, she comes up with in-person and virtual options that are tailored to the training need, and she is intentional about her work. She is ready to lend a hand to other consultants, and is never afraid to bring our focus back to the needs of our libraries and library staff.

Because of Jamie and her WVLS colleagues' work, and because of the work she engages in with consultants from other systems, library staff from all over the state (and beyond!) have access to a wide variety of high-quality resources.

Sincerely,

Leah Langby
Library Development and Youth Services Coordinator
langby@ifls.lib.wi.us



September 28, 2020

Dear Marathon County Education, Extension and Economic Development Committee:

For the past 15 years, I have worked in continuing education (CE) for library staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Information School (iSchool) and my job duties often extend into the Wisconsin public library CE community. I attend statewide meetings of library system education consultants, participate in the statewide library CE listserv, and partner with library systems on projects.

Based on my background, I was surprised to read that the Marathon County Public Library was unhappy with the continuing education provided by the Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS). Library systems often coordinate with each other to brainstorm ideas, share access, and divide costs for both in-person and online training. Library systems strive to ensure public libraries in all parts of the state have access to the same types of training resources and a culture of sharing prevails. In fact, the WVLS education consultant Jamie Matczak was one of the first people to bring the idea of widely shared CE content across systems with her inception of the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference each January. The conference began in 2013 and invites all library systems to participate at a very low cost. In my experience, WVLS provides training opportunities to their libraries on par with or even exceeding other library systems in the state.

Ms. Matczak's prominence in the Wisconsin library community led the iSchool to hire her in 2014 to teach online CE courses, and she continues to teach for us every year. Her courses are so well designed that they are used as models for other instructors, and she regularly suggests new course ideas that turn into popular classes. In course evaluations, students rate her content as being extremely applicable to their jobs. One student comment on a course evaluation reads "this was a great class, and Jamie was a wonderful instructor. I would take another class with her and would highly recommend her classes to others." The strong evaluations are due in part to the thoughtful course design, but also because of her ability to weave ideas from other disciplines into library contexts. This gives students a contemporary, holistic view of work and services that can be applied to all library settings. In my opinion, Ms. Matczak is tuned into the challenges library staff face, offering creative, practical solutions that bring libraries to the next level.

I have observed Ms. Matczak's abilities on large and small scales and am confident that she has the background, connections, and drive to bring high-quality educational experiences to WVLS member libraries. She is an innovator in the library CE community and does work to lift up all libraries throughout the state.

If I can provide further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (ahpalmer@wisc.edu or 608-509-6861).

Sincerely,

Anna Palmer
UW-Madison, iSchool
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Information School

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