

During the week of Sept. 28-Oct. 2, I attended the online [ARSL Conference](#), SOAR with Libraries. I have attended 10 previous ARSL Conferences in person, because it is always one of my favorites. The sessions are high quality, the networking is plentiful, and I always meet interesting people. Because of the virus, the conference went from a three-day in-person event in Wichita to a week-long online conference. While it was disappointing to not be able to attend in person, it was the best and most safest decision.

I attended this virtual conference more from the standpoint of gathering information and ideas for future Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conferences. I also was a Spark Talk presenter during the Friday sessions, so I wanted to watch some of those to get an idea of how it worked. Furthermore, I was hoping to find a speaker to fill a spot in the Small Libraries track for this year's Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference.

The ARSL Conference used the Whova app as its platform. It seemed like it was relatively easy to use. You could watch sessions within the app, as well as chat with other attendees, connect with speakers, and connect with attendees. I actually used the app to contact one of the presenters, Julie Edwards, to see if she would be interested in speaking for "Wild Wisconsin." Julie is a designer for Niche Academy.

Julie and I were initially able to connect in the app and could exchange emails so we could communicate further. Julie gave an excellent presentation on grant writing, and I think this will fit in nicely for our upcoming conference. She didn't talk a lot about where to find library grants. Instead she chose to focus on language to use and what types of research is key in getting grant funding. I wrote down that she stated, instead of asking for "x amount of equipment that you have to specify the purpose and what impact the equipment will have on library users. I thought this was really powerful. Julie had a great set of powerpoint slides that were easy to follow, and she was an engaging presenter. I'm really pleased that she is available to give this presentation for "Wild Wisconsin."

I also liked that the conference page and app had a separate bio section for its speakers. These sections also had head shots of speakers. I'm considering changing this feature for the Wild Wisconsin Winter Web Conference. While I would like to continue the bio section, I think the head shots will only appear in this area, as opposed to the registration area. This could assist the website in looking a lot cleaner. The conference also promoted inclusivity. Each speaker had the preferred pronouns listed. This indicates, when it comes to pronouns, how a person would like to be spoken to or about. I am thinking about implementing this with speakers for "Wild Wisconsin" as well.

Another great presenter that I listened to was Joan Weaver, Director of the Kinsley Library in Kansas. Joan's presentation called "Capturing Your Community" highlighted the ways her small library is collaborating with her community, during COVID times and during pre-COVID times.

Her photos and ideas were so creative! She had so much energy about her, and I noted this down as a potential future speaker.

Another presentation that I really enjoyed was called “Playing Well with Others at Work.” This was presented by Kieran Hixon, Sharon Morris and Christine Kreger, who all work for the Colorado State Library. I have seen Kieran and Sharon present at past ARSL Conferences, and one year they presented for “Wild Wisconsin.” I really enjoyed the content, although I felt this would’ve been more effective as an in-person presentation.

My Spark Talk presentation on “Libraries and Smart Phone Photography” went very well. I was also interested in how this would work. Because the moderator had to advance the slides for me, I had to submit my slide deck to ARSL several days before my presentation. This was odd and kind of hard for me, because I’m usually making adjustments last minute. In the end, this was positive because it allowed me to just focus on my presentation and the content that I had submitted. This presentation was part of a longer one that I had given previously, so editing it to 9 minutes was fun and challenging.

Overall, I was pleased that ARSL chose to continue the conference using a virtual platform. It wasn’t the same as being face to face, yet I still thought it had value.