

**MEMORANDUM:**

**To:** Winnefox Library System Trustees  
**From:** Mark Arend, Assistant Director  
**Subject:** Report of System activities  
**Date:** 12 September 2008

The following is an update of activities since our last meeting. I would be happy to provide further details at our meeting, or feel free to give me a call or send an email in advance.

**Open Meetings Law:** At our last meeting the question was raised as to whether it was a violation of the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law to have the door closed, but unlocked, during our meetings. I could not find this question addressed in the Department of Justice's *Open Meetings Compliance Guide* so I asked John DeBacher at the DPI's Division for Libraries, Technology & Community Learning. Here is his answer:

As you found, the statute and the guidelines direct that meetings are to be reasonably accessible to the public. So a closed door would not be a violation, but a locked door would, especially if no one were to open it for a member of the public wanting to attend a meeting. There are many meeting rooms where hallway or outside noise precludes the door being open for an open meeting. A "closed" meeting implies that the meeting is not open to the public, not that the door is closed (although it often is, and sometimes locked).

**County Library Funding:** It appears that county funding will be tight again this year (as it seems to be every year). Libraries in several of our counties may see minimal or no increases in county funding next year. Because of increased costs some libraries may have to cut services, in spite of increased demand for library services. One good note is that the Fond du Lac County libraries should reach 100% reimbursement in 2009. It's been a long road to get them to this point; Ken and the other county directors have worked hard on this and the County Executive and county board have been very supportive.

**Library Trustee Training:** Due to popular demand, I have scheduled two more sessions of the Library Trustee workshops that were held in June.

- Tuesday, October 14, 2:30 – 4:30 pm at the Ethel Everhard Memorial Library, Westfield
- Thursday, October 16, 5:30 – 7:30 pm at the Wautoma Public Library

**Library News:** The Wisconsin Library Association has named the Menasha Public Library as their 2008 Library of the Year. I've attached a *Post-Crescent* article to my report.

**Staff News:** Van driver Jeff Hafmeister has resigned; he has worked for us since 1999. ILL page Adeline Miller has resigned and Matthew Schrottky has been re-hired to replace her. Print shop assistant Ryan McGuire is no longer working for us.

# Menasha's 'vibrant' library tops in state

## Expansion, customer service pay off

*By Michael King  
Post-Crescent staff writer*

MENASHA — With his 6-month-old son, Mavrick, and some children's books in tow, Tyler Thompson guided a stroller out of the Elisha D. Smith Public Library on Tuesday.

It's an "almost every day" ritual for Thompson, 20, of Menasha, who regularly walks a few blocks to 440 First St., mostly for movies and books to read to his son.

"It's awesome," Thompson said of the library, which underwent a \$4.5 million expansion and remodeling completed in 2004. "They've got a good selection of movies. The staff is very nice."

Library director Tasha Saecker and her staff recently learned that Menasha's library was named the Wisconsin Library of the Year for 2008.

"I'm thrilled," said Saecker, who became director in 2006. "We're all thrilled. It's quite an honor.

"Our circulation has been up over 11 percent for six months running, which is incredible," she said. Saecker pointed to the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program for boosting children's books circulation 30 percent in the last six months.

"Supporters describe the library as a vibrant, collaborative, and vital part of the city," said Lisa Strand, executive director of the Wisconsin Library Association/WLA Foundation.

School Supt. Keith Fuchs, the library board president, praised the staff of 30 for "their hard work and diligent effort to meet the needs of the community. We really look at the library and school system as partners in educating our students."

The partnership includes a bank of four computers supplied by the school district to provide access for any students who might not have computers at home.

The library has nine other public access computers with Internet connection that get steady use by patrons.

The four school computers allow students to connect to their own files on the school server using their log-in and password. "Those are heavily used in the afternoon when kids get out of school," said Kathy Hannah, a reference librarian.

She praised the leadership of Saecker, whom she called "technologically proactive. She has helped us all become a little more tech-savvy.

"We like to think of our ourselves as roving librarians," Hannah said. "Instead of just situating ourselves at a desk, we're out and about helping people find the information that they're looking for."

Hannah said the library has greatly expanded its creative programming in the past year with Saecker's support. "We now have a movie series, music in the library series, we have ongoing computer classes and we try to bring in speakers that deal with (timely) issues," she said.

"We're very customer-focused," said De Dallum, a reference librarian and 30-year library employee. "We really, really try to be user-friendly to our patrons, to go out of our way to help them. The whole staff is like that. We just try to treat them like we would like to be treated."

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