

WINTER 2020

# WISL WINTER WONDERLAND

The holiday newsletter of Wisconsin Small Libraries



## Cheers to a Better Year

AUBREY HUFF

There are no doubts that this year was a difficult one, both personally and professionally. Despite the challenges, losses, and compromises, we found new ways to be family, citizens, activists, and information professionals. Let us celebrate the wins that inspired us this year, the work we did, and the memories we shared. Let's charge into 2021 stronger than ever before.

I raise a toast to you all!

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# WISL Updates

*THIS YEAR THREW MANY CHALLENGES OUR WAY, BUT WE LEARNED WHAT WE ARE MADE OF. LIBRARIES SHARE SOME UPDATES.*

The Small Library Section of the Wisconsin Library Association (WISL) held two virtual meetups this fall. The first meeting explored the ways that small libraries across the state have used the pandemic's disruption of life as we know it as an opportunity to try new ideas and take new risks. Embracing possibilities such as personalizing library services and expanding outdoor activities while finding inventive ways to support our communities. Our second session took us beyond Christmas at curbside where we focused on how to make the most of winter programming in new ways. We discussed tricks for pulling off cooking programs virtually, winter reading programs and converting traditional programming to virtual and moving it all to the great outdoors.

Our members have this to say about our meetups:

“The meetups are incredibly refreshing. Its so motivating to hear the positive things happening at libraries that are as small (or even smaller than) we are! – Kayla M.; Independence Public Library.

“A break from the stressfulness of the pandemic and a fun opportunity to collaborate and imagine possibilities.” – Tammie B.; Rib Lake Public Library.

“A welcome break, a time to recharge, gather inspiration, and move forward with renewed purpose and energy. – Sara K.; Walter E. Olson Memorial Library

*The next WISL meetup is scheduled for January 28th at 2pm. To join us, follow the WISL Facebook page for event registration.*



# Small Library News

Trempealeau Public Library celebrated community artists with a physical and virtual art show this past August.

The community art show featured work by more than 30 artists of all ages. Intended to provide recreation when people experienced COVID fatigue, this art show proved that creativity and community can bring great joy.

“We first had the idea while the library was still drive-up only to bring some light into this unusually dark time” said Verity Schreurs, Teen/Adult Programming Coordinator at the Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library. “Art connects us and brings hope. We may be separate, but this art show reminds us that despite distance and circumstance, we all stand together.”

“The talent we have here in our little village of Trempealeau is amazing.,” said Jessica Schoonover, Director of the Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library. “Over 100 digital images of art were submitted, ranging from weaving and painting to woodcarving and jewelry making.”



# COVID Stories

*ALTHOUGH WE SPENT THIS YEAR FEELING MORE ISOLATED THAN USUAL, WE SHARE OUR COVID STRUGGLES AND STORIES.*

## What it was like having Covid-19

Kent Barnard

My wife and I both tested positive after testing on October 20. What was it like? It sucks. Plain and simple.

Our symptoms – (symptoms are as different as the people who get the virus)

Sleeplessness. runny nose, coughing, Intestinal disturbances, fatigue, headache, loss of taste and smell. These are the ones we had, although my wife didn't have the ID and I didn't have the headaches. Neither one of us EVER ran a fever!

Sleep! We don't need no stinking sleep!

At first, I slept great, lots of sleep – woo-hoo! But then, 3 days later, I could not get to sleep at night. I stayed up until 3am, 4am, 5am and I would get up at 10 or 11.

Fatigue

I have never felt like this before, even in boot camp! Our mailbox is just down our driveway and across the street. It is probably 150 feet from the door over. I would walk over (in pajamas – this was the nice weather week), come back and flop down on the couch – worn out from the walk! Any little thing we did, including making lunch or cooking dinner was SO tiring!

After the high winds on Halloween, I needed to go up on the roof and fix the old chimney cap, which had blown off. Once up on the roof, I was freaked out I might never be able to handle stepping down onto the ladder! I got down, and once again took my place on the couch. That was it for that day!

Intestinal Disturbances

I'm trying to be polite, but I'm pretty sure you know what this means. 4-5 trips to the bathroom MINIMUM every day. I definitely know the difference between when it's from my meds!

Loss of taste and smell

Next to the fatigue, this was the worst, and along with the fatigue it has lasted the longest! Here's the thing, I was a cook, restaurateur and I love food (just look at my belly!). This was like a cruel trick played on me!

I would make pizza. I KNEW it was Pizza, and my brain remembered what pizza tasted like, but if I had closed my eyes, I wouldn't have known what it was other than hot gooey and a little spice. I could taste, salty, sweet, and spicy. We had mashed potatoes and gravy, which my wife could now taste. "can you taste it?" she asked. "No. But I do know it's hot and fills my belly!" Sometimes it's the little things!

This is a great time to clean out the fridge – no mold? Still edible! Woo-Hoo!

On November 11, I suddenly smelled my Bath and Body Hand Sanitizer – not strong – but a faint whiff. I was ecstatic! I can now taste a little bit – it's kind of faint, like a memory you're just getting, but it is there!

More fun – Quarantine. Together. With my true love. Did I mention we were together 24/7?

We have a pretty small house. 2 bedrooms, one of which is my wife's art studio. There's a kitchen, and a living room. There's a loft, but it is too low for me, I hit my head. There's a basement, where the puppet making studio is, but it is 6 steps down!

I love my wife, and she (still, somehow) loves me. But take two sick people who sit next to each other on the couch ALL DAY AND ALL NIGHT, well let's just say we got the grumps, especially me. Did I mention I was a grumpy old man? I was terrible. Luckily, I married a wonderful, sweet, lovely goddess!

The Plus Side (Whaaaaat?)

Cleaned out the fridge! Some things I was very glad I couldn't smell.

Streamed TONS of stuff on Netflix, Disney, Vudu, Hulu, etc. We binge-watched more in these 3 ½ weeks than we had for most of the summer (although we did quite a bit then, too!)

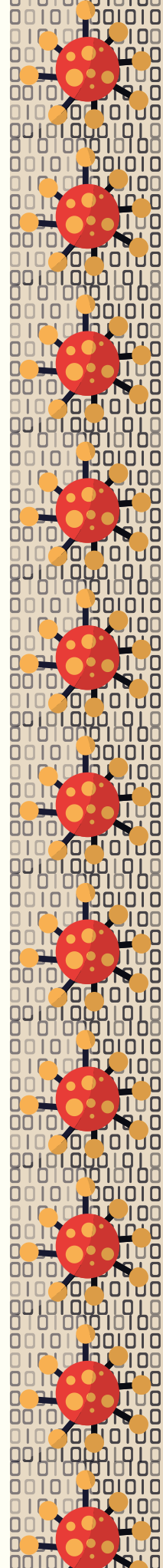
We got lots of well-wishes from people all over the world!

We learned to shop online and drive through for groceries!

And, we had only mild cases. No respirators, no hospitals. NO DEATHS!

Although we had a second test and it was also positive, ONE of the nurses that called told me after 10 days we were not contagious, but to still not work until the symptoms were gone. We are both still fatigued easily.

Please be careful – this is real and it is no joke. It's been almost 4 weeks of feeling like sh- feeling poorly. You do not want it, even a "mild" case.



# COVID Stories Continued

## I Thought I Might Have COVID...and Then I Went to Vote

Aubrey Huff

A sore throat woke me one morning in early November. Being no stranger to the sniffles and allergies typical of this time of year, I mostly ignored the discomfort. The next day, my symptoms intensified; my tonsils crimson and ballooned to uncomfortable size. Given I was scheduled to teach a group of students in-person that day, I called in to work just in case and stayed in bed.

The physical symptoms intensified as the day wore on and brought to light another dilemma. The presidential election was the following day, and I had not cast an early ballot, mostly due to the continuous news coverage and fearmongering surrounding the voting process. I had decided months before that I would personally see my vote cast into that voting machine. There would be no mistake, no lost ballot. Now that I was sick, however, what was the right thing to do? Does potentially having COVID supersede my responsibility to participate in the democratic process, I wondered.

As any librarian would, I did my research. Everywhere I looked, sources told me to vote, regardless of health status if one felt comfortable. I also knew I would never ever ever never ever never ever forgive myself if I refrained from voting, and the outcome would turn out as I feared. Therefore, with a pocket full of hand sanitizer and double masks, I cast my ballot. From there, I went straight to the hospital for COVID testing.

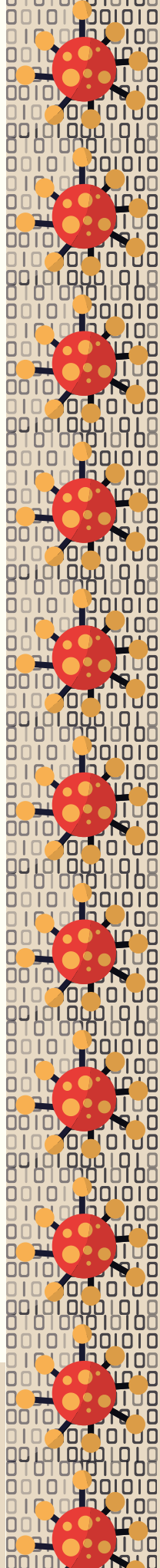
The test was negative.

While I would like that to be the happy ending to my story, the reality is that 30% of negative COVID tests are false negatives, meaning I still potentially put unknown people at risk. In addition, presenting any COVID symptom prevented me from seeking medical care, as I was not permitted into any doctor's office without a negative test result. While my illness diminished eventually, the concern remains that necessary care is delayed due to COVID and the testing process.

I have no regrets voting. I voted with the hope that my chosen candidate would do what was necessary to prevent further loss of life. Despite the confidence in my choice, the dilemma felt dystopian and somehow cruel.

Perhaps the best we can hope for is not a happy ending but a hopeful one.

*"Does potentially having COVID supersede my responsibility to participate in the democratic process, I wondered." -Aubrey Huff*



# Feed Your Grati-toad

*A NEW WAY TO SHOW GRATITUDE FOR IMPROVED HEALTH*

The difficulties we faced this year made it hard to see all of the good we experience on a daily basis. Practicing gratitude can help you, your library team, and your patrons realize that the world is not always as dark as it seems.

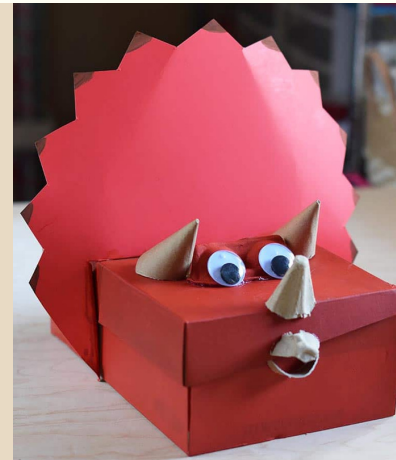
Incorporating a Grati-toad or Grati-saur to your library is easy! Take a shoebox or other small box, and use construction paper, googly eyes, or whatever you wish to make your gratitude animal. Gratitude animals can be incorporated into story times, meetings, and events.

Make the gratitude animal everyone's responsibility. Make a sign describing that your Grati-toad needs to be fed daily, and everyone can and should feed the toad words of gratitude.

For extra fun, make several sizes of your gratitude animal, so people can see it "grow" with gratitude.

## *7 Proven Benefits of Showing Gratitude*

- 1. Opens the door to more relationships*
- 2. Improves physical health*
- 3. Improves psychological health*
- 4. Enhances empathy, reduces aggression*
- 5. Better sleep*
- 6. Improved self-esteem*
- 7. Increases mental strength*



# Featured Phrases

*STAY CURRENT WITH LIBRARY TRENDS AND PHENOMENON THROUGH  
FEATURED PHRASES*

**Information Privilege:** the idea that access to information can be based on an individual's status, affiliation, or power.

**Example:** As rural libraries closed, many residents were left without access to the internet. Internet is a necessary resource to exist in modern society, particularly during COVID-19, where a substantial number of services could only be accessed online. In contrast, my geographic location provides me with access to high speed internet.

**ACRL Framework applications:** "Information privilege" can be taught and expanded upon using the frame "Information has value."

**Origins:** This term was originally used by Char Booth in her blog "on information privilege" in 2014.

<https://infomational.com/2014/12/01/on-information-privilege/>



## *Contribute to WISL Newsletter*

*Does your library have news, programs, or event ideas you would like to share in the newsletter?  
Email Aubrey Huff at [huffa@uwstout.edu](mailto:huffa@uwstout.edu) with your contributions!*