

## **In other business**

■ The Waukesha Common Council unanimously voted to approve an agreement to settle excessive assessment lawsuit Harp & Eagle v. City of Waukesha.

■ The council voted 12-1 in favor of the resolution for the Waukesha Public Library front entrance remodel. Cory Payne dis-

# Growing with the times

## Waukesha Public Library looks at renovations

By Jake Ekdahl  
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WAUKESHA — The Waukesha Public Library is about more than just books these days.

A large children's section offers play spaces and programming for kids, even those too young to read; meeting rooms are available for community events; computers offer access to online resources; and there's still books of course, but many are also now available in electronic format.

The library's popularity and diversity of activities is spurring the Library Board's thoughts on a potential renovation.

The library was renovated in 2005 with a plan that came in two phases. The first phase focused on the first-floor meeting room and the front rotunda. Phase two was supposed to move the exterior wall of the meeting room and double its size, but that never happened.

Waukesha Public Library Executive Director Bruce Gay said the recession led to the decision not to move forward with phase two. But the library is once again looking at how to adapt and expand.

Instead of pushing out the exterior wall, the library will opt for the more cost-effective option of extending interior walls, moving into space currently occupied by bookshelves. The meeting room will still double in size.

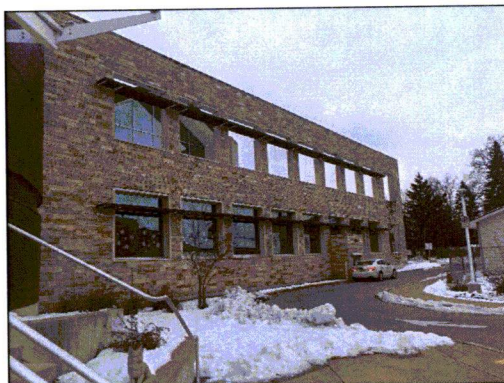
"We've been planning for a while," said Library Board Member Dr. Kevin Guilfooy. "If this happens, it would expand the kinds of spaces and offerings that people actually use, I think it would be fantastic."

From 2008 to 2018 adult attendance of community events rose 250%. Figures are not yet available for 2019.

Ebooks now make up about 10% of all circulation. Gay estimated five years ago that would have been 1%.

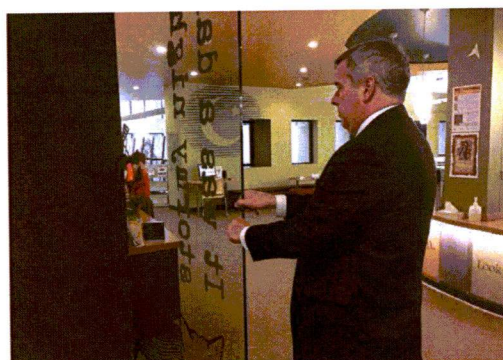
Gay said the library will look into private fundraising. But the first step in that direction is a feasibility study.

The Library Board chose Engberg Anderson, the Milwaukee-based architectural firm that previously designed the second floor children's section of the library.



Jake Ekdahl/Freeman Staff

A wall at the Waukesha Public Library shows empty spaces originally intended as windows for second-floor offices.



Waukesha Library Executive Director Bruce Gay moves a retractable glass door at the library designed to accommodate multi-purpose spaces.

The firm was chosen through a request-for-proposal bidding process.

"We hope to do something to kind of enliven the first floor," like the second-floor children's area, Gay said.

### 1904 building

The library isn't just looking at making a new area during the renovation; an old one is up for some changes too.

The Waukesha Public Library was founded in 1896 as a house on Carroll Street. The house was later replaced with a building constructed with the help of philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1904.

The 1904 building is still part of the library today. It currently houses magazines and newspapers along with a few reading chairs. Gay hopes to see it become a space that conjures a sense of the history behind it.

"Potentially, it's a really beautiful space," Gay said. He envisions older style furniture, historical materials and a designated status as a reading room. The furni-

ture would be movable so the arrangement could change to accommodate events like author talks.

For highly attended events, the library sometimes has to turn to other spaces to get sufficient room. When NASA's Michelle Fowler came for an event, the Waukesha Civic Theatre had the be used, as it was the only appropriate venue for the number of people who showed up.

Gay hopes the library will some day be able to handle events like that on its own. "We love the Civic Theatre, but we want to have the space to do that," he said.

Space for smaller gatherings will not go overlooked either. "If you have a book club and you want to meet at the library, we don't have a really great space for you," Gay said. "And that kills me."

No figures are yet known on potential cost, but that may change once the feasibility study is completed.

Gay said 2021 is the earliest construction would possibly begin.

# Waukesha Public Library hosting book discussion on poverty, incarceration

Discussion will focus on Harvard professor's book

By Jake Ekdahl  
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WAUKESHA — Book lovers and civic minded locals alike will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discourse on important issues Thursday.

The Waukesha Public Library at 321 Wisconsin Avenue, downtown Waukesha, will host a 6:30 p.m. Book Discussion on "From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America." The 464 page book is by Harvard University assistant professor Elizabeth Hinton.

Hinton's research focuses on poverty and the transformation of domestic social programs following the Civil Rights Movement. She teaches courses on urban history, African American history and mass incarceration.

Hinton challenges the idea that American mass

incarceration began with President Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs during the 1980s. She argues the phenomenon can be traced back further to President Lyndon Johnson's welfare programs during the civil rights era of the 1960s.

"By the 1980s, crime control and incarceration dominated national responses to poverty and inequality," Hinton writes. "The initiatives of that decade were less a sharp departure than the full realization of the punitive transformation of urban policy implemented by Republicans and Democrats alike since the 1960s."

Waukesha Public Library Head of Program Development and Community Engagement Kori Hall said all perspectives are welcome at Book Discussions.

Hall said the book came as a recommendation from Reggie Jackson of Nurturing Diversity Partners in Milwaukee, who suggested it as a resource.



# Libraries offer coding for kids

By Jill Fuller

A few kids lean over a large whiteboard on the floor, watching a small robot follow a maze they've drawn using Blockly codes. Others are on a computer using Scratch coding to create an interactive holiday card.

No, this isn't Google headquarters. The kids are at the Pauline Haass Public Library in Sussex, participating in the library's Hour of Code activities for Computer Science Education Week. The library is one of

many public libraries in Waukesha and Jefferson counties now offering coding programs for children and teens.

"When kids learn to code, they are learning a growth mindset, computational thinking, and how to collaborate with others," Nancy Aycock says. Aycock, children's library associate at the library, coordinated the Hour of Code programs



Fuller

this year.

"As a community partner, libraries can offer access to technology and resources that their community members may not have access to otherwise," she says.

Mukwonago Community Library offers a Girls Who Code club for girls in fifth-twelfth grades. The program is run by Callie Fuchs, a Mukwonago High School student who works as the library's "Innovator in Residence".

She says, "I teach the girls how to code and program in a variety of basic languages, such as Scratch and Python. We make small programs that involve using the things I have taught them in order to help the skills stick and make them easier to remember."

When asked why coding is important, she explains, "Coding isn't just typing a bunch of numbers into a machine and calling it a day. It's much more than that. It's trying to reach a goal to make something better and solve a problem."

The Waukesha Public Library also offers coding programs, with activities using micro:bits, the ScratchJr app, and Ozobots. Library Associate Jason Penckofer says coding is important for kids to learn because it improves sequential thinking and problem-solving skills. It also "helps teach the importance of persistence, as your first solution may not be the best one — it might not even work!"

But are libraries the right place to teach coding?

Aren't they just quiet rooms full of bookshelves? Not at all, says Caitlin Schaffer, youth services librarian at Oconomowoc Public Library.

"Libraries do everything they can to move patrons and communities forward, helping them achieve their goals and become lifelong learners. Coding fits right into that mission, for all ages," she asserts.

For the past three summers, the Oconomowoc library has offered a Coding Club for ages 8-12, with teen volunteers helping to run each session. Projects are geared around participants' interests, such as engineering, robotics, video game creation, and more. Parents have reported back to Schaffer about how excited their kids are to attend the club. This, Schaffer believes, is why public libraries are the place for this type of learning.

"Libraries excel in providing opportunities for kids to not only learn, but to grow as people with skills that will help them successfully tackle the other challenges life throws at them," she says.

Visit or contact the libraries mentioned in this article for more information about their coding programs. Talk to your librarian for more information on coding opportunities at your library.

*(Jill Fuller is the coordinator of marketing & communications for the Bridges Library System.)*

## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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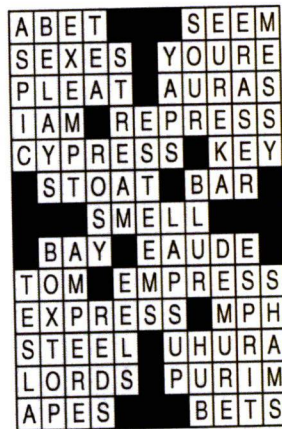
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**IN BRIEF**


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**USO Wisconsin moves to temporary location**

MILWAUKEE — The USO Wisconsin facility will be located at a temporary location in Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport.

The USO facility is now on the south side of Concourse D, right behind the Starbucks and just before security to accommodate remodeling at the airport. The location offers a room with snacks, beverages and free internet for traveling military personnel and their families.

A permanent location is expected to open in spring at the airport's main marketplace, next to the bookstore.

**St. Augustine Prep to host open house for School Choice Week**

MILWAUKEE — St. Augustine Preparatory Academy will host an open house on Wednesday from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The event will feature school tours, information tables and opportunities for families to complete online applications. This event is planned to coincide with National School Choice Week 2020, which will feature more than 50,000 school choice events across all 50 states.

The K-12 non-denominational Christian school is on Milwaukee's south side at 2607 S. Fifth St. The school serves about 1,300 students. The school is a student-centered environment with a focus on not only academics but also physical health, creativity and faith.

**Early Childhood Information Night at Divine Redeemer Lutheran School**

DELAFIELD — Divine Redeemer Lutheran School, 31385 Hill Road, will host its Early Childhood Information Night on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in the school's library and media center.

The event will have information about the school's infant and toddler programs, 2-year-old preschool and kindergarten programs. Parents will be able to meet teachers, learn about the curriculum and tour the facility.

Free child care is available during the event by registering at 262-367-3664. Registration for the fall programs begins in February.

**Free documentary screening, discussion at Waukesha Public Library**

WAUKESHA — The Waukesha Public Library will host a free screening of the documentary "Remembering Bronzeville" and a follow-up discussion on Jan. 18 at 10:30 a.m.

The film tells the story of the creation and destruction of Bronzeville, Milwaukee's historic African-American community. It will be followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers and a discussion with Clayborn Benson III, the founding director of the Wisconsin Black Historical Society Museum in Milwaukee.

For more information, visit [waukeshapubliclibrary.org](http://waukeshapubliclibrary.org) or call 262-524-3682. Waukesha Public Library is located at 321 Wisconsin Ave.