

# Advocating for libraries

## Library Legislative Day provided opportunity to discuss impact of facilities

By Jill Fuller

We walked up the steps of the Wisconsin State Capitol under February blue skies and sunshine last week, excited to talk with state leaders about Wisconsin's public libraries. Librarians, library directors and library board trustees from across the state of Wisconsin were in Madison for Library Legislative Day, an annual opportunity for

library advocates to share the impact of libraries in our communities and thank them for their continued support.

Brittany Larson, director of Muskego Public Library, said that she attended Library Legislative Day



Fuller

because "the people of Wisconsin deserve all that we have to offer, so I want to make sure the support the legislators have given us continues."

Sitting down with state senators and representatives, we shared the stories of those who use and depend on library services in our towns, cities, and villages: the person who used Gale Courses online classes to build skills for re-entering the job market, those living with Alzheimer's who find friendship and support at our memory café programs and the children who discover a love of reading at our early literacy classes. Every day, we see the profound impact a library can have on an individual's life and on the health of a community. Sharing this with the elected officials who make decisions for our state is critical for the future of libraries in Wisconsin and it was heartening to get their feedback and answer their questions about what libraries offer their constituents.

Information is powerful. Access (or the lack thereof) to quality information and resources can greatly influence us individually, as a community and as a nation. In that respect, libraries and librarians are key examples of democracy at work in your community, as they provide equal access to resources, find quality information to improve

lives and seek ways to level the playing field so everyone can have a chance to succeed. For that to continue, your support is crucial.

You don't have to wait until next February to speak up for your libraries. Here are a few ideas:

■ Think of a time the library helped you find an answer or get access to a resource. Or think of what the library means to you and why it matters to you. Then share those thoughts with your library, either in person, through an email or phone call, or on social media.

■ Call or write your legislators, council members and other local officials to tell them why the library matters to you.

■ Talk to your librarians. Ask questions and learn more about what the library does in your community and what it can do for you.

■ Use your vote to support library initiatives or funding for libraries.

As one senator told us last week, hearing from voters makes a difference. "Get your friends and neighbors to call, have people send us an email," she said. Your voice and your story matter, and I encourage you to use both to support your library all year long.

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

## CROSSWORD

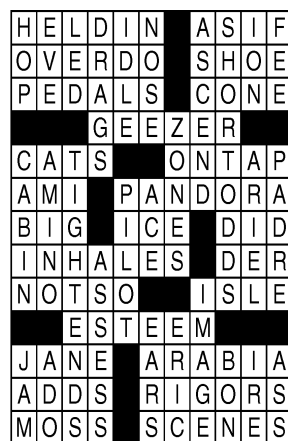
By THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

- 1 Beach cover  
5 Beach setting  
10 Witch  
12 Friend of Wendy  
13 Take it easy  
14 Church feature  
15 Santa — winds  
16 Box opener of myth  
18 Kitchen storage  
20 Fellows  
21 Convene

### DOWN

- 45 Prom crowd  
46 Editor's spot  
1 Throw away  
2 Concert setting  
3 Pitcher Ryan  
4 Genetic stuff  
5 Reach across  
6 Grasped  
7 Padded footstool  
8 Hit



### Yesterday's answer

- 17 Supporter's vote  
19 "I don't need the details," for short  
22 Foils  
24 Wyoming city  
30 Zoo beast  
33 Unmanned plane  
34 Reunion attendees  
35 Chop-house