

The Weather Outside is Frightful-Warm Up to a Good Book with MPL's Winter Reading Program!

Jan 6, 2026 | 2:30 PM

[Local News](#)



MANITOWOC PUBLIC LIBRARY
2025 WINTER READING PROGRAM

*Warm Up to a
Good Book!*

JANUARY 12 -
FEBRUARY 22

THE WINTER READING PROGRAM IS OPEN TO ALL AGES! READ OR BE READ TO A TOTAL OF 10 HOURS FROM JANUARY 12 THROUGH FEBRUARY 22. TRACK YOUR READING ON THE BEANSTACK APP OR PICK UP A PAPER TRACKER AT ANY SERVICE DESK!

The following article was written by Kristin Keck, a Teen Associate at the Manitowoc Public Library.

Kristin, the Teen Services associate at MPL, here with, ironically, a hot take: I love winter.

I love the otherworldly silence of snowfall and houses fanged with icicles, air so cold it crackles, and ice glinting bright enough to force a squint. The world rests in cotton and eiderdown, made

brilliant by the red of cardinals' wings.

And, of course, I love coming in from the cold.

Is there anything better than looking out a frost-framed window, a warm mug of something in-hand, wrapped in a cozy sweater? Outside, a world at rest, except for the industrious sparrows. Inside, the same chance to rest, reflect, and read.

I was going to get around to reading eventually. I work at the library after all.

Honestly, winter is the perfect time to catch up on that To-Be-Read pile that has been growing since summer. The season enhances every kind of story. Don't believe me? Try a mystery on a grey evening when footsteps crunch and tires hiss by outside. Lose yourself in romance by the glow of candles or firelight. Fill a long dark night with ghost stories—even Dickens knew that winter was the time for ghost stories. Put on your scholar's cap and contemplate a history or a biography—it keeps the brain warm!

There's a reason we say that winter nights draw-in. They draw us in. Heroes and villains, daring deeds and hauntings—everything seems more plausible in the short cold days and long nights filled with stars.

Make those dark winter night reading binges even better with the [Winter Reading Program](#) at Manitowoc Public Library. Read, or be read to, a total of ten hours and receive a raffle ticket for some fantastic prize baskets.

There are baskets for every age, from grandmothers knitting-away to Janet Evanovich on audio to newborns tasting their first board book. (Teens—there will be a completion prize bucket to choose from in addition to the raffle ticket; I am not above bribing you people.) The [Winter Reading Program](#) will kick off on Sunday, January 11, and wrap-up Saturday, February 28.

Tracking your reading is easy. If you have the Beanstack app already, use that. We can help you download it at the library. You can also go through our website by visiting manitowoclibrary.beanstack.org. There are other programs on our Beanstack page to sign up for, including [1000 Books Before Kindergarten](#) and, of course, the Summer Reading Program when the weather turns warmer.



Kristin Keck

We'll have paper trackers at the library as well, if you want a hands-on approach to tracking. Pick those up at any Service Desk at the library.

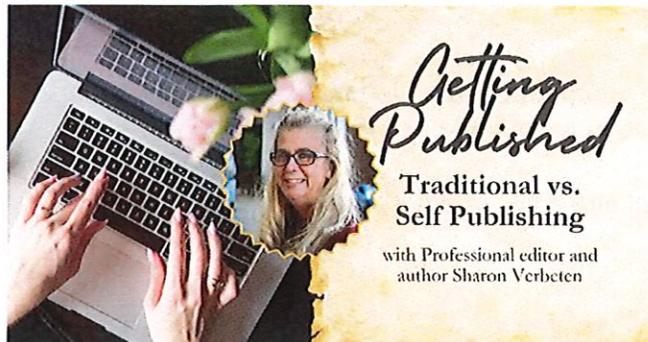
This [Winter Reading Program](#) is generously sponsored by Friends of Manitowoc Public Library, Green Bay Packers Give Back, Lake Michigan Carferry, On the Surface, Little Sips Play Cafe, Ivy Trails, and The Read Apple Toy Shoppe. Which might give you a hint about the prizes.

You can get a prize for something you were going to do anyway. So, get drawn in this winter. Snuggle down into a story. While away those winter nights. Summer will be here before you know it.

Manitowoc Public Library Program to Focus on “Getting Published”

Jan 13, 2026 | 2:30 PM

Local News



The following article was written by Sharon Verbeten, the Youth Services Manager at the Manitowoc Public Library.

“Publication is not all it is cracked up to be. But writing is.”

Those words by American novelist, Anne Lamott, could not be truer. While writing is definitely its own reward, many people dream of getting published. And let me tell you—there’s no better feeling than seeing your name in print!

For me, publication has been my dream since I was in second grade, when I hand-created my own “newspaper”—complete with my byline!—for my Dad. I have had a fair measure of success in the ensuing years, but it wasn’t always easy.

Whether you have a novel, a memoir, or a children’s book in your head, how do you get it from idea to manuscript to publication? Join me for our *Getting Published: Traditional vs. Self Publishing* program, on Wednesday, January 21, at 6 PM, in Manitowoc Public Library’s Balkansky Community Room.

I’ve been an editor and freelance writer for more than 30 years; I’ve also written two books on collecting Barbies and have been published in hundreds of national trade and consumer magazines.

As a writer, I have honed my craft for decades. Here is what it has looked like

- brainstorming ideas (*Sometimes writing them down on random receipts or scratching them out in the dark on a notepad by my bed*)
- putting pen to paper (*For me, low-tech is the best way to a first draft*)
- shoving the manuscript in a drawer for a few weeks (*No peeking allowed!*)
- revisiting the first draft with fresh eyes (*Did I really write that?*)
- editing with abandon—cutting unnecessary words (*Especially, like my favorite quote from Stephen King, “The road to hell is paved with adverbs.”*)
- crafting an even better second draft (*Yes, you can improve upon “perfection!”*)
- exploring potential markets (*Yup, there’s some research involved*)
- creating a powerful query letter (*Are we there yet?*)
- proofreading...again...and again (*Nobody’s perfect*)
- sending out queries (*It’s a digital world now, baby!*)
- waiting for responses (*Which may never come*)
- waiting for rejections (*Which may come*)
- maintaining sanity—and hope—through it all
- refusing to give up
- doing it all over again.



Sharon Verbeten

Seem like a lot? It is, but even so, no matter how much time you invest in your craft, getting published is not an easy proposition, and there's no silver bullet. If there were, I'd be as rich as Stephen King!

Despite the challenges, however, getting published, seeing your byline, and sharing your story with the world is a most rewarding experience. I'm here to help you navigate the complex world of traditional publishing, as well as the path many writers today take—self publishing or print-on-demand. Both routes have pros and cons, and we'll discuss which path might be right for you and your work.

I'll cover everything from crafting your manuscript and writing compelling query letters to assessing the market and approaching agents or publishers. I'll also share the best resources to guide you on this journey.

Bring your questions—this topic always generates much interest and when you get a room full of writers together, magic is certain to happen!

MPL's Homebound Services Keeps Tina Prigge's Love of Reading Going Strong

Jan 18, 2026 | 2:00 PM

[Local News](#)



I'm grateful that we live in a community with a public library that offers robust access to media, materials, and resources that can improve our lives on every level:

- Great stories that pique the imagination, broaden perspective, and take us on adventures, allowing us to walk in the shoes of another character, gaining empathy through their experiences
- The deep knowledge of non-fiction resources
- A makerspace with access to 3D printing, laser engraving and sewing
- A business resource center with access to computers, printing, faxing and photocopying
- Hobby kits for everything from bird watching to cake baking
- A delightful youth space, including a toy room and numerous activities

Manitowoc Public Library is an amazing resource in our community for all ages.

I've been a big fan since childhood. Some of my earliest happy memories involve storytime at the library when it was located on Hamilton Street. The song "Farmer in the Dell" immediately transports me back to the Youth Department there.

After playing such an important role in my life for 50 years, I was distressed following our near fatal accident in 2024 (when a reckless driver crossed the centerline and crashed into us) that as a double amputee, I might not be able to access the resources of the library. For nearly four months following the accident, I had extreme difficulty reading due to a concussion. Honestly, I had feared it was a skill lost to me.

Not to fear! Another great resource offered by the Manitowoc Public Library are "Playaway" audio books. Requiring only a battery and headphones, and no need for Wi-Fi or an internet connection, these small devices (easily slip into a pocket) are a great way to "read" a book with your ears.

And the best, most important, life-enhancing discovery I made is that Playaways, in addition to other materials, are available through Manitowoc Public Library's Homebound Services program. In all my years of accessing the library, I had never heard of this service. And it is incredible.

Once I built back the ability to begin reading again, I started voraciously devouring books thanks to "homebound delivery services". Since my post-accident mobility is limited, the librarians curate a box of materials (usually four books) that they drop off and pick up each month from my home. It's an incredible service that has allowed me to keep reading.

This program is available to anyone in the community who has challenges preventing them from getting to the library. Officially, here's how it is stated on their website: "*Manitowoc Public Library provides materials for cardholders of any age that are unable to visit the Library due to an ongoing physical condition, illness, age or other qualifying condition that limits mobility. We offer material selection, delivery, and pickup services. Staff*

carefully select materials to reflect your interests. Volunteers are assigned to each patron for pickup and delivery services to your home or residential facility. ” Isn’t that incredible?

Signing up for the program was easy and painless. I signed up online via the Library’s website, but you can also call and request the application form. And, there’s also a Reader Preferences form so the librarians who curate your monthly box of goodies have an understanding of the authors, genres, and types of materials you prefer. They even welcome specific requests. I have recently gone down an adventure travel rabbit hole so I can explore the world without leaving my wheelchair. When I mentioned this interest to the librarians, they found great selections for me to enjoy. When I’ve made specific requests for a title or author, they have tracked it down, even sometimes from other libraries in the system.

Every four weeks, the sweetest volunteer drops a waterproof bin with fresh materials on my porch and takes back the previous bin of materials.

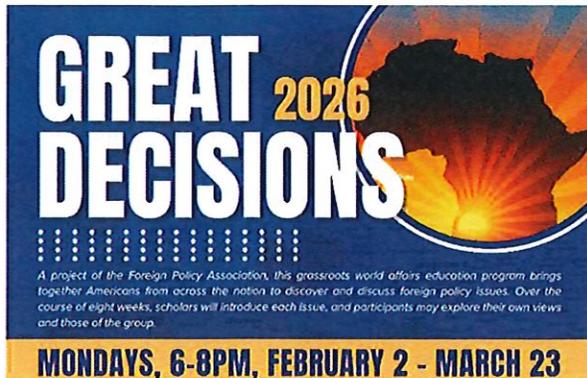
I am so grateful for this incredible service in our community. When I consider the moniker “Coolest Coast,” this is definitely one of the things that makes our little corner of the world such a cool place to live.

If you or someone that you know is interested in utilizing MPL’s Homebound Services, here’s the URL for you to get started on your at-home journey: www.manitowoclibrary.org/services/outreach/homebound.

The Great Decisions Lecture Series Returns to Manitowoc Public Library in 2026 for Its 20th Season!

Jan 20, 2026 | 2:30 PM

Local News



The following article was written by Tim Gadzinski, Marketing Associate at the Manitowoc Public Library.

We live in a turbulent world. That's not political commentary—that's just a simple fact.

Be it nationally or internationally, there are no simple answers, no easily-arrived-at solutions. Merely complex situations that intertwine with one another, creating a contemporary Gordian Knot that, at times, appears to shun any and all unravelling.

Domestic and foreign conflagrations, détentes, and maneuvering can be seen simultaneously playing themselves out everywhere—in traditional media, online, and, depending on where one is situated, even by looking out of one's the window. Not in a scripted, reality television sort of way, but in a way that feels like a real-life cliffhanger, chock full of unexpected twists, turns, gut-wrenching surprises, and mind-boggling (sometimes, mind-numbing) developments and consequences.

Add into the mix that finding reliable sources is getting more and more difficult to come by. In an age where opinion—regardless of what one holds dear—has become more cherished than fact, plucking truths from the swirl of words that surrounds us has become arduous. Wherever you look, it's a war of inherent biases squaring-up to do battle. It certainly seems as if latching onto the unadulterated truth has become more complicated than ever before.

Since the world has become a more compact, more interconnected place, it becomes abundantly clear that regardless of in which corner of the world an event transpires, the fallout affects all of us on our collective home fronts. Therefore, while our community may appear at first glance to be our immediate geographic area, a closer, more accurate look reveals that we're part of the larger global community, too.

There is one place, nevertheless, where the quest for an ongoing comprehensive look at the larger picture can be found—the public library. Libraries remain safe havens open to everyone, warehouses of knowledge of every stripe. Just look at Manitowoc Public Library's Mission Statement, which plainly spells out that we're here to provide access to information. Through our "services we strive to foster an environment that meets the educational, recreational and cultural needs of the community." Not just a portion of the community, but the entirety of it.

Regardless of what transpires on a global level or in the culture wars that constantly flare up, one rock-solid constant remains: knowledge is power. Because facts really do matter. Sourcing accurate information from unbiased sources matters. And conveying accurate facts always trumps the mere confirmation of biases.

There may be no better source of familiarising oneself with the activities and situations of importance taking place around the world than the ones addressed during the Great Decisions lecture series at Manitowoc Public Library.

It's with more than a little pride that I can announce that Manitowoc Public Library will be presenting Great Decisions 2026, our twentieth consecutive year of hosting this preeminent eight-week grassroots lecture series.

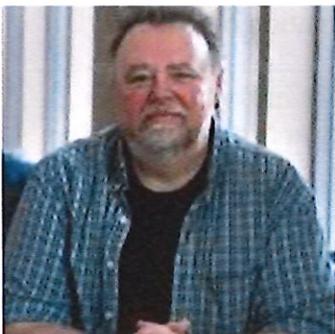
Once again, we'll be presenting Great Decisions 2026 in a hybrid format. All of the lectures—except for the very last presentation, which will be taking place exclusively online—will be taking place in-person in the Balkansky Community Room at 6 PM every Monday evening in February and March. They will also be simultaneously livestreamed on both our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/manitowoclibrary) and our YouTube channel. This way, anyone with a thirst for knowledge and an Internet connection that can't be at MPL in-person will have the opportunity to discover, discuss, and decide how to meet some of the world's greatest challenges head-on.

The best part is that every lecture will be live. In-person and online attendees will have a real-time experience. And, after each lecture, everyone has the opportunity to participate in the Q&A sessions that precede them. If someone is following along online, all they need to do is type a comment or question into the "Comments" box, hit "Send," and I'll convey what they have to say to that week's expert.

The lecture specifics are as follows:

- February 2 Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy, Pablo Toral, PhD, Beloit College
- February 9 Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation, Martin Farrell, PhD, Ripon College (Retired)
- February 16 U.S.-China Relations, Shale Horowitz, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- February 23 Ukraine and the Future of European Security, Yoshiko Herrera, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- March 2 Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World, Amitabh Pal, Journalist/former Editor of *The Progressive*, Adjunct Professor at Edgewood College, Madison
- March 9 America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy, Beth Dougherty, PhD, Beloit College
- March 16 U.S. Engagement of Africa, Heinz Klug, S.J.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School
- March 23 *ONLINE ONLY*: The Future of Human Rights and International Law, Alise Coen, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

It's important to note that the Great Decisions series is a product of the Foreign Policy Association. This nonpartisan, non-profit organization has dedicated itself to a single cause—to increase American awareness of global affairs. In 1918, 141 Americans came together to support President Wilson and his efforts to achieve a just peace. This group was called the League of Free Nations Association. In 1923, they became the Foreign Policy Association, the name by which they are still known. Their mission was, and still is, to study all sides of international questions that may affect the U.S. In 1954, the first Great Decisions program was launched, and it's still going strong sixty-nine years later.

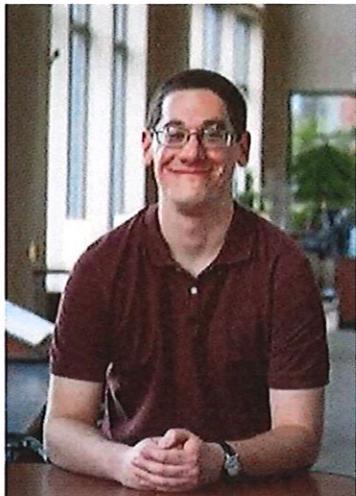


Any discussion about Great Decisions wouldn't be complete without expressing gratitude to all those who make it possible. The series is generously sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Manitowoc County, Manitowoc Public Library Foundation, Manitowoc Public Library, and Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Their continued support is appreciated tremendously. Should you feel so inclined to lend your financial support to the Great Decisions series, we would once again direct you to the program's landing page (www.manitowoclibrary.org/events/great-decisions) where information regarding that possibility is readily available.

Whether you'll be attending online or joining us in the Balkansky Room, we look forward to seeing you! It's going to be another great year of Great Decisions!

Manitowoc Public Library to Offer a Trio of Tutorials in Library Usage

Jan 27, 2026 | 5:20 PM
[Local News](#), [State News](#)



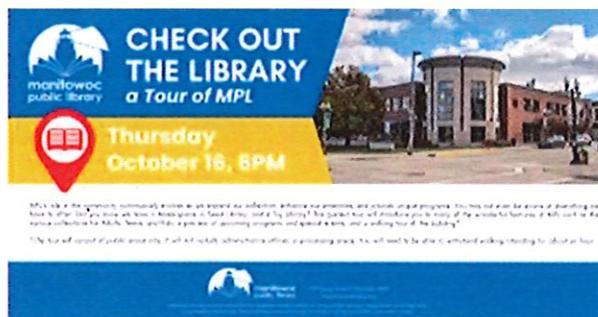
Article submitted by MPL Public Services Librarian, Tony Plekan

A library card gives you access to so many fantastic materials and resources that it can be difficult keeping everything straight. We are here to help! In February, Manitowoc Public Library is offering three unique programs designed to teach you how to get the most of out of your library!

“CHECK OUT THE LIBRARY: A TOUR OF MPL”

Thursday, February 5, at 6 PM in MPL’s Second Floor Board Room

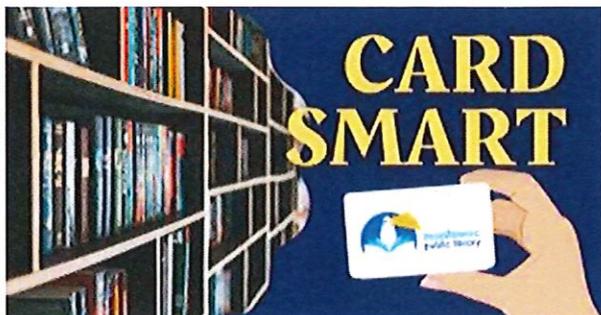
Manitowoc Public Library’s role in the community continuously evolves as we expand our collection, enhance our amenities, and provide unique programs. You may not be aware of everything MPL has to offer. Join us for “[Check Out the Library: a Tour of MPL](#),” where staff will take you around the building and show you some of the wonderful features of our library.



This guided tour of Manitowoc Public Library includes:

- An overview of various collections for Adults, Teens, and Kids
- A preview of upcoming programs and special events
- A walking tour of the building*

**Public areas only. You will need to be able to withstand walking/standing for about an hour.*



“CARD SMART” SESSION ONE: LIBRARY BASICS

Wednesday, February 18, at 5:30 PM in MPL’s Second Floor Board Room

Learn the fundamentals of using your Library Card, including how to:

- Manage your Library Account
- Search the Library Catalogue
- Place Items on Hold
- Locate Materials in the Library
- Check Out Materials

This session is perfect for individuals with limited library experience or are new to MPL. Learn the techniques for finding what you want in the catalogue and on the shelves. Great for beginners!

“CARD SMART” SESSION TWO: TECHNOLOGY USAGE AT MPL

Wednesday, February 25, at 5:30 PM in MPL’s Second Floor Board Room

MPL offers a multitude of online resources and in-house equipment for you to enjoy just by having a Library Card. We will show you how to:

- Navigate Manitowoc Public Library’s Website
- Access our Digital Databases
- Sign into an MPL Public Computer
- Print, Copy, Scan, and Fax Documents
- Access the Idea Box (MPL’s Makerspace)

We recently renovated our public computer area, so be attending any of these sessions, you’ll be able to see firsthand how these upgrades can benefit you. Take advantage of the various online databases MPL provides such as *Ancestry.com* and *Consumer Reports*! Technology can be intimidating, but with a little practice and exposure, you can use these resources like a pro.

No registration is required for any of these programs and All Ages are welcome. Come to one, two, or all three sessions and start maximizing what your Library can do for you!

Winter Fun for Little Ones at Manitowoc Public Library's Baby Winter Olympics

Jan 29, 2026 | 12:37 PM
[Local News](#), [State News](#)



Article submitted by Youth Services Associate, Kirsten Smith

Let the giggles begin as we bring a burst of winter fun indoors! Manitowoc Public Library is gearing up for [Baby Winter Olympics](#), a joyful celebration of movement, curiosity, and cuteness-in-motion. This special event takes place on Friday, February 13, at 10 AM and is designed for the littlest of athletes—crawlers and early walkers.

Inspired by the excitement of the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, [Baby Olympics](#) invites babies and toddlers to crawl, scoot, and slide through playful challenges that spark exploration and physical development. Little Ones can try

toddler-friendly versions of classic winter sports, such as ice dancing, hockey, curling, luge, snowboarding, and slalom. Each activity uses simple motions that help children practice balance, coordination, and confidence. Families can also snap a photo of their little athlete and their gold medal at our Olympic podium.

All of this playful movement supports something big. Movement is essential for babies and toddlers—not just for physical health, but also for brain development, emotional regulation, and social growth. During the first years of life, children build foundational motor skills that support everything from balance and strength to spatial awareness and problem solving. When babies reach, roll, crawl, and toddle, they are not just exercising their muscles—they are wiring their brains for future learning.



[Baby Olympics](#) offers a safe, engaging space for children to explore these skills in a developmentally appropriate way. The activities are low pressure and high fun, giving each child room to move at their own pace while discovering new textures, sounds, and gentle challenges. Whether sliding down a soft ramp, crawling through a tunnel, or reaching for a medal at the finish line, every moment encourages growth.

For caregivers, [Baby Olympics](#) is a chance to connect with their little ones in a playful, supportive setting. It is also an opportunity to meet other families and share the joys of early movement milestones. Library staff will be available to guide activities and ensure that all participants feel welcome.

This program reflects Manitowoc Public Library's commitment to inclusive, sensory-friendly experiences. Gentle transitions, flexible stations, and a warm atmosphere help every child to participate comfortably, regardless of developmental pace or temperament.

As winter settles in, [Baby Olympics](#) brings warmth, energy, and the joy of watching Little Ones discover what their bodies can do. Every baby leaves a winner, cheered on by caregivers, staff, and a community that celebrates each scoot and slide. We cannot wait to cheer on our itty bitty athletes!

No registration is required. Just bring your baby, your camera, and your cheering voice to Manitowoc Public Library on Friday, February 13, at 10 AM. We will provide the giggles, the games, and the gentle encouragement to keep those tiny feet moving!