

# Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | July 2023

## 1. State Update

- a. Our 414 Municipal Ballot Petition Signature Reduction bill passed in both houses and has been delivered to the Governor for her consideration. The New York Library Association has provided, upon their request, a letter of support urging her to sign this bill into law. Thank you to all who helped us get this bill through the legislature this session, once signed into law this will ease the way for more than half of our libraries to access the ballot on Election Day for funding referendums.
- b. The State Librarian has announced they will sunset the NOVELny program on June 30, 2024. There are ongoing discussions regarding a statewide cost share model to retain some of the resources the library community has come to depend on in this collection.

## 2. Personnel Updates

- a. We have hired Rebecca Hagen as our new Interlibrary Loan (ILL) & Cataloging Specialist. Rebecca comes to us from the Millbrook Library.
- b. In keeping with our goal to pay all staff a living wage, as well as to be competitive in the job market, I am recommending a salary adjustment for two of the part-time positions on the Delivery Team. The recommended levels in the Personnel Action document would be our last step to ensure all staff, full and part-time, are paid a living wage.
- c. We are in progress on the search for a new Finance Manager & Personnel Officer.
- d. Farah Faizi has decided not to return to work after her maternity leave ends. A search is underway to fill this position.
- e. Kerri Carpenter, our Cataloging Specialist, has let us know she will be moving out-of-state and leaving her employment with MHLS in mid-July. A search is underway to fill this position.

## 3. Delivery Services

- a. We reinstated the analysis of delivery volume to right-size our delivery contract. This was the first time this activity was undertaken since the beginning of the pandemic and our overhaul of the delivery schedule in light of the major disruptions to delivery volume due to the impact of the pandemic on library usage. The most recent evaluation resulted in a reduction of 14 stops per week. Our methodology was reviewed by the MHLS System Services Advisory Committee, and each impacted library was notified in advance. The new schedule went into effect the same day our renewed contract started with Valley Courier on July 1, 2023.

## 4. Facility

- a. Roof & Solar Project
  - i. Requests for Proposals (RFP) for our roof replacement and solar project were published the week of July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- ii. Enclosed in this month's board packet is the assurances page of the application for State Aid for Library Construction funding for this project. The board will need to vote on this and our board president will need to sign it for inclusion in our application package.
    - iii. We were notified that we did not receive the EBSCO Solar Grant.
  - b. The Pollinator Garden project will move forward pending the availability of our landscape contractor. Thank you to all who personally donated to underwrite this project.
  - c. All air handler filters have been replaced due to our routine replacement schedule, this also allowed us to assess the condition of the filters after the recent bouts of smoke from the Canadian wildfires.
  - d. The Dutchess County Board of Elections once again used the MHLS Auditorium to host the primary election in June.
- 5. **Annual Report to the State:** The NYS Division of Library Development (DLD) has notified us that our Annual Report for Library Systems – 2022 has been approved. This enables us to receive our state aid this year in a timely manner. Thank you to Laura Crisci, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator for organizing our submission this year and addressing questions that DLD had about our report.
- 6. **Memo of Understanding Development Update:** The fourth draft will be presented to the System Services Advisory Committee this summer.
- 7. **Partnership with the Adirondack (ADK) Mountain Club:** Thanks to a third year of partnership with the ADK Mountain Club twelve (12) member libraries have received program grants averaging \$500 each. This program was built upon the belief that young people who learn to love things in nature will want to protect nature when they are adults when they can make a difference in their work, community involvement and recreation. They will support ADK's mission, and most importantly, they will want to save the environment.
  - a. D.R. Evarts Library, Athens: Development of loanable nature backpacks designed to increase patron's understanding and appreciation of natural resources and each person's role in conserving.
  - b. Beekman Library: Funding of a monthly after school Nature Club.
  - c. Julia L Butterfield Memorial Library, Cold Spring: Creation of a nature and sustainability oriented Little Free Library on the Hudson River waterfront.
  - d. Kent Public Library: Nature backpacks which include a guidebook to the backpack's ecological theme and tools.
  - e. Kinderhook Memorial Library: A three-part multi-season program called "Native Plants and Pollinators in Columbia County" in conjunction with the Columbia Land Conservancy.
  - f. Millbrook Library: Two new program series for children and teens: Family Nature Walks & Teen Eco-Crafts.
  - g. Reed Memorial Library: Creation of a StoryWalk themed "Treating Nature with Kindness" on the Putnam County Bike/Trailway.

- h. Roeliff Jansen Community Library, serving Ancram, Copake, and Hillsdale: Expand its outdoor program along a trail to the Roe Jan Kill.
- i. Staatsburg Library: Collaboration with the Pollinator Patrol Club for nature exploration through a series of 12 guided hikes, and an introduction to citizen science through a Monarch butterfly larva monitoring program.
- j. Tivoli Free Library: Support ecology based, reusable, STEM and Arts Kits for families and children aged 1-14.
- k. Grinnell Public Library District, Wappingers Falls: Outdoor Explorer Backpacks which contain different nature-themed books, observation tools, and other exploration items.
- l. Woodstock Library: Guided hikes and hiking packs as a part of the library’s “Woodstock Gets Wild: Outdoor Adventures Beyond the Library Shelves” program.

**8. IMLS Visit**

- a. At the request of the New York State Division of Library Development we are hosting a day-long visit with staff from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The visitors, who oversee the five-year plan for our state library, are interested to learn more about how the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds have benefitted libraries and what results have been achieved for our communities. Our plan is to tour the following libraries who have deployed ARPA funds in their communities:
  - i. Kingston Library: Participants in the [Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley](#) Program & a Library and Museum Partnerships project: [Kingston Immigrant Oral History Project](#) (Kingston Public Library / Reher Center for Immigrant Culture and History)
  - ii. Hudson Area Library: Participated in both the [Digital Navigators Program](#) & benefitted from equipment purchased and installed thanks to our Beyond the Library WiFi program
  - iii. MountainTop Library (Tannersville): Participated in both the [Digital Navigators Program](#) & benefitted from equipment purchased and installed thanks to our Beyond the Library WiFi program

**9. Summer Reading Program Launched Across the Hudson Valley**



- a. This year’s Summer Reading Program theme is “All Together Now.”
- b. Member libraries are hosting kick-off parties to help families connect with this educational and fun program that is designed to:

- i. Advance literacy and maintain reading skill levels by engaging children and teens in reading and enrichment activities during the summer months.
  - ii. Foster a love of reading and using the library through public library programs and services.
  - iii. Increase successful reading experiences through librarian-supported, self-selected, voluntary reading.
  - iv. Involve parents, caregivers, and all family members in the library summer reading experience.
  - v. Improve children’s access to library materials and activities, which will encourage them to become lifelong library users.
  - vi. Increase the number of children and teens participating in public library summer reading programs.
  - vii. Increase collaboration between schools and school libraries and public libraires, to promote, facilitate and increase Summer Reading participation.
- c. New York State has released the remaining funds from the “Love Your Library” Fund, which benefits from fees associated with the custom NYS license plate to advertise support of libraries. These funds will be distributed to each county for help in the support and promotion of the summer reading program.

Scenes from the Pleasant Valley Free Library’s Summer Reading Kick-off Party & Advertising for the Hudson Area Association Library’s Summer Reading Kick-off Party:



**Ready for Summer Party!**  
 Tuesday, July 11, 6 - 7pm  
 In person, Half Moon (48 S. Front St. Hudson, NY) – outside, weather permitting

Celebrate the start of summer with dance music, free books and activities for kids, a backpack giveaway, free pizza tickets for Summer Reading registrants, and more! Sarah Van Buren (SVB) and Matthew Cullen will share special DJ performances to kick-off our [hey DJ! Keep dancing that song!](#) program for tweens and teens this summer.

## 10. Board Operations

- a. I have engaged the services of a professional parliamentarian to provide guidance on our application of Robert's Rules of Order for both our board and the Directors Association operations. Adrian Stratton, MBA, PRP, is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and the American Institute of Parliamentarians and currently serves as the president of the New York Association of Parliamentarians. Mr. Stratton is also the parliamentarian for the American Library Association. He will be advising us on roll call votes, unanimous consent votes and how to handle recommendations made by committees in an efficient manner in compliance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- b. Sexual Harassment Prevention Training: Directions to comply with the mandated Sexual Harassment Prevention training are enclosed with this month's board packet. There are now two forms you need to file with MHLS by September 30<sup>th</sup> which are enclosed with the directions. If you have any questions, please reach out to me, Ken Goldberg, chair of the Board Development Committee, or Barry Ramage, Board President.**
- c. **MHLS Trustee Continuing Education Reminder:** MHLS trustees should take 2-hours of continuing education relevant to our work on the board each year:
  - i. [Trustee Continuing Education Policy](#)
  - ii. [MHLS Trustee Continuing Education Procedures](#)
- d. **Board-to-Board Visits**
  - i. Reminder: Please coordinate responses to libraries requesting a visit with your peers in the county before individually responding to request and, as always, please let me know if you need any assistance to prepare for your meetings or with follow-up information.
  - ii. Suggested Talking Points:
    1. Encourage folks to thank their state legislators for their advocacy for the 414 Petition Signature Reduction bill.
    2. Promote the availability of the MHLS Training on Demand Service to help them meet their trustee education requirements: 2 hours annually.

11. I was recently a guest on [IN TOUCH](#), the public affairs and issues program that runs across Townsquare Media of the Hudson Valley radio stations. Listen to the [interview](#) here and read the article, [MHLS is the Future of Community Outreach & Sustainability](#).

## 12. Executive Director's Event Participation: May 10 – June 30

- a. Meeting with Melissa Everett, Sustainable Hudson Valley and Mary Lou Carolan, Director of the Newburgh Free Library
- b. Foundation for Hudson Valley Libraries Board Meeting
- c. Ulster County Library Association (2)
- d. Keynote Presentation, Quebec Library Association, Montreal

- e. MHLS Ad Hoc OverDrive Committee
- f. Presentation: Core Values & Ethics, MHLS Trustee Education Series
- g. Advisory Board, Sustainable Libraries Initiative (2)
- h. MHLS Executive Committee
- i. Consultation, Kristen Salierno, Howland Public Library, Beacon
- j. Dutchess County Directors Association, Tivoli Free Library with Ric Swierat
- k. MHLS Government & Community Relations Working Group
- l. Interview, Elias Sorich, Millerton News re: Pine Plains Free Library's 414 vote
- m. Keynote Presentation, Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL) Conference, Cork, Ireland
- n. Keynote Presentation, New Jersey Library Association, Atlantic City, NJ
- o. Consultation, Union Vale Trustees and Consultant
- p. Consultation, East Fishkill Community Library Board
- q. Library Visit, Pawling Free Library
- r. Columbia County Library Association
- s. Consultation, Helene Tieger, Catskill Public Library
- t. MHLS Directors Association
- u. Legislative Committee, New York Library Association
- v. Consultation, Pine Plains Free Library
- w. New Director Orientation, Alex Geller, Red Hook Public Library
- x. Ulster County Library Association, Elting Memorial Library, New Paltz, with Stuart Auchincloss
- y. Presentation, Financial Planning & Budgeting, Trustee Handbook Book Club
- z. Annual Conference, American Library Association, Chicago, IL
  - i. Presentation: *The Storm is Already Here: A National Survey of Public Library Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience*



“With climate change fueling more severe weather, libraries and the communities that they serve are confronting the realities of climate adaptation. Join the research team as they share their findings of the recent national survey designed to examine the role of public libraries as agents for disaster preparedness and community

resilience. This presentation will provide a look at the impact of weather-related disasters on libraries, the response of libraries to deal with these disasters through the creation of readiness and recovery plans, as well as institutional partnering and training efforts.

1. Upon completion, participant will be able to describe how public libraries are being impacted by weather-related disasters.
2. Upon completion, participant will be able to describe how public libraries are coping with weather-related disasters as an institution as well as how they are helping communities prepare.
3. Upon completion, participant will be aware of support organizations and agencies working to help libraries to prepare for and recover from weather-related disasters.”

- aa. Putnam County Library Association
- bb. Presentation, Technical Assistance for the State Aid for Library Construction led by Laura Crisci
- cc. Statewide Planning Meeting, The Great Give Back 2023
- dd. Consultation, Millbrook Library Board of Trustees
- ee. New Director Orientation, Amy Smith, Dover Plains Library