

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | March 2020

1. Albany Update

- a. The Mid-Hudson Library System was well represented in Albany for NYLA Library Advocacy Day. I would like to thank Ric and Mark for joining MHLS staff members Casey Conlin, Kerstin Cruger, Courtney Wimmers and myself in helping to lead meetings during the day. We did 15 meetings in just over four hours with over 40 of our MHLS friends and advocates and representatives from our peer systems: the Ramapo Catskill Library System, the Southeastern NY Library Resources Council, the Upper Hudson Library System, Westchester Library System, Mohawk Valley Library System and Four County Library System.



Hundreds of library advocates from across NYS gathered on the steps of the Well of the Legislative Office Building to take a picture before the rally began.



Assemblymember Didi Barrett welcomed a BIG group from her district!

- b. Legislators made it clear that **this is a challenging fiscal year** and that we will have to work hard just to see a restoration of the aid the Governor has proposed rolling back. Please help keep up the pressure on our legislators by giving them a call, making time to see them in their local offices/at local events and by writing letters to the editor of your local papers that urge an investment in library aid and construction aid for libraries.
- c. The budget negotiations will heat up as the month goes on, particularly once the Coronavirus funding bill is settled, so stay tuned for updates! Once the budget is finalized, hopefully by April 1, we will turn our attention to more focused advocacy on our [legislative priorities](#).

2. Pandemic Preparation

- a. In light of the Coronavirus reports in New York State, MHLS staff have taken a number of precautions:
 - i. Cleaning protocols have been reviewed and frequently touched surfaces are being disinfected more frequently.
 - ii. An all staff message was sent with reminders from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding good personal hygiene and what to do if you are sick as well as reminders about our workplace protocols for workspace cleaning and leave time.
 - iii. The “Stop the spread of germs” poster from the CDC has been posted throughout the facilities.
 - iv. Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer have been provided to staff.
 - v. A review of our telecommuting policy and audit of our telecommuting agreements was undertaken as well as preparation of our laptop inventory.
 - vi. Scenario planning related to severe staffing level issues is underway.
- b. Staff have drafted a Pandemic Policy which was shared electronically for feedback with the Personnel & Planning Committee. This policy will be a topic for discussion at our meeting under New Business.
- c. We have been updating member libraries routinely as new resources become available. These are now housed on our web site on a permanent page to keep up with fast-moving developments.
- d. MHLS Trustees are reminded of the remote participation option for all MHLS Board Committee meetings. You may request this option by contacting the chair of a committee and copying me on that request.

3. ILS News

- a. Road Map Updates
 - i. Decision Center Launched! We are excited to report we have launched the final project on our very first ILS Road Map: Decision Center. This is a comprehensive collection management and analytics solution to provide library staff and directors dynamic tools to report, analyze, and make data-driven decisions and recommendations regarding collection management. Training in all five counties is scheduled in March & April.
 - ii. On April 20th we will hold our second ILS Road Map Development Session. Laurie and I will host the leadership of the Directors Association and its advisory committees as well as the chairs of each county directors’ association to review and rank features/services/enhancements for the ILS and online catalog. The results of this session will be used to craft our ILS Road Map version 2.0.
- b. Innovative Interfaces Inc. (III)/Ex Libris Acquisition
 - i. We are working with our colleagues in consortia in the Northeast to create organized messaging to the new management at III. As Ex Libris primarily serves the academic library community we want to ensure the public library consortia message is strong, clear and impactful in these early days, particularly in light of a lack of clarity as to how they will be developing our discovery platform for the next generation. As a result, I will be joining the heads of seven other consortia in the region to jointly meet with the new III general Manager, Yariv Kursh, at the Ocean State Libraries headquarters in Rhode Island on March 23rd to work towards more open communication.

4. New Partnership: Bard College and La Voz

- a. We are pleased to report that we have partnered with Bard College and La Voz, a monthly magazine covering culture and news from the Hudson Valley for the Spanish-speaking community, to bring copies of La Voz directly to libraries through the MHLS delivery bins, and promote libraries through in-kind ads that will run in the magazine each month.



- b. La Voz seeks to empower its Hudson Valley readers through actionable information featuring columns on health and legal affairs, an English learning worksheet, advice on personal finance, and a resource guide announcing local events and activities. **This partnership will enable libraries to provide current resources for the Spanish-speaking members of their communities** and highlight the services libraries are currently providing for new audiences. For more information about La Voz, visit <https://lavoze.bard.edu/>

5. Two Library Sustainability Projects Kicking Off This Month

- a. 2020 Lab Project – Increasing Yes Votes: We are pleased to be working with four member libraries this year: Brewster, Germantown, Patterson, and Roeliff Jansen. MHLS staff will work with each library to create and implement an action plan to increase voter turn out for the 2020 Election. All libraries are pursuing a 414 vote, or municipal public ballot.
 - i. As part of this project and in response to recent changes in Election Law, I have written a new edition of the 414 “how-to” manual: [Inch by Inch, Row by Row: Using the Municipal Ballot Option in Education Law 259\(1\)\(b\) to Obtain Sustainable Funding for Your Library](#) [Third Edition (2020)]
- b. 2020 Turning Outward Cohort – due to popular demand we have extended the Turning Outward cohorts through the end of our current Plan of Service. This program gives libraries who are working on their strategic plans the opportunity for guidance and support as they seek their community’s input to design the goals of their upcoming plans of service. This program is based on the [American Library Association’s \(ALA\) Libraries Transform Communities project](#) and customized for our members using the Turning Outward resources made freely available by ALA to its members. We now have two staff members trained by the Harwood Institute, the

originators of the approach: Casey Conlin and Courtney Wimmers.

6. County Funding Advocacy Meeting set for April

- a. Our annual get-together for library stakeholders involved with county-level advocacy is scheduled for Thursday, April 30th from 10am-12pm in the MHLS Auditorium. MHLS Trustees are welcome to attend.
- b. At this event we will discuss:
 - i. County funding updates from each county
 - ii. Effective strategies to position libraries to receive county funding
 - iii. Grassroots advocacy efforts that work
- c. To attend, please [register online](#).

7. Town of Union Vale Contract Update

- a. As of the writing of this report there is no contract in place with the Town of Union Vale. In February, the final deadline provided to the town by the board presidents of the impacted libraries came and went with no response from the town. As a result, the two libraries in the situation that meet the threshold to request restrictions as per our Free Direct Access Plan have renewed their claims of serious inequities and hardships to the board. Their requests and additional documentation are included in the board packet for your review and consideration.
- b. *For more detailed information about this situation please see these [answers to Frequently Asked Questions](#) provided to Union Vale cardholders in September.*

8. Board-to-Board Visits & Talking Points

- a. As reported in an email to the full board on February 13th, the annual letter to all member library board presidents to promote our board's outreach work and encouraging invitations for board-to-board visits went out in early February. Now is a good time to reach out to any libraries that you are hoping to visit this year that you have not heard from.
- b. Please do let me know when you plan to visit a member library board, I am happy to help you prepare for the meeting and also appreciate the opportunity track which boards have been visited as per the request of the Trustee Services Committee.
- c. For the next few months we are asking for your help to promote two very important things:
 - i. Please ask boards to continue the necessary work to advocate for the NYLA Legislative Priorities, if the budget has passed before your meeting please bring their attention to the pending bills we are interested in advancing:
https://www.nyla.org/4DCGI/cms/review.html?Action=CMS_Document&DocID=1536&MenuKey=advocacy
 - ii. Please continue your good work to help local library boards understand the important role libraries can play for Census 2020, both to promote that it is happening and preparation to assist residents to fill out the Census online.

9. Executive Director's Event Participation: January 17 - March13

- a. System Services Advisory Committee
- b. Ulster County Library Association at the Kingston Library (w/Ric Swierat)
- c. Union Vale Negotiation Team Meeting, Beekman Library
- d. New York Library Association Legislative Committee Meeting
- e. Midwinter Conference, American Library Association in Philadelphia, PA
- f. Union Vale Negotiations, Beekman Library
- g. Board Consultation, Tivoli Free Library (w/Casey Conlin)
- h. Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee
- i. Board Consolation, Morton Memorial Library (Pine Hill) (w/Casey Conlin)
- j. Dutchess County Directors Meeting at East Fishkill Community Library (w/ Ric Swierat)
- k. Division of Library Development Monthly Update
- l. Greene County Library Association at the D.R. Evarts Library (Athens) (w/Ric Swierat)
- m. Advocacy Day Briefing Webinar (presented w/Jeremy Johannesen)
- n. Columbia County Library Association Meeting at Roe Jan Community Library (w/Ric Swierat)
- o. Putnam County Library Association Meeting in Carmel, NY (w/Ric Swierat)
- p. Directors Association Meeting
- q. New Directors Forum (facilitator)
- r. Pre-Advocacy Day Meetings: Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO) and the New York State Alliance of Library Systems (NYALS)
- s. NYLA Library Advocacy Day
- t. Public Library Association Conference, Nashville, TN
- u. Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee
- v. Directors Association Workshop: Paid Time Off
- w. Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State: SHIELD Act Briefing
- x. Division of Library Development Monthly Update
- y. Dutchess County Directors Meeting at Pleasant Valley Library
- z. Board Consultation, Brewster Public Library (w/Casey Conlin)
- aa. Incentives Committee Meeting
- bb. Board Consultation, Phoenicia Library (w/Casey Conlin)
- cc. Columbia County Library Association Meeting at the Kinderhook Memorial Library