

1. Directors Association meeting on October 3 to be held at Mid-Hudson on the third floor of the office building, not the Auditorium. We had talked about meeting at the Starr Library in Rhinebeck, but we've been able to clear space on the third floor to meet at Mid-Hudson! Thank you Steve Cook for holding open this date at Starr in case we needed it!

2. Collaboration, the New Normal? There's a lot of collaboration between libraries in the Mid-Hudson Library System and you have to wonder if this is the new "normal."

In its second year being led by member libraries, Battle of the Books had twenty-seven participating libraries this year. Its success was the result of hundreds of hours of group effort by library staff, friends and parents as well as Kerstin Cruger at the System. (The contestants were amazing!)

There are two Big Reads this fall of *The Great Gatsby*, one coordinated by Putnam County libraries and the other led by the Poughkeepsie Public Library District with a long list of participating libraries, schools and other organizations in Dutchess and Ulster counties.

Having visited all the member libraries in Mid-Hudson, I am increasingly aware of the everyday and ongoing collaboration between neighboring libraries and other organizations, such as collaborative programs with local colleges, coordinating summer reading programs, sharing children's services staff and working together on e-rate and other issues.

Collaboration is a way to tap the experience and expertise of individuals that you may not be able to otherwise afford and extend the resources and opportunities that you provide your communities.

3. Planning for Mid-Hudson's 53rd Annual Meeting. So what questions would you and your trustees like answered on October 19 at the annual meeting about *Creating the Future: a 2020 Vision Plan for Library Service in New York State*?

The report and its 60 recommendations have been adopted by the Regents and represents a distillation of hundreds of ideas and recommendations on how libraries can remain relevant and successful in a rapidly changing world.

- How important is it for the public to vote on your budget as recommended by the report?
- How can we overcome the perception that libraries are no longer relevant in a digital age?
- What's the role of advocacy in this period of "dramatic and rapid" change?
- What's our role in providing our communities access to eBooks?
- How can libraries help their communities "confront society's most difficult problems?"
- What strategies can we pursue to establish successful partnerships with local schools in support of early childhood education? Homework assistance?
- How do we approach the challenges of managing our physical spaces in an increasingly digital world?
- What partnerships and collaboration should libraries seek in support of information literacy? Digital literacy? Workforce development? Protecting our local cultural heritage?

We're preparing a number of questions, such as these, to help launch the discussion among the panelists, John Hammond, Gerald Nichols and Bridget Quinn-Carey, and the trustees, directors library staff and friends who attend the meeting.

Each panelist brings a very different perspective to the questions as will you and your trustees, staff and friends.

MHLS REPORT TO THE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION October 3, 2012
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Mike Nyerges

In addition to serving as Chair of the Regents Advisory Council when planning for this report began in 2010, Bridget Quinn-Carey has served as Director of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System and is now Chief Operating Officer at Queens Library. She also received *The New York Times* Librarian Award in 2003.

John Hammond's perspective is shaped by leading the Northern New York Library Network in Potsdam, which is one of the state's nine regional research councils. His perspective is also shaped by his advocacy as a former President and Legislative Committee Chair of the New York Library Association and by his leadership in New Yorkers for Better Libraries Political Action Committee. It was John that led the soliciting of the ideas and recommendations that were ultimately distilled into the final version of *Creating the Future*.

Jerry Nichols is currently focused on training the next generation of library leaders as the Director of the Palmer Institute for Public Library Organization & Management at Long Island University. But his perspective is also shaped by serving as Director of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System and several Long Island public libraries. His leadership and expertise in library management, finance, law and construction is widely recognized and he's been the recipient of several awards. He is also editor of the *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State*, which is the basis of Mid-Hudson's Trustee Essentials workshop.

Here's what *Creating the Future* cites as the ideal model of success for public libraries.

Public libraries reflect the highest ideals of the communities they serve. The best public libraries are places where the love of learning is instilled at the youngest age and intellectual curiosity encouraged for all. They provide a path to navigate life's challenges and help new Americans assimilate. As community centers they actively encourage civic engagement and cultural awareness while remembering the past by the preservation of community history. They actively strive to provide access to their facilities and their resources to all residents, especially for those who are physically or mentally disabled, economically disadvantaged or otherwise facing unique challenges in today's competitive world. Their success is grounded in their basis as a truly democratic institution, governed and supported by the people they serve.

Here are the report's recommendations for public libraries.

- The further proliferation of the Regents' Public Library District Model to enable all public libraries to become fully funded and governed through citizen participation and public vote.
- All public libraries to proactively create and collect local content and serve as a catalyst for civic engagement to promote civil discourse and confront society's most difficult problems.
- Collaboration with other libraries and community organizations to develop seamless information literacy initiatives, promote cultural understanding and protect local historical and cultural treasures.
- Support state and national digital literacy learning initiatives providing this 21st century skill to people of all walks of life, not just those enrolled in schools and colleges.
- The provision of robust early childhood education programs and the provision of homework assistance as a core service; the alignment of outreach services with societal priorities, such as teen services and gang prevention.
- The provision of full access to library services by people with disabilities, including accessible buildings, homebound services, and assistive technology.
- Investment in public library facilities in order to be able to respond to the changing needs of communities -- rewiring of older buildings, creation of larger meeting spaces and small meeting rooms, flexible storage solutions so that libraries can adjust as print to e-format ratios change and energy efficiency improvements to keep operating costs down.

Join the discussion at the the Annual Meeting on October 19! Prepare your questions! Tickets are \$25 and still available. Download the registration from the Mid-Hudson calendar at <http://tiny.cc/km08kw>.

4. **I2NY Summit.** Merribeth and I attended the state-wide I2NY Summit in Saratoga Springs on September 24th & 25th. On day one, I would say that its purpose was to encourage greater collaboration and sharing among libraries in an effort to more efficiently and effectively meet the needs of state residents. On day two, its focus was the development of questions that would need to be addressed and possible answers that would need to be applied if a new information infrastructure--I2NY--was to be built on the state's existing information infrastructure, which basically consists of the state library and 73 library systems serving the state's academic, public, school and special libraries. But I'm not sure the two are necessarily connected.

We'll see all the recommendations (there were 120!) that were generated at the Summit in the next couple of weeks and a more complete report and plan-forward in a month or two. (If you're interested, I've blogged at <http://director.midhudson.org> what I took away from the Summit and my initial impressions, including the top 6 recommendations.)

But the one discussion I would share with you here, which was something of a surprise, is how a group of (primarily) academic librarians saw the future role of their libraries transitioning from distributing content to creating it. In their judgment, libraries have already lost control over the content that once formed the core of their missions and are unlikely to regain it.

There was considerable discussion about what types of content libraries would create and the skill-sets and organizational structure this new role would require. For academic libraries, the issues revolved around open access publishing and open archives and "publishing" instructional materials, research data, scholarly publications and student portfolios. There was the recognition that this involved an 180-degree turn in direction for libraries and required staffing and organizations with a different focus and different skills. But there was a readiness among these librarians to accept the need for this to happen quickly, in the next 3-5 years. (Wow!)

Public libraries would manage and make discoverable a range of local resources, including local records, community publications and media, and local history; they would support and publish local authors; they would provide a "makers space;" they would become more "kitchen than grocery store." But although these are, without a doubt, visible trends in the public library community, the public's expectation for access to content at public libraries is unlikely to evaporate quickly. So when allocating scarce resources, the challenges of public libraries transitioning from distributing content to facilitating the creation of content isn't something that'll happen in the next 3-5 years. I think this speaks to the very different communities served by academic and public libraries. For public libraries, I think this transition will be more gradual.

But the discussion about this transition was an real eye-opener.