

1. ADVOCACY - When we meet on Wednesday, March 6, Advocacy Day will be in the rear view mirror. But the need for advocacy will continue! So don't stop with your calls and letters to legislators or stop urging the members of your board and friends group to do the same. The word in Albany is that the budget may be decided very quickly.

- Say thank you when talking or writing to your legislator. Thank them for their leadership in restoring some of the support lost after 2008 when full-funding for library services was cut nearly 30%. The governor's 2013-14 budget has library services pegged at 80% of full-funding, which is largely because the legislature is listening to you and me and members of the library community.
- Be passionate about what you accomplish every day. Talk about the opportunities your library provides residents to enrich lives, learn skills, access the Internet, prepare preschoolers for school, or how your library provides a safe and welcoming space for teens, seniors and others.
- Cite a statistic, such as the weekly attendance at your children's programs, the high attendance you received at a recent program for families, the number of people using your computers on an average day.
- Tell a story of someone that your library benefited. Describe how MHLS is a partner in your success.
- Don't be reluctant to state your opinion that the statistics and stories you share are the reasons library services deserve to have state funding fully restored.
- Bottom line: if we see an increase, you'll see more dollars for direct service in your community.

As you know, we're asking for full funding--\$102 million. Although it's unlikely we'll see full reinstatement of state funding this year, chances improve for an increase if we make the calls, schedule our visits, and send the follow-up letters and thank-yous to our legislators. A list and links to your representatives are on [Mid-Hudson's website](#).

2. CIPA POLICY - You may have noticed my email to directors on February 25 announcing that the MHLS Board will be considering a Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) policy for the System at its March 9th meeting in the auditorium, and the opportunity at 10 AM for member libraries to comment on the policy in a "public hearing."

CIPA requires a public hearing to be held before the adoption of a CIPA policy. If a member library were to consider such a policy, a public hearing would need to be held for its residents. The same is true for a public school. But a private school would hold a public hearing for its "constituents," the families of the students attending the school. Our "constituents" are our member libraries, hence the notice to you, the directors.

The policy is required for the System's reimbursement under the e-rate program for the cost of broadband. Reimbursement for network equipment, such as routers and switches, is permitted every three out of five years. Telecommunication costs are also e-ratable, but DO NOT require CIPA compliance, and we extend the reimbursement we receive for telecommunications to member libraries participating in Teleforms. A copy of the proposed policy is available on [Mid-Hudson's website](#).

The policy DOES NOT affect members libraries. The only exception would be the Poughkeepsie Public Library District because they periodically use our auditorium for programs. But PPLD is already CIPA-compliant.

If there is any impact on member libraries at all, I believe it's positive. Reimbursement under the e-rate program is based on the number of students in a community that are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. In Poughkeepsie, reimbursement is 90%. Reimbursement for Mid-Hudson's Internet access this year is estimated to be \$18,000.

CIPA requires a policy and the filtering of the Internet that prevents access to obscene or harmful content over the Internet by minors. For libraries and schools seeking e-rate reimbursement for Internet access, this is required even in buildings where only adults work, such as in school administration buildings. There are no federal standards for filtering under CIPA and Mid-Hudson is already running an Internet filter.

CIPA requires policy and procedures to prevent unlawful activities by minors, or the unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors, or access by minors to direct electronic communications, such as Internet e-mail or chat rooms, unless their safety and security can be ensured by a supervising adult. And we will be adjusting our building-use policy to ensure these requirements are met by any library sponsoring or running programs on our premises.

Compliance with CIPA is also required when purchasing computers that access the Internet with Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) funding.

Please let me know if you're planning to attend the public hearing and MHLS Board meeting on March 9, which begins at 10 AM.

- 3. MTA REIMBURSEMENT** - On the February 19th conference call with system directors and the NYS State Librarian and Division of Library Development staff, we learned that the state is nearing agreement on how to disburse the \$1.3 million the legislature agreed to return to libraries affected by the MTA tax. Sometime soon, Mid-Hudson will be receiving the funds along with a distribution list. In Mid-Hudson, this only affects the libraries in Dutchess and Putnam counties, but stay tuned!
- 4. MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEYS** - A report on our 2012 member satisfaction survey will be sent out to directors and board presidents on Friday, March 8, by John Bickford. He's the chair of the MHLS Personnel & Planning Committee and a representative from Dutchess

County. He helped lead the survey's development, conduct and analyze it, and is author of the report. He'll send the report out with links to the full results of the survey, which include all comments. Participation by both directors and board presidents were up and responses were generally very positive.

Year	Total Responses	Board Presidents	Directors
2012	91 (69%)	34 (52%)	57 (86%)
2011	73 (55%)	29 (44%)	44 (67%)
2010	43 (33%)	9 (14%)	34 (52%)
2009	42 (32%)	7 (11%)	35 (53%)

The System Ad Hoc Services Committee will get an advance copy of the report when it meets after the DA meeting on March 6. There were two parts to the survey, one for board presidents and the other for directors. The System Ad Hoc Services Committee helped draft these surveys and emphasized the importance of evaluating system service outcomes.

This will be the first time that the results will be openly shared with member libraries. The Mid-Hudson Board and staff have been reviewing the results to see where action might improve services. We'll have an opportunity at the April DA meeting to discuss some of these possible actions, keeping in mind that we have a plan of service that reflect member library consensus.

The System Ad Hoc Services Committee will also be meeting to review the results of the focus group sessions on the effectiveness of system communications, which were conducted at the January DA meeting.

5. FIRST RESTORERS REDUX - As you may recall, one of my take-ways from the NYLA Conference, which I shared with you in December, was OCLC Vice-President George Needham's characterization of libraries as "first-restorers" following natural disasters. FEMA may not recognize libraries as "first responders," he claimed, but it does recognize libraries as "first restorers." This was great rhetoric and an example of sound instructional technique by providing an example and counter-example. Needless to say, the phrase resonated with me and others, especially with our recent experiences with Hurricanes Sandy and Irene.

The trouble was, I and others couldn't discover another source for this characterization. So I asked him and he shared a number of sources. The characterization is based on legislation following the flooding of the Cedar Rapids Public Library in 2008. The library applied to FEMA for temporary relocation funding and was denied because libraries were not identified in the law as essential community services. And although FEMA reversed that decision, it wasn't until passage of federal legislation in 2010 that libraries were identified by FEMA as essential services, along with police, fire protection, emergency services, utilities, medical services, and education. The legislation also allows libraries to be designated as temporary relocation facilities during disasters and other emergencies.

So Mr. Needham was entirely justified in his characterization of libraries as “first restorers. It’s just not a term used by FEMA.

6. CATALOG ENHANCEMENT - Sometime in March, you’ll see an important enhancement to the catalog: [Novelist Select](#). This is an EBSCO product that the Central Library & Collection Development Advisory Committee reviewed and strongly supports. It matches the titles patrons pull up in their searches with suggestions of similar titles and further strengthens the role of the catalog as a discovery tool for readers. This is especially useful when patrons are placing holds on popular materials because it gives them titles they wouldn’t think to search for, but would have an interest to read.

Also, it’s unclear what the impact of ebook downloads have on the circulation of our physical book collections. But the statistics in 2012 suggest fiction titles in particular may be adversely affected. And where one year doesn’t make a trend, Novelist Select adds a feature that would make more titles, including those shelf-sitters, more visible to readers.

The budgeting of central library grants were adjusted to pay for this product, which costs \$16,000, but at the same time ensures that the \$40,000 from central library grants would continue to be available to off-set member assessment of delivery costs.

7. WHY LIBRARIES MATTER - If you’re not planning to travel to Albany on March 5 for Advocacy Day, you’ll miss David Vinjamuri, who will be speaking at the Mid-Day Rally. He is a leading marketing expert, teaches at New York University, has served as consultant for American Express and the U.S. Army among other companies and industry groups, and writes an online column for Forbes, “Brand Truth.” He is often sought out by the media, including the *New York Times* and Fox, for his views and opinions.

He recently wrote two columns on Forbes--one in [December 2012](#), the other in [January 2013](#)--that are must-reads for anyone working in the public library community. These explore why publishers and libraries need to work together and why libraries are more important than ever.

In these columns, he argues that public libraries are a “keystone species in the ecosystem of reading,” and that publishers need to include public libraries in their strategies to remain relevant and healthy in an increasingly digital world. The “big six publishers,” he writes, “limit public libraries’ access to eBooks at their own peril.”

He believes the recommendation of titles and the discovery of new authors are growing challenges to publishers, libraries and readers alike. He cites [estimates by Bowker](#) that in 2012, self-published books have grown to 235,000 titles. Who will help separate the wheat from the chaff? Public libraries, he argues, can coordinate the discovery and recommendation of titles.

Mr. Vinjamuri is another reason to travel to Albany on March 5.