

Annual Meeting

The Mid-Hudson staff did a great job planning and running the 52nd Annual Meeting, which had about 70 attend on Friday, October 28. The morning was cold, but clear. The food was good and the coffee was plentiful and hot.

Special guests included NYS Senator Stephen Saland and Assemblyman Marc Molinaro, and Southeastern NY Resource Council Director John Shaloiko, Westchester Library System Director Terry Kirchner, and Ramapo Catskill Library System Director Robert Hubsher.

Peggy Winn deserves a special “thank you” for her coordination of the event.

The election of the trustees went as planned.

So did the keynote, which engendered a fair amount of discussion. (I'm glad it's behind me!) The slides for the keynote are online at director.midhudson.org.

Matthew Perry (Columbia) was elected to complete a three-year term; Myrna Sameth (Ulster) to complete a one-year term; and Regina Morini (Putnam), Lisa Baker Brill (Greene) and Michael Minor (Ulster) were elected to five-year terms.

Library system staff were recognized: Tom Finnigan for 20 years of service, Kerstin Cruger for 10 years of service, and Gerry Formby and Tara Stohr 5 years of service.

A special farewell was held for Board member Pat Miller, who has completed two five-year terms on the Library System Board will be leaving the board at the end of 2011.

2012 Library System Budget

The 2012 budget definitely moves from the back burner to one of my main focuses in November.

We'll be sitting down with CSEA and our staff to discuss wages and benefits in November. Our goal is to have a 2012 budget ready for the Board of Trustees when it meets on December 10. The next meeting of the Personnel and Planning Committees is November 2.

Library Advocacy and Economic Development

Now that the annual meeting (and the keynote) is behind me, I need to get busy with some advocacy that focuses on the continuing importance of libraries in these tight economic times and the connection between public libraries and economic development.

I attended a Mid-Hudson Economic Development Council work session in Putnam County in the beginning of October. But I haven't had a chance to spend much time on this issue since. So I plan to write letters and make calls with the administrators and chairs of the economic development councils that are in our service area, along with state representatives.

Public libraries often serve as providers-of-last-resort for public access to computers and the Internet and are often the only provider of free public access and WiFi in their communities.

Affordable and adequate broadband service is both a quality of life and an economic development issue, especially in our smaller and more rural communities. This is an issue of considerable importance to libraries!

Libraries with adequate amounts of broadband and WiFi can and do support small businesses. Some public libraries are overtly marketing their space and services to start-ups, the small business professional, and those people armed with just a laptop and an idea.

People who have been negatively impacted by the economy are twice as likely to use computers and the Internet at a library than those who have not been negatively impacted.

OCLC Perceptions Public Libraries 2010 provides solid validation to the anecdotal evidence that the public's use of libraries rise during times of economic recession. Harris Interactive conducted the survey and its findings are statistically valid with an error of plus or minus 3%.

Other issues

- What do the Hudson Valley Renegades have to do with Mid-Hudson Library System and its member libraries?
- Visits to member libraries
- Annual Member Library System Evaluation