

Consultant Reports
MHLS Director's Association
Meeting of Thursday, June 5, 2014

Merribeth Advocate, Assistant Director

1. **OverDrive Display of Covers:** Regarding the discussion at the May DA meeting about too much juvenile showing in the New Books section of the OverDrive homepage at <http://mhls.lib.overdrive.com>. In mid April we had asked OverDrive about this when it first started to appear. Unfortunately, it is not possible to exclude juvenile content specifically. OverDrive said the New eBooks display was set to show a selection of available titles out of the 100 most recently purchased items. Out of the 100 most recent items, the majority of the available titles at that time were juvenile due to large orders from Ulster County. At that time OverDrive bumped the selection number up to 200 to help counteract this. When much of the mass purchasing of juvenile titles had lulled, we asked them on May 12 to return the selection number to 100. Since the majority of our recently purchased adult titles are currently circulating (which is great!) unfortunately this means that of the 100 most recently added and available titles, the majority of them are still juvenile items. Moving forward, options include the following. **How would you like to proceed with the decision making about this?**
 - We could keep the current set up of the display in the center section of the OverDrive page (New eBooks, followed by New Audiobooks, followed by Just Returned).
 - We could keep the current display as in #1 above and have New eBooks also show ones that are not available (doesn't seem like a good choice).
 - We could move Just Returned to the top of the display (note that would include eBooks & audiobooks).
 - We could add a 'Most Popular' collection above New eBooks.
2. **MHLS CE Credit for Encore Training:** 29 Encore trainings were held this spring. We would like to capture the attendance at these sessions so we can provide continuing education contact hours for staff. Directors that hosted trainings at their library for staff have received an attendance sheet in the delivery to fill out and return to me (by June 18 please). Directors that had staff attend webinars (either the Innovative webinars or those by Eric), please have staff fill out the form at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/encorewebinar14>
3. **Locations of CE Programs:** In order to update our information on where best to hold continuing education programs in the MHLS region (the latest info we have is from 2011), we are sending out a revamped online '**Availability of Member Library Space to host MHLS CE Programs**' survey to be filled out by directors who are interested in hosting regional training at their library. Additionally this time we will be asking if your site is also interested in hosting group viewing of webinars (we will include the technical infrastructure information for this). As before, once we have the list of the 'volunteer' sites, we will send a survey to directors, staff, and trustees asking them to indicate all of their 'Preferences for Location'. Thank you in advance for helping us bring trainings to your region.
4. **New Interface for GALE Kids InfoBits:** The Kids InfoBits database has been redesigned to support twenty-first century learning with a modern interface, improved navigation, updated content and additional tools. Kids Infobits is designed specifically for students in kindergarten through grade five and addresses the way kids learn and conduct research. Elementary-aged students are clever information consumers and acquiring these skills at an early age has become the foundation for the Common Core. All MHLS libraries have access to this database, funded by NOVELny, through their county HOMEACCESS page.
5. **Updates Coming to JobNow:**
 - More practice tests including the TASC, the new New York GED: The new high school equivalency test in NY is **TASC** (Test Assessing Secondary Completion). The GED is no longer administered in NYS.

- They have partnered with Dick Bolles, the author of *What Color is Your Parachute*, the most widely used career advice book ever, to offer an online resource. **eParachute** is designed to help recent high school or college graduates searching for what to do with their educational experience and for job hunters who don't like their current options. eParachute is designed to provide new insights and inspiration to set people on a path to a career of their dreams.
- There will be JobNow training webinars scheduled in the early fall.

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Coordinator for Library Sustainability

1. Albany Update:

- I am participating in "**Mini-Lobby Day**" in Albany on Wednesday, May 28th. This is an annual event of the NYLA Legislative Committee where a small group of library advocates attend meetings with leadership in both houses, the Governor's office and NYS Division of Budget. We will also attend the Libraries & Education Technology Committee of the Assembly's meeting that day.
- The budget includes nearly \$42M in '**Bullet Aid**': If you haven't already, and have a need, reach out to your legislators to let them know you could use extra funds for a specific project. Libraries with legislators in the majority of either house (Senate or Assembly), particularly in the Senate, may find this a good use of their time.
- **The Library Construction Aid bill has passed out of the Legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature.**
- The **MTA Payroll tax exemption** had been included in the draft budget, but "dropped out." It will evidently be challenging to move this item through the Legislature.
- The **Maintenance of Effort Waiver bill** is on the Senate Floor calendar, and currently assigned to the Assembly Ways & Means Committee.
- The **Digital Literacy bill** is not currently moving.
- The **Economic Impact of Libraries bill** has passed the Assembly and is assigned to the Senate Education Committee.
- NYLA is pursuing the introduction of the bill **requiring an elementary school librarian**.
- Senator DeFrancisco's bill authorizing a **Central Information System** to allow for statewide purchasing of electronic resources (databases) is likely to pass the Senate.
- Two competing Senate bills directed at making changes to the **Queens Library Board of Trustees** are being monitored for their potential implications to libraries statewide.
- NYLA's **beer coasters** used during Advocacy season were featured in *Library Journal*!
<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2014/05/opinion/one-cool-thing/coasters-speak-louder-than-words-one-cool-thing/#>

2. Property Tax Freeze: Information from the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance has been released which answers some, but not all questions:

- Freezes property taxes on primary residences of homeowners with income at or less than \$500,000 in local governments and school districts that stay within property tax cap.
- Effective for "cities, towns, villages, counties and special districts" in fiscal years beginning in 2015. (School districts starting with the 2014-2015 school year).
 - Please note information provided in my DA report last month which are the preliminary interpretations of which libraries will fall under this:*
 - **Association libraries** are likely **not** covered by the tax freeze legislation;
 - **Special District Libraries** are likely to be covered by the legislation.

- Whether **Municipal Public Libraries** are covered is less clear, and we probably need to wait for some info from OSC to determine where they're coming down on that.
- **School District Public Libraries** are more likely to be covered than Municipal Public Libraries, but whether they are is an open question.
- To receive the tax credit in the second year entities must stay within the tax cap and “**develop plans for sharing or consolidating services that will achieve savings for taxpayers.**” Also known as a “State approved efficiency plan.” These plans are due to the Department of Budget by June 1, 2015.
- For taxpayers to receive the credit: “taxing jurisdiction” must have a tax cap compliant budget and must certify this to the Department of Taxation and Finance and the Office of the State Comptroller by the “**21st day of the fiscal year.**” Deadline for “most” school districts is July 21, 2014 and deadline for “most” local governments is January 21, 2015.
- Taxing jurisdictions have already been called upon to provide 2013/2014 tax bill information to start calculations.

3. Local Library Votes

- **Post-Vote Survey:** After your budget vote please expect to see an email from me or MHLS Marketing & Program Assistant Kerstin Cruger asking four easy questions about your vote related to the outcome and the tax cap. This data helps us spot trends and is useful for planning at the System level. Thanks for your help!
 - **414 Libraries:** At this point in the year you should be engaged in or on the eve of your petition drive. “[Rules for Filing Petitions](#)” are available in this meeting packet in Supplemental Documents. Let me know if you have any questions.
 - **So Far in 2014:** School District Public Libraries, Municipal and Association libraries using the 259 School District Ballot option, and a few Special District Libraries have already held their budget votes this year. Results, as reported to MHLS, are available at <http://midhudson.org/vote/Toolkit/member-library-votes.htm> Bravo to the Desmond-Fish Library in Garrison for going after their very first public library vote with success!
4. Just a reminder that there are many **photo opportunities during your Summer Reading Program for state legislators** and other municipal leaders that may have decision making authority/influence over your funding. Please reach out and invite them in!
5. **The Role of Public Libraries in Enabling Open Government:** On May 7 & 8 I was invited to attend the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and University at Albany’s Center for Technology in Government (CTG) summit on the role of public libraries in enabling open government in Washington, DC., representing the New York Library Association. From CTG’s project web site: “*State and local governments are exploring new ways to open their governments using technology to engage citizens, increase transparency and accountability. Such efforts provide new opportunities and challenges for public libraries as citizens turn to them for both access to and assistance in their interactions with government ... An open government initiative will impact and can be facilitated or impeded by a community’s information ecosystem. Libraries can have a critical influence on an ecosystem and the success of such an initiative.*” Our discussions centered on the varying roles public libraries play to assist in “open government,” from providing tax forms to assisting patrons in accessing government programs to public forums, all the way up to data crunching and visualization (one library had a year-long resident from **Code for America** <http://codeforamerica.org/> !) – and the clear burden open government efforts have put on local public library infrastructure (staffing technology, connectivity, physical space). There is widespread acknowledgement that in efforts by all levels of government to

streamline processes and costs, there has been a direct impact on libraries as more people turn to us for help.

The efforts of those in attendance (see below) will result in a “framework” to assist libraries in responding to the rising need to assist patrons with open government services, from a resource and advocacy perspective. IMLS representatives at the summit made it clear they are interested in funding projects related to these issues.

Stakeholders in the room included library directors from major metropolitan libraries throughout the U.S. (Los Angeles, Chattanooga, Cleveland, Pittsburg, Multnomah County), library stakeholders from major universities (University of Maryland, Rutgers, University of North Carolina), library advocacy groups such as the Public Library Association and OCLC, and non-library, government and open government stakeholders such as the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, U.S. Department of Education, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, Office of Government Information Services, Sunlight Labs/Sunlight Foundation, GovTrack.us, TechSoup Global, , and Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington.

For more information, see CTG’s website at <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/imls> . They have also posted a concept paper at <http://imls.ctg.albany.edu/book/enabling-open-government-all-planning-framework-public-libraries> . If you’d like to participate in the discussion about libraries and open government, you can do that at <http://imls.ctg.albany.edu/forums/online-discussion-concept-paper> .

6. **Construction Grant Program:**

- We are still waiting on the notifications to those libraries granted funds through the 2013-2014 cycle. State legislators will have the first opportunity to announce the grant awards, then the State Library will let you know when you can “go public” with the news. DLD has reported that the Dormitory Authority (DASNY) did not change any of the recommended award amounts so the amounts shared with you in the last quarter of 2013 should be the same as your award amounts.
- Those libraries planning to apply in the upcoming cycle (2014-2015) will want to attend the upcoming **Construction Grant Technical Assistance Workshop planned for Friday, June 20th from 10:00am-12:00pm in the MHLS Auditorium**. This workshop is designed to help those applying this year, if you have never applied before, or have not applied through the online application process before, please consider this workshop mandatory, you’ll thank me later!
- **State Aid for Public Library Construction Grant Program Dates to Save:**
 - i. The NYS Division of Library Development expects the online application for the next round of construction grants to be **live on June 1**. Applicants are encouraged to either
 1. Establish a login/password:
<https://eservices.nysed.gov/ldgrants/ldgext/diRegistration.do>
 2. Check to make sure existing passwords are still current – you may need to reset your password: <http://bit.ly/1m0wOSM>
 - ii. The application deadline for member libraries will be set once DLD sets their deadline for the Systems.

7. **Survey Team Training, Non-Library-User Outreach Program:** 10 member libraries are currently fielding survey teams as part of the Marketing Advisory Committee’s Non-Library-User Outreach Program. Each team, made up of 4-8 library stakeholders (director, staff, Trustees, Friends) attended training in May conducted by myself and MHLS Marketing & Program Assistant Kerstin Cruger to develop their custom action plan. Teams are now busily using a survey instrument developed by the Committee to interview at least 40 community members that have not been to the library in over a year. Results will be collated System wide to assist in educating libraries about how to best market to those in their community who are not familiar with what a modern local public library has to offer.

8. **MHLS Leadership Circle:** At the urging of a number of interested library directors we will begin offering a workshop called the “Leadership Circle” for directors interested in an open dialogue about issues you face as a library leader. This initial proposal sees the event run similarly to the *MHLS Roundtable for New Directors* in that we would have a chosen topic for the day, I would serve as facilitator and peers from our member library community with specific expertise on the topic will be invited to share their thoughts to kick off the event and then we’d have open Q&A/discussion. The idea behind this is to provide a leadership learning opportunity and to take advantage of the knowledge and wisdom of many of our member library directors while supporting each other. We don’t have to reinvent the wheel to lead our libraries forward! Our first instance of the MHLS Leadership Circle will take place after the **October 7th** Director’s Association meeting. To plan for this first session:
 - **I am interested to hear what you might like to discuss at such an event – please email me your thoughts by July 1. To get you started, here are some possible topics we could focus on through the Leadership Circle:**
 - i. Management vs. Leadership
 - ii. Strategic Thinking (staffing, budgets, space)
 - iii. Working with your Friends Group
 - iv. Working with your Board President
 - v. The Director’s “Role as Facilitator” for the Board
 - vi. Capacity Building

Robert Drake, Technology Operations Manager

Technology Operations Overview

1. Department Contacts: Despite the change in staffing, the process for contacting MHLS has not changed significantly. If you need:
 - Tech/Sierra/Encore Support: techsupport@midhudson.org or sierra@midhudson.org | 845-471-6060 x240
 - Cataloguing Support: cataloging@midhudson.org | 845-471-6060 x 252
 - Hosted Website Support: webchanges@midhudson.org | 845-471-6060 x240

We are using a ticket system to keep track of issues. To assist our workflow, when possible, please lead with

e-mail. Aside from automatically creating a ticket, Email allows us to prioritize issues, best delegate responsibilities, keep more accurate statistics, build a training and support knowledgebase, and maintain open phone lines for emergencies that cannot be handled in other ways.

IT/Technology

1. Broadband Committee Update: May 12th and again June 5th, I'm at Broadband office meetings. I'm currently on a working group attempting to write out the possible rules around a combined bandwidth/digital literacy grant program.
2. Aerohive Wireless: After significant negotiation, Aerohive has proven to be the cheaper vendor of wireless devices. For most details please refer to my January report, however to summarize these devices:
 1. Provide a captive portal, also known as a policy acceptance page
 2. These devices keep detailed session statistics
 3. These devices can, in most cases, be managed remotely by MHLS
 4. Free replacement for malfunctioning devices for 5 years

Costs:

Initial setup cost	\$440
Yearly Maintenance Cost	\$85

I will be following up with those libraries that contacted me earlier in the year to confirm their continued interest. Other libraries may indicate their interest by emailing techsupport@midhudson.org

Sierra/ILS

1. Static IP Addresses & Encore: As many of you know, encore can use static IP addresses to identify your traffic on the server side and move your libraries items to the top of searches performed within your building. Static IP addresses can also allow access to certain databases from within your building without an additional login being required. As we leave our dedicated implementation period, iii's process around accepting IP addresses and arranging encore becomes significantly delayed. As such, we are not able to reliably support dynamic addresses.
2. Database Action Memo: An action memo has been distributed to collect which databases have been purchased by individual libraries and/or county library associations beyond those provided to all libraries through MHLS. As always please respond with this information as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance with this.

Cataloguing

1. Catalogue Assistance: Eric provided substantial support to our cataloguing staff. As we proceed through an interim period, certain catalogue activities may take longer than previously. To best support efficient work, please make judicious use of cataloguing assistance and time.