

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
July & August, 2024**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

Bill Bonner from Amsterdam will be joining the MVLS board for the September 19 Board meeting. I will be meeting him before that for an orientation session. Please welcome Bill, and introduce yourself.

State Aid payments are about half paid. We continue to wait for the Outreach Aid, Central Library Aid, Institutions and Corrections Aid; and the final 10% of the LLSA and the LSSA. In 2023, some of that aid was not received until 2024.

As announced at the July MVLS Board meeting, the MVLS Annual Meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 2 from 5:30 – 7:30 at the Fort Hunter Free Library. We are beginning to receive some registrations, and libraries are submitting the information for their library posters. Unfortunately, we learned today that the Annual Meeting coincides with the beginning of Rosh Hashanah. We will have to be more careful in the future to make sure this conflict does not happen again.

The Annual Meeting is, of course, a celebration of libraries and their accomplishments. That happens through the library posters, through the encouraged networking and through the MVLS Awards. This year we had two applicants, and the committee determined that both will receive awards. Finally, the Annual Meeting is a time to foster library collaboration and to conduct a small bit of business – the election of trustees. We, of course, have one vacant seat, which opened up when Becky Sokol resigned in March. Also, Chris Witkowski's term is set to expire on 12/31/2024. We have been trying to recruit Fulton County residents to serve as trustees, with little success.

T.M. Byxbee is working on the 2023 MVLS and JA audit reviews. We expect that they will be presenting their work at the November board meeting.

Post Symposium activities continued throughout the summer, with the final survey completed and distributed in early August. It is posted on the MVLS website at: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Post-Symposium-Survey-Results-July-2024.pdf>. While the results are generally positive, there are many good suggestions for improvements to MVLS and JA communications. Of course, as mentioned at the July meeting, some have already been implemented. Many others will be looked at over the next several months.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

It is time for us to make the official changes that will allow the Amsterdam Free Library to begin serving as the MVLS Central Library effective January 1, 2025. We have been working with the Central Library Advisory Committee and the directors to develop a new Central Library Plan. That plan will be presented at the September Board meeting for approval. In addition, we will need to address small changes to the MVLS Free Direct Access Plan and Plan of Service. Please note that these documents will be amended only to remove specific references to the Schenectady County Public Library as the MVLS

Central Library in those documents. Those amendments will also be included with the September meeting materials.

Of course, part of the change in Central Libraries will involve moving the physical central library collections out of the SCPL. Once the withdrawal is complete, those items will be effectively lost if they remain in Schenectady. Since Amsterdam is under construction and cannot accept the items now, they are being temporarily housed at MVLS. We stopped purchasing new items for this collection a year ago, and physical items have a diminishing importance in central library services. Eventually all items will move to Amsterdam and other MVLS libraries.

The JA Council was scheduled to meet on September 11. Unfortunately, while we had more than a quorum with Zoom (and several additional participants) we did not have an in-person quorum. While there is some ambiguity whether this matters for the JA Council, we have been following the letter of Open Meetings Law for JA Council meetings. In this case we went through the full agenda, but took no official action. One of those proposed actions was securing JA Council approval of the proposed 2025 JA budget. Since the ultimate approval of that budget comes from the MVLS and SALS boards of trustees, that budget is now available for MVLS board approval. It will be with the meeting materials for the September meeting.

The SCPL withdrawal from JA is now moving forward rapidly. SCPL and JA have agreed to dates for the withdrawal, in mid-December, 2024. DLD has indicated to all parties that they are not open to any changes in public library system boundaries. Schenectady has elected to develop their own independent integrated library system, using the same Polaris software used by JA. The Upper Hudson Library System has decided to cease discussing a partnership with SCPL. The reciprocal holds between SCPL and the rest of the JA libraries have been stopped as per the decision of the JA ad hoc committee on that subject.

There remain many issues that still need to be worked out between SCPL, JA and MVLS. The technical transition team will continue to meet to deal with those technical issues. We are working to form a special working group of member library representatives that will discuss and make recommendations concerning all of the library issues that will change when SCPL is no longer on the same computer system as the rest of the libraries. And there are two separate initiatives that seek to develop a structure to help find a mutual solution between MVLS and SCPL on how the relationship between us will work after the withdrawal. There is a meeting scheduled on 9/16 between me, Haileab, Charity Thorne and Madelyn Thorne to begin the discussion of how – various committees? mediation? – to begin finding solutions to those many issues.

Finally, we have the issue of the response to the August 29 letter. Cole Adams worked with the Executive Committee to draft an initial response, and that response, available here: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Board-Response-to-Augsut-29-Letter.pdf>, was sent to the SCPL board of trustees on September 9. Cole will be available to provide additional counsel at our September 19 board meeting.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

Libraries are busy with summer programs in July and August. The MVLS GO! Project has been very successful and well-received. Libraries are now compiling their final statistics for the state. MVLS Start

With Science kits and KitKeeper items were heavily used over the summer. And believe it or not, planning is already underway for the 2025 collaborative summer reading program workshop.

Outreach projects include the implementation of the new Books for Babies initiative in Gloversville, and work in setting up programs with Liberty ARC in Amsterdam. Books continue to be distributed to outreach sites.

Beth continues to make contacts and visit the various jails. She is working with them to develop new ways to acquire materials and resources. Beth and Sharon visited the Schenectady County jail to consult with them on a proposed library automation project.

Through our work with the Broadband Coalition, Mary has been investigating various options for collaborative programs that can provide digital training to seniors and others, working with SALS, the Mid York Library System, and others. They are looking into various training platforms, including Senior Planet. Mary is also getting involved in a statewide effort to help libraries with accessibility issues, including website accessibility.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

Mary's training classes are continuing, with sessions in library locations including Schenectady and Schoharie, as well as in senior centers in Schenectady and Amsterdam. Website updates for libraries are ongoing, with work over the summer for Gloversville, St Johnsville and Sharon Springs. And Mary and Beth are already planning the Cabin Fever Club programs for 2025.

All MVLS staff continue to work on providing training for new staff in MVLS member libraries. Beth and Mary provided tours of the MVLS facility and demonstrations of resources to Diane Empie (St Johnsville) and Meghan Keaney (Sharon Springs), and a separate session for SCPL new youth services staff.

A variety of training, networking and collaboration opportunities are being offered to member libraries, including the Adult Program Swap, Youth Services meet-ups, Storytime Bootcamp and an outreach workshop. And Beth participated with the Amsterdam Library in tabling at a Centro Civico event, providing early literacy information to over 250 participants.

Trustee training sessions were held over the summer in Amsterdam and St Johnsville. All libraries are encouraged to contact MVLS for locally relevant trustee training sessions.

We have seven applicants for public library construction grants this fall, requesting a total of \$1,253,653. We have \$1,145,377 to allocate, so the committee has work to do. The committee meeting is Tuesday, September 16 at 9:30. In aggregate, we will be able to fund the requests at about 71% of project costs. A proposal will be brought to the September MVLS board meeting for approval.

Mary Carrier has been participating in a variety of CDLC activities, including committees on technology and AI. I am recommending that Mary become the new MVLS representative on the CDLC board of trustees. I know that CDLC is excited by the prospect of having Mary as a member of their board.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

In addition to the public library construction grants, September is also the time to approve the payment of the annual Foundation Dream & Do grants. Libraries have been invited apply for \$500 grants to augment some form of public service in their libraries. Applications are due September 15, so we will have a package for approval at the September board meeting.

The Foundation held a successful golf tournament in Cobleskill on August 23, raising about \$3,000 that gets used for Dream & Do and other Foundation grants.

The New York Alliance of Library Systems conference was very productive in identifying ways to make improvements to the New York library community's advocacy and public relations efforts.

Beth is currently at the Association of Rural and Small Libraries conference in Springfield, MA. MVLS offered conference scholarships to member libraries, as we do for other conference opportunities, including the annual NYLA conference. Mary and Beth will be presenting a program at the NYLA conference, which will be in Syracuse this year.

MVLS and the libraries have been getting great press coverage, especially for the MVLS GO! Initiative. Several media stories are linked below:

<https://www.news10.com/news/local-libraries-giving-out-original-trading-cards/>

https://www.dailygazette.com/the_recorder/amsterdam-library-central/article_631d2514-59ba-11ef-9c76-1b5be1fa0654.html

https://www.dailygazette.com/the_recorder/news/amsterdam-library-construction/article_72c64c8c-4ea4-11ef-9a56-6b8d6a4e4965.html

[Gloversville Public Library begins decreased service following failed budget vote](#)

Future good press will come through a donation received through Fenimore Asset Management in Cobleskill. Dusty Putnam, one of the founders of FAM, was a MVLS trustee in the 1990s and early 2000s. The company is celebrating its 50th anniversary, and as a part of that celebration, coordinated donations to Schoharie County libraries through MVLS. Much more will come about this effort.

A new issue of the MVLS Newsletter was produced in August. It is on the MVLS website at:

<https://www.mvls.info/newsletter/>,

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

7/1/2024

Madelyn Thorne
Foundation Board

Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library

7/2/2024

Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library

Tina Shave, Fort Hunter Free Library

John Sullivan

Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library

7/3/2024

Wanda Bruchis, Mid York Library System

	Heather Devitt, Mohawk Valley Digital Inclusion Coalition
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Max Prime, NYLA
7/4/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
7/5/2024	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	John Sullivan
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
7/8/2024	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	Foundation Board
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Heather Devitt, Mohawk Valley Digital Inclusion Coalition
	MVLS Trustee Education Session - STJ
	Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
7/9/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Julia Maxwell, DLD
	Alex Kuttich, Montgomery County Planning
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/10/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Joe Burke, Altamont Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	JA Council
	Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/11/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Wanda Bruchis, Mid York Library System
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/12/2024	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	Don LaPlant, The Community Library
7/15/2024	Christine Witkowski

	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/16/2024	John Wisniewski, Global Underwriters Agency, Inc.
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS Staff
	Sean Wyse, Rivers Casino & Resort
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
	Don LaPlant, The Community Library
7/17/2024	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/18/2024	Stephanie Cuomo
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
7/22/2024	Frank Privitera, Fenimore Asset Management & FAM Funds
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Grace Riario, Ramapo Catskill Library System
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/23/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS SCPL JA Discussions
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
7/24/2024	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
7/25/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Foundation Board
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
7/26/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Doug McFadden
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
7/29/2024	Brideen Finegan
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	MVLS Awards Committee
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library

7/30/2024	<p>Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library</p> <p>Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library</p> <p>Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library</p> <p>Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams</p> <p>NYALS Conference</p> <p>PULISDO Meetings</p>
7/31/2024	<p>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System</p> <p>NYALS Conference</p> <p>PULISDO Meetings</p>
8/1/2024	<p>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System</p> <p>Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library</p> <p>Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library</p> <p>Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams</p> <p>PULISDO Meetings</p>
8/2/2024	<p>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System</p> <p>Kim Zimmer, The Community Library</p> <p>Brideen Finegan</p> <p>Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library</p> <p>MVLS Member Library Directors</p>
8/5/2024	<p>Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library</p> <p>Christine Witkowski</p> <p>MVLS SCPL JA Discussions</p>
8/6/2024	<p>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System</p> <p>Brideen Finegan</p> <p>John Sullivan</p>
8/7/2024	<p>Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams</p> <p>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System</p> <p>MVLS Board of Trustees</p> <p>MVLS Central Library Advisory Committee</p> <p>MVLS Member Library Directors</p> <p>Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library</p>
8/8/2024	<p>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System</p> <p>Kim Zimmer, The Community Library</p> <p>Mary VanPatten</p> <p>Brideen Finegan</p> <p>Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development</p> <p>Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library</p> <p>Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams</p> <p>MVLS Member Library Directors</p> <p>Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library</p> <p>Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library</p> <p>Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library</p>
8/9/2024	<p>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System</p> <p>Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library</p>
8/12/2024	<p>Frank Reese, Division of Library Development</p> <p>Foundation Event Committee</p>

	MVLS Awards Committee
	MVLS Central Library Advisory Committee
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
8/13/2024	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	PULISDO
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
8/14/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
8/15/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Division of Library Development, NYSED
	MVLS Central Library Advisory Committee
8/16/2024	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
8/19/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Doug McFadden
	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
8/20/2024	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
8/21/2024	Cheryl Cufari
8/22/2024	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
8/23/2024	Becky Leggieri
	Haileab Samuel
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
8/27/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
8/28/2024	Becky Leggieri
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS Trustee Education Session
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
8/29/2024	Brideen Finegan

8/30/2024

Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
Foundation Board
Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
MVLS Board of Trustees
MVLS Member Library Directors
Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
Christine Witkowski
Sarah Gold, Gold Law Firm
Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library