

# SHELF LIFE

MOHAWK VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM



## IS YOUR LIBRARY READY FOR AN EMERGENCY?

If one thing is certain in life, it's that the unexpected happens! In a library this could be anything from a community member or staff member having a medical emergency to a weather event damaging your building. Whether your library is small or large, it's important to be ready to respond so that patrons and staff are safe!

Here are some things to consider when planning to respond to unexpected emergencies:

**Go bags** – These should include up-to-date schedules, contact information for all staff members and their emergency contacts, as well as, a small first aid kit, a thermal blanket, and a whistle or bullhorn. As an important reminder, these items should be in a bag or bin, ready to take with you in the event of an evacuation.

**Evacuation** – If you and your staff have to evacuate, do you have a meeting point to ensure everyone made it out safely? Does your staff know how to sweep the building quickly and efficiently to help direct patrons out of the library? Are your exits clearly labeled?

*Continued on page 2*



Use this  
template to  
create a portable  
ready-reference  
for emergencies!

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## IS YOUR LIBRARY READY FOR AN EMERGENCY?, CONT'D

**Communications** – How will you communicate with staff during the emergency and afterward: text, email, or another means? Do you have a landline in your library to call for help if needed?

**Facility** – Do all staff keep an eye on the building and grounds for potential safety issues? Do they know the procedures for reporting them?

**Who's in charge?** Do you have an established "chain of command?" Do staff feel empowered to make decisions in emergencies, especially on evenings and weekends when there is a limited workforce?

**Where to go?** Sometimes it's safer to stay inside the building. Where is the best location in your building for staff and patrons to shelter in place if needed?

**Who to call?** Do you have an accessible phone list for local law enforcement/emergency services, and your plumber, electrician, or other important tradespeople?

**Equipment** – Flashlights are a must, a battery-operated radio can be helpful in the event of a weather-related emergency, especially if the power goes down. Do all library staff know where the fire extinguishers are and how to use them? Where is the first aid kit and where are the supplies if it needs restocking? Do you have a way to block off an area if it needs to be restricted for a time?

**Incident Reports** - Make sure you are keeping track of any injuries or accidents for insurance purposes.

### Steps to Take

- Review the items above.
- Develop a written safety plan/procedure.
- Train staff on procedures regularly and especially during onboarding.
- Connect with local law enforcement to discuss building safety and training for staff.
- Consider developing policies for unattended children and vulnerable adults so staff know how to respond in these situations.



Consider joining the American Red Cross Ready Rating System. Enter your organization's information and discover how emergency-ready your Library is today.

Click [here](#) for more information.



Thank you to Karen Shaffer and the staff at the Amsterdam Free Library for your creative support and promotion of Cabin Fever Club - Winter 2025!



### Staff Picks: *What are you reading?*

Eric: *A Place in Time*  
by Wendell Berry

Beth: *You'll be the Death of Me*  
by Karen M.. McManus

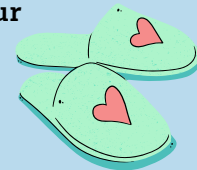
Kate: *Annihilation*  
by Jeff VanderMeer

Wade: *The Things They Carried*  
by Tim O'Brien



## VISIT THE LIBRARY IN YOUR PJS

Can you believe we have all these services our community can use to connect with our libraries without even leaving home?



It's just a click away:

- Access the online catalog to search for titles.
- Search for Library of Things items such as games, equipment, kits, and more!
- Check out promoted New Titles or New Stuff
- Place a request for an item (s).
- Borrow eContent - ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines.
- Learn about programs, events, and activities happening at the library or virtually. Check out the calendar and find out how to register.
- Research topics using NOVELny - Gale Resources.
- Home School Educate

Some libraries in our system have special products and databases - such as:

- NY Heritage
- NYS Historic Papers
- Ancestry - genealogy research

Take some time to see if all of your library's services are easy to find on your website and promoted on social media.





## WAITING ON A BUDGET

*NY State budget deadline has passed, still being negotiated.*

April is here. Unfortunately, the New York State budget is not.

The Governor and legislative leaders have not reached consensus on multiple policy issues within the budget. As a result, the April 1st deadline is in the rear view mirror, and a budget extender has been passed. Further extenders may be required if the budget continues to be delayed.

In January, the Governor introduced her executive budget proposal with a slight increase in Library Operating Aid and a significant decrease in Library Construction Aid. In March, the State Senate and Assembly shared their one-house budget amendments that proposed increases in library funding. (See the chart below for more details.)

Thank you to all who made the trip to Albany, spoke with legislators, and/or sent messages to advocate for library funding in the state budget.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SAVE THE DATES!

#### *Trustee Training Session*

Thursday, April 24th, 9:30-10:30 am  
MVLS (virtual or in-person)  
Topic: Library Core Values

#### *MVLS Spring Symposium*

Thursday, May 1st, 3:00-5:30 pm  
Sharon Springs Free Library

#### *Future-Ready Youth: Preparing Our Patrons to Navigate the Age of AI, featuring Nick Tanzi*

Friday, May 2nd, 10:00 am (virtual)

#### *Public Services Meetup*

Thursday, May 15th, 2:00-3:00 pm (virtual)

## UNCERTAINTY AT IMLS

In recent weeks, the status of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal government agency that provides funding in support of libraries and museums, has changed dramatically. After a recent presidential executive order, the status of the agency is uncertain, and IMLS staff have been placed on paid leave for up to 90 days.

To share your opinion on the subject, NYLA has created a [link where you can share a message with your elected representatives in support of IMLS](#).

### 2025-26 New York State Budget Proposals

FUNDING CATEGORY	GOVERNOR	ASSEMBLY	SENATE
LIBRARY OPERATING AID	\$104.6 MILLION	\$107.1 MILLION	\$109.6 MILLION
LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION AID	\$34 MILLION	\$68 MILLION	\$54 MILLION
LIBRARY MATERIALS AID	\$6.25/PUPIL	\$11.50/PUPIL	\$11.33/PUPIL
NOVELny	\$3 MILLION	\$3 MILLION	\$3.25 MILLION



## AI CHALLENGE FOR YOUTH SERVICES STAFF



During the month of March, MVLS joined with eleven other NYS Library Systems to offer the **YS AI Challenge**.

The challenge consisted of six weekly mini-challenges, each designed to help YS staff learn about AI tools, expand general knowledge, and leverage AI tools to streamline library services.

Topics included: prompt engineering, image creation, communications, and tools for books, programs, and social media.

You can find more details [here](#)!

We'll also be participating in ***Future-Ready Youth: Preparing Our Patrons to Navigate the Age of AI***, featuring Nick Tanzi, Assistant Director at South Huntington Public Library on Long Island.

This virtual program will be held Friday, May 2nd, 10 am. Please register [here](#).

## COLLECTIONS CORNER

*Useful selection tools for youth materials*

The 2025 Día booklists - in English & Spanish! - provide engaging stories representing a variety of cultures and backgrounds to share with children from birth through 8th grade.



## PROGRAMMING RESOURCES



### Digital Resources

**Agricultural Literacy:** books and activity plans to celebrate, educate, and engage kids in your community. Find them [here](#)!

**Vincent Van Gogh Museum:** Just in time for summer, here's a trove of resources about the famous artist, with fun activities for kids of all ages!

### Resources added to myTurn

Down by the Bay Storytelling Felt

Hand Drums

Once Upon a Time Story Stones - Garden Theme  
Once Upon a Time Story Stones - Medieval Theme



new

## OUTREACH MINI-GRANTS



Outreach Mini-grant Applications are now open for the 2025-2026 cycle. Please apply to Beth by Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. Feel free to reach out with any questions!

# NATIONAL LIBRARY WORKERS DAY APRIL 8, 2025

Mark this day to recognize all of the hard work and valuable contributions of all library workers. Only one day? Doesn't seem long enough...how will you celebrate?



“Alone we can do  
so little, together  
we can do so much.”  
~Helen Keller



*Let's  
Celebrate*

National Library Week: April 6-12  
What's the draw? Everything.

# CHECK OUT GOOGLE LENS

## From the Tech Tutor

Google Lens is a visual search tool that can identify what you are looking at and provide search results.



Some of the cool things you can do with Google Lens include:

### Identify -

- plants, animals, and other objects.
- products and where to buy them.
- clothing brands - suggestions on price and where to buy them.

### Translate -

- text from signs and other images.

### Explain -

- solves math problems and equations instantly, while providing an explanation of how the problem was solved.

## Find Google Lens:

Android phones have the Google app pre-installed - some models even have Google lens included in their camera features. iPhone users will need to download the Google app from the App store.



To get started, open the Google app and tap on the lens icon. Allow the app permission to use your camera. Hover the lens over an image or object and tap on the magnifying glass icon.

An easy test is to aim at your shoe or at a water bottle to see how Google Lens works. To access the interactive lens again, tap on the back arrow at the top of your screen.

To use Google Lens with photos on your smartphone, tap the images icon next to the magnifying glass icon. Allow Google limited or full access to your photos. Tap on a photo, such as a pet, flower, or beach. Expand the lens window if necessary and review the search results. If you allow limited access, you will need to allow access for each image and tap on Edit Selected Photo each time.

Have fun exploring all you can do with Google Lens!

## Digital Literacy News

### SENIOR PLANET FROM AARP

Senior Planet classes are in full swing. Kim Zimmer, Director of The Community Library, hit a home run with the Streaming and Smart TVs class. And the crowd went wild, with 21 people in attendance and fully engaged!

Mary Carrier from MVLS has been up to bat the last few months delivering the AI Scams class to a number of local senior centers.

### Grow with Google

John Sullivan from the Frothingham Free Library scores big as he has been consistently offering a variety of digital literacy classes using the Grow with Google platform.



The Amsterdam Free Library is gearing up to hit it out of the park, offering the Digital Learn series of classes in April/May. The series includes *Computer Basics & the Windows Operating System*; *Internet Basics*; *Cybersecurity Basics*; *Email Basics*; and separate classes for *Mobile Devices - Android & iOS (Apple) smartphones*.

**Are you ready for spring training?  
Interested in offering classes at your  
library or local senior center? Contact  
Mary Carrier - [mcarrier@mvls.info](mailto:mcarrier@mvls.info) to  
discuss a variety of options.**





# CELEBRATIONS & SHOUT OUTS



We appreciate our delivery  
service driver, Josh!  
Thank YOU!



Good Luck to  
all our libraries  
that have a  
budget vote in May!



**Congratulations to Diane Empie and  
The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library**  
for receiving a Regional Collections grant  
from the Capital District Library Council  
(CDLC) to digitize these historic newspapers:

St. Johnsville Enterprise & News  
Jan. 3, 1901 – Dec. 1931  
Sep. 16, 1931 – Dec. 25, 1958  
Jan. 1, 1959 – Mar. 25, 1971

Fort Plain Standard  
Jun. 5, 1911 – Dec. 27, 1928  
Jul. 3, 1930 – Dec. 30, 1942

It will be great to find these online in the future at  
[The NYS Historic Newspapers](#).



## CONTACT US

Do you have questions we can answer? Helpful comments?  
Want to tell us about something going on at your library?  
Email us or call us at 518-355-2010.

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Not sure who to contact?  
Check out [MVLS Staff At a Glance](#)