

SHELF LIFE

MOHAWK VALLEY
LIBRARY SYSTEM



Middleburgh Library

THE ONLINE CATALOG HAS A NEW LOOK

Vega Discover is live!

The public online catalog (PAC) accessed from public computers in our libraries and from each library's website is getting a new look. As you may have heard, website accessibility is an important requirement and much work is being done by institutions and agencies to be in compliance with Title II WCAG 2.1, AA. These are the standards required to ensure web content is accessible to individuals with disabilities, effective April 2026.

Our integrated library system, Polaris, now has a new PAC interface called Vega Discover. This change has been made in order to meet ADA compliance standards. On April 1, we added a link to the new Vega Discover catalog on the current PAC to allow patrons to start getting used to the new catalog.

Continued on page 2



Coming Soon: Niche Academy

Niche Academy is a training platform that will be available soon to all MVLS staff and member library trustees. There are tutorials available on a variety of subjects. These self-paced training modules cover topics like DEI, grants, trustee training, collection management, and more!

*Take some time to explore
our Niche Academy
when you receive your invite.*

IN THIS ISSUE:

*New Online Catalog - Page 2
Advocacy Update- Page 3 - 4
Youth Services Highlights - Pages 4 & 5
Website Accessibility - Page 6
Library Highlights - Page 7 -8*

Continued from page 1

The PAC will not be going away in the near future; there is even a link to the “Classic catalog” on the Vega Discover catalog for those who prefer the old PAC interface.

JA staff will update the catalog links on all public PCs in our libraries to the Vega Discover catalog on April 20, 2026; you may request for this change to be made sooner by contacting Computer Support.

Any catalog links (including embedded search boxes, links to My Account, the online “Get a Library Card” page, and all printed materials referencing pac.sals.edu) will need to be updated.

As you know, any new rollout can have growing pains! Vega Discover is continuously tweaking and updating. Take some time to explore the new PAC from a patron’s perspective. Bear in mind that this rollout is live, so any exploration you do (such as placing a hold) is real.



GONE PHISHING?

Pause before you take the bait

New York’s trout fishing season runs from April 1 to October 15. Trout season seems short, compared to phishing “season” which takes place year round, 24/7.



Phishing is the technique used to try to get you to click on a link in an email or text message. The link is used to spread a virus to your computer or to your email contacts, or to collect personal information. Don’t get caught taking the bait!

Protect yourself by keeping these tips in mind:

- Be skeptical
- Pause and come back to the message later.
- Verify with the “sender” to see if the message is real.

If you see a phishing attempt, while at work, tell your supervisor so they can let others know.

The best way to avoid phishing is to delete the message.

To err is human and a click can happen. Protect yourself and make sure to let others know that may be impacted. Follow up with tech support, change your passwords, and continue to be alert.



Waiting on the state budget

Ideally, the New York State budget should be passed by April 1st. Unfortunately, that has not been the case over the past few years, and this year is no different. Last year, the state budget was not approved until May. A budget extender was recently passed to keep funding the government through April 7th, but further extensions may be necessary if budget negotiations continue beyond that date.



In the meantime, both the State Senate and the State Assembly have proposed changes to the Governor's budget. As is frequently the case, the Governor's budget included cuts to both Library Operating Aid and Library Construction Aid. Both the Senate and Assembly have proposed modest increases for both funding categories.

New for this year, the Governor's budget proposal included \$12 million in funding to help stabilize the Office of Cultural Education, which includes the New York State Library. This funding is especially

important because it will help protect the Office of Cultural Education from fluctuations in federal funding, an issue that has been of great importance over the last year. It appears that both the Assembly and Senate support this funding, too.

Even though the current situation looks mostly positive, nothing is set in stone until both houses approve the budget and the Governor signs it into law.

Keep an eye out for news on the budget. MVLS will report on the final results after it passes.

Thank you for your ongoing advocacy!

BUILDING A NEW PLAN

Frothingham Free Library celebrates the creation of a Plan of Service

On March 17th, amid newly-painted bookshelves, the Frothingham Free Library Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve its 2026-2030 Plan of Service.

For this dedicated group of trustees and staff, it is much more than meeting a state requirement. They worked diligently to

Continued on page 4



Trustees and staff at Frothingham Free Library celebrate adoption of their new Plan of Service.

Continued from page 3

create a bold plan for the future of the library. They held workshops to learn about the needs of the community. They identified the library's core values and drafted vision and mission statements. They created goals for the library with specific tasks to accomplish them. In short: they built a road map for their library.

Frothingham Free Library has much to celebrate now. They look forward to even more celebrations as they implement their plan.

In addition to Frothingham Free Library, The Community Library (Cobleskill) and the Schenectady County Public Library have also been working hard on their strategic plans. MVLS is embarking on its own strategic planning process, as well.

MVLS is always happy to help libraries navigate this process. (Please contact Wade Abbott for more information.)

Programming Resources

New (updated)
Start with Science Kit:
Incredible Insects
***available in Polaris

Children's Book
Discussion Sets
***available in MyTurn



Save the Date

The MVLS Spring Symposium is
Wednesday, May 6
2-5 PM
Middleburgh Library
323 Main Street

Save the Dates!

Storytime Bootcamp
4/15, 12-4:30 pm @ MVLS

Reader's Advisory:
RA for All: Flip the Script
and Think Like a Reader
5/13, 2pm via Zoom

Spring

Storytime Smarts!

click images for inspiration & resources

Gardens



StoryTime Skills: SINGING

Did you know there are five interactive practices that experts recommend to make the most of your library storytime's potential and build early literacy skills? Those skills are: Talking, Writing, Reading, Playing, and Singing!

Singing is an important practice in developing early literacy skills in young children for several reasons:

1. Singing helps children learn new words and information. Songs are a natural way to learn about language.
2. Most songs have a different note for each syllable. This helps break down words so they hear individual sounds.
3. Singing slows down language so children can hear different parts of words and notice how they are alike and different.
4. Singing develops listening skills, and helps children remember things for a longer time.

In fact, you may still use songs to remember things you learned decades ago, like the alphabet or the days of the week!



HOW CAN LIBRARIES HELP?

1. Be sure to include singing in your storytime! You can sing, chant, or play recorded/streaming music.
2. Include songs that have hand gestures/body movements that go along with the words. This will help children remember the songs better, since multiple senses are used.
3. Read aloud books that can be sung, such as Over in the Meadow or I Ain't Gonna Paint No More!
4. Introduce families to a wide variety of children's music. There are many artists who record just for young children. Try different bands and find your favorites. Share them with your families!
5. Include other musical activities such as nursery rhymes and finger plays. Encourage parents to do the same at home!

RESOURCES

Diversify Your Storytime Music - Bookcart Queens

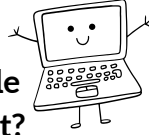
Hitting the Right Notes: Using Music in Storytime - The Loudest Librarian

Music, Movement, and Stories - ALSC Recommended Books and Songs

Singable Books List - Boston Public Library

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

From the Tech Tutor



Q. Does everyone have an equitable experience with our digital content?

A. We all need to approach our digital content with accessibility in mind.

Libraries and other state and local agencies are being advised to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), specifically to the requirements, of the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - WCAG 2.1 AA standards for web and mobile applications](#).

It is important for our library websites to be accessible for individuals with disabilities.

Three main categories include:

- Accessible for individuals with a **visual impairment** - a screen reader is able to narrate the text found on a website.
- Accessible for individuals with a **hearing impairment** - use captions on videos.
- Accessible for individuals with an **inability to use a mouse** and/or a keyboard for navigation - the ability to use keyboard commands as an option or voice recognition software to control the computer.

“Accessibility allows us to tap into everyone’s potential.” - Debra Ruh

As a starting point, here are 5 Big Accessibility Fixes to incorporate:

Alt-Text

Alternative text is a description of the image that is read by a screen reader. This allows the individual using this technology to understand the relevant content of an image. Content creation software and social media platforms have an area to add alt-text.

Accessibility Checker

Microsoft products and other content creation platforms such as Canva have built-in accessibility checkers. When initiated, they look for color contrast issues and missing alt-text, and can provide recommendations to allow for a more accessible experience.

Consistent Headings on Webpages

Use the heading tags in HTML, consistently:

H1 - page title

H2 - major headings

H3 - major sub headings

[More information about headings](#)

Color Contrast

Use this [color contrast tool](#) to compare foreground and background colors to determine the contrast ratio.

Label Descriptions for links

When a screen reader reads, ‘click here’ it is not helpful to the user. Links should be described in more detail, such as, Click here to read our policy about book donations or remove the click here and start with [Read our policy about book donations](#)

CAUGHT BEING CLEVERLY CREATIVE

The art of Pysanky
Ukrainian egg decorating
hosted by the Schoharie Free Library



Photo credit:
Pete Lindemann,
Cobleskill Times Journal, 3/26/26



Email Beth by 4/17 to be entered into a drawing for a bundle of new books for your Library.

Staff Picks

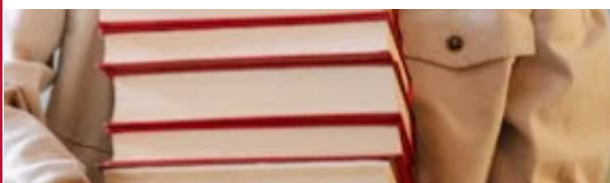
What are you reading?

Kate: *Strangers*
by Belle Burden

Mary: *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*
by Lisa See

Sharon: *Very Bad Company*
by Emma Rosenblum

Wade: *Navy SEALS*
by Dick Couch & William Doyle



CONTACT US

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

Thank you to all staff for your dedication to your library and community! You are invaluable!



National Library Workers Day

4/21/2026

