

AT a time in America when we are all feeling uncertain about the future and unprepared for the complexities of the new global order, the American public library offers a remarkable bulwark against fear, ignorance and isolation. It is both a symbol and a place of intellectual and social discourse. Beyond books, beyond the dispensing of information, beyond providing a place to read and think, the public library exists as a civic institution. It provides a way for people to participate, to share, to learn and to communicate—the very basics of democratic culture. —Diantha D. Schull, President, Libraries for the Future

A C R O S S T H E

BOARD

Inspiring Trustees: Models to Emulate

Trustees are volunteers who work tirelessly around the calendar telling the library story to local legislators, neighbors and businesses. They lay the groundwork that helps libraries secure funding, often in ways that inspire us.

This year the Mid-Hudson Library System recognized five public library trustees with its **First Trustee Success Story Recognition Awards**. The recipients were nominated by fellow board members and judged on two criteria: (1) What was the positive outcome for their library; (2) How inspiring was the project for other library trustees. One trustee from each of the five counties served by the System (Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam and Ulster) was awarded a \$200 cash grant for their library. The awards, presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Mid-Hudson Library System, will be given annually.

And the winners are...

Columbia County: Vesna Marincek, Kinderhook Memorial Library.

Ms. Marincek began her service on the board by contributing new ideas to raise funds for library operating costs and capital improvements. Capitalizing on her knowledge that libraries with budgets which are voted on by the public receive more stable funding from their towns, she created a success story for herself and the Kinderhook Library. Ms. Marincek aggressively pursued a more secure means of funding for her library and the Valatie Library through Chapter 414, directing an intensive year-long program of research and outreach involving community members. As a result, the library's annual operating budget increased by 50 percent, enabling it to add a professional librarian to the staff and increase the library's hours of operation from 20 to 35 per week.

Dutchess County: Celia Bland, Tivoli Free Library. Described as an unflagging and talented volunteer, Ms. Bland expends her time and talent in many areas, from preschool story hour to fund-raising events and grant writing. One of her more notable contributions was the partnership she engendered between the **Lost Sock Laundrette**, a local Tivoli business, and the library. That partnership resulted in the establishment of **Speed Queen Java**, a coffee bar at the laundrette. Underwritten by the business and operated by Ms. Bland on behalf of the library, proceeds benefit the library's book budget. She also applied to the Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Foundation and was awarded a product donation of ice cream bars to sell during the library's annual book sale. Tivoli Free Library Board President, Christine Kane, said of Ms. Bland, "She has helped her fellow board members recognize that their community and its business owners are more than willing to support the library."

Greene County: Erin Feinburg, Cairo Public Library. Ms. Feinburg has been an active member of the Cairo Public Library Board for 36 years and a member of the Greene County Library Association for 21 years. Over the course of her tenure Ms. Feinburg has been "a vocal supporter of raising library staff salaries to a level commensurate with comparable positions and is always looking for ways to show her appreciation of the staff," said Debra Kamecke, director of the Cairo Public Library. Ms. Feinburg was instrumental in starting the library and spearheaded the movement to relocate it to a new building. In 1994, she supported building the addition that houses the children's room. Beyond her successes within the library, Ms. Feinburg is to be commended for her drive to promote the library and its services at every opportunity.

Putnam County: Dr. Kathi Heiber, Mahopac Library. In October 2000 the Mahopac community approved a bond issue for a new \$7.9 million library with much thanks to the efforts of then-board president Dr. Kathi Heiber. Dr. Heiber continues to work with the architect and building engineer on the plans for the library. She has worked extensively with the Putnam County Library Association on various committees to increase library funding by state, county and local legislatures. "Kathi is constantly encouraging trustees to be concerned locally, regionally and statewide in library functions," said David Gagliardi, a trustee of the Mahopac Library.

Ulster County: Harvey Kronick, Hurley Library. Mr. Kronick, a trustee of the Hurley Library for the past eight years, is referred to as "the backbone of the Hurley Library" by its director, Barbara Alstadt. "He keeps the finances and spending in check while being open to spending on new programs and materials." Mr. Kronick is viewed as an "all-around trustee," with contributions that range from setting up tarpaulins to provide shade during the summer reading program, to working behind the scenes on the library's special district vote, to actively recruiting community members to the Hurley Library board of trustees. "It is difficult to put into words how important he is to the success of our library," said Ms. Alstadt.

In Support of Libraries

Organizations that are integral to their communities share three characteristics: *Value, Visibility, Viability*. Mid-Hudson Library System services are designed to provide assistance to libraries in these areas.

Value. The value of a library to its community can be measured by the range of materials and services it offers to patrons. Mid-Hudson Library System adds to a library's value by facilitating resource sharing among all of the member libraries, which means your library can now offer more to its patrons. For example, your patrons have access to all of the catalogs of MHLS member libraries through our shared circulation system.

Online options are available for reserving books (**Request-A-Title**) which can be picked up at any library within the System service area. Patrons can also check their personal library records online. Each library receives one to six days of free delivery per week when System vans pick up and drop off books, videos, program support materials and items requested through the Interlibrary Loan department and **Request-A-Title**.

Other resource-sharing benefits include **HomeAccess** which allows library patrons to access electronic databases from their homes or offices, thereby expanding the walls and services of your library; and **Rotating Collections** of materials in new formats such as DVD and books on CDs which help your staff to gauge patron response and make more informed purchasing decisions.

Visibility. Positive visibility leads to continued community support. MHLS helps by providing support for programming and publicity. For example, we offer programming materials and ideas to enhance the library experience for children, youth and families; we coordinate an annual **Performers Showcase** to help libraries choose the performers that are right for them; and we provide materials and program and translation support to libraries looking for new ways to meet the needs of their diverse communities.

Publicity related to programming and services is essential; it can increase your community's knowledge and appreciation of the library. To strengthen your library's visibility in its community, MHLS provides professionally designed and printed materials suited to your library's needs.

Library visibility is further enhanced by the expansion of traditional library services. Following are examples of recent MHLS initiatives that expand those services to make libraries more visible in their communities: **(1)** installing workforce development resources and/or workstations in your library to provide positive and timely help to jobseekers and local employers; **(2)** working with local educators and school systems to inform families and students about current health resources and homework help centers; **(3)** coordinating a centralized loan program of Talking Books and TTY machines for patrons with vision and hearing needs; and **(4)** disseminating information about grant opportunities and fundraising for libraries through the bimonthly Mid-Hudson Library System Fundraising Information newsletter.

Viability. Libraries are enduring institutions that deserve permanent, sustained funding to ensure their continuance. To help libraries achieve this the System works with them on Special District and Chapter 414 budget votes.

A strong board made up of well-versed trustees is fundamental to the success and growth of public libraries. Trustees receive support through annual **Trustee Training** sessions conducted throughout the System to ensure a fundamental understanding of the trustee role.

MHLS staff are available to consult with you and your library on a wide range of topics, from "Library Policies" to "Running Effective Meetings." See "Consultations Available from MHLS" for a complete listing.

Trustees and library staff can enhance their library expertise through continuing education opportunities provided by the System. Topics include:

- Managing Building Projects
- Public Library/School Library Connections
- Employee Benefits
- Basic Interlibrary Loan
- Reference Services
- Basic Web Page Maintenance
- Capital Campaigns and Fund Development
- Library Advocacy
- Digitization
- Using Digital Cameras
- Financial Statements/Financial Statement Analysis
- Children's Books and Materials Vendor Fair
- Serving Teens in the Library.

For support outside of a classroom setting, you can borrow materials from the MHLS professional collection of books and resources related to public libraries. Or visit our web site (<http://www.midhudson.org>) to find additional tools and information for trustees and library staff. Especially useful areas of the site are: *Contact Information for System Staff*, *Professional Development*, *Youth Services Department resources* and *Continuing Education opportunities*.

Consultations Available from MHLS*

*(Reach consultants by calling **845.471.6060** followed by the extensions listed below.)

Introduction to the Mid-Hudson Library System and Its Services. Overview of services and programs offered to member libraries including the value of consortium services to the local library. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Josh Cohen, jcohen@midhudson.org; ext. 17. | **Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees and the Director.** What is the role of the board of trustees? What are the responsibilities of trustees and the library director? Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Josh Cohen, jcohen@midhudson.org; ext. 17 or Rebekkah Smith, rsmith@midhudson.org; ext. 39. | **Library Policies.** Library policies are required by the Commissioner's regulations as part of the public library minimum standards. Learn what policies you should have and get help with their development. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Josh Cohen, jcohen@midhudson.org; ext. 17. | **Personnel.** Policy issues and best personnel practices for public library boards. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Josh Cohen, jcohen@midhudson.org; ext. 17. | **Sustaining Your Library.** Communities that vote on library budgets support public libraries at a higher per capita than libraries relying on the kindness of constituents. Learn about your options: Special Library Districts and Chapter 414. Follow-up help is available. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Josh Cohen, jcohen@midhudson.org; ext. 17 or Rebekkah Smith, rsmith@midhudson.org; ext. 39. | **Capital Campaigns.** Building or renovating your library can be a costly project. Learn how to fundraise strategically. Information on how to hire fundraising consultants is also available. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Rebekkah Smith, rsmith@midhudson.org; ext. 39 and Deborah Begley, dbegley@midhudson.org; ext. 22. | **Friends Groups.** What are they? How do they work? How to start one and best practices. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Rebekkah Smith, rsmith@midhudson.org; ext. 39. | **Running Effective Meetings.** Concise, effective meetings that fit busy contemporary life-styles are appreciated by trustees and may increase the pool of people interested in serving on a library board. Well-run meetings also increase the power and scope of what a board can accomplish. Time: 1/2 hr. **Contact:** Rebekkah Smith, rsmith@midhudson.org; ext. 39 and Merribeth Advocate, madvocate@midhudson.org; ext. 54. | **Space Planning.** Running out of space? Planning a new building? Take the time to do it right. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Josh Cohen, jcohen@midhudson.org; ext. 17. | **Budgeting Process.** Help with budgeting and financial recordkeeping. Time: 1 hr. **Contact:** Fred Van Tassell, ext. 15.

Visit the American Library Association on the web (<http://www.ala.org>) and discover how your library can become part of the @ your library™ campaign.

(left) **Celia Bland**, Tivoli Free Library, Dutchess County, is one of five recipients of the First Annual Trustee Success Story Recognition Awards. Presenting the award is Patricia Konopka, Secretary of the Mid-Hudson Library System Board of Trustees.



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A Mid-Hudson Library System Publication for Trustees

103 Market Street * Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED