

From Jesse Feiler, President, Mid-Hudson Library System Board of Trustees ← This last year has seen the fruition of a number of projects that have been many years in the making. On the technology front, we have continued to bring more and more of our libraries online. With the advent of Internet communications, automated circulation is now feasible for all of our libraries. Initially, the largest of our libraries came online to better meet the new demands of library service. Now, many of our smallest libraries have discovered that automation brings comparable benefits to them—the drudgery of preparing overdue notices, for example, has simply disappeared. We still have a number of libraries to go before the entire System is automated, but the end is clearly in sight. ← One of the benefits of having more of our libraries online is that the Union Catalog is almost complete. At various times in the past, some libraries did not submit bibliographic data; at other times, Mid-Hudson itself did not accept certain types of data (children's books at one point). Today, everything that can circulate must be in the catalog in order for the System to work. And, as more and more holdings are added, we are discovering more and more “buried treasures” in our libraries. (continued below)

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We also have been able to implement System-wide holds on library materials. This means that a librarian or patron (from the library or from home) can request an item to be delivered to the patron's home library for pick-up. Our ever-expanding delivery system gets those items to libraries faster than ever. Patrons can receive requested items in a matter of days, not weeks. We have even heard reports of turnaround times under 24 hours, but a day or two is the norm.

All of this means improved service to our communities, and that's what matters. We will continue to improve our automation services next year as we migrate to a new circulation system. Built by Innovative Interfaces, it will replace our existing Geac system. There will be more about this later in the year. For now, all that matters is that it is easier to use—and yet it does more.

At MHLS itself, Josh, the staff and the Board have been working hard, examining some of our basic policies and procedures. In the area of grants, for example, there is a general sense that the System could be more effective in the monies that it disburses. We are moving away from a “one size fits all” approach into a more flexible system that will allow us to aid each library in the way that matters most to it.

The newly formed Trustee Services committee continues its work to help staff provide meaningful assistance to local trustees—who, after all, form the largest MHLS constituency other than patrons. Feedback on our trustee seminars this year has been excellent, and we hope to do even better next year.

On the horizon, a number of significant issues are looming that are certain to change the way in which libraries function. Perhaps the largest is the issue of copyright. We take the laws for granted, but they have changed recently and probably will again. Some people have suggested that copyright is an outdated concept—everything should be free, except for the cost of production (printing, ink, and so forth). Others take an opposite approach and suggest that copyright protects each use of the material: that is, lending a book should in some way generate a payment to the publisher. Electronic media (not to mention Napster) have forced these issues on to the table, and they are not likely to disappear soon.

Also of interest is the role that libraries play in their communities. As people lead busier, more “cocooned” lives, libraries remain one of the most social of institutions, appealing to a very broad range of people. This role may become increasingly important in the future. Looking ahead, it seems that our house is in order and we are ready for the changing demands of our patrons as we move together into a faster-paced world with increasing challenges and opportunities for library services.

From Josh Cohen, Executive Director, MHLS Just when pundits were predicting that books were dead, the MHLS **Request-A-Title** feature proved them wrong. With **Request-A-Title** a library cardholder can request any title from any online library in the system and have it delivered to the library of their choice. The response to this program has been so overwhelming, we had to buy a fourth delivery van and add an extra run each day of the week. This is the true future of library service: the melding of technology and tradition for improved library service.

Another inaccurate prediction was the belief that the Internet would make library buildings obsolete. We have seen that the Internet has sparked a whole new range of service for libraries and has brought people into buildings as never before. While this is good news, new computer areas and larger community rooms have over-taxed the

current limited space so that over fifty percent of libraries in the system are planning some type of construction or renovation. The System sponsored a Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) Institute on managing library building projects which was attended by 100 people. We have seen libraries pass bonds and hire fundraising consultants to build capital campaigns. System staff have consulted with libraries on fund development and strategies, space planning and construction issues and continue to be available to you for your library's needs.

A complete range of workshops was offered, from interlibrary loan and reference to digital cameras and young adult authors. New this year was training for trustees; thirty libraries received \$100 each for participation. The curriculum included *Structure of Libraries*, *Role of the Trustee*, and *Effective Meetings*. The same courses will be offered again next year. On November 1 we will hold our third annual Presidents Forum. This year's Forum will focus on the role of the board president.

Many libraries have been looking for ways to increase their tax support either through **Special District** or **Section 414**. These initiatives allow voters to determine the library's budget based on the services the community wants to see funded. In most instances library budgets have increased, but more importantly, when the public votes on the budget, the library becomes more responsive to its community.

Over the last few years I have met with more than half of our member library boards and wish to thank them for their warm welcomes and willingness to give their time for libraries. Libraries are, more than ever, community cornerstones crucial to a free democratic society. Whether it is our smallest library in Livingston or our largest in Poughkeepsie, there is a commitment to serving the community and offering the best service possible that is not surpassed by any other public organization. It is this dedication that makes libraries one of the most cherished institutions in a community. By working together we can make libraries even more valuable to and visible in our communities.

From Patti Haar, President, Director's Association *Patti is director of the Patterson Library Association in Putnam County. The Directors Association (DA) consists of all Mid-Hudson Library System library directors. As stated in its bylaws, the Association's purpose is “to address the needs and concerns of member librarians; to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas; to encourage the dissemination of information in the field of library management and to forward consensus recommendations to the Mid-Hudson Library System.”*

Basically, the Directors Association uses the bagel incentive to attract directors to meetings. Gathering together in the MHLS Auditorium one morning each month, library directors partake of the coffee, bagels, and danish that are graciously provided for us by Mid-Hudson. With an average attendance of over forty directors, this regular meeting of professional colleagues is an opportunity to share new ideas, seek solutions for common challenges, and maximize the benefits of membership in the Mid-Hudson Library System.

As new directors join Mid-Hudson libraries, they are strongly encouraged to participate in the DA. Their opinions and ideas are as important to the group as are those of directors with years of experience. The collective spirit is hard at work at MHLS. When member library trustees empower their directors to participate in these monthly meetings (which last about three hours), they ensure that all libraries are heard and play a part in the decision-making process for System services.

The business of libraries is constantly changing. From new formats to old buildings, the challenges of libraries throughout our region are many. The DA addresses a wide range of issues and concerns that are important to libraries of all sizes, and works with the staff and trustees of Mid-Hudson to find appropriate solutions for libraries wherever and whenever possible. This year the DA and MHLS have worked together to implement a number of projects: System holds, increased delivery, and informational workshops on topics ranging from reference basics to personnel benefits.

We look forward to continuing the process of migrating to new circulation/database software and to whatever adventures are in store for us all as we move our libraries into the new century.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Two fundraising workshops will be presented at MHLS this fall with Linda London, Nonprofit Advisor of the Council of Community Services of New York State, Inc. (CCSNYS) Leadership and Management Institute. These workshops are designed to help you plan and achieve the funding goals for your library.

The Fund Development Plan Workshop • Wed., Oct. 31st at the MHLS Auditorium, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Planning for fundraising can be a daunting task for library trustees, staff and volunteers. This workshop is designed to help you organize your fundraising efforts for maximum success. The workshop covers: *Key Concepts in Fundraising*, *Creating a Development/Fundraising Plan for Your Library*, and *Fundraising Strategies*.

Capital Campaign Basics Workshop • Fri., Nov. 9th at the MHLS Auditorium, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | A capital campaign can seem overwhelming for trustees and staff. This workshop will take you through steps you can replicate for successful campaign planning. The workshop covers: *Essentials of a Successful Campaign*; *Conducting a Readiness Assessment*; *Strategies, Structure and Rules*; *Choosing and Using a Fundraising Consultant*.

To register for one or both of these workshops, send an e-mail to signup@midhudson.org with your name and library by Friday, October 26, 2001. Or mail the information to MHLS, c/o Lena Smolon, Outreach and Education Services Assistant, 103 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601.

Board Presidents Forum • Thurs., Nov. 1st, 6–8 p.m. at the MHLS Auditorium | “The Role of the Board President” presented by Doug Sauer, Executive Director, Council of Community Services of New York State, Inc. Through his role as CCSNYS Executive Director (1982–present) Mr. Sauer has conducted extensive governance trainings for nonprofit boards of directors and executive-level staff. He has provided a wide range of technical assistance in the areas of organizational development, strategic planning, financial management, human resources, board development, mergers and collaboration. Mr. Sauer also serves on the Nonprofit Advisory Committee, led by the New York State Office of the Comptroller, and on the E-Grants Committee, co-led by the Comptroller’s Office and the State Office of Technology. To register, send an e-mail to signup@midhudson.org with your name and library by Friday, October 26, 2001. Or mail the information to MHLS, c/o Lena Smolon, Outreach and Education Services Assistant, 103 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601.

The NYS Board Training Consortium’s “Achieving Excellence in Governance” Training Series, 2001 (provided through contract with the State of New York by CCSNYS). The following workshops in this series will be held at the Grand Hotel, Poughkeepsie. Register by Monday, November 12, 2001.

Duties and Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

(Thurs., Nov. 15th, 1–4 p.m.)

Understanding Your Legal Obligations as a Nonprofit Board Member

(Thurs., Nov. 15th, 5:30–8:30 p.m. & Friday, November 16th, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.)

Human Resource Issues for Nonprofit Boards

(Thurs., Nov. 15th, 1–4 p.m.)

Quality Assurance Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

(Thurs., Nov. 15th, 5:30–8:30 p.m.)

Fund Development for Nonprofit Boards

(Fri., Nov. 16th, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.)

You can register online at <http://www.ccsnys.org/sbtc>. Or you can request registration forms from Rebekkah Smith, Coordinator of Community Relations, MHLS (845.471.6060 ext. 39, e-mail rsmith@midhudson.org). You can also use one of the following registration options: **Tel.** 1.800.515.5012, ext. 106, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; **Fax** 518.434.0392; **E-mail** anevin@ccsnys.org.

PLEASE NOTE: To be eligible to attend these workshops, *you must list your organization as the Mid-Hudson Library System*, not your local library.

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A Mid-Hudson Library System Publication for Trustees
103 Market Street * Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

“...those three little words, ‘free public library,’ remain among the sweetest in the language—not only in English, but in any language.”

—Marilyn Gardner
The Christian Science Monitor
September 29, 2001