

Director Report

April-May-June 2025

Administration

During the June meeting, the auditors will present the SALS (Southern Adirondack Library System) 2024 audit review, a pivotal update that will not only keep us all informed but also actively involved in understanding and maintaining our financial health.

SALS has been allocated approximately 1.2 million dollars to disburse qualifying projects. The Division of Library Development will soon open the Library Construction portal.

The SALS Board will be asked to approve revisions to the JA policies approved by the The MVLS board and the JA Council. The following seven policies were amended to remove references to specific library numbers and substitute the language "participating libraries in the Mohawk Valley and Southern Adirondack library systems."

The policies are:

- Identification Information in Patron Registration Policy
- Network Connections Policy
- Security Policy Addendum Confidential Library Patron Policy
- Security Policy Description
- Security Policy FAQ
- Access to Polaris Policy
- Workstation Purchase and Support Policy

The User Account Policy was amended to add, "Multi-factor authentication (MFA) is required for all user accounts." The SALS Board will also be asked to approve the budget amendments in the JA Budget.

- Increase BL 7260 Interest Income by \$10,000 to \$30,000;
- Increase BL 8210 Software Maintenance by \$45,171 to \$206,645;
- Increase BL 8510 Building Maintenance by \$950 to \$1,400;
- Increase BL 8520 Generator Maintenance by \$2,010 to \$3,000.

Kudos to Pamela DelSignore and the SALS staff for their exceptional work at the Annual Dinner. The event was held at the Saratoga National Golf Club in Saratoga Springs, New York. Approximately 160 people attended, and twenty-six member libraries were represented.

It was difficult saying goodbye to Linda Borden and Christine Connell, long-time trustees. We welcome Heather Crocker, Eleanor DeVries, Debbie Warnock, and Pat Partello.

Every year, all New York State employees must complete sexual harassment prevention training. It was distributed to all SALS employees and board members and was made available to member libraries to train their staff and board. Colleen worked with member library staff to update their staff lists to allow all current employees and board members to complete the training. She also assisted with the JA semi-annual group order.

Pamela DeSignore has accepted the position of Administration and Finance Manager. She has completed the JA Group Order and feels more comfortable in this position.

The System Services Support Coordinator position has been posted, and it is anticipated that it will be filled shortly. Jill Ryder is leading the search for that position.

The SALS Executive Director Search Committee met a few times, and the work is on schedule.

The SALS staff and Board will begin preparing the 2026 budget this summer. Personnel and the Audit and Finance Committees meetings will be scheduled in July or August.

Pamela usually prepares the SALS Annual Statistical Summary, but due to the learning curve, Jack Scott has agreed to compile it this year.

Once again, SALS participated in No Mow May. It is a nationwide effort to avoid mowing the lawn in May to help provide more food sources for bees and other pollinators emerging from winter hibernation.



Ajuga



Cat's-ear



Daisy



Popcorn



Ground Ivy



Wood-sorrel



Forget-me-not

Shortly after the SALS Board Meeting, I will leave for the ALA (American Library Association) Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA. It will be my last meeting serving on the ALA Executive Board.

The New York Library Association's Annual meeting will be held in Saratoga Springs, NY November 5-8, 2025. It is best to register under the Early Bird rates, which will be available shortly before the SALS September board meeting. Trustees interested in attending will receive continuing education (CE) credits. You may register through your

personal NYLA member account. Please get in touch with Pamela or NYLA if you need assistance registering.

All budget referendums passed this year. Our communities appreciate excellent library services, and our libraries deliver. In fact, in some elections, the library received a higher percentage of "yes" votes than the school budget.

The board must approve Tom Shaginaw's appointment as the SALS Board representative on the JA Council.

Joint Automation

The beginning of the year group orders was due on May 10th. Dave MacFarland compiled the orders. A few of the prices have increased slightly; most have gone down. Dave will notify libraries for the ones that have increased.

Jim Baker is upgrading library computers to Windows 11.

The final two SCPL PCs that were still running JA images were reimaged. A final message was sent by JA to the transition team thanking them for their work and stating that the transition is complete.

Sara, Eric Trahan and Michele Largeteau met with "Cole" Adams. Later Eric, Jill Ryder, and Michele met with the lawyer to discuss the first draft of the JA agreements.

SALS and MVLS are waiting for final approval by our lawyer to finalize the next 5-year contract with III.

MFA was enabled for all users on April 15th. Due to a great deal of hard work by Chris Mundell, Jim, Dave and member libraries, about 90% were set up before the deadline. The remaining users will be prompted to set up MFA on their next login to email or OneDrive. As of 5/7, only a handful had not set up MFA, so those accounts were disabled. They will be required to finish setting up MFA before using Polaris, email or OneDrive.

The Polaris ILS upgrade from version 7.5 to version 7.7 was completed overnight on 4/22. The system was available to users by 8 a.m. Jason Thomson and the system trainers did an excellent job planning for and completing the upgrade.

Seven JA policies were presented to the JA Council for upgrades in wording to reflect the change in membership with SCPL leaving. One policy, the User Account Policy, has been revised to add the MFA requirement. These changes were approved by JA and MVLS.

JA staff and system trainers are investigating a new solution for SMS text messages from Polaris. The current email to text solution is being phased out by cell phone carriers due to changes in federal regulations and anti-spam laws. There are two products that will offer a solution; either solution will incur a cost.

JA assisted with additional IT audit questions for the SALS audit.

Michele and Dave provided assistance to Colleen and Pamela as they transitioned the business office tasks, PCs, AxCrypt and QuickBooks.

Polaris settings were updated for the Ballston Spa's unplanned closure.

There were Meraki report problems; the monthly reports were not delivered. Meraki was notified and the problem was fixed.

Chris completed an upgrade to the firewall and VPN software. He still needs to complete an additional change for the VPN software server, awaiting a quote from Microsoft to build a new virtual server due to a change in the software requirements.

Chris has been working with FirstLight on an issue with the SALS phone system. Under certain circumstances, calls to people working in the SALS building will drop after several minutes. FirstLight investigated and implemented a fix on their end that appears to have fixed the problem, but it is still being monitored.

A firewall low memory event was caused by a large number of external entities attacking the VPN interface. Chris worked with Fortinet support to develop an updated configuration to mitigate the issue, and it is now running much better.

The JA staff continues to visit member libraries to help with renovations and computer reimaging.

There have been 499 SysAid calls since 4/1/2025. Top counts are Email, User Accounts and PCs. The calls that take the most time are PC's, Email and Polaris.

Cataloging

Jill Ryder worked with JA staff and the MVLS System Trainer (Sharon O'Brien) on testing, preparation and documentation for the upgrade to Polaris/Leap 7.7. The team has also been looking into alternative notification systems for sending text message notices to patrons, as cell phone carriers are phasing out the current means of delivering these messages.

Jill is leading the hiring process to fill the position of SALS System Services Support Coordinator. To date, we have received 5 applications.

Jill has been assisting Pamela by preparing the weekly bank deposits. She is also helping out with delivery and placing reserves for the correctional facility.

Ballston Spa Public Library closed unexpectedly; Jill worked with the director and JA staff to facilitate this closure.

As part of her day-to-day work, Jill assists library staff with running reports, changing Polaris system administration settings, bulk changing library items in the catalog, database cleanup and answering any and all Polaris questions that arise.

SALS catalogers (Jill Ryder and Johanna Hall) modified a total of 10,927 bibliographic records in the catalog during April and May 2025. A total of 6,184 new bibliographic records and 19,858 new item records were added to the database during the same months. This work is done by cataloging and technical processing staff both at the System offices and the member libraries. Bib records represent the individual works (a book or a DVD, etc.) and items records represent each library's copy of that work.

Jill oversees the purchasing of eBooks and eAudiobooks for the shared OverDrive collection; 526 titles were purchased throughout April and May 2025. Popular titles purchased include Great Big Beautiful Life by Emily Henry, Broken Country by Clare Leslie Hall, and The Wedding People by Alison Espach.

Outreach and Adult Services

In May, the SALS website had about 1,300 unique visitors. The most viewed pages were Job Listings, Calendar, and About Us.

On May 6, Jack Scott met with the statewide Accessibility Group, and they finalized recommendations to help member libraries create accessible digital content. The group looked at accessibility toolbars, newsletter software, social media posts, WordPress, PDFs, Canva documents, Accessibility Statements, LibGuides, Niche Academy, and public PC images. Jack will share the results with member libraries after all the information has been compiled.

On July 9, Jack will attend NYSL's Room for Everyone: A Library Accessibility Day of Learning and will bring back additional accessibility insights to share.

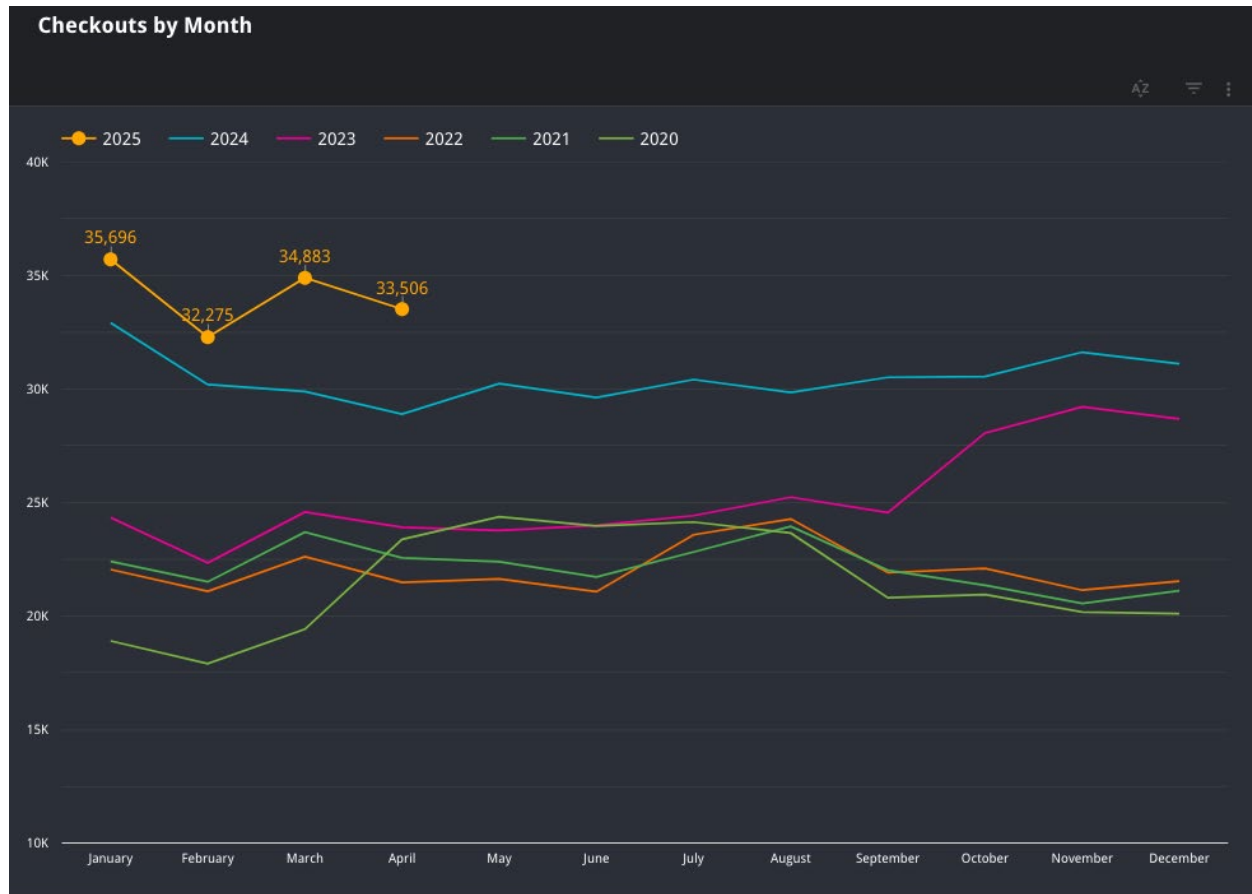
On May 22, Meghan Wakeman of the Capital District Library Council (CDLC) presented a virtual session on two services:

- Interlibrary Loan (ILL)– enabling patrons to borrow items from outside the SALS system, and
- Direct Access Program (DAP) – offering special library cards usable at libraries beyond SALS.

The program drew 68 registrants.

Finally, he completed nearly all the member-library infographic requests and is waiting on a few libraries to send their yearly highlights.

OverDrive: In April and May, an estimated 62,000 items were downloaded by 9,000 users, with 22,000 holds placed. In April, SALS borrowed 1,488 items from other systems and shared 478 items with other systems.



Statistical Summary: Jack is working on a new, more accessible format for the SALS' Statistical Summary using Google's Looker Studio. Looker Studio allows us to create interactive dashboards that connect to our annual report data.

NovelNY: From February through April, Gale recorded 2,230 sessions. The most used databases were Academic OneFile, In Context-Elementary, Opposing Viewpoints, and Health and Medicine.

Ancestry: In April and May, there were 1,285 searches.

OATS: SALS has submitted a joint application with Senior Planet for New York's Digital Equity Program Capacity Grant. If accepted, the grant would run from Q4 2025 through 2027, and our total funding request is \$85,156.

Jack is working with the Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS) and the Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS) to launch a new teen incentive program, Read It Forward, for this summer's reading season.

Each participating member library selects two popular YA titles—one novel and one graphic novel. This year, libraries collectively purchased 76 copies of *Pet* and 56 copies of *Dire Days of Willowweep Manor*.

Every copy is stickered with a brief explanation of Read It Forward and a QR code linking to a short survey. The books are then shipped to participating libraries, where teens can borrow them, read, and pass them along to a friend—no due dates, fines, or late fees.

GOAT 2025

On May 12, Jack met with MVLS and UHLS to plan our Greatest Of All Teen (GOAT) services. It has been decided to hold the event this autumn at the East Greenbush Library on October 22. More information will be shared with member libraries over the summer months.

Farm-2-Library

The annual Farm-2-Library meeting was held on April 25. Libraries reported that the program is thriving. Nearly all food is gone by the end of the day, with only bulk items like potatoes and apples lasting a day or two. Libraries restock in small batches—both to fit their limited-size fridges and to give more patrons a chance to take something. Recipe cards, especially unfamiliar produce, are a big draw.

One branch has leftover apples on Friday, which coincides with their Storytime. After Storytime, the kids race out, and each grabs an apple. Another library reported that they usually have a line of about 15 patrons waiting when each delivery arrives.

Comfort Food reports that their funding for this program is not in jeopardy.

On May 14, Jack visited the Comfort Food Community Food Hub in Greenwich. They have built some healthy relationships with local food producers. He was able to view the volunteers packing up the bins for the library deliveries and pick-ups on Thursday.

Jack has been asked to present on June 4, the Farm-2-Library program during the Nebraska Library Commission's weekly live webinar series.

Path-2-Belonging

On April 29, Jack met with the Path-2-Belonging team. The team discussed the project's future, timeline for completion, and plans for implementing the program.

The Advocacy Committee held its first meeting on May 1. The committee discussed its goals and plans for moving forward. The next meeting is scheduled for June 12.

On May 20, Jack attended NYLA's "Spring on the Hill—Advocacy for Every Season." It was a long day, but there were many excellent informational sessions. Some highlights:

- A Moth-style Story Hour on advocacy storytelling, and
- An update on the current state of the State Library and what the proposed defunding of IMLS could mean for the future.

On June 2, Jack will meet with the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) and the librarian at Washington Correctional Facility for the annual authentication review. Since Great Meadows Correctional Facility closed, SALS now serves only Washington Correctional Facility.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Dallas
June 3, 2024

Meetings

April 16, 2025	Galway Board Meeting
April 21, 2025	ALA Audit and Finance
April 23-30, 2025	ALA Executive Board Chicago
May 6, 2025	Richards Board Meeting
	United for Libraries Board Meeting
May 7, 2025	ALA Executive Director Search
May 14, 2025	JA Council
May 16, 2025	Ballston Spa Board Meeting
May 16, 2025	June Garcia/Sari Feldman
	ALA Executive Board Meeting
May 19, 2025	SALS Annual Meeting
June 12, 2025	Lake Pleasant and Indian Lake trustees
June 17, 2025	SALS Board Meeting