

Director Report

June, July, August, September 2023

ADMINISTRATION

I am visiting member library board meetings. Talking points include an overview of SALS services, Joint Automation services, fees for 2024, the NYS (New York State) Library Construction program, required Trustee continuing education, book challenges, bans, and enforceable policies.

Members of the Audit and Finance Committee and the Personnel Committee met on August 8, 2023, to review the 2024 SALS Budget Draft. The 2024 draft budget is included in the SALS Board packet. After the board reviews the draft budget at the September meeting, it will be shared with the member library directors. Comments will be shared at the October SALS Board meeting.

The SALS Building Committee must meet before the SALS Board meeting on September 19, 2023, to review the NYS Public Library Construction applications.

SALS was informed that the Meraki Routers construction grant was approved. Many of the Meraki routers have been installed in the libraries. Chris Mundell is working with Adirondack Cabling to schedule wiring work if required.

SALS, the Crandall Public Library, and the New York Library Association presented a webinar about understanding and being prepared for book challenges. The presenter was Jamie LaRue, and the evaluations were excellent. I shared the slide deck with you after the program.

Work is moving forward with the Messages from Survivors project. As of this writing, WMHT has agreed to partner with us. I am expecting to be partnering with U Albany and Skidmore.

Great news to share regarding the Ballston Community Library. The Governor signed the bill to update the library's special district's legislation.

I began my second term as a member of the ALA (American Library Association) Executive Board. The board meets virtually once a month and face-to-face four times a year. I liaise with United for Libraries (ALA Division), the Freedom to Read Foundation, the Social Responsibilities Roundtable, the Sustainability Roundtable, the Sustainability Committee, the Committee on Legislation, the Executive Board Finance and Audit Subcommittee, ALA Assistant Executive Director Public Policy Advocacy search committee (all virtual), and the Executive Board Effectiveness Committee. I sit on the planning team for the ALA Summit on Libraries and Defending Democracy. If time allows, I try to attend meetings.

I will be presenting two programs on book bans and censorship. One is a half-day CE (Continuing Education) program at the New York Library Association's Annual Conference in Saratoga. The other is a virtual program for the Southern Tier Library System.

Pamela DelSignore is redesigning the SALS statistical report to make it accessible on the SALS website.

She has been answering questions from member library trustees and staff to help them complete the NYS Library Construction applications.

Pamela also worked with Colleen Smith and me to develop a draft SALS 2024 budget.

Colleen worked with Michele Largeteau to develop the JA (Joint Automation) 2024 draft budget. She also worked with Michele regarding the search and hiring process for the JA Programmer Analyst.

She also placed the second 2023 semi-annual bar code label order for SALS and MVLS (Mohawk Valley Library System) libraries. 16 SALS libraries and 6 MVLS libraries ordered 28,000 bar code labels.

Colleen assisted SALS staff, trustees, and several member libraries with NYLA (New York Library Association) conference registration.

AUTOMATION JA

The beginning of the year group PC (Personal Computers) order has been completed. The end-of-year order has been announced, and the deadline for orders is 9/22/2023.

Chris Mundell and Michele Largeteau worked with Kevin O'Brien from Upstate Agency to create a template application for member libraries, with the standard technical questions already answered. Kevin is working with the libraries who have contacted him to get quotes.

CFC is the company that carries the insurance for SALS/JA and MVLS. This company recently changed management and is unwilling to insure any member libraries, as they feel they could get hit twice for a claim because of covering the systems. They are now working with TokioMarine as the carrier for member libraries. As libraries are getting closer to getting cyber insurance, they are inquiring about MFA (Multi Factor Authentication).

The Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library is meeting with JA staff to develop a Request for Proposal for RFID (radio frequency identification).

Michele shared with the Waterford Public Library information about JA cyber security measures.

Dave MacFarland attended a Round Lake staff meeting to answer questions about PCs (Personal Computers).

The SALS board must review and approve JA 2023 budget amendments approved at the July JA Council meeting. The MVLS board has approved these, which need to be approved by the SALS board.

Assistance was provided to Rockwell Falls staff to set up access to a newspaper database.

Jesse Jensen will start on 9/11/2023 to fill the JA Programmer Analyst position. Jesse will report to Jason Thompson.

The draft 2024 JA budget has been created and shared with system directors. This will be presented at the September 13th JA Council meeting and brought to the SALS Board Meeting for approval.

There were some Polaris connection issues over a few days in June. After a few issues, Polaris found the problem and corrected it.

Chris ordered new Meraki wireless hardware and licenses for almost all SALS libraries. He is working with the libraries to get the new equipment in place. A few require new wiring, and he is working with Adirondack Cabling to complete that.

Princh (Princh is a simple cloud-based printing solution allowing users to print, copy, scan, and pay from their mobile devices, laptops, and desktop PCs. This is handled through the Princh web app or our Princh iOS or Android app) was installed on a trial basis at the Waterford Public Library.

Chris and Dave attended the PULISDO (Public Library System Directors Organization) conference in Buffalo on August 2-4, 2023.

In the latest phishing testing, users had a 3.9% failure rate, down from 17.2% at the initial test. The required security training is having the desired effect.

JA staff have discussed cyber insurance and MFA with Waterford, Richards Library, Salem, Easton, and Inlet libraries.

JA staff assisted with the MFA setup for the Waterford Public Library.

Chris visited the Saratoga Springs Public Library to replace a router. He visited Schuylerville and Mechanicville to install the new Meraki routers.

Jim Baker visited the Lake Pleasant Public Library to provide new director training and to install new PCs, the Indian Lake Public Library, Town of Chester Library, Johnsburg, Town of Ballston Community Library, Mechanicville Public Library to install new PCs or Cassie machines, and Long Library to install a printer.

The JA staff are having bi-weekly JA staff meetings.

There have been 1100 SysAid calls since May 24, 2023. The top calls dealt with email, PCs, and user accounts. The most time-consuming calls were PCs, email, and Polaris issues.

CATALOGING

The Galway Public Library went fine-free on July 1st, 2023, joining most of the System's libraries. Thirty of the thirty-four member libraries are fine-free or mostly fine-free.

Jill Ryder assisted the Rockwell Falls Public Library with their hoopla setup. Hoopla is a digital streaming platform several SALS libraries offer, including eBooks, eAudiobooks, music, and streaming video.

Jill worked with Crandall and Clifton Park-Halfmoon public libraries on collection management projects and assisted member libraries with ongoing library collection inventories.

The summer training series presented by Jill Ryder was well attended; 324-member library staff attended or received a recording of the three webinars on topics including patron registration, technical processing, and Polaris Leap.

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 Polaris questions that arise.

SALS catalogers (Jill Ryder and Johanna Hall) modified 26,767 bibliographic records in the catalog during June, July, and August 2023. Nine thousand seven hundred forty-nine new bibliographic records and 37,886 new item records were added to the database during the same month. This work is done by cataloging and technical processing staff at the System offices and the 61-member libraries. Bib records represent the individual works (a book or a DVD, etc.), and item records represent each library's copy of that work.

Jill oversees purchasing eBooks and eAudiobooks for the shared OverDrive collection; 594 titles were purchased in June, July, and August 2023. Popular titles purchased include the beach read Five-Star Weekend by Elin Hilderbrand, the transporting novel The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese, and the adventure-filled fantasy Fourth Wing by Rebecca Yarros.

As in years past, SALS is applying for \$35,000 in Saratoga County Aid to purchase eBooks and eAudiobooks for the consortium OverDrive collection. Jill is working with Saratoga County libraries to obtain letters in support of this grant application. The application will be submitted before the end of September deadline.

Jill represented SALS at the retirement reception for the longtime Lake Pleasant Public Library Director Sherry Matthews.

SALS BUILDING

The Holiday Inn requested the use of the SALS parking lot for a function with over 400 guests. These will be cars that are parked via Valet parking. The Holiday Inn provided the proper insurance riders and signed a memo of understanding.

Pamela is looking for quotes for repairing the parking lot and plowing contract.

OUTREACH REPORT

The Farm-2-Library program has 13 participating libraries. Erica Freudenberger met with Mary Beranek from Comfort Food to share the work on the Path to Belonging. She found it helpful and may use it to guide her thinking at her organization.

The summer has been busy, with record turnouts at many locations.

The coordinated Outreach Advisory Committee meeting will occur on Tuesday, September 12.

Thanks to the excellent sleuthing of Pamela DeSignore, we have offered free fentanyl testing strips to our member libraries. So far, Saratoga Springs Public Library has requested two boxes of strips, and Schuylerville has received one box.

We are working with the Saratoga County Department of Health to provide Naloxboxes to interested member libraries in Saratoga County. Each box contains several Narcan emergency kits. The kits are intended for public use.

The Saratoga County Department of Health will provide Narcan training for any of our member libraries as professional/staff development or for the public. At the end of each training, they distribute free Narcan Kits.

The OATS (Older Adults Technology Services) cohort is up and running. We have monthly meetings to check how our libraries are implementing the program and how we can support their work (for more details, see Jack's report).

The SALS Friends Council will meet at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 24.

Erica met with Rebecca Verhayden, director of the Town of Ballston Community Library, to create a template for trustee recruitment flyer and discuss a patron issue (custodial feud).

She met with Tammy Wilson, the director of the Whitehall Free Library, about programming, book distribution, annual appeal letter, and more.

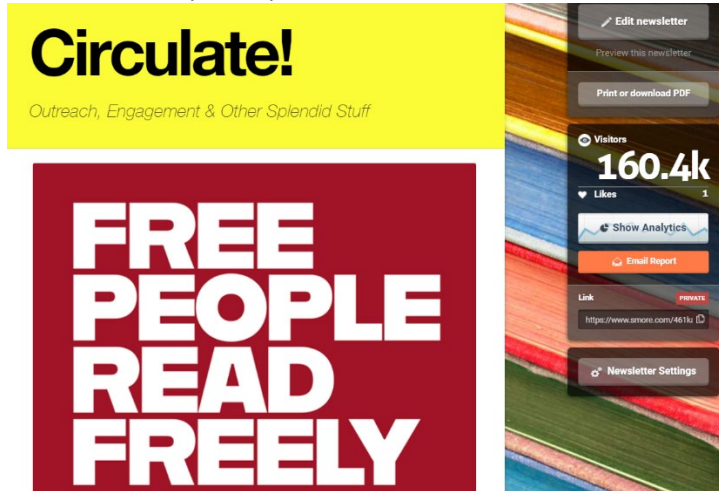
In addition, Erica met with Linda Borden, Easton Library trustee, to discuss its meeting room policy and held a new director training with Katrena Cohea at Lake Pleasant Public Library.

Erica, Sara, and Jack Scott held a trustee orientation for Rockwell Falls Public Library Trustees one evening at SALS.

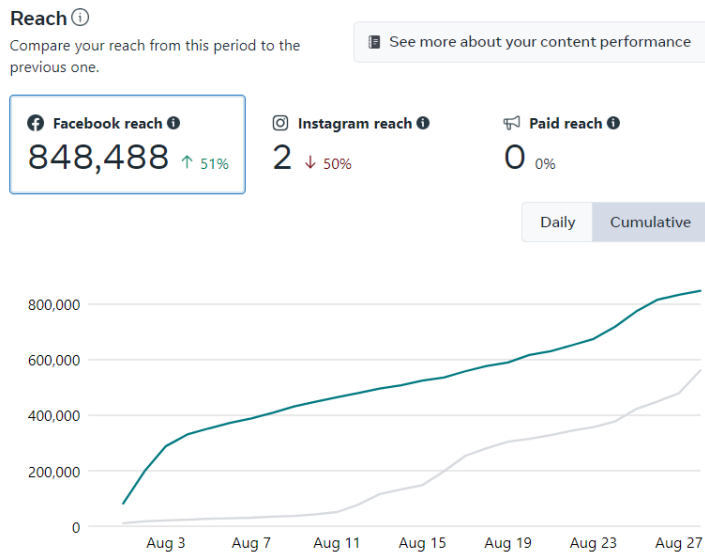
She attended the Rockwell Falls Public Library Board Meeting on August 22 to discuss strategic planning.

Finally, Erica met with Sue Sawyer, trustee for the Cambridge Public Library, to discuss governance, roles, and trustee development.

The e-newsletter, Circulate! was published. In the past, readership has averaged between 1,500-4,000 opens for each issue, but the past couple of problems have found a broad audience: The June issue had more than 207K readers, and the August issue has more than 160K readers (so far).



SALS continues to have a solid social media presence, with 29.3K followers. In the past month, SALS has reached more than 800K users.



The Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in Small & Rural Libraries committee has developed a rough draft of the Path to Belonging, an EDISJ (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice) approach for small, rural libraries. Erica has met with colleagues at the Tennessee State Library & Archives SALS directors from Argyle, Warrensburg, Granville, Hadley-Luzerne & Lake Pleasant.

Erica's proposal for a workshop at the Public Library Association conference (2024) has been accepted.

The Clinton, Essex & Franklin, the North Country, and Mid York library systems have been invited to join the Adult Program Swap on September 19, doubling the number of participating systems (previously SALS, UHLS (Upper Hudson Library System) & MVLS).

SALS will partner with UHLS to bring Lisa Wemett & Terry Mulee to the Clifton Park Halfmoon Public Library in spring 2024 to provide a workshop on how to start a Friends of the Library group.

Jack and Erica met with Sarah Washburn from TechSoup to talk about the Farm-2-Library program and the type of data that could help promote climate and food justice information.

TECHNOLOGY and YOUTH SERVICES

Jack Scott reports working with Hudson Falls, Argyle, and Lake George libraries to update their websites.

The SALS website's analytics software has been updated to Google Analytics 4, and since June, there have been 8.8K page views. The most visited pages were the Directory, Jobs, About Us, Calendar, and Cataloging.

Jack has completed 23 infographics for the member library's annual community reports.

He attended PULISDO in Buffalo on August 2nd and 3rd. He followed both the IT (Information Technology) and Director's programming tracks. His favorite sessions were on AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Libraries & 1st Amendment Rights.

Jack has been working on developing engaging content for the member libraries in Niche Academy. Niche Academy is a platform where SALS can deliver training on various library services. There are courses on Youth Services, NOVEL NY (New York), Ancestry & Heritage Quest, Computer Literacy, Overdrive & Libby, Microsoft Tools, Intellectual Freedom, and Staff

Development. He hopes to have a few more courses ready for when the platform is open to member libraries and trustees after the next director's council on September 20th.

Erica Freudenberger and Jack created an Intellectual Freedom Challenges Flow chart to aid and prepare front-line staff and trustees in dealing with potential challenges. They also created a deeper Intellectual Freedom Challenges Course Guide on Niche Academy. There is an Intellectual Freedom Challenge Form to track challenges in our region.

A League of Extraordinary New Directors meeting is planned for September 13th. The topic will be Collection Development. In addition to this meeting, Jack is developing a course on Collection Development at Niche Academy.

On June 15, 2023, SALS hosted the virtual event Tech-After-Lunch: AI. Thirty staff members attended the webinar.

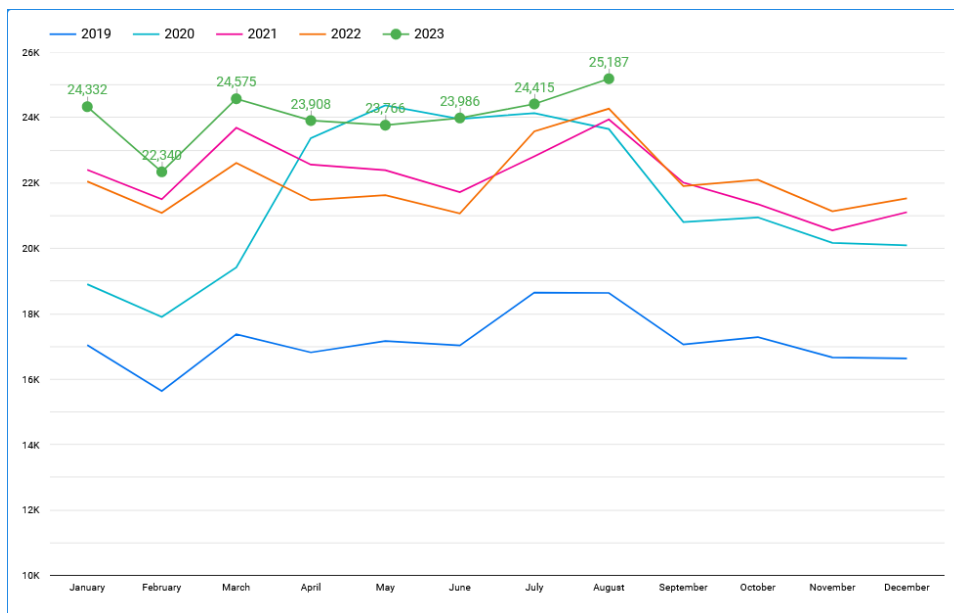
In efforts to expand telehealth options in the SALS service region, Erica and Jack met with the ADK Wellness Connection to learn more about their discovery platform, which puts individuals in touch with various health and social services. Erica and Jack will attend one day of the North Country Leadership Summit: Enhancing Equitable Healthcare in Rural Communities in Lake George on September 28, 2023.

Jack and Erica met with the Clinton Essex Franklin and the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus library systems to discuss the next steps with the Leaving Our Fingerprints project. We are still receiving a few submissions every couple of months, but the nature of the responses differs from earlier responses and focuses more on looking back over the last few years. The group decided to create a shorter submission form that allows people to reflect on the Pandemic. Once that project is ready, we will close the Leaving Our Fingerprints project and look for ways to preserve the submissions.

The 3rd quarter of OATS will wrap up on September 15th, with the 4th quarter starting in October. Several libraries have signed up to teach 5-week courses on computer essentials, Chromebook essentials, and iPad essentials. We had our quarterly meeting with Senior Planet

on August 16th. They have actively created new training courses and responded to comments. The Saratoga Springs Library joined the program and had four people attend OATS's most recent training; this brings the total number of participants to 9 libraries with 19 total trainers. As of August 29, member libraries have offered 61 training sessions with 257 attendees.

From June through August, an estimated 72k items were downloaded by 9k users, with 27k holds. There were 9k magazines downloaded over the summer. Our member libraries borrowed 2069 items from other library systems in June and July. SALS' libraries shared 662 items.



Youth Services:

SALS has received \$6,000 in Love Your Library Funds this summer and rolled over \$813 from 2022. After consulting with Summer Reading providers, members decided they would like micro-grants for summer reading presenters and programs. As of August 29, 20 libraries have indicated they are interested in using these funds for Summer Reading. Based on current numbers, each library that applied would receive \$340 for Summer Reading.

The Saratoga Co Department of Youth & Aging has notified us that we will receive \$1,500 for the Lively Library Summer Program. Saratoga County member libraries will receive their reimbursements in September.

Two upcoming eclipses are on Oct. 14, 2023, & Apr. 8, 2024. Jack applied to the Science-Technology Activities & Resources of Libraries and received 500 solar eclipse glasses. These are being distributed to interested member libraries.

The library of things opened back up this summer, and it has been packed with all the kits out for July and August. We recently added Hotspots to the Lending Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Dallas
August 30, 2023

Meetings

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| June 21 – 28, 2023 | ALA Annual Conference |
| June 29, 2023 | Ballston Community Library Meeting |
| June 30, 2023 | Message from the Holocaust |
| | Congressman Tonko Open House |
| July 10, 2023 | Argyle Board Meeting |
| | NYLA IF Committee Meeting |
| July 12, 2023 | JA Meeting |
| July 17, 2023 | Clifton Park-Halfmoon Board Meeting |
| July 19, 2023 | SALS Director's Council |
| July 25, 2023 | Board Effectiveness Meeting |
| July 27, 2023 | SALS Staff Budget Development Meeting |
| August 8, 2023 | Waterford Board Meeting |
| | SALS Finance and Personnel Committees Meeting |
| August 14, 2023 | NYLA IF Committee Meeting |
| August 15, 2023 | Core Values Meeting |
| August 16, 2023 | PPA search |
| August 17, 2023 | ALA Executive Board Meeting |
| August 18, 2023 | SALS Directors Meeting |
| August 19, 2023 | Raquette Lake Board Meeting |
| August 28, 2023 | Jamie LaRue Webinar |
| August 31, 2023 | ALA EB "Office Hours" |
| September 6, 2023 | Board Effectiveness Meeting |
| September 11, 2023 | NYLA CE Planning |
| September 13, 2023 | JA Meeting |
| September 15, 2023 | Lake George Board Meeting |
| September 18, 2023 | PPA Meeting |
| | Saratoga Springs Board Meeting |
| September 19, 2023 | SALS Committee Meeting |
| | SALS Board Meeting |
| | NYLA IF Committee Meeting |