Advocacy: NYS Budget news - The NYS budget has been negotiated and approved...on time again! The excerpt from NYLA’s announcement below provides the highlights -

“Governor Cuomo’s Executive Budget Proposal cut Library Aid by $4M to FY2012-13 levels of $81.6M. The Assembly proposed increasing the Executive’s proposal by $2M to $83.6M. The Senate proposed increasing Library Aid beyond the Executive’s proposal by $8M to $89.6M.

As the three proposals were reconciled into a final budget, Library Aid has been set at $86.6M, an increase of $5M over the Executive Budget, and $1M above FY2013-14. The $5M Legislative add to Library Aid is the largest since 2007 and the second largest in well over a decade.

The FY2014-15 Budget also once again includes $14M for the Library Construction Aid Program and $1.3 M for an MTA Payroll Tax Rebate.”

The end result for New York’s libraries is an increase of $1 million from last year’s Library Aid total, bringing us to an aid total for 2014 of $86.6 million. The total increase to library aid in the budget is reflected as a $5 million increase, however $4 million of that simply restores the funds the Governor cut from Library Aid in his original executive budget to start this year’s budget process. While this is not the increase we had hoped for, or advocated for, it is still an increase so it continues our trend of increases in Library Aid in each budget year and moves us closer to the full formula funding level of $102 million, so this should be viewed as another successful advocacy effort for our library community. The continued funding of the NYS Library Construction grant program is also good news for libraries. Thank you and your library’s supporters for your continued participation in our advocacy efforts.

Advocacy: Getting the advocacy message out - As you all know, I regularly forward NYLA Advocacy messages out to UHLS member library directors, board presidents, and the UHLS Trustees with my own additional encouragement to both take the required action and to share the message freely in their own libraries and communities. Current conversations in the NYLA Legislative Committee involve how we can get more members of the library community to make their voices heard with these advocacy alerts, because the current numbers for advocacy messages actually sent is a very small fraction of the population of librarians, library staff, trustees, friends, and library users in NYS. To help address this locally we have started an effort to push these messages out to the member libraries in a deeper way by sharing them through the different UHLS advisory councils and user group mailing lists. I am anxious to see if we can make a positive difference in the numbers locally for NYLA’s advocacy efforts.

ILS Investigation Update - After significant time and energy focused on exploring all of the options for a new integrated library system (ILS) to determine a direction for the System, the ad hoc ILS Exploration Committee made a recommendation to the Automated Services Committee (ASC) at their 4/4 meeting. At the end of the process the two final products being considered were Sierra by Innovative Interfaces Inc. (III) and Polaris by Polaris Library Systems. Unexpectedly, on Tuesday, April 1 it was announced that III had acquired Polaris, effectively altering the library automation landscape and unsettling the ad hoc committee’s process of reaching a final decision on its recommendation. After post-acquisition follow ups with both vendor reps, the
committee met on 4/3 and unanimously voted to forward a recommendation to ASC that UHLS migrate to III’s Sierra ILS. The ASC discussed the recommendation at their 4/4 meeting and unanimously endorsed the recommendation and is putting the recommendation before the UHLS Board for action. This recommendation comes to the board with the full support of the member library staffs, the Automated Services Committee, and the UHLS Automation Department. I will prepare a summary document for the UHLS Board meeting with more information about the service and cost impacts of this recommendation to the System so the board can fully consider the recommendation.

**UHLS NYS Annual Report** - The NYS annual report for UHLS has been submitted for review by the Division of Library Development. We will have copies of the report available for the Board’s review at the meeting. After discussion and questions at the April board meeting I will ask the UHLS Board to accept and approve the 2013 NYS annual report for UHLS.

**Plan of Service Satisfaction Survey** - The completion of the 2013 Plan of Service Report has been delayed. I hope to have the report completed and distributed to the member libraries very soon. Sorry for the delay. Remember that the Plan of Service is available on the UHLS website at: [http://www.uhls.org/UHLS_Plan_of_Service_2012_2016.pdf](http://www.uhls.org/UHLS_Plan_of_Service_2012_2016.pdf)

**E-content news** - There are a few exciting new developments in the area of e-content for UHLS that I wanted to share with you.

- **Best of the Small Presses collection** - As part of the ongoing efforts of the library community to encourage all publishers to sell their e-books to libraries at a fair and equitable price, Richard Naylor (Director of the Colonie Library) has worked with Jo-An Benedetti and Overdrive to develop a feature to highlight small and independent publisher’s titles in the UHLS e-content collection. The Best of the Small Presses link will allow users to easily find and check out these titles and the member libraries will focus some additional attention on building this collection to help users seek alternatives to the offerings of the large publishers.

- **Foreign language e-content collections** - At the recommendation of the E-content Advisory Committee UHLS will be adding two foreign language interfaces (Chinese and Spanish) to the UHLS e-content offerings and will begin to add e-content in both of those languages. Overdrive will supply the translated interfaces at no charge and the member libraries have begun developing a plan to start building collections in both languages using Overdrive’s collection development tools and the expertise of several member library staff who are experienced in collecting in both of these languages.

- **Streaming video through Overdrive being tested** - Overdrive has been working on the development of a streaming video service through its library e-content platform. They have just recently shared their streaming video site with some members of the UHLS staff and members of the UHLS E-content Advisory Committee for testing. We are still likely several months away from this feature going live in wide release but it is an exciting direction for libraries and e-content, so stay tuned.

**2014 Public Library Association Conference** - The 2014 PLA Conference was an interesting and productive opportunity to learn and connect with public librarians from across the country. In addition to personal meetings with Overdrive leadership and reps from the two ILS products being considered and a great visit to the Indianapolis Public Library, I was able to attend a number of informative program sessions including:

- “ABC - Always Be Circulating: How Public Libraries Meet Demand and Increase Use”
- “Technology’s Future at Public Libraries: Staying Relevant in the Digital Age”
- “Difficult Decisions and tough Times: Policy Survival Tips”
CDLC Executive Director Search - As many of you may recall, I am currently serving as Board President for the Capital District Library Council (CDLC). The long-time Executive Director of CDLC, Jean Sheviak retired at the end of March and the Council is in the process of identifying and selecting a new Director. As board president I am chairing the Search Committee and leading the process. I tell you this for two reasons - 1) the management of this process has capitalized a greater portion of my time than during “normal times”, but I assure you that I am keeping up with all of my UHLS responsibilities, and 2) that this is providing me with a priceless “been there, done that” experience that will enhance my ability to effectively consult with (and sympathize with!) UHLS member library boards as they go through their own leadership transitions.

Member Library Support - Since the last Board meeting, I have worked with several member libraries consulting with them on specific projects/issues, providing advice and support on local issues to trustees, directors, and/or staff. For this reporting period those libraries include Watervliet, Castleton, Nassau, Westerlo, Stephentown, and Schaghticoke. This is in addition to delivering the UHLS New Director Orientation for Samantha Fagan, newly appointed at Watervliet Public Library; the presentation of the CORE Trustee Training program at UHLS on the evening of 4/8; and the presentation of the CORE long range planning module at Schaghticoke and Grafton.

UHLS Information Technology Update – The Automation Services Report for the last reporting period is attached for your review.