



Executive Director's Report

Kim Bolan, Executive Director
June 2026

Executive Director Highlights

Over the past two months, SALS made strong progress across operations, technology, and advocacy. Key milestones include the successful rollout of Bill (previously Bill.com) and Paychex, a cyber insurance renewal that saved over 50%, and the JA team achieving nearly \$10,000 in hardware procurement savings. Eight member directors were invited to the IMLS Library Convening 250 in Washington, DC, and the SALS Annual Meeting on May 18 was a wonderful celebration of our system and member libraries.

Year-over-year data reflects positive growth across key metrics, with OverDrive downloads up approximately 22% compared to 2025 and website traffic significantly higher. NovelNY session usage, however, has declined compared to 2025 and will be a topic of discussion for SALS' staff going forward.

Member libraries continued to demonstrate remarkable creativity and community impact this period. Standout moments include Rockwell Falls' first budget increase in seven years (31%), Lake Pleasant's \$10,000 CDLC technology grant, and Mechanicville's moving WWII veterans' photo restoration project. From memory care kits and seed libraries to Paint & Vibe Nights and holocaust survivor talks, SALS libraries are thriving.

Member Support

Lisa Christopher successfully submitted our member libraries' annual reports to DLD. As of the date of this report, we are still waiting for a date to submit the SALS' Annual Report.

I attended the Johnsborg Board Meeting the evening of May 6 and started work with Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library on next steps in future planning related to the Strategic Plan and facilities planning.

In May, Jill Ryder assisted the Town of Johnsborg Library with interviewing for a new library clerk.

Thanks to great teamwork and a lot of creativity, SALS' **68th Annual Trustee Meeting & Dinner** on May 18, held at the Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls, was a success! Members reported having fun and enjoying the evening, especially the SALS Superlatives and all the laughter.

Work continued on the **Delivery Services RFP** and reviewing proposals. A recommendation will be made during the June board meeting.

Eight member directors registered for the **IMLS Library Convening 250: Telling America's Story** to be held on June 10-12, 2026 in Washington, DC. IMLS is covering all travel expenses, lodging, and meal expenses for attendees. In March 2026, I registered all our member libraries serving populations under 5,000. This event is by invitation only. The purpose of this event is to inspire and empower librarians responsible for small and rural libraries. I'm excited for our directors and look forward to hearing about what they learn.

The **upward trend in member questions by SALS' staff** is encouraging and hopefully indicating a growing demand for SALS staff expertise and the value the system is delivering to member libraries. In 2026, monthly questions answered are running noticeably higher (228–269/month) compared to 2025 (162–179/month), which is roughly a **40% increase year-over-year**.

Collections

Jill Ryder provided support to members in establishing electronic ordering and invoicing with library vendors Ingram, Follett and Brodart.

OverDrive Downloads are up – 2026 is consistently outpacing 2025 month-over-month. May 2026 hit 41,550 vs. 33,975 in May 2025 – a increase of roughly 22%.

OverDrive Users are growing – Monthly users are running about 400–1,000 higher in 2026 vs. the same months in 2025, reflecting broader patron engagement with digital collections.

NovelNY sessions are declining – 2026 figures (609–1,049/month) are noticeably lower than the same months in 2025 (940–1,428/month). We will monitor this and attempt to determine if it's a promotion / awareness gap or other reason. Niche Academy also remains low with modest usage in 2025 and 2026, but the sharp March 2026 drop to just 22 views stands out and SALS staff will continue to monitor and discuss.

Service to Special Client Groups

Adult Literacy, Youth Services & Early Literacy, Coordinated Outreach, Correctional Facilities

Love Your Library funds in support of Summer Reading were distributed to member libraries.

Books for **Read It Forward**, a summer program for teens (approximately grades 6-12) to read a featured title and pass the book to their peers, were selected, purchased, and distributed to participating libraries.

SALS' held their annual meeting with the Department of Corrections & Community Supervision (DOCCS) on May 27 to discuss the budget and renew our annual agreement.

We were awarded the **2026 Digital Inclusion Grant to Libraries** by the United Way of the Greater Capital Region in the amount of **\$34,453** for the funding term of June 1, 2026 to September 30, 2026. The purpose of the grant is to strengthen digital inclusion communities across Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties through digital navigators and access to low-cost internet solutions and devices (laptops, Chromebooks or tablets)

SALS received its portion of the funding (\$6,026.40) for participating in the *Big Read*. These funds account for the time Jack Scott and Pamela DelSignore spent on grant administration.

Professional Development

As part of our five months of Readers' Advisory series with Becky Spratford, we hosted "RA for All: Flip the Script and Think Like a Reader" on May 13. This program was a collaboration with five other NYS library systems. Seventy-four people attended.

Advocacy & Engagement

State-wide Engagement

I attended the PULISDO meetings on April 14 and May 12 as well as PLS meetings on April 16. I also attended CDLC board meetings on April 17 and May 15 as well as a CDLC reception on June

As per NYLA, the legislature is voting on the State Budget bills and the sections including library aid seem to have been established. From the information we have, the numbers most important to us include:

- Operating Aid: \$106.395M (last year \$106.325M, \$70,000 increase)
- Construction Aid: \$44M (last year \$44M)
- Library Social Worker Program: \$500,000
- NOVELny: \$3M (last year \$3M)
- Cultural Education Stabilization Fund: \$12M (new funds)

The other issue significant to some libraries/systems is the **enhancements made to Tier 6 of the NYS retirement system**. Estimates indicate the enhancements will cost public employers, not including the State, over \$450M per year. It is not clear what share of that will fall on libraries.

Community Engagement

The Saratoga Children's Literacy League completed its bookmobile renovations on May 1.

[Saratoga Children's Literacy League hits the road with new book-bus](#)

Operations

Over the course of April and May, Jill Ryder and I met numerous times with Paychex as we continued our work rolling out our new online timekeeping and payroll services.

We successfully completed our boiler inspection on April 30. Thank you, Bill.

Our regional **NYSLRS' Employment Education Seminar** was offered on April 30 and May 1 in Bolton Landing. Pamela DeSignore attended on April 30 and I attended on May 1. The seminar covers Retirement and Social Security Law as well as NYSLRS policies, procedures, and reporting.

Pamela DeSignore, Tom Shaginaw, and I continued working with **Bonadio Group on the roll out of Bill** (previously Bill.com), our new cloud-based financial operations platform. It is helping us streamline the approval and bill paying processes as well as tracking accounts payable, accounts receivable, and more.

I attended the **Innovative Users Group (IUG) Conference** in Chicago, IL from April 12 through April 14. I was part of the Directors Summit on Sunday, April 12. A few select directors were invited to have a full-day discussion about public libraries, Polaris, Vega, and Clarivate/Innovate. Jason Thomson also attended IUG from April 13 through 15.

I had conversations with our attorney Ellen Bach over the course of April, May, and early June focusing on finalizing the new JA Agreement.

I worked with Jesse Jensen and Chris Mundell on our annual Cyber Insurance renewal. We were able to save over 50% by getting multiple quotes.

I attended the Joint Automation Council meeting on May 13 at MVLS System Headquarters.

The Joint Automation Project

Hardware Procurement & Deployment

The first group hardware order of 2026 has been successfully placed, totaling **38 PCs and 6 Macs**. Due to volatility in the computer market driven by RAM supply constraints, vendor pricing was only valid for 14 days. A revised quote resulted in increased costs, particularly for small form factor PCs, which rose by approximately \$400 per unit. In response, Dave MacFarland and Jesse Jensen expanded procurement options to include state contract pricing and secured improved rates through HP. While overall costs increased compared to the initial quote, this strategic shift resulted in **nearly \$10,000 in total savings**, including **over \$5,000 in savings for participating SALS members**.

Jim Baker has completed the delivery and installation of the majority of hardware from the 2025 year-end order. Three items remain outstanding:

- One PC lost in transit, currently being replaced by the vendor
- Warranty misconfigurations on laptops, which have delayed deployment and are being actively resolved
- Install of three PCs for Warrensburg are on hold until the library re-opens

Service Delivery & Support

Between April and May, the JA team resolved **663 support tickets** across member libraries. Support covered a wide range of needs, including:

- Updating seasonal operating hours
- Resolving staff access and permissions issues
- Addressing network outages
- Configuring printers and other equipment

System Reliability & Issue Resolution

In early May, Jason Thomson identified that a Microsoft update disrupted the automated transfer of monthly Polaris reports. He:

- Implemented a **rapid workaround** to ensure libraries received April reports on time
- Designed and deployed a **long-term fix** ahead of the May reporting cycle

During May, JA also addressed outages affecting Leap and the classic catalog. Working closely with Clarivate, the team determined the cause to be **high-volume bot traffic overwhelming backend services**.

Clarivate recommended geofencing access to North American IP addresses. After implementing this solution:

- Bot traffic was significantly reduced
- **System performance stabilized** for both Leap and the classic catalog

Strategic Initiatives & Innovation

Jason Thomson and Jesse Jensen are collaborating with Jill Ryder, Sharon O'Brien, and Clarivate to evaluate **OverDrive eContent integration with Vega Discover**.

Using a 60-day test environment connected to the Polaris training system, the team is:

- Assessing the impact on patron and staff experience
- Comparing benefits against the current Polaris integration
- Identifying opportunities to enhance discovery services

Infrastructure & Member Support

Chris Mundell continues to lead infrastructure improvements, including:

- Traveling to member libraries to **upgrade Meraki router hardware**
- Providing a **network consultation** to Schuylerville Public Library in support of their upcoming renovation project
- **Completed implementation of the new Endpoint Management Server (EMS)** that manages our VPN security and connections.
- **Re-purposed the old EMS server to host WhatsUp** network monitoring software for the SALS datacenter, saving roughly \$800 in server licensing costs.
- **Kicking off the next round of KnowBe4 training for all users on June 9th**. This round will feature a Social Engineering training video, "How Do Tech Support Scams Work?"

Web & Systems Modernization

Jason Thomson continues website migrations away from the legacy GoDaddy platform. With the Discover implementation now complete, he is able to dedicate additional time to completing the remaining site transitions.

The SALS' website has been migrated to the new server and is now running the CDLC accessible WordPress theme. We are still updating some of the content.

He is also preparing for a **Polaris 8.1 upgrade** to the training server, pending completion of the Discover eContent testing initiative.

Privacy & Data Strategy

JA is currently reviewing an updated **Privacy Policy**, driven by interest in implementing **Google Analytics** on catalog platforms. This initiative would:

- Provide insights into how catalog pages are used
- Track adoption of Vega Discover versus PowerPAC
- Inform improvements to features and user experience

Following approval by JA Council, the updated policy will be presented to the both the SALS and MVLS Boards for final review.

Member Library Spotlight

Celebrating the successes of our 34 member libraries.

Bancroft Public Library

Bancroft reported an update to their seed library, which includes putting their seed packets in clear plastic sheets in a binder. The sheets each have four pockets that fit the seed packets perfectly. It has made keeping the seed library much more inviting and easier to look through. The plastic sheets came from Amazon.

Corinth Free Library

During the month of April, they had the tabletop display of “Messages From Survivors.” Rena Bernstein, a local holocaust survivor gave a talk about her experiences in Poland as a young child in the 1930s and 1940s. They also restarted Farm 2 Library after a winter hiatus.

In May, their Creative Writers Group, which was formed for “The Big Read,” held an open mic event to showcase their work. And, their budget proposition passed (with a nice increase)!

Lake Pleasant Public Library

Lake Pleasant Public Library was one of five institutions to receive Technology and Equipment Grant funding from Capital District Library Council (CDLC). The grant supports innovative services, enhanced accessibility, and helps fill urgent technology gaps. Lake Pleasant’s award will fund a public computer to support senior digital literacy classes. They were awarded \$10,000 which will fund new automatic front doors for the library.



Long Lake Library

The library collaborated with Long Lake Central School to provide their version of a scholastic book fair. A grant from Pearsall Foundation provided funds to purchase a book for each child within the school district. They also handed out the Friends of the Library scholarship application to each graduating senior.

Mechanicville District Public Library

The Mechanicville Library hosted a fundraising kickoff event for the restoration of the Charles Sicilliano WWII & Korean Veterans Photo Collection. The event was held on May 7th at the Arts Center on the Hudson, over 100 people were in attendance to hear the stories of some of the local veterans. Charlie Sicilliano was a local restaurant owner who took his hobby of picture taking to the next level. When local servicemen were shipping out or coming home during WWII, if they stopped into the restaurant with their uniform on, Charlie snapped their picture. This resulted in a collection of over 600 WWII Veterans pictures. Chris Carolla, retired AP reporter was and is our narrator. The second event in this series will be held on June 18th at the Ballston Spa Historical Center.



Rockwell Falls Public Library

Rockwell Falls reported their budget passed on May 19. They will receive a 31% increase. It is their first increase in seven years!

Schuylerville Public Library

Schuylerville hosted their first Paint & Vibe Night for tween/teens in May and it was a huge hit! The teens painted with neon paints, had colorful drinks and snacks, listened to music, and enjoyed some glow in the dark activities.



Waterford Public Library

Waterford added two memory care kits to our small library of things! They are filled with puzzles, discussion cards, and fidget toys. “We have an aging population here in Waterford, and our talks with the Alzheimer's association have proven very popular with our patrons.” The kits have been checked out several times since they were added only last month!

The library also reported that their budget passed on June 4.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Bolan, Executive Director