

Director's Report June 2007

Visit from DLD Regional Consultant

On Monday June 11th and Tuesday, June 12th, Lisa Areford, Regional Consultant from the NYS Division of Library Development (DLD) visited WLS and nine member libraries – The Warner Library/Tarrytown, Ossining, Croton, John C. Hart Memorial Library/Shrub Oak, New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, Scarsdale, Pelham and Mount Vernon (in that order). Each site offered a different perspective on how library service is delivered throughout Westchester. Lisa was also able to get a first-hand look at some of the new and intended construction programs as well as meet some of the newer directors of the member libraries. Lisa also offered up some advice and recommendations for a number of our members who are experiencing charter, funding or other governance issues.

2007 State Construction Grant Workshop

WLS will be hosting a grant workshop at the Ossining Public Library with the Division of Library Development. This workshop is designed to offer information and provide assistance to those libraries interested in applying for construction support under the large \$657,000 grant awarded to WLS. The System's Board of Trustees must approve all applications and the Public Library Directors Association's (PLDA) recommended funding levels for each before they can be submitted to the State by September 14th. WLS has set August 1st as the date for all construction applications to be sent to WLS. The PLDA Construction Grant Committee will meet to review all applications and recommend funding levels by August 10th. Still unscheduled at this time is an emergency meeting of the WLS Board of Trustees to review and accept the grant applications and recommended funding levels.

In order for a library to be eligible for construction aid the following are important points to know:

- A library with a current construction project which is not yet completed may apply. However, the new application must be for a new project or a new phase of a current uncompleted project but not one applied for previously;
- A library may apply for up to 50% of the cost of a project. However, the System cannot guarantee that the library will receive all that it asks for. The amount will depend upon

the number of applications received and the amount requested by each library. Last year, approximately 33% of all requests were funded through the grant program.

- If your building is 50 years or older, you must receive written approval from the NYS Historic Preservation Office prior to the application deadline.
- Your application must include written approval from your town, village or city permitting authority. Even if a permit is not required for your project, your application must include a statement from your municipal authority stating that the project does not need a permit in order to proceed with construction.

Libraries which received NYS Construction Grants in 2006 were: Greenburgh (\$120,000); Tarrytown (\$110,000), Mount Kisco (\$95,000), Ossining (\$90,000), Mount Pleasant (\$65,000), Scarsdale (\$55,000), Chappaqua (\$40,000), Ardsley (\$35,000), Pound Ridge (\$12,251), Pelham (\$10,000), Rye (\$10,000), South Salem (\$10,000).

WLS Website Redesign.

Tim Wood, WLS web design consultant, has provided WLS staff and web committee a series of design concepts which are wonderfully interesting and quite different. While we rejected the initial three designs, Tim did come back with six rather innovative concepts which will help WLS and member libraries focus on the overarching theme for the site. We have narrowed the selection down to two. A presentation of the design concepts will be shown at the Trustee meeting on June 19th.

Marketing Campaign

On June 1st and 4th a committee of WLS staff, Trustee Donelson and two members of PLDA interviewed four marketing firms – one of which will help WLS launch an overarching technology campaign to tout the technologies and services available in libraries throughout the County. In addition, 2008 is not only WLS's 50th anniversary; but it is the 10th anniversary of the African-American Readers and Writers Literary Tea. The two finalists are Harrison-Edwards and Co-Communications. We have checked a number of references on both firms. Therefore, pending one final conversation, we expect to be able to have a recommendation for the Board to review on June 19th.

Community Connections Interagency Meeting

In order to keep up with the times – and to begin using far less library lingo in what we do – the Adult and Outreach Services department has been renamed to better reflect their work. The new title for the department is the Office of Community Connections. The change reflects the fact that the term “outreach” means little to those we serve. The overall discussion on outreach services was part of a conversation at the second 2007 Interagency meeting hosted by WLS on June 7th at Polytechnic University. The discussion entitled, “Too Many Left Behind: Are We Part of the Problem? Can We Be Part of the Solution?” was a broad review of social and economic disparities in Westchester and how we as social service agencies either encourage or discourage use or service through our own workplace (and personal) practices. We need to be more conscious of the words we use to communicate the work we do. WLS Office of Community Connections invited Tracie D. Hall, former Director of the office for Diversity at ALA and current Assistant Dean at Dominican

University, to talk about how unequal access to services and information perpetuate exclusion. Ms Hall was quite targeted in her review of things we say and actions we take and how those things and actions can and will be perceived as barriers to service and sincerity of mission when they do not match.

The Big Read

The Westchester Arts Council has been awarded a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant to participate in The Big Read – which is a nationwide effort to try and get reluctant readers to read. The Council selected *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston because of the novel's universal theme of finding one's voice, for its significant contribution to American literary landscape, and its eloquent depiction of the pain and joy of life.

In order to encourage the reluctant reader WLS and our member libraries will host book discussions for a number of age groups. In addition, WLS will create blogs, pod casts, and wikis to entice and excite the public to read the book and then participate via these new technologies. Since these new technology-based mediums have become such a significant part of everyday life, we have decided to take advantage of them as a way to reach particularly teen-based audiences. In addition, WLS has been approached by WFAS to develop radio programming based on the novel. Lisa Tolliver is a broadcaster on WFAS; she has a weekly talk show on Thursday mornings called *The Lisa Tolliver Show* and is determined to assist us in engaging reluctant readers through her show and the creation of said blogs, wikis and pod casts.

Trustee Institute (Reminder)

As a reminder, the second of four Trustee Institutes will take place on Wednesday, June 20th, at WLS from 6:00 till 8:00 p.m. The topic up for discussion will be "Fundraising: Developing an Integrated, Comprehensive Development Plan for General Private Financial Support." Please encourage your libraries to send interested trustees, Friends group representatives and/or foundation trustees.

Important Dates to Remember

June 20, 2007 – Second Trustee Institute – WLS

June 21-27, 2007 – ALA Annual Conference – Washington D.C.

August 26-28 – PULISDO Conference – Utica, NY

Next Board Meeting: September 25, 2007

Respectfully submitted,



Siobhan A. Reardon
Director