

## **Executive Director's Report October 2019**

### **Battle of the Books**

The sixth annual Westchester Library System Battle of the Books (BOB) took place on Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at the Hommocks Middle School in Larchmont, NY. This year 17 teams from Grades 4-6 and 17 teams from Grades 6-9 competed. The 34 teams were comprised of participants from 20 WLS member libraries.

In the Grades 4-6 category, the championship went to the Briarcliff Manor Public Library's team, *Children of Roz*. Second place went to the Rye Free Reading Room's team, *Gummysaurus Rye*. In the Grades 6-9 category, the championship went to the Town of Pelham Public Library's team, *The Readers of Oz*. Second place went to the Somers Library's team, *Somers Turkey Warriors*.

Once again the Battle of the Books Committee, comprised of youth services librarians throughout WLS, did an outstanding job coordinating all aspects of this year's event—even setting up a Twitter feed (#WLSBOB2019) to follow the event via social media. Special thanks goes to the Committee and to all those who volunteered for making this such a successful event.

### **WLS 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

WLS was incorporated in November of 1958 and our first Annual Meeting took place on November 24, 1959, at the Roger Smith Hotel in White Plains. WLS will hold its 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2019, at our Headquarters in Elmsford. The event will begin with breakfast and networking from 8:30 to 9 am followed by the Business Meeting and program from 9:15-10 am.

Our featured speaker is Rich Harwood, President and Founder of The Harwood Institute. Mr. Harwood has dedicated himself to transforming people's public and political lives by supporting individuals, organizations and communities in their quest to create change. Working side by side with libraries throughout the country, the Harwood Institute's approach helps communities transform by looking outward. Their work helps libraries bridge divides by cultivating shared values and strengthening civic culture—and thereby becoming recognized as local leaders relevant to the sustainability of community life.

Our celebration of 60 years will include fun memories and special giveaways. Invitations are on their way, and registration is currently available on the [WLS Evanced calendar](#).

On a sad note, Judith Johnson, New York State Regent [9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District], passed away on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Regent Johnson was WLS's representative on the Board of Regents and guest speaker at our 2017 Annual Meeting. She served as the Peekskill City School District's Superintendent of Schools from 2001-2011 and as the Mount Vernon City School District's Interim Superintendent from 2012-2014 and was awarded the NYS School Superintendent of the Year in 2008, the first African American to receive that honor. She was a strong advocate for public education always pushing for children's programming that was grounded in equity and excellence. There will be a Celebration of Life service held on Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, from 4 to 6 pm and Home Going Services on Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, at 10 am. Both services will be held at the Rockland Community College, 145 College Road, Suffern, NY 10901.

## **County & State Budgets**

### ***WESTCHESTER COUNTY***

The budget process for Westchester County's FY2020 is underway. County Executive George Latimer has met with various groups to gather input for developing this year's budget. I attended a breakfast meeting hosted by NonProfit Westchester with County Executive Latimer on October 22<sup>nd</sup> as well as a County Budget Overview meeting held at The Field Library in Peekskill.

In addition, the traditional public budget hearings have been scheduled as noted below. WLS Trustees are encouraged to attend or give testimony at any of the hearings—all of which begin at 7 pm, with sign up to speak beginning at 6:15 pm.

#### **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

Doles Recreation Center Theater  
250 South 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY

#### **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26**

Cortlandt Town Hall  
1 Heady Street, Cortlandt, NY

#### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4**

Westchester County Board of Legislators  
148 Martine Avenue, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, White Plains, NY

### ***NEW YORK STATE***

While the State's budget process usually starts closer to January (as the State's fiscal year is from April to March), Jeremy Johannesen, Executive Director of the New York Library Association (NYLA), is requesting a call to action for Governor Andrew Cuomo to stop cutting Library Aid as part of his Executive Budget. The Governor and his staff pay close attention to the media, including local community newspapers. NYLA is requesting that at least one member of every library or library system board submit a letter to the editor. By having messages opposing library cuts appear throughout the State now, while the FY2020-21 Executive Budget is being crafted, there is a better chance of putting a stop to the library cuts that have occurred in the last three Executive Budgets that were released.

WLS is drafting an editorial letter that will be sent to our local community newspapers and will share the copy with our member libraries for those interested in doing the same.

## **Information Technology (IT) Services Update**

### ***IT AUDIT RFP***

The IT Audit Request for Proposal (RFP) created with input from the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) IT Audit Committee was issued on August 20<sup>th</sup> with all responses due by September 13<sup>th</sup>. One RFP response was received and the vendor was invited to provide a more detailed review of their proposal. The RFP Review Committee included WLS Executive Director Terry Kirchner; WLS Chief Financial Officer Fran Feuerman; WLS IT Manager Wilson Arana; and Andrew Farber, Chair PLDA Technology Committee and Director of the Somers Library. After meeting with the vendor, it was determined that not all elements of the RFP were fully met in the proposal.

Discussions with other potential vendors who had not submitted a response to the IT Audit RFP revealed that the scope of the original RFP was too broad for any one vendor to effectively meet all the requirements. After discussions at the PLDA Technology Committee held on October 10<sup>th</sup> and the PLDA General Membership Meeting held on October 17<sup>th</sup>, it was agreed that WLS would move forward with a phased

approach comprised of a series of audits that would address the key priorities identified in the original RFP. A total of three, more focused RFPs have been drafted and are now being reviewed by the PLDA IT Audit Committee. The scheduled date for posting the new RFPs is Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, with a service start date of December 1<sup>st</sup> and report delivery dates as early as January 31, 2020.

The three audits will each focus on one of the following areas:

#### ***Virtualization Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)/Environment***

a qualitative assessment including but not limited to the following:

- What other alternative structures (other than the existing VDI platform) can support a desktop environment and what are their costs, usability and maintenance requirements?
- Based on the needs of the two user groups (public library staff and public library patrons), is VDI the right choice for a supported desktop environment (with the recognition that the solution may be different for each group)?
- Do the platforms in use and processes in place (or their potential replacements) have the flexibility to serve the range of different sized libraries?
- Should it be retained, what remediation is needed to address the disadvantages and the potential advantages of the current VDI environment?
- Specifically related to member library use of the Evergreen Integrated Library System (ILS) and VDI: Should VDI be the primary vehicle for access to the Evergreen ILS? What alternatives exist and what potential trade-offs are there in terms of security and accessibility? How can access controls can be maintained in compliance with the NYS Comptroller's guidelines on Information Technology Governance in an off WLS network / non-VDI based access to the Evergreen ILS?

#### ***Network Operations, Structure and Security***

a qualitative assessment including but not limited to the following:

- Wide-Area Network configuration and management
- Patron Wi-Fi Network configuration and management,
- Data center operations,
- Network and infrastructure security (including a threat assessment to identify both accepted and unknown vulnerabilities and remediation recommendations), and
- Overall network architecture and ability to deliver required performance
- A risk analysis plan.

#### ***IT Operations***

a qualitative assessment including but not limited to the following:

- Evaluation of the quality of processes, routines, and controls related to the organization and management of IT operations
- Customer service and helpdesk response, and
- Disaster recovery planning (including data recovery).

During the interim period while the phased RFPs are being issued and completed, PLDA and the PLDA Technology Committee have identified the following three priorities for the WLS IT Department: VDI services, printing solutions and WiFi services. WLS has contracted with a third party vendor with expertise in VMware, which hosts the VDI platform, to review our current environment. A review of the current system

settings is underway to determine how potential changes could improve the overall stability, responsiveness and logon times. Based on their findings, corrective actions will be taken to maximize the effectiveness of the platform. WLS IT staff are reviewing and updating server settings in an effort to improve the printing experience in the member libraries and developing options for enhancing the WiFi capacity within the member libraries.

**EVERGREEN ILS**

Work continues on the enhancement of the Evergreen online catalog as well as the acquisitions module. Expanded cover art has been added to the online catalog, creating a more visually appealing search experience.

WLS has started the contract process with Equinox, the management company working with Evergreen, to work on the fixes that were prioritized by the PLDA ILS/Evergreen Committee that includes enhancements to the check-in and check-out process, holds queue placements and statistical analysis functions. A full review of the sequencing of holds queues as it currently occurs is being conducted, and alternative options will be explored to better prioritize the fulfillment of a library patron's hold with an available copy owned by the patron's home library.

**STAFFING**

Mr. Matthew Reinhardt started on September 23<sup>rd</sup> as the newest member of IT. In his role as a support technician, he will be a primary point of contact on helpdesk phone calls. He will also post monthly statistics and provide support with hardware repair and troubleshooting.

Ms. Lindsay Stratton has accepted the System Librarian position and is expected to start in early November. She will be the project lead on priority issues related to Evergreen, with an initial emphasis on full implementation of the acquisitions module, revamping of user permissions and improving the holds sequencing.

**Future Events**

November 13-16      New York Library Association (NYLA) Annual Conference –  
  Saratoga Springs, NY

November 21          WLS 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – WLS Headquarters, Elmsford – 8:30-10:30 AM  
*Guest Speaker:* Rich Harwood, President & Founder of The Harwood  
  Institute

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner  
Executive Director