

# Four County Library System



Fall 2009

## Library advocacy is now easier with a new online tool at 4CLS.org

The ongoing budget crisis in New York and the continued cuts in funding for libraries and library systems mean that advocacy has never been more necessary.

To make it as easy as possible and to increase the number of directors, trustees and library users who are willing to take action to ensure that their voices are heard in Albany, the Four County Library System has teamed with the **New York Library Association** in using a new electronic tool.

The **Online Advocacy Center** is accessible by clicking the icon on Four County's website home page at [www.4CLS.org](http://www.4CLS.org). It enables you to easily send a timely message to your legislators right from your computer desktop.

"Your legislators really are just a couple of quick clicks away now," says **David Karre**, Four County's executive director and CEO. "We can't make it any simpler or more convenient, so we hope we've eliminated any reasons for people not to speak up on behalf of public libraries."

Just ask **Millie Herko**, Four County's 83-year-old receptionist. She's a first-time online advocate. "I can't believe how easy it is to use," Millie says. "I just clicked on the red, white and blue button and followed the instructions. It only took a minute."

### ***Already used to fight funding cuts***

This new online tool was used for the first time at the end of October, when the statewide library community was asked by **Michael Borges**, NYLA director, to tell elected officials to reject Governor Paterson's proposed cuts in library aid. Hundreds of urgent messages were sent to members of the New York State Senate and



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Assembly from Four County and its member libraries.

"We had an outstanding response from people in the four-county region," David says. "In fact, it was just about the best in the state. That's remarkable, especially when you consider that this is a brand-new tool." He adds, "I'm really pleased and excited, but we can't ever relax because I don't think that library funding will ever be safe."

### ***Don't wait – become an advocate now***

If you haven't already tried out this handy tool, go to Four County's home page and click on the icon at the bottom to jump directly to the Online Advocacy Center. Follow the simple instructions, and use your nine-digit ZIP code where appropriate.

When necessary, we'll send an email via our FCLS listserv to call upon library supporters to click the "Take Action" button under a message that NYLA will develop to target a critical library-related issue.

## System meeting highlights

Directors and trustees from 15 member libraries gathered in Norwich on October 21 for the year's second System meeting. The two-hour session included:

- ▶ Director's Station overview by **Steve Bachman**, JC library director. He did a demonstration and answered questions, and he might do more training in the near future.
- ▶ Webcams and a related FAQ were distributed by **Pamela Brown**. Every library will get at least one webcam. The webcams came from an LSTA grant and are primarily intended for training purposes and communication between Four County and member libraries. Online and RAPAS libraries get a second webcam for public use, if they choose to install it.
- ▶ **David Karre** distributed several documents related to library policies. He also shared handouts related to H1N1 Swine flu and revisions to the "open meetings" law, and later he gave an update on current issues in library funding at the state level.
- ▶ **Sherry Kowalski** reviewed BCPL's grant-funded "TXT 4 Answers" program; Pamela discussed activities related to the distribution and use of Gates Grant computers, she reported on changes to the Research Center, and she also noted that the next Technical Services Advisory Committee meeting is set for March 17 at the Four County Library System.
- ▶ **Paul Golaszewski** discussed the NYS Construction Grant Program and encouraged libraries to begin planning now for next year's projects. Later he distributed a flyer and discussed the new online advocacy initiative.
- ▶ **Starr LaTronica** reviewed this year's Summer Reading Program (*more on p.4*); she also talked about recruiting teen volunteers and the Barnes & Noble book drive. Free books were available to attendees.
- ▶ **Megan Biddle** was introduced as the new manager of collection services (*more on p.3*).

System meetings in 2010 are set for April 21 and October 20, perhaps to be done via webcams.

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**Providing consolidated programs, services and specialized resources that help 42 public libraries serve their communities in Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Otsego Counties.**

Four County Library System  
304 Clubhouse Road  
Vestal, New York 13850  
607.723.8236  
www.4CLS.org

**Paul Golaszewski**, Editor [pgolaszewski@4cls.org](mailto:pgolaszewski@4cls.org)  
**David J. Karre**, Executive Director/CEO  
**Pamela P. Brown**, Deputy Executive Director

## Construction grants 2009

Construction grant applications approved by the Four County Library System's trustees and submitted on behalf of seven member libraries amounted to nearly \$300,000 in funding requests under the \$14 million state program. Total cost of these projects is more than \$600,000. A construction grant can cover up to half of a project's total cost.

- ▶ Broome County Public Library \$238,901 total project cost to install solar panels (for a 50% reduction in electricity costs), solar-powered hot water heater, LED lighting, an emergency door, and relocate security office; grant application written by **Lisa Wise**.
- ▶ Endicott \$163,550 to renovate public restrooms and improve restroom accessibility for persons with disabilities; **Ed Dunscombe**.
- ▶ Greene \$23,417 to pave a parking area, add a handicapped space and install a parking lot lighting system; **Mary King**.
- ▶ New Berlin \$14,828 to install a new furnace; **Darlene LaBrie**.
- ▶ Oneonta \$108,045 to restore driveways and the parking lot; **Marie Bruni**.
- ▶ Oxford \$22,700 to install a sidewalk and curb and pave the parking lot; **Nancy Morey**.
- ▶ Sidney \$33,880 to replace the roof; **Roz Conner**.

Applications were reviewed and approved by the Division of Library Development and have been forwarded to the NYS Dormitory Authority for final review and approval.

**Grace Kelly**, DLD's construction grant program manager, says that applicants should not expect to receive a formal notification letter before late February or early March. Grant recipients then have six months to begin working on their construction projects.



Librarians **Debbie Sturdevant**, Lisle Free Library, and **Nancy Simerl**, Sherburne Public Library, were among the attendees at the System meeting at the Guernsey Memorial Library.

## Welcome our newest manager

**Megan Biddle** joined Four County on November 16 as collection services manager. She is responsible for all technical services functions – acquisition, cataloging and processing – along with circuits.

Megan earned a B.A. in history from Lebanon Valley College and an online Master's degree in library and information science from Drexel University. Before coming to 4CLS she worked in the retail industry, including Barnes & Noble and Borders. Contact her by phone at ext.360 or email at [mbiddle@4cls.org](mailto:mbiddle@4cls.org)



## New officers, trustees at 4CLS

The Four County Library System board of trustees announced the election of new officers and the election of two new trustees. Officers are: **Kathleen Wood** of Harpursville, president; **Sandy Sheradin** of Walton, vice president; **Annette Testani** of Johnson City, secretary/assistant treasurer; and **Marilyn Kochersperger** of Norwich, assistant secretary. New trustees are **Chris Kuzel** of Johnson City and **Daniel Swift** of Otego. Other trustees are **Wendy Caldiero**, Afton; and **Steve Rothenberg**, Sidney.

## Are you using Twitter yet?

If social networking tools such as Twitter leave you bewildered, think of it this way: If email is like a person-to-person phone call, and a blog (i.e. Web log) is like a lecture with follow-up questions and discussions, then Twitter is like a party where a group of people experience and discuss the same thing. The core of tools such as Twitter, Facebook and MySpace is a commons or shared area where people communicate.

Twitter messages are limited to 140 characters and are sent to many people, unlike a cellphone text message which is a person-to-person communication.

— excerpted from *The Wisconsin Valley Lamplighter*



Members of the technical services department bid farewell to **Casey Moore** (second from left): **Dannielle Swart**, **Marilyn Saunders**, **Laura Henry**, **Sue O'Connell**, **Pat Bostwick** and **Sharon Bennett** (missing: **Susan Blumberg** and **Sharon Dotman**).

## Briefly noted . . .

**4CLS** – A sincere thank you to **Janet Potter** who "retired" after 14 years as a trustee. She served two terms as president, and many achievements marked her time on the board, including the roll out of the world's first Cybermobile and the integration of computers into member libraries. **Janet Ottman** also left the board... **Casey Moore** resigned as copy cataloger in technical services and moved to NYC. **Luci Squiers** joined the department as her replacement... The merger of the automation system at **Broome County Public Library** with the Sirsi system at Four County was noted in a recent edition of *Library Administrator's Digest*... **Kids' Bookfest 2009** was held on November 14 at the Discovery Center, which offered free admission to any family with a library card... **Afton** – Thanks to volunteers and board members, the library's book sale raised \$781... Manager **Ramona Bogart** was nominated for the MDA Lock Down last month... **Albany – Dr. David Steiner** is the new commissioner of the NYS Education Department and the new president of the University of the State of New York... **Bovina** – Is holding a glassware sale through December 24 to benefit the library... **Endicott** – Trustee **Brian Steele** has been appointed to the board of the New York State Association of Library Boards... **Franklin** – Special thanks to volunteer **Lee Oreowitz** for barcoding the majority of the library's collection. Franklin is now an online library... **Nineveh** – Director **Tracie Livermore** reports that a local volunteer holds weekly GED classes at the library, which have become very important to the community... **Oxford** – **Shannon Brandt** is the new youth services coordinator... **Sidney** – The **Masonville** and **Sidney Center** branches are now online... **Smyrna** – **Stacie Beers** is the new director.



**Cathy Weinell** of the Sherburne Public Library enjoys a moment with children who participated in the felt-making class as part of the Summer Reading Program.

## Summer reading wrap-up

It was another banner year for summer reading in the 4CLS region. Over 5100 children and teens registered for programs in the member libraries and on the Cybermobile. Participants kept track of their progress in a variety of measures, logging in by number of books (26,004), hours (10,757), or pages (190,288) read over the course of the program.

Staff in member libraries inspired and encouraged young readers through the guidance of expert readers'

advisory and creative programming that drew families to the library and enhanced their experience while expanding their worldview.

This year's theme, *Get Creative @ Your Library* provided a plethora of possibilities for the imaginative energies of youth services programmers, from the creative crafts such as feltmaking projects at the Sherburne Public Library, to the rich series of multicultural performances that are the hallmark of the Franklin Free Library. Others focused on the NYS quadricentennial celebration with programs and activities that celebrated historical events. Families could partake in a panoply of opportunities throughout the region, visible via the web-based calendar on the 4CLS home page that is supported by Federal Library Services and Technology Act funds, awarded to the New York State Library by the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Partnerships with schools, recreation groups, and programs such as the Migrant Education Outreach Program provided additional opportunities to bring summer reading into the daily lives of children and teens. The educational benefit of maintaining and increasing reading skills during the summer has demonstrated the importance of public library summer reading programs. Additionally, these programs establish a love of reading for pleasure and form an appreciation of the independence of individual choice that will last a lifetime.

— *submitted by Starr LaTronica*



**Four County Library System**

**304 Clubhouse Road  
Vestal, NY 13850**

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