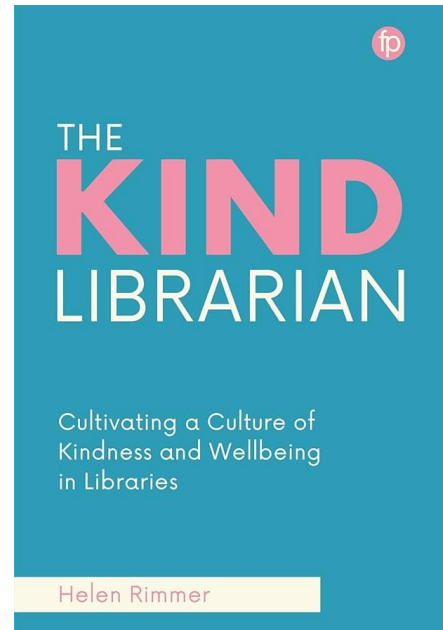


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Request *The Kind Librarian* by Helen Rimmer!  
**A20519414065**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Annual Reports** are due to FLLS on **February 22!**

**Upcoming Staff Out-of-Office:** Tom—1/31 & 2/26; Carlos—2/6-2/7; Heidi—2/18-2/21; Sarah—2/26-2/28; Jenny—2/27 (PM only).

## LINKS TO MAKE YOU THINK

[The Grand Canal: Celebrating the Erie Canal's Bicentennial](#)



[Where did that chair come from?](#)

[Apply Now: Peggy Barber Tribute Grant](#)

[Letting Go to Move Forward: Reevaluating My Social Media Presence](#)

[10 Things Library Workers Should Know About the Internet's Invisible Architecture](#)

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2025 from Finger Lakes Library System. We have had a busy start to the new year, so here are some updates for you:

**NY State Budget** – Governor Hochul delivered her 2025 State of the State address in Albany on January 14. That address offered more than 200 initiatives that according to her office will put money back in residents' pockets, keep New Yorkers safe, and ensure that New York is a place where all families can thrive. While education was discussed, libraries were not mentioned in her State of the State, which is not unusual.



On Tuesday, January 21, Governor Hochul gave her FY 2026 budget announcement. This was the first indication of what she is suggesting for library aid. According to her written budget document, the following is being suggested: **“Support for Libraries** - The Executive Budget supports public libraries by providing \$104.6 million of Library Aid, equal to the SY 2026 statutory funding amount. This is a \$0.7 million increase over FY 2025 Enacted Budget levels. The Executive Budget also provides \$34 million for Library Construction to fund various capital projects. In addition, the Executive Budget continues a \$3 million appropriation to ensure continued access to the New York Online Virtual Electronic Library, a free online library of magazines, newspapers, maps, charts, research, and reference books available to all New Yorkers.”

A \$750,000 increase in library aid would amount to a few extra thousand dollars for library systems for FY 2026. The State Aid for Library Construction is actually a \$10M loss from FY 2025, when construction aid was \$44M in the FY 2025 enacted budget.

**Advocacy Day** – This year NY State Advocacy Day is on Wednesday, February 5. Please note that FLLS will not be providing a bus to Albany this year. Instead, we are continuing our localized advocacy efforts and meeting with our legislators at our area libraries during their library visits. This method of advocacy has served our area well over the last few years. I will be in Albany for pre-Advocacy Day State meetings and will be out of the office and in Albany February 4—6. We will be sharing NYLA Advocacy alerts and requests for online advocacy efforts over the next month or so.

**Annual Reports** – A reminder that the NY State annual report portal is open. FLLS must submit member library annual reports to the State Library by March 1, so the **due date to FLLS is February 22**. This will give us time to look over the reports and suggest corrections. A reminder that all annual reports **MUST** be approved by your board of trustees, so make sure that you hold your board meetings before February 22.

**Ovid Fire** – Many of our directors and trustees reached out to us on Wednesday after news of the catastrophic fire in Ovid on Tuesday, January 21. The Edith B. Ford Memorial Library in Ovid was safe from the fire across the street from them. Late Tuesday evening fire crews did have to spray the roof of the library due to flying embers, but the library was not harmed. The library re-opened on Thursday and many thanks to the Interlaken Library and Lodi Library who acted as warming shelters on Wednesday.

Thank you for all of your hard work in libraries since the start of the new year.  
Sarah



# MEMBER LIBRARY NEWS

Do you have something to share? Please email [jshonk@fills.org](mailto:jshonk@fills.org)!



## Phillips Free Library in Homer

*"Someone hung these wonderfully crocheted picture book covers in our trees a few days before Christmas. We don't know who did it. They call themselves The Peace Bandits."* — Director Martsje Vanderschaaf-Riehlman





# CONTINUING EDUCATION

## Upcoming Webinars

### [Storytime Stuff with Kathy MacMillan \(OWWL\)](#)

**Friday, February 7 | 10:00am-12:00pm | FREE**

It's a storytime showdown full of fresh ideas, practical tricks, and easy flannelboards, fingerplays, sign language rhymes, and other activities. Learn how to keep your audience's attention, transition smoothly between activities, and keep kids and parents coming back for more. OWWL Library System invites FLLS member library staff to attend this free webinar.

### [Creating Equitable Library Policies \(SCRLC\)](#)

**Friday, February 14 | 10:00am-12:00pm | FREE**

The policies of a library help to create the library's environment for staff and patrons. Effective library policies are essential for setting clear expectations, defining responsibilities, and establishing boundaries. Unfortunately, policies often focus on negatives, rather than positives and may unintentionally target (and harm) specific populations. Using several policies that a library has – dress code, bereavement, code of conduct, and meeting room policies – we will discuss how to avoid policies driven by fear or past events, and discover how policies can focus on positive actions, inclusion, and equity. Participants are encouraged to bring their dress code, bereavement, code of conduct, and meeting room policies to the webinar. There will be time during the webinar for them to review these specific policies and begin to update them using information learned during the session. Presented by Jill Hurst-Wahl.

### [Disaster Preparedness Basics—People, Policies, Practices, and Procedures \(CLRC\)](#)

**Wednesday, February 26 | 2:00pm-3:30pm | FREE**

In July, 2024, Rome was hit by an EF2 tornado that went through the city's center coming within a block of the library. In this one hour program, learn what procedures, policies, and partnerships helped Jervis to respond quickly to the tornado warning and as an essential component of the community's response. In addition, you will be invited to consider other actions that can be part of response preparedness. Presented by Lisa Matte.

**Ask the HR Expert Series**  
with Stephanie “Cole” Adams

**FRIDAYS FROM 10 AM - 11:30 AM**

New Laws in the New Year	<b>JANUARY 24, 2025</b>
Innovations in Employee Benefits	<b>FEBRUARY 28, 2025</b>
AI on the (GLAM) Job	<b>MARCH 28, 2025</b>
Open Ask HR	<b>APRIL 25, 2025</b>

**Empire State Library Network**

**Empire State Library Network (ESLN)** presents: A series of webinars that will address your pressing Human Resources questions. They will be presented by Stephanie “Cole” Adams, our Ask The Lawyer representative.

Registration: <https://www.senylrc.org/ask-the-hr-expert-webinars/>

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# POLARIS TIP

## Logging On & Off Properly

### To Log On

Double click on the Remote Desktop/Polaris icon on your computer's desktop. The Remote Desktop will open on your screen and you can double click the Polaris icon along the left-hand side of the screen. Enter your unique User Name and Password.

**Note:** Passwords are case sensitive.

Having trouble with your receipt printers? You may have logged onto the Polaris toolbar before the printers were able to map completely. It is recommended that you wait a few seconds before opening the Polaris toolbar to ensure that everything loads correctly.

### To Log Off

On the toolbar, go to the **File** → **Log Off** or **Ctrl L**, then click **OK**. Next, go to **File** → **Exit** to close the toolbar. Lastly, go to the Windows button in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen, right click, move your mouse to **Shut down or sign out**, and left click on **Sign out**.



**Please Note:** When closing Polaris, simply clicking on the X on the toolbar or the Remote Desktop without logging off may cause issues with the Polaris server and could impact the entire system!

**DO NOT** click the X to get out of Polaris!



## Looking for Assistance with Polaris?

Visit <https://www.flls.org/polaris-documentation/> to view Polaris handouts and videos! The videos are password protected.

**If you cannot access Polaris, please contact the CNS Department immediately: 1-607-273-4074 ext. 237**

Otherwise, please submit a **HelpDesk** ticket: <https://flls.samanage.com/login>. You will have to create an account.

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# PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

## Summer Reading Updates

Want to color outside the lines this summer? Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar and get some fresh ideas at our [programming workshops](#).

Have you bookmarked the FLLS Summer Reading 2025 LibGuide yet <https://scrlc.libguides.com/flls-summer-reading-2025>? It's where all things summer live. Will be updated as new resources become available.

**COLOR OUR WORLD**  
Summer Reading Collaborative Workshops

<p><b>Children's Programs</b> Tuesday February 25 9:30 am-12:30 pm</p>		<p><b>Teen Programs</b> Tuesday March 11 9:30 am-12:30 pm</p>
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Check out this free webinar from STAR Net and CSLP on Tuesday, February 4 at 3pm! [Color Our World with Citizen Science: From Space to Sea](#): Join SciStarter, STAR Net, and the Collaborative Summer Reading Program for an engaging webinar that explores how libraries can bring the 2024 Summer Reading Theme, Color Our World, to life through Citizen Science. Discover hands-on STEM activities for all ages, from exploring the wonders of space to uncovering the mysteries of the deep sea. Learn how these activities align with the theme and provide opportunities for library users to contribute to real-world scientific research. [Register here!](#)

### Early Literacy Resources from the [New York State Library](#)

Be sure to explore the [DayByDayNY Family Literacy Calendar](#), featuring multimedia activities that enhance books, songs, and family health. The [Family Literacy Calendar](#) includes [One More Story](#), an online library of the best of classic and contemporary children's read aloud picture books with two new eBooks each day, as well as unique features that help pre-readers and early readers engage and enjoy literature independently or with family or caregivers. Scan the QR code for more information.

**OneMoreStory.com**





## AUTISM-READY LIBRARIES TOOLKIT



Information School  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



INSTITUTE of  
Museum and Library  
SERVICES

The toolkit website contains FREE online training modules and resources for library staff in public libraries who would like to better serve families with autistic children. The [Autism-Ready Libraries Toolkit](#) can also be used by anyone with an interest in autism inclusion and inclusive early literacy practices.

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## AWARDS & GRANTS

### SCRLC Digitization Awards

For 2025-2026, applications are especially encouraged for:

- partnerships increasing representation of and with communities that have been historically and systematically oppressed;
- geographically underrepresented communities in the SCRLC region;
- innovative approaches to availing digitized collections, e.g., holding or co-organizing a Wikipedia edit-a-thon to add links to New York Heritage collections, walking tours, virtual tours through ESIE, or HistoryForge participation.

All proposals received will be presented to a review panel comprised of expert individuals from outside the SCRLC region for evaluation and funding recommendations. Individual applications are limited to \$5,000; partnership applications, to \$8,000.

The application packet is available in Word or PDF format: <https://scrlc.org/grant-information>.

Applications must be completed and submitted electronically to Claire Lovell, SCRLC's Digital Services Librarian, at [clovell@scrlc.org](mailto:clovell@scrlc.org) by **Friday, April 11, 2025**. Please contact Claire with any questions.

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**It's that time again!** Do you have an idea for an outreach project but lack funding? Member libraries in our service area can apply for an Outreach Mini-Grant! Applications are **NOW OPEN** for the 2025-2026 grant cycle. \$15,000 is available! ***All applications are due March 21, 2025.***

Visit the [Outreach Services](#) page to download an application or to view the FAQs and Tips document. *Have a question? Stuck on an idea?* Email Jenny Shonk at [jshonk@flls.org](mailto:jshonk@flls.org).