



# Trustee Update

## Library News You Can Use

### When times get tough, libraries get tougher...and busier!

In the November issue, we told you about the press release “Slow Economy Fuels Surge in Library Visits” from the American Library Association (<http://tinyurl.com/6ychno>). Since then, there have been many more articles about this phenomenon, well known in library circles but often not fully recognized or understood by those who approve local budgets that determine library funding.

In the future, you may be able to use this situation to help document your need for additional funding. Here is a sample of local and national news coverage:

- ✓ “Libraries offer free relief from tough times” (<http://tinyurl.com/48advt>), which is a video from NBC Nightly News.
- ✓ “As economy dips, Fox Valley libraries have ‘banner year’” (<http://tinyurl.com/bx8z3g>), from the Fond du Lac Reporter.
- ✓ More news links are available in the January 9 and 23 issues of Online Update ([http://scls.typepad.com/online\\_update](http://scls.typepad.com/online_update)), SCLS’s biweekly online newsletter.



libraries is encouraging, it’s important to remember that the extra traffic is putting a strain on the staff at your library. The article “Library usage will go up during a recession—Management are you really prepared?” (<http://tinyurl.com/8y8ce5>) offers suggestions for helping your director and staff survive and thrive.

To help libraries benefit from the increased usage being experienced today, the The American Library Association has created a press kit ([www.ala.org/economynews](http://www.ala.org/economynews)) and toolkit (<http://tinyurl.com/8y9y8d>). These tools can help library advocates make the case for libraries during times of economic downturn. Some of the people turning to you during the economic crisis may be new library users, and if you can turn them into advocates, you’ve added to the numbers you can

call on when speaking to municipal officials about the importance of library funding. Encourage your supporters to volunteer to speak up at [www.scls.info/pr/speak\\_up/](http://www.scls.info/pr/speak_up/). It’s an easy way for people to get involved and make a difference for the library they already love.

Another tool to help you in these advocacy efforts is the Library Use Value

Calculator ([www.scls.info/pr/calculator/index.html](http://www.scls.info/pr/calculator/index.html)), which allows library users to determine just how much they are saving by using the library. ♦

### February is Annual Report season

Once again, the director of your library is hard at work on the state Public Library Annual Report, as required by state statute (43.58(6)). It’s a big job, and an important one, so consider stopping by to give them some moral support.

It’s not a thankless job, though, because the report allows you to review your library’s current and past data to evaluate performance, and to compare your library to other libraries. Data from past annual reports is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/dm-lib-stat.html>.

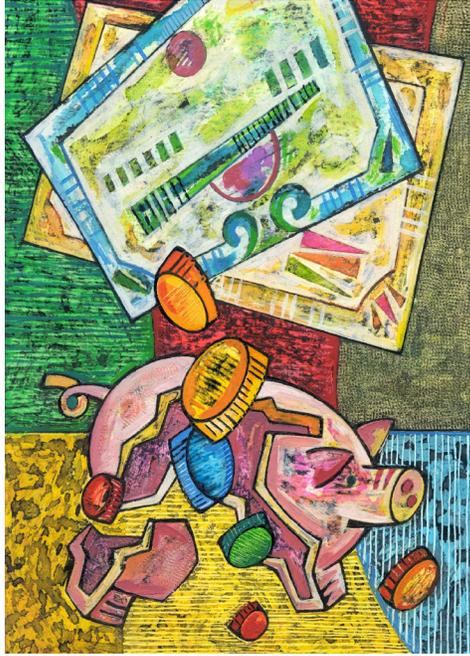
The library board also has a role to play in the annual report process. Because it is a report from the library board, it must be formally approved by the board before it is submitted. Following approval, the report must be signed and dated by the library board president (and library director).

The annual report is an excellent source for statistical data, which you can use to tell your library’s story to the public, as well as to your municipality, county, and any other funding sources. ♦

While this heightened interest in li-

# Library budgets—the saga continues

It is just the beginning of 2009, and perhaps your library, and you, as board members, are already wondering how you will make your budget last the year.



In the November issue, we talked about the possibility of being required to make service reductions, or exploring other ways to make up the shortfall, if your library did not receive the budget allocation needed to maintain the necessary level of service.

This becomes increasingly important since libraries

are busier than ever as a result of the current economy (see article on page 1).

It's possible that your library is already weathering some negative results from such decisions. Given recent economic predictions, it's logical to conclude that public libraries will continue to experience increased usage. Therefore, it is important to keep a record of these results and comments from library users. Stories from people who have no place to go the evenings you are now closed, or from students who must wait longer to use computers because of the increased use—or whatever your particular case may be—help support your cause when you present your 2010 budget request later this year. ❖

## SCLS staff contacts:

Do you have questions about filing your annual report, or preparing library budgets? If so, contact Cheryl Becker at (608) 246-7973 or [cbecker@scls.lib.wi.us](mailto:cbecker@scls.lib.wi.us).

If you have questions about marketing, advocacy and funding, contact Mark Ibach at (608) 246-5612 or [mibach@scls.lib.wi.us](mailto:mibach@scls.lib.wi.us). ❖

*South Central Library System Trustee Update—Library News You Can Use*

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MADISON, WI  
PERMIT NO. 2588

South Central Library System  
5250 E. Terrace Drive, Suite A-2  
Madison, WI 53718-8345

