

Executive Director's Report

June 17, 2015

SAILS is celebrating its 20th anniversary July 1, 2015. It doesn't feel like it has been that long and I am astonished with what we have accomplished over the past two decades. I am proud to say that in many ways SAILS is a model of how a library network can provide exceptional return on investment for dollars spent on membership. SAILS is the only network in Massachusetts that successfully merged two separate networks into one. It was one of the first networks to provide its members with a platform for storing and displaying historically significant images and documents – long before the Digital Commonwealth was formed. It is the only network in the state that offers patrons the option of receiving automated telephone notifications. It is the only network in the state that allows patrons to opt into viewing their checkout histories. It is the only network that welcomes diverse libraries – K-12 and special. SAILS was the first network to provide patrons with downloadable audio books. SAILS breaks the mold and forges its own path to ensure that the residents of Southeastern Massachusetts have exceptional library services. It couldn't have been done without the dedication of the directors who were committed to coming together to create a vibrant and forward thinking organization

I would like to talk about the "Class of 2015" – the directors who will be retiring this year. All of them have made significant contributions to the network by serving on committees, as officers, and allowing their staff members to actively participate in network activities. Denise Medeiros, Danielle Bowker, Robin Glasser, Jerry Cirillo, and Beth Smith (in order of their retirement dates) have made significant contributions to SAILS. I will miss all of them – I relied on their feedback and advice over the years and they have all stepped up when I needed help. You can be sure I will be calling upon their successors to serve on the network's committees and fill their very large shoes.

I want to thank the outgoing officers and all the directors who have served on the board or as officers over the past years. All of you have been very generous in the time you have been willing to devote to SAILS. I couldn't do my job without your assistance.

As you know we are losing two valuable staff members this summer. Ginny Berube will be leaving SAILS in July. She was the commander in chief who organized and managed our move from Middleborough to Lakeville. She has developed a set of procedures to ensure our business practices are organized and coherent. She is going to be a hard act to follow.

I congratulate Jayme Viveiros on her appointment as director of the Lakeville Public Library but I am sad to see her leave the SAILS staff. I know she has contributed greatly to the success we achieved this year and she has helped many of the member libraries individually. Luckily she isn't going too far and I will be calling upon her to provide me with insight into what the libraries in SAILS need to be successful. She will only be up the street from us after all.

Of course I want to recognize the SAILS staff – the foundation upon which everything rests. They give 110% to ensure that the network provides quality services to the members.

Starting July 1, 2015 we are starting a new Strategic Plan. I was looking at the Strategic Plan that was developed in 1995 and I was struck with how the role of the network has evolved over the past 20 years. It is no longer a cooperative primarily involved with circulation and cataloging activities but has become an organization dedicated to helping its members deploy technology to provide the best service possible to their user communities. It hasn't always been easy but I would like to think it has made a difference to the members.

When ABLE and SEAL first came together no one knew how it would work out – after 20 years I think it is clear that it has been tremendously successful. This has been a collective effort and I am proud to have been a part of that effort. I am confident that the network will continue to provide the libraries in Southeastern Massachusetts with the services they need to succeed not matter how technology changes.