

**New Jersey Library
Trustee Association**
P.O. Box 1505, Trenton, NJ 08607

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New Jersey Library Trustees Newsletter

National Legislative Day

National Legislative Day in Washington, DC is just around the corner. Sponsored by the American Library Association, Legislative Day is an opportunity for library advocates to talk to members of Congress about the key issues important to libraries. Monday, May 11th is set aside for briefings from the ALA Washington Office. They do a fantastic job of bringing attendees up to date on the issues that impact libraries, be they LSTA, E-Rate, Copyright, or, in this case, the stimulus package. Monday evening there is a reception on Capitol Hill and on Tuesday, May 12 we'll schedule you to visit NJ members of the House and Senate. Won't you consid-

er joining us this year? Check out the ALA Legislative Day website at: www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/wo/washevents/nlld/nlld2009.cfm

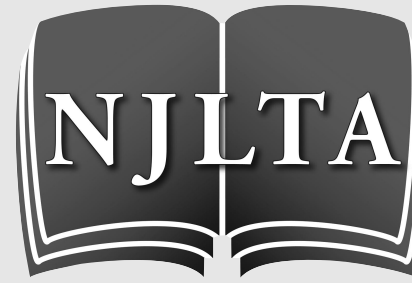
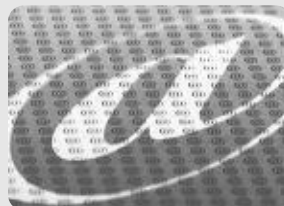
The registration fee is \$20. Need more information? Contact Eileen Palmer at: empalmer@lmxac.org.

NJLTA supports the attendance of a New Jersey Library Trustee to Legislative Day through the Harmatz Award which provides \$500 to support travel and hotel accommodations. Details for the Harmatz Award can be found at: www.njlibrarytrustees.org/harmatznomination.pdf

This is a wonderful opportunity for a trustee to go to Washington.

Do We Have Your Email Address?

NJLTA sends our monthly email messages to our members. Have you been getting yours? If not, please check with Pat Tumulty at ptumulty@njla.org and she will check our database and make sure we have your correct address. There are so many things going on that you don't want to miss out.



New Jersey Library Trustees Newsletter

Spring 2009

President's Column

Evaluation is Essential

by Margaret Shapiro, NJLTA President



Part of the library board's job is to make a written, comprehensive evaluation of the director. It is the director's job to do the same for each employee of the library. Who evaluates the board? It's up to the board to hold itself accountable for good performance. Then shouldn't the board of trustees have an evaluation too? Has your board done a self-evaluation? It might not be a bad idea to take a yearly look at how your board works and if it is effective and achieving its goals.

Why should we evaluate? As stewards of the public's trust, we need to have some measurement of how well we're performing our duties. We're not necessarily looking to find fault with the board or individual trustee, but to identify strengths and weaknesses, determine if goals and objectives are being met and decide how we can do a better job.

Some things to consider in an evaluation might be:

Planning – is there a strategic plan in place? How well are we doing in achieving the goals of the plan?

Communication – how well do we communicate with the director, local officials, the public, with each other?

Conduct – do we conduct our meetings in an effective way? Do we conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity? Do we operate within our bylaws? Is our business conducted within the law?

Funding – have we secured adequate funding for operations and for the future as outlined in our strategic plan?

Continuing Education – do we attend whenever possible?

After a board evaluation, individual trustees should also take a look at their own performance to see how effective they are and whether they are contributing to the board. The number one question to ask here is; "Am I an active member of the board?" Do I ask, do I listen, do I speak my mind, and do I vote my conscience?

The evaluations do not have to be complicated or take a lot of time. But the evaluations should be written and part of public record. Evaluations should be done on a yearly basis and conducted before new trustees are sworn in. Any evaluation should include a plan for improvement. What steps can we take to become better trustees? The board should have its own plan of action and a timetable for review. As a board, how can we better serve the library, the public and the communities we serve?



NJLTA Spring Program

Trustee Program at NJLA Spring Conference promises to be informative and fun. (You can't ask for anything better than that!) Our evening program will feature Will Manley as the guest speaker. It will be Tuesday, April 28 beginning at 7:30 at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch. Will is the rare individual who can address important topics with wit and wisdom.

Will had a long career in public service. He was the library director of the Tempe (Az) Public Library and became the Tempe City Manager in 2001. He understands the challenges of both libraries and city administrators. He has written several books on library administration and is a frequent contributor to American Libraries Magazine. His presentation for NJLTA will focus on the roles and responsibilities of library trustees. Come down early and see the exhibits and attend the NJLA Awards Reception which begins at 5:30 pm.

How to Contact Governor Corzine

Phone: **609.292.6000**

For email visit:
**[www.state.nj.us/governor/
about/contact](http://www.state.nj.us/governor/about/contact)**

Select topic "**Commerce**"

Select Sub Topic "**Small business**"

Office of the Governor

P.O. Box 001, Trenton, NJ 08625

Trustee Boards Lead Advocacy Efforts Against Attacks On The 1/3 Mill Legislation

In November, the NJ League of Municipalities passed a resolution that supported lowering the minimum funding requirement for municipal libraries from 1/3 mill to 1/6 mill. The New Jersey Library Association developed a model resolution for library boards to adopt in opposition of this proposal. The response from the trustee community was overwhelming. To date over 140 boards of trustees have adopted local resolutions opposing a change in the current law. In addition, nineteen local municipalities also adopted resolutions against the league's proposal.

In February, legislation (A3753) was introduced by Assemblyman Prieto. The assemblyman has met with mem-

bers of the library community and has indicated he is not moving forward with this legislation. He would support making municipal libraries a cap exemption or making funding for libraries a dedicated line such as open space funding. The actions of local boards of trustees made all of the difference in this advocacy.

State Budget Proposes More Cuts In Library Funding

Governor Corzine has announced his FY10 state budget. Unfortunately, it again recommends significant reductions in library funding. If the state legislature does not restore this funding, this will make three straight years that funding for library programs would be reduced. Our libraries relied on four major state funded programs- the state

per capita aid program, the New Jersey Library Network, the Virtual Library program and the Knowledge Initiative. The roles of these programs are complementary. Each of these programs has received at least a 10% reduction in the budget. The cumulative reductions for library programs from FY09 to FY10 are \$2,346,000 or a 14.42% reduction from last year. When added to cuts already taken in the FY08 and FY09 budgets, library programs have been reduced by 22.76% in the last three years or over \$4,038,000. These are cuts in services which directly impact the public. In addition, the New Jersey State Library has also taken additional reductions in funding. Budget discussions are just underway in Trenton. NJLTA members should contact their local legislators about these cuts.

Snapshot Day - Ever Wonder About A Day Without Libraries?

Snapshot: One Day in the Life of New Jersey Libraries

The New Jersey State Library and the New Jersey Library Association launched a project called "Snapshot: One Day in the Life of New Jersey Libraries." Its purpose? To capture the impact that New Jersey libraries have on their communities on a typical day.

Librarians from all types of libraries were invited to participate, and participate they did: public and academic libraries, school and special libraries, hospital libraries and government libraries, from the tiniest facility to the largest county systems. We created a quick survey to capture the daily activities of libraries across the state, and hundreds of libraries sent us their survey results.

The results from the participating libraries were amazing:

- 161,367 people walked through our doors (Did you know that 40,000 people visit Disneyland every day? – we had four times the volume!)
- 156,793 items were circulated
- 27,742 people used the computers
- 1,245 got employment assistance.

Snapshot Day was such a great success that we plan on making it a yearly event. More information on Snapshot Day is online at: <http://snapshot.njlibraries.org/>

For more information about Snapshot Day, contact Peggy Cadigan at the New Jersey State Library 609-278-2640, x113, or pcadigan@njstatelib.org.



State Librarian's Column

Better Trustees Make Better Boards

by Norma Blake, State Librarian



It is time to register for the sixth New Jersey State Library Trustee Institute to be held Saturday, May 9, 2009 at the Marriott Princeton Hotel and Conference Center at Forrestal. Copies of the conference brochure with registration information were sent to your Board President and Library Director to disseminate. To see an online version of the program go to: www.njlibrary-trustees.org/institute.html. In this very difficult year for libraries and library funding, we urge you to discuss this information with your fellow board members and encourage their attendance.

The New Jersey State Library is proud to present the Trustee Institute along with our partners, the New Jersey Library Trustee Association and the New Jersey Library Association. This year's conference theme is *Libraries from Town Hall to Washington, DC: Have Your Message Heard*, and features advocacy expert Stephanie Vance. Trustees will attend informational workshops on library law & state aid, budgeting & finance, trustee roles & responsibilities, strategic planning, fundraising & capital campaigns, plus special workshops on advocacy.

There is something for every trustee, both new and experienced, at Trustee Institute!

According to State Librarian, Norma Blake, "These are the most difficult times I can remember for libraries in New Jersey. Despite record use, financial support for libraries is being challenged on every front. Library trustees have never been more important than in our current economic crisis. State officials need to know library issues and the fiscal and legislative consequences of their actions. This is why trustees are of such vital importance. You are our champions for responding to critical issues facing New Jersey libraries at this time. I believe that the advocacy training you will receive during this year's institute will prove valuable in the coming year. Together we can create a brighter and more secure future for libraries in New Jersey. I look forward to partnering with you as we speak with one voice about the value of libraries in our communities."

The New Jersey State Library will once again pay for one trustee from every library (up to 200 individual libraries) to attend the conference. We encourage your library to send additional trustees, directors, and library commissioners at the very reasonable conference fee of \$150 each. A small block of rooms has been

reserved the night before the conference (May 8th) at the special rate of \$129.00. Accommodations are on your own and must be made directly by calling the Marriott Princeton at 800-943-6709 or 609-452-7800.

Please note that registration for the conference takes place only online this year at: www.njstatelib.org/LDB/Events

We recommend that you engage the help of your Library Director to register all of your trustees at the same time. We will then issue your library one group invoice. For further information and to download more copies of the brochure visit the New Jersey State Library website at www.njstatelib.org/LDB/Trustees. Contact Michele Stricker at mstricker@njstatelib.org with any questions.

