

**New Jersey Library
Trustee Association**
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New Jersey Library Trustees Newsletter

Library Champions

What do Judy Blume, Trent Cole, Michael Connelly, Janet Evanovich, Devin Harris, Zach Parise and Justin Tuck have in common? They are all NJ Library Champions. The Library Champions program is an exciting public awareness initiative sponsored by the NJ State Library. You will soon be seeing posters of these champions in your libraries.

Encourage everyone in your community to also become a library champion. The New Jersey Library Association has a goal of adding 10,000 library champions during the month of February. Every library director has received information, so ask yours how you can get involved.

Hold the dates

April 27-28

NJLA Spring Conference in Long Branch.

June 29

ALA National Library Advocacy Day in Washington, DC

September 25

Trustee Institute Princeton Marriott Hotel and Conference Center at Forrestal

Do We Have Your Email Address?

NJLTA sends our 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

Winter 2010

President's Column

Have the Right Tools

by Margaret Shapiro, NJLTA President



On Election Day this year, the residents of Demarest, NJ voted to create a municipal library where only an association library has existed since 1963. The vote was 4 – 1 in favor of the measure and we are now The Demarest Free Public Library. Even in this time of economic pressure, the voters chose to fund their local public library.

The road to municipalization was an interesting one. It allowed me to use all of the tools I had accumulated from the programs I had attended over the years

as a library trustee. Since I became a trustee I have attended Trustee Institutes, sponsored by NJLTA and NJ State Library. Each time I go, I learn something new. I have participated in many programs sponsored by the local library cooperatives. The latest was an on-line chat facilitated by BCCLS (Bergen County Cooperative Library System) for trustees to discuss current issues of importance at their libraries.

Continuing education for trustees is part of the job. And the reasons for it are clear. You may need to negotiate for funding, or you may need to hire a director. There have been programs offered on these topics and others. There have been programs on roles and



responsibilities and advocacy. We even had a program on how to connect with your local officials presented by one of our NJLTA board members.

So, make the effort. Attend that program. We try to provide a wide range of programs and events throughout the year. Check websites, too, (NJLTA, NJLA NJ State Library). There is a lot of useful information jammed onto these sites. If you missed a program, chances are the information and contents are on the website. The tools are there. Use them and you'll do a better job for your library!

**Next Trustee Institute is
Saturday September 25,
2010. BE THERE!**

NJLTA Spring Workshop

“Beyond Library Law: An Overview of New Jersey Law for Library Boards/County Library Commissions.”

**Saturday, March 20 at
the East Brunswick Public
Library from 10 am-2pm.**

**Guest Speaker:
Beth Hinsdale-Piller Esq. Wilentz,
Goldman & Spitzer**

Beth is the contributing author of the 2009 New Jersey Local Government Deskbook. Topics to be covered: Open Public Meetings Act;

Open Public Records Act; Local Government Ethics Law; Personnel Issues. Come prepared with all those questions you always wanted to ask: when do we have to post the minutes, what is a Rice letter, does my wife have to fill out a financial disclosure form (and many, many more.) Beth actually wrote the book on these issues. It will be a great program.

(2.5 CEUs for state per capita aid). Fee is \$25 (includes morning refreshments and lunch) for NJLTA members. Registration form is included in this Newsletter or on the web at: www.njlibrarytrustees.org/library-law.pdf.

This is an important program for all trustees. Bring your questions.

Advocacy Tools from the American Library Association

During these difficult budget times, it will be essential that all New Jersey library trustees be ready to articulate the importance of library service to their community. The American Library Association has

developed many excellent resources to assist trustees. Visit ALA's main website (www.ala.org) and on the left side you will see a link for "Issues and Advocacy". That link connects you to many

other wonderful materials which can be extremely useful when discussing the importance of library funding in your community.

New Jersey's Libraries - Busier than Ever!

The statistics coming in from all over the state demonstrate that 2009 was a record year for NJ libraries. The libraries of BCCLS reported circulation of 12,175,000 for 2009 (an increase of 11.8% over

2008); the libraries of LMxAC announced that they broke the 5 million mark in circulation for the first time (an increase of 9.47% over 2008) with the number of library items checkout totaling

5,054,548; the Summit Public Library reports breaking the 300,000 mark in 2009. Keep those stories coming!



NJLTA Time to Renew

January is the time to renew your library board's NJLTA membership.

All libraries were sent renewal forms in December. NJLTA membership is a valuable way to keep your trustees informed of the important issues facing NJ

libraries. If you have an email address, please add that to the membership renewal form. NJLTA sends out

Legislative updates

The new session of the NJ Legislature is just beginning. Bills of importance to libraries can be introduced at anytime so it is very important to keep current by

checking the NJLA legislative webpage at: www.njla.org/legislative/ The state budget is going to be very difficult this year. Governor

Christie will introduce his FY11 budget in March. We will let you know as soon as possible about the funding situation.

State Librarian's Column

Policy Making for the Library

by Norma Blake, State Librarian



As a library trustee one of your most important responsibilities is to create written policies to govern library operations and programs. Policies are the rules under which the library operates in pursuit of its goals. The library board and the director should work together to determine what policies are needed for their particular library. Policies can be developed for day-to-day operations of the library, for the board's own operations, and for special uses, such as a volunteer program or for Internet usage. Public policies are open to view and should be assembled in a manual and posted on the library's website. Some policies are broad statements, such those on intellectual freedom. Others are narrower covering decisions such as the hours the library is open, personnel practices or fines.

In developing or reviewing a policy manual, the best process is for the board and director to determine what policies are needed. While it is clearly the responsibility of the board to determine library policies, it is best to rely on the director and staff for suggestions. The best policies are the

ones that will be effective over a reasonable length of time. If existing policies are obsolete then they should be eliminated.

There are many different types of policies that must be developed by the library board. These include general policies such as the library mission and goals statement; public statements and announcements; conduct at board meetings, Bylaws, and the board's relationship with the Friends group. There are personnel policies, policies on finance, building and grounds, public services, collection management, community relations, and more.

Writing and updating so many policies may seem like an overwhelming task. Luckily, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Just remember that sample policies provide guidelines but ultimately local conditions must be incorporated to create effective policies. Sources for consultation and reference to aid you in creating policies include NJLTA, NJLA, and the New Jersey State Library.

One great website for sample policies comes from the Mid-Hudson Library System in New York State. You will find them all listed on their "Trustees Resources" page at www.midhudson.org. Remember that this amazing

array of policies is meant for you to screen and adapt to your own library's situations and needs.

Another useful website is "Safe Harbor" www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/safeharbor. Nine librarians from the Alliance Library System created policies, procedures, and even scripts to help front line library staff handle a variety of situations. Safe Harbor does not deal with building issues, security equipment, hiring of staff, or personnel policies but was created to help library staff solve most of the problems they encounter during their work day. Again, you are encouraged to discuss the issues cited and adapt them to your own library's circumstances.

Policies are designed to prevent favoritism and unfairness. They can answer questions and may prevent disagreements. They help to avoid making decisions on a case by case basis. They help front-line staff handle a variety of situations. In short, they are the framework for a well-functioning library. Determination of policies is the clear responsibility of the library board. As always, should you need further information, NJLTA, NJLA, and the New Jersey State Library is here to help you.