



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gail Dysleski

## What We're All About - PART 2



**I**n our last newsletter (Autumn 2006), I listed library trustees' six major roles. In this issue, I would like to zero in on the last two categories:

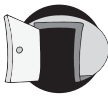
• **Planning for the future:** As trustees, we are responsible for providing the best library service to our community. This is our planning for the library in the community role. In order to do this, we need to relate to the public, which we represent. We can do this by:



Listening to what people are saying about the library and the community's needs and aspirations.



Working closely with other trustees, the library staff and support groups for maximum results.



Being open to new ideas and suggestions from all parts of the community.



Realizing that library growth and effectiveness are part of a continuous process requiring ongoing vocal and financial support from many sources.



Organizing support for the library, its plans, its programs and its growth.



Accepting the challenge of change and the value of meeting new needs.



Understanding trends and issues that can affect your library.

Library board members need to work with each other and the director to develop the mental model of what their library will be and what they collectively expect the library to focus on and achieve during the next several years. The future of your library is within your control if you gain an understanding of the trends and issues that are affecting all libraries throughout the United States.

• **Continuing education opportunities:** What have you done to improve your capabilities as a trustee in your library? Have you read some recent library journal articles? Have you updated yourself on laws or regulations that could affect your library? Have you talked to board members in a neighboring town to discuss best practices, policy issues or goals? If you can answer yes to these questions, then you are developing an understanding of your library and you have a better insight into the library's relationship to education, cooperation and professionalism. You are taking time to understand why staff can be passionate about services and the funding needed for them. As a library trustee, your professional growth is important in order to carry out your role and responsibilities.

It is imperative that all of us attend conferences and meetings that are held throughout the state. The greater the breadth of knowledge you have, the better you will be in helping to develop policies, advocating for the library with local officials, and understanding the importance of being a library trustee. Virginia Young said it best: "The best trustee is an educated trustee."

Just a reminder that the NJLTA webpage is a good resource for continuing education. Be sure to visit it and use it to your advantage. The address is:

[www.njlibrarytrustees.org](http://www.njlibrarytrustees.org)

### Side Bar

#### Six Major Library Trustee Roles

- (1) Recruit, appoint, and review the performance of the library director,
- (2) Establish, review and revise all policies, including but not limited to personnel, material selection and use, building use,
- (3) Secure adequate funds so that the library can carry out its goals and objectives,
- (4) Advocate for libraries on the local, state, and national level,
- (5) Plan for the future of your library within the community, and
- (6) Continue to take advantage of educational opportunities to help you in your role as a Trustee.

## ► Clearing Up the Confusion

The New Jersey Library Trustee Association partners with the New Jersey State Library and the New Jersey Library Association on a number of library events and efforts. Each is a separate entity and has different, but overlapping purposes. If you look at the websites of the different organizations, you will find information on purpose taken from their individual strategic plans or other documents. It is still confusing. In an effort to make the difference clearer:



- New Jersey Library Trustee Association is a membership organization specifically for trustees. This is our organization. We have over 1,500 registered members representing all types of public libraries. Our main focus is library trustee education. NJLTA is a non-profit organization and is governed by its own Executive Board. There are several benefits of membership. Among them are this newsletter, the NJLTA listserv and educational opportunities for trustees. A new service that is in progress is information packets that you can use. The first, on hiring a library director will be posted on the NJLTA website and will be available in hard copy from the NJLTA office. Please call 609-394-8032 or email [ptumulty@njla.org](mailto:ptumulty@njla.org).



- New Jersey State Library is the state agency that provides library services to state government officials and is the regulatory agency overseeing public libraries in New Jersey. The State Library also administers per capita state aid to public libraries, including the oversight of the regulations required to obtain per capita state aid. It also sponsors continuing education opportunities for library staff and trustees. The New Jersey State Library is the major sponsor of the annual Trustee Institute, the state's major trustee training event.



- New Jersey Library Association is the membership organization for library staff, and is open to trustees if they wish to join. The New Jersey Library Association's main focus is to support library staff, rather than trustees, however, and provides continuing education designed for library staff. The New Jersey Library Association has over 1,600 members and sponsors an annual conference. (In 2007, the conference will be held on Monday, April 23 through Wednesday, April 25 at Ocean Place Resort and Spa.)



## Spotlight on Trustee

### *Excerpted and adapted from the Libraries of Middlesex Trustee of the Year Award nomination*

Phil Peck, Middlesex County Library Trustee of the Year, is a model for all Mayoral Alternates on public library boards of trustees. He has served in the position on the Woodbridge Public Library Board of Trustees since 1996. He has served in this position during the terms of two elected and four interim mayors. He is well-known and well-regarded among the leaders of Woodbridge Township.

Phil uses his community and political connections to benefit the Woodbridge Public Library. He has worked to help the library fund additional staff members to expand service hours at the branches, to improve general library funding and to better communications among library board members and township officials.

Phil is more than a locally connected guy. Phil is active on the New Jersey Library Trustee Association Executive Board. He previously served as secretary for the association and is an active recruiter for new members. Phil attends the annual Trustee Institute and the NJLTA programs at the annual New Jersey Library Association conference in the spring. In addition, Phil is a major recruiter for the NJLTA Executive Board.

Phil is also an active supporter of the Friends of the Libraries of Woodbridge Township. He attends all of their programs and is the official who swears in new Friends officers at the annual meeting. Phil promotes Friends activities to the Board of Trustees and urges his board colleagues to participate in Friends' activities and events.

Phil was born and raised in Newark and keeps his Newark connections alive by supporting the Friends of the Newark Public Library. He makes it a point to relate Newark Public Library Friends activities to the Woodbridge Public Library Board of Trustees.

Phil is a true library advocate and friend. His support of the Woodbridge Public Library is warmly appreciated.

## Spotlight on Trustee

### *Excerpted and adapted from the Libraries of Union County Consortium Trustee of the Year Award nomination*

Longtime Springfield Free Public Library Trustee Myrna Wasserman was honored as Library Trustee of the Year at the Libraries of Union County Consortium.

Wasserman has been a member of the Springfield Library Board of Trustees since January 1993. In her fourteen years on the library board, Mrs. Wasserman has served as president several times and treasurer many more times. During her terms on the Board, Mrs. Wasserman worked on the implementation of three major HVAC projects, a new roof, a building renovation, carpeting, a flood renovation, more carpeting, computers, circulation systems, the Internet, the wireless network and countless other projects. She has worked with the library staff from the time of punch cards and stamp pads to laptops and e-mail. During all of these projects, Mrs. Wasserman has always been a voice of reason. She supports the mission of libraries. She stands against censorship and for the equal provision of library services for all.

In her over forty years in Springfield, Mrs. Wasserman served many years as a member of the Board of Education and served as its president. She was also active in the Jonathan Dayton High School Parent Teacher Student Organization.

Mrs. Wasserman spent many years as an active member of the Springfield League of Women Voters, where she also served as President. During her time with the League, Mrs. Wasserman participated in a major study of municipal government. In addition, she has served as a moderator at League of Women Voter Candidates debates throughout Union County and the state. At one time, she also tossed her hat in the ring as a candidate for the Springfield Township Committee.

Mrs. Wasserman is an adjunct professor at Kean College in the English Department and enjoys spending time with her three grandchildren. Mrs. Wasserman is an asset to the Springfield Public Library Board of Trustees.

## Trustee Institute

Over 225 library trustees attended the fourth annual New Jersey Trustee Institute on September 29 and 30, 2006 at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch. Of this total, over 110 trustees attended for the first time. The Trustee Institute, sponsored by the New Jersey State Library and cosponsored by the New Jersey Library Trustee Association and the New Jersey Library Association, **is a terrific opportunity for trustees to learn and share ideas.**

The theme for this year's event was "**Community Connections,**" and the goal was to increase the advocacy skills of New Jersey public library trustees and for trustees to share and implement their newly acquired skills and knowledge in their own library, with fellow members of their Board, and residents of their communities. Norma Blake, New Jersey State Librarian believes strongly in trustee training, and the Trustee Institute is an excellent opportunity for trustees to learn, share and grow.



Gail Dysleski, NJLTA President, led a discussion of library trustee roles and responsibilities.

The event started with an opening keynote address by Yolanda Cuesta on community diversity. Following the opening session, trustees had the opportunity to attend a variety of workshops, from advocacy through budgeting to trustee roles and responsibilities.

The event closed with George Needham's presentation on public perceptions of libraries, a recent study performed by OCLC. In addition, trustees networked, shared their ideas and shopped at the New Jersey Library Association Store.

Participants enjoyed the sessions, the location and the interaction. Many participants indicated that they are going to *continued on back*



Shoppers choose reading-related items at the NJLA Store. Jeff and Cheryl McBride, NJLA Store representatives promote early holiday shopping at the NJLA Store.

# NEW JERSEY LIBRARY TRUSTEE ASSOCIATION

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## Trustee Institute (continued)



Sharon Karmazin, formerly director of the East Brunswick Public Library, was honored by the Association for Library Trustees and Advocates for her library support through the Karma Foundation's Tipping Point grants.

encourage their colleagues to attend next year. The evaluations listed the practicality and usefulness of the information shared.

*“The annual Trustee Institute is the best place to learn what you need to know to be an effective library trustee. And it’s fun! I enjoy the time to share ideas and stories.”*

The New Jersey Library Trustee Institute is funded by the New Jersey State Library with the support of the New Jersey Library Trustee Association and from the New Jersey Library Association.

*Plans for the 2007 Trustee Institute are already underway.  
See you on Friday, September 28 and Saturday, September 29, 2007  
at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa for the event.*