
MAINE LIBRARY TRUSTEE TIMES

Spring 2009



President's Column

Trustee Forum Series Scheduled for May

Once again,
interested
trustees and the
state library
district

consultants are planning statewide trustee forums for the spring.

These meetings will focus on a topic and allow plenty of time for discussion and networking.

The schedule is:

May 11 Gibbs Library, Washington

May 12 Rockland Public Library, Freeport
Community Library, Skidompha Public Library,
Damariscotta

May 13 Ellsworth Public Library, Turner Public
Library

May 14 Bailey Public Library, Winthrop
May 18 Bangor Public Library

May 19 Longlake Public Library, St. Agatha ,
Cary Memorial Library, Houlton, York Public
Library, Farmington Public Library

May 21 Winslow Public Library

May 26 Thompson Free Library, Dover-Foxcroft

Please register to attend at the statewide CE
calendar:

<http://evanced.info/maine/evanced/eventcalendar.asp>

The meetings will be held from 6:30-8:00pm
unless otherwise specified on the calendar.



MLTA's Trustee Handbook

There are two types of library trustee boards—governing and advisory. It is essential that a board understand the authority under which it functions.

The Trustee Handbook is an excellent information source for clarifying the board's authority, duties and responsibilities.

It covers such topics as continuing education for trustees, public relations, and planning as well as board selection, finances and budgeting .

Every board member in the state of Maine needs a copy of this handbook.

Contact the Maine State Library. 207-287-5620,
for information on obtaining copies of the
handbook.

District Liaison Committee Formed

A liaison committee consisting of the three District Consultants, the three Board Chairs, a second representative from each district, and the acting State Librarian has been formed in order to better collaborate and communicate statewide.

To that end we have invited representatives from Maine library organizations to speak to us about their needs, concerns and ways in which they can assist us in reaching our goals.

We have met with the following:

1. James Jackson-Sanborn – representing Maine InfoNet
2. Jeff Small – representing MASL
3. Molly Larson – representing MLA
4. Pam Turner – representing MINERVA
5. Tom Abbott – representing UMA
6. John Clark – representing FOML
7. Happy Copley – representing HSLIC
8. Steve Nichols – representing MLTA

We are compiling a report for the May meeting of the Maine Library Commission with recommendations for the future direction and unity of Maine libraries.

Tips for Recruiting Board Members

Create a mini-strategic plan to identify the talents the board needs.

Invite potential board members to serve on committees (Friends groups can be proving grounds for Trustees)

Be very clear about expectations so that recruits can honestly gauge their level of interest and commitment

Always speak of the board as a successful and respected community organization

Orientation for New Board Members

New board members are often difficult to find. After all the time spent recruiting new board members, how do you insure that they function effectively? An orientation is the best way to bring new board members up to speed about the library and their new duties and responsibilities.

Orientation should include a tour of the library and an introduction to the staff. New members should be advised as to whether the library is a town department or a non-profit library. The boards of non-profit libraries have different responsibilities than boards of town department libraries.

Special emphasis should be placed on the advocacy role of trustees and that the board speaks with 'one voice'—individual members support the decisions of the board even if they disagree.

Items to Include in a Board Handbook

1. Names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of board members plus their terms of office.
2. Board meeting calendar
3. Committees, assignments and duties
4. History of the library
5. Board charter and bylaws; library's charter
6. Outline of the duties and responsibilities of a trustee
7. Outline of the duties and responsibilities of the director
8. Library staff's names and job descriptions
9. Organizational chart
10. Last annual report
11. Library's goals and long range planning documents
12. Library policies
13. Minutes of previous board meetings (current year)
14. Librarian's annual report and statistics
15. Information about the Maine State Library, Maine Regional Library System, the district in which the library is located, the Maine Library Trustees Association and the Maine Library Association

How to Be a Destructive Board Member

How often have you observed any of these behaviors?

1. Gossip about what goes on in board meetings
2. Leak sensitive information to the press
3. Skip, or rarely be on time, for board and committee meetings. Never read board materials before meetings
4. Ask the director to hire your friends, relatives and political cronies
5. Interfere with staff activities, procedures and services on a daily basis

6. Withhold strategic information until the last minute—when it serves your personal or friend’s special interests
7. Use your public office for your own personal advantage and that of your friends and supporters
8. Snuggle up to the local power brokers to advance your personal agenda without the knowledge of the rest of the board
9. Energetically shoot down all new ideas before exploring them or alternatives
10. Hold grudges
11. Be impolite to fellow board members and library staff
12. Build a power block with one or two other board members
13. Don’t volunteer for committees—they take too much time
14. Break the chain of command so you can create confusion and build your own power base
15. Show little interest in what the board does
16. Abstain on all crucial votes and then claim no responsibility for decisions

Policy Making for Public Library Trustees, James C. Baughman, 1993, Libraries Unlimited.

The Successful Library Trustee Handbook, Mary Y. Moore, 2005, American Library Association.

The Library Trustee: A Practical Guidebook, Virginia G. Young, 1995, American Library Association.

Gaining Momentum for Board Action, Arty Trost and Judy Rauner, 1983, Marlborough Publications.

Articles

Hill N. Whose Job Is It Anyway?. *Public Libraries*; September 2008:26, 29

Zelenka H. A Trustee For the Twenty-First Century. *ILA Reporter* , August 2008:4, 7.

Resources

Websites

Maine Library Trustee Association

http://mainelibraries.org/comm_trustees.php?

Maine Trustee Listserv

<http://www.maine.gov/infonet/listservs.htm#trustee>

Maine State Library

<http://www.maine.gov/msl/lib/trustees.htm>

Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/altaff/index.cfm>

Print Resources

Maine Library Trustee Association Handbook

Library Board Strategic Guide: Going to the Next Level, Ellen G. Miller and Patricia Fisher, 2007, Scarecrow Press.

Working Together: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Trustees and Librarians, James Swan, 1992, Neal-Schuman Publishers.

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