

# NHLTA Library Trustee

WINTER 2021-2022

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The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

## NHLTA 2021 Award Winners



Library Director Eric Stern (holding award) celebrates Derry Public Library's award with trustees, staff and supporters.

“**W**e’re Derry, We’re Happy!” With apologies to Bobby McFerrin, **Derry Public Library** Director Eric Stern opened the October 2 ceremony celebrating the library being named **NHLTA Library of the Year** with a song. Like many other NH libraries, Derry continued to serve its town during the pandemic, making community, collaboration and creativity its focus. While they were closed, the phones were forwarded to reference staff cell phones and email inboxes, and social media messengers became a virtual reference desk. When the library reopened in June (by appointment at first), safety precautions were in place to keep the patrons safe.

Community collaboration increased during the pandemic – the library worked with the Derry Museum of History and Derry Community Access Media to launch the Pandemic Diaries, an ongoing public history project which will be archived in the local history room. The annual MacGregor Poetry Contest (in conjunction with the Robert

Frost Farm) was held via Zoom; the Teen Department obtained a grant from CATSNH to create an Art and Writing Magazine; and a new patio was installed on the library grounds with the help of Derry Public Works and Derry Parks and Recreation. It features a beautiful piano painted by the Greater Derry Arts Council.

The library staff was creative with its programming as well. While many programs were held on Zoom, which doubled the number of programs being offered, in-person events such as a spooky haunted house and Elf Training were held. Promotional videos were also created – the Derry YouTube channel has more than 450 videos available to view. The staff is also working with Derry Community Access Media to build a remote studio in the meeting room which will help produce quality programming for an even broader audience.

The **Friends of the Tucker Free Library (FTFL)** had been dormant for many years before its

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Marcia McLaughlin  
NHLTA President

## Winter 2021

Full is the time of year when the NHLTA award winners are recognized, both in this newsletter and by individual presentations at their respective libraries. One of my privileges serving as the board president of NHLTA has been the opportunity to go to the individual celebrations and present the award to the individual, director, library, and Friends group. It has struck me that upon each occasion my personal group of library “people” has expanded, my library world has grown. Additionally, I have heard over and over the recipients refer to the interconnectedness of director, staff, trustees, community – their library world – which was key ultimately to their award. This speaks to the contribution our libraries make to our communities in both tangible and intangible ways.

While I’m talking about our “library world,” I’ll mention that NHLTA hosted a trustee Roundtable via Zoom in early November. All trustees were notified and nearly 100 were able to register and attend. While the pandemic has made some things more difficult, it has given us this easy meeting format. Via Zoom, we were able to gather trustees from across the state for an open forum discussion of issues and concerns brought up by the attendees.

NHLTA is planning to hold a spring Roundtable, whether in-person or via Zoom, and will publicize it to all trustees. Roundtables are a great way to meet other people who share your passion for the libraries in their communities.

The NHLTA Annual Conference provides yet another opportunity to gather, share and expand your library world. There will be more information forthcoming but mark your calendar now for May 10, 2022.

Finally, a library director recently shared with me that the library was seeing a very slow return to the in-person patronage level before the Covid pandemic began, when the library was full of people. And, in almost the same breath, commented on the stress the pandemic had placed on the staff. We as trustees must be ever mindful that while our staffs have done an extraordinary job shifting how they’ve done the library’s business, it was not necessarily easy. Keeping that in mind, check in with them periodically and find out how they’re doing. I know it will mean a lot.

My best,  
Marcia

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia". The signature is fluid and cursive.

## New Hampshire State Library/IMLS ARPA Award Update

On December 1, 2021, NH State Library contacted the grant applicants for NHSL IMLS ARPA round 2 and notified 42 of 43 applicants that their grants were approved by the five-member grant review committee. Grant awards for this round total \$825,442. The next steps are for NH Governor & Council to approve all grant awards (all awards are over \$10,000 and require their approval). Once approval is obtained, we’ll be publicizing the grant awardees and their projects on the State Library ARPA LibGuide, under the 2nd Round Competitive Sub-Grant tab, at <https://nhsl.libguides.com/arpa>.

The NH State Library awarded \$416,640 to 174 NH public libraries in a formulaic sub-grant round 1 between June and September 2021, which was open to all public libraries in the state. NH Governor & Council also approved an NHSL IMLS ARPA sub-grant award to UNH for digitization of the town

reports for 20 towns (\$242,364) and four NH public libraries were awarded a combined total of \$16,145 for NHAIS local projects involving open-source Koha software. The total amount of sub-grant monies from the state’s IMLS ARPA allocation is \$1,500,591 or 65% of our total \$2,297,692 IMLS ARPA monies.

IMLS ARPA funding is to be used by September 30, 2022, to help libraries and their communities respond directly and immediately to the pandemic, as well as to related economic and community needs through equitable approaches. For a list of IMLS ARPA spending priorities, as well as sub-grant round 2 grant information/guidelines, please visit the NHSL ARPA LibGuide at <https://nhsl.libguides.com>. Questions? Please contact Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian at [lori.a.fisher@dncr.nh.gov](mailto:lori.a.fisher@dncr.nh.gov).

## Fuller Library restores their historic ceiling

Hillsborough's Gov. John Butler Smith Mansion, now the home of the Fuller Public Library, was built in 1891. The dining room was, by far, the most imposing and artistic room in the mansion. In fact, Mrs. Smith came to refer to this room as "The Gem." The ornately hand-painted ceilings are 20 feet high, comprised of panels and arches exquisitely painted with cupids, flowers, and fruit, as well as a succession of hunting scenes.

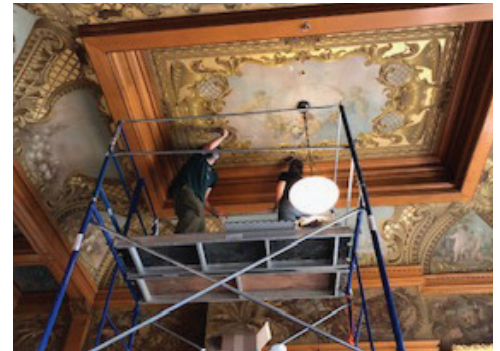
In January 2020, the Fuller Library received a Cultural Conservation Grant to clean and restore the hand-painted ceilings and to repair the decorative frieze in the first-floor lobby and reading room. This past fall, the work was completed under the supervision of conservator Wenda Kochanowski. She and her assistant Gregg cleaned the ceilings, in-painted the areas where the paint was peeling, and filled holes left

behind from repairs and light fixtures. They were careful to reattach flaking paint wherever possible. Areas where the original paint had been lost were repainted to match the existing patterns.

Once again, the room is "the Gem" of the building and the library is grateful to the NH Council on the Arts, the Mooseplate Conservation License Plate grant, and the Town of Hillsborough for helping to fund this project. The trustees and staff invite you to stop by for a tour of their historic building when you're in the area.



Fuller Public Library, Hillsborough NH



Conservator Wenda Kochanowski at work

## What to do if your library programs or materials are challenged

The American Library Association has stated that they have seen "a dramatic uptick in book challenges and outright removal of books from libraries," according to their press release dated 11/29/2021. The New Hampshire State Library is encouraging all New Hampshire public libraries to make sure they are proactively prepared for book and program challenges. Here are a few steps your library can take to prepare:

- Library directors should review current Request for Reconsideration policies with other library staff, and then review the policy with the library board of trustees. Revisions to the policy should be approved by the board at an official meeting.
- If your library does not have a Request for Reconsideration policy in place, create one and discuss with the library board of trustees. Having a procedure/process in place when someone in your community objects to a book or program goes a long way towards trust and transparency for your library within your community.
- Library directors and staff should review the library's Collection Development policy, and if revisions are needed make sure the library board of trustees approves those revisions at a regular board meeting.
- Make sure your Collections Development policy and

Request for Reconsideration policy are available on the library's web site. Transparency about these policies and the actions people can take if they object to a material/program is invaluable when building community trust.

- Have all staff and all trustees review your current collection development policy and request for reconsideration policy so that everyone is aware of them, and also understands the need to have them in place.
- Consider having your library board of trustees share these policies with information on why they are important with other stakeholders in town, such as select boards, budget committee members, school board members, the school superintendent, and other community organizations such as Kiwanis or Rotary. Communicating why these policies are important and why there is a process for handling objections sometimes will diffuse a situation when emotions are running high about a particular item/program.

Please visit the NH State Library's LibGuide, which contains links to the ALA Challenge Toolkit as well as sample Request for Reconsideration forms and policies: <https://libguides.com/divisiveconcepts>. Questions? Contact Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian at [lori.a.fisher@dnr.nh.gov](mailto:lori.a.fisher@dnr.nh.gov).

## NHLTA 2021 Award Winners *continued from page 1*



NHLTA's Marcia McLaughlin, lower center, with Friends of the Tucker Free Library.

resurgence in 2019, and it was this enthusiastic resurgence which caused the library trustees to nominate the group for the **Sue Palmatier Award for Outstanding Support by a Friends of the Library Group**. FTFL quickly established themselves as a 501c3 organization, with new by-laws and a memorandum of understanding with the trustees. They grew their membership and supported the library's upcoming building project – and all during a pandemic!

During the first wave of pandemic closures, FTFL posted motivational signs at the library; baked cookies for the staff; decorated the library for the first ever Henniker Holiday Decorating Contest (they didn't win but they had fun); organized "Friends Helping Friends" and "Mud Season" raffles to help support local businesses; supported the "Take and Make" crafts and hosted Virtual Sundays at the library. As pandemic restrictions eased, FTFL supported the summer reading program, funded a "Checkin and Checkout" raffle for adults, partnered in the Library Ambassador program and funded a Steam Kit program. FTFL may be a new group, but they are making a big impact! On Wednesday, October 20, NHLTA Marcia McLaughlin presented the group with their award at a reception

held at the Colby Hill Inn.

The **Dorothy M. Little Award** was created in 1988 in honor of Dorothy M. Little, a trustee of the Lane Memorial Library in Hampton. Known locally as "Mrs. Library," she was a woman who took to heart the cause of bettering state and local libraries. A plaque at the State Library lists all the recipients of NHLTA's Dorothy M. Little award. The award is presented to an individual who "has demonstrated sustained, extraordinary public library advocacy and activism on a local, regional and state level." This year,

Conrad Moses, winner of the Dorothy M. Little Award.



the award goes to **Conrad Moses**, long-time member of the East Kingston Public Library Trustees and NHLTA Board member. Katrinka Pellecchia presented the award on behalf of NHLTA at a EKPL trustee meeting on October 25.

During his 26-year tenure as an EKPL trustee, Conrad oversaw the growth of the board from three to five members, and was instrumental in getting town support for a new library building which opened in 2008. In the words of one of his fellow trustees: "Our time on the board was a time of a lot of change as we worked to get a new library built. Conrad was a consistent, strong, and quiet presence. He was willing to do whatever it took to get the job done. He came prepared and focused; he was the kind of person who you wanted to keep the ship on course. He also didn't need the limelight. He worked behind the scenes, and helped other people shine during town meetings or other events. He is just a great person who made our community better through his dedication and tireless effort."

In 2008, Conrad joined the NHLTA Board of Directors, where he has served as President and Past-President. In 2014, he helped organize regional meetings in the Seacoast area in order to discuss common issues, create networking opportunities and build a community of library trustees. Conrad retired from the East Kingston board in May, but we are fortunate that he continues to serve on the NHLTA Board, where he manages the ListServ, which enables trustees from around the state stay in touch.

A lot has happened in the four short years that **NHLTA Library Director of the Year Cynthia Jewett** has been at the James A. Tuttle Library in Antrim. In the words of one staff member, the library was "in disarray" when she arrived. The building was disorganized, its books were old and programs were unattended. With Cynthia's guidance, policies were re-written, patron files were made updated, the collection was weeded and



Cynthia Jewett (holding award) celebrates with the Tuttle Library Staff.

reorganized, a Children’s Librarian was hired, a Friends group was established, circulation was increased and employee morale was boosted.

While many of her improvements were behind the scenes, Cynthia also reached out to the community. Each year, the library now hosts more than 100 programs for all ages – the most visible of which is the Festival of Trees which attracts an average of 500 visitors – and partnered with community groups include the Historical Society, Avenue A (a popular teen activity center), the Antrim Community Board as well as local study groups. In the words of her trustees, “Perhaps the most significant achievement is that she has once again made the Tuttle Library into a friendly, welcoming place. The warmth of our mighty Library is palpable.” Marcia McLaughlin presented Cynthia with her award at a well-attended ceremony at the Tuttle Library on November 13.

In 1988, when **Ron Brown**, the **Lillian Edelmann Trustee of the Year** award winner, was looking for ways to meet new people and get involved in the community he started volunteering at the Wilton Public and Gregg Free Library. Thirty-three years later, he’s still

volunteering at the library – as chair of the board of trustees. Ron’s focus is the community of people who work at and use the library, saying that without them, “it would just be a building. It’s the people who make it a library. If you don’t find me at home, you’ll find me here.”

Under Ron’s leadership, the board “became more outward looking,” working to engage the community. This outreach included refining board procedures to make fundraising, outreach, and grant application processes more efficient. Some of the projects he’s been involved with: the move to a computerized catalog in the late 1990s; a major renovation of the library in advance of its Centennial in 2008; the difficult repair and renovation of the building’s antiquated drainage and sewage systems in 2016; and a recent renovation of the children’s areas and the new and evolving outdoor space. Next up? Replacing the library’s slate-and-copper roof for the first time in 110 years. In the words of one of his fellow trustees: “Never have I seen anyone so adept at managing opponents and doubters at Town Meeting, while leaving them thinking he was complimenting them for their input. Golden tongue, indeed!” Marcia McLaughlin presented Ron with his well-deserved award on December 3 at a reception held at the library.

“McDonate.” That is how **NHLTA Special Library Service Contribution Award** winner **James “Jim” McFarlin** is known in Meredith. While everyone agreed that the town needed a new library

Ron Brown and Marcia McLaughlin



building, the Select Board and the Library Trustees couldn’t agree on the project. Finally, a consultant suggested that the trustees start a separate, neutral fund-raising board. No town or library officials would serve on the board; it would consist of citizens. The trustees asked Jim to serve as president of this new board; he agreed and the Meredith Library Fund became a reality. Jim recruited board members who had strong ties to the community, were members of other Meredith institutions and organizations and were willing to advocate for the building project.



NHLTA’s Anne Chant with Jim McFarlin.

The Fund was challenged to raise \$1,125,000 in a little under a year – seemingly an impossible task in a town of just over 6000 citizens. However, in a few short months, Jim had pledges totaling more than \$600,000. In addition to raising money, Jim was also building good will. He soon managed to raise nearly \$1 million with his grass-roots campaign. In March 2020, he also spoke eloquently in favor of the building project and the Fund’s efforts, and the \$5,000,000 bond passed with 92% support. Although fund-raising slowed during the pandemic, unsolicited donations continued and the library project broke ground that summer. As the project progressed, Jim continued to be involved and worked to solve the problems that arose. NHLTA board member Anne Chant presented Jim his award during the festivities celebrating the Meredith Library’s grand opening on December 4.

PHOTO: LINDA HOUGH



By Natch Greyes,  
Municipal Services  
Counsel,  
NH Municipal  
Association (NHMA)

## The Intermunicipal Agreement or Library Cooperative

I have to credit the library directors and trustees of New Hampshire. Whenever I think that I've exhausted RSA chapter 202-A for content, I receive a call that causes me to look to an entirely new (to me) section of the statute. Last month, it was RSA 202-A:4-a, authorizing a library to join a library cooperative.

The reason that I was asked to look at that statute was because multiple libraries wanted to join together for a common purpose, and the library director that I was talking to had been advised that they needed to do so under RSA chapter 53-A. RSA chapter 53-A is the chapter that allows a municipality to enter into an agreement with another unit of government (municipal, county, state, etc.) to jointly-exercise any power or powers,

privileges or authority exercised or capable of exercise by that municipality. Often, this takes the form of public safety. Two or more municipalities might be two small individually to support the costs of a full-time police department or fire department, but by joining forces they can afford to obtain that full-time service.

Chapter 53-A agreements are common and useful for regional approaches. They allow multiple municipalities to join forces, set-up an oversight board, and, ultimately, save money while also providing a greater array of services to their citizens. In the context of libraries, towns with libraries that would benefit from regionalization *could* seek to enact a Chapter 53-A agreement.

But there are downsides as well. Regionalization means giving up local control. And, in the context of libraries, a better option is probably to form a library cooperative pursuant to RSA 202-A:4-a. That cooperative can consist of public libraries, or of public and other than public libraries including school, college and university, and special libraries. And, because the term "library cooperative" is not defined anywhere in the statute, a court would use RSA 21:2 to construe that term according to the common and approved usage of the language. In other words, a court would look to the dictionary definition. As such, the operative definition is the one pertaining to "cooperative," an organization which is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits or benefits. Sound familiar?

Libraries, as it happens, can basically enter into Chapter 53-A agreements without going through the process required by Chapter 53-A. All they really need is approval by each library's trustees. And, it gets better.

RSA 202-A:4-b states that a town can enter into a contract with "another town or city, or with an institution or other organization, for any library service." Presumably, "other organization" includes "library cooperatives." As such, two or more libraries can form a separate organization run as they see fit for their own benefits, and contract with towns without libraries to provide those towns with library services.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

## NHLTA Spring Conference

Tuesday, MAY 10, 2022

# Trends Shaping The Future

THE BASICS & BEYOND

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- Library RSAs
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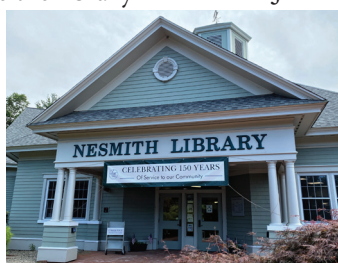
# Nesmith Library Celebrates Its Sesquicentennial



By Sylvie Brikiatis,  
Nesmith Library Director

On September 18, 2021, the Nesmith Library hosted a 150-year anniversary celebration at the library as part of our yearlong celebration. The day featured speeches from our Board of Trustees chair Karen Moltenbrey, the NH State Librarian Michael York, our NH State Representative Robert Lynn, and Senator Regina Birdsell. They each spoke about the importance of libraries, now more than ever, to our nation and community in particular.

In 1870, Colonel Thomas Nesmith bequeathed the sum of \$3000 to the town to purchase books for the establishment of a public library in Windham. Up until that time, there had been several different subscription libraries only. Initially, the library was located in a small alcove (that we think is the area currently occupied by a kitchen) in the upstairs gathering space of the Town Hall. The space was dedicated as Nesmith Library on June 21, 1871. The library quickly outgrew this space and in 1899, George Washington Armstrong built and donated the Armstrong Building to house the library next door to the Town Hall. And finally, in 1997, the Nesmith Library moved to our current location, a beautiful, modern, 11,000 square foot building in the town complex across the



street from our prior locations. During our Sesquicentennial Celebration, a scavenger hunt was organized for attendees that took them to all three of these locations. Historical displays were set up at all locations featuring items that would have been housed at these venues. Included was a display of books that would have been in the collection in 1871 (a couple of them may be the original copies!), a collection of titles to circulate entitled “Read like it’s 1871,” and a display on the history of the library buildings.

A food truck, crafts, cupcakes, and a performance from our wonderful Windham Community Band rounded out the day.

Ongoing celebrations at the library include a rotating collection of displays featuring historical events, books, art collections, and trivia about the library, a Buy a Brick Fundraiser to help pay to restore our brick walkways and entrance area, and window clings of our Sesquicentennial Seal. We have also been inviting patrons and visitors to sign our guest book and add a note about what the library has meant to them, whether they grew up here or just moved here recently, whether they’ve visited us once or every week. The guest book will be added to our time capsule which will be sealed at the end of the year. Here’s to another 150 years!

# NH Library Trustee

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### MISSION

The NHLTA assists Trustees to be knowledgeable and effective in order to serve, improve and promote New Hampshire Public Libraries.

