

NH Library Trustee

FALL 2024
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The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

Congratulations to the 2024 NHLTA Annual Award Winners!

New Hampshire is indeed fortunate to have such fine public libraries, library employees and dedicated volunteers. After lengthy consideration, the NHLTA Board of Directors is happy to announce the following list of award winners for this year. Presentations will be made at local celebrations this fall.

Library of the Year (two awards)

Meredith Public Library – small library
Nashua Public Library – large library

Library Director of the Year

Beryl Donovan, Gaffney Library, Wakefield

Special Library Service Contribution Award

Garden at Tracy
Library,
Tracy Memorial
Library, New London



Meredith Public Library



Nashua Public Library

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Annual Report Reminders

202-A:12-a Trust Fund Annual Reports. Any public library holding funds in trust shall **report to the office of the attorney general**, annually at the conclusion of each fiscal year, the information required by **RSA 202-A:12(a) through (d)**.

202-A:12 Annual Reports. Every library regularly open to the public, or to some portion of the public, with or without limitations, whether its ownership is vested in the town, in a

corporation, in an organization or association, or in individuals, shall make a written report to the town or city at the conclusion of each fiscal year of (a) all receipts from whatever sources, (b) all expenditures, (c) all property in the trustees' care and custody, including a statement and explanation of any unexpended balance of money they may have, (d) and any bequests or donations they may have received and are holding in behalf of the town, with such recommendations in reference to the same as they may deem necessary for the town to consider.

Letter from the President . . .



Marcia McLaughlin
NHLTA President

Fall 2024

Each quarter when I sit down to write my article for the newsletter, I check previous newsletters on our website to see what the hot topics, trends or concerns were at the same time in the past. Previous issues often spark an idea, remind me of an issue, or simply draw me into reflection. This quarter is no exception.

I found Susan Gaudiello's article in the Fall 2019 issue particularly salient. At that time the board was facing a decrease in membership in the "next few years." The current board's concern is greater in that two members retired at the end of the past fiscal year, and another will retire at the end of October. We are a small board at the best of times – 15 – but with retirements and board spots as yet unfilled, we will be down to ten members in November. Therefore, like Susan, I am going to "make a pitch" to encourage you to consider options for volunteering with NHLTA.

The board meets on the first Wednesday, 11 months of the year. The meetings are normally held via Zoom, allowing members to join from the comfort of their home, and rarely last more than 1 ½ hours. Each board member is asked to serve on one committee, which also meets via Zoom. Each committee is chaired by a board member.

The board contracts outside services for most

administrative duties as well as assistance in the planning and implementation of the annual conference. This allows the board and its committees to concentrate on the core mission of the organization: to "assist trustees to be knowledgeable and effective in order to serve, improve and promote New Hampshire public libraries." In order to continue our mission, I ask you to thoughtfully consider if you have the interest and time to come alongside the current members of the board and make a difference.

The Education Committee is the backbone of our organization, planning and presenting all the educational opportunities NHLTA offers – annual conference, in-person orientations and workshops, webinars available through the website, regional gatherings, etc., each a key component for building trustee knowledge. It meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month, also via Zoom.

Many hands make light work. I hope that you will consider how you might best fit and reach out to me (m.mclaughlin@nhlta.org) or any board member (see the board list on p. 8) if you have questions or wish to be contacted further.

Have a wonderful Fall!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia".

Marcia

m.mclaughlin@nhlta.org

Calendar 2024–2025

October 5	10 am-12 pm	Regional Gathering Ossipee Library 74 Main St, Center Ossipee
October 22	10 -11:30 am	Regional Gathering Wadleigh Memorial Library 49 Nashua St, Milford
May 1, 2025	9 am	2025 Conference & Annual Meeting Registration and breakfast open at 8:00 am DoubleTree by Hilton Manchester Downtown 700 Elm St, Manchester



Newbury Public Library Grand Opening

Left: Trustee President Paul Sullivan, Trustee Todd Mailly, Library Director Lea McBain, Alternate Trustee Patricia Sherman and Trustee Jeanne Palleiko prepare to cut the ribbon at the September 7 grand opening of the library's new addition (below), which more than doubled the size of the library.



Save the date!

**NHLTA Annual Conference
Thursday, May 1, 2025
DoubleTree Downtown,
Manchester**

We heard you loud and clear in the feedback you've given us over the last several years – the technology issues, needing a bigger space and who could forget dessert!

Of all the venues we looked at, only the DoubleTree in Manchester could accommodate a group of our size and our need for breakout rooms. Parking and Wifi are included in the \$65 registration (members). **New this year: we'll be accepting credit cards!**

The theme of the 2025 Conference is **Trustees Unleashed: The Must-Have Info!** Stay tuned for more information!

Tammy Hooker & Janet Hromjak,
2025 NHLTA Conference Co-chairs

PLEASE JOIN US
IN CELEBRATING THE
RETIREMENT OF
MICHAEL YORK
STATE LIBRARIAN
1999-2024

OCTOBER 30TH

2:00-5:00 PM

Remarks at 3:30

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE LIBRARY
2ND FLOOR MAP GALLERY
20 PARK STREET
CONCORD, NH

Refreshments Provided

RSVP Appreciated

Please contact Arti Peterson with RSVP or any questions
ardith.i.peterson@dn-cr.nh.gov

If at first you don't succeed ...

by Katrinka Pellecchia,
Lee Library Trustee

Founded in 1892, the Lee Public Library occupied the second floor of the Lee Town Hall for the first 70 years of its existence. When Lee joined the neighboring towns of Durham and Madbury to form the Oyster River Cooperative School District, its one-room schoolhouses were not needed. In 1962, the town voted to purchase the Center School and move it to the town center to serve as the library. As the town grew, so did the library. By 1996 the original building had been added onto three times! In 2004, armed with a space needs study, the library trustees decided the town had outgrown its beloved little 3700 sq. ft. library. They held public listening sessions, enlarged the board of trustees from three to five members, and worked with the town on a Town Center Committee charged to study and evaluate all town buildings.

Years passed. Town center committees disbanded, then re-formed. The trustees worked with an architect and a construction firm – first on an 11,500 sq. ft. building, then on a plan whittled down to 7,500 sq ft. Money had been voted into a capital reserve fund, a foundation had been formed, and money was being raised. Interest rates were low – the time seemed right to go for a bond. Unfortunately, in 2015, with the looming prospect of an expensive new middle school and a belief that the

internet was on the verge of making libraries obsolete, the town voted down the \$1 million library bond.

But the trustees didn't give up. Yet another new town committee formed and developed a plan for a town campus that would create a new town hall and also build a large addition onto the existing library. That plan went down to defeat as well. The next year a bond for just a town office building was also defeated.

Determining that the town would never support a library building bond, the trustees decided to make the existing library building the best it could be. They agreed to divide the renovation into phases and do what they could with the money they already had, hopefully raising more as needed. They began working with SMP Architecture, eventually once again hiring Milestone Construction, LLC, as their construction manager. Then, just as the project was getting underway, the library had to close due to COVID.

Over Zoom meetings and eventually in person, planning resumed only to find that the cost of building materials had skyrocketed and workers were scarce. Budgets were revised, but the news wasn't good. What had been enough money to accomplish Phase One suddenly wasn't. The trustees made the tough decision to ask the voters to support a \$200,000 warrant article, the largest amount they had asked for since the failed bond. The voters approved it in March 2023 and the renovation plans were back on track. With the money secured – and thanks to donations and grants from the **Association for Rural & Small Libraries** and ALA's Libraries Transforming Communities – the actual renovation was finally able to begin in the Fall of 2023.

When you build new, you pretty much know what to expect. With renovations, there is certain to be a surprise or two, not all of them pleasant. Asbestos was determined to be in the attic insulation and in the skim coat on the drywall and lead paint was found. On the plus side, when the carpeting was removed, the school building's original hardwood floor was revealed! Once again, the budget was redone, and once again, the trustees

The renovated children's area with acoustic panels hanging from the ceiling to help dampen the noise. Note the refinished floor!



made the hard decision to go back to the voters and ask for another \$200,000 in March 2024. Fortunately, the interior of the new children's area was finished enough that the library was able to hold an open house for the community two weeks before the vote. The trustees showed the community what had been done and what still needed to be done. It worked! Once again, the voters approved the trustees' request.

The trustees were on a roll: the success of Phase One and the children's area laid the groundwork for more phases – eventually the entire library was renovated and the basement, now accessible due to the installation of a lift, was turned into usable space. Putting up with noise, dust and nothing being where it should be, the library staff exceeded expectations and kept the library open. During the entire ten-month renovation, the library was closed



for only two weeks: for major electrical work that required the power to be turned off, and then to allow staff and volunteers time to paint shelves and move and re-shelve boxes and boxes and boxes of books.

The trustees' original goal had been to make their little library building the best it could be. After nearly 20 years of defeat and setbacks, they ended up making it better than they could have imagined. The Lee Public Library is still little, but by shifting service areas, rearranging offices and turning the basement into an attractive and usable space, it appears to be larger and more spacious, with room for comfortable chairs, a conference table and even a coffee station!

ABOVE: What was once a dank and musty basement is now a welcoming area for teens.

BELOW LEFT: The cake served at the August 17 Open House says it all!



New NHLTA Board Member: Brodie Deshaies



Brodie is the Communications & Policy Manager for NH Hunger Solutions, a nonpartisan nonprofit advocating to end food insecurity, improve access to nutritious food, and address hunger's root causes for all New Hampshire residents.

He has worked as a political consultant and project manager, coordinating political campaigns, and served as a NH State Representative from Carroll County District 6 from 2020 to 2022. He also serves as a member at large and chairs the Governor Wentworth

Regional School Board. He graduated from Saint Anselm College in 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts in History and English and a minor in Philosophy.

Brodie was elected to the Wolfeboro Public Library Board of Trustees in 2023 and currently serves as its treasurer.

Brodie and his wife Grace both grew up in Wolfeboro. They have two black cats, Marlow and Mason (named after NH towns, starting with the letter "M"). They previously had a black cat named Meredith.



By Natch Greyes,
Government Affairs
Counsel, NH Municipal
Association (NHMA)

It is recommended
that libraries establish
a policy if child
visitation is an issue
or could become
an issue.

Subscribe to the
NHMA Legislative
Bulletin
www.nhmunicipal.org/legislative-bulletins.

Legal Q&A: Child Visitations at a Library?

Libraries across New Hampshire have been used as child visitation centers for years. In fact, in response to a WMUR report in 2019 on pending legislation, the Department of Health and Human Service’s spokesperson said, “The Division for Children, Youth and Families has historically used public spaces as appropriate and where no risks are identified for visits between foster children and their birth parents... That continues today at parks, shopping malls, public libraries and other public spaces.” But are “public libraries” actually “public spaces”?

Well, not exactly. In legal parlance, “public spaces” are known as “public forums,” and there are three different levels of government regulation of these spaces based on the historical use of these government properties by the public. These regulatory levels are divided based on the categorization of the space and include the “quintessential” or “traditional” public forum, “limited public forum,” and “nonpublic forum.”

“Quintessential” or “traditional” public forums, such as public parks, are extraordinarily limited in what the government can control. They are “places which by long tradition or by government fiat have been devoted to assembly and debate.” *Perry Ed. Assn. v. Perry Local Educators’ Assn.*, 460 U.S. 37, 45 (1983). “Nonpublic” forums are the opposite. These include all public property “which is not by tradition or designation a forum for public communication.” *Id.* at 46. Think school mail facilities and office spaces. Then, in the middle, are “limited” public forums. These forums are “opened for use by the public as a place for expressive activity” and allow “[r]easonable time, place, and manner regulations.” *Id.* at 45-46.

Where does the public space of a library fall within this categorization? Well, according to the U.S. Supreme Court, a library is a place that “offers library resources: to facilitate research, learning, and recreational pursuits by furnishing materials of requisite and appropriate quality.” *United States v. American Library Assn., Inc.*, 539 U.S. 194, 206 (2003). “Obviously, a library patron cannot be permitted to engage in most tradi-

tional First Amendment activities in the library, such as giving speeches or engaging in any other conduct that would disrupt the quiet and peaceful library environment.” *Kreimer v. Bureau of Police for Town of Morristown*, 958 F.2d 1242, 1256 (3rd Cir. 1992). “Most courts addressing this issue have relied on Kreimer to hold that a public library is ‘a limited public forum.’” *Heuvel v. Dorothy*, No. 2:21-cv-2176-TLN-CKD PS (E.D. Cali. 2022) (citations omitted).

In other words, parks and libraries are not governed by the same legal rules. “As a limited public forum, the [l]ibrary is obligated only to permit the public to exercise rights that are consistent with the nature of the [l]ibrary and consistent with the government’s intent in designating the [l]ibrary as a public forum. Other activities need not be tolerated.” *Kreimer* at 1262.

When examining the intent of the government in designating the library as a public forum, anyone looking at the long history of libraries would find it hard to find any evidence that libraries in New Hampshire have traditionally been used for child visitation purposes. Indeed, RSA 202-A:1, passed in 1963 and referencing a constitutional provision adopted on June 2, 1784, clearly states that the purpose of the public library is to serve as “a valuable supplement to the formal system of free public education.” There is no reference in New Hampshire law to libraries as child visitation centers.

Furthermore, library trustees should remember that in order to be bound by a court order, an entity (or person) must be a party to the case. Libraries are never involved in child custody disputes because they cannot, in fact, birth or conceive children. Therefore, libraries have no obligations when it comes to ensuring that the parents can find a mutually agreeable place for child visitation.

It is recommended that libraries establish a policy if child visitation is an issue or could become an issue. Here is a link to a protocol on supervised child visitation and access services: www.courts.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt471/files/documents/2021-06/c16.pdf.

Remembering Loring Webster

By Adele Knight, former NHLTA Board President

Loring Webster decided to retire from the NHLTA Board of Directors in 2017 but the wealth of all that he accomplished and contributed to the board and community of libraries is still relevant and timely. We all found working with Loring a pleasure. His intelligence, love of libraries, empathy, sense of humor, and willingness to work tirelessly for libraries will long be remembered.

Loring's experiences as a former member and chair of the Brookline Public Library Board of Trustees made him a good candidate for the NHLTA Board of Directors. Upon being appointed to the board, Loring was soon drafted to serve on the Governance Committee, where he excelled. Connie Kirwin said, "his attention to detail had a 'military' precision that was exemplary. He was a driving force for developing policies and procedures and job descriptions for the NHLTA." Loring continued to lend his sage advice by serving on the Finance Committee after he resigned from the NHLTA board. Loring served as my Vice President for three years. He was always so helpful and reliable and up to date on board and library issues. He never hesitated to assist with setting up and manning a booth at conferences and other events. Loring suggested that we develop an elevator speech (a speech lasting as long as a short elevator ride) to promote

the importance of libraries whenever and wherever we could.

Proofing (with wife Ann) the NHLTA newsletter was another plus that benefited the NHLTA. In addition to proofreading Loring also, sometimes under the guise of The NHLTA Curmudgeon, submitted articles for the newsletter. One opinion piece, Guardians of Democracy, (Spring 2015 issue, which can be found on the NHLTA website) is a must read. The Curmudgeon reminded us of the horrific period when Nazis attacked libraries and burned books so that only they could control and influence the people. He then continued, with great conviction, to state that libraries today which are free and open to everyone are "part of the foundation of our democratic way of life".



Loring Webster
December 11, 1934–
August 28, 2024

On a humorous note, the Curmudgeon paraphrased the well-known quip about the dog that ate my homework with an answer to the dog that ate my library card, how do I borrow a book? Response: "Bring your dog in quickly and we will try to scan his/her stomach. If not check your yard. Lastly, you may need to get a new library card."

The following quotes from former board members reflect our memories nicely: David Hallenbeck remembers Loring as "smart, articulate, empathetic, and always sharing with good humor. Loring epitomizes what it is to be a true-gentleman. His passing is a deep loss to several NH groups but we were fortunate to have him among us as long as we did." Susan Gaudiello shares her thoughts, "he was such a gift to the organization. He always maintained a positive outlook and was an inspiration to others."

His intelligence, love of libraries, empathy, sense of humor, and willingness to work tirelessly for libraries will long be remembered.

Library Trustee

The Newsletter of the
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Association

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