

NH Library Trustee

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The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

Congratulations to the 2020 NHLTA Award Winners!

Not surprisingly given this extraordinary year, NHLTA received a number of impressive nominations. To meet the shifting demands imposed by the pandemic, libraries had to adapt quickly, changing the way they conduct business and coming up with new ways to serve their communities. 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 during the coming months.

Library Director of the Year (tie)

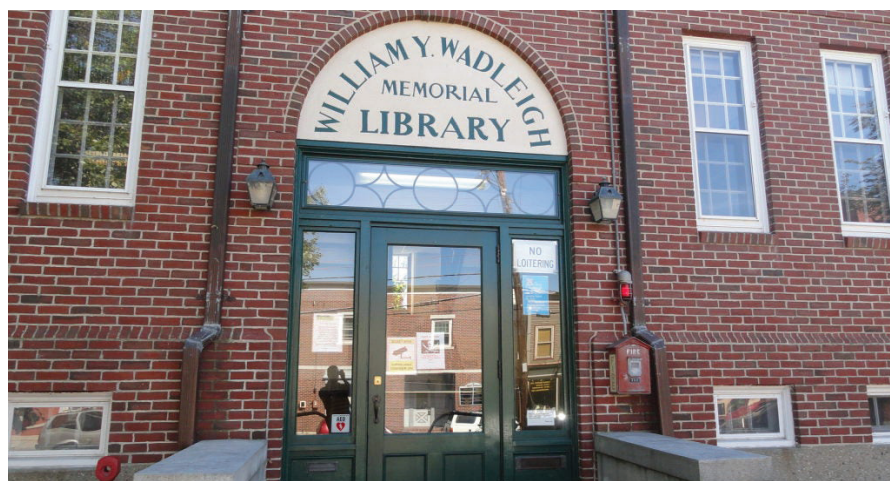
Corinne Chronopoulos,

Peterborough Town Library

Julie Perrin, Jaffrey Public Library

Lillian Edelmann Trustee of the Year

Sally Miller, Keene Public Library



Library of the Year

The William Y. Wadleigh Memorial Library, Milford

Sue Palmatier Award for Outstanding Support by a Friends of the Library Group

Friends of the Library of Windham

Dorothy M. Little Award

Lori Fisher, New Hampshire State Library

REMINDER: 2020 Nonprofit Reports Due by December 31

2020 is a renewal year for NH nonprofits – this means that, per RSA 292:25, all legally-organized New Hampshire nonprofits must file the “2020 NONPROFIT REPORT” with the NH Department of State, Corporate Division, by December 31, 2020. Since most Friends of the Library organizations are organized as nonprofits, they are required to file. New Hampshire nonprofits must make this filing every five years. The last required nonprofit filing was in 2015; after this year, the next one will be in 2025. This report is different than the “Annual Report

Certificate” which must be filed every year.

Names and addresses of the officers and directors of the nonprofit organization are required information on the nonprofit report. Any change to a nonprofit’s address should also be included. A \$25 fee must accompany the report filing.

Unfortunately, many nonprofits do not realize that they must file a report with the NH Secretary of State’s office every five years. If a report is not filed, then the nonprofit’s state charter is repealed. For reinstatement, a \$50 revival application is

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Letter from the President . . .



Katrinka Pellecchia
NHLTA President

Fall 2020

The past six months have been a chronicle of loss and unsustainable hardship for much of the world: loss of loved ones, loss of income, loss of the simple pleasures of life we have all taken for granted. Here, at NHLTA, we had to cancel the 2020 Annual Conference and we recently made the hard decision to not hold an in-person conference in the spring of 2021. Instead, we will be holding a two-day virtual conference on May 12 and May 13, 2021, and we hope to go back in person in 2022.

2020 has been a challenging year and, as the winners and all the nominees for our Annual Awards demonstrate, libraries and librarians have met that challenge head-on. From curbside pickup to Zoom book club meetings, to adding streaming services to virtual talent shows and program offerings, libraries are doing what they do best – keeping their communities connected and informed. I agree wholeheartedly with one of

the nominators who stated: “my initial thoughts were that every librarian in the state should receive this award because of the enormous amount of changes that have taken place and the decisions and concessions that needed to happen in the face of the pandemic.”

This is my first year to serve as NHLTA President, and it’s turning out to be quite the adventure. I have a long history of volunteering with libraries: I have served as a trustee of the Lee Public Library since 2006, and joined the NHLTA Board in 2014. Previously, I served on the board of the Fort Worth Friends of the Library, co-chairing the annual book sale.

In our recent survey, respondents mourned the lack of in-person contact that the Annual Conference and the regional meetings provide. We totally agree and will resume meeting in person as soon as it is safe to do so. Meanwhile, we will continue to host virtual roundtables – they’re a great way to stay connected. The NHLTA website is constantly updated; do sign up for the **LISTSERV®** to make sure you have the latest information. And, as always, email us with any concerns or questions or suggestions.

I truly believe the work librarians do and the services libraries provide are essential to our communities. And the work is appreciated – as you can see in this photo of what greeted the librarians in my home town of Lee one morning when they came to work during the early days of the pandemic.

Take care and stay safe.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katrinka".

Katrinka Pellecchia, President



2020 Nonprofit Reports

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required, plus the required \$25 filing fee, for a total of \$75.

The “2020 NONPROFIT REPORT” may be filed online at: quickstart.sos.nh.gov/online/account/landingpage. A “QuickStart” account must be established before your organization may file. The \$25

fee must be paid with MasterCard, Visa, Discover or pre-approved ACH. Once on the web site, click the “File Annual Report” icon. Here you may create a free account. For those who prefer to file the report in paper form with a check payment, they should call the Secretary of State’s Corporate Division at 603-271-3246 to request the form.

A nonprofit’s status with the Secretary

of State can be looked up, using the “Business Name Lookup” feature at the same website address mentioned above. The nonprofit’s Business ID # can also be found here; that number is required in order to file online.

Trustees and library personnel should remind their Friends’ organization, foundation and other nonprofits about the requirement to file this report in 2020.

Virus-Responsive Design

In the age of COVID-19, architects merge future-facing innovations with present-day needs

By Lara Ewen

Excerpted with permission from *American Libraries* magazine, September/October 2020

Libraries have always been spaces for discovery. But in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have been tasked with transforming themselves into places that allow users to physically distance while being more digitally connected than ever. As some institutions emerge from months of shutdowns, design and architecture experts seek to meet current health and safety challenges as well as safeguard these community spaces against an uncertain future.

Traci Engel Lesneski, CEO and principal at Minneapolis-based national architecture firm MSR Design, says libraries are ideal spaces for innovative design solutions. “Libraries can provide hands-on learning and access to certain technologies that people don’t have access to in their everyday lives.”



Dividers encourage physical distancing. Tulsa City-County (Okla.) Library

PHOTO: LARA SWIMMER

Yet libraries have had to find new ways to provide that access. “[COVID-19] is aggravating the digital divide,” says Susan Nemitz, director of Santa Cruz (Calif.) Public Libraries (SCPL). “There are

a number of people who don’t have access to the internet and computers, because we haven’t opened up yet.” She says that effective design solutions will have to bridge not just physical and digital distance, but socioeconomic distance as well.

“We find that, more and more, our community is isolated,” she says. “And we’ve been moving away from being a warehouse of books to being a social connector. The COVID crisis has thrown a wrench into who we are and what we believed. Do we build our buildings for the situation we’re in now, or the situation in the long run?”

The answer may be both. “This will not last forever,” says Amanda Markovic, architect and associate principal at GBBN Architects. “But there’s a possibility that it will happen again. So I think [design] is about ensuring there’s flexibility, making sure there aren’t as many hard walls in these spaces to allow for the expansion and contraction [of our spaces] that will be necessary.”

Libraries are repurposing certain design features to address the new normal. “There have been some fortunate coincidences that were not intended to be in reaction to a pandemic but that we can use,” says Markovic. “For instance, at Baldwin Borough Public Library [in Pittsburgh], we put casters on the stacks to make them easy to move around. We can now use them to create little ‘pods.’”

Clean and simple

Certainly funding is an issue. But not all changes need to be expensive. In fact, some of the most effective enhancements libraries can employ involve only elbow grease and motivation. “One of the things that works is just cleaning,” says Markovic. She says that high-touch areas like doors and desks should ideally be nonporous and cleaned often. “So putting wipes near furniture and the front desk and near where people might want to go would be a visual cue.”

Lesneski says that library guests should also be a part of that process. “We will have to take personal responsibility to clean up after ourselves,” she says. “And we might have to start carrying around sanitizer.”

Technology solutions can also make spaces cleaner and safer. Touchless lights, faucets, and doors may become more common, and libraries may begin to experiment with automated cleaning protocols. “Maybe there’s an automatic occupancy sensor that turns on a UV light that [could kill] the most recent virus, like task lights at every computer,” says Cindy Kaufman, principal associate at Holt Architects.

Products and placement

Design can also provide visual reminders of social distancing. Indoors, that can translate into strategic furniture placement. “Especially in facilities that don’t have money [to remodel], I see the possibility that furniture is arranged in a completely different way,” says Kaufman. “If people need to face each other, you could put up a barrier or a sneeze guard or a panel. Mobile screens can be another way to create separate seating.”

Product design is quickly evolving to meet the needs of environments that practice social distancing. “You’re seeing products pop up”—such as planters and fabric screens— “[that] feel natural

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Virus-Responsive Design

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but also keep people at a distance,” Lesneski says. Furniture still needs to be welcoming, she adds, because otherwise people won’t want to be there. “We can’t look like we’re living in a surgical ward.”

Storage solution considerations will also affect collections, as many libraries now have a process for quarantining materials. Libraries have to dedicate space for books to sit for three days and then be cleaned.

Outside the box

As scientists learn more about the transmission of COVID-19, the importance of using outdoor space as much as possible has repeatedly been stressed. “Outside is safer than inside,” says Sullivan. “So are the services going to be curbside pickup? Will there be outdoor programming?”

Designers are also thinking about how to better ventilate indoor spaces. “Everyone is looking at improved indoor air quality for HVAC systems, more operable windows, more fresh air, and more air circulation,” says Thomas M. Hotaling, architect and principal at Ann Beha Architects, a Boston-based design firm. “Fresh air is proven to make for a healthier environment.”

As libraries bring the outdoors inside, they’re also bringing traditional indoor services outside. “There’s a trend in creating outside spaces and

leaving our Wi-Fi on,” says Nemitz of SCPL.

“Maybe expanding coverage so we can be a Wi-Fi hotspot, so students can use it if they don’t have Wi-Fi at home, whether we’re open or not.”

“We have a lot of people who love print books and who are suddenly motivated to download books,” says Nemitz. “This kind of thing is going to forever change us.”

Looking ahead

Designers say that the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity not just to modify libraries but to improve them for future use.

“This is about so much more than having less seating and different planning,” says Kaufman. “It’s about human-environmental interactions, and how can we affect human behavior with simple design tools. In my mind, it’s imagery and spatial reconfiguration that can help people feel more [connected] to each other. Buildings will need to create more usable spaces for people to spread out more, and users need to trust the staff.”

Lesneski says that a lot of existing built environments have barriers that hinder inclusivity at multiple levels, including racially and socioeconomically. Ironically, a shift to more equitable spaces will happen because the virus has made decision makers “uncomfortable,” she says. “We [should] remember to expand our lens so that it’s not just about the pandemic but also a long-term overhaul.”

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Tips for looking great in a virtual meeting

Since meeting virtually is the new normal, here are some ways to make yourself look better. Of course, there’s always the option of turning your camera off!

Looking Good. Wear a solid-color shirt or sweater as busy patterns can be hard on the eyes. And avoid bright white or solid black. Remember, you only have to look good from the waist up!

Lighting. Avoid side or back lighting which can put your face in shadow. And even if you have a great view,

avoid sitting with your back to the window – the camera will turn you into a silhouette. Better to face the window if you can.

Background. Sitting in front of a bookshelf has become something of a cliché, but plain backgrounds are best as they’re not so distracting. If you’re meeting via Zoom, you can choose to use a virtual background – again, the less distracting the better.

Keep Your Distance. The cameras on smartphones and webcams are wide-

angle. If you’re too close to your camera, your face will look distorted.

Look Them in the Eye. Don’t sit where you’re looking down at your camera – Do you really want people looking up your nose? Experiment with stacking books under your laptop until you see the webcam eye to eye.

Sound. Again, don’t get too close or so far away that the microphone can’t pick you up. Remember to mute yourself when you’re listening – no one needs to hear your coffee cup clinking against the table, or background noise.

Alternate Trustees

Alternates are a necessary part of any board, including those boards that govern libraries. Several statutes apply directly to alternates for library trustees: RSA 202-A:6 and RSA 202-A:10. These statutes together inform boards that there may be no more than three alternates and that the names of alternates may be recommended by the library trustees to the governing body for appointment to one-year terms, but they do not answer some basic questions about alternates and their roles on boards. This column hopes to answer some of those basic questions.

Do alternates take an oath of office?

Yes, RSA 42:1 states, in relevant part, that “[e]very town officer shall make and subscribe the oath or declaration as prescribed by part 2, article 84 of the constitution of New Hampshire.” That would include all alternates to boards as well as all regular members.

Are alternates required to attend every meeting?

Alternates are not required to attend every meeting, but it is good practice for them to try to attend all meetings so that they are familiar with the issues on which the board has been working.

At a board meeting are alternates considered just a member of the public except when serving in place of an elected trustee?

Alternates only fill in “when elected members of the board are unable to attend a board meeting.” RSA 202-A:10. Therefore, they are not technically board members when not serving in place of a trustee, but keep in mind that the public may know that they are alternates and believe – wrongly or rightly – that they have some extra influence on the board as compared to the general public. There is nothing much that can be done about that, but boards should be careful to ensure that they take pains to avoid even the appearance of conflicts of interest. This could come up if an issue is debated with public input where an alternate not participating as a board member voices a strong opinion

for or against the issue, the board decides to wait to vote on the matter until the next meeting, then, at the next meeting, the board finds that it needs to pull an alternate from the audience onto the board to fulfill the quorum requirement. The alternate who has not voiced an opinion is a better choice than the one who has voiced an opinion because, as NHMA constantly cautions, board members should try to limit expressing their opinions on matters pending before the board to board meetings.

At a board meeting when can alternates speak or participate?

Alternates who are participating as substitutes for board members who are not present are both literally and figuratively sitting in the seats of those absent board members. Therefore, they are entitled to the full rights of any other board member.

Alternates who are not presently acting in the place of full board members should not participate actively as a board member. Remember, they aren’t technically on the board except when a full board member is absent.

When can alternates vote?

Alternates can vote *only* when they are serving in place of a full board member. Otherwise, there would be no difference between alternates and full board members.

Can an alternate be elected as an officer of the board? Such as Treasurer or Secretary?

No. Alternates only serve when a full board member is absent. They cannot be an officer of the board because the full board may be present, in which case the alternate is not entitled to participate.

Can alternates attend a non-public session?

A board may choose who to invite into nonpublic session entered into under RSA 91-A:3. While it is permissible for the board to invite non-board members, including alternates, into nonpublic session, boards would be wise to consider whether that is appropriate. In most cases, it is best to limit

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

Alternates who are participating as substitutes for board members . . . are entitled to the full rights of any other board member.

Alternate Trustees

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nonpublic session to the then-existing board. (Note, of course, that disclosure of the discussion of non-public session by any officer of the municipality is a violation of the Oath of Office according to RSA 42:1-a, II.)

Can an alternate serve on a trustee board-approved committee?

Committees created by a board are composed of whoever the board decides to appoint. Frequently, it is the case that mixed committees, composed of board and non-board members, can assist a board. Therefore, it is perfectly permissible for the board to appoint non-board members, including alternates, to the committee.

One thing boards should keep in mind, however, is that any board-approved committee is subject to the Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A, and the board should take care to both inform the committee of the requirements of that statute and ensure that the committee is following that statute.

Can an alternate “speak” for and/or represent the elected trustee board, such as at a budget hearing, etc.?

The board may appoint whoever it likes to represent it before other boards. The preference, of course, is a full board member, but there may be circumstances where that is not possible or advisable. If that is the case, it is perfectly permissible for the board to take a vote to appoint someone else, including an alternate, to speak for it before another board or committee.

Libraries are essential to communities, and no other place comes close.

—TONI MORRISON

Meet the New NHLTA Board Members

Tammy Hooker is currently a trustee of the Hooksett Library where she holds the office of secretary. Tammy has been on the board for over 10 years and was named the Lillian Edelman Trustee of the Year in 2019. She is also an active



member of the Friends of the Hooksett Library where she initiated the Mother's Day Tea Party and Summer Concert on the Porch series.

Upon moving to Hooksett more than 20 years ago Tammy sought out the library,

where she found a welcoming community and made many friends. As a mother of two young boys she came to understand the need for exceptional programming.

The library has always been an important part of her life. Tammy looks forward to working with the members of NHLTA.

John Stone moved to Jaffrey in 1978, to teach language arts and social studies in Jaffrey-Rindge

Middle School, eventually serving as principal of Rindge Memorial for 16 years. He oversaw the elementary school in Rindge, earning New Hampshire Elementary School Principal of the Year honors in 2009. After 34 years in the district, John retired in 2012. Retirement to some might mean taking it easy, but John continues to be very involved with his community. For the past seven years he has driven a bus two days a week for the adult daycare program at Monadnock Family Services; additionally, he has served on the Jaffrey Chamber of Commerce, the Jaffrey Friends of Recreation, his local Knights of Columbus and, of course, the Jaffrey Library Board of Trustees. But it may be that what John is best known for is being the Monadnock Santa – 27 years and counting! A fixture at the annual Jaffrey tree lighting, he only answers to “Santa” while wearing one of his three red suits. John and his wife Helen have three sons and five grandchildren.



Ghost Stories

by Renee Mallet

I've spent the past 15 or so years, writing about New England's legends, folklore, and haunted happenings. In that time, I've learned a thing or two about ghosts. For instance, theaters are usually haunted. But libraries *always* are.

I've found that all libraries have what I think of as an archivist. I don't mean this in the technical sense of the term, it's not their job description. But there comes a time at every library presentation I've ever given when a patron says, "I wonder if this library is haunted?" While the library director looks around a little flustered, possibly wondering how their trustees will feel about rumors of spooks and spirits in the building, the face of a longtime staff member will light up and the stories just start to pour out. And I get to give a silent sigh of relief! I do try to make it a point track down a story or two about wherever I'm giving a talk. But the archivist always has a story I haven't heard before and it's usually a first or secondhand experience at that. There's nothing that tickles a patron more than hearing about something a little creepy that happened one night to their favorite staff member in their favorite library.

Ghost stories appeal to all kinds of people for all kinds of reasons. Even those who don't believe in the things that go bump in the night can still enjoy a wicked tale or two. Many libraries use these kinds of presentations around Halloween to encourage residents who might not consider themselves readers to walk through the doors and see what else the library has to offer.

In 2013 the North Hampton Library made a visit from a paranormal researcher part of their Teen Read Week. That's one way to get the older kids back into the library! The staff had reported unexplainable sounds for a while. While closing up for the night there'd be a noise near the computers or in the stacks. But whoever mustered up

the courage to go and check it out would never find a source and the sounds would stop as soon as they'd started. The North East Paranormal Association showed the kids how they conduct their investigations and confirmed that there was something unearthly going on at the library. The group was even able to give a name to one of the spirits, early 1800s Granite Stater Paul Jacobs. If nothing else the staff could now address their after-hours visitor by name.

I remember when the Portsmouth Public Library moved from its longtime home on Islington Street to its current home on Parrot Avenue. While I'm sure the staff loved the brightly lit, modern, new building, I wonder what had happened to their ghosts! The Islington building had a good half a dozen spirits that called the library home. One, a small child, could be heard running around the upper floor playing, with a few (un)lucky patrons saying they had even seen the girl from time to time. More rambunctious patrons said they were shushed by the ghost of a librarian in the Special Collections room when they got too loud. The library's most unique ghost was not any of the typical sorts of stories you think of when you think of haunted New England – it was a man dressed in modern clothes who was said to wander inside the building, unmindful of the walls he passed through like mist, before stepping outside to cross the road.

Did those longtime library residents hitch a ride with the books to marvel at the new Parrot Avenue location? Did they wander the empty rooms confused until the new Visitor Center was created? Or did they just decide it was time to move on when the books were gone?

While I've seen and heard and written about plenty of unexplainable things in my time, I just don't know if I'm ready to say they were caused by a ghost. But if anything chips away at my skepticism it's the prevalence of ghost stories set in libraries. Because who among us, given the chance, wouldn't want to spend an eternity surrounded by books?

Library Trustee

**The Newsletter of the
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NH Library Association

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