

NH Library Trustee

WINTER 2022-2023

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The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

NHLTA 2022 Award Winners Celebrated



East Kingston Public Library: Director Tracy Waldron (holding award) with the EKL trustees and NHLTA President Marcia McLaughlin (second from right).

All of the nominations were impressive, and demonstrated how fortunate New Hampshire is to have such fine public libraries and library supporters. Nowhere was this more evident than when it came to deciding the Library Director of the Year. Once again, NHLTA chose two directors to share the honor.

Library Director **Tracy Waldron** joined the East Kingston Library in 1993 when the library was just a 750 sq ft. one-room schoolhouse. During her 30 years of service, she has done everything from shoveling snow to delivering books to patrons to finding interesting programs to encouraging children to love books. Her longest running program is the library's book club, a mainstay for 20 years! Tracy played a major role when she worked with the trustee board to build a new library. Beginning in 2004, she was the public face of the library project – thanks to her “massive patience and gentle persistence” the library was completed four years later and now offers more programming and more resources to the community. To quote one

board member: “Her empathy, her curiosity, and her flexibility have been invaluable to us over the years, and she has used those same skills to ensure she leaves us on firm footing as she transitions into her retirement and makes way for the next generation of library leadership.”

NHLTA Board President Marcia McLaughlin presented Tracy with her award on October 24 during the EKL trustee meeting.

The second NHLTA Director of the Year award went to **Dianne Hathaway**, the director of the Goffstown Public Library. In their nomination, the Goffstown trustees cited Dianne’s “exemplary job in realizing the mission of the Goffstown Public Library: to meet community information needs, provide high-quality programs and materials, and contribute to the cultural life and awareness of the town. Under her direction, the library provides a safe and welcoming space for people to explore and engage with important – and sometimes difficult

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Letter from the President . . .



Marcia McLaughlin
NHLTA President

Winter 2022-2023

As we trustees ring in the new year, the annual budget process continues. While our budgets have been presented, defended and scrutinized, there is still work to be done.

This year most especially the town budget process is under additional strain due to high inflation which has impacted the pocketbooks of the residents. Tight budgets have probably been presented. It is our duty as trustees to advocate for our library budget, to the select board, budget committee and the voters. Advocacy has a multi-pronged approach.

Your budget has been presented to the elected officials who decide what final number will be presented to the voters. Be sure the deliberative body understands the needs of the library and even

more importantly, the value the library brings to the community.

Be present at all budget meetings. Be present at the town meeting or deliberative session to speak to the library budget. Be prepared with factual information which can be used to reinforce your budgetary requests.

Be the voice of advocacy in the community – at all times, in all places. An informed voter is your best ally. Additionally, make sure your Friends group is conversant with the library's budgetary needs and can speak to them when out at other programs or events. Our Friends groups walk hand in hand with us for the benefit of the library.

The budget process can be grueling, but if we are prepared, we will increase our chances for a good outcome.

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

Plan Now to Attend

2023 NHLTA Spring Conference!

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023

First Amendment: Censorship & Advocacy

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

First Amendment Issues: Censorship and Library Advocacy

MARTIN GARNAR

WORKSHOP TOPICS WILL INCLUDE:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Collection Development Policies in the Age of Book Challenges | Strategic Approach to Grant Writing |
| What Library Trustees Need to Know | Trustee Participation at Meetings |
| Social Media – Risks & Rewards | Small Afternoon Roundtables |
| Library RSAs & Other Basics | Presenting Your Library's Case |
| | Dessert Social & Networking |
| | . . . and more! |

GRAPPONE CENTER, CONCORD

Censorship Update – Practical Tips for Proactive Preparation

New Hampshire libraries continue to face material/program/library display challenges, both formal and informal, in their communities. ALA's most recent statistics through October 2022 show that as a nation we have exceeded the number of challenges made in 2021, and this is reflected through the experiences of our libraries in NH.

The NH State Library Censorship LibGuide continues to be a repository of useful resources for our library staff and trustees, including slide presentations, sample collections policies and reconsideration forms, and role play scripts. Recently, I added a copy of the Policy Review Matrix from the Goffstown Public Library (thank you Dianne Hathaway, Director and 2022 NHLTA Director of the Year recipient) so that trustee boards can work to integrate library policy review into every board meeting. Often, policy review is the one item that is taken off the agenda when a "crisis" occurs or the agenda gets long. I strongly encourage our boards to not let this happen, and to use the policy matrix to keep you on track. As discussed in other forums, making sure that your Collection Development policy, Reconsideration form, Patron Behavior or Conduct policy, and Circulation policy have been reviewed within the past year is critical right now as we face both formal and informal challenges.

If a reconsideration form is completed and filed at your library, please make sure to provide the information about that challenge to the American Library Association for tracking purposes: www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/report. This data is extremely important in order to provide an accurate state/regional/national perspective on challenges.

The two policies that a number of NH libraries are trying to implement right now as preparation before a challenge are a library display policy and a crisis communication policy. Why? Because



library display challenges have been on the rise in NH since June's pride month, and they are continuing to occur in our communities. You can have a separate policy, or add library displays to your current reconsideration form and collection policy. The library display policy which the Durham Public Library developed is a good example. A crisis communication policy is useful for any crisis that faces the library. Some libraries have been using

this as an opportunity to have conversations at the town level about media policies and emergency plans. ALA has a good resource outlining possible elements of a crisis communication policy. [Editor's note: Both of these policies may be found on the NHLTA website under Resources.]

This is my last contribution to the NHLTA newsletter, as I am leaving NH State Library to be the Maine State Librarian at the end of December 2022. I won't be far away, and hope to collaborate with NHSL, NHLA, NHLTA, and NHSLMA in the future through the Maine State Library. Thank you to all of the NH library trustees for their dedication to our NH library community, and particularly to the leadership of NHLTA for their zeal and drive to support NH libraries.

By Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian at the NH State Library

...Making sure that your Collection Development policy, Reconsideration form, Patron Behavior or Conduct policy, and Circulation policy have been reviewed within the past year is critical right now as we face both formal and informal challenges.

McKay Scholarship Deadlines

Applications for summer 2023 graduate courses must be received by April 1, 2023; one \$1,000 graduate course scholarship will be awarded.

Applications for library conferences and workshops should be submitted approximately one month before the event. Virtual courses, conferences (including NHLTA's Annual Conference) and workshops are also eligible for scholarship awards.

Criteria for scholarship eligibility and a scholarship application can be found on NHLTA's website, www.nhlta.org.

Goffstown Public Library:

Director Dianne Hathaway (holding the award) celebrates with the Goffstown Public Library Board of Trustees.



NHLTA 2022 Award Winners

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– issues.” The Courageous Community Conversations series of programs is a good example. Begun several years ago as a way for the Goffstown community to discuss race, the series has expanded to include environmental concerns and other civic issues. The library takes an active role in civic affairs, making sure information about candidates for local office is available in both digital and hard copy. Dianne is involved in all aspects of the library – from cutting slices of pie at the annual Pie Sales to toting books at the book sales to communicating library news via the web page, the library newsletter and her weekly library news column. Dianne’s leadership extends beyond the Goffstown Library; she serves as NH Mentor to the New England Library Leadership Symposium.

On November 9, NHLTA board member Kathy Parenti presented Dianne with her award before an enthusiastic crowd of library patrons, trustees and staff; town department heads and several members of the Select Board and Dianne’s family, including her mother and her grandchildren!

This year’s recipient of the Special Library Service Contribution Award **Robert Grano** grew up in Northwood, in his family’s home across the street from the Chesley Memorial Library. His mother Theodora was a strong library supporter and upon her death, Robert donated \$100,000 to the library – a donation which enabled them to build a two-story addition in 1991. In 2020, he again reached out to the library to create the “Joseph Grano Children’s Initiative” in order to memorialize the 100th anniversary of his father’s immigration to America. The purpose of the Initiative is to fund programming that will promote exploration of the natural world, music, art, diverse cultures, adventure travel and craftsmanship. Though the programming had somewhat of a slow start due to COVID restrictions, the library was able to sponsor a Story Walk. Since then, they’ve sponsored a program at a local family-run enterprise, Robertsons’ Sugar Shack, a presentation by Sanborn Mills Farm and activities for the 2022 Summer Reading Program “Oceans of Possibilities”. The Grano Initiative fills a large gap in the Chesley Library’s budget, allowing them to offer a wider variety of programs, strengthen community ties by visiting neighborhood businesses and also bring in speakers from outside the area. On October 8, Chesley Memorial Library trustees accepted the award on behalf of Robert Grano, who now lives in Florida.

Chesley Memorial Library, Northwood:

From left, Gale Tobbe, past trustee president; NHLTA Board President Marcia McLaughlin; Betty Smith, current trustee president



Kathryn Parenti, the Lillian Edelmann Trustee of the Year award winner, is a busy, active and involved Wadeleigh Memorial Library Trustee. Kathy has always been a library supporter, patron and reader and now she is passing that love along to her grandchildren. Kathy started as co-chair of the Trustees in 2019 at a time when the Wadeleigh Library in Milford was seeking to expand; her knowledge of town functioning served the Board well, even before she moved into the position of chair. Since becoming chair she has led the group through navigating a pandemic, successfully applying for the NHLTA 2020 Library of the Year award, reconfiguring the building project, sponsoring multiple warrant articles seeking funding from taxpayers and utilizing financial gifts from donors for much-needed repairs and even a few renovations! She has gotten to practice her public speaking skills numerous times – at multiple Budget Advisory meetings and Deliberative Sessions in front of the town explaining the work that very much needs to be done at the library. She rolls up her sleeves for form completion – be it the capital improvement forms or working with Library Director Betsy Solon on a request for \$800K in ARPA funds. Kathy was also instrumental in getting another roughly \$200K from the Town of Milford’s ARPA funding. She is the face to the voters on Voting Day – Kathy is always present at the information booth for the library. And if that wasn’t enough, this past summer she was elected to the NHLTA Board of Directors! What’s next on the agenda? The library is now embarking on a capital campaign to secure the funds to repair/renovate the library – and Kathy will be at the forefront of that – undoubtedly doing anything and everything required to get the job done. NHLTA Board Director Debra Caplan presented Kathy with her award at a small but enthusiastic celebration at the Wadeleigh Library trustee meeting on October 18.

While it is certainly true, as was pointed out in the nomination, that every Friends Group deserves an award, the consensus of the **Weeks Public Library** trustees is that without their Friends group, their library would be still struggling to serve the Greenland community from its small, overcrowded space built in 1897. As detailed in the Fall 2021 issue



Wadeleigh Memorial Library, Milford: Kathryn Parenti (holding award) stands with her fellow trustees and NHLTA Board Director Debra Caplan (far right).

of the NHLTA newsletter, the journey to a new Weeks Library was not an easy one. As the project grew more and more expensive (and seemingly more and more out of reach), the Friends of the Weeks Public Library went into action. They set a fundraising goal of \$425,000 and surpassed it! They also worked to convince Greenland voters to support a warrant article raising \$198,000 for the project. The expanded Weeks Library re-opened on August 30, 2021. Not content to rest on their laurels, the Friends continue to fund-raise, supporting programs and events.

On November 17, NHLTA Board Director Katrinka Pellecchia presented the Sue Palmatier Award for Outstanding Support of a Friends Group to the Friends of the Weeks Public Library at a gathering in “Greenland’s Living Room”, as the original part of the library is now called.



Weeks Public Library, Greenland: Left to right, Friends members Debbie Bauder, Phyllis Picha and Stuart Bauder (the current treasurer and the chair of the capital campaign), pose proudly with their award.

Book Bans, Catalog Requests, and Patron Checkout Records



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

It has been a difficult year for libraries. The concept that by eliminating the written word one can eliminate the idea has sparked a fury of activity. Libraries across the nation have seen books pulled from shelves because someone did not like them. They have faced budget cuts due to stocking books that some deem objectionable. And some have seen requests for catalog or patron records. These problems are not new. Books and their custodians have always been in danger from those whom they threaten with the demand that they question their assumptions.

Fortunately, New Hampshire has a robust set of laws that may help libraries weather this storm. First, the easiest way for someone to interfere with the free circulation of materials is to detain an item. RSA 202-A:25 anticipates this action. A library may give written notice to return it, referencing the statute, via certified mail to such person's last address or delivered by a person designated by the lawful custodian of such property. If the patron refuses to return the item within 15 days, he or she is guilty of a violation, which has a maximum penalty of \$1,000 and, of course, grants the court the ability to order the return or replacement of the item. (Damaging an item is its own offense pursuant to RSA 202-A:24.)

The next most common salvo, and the one besieging at least a few libraries in New Hampshire, is the catalog request. Catalog listings are not, by themselves, protected. In fact, RSA 202-A:3-a and the general definition under RSA 91-A:1-a clarify that libraries are public agencies whose records are subject to disclosure pursuant to the provisions of RSA chapter 91-A. It is possible, therefore, that someone could request any record possessed by the library that would show all items held in its catalog. While there is no obligation for a library to create such a record pursuant to RSA 91-A:4, VII; if one exists, it would have to be disclosed upon request.

The next logical step, of course, is for the requestor to identify which materials he or she determines are "objectionable" and attempt to obtain more information about who is requesting

those materials. Again, New Hampshire law anticipates this issue. RSA 91-A:5, IV clearly bars the disclosure of "library user" records. Additionally, RSA 201-D:11 provides that library records which contain the names or other personal identifying information regarding the users of libraries shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such libraries and shall be disclosed upon request by or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by statute. Municipal libraries have an additional protection embedded in RSA 33-A:3, LXVI. Under that statute, municipal libraries have no obligation to retain library user records; those that do exist are confidential.

The existence of these statutory provisions gives rise to serious policy considerations by libraries. Libraries still using paper checkout cards must consider whether they are taking adequate steps to anonymize patron's checkout history by, for example, collecting the cards and redistributing them at random as new users check out books. Libraries that have moved to a digital system must ensure that adequate cybersecurity and record retention provisions are in place to remove the risk of what someone checks out being released for public dissemination. These policy considerations will be library-specific and may require weighing new costs against existing practice and patron services.

The good news is that municipal libraries in New Hampshire, at least, should breathe a little easier on the funding piece. Certainly, we have seen elsewhere that when someone cannot get a book pulled that they do not like, their final effort may be to bar funding of the entire library. Thankfully, New Hampshire's statutes have again anticipated this issue. RSA 202-A:4 clearly states that "[a]ny city or town having a public library shall annually raise and appropriate a sum of money sufficient to provide and maintain adequate public library service therein or to supplement funds otherwise provided." While we do not yet have a case on the meaning of the word "adequate," it is clear that

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New Hampshire law does not contemplate that funding for a library can be yanked at town meeting simply because someone is upset with what resides on its shelves.

Libraries will have a hard year ahead. There is no indication that the interest in checkout records has abated in the wake of the recent mid-term elections. Libraries

throughout New Hampshire will have to be vigilant and be careful to follow our existing statutory scheme and the protections embedded in it. Always feel free to reach out to us at the New Hampshire Municipal Association if you have any legal questions that arise and have a wonderful holiday and budgetary season.

You Can Make a Difference!

NHLTA is actively seeking volunteers to work on a project-by-project basis or on a long-term basis. Do you have skills to share to fill in some gaps? Are you looking for something to sink your teeth into in support of libraries?

The NHLTA Board of Directors is an all-volunteer group of current and former library trustees. We need help in the following areas:

- **Education:** Help us put together our exciting and educational annual conferences, orientation sessions for new trustees, and topical workshops.
- **Technology:** We need a computer-savvy person with experience working with Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Knowledge of Constant Contact would be a plus.
- **Communications:** Support the editor in creating our quarterly newsletter with content, regional reporting, and feature articles.

For information on how to volunteer with the NHLTA, please contact Anne Chant at a.chant@nhlta.org with an estimate of the time you can offer, areas of interest and special skills.

If you care about libraries and want to make a difference, volunteering with NHLTA is a great way to do it!

Do you have a great idea for an article for the NHLTA newsletter?

We encourage you to submit articles and photos to us for consideration.

Topics could include events, programs, announcements or a recent success.

Please e-mail all submissions to the editor, Katrinka Pellecchia, at k.pellecchia@nhlta.org.



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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.



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