



Association of Connecticut Library Boards Newsletter

The Association of Connecticut Library Boards (ACLB) is Connecticut's library trustee organization representing public library boards throughout the state.

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2016 Trustee Leadership Conference Draws 121 Participants

“CT Libraries: The Path Forward” was the topic of ACLB’s 2016 trustee leadership conference held at the University of Hartford on Nov. 4. The event drew 121 participants from libraries and boards across the state.

Douglas Casey, executive director of the Connecticut State Commission for Educational Technology, began the day with a keynote address on “How the Future Requires that We Re-Envision Public Libraries.” His talk was followed by break-out sessions on Library Board Basics Plus, an opportunity to meet the Connecticut Library Association lobbyist and the public library Best Practice document, which remains a work in progress.

Following a buffet lunch, Cassie Guthrie, director of the Greece Public Library near Rochester, N.Y., spoke on “The Care and Feeding of Your Library Director.” She cited Will Manley’s Library Director’s Bill of Rights, which includes a fair wage, timely and appropriate feedback, a unified and loyal board, participation in the policy-making process, protection from politics, a free hand in personnel management and freedom from meddling.

The conference also included the presentation of library trustee awards. Recipients included the Middlebury Public Library Board of Trustees, David Hersant of the Public Library of New London, Gail Ryan of the Simsbury Public Library, Marcia T. Andrus of the South Windsor Public Library and the Wallingford Public Library’s 15-member Board of Managers.

To focus on just one example of why these winners were chosen, the Wallingford board was honored for its support of the Collaboratory@WPL, a 2,400-square-foot maker space, digital media lab and co-working space containing a wide variety of state-of-the-art technology and traditional hand-crafting tools. The board is credited with taking the initiative in re-purposing space within the library in response to residents’ desires for opportunities to learn about new technology, skills building and applied arts. Equipment available at the Collaboratory includes a laser cutter, 3D scanner, quilting machine, weaving loom and tools for rubber stamping and jewelry making. Staff supervision is provided for the use of more specialized equipment. The facility opened in September 2016.

Telling the Library Story

By State Librarian Kendall F. Wiggin

The State Library recently issued *Connecticut Public Libraries: A Statistical Profile July 2015 - June 2016*. Trustees have an important role as advocates for their library. As a trustee you need to be well informed about what is happening in your library and libraries around the state. The report and the tools that the Division of Library Development make available for libraries to utilize the report are something I hope you will become familiar with if you aren't already.

Several of the indicators stand out—funding, circulation, program attendance and the number of public access computers. Each tells a different story. When it comes to funding, only 1.2% of town/city taxes go to support public libraries. Stated another way, 1.2 cents of every local tax dollar goes to fund the library.

Circulation, a traditional measure of library use, continues to decline, mirroring the national trend. Circulation hit its peak in 2010 during the recession. Historically, library circulation increases during recessions and drops back down as the economy improves. However, circulation has fallen lower than it was prior to the recession. While overall circulation is down, when we dig into the numbers we see that eBook, audiobook and video circulation continues to increase.

There are many factors contributing to the decline in book and serial circulation, including less time devoted to reading traditional print books and growing options for getting books and magazines. On the other hand, program attendance continues to increase as does the number of public access internet computers in libraries. These last two indicators are important in that they reflect the important role libraries play as “place.”

One of the problems we face in telling the library story is that the way we have come to measure library use no longer adequately reflects what libraries do. I am currently involved in planning for a national summit on library data. Called “Measures that Matter,” this initiative led by the chief officers of state library agencies will lay the groundwork for establishing better measurements for today's libraries.

As we advocate for libraries and a bigger slice of the budget pie, we need to find ways to measure the value of the library as a place for job seekers; the impact of maker spaces; the impact of digital, financial, and other literacy programs and more. For now, telling real stories of how real people are using your library may be one of the most effective means of doing that.

I encourage you to work with your library director to learn as much as you can about your library's statistics, how it compares to other similar libraries and, most important, how your friends and neighbors are utilizing the library—one of the greatest assets any town can have.

Spreading the Word to Members of the General Assembly

In addition to ACLB members, we are expanding the mailing list for this newsletter to include members of the General Assembly. In these days of extremely tight budgets, we want to remind our legislators of the importance of libraries in the hope that they will make available the funding necessary to continue providing high quality service to residents of our state.

Please Share this Newsletter with Others on Your Board!

ACLB sends one copy of our newsletter to the chair of our member boards, so after you've read your copy, we encourage you to pass it along to the other members of your board.

Connecticut Libraries Offer Services 'Beyond the Walls'

No doubt we've all heard the saying, "If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed will go to the mountain." The same is true for libraries that bring their services to patrons unable to visit their buildings. Many such options are available in our state. In this issue we will look at materials delivery for seniors and the homebound, with other programs to follow in a future issue. Here is what happens at just a few of the many libraries that offer these services to residents of their communities.

Some libraries rely on volunteers to deliver and pick up materials for patrons in their own homes as well as senior housing, assisted living facilities and rehab centers. Among them are libraries in Somers, West Hartford, Ledyard and East Lyme.

Because of security and liability issues, libraries such as Berlin-Peck work with their towns' insurance companies to ensure that volunteers abide by rules necessary for everyone's protection. At some libraries volunteers sign contracts. The Beardsley Library in Winsted worked with their board to approve policies and resolve liability issues. The East Lyme Public Library does a background check on its volunteers.

The Enfield Public Library has a Words on Wheels program through which a staff member makes monthly visits to two convalescent homes/rehab centers where she brings large print books and audiobooks and helps residents download e-books. She also delivers materials to a few patrons living in their own homes. Words on Wheels, running since 2006, received funding from a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant administered through the State Library.

The Norwalk Public Library partners with Meals on Wheels to deliver materials to its clients. Library staff and volunteers

select and pack books, audio books, music CDs and DVDs based on each patron's preferences. Library staff members bring the items to the town's senior center from which they are delivered along with the patrons' meals.

While the Beardsley Library uses volunteers to deliver materials, they work with Meals on Wheels and the Visiting Nurses Association to publicize the service. A volunteer goes to retirement communities to help residents register for the program.

Through the WPL@Your Doorstep program, the Wallingford Public Library arranges for delivery of materials to homebound residents of that town who do not have a household member who can come to the library for them. An enrollment form includes information on preferences for books, CDs and DVDs. Materials are delivered to patrons' homes by volunteers or mailed with postage-paid return envelopes.

The Wilton Library offers an At Your Service at Home program that also provides materials by mail that can be returned in postage-paid pouches.

In Monroe the Senior Center van delivers and picks up materials from the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library for residents who are homebound or seniors who are unable to drive.

The West Haven Public Library has a bookmobile that delivers materials to senior centers as well as senior and low-income housing facilities.

The Canton Public Library is looking to create a "pop-up" library with a wi-fi hot spot so materials can be taken to locations outside the library where people can choose their own materials and apply for cards.

There is no question that these delivery services are highly valued by those benefitting from them. Carrie Tyszka, head of reference and adult services at the Berlin-Peck library said, "We've had patrons tell us it has changed the quality of their lives."

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Our Mission

- Enable member library boards to improve library services in their communities.
- Broaden trustee knowledge of current developments in the library field.
- Improve communication and cooperation among library boards.

What We Do

- Provide workshops geared to the needs of trustees across the state.
- Maintain strong liaison with library-related organizations on the state and national levels.
- Provide consultant help to library boards and individual trustees

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