



Trustee Update

Library News You Can Use

Golden rules for library board members

Do you remember the Peace Corps slogan from several years ago—“the toughest job you’ll ever love”?

Being a library board member—especially during these challenging times—is a tough job, but it should also be a rewarding one. In hopes of clarifying your role as a library board member, here are 10 “golden rules” adapted from the Virginia Public Library Trustee Handbook.

1. Leave the actual management of the library to the library director. It is the library director’s responsibility to select materials, employ staff, and supervise the day-to-day operations.
2. After a policy or rule is adopted by the majority vote of the library board, do not criticize or re-voice your opposition publicly.
3. Respect confidential information. Do

not divulge information regarding future library board actions or plans until such action is officially taken.

4. Observe the publicity and information policies of the board and library. Do not give information individually but refer questions to the library director or appropriate representative to interpret policies.

5. Treat staff members and the library director in an objective manner. Under no circumstance listen to grievances of staff members or treat individual problems on your own. The library director is in charge of the staff and has administrative control up to the point where a grievance is presented to the library board as a whole.

6. Do not suggest hiring a relative as a library employee or two members of the same family.

7. All rules and policies directed to the library director must be approved by a quorum of the board at a regular meeting. Even the library board president should abide by this rule.

8. Do not hold board meetings without the library director.

9. Complaints from the public are the library director’s responsibility. Continued dissatisfaction and problems should be taken up at the board meeting only if policy revision is necessary or legal ramifications are involved.

10. Assume your full responsibility as a library board member. If you are unable to attend meetings regularly and complete work delegated to you, resign so that an active board member can be appointed. ♦

Can you guess who I am?

Peggy Kindschi, longtime director of the Columbus Public Library who passed away in September of this year, wrote a thought-provoking piece several years ago on the role of a public library director. It is just as valid now as it was then, so in loving memory of Peggy, we wanted to share it one more time.

I schedule, council, hire and fire employees... No, I’m not a Human Resource Specialist.

I work with city, state and national laws... No, I’m not a lawyer or a police chief.

I plan, perform, hire and schedule performers... No, I’m not an actor or agent.

I supervise the maintenance of a building or buildings... No, I’m not a Facility Manager or Head of Maintenance.

I manage the budget; keep statistics, bills, and payroll... No, I’m not an accountant or treasurer.

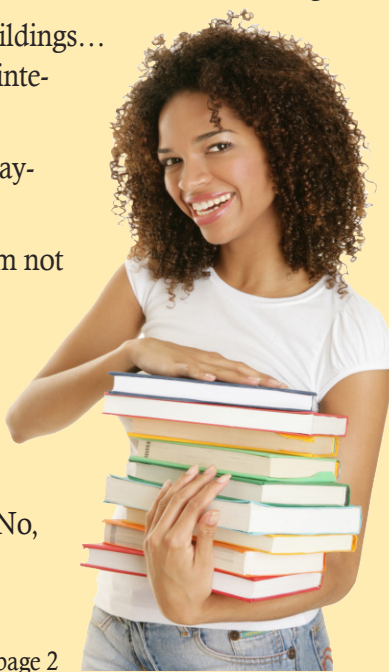
I do surveys, county and state reports... No, I’m not a statistician or city clerk.

I write news releases, PSA’s, Cable TV announcements; create posters, flyers, and brochures; speak on the radio or TV... No, I’m not a Public Relations person.

I help to educate citizens in my community... No, I’m not a teacher or school superintendent.

I teach computer skills and other things in my

—please see Can you guess? on page 2



Can you guess?—from page 1

community and beyond... No, I'm not a trainer.

I install programs and troubleshoot computer problems... No, I'm not a technical support specialist.

I purchase supplies, equipment and furniture... No, I'm not a purchasing agent.

I move or have moved materials, equipment and furniture... No, I'm not a mover or dispatcher.

I track down information... No, I'm not a detective.

I watch over the safety of people in our building... No, I'm not a security guard.

I speak before and work with the city council, legislators and senators... No, I'm not a lobbyist or politician.

SCLS staff contacts:

For information about the library law or trustee responsibilities, or library administration, contact Denise Anton Wright at (608) 246-7973 or dawright@scls.lib.wi.us.

If you have questions about library advocacy, marketing, or printing *Trustee Essentials*, contact Mark Ibach at (608) 246-5612 or mibach@scls.lib.wi.us. ❖

I work on local, state and national committees and with a board... No, I'm not a CEO.

I'm a bit of all of these things: human resource specialist, lawyer, actor, facility manager, accountant, statistician, public relations person, teacher, trainer, technical support specialist, purchasing agent, mover, detective, security guard, lobbyist and CEO...

I'm a public librarian. ❖

Trustee Essentials available in print

Wisconsin's *Trustee Essentials* is one of the best resources that public library trustees—and library directors—have at their disposal.

The Department of Public Instruction Division for Libraries and Technology keeps *Trustee Essentials* updated on its website (<http://dpi.state.wi.us/pld/handbook.html>). However, we know there are times when a print copy is needed and we realize that at 150 pages, *Trustee Essentials* could be a time-consuming print job for your library.

SCLS is happy to print copies of *Trustee Essentials* for use by your library board. The printing can be assigned to your library's SCLS annual printing allotment, so in many cases there will not be a charge. Otherwise, the cost will be \$4.50 per copy. To obtain print copies, contact Mark Ibach at SCLS. ❖

South Central Library System Trustee Update—Library News You Can Use

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON, WI
PERMIT NO. 2588

South Central Library System
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Madison, WI 53718-2153

