100 Library Trustees gathered on August 12 at the Plainview-Old Bethpage Public Library for LTA’s regional workshop, Trustees in the Know.

Rob Caluori, Director of Information Technology at Westchester Library System, broke down technical issues of patron privacy in what might be called Cybersecurity 101 for Libraries. He spelled out risks to library patrons, explained the concept of a public and private cloud, defined email security and email tools, and addressed changes in net neutrality – all in laymen terms. A video of his presentation is available at https://youtu.be/2-Fj7WOHN68

Joe Eisner addressed trustee liability for library finances and for creating library policies in his presentation, *Due Diligence: Liability, Policy, & Pitfalls*. Joe is well known to trustees for his monthly website column, *Ask Joe*; his presentation sparked many questions as trustees matched their own board practices against legal and ethical considerations.

*(continued on next page)*
TRUSTEES IN THE KNOW

(continued from cover)

Jim Lothrop brought a team from his architectural firm, Lothrop Associates, to envision how future forces within technology will change the way libraries are used. Libraries looking to engage additional patrons need to plan collaborative spaces and portable configurations, and to consider how design elements—use of color, lighting options, furniture design, and, yes, whimsy—can define the character of a community library.

LTA sends a genuine thank you to Library Director Gretchen Brown and the library staff for hosting the workshop and facilitating the program details and workshop amenities.

As one trustee commented, it’s great to leave “more in the know” after this successful workshop.

Rob Caluori makes issues of patron privacy accessible to trustees

Lothrop Architects design team: Jim Lothrop, Judy Girod, Bob Gabalski

Library spaces evolve to meet changing needs
Designing a “Policy Development Template”

Policy development is a hard enough task to begin with, so simplify your starting point. Design a standard policy format and process — a “policy development template.” This will not only improve policy organization and make it easier to seek out policies, reference and update them — it will also make it easier for library staff and patrons to understand them. Additionally, it will ease the pathway for those who write the policies.

Example “Policy Development Template”:

First, answer the following questions... 

**Step 1**: Why do you need to create a policy?

**Step 2**: Do you already have a similar policy which just needs to be updated or modified?

**Step 3**: Do you have a specific person (such as a “Policy Chair”) designated to draft a policy, to do policy research (such as looking through LTA’s Policy Database), and to check state/federal laws?

Once the previous steps have been completed, it should be easier to move on to the actual writing of the policy.

Written to the right, is a commonly used template to help organize thoughts, and

to help compose a strong, coherent policy:

**Commonly suggested tips:**

1. The same policy template should be used for each policy that is created.

2. Language used should be concise, simple and consistent (e.g. If a collection development policy refers to “weeding,” it shouldn’t be called “de-selection” in a different policy).

3. Each policy should look similar in appearance (including font, font size, heading sizes, etc.)

4. Policies should be organized by a table of contents in a hierarchy and grouped with policies in the same general category.

5. Use policy numbers to help show relationships (e.g. A personnel policy might be titled “3.1 Duties of a Library Director,” while the next might be titled “3.2 Evaluation of a Library Director”).

6. All policies should be able to stand on their own and each policy should start on separate page to help aid understanding, enforcement, retrieval and updating.

| LIBRARY NAME |
| POLICY CATEGORY |
| POLICY NUMBER and TITLE |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: |
| APPLICATION: (Who does the policy affect — patrons, personnel, only certain personnel, trustees?) |
| STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (sometimes alternatively worded “NEED FOR POLICY”): (This often refers back to the library’s mission Statement. Occasionally the library’s mission statement is included as a reference. This section not only serves as a reminder to patrons and staff as to why this policy is important, but reminds those who are drafting the policy to keep the library’s mission in mind.) |
| POLICY: (The text of the policy.) |
| RESPONSIBILITY: (Who will be responsible for ensuring policy compliance? Who will be responsible for drafting necessary procedures to ensure that the policy is properly and successfully implemented?) |
| APPROVED: DD/MM/YYYY by the “X” Library Board of Trustees |
| REVISED: DD/MM/YYYY by the “X” Library Board of Trustees |
| REVIEWED BY/ON: (Legal Counsel and/or by a designated person after a period of time) |
One of the challenges of sharing this column each edition is that of having content that will be relevant by the time our readers receive the newsletter. What is newsworthy at the time of writing might be irrelevant a month later. Alas.

There are a few items, however, that I feel will bear up. First, please make every effort to connect with individuals running for office in your area to serve. Never assume that the candidates have a feel for, or knowledge of, the value of your library to your community. Provide them with a concise, brief, summary of what you’ve accomplished in the past year, and an idea of where you are heading in the near future.

Second, read about the activities your LTA is involved with to keep library trustees important, informed partners in our State’s library community. The Trustees in the Know session in August was a success. LTA will be at NYLA in November and sponsoring several workshops. Our website is updated regularly to supplement this print edition. Check it weekly.

Third, after witnessing the devastation faced by communities who managed to survive Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, spend some time at one of your board meetings to review, develop, or at least start to think about how your library would respond in a disaster. Is there a town/county/municipality disaster plan that needs to include your library? Do you have a plan, familiar to your staff, that outlines what should be done in an extreme circumstance? Our state has lake and sea shores, mountains, rural and urban communities. In the not too distant past, some of our rural libraries suffered flooding after severe storms. Last summer, many areas were declared in drought. Without sounding like a harbinger of doom, better to have thought ahead of time than to have to react in haste.

Let me close this editorial with a welcome to any new library trustees. Terms end throughout a calendar year and LTA may not be aware of your joining this vital and exciting community. I think you will find great satisfaction in serving on your library board. I know I do. Please consider participating in all that an LTA membership has to offer. We are always open to new ideas and fresh energy.

Have you heard about the new Health Literacy Toolkit?

October is Health Literacy Month. The Library Advocates Tumblr blog recently shared information from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) about their Health Literacy Toolkit. Libraries are an important resource for community information. This toolkit might be something to consider for a special display.

The free toolkit, which is available at (http://www.ilovelibraries.org/librariestransform/health-literacy-toolkit-intro), includes health literacy data, key messages and talking points sourced through NNLM, as well as nine “Because” statements that speak to some of the varied health literacy issues that libraries address. Each statement comes with downloadable graphics including posters, social media images and more. The toolkit also includes ideas for libraries to use these tools for promoting their own services and programming. NNLM hosted a webinar on September 14 for library advocates to learn more about the toolkit. Find the link to the PDF of the presentation on our LTA website (https://nnlm.gov/sites/default/files/ma/files/HLM_Toolkit_Webinar_Presentation_09-14-17.pdf). You may also watch the recorded webinar at this webpage.
Q. May a library board meet less often than specified in its by-laws, and vote by e mail or telephone to deal with contingencies or “urgent matters” which might arise in the interval between such meetings?

A. Yes, a library board may meet less often than specified in its by-laws, but not less often than once a quarter. However, both association and public library boards may not transact business by taking votes by e mail or telephone as a substitute for actually convening a public meeting in compliance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Law (OML).

General- A library board needs to carefully consider the pitfalls which might be encountered if the number of board meetings is reduced. If the board’s current by-laws specify a number of meetings which is different than the reduced number a majority of the board proposes, the by-laws need not necessarily be changed at that point. At a board meeting legally convened in accordance with the requirements of the OML, the board could by resolution set up a schedule of the dates of such proposed public meetings for the next 12 months, reserving to itself the option of reviewing the matter at a future date to determine whether such a schedule has met the need for the board to responsibly transact routine library business, including payment of bills (see 2 below). This resolution should also indicate who and under what circumstances and for what purposes a meeting of the Board would be convened if a situation arose which required a meeting in order for the board to make a decision which the board for whatever reason would not wish as a matter of policy to entrust to the library director, a designated board member, or a committee of two or more board members. There is a difference between an “emergency” and an “urgency”. The latter could best be dealt with as suggested by the following:

For example, as an alternative, perhaps greater latitude could be accorded the library director to allow him/her to make decisions regarding expenditure of funds or to take action on matters which customarily have been reserved to the board. In any event, the board should adopt a policy statement which contains definitions of those situations which would encompass matters not foreseen or not covered by previous experience, and which either allow the library director latitude in coping with them, or would require that the board to convene to handle such matters or matter. An “urgency” should not be confused with an “emergency”.

For example, if as a matter of recorded policy the board agrees that in between required board meetings as set forth in the previously referred to schedule, the library director may make expenditures not to exceed a certain limit, such action would be subject to a post audit by the board. Similarly, an action taken by the library director in accordance with the suggested adopted policy allowing him/her the latitude to make certain decisions without the necessity of the board convening a meeting could also be reviewed by the Board in order to strengthen, modify or amend that policy in light of the experience gained from the event which caused such a review by the Board to be considered.

PART II: For additional considerations concerning this subject, please visit: www.librarytrustees.org and search for the “Ask Joe” page under the “Resources and Links” page.
News from the State Librarian

From the Desk of Bernard A. Margolis,
New York State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries

Combatting the Opioid Epidemic – New York Libraries Save Lives

Opioid overdose statistics released by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) are frightening: “91 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose (that includes prescription opioids and heroin).” The Huffington Post reported that “drug overdose is the leading cause of death from unintentional injuries in the United States killing more people than gun homicides and car crashes combined, with opioid overdoses accounting for the loss of 33,091 American Lives in 2015 alone.” As opioid overdose deaths continue to rise in the United States, libraries are finding themselves increasingly on the front lines combating opioid overdoses. The media was quick to pick up the stories (see sidebar).

Why libraries? By their very mission, libraries are prime locations for opioid addicts and potential opioid overdoses. Julie Todaro, immediate past president of the American Library Association, said that “people think of libraries as a place they can go to get out of the cold and rain and pretty much just be left alone, without judgement. So it makes sense that struggling addicts with nowhere left to turn would come to a library for help.”

What can libraries do? Libraries can help address the opioid overdose epidemic by expanding the access and use of naloxone (a safe antidote to reverse an opioid overdose). The State Library, working in partnership with others, is leading the way in both expanding the use of naloxone and developing strategies and guidance that will help New York’s libraries fight the opioid overdose epidemic. The State Library wants to help all libraries save lives.

To combat the continuing rise in opioid-related deaths in New York State, laws were recently enacted allowing public libraries to provide and maintain naloxone on-site in each facility to ensure ready access for use in case of an opioid overdose. Libraries can participate by partnering with a New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) registered Opioid Overdose Prevention Program.

Where can libraries get help and advice? As part of a coordinated statewide effort, the State Library, the State Education Department, the State Department of Health, the New York Library Association (NYLA), the Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) and the Harm Reduction Coalition have collaborated to create Guidance for Implementing Opioid Overdose Prevention Measures in Public Libraries. In addition to the Guidance, a library-specific training webinar and sample policies and procedures will help libraries develop their own overdose prevention programs.

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**LTA Goes to NYLA Conference in Saratoga Springs**

Registration is still open on the NYLA website for their Annual Conference, November 10-11, in Saratoga Springs.

Join us on Friday, November 10, 9:00 am – 10:00 for LTA’s featured program . . .

**Title: The Proper Care and Feeding of Your Library Director**

Join Cassie Guthrie for a (mostly) light-hearted look at how what trustees do - and sometimes don’t do - impacts their library directors and vice versa. Cassie will help provide a mirror with which trustees and library directors can view themselves and their actions, and a lens through which they can view their interactions with one another. This program will help strengthen the leadership skills of trustees and library directors and will help foster relationships. This popular and highly successful presentation will help improve communication, facilitate library directives, and it will help build a stronger foundation from which the library can operate more smoothly and more successfully.

**LTA works closely with the Friends of the Libraries Section (FLS) to co-sponsor four workshops:**

- Choose Your Local Resources for Successful Fundraisers
- Bringing Friends Back From the Brink
- Best Practices for Management of Friends Boards
- Friends and Trustees Building Community When Disaster Strikes

LTA is proud to co-sponsor several other program sessions, including:

- Q&A with Commissioner Elia
- Creating the Future: Looking Beyond the 2020 Vision for Library Services in New York State

**News from The State Librarian (continued from previous page)**

The State Library is unveiling *Opioid Overdose Prevention Measures in Public Libraries* project materials during the 2017 NYLA Annual Conference in Saratoga Springs, November 8-11. A dedicated webpage will include materials, information, and resources necessary for New York’s public libraries and public library systems to implement overdose prevention programs.

If you have any questions about the *Opioid Overdose Prevention Measures in Public Libraries* project, I encourage you to contact your public library system director or Frank Rees, Library Development Specialist, Division of Library Development, New York State Library at francis.rees@nysed.gov.
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