

Advice for Political Relationships and Activities

*By Dennis Sandow, Trustee,
Long Hill Public Library;
and Executive Board
member, NJ Library
Trustee Association*

A library's trustees, director, and staff members are in the best position to lead the parade for advocacy on library issues. Staffers may think that they should avoid political involvement, but staff members are voters, and they are knowledgeable. What voters are better qualified to bring library matters into the political discussion?

Knowledge is power. Don't waste it. It is important to exercise that obligation by taking an active role whenever politics affects our libraries. As a trustee who is



engaged in local politics, I've learned many things that I'd like to share. The recommendations below can help you build good political relationships.

Be There: A library's director or a trustee should be present at every meeting of the city council or township committee. Look for any opportunity to stand up and go on record to insert the library into the public discussion. Here are some examples of agenda-specific comments:

- "Our Library is an official reposi-

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Cultivating Relationships With READ Posters

*By Patty Boyd, Director,
Waldwick Public Library*

The Trustee Institute of 2004, held in Long Branch, provided the inspiration for one of the highest-profile public relations projects that I have managed since becoming director of the Waldwick Public Library in February of 2002. I had registered to attend the institute because the mayor of Waldwick at the time, Rick Vander Wende, had been

invited to make a presentation on the topic of "communicating with elected officials." Rick had recently been awarded the NJLA Trustee of the Year Award for his fundraising efforts in support of the 2003 expansion and renovation of Waldwick PL. As an elected official with a strong commitment to public libraries, Rick became a sought-after speaker for library meetings.

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Message from the PRESIDENT-Elect

A Political Firestorm

I'm stepping in as a guest columnist this month to give our President, Mary Romance, some breathing room to deal with personal matters. Here is what is on my mind right now as far as "cultivating political relationships" while I'm in the middle of a firestorm.

Municipal budgets in 2011 are already shaping up to be nightmarish, mostly because of the mandated 2% cap and the lack of cash. Layoffs of police are becoming commonplace. A public library is not immune to backlash if it has a single penny in reserve. Thus is the tale of Middletown Township Public Library today (www.mtpl.org), although it could happen in Anytown, U.S.A.

Middletown Township needs cash quite badly. A covert attack on the library's financial reserves has been launched. Library reserves, now embarrassingly more than township reserves, had been restricted by the Trustees to fund a virtual server system and other technology improvements, additional parking for the main library, a solar initiative, and possible branch renovation. But the giveback request is greater than the new law allows. There are threats to stack our Board with "compliant" Trustees, to force the library to make debt service payments, and to dissolve the library without a public referendum. Civility has flown out the window. Political parties have taken sides. Even people who thought they had good relationships with local elected officials find they are unraveling at a rapid pace. (See local newspaper coverage and photos at <http://tinyurl.com/4su7p7i>.)

Since I'm the Director of this embattled library, these questions are keeping me worried and sleepless:

- What could I have done better? As the composition of the governing body morphed through the years into one where no sitting member of the

committee was familiar with the library and especially with the financing of a major construction period only 6 years ago, I should have spent more time visiting with each new elected official, bringing them into the fold and making them take public credit for our fine library. Invitations to events, annual proclamations and a few photo ops aside, I should have had more face time with them. I also could have pushed to get the reserves spent faster—but *that* is water over the dam, and I'm sure there would have been a backlash effect on the Board for radical spending.

- What can I do now? I need to be courteous and professional. This is not a personal attack, and "losing it" in public will not do at all. I should answer questions promptly and fully. As much as it is very hard for me to do, I have to avoid making "off the record" comments. Even when lines are drawn in the sand, and I think this is really the last stand at the Alamo, there is the possibility of a *negotiated* resolution. I will try my best to be a part of the solution. I cannot think about the past.

Despite the pressure, I've found it very helpful to seek out ideas and support from within our professional community. NJLA is a great network, and conversations with Kathy, Manny, Ingrid, Eileen, Bob, Miriam, and others have kept me on an even keel. After all, we're all in this together.

Finally, I know I have to take care of myself—sharing a laugh with my husband, getting enough sleep, talking to my grandkids—these things will give me the resolve to get through this, and hopefully "save" the Middletown library.

In a few months I'll be your new NJLA President, and I sincerely hope my message to you all will be a tale of survival and inspiration.

Susan O'Neal
NJLA President-Elect

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Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

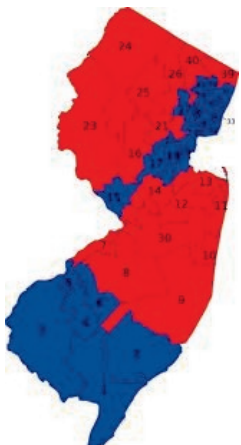


Speak for Yourself, John or Joan

There is a famous story told from the days of the Pilgrims where Miles Standish sends John Alden to "woo" the fair Priscilla on his behalf. At some point Priscilla stops him and says bluntly, "Speak for yourself, John." Perhaps this can also be said of our advocacy efforts. Sometimes we just have to speak for ourselves. No one else can do it. The disastrous budget proposed last year resulted in an all-out advocacy effort by the library community. That huge grassroots campaign involved thousands of citizens sending emails and postcards to our elected officials regarding the importance of libraries in their lives. The public spoke out loudly and clearly about the importance of libraries. It was their advocacy efforts that won the day.

As we prepare for this year's state budget, I have attended several meetings with staff members from the NJ State Library and state legislators where we discussed our fiscal concerns. In the course of one of these discussions, a legislator was very candid with us. He said: "You know, I don't know the name of several librarians in my district. I park in front of one of the libraries when I am going to other meetings but I have never been invited inside to attend any programs."

I found this a little shocking but, unfortunately, probably not completely surprising. I think it is fair to say that we librarians are often so caught up in helping the public and in the stresses of our everyday jobs that we often forget that sharing *our* story is an essential component of library advocacy.



With our libraries busier than ever, with our expanded services for those seeking employment assistance, with the emergence of new services such as e-books, every library has a tremendous story that must be told. And you are the ones who must tell it. You can't rely on anyone else. You know your local situation and what impact the loss of state and local funding has had on your community. I know the situation with libraries throughout the state, but I can't tell your story as well as you can. It is impossible. Only you can tell this story; you live it every day.

So ask yourself, when was the last time you invited a legislator into your library to show them what's going on? Would they know your name? Would they know the names of any of the library Trustees? Think back to that old adage, "All politics is local." You are the local connection to your library. No one knows better what the loss of state funds means to your library.

Our grassroots advocacy efforts have shown that the public truly cares about library services. But now we need to speak for ourselves. We need to develop the personal touch for our advocacy efforts. We need to tell our story to those who can provide the critical dollars needed to sustain our services. They can't help us if they don't even know what is going on in the libraries.

So speak up for yourself by inviting elected officials into your libraries frequently to see what is going on and to demonstrate how your library is a critical part of the community. The state legislators in the 6th district (Senator Beach, Assemblyman Greenwald, and Assemblywoman Lampitt) use local libraries such as Haddonfield PL for constituent outreach. This would be an excellent model to follow in other districts.

Speaking up won John Alden the hand of the fair Priscilla. Speaking up for our libraries is essential for securing the financial support we so desperately need. It is our story to tell.

Pat Tumulty



Note from the EDITOR

Overcoming Challenges to Deliver What You Want and Need

The idea for this issue's theme came from the member survey that the Newsletter Editorial Board put out about a year ago, when we were trying to decide whether to, and how to, transition from a print to an electronic newsletter. When asked what sort of information and articles you wanted, a number of you responded that you wanted to know how to deal with legislators and political situations.

From my many years of editorial experience, I knew two things as soon as I read those survey results. First, I knew that was a great topic and would make a very valuable issue. Second, I knew that it was one of those themes that everyone wants to read about, but nobody wants to write about. Politics is a touchy subject any way you slice it, and many people are loathe to share their thoughts about it. At that point in time, I was a member of the Editorial Board and had no idea that I would soon become the Editor, so I didn't dwell on any of this.

Sadly, though, it wasn't long after this that Jane Crocker felt it was time to move on, and I found myself in her place. With renewed interest, I studied the survey results again to determine what you, the reading members, wanted most. The political theme surfaced again, and although everyone on the board knew it would be challenging, I fought to use it because learning how to make political allies is something we all desperately need to do.

With a little luck and a little arm-twisting, we managed to fill this issue with what I believe are truly useful articles. I hope you all agree. But more importantly, I hope you all take this info to heart and *take action*.

Cultivating political relationships is not an optional activity. Our industry's well-being depends on it.

Kathy Dempsey

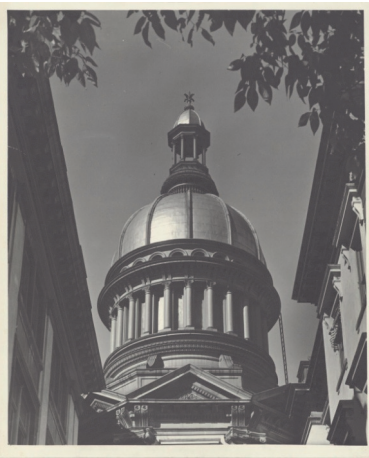
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... Advice for Political Relationships ...

tory for Federal and State environmental cleanup projects and flood control project information. Residents can read those documents 7 days a week."

- "The library has complete copies of the proposed town and county budgets on display. Taxpayers can come to us to read the details before they bring specific issues to the town budget deliberations."
- "If you want to hold a public forum on that matter, you can use the library's conference room on Saturday."

Be Involved: Meet and get to know your local councilmen, freeholders, state legislators, and congressman. Trustees and Friends should be encouraged to attend political fundraisers and party gatherings. Walk the streets with candidates when they campaign door-to-door. Wear your library baseball cap or golf shirt, so they begin to associate your face with the library.



NJ Statehouse photo from the collection of the NJ State Library

Always be totally prepared to lead a 3-minute conversation about a current library issue. State legislators should hear the advocacy words on their home turf, not only from the NJLA Executive Director in a Trenton hearing room. After your elected representative gets to know you, when there is library legislation pending, supplement your orange postcard or official Capwiz email with your own succinct personal message to their private email address.

Be Visible: The library must have a booth at every community event. When a street fair or similar event is scheduled, contact the sponsor and the local political clubs to be sure that they have invited your councilmen, freeholders, state legislators, and congressman for a walk-through. If there is an election pending, be sure they are also inviting the challengers.

Ask the political party coordinators to escort the politicians to a stop at the library booth or tent. Then be sure that the director, a trustee, or a Friend is ready to greet them wearing garb with the library's logo. Be prepared with a "sound-bite" for a 45-second encounter. You may as well use their time productively. And if it is a challenger rather than an incumbent, be sure that your message suggests that they will get more votes if they stump for more library services, rather than for library budget cuts.

If candidates are working the event in their own campaign tents, then send your trustees, Friends, and patrons over to talk to them throughout the day. They'll welcome the attention, and might even be overwhelmed by the message.

Speak Their Language: Be certain to adopt the language that politicians understand. When referring to the library's patrons, don't call them "patrons." Call them "voters" or "taxpayers" or "constituents." These are attention-grabbing words to a politician.

Remind your local leaders that the library is one of the few totally non-threatening services that government provides (right after garbage collection). Point out that the library is visited by more voters in a day than City Hall sees in a week.

Involve Them: Are you holding a concert or a meet-the-author event? Ask around to see if one of the local leaders is a musician or an avid reader. Then invite that person to come and make the introduction. Get a commitment, then add news of the appearance to the press release. Be sure your guest wears a nametag with the library's logo. Before he or she leaves, take the guest to the circulation desk to update or renew their library card.

Be Efficient: If there is a need to overwhelm the Township Committee with a one-time appeal (for, say, a new roof, an expansion, or a new building), you must carefully orchestrate the performance. It is OK to have many supporters attend the meeting, but select no more than 10 patrons, Friends, or trustee officers to be the speakers. Coach them on professional presentation—no rambling, no love stories, no threats. Each must have a slightly different message, and each must understand the value of sitting down in less than 3 minutes.

Also, prearrange with the mayor or council chair to announce that they'll take "one more speaker" and then to call on a designated wrap-up speaker to make a cogent closing statement. In other words, do not count on the governing body to sort through a tangle of rambling, redundant input. Prepare your case, your speakers, and your summary as you would prepare a grant application.

Be Helpful: The mayor's representative, the trustees' treasurer, and the library's director should all take the time to understand the town's finances. Learn the rules and restrictions for municipal CAPs, funds transfer, use of reserve, off-budget accounts, and bonding. Ask questions (privately) and attend budget work sessions. Do not ever announce your ignorance about municipal financial matters.

Then be creative in requesting additional services from the town. You could make a case about "a better place to live." If you use the library budget to pay contractors for garbage removal, cleaning, snow plowing, lawn care, etc., ask the town to pick up the cost with Public Works employees or with their contractors. Use the current popular phrase "shared services" and make sure that it sounds like, "Getting more services for less money; we all feel the pain together." Don't hesitate to offer to pay, if that becomes a deal-breaker. The important issue is to maintain a regular financial dialog.

And don't just "go through the motions" then give up. If your relations are as good as they should be, you will know whether to hold your discussions with the mayor, the finance committee, the administrator/manager, or the CFO. Get it right the first time.

Do the Job: When I was appointed as the mayor's representative to the library board, the first advice I received was that the trustees are a non-political body. I felt that was an incredibly naive attitude. As the mayor's rep, it was my duty

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to represent the mayor's position in library matters, to raise issues he would raise, to vote as he would vote, and to report back to the mayor and town committee on library matters of concern to them.

Carrying out that responsibility involves some risk of being on the losing end of Trustee votes on key issues every now and then. It's part of the job. The mayor's rep is the designated conduit for communication between the trustees and the governing body, and it is a role that must be taken seriously. A mayor's rep who does not talk regularly to the mayor or who votes his own conscience rather than the mayor's is failing in this responsibility.

Be Patient: Don't expect instant gratification. Be satisfied with a nod. "I hear you" is even better than a nod. If your target is even more encouraging, ask him when, where, and how he can help, then send a thank-you letter, along with a summary of the discussion and his promises. Then send him reminders as appropriate. If he even hints that he is willing to help, get in his face and stay there.

Also, don't hesitate to ask your elected representative why she voted against legislation you support. You may learn something that helps you position yourself for your next encounter.

Teamwork: Work to clarify roles so that effort and opportunity are not wasted. There is a tendency for the Trustee President to want to "speak for the library," and that may not be effective. Identify those trustees or Friends with political connections, take their advice on how to approach political issues, encourage them to work underground (if necessary), and support their efforts. Be sure that the director can always maintain cordial and business-like relations with the town staff. Don't send the director into harm's way "because it's in the job description."

Delegate Upward: Finally, if you, as a director or staff member, feel more strongly about these issues than do your trustees, then talk to them. Suggest outreach programs. Overwhelm them with advocacy information and simple statistics. Rub their noses in the need for political activism. After all, the trustees are political appointees. Be sure that they act like it.

Dennis Sandow is a Trustee of the Long Hill Public Library in Morris County, and a member of the Executive Board of the New Jersey Library Trustee Association. He is an engineer whose professional career included executive roles with many corporations. Since retiring, for the past decade he has immersed himself in local political activity. He has a high tolerance for pain. His email address is dsandow@garden.net.

Educating Legislators About the Need for School Libraries

By Debra Kachel, co-chair of the Legislation Committee,
Pennsylvania School Librarians Association

School librarians have long had to justify their programs, and the situation is not going to improve on its own. Many states do not require schools to have a librarian or even a library, and with the nation's economic crisis, only mandated services and programs are being funded. But there is hope, and I want to share it our neighbors in NJ.

In 2007, when the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) eliminated the Division of School Library Services, the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA) recognized that the voice for school libraries in our state government was all but extinguished. The PSLA Legislation Committee (which I co-chair) was charged with re-creating a school library presence in our capital and developing an action advocacy plan. I asked some retired librarians to join me in meeting with legislators who served on the Education Committees in the House and Senate. As a retired school librarian and part-time university instructor, I was able to make several appointments during the weekdays to travel to Harrisburg. Initially, we visited with legislators to introduce them to PSLA, to provide background research that connects student learning and library programs, and to tell them about the declining numbers of school libraries in the state.

After several meetings, it became clear that legislators knew very little about school library programs. Some were shocked to learn that schools were not required to have libraries and that programs varied from non-existent to well-staffed ones where collections were integrated with the school's curriculum. Legislators wanted answers to questions for which we had no answers:

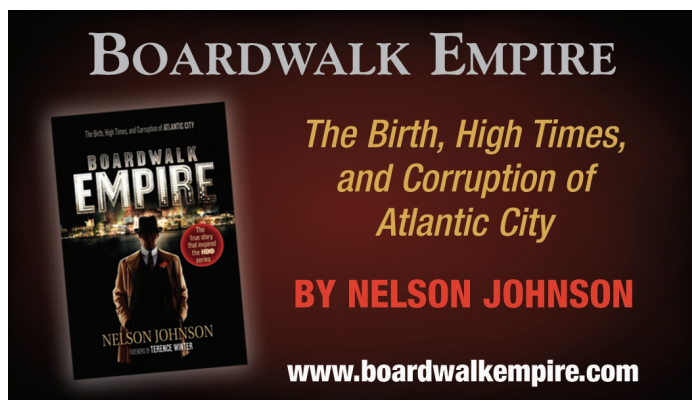
"How many schools in my district don't have school libraries?"

"How much does it cost to have a good school library program?"

"Since the legislature has been steadily increasing money for education [under Governor Rendell's administration, which ended in Jan. 2010], why hasn't some of this money been used to fund school libraries?"

The PSLA Legislation Committee regrouped. Now armed with consultant Stephanie Vance's book, *Government By the People: How to Communicate with Congress*, and ideas from her website at www.advocacyguru.com, we learned that we needed to develop a message. What did we want legislators to do? Certainly we wanted to make them aware of the status of school libraries in our state, and we collected some dismal facts. For example, in 1987, every school in the city of Philadelphia had a certified school librarian and a trained library assistant. Today, there are only 72 certified librarians and 26 assistants in the district's 258 schools. More than half of the schools no longer have a library. Wealthier districts, of course, were different.

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... Relationships With READ Posters

During one of the general sessions of that institute, we heard about a library that had created a poster of their mayor posing with his favorite book, fashioned after the ALA READ posters. I don't remember the name of the library, and we never got a look at the poster, but I immediately turned to Rick to ask, "Would you be willing to pose for a READ poster that we could display in our library?" After a few moments of reflection, he responded, "I would consider it, but only if we can get other community leaders to join me. Maybe we can develop a series of posters to encourage reading."

A few days later, Rick and I met in my office with Bill Smithuysen, a library trustee who happens to be an accomplished professional photographer. Once we had agreed on a plan for the development and use of the posters, our committee of three enthusiastically forged ahead with our assignments: Rick would extend the invitations to selected community leaders and encourage their participation, Bill would volunteer his talent as a photographer and graphic

designer, and I would schedule photo shoots and handle publicity.

Shortly after Rick had decided which community leaders to approach about the campaign, we sent a letter of invitation to each of the following: members of the Council, the Borough Administrator, the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief, the Postmaster, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Principal of each of the four public schools in Waldwick. They asked the recipient to select a book that had made an impression on his or her

life and to contact me to schedule an appointment for a photo shoot. Those more accustomed to attention from the media (Council members and the Borough Administrator) were quick to respond in the affirmative. Others on the list required more persuasion—follow-up phone calls and, in some cases, personal visits—but eventually they all agreed and submitted the titles of the books for their photo shoots.

To maximize efficiency, the photographs of the individual Council members and Borough Administrator were set to be taken prior to a regularly scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Council. Bill set up professional studio lighting and backdrops in the library meeting room and scheduled each subject at 15-minute intervals. He photographed a few of the educators and Postmaster in the studio setting as well, but to add variety, he decided to take the remainder of the photographs on location. Mayor Vander Wende (above) posed in the council chambers in front of the seal of the Borough of Waldwick, the Superintendent in front of his office, the Police

Chief next to his official car in front of the Public Safety Building. The Fire Chief was positioned in front of the fire truck, and one Principal posed next to the message board on his school's lawn.

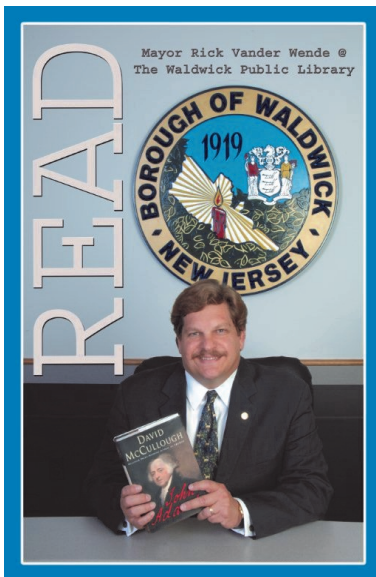
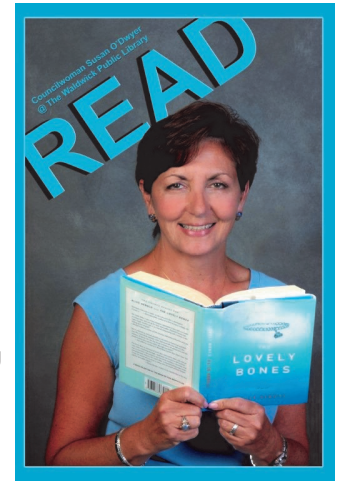
Although we purchased the READ software from ALA, Bill elected not to use it, preferring to create original designs for each poster with his laptop. He used his imagination and advanced Photoshop skills to create custom borders, backgrounds, fonts, and motifs that would make the posters pop. Minor imperfections and blemishes were whisked away. We had the posters printed at a professional camera store; we ordered one of each measuring 24 x 36 inches for display in the library and two of each measuring 12 x 18 inches. Each participant eventually received a framed copy of his or her poster as a gift from the library. The other small poster was retained for our files in a display binder. We spent approximately \$1,500 to print and prepare the posters for exhibition.

To maximize the impact of our Poster Campaign to Promote Reading, we decided to unveil the posters at the Sept. 13, 2005, meeting of the Mayor and Council, which had been arranged to take place in the library in honor of the occasion. The press and public were invited to the event, and because all of the images had been kept secret, an element of suspense and excitement began to build as the date approached. A headline in the Aug. 17 edition of the *Waldwick Suburban News* declared, "The Mayor's Favorite Book Is What? He's not telling and neither are the town's other reading promotion celebrities."

The unveiling event brought broad smiles to the faces of the participants and everyone else who attended. Afterward, we exhibited all 15 of the original posters in the library as a collection for a week, and then, one by one, we displayed each larger-sized poster on an easel in the lobby for a month at a time. The library released articles on the featured "community leader of the month" and the newspapers enthusiastically responded with a prominently displayed story and an accompanying color image of the poster. As an additional way to attract attention, we invited the featured community leader of the month to read a picture book to children during a storytime program.

Today, the posters decorate the meeting room of the library, delighting visitors and eliciting many admiring comments. We've had occasion to add more posters over the years as community leaders have come and gone, so the project that has generated so much positive publicity continues to offer a meaningful way for the library to establish good relationships with elected officials and the general public.

Patty Boyd is Director of the Waldwick Public Library in Waldwick, NJ. She holds an M.L.S. from Rutgers University and a B.A. in English from the University of Delaware. Boyd writes an award-winning library newsletter, *Waldwick Library News & Events*, and is responsible for all communications and publicity. Her email address is boyd@bccls.org.



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... Educating Legislators About ... School

Given our findings, we coalesced around a new approach: "We want equity for kids! All students, regardless of ZIP code, should have access to a quality school library and a certified school librarian who teaches them critical thinking and research skills required of 21st century careers."

Learning from Stephanie Vance, we also developed what she calls an "ask." This means, don't leave a legislator without making it clear what you want him or her to do. We decided to ask legislators to authorize a study to gather data about school library programs so we could learn whether all students had access to the library resources they needed to learn. With evidence showing gross inequities, we know we will be successful in persuading legislators, parents, and other stakeholders that funding and regulations need to be put in place to require school library services for all students.

Through our initial meetings, we had learned that legislators did not understand the role of today's school librarians in education. So we determined that they needed to see them in operation because handouts, research briefs, and personal visits to their offices weren't going to be enough. Thus, the PSLA Legislator@Your Library Campaign was conceived in Sept. 2008. Recognizing that working school librarians have little time to organize legislator visits, the Legislation Committee decided to train retired PSLA members, many of whom were still quite active with the association, to help. After we researched and planned how legislator visits could be facilitated, I trained five retirees via conference call. The five "event planners," as we dubbed them, would act as advisors and handle these other tasks:

- Research which legislators to invite.
- Communicate with the legislator's staff to make and confirm arrangements.
- Advise the school librarian on visitation activities, using prepared checklists.
- Arrange for media coverage, prepare press releases.
- Debrief with the school librarian after the visit.

The hosting school librarian would handle these activities:

- Get the school's permission to host and select a date.
- Communicate with the event planner.
- Share the PSLA-prepared packet with the legislator.
- Arrange for photo opportunities and work with the event planner on media coverage.
- Send thank you notes.

We assemble packets in two-pocket folders and include:

- A background sheet about hosting the school library program (which the librarian completes)
- These one-page handouts: Legislator@Your Library Campaign, Benefits of a Strong School Library Program, Inputs for a Quality School Library Program, and Recommendations for Pennsylvania
- Several booklets (listed on our site) and recent newspaper articles about school libraries

Packets could be customized for any state. Printing and mailing them are our only expenses, so the program's cost is quite reasonable if you have volunteers to implement it. You can find all the items in our packet along with other re-

sources on the PSLA website at www.psla.org/index.php/legislation/legislator-your-library-campaign.

Since 2009, we have successfully implemented 20 visits, and have at least 20 more that are in the works. From our experiences, we have learned some valuable lessons.

Event planners are key. Hosting school librarians have reported that the event planner was key in facilitating the visit. Event planners reported that they spent a considerable amount of time scheduling and confirming dates. Without the persistence and follow-through of an event planner, most visits would not have occurred.

Librarians gain exposure and influence. By inviting administrators and school board members or by asking teachers to bring their classes to meet the legislator, the librarian is seen as a leader who goes the extra mile to bring educational opportunities to the school.

Legislators love photo ops with kids. When one harried librarian called me to say her guest was cancelling his visit, I called the legislator's secretary to explain that the media was coming to take pictures and write an article for the local newspaper. Guess who came? After this, I told the event planners to be sure to inform each legislator's office staff that press would be present.

PSLA is recognized with a clear message and focus. By creating the packets and position statements that legislators receive, the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association is gaining recognition as a credible education organization. With over 800 members, PSLA needs to control and focus the message that *all* kids deserve the educational opportunities afforded by equitable library programs that

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You can see more photos like this one from Clay Elementary School at PSLA's site: <http://tinyurl.com/legis-photos>. These kids are demonstrating LSTA laptops for Rep. Tom Creighton.



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Looking Further

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Compiled by **James Smolens**, Adjunct Reference Librarian at Gloucester County College in Sewell.

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People & Places Around the State

Honors and Awards

Nancy Adamczyk, Director of the Madison PL, was honored for 40 years of service.

Kate Baker of the Piscataway PL was named Library Employee of the Year by the Libraries of Middlesex for her contribution to library service.



Kate Baker

East Brunswick PL received a \$15,000 grant from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine to improve the design and scope of its health-and-wellness computer portal.

Sandy Hall, Young Adult Librarian at the Morristown and Morris Township Library, was featured as a "Local Hero" on www.NJ.com.

New ALA Emerging Leaders from New Jersey are **Melissa Brisbin**, **Bonnie Fong**, and **Samantha Marker**. Congratulations to all.

Eileen Palmer of Libraries of Middlesex Automation Consortium received a Library Service Award from the Libraries of Middlesex.

Plainfield PL's proposal, Libraries: Your Silent Partners in Heritage Tourism, has been selected for presentation at the 2011 Historic Preservation Conference on June 3, 2011.

Appointments and Elections

Rita Browning is now the Director of the Cresskill PL.

Gillian Buonnano is the new Director of the Wanaque PL.

Evalina Erbe has been named Director of the Jamesburg PL.

Marilyn Force is the new Acting Director of the Wyckoff PL.

Karen George has been named Director of the Atlantic County Library System.

Peter Havel has been named Director of the Cedar Grove PL. He was formerly the Head of Reference and Archives at the Englewood PL.

Gair Helfrich has been appointed Chief Librarian of the Atlantic County Library System.



Gair Helfrich

Margaret Mellett is the new Interim Director of the Rutherford PL.

Maria Norton has been appointed Director of the Morristown & Morris Township Library. She was formerly the Assistant Director.

Edwina Wilinski is the new Assistant Director of the Atlantic County Library System.



Edwina Wilinski

Catherine Wolverton was appointed Director of Bloomfield PL. She was previously Director of the Cedar Grove PL.

Celebrations

Cherry Hill PL celebrated its 50th anniversary in November 2010.

Deptford PL recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Hoboken PL celebrated its 120th anniversary in October 2010.

Kenilworth PL celebrated its 75th anniversary in its current building in December 2010.

The **Morristown & Morris Township Library** reopened its new wing on Jan. 6, 2011, after an underground explosion in May 2010 caused severe damage to the library.

North Brunswick PL was named Central Jersey's Best Public Library & Best Free Entertainment for the second year in a row by the *Home News Tribune* Readers' Choice poll.

Resignations and Retirements

Michael Case has retired from the Bernardsville PL.

Alice Chi has retired from the Cresskill PL.

Deborah Griffin-Sadel is leaving her position as Director of the Red Bank PL.

Roz Pelcyger retired as Director of the Glen Rock PL in December 2010.

Judy Schmidt has retired as Director of the Wyckoff PL.

Anthony Taormina, Director of the Lodi PL, retired at the end of December 2010.

Deaths

Barbara Weaver, former State Librarian of New Jersey, has died. She was State Librarian from 1978 to 1991, and among her accomplishments was the development of the New Jersey Library Network.

Compiled by **Mary Marks**, Associate University Librarian, Fairleigh Dickinson University Library in Madison.

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Advice From One of Our Government Officials

By Susan O'Neal, Director,
Middletown Township Public Library

Picture yourself sitting in the office of one of your government representatives. You're there to educate her and ask for her support. After exchanging a few pleasantries, you launch into a passionate and data-packed spiel about how your library will be hurt if Bill XYZ is passed. You want your representative to give you a commitment to vote against it, and when you wrap up your talk, you leave her with a portfolio of charts and statistics to support your position.

Do you ever wonder what the person on the other side of the desk is thinking as you go through your talk about why your library cannot provide more books for children because of budget cuts? Is she thinking, "What will my family have for dinner?" or "I must get my aide to schedule me for a call with the chair of the budget committee to show I am against this bill going forward."

For those of you who have wondered how legislators think and how you can really get through to them, Assemblywoman Amy Handlin of New Jersey's 13th District is coming to your aid. But first, here's a bit of her background: On top of being an Assemblywoman, Handlin has published two books and has a third coming out in June. She is an Associate Professor of marketing at Monmouth University (by way of Harvard, Columbia, and NYU). Prior to her election to the NJ Assembly in 2006, she had held a local office in Middletown Township and she was a Freeholder for Monmouth County. Importantly, she's also a regular customer at the Middletown Township Public Library.

I asked Dr. Handlin to share with NJLA members her advice for having good discussions and good relationships with their elected officials. She was candid about what works and what doesn't work to get her attention and support. "The number one piece of advice I give to all prospective lobbyists is this: Get to know officials *before* you have a problem, so you won't need to scramble when you do. Arrange informal meetings with key decision-makers just to introduce yourself

and to educate them about your issues. Then, whatever the future brings, you will always be in a stronger position if you've established friendly, respectful relationships in the halls of power."

That's excellent advice whether you are lobbying at a scheduled meeting or have the impromptu opportunity to give an "elevator speech." You can't spend everyone's valuable time establishing your credentials or identity when decisions are about to be made; you need to be someone the officials already know.

The Assemblywoman's latest book, *Be Your Own Lobbyist: How to Give Your Small Business Big Clout with State and Local Government* (Praeger, 2010) is very useful for librarians. Handlin's advice includes how to use the media to get your message across, including tips for calling in to radio stations. If the discussions on 101.5 FM get you fuming and you want to call in, Handlin advises, to get on the air, you need to be animated and outspoken and be able to handle entertainers who make a career of being rude and sarcastic. Don't ever call in from your car, she cautions; and if your call is aired, stay focused on your message, make your points, say thank you, and do not get riled by disagreement from the host.

Dr. Handlin has much more to say, and she will be presenting the session Lobbying for Your Essential Library at our NJLA Annual Conference. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 3, at 11:00 a.m.

Susan O'Neal is Director of the Middletown Township Public Library. Her email address is soneal@mtpl.org.



Assemblywoman
Amy Handlin of
NJ's 13th District

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**"Leave the libraries alone.
You don't know the
value of what you're
looking after.
It is too precious
to destroy."**

From a speech that best-selling author Philip Pullman gave during a community meeting in defense of Oxfordshire, U.K., libraries that were facing closure at the hands of City Council.

False Economy blog, reprinting the speech, Jan. 25, 2011.
<http://falseeconomy.org.uk/blog/save-oxfordshire-libraries-speech-philip-pullman>



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P.O. Box 1534
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(Continued from page 7)

... *Educating Legislators About ...*

have certified school librarians at the helm.

Creating a legislator visitation program does require leadership, organization, and dedicated volunteers. However, it is not expensive and, after the initial work, is very self-sustaining. The feedback has all been positive.

I maintain a master chart that helps me see the statewide picture of library visits and office visits that our committee members have made. This is essential with a huge state like Pennsylvania, which has 203 representatives and 50 senators! By knowing which ones have been visited and the committees they serve on, it is easy to strategically identify districts that need to be visited, especially if we need their support to pass critical legislation.

The effects last. After meeting their reps face-to-face, librarians do not

hesitate to email or call legislators' offices on other matters. And it's working. We got a House Resolution passed (unanimously!) in October 2010 to fund the study we'd asked for. PSLA has worked with the State Board of Education to develop questions, and we anticipate that our survey will have been launched online in February.

Legislators need that image of kids actively learning in school libraries as they vote on education bills that will ultimately impact our funding. In states that do not mandate school library programs, it is vital that legislators understand our role in order to ensure that all students have access to quality resources. Our Legislator@Your Library campaign is truly a win-win situation.

Debra Kachel is an online instructor for Mansfield University's School Library & Information Technologies Graduate School in Mansfield, Pa. She holds an M.L.S. from Drexel University in Philadelphia. Kachel serves as co-chairperson of the Legislation Committee for the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association. Her email is dkachel@psla.org.

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