

Advice to new public librarians

I am retiring in January 2017. I want to pass on what I have learned. I realize, however, this document would be greatly improved with wisdom of other librarians as well. This document now includes contributions from over 50 librarians.

This document is my retirement gift to you. Feel free to re-gift it others in any non-profit way. Some librarians gave earlier versions to staff. This document is in Word so you can add contributions specific to your library and state. Feel free to rearrange or delete content to suit your needs. Please, however, respect the integrity of each contribution by not changing its wording. If you disagree with or wish to expand some point, make an annotation. When copying and pasting contributions into other documents, please include contributors' names so all get credit for their contributions to library literature. As the wise folk philosopher, Red Green, says, "We're all in this together." – **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

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Learning your new job

Read and do your job description: Your job description should be the basis upon which the library board evaluates your performance. Ask your library board whether or not your job description is up-to-date and describes what they want from you. If they say no or you don't have a job description, then write or rewrite it. If necessary, ask other librarians to help you. Ask your board to approve the new job description. When you have a job description that is satisfactory to you and the board, follow it because doing so is your protection. - **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Read your policies: I recommend ... reading the library policy and be familiar with all aspects of it. Always be welcoming to patrons who drop in and try to be of help to anyone who walks through your door. "A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert." Andrew Carnegie. - **Marilyn Carlson**, Librarian, Little River Community Library, Kansas

Ask your State Library for manuals, handbooks, standards: Most states produce manuals, handbooks, and standards for public librarians and public library boards. Ask your State Library for these documents. Read them and show them to your library board. – **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Read the state statutes governing libraries in your state; learn everything you can about the taxing structure of your district; study the last three years' budgets and whether you are financially healthy or in deficit spending; prepare to report on these things to your board so they know what focus on. - **Tom Cooper**, Director, Webster Grove Public Library, Missouri

Read a dictionary of library terms and acronyms:

- <http://www.library.illinois.edu/learn/intro/glossary.html>
- <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/help/glossary.html>
- http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis_A.aspx
- <https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/public-libraries/definition-of-terms/>

– **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Recommended reading

- “Your First Day(s)” on pp.6-16 in *Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State* By Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
http://midhudson.org/directors_handbook.pdf
- *Communicate! A Librarian's Guide to Interpersonal Relations* by Anne J. Mathews. ALA, 1983. [O.P.] Although out of print, Interlibrary Loan it and read thoroughly - a most thoughtful book about interpersonal relations.
- *Small Libraries: A Handbook for Successful Management. 2nd ed.* by Sally Gardner Reed. McFarland, 2002. Sally Gardner Reed knows everything about everything - read everything she writes, then go and do it!
- *Crash Course in Public Library Administration* by Wayne Disher. Libraries Unlimited, 2010.

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Revised November 2016

- *Introduction to Public Librarianship* by Kathleen de la Pena McCook. 2nd ed. Neal-Schuman, 2011.
- *Librarian as Community Leader*, pp. 2-3, 12, at <http://tinyurl.com/LibrarianasCommunityLeader>
- *So . . . what do I do now?* at <http://tinyurl.com/SowhatdoIdonow-2016>
– **Don Reynolds**, Director (retired), Nolichucky Regional Library, Tennessee

Search for online training: The following are free.

- “Public library director 101 series” by COSLA at <http://tinyurl.com/jn5cs9b>
- Webjunction contains free and for pay resources on a large number of topics. Check whether your state has an account. <https://www.webjunction.org/>
- Wyoming compiles a calendar of online training from all over the country <http://www.wyominglibraries.org/calendar.html>

– **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Study before you start: Learn as much as you can about the library and the community before you even interview for the job. Librarians have no excuse not to do their research ahead of time. Interviewers can tell very quickly if a candidate for a job has prepared or is just winging it. You are better off to show up prepared. - **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida

Know who to call: Find out who to call for things like plumbing, snow plowing, the alarm system, and make a list of phone numbers and passwords, if you need them. – **Anita R. Barney**, Director, The Brookfield Library, Connecticut

Seek advice: My piece of advice is that there is help out there and they shouldn't hesitate to seek it. Whether it's a listserv like this one, a colleague in the next town over, a local university, their state or national library association, or something else, there is a wealth of resources and support out there for the taking. The general public has a lot of good will toward libraries, and wants libraries to succeed, so don't hesitate to go looking for assistance—it'll save time and resources. – **Beth Yoke**, Executive Director at Young Adult Library Services Association, American Library Association.

Seek advice: When in doubt, ask the State Library (or Regional Office/System, depending on the state). More likely than not, someone has already been through what you are experiencing, and they will have words of wisdom. Also the State Library knows all about *those laws.* Cherish your library colleagues. You never know when you will run into them again, you never know when they will have the help you need (or shoulder to cry on) in times of stress. Librarianship is a small, incestuous profession. For most of us, there are no more than 2 degrees of separation. (In some cases literally incestuous ... I have two ex-wives who are both librarians, and currently in different states than each other and me!) - **Michael A. Golrick**, MS in LS, MBA, Head of Reference & Library Consultant, State Library of Louisiana

Seek out the advice, ideas and help of others: Librarians are the best at sharing! Follow and interact with listservs, Facebook groups, Twitter, and anything else you can find where you can get ideas. -**Sheila Urwiler**, Assistant Director, Public Services, Elkhart Public Library, Indiana

Join a listserv and/or consortium, especially if you are working in a rural library. The contacts and resources from these things are invaluable. - **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Get to know other librarians in your area and region.: Chances are you share patrons and funding sources in common. – **Carol Barta**, Assistant Director/Consultant, North Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Find a mentor: Make friends with an experienced librarian you can talk to. – **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Keep in contact with previous director: I will add that when I retired, I contracted with my board to be available for transition consulting with my successor at her request. That way I was not underfoot when she began her duties, but I was available to provide any information, coaching, etc. that she might request. I believe this was useful to her. – **Jim Minges**, Consultant, Minges & Associates, Kansas

Establish an “understanding” with the previous director: [This advice is to a new director being told by an unpopular previous director everything being done wrong.] Let [the previous director] know you understand you have big shoes to fill but you are anxious to take on that task. Maybe ask them to recall the excitement they felt when that position was first theirs and how much they enjoyed making it their own? I can sympathize, to some degree, with your former director but you will have to help him/her cut the cord not only for your sake but for the sake of your staff and patrons. - **Gaye Rizzo**, Director, Windsor Public Library, Connecticut

Be a new director, not a copy of the old director: Even if the former director is well respected and well-loved be careful about getting into the exact same mindset. You were hired for your gifts and talents not to be a carbon copy. - **Paula Laurita**, Director, Athens-Limestone Public Library, Alabama

Use your past skills: But what skills do you have? I managed fast-food restaurants and truck stops for many years. I have experience with retail layout and remodeling public spaces. Last year when I took over Council Grove Public Library, I remodeled the place. I hired people to repaint, rearrange the furniture including the books, and re-carpet. I asked the city guys to try out their new street line painter by painting lines in the parking lot, something the board had been unable to get done for years.

My board is very impressed. So, figure out something big you can do to improve the library, something patrons and the board will notice and like. – **Shannon Reid-Wheat**, Director, Council Grove Public Library, Kansas

Don't brag too much about your old library: Be careful as you first start out not to inadvertently alienate employees or volunteers by saying too much about how they did things at "my old library" or other libraries. Many of these people have a lot of pride in what they have been able to do over the years and take offense easily. I hope you will find your work satisfying

and for the most part enjoyable! - **Bill Taylor**, Asst. Branch Mgr., Denham Springs - Walker Branch, Louisiana

Have a staff training day for all paid staff and volunteers as early as possible in your second week to discuss their opinions about what the library does well and what they would suggest to improve the work place and services to customers. —> yes, close the library for an in-service day (your Friends group will be delighted to provide morning nibbles and lunch) to visit with the staff asking:

- what is the library doing to serve the community?
- what does the library do well?
- ask what staff expects from you; what do you expect from them
- what can we do to make the library better?
- prioritize their list of suggested improvements - ask staff who would like to do (or be involved with) what

Have lots of chocolate available for last half of day.

Keep flip charts of lists for future reference.

Make sure you cover answers under “*What is our library doing?*” on p.5 at *Librarian as Community Leader* at <http://tinyurl.com/LibrarianasCommunityLeader>

Check how your library is doing compared to what public deserves list, also on p.5. Distribute and discuss the **Thumb Rules** as part of staff discussion <http://tinyurl.com/ThumbRules>

Ask the same questions at a several hour open discussion meeting each with Board of Trustees, then Friends of the Library, if there is one. – **Don Reynolds**, Director (retired), Nolichucky Regional Library, Tennessee

Attend conferences and visit other libraries: Attend conferences where you will meet librarians like yourself. Talking with other librarians is as important as attending sessions. When traveling visit other libraries for ideas. – **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Resources: Check out PLA's Professional Tools site which will provide ... all sorts of different resources. - **Natalie Bazan**, Director, Hopkins District and Dorr Township Libraries, Michigan

Never make changes faster than your authority to do so is recognized. I received this sound advice from one of my professors when I graduated from library school. You need to be sure of your own authority on several fronts before introducing change. If you want to change the hours of the library, be sure the staff will support the changes and that the public will consider your new hours as an improvement in service. – **James Swan**, Director (retired), Great Bend Public Library and Central Kansas Library System, Kansas [When James retired he wrote a 6-page essay describing how he does his job. This essay is an appendix to this document. – Chris]

Seek first to understand before making changes: After 8 years as a Library Director I would have to agree with the advice that you make no substantive changes in the first 6 months. Take that time to get to know your staff, patrons, town, board and local community groups. If you have a Friend's Group, make connections there. Find out about the management style of your

supervisor and develop a solid working relationship with that person. Spend a lot of time listening and processing all that new information.

When I first became Director, everyone was telling me we needed more parking. The staff was thrilled that there was someone new who could finally make that happen. I was proud that I convinced the church next door to share enough of their land to create 8 new spaces. I found someone at town hall who had money to do the excavation and grading work, someone from public works could do the paving and line striping. I was all set to pull the trigger ... when I realized I had failed to consult my town manager. He had some very solid reasons for NOT adding additional parking at our site and my parking project did not move forward. That was my biggest first year regret. Not only did I waste a lot of my own time but I involved a whole lots of other people's time and had nothing positive to show for it at the end. Had I spent those first 6 months listening, exploring and processing rather than trying to make changes, I believe that I would have known not to embark on a project that had no hope of happening. - **Gaye Rizzo**, Director, Windsor Public Library, Connecticut

Libraries protect Intellectual Freedom: “Intellectual freedom is the right ... to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas....” Libraries’ free access is provided through library policies and procedures related to:

- Collection development
- Computer use
- Patron behavior
- Meeting room
- Patron privacy and confidentiality

Public libraries protecting First Amendment use of library materials and computer should be obvious. Public libraries themselves sometimes violate patrons’ First Amendment rights with improperly written and implemented patron behavior or meeting room policies. Policies about patron behavior and use of meeting rooms should protect patrons’ First Amendment rights and be written to survive lawsuits in federal court.

Here are sources of more information.

- “Guidelines for development and implementation of policies, regulations, and procedures affecting access to library materials, services, and facilities” at <http://tinyurl.com/lg22yvn>
- “Intellectual freedom and censorship Q & A” at <http://tinyurl.com/mlfx73z>
- “Public libraries and intellectual freedom” at <http://tinyurl.com/m672jvv>
- ALA’s “Freedom of Read Statement” at <http://tinyurl.com/kz5w6up>
- “Libraries: An American Value” at <http://tinyurl.com/mmlnmjl>
– **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

On managing your career: do it for love. Follow the things that genuinely interest you and speak to your passions. You'll find a way to connect it all eventually. – **James LaRue**, Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom and Freedom to Read Foundation, ALA

Community

Libraries amek communities: Remember that it is not the job of the community to make a great library. It's the job of the library to make a great community. That applies not just to public libraries, but school and academic, too. That means you have to KNOW the community: go where the leaders are and pay attention. – **James LaRue**, Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom and Freedom to Read Foundation, ALA

Be involved in your community: Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, church, school, and social service groups. This is how you get to know your community and its wants and needs. -**Sheila Urwiler**, Assistant Director, Public Services, Elkhart Public Library, Indiana

Be sure you and your staff are active in the community with Chamber of Commerce, clubs and organizations, helping with city events and the library. Make yourself indispensable to city departments, city officials, business leaders, non-profits. I read once in a League of Cities article that librarians should spend at least 25 percent of their time in the community. The more people know your face, the easier it is to make “the ask” for donations and garner support for the library. I would include working with other area libraries. Collaborating and partnering stretch your dollars and show that you are fiscally responsible. - **Jennie Garner**, Library Director, North Liberty Community Library, Iowa

Learn everything you can about your community: Schedule a one hour meeting each with the mayor, town administrator, newspaper editor, Cooperative Extension head (including FCE supervisor), and paid head and/or president of Chamber of Commerce.

Ask:

- What’s happening in the community?
- What are you and your organization doing?
- What kind of information do you use and need?

DO NOT ask what the library could do for them (unless they volunteer, unasked) or attempt to tell them what the library can do - this is a fact-finding conversation about what they are doing.

Beverly Lynch has written that, “The most successful librarians are those who interact with their environment. The least successful are those who only talk to each other.”

Then, go back to your office and review your results with [So...What do I do now?](http://tinyurl.com/SowhatdoIdonow-2016) <<http://tinyurl.com/SowhatdoIdonow-2016>> to begin a strategic plan for the library’s development. Schedule another visit with the staff about what you’ve found and begin to develop your next steps together:

- what services to provide/change/develop;
- how staff can be best deployed;
- revisit folks from No.9 with specific information about how the library can help and support their activities.

Depending on your findings, begin to take steps to do what is needed - go gently, conversations with staff will give indication of best pace - it usually is not a good idea to go too fast unless severe conditions truly warrant. – **Don Reynolds**, retired, Nolichucky Regional Library, Tennessee

Take training about poverty: Take some basic training on dealing with poverty. You will see all levels and learning how to understand some of the situations brought on by poverty. - **Julie Elmore**, ARSL Board Member and Marketing Chair.

Always be prepared to speak about the library: You are walking down the street. You meet the mayor and he or she asks about the library. What would you say? Always be prepared with a five minute speech about the library: its purpose, current goals, challenges, issues, latest great happenings, next great upcoming events. – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System

Actively Reach Out: Raise the profile of your library by actively reaching out to community leaders and organizations. Invite them in for a tour or offer to speak at their events. Most community leaders are amazed when they discover the wide range of resources and services available at the library. - **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida

Toot your horn: Bad news travels fast, good news, not so much. Sometimes if it is good, you will need to toot your own horn, or no one will know what a good job you are doing/did. - **Michael A. Golrick**, MS in LS, MBA, Head of Reference & Library Consultant, State Library of Louisiana

Learn the Art of Public Speaking: Practice your public speaking whenever possible. Join organizations like Toastmasters or Rotary that allow opportunities to speak in front of groups. Public speaking is a fine art that requires lots of practice to perfect. It also makes a world of difference in bringing a community onto your side, influencing elected officials and your board, and doing successful public relations. - **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida

Create a file of complimentary quotes. Any time the library gets a note of appreciation, favorable comment on a survey, nice note on Facebook, etc., add it to the file. There will come a time when you will want some quotes from the community to add to a request for funds, etc., and this will be invaluable. - **Becky Isbell**, Director, Brownwood Public Library, Texas

People

Focus more on people, less on stuff: I'd like to pass on some advice that I was given two years ago: take your vacation time; realize that the majority of items in your collection are replaceable or can be interlibrary loaned (in regards to overdue, damaged or lost items)—basically, take a deep breath, relax, stop worrying about the stuff of our job and focus on the people more. This has led me to create a much more patron-centered library. **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Make your library an "employer of choice." No one gets paid a lot to work in a library, so if possible do things like:

- 1) Pay pages a bit more than minimum wage, OR start them there, but give them percentage increases as one might give other staff raises.
- 2) Provide some kind of proportional sick and vacation leave for p-t people, even for those working as few hours as 10 per week.
- 3) Be flexible about, e.g., bereavement leave. American families are sometimes strangely configured these days, so define "immediate family" broadly.
- 4) Give soon-to-be retirees a couple of days' pre-retirement leave to deal with Social Security, Medicare, or ????
- 5) Be flexible about staff members' "professionalism." If a person in the stacks asks a page or circ clerk, "Where are the books about ----?" let them answer the question and/or take the patron to the materials. Why make them send the patron(s) to a "real" librarian, unless there's a request that gets complicated? Avoid rigidity. - **John Richmond**, Director, Alpha Park Public Library District, Bartonville, IL

Keep your eye on your customers: Every library community is a little bit different and so the needs and wants of the customers are different. The library is the heart of the community and needs to serve its community. The best way to do that is to know your customers and to listen to them. – **Jo Budler**, State Librarian, State Library of Kansas, Kansas, 2013 Librarian of the Year

We are social workers: Despite what some library professionals say, with disdain, we ARE social workers, at times, even if we don't have the degree. But we deal with people in all sorts of conditions of life, and some of those conditions are messy, sad, chaotic. So, while we're not licensed counselors or social workers, we still do "social" work by virtue of dealing with the public, in ways that we may not even imagine until we're in the thick of things. - **John Richmond**, Director, Alpha Park Public Library District, Bartonville, IL

Old-fashioned courtesy: Take the time for those tasks that are rarely done these days. Primarily, writing "thank you" cards. Besides being polite, you'd be surprised how far this can get you in cementing connections and building goodwill for the library. - **Becky Isbell**, Library Director, Brownwood Public Library

Treat your regulars as friends. These dear people are your rays of sunshine throughout the day.

Treat everyone as you want to be treated. In the Library, everyone has an important job, no matter if they have a library degree, or a high school diploma. The janitors who keep the Library clean and inviting are as important as you are.

The longer you work, the more you are associated with the Library, no matter where you are. Don't be surprised if people who see you, ask you to return materials to the Library for them. Embrace that. Throughout my lifetime, I've returned 100s of books and DVDs. - **Jeff Imperato**, Reference, Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, Kansas

Diagnose Systems Before Blaming People: It is human nature to criticize the errors of others and assume they are incompetent or lazy. However, most people are simply responding to how the system around them is constructed. If the system is guiding people in the wrong direction, your priority is to fix the system. A good system should guide people in the right direction. Assume people are trying to do the right thing and build a system that helps them do it. Have them take an active part in the diagnose and correction of any system to get buy in. **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida

Crucial Conversations: Read *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High* by Kerry Patterson, et. al. 2nd edition, 2011. This book teaches how to talk to people about difficult topics while improving relationships, e.g., how to tell patrons they owe fines or smell bad without losing them as patrons. The first edition is an audiobook at <http://tinyurl.com/h53drmk> Related videos at <http://tinyurl.com/z5yvwnt> The authors did a series of articles for *Psychology Today* at <http://tinyurl.com/z5hxxmd>

- How to Deal With Angry Employees
- How to Change People Who Don't Want to Change
- Accountability-What Dysfunctional Teams Are Missing
- How to Speak Up Without Causing a Blow-up
- Stuck With a Slacking Co-worker? Why You're to Blame
- 6 Ways to (Tactfully) Bring Up Personal Hygiene Issues
- How to Stop Others From Lying (or Being Dishonest)

– **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Sympathy cards: As a director, one thing I never anticipated and wish some one had told me about: find sympathy cards you like and buy them in bulk, because surprisingly you need a lot more of them than you might have ever imagined possible. - **Su Epstein**, Ph.D., Library Director, Saxton B. Little Free Library, Connecticut

Be nice: As much as possible, reduce barriers to service. One of the best ways to do this is to just be nice, even if you have to say no or enforce a rule. - **Sara Wright**, Regional Consultant, Colorado Library Consortium, Colorado

Be nice: Seriously, you will be surprised how much good will you will garner from vendors, contractors, funders, the community – even the people who question the need for library – if

you're just NICE. Ask how they're doing, and listen like you care even when you don't feel it. "Please" and "thank you." - **Lisa Neal Shaw**, Library Director, Caribou Public Library, Maine

Listen to patrons: Everyone has a story to tell and everyone's needs are different. If you listen to them you'll learn that they are looking for books about the Pacific conflict not WWII, that they would be open to reading "Neverwhere" or that they need a class on how to protect themselves from identity theft. - **Stacy Tiller**, Children's and Teen's Librarian, Spencer County Public Library, Indiana

Develop good communication skills into habits: In library school, I trained to be a reference librarian. Numerous tests show reference librarians answer only 60% of reference questions correctly. In the mid-1980s, Maryland librarians tackled this problem. They hired "secret shoppers" who visited all Maryland libraries asking reference questions. After each encounter, the "secret shopper" filled out a survey describing the librarian's behavior. Statistical analysis correlated behavior with giving correct answers. The top six librarian behaviors are listed below in order of importance. Five of these behaviors are communication skills that would improve all interactions with patrons and staff, not just reference. Furthermore, these skills are not merely knowledge. These skills are habits requiring deliberate practice over and over to be done unconsciously.

- Verifies patrons' specific question(s) before answering
- After giving the answer, asks follow-up question: Does this completely answer your question(s)?
- Probing for the real question(s) with open questions.
- Finds the answer in the first source
- Gives patrons full attention.
- Paraphrase question(s)

- **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Look for wisdom in each conversation: Find a way to glean the wisdom in every conversation and set the other person's baggage aside. We all have our own baggage, but there is almost always a gem of wisdom in any conversation. - **Laura McConnell**, East Morgan County Library District, Colorado

And remember to have fun!: One of my young patrons told me he wants to be a librarian when he grows up because it's the most fun job in the world. And he is right! Even with the loads of paperwork and occasional irate patron, it really is the most fun you can have legally and still get paid. Embrace the challenges, pinch the pennies, go read your favorite book at story time, ask your teens who does the best tattoos in town, go in early on Sunday and enjoy the library all by yourself. Remember why you wanted to be a librarian in the first place. Just go out there and enjoy it. As the old Army slogan used to state "it's not just a job, it's an adventure!". - **Diana M. Watkins**, MLIS, Director, Rolla Public Library, Missouri

Librarianship

Be passionate about your profession!: Library work is the most challenging and the most rewarding. Remember: There is no other institution in the world as important to education and to democracy than the library. – **Jo Budler**, State Librarian, State Library of Kansas, Kansas, 2013 Librarian of the Year

Are libraries about books or information?: When I was applying to library school, I was advised not to claim, “I wanted to be a librarian because I liked books.” I was told to claim I liked information. Information comes in many “formats”: books, magazines, DVDs, Internet, etc. As a librarian, I am supposed to promote all these formats and people’s abstract right to all information in the library. Defending people’s right to the information “they want” that to me seems like junk, trash, and maybe even harmful can be challenging. – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Show Your Research Chop: Many people in the community are amazed to learn how quickly and efficiently librarians can supply research information. We can go beyond Google to provide valuable research services for free. It can be a great promotional tool to bring busy community leaders onto your side and turn them into library advocates. **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida

We are in the people business more than the book business: Everything we do, especially in a small library, affects the people we serve; and the people we serve truly have needs - sometimes the need of a good book and sometimes the need of a caring ear. - **Laura McConnell**, East Morgan County Library District, Colorado

Libraries are about access: Library buildings should follow guidelines of the Americans With Disability Act to allow everyone access into the library and around the inside of the library. Libraries should use a number of techniques to provide access to the collection.

Library catalogs should list everything in the library so people in the library and, with online catalogs, people outside the library, can know what the library has. Combining catalogs with circulation systems misleads some librarians into thinking library catalogs are about checkout. These librarians don’t catalog local history or genealogy because these titles don’t checkout. This is wrong! Library catalogs should list all titles in the library so patrons and library staff can find them. Cataloging all titles is very important in the world where people can search library catalogs from home. Catalog all titles!

- Shelves provide major access to collections. Patrons can have difficulty using shelves stuffed with books. Library staff can make shelves easier to use with a number of techniques.
- Signs, readable from a distance, help patrons know which shelves they want to browse.
- Weeding until shelves are only three-quarters full adds “white” space to make shelves more readable. This increases circulation.
- Spine labels marking genres or recommended books helps patrons quickly identify the items of interest. This increases circulation of items with labels.

- Displays dramatically increase circulation of items displayed. Displays are most effective when placed at the front of the library. I recommend displaying older titles shelved near the front of the library. New books already have enough demand. They circulate well when shelved further back.
- Booklists of recommended books.
- Breaking fiction into genres or other groupings increases circulation of lesser known authors.
- Readers' advisory is another way of providing collection access.
– **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Librarians are business executives: Melvil Dewey is the best known founder of American library science. Melvil wrote an essay, "Advice to a Librarian" in *Public Libraries*, Vol. 2, page 266-7, 1897, summarized using the following quotes.

1. "As a matter of fact the position (of librarian) is more on an executive business affair than a literary one."
2. "It is in no sense your business to dictate to others as to what they may or may not, should or should not, read, and if you attempt to assume such responsibility you will make unnumbered enemies and take upon yourself a thankless and uncalled-for task.... Hang on to your tastes and prejudices for yourself, but don't impose them upon others."
3. "Cultivate your own tastes carefully by reading but little, and that little of the best; avoid the latest sensation until you are quite sure it is more than a sensation; if you have to buy it to please the patrons, have some convenient (literary) dog of good appetite and digestive organs, and try it on him or her and watch the general effect. You will be astonished how much you will find out about a book, its morals and manners, by the things they don't say."
4. "... I have been impressed with the fact that librarians seem to think that they must or ought to know everything, and get to think they do know. It's a delusion. Be more than content to be ignorant on many things. Look at your position as a high-grade business one. Look after the working details, have things go smoothly, know the whereabouts and classification of the books, and let people get their own meat or poison." - **Melvil Dewey**, founder of American library science. [Summarized by Chris Rippel]

Public library service is not free; it's prepaid. All of your taxpayers have given money in advance for your services, whether or not they choose to consume them in person. They are all your constituents, and their needs and priorities are your concern. Make sure they know how you respect their views, how you are adding value to the community, and what kind of results they can expect from you. Library supporters are not necessarily library users. You don't have to make them borrowers to make them proud. - **Joan Frye Williams**, Library Consultant & Futurist

Five laws of library science: Indian librarian S. R. Ranganathan's 1931 book *Five Laws of Library Science* <<http://tinyurl.com/pu2o2ob>> explains five values that have inspired generations of librarians.

- Books are for use.

- Every reader his or her book.
- Every book its reader.
- Save the time of the reader.
- The library is a growing organism.

“Books are for use” addresses tension between protecting library materials and letting patrons use library materials. Some librarians and boards write overly protective policies to keep materials in the library unused. The first law says the purpose of materials is use. Encourage use by loosening policies and practices: library hours, what books can be checked out, checkout length, allowed renewals, fines, etc.

“Every reader his or her book” is more radical than it sounds. Books *and* education are *for all*, not the chosen few. *All* includes rich and poor, men and women, “city-folk” and “country-folk,” “normal” and “abnormal” of all kinds, young and old, literate and illiterate, people on land and sea, adults and children, and, finally, people in every country. Public libraries should provide everyone with the books needed to improve lives and societies.

“Every book its reader” and “save the time of the reader” encourages promoting and improving access to books starting with locating the library where the people live and, in the library, with appropriate cataloging, useable shelving, displays, publicity, book talks, etc.

“The library is a growing organism” could be interpreted in narrow and broad senses.

The narrowest sense means perpetual increase in library collections.

- Not buying more books for libraries is satirized by quoting an ignorant, unnamed Kansas legislator..., ‘Mr. Speaker, I object to spending this money [for more books in the Kansas University library]. Why, they’ve got forty thousand books there at Lawrence now, and I don’t believe any one of them professors has read ‘em all yet!’” (page 385 of *Five Laws of Library Science*).
- Ranganathan then claims the new practice of weeding to “equalize the rate of weeding out and the rate of accessioning, after the size of the collection reaches an arbitrary norm” will prove impractical because so many new books are being published. Some modern librarians disagree.

The broader interpretation of “growing organism” is to think concretely and plan specifically for inevitable changes in library use, requiring changes in facilities, catalogs, collection organization, shelving, staffing, services, and governance. – **S. R. Ranganathan**, founder of library science. [Summarized by Chris Rippel]

Prevention is more respectful than rescue. Traditional public library service models wait for patrons to fail and then mobilize staff to bail them out of their difficulty. Rescue-style service may make staff feel heroic, but it makes patrons feel inadequate. When patrons approach staff by saying “I know this is a stupid question, but...” they are actually telling you that their library experience has made them feel stupid. Using the library should make patrons feel smarter! Encourage staff to give a priority to anticipating patron needs and setting things up to prevent failures in the first place. Using the library should be so straightforward that the number of

directional questions and instructional sessions go DOWN. The public's success is the best measure of your success. - **Joan Frye Williams**, Library Consultant & Futurist

Pay attention to details: Not just cataloging records, but also the reference answers we give, what exact message do overdue notices project, listening to our patrons... the list goes on. Even verifying that materials were actually scanned during checkout can save anguish later! - **Kathy Rippel**, Retired, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Who is not well served by your checkout period and renewals?: Download Checkout Decider spreadsheet at <http://tinyurl.com/zhg4gft> to find out. Type in your checkout period (in weeks) for fiction books. One renewal is given automatically. These turn the cells in the spreadsheet dark green and light green cells. If you allow additional renewals, type those too. These turn cells yellow. A 2-week checkout period with 1 renewal gives ages 65+ enough time to read long works of genre fiction. 2-week checkout with 1 renewal discriminates against average readers in every other demographic category, especially men, parents, and the employed. Try different checkout periods and numbers of allowed renewals to see who is well served and not served. - **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Use library's computerized catalog reports as a research tool: Since the library catalog report modules makes reports quick and easy, use them to find out which portions of the collection circulate best. Buy more books for those parts that circulate best and fewer books for those parts circulating less. - **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Learn basic plumbing: My own advice is very practical--learn some basic plumbing. Knowing how to unclog a toilet, replace a float, and where the water shut off valve is (again thanks Dad!) has been incredibly helpful and have saved us a fair amount of money. There will not always be a custodian or maintenance person around. Or your budget may not stretch to cover the plumber's bill at the end of the fiscal year. - **Diana M. Watkins**, MLIS, Director, Rolla Public Library, Missouri

Take your time: Remember that a library is not an emergency room. Nobody will die if they have to wait for you to do your job properly, don't get exactly what they want when they want it or have to come back because they forgot their library card. - **Annie Miller**, Director, Greenwich Free Library, New York

Barriers to good library service: As a new employee, you are in an excellent position to see library services more from the point of view of the patron, and from the point of view of someone who has to describe and explain services and library policies to patrons. You are also able to ask questions of your colleagues and your patrons and, to some extent, question whether routines and library policies might actually be operating as barriers to your library's use.

I recall several occasions when patrons had insight into improving services and relations with patrons. Mimi, a woman who worked with visually impaired individuals, always brought new clients to the library where I worked. I was always pleased with an opportunity to introduce our services, especially services for the blind and visually impaired. One day, explained why she really brought clients to the library: "If they can get into this building by themselves, they can get into any building in town." She showed how dangerous our ramp was, how visually impaired individuals could easily be injured by our rail, and how people in wheel chairs would have

difficulty turning the sharp corners in the ramp leading to our entrance. News such as this should prompt a review of the accommodation and compliance of the physical facility.

I also recall two examples for more flexible with circulation policies. I worked as the state and federal documents librarian. One night I was ecstatic that a patron wanted to check out a number of documents. This only resulted in the circulation assistant becoming very angry because the documents required hand-written circulation records. After she threw the documents at me, I easily completed the records, still happy to see that the materials would circulate.

A final example came from a patron. When I was a doctoral student I assisted on research projects. One project involved my calling 100 public library patrons months after they had requested an item through interlibrary loan, asking them some questions to ascertain how much impact the requested item had. Ninety-nine interviews took only about 5 minutes. The first interview, though, took nearly 50 minutes as the elderly patron had much good advice and wanted to talk with someone about public library service. He recalled that he was the only one in the library who read certain books and wondered why he had to return them unread when no one else wanted to borrow them. He had some difficulty getting to the library building and had to return the item for even a renewal. He taught me about the need to have flexible circulation policies that would allow a patron more time to read materials, especially when an extended circulation did not prevent other patrons' access. - **Loriene Roy**, Professor, School of Information, The University of Texas at Austin; 2007-2008 President, American Library Association

Cataloging

Get assistance with cataloging: If you aren't comfortable with it, see what your state library commission offers in terms of assistance! The WV Library Commission has a series of webinars, a subscription to OCLC and an on-staff cataloguer. I have an MLIS and find copy cataloguing calming, but something about actually cataloguing makes my brain seize up. – **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Circulation

Fines Free Fridays: Circulating materials: Regarding fines, in an effort to be more community/patron friendly, we started Fine Free Fridays, and have been advertising that to patrons. If a patron has overdue items, librarians will advise them that all of the fines will be waived if the items are returned on a Friday. We are noticing a pretty significant increase in the number of overdue items returned as opposed to just kept. We also offer a school supply drive in September and a canned food drive in November, where we take \$1.00 off of existing fines for every item donated (those items then go to local schools and a food pantry, respectively). These are some ways to work with patrons in a low-income community to get rid of their fines/not get any fines and also benefit the community at large. – **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Collections

Shelving books: A “section” of shelves are the shelves between two uprights holding up the shelves. Several sections combine to create a “range”.

- Books should be placed flush with the front of shelves, not shoved to the back of shelves. Books spines even with shelf fronts look neater. Shelves look cleaner because dust accumulates behind the books rather than in front of the books.
- Fill all the shelves in a section before moving to the next section in the range. Don't fill the top shelf along the range before dropping to the second shelf. Shelving along the entire top shelves seems natural when shelves are completely filled with books such as in homes. In libraries, however, shelves should be only three-quarter full to leave room for reshelving books checked out and adding new books. Filling shelves only partially makes dropping down to the next shelf seem more natural.
- When patrons browse the collection they should move up and down the aisles from left to right in an expected movement. When reaching the end of a range, they should know whether to move around the end panel to the first section on the other side or across the aisle to the first section. If patrons reach the end of a range and are confused about where to go next, then the arrangement is flawed. – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Know your collection, and learn Dewey in detail. In the event of the online catalog failing, you will be an invaluable resource, if you know where subjects are supposed to be.

Keep up with current events, locally, in the state, and nationally. The more you are informed, the better you can help your patrons. - **Jeff Imperato**, Reference, Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, Kansas

Give them what they want: Public libraries were started to inspire, educate, and civilize the public. This meant buying books that inspired and educated, as opposed to fictional romances and adventure stories which were considered harmful to weak minds. In time, fiction became accepted. Starting in 1963, Charles W. Robinson began a movement with the phrase, "Give them what they want." The debate continues. Some librarians would like to encourage the reading of better books. Other librarians defend Robinson's philosophy by urging people to "Never to apologize for your reading tastes." – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Weeding is a good thing: It can be hard at first, when you see all the beautiful (but also old) books on the library shelves that someone might love. But good weeding actually improves circulation by allowing patrons to better find the good books instead of sorting through all of the old, ugly books. - **Becky Isbell**, Director, Brownwood Public Library, Texas

Weed your collection regularly: Weeding is a necessary part of the collection maintenance process and if you are adding materials, whether through purchase or donation, you **MUST** weed your collection. As someone else has said, there are many, many resources to help you do it: online, from other libraries, from your State Library, and in my state, from your regional consultants. When you leave weeding undone for many years "because you are such a book lover that you cannot stand to do it", you are opening yourself and your library to attacks from the public who perceive the normal process of curating a library collection as wasting tax money. Books are for use. They wear out, they become outdated and superseded. If you and your patrons

are using your collection, it needs to be regularly weeded. - **Kim Uden Rutter**, Library Consultant, Southeast Kansas Library System, Kansas

Buy book award winners: The regional catalog of the Central Kansas Library System has 50 libraries. I used the report function of this catalog to make the following discoveries. Within the top New York Times bestsellers from 2013 to May 2016, the best circulation came from titles with Goodreads ratings between 3.81 and 4.10 because authors with highest patron demand write books within this range. Book award winners in romance, mystery, and Christian fiction circulate 4% to 13% better than the NYT bestsellers mentioned above. Award winning books circulate 8% to 31% better than these authors' other books. So buy book award winners. – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Interlibrary loan

Incredibly valuable resource!!!: Last year we exchanged over 800 ILLs with the other libraries in our consortium. The fact that we're able to fulfill patron requests without buying those books is just fantastic. It saves us funds and shelf space. – **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Programming

Fit programming with the community: Don't try to do it all yourself. Also, if something isn't working, don't be afraid to scrap it and try something else. Our makerspace wasn't getting used (I think due to the location-but we don't really have anywhere else to put it), so we're going to start having maker nights instead and see how those go. Fit your programming to your community: what's lacking in your community/What gaps can you fill? What general interests do your community tend to lean towards? Is this going to benefit the community? – **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Serving seniors

Reading discussions: We have bi-weekly one-hour discussions targeting an older audience. For this older audience a part-time facilitator chooses articles or reviews for discussion. Fiction discussions are about short stories, poems, literary reviews, and poets and writers. Articles about non-fiction topics are pulled from *Science*, *Nature*, *New Yorker*, *Orion*, *Mother Jones*, and *High Country News*. This approach has been substantially more successful than a book discussion. – **Abbie Zeltzer**, Library Director, Patagonia Public Library, Arizona.

Seniors as volunteers: We engage seniors as speakers, assistants with our summer lunches at the library program, as front desk volunteers and any manner to keep people actively contributing to our community. Staff train volunteers on a one-on-one basis. – **Abbie Zeltzer**, Library Director, Patagonia Public Library, Arizona

Serving kids and young adults

Treat kids and teens like adults: Regarding children and young adults, I came into the library field with a social work background. I think that it's sometimes too easy for people to dismiss kids and teens (maybe especially teens) as annoying, loud, disruptive kids who just want to use the computers...or to be suspicious when a group of teens are hanging out together. I remind my

librarians that the library is here for everyone and we need to treat kids and teens just like we would adults. If they are being too loud, we need to point it out to them that they are being disruptive to other patrons and ask them to keep the noise level down rather than just shushing them. Respect goes a long way with teens. Libraries and librarians are in a great position to provide a place for teens and children where they can come to learn, explore, and meet with friends—we need to make sure that kids and teens feel welcome to use this space. – **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Technology

Have a written technology plan and update it regularly. A technology plan should establish goals for using technology to improve library services, include staff training to insure a resource for assisting patrons, and provide sufficient budget to implement and maintain the plan. A written plan increases the chances of success of the goals of the plan. A good plan is a commitment on the part of the library, staff and board to using technology to achieve library outcomes. - **Charlene McGuire**, Technology Consultant, Southwest Kansas Library System, Kansas

EBooks

Acquisitions: Terms vary by vendor according to restrictions placed on titles by publishers; some titles can be purchased outright, others can only be leased for a certain number of checkouts or length of time. As with print titles, watch best seller and awards lists to inform your title selection decision. - Eric Hansen, eGO and eResource Coordinator, Connecticut State Library

Marketing and Promotion: Procure marketing materials from your E-Book vendors to display and hand out, such as posters, flyers, bookmarks, etc.

Post links or icons to your E-Book services to your online presence wherever possible.

If you publicize additions to your library collection (newsletter, social media, etc.), feature E-Books along with print titles. – **Eric Hansen**, eGO and eResource Coordinator, Connecticut State Library

Patron training: Patrons will have questions about how to download, install, and configure the vendor software or apps necessary to search for, download, and read E-Books. If your library licenses E-Books from more than one vendor, expect to get these kinds of questions for each of your E-Book vendors' products.

Find an individual conversant in computer and mobile device technology and willing to teach classes at your library about your E-Book service, for different platforms (iOS, Android, Kindle Fire, etc.).

Pressure your E-Book vendors to furnish training webinars for library staff and patrons in the use of their products and services.

Use your tablet, smart phone or other such E-Book capable device to familiarize yourself with your library's service or services. If you are in a position to work with your patrons directly,

nothing beats first-hand experience. When a patron approaches you for help with an eBook reader or other mobile device (tablet, smart phone) for eBook help, a good approach is to indicate that you and the patron will work together to find an answer to the patron's question. – **Eric Hansen**, eGO and eResource Coordinator, Connecticut State Library

Technical Support: Post the means of contacting the vendors for patron support online and within the library. – **Eric Hansen**, eGO and eResource Coordinator, Connecticut State Library

Print books vs. eBooks: There are advantages and disadvantages to print books and E-Books. A comparison of the two follows.

Print books:

Pros:

- A printed book is a copy of a creative work. When a library purchases a printed book, the library has the right to lend, sell, or dispose of that copy, according to the Doctrine of First Sale.¹ This right makes the existence of lending libraries and Friends of the Library book sales legal.
- We tend to think of printed books as useful only to individuals, but they can potentially be read by more than one person at a time, and can be read aloud to a class or audience.
- Printed books do not require computer or networking technology to access their content.
- When a library purchases a printed book, there is no added intermediation needed between that book, the library, and a library patron. The library determines checkout and hold policies for that book. A library patron will likely be required to have an account with the library, represented by a valid borrower's card, to access the library's printed books – the patron need not have an account with the book vendor nor with publisher.
- Several printed books can be opened and laid out for direct comparison of passages for study.
- Printed books mostly have similar and predictable formats.

Cons:

- If heavily or improperly used, a printed book can wear out.
- Printed books have fixed formats and fonts. External technology is necessary to make them more accessible to users with special needs, for example screen magnification, enhanced lighting, etc.

E-Books:

Pros:

- Being digital, an E-Book will not wear out.
- Some E-Books can be subject to assistive technology to the advantage of the library user: font faces and sizes can be adjusted, the amount of contrast between text and its

¹ Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C. § 109.

background can be adjusted, and the reading device can be set for portrait or landscape viewing.

Cons:

- Library distribution and use are determined by vendors' licenses: an E-Book may be limited to individual checkouts only, and may be limited to a fixed number of circulations or a span of months before a library needs to relinquish access or pay again for access. In addition to a valid library borrower's card, the patron likely will be required to create a user account with the E-Book vendor as well.
- E-Books are often tied to a specific vendor delivery and reading platform.
- Libraries are charged for purchase or license of works in the public domain in order to get them in a specific vendor's platform like other works.
- It is not always possible to pivot between E-Books for comparison and study, especially on mobile devices.
- E-Book formats vary according to the vendor platform, app, and physical hardware involved. The library patron must master each vendor's platform and app.

– **Eric Hansen**, eGO and eResource Coordinator, Connecticut State Library

Management

Put your staff first: My best management advice actually came from my Dad who was not a librarian, but at 24-year Army veteran. He told me to always put my "troops" first. If you treat your staff with respect and act the way you want them to act, then in most (unfortunately not all) cases those staff members will feel loyal to you and the organization. They have a vested interest in seeing the library succeed. Remember that they are people, with passions and problems and families, not just that they are the person that does story time on Tuesday mornings. And never ask one of your staff or volunteers to do anything you are not willing to do yourself. - **Diana M. Watkins**, MLIS, Director, Rolla Public Library, Missouri

Keep your staff happy: If you're lucky enough to have good people, do your best to keep them happy, and to keep them engaged with the job. I've been at a small-town library for 18 years, and the last three or four have been the best. I've got a team of people that works really well together and even though I can't offer much in the way of monetary rewards, I always acknowledge their efforts and their ideas and I let them know that they're appreciated. It's also helpful in that customers can sense that we're enjoying the job we're doing and it makes them happier when they come here. Just my opinion. Best of luck – **Richard Sanders**, Director, Hart County Library, Georgia

Especially for people in supervisory/managerial positions, it will ALWAYS be the "people issues" that keep you awake at night, or consume vast amounts of time. Budgeting, taxation, equalized assessed valuation of property in your territory, reports to the State Library, capital repair projects--those things can be learned, to one degree or another (and sometimes painfully!), however overwhelming they may seem at any given time. They are more tangible, in many ways, than dealing with staff/public/board problems or all 'round weirdness. It's the people stuff that will hook you, so to speak. - **John Richmond**, Director, Alpha Park Public Library District, Bartonville, IL

It's lonely at the top!: Your relationship with your co-workers will be different. You can't gossip or complain with your co-workers like you could when you were not their supervisor. Like the old parenting advice, you need to be a supervisor, not a friend. This is especially true when you come into a new position. Immediately address issues as they come up. Don't be wishy-washy or you'll have to deal with bigger issues later. Read up on laws and advice for difficult issues (writing up an employee, firing) before they become an issue. As possible, write these into the handbook so you have a guideline when they come up (i.e., laws for when the last paycheck needs to be issued may be different for an employee that leaves voluntarily vs. involuntarily, and it's easier to have this recorded in the handbook rather than scrambling to figure out all the pertinent laws when it happens). - **Becky Isbell**, Library Director, Brownwood Public Library, Texas

Leadership begins with listening.: You'll move farther and faster if you understand what motivates the people on your team, and connect their talents to organizational needs. – **James LaRue**, Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom and Freedom to Read Foundation, ALA

LaRue's Laws Of leadership: 1. Anything is possible. 2. It's a miracle that anything works. – **James LaRue**, Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom and Freedom to Read Foundation, ALA

Ensure the library ... provides high-quality service specific to *your* community (residents and internally to other staff). Empower employees to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. Place the right people in the right positions and let them soar, but don't work a position around a person. Think in terms of doing what is best for the library when you give your staff direction or honest constructive feedback. Write good, logical job descriptions and review them annually with each respective person in the role to be sure that their duties match the position. Along with reviewing job descriptions, do annual evaluations and meet with each staff person on a regular basis. We do quarterly check-ins so that no one is surprised by anything on their annual evaluations. - **Jennie Garner**, Library Director, North Liberty Community Library, Iowa

Hire good people; Train them well; Leave them alone to do their jobs; Say "Thank you" often. – **Anita R. Barney**, Director, The Brookfield Library, Connecticut

Interact with staff daily: Do greet all staff each day by name. Visit with staff often, daily if possible at their desks. Allow staff to fail but not to be failures. Allowing staff to take chances increases creativity Allow staff to vary from policy when they encounter new situations. Do not try to characterize individual personnel as to their usefulness, fit for the job or ease of getting to know. Realize how fallible circ-systems are and how staff make mistakes in shelving, check-in, etc. Patrons are often right. – **Harry Willems**, Director, Great Bend Public Library and Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Never criticize staff in public unless it's a dire emergency. Always compliment staff in public. – **Anita R. Barney**, Director, The Brookfield Library, Connecticut

Learn from Others: Reach out to successful managers to learn their secrets, both in the library world and other professions. A manager who tries to figure it all out on their own is creating a really sharp learning curve. Leverage the wisdom of experienced managers to give you a head start. Besides, most people enjoy sharing their knowledge and are impressed when someone seeks them out. - **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida

Share information with staff: Share as much information as you can with your staff (budgets, plans for new services, who your board members are, etc.) They feel included, and they don't sound like idiots when dealing with the public. – **Anita R. Barney**, Director, The Brookfield Library, Connecticut

Regard your staff (or the key people on your staff, depending on the number of employees you have) as a team. Discuss ideas for resolving problems or trying something new. Incorporate the best ideas and let them help shape the plan. They are likely to have valuable input, and the end result will be better than what you would have come up with otherwise. Plus, they will feel a sense of ownership in what happens. Most employees will be happier, more enthusiastic about their job, and more creative and productive. – **Roger Carswell**, Director, Southeast Kansas Library System, Kansas

Match people with the job: Take time and get to know people you interview. Some personalities are more comfortable with some jobs than others. I hired someone that has to force herself to look adults in the eye for children's services and it worked great because she is very comfortable with children. I still wouldn't put her on circulation full-time, but she still volunteers some circulation shifts to expand her skills. Learning to adjust to everyone's personality and learning styles makes for a good culture in any department. Finally, never hire

the person that wants to work in the library because "it's so quiet and they love to read". – **Clancy Pool**, St. Johns Branch Manager, Whitman County Rural Library District, Washington, 2014 Paralibrarian of the Year

Always be open to new ideas. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Don't hold grudges. Smile. - **Royce Kitts**, Director, Liberal Memorial Library, Kansas

Are librarians introverts or extroverts?: During my career, I have heard librarians frequently labeled as introverts, e.g., sitting quietly and reading. Librarians themselves sometimes link certain library jobs such as cataloging with introversion. In the submissions I received, several librarians strongly reject connections between introversion-extroversion and ability to do specific library jobs. – **Chris Rippel**, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Submission 1: I have worked with ... introverts who are excellent circulation staff and even youth services staff. Many introverts enjoy and are good at ... interactions ... at the circulation desk, ... reader's advisory, and have a calming effect on the patrons and their colleagues. They just spend their time off work doing quiet things to ... recharge. Lots of introverts would not make good catalogers or processors because they don't have the same attention to detail, desire for order, or organizational skills Temperament and skill sets are not the same thing. ... Susan Cain discusses the value and accomplishments of introverts and the idealized mythology surrounding the Extrovert Ideal that permeates our culture in ..., *Quiet: the power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*. I highly recommend it and I bet you can find it at your local library. (Susan Cain TED talk at <http://tinyurl.com/oup5xpf>) - **Crista Cannariato**, Library Regional Supervisor, Mary L. Stephens Davis Branch, Yolo County Library, California

Submission 2: I have to agree with this. I'm an introvert, have worked well with teens, and enjoy working the desk every so often. I don't particularly enjoy public speaking in front of large audiences, but I do it as part of my job. I thought I would be excellent at cataloging and am not. Some ... extroverts ... are much worse at handling confrontational patrons than I am. Being drained by interacting with people doesn't necessarily mean that you're horrible at it. - **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Submission 3: As an introvert who has worked many customer service jobs, ... I assure you, many introverts have no trouble handling the circulation desk, story time, or any other front line responsibilities. In fact, I'm quite comfortable with public speaking too. You might be quite surprised how many actors are introverts. I definitely agree about staying away from hiring the person who wants to work in the library because it is quiet. Kim's advice about weeding is spot on. Your shelves are your real estate. If you fill your real estate with old dusty books, there's no room for the new material that everyone wants to read. Keep your space clean and spacious so there is room for new items. Then people will want to come in often to see what new things have arrived! – **Joyce Baker**, Library Director, Coolidge Public Library, Arizona

Administration

Have a sense of humor and don't take yourself too seriously. – **Harry Willems**, Director, Great Bend Public Library and Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Attend board meetings: This is where you find out what is really happening in the library; what the director is telling the board about the library; and your chance to get to know the board. -**Sheila Urwiler**, Assistant Director, Public Services, Elkhart Public Library, Indiana

Have a “dream in a drawer”: – something that you really wish you could do but currently do not have funds to do it – so that when a funding opportunity arises, you are ready to grab it. There have been many times when a grant opportunity presented itself on very short notice and having a plan ready to submit meant that the funding came our way! – **Jo Budler**, State Librarian, State Library of Kansas, Kansas, 2013 Librarian of the Year

Make the library board and staff proud to play a part in success: When the library board approves some project, at the next meeting, thank them for approving the project, report on the progress of the project. Talk it up. Make them feel a part of the project's success. Do the same for the staff. – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Leadership: I am also a HUGE fan of L. David Marquet's “Turn the Ship Around” leadership philosophies. I recommend his book highly. The best one for me so far has been “move authority to information.” Don't make “staff” have to hunt down someone in charge to make front line decisions. Don't refer to them as “staff.” They're people – colleagues. Have their backs if there's a misunderstanding or they make a mistake. Show you're willing to do whatever you are asking them to do. - **Lisa Neal Shaw**, Library Director, Caribou Public Library, Maine

Policies: Work with your board to write and implement sound policies that are specific and cover issues that could come up proactively rather than reactively. Pare down your policies enough to allow your staff to do their jobs effectively. Staff should be able to look to policy for consistent decision-making but still have the flexibility to empower staff to make decisions based on individual transactions with a patron. Part of having good policies means being sure your staff is fully and consistently trained in all areas and especially in internal/external customer service and intellectual freedom. - **Jennie Garner**, Library Director, North Liberty Community Library, Iowa

Know labor laws: I am continually in horror at the ways libraries ignore FLSA. All it takes is one disgruntled employee to bankrupt the library and/or put the director or office manager in jail. Following the letter and spirit of the law will actually create a more respectful atmosphere. The appearance of favoritism or whimsical application of policy will be lessened by the equal application of the spirit and letter of the FLSA laws. – **Paula Laurita**, Director, Athens Limestone County Public Library, Alabama

Understand patron privacy policies, their purpose and how to make them work. (ALA is a good source for this) Make sure your staff understands them. Create them if you don't have them. Enforce them. Small towns can be very lax with this, robbing people of their right to privacy. - **Annie Miller**, Director, Greenwich Free Library, New York

Patrons' First Amendment library rights: Federal courts have decided citizens' receiving information at the public library is a First Amendment right. When library staff kick patrons out of the library for misbehaving, they are denying those patrons' First Amendment rights. Those patrons can sue for denying First Amendment rights without due process. If, in fact, the library has not followed due process, patrons win the lawsuit. ALA guidelines for behavior policies following due process is at <http://tinyurl.com/mhg8vsc> – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Keep your eye on the budget. Not just your legal authority to spend, but how your cash flow looks. Some libraries you can plan ahead for the big expenses, if you can start putting some money ahead in advance it is easy to let present needs threaten your long term viability. – **John Mundy**, Director, Perry County Public Library, Indiana

Learn the Art of Stress Free Productivity: Develop an efficient workflow system to keep your priorities and daily tasks under control. I highly recommend the *Getting Things Done System (GTD)*, created by David Allen (www.gettingthingsdone.com). I would not be where I am today without it! An efficient workflow is a must to avoid the unnecessary pressure of missed deadlines and the potential explosion of ticking workplace time bombs. - **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida

Reframe ambiguity as diversity. When you're in any challenging situation, you are going to be surrounded by incomplete and conflicting information. Human beings crave certainty, but too much certainty can insulate a director from what's really happening.

The trick is not to eliminate the uncertainty but to avoid being paralyzed by it. It can help to reframe the ambiguity that surrounds you as diversity, and to think of it not as an inconvenience, a disadvantage, or a threat, but as a rich database of ingredients for possible solutions.

From that perspective, it's not your job to determine the one absolute and immutable truth. Nor is it simply to accept all the conflicting information as equally valid and resign yourself to the chaos. Your job is to analyze and select and prioritize AND SYNTHESIZE from all the various versions of the truth, to craft an approach that looks as if it might work. When clarity is lacking, worry less about being right and best, and more about being pragmatic and effective. - **Joan Frye Williams**, Library Consultant & Futurist

Underestimate revenues, overestimate expenditures: When budgeting, be conservative on your estimate of revenues and liberal on your estimate of expenses. You are less likely to be unpleasantly surprised and have to make difficult decisions part-way through the year. Rather, you may find that you have extra to spend on special projects, collections, or to tuck away into a capital improvement fund. – **Roger Carswell**, Director, Southeast Kansas Library System, Kansas

Consider long-term consequences: This advice assumes the person is working in a culture where the predominate belief is that one rule applies to all. ... Library staff are generally helpful people. In the spirit of helpfulness, library staff often cause problems for themselves. Before helping anyone with something outside of the obvious duties of one's position, one should think about the long term implications. For example, if library staff "help" one person by making all their copies for them, that person will often continue to expect that service going forward and may become upset if it is not provided. Additionally, observing patrons will expect that same

service for themselves, leading to the library staff serving as copy-center staff rather than library staff. This urge to be helpful can be tempered by a recognition that people expect what is to their benefit, without considering the nuances of a situation. – **Jill Hames**, Director, James L. Hamner Public Library, Virginia

Diplomacy for the long term: As a librarian, particularly if you are library director, you will eventually find yourself in disagreement with people who have power and influence. It may be official (opposition from governing bodies, elected officials) or situational (a strong community leader, a provider of funding).

Negotiation requires walking a fine line. You owe it to the institution you represent to be assertive in doing your best for the library and its users, without stepping over that line into aggression and disrespect. One of my early career mentors put it best: "*Never* back anyone into a corner. Always leave your adversary a graceful way out."

With practice and experience, you can learn to respect others and their positions while powerfully advocating for what you believe.

You will not always prevail, but when you walk away carrying your own dignity and integrity, and have left your challenger with hers or his, you've succeeded.

When necessary, remind yourself that "You're no better than me!" and "You and I are equals" are two very different messages.

- **Jeff Hixon**, Director of Statewide Services, State Library of Kansas, Kansas

Get as much fundraising and grant-writing training as you can, and keep up to date with it! - **Carol Wohlford**, Director, Eudora Public Library, Kansas

Be prepared to spend half of your career in meetings: Librarians do everything by committee. This can be a good thing - do your part to make the team a safe and welcoming place to express thoughts and ideas, questions, and even disagreements. -**Sheila Urwiler**, Assistant Director, Public Services, Elkhart Public Library, Indiana

Learn some light plumbing and electrical repair: You're going to need it! -**Sheila Urwiler**, Assistant Director, Public Services, Elkhart Public Library, Indiana

Enjoy your job! Librarians have the best job in the world - even on the bad days. -**Sheila Urwiler**, Assistant Director, Public Services, Elkhart Public Library, Indiana

Proofread, proofread, proofread: Your brain sees what it expects to see. Bring in someone from the community if you don't have a good proofreader on staff. Everything that goes out from your library, whether it's a newsletter, a press release, a Facebook post, or an email, represents the library. Set a good example. – **Anita R. Barney**, Director, The Brookfield Library, Connecticut

Mission statements can support your control over meeting rooms: Mission statements express the purpose of the library: what the library does, who is served, and how service is delivered. Mission statements help the Library Board, Director, and staff decide which services and programs should and should not be undertaken and guidelines on how they should be done. For example, meeting room policies should use a library's mission statements to define the purpose of meeting rooms, e.g., "The ... Public Library, in keeping with its mission, offers

meeting rooms for programs ... that are of an educational, cultural, or civic nature.” Linking the mission of the library to the purpose of meeting rooms gives the board authority to define the types of speakers and programs allowed and not allowed in meeting rooms. Mission statements should also support defining the use of other public spaces, library collections, etc.

Recent trends recommend short, inspirational , memorable mission statements, e.g., “Read, Learn, Discover.” “Preserving Yesterday, Informing Today, Inspiring Tomorrow.” “To help the people of our community to achieve their full potential.” Such phrases don’t clearly define how library spaces should be used or support limitations on use of meeting rooms. I suggest a compromise. Start with a short, inspirational, memorable phrase, followed by longer sentences defining the intent of the library. – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Permission: It’s easier to seek forgiveness than permission. - **Kirsten M. Corby**, Branch manager, Noman Mayer Library, Louisiana

Statistics about libraries: There are two resources for librarians who like statistics. Each January public librarians across the country fill out an annual report about their library. These reports are compiled and, in most states, available on the State Library Website. Though many states put these up as PDF, asking for an Excel version allows manipulating data for analysis. The Pew Research Center <<http://www.pewinternet.org/topics/libraries/>> does fascinating surveys of public library use. – **Chris Rippel**, System Consultant, Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Don’t take work home: It’s tempting to take book catalogues or grant proposals home or just brainstorm or listen to a webinar at home, but don’t. This job is amazing but can come with quite a bit of stress. Help yourself by creating clear work/home boundaries. - **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia

Passing the baton to a new librarian

Create a transition notebook for the next librarian: Assure continuity of service by WRITING DOWN essential need-to-know information: passwords, contact info for maintenance, deeds, contracts, grant info, major donor details. Optimally, a binder with copies of everything and a note about the location of the original documents would be great. Also, leave the incoming director specific instructions for their first week and suggestions for their first month, first quarter and first year - with annual deadlines for reports or requests. Find some sample documents that we at the State Library in Montana have created to assist in these important transitions here: <http://tinyurl.com/zwpp456> - **Jo Flick**, CE Coordinator, Montana State Library, Montana

Network, network, network: Do not try to do it alone. Plan for your replacement from Day 1. Make the transition easy for them whether you're there for one day or 30 years. Play nicely with other departments, cheer on your bosses and colleagues – basically, do unto others ... - **Lisa Neal Shaw**, Library Director. Caribou Public Library, Maine

I so agree with [the advice above].. There was less than a week of overlap between my taking over as interim and the previous director leaving. Luckily she left me a wonderful (and forever more known as "THE Notebook") binder with staff and board contacts, invaluable contacts for plumbers, volunteer info, printers, passwords. She had even set up a folder of info on the office computer and left a bar of chocolate in the desk drawer labeled "in case of emergency". - **Diana Watkins**, Director, Rolla Public Library, Missouri.

Write down everything you can think of that your successor might need to know: - even if your predecessor did not do this for you. You never know what might happen tomorrow, so be considerate and leave a transition notebook. When the unforeseen happens, your staff and board will need this information as well. Items to include in your notebook:

- Your Library policies and Board bylaws
- A copy of (or URL for) your library's staff manual and problem-solving (grievance) procedure.
- Most recent budget and board minutes for the past year.
- A list of library board members including the expiration date for each trustee's term.
- Instructions on how to post a regular, special, or emergency meeting in your state, and the legal requirements for going into executive session.
- A copy of your library's strategic plan and other plans the new guy should know about.
- Step-by-step processes/checklists for opening and closing the library, ordering titles, doing ILL, checking out books, generating overdue notices, maintaining computers, *etc.*
- List of the monthly, quarterly, and yearly reports which must be filled out.
- A list of the items director needs to include in the monthly board reports. What information should be included in pre-meeting board packets?

- List of information needed to fill out the annual reports and approximate dates those reports are due.
- List of all library collections and their locations in the library. How to generate that information from the library's ILS [using the report function in library catalog – Chris Rippel, editor].
- The date of the last inventory and weeding of the collection.
- If your library is a member of a consortium, what are your responsibilities as a consortium member? Who is your contact person for the consortium?
- Dates of annual library, city, and county events and programs and how the library participates in these.
- Passwords and URLs pertaining to the library's computers, online databases, annual reports, Web site, E-Rate portal, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr accounts, *etc.*
- Commonly used past grant sources.
- Dictionary of library terms and acronyms, especially those related to the library and the statewide library environment.
- Location of the electrical and water turnoffs.
- What are the worst problems of the current library building? Be nice.
- State Public Library Standards, if any.
- Copies of (or links to) your state's library laws, public records laws, patron privacy laws, open meeting laws. [And local resolutions relating to the library – Chris Rippel, editor]
- Who is your area field consultant (or main contact person) at your state library agency and how can the new director contact him or her?

This list is a work in progress, so please keep it current and add items as you think of them.

We have also updated our *Survival Guide for Idaho Librarians*. It is designed for the individual who suddenly finds himself/herself in charge of a public or school library. Most of the information is relevant to anyone, not just in Idaho. http://guides.lili.org/survival_guide - **Kevin Tomlinson**, Library Consultant, Idaho Commission for Libraries, Idaho

GraceAnne DeCandido's "10 Graces for New Librarians," a commencement speech she delivered at UAlbany in the early 90's. <http://www.well.com/~ladyhawk/albany.html> - **Lisa Richland**, Director, Floyd Memorial Library, New York.

Provide a list of all passwords for staff logins, server logins and applications needing passwords Provide passwords for passworded documents like budgets, salary spreadsheets etc. – **Harry Willems**, Director, Great Bend Public Library and Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Links to other's tips

<http://tinyurl.com/josssh3>

<http://tinyurl.com/j4t8v8g>

<http://tinyurl.com/honjlqh>

http://guides.lili.org/survival_guide

<http://tinyurl.com/ze8v7wd>

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1. **Abbie Zeltzer**, Library Director, Patagonia Public Library, Arizona
2. **Anita R. Barney**, Director, The Brookfield Library, Connecticut
3. **Annie Miller**, Director, Greenwich Free Library, New York
4. **Becky Isbell**, Director, Brownwood Public Library, Texas
5. **Beth Yoke**, Executive Director at Young Adult Library Services Association, American Library Association
6. **Bill Taylor**, Asst. Branch Mgr., Denham Springs - Walker Branch, Louisiana
7. **Carol Barta**, Assistant Director/Consultant, North Central Kansas Library System, Kansas
8. **Carol Wohlford**, Director, Eudora Public Library, Kansas
9. **Charlene McGuire**, Technology Consultant, Southwest Kansas Library System, Kansas
10. **Clancy Pool**, St. Johns Branch Manager, Whitman County Rural Library District, Washington, 2014 Paralibrarian of the Year
11. **Crista Cannariato**, Library Regional Supervisor, Mary L. Stephens Davis Branch, Yolo County Library, California
12. **Diana M. Watkins**, MLIS, Director, Rolla Public Library, Missouri
13. **Don Reynolds**, Director (retired), Nolichucky Regional Library, Tennessee
14. **Douglas Crane**, Director, Palm Beach County Library System, Florida, also wrote "May I Ask You a Question?" at <http://tinyurl.com/ze8v7wd>
15. **Eric Hansen**, eGo and researchNT CT Coordinator, Connecticut State Library
16. **Gaye Rizzo**, Director, Windsor Public Library, Connecticut
17. **Harry Willems**, Director, Great Bend Public Library and Central Kansas Library System, Kansas
18. **James LaRue**, Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom and Freedom to Read Foundation, ALA
19. **James Swan**, Director (retired), Great Bend Public Library and Central Kansas Library System, Kansas
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23. **Jill Hames**, Director, James L. Hamner Public Library, Virginia
24. **Jim Minges**, Consultant, Minges & Associates, Kansas
25. **Jo Budler**, State Librarian, State Library of Kansas, Kansas, 2013 Librarian of the Year
26. **Jo Flick**, CE Coordinator, Montana State Library, Montana
27. **Joan Frye Williams**, Library Consultant & Futurist
28. **John Mundy**, Director, Perry County Public Library, Indiana
29. **John Richmond**, Director, Alpha Park Public Library District, Illinois
30. **Joyce Baker**, Library Director, Coolidge Public Library, Arizona
31. **Julie Elmore**, ARSL Board Member and Marketing Chair
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34. **Kim Uden Rutter**, Library Consultant, Southeast Kansas Library System, Kansas
35. **Kirsten M. Corby**, Branch manager, Noman Mayer Library, Louisiana

36. **Laura McConnell**, East Morgan County Library District, Colorado
37. **Lisa Neal Shaw**, Library Director, Caribou Public Library, Maine
38. **Lisa Richland**, Director, Floyd Memorial Library, New York
39. **Loriene Roy**, Professor, School of Information, The University of Texas at Austin; 2007-2008 President, American Library Association
40. **Marilyn Carlson**, Librarian, Little River Community Library, Kansas
41. **Megan Shanholtz**, Director, Hampshire County Public Library, West Virginia
42. **Melvil Dewey**, founder of American library science
43. **Michael A. Golrick**, MS in LS, MBA, Head of Reference & Library Consultant, State Library of Louisiana
44. **Natalie Bazan**, Director, Hopkins District and Dorr Township Libraries, Michigan
45. **Paula Laurita**, Director, Athens Limestone County Public Library, Alabama
46. **Richard Sanders**, Director, Hart County Library, Georgia
47. **Roger Carswell**, Director, Southeast Kansas Library System, Kansas
48. **Royce Kitts**, Director, Liberal Memorial Library, Kansas
49. **S. R. Ranganathan**, founder of library science
50. **Sara Wright**, Regional Consultant, Colorado Library Consortium, Colorado
51. **Shannon Reid-Wheat**, Director, Council Grove Public Library, Kansas
52. **Sheila Urwiler**, Assistant Director, Public Services, Elkhart Public Library, Indiana
53. **Stacy Tiller**, Children's and Teen's Librarian, Spencer County Public Library, Indiana
54. **Su Epstein**, Ph.D., Library Director, Saxton B. Little Free Library, Connecticut
55. **Tom Cooper**, Director, Webster Grove Public Library, Missouri

Appendix: “How I Do My Job” by James Swan

Director (retired), Great Bend Public Library and Central Kansas Library System, Kansas

Getting Acquainted

Interview every staff member. Have each person fill out a one-page, open-ended survey before they come to the interview. Getting to know the staff will help you begin the process of building trust with the staff. One of the staff members I interviewed when I came to this job started crying when we started talking about her salary. It was significantly below minimum wage—appalling enough to make anyone cry.

Try to have a one-on-one visit with every board member. Try to contact them at their place of business, but be careful not to invade their space or take time they are not willing to give. You are the “new kid” on the block. Don’t ask them to honor you by coming to your office—unless they are already coming to the library.

Get acquainted with city officials, especially the city manager and the chief financial officer. Don’t get too pushy. A short get-acquainted visit in his or her office might be the most appropriate first move you can make.

Get acquainted with the business people in town. Take the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce to lunch and try to discover the names of key business people you need to know. Take one or more of them to lunch every once and a while. Attend the business coffees sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

Visit other libraries in Kansas. It honors to them, and you will learn more in a two-hour visit than a whole semester in a class in library school. In fact, I believe that library visits are one of the most valuable continuing education activities you can have.

Making Changes

Make changes carefully. **“Never make changes faster than your authority to do so is recognized.”** I received this sound advice from one of my professors when I graduated from library school. You need to be sure of your own authority on several fronts before introducing change. If you want to change the hours of the library, be sure the staff will support the changes and that the public will consider your new hours as an improvement in service.

In the initial interviews I had with the staff I discovered that some employees were severely underpaid. The next month I went to the boards and asked for salary adjustments for everyone. Because the “honeymoon” period was still in place the boards agreed with my request. Don’t try something like this unless you totally understand the situation and feel as strongly about it as I did then. Make sure you know where the money is going to come from.

If you want to make changes in the staff, touch base with everyone involved to make sure they think it will work. Some of the people who work at the library have been here a long time and they have a pretty good idea how they think things ought to work. If you decide to follow your own dream for the library, you may be the only person who thinks it is a

good idea if you don't test the waters with the staff. Share your vision with a few staff before you take your new idea to the board.

Leadership style

Leadership is an individual thing. Develop your own style. The library needs someone with fresh ideas and the confidence to make them happen. Having said that I still want to give you the benefit of some of leadership techniques I have learned.

Trust the people under your leadership to do the jobs they have been hired to do. Make sure they know their jobs and then empower them to do the tasks they have been hired to do. Empowering someone you can't trust is like having a loose cannon on the deck of the ship. Keeping people you can't trust on the staff is dangerous for staff morale and for your job security. (More on hiring and firing people later.)

Insist on quality whenever you put something out for the public with the library's/system's name on it. Because "you never get a second chance to make a first impression." Every letter, every brochure, every business card, everything anyone from the library has to be as good as you can make it. Check everything one more time.

Recruiting Board Members

Even though you would like to select your own board members you need to stay well clear of the process. You may be able to provide information to those who will make the final decision.

No trustee is ever perfectly qualified when appointed for the first time. Good trustees qualify themselves as they serve. Effective trustee performance seems to be based on the following traits:

- Interest in the library, in the community, and the way each relates to the other
- Readiness to devote time and effort to the duties of library trusteeship
- Ability to establish impartial policies for the library
- High standards of personal conduct
- Willingness to allot sufficient time to prepare for and attend board meetings
- Ability to work well with others
- Commitment to conducting library board business openly
- Ability to listen effectively
- Respect for the opinions of others

Every new trustee has personal experiences, skills, and talents that can benefit the library. Common sense, clear-sighted political know-how, and leadership lead the list of valued assets new members can bring to the board. But the most important qualification of all is an abiding interest in the library and its welfare.

Guard against political cronyism on the library board. Often those who seek political appointments simply want higher political visibility, and are not team players. You don't need

them on your board. Appointment to the library board must be nonpartisan. Cooperative effort is in jeopardy when board members come to board meetings representing any cause other than the good of the library.

Protecting Your Board Members

Most library trustees have agreed to serve on the library board because they care about the library. Some may be unaware of the technicalities of the law and put themselves at risk inadvertently. One of your jobs is to help protect them from the risk of legal entanglements by omission or uninformed action. Areas of special concern include:

- Open meetings violations
- Conflicts of interest
- Non-management (failure to respond to clear needs to manage)
- Civil rights concerns in hiring
- Wrongful discharge

Library board meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Laws of Kansas (K.S.A. 75-4317). All library board meetings must be open to the public. A “meeting” means any gathering, assembly, telephone call, or any other means of interactive communications by a quorum of the board. If the board meets at a time other than its regular meeting time, advance public notice must be provided, giving the date, time, and place of the meeting.

Individuals should not profit as a result of their position on a board. To do so is a conflict of interest. Another agency should not benefit as a direct result of an individual’s dual membership on the boards of both agencies. If a transaction occurs in which loyalties are confused, board members should vote against the transaction. Board members should ask this question: “Would you be willing to have it publicly stated that your library is doing business with a board member?”

Civil rights violations can occur if board members ask illegal questions in a job interview or on an application. It is your job to train them to avoid these pitfalls. Several years ago I took a board member with me to interview a candidate for a position at the library. I told her ahead of time that it was illegal to ask anything about the person’s religion. She went ahead and asked the question. We could have been sued. You need to keep board members from making these mistakes.

Working with Board Members

Learn to work with board members. Library board members are right even when they are wrong. Most of the time board members care deeply for the library and want to see it prosper and grow. Now and then a citizen will offer to serve on the library board to keep taxes down. When this happens, budget increases and salary increases for the staff will be more difficult to secure.

Sometimes a single board member can control the outcome even when a majority of the board votes to do something. I remember a time when the Great Bend board voted to ask the city to create an employee benefit fund for the library. Only one board member voted

against it. When I went to the city council to make the request to increase the library's funding, the board member who had voted against the issue in the board meeting, showed up at the council meeting to argue against the employee benefit fund. The only thing I could do was let it happen. The city did not approve the benefit fund, but from that point on until the end of his term this board member had no influence with the rest of the board.

Keep board members informed. Give them a month or more to consider a new proposal before you ask them to vote on it—especially if it means spending money. When I present the proposed salaries for the next year, I give them the proposed salaries in November and tell them that they need to finalize the salary increases at the January board meeting. (Pay raises go into effect on February 1 of each year.)

Managing Money

The budget is the library's single most important planning document because it is the basis for the monthly financial statement. Knowing the library's current financial situation will help you determine future expenditures. If utility costs are running higher than normal, you know you will have to cut back somewhere else to balance the budget at the end of the year. The board helps the librarian make these decisions.

Budgeting is the process of securing adequate funding and allocating current resources. Each year you develop a budget for the public library and the System. I start the budget for the coming year in March or April. First priority usually goes to those line items over which we have very little control. Second priority is for those items over which we have absolute control. Utilities, building maintenance, and salaries tend to claim a lion's share of the money, while the rest is spent on books, materials, and programs.

The previous year's actual expenditures are often a good predictor of future expenditures. Look at what the library spent last for electricity or postage and use the numbers to estimate the amount for that line item in next year's budget—except when you know for certain that postage or some other item are going to increase. Then you have to make an educated guess how much to allocate for these items.

Once the board sets the budget it is your job to manage the library's money. The Great Bend Public Library board and the CKLS Executive Committee receive and review a monthly financial statement. The accountants and the staff prepare the financial statements. Take time before the board meetings to study these statements. Board members will ask questions. Be prepared to answer them. Once individual members are satisfied they will vote to approve the monthly bills and file the financial statements for the auditor.

The board's role is to secure adequate funding. The board must constantly strike a balance between asking for more of available tax money and considering the needs of the library. If tax funds are inadequate or if you just need some ideas on how to get more money for your library, read my books, *Fundraising for the Small Public Library: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*, (Neal-Schuman, 1990) and *Fundraising for Libraries: 25 Proven Ways to Get More Money for Your Library*, (Neal-Schuman, 2002).

Nuts and Bolts of Creating the Budgets

The purpose of a library budget is to determine the resources the library has and manage those funds in a way that guarantees that staff members will have the resources they will need to carry out the goals and objectives of their jobs. Estimate as closely as you can how much money you are going to have for next year. Review the budgeted amounts for each line item in the previous year. Review the actual expenditures for each line item from the previous year. Try to reconcile any differences between the budgeted amounts and the actual expenditures. Project increases that might occur in the coming year. e.g. postage, fuel, electricity, etc.

Allocate money for non-discretionary items first. Then allocate the rest of the money among the discretionary items. Keep working with the budget numbers until the projected expenditures match the estimated income.

The best way to do this is to keep accurate records of how you spent last year's money. Even if you haven't allocated funds for the item you need to track, deduct the expenditure from the line where it fits the best. Then budget accurately for that category next year.

Don't spend the capital reserve or carryover on salaries. Next year when you need more money for salaries, it won't be there because you have already spent the carryover. Once you increase the salary budget with discretionary money, from then on that money will become "non-discretionary."

Salaries must come from current revenue—not from carryover funds. Once you allocate a dollar amount for salary increases, you will have to continue at least that amount in future budgets.

Budgeting Time Line: I use this guideline for preparing the budgets.

January. Have the boards adopt the final draft of the budget for the coming year. You can't change the revenue from tax sources, but if you wait until after all the expenses for the past year are in, information on actual expenditures will help you forecast next year's expenditure, and you will know exactly how much money you will have to work with.

March. Draft the preliminary budget for the coming year and discuss it in the April board meetings. The first step is to create a column for revenue and expenditures for the new proposed budget to the right of the column for current budget. To the left of the current budget will be the actual revenue and expenditures for the previous year. The next step is to figure out how much money you plan to have for the coming year. Start with the tax revenue from the current budget, and then estimate what it will be for the coming year. Estimate the amounts you expect from other funding sources. This will give you an idea of the total revenue to work with.

Now that you have a revenue target you can begin to figure out the planned expenditures. Last year's actual expenditures and the current year's budget figures will give you a good guideline for the coming year's projections. I usually copy the current budget column and paste it into the new column for the upcoming year. Then I adjust each cell what I think we will have to have or want to have for each line item in the budget. Non-discretionary items come first, then you can project the amount you would like to spend for discretionary items like materials, capital outlay, and salary increases. It is like fitting the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together. You keep working on the numbers until the

expenditures match the revenue. Be sure to plan for money in the capital reserve (carryover) fund.

April. Present the proposed budgets to the Board. Mail it to them well ahead of the board meetings, if you can. At the meetings they will have a chance to review and suggest whatever changes they want.

May. Adopt the final version of proposed budgets. This is the budget you will give to the city's Chief Financial Officer for inclusion in the city budget.

June. Send the proposed budget by the date requested by the City with the cover letter that contains this wording: "Here is the proposed YYYY budget for the Great Bend Public Library. It is based on our estimate of the yield the library's five-mill levy plus a proportionate share of motor vehicle and other applicable taxes."

At this point revenue amounts are the only budget parts that are "cast in stone." Once the budgets are published and passed, tax revenue will not change. The expenditures within the budget may be shifted around to accommodate updated cost information.

November. Establish salaries. By now the income is fixed and you should be able to determine salaries for the coming year.

Budget preparation is a yearlong activity. It is the single most important planning document you have. Stay on top of it all year long and give it your best attention.

More Than Pay and Insurance

Be loyal to the staff. Loyalty is a two way street and you need to hold up your end of the bargain. Early in my career here, I found a list of what employees look for in a job. Since then I have tried to live by it. Here is the list—ranked in order of importance:

1. Appreciating their work
2. Being in on things
3. Having a boss who is sympathetic to personal problems
4. Job security
5. Good wages
6. Interesting work
7. Promotion and growth within the company
8. Management that is loyal to workers
9. Good working conditions
10. Tactful disciplining.

If you can learn to implement the concepts on this list you will have the support of the staff.

Never hire from a too small applicant pool. Every time I have broken this rule, I lived to regret it. If you advertise for a position and only get one application, keep looking. There

is a chance that the one applicant you have will have the education, experience, and skills to do the job, but lack the personality to get along with others or the work ethic you can trust.