

# Trustee Newsletter

## January 2019

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**If there is a new trustee on your board, be sure to sign them up for this newsletter!**  
**Contact Nora at [nburrows@fills.org](mailto:nburrows@fills.org) to sign up.**

## Advocacy Day

Library Advocacy Day is on Wednesday, February, 27. We want to have a representative from every library this year. It can be a director, a board member, any staff member, a volunteer, or even a patron. With the proposed State budget cuts, it is extremely important that we show up with the strongest representation possible!



We need to provide a list of people attending the meetings with the legislators before the schedule is finalized, so please register as soon as possible. To register, please go to <http://bit.ly/2DyaLoi>. The deadline for

*Advocacy, continued on page 2*

## New Trustee?

Are you a public library that has new trustees as of January 1st? This is an important reminder that New York State Public Officer's Law §10 requires all public library trustees (but not association library trustees) to take an oath of office within 30 days of beginning their term of office. Public library trustees are public officers and the oath of office is required to officially undertake and perform duties of a public library trustee. If a public library trustee does not properly complete and file an oath of office, the trustee's position may be deemed vacant.

For more information about how and why the oath of office is administered, and where to properly file an oath of office, please see the Oaths of Office page on the New York State Library website at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/oath.htm>.

Not sure whether your library is legally a public library or an association library? Contact Sarah Glogowski at [sglogowski@fills.org](mailto:sglogowski@fills.org) or 607-273-4074x222 to find out.

## Advocacy (cont'd from page 1)

registration is Friday, February 15th.

The Finger Lakes Library System will be providing a bus to Albany, leaving Wegmans in Ithaca at 6am. The bus will stop in Dryden and Cortland. The System will also provide a van to Albany for those in the northern region, with stops in Auburn and Weedsport, and can add another stop or two if necessary.

Please contact Kristi Downham at [kdownham@flls.org](mailto:kdownham@flls.org) or 607-273-4074x228 with questions or to make arrangements to meet the van.

## FLLS January Board Meeting

The Finger Lakes Library System board of trustees met on Wednesday, January 23rd. Here are the highlights of what was discussed:

- ◇ 2019 Board Meeting Dates were confirmed. The FLLS board typically meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm. <http://bit.ly/2RwYgx0>
- ◇ Conflict of Interest forms were signed by all trustees. The form FLLS trustees use can be viewed at: <http://www.flls.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Conflict-of-Interest.pdf>.
- ◇ Board Committee Assignments were reviewed. Board members signed up for committees such as finance, personnel, policy, and nominating.
- ◇ There was a discussion of Advocacy Day, which takes place on Wednesday, February 27, and the legislative highlights that NYLA distributes.
- ◇ The 2019 FLLS budget was formally passed.
- ◇ The FLLS board continued a discussion on e-content services, especially hoopla. [A further discussion took place with member library directors at the January 30th Directors Advisory Council.]

The FLLS board meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. The next meeting is on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 at 5:30pm.

## Upcoming Events

Just the winter blues? Facts & myths about seasonal affective disorder

- ◇ **Friday, February 15, 2019 at 10am**
- ◇ Webinar from SCRLC
- ◇ <https://scrlc.org/events/view/6054>

Advocacy Day

- ◇ **All day on Wednesday, February 27, 2019**
- ◇ Albany, NY
- ◇ More details and registration at <http://bit.ly/2DyaLoi>

Preventing Workplace Burnout: Self-Care Strategies

- ◇ **At your convenience**
- ◇ Archived webinar from SCRLC
- ◇ <https://youtu.be/XI7Whw8RziA>



# Trustee Interview: Deborah Lewis



**Name:** Deborah Lewis

**Where are you a trustee?** Finger Lakes Library System

**Current job:** Retired, living at home to support my 99 yr.-old Mom

**Education/work background:**

Education: MBA from Franklin University in Ohio, MLS and BA from the University at Albany, AA from Auburn Community College (now Cayuga Community College)

Work: Onondaga County Public Library System in Syracuse NY (an organization similar to the Finger Lakes Library System), OCLC: Online Computer Library Center in Ohio (a non-profit, international library membership organization), Ohionet (a non-profit library service organization supporting OCLC), SUNY/OCLC Network (a non-profit library service organization tied to but separate from SUNY; now defunct, supporting OCLC services ) in Albany NY, and co-owner of Marathon Press (now defunct)

Volunteer: Trustee and current board president at Finger Lakes Library System, member of the Union Springs Lions Club, Secretary for the Finger Lakes Region Lions Hearing Foundation Inc., coordinator for the Union Springs Community Blood Drives

**Trusteeship is volunteer work. Why did you become a trustee?** During my working career, I've tended to put most of my energies into work, rather than balancing my work life with community volunteering (with a few exceptions). I always planned to spend time in retirement volunteering to make up for that earlier lack of involvement. We live next door to the Springport Free Library librarian, so here I am! As a librarian I'm glad I can still have a role in supporting the work of libraries.

**What is the best thing about being a trustee?**

Knowing that I'm supporting the work of libraries.

**What is the most challenging thing about working on a library board?**

Keeping up with the NYS laws and regulations affecting libraries to make sure the organization complies. On other boards (not FLLS), dealing with differing personalities and getting the volunteer Board members to put in the time outside of the meetings to do the work that is needed.

**What are you most proud of?** My career in helping libraries.

**What current library trend are you most interested in?**

Sustainability, but also (not a trend), securing sustainable library funding

**What advice would you give to a new library trustee or someone considering being a trustee?**

Take the time to understand the background of the public library environment at least the state and regional level, as well as in your community and of the local library.

**What do you do for fun?** Read and travel

**What would you like to learn?**

QuickBooks – for the Hearing Foundation (one of the other boards I serve on)

**What are you currently reading or watching?**

I'm finally watching Outlander. I held off for years, thinking the show couldn't be as good as the books, but I'm enjoying the show.

**Is there anything about you that others would be surprised to know?**

I have an Amateur Radio General License.

# Conflict of Interest Forms

By Sarah Glogowski

As we start our 2019 Board of Trustees meetings, I would like to highlight the importance of conflict of interest forms. Conflict of interest for library trustees is covered on pages 41 and 42 of the print version of the *2018 Handbook for Library Trustees*. It is very important that both library boards and library staff be transparent about conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest policy and disclosure form are now required for all libraries in New York State given the Department of Education's Office of Counsel ruling on how the Non-Profit Revitalization Act applies to libraries. The Act specifies particular issues to be addressed in a library's conflict of interest policy. You can view more information on the New York Library's website: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/coi-wb.htm>.

The State Library and the State Education Department Fraud, Waste and Abuse website have received an increasing number of complaints challenging the actions of library boards that have approved the hiring of relatives of board members as either staff or as vendors. Library boards are strongly advised against this type of hiring in the interest of stewardship, accountability, and transparency.

If a conflict of interest comes up, being open and transparent about it to the Board of Trustees should immediately occur. In every decision, trustees should be sensitive to even the appearance of impropriety. When a conflict occurs, trustees need to recuse themselves from that particular vote during the Board meeting.

Conflict of interest forms can vary in length. If your library needs sample copies, the Finger Lakes Library System form can be viewed at <http://www.flls.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Conflict-of-Interest.pdf>. We would also be happy to provide you with other samples. If you are not sure whether a particular issue is a conflict, please reach out to Sarah, Nora, or Jenny at FLLS by phone or email.

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## Going fine free

By Nora Burrows

As of January 2019, all five of the Seneca County public libraries have gone fine free. These libraries, along with a number of other libraries in the Finger Lakes Library System, no longer charge patrons for items that are returned late. The Seneca County libraries were featured in an article by the Finger Lakes Times (<http://bit.ly/2RobGeP>).

Eliminating overdue fines is a national trend that is growing in popularity. Removing late fees helps libraries better serve their communities by reducing obstacles for patrons to access library services. Many libraries that have gone fine free have seen an increase in library usage and an increase in circulation of materials with no change in the number of items that don't get returned. To learn more about going fine free, including rebuttals to the main reasons to keep fines, check out this TED Talk: <http://bit.ly/2Tq01h8>.

If your library is considering going fine free and would like more information or guidance, feel free to contact the Finger Lakes Library System.





# Reminder: Annual Reports

Now is the time of year that your directors are working on their New York State Annual Reports. Please be available to assist them and answer questions if necessary. They are due to Kristi Downham by February 15th.



-  @fingerlakeslibrarysystem
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-  @fingerlakeslibrarysystem

## Fun!

BookOps, which sorts books for the Brooklyn and New York Public Libraries, faces off against the King County (WA) Library System in an annual book sorting contest <http://bit.ly/2Sl1hVy>

Two new branches of the Chicago Public Library now have apartments in the same building <http://bit.ly/2Hu2SnT>

The book *Good Omens* by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett is coming to Amazon Prime in 2019. The series is being adapted for television by the original authors and stars David Tennant and Michael Sheen. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1869454/>

FLLS will be closed 2/18/19 for Presidents Day



**Finger Lakes Library System**  
January 23 at 9:45 AM · 🌐

It's the fourth Wednesday in January which means it's #LibraryShelfieDay! Here are the shelves where we keep storytime kits, puppets, and more that we loan out to our member libraries. We also have book group kits here that anyone with a Finger Lakes library card can request.



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