

2020 Trustees and Friends Conference

Theme: **Remaining Vital: Your Library as Community Connector in Uncertain Times**

Dates: September 21-25, 2020

Where: Online

Cost: Free!

Registration: Coming soon!

Join us for a week of discussion on how libraries can thrive during COVID-19, how we can manage the risks ahead, and how we can emerge stronger and more integral to our communities.

How can I attend a weeklong conference? How will it work?

The Conference will have several different types of events and activities.

- **Live Events:** These events will occur via online conference call technology MS Teams – which functions like Zoom meetings. We will post the links to the events ahead of time, and you can join the live event either with your phone (dial in for audio only or join via smartphone) or your computer. Most live events will be recorded so that if you are not available to join us live, you can watch them at your convenience and send us follow-up questions at a later date. If you are able to join us live, you'll be able to ask questions of the presenters during the live event.
- **Pre-recorded events/resources:** These will be released throughout the week, and you are welcome to watch them that day or at your convenience using any web-accessible device (smartphone, computer, etc.).
- **Listserv Discussions:** Each day, we will post a question topic on the Trustees & Friends listserv (a listserv is an email distribution group – like Front Porch Forum, but each posting is its own email). This is to encourage your use of the listserv and to help you engage with one another as if you were in a conference session together (but communicating with the group via email messages). Not on the listserv? You can join by emailing joshua.muse@vermont.gov and tell him your name, your library, and that you wish to join the Trustees and Friends listserv.
- **Resources:** We will be gathering and posting resources throughout the week on our website for you.

What is MS Teams, and what technology do I need to participate in an online conference?

- MS Teams is an online video conferencing technology that functions like Zoom. You can join by:
 - dialing in with your phone/smartphone (like making a phone call),
 - clicking on a link using a smartphone (like a mobile device surfing the web),
 - or clicking on a link with your computer.
- If you want to be able to interact with the presenters and participate in discussions, you'll need a microphone (either via your phone/smartphone or your computer).
- If you want to have your face appear as well, you'll need a video camera on your computer (or you can use your smartphone video camera).
- More information on joining an MS Teams meeting can be found on our website here: https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/continuing_ed/joining_teams

Conference Schedule

Link to Conference Schedule with Full Descriptions: <https://libraries.vermont.gov/2020TFCschedule>

Monday, September 21st

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. (LIVE EVENT): Town Hall with State Librarian Jason Broughton

Join State Librarian Jason Broughton for a State-level perspective on the issues facing libraries during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. (LIVE EVENT): Breakout Discussions

Continue the conversation in one of three breakout discussions where you'll join a host for a discussion with other trustees, friends, and library directors on a focus topic.

Topics:

1. Continue the Conversation with Jason.
2. Equitable and Inclusive Library Policies with Joy Worland.
3. Strategic Planning Implications during COVID-19 and Beyond with Lara Keenan.

Pre-Recorded Event: Keynote Speaker Susan Clark - Slow Democracy and the Power of Community

We've all experienced the "us-them" mentality that divides our society. And yet we also know that it will take all of us working together—liberal, conservative, old-timer, newcomer, and every other category we divide ourselves into—to build long-term answers. How can we communicate across the divide in these crazy times, and what is the role of libraries in this effort? In this presentation and discussion, author and educator Susan Clark explains "slow democracy," in which ordinary people mobilize to find local solutions to local problems. You'll have an opportunity explore your own worldviews, consider some of the latest research and writing about public engagement, and consider practical tips for re-awakening civility.

Susan is coauthor of *Slow Democracy: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back Home* and *All Those In Favor*, a book about Vermont town meetings.

<http://slowdemocracy.org/author-bios-contact>

Listserv Discussion Topic: What Successes in Community Connections has your library had during COVID-19?

Join us for a conversation on the Lib.TrustFriend listserv. Post your response to the discussion topic, share advice, and celebrate one another's successes!

Tuesday, September 22nd

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (LIVE EVENT): Money Matters: Building Certainty in Uncertain Times with Gary Deziel

The pandemic has made us all aware of the vulnerability of our economic underpinnings, nationally and locally. Public library trustees, with control over non-profit corporations or municipal units, are feeling the uncertainty as well. This session will focus on framing the current fiscal environment, current hiring, employment, and fiscal impacts of the pandemic on Vermont public libraries, municipal officials' perceptions on the short-term fiscal future, and launching from there into concrete strategies for budget management today and budget planning for tomorrow.

Gary Deziel, Extension Assistant Professor and Community Development Specialist, UVM Extension, is former Associate Director/Dean, Finance and Operations (2006-2017), UVM Extension, where he was responsible for general, sales and fees, grant, and gift funds totaling ~\$11 million per year. Gary holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Vermont and is a trustee and treasurer of the Georgia (VT) Public (municipal) Library.

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (LIVE EVENT): What Do Librarians Really Do? A Panel of librarians, moderated by Joy Worland

You know what your librarian's job description says and that they must be working hard if the library is running successfully, but how much do you know about the ins and outs of their daily work life? A truly complete list of responsibilities and tasks of a Vermont librarian would be pages long, and it might include some things that surprise you!

Join VTLIB Consultant Joy Worland and a panel of librarians from a variety of sizes and types of libraries to hear more about the seemingly ever-expanding and sometimes invisible labor that makes Vermont libraries some of the best in the country.

Pre-Recorded Event: Trustee Trainings with Lara Keenan: 1. Trustee Duties and Responsibilities and 2. Laws for Libraries

VTLIB Consultant Lara Keenan's trustee training covers a wide range of topics. In these two videos she focuses on trustee duties and responsibilities and laws that apply to library trustees and libraries in VT.

Listserv Discussion Topic: How have you transferred your fundraising to the new COVID-19 environment? What new online fundraising ideas have you tried? What changes have you made to your usual fundraising techniques? What successes and challenges have you had?

Join us for a conversation on the Lib.TrustFriend listserv. Post your response to the discussion topic, share advice, and celebrate one another's ideas! These ideas will be added to a handout that we'll provide at the end of the week on online fundraising ideas.

Wednesday, September 23rd

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (LIVE EVENT): Successfully Navigating HR Challenges through the Pandemic for Library Trustees with Gary Deziel

As a trustee, you have special responsibilities for your library's success. And success begins and ends with good people employed *and supported* within the organization. The impact of the pandemic has put a great deal of stress on library trustees, library employees, and the many and varied relationships that your library has with the town, funders, volunteers, and friends. This session will focus on current HR topics-of-the-day, including regulations and laws that govern employee and employer rights, "common pitfalls" of managing employees and how to avoid them, and "real world" examples of employer-employee challenges present in the current workaday world that COVID-19 has defined.

Gary Deziel, Extension Assistant Professor and Community Development Specialist, UVM Extension, is former Associate Dean, Finance and Operations (2006-2017), UVM Extension, where he was responsible for human resources. Gary is a Society of Human Resource Management certified professional (SHRM-CP) and is a current trustee and the treasurer of Georgia (VT) Public Library.

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (LIVE EVENT): Library Trivia with Special Guest Amanda Gustin from the VT Historical Society

Join us as Amanda Gustin hosts a special Library Trivia night! Learn about VT libraries, socialize online with library trustees and friends from around the state, and test your knowledge! Amanda has been hosting fun-filled trivia nights for the VT Historical Society throughout the Pandemic, and she has a reputation for entertaining and enlightening trivia nights. Kick back, get yourself a glass of your favorite beverage, and join us for a bit of fun!

Pre-Recorded Event: Trustee Trainings with Lara Keenan: 3. Fundraising Basics and 4. Succession Planning

VTLIB Consultant Lara Keenan's trustee training covers a wide range of topics. In these next two videos she focuses on the basics of fundraising and tips for succession planning.

Listserv Discussion Topic: What have your trustees and Friends groups done to make sure that you have a productive and successful partnership? How do you maintain open and honest communication? What do you partner on? Do you have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

Join us for a conversation on the Lib.TrustFriend listserv. Post your response to the discussion topic, share advice, and celebrate one another's ideas!

Thursday, September 24th

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (LIVE EVENT): A Crash Course in Communications for Library Supporters with Kathy Dempsey

This session will teach you simple ways you can serve your libraries even more effectively by brushing up on basic communications tactics. Our speaker will explain why it's everyone's job to help deliver positive messages and good user experiences. Everything you do makes impressions on others, and when you're affiliated with organizations, your actions become "brand touchpoints" for them. (That's lingo for "your actions affect your organization's reputation.") So we'll touch on communications that are written, verbal, visual, social, professional, and personal. Combining cautionary tales with best practices, and combining serious strategy with some humor, Kathy Dempsey will give you new perspective on how careful communications can help you achieve your service goals.

Kathy Dempsey is a consultant and trainer through her business, Libraries Are Essential, and is the author of *The Accidental Library Marketer* (Information Today, Inc., 2009). Her work is dedicated to helping librarians and information professionals promote their value and expertise in order to gain respect and funding. Kathy has been the Editor of the *Marketing Library Services* newsletter for 24 years and was formerly Editor-in-Chief of *Computers in Libraries* magazine. She also blogs at The 'M' Word, and is an active member of the New Jersey Library Association.

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. (LIVE EVENT): Library Advocacy in 2020: Making the Case for Support *During* Uncertain Times with VT Library Association President Kevin Unrath

EveryLibrary, our national library advocacy organization, writes that libraries are "under threat from a number of major crises simultaneously during these uncertain times, particularly the loss of financial and voter support. The COVID-19 crisis has decimated the fundamental municipal tax base that funds school and public libraries. Even libraries that were doing well before the crisis may be facing new challenges." Those are sobering words. The *good news* is that libraries are still one of the most heavily used cultural institutions in our communities, and they serve as

the heart of many Vermont towns. This program will make the case that Friends and Trustees are in a great position to advocate for continued local funding and provide tips and ideas on making the case effectively.

Kevin Unrath earned his Master's Degree in Library Science in 2000, and since then he has worked in both public and academic librarianship around the United States over the last two decades. He currently serves as the Director of the Pierson Library in Shelburne and is the 2020-2021 President of the Vermont Library Association. Kevin has successfully advocated for funding throughout his career, including leading local and statewide efforts.

Pre-Recorded Event: Trustee Trainings with Lara Keenan: 5. Community Needs Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Advocacy

VTLIB Consultant Lara Keenan's trustee training covers a wide range of topics. In this final video, she focuses on the interrelated topics of community needs assessments, strategic planning, and advocacy.

Listserv Discussion Topic: What ideas do you have for continuing your education about your roles and responsibilities as a library trustee or friend member?

Join us for a conversation on the Lib.TrustFriend listserv. Post your response to the discussion topic, share advice, and celebrate one another's ideas!

Friday, September 25th

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (LIVE EVENT): Board Management with Sarah Henshaw

Wondering how to be a great board member, especially with COVID restrictions? How do you tap into your skills and experience to be an Ambassador for your library? How do you attract community members to join you on the board? Sarah will provide some exercises and tools board members can use to assess and use their individual skills as board members/ambassadors, remain engaged and excited between board meetings, and intentionally recruit board members. Time will be allotted for questions and sharing of best practices between participants as well.

Ms. Henshaw is a community development professional with over 20 years of experience in strategic planning, facilitation, program design, business development and fundraising in both domestic and international nonprofit settings. Ms. Henshaw owns Leaves of Change VT, providing consulting and advisory services to build on strengths that allow nonprofits to more effectively and efficiently serve their clients, participants and beneficiaries.

Pre-Recorded Event: Do-it-Yourself Trustee Training with Joe McVeigh

Not all trustees and library boards are able to attend conferences or set aside time for extensive training or professional development. This brief presentation will describe how one library board took on their own training as part of regularly-scheduled board meetings and made it part of their board culture. The presenter will share tips and suggestions for how any board can incorporate ongoing professional development into board meetings, whether virtual or face-to-face.

Joe McVeigh is President of the Board of Trustees of Ilsley Public Library in Middlebury.

Resource: Handout: Fundraising Ideas during COVID-19

We have gathered a list of fundraising ideas from local and national sources – as well as your ideas from the listserv discussion – and we will release those ideas on our final day.