

# trustee tale

## Newsletter for Public Library Trustees

### What A Director Needs To Know

It is a requirement that library directors be certified by the State of Wisconsin. And to remain certified, directors need to complete 100 contact hours of continuing education over a five-year period (an average of 20 hours a year). So what exactly are they learning?

Library directors have to know a lot. First, there's the "library stuff": selecting, purchasing, and cataloging books, providing reference service, readers' advisory, and interlibrary loan, etc. Then there are business skills because your library director is, in effect, running a small business. They need to know about bookkeeping, personnel management, customer service, legal issues, computer support and building maintenance. Even if they don't do a task themselves (you don't expect your library director to fix the furnace), they need to know enough to see that the work is done well for a fair cost.

Here's a run-down of an average library director's continuing education record. If the library director doesn't have a Masters in Library Science degree (directors of smaller libraries probably won't), four basic courses are required within their first five years as a director. These courses are:

- ♦ Library administration & management
- ♦ Collection development and materials selection
- ♦ Reference services & information science
- ♦ Cataloging & organization of knowledge

Once those have been completed, directors can get started on accumulating the 20 hours a year that are required just to keep up. The State of Wisconsin divides continuing education activities into three types: Credit, Noncredit, and Self-directed.

Credit is recognized when a college or university awards academic credit. These credits could come from courses in librarianship from one of our state's library schools or from a class in QuickBooks or Microsoft Word from a nearby technical college.

Noncredit continuing education is by far the most common. These types of educational activities are usually offered by agencies, organizations, or associations for which academic credit is not given. Topics covered might include:

- ♦ Safety & security for staff and library facilities

*(continued on page 2)*



## Links on Certification and Continuing Education:

The *Certification Manual for Wisconsin Public Library Directors*, the essential document for trustees and directors on certification requirements will be found at

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dlcl/pld/certtoc.html>.

Of special interest is Appendix C of the Certification Manual: Library Board Responsibilities and Certification:

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dlcl/pld/certappc.html>

Continuing education resources, OWLS web page:

[http://www.owls.lib.wi.us/services/con\\_ed.htm](http://www.owls.lib.wi.us/services/con_ed.htm)

Winnefox (Library System) Meetings and Workshops

<http://www.winnefox.org/calendar/welcome.html>

Wisdom (Wisconsin Data on Library Meetings)

### *("What A Director Needs To Know" continued)*

- ♦ Best new books
- ♦ Customer service
- ♦ Fundraising
- ♦ The best ways to serve a particular group (ethnic minority, persons with disabilities, senior citizens)
- ♦ How to get the most out of a particular type of reference resource
- ♦ Workplace communication

Attendance at professional conferences would fall into this category. Annual conferences of the Wisconsin Library Association, the Wisconsin Association of Public Librarians, the Public Library Association, and other like organizations are highly valuable and a great resource for such education. Attendees learn about the latest trends and developments in the library world, hear world-class speakers, and have a chance to network and discuss issues with colleagues. These conferences can be useful for library trustees as well.

Self-directed activities are the least common, but sometimes the most interesting. These educational activities occur when the director and a learning consultant (a member of the system staff) plan together. Examples of self-directed activities may include work exchange programs, teaching a class, or significant activity in a professional association.

Library directors today need to be highly educated with command of a wide variety of knowledge and skills. Library services reach far beyond just shelving books.



## Director Certification

*By Greta Thompson*

Because public library directors need to be certified in the state of Wisconsin, the Library Board needs to explain this to candidates during the hiring process to ensure that they meet or can meet the requirement, and are willing to do so. A person does not need to be certified at the time of hiring, but she/he must be able to meet certification requirements within one year. A temporary certificate indicates that the director meets all the general education requirements of the position. A newly hired director must apply for a one-year temporary certificate within three months after being hired.

Although it can occasionally be tempting, it is inadvisable to hire someone who does not already meet the general education requirement. The task of managing the library plus taking required library courses is time-consuming and sometimes taxing. Having to do more can frustrate both the director, who wants to do a good job at work and at school, and the board, which needs the director to be devoting the best part of his/her energies and time to the job.

**("Director Certification" continued)**

A regular certificate indicates that both the general education requirements and the library education requirements have been met. Certificates are issued for a five-year period. The renewal of a certificate for another five-year period requires participation in 100 hours of continuing education.

There are three levels of regular certification. The population of the municipality in which the library is located determines the one your director needs.

**Grade I**

Directors of libraries serving a municipality of 6000 or more need to have a Grade I certificate. Only those people with both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from an ALA-accredited library school program are eligible for Grade I certificates.

**Grade II**

Directors of libraries serving a municipality with a population between 3000 and 5999 must hold a Grade II certificate. The educational requirements for this grade are a bachelor's degree, including or supplemented by courses in public library administration, selection of materials, organization of materials, and reference and information services. An applicant for Grade II certification who has not completed these library courses may be granted temporary certification, renewable annually for up to three years.

**Grade III**

Directors of libraries serving a population of less than 3000 must have a Grade III certificate, which requires the successful completion of 54 semester hours, half in the liberal arts and

sciences, including or supplemented by a course in public library management. Applicants who have not completed a course in public library management may be granted temporary certification for up to one year. Prior to his/her initial recertification in five years, Grade III directors must complete courses in selection of materials, organization of materials, and reference and information services.

**Renewal of Certification**

Public library directors must accumulate 100 contact hours of continuing education activities: (A) credit continuing education activities, i.e., courses for which academic credit is awarded; (B) noncredit continuing education activities, e.g., system workshops and state or national conferences of library-related associations; and (C) self-directed continuing education activities, which must be preapproved and developed in consultation with the system staff person responsible for this, the system validator. A minimum of seventy contact hours must be earned in Categories A and B.

**Voluntary Certification**

Individuals employed in libraries in positions other than director may apply for certification, though it is not required. Certification is not intended for use by individual library boards as a requirement for hiring in non-administrative positions or for advancement within the library.

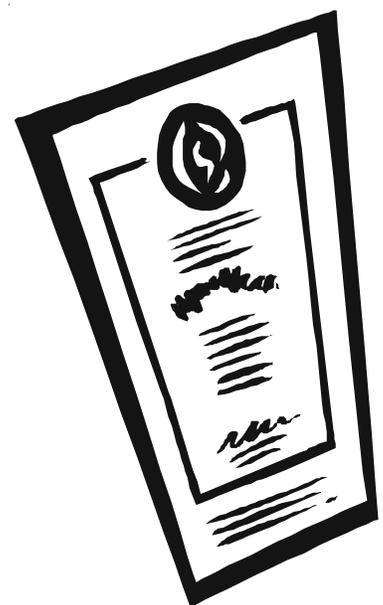
**Board Support**

Appendix C in the *Certification Manual* concludes, "The Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning recommends that libraries budget sufficient annual funds for the continuing education needed to maintain the

library director's certification and improve his/her knowledge. Not only is payment of certification fees recommended, but also paid leave time and payment for other expenses to pursue needed continuing education." In addition, some systems offer scholarship assistance, usually on a matching basis, for librarians taking classes or participating in continuing education conferences and workshops.

Certification and continuing education help your director be a good and continually improving librarian. It is in your interest, and that of your community, to actively support his or her educational work.

**Note:** This article is based on the certification page within Outagamie Waupaca Library System's Links for Librarians at <http://www.owls.lib.wi.us/info/links/cert.htm>.



## Ken Hall, New Director at Fond du Lac

Ken Hall, formerly Assistant Director of Winnefox Library System and my partner in trustee workshops and this newsletter, has recently become the Director of Fond du Lac Public Library. We want to congratulate him on his new job and wish him the best. We also want to lament his departure; he has been a pleasure to work with and all of us involved in the workshops and newsletter will miss him.

Mark Arend, the new Acting Assistant Director at Winnefox, will join Carla Basiliere, Marketing Coordinator and myself in continuing to publish *Trustee Tale*. The joint workshops are on hold, but each system, OWLS and Winnefox, may offer some activities designed to interest and help trustees this fall. In the mean time, to adapt Charles Osgood's phrase, "see you in the newsletter."

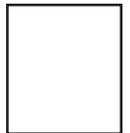
### TRUSTEE SOAPBOX

*Do you have a question, comment or topic to suggest for a future TrusteeTale? Send an Email to:*

*[Arend@mail.winnefox.org](mailto:Arend@mail.winnefox.org)*

*You may also phone your questions to Greta at 920-832-6794.*

**Winnefox Library System  
106 Washington Avenue  
Oshkosh, WI 54901-4985**



*trustee tale* is written and distributed by the Winnefox Library System and the Outagamie Waupaca Library System. Distribution to your board is funded by your home system.

If you have questions, comments or suggestions for future articles, send them to:

Winnefox: Mark Arend, 920-236-5222  
or email [arend@mail.winnefox.org](mailto:arend@mail.winnefox.org)  
OWLS: Greta Thompson,  
920-832-6194 or email  
[greta@mail.OWLS.lib.wi.us](mailto:greta@mail.OWLS.lib.wi.us)

Editor: Carla Basiliere, Marketing  
Coordinator  
Authors: Greta Thompson  
and Mark Arend  
Graphic Artist: Renee Miller