



THE BULLETIN

NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Voice of the Library Community

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Mark your calendar

- MARCH 11**
NYLA Library Lobby Day
Albany, NY
- MARCH 18**
NYLA Institute
Stories in Action
- MARCH 20**
NYLA Institute
Speaking with One Voice



\$5 Million Cut in Library Aid

by Michael Borges

Governor Spitzer released his proposed 2008-09 Executive Budget on January 22nd, which removed the \$5 million in funding for library systems added by the Legislature last year. Included in the proposed 2008-09 Executive Budget were the \$3 million increase in Library Aid from 2006, the \$14 million in public library construction funding, and the \$6.25 per pupil for Library Materials Aid. The Executive Budget removed many, if not all, of the extra funding added by the Legislature in 2007.

Despite a \$4.3 billion potential deficit, the Governor did manage to increase School Aid by \$1.4 billion, set aside \$1 billion for upstate economic development, and proposed creating a \$4 billion endowment for higher education to be funded by privatizing the State Lottery. The Executive Budget also proposed increasing funding for the Governor's Universal Broadband Initiative by \$10 million.

As a result of the Governor's actions, NYLA's efforts will be focused on restoring the \$5 million cut as well as attempting to have the Contracts for Excellence

Initiative amended to allow the extra funding provided to high needs school districts to be used to purchase books for school libraries and hire school library media specialists. Should additional funding become available, we will also be seeking state support of NYLA's Book Aid proposal, which provides or increases state aid for all libraries to purchase books.

Library advocates should be contacting legislators either directly or through NYLA's Online Advocacy Center to send letters urging the restoration of the \$5 million cut and amending the Contracts for Excellence Initiative (which provided extra state aid to high need school districts to reduce class size, extend hours/school year, etc).

In February, I testified at the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Education and met with key legislators and legislative staff on our 2008 Budget Priorities. Library Lobby Day is Tuesday, March 11th and we encourage all library advocates to make every effort to attend this one opportunity for the library community

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INTERVIEW WITH NYLA MEMBERS

John Brock and Joanne Shawhan

by Michael Borges



In February, I interviewed both John and Joanne who recently joined the NYS Department of Education as Associates in School Library Services in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Instructional Technology. Both John and Joanne are second career librarians. John was a professional chef and Joanne was pursuing a career as a historian before joining the library community.

John utilized Syracuse University's distance education program to get his MLS and was mentored by his wife who is an educator. Joanne has a PhD in history from Columbia and her MLS from the University at Albany. John started his library career as a Library Clerk in the Tompkins Seneca Tioga BOCES and worked for Laurie Brooks who is now at IMLS. He worked for the Dundee Central Schools as a school librarian, then took a sojourn to the warmer climes of North Carolina to work in a magnet school. He came back to New York and took a position as Library System Director at the DCMO BOCES because he missed the weather and the better working conditions in New York schools.

Joanne started volunteering in schools before deciding to go back to school to get her MLS because she was interested in the programs and the technology that libraries had to offer. She worked for ten years as the librarian at the Cobleskill-Richmondville High School before joining SED.

Both John and Joanne saw the opportunity to work at SED as a way to have a

larger impact on school libraries and the students they serve. They are both still learning about SED and their roles at the Department, but look forward to working with school librarians and library systems statewide. They are both serving on NYLA's Information Literacy Standards Task Force and appreciate the opportunity to have input on such a worthy endeavor.

Joanne would like to focus on promoting the important role that school libraries play in improving student academic achievement and providing students with the skills necessary to thrive in the Information Age. John wants to insure that libraries are properly staffed, equipped and funded so they can continue to have a positive impact on students.

When asked about the challenges facing the library community, John thought that funding issues were still of paramount concern and being both a literacy and technology resource to the community. Joanne responded that managing the transition from print to digital formats and insuring that the public understands that the internet is no substitute for libraries are some of the challenges facing librarians.

John was recruited into NYLA by Laurie Brooks and sees NYLA as the vehicle for bringing the library community together, promoting libraries to the public and policy makers, and providing opportunities for networking and professional development. Joanne joined NYLA while in library school and believes the library community can be stronger and therefore accomplish more by working together through NYLA. ♦

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by Bill Barnes and Gene Armbaum



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Stories from the Stacks.....

STORIES FROM THE STACKS is a special feature of the Bulletin where we ask our members about the profession and library issues and print selected responses in the newsletter.

This issue's question is "What has been your most successful library contest?"

"Guess Who!" Contest: The contest piques student interest in reading. Each month a teacher volunteer brings in their favorite books and magazines which represent their reading interests. A "Guess Who!" Contest display is created. Students stopped by the display and tried to guess which teacher was the likely reader of the books on display.

It was a fun and effective promotion. It prompted students to talk with their teachers to try and get them to reveal what things they might read. As a result, circulation increased, teachers and students talked about what they were reading, we added books to our collection based on recommendations and people are asking when we're going to run the contest again!

**- Mary Klucznik, LMS and Kathy Pitoniak, Library Aide.
Chittenango High School Library**

"Library Quest" Board Game: The object of the game is to correctly answer questions about the library. Questions involved lending policies, location of collections, etc as well as questions specifically about our library (What is the

library cats' name?). Young people and many adults participated and told us they learned a few things along the way.

**- Nancy Stowell, Youth Services
Frank J. Basloe Public Library**

"Book Blizzard Read-a-thon" Contest: We challenged patrons to either enter themselves or sponsor a staff member. Through the read-a-thon we were able to not only read over 200 books, but also raise \$1142 for our small library – not bad! People from the community would stop in to see how many books had been read, how much money we raised, or to drop off checks in lieu of flat donations. We awarded trophies to our big winners.

**- Sara Kipp, Library Director
Stillwater Free Library**

"Ice pops for Everyone If We Reach 100%!" Contest: We were losing way too many library books at the end of the school year because students didn't return them. A big thermometer was put on the Library door. We added red rectangles to show the mercury rising as students returned more and more books. The suspense was almost unbearable, as students kept coming to the door to see how we were doing. Last year, we reached a 99+% return rate! Great fun and a wonderful school spirit booster. Ice pops for everyone!

**- Pam Haas, School Library Media Specialist
Jefferson Elementary School**



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Executive Director's Report



Michael J. Borges

2008 started off with the loss of \$5 million in Library Aid in the proposed 2008-09 Executive Budget and the departure of Jeremy Johannesen, NYLA's Deputy Director for a new position as Executive Director of the NYS Alliance for Arts Education. Both were equally disappointing if not unexpected. But we have reacted swiftly and prudently to address these losses by promoting Johanna Geiger, our Marketing Coordinator to be Deputy Director and launching advocacy efforts to restore the \$5 million cut in Library Aid.

This proves that nothing can be taken for granted. That everyday and in every way we must be attentive and pro-active in our efforts as both employers and as advocates. Despite achieving several historic milestones for NYLA in 2007, like consecutive annual increases in Library Aid (the \$5 million the Governor just cut was

added in 2007), reaching over 4,200 members for the first time and adding association-based health care coverage for our members, NYLA and the library community cannot rest on our laurels.

We must continue to be vigilant, to evolve and improve. The status quo and complacency are not an option in today's ever fluid and rapidly changing political, technological and economic environment (even the environment is changing).

Rest assured that NYLA and the library community it represents is up to the challenges that lie ahead. If we continue to work together, to think and act for the common good, and embrace change, we will stay ahead of the curve and successfully meet these challenges. ♦

New "Rural and Small Libraries" Roundtable Formed

The Executive Board of NYLA has approved the establishment of a new roundtable to serve the small and/or rural libraries of New York State.

This roundtable was formed in response to concerns expressed by participants at the PLS Table Talks held during the NYLA Annual Conference in October.

Some of the issues discussed were:

- the definition of small and rural
- library board and director relations
- building space
- education requirements of library personnel
- social service issues in the public library

- salaries and benefits
- scholarship opportunities
- professional development (or continuing education)

The roundtable will need officers, and nominations are currently being accepted. Individuals interested in working on a roundtable newsletter, developing NYLA Conference programming or starting a listserv are also needed. Participation at any level is welcome.

Membership in this roundtable is open to all NYLA members for an additional \$5. Anyone interested in joining this new roundtable should contact either; Charlotte Garofalo, Gouverneur Reading Room Assoc. at garofalo@north-net.org, or Joan Pellikka, North Country Library System at jpellikka@ncls.org

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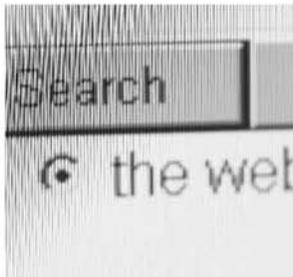
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Members on the Move



Jill Anitto is a Senior Analyst for New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget where among other responsibilities she manages the oversight and maintenance of the capital budgets for the city's four public library systems.

Greta Boeringer, Library Director of the Hudson Area Association Library, and Cocksackie Correctional Facility Senior Librarian **Steve Almasi** assisted the correctional facility inmate's participation in the Columbia-Greene Public Library's "Big Read" for November-December 2007.

John Bosco has been appointed the Library Director of the Elmont Public Library in Elmont, NY.

Krista Briggs, leader of the Canton Free Library's very successful **Anime Club**, has accepted the position of Young Adult Coordinator, a new position established with the approval of the Library's 2007 Board of Trustees.

John Brock, former Director of the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES School Library System, has joined the New York State Education Department's Curriculum,

Instruction and Instructional Technology as Associate In School Library Services.

Jacalyn Groves, retired School Library Media Specialist from the Morrisville/Eaton Elementary Library, has been hired by the Madison-Oneida School Library System in Oneida, NY as the Staff Development and Grants Manager.

Carol LaDue recently retired from the Massena Public Library where she was a Library Clerk for more than 23 years.

Bell Top Elementary School is featured in the Betty & Veronica Double Digest #157 premiering on the news stand January 7, 2008. The first story is all about the Bell Top library and its staff: Librarian **Leonora Martin** and Typist Phyllis Stern.

Jane Minotti, Director of the Sand Lake Town Library from 1999-2007, was recently appointed Librarian of the Transportation Research and Development Library at the NYS Department of Transportation.

Micki Nevett, School Library Media Specialist at the Westmere Elementary School in Albany, NY died on December 17, 2007. Nevett had also worked as a Children's Librarian at the Bethlehem Public Library and then as youth consultant for the Mohawk Valley Library System. She was an active member of Children's Literature Connection and was active in the ALA and NYLA. She was serving on the current Newbery Medal Award Committee. Her sudden and unexpected passing is a big loss to the library community.

NYLA's Empire Friends Roundtable was presented with the State Friends Award at the ALA Midwinter Conference for their National Friends of Library Week activities.

Cyril Oberlander, former Director of Interlibrary Services at the University of Virginia's Alderman Library, has been hired as Associate Library Director at the State University of New York at Geneseo.

Frances Rabinowitz, Assistant Coordinator at the Office of Adult and Information Services, has retired after a 36 year career with The New York Public Library.

Frank Rees is the new Director of the Kent Public Library in Kent Lakes, NY. Rees was formerly the Assistant Director of the Howland Public Library in Beacon, and before that, the Director of the Hudson Area Association Library.

Richard Reyes-Gavilan is the new Director of the Brooklyn Public Library Central Library.

Kathy Rose is the new Director of The Pearl River Public Library in Rockland County, NY.

Robin Sanford is the new Assistant Director at the Sidney Memorial Public Library in Sidney, NY.

Dr. Joanne Parnes Shawhan has joined the New York State Education Department's Curriculum, Instruction and Instructional Technology as Associate In School Library Services. She had recently served as School Library Media Specialist and Library Department Chair at Cobleskill-Richmond High School.

Karen Shea, former Director of the Butterfield Library in Cold Spring, NY, has joined The Hastings Center Library in Garrison, NY, one of the leading bioethics institutes in the country.

Sue Sherred, a former student member, has accepted her first position as a School Library Media Specialist at Bradford Central School District in Bradford, NY.

Chris Spink is the new Head of Acquisitions and Technical Processing at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System in Jamestown, NY.

Amanda Tehonica, an Administrative Assistant at the North Country Library System, recently completed her Master of Science in Library and Information Science. **Tehonica** has joined the staff of Flower Memorial Library as a Reference Librarian.

Rebecca Verhayden has joined the Town of Ballston Community Library in Burnt Hills, NY as the Youth Services Librarian.

Ann Wemple has joined the staff of the Guilderland Public Library in Guilderland, NY as a Reference Librarian in the Adult Services Department. Before starting library school Wemple began her service at Guilderland as a Library Clerk in the Circulation Department.

Stacey Greene Wicksall has joined the Waterloo Central School District in Waterloo, NY as an intermediate and middle school level librarian.

Michelle Young has been appointed Library Director at Clarkson University in Potsdam. For the past 7 years, she served as College Librarian at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. ♦

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Syracuse Researchers Link Higher Test Scores to Certified Library Media Specialists

by Dr. Ruth Small, Principal Investigator; Jaime Snyder and Katie Parker, Research Associates Center for Digital Literacy, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University

Preliminary findings of research conducted by Professor Ruth Small and graduate students in the Center for Digital Literacy (CDL) show a statistically significant increase—with an almost 10 point difference—in the English Language Arts test scores among fourth-grade students whose schools had certified library media specialists over students in schools without certified library media specialists.

The preliminary findings reported here reflect data gathered during Fall 2006 and Winter 2007 via online surveys completed by library media specialists and principals from across New York State. Responses from 1,612 public schools were received, proportionally representing the state's diverse populations (including New York City; large upstate cities such as Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester; other urban and suburban schools, and rural districts). The range of schools represented in this study allowed researchers to learn that, regardless of educational need (school district student poverty level) and the financial resources of the school district, a statistically significant difference existed between average test scores.

Although the study is ongoing and data continues to be analyzed, researchers can confirm that these preliminary findings support previous research efforts in the Lance studies and in other states by demonstrating a positive relationship between school libraries and student achievement. Additionally, while previous state studies of school libraries' services and resources have focused almost exclusively on the school library media center's impact on student achievement, Dr. Small's research, funded, by the Institute for Museum and Library Studies (ILMS), looks beyond achievement test scores to investigate additional factors such as the impact on (1) student motivation for learning, (2) services to students with disabilities, (3) technology use for teaching and learning, and (4) programs and services to families and communities. Analyses currently in progress focus on these more qualitative aspects of the impact school libraries have on school communities and will be the subject of future published reports resulting from this study.

The current findings also reinforce the value of New York State K-12 Library Media Specialist certification. Certified library media specialists are currently not mandated at the elementary level in New York State, but they are at the secondary level (grades 7-12). New York State certification as a library media specialist is positively correlated with student achievement, confirming that well-trained librarians have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform effectively in New York State public schools as discussed in the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations Preparation Guide.

The positive correlation between student achievement in English Language Arts and the presence of certified library media specialists provides evidence in support of the Guidelines for Effective Reading Instruction issued by the NEA Task Force on Reading in 2000, specifying that every school should have a fully funded library/media center that meets the highest of state and/or national standards and a licensed, full-time librarian/media specialist.

The preliminary findings reported here are just the beginning of the evidence this study will provide about the role of school library program in student motivation and learning. This two-year study includes three phases of data collection. In addition to the general survey of public school discussed here, a more in-depth survey was conducted in Fall 2007, targeting 48 schools for closer study. During January 2008, follow-up focus groups were conducted with classroom teachers, library media specialists, students, and parents and interviews were held with principals in eight of these schools, providing researchers with opportunities to gather rich descriptions from students, teachers, parents and principals about the impact that school library programs have had in their lives. This data is currently being analyzed and initial results will be made available in the next several weeks. ♦

Pretend Its Magic

by Lauren Russo, Communication Services

Evergreen, an open-source software system developed by the Georgia Library Service and its PINES program, helps library patrons find library materials, and helps librarians manage, catalog, and circulate those materials. The Georgia Library PINES, Public Information Network for Electronic Services, is a consortium of 275 public libraries. Evergreen is licensed under the General Public License (GPL).

Open source systems refer to free software that includes the original source code created by the program, thus enabling users to modify and enhance the software to tailor it toward their needs.

“Our vendor product didn’t meet our needs,” Director of the PINES program Elizabeth McKinney de Garcia said. “We had to change and create new policies around the limitations of the vendor’s software.”

After receiving permission from their bosses in state government, in the summer of 2004, a team of nine staff

members, including McKinney de Garcia, began to put their plan into action. Throughout the state, they held focus groups with staff members, directors, clerks, patrons, and staff members from other libraries not in the consortium.

“Pretend it’s magic was our theme in the focus groups,” McKinney de Garcia said. “We asked participants to think of anything they wanted in the new software, and that’s when the creativity began to flow. Our main concerns were with our users. We wanted to develop this software to help them.”

After gathering information and ideas from the focus groups, and after about two and a half years of development, Evergreen went live in September of 2006. Although the software isn’t perfect yet, it’s constantly improving because of end-users’ enthusiastic participation.

“The patrons loved it,” McKinney de Garcia said. “We’ve had some problems with holds because of the huge response from users. With the new software, holds increased by 40 percent.”

While certain open source system providers charge for the use of this service, Evergreen is completely free. The dedicated staff at Georgia Library Service and its PINES program, as a mix of libraries and open source advocates, feel this information should be shared; open source provides users with freedoms they otherwise would not have with propriety software.

“It’s like the difference between renting and owning,” McKinney de Garcia said. “With a vendor, we were renting; we couldn’t really paint the walls ourselves.”

Evergreen has modules for circulation, cataloging and statistical reporting; it also supports the SIP2 protocol for self-check and Internet/computer access control. Currently, its Acquisitions and Serials modules are under joint-development with the University of Windsor, and will hopefully launch in early-mid 2008. Other features such as the Z39.50 server, and telephony and credit card support are future initiatives.

Current general features include a flexible representation of the organizational hierarchy, a permission system for groups and users, and separation of orthogonal information. Although this service was designed originally for large consortia, it can also work for smaller libraries and library systems. Evergreen also allows administrators to set a balance between ease of use and strict control and accountability.

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Showdown in Cold Spring: The Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library's Successful Fight For Chapter 414 Money

by *Ellen M. Bach and Robert T. Schofield'*

Separation of orthogonal information eliminates overloading of concepts and fields, removes the need for fake users, fake records, and the combination of locations and statuses.

The circulation module contains features such as library-defined statistical categories for patrons, notes and alert fields for patrons, and separation of patron accounts and library cards. In addition, this module includes group management, circulation of non-cataloged and pre-cataloged materials, customizable receipt printing based on templates, meticulous control of bills with groupings and line-items, and customizable circulation rules for defining privileges based on library, patron, item, and bibliographic information, which allows more flexibility than a simple "matrix."

Library-defined statistical categories for items are a feature of the cataloging module, which prevents librarians from abusing and overloading fields. Other features in this category include unlimited notes for annotating items, "buckets" for grouping and sharing related items and bibliographic records, along with record merging functionality in bibliographic buckets and batch creation of volumes and copies across multiple branches. Customizable label printing based on templates allows librarians to play with the layout when needed.

With the web catalog, users can use Google-like interface by default for searches, and also includes related subject, author, and series sidebars based on the results of the searches. This feature also contains integration with common web browsers, news aggregators, and search engines through RSS feeds, unAPI, OpenSearch semantics, and multiple XML and library formats for exploring data. Plug-in support for "added content" vendors provide items such as jacket cover images and reviews, and "bookbags" helps patrons and librarians group titles in arbitrary ways and share those groupings. "Metarecords" cluster different formats and editions of the same work together, which provides more accurate search results and greater flexibility with placing holds on items.

The statistical reporting module includes a GUI based report builder with no special license fees for direct SGL access to the database, which means both the database and data scheme are open sourced.

"The creation of Evergreen was a liberating experience for our library," McKinney says. "If an aspect of this software is not working for our users, we have the ability to change it ourselves without restrictions." ♦

The Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library is an association library which was created in 1927 through an endowment bequeathed by the late Julia Butterfield. The Library is located in the Village of Cold Spring and serves the Village and the surrounding Town of Philipstown. Historically, the Library has received monies from the Town and the County of Putnam by way of annual appropriations from those municipalities. It has supplemented its operating expenses with the income from the endowment created by Mrs. Butterfield.

In 2006, the Library's trustees decided to pursue an increased appropriation from the Town of Philipstown through the mechanism provided by Education Law §259(1)(b)(1), commonly referred to as a "414 Referendum." Supporters of the Library circulated petitions seeking to increase the appropriation by the Town from \$125,000 to \$276,000 per year. Signatures were obtained from Town voters, and the petitions were presented to the Town Board in September 2006. The Town Board approved the petitions and the referendum appeared on the election ballot during the November 2006 general election. It passed by a margin of 1,086 to 973 votes.

Although the Town Board authorized the placement of the referendum on the ballot and, indeed, some of the Town Board members signed the petitions in support of the referendum, the Town Board failed to include the increased appropriation of \$276,000 authorized by the vote in its budget for the 2007 fiscal year. When the Library contacted Town officials about the oversight, the officials asserted that Section 259(1)(b)(1) did not require them to make the money available until fiscal year 2008. The Library explained that the results of a vote under Section 259 would apply to the 2007 budget because that budget was adopted by the Town subsequent to the election. In response, Town officials then took the position that the election results were void because the Putnam County Board of Elections failed to

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NYLA New Members July – December 2007

LAMS

Elizabeth Bermel
Sally Carmer
Phyllis Hodges
Sandra Hylen
Dena Marger
Gail Marinaccio
Mary Jo Ortech
Logan Ragsdale
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Kornelia Tancheva
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Budget cut continued from page 1

to show its strength and depth of support to members of the Legislature and their staffs.

Library Lobby Day will start off with Legislative Breakfast Reception from 8-9:30 a.m. in Meeting Room Six of the Empire State Plaza, where legislators will have the opportunity to have their photos taken once again for the READ posters and book-marks. This is also a good time for library leaders to meet one on one with legislators while they mingle and wait for their photos to be taken. The Library Lobby Day Rally will also take place in

Meeting Room Six from 11:30 a.m. to noon, where library advocates will hear comments from legislators and NYLA leaders.

The night before Lobby Day, the New Yorkers for Better Libraries PAC will be holding a fundraiser at the Holiday Inn on Wolf Road starting at 6 pm with speakers Steve Sanders, former Chair of the Assembly Education Committee and Marion Roach, writer and NPR commentator. Information about Lobby Day and the PAC fundraiser can be found on NYLA's website (www.nyla.org). ♦

Showdown continued from page 9

publish the language of the proposition in one of two local newspapers, as required by the Election Law. Efforts by the Library and the Board of Elections to resolve the dispute with the Town were unsuccessful, and, in mid-March 2007, the Library commenced a lawsuit to compel the Town to comply with the election results.

The litigation continued throughout the spring and the Library focused its efforts on convincing the Court that the Town Board had no authority to refuse to comply with the results of the election. Ultimately, in three separate decisions, the Putnam County Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Library and dismissed the Town's efforts to nullify the results of the election. The Town appealed.

Almost from its inception, the dispute had been followed closely by the media in and around Philipstown. Media coverage and public support initially seemed roughly balanced between the Library and the Town. When the Town Board chose to appeal the local court's decision directing the Board to comply with the will of the voters, however, the media frenzy tipped decidedly in favor of the Library and against the Town's action. By this time, Philipstown voters were gearing up for the election of Town offices to be held in November, which may have motivated Town leaders to reach an agreement with the Library in order to defuse the politically-charged environment created by the dispute between the Town and the Library. After several months of negotiations and discussions, a settlement was reached

under which the Library would receive the \$276,000 in voter-approved funding in accordance with the requirement of Education Law §259(1)(b)(1) from 2008 onward. In exchange for that guarantee, the Library Trustees agreed not to seek to pursue the \$151,000 the Town had not paid them for 2007. With that agreement, the litigation was settled.

Although libraries like the Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library generally have been successful around the State in pursuing and enforcing their rights under Education Law §259(1)(b)(1), the litigation in the Philipstown matter serves to remind us that the provision of funding through 259(1)(b)(1) is not necessarily without controversy. As was learned in Cold Spring, while the statute can be a great source of potential resources for libraries, it can also be a lightning-rod in the issue of library funding. The Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library was able to reach a positive result with the Town because, ultimately, both the Court and vocal Town residents supported the Library's position. Library supporters considering its use should keep in mind the importance of adhering closely to the requirements of Section 259 and the Election Law, and of actively engaging the community and its leaders to help avoid disputes.

1. The authors are attorneys with Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP in Albany, New York. They successfully represented the Julia Butterfield Memorial Library in this dispute, and have represented a number of other libraries in litigation and with regard to general legal matters. Ms. Bach is also a Trustee of the Albany Public Library. The Firm is a member of NYLA.

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Librarians Answer the Call

by Terry Tyson, *Communication Services*

With technology changing the way people access information today, libraries are responding with innovative programs that simplify the process by which patrons can get information online. One of these is a free online reference service that provides one-on-one assistance from real librarians, in some cases, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Utilizing this service, patrons can get the answers to their questions in minutes rather than wasting hours navigating unhelpful or irrelevant web sites.

Ask Us 24/7 is upstate New York's online chat service. The project is managed by the the Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC). Ask Us 24/7 is a multi-regional chat reference service that provides online resources to the Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse service areas as well as anyone else who can find their way into the service. Ask Us 24/7 utilizes OCLC's QuestionPoint software to coordinate the service, which in 2007 answered more than 7,500 questions online. At present, librarians from at least 25 libraries participate in staffing the service. WNYLRC and the Central New York Library Resources Council support most of the costs associated with this service, with financial support from the participating libraries.

Ask Us 24/7 maintains quality control through pop-up patron evaluations at the end of each chat as well as periodic reviews of transcripts by participating librarians. Librarians typically spend an average of 20 minutes per chat, fielding questions as diverse as genealogy and academic research to general library questions. At times, a librarian might handle two chats concurrently.

"It's been a long time growing it, but Ask Us 24/7 is working well," said Laura Osterhout, M.L.S., Regional Services Librarian for the Western New York Library Resources Council and Ask Us 24/7 Project Manager. "It's a great way to reach patrons who might otherwise not utilize the library. Our ultimate goal is to have enough libraries participating so that the program becomes self-sustaining."

The New York Public Library's Ask Librarians Online service also utilizes QuestionPoint software, but it offers its users both email and live chats. The service is available from 10-5 pm Mondays through Fridays and is staffed by three librarians and three information assistants. Both emails and chats have increased considerably since Ask Librarians

Online has been promoted on both the home page and throughout the NYPL website. From July 2006 through June 2007, the service answered 47,234 phone calls, 12,951 email questions and 8,429 chat questions, up from 39,857 calls, 6,176 emails and 7,353 chats in 2003-2004.

Harriet Shalat, NYPL Supervising Librarian for Telephone Reference and Director of the Ask Librarians Online program, believes that staff doing virtual reference must possess a unique set of skills and the desire to work with patrons online. Since the program's inception, Shalat and Bernard van Maarseveen, Senior Librarian and Training Coordinator for NYPL's Ask Librarians Online program, have trained over 100 librarians for Ask Librarians Online; however, fewer than ten have actually become part of the Ask Librarians Online team. "It's more challenging to work with people online than in real time, face-to-face interactions," said Shalat. "In either case, when a patron says he wants to know about Africa, he might really want to know the gestation of an elephant. It's our job to figure out the real question being asked."

Shalat and van Maarseveen paid tribute to the late Jane C. Neale of NYLINK, who taught the staff almost everything they know about QuestionPoint. van Maarseveen stressed that teamwork, "extreme collaboration" and good training are vital ingredients in the success of this program. The QP local knowledge base—a collection of answers to previously asked questions developed by the library staff—is also of great value, especially when a single librarian is juggling as many as 3-4 chats simultaneously. Among the more interesting questions van Maarseveen has fielded are:

Where did the custom of handing out cigars to celebrate the birth of a child originate?

What was the face value for a Super Bowl I ticket?

When did those trendy New Year's glasses that have the round zeroes as eye holes ...i.e. "2000", "2001", etc., first get introduced and are they specific to New York City? Or even originally from NYC?

Florida's Ask a Librarian program is a statewide network of libraries that collectively provides library reference services to its patrons and the patrons of other participating libraries. With 90 participating libraries in the network, two to six librarians are at the virtual librarian desk ready for a live, one-on-one "chat" 10 am to midnight Sundays through Thursdays and 10 am to 5 pm Fridays and Saturdays. Email

From the President...

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assistance is available 24/7 except during maintenance. If unable to find immediate answers for patrons, librarians can suggest other sources to try or take contact information from the patrons to pass along to a local librarian. At the end of chats, patrons are given the option of viewing and printing their transcript or emailing the session to themselves for later use. The transcript provides links to all the resources visited during the chat sessions, thus eliminating the need for copious note-taking while online.

Ask a Librarian, Ask Us 24/7 and Ask Librarians Online illustrate some different ways that libraries are utilizing the Web to broaden their patron base. At the present time, there is no statewide New York network similar to the Florida model. "NYLA is currently looking to offer a statewide approach to providing these 24/7 reference services to all library patrons within the state," stated NYLA Director Michael Borges. Programs like these can go far toward meeting the needs of an increasingly more tech-savvy patron base. ♦

ment in your professional ideals and principles.

I hope you're saying that your membership gives NYLA a big loud voice when speaking to legislators about our needs.

I hope you're saying that your membership gives NYLA the power to create professional development activities to support your professional growth.

Now, why am I talking to you, the choir? Because it is our collective responsibility to identify a colleague who has not joined NYLA and ask him or her to join. It is our responsibility to encourage non-members to consider joining. Each of us is a member because someone took the time to tell us about NYLA and asked us to join. Isn't it time that we returned the favor?

Think about it! Today we are 4000 strong! But if each of us recruited one member—our membership could double! It's doable if we put our minds to it. It's doable if we connect with a colleague and make membership a priority. So, let's roll up our sleeves, make those connections and let's aim for the stars! Working together we can do anything! ♦

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This project funded by a grant awarded to the New York State Library by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program.

The State Education Department
The New York State Library
Albany, NY 12230

Janet Martin Welch
State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries
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New Yorkers for Better Libraries Banquet

FUNDRAISING GALA

Monday, March 10, 2008 / 6:00 p.m.

Holiday Inn Albany on Wolf Road / 205 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 / 518-458-7250

www.hialbanywolf.com

(Directions are available at this site)

*Please join NYLIBS-PAC for this special evening to support the library community of New York.
The evening will begin with cash-bar cocktail hour at 6:00 p.m. Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m.*

New Yorkers for Better Libraries Political Action Committee (NYLIBS-PAC) was formed in 2003 by library leaders who believe in the importance of campaign contributions as part of a multi-faceted legislative strategy designed to increase state aid to libraries and library systems.

The mission of the New Yorkers for Better Libraries PAC is to provide financial support to legislators and candidates for state office who are in a position to effectively champion libraries. Last year, we contributed \$10,900 to 13 campaign committees – a complete list of recipients is included on the NYLIBS-PAC website. These contributions have brought us access to decision-makers and have signaled a seriousness of intent within the library community.

The Second Annual NYLIBS-PAC Fundraising Gala is pleased to note that this year's program include **Steve Sanders**, former

Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, and **Marion Roach**, contemporary non-fiction writer and commentator on the National Public Radio on the show "All Things Considered".

For more information about NYLIBS-PAC or to register online, please visit: www.nylibs-pac.net

Banquet Registration: Your \$100 payment includes dinner, 10 raffle tickets, and a contribution to our PAC. Those who have already made a 2008 contribution to the PAC are invited to attend (dinner only) for \$50. Pre-registration is required. Space is limited! Registration is completed when your payment is received. Registration deadline is March 6, 2008. **Hotel Registration:** The group rate is \$139 single/double – you will need to mention New York Library Association to get the group rate. Call 1-518-458-7250 to book.

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NYLIBS-PAC Banquet Registration Form

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Payment Information

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NYLIBS-PAC, PO Box 795, Canton, NY 13617

Fax: 518-935-9007

Questions?

Call: 518-331-8382 or email: bnr51@msn.com

NYLA Dewey Scholarship

I was awarded the NYLA/Lake Placid Education Foundation scholarship in 1992, a time of great personal difficulty. The NYLA scholarship helped me to earn my MLS degree, which made it possible for me to advance professionally, which made it possible for me to do good in the world and well in life. Past-President Art Friedman, then chair of the Awards Committee, was my first NYLA mentor. I was very lucky. It's said that people treat others as they've been treated, and I hope that's true. Over the years, I've tried to give back to NYLA by serving as president of PLS and LAMS, by serving on committees, and by mentoring others. I've made some wonderful friends, and learned a lot from them, in the process. In 2004, Art asked me to chair the NYLA Awards Committee, bringing us full circle. I'm very happy to be able to confirm that libraries – and library scholarships – really do change lives.

Phyllis Hersh Keaton, Director, Howland Public Library

NYLA – Dewey Scholarship

New York Library Association
252 Hudson Ave., Albany, NY 12210
518-432-NYLA / www.nyla.org

Over the past 18 years, NYLA has given over \$193,500 to help 33 interested and deserving students to pursue a Masters Degree in Library Science at an ALA-accredited library school in New York State.

Recipients of the NYLA – Dewey Scholarship receive support to help cover tuition costs and related expenses. In addition, the winner receives free attendance at the first NYLA Annual Conference to be held after the awarding of the scholarship (this includes a ticket to the Awards Banquet).

NYLA would like to continue to be able to offer this beneficial scholarship and hope you can help us.

I am interested in making a donation to the New York Library Association's NYLA – Dewey Scholarship Fund.

Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. / Mr. & Mrs. / Dr. _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Telephone (include area code) _____

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Enclosed is \$ _____

Make check payable to New York Library Association

Charge my: Visa Mastercard Discover

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Exp Date _____

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Signature _____

NYLA – Dewey Scholarship Winners

1990 Nancy Hands	1998 Ernarosa Tominich	Kirsten Hensley Ronit Sokoloff Roderick Somers
1991 Sonja Landes	1999 Rakisha Kearns-White	Alanna Moss Linda Paul Terence Fitzgerald
1992 Phillis Keaton	2000 Karen Cannell	2006 Debra Firestone Amanda Angevine Maria Muhlbauer Lindsay Laczak David Conners Sara Kipp
1993 Suzanne Castroman	2001 Kelly Bigg	2007 Nancy Goldblatt Rebecca Eller Tobi Fineberg Gabriel McKee Emily Cornell Sarah Hodges Kimberly Anne Hack
1994 Caroline Bartels	2002 Daisy Domunquez	
1995 Lisa Milewski	2003 Angel Pagan	
1996 Neal Farley	2004 Joaquim Martins	
1997 Joan Marie Kearns	2005 Karan Rinaldo	

From the President...

Greeting and Felicitations Fellow NYLA members!

I keep pinching myself to make sure that being NYLA President is not a figment of my imagination but a real, true fact! I think that I will wake up and discover that just like Bobby's death and year's hiatus in the sitcom "Dallas" I will wake up and discover that this whole year has been a dream!

My theme for the coming year (just in case this isn't a dream) is "Connecting, Collaboration, and Cooperating @ your Library. These three words plus "communicating" will serve as the foundation for our work this year.

So can we talk—about membership—that is? Now I don't want to preach to the choir—and you, the 4000+ faithful members of NYLA are the choir. But the fact that you have been a long-standing member of NYLA makes you very powerful! Why did you join NYLA? And more importantly, why have you remained a member? How has membership in NYLA impacted your professional life? What do you value about NYLA membership?

Is it the NYLA website—a truly dynamic and functional place where you can retrieve information on everything from awards to section activities to member benefits?

Is it the many listservs where you can connect with colleagues throughout the state?

Is it the powerful Legislative Committee chaired so capably by Kathy Miller who has worked tirelessly to make sure that librarians get adequate funding to maintain exemplary

library buildings staffed by competent staff and stocked with materials needed to meet the needs of library clients?

Is it the support that Michael Borges and the staff have given school library media specialists in their pursuit of improved funding and validation that they are an important cog in the wheel we call school?

Is it knowing that you are not alone in the world we call the library?

Is it knowing that when faced with a bureaucratic government eager to take away our freedom to read, NYLA is a phone call away?

NYLA is in the business of working for libraries—wherever they may be located and regardless of the age of their clients. NYLA is ready to defend everyone's right to intellectual freedom, the right to read, and the right to free, ubiquitous access to information, among others.

Membership in your professional organization should be of the utmost importance to every single librarian in the state. It should be non-negotiable to support the organization that promotes your values and beliefs.

Some say "why join when I can't go to conferences." Well, the NYLA conference is only one facet of NYLA. NYLA is much, much more than just the conference. So, again, why join?

I hope you're saying that your membership is an invest-



Rosina Alaimo

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The New York Library Association
252 Hudson Avenue
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Periodicals