Albany Public Library Drops Dewey at Branches

by Michael J. Borges

Albany Public Library's (APL) move to weed Dewey from its branches got a jump start when Carol Nersinger joined as APL Executive Director in July 2009, just as work on revamping the library's branches was underway. Mary Coon, Head of Collection Management Services, met with the new library director soon afterwards to discuss how to make access to the collection more user friendly and a decision was quickly reached to take advantage of the branch improvement projects to implement a new collection management classification.

"We decided to jump into the deep end with both feet," stated Mary Coon in describing how the library decided to go cold-turkey by adopting the BISAC (Book Industry Standards and Communications) designation for its branch collections, and not a hybrid Dewey/BISAC model that other libraries have utilized. The hybrid model uses book-store classifications for displaying the collection within the library, but retains the Dewey numbers for shelving purposes.

The process for relabeling a portion of the adult and juvenile non-fiction collections at one Albany branch involved 9,000 items and took four weeks and two and half staff members to complete. The library worked with Baker and Taylor to develop the categories for classification and agreed upon 121 categories for a combined adult/juvenile collection.

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The Albany Public Library uses labels that denote the topic and subtopic, i.e. History/US, and materials of similar interest are grouped together, i.e. interior design, architecture, and home improvement. "Using text instead of numbers to guide us in cataloguing our collection gives us more flexibility in where to place our materials within the library and gives library staff more ownership..."

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INTERVIEW WITH NYLA MEMBER

Sara Kelly Johns

by Michael Borges

This Winter I interviewed the irrepressible Sara Kelly Johns, candidate for ALA President and school librarian at Lake Placid High School.

I asked her about how she chose her career path and she replied, “I’m of the age that I can actually still say that I became a librarian because I loved books, reading and libraries. The librarian in my small town library (Dannemora), Mrs. Haley, let me read any book in the library, children’s section or not. When I reached college, undecided about my future but knowing that I liked working with people, my mother, a first grade teacher who was the school librarian for two summer school sessions, told me that she had the career for me, one that involved learning and people. She was right.”

Sara received her BA from SUNY Plattsburgh majoring in Education and an MLS from SUNY Albany. She became an adjunct professor at SUNY Plattsburgh in 1990 teaching Research Methods through Technology, an information literacy course, until 2007. She now teaches Access and Legal Issues online for Mansfield University School Library and Information Technology program.

She started her career as a middle school librarian at Beekmantown Central School just north of Plattsburgh, a position created when the school’s population grew to such an extent that the school district instituted split sessions, requiring a full-time librarian for both sessions. “I loved working with the students, collaborating with teachers in project-based learning, and had the bonus of working side by side with an experienced librarian as my mentor,” stated Sara.

Sara first became involved in a professional library association at the local level by becoming a charter member of the Northern Adirondack Library Association (NALA) working together with people from all types of libraries in the Plattsburgh area. “My leadership role as president of NALA gave me the confidence to accept leadership roles in SLMS and NYLA, eventually with AASL and ALA. My work with the library community continues to improve with good professional development; the rewards of working with teams of people who are also passionate about libraries continue to energize me personally and professionally,” said Sara.

I asked Sara about her experience as AASL President in 2007-08. “Being AASL President was intense, exciting and eye opening. I had been on the AASL Board for four years as the director-elect and then director of Region II (NY, PA, NJ, DE, DC and MD) and knew the structure and procedures for the governance part of the position. I thought. My major accomplishments as AASL president were: involving ALA and AASL with the Washington State effort to increase school library funding with the “Spokane Moms,” increasing AASL involvement with the Spectrum Scholar program and supporting local effort to retain school library positions in jeopardy. I did workshops and keynotes from Boston to Singapore on behalf of school library issues. After years of lobbying in Albany, I experienced national lobbying in Washington and returned there last May to lobby as part of the New York delegation,” stated Sara.

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Unshelved

It’s not fair that you get holidays off. Just when I’m free to use the library, it’s closed! You should be open when I’m available.

Who are you calling? Unshelved? I found the center of the universe!
Throughout most of human history, access to written information has been one of the greatest challenges faced by the blind. In fact, until the invention of Braille, lack of access to written knowledge probably played the largest role in the isolation of the blind from the rest of society. While most people gained previously-unheard-of levels of access to information with the invention of the printing press in the mid-1400s—sparking nothing less than a revolution that allowed even those in the humblest of material circumstances to learn to read and write—Braille did not come along until nearly four hundred years later. Today, Braille, audio recording, and new technology provide access to books for blind Americans. But the number of books produced in these formats remains small. E-books offer a potential solution to this problem, but so far they have largely proven to be yet another barrier to access. The Reading Rights Coalition, which consists of thirty-one organizations representing 30 million Americans who are blind or have other disabilities that prevent them from reading print, is asking America’s librarians to help us address these barriers to access so that books will be more widely available to everyone, including people that historically have had limited access to the printed word.

An increasing number of libraries are lending or considering lending electronic books. We are concerned that many of these electronic books are not being offered in ways that are accessible to Americans who are blind or have other disabilities that prevent them from reading print, is asking America’s librarians to help us address these barriers to access so that books will be more widely available to everyone, including people that historically have had limited access to the printed word.

Libraries are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). In addition, libraries that receive federal funding are covered by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Both of these laws require libraries to ensure that their communications with people with disabilities are as effective as their communications with non-disabled people. Many state laws mirror these federal laws and further extend the rights of individuals with disabilities to access public libraries.

E-books have the potential to make books available to people with print disabilities to the same extent and on the same basis as people without disabilities. Print books are generally inaccessible to people with print disabilities, including those who are blind, have low vision, have learning disabilities such as dyslexia, or have manual disabilities that make holding a book or turning pages difficult. Until now, people with print disabilities and the libraries that serve them have relied on alternative versions of print books in formats such as Braille or audio. These books are expensive to produce, difficult to obtain, and do not come out until long after the print editions. These barriers hinder literacy, educational attainment, employment, and access to information for people with print disabilities.

Because e-books are files made up of 0s and 1s, they are not inherently visual. They could be accessed by print-disabled individuals through whichever sense (sight, hearing, or touch) is most useful to them. However, the publishers and vendors of e-books and e-book readers are restricting accessibility for people with print disabilities.

For example, Adobe, which offers e-books online through a subscription service to libraries, once provided a text-to-speech option through Adobe Reader that would read the book aloud. But Adobe has turned off the text-to-speech capability, and Adobe’s proprietary software for Adobe Digital Editions does not function with screen access software used by the blind and other individuals with print disabilities (screen access software converts text on a computer screen into synthesized speech or displays it on a Braille device). Similarly, the Barnes & Noble e-book reader and Kindle books for PCs and Mac platforms do not work with screen access software. The Amazon Kindle 2 and Kindle DX, Sony Reader, B&N Nook, and other e-book reading devices have on-screen menus without audio interfaces, so they cannot be used by people who are blind. Some e-book readers offer text-to-speech that can read books aloud, but publishers are demanding that the feature be turned off. As a result, a great opportunity for Americans with print disabilities has become a barrier.

“Separate but equal” has been rejected by the Supreme Court as a legal standard to be used in the United States. In this case, access to books by individuals with print disabilities...
The winter months have been busy here at NYLA as we launch our SnapShotNY initiative and library advocacy campaign entitled “Libraries: Essential” to promote the value of libraries to life-long learning, jobs and opportunity, community empowerment and quality of life. The purpose of these efforts is to mobilize library users of all ages and types to advocate on behalf of their libraries and convince state and local policymakers that libraries are providing essential services to our communities, schools, campuses and institutions. These efforts culminate with our Library Lobby Day on March 2nd, when the library community turns out in force to advocate for libraries with state legislators and their staffs.

In addition to our advocacy efforts, NYLA has been busy preparing for our first annual Empire State Book Festival scheduled for April 9-10th at the Empire State Plaza in Albany. The two-day event starts off with the Empire State Book Festival Gala at 6 p.m. Friday night at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, where the first inductions into the NYS Writers Hall of Fame will take place. The Empire State Book Festival will feature 35 programs featuring over 60 authors, poets, illustrators and journalists involved in panel discussions, author talks and storytelling. Gregory Maguire, author of Wicked, will kick off the day-long event at 10 a.m.

NYLA will also be unveiling our new redesigned website in the upcoming months after getting feedback from our Web Committee and through a membership survey on the content and layout of the website. NYLA is also celebrating our 120th Anniversary this year and several initiatives are planned around this important milestone. So stay tuned!

Michael J. Borges

Executive Director’s Report
A. Smith, NYS College of Ceramics at Alfred; Joan Getman, Cornell University; organizations. Panelists will present examples and offer a variety of perspectives who must strategize for the adoption of new technologies in their horizon: Connecting Technology Trends with the Library of Tomorrow.

Dr. Michael Stephens, will give the keynote address on Hyperlinked Users: How Academic Librarians Can Respond. Stephens will discuss the trends shaping the 21st Century student experience and what emerging research tell us about expectations for learning environments, collaborative and “always on” access to information.

Dr. Deborah Gagnon, Associate Professor of Psychology at Wells College will address how technology may be changing our perception, attention, memory, reasoning, decision making, and problem solving in her talk: This Is Your Brain on Technology: The Technology Exposure Effect (TEE). Dr. Gagnon will look at the effect exposure to extant technologies - Twitter, FaceBook, GPS, Second Life, etc.—present to our cognitive and neural functioning. Is that GPS on your dashboard possibly shrinking your hippocampus? Or is it really the Holy Grail that the more spatially challenged among us have been searching for our whole lives?

Speakers will examine the 2010 Horizon Report in a Look Over the Horizon: Connecting Technology Trends with the Library of Tomorrow. The NMC Horizon Report is an important tool for educators and information specialists who must strategize for the adoption of new technologies in their organizations. Panelists will present examples and offer a variety of perspectives as it will impact “The Library of the Near Future”. Panelists include Mark A. Smith, NYS College of Ceramics at Alfred; Joan Getman, Cornell University; Alison Miller, Drexel University; Harry Pence, SUNY Oneonta.

Additional programs include:

- Geotagging, Geolocation, and Augmented Reality: Opportunities for Libraries to Create in Situ Learning Experiences, Tito Sierra, and Markus Wust, from North Carolina State University describe the concept of ‘in situ’ learning on mobile devices and illustrate the concept using an example project developed at NC State University, called The WolfWalk. This project allows users to explore NC State campus history using a location-aware interface for mobile devices.


- This exciting and innovative conference will provide an in-depth and essential look into the impact of technologies on ourselves, our library users, and our library planning, infrastructure, and services. Find more information or register now at http://www.nyla-asls.org/AcademicLibrariansConference/.

LAMS Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, President

The LAMS Board is hard at work putting together programs suggested by members for the 2010 NYLA Conference. We have designed our luncheon program and a session around NYLA President Kathy Miller’s theme, “The Library: YOUR Story Starts Here” As managers and administrators charged with carrying the library story to the public, LAMS has arranged for author Lawler Kang to present as both our luncheon speaker and a program presenter. Lawler’s work focuses on “energizing leaders, their teams and their talent to align and emotionally engage with their work for extraordinary success.” Other LAMS Conference sessions will include “I STILL Don’t Want to Talk About It” the popular annual session to get help with sensitive administrative issues like firing employees, staff evaluations, disciplining employees, sexual tension and harassment, and ways to effectively make confident decisions; a session to provide techniques to use when dealing with the mentally ill at your library; and “Managing Up and Down,” a session to help just about any library employee, regardless of their job description, have a positive impact.

We would like to invite more of our membership to consider writing for JLAMS, our peer reviewed electronic journal. JLAMS creator and editor Richard Naylor is always interested in discussion article proposals. Check out past issues of JLAMS on our web site: http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=922 Contact Richard at naylor@ColonieLibrary.org or give him a call at 518.810.0316 to discuss your article ideas.

Sock sales are going well, the limited edition Little Miss Matched “Peace, Love and Freedom” socks were designed especially for LAMS. The socks make great gifts and can be ordered from the LAMS web site [http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=62] or by contacting “Sock Mastermind” Rebecca Lubin, at lubinr@uhls.lib.ny.us. The socks will also be available for sale at the LAMS booth at the conference.

PLS Matthew Bollerman, President

2010 PLS Spring Conference

PLS has announced its Spring Conference in Ithaca at the beautiful La Tourelle Resort and Spa. The conference will be on Friday, April 30, preceded on Thursday evening by a Wine and Wellness Reception. Details are available on our site www.nyla.org/pls

Post MLS Continuing Education Award

PLS offers four Continuing Education / Post MLS awards each year to members attending workshops, courses, or continuing education programs.

Apply today! Deadlines are October 1, December 1, February 1, and June 1 and award amounts range from $50 to $250. For more information, please visit our website at www.nyla.org/pls

Congratulations to Barbara Madonna of the Gloversville Library for being awarded the Post MLS Continuing Education Award to attend the 2010 PLS Spring Conference.

Annual Conference Preview

PLS will be having it’s Author, Author program again this year. We are excited to announce that Lee Child will be speaking at the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame on Thursday, November 4. Also, we are excited to be bringing Michael Stevens to the conference.

PLS is seeking nominations for the following upcoming openings on the board:

- Vice President/President-Elect — a 3 year commitment (President second year, and Past President third year).
- Treasurer — a 2 year commitment.
- 1st Year Director — a 3 year commitment (2nd Year Director for your second year, the 3rd Year Director for your third year).

All three terms commence at the NYLA conference in the fall of 2010. Interested nominees should contact Karen LaRocca-Fels, Cornwall Public Library, 845-534-8282, klfels@ccls.org.

SLMS Fran Roscello, President

SLMS has a great conference coming up April 29 – May 1: “School Libraries—Where the pieces fit.” School librarians are juggling literacy, technology, and

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The New York State Library was awarded a $9.5 million Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

The award was announced Feb. 19th and will be used to purchase 860 computers for 30 libraries and fund five mobile training centers across 41 economically distressed Upstate New York counties. Participating libraries will also receive funds to staff expanded service hours and offer online resources for the unemployed and underemployed. The grant will also fund the purchase of High Definition video conferencing equipment and connections for the libraries for use by patrons, public safety officials, schools and other governmental entities.

In addition, the Division of Library Development has finally been given approval to move forward with the state’s Broadband Access Grant Program. An initial grant of $621,000 was awarded in 2008, but due to state budget reductions and other bureaucratic red tape, the funds awarded were reduced to $235,000. Three library systems will receive funds to expand broadband access in their areas:

Four County—to update the internet connection of their Cybermobile; North Country—to create broadband access at the Cranberry Lake library and at the Osceola Library; and Mid-York Library System—to create broadband access at the Jordanville Public Library.
teaching and trying to make all the pieces of the school curriculum fit in their program. Come join your colleagues for the SLMS 2010 conference in Albany, NY for ideas, camaraderie and learning. Renowned speaker and researcher Ross Todd from Rutgers University and the Center for International Scholarship in School Librarianship (CISSL) will keynote the conference. The conference will also feature 2010 Knickerbocker winner Laurie Halse Anderson and authors James Preller and Matt McElligott, plus over 35 breakout sessions on technology, literature, advocacy, and inquiry. To find out more about the conference and to register go to http://www.enyslma.org/slms2010/index.htm. Be sure to download the brochure with all the conference details. Hope to see you there!

Through the generous support of MLAssociates/Marsha Lederfeind, SLMS will be offering a new $500 scholarship in 2011 for a SLMS member to attend an upcoming SLMS conference. Look for further information with other SLMS scholarship announcements in the fall.

In SLMS advocacy efforts SLMS members are furnishing book reviews to the NYSUT newsletter New York Teacher for their "Check It Out" column. This is an important activity where SLMS and NYSUT joint members are visible to the larger teaching community.

SLMS voted to endorse “A Request to the Board of Regents for Separate Information Literacy Standards”. The importance of Information Literacy for all students, we believe, warrants a distinct, separate NYS Learning Standard area.

The Leadership Retreat will be held this summer August 1-3 at Cornell. Participants will learn how the AASL Standards for Twenty First Century Learners and Empowering Learners guidelines impact and improve a school library program. They will leave the retreat with a plan for the school year. Please plan to attend.

Visit the SLMS website www.nyla.org/slms for details of all the above programs.

SMART Marcy Strong, President

SMART is excited to announce that our spring workshop will feature John LeMasney, presenting “Practically Designed: Best Practices in Design.” We hope you’ll be able to join us in Rochester for what should be a wonderfully engaging program on free and open source visual design tools. Keep an eye out for the official announcement and be sure to sign up quickly—we expect this program to sell out fast! We’re also working on developing another slate of diverse programs for the upcoming 2010 NYLA conference and we’ll have several awards to help prospective attendees with conference costs. To keep up with all SMART’s developments, be sure to read our blog at http://nylasmart.wordpress.com/ and check out our spring newsletter, which is available on the NYLA SMART website.

YSS Sarah Sachs, President

There is still time to register for Back to Basics, the YSS Spring Conference featuring Megan Lambert and Daniel Kirk, April 9, 2010. Come join your youth services colleagues at the Holiday Inn on Wolf Road in Albany as we explore all things youth. Conference planner Chris McGinity has provided workshops for all levels of interest in every session. Begin your visit to Albany Thursday, April 8 with the Past Presidents Dinner at Reel Seafood Co., hosted by Annette Birdsall. Then extend your stay to include the first annual Empire Book Festival on Saturday. Check out the details on our website (http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=54) Print and mail the registration form or, for the first time, register online! Now is also the time to encourage your readers to vote for their favorite book for the Three Apples Children’s, Teen’s, and Young Reader’s Book Awards. Visit http://www.3applesbookaward.org for a complete list of nominated titles.
Kimberly Bolan Cullin was presented with the “Top Forty Under 40” Award by Indiana Business Journal for her work with libraries across the U.S. and abroad.

Susan Currie is the new Director of the Tompkins County Public Library.

Nancy Curtin, Director of the Port Washington Public Library, has begun Books for Dessert, a unique book club program for adults with intellectual disabilities. The book club gathers weekly to read a good story and under the direction of trained leaders, members read, meet new friends and learn while having fun (and dessert). The program is designed to increase participants’ reading abilities and teach life skills, while enhancing the pleasure of reading.

Robert Dowd, President of the NYLA Government Information Roundtable (NYLA/ GIRT), announced the winners of the 2009 New York State Notable Documents Awards. The awards are presented to outstanding documents produced by New York State government agencies or to a notable agency effort.


Liza Duncan, New York State Library's Principal Librarian of Technical Services and Systems Preservation Officer, will receive the prestigious Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award presented by the American Library Association/Government Documents Roundtable.

Mamie Eng, Library Director of the Henry Waldinger Memorial Library, has been awarded the “Bridge Builder of the Year” Award by the Friends of Bridge, a non-profit drug and alcohol rehabilitation and treatment facility, for her efforts to bring together books and an author to work with youth in the Friends of Bridge Educational Program.

Tom Fortin has been appointed Director of Community Libraries of the Queens Library.

Muriel Feldshuh, editor of Up-Front with Storytelling which is celebrating its 12th year of publication, completed her 4th Illustrator Quilt titled “Celebrate...Voices in Children’s Books.” The quilt was on exhibit at The National Center for Children’s Illustrated Literature (NCCIL) in Abilene, Texas.

Peter Gisolfi’s firm Peter Gisolfi Associates received the Connecticut Green Building Council’s 2009 “Most Intriguing Institutional Design” Award for the Darien Library in Darien, Connecticut. The Council said that in designing the Darien Library, the Gisolfi firm “...was clearly able to bridge the gap between traditional architecture and excellent sustainable design.”

Dan Killian has been appointed the Interim Library Director at Niagara Falls.

Tammy Kokot, Director of the Almond 20th Century Club Library, reports that Cassandra Robbers, one of the Library’s most fervent Patron’s, was featured in the March 1, 2010 issue of Woman’s Day magazine (www.womans-day.com/library). The article How the Public Library Can Save You Money highlights the importance of libraries to their communities.

Jennifer A. Magee, former manager of the Haxton Memorial Library, has been named the new Director at the Ogden Farmers’ Library.

Dale McNeill has been appointed Director of Public Library Services of the Queens Library.

Ellen E. McTyre of the Mamaroneck Public Library District completed NYLA’s Leadership & Management Academy Program in October 2009 and was recently promoted to Head of the Young Adult Department at Mamaroneck Library.

Mary Jo Orzech, Director of SUNY at Brockport Drake Memorial Library, secured a National Endowment for the Arts grant to support “The Big Read” project which encompasses numerous events throughout the spring semester. Drake Memorial Library is partnering with the Seymour Public and the Brockport Central School District on “The Big Read” project, which will focus on the book Sun, Stone, and Shadows: 20 Great Mexican Short Stories, edited by Jorge Hernández.

Mariah Prentiss is welcomed by the Ithaca City School District librarians, where she’ll bring her enthusiasm, dedication, and strong school library skills to Lehman Alternative Community School.

Amy B. Raff, former Assistant Director of the Woodstock Public Library, has been appointed the Library's new Director

Betsy Sywetz, President of the NYLA Empire Friends Roundtable (NYLA/EFR), announced the 2009 “National Friends of Library Week” awards as follows: Friends of Brighton Memorial Library for Large Friends Group, Friends of the Waterford Public Library for Small Friends Group, and Literary Manhattan for School for Academic or Special Library Friends Group.

Mary Ann Weighhofer is the new Director at Clinton Community College’s Douglas Library.
INTERVIEW WITH NYLA MEMBER
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So after that whirlwind year as AASL President, I wanted to know what made her run for ALA President this year. “I was asked to run for ALA President by a nominating committee with no school librarians on it which I found significant. I decided that with my experience as an ALA division president and my broad library experience as a school librarian, public library trustee and as an adjunct professor for SUNY Plattsburgh and now Mansfield University, that I can represent all library types well. If I am elected, I plan to build upon the current and recent ALA presidents’ advocacy initiatives by increasing awareness of libraries’ value in today’s difficult economy. It’s my belief that promotion and marketing equals advocates. We need to recruit a core group of people and partners to speak for us with legislators and decision-makers. I also want to increase diversity recruitment and retention. More information on my platform is available at: http://www.skj4ala.org,” responded Sara.

My final question, as always, was what role did NYLA play in your career? “I first went on NYLA Council in 1993 as SLMS president and have been on public awareness, membership and legislative committees as well as a term as a NYLA Councilor at Large ever since. I’ve also been a member of YSS and the Intellectual Freedom Round Table. The experience of working together with all library types to improve library service in New York State is very significant since ALA’s structure is quite similar. NYLA membership gives the library community a much louder voice than I could have alone,” concluded Sara.

Albany Public Library
continued from page 1

and input into the display and classification of the collection,” said Ms. Coon. The new system also gives the staff greater flexibility to place its more popular book selections in high traffic and visible locations throughout the library. On the downside, shelving the collection requires more staff time to decide where the item belongs.

“Going Dewey free at our branch libraries has been an interesting and rewarding experience,” said Ms. Nersinger. “Our customers are better able to browse the collection using this subject-based system, and our non-fiction circulation numbers have increased at both branches that are Dewey free. We’ve gotten a lot of comments about the system, and are considering it a successful work in progress that will require adjustments here and there.”

Currently, APL is using two different models at its reopened branches for alphabetizing its collections, one branch uses alphabetized authors and another utilizes alphabetized titles. After a period of time and based on staff and patron feedback, APL will determine which model works best and institute uniformity throughout the branches. “Our conversion to a Dewey-less collection is an evolving and organic process, and we will re-evaluate its effectiveness in a year’s time,” concluded Ms. Coon.

Albany Public Library is the largest library in New York State that is using the BISAC classifications. The only other New York library known to be currently utilizing the bookstore or hybrid model is the DeWitt Community Library in Onondaga County. Susan Reckhow, the former DeWitt Director, who is currently Director of the Onondaga Free Library, is also using the construction of a new library to institute a hybrid model at her new building.

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is clearly unequal. Individuals without disabilities can access e-books twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, through the Internet or an e-book reader from the comfort of their own homes or from many other locations. However, individuals with disabilities cannot get many books; or, if they can get them, they must certify their disability, contact the library during business hours, order the book, and wait days or weeks for the book to be found in an accessible format.

Since e-books are readily made accessible, libraries can no longer rely on separate, unequal access for people with disabilities. Vendors also have no excuse for making their e-books inaccessible. Many vendors and publishers simply aren’t interested in providing accessible e-books. Libraries, which are major purchasers of e-books, can change that.

In recognition of the purchasing power and the legal obligations of libraries, the American Library Association recently adopted a resolution regarding purchasing accessible electronic resources, which calls upon libraries to require their vendors of electronic resources to verify compliance with accessibility standards and to ensure that electronic resources are user-tested. The Los Angeles Public Library system has already announced that it will suspend purchase of e-books that are compatible with Adobe Digital Editions because these books are not accessible to all of the Library’s patrons. This action has gotten Adobe’s attention, but a single library system, however large, cannot exert the kind of pressure that will force companies to alter their technology and business models to include accessibility.

We are asking public libraries to make it clear that they will not purchase e-books that can’t be used by all of their patrons. If you hold the line on accessibility, vendors will provide accessible e-books. If you don’t insist on accessibility, few vendors will provide it. Libraries that purchase inaccessible technology expose themselves to potential liability. On the other hand, when libraries insist on accessibility, accessibility happens.
As a result of its resounding success in its first year, Creative Aging in Our Communities: The Westchester Libraries Project has received renewed funding to support arts programming for older adults in Westchester County. The Westchester Library System, in partnership with Lifetime Arts, Inc., will once again offer Westchester libraries the opportunity to apply for a grant in order to engage professional teaching artists to conduct hands-on arts workshops in a variety of disciplines.

The project focuses on the powerful and positive role of the arts in enhancing the quality of life for older adults. In its first year over 100 older Westchester citizens took part in more than 75 sequential, instructional arts workshops at libraries throughout the county. From 60 to 95 years old, participants danced, painted, wrote memoirs, and made collages, murals, and ceramic tiles.

“The Creative Aging in Our Communities Project provides older adults with a unique outlet to express themselves artistically in the comfort of their local library,” said Terry Kirchner, Executive Director of the Westchester Library System. “It’s absolutely wonderful to witness the creative energy at each participating library.”

The generous funding for this project is from the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation, which is committed to building “elder-friendly” communities. The Foundation views older people as assets to their communities, an essentially untapped resource of time, talent, and experience with potential to benefit neighbors and neighborhoods. Lifetime Arts, a NY-based nonprofit, encourages creative aging in organizations and communities and will work with county libraries to design and implement instructional art-making workshops.

In addition to the new skills learned, the workshops also provide participants with vital opportunities for socialization and a greater sense of purpose. Maura O’Malley, President/CEO of Lifetime Arts, says, “Professionally conducted instructional arts programs significantly enhance the quality of life for older adults and help community organizations respond to the growing demand for quality programming for an aging population. These programs are effective, cost-efficient and highly replicable.”

Up to eight grants will be awarded later this fall for projects taking place from January through May of 2010. Libraries may apply for a minimum of $1,000 and a maximum of $5,000. Each participating library will provide space for a workshop series, coordination and promotion, and will host a culminating exhibition or performance at the library. Libraries are also required to apply for the programming grants in partnership with professional arts organizations and/or teaching artists.

“The Westchester Library System was very pleased by the high levels of community engagement and individual learning generated during the first year of this project,” said Kirchner. “Many of last year’s participants joined the program without prior experience creating art and blew us away with their accomplishments. We anticipate more wonderful results as member libraries and their communities participate in the coming year.”

“Libraries are natural partners for creative aging programs,” said Lifetime Arts Executive Director Ed Friedman. “We’re encouraged by the success of the 2009 projects and have received so much positive feedback from participants and librarians alike. Our presentation at this year’s ALA conference in Chicago garnered support and many inquiries from librarians from around the country. We’re looking forward to partnering with more libraries to help them include creating aging programs as part of their core offerings.”

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So how do you navigate making the choice of who your supplier should be? The New York Library Association (NYLA) has chosen to partner with Energy Plus™ because Energy Plus has created a unique electricity program just for members. In addition to the tax savings for some, NYLA members earn a 3% Cash Back rebate on supply charges every 6 months AND a $25 activation bonus after two months just for giving Energy Plus a try. The program is available for your business AND your home! To be eligible you need an address in New York State within our service area, which covers all areas except those covered by the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA).


Here is a few of the organizations who have already made the switch:

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Aurora Free Library  
Beaver Falls Library  
Bedford Free Library  
Brewster Public Library  
Canton Free Library  
Claverack Free Library  
Clifton Springs Library  
Finkelstein Memorial Library  
Florida Public Library  
Gloversville Public Library  
Greenwood Lake Public Library  
Hendrick Hudson Free Library  
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2009 NYLA Fund Donors

THE NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION would like to thank all those who generously contributed to the NYLA Fund during 2009.

Because of gifts like these, NYLA can continue providing strong programs and advocating for the needs and priorities of libraries across New York State.

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SUPPORT CONTINUES FOR CREATIVE AGING
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Michael J. Borges, Executive Director and Marcia Eggleston, NYLA President-Elect meet with State Education Commissioner David Steiner to discuss information literacy standards and other issues important to the library community.

Last year’s seven participating libraries included the Chappaqua Library, New Rochelle Public Library, The Field Library (Peekskill, NY), Town of Pelham Library, Somers Library, Yonkers Public Library-Grinton I. Will Branch Library, and Yonkers Public Library-Riverfront Library.

O’Malley adds, “With great teaching artists, supportive library staff, and no previous arts experience necessary, the Creative Aging in Our Communities programs engages older adults in new learning opportunities in comfortable, socially stimulating, and age neutral community libraries. It’s a truly valuable experience for everyone involved.”

For more information on Creative Aging in Our Communities: The Westchester Libraries Project, contact Lifetime Arts at info@lifetimearts.org or call (914) 355-2304 or visit their website at: www.lifetimearts.org. Additional information may also be found at www.westchesterlibraries.org.
NYLA New Members July – December 2009

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Alexis Alfasso
Rand Bellavia
Pamela Bigsby
Jennifer Burr
Zack Chauvin
Cheryl Clancy
Crystal Cutler
Trudy Duschaneck
Rubyliza Gaba
Christopher Greene
Monique Harding
Matthew Harrick
Christine Karatnytsky
Devon Kramer
Mary Lanham
Linda Larkin
Rosemary LaSala
Jennifer Lim
Megan Oakleaf
Rebecca Oling
Lorna Peachin
David Phillips IV
Patricia Powers
Diane Riley
Heather Saunders
David Schoen
Dagobert Soergel
Allison Steffmann
Diane Talbot
Tess Tobin
Gail Yamauchi

LAMS
Daniel Caufield
Leah Goldschmidt
Regina Golia
Harriet Groner
Gregory Harris
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Randi Leopold
Lauren Marchisotto
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PLS
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Carol Bearisto
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Anna Ciepela Ioannides
Marjorie Clark
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Dorothy Dineen
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Regina Doli
John Eberhardt
Marie Elsworth
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July – December 2009

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Michele Giuffre
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Valarie Lewis
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Devin McKinney
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Felice Morris
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Jim Quinn
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Brianna Reagan
Marjorie Reinhardt
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Karen Rutkowski
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Christine Schaeper
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Libby Post, President/CEO
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after, lost his job. He had never used a computer before; now he was in the library every day, seeking help from the staff on how to use the Internet to find employment (and how to use a computer). There were other factors, of course, but the town held the line on the library budget when others were being cut.

I encourage everyone to continue the efforts started with SnapShotNY. Write a short anecdote about how you’ve helped a patron (go http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=1860 for some examples) and share those anecdotes with your director, your Friends group, your Board, so that they can use those stories to illustrate the impact of your library—how the library made a difference in someone’s life (remember: The Library: Your Story Starts Here!).

Other initiatives
Thanks to the dedicated committee chairs I am fortunate to have this year NYLA will be moving forward with many new initiatives. There will be more CE opportunities for all types of libraries; a revamped website for NYLA; more visibility for NYLA—think State Fair—legislative action, of course; and special fundraising for scholarships as part of our 120th Anniversary celebration. Committee chairs, with my thanks to them, are:

Awards – Josh Cohen
Conference Chair – Ellen Rubin
Continuing Education – Debby Emerson
Development/120th Anniversary – Penelope Klein & Carolyn Giambra
Exhibits Chair – Rocco Staino
Intellectual Freedom – Robert Hubscher
Legislative – Kevin Verbesey
Local Arrangements – Isaac Pulver & Rebecca Lubin
Membership – Patti McCall
Public Awareness – Kim Iraci
Web – Tim Baird

And, of course, three will be a great conference this fall in Saratoga Springs (Nov. 3-6)! ♦

Online Resource for Struggling New Yorkers

As the economic downturn continues, many individuals and families are struggling to make ends meet. Financial difficulties are leading New York State residents to seek help and information at libraries on employment opportunities and accessing public assistance programs.

An online resource is available to assist low and moderate income families in accessing valuable economic supports and services. New York State’s website, www.myBenefits.ny.gov is an e-government hub for human services that allows users to determine if they may be eligible for benefits by answering one simple set of questions. The site is easy to use and confidential. It currently provides a prescreening for nutritional assistance (food stamps), Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other tax credits, health insurance programs including Healthy NY, Family Health Plus, Child Health Plus, Medicaid, and the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), free and reduced school meals and temporary assistance. The prescreening generates a customized results screen for the user which tells them which benefits they may be eligible for, where and how to apply, and what documentation to bring.

Since its introduction in 2008, myBenefits has been improved and expanded with a new home page and additional features. Besides the prescreening component, the site now allows users in some New York State counties to apply for Food Stamp benefits online. Additional counties continue to be added to this feature. myBenefits also includes a link to Resources for Working Families www.otda.state.ny.us which provides more detailed information on these programs, as well as links to the NYS Department of Labor and the NYS Consumer Protection Board websites.

If not already doing so, you are encouraged to direct customers to this self-service resource. A variety of outreach materials are also available free-of-charge which help promote the website and available economic supports. Publications can be viewed and ordered at: http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/publications/. Questions can be directed to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Employment and Advancement Services Bureau at (518) 486-6106.

Additionally, you are invited to attend a presentation on myBenefits at the NYLA Conference in Saratoga Springs in November and upcoming Regional Institutes (times and locations TBA). ♦
From the President...

“60 Minutes,” Joel Nitzkin and Library Funding

For more than 40 years, CBS’s “60 Minutes” has riveted the millions of viewers who tune in each week. The reporting can be hard-hitting and investigative, or it can be light and whimsical. Whatever the formula, no one can argue with its tremendous success.

So what does “60 Minutes” have to do with library funding? Well, they share the secret to success. That “secret,” according to Don Hewitt, creator of “60 Minutes” is:

“...simple and it’s reduced to four words every kid in the world knows. Tell me a story. It’s that easy.”

Stories are the power behind advocacy.

Okay, then—who’s Joel Nitzkin and what’s he got to do with library funding? Several years ago, county health departments were facing cuts from the state (déjà vu?). Nitzkin, Monroe County Health Director at the time, and president of the New York State Association of County Health Officials, asked county health nurses to submit short anecdotes about how their services helped patients. He stated in a recent article in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle:

“We developed so many of these anecdotes, we were able to give six to each member of the state legislature—and I mean different ones to each member. The effort worked: The cuts were tabled…”

Success in both cases happened because of stories. Everybody loves a story, but more importantly everyone remembers a story. Stories give meaning to what we do everyday and answer the question: “So what?”

NYLA’s “SnapShotNY” is right in line with Nitzkin and “60 Minutes.” Telling your library funder—town council, school principal, college provost, or state legislator—how vital your services are and giving plenty of statistics to back it up—that’s important. But tell just one good story (those “My Library is Essential because…” statements from your users), and I can guarantee you’ll have an attentive audience.

I did it. I’m a trustee of the Brighton Memorial Library and for the first time had to present the library budget to the town board. I told them the story of Matt, a long-time town resident who had just bought a new car, and then shortly there-