A Message from the ASLS President

Aprille C. Nace, ASLS President

With spring just around the corner, we are all looking forward to another exciting year. Before we get too far into the New Year, let’s pause a moment to reflect on the success of the 2007 Conference. Thanks to the ASLS board and committee members we were able to bring you a wide variety of programming which by all accounts was very well received. We held a very successful raffle at the conference booth—the winner of the raffle turned out to be our own Erin Rushton of Binghamton University. Speaking of the conference booth, hats off to Chris Walker for leading the effort to put together a fabulous display featuring items provided by more than 30 ASLS institutional members. Conference also helped to bring ASLS membership to more than 425 members. Thank you to all our members for your continuing support and commitment. You are the force that gives the academic and special libraries of New York State a voice. As always we look forward to your feedback and I encourage you to contact me (naceac@cmog.org or 607.974.8644) with your ideas. There is strength in numbers so let’s see if we continue to increase membership this year. If only 1 out every 5 of our members could share with their colleagues the benefits of joining NYLA and ASLS and bring one new member on board, we would easily surpass 500 members.

One arena where the idea of strength in numbers is sure to play out is the upcoming NYLA Library Lobby Day, March 11, 2008. The Governor’s proposed budget reflects significant cuts to library funding in New York State, and your voice is critical to NYLA’s efforts to have these cuts restored. Invest in the future of libraries and the future of the profession by joining colleagues in Albany as we stand up for libraries. Look for more details from our Legislative Committee representative, Jean Sheviak, later in this newsletter.

Throughout this newsletter you will also find more information on the ASLS 2007 Spirit of Librarianship Award Winner, Kathy Miller, Director of the Rochester Regional Library Council and the most recent Ridley Internship Award winner. As a staff member of an institution that previously received this award I can tell you that we found the internship of immense benefit and encourage you to take advantage of the application opportunity. Also in this issue is the Spotlight on a Special Library featuring the combined school and professional library at the Astor Home for Children. Let us know if you would like to see your special library featured in an upcoming newsletter.

And finally, a warm welcome to Amy Pass of The Sage Colleges, who joins the ASLS board as Secretary/ Web Liaison and our continuing appreciation to Karen Gardner-Athey of the SUNY Office of Library and Information Services, for once again offering her services as a Director. Of course we cannot forget our new conference programmer (and Vice President) Erin Rushton, who has been hard at work to bring you a variety of engaging sessions at the NYLA conference in Saratoga Springs (November 5-8). This year ASLS will be working with RASS and SMART to co-host one humdinger of a joint-section reception. Mark your calendars now; you won’t want to miss out on the fun!
Academic & Special Libraries Support Learning for Life!

Academic & Special Libraries Support Learning for Life! The theme of the 2007 ASLS Booth was carried out by displaying an array of items from across the state. Seeing bookbags and notebooks, mugs and paperweights, to t-shirts and wine glasses, booth visitors became aware of New York’s variety of academic and special libraries. The 69 libraries that are organizational members of NYLA and/or ASLS were awarded a special star of recognition.

Visitors were encouraged to guess the number of academic and special libraries in New York. Guesses ranged from 102 to 6,008!!! The actual number (based on information from the NYS Education Department and the 2007 Gale Directory of Special Librarian and Information Centers) is 1,767! Winners with the closest guesses were invited to choose a prize from the items donated for the booth.

A highlight of the booth was a lovely gift basket donated by the Corning Museum of Glass which included books, museum tickets, “Make Your Own Glass” tickets, and a beautiful purple and orange bowl made by William Gudenrath, Resident Advisor at The Studio. Erin Rushton of Binghamton University won the raffle for the basket.
We are having a party!

Hosts: ASLS, RASS and SMART sections of NYLA  
When? 2008 NYLA Conference  
(November 5 – 8, 2008)  
Where? Saratoga Springs  

You are invited to join us at the 2008 NYLA Annual Conference for a reception co-sponsored with the Reference and Adult Services (RASS) and Management of Information Resources and Technology (SMART) sections.

Stay tuned for further details…

ASLS Spirit of Librarianship Award

Kathleen M. Miller, Executive Director of the Rochester Regional Library Council, is the 2007 winner of the ASLS Spirit of Librarianship Award. The award was presented to Kathy at the ASLS Annual Membership Meeting at the Annual Conference in Buffalo.

Each year ASLS presents this award to a section member who clearly exemplifies an exceptional and unique spirit in academic and special libraries. Kathy Miller received two nominations for the 2007 award, both of which mentioned her commitment to excellence in library service, her unflagging belief in the importance of libraries, and her exemplary work ethic.

Kathy has served all of us as Chair of the NYLA Legislative Committee for the past three years. Under her guidance, NYLA has successfully lobbied to increase state aid by more than $39 million over the past two years. NYLA’s advocacy initiatives have been reinvigorated during Kathy’s tenure as Leg Committee chair, and her leadership has been critical in navigating through the important processes of consensus building, advocacy, and follow-up.

Kathy has been actively involved in NYLA and ASLS activities for many years, and served as ASLS Vice President/President/Past President from 1998-2000. She has always been a vocal and effective champion of NYLA and ASLS. For example, she recently contacted all the academic library directors in her service area and encouraged them to join NYLA and become active in ASLS. She has not limited her work to the RRLC region. She has been actively involved in a number of collaborative statewide programs and always includes NYLA as part of the solution.

The ASLS Newsletter is published three times a year by the Communications Committee of the Academic and Special Libraries Section of the New York Library Association, Judy Fischetti and Tessa Killian, Co-Editors. ADDRESS: ASLS Newsletter c/o Southeastern NY Library Resources Council, 21 S. Elting Corners Rd, Highland, NY 12528; Phone: 845-883-9065 Fax: 845-883-9483; email: judyf@senylrc.org or killian@senylrc.org
Spotlight on a Special Library
The Astor Home for Children Library

The Astor Home for Children, originally the Astor Home for Boys, was established in 1953 in response to a New York State initiative to create children's residential treatment programs that would reduce the need for psychiatric hospitalization of children. Its first home, now the agency's administrative offices and residential treatment center, is located in Rhinebeck, on property Vincent Astor donated in memory of his father, John Astor (who died on the Titanic), that had been Holiday Farm, a convalescent home for children.

The Astor Home for Children serves a region stretching from Dutchess County south through the Hudson Valley and into the Bronx in New York City, with staff located at over two dozen different locations. The Astor Learning Center was incorporated in 1980 as a state approved private school for children with emotional problems at the Rhinebeck site. Other services provided by Astor throughout the service area include Head Start, day treatment, home-based crisis intervention, school-based services and preventative services to children and their families.

The Astor Home for Children has one librarian but two libraries (in one room!) in Rhinebeck, a school library that supports the Astor Learning Center (ALC) and a professional library that supports the staff at all the Astor locations. The ALC library is about 25 years old and houses over 4,000 items for students in K-8. The Astor Professional Library is about 50 years old, supports the staff at all the remote locations, and houses over 1500 items that focus on child psychology and psychiatry, child psychopathology, child development and education. The Library’s bibliotherapy collection contains materials aimed at children and therapists on topics such as anger, adoption, abuse, and emotions, as well as a parenting collection used with counseling and parenting classes.

Many Astor staff at remote locations take advantage of the e-TOC service (electronic table of contents service), and request articles from the Library’s 45 journal subscriptions. When staff has a pressing need for detailed information on a specific topic, the librarian performs a search using the various online databases available to the Library and an annotated bibliography prepared for staff to review. For those times when staff information needs require resources beyond what is housed in the Astor Library collection, most requests are successfully filled through the excellent resource sharing tools available to libraries—SEAL (SENYLRC ILL product), NYSILL, DOCLINE and OCLC.

The ALC school library duties are for children aged 5-14. Each class receives instruction in basic library literacy (using resources like encyclopedias and almanacs, doing research, etc.), literature appreciation (storytimes) and library organization (Dewey). ALC teachers are provided curriculum support as well as support for their information needs so they can better teach the children. Classes come to the library on a fixed schedule, so there are times each day set aside to do the "Professional Library" side of the job. Although it sounds like it could get confusing, having "two jobs in one" is a good stress release--when one side gets a bit much, there's always work on something for the other side of the job.


by Denise A. Garofalo

Thinking about going to conference this year? The 2008 NYLA Annual Conference will be held in beautiful Saratoga Springs, November 5 – 8. Here are some reasons why we think you should attend....

1. Interesting conference programs: We have already started planning our conference programs and we’ve lined up some innovative and engaging speakers to discuss a variety of issues ranging from digitization to environmentally friendly libraries.

2. Networking opportunities: Our events and reception provide opportunities to meet other academic and special library colleagues from around the state. And we usually serve tasty hors d’oeuvres as well.

3. ASLS Booth: Interested in learning more about ASLS or looking for opportunities to participate in ASLS? At conference you can stop by and visit us at our ASLS booth. We promise to have some good prizes and giveaways.

Exhibits: Meet up with your vendor representatives and learn about new products and services.
Tips for New Librarians - Present...Me? No!...YES!!

As a new librarian, it will be important to go to presentations, both as an attendee and a speaker. In these sessions, you will learn about the dynamics of the profession, current trends, and future initiatives. These venues provide an opportunity for conversations among library professionals. For many, it is easy to be a member of the audience; however, getting up to speak can seem a bit intimidating. By trying the following tips you may find that you have better speaking experiences:

♦ Select a topic you like – talking about something you don’t like will make you like it even less.
♦ Be prepared – if you know your “stuff” the presentation will be more fluid.
♦ Use an outline (can be Power Point) to help keep you on track.
♦ Practice alone – you will become more fluent with the material.
♦ Practice with colleagues – listen to their feedback and suggestions.
♦ Use props – these instruments will take some of the focus off of you.
♦ Start the session with an audience exercise – again –the light is off of you.
♦ Be ready to answer questions and be honest if you don’t have the answer – pass the question back to the audience “would anyone else care to address…?”
♦ Bring water and other comfort (e.g., tissues) items to avoid unnecessary issues.

Another recommendation is to start out small and work into a larger experience; you don’t have to conduct a three day workshop as your first endeavor. There are many opportunities to present. As follows is a hierarchical list of speaking prospects:

♦ Session moderator – selects the presentation topic, locates appropriate speakers, and organizes arrangements and introductions. Very limited, but some initial public speaking time.
♦ Poster session – the board (or sometimes slide show) does most of the “speaking” work. Interaction will include one-on-one Q&As.
♦ Panel speaker – this format includes several speakers who select one aspect of a broader topic. This option fosters collaboration and the luxury of not being alone!
♦ Demonstrations – these can include catalog, database, or Web page demos. The focus tends to be on the application rather than on you.
♦ Conference presentations – range of time varies with conference, usually 45 minutes to 1.5 hours. Select a time frame that works for you. You can always co-present to take off pressure.

You may be shy now, but over time you will be eager to present!

Brought to you by the ASLS Membership Committee

Cut this out and pass it along to a new colleague

Rudolf Steiner Library Awarded ASLS/Ridley’s Book Bindery Student Internship Grant

The Rudolf Steiner Library, national library of the Anthroposophical Society in America in Ghent, NY, is the recipient of the 2007 ASLS/Ridley’s Book Bindery Student Internship. The award provides the library with $1,000 toward the cost of hiring an intern who is a graduate student in the field of library and information science. The award is generously funded by Ridley's Book Bindery in Ithaca, NY.

The Steiner library was founded in 1925 and originally focused exclusively on works by Rudolf Steiner and other anthroposophical authors for the benefit of society members. In the last thirty years it has become an outstanding collection in world spirituality, Biblical studies, world mythology, death and dying, alternative health and nutrition, Waldorf education, and Goethe studies. The library offers mail-order and on-site borrowing and interlibrary loan.

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NYLA Legislative Committee Report

The NYLA Legislative Committee met on February 5, 2008 at NYLA. In the room were 21 people: at-large members of the committee; representatives from NYLA sections, round tables, and affiliate groups; representatives of the State Library; and NYLA officers and staff. After the meeting an ASLS member who attended asked if he could meet with me to learn more about why he (and, and by implication, other ASLS members) should spend time and effort on legislative matters. After all, we aren’t in public libraries and we don’t have to worry about public library funding issues. Or is there more to it than that?

My answer? Yes, there is lots more than that! New York’s library structure with different types of systems reflects the work New York legislators began several decades ago. They recognized the need to support the research needs of the State, and one of the ways they did that was by creating the Reference and Research Resources Councils (the 3Rs). The 3Rs provide support for the academic and special library community through the academic coordinated collection development assistance program as well as by funding resource sharing, library automation, and other cooperative activities. While the public libraries may be the most visible face of libraries in the state, the legislature provides significant dollars for academic, hospital, special, and school libraries through the 3Rs and other library systems.

On March 11, librarians and library supporters of all types will gather in Albany to thank legislators for their past support of libraries and encourage them to do even better in the future. Specifically, we will focus on restoration of $5 million dollars to the library budget. Added by the legislature in 2007 after years and years of flat library funding, the $5 million was removed by the Governor in this year’s budget.

NYLA Lobby Day is a day when numbers count, so why not join us? Not sure what to do or where to go? Contact your local NY3Rs organization for information, or call me and I’ll put you in touch with someone who can help. It’s fun, and it’s government in action! For more information about Lobby Day, NYLA’s legislative agenda, and an easy way to contact elected officials go to www.NYLA.org and follow the link to Advocacy.

One more thing: Did you know that libraries have a political action committee? New Yorkers for Better Libraries was formed in 2003 by New York library advocates who believe that increased state aid for libraries and library systems is essential so that library and information services can be sustained and improved. The NYLBS-PAC website at www.nylibs-pac.net will tell you what they do and how to donate. You’ll also find an invitation to their second annual Gala Fundraiser to be held at 6 pm on Monday, March 10th at the Holiday Inn Albany on Wolf Road.

Jean Sheviak, ASLS Representative to the NYLA Legislative Committee

……..Rudolf Steiner Library, Continued

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The facility serves teachers, students, homeschoolers, and researchers, and is an excellent resource for scholars without access to a university library.

Last year Steiner Library received a grant from the New York State Library’s Division of Library Development for a preservation planning survey. Among the survey recommendations were creation of a disaster plan and a preservation plan. The library will engage the services of an intern for 120 hours to create the plans. dPlan, the template created by the Northeast Document Conservation Center, will be used to create the disaster plan.

This project will provide an intern with the opportunity to undertake and complete a project that involves familiarizing themselves with the structure (both physical and organizational) of a unique special library in all its depth and complexity, and to create a preservation plan. The expertise gained in the creation of such a plan—a necessary document for any library—will be important for a student’s future career.
[Editor’s Note: This letter is a response to the Dear Lorol column in the Fall 2007 ASLS Newsletter.]

Dear Lorol,

Although congratulations were definitely in order for “Resting Comfortably”, I think you missed the boat, or the “teaching moment”. I’m sure we all deserve rest after the sweaty palms and years of toil which result in tenure (or permanent appointment) …. But even though that is all-too-often the perception and the reality of tenure, that isn’t what it is about. Tenure was created so that faculty wouldn’t have to worry about teaching or investigating unpopular (to the administration) views – it wasn’t created so that we can sit on our laurels (which is somewhat painful, actually). We’re all professionals – we shouldn’t be “resting” – EVER!

…and as far as a sabbatical is concerned, “Resting” indicates that he/she is now “eligible” for the same. Although “eligible for” and “entitled to” both start with the letter “e”, they are different constructs. Just because “Resting” has achieved tenure, does not mean “Resting” will actually receive a sabbatical. “Resting” should already have research under way (otherwise, how did he/she receive tenure) which could then result in a sabbatical project. Sabbaticals aren’t vacations (again, an all-too-often perception and, unfortunately, reality): sabbaticals have to be applied for and justified, with an expected product at the end. I, myself, am “eligible” for a sabbatical after achieving permanent appointment; but it is highly unlikely I will ever receive one, since my administration has a problem with justifying leaves of absence of any kind (budgetary restricts prohibit a sabbatical replacement … and if I don’t need to be replaced, then why do I need to be employed?)

Tenure and sabbaticals are marvelous privileges for academic librarians, but they are not entitlements and should never be viewed that way. May we never rest! May we always be intellectually challenged!

Signed,

Glad I have job security, but hardly resting

Dear Hardly Resting,

Good thing I’ve learned to swim!

According to Merriam-Webster, a sabbatical is “a leave often with pay granted usually every seventh year (as to a college professor) for rest, travel, or research.”* I do believe that you are absolutely correct in that eligibility is only a precursor- one must submit a proposal and have it approved, and have an administration that is willing to make provisions to cover your professional responsibilities in order to avail oneself of this privilege. Requirements also usually involve the submission of some kind of “product” or report upon return. Certainly not in my mind, a privilege to be taken lightly.

I think your letter serves to highlight the professional variances experienced by academic librarians, particularly for those librarians who “enjoy” faculty status in some form. I’m guessing there are any number of opinions and anecdotes related to these issues. Readers………anyone else care to share?

Lorol, The Liberated Librarian
