A Message from the ASLS President

Erin Rushton, ASLS President

Happy New Year ASLS members! Unfortunately, it sometimes feels like there is not much to celebrate given the current financial environment. That’s why it is important, in these challenging times of limited budgets, for librarians to share creative ideas on how to continue providing valuable library services and resources. One way that ASLS helps foster this type of communication is through programs and networking opportunities offered at the NYLA Annual Conference. Even though the 2009 conference is still nine months away, ASLS is already hard at work planning for this year’s event. Our conference programmer Regan Brumagen, an Outreach & Education Reference Librarian at the Juliette K. and Leonard S. Rakow Research Library of The Corning Museum of Glass, has been doing an excellent job planning sessions and lining up speakers. So stay tuned because in our next newsletter we will give you a preview of our proposed sessions.

Another way ASLS aspires to foster communication is through our newsletter. Every few months, Judy Fischetti and Tessa Killian, the dedicated members of the ASLS Communications and Publications Committee, publish newsletters that highlight special and academic libraries in the State, offer advice for new and mid-career librarians and advertise special ASLS awards. ASLS is always interested in hearing from members so feel free to contact us if you would like to contribute something.

Finally, ASLS would like to remind everyone that NYLA has been highlighting many useful resources and information on their website such as updated budget reports. You can also find out more information about Lobby Day 2009. This year ASLS was able to donate $250 to help support this valuable cause.

ASLS hopes everyone is enjoying this snowy winter and we look forward to updating you again in our summer newsletter.

ASLS Conference Scholarship Winner

Each year, ASLS awards a scholarship for attendance at the Annual Conference. The 2008 conference scholarship winner was Michelle Costello, Reference/Instruction Librarian at SUNY Geneseo's Milne Library. When Michelle applied for the conference scholarship, she was a new NYLA member, a new ASLS member, and a new librarian!! She has now been at SUNY Geneseo for a little over a year, and recently organized a highly successful conference on library instruction. "Library Instruction: Teaching Tips from the Trenches" was specifically designed to meet the needs of new instruction librarians. 55 enthusiastic participants gathered at SUNY Geneseo in January and the reality of a plan hatched back in the summer of 2008 came to fruition.

In her application for the NYLA conference scholarship, Michelle said, “Possibly the most valuable aspect of the conference will be the opportunity to network with other academic librarians. As someone new to the field I welcome the opportunity to talk with others and be able to ask questions and receive advice. I would enjoy the ability to share some of my new ideas with more experienced librarians and receive feedback”.

Michelle took full advantage of her conference attendance opportunity and obviously came away with new information and connections that made it possible for her to take a leadership role in planning an extremely successful conference.
Spotlight on a Special Library Center for Inquiry Libraries

The Center for Inquiry Libraries, located across from the University of Buffalo North Campus in Amherst, NY, house several different collections of materials that relate to skepticism. To many people, skeptics just do not believe anything and are basically “debunkers.” At the Center for Inquiry, this is just not true. The mission of CFI is to teach critical thinking skills, utilizing reason and the scientific method, and to apply them to all areas of human endeavor. The primary areas covered by the library collections at the CFI Libraries critically examine religion and religious claims, and examine paranormal and supernatural claims.

The Council for Secular Humanism collection, the James Hervey Johnson Freethought and Humanism Library, has materials that critically examine religion, but also focuses on freethought, humanism, and other closely related subjects. Due to the mission of the Council, philosophy, politics, separation of church and state and social justice are also a part of this collection. This world-class collection is used by scholars world-wide to do research, due to the many rare and one-of-a-kind holdings as well as the expertise of our research fellows.

The John and Mary Frantz Skeptics’ Library is the collection of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI), formerly known as the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). Materials within this collection include skepticism (of course), but also it also has a very large number of pro-paranormal works on various related topics, such as cryptozoology, ghosts, UFOs, spiritualism, magic and conjuring, pseudosciences and alternative medicine. Requests for information on the paranormal from the media occur rather frequently from this collection. The libraries (and the librarians too) have been a backdrop for many television shows that appear on such channels as PBS, Discovery Channel, Science Channel and The Learning Channel.

The CFI Libraries also house other collections, including a general collection, a reference collection, microfilm/microfiche, and archives. The periodical and journal collection has such titles as Fate, Fortean Times, Science, Nature, and Discover on the CSI side, plus the Truth-seeker, Progressive World, Freethinker, and The Humanist on the CSH side, as well as a number of general items. The rare book room has first editions of such items as Ethan Allen’s Reason: The Only Oracle of Man, Thomas Paine’s Age of Reason, and a large number of autographed Robert Green Ingersoll works, in addition to some of the most rare humanism and freethought-related works available today.

A few of our special collections include the Jo Ann Boydston Library of American Philosophical Naturalism, the Martin Gardner Collection (donated by the father of the modern skeptical movement himself), the Levy Hoax Collection, the Renner Alternative Medicine Collection (which includes over 25 quack medical devices), the Verb Collection of Little Blue Books, and the Steve Allen Notebooks Collection (a collection of materials created by and for the use of the late entertainer and CFI supporter Steve Allen).

All told, the Libraries have about 60,000 books and around 100 current periodical subscriptions, and they are maintained by two professional librarians. As a member of OCLC, NYLINK and the Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC), the Libraries participate as a Paranormal Subject Expert for the Ask Us 24/7 Virtual Reference Service. The libraries are open to the public by appointment.

Timothy Binga has been the Director of Libraries at the Center for over twelve years. He has written for the Skeptical Inquirer, and Free Inquiry magazine as well as the Encyclopedia of Time and The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief.
New York’s Libraries See More Visitors During Difficult Times

ASLS Supports NYLA’s Library Lobby Day 2009
Tuesday, March 10, 2009
Empire State Plaza Meeting Room 6
Albany, New York

Contact Your Elected Officials via NYLA’s Online Advocacy Center

2009 BOARD ROSTER

Erin Rushton, President
Binghamton University Science Library
Phone: 607-777-2706
Email: erushton@binghamton.edu

Aprille C. Nace, Past President
Corning Museum of Glass
Phone: 607-974-8644
Email: naceac@cmog.org

Regan Brumagen, Vice President & Conference Programmer/President Elect
Phone: 607.974.8649
Email: brumagenER@cmog.org

Amy Pass, Secretary/Web Liaison
The Sage Colleges
Phone: 518-244-3106
Email: passa@sage.edu

Kathryn Frederick, Treasurer
Skidmore College
Phone: 518.580.5502
Email: kfrederi@skidmore.edu

Sheryl Knab, Director
Western NY Library Resources Council
Phone: 716.633.0705
Email: sknab@wnylrc.org

Karen Gardner-Athey, Director
SUNY Office of Lib & Info Services
Phone: 518-443-5577
Email: Karen.Gardner-Athey@suny.edu

Nancy Virgil Morgan, Director
Utica College
Phone: 315-792-3151
Email: nmorgan@utica.edu

Elaine M. Lasda Bergman, Director
University at Albany
Phone: 518-442-3695
Email: lasda.bergman@gmail.com

Congratulations to 2008 ASLS Award Winners

ASLS Conference Scholarship
Michelle Costello, SUNY Geneseo

Dewey Fellowship
Judy Fischetti, Southeastern NY Library Resources Council

ASLS / Ridley’s Book Bindery Student Internship Grant
Lorette Wilmot Library and Media Center, Nazareth College
NYLA Legislative Committee Report

On November 18, 2008, NYLA held a very successful Library Rally in the State Capitol and Legislative Office Building. At the rally, library supporters made it clear that while we are willing to do our fair share the cuts then proposed to library funding well exceeded our fair share. The rally, and the tireless work by NYLA Executive Director Michael Borges and library supporters in the NYS Legislature were successful, and the ultimate budget reductions were less than had been originally proposed.

In his 2009 budget proposal, the Governor once again called for 18% cuts in library program funding. Once again, these proposed cuts exceed those for other programs, particularly since libraries did not receive any increases in the good times. Library supporters will gather again in Albany on March 10, 2009, for the annual NYLA Lobby Day.

During the rally we will meet with our legislators and
• ask them to reject the $18 million (18%) cut in Library Aid, which would bring library aid down to 1993 levels.
• note that library use has increased dramatically due to the economic downturn.
• remind them that library aid provides the majority of funding for library systems, which allow libraries to provide services in a cost-effective and efficient manner.
• remind them that libraries are models of efficiency and cooperation.
• tell them how funds they provide (like coordinated collection development funding for academic libraries) are used to support research and economic development in the state.
• let them know that these cuts are more than our fair share.

Our legislators need to hear from us what we think is important. We invite you to join us in Albany on March 10! If you can’t be there, go to www.nyla.org and click on “Become a Library Advocate” to easily and quickly let your legislators know that libraries are important to you.

Jean Sheviak
ASLS Representative, NYLA Legislative Committee

Tips for New Librarians

Answering that Call: Phone Interviews Simplified

As a recent library school graduate or a new librarian looking to stretch your career options, you may find yourself in the job market. Many search committees require a phone interview. These provide potential employers with an introduction to viable candidates. Here are some tips that may help make this process less painful. Many of these tips can also be used in traditional face-to-face interviews.

• Read the vacancy notice
• Research the library and parent institution
• Prepare a list of questions to ask the interviewers
• Create a spreadsheet with the job requirements and your matching qualifications – include and examples column
• Ask a friend to conduct a mock phone interview
• Conduct a reverse (you set up the questions) mock interview for more insight into the committee’s experience
• Plan to be in a quiet space – with no background noise
• Turn off all electronic distractions – e.g., calendar or email reminders
• Schedule during a no-intrusion time
• Use a landline (if possible) for better reception
• Charge your cell phone, oh, and have minutes!
• Be aware that questions may be asked by several people on the committee – different voices
• Write down the questions as they are asked
• Jot down notes – “to go back to the question on…” – time provides a more coherent response
• Ask the interviewer to repeat a question if you don’t understand it
• Thank the committee
• Good luck!

Brought to you by the ASLS Membership Committee

Cut this out and pass it along to a new colleague.
For the 2008 NYLA booth, ASLS highlighted and celebrated the research support academic and special libraries provide to their constituents for developing and creating books, articles, and other products. Many New York State libraries are instrumental with providing assistance to authors who write and publish books, scientists who produce new inventions, journalists who write daily news articles, and manufacturers who develop new merchandise for consumption, to name a few. The full list of contributing New York academic and special libraries and their corresponding “products” is on the ASLS website at the following URL: www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=1686. Here is a sample of the products included:

**Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum**


Acknowledgment to the Library staff that Curtis wrote in the book: “For anyone writing on the Roosevelts, the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park is indispensable. Beginning with the director, Cynthia Koch, and the deputy director, Lynn Bassanese, I am grateful to the incomparable archival staff headed by Robert Clark (and Ray Teichman, his predecessor). Of particular help to me were Alycia Vivona, Mark Renovitch, Virginia Lewick, Karen Anson, and Bob Parks. Although retired from the staff, Beth Denier did much research for me in the early stages of my manuscript, as more recently did Ken Moody. On the curator's staff Michelle Fraunberger helped me with pictures. My life was much eased by the help of my friend Cynthia, her husband Eliot, and her staff, Joanne Tammaro and JoAnn Morse.”

**Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Folsom Library**


Haw thanks one the RPI Archivist, Amy Rupert, in this book for her assistance. The Fixman Archives' Roebling Collections document the lives and activities of the distinguished civil engineers John A. Roebling, the concever and designer of the Brooklyn Bridge, his son Washington and his daughter-in-law Emily Warren Roebling. When John Roebling died during construction, his son, Washington A. Roebling, an 1857 graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, assumed oversight, and when Washington Roebling also became an invalid, Emily Warren Roebling, his wife, assumed the role of chief engineer.
Treasurer's Report
Academic and Special Libraries Section

Academic and Special Libraries Section of the New York Library Association

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New York Heritage Digital Collections

The New York 3Rs Association has launched a new digital heritage web site, [www.newyorkheritage.org](http://www.newyorkheritage.org). The site connects more than 160 digital collections from around the state, contributed by libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions, and builds on existing digital repository services administered by each of the nine reference and research library resource councils.

NewYorkHeritage.org uses OCLC’s CONTENTdm Multisite Server to bring these collections together, allowing the public to search across all items simultaneously. This project provides free, online access to images of cultural and historical significance in New York State.

A variety of materials can be found among the New York Heritage Digital Collections, including photographs, postcards, correspondence, manuscripts, oral histories, yearbooks and newspapers. Many kinds of institutions from New York State have partnered to make this project possible, including public, academic and school libraries, museums, archives and historical societies. The power of collaboration is what makes this new service possible.

Participants to New York Heritage Digital Collections are committed to enhancing the site by adding both content and contributing institutions on a regular basis. The goal of the project is to eventually connect one thousand collections and one million items from throughout New York State. All institutions interested in participating in the project are encouraged to contact the 3Rs organization that serves their region.

Dear Lorol,

I’m lost. I’ve always prided myself on staying on top — OK, maybe just somewhere near the top — on the latest electronic products and gadgets available that may be useful in the world of libraries. Lately when I hear my colleagues talk, everyone seems so much more knowledgeable and technologically advanced than I.

I know training is out there, but in today’s economy my library just doesn’t have the money to send anyone. I’d like to find out more about what kinds of different technologies and resources are available and how they can be used. Any suggestions?

Signed:

Feeling like I am floundering

Dear Floundering,

I think you already have a great answer-listening to your colleagues talk. If people in your library are doing innovative things with different types of electronic resources, why not tap into their knowledge? Remember that all important concept stressed in Library School- Librarians eat! ….how about setting up some brown bag lunches and prevailing upon your colleagues to talk about what it is they are doing? Offer to buy/bring them lunch. These kinds of relaxed, informal talks can be quite conducive to learning something new. Strive to re-kindled your innate “Librarian’s Curiosity” by following up with further research into the products they are using. Ask if you can sit in on a BI with someone whose ideas strongly appeal to you. Many of our vendors and consortial partners offer webinars and podcasts that are free or relatively cheap. Get a group together and sign up for one. Or go it alone. Stand tall and reach for the top once more.

Lorol

Ridley Book Bindery Student Internship Grant

The ASLS/Ridley’s Book Bindery Student Internship Grant provides $1,000 annually to an academic or special library to support one internship project. Sponsored by Ridley’s Book Bindery (Ithaca, NY), the grant enables the recipient to conduct a project planned by the library and implemented by a student currently enrolled in a graduate-level library studies program. The purposes of the grant are to:

- Provide a practical and meaningful work experience for a graduate library studies student interested in pursuing a career in academic or special librarianship.
- Stimulate interest among graduate library students to pursue a career in academic or special libraries.
- Support professional development of graduate library studies students for careers in academic and special libraries.

The 2008 winner of the Ridley Student Internship Grant is the Lorette Wilmot Library at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. In February 2008, 48 musical scores were donated to the library. All scores were composed by Walter Mourant, a graduate of the Eastman School of Music who later accepted a graduate fellowship at the Juilliard School of Music. His compositions were performed by major orchestras in the United States and Europe. Some scores were handwritten.

After a preliminary search of WorldCat, only 1% of the collection appeared. There was no one on the library staff with sufficient expertise in music to complete the work. The goals of the internship were to a) catalog all scores in MARC format, b) enter the MARC records into WorldCat, and c) process the materials for use. The library has hired a student from the University at Buffalo's library school to complete the project.
The 2009 NYLA Annual Conference
Libraries: Peace, Love & Freedom
October 14 - 17, 2009
Niagara Falls, New York

For conference information, go to: www.nyla.org.