Celebrate, Celebrate!

Dear ESRT Members,

This year is a very special one, as we are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Ethnic Services Round Table. Our group was founded by the well-respected librarian David Cohen, who will be 98 years young this May. ESRT members Jennifer Ransom and Janet Landow interviewed David in 2006; the interview is available on ESRT’s web page as an MP3 file. As reported in this issue, David will receive an ALA honorary membership, ALA’s highest honor, this June.

The first general membership meeting of our Anniversary year took place on February 7, 2007 at the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America (PIASA). After a business meeting, we were treated to a tour of the beautiful space, including the library and archives of PIASA. We even saw the chair that Pope John Paul II had sat in when he visited PIASA as a Cardinal (ESRT webmistress Galina Chernykh sat in it!).

Our upcoming membership meetings and programs during the NYLA 2007 conference will be equally interesting. Our centerpiece, double-session program at the conference in Buffalo is called “Populations Under the Radar” – this NYLA President’s Program will feature a panel of experts discussing ways we can reach out to groups that are underserved, including the Muslim community. Building on our successful author program last year, ESRT and YSS will co-sponsor an appearance by noted author and folklorist Joseph Bruchac. A third conference program will focus on the dos and don’ts of multilingual websites with SIRSI’s Stephen Abram. Finally, you won’t want to miss our general membership program, in which we will celebrate 25 years of ESRT. NYLA is also organizing a Diversity Fair during the conference; ESRT will have a strong presence at the Fair.

All of the programs we present are supported by you, our members. In this Anniversary year, I would like to ask every ESRT member to consider making a contribution; I have done so myself. It would be wonderful if you considered a donation of $25 in honor of our 25th Anniversary, but no amount is too small (or too large).

I would like to acknowledge and thank for their generous donations these recent contributors to ESRT: Mr. Fung Pyo Choi of the Koryo Book Importing, Inc. and ESRT member Anne J. Hofmann.

Our next General Membership Meeting will take place at 10 am on **Wednesday, June 13** at the Korean Cultural Service, 460 Park Avenue (6th floor). Let me know if you are planning to attend – I’d love to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Olesh
ESRT President
DAVID COHEN NAMED HONORARY MEMBER OF ALA

Professor David Cohen, founder of the Ethnic Services Roundtable/NYLA, was elected to honorary membership in the American Library Association (ALA) in action taken by the ALA Council at the ALA 2007 Midwinter Meeting. This honor, ALA’s highest, is conferred in recognition of outstanding contributions of lasting importance to libraries and librarianship. The honorary membership plaque will be presented in June 2007 during the Opening General Session of the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

David Cohen, a former adjunct professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies of Queens College of the City University of New York, was nominated for his contributions to multicultural librarianship and intellectual freedom in a career stretching over seven decades.

Professor Cohen inspired generations of library school students to initiate library programs and build library collections reaching out to the broadest possible range of ethnic and multicultural populations. He worked within both the ALA and the New York Library Association to create and support intellectual freedom committees and round tables; served as chair of ALA’s Committee on the Treatment of Minorities in Library Materials and on the ALA Minority Concerns Committee. He was co-founder and coordinator of the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT)’s Task Force on Ethnic Materials, which later became the Ethnic Material and Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT). Within EMIERT, he was the founding member of the Jewish Librarians’ Caucus and the founding editor of the EMIE Bulletin. He was a charter member of the Freedom to Read Foundation, a trustee of the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund and a co-founder of the Long Island Coalition Against Censorship.

Professor Cohen is the recipient of the New York Library Association’s SIRS Intellectual Freedom Award and The Freedom to Read Foundation Roll of Honor Award. In 1999, ALA created the prestigious David Cohen/EMIERT Multicultural Award to recognize individuals for notable work on multiculturalism and libraries. In 2004, in celebration of his 95th birthday, the ALA Council presented him with a proclamation honoring his lifetime achievement in multiculturalism and intellectual freedom.

Queens Library hosts its first Fulbright Scholar

Queens Library is currently hosting Dr. Tekle A. Tepoyan, a researcher from the Russian Federation, who has come to the US under the Fulbright Program administered by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. During Dr. Tepoyan’s grant period, which started in February and will last for 6 months, Queens Library Deputy Director Carol L. Sheffer will serve as the host advisor and primary contact for her.

Tekle Tepoyan’s proposed research project as a Visiting Scholar concerns the problems of
library services to immigrants in major metropolitan areas in the United States. The main objectives of her research include the following: the role of American public libraries in the social, cultural, and economic adaptation of immigrants; identification, planning, development and evaluation of special library programs addressing cultural, educational, and informational needs of new immigrant populations; collection building policy, acquisitions and evaluation of materials in immigrant languages.

Upon returning home to her institution (Center for Advanced Studies and Education, Rostov-on-Don, Russia) Dr. Tepoyan is planning different projects promoting, whenever possible, the adoption of American standards or best practices in the field of Immigrant Library Services. She is also planning to publish an article based on the experience gained at Queens Library. She has already had initial meetings with staff from the library’s New Americans Program.

Dr. Tepoyan would like to hear from ESRT members who work with immigrant populations around the state to enhance her understanding of approaches being taken by libraries to serve their growing immigrant communities. Her e-mail address is: tekle.tepoyan@queenslibrary.org

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A Brief Guide to Russian Culture in New York City

By Alla Makeeva-Roylance
Brooklyn Public Library

If a winter is particularly cold, I often hear, "But you must love it, you are Russian!" When I say I don't drink vodka and don't like pickled herring, I am often told that I am a weird Russian. (When I tell fellow Russians that I don't read science fiction and have fainting spells in Russian steam baths, my compatriots call me a weird Russian, too.) We Russians in America are often confronted with the stereotypes perpetuated by the pop culture: frost-resistant dangerous ruffians or green-card-hunting blondes who consume vodka- and-caviar meals three times a day. Meanwhile, the group of people perceived by Americans as the Russian immigrant community is breathtakingly diverse. We are different in many, many ways: we may belong to different waves of immigration, we come from all corners of an immense country that used to be the USSR, we may belong to different ethnic groups, we pray in temples, churches and mosques, or we subscribe to other system of beliefs. Some people have forgotten English they used to know before they came to the USA, while others work as the UN translators or teach in American colleges and universities. We have penetrated every tier of the society: from the underworld all the way to the American upper crust.

Therefore, I will not pretend that my little guide to the Russian culture in New York City is complete, exhaustive and final. In fact, I encourage other Russian-speaking librarians to add and expand this modest compendium. So here is my teaser installment.

Let's start with what is near and dear to us: libraries. The New York Public Library, Donnell Library Center, is a home for the NYPL's largest collection of materials in world languages. It circulates books, periodicals and movies and music in over 20 languages, including Russian. More information can be found at http://www.nypl.org/branch/central/dlc/df/.

The Slavic and Baltic Division of the NYPL's Humanities and Social Sciences Library is a tremendous resource for scholars, writers, translators and historians interested in the Russian literature, history and art (http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/slv/slav.balt.html).

The Brooklyn Public Library, Multilingual Center (http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/multilingual.jsp) houses one of the largest collections of Russian books, magazines and audiobooks in Brooklyn. Brooklyn's Russian hub, Brighton Beach, has its own library, the Brighton Beach branch, which Russian collection rivals the MLC's in size and variety.

The Queens Library, with its celebrated New Americans Program (http://www.queenslibrary.org/?page_nm=New+Americans+Program) and the International Resource Center (http://www.queenslibrary.org/?page_nm=International+Resource+Center) provides books and programs for the Russian
community, and for other immigrant groups as well.

Besides the public libraries, there are a number of academic libraries which support the Russian studies curricula. Columbia University’s world-renowned Harriman Institute ([http://www.harrimaninstitute.org](http://www.harrimaninstitute.org)) is a proud owner of the Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies collection. [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/slavic/index.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/slavic/index.html).

While we are on the subject of academia, it is worth mentioning that New York City is a home for several **colleges and universities** which offer the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate Russian studies. In the time when most new students opt for Arabic and Persian studies, there are still vibrant Slavic programs in the local higher education institutions. Besides Columbia, *New York University’s Russian and Slavic Studies* program places a special emphasis on the study of the contemporary Russian culture. For more information, please visit [http://www.nyu.edu/fas/dept/russian/](http://www.nyu.edu/fas/dept/russian/).

**Hunter College (CUNY)** offers the largest undergraduate program in Russian and Slavic languages and literature in New York City ([http://www.hunter.cuny.edu./classics/russian/aboutus.htm](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu./classics/russian/aboutus.htm)).

**Russian-language media** is a vibrant, ever-growing and important part of the life of the Russian community. In my opinion, the radio and newspapers have a stronger impact and farther reach than the Russian local television. The stations *RTVi, Russian World, NTV America, RTN-WMNB* are mostly enjoyed by the older generation. The younger and professional Russians read papers or tune in to the several radio stations such as the *Davidzon Radio* (620 AM), Radio *"Vsyo"* (87.7 FM). The Russian newspaper market is highly developed and very competitive. The oldest Russian-language newspaper in America, *Novoye russkoye slovo* - [http://www.nrs.com/](http://www.nrs.com/) - (the non-Russian speakers, confused by the deceptively looking Cyrillic alphabet “Новое русское слово,” often mispronounce the first word of the title as “Hobo”), is probably the best-known and most-read daily in the New York area and throughout the USA. The very popular weekly *“Metro”* publishes a lot of original analytical and investigative materials as well as the usual tabloid-style fare and TV programming information. The magazine’s main focus is New York and everything that happens here, regardless if there is a Russian connection. Other popular daily or weekly publications are *"Russkaya Reklama", “Vecherniy New York”, “Russkij Bazaar”, “Kurier”.*

The Russian community produces a number of literary **magazines**, which Russians call “thick magazines”. The year 2007 marks the 65th anniversary of *"Novyj Zhurnal"* (Russian for “New Review”) which was established in New York in 1942 by Mark Aldanov and Mikhail Tsetlin with active support from the Nobelist Ivan Bunin. The magazine can be purchased through a subscription or read online – along with many other “thick” literary magazines – in the “online periodicals reading room” - [http://magazines.russ.ru/](http://magazines.russ.ru/). Another well-regarded literary magazine is *Slovo/Word*. With the publishing industry booming in Russia, **bookstores** and other book-selling businesses are cropping up. The following are my favorite stores and sellers, all have excellent materials and have experience working with libraries:

St. Petersburg: [www.ruskniga.com](http://www.ruskniga.com)

MIF: [www.russkieknigi.com](http://www.russkieknigi.com)


For five years in a row, The **Red Shift Film Festival** ([www.rsfest.com](http://www.rsfest.com)) has been held in New York. Young moviemakers from Russia, the former Soviet republics and from the former socialist countries share their art in the genres of documentary, shorts, and animation.

Important **websites** to know are [www.ycrop.com](http://www.ycrop.com) which lists upcoming concerts, readings, shows, exhibits and other cultural events of interest to the Russian community and [www.rususa.com](http://www.rususa.com) which offers the latest news, online radio, advice on everything from legal issues to dating. Two excellent online Russian-English dictionaries are [http://www.lingvo.ru/lingvo/](http://www.lingvo.ru/lingvo/) and [http://www.multitran.ru/](http://www.multitran.ru/).

The more I compile my little guide to the Russian culture, the more I realize that I am leaving out much more information. I invite my colleagues to add to this guide their favorite Russian cultural resources that can be useful to our Russian customers or to other librarians who work with Russian clientele.
Ismail Kadare, an internationally known Albanian writer, was born in 1936 in the ancient city of Gjirokastra in Southern Albania. He studied in the Faculty of History and Philology at the University of Tirana and at the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow. He launched his literary career in the 1950s with two verse collections which highlighted his talent and originality.

In the sixties, Kadare turned his literary attention to prose, securing his place as the most popular writer of Albanian literature. In 1990, he left Albania and moved to France, where he soon garnered international fame. Kadare was awarded the Inaugural Man Booker International Prize in 2005.


Want to see your words and / or photos in print?

Send them to Elizabeth Olesh by Friday, September 7th for inclusion in the Fall ESRT newsletter!

The Scoop from The Librarians Baird – Winners of ESRT’s 2006 Awards

By Thomas Brogan
Brooklyn Public Library

Note: What follows is an excerpt from an interview with Tim and Zahra Baird, winners of ESRT’s 2006 Professional Development Award and Multicultural Award, respectively. The entire interview will be posted to ESRT’s web page, which is part of the NYLA website.

Q. Tom: Tim and Zahra, what has this award meant to you and your career?

A. Tim: First off, this award allowed me to attend the full complement of the Annual
Conference thanks to the generous scholarship that came with the award. The award also is a reflection of the hard work that everyone at the White Plains Library has done to make the library more accessible to our growing Hispanic population. We hope that other libraries in New York State will follow our example of coming up with creative ways to bring new and diverse populations through our doors.

A. Zahra: Receiving this award is one of my career highlights. I am deeply touched and honored to have my contributions, achievements, advocacy and leadership efforts in serving the community in areas of collection development, outreach services, developing creative multicultural materials and programs in New York State recognized. This award is a reflection upon everyone with whom I have collaborated, including my colleagues at the Chappaqua Library, NYLA ESRT members, community and business leaders, all of whom have supported and partnered with me in many multicultural efforts. I couldn't have accomplished all that I have without my faith, family, friends and the creativity, helping hands and giving hearts of those who share the incredible passion for sharing the rich experiences which world cultures have to offer.

Q. Tom: Zahra, do you have a mentor who has encouraged you in your library work?

A. Zahra: I have been fortunate enough to have had several mentors encourage me in my library work. I got my start in the library field as a volunteer in the Children’s Department, thanks to Mrs. Peters at the Beaconsfield Public Library in my hometown in Quebec, Canada. My father, the late Mirjehan Janmohamed (after whom I was named, Mirjehan translates to King-of-the-World), and mother Sharifa immigrated to this country from Africa with $500 and a little black suitcase; their quest to make a better life for themselves and their success has propelled me to believe that I can make a difference in this world if I am devoted, focused, resourceful, persevere and keep a positive attitude. My colleagues are a source of support and lead by example. “Library powerhouses” who recharge me include Robin Osborne, Christine McDonald, Kim Bolan and Barbara Genco. I carry a sliver of the essence of everyone I meet. Connecting with people helps me to energize my work.

Q. Tom: Tim, can you tell me about the scholarship you won to take a Spanish language course and how this has translated into programming for the White Plains library community?

A. Tim: The scholarship I won to take a Spanish language course was offered by the Westchester Library Association. In an essay, you had to explain why learning Spanish would be an asset to yourself and the library. The original idea was that either I would be able to offer our basic computer classes in Spanish and/or be able to answer our Spanish speaking patrons daily questions about computer use at the Library. During the time I was taking the course, a new Young Adult librarian was hired who is fluent in Spanish and was very interested in teaching computer classes, so working together we created a series of classes for our Hispanic patrons to take advantage of. In the two years that we have now been doing this, we have gone from basic classes to more advanced topics like Word, Google searching, and even PowerPoint.

Q. Tom: Tim and Zahra, since both of you have won ESRT awards in 2006, may I ask you if you motivate each other in your work?

A. Tim: Zahra totally motivates my work by encouraging me to be active in association work and community work. We have co-written articles and chapters for books and we really do feed off of each other in these ventures.

A. Zahra: Lucky me, I am fortunate enough to have synergy with my life-partner Tim, who also happens to be a constant professional sounding board. It is very handy to have someone who understands the framework of the library world who can not only act as a brainstorming catalyst but also help provide some start-up “person-power” to launch my various library-related visions.

Q. Tom: Tim and Zahra, has your work with multiculturalism in libraries made you more sensitive to other ethnic groups? What do you see as the future of multiculturalism?

A. Tim: Libraries throughout New York State, especially in the southern part of the state, must become multicultural as their populations continue to evolve. Coming from Montreal, which is a very diverse city, I have always been aware of the positivity of having multiple
ethnic groups working together. Libraries must adapt to the needs of their population to continue to thrive. This means more and more multicultural programs and materials at our libraries.

A. Zahra: My work with multiculturalism in libraries has opened my eyes to becoming more aware of the nuances of the various diverse populations in New York State. I have learned a lot about the best ways to communicate with each ethnic group while coming to a deeper appreciation of their rich heritage. As for the future of Multiculturalism, now more than ever, we are faced with intense questions about ethnicity, nationhood, and identity. Multiculturalism has been viewed as a state of fragmentation and also as a strengthening agent. I believe that multiculturalism has fashioned an active and vibrant society so cultural diversity is one of our most valuable assets. In the communities we serve, libraries need to tirelessly advocate and promote multiculturalism as the coming generations need to understand, believe in and value the benefits multiculturalism can provide.

ETHNIC SERVICES ROUND TABLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD AND MULTICULTURAL AWARD

By Wol Sue Lee
New York Public Library

As Chair of the ESRT Awards Committee, I encourage each and every ESRT Member to take advantage of these wonderful opportunities.

The Professional Development award will be presented at the Annual Conference of the New York Library Association (NYLA) by the Ethnic Services Round Table (ESRT).

This award was created:

- to increase NYLA Annual Conference attendance by ESRT members
- to encourage interest in professional development via the NYLA conference
- to support individuals who share ESRT's goals

All ESRT members in good standing are eligible to apply (except for members of the ESRT Awards Committee and the ESRT Executive Board). The award of $500 is co-sponsored by Lectorum Publications and is intended to defray the costs of attending the NYLA Annual Conference in Buffalo, October 17-20, 2007.

APPLICATION INFORMATION (There is no special application form)

In 1000 words or less, (2-3 pages, double spaced) describe your professional involvement with library service. Include significant library experiences and your activities with any professional associations and/or ethnic groups. Discuss how you see yourself as an active member of NYLA ESRT now and in the future. In the selection process, the Awards Committee will be considering the interest of an applicant in making a commitment to ESRT/NYLA activities in the future and his/her intent to attend future conferences.

The Award recipient will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to:

- Attend programs during at least two days of the 2007 NYLA Annual Conference in Buffalo. Attend the ESRT membership meeting and NYLA Inaugural Banquet
- Submit an essay/report about his/her conference experiences and the programs attended by November 15, 2007 to the ESRT Awards Committee Chair.

Upon receiving the signed statement a check in the amount of $500 will be sent to the award recipient at the address provided by him/her.

The statement should be signed and returned to Wol Sue Lee, ESRT Awards Committee Chair, together with the dates of anticipated
conference attendance by the recipient, not later than September 1, 2007.

If the recipient will be unable to attend the conference and complete the terms of the award, he/she will notify the ESRT Awards Committee and return the funds received.

Applications must be received by **Friday, July 27, 2007**.

The **Multicultural Award** will also be presented at the Annual Conference of the New York Library Association (NYLA) by the Ethnic Services Round Table (ESRT).

1. Members of NYLA are eligible to be considered for the award based on outstanding achievement, advocacy and leadership in serving the community in areas of collection development, outreach services, developing creative multicultural materials and programs. Emphasis is on multicultural/multiethnic and not multilingual.

2. This will be an annual award. If no suitable candidate is judged to merit the award in a given year, the award will not be presented. If two people are very close in their qualifications, the award will be shared between them.

3. The Executive Board of ESRT will select a committee of three to administer the award. The chair of the round table will be an ex-officio member.

4. Deadline for the receipt of award nominations from the NYLA membership is Friday, July 27. The Awards Committee will meet shortly after and submit the name of the successful candidate for the award to the executive board. Announcement of the successful recipient will be made at the September ESRT conference planning meeting and the candidate will be notified. Presentation of the award will be made during the NYLA Annual Conference.

5. Screening of candidates will be based on submission of an application form with specific information and evidence of outstanding achievement, advocacy and leadership. Supporting documentation is welcomed. The applications will be sent to the Awards Committee members who will select the outstanding candidate.

6. The award, a citation, and a check for $250 and a gift certificate for $750.00 worth of books (to be selected by the winner for their library) from Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group) will be presented to the winner at the ESRT Annual Membership Meeting and the award winner will be recognized during the NYLA Inaugural Banquet.

Send all completed applications for both the Professional Development Award and the Multicultural Award to:

Wol Sue Lee, Multicultural Award Chair
Ethnic Services Round Table
Department Head, Reference & Advisory Services Department
Mid-Manhattan Library
The New York Public Library
455 5th Avenue, 2nd floor
New York, NY 10016-0122
E-mail: wslee@nypl.org
ETHNIC SERVICES ROUND TABLE MULTICULTURAL AWARD
NOMINATION FORM

Name of Nominee:

Present Position:

Business Address:
(please include institution name & department)

Business Phone:

Fax Number:

E-Mail Address:

NYLA Membership Number:

Nominated by:

Present Position:

Business Address:
(please include institution name & department)

Business Phone:

Fax Number:

E-Mail Address:

NYLA Membership Number:

Reasons for nomination:

Keep in mind that members of NYLA are eligible to be considered for the award based on outstanding achievement, advocacy and leadership in serving the community in areas of collection development, outreach services, developing creative multicultural materials and programs in New York State. Emphasis is on multicultural/multiethnic and not multilingual.

Please refer to paragraph #5 of the Criteria for selection.

Comments should be written on the back of this page.

Deadline for nominations: Friday, July 27, 2007. Only members of the New York Library Association may make nominations or be nominated.
ESRT Officers & Committee Chairs 2006-07

Elizabeth Olesh, President, <eolesh@nassaulibrary.org> (516) 292-8920 x237

Alla Makeeva-Roylance, Vice-President / President-Elect / Conference Programmer
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Miriam Tuliao, Past-President <miriamtuliao@nypl.org>

Susan Gitman, Secretary <sgitman@nypl.org>

Irina A. Kuharets, Treasurer <ikuharets@nypl.org>

Wol Sue Lee, Member-at-Large / Awards Chair <wslee@nypl.org>

Liana Alaverdova, Member-at-Large / Membership Chair <l.alaverdova@brooklynpubliclibrary.org>

Younshin Kim, Member-at-Large <younshin.kim@queenslibrary.org>

Galina Chernykh, Web Page Liaison <gchernykh@nypl.org>