2011 Annual Conference Highlights

The 2011 Annual Conference and Trade Show was back in Saratoga Springs this November and will be returning next year before heading out to Niagara Falls in 2013. “New York Libraries Rock!” was the theme of this year’s conference that attracted approximately 1,254 attendees, speakers and exhibitors.

The keynote speaker was Sonia Manzano, television actress “Maria” on Sesame Street and author of two children’s books. Ms. Manzano provided an insider’s look into the production of Sesame Street and its groundbreaking attempt to teach literacy through television as well as the behind the scenes editorial process that determined how the show dealt with important societal issues ranging from divorce, race relations and terminal illness.

The Inaugural Celebration recognized several outstanding individuals and organizations for their contributions to the library community in New York. Thomas Galante, Director of the Queens Public Library received the 2nd annual Mary Bobinski Innovative Public Library Director Award, Libby Post of Communication Services, and NYC Councilmembers Christine Quinn, Jimmy Van Bramer and Domenic Recchia received the Outstanding Advocate for Libraries Award, and Andrew P. Jackson of the Queens Public Library won the Outstanding Service to Libraries Award. The American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression received the Sirsi/Dynix Intellectual Freedom Award and The New York Public Library’s Homework NYC Project received the Joseph F. Shubert Library Excellence Award from the NYS Regents Advisory Council on Libraries.

Sara Kelly Johns, school librarian at Lake Placid High School and adjunct faculty member at Mansfield University School of Library and Information Technologies received the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award for her many years of service and dedication to
INTERVIEW WITH NYLA MEMBER

Christian Zabriskie

by Michael Borges

This Fall I interviewed one of our up and coming librarians who helped organize an impromptu fundraiser for flood damaged libraries at the Annual Conference in Saratoga Springs and is the founder of Urban Librarians Unite (ULLI).

So I started off with the typical how did you decide to become a librarian question. “I had a career in publishing before I came to libraries and I was working as a college textbook sales rep. My territory was huge, Southwest Georgia and the Florida Panhandle, and I was on the road two weeks out of every three. That was tough but workable until I met my wife and realized that I didn’t want to be constantly away from home. I was also getting pretty burnt out selling books which I was not crazy about when I could be giving away the perfect book for free. I went to Florida State University and was able to complete the degree in one year while working, which I do not recommend to anyone,” stated Christian.

I followed up with a question about his first experience as a professional librarian. “I worked at the Florida State’s Strozier Library while I was studying for my MSLIS and since I was in library school they let me work the reference desk. I utterly loved it, being a detective hunting down information, helping people who needed hard-to-get information, I found it utterly fascinating and frankly thrilling (which shows just what a library geek I am I suppose),” replied Christian.

I moved onto questions about his career since then and what he learned or liked about these experiences. Christian responded, “I have been working in public libraries for about 11 years now and have moved around quite a bit. I was in charge of circulation services at Leon County Public Library in Tallahassee Florida. I then took over collection development for that library system’s central library while working as an adult reference librarian. I also did a little freelance work for the DIA through Florida A&M University at that time which was a fascinating research experience. From there I became the Assistant Children’s Librarian of the island nation of Bermuda and lived on the island for three years. While in that position I was the cataloger for children’s materials as well as doing outreach and class visits. When my wife and I returned to the States we moved to New York City and I was hired as a YA librarian at Queens Library where I worked as a frontline YA librarian for a couple of years before taking over my current position as Assistant Coordinator of Young Adult Services for Queens.

I loved living in Bermuda even though it was tiny and wildly expensive to live there. While there I learned to sail and scuba dive which, while not library related, was pretty great. I have really gotten a lot out of my time at Queens and feel like I have been able to tryout big ideas there which I appreciate a lot.”

I next asked about his ongoing projects and activities. “I like to stay pretty busy. I am the founder of ULLU which is a social/professional/advocacy group dedicated to promoting and preserving libraries in cities. Our work is pretty much entirely in New York City where the vast majority of our members reside. The group started off as a way for librarians from the three city public library systems to have a chance to swap ideas. It quickly grew to include academic librarians, corporate librarians, and archivists. When the city budget battles got intense we retooled ourselves to be an activist organization and have been getting

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The last few months were very productive for the association as we received contract approval of our $791,662 federal Digital Literacy Grant (see article) and approval by the State Comptroller’s Office of NYLA’s Advisory Opinion on the Tax Cap assuring library budget votes (for all types of public libraries) would have separate tax cap. In addition, the Governor signed the last of three Legislative Priorities passed by the Legislature – Library Construction Bill (S.4101/A.113), which will lower the matching requirement for public libraries in high need areas to 25% and allow grant funds to be used to purchase vacant land.

NYLA Advocacy Day will be Tuesday, March 6th and Library Snapshot Day will be Feb. 13-24th. The Libraries are Essential website will continue to be the portal to upload photos, facts and testimonials for Snapshot Day as well as for the general public interested in becoming library advocates. The 2011 Voters Guide has been released and can be found on both our website and the New Yorkers for Better Libraries site (http://www.newyorkersforbetterlibraries.org/drupal/). In response to the Voters Guide, the Assembly Libraries and Education Technology Committee held a hearing on Tuesday November 29th in Albany on library funding and to ascertain the needs of the library community.

NYLA recently conducted a membership survey this Fall and as a result of member feedback we will be offering more continuing education workshops around the state and via webinars in 2012. Also to save money and respond to member’s preferences, this will be the last printed version of the Bulletin. Starting in February 2012, NYLA will issue a bi-monthly eBulletin to members with more timely information, embedded videos, best practices tips and regular survey results.

The 2011 Annual Conference and Trade Show was a resounding success with attendance holding steady and survey results confirming that less was more in terms of the quality of the programming offered.

I also want to thank Marcia Eggleston, NYLA Immediate Past President for her leadership and constant good humor despite facing personal and professional challenges over the past year. Happy Holidays to all of our members and do not forget to renew your membership!

Michael J. Borges
executive Director’s Report
Creating a Friends Group for School Libraries

by Rocco Staino

After attending both the American Association of School Librarians and the New York Library Association conferences this Fall, it is apparent that school libraries in New York and across the country need all the help they can muster. Often times, school librarians see the fate of their programs lying solely in the hands of their building and district administrators or their school boards. They sometimes fail to realize that they are surrounded daily by advocates in the form of their students, faculty and parents.

School libraries should be following the lead from our public library colleagues and form a school library friends group. Friends groups at all school levels can help a library program by providing advocacy and additional funding. Also on the secondary level, it gives students the chance to interact with adults as peers and offer them the opportunity to become an officer in an organization that can also be included on a college application.

The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF) formerly known as Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA), a section of the American Library Association, is an excellent resource for schools wanting to start a friends group. The group has a helpful fact sheet that provides information on starting a school friends group (http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/altaff/friends/factsheets/factsheet6.pdf). The most important thing to consider when forming a friends group is determine the primary purpose for starting a group. Is it for advocacy, volunteers or fund-raising? The main reason for forming a friends group does not preclude other activities but helps provide a focus for the group. Also it is important to gain the approval for the organization from administration.

Many school librarians feel that a friends group may be in competition with a school’s parent group but it can easily be incorporated as an activity of that organization. Once established, a friends group can be the source of volunteers both student and adult. Friends groups can help provide additional financial support for the library program. Fundraising projects can range from a birthday book club where a child donates a book to the library on his/her birthday, running a book fair or more ambitious funding projects to provide equipment, renovations or special events for the library program.

Probably the most under utilized aspect of a friends group is advocacy. Often times, librarians and their supporters become reactive when cuts to programs are announced, rather than maintaining an on-going positive public awareness program. Beginning with student to student advocacy, student library friends can promote the resources and services of the library. A friends group can also represent the library program on the building and district levels by serving on committees and speaking on behalf of the library both in good and bad times. During my time at a school in Westchester County, I had a friends group composed of both students and adults. Annually, during School Board Recognition Week, the friends group presented a book plate and a form to each board member asking that they name a book into which the plate will be placed. Many times the book was already in the collection. For ideas about school board presentations, I would recommend a new book by NYLA members Marguaux Del Guidice and Rose Luna entitled Making a Big Impact @ Your School Board Meeting (Linworth, 2012).

Friends groups are always welcome at NYLA’s annual Library Advocacy Day in Albany. Student friends can travel to Albany to learn about the legislative process in action and to have their photo taken with their state legislators, while promoting their library’s need for funding.

Whether it is to enlist and organize parent volunteers or to mount a major advocacy campaign, a school friends group is an excellent idea.
NYLA finally received state approval to move forward on a federally funded initiative to provide training to public librarians on Digital Literacy Standards developed by the state’s Broadband Development and Deployment Council. The $791,662 grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) was awarded in 2010 as part of an $8 million grant awarded to the state to support broadband development and access in New York.

The three year grant will fund a review of the Digital Literacy Standards (which can be found under Headlines at www.nyla.org), the development of instructional curriculum for librarians and patrons, a resource website, and 48 training workshops around the state. The goal of the grant is to train 1,440 librarians on the Digital Literacy Standards so they will use it and the curriculum in their classes for patrons. This will create a uniform or base line competency for digital literacy, so that patrons taking a digital literacy class in Buffalo or one on Long Island are learning the same skills. NYLA plans to work with the Division of Library Development to create a certificate of completion for any patron that completes the approved curriculum, which would result in a pool of “Digitally Literate New Yorkers.” Patrons could then show the state approved certificate to employers or educational institutions to demonstrate their proficiency in basic use of technology, the internet and information.

Linda Todd, of the Division of Library Development is Chair of the Advisory Committee that will work with consultants Jill Hurst-Wahl to review the standards and develop the curriculum and Libby Post to develop and design the resource website. Other members of the Advisory Committee are Merribeth Advocate, Mid-Hudson Library System, Ruth Small, Syracuse University, Donald Eck, Wayland Free Library, Lindsay Stratton, Pioneer Library System, Sally Gillich, Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library, Scott Jarzombek, Pawling Public Library, Tom Lawrence, Poughkeepsie Public Library District, Jaclyn McLaughlin, Lockport Public Library and Mary Ann Waltz, NYLA Special Projects Coordinator.

The first Digital Literacy classes are scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2012 and be completed by the Fall of 2014. The New York Library Association was the only state library association to receive federal stimulus funds from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and our state Digital Literacy Standards were used by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the development of their National Broadband Plan. The FCC recently announced the creation of the Connect America Fund to help spur the adoption and accessibility of broadband and includes a new initiative called the “Digital Literacy Corps” to promote and teach digital literacy (see http://www.fcc.gov/document/chairman-genachowski-broadband-adoption).

Once again, the New York Library Association is on the cutting edge in delivering new programs to the library community and library users as we launch our own Digital Literacy Initiative next year.

Congratulations to Dewey Fellowship and Scholarship Recipients!

**Dewey Fellows**

Tracy Priest, Phoenicia Library Association – LAMS nominee
Lauren Lampasone, New York Public Library – RASS nominee
Starr LaTronica, Four County Library System – YSS nominee

**Dewey Scholarships**

Jennifer Daddio, CUNY/Queens College
Abigail Orian Garnett, Long Island University/Palmer School
Tessa Brawley, Syracuse University
Tor Loney, University at Albany
Amanda Koziura, University at Buffalo
Friends groups can provide all sorts of helpful support to a Library, in the form of financial assistance, volunteers, additional programming and services, community outreach, and more. A formally established and well-run Friends group, working cooperatively with a Library, is a fabulous asset. But Friends groups require care and commitment, like any other worthwhile organization. The following information may be useful if your Library is considering whether to establish a Friends group, or is working to improve its relationship with an already existing Friends organization.

A Friends group should be formally established as a New York not-for-profit corporation, in order to obtain legal protections for the individuals involved. This is a fairly simple process that involves filing a Certificate of Incorporation and paying the requisite filing fee to the New York State Department of State. The corporation will need individuals to serve as its board of directors. Those directors then elect officers and adopt a set of by-laws to govern the functioning of the organization. While one or more Library trustees may help to create and organize the Friends group, the organization should have its own, independent board of directors composed of interested members of the community. The board of directors of the Friends organization makes all decisions on behalf of the Friends organization. Library staff members and trustees should not serve as a majority of the members of the Friends board, because in this way the Library would effectively control the operation and decision-making of the Friends organization.

In order to accept tax deductible contributions, the Friends organization must apply to the Internal Revenue Service for 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, and obtain an IRS Determination Letter. Without taking this step, the Friends group cannot accept tax deductible contributions. Thereafter, the organization must annually file IRS Form 990 to provide basic information to the IRS regarding the Friends’ mission, programs and finances. A Friends group must also file with the Charities Bureau of the New York State Attorney General’s Office if it solicits or receives contributions of $25,000 or more in any fiscal year of the organization. It is also important for a Friends group to be aware that, as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, it is subject to IRS regulations limiting the percentage of its resources it can devote to lobbying activities, including resources used to advocate for a library tax levy.

While Friends groups must be careful to comply with each of the foregoing requirements, the most complicated issue facing a new or existing Friends organization and the Library it supports is often the relationship between the two entities. It is important to remember that the Friends organization is separate from the Library, with its own legal status and governing body, but also that it exists exclusively to support the mission of the Library. It can be helpful to establish in writing the mission of the Friends group and the role it will play in supporting the Library. This can be accomplished in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the boards of the Library and the Friends.

Good communication and cooperation between Library staff, trustees and the Friends group is crucial – not only at the outset of the relationship, but as the Library and the Friends grow and change. The Library director plays a critical role in enhancing communication and identifying opportunities for members of the Friends group to get appropriate training and to support the Library in helpful ways. Communication can be greatly enhanced by having a liaison from the Library board of trustees regularly attend meetings of the Friends group. Likewise, a representative of the Friends organization should regularly attend meetings of the Library board.

An effective Friends organization can provide assistance that runs the gamut from staffing the Library’s book sale to undertaking a major capital campaign on behalf of the Library. The role your Friends group can play will depend upon the interests of its members and the needs of the Library, but also on how effective a relationship you build between the Library and the Friends.

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1. The authors are attorneys with Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP in Albany, New York. They represent numerous libraries throughout New York State on the full range of legal issues that arise for public and association libraries, including, among others, governance and funding matters. Ms. Bach is also a director of the Albany Public Library Foundation. The firm is a member of NYLA.

2. There is a simplified filing requirement for exempt organizations whose annual gross receipts are normally $50,000 or less ($25,000 or less in tax years ending prior to December 31, 2010). Such organizations may electronically file a simplified form known as the Form 990-N certifying that they do not meet the Form 990 filing requirements.
Arcari & Iovino Architects, PC was voted the 2011 Firm of the Year by the New Jersey chapter of the American Institute of Architects, in part, for its support of libraries and its significant architectural contribution to libraries and public buildings in and around the NJ/NY area.

Carol Ann Batt, Assistant Deputy Director of Information Technology and Technology Support at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System, has been appointed to the position of the system’s Chief Operating Officer.

Allison Bernstein’s article, The Big Elephant in the Library, was published in the November/December issue of Library Media Connection.

Judith Berry retired as the Director of the Hauppauge Public Library.

Matthew Bollerman, former Director of the Westhampton Free Library, has been selected as the new Director of the Hauppauge Public Library.

Lynn Brown, former Media Specialist for School 52 in the Rochester City School District, has been appointed the Roberts Wesleyan College Golisano Library’s first Director of Library Digital Services and Systems.

Shauntee Burns, New York Public Library Branch Outreach Specialist, won the 2011 Joseph F. Shubert award for HomeworkNYC.

Terri Corbin-Hutchinson, St. Joseph’s College Callahan Library, has been appointed Director of Berkeley College’s New York City Campus Library.

Kathleen Degyansky, former Executive Director of the Southwest Florida Library Network, is the new Assistant Library Director of the White Plains Public Library.

Leslie Effman, who retired from the Clarence Central Schools in 2007, is a volunteer for the OASIS Program Committee to identify speakers and develop class sessions for OASIS Lifelong Learning Programs/Albany. She is also on the Travel & Programming Committee for RC10 NYSUT Retirees where she plans programs and identifies speakers for events.

Muriel Feldshuh, a retired librarian, author, and advisor to the Books for Kids Foundation, has pieced together five literary quilts to promote children’s literature. Over 150 children’s book authors and illustrators, many Caldecott Award winners, have contributed to the quilts. The exhibit will be on display at the Mississippi Children’s Museum through the end of this year.

Evan Frankl, a recent MLS graduate from CUNY Queens College, is now the Bronx Campus Librarian for Boricua College.

Alexandra Gaete, currently employed by the Hastings-on-Hudson Public Library, received a scholarship award from the Westchester Library Association to assist with classes at the Long Island University’s Palmer School of Library Science.

Lynne “Asha” Golliher, Community Relations Specialist at Ellenville Public Library & Museum, has been invited to attend an IMLS Planning Grant Conference on: “Creating a Blueprint for a National Digital Public Library” to be held at the Los Angeles Public Library. Ms. Golliher manages the museum special collection digitization projects for EPL&M.

April Grey, former Catalog Librarian at Medaille College, has joined the faculty at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette as Assistant Professor of Library Science/Head of Cataloging in the Technical Services department.

Kelly A. Harris, former Children’s Librarian and Assistant Director at the Amagansett Free Library, is the new Director of the Hampton Library.

Jennifer “Charlie” Kelly was selected to participate in the ALA Emerging Leaders Class of 2012 and will also be receiving sponsorship from AASL.

Sandy Miranda has retired after twenty-two years as Director of the White Plains Public Library. She served as President of the New York Library Association in 1994, and was Legislative Chair of the Association from 1990-1993.

Jennifer McLaughlin, the new Library, Media, and Arts administrator at Monroe 1 BOCES, will lead the School Library System, Media Services and Arts in Education programs on behalf of Monroe 1 BOCES component districts.

Susan Morgan, former Assistant Director of the Onondaga Free Library, has been appointed to the position of the Library’s Director.

The Port Washington Public Library hosted best-selling author Philippa Gregory on the first stop on her North American tour. The author of “The Other Boleyn Girl,” and a string of enormously popular novels focusing on the Tudors and the Plantagenets, spoke about storytelling, answered questions and signed books from an audience of more than 400.

Joy Rankin is the new director of the Roosevelt Public Library.

Janis Schoen, former director of the Locust Valley Library, is the new director of the Massapequa Library.

Amanda (Miryem-Khaye) Seigel, Librarian in the Dorot Jewish Division, New York Public Library, received the 2011-2012 Joseph Kremen Memorial Fellowship at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, for her research project, “The Broder Singers: Forerunners of the Yiddish Theater”.

Mary Ann Sheets, School Library Media Specialist at the Edison High School, received Teacher of the Year for the Elmira Heights CSD in September.

Joanne Sininsky, Director of Haverstraw King’s Daughters Public Library, retired November 2011.

The Smithtown Library in New York is half-way through its $21 million expansion and renovation project. Two of the branches have been completed; Commack, which has been expanded and Nesconset which was relocated into an abandoned armory. Both feature high-performance green buildings and systems and state-of-the-art computer technology. The Main Library and the Kings Park Branch, currently undergoing renovations, are expected to reopen in 2012. When completed, all four buildings will be LEED certified.
Marina Sullivan retired from the Babylon Public Library in November after 40 years in the library field with the past five years as Library Director at Babylon.

Mary Anne Waltz, formerly Coordinator of Reference and Instructional Services at RPI, has been appointed as Director of Library Services at Union Graduate College.

Catherine Way, Director of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System and the James Prendergast Library, retired after a 38-year career with both organizations.

Stephanie Wilson, Greater Southern Tier BOCES School Library System, was recently appointed to the ALA/Association for Library Service to the Children’s Notable Children’s Book Award Committee, 2012-2014.

Congratulations to the 2011 graduates of the NYLA Leadership and Management Academy

Elizabeth R. Bouchard, Bethlehem Public Library
Annette M. Friedrichs, Liverpool Public Library
Matthew Gomm, Goshen Public Library
Brian M. Hildreth, David. Howe Public Library
Scott C. Jarzombek, Pawling Free Library
Heather J. Matzel, Fayetteville Free Library
Darlene B. Richards, Rochester Public Library
Tracy A. Salvage, Schenectady County Community College
Mary C. Scheg, Rochester Public Library
The Westchester Library System (WLS), Lifetime Arts and the American Library Association have been awarded a $450,000 National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for a two-year project entitled, Creative Aging in New York State Public Libraries: a Regional Model with National Applicability.

The emerging field of creative aging focuses on the positive and powerful role of the arts in enhancing the quality of life for older Americans. Research shows that professionally conducted arts programs which engage older adults in active learning can have positive mental and physical health benefits. Arts programs that create working/learning relationships—with other elders, students, family members and the community—often succeed in breaking down the chronic isolation and inertia that inhibit many older adults. Public libraries have a naturally occurring constituency of older adults and provide an age-neutral location which is often situated in the heart of one’s community.

From 2008-2010, WLS partnered with Lifetime Arts to bring Creative Aging to Westchester. With funding from the Helen Andrus Benedict Foundation, this project successfully supported creative aging programs at 8 libraries in 2008-2009 and at 10 libraries in 2009-2010. Competitive grants were made available to libraries who partnered with professional teaching artists or art organizations to develop and implement instructional programs that promote creativity in older adults and provide opportunities for meaningful social engagement. These programs covered a broad range of art instruction including: painting, drawing, dancing, memoir writing, poetry, acting, and singing. Lifetime Arts and WLS administered the grant program and provided ongoing technical assistance; access to arts and programming resources and program design support; and assistance with public relations campaigns. With funding from Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Lifetime Arts then worked with The New York Public Library (NYPL) and Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) in 2011-2012 bringing the program to 30 libraries in New York City.

Lifetime Arts will continue to administer this two-year project by providing extensive technical assistance and professional development for participating librarians and artists with the goal of building their capacity to respond to the growing demand for meaningful programming for an aging population. This project not only provides a significant learning experience for the participants, but also provides a vital learning experience for the artists and the library staff who can learn how to replicate projects for the future. In order to promote program sustainability, another component of this project will be the publication of The Creative Aging Tool Kit for Public Libraries, an online implementation guide. To be disseminated nationally by the American Library Association’s Public Programs Office, this free tool kit will provide practical guidance on program implementation, partnership development, funding and sustaining strategies libraries can use to collaborate with artists.

Lifetime Arts CEO and co-founder Maura O’Malley describes it this way, “What’s most inspiring about this work is witnessing the individual transformations that take place in the library workshops as older adult participants discover and rediscover creative abilities and make new friends. Also, part of our role is to help librarians and artists bring their complementary strengths to designing and implementing arts programs for older adults, helping provide their communities with a valuable new resource to promote positive aging.” WLS Executive Director Terry Kirchner added, “Libraries are a natural partner for creative aging programs; they are ‘age-neutral’ community and cultural centers, reaching people of all education and economic levels. We look forward to building on the work we’ve done with Lifetime Arts and fueling the national discussion of how public libraries can enrich the lives of older adults.”
Interview with Christian Zabriskie continued from page 2

out there and making noise for libraries ever since. The work that I was able to do there, lead to my co-authoring a book for ALA called Grassroots Library Advocacy: A Special Report which will be coming out in the Spring,” stated Christian.

“ULU has really grown a lot in just a couple of years which is fantastic but presents some interesting and exciting challenges. We are already gearing up for our biggest advocacy season ever this spring and have some nice surprises in store. Right now my biggest concern is the Book Carnival that we are throwing at the NYLA conference in Saratoga Springs to raise money for the Disaster Relief Fund and the assistance we are trying to give library advocates in Chicago who are facing their own potentially devastating cuts. I also write and lecture about graphic novels in libraries a lot but the activism and advocacy have really taken over,” continued Christian.

My next question dealt with ongoing challenges facing libraries and the library profession. “Budgets remain my principle concern about the future of libraries. That battle seems to have become a constant and is getting more and more intense all the time. I worry a lot that as budgets are cut so too will hours get cut and then it will become increasingly difficult for people to access the library and thus will become less and less relevant to their lives. I don’t fear that we will lose a generation to smartphones, I fear we will lose them due to limited hours,” said Christian.

“I think that the profession is trying to redefine itself and stay relevant and important to people’s lives. This has made us very technology centered which is great and all but for me the things that are going to keep us relevant in people’s lives are the core skills we have always had: service, information, flexibility. I don’t think people are expecting to check an ipad out of the library but I think that they do expect to be treated well and have their questions/tastes/entertainments treated with respect and held in the closest confidence. People continue to respond to what we do best. While budgets are tight and libraries have not been able to afford the latest bell or whistle our usage is higher than ever and the NEED for us is higher than ever. I think ultimately the greatest way to ensure our future is by focusing on being really good at what people want from us the most,” stated Christian.

I asked what role do you see NYLA playing in meeting these challenges? Christian responded, “NYLA is already doing great work with advocacy. The work the organization does up in Albany is fantastic. Lots of people around the state are doing really interesting things as they are speaking up for their libraries. We need tools that can expedite the exchange of ideas and make it easier for people to get active quickly and effectively. NYLA provides a lot of great tools on their webpage as well as loads of information swapping at conference in both formal and informal networking which is great. I also applaud the organization for its ongoing commitment to, and fund-raising efforts in, the Disaster Relief Fund which is so crucial to libraries struggling with catastrophic situations.”

My final question was when he’s not advocating or writing or working, what is he reading? “I have the bad habit of reading a lot of things at once. Currently the top of the pile is The Jack Kirby Omnibus Vol. 1 which has tons of great Kirby work from the Golden Age of comics. I’ve also been juggling Total Resistance by H. Von Dach and The Complete Idiot’s Guide to MBA Basics by Tom Gorman. They each deal with interesting management and logistics issues albeit in radically different ways,” concluded Christian. •
New Yorkers for Better Libraries Releases 2011 Voters Guide


“We are very pleased that there was a significant improvement in the voting records of legislators compared to last year. This improvement can be attributed to legislators’ increased appreciation for the important role libraries are playing during this tough economy in helping the unemployed search and apply for jobs, improving literacy and reading skills among all age levels and providing access to unbiased and uncensored information critical to the functioning of our democracy,” continued Mr. Hammond.

“There was a marked improvement especially in the voting records of Assembly Democrats, thanks in part to the efforts of Assembly Library Committee Chair Bob Reilly and Assemblymember Amy Paulin working with Assembly staff to reach a satisfactory compromise on many of our issues. However, we were disappointed that the Assembly did not join the state Senate in proposing a restoration in Library Aid,” stated Mr. Hammond.

“Once again, the Senate really shined and came through for the library community by passing five of the New York Library Association’s 2011 Legislative Priorities, three of which were signed into law by the Governor. In addition, the Senate proposed a $4 million restoration in Library Aid, of which $3 million was included in the adopted 2011-12 State Budget,” said Mr. Hammond.

Long time library champion, Senator Hugh Farley, receives this year’s 2011 Ex Libris Award for his leadership role in the restoration of Library Aid, for sponsoring two of the bills signed into law, and for receiving the highest score (160 A+) on the Voter’s Guide.


Assembly Library Committee Holds Hearing on Funding Public Libraries

The Assembly Libraries and Education Technology Committee, Chaired by Assemblyman Robert Reilly (D-Colonie) held a hearing in Albany on November 29th to get feedback from the library community on the impact of state aid cuts as well as the future needs of libraries. Other members of the Committee hearing testimony were Assemblymembers Thomas Abinanti (Westchester), Samuel Roberts (Onondaga) and Philip Palmesano (Steuben).

NYLA Executive Director Michael J. Borges testified along with Jeff Cannell, Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education and representatives of the library community from around the state such as Mary Jean Jakubowski, Director of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Terry Kirchner, Director of the Westchester Library System, Jean Sheviak, Executive Director of the Capital District Library Council, Kevin Verbesey, Director of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System and Maureen O’Connor from Queens Public Library, Kevin Winkler, Deputy Director of Public Service for the New York Public Library, and Brooklyn Public Library Chief Librarian Richard Reyes-Gavilan. You can read or view NYLA’s testimony by going to www.nyla.org.
Membership Survey Overview

In September, NYLA conducted a survey of our membership to obtain feedback on the association’s communications, services and advocacy efforts as well as to give guidance to the NYLA Council in developing a new strategic plan.

The survey results reaffirmed that our members want the association to continue to provide advocacy and promote libraries, offer a wide variety of professional development, enable more diverse networking opportunities and be a source of information on library issues. The survey also pointed out the need to expand our continuing education outreach to other parts of the state and through online tools, which we will be doing.

Regarding our communications, members are satisfied with our weekly News You Can Use and Legislative Alerts, but believe the Bulletin needs to have more useful info on best practices, successful programs and timely information. To this end, NYLA will be suspending the printed version starting next year and switching to an eBulletin that will solicit more input from the field on content and be issued on a more timely basis.

In reference to the Annual Conference, our choices for venues are very limited by the size of our event and need to keep it cost effective. The cities that currently meet our needs are restricted to Saratoga Springs, Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Rochester. Each one has a convention center that can accommodate our trade show (needs at least 25,000 square feet) and is connected or in walking distance to hotels and meeting space. This rules out Syracuse (no nearby hotels), and NYC Metro area (costs).

As far as dues are concerned, NYLA has not raised dues in at least 10 years, this is because we have been able to generate sufficient marketing revenue from promoting various vendor partners like EnergyPlus, Better World Books, Liberty Mutual, etc. The more non-dues revenue we can generate from these vendor partners, the longer we can continue to hold down membership dues. In addition, compared to other similar sized state library associations in Ohio, New Jersey, California, Illinois and Texas, our membership dues are lower in many categories. Also the more libraries that join as organizational members, the less pressure there is to raise individual dues. However, the Membership Committee will be reviewing our dues structure in the upcoming months to suggest improvements or restructuring.

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the library community and especially her efforts on behalf of school libraries.

Other interesting speakers of note were authors Chris Bohjalian at the PLS Author! Author! Event, vocalist and author Larry Kirwan at the RASS Noted Author Luncheon, children’s author Laura Vaccaro Seeger at the YSS Empire State Award Luncheon, and Peter Bromberg, Assistant Director of the Princeton Public Library at the LAMS Luncheon. The Scholarship Bash was held on Friday this year (instead of Thursday due to the racing schedule) at the Saratoga Casino and Raceway and attracted over 225 participants, including several lucky winners and raised over $2,600 for scholarships to library school students.

In addition to all the speakers and events, there was a greater emphasis on quality over quantity (96 programs in 2011 compared to 116 in 2010) in this year’s offerings of educational workshops that covered topics ranging from high school to college collaborations, tools to manage your website to discussions on e-readers, serving the deaf, and the impact of the property tax cap.

The NYS Regents Advisory Council on Libraries continued its dialogue with the library community on its 2020 Vision for Library Services and state Education Commissioner John King also conversed with a standing room only crowd on topics ranging from the Regents Reform Agenda, to funding for libraries and school librarians roles in the Common Core Curriculum.

The Annual Conference ended with the very colorful and amusing Joe Raiola, Senior Editor at *Mad Magazine*, who gave a raucous monologue on censorship, banned books, obscenity and other controversial topics confronting publishers, writers and librarians at the Farewell Luncheon.

Special thanks once again to Ellen Rubin, Conference Chair for the past three years, who will be taking a break next year and handing over responsibilities to Lauren Gilbert, who was Author Program Chair for the Empire State Book Festival the past two years. I also want to thank all the Conference Programmers for doing an excellent job with selecting and organizing very informative and interesting workshops (we received many compliments) as well as all the sponsors and exhibitors whose financial support make the conference affordable for attendees. See you next year in Saratoga Springs on November 7-10th.

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Marcia Eggleston, NYLA President with SED Commissioner John King and Michael Borges, NYLA Executive Director.
After a natural disaster strikes, getting back to normal may seem impossible.

**Beyond Words School Library Relief Fund**

Since 2006, the American Association of School Librarians, with funding from the Dollar General Foundation, has given more than $800,000 in grants to over 90 school libraries across the country affected by natural disasters. We’ve also created a website with tools to help with other areas of the recovery process.

Apply for a Beyond Words Grant: www.ala.org/aasl/disasterrelief
At the 2011 Annual Conference, additional monies were raised for libraries damaged by recent weather events. I asked at the Inaugural Banquet for people to “pass the hat” and over $1,000 was raised, plus another $1,000 was raised at an impromptu fundraiser at the Parting Glass restaurant organized by Urban Libraries Unite. In total, $10,000 in donations were collected that will be distributed in December to libraries damaged by flooding. Thanks to all of you who have already donated to NYLA’s Disaster Relief Fund. Contributions are still being accepted by going online at www.nyla.org.

I look forward to seeing the 2012 conference theme, “Writing Our Next Chapter” develop, with section programmers and others involved in planning the conference tackling the topic of our future selves. I hope programs and vendors are present who can help us be more sustainable (not just the buildings), relevant, and to be the most important service provided in any community.

In late October, I began as the Director of the Hauppauge Public Library, the Heart of the Community, as we say. The library is looking to build a permanent home after spending its first ten years in rented space. The challenge is asking the community to build a facility in this current environment, but also to have the flexibility to address whatever changes are coming our way. I hope to be able to share what I have learned with you over the coming year to possibly help you with your own challenges.

It is a great honor to be the President of NYLA. I hope each of us is proud of our membership and look forward to helping the Association in the ways that suits us as individuals. Be it as a member of a committee, section or answering the call to action via our advocacy efforts. I will ask that you each encourage someone else to join the association. Without a strong robust membership, we will not be able to meet our goals in Albany, Washington DC and throughout the state. Help me grow this fine organization; let us reach for an all time high in membership this year. If each person could recruit one person, we would be halfway to our all time high. So bring in two!

I want to thank Marcia Eggleston for her fine work as President, especially in leading efforts to update NYLA’s Strategic Plan. I look forward to implementing many aspects of the plan over the coming year. My e-mail is always open, mbollerm@suffolk.lib.ny.us, as is my phone, 631-979-1600. If you need something from NYLA and do not seem to be able to find it, let me know.