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The New York Public Library Retirees Association Newsletter Issue 10 August 1997

RETIREES ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM by Alar Kruus

At the suggestion of its members, The New York Public Library Retirees Association is developing a program of taped interviews with retired (and, in some cases, "still on-duty") library staff. A program, to be initiated in the fall of 1997, will aim to capture and preserve the history of the Library through the memories and recollections of its people. This Retirees Association project will be implemented in cooperation with the New York Public Library Archives and will complement and supplement their current programs. Robert Sink, the Library's archivist and records manager, will serve as liaison.

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PERFORMANCE COLA UPDATE

by Juanita Doares

The 1997 legislative session finally recessed on August 4th with the passage of New York State's latest budget ever.

We are pleased to announce that due to the efforts of the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA) and the Alliance for Public Retiree Organizations (APRO) under the able leadership of Ed Curran the current supplementation law was extended through August 1999 (S5266 by Senator Trunzo and A6557 by Assemblyman Vitaliano

CENTRAL LIBRARY RENOVATION

by Christine Hoffman

The Library has begun the renovation of the Central Building, completing its transformation into NYPL's Center for the Humanities. The Center is relocating several divisions and making physical improvements to some of its reading rooms, an expansion made possible by the relocation of some of its collections and services to the recently opened Science, Industry and Business Library on Madison Avenue and 34th Street in the old B. Altman building.

The first and largest of these renovations is the complete rehabilitation of the Main Reading Room, made possible by a \$15 million gift from Sandra Priest Rose and Frederick P. Rose. Although the Public Catalog Room was renovated in 1986 and renamed the Bill Blass Public Catalog Room in 1995, the Main Reading Room has seen no major upgrade or reconstruction since it opened in 1911. This renovation will restore the original beauty and grandeur of one of New York City's great architectural treasures while enabling it to offer state-of-the-art services. The renovation will include:

- *A total rehabilitation of the mechanical systems used to deliver books from the stacks to the reading room.

- *The restoration of the largest possible number of reading seats for books and other printed materials by the relocation of scholars' spaces and microforms service out of the reading room.

- * Improved access to reference assistance in the main reading room, including compliance

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RESTORATION OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

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with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

- * A separate supervised reading area for materials requiring additional care due to condition, rarity, or ownership by other libraries.
- * Accommodation of self-service copying for selected materials.
- * Restoration of the ceiling and other deteriorating architectural features of the room.

The Move: To relocate the collections and services of the Main Reading Room before renovations began, a professional moving company worked five late-night shifts between July 7th and 12th. The only evidence of change, to the readers, was the slowly disappearing collections on the open shelves. Computerized research, book delivery from the stacks, microforms service, and librarian assistance went on virtually unchanged during the entire week. By Sunday morning, though, the Main Reading Room was a football-field sized landscape of empty library tables and dust!

The Library staff spent countless hours planning and organizing the move. The General Research Division was closed to readers for only one day, Monday July 14th. Almost miraculously it closed upstairs on Saturday afternoon and opened downstairs Tuesday morning, with all new service points in place, all equipment working, and a completely new delivery pattern in motion.

The Interim Spaces: The General Research Division is staffing the former Friends desk in Astor Hall, just inside the Fifth Avenue entrance, to direct readers to the interim public service spaces and to assist with referrals. Further reference assistance is available in Room 121 (the old Science Division), where call slips may be turned in. CATNYP terminals, for access to the Library's online cataloging records, are available in Rooms 120 and 121. CD-ROM databases and access to the Internet are provided on workstations in Room 119. The 800-volume *Dictionary Catalog* is available just outside these rooms. Room 121 also houses many of the volumes usually available on the open shelves in the Main Reading Room.

Books from the general stacks, interlibrary loan materials, and reserved books are delivered to readers in the Gottesman Exhibition Hall (main floor), which accommodates up to 228 readers. It will reopen as an exhibition space in 1999, at the completion of the Main Reading Room renovation.

Room 229 (old Economics Division) serves the microforms collection and contains many of the self-service titles which were found in the North Hall of the Main Reading Room. The Wertheim Study has moved to Room 228 from the southeast corner of the Main Reading Room.

Copy Services is now located outside Gottesman Hall in a nook of Astor Hall (old cloak room). Their back-office staff, as well as the GRD staff dislocated from the Public Catalog Room, are temporarily housed in Room 225.

The move to interim spaces has caused a reduction in reading seats from 392 to 270 and a slight reduction in the number of microfilm readers. The number of computer workstations has remained the same. The interim spaces are designed to keep the great majority of library users out of harm's way during this major renovation project. Most of the construction personnel enter the building before public-service hours, and much of the material will be delivered off-hours through window hoistways directly into the reading room. For readers using the 119-121 complex and the Gottesman reading room, research should be virtually unhampered by the construction itself. Hours of the General Research Division remain unchanged during the renovation.

The Future: Renovation of the Main Reading Room is scheduled to be finished early in 1999. At that time, Gottesman Hall will be returned to an exhibition hall, and other renovation projects will commence. All in all, the transformation of the building is expected to be finished in 2001.

PERFORMANCE COLA

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and has become Chapter 151 of the Laws of 1997)

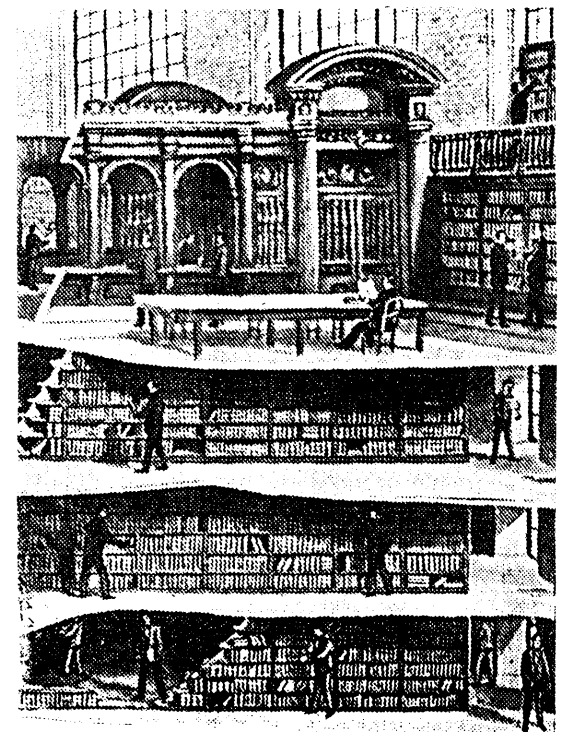
Unfortunately, the Performance COLA bills (A8161 and S5615) died in committee. The bills did not include New York City retirees and the Teachers Retirement System.

We will continue to fight for Performance COLA along with other New York State retiree organizations.

Discussions, update and planning for regional mini conferences on Performance COLA are planned for around the state with the first one scheduled for Rochester on September 15.

On behalf of The New York Public Library Retirees Association, I have written letters to all state legislators in Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten island.

The NYPL Retirees Association was a cosponsor of two rallies held on Performance COLA, one in Albany and the other on Staten Island. Bill Lee, our treasurer, represented us at the Staten island rally.



ANNALS OF TIME PAST
CASINDANIA
PRATT
EATON:
A REMINISCENCE
by Naomie Noyes

Cas Eaton came to The New York Public Library on January 20, 1941. A graduate of the library school at Simmons College in Boston, Miss Eaton worked in a number of the Library's branches, among them Mott Haven and Parkchester in the Bronx and Muhlenberg in Manhattan. She was appointed Coordinator of Manhattan Branches in 1958 and retired from that position in 1972.

Loyalty was one of Cas Eaton's strongest characteristics, loyalty to her family, to her friends, especially Katherine Love, Erna Obermeier and Margaret Scoggin, and to the Library and its staff. After her retirement Cas and I became good friends, and I delighted in her reminiscences of the Library and in current news of her sister and her family in whom Cas took great pride. She never lost interest in what was going on in the Library.

Miss Eaton died at her home in Manhattan on June 12, 1996. She is an enduring part of the memories of many of us.

LIBRARY BUDGETS by Juanita Doares

City: The City Budget for Fiscal Year 1998 includes additional operating funding in the amount of \$16 million for the City's libraries (Brooklyn, New York Public, and Queens). This amount will enable the Branch Libraries to restore six days of service in all units, continue Sunday service at Donnell, Fordham, and St. George Library Centers, and purchase additional library materials. The Research Libraries also received additional funding through the Capital Budget for the renovation of the Center for the Humanities (the Central Building, owned by the City of New York).

Members of our Association, including Ada Jackson, Bill Lee, Alar Kruus, Delores Noyes, Ruth Rausen and Virginia Swift volunteered to work with Library staff in The Branch Libraries for a letter writing campaign to City officials, which proved to be successful. We hope that members of the Association will send letters of thanks to the Mayor and your City Council representative expressing your appreciation for this additional funding.

State: In the next issue of the *Newsletter* we will include an article on appropriations for libraries at the State and Federal levels.

MERCY KELLOGG
IN MEMORIAM
by Juanita Doares

The NYPL Retirees Association is saddened by the death of our colleague and friend, Mercy Kellogg, a charter and active member of our association who was currently serving as its Vice President. She died on June 29, 1997 after undergoing bypass surgery and the replacement of two heart valves.

Mercy's library career, which began in 1950, was spent in The Branch Libraries. When she retired in 1987 she was the Branch Librarian at the Seward Park Branch Library, the same position she had also held at the Ottendorfer Branch.

Her interests represented the dedication of a true librarian. At the Ottendorfer and Seward Park branches she immersed herself in studying the history of the Lower East Side, and she emphasized the importance of serving this community and building book collections it could use. She was also a generous benefactor of the Central Children's Room to which she contributed in memory of her mother, who had regularly taken Mercy as a child to the Library's children's room.

We will miss her leadership and her many other contributions to our association. Our September meeting will be dedicated to her memory.



An alcove in the Central Children's Room when it was in the Central Building. Mercy Kellogg was a reader here as a child. The space is now used for offices.

Retirees in Action

News from the Field

Most of the items have been compiled from membership applications and renewals. Although some editing has been done, entries have been kept as much as possible in the words (and punctuation) of the writer. We beg your forgiveness for possible errors in our reading of handwriting.—The Editor



Marjorie Anderson, Bronx, New York: Irma Bombeck always said that time was pushing us into old age. I am pushed way into it, so all of my time is taken up just keeping up with a few chores, doctor, dentist, cooking. I feel so deprived. It is a joy to hear about the plays that I can't get to. I manage the steps in the subway and get to 86 St. as there is so much down there. I buy cookbooks at B & N for fun—fish across the street and meat at S & W on Second Ave.—buy Chinese dinner and take express bus back to the Bronx. I loved every minute of my time in NYPL.

Mary Anne Altman, Kansas City, Missouri: Activities: Reading; walking—Kansas City has lots of hills; movies; gardening on my balcony in the summer—last year had cherry tomatoes, herbs and flowers. I enjoy baking—particularly cookies. Traveling—last summer I visited the Tetons and Yellowstone with Sophie Mitrison and her family. I volunteer at my church—attend activities of the Womens Society such as lectures, craft programs and bus trips. I also am Eucharistic Minister at Mass, serve in a soup kitchen twice a month and have done volunteer work in the church office. At Nutcracker time I've volunteered at the Missouri State Ballet. I'm also on the board of my condo. Memories of the Library: I enjoyed all my experiences at NYPL but particularly my years on the Staten Island Bookmobile and in the Chatham Square Regional.

John P. Baker, Delhi, New York: Activities: Gardening; home maintenance and improvements; visits to Bos-

ton and New York to attend museum exhibitions, see new films and attend opera performances; browsing used book stores and occasionally buying. I serve as archivist at the local parish church. Memories of the Library: The stack cleaning project; Book selection in Scandinavian languages.

Viola Barrett, Lafayette, Colorado: Activities: Travel—Europe, Australia, including Tasmania and New Zealand. Volunteer—Library board; senior center. Memories of Library: Doing work that gratified my need to serve, and the pleasure of my NYPL family.

Emily Browne, Fresno, California: Activities: Volunteering in gift shop at St. Agnes Hospital. Belong to book club and play Mah Jongg. Memories of the Library: Children's meetings—all over the City. Wonderful to have been able to visit other branches and areas of the City.

Shirley Campbell, Bronx, New York: Activities: Reading. Disabled since stroke in '94. Memories of Library: My years as Chief of Central Registration Office 1982-91.

Forrest Carhart, Jr., Denver Colorado: Activities: Stamp collecting (U.S. only); Peter Pauper Press bibliography. Volunteer at the Denver Museum of Natural History; arrange and conduct extramural educational excursions for members at least once a month. Volunteer at HOSPICE of METRO Denver—drive patients, families, etc. to appointments, visits, emergency medication; home sickroom supplies and equipment; and much more. Memories of the Library: The members of the Library staffs with whom I worked in METRO.

Lisa Cleveland, Bronx, New York: Activities: Traveling and visiting friends and families. Memories of Library: Too numerous to mention on paper.

Emma Cohn, Paris, France: Activities: Contemporary painting, film, and French housekeeping, which is con-

tinually interesting and surprising: for example, I just found out recently that you can buy only a couple of branches of celery instead of a whole bunch, if you want to! I am a volunteer reader to the blind at the National Public Library, Pompidou Center, Paris. Member, Audio-Visual Round Table, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA—through ALA). Memories of the Library: Working with teenagers and young adult librarians in the Bronx branch libraries and the Office of Young Adult Services.

Edward Dana, Martinsburg, West Virginia: Activities: Travel as often as possible; work with the Air Force Sergeants Association (currently convention coordinator); care of house (20 rooms) and property (12 acres). Visiting with grandchildren. Memories of the Library: The building and the people.

Lucy Eldridge, Toms River, New Jersey: Activities: Learning new activities such as country western line dancing, book discussions, vice president of Ocean County Library Friends, public relations volunteer for the Toms River Library. Volunteer work includes being board member of our community in Pleasant Plains, Toms River; vice president of the Friends of the Ocean County Library, Toms River; book discussions at local library. Memories of the Library: The children who grow up in Harlem and the South Bronx Libraries. They need help and we as a group should always actively be helping all children, as a community concern.

Jeanne Felker, New York, New York: Interests and Activities: Local and national government issues, architectural history, genealogy. Volunteer at telephone information service, League of Women Voters. Volunteer in English Conversation Program, Riverside Church. Treasurer—Morningside Gardens News. Occasional planting and weeding, Riverside Park.

Tillie Frank, New Haven, Connecticut: Interests and Activities: After

many years of work I now enjoy the leisure of being with my family and watching a new generation grow up. While in New York City and after moving to New Haven I did volunteer work in school and public libraries—always something to do with books. Memories of the Library: The friends I made and the lessons I learned while working. No task was too dull. It was all for the Library.

Frances Friscia, Pacific Grove, California: Agnes Babich has given the *Newsletter* a copy of the tribute presented to Frances on February 6, 1997 by the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. It reads as follows: "You have served with distinction as a Trustee of Community Hospital and as president of its Auxiliary. During your term of office, the Auxiliary provided valued service throughout the hospital with more than 200,000 hours of volunteer time donated by its adult and junior members. With your leadership and guidance, volunteer service remains at the heart of compassionate and caring hospital care, providing large doses of comfort and assistance to patients and visitors. You put your love of service, your attentive management style, and your warm sense of humor into each and every task you took on. During your term as president, the Auxiliary completed its largest-ever pledge to support the hospital, and the Family Birth Center's entrance gallery was dedicated in its honor."

Betty Gubert, New York, New York: Activities: I'm gathering information for a biography of Walla B. Brown, an early 1930's-40's aviator. I do freelance research in various areas of African-Americana: artists, inventors, etc. Have had four essays published in *Encyclopedia of New York City* and thirteen articles in *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*. I enjoy going to the theater and museums. I have traveled often since retirement in 1991 (France, Ireland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Canada, and Portugal), but I think I am now traveled out and will explore, even more

than in the past, New York. I have been working on the ROAR program since August 1995. It's fun to get around and see what's doing in the branches. I am not volunteering now, but from 1991 to 1995 I volunteered at the Museum for African Art in SoHo, and I processed collections at the Archives of the City College (CUNY).

Raphaëlle Guiyoule, Bronx, New York: Activities: Reading (as usual), going to matinees, visiting museums and galleries, going to bowling tournaments and wining! taking day trips. Memories of the Library: Too many to list, but my happiest is helping to move the old Throgs Neck from a store front to its present location in a building of its own.

Dorothy Henderson, Bronx, New York: Interests and Activities: Genealogy, travel, window gardening, music, astrology. I am editing my grandfather's memoir of his service in the Civil War. I am volunteering at the Huntington Free Library, working to complete a project which I started while I was Branch Librarian at Westchester Square. Huntington plans to publish this project on Bronx history when a grant is available. I am a member of the boards of the Bronx Rotary Club, Citizens Advice Bureau (helps the very poor), Regional Aid for Interim Needs (helps senior citizens), and Network Organization of Bronx Women. Memories of the Library: My five years at the Sixty-Seventh Street Branch, where I started (Ages 19 to 24); while there I went from subprofessional to first assistant, spending three years part-time studying at Columbia and learning more on the job from a wonderful mentor, Margarette Kottenbeutel

Richard Jackson, Metairie, Louisiana: Activities: Reading; movies; travel. Volunteer in Historic New Orleans Collection. Memories of the Library: Learned much about my subject (American Music). Learned much about "THE" Public.

Bella Remz, Rio Rancho, New Mexico: Activities: Knitting, needle point, quilting, some gardening and traveling. Active in Jewish War Veterans and Auxiliary. Memories of the Library: All my years at NYPL were outstanding. Each unit that I was assigned to was a wonderful experience.

Anna Revi, Bronx, New York: She joined a Global Volunteers service program in Mexico, where she taught English to students at the University of Northern Guanajuato in the city of Dolores Hidalgo. She went to Mexico in memory of her father who had worked on the water tunnel in Veracruz, Mexico after leaving his native Hungary, and he always regretted not staying in Mexico. She was struck by the stark contrasts between the U.S. lifestyle and the standard of living in Mexico, and in response she is collecting used English books to send to Mexico. At home, she is a former trustee of the Bedford Park Congregational Church. She is known as the "Jelly Queen" for the hundreds of jars of jellies and preserves she has made and donated to worthy causes. She has also taught crocheting to youngsters, and has served as a volunteer gardener and member of the Bronx County Historical Society, and she still volunteers in school and public libraries. (For information on Global Volunteers, a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization, contact Global Volunteers at 1-800-487-1074, 375 E. Little Canada Rd., St. Paul, Minnesota 55117).

Ethel Ryan, Boynton Beach, Florida: Activities: Condo treasurer, bowling, cards, Mah Jongg. Memories of the Library: Francis Martin Branch, 1963, my first branch, and many happy memories of Mrs. Horton, Mary Brady, Miss Mir and the "famous" blackout of New York City. At Jerome Park: Miss Martin, Miss Thomson, Ms. Barrett, Miss Aitto, Miss Smith, Miss Cordoni, S.C.

Patricia Smith, Schaumburg, Illinois: Activities: I'm still getting my home in order. I'm waiting for spring

RETIREES IN ACTION

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to work in my new garden. Have taken up crafts (in a small way). Memories of the Library: I remember the friends I made. The work was always interesting and stimulating. I always had the support and encouragement of staff.

Frances Lander Spain, Schenectady, New York: Activities: I had my 94th birthday last month and so I am not very active. With help, I have a garden around my apartment. I still read (fortunately my eyes are still good), watch selected TV programs. I have a Siamese cat who keeps me company. I still live alone and keep house with bimonthly help. I gave up driving last year, but with my daughter Barbara and friends I keep going. Lunches and day-trips add interest to my life. Four of my five grandchildren live within driving distance (Pa., Ct., Vt., NJ) and I enjoy them, and my six great grandchildren. Life is still full of excitement—what is happening in our state, country, the world. Memories of the Library: Mostly the wonderful people within the Library and outside of the Library. There was an undercurrent of excitement all the years. I was aware of something about to happen.

Dorothy Swerdlove, Tucson, Arizona: Interests and Activities: Getting settled in Tucson, where I moved in September 1996: 1) furnishing my apartment; 2) learning to drive—necessary, but scary in the midst of aggressive drivers who sometimes settle traffic disputes with guns (I haven't met any yet, thank goodness); 3) exploring my new surroundings. Once a week I work behind the scenes at the local library, which is a children's branch—rather far from my NYPL experience in the Theatre Collection. I am proof-reading copy for the 2nd edition of the *International Directory of Performing Arts Collections* (due 1999 or 2000) published by the International Association of Performing Arts Libraries and Museums (SIBMAS). Note: Dick Buck is the General Editor. Memories

of the Library: The excitement and variety (and stress) of life in New York, both inside and outside the Library.

Thelma Thomas, New York, New York: Activities: Storytelling (my career as a professional storyteller is almost full time), swimming, travelling and reading. Memories of the Library: My 17 years at Mid-Manhattan. My first book talk as a Young Adult Librarian at the Tompkins Square Branch.

Virginia Warner, Staten Island, New York: Activities: Since retiring I have attended 25 Elderhostel programs. Friends and I have three coming up—Williamsburg, VA; Precious Blood Monastery; Paul Smith in Saranac Lake. Arthritis is cutting into craft hobbies, but I keep trying. As a volunteer, I am involved in HIP Consumer Program (one of 35 Member Council; Quality Improvement Committee and Regional Chairperson for Staten Island and Brooklyn Geographic Committee). Volunteer two mornings a month with UCP, taking children to the Elizabeth Connelly pool. Work with NYC-AEYC on the Publications Committee. Have been Membership Chairperson for our local AARP for eight years. Have done fund raiser Book Fairs for both U.C.P. and the Staten Island Mental Health Head Start program. Memories of the Library: My memories were all positive. My friends on the staff were my extended family. My days at Huguenot Park and Princes Bay when I needed help from children to get the fire going and the day Manee's horse tried to come in the branch!

Richard Williams, New York, New York: Activities: Studying botany and Pre-Columbian archeology, and attending various conferences on these topics around the country. Attending classical music concerts and dance programs. As a volunteer, I am compiling bibliographical citations for *MEXICON* (anthropological newsletter). Giving bibliographical assistance to several overseas archeologists who lack such resources. Memories of the Library: Entering the world of computer manipulated cataloging data.

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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The Association will retain all responsibility for the administration of this program. An advisory council will be impaneled by the Association's president to oversee the selection process, to gather and evaluate suggestions, establish "target lists," recruit volunteers and provide overall coordination.

The New York Public Library Archives will provide training, technical advice and long-range consultative assistance. The Library will also provide storage facilities and will make master tapes for permanent repository. Access will be provided in accordance with NYPL's established policy.

The Association's first meeting this fall (Monday, September 15, at 3 pm in the first-floor conference room of the Mid-Manhattan Library) will be devoted to this project. Robert Sink will talk about oral history programs in general, the Library's endeavors, and the importance and potential benefits of programs of this type. He will also answer questions and discuss concerns.

Your Association invites you to participate in this undertaking. We are seeking nominations and volunteers. Please send us names (and addresses) of people you suggest be invited to be interviewed—to be asked to talk about themselves, their careers, the people they met and the NYPL they knew. We hope you will volunteer to be interviewed yourself or to become an interviewer (we will provide training). Come to the meeting and learn more. Bring your ideas and suggestions, and provide any assistance you can. Help your colleagues capture and preserve the history in which we all take pride.

For questions and additional information, please get in touch with:

Alar Kruus
85-34 56th Avenue
Elmhurst, New York 11373



OUTINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION

by Agnes Babich

The Association visits

Manhattan's Murray Hill Area

Seventeen members went to the Pierpont Morgan Library the morning of March 13 for an exhibition tour of drawings by the great Venetian artist, Giambattista Tiepolo. The exhibition was extensive and included works by the artist's sons, Domenico and Lorenzo Tiepolo, also depicting cultural life in 18th century Venice. Lunch followed at the Peking Park Restaurant where all enjoyed a variety of delicious Chinese dishes served family style.

In the afternoon, the group toured NYPL's new Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL) in the former B. Altman building. John Ganley gave an excellent overview of the research, reference and circulating collections, serving about 2,500 readers daily! It was impressive to see the state-of-the-art technology, as well as the Electronic Information Center with over 70 data bases available to students, readers and researchers.

Retirees View Internet at Donnell and Presentation at Museum of Television and Radio

About 20 members and friends came to Donnell the morning of June 11 and were split into small groups for an Internet demonstration. It was thrilling to have an introduction to the many resources available on the Internet for users of NYPL.

After lunch at the Piatti Pronti Restaurant on Sixth Avenue, the group spent a relaxing and enjoyable afternoon at the Museum of Television and Radio. The program shown, "Great Moments in Television: What We Watched," featured clips from old TV programs familiar to all of us.



Editor's Notes

This issue contains a short obituary of Mercy Kellogg, who was this association's vice president and also one of its founding members. We greatly miss her, not only as a personal friend but as one who contributed so much hard work to this organization.

We continue our report on past times with Naomi Noyes' remembrances of Cass Eaton, a skilled administrator remembered for her great influence within the Library and for her kindness to the staff.

As usual, we try to tell you the latest news about your pension, and Juanita Doares again describes legislative action. Members of this association put in many hours of hard work in fighting for our causes.

One of the important projects of this association will be the Oral History Program. Alar Kruus reports on it, and we hope to recruit enough volunteers to make it a success.

Most retirees remember the great Central Building, now called the Center for the Humanities, as the center for the entire library. It once held all the central administration and preparation services for both The Research Libraries and The Branch Libraries, and these varied from preparation services to Personnel, printing and bookbinding. Not only did it contain all the public services of The Research Libraries, but it also held some of the public services of The Branches, such as Central Circulation (incorporated into Mid-Manhattan), the Central Children's Room (now at Donnell), and the Readers' Advisor's Office (no longer existent). To tell you what is happening there today, Christine Hoffman reports on the renovation. She is Special Assistant for Planning, Center for the Humanities.

In this issue we continue Retirees In Action, which has become our most popular feature. It depends upon the information you give us when you renew your memberships, and we always look forward to any additional news you would like to send us. —Lawrence Murphy, Editor

THE TYRANNY OF COMMERCIALISM

Anthony Lewis in *The New York Times*, December 18, 1995: Lord Dahrendorf, the former director of the London School of Economics, warned recently that making the values of commerce the emperors of our soul leads to an economism run amok." The United States today is in the grip of free-marked ideology carried to the extreme: a belief that the society will thrive if nearly all decisions are left for individuals to make on economic grounds. When people in a society care only for themselves, when they are taught by demagogues to sneer at government and the communal good, it cannot be surprising that social bonds and social trust decline. In that process, everyone will eventually lose. In a society where fewer people vote or care to join—a society that has lost its sense of community—individualism will not bring contentment.

Thelma Thomas Storytelling Calendar

September 21, Sunday 11-4

New York Is Book Country

September 23, Tuesday 7:30 pm

YAKITY YAK, 153 West 21 St.

October 19, Sunday, 3-5 pm:

Langston Hughes House, 20 East 127 St. (bet. Fifth and Madison)

Thelma Thomas telephone:

212 807-1570

A LOOK AT THE BOOKS

by Anne Moy

We sit across from the shelves
Which, if one got to read the books
Would appeal to our many selves.

But who looks at all those books?
In front of the shelves stands the TV
set—
It's hard from there to the books to
get!

PROGRAM MEETING, APRIL 1997

by Juanita Doares

Christine Hoffman of The Research Libraries and Ray Markey, president of the Library union were the speakers at the April program meeting of the Association.

Ray Markey brought us up to date on the recently negotiated union contract with the Library and answered questions concerning health programs and other matters.

Christine Hoffman spoke about plans for the Central Building, now called the Center for the Humanities. Her article on page one of this issue of the *Newsletter* contains the restoration information.

Ms. Hoffman also talked about long range plans for the building after the renovation is completed. These will include a special scholar's center. She distributed copies of a newsletter, *Renovation News*, that will keep the public and staff up-to-date.

NEW MEMBERS SINCE JANUARY 1997

Nunzia A. Bongiorno
Pauline A. Cappellini
James Egan
Edward J. Giles
Ivy N. Hicks
Eva M. Szabo
Victoria Tcheng
Molly Wamp

WILLIAM FLOYD RETIRES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RPEA

by Juanita Doares

William C. Floyd is retiring as Executive Director of the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA). Bill has been a good friend of the New York Public Library Retirees Association since its beginning, and he was one of the early speakers at our meetings. Belle Weinberg and I are grateful to him for his generous counsel on Pension Supplementation and Cost of Living Adjustment, as well as other legislative matters. We wish him a healthy, happy retirement with his wife, who by the way, is a librarian.



MEETINGS AND EVENTS SEPTEMBER 1997-JUNE 1998

Program Meetings

September 15, 1997, Monday 3-5 pm

January 12, 1998, Monday 3-5 pm

April 22, 1998, Wednesday 5-7 pm

All program meetings will be held in the first floor conference room of the Mid-Manhattan Library.

Board Meetings

October 16, 1997, Thursday 1 pm

February 12, 1998, Thursday 1 pm

May 15, 1998, Thursday 1 pm

Social Events

November 13, 1997, Thursday

December 11, 1997, Friday 6:30 pm

(Holiday Party at a local restaurant)

March 12, 1998, Thursday

June 12, 1998, Friday

September Meeting: Bob Sink, the Library's Archivist will speak about the Program for the Oral History of NYPL, and he will begin the training for the Retirees Association's Oral History Project. (See the article by Alar Kruus in this issue of the *Newsletter*.) The meeting will also include a memorial for Mercy Kellogg, our Vice President, longtime colleague and friend. (See the remembrance in this issue of the *Newsletter*.)

Board Meetings: These are open to all members. The October meeting will be the final one at the HBO Cafeteria.

Social Events: The 1997/98 events are still in the planning stage. If you have suggestions for places to visit or want more information, call Agnes Babich at 718 335-3881. Notices for events will appear in the next issue of the *Newsletter* and in *Staff News*.

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