

# New York Public Library Retirees Association Newsletter

Spring - Summer 2006

Issue No. 21

## AN INDONESIAN JOURNEY by Elaine Thomas

### Two retired Children's Librarians on a special project in exotic Indonesia

This journey really starts in 2004 on a trip to South Africa and the IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) conference in Cape Town. Anne Pellowski was gathering a group of people to go with her a week before the conference; they would help her with the cloth bookmaking workshops she does around the world. Anne asked Marilyn if she would be interested in joining the group; Marilyn mentioned it to me, and added that she would need to find a roommate; I said that my passport was good; I would love to go with the group. So, off we went on a fabulous journey to South Africa, the workshops given in Limpopo Province, the conference in Cape Town and the Garden Route tour (of wineries and other places) afterwards.

Dr. Murti Bunanta, who got the first doctorate in children's literature from the University of Indonesia, is the president of The Society for the Advancement of Children's Literature (SACL) in Jakarta, and she is a friend of Anne Pellowski, who had been there at least five times to conduct the bookmaking workshops in Jakarta and on other islands. Murti

asked Anne if she would bring a group with her for the next workshops scheduled for Indonesia; Anne asked Marilyn and me if we were interested, and we both said YES!

We would pay for the airfares there and the short flights between islands, and for any time we spent afterwards (and of course, any shopping). The SACL and the Murti Bunanta Foundation, whose director is Bun Bunanta, would cover the hotels and all of our meals while we were doing the workshops, which were scheduled for Jakarta, and Maumere, on



Elaine Thomas and Dr. Murti Bunanta



**Cloth Bookmaking Workshop**

Flores.

Cathay Pacific is an airline I will recommend to anyone who can take it anywhere; comfortable even in coach with fare reductions for those over 55, a very helpful and considerate staff, great food, and a stopover with no extra charge in Hong Kong! So we planned a direct flight from NYC to Jakarta; some days on Bali after the workshops, some days in Jakarta after that for sightseeing; and then five days in Hong Kong; not long enough in any of the places; they all call for return visits.

The direct flight via Vancouver with a change of planes in Hong Kong and a layover there was too long; 27 hours. Next time, I would leave from Vancouver – that was manageable. We arrived in Jakarta in the early afternoon. It was hot. It was breathtakingly beautiful. We were met by Ari, one of the drivers who worked for Murti and we had tea/coffee at the Sheraton Bandara and I got to practice my first phrases in Bahasa Indonesian. Then we went back to the airport for Anne who arrived

a few hours later; we registered at the Santika Hotel, met Murti, had an early dinner and went to bed; the first workshop would start at 9 A.M. the next day! Neither Marilyn nor I are early risers if we can avoid it.

That next day we met Murti, her husband Bun, and their daughter Agatha, who would photograph the workshops for the SACL and the Bunanta Foundation, at the Foundation office where the workshops were held. They are a charming family, and they made our days in Indonesia so very comfortable and enjoyable. Agatha is a photographer who has had work included in several worldwide exhibits.

Besides helping in the cloth bookmaking workshops, which produce books that are often the first, or only children's books that children see in their own language, or particular dialect, Marilyn and I both gave our own workshops; Marilyn's on storytelling, and mine on photography. I prepared a workshop showing how to use photos taken by the teachers, or students, or found in publications. I gave ideas to use photographs for creative writing; storytelling; art; counting, sequences, and other math projects; geography and maps; treasure hunts, and ways of seeing the world



**Pop-up Book**

around you. I used my own photographs, some of my friend's work, and some of Agatha Bunanta's to illustrate each section, and prints of some black and white photos to be hand tinted during the workshop. One of the most difficult ideas to get across was writing a story about the events they imagined took place in the photo; at first, some people wrote about how they chose the colors for the tinting, but then, after Murti explained further, they wrote some great stories. The participants were elementary teachers, day care teachers, library staff, and others who worked with children. They would take these ideas back to their schools and use them not only with their classes, but also with other teachers who couldn't come to the workshops. Marilyn and I also helped Anne with a new workshop on making pop-up books.

Each night we got to try a new Indonesian restaurant with Murti, Bun, and Agatha. I found a new fish – a silver pomfret – lots of new vegetable dishes – I love gado-gado – and learned not to even think of the fruit durian.

After two days in Jakarta for the workshops, we left for Flores (via an overnight on Bali because of an airline schedule change) and the SOS Kinderdorf orphanage, SOS Desa Taruna in Maumere to give some more workshops. The orphanage is a well arranged compound of ten houses with housemothers for ten to fifteen children who are abandoned, abused, or orphans of the tsunamis. We were met at the airport by Bapak (which roughly means Mr.) Agus, the director of the orphanage. When we got to the orphanage after a driving tour of Maumere, there was a welcoming ceremony with children and some of the house mothers dancing in greeting. Ibu Agus, the director's wife helped two youngsters present us with gifts of ikat, and we entered the main hall for drinks of coconut juice. That evening, I heard my first gecko; louder than I had



**Marilyn Iaruso at the Dirty Duck**

imagined and it cleared its throat before each group of calls. Murti said there was a children's fortune telling/counting game on the calls of the gecko similar to ours of counting daisy petals.

The house mothers and many teachers from schools around the island were the participants in the workshops in Maumere, and they were a bit more difficult than in Jakarta as we needed Murti and Agatha as translators; in Jakarta all of the participants understood, and many spoke, English. So I tried even more of my Bahasa Indonesian, and walked about with a good phrase book; that was fun!

After another two days of workshops, we had two days of sightseeing on Flores, (and finally some shopping!), going to several churches, a mountain top with a statue of the virgin Mary that had been blown down in a storm with workmen preparing to get the statue up again, and to Lake Kelimutu, an extinct volcano with three lakes, each a different color, in the crater. Getting up at 3 a.m. for the drive, and then the driver arriving at 5 (he said there was a mix-up, he never started at 3) was not the



best beginning, but it was a fantastic trip. Even though I didn't get up to the highest part of the rim to see the third lake, the lower two were beautiful, and the rice terraces along the mountainside were also beautiful. I only took a digital camera with me on this trip; to South Africa, I had taken two film cameras and a digital, but I'm getting better with digital now and got almost 800 photos of Indonesia and Hong Kong. There was a closing ceremony to say farewell at the orphanage, with a skit and two musical performances by the children, speeches all around, and gift-giving once again, and we had some small things to give to the children.

We then left for Bali, where Marilyn and I were the guests of Murti, Bun and Agatha in their villa in the Bali Nirwana Resort, but Anne had to leave to do another workshop in Singapore. For the next three days, they gave us an insider's tour of Bali, from the Monkey Forest in Ubud, to the Tanah Lot sea temple, to Barong and Kecak dance performances; with lots of great restaurant and other stops along the way. The Dirty Duck in Ubud which has a delicious dessert of black Russian pie, made with the drink, became a favorite.

Marilyn and I then checked into the Santika



Beach Resort Hotel; with an introduction from Murti who had to return to Jakarta to prepare for the launching of the new Motorbike Library project (more on that in a separate article with excerpts from Murti's report to IBBY). We had three days of sightseeing, snorkeling, and shopping (we had to ship boxes back home because of what we bought, and the gifts of ikat from the orphanage, and only one suitcase each). Then we returned to Jakarta for more sightseeing and shopping, getting to the Foundation office to see the Motorbike Libraries, the Wayang Museum (puppets), the aquarium, and the National Museum of Indonesia where I got to see a Sasando, a musical instrument of bamboo and palm fronds; I wanted to get one to take home, but they were too large and too fragile (so I got a small angklung instead!) Each night Murti and Bun met the two of us and we got to some more great restaurants. It was hard saying good-bye to them knowing it would probably be years before I'd be able to get back to Indonesia, but there is e-mail, and who knows what might happen in the future? I keep my passport in easy reach.

## THE IBBY MOTORBIKE LIBRARY

There are five motorbike libraries just now; three were funded by IBBY, and two by the Ohanashi Caravan Center, The Society for the Advancement of Children's Literature, and the Murti Bunanta Foundation, and they were launched in February 2006. They were designed and planned by Bun and Murti Bunanta for use in areas that are remote, in need of recovery help, and/or are difficult to reach. This is an ingenious design with a bike that pulls a truck with sides that lift up into awnings to display books, and back doors that open so more shelves of books can be pulled

out. Each bike and the library truck are painted the same color: the five I saw were pastel blue, yellow, green, blue, and red. The illustrations painted on them, as well as the song they will play, are attractive and should be a draw to children.

I can see these motorbike libraries being used in many countries, including here; in the Southwest, the Appalachians, and our inner cities where driving and parking bookmobiles is hard because of traffic and narrow streets. The fuel savings of the bikes in comparison to the bookmobiles is another reason to consider their use. There might be a problem adapting them to winter weather, but with this design, I think a driver's enclosure would be possible.

This project has been a dream of Murti Bunanta's for many years and it has now come true. She hopes that soon children will pay more attention to vendors offering the intellectual nutrition of books than to those who offer the snacks that seem to perk them up.

Excerpts from Dr. Murti Bunanta's report on The IBBY Motorbike Library for Education Recovery Project through Books for Aceh.

The Education Recovery Project is a joint project that was set up between IBBY, the So-

ciety for the Advancement of Children's Literature (SACL), and the Murti Bunanta Foundation. Their purpose is to help through books the recovery of education in areas affected by the tsunami and other needy areas in Indonesia.

On February 22, 2006, the motorbike libraries were launched at a reception for over 100 guests, with many media representatives. The libraries can hold 1,000 – 1,500 books each, and the first were started with a collection of 700 books. Two will serve in Banda Aceh for schools, refugee camps, orphanages, and the surrounding communities. The third will go to Maumere on Flores, which also suffered from a tsunami. Funding from the Ohanashi Caravan Center, the SACL and the Murti Bunanta Foundation made another two motorbike libraries possible, that were also launched on February 22. One of these two will go to Maumere and the other will go to Purwakarta in West Java. There is funding enough from IBBY to set up a sixth motorbike library and give it to Jogja which has also been devastated by a recent tsunami.

February 22 was also the celebration of the publication of five folk tale picture books with funding from IBBY. Three were written in English and Indonesian, and two in Indonesian and Acehnese, dedicated to particularly help children's education in Aceh. Each title has a run of 3,000 copies with IBBY's logo and dedication; 75 packages of books were given to representatives of schools, orphanages, Moslem boarding schools, and small libraries who attended the ceremony from Maluku, Bali, Central Java, Jakarta, East Java, West Java, and Kalimantan.



**Back view of the Motorbike Library**

## NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Wonderful News! We are so excited to have heard from almost every one of our members. Thank you all for responding to this year's membership appeal. The transition has taken place and the next time you hear from us regarding dues will be January 2007.

I hope everyone has had a great summer. Here in New York we've had some beastly hot and humid days, but now a cool, rainy spell has reminded us that fall is on the way and that it's time to plan our yearly events and outings.

Our first general business meeting will be held on October 17, 2006, at Mid-Manhattan Library. Our special guest will be Jennifer Levesque, NYPL Benefits Administrator. She will speak on Medicare Part D issues and library coverage. All NYPL retirees are welcome to attend this important meeting. On November 15, we have planned an outing to The Langston Hughes Community & Cultural Center and The Louis Armstrong Museum, Queens. On December 14, 2006, we go to the Research Library Map Division where Alice Hudson will give us a special "librarian's" tour. In February 2007, it's on to the newly renovated Morgan Library and Museum. Other exciting events are being planned too and for those of you who may be joining us for the first time, we frequently schedule a morning and afternoon related event. All events are informal and usually include lunch at a good but affordable place. You may bring a guest and if you can't spend the whole day with us, a half day is fine too. Watch Staff News for further information on our events or give me a call at (212) 874-6199.

This year we hope to reestablish our Oral His-



tory Project, where we tape personal interviews with retirees who have worked in the library system. We all have interesting stories to relate and if you would like to be interviewed, please send us your name, phone number and several pertinent sentences about your experiences in the library. If you would like to volunteer to help with this project, let us know.

This spring I attended an exciting course with the Institute for Social Action, an advocacy and leadership training program sponsored by JPAC (the Joint Public Affairs Committee). It is an exceptional program that assists older persons in becoming more involved and effective advocates for social and civic affairs. My classmates all came from different professions and life experiences. We had marvelous speakers and we delved into everything from city budgets, legislative processes, voter registration and outreach, senior entitlements, etc. I found it very stimulating, enjoyable and extremely useful. If you might be interested in this program, contact me as we would like more of our retirees to take this important course.

## RETIREE NEWS

These are a few thoughts for now. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. And remember, we love to hear from you all, so please keep your informational News Sheets coming in. Even a few sentences mean a lot and it makes our Newsletter really special. Best wishes to you all.

Becky Koppelman  
(212) 874-6199  
blekopp@gmail.com

## THE BOOKS-FOR-CHINA FUND

John T. Ma, NYPLRA member, has established a project to collect and donate college level or above books and materials from the private collections of scholars, retired professionals, and friends of China. The materials are then sent to University libraries in China. If you are interested in more information about this project, please contact Mr. Ma at 138-10 Franklin Avenue, #3D. Flushing, New York 11355-3301. Tel: (718) 886-4687, Fax: (718) 886-0312, or e-mail: johntajenma@att.net.

## NEW MEMBERS

Here are our new members in 2006:

Margaret Benjamin, David Beasley, Robert Foy, Marilyn Iarusso, Patricia Jones, Dorothy Lourdou, Felix Morales, Diane Riordan, Kathy Rowan, and Hara Seltzer.

### LUIS ALCALA

I made it to Chicago in December for a much needed dose of opera and theater. Also, I sprang for a passel of records including a 1972 French broadcast of Lalo's Le Roi D'Ys. Bet I'm the only one on my block with two versions of Eugen D'Albert's Tiffland. Though the composer was Scottish by birth, his heart belonged to Deutschland. Wagner and Strauss notwithstanding, many German opera buffs consider Tiffland their national opera. It has a silly plot, but gorgeous music. I'm still buying some 1/1200 and 1/1250 scale waterline model ships. If they were the real thing, I'd have the world's largest navy.

I constantly dream about the Library, especially the Mosholu Branch. This is a sure sign of old age and rapidly approaching senility. Luckless me tries to close the branch and finds seemingly endless hidden gaggles of children and teens to shoo out. No wonder I need those potent Harrison Roadhouse martinis.

EDITOR'S NOTE: At least two other librarians have had variations on this dream.

### JACOB AZEKE

I was in Nigeria for six weeks attending my nephew's graduation from the Nigeria Law School. While I was in Salvador Bahia, Brazil for ten weeks, I was invited to meet with young men and women in the poor section of Salvador Bahia. They had purchased a building to use as a library. They had many questions. My friend and I plan to make donations toward electrical renovation work, painting, bookshelves, chairs, and tables. I participated in the annual carnival in Salvador Bahia.

## JULIA BRODY

I do want to take the opportunity to say that ever since the Retirees Association was formed, I have been impressed by the quality of work done by those doing the planning and carrying out the activities of the Association. In the forty years during which I was a staff member of the New York Public Library, I was most fortunate to have held a variety of positions, and so worked with many individuals in various parts of the Library who have provided me with rich memories and many friendships.

Although I am unable to join you at meetings and participate in the field trips, I do enjoy reading about them and learning about what our busy retirees are doing. I do maintain contact with a number of former staff and staff who are still working at the Library, mostly through phone calls, letters and holiday greetings.

I hope the Association will continue to flourish and I look forward to receiving the directory and the activity with which each person is involved for they serve as a link to the Library which was a major part of my life.

## WILLIAM LEO COAKLEY

Lovers of art and literature — and of New York and the New York Public Library history — were appalled last year by the Trustees' crass insult to the honor of the Library and the generosity of its donors. Under cover of darkness they sold one of the Library's great treasures, with all its beauty and associations: Asher Durand's Kindred Spirits. It had been bequeathed to the people of New York forever, for their delight and inspiration, through what was thought to be an honorable institution.

## CAROL DAVIES-GROSS

My husband has been ill so there is not much going on or many activities in my life.

I remember when I was working at Fordham Library a woman came in. She wanted to get a dog, but her husband had an allergy to pets. She had heard about a dog from India, but only knew the first letter of the dogs' name. I found the dog in a dog encyclopedia, but didn't discover whether he had fleas, an important concern of hers. There was a list of owners and addresses. I suggested she write one of them and ask if the dog has fleas.

## DOROTHY R. EOSEFOW

I went to New Orleans two weeks before Katrina hit, Niagara Falls during the summer of 2005, visited two casinos, Mohegan Sun and Showboat, as well as, visiting around the city.

## BARBARA GIBBONS

I'm still volunteering for the Long Island Masterworks (Chorus), my church and the day care center. Once a budget person...staying busy! Also, I traveled with my husband to the National Guard convention in Honolulu last September, then on to California for a nephew's wedding. Two weeks ago I was visiting friends in Santiago, Dominican Republic. Sorry I missed the holiday dinner. In June, my sister and I plan a trip back to our roots in Germany to visit family and friends.

## JAMES T. GREENE

Some retirees may be familiar with the so-called "library" building on West 21st Street where many librarians lived over the years. Among those who lived here during my almost forty-three years of occupancy are Amy Valentine, Edith Busby, Aileen O'Brien Murphy, Helen Hechinger, Nan Peters, Henrietta Quigly, Leona Durkes, Eliza Marques, Helen Sattley, Julia Ruth Armstrong, Casindania Eaton, Helen I. Rawstron, Kay Love, Erna





**On the terrace of the new Bronx Library Center  
before lunching on Arthur Avenue**

Obermeier, and Margaret Scoggin. Alas, with Aileen Murphy's death in her nineties two years ago, I remain the only representative of the New York Public Library at 433 W. 21st Street.

#### LEE JOHNSON

Retirement equals delight. This year I continued bicycling; playing tennis and the piano; visiting museums, zoos and botanical gardens; and attending a never-ending array of concerts, recitals, and operas. New York is a cultural wonderland. I'm still awed by the luxury of time to enjoy it. Latest book read, Mark Twain; a Life, by Ron Powers (from Hannibal, MO). It is a fine biography. Since my home town is thirty miles from Hannibal, I take great pleasure in discovering more about our greatest author. Here he is presented with all his contradictions, wit, dark thoughts, insecurities and hilarious creations, loving and living to the hilt. Ron drew upon the extensive Twain archive at Berkeley; the

book is well documented.

#### PATRICIA JONES

No current news. I retired only recently, January 17, 2006.

#### ANNE MOY

I swim and tutor Chinese adults in English.

#### EMIL N. RAMIL

I have a collection of 300 operas, 100 operettas, 200 of Zarzuelas and a lot of very discontinued recordings of Classical, popular and international music. If somebody wishes to buy any of my collections, let me know through e-mail, [eramil78@msn.com](mailto:eramil78@msn.com). Besides that I have a lot of classical and pop 45's, cassettes, eight tracks, open reel recordings, etc.

The main thought in my soul about the Library is it is the best of the whole world as a place to learn...ANYTHING. It is the best in the whole world. Live forever NYPL.

## PAULINE RESTUCCIA

We're keeping active with the Senior Citizen Club of our development, Greenwood Senior Citizen Club. We're active almost each month with special luncheons, in which both my husband and I participate. We enjoy it very much. Whenever we can we go on day trips to Atlantic City or other parts of New York State, New Jersey, or Connecticut. We're even involved with veterans with their luncheons, dances, etc. My husband is treasurer in both groups.

I enjoyed every day of my thirty-seven years in the Library. My years in the branches were in the children's rooms, reading to children, and working with picture books. Then I went on to Technical Services (Binding and Processing). Again I enjoyed each and every day.

## ALICE R. LEONE for INEZ S. RUSSO

I am returning the forms that were sent to my mother. She passed away in April 2004. In a strange twist, I wound up going back to school for an MLS and work as a school librarian in the New York City public schools. I guess all her 'library' stories must have made a lasting impression.

## ROBERT SHEEHAN

I still winter in the Yucatan where 90 degrees is a cool lovely day. And, oh, how I miss New York!

## JOHN G. SODERBERG

Last October I sold my home in Melbourne, Florida. I was living alone; my wife Frances of forty-one years passed away. In 1999 I lost my daughter and my wife, both in the same year. In 2001 I lost my son. I was introduced to Hortencia through my late wife's niece. We have communicated with each other for four years. I decided to sell my home to be with her in Texas. This past June 1, Hortencia and I were married.

## PEARL SPIEGEL

I enjoyed very much the twenty-six years that I worked in the Fordham Branch. After retiring, I moved to San Mateo, California, and volunteered in the Main Branch in San Mateo. For some twelve years, I have been volunteering along with six others in Temple Beth El library.

While working at the Library I was intrigued watching Literacy Volunteers. Here in San Mateo it is known as Project Read. I have been teaching newcomers to read, write, and speak English one-on-one at the volunteer level.

## ELAINE THOMAS

I traveled with Marilyn Iarusso in a group organized by Anne Pellowski to the IBBY conference in Cape town and a bookmaking, pottery, and photography workshop in Limpopo Province, South Africa in 2004. This year the three of us went to Indonesia . [Editor's Note: see lead article]

I am still trying to publish the picture books and picture book folk tales I've written, four so far, but travel, photography, and the gym cut into my writing time. I have just applied to be a volunteer at the American Museum of Natural History and I hope to get to work in the Planetarium. I'm waiting for Virgin Galactic Trips to become affordable

## SALLY L. THOMPSON

I have moved to Minneapolis where I grew up and have a beautiful bedroom apartment with a balcony with a view of townhouses, fir trees, and Canadian geese! My cousin wanted to make me part of his family and so he has. Walking is more and more difficult for me which is why he and his wife wanted me to come here. It was increasingly difficult for me to get around New York City, go to dinner, plays and the ballet. I came back to my New

York apartment this spring to get rid of “stuff” and to sell the apartment. I did take time to attend NYPL’s annual reception and enjoyed seeing everyone. I think the reception is a wonderful idea; the people, food, and wine are great. Beats getting a one-time gold watch or the like as someone once told me.

#### MOLLY WAMP

I enjoy taking daily walks in this scenic town of 1,200 people. People say, Hello, Molly, when I go by the houses. I pat their dogs and cats. I visit our library once or twice a week to see what new items they have and what ‘weed’ books are for sale. My sister and I share a pet cat, Sidney, who keeps us amused, relaxed and busy at times. He’s black and will sit on our laps. I have a habit of doing crossword puzzles daily in the newspapers. We get a Rochester, New York daily paper and the Sunday New York Times.

#### VIRGINIA WARNER

I’m looking forward to my fourteen day cruise to Hawaii. It has grown from just grandson James and Sherry, plus me, to twelve gray haired seniors plus the young couple! I am now using the “Cadillac” of walkers. My biggest problem was finding a handicapped room with doors wide enough for “Old Herbie” to wheel through. My guardian angel sent the elves to help and a room was found right next to the elevator. Of course, it is at the opposite side of ship from the dining rooms. Guess you can’t win them all!

#### BONNIE WILLIAMS

I have at last resigned from the Community Board, just when the new Borough President is seemingly taking real notice of the hard work these group accomplish; but it is now time. I continue with beading classes. I really enjoy this intricate, detailed “sewing” and found three other NYPLers who also do some

kind of jewelry work. I’m still working at the New York City Aububon office once weekly. Mirabile dictu, I have hired a personal trainer to see if I can strengthen my knees (and attendant limbs and muscles) so if I do have to have a replacement, I will be in good condition for it. Life is good — opera, concerts, walking (a must) and some travel, family reunion in July, “The Norwegian Legion”, my mom’s family, and a whole week of the Santa Fe opera in August, long wanted and finally assured.

#### JOE ZEVELOFF

My wife, who is Brazilian, and I went to Brazil for three months from December 31, 2005 to March 30, 2006. We went to various parts of Brazil including many nice beaches.

## **KEEP OPEN THE NORFOLK PUBLIC LIBRARY!**

### **A letter sent by David Beasley**

I was upset to see that funds for the Norfolk Public Library System had been cut —as much as 60% taken from staffing, I believe. Libraries are among the most important institutions that a community has; I am sure that I do not have to review the benefits that they bring to the community. Back in 1969 when I was a research librarian at the New York Public Research Libraries and President of the library workers’ union, the New York Library Guild, the library announced it was closing one day a week to save money. Writers who used the library came to me and together we organized a protest on the front steps facing Fifth Avenue. As Frank Lundberg [author of Citizen Hearst, The Rich and the Superrich] said, “Threatening libraries is like threatening motherhood.” Tony Randall was our M.C., Betty Comden [writer of Broadway musicals]



**David Beasley & Michelle**

was honorary chair, speakers were scholars such as Cleveland Amory, actors such as James Earl Jones and Alan Alda, singers such as Peter of Peter, Paul and Mary, novelists famous in that day and others let the trustees know that they made a big mistake. I received telegrams to keep the library from Marian Anderson, Arthur Miller, Bill Styron, etc. etc. Even the legendary Allen Nevins sent me \$10 from California to help keep the library open. Barbara Tuchman gave me \$200 to defray expenses. If there is a soul on your Council who thought that libraries were a good place to start cutting expenses, that person ought to be enlightened. Needless to say, the New York Public Library immediately found the money to reopen on the day it wished to close. Mayor John Lindsay found the money, supposedly. The New York Times had an article about it. Of course, years later, during the fiscal crisis, a new mayor tried to close branch libraries and faced citizen sit-ins and near-riots. I could have warned the city what would happen because the citizens who came to the front steps of the library to hear the celebrities talk signed reams upon reams of a petition to restore funds to the library.

The Norfolk Public Library in Simcoe is important to me as a writer who must use its interlibrary loan services to get the information I need. In recent years such services have been given to local libraries and I understand that there are expenses incurred, which were planned for. I was not pleased to see that a staff member at the research desk had been terminated for fiscal reasons. I trust that funds will be restored quickly.

I am sending a copy of the letter to the Norfolk Public Library C.E.O, to the New York Public Library Retirees Association's Newsletter [retirees are active in campaigning for library legislation, etc.] and to the Simcoe Reformer, who may wish to use it to inform its reader of the state of our library.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** His efforts brought success: funds restored! David Beasley is a prolific author and publisher.

See [www.kwic.com/~davus](http://www.kwic.com/~davus).

## **PASSINGS**

We honor the passing of NYPL Retirees Association members and other Library staff as reported in Staff News and elsewhere.

Murray Antler, Herbert Boucher, Regina Brown, Edna Canozzer, Cyril Duke, Grace Falcetti, Hannah B. Friedman, Joseph Graham, Ruth Harper, Isola Jones, Margaret Kruh, Manuel Larios, Catherine Marquard, Myrna Martin, Shirley Myers, Naomi Noyes, David Pugh, Eleanor Radwan, Gladys Rindner, Walter Ristow, Rose Roth, Inez Russo, Mildred Sage, Marion Stock, George Washington.



## REMEMBERING NAOMI NOYES

**From Despina Croussouloudis and Angeline Moscatt** as listed in Staff News, September 21, 2006: Generations of Children's Librarians remember Ms. Noyes for her storytelling, her lively, informed mind, and her generosity of spirit.

**From Harriet Gottfried:** Naomi Noyes passed away in July, 2006. I first met her when I came to work at NYPL in 1981 when I was appointed to be the Children's Librarian at the Hamilton Fish Park Branch on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Our first encounter took place over the telephone. Ms Noyes was waiting at JFK airport for a flight and called me, as a newly employed Children's Librarian, to be sure that I was settling in okay. Over the next three years when I worked at Ham Fish and later at Epiphany for Children's Services, Naomi came to see me many times. She was consistently friendly, encouraging and helpful with a wicked sense of humor. During those years she told me many stories about the children's services at NYPL that illuminated its reputation as the best place to be trained and to work at as a Children's Librarian. Through her anecdotes about past staff and by her own example, she conveyed a rich tradition and history of excellence in children's librarianship that will always be with me. Naomi Noyes was a dedicated librarian and a pleasure to learn from and to work with.

## OUR NYPLRA ORAL HISTORY OF NAOMI NOYES

Virginia Swift interviewed Naomi Noyes on September 19, 1998. Harriet Gottfried transcribed the tape. Excerpts from the interview

are in quotation marks.

Naomi Noyes began working in The New York Public Library as a page at the Cathedral Branch her senior year in high school and her first year at Hunter College. Soon she was promoted to clerk. "...The Children's Librarian under whom I was a clerk took me to Children's Librarians meetings so I saw Anne Carol Moore and I listened to Frances Clarke Sayers preside and whoever else was there, so that was a rare experience.... And the meetings were held in the Central Children's Room which is Room 78 in the Central Building now occupied by something else. A beautiful room with window seats and with a red Spanish tile floor..."

Her positive experience at the Cathedral Branch led to her decision to become a Children's Librarian. She worked as an Assistant Children's Librarian at High Bridge and Fordham Branches before going to work for the Los Angeles Public Library. Talking about what her work day was like she said, "Reader service, class visits, story hours and so on-but if there was a need at the registration desk, the charge desk, the return desk, you just did whatever was at hand...And book ordering? Oh, definitely that and storytelling. Oh yes, weekly story hours? I always found that so hard-trying to learn a story."

"Another thing that was different in those days, do you remember the tea that we used to have? Oh, my heavens, who could forget the tea? Tea was part of life. I mean you didn't think that it was funny. Well, new staff members sometimes did, especially when a young man was supposed to provide the ingredients with the cake, muffins, and things like that. But it was very pleasant.

And you got to see others of the staff. Oh yes, then you talked with the staff in the adult department and you got mixed up in a nice

potpourri.”

After returning from Los Angeles Naomi Noyes became Children’s Librarian of Fordham Children’s Room at about twenty-five years old. “Yes it was the busiest Children’s Room in the system and the theory was that only a young person could stand it. It had 98 feet of solid cement floor, and I darted from one end to the other, and my feet have not been the same since. However, they have eased into a peaceful compromise.”

A year later, in the early fifties, she was working on the Bronx Bookmobiles. “The Bronx at that time was slowly developing. I think it shot forward later. And we used to go to areas at great distances from libraries-like Throgs Neck which now has its own branch and Edgewater Park. I don’t know whatever happened to that-but that was a little almost rural community in part of The Bronx. Well, we had two. The original bookmobile, well not the original no, but the one that was there when I first went in the bookmobile service was a truck with a specially built body, which had outside flaps, metal framed with glass in the middle that when you got to the stop, the driver raised them up and they were heavy. Revealing which you could already see through the glass, but now you could touch them. This was on both sides, but since we parked at the side of the road, only one side was useful. But the other side was used to carry books that we could use at the next stop or, you know, change the stop or something. The inside was also used. The inside was the Adult Department, and the outside was for children. There was a small children’s section on the inside for rainy days. Well, I used to write a prescription. I would go through the bookmobile and note how many inches of fiction you needed for the next day. After the shelving had been done-if there were gaps-in nonfiction particular areas-travel, biography,

whatever. Mostly children or adults?

“There is a very famous, or was, a very famous spot-*Story Hour Rock*, off Hollywood (?) Avenue near a church and convent ... Anyway, there was a rock there and children sat on the rock. The librarian sat in a chair and told stories. And one day, there I was telling a story when I was enveloped in a dark cloud, black cloud, and it was a nun who had taught me in the seventh and eighth grade, and she was now at St. Francis. It was pleasant. I don’t know whether we got back to the story or not.”

Naomi Noyes was the first librarian on the Manhattan Bookmobile. “Cassie Eaton had great pleasure in designing it. It looked like a bus, a big bus without windows on the side. All the books were inside and it was used in Manhattan to serve the public at the branches that were closed for rehabilitation, a project undertaken by the library and the city, in the fifties, I think, and maybe the early sixties.”

Naomi Noyes was Assistant Children’s Borough Specialist under Sally Helfman; then later the Borough Specialist. “Well, Miss Eaton really wanted the Specialists to be out in the branches, more than in the office, because we were helping to train staff, help to advise them, to see what was needed, to come back and do what we could do to remedy the needs. Sometimes criticisms were necessary. I didn’t enjoy that part so much, but it did happen.”

When asked if she remembered any special stories about any of the remarkable staff we had in the library, any funny things, she said, “I don’t know if I could repeat them.”

Naomi Noyes retired in 1988 after 48 years working in the Library. She worked at Central Children’s Room for a number of years afterward. She was instrumental in getting

the books in the stacks entered into the computer database. She continued to enjoy working with children and books.

## NAOMI IN LA

Frances Clarke Sayers was Superintendent of Work with Children of the New York Public Library in 1951 when she published Ginny and Custard. Ginny, who accompanies her family to Los Angeles, befriends a cat, Custard. The surprise comes when she visits the local library.

*The librarian was a tall slim young woman, with curly hair and brown eyes. She moved about the place very quickly, like a bird skimming water. She found the book that Father wanted at once, and she seemed to be so pleased with him for wanting it.*

*“I’d like to take out a book,” Ginny said.*

*“Have you belonged to the library before?”*

*“Yes, At Jackson Square. But that was in New York.”*

*“Jackson Square!” said the skimming one. “I know Jackson Square. I’m from New York too.” And she leaned over the desk, and Ginny leaned over the desk, and they talked and talked and talked.*

*Miss Skimmer’s name was really Naomi Noyes, and she and her friend, Joan Treble, who was also a librarian, had come out to California for a year in Los Angeles.*

The two librarians spent Christmas with Ginny and her family.



**Naomi Noyes, May 1997,  
in the Central Children's Room  
sitting in front of the poster she designed  
to help readers and librarians not  
experienced working with children's book**

*Everyone helped with the dishes afterward. Then Joan and Naomi brought out their recorders and piped the old English carols into the room.*

Naomi Noyes and Joan Treble stayed six months in Los Angeles before returning to work for The New York Public Library.

## **NEWS FROM DC 37's PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PRESS**

If you didn't receive your Medicare Part B reimbursement check in August, write: The Health Benefits Program, 40 Rector St., Attn.: Medicare Unit, New York, N.Y. 10006. State that you did not receive your check. An affidavit will be sent to you. The process may take several weeks.

There have been problems with the new prescription plan. If you are having difficulties, phone DC 37 Health and Security Plan (212 815-1234) or Innoviant (800 207-1561).

### **REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEER**

The American Folk Art Museum at 45 West 53rd Street between 5th & 6th Avenues is looking for a volunteer to run a small library open to scholars and staff. They would like someone to volunteer a minimum of 1/2 day per week, preferably Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday when they have the library open. Previously, the library had a paid librarian. The library duties would include responding to e-mail requests, helping people find material, scheduling appointments, reshelving books and maintaining the general organization of the library, and processing new materials.

If you are interested in volunteering, call Jane Lattes at 212 977-7170 x 330. One of our members has volunteered and says there is a need for more volunteers.

### **COPYEDITING**

Mary K. Conwell checked this newsletter for clarity, punctuation errors, and more.

## **PHOTO CREDITS**

Marilyn Iarusso and Elaine Thomas took the photos in Indonesia. If you would like to see Elaine's wonderful, full color photos on Snapfish, e-mail her at e10et@yahoo.com. That e-mail address is 'e ten et'. Elaine took the Bronx photo. David Beasley sent the photo of himself and his companion. Despina Coussouloudis took Naomi Noyes's photo. Polly Bookhout took the photo of Becky Koppelman. All photos have been cropped and enhanced by Polly Bookhout.

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