

New York Public Library Retirees Association Newsletter

Fall 2008 - Winter 2009

Issue No. 26

THE ONE LIBRARY PLAN UPDATED

In January, following news of the expanding fiscal crisis, David Ferriero, Andrew W. Mellon Director of The New York Public Libraries, and David Offensend, Chief Operating Officer, gave us an update on the Library's plans and how the Library might be affected by the fiscal crisis.

A year ago, in a very different financial climate, the Library announced its plans for a new central building, funded largely by a \$100 million dollar gift from Library Trustee Stephen A. Schwarzman. Two other programs that got less play in the media were announced:



In the Trustees Room

1) The establishment of hub libraries in Manhattan and Staten Island, modeled on the Bronx Library Center. These hubs are to “work in tandem with and support neighborhood libraries.”

2) The expansion of the Library’s “online presence dramatically to make its unique holdings and programs accessible worldwide and create new online communities led by its librarians and curators.”

A NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY

The new central library will include circulating collections for all ages. Three levels of public service will be housed in the space beneath the third floor Rose Reading Room. The books currently shelved there will move to compact shelving below Bryant Park. The Research and Branch Service Center for materials processing, preservation, and other similar services will be located in Long Island City. The Science, Industry and Business Library, and Mid-Manhattan collections and services will be reconfigured and, in some cases, moved. The Andrew Heiskell Braille & Talking Book Library will remain in its present location.

The Library is attempting to rationalize the special collections. Should the Library invest more in collection processing and digitization? Collections that will be kept include manuscripts, photos, and genealogy. Some collections, such as education and law, will be de-invested. The Library has an advantage over university libraries in not having to tailor the collections to suit vocal instructors. Before investing in a collection, the Library will ask if the area of collection is unique and if it is a strong collection.

The goal for the new central library is to create an international destination, to provide rotating displays of the treasures of the Library, and to provide seamless service for both borrowers and scholars. The Library is hoping for an increase of traffic to 3.5 million visitors.

Will the water damage at the second level of the stacks beneath Bryant Park create problems? The Library has remedied this. The problem was caused by an underground stream.

Will there be room for additional books and materials in the stacks, or if not, will digitizing materials answer this concern? There will be enough room in the stacks for growth. In addition, the Library’s site in Princeton will continue to hold little-used material, which can be brought to the central building in twenty-four hours.

How has the fiscal crisis affected money promised from private donors such as Stephen A. Schwarzman? Donors are honoring the pledges they made to the Library. However, city and state funding has been cut, and bigger cuts will follow next year. The State cut is 18% across the board for all libraries. In addition, the Library’s endowment is down 30%. Another important source of funding, parties and other events in the Library, is down. Parties planned by organizations have been considered as too “splashy” in troubled times and cancelled.

The Orient-Express Hotels Ltd., which is buying the Donnell Library Center, has paid part of the cost of its sale but has postponed the closing until November. The buyer is committed to rebuilding a new Donnell. A



Friends and former colleagues meet

temporary site replacing the Donnell Library Center will open at 46th Street and Lexington Avenue. [Editor's Note: See Donnell Library update on the last page]

THE SITE MANAGER POSITION

The Library has spent two years rethinking and reorganizing the way the Library functions. Almost every position has been touched by this effort. A lot of attention has been focused on what competencies are needed by the new Site Managers who will provide leadership for their sites.

These competencies include demonstrating leadership in each site; developing strategies to enhance use and attendance; providing outreach to schools, public officials, and the public; writing staff performance reviews; scheduling staff; maintaining a profile of the

branch; and ensuring that site hours meet public demand.

Each neighborhood library will have a Site Manager. The Site Manager is not required to have an MLS. A bachelor's degree or the equivalent in education or experience is required. Of the fourteen positions filled recently, six were filled with non-librarians. All positions were filled from within the Library.

The Library and DC 37's Local 1930 have agreed that Branch Librarians may apply for the Site Manager position of their current branch or may transfer to a Supervising Librarian position elsewhere. Even though the new Site Manager position pays more than the Supervising Librarian position, several librarians declined to apply for the Site Manager position.

Site Managers will work with the Strategy Office in developing and refining profiles for each branch. These profiles are used by those who order the books and other materials for branches.

The Library expects that Brooklyn and Queens will follow the example of the NYPL in providing Site Managers without MLS degrees. Several retirees in the audience disagreed with this.

Site Managers, together with Human Resources staff, will hire librarian and clerical staff for each site.

[Editor's Note: See www.local1930.org for full details on the Site Manager position.]

There were a number of critical responses from the audience.

How can a Site Manager decide on the qualifications of a librarian? Site Managers can say no to hiring a particular librarian.

Why are small publishers excluded from consideration when ordering for branches? Does Baker & Taylor realize that New York has a sophisticated public? Profiles will be continually refined to improve book and materials ordering and other activities.

Are the wrong books being bought? A retiree from Greenwich Village told of visiting her local branch and finding four copies of a book about a rock star's wife in the New Book section. The librarian at the branch apologized and said that he didn't order the books at his branch. The Library had to spend a lot of money rapidly and mistakes were made.

Are the branches being adequately staffed? A retiree visiting her local branch on the West Side saw a long, long line waiting to check out books. One librarian was on the adult desk for the whole day. The schedule for staff that day provided two librarians, one on the adult floor and one in the children's room, plus two clerks. It was acknowledged that there are inequalities. Schedules are supposed to provide for peak times. Mr. Offensend said that he goes out to branches to see how they are functioning. There are "people counters" in all branches recording hourly use of the library.

Will you order the right books if you aren't working daily in the branch? A retiree remarked that her multi-ethnic neighborhood branch might not be considered for buying Tacitus though she had found that it circulated every other month. We have to look into this. Tacitus is important. We shouldn't assume that it doesn't belong in a multi-ethnic branch.

In addition, Mr. Offensend expressed the Library's concern with book loss in the branches. Branches without security turnstiles do not have a greater loss rate than branches with turnstiles. The Library is considering putting RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Tags) in each book. This will provide better inventory control. The Queensborough Public Library is experimenting with installation of these tags.

Because high levels of lead were found in the central building's 1911 stacks, books in these stacks are not available to the public; the books in the stacks under Bryant Park are available. An upside of the lead removal: the books are being cleaned.



Meeting fellow retirees

When will St. Agnes Branch reopen? St. Agnes is scheduled to open in September following a very troubled renovation.

Will ROAR, the program for retirees to work per diem for the Library, be reinstated? No. In this fiscal climate there is little flexibility in hiring staff. We need to protect present positions. Retirees were told that they were a valuable pool of workers. The present policy will be reconsidered when times change and the need arises.

Will the central building have adult circulating material when Mid-Manhattan closes? Not right away. The public will use the new site at 46th Street and Lexington.

Where will you locate literacy, prison, and English as a Second Language programs? This has not been decided.

Is there a ceiling on librarian promotions? After becoming a Senior Librarian, the only promotion available is Site Manager. The Library acknowledges that this is a challenge

and is looking for ways to recognize and utilize our staff beyond promotions.

How can a Site Manager fulfill all the activities listed when there will be fewer staff available for activities such as going out to the community? The Library wants the new Site Managers to be successful. It is important that Site Managers communicate with their staff, including finding out what each staff member hopes for his/her future. There will be 150 hours of special training for Site Managers.

The Strategic Planning Office has been set up to monitor changes and fine tune planning. This prevents designing one plan and then a few years later having to design a whole new plan. It is hoped that top level staff will be open-minded and that staff will speak up about problems with the plan.

Are there plans for moving Schomburg or Countee Cullen? No.

Will Books for the Teenage and other specialty publications continue? Yes.

In June the Library will launch an online catalog combining the Branch Libraries' catalog, Leo, and the Research Libraries' catalog, Catnip. There will be no cute names for the new catalog, said David Offensend. This was the only moment of hilarity in a very sobering presentation.

THE GOOGLE BOOK SEARCH PROJECT

The Library is one of the thirty contributors to the Google Book Search project, making digitally scanned books available to the public. The Library provides public domain material; others provide copyrighted material. Google has been sued by authors and publishers for violating copyright laws. The suit's settlement provides that users of the project's materials must purchase a license. Libraries will be allowed only one point of access per building. The copyrighted digitized material will not be available for home use by NYPL card holders. Home users must purchase a license. Information on the proposed settlement can be found in the "Business Day" section of the *New York Times*, January 5, 2009.

STAFF SERVICES

Louise Shea, the new head of Staff Services, said communication among all levels of staff is one of her main concerns. Managers must talk to their staff and keep them informed of changes. A new interactive Staff News may help with communication. Due to both financial and environmental concerns the Library will not provide a printed Staff News.

Jennifer Levesque, Director of Benefits, will send a letter to us if there are major changes in our benefits. As you know by her December letter, we will not get Staff News

either in print or by e-mail. Staff News will be published for current staff every two weeks with more meaningful content. In the past, many staff members didn't read Staff News. This may change if kiosks are added or more staff accessible computers are added. Retirees will not have access to LAIR, the Library's website for staff.

Benefits will try to provide us with discounts, but discounts are shrinking even for working staff.

Retirees emphasized that our printed newsletter which comes out only twice yearly cannot be expected to substitute for information from Staff Benefits. Our membership includes only about 200 of the 900 retirees. Only half of our members have provided us with e-mail addresses. When we e-mail our members we reach only 100 of 900 retirees.

David Ferriero and David Offensend would like to speak to us again in six months.

MAP DIVISION TOUR

In February, Alice Hudson, who will soon retire as Chief of the recently renovated Map Division, graciously invited us for a return visit.

The Map Division is named for Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal, who made the generous donation that funded the renovation and that now supports purchase of antiquarian materials as well as the conservation of current collections. Mr. Pincus is a retired investment banker, and the

Jordanian Princess Firyal comes by royalty through a former marriage.

Before the move to its present first-floor location in 1963, the Map Division was in small quarters on the third floor. While the new location provided much-needed additional space, dust and soot covered the walls and ceiling, coloring the room a dark walnut. During the renovation, gilding and color were added to the walls and ceiling and previously unnoticed lion wall-sculptures were restored. Fluorescent table lights were removed and replaced with gilded chandeliers, and the main room was reconfigured. Tables were placed in the center of the room, bookcases were located along the walls, and old metal map cases were moved to the workroom.

The workroom is furnished with low map cases, rolling shelves, and, to the side, two levels of shelving. Because the interior of the Map Division is landmarked, the end pieces on the shelving are original and give the area a traditional look when viewed from the street by passers-by. The workroom is separated from the main public area in such a way that it may be used for meetings when the main room is open.

The use of the Map Division has changed over the years, with fewer people coming in to see paper maps and more people using digital resources, including maps available in the Library's Digital Gallery and other web sources. The Library has catalogued and digitized Middle Atlantic materials before 1850 and many pre-1923 maps, which are now in the public domain. Geographic Information Systems workstations are available to the public who come into the Map Division.



Alice Hudson

Hudson is assembling materials for an exhibit this fall on the New York City shoreline. One item she pointed out was a 1775 British map of the New York City area showing hills and waterways, important features to know if troops were to defend Manhattan from “uppity” residents who might be ready to revolt. This map and others show the city built up below City Hall, with farms above City Hall and in New Jersey. One point of continuity is the triangular park below City Hall.

Hudson buys maps for both scholarly and exhibit use. One of the exhibit-worthy maps is made of recycled beach glass showing the Dutch city. Another is a digital copy of a map of the Hudson River watershed, the original of which hangs in the Hudson River Museum.

The Dutch were prime mapmakers, and Hudson pointed out a 1720 Dutch map of North America marked in Dutch, English,

and French that shows wind directions. She said that maps are never neutral but are always “skewed.” A Dutch atlas of 1660, for example, has nine volumes, with one each for European countries and one final volume for Asia, Africa, and America. The volumes are bound in vellum and stamped in gold leaf. Hudson pointed out that the cloth-made paper of these early volumes is warm to the touch, not cool as glazed paper is today. She also noted that in the eighteenth century, wealthy people could pay a fee to have their names added in the cartouche of a map.

Other maps highlighted by Hudson were one made after 1811 showing the Manhattan street-grid pattern even before the streets had been established, and an 1853 map showing the World Exposition Crystal Palace on the Bryant Park site. Maps in this decade show horse-trading establishments and riding academies nearby.

Hudson ended by inviting us to come back for the Map Division’s Manhattan shoreline exhibit in the fall, celebrating the Quadricentennial of Henry Hudson’s exploration of the Hudson River and the Harbor.

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The New York Public Library urgently needs the help of the Retirees Association. The poor economy and deep fiscal cuts affecting our cities and states are also affecting our libraries. Bob Bellinger, Associate Director for Government and Community Affairs for NYPL, spoke with the Executive Committee this past March. He emphasized that NYPL

remains a model for connecting with the community and with elected officials during this time of Federal, State, and City budget negotiations. He reported that Library officials, staff, union representatives, and retirees went to Albany on March 10. There they told state officials that library use is up 30%, with huge increases in attendance, circulation, and programs for patrons of all ages. In the depressed economy, there is a surging demand in all libraries for more job information, help with resumes (now most often via e-mail), ESOL and technology classes, and services in general. However, the statewide budget was cut \$18 million, with \$3 million of that for NYPL alone. Brooklyn and Queens Libraries are facing similar reductions. These cuts, combined with those now coming from the city, would force all three library systems to reduce days and hours of service and even have to consider staff reductions.

Now Mr. Bellinger just sent us more devastating news about the City budget. “In addition to previously proposed cuts for next year’s budget equaling \$23.2 million, we have been asked for an impact of an additional 4% cut which would take our total reduction to \$28 million. If this cut were to go through, this would obviously have a devastating impact on hours and days of service as well as staffing levels. The Mayor’s Executive Budget will be released on May 1 and the library is planning a letter writing campaign to begin right after that and last throughout the month of May and possibly into June. The budget needs to be adopted before July 1 when the new budget year begins.” Between April 16 and June 6, negotiations are being held between the Mayor and the City Council. Retirees are being asked to volunteer in all branches to

help with the letter-writing campaign. We are also being asked to participate in budget hearings. We are invited to attend community board meetings with the branch site managers and staff in supporting them and speaking out about the needs of the people who use our libraries as we ourselves use them. And if you're interested in going to visit local elected officials, that can be arranged.

As of May 1, letter-writing materials should be going out to all locations, including Mid-Manhattan, 42nd Street, and SIBL. The

Association will be receiving fliers by e-mail and will send them to those of you who live in the city and surrounding areas, in the hopes that many of you will be able to help with this important campaign. For those of you living elsewhere, please help by writing a letter anyway, for NYPL or your own public libraries.

Please let us know how you will be helping NYPL and the Retirees Association when we join in the letter-writing campaign this May. Contact Juanita Doares at 212-666-5737, Becky Koppelman at 212-874-6199 or

In the Map Division



blekopp@gmail.com, or Ma'lis Wendt at mwendt@nyc.rr.com. More information will be coming to you as soon as we receive it. Included here is pertinent advice from Ma'lis on helping with library advocacy issues. There are two websites--from ALA and NYLA--that deal directly with advocacy on the federal and state levels. Both sites make it easy for anyone to help advocate for library issues. You can also sign up for advocacy alerts to keep on top of issues. The ALA action site is at <http://capwiz.com/ala/issues/alert>. NYLA's Online Advocacy Center is at www.nyla.org. Look for the ACTION button.

For the City Budget campaign there are several ways NYPL Retirees Association members can be of assistance. Be in touch with your own local elected officials. Volunteer to accompany branch staff members on visits to local elected officials and their offices, especially for those branches without many local volunteers. Help with letter-writing campaigns in local branches.

Lobbying in 2009

by Elga Cace

It took me a while to get used to the fact that I no longer work for The New York Public Library. It was a loss of something very precious. However, as time went on, I realized that the loss of that identity has brought with it the advantage of being able to see NYPL from a different point of view. Having always been a library supporter at heart, now I had to ask myself how I could justify taking part in a campaign to save libraries at the expense of other agencies and

services at a time when planned cuts go so far as to eliminate bus routes that people use to get to work. And how might the recipient of such a letter react?

Every spring for years past, we have been asking library supporters to describe to officials how they themselves use the Library. If I were to do that today, saying that I enjoy free computer classes, books, DVDs, and the free programs that the Library provides, the recipient, considering tax revenue shortfalls, would think, "Too bad! Everyone will have to suffer their share of loss of service. Let her take up knitting!" Fair enough? Yes, but it would be the wrong decision.

All agencies that receive funds from the City provide useful services to voters. All elected officials know that and are very much aware of the fact that these voters elected them and will vote again in future elections for the officials who please them. The Library is one of the services funded by the City, and there are good reasons to support its funding even over that of other agencies. Our task in this year's campaign needs to be that of informing the public and the officials about the reasons why decreases in library services and the funding for them must be avoided or kept to a minimum. It is up to librarians, active or retired, to help people who may never have worked in a library make the connections in their minds between libraries, education, and survival in a world of economic, technological, and political change.

Here are some of the reasons why library services and the budget for them must not be diminished:

First, public libraries, NYPL eminent among them, are part of the structure of public education in the United States. Public libraries serve people for the duration of their lives. From mothers-to-be who find information about pre-natal care and birth, and the child who often gets the first exposure to books and stories in the library's toddler group, through adults for whom the public library may provide an entrance into new formal education or be the source for individual learning and information until the end of life. There is no other life-long source of education with no entrance exams, no fees, and no questions asked, except the public library. Public libraries also support public schooling and home schooling by making books available and by providing, year-round, a place for study that has access to computers and assistance with assignments free of charge.

Second, public libraries help people survive and adapt to change when times are hard. At NYPL, people come to ask about jobs, where and how to find them, and how to increase their education in order to qualify for new kinds of work. Many need help in applying online for jobs, in writing resumes and submitting them online, or in seeking schools where they might increase their qualifications for jobs. There is no other free source for this, except the public library. NYPL has opened a job-search center at SIBL and is training at least one staffer in every library site to assist those who are looking for employment.



Holiday Dinner January 2009

Third and most important, public libraries, with books and programs for very young children, prepare them for learning to read as soon as they start school. Being able to read well helps children succeed as they progress through school. In adulthood, having a good education helps people adapt to change in their field of work and explore new careers or skills if they find themselves unemployed. There is a connection between reading to a very young child by a parent or librarian and that child, having reached adulthood, surviving, working, and making his contribution to the world. Children's librarians in public libraries, through their work with children from early childhood through the elementary school years introduce children to books and stories, support them in their schoolwork, and help them toward success in school and later in adulthood. There is no other agency that does this and does it for free and for anyone. While it is true that many children and teens read below grade level, they would be even

worse off without the public library. Young Adult Librarians perform an invaluable service to society. Through their book talks and author visit programs, they instill in teenagers the love for reading and help to keep them in school. For adults, NYPL provides classes in computer skills, literacy instruction at the Centers for Reading and Writing, and classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages.

We must help elected officials, through our letters and visits, to understand that this is what The New York Public Library does. If we can mention specific events such as pre-school story programs, school class visits, book talks, and reading aloud programs in specific branches in the legislator's district, our request will have more impact because the official or aide will see that we are well-informed library users and voters.

NEWS FROM THE BENEFITS OFFICE

MEDICARE B REIMBURSEMENT

The Library and the DC-37/NYPL Trust have once again decided to offer Medicare reimbursement for 2008. All eligible retirees who are over the age of 65 and enrolled in Medicare will be sent information regarding the reimbursement procedure in the coming weeks.

AFTERNOON TEA

The annual Retiree Reception will be held in the Celeste Bartos Forum at the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building (formerly the Humanities and Social Sciences Library) on Wednesday May 27th from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.. This year the reception will be a little

different from what it has been in years past, as it will be an Afternoon Tea instead of an evening reception. Please note the 3:00 p.m. start time. Invitations will be mailed shortly. Please remember to RSVP!

MEDICARE ELIGIBILITY

All retirees and qualified dependents receiving health insurance through the Library are required to sign up for Medicare Parts A and B when they turn 65. It is a good idea to contact Social Security several months before turning 65 to begin the Medicare enrollment process. We do our best to notify all retirees and dependents that reach age 65, but if you are concerned that we have missed you or your dependent, please contact the Benefits Office.

BENEFICIARY UPDATES

Don't forget to keep your life insurance beneficiaries up to date. If you have any questions or would like to check who your current beneficiaries are, please contact DC-37 or the Benefits Office, depending on who administers your benefit. To make any changes to your pension death benefit beneficiaries (Tier 2, 3, and 4 Members Only), address, tax information, or direct deposit information, contact the New York State and Local Retirement System directly.

ADDRESS CHANGES

If you have recently moved or will be moving soon, remember to update the Benefits Office and also to contact NYSLRS. In addition, if you move out of your health plan's coverage area, contact the Benefits Office for information regarding what plans are available in your new location and how to enroll in one.

**MEDICARE D/HIP VIP/
EMPIRE MEDIBLUE**

For retirees currently enrolled in a Medicare HMO with prescription drug coverage, HIP VIP or Empire MediBlue, please remember to notify the Benefits Office if you have reached your annual coverage limit for prescription drugs, so that we can activate your supplemental prescription drug coverage with Innoviant. The annual maximum for 2009 is \$2700. This amount includes both the amount that you pay out of pocket as well as what your prescription drug plan pays. We will need to see documentation from the health plan indicating the date when you reached the limit.

Please fax this information to 212-592-7371, Attention: Lisa Kirsch. Your coverage with Innoviant will be activated as of the date you reached your limit.

Important Phone Numbers

The New York State and Local Retirement System
(866) 805-0990

DC-37
(212) 815-1234

Benefits Office
(212) 592-7331



A Table at the Holiday Dinner

RETIREE NEWS

JOSEPH BOONIN

Still enjoying retirement in California. Busy working as an indexer for an online music database. Treasurer of local community library. Planning to go to Africa in May 2009.

LUCIA M. BURKE

It's really amazing to hear a voice saying, "You're from the Library" or "I know you" from so many people that I meet everywhere!! It's a good feeling to be remembered by the readers!! Retirement is very rewarding. Thanks be to God!!

MARY K. CONWELL

Traveled to Buenos Aires and Rio in October 2008. Learned a little Portuguese for the trip and am now back to studying Spanish. Oil painting and recorder classes at the 92nd

Street Y, museum and theater going, and genealogy research keep me busy and happy to be retired.

JEANNE FELKER

I enjoyed two weeks travel in Bulgaria, northern Greece and western Turkey last September.

MARIE G. FERRIGNO

Since retirement have done a lot of traveling, but all changed in the last six years. Now, I continue my love of reading and working on crossword puzzle solving. My greatest joy is working on the computer.

Had several experiences that will always be with me. The one that always tickles my fancy took place in 1955 when we were working behind the scenes at Donnell before we opened. I do not recall his name, but I believe he is a member. There were three of us to set up the Foreign Language Department on the second floor. From time to time there was a bit of friction among us and he dubbed the three of us “the temperamental Divas.” Am heartbroken the Donnell I knew is no more.

PHIL GERRARD

After many years of not putting news of me in the Newsletter, perhaps it is time to do so before everyone I know in the Library has lost interest! I retired in 1992, and in late 1993 moved to Oakland, California where I had grown up. I had some family and a number of friends out here, so was not jumping into a new life without a net. Since my move I have been to New York and other points East a number of times to visit friends (Library and other) and family, but I thoroughly love my life here. My apartment is a few minutes from the East Bay hills,

where I often hike. I get to many plays, concerts and dance both in the East Bay and San Francisco (just fifteen minutes away), and belong to just about every museum around--some extraordinary. I have taken a number of sightseeing/hiking trips by car in the West and Southwest and have made a few trips to England and Europe. In New York I always had an upright piano, and now have a good grand piano that I play regularly. A few years ago I began taking piano lessons, and am making quite good progress for an aging pianist. My volunteer work so far has included being a library assistant at the American Conservatory Theater library in San Francisco, assisting with HIV/AIDS services and fund raising at a gay and lesbian center in Berkeley, and HIV test counseling at the Berkeley Free Clinic.

BARBARA GIBBONS

2008 was a great travel year for me. I decided to do as much as I could while I was able to go. My sister and I went on a Baltic Cruise in July and then spent two weeks in Berlin and Hamburg, Germany to see friends and relatives. In October we went on a river cruise in Germany—the Moselle, Rhine, and Main Rivers, with a couple of days in Prague at the end. It was a lovely experience, very restful but also very interesting. Christmas we spent with my sister and nephews in northern California—the first time in fifteen years together for the holidays. 2009 looks like it will be much less active—but then, we never know, do we?

ARNOLD HYMAN

My daughter Amy was married in November, 2008. She will graduate in April, 2009 with a PH.D.

FRANCES JOAN KIRWIN

Spent a two-week visit to my brother, Frank and his wife, Peggy, in Key West, Florida. They went on a charity walk, a 26.2 mile marathon for the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society (or Association.) Peggy's father had lymphoma. So the five days they were in Orlando for the walk, I took care of Tyrone, a chocolate lab, Vincent, a large six month old puppy, half golden retriever and half blond, curly poodle, and a little black cat, Duke. Fun and wonderful sunny days.



ZENON KUROWYCKY

Our daughter is getting married in May 2009.

LYDIA LA FLEUR

Time keeps going faster and faster. I continue to be busy with our community theater, writing workshop, two book clubs, yoga, going to Off Broadway plays and to New York City Ballet. In January I went to Japan to celebrate their biggest holiday—New Year's Day—and to celebrate my granddaughter Emma's entrance into adulthood at twenty.

Working at NYPL seems very long ago, but the many happy memories of those years remain.

JACKIE LAVALLE

I am currently studying Latin Percussion and Spanish, French, Italian languages. I want to volunteer with immigrant coalition organizations, but can't seem to find the right contact and I want to work in a special library setting.

Another table at the Holiday Dinner

I have had many wonderful/incredible experiences while working for NYPL but I need more time to put them in writing and I would love to do same very soon.

RICHARD C. LYNCH

I must be the only retiree who does not have a computer and is not online! True, the mailings of Staff News were erratic, but still were about my only contact with what was going on in the Library. I trust that the Retirees Newsletter will pick up the slack! My Christmas cards from current and retired staff were all dark with rumblings about transfers and low morale. Please keep us updated on the situation.

MARGARET MA

I'm still feeling my way around as a new retiree... I would definitely like to travel. Some of my dream destinations are Hawaii, Alaska, our National Parks, a cross US/ Canada train ride, New Zealand/Australia, and, of course, China and Asia. I would also

like to read more, pick up more computer skills and garden more. Presently I do Tai Chi at the Y and crochet and knit with two groups at the branch libraries on Staten Island.

I am happy to leave the two branches I worked at (West New Brighton and Huguenot Park, on Staten Island) as busy places where the public can visit—for books, videos, information, classes, or just to see people—on a regular basis. I am happy to see how these branches have grown and become rooted in their communities. I am most proud, and happy to see my staff working together congenially and liking what they do.

DAN MCGRATH

Obsessive interest in films of the 1930's, 40's, 50's; subscriber to "Films of the Golden Age" and "Classic Image." Indispensable cable station: Turner Classic Movies. Travel in recent years has included Eastern Florida and Western Ireland. Other interests: biographies, history, crossword puzzles, mysteries, jazz+folk+rock+country music, art history.

I profited in many ways from twenty plus years working with the singular Louis Mintz, Chief of Stack Maintenance and Delivery. The last years before my retirement I had the good fortune to work under the more-than-capable supervision of the always amiable Terry Kirschner and the always charming Ann Thornton. I will always appreciate their encouragement and consideration. Kudos also to Cynthia Rosado, Audrey Brown and the many pages, LTA's, librarians and readers who made it all worthwhile.

RAY MARKEY

2008 was a great year. Eight months spent in sunny Hawaii and the end of an eight year nightmare. Bush was finished and Obama had won. Ma'lis and Peter Wendt visited and a good time was had by all.

ROSE MESSER

Having reached almost 93 years old, I no longer do the traveling I loved to do. Most of my entertainment these years is playing bridge, though I'm not very good at it.

Incidentally, I was disturbed that Richard Couper's death was not mentioned in any "Staff News" publication I received.

MARIELLEN O'DONOVAN

Moved from Staten Island seven years ago to Middletown, N.J. I now belong to the Middletown Public Library and attend their book discussion every month.

ROSEMARIE O'LEARY

In 2008 I appeared in a documentary film to be called, "Vanishing New York." The rough cut is ready and the film should be ready in early summer. This week I am meeting with the producer and director to work on an idea I have for another film.

EDITH OSTROWSKY

I can't believe its been four and a half years since I retired! I've been busy with my art and keeping the wood stove going to heat my log home. Its 16 degrees outside but a wonderful 72 degrees inside. My recent paintings are currently part of a group show at the "Gallery on the Hudson" in Schuylerville, N.Y.

JEAN A. PINCKNEY

I have now fully retired and spend a lot of time gardening. There is actually a science to eradicating the weeds in my flower garden. I am now volunteering twice per week to assist young students with their homework. I am trying to have the local church set up an internet training for the older persons in the congregation. It is February entering March and we still have some cold nights in the 30's. Hopefully Spring will arrive soon!

MARIA M. PROCTOR

I live in a retirement community with a lovely library. We have several volunteers. I am the only trained librarian in the group. The official librarian and I got a lot done together.

RAYMOND J. RACHKO

Retired to Vero Beach, Florida on disability in 1999. Married to Gloria Wright for 18 years. She was a clerk in the NYPL Shipping Department.

EMIL N. RAMIL

Because I worked for many years in Music Cataloging, I still have my thoughts ALWAYS on music, and my big collection of classical and pop music. Maybe, if everything goes okay with USA-Cuba relations, I will go to Havana to see my first son. I have not seen him since 1955.

ARTHUR G. RUHL

In February 2008, I retired after 30 years of service. One month later I flew to Jordan to see Petra and on to Cambodia to see Angkor Wat. With the addition of Cambodia, I have been to sixty-three independent countries. I am now a member of the Circumnavigators Club. In September 2008, I got married to a woman from Thailand. She is currently in



Curator Arthur L. Schwarz leads tour at the Grolier Club

Thailand remodeling a house we have there. I hope to go to Thailand in April to be with her, for a month or two. On the way over I may stop off in the Middle East to visit a couple of countries I haven't been to yet, possibly visiting Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and Oman. In the not too distant future, I want to visit Western Australia. I will go to the libraries and archives there to research my grandfather who lived there in the 1890's, when he prospected for gold in the outback. I have also spent some time in the library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art to research my other grandfather, a professional sculptor.

I will never forget the time back in the late 1970's when I worked at Baychester. It was closing time when a squirrel ran in our door. It took over an hour to chase him out of the library.

KARLAN SICK

We are kept busy visiting our son and his family in Seattle, our daughter and family in Rome, and my ninety-nine year old father in

Kansas. The grandkids are all enthusiastic readers so I send lots of books to them. Literature for Incarcerated Teens (LIT) is my main volunteer activity. The LIT board is raising money for libraries in the New York City juvenile detention centers. Please contact me if you are interested in this project.

DOROTHY L. SWERDLOVE

I was recently elected President of the Friends of our local library, to go with my unofficial title of Bag Lady. The Friends maintain a small cart of donated books in the library lobby, and I collect the money every few days. We've been able to buy a variety of "extras" for the library, ranging from exhibition cases to baby changing stations in the restrooms.

ELAINE THOMAS

On my way home from Alaska and Vancouver in September 2008, I met Marilyn Iarusso in Seattle and we did tourist trips (she grew up there) including a Duk Tour to visit the relatively new library. Two rooms for computer use—a large one for laptops and a smaller one for desktops. The Children's Room on the main floor is bright, but with books displayed on the top of every shelf. The picture book/toddler area had an interactive wall as well as tables with bead mazes. The wall had a tree with birds to be moved, a pond with frogs to be moved and other things to play with. I had fun trying all of them.

SALLY L. THOMPSON

My assisted living center is called Heathers Manor. It is a lovely place with friendly staff, good food, and beautiful decor and landscaping. We go out in a van to lunch and to plays on occasion, and there is usually

entertainment in the lobby every afternoon. I keep up with friends all over the USA. I even got a call from Joan Mondale, who heard I was back in Minneapolis from New York City. She and I traveled together in France in 1951. I also attended her wedding to Fritz. Ann Alexander continues to come to visit me and attended a birthday party my cousin and his wife held for me at the Manor. Moving from New York City was very hard for me, physically and mentally, but I finally did it about three and a half years ago and fortunately received a very nice price for my coop.

ELIZABETH TIEDEMANN

My hobbies: Swimming at the YMCA three times a week and walking in parks on Staten Island every day.

STEPHANIE TOLBERT

I worked in the month of October at the Board of Elections. They were so backed up with absentee ballots. Record breaking numbers. I'm still basking in the afterglow of the election. I recently became a member of the Central Harlem Senior Citizens Advisory Board. I still travel occasionally to Leesburg, Virginia, to see the grandsons. I will probably get involved in my upcoming 50th anniversary graduation reunion from Cathedral High School. That's about it.

JULIA VAN HAAFTEN

Presently working at the Museum of the City of New York as Director of Collections.

SARA VELEZ

I am still working at NYPL/Library for the Performing Arts. Love music, dance, theatre, fine arts, travel, especially to Europe.

DOLORES VOGLIANO

Lectures at The University Club and museums, theater, film and dining with friends keep us quite busy. We try to spend as much time as possible with the family, especially with the grandchildren, ages 5 to 17, attending hockey, baseball, soccer games, school plays and events, etc. Last spring my husband and I traveled to Berlin and Paris and in the fall visited family in Turin and Milan. This summer we look forward to traveling with the entire family (14) to Paris and Cape Ferratt to celebrate our 50th Wedding Anniversary.

ROBERTA WEST

From the archive of oddball questions: “Do they accept American money in Arizona?” This wasn’t asked at a public library, but could have been.

VIRGINIA WILHELM

Since retiring from NYPL, I worked part time for the Metropolitan Opera and also assisted a friend who is writing a book. I’ve been to England twice—attending the theatre in London and visiting Jane Austen sites. I’ve been active in the Barbara Pym Society and a book group.

JOSEPHINE WISE-PARKS

Working full time as a paralegal.

PHILIP WOLCOFF

It is a pleasure to see an article in a national magazine that would make all of us proud to have chosen the profession we did. My wife subscribes to Woman’s Day. I happen to have scanned the March 3, 2009 issue and read an article, “The Library made me Healthier.” The magazine describes it this way, “It’s not just about snagging the latest bestseller anymore. These four women used the library



Exploring all about Henry VIII at the Grolier Club

to get well.” It is well worth reading! In a future issue the magazine plans to publish up to four women’s stories describing how the library as gotten them or their family out of a financial crunch.

THE NYPL A SLICE OF HISTORY

Dr. Zahava Szász Stessel

As we look back to former days, we are surprised that many things we could do without then, are today's necessities. One example is the air-conditioning

I realized the high significance of the cooling system in today's world when our granddaughter spent last summer with us. She was working in the city to fulfill the requirements for a law degree. An hour before her arrival we closed the windows, the screen doors and opened the air-conditioner.

One day, as we were enjoying the bright rays of the summer sun through the open windows, our granddaughter surprised us by an early arrival. She quickly located a fan and waited anxiously till the air-conditioner cooled the room. Looking at her sweet-suffering face I recalled the time working in the Jewish Division of the NYPL at 5th Avenue and 42nd street. We had no air-conditioning and it was quite hot and humid. Yet we, as well as the readers, managed pretty well. Our reward came when the temperature reached beyond 90 degrees and the Division closed. We were given an early dismissal and a pleasant way home, avoiding the rush-hour traffic. It was such a nice arrangement that we greeted the installation of air conditioning in the summer of 1985 with a bit of chagrin.

First the stacks were cooled to protect the books. Thus, we were less anxious looking there for a misplaced title. Then gradually the whole division enjoyed the advancement

of technology. Today a library without air-conditioning could be found only in the memories of librarians from those days of long ago.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome!

Osman Bayazid
Joseph Boonin
Henrietta Cammisa
Marie Ferrigno
Lawrence Gundersen
Edwin Holmgren
Diane Johnston
Athena Kendris
Zenon Kurowycky
Jackie Lavalley
Merryl Levy
Robert McBrien
Donald McCormick
Daniel McGrath
Fran Nathan
Mariellen O'Donovan
Gennie Perez
Raymond Rachko
Jeanette Rick
Arthur Ruhl
Milton Sadolf
Karlán Sick
Elizabeth Tiedmann
Roberta West
Josephine Wise-Parks



PASSINGS

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

Juan Canimo
Albert Cesarski
Jennie Donlin
Tillie Frank
Mary Gibson
Amanda Hernandez
Lucille Kaufman
Florence Levy
Ruth Margolis
Margaret Nagy
Gunther Pohl
William Preiss
Bridie Race
Estelle Sabow
Ladislav Sajor
Dolores Shields
Robert Simmons
Margaret Sung

TILLIE FRANK

Tillie Frank, a long time library employee, passed away at age 94 on November 30, 2008. She worked for the library beginning in 1955 when she was stationed in the Catalog Office at Donnell until close to twenty five years later where she was an Information Assistant stationed at the Inquiry Desk assisting anyone who entered the front entrance of the Main Library at 42nd Street. Mrs. Frank's face and help became so well known in this latter position that she was featured in an article in the New York Times. She is survived by three children, seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Her oldest daughter is Johanna Hurwitz who was a children's librarian at the New York Public Library for many years.

DONNELL LIBRARY UPDATE

Quotes from "A Hotel Deal Gone, Patrons Want a Library Reopened" by Sewell Chan in the New York Times, April 28, 2009.

The New York Public Library shut the Donnell branch, which opened in October 1955, last August, as part of a deal announced in November 2007 to sell the building to Orient-Express Hotels Ltd. for \$59 million. The five-story building, at 20 West 53rd Street, was to be razed to make way for an 11-story hotel, but a new library branch would occupy space on the first floor and in the basement. The deal fell apart in March, however, with the hotel company backing out, citing the financial and credit crises.

“Our goal was and is to create a new, state-of-the-art library on the Donnell site, replacing an aging, out-of-date building,” said Heidi Singer, a spokeswoman for the library system. “We’re now evaluating various alternatives.” She said the library system hoped that Orient-Express Hotels “honors its commitment to the library,” but would not specify whether the library system planned to sue the hotel chain.

But Ms. [RiraSue] Siegel said the new branch was hardly a substitute for the 88,000-square-foot Donnell.

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