

# New York Public Library Retirees Association Newsletter



Fall - Winter 2013

Issue Number 34

## CELEBRATE!

### NYPL RETIREES ASSOCIATION IS 20 YEARS OLD



**Oral History Special Event Presenters: Beth Wladis, Ma'lis Wendt, Deborah Trepp, Jane Kunstler, and Mary K. Conwell**

On Friday October 25, we celebrated the Association's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a well-attended program at Mid-Manhattan. The high point of the afternoon was a presentation by the Oral History Project task force. Quotations from interviews were shown on the screen while members of the task force read them aloud. The audience was then given a chance to guess the name of the retiree who had been interviewed. Whether the guesses were right or wrong, the mystery ended when a photo of the interviewee was flashed on the screen. The presentation concluded with Carol Reisner reading a poem by Lillian Morrison. Afterwards, a photo slideshow was projected on the screen while we all had a chance to chat with old friends and enjoy the delicious sweets baked for us by Marcia Loyd. It was a wonderful celebration, and we're all looking forward to our 30<sup>th</sup>.

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## ORAL HISTORY PRESENTATIONS

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"On September 1, 1939, I came to work at Central Circulation. The bells were ringing and the sun was shining - not because I came to work there but because Hitler had invaded Poland and England had declared war on Germany." **Henrietta Cohen**

Retired in 1988 as Secretary in the Manhattan Borough Office  
(Interviewed in June 1998)

"I'm a first generation American. My parents emigrated from Croatia, and we lived in Hell's Kitchen, a name that disturbs me because it makes people think that everyone was a gangster. But everyone worked very hard in a very diverse community and brought up their children to go to school and do well. I was at my local library on 40th Street between 9th & 10th Avenues every day. The librarians knew me and were wonderful and kind."

**Agnes Babich**

Retired in 1984 as Manager of Staff Benefits, Personnel Office

(Interviewed in April 2012)



"I had an upbringing partially in Virginia and partially in New York. My life in Virginia did not include libraries because there were no public libraries for people of color. But in New York I went to the 135th Street Library where Augusta Baker was children's librarian and to the Wakefield Library at 229th Street in the Bronx." **Telza Gardner**

Retired in 1999 as Regional Librarian, West Side Region, Bloomingdale Regional Library

(Interviewed in February 2013)



"In the summer of 1958, I happened to be in New York, walking on Amsterdam Avenue at West 65th Street and saw the enormous excavation for the future New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. I certainly didn't imagine I would be working in that spot in seven years or that thirty-five years later (in 1993), I would receive a call from Juanita Doares inviting me to an organizational meeting of NYPL retirees." **Richard H. Jackson**  
Retired in 1990 as Head of the Americana Collection, Music Division, Library of the Performing Arts  
(Written remembrance, March 2013)

"I worked at several branches on the Lower East Side, including at Ottendorfer with Mercy Kellogg. Miss Kellogg was fearless with the collection of Bowery drunks that sometimes frequented Ottendorfer. She probably turned some of them into readers. I remember that Ottendorfer was coal heated, and sometimes Christiana Pinto and I wound up shoveling coal." **Osman Bayazid**  
Retired in 1989 as Supervising Clerk, Donnell World Languages  
(Interviewed in February and June 2012)



"When I was six years old, my mother told me to go to the library at Alexander Avenue and 140th Street. The first thing I saw was a vase of fragrant lilacs. The year was 1931, and I had never seen a floral arrangement before. When I was hired years later as a trainee, I asked that my first assignment be my beloved Mott Haven Branch." **Viola Barrett**  
Retired in 1987 as Coordinator of Adult Services  
(Interviewed by telephone in February 2013)

"It was the blizzard of '60, and I was in seventh heaven because I hadn't seen a lot of snow in my life. I got on the subway – the El at that time – and I got to Tremont. The only person there was the custodian! Everyone else knew not to go to work, but I didn't. I thought this was just the way it always snowed in New York!" **Phil Gerrard**  
Retired in 1991 as Chief, Donnell Library Center  
(Interviewed in September 2012)



“It was the day that a very tall man in a wooly sailor cap appeared at our charging desk. Pete Seeger! A replica of a Hudson River sloop, like Pete’s environmental boat, the *Clearwater*, was in the children’s room glass case at the time. Pete walked to the children’s biography section, pulled out a book about Shackleton, and proceeded to tell us the harrowing, amazing tale of Antarctic exploration in which a leader brought back every one of his men.” **Norma Herz**  
Retired in 1993 as Librarian, St. George Library Center  
(Written remembrance, June 2013)



"I only started in 1984, but my feelings about the library were influenced by the fact that I am descended from Melvil Dewey. The first library I ever saw was the Inwood Branch on a 4th grade field trip from St. Jude's School. I learned as I grew up that the Inwood Branch and PS 151 were built on land that was once a goat farm owned by my great grandmother. The bigger surprise was that, some 25 years later when I was hired, Inwood still looked exactly the same inside!"  
**Ray Rachko**  
Retired in 1998 as Head of Branch Cleaning Services  
(Interviewed by telephone in May 2013)

“After the Rose Main Reading Room opened – it opened at the same time that the new British Library was finished and the new French Bibliotheque Nationale – a reporter from the *New York Times* visited all three libraries to request three books in order to check on the delivery time. We won! Even with our pneumatic tube system!”  
**Jean Bowen**  
Retired in 2000 as Director, Humanities & Social Sciences Library  
(Interviewed in January 2013)





“The bookmobile was a truck with a specially built body, which had flaps, metal framed with glass in the middle. When you got to the stop, the driver raised the flaps – and they were heavy – revealing what you could already see through the glass but now you could touch. This was on both sides, but – since we parked at the side of the road – only one side was useful. 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. It was the rainy days I remember on the bookmobile. I remember getting high-water marks on my shoes from one of the trips!”

**Naomi Noyes**

Retired in 1988 as Children’s Specialist, Manhattan Borough Office  
(Interviewed in September 1998)

“By 1967, with the establishment of the new Performing Arts Library at Lincoln Center, a number of units moved out of the Central Building, freeing up space. The Jewish Division was to move to Room 84, with its adjacent stack area on the ground floor. My long-time colleague Norman Gechlik and I were responsible for working with and supervising the pages hired to move the books down to the ground floor and Stack I. Once the huge task, lasting several weeks, had been completed, Norman gave me a ride through the stacks atop an empty book truck while I blew a *shofar*. (For some reason we had an old *shofar* together with the rare books). Alarmed inquiries came down from the Main Reading Room. I never did it again.” **Leonard Gold**  
Retired in 1998 as Dorot Chief Librarian of the Jewish Division and Bibliographer in Jewish Studies  
(Written remembrance plus interview, November 2012)



My first appointment at the senior level in 1966 was as reference librarian at Inwood. Clara Rees was the branch librarian, and she was very easy-going. I remember she showed me the rule book and said, 'Now, remember, with every rule you can add a sentence, which is: at the discretion of the branch librarian.'" **Cynthia Smith**  
Retired in 2001 as Regional Librarian, Northern Manhattan Region, Inwood Regional Library  
(Interviewed in August 2012)

"In late 1957, Miss Shinnamon, the branch librarian of Jackson Square, suggested I apply for one of the four senior clerk positions being advertised. The only one left was in the Picture Collection. I had no idea what the Picture Collection was when I went to my appointment with the curator, Romana Javitz, in Room 73 on the ground floor of the 5th Avenue Building. The date on the PCN I've saved is January 1, 1958. We sat at a long table and took a tray of pictures to sort by means of a large, unique filing device. I loved the work from the first day."

**Lenore Cowan**

Retired in 1983 as Curator of the Picture Collection

(Written remembrance, March 2013)



"The senior clerk position became available at Hudson Park in 1962. It was the branch I grew up in and loved. In those days we used to have puppet shows quite often in the children's room. Gertrude Robertson was the children's librarian, and the staff would all take part. We made the puppets out of papier-mâché, made the costumes for the puppets, and recorded the stories. We did a lot of this on our own time. I remember we did "St. George and the Dragon," and it was a wonderful dragon – green with sequins. It even breathed smoke! We would smoke a cigarette to make the smoke. We had a wonderful time."

**Rose Marie O'Leary**

Retired in 1984 as Senior Clerk, Hudson Park Branch Library

(Interviewed in May 2013)

"There were live-in custodians all over the system when I came in. When I went to 58<sup>th</sup> Street, we had Mr. Davis, a wiry little guy – absolutely darling! His family lived upstairs, and he was a great gentleman and a wonderful, wonderful custodian. When some of us worked at night (I know when Jean Bowen and I did), the dumb waiter alarm would go off – it was in the workroom, so it wasn't out where the public could see. We would go answer it, and on the lift were Manhattans – the cocktails, of course!" **George Mayer**

Retired in 1987 as Coordinator, General Library, Library for the Performing Arts

(Interviewed in August and October 2012)







### **In Praise of Books**

My old, much used books  
need taping up  
need mending  
and so do I.  
Together we have reached the point  
of entropy impending.  
Throughout my life  
they've been my faithful friends.  
I hold them now  
in veined and wrinkled hands.  
They still inspire.  
Some, ignored for years,  
I find again with pleasure.  
They don't require  
steadfastness on my part  
but give and give of their deep treasure  
of story, fact and feeling  
whenever I might turn to them.  
They nurture me  
when I'm in need of healing  
or entertainment  
or a pick-me-up  
when the brain is bored.  
And so I say to you  
my beloved hoard  
resting in stacks, on shelves  
Thank you!  
Thank you for delight.  
Thank you for companionship  
by day, by night  
as I travel  
through the span  
allotted me.

### **Lillian Morrison**

Retired in 1982 as Coordinator  
of Young Adult Services  
(Interviewed in January 2012)

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## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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The Oral History Project Committee would like to thank the Association Board and the membership for their support of the Project. The Board has been generous in allocating funds for such things as recording equipment, audio tapes, and digitization. In addition, individual members have sent contributions to be used for the Project; several were made in memory of Juanita Doares. Such contributions are particularly appreciated at time when we are moving from analog to digital recording.

Others who wish to contribute to the Project may send a check at any time made out to "NYPL Retirees Association," with "Oral History Project" on the memo line. The checks may be sent to Treasurer Agnes Babich, 35-46 79th St. #3 Jackson Heights, NY 11372. If it is more convenient to make a contribution during the membership renewal period, a check-off box has been added to the Membership Form. Remember that NYPLRA is not a non-profit organization, so contributions are not tax-deductible.

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## THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION

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### Dr. Zahava Szász Stessel

I used to watch the St. Patrick's Day Parade, New York City's annual tradition, on television, but it was different to be close by. Working in the library at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, we were almost part of it.

March 17, St. Patrick's Day, was usually sunny and bright. As it was close to the end of the long winter, we enjoyed the uplifting warmth in the air, with its promise of the approaching spring. Our anticipation grew as we watched the assembly from our windows

facing Bryant Park. It was good to get away a bit from the computer screens and cataloging scores as we watched the exciting crowd wearing green everywhere. We felt the reality of the maxim that each one was Irish that day.

Finishing their march, a few of the young men filtered back to the library. As the Jewish Division was then on the main floor in Room 84, close to the entrance, some of them reached us, too. Tending the information desk, I had the pleasure of observing those young enthusiastic boys entering and taking a bit of rest. Inspired by the library, they gave a quick check to the catalogue cards which were conveniently available in those special drawers in the reading room. Then they left, returning hurriedly to the rest of the day's activities.

St. Patrick's Day became more personal as a new page started to work in our division. Pages at that time, around 1980, were students who tended the reading room by providing and replacing books to shelves. Our page was a lovely boy of Irish descent. On St. Patrick's Day, he was the proudest telling us that the parade marched for the first time on March 17, 1762, fourteen years before the Declaration of Independence was adopted. He also brought with him that famous Irish soda bread that he had spoken so much about before. The cake-like brown soda bread was made by his mother. The primary leavening agent was bicarbonate of soda.

Next year, our page left for college, but his enthusiasm and the St. Patrick's Day celebration remained with us. It escorted me as one of my present memories in retirement.

Zahava Szász Stessel is the author of *Wine and Thorns in Tokay Valley*, *Jewish Life in Hungary: The History of Abaújszántó*, 1995, and *Snow Flowers: Hungarian Jewish Women in an Airplane Factory, Markkleeberg, German*, 2009. Dr. Stessel was interviewed for the Oral History Project on January 30, 2014.



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## NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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Greetings!

I start this wonderful Newsletter with sadness but with an enormous amount of gratitude. Juanita Doares, our Founding President, passed away at the age of 87 on December 11, 2013. She had been in declining health for several years. Her son Bill was at her side. What she left behind is a healthy, thriving organization that exists in large part because of her.

I remember Juanita in 2004 when, at a Board meeting, she announced that she was “stepping down” from the presidency. I was there as Social Committee chair. I remember vividly her plea for someone on the Executive Board to take over the presidency. There was silence. But then she continued to talk, asking, “What will happen to our Association? Is it worth having a retirees association? Do you like being part of it? Do you like our activities and keeping in touch with your fellow retirees?”

I, for one, did like being part of our Association. And yes, I was enjoying it; it meant a great deal to me. Everyone around that table liked being part of the Association. But being the president? Even though I was one of the newer committee chairs, someone in the room said she thought I should be president! I considered it very seriously for a few minutes and then heard myself saying, “I’ll try!” I knew I would need a lot of help from the rest of the Board. And I’ve received that. Juanita said to me, “You will do fine.” And we’ve done fine, very fine. We have almost 300 members. We have a fine Executive Board that meets monthly, planning events and taking care of business. We have a fine Oral History Project with committee members totally dedicated to the project.

But WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!



You tell us you LIKE our tours, our meetings, our Oral History Project, our Newsletter, our Facebook page, and our website. But these activities take up a lot of time from the lives of our Executive Board, committee members, and others who volunteer.

If we don’t get more volunteers, we may have to CUT BACK on the number of our social activities, have only one newsletter a year, limit the number of oral history interviews, or find other cuts.

Are there ways you can help us? Take a look at these specific ways that you can help make our Association stronger.

Our Newsletter needs someone to:

- Take over as editor. Our present editor will send you a description of how the newsletter is presently produced and will help you in any way to ease your way into producing the newsletter.
- Type “Retiree News” items from the forms into Word or Pages for submission to the next newsletter.

Our Website needs someone to:

- Take over as webmaster. Our present webmaster will help in the transition.
- Help in assembling media items for the “In the Media” page of the website.

Our Oral History Project can use your help:

- Indexing oral history narrations by accessing the narrations through Dropbox and using indexing software.
- Digitizing oral history tapes using your own PC and a product like Audacity, an open-source cross-platform program.
- Creating interactive forms for the project and the association so that forms may be filled out and submitted on line.
- Assisting with organizational tasks, including tracking interviews, correspondence, and documents; producing labels; filing; and updating the interviewing spreadsheet. This will entail regular meetings on the Upper West Side.
- Interviewing Staten Island retirees. Recording equipment and training will be provided.

Our Legislative, Benefits, and Senior Issues Committee needs volunteers who are interested in

keeping up with pertinent issues that affect our lives and distributing information to members.

If you think of something else you can do to help that we haven’t thought of, please let us know.

In closing, I trust you know that I am extremely happy to serve and work for you as President. I know our Executive Board and committee members feel the same way. All are volunteers, and I thank them for their hard work and dedication in keeping our Retirees Association thriving and vibrant. They are truly the best.

We thank you, our steadfast and loyal members. Please stay in touch; everyone loves to hear from you. And last, but not least, don’t forget to VOLUNTEER!

Becky Koppelman, President  
(212) 874-6199  
[blekopp@gmail.com](mailto:blekopp@gmail.com)

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## REMEMBERING JUANITA DOARES

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### MY MOTHER

**Excerpts from a memorial piece written by Bill Doares and given out at Juanita Doares’ service on December 18, 2013.**

Juanita loved people, especially children. She loved animals, especially dogs. Her greatest joy in life was in giving and helping others. She had deep empathy for anyone who was suffering or oppressed. And she had a raging hatred of injustice. These feelings were the driving force in her life.

She was born Juanita Ann Starr in Hickory, North Carolina, on April 19, 1925, to Coyt Velma Lingle, a homemaker, and Ceil Mims Starr, a telegraph

worker. Her mother came from a long line of German Lutherans who settled in western North Carolina after the Civil War; her father was of the Native people of this land, Cherokee/Tuscarora by family oral tradition.

In the Depression, Cecil Starr worked three jobs to support his family: for Western Union, as a night clerk at the DeSoto Hotel, and selling printing commission on weekends.

Times were hard, but Juanita remembers her mother making sandwiches for jobless and homeless people and serving them on the porch. "We are here on earth to help people," her mother said. She always remembered those words. She was raised in Reformation Lutheran Church and in high school was president of the Young Luther League of South Carolina.

My mother grew up in the Jim Crow South and early on came to hate racism and segregation. More than once she was thrown off a public bus for challenging the racist seating rules and refusing to sit while older Black passengers were standing. She joined the NAACP, voted for Henry Wallace in 1948, and in 1953 joined the civil rights march on Washington.

The time of her life she was most proud of came after her 1989 retirement when she devoted herself to fighting for the rights of retired workers. She founded or helped found the New York Public Library Retirees Association, the Retired Public Employees Association, and the Older Women's League and was president of all three as well as editing their newsletters. She was always going to Albany to protest and lobby, and her biggest pride was the campaign that won yearly cost-of-living increases for retired state workers.

At the same time, she stood by and cared for my father in his intensifying battle with cerebellar ataxia, a degenerative disease. Both my parents were active members of the National Ataxia Foundation and traveled to its conventions. She cared for her



**Young Juanita Doares**  
**(Photograph provided by Bill Doares)**

mother until her death in 1989 and for her sister Frances, who suffered from a lifelong disability.

In their retirement, my parents were able to travel around the country, taking Elderhostel trips to New Mexico and Arizona. In 2001, they marked their 50th anniversary with a cruise to Alaska. My father died in 2011, just eight months shy of their 60th anniversary. In the last three years of her life, my mother struggled with dementia and other disabilities, and I became her full-time caregiver. Though her memory was failing, her spirit was unchanged: her generosity, her love of people, children and animals.

**Editor's Note:** More about Juanita Doares can be found in a copy of our newsletter's Issue 18 article at the end of this newsletter.

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## RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

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### NYPL ON FILM

Elena Rossi-Snook, Archivist in the Performing Arts Library's Reserve Film and Video Collection (formerly Donnell Media Center), has a reverence for NYPL history that she is able to employ in her work. On **Friday, March 14, 2014**, at 11 a.m., in the Performing Arts Library's Bruno Walter Auditorium, Elena spoke about her project preserving films about NYPL and screened some of the short films in the collection. We had the opportunity to identify staff members in the films; their names can then be added to the catalogue record and/or files..

Jane Kunstler and Alan Pally previewed the films and identified Lillian Lopez, Gerard Alexander, Leonard Gold, Betty Myers, Belle Weinberg, and (possibly) Maria Cimino. Films, made between the 1940s and the 1980s were selected from the following list: "Business and The New York Public Library;" "The Impressionable Years;" "It's Our Job;" "The Kurzweil Reading Machine: An Open Door to the Printed Word;" "The Library on Wheels;" "Library Service on Staten Island;" and "The Seward Park Branch and the Neighborhood It Serves."

Coffee and cookies were served before the program began.

### VISIT THE RENOVATED STAPLETON BRANCH & ITS SRI LANKAN COMMUNITY

On **Friday, April 4, 2014**, we have planned a program on Staten Island for our retirees. It will begin at 11 a.m. with a tour of the recently renovated Stapleton Branch, a 1907 Carnegie building designed by Carrere and Hastings which now has a modern

glass addition. Then we will hear from Faikah Jayman, who retired as Senior Clerk at St. George. She will talk about the large Sri Lankan community on Staten Island, which is said to be the largest outside of Sri Lanka.

Afterwards, those who wish may join us at the nearby Sri Lankan restaurant, Lakruwana. The library building is located at 132 Canal Street at Wright Street, a short ride from the Staten Island Ferry terminal at St. George, and the restaurant is at 668 Bay Street.

### MEET MARY LEE KENNEDY

On **Monday, April 28**, from 10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Retirees Association members will meet for a get-acquainted talk with Mary Lee Kennedy, Chief Library Officer of NYPL. Our program will be held at the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street.

Mary Lee Kennedy was previously Senior Associate Provost for the Harvard Library, appointed by the President of Harvard to lead the transition to the new Harvard Library. She has a B.A. cum laude in social psychology from the University of Alberta, Canada, and a Master's in Library Science with honors from Louisiana State University.

Some of us met her when she was introduced at the Retirees Spring Reception last June. In her position at the Library, she and her staff are focusing on the program strategic plan for FY15-FY17, research and circulating services for current and future Library users, and the NYPL digital experience. Mary Lee is eager to meet with us and "will be happy to talk about the work we are doing and the direction in which our programs are headed and to provide a session open for questions."



**The Miles Davis trumpet shown to Mark McCluski, Estelle Friedman, and James Briggs Murray by their tour guide**

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## **RETIREES ABOUT TOWN**

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### **TRIP TO THE INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES**

On September 17, nineteen retirees visited the Institute of Jazz Studies at the Dana Library of Rutgers University in Newark. We took the New Jersey Transit to the Newark Campus. The collection was overwhelming. Under the auspices of two very knowledgeable guides, we were privileged to view the instruments played by such artists as Ben Webster, Benny Carter, Roy Eldridge, Jack Teagarden, and many other greats. We saw Miles Davis' trumpet which is painted green. We looked at personal papers of Mary Lou Williams and James P. Johnson. One of our retirees, James Briggs Murray, was astonished to discover memorabilia from his uncle, jazz trumpeter, Arthur Briggs.

There were over 100,000 sound recordings produced on machines ranging from original cylinders and wind-up phonographs to digital media. This collection is considered to be the largest collection of jazz memorabilia in the world. Ken Burns used this

library as his main source of information when he produced his series on PBS television. The Institute's website can be viewed at <http://newarkwww.rutgers.edu/IJS/>

After viewing this wonderful exhibit we ate in a Portuguese restaurant called "Fornos of Spain" which is located in the Ironbound section of Newark. We had wonderful food served in a special room reserved for us. We all agreed that a good time was had by all with the expressed wish that we repeat this lovely and interesting venture.

### **HOLIDAY LUNCH**

On Friday, January 24, 2014, for the third year in a row, Benoit was the venue for our get-together to celebrate the holiday season and the New Year. The menu included a choice of two appetizers and two entrees followed by a scrumptious dessert. All 64 seats were taken by retirees and a few spouses and friends. We regretted having to turn people away because we ran out of space! Among our special guests this year was Bill Doares, our founder Juanita's son. During Juanita's final illness, Bill became like a surrogate member of the Association.

He brought Juanita to Board meetings when she was able to get out and kept her up-to-date on our activities when she wasn't. We are grateful to Bill for all he did and were happy to honor him at our luncheon.

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## RETIREE NEWS

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### DAVID BEASLEY

I was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal by the Canadian Governor General on November 18, 2012. I quote the citation: "In recognition of his extensive writing on the arts and politics as well as his contributions to the documentation of international and local history." Medals went mostly to members of the armed forces, police, and fire workers for distinctive service as well as to those whose charitable works were exceptional, but a few went to the arts. It is a Canadian medal distinct from the British medal. Since Justin Bieber also received the medal, I am feeling quite young. Hey baby, baby!

### JOE BOONIN

In my work with the volunteer-run library in my retirement community, I am up to my eyebrows in searching and selecting a small automated library system. My work has been rewarded by the presence of Deanna Gaige who is much more systems-literate than I and cut her teeth at NYPL. I also continue to do indexing of printed music for a large on-line subscription database of classical music. After a half-century, I am back doing [quasi] cataloging.

### ELGA CACE

Gunars and I are enjoying the quiet life at home. In summer we sit on the back porch, tend flower pots, watch birds, and read books that we did not have time to read while working, as well as new ones. Our cat is a cheerful and affectionate companion. My husband uses a walker. He has frequent medical appointments in Manhattan and I accompany him. A

cousin usually drives us and the three of us make a party of these trips by eating lunch out and having merry discussion about politics and newsworthy events. In the evenings we watch old movies. This year we have been having our house renovated, roof to basement, which is a messy undertaking. I still have much cleaning and sorting to do, but am determined to finish it. I am thankful for every day that Gunars and I spend together.

Augusta Baker has been much on my mind these past few days. I remember her telling Uncle Boqui tales in the storytelling class that she taught at Columbia University. She was better than any comedian and had us laughing ourselves silly.

Years later, in a meeting at the Office of Children's Services, she spoke of her experiences as a new and black librarian and inspired us to do our best for all children. She loved books and took great pleasure introducing to us new and old books by black authors. She read us poetry by her friend, Langston Hughes.

"So boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—  
For I'se still goin', honey  
I'se still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair."

From "Mother to Son"

### EMILY COHEN

I entered my recipe for "Better Than Brooklyn Bialys" in the 2014 Recipe Contest that is run by the *Staten Island Advance* newspaper. Naturally, I entered it in the "Baking" category. The other day I got a phone call from the Food Editor. She told me that she had decided to switch my recipe to the "Starch" category. I was scratching my head as she said this because the "Starch" category is supposed to include recipes based on potatoes, rice, pasta, and grains. However, when Ms. Silvestri informed me



**Standing: Becky Koppelman, Jane Kunstler, tour guide, Mark McCluski, Jennine Porta, Mary K. Conwell, Estelle Friedman, Joanne Rosario, James Briggs Murray, Yolanda Bonitch, Sharon Hyman, guide, Jesse Reisner, Joe Zeveloff, Marsha Osofsky. Kneeling: guide, Peter McCallion, Carol Reisner, Vera Zeveloff**

that I was a Finalist in the "Starch" category, I decided to accept the decision.

The next step was on Saturday, February 8, 2014, when the Taste-Off took place at the Hilton Garden Inn on Staten Island. I brought enough home-baked bialys and accompaniments, such as sweet butter and flavored whipped cream cheese, for the 15 judges to taste. Free tickets were available for this event. It included an opportunities for audience members to enjoy a free Continental Breakfast, to play an interactive game, "The Cheap Show," to taste products of the sponsors such as General Mills and White Rose, to hear a talk by Alison Robicelli, cookbook author and humorist, about her cookbook ,

*Robicelli's: A Love Story With Cupcakes*, and to possibly be chosen as part of the panel to choose which recipe gets the "People's Choice" award.

The other two recipes entered were for elaborate ravioli dishes with gourmet fillings and sauces. The only thing going for me was that one's display is considered in the judging. As we all know, longtime librarians are skilled at arranging displays! Of course, I put a book in mine, *Inside the Jewish Bakery: Recipes and Memories from the Golden Age of Jewish Baking* by Stanley Ginsberg and Norman Berg, held open to the pertinent page on the history of the bialy. (By the way, I highly recommend this book.)



If any retiree would like a copy of my recipe for bialys, I would be glad to share it with you. My contact information can be found in the NYPLRA Membership Directory.

A short play I wrote and submitted to a contest run by the Staten Island Playwrights Collective was chosen to be part of a program of short plays with some reference to a "key" or "keys" in them. The requirements included that any interpretation of "key" would be acceptable, whether literal or figurative. The other winning plays and my play were performed at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings, March 7, 8, and 9, 2014.

#### **YOLANDE ELYSEE**

I had been using glasses for years, just to read. Those eyeglasses didn't have any particular place to be when, of course, not in use. Assigned at Bloomingdale, the pleasant staff quickly detected a problem. I was often at the Circulation Desk checking the drawer of lost and found items or telling a clerk that I am looking for my glasses. "Your glasses! Where were you Mrs. Elysee?" It was repeatedly the same question.

One day, with no eyeglasses, my somber appearance denoted something. I would hear, "Are you okay, Mrs. Elysee. You are looking for your glasses?" I was even offered a "Peeper Keeper" to solve my problem, but I refused, no not that. Can anybody guess where my eyeglasses were found? I won't let you think longer. Yes, in the refrigerator!

#### **PATRICK HARDISH**

My activities as a composer and as a founder and director of the Composers Concordance and its new music series were saluted on January 24, 2014, at the Turtle Bay Music School in Manhattan. At this event, four of my compositions were performed, as were two works composed in my honor by two composer friends.

#### **PHYLLIS HOFFMAN**

Emily Cohen: Phyllis had to get to a hotel near Newark airport the night before her morning flight to go on her vacation to Hawaii. This was during the snowstorm and she feared she wouldn't make it. Here's what happened:

I made it myself! I trudged out in the snow and hauled my suitcase to 8th avenue and cornered a yellow cab. I made him an offer he couldn't refuse and had him take me to the hotel in Newark! I paid him a fortune, but he took me there — but only after circling the hotel for half an hour trying to find the right access road. I made it, and our flight took off on time. I had a grand time in Hawaii. I snorkeled three times; I was in paradise! The Hawaiian islands are just beautiful, and I saw Ray Markey and Mary Berman and Joe Zeveloff and his wife Vera!

#### **ALICE HUDSON**

I have been asked to curate an exhibition at the University of Southern Maine, Portland, in 2015 about women mapmakers. This continues my previous research in this subject. I am involved in the Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group, helping to research the Upper West Side of Manhattan and to organize public programs on topics such as the mapping of the area, the 9th Avenue El, jazz and theatrical history in the area with lots of neat speakers and support by the staff of the Bloomingdale Branch, NYPL.

#### **JAMES HUFFMAN**

Since retiring as Correctional Services Librarian, I have been actively participating with the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office in their Young Adult Mentoring Program. I have also continued my participation with the Correctional Association, founded in 1844. The association is an independent non-profit organization that advocates for a more humane and effective justice system. I am enjoying my travels and observing correctional facilities around the country. I enjoy having a great time with my favorite hobby of photography and having the opportunity to exhibit some of my work. I recently completed participation in the NYPL Retirees



**At the 20th Year Celebration: Tom Dickinson, Margaret Hetley, Telza Gardner, Patricia Jones, & others. More photos at the end of this newsletter.**

Association Oral History Project. It was a wonderful experience, and I hope more retirees will participate.

#### **LYDIA LA FLEUR**

I made two trips to Japan this year. I spent three weeks in August at my son and family's county house in Karulzawa, and in November I went for three days to Tokyo to see my granddaughter Emma's stage debut in the leading female role in Stephen Sondheim's musical *Merrily We Roll Along*. It was in Japanese, of course, so I didn't understand a word of it! But no matter -- it was a highlight in my life to see her sing, dance, and act completely at home on the stage. She was wonderful! I hope to return in June to see her perform in *Sister Act*.

Initially, I was hesitant to go for fear that, at my age, I might not be able to deal with all that a trip entails, but I discovered that it's so easy to travel these days if you're a senior. I order a wheelchair with the reservation and am met at the plane by the stewardess who takes care of me from then on. I've found the stewardesses and stewards very solicitous to the elderly, whether I'm traveling business class or economy. I traveled economy coming back in November and was most fortunate to have five unoccupied seats to stretch out on and sleep all the way. Luckily the plane was only half full.

I just celebrated (in January) my 87th year and feel healthy thanks to yoga and working out with a personal trainer twice a week, but recently I started to use a cane to help me feel more secure with my balance. Every year is a gift!

#### **DONALD LAUB**

I recently retired, January 2013. I love being able to get up at the same time every day and not having to think about whether I am working 7-3, 8-4, 9-5, 10-6, 12-8, 12:15-8:15, or 12:30-8:30! I do a lot of reading in the morning, go for a walk most days, and am busy Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons. There are not enough hours in the day! I am loving it!

#### **PETER MC CALLION**

At seventy years of age, I finally fulfilled my dream of being an archaeologist and attended an archaeology field school where I actually uncovered the bones of a man buried about eleven hundred years ago! With continued good health I spent the winters in Oaxaca, Mexico where I volunteer at the English Language Library weeding the collection and leading book talks.

Tanglewood and the Boston Symphony Orchestra continue to be my summer job.

**ALAN PALLY**

In addition to continuing to serve as a Trustee of the Noël Coward Foundation and on the Board of Directors of HB Studio (the drama school Uta Hagen used to run), I'll be giving a talk at the Performing Arts Library (Bruno Walter Auditorium) on Thursday, June 12, 2014, at 6 p.m.. The subject will be programs I've produced at the Library working with English playwrights Alan Bennett, Michael Frayn, Simon Gray, and Peter Shaffer. Video clips, taped live at the programs, will be shown.

**JEAN A. PINCKNEY**

Still enjoying life here in South Carolina between taking care of my sick husband and being a missionary at church. I also teach Sunday School twice per month. We have just celebrated the annual Moja Festival, an African-American and Caribbean Arts Festival. We went to see one of the plays which was called *The Old Settler* and told of two older sisters who settled in Harlem and rented a room to a young man from South Carolina. It was hilarious. I do get out since I hired an aide to assist with my husband. I also have some dear friends from church who come to sit with him sometimes. I can say God has been good to me in spite of everything one goes through as a caregiver.

**SHARON RUBIN**

I recently lost my mom and am busy clearing her apartment of 97 years of collecting. When this is finally over, I hope to be attending NYPLRA events that I have so wanted to attend.

**DANA SIMON**

In the spring of 2013, I organized a series of art programs for people with low vision given by the Museum of Modern Art and other art museums; and, in October, I organized a technology fair for people with low vision at the Andrew Heiskell Library. In addition, I exhibited personal artwork at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as part of the program "Seeing through Drawing." I will go to Greece with fellow librarians this May and visit one of the Fulbright scholars sponsored by NYPL.

**BOB SINK**

I continue to research my social history of the librarians in NYPL's Circulation Department, 1901-1950.

Last summer I did a presentation at the Conference on New York State History on "NYPL's Pioneering African-American Librarians" and the process of desegregating the staff, 1920-1940. And the Conference has accepted my proposal for a paper this summer on the autonomy the Branch Librarians exercised, defended, and then ultimately lost by the 1930s.

**PAT SMITH**

I did visit Vi Barrett in Stuart, Florida, in April. We had a nice visit. This summer has been quite a bit better than last year, no drought. I'm still active: I take aqua fitness classes and Tai Chi. It keeps me health and upright.

My almost thirty-two years at NYPL are still fresh in memory even though I've been retired for ten years. People who stand out in my mind are Grace Ijima, my first branch librarian at Allerton, Eileen Riols of Kingsbridge who succeeded Margaret Scoggins at the Office of Young Adult Services. I could go on. I really liked units I served in, all different with good people and some great Christmas parties. I really liked having every day different from the last. It kept me on my toes. Good luck with the project.

**DR. ZAHAVA STESSEL**

Hurricane Sandy flooded our home. We lost many personal belongings, among them books, photographs, computer, washing machine, refrigerator, our summer clothing, and many other things.

What we gained is the knowledge that we have good neighbors. They were there helping us to remain in our home through the process of cleaning and rebuilding.

**KATE TODD**

In April 2014, at the Texas Library Association in San Antonio, I will be speaking about library services to people with disabilities.

### **PHILIP WOLCOFF**

My fondest memory of working for NYPL for over forty years was my last assignment, the Parkchester Branch. I started there as a Supervising Branch Librarian, and when the circulation increased enough to warrant a Principal Librarian, I was Supervising Assistant Branch Librarian with Wendy Caldiero, the Principal Librarian. One of my fondest patrons at Parkchester was Adele Lerner. We exhibited her art work, and I co-led a book discussion group she participated in. I am pleased to say that the *Flushing Tribune* in Queens published an article and photo of her in October 2010 to celebrate her 103rd birthday. My wife and I live in Flushing, Queens, and see her and her attendant occasionally while walking in the neighborhood. We wish her well.

### **JOE YRANSKI**

In many ways, my years with NYPL were very helpful in my automatically going over to do pro bono work with many archives and institutions without expecting or receiving large consulting fees. Currently, I am working with the Library of Congress, the Mary Pickford Foundation, Milestone Films, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Weston Woods Studios, et al. In addition, I program for film festivals such as Cinefest in Syracuse, NY; Cinecon in Los Angeles, CA; the Theater Organ Society of Los Angeles; the Catalina Island Silent Film Festival, et al.

One of the great experiences that happens is when an old patron comes up to me after a program to thank me for assisting him in the past. An example is when I did a lecture at Film Forum last year, and John Moses came up to thank me for matching him up with LOC, which preserved several of his grandfather's 35mm nitrate feature films made between 1918 and 1920. I also continue to see one of the great volunteer ladies of Donnell; Ruth Ryer is now in her 90s but still "younger than springtime."

Coming up in April 2015, one of the films that I unearthed and have helped preserve at Warner Brothers will debut at the Turner Classic Film Festival. "Why Be Good?" (1929) was a "lost film" of Colleen Moore. I have been working on its preservation with Ned Price of Warner Brothers. We are also working on other film projects.

I have just finished arranging a program which took place on January 5, 2014, at the Bruno Walter Auditorium with Kathryn Crosby – her fourth appearance at NYPL for me.

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## **NEW MEMBERS**

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Gudrun Boettger  
Erminio D'Onofrio  
Robert Gang  
Rhonna Goodman  
Julia Hotton  
Sharon Hyman  
Armand Isip  
Amorfina Muhi  
Raphael & Carmen Reyes  
Peggy Salwen  
Dana Simon  
Bosilijka Stevanovic  
Philip Yockey

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## REMEMBERING OUR COLLEAGUES

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### PHYLLIS CALESE

After working for the Boston Public Library in her native Boston, Phyllis came to NYPL and worked in a number of branches, including High Bridge, until she retired in 1980 from Mid-Manhattan's Picture Collection. A world traveler and passionate reader, she was also politically active.

### EDWARD DANA

Edward M. Dana passed away on October 25, 2013, at the age of eighty-four. Ed and Roberta Dana had been married for 49 years. Ed retired from NYPL in September 1984 after working at the Central Research Library in Building Maintenance and Operations for over 20 years. He was working the night shift there when they filmed the movie *Ghostbusters*. Roberta also worked at NYPL in the Accounting Office.

### WILLA FEEKE

Willa Catherine Feeke was born in Toronto, Canada, in 1930 and died in 2010. She joined NYPL as a young adult librarian but later changed her specialty to adult services. Her knowledge of literature was extraordinary, and she always looked for a new task when she had completed one. Willa worked at Sedgwick, Inwood, and Spuyten Duyvil, among other branches.

### SALLY HELFMAN

Sally's career in NYPL included children's librarian of Riverside Branch, specialist in the Office of Children's Services, and branch librarian of Donnell Library Center.

### CARMELA MULÉ

Carmela Mulé, who worked at the Research Library, died recently. She began her career at the library in 1948, working in the microform unit of Photographic Services before transferring to Serial Cataloging in 1968. Carmela retired from there in 1998; her fifty years of service were celebrated with a Trustees Room party. She was eighty-four.

### MIRIAM RABINOFF

Miriam worked at NYPL from 1955 to 1989. She is best remembered as the long-time branch librarian of the 58th Street Branch.

### ROBERTA SALTZMAN

Roberta, a bibliographer and author, was Assistant Chief of the Dorot Jewish Division. She donated a significant collection of Jewish cookbooks to the Division. See <http://www.finebooksmagazine.com/issue/201001/cookbooks-1.phtml>

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## LILLIAN MORRISON

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Lillian Morrison, who died on January 27, 2014, was born and grew up in Jersey City, New Jersey. She earned a bachelor's degree, Phi Beta Kappa, as a math major at Rutgers University in 1939. After a chance encounter with a friend who told her the Library was hiring, she began working as a clerk at 42nd Street. She found she loved working there, surrounded by books and by people who loved them and were so knowledgeable. She enrolled at Columbia University to get her library degree, working two nights a week and going to school three nights a week. The only opening available when she graduated was a young adult position, and she found she liked working with teenagers. One of her favorite early positions was at the Aguilar Branch, where the third floor had been turned into a "Teen Canteen," based on the canteens created for service men during World War II. Other positions included stints at 67th Street and Seward Park, Vocational School Specialist, Branch Librarian at Kingsbridge, Assistant Young Adult Coordinator (working with Margaret Scoggin), and Coordinator of Young Adult Services from 1966 until her retirement in 1982. She also served as a lecturer at both Rutgers and Columbia Universities.

As a child, Lillian developed an interest in poetry from playing rhyming games such as jump rope and patty cake with her friends and later became enchanted with the autograph rhymes introduced to her by teens in the branch libraries. She was particularly interested in folk rhymes, outdoor sports, dance, jazz, and film, saying, "I love rhythms, the body movement implicit in poetry, explicit in sports--I am drawn to athletes, dancers, drummers, jazz musicians, who transcend misery and frustration and symbolize for us something joyous, ordered, and possible in life." (www.goodreads.com) She wanted to share her love of poetry by making it fun and accessible for children and teens, and she did



this as a published author. Among her books are *Yours Till Niagara Falls*, *Ghosts of Jersey City*, *Guess Again!: Riddle Poems*, and *The Sidewalk Racer*. Her poetry for adults includes the book *A Good Catch for the Universe: Poems on Growing Older*, and she contributed poems to many magazines including *Prairie Schooner*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Atlantic*. She was also the general editor for two Crowell series publications, *Poems of the World* and *Crowell Poets*.

Lillian was recognized as the recipient of the American Library Association's Grolier Award in 1987 for her contributions to stimulating the interests of young people through reading, and she inspired many teens and young adult librarians during her almost fifty years at The New York Public Library. She is survived by two nephews and a grand nephew. One of her final poems appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

## 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRANTS



**TOP: Seated - Arthur Ruhl, Stephan Likosky, Harriet Gottfried**

**RIGHT: Marcia Loyd bringing her delicious baked good**

**BOTTOM: Jane Kunstler, who put together the slideshows**







**TOP: Rita Bott, Margaret Hetley**



**LEFT: Gennie Perez,  
Olga Oberman**

**BOTTOM: Frances Rabinowitz,  
Peggy Sue Salwen**



## MORE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRANTS



**TOP: Carol Reisner,  
Amy Spaulding**

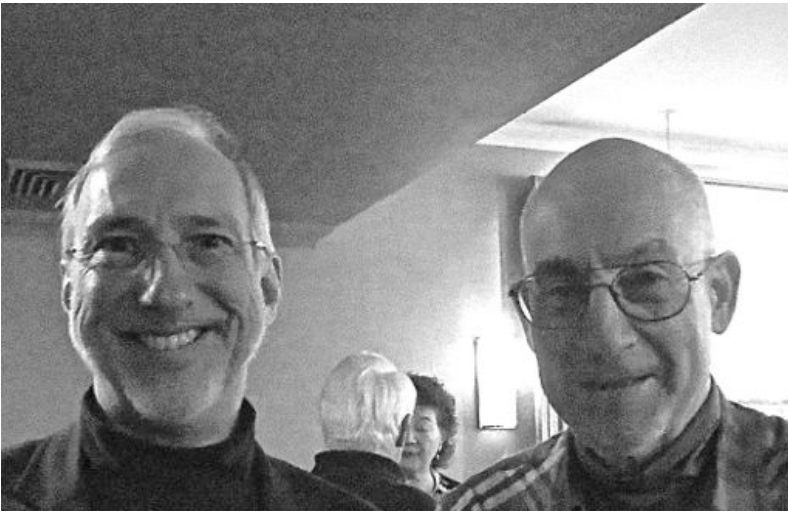
**RIGHT: Despina Croussouloudis,  
Angeline Moscatt**

**BOTTOM: Deborah Trepp,  
Leonard Viggiano,  
Ellen Viggiano**

**FOR MORE PHOTOS and photos  
in color visit our Facebook page.**



## HOLIDAY LUNCH 2014



**TOP:** Mark McCluski, Joe Zeveloff

**CENTER:** Jean Paul Michaud,  
Fu Mei Yang, Jessie Lee Johnson

**BOTTOM:** Karlan Sick, Beryl Eber,  
Joe Yranski



## MORE HOLIDAY LUNCH 2014

**TOP: Allen and Emily Cohen**

**CENTER: Bill Doares,  
George Koppelman**

**BOTTOM: Joanne Rosario,  
Harriet Gottfried, Marsha Howard,  
Beth Wladis**

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color visit our Facebook page.**



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**President:** Becky Koppelman, 10 West 86th Street, Apt. 5B, New York, NY 10024, (212) 874-6199, [blekopp@gmail.com](mailto:blekopp@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** Polly Bookhout (212) 956-3634, [pbookhout@earthlink.net](mailto:pbookhout@earthlink.net)

**Copyeditors:** Mary K. Conwell & Jane Kunstler

**Events Photographer:** Alan Pally and Jennine Porta

**NYPLRA Retirees E-mail:** [nyplra@earthlink.net](mailto:nyplra@earthlink.net)

**NYPLRA Website:** [www.nyplra.org](http://www.nyplra.org)

**NYPLRA Facebook Page:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-New-York-Public-Library-Retirees-Association/123598427801504>

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## IN THE MEDIA

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To keep up with library news in our city, visit our website, [www.nyplra.org](http://www.nyplra.org)

On the **Library Advocacy** page you can find links to active organizations, Citizens Defending Libraries and others.

The **In The Media** page will direct you to articles in newspapers, blogs, and magazines.