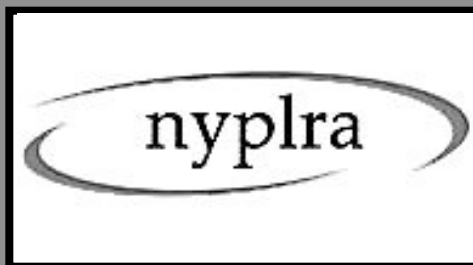


# New York Public Library Retirees Association Newsletter



Spring 2014 - Early 2015

Issue Number 35

## STEP INSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM A



### MEET THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Standing: Joe Zeveloff, Mary K. Conwell, Polly Bookhout, Jennine Porta  
Seated: Sharon Hyman, Estelle Friedman, Emily Cohen, Jane Kunstler  
Not pictured: Becky Koppelman, Marcia Loyd, Agnes Babich

## STEP INSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM A

### Emily Cohen

Step inside Conference Room A at Mid Manhattan Library. It is 1 p.m., and tables are arranged in a square. Some people, senior in age (or, shall we say that they “have been young for a long time”) are sitting at the tables eating the lunches they have brought and enjoying lively conversation. A few more people of similar vintage enter. What is going on?

This is the prelude to one of the monthly Executive Board meetings of the New York Public Library Retirees Association, commonly known as NYPLRA. Although the By-Laws refer to the “Executive Board,” the members often refer to themselves as the “Executive Committee.” Perhaps “Board” seems too formal and stuffed shirt. Still, these congenial colleagues get things done.

At 1:30 p.m., right on time without need of a gavel, President Becky Koppelman gets the meeting started with a gracious welcome. Chances are that not all members are present. As they say, “If you want something done, ask a busy person.” Should all of the busy officers, committee chairs, and members-at-large be present, you would see, in alphabetical order, Agnes Babich, Polly Bookhout, Emily Cohen, Mary K. Conwell, Estelle Friedman, Sharon Hyman, Becky Koppelman, Jane Kunstler, Marcia Loyd, Jennine Porta, and Joe Zeveloff.

Each person has a copy of the agenda; some have sent written monthly reports. Is the Secretary present? Who will take minutes?

Jennine Porta takes on the task. (Later she finishes and sends a draft from her first stop while on vacation!) While proceeding from one item to another, such subjects are discussed and such actions are taken as these: Is an NYPLRA member in need of a get-well card or note of congratulations? Sharon Hyman’s Caring Committee will send it. Has there been word of the passing of a member? An obituary notice will be composed, and it will be e-mailed as soon as possible and included in the next mailing to the 60 plus of our members without e-mail addresses.

The progress of our Oral History Project is reviewed by Mary K. Conwell. Who has been and will be interviewed? How are the transcription and editing coming along? How about the Glossary of library-related terms that will accompany each history? Are we in need of additional recording equipment? Which archive should be chosen to house the material?

The Communications Committee, in the person of Polly Bookhout, reports. What is the latest on our website? Should a meeting of the Photo Committee be scheduled to choose photos for the next Newsletter?

What is the status of our Treasury? It is audit time. A committee will visit the home of our Treasurer, Agnes Babich, to accomplish this. This hospitable lady describes the comfortable surroundings there and suggests all go out for lunch after the audit.

Some special events are being planned. Estelle Friedman shares details. Emily

Cohen, Staten Island Representative (a member-at-large), tells of the ups and downs of her planning for the annual event in her borough. The others weigh in.

Jane Kunstler, Membership Chair, brings up a knotty situation. Some members, despite reminders, have paid dues for the past calendar year so late that, when asked to pay this year's dues, they will opine, "I just paid." (Oh goodness, are you among them, dear reader?) Does Jane need help calling a few stragglers? Marcia Loyd steps in.

Has Joe Zeveloff been to a Retired Public Employees Association meeting? Are there issues to relay to the membership?

If it is one of those times of the year, all present will rise to form an assembly line to collate and staple "hard copies" of the Membership Directory or Newsletter. Then these are "stuffed" into manila envelopes, and address labels and stamps are affixed. (They'll be carried to the post office for mailing at meeting's end.)

Not every moment of the meeting can be described here. Generally, meetings run until 4 p.m. Yes, it seems to be a long time, but it is time spent productively. Also, truth be told, an important item on every Agenda is the mid-meeting "break," which allows for friendly chatting. As the close of the meeting approaches, personal calendars emerge as the "busy bees" seek a date for the next meeting. Becky, who has presided over all, asks us each to recap our duties for the next meeting. She thanks us for our accomplishments. We have had another good meeting.



**Milada Khatil, Lilian Zwyns,  
Janice Durham**

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## REMEMBERING MILADA

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NYPL Retiree Milada Klatil died on September 11, 2013, at the age of 96. While we were unable to interview her for the Oral History Project, she is fondly remembered here by two colleagues. Lilian Zwyns, Milada's friend for over forty years, reminisced about her in an interview that has been excerpted and edited for this newsletter. David Beasley sent written remembrances after learning of Milada's death.

While Milada was reticent to talk about her past, Lilian learned that she was born Milada Ribovea on October 16, 1917, into a family of some prestige in Slavkov, Czechoslovakia. Her mother, to whom Milada was devoted, was a homemaker, a profession Milada felt was undervalued. She admired the creativity and care her mother brought to the role. Choosing meals carefully and being cognizant of good health were no doubt inherited from her mother, who, into her 80s, went swimming in a river near Prague every day, even in winter.

Milada's father, from whom she was more distant, was responsible for introducing

electricity into considerable areas of the country. While his success put the family comfortably into the upper class, that was a position in which Milada never felt comfortable. She did, however, value quality, including in clothing. A favorite outfit was a pair of corduroy wide-wale brown shorts with a wide cuff that had obviously been hand-made and tailored for Milada. The shorts were very much a part of the outdoor life Milada led beyond her work in the Library. She was an active member of both the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Adirondack Mountain Club. One of Lilian and Milada's first forays "into the wild" together was a tenting trip to St. John Island in the Caribbean in the early 1970s. It was through the outdoor life that they became fast friends. Lilian felt that Milada had a deep "soul-connection" to nature. She always took that extra moment to soak in the beauty around her, breathe the fresh air, listen to the sound of the water, and exclaim at the wonder of it all. She was also a devotee of swimming naked and encouraged her friends to find a secluded spot and discreetly slip out of their suits at water's edge. "No one will know the difference," she'd say with great confidence.

A favorite of her "hardy outdoor weekends in rustic settings" was at the Adirondack Mountain Club camp north of the City in Harriman Park, where Milada, Lilian, and colleague Janice Dunham spent many weekends. Cots in rustic dorm rooms, outhouses up a hill, wells for pumping water, swims in the lake, and laughter in front of the big fireplace drew Milada, and she kept her membership current until she was in her early 90s. Lilian happily "inherited" Milada's key and locker.

As much as she loved the outdoors, Milada was a librarian through and through, and she never stopped believing in and advocating for the important role of libraries in a democratic society. That belief began with her early education in Czechoslovakia. After graduating from Brno University, she worked for the Minister of Trade in Prague and then as a commercial attaché in London. She resigned in 1948 after the Communist takeover. She immigrated to the United States in 1951, spent time in Chicago, met and married Frantisek Klatil in 1953, and moved to California, where she received a Master's degree in Library Science at the University of California at Berkeley in 1965. She began working in The New York Public Library in 1966. Her early career was spent briefly in branches, including Fordham Reference, before she moved to the Economics and Public Affairs Division at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. She ended her career at SIBL.

At Economics and Public Affairs, Milada became responsible for financial materials. While this was not necessarily her choice—she had received a second Master's degree in Sociology in 1975—she was very curious and always eager to learn something new. When she later received her PhD from the City University of New York, she was able to convince her advisors to allow her to do a study of the Federal Reserve System and the history of banking from a sociological point of view. What she was able to bring to the Division and to the Library was a source of great pride to her.

While her marriage to Frantisek Klatil, a writer and journalist, did not last, they had been drawn together by love of their homeland, and they remained in touch until his death. Milada edited his biography and

made sure his important papers went back to the National Library in Prague. Because English was not her first language, Milada often asked Lilian to edit her writing. However, Lilian found Milada's use of language interesting, creative, and articulate.

Jane Greenlaw, another of Milada's colleagues and friends, eased her later years with regular visits and by handling life's daily logistics. Milada "had a grace and elegance about her," Lilian recalls, that served her well even in her last two years in a nursing home. She would greet visitors almost as "if they were nobility." The value she gave to friendships was returned in kind by those who knew her well and who miss her.

Received from David Beasley:

Milada Klatil's death at 96 in September 2013 saddens and startles me. She was a calm presence in the often hectic bustle of the Economics Division where I worked alongside her for many years. As banking specialist, she took courses in banking for years at City University and gave me suggestions for investing wisely from what she learnt. She came to the US as a refugee from Czechoslovakia after World War II and, I believe, lived in San Francisco with her husband, a journalist. She spoke to me about him as a former husband, possibly dead, and wrote his biography in Czech. Her background seemed mysterious, and she was reticent about herself. I was startled by her age. When I retired from the Library at 61, she, who helped organize my retirement party, was 74, and she worked several more years while studying for her PhD in banking. I suppose she was in her eighties when she retired and earned her PhD, a remarkable feat. I last saw her at the funeral reception for our former colleague Mary Margaret Regan,

maybe 8 years ago, when we hugged good-bye. She looked older but nowhere near her age. I recall the battles with the Library over allowing staff to remain till 70 rather than 65. Milada fooled everyone to stay working so long. Good for her!

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## **AILEEN O'BRIEN MURPHY**

### **LIBRARIAN AND LYRICIST**

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Aileen O'Brien Murphy was interviewed by Angeline Moscott in 1998 for the original Retirees Association Oral History Project. In the interview, Aileen related that she applied for her first job at NYPL in 1945 after arriving in New York with her husband from West Virginia, where she had worked at the Ohio County Library. She was offered a clerical position in the Book Order Office at a salary of \$110 a month. In true Murphy fashion, she immediately negotiated for a higher salary and got \$120 per month, the

amount being paid to recent library school graduates.

Aileen's job in the Book Order Office involved preparing books with pass slips and reviews prior to their going to the book selection room. The children's books first had to be approved by the Coordinator, Frances Clarke Sayers, who obviously recognized a kindred spirit and told Aileen she should be working in children's services. In her new position she became quite intimate with the Union Catalog. It was in a "great big corridor outside of all the administrative offices in the Main Building; and there were lots of card catalogs. My boss Frances Clark Sayers said, 'You know the Union Catalog is so fascinating. It's like every morning a bunch of Vestal Virgins come out and minister to the Union Catalog.' They would scratch off the accession number. They used to do everything with accession numbers; I don't know if they still do. The City made you do it. They would take off the accession numbers and then they would add other things. Using the Union Catalog was wonderful, it was right outside my door, you know, so I had it always at hand."

Although Aileen had never finished an undergraduate college degree, with the encouragement of Mrs. Sayers, she was eventually allowed to take classes at the library school at Pratt and received a certificate rather than a master's degree. She parlayed that certificate into a remarkably rich career in children's literature. Her firm hand was behind the publication of virtually every list published by the Office of Children's Services, including the annual list *Children's Books* that came out during Children's Book Week. She served on the ALA Newbery/Caldecott and Notable

Children's Books Committees, and she taught children's literature for several summers at the Library School of the University of Wisconsin. Although she worked briefly in various branches, she spent the bulk of her career in the Office of Children's Services and retired as the Children's Literature Specialist. Many children's librarians over the years remember getting a call from Mrs. Murphy questioning something on one of the book reviews that all children's librarians were required to write.

During her time in OCS, Aileen worked with three different Coordinators. According to Aileen, Mrs. Sayers' strength was her knowledge of children's literature and she was very "strong in book selection." Next came Frances Lander Spain, whom Aileen characterized as "a very charming woman and a very good manager." Finally, there was Augusta Baker, who "was good on both book selection and administration, so she was definitely the boss there on everything."

Along with her expertise in children's literature, Aileen became the unofficial NYPL lyricist, working her craft for many retirement parties. "We had wonderful retirement parties for children's librarians, and at some point, somebody asked me to do a song or a round, and I used to pick very well-known songs and then write something that was mostly saying 'we don't want you to leave, we don't want you to leave, we don't want you to leave.' It was sort of silly, and then we'd get different people to sing it. And actually when we did it for distinguished people, like when Frances Spain retired, we did a whole chorus of different people from all over the system, and I remember Jim Greene was one of the ones in it. And we did 'Remain dear Spain; your parting gives me

pain’.” This, of course was sung to the tune of  
“The Rain in Spain” from *My Fair Lady*.

“There was a time when some of us went up  
to help close High Bridge [which was being  
replaced by a new building]. Mary K.  
Conwell was there to help with the weeding,

and I was there, and a lot of the people on the  
staff were there, and we just had a party  
afterwards, and we decided to do this song.  
Mary K. and I made it up, and then we sang it  
together. It was to be sung to the tune of  
‘After the Ball Is Over’.”

## AFTER THE HIGH BRIDGE CLOSING

After the High Bridge closing, after the last work’s done,  
After the staff is leaving, after the public’s gone,  
Many the hearts are aching, if you could see them all ...  
Many the hearts that are breaking, let us recall.  
These are the walls that sheltered Cohen, Calese, and Zahn,  
Robertson, Treble, Kunstler, Alcala, Harrison,  
Geller and Shields, Martinez, Noyes, Yamashita, too,  
Rubin and Hetley and Heinrich, Domherr and Wu.  
Hutchins and Hester Conway, the Hultons and Phillips, too.  
Barrett, Pellowski, Rollock, Allyn, we’re almost through.  
Wilson, Puschkoff, and Harris, Currie and Dorothy Cobb.  
Please excuse if we have missed one out of the mob.  
We were the ones who weeded, down through the weary years,  
Many the shelves were burdened, oh, how the memory seers.  
How we threw out the discards, hard to read children’s books,  
Our names are Murphy and Conwell. Farewell, gadzooks!

**Individuals cited in song below:** Henrietta Cohen, Phyllis F. Calese, Mabel Zahn, Gertrude A. Robertson, Joan M. Treble, Jane Kunstler, Luis A. Alcala, Harrison [Name unverified], Arleen F. Geller, Dolores Shields, Lizz Martinez, Naomi Noyes, Hisako Yamashita, Jean Rubin, Margaret Hetley, Louise Heinrich, Lydia Domherr, Ethel Chen Wu, Anne Shuck Hutchins, Hester Conway, Clara Hulton, John Gilmore Hulton, Miriam H. Phillips, Mary M. Barrett, Anne Pellowski, Barbara Rollock, Donald W. Allyn, Wilson [Name unverified], E. Anna Puschkoff, Harris [Name unverified], Hubert Currie, Dorothy Cobb, Aileen O’Brien Murphy, Mary K. Conwell.

**Editor’s note:** If any retiree can identify the “unverified” names or has a photo of Mrs. Murphy, please contact Mary K. Conwell ([mkconwell@yahoo.com](mailto:mkconwell@yahoo.com)).



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## NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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Greetings to All,

Here is your wonderful Newsletter for 2015! I trust everyone had a good New Year's. How is the weather where you are? Here in the Northeast, we have been having horribly cold and snowy weather. It's freezing! We had enough of this last year and had hoped for milder temperatures this year. Now we are just hoping that spring comes soon.

We have scheduled our Annual Luncheon for March this year. As you may recall, we always had a "Holiday" Luncheon in January, but this year we felt it was too cold—thus the change. We have another great restaurant, too: La Mirabelle, which has an authentic French bistro cuisine. By the time you read this, those attending will have dined on delicious food such as Liver Pate, Duck a la Mirabelle with Plums, and Mixed Berry Tart or Chocolate Mousse. We will have enjoyed visiting with fellow retirees, too.

Other events being planned this season include our March 30 trip to the Staten Island Museum, which is featuring a retrospective of SI artists. Then we're off to lunch at Beso Spanish Restaurant and Tapas Bar. Both locations are conveniently near the St. George Ferry Terminal, and all of this has been planned by Emily Cohen, our Staten Island Representative. She informed us that a new branch is being planned in the Charleston community of Staten Island and that the Library is seeking community input via surveys emailed to local library card holders and available on kiosks in nearby branches.

Back to events: on June 23, we travel to Queens for a tour of the fascinating Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary & Victorian Home and Garden. Look at their website or "Like" them on Facebook. They have many interesting activities there, so save the date.

Estelle Friedman, our Program Chair, is looking into a tour of the Good Housekeeping Research Institute lab, which is located in the Hearst Tower.

And in late spring, we are happy to announce that Jennifer Levesque, Director of Total Rewards, will be speaking to us on Medicare & Benefits. The date will soon be decided.

"Somebody Come and Play" was an animated and musical exhibit with "fuzzy furry friends" from Sesame Street at the Library for the Performing Arts. It was held last September through this January. Two retirees, Virginia Wilhelm and I, volunteered to read stories once a week to the children, parents, and caregivers who attended the exhibit. Regular library staff could not leave their branches to help out. It was quite an experience! Virginia and I were told we would be reading to



preschoolers and kindergartners. Instead large groups of toddlers, babies, and caregivers surrounded us. It kept us on our toes, with very simple stories, rhymes, songs, and finger plays.

I hope you enjoy reading our oral history excerpts and our lead article, “Step Inside Conference Room A,” by Emily Cohen. We have our board meetings at Mid-Manhattan Library, 6th floor, conference room A. Now you see us in action.

Polly Bookhout, who wears many hats as Vice President, Newsletter editor, and website director, will be working with Susan Chute on upgrading our regular website and creating an oral history page there. Our website is [www.nyplra.org](http://www.nyplra.org). We hope to have more information, photos, and oral histories for you there.

As you can see, we are always busy. We have a dedicated and hard-working crew! Right now, we are expanding our committee structure. In some cases, we have a committee chair but no committee members, which means we will need some help from those of you who live in the metropolitan area. Our requests, when they come, will be practical and purposeful. We are trying to make our association work better and more smoothly for all. When we call you with a simple request, we hope you will say, “Yes, I can do that. I can help.”

Some who have said “yes” are Fran Rabinowitz, Anne Hofmann, Ruth Ann Carr, and Phil Gerrard for the Oral History Project, Susan Chute for the website, and Bob Bellinger for help in writing obituaries.

By the way, are you one of our members who received a renewal membership form and have forgotten to pay your dues? Why not write a check now? Why not fill in your news sheet form too? Send them together! Just do it! That’s what makes our Newsletter special! All of us look forward to reading our Retirees News section, and we want to hear from you!

And we are always looking for new members! If you know anyone who has recently retired and is not a member of our association, or anyone who worked at NYPL, in any capacity, for 10 years or more and is 55 years old, let our Membership Chair Jane Kunstler know at [j.kunstler@att.net](mailto:j.kunstler@att.net). We have heard of some retirees who hesitate to join because they think we are affiliated with NYPL, but we are strictly an independent association.

In fact, we have a wonderful association! And we are unusual. We don’t know of another retirees' association like ours at all. We have tried to find one. Have you heard of any?

Now it is time for me to close. From all of us here, the Executive Board, Committee Chairs, Members at Large, and the Oral History Committee, we wish you all well. Have a good year. And please keep in touch! You can always reach us at our website, [www.nyplra.com](http://www.nyplra.com). My email is [blekopp@gmail.com](mailto:blekopp@gmail.com), or phone me at 212-874-6199. I am happy to talk. Remember, everyone loves to hear from YOU!

Enjoy Your Newsletter!  
Becky Eakins Koppelman

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## **THIS IS NOT A UFO - or - What Happens to Your Donations to the Oral History Project Fund**

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From 2012 until press time, forty-four Association members have donated a total of \$1691.00 to the Oral History Project! Thank you!

So, how are these funds used? In the beginning, they were used primarily to pay for the digitization of the early tapes—about 72 of them! This process cost between \$20 and \$60 per interview, depending upon the length of the interview and the number of tapes needed.

While we inherited one tape recorder, we purchased a few more with Association funds, and some of our interviewers purchased their own. These recorders and the blank tapes were inexpensive and did a great job for us for a while. The downside was that it was costly to have the

tapes digitized for archiving, and the recorders had a relatively short life-span.

Thanks to the Columbia University Center for Oral History, we were introduced to the Zoom H1 digital recorder (see photo) and are now using the Zoom H1 exclusively. We have purchased four. Each recorder costs \$108.86 plus \$66.60 for the peripherals like a tripod stand, carrying case, and mini playback speaker. We can now download the digital files ourselves and avoid the cost of digitization.

We also use donated funds to purchase thank-you cards and the postage to send them. We make these cards through Shutterfly using photos taken by our members. If you have a photo you'd like to have us use on a card, please send it on! We particularly like seasonal scenes taken in and around NYC.

There are other expenses related to the project that our committee members simply pay for themselves. These include the cost of paper and toner, since it is difficult to separate project use from personal use.

When donated funds run out, the Association Board is generous in supporting the Project with general funds from membership dues. For this we thank them and you dues-paying members. And, particularly, we thank those of you whose special donations are helping to make the Oral History Project a reality!

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## **POLITICAL ACTIONS/ SENIOR ISSUES**

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### **Joe Zeveloff**

Don't forget to visit your City Councilperson's office. The staff is able to offer information and help of many kinds. In October, I met at my Councilman's roving office with his Director of Constituent

Services and Social Work to talk about “select” bus service, which has become problematic for those of us who live in the East 70s. Neither the new select buses nor limited buses stop on 72nd Street between First and York Avenues. There is a long wait for local buses, which become filled to capacity while select buses pass by half empty. While I was discussing this situation, the conversation got around to the fact that my wife and I are looking for an apartment. I was pleased to learn that the Councilman's office helps seniors in our situation by sending lists of apartments and names of agencies that can help. One of the agencies mentioned by Ben Kallos's office was Met Council on Jewish Poverty, which has lists of apartments in many boroughs. If you are a senior and looking for an apartment, your City Councilperson or Met Council on Jewish Poverty are good places to start.

The founder of our Association, Juanita Doares, felt that political action and senior issues should be high on our agenda. I would urge everyone to begin by visiting your City Council office, learning what services are available, and sharing the information with the Association. If you would like to email information to me ([jlz44zev@aol.com](mailto:jlz44zev@aol.com)), I will be happy to add it to future Newsletter columns.

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## FROM TOTAL REWARDS

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Jill Mongelluzzo, who was Senior Manager in Total Rewards, has left the Library after 14 years. She has taken a position at National Grid, an international electricity and gas company based in the UK and northeastern US, where she will be concentrating on benefits strategy rather than day-to-day

benefits administration. She will be missed by her coworkers and members of the Retirees Association who benefited from her expertise.

### Health Advocate

If you haven't used them already, Health Advocate (1 866-695-8622) can be a great help for many of your health care questions. The advocates specialize in navigating a complex healthcare system and can help you:

- Find doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers
- Research and locate treatments for medical conditions
- Understand test results, treatment recommendations, and prescribed medications

Your advocate can also help you:

- Sort out claim and billing payment issues
- Schedule specialist treatment and tests
- Deal with insurance company pre-certifications and other approvals for services
- Transfer medical records, X-rays, and lab results
- Arrange for home-care equipment following a hospital stay
- Coordinate benefits between physicians and insurance companies

### Health Plan Contributions

We have had calls regarding changes in the pension check due to health insurance increases. Depending on your plan, there were changes effective January 2015 that were explained in Open Enrollment

communications. These changes did not take effect in the pension check until recently, but they will not be retroactive.

### The Aetna Plan

Effective January 1, 2015, the Aetna HMO plan has been replaced by the Open Access Elect Choice (Aetna EPO) plan.

If you were on Aetna HMO (non-Medicare) you should have received new Aetna cards which read Aetna EPO instead of Aetna HMO.

Aetna's Open Access Elect Choice (EPO) plan offers a few enhancements:

- NO REFFERALS REQUIRED – Retirees have direct access to all physicians and specialists in their network
- PCPs no longer required – PCPs are always encouraged, however, no longer required
- Larger Provider network – All providers in the HMO network are available on the Open Access Elect Choice (EPO) network....and many more. Retirees can log onto [DocFind](#) to look up providers in their area.
- Short Term Rehabilitation was enhanced to cover 60 visits per year (a change from the existing 60 consecutive days).

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## RECENT EVENTS

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### RETIREEES VISIT TO STAPLETON BRANCH LIBRARY



**Branch Manager Robert Gibbs and retirees on the tour.**

**See more Events photos at the end of this newsletter.**

When Staten Island Representative Emily Cohen discussed with Stapleton Branch Manager Robert Gibbs the idea of a program that would combine a tour of the recently renovated library building with a talk on the Sri Lankan community nearby, he agreed to give the tour and suggested the perfect person for the talk: Faikah Jayman, retired Senior Clerk at St. George Library Center. She graciously accepted the invitation.

Thus, on Friday, April 4, 2014, our group of twenty-three retirees brightened a showery day by marveling over the finely restored 1905 Carnegie building and its modern glass addition. Robert Gibbs was a dynamic, enthusiastic guide, and we were impressed to learn that he had been able to select his own staff members. They, in turn, work hard to tailor programs to the needs of the community.

After our tour, we sat in the community room and enjoyed hearing Faikah Jayman speak about Sri Lanka and the exodus of people fleeing unrest there. Staten Island beckoned many as a place to settle, especially areas not far from the ferry to Manhattan where work could be found. She told us about some of the customs of the people. Everything we heard was interesting, but it was most entertaining to find out what brought Faikah to start a career with The New York Public Library.

As a young person, she had been at her local branch and saw others filling out forms. When told that these were applications for page positions, Faikah was confused. She understood the meaning of “page” as a part of a book! Once given the meaning in this instance, Faikah decided to fill out an application herself. She was hired!

Following Faikah’s great talk, most of us went to lunch at nearby Lakruwana, a Sri Lankan restaurant. The authentic food we ate in surroundings of décor imported from Sri Lanka provided an experience that capped off a lovely day.

## **FORT WASHINGTON BRANCH CENTENNIAL**

On April 12, 2014, the Fort Washington Branch celebrated its centennial. A plaque was created commemorating this event and listing—together with their years of service—“all the branch managers from the past 100 years who shaped this library into the vibrant community that stands today.” It was a lovely low-key affair with a large birthday cake. Some of the library retirees who attended were Felix Morales, Mary K Conwell, Becky Koppelman, Jane Kunstler, Beryl Eber,



**Back row: Jennifer Zarr,  
Kenneth Wright  
Front row: Anne Coriston,  
Felix Morales, Estelle Friedman,  
Vianela Rivas**

Yolanda Bonitch, Bob Bellinger, and Adele Bellinger. Congressman Charles Rangel and Borough President Gale A. Brewer, as well as other elected officials, graced Ft. Washington with their presence. Helen Brody and Francie Einkenkel, current librarians who had worked at Ft. Washington during its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well as members of the Support Group, also came to celebrate and to reminisce.

They remembered that at that previous celebration then Mayor Ed Koch was in attendance along with other political representatives. A proclamation was issued by then Borough President David Dinkins, and Congressman Rangel inserted the event into the Congressional Record. Testimonials had been sent in by the branch’s alumni, including Henry Kissinger, actress Irene Dailey, newsman Edwin I. Newman, and playwright William Gibson, among others. The Chair of Community Board 12 recited Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech, and a chamber orchestra played an original

composition written especially for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It was difficult for many of the visitors to believe that 25 years had passed so quickly.

## DEWEY DECIMAL FESTIVAL



**Becky Koppelman & Carol Anshein**

When we heard about the Dewey Decimal Festival, a program of staged readings of ten-minute comedies related to libraries, some of us were intrigued. The Friends of the Chappaqua Library in Westchester County had sponsored a contest, and the nine plays chosen as winners comprised the program. Playwrights included U.S. and Canadian citizens. Titles included *What Would Dewey Do?* and *Dewey or Don't We?* Actors were from community theatre companies.

By the time the evening of Saturday, October 8, 2014, arrived, our NYPLRA attendees numbered eleven. Some of us traveled together via Metro North from Grand Central Station; others traveled by car. Several of us enjoyed a pre-theatre dinner at a French bistro near the Chappaqua Station, Le Jardin du Roi.

C.J. Ehrlich, co-coordinator of the festival, was wonderfully welcoming to us, and she and President of the Friends group Shobha

Vanchriswar went all out. There were choice seats saved for us with “Reserved” signs on them although this was not a reserved-seat event. When the program ran overtime and we were in peril of missing our train home, the promised rides to the train station materialized in a blink of an eye and whisked us there in time.

We hear that, due to the event’s success, it may well be repeated next year. Let us hope that it will be a matinee so those from NYPLRA who would have attended if not for the late hour might have the chance to experience this!

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

On Wednesday, December 3, the Retirees braved inclement weather to take an exciting tour of the National Museum of the American Indian in Lower Manhattan. The museum is located in what was formerly the U.S. Custom House, a truly historic building, and is part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

We were assigned a “Museum Ambassador,” Loretta Shapiro, who took us through “The Infinity of Nations.” Her tour concentrated on different masks representing the diverse cultures of various tribes on the East Coast. It was fascinating to see how the masks, clothing, and culture of each tribe differed one from the other.

There was also an exhibit of turquoise and silver jewelry made by tribes in the Southwest, as well as a documentary showing how the jewelry is actually made. Of course,

there was also the gift shop featuring books, pottery, etc.

We all expressed a desire to return in the future.

## **SAXTRAVAGANZA**



**Becky Koppelman, Patrick Hardish,  
Mary K. Conwell**

On December 4, 2014, Becky Koppelman and Mary K. Conwell attended “Saxtravaganza,” a celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Adolphe Sax, which was presented by the Composers Concordance. Composers Concordance is a concert series and presenting organization for contemporary music with a 31-year history of successful premieres in Manhattan. The group strives to present contemporary music in innovative ways, with an emphasis on thematic programming. Patrick Hardish, an NYPL retiree, musician, composer, and co-founder of Composers Concordance was represented at the event by his composition *Sonorities IV*, performed by Nick Biello on soprano saxophone.

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## **IN THE EVENT OF A RETIREE'S DEATH**

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In the event of a retiree's death, it is important that the following be contacted by the next of kin.

NYPL Human Resources Service Center  
212 -621-0500, prompt 4, for general NYPL questions.

DC37 212-815-1234, for union benefits information.

New York State Retirement System  
866-805-0990, toll-free, for pension questions and to inform NYSRS of the person's death date. A death certificate will be required as proof of death.

The New York Public Library Retirees Association would also like to be contacted so that we may inform the deceased's former colleagues. This may be done by emailing or calling President Becky Koppelman at [blekopp@gmail.com](mailto:blekopp@gmail.com) or 212-874-6199.

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## RETIREEES NEWS

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### POLLY BOOKHOUT

I can't help it. I am a perpetual student. The ancient world has been a prime interest for several years with classes on the archaeology of the Aegean islands, Greece, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia. The Assyria to Iberia exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum came just at the right time along with lectures at the museum. Last spring I took a Greek tragedy class and went to a couple of performances of Greek tragedy, one in Greek with supertitles. This summer two friends and I finished the third volume of the Arabian Nights and enjoyed indoor picnics.

Last year I took a Road Scholar Mayan-themed trip through Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. This year I will take a trip to Corsica to complement my present course on the prehistoric western Mediterranean.

This year I hope to improve my neglected apartment with repaired doorknobs and lights, a new washbasin and stove, new tiles in the kitchen, and fewer books.

### ESTELLE FRIEDMAN

This past December and January, my daughter and I went to Israel to visit my son and family. It is a good time of the year to go because the temperature is usually about 40 degrees in the north, about 70 degrees toward the south, and very hot near the Dead Sea. We attended a Bar Mitzvah that was held in a tent in the desert. We all sat there feeling very biblical. We then drove north toward a city called Safed to visit my granddaughter who is in medical school. On the way, we drove by the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth. The road we were on was exactly level

with the Dead Sea, which was on one side of us with high mountainous sand dunes on the other. The contrast is quite spectacular. It took us only four hours to get from the south to the north; in certain places, the width of the country was only nine miles. Israel is such a small country, and the climate and temperature are constantly changing. Before we were aware of it, we went from desert heat to mountain rain.

This is the time of year when the country is green and everything grows. Poppies grew in the desert, and there were greenhouses all around the country. We stopped at one greenhouse where peppers were growing. I never knew that when you let green peppers mature for a longer period of time they become red or orange or yellow and are much sweeter. I always thought they were a different species.

We brought my granddaughter a space heater because her place has no central heating. We all huddled around it, including the dog named Goulash. At night, Goulash also huddled under the blankets to keep warm.

The next day we went down to Tel Aviv, which had grown since the last time we visited. An area where the British army had been quartered years ago had been made into a beautiful park, which was surrounded by cafes and shops and where crowds of people walked, biked, roller-skated, and lounged.

We did very little sightseeing. It was pleasant just to be together. In this day and age, when families live so far from each other, this is just one of the ways we manage to keep in touch.





**James Huffman with students from Thurgood Marshall Middle School.**

#### **JANE GREENLAW**

I have been, since 1992, an enthusiastic gardener in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen, where I am fortunate to have ample garden space in two neighborhood gardens: one in Hell's Kitchen Park on Tenth Avenue between 47<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Streets; the other in Clinton Community Garden on West 48<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues.

I have enjoyed summer travel for many years with my husband to Zermatt, Switzerland.

I worked, after my retirement from NYPL in 1999, for eleven more years (2000-2011) as a part-time adjunct reference librarian at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY. I also trained as a massage therapist at the Swedish Institute in NYC and, in 2003, obtained my New York State license as a professional massage therapist. I worked for several years part-time, and, from 2007-2012, was a volunteer doing massage at a local hospice. I am now completely retired.

#### **NORMA HERZ**

Does anyone remember an old edition of *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde with a black, white, and gray cover? It was unusually shaped, about 10" wide by 5" tall. I recall an illustration showing the giant lying down while children played. There was a version in just English and another in German and English. Please contact me with any memories of this book or additional facts that might help me to locate a copy. My address is 68 Clifton Ave., Staten Island, N.Y. 10305 and my phone number is 718-447-8043.

#### **JAMES HUFFMAN**

I am enjoying working with 6th and 7th graders, Department of Education, Thurgood Marshall Middle School, Extended Day Reading Program.

My hobbies include a continuing interest in photography and traveling.

### **PATRICK HARDISH**

Patrick reports that on December 1, 2014, his "Soliloquy" for bassoon was performed at LeFrak Concert Hall, Queens College (CUNY), Flushing, NY, by Cindy Baez as part of her senior bassoon recital.

### **ANNE HELLER**

At retirement, I left Manhattan, where I had lived for forty-seven years, and moved to the east end of Long Island. The village of Greenport has a very active library, the Floyd Memorial Library, which is the center of cultural life in Greenport.

I'm working three days a week in a small law office in Riverhead, a twenty-three mile drive each way, assisting an attorney with trusts and estates.

In my spare time, I'm volunteering at the Historical Society, helping archive their collection; going on birding walks with the local Audubon chapter; quilting with a group of women once a month; and learning how to knit. I'm also learning about gardening and house repairs, having bought a house after living in an apartment most of my adult life.

### **JESSIE LEE JOHNSON**

My first project in 2014 was contacting author Sally Svenson and arranging for her to present a program about her book, *Lily, Duchess of Marlborough* (second wife of the eighth duke), to an organization I belong to. Although not nearly as well-known as other "millionaire American princesses," Lily—from Troy, New York—deserved this thoroughly researched and documented biography with a well-written, flowing narrative. It is the fascinating story of a woman who was exceptionally remarkable, admirable, and resourceful for her era. She controlled her fortune from her first husband

throughout two subsequent marriages, outliving all three husbands and leaving only one child, a boy who died in 1919, presumably during the flu epidemic of 1918-1919.

A fabulous fjords trip up the western coast of Norway, past the Arctic Circle to the Lofoten Islands, was the fulfillment of a desire to see this unique area of the world and its natural beauty, a desire that began after seeing filmed-on-location Norwegian movies of Knut Hamsun's novels at LPA in 2009 and an aerial-view documentary film, *Ocean, a Way of Life*, on the entire western coast, at the National Maritime Museum in Oslo on a trip to Scandinavia in 2012. At the conclusion of the fjords trip, I went back to see this documentary. It was a singular thrill to see it again since I had just seen many of the sites in the film.

### **LYDIA LA FLEUR**

I spent most of last July in the mountains of Japan with my son and [his] family, but I went primarily to see my granddaughter Emma perform one of the leads in the musical *Sister Act*—in Japanese—at Tokyo's Imperiale Theater. Before going, I went to the NYPL's Library for the Performing Arts to view a video of it as performed on Broadway. I'm very grateful for this service because it helped me understand what was going on in the Japanese version, which, incidentally, was very spirited and beautifully sung.

This past year, I created, with the help of a younger person, a blog devoted to my current experiences with aging in Manhattan, hoping that they will resonate with many other people around my age. I've gotten wonderful feedback from readers so am encouraged to continue it. I would be ever so pleased if

you'd give it a try and would love any comments, negative as well as positive. You can read it by going to [www://stillupright.wordpress.com](http://www.stillupright.wordpress.com).

Did you know that eighty-eight is considered a lucky number in Japan? I learned this only in January when I was given a big surprise birthday party. I was expecting a big celebration when I reached ninety, but my granddaughter Sarah insisted on this year because the character for eighty-eight resembles the character for rice, which, along with being Japan's most important food, also symbolizes health and wealth. So those of you who are approaching eight-eight, welcome it! Life is good!

#### **MARCIA LOYD**

I am a proud grandmother of two boys. My oldest, Lukwan, is about to graduate from the Borough of Manhattan Community College this spring. My younger, Keith, attends Mathematics, Science Research and Technology Magnet High School. He takes college courses at sixteen years old on the weekends.

#### **JENNINE PORTA**

My duties on the Executive Board include rotating as the recording secretary at board meetings. I also send out email notices to the membership and help take photographs at the annual luncheon and retirees' events and outings. I also enjoy photography when traveling with my husband Mark McCluski and our dog Elvis in our Chinook Motor Home. Our most recent adventure this January and part of February was an RV rally in Ocala, Florida, followed by visiting friends in Sarasota and Tampa and cousins in Daytona, and a reunion in Bradenton with Mark's cousins that he hadn't seen in 50

years! We also visited Tarpon Springs, the Ybor City historic district in Tampa, Venice, Dunedin, and several lovely state parks. On the way home, we saw St. Augustine and then visited family in North and South Carolina. We managed to make it home in time to catch some of the frigid weather and another snow storm.

#### **PAUL SCHMIDT**

Although frustratingly slow moving, I just love retirement. Enjoying and supporting early music groups, especially Back Vespers at my church and the Boston Early Music Festival, is most satisfying, as are frequent trips to New England. I was on Cape Cod for a few weeks last year.

#### **JOE ZEVELOFF**

I go to Brazil almost every year. My wife is from Rio, and we usually go there when it's winter in New York. However, in 2014 we went in May because of the World Cup. The atmosphere during the Cup was very exciting. For the first game we went to an apartment of some friends. They had about 15 people and a lot of beer and good food. There were a lot of screams of joy at goals and many groans at missed goals. When Brazil won that first game, there was a big communal sigh of relief. My wife lives at the top of a hill in a picturesque part of Rio. It's surrounded by the Tijuca Forest. When we arrived back to her home, there was a big celebratory party at the bottom of the hill for Brazil's win. Music, dance, and more beer.

We watched some of the other games at my wife's house, at other friend's apartments, on big-screen TVs at Copacabana Beach, and at various bars and restaurants around the city. Watching on large screens at the beach was very exciting because people from all over the

world were there to witness the games. The individuals had their countries' football tee-shirts with the various colors and logos. At the end of the tournament when Brazil was trounced 7-1 in a semi-final, the Brazilians, of course, were very sad, but the party at the bottom of my wife's hill was still going strong despite the loss.

My impression of Brazilians is that they like Argentines and Argentines like Brazilians, except when it comes to football. Most, if not all, of the Brazilians that I spoke to wanted Germany to win the World Cup, and they were very happy when Germany beat Argentina in the final.

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## NEW MEMBERS

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Jay Barksdale  
Rhonna Goodman  
Jane Greenlaw  
Ann Heller  
Julia Hotton  
Armand Isip  
Faikah Jayman  
Barbara Krauter  
Marjorie Mir  
Janice Quinter  
Paul T. Schmidt  
Dana Simon  
Bosiljka Stevanovic

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## DIRECTORY UPDATES

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Nancy Avrin  
9 Evergreen Way  
Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591-1044  
914-418-5682 (h)  
(everything else the same)

Jay Barksdale (new)  
311 Washington Street #11C  
Jersey City, NJ 07302  
201-763-6800  
[birdale@comcast.net](mailto:birdale@comcast.net)

Henrietta Cammisa  
[avery2cammisa@aol.com](mailto:avery2cammisa@aol.com)

Thomas A. Dickinson  
Atria West 86  
333 West 86th Street #110 4A  
New York, NY 10024  
646-862-7934

Ruth A. Gonnello  
971 Tenderfoot Hill Road Apt. G  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906-3934  
719-632-1039

Jane Greenlaw (new)  
529 West 42nd Street #4J  
New York, NY 10036-6227  
212-564-3049 (h) 646-322-7840 (c)  
[janegreenlaw@verizon.net](mailto:janegreenlaw@verizon.net)

Marilyn Iarusso  
9002 39th Avenue SW

Patricia Jones  
914-649-4507 (c)

Marjorie Mir  
45 Pondfield Road West  
[marjorie.mir@gmail.com](mailto:marjorie.mir@gmail.com)

Larry Petterson  
[larry.petterson@icloud.com](mailto:larry.petterson@icloud.com)

Frances Rabinowitz  
718-809-8032 (c)

Paul Schmidt  
2 Grace Court #2P

Hara Seltzer  
212-206-7875

Karlan Sick  
212-600-0016

Kathy Sweekly  
[moon234ks@gmail.com](mailto:moon234ks@gmail.com)

Kate Todd  
914-202-5615 (c)

Stephanie Tolbert  
917-733-0464 (c)

Philip Wolcoff  
917-715-7298 (c)

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## IN MEMORY OF NYPL RETIREES, COLLEAGUES, AND FRIENDS

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We are all saddened when one of our own passes away. But are you wondering why some of our obituaries are so brief? It's because we've been unable to find information on a retiree's life or work history. We search as best we can, but our resources are limited. However, if you knew the person who has passed away, please share your information. Write or email your memories to us, and we will pass them on. In that way, we all can remember our friends and colleagues. Obituaries were previously sent via email and U.S. Mail for the following:

Emily Browne  
Pauline Cappellini  
Richard David Claypool  
Stephen Crook  
Josephine Iacullo  
Sarah Jones  
Richard C. Lynch  
Brian G. Martin  
Shirley Spranger  
Eric Steele  
Valerie Angela Brown Stewart  
Gwendolyn Taylor-Davis  
Virginia Warner  
Tony Warren

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## HELEN BEATTIE

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We are sorry to report that Helen Beattie, 88, died in Montana February 1, 2014, after a brief illness. Mrs. Beattie retired as a senior children's librarian from the Richmondtown Branch on Staten Island in 2005. In 2000, she was among the first recipients of the New York Times Librarian of the Year Award. Her knowledge of children's literature was extensive. She trained new children's librarians and frequently was able to overcome the resistance in other staff to working with children. Librarians and staff she worked with remained devoted to her. A colleague, Susan Calvert, has said of Helen Beattie, "Mrs. Beattie was the best librarian .... she displayed a quiet strength, good humor, and patience, and there wasn't a book she didn't know."

Born Helen Elizabeth MacDonald on December 7, 1926, in Montana, she lived in the Philippines as a child with her parents,

Presbyterian missionaries. When World War II broke out, she and her family were taken and held as prisoners of war in the internment camp at Los Banos until 1945 when the camp was liberated by Army paratroopers.

She returned to Montana to attend the University of Montana where she studied music. After graduation, Mrs. Beattie moved to San Francisco where she completed her Seminary studies. As a woman, she was unable to be ordained but chose to serve as a missionary in Iran where she spent two years teaching music to children.

She then returned to the United States and to New York City where she sang in the Choir of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church. There she met her husband, Lawrence, whom she married in 1958. Until her death, Mrs. Beattie remained a member of the Saint Cecelia Society.

Her only child, David, was born in 1961. As a toddler, David was diagnosed with significant developmental disabilities. Mrs. Beattie spent the rest of her life as David's tireless advocate. During that time she earned her library degree. She began her career with The New York Public Library at the Great Kills Branch as a part-time children's librarian while overseeing David's therapy. As David progressed she was able to assume a full-time schedule.

Mrs. Beattie and David returned to Montana in 2012 just before the onset of Hurricane Sandy, which destroyed their former home. Her husband predeceased her. She is survived by her son David, brothers John and George Mac Donald, and a sister Sibyl Kinter.

**Nancy Avrin, one of Mrs. Beattie's close colleagues, wrote,** "Helen was undoubtedly one of NYPL's most unique and well-known children's librarians. She and I worked together from 1986 until her retirement from Richmondtown. When I became the Great Kills Branch Librarian, she affectionately called me her 'child boss.' Helen was the ultimate source of information. Whenever a patron would stump the staff with a question, we would all dig into the reference books (and later, computer sources) to find the answer. If we still couldn't find it, we'd ask Helen, who always knew the answer or could put her hand on the right source without hesitation. We will all miss her."

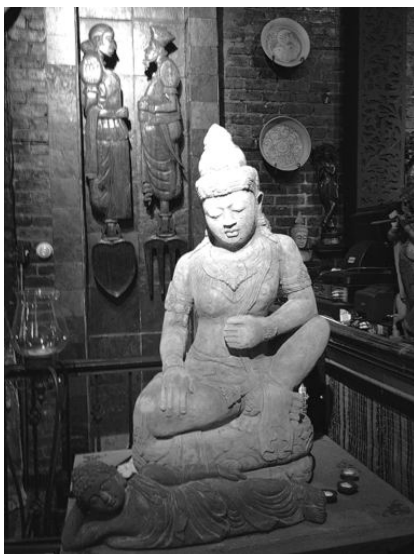
## THE STAPLETON TOUR

**The original front  
door of Stapleton  
Branch Library**



**Faikah Jayman is  
speaking.**

**Seated are  
Agnes Babich,  
Margaret Hetley, and  
Emily Cohen.**



**On the left  
is the  
fascinating  
restaurant  
decor**

**Emily Cohen  
is seated at  
right.**





## THE FORT WASHINGTON BRANCH CELEBRATION



**Speaking is  
Branch Manager  
Kenneth Wright**

**Seated are  
Charles Rangel and  
Gail Brewer**



**Left:  
Kenneth Wright,  
Charles Rangel,  
Estelle Friedman**

**Right:  
Beryl Eber,  
Bob Bellinger,  
Adele Bellinger**



**Yolanda Bonitch,  
Estelle Friedman,  
Jane Kunstler,  
Becky Koppelman, and  
Mary K. Conwell**



**Francie Einkenkel,  
Yolanda Bonitch,  
Helen Brody  
and Estelle Friedman**

## **THE MARY LEE KENNEDY PRESENTATION**



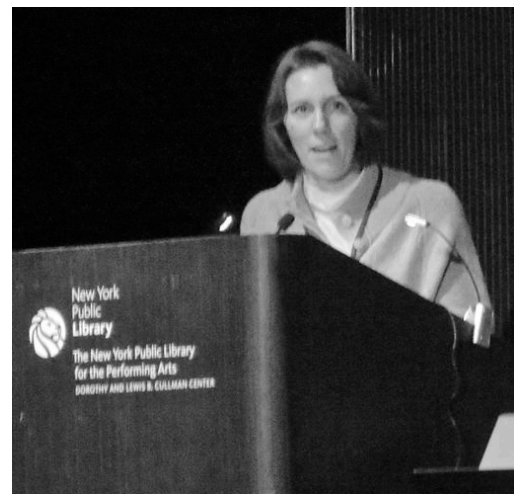
**Front Row: William Coakley, Yolanda Bonitch, Bonnie Farrier,  
and Beth Wladis**

**Second Row: Mystery Woman, Joanne Rosario, Mark McCluski**

## **IT'S OUR JOB FILMS MADE BY, FOR, AND ON THE NYPL A PROGRAM AT THE PERFORMING ARTS LIBRARY**



**Jane Kunstler and  
Becky Koppelman**



**Elena Rossi-Snook, Archivist in  
the Performing Arts Library's  
Reserve Film and  
Video Collection**

## **ANNUAL LUNCH AT LA MIRABELLE, MARCH 6, 2015**



**Alison Ryley, Diane Johnston,  
Nathaniel Crossland**



**George Mayer, Carl Yung,  
Josephine Chan Yung**





**Kris Shuman and Jessie Lee Johnson**



**Becky Koppelman and  
La Mirabelle chef**

**Clockwise from top: Mary Ann Carrier, Robert Foy, Kay Cassell, Carol Anshein,  
Susan Linder, Alice Hudson, Fran Nathan, Jane Kunstler**





**Marcia Loyd, Beryl Eber, and Dolores Vogliano**

**Kay Cassell, Robert Foy**



**Mark McCluski**







**Frances Rabinowitz, Beth Waldis,  
Adele and Bob Bellinger,  
and Virginia Taffurelli**



**Donna Abbaticchio and Gennie Perez**

**Osman Bayazid and Bosiljka Stevanovic**



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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

**Photographers:** Becky Koppelman, Jane Kunstler, Alan Pally, Jennine Porta, and Elizabeth Tiedemann

**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.