

**New York Public Library
Retirees Association
Newsletter**



Fall 2016

ISSUE NUMBER 38

REMEMBERING DONNELL



Donnell Staff in 2006

Left to right: Anne Hofmann, Jennifer Craft, Donna Abbaticchio, Jutta Zaplinski, and Alexandra Lutz

See page 2 for Jutta's remembrances.

REMEMBERING DONNELL

Jutta Zaplinski was born in Germany and received a degree in librarianship for academic libraries and archives in 1974 from the University of Hamburg. She was a cataloger and, later, Head of Binding and Preservation at the Max-Planck-Institute for Comparative and International Private Law. After coming to New York, she worked at The New York Public Library from 1993 until 2009. Jutta is a member of the editing task force of the Oral History Project and, in 2013, was interviewed for the Project by telephone from her home in Savannah, Georgia, where she and her husband relocated after their retirements. The article below is adapted from her interview as well as her written reminiscences.

When I learned that the new 53rd Street Branch had opened on June 26, 2016, I felt that I wanted to write my personal remembrance of the Donnell Library Center, the place that once meant the world for me.

I'd like to step back in time to recall my first, still-very-vivid impression of the Donnell Library Center through the eyes of myself as a recent immigrant. It must have been lunchtime when I entered Donnell for the very first time. The ground floor was crowded. I noticed long lines at the circulation desk, and almost everybody was carrying library materials. Some were roaming the aisles or reading at the tables. To perceive the library as such a popular place made me incredibly happy, and I wished with all my heart that one day I would be part of it.

As it happened, Bosiljka Stevanovic, Head of the Donnell Foreign Language Library, was looking for somebody with a solid background in German language and literature. I assured her that I was exactly the person she was looking for, and after a short interview, was hired as a temporary employee. I still have my first paycheck, dated March 19, 1993. For 20 hours of work, my gross income was \$194.00, and my take home pay was \$178.80.

When I close my eyes, I still see the entire workroom: divided into two parts, each side had metal shelves filled to capacity with books—some of them serving as room dividers between workroom and public area—as well as desks and computer stations surrounded by trucks and boxes of materials waiting to be processed.

During my first couple of weeks on the job, I observed, listened, and learned. I also deleted books that I would have preferred to save under different circumstances. As time went by, I felt more and more attached to the workroom and the people who worked there. We all had one thing in common: English was our second language. Although my English vocabulary was still limited, this environment gave me the confidence I needed to start using the language regularly. It's difficult to explain how good it felt to be increasingly able to converse with Ms. Stevanovic, Mr. Chang, Ms. Kuharets, and the unforgettable Mrs. Goldberg.

Finally, my employment as a German specialist was about to expire, and I feared the day when I would have to leave. Perhaps Ms. Stevanovic knew that I needed a gentle push when she suggested that I go back to library school and apply for the position of librarian trainee. I definitely was daydreaming about a permanent position, but going back to school? At my age? And as a grandmother? Luckily, Ms. Stevanovic did not take my half-hearted protest as an answer, and soon after, I was matriculated at Pratt Institute. Exactly on my fiftieth birthday, I attended my first course in cataloging.

For the many patrons who came to the third floor in need of assistance with foreign-language materials, the knowledgeable staff always went the extra mile to meet their expectations. The beauty of the Donnell Foreign Language Library was that it was a place where people of all nationalities could feel at home, find books in their native languages, and, perhaps, socialize. I still remember telling my friends in Germany that I was just another puzzle piece—instead of a foreigner—in the “melting pot” that made New York such a unique city, and DF was such a great place to be. When the Foreign Language Library was renamed World Languages Collection, it reflected just perfectly what it really had been all the time.

Needless to say, Donnell changed my life. I worked in several other branches and finally, beginning in 2002, came back as the supervising—and later principal—librarian of the adult and reference collections. These were located on the main floor and mezzanine—the nucleus of all five floors—and, therefore, the staff was usually the “first responder” when a situation occurred. Although we had unpleasant incidents at times, one thing was clear: the patrons really cared about their library.

So, it seemed unthinkable that this heavily used library, together with its precious auditorium, would ever go out of existence. But after fifty-two years in operation, it did. It all started with rumors—I think purposefully dropped—that the DLC would be closing and the building demolished. The rumors spread like wildfire, but as long as I hadn’t been officially informed, I refused to participate in speculation. Eventually, the selling of the building was confirmed, reality set in, and we had to get busy preparing for closing. After rigorously weeding the collections of all floors, the remains found new homes in branches, the Mid-Manhattan Library, the Performing Arts Library, or they were outsourced to Princeton, NJ. At the end—except for the Media Center—the library was a very ghostly place where empty shelves, secured with ugly orange plastic mesh, gave me the creeps.

A little bit of everything—including myself—was moved down to the former Media Center, to serve the last loyal patrons. It was not an easy task to deal with very unhappy patrons and frustrated staff at the same time, especially since we were never officially informed nor provided with written information for the public. But I did what I had to do. I shared my limited knowledge with insisting patrons that the Donnell Library Center would be replaced by a state-of-the-art library below ground, with an entrance alongside that of a new eight-story-high hotel. I am proud to say that I squared the circle by being loyal to my employer and not knowingly lying to the public, although, due to the strange secrecy, I wasn’t sure what to believe. Finally, on August 30, 2008, as the last employee standing, it was my duty to close the library for good and leave the responsibility of the dying giant to a security firm. As much as I cherish the memory of my first day as a librarian trainee at Donnell, I still remember vividly how miserable I felt

when I had to ask the last patron to leave, turn off the computers and lights, hug the guard goodbye, and leave the library for the last time. I walked down Fifth Avenue fighting off tears.

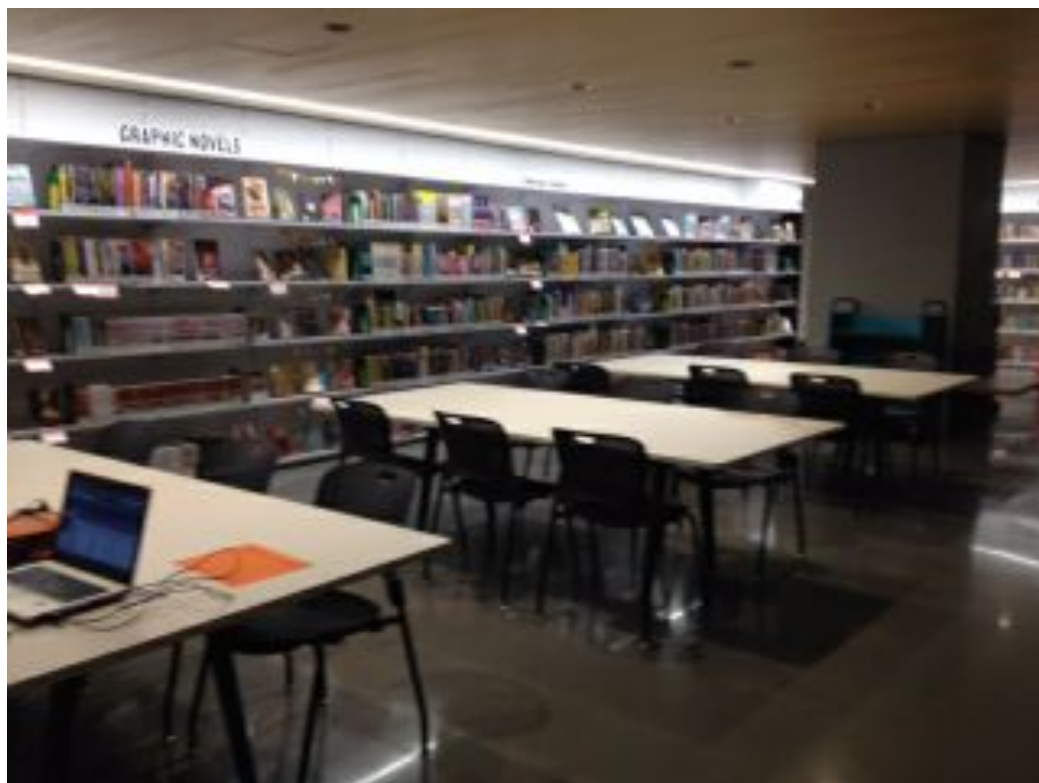
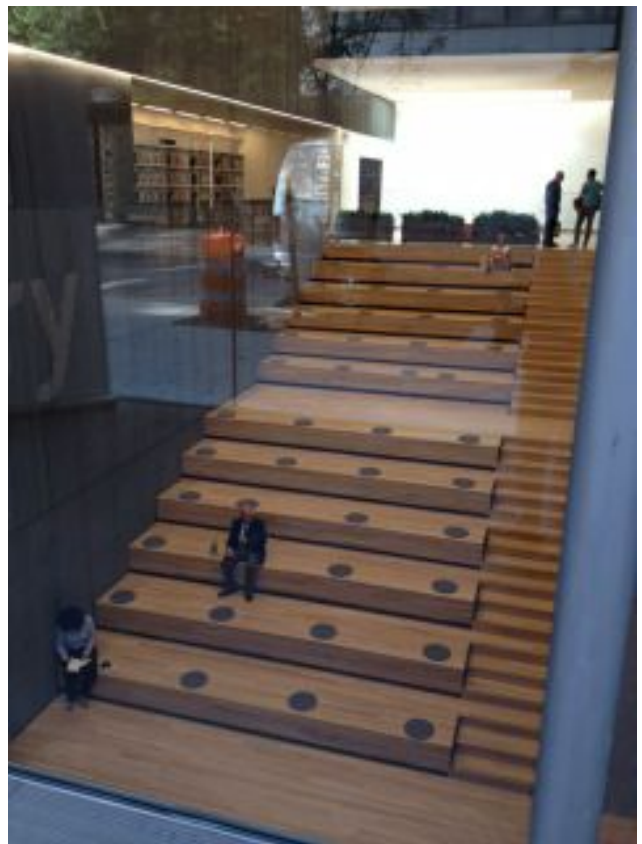
The new 53rd Street Library shows that the NYPL administration kept its promise to build a state-of-the-art library that meets the needs of the 21st Century. Thank you for that. Eight years have elapsed between the closing of the Donnell Library Center and the opening of the new branch. Never-ending electronic updates that I couldn’t even imagine in 2008 are now substantial parts of my daily life. I am using my smartphone constantly as a ready reference tool and sometimes even to make phone calls. I love to download e-books for my book club and have become a busy texter. In short, even more than what the comprehensive DLC had to offer is now right in the back pocket of my jeans. Do I want to go back in time? Certainly not. It was a privilege to serve the public as a staff member of the Donnell Library Center, but it is history.



Remembering the old Donnell building

PHOTOS OF THE NEW 53rd STREET BRANCH

Taken by Mary K. Conwell



NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVES

The NYPL Archives is a treasure trove. There are thousands of boxes containing material on a myriad of subjects.

Let's say that, as a library retiree, you'd like to see the holdings on a particular branch. You can find this information online.

Go to www.nypl.org and select "Research." Then scroll down a bit and select "Archives Portal." In the search box labelled "Find Archival Materials," type in the name of the branch. For an example, let's use Muhlenberg Branch.

When you do the search you will see a heading "Muhlenberg Branch Records 1906-1997." If you click on this heading, you will see more information in an overview form. At this point, you can elect to see a detailed description where you'll find out what is in each box and folder. Some examples are "Annual reports - Branch 1926 - 1990" and "Opening 1906."

If you are interested in examining the material, select "Contact The Division," and a form will appear on which you can request access.

Here's some information courtesy of Thomas Lannon, Assistant Director of Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books. He tells us that, due to budgetary restraints, the Library will not have a senior staff member as its Archivist for the foreseeable future. The NYPL Archives have been incorporated into the Manuscripts and Archives Division (MSS) and will be managed by its staff under the direction of the Associate Director of Special Collections with support from Mr. Lannon.

Perhaps you have something that you would like to donate to the Archives. The requested method is to email manuscripts@nypl.org. Please include both a description of the material and its amount. If you have no computer access, write to:

The New York Public Library

Manuscripts and Archives Division

Stephen A. Schwarzman Building

476 Fifth Avenue

Third Floor, Room 328

New York, N.Y. 10018

FROM THE EDITOR



This is your newsletter! Please let me know about the goings-on in your retirement. Did you travel somewhere interesting or meet a colleague from long ago? Do you have a fond (or not-so-fond) memory from your working days? Please share your stories. Please also send pictures that correspond to your stories if you have them or just a picture of yourself to share with your fellow retirees.

Emily Cohen

718-984-3790

ecohennypl@aol.com

PRESIDENT'S NOTES



Greetings! Here I sit at my computer, anticipating another wonderful newsletter. Enjoy!

First, I want to tell you that I am retiring from the presidency of our retirees association. I have been president since Juanita Doares, past president, “stepped down.” I have been thinking about this for a while, but something interesting is always going on. I have enjoyed being your president, but now it is my time to “step down.” I will remain, as President Emeritus, but someone younger is needed to lead the association with vitality and new ideas. We have nearly three hundred members in our exceptional association, and we are still growing. There’s not another retirees association like ours. We have a dedicated and agreeable executive board and committee members who meet monthly. We laugh and chat but also have serious discussions as we plan great outings and programs for you. And I think you all know that we have an exceptional Oral History Project in progress, too.

But we can’t have an association without a President! We can’t exist without one. We need a President! Will YOU think seriously about becoming President when I retire? Or become a board member, or work on a committee when needed?

We will be in touch with you again about this. We must have an election, and we want new names on our slate. Please give me a call so that we can discuss the association. We will need a new President!

In closing, I want to wish you all a good fall and winter. This is the busy holiday season. And remember, send in your news for our next newsletter; everyone loves to hear from YOU!

My very best wishes to you all!
Becky Eakins Koppelman

HONORING ISMAEL ALICEA

On Friday, May 20, 2016, the Northeast Chapter of REFORMA, the National Association to promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, presented a program in the Trustees Rooms of the Library to honor Ismael Alicea, who died last year after many years of service to NYPL. At the gathering, the Ismael Alicea Professional Development Award was presented to Mary Marques of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The award, renamed in honor of Ismael, is given annually to a member of the chapter to help defray the expenses of attending the American Library Association’s annual conference. Ismael was a member of the Northeast Chapter for many years and was very involved in its work.

A plaque was presented to the Alicea family, and a slide show highlighted Ismael’s life and work. Several members of his family were present at the ceremony.

Family members and others who had known and worked with Ish shared their memories of him. Among the current and former NYPL staff members who spoke very movingly were Yolanda Bonitch, Harriet Gottfried, Bosiljka Stevanovic, Linda Arce Caycedo, Brigid Cahalan, Alexandra Gomez, and Ken English. Their anecdotes were both poignant and amusing. The event was a fitting tribute to a fine man and librarian.

FOUR MEMORABLE COLLEAGUES

By David R. Beasley

TIMOTHY F. BEARD. Short, rather tubby, with a voice that threatened to crack, Tim was an engaging personality informed by a professional attitude. He worked in the Genealogy Division of the Research Libraries, which was off the end of the Reading Hall on the right after one passed through the Catalogue Room, 315. I recall him sitting at the main desk, shaped like a counter, and answering questions in a deliberate, all-knowing manner. He knew his stuff. He wrote a book on genealogical research. I used to meet him on coffee or lunch break in the Library Cafeteria in the early days when the Cafeteria was a going concern and writers from the Allan and Schomburg Rooms would congregate there. For some time, his conversational companion was the thin, correct editor of the Public Affairs Information Service Index, whose name I have forgotten but whose knowledge complemented Tim's. For some reason they had a falling out, and Tim no longer appeared in the Cafeteria. Gunther Pohl was the head of his Division, and although the two worked in close proximity for years, they were not on speaking terms near the end. Tim retired to the Berkshires with his wife Ann whom he mentioned proudly. I mention him, though not by name, in my autobiography. If you read it, I give you a hint – “reams of toilet paper.”

FRANK BRADLEY. The ebullient Frank Bradley was the third “librarian” in the Genealogy Division, just as knowledgeable as the other two but really a Library Technical Assistant. He was a handsome fellow in the mould of the English actor Leslie Howard. I mention him here because his death was announced in the Newsletter two or three years ago. He had no chance for promotion. I felt sorry for him (although promotion was generally difficult to obtain in most Divisions), yet he was always cheerful. He sang in choirs. He gave me a tour of his basement apartment once, not far from the Library. Then one day he left the Library for work tracking down heirs to estates. His friend asked him to join him in this lucrative business. Later Frank gave me a tour of his fabulous apartment on Park

Avenue, one of the richest looking establishments I had seen.

SYLVIA VON OBERLEITHNER. When I began working in the Cataloguing Division of the Research Libraries in 1965, I expected to do advanced cataloguing, for which I had prepared in courses at Pratt Institute. To my dismay, I was given planning sheets to fill out in preparation for computerization. Sylvia was my supervisor or corrector who would look over the planning sheets for the books I catalogued and point out missed commas. Sylvia was very tall and lean with a long face and bright eyes. She moved swiftly in long strides. Her German accent could have won her a role in a TV comedy. I imagined she must have escaped from Hitler's Germany. She was a good soul. I deal with my frustrations in the Cataloguing Division in my autobiography so will say no more here.

JOHN GANLY. After I was elected President of the Union, John came to the Economics Division, to which I had transferred three years earlier. It was a practice of librarians in that time to work in the Economics Division for the two years required to get the State diploma and then move to a university library and better pay, but John intended to stay. John had worked in business, which he said he disliked. He was of medium height, thin, quick in his movements, ambitious and attentive to whatever was required of him. He was balding. One day after I had known him for some years, he looked rather abashed at me. I noticed that he had a toupee attached by some sort of screws to his forehead. He wondered what I would think. I thought if it made him feel better, all the more power to him. He was business-like on the job and favored by our Division Chief, Ed Di Roma. I had been turned down for several promotions to subject librarian, as I describe in my autobiography, until as union leader I could not be denied the Labor Relations position. For many years, John remained a Librarian II, a static post in which one waited for a subject specialist to retire or die. I wrote a screed to the Trustees condemning this policy and, lo and behold, shortly thereafter the Library promoted several Librarian IIs to IIIs, including John. I got along well with John, although I sensed competitiveness after I returned to the Division on being voted out of the presidency—a vote that John helped to scrutinize. I think John was born in New York City of Irish parentage. He

inherited a place on Fire Island. He emailed me a year or so ago to inform me of his book *Celtic Crossings*, about Irish immigration. While writing this, I see that Kristin McDonough, Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL) wrote in praise of him in a Blog online, “Remembering John Ganly,” covering his life after the Economics and Public Affairs Division moved to SIBL, to which many of his co-workers added compliments. I mention him in my autobiography after he became Chief of the Division--selected over me--and also our relationship, which changed when he became my supervisor. His promotion seemed to have opened up opportunities for him and energized his librarianship.

THEN AND NOW



The building above served as the original Huguenot Park Branch Library . At that time it was the smallest building in the NYPL.



The current Huguenot Park Branch building opened January 2, 1985.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW INSPIRES TRIP

One of the pleasures and advantages of working on the Association’s Oral History Project is learning a lot about many things of which I know not. While working on the narrative of Alice Hudson, Curator of Maps, I became increasingly curious about Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where she lived as a young child. Oak Ridge was one of the three locations where the Manhattan Project, responsible for the atomic bombs used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were created. Oak Ridge was the site at which experiments were conducted and fissionable materials, both uranium and plutonium, first produced. Originally farm land that the government purchased, not without complaints from the long-time residents, in a quiet valley in Tennessee close to hydro-electric power, it became a small town and a top secret facility housing nearly 75,000 people at its peak and providing jobs for its residents, few of whom knew on what they were actually working. From houses constructed in a single day, to stores, transportation systems, schools, and every other living need, it is a fascinating story of cooperation and scientific development. We visited Oak Ridge, now a national park, spending five hours viewing the museum, old movies developed about the project, photos of bookmobile and other services, and viewing the original, decommissioned reactor. I highly recommend the journey and learning, first hand, about the events leading up to the use of the atomic bomb--well worth the trip. I would also urge everyone to jump in and participate in the Oral History Project. Our colleagues are, without doubt, a fascinating group, and saving and sharing their personal and professional histories is a wonderfully satisfying endeavor.

Deborah Trepp

Have you considered helping out with the oral history project but wondered if you have the right skills or even if you have the time?

Matching the tasks to your skills is a definite plus, but most of the tasks can be easily picked up. When it comes to time, all of us who volunteer for the project fit the work into our very busy retiree schedules, and we all have the autonomy to work around other obligations. So, read on and see where you can fit in.

The areas of the project that need the most help—in this order—are transcribing, editing, and interviewing. Here's how to think about each.



Transcribing: Were you one of the best typists in your class? Do you use Microsoft Word? Would you like to be among the first to listen to a narration and honor one of your colleagues by transcribing it? If you answer yes to most of these questions, contact Deborah Trepp at dpotrepp@gmail.com, and she will connect you with the narration of your choice and get you started on the ins and outs of transcription. Following are the interviews that already have been recorded and are awaiting transcription:

Burt Abelson
Alice Adamczyk
Louis Becker
Adele Bellinger
Robert Bellinger
Polly Bookhout
Elga Cace
Sally Campbell
Ruth Carr
Kay Cassell
Susan Chute
Emily Cohen
Henrietta Cohen
Martha Deephanphongs
Robert Foy
John Ganly
Harriet Gottfried
Dorothy Henderson
Phyllis Hoffman
Marsha Howard
James Huffman
Sharon Hyman
Joan Jankell

Patricia Jones
Edward Kasinee
Becky Koppelman
Lydia LaFleur
Dorothy Lourdou
Richard Lynch
Phyllis Mack
Peter McCallion
Sam Memberg
Jean Paul Michaud
Glenn Mills
Marjorie Mir
Ann Mock
Lillian Morrison
David Ockene
Edie Ostrowsky
Alan Pally
Sandra Payne
Gennie Pérez
Warren Platt
Marcia Purcell
Raymond Rachko
Carol Reiser

Diane Riordan
Kathleen Rowan
Arthur Ruhl
Hara Seltzer
Harriet Shalat
Kris Shuman
Karlán Sick
Gloria Silverman
Cynthia Smith
Virginia Taffurelli
Hishi Velardo
Sara Velez
Ellen Viggiano
Leonard Viggiano
Kaye Coke Walker
Sharon Washington
Ma'lis Wendt
Bonnie Williams
Beth Wladis
Philip Yockey
Josephine Chan Yung
Jutta Zaplinski
Joe Zeveloff



Editing: Are you someone who sees a sentence like the following and wants to correct it? "When you finish, will you please send the report to Bill and I?" Do you like to cite the *Chicago Manual of Style* to prove to a friend that she really feels bad and not badly about someone else's misfortune? Can you take a narrator's sentence and remove the uh's and um's without changing a jot of what they actually said and meant? If so, contact Beth Wladis at bethwladis@hotmail.com. She'll give you an orientation on our editing guidelines so you can be a first or second editor as soon as the following transcriptions have been completed.

Angela Calderella
Thomas Dickinson/Felix Morales
Telza Gardner
Robert McBrien

John Peters
Fran Rabinowitz
Zahava Stessel
Bosiljka Stevanovic



Interviewing: Are you excited about preserving the stories of our own contributions to NYPL? Do you consider yourself a good listener? Are you willing to learn how to use a digital recorder? Would you like to be the one to interview a colleague who is not yet on any of these lists? If so, contact Mary K. Conwell mkkconwell@yahoo.com, who will introduce you to the use of the Zoom H1 digital recorder and provide interview training created in conjunction with the Columbia University Oral History Master of Arts program. And if you yourself aren't on any of these lists, don't be shy about volunteering to be interviewed, either in person or over the phone.

Work on the following narrations has been or soon will be completed.



Ismael Alicea
Thomas Alrutz
Agnes Babich

Viola Barrett
Osman Bayazid
Yolanda Bonitch

Jean Bowen
Wendy Caldiero
Marie Ferrigno

Estelle Friedman
Philip Gerrard
Gerald Gold
Leonard Gold
Betty Gubert
Alice Hudson
Stephan Likosky

Bernice MacDonald
Raymond Markey
George Mayer
Angeline Moscat
Aileen O'Brien Murphy
Fran Nathan
Naomi Noyes

Rose Marie O'Leary
Carmen Reyes
Rafael Reyes
Virginia Swift
Dolores Vogliano
Cora Wilmot
Lilian Zwyns

And we've received written remembrances from:

Lenore Cowan
Phyllis Current
Norma Herz

Richard Jackson
Jesse Lee Johnson
Jean Pinckney

Robert Sheehan

Finally!



Yes, you! You don't even have to be in New York to transcribe or edit. So, please volunteer to help complete the important work of saving our own stories!

IN THE EVENT OF A RETIREES DEATH

In the event of a retiree's death, the following are to be contacted by 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 or (212) 984-6199.

IN MEMORY OF NYPL RETIREES, COLLEAGUES, AND FRIENDS

William J. De Mascio

Virginia J. Freeman

Norma Hersh

Philip A. Milito

Robert Pon

Gloria C. Protaz

NEW MEMBERS

Debbie Acosta

Marcelina Albadejo

Ann Alexander

Francie Einkenkel

Belen Garcia

Edward Kasinec

Janet Klucevsek

Jeanne Lamb

Betsy Bentley Menna

Madeleine M. Nichols

Julia C. Sherman

Barbara Suggs

RETIREES GO TO THE RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL TO SEE THE ROCKETTES

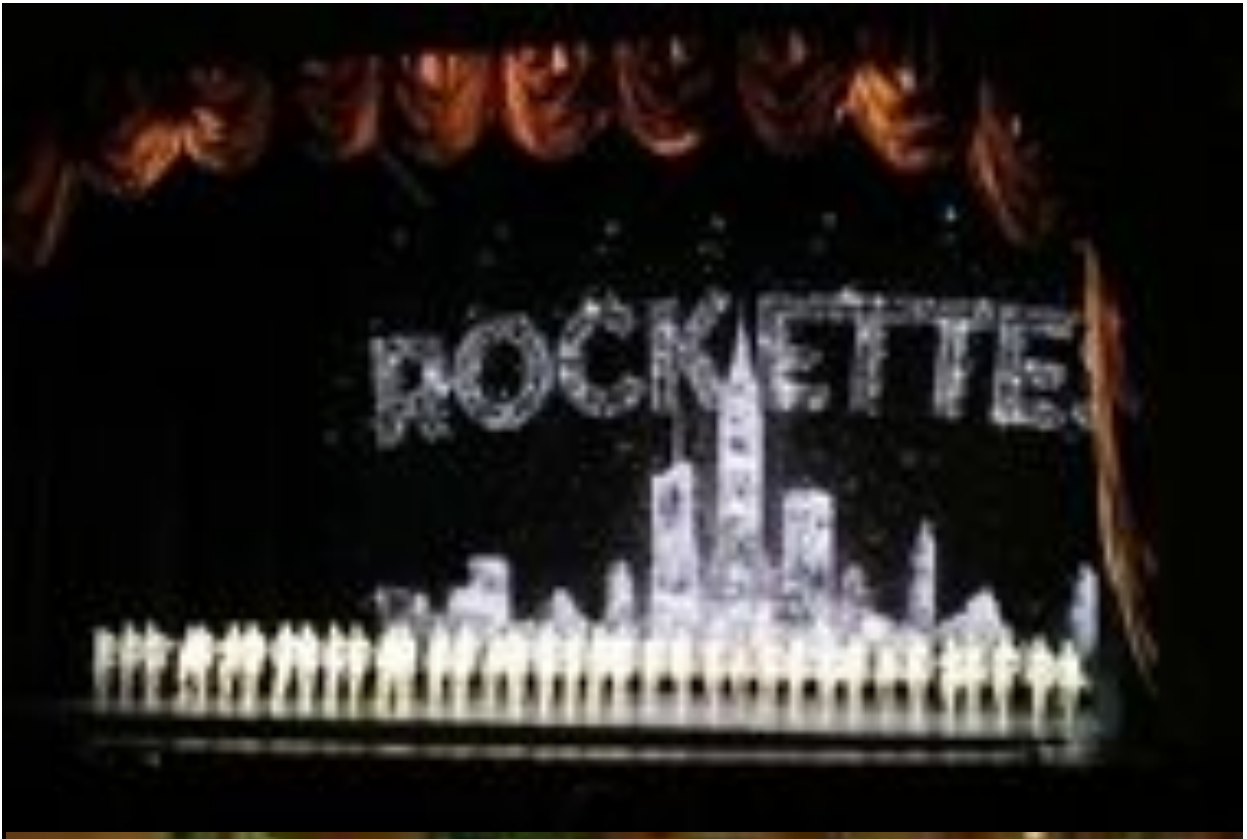
On July 27, twenty-five retirees took their seats to see the 2016 New York Spectacular starring the Radio City Rockettes. The trip was arranged by Estelle Friedman with our contact at RCMH, who gave us excellent orchestra seats at very reasonable prices.

I found the show sensational! The sets were amazing. The story involves an out-of-town family (all live actors) who get separated in the subway station at Grand Central. Mom and Dad head uptown, while the kids, an older daughter and younger son, head downtown. The two kids, not wanting to be on their own, really want to find their parents, so they look first at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, then Central Park, the Empire State Building, and the front steps of NYPL at 42nd and 5th. There sat Patience and Fortitude, huge animated puppets, "strutting" while delivering a clever rap, blinking their enormous eyes, and swatting huge tails back and forth. What fun!

The whole program was a Holiday Fairy Tale, every site filled with animated characters and fabulous stage settings. The orchestra was fantastic, with live actors, dancers and singers roaming all over the auditorium, while the Rockettes performed a real showstopper at each famous tour stop. They were sensational, especially when dancing to "Singing in the Rain". Real rain!!

Was the family reunited? Yes indeed, at the singing Statue of Liberty, where the whole stage and auditorium were filled with deafening music, bright colorful pulsating lights, wild streamers and confetti shooting all over for a fabulous grand finale. Whew!! What fun!! I am definitely ready to go back next year!

Becky Koppelman



A VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE NYPL RETIREES ASSOCIATION

My mom is a retired librarian from NYPL. When she was working in the NYPL system, one of the things that I found particularly admirable was the opportunity she had to interact with librarians and staff from across the NYPL system, whether it was from working at different branches, meeting colleagues through common activities such as book order, or participating in workshops and courses. It gave the sense that NYPL was really an interactive library system, and not individual branches that functioned as silos in isolation from each other.

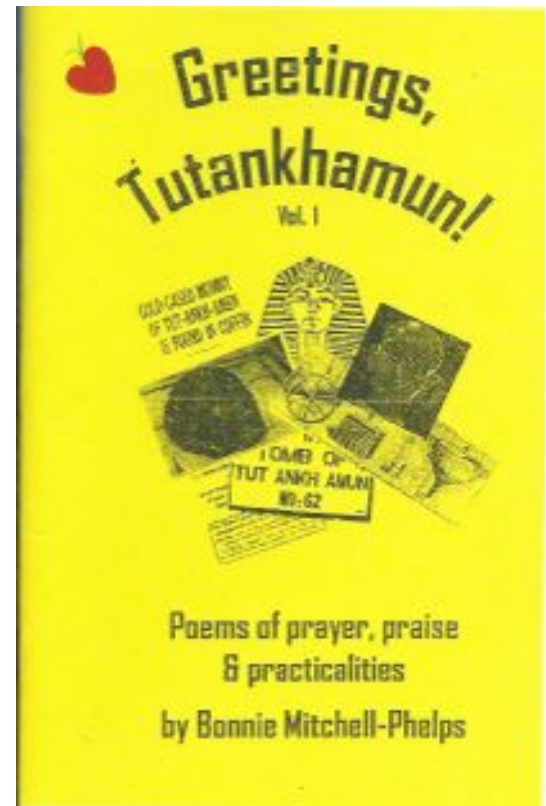
Now, since she has retired, I have been very impressed to see how the interactive nature of this community of librarians continues through the retirees association. The interesting trips and tours that the association has arranged provide opportunities to see places in and around NY that are unusual and not always available to the general public. Additionally, maintaining the relationships and friendships that sometimes fade away when people don't see each other as often after they retire provides a nice social network. I think this is an enviable opportunity for library retirees. I don't know of any other professional organization that maintains a retirees association like this one, and it should be emulated by other professions.

Wilma Friedman

WE WANT TO COMMUNICATE!

Are you getting our emails? We hear from time to time that some of you aren't getting our emails. Some email providers don't tell us that our messages haven't gone through to you. Please, please let us know if you aren't getting our emails.

Reply to nyplra@earthlink.net



Winter's Purpose

*Whether His Sky
Wears the brightest of blue
Or robes of somber grey,
Whether He dawns
With the gold of the sun
Bringing winds
All too eager to play.
Whether the tree and bush stand bare
Prayerfully awaiting renewal
While our Land submits
To the way of the Frost
Though it be cold and cruel.
There's a principle found
In our time of snow
Each force demands its season,
And Earth humbly yields
To the will of her God.
Isn't Spring a good enough reason?*



STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE

As we approach the Association's 25th anniversary (2018), it's a good idea to examine the mission of the Association and explore ways in which we might adapt for the future. To that end, a Strategic Planning Task Force has been formed, to be chaired by Alan Pally. The Task Force will discuss such issues as whether the Association should provide a forum for interested members to be part of the larger discussion of changes in the library world, whether we should partner with other professional and library organizations, and other topics. The Task Force will begin meeting in early 2017 and report back to the Association's Board later in the year. Other members include Mary Kay Conwell (who will serve as the Board's member on the Task Force); and Ruth Carr. If you are interested in joining the Task Force (we hope to keep membership to five), please email Alan Pally at apally@rcn.com.

PURA BELPRÉ FEATURED ON NPR

Pura Belpré, who "made a difference, well before the rest of the world recognized it."

For those who worked with Pura Belpré, heard her tell stories, watched her perform in a puppet show, or observed her working with children in one of the Branch Libraries children's rooms, the memory is indelible. Now, more than 30 years after her death, her contributions to the Library—and beyond—are being celebrated. On September 8, 2016, Ms. Belpré (or Mrs. White as she was known to many) was featured in the inaugural segment of National Public Radio's "Boundbreakers: People who Make a Difference." You can listen to or read the segment by clicking on this link

<http://www.npr.org/2016/09/08/492957864/how-nycs-first-puerto-rican-librarian-brought-spanish-to-the-shelves> or by doing a search for "NPR Pura Belpré." To hear the segment, be sure to click the "Listen" button. Among those quoted are Retirees Association member, Belen Garcia; Belen's daughter Valerie Garcia, who is the current children's librarian at the Aguilar branch; and Vianela Rivas, the branch manager at Washington Heights. If you don't have a computer at home, be sure to visit your local library to take advantage of a computer there.

POLLY BOOKHOUT'S MOST MEMORABLE PATRONS

I'll pick four people as the most memorable in my library years.

The first is a young man at Kingsbridge in 1961, my first year in New York and NYPL. He asked me, "What are the 'winda ows'?" I didn't understand him so asked him to repeat what he said. He did. I still didn't understand him. I asked one of the clerks to translate. He had said, "What are the winter hours?" He had substituted a d for a t and eliminated two r's. This was too much for this Californian new to New York. He was very kind and didn't take offense.

Two little girls were sitting in the front row at Story Hour at Tompkins Square and giggling. After the story, I asked them why they were giggling. They said my toes were wiggling. There I was controlling my voice, my posture, my hands, but I couldn't control my toes!

The last person on my list is a woman at Columbus who came to the library regularly. She didn't appear to be a prosperous woman, but one day she gave the branch \$50. I didn't have the courage to ask her what prompted her gift. I imagined that she had won the lottery and had promised that she would give money to the library if she won. I used the money for a puppet show for the children.



"Oh I could tell you where self-help is, but that'd sort of defeat the purpose, wouldn't it."

RETIREE NEWS

JULIE CUMMINS

I have written an article on Rattlesnake Pete, a New York State legend for his obsession with snakes! It appears in *Life in the Finger Lakes* magazine, the Nov/Dec. issue.

MARIE FERRIGNO

Finally, I received an iPad as a gift. I am very happy with it. Since it is so small, I can bring it with me wherever I go, a great advantage over a computer. However, my first choice when I am home is my beloved computer.

DOROTHY HENDERSON

I have just finished editing a new book!! This is a powerful thing to say to a bunch of librarians. The book is a Civil War memoir, written by my grandfather in 1865. He wrote it while on the ship, but another seaman stole it. In 1911, when he was very ill and at the Institute of Medicinal Light in Copenhagen--Roentgen had recently discovered x-rays--he wrote it again.

After his death, it was hidden away in a safe deposit box by one of my cousins, who accidentally mentioned it to me. My grandfather was in the US Navy and served on the USS Pembina, a ship that was on blockade duty to prevent commerce between the South and Europe.

I am printing it myself, and it will be on Nook and sold by Amazon. I am thoroughly delighted.

ALICE HUDSON

As retired Chief of the Map Division at NYPL, I am interested in maps. Specifically, for some thirty years, I've focused on women in cartography. In 2015 and 2016, I held two map exhibitions at the University of Southern Maine in Portland, Maine, and in Spring 2017, at Boston Public Library.

EDWARD KASINEC

Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution

Edward Kasinec holds graduate degrees and certificates from Columbia University (M.A., 1968, M.Phil., 1979), Simmons College (M.L.S., 1976), and New York University (Appraisal Studies in Fine and Decorative Arts, 2010).

His career includes service as Reference Librarian/Archivist for Harvard University's Ukrainian Research Institute Library (1973-80); Librarian for Slavic Collections, University of California, Berkeley, Library (1980-84); and Curator, Slavic and Baltic Division, The New York Public Library (1984-2009). He presently serves as a Research Associate, Harriman Institute, Columbia University, and, since 2014, Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution.

Kasinec has published more than two hundred refereed articles and books, has been acknowledged in as many publications, and is the author (or co-author) of twelve successful grant proposals to national funding agencies.

MARCIA PURCELL

Almost a year ago, a cruise in a brochure from Cunard caught our eye. The Queen Mary 2 was to sail from NYC round trip to Norway with stops in Southampton, Hamburg, and half a dozen ports in Norway. NO planes! However, the cruise was 30 days--pretty long. We have recently returned from this voyage, and I am happy to say, 30 days is NOT too long. I can heartily endorse Norway as a fascinating destination, and, outside of Oslo, Bergen, and Stavanger, there are almost no people--a welcome change from NYC! (Tour guides repeatedly informed us everyone was now living in Minnesota.).

If waterfalls, glaciers, scenic railroads, and great explorers are of interest, this country is for you! Of course, unpacking only once and having the "hotel" move every day with you, is an enormous plus. We had a great vacation and met interesting table mates from all over the world. If you haven't tried cruising, give it a try. You'll be converted. (Cunard did not pay me to write this.)

ARTHUR RUHL

I am still living most of the year in Northern Thailand, visiting New York once a year in the Fall. This year I achieved a long term goal: I visited country number seventy. I told people that my goal was 70 by 70; that is to say, to visit 70 countries by the age of 70. I did this by going on holiday to a country few Americans get a chance to visit, Myanmar. It was formerly known as Burma and was pretty much closed off to the outside world for tourism until 2011. From that time on, a small trickle of tourists has been turning into a flood. Myanmar is now one of my favorite countries among the seventy. My Thai wife and I spent three days in its largest city, Yangon, previously known as Rangoon.

Many people who have been to Myanmar share my view of the country. It's unspoiled, charming, and exotic. Whereas many large Asian cities such as Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Shanghai bedazzle the tourist with a sea of skyscrapers, Yangon looks in large measure like a city built inside a big park. This is in spite of its impressive population of five million. There are lots of trees, greenery, leafy shady streets, etc., except for the center of the city which has all the chaos and confusion of Asia. Much of the time in the center of town, where we stayed, we walked in the gutter rather than on the sidewalk, which was jammed with people selling things. One merchant laid out a large towel on the sidewalk. On it were eyeglasses for sale. My wife bought two pairs of reading glasses.

But most of all, I went to visit the world famous Shwedagon Pagoda. A gold-plated Pagoda set on top of a hill, it's the most beautiful temple I have seen in all of Asia. My favorite poet, Rudyard Kipling, called it "a beautiful winking wonder."

It also was monsoon season when we went in July (couldn't make it any other time of the year). The day started out with heavy rain, and I wondered if my picture-taking would be spoiled. Near Shwedagon, while sitting in a taxi, we spotted Buddhist monks in their wine colored robes walking barefoot on the rain-soaked city streets, heads shaved bald, carrying their silver begging bowls. Close behind came some ladies, Buddhist nuns, also with heads shaved bald, dressed in pink robes.

At the entrance, it was still raining. My wife and I climbed up, up, up the four massive stairways to get to the Pagoda itself. Once we got to the top, a most amazing thing happened. The skies cleared, and the sun came out, bright, hot, and brilliant. We took off our shoes and socks, as required, and started to explore the site. Because it had been raining, the old stones were slippery. I slipped and started falling. I came close to hitting my head on a large stone, which could have resulted in a serious accident. But I caught my footing in the nick of time, and a kindly Buddhist monk grabbed my arm and helped me back on my feet.

After a couple of hours, my wife and I started back down the stairway. She paused to buy something from a vendor. Suddenly I heard a loud whooshing sound. I looked out a window and discovered that the weather had changed drastically. Gone was the sun. The monsoon had returned full force. It was a torrential downpour of rain, the likes of which I had seldom seen before. My wife turned to me and said, "You see, you must think of the Buddha. He saved you from a serious injury at the pagoda. He also knew that you wanted to take pictures and see Shwedagon in all its glory in the sunlight. He prevented the rain from returning until you were finished visiting. The Buddha loves you." How could I argue with that?

I should have guessed that Myanmar would be a very agreeable experience. At the airport, when we arrived, the taxi dispatcher, dressed in his Longyi skirt, asked me, "Sir, from what country are you coming?" "New York City, United States of America." "Ooooooh America, VERY good country sir."

By the time it was the day to leave, I had fallen in love with Myanmar, but one of the most remarkable experiences of the trip was yet to come. I had purchased souvenirs, but my wife had failed to do so. She solved the problem by purchasing four roast ducks, with wings, necks and heads still attached when we arrived in Bangkok on our way home to northern Thailand. "How will you get them back home?" I asked. "No problem." When we arrived at the airport, and it was time to go to our gate, my wife placed the four roast ducks in a bin on the conveyor belt and sent them through the carry-on X-ray machine, their lifeless eyes pointing to the ceiling. Bingo! This alerted airport security personnel. My wife was taken aside for questioning. "Oh please let me keep my ducks. My husband is hungry, and the rest are for other family members." The airport security attendants had never

seen anything like it but could find no legal objection, so we stuffed the ducks into a large cloth bag and headed to our gate. The fun continued as we attempted to shove the 4 roast ducks into a bin above our plane seats.

Next year we may visit Vietnam, and the adventures continue.

BOSILJKA STEVANOVIC

Back in February of this year, I stopped to have a cup of coffee at a coffee place on 41st Street and 5th Avenue, practically facing NYPL's formerly venerated Research Library, relatively recently renamed the name that I can never remember because, perhaps, I do not want to ...

As I was exiting the "caffe," two gentlemen were coming in. The first one held the door for me, and as I was saying thank you while going through it, he said, "Oh, wait, I know you." At first I did not think this was addressed to me, and I almost went by, but he continued, "You worked in the library, didn't you?" I turned and saw a smiling Japanese gentleman. Smiling back, I said, "Yes, but I retired 10 years ago." "Listen," he said, "I will never forget that library. It was a haven for me. I used to spend a lot of time there on weekends, reading the Japanese magazines, looking through books and movies on videos and taking them home. You had everything I wanted, and now I am looking all over for the same thing, and I cannot find it. Across the street," pointing to the building in question, "they have nothing. It is terrible that that place does not exist any more, and what a shame." He couldn't have found a better ear than mine for his story of regret.

I expressed my deep sorrow for what had happened and called it irresponsible. "How can anyone think that New York City, with millions of immigrants from all over the world, can do without a place like that or even a greatly expanded one?" "I know," he said, "and I miss it terribly."

In parting, I thanked him very much for having recognized me and for giving me such a testimony. In recognizing me, he recognized the entire staff, for we worked as a team, and I always appreciated everyone's dedication and hard work. Ten years later, I came face to face with the place that no longer exists and the service that is now only the ghost of its former self. Slowly, deeply touched and nostalgic, I went on my way.

JOE YRANSKI

I programmed a month-long film series "It Girls: Flappers, Jazz Babies, & Vamps" at the Film Forum in NYC. Three in the series were lost films that I discovered and on whose restoration I worked: *Why Be Good?*, *Synthetic Sin*, and *Get Your Man*. My latest work, *Show Girl* (1928), another lost silent film with its original Vitaphone soundtrack, had its world-wide debut in New York City at the end of October.

On October 1st in Suffern, New York, I presented *High Tor*, starring Bing Crosby, Julie Andrews' first motion picture; I also led a panel discussion of the 1956 work. A radio interview that I did can be found at <https://soundcloud.com/cbsheridan/high-tor-1956-movie-musical-crossroads-of-rockland-history>.

JOE ZEVELOFF



I was very excited when I heard that the Olympics were going to be held in Rio de Janeiro. Since my wife is from Rio, we decided we would attend some events at the games.

For the last several years, Rio had been preparing first for the World Cup in 2014 and then for the Olympics this year. They built a new subway line, in part to get people to the Olympic venues. They built a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that connects the Tom Jobim International Airport to various parts of the city. They city also built a single-lane bus line that goes from a second airport in downtown Rio to the main bus terminal. From this bus terminal, travelers can go to other parts of Brazil as well as to other countries in South America. Brazil also constructed seven or more new stadiums and arenas at the main Olympic site.

We went to many different events. First we saw two football (soccer) matches: Honduras vs. Algeria and Portugal vs. Argentina. Honduras won their game and advanced far into the games. They were a bit of a surprise in Olympic football. The second game featured Portugal and Argentina. Brazilians and Argentines usually like each other except when it comes to sports.

The mostly-Brazilian spectators were against Argentina, and whenever the Argentines had the ball the fans booed loudly; the Portuguese were cheered quite vociferously. Portugal won, to the delight of a majority of the fans.

The next day my wife, her 10-year-old niece, and I went to fencing matches. My wife's niece had won two tickets in school to the matches. I was able to buy a third ticket for myself. My wife, and especially her niece, were not terribly excited about the fencing. I enjoyed it, but I think you have to be a fencing aficionado to really enjoy it.

I was not too surprised that I was able to buy tickets for other events while I was there. Many people were scared because of the Zika virus and various other perceived problems. Because it was in the Brazilian winter, it was not warm enough for the mosquitoes to be a factor. I bought tickets for swimming and diving, indoor volleyball, and also a women's semifinal football match between Brazil and Sweden. It was an exciting match, but unfortunately Sweden won in overtime.

My wife and I also went to see swimming and diving. I had seen both events on TV many times but never in person. It was pretty amazing to see the swimmers so close and in person. The relay races were especially exciting to watch. These races were preliminaries. Unfortunately, we did not see Michael Phelps or any other top swimmers that day. The diving that we saw was synchronized diving, two divers diving at the same time. It was quite interesting to see the divers doing the same thing at the same time.

On another day, I went with my wife's nephew to see track and field. We saw the shot put and the men's discus, but the most exciting event of the day was the women's 10,000 meter race. The woman who won the race, Alma Ayana, was from Ethiopia. She broke the world and Olympic records for the 10,000 meters by about ten seconds, in the time of nine minutes and seventeen seconds. During the last lap of the race, the fans were going crazy cheering her on because they knew she was on a pace to break the world record. When she won and broke the record, the crowd went crazy. The next day, my wife and I saw another day of track and field. In a preliminary heat, we were able to see Usain Bolt for about 10 seconds. That was all he needed to finish his 100-meter prelim heat. The stands cheered wildly before and after he won the race.

I was also able to buy tickets to see indoor volleyball. We saw Russia vs. Iran. Iran was competitive, but Russia won 3-0. We also saw Poland beat Cuba 3-0. I was surprised because I thought Cuba would be a good match for Poland, but Cuba did not play very well.

With all the pre-Olympic talk about Brazil's not being ready for the games, the Olympic Games were almost perfect. In the beginning, the security lines were very slow, but by the second or third day, the security lines were much quicker. In Brazil, if you are over sixty-five or have physical problems, there are separate lines. These lines are usually much shorter.

As a sports fan, I enjoyed the Olympics because there were so many sports to choose from. I was not able to go to the tennis matches, but I usually go to the US Open here in New York, and I went to the Open about a week after I got back from Brazil.

Going to the Olympic Games is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget. If the US has the Olympics in the future, I might try to go, but having gone to the games in Rio, I will remember what I did see with fond memories.



THIS NEWSLETTER is published semi-annually by the New York Public Library Retirees Association.

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

Newsletter Editor: Emily Cohen (718) 984-3790, ecohennypl@aol.com

Copyeditors: Mary K. Conwell & Jane Kunstler

FROM:

NY PUBLIC LIBRARY RETIREES ASSOCIATION

C/O EMILY COHEN

473 JEFFERSON BLVD

STATEN ISLAND, NY 10312

TO:

IN THE MEDIA

To keep up with library news in our city, visit our website, 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.

NYPLRA Retirees E-mail: nyplra@earthlink.net

NYPLRA Website: www.nyplra.org

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



"Decimals are OK I guess, but there better not be a Dewey fraction system."

REFERENCE BOOKS

