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The New York Public Library Retirees Association

N_{ewsletter}

HUDSON PARK'S MARIANNE MOORE

by John S. Robotham

The Hudson Park Branch is a three story brick building trimmed with Indiana limestone at 66 Leroy Street in Greenwich Village. The sixteenth branch built from Andrew Carnegie's gift, its designers were Carrère & Hastings, the architects of the Library's Central Building. The neighborhood has been well known for its literary residents, and among them were Theodore Dreiser at 16 St. Luke's Place, just across the street, and Sherwood Anderson, a few doors away at number 12.

Between Dreiser and Anderson, at 14 St. Luke's Place, one of The New York Public Library's most famous employees, the poet Marianne Moore, lived with her mother. On October 19th, 1919, she wrote to her brother "...and now Miss Leonard [Mary A. Leonard, the Branch Librarian from 1911 to 1939] wants me to help them at the library across the street, 4 hours a day, \$30.00 a month. I am going to do that. They are nice people to work with, all of them at the library, and I can spare the time" And by the second of November she was working, for she wrote her brother about the kinds of books that were being asked for. "There is considerable demand over at the library for 'sporty' boy's fiction like Alger's and for fights and trapping, but with even the smaller boys there is more interest in airplanes, ships, war, scientific experiments and biography

than for fiction. Dan Beard's handy books for example are in great demand. There are three copies. [Theodore] Roosevelt is the subject of the hour upstairs and down."

At some point during these years—and it could have happened in any library, in any year—Moore described a day in the library, probably her own.

"At the library, the brass is shining, the floor polished, the books are in order and the little boy who lisps is asking for three books about sea-robbers in ships—in Swedish....In a few minutes a stranger inquires at the library desk for a book about electric bells.... 'I'm wiring a bell for my aunt and I got to a place where I needed a little help....'

"Waiting for [this conversation to finish] are Romeo Gibilisco, aged nine, and a very old man who cannot speak English. Romeo's brother, Matteo, is a soldier and month after month, Matteo's allotment has come to his mother, but the mother has died. Matteo is not a soldier now; he is working in a mine, but before he went away he cashed the check which the government had sent his mother, and now — see what the government has told him. In impassioned Italian the old man urges Romeo to tell the lady that the government is angry; if she will not write a letter for him, he will be in jail; the government will kill him.

"When the assistant has made an appointment by telephone with a member of the Legal Advisory Board for Romeo and his father and the two have gone away reassured, she consults the messenger slips returned the previous

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evening and ponders the comment which she finds on the back of a bill to Hercules Albodanza, for *Tom Sawyer*, destroyed. 'House being demolished — no inhabitants.' She makes inquiry of Tony Ugilino and finds that Hercules lives not far away but is sick. Deciding to go herself to see him, she finds him with his grandmother, four brothers and sisters and his father (a cripple) in one room, his grandmother not able to do the washing and ironing by means of which she had earned money for the family's support. The library assistant urges a report to the Charity Organization, but the grandmother refuses to have her son-in-law sent to an institution. The assistant suggests a compromise; the father shall go for a short time — for a visit — to stay longer perhaps, and eighteen dollars a month will than be sent to Hercules' grandmother; the grandmother consents.

"Triumphant, although without book or fine, the assistant returns to her position at the desk. The row of books on the NEW BOOK SHELF has been reduced by half, magazines are spread on the reading tables, and it is almost closing time, when a woman advances with determination to the desk and beckons to the assistant:

"Lady, will you write me a bit of a line so that I can get a job. Sure they know you, and if you write me a line, I'll get it."³

Moore became eligible for The New York Public Library's Grade 2 on January 1st, 1921, having passed — with high marks — the examination in the Library's training class.⁴ She worked some of the time in the children's room, recommending to boys looking for something to read, John McGraw's *How to Play Baseball* and Christy Mathewson's *Pitching in a Pinch*.⁵ She would have been, in at least one respect, an ideal staff member for the children's room; she had read voluminously as a child, and had

read all those titles and authors (Stevenson, Henty, Howard Pyle, Palmer Cox, Lang's series of fairy tales) so frequently mentioned by children's librarians of the period as being much in demand.⁶ And her broad sympathies and obvious delight in so many books and subjects must have made her most welcome in the adult department as well.

To a Steam Roller

The illustration

is nothing to you without the application.

You lack half wit. You crush all the particles down
into close conformity, and then walk back and forth on
them.

Sparkling chips of rock

are crushed down to the level of the parent block.

Were not "impersonal judgment in esthetic
matters, a metaphysical impossibility," you

might fairly achieve

it. As for butterflies, I can hardly conceive

of one's attending upon you; but to question

the congruence of the complement is vain, if it exists.

— Marianne Moore

One way she was obviously useful in the adult department was in her book reviews. To assist those who were selecting books for branches — usually the branch librarian — many staff members were asked to write brief reviews of books and make recommendations for purchase. Since most books are never reviewed anywhere, great help is provided to the selector who has to look over hundreds of books every week. Moore wrote at least 52 such reviews, spanning about five years, and they were mostly marginal books by long-forgotten authors — as are most books sent to staff members for review.

Ghosts by Arthur Crabb was reviewed by her on April 14, 1921, and she said it was, "Not powerful but plausible, wholesome and well written. Acceptable to the average unsophisticated reader. Recommended for purchase. Hp [Hudson Park] would like a copy." On the same day, she described another book as having a "Haphazard immature use of words. Not recommended." And on April 28, 1921, she

wrote about Florence Olmstead's *This Little World*, that it was, "A happily ended double romance of 2 sisters. The work of an amateur in method of telling and in plot but vivid and entertaining. Recommended for purchase. Could be replaced once. Hp [Hudson Park] would like a copy."

So she went on for the next four years, liking some, but not most, of the books she was sent for review. In June of 1921, Louis Hemon's *Maria Chapdelaine* was, for her, "The publication of a literary event." But *The Marriage of Patricia Pepperday* by Grace Miller White was "A saccharine love story full of verbal and psychological incongruities," and it was not recommended for purchase. Neither were most of the books she reviewed in 1922. She did recommend *Timber* by Harold Titus. It was "Rather weak, with occasional revolting touches, though the heroine is uncommonly well conceived." But two weeks later she didn't like this author's *Hurricane*.

Temple Bailey's *Dim Lantern* was reviewed early in 1923, and she recommended its purchase but thought it probably shouldn't be replaced when lost or worn out. *Unknown Quantity* by Gerard Hopkins was not recommended, nor were a number of others. And *A Conqueror Passes* by Larry Barretto she found "Shallow, hackneyed, gross; in no way entertaining."

It is worth quoting in full a review she wrote in 1924. It is a good example of her style, and shows the form of these staff reviews.

"*Men of Earth*: Bernice Brown: Putnam: These for the most part expertly constructed stories hold the attention, give a knowledge of peasant Canadian border life, and are genuinely impressive in their ironic, graphic portrayal of nature and of persons. Nevertheless, the author's pity for humanity and her contagious exemplifying of courage and self sacrifice, are neutral-

ized by a somewhat unreal, supine obedience to the tyranny of romantic love. One becomes surfeited with the 'frail,' shy,' 'wistful,' 'mystic,' 'gracious,' 'graceful,' 'delicate,' charms of 'the sort of girl that no man can look at with equanimity,' and the 'timidly lifted arms' of 'bleak' masculinity."

In march 1925 she recommended *The Dinner Club* by H.C. McNeil, but said it wasn't wanted at Hudson Park unless the publisher made it a gift. And that same month, a book she reviewed was, "A compendium of grandiose vulgarity." During April, she failed to recommend four more books, including *Counterplot* by Hope Mirrlees, but one of them she thought Hudson Park should accept, if it was a gift.⁷ Then she resigned.

It may have been her experience with so many novels of this kind that caused her to write to her brother: "Dr. Cross is to speak at the main library this week on some novelists of 1920, but I know so well how little I like any novelists of 1920 that I don't intend to go."⁸

Her last day at the Library was April 25, 1925. Presumably she left to assume the editorship of *The Dial*, a position to which she had just been appointed.⁹ During the *Dial* years, Moore didn't abandon the Library; on May 21, 1928 she went downtown to the Rivington Street Branch where she gave a talk on *My People, the Sioux* by Chief Standing Bear. She would review this autobiography in *The Dial* two months later. And she worked again for the Library in February 1929,¹⁰ perhaps because she needed the money; *The Dial* ended in July of that year, and with it her job. During most of the time she was working at Hudson Park, at least since 1921, she had contributed articles to *The Dial*; and in 1924 she was awarded *The Dial* prize of \$2,000.¹¹

Unpublished material by Marianne Moore is used with the permission of Marianne Craig Moore, Literary Executor for the Estate of Marianne Moore, and the Rosenbach Museum and Library. All rights reserved.

⁷The Papers of Marianne Moore, VI:23:11. Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia. (Letter of 10/19/19 to her brother.)

PENSION SUPPLEMENTATION UPDATE

by Juanita Doares

At our October meeting, Ed Curran, the President of the Alliance for Public Retirees Organizations (APRO) was our guest speaker. All retirees owe him a debt of thanks for his extensive efforts on our behalf to get pension supplementation through the State Legislature and for working with Comptroller McCall to keep Governor Pataki from raiding \$230,000,000 from the Pension Supplemental Reserve Fund.

Mr. Curran gave an excellent summary of the efforts that have been made to get some kind of pension increases for retirees in the New York State Retirees System. The situation as of this writing is as follows. Judge Keegan of the New York State Supreme Court on December 11, 1995, ruled in favor of retirees. Governor Pataki has again appealed the decision, and his appeal will be considered by the Appellate Court in February, with the decision expected by April. We are hopeful that the case will be decided in favor of retirees, in which case the Governor will undoubtedly appeal it to the Court of Appeals.

There is also better news for New York City retirees. The City Council has voted to move their pension supplementation increases forward to September 1996 rather than the effective date of 1997 which was originally proposed. We will keep you informed, and we know you will be hearing from the State Comptroller as soon as the New York State Court of Appeals has made its decision.

The following is the memo we received from H. Carl McCall, the New York State Comptroller:

Statement by State Comptroller H. Carl McCall

December 12, 1995

Obviously, I'm pleased with today's court decision reaffirming the independence and integrity of the pension fund. Hopefully, the lesson will finally be learned in Albany: the pension fund is for pension benefits. It's not a slush fund to be used to balance the budget.

In his decision, Judge Keegan recognized what the Governor and the Legislature were attempting to do, calling the raid "their latest budget balancing ploy."

The most disturbing aspect of this entire fiasco is the willingness of the Governor to use retirees as pawns in his budget balancing game. Through his legal maneuvering, for three months he's denied retirees the modest pension supplement that he himself signed into law earlier this year. During those three months, nearly 3,000 retirees passed away, never to receive the additional benefits they so needed and deserved.

The tragedy is that both the Governor and the Legislature knew what they were doing was wrong. As Judge Keegan said in his decision, the Legislature and the Governor "anticipated problems with its hand in the cookie jar..." They were right. There were problems. Raiding the pension fund was legally wrong, and playing chicken with retirees' benefits was morally wrong.

I urge the Governor to do the right thing. He can stop delaying justice. He can let the judge's decision stand. [He did not. After this memo was written, the Governor appealed. See item above.]

²Ibid., VI:23:12 (letter of 11/2/19 to her brother.)

³Ibid. II:01:35

⁴NYPL. Board of Trustees. *Minutes*, 1/15/21, p. 14

⁵Moore, Marianne. *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore*. Edited...by Patricia C. Willis. New York: Viking, 1986, p. 620

⁶Ibid., p. 671-2

⁷The Papers of Marianne Moore, II:04:27. Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia

⁸Ibid. VI:23:26. (Letter of 12/13/20 to her brother.)

⁹Moore, Marianne. *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore*. Edited...by Patricia C. Willis. New York: Viking, 1986, p. v-vi

¹⁰NYPL Personnel records

¹¹Hudson Park Branch scrapbook

FIFTY YEARS AT N.Y.P.L.

by Fred Noeske

Edited by Eleanor Herling

*Third and concluding installment
continued from Newsletter
number 6, July 1995*

In this concluding part of his article the author discusses some of his thoughts on libraries and library work. He ends with a poignant note regarding his own position in The New York Public Library. Many of us who remember Fred Noeske will be touched by it.

We regret that due to space limitations we have had to curtail somewhat the original article. The complete article may be consulted in the Library's Archives.

A report of the dinner in honor of Fred's fifty years of service appeared in The New York Times and is copied at the end of this item. Fred retired from the Library the following January 1. —Eleanor Herling

Since I came to work in the Library, I have had the following bosses or rather, Chiefs of the Section, namely Dr. Weitenkampf, Mr. Perry, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Rice, Mr. Metcalf, Mr. Gjelsness, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Mumford, Mr. Wright, and now Mr. Bergquist.

In the Central Building, after we got up here in 1911, I was raised every two or three years, about \$10.00 per month. Then, in 1930 or 1931, I think, I got one more raise, and then for the next ten to eleven years I got no more raises, although I had been promised one several times. In 1942, after the late war was on, I and all of us, on account of the increasing cost of living, did get raises again of \$10.00 per month, each year till 1947, when we all got a twenty percent raise. So my salary now is fair, although if I had a college education it would be somewhat higher. However, I am satisfied with the way the Library has treated me, in regard to salaries.

In my time there have been five di-

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rectors, namely, Dr. Billings, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lydenberg, Mr. Hopper, and now Mr. Beals. The last three I have had personal contact with sometimes.

Now, in my 45 years of service with the Library, I might be asked what do I think about library work and libraries in general. As far as my own library work is concerned, I always have loved and enjoyed it, in fact, more so now than when I first started. In fact, nothing could have pleased me more, as in business I just never cared for it enough. As for books, I just am overfond of them. They are not only the work I enjoy best, but also a hobby with me.

In regard to libraries in general, I feel sure most of them are doing a good and useful service to their respective communities, and that they should be encouraged by ever-increasing funds, better salaries, and also an even closer touch with the public.

In writing this article I have only sought to bring out my point of view, what library work has meant to me. As I said before, I never cared for business. Of course, if I had not gotten this job, I would have taken any kind of a job, till I perhaps would have found one that I cared for enough. However, none would have given me the pleasure that my present job has. I do not say it is perfect, or that it is the exact work I cared for most, but it has come closest to being that, and I have been, and still am, very happy in it.

On a radio program last night, August 23, 1948, over station WOR, I heard a psychologist say that about half of all workers, here in our own United States, are in jobs they do not like, or are at best not very happy in them. That gave me a thought that soon a new system or science will spring up that will help all young people when they leave high school or college find just the right type of work they are best fitted for.

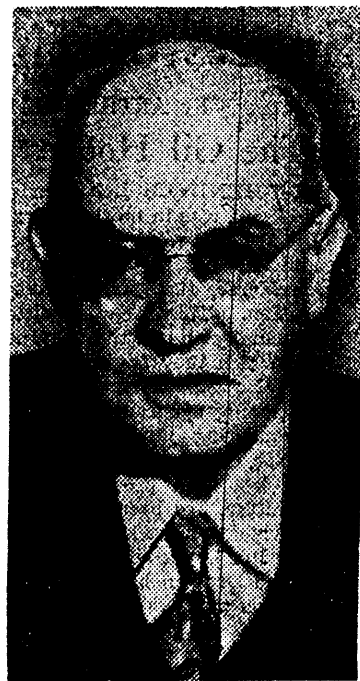
Note

Several chiefs I had have told me that I would always go forward, meaning, I would always get a raise now and then, and also proved it by giving me

raises fairly often. I have asked to do higher grade work than I am doing, but was always told my position and work was too important, and they would rather have me keep it. This being the case, should I not get a raise anyhow, as I feel, and could use more money, as my present salary in present times does not go very far, and surely if my work means as much to the Library as I have been told it does, then I ought to be met half way in this respect, and be given a better salary than my present one.

I can honestly say that there are few positions in the Library I could not fill, if not as good as a college graduate, at least passable, I am sure, on account of my experience. I always try to give the best in me to my work, for I sure enjoy it, and hope I always will. I am thankful for what the Library has done for me in past years, and try to show it by always keeping my section in the best possible shape, to speed up its work.

Library Aide Is Honored For 50 Years of Service



Fred Noeske, who will round out fifty years of service with the New York Public Library on July 1, was honored by eighty of his fellow workers last night with a dinner in the New York Times service dining room. He re-

ceived a gold pin.

Mr. Noeske, who is 64 years old and lives at 71-43 Sixty-second Street, Glendale, Queens, will retire next Jan. 1. His chief hobbies are collecting travel literature, particularly railroad timetables, and books dealing with all phases of geography.

Two letters congratulating him on his long service with the public library were read at the dinner. One was from Dr. Frank Weitenkampf, 86, of 45 Fifth Avenue, who hired Mr. Noeske on July 1, 1903. The other was from Dr. Harry Miller Lydenberg, former director of the library who retired in 1941.

Robert E. Kingery, chief of the preparation division in which Mr. Noeske is employed, made the presentation of the fifty-year pin.

The New York Times May 22, 1953, page 24, column 7.

THE NEW BRYANT PARK

Many retirees remember Robert Moses' 1936 formal garden, a heavily used but unfriendly park with its keep-off-the-grass signs. With the 1970's came the City's financial crises. The small trimmed hedges grew into huge ragged bushes, the flowers almost disappeared, the walks became dilapidated, the fountain stopped. The Library's extremely popular daily concerts of recorded classical music were ended (the management of Stern's Department store complained that they brought an undesirable element into the park), and soon afterwards the park became a city center for crime and the drug trade.

The park was completely closed for several years, surrounded by a chain fence, while the central lawn was dug up so that two stories of library stacks could be built beneath it. When finished, a beautiful lawn appeared on top. You can walk on it, or you can drag onto it to one of the thousands of small lightweight folding chairs copied from those in the Bois de Boulogne. Along its sides are beautifully maintained 300 foot long flower beds. New entrances have been added, and the old ones have been repaired. Under the trees are new

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FUNDING

Six-day library service continues in all libraries in the city thanks to a budget agreed to last summer by Mayor Giuliani and the City Council. In addition, the City Council restored \$1.5 million to the materials budget of the City's three library systems. The budget also provided funding for 61 new capital improvements in the Branch and Research Libraries totalling nearly \$25 million.

The City, State and Federal governments are all experiencing severe fiscal constraints, which could affect library funding. The release of the Mayor's Preliminary Budget in January will provide the first indication of City support for libraries in the next fiscal year which begins July 1.

In the meantime, supporters will be reaching out to public officials in support of libraries by writing letters, visiting district offices, or participating in trips to Albany and Washington. The annual trip to Albany will take place February 13. Those interested in participating in these activities should contact their local branch, or call Rick Lepkowski at 212 930-0953.

benches, and near the rejuvenated fountain is a concession where one can play chess or backgammon.

Vine-covered food stands have been built, and on the upper terrace are indoor and outdoor spaces for dining and drinking, now a fashionable place for crowds of young people. The glass enclosed restaurant is elegant, with ivy climbing up wooden trellises, boxes of flowers, and an 86-foot mural of exotic birds by the artist Hunt Slonem. Like the old days, there are again free concerts (but no recorded music from the Library), as well as literary readings and comedy performances. On Monday nights, movies attract as many as 10,000 people. Half-priced tickets for the City's music and dance events are sold from a fancy kiosk at the new 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue entrance. The old statues have been restored, and a new one, Jo Davidson's 1923 sculpture of Gertrude Stein, has been added, one of the few monuments of women in the City. Although still owned by the City, the park is now privately managed by the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation, founded in 1980 by Andrew Heiskell, former chairman of the Library's board. More than half of its \$1.7 million maintenance budget comes from businesses in the neighborhood, the rest from the City Parks Department, private donors, and concession revenues.

JEFFERSON MARKET COURTHOUSE UPDATE

The restoration of Jefferson Market Courthouse has finally been completed with a new roof and the repair of the two-ton bell in its tower, said to be the second largest bell in New York City, after one at Riverside Church. The building was built in 1877, the design of Frederick Clarke Withers and Calvert Vaux, the latter one of the designers of Central Park. It opened as a branch of the Library in 1967, and at that time was considered one of the most remarkable of interior adaptations for a library.

FROM OUR CLIPPING FILE

Anthony Lewis on the OP-ED page in *The New York Times*, December 18, 1995.

The United States today is in the grip of free-market ideology carried to the extreme....When people in a society care only for themselves, when they are taught by demagogues to sneer at government and the communal good, it cannot be surprising that social bonds and social trust decline. In that process, everyone will eventually lose. In a society where fewer people vote or care to join—a society that has lost its sense of community—individualism will not bring contentment.

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RETIREES IN ACTION

WABC's award winning program "Like It Is," hosted by Gil Noble, on December 24, 1995, featured an interview with **Jean Blackwell Hutson**, former curator of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture from 1948-1980.

Phyllis King and **James L. McPherson** gave a reading of their poetry at Mid-Manhattan Library on December 18, 1995.

Alma Fields appeared in "I'll be Loving You Always," a play by Jerry Maple, Jr. about a widowed mother's struggle with Alzheimers Disease. It was given by the Benjamin Moore American Legion Post #1946 on September 16, 1995 at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cambria Heights, New York.

Frances Lewis was the subject of a *New York Newsday* Profile, as well as several other articles about her work in making New York City green. She is known as the "Parks Lady," a volunteer who has adopted a small park in her neighborhood, Whalen Park, an "oasis in the desert." She also spruces up Williamsbridge Oval. At a reception in Central Park she was one of the 32 people honored with a Volunteer Greening Award for her "invaluable contributions to New York City parks." She also is active in a variety of community organizations.

Sophie Mitrisin is editor of the newsletter *Residential Collections* put out by The Association of Private Libraries, 66 Frankfort Street (2G), New York, NY 10038-1622. The subtitle is *Volunteer Libraries and Volunteer Librarians*. It provides news items and views on topics concerning the development and application of book ownership and personal libraries, including such issues as arrangement and organizational problems, house, use, and eventual disposition of books. Recurring features include news of members, news of research, and news of educational opportunities. Its audience includes owners of private libraries, book

collectors, and investors in books and personal libraries. First published in 1974, its frequency is periodic.

Thelma Thomas continues her career in storytelling. She has performed at this association's meetings and is highly recommended by us. The following is her February storytelling schedule, and we hope you can be there:

Sunday, February 4, 1996 3 pm
Langston Hughes House
20 East 127 Street (between 5th and Madison Avenues)

Saturday, February 17, 1996 8 pm
Peoples' Voice Cafe
133 West 4th Street
Washington Square Church Parlor
\$7 or TDF+2/ members \$5/ seniors \$4

THE ASSOCIATION'S TOURS AND VISITS

by **Agnes Babich**

Tour of NYPL's Belmont Branch and Belmont Area of The Bronx: Mary Berman, Branch Librarian, was tour guide for the Association's visit to Belmont on November 9. Members were particularly impressed with the Children's Room and the Italian Heritage Collection, as well as the atrium that allowed much light into the library. Theresa Casile very kindly arranged for a delicious lunch at a local Italian restaurant, followed by coffee and dessert at a nearby cafe. Before leaving, the group went on a shopping tour of bread bakeries, vegetable markets and shops featuring Italian delicacies.

Visit to Tenement and Ukrainian Museums and Lower East Side: As part of the Association's program of exploring New York City neighborhoods, members traveled to the Lower East Side to visit the tenement and Ukrainian Museums. It was interesting to see two typical tenement apartments in a building erected in the 1840's and to imagine how immigrants (the first were German craftsmen) lived in such dark, small quarters. The Ukrainian Museum featured a variety of painted

Easter eggs and breads, as well as Ukrainian costumes and headgear. Retirees enjoyed a typical Ukrainian lunch at the Kiev Restaurant on Second Avenue and ended the day by visiting Ukrainian food and craft stores.

Museums and Points of interest visited by the Retirees Association over the Past Two Years:

Isamu Noguchi Museum and Sculpture Garden

& Greek area of Astoria
National Museum of the American Indian

& Chinatown
Brooklyn Museum

& Middle Eastern area of Brooklyn
Studio Museum

& Sylvia's Restaurant in Harlem
Jacques Marais Museum of Tibetan Art

& Richmond Town Restoration in Staten Island

Tenement & Ukrainian Museums
& Lower East Side

Belmont Branch, New York Public Library

& Italian section of Belmont

THE ASSOCIATION'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee regrets that no member has been found to serve the balance of Mary Ann Altman's term as Secretary ending January 1997.

It is hoped that a volunteer may be found. If not, the President is empowered to appoint someone.

The two-year terms of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Executive Board member, Belle Weinberg, end in January 1997.

There are two Executive Board positions for terms from January 1996 through January 1998 vacant. The Nominating Committee is pleased to submit the following slate:

Moritia Leah Frederick
Lawrence Murphy, Editor
Respectfully submitted,
Mercy P. Kellogg, Chair
Theresa K. Casile
Fred Gee

NYPL RETIREES ASSOCIATION TAX EXEMPT STATUS

by Juanita Doares

For over a year the Executive Committee has been working with the IRS in an effort to gain tax exempt status as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

We have failed in spite of all of our efforts. The IRS has rejected our application on the basis that our association is a professional association for the benefit of its members and does not serve the public at large.

In lengthy correspondence with the IRS, we gave proof that many members work or volunteer in public institutions. We also showed that the structure of the Association includes committees interested in the common good. The IRS nevertheless has turned us down.

The Executive Committee of the Association, following discussions at the September and October meetings, has voted not to pursue tax exempt status any longer with the IRS. As you may know, the Association is already certified by the State of New York as a not-for-profit corporation.

75th ANNIVERSARY OF NEW YORK STATE AND LOCAL RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

by Juanita Doares

Events are now being planned for the 75th anniversary celebration of the largest retirement system in the United States, The New York State and Local Retirement Systems, established on January 1, 1921. After many years of working to develop a pension plan, the Library was allowed to join the state system in 1937 by a special act of the New York State Legislature.

The New York Public Library Retirees Association, along with many other retiree associations, is one of the groups planning these events, which will be held in Albany. All members

Editor's Notes:

WHO KILLED THE MIDDLE CLASS? This is the title of an article by John Cassidy in *The New Yorker*, October 16, 1995, pp. 113-124, and we call it to your attention, because public libraries in this country have grown out of the dreams and ambitions of what we have called a Middle Class. They have furthermore been most heavily used by that class, and have been financed primarily by the governments they have elected. The information in the article may not be new to you, it summarizes the published work of a great many people, but nowhere else is one as likely to find such a well-written item on this subject.

The article should be read in full, but we will here attempt to extract a few items from it. The subtitle of the article is important: "The economy is fine, but most Americans are not—and the ideal that once defined how we lived is gone." The author quotes William J. McDonough, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and thus a lord of capitalism: "The issue is, of course, the growing disparity in wages earned by different segments of our labor force...." Living standards have fallen or stagnated for the majority of Americans, while a small minority have enjoyed a bonanza, news that you have undoubtedly heard many times recently. In the three decades after World War II the majority of citizens, including virtually all those who considered themselves middle-class, received steadily rising earnings. The spoils of economic growth were divided remarkably evenly, but during the last two decades wages have fallen while productivity, profits, and stock prices have all soared. As a result, the country has become, in Mr. McDonough's words, "a society of diverse economic groups suspicious of both the future and each other." We no longer are the Middle Class country described by de Tocqueville and Matthew Arnold. Nor are we a highly educated country, only about one in four working-age Americans has a college degree, and without that degree it is almost impossible to enjoy rising earnings. The reasons for the present situation are extremely complex, and there is controversy over them. Certainly there is no one cause. Certainly there is no one fix. These are perhaps the most important statements in the article. Balancing the budget and reducing the size of government evidently have little to do with a remedy. We are told that Robert Reich probably best understands the needs when he says that the only way out is to increase the supply of skilled workers, and that solution includes such things as subsidizing college attendance and retraining, at government expense, those who have lost their jobs. The difficulty here is that the cost would be immense, and in the present environment there is little hope for such expenditures.

The changes described in this article need to be considered by library retirees, if they have not already done so, for the library world in which we have spent our lives is in a more precarious position than we may have realized, while at the same time libraries are more needed than ever. The changes also directly affect our own lives, for in the struggle for necessary cost of living increases in pensions, the population's finances are a reality we must confront.

LM

living in New York City are invited to participate in the event planned for May 7, 1996. Busses will leave from the Library at 40th Street and Fifth Avenue and from a location in the Bronx.

The day's events will include a tour of the Retirements System offices, lunch with Comptroller McCall at the

University Club, a tour of the Capitol and visits with the New York City delegation to the State Legislature.

The cost will be \$27.00 for the bus and lunch. We hope many of our members will attend. Please call Juanita Doares at 212 666-5737 or Belle Weinberg at 212 877-6974 for details.

**The New York
Public Library
Retirees
Association, Inc.**
An Independent Association

Officers

President: Juanita S. Doares
Vice-President: Catherine
Marquard

Secretary:

Treasurer: Mary T. Brady
Executive Board:

Moritia Leah Frederick
Lawrence Murphy
Belle Weinberg

*To join the NYPL Retirees Association,
send annual dues of \$10 to:*

Ms. Mary Brady, Treasurer
NYPL Retirees Association
505 East 82 Street, 5-J
New York, NY 10028

Send information for the newsletter to:
NYPL Retirees Association
Newsletter

c/o Larry Murphy, Editor
137 E. 36 St., #16-B
New York, NY 10016

All other information and inquires:
NYPL Retirees Association
c/o Juanita Doares
401 W. 118th St., #3
New York, NY 10027
(telephone: 212 666-5737)

Social Outing

The next Social Outing will be a visit to the Jewish Museum on Thursday, March 21, followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant. For information call Agnes Babich: 1-718 335-3881

**Directory of
the Association**

Included in the envelope with this newsletter is a directory of the members of this association. It lists only the names of those who have not objected to having them published. The directory is being distributed only to members and will not be included in envelopes of those nonmembers who receive the newsletter.

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**The Association's
Committees and
their Members**

Health Care Committee

Moritia Leah Frederick, Chair
Agnes Babich
Mercy Kellogg
Ann Moy

Legislative Committee

Belle Weinberg, Chair
Lucy Eldridge
Nora Gorchoff
Theresa Casile
Ruth Kronmiller

Membership Committee

William O. Lee (Staten Island
representative)

Social Committee

Rose Marie O'Leary
Agnes Babich
Betty Gubert

If you would like to serve on one of these committees, please contact Juanita Doares.
212 666-5737

**New Members
by Mary Brady**

The Association's New Members
as of November 15, 1995:

Don Allyn
Charles Benson
Virginia Christ-Janer
Abraham Fox
Kathleen Kenney
Angeline Moscatt
Lewis Stark
Kaye-Coke Walker

**ALA, Microsoft
"Libraries Online"**

ALA and Microsoft will begin a one-year, \$3-million initiative to find out how to extend information technologies to all people, not just those who can afford it. One of the test libraries is the Brooklyn Public Library's Flatbush branch, which serves a largely immigrant population. Funded by Microsoft, it will be administered by PLA. See *American Libraries*, January 1996, page 7.

**Schedule of
Meetings of the
Association**

Wednesday, January 17
Monday, February 12
Wednesday, March 13
Monday, April 15
Wednesday, May 15
Monday, June 17

All meetings except Wednesday May 15 are scheduled at Mid-Manhattan Library, first floor conference room at 6 pm. The May 15 meeting will probably be in the Bronx in the afternoon.

**Review of
Meetings of the
Association
by Juanita Doares**

The June program of the Association was devoted to the recommendations of the White House Conference on the Aging. Our speaker was Nat Yalowitz, a delegate to the Conference. He went through the recommendations it had passed and discussed those that were of interest to us. Mr. Yalowitz asked that we urge our Congressional representatives not only to vote for bills that came out of the White House Conference, but that we also encourage them to sponsor legislation relating to the Conference's resolutions.

We are grateful to Elizabeth Mullan for hosting our September meeting held in the St. George Regional Library on Staten Island. Joyce Pan of the staff greeted the retirees, gave a brief history of the library, and invited us to view an exhibit of photographs referring to the St. George Library. Our guest speakers were Eva Heyman, coordinator of health issues at DC37, and Ray Markey, President of the NYPL Local. They answered questions on health benefits and discussed labor negotiations being held with the City. Following the meeting we were given a tour of the building.

Ed Curran was the speaker at the October meeting. See page 3 of this newsletter, *Pension Supplementation*.