

NETWORK CONNECTION



Official Newsletter of the New York State Library Assistants' Association

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We'll Miss You, Kathy Martel!

Sally Collins, Administrative Assistant at RRLC
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When people talk about Kathy Martel these words are often spoken: leader, volunteer, advocate, faithful, and friend. Kathy, who works in the Communications Department at the Monroe County Library System, has been an ongoing supporter of the RRLC Library Assistants' Committee for 18 years, always ready to offer new ideas and mentor new leaders for the group. Her enthusiasm has kept the group invigorated and she has been a consistently effective leader.

Kathy took the lead in the library assistants' volunteer efforts, organizing a twice-yearly collection of items for the Grace Urban Ministry and then driving many car loads of the much needed items to the Ministry, helping to cook several dinners throughout the year at the Ronald McDonald House, and leading a group of volunteer gardeners at the Rochester Historical Society.



In 2004, Kathy won the New York State Library Assistants' Association (NYSLAA) Craig Koste Award. This is an award for outstanding service. This award recognizes those library assistants who have distinguished themselves by their service to the NYSLAA organization and to the library assistants of New York on either a state or local level.

RRLC and the Library Assistants' group will miss Kathy's guidance and leadership, and we want to wish her the best as she retires this spring from her position at the Monroe County Library System.

Kathy FAQs:

- NYSLAA member for 18 years
 - attended all of the last 18 conferences!
- Instrumental in writing the Library Assistants' bylaws.
- Helped plan both of the NYSLAA conferences held in Rochester 1993 & 2004.
- RRLC Library Assistants Committee Public Relations Chair from Fall of 1995 to June of 1999.
- Acting Vice President in 1997 for NYSLAA.

Comments from some of the people who have worked with Kathy:

- "Kathy is always looking for new volunteer opportunities for our RRLC library assistants group; she was the person who suggested we work on Bibliobuild, the Habitat for Humanity house that the library community sponsored."
- "In 1993 Kathy was the co-chair for the NYSLAA conference in Rochester, NY...She helped pull in volunteers from all different types of libraries."
- "She has worked with advocacy issues with the various legislators....she has traveled to Albany to lobby for library support. She has marched in rallies to show library support"
- "She's just a sweet, outgoing and very well rounded person and I sure hope she stays in touch because I'm going to miss her."

INSIDE: NASIG Award...Lobby Day...Library Assistants' Day...Legislative Look...Membership Update

Lobby Day 2008

Ruth Mason, Public Relations Chair

The Capitol was bustin' on March 11, 2008, when our group arrived for Lobby Day. Colleagues and other library advocates traveled across the state for face-to-face meetings with our elected officials. Those of us "in the trenches" know the importance of the Governor restoring the \$5 million cut in supplemental system aid, which was added by the Legislature in last year's budget. For the Four County Library alone, this amounts to \$95,742.

Our Four County Library System group started the day early. The tour bus left Johnson City at 7:30 am., making stops in Sidney and Oneonta. We arrived in Albany around 10:45 am.

NYLA sponsored a hospitality reception, registration and briefing for arriving lobbyists. Members from FCLS met with Assemblypersons Clifford Crouch, Gary Finch, Donna Lupardo and Senators Thomas Libous and John Bonacid.



State Capitol Building, Albany

This was my first trip to the Capitol for Lobby Day. For me, it was inspiring to see "our government at work." Major news events did not seem to disrupt the flow of the regular work day. For the most part, everything seemed to be "business as usual" on a busy Tuesday at the State Capitol.

If you are up for a little adventure and an opportunity to voice your concerns for the future of YOUR library, plan to attend next year's Lobby Day in Albany! See you there!

Library Assistants' Day

Ruth Mason, Public Relations Chair



NYSLAA has traditionally observed the Thursday in National Library Week as "Library Assistants' Day." Libraries across the state celebrated the day with a variety of activities.

In New York City, the Metropolitan New York Library Council, New York Public Library Guild Local 1930 and New York Public Library sponsored "Enhancing Our Skills in the Age of Information." The event offered six workshops and a tour of the New York Public "Science, Industry and Business Library." Thanks to Vergie Savage-Branch for sharing this information.

Guernsey Memorial Library's Director, Melanie Battoe, Norwich, NY, sponsored a catered luncheon for all employees. Catering was provided by Bruce Burchill, also a library employee, and included one of Bruce's "world famous" lemon cheesecakes. A good time was had by all.

How did your library celebrate? Let us know and we will share in the next newsletter!

A Legislative Look at 2008-2009

Ove Overmyer, L.A.

Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County
President, CSEA City of Rochester Library Workers 7420
CSEA Political Action Chair Local 828
CSEA WNY Region 6 PAC Committee

When Bill Clinton muttered, “It’s the economy stupid,” people were floored by the sheer simplicity of his remark. Today, the price of gas, food and housing are way out of control. Unemployment has never been higher and real estate foreclosures are skyrocketing throughout the state and nation. And so, too, is public library usage on the rise.

The American Library Association (ALA) commissioned studies in the past that demonstrate a clear connection between an economic decline and an increase in public library use.

One five-year study, released in April 2002, saw a match between circulation increases at 25 of the nation’s largest public libraries and time periods labeled “recessions” by the National Bureau of Economic Research.



Simply put, when our dollars shrink and expenses grow, people tend to rely more on their public libraries for free materials and services they might otherwise pay for. Even though libraries are erroneously considered non-mandated services, I dare to say that no other institution in our communities improves the quality of our lives more than our libraries.

The ALA studies confirm the stories we’ve been hearing from our library workers from around the state. In fact, I have had personal conversations with college-aged patrons at the Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County who renewed their library cards because money was too tight to go to retail outlets to buy music and books.

We see people flocking back to our libraries at a time when library dollars are extremely scarce, which means that funding has never been more important than it is right now.

Advocacy is a necessary evil

Financially backing our public libraries has the overwhelming support of New Yorkers from Buffalo to Montauk Point. In fact, a January 2008 Zogby poll showed that 82% of New Yorkers support continued increases in state aid for libraries to purchase books, despite these uncertain economic times.

Historically, the library community has not done a very good job of advocating for itself until just recently. Now, library employees and union members are trying to aggressively renew alliances with government officials, administrators and lawmakers to advocate for sustained and equitable funding. We do this because we so deeply believe in the mission of our work. Some form of advocacy should be a requisite task of every library worker one time or another. Today, I'm asking you to make a commitment to this priority.

Lobbying in Albany

Our lobbying efforts in Albany this year were bittersweet. Even though our state lawmakers restored millions to the Governor’s proposed budget, a sweeping 2% decrease in overall funding has shortchanged state libraries nearly 2 million for 2008-2009, including Coordinated Collection

Development for Academic Libraries. Aid programs for public and school library systems were also cut by 2%.

Pre-Lobby Day activities included various NYLA affiliates who held meetings on Monday, March 10 at the Holiday Inn on Wolf Road. The New Yorkers for Better Libraries Political Action Committee also held a fundraising dinner that same evening to give a legislative voice and financial kick to our lobbying efforts.

On Lobby Day, the legislative breakfast reception was held off the concourse of the Empire State Plaza. It began at 8:00 a.m. where NYLA hosted an informal buffet breakfast for legislators and staff to meet with library advocates from around the state. Legislators were also given the opportunity to have their photos taken for the annual READ posters and bookmarks that are used to promote the Statewide Summer Reading Program.

Around 11:30 am, library advocates rallied in Meeting Room 6 to voice their support for library funding and provide a visual demonstration of the strength of the library community to legislators and their staffs. Various speakers included NYS Assembly Member Amy Paulin (D-Westchester) who is Chair of the NYS Assembly Libraries and Educational Technology Committee.



Library Lobby Day (left to right)
Michael Borges, NYLA Executive Director,
Rachel Baum, 2007-08 NYLA President,
Ove Overmyer, President, CSEA City of Rochester
Library Workers 7420.

That afternoon we visited with our legislators. Library advocates had one-on-one sessions with their lawmakers to inform them of our State Budget priorities for the coming year.

However, not all that came out of this budget year was gloom and doom. Despite the tough economic climate, state aid for libraries does include the \$8 million for library systems that we received last year. In addition, funding also kept the \$14 million earmarked for bricks and mortar public library construction.

Our challenge as Library Assistants

Faced with the constant threat of budget restraints, our challenge is to maintain and improve the quality of services for our libraries. We must convince the county executives, county legislators, city officials and state lawmakers that library services should not be viewed as an expense to taxpayers-- but as a vital investment in the future of our communities.

I personally want to thank all of the proactive library advocates for their efforts on behalf of their libraries. Without the great support NYLA received on lobby day March 11, where over 1000 library advocates descended on our state capitol, there may have been even more cuts without the \$8 million budgeted. Squeaky wheels really do get the grease.

Again, next year promises to be another difficult year. We know we will need every advocate to continue to remind our elected officials of the benefits our libraries provide for our communities. Not only do our libraries depend on it, so do our jobs.

NASIG Serials Specialist Award

John A. Edens
Director of Technical Services
University at Buffalo Libraries

I am pleased to share the news that Marie Peterson, Lockwood Memorial Library, University at Buffalo, in CTS Print Periodicals and Serials is the 2008 recipient of the Serials Specialist Award from NASIG (North American Serials Interest Group). Marie will be attending the NASIG annual conference in Phoenix in June. All expenses will be covered by the award.



The description of the award from the NASIG website: “The purpose of the NASIG Serials Specialist Award is to provide a promising paraprofessional with the opportunity to advance his/her knowledge and understanding of serials by networking and interaction with a wide range of dedicated professionals working in all segments of the serials information chain. The award provides the recipient with a firsthand introduction to NASIG by sponsoring attendance at the NASIG annual conference.”

Congratulations, Marie.

Membership Update

Donna Hanna, Membership Secretary

Membership for 2008 is at 364. Of the 364 there are 49 new members! That means there are a lot of 2007 members out there that need to renew. Renewal reminders will be sent out shortly.

If you move, please be sure to alert me that you have a new address. This will help avoid unnecessary delays in receiving your mail.



Are you on NYSLAA-L? This is a great avenue to share information, but if you're not on the list then you don't receive the information. It's not a busy list making email messages very easy to manage. Why not take a minute to sign up? Go to NYSLAA.org, click on NYSLAA-L listserv, and follow the instructions.

As always, if you have a question regarding your membership or if you need a letter verifying your years of NYSLAA membership for the Certificate of Achievement Program please let me know.



Welcome New Members!

Gwendolyn Accoo	New York Public Library, Mid-Manhattan Library
Donna Ayers	SUNY Geneseo, Milne Library
Melissa Barron	Onondaga County Public Library
Cathleen Bennett	Saint John Fisher College, Lavery Library
Robin Best	Onondaga County Public Library Petit Branch Library
Priscilla Bowie	New York Public Library, Aguilar Branch
Elizabeth Bowlby	Newark Public Library
Gina Brady	SUNY College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill, Van Wagenen Library
Amanda Bransford	New York Public Library, Epiphany Branch
Linda Chapman	Dansville Public Library
Diane Daversa	Poughkeepsie Public Library District, Adriance Memorial Library
Sarah DiThomas	University at Buffalo, Health Sciences Library
Nancy Englebach	Greece Public Library
Donna Gady	Middletown Thrall Library
Jennifer Gaston	SUNY Oneonta, James M. Milne Library
Zena George-Lewis	New York Public Library, Science, Industry and Business Library
Maryalice Hannan	Capital Region BOCES, School Library System
Katherine Hanrahan	Liverpool Public Library
Randell Helbert	New York Public Library, Countee Cullen Library
Denise Holcomb	SUNY College of Technology at Delhi, Mildred & Louis Resnick Library
Barbara Hubbard	SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry, F. Franklin Moon Library
Rahsaan Hunt	New York Public Library, Macomb's Bridge Branch
Saran James	New York Public Library, Science, Industry and Business Library
Virginia Jones	Onondaga County Public Library, Petit Library
Anne Kavanagh	SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, F. Franklin Moon Library
Sue Lefebvre	Champlain Valley Educational School Library System
Galina Levina	Onondaga County Public Library, Paine Branch Library
Renee Morsch	University of Rochester, Rush Rhees Library
Sheila Muller	SUNY College at Potsdam, Frederick W. Crumb Memorial Library
Alan NaPier	Liverpool Public Library
Tom Nielsen	Metropolitan New York Library Council
Rhonda Niski	Orange County Community College, Library Resource Center
Brandy Olsheski	Dansville Public Library
Betsy Poray	Williamson Free Public Library
Jenny Rodriguez	New York Public Library, Jerome Park Branch
Judith Romero	New York Public Library, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Terri Rowe	SUNY Oneonta, James M. Milne Library
Charles Scala	New York Public Library, Humanities & Social Sciences Library
Marcia Short	Manlius Library
Ellen Urbanek	University at Buffalo, Lockwood Memorial Library
Benel Venson	Unaffiliated
Robin Wallace	Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library

In order to save trees and landfills, there will be no Annual Reports printed for the Town Meeting. Please bring your Jan.-Feb. 2008 issue of the Network Connection if you want to refer to the Annual Reports for 2007. Thank you.