

# NETWORK CONNECTION



Official Newsletter of the New York State Library Assistants' Association

Oct.-Dec. 2008 Vol.20, no.4

## Library Assistants Libraries Need You

Submitted by: CALA 2009 NYSLAA Conference Committee  
Michele Matthews, Carol A. Reppard, Jean Guyon, Kathy Corbett,  
Adrienne Birchler, Michele Guiffre, and Eileen Lemley

In June 2009 the Capital Area Library Assistants (CALA) will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by hosting the **31<sup>st</sup> New York State Library Assistants' Association (NYSLAA) Annual Conference**. The Conference will be held in the historic hometown of Uncle Sam, Troy NY, on the campus of Russell Sage College.

We are planning tours which will include a walking tour of history-rich downtown Troy given



by the Rensselaer County Historical Society. We will also be offering tours of the celebrated Troy Music Hall and the very picturesque Oakwood Cemetery which is the burial site of Uncle Sam and other significant local, state, and

national figures. The Wednesday night mixer will be held at one Troy's local eateries known for its great food and friendly staff. Thursday evening we will be cruising, dining and dancing on the Hudson River aboard the Captain JP docked a few short blocks from campus.

With our offering of 31 workshops covering computer skills, personal and professional grant information, outreach, digitization, genealogy, art and other topics, there is sure to be something for everyone.

Sister Anne Bryan Smollin, therapist, lecturer, author and former teacher, will be our Keynote Speaker. She is sure to motivate us all. There will also be local library professionals who will be speaking to us at our mixer and breakfast venues about our importance to libraries.



Within walking distance of the Russell Sage College campus is a myriad of restaurants, shops, and local attractions sure to appeal to all.

We are looking forward to having all of you help celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at NYSLAA's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference being held June 10-12, 2009.

**INSIDE: ALA Certification...Fall Workshops... Elections...Award... Membership Update**

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“We would like to see a library community in New York State where library assistants have a voice in decisions that affect their future, are valued for their contributions, recognized and rewarded appropriately, and where there is equitable access to professional development opportunities.”

## NYSLAA’S MISSION

“The mission of the New York State Library Assistants’ Association is:

1. To enhance the professional image and status of NY State’s library assistants.
2. To further their professional growth.
3. To provide a network for communication to our members and the profession on library and library assistant issues.
4. To network and cooperate with library organizations on local, state, national, and international levels.”

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CHECK OUT NYSLAA’S WEBSITE: [nyslaa.org](http://nyslaa.org)

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## JOIN NYSLAA-L, NYSLAA’S ELECTRONIC FORUM

To subscribe, send the following command to **listproc@cornell.edu**, subscribe nyslaa-l <first name> <last name>. Do not include a subject.

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## Thoughts on ALA's Library Support Staff Certification Program

Sheila Tshudy

I have worked in the library at The Corning Museum of Glass since 1980, starting as a Serials Assistant and now as the Cataloger for the video and glass company trade catalog collections. I do not have a college degree but with mentoring and support from former and current supervisors and co-workers I have been able to advance in my library career. I personally believe that professionalism is not solely obtained with a degree, but also in personal achievements and accomplishments.

In the fall of 2007 I submitted my application to NYSLAA's Certificate of Achievement Review Board, requesting a Level IV in Technical Services. I was quite confident that I had successfully documented my experience, education, and accomplishments, but would the board feel the same? In November I received a phone call from Michelle Matthews letting me know that my application had been approved. It was a great feeling knowing that I was being recognized for my accomplishments and professionalism on a state level, but more important was the self-gratification (and I thank NYSLAA for the development of this program). Soon after, I learned the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded the American Library Association (ALA) a grant to pursue development of a national library support staff certification program. I knew this was my next goal. Certification on a national level would surely be considered an extremely valuable accomplishment in management's eyes. I soon learned that support staff from special libraries would not be able to participate, and that this was at the request of the Special Libraries Association (SLA). I know that SLA is also working on establishing their own certification program and wonder if perhaps they feel that the criteria and competencies required in special

libraries might not be addressed in ALA's program? If this is the case, SLA should allow library support staff from special libraries to make their own choice of becoming certified in ALA's program and/or in SLA's. Since this grant is partially funded by IMLS I'm surprised that they would support the idea that museum libraries would not be included in this program. With ALA's certification program still in the initial stages, perhaps they will reconsider and encourage SLA to join them.

In checking further, I found that the grant awarded to ALA holds some other interesting criteria that might very well impact more than just those in special libraries. The grant states that it was awarded to "*develop a national voluntary certification program for support staff in rural or small town public and academic libraries*" (<http://www.ims.gov>). Something more to think about, I wonder who will determine small town and rural areas?

Regardless of how this plays out, I firmly believe that library support staff needs to have their voices heard and become proactive in their own development regardless of which path they choose. For some this means a more formal education, for others, this may include certification on a state and/or national level. I am confident that national certification can and will promote the value and importance of the contributions of library support staff – something we all must pursue in order to be recognized for the professionals that we are. So take advantage of the opportunities available and get involved. Start with NYSLAA's Certificate of Achievement and for those of you who can, prepare for ALA's national certification which is certain to open doors for all of us. You'll be glad you did!



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**  
**NYSLAA's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference**  
**Russell Sage College, Troy, NY June 10-12, 2009**



## Pioneer Library System Hosts Annual Fall Support Staff Workshop

Heidi Jensen

October 24, 2008, was the fourth annual Pioneer Library System Fall Support Staff Workshop. This is a unique workshop for the Pioneer Library System in the fact that it's run by and for support staff ONLY.

This event was started after I attended my first NYSLAA conference in Rochester. I was so impressed at how support staff could come together, learn more about their field of work and network with other library assistants. I thought that the library system where I worked needed to have the same thing – on a much smaller scale. It's been my pleasure to host each of these workshops.

This year we offered three different programs. We started the day by having Melissa Correia, Librarian from the Geneva Public Library, speak to us about a reader's advisory data base called 'NoveList.' She taught everyone how to help their patrons find what to read next by using a favorite author or subject search to locate other authors or titles of interest. After a quick break, we had Chris Kovar from non-profit 'Whole Me, Inc.' speak about deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons. I first heard Chris speak at the 2008 NYSLAA Conference in Liverpool and liked her so much I invited her to do a presentation at our workshop. At the end of the morning, we raffled off two gifts baskets. One basket had two caramel apples, an MP3 player and a beautiful blanket. The second basket had a handmade scarf, MP3 player, leather bag, gift certificates for coffee and much, much more. Every item in the baskets was donated.

Our last workshop was about blogging and was presented by Lindsay Stratton, trainer from the

Pioneer Library System. This workshop was held during lunch. Attendees learned what is important in a blog and how simple it is to create one for their library.

Many of the attendees at this workshop have never been to a NYSLAA conference. Each attendee received a bag from Baker & Taylor filled with information about NYSLAA, NYLA, ALA and the RRLC Library Assistants Group. There were also bookmarks from Gaylord, Highsmith, Associates and NYLA, a pen & Post-it Notes from Vernon Library Supplies, and magazines from Library Journal and Archival.

After signing in at the workshop, attendees received a packet containing the agenda, blogs and websites of local interests, a list of other workshops available in the Rochester area, a donations list and a website address for a survey to fill out on Survey Monkey. To remind them of how important they are, each attendee received chocolate and a pack of Post-it Notes with a handmade cover on it.

We also had several very special donations. ALA donated four ALA/NYLA joint memberships and NYSLAA donated four 'new' memberships. These memberships were given away as door prizes. Other door prizes were five \$25 gift cards to a variety of local locations.

This year we had 54 in attendance and it was a GREAT success. I hope to have at least 15 people from the Pioneer Library System member libraries attend the 2009 NYSLAA Annual Conference at Russell Sage College in Troy, NY.



## SCRLC, CLRC, RRLC & NYLINK Library Assistants' Day

Cheryl Grom

Rainy weather on October 16, 2008, welcomed the participants to the Syracuse, NY Holiday Inn for the second Annual Library Assistants' Day.

The first session was called *True Colors: Discovering How Personality Influences Work*, and was attended by the whole group. Carole Marshall, OCM-BOCES, explained that everyone looks at work and life differently. This idea was first presented by Greek philosophers and has evolved over time. The idea of True Colors describes a person's strengths and weaknesses and is a personality typology with four dominant types based on the colors, orange, blue, green and gold. Each color relates to a different personality and we did a hands-on exercise to determine our own (color) type. What an interesting way to look at your own personality and work ethic, and the people around you!

The group then broke up into one of three sessions, *What's the 411: Cataloging Update on RDA* with Lynne Graziadei, *Social Networking: Blogging* by Kate Pitcher and *Reading the Resume: What Employers are Looking For*, which was moderated by Stephen Klein.

After a wonderful lunch, there was a panel presentation titled *The Single Service Desk* with Anita Chiodo, Head of Access Services, SUNY Cortland; Bonnie Charity, Circulation & Reserves, SUNY College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry; Jenna Mayotte, Reference Librarian and Business Specialist, Syracuse University; and Brad Long, Head of Reference, SUNY Upstate Medical University.

The end of the day was a breakout session with two workshops: *Help They Moved My Space! How to Successfully Navigate the Learning Commons Change*, by Bill Drew, Systems Librarian for Technical Services and Electronic Info Resources, TC3; Lucy Yang, Library Services Assistant, TC3; and Ann Sullivan, Librarian for Reference, TC3, or *Generationally Speaking: Generational Issues in Libraries and Beyond* with Mary-Carol Lindbloom, Executive Director, SCRLC.

By the time the day was over the rain had stopped and hopefully everyone left with a positive experience.



### Executive Council Elections

Donna Kuhner, Election Chair

The call for nominations was printed in the July-September, 2008 *Network Connection*. This year we were choosing our Vice President, Membership Secretary and Recording Secretary.

*No nominations from the membership were received.* The following officers have agreed to continue serving the organization.

**Vice President:** Ruth V. Oberg, Science and Engineering Library, University at Buffalo

**Membership Secretary:** Donna Hanna, Milne Library, SUNY Geneseo

**Recording Secretary:** Coleen Hopkins, Milne Library, SUNY Geneseo

As per our By-Laws under Article II: Elections Section B: Election Procedures B.1: "In the event of a totally unopposed slate of nominees, the Chair of the Election Committee shall inform the membership before the end of the year, and shall declare those nominees to be the new officers in January."

Congratulations, Ruth, Donna and Coleen.

The Executive Council often questions why members don't step forward and get involved in our organization. We would like to hear your thoughts and suggestions. Please feel free to put them on NYSLAA-L or contact any of the Executive Council officers personally.

(See page 2 for contact information.)



## **NYSLAA Member Receives WNYLRC's 2008 Outstanding Committee Member Award**

Ruth V. Oberg

The Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) annually awards an Outstanding Committee Member Award. This award is intended to honor individuals who have provided outstanding service to their appointed committee and have gone above and beyond committee member criteria outlined in the WNYLRC Committee Guidelines in one or more of the following ways:

- Through leadership, enthusiasm, participation and commitment demonstrated by work ethic, a willingness to take on new tasks and the ability to gather support for a new idea or direction that supports WNYLRC's strategic goals and objectives
- Through representation of appointed group (e.g. public academic, special libraries, etc) and accomplishing the charge of the committee with position of said group in mind
- Through enthusiastic support of WNYLRC's other committees' endeavors and the support of WNYLRC in the library community at large

This year's recipient is **Marie Peterson**, Instructional Support Associate, University at Buffalo Libraries, Central Technical Services.

Marie is Chair of the Western New York Library Assistants (WNYLA) and has been instrumental in raising the visibility of library assistants and ensuring that educational opportunities and communication avenues are open to them. Her dedication in strengthening the relationship between WNYLA and WNYLRC has been very successful. Through her efforts and others like hers, a formal Library Assistants subcommittee now exists under WNYLRC's Continuing Education Committee.

Marie received her award at the WNYLRC Annual Membership Meeting, October 22, 2008.

**Great job, Marie!**

*Editor's Note:* We are always interested in publishing the accomplishments of our members. Is there someone in your library who has received recognition for the excellent work they do? Please let me know so the information can be sent to all the members. It is important to recognize our awards and to encourage others in our field.

## **Membership Update**

Donna Hanna

Membership for 2008 ended at 428. Of the 428 there are 66 new members! Unfortunately, that means that around 75 of our 2007 members did not renew for 2008.

I am accepting memberships for 2009 so go ahead and send yours in. If you think you've already renewed and would like to check just give me a call at (585) 245-5508 or send me an email, hanna@geneseo.edu.

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

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 or for any other reason, please let me know.