

ACRL / NY

Association of College and Research Libraries

The Greater New York Metropolitan Area Chapter

Connections:
The Quarterly Newsletter of ACRL / NY

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Spring 2003

Message from the President

Eloise Bellard

Greetings to all our ACRL/NY members. The executive board has been diligently reviewing the revisions of the by-laws that our past president Harriet Hagenbruch and Recording Secretary Laurie Lopatin have worked so diligently to bring up to date. The new editions and changes will be sent out to the membership for review in the near future. Our mission statement has also been revised and is now posted on our website, so please take a look.

The symposium planning committee is working on our upcoming symposium, "Operation Intellectual Freedom – Librarians on the Front Line," to be held at Baruch College on November 21, 2003. As with our previous events, I'm sure it will be a great success.

As president, I would like to encourage all our members to get more involved with the chapter. It is not too late for anyone to express interest in becoming a member of our Executive Board. Each year we select Vice Chairs/Chairs Elect from each of our sections: Westchester/Lower Hudson Valley, Long Island, and New York City. Each Vice Chair assists the Board and the Chair of their Geographic Section in coordinating activities. In the second year of office, as chair of your Geographic Section, you would be responsible for organizing and planning two activities, such as a workshop or library tour, that are geared to librarians within the Geographic Section. Or you may wish to join our Sympo-

sium Planning Committee and get involved in organizing our annual event. If that doesn't appeal to you, we are always looking for members to become active in our Special Interest groups. We still need volunteers to chair our Collection Development Group and Cultural Diversity Group.

One of ACRL/NY main objectives is to provide networking and mentoring opportunities for its membership. Many of us belong to various list-servs for our areas of expertise. However, the increasing demand of our profession and the Internet has isolated us and we often do not have the time to meet our colleagues face to face or network as often as we would like. Many of us are also required to publish and present for our professional portfolios. I believe that ACRL/NY can offer us a variety of opportunities locally to help us meet those requirements and improve our profession at the same time. As I listed above, our annual symposium, local workshops, discussion groups and our list-serv are a few venues for librarians to share their knowledge and research while promoting professional development. Through our list-serv or discussion groups, you may find a colleague who is involved in an area of research you are interested in or who would like to do research in your area of expertise. In addition, you might attend a workshop or our symposium and find another librarian to collaborate with on writing an article or have an idea

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for another one of our workshops. You might even go so far as to take that collaboration and present at a national conference. The Executive Board is always looking for workshop ideas and panelists for workshops. I am a strong believer in mentoring new librarians in this area by helping to promote their interests and endeavors. The future of our organization and profession rests with their ideas and contributions. I would like to encourage all our members to share their research ideas with their colleagues locally. If you have written an article recently or presented on a topic, please let me know. If you have an idea for a workshop, you can contact me or the chair of your Geographic Section. Please feel free to e-mail me at bellard@adelphi.edu or call me (516) 877-3584.

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Previous issues of *ACRL/NY Connections* may be found on the chapter's website:

Here are a few examples of what some of board members are up to in their spare time. **Debra Dolan**, our legislative liaison, is presenting this summer at a conference in England on Information Literacy and Graduate Students. **Marilyn Rosenthal**, Co-Vice Chair of the Long Island Section, was on the Advisory Panel that prepared the upcoming book *Developing Research and Communication Skills: Guidelines for Information Literacy in the Curriculum*, prepared by Middle States Commission on Higher Education. **Dona McDermott**, Chair of the Information Literacy Discussion Group and our Newsletter Editor, is involved in research regarding information literacy programs for freshman. I look forward to hearing from you and hope ACRL/NY can be as helpful to you as it has been for me.

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SYMPOSIUM UPDATE
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On Friday November 21, 2003 at Baruch College in New York City, the ACRL/NY Chapter will proudly present a symposium titled: "Operation Intellectual Freedom: Librarians on the Front Lines." The symposium will feature Judith Krug, head of ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom and Siva Vaidhyanathan, faculty member of NYU's Steinhardt School of Education and a cultural historian and media scholar. Prof. Vaidhyanathan is the author of *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity* and of the upcoming book, *The Anarchist in Library: How Peer-to-Peer Networks are Transforming Politics, Culture and Information*. Moderating our afternoon panel will be Rick Karr, who can be heard on NPR News reporting on culture, media, and technology. In addition, Mr. Karr has been a contributor to the PBS offering, *NOW with Bill Moyers*.

In this symposium our speakers will address the tension between our traditional emphasis on freedom of information for all of our patrons and the current concerns regarding national security. To this end, and to the professional quest for balance that we seek to provide as information professionals, we will present several points of view on this important topic. Our speakers will talk about the current state of libraries in this time of tension and will include discussion of the Patriot Act as it affects us as librarians.

Gloria Meisel
Vice President

ACRL/NY Tours Westchester County Archives and Westchester County Historical Society Library

On Thursday, May 22, several ACRLNY members were treated to an enlightening tour of the Westchester County Archives and Westchester County Historical Society Library. Stacks of books, boxes of photos and canisters of maps were brought to life by our very knowledgeable guides. Their anecdotes and exceptional understanding of the county's cultural roots enabled those of us with little historical knowledge to immediately enjoy the seemingly endless treasures set before us at every turn.

The program began with a warm welcome from the Director of the Westchester County Public Archives, Patty Dohrenwend. She described several initiatives currently underway. Many collections are being made digital, including information documenting the construction of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation. It may surprise some to know that the Bronx River Parkway has been deemed a national historical landmark of engineering significance by the National Park Service. This motorway, constructed in 1925, was the first of its kind to be built through a continuous stretch of Greenbelt – a limited access parkway.

Later as we toured the public archives, we were able to look through some of the documents in this collection. A memorable letter addressed to the Bronx River Parkway Commission was pointed out to the group. The writer was protesting the forced sale of his land and business. Interestingly, his family's business was the construction and sale of carriages, which would not have been permitted on the Motorway in any case. Our guide Diana Maull easily held our attention adding color and nuance to the most fragile and faded document. She led us through the aisles pointing out trade receipts from the earliest of settlers, military maps, birth records and myriad other public records that have been preserved because of their historical significance.

We then were ushered into the nearby stacks of the Westchester County Historical Society Library. Although the two collections have separate origins and are catalogued differently, they are housed in the same building with the

same environmental control systems and are made available to the public through the same Reading Room staff and volunteers. Of course, their missions are similar: to collect and preserve historic documents, to promote an understanding of that information and to make it as accessible to the public as possible. However, the Westchester County Archives is an office of the County Government, falling under the leadership of the Department of Information Technology. The Westchester County Historical Society, on the other hand, is an independent, not-for-profit organization supported by membership dues and grants.

Our guide in the Historical Society Library was Chris Marinaro, who had an obvious passion for local history and the natural presence of a seasoned docent. The collections in this library are vast, many of which were bequeathed to the Society by families with far reaching ties to the settlement of Westchester County. Layer upon layer of maps were available from every available time period. Maps are the fastest growing document type in the library. Many of these are being photocopied or reproduced digitally for reasons of preservation as well as ease of retrieval and comparison.

As we snaked through the stacks, we were able to reach in and pull out any title that caught our eye. This activity of course might have continued well into the evening. However, the building was to close at 5 p.m. so we had to curtail our curiosities. Following the tour, our guides joined us for some informal conversation and refreshments. I think all who participated in this event would join me in a hearty "thank you" to the wonderful staff at the Archives and Library. If you missed the tour, the Archives offer limited hours to the public. If you would like to visit them or learn more about their collections, please visit their websites: The Westchester County Historical Society at www.westchesterhistory.com/ and The Westchester County Archives at <http://www.westchesterarchives.com>.

Sheri Webber
Chair, Westchester/Lower Hudson Valley Section

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New York City Section Goes to the Met

On Wednesday April 2, 2003, the librarians at the Thomas J. Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art hosted a small, diverse group from the New York City Geographic Section of ACRL/NY. We were treated to an informative presentation by Linda Seckelson, Head of Reader Services, followed by a tour of the library, including the reading room, the preservation lab, and the closed stacks. All in attendance learned about the library's collections and policies, a retrospective conversion project, the many individual institutional libraries housed at the Museum, and future renovation plans. After the tour, we relaxed with wine and cheese, chatting with old friends and meeting new colleagues. Thanks go especially to Ken Soehner, Chief Librarian; Linda Seckelson, Head of Reader Services; and Nancy Mandel, who arranged for the lovely reception.

*Jennifer Schwartz
Vice Chair, New York City Section*

New York State Higher Education Initiative (NYSHEI) Names Executive Director

John Townsend has been appointed the first Executive Director of the New York State Higher Education Initiative (NYSHEI), which is a new member-governed organization of public and private academic libraries and institutions in the state. It fosters collaboration among academic libraries to enhance research and educational resources. It facilitates access to collections and assists New York's member institutions to address changing modes of scholarly communication. NYSHEI has financial support from 127 founding members, including all of SUNY (State University of New York) and CUNY (City University of New York) plus 44 private colleges and universities, including Columbia, Cornell, Colgate, Syracuse, New York University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Rochester Institute of Technology, Union College, Vassar and many others. (A complete list of members is available at the NYSHEI web site, www.nyshei.org.) Membership is open to all accredited institutions of higher education in New York State.