
NYMA News

Newsletter of AJL-NYMA

Vol. 9, No. 1

Winter-Spring 1997

Fall Conference Event Brings Editors Together

by Elizabeth Stabler

The Fall Conference, held November 21, 1996, in the Weill Art Gallery of the 92nd Street YM&YWH, was a great success. The four editors, representing the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, *Jewish Press*, *Forward*, and *Jewish Week*, treated the audience to an insider's view of the Jewish news media. Each spoke about their agency/paper's history and policies. They also addressed subjects of particular interest to librarians and libraries.

Debra Nussbaum Cohen of the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)* reported that all news for the past three years has been archived electronically and will eventually become available to the public online. The *JTA* is constructing a Web site, with several tiers of service; individuals may visit *JTA's* Web page for free and subscriptions will start at \$15 a month.

The *JTA*, founded in 1917, considers itself "the record keeper of the Jewish community." While no telephone reference is possible, researchers may have access to microfilm of back issues at the *JTA* offices.

Arnold Fine, Senior Editor at the *Jewish Press (JP)*, began by telling us that most of the mail the *JP* receives is about the jokes. Mr. Fine reported that he has been writing jokes for 46 years!

The *JP*, founded 47 years ago, has the first 20 years of its issues on microfiche. Each year's run is bound. Researchers may have access to these volumes and the paper's morgue. They are also welcome to

(Continued on Page 2)

From the President Shulamith Z. Berger

Our 1996 Fall Conference, "Meet the Jewish Press, offered attendees a unique opportunity for a behind-the-scenes look at several influential Jewish newspapers. Choosing a topic for the conference engendered numerous lively, animated discussions at our Board meetings. These deliberations once again raised issues which the Board has been pondering the past few years:

1. How to encourage "*panim hadashot*," new participants in NYMA programming, activities, and on the Board.
2. Do our programs and workshops satisfy our members' needs? Are they practical enough, or are they too culturally oriented? Do participants return to work with useful new information and ideas? Can a librarian present our program descriptions to a supervisor, administrator, or principal and feel justified in requesting time and funding to participate?

I believe the same premise lies behind the ongoing deliberations on the above two points: a lack of communication between the Board and the membership at large. The Board's perception of a communication problem may be skewed because the Board, with only one or two exceptions, has remained stable for many years. Members play "musical chairs" and switch roles, but there is little fresh input because of the dearth of new Board members.

Please help us determine whether or not our perception is accurate. We welcome feedback on our programs and activities from the membership at large. In this issue of *NYMA News* we are offering two ways for you to give us your opinion.

One vehicle is the newsletter itself. We would like to encourage letters to the editor, suggestions for features, and of course, articles and contributions by members. The other is a revised version of a questionnaire which was distributed at some NYMA functions last year. Please complete it; there are new questions on it. It is designed to get to know you and survey your needs. I am looking forward to reading your responses.

Without your input and feedback we are operating in a vacuum. Please help fill the void!

(Conference, cont'd)
come into JP's Research
Department.

Seth Gitell, Op-Ed Editor of the English language *Forward*, founded in 1990 by Seth Lipsky, told us his paper considers itself the "secular Jewish conscience." There is no microfilm of the *Forward's* back issues but researchers may come into the newspaper's offices to look through back issues. How much help they receive will depend on how busy the staff is at that moment.

Jonathan Mark, Associate Editor of the *Jewish Week (JW)*, explained that the JW "tries to be the paper of record for the Jewish community." JW's back issues are kept in bound volumes. At present "some" material is stored electronically, but not yet available to the public online. Researchers may come into the offices to look through the paper's morgue.

After the presentation of each editor's agency or paper, the panel, admirably moderated by NYMA president Shulamith Berger, engaged in a fascinating, collegial discussion. The panelists clearly welcomed this opportunity to come together professionally.

Because the agency's or paper's focus is on the present and future, they do not expend much effort on archiving their materials, except as described above. While each panelist was interested in the librarian's impetus to make materials easily available to researchers, none of the agencies or papers have librarians.

The conference was a huge success, even though attendance was disappointing. Panelists and audience both came away knowing they had participated in an exciting, professional exchange of ideas.

Ramaz Upper School Library — a profile by *Esther Nussbaum*

While generally known as the Ramaz Upper School Library, the sign above the entrance reads "Library-Media Center," which more accurately describes the collection and activities taking place there. Our on-site collection is both print and non-print but more importantly we locate materials for our patrons in any format from varied sources worldwide.

It has been my privilege since 1978 to have built our collection along with my esteemed colleague, Noreen Wachs. We serve the needs of the entire school population grades 7-12. Most of our holdings, however, consist of materials on the high school level.

Our goal as defined by the collection policy is to acquire up-to-date materials that will enable students to find information and the necessary texts they require for daily assignments as well as for research projects. Our collection enhances the curriculum in addition to supporting it. Our Judaica and Hebraica collections are extensive and are used by students and faculty alike.

We take pride in the broad range of our periodicals, subscribing to over 50 titles in hard copy and some on-line and on microfiche. We have some titles on fiche dating back to 1969, an unusually rich resource for a high school collection. Our audio-visual resources include a large video collection which is utilized by teachers on a daily basis. We are responsible for the AV equipment which requires both management and maintenance. In the last five years the profile of our library has changed once again as we entered the computer age. We enthusiastically embrace the CD-ROM format and have been using several programs successfully during the past few years.

Ramaz's long-time membership in the New York City School Library System (NYCSLS) benefits our students by allowing them access to an extensive database which includes the New York Public Library in addition to the entire school library system. They are able to obtain materials through interlibrary loan via a very efficient delivery system.

Other benefits that NYCSLS offers to members are Internet training workshops and in-service days. Both Noreen and I have found these extremely useful for learning the latest trends and applications in computerization and programming. This year with the advent of our Internet access we are able to telnet to various libraries worldwide as well as search the World Wide Web for specific subjects. Juniors and Seniors even have their own E-Mail accounts and some do their own Web surfing!

Our main problems are space-related — real space and cyberspace! As the school curriculum becomes more diversified and customized, the library facility is used for classes from time to time. The library is also home to four computers at which students may do their own word processing and E-Mail as well as their research. Teachers use our computers for their Hebrew word processing and for the printers which have Hebrew capability. While we have weeded several subject areas as well as the fiction collection, there is just no space to grow!

(Continued on Page 3)

(Ramaz, cont'd)

It is evident that today's librarian must be an information scientist, but I still believe strongly that the librarian must continue to be the agent of books, promoting the primacy of the book to help students become lifelong learners. It is our mandate to keep the library as a palace of print with all other formats enhancing the information and pleasure derived from the text.

Upcoming Events**Cataloging Workshop**

Thursday, February 13, from 1:30-4:30 at the Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway (at 122nd St.), in the Mendelson Convocation Center.

Program:**Cataloging:**

1. Kibbutz and other, non-traditional Haggadot; Auction catalogs
2. Teaching Para-Professionals Cataloging Skills
3. NACO Hebraica Funnel: A panel discussion

Day School/High School Workshop — May 1997

1997 Spring Conference — June 1997

32nd Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries — June 22-25, 1997 Wyndham Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio. For information contact the AJL office at 212-725-5359.

Community Calendar

"Kehillat ha-Kodesh, Creating the Sacred Community: the Roles of the Rabbi, Mohel, Schochet and Cantor in Jewish Communal Life." This is an exhibition on view currently until March 17, 1997, at Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 122nd Street and Broadway in Manhattan. Exhibition hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., and Sunday 10-a.m.-5 p.m.

Condolences

We all extend our heartfelt condolences to our dear friend and colleague, Marcia Posner, on the death of her beloved husband, Louis. May she and all her family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

We welcome your ideas, comments, suggestions, or professional news about yourself. Please write to the AJL-NYMA Newsletter Committee c/o Marion Stein, 28 Douglass St., Brooklyn, NY 11231.

*Association of
Jewish Libraries
New York
Metropolitan Area Chapter
c/o Shulamith Berger,
Yeshiva University, Archives
500 W. 185th St.
New York, NY 10033
Phone no: 212-960-5451
E-Mail: sberger@yu1.yu.edu*

**Executive Board
1996-1997****President**

Shulamith Berger

Vice-President

Rita Lifton

Corresponding Secretary

Shaindy Kurzman

Recording Secretary

Elizabeth Stabler

Treasurer

Sylvia Avner

High School Interest Group**Coordinator**

Noreen Wachs

Membership Coordinator

Naomi Steinberger

Programming

Marion Stein

Publicity Coordinator

Rita Lifton

Workshop Coordinators:*Cataloging:*

Elisheva Schwartz

Rachel Simon

Day School:

Beth Anshen Braunstein

Eileen Shmidman

Past Presidents

Tzivia Atik

Edith Lubetski

Esther Nussbaum

Marion Stein

Newsletter Committee

Marion Stein

Hallie Cantor

The Librarian and the Teacher Should be Friends

by Marion Stein

On Tuesday afternoon, July 2, 1996, a symposium which was organized by Professor Edith Lubetski, Librarian of the Hedi Steinberg Library of Stern College of Yeshiva University, took place at the college. As always, when Edith has a good idea, she does what needs to be done to bring it to fruition.

And so it was on Tuesday. Having run a similar conference previously, Edith thought it was time to try again to increase the awareness among students at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration of the importance of good library services as a vital component of a fine teaching program. With the full cooperation of Rabbi Yitzchak Handel, Director of the Azrieli School and the co-sponsorship of NYMA, the local chapter of the Association of Jewish Libraries, the afternoon symposium took place. Five master librarians shared their expertise with the assembled students, school administrators and librarians in the field who attended. Because of the mix of talents and interests among participants in the audience, the session proved to be highly interactive and very stimulating.

The first speaker was Merna Davidowitz, librarian at the Ashar Day School in Monsey, New York. She shared a number of programming ideas that she uses regularly with students in her N-8 school. Students in grades 1-6 come to the library regularly each week. Merna works with the students, teaching them various concepts from the general curricular areas such as map skills and time, by referring to Jewish ideas and using Jewish examples, thus achieving a natural integration of the two aspects of the school. She distributed handouts with specific lessons, including the use of world folk literature to express Jewish values and comparisons to Jewish stories on similar themes. The teachers and administrators were treated to some imaginative ways in which a dedicated and experienced librarian can enrich all areas of the curriculum.

Susan Young, librarian at Bais Yaakov (BY) of Queens, and Temple Beth Shalom of Roslyn Heights, demonstrated how an energetic librarian can make small miracles occur by being persistent, resourceful, and thoroughly professional. Susan has worked in all areas of librarianship and brings her broad experience to all she does. Even though she works part time in both positions she manages to keep the BY library for a student body of 500 running smoothly with a very impressive rate of circulation.

Susan has earned the respect and trust of all segments of the school community because of her long affiliation with the school as an alumna, parent, and now as librarian. She organizes special programs and makes sure that the

most recent books that are relevant to the curriculum are available. She, like Merna, tries to have something for everyone, even if she doesn't always have everything. Susan described ways in which she maximizes her acquisitions capacity by making use of all available funding — State, Federal and Agudah. This is a very important aspect of collection building and it takes skill to be able to know how to complete forms properly and in a timely manner. Susan considers her role to be part educator and part administrator.

Roz Friedman, librarian at the Solomon Schechter School of Westchester in White Plains, NY, presides over a relatively new, fully automated library at this K-8 school. Three years ago the Mandarin Library automation system was installed, which fully integrates the catalog and circulation systems and has allowed significant improvement in record-keeping and ease of circulation. Roz highlighted in particular the ease with which she can now create bibliographies for teachers on very short notice in all subject areas. She is also able to set up reserve lists, check on the whereabouts of any book in the collection and keep careful circulation statistics. Roz works closely with the computer teacher in the planning and execution of term papers and research projects. She handles the research and on-line search aspects of the work and her colleague Mrs. Kaufman assists the students with the drafting and word-processing aspects of the tasks. Anyone who would like to see how a beautiful and functional library space can enhance a school should plan a visit to her library.

Lillian Steinberg, librarian at HAFTR High School (Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway) in Cedarhurst, NY, has been librarian at the school for 20 years. She has been with the school through its various reincarnations and like Susan Young has been able to take advantage of her long-term and intimate knowledge of the institution to service her clientele very effectively. Although her library is not yet fully automated, Lillian has installed an Internet connection which is being used to good advantage by students and faculty alike. Lillian is a determined person and even in the face of budget cuts she makes the library work for the school. She takes full advantage of the library consortia available in Nassau County to maximize her school's resources.

Esther Nussbaum, Head Librarian at the Ramaz Upper School, shares with her colleagues Susan and Lillian a very long affiliation with the school in which she serves as librarian, having been both a parent and librarian there for over 20 years. She is the one who has built the library at Ramaz over the past 16 years and had the good fortune

(Continued on Page 5)

(Friends, cont'd)

of helping to design the physical space as well as supervising the growth of the collection.

Esther's broad interests and knowledge have allowed her to build what may be the finest Jewish day school library in the Metropolitan area, with a collection of close to 30,000 volumes. The library offers the students access to information in many formats, including monographs, over 50 periodical subscriptions, microforms, CD-ROMs, and an Internet connection. Because Ramaz has an excellent card catalog maintained by Noreen Wachs, Associate Librarian, who also is the principal Hebraica librarian, they have not yet selected an automation package that will suit their special requirements. In addition, as there is no OPAC provider for the PC market that offers Hebrew capability, Esther and Noreen are waiting in the hopes that such capability will be forthcoming soon. In the meantime, they offer many services to the high/middle school community. These include library skills training, exercises in critical information-gathering, and lessons to teach rules for the proper documentation of one's findings.

They also work closely with the faculty to develop

reserve lists of books as needed and to suggest resources both from the library collection and through interlibrary loans for specific lessons and units. Ramaz, like HAFTR HS, is very active in NYCSLS, their local library consortium. They are the designated collector of 19th century European history for all of NYCSLS.

The library at Ramaz is a cross between a *beit midrash* and a research library. On any given day students can be seen in clusters discussing a wide variety of topics, assisting one another, working alone in one of the many study carrels, or even playing chess. The library is the heart of the school because it is a pleasant place to be and because it offers the resources that their community needs.

In conclusion, a close working relationship between teacher and librarian is essential, as well as beneficial, to anyone connected with a school. As Edith Lubetski said, she hopes other institutions will replicate this symposium in their own communities. It goes a very long way towards heightening the awareness in the Jewish day school world of just how important the library is to the well-being of a school.

**AJL-NYMA
CONVENTION-SCHOLARSHIP
INFORMATION AND APPLICATION**

This year's AJL convention will take place in Cleveland, June 22-25, 1997. The NYMA chapter is offering a limited number of \$200.00 scholarships to help members defray the cost of attending. A committee of the Board will select the scholarship winners. Please fill out the short questionnaire below and mail or fax by March 1st, 1997, to:

Shulamith Berger, AJL-NYMA President, c/o Yeshiva University, Archives
500 W. 185th St., New York, NY 10033, FAX: 212-960-0066

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Institutional Affiliation: _____

Phone number: _____

1. What other sources of funding for Convention do you have available? _____

2. How many years have you been a member of AJL-NYMA? _____

3. Describe your activities on behalf of AJL National and the NYMA chapter.

4. What would you like to do on behalf of AJL-NYMA or National?

AJL-NYMA QUESTIONNAIRE

Please feel free to remain anonymous if you so desire.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Library name or type (e.g. university, synagogue): _____

Address: _____

Telephone no: _____ FAX no: _____ E-mail address: _____

Do you subscribe to Ha-Safra? YES _____ NO _____ Are you a member of AJL? YES _____ NO _____

If you are not a librarian, what is your interest in AJL-NYMA? _____

What types of programs and workshops would you like NYMA to offer? _____

Which NYMA programs have been most valuable to you professionally? _____

Why? _____

Would you be interested in presenting a workshop or program on behalf of NYMA? YES _____ NO _____

If yes, in what topic? _____

What is the most convenient time (day of week, time of day) for you to attend programs? _____

What features would you like to see in the NYMA Newsletter? _____

Would you like to contribute to the NYMA Newsletter? YES _____ NO _____

If yes, on what topic? _____

Is your library automated? YES _____ NO _____ If yes, what system do you have? _____

If no, are you planning to automate? YES _____ NO _____

What information would help you make your decision? _____

Would you be interested in volunteering for NYMA? YES _____ NO _____

What would you like to do? _____

Comments:

Please return to:

Shulamith Berger, AJL-NYMA President, Yeshiva University, Archives, 500 W. 185th St., New York, NY 10033
FAX: 212-960-0066, E-mail: sberger@yu1.yu.edu