
NYMA News

Newsletter of AJL-NYMA

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Summer-Fall 1997

AJL AT THE 12th WORLD CONGRESS OF JEWISH STUDIES, JERUSALEM 8/4/97

by Ya'akov Aronson

An overflow crowd showed up for the AJL-sponsored session at the World Congress of Jewish Studies on "Computerized Judaica Tools and Databases." In fact, additional chairs had to be brought twice as more and more people joined the participants. In the end it was literally a standing room only audience.

The original idea for such a session came from Aviva Astrinsky of the Center for Judaic Studies of the University of Pennsylvania and the President of AJL's R&S Division. Encouragement came from Esther Nussbaum, AJL national president, and arrangements were shepherded through by Edith Lubetski of the Hedi Steinberg Library at Stern College, who chaired the session. Attendees included librarians, students, and scholars, among them over 50 participants from Israel, the U.S.A., France, Great Britain, and South Africa.

Elhanan Adler, who was recently appointed Associate Professor of Library Science at Haifa University, and who serves as the coordinator of the Inter-University Computerized Library Network in Israel, gave a comprehensive presentation, including information about the computerization of Judaica resources, problems involved, especially with Hebrew language materials, and a review of the most important sources presently available. Ellis Weinberger of the computer staff at the

(Continued on pg. 2)

From the President

As the academic year gets under way, the AJL-NYMA executive board is planning an interesting and enriching year for its membership. The kickoff event was our semiannual conference, held on November 3rd at the Ramaz Lower School. The topic of the conference was "Disaster Preparedness and Planning: An Interactive Workshop." Presenters Cynthia Frame of Union Theological Seminary and Lars Meyer of Columbia University guided participants through the steps needed to prepare and implement a disaster plan.

The next event on the NYMA calendar is the reference workshop, which will be held on December 17 at the Yeshiva of Flatbush, Joel Braverman High School, in Brooklyn. Yael Penkower, Librarian of the High School, will put an interesting spin on reference work by pointing out ways to avoid misinformation on the Internet and will demonstrate some of the newest CD-ROMS in the field of Judaica. Other events still in the planning stages include a cataloging workshop, day school/synagogue workshop, and the Spring Conference.

The workshops and conferences described above can be held only because NYMA is a local chapter of the Association of Jewish Libraries. With that in mind, I want to urge every reader to make sure that he or she is a member of AJL on a national level. Membership benefits include receipt of *AJL Newsletter*, a quarterly, and *Judaica Librarianship*, a scholarly journal; discounted rates for attendance at AJL's annual convention (see related article on page 7 for information about travel stipends for this year's convention in Philadelphia, June 21-24, 1998); continuing education courses at convention and at home; and a 20% discount on AJL publications as well as a 10% discount on Jewish Book Council publications. For further information about membership, call AJL headquarters at (212) 725-5359.

I look forward to meeting and speaking with many of you at upcoming NYMA events, and take this opportunity to wish the entire membership a happy Hanukkah.

Rita Lifton

(World Congress, cont'd from pg. 1)

Geniza Unit of Cambridge University Library described work being done there to make available on the World Wide Web not only information about the collection but images of selected documents (www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter).

Ya'akov Rosenes, who heads a unit filming classic Judaica works, talked about the work involved in producing microfiche editions of this material. To date, approximately 1200 items have been filmed, providing inexpensive access to previously hard to obtain material.

All the participants came away from the session with enhanced knowledge about the topics discussed. It is hoped that this AJL-sponsored session will become the first of many and a permanent part of the bi-annual World Congress of Jewish Studies.

Book Review

Antler, Joyce. THE JOURNEY HOME: JEWISH WOMEN AND THE AMERICAN CENTURY, The Free Press, New York, 1997. Hardcover, ISBN 0-684-83444-8, \$27.50.

Antler, Professor of American Studies and Chair of the Department of American Studies at Brandeis University, has written a fascinating history of 20th century Jewish women in the United States by telling the stories of individual women. Her subjects range from Eastern European immigrants such as Anzia Yezierska and "Uptown" women like Maud Nathan, to present-day figures such as Blu Greenberg, Judy Chicago, Wendy Wasserstein, Cynthia Ozick, and Barbra Streisand.

Antler's portraits are sympathetic and three-dimensional, as is her historical narrative. In depicting individual women's lives within the context of their eras, she shows how each woman faced in her own way the social forces and conflicts of her time. In addition, her focus on each woman's family of origin and relationships leaves the reader with a sense of what motivated these women to greatness. This is a valuable book for any library with a collection in the area of American Jewish history.

— Elizabeth Stabler

Past Meets Future At AJL-NYMA Spring Conference

by Batya Kaplan

AJL's 1997 Spring Conference featured a program on the integration of new technologies into the traditional Jewish library setting. As new applications and capabilities are constantly becoming available, it was decided to devote an AJL program to a demonstration of new technologies as they are incorporated and used by the system of one academic Jewish library — that of JTSA. ALEPH, the computerized online catalog, in use at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America since 1990, has provided quick and easy access to the holdings in the collection for library users on the premises and at remote locations. This catalog would serve here as a model and prototype of the future Jewish library.

Acknowledging the advent of the millennium and the need to prepare for the challenges of a new era, AJL-NYMA entitled its Spring Conference "*Gesher* to the 21st Century." The program was divided into two parts: "Enhancements to the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)" and "New Electronic Reference Resources."

In part one, Naomi Steinberger, Executive Librarian of the JTSA Library, introduced ALEPH Client, software that may be downloaded off the JTSA Library web page and used to browse the library's OPAC. The format viewed over the Internet is a Graphical User Interface (GUI), a technology that allows us to tie digital images with their respective bibliographical records. As the library is in the process of cataloging its various image collections, prints, *ketubbot*, postcards, portraits, slides of Judaica artwork, and so forth, the project includes scanning the images so that, once online, our users will be able to browse the digitized form from the convenience of their computer terminals. The scanning equipment and technique were showcased as part of the program.

The second part of the program was devoted to electronic reference sources outside the online library catalog. Here Batya Kaplan, Reference Librarian at JTSA, introduced three new programs: the multimedia Jerusalem 3000 CD, the Torah CD-ROM Library, which contains classic Judaica texts and commentaries, and the updated version of *The Index to Jewish Periodicals*.

Naomi Steinberger closed the program with a showcase of selected Judaica resources on the World Wide Web.

“Just Show Me What Numbers to Put On”

The Story of the Louis Posner Memorial Library of the Holocaust Memorial and Educational Center of Nassau County

by Marcia W. Posner

This article is the third in an ongoing series about libraries in the NYMA chapter.

Background

About 12 years ago, Nassau County executive Thomas Gulotta set up a commission to supervise the annual Yom HaShoah commemoration that took place at the County seat in Mineola. A group of those involved decided they wanted to have a center where they could carry on Holocaust education year round. In 1992, after considering several properties, the County commission selected a 43-room manor located on the Welwyn Preserve in Glen Cove in which to establish the Center.

I became involved when a fellow congregant of the Shelter Rock Jewish Center who is a survivor and serves as the Center's education director asked me to help him set up a library. When I hesitated because of my packed schedule he asked me to “just come over and show me what numbers to put on” the books. I have been there ever since.

The Library Spaces

The room selected for the library is an elegant, prominent room which, however, lacks a work space. Lou, my husband of blessed memory, offered to furnish the library and fund a

basic collection. On December 14, from 2-5 p.m., one year since his death, the library will be dedicated as The Louis Posner Memorial Library. David Savitt, author of *Hunger for the Printed Word: Books and Libraries in the Jewish Ghettos of Europe*, will speak.

This room holds the basic collection. Other spaces throughout the building house additional parts of the collection. The former dining room, now called The Liberator's room, contains two permanent displays and also serves as a viewing room for films and videos. The kitchen serves as a holding area for duplicate books and books awaiting processing.

The Collection

After deciding that students and teachers are our main audience, with adult groups and individuals researching their personal histories as additional targets, we collect memorial books, videos, photographs, letters, maps, realia, journals, periodicals, newspaper articles, and pamphlets, etc., related to the Holocaust period (1933-1945) and beyond. We collect broadly on topics that include the background of anti-Semitism, the psychological, socio-

logical, industrial, artistic, and medical aspects of the subject.

The collection includes Holocaust materials on other targets of Hitler's enmity, such as Gypsies, Quakers, Freemasons, and homosexuals. We are also collecting materials on other peoples who are targets of prejudice and tribal or political genocide throughout history, including the present. As new topics are introduced, we expand our selection profile.

The collection grows from donated and review books. It is an emotional experience for some people who donate books about their hometowns in pre-war Europe. We catalog in the Dewey Classification System and at present have 3500+ cataloged titles and 90 videos.

Serving the Community

At present, we allow students to borrow materials in their teacher's name and the teacher is responsible for the items.

Teachers researching special topics or working on grants in Holocaust studies may borrow materials, as do college students and docents. At this time we are researching for a major exhibit, “Pockets of Rescue,” and books are flying out. Videos and even

(Continued on pg.. 6)

WEB SITES & WORKSHOPS

Students find AJL-NYMA's program totally awesome

by Noreen Wachs

On Tuesday morning, May 6th, 1997, the Moriah School in Englewood, NJ, hosted AJL-NYMA's annual day school/high school workshop. The program, entitled *Library Skills in the Electronic Age*, attracted a large turnout, evidence of the tremendous interest in the topic. Twenty-four librarians attended from schools in New Jersey and the greater New York area.

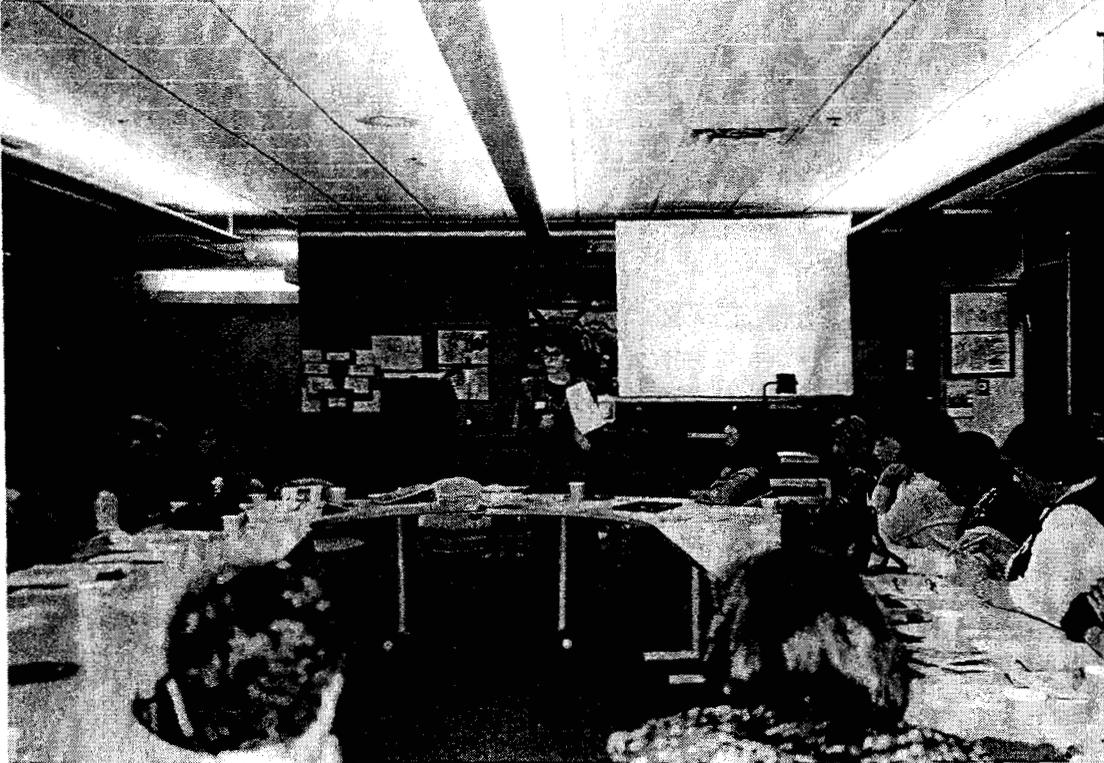
Shelly Feit, librarian and Educational Media Specialist at Moriah, gave the following description of their uses of technology in the library and in the classrooms:

The library has four research computers for use with CD ROM materials in both secular and Judaic subject areas. They include atlases, encyclopedias, dictionaries, quotation books, and historical databases. We provide instruction for students in CD ROM search skills and as a result, these materials get heavy use for reference and research.

Two of the computers have Internet hookups which are available to students and faculty. We also provide training in the use of the Internet for educational purposes. This includes providing lists of relevant and up-to-date web sites in a variety of subject areas.

We try to get our students involved in new projects each year. This year we produced a class newspaper in color with the fourth grade. This was a project that was carried out cooperatively by the classroom teacher and the librarian both working with the students. The paper contained fine graphics that were created by the use of scanning, which produced a magnificent product.





Another newspaper project was created by the sixth grade, who studied ancient history for the entire year. Their newspaper on ancient Greece was a great source of pride to them. Samples of both these papers were on display for the conference participants to see.

Our seventh graders participated in an international reading project which allowed them to communicate via the Internet with students at four different schools in Israel, all of whom were reading the same book at the same time. The book, *The Island on Bird Street*, by Uri Orlev, was this year's selection. The library also hosted an enrichment group of fifth graders once a week who were taught to produce materials for Moriah's own web site. By June, the web site containing information about school events of particular interest was up and running.

Beverly Geller, librarian at Frisch High School, shared her favorite web sites with the conference attendees. She also provided an annotated handout about these sites.

Much discussion ensued among the librarians about how to best utilize the Internet and how to teach search strategies and skills to students. Many participants agreed that a print or CD-ROM source may be a quicker and more authoritative option for students' research.

Esther Nussbaum and Noreen Wachs of the Ramaz Upper School (grades 7-12) spoke about researching Judaica, Israel, and the Holocaust through the use of general studies CD-ROM software such as SIRS, Proquest's Resource One, and Newsbank. They demonstrated various strategies using over-heads that they had prepared, and they distributed purchasing information for these products.

This well-attended and valuable session proves not only that Jewish schools are ready to make use of the most advanced technology and but that our librarians are among the best-informed persons in our schools, and are ready to share their experiences in order to ease the way for one another. This conference was one of the best we have had and bodes well for the continued advancement and improvement of libraries in our schools.

After the session was completed, a number of the participants went to the Dwight-Englewood school, a private school located within walking distance of Moriah. The head librarian, Moshe Kramer, a member of AJL, gave a tour of the school's very well-equipped facility.

Disaster Plan the Message at Fall Conference

by Elizabeth F. Stabler

For centuries Jewish books have suffered bonfires, pogroms, and other calamities. Nowadays, however, the librarian has other things to worry about -- an earthquake, a lighted cigarette or a leaky ceiling. What do you do when your prized Vilna Shas gets rained on, or when your Rambam goes up in smoke?

All these and similar questions were asked Monday morning, November 3rd, at the Ramaz Lower School, when an avid crowd appeared for the AJL-NYMA's Fall Conference and its topic, "Disaster Preparedness and Planning: An Interactive Workshop." The presenters were Cynthia Frame, Preservation Librarian and Archivist, Union Theological Seminary, and Lars Meyer, Head of the Preservation and Reformatting Department, Columbia University. The conference was hosted by Eileen Shmidman of the Ramaz Lower School, which provided a lovely breakfast.

Because the topic of disasters in libraries is too broad for a morning conference, Frame and Meyer focused instead on what librarians in all kinds of libraries can do to be prepared for emergencies. Stressing the importance of the planning process, they handed out copies of "Worksheet for Outlining a Disaster Plan," also available from the Northeast Document Conversation Center's web site, <http://www.nedcc.org>. As they took the audience through the steps of the process, they invited participants to share their experiences.

It became apparent that each institution is unique physically and administratively; a junior high school library, for example, might be more contained (i.e. in a large room) than a university research library, which might occupy an entire building. Therefore, the first step in planning is the awareness of how the library fits in the institution as a whole. Recommended as a good source of information was another web site, "Conservation Online, <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu>," which contains 14 complete plans. "Resources on Disaster Preparedness," a bibliography, is also available online at <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/soline/disasbib.htm>. In addition, Frame recommended a few vendors and companies, such as Global Equipment on Long Island, for large fans, Conney Safety for environmental supplies, and Munters Moisture Control to handle moisture or floods.

Frame and Meyer ended the conference by taking questions. Of particular interest was the problem of mold, whose often overlook danger Frame stressed, particularly the need for adequate protection -- filter masks, special filtered vacuum cleaners, gloves, and aprons -- when cleaning mold from the stacks. Participants at the AJL-NYMA's Fall Conference were treated to a timely and thoroughly informative educational experience.

(Numbers, Cont'd from Page 3)
vertical file materials circulate.

At present, control of the materials is loose. We are working on establishing more stringent policies to ensure the preservation of our unique collection.

We are a tour destination for many middle and secondary school groups each year since we opened our doors to groups in January of 1995. This year, from September through December, we have 150 groups scheduled for visits, comprising approximately 2200 students.

In addition, this year I will begin a program for children in grades 3-5. They will tour the Children's exhibit and be introduced to biographical fiction, realistic fiction, memoirs and picture storybooks about the Holocaust.

We prepare graded book talks which are summarized and arranged thematically so that a teacher can select and arrange in advance for parental approval to students' purchasing these books when they come for their Center visit. We also provide in-service courses for teacher.

The Center is open from 9-4 Monday-Friday and 11-4 on Sundays. Everyone at the Center library enjoys their work -- the vertical files, catalogers, reference folks, technical service people, bibliographers, and acquisitions personnel. We feel we are doing something worthwhile for our people, for the world, and for ourselves.

JEWISH BOOK MONTH by Rita Lifton

Jewish Book Month will be observed from November 24th to December 24th, 1997. In its 52nd year, this month long celebration is a national event sponsored by the Jewish Book Council. The Jewish Book Month kit, which can be ordered from the Council, includes a poster by the internationally known Israeli artist, Yaacov Agam, an annotated list of the 1996 National Jewish Book Award winners, various bibliographies, and bookmarks for children and adults.

The National Jewish Book Awards are always presented in conjunction with Jewish Book Month. This year's ceremony, which took place on December 2, was hosted by Joseph Telushkin and honored Cynthia Ozick for her contributions to Jewish literature. Among the winners -- in the category of fiction, the award went to Saul Bellow for *The Actual*; for non-fiction, Ruth Gay for *Unfinished People: Eastern European Jews Encounter America*; and, in the category of books for children, the winners were Barbara Rogasky, author, and Trina Schart Hyman, illustrator, for *The Golem*.

For further information about Jewish Book Month, the National Jewish Book Awards, or to order a kit, call the Jewish Book Council at (212) 532-4949, or e-mail: CarolynHessel@jewishbooks.org.

Travel Subsidies Available for the 1998 AJL Convention

Two kinds of travel subsidies are available for those who wish to attend the Philadelphia National Convention, June 21-24, 1998:

1. If you are a **new member** of AJL and need help defraying expenses, we can help you. Please submit your application postmarked **no later than February 1, 1998**, to Sally Brown, 351 South Merkle Road, Columbia, OH 43209.

Application: Write a letter of 500 words or fewer telling us why you would like to attend the 1998 convention. State how long you have been employed in a Judaica library, what part of the cost your institution will pay, your educational background, whether or not there is an AJL chapter in your area, and whether or not you participate.

2. For **long-standing members** active in AJL and newer members who would like to participate more fully, current paid-up members should send letters to Peggy K. Pearlstein, 14 Shagbark Court, Rockville, MD 20852. Letters of application should include the following information:

- Name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and the name and address of your library.
- Length of AJL membership and number of conventions previously attended.
- The amount and source of support you will receive from local funds.
- If you are currently active (local or national officer, committee member, convention program presenters or moderator), describe your participation and its benefits to AJL. If you have not yet become active, describe your plans for future participation. Examples might include work on education, membership, publicity, or book award committees; writing articles, book reviews, or soliciting ads for the *AJL Newsletter* or *Judaica Librarianship*.

The deadline for applications is March 1. You will be notified of the committee's decision by March 31. Members in the Philadelphia area and first-year members are not eligible (see above for new members). For more information, please contact Peggy Pearlstein, ppea@loc.gov or fax 202-252-3180 (library) or 301-984-9695 (home).

Association of Jewish Libraries New York Metropolitan Area

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Upcoming Events

Reference Workshop: Wednesday, December 17, 3-5 p.m., Yeshivah of Flatbush, Joel Braverman High School, 1609 Avenue J., Brooklyn, NY.

Program:

1. **Internet** — Getting correct information while avoiding misinformation.
2. **New Reference Tools** — *Encyclopedia Judaica* and the *Talmudic Encyclopedia* on CD-ROM.

Cataloging workshop: February 1998. Details will be announced as soon as they are available.

33rd Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries: June 21-24, 1998, Doubletree Hotel, Philadelphia, PA.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

“Past Perfect: The Jewish Experience in Early 20th Century Postcards:” October 20-December 30, at the Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway (at 122nd St.), New York, NY.

CONDOLENCES

AJL-NYMA offers condolences to the family of Leonard Mathless, who passed away on August 20, 1997. Leonard was a cataloger at Yale University’s Sterling Memorial Library. May his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

Condolences are also offered to Annette Botnick on the loss of her mother, Mrs. Thelma Muffs. May her family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

**Comments? Ideas? Suggestions?
Or professional news about yourself?
Please write to:**

**THE AJL-NYMA NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE
c/o Marion Stein
28 Douglass Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11231**

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-Safran? 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:

Rita Lifton, Jewish Theological Seminary of America Library, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027

Phone no: 212-678-8092; FAX: 212-678-8998; E-mail: rilifton@jtsa.ed