
NYMA NEWS

Newsletter of AJL-NYMA

Vol. 10, No. 1

Winter-Spring 1998

***Yeshiva of Flatbush
Hosts December
NYMA Workshop
by Yisrael Dubitsky***

On Wednesday, December 17, 1997, Yael Penkower and the Yeshiva of Flatbush High School hosted an AJL-NYMA workshop. Nearly 20 librarians, many new to NYMA events, attended.

Mrs. Penkower, librarian of the Yeshiva of Flatbush High School, first demonstrated the basics of the Yeshiva of Flatbush's home page. She next pointed out several issues to examine in order to determine a web page's quality -- date of last revision; number and quality of links associated with that page; and appropriateness of sources.

Lastly, Mrs. Penkower demonstrated several examples of "misinformation:" information on the web that is of dubious quality and reliability. For those librarians in elementary and high schools, this is especially important to be aware of, as students may often stumble across this misinformation and become confused over the "facts" it claims to present. As an example, a web search of "Holocaust" might yield "Holocaust revisionism," a topic that may not be suitable for young and impressionable minds.

Perhaps the most useful page demonstrated was the *Britannica Internet Guide* (BIG) [www.ebig.com], which "classifies, rates and reviews more than 65,000 Web sites." With the reputable *Encyclopedia Britannica* publishers' name behind it, this site is a veritable treasure for locating online information. Some 14 major categories ensure the searcher a quality site.

In the next segment of the program, Mrs. Penkower demonstrated the

(Continued on Page 2)

***INFO & INSIGHTS
Day School/High School Workshop
Sponsored jointly by NJ-AJL and AJL-NYMA***

by Marion Stein

On Tuesday afternoon, March 17, 1998, I attended a workshop sponsored jointly by New Jersey and NYMA AJL. The program was divided into 2 parts. The first was a presentation and discussion of 3 cataloging schemes that are appropriate for libraries containing Judaica collections: Elazar, Weine, and Dewey. Rachel Glasser, of the Yavneh School spoke about the Elazar scheme (which she herself worked on) and the Weine scheme, which is used at Yavneh. Beth Braunstein and I spoke about the Dewey classification scheme, which is used at Ramaz, Heschel, HALB, Solomon Schechter School of Westchester, SAR and Har Torah.

Ms. Glasser, a highly experienced cataloger, distributed handouts about the cataloging tools she uses. Also in attendance was Dr. Bella Haas Weinberg, the douane of Hebraica and Judaica cataloging, who informed the group that the latest edition (21st) of the Dewey classification table for religion contains a totally revised and expanded Judaica section that is quite good. A philosophical discussion ensued, with the consensus that whatever the scheme selected, it must suit the needs of the community that is being served by a particular library.

In my opinion, the issues raised by the question of cataloging go to the type of library one wishes to have. Under the Dewey classification scheme, the entire library is integrated within the school curriculum, making the statement that as the school is integrated with both Judaica and secular subjects, so is the library, since the library reflects the outlook of that school.

An example of this brought by Ms. Braunstein was the 2 titles, *Trees in our Biblical Heritage*, and *As the Leaves Fall* — both about trees. Both books sit next to one another on the shelf; one of Jewish interest and the other about general science. Both have the call number 581.2. In her library, Ms. Braunstein highlights the books of Jewish interest with a colored dot so that they stand out for those who are interested in that particular aspect of a book.

This discussion also brought up the question of subject access. Often the CIP (Cataloging in Publication) includes subject headings that are irrelevant to our collections or are simply incorrect. We must be able to change, add, or delete these headings so that our clientele will find the books they want as independently as

(Continued on Page 2)

(NJ-NYMA Workshop, cont'd)

possible, freeing the librarian's time to do other things. Without adequate subject access, the books don't move off the shelves, since no one knows they are there.

This is the type of professional work that the librarian needs to do. It is time-consuming and exacting but ultimately worth the effort, especially in the day school setting.

The second half of the program was devoted to a presentation by Dr. Reuven Regev, coordinator and creator of the ORT Resource Center in Forest Hills. He has created a Jewish Web Browser, available on a CD-ROM for a mere \$15.00, which works on PC's that have the Microsoft Internet Browser. Its advantage in a school setting is its ability to limit the sites to which a user may go, removing the concern of inappropriate sites while the student is using the Internet. Demonstrating a Holocaust program in the Solomon Schechter School's computer room, Dr. Regev showed how the Browser can be used to do projects on the Web.

All those who attended this excellent workshop came away with new information and insights as well as the chance to see a fine, new state-of-the-art school library. It really does have some excellent -- and educational -- features.

(Yeshiva of Flatbush, cont'd)

Encyclopedia Judaica on CD-ROM. This is basically the same text as the printed 16-volume edition, plus the yearbooks and decennial volumes, but in a much more convenient format.

Firstly, the "text search" locates words or names that are not listed in the Index, enabling a much broader means of cross-reference. Secondly, the multimedia capabilities of the CD-ROM allow users to listen to music, view maps or illustrations and movies -- features totally unavailable in the printed edition. However, the latter has articles lacking in the CD-ROM -- for example, the 100-year calendar and images of the various jugs from Ruth Amiran's *Ancient Pottery of Eretz Yisrael*.

Due the technical difficulties, Mrs. Penkower was unable to demonstrate the *Encyclopedia Talmudit* on CD-ROM. However, what has been presented at the workshop shows that we have come a long way from a simple text on a page.

**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
E-mail: marions@panix.com
Fax: 718-428-3617

Association of Jewish Libraries
New York Metropolitan Area
c/o Rita Lifton,
Jewish Theological Seminary Library
3080 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Tel: 212-678-8092
E-mail: rilifton@jtsa.edu

Executive Board 1997-98

President
Rita Lifton

Vice-President
Naomi Steinberger

Corresponding Secretary
Shaindy Kurzman

Recording Secretary
Elizabeth Stabler

Treasurer
Sylvia Avner

Membership Outreach Coordinator
Shulamith Berger

Publicity Coordinator
Rita Lifton

Workshop Coordinators:

Cataloging:

Elisheva Schwartz
Rachel Simon

Day School/High School:

Elana Gensler
Noreen Wachs

Reference:

Yael Penkower

Preservation

Stanley Bergman

Past Presidents

Aviva Astrinsky

Tzivia Atik

Shulamith Berger

Edith Lubetski

Esther Nussbaum

Marion Stein

Newsletter Editors

Marion Stein

Hallie Cantor

Where Two Halves Make a Whole

Just About Everything Comes Together At Stern College Library

by Hallie Cantor

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

A certain duality, a sense of new and old, modernity and tradition, pervades Hedi Steinberg Library of Stern College for Women. You feel it when you walk in -- the synergy of mutual forces. Perhaps because it reflects Stern's history as the first Orthodox college for Jewish women in America.

Indeed, a stroll through the library is like a journey through two cultures. The further you walk down the aisles, the well-used *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Current Biographies* and Gale research series morph into distinctly Hebrew characters and titles such as the Abarbanel or the *Talmud*.

The issue of whether the Jewish and secular materials should be kept separate or together had arisen long ago. "Our choice," replies head librarian Edith Lubetski, "was to keep them separate for browsing purposes. However, the titles are integrated in the catalog."

The books may be kept physically separate, but the values are not. And this is what makes the Hedi Steinberg Library unique: its synthesis of both and their accessibility.

The commitment to Jewish and secular studies shows in the process of acquisition. To support the Sy Syms School of Business, the library has actively increased its holdings in this area -- along with books on Jewish business ethics. For education majors, there is a general and Jewish juvenile collection, located in the mezzanine, along with Hebrew and English curriculum materials. Classical music CD's occupy the multimedia room. The audiocassettes on Jewish subjects are particularly popular during *sefirah*.

Prof. Lubetski talks proudly of the growing women's studies collection, with the emphasis, of course, on Jewish women. For the film studies classes, there is an impressive collection of classic and popular films on video. "We don't quite compete with

Blockbuster," says Mrs. Lubetski, "but we have something for everyone, even for children."

Recently the college has acquired the Jewish Heritage Video Collection, which contains over 200 videos on anything about Jews -- Hollywood and Yiddish films, Holocaust and Zionist documentaries, Biblical history, Jewish rituals.

In all, the library houses over 100,000 volumes and subscribes to close to 500 periodicals. Its balance of secular and Judaica shows how its patrons can, indeed, have the best of both worlds. At Stern, located in mid-Manhattan, multiculturalism meets Jewish continuity.

Patron Services

In one area, however, the old has strongly made way for the new. Since the summer of 1997, the Hedi Steinberg Library has gone online. Thanks to the Yeshiva University Library Information System (YULIS), students can browse through information on over 250,000 titles, with dozens more being added to the system each day.

Not only can a student read a screen with Hebrew, Yiddish, or Aramaic titles, but she can switch back and forth, from Hebrew to roman alphabets, to find out which titles are available at Hedi Steinberg, which ones are available at YU's Pollack and Gottesman libraries (in Washington Heights), and which ones are on reserve for classes.

In addition to the OPAC, various Jewish databases (i.e., *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book*, *Index to Jewish Periodicals*) co-exist with the secular (i.e. *Moody's Company Data*, *Social Work Abstracts*) to service the curriculum needs of the students and faculty. The patron can look up practically anything, from company profiles to the history of Sephardic and Oriental customs.

And, of course, there is the Internet. Click on the Netscape icon and the Yeshiva University home page appears, complete with links to its schools and libraries. For the newer generation of students, surfing the Web is not only a breeze but the method of choice, for its up-to-the-minute information.

The staff goes out of its way to educate its patrons in the art of database searching. Besides printed guides, students are given hands-on bibliographic instruction. Keeping up with the push-button mentality of our era, the library provides full-text reference sources, such as the *Encyclopedia Judaica* and *Bar Ilan Responsa*. In addition, full text databases provide students with articles instantaneously.

"We can't own all the books and periodicals in the world," says Prof. Lubetski. "But we can provide the best possible reference service. We help students locate and obtain any materials they need."

In a place where *Chaucer* is just a few lines down the screen from *Chassidism*, cultural as well as computer literacy is crucial. The reference librarian must be grounded in both Jewish and secular subjects. This involves familiarity in the classics, such as who the Vilna Gaon was, and who George Eliot was (and the difference!). It also helps to know several languages besides Hebrew and English; many of the staff are multilingual.

Past Present & Future

The transition to high-tech is not quite over. Items are still being entered into the system. Some older books are currently undergoing retrospective conversion.

But once the transition is done, the results will be awesome. As holdings continue to grow, and as Beowulf shares bits and bytes with the Rambam, the Hedi Steinberg Library enters a new era.

Upcoming Events**AJL-NYMA Spring Conference, Thursday, May 21, 1998.**

"Museum of Jewish Heritage: Living Memorial to the Holocaust." Program begins at 3:00 p.m., followed by museum tour.

33rd Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries:

June 21-24, 1998, Doubletree Hotel, Philadelphia, PA.
Contact Ruth Ronen, Tel: (215) 238-1290, ext. 122,
E-mail: ronen@mail.sas.upenn.edu

New Publication

Elana Gensler, member of NYMA, has published a new book:
A Year of Celebrations: Jewish Holiday Short Stories

for Children, 1985-1997. New York, AJL, 1998.
(16 pages.) ISBN 0-929262-32-8. An annotated biography of short stories for the Jewish holidays in calendar-year order. Members' price, \$7.00, Non-members' price, \$8.50.

Please order the publication from:

Beverly Newman, Vice President for Publications,
11808 High Drive, Leawood, KS 66211 USA.

E-mail: taxwife@aol.com.

We appreciate prepaid orders!

Condolences

We regret to announce the passing of LEAH BARUCHI, mother of Yael Penkower, in Jerusalem, April 27.
May her family be comforted among the mourners of Zion in Jerusalem.

SURVEY

AJL-NYMA would like to develop a list of school, synagogue and organizational libraries in the NYMA area that have automated systems. If you are willing to share ideas and experiences with others planning to install an automated system, please fill out the following form and send it to Rita Lifton, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027; Fax (212) 678-8998.

NAME _____ TELEPHONE (Day __ Evening __) _____

LIBRARY _____ AUTOMATION SOFTWARE _____