

# NYMA NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF AJL/NYMA VOL. 21, No. 1 / SUMMER-FALL 2009

## Books, a Life

### A Scholar Reflects

#### @ Spring Conference

by HALLIE CANTOR

Acquisitions, Yeshiva University

Ah, books. They're our very lifeblood, our *raison d'être*. But for how much longer?

The love – and future -- of books was the topic of NYMA's Spring Conference, held Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, at the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Park East Day School. Guest speaker Phyllis Chesler – feminist scholar, author, and columnist – eloquently discussed a life and love for the printed word.

#### Goodbye to All That

The conference began with a changing of the guard: Roz Friedman, NYMA's incoming president, read aloud a "farewell letter" from her predecessor Leslie Monchar, who was away at a double graduation ceremony. In her letter Leslie fondly acknowledged her past two years as NYMA leader and the contributions of her fellow board members.

Roz then introduced Phyllis Chesler, author of noted works as *The Death of Feminism*, *The New Anti-Semitism*, and, her most recent, *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman*, which describes a radical feminism gone dangerously awry. (Co-author of her *Women of the Wall*, Rivka Haut, had kindly filled in for an ill Ms. Chesler at last year's Fall Conference.)

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## Baruch Habah!

Taking on the presidency of NYMA at this time is something I do with great trepidation. Times are tough, even worse than they were a year ago. Many of our colleagues find themselves out of work; others, like me, are working abbreviated hours due to budgetary constraints at their places of work. Still others continue in their current jobs but have no budgets with which to work.

As I write this, I am reflecting on AJL in Chicago, where it was good to see colleagues who have been a wonderful source of support all these years. This is an awesome group from whom I have learned so much over the years that it is unimaginable to think of not being able to draw on your collective knowledge.

I have received a letter from the Avi Chai Foundation announcing the official end of the Bookshelf Grant Program that has enabled those of us who work in high schools to do some truly wonderful things for the duration of the grant. Nina Butler, representing the Bookshelf program, addressed us at AJL to speak about how far we have come. Participating libraries are now using OPALS for their catalogs and are all able to network with one another and share resources. I hope this will help sustain us through this difficult period.

Future conferences and workshops are in the planning stages and I am confident that there will be wonderful programs in the coming year. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Roz Friedman  
(New) President, AJL-NYMA

## Lasting Impressions

### On “Empowering Librarians for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

By STEPHANIE GROSS, Librarian, E-Reserves, Yeshiva University

There were quite a few aspects that impressed me at this year’s annual conference in Chicago. One, simply, that it did take place in spite of all the doom and gloom. Another, however, was the fact that although many NYMA members were thankfully able to attend, many did not or could not. I’ve tried to comfort myself with the thought that so far this past year, NYMA has had stellar workshops with robust attendance. Of course, no one really knows how the absence of Avi Chai funding will impact future participation at either the chapter or national level.

I am aware of how difficult it has been to find work in the tri-state area. During this convention year I sensed a ubiquitous angst, especially during mealtime. For those of us who are yet young and in need of gainful employment, the situation is far more severe than for those who are retired or better off financially. There were indeed sessions devoted to PR, fundraising, collaboration and publicity via social media. Since many NYMA members were in attendance, from our officers to active members, we can rest assured that the lessons, skills and initiatives presented at the conference will be applied to future chapter events.

To wit, NYMA members are currently quite active on National Council -- Leslie Monchar, who reported on Professional Development; and Michael Davis, who reported on Accreditation. I myself reported on the Mentoring, while Kathe Pinchuck presided over much of the Sydney Taylor awards. I was humbled as well as made proud by our continued contribution to AJL beyond our immediate sphere of influence.

Perhaps it’s in order to underscore the value of attending a national (more correctly *international*) conference as compared to a typical NYMA gathering. Certainly, one of the major differences would be the sheer magnitude of resources that become available when all constituents contribute. This year we had a stellar cast of lecturers on the topic of stolen books and the Holocaust. In addition, there was an equally amazing cast of authors and illustrators winners of the Sydney Taylor Awards. Beyond that, NYMA members could both learn and influence opinion concerning standards, social media use, issues of employment, mentoring and advisement.

More importantly, we could and did express heartfelt support for those professionals who have been either downsized or laid off from employment. I hope that in years to come NYMA will continue to lead in Judaica librarianship and that I might number among them. *Yashar koach* to all who attended, and see you next year in Seattle!

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## Open Windows

### UN & FSU are A-OK

#### @ Reference Workshop

#### By MARGA HIRSCH, Librarian, Park Avenue Synagogue

NYMA held its 2009 Reference Workshop on Thursday afternoon, February 12, at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Two presentations introduced areas of Judaica librarianship that were unfamiliar to most of the listeners in the room and virtually opened up new worlds.

#### Global Network

Tzvi Muskal, Cataloging Group Team Leader at the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, covered two topics: "The Global Library: Serving the International and Local Communities" and "Resources on Israel and The Middle East at the UN Library." Tzvi explained how library services fit into the Outreach Division of the Department of Public Information at the UN, which has branches in Geneva and in Vienna as well as here in New York. The library serves reach a wide variety of patrons, from refugees to researchers, with different levels of security for different groups of people.

Tzvi gave a detailed description of document flow at the UN. The good news for all of us is that after thorough processing, including content analysis, indexing, and translation into all of the UN's six official languages, full text of all documents is available online. Tzvi demonstrated the library website, accessible to all of us at [www.un.org/depts/dhl](http://www.un.org/depts/dhl).

#### From Russia with Love

The second presenter, Dr. David Fishman -- Professor of Jewish History and Director of Project Judaica at JTS -- spoke on "The People of the Cyrillic Book: Judaica Publishing in the Former Soviet Union." Project Judaica, established in 1991, is a joint venture between JTS and the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow. Its principal goals are to train a generation of indigenous Russian scholars of Judaica, reestablish Jewish studies as a legiti-

*(Cont'd on Pg. 10)*

## **“There is Much to Be Done”**

*The following is the “farewell letter” of departing NYMA president Leslie Monchar.*

I am unable to be with you this afternoon for a very good reason. I am attending the graduation of UMDNJ. I am privileged to witness my daughter-in-law, Elana, receive her M.D. degree, and my daughter, Sarah, receive her Physician Assistant Certified/M.S. degree. They have worked so hard for the past several years and I am so proud of their achievements.

But there are many others who have worked very hard over the past several years, too. And, I am referring to the many who have volunteered countless hours to our professional organization, AJL, and specifically, our local chapter, NYMA. Dear board members, it has been both a privilege and a pleasure to work with you these past two years. You have been generous with your advice, and I have learned much (though I admit, I still feel like a novice, not one of the old-timers). And, along the way, I feel we have become more than colleagues: we have become friends.

At the beginning of my administration, we set out to accomplish several goals. Not all have been met; there is plenty of work left for Roz to complete. Probably the biggest project of all is the reworking of the chapter constitution. Maybe that can be done during the next two years.

There have been several innovations, however. The first is that our banking and financial records have become more streamlined. Thank you, Joyce and Marlene, for making sure that this happened. And thank you, Joyce, for keeping the records and using those GoogleDocs!

Secondly, I would like to thank Steven Bernstein, who manages our NYMA website. If you haven't seen it lately, it is worth a few minutes' time at the computer. All the information about our chapter can be easily found in one address. And, also thanks to the new technology, we digitally record all of our meetings and workshops. Steven then uploads the files onto our website, so if you miss a workshop, you may listen at your leisure at home. It is the next best thing to being there!

And, finally, speaking of technology – NYMA is going “green.” Our flyers and all publicity is now sent electronically (thank you, Rita and Chaya). Our NYMA news is now delivered via e-mail to our members. This saves trees and NYMA dollars as well. Thank you, Hallie, for putting it all together so beautifully.

There is much to be done. We are going through some tough economic times. Now, more than ever, we must support each other. So, please volunteer. Trust me, you get out much more than you put in.

Roz, thank you. You have always graciously come to my aid. I hope that I can help you as much as you have helped me. But now the gavel is passed to a new administration . . . *mazel tov* to Roz Friedman, new president of AJL-NYMA.

### *(Conference, cont'd from Pg. 1)*

Ms. Chesler covered quite a few issues: reading as a way of life, the onslaught of non-print technology, and its social and intellectual repercussions. In addition she mentioned her own activism and her confrontation against the raging liberal agenda. Her speech is reprinted here, with photos, courtesy of her own blog and website <http://www.phyllis-chesler.com/blog/>.

Like you, I love books. I love our sacred Jewish texts and the many splendid commentaries that accompany them, but in truth: all leather-bound, gold-embossed books call out to me. Verily, I am a person of the Book. I read them, I write them, I consume them. I love libraries, their respect for work done in silence and solitude, the

quiet solicitousness of librarians, their efficiency and kindness. I love fine writing, great writing, the kind that lasts.

### **Enchanted**

A book lover lives an enchanted life. She is someone who can, in an instant, escape her ordinary life, travel to any country on earth, time-travel to any century; she can enter a peasant's hut or a king's bedroom, witness a childbirth, a love affair, a murder, a coronation.

A book lover is someone who is never exactly lonely, someone who probably believes that fictional characters are more real, more alive, than “real” people are, and that their stories are as important as the stories of our “real” lives. If I want to know something about someone, I'll find out what

books they've read or are reading. Then, I'll inquire about their childhoods.

I admit it. I eat books. I possess them. I write in the margins and on the blank front and back pages. I plant my post-its everywhere. Unlike a librarian, I am no longer willing to lend my books out. They are part of my daily life. At any given moment, my writing might require just that book. Also: They are so . . . "used," so lovingly battered. How can they unashamedly leave home? In my lifetime, whenever I've made a major geographic move, I have been forced to



**SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE** – NYMA's new president Roz Friedman introducing Ms. Chesler.

give away books—anywhere from 2,000-10,000 at a given time.

Once, 1000 books of mine were held up at the Khyber Pass—but that's a story for another day. Actually, I have written about this adventure in one of my books and may expand it into a memoir. You may find it in my book, *The Death of Feminism. What's Next in the Struggle for Women's Freedom.*

I began reading when I was three and writing when I was eight. My first poem was published when I was seventeen and my first article when I was twenty-three. I decided to get a PhD and became a professor-psychotherapist (a "Viennese witch-doctor") in order to support my writing habit.

### Changes

I've been publishing for nearly 50 years now. I've published thirteen books and

written fifteen. I've worked with many major publishing houses. As we all know, many things have really changed. There's a lot less money lying about. Newspapers are shutting down. Small bookstores are shutting down. The chains rule. Buying online rules. Discounts rule. Even some library branches are shutting down.

But mainly, I fear that books, and the habits of thought that reading shapes, the time it takes to shape such habits of thoughtfulness, may rapidly be going out of style. Technology, youth, and marketplace demands have conspired in the minimization of books as we've known them. I fear that one day, our books may reside in museums, not in libraries.

Younger people prefer books on Kindle and online. Even in an era of book clubs, people still prefer quick books, easy books, books with a "point," especially books by celebrities which are often ghostwritten by ghosts who are not great writers. Books that can be listened to while driving, books that are easy to market, books that "sell," books that can be turned into blockbuster movies, videos, small *Youtube* sensations, maybe even into tee-shirt logos. Some people prefer blogs, others Twitter.



**READING SIGNS?** – "I fear that one day, our books may reside in museums, not in libraries."

I fear our traditional aesthetic and intellectual standards, for fact checking and for the quality of writing, have plummeted. Short is now sweet, long is out. Anything goes on the internet. There's no mediator, no editor, no expert, no grown-up in charge.

We are shortchanging the coming generations by accustoming them to books-as-information, books packaged as entertainment, preferably presented visually—easy for

*(Cont'd on Pg. 10)*

## Human Tragedy, Human Resource

### Holocaust Review @ Day School/High School Workshop

By LEAH MOSKOVITS, Librarian, Torah Academy of Bergen County

The topic was grim but the mood upbeat at the Day School/High School Workshop, held Wed., March 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Frisch School in Paramus New Jersey. Over 15 librarians attended "Guidelines for Using Holocaust Literature with Middle School and High School Students," hosted by Beverly Geller, librarian at The Frisch School, who arranged a tour of the beautiful new building for those who were able to stay after the program.

Beryl Bresgi, librarian at the Solomon Schechter Day School of Bergen County, began by explaining her philosophy as to when Holocaust literature can be appropriately introduced to children and what exactly should be emphasized. Herself a firm believer that the very young are not ready for graphic exposure, she stresses instead memories, followed by books on tolerance, differences and inclusion. Even with older children she stays away from numbers and atrocities, focusing instead on the vibrant Jewish life that existed in Europe before the war. Jewish folktales play a large part, along with a Living Museum Curriculum which she runs in her school.

Beryl brought in many books from her collection to share on topics such as heroes, rescuers, and resistance – including spiritual resistance – as well as the hiding and survival of refugees. She urged the use of memoirs and the need to check background information in order to ascertain the accuracy of historical fiction.

Whereas Beryl dealt with middle school material, the workshop's second speaker Kathe Pinchuck -- Chair of the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee, librarian at Congregation Beth Shalom in Teaneck, New Jersey, and part-time librarian at the Montclair Public Library -- dealt with high school. Kathe emphasized evaluation strategies, providing criteria for both fiction and non-fiction titles. At the end of the program, Beth Braunstein, librarian of the SAR Academy in Riverdale, NY, shared her bibliography of picture books on tolerance and human diversity.

An audio recording of the workshop is available: <http://ajlnyma.org/Events/2008-2009/2009%20School%20Library%20Workshop/index.htm>

## Tools for Tomorrow

### XML @ Cataloging Workshop

By SARA ROFOFSKY MARCUS Assistant Professor,  
Electronic Resource/ Web Librarian, Queensborough Community College

What goes on behind the scenes of catalogs, document repositories, and websites? Librarians, library-lovers, and other inquiring minds got to know as they converged Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at the media center of Ramaz Middle School for the NYMA Cataloging Workshop.

The workshop's success was evidenced by the sheer diversity of attendees, NYMA and non-NYMA alike, including some from as far away as Vermont and Rhode Island. Keynote speaker Kevin Reiss, Systems Librarian at

the City University of New York, spoke on "XML for Catalogers in 2009: Emerging Technologies, Tools, and Trends." The audience was then treated to a presentation and demonstration about XML, from basics to a discussion of XML and MARC, to the future of MARC in relation to XML and other metadata standards.

A PowerPoint Presentation of the workshop with Synced Audio is available: <http://ajlnyma.org/Events/2008-2009/2009%20CataloSing%20Workshop/>

# Past / Present / Future

## URGENT!

As NYMA News goes to press, the Bittenweiser Library of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y faces closure. While ostensibly the collection would be "reconfigured" and relocated to a "reading room/lounge" (with WiFi) on the ground floor, in reality, writes librarian **Lynn Feinman**, "the actual end effect . . . is to make way for offices. The space that we understand to be intended as the reading room is less than 1/3 the size of our existing space. It is unclear whether it will be staffed at all. The collection will be broken up and parts of it will be placed in locations that will be off limits to almost everyone; there is certainly no room in the building for all 30,000 books."

Neither card-holding nor non-card-holding patrons were notified until very late. "We are pleased to say," continues Lynn, "that a large number of patrons have called, written and emailed to register their objections. Some have stated that they plan not to renew their memberships at the Y if the Library is closed, or that they would be willing to pay an extra fee. . . . We believe that the administration seriously underestimated the intensity and quantity of the public reaction. What they may not realize is that there is much more to come."

Want to add your voice? There is a Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/n/?group.php&gid=127700011998&mid=c84cfaG3c2fd566Gac48fcG6>

## Honorable Mention(s)

YIVO's *Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* has twice received honorable mentions:

- 1) American Library Association's Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) Book and Media Awards, and the Dartmouth Medal.
- 2) Multivolume Reference Works in the Humanities and Social Sciences of the PROSE Awards – the Association of American Publishers' Awards for Professional and Scholarly Excellence.

YIVO librarians Lyudmila Sholokhova and Oleg B. Vinogradov received the 2008 "Harold Ostroff Award of Excellence in Professional Service and Leadership" – named in memory of the late YIVO trustee and activist – along with \$2,500 for each honoree. Attendees included members of Ostroff's family, who shared memories.

## Notable Finds

The YIVO library was recently presented with a rarity: Fania Lewando's *Vegetarish-dietisher kokhbukh: 400 shpayzn gemakht oysshlishlekh fun grinsn (Vegetarian-Dietetic Cookbook: 400 Meals Made Exclusively from Vegetables)*, published in Vilna 1938, just 3 years before the destruction of the Jewish community. The decorations – vivid color illustrations of

vegetables – were unusual among Yiddish publications of the time. YIVO librarian

**Aviva Astrinsky** suggests they were copied off envelopes containing vegetable seeds distributed throughout Europe and Palestine.

The YIVO Archives received a major portion of the papers of Egon Mayer – leading sociologist and demographer of American Jewry. The bulk consists of research materials gathered for his upcoming book project on Rudolph Israel Kasztner, the Zionist who had negotiated in 1944 with Eichmann, to allow two trains carrying 1,685 Jews to travel to Switzerland in safety.

As part of the YIVO Holocaust Archive Project, a collection of almost 5,000 Nazi registration cards (*Kennkarten*) will be microfilmed and digitized. The project is being carried out with the Mémorial de la Shoah-Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris and funded by the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the Foundation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah in Paris. The cards were found among the files of the notorious Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage (Institute for Research into the Jewish Question) – originally located in Frankfurt am Main in Germany – fragments of which are in the YIVO archives.

### Collective Memory

The American Sephardi Federation has developed a new Collection Development Policy which would focus on recovering and preserving knowledge about disappearing Sephardic Jewish communities outside the U.S. and Jewish participation in the culture of their host countries; and narratives and records of Sephardic Jews of the U.S. during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The ASF is also in discussions to acquire the collection on the Anusim from the Casa Shalom Library – Israel's foremost institute for Marrano-Anusim Studies, which holds thousands of books, documents, and artifacts on Jews who converted to Christianity or fled Spain and Portugal during the Inquisition.

### Lecture Circuit

Sun., Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> annual Helene Spring Library Event at East End Temple. Author and *Wall Street Journal* reporter Lucette Lagnado discussed her recently published memoir of Jewish Egypt, *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit*. Lecture was followed by book signing.

Mon. Mar. 23<sup>rd</sup> – "When Grandma was a "Wild Young Thing," part of Congregation Emanu-El Library-Museum Lecture Series, hosted by

**Liza Stabler.** Author Lily Koppel spoke of her book *The Red Leather Diary: Reclaiming a Life Through the Pages of a Lost Journal*, in which she unveiled the life of a young woman growing up in Manhattan in the 1930s. The diary's author, Florence Wolfson, daughter of Russian-Jewish immigrants, belonged to Emanu-El's Junior Society, precursor of today's Saviv group for young adults.

Wed., Mar. 25<sup>th</sup> – Exploration of Passover hosted by JTS library staff through their extensive holdings of manuscripts, rare books, broadsides and archival material, as well as digital and video collections. Guests were treated to a visit of JTS's state-of-the-art conservation lab.

Thurs. Apr. 23<sup>rd</sup> – "Publishing in Exile: German-Language Literature in the U.S. in the 1940s," at Leo Baeck Institute. This exhibit, curated by NYU Professor Paul North, presented books, photos and archives from German-language publishers who established themselves here and helped promote emigrant writers struggling with a new culture and language. Lecture was followed by roundtable discussion of the difficult dislocation for these writers.

### Ruth Gay Seminar

Sun. July 12<sup>th</sup> – "Uncommon Voices, Everyday Lives: Jewish Experiences in Salonika Through the YIVO Archives." Hosted with ASF, the Salonika Project under which the Archive of the Jewish Community of Salonika at YIVO was organized, microfilmed and digitized, was supported by Maurice Amado Foundation and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Event was presented by Devin Naar – historian of Salonika Project at YIVO, doctoral candidate at Stanford University; chaired by Dr. Isaac Benmayor – Ph.D. in Modern Greek Linguistics from Oxford University, past president of American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece, collaborator on publications about the Holocaust in Greece; and introduced by Dr. Steven Bowman – Professor of Judaic Studies at University of Cincinnati, historian of Greek Jewry.

### Live from JTS

It's here. The Library of JTS has published the first issue of *Quntres: An Online Journal for the History, Culture, and Art of the Jewish Book*. <https://taljournal.jtsa.edu/index.php/quntres>. They hope to see this journal published annually, with occasional updates. Enjoy the first issue, and please feel free to provide them with feedback – and even submissions for the 2010 issue! Visit the Library's website: [www.jtsa.edu/library.xml](http://www.jtsa.edu/library.xml). Also – what do Jewish stats, emigration ports, prayers for Israeli soldiers, tombs and the Ba'al Shem Tov have in common? All are topics raised in recent June posts on the JTS Library blog: <http://jtslibrarytakeaway.blogspot.com/>.

### Image Conscious

Thurs., Jun. 4<sup>th</sup> – "D.I.Y networking," METRO lecture co-hosted by **Stephanie Gross**, who offered tips on social networking, Web 2.0, and other current, unprecedented opportunities for professionals in these challenging times to find one another via the internet. Stephanie is also organizer of the NY Librarians Meet-Up, a group "to gather and discuss developments in the field, professional opportunities, books, emerging technologies, library 2.0, and good old-fashioned librarianship." Her AJLMentoring is now available on Twitter, Delicious, and Flickr. In addition, you may post to her blog: <http://nylibrariansmeetup.blogspot.com/> or contact her: [ajlmentoring@gmail.com](mailto:ajlmentoring@gmail.com).



### Novel Beginning

Sun., Mar.15<sup>th</sup> – Jewish Fiction Writers' Conference was launched. Co-sponsored by the Jewish Book Council and the 92nd Street Y's Buttenweiser Library, and co-hosted by

**Steven Siegel**, the workshop featured top writers, editors, and anyone simply interested in adult Jewish fiction. Presentations included "Let's Talk: Publicity Beyond Your Bubby's Friends;" and "Why is This Story Different Than All Other Stories?"

### Take a Bow

**Hallie (Chaya Sarah) Cantor** has co-edited *Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith, Slager Edition, VI & VII: Prophecy*, compiled & adapted by Rabbi Chaim Miller. To be published by Kol Menachem.

**Meir & Edith Lubetski** are proud authors of *The Book of Esther: A Classified Bibliography*. Publisher Sheffield Phoenix Press LTD.

### Retiring

**Lillian Steinberg**, after 33 years as the librarian of HAFTR High School. She can now be reached at [lsteinberg432@gmail.com](mailto:lsteinberg432@gmail.com).

**Marion Stein** from the Abraham Joshua Heschel School. However, she writes, "I do expect to continue to be (even more) active in AJL in the future." Home email: [marions@panix.com](mailto:marions@panix.com)

### Mazel Tovs

To **Yosaif & Basya Reich** on the birth of a granddaughter Shterna Sara. Parents Shmuel & Raizy Reich.

**Lawrence & Marlene Schiffman** on the birth of their grandson. Parents Jeremy & Estee Lavitt.

**Philip & Leslie Monchar**, on the birth of their granddaughters: Claire Emily (parents Josh & Aliza Kroll; Olivia Annette (parents David & Talye Kaye).

**Pinchas & Ina Cohen** – on the birth of their grandchildren – triplets!! Chaim Yisrael, Dovid Shlomo, & Ahuvah Gittel. Parents Yoni and Rachel Ratzersdorfer.

To **Ira & Roz Friedman**, on the engagement of their daughter Tova to Roni Katzir.

May their all *schep nachas*.



**WHAT RECESSION?** – Apparently the economy couldn't keep NYMA members away from AJL's 2009 convention. They remained among the highest represented of all chapters.

*(Conference, cont'd from pg. 5)*

people with a culturally enforced attention deficit disorder, or who multitask while they read (!) – this is the rapidly incoming fashion. Everyone's articles can be published online whether or not they have been edited for grammar or accuracy. Is this democracy in action or the triumph of Big Lies and foolish vanity? Clearly, it's both.

The truth is: I love blogging. I publish 3 articles a week, every week. Such deadlines demand enormous discipline. I read 10 to 20 newspapers and an additional 40-50 articles every day in order to be "up on the news." I do this because there are moments in history when writers (who might rather be working on long books) must take a visible, immediate, and ongoing stand against evil and injustice. This is one of those moments. The internet allows me to do so.

**Disenchanted**

What happens when a writer evolves, deepens, or changes her mind about certain things? What happens when a writer -- this one -- decides to stand up for the Jews, for Israel, for America, for the truth, for the virtues and traditions of Western civilization? What happens when a writer decides to oppose fascism and totalitarianism? And to criticize Islamic gender and religious apartheid and jihad—and will still not surrender her feminist ideals?

Why, all happy hell breaks loose.

And then I spoke freely about how ideas matter and about the consequences of sharing ideas with the world. I did a brief reading from *The New Anti-Semitism*. It is unconscionable that such gentle, educated, Jewish people are still the targets of so much hate. Yes, Jews are also thieves and scoundrels, but they are in the minority.

One woman, who turned out *not* to be a librarian, asked me to comment on the Golden Age in which Jews, Christians, all lived together in harmony. I told her that many scholars now strongly dispute this. We had quite a spirited discussion.

One librarian said that she'd lived in Israel but, after fifteen years, had missed her family in New York and had returned. She admitted that once, she'd had dreams about peace that have been chipped away at, tarnished, even shattered. She asked me what I thought about this.

Don't give up your dreams or your ideals. Simply allow reality a place at the table. Anyway, Jewish dreams, Jewish ideals belong to a Messianic Age. We are not there yet. Our job is to take up our places in the great chain of Being, to "love or regard our neighbor as we love and regard ourselves," to be kind to others, try to do no harm, to do some good on earth, and to walk humbly with God.

All the rest is commentary.

*(Reference workshop, cont'd from pg. 3)*

mate area of university study, foster the revival of Jewish life in Russia, and discover and describe all Jewish-related materials held in the archives of the FSU.

Contrary to what we might have thought, Judaica publishing is flourishing in the FSU. Close to 2,000 quality books on Jewish topics in the Russian language have been published in recent times, including *siddurim* and other religious books; publications on Jewish history, culture, and traditions; fiction translated from Yiddish and Hebrew; and several periodicals. (The only genre not represented was children's books.) The market for Judaica written in Russian is not

only for residents of the FSU, but also Russian and former Soviet emigrants in North America and in Israel, where considerable numbers of Russian-speaking *olim* have lacked previous exposure to Jewish books. Dr. Fishman brought a cartload of books with him and passed them around, so that even those who could not read Cyrillic, could appreciate the variety of publications.

The Reference Workshop broadened the horizons of all who attended, reminding us that the world of Judaic librarianship is wide, which we may forget as we work day to day in our own familiar spaces.

# The Time is NOW!

Dear Colleague,

As president of the Association of Jewish Libraries-New York Metropolitan Area Chapter, I invite you to renew your membership in our organization. Each year, AJL-NYMA sponsors conferences and workshops, publishes a chapter newsletter, and awards scholarships to the annual AJL convention, which will be held next year in Seattle, Washington. Please see the AJL website: [www.jewishlibraires.org](http://www.jewishlibraires.org), for national membership information.

This year, once again, NYMA will be sponsoring a Fall Conference and a Spring Conference. We also are planning workshops, to be announced over the course of the year, in reference, cataloging, and day school/high school librarianship. They all promise to be enjoyable and informative and afford a chance for us to network with others in the field.

**The time to renew your membership is now!** NYMA membership is from Sept. 1, 2009- Aug. 31, 2010. Your membership will ensure that you will remain on our mailing list and continue to be notified about our programs, receive our newsletter, and pay significantly discounted members' rates for workshops and conferences.

Please take a moment and complete the membership renewal form, including your e-mail address to which you would like all mail to be sent.

Remember, NYMA annual membership dues are a true bargain! They remain **at the incredibly low price of \$10.00 (that's less than \$1.00 per month)!**

I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at future programs.

Sincerely yours,

Roz Friedman  
Chapter President

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## Membership Form

Please send this registration form with a check in the amount of \$10.00 made payable to AJL-NYMA.

MAIL TO: Joyce Levine, 711 Park Lane, North Woodmere, NY 11581

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify: \_\_\_ Home \_\_\_ Work address