

**A Message from the President,  
Susanne Markgren**

Greetings ACRL/NY members!

First off, I want to thank our news editor, Sarah VanGundy, for her dedication and commitment to our organization and for her enormously creative ideas for our newsletter and symposium zine. This is her final newsletter because she is stepping down from her position and moving out-of-state to pursue other adventures. We wish her all the best!

The ACRL/NY Discussion Groups have been very active in the Spring semester. We currently have seven discussion groups: Distance Learning, Education/CMC, Information Literacy/Instruction, New Librarians, Resource Sharing, Special Collections/Archives, and User Experience. Each group meets at least two times per year. The groups have been a big boost for membership and we are pleased to have such motivated and dedicated leaders for all of the groups. If you are interested in learning more about a particular group, or want to get involved, please contact the discussion group chair:  
<http://www.acrlny.org/exbrd.htm>

Our geographic sections have also been very active. The Long Island section held a program on April 16 titled, "Institutional Repositories: A Digitization Case Study and Lessons Learned" at Adelphi University, and the New York City section will hold a program on May 21 (from 8:30am to 12:00pm) titled, "Teaching the Holocaust, Genocide and War: Resources and Services" at the new Holocaust Center at Queensborough Community College.

The Symposium Committee is busy planning and preparing for the annual symposium. This year, the symposium will be held on Friday, December 10, 2010, at Baruch College. The title is: "Innovation by Design: Re-visioning the Library." Save the date! We will send out more information, including calls for posters, in the coming months.

I hope you can take advantage of your membership in ACRL/NY by attending some of our programs and events, and please feel free to make suggestions for upcoming events that you think might be valuable for academic librarians. Have a wonderful and relaxing Summer!

--Susanne Markgren  
ACRL/NY President

## Save the date for the next ACRL/NY Symposium!



You may be thinking: "We just had a symposium." Well, yes we did but that was last December and December 2010 is coming soon.

The ACRL/NY Symposium Planning Committee has been hard at work for the last four months getting ready for this year's symposium.

It will be on Friday, December 10th at Baruch College's Vertical Campus Conference Center in New York City, the same great oval room as last year.

The title is 'Innovation by Design: Re-visioning the Library'. We are going to look at design in relation to a wide variety library tools and services.

Currently we are lining up speakers that hail from places across the country like Oregon, Washington D.C., and California. Our symposium website will be up soon,

so keep an eye out for more details, including our solicitation for poster proposals. We look forward to seeing you there.

--Carrie Eastman, ACRL/NY Symposium Chair

### **An Open Letter to Legislators on the Importance of Academic Libraries:**

The academic library is often called "the heart of the campus." Consider that ACRL/NY members represent thirty-eight academic libraries located in New York City's five boroughs, Long Island, Westchester County and the Lower Hudson Valley. Our membership ranges from the small community college to the large research institutions, both public and private. Our patrons, and their families, are likely to be your constituents—and that translates into hundreds of thousands of voters. While the particular needs of our individual libraries might vary, fundamentally we are united in our endeavor to provide the finest service to our users, to address the information needs of our patrons and to ensure that our students maintain a high level of information literacy skills that are necessary in this ever-increasing digital age.

And now expand that circle of service provided by academic libraries beyond New York to a national level!

While New York's academic libraries need continued support from all sectors, citizens and businesses, we especially depend on the government to support us through funding, sponsored programs and appropriate legislation. Librarians—as faculty members, citizens, employees, trustees and supporters—are striving to ensure that all our community members have access to the many benefits of academic library services. But, we need your support!

### **How You Can Help**

Stable, generous funding levels for library services are absolutely critical for meeting the ongoing needs of our college and university communities, particularly in this difficult economic time. ACRL/NY urges you to continue to strengthen, protect and support programs, legislation and funding related to our libraries. We all know that our city, state and nation are facing tough fiscal challenges in which they need to make hard economic and budgetary choices. We ask that you do not disproportionately decrease funds that ultimately help finance the libraries in our institutions—the education of our youth is dependent upon it.

We cannot afford any additional cuts to libraries and library-related services. Our communities are depending on us – and you.

--Caroline Fuchs  
Legislative Liaison, ACRL/NY

## **The Battle of RDA: Victors or Victims**

Thursday, May 6, 2010

9:30 – 11:30 am

St. John's University – Manhattan Campus  
Davis Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 101 Murray Street,  
Directions can be found at:  
<http://www.stjohns.edu/about/general/directions/directions/manhattan>.

Presented by Rick Block, Head of Special Collections Metadata and Cataloging at Columbia University

Rick will take a critical look at the development of RDA as a replacement cataloging standard for AACR2, and why many members of the LIS community still have reservations about its' implementation.

Co-hosted with the WALDO Technical Services Committee. This meeting is open to members of WALDO libraries and members of ACRL/NY.

Please RSVP to Maureen Weicher  
[weicherm@stjohns.edu](mailto:weicherm@stjohns.edu)  
<mailto:weicherm@stjohns.edu>

## **The Whys and Hows to Creating a Good Resume**

Thursday, May 13, 2010, from 6pm - 8 pm

Julie Cunningham, the Chief Librarian at the Mina Rees Library, CUNY Graduate Center, and Elisabeth Tappeiner, the

Acting Chief Librarian at Hostos Community College CUNY, will share their experiences in what makes a good resume. Bring your resumes. This workshop deals with critiquing your resume as well as answering any questions about how library academic search committees operate and what they look for in resumes.

The meeting will be held in:  
C196.05 (Special Collections Reading Room), Mina Rees Library  
CUNY Graduate Center  
365 Fifth Ave.  
New York, NY  
Light snacks will be served.

RSVP by May 12<sup>th</sup> to Michael Handis ([mhandis@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:mhandis@gc.cuny.edu)).

## **Teaching the Holocaust, Genocide and War: Resources & Services**

Friday, May 21, 2010

8:30 a.m.-12 noon

Breakfast will be served!

The Harriet & Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives of Queensborough Community College, City University of New York

Speaker will include: Dr. Arthur Flug, Dr. Susan Jacobowitz, Ms. Sylvia Karges, and Dr. Anne Kirschner

Sponsored by  
ACRL/NY - New York City Section and

Friends of the Kurt R. Schmeller Library  
QCC, City University of New York

Please RSVP to Dr. Barbara Bonous-Smit  
[bbonoussmit@qcc.cuny.edu](mailto:bbonoussmit@qcc.cuny.edu)



*Shushan emek uyamah, kerovah for shaharit of Yom Kippur. (14th Century)  
NYPL Digital Collection*

## ***This Book is Overdue: How Librarians and Cybrarians Can Save Us All* by Marilyn Johnson**

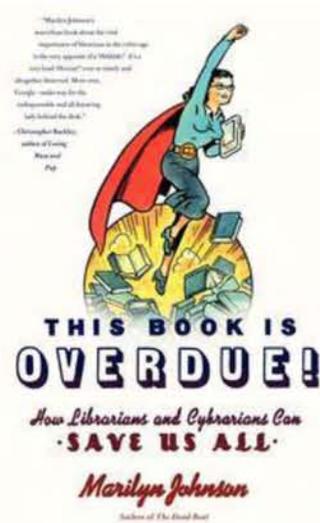
If you have not heard about it yet, Marilyn Johnson's most recent work is not just a love-letter to librarians, it is bound to be a strong wind in the sails of libraries during a time of fiscal crisis. In the interest of full disclosure, I am one of several New York Metropolitan Area librarians who are mentioned in *This Book Is Overdue!: How Librarians and Cybrarians Can Save Us All*, but when asked to write a piece for ACRLNY's newsletter, I accepted in order to publicly thank Johnson for her willingness to take up the cause of

promoting libraries and librarianship – especially since she had to persevere in the face of disbelief and derision from friends, editors (and even librarians) when she told them she was writing a book about the changing world of libraries.



I met Johnson at the 2007 ALA in Washington, where she was enthusiastically engaging librarians of every stripe. I had a “healthy skepticism” of a writer who claimed to be interested in following around librarians, so prior to returning her 2008 follow-up call, I read her book “the Dead Beat” – a delightful book about obituary-writers and obituary enthusiasts. Yes, it was delightful, surprising and engaging; in fact, the book was such a sympathetic portrait of people who love obituaries, I thought “if Johnson could make librarians \*half\* as appealing to her readers, it would be a boon to us all”. I am glad to report that she succeeded with great aplomb; She captured the serious, whimsical, tragic, absurd, patriotic, revolutionary, exciting, and sometimes-nerve-wracking elements of our vocation in a way that should have

readers nodding, raising eyebrows, and at some points interjecting “I had no idea!”



In the initial stages of writing, Johnson took the time to explore the myriad roles, issues, politics and personalities that make “libraryland” a constant adventure. As a curious student, she enjoyed meeting with various types of librarians; as an investigative interviewer, she was “easy to please, but hard to satisfy.” She was not just interested in what librarians did, but how librarians saw themselves and their profession; she winkled out the sense of vocation which drew them to their particular type of service, she listened carefully to conflicting arguments about whether the blurring of staffing roles is inevitable, and, of course, she wanted everyone’s “take” on the impact that rapid changes in Information and Communication Technologies has had, and will continue to have on librarianship, both for good and for ill.

The book is just the beginning however; her book-blog continues to record the obits of the librarians who inspired her to write this book, and a growing number of stories about librarians who continue to inspire others. What might have been a sweet “thank-you” project, for a niche market of librarians, has turned into a rallying point. This is due in no small part to Johnson’s winning writing style, her portrayal of the rich diversity of librarians and their unwavering commitment to their patrons, and, ultimately, to Johnson’s commitment to library patrons as well.

During interviews, Johnson shows she has a real grasp of the issues of libraries; and her willingness to harness her formidable librarian-network allows her to keep up with the latest research about how libraries -- in every sense of the word -- are an invaluable resource to communities – in every sense of that word. The fact that libraries are once again on the budget-chopping-block has given every interview a sense of urgency, and Johnson has stepped up to the plate.

The combined impact of her book’s positive reviews and her passionate, eloquent interviews (in both local and national venues, and increasingly in the main stream media) have served as a clarion call for all citizens to fight for the essential resources and services that libraries provide. I witnessed first-hand, at the Empire State Book Festival in April, that her speaking engagement turned into an impromptu pep-rally for shoring up

funding for libraries. Libraries and librarians across the nation, and in every type of library, should be glad that Marilyn had this idea a few years ago, that she stuck with us, laughed with us, commiserated with us and marveled at how we are handling the changes.

This ACRLNY librarian is very grateful that our profession has in Marilyn Johnson someone who can be an upbeat cheerleader, cautious critic, and formidable advocate, as the situation requires.

-- Kathryn G. Shaughnessy  
Assistant Professor, Instructional Services Librarian  
St. John’s University College

### **Trying To Access Statistical Data? Wolfram Alpha versus Google**

Are you having trouble finding fast, factual answers to questions like, “What is the population of New York City?” Below is a comparative review of the usefulness of Wolfram Alpha vs. Google for finding answers to statistical queries.

Wolfram Alpha ([www.wolframalpha.com](http://www.wolframalpha.com)) is an answer engine developed by Wolfram Research. It answers factual questions by computing answers using its own repository of data, rather than a search across the World Wide Web.

Wolfram Alpha uses built-in algorithms to compute answers to statistical questions. It collects and processes objective data

and makes it accessible to everyone. The web site references the source from which the answer to their question originates, making it more trustworthy than Google searches, which may show results from un-reputable sources. Wolfram Alpha, launched in May 2009, hopes to be the definitive resource for anyone who needs definitive answers to factual queries.

Below is an example of a basic question using natural language.

The screenshot shows the WolframAlpha interface. At the top, the search bar contains the question "What is the unemployment rate for New York City?". Below the search bar, the input interpretation is shown as "New York unemployment rate". The result is "8.7% (May 2009)". A history graph shows the unemployment rate in percent from 1980 to 2009, with a log scale. The graph shows a general downward trend with significant fluctuations, particularly a sharp increase around 2003-2004.

### Searching Google to Find Public Data

Google has a built-in function for accessing public data, but it's only

available for U.S. states (and not U.S. cities).

Searching Google for Public Data is not as seamless as Wolfram Alpha. Natural language is not recommended for searches in Google Public data so users need to enter the correct search query to find the information they are seeking. For example, one needs to type: "unemployment rate New York" to access the same data set as the Wolfram Alpha search above.

The screenshot shows the Google search interface. The search bar contains the query "unemployment rate new york". The search results show a link to "Unemployment rate, New York" with a small line graph. The graph shows the unemployment rate in percent from 2004 to 2009, with a log scale. The current rate is 8.6% of the labor force - Not seasonally adjusted - Jun 2009. The source is cited as U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

### Which one is better?

Wolfram Alpha delivers more numeric and statistical data. Google can also effectively locate statistical data but its main function is to search web pages, news stories, images, and other content based on search query.

--Mark Aaron Polger, Instruction/  
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## **About ACRL/NY**

*Connections: The ACRL/NY Newsletter*, is published by the Greater New York Metropolitan Area Chapter / Association of College and Research Libraries, Inc.

Submissions and suggestions can be sent to the current news editor:

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Links to past issues of *Connections* may be found here:

<http://www.acrlny.org/news.htm>

## **Membership**

You may find the membership form for joining ACRL/NY at the ACRL/NY website:  
<http://www.acrlny.org/>

Join online:  
<http://www.acrlny.org/membership.htm>

or

By mail:  
<http://www.acrlny.org/membership2008-2009.pdf>

## **Upcoming Events**

Check the website <http://www.acrlny.org/> for the most complete event information!