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Rhode Island Library Association Bulletin

Volume No. V. 65 Nos. 3 & 4

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March/April 1992

RILA Leadership Prepares for the Next Budget Session

BY JOHN BUCCI

It is possible that the 1991 state budget cuts were a precursor of what may be an even more severe test for Rhode Island librarians. The state has been reeling from economic and political problems that virtually ensure an all-out battle to retain the modest funding libraries have lived with over the past year. While the outlook seems bleak, a group of librarians and library supporters are determined to challenge policy makers at the state level and to encourage the financial support that libraries need during these difficult times.

Judith Paster, RILA President, and Government Relations Committee members James Giles, Catherine Mello Alves, and Dale Thompson have been active in lobbying for more funding for Rhode Island libraries. I asked them to evaluate past efforts, describe current RILA lobbying tactics, and predict successes in the coming legislative year.

- Judith Paster -

What are your thoughts on how RILA's response to lobbying has changed in the past year? What is the Association doing to be ready in 1992?

One definite change of attitude I have witnessed in my work with RILA's Government Relations Committee and my attendance at COLA meetings is that library-concerned parties (whether lay or professional) must convey a constant and appreciable presence at the State House. We cannot wait for the budget crisis at PPL or DSLS to mobilize our forces. We must contact our legislators on a regular basis and provide them with continuous education on library concerns. Hence, the "counterparts" program that RILA, with the guidance and hard work of the Government Relations Committee, has initiated.

My second observation is that RILA members must think of themselves as library ambassadors at all times. We must learn to talk to others (friends, neighbors, people we do business with) about libraries and their importance to a civilized, humane life. We cannot continue to talk just to each other. I am continually amazed at the lack of library information existing in people who really are, or could be, the natural friends of libraries.

My last observation grows out of our experiences last year, with the Governor's Conference and, especially, the State House Rally last May. The partnership between the professional organizations, such as RILA, and the layperson's organization, COLA, cannot be over-emphasized. We professional librarians cannot begin to function without this crucial relationship. COLA is the place where those interested in libraries and those who work in them can communicate and work together. The rally last May was the best example I have ever seen of cooperation between the various components of the library world.

One postscript to all this: it is easy to become cynical about the efficacy of lobbying efforts. We look at our legislators and wonder why we bother. The answer is that we can't afford not to. Recently at a COLA Board meeting, Vicki Lederberg attested to the power of ten letters on one subject. We can't not write those letters. Or not make those phone calls, or not march to the State House if it's called for. The only answer to cynicism is action. I urge all RILA members to be aware of what our Government Relations Committee is doing and to be ready to act when action is called for.

- James Giles -

What are the specific goals of the Government Relations Committee this legislative year?

Our first goal, appointment of the Library Board of Rhode Island, has been met.

The second goal is to increase funding. We've determined that a 3% increase in the amount of Grant-in-Aid to cities and towns each year through the year 2000 would increase the state's contribution to 25% of each library's budget. This 3% is based on the local appropriation of the second preceding year.

We'd like to increase the state's contribution to the Rhode Island Library Network to \$1.5 million.

We're also asking state officials to support any initiatives that promote library services. This includes reinstating reimbursement for construction and providing each city and town library with a set of the General Laws.

What can librarians do to ensure increased library funding?

All librarians can help by communicating with legislators in the communities where they work and live. We had a great response from librarians at the Fall Conference. Many signed on to contact one legislator and educate him or her on the needs of Rhode Island libraries and what strong libraries mean to the citizens of this state.

Librarians can also elicit help from patrons and community leaders who are library users. These citizens can communicate to the legislators the importance of their libraries.

Considering the economic climate and the number of important issues before the General Assembly, how can the library issue be brought to the forefront?

By letting the legislators know what libraries are doing! In addition to the concept of individual contact with legislators, we can use the media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, to get our message out. However, I believe individuals contacting their legislators is the best method and has the greatest impact.

It's important to work hard for these goals, with intelligence and diligence. Our success will be directly related to the amount of effort we expend. It's always difficult – but look at the accomplishments. I think we can get the job done.

- Catherine Mello Alves -

Besides one-to-one contact, what else can librarians do to educate the General Assembly?

It's important that every library do a good job. That success should be promoted to the media. Programs, even if they fill up without publicity, should be publicized. Informational articles should be written and success stories should be given the attention they deserve.

Libraries should regard customer service as one of their most important goals, and it should be part of their mission statements. That helps to create the grassroots support we need when we approach the legislators.

I think it's also important that trustees and friends be well informed concerning funding issues at the state level. Librarians should communicate with those groups monthly on such concerns.

What is the Government Relations Committee planning for this legislative session, beyond the one-to-one contact with legislators?

We'd like to communicate more with the librarians who have signed on to that particular program, possibly with a mailing. We'd also like to have a working session at the RILA Conference to follow up on the preliminary work.

I think it would be nice to have some television spots, to use more visual media to promote our message. The question arises if a professional publicist would be more effective at this juncture. Is that something that should be discussed?

What would you like to see come out of the General Assembly?

Primarily, I'd like to see our proposals pass the General Assembly. Certainly, the money issue is paramount.

We have to keep building on our successes and develop a positive attitude when dealing with legislators.

We have to find more friends in the General Assembly. It's important to dispel the image of the old library and to convince legislators of the value of our institutions.

Finally, all librarians need to become more aware of our precarious situation and become more politically active. It's no longer enough to do a good job inside the library; we also have to fight the good fight outside the library.

- Dale Thompson -

What is the most important goal for the library community?

Other than funding, working cooperatively to stress that libraries are efficient, well-managed and well-organized.

Most legislators don't understand public libraries, so they appear unresponsive to our needs. We need to make an impact when priorities are being set in the General Assembly. We have to convey that the public needs, wants, and appreciates the services that public libraries offer. We must become high profile so that the message of what we do is understood.

What would you like to see come out of the General Assembly for Providence Public Library?

Money! Money will allow us to provide current information in usable formats. Money will guaran-

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Presently, we're mobilizing the user community, analyzing and costing services and collecting facts and figures to present our case to local legislators in the General Assembly.

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Two major themes stand out in these interviews. The first is the need to work as a group to be effective lobbyists. This includes one-on-one contact with legislators, developing grassroots support, and promoting libraries and their services.

The second, and possibly more important, theme is the need to articulate the importance of libraries to elected officials. The education of these officials deserves long-range planning and promotion, so that the annual trauma of seeking sufficient funding may be put behind us.

John Bucci is Chief of Branch Services at Cranston Public Library. Judith Paster is President of RILA. James T. Giles is Director of the Cranston Public Library. Catherine Mello Alves is Coordinator of the Island Inter-related Library System. Dale Thompson is Director of the Providence Public Library.

Highlights From the Executive Board Meeting

March 3, 1992

Treasurer Judith Bell reported that funds from a matured Certificate of Deposit at Hospital Trust will be used to purchase a new CD at Fleet Bank. The remaining funds will be placed in a regular savings account. The accounts are being transferred to Fleet Bank from Hospital Trust.

Rita Warnock reported that all delegates to Legislative Day will meet at DSLS for an orientation to choose issues in addition to the White House Conference Youth Omnibus Bill to focus on with the Congressional delegates. Judith Paster will also attend Legislative Day.

According to Donna Roberts, the annual membership drive is underway, with 215 renewals and 29 new members. Myra Blank is handling advertisements for the Membership Directory. Denise Gibbons is assisting with data entry. The mentor program under the direction of Doug Swiszc is temporarily on hold. Donna distributed names of mem-

bers who expressed an interest in serving on various committees to each committee chair.

Nominating Committee Chair Charlotte Schoonover reported that the offices to be voted on are: Vice President President Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, Member-at-Large, ALA Councilor, and NELA Councilor. Nominating Committee members are John Fox Cory, Deborah Barchi, and Michael Vocino. Anyone wishing to run for office or with suggestions for nominations should contact a member of this committee.

The Personnel Committee has arranged to speak to URI GSLIS students in April. Ken Svengalis will address two classes on taking a job that pays fair value. The committee is working on the fifth annual salary survey.

Donna Roberts will address the Public Relations Committee on her media training experience from ALA and how it can be used by RILA. Marcia DiGregorio will be doing press releases for RILA and 10- to 30-second spot announcements to go to radio stations. Frances Farrell-Bergeron and Molly McGetrick are also working on a TV and radio spot on "6 out of 10 people use libraries." Fran, Joe McGovern, and Dorothy Frechette are putting together a monthly interconnect cable TV series as well.

Judith Paster announced that the deadline for nominations for the Trustee of the Year award will be April 20. The decision will be made at the May Executive Board meeting.

Prepared for the Bulletin by Pam Stoddard from minutes taken by Deborah Mongeau, RILA Secretary.

State Budget Cuts for Current Fiscal Year and Projected Cuts for Fiscal 1993 Announced

On February 28th, Barbara Weaver, Director of the Department of State Library Services, announced that under the proposed FY1993 State Budget, funding for library services will be reduced by approximately 7%. The reduction was no greater than this because DSLS has decided to phase out the regional library centers earlier than previously anticipated and to eliminate funding for the Rhode Island Library Film Cooperative. Meanwhile, because of FY1992 budget constraints, funding for the regional centers and the film cooperative will be discontinued effective May 1, 1992. In addition, FY1992 funding for the Statewide Reference Resource Center at Providence Public Library will be reduced by \$19,171.

The overall proposed FY1993 budget reductions affecting local communities were announced as follows:

	FY92 (As budgeted)	FY92	Reduction
State grant-in-aid	\$333,119	\$300,000	\$31,119
Institutional libraries	\$20,160	\$17,125	\$3,035
Statewide Reference			
Resource Center	\$978,514	\$895,777	\$82,737
Regional Centers	\$173,997	-0-	\$173,997
Film Cooperative	\$31,613	-0-	\$31,613

Finally, starting May 1, 1992, there will be a new RHILINET ILL Clearinghouse, which will replace the interlibrary loan functions now performed by the four regional centers. The Clearinghouse will be located at DSLS, and will handle author and title ILL requests from libraries in Rhode Island. Subject requests will be considered as reference transactions, and will be forwarded to the Statewide Reference Resource Center at the Providence Public Library.

Trustees to Hold Briefing Session

An informal workshop for trustees is planned jointly by the Trustees' Committee of RILA and DSLS. To be held on April 30 at the Sheraton Tara Hotel from 4 to 7 p.m., the session will allow for informal "mingling" as well as a workshop focused on the values and problems of being a public library trustee.

Patricia Owens, Director of Library Development for Connecticut, will speak to the group on "The Importance of Trustees." Following will be a panel discussion of trustee concerns, moderated by Wil Gates, Chair of RILA's Trustee Affairs Committee.

Salad and hors d'oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be available.

Directors of public libraries are encouraged to ask their trustees to attend and to attend with them. Both RILA and DSLS hope that this kind of resource sharing will be the first of many similar opportunities.

Additional information is available from Roberta Cairns' office at the East Providence Public Library, 434-2453.

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Spring Conference Update

The RILA Conference Committee has scheduled a number of programs to entice you to come to Salve Regina College June 4 and 5 (just in case Newport in June isn't enticement enough!) A preview of the lineup follows:

Thursday, 6/4

MARKETING SERVICES AND RAISING FUNDS – workshop conducted by Simone Joyaux of Joyaux Associates
FAMILY LITERACY – panel presentation on two programs in Rhode Island
THE RIGHT TO KNOW – access to government information
PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS – Donna Roberts shares media training from ALA
PERIODICALS ACCESS VS. ACQUISITIONS – panel discussion of issues
RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN NATIONAL PARKS – presentation and slide show by Frank Notarianni
POLLUTION CONTROL LITERATURE – discussion by Dwight Peavy of the Environmental Protection Agency
DSLS UPDATE – current and future status and services
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT – implications for libraries

Friday, 6/5

TRUSTEES' PROGRAM
MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP – conducted by Anne Parent
LOCAL AREA NETWORKS – presentation by NELINET
YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMMING
STORYTELLING – Jordan-Miller Program

BULLETIN BOARD

QUAHOG (Quick Access to HoldinGs) Rhode Island's first statewide CD-ROM library catalog, recently made its debut in libraries throughout the state. This first edition contains bibliographic and location information – current to October, 1991 – for more than 2,500,000 items located at 32 public libraries, 10 hospital libraries, one high school library and the Department of State Library Services. A second edition of the database, inclusive of college and university libraries and more school libraries, is scheduled to be published in 1993. The QUAHOG database logo was designed and generously donated by Don Bosquet and is featured in all QUAHOG libraries. For more information about QUAHOG contact members of the DSLS Network Group (Dorothy Frechette, Howard Boksenbaum, Cynthia St. Amour, Andrew Egan, or Jeffrey Vale).

•••••

Brown University Librarian Merrily Taylor recently announced plans to name the Government Documents section of the Rockefeller Library in honor of Alice Brendel, the library's Government Documents Coordinator who tragically died last November. In addition to naming the Documents area in honor of Alice, the Library has established, with the approval of the family's relatives, a memorial book fund. Its proceeds will be used to acquire materials in Alice's areas of special interest, international studies and government documents. Donations to this fund may be sent to the Brendel Family Memorial Fund, Box 1877, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912



Concept plans for "Project Century 21: A Research and Action Program for Meeting the Information Needs of Society" were approved during the 1992 American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio. The project will examine society's needs for information and the human resources that will be essential to deliver services through libraries and information agencies in the Information Age. Recommendations will be made toward influencing education for library and information services and programs in the future. ALA President-Elect Marilyn Miller, Chair of the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, will direct the program. The project is an outgrowth of suggestions from the final report of the ALA Special Committee on Library School Closings and recommendations to the ALA Council from the ALA Standing Committee on Library Education (SCOLE). A copy of SCOLE's report recommending "Project Century 21" (CD #14.1) is available from Margaret Myers, Staff Liaison, ALA, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.



"The American With Disabilities Act of 1990" will be the subject of an educational seminar and exposition on Tuesday, May 19th at the Warwick Campus of the Community College of Rhode Island. The program is sponsored by Tech Access of Rhode Island and the Construction Specification Institute. For more information contact Betsy Dalton of Tech Access (539-6027) or Ann Piascik at DSLS (277-2726).



The Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) has established a Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service. The Service can be contacted by calling OSCIL at 401-738-1014 or 401-738-1015 TDD, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PEOPLE

HARRIET LAPOINTE, librarian at the Lincoln Junior-Senior High School, recently was named Project Director for Library Power/Providence, the three year 1.1 million dollar grant received by Providence's Public Education Fund from the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund to improve the city's elementary and middle school libraries. Located in Providence, the Public Education Fund is a nonprofit organization committed to stimulating cooperative change so that the Providence public schools become preeminent in providing quality urban education.

GRETCHEN NEEDHAM is now sharing her previous full-time position as Satellite Librarian at the U.S. Court of Appeals in Providence with **STEPHANIE MUTTY**, who most recently worked at Rhode Island College and Roger Williams College filling positions for librarians on sabbatical leave.

Obituaries: The *Bulletin* notes with sadness the deaths of two members of the Rhode Island library community. **JOSEPH DOHERTY**, who served as Director of the Providence College Library for 22 years before retiring in 1989, passed away on January 10th; **SALLY WILSON**, who served as Special Collections Librarian at Rhode Island College's Adams Library from 1977 to 1990 and who was a member of the RIC library staff since 1965, passed away on February 23rd.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

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D A T E S

APRIL 22: "Is It Legal? Applying Copyright in Special Libraries," Raytheon Company Corporate Headquarters, Lexington, MA, 5:30 PM – 8:45 PM. Contact: Ray Niro, (508) 490-2285.

MAY 8-9: New England Chapter of the Music Library Association (NEMLA) Spring Conference, Ladd Library, Bates College, Lewiston, ME. Contact: Patricia Brennan, NEMLA Chair, Rhode Island College.

JUNE 4-5: RILA Spring Conference, Salve Regina College, Newport, RI.

JUNE 5: Jordan-Miller Storytelling Program, Salve Regina College, Newport, RI (featured as part of RILA's Spring Conference).

JUNE 2-JULY 2: ALA Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA.

P R E S I D E N T ' S J O U R N A L

As many of you know, my fervent belief about the function of the *Bulletin* is that it represent as many aspects of our lives as librarians as possible. Towards that goal, we must all be willing to share what we're doing and where we're going.

March 12 was held the third annual William L. Bergeron Memorial Poetry Program. Many of us knew and worked with Bill. He served RILA as Treasurer during my first year as *Bulletin* Editor, and before that, as Chair of the Intellectual Freedom Committee. Bill was passionate about the tenets of intellectual freedom.

On this night, the fourth anniversary of Bill's death, spoke Jane Lunin Perel, a poet and professor of English at Providence College. Perel began by reading two poems by others, and then seemed "to hit her stride" as she moved into her own. One cannot re-create the atmosphere and involvement that the audience felt; it seemed to me that each of us was listening, alone and yet together. Her subjects were not "pretty"; she cut down deep into life and death, the ugly ironies of nature, of suffering, historically and singly. She uses sharp clean images, and makes her listeners see – homely things, like soup bones and toilet bowls, or natural things, like a victimized sailfish or a dying baby goat.

I don't think I'm wrong in guessing that everyone in the room was touched by some of her words. There was a kind of euphoria after her talk that comes from shared images, ideas, feelings. It is very pleasant to be reminded that our library community possesses genuine vitality and a willingness to be inspired.

President's Note: A public word of heartfelt thanks is owed by all of RILA to Wendy Knickerbocker and Frank Iacono, who have agreed to edit the *Bulletin* together on an interim basis.

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