Recession. Layoffs. Budget cuts. The news, it ain’t good. Often libraries—and librarians—find themselves the first to face the chopping block.

How to stay important? How to convince the higher-ups that they simply can’t do without you?

NYMA’s Fall 2007 Conference “Are You Relevant?: Lobbying for Librarians and Libraries,” held on Thurs., Nov. 8, at Congregation Emanu-El and coordinated by NYMA president Leslie Monchar, addressed these timely and pertinent concerns. Keynote speaker Joanne P. Roukens (Executive Director, Highlands Regional Library Cooperative and New Jersey Library Association Librarian of the Year) gave an on-target lecture entitled “Valuing Libraries: Demonstrating Your Library’s Impact on Your Community.” (Her PowerPoint presentation, as well as additional materials from the conference, is posted on the AJL-NYMA webpage under “Past Events” and “2007/2008” under “Fall Conference.”) The “Valuing Libraries” curriculum itself was developed in partnership with the New Jersey State Library and the Highlands Regional Library Cooperative Funding and Resource Development Task Force.

Ms. Roukens began her lecture with a stress on rapport with the institutional members. “Today is about how valuable your library is and how you can communicate its impact to your school, synagogue or community center,” she urged. To do this you the librarian must:

(Cont’d on Pg. 7)
Contacts, Connections & Cons
Forging Ahead & Forgery Ahead
@ Reference Workshop

Discovered talent, discovered websites, discovered frauds—all these formed a remarkable trilogy at this year's Reference Workshop, held Wednesday, Feb. 13, at the Center for Jewish History and chaired by Rachael Kurtz (Yeshivah of Flatbush High School Library) and Ina Rubin Cohen (Jewish Theological Seminary Library). The theme was publishing—Jewish authors, resources, and con artists—and the dissemination of fresh, vital, and questionable material.

Beyond the Slash Pile

The first speaker was Alte Karper, Editorial Director, Schocken Books. In “Contemporary Issues in American Jewish Publishing,” she began by taking the audience on a time trip back to the early 70s, that ancient era before personal computers.

While cleaning out her office, she came across old rejection letters of manuscripts such as Satan in Goray (Isaac Bashevis Singer), The Assistant (Bernard Malamud); and The Chosen (Chaim Potok). The letters questioned the marketability of these works, which seemed too ethnic for the outside market. The comments very much reflect the WASP culture that dominated the American publishing world for much of the twentieth century, when any depiction of Judaism was watered down for the mainstream, including the largely assimilated American Jews.

The mentality changed after the 60s. In the emerging “multicultural” movements, as minorities began to explore and exalt their roots, the Jews’ interest in their own developed, along with the demand for books explicitly written by, for, and about Jews, with stronger religious and cultural themes. Authors who in the past were once marginal marched proudly to the forefront.

Since then, the “Jewish market” has taken off. Citing examples like The Rebbe’s Army, an in-depth look at the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, or To Heal a Fractured World, a modern plea for tikkun [correction], Ms. Karper described how interest in Judaism has moved far beyond the “lite” holiday fare and acknowledged the contemporary public’s more active, “insider” interest in authentic Jewish life.

Ms. Karper held up her most recent release: Why is This Night Different From All Other Nights?, by (Cont’d on next page)
(Cont'd from pg. 2)

Ilanor Kurshan. This Passover book, which presents the Four Questions in every language spoken by Jews in the Diaspora, appeals to today’s more sophisticated younger readers through its multicultural motif. Clearly Jewish identity has left behind the shetl and entered the “global village.”

During the Q & A, Ms. Karper discussed some of the changes within the publishing world, such as reader feedback from blogs and e-newsletters. However, e-books, ipods, Kindle and other technologies still lag, at least at Schocken. Lastly, there are censorship issues, as with the controversial One People, Two Worlds. But the ability of such books to find a niche points to a reading public that is still, contrary to rumors of its demise, very much alive and kicking.

Sorting it Out

In this day and age books alone do not a library make, not even a Jewish library. Access to its material is crucial.

The next speaker, Hannah Miryam Belinfante, Dorot Jewish Division, New York Public Library, addressed ways to help librarians locate Jewish sources and determine their purchase. In "Sorting Through Cyberspace: Choosing Databases For Your Library," she focused on four databases in particular--Project Muse, JSTOR, ATLA and History Abstracts--and asked the following:

* What is the range of the material indexed?
* How up to date is it?
* Does it contain full-text articles?
* Is it easy to use?
* What is the cost value?
* Does it provide something not easily accessed elsewhere?

Relying on these criteria the librarian could determine the suitability of the database for the library’s collection.

The talk followed with feedback from the audience about personal experiences with these databases, experiences which led to further helpful suggestions for their use.

Fakers & Shakers

The third and final speaker was Rabbi Jeremy Meyerowitz, a reference librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary. His “Passing As Sacred: Forgeries in Rabbinic Literature” was a summary of what has been previously published regarding a number of controversial rabbinic publications, which scholars acknowledge today are not the documents that they purport to be.

One of these forgeries is Talmud Yerushalmi Seder Kodshim, along with the commentary of Shlomo Yehuda Algazi-Friedlander. Cheshke Shlomo Friedlander claimed to have discovered the long-lost text of the Yerushalmi’s Seder Kodshim. His talent was matched only by his ego: he wrote his own commentaries in the style of Rashi and Tosafos and obtained haskamot [approval] from respected Torah scholars, arranged funding from the scholars Solomon Schechter and Solomon Buber—and published all of this in two volumes, in 1907 and 1909! Within the next few years the controversy became full-blown, as articles and letters both defending and debunking the authenticity of the text were published. Today it is generally acknowledged that this text was a forgery.

The other forgeries discussed:

* The Zvi Benjamin Auerbach edition of Sefer HaEshkol by Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne (Halberstadt, 1868) which may contain later additions not written by Abraham ben Isaac.
* Besamim Rosh, supposedly the responsa of Asher Ben Yehiel, (the “Rosh,”) with a commentary of Rabbi Saul Berlin (Berlin, 1793).
* Letters purported to have been written by the early Hasidic leaders originating in the Kherson Geniza, and which have been published in various books and journals.

A lively discussion followed the presentation, focusing on how librarians (and library catalogs) can alert readers to the authenticity of these kinds of books: The word “controversial” is itself... well, controversial: although placed in the Marc records, it signifies here not a book with debatable content, but rather a completely phony book to begin with! Ironically the brazen imagination behind the writing of these books, as well as the authors’ colorful histories, might make these books collectors’ items in their own right.

Complete audiorecording of Reference Workshop now available online at www.ajlnyma.org.

NYMA-NEWS thanks the following contributors to this article:

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LEAH SCHECHTER BENNETT, Acquisitions Librarian, Jewish Theological Seminary;
INA RUBIN COHEN, Public Services Librarian, Jewish Theological Seminary.

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**Past/Present/Future**

**Fateful Encounter**
From the desk of Phil Miller:
"This morning (Oct. 1) I shared a remarkable experience with Yaron Kapitulnik, a second-year rabbinic student. While perusing a book published in 2004 and written in English and Polish about Lopuszno, a Polish shtetl destroyed during the Holocaust, I happened upon some photographs of people named Kapitulnik and could not help but wonder if these persons were related to Yaron.

"I went to my computer to send Yaron an e-mail, asking him to come to my office, but before I could even sit down, he magically appeared at my door with a reference question totally unrelated to anything we had ever previously talked about.

"As I passed him the book, he literally collapsed in a chair, for he recognized photos of his grandfather as a young man, as well as great-grandparents and his grandfather's siblings, none of whose faces Yaron had ever seen before. (His grandfather, having left Poland in March of 1939, was the only member of the family to survive the Holocaust.) Especially poignant was a photo of his grandfather and a sister reciting Kaddish at their mother's grave on the eve of his departure.

"I recalled the book had been donated by an Israeli businessman who had funded the book's publication, and I was glad to pass along his contact information in Tel-Aviv to Yaron. Yaron was eager to call Jerusalem and tell his father of this remarkable and entirely serendipitous discovery.

"Moments such as this truly make the work of a librarian most rewarding!"

**Sabbath Scholar**
On Wed., Oct. 10, Liza Stabler hosted the Emanu-El Reads program, which got off to a start with The Sabbath, the classic work by Abraham Joshua Heschel. The program was presented by Susannah Heschel, Eli Black, Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, whose scholarship focuses on Jewish-Christian relations in Germany during the 19th and 20th centuries. Her publications include Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus, which won a National Jewish Book Award and Germany's Geiger Prize, and a forthcoming book called The Aryan Jesus: Christians, Nazis and the Bible. She also has edited Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays of Abraham Joshua Heschel.

**E-News**
As a follow-up to her presentation on e-books in Jewish Studies last summer at AJL's 2007 convention, Sara Spiegel has updated her bookmarks page on http://del.icio.us/ and added a link to more Judaica e-books on the Internet. Her selection currently is based on free resources and digitized collections.

To open: http://del.icio.us/
Login: user name - jsเทค
Password: ebook1

The link to Jewish Theological Seminary of America's new library blog, Mekorot, is up and running: http://itslibrary.wordpress.com/. This blog features reviews and discussion of new and classic sources in Jewish Studies, bibliographical notes, and edifying tidbits. Also at JTS: Digital Library. Please click on http://www.jtsa.edu/Secondary_Pages/News/Press_Releases/Press_Releases/The_Library_of_The_Jewish_Theological_Seminary_Announces_Launch_of_Digital_Library.xml for press release.

**Coming Soon**
"Treasures of the YIVO Sound Archives." With Lorin Sklamberg (Max and Frieda Weinstein Archives of Sound Recordings). A fascinating survey of YIVO's audio holdings. Examples will include rare commercial and private audio and video recordings of Yiddish folk, theater and art songs, cantorial and klezmer music.

Wednesdays, March 19-26 and April 2, 2008, 7:00-8:30 PM. $90 ($75 for YIVO members).
Paging Random House.
Once again, the Jewish publishing world convened at the 92nd Street Y. The Ninth Annual Jewish Children's Book Writers' Conference, held Sunday, November 18, 2007, and hosted by Buttenweiser librarian Steve Siegel, included such topics as writing for Jewish teens and presenting an “eye-catching” portfolio.

Speaking of Jewish Children’s Books
The Center for Jewish History is digitizing and illuminating historical Jewish children’s books from the collections of its partners (YIVO, American Jewish Historical Society, YU Museum, American Sephardic Federation, Leo Baeck Institute). The “Jewish Children’s Book Project” comprises mostly books that are no longer in print. Included are educational materials, original stories, folk tales, and fairy tales. Materials are being digitized and available free of charge through the website http://digital.cjh.org/. Digitized books will also be added to the International Children’s Digital Library (ICDL), which makes children’s literature available online free of charge at www.icdlbooks.org.

Also from CHJ:
A grant of $670,000 has been awarded to the Center for Jewish History by the Leon Levy Foundation. The Leon Levy Archival Processing Initiative will catalog 1,200 linear feet of archival materials from more than 50 collections of the Center’s partners. The materials represent millions of official documents, manuscripts, correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs, audio recordings, and much more, providing an unparalleled window into the diversity of the Jewish experience throughout history and around the world.

The CJH Holocaust Resources: An Annotated Bibliography of Archival Holdings at the Center for Jewish History, made possible by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, provides worldwide access to more than 2,000 annotated entries and represents records in 32 languages—all archival records of the Center’s five partner organizations. Included are almost 3,000 individual names, more than 300 organizational names, and nearly 700 geographical locations with alternate languages and spellings to aid in a search. There are personal memoirs of life in the ghettos and camps, and extensive material on those who escaped Europe.

Hot off the Press
The Kol Menachem Haggadah, by Rabbi Chaim Miller. Editor Hallie (Chaya Sarah) Cantor. A compilation of classic commentaries and discourses of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, zt"l, available in both the Ashkenazic and Ari Zal (Chabad) versions. Hallie has also recently edited The Rebbe: Inspiring a Generation, by Menachem Kirschenbaum (Avner Press; www.inspiringageneration.com); foreword by Dr. Lawrence Schiffman, husband of NYMA ex-prez Marlene Schiffman.

Mazel Tov!
To Beth & David Braunstein (3x!): on the birth of their granddaughter Abigail Beverly. Parents Yvette and Ari Braunstein; and on the engagement of their daughter Devorah to Meir Ben-David; and on the wedding of their son Seth to Jamie D. Vichinsky.

To Yosef & Basya Karp, on the birth of their grandson Gershon Aharon. Parents Shmuel and Raizy Reich. May they all schep nachas.

Condolences
To Tzivia Atik, on the loss of her husband Abraham.
To Micha Oppenheim, on the loss of his mother, Gerda. May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion in Jerusalem.

Refuah Sheleimah
To Liza Stabler, on her recent surgery. NYMA misses her and looks forward to having her with us again very soon.
Baruch Dayan Emeth

With deepest sadness both AJL-NYMA and the Yeshiva University family mourn the passing of Jacob I. Dienstag Z"L, retired long-time Librarian of the Mendel Gottesman Library. He was an acclaimed bibliographer, president of Jewish Librarians Association (forerunner of AJL), and author and editor of many works on Maimonides. Our condolences to widow Claire: may the family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

The following eulogy, from Hebrew Union College's blog “Needle in the Bookstack” (http://www.huc.edu/libblog/librarianstalk.html), was written by Phil Miller:

In my nearly four decades as a librarian in one capacity or another I have come into contact with many remarkable individuals, some of whom have shared remarkable stories from their lives.

In the third entry of this "series," I cited a story about Ze'ev Jabotinsky and Arthur Koestler told to me by Jacob Dienstag, librarian emeritus of the Mendel Gottesman Library at Yeshiva University:

Mr. Dienstag passed away this past weekend. They said he was 95, but I suspect he was older, as if that makes any difference!

There are several stories about Mr. Dienstag, some that he told me, that I would like to share, to praise him—and make him better known:

First of all, the reader should know that Mr. Dienstag was an uncompromising Orthodox Jew, but he also had a broadness of heart and soul that are the sign of an "erlicher [honest] Yid." During World War II he did his basic training at a base near Columbus, Ohio. Knowing that Abraham Joshua Heschel was "nearby" in Cincinnati (only some 90 miles or so), Mr. Dienstag went AWOL one Friday morning, hitched a ride to Cincinnati, planning to spend Shabbat there. He located Dr. Heschel, who not only invited him to spend Shabbat at his home, but even arranged for a ride for Mr. Dienstag back to his base. Mr. Dienstag said that the memory of their conversations lightened his heart when he thought back on them later, in the field; in Europe.

He was sent to Europe, where he volunteered to be a chaplain's assistant. In his case, the chaplain he was assigned to was Rabbi Max David Eichhorn (1906-1986), a Reform rabbi. Mr. Dienstag told me that at first he was not especially happy to be attached to a Reform rabbi, but it took only a short time for the two to become fast friends. Indeed, I remember one time when Rabbi Eichhorn visited the Library during the 1970s (when we were still on West 68th Street), and I mentioned to him that Mr. Dienstag was a frequent visitor to the Library. As Rabbi Eichhorn was going to be in New York a short time, it would not be possible for them to meet in person. So he telephoned Mr. Dienstag from my office, and from the joy in Rabbi Eichhorn's voice, I could tell what a wonderful reunion they were having:

Finally, a story from the field. One Friday night in France, in the summer of 1944, an older GI came to services and told Rabbi Eichhorn that it his father's first Jahrzeit. Of course eager to know the soldiers he was serving, Rabbi Eichhorn asked the man his name. He replied, "Albo." Mr. Dienstag asked if he were somehow related to the Spanish-Jewish philosopher, Joseph Albo (1380-1444), author of Sefer Ha-Ikkarim. The man laughed and said he was the son of Ismar Elbogen (1874-1943) [noted Jewish historian], that he was an interpreter for the U.S. Army, and that he had "modified" his German name, lest he be captured by the Germans and they find out who he was.

Simcha Kluger told me just today that when the administration of Yeshiva University closed the buildings in the evening and refused to keep them open so that Rabbi Soloveitchik could add lectures, Mr. Dienstag kept the library open and provided the venue.

Finally, Jacob Dienstag was not meshugga 'le-davar ehad [crazy about one thing], but rather le-shney devarim [two]: Jabotinsky (his mentor) and Maimonides. He was always researching Maimonides and compiling bibliographies. If one searches Jacob Dienstag in the Libraries' online catalog one will find thirteen entries, eleven of which are related to Maimonidean scholarship.

He was such a colorful and lively individual, and with his passing we lose yet another important link to our past. I consider myself most fortunate to have known him.

Yehi zikhro barukh.
*Define what is valuable to customers and funders/stakeholders;
*Execute a seven-part strategic process;
*Identify your library's Value Proposition;
*Quantify your library's value;
*Make your case.

Today is about how valuable your library is and how you can communicate its impact to your school, synagogue or community center.

Ms. Roukens explained the "strategic triangle," with the sides "publicly valuable, politically and legally supported, and feasible," through which you the librarian could develop the best way of showing your library's value. She identified the "strategizing steps" to become a library lobbyist:
*Get out of the room;
*Mingle in your building;
*Go have lunch [with some non-library people];
*Build personal connections;
*Make yourself visible.

Making the Grade

As an illustration of the "Value Proposition," Ms. Roukens got the audience involved in a mock proposition for "Acme Cleaners." People in the audience shouted out examples of the cleaners' and customers' desires (i.e. efficient, "green," etc.), and ways in which the proposition is best formulated. Stating all the excellent qualities of the cleaners' services that are relevant to the customer enhances the unique value of this particular cleaner. The aim is to show effectively how this cleaning service is both remarkable and indispensable.

This was followed by a proposition for the "Niceville School" library: "When you use the library, you can count on a welcoming atmosphere where you can quickly find information for assignments, teaching, great books to read and computers to use for word processing, databases, websites, and more. Assistance is always readily available." The library may not promise the moon, but it can certainly offer a lot to bolster reading scores and academic success.

Ms. Roukens then described the various ways of "quantifying" your impact and other techniques of publicizing your library's achievements, such as the concise "elevator speech"—when in the elevator with a representative of the powers-that-be. Grabbing — and keeping — that person's attention is crucial.

When Great Minds Meet

The next part of the program was a focus group led by Philip Monchar, Ph.D., Market Researcher and Focus Group Moderator (and husband of Leslie). Six representative librarians from school and academic libraries in the NYMA network were selected and asked a series of questions by the moderator:

When you use the library, you can count on a welcoming atmosphere where you can quickly find information for assignments, teaching, great books to read and computers to use for word processing, databases, websites, and more. Assistance is always readily available.

*What do their libraries offer?
*How do libraries present themselves to the public?
*What kind of image does the respective library present to administrators and to funders?
*How should the librarian respond to those who want to slash the library's budget?

The unheated responses brought up some real, very timely issues, as librarians described the academic or cultural needs of the reading public and the vital role the libraries played.

Following the formal part of the program, participants were offered the opportunity to view the recently restored Temple Emanu-El sanctuary and hear about its history and design. NYMA is deeply grateful to Emanu-El librarian Liza Stabler for making the arrangements, and a pleasant end to a sobering afternoon.

Hard times lie ahead for many libraries. It is hoped that, armed with facts, figures, and ideas, librarians have learned that staying alive means staying important.