

## Library History Round Table Newsletter



American Library Association  
Library History Round Table



# Library History

Round Table Promoting library history since 1947

**Fall 2008**

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**LHRT Executive Meeting at ALA Midwinter in Denver (open to all interested members) will be held on Sunday, January 25, at 8:30 a.m., place TBA- watch the LHRT web page: <http://www.ala.org/lhrt/> (/lhrt/)**

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### Message from the Chair

I'd like to report that LHRT is alive and well for another year. Here is a short report of recent activities. Our LHRT speakers program and research forum at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim were both well-attended and successful. Speakers offered well-researched and ably delivered papers on an array of topics. The Q&A session that followed the forums evidenced a remarkable enthusiasm among attendees for points of history in librarianship. (See the report on the LHRT Research Forum in this issue.) Earlier that same day the LHRT Executive Committee generated lively discussion on a number of issues. Planning has already commenced for Library History Seminar XII, our quinquennial (every 5 years) research forum and mini-conference, to be held in Madison, Wisconsin in September 2010. This Seminar will be co-sponsored by the Center for the History of Print Culture in Modern America, located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin. Editor David Gracy II reported that LHRT's flagship research journal L&CR (Libraries & the Cultural Record), a University of Texas Press publication, is thriving and will issue two new special-issues soon.

Of foremost interest for the health and continuance of the round table were discussions concerning two proposed changes to the LHRT Bylaws. These two actions concerned proposals for a membership dues increase, and secondly, a proposal to create a new standing committee on Membership and Outreach. Both bylaws amendments will come to the membership in the form of a referendum vote next winter on the ALA ballot. See the discussion and rationales printed in the spring 2008 Newsletter, as well as the Executive Committee Minutes published in this issue. The LHRT Executive Committee strongly endorses both bylaws changes and additions, and encourages all LHRT members to vote your approval on the forthcoming ALA ballot.

On another note, the Chair wishes to recommend a couple of engaging and thought-provoking articles that appeared in the popular press recently. This is an addendum to Ed Goedeken's superb LHRT bibliography. I note these articles for their insight from a historical perspective upon quandaries in present-day librarianship. See Robert Darnton's "The Library in the New Age" *The New York Review of Books* (June 16, 2008); and Anthony Grafton's "Future Reading: Dreams of the Universal Library" *The New Yorker* (Nov 5, 2007). Guaranteed to provoke and inspire thought on "big library history".

Cheers,  
Ken Potts, LHRT Chair

## **THE 2008 JUSTIN WINSOR AWARD by David B. Gracy II**

"A Library of the Most Celebrated & Approved Authors: The First Purchase Collection of Union College"  
by Jeremy Dibbell, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College

The selection committee considered the paper to make a very good case for why the Union College (Schenectady, NY) library is important in the history of libraries and of education, by pointing to the intentional way in which the collection was built in the 18th century, rather than simply being allowed to accrue. The paper draws an excellent connection to the college curriculum and draws out fascinating details about how the curriculum was innovative. Some of the details of how the books journeyed to the College are also very evocative, and the comparisons with other institutions are useful. The paper is well situated within the history of print culture, and makes ingenious use of a variety of types of primary sources. The history of academic libraries is not as well covered in the existing literature as the history of public libraries, and the committee felt that this will be a very welcome contribution to the literature. The paper is in press and will appear in the 2008 #4 issue of *Libraries & The Cultural Record* which will be published this fall. My sincere and deep thanks to chair Christine Pawley and committee member Suzanne Stauffer for compressing the period within which we reviewed the papers.

## **SHARP @ Oxford Report By Melanie Kimball**

Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing 16th Annual Conference, Oxford, England,  
June 24-28, 2008.

The annual conference of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP) enticed many of us to Oxford instead of ALA at Anaheim. The weather was sunny and welcoming as were the conference organizers at Oxford Brookes University. The conference theme was "Teaching and Text" and kicked off on June 24th with several pre-conference workshops held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University Press, and Oxford Brookes University during the morning and early afternoon. Simultaneously, conference attendees who signed up in advance went on tours of Oxford University Press. The conference proper was kicked off by a Plenary lecture given by Juliet Gardiner called "Mercurial Expectations and Uneasy Returns: the Lot of the Modern Author" The lecture, given at Oxford Town Hall, was followed by a reception at Blackwell's bookstore.

Beginning Wednesday, June 25, multiple simultaneous presentations on topics as diverse as bookselling in 19th Century Finland, reading communities in contemporary Scotland, presentations on digital projects, and the use of periodicals to educate 19th Century women met SHARP's high standards for diversity of content.. LHRT was well represented with presentations from Christine Jenkins, Melanie Kimball, Cheryl Malone, Kate McDowell, Debra Mitts-Smith, Barry Neaville, Christine Pawley, and Wayne Wiegand.

Several sessions devoted to Oxford University Press included one on the upcoming Oxford Companion to the Book, a monumental undertaking to which many LHRT members contributed. The closing plenary session explored the field of book history in the fifty years since the publication of *The Coming of the Book* (L'Apparition du livre) by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin.

## **Reflections on the LHRT Research Forum / Christine Pawley**

The 2008 LHRT Research Forum organized by Kenneth Potts focused on the theme: "The History of American Libraries and Librarianship in the West." The panel of juried papers featured scholars at different

points in their careers. The three presenters included: our distinguished editor of *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, David B. Gracy II; Suzanne Stauffer an assistant professor at Louisiana State University who has published on gender issues and on public library development in Utah; and Brad Reel, from the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison. The moderator was Joanne Passet whose book *Cultural Crusaders* is widely known among LHRT members. All the presenters were excellent, and there was a lively discussion afterwards.

The panel for our 2008 forum continues the tradition begun with our first "annual" Research Forum which was launched at the 1992 ALA conference in San Francisco; at that time our stated goal was "to invite both young researchers and established scholars to present papers on a range of issues, including methodology, historical interpretation and oral history." Our first forum was an invitational program that focused on the Public Library Inquiry and featured a panel of four scholars. Since then the LHRT has regularly sponsored research forums that were either based on invitations to present (often for a special occasion) or through calls for papers. The titles of these forums are listed below:

"The Public Library Inquiry" (1992); "Women's Work: Vision and Change in Librarianship," (1993); "The History of African-American Librarianship" (1994); "Women of Influence: Implications of Feminist Leadership Research for Library Historians" (1996, New York); "Reading for Moral Progress" (1997); Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of LHRT (1998-program and research forum combined); "Bringing Libraries to the People" (two panels, 1999); "Public Libraries as Public Spaces: Histories of Buildings and Their Uses" (2001); "Library Women in the 20th Century" (2003, Toronto); From the Outside In: The Library in the Life of Its Historical Users (2004) "Untapped Treasures: Library Documents as Primary Sources." (2005) The American Ethnic Experience in the History of Libraries & Print Culture," (2006); "Washington, DC, the Nation and the World: Papers in Honor of John Y. Cole." (2007, Washington, DC)

Papers from several of these forums were published as a special issue of *Libraries & Culture*; other sets of papers were published as monographs or Occasional Papers. Papers from the 2007 forum in Washington DC will appear in a Festschrift for John Cole that is scheduled for publication in January 2010.

## **The Wisconsin Library Heritage Center /Larry T. Nix**

On March 19, 2008 the Wisconsin Library Association Foundation (WLAFF) Board adopted a resolution establishing the Wisconsin Library Heritage Center (WLHC) as a program of the WLAFF. The action of the Board was based on recommendations of the WLHC Steering Committee. The WLHC is the first entity of this nature established in the United States.

The WLHC was established for the following purposes:

- To promote an understanding and appreciation of the history of libraries and librarianship in Wisconsin by the general public and the Wisconsin library community.
- To promote the preservation of artifacts and archives which contribute to an understanding and appreciation of Wisconsin's library heritage.
- To promote research and publishing which contribute to an understanding and appreciation of Wisconsin's library heritage.

The WLHC will not be a physical entity. The WLHC Steering Committee under the oversight of the WLAFF Board will facilitate a variety of possible projects designed to promote Wisconsin's library heritage.

A central component of the WLHC is a website which is located at <http://heritage.wisconsinlibraries.org/> (<http://heritage.wisconsinlibraries.org/>). The website officially "went live" on August 6, 2008. The website uses MovableType blog software which allows for static web pages as well as blog entries. Much of the initial

content of the site was moved from the Wisconsin section of the <http://www.libraryhistorybuff.org> (<http://www.libraryhistorybuff.org/>) website.

The WLAF Board has also authorized the establishment of a Wisconsin Library Hall of Fame as a component of the WLHC. The first official members of the new hall of fame will be inducted in November, 2008 during the Wisconsin Library Association Conference.

The report on which the creation of the WLHC is based is located at <http://heritage.wisconsinlibraries.org/heritage-center-report-3-19-08.pdf> (<http://heritage.wisconsinlibraries.org/heritage-center-report-3-19-08.pdf>).

The concept of state library heritage centers is discussed at <http://www.libraryhistorybuff.com/library-heritage-centers.htm> (<http://www.libraryhistorybuff.com/library-heritage-centers.htm>).

## Call for Nominations

Phyllis Dain Library History Dissertation Award and Justin Winsor Essay Prize

Nominations are now open for the the Phyllis Dain Library History Dissertation Award and the Justin Winsor Essay Prize. The Dain Award is a \$500 award and a certificate for an exemplary dissertation treating the history of books, libraries, librarianship, or information science. The Winsor Prize is a \$500 award and publication in *Libraries & the Cultural Record* for the best unpublished work written in English embodying significant original research in library history. Send nominations for the Winsor Prize to Suzanne Stauffer ( [stauffer@lsu.edu](mailto:stauffer@lsu.edu) (<mailto:stauffer@lsu.edu>)) by January 15, 2009 and for the Dain to Andrew Wertheimer ( [wertheim@hawaii.edu](mailto:wertheim@hawaii.edu) (<mailto:wertheim@hawaii.edu>)) no later than March 1, 2009. Further information can be found at <http://www.ala.org/ala/ors/orsawards/awards.cfm> ([/ors/orsawards/awards](http://www.ala.org/ala/ors/orsawards/awards))

## Wiegand Awarded NEH Fellowship

Wayne Wiegand has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship to write a book exploring the history of public libraries in the United States. Wiegand, the F. William Summers Professor of Library and Information Studies at Florida State University, received a \$50,000 fellowship to write his proposed book, *A People's History of the American Public Library, 1850-2000*. This award represents the first such NEH Fellowship issued to a LIS faculty member since the agency was established in 1965. In addition, Wiegand's proposal received a "We the People" designation, which is awarded to projects aimed at reinvigorating the teaching, study and understanding of American history and culture.

"The American library ...for generations... has been -- and still is -- a very active civic agency. I wanted to take a look at it through the eyes of the users, not the eyes of librarians or library trustees...I hope to deepen the understanding among policy makers, humanities scholars from all disciplines, library professionals and library school students about why the American library remains such a popular and heavily used civic institution," Wiegand said. "Hopefully, these findings will provide new ways to think about the spaces and services that libraries routinely provide."

Wiegand will explore the historical roles the public library has played in the community, in the life of the reader, and as an information provider. The answers may explain why Americans in the first decade of the 21st century have increased their use and support of the public library despite the fact that many predicted its demise. The book will cover the evolution of the American public library from its early days when Andrew Carnegie donated \$45 million to build 1,679 public libraries through today's Internet Age. . *A People's History of the American Public Library, 1850-2000* was one of 260 projects to receive NEH funding in 2008-09 out of more than 1,500 proposals. Wiegand expects to finish writing the book late next year or in early 2010.

## Women in the information domain / Janelle Dupont

Two special issues of *Libraries & the Cultural Record* will be devoted to profiles of women in the history of the information domain, 44:2 (2009) and 45:2 (2010). Women from the fields of librarianship, information science, and archival enterprise will be the subjects of approximately 12 articles. The first issue will cover the years to circa 1950, the second from 1950 to the present. Issue editors will be Trudi Bellardo Hahn, professor, and Diane Barlow, associate dean, both of the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland.

## Proposed By-Law Amendments (to be inserted on LHRT's 2009 ballot)

Introduction:

At the LHRT Executive Committee meeting held during ALA's 2008 Annual Conference, the Committee voted to submit two proposed by-laws changes for membership approval on the upcoming election ballot. The first item will raise individual membership dues from \$15.00/year to \$20.00/year, and corporate/organizational dues from \$20.00/year to \$100.00/year. The second item will create a standing committee for Membership and Outreach. The text of the proposed bylaws changes and their rationales are given below. Amended and deleted text is marked with a strikethrough. The Executive Committee urges all members to vote their approval.

### Proposed By-Law Change, under Article I - Membership and Dues:

Members of the American Library Association in good standing may become members of the Round Table. Annual dues for members shall be \$20 to be collected by the American Library Association through its regular membership channels. Annual dues for ALA members classified as student members shall be \$5. Organization or corporate membership dues shall be \$100. One dollar (\$1) of each member's annual dues shall be designated for the enhancement of the Justin Winsor Prize or recognition of similar research as determined by the Executive Committee.

Rationale:

*LHRT has two endowments, the Justin Winsor Prize Fund and the Edward Holley Lecture Fund. Because of the poor economic climate and resulting low returns on ALA's investments, these endowments have not been generating enough revenue to pay for the Winsor award or fund the Holley lecture. Thus, the Executive Board seeks to raise funds by increasing membership dues. The \$1 provision in the current by-laws only transfers about \$600 annually to the Winsor endowment. Removing this clause and raising membership dues will empower the Executive Board to transfer additional, excess operating funds to the Winsor and Holley funds. LHRT has not increased its dues since 1996 (when dues were raised from \$12 to \$15). Several other round tables (including GODORT, MAGERT, and VRT) have dues of \$20, and more units are expected to raise their rates this year.*

### Proposed By-Law Text, to be inserted under Article III - Committees:

#### Section 6 Membership and Outreach Committee

The Membership and Outreach Committee shall be chaired by the Secretary-Treasurer-elect. The Committee shall consist of at least three additional members, including the immediate Past-Chair of LHRT, one Member-at-Large, and others appointed by the LHRT Executive Committee. The responsibilities of the Membership and Outreach Committee include:

1. Reporting membership statistics at each annual and midwinter meeting

2. Recruiting and retaining members for the Round Table. The Committee may undertake additional activities with the approval of the LHRT Executive Committee.

Rationale:

*LHRT has a special interest in recruiting and retaining members, since it seeks to facilitate new research in the history of libraries, librarianship, and print culture. Also, given ALA's concerns about attracting a new generation to the profession, membership and outreach activities are becoming a priority for every unit. For several years, LHRT members have volunteered in an ad-hoc fashion to welcome new members and represent the Round Table at ALA's membership pavilion and other outreach events. However, it is time to step-up these efforts by giving Membership and Outreach an official and prominent place within our Round Table.*

Bernadette Lear  
Secretary-Treasurer, ALA-LHRT

## The Calendar

- 2009 ALISE Meeting, Denver, CO January 20-23, 2009. See the History SIG program elsewhere in this issue.
- 2009 Midwinter Meeting, Denver, CO: January 23-28, 2009
- 2009 Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, July 9-15, 2009.
- SHARP 2009: "Tradition & Innovation: the State of Book History/le Point sur L'histoire du Livre," June 23-27, 2009 at The University of Toronto. <http://www.sharpweb.org/> (<http://www.sharpweb.org/>)
- 2009 American Studies Association November 5-8, 2009: Renaissance Hotel, Washington, DC. [http://www.theasa.net/annual\\_meeting/page/future\\_meetings/](http://www.theasa.net/annual_meeting/page/future_meetings/) ([http://www.theasa.net/annual\\_meeting/page/future\\_meetings/](http://www.theasa.net/annual_meeting/page/future_meetings/))
- IFLA: World Library and Information Congress: "Libraries Create Futures: Building on Cultural Heritage," 23-27 August, 2009, Milan, Italy. <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/index.htm> (<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/index.htm>)