



# STATE LIBRARY NEWS

For the People, the Government and the Libraries of New York State

Winter 2004

## LEGISLATORS: ASK US ANYTIME

You can now get help with your questions from the State Library even when we're not open. Chat with a librarian on the Internet between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, and all day on weekends and holidays. Just visit us at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov> and click on "Ask a Librarian". Of course, we'll still be available during our normal business hours by telephone, e-mail, or at the Library Service Point in the Legislative Office Building.

## GOVERNOR'S BUDGET AND LIBRARIES

The Governor's 2004/2005 Executive Budget again proposes moving the State Library out of the Education Department to a yet to be created public benefit corporation. In addition, the Budget contains a 5 percent reduction in state-wide library aid. The State Library and other units of the Office of Cultural Education continue to be funded by surcharges on fees for filing documents with county clerks instead of through traditional State Budget allocations. The Governor also again proposes replacing the 16-member Board of Regents elected by the Legislature with 18 Regents, 12 appointed by the Governor and the rest by the Legislature.

The Friends continue their rigorous campaign to keep the Library and its programs with the State Education Department and restore cuts.

## LIBRARY LEADERS PLOT STRATEGY FOR ACTION



State Librarian **Janet M. Welch**, consultant **Richard M. Dougherty**, and Interim Research Library Director **Mary Redmond** meet to discuss plan for State Library.

An imaginative strategic plan for the future of the State Library is evolving under the leadership of State Librarian Janet M. Welch. Building on the State Library's excellent collections and staff expertise, as well as its outstanding information technology, the plan will define priorities and create a clear course of action to uphold the State Library's longstanding eminence as the flagship of the nation's state libraries.

The planning process involves a consultant, an advisory group of national re-

search library leaders, key partners in New York's library community and other organizations, in addition to State Library customers and staff.

Richard M. Dougherty, the consultant working with the State Library, is former director of university libraries at Michigan and Berkeley. He was recently profiled in "Change Masters All-A Series on Librarians Who Steered a Clear Course toward the Twenty-first Century" in the fall 2003 issue of *Library Administration and Management*.

## UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR ESSENTIAL NOVEL DATABASES

If the State of New York does not allocate funds for NOVEL databases, some of them might have to be eliminated in 2005. Databases at risk include health, business, newspapers, general information, literature, information for K-12 students, and resources in Spanish.

NOVEL databases are currently paid for by federal funds which are appropriated annually on the basis of population. New York State's share of the national population is decreasing and unless New York allocates funds, databases

continued on page 3

## RESCUING NEW YORK HISTORY

■ Charles Van Aken's glass plate negatives show what life was like in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chemung County.

■ Deeds and court orders document life in Rockland County from 1852 to 1929.

■ Applications with supporting documents trace the history of Puerto Ricans who migrated to New York State between 1930 and 1945.

These are 3 of the 24 projects that won this year's grants from the State Library's preservation program. Awards totaling \$500,000 to libraries, historical societies and other organizations are part of a \$2.24 million comprehensive, statewide program to save endangered materials that are important to the State's history. Maximum grant to an institution is \$30,000. For further information, call Barbara Lilley (518) 486-4864.

## GET RID OF THE PAPER

If you don't want to carry around stacks of photocopies, you have an option. With our new equipment you can now scan text from our collections onto a diskette or CD and take it home to read on your computer. For more information, call (518) 474-3092.

## DO YOU KNOW?

Alfred Billings Street, State Librarian from 1848-1862, was also a well regarded poet.

**New York State Library News** is produced by the Friends of the New York State Library and the New York State Library to inform New Yorkers about the collections and services of the State Library.

Editor: Miriam S. Soffer  
This newsletter is not published at State expense.

## Visit the State Library's Web Site

<<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov>>



Search Excelsior, the online catalog of our holdings and access national and regional databases. Use the State Library Web site to:

■ **Keep current with culture.** Learn how to subscribe to Empire State Development's new Culture e-News.

■ **Get ideas for names.** The Social Security Administration's Popular Baby Names Page has thousands of possibilities.

■ **Save energy.** Check out the U.S. Department of Energy tips on making your home more energy efficient.

■ **Drive safely.** Visit "Traffic Safety Topics" on the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Web site.

### And Much More

Instructions for reaching these sites are available at:  
<<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/friends/nysl.n.htm>>

If you don't have Web access from your computer, dial into our catalog at (518) 474-9851. For more information, call (518) 474-0719 or e-mail: <[excelsior@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:excelsior@mail.nysed.gov)>.

## HOT NEWS FOR RESEARCHERS

"We can finally say we have it," says State Library staff member Shawn Purcell. The State Library recently acquired the 55-volume *Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records*, which dates from the early settlement of the state up to about 1850.

"The Barbour Collection has been in great demand among our genealogical researchers," says Mr. Purcell. Alphabetized by town (from Andover to Windsor), each volume contains about 30,000 entries. They give the name, date of event, names of parents (in the case of births and sometimes deaths), names of both spouses (in the case of marriages), and sometimes age, occupation, and specific place of residence.

"This is a very important acquisition in light of the strong historical and genealogical ties between Connecticut and New York," says Mr. Purcell. "As good land was in short supply and entrenched eldest sons were not inclined to spread the wealth (human nature being what it is), New York State was often the first stopping-off place on the westward migration route."

The collection was the life work of General Lucius Barnes Barbour, Connecticut Examiner of Public Records from 1911 to 1934. Looking very handsome in light blue library bindings, the collection is now available in the History and Genealogy section of the State Library. For more information, call (518) 474-5161.

## TELL US

Send comments and questions about the New York State Library and its newsletter to Mary Redmond  
<[mredmond@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:mredmond@mail.nysed.gov)>.

## UNCERTAIN FUTURE... *continued from page 1*

Courtesy of New York Library Association



*Library supporters rally at the State Capitol during a 2003 demonstration.*

essential to a good education and for success in business might have to be cut.

More than 4,600 public, school, college, and research libraries now participate in NOVEL, New York's Online Virtual Library and a key component of the New Century Libraries proposal to provide library services all New Yorkers need to meet the demands for information in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The New Century Libraries proposal also includes support for literacy and reading programs, public library construction, an academic/

research initiative, recruitment of a new generation of librarians, and more. Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) and Senator Hugh T. Farley (R-Schenectady) introduced identical New Century Libraries proposals in the Assembly (A8354) and the Senate (S3994).

For more information about the future of NOVEL databases, see <<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/library/novel/dbfuture.htm>>. Further details on New Century Libraries are available at <<http://www.ncl.nysed.gov>>.

## NEWSPAPER PROJECT AWARDED GRANT

The National Endowment for the Humanities salutes the Newspaper Project with a grant for \$680,000 to preserve and microfilm deteriorating newspapers. The award begins July 1, 2004 and runs through June 30, 2006. The New York State Newspaper Project, part of a national effort, makes it possible for researchers to read

historic newspapers going all the way back to 1725 (*The New-York Gazette*). In operation since March 1987, the New York State Newspaper Project, has microfilmed about 3.4 million pages of New York State newspapers since 1991. More information is available at <<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/>>.

*To join Friends of the New York State Library, complete the form below and mail it with your check.*

## New York State Library News

Yes, I want to join Friends of the New York State Library.

new member

renewal

My check for  \$25  \$50  \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check payable to *Friends of the New York State Library* and mail to: Treasurer, Friends of the New York State Library, PO Box 2247 Empire Plaza Station, Albany, NY 12220**

## BE A FRIEND

Join the Friends of the New York State Library. In addition to the deep satisfactions of preserving your heritage and sustaining a world renowned public research library, you can obtain special discounts at local book stores. Select:

■ **Sustaining Membership. \$25.** Receive discounts at three book shops: 20% at Borders Books & Music in Colonie, a one-time 20% discount at the Book House in Stuyvesant Plaza, and 25% off one purchase at the Open Door Bookstore in Schenectady.

■ **Contributing Membership. \$50 or more.** Receive all of the above plus recognition in the New York State Library News.

Every Friend also receives:

■ Free admission to the Friends Annual Meeting featuring a talk by an author of a recently published book.

■ Invitations to other stimulating programs at the State Library.

■ A subscription to the *New York State Library News*, an illustrated quarterly newsletter.

■ Remote access to Health Reference Center-Academic, a database for health and medicine.

## DUTCH TREAT



**Janny Venema** discussed her ground-breaking book about colonial Albany at a recent program sponsored by the Friends of the State Library.

You can taste the flavor of life in 17<sup>th</sup> century America when you read Janny Venema's *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier 1652-1664*. The dates bracket the settlement of Beverwijck and the bloodless British takeover, when the colony's name was changed to Albany, and Dutch customs began to be overlaid with English traditions. Because many records of this early settlement were written in Dutch and remained untranslated for so long, the history of Albany has been seen largely from the English perspective. Dr. Venema paints a clear picture of the little settlement on the Hudson and the Dutch people who came here to seek their fortune. She outlines their relationship to

their landlord, Patroon Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, the Dutch Reformed Church, and Native Americans, who in the early years of the colony, went door to door selling beaver pelts.

Based on her doctoral dissertation at the Free University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, Dr. Venema's *Beverwijck* is an authoritative social history of an early Dutch community. "Beverwijck was not just a short-lived settlement of greedy traders, as often portray," says Dr. Venema. "There was a real sense of community, including the first system of relief for the poor in North America."

Since 1985, Janny Venema has been a Project Associate of the New Netherland Project, the acclaimed Dutch translation program directed by Dr. Charles T. Gehring. The project is located in the State Library. Dr. Venema has also translated deacons' accounts (1652-1674) of Albany's First Dutch Reformed Church and has published educational materials about New Netherland.

Already in its second printing, *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652-1664* can be purchased on the Internet. If ordered through Amazon.com, the Friends of New Netherland get a small royalty. You can also buy it at local book stores and through SUNY Press.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Author Mark Shorto will address the 2004 annual meeting of the Friends of the New York State Library on Wednesday, March 24 at 5:00 p.m. in the Cultural Education Center. Shorto's new book, *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan, the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America*, will be released by Doubleday on March 16, 2004. The program is cosponsored by the New York State Writers Institute.

## READ AROUND THE WORLD

Celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Great New York ReadAloud Wednesday, April 21 at your local library. Focusing on this year's theme, Read Around the World @ Your Library, celebrities, teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders will gather to read selections from many cultures. They will also discuss the joy of reading and its importance for a successful career. The annual Great New York ReadAloud is just one of many examples of statewide programs coordinated by the State Library. For information, call Tiffany Allen (518) 486-4863.

New York State Library News  
New York State Library  
N.Y.S. Education Department  
Albany, NY 12230

### State Library Hours

Monday through Friday  
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call  
(518) 474-5355 or e-mail  
<refserv@mail.nysed.gov>.