
Judaica Library Network of Metropolitan Chicago

Summer 2003 / Sivan 5763



From the editor's desk

The school year is almost over and I hope that you all survived. I have just completed my first semester teaching future librarians at San Jose State University, School of Library and Information Science. I taught a course in online searching and retrieval. I never knew I knew so much and I never knew I knew so little. One of the students prepared a final essay for the class that I am including in this newsletter. She found her mother and other nonlibrarians were skeptical about what one can learn about online searching. In one dramatic gesture I showed the class a 400 page directory of just the list of the databases from one vendor. I thank my students for what I learned from them and thank Colleen Baker for permission to print her article. On the listserv, AUTOCAT, I found comments about author searching on the Internet by Shawne Miska who gave permission for an edited version.

To read the Power Point presentation from my February presentation go to URL: [http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/courses/244.stuhlman/Judaica Reference.ppt](http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/courses/244.stuhlman/Judaica%20Reference.ppt)

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Minutes of The Winter Meeting

FEBRUARY 9, 2003

Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School
Chicago, IL

President Rena Citrin opened the meeting.

AJL Convention Subsidies are available for the upcoming convention in Toronto. Anyone interested should contact Rena.

Spring Meeting: At the next meeting, Eva Eisenstein will present a program on graphic novels.

Newsletter: Rena thanked Donnie Stuhlman for continuing to put together the newsletter and asked for submissions.

Following the brief business meeting, Eileen Brooks, reference librarian Asher Library, Spertus Institute of Judaica, and Daniel Stuhlman, presented a program entitled *The Reference Question Approaches, Sources and Solutions*. Donnie began by discussing print sources, and Eileen followed with a discussion of online sources.

Respectfully submitted, Marcie Eskin, Recording

Secretary.

Library Public Relations for the Small Library Part 2

by Daniel Stuhlman

V. Act like a Business, Think like a Library

Businesses try to encourage sales with several kinds of messages. Libraries need point of sale promotions, displays of new materials, displays of treasures, displays on special topics, proper signs, lures to encourage visitors, giveaways, and diversions. The message delivery system need not cost a lot of money.

Point of sale promotions could be shelf signs encouraging a book or section. Compare this with a store offering sale price on a shelf. Information sheets or bibliographies on current topics supplied at the information desk are more general promotions. Displays of new materials encourage the casual reader to browse and check out a book that s/he never knew existed. Compare this with impulse buying or new merchandise displays in a retail store. Encourage people to come in for one reason and leave with a book they had no prior intention to borrow.

Displays of treasures are the way to share valuable materials with the public. Displays show the value of the library as a guardian of the past, a bridge to the future, and a teacher. Books and other library materials are artifacts. Because of the need to preserve materials, libraries cannot let everyone touch some materials. With a display more people become aware of the library's role as a museum and preserver of the past.

Displays on special topics bring together materials to inform and/or amuse patrons. Perhaps the patrons were unaware of these materials? Displays in businesses show off current merchandise. Libraries learn from business the merchandising of materials. Businesses learn from libraries about content.

Giveaways could be book marks with the library's name, address, phone number and hours. This encourages readers to call upon the library and keep the library's name in front of them. Pencils, pens, pads of paper, brochures, etc. made with the library logo as giveaways encourage people to

keep the library name before the public. One library had a book mark design contest. Children were encouraged to make a book mark. The winner had their book mark printed and received a giant copy for themselves and their classroom. The positive publicity for this was amazing. All the schools in the area knew about the contest. All the library patrons knew about the contest. The winner was publicized in the local press and by their school. Both the library and the school gained positive publicity. I know this because the winner was in my daughter's class.

Does your library have handouts? Is this handout available in other places on your campus or building?

Diversions are placed in the library to give the place some warmth. Examples are fish aquariums, plants, art work, comfortable chairs, and gardens.

Signs are extremely important. Firstly, you do not want to waste staff time telling patrons what they can read on a sign. Secondly, you want patrons to feel empowered and welcomed. A patron who can find a place without help has saved you time and saved himself from asking what may be an embarrassing question.

VI. Appearances

Is the physical appearance of the library encouraging to patrons? The floor plan should have been part of the original planning, but what has been done lately? Is the library neat and orderly? Are books dusty or clean? Is parking convenient? Is the room clearly marked as a library? Are the hours posted on the library door and in other places in the building (if part of another institution)? On a multi building campus are signs in place to direct patrons to the right place? Are provisions made for the return of materials after hours?

What provisions have you made for people with disabilities? This is not just making accommodations for wheel chairs. This includes provisions for tall and short people. For example when my son was five years old, he wanted to look for a book in the catalog. The library's OPAC was only accessible from computer terminals on a standup desk at the height for adults. This library had no sitdown terminals, step stools, or

provisions for children or short people to reach the catalog. He could read and look at the computer, but he could not use it unless I held him up. It took over a year to get that library to recognize and correct the problem. It seemed so simple to change the table or get a step stool. Signs also need to be at the right height for the majority of people. Eye level for 6' 3" people is much higher than for 5'2" people.

VII. Media Relations

The media are any means of communications with multiple people. Examples are electronic mailing lists, web pages, newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. One needs to understand what the media are providing and the strength of each medium. The library may have an email list that sends information on a periodic basis to subscribers. Web pages give the library ability to serve patrons anywhere and anytime. The library has control of the mailing lists and web pages. The other media are controlled by editors with their own interests and market forces. If you match your interests with theirs, the library has a better chance to get coverage.

The newspapers, general interest magazines, TV and radio want news and features that inform their readers and listeners. There is heavy competition for space and time. Libraries compete with other nonprofits as well as news of accidents and community events. One technique to match your needs with that of the media is to peg the story to a special, timed happening. Invite the media to an award ceremony or special display opening. Make an event newsworthy; do something different or unusual. A summer reading program that occurs every year is not newsworthy. An award to summer readers given by a famous author is newsworthy. Current best sellers acquired by the library are not newsworthy because they are routine. A rare 15th century book donated to the library is special.

Schedule awards and presentation ceremonies at times that would facilitate coverage. Make coverage as easy as possible. Provide maps and parking directions if needed. Plan visually interesting events and happenings. The mayor reading a declaration may not provide interesting pictures. The release of dozens of helium balloons with the library logo would provide great pictures. If the library receives a large donation,

have a giant mock check for presentation purposes. I saw this done on the *Today Show* this morning. Take your own photographs for display in the library and for the historical record. Give reporters printed background information and a copy of your news release.

The personal touch works both ways. Stay on the good side of editors and give them every reason to use your material.

VIII. Internal Publications

The library should have several kinds of internal publications. For academic libraries a newsletter to alumni and friends should be a way to show off the library, win donations, and garner good will. Alumni like to hear good news from their alma mater. Some donors like the publicity; some do not. Listen to their wishes. If the library is big enough, a staff newsletter keeps people in far strung locations in touch. Writing internal publications requires writing and design skills and most librarians will need to acquire these skills on the job. A library director of a small library may need to learn the process and terminology for making camera ready flyers. With the help of word processing and other software packages this is easy compared with the effort needed 20 years ago.

IX. Actions

The final question is who is going to do public relations in your library? You are. If you are the director, you will assign tasks to the appropriate person within the library or an outside consultant. If you are a staff member, you have to be actively involved. The writing, artwork, layout and distribution of the results need to be coordinated. The size of the library and its needs dictate the level of expertise and time needed for each project. When I was a library director, I did all the writing and layouts of flyers. Press releases were done in consultation with others in the organization.

Public relations are important. Libraries need to maintain a high level of public awareness. No library is without a public or sponsoring organization (except for personal libraries). In times of tight fiscal and resource limitations the PR plan is essential. The plan sets up the procedures, action plans, and evaluation proce-

dures. Good public relations explains the library point of view, publicizes the resources and programs of the library, promotes good will, markets library programs, sells ideas, and encourages improved support.

Online Searching

by Colleen Baker

Graduate Student, San Jose State University, School of Library and Information Science. Lives in San Diego, CA and will complete her MLIS in Dec. 2003

My mother and I had a discussion about the class on Online Searching that I took in library school. She implied that there could not possibly be enough information out there for an entire graduate school class devoted only to online searching. I shared that I could devote my entire life to online searching. I would never learn all there is to know, be able to use all of the tools, or visit all of the sites that are "out there."

How Do I Know What's Out There and How Do I Learn to Use It?

I recognize the value of learning how to properly search for items online. Online searching encompasses much more than just searching the web or using Goggle. There are many search engines, metasearch engines, directories, subscription databases, pay for service vendors, and "invisible" web sites. The trick is learning how to use different types of search tools and then as a librarian, sharing your knowledge with those you are attempting to help.

Therefore, I am using the "mother" rule. If I can show her how to use it and she understands the concept, she will be able to use it. She is a very bright lady, but has no formal computer education, experience, or training.

Definitions

A **Search Engine's** data base is created by robot programs called "spiders." Spiders compile lists of documents and their contents by navigating the web following the links on each indexed page. Search engines respond to a user entry, or query, by searching the lists and displaying a list of

documents that match the search query. Search engines are not organized by subject categories. They are able to retrieve huge amounts of information very quickly. Since they are not evaluated, they may contain exactly what you are looking for or hundreds, if not thousands of extraneous material.

For up-to-date information about the status of many different search engines you can log onto the Search Engine Watch (<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>) This service gives up to date information on changes on search engines, the way they operate and the way they rank their findings. This site also provides helpful hints for using different search engines. The authors review engines and provide many articles that address issues related to using search engines. During the class in online searching, we evaluated search engines for their strengths and weaknesses. We were able then to come up with criteria on how to use the correct search engine for the right purpose.

Popular search engines include: Goggle (www.google.com); AlltheWeb (FAST) (www.alltheweb.com); Teoma (www.teoma.com); AltaVista (www.altavista.com) and Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com). There are many more search engines that vary in size and scope of the sites searched. Both AltaVista and AllTheWeb have search options to search the Web for videos, News, pictures and MP3 files. These are some of the largest and easiest to use without getting a lot of superfluous information.

A **Subject Directory** is organized by subject categories. A subject directory is built by humans to search for titles, descriptions, specific subjects, sub categories, etc. Directories are specific web sites that you log onto and then you will find links arranged according to a classification scheme and allow you to browse by subject area. Directories are very useful because their content is prescreened, often annotated and evaluated for their usefulness. Yahoo! has a very large directory, but there are some smaller, very useful directories.

The following are useful Subject Directories: *Librarians' Index to the Internet* (<http://lii.org/>) This is a "searchable, annotated subject directory of more than 11,000 Internet resources selected and evaluated by librarians" ...that gives users a

“reliable and efficient guide to described and evaluated Internet resources.” (Lackie, Robert J. *Those Dark Hiding Places: The Invisible Web Revealed* (http://library.rider.edu/scholarly/rlackie/invisible/inv_web_Main.html) accessed 5/12/03) *Librarians' Index to the Internet* can also lead you to invisible web databases by typing in a broad topic adding the words: “and databases,” such as (chemistry and database.) This database is organized like most librarians think with logic and quite understandable subject headings.

FindLaw (<http://www.findlaw.com/>) *FindLaw* contains a comprehensive set of legal resources on the Internet for lawyers, business people, students and individuals. It contains an annotated list of free databases on many-law related topics. From the home page, click on legal subjects, then pick a subject heading. Databases will be listed under the Web guide for that subject.

About.com (<http://www.about.com/>) This portal neatly organizes thousands of topics, including the web pages, news, and commentary.

For the college student or researcher, *InfoMine* (<http://infomine.ucr.edu>) provides scholarly Internet resource collections from the University of California at Riverside. It contains more than 100,000 sites grouped into 12 categories for easy retrieval. This site also makes available e-journals.

The ***Invisible Web*** is the set of web pages that cannot be found in search engines and are rarely in subject directories. The invisible web is estimated to offer two to three times as many pages as are found on the visible web. The user just has to figure out how to get there. The reason the invisible web is not readily searchable is because search engines only allow you to access the World Wide Web through a specified search box. The terms used are sent to the specialized database and are returned to you in another web page that is specifically for our answer. The answer is not retained after the search. Because the search is not retained, spiders cannot set up an attachment or they are blocked entry because of required passwords. The following are recommended links to invisible web databases:

Direct Search (<http://www.freepint.com/gary/handbook.htm>)

This web site was created by Gary Price, MLIS, of

Gary Price Library and Internet Research Consulting. Mr. Price is one of the foremost authorities on Invisible Web resources and his web site contains a wide variety of searchable links. It is categorized in an easy-to use directory format.

Complete Planet (<http://www.completeplanet.com/>) This is a site maintained by BrightPlanet Corporation and contains more than 100,000 searchable databases and specialty search engines.

InvisibleWeb.com (<http://www.invisibleweb.com/>) This is a high quality, human edited and indexed collection of highly targeted databases.

There are also subscription databases that we had the opportunity to use during this semester. While at first we were frustrated because they were not “easy to use” or even intuitive, we quickly found that these databases had a very useful purpose. They get you directly to the source of data for that information. Given the proper search, there is little to sort through and the answer is from a verified source. These subscription databases, which are also part of the Invisible Web include: Dialog, Lexis Nexis, Factiva, Westlaw, and Proquest.

These databases have their place in business and legal settings. These databases are also available in academic settings. However, these are likely to be cost prohibitive for the public library setting.

Now That I Know Where to Go, How Do I Know When to Use What?

There are many concepts that an experienced researcher will take for granted. One of them is where to start. Most people will head straight to Google and become inundated with more information than they can digest, which they will soon find to be irrelevant. Therefore, it is the job of the librarian to teach them to look for more specific information. This means creating links on the library's web site that helps the user cut to the chase.

I learned that if I only had a general concept to search, I start with a directory or a search engine that is divided into directories such as Yahoo! I searched my public library's web site and learned that it has all of the links to the search engines,

directories, MetaSearch engines, business directories, health information sites, government information links, and travel or weather sites. I cannot express how important it is to teach library users how to use the information that is available to them at their local public library. Users need to recognize the value of a library's web site and how to navigate through it to make it most useful. Search engines can only search on the words you type into the box. They cannot comprehend what you mean, if you do not identify the correct words to search. Search engines are amazingly fast and provide almost instantaneous responses to queries. However, sometimes, a topic that is too general, will retrieve millions of responses. WebCrawler founder Brian Pinkerton put it like this: "Imagine walking up to a librarian and saying 'Travel.' They are likely to look at you with a blank face." (Sullivan, Danny., *How Search Engines Rank Web Pages*. **SearchEngineWatch.com**. October 14, 2002 (<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>) accessed 5/10/03) But there is a difference between the librarian and the search engine. The librarian is going to ask you additional questions to better understand exactly what you are looking for and then send you in the correct direction. The search engine does not have that capability.

Creating the ideal online searching situation is something learned. The user must be savvy enough to recognize when they must search further, when they need to verify their sources, and when they have struck gold! (That is, when they have found exactly what they are looking for.)

Many web sites and search engines have come and gone, but this continual progress has been a benefit to the end-user. For the most part, the user no longer has to sort through annoying ads, popups, streaming videos, etc. to get to an answer. Competition has served to streamline both the look and the ease of use for search engines, online databases and web sites.

How Do We Prepare Information Professionals to Be Online Searchers

Professionals have to be exposed to databases then practice using them in order to learn which are useful and reliable. They

also need to learn to check their sources, and be suspect of sources that appear to have no authority control. Novices and professionals alike need to check their sources. Amelia Kassel in *Tales of a Searchers Life: A Comedy of Errors or a Test of Patience?* (*Searcher*, September 2002 v.10 n.8 pp.48-52) warns her students to be suspect of anything in print. Therefore, searchers are told to:

1. Always confirm and verify either suspicious or statistical information with three sources whenever possible.
2. Use multiple sources to gather varying perspectives.
3. Review and analyze results with a filtered lens in an effort to understand or see through potential biases, particular to a body of literature, focusing on who is writing (the author and their credibility) and for what (targeted) audience.

In an article titled, "*The newly minted MLS: What do we need to know today?*" (In *Searcher*, May 1998 v.6 n.5) Mary Ellen Bates identifies eleven skills that every librarian must have to be worthy of hire. These are:

1. Basic librarian skills: This means not just knowing how to catalog books or compile a bibliography, but understanding how to *think* about information.
2. A basic proficiency in the traditional online services as well as an exposure to different CD-ROM products.
3. Basic Internet skills, from searching the Web to building web sites.
4. A solid grasp of the information landscape and when to use which information source.
5. "Value-added librarians." We need librarians who are comfortable with wearing a number of hats – researcher, counselor, planner, manager, assessor, team member, problem-solver, and computer/printer repairperson.

6. Teaching skills. A librarian is both an information finder and an information guide.

7. Strong "people skills." A librarian needs to work with a wide variety of persons from every racial and socioeconomic background.

8. Need to think like an entrepreneur. No matter what type of library you work in, you will need to constantly market your services.

9. Leadership skills. Need to be able to serve on committees, work in small groups and have the ability to instill confidence and envision the outcome and then make it happen.

10. Embrace change. Though it appears that we will never be able to catch up, we need to be comfortable taking risks and being the agents of change. With the information age, the Library will constantly be in a state of change.

11. Reinventing ourselves. In addition to Information professionals need to be exposed to a lot of non-traditional librarian jobs. They need to be exposed to new concepts and ideas.

This 1998 article spells out how library professionals need to embrace the changes that have occurred in the library profession because of the massive impact of online resources. Already CD-ROM products have gone by the wayside in favor of totally Web-based subscription services. In fact, any article written about online searching is usually outdated by the time it gets into print. However, it does not mean that it has no value; it more likely means that the web site has changed the search capabilities have changed, or the "look" of the site has changed.

However, in the past twenty years, change has occurred faster than the profession can keep up. These changes are primarily related to computers and the automation of library functions. The duties of a librarian have changed because of the evolution of the Internet, the continual expansion of on-line databases, searching tools, and changes in information formats. Today's librarian must be both "information finder" and "teacher of computer searching skills." Armed with full knowledge of classification systems and what kind of book will you find in each of the major categories, a librarian also must be able to find

the names of all Seven Dwarfs or the Twelve Days of Christmas at the drop of the hat. While these trivia type questions used to be the mainstay of a librarian's day a decade ago, times have changed and the complexity of a librarian's job has also increased. Libraries used to be book driven; now they are technology driven. Decisions are made about subscribing to the Gale databases or purchasing the set of *Contemporary Author Books*. Subscribing to the database allows everyone in the library equal access to the information, regardless of the size of the library, or if someone else is using it.

In the article *Recruiting a Corporate Dream Team*, by Barbara Quint. (Volume 17, **Information Today**, September 1, 2000) Quinn tells of an interview she attended where the interviewer said, "You know, I'm the only one in the office who knows about librarians... They can do anything and you can get them for practically nothing!" He was correct on both parts. Librarians have the training that allows them to be able to do almost anything, and if they do not know how, they know where to find out. Unfortunately, the second part of the statement is also true. In comparison to salaries paid in the corporate world, librarians come quite cheap.

How do you find a librarian? According to Barbara Quint, "Start with one, they breed!" Once you have a good one, you can use that librarian to find more. Librarians have fabulous networking skills and they will not likely recommend someone who will not fit into the environment.

Twenty or more years ago, few would consider going into the library profession to work in the corporate world. Few in the corporate world would recruit librarians. Now it is common practice. Intel, Amazon.com, NoveList, Lexis/Nexus and many other corporations are scouring recent graduates to find the right person for their team. Librarians have something that other types of graduates do not. They are information literate, organized, and experts in dealing with the ambiguities in the 21st century sources.

Summary

Online searching is a very detail oriented, in-depth subject, yet it is very abstract. My mother is one who just wants to use her search engine, without wondering the reason it works the way it does. For

those who wish to make full use of online searching skills, understanding the concepts behind the search engines and the web site developers is a necessity.

The value of a librarian who has attained this set of skills and the knowledge to perform these tasks well is something undervalued.

Author Searching and the Internet

by Shawne D. Miksa

Assistant Professor SLIS-University of North Texas (Denton, TX). Smiksa@unt.edu

(originally posted on AUTOCAT listserv, June 2, 2003; modified for publication 6/2/03)

Generations growing up using Internet and Web search engines for name searching may miss the important differences between keyword searching and searching a catalog created with the rules of name authority. For instance, differences between an inverted name search and direct order name search may hinder searchers as they move between search engines and online public access catalogs.

This difference will definitely have an impact, but I do not think we should watch passively as it happens. There seems to be several avenues of attack on this problem. First, school librarians, reference librarians, and other public service librarians, should instruct children and adult readers in the ways of searching for information. Kids are sharp; they will understand.

Second, teaching this obviously means librarians working in school media centers/libraries take the necessary courses--cataloging, reference, etc.--that helps to shape their knowledge of how information can be organized, controlled, accessed, and retrieved. We impose a certain structure on information so that it will conform to our information systems. Consequently, we teach that structure to librarians. We also teach that structure to the users, whether those systems are geared toward children or adults.

Third, let's all stop being reactive. Cataloging and classification are probably one of the truly unique areas of our profession. We need to let everyone else know that. I cringe every time I hear or read about an Internet search engine company that claims to have the ultimate organization of information on the Web. There is

no ultimate structure; classificationists have known this since the early 20th century. Even traditional library organization is fraught with potholes, but we have been doing it long enough to know many of the dead ends that these Internet companies are just now discovering. Let us share our knowledge with them as guides and partners. We need to be proactive instead of reactive.

I have been thinking about this problem/phenomenon for a while now, based on watching my nieces and nephews navigate the Internet and computer games in ways I never imagined. Their perception of information and how it structured, accessed, and retrieved will be so very different from ours. Interestingly, I was reading William Gibson's latest novel, *Pattern Recognition*, in which the main character talks on page 2 about finding information about people--"Goggle Damien and you will find a director of music videos and commercials. Goggle Cayce and you will find . . ." This is not the first time I have heard this. Goggle has been transformed from noun to verb. I for one will explore this and incorporate this into my cataloging and classification course.

How I Became a Judaica Librarian

by Rochelle Elstein

Northwestern University Library

People can and do start out pursuing a career in Jewish librarianship but when I began to catalog a synagogue library, few synagogues thought it necessary to **pay** a member to organize their books. Moreover, Jewish studies at the college and university level were just taking hold, so that side of the profession was just getting started.

I was an accidental librarian from the outset. I earned an M.A. in General Studies in the Humanities at the University of Chicago and could not find any teaching jobs in Chicago's junior college system. While preparing my thesis in architectural history, I spent most of my time in the art library. Therefore, when the librarian retired, I was asked if I wanted the job. This was contingent upon simultaneously going to library school, which I did.

Two moves later, I found myself in East Lansing Michigan with young children and in need of some intellectual stimulation. The *kol-bo* [multi-denominational] synagogue needed a second person to help the professional [unpaid] librarian to catalog the collection, mostly children's books and castoff *bar* and *bat mitzvah* presents. We

used the Dewey classification.

Ignorant of what lay ahead, a group of Michigan State University faculty, dissatisfied with the existing synagogue, decided to form our own. Renting space from a church and not hiring a rabbi or *chazzan*, but using local talent (largely Camp Ramah alumni), we kept costs to a minimum. From the outset, we budgeted for a library and started buying books rather than taking the detritus of members' basements.

With a year of synagogue library cataloging experience on my resume, I was the obvious choice for librarian at the same non-salary I earned before. This time I chose the Elazar system. Danny z"l was one of our best friends and I think it is the best for specialized Jewish libraries. I wrote out a manual for my successors and also trained some assistants.

Whenever I drove the car pool, I stayed and cataloged some books. Whenever we got a contribution to the Library Fund, I bought some books. Many were for adults in the congregation, who had become interested in Judaism long after they had been involuntarily incarcerated in Hebrew School. In time, the congregation grew. We bought a public school building and easily adapted it to synagogue and school use. One classroom became the library.

The congregation, from its inception, avoided plaques and other forms of recognition. Nonetheless I still feel like it was my library and am very proud of the people I trained and the seeds we communally planted. Being a librarian is always an act of faith because you acquire books for future users (like the Talmudic story of planting trees) and they harvest them without knowing how they got on the shelves.

Author's Query -- Sydney Taylor

June Cummins, Assistant Professor specializing in Children's Literature at San Diego State University, who gave our group a presentation, is working on a biography of the late children's author, Sydney Taylor. If you have any personal remembrances or original documents, please contact her via e-mail: jcummins@mail.sdsu.edu. She is wondering, in particular, if anyone in the Chicago area knows of Esther Meeks, Taylor's editor at W. W. Follett, or anything about this

Chicago publishing company itself.

Jews are the People of the Comic Book

On Thursday, May 14, Eva Eisenstein, Librarian at Temple Sholom of Chicago, presented a program on The Jewish Graphic Novel at Asher Library, Spertus Institute.



After an introduction on

whether comics/graphic novels are trash or an art form, Eva gave a brief history of the comics industry in the United States. She described the prevalence of Jewish artists and writers during the 1930's and 40's - the "Golden Age" of comics. Their creations include: *Superman, Wonder Woman, Spiderman, The Incredible Hulk, The X-Men* and others. In the seventies, how one of these Jewish artist/writers, Will Eisne, created the American graphic novel in both form and name, with his publication of *A Contract with God : A Graphic Novel*.

Using sample pages from the Jewish graphic novels in Temple Sholom's library collection, and other sources, Eva highlighted different artistic styles, and explored the philosophical underpinnings and mechanics of the comics format. This served as a quick primer on how to read comics, and to emphasize that comics and/or the graphic novel are a great deal more sophisticated than most of us can imagine. Eva then addressed library issues such as whether a library should acquire graphic novels, and if so, how to incorporate them into collections.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Eva distributed Israeli Bazooka bubblegum (with Hebrew comics) to all attendees.

There were two handouts --

- A bibliography of resources, including websites
- Definitions of comics, comic book, comix, graphic novel, etc.

If you are interested in having copies of these, please contact Eva at eva@sholomchicago.org.

Summer Planning Meeting

Thursday, July 31st
10am - 12pm
at home of Judy Weintraub
8307 Harding, Skokie IL 60076

RSVP: 847.677.5609.

Tentative agenda

- I. Nominations/Election
- II. AJL Convention Report
- III. 2003-4 Program Planning

The Muriel Yale Map Collection at Asher Library

The Asher Library of Spertus Institute now boasts one of the world's most extensive collections of antique maps of the Ottoman Empire (including Israel and the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans).

The collection numbers close to 800 maps, dating from the mid-sixteenth century to the 20th century, with most of the items dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. The largest component of the collection is of maps of the Holy Land, showing routes of the patriarchs, tribal divisions, encampments in the desert, as well as other biblical scenes.

Spertus has plans for a major exhibition of this collection after the new building has been completed.

Plans call for the creation of a virtual (online) exhibit, adding the maps into the library's online catalog (Aleph) and RLIN, courses revolving around items from the collection, the sponsorship of several public lectures related to the maps, and a printed catalog (to accompany the Museum exhibition). Spertus staff members are currently applying for grants to assist in the development of these programs.

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The web site for previous issues: <http://home.earthlink.net/~DDStuhlman\jln-home.htm>

New Building for Spertus

Spertus Institute launched a new building project on Thursday, June 12, 2003, with a gala tent party on the site of the new building, next door to the current one, at 618 S. Michigan.

The new building, designed by Ron Krueck of Krueck & Sexton Architects, will cost approximately \$55 million. The project is expected to be completed in late 2006, or early 2007.

The new building will have enhanced facilities for the museum, college and library. The library will have expanded square footage, and will also utilize compact shelving for several collection areas, including non-circulating, periodicals, and the Chicago Jewish Archives. Additional new features, include: a larger conservation lab, a rare map room (to house the Muriel Yale Collection of Maps of Eretz Yisrael and Related Areas), more individual study space, with network connections for laptops and other devices.