

## **Annual Report of the Documents Association of New Jersey (DANJ) – 2011**

The Documents Association of New Jersey (DANJ) is a proud advocate for the preservation, use, and provision of public access to government information. Our continuing mission is to:

- Promote the use of government documents
- Provide a forum for discussion of problems and concerns
- Provide training and continuing education events
- Facilitate communication among documents librarians and administrators

### **Membership**

I am happy to report that our membership is up from previous years. We had 39 members in 2011 and hope to continue growing.

### **Federal Documents Interest Group (FDIG)**

The FDIG, chaired by Laura Sours, proved particularly active this year as it worked to identify and discuss issues related to the preservation and access of federal information. Several New Jersey Depository Libraries were inspected in 2011 and members were able to share information on the experience. As the New Jersey Depository Regional Coordinator, Laura kept the group informed of GPO activities and answered a wide variety of additional, depository-related questions.

Federal budget cuts were also a major topic of concern in 2011. With many agencies experiencing reductions, access to federal information was threatened. In particular, the GPO, the Census Bureau, and the National Archives all saw proposed or actual cuts with significant implications for depository libraries. Among the more significant threatened items, are:

- the entire Census Bureau's Statistical Compendia Branch (and its most well known products, *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* and *The City and County Data Book*),
- the GPO's official content management system, *FDsys*,
- a number of agency-specific or "Open Gov Initiative" resources, such as [data.gov](http://data.gov) and [usaspending.gov](http://usaspending.gov)

Although letters were sent to the New Jersey Congressional delegation regarding these cuts, it is not expected that all resources will be available in 2012.

Some positive news did emerge, however. For example, the Rutgers Law Library in Newark received a grant from the National Archives to digitize two New Jersey collections. Also, 2010 Census data and products started emerging, opening avenues of new inquiry. FDIG members also found a number of promising new (or newer) documents portals were explored (ie, Google Books, the Hathi Trust, et al.). All in all, the FDIG had much to discuss and will continue to be very active in 2012.

### **State Documents Interest Group (SDIG)**

The SDIG, chaired by Deborah Mercer, had a number of opportunities for advocacy in 2011. Deborah, representing the New Jersey State Library (NJSL), met with several members of the NJ Assembly and Senate to discuss several bills. Among them:

- A2742 (S2863), which reduced the number of printed copies of each State report or publication required to be filed with State Library
- A1541, which required electronic submission of some periodic reports by state agencies
- S1217 (A2408), which required state documents to be primarily available on the internet, though provided for notification of availability

Deborah and the NJSL took these opportunities to promote document preservation and ensure public access despite budget reductions and/or austerity measures. Deborah also had opportunity to advocate for the *Statistical Abstract* at ALA Legislative Days and even begin a new twitter feed (@njdocslibrarian). Truly it was a busy year for State documents promotion!

### **International Documents Interest Group (IDIG)**

Sadly, the IDIG did not meet this year. DANJ is interested in recruiting interested members to reenergize this group! Please share your knowledge and interests!

### **DANJ Web Page**

The web page faced a few hosting challenges that will need to be revisited in the future, but was back up and running thanks to the hard work of Susan Lyons and Susan Bucks. Susan Bucks took over responsibility for the website in 2011 and has begun work with the content. We know she will continue to bring many wonderful ideas to DANJ's public presence.

### **Newsletter**

The DANJ Newsletter, edited by Beth Patterson, was sent to members in the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2011. Several members contributed short pieces sharing information on a variety of resources, from Twitter to PACER. The newsletters are available online if any interested members would like to review them. I encourage all members to contribute their own interesting finds to future issues.

### **Continuing Education**

Following some very positive feedback from previous Conferences, a practical and interesting topic was chosen for the 2011 Fall Conference. The Conference, entitled *A Healthy Dose of Information: Government Resources for Mental and Physical Wellness*, was held at Monmouth University and featured a number of distinguished speakers. Aruna Rao, Associate Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New Jersey, and Celina Grey, Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma, offered a panel discussion on working with patrons with mental health needs. In addition, Karen Hartman, Social Sciences Librarian at Rutgers University (New Brunswick), offered a presentation on mental health resources; Renae Barger, Executive Director for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Middle Atlantic Region, offered a presentation on PubMed and Medline; and Robin Siegel, Medical Librarian at CentraState Medical Center, offered a presentation on health statistics.

I would like to thank all members of the Executive Board for their roles in attracting such wonderful speakers. I would also like to thank Susan Bucks and Monmouth University for their support and for providing such wonderful facilities.

### **School of Communication and Information (SC&I), Rutgers University**

Susan Kadezabek, DANJ's SC&I liaison, was an active advocate for documents librarianship in 2011. She attended several SC&I meetings and organized DANJ members to read and select the best research paper/project from the SC&I Government Documents course. Erin Ackerman's work, *The Implementation and Enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: an Annotated Bibliography*, was selected to receive the DANJ Award, which included a \$300 scholarship. (This and all previous winning papers are available on the DANJ website. I encourage you to read through them at your leisure.) In addition, Deborah Mercer offered a lecture to Government Documents students about state document collections and Caitlyn Cook offered two to Reference Services students about government documents reference.

## Treasurer's Report

We are grateful to our treasurer, Ma Lei Hsieh, who did an excellent job maintaining our financial accounting. We are also very thankful to Mary Fetzer, who served to audit our Treasurer's Reports.

As of January, 2011, DANJ's account balance stood at \$5780.65 and DANJ's CD balance stood at \$4241.54. As of October, 2011, DANJ's account balance stood at \$5441.19 and DANJ's CD balance stood at \$4292.03; **Total assets:** \$9733.22. Please see the Treasurer's Report, for more detail.

## Conclusion

As documents librarians, we share a common interest in preserving public access to government information. While we applaud the development of new technologies to better enable faster, easier public access, the cost of doing business in this increasingly digital world has created a number of unprecedented challenges for our libraries and for the agencies that supply our documents.

While I am pleased that more government information has been made available on the web (and I'll admit I happily explore my agency-created "apps" each morning), I equally fear the loss of traditional resources that have been rendered inconvenient or undesired because of their printed format or costly digital preservation. I fear that the loss of resources like the *Statistical Abstract* or legislative changes that reduce the number of required preservation copies mark only the beginning of a wave of coming changes. I suspect more loss lay on the horizon as the real cost of preserving authenticated documents in the long term is fully realized.

I argue, therefore, that while technology has reduced depository library exclusivity in terms of serving as primary reference locations, it has revitalized the depository's core mission: to preserve documents and ensure public access. As documents librarians, we will no doubt face more challenges and more documents loss in the very near future. Yet this will certainly expand our mission and responsibility to collect, preserve, and promote government documents. In other words, there has rarely been a more important time to serve as a documents librarian!

DANJ is committed to continually seek opportunities for advocacy, training, and documents promotion, as well as to provide a lively forum for discussion and the dissemination of information. I thank you for allowing me to serve you in 2011 and I look forward to continually serving DANJ in the future.

Yours respectfully,

Caitlyn Cook