

# ARLIS/New York News

The Newsletter of the Art Libraries Society of North America/New York Metro Chapter

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## From the Chair

By Judy Connorton



How fast this year has gone! That this is my fourth and last column as your chair is hard to believe and while that sounds trite, it's so true. I've had a good run and I've enjoyed so much getting to know our members better and working with our terrific board.

In a few short days, Ken Soehner takes charge and I move on to the "past chair" spot on the board. I can't think of anyone more capable of taking over the helm! Ken has been absolutely terrific this year in thinking of programs, putting them into effect, and attracting support for them. We're in good hands, and I look forward to lending my hands to help with his programs.

I'll miss seeing the smiling faces of two members of the current board. After three consecutive years of service (in addition to service in the early '90s as member-at-large), Debbie Kempe is taking a well-deserved break. All who know Debbie know how hard she has worked for this chapter. But how did she make it look so effortless? I guess she's got the gift!

Debbie is joined in her board retirement by our secretary Heidi Hass who after two years is putting down her pen (or rather turning off her laptop) and giving her notes to Tony White, just elected to a two-year term as secretary. Conscientious, funny and thoughtful, Heidi was always up on the action, taking notes at events, and adding to our institutional memory. We're indebted to both Debbie and Heidi and look forward to seeing them at future membership meetings.

I'm happy that our other officers will remain. Treasurer Caitlin Kilgallen is always upbeat in balancing our books while keeping an eye on toddler Sofia who occasionally graces our board meetings. Faith Pleasanton, re-elected as our member-at-large for advertising, has been amazingly successful in rounding

up donors who always seem happy to return her calls. Now THAT's a gift! Her latest successes have been with Christie's, Knoedler, and Prestel Publishing. We appreciate their generosity to ARLIS/NY.

Suz Massen not only updates our website and contributes to the newsletter, but also fills in as raffle announcer and cheerfully does anything asked of her. Erin Elliott slipped seamlessly into her first-year term as member-at-large for membership. She's been most gracious too in extending Bard's hospitality for a number of our board meetings. Jim Viskochil set up our website and handled the ARLIS/NA National Conference website as well, all while juggling a new and demanding position. And what would we do without the editorial and writing skills of Alexandra de Luise and James Mitchell, our *ARLIS/New York News* team? As editor of my college library newsletter, I know that it's not easy to cajole colleagues into writing articles and then to edit them diplomatically. Often, you end up writing the stories yourself at the last minute. Alexandra and Jamie produce four issues a year and we're grateful that they're willing to carry on.

In addition to Tony and Faith, our third newly-elected member to the 2005 board is Jenny Tobias who will be joining us as vice-chair/chair elect. This is actually a return appearance to the board for Jenny, as she was treasurer in 2000-2001. We welcome her back.

I'll close by reminding you that Ken already has the first event of 2005 nailed. We hope that many of you will join us on January 6 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the unveiling of the online version of the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. This will undoubtedly attract a good-sized audience so do reply early when the official announcement reaches you shortly.

Thank you all for your support this year. I'm very grateful and I look forward to seeing you in 2005. Here's to a lovely and healthy holiday season to you all!

## 2004 ARLIS/NY Executive Board

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**Past-Chair** Deborah Kempe

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James Mitchell, Jenny Tobias.

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**Announcements, articles, and artwork are welcome.** Send to Alexandra de Luise, Queen's College, Flushing, NY 11367, adeluise@qc1.qc.edu; or to James Mitchell, jmitchell@folkartmuseum.org.

**Advertising Manager:** Faith Pleasanton, 212-650-2857, faith.pleasanton@metmuseum.org.

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## Upcoming ARLIS/NY Events

Ken Soehner has organized a special event to take place at the Metropolitan Museum on Thursday, January 6, 2005 at 3:30 p.m. Robert Faber, Project Director of *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, will make a presentation on OUP's major revision of this classic and fundamental reference source, which will be released on September 23rd. The *London Times* has stated, "rejoice, rejoice... the great publishing event of 2004 is here." From our perspective, this is a major new resource for art historical research, and it will be a significant new online resource for art librarians and for researchers of British and early American art. Accordingly, Robert's presentation will focus on this aspect of the Oxford DNB. Oxford University Press has very kindly agreed to cover the cost of the reception that will follow Robert's presentation.

Please R.S.V.P to ken.soehner@metmuseum.org if you would like to attend. Upon arriving at the museum, proceed to the Group Registration Desk in the Great Hall. There will be an admission button for you and you will be given directions to the Board Room.

## ARLIS/NA Internship Award

By Heidi Hass, for the ARLIS/NA Professional Development Committee

Congratulations to Internship Award winner Lauren Edison, a student in the dual degree program at Pratt Institute, and a new ARLIS/NY member. Lauren will now be looking for an institution to do her internship in. This is a good time to update your institution's listing at <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/afa/pdc/internshiproster.htm>

## Chapter Website News

ARLIS/NY is seeking interested candidates for the website committee, which will start to work on a redesign of the chapter website ([www.arlisny.org](http://www.arlisny.org)) at the beginning of 2005. Please email Suz Massen at [massen@frick.org](mailto:massen@frick.org) to help with the project.

## New ARLIS-NY Listserv

Thanks to ARLIS-NY member Sherman Clarke at NYU, we now have a new list up and running at [forums.nyu.edu](http://forums.nyu.edu). It is an unmoderated list, limited to chapter members in good standing. (So renew for 2005 if you haven't already!)

All 198 chapter members with active email addresses have been transferred from our earlier Yahoo list to the NYU list. We encourage all members to use it actively for announcements and discussion. Simply send messages to: [arlis-ny@forums.nyu.edu](mailto:arlis-ny@forums.nyu.edu) and they will be sent to all subscribers. You can manage your subscription or read recent messages by going to [forums.nyu.edu](http://forums.nyu.edu), and entering: [arlis-ny](mailto:arlis-ny) in the listname box and following further instructions.

If you are have list problems, contact [sherman.clarke@nyu.edu](mailto:sherman.clarke@nyu.edu).

## Roger Kimball's Old Criteria

By Jenny Tobias

Speaking to ARLIS/NY in October, art critic and *New Criterion* Managing Editor Roger Kimball discussed his new book, *The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art* (Encounter Books, 2004). Ken Soehner organized the event at the Metropolitan Museum. Casalini Libri sponsored the reception.

Closely following the book (source of most quotes here), Kimball argues that "What we are witnessing today is the triumph of political correctness in art history...[B]y subordinating art to a non-artistic agenda one drains art of its intrinsic dignity and pleasure."

He believes that art history has been sabotaged on two fronts: "Spurious aggrandizement...blurs the distinction between high and low, elevating the detritus of popular culture to the status of fine art...[T]he *rape of the masters*...proceeds in the opposite direction...Its enemy is civilization and the social, moral and aesthetic assumptions upon which civilization rests."

As in the book, Kimball supports his argument by critiquing art historians' interpretations of major art works, one each per chapter. For example, he critiques Anna Chave's combined philosophical and compositional contextualization of Mark Rothko's *Untitled* (1953). He asserts that the "experience of art...is essentially an experience of surfaces, of what meets the eye." Thus a Rothko is "a picture. It is not a 'text' to be read or a puzzle that needs to be deciphered or unraveled."

He qualifies this: "I do not...mean to suggest that a full understanding of works of art cannot involve all manner of cultural, social and historical elements...But the animating center must remain the work itself."

Kimball seems to argue, however, for only selected cultural, social and historical elements. These appear to be limited to biographical and art historical context in the "great man" tradition, infused with Greenbergian formalism.

Asked to elaborate upon his approach, particularly its "social, moral and aesthetic assumptions," Kimball locates his analysis in the traditions of empiricism and pragmatism and his assumptions in ideas shared by "the museum community," among others.

Speaking of assumptions, in person and in print Kimball maintains that "By design there is as much ridicule as there is argument in this book...In the face of blatant absurdity ridicule is generally a more effective specific than argument."

Unfortunately.



Sketch by Jenny Tobias.

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## ARLIS/NY Fall Business Meeting at The Brooklyn Museum

By Heidi Hass, ARLIS/NY Secretary

The chapter's fall meeting took place on October 14 at the newly renovated Brooklyn Museum of Art Library. Library staff including Deirdre Lawrence, Principal Librarian, and Deb Wythe, Archivist, gave tours of the stacks and Reading Room, and introduced us to the online Voyager catalog, and to digitized images from the William Henry Goodyear Archival Collection.

Judy Connorton, ARLIS/NY Chair, opened the formal proceedings with a review of the chapter's many activities during 2004. Of course we started off with a bang by hosting the ARLIS/NA 2004 conference, quickly followed by the fascinating talk by Father Justin of St. Catherine's monastery, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. After we caught our breath we trooped out to the Queens College Art Center in June; a tour of the Cooper-Hewitt in July followed. Greenpoint and Williamsburg gallery tours occurred on a rainy September Saturday, and Roger Kimball's provocative lecture, also at the Met, caused a stir in October. On behalf of the chapter Judy thanked sponsors LibroCo and Casalini for providing refreshments at the two Met meetings.

Reports from Treasurer Caitlin Kilgallen and Member at Large for Membership Erin Elliott testified that the chapter is in good shape. Celine Palatsky Award winners Shalimar Abigail Fojas and Henry Baker were recognized, along with new member Sara McCleskey, head of Access Services at Hofstra.

Suz Massen announced the formation of a short-lived Yahoo! Groups list for the chapter; this has now been superseded by a listserv hosted by NYU, thanks to Sherman Clarke and Jim Viskochil. (Go to <http://forums.nyu.edu> and enter arlis-ny for subscription options.)

Vice-Chair/Chair Elect Ken Soehner announced candidates for open positions on the 2005 board. They are: Zimra Panitz (SVA) and Jenny Tobias (MoMA) for Vice-Chair/Chair Elect; Holly Hatheway (SVA) and Tony White (Pratt) for Secretary; Deborah Perotti (MoMA), Christina Peter (Frick) and Faith Pleasanton (Met) for Member-at-Large for Advertising. No nominations were received from the floor. Results will be announced at the holiday party on December 8. Ken proposed that the chapter consider electronic balloting for future elections; the board will work on this issue in 2005, and propose a change in the by-laws should it seem advisable.

Upcoming chapter events include a visit to the New York School of Interior Design on November 15. And this year's holiday party will be held at the Frick Art Reference Library on December 8. Entertainment will be provided by members of the Dessoff Choirs, including the Frick's own Christina Peter. The first meeting of 2005 is planned for January 6 at the Met: Oxford University Press will sponsor a presentation by Robert Farber, the editor of the newly published *Dictionary of National Biography*.

After the business meeting members enjoyed a reception sponsored by the Museum. Our thanks to Deirdre and her staff.



Touring the compact shelving in the stack areas.



Members gather in the Reading Room.

Photos by James Mitchell.

## Brooklyn Gallery Tour

By Suz Massen

On Saturday, September 18, 2004. A group of ARLIS/NY members braved the drizzly weather to explore some of the galleries in the Greenpoint and Williamsburg areas of Brooklyn. Luckily, the heavy rain of the early morning cleared up in time for attendees to meet at the Booklyn Artists Alliance in Greenpoint. Booklyn is a nonprofit artist and bookmaker association founded in 1999, which promotes the artists' book as an art form and as an educational resource. Emily Larned, the current vice-president of Booklyn, and Christopher Wilde gave ARLIS/NY members in attendance an overview of the Booklyn Artists Alliance as an organization and selected examples of artists' books from its collection for examination by attendees. Some of the highlights from the visit were the letterpress-printed bimonthly zine *Ker-Bloom!* produced by California-based artist Karen Switzer, and *Cheeseburger Soup*, a collection of etchings and descriptions by the artist Liz Roth of her coworkers in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

After Booklyn and a brief bus trip, the attendees visited Pierogi 2000, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. It is one of the oldest established Williamsburg galleries. "Pierogi a Go-Go: Brooklyn Gravity Racers" was the exhibition on display. Several area artists created pine wood derby racecars, each with a unique flare. These were on display in the gallery until the beginning of October when the artists put their designs to the test in a three-day gravity-racing extravaganza. Along with monthly exhibitions, Pierogi has a large flat file collection, which contains works by more than seven hundred area artists.

The next stop on the tour was Jack the Pelican, a gallery located right around the corner from Pierogi. "Squint: a Hitchcockian Odyssey in Visual Delay" dominated most of the gallery space, offering works of art dealing with the altering of perception and attention to detail. A highlight from this show was an enormous construction made entirely out of pipe cleaners that formed a dramatic abstract design when viewed from far away. "Vox Populi" by the artist Don Ritter also was on display. This installation pitted a gallery visitor reciting a speech against a video wall of citizens either cheering his/her speech skills, or jeering them.

Black & White was the next gallery on the tour, located next door to Jack the Pelican. Black & White offered attending members a chance to see the work of the sculptor Dewitt Godfrey. Godfrey filled the gallery and the outdoor courtyard with sculptures made out of stacked steel tubes, amorphous in shape. An indoor and outdoor version of "Picker Sculpture" could be viewed at the gallery. The indoor version filled the gallery from floor to ceiling, and allowed visitors to walk through it to reach the back of the gallery and the outdoor courtyard. The outdoor version loomed as tall as the concrete walls enclosing the courtyard.



Suzanna Simor, Elizabeth Broman, and Suz Massen, with Dewitt Godfrey's "Picker Sculpture" at the Black & White gallery.

Photos by James Mitchell



Caitlin Kilgallen, Leslie Preston, and Robert Lobe.

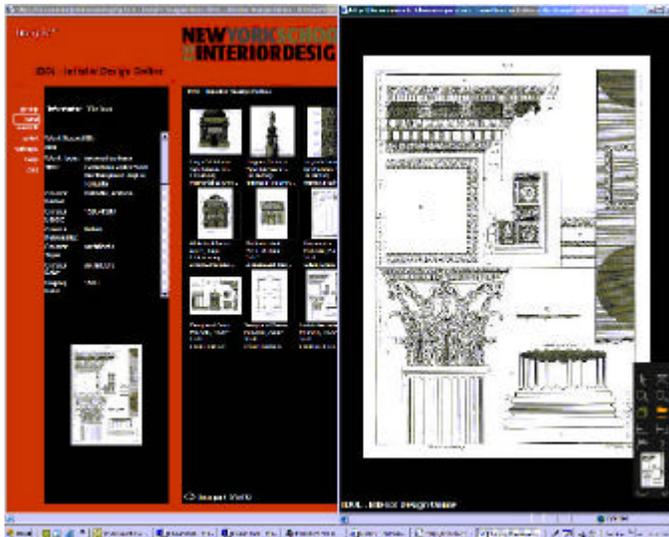
After a coffee break at Read, a café on Bedford Avenue, attendees found themselves at Joymore, a small storefront gallery that just opened this fall. The space also doubles as the apartment of owner Melissa Schubeck. Joymore began in Chicago in 2000 as a space focused on promoting emerging and mid-career artists. It continues this focus with its move to Brooklyn. The exhibition "Daydreaming, Slight Alienation, Cruel Kindness, & Detached Sentimentality" included painting, sculpture, and video work from several artists. It included the work of Malin Abrahamsson, a library staff member at the School of Visual Arts. Portuguese artist Carlos Roque who is currently an International Studio and Curatorial Program resident curated the show.

The varied destinations gave attending members unfamiliar with the Greenpoint and Williamsburg areas of Brooklyn a chance to experience a new locale along with some interesting art. For attendees already familiar with the neighborhoods, it hopefully gave them a closer look with good company. ARLIS/NY would like to thank Caitlin Kilgallen and Suz Massen for organizing the trip, as well as the Booklyn Artists Alliance and all of the galleries visited.

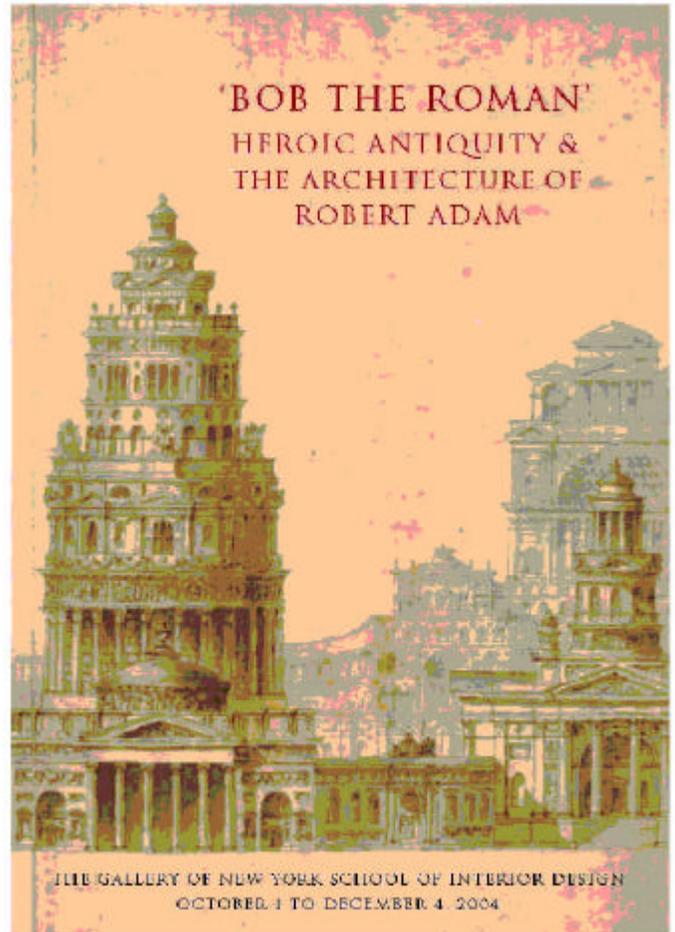
## New York School of Interior Design Welcomes ARLIS/NY Members

On November 15, 2004, the New York School of Interior Design hosted a special event for the ARLIS/New York Chapter. Eric Wolf, Director of the Library at NYSID, demonstrated their new image database and in-class presentation system, IDOL: Interior Design OnLine. The system, which uses Luna Insight software, was quickly built up from existing library and faculty slide collections focused on interior design, architecture, and the decorative arts. Eric discussed how such projects can lead to terrific opportunities for resource sharing and collaborations between member institutions.

The program was followed by a private viewing of the exhibition “‘Bob the Roman’: Heroic Antiquity and the Architecture of Robert Adam” and a reception. The exhibition came from Sir John Soane’s Museum in London and featured original architectural drawings by Robert Adam and his circle. Chapter members enjoyed looking at the superb drawings over wine generously provided by the NYSID President’s Office.



A sample screen from the IDOL database.



Poster for “Bob the Roman” featuring “Design for a Palace” (detail) by Robert Adam and an anonymous draftsman, 1757. Adam Collection, Sir John Soane’s Museum, London.

Images courtesy NYSID.

## Member News

**William Peniston's** book *Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth Century Paris*, has been published by Harrington Park Press as part of their Haworth Gay & Lesbian Studies series. Its Amazon.com sales rank is already #150,181.

Long-time ARLIS/NY member **Barry Redlich** has retired after 32 years of librarianship. Most recently he had been the principal librarian for art at the Newark Public Library. He had formerly spent 8 years in the graphic arts field. Barry notes that, "it's a little weird to be out of harness!" His email address is [barryredlich@yahoo.com](mailto:barryredlich@yahoo.com).

In October **Jonathan Lill** joined the staff at the Arts Library, Yale University as the 2004 Kress Fellow in Art Librarianship, an 8 month position for a new art librarian sponsored by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Jonathan received his MLS from Simmons College in 2003 and holds a BFA from the University of Illinois. He comes to Yale from Columbia University where he led a one-year survey of manuscript collections funded by the Mellon Foundation.

**Rebecca Krantz Friedman** has joined the Bard Graduate Center Library as their new Reader Services Librarian. Her responsibilities include reference, ILL, reserves and periodicals. Rebecca, an ARLIS/NY member since 1998, returns to our area from her position as Reference Librarian and Arts Bibliographer at Wake Forest University Library, Winston-Salem, NC.

**Jeff Guerrier** has accepted the position of Manager for Library Services at the Le Brun Library of the Montclair Art Museum. He will continue working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as Librarian in the Department of Drawings & Prints.

**Paula Baxter**, Curator in the Art & Architecture Collection of the NYPL Humanities and Social Sciences Library, has organized the exhibition "Decoration in the Age of Napoleon: Empire Elegance Versus Regency Refinement." It is on view in the Edna Barnes Salomon Room (third floor) through April 3, 2005.

**Brenda Wegener** is the new Senior Reference Librarian in the Fine Arts Division of the Central Library of Queens Borough Public Library, as of September. Brenda previously worked in the Art & Music Division at San Diego Public Library.

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## ARLIS/NY Holiday Party

By Suz Massen

December 8, 2004, marked the annual ARLIS/NY holiday party. This year the party was held at the Frick Art Reference Library. Around 120 guests squeezed into their grand Reading Room for this wonderful event. Guests enjoyed wine, donated by the Frick Art Reference Library, and sweets and savories brought by attendees. Anne Poulet, the Director of The Frick Collection, joined the party and offered encouraging opening remarks as she pointed out that she has used several of the libraries represented that evening in her research over the years.

Halfway through the party, members of the Dessoff Choirs sang a selection of holiday music, closing with “Deck the Halls” and “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.” Christina Peter of the Frick Art Reference Library and Deborah Vincelli of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Watson Library sang with the group. Some of us also recognized Rémi Castonguay, who had recently worked at the Frick as Reference Associate. After the singing, Ken Soehner, vice-chair of ARLIS/NY and the Arthur K. Watson Chief Librarian at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, announced the election results for the chapter’s 2005 Executive Board. Congratulations are in order for Jenny Tobias, Tony White, and Faith Pleasanton, who have filled the open board positions. Ken also presented Judy Connorton, the outgoing chair of ARLIS/NY, with a gift from ARLIS/NY of a crystal apple from Tiffany’s for her great leadership over the past year.

Donated gifts from area institutions were raffled to raise money for the Celine Palatsky Travel Award. The Frick Collection, the School of Visual Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Folk Art Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, Faith Pleasanton, Judy Connorton, and Lydia Dufour all donated items to the raffle. More than \$150 was raised for the travel award, which helps send a first-time attendee to the ARLIS/NA conference.

The party went well into the night as colleagues chatted with each other in the warm environment. Special thanks are in order for Patricia Barnett, the Andrew W. Mellon Librarian of the Frick Art Reference Library, for providing the venue, wine, and catering services; Debbie Kempe, Chief of Collections Management and Access, for organizing and overseeing the event; Judy Connorton and the ARLIS/NY Executive Board for their support; and the staff of the

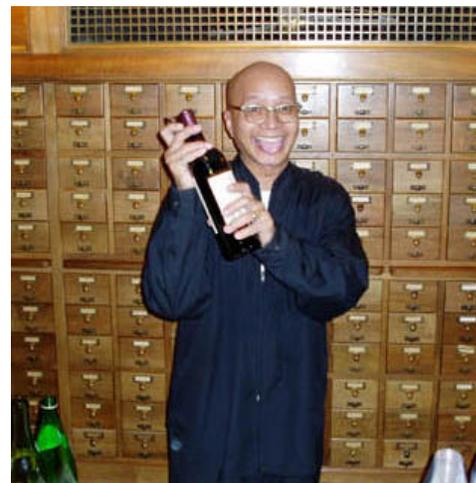


Erica Doctorow won a raffle item.

Frick Art Reference Library for making the event run smoothly. Without the help of everyone involved, including those members who brought the food to enjoy, the event would not have been such a smashing success.



From left to right: Anne Poulet, Pat Barnett, and Judy Connorton.



Ace bartender Jesse Sadia kept the good times flowing.