Editor's Note
By James Mitchell

It seems like ages ago already, so maybe this is a good time to reflect on the ARLIS/NA annual conference, held in Banff, Canada this past May. A more impressive conference setting has rarely been seen. I’m sure other New Yorkers appreciated the change from our steel and glass canyons to the blue Canadian Rockies. The sprawling Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, nestled between Mts. Sulfur and Rundle (the latter, I think, pictured below), was a spectacular and relaxing venue.

The highlight of the conference was undoubtedly the presentation of the ARLIS/NA Distinguished Service Award to New Yorker and cataloger extraordinaire Sherman Clarke. It was so moving to see Sherman receive the recognition we all knew he deserved. Liz O’Keefe’s introduction at the Convocation Ceremony featured testimonials from many colleagues. Her text is reprinted beginning on page 4, followed by Sherman’s acceptance speech.

As usual, the New York chapter contributed a basket of goodies to the not-so-silent auction. Coordinated by chapter Treasurer Meg Black, our basket included a diverse array of books and gift items from local museums and other institutions, donated by our generous members. The winning bid of $70, from Ida daRoza of the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, will support the ARLIS/NA conference speakers fund.

In addition, ARLIS stalwart Ted Goodman separately donated an autographed copy of his book Writing the Rails, an anthology of 101 train-travel stories (Black Dog & Leventhal, 2001), and two vintage ARLIS/NA conference t-shirts, from Pittsburgh and Los Angeles. Ted’s basket raised an additional $20.

Also in this issue we have a report on the conference by Jill E. Luedke, recipient of this year’s ARLIS/NY Celine Palatsky Travel Award.

Besides the trip to Canada, New York has continued its busy schedule of local chapter events. Several of these are reported in this issue. We thank Ken Soehner in particular for his programming efforts.

Many of you joined us for two other recent events, which were held after this issue went to press. The Fall issue will include coverage of the June 12 meeting at the Goethe Institut, which featured a presentation by Dr. Michael Knoche, Director of the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar, Germany.

We will also present a report on the July 12 presentation at the Met by Lauren Cornell of Rhizome.

Jenny Tobias’s Chair’s column, which usually appears on this page, can be found at the end this time, due to space considerations.
Proposed ARLIS/NY Bylaw Changes

By Jenny Tobias

The ARLIS/NY board proposes the following changes to the chapter bylaws. As stated in the bylaws themselves (Article X), “Written notice with full wording of the proposed amendment must be sent to each member at least three weeks prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered.”

The bylaw proposal concerns a shift from paper ballots to electronic methods for conducting elections and other votes. The new text is indicated in italics, and bracketed text would be deleted. Additional explanation is provided in the gloss.

The proposed changes will be put to a vote this Fall as part of board elections. To pass, a two-thirds majority of voting members must approve. There will be opportunity for discussion at the Fall business meeting. Members are also encouraged to contact the board with questions or concerns.

Article IV. Officers

C. Elections

1. Officers shall be elected by [written] ballot [mailed] provided to each eligible member soon after the annual business meeting. Candidates who receive a plurality of votes shall be elected.

Gloss: beginning with the Fall 2007 election, balloting will be electronic, using email or web-based methods such as SurveyMonkey. Alternatives will be provided to members with a disability preventing use of electronic balloting. Such members must notify the chapter Secretary by November 1, 2007.

E. Responsibilities

3. The Secretary

f. Shall [mail] provide a ballot to each eligible member soon after the annual business meeting.

Article V. Members-at-Large

C. Members-at-large shall be included on the [written] ballot for officers.

2007 Board Initiatives

By Jenny Tobias

ARLIS/NY Professional Development Award

The Chapter’s officers plan to create a new Professional Development Award, to be given annually to support education or research by mid-career professionals. One award would be given each year to a professional with at least three years of ARLIS/NA and NY membership. The first award, to be given in 2007, will be $500, and will be named the Sherman Clarke Professional Development Award, in recognition of Sherman’s significant contribution to the profession and exemplary service to the chapter. Future awards may likewise be named in honor of a distinguished chapter member.

An ad-hoc committee of three chapter officers will be formed to select from among all eligible applicants. The award is to be funded in part from savings gained from electronic balloting. Comments are welcome, by email, listserv, or at the Fall business meeting. Stay tuned for further details.

Electronic-only Distribution of ARLIS/NY Newsletter

Beginning with volume 27, number 4 (Winter 2006), ARLIS/NY News will be available only as an electronic edition, accessed via the chapter website. Paper copies will be provided only to members with a disability preventing use of computers. Such members must notify the newsletter editor by December 1, 2006.
I am honored to have represented the ARLIS New York chapter as the Celine Palatsky Travel Award recipient at this year’s ARLIS/NA conference in Banff. I sincerely thank ARLIS/NY for granting me this award and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to experience the Society on an international level. I would like to particularly thank Tony White, my academic advisor, for his continued support and counsel; B.J. Irvine, my conference mentor, for her energy and hospitality; and Ken Soehner for his leadership and shepherding.

Soon after I became a dual Art History/Library Science student at Pratt Institute, I joined the ARLIS New York chapter as a way to introduce myself to the art librarianship profession. I enjoyed attending many of the events and meeting my new prospective colleagues. I quickly realized I was ready to go international. I was excited to meet the movers and shakers in the profession, whose research had inspired me during my art librarianship class. As a first-time attendee, I wanted to familiarize myself with the diversity of the conference, so I engaged in as many sessions, programs and activities as possible.

The lively discussion about the recently announced OCLC and RLG merger during the RLG Roundtable was considerably enlightening. I found the workshops on Effective Classroom Instruction and Building the Perfect Resume particularly insightful for an emerging professional. I was especially interested in taking part in the yearlong mentorship pilot program and I look forward to working with my new mentor Adeane Bregman, Head Librarian of the Bapst Art Library at Boston College. I enjoyed learning about some of the innovative architecture and design projects taking place in Banff and at the University of Calgary during the Green Initiatives session and following tour. During the Reference and Information Services Section meeting I volunteered for a year-long project of analyzing and assessing bound library catalog collections, a project spearheaded by Peter Blank at Stanford University. I look forward to becoming more involved with the Society and contributing more to the discipline in years to come.

I was rewarded by the camaraderie and dedication I experienced at the conference. I had the good fortune to converse with some of the practiced and some of the new and aspiring professionals. It was encouraging to engage with such quality librarians devoted to the evolving world of art librarianship. I expect continued progressive discourse for years to come.

I will always remember my first ARLIS/NA conference. I discovered a community among art librarians that thrives beyond the chapters and the listservs. A community of confidants and colleagues who unite once a year to recognize the progress of their profession by honoring veteran scholars and acknowledging new research, and to exchange ideas about the future in order to ensure the endurance of the discipline.
ARLIS/NA Distinguished Service Award: Introduction by Liz O’Keefe

The Convocation program gives the bare bones of Sherman Clarke’s career: art librarian since 1973, ARLIS member since 1975, board and committee member at both the national and the chapter levels, major player in the development of data standards for art information, and founder and coordinator of ARTNACO since 1993. In my remarks, I would like to highlight aspects of Sherman’s contribution to ARLIS which cannot be brought out in a curriculum vitae, but which were mentioned again and again in the many letters written in support of this award. I can’t read all the letters, but not to worry: Sherman will be given copies to read and savour.

One characteristic that came up in every letter was Sherman’s unparalleled knowledge of cataloging and art information:

*He is the “go to” guy, or even the guru.*

*An art librarian’s librarian and a cataloger’s cataloger.*

*The gold standard of cataloging judgment and knowledge ... the person to whose desk all catalogers made a pilgrimage when in need of consultation on knotty problems.*

This knowledge is always on tap to ARLIS members:

*He has written an article about or participated in a conference session on some aspect of cataloging, metadata, or standards every year since 1990. In addition, he has provided invaluable leadership of the Cataloging Problems Discussion group at every ARLIS/NA annual conference since 1975 and sustained guidance of the Cataloging Advisory Committee.*

Sherman is one of those rare catalogers who can demystify cataloging for the non-specialist. According to a grateful non-cataloger:

*One of Sherman’s most valuable talents is his ability to speak to those of us who value the application of cataloging standards but would not be able to catalog anything if our life depended upon it. Sherman is a patient and gentle teacher who can explain the most complicated cataloging matters to everyone.*

That ability was tested on one occasion, when Sherman interrupted one of his frequent European trips to lead a NACO workshop in Rome…. I will never forget the patience with which he explained each concept, slowly, in English, in order to reach a group of catalogers that were struggling, in their second or third language, with new and unfamiliar concepts.

Sherman’s ability to build consensus and bring people together was mentioned frequently:

*Unless you sit on a committee with him, you will not understand his ability to quietly listen to comments, and then build consensus and move a group on. Unless you’ve seen him work in a stressful environment, you will never know how he is able to deflate tense moments and build relationships.*

This has earned him a special place in the hearts and the counsels of our VRA colleagues:

*More than any other single individual, Sherman has broken down the longstanding boundaries between art librarianship and visual resources curatorship.*

And:

*Sherman’s holistic view of art metadata issues has facilitated a community approach to cataloging bibliographic and image resources.*

And:

*He has fostered contact and cooperation between book catalogers and image catalogers, and initiated fruitful collaborations between two communities that must work together to realize the full benefits of digital access to art resources.*

But most crucially for ARLIS and for the world of art information, Sherman has won for himself and for ARLIS a place at the table where data standards are developed:

*He has ... a hand in anything and everything coming down the pipe that affects the organization of art library resources. At the same time, he has fostered a community of art librarian catalogers with which he is in constant conversation. In effect, then, because of Sherman’s efforts, every cataloger in our field has been given a voice in national cataloging policy.*

It was truly impressive to see the glowing endorsements from non-ARLIS members, including senior staff at the Library of Congress, OCLC, the Research Libraries Group, and those who have served for years with Sherman on various standards committees of the American Library Association:

From the Library of Congress:

*He has been a tireless and effective spokesperson for art cataloging as well as an advocate for the development and application of standards in cataloging and the maintenance of cataloging quality.*
From RLG:

We at RLG have relied on his advice over the years on technical service issues and view him as a valuable resource to the library community in general, not just the RLG community and the art library community.

From a long-standing member of MARBI (the Committee on Machine Readable Bibliographic Information which oversees the MARC format):

Sherman has always held a special place [in MARBI], as both an experienced general cataloger (without the annoying habit of clinging to the details at the expense of the big picture that “real” catalogers often exhibit) and a well-grounded specialist, with all the important issues of his field firmly within his grasp. He never spoke promiscuously—not too much nor too long (and never in frustration), but always with the full attention of his peers. And every comment was garnished, of course, with his wonderful gentle humor.

One of Sherman’s greatest contributions to the field of art librarianship was his founding and continued coordination of ARTNACO, the funnel for name authorities to the Library of Congress Name Authority File.

Here is an evaluation of ARTNACO from the perspective of OCLC and the wider library community:

While the creation of those authority records has been an invaluable service to the art library community, I cannot emphasize too strongly their value to the broader library community. ... specialized catalogers bring to their work the knowledge and understanding that comes from years of experience in handling specialized headings, such as artist’s names and uniform titles ... general catalogers, especially those in smaller institutions, often have to handle those same kinds of headings without the advantages that specialized knowledge and understanding bring. Sharing that specialized knowledge and understanding via the creation of authority records has helped general catalogers create better bibliographic records and more consistent catalogs for their users and has contributed to improved quality in the large shared databases like OCLC’s WorldCat and the RLG Union Catalog.

How does he find time for all this? Well, let me share with you a little-known fact about Mr. Clarke. Sherman never sleeps. When he feels the need to rest his eyes, he suspends himself upside-down from a conveniently placed hook on the wall, and remains in that posture for an hour or so, recharging. Then he unhooks himself, checks his email, reviews a few NACO records, writes up a report on the latest meeting of MARBI or CCDA or PCC ....

Sounds far-fetched? Well, then how do you explain the fact that:

He is always available with friendly and authoritative answers to desperate cataloging questions, not limited to art and, seemingly, 24/7.

Or:

Sherman is continuously posting relevant documents on his web site to provide us with information and to alert us to developments in name authority work and in cataloging in general.

Or:

His tireless interest in art literature is evidenced by his ‘moonlighting’ in several art libraries, helping us catalogue material that would otherwise go into our backlog. I do not know many people who work full time and then go on to an evening of cataloguing....

I’d like to close with a few words about Sherman’s impact on individual art catalogers. Letter after letter mentioned his collegiality and kindness (what one person described as the “humane model of cataloging presented by Sherman”), and his personal encouragement of new catalogers, particularly at the annual conferences. For many of us, the annual conference is our only chance to see colleagues from other parts of the country. It’s easy to get immersed in reconnecting with old friends and overlook newcomers. But Sherman has always taken the time to reach out to first attendees. From several accounts, I have chosen one cataloger’s description of her first ARLIS conference:

It had been only a few months since I had joined the staff at [her institution] and I was new to the field of art librarianship. Sherman introduced himself, gave me some advice on which meetings to attend, and invited my institution to join the 10 other museum libraries that made up the Art NACO funnel he was coordinating. I had never had such a warm and helpful encounter at a professional meeting and I was sure it was an aberration. But soon I realized that what I had experienced was simply Sherman: warm, kind, helpful, approachable, wise, and above all, enthusiastic. I will always be grateful to him for welcoming me into the society of art catalogers and guiding me until I found my way.

For helping so many of us to find our way, and for his role as de facto ARLIS ambassador to the library and art information communities, we present to Sherman Clarke the Distinguished Service Award.
Thank you very much, Liz, for putting together those comments. I don’t really know how to respond. Well, there are lots of ways I could respond. I threatened Liz with a dada poem of mismatched meter and no rhyme, composed mostly of MARC fields and AACR rule numbers. You’re lucky because I’m not a poet. I would much rather sit in a circle talking about cataloging issues than stand in front of you all. But you all are what has made this so enjoyable and relatively easy. I’m really glad that librarianship is a collective activity.

I have been incredibly lucky to find a profession that used my native abilities to stick things in pigeon holes and to describe how things are alike and different. It seems to me that is what cataloging is about. My office neighbor says that the scholars are spending their efforts breaking the boundaries and it is our duty to apply some organization.

You have probably heard it argued that original cataloging is difficult. My colleagues in the visual resources arena say they do only original cataloging. But you don’t want to be too original because you would be doing a disservice to the user of your cataloging record. You want to find the similarities to other items you’ve cataloged. It goes back to Cutter’s principles of finding something when you know the author or title, or finding what a collection has on a particular topic. You want to say that author’s name the same way each time. You want to express a subject in the complementary way and provide references between related subjects.

Cataloging is always evolving and the past couple weeks have been particularly exciting, as well as frustrating and just confounding. We were greeted this past week with a news release describing a conflation of OCLC and RLG. It is my sincere desire that the wealth of RLG’s special programs doesn’t get lost among the incredible resources of OCLC. The conflation news followed by only a few days the shocking news that LC would no longer try to control series titles. They’re responding in part to a lot of early retirements a few months ago. Many series titles will be just fine, at least in LC’s system, the way they plan to do series access in the future. But it’s still a shock to the system—personally and the cooperative cataloging world—to think of letting series titles just go meander into keyword territory.

We’re still trying to figure out how our library catalogs can effectively interact with other means of access like web browsers. That’s not new, of course, since you always had to combine the catalog search with a visit to the indexing table or the archives. The seeming ease of electronic access makes us want to have one-stop shopping for researchers at the same time we know that it can’t be easy, the synthesis of information is not something that can yet be automated.

My first library job was in the mid-1960s at the Ceramics College Library in Alfred where our work was guided by Lois Smith, a wonderful librarian and Quaker. Her approach to life and work has been an inspiration throughout my career. That was my summer and vacation job; during the year, I was the student worker in the slide room at SUNY New Paltz. The ability to combine love of art with work was too splendid. It was wonderful to be getting out of grad school and library school, and entering the library profession, just as ARLIS/NA was getting off the ground. If I have been able to help new ARLISers into the fold as I was helped, it will have all been worthwhile.

I do value beyond words the people I’ve met, the things I’ve learned, the wonderful places we’ve been, and I thank you from the depths of my heart and soul for this high honor. By the way, I don’t plan on retiring right away though I do share my birth year with Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Cher, Bette Midler, Goldie Hawn, and a whole bunch of other boomers.
On April 12, 2006, around twenty-five ARLIS/NY members attended a gallery talk and viewing of the exhibition *Technical Detours: the Early Moholy-Nagy Reconsidered* at the Art Gallery of The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY). Diane Kelder, the gallery curator, gave an introduction to the exhibition and the exhibition catalog. Oliver A. I. Botar, associate professor of art history at the University of Manitoba, was the guest curator of the exhibition. The exhibition was split into ten distinctive sections, each focusing on a different aspect of Moholy-Nagy’s work: early years, literary ambitions, artistic development, Soviet Republic, Vienna, Berlin art world, Dada technics, *Der Sturm*, International Constructivism, and new media. The exhibition covered his work from WWI to the early 1920s. The time period of the exhibition precedes Moholy-Nagy’s affiliation with the Bauhaus. There were more than 200 works in the exhibition. It was composed of works by Moholy-Nagy and his contemporaries. A real effort was made in the exhibition to weave Moholy-Nagy into the fabric of art moments occurring in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century.

László Moholy-Nagy was born László Weisz in 1895 in Hungary. He trained as a lawyer in Hungary and enlisted in the army during WWI. After being injured during the war, he started taking art classes at night school. This was his only formal art training. Moholy-Nagy produced sculpture, paintings, graphic design pieces, industrial design pieces, and type faces. The exhibition reflected this diverse spectrum of his work.

After the gallery talk and viewing, a small reception was held for ARLIS/NY members. ARLIS/NY would like to thank Diane Kelder and her staff as well as Michael Szarvasy for sponsoring the program.

Photo by Maria Oldal.

Christina Peter, far right, talks to Jessica Pigza.
Making Art History: Documenting Latin American & Latino Art at the MoMA Library

By Eric Wolf

On May 19, 2006, ARLIS New York members were treated to a very informative and encouraging presentation by Taina B. Caragol, Bibliographer and Latin American Specialist, at the Museum of Modern Art.

After a thorough introduction by Ken Soehner, Chapter Past President and host of this event held in the Douglas Dillon Board Room of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ms. Caragol, who is completing her PhD in Latin American Art at the CUNY Graduate Center, began her presentation. Ms. Caragol began her current position at the Museum of Modern Art in 2003. In this capacity, she has two chief areas of responsibility: first, she serves as the bibliographer for the MoMA Library’s Latin American and Latino holdings; second, she coordinates the Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art, a grant-funded initiative helping establish and support archives at a host of different institutions in the greater New York area.

In her capacity as Latin American and Latino Bibliographer at MoMA, Ms. Caragol follows in a long tradition of interest in Latin American art at the Museum. She briefly surveyed the Museum’s interest in the subject, going back as far as 1931 with the first North American monographic exhibition on an important Latino artist (Diego Rivera), a show on modern Brazilian architecture (1943–44), modern Cuban painting, (1944), etc. Her talk made it clear that modern Latin American art was an important part of MoMA’s mission in the eyes of Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (the founding director) and many of the early trustees. The Library has echoed these interests with one of the largest US collections of exhibition and collections catalogues, clippings, photographs, ephemera and artists’ file materials. Ms. Caragol continues to maintain these collections and insure MoMA’s place as one of the foremost collections on Latin American and Latino art in the country.

In addition to her collection development and maintenance responsibilities, Ms. Caragol coordinates the Metro-MoMA Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art (see website: http://www.moma.org/research/library/latinosurvey/index.html, a print guide is forthcoming). The Metro grant-funded survey seeks to provide assistance to often under-funded area institutions and grass-roots arts organizations and artists’ collectives to document works and projects and to provide archival preservation. Participants include such important institutions as El Museo del Barrio, the Bronx Museum of the Arts and Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and such grass-roots arts organizations as Taller Boricua/Puerto Rican Workshop and En Foco.

A lively reception in the Watson Library followed, permitting chapter members to talk to Ms. Caragol and learn more about her very important and timely work. I join the membership in thanking Ms. Caragol for this most informative presentation and Ken Soehner for providing a lovely venue and hosting a most enjoyable reception.
Member News

**Tom McNulty**’s latest book, *Art Market Research: A Guide to Methods and Sources*, has been published by McFarland. The book provides insight into the valuation of works of fine and decorative arts, and the workings of the art market. It’s coverage of provenance and object-oriented research will be widely useful. The thorough annotated bibliographies are excellent, covering the major databases and contemporary resources as well as important rare historical sources. The book is a comprehensive and incomparable treatment of its subject. Highly recommended.

**Jenny Tobias**’s article “Re-Use Value: Stock Photography and the Future of the Past” will appear in the forthcoming issue of *Cabinet* magazine.

**Tony White** travelled to Washington state twice this Spring to lecture. On April 30 he discussed “The Influence of Japanese Bookbinding on Contemporary Artist’s Books” at Whitman College in Walla Walla. And on June 8 in Seattle he presented his lecture “Liminal Spaces: Book Arts and Photography,” hosted by the University of Washington and the Seattle Book Arts Guild.

From the Field

**New Museum Library Finds New Home**

The New Museum of Contemporary Art and New York University Libraries have announced the transfer of the New Museum’s library, closed since 1992, to NYU. Totalling nearly 20,000 volumes, the collection will be integrated with the holdings of NYU’s Bobst Library, including the Fales Downtown Collection, and the Institute of Fine Arts. Catalog records will record the books’ provenance. In addition to this significant enhancement to the contemporary arts holdings of NYU’s libraries, the two institutions will collaborate on related programs. The New Museum, in its new building under construction on the Bowery, will feature a new Resource Center with current books, exhibition catalogs, and periodicals on contemporary art, which will be transferred annually to NYU. A new graduate fellowship will also be established to allow a student from the IFA to assist with the Resource Center’s programs.

cartooning...turns out to possess a charming set of terms all its own. (For instance, the little cloud left behind by someone running is called a *briffit*, while, according to the caption..., “A complete *sphericasia* or *swalloop* is used by a cartoonist to depict a complete swing at an object, be it a golf ball or another object.”)

The generally well-reviewed book was revised in 1990 and it even begat a 1992 Chinese edition. For anyone interested in visual communication, What’s What represents a well-intentioned if flawed attempt to make the world understandable through word and image.

Editors Reginald Bragonier, Jr. and David Fisher clearly intended to produce a serious work: “*What’s What* is far more than an ordinary reference book. Aided by well-known artists and experts in the visual-arts fields, the editors have made every effort to produce a book that is as engaging as it is informative.” The editors come with good credentials: both wrote for *Life* and other national magazines, and both authored books.

Fisher also had the unusual distinction of co-authoring a comic strip (Scroogie) with baseball player Tug McGraw and illustrator Mike Witte. Witte, with impressive credentials of his own, illustrated the *What’s What* section on Cartooning, setting the scene for *agitrons*, *bhubits* and *boozex*, among other terms.

These delightful terms are almost certainly apocryphal, however. The terms aren’t found in the second edition of the *OED* (with the possible exception of *spurl* and *squean*), and they engender no Web discussion in the thriving next-gen comics community. Yet the spread was reprinted in the revised edition and then translated into Chinese (how does one translate *spurl*, that tornado-shaped symbol of dizziness?)

I recall reading that the terms were made up by a couple of cartoonists, presumably including Witte and possibly Doonesbury’s Garry Trudeau. But like the editors of *What’s What*, I haven’t done adequate fact checking. So pending confirmation, everything I wrote could be a lie. It’s enough to give a librarian *plewds* (flying drops of sweat).