



Yeshiva University Libraries

LIBRARY STAFF NEWS

ISSUE #18 JUNE 2021



STUDENT LIBRARY RESEARCH AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED



Elisabeth Kohn

Congratulations to Elisabeth Kohn, winner of the Student Library Research Award for 2021 for her paper "German Attitudes towards the United States under Donald Trump's Presidency, Based on German Reporting."

"The Atlantic Ocean is starting to look awfully wide," *The Economist* wrote in 2019, referring to the increasing divide between Americans and Europeans on matters relating to trade, defense, foreign policy, and multilateral agreements. Examining the German perspective on the state of US-German relations under former President Barack Obama, and its evolution under Trump, is necessary in order to understand the phenomenon that has taken place in transatlantic relations as described by *The Economist*. How have German attitudes towards the US evolved under Trump's presidency?... The research is primarily based on *der Spiegel*, *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, and *die Zeit*, three prominent German newspapers, and spans from the concluding months of former President Barack Obama's presidency to the months leading up to the November 2020 presidential election. A thorough analysis of German coverage during critical junctures such as the US' withdrawal from the Iran Deal, Trump's demands regarding German defense

expenditures, US sanctions over the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, and other events suggest that German-US relations deteriorated under Trump's presidency. A major factor in the decline of the relationship was the manner with which American political demands or policy changes were conveyed to German leadership, not necessarily the substance of these changes. Though disagreements over policy and multilateral initiatives played a significant role in disputes between German and US leaders, it was the strongly-worded letters, tweets, and unannounced decisions that ultimately led to a weaker German-US relationship.

This fascinating analysis of international relations was written over the summer by a Senior at SCW. The prize committee was impressed by Ms. Kohn's command of the German sources and the analysis of the political ramifications of the seminal events. Congratulations to our 2021 winner who received a \$250 check and certificate.



Wishing Chriss a complete and continued recovery from an accidental fall. She reports that she is back at the office already!

Rebecca is continuing to heal from a foot injury. She is happy to have had the opportunity to work at home.

Stay well, everyone!



LIBRARY SHORTS

CATALOG OF UNIVERSITY AUTHORS 2021 was published in May by the Office of the Provost and Yeshiva University Libraries. It was compiled and proofread by Paul, Nicole, Stephanie, Rebecca, Ella, Marlene, and Avrom. The contents include publications and creative works generated by seventy faculty and staff members from March 2020 to February 2021.

The annual conference of the ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LIBRARIES, June 27-July 1, will feature Deena and Stephanie as speakers. Deena will detail the process of collecting COVID 19 resources in a paper entitled *Archiving the Now*. Stephanie's presentation is entitled *YAIR: Yeshiva Academic Institutional Repository: Highlights from the First Three Years*. Again, as last year, the conference will take place on Zoom.

The Provost's office offered preliminary guidance on RETURN TO OFFICE with library hours fully restored. Student-facing staff members will return full time and technical staff will return 2-5 days per week depending on their need to access materials. Instructional staff are preparing Fall Semester orientation sessions, and Live Chat will extend to 9 PM Monday-Thursday.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY'S 36 HOURS OF GIVING CAMPAIGN was held Wednesday, April 21, 8 AM through Thursday, April 22, 8 PM in support of students due to additional COVID-related expenses. The campaign for critical funding engaged 613 alumni, parents, friends, faculty, staff, and students, and raised \$2,119,870 with a matching gift for twice the impact.



REALM NEWS

Hanging Together

Excerpted from an article by Sharon Streams,
REALMS Project Director, OCLC

A **RE**opening**A**rchives**L**ibraries&**M**useums research briefing has determined that COVID vaccines are all effective, even against variants and mutations although it is not known yet how long immunity lasts. Also under investigation is how and when vaccines will be available for children under 12 years old. In the meantime, the continued measures of public health strategies (physical distancing, masks, hand hygiene and quarantining) should be in place to prevent a sharp increase in new cases.



The REALM project: What we've learned and what's next

What the REALM project has learned over the past year, and an outline of our next phase of work.

 Hanging Together / Sharon Streams / May 20

As we've seen recently with updated communications from the CDC and WHO, there is general agreement that SARS-CoV-2 travels through the air easily—both through large respiratory droplets and through small aerosolized particles—and that transmission via materials and surfaces is a less common source of COVID-19 infection. For libraries processing millions of checked-out items last year, quarantining was a relatively simple method for handling books, DVDs, and other collection materials suspected of contamination without damaging them or investing in expensive products.

As more research has accumulated to show that fomites—that is, infected objects or materials—are not a key source of virus transmission, many libraries have determined that quarantine of handled collection items is not necessary or could be limited to items where contamination is suspected (e.g., someone who is not vaccinated sneezed on it). As more people are vaccinated, scientists are currently focused on the three "Vs": vaccines, variants, and ventilation.



Battelle Research Report from the REALM Project

A new research briefing prepared by Battelle, released May 20, 2021, concluded that variants of COVID 19 are more easily transmitted and have a higher spread rate than the original virus. However, vaccines have been able to neutralize the variants.

Studies on the effects of ventilation have also been conducted. Theoretically, many factors influence whether ventilation is successful in the elimination or decrease of SARS-CoV-2 particles in the air, including – Activities taking place in the space, – Number of infectious people in a space and their viral load, – Air change rate, natural vs. mechanical ventilation, and presence of air filtration. Air purification devices with a HEPA H14 filter eliminated 99% of bacteriophages under perfect conditions. Similarly, another study found that aerosol concentration decreased 90% after 30 minutes of running four air purifiers in a classroom with windows and doors closed. There is a risk that HVAC systems could worsen spread of COVID-19 if not designed or modified to maximize circulation of virus-free air into a space. HVAC systems might have to be redesigned to efficiently remove virus particles.

Historic buildings were often found to be safer because they were built with large windows for cross-ventilation. Because ventilation with outdoor air is more difficult in colder months, researchers have estimated that airborne infection risk is double that of summer months. Therefore, a consensus must be developed on how to best configure, upgrade, or design ventilation systems to mitigate the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Battelle will continue to review current scientific literature and to issue its briefings with new and updated information.

WILF VACCINATION SITE

The University announced on April 5th that New York City had accepted its offer of support, and as a result, Weissberg Commons on the Wilf Campus had become a new NYC vaccine site. The site became operational as of April 7. Vaccines became available Sunday through Thursday from 9 AM to 7 PM and Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM (closing on Shabbat and Jewish holidays) until June 30. The site is managed on behalf of New York City by Centers Urgent Care. As of April 6, all New Yorkers 16 years of age and older in the YU community are eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at the site.

Employees must have a negative PCR test on file. It must be no earlier than April 6th for those who have been continually coming to campus since after Passover break. For those first coming to campus now, or for new employees, a negative PCR test is required (available on campus) or proof of vaccination. Masks are required unless in a private office alone.

Please check <https://library.yu.edu/librarians> for updated Library summer hours. In-person events will hopefully resume in the fall, and shuttle capacity will then also be reconsidered.



SUMMER COVID TESTING

Employees coming to campus over the summer, who have not submitted proof of full vaccination must test at the following times. Please bring your insurance card to the testing site.

Testing will be available on Wilf Campus in Furst Hall 2d floor and on the Beren Campus (215 Lexington) 3rd floor from 1-3 PM on the following days:

Thursday, July 1st

Wednesday, July 14th

Thursday, July 29th

Those who have submitted proof of full vaccination to COVID_HR@yu.edu do not have to participate in the summer testing.

Remember that masks are required in all university buildings.

COLLEGES REQUIRE STUDENTS TO HAVE COVID19 VACCINES FOR FALL

Duke University in North Carolina has announced that it will require students to have a COVID-19 vaccine when they return this fall. And the list of campuses with such policies is growing.



Rutgers University in New Jersey was the first, and since then more than a dozen residential colleges have followed. The University of Notre Dame; two Ivy League universities, Brown and Cornell; and Northeastern University in Massachusetts are among those requiring the vaccine for the fall. Cleveland State University will do so for all students living on campus.

Yeshiva has joined the growing number of colleges to mandate vaccines as a means of controlling outbreaks on campus. Consequently, the University has announced a full reopening in the fall 2021 semester.

TRANSITIONS

POLLACK LIBRARY

by Sandy Moore



GALINA TOPILER, the long-time Acquisitions Associate at the Pollack Library, retired at the end of May. As our Acquisitions Associate Galina has certainly left her mark on our collection. For years to come, our students, faculty, staff, and alumni will enjoy browsing a collection that Galina helped to build. Working with her for the past couple of years has been a true pleasure, and her warm and friendly smile will be missed. During the pandemic, Pollack Library staff have had the opportunity to hear Galina play the piano during our weekly meetings. It has been such a lovely way for us to celebrate staff birthdays when we can't physically be together. Galina has worked at YU Libraries for nearly 30 years,



and although it is difficult to see her go, we are thrilled that she will have more time to spend traveling with her husband and doting on her grandchildren. We will remember her grace, impeccable fashion sense, and friendly demeanor.



Galina Topiler



NICOLE BUEHLER, our Public Services Librarian at the Pollack Library, recently completed her Master of Library and Information Science at Pratt University, graduating with distinction. She has been offered and has accepted a position in her home state as Instructor and Library User Services Specialist at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. Kansas State is Nicole's alma mater, and she is eager to move closer to her family. During her time at YU, she has helped us with chat reference during the pandemic and played an essential role in this year's *Catalog of University Authors*. Nicole's upbeat personality and willingness to take on new responsibilities will surely be missed. Will she resume her hobby of playing the euphonium in the marching band?



Nicole Buehler

HEDI STEINBERG LIBRARY

Shulie Cohen Sails the Retirement Seas by Hindishe Lee and HSL Staff

HSL staff is barely recovering from the departure of our beloved Alice to the shores of retirement. Now, our beloved Shulie has decided to also take the plunge after working at the circulation desk in 1997. Alice and Shulie could both be described as the "Dynamic Duo" of the second-floor library, whether extending their courtesies at the circulation desk or artistically setting up our staff luncheon tables. As an added plus, Shulie always supplied us with an ample supply of healthy tangerines!



They say the early bird catches the (book)worm. That certainly describes our Shulie. Often arriving to work well before the hour required, Shulie fulfills the aphorism "*lifnim m'shurat hadin*," going above and beyond the call of duty. Additionally, she always provided a *heimish* (Yiddish: friendly, homey) ambiance to the library that will be sorely missed, as well as her abundantly kind heart.

Shulie's children will certainly keep her globe-hopping as they live in Chicago and Perth, Australia. We wish Shulie much happiness and success in her retirement, hopefully busily involved with many simchas (happy occasions) to plan and enjoy. We love you, Shulie!



FINAL LIBRARY BOOK TALK OF THE SPRING SEMESTER

by **Marlene Schiffman**

On Monday, April 19, 2021, Dr. Rachel Mesch, professor of English and French and chair of the English department, gave us a peek into her book, *Before Trans: Three Gender Stories from Nineteenth-Century France*. The book talk was held on Zoom, Monday, April 19.



Dr. Rachel Mesch

Moderated by Paul and in conversation with Liesl Schwabe, Lecturer in English and Writing Program Director, Dr. Mesch shared her research on gender roles that were rapidly changing in nineteenth-century Paris. At that time, mass culture was invented with a proliferation of newspapers and photographs. These media portrayed women as feminine and family-oriented. They declared that women writers had a terrible reputation: men were writers; women were not. Women who wrote would have to deny their femininity. Yet some women not only wrote: they acknowledged their trans status.

The author defined "trans" as referring to someone who has moved away from the gender assigned at birth, often toward a nonbinary gender identity. Dr. Mesch used this framework to understand three literary figures. These writers experienced their gender in ways that did not fit into 19th-century categories. At that time, there was no term for "trans" as a medical or social category and no study of gender identity as a science.

How did these three people express their struggles with their sexual identities? They wrote stories. Dr. Mesch examined both their novels and stories as well as their extensive personal letters and journals. She gained empathy and compassion for them as people who wanted, despite great pressures to conform, to express their true identities in a society that would not allow that.

The three writers she researched all started out being addressed with feminine pronouns, but they identified with masculine or nonbinary gender expressions. Jane Dieulafoy (1851-1916) wore men's suits and short hair and had official permission to wear trousers. She promoted women's participation in society and professions. She and her husband participated in archaeological excavations in Persia and filled a room in the Louvre Museum with ancient artifacts. Her celebrity allowed her to transcend comments about and criticisms of her nonconforming attire. Tellingly, in a novel, she wrote about a character like the biblical Joseph: He was torn away from his family but wanted to return and be accepted both as the same person who left but also as a changed person. She also saw herself as Joan of Arc, the "transvestite saint."

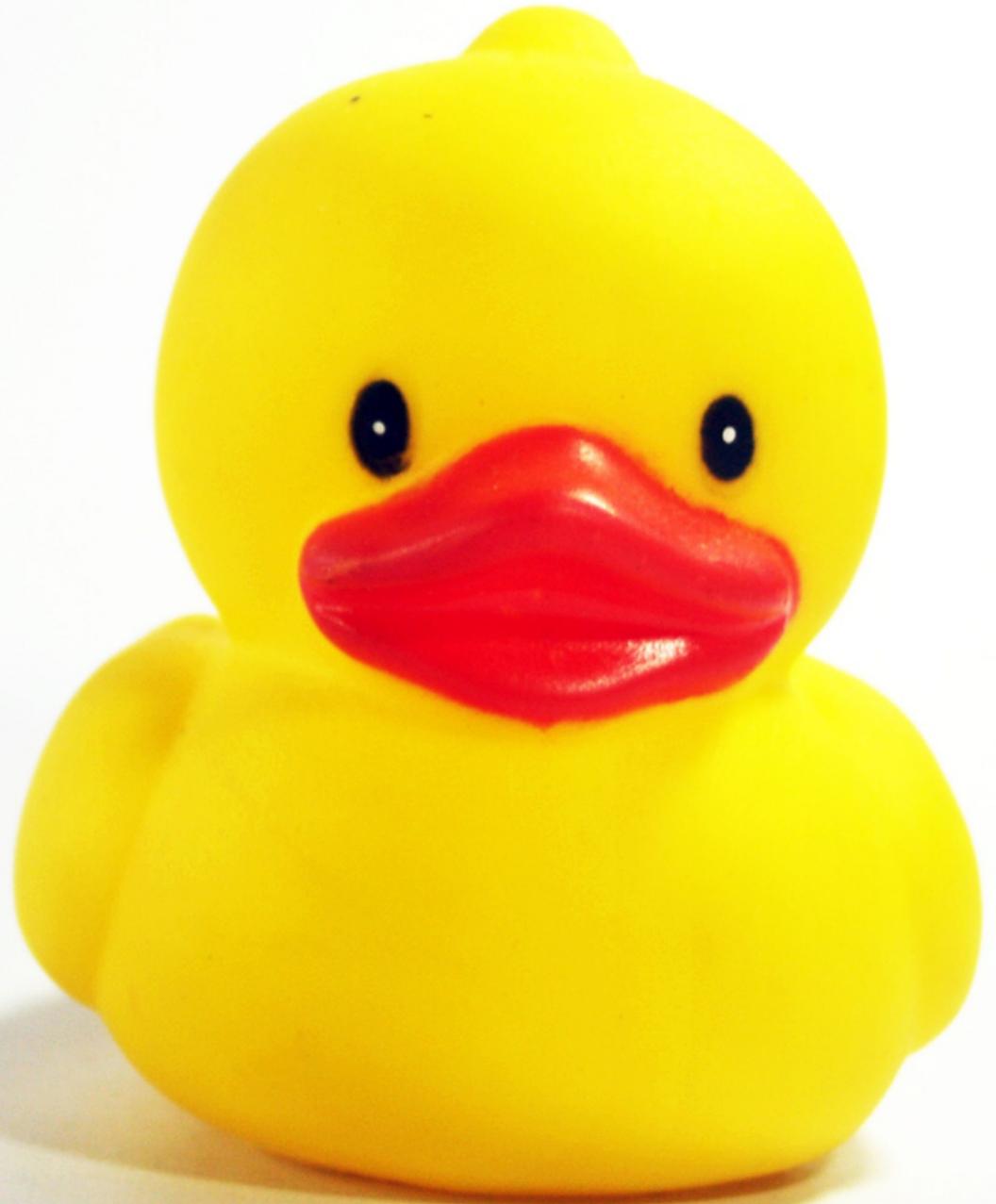
Rachilde (1860-1953), whose photographs over the years reveal a woman changing gradually into a nonbinary identity, adopted the werewolf as her symbol. She specialized in writing tales of decadence full of eroticism, mood-altering drugs and bold experiences that were meant to shock the reader. Her writing exhibits self-loathing and vulnerability. She embraced a bohemian status and so was able to neutralize criticism partially.

Marc de Montifaud (1845-1912) was the most persecuted of the three, spending time in jail for writing scandalous novels. There was no talk about gender in them, but in a less direct way, the author defended people who were nonconforming.

Men who displayed feminine attributes were considered merely "eccentric," and they expressed their identities in more private ways, such as in the clothing they wore at home or by home decoration. For commercial success, it behooved them to maintain their male identities in public to sell their novels. Some women writers, even though they were not transgender, also adopted male pseudonyms to increase sales of their books. With this study, we see that gender nonconformity was expressed in different ways, and one significant method was through literature.

Dr. Mesch said that her research allowed her to connect on a new level with these authors that let their full humanity shine through. While they were treated disparagingly or were even mocked, what drove them inspires empathy. In the past, we have expected every person to be heterosexual and gender normative. Dr. Mesch observed that we understand an important dimension of human personality by listening to these three authors' expressions of this aspect of their deeply rooted identities.

Adina and Noah Pollack announced the birth of a son, Yitzchak Shlomo, April 15th.



Mazal Tov!



Editor: Marlene Schiffman