

# PLG Progressive Librarians Guild Bulletin

Volume 2, Issue 4

April 2013

## **Miriam Braverman Memorial Prize - Deadline Extended**

The MIRIAM BRAVERMAN MEMORIAL PRIZE, a presentation of the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG), is awarded each year for the best paper about some aspect of the social responsibilities of librarians, libraries, or librarianship. Papers related to archivists, archives, and archival work are also eligible.

Please note that the deadline for this award has been extended to **Monday, May 12, 2013**.

The winning paper will be published in the Summer 2013 issue of Progressive Librarian. The winner of the contest will also receive a \$300 stipend to help offset the cost of travel to and from the 2013 American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in Chicago, IL from June 27- July 2. The award will be presented at the annual PLG dinner at ALA.

Visit <http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/content/award.shtml> for the full call for submissions.

## **PLG Member's Book Wins Silver Nautilus Award**

*The Greedy Sparrow: An Armenian Tale* by PLG Member Lucine Kasbarian won a Silver Nautilus Book Award in the Children's Picture Books (Preschool to Grade 2) category. The Nautilus Book Awards are given to "books that promote spiritual growth, conscious living, and positive social change". For more on the Nautilus Book Awards, visit:

<http://www.nautilusbookawards.com/Home.html>

Reach and Teach, a progressive, social justice learning company, has reviewed *The Greedy Sparrow* as part of its "Books That Transform the World" review series. To read the review, visit: <http://www.reachandteach.com/content/article.php/sparrow>

## **Haymarket Monument**

Travelling to Chicago for ALA Annual? Plan a visit to the Haymarket Monument, constructed in memoriam of the 1886 Haymarket riot. A guide to the monument is available at:

<http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org/haymarket-tour-intro.html>

## SRRT Programs at ALA Annual

### Saturday, June 29

8:30AM	Amelia Bloomer Project Author Panel	McCormick Place Convention Center - N427a
1:00PM	Introduction to Women's Issues in ALA	McCormick Place Convention Center - N139
5:00PM	Returning Fire: Culture Jamming War & Militarism in the Online Gaming Sphere	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place - Adler 24AB

### Sunday, June 30

3:00PM	How to Plan and Run a Successful Human Library: Promoting Understanding, One Conversation at a Time	McCormick Place Convention Center - N129
3:00PM	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Video Tribute filming session	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place - Adler 24A
4:30PM	Libraries Transforming Communities: Extending Our Reach	McCormick Place Convention Center - N138
<b>4:30PM</b>	<b>Progressive Librarians Guild Committee Meeting</b>	<b>McCormick Place Convention Center - N136</b>
8:00PM	FTF Feminist Night at the Movies	Hyatt Regency Chicago Columbus AB

### Monday, July 1

8:30AM	Out of the Library and into the Community: Academic Librarians and Community Engagement	McCormick Place Convention Center - S502
10:30AM	Dutch Caribbean Libraries Association Goes Green: Experiences of the Aruba National Library and the Philipsburg Jubilee Library	McCormick Place Convention Center - N127

For more information on these sessions, as well as other SRRT committee meetings, please visit <http://ala13.ala.org/scheduler>

**PLG Co-Signed Open Letter to President Obama**

April 23, 2013

Re: Security Classification Reform Steering Committee

Dear President Obama:

The undersigned organizations, which support greater openness in government, urge you to promptly establish and provide active White House leadership for a Security Classification Reform Steering Committee to help correct what you have called “the problem of overclassification.”

As you know, the national security classification system sweeps in far too much information that should actually be available to the public, creating unnecessary barriers to public deliberation on many policy issues in counterterrorism, intelligence policy, and the conduct of foreign affairs. As public frustration over unjustified secrecy mounts, respect for the security classification system plummets, placing genuinely sensitive information at risk. Yet up to now, no constructive resolution of this impasse has emerged.

In principle, classification authority should be used with precision and only when absolutely necessary to protect the security of the United States. In practice, however, classification activity has been dramatically on the rise for many years, with over 92 million decisions to classify information in fiscal year 2011 alone. Declassification procedures cannot possibly keep pace, especially given the legal and bureaucratic obstacles to declassification that currently exist. This approach is unsustainable and counterproductive.

For these reasons, we welcomed the reforms you made to the classification system in December 2009 through Executive Order 13,526 – as well as your decision to charge the Public Interest Declassification Board (PIDB) with developing recommendations for a “more fundamental transformation” of the classification system. We also were deeply appreciative of the conscientious and transparent manner in which the PIDB approached its task. The PIDB has now issued the recommendations you requested, prefaced by the stark conclusion that “present practices for classification and declassification of national security information are outmoded, unsustainable and keep too much information from the public.”

While we do not favor all of the individual recommendations contained in the PIDB’s report, and would add others that were not included, one of the recommendations that we do support is the PIDB’s first proposal: the creation of a White House-led Security Classification Reform Steering Committee to lead a systematic program of classification reform. The PIDB has provided a useful diagnosis of “the problem of overclassification.” But the Board itself is only an advisory body. It can suggest potential remedies, but it is not in a position to prescribe or deliver them. That will require an exercise of presidential authority. A presidentially-appointed Steering Committee would provide a mechanism for identifying and coordinating needed changes and for overcoming internal agency obstacles to change. It would also reflect the urgency of reining in a classification system that is largely unchecked.

Continued on page 4...

## **PLG Co-Signed Open Letter to President Obama (continued)**

Furthermore, we know from experience that the successful implementation of systemic reform proposals will require two things: strong White House leadership, and agency “buy-in.” It is essential that the White House take ownership of the reform effort going forward and that senior agency officials be closely involved in the decisions that are made. The Steering Committee provides the vehicle by which such engagement can occur, and a forum for continuing refinement and oversight of the reform process.

Of course, merely appointing a group called the “Security Classification Reform Steering Committee” will not itself accomplish these goals. To be successful, the committee must have active, high-level White House participation and support. It must include (as the PIDB recommended) not only senior agency officials charged with ensuring the security of sensitive documents, but also those charged with ensuring public access to government information. And, in accordance with the PIDB’s observation that the committee’s processes must be “transparent” and earn public support, the committee should engage the public, much as the PIDB itself did when developing its recommendations.

In closing, transformation of the classification system has become a democratic and security imperative, and the critical moment in this effort has now come. We believe that a Steering Committee can be the key to the success of classification reform if it is properly constituted and given a clear mandate to reduce the size and scope of the national security classification system.

Respectfully,

Advocacy for Principled Action in  
Government  
American Association of Law Libraries  
American Booksellers Foundation for  
Free Expression  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Library Association  
Association of Research Libraries  
Bill of Rights Defense Committee  
The Brennan Center for Justice  
Center for Democracy &  
Technology  
Center for Effective Government  
Center for Media and Democracy  
Center for National Security Studies  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics  
in Washington

The Constitution Project  
Council on American-Islamic Relations  
Cyber Privacy Project  
Defending Dissent Foundation  
Demand Progress  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
Electronic Privacy Information Center  
Essential Information  
The Federation of American Scientists  
Freedom of the Press Foundation  
Government Accountability Project  
iSolon.org  
The National Security Archive  
National Security Counselors  
OpenTheGovernment.org  
Progressive Librarians Guild  
Project On Government Oversight  
Society of American Archivists

cc: John P. Fitzpatrick, Director, Information Security Oversight Office  
The Honorable Nancy Soderberg, Chair, Public Interest Declassification Board

## **PLG Edmonton Letter to Minister of Canadian Heritage**

The Edmonton Chapter of the Progressive Librarians' Guild has drafted a letter to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, James Moore, bringing to his attention violations of the LAC Code of Conduct by Daniel Caron, Librarian and Archivist of Canada, and Mark C. Melanson, Champion, Values and Ethics. These gross violations of the Code of Conduct and Duty of Loyalty are particularly troubling given Mr. Caron and Mr. Melanson's positions of leadership at LAC.

Please feel free to print and mail a copy of the letter to Mr. Moore to show your concern around the LAC Code of Conduct and its chilling effect on library, archives, and information work in this country.

The letter can be found on the PLG Edmonton blog:

<http://plgedmonton.blogspot.ca/p/the-honourable-james-mooreminister-of.html>

Remember, the Bulletin needs updates from  
the PLG membership so we can spread the word about  
all of the good work that we are collectively doing!

Have an update to share?  
Send it to [sarahbarriage@gmail.com](mailto:sarahbarriage@gmail.com)