

**President's Message**

*by Nancy Flury Carlson, Chapter President*

Last year at Westinghouse's "Take Your Children To Work" day, my library participated in the Career Fair where we raffled an Internet book and handed out a couple of flyers we had written: "Is Special Librarianship the Career for You?" and a mini-test called "Should You Work in a Special Library?" The raffle drew throngs of students, and most of them were familiar with and enthusiastic about the Internet. As I talked to these students about the Internet, my favorite line was: "You probably don't realize this, but librarians have been searching online databases for twenty years." Their eyes changed and their heads tilted - we had been surfing their entire lives! This must be an interesting profession.

Even though most of us have been using highly cool information technologies our whole careers, and even though we have adopted use of the Internet as part of our toolkits, sometimes one simple event still takes you by surprise. For me, it was a little interchange I had last week. I was searching the web for something else, and came across the home page of the university I used to work for. I decided to take a quick detour to see if there were any pictures of the Law Library, the place where I worked in my first library job, which in turn gave me the idea to get an MLS. There weren't any pictures, but I saw a list of the staff, and there was the Acquisitions Assistant (my old job!). And there was her email address. I shot her a quick email, just letting her know that I had her job twenty years ago, and how one thing led to another and here I am now. Within 15 minutes she shot back an email, telling me that they still get junk mail with my name on it, and she's starting to work on her MLS now too. Before the Internet and email, it wouldn't have been worth the effort to follow up on a question like "I wonder who has my old job back at the law library?" With the Internet and email, it can be asked and answered in 15 minutes.

So what's my point? Well, there's clearly magic in the Internet, and the population at large is now aware of it. All kinds of people are finding their own little exciting examples of using the Net for something that would not have been possible without it. And with the internet, people everywhere are turning themselves on to the thrills and spills of seeking information. I think that this means the population at large is ready now to understand what our profession has been doing all along. They now have a context to understand what we are talking about when we say we do online searching. After they spend an hour looking through the first 50 hits of a 350,000 hit internet search without finding what they are looking for, they are primed to understand what we tell them about well-organized, professionally indexed information tools. Better yet, when they spend hours searching the Net for something that isn't there, and finally come to the library to ask about it, we can sometimes whip out a reference book or industry newsletter and show them the answer in minutes. The world's eyes are changing when they perceive us as we are now, and they see that this is how we always have been.

**Collaborating for Our Future**

*by Linda Hartman, President-Elect*

After the December Pizza Party, I was speaking with Carol Hoffmann, from the School of Information Sciences (SIS) at the University of Pittsburgh. Carol assists the students with internships and other questions they may have regarding their preparation as an information

professional. She thanked me for providing the students with the opportunity to listen to wonderful speakers tell their story and give advice to those entering the job market.

During our discussion an idea formed. Dave Majka and I are both involved with the School of Information Sciences Alumni Society, which also provides professional growth opportunities for the students. Rather than both groups working separately toward the same goal, why not work together? After the start of the new year, I sent an email to the leaders of the student groups at SIS, their faculty advisors, the leaders of the professional organizations with active chapters in Pittsburgh, as well as the dean, department chairs, and other individuals from SIS.

As you can imagine scheduling can be a challenge when dealing with such a large group of people. After the first meeting I intend to do much of our work virtually. I had hoped to involve the Information Sciences and Telecommunication students and faculty as well. I feel this is important because as the information profession moves forward it will include the work of those from the Library and Information Science programs as well as the Information Science/Telecommunication programs. Unfortunately, most of those in attendance were from the Library and Information Sciences department. I can see there may be some educating to do. Doesn't everyone know how much fun it is to work with LIS folks? The other problem is there is no active chapter of ASIS (The American Society for Information Science) in Pittsburgh. Our numbers may have been low at this first meeting, but our productivity was high! These are some of the ideas that came about:

- Listserv and possibly a brochure with Frequently Asked Questions about interviewing, etc. (e.g., how many suits to take on an interviewing trip). Practitioners would monitor the listserv and be able to participate from their office or den.

- Resume critiquing, particularly before major conferences for information professionals

- Job Fair/Placement Fair - The University holds these once or twice a year. We would have a table outside the room where the companies are located. We would be a "friendly face" for the students as well as provide a tip sheet listing questions they should ask the prospective employers.

- Speakers similar to those we had at the pizza party. They would give advice about resumes, interviewing, and getting that first job.

The topic of one of these speakers could be "How to Conference". Ideas presented would deal with getting the most out of attending an annual conference.

Along with these ideas we established a timeline of when to hold these various events. We also discussed who would be responsible for organizing each idea or event. The other groups would then be called upon to have members assist and participate.

SLA was given the task of organizing the "How to Conference" session. I am looking for volunteers to coordinate this. Just because you have not gone to an annual meeting, does not mean you are off the hook. What would you want to know if you were going for the first time? Having gone once or twice, what would you like to know to make the next trip more productive? If you do not volunteer, I will be calling YOU! This is our chance to show the other information professionals that SLA knows how to network and to get the most out of our organization. Maybe they will want to make it their organization, too.

Your involvement does not mean you have to get up and speak if that does not interest you. We need input and help contacting those from the other organizations about their conferences. I am waiting by the phone and have my email up and running. I look forward to hearing from you!

## Other News

In keeping with the theme of Linda's article above, SIS is looking for mentors for mentors for its students. See the ad to the left for details.

For those of you who are looking for work, contact Scott Trask, Employment Chair, for information about openings. Contact Scott via email at [BSNL28A@prodigy.com](mailto:BSNL28A@prodigy.com), phone: 724-539-6464

Don't forget that the resources of Carnegie Library's Job and Career Education Center are also available to you for free. JCEC has computers and printers for resumes and cover letter preparation, books on interviewing techniques and salary negotiations, information on local companies to target your job search and prepare for interviews, etc. Free resume consultations are also available by appointment at 622-3133.

Some of the new books in JCEC that may be of interest to you in your career planning include: *Get Ahead! Stay Ahead!* by Dianna Booher. (Subtitle--Learn the 70 Most Important Career Skills, Traits, and Attitudes to Stay Employed!); *Strategic Job Jumping* by Julia Hartman (Subtitle--Fifty Very Smart Tactics for Building Your Career); *Marketing Yourself and Your Career* by Jane Ballback and Jan Slater. These are just a few of the many, many valuable titles available to you. You can also sign up for a free email account through the Carnegie Library!

## For All You Do, This Part's for You

With National Library Week and International Special Librarians Day (April 23) coming up, Nancy Carlson thought this press release [which has been edited] from SLA Headquarters might be worthwhile reading. So, for whenever someone asks, "What do librarians do all day?" or "Why do you have to go to graduate school to become a librarian?"-- maybe the following information will help.

### *Who Are We and What Do We Do?*

SLA has been working with BLS to not only modernize and refine the definition of a librarian, but also attempt to retitle the profession as "information professional." The latter has failed, according to BLS, due to its "potential confusion with information technology folks." But our recommendations for redefinition are now being taken seriously. Here is SLA's proposed definition for "Librarian:"

"Provides timely, working information to a specialized clientele to further the objectives of libraries, educational institutions, museums, non-profit organizations, government agencies, corporations, news organizations, law firms, and health care providers. Possesses expert knowledge of information resources, and anticipates the needs of the organization or client. Critically evaluates and filters information to design tailored information products that can meet the strategic goals of the organization or client. Functions also include acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, collections maintenance, and reference services; compiling, analyzing, writing, editing, computer programming, and systems design."

This definition was created over several years, with consideration given to all varieties of librarians and capacities served. It is certainly not meant to encompass every potential duty found in the profession; but it is meant to capture the essence of the work involved. Visit the BLS website at [http://stats.bls.gov/soc/soc\\_home.htm](http://stats.bls.gov/soc/soc_home.htm) for details on the revisions.

## **A Change of Seasons**

*by Linda Hartman, President-Elect*

As you know from your libraries and organizations, strategic planning is an important process. SLA HQ has undergone it as well. Part of looking ahead is reviewing the recent past, to see what goals have been met and which still need work.

SLA International HQ has put together a document called "Seasons of Change". It covers 1997 and is broken into the different areas of responsibility within the organization (e.g., Computer Services, Exhibits and Advertising, and Public Relations).

Following are a few excerpts:

### **WINTER 1997 - January + February + March**

#### *Conferences and Meetings*

- For the first time, the Preliminary Conference Program was online for easy members access.

#### *Information Resources Center*

- IRC Web pages added as separate heading on home page, leading to greatly increased IRC exposure.

### **SPRING 1997 - April + May + June**

#### *Exhibits and Advertising*

- New successful events at 1997 show included: ExpoCards, Exhibitor Cocktail Reception, Indianapolis Kick-Off Party, New Product Demonstrations and Web Links.

#### *Membership Development*

- Membership staff worked with SLA Student and Academic Relations Committee to establish Certificate of Merit Program Recognizing

- Outstanding Student Groups. Certificates were distributed at the President-Elects Reception for Students at SLA's Annual Conference. The Certificates will be awarded annually and presented at the Reception each year.

#### *Professional Development*

- During the months of April and May, SLA partnered with Pace University to offer SLA's newest distance learning program where members can participate from their desktops at their convenience. These courses utilize the Internet, videotapes, textbooks and other supplemental materials.

#### *Public Relations*

- At the Annual Business Meeting, the first SLA video was viewed as a part of the Executive Director's Report.

### **SUMMER 1997 - July + August + September**

#### *Finance and Administration*

- Finance and Administration began utilization of document-on-request systems for routinely requested financial forms in September.

#### *Government Relations*

Inclusion in Government Grant Programs: The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) wanted to exclude special and private libraries from its grant programs. SLA convinced IMLS to at least accept special or private libraries that were also not-for-profit. The definition of a library in the law was also amended to include special and private libraries.

#### *Research*

- The Web site's Research page has been reorganized and a page has been added for "Other Research and Related Links."

### **FALL - October + November + December**

#### *Non-Serial Publications*

- Ten new titles were published in 1997, including State-of-the-Art Institute, Annual Conference, Competencies report, Competitiveness report.

#### *Serial Publications*

- SLA solicited a higher number of international authors. Articles have been submitted from Australia, Japan, Canada, and Switzerland.

If you would like to read the entire document, please contact SLA HQ or look at the website at <http://www.sla.org/assoc/seasons.htm>

### **SLA Member in the Spotlight**

***By Marge Sroka***

Barb Folb is currently a medical/business librarian at Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield Business Research Services. She is one of two librarians, and has worked there two years. Her past jobs have been at Carnegie Mellon University's Hunt Library and Falk Library at the University of Pittsburgh.

The Highmark library provides information about health care, employee benefits and health-care financing. Highmark clients are typically from case management, product development and market research. Barb markets the library by stamping its name on every item that originates there, Employees reading photocopies, circulating journals, and articles readily see the library provided this information. The company is currently working on an Intranet, and Barb will post news of library services and the library catalog on it.

Being a librarian is Barb's second career. Besides her MLS, she has a Masters of Art in Music from Youngstown State University. She is an accomplished musician. She played freelance horn and had a variety of jobs. After a neck injury, she began to consider alternative careers. A friend recommended librarianship because Barb has been a lifelong library user. At the time Barb lived in Wisconsin. After learning that the closest accredited library school was a two and a half hour drive away, she postponed her plans for library school. When she and her husband moved to Pittsburgh, she immediately enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Sciences and graduated in 1994.

The biggest challenge for Barb is to remain current in the health care/medical field. Information and new resources come out rapidly. As a result, after you become comfortable with one resource, a new one is introduced, and the learning process begins again. Managing her time

between answering reference questions, and maintaining the library is an ongoing challenge as well.

Barb has been a member of SLA for 3 years. Currently she is the Webmaster for the SLA Pittsburgh Chapter. By mid February the page will be available on the SLA server. Its URL is <http://www.sla.org/chapter/cpit/index.htm>. Contents will include a calendar of events, local contacts, and employment news. Anyone who would like to post an article, report or other library-related information on the Pittsburgh chapter page, should contact Barb.

## Sight Bites

*by Earl Mounts*

David Macey and his wife were delighted with the Christmas candle they received in December--especially since it carried a warning that ensured no misunderstandings would occur when it was used. "Flammable when lit", the package cautioned them.--New Scientist, January 31, 1998, p.96 ([www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com))

The QWERTY keyboard is the granddaddy of all paradigms; within it there is refuge from the onslaught of changing standards. Next time you hear the announcement that, "Things are going to be changing around here", just look down at your keyboard, sigh, and take strength in the enduring quality of that irrational string of letters. T. Cooper, The QWERTY Paradigm in Executive Report, February 1998, p.44 ([www.execreport.com](http://www.execreport.com))

According to the NET (No Electronic Theft) Act signed on December 16, 1997, possession of 10 or more electronic copies worth more than \$2,500 could land you six years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. "You'd be better off going out and shooting somebody" quips D.J. Farber, telecommunications professor at Penn. "The penalty is less." --W.M. Grossman, Downloading as a Crime in Scientific American, March 1998, p.37 ([www.sciam.com](http://www.sciam.com))

Help for the technologically impaired: A customer called the help line of a large British computer company. He was complaining that his mouse was not transparent. He was moving it around on the screen but couldn't see through it to the text he wanted to identify.--New Scientist, January 31, 1998, p.96. ([www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com))

For the budding engineers' points of view on present and future libraries, see <http://www.eweek.org/1998/News/FC/FCntirel.html>.

## Chapter News

Our new web page address is: <http://www.sla.org/chapter/cpit/INDEX.HTM>. Visit often! Help make it your Home Page. Contact Barb Folb about submissions.

The Chapter now has an official permanent mailing address to which correspondence should be directed. Our new address: Pittsburgh Chapter, Special Libraries Association, PO Box 23373, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

During last year's annual Chapter financial report preparation for SLA headquarters, it was learned that the Internal Revenue Service has requested that all invoices or bills show the Taxpayer Identification Number (i.e., Employer Identification Number or Social Security



Number). Therefore, when asking for services or buying products for the Chapter from vendors, please ask them to include their TIN on their invoices/bills. A related point is, that this is true also for reimbursement checks to Chapter members for purchased goods or services.

Therefore, to avoid a hassle to yourself, please try to arrange the transaction to either 1) get a check from the Treasurer before the transaction, or 2) make sure that the vendor sends an invoice or bill (with the TIN). The flags go up when the IRS sees checks written to individual persons. If such checks cannot be substantiated as being a purchase, then headquarters may need to prepare a Form 1099 for the person(s). A little forethought in preparing for purchases or supplies for the Chapter could make life easier for all concerned. *Submitted by Nick Kotow, Chapter Treasurer*

Please let us all welcome a new student member, Thomas E. Dubis, to the Chapter. We're happy that you decided to join and we hope to see you at future meetings! *Submitted by Paula Reed, Membership Chair.*

Please change Scott Trask's Employment Chair contact information to: email: [BSNL28A@prodigy.com](mailto:BSNL28A@prodigy.com), phone: 724-539-6464.

Don't forget to fill out a Membership Change Form (copy on p. 15) if you have an address, name, phone number change, etc.

### **Upcoming Events**

April 6, 1998-2:00-4:00pm, Pittsburgh Chapter Meeting and Program: Knowledge Management Resources at PALINET. Dinner follows.

April 23, 1998- International Special Librarians Day

### **Pittsburgh Chapter Bylaws Revision**

Have you read the Chapter bylaws lately? If you haven't, you may be unaware of the guidelines that determine the governance of our Chapter. Just as any administrative body needs an outline of policies, so our Chapter's Executive Board relies on the bylaws which guide them through murky waters without compromising its integrity. In general, bylaws must be clearly written in language that reflects current usage and societal changes. Lynn Labun and her committee, Earl Mounts, accomplished the daunting task of completely revising our bylaws for the first time in about 15 years. After the initial revision, preapproval by SLA HQ, approval by our own Executive Board, approval by SLA HQ, approval by Chapter members, and final approval by SLA HQ, the revised bylaws went into effect this year. This [new version of the bylaws](#) is available on the Pittsburgh Chapter's homepage. Be sure to take a look!

The Chapter gratefully acknowledges Lynn and Earl for leading us into the next millennium!

### **Pittsburgh Chapter Award**

The deadline for submitting nominations for the Pittsburgh Chapter Merit Award is approaching! Each year the Pittsburgh Chapter presents a chapter Merit Award to a chapter member or group of members, in recognition of a notable achievement or a significant contribution over an extended period of time. The achievement or contribution must have enhanced the Pittsburgh Chapter or furthered its goals and objectives.

Lynn Tinsley received the 1997 award in recognition of her advocacy of knowledge workers and mentoring of future information professionals. Prior honorees include Barbara Richards (1996), Karola Yourison (1995), and Earl Mounts (1994).

You do not have to write a term paper to recognize the achievements of your colleagues! Nominations can be brief but should include as much information as possible regarding the qualities, achievements, or contributions which meet the criteria for this award. Please send your nominations to:

G. Lynn Tinsley,  
Carnegie Mellon University,  
Engineering & Science Library, Wean Hall, Pittsburgh PA 15213,  
phone 412-268-2428, fax 412-681-1998, [ltinsley@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:ltinsley@andrew.cmu.edu)

The DEADLINE is Friday, April 10, 1998.  
Submitted by Nancy Carlson, Chapter President

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