President’s Message - Ryan Splenda

Hello SLA Pittsburgh Chapter members! It is a pleasure to serve as your president for the 2018 year. I want to share with you some efforts that we are undertaking in order to make your SLA Pittsburgh experience as valuable as possible.

Our Chapter has members from many different areas outside of Allegheny county, including Central PA, Maryland, West Virginia, and Ohio. In order to reach and engage members in these areas, we are adding more webinar-type events. A great example of this was the webinar that we co-hosted with the SLA Philadelphia Chapter in March on blockchain technology and their applications in libraries. The event was well-attended and well-received. We are hoping to do more webinars like this in the future.

Another goal of mine is to get feedback from you, our members, to help guide our programming and events in the future. Board members have sent out emails to all current members asking you to answer some questions in the hopes of gaining insight into your world as information professionals and your interests. If you have received this email, please consider responding with your interests in mind. It will help us when developing future events that will add value to our members.

Lastly, I will be attending the SLA Annual Conference in Baltimore this year. If you are also planning on attending, please join us at our Chapter’s annual no-host get-together event! This year we will be meeting at The Yard on Monday, June 11th from 6PM-8PM. Please drop by, have a drink, eat some appetizers, and hang out with current and former Pittsburgh Chapter members! The Yard is located at 110 South Eutaw St. Baltimore, MD 21201. Hope to see you there!

Our Chapter has made great strides over the last few years. I am hoping to continue that momentum throughout this year. Thank you for being members of our Chapter, and I am looking forward to working with all of you in the future!
Q&A with 2018 Chapter Web Manager Kiera Mudry

**Favorite SLA moment:**
I’m a new member to the official organization so I have not had too many moments yet, but I was a member in the student chapter of SLA during library school. During that time, I had the experience of touring the Barbour Library at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The collection and physical space of the library were rare and impressive, particularly the special archaeological collection. It was a great introduction for getting to know other local members of the Pittsburgh chapter. I’m sure attending my first SLA conference in Baltimore this June will be a favorite moment as well!

**Favorite part of your job:**
My favorite part of my job is the opportunity to learn new things every day. The research unit at RAND spans across many subject areas and topics, and the researchers who work to publish their reports are always engaging the reference department with unique project proposals and desired literature searches. I have had the chance to work on questions that span from early childhood education practices to historic air force units during WWII. I’m always learning something new.

**Least favorite part of your job:**
While I am only one year into this new job, I can’t pinpoint anything that deserves to be named my “least favorite part.” I faced some adversity in the beginning, as I was transitioning from an academic library to a special library in a non-profit, but that has ultimately helped me become a better information specialist.

**Goal for the coming year:**
My professional goal is to become more technologically savvy. I am hoping to pursue more professional development in the areas of technology and HTML coding to enhance our online and digital presence. My personal goal is to be healthier and more physically active outside of my professional life.

**First Library Job:**
My first official library job was with the Business Library at the University of Pittsburgh, as part of the Pitt Partners program during my graduate career. I worked as a Reference Intern under Eve Wider (and Ryan Splenda) when the library was housed in Mervis Hall.

**Last Book Read:**
The last book that I read was IT by Stephen King. I read the title in preparation for the cinematic remake that debuted in theatres last fall. It was very long, detailed-oriented, and effectively scary! It was also my first read of any Stephen King novel and I am looking forward to reading more of his works in the future.

**What made you want to become a Librarian?**
It might be cliché to say that I have always wanted to become a librarian because I love reading, but my love of reading was what helped me find my passion for research. I chose this profession because nothing makes me happier than to help someone find that hidden piece of information that they have been searching for.
Pittsburgh Chapter Escapes!
May 17, 2018

We escaped! SLA Pittsburgh Chapter members successfully completed the Carnegie’s Million$ room at Escape Room Pittsburgh. Chapter members worked together to solve a number of puzzles and escaped with minutes to spare!

Special thanks to Leif Johnson and EBSCO for sponsoring this event.

Mock Interview Student Event
March 19, 2018

SLA Pittsburgh Chapter members welcomed Pitt’s ALA student group for a night of interview preparation! Chapter members Denise Callihan and Lynn Berard began the evening with a presentation of interview tips and stories. After the presentation, each student in attendance participated in a mock interview with chapter members and had time to receive constructive feedback regarding interview strengths and areas for improvement.

Thanks to all those who participated in making the evening a success!
Q&A with Kate Arnold—Stefanie Maclin-Hurd

Former SLA President, Kate Arnold, recently made a career change. Having worked as a librarian for 30 years, and in a variety of sectors (media, not-for-profit-, academic, and health), and being in the process of job hunting, and finding it difficult, she decided to go into training to teach geography. Geography was her undergraduate subject. The course to become a certified geography teacher is nine months long, and will allow for her to teach geography to 11-18 year olds anywhere in the world once completed. The course is a mix of academic training at university, and time spent in school training. In asking how studying to become a geography teacher, Kate answered, “there are similarities in terms of never quite knowing what the day will bring, problem solving, and the need to be organised.”

In March, I took the time to send Kate some questions. Please find some highlights from our conversation below.

How does having been an information professional help with this career change? Do you find certain skillsets to be transferable? If yes, what may those skills be?

Kate mentioned that her “influencing and relationship management skills, which have been honed in part by my involvement in SLA, have helped me no end in understanding how the school culture operates.” She also mentioned that being passionate about the subject you teach is really important, which is also true of most library roles. She sees many transferable skills between being a librarian and being a teacher, primarily in her being very organised, and not fazed by the amount of planning needed to prepare for lessons. She’s even helped her colleagues on how to reference and carry out basic research – once a librarian, always a librarian!

Where do you see yourself moving forward once you are a certified teacher?
Kate’s course will end just as SLA convened for the Annual Conference in Baltimore. She’ll still need to complete her first-year post training (called NQT – newly qualified teacher), during which she’ll need to complete a portfolio of evidence of her teaching practice. At the time of our conversation, she has already started applying for NQT jobs.

How are libraries helping you in your studies?
Kate highlighted, “I’ve always said the best way to experience your service is to be a user.” She believes the course has given her such a great opportunity, and the university library has provided her with resources, advice, and support, all of which, have been invaluable. She also believes that being on the other side of the issue desk does give a different perspective.

Good luck, Kate, in finding your NQT job, and thank you for answering my questions!
Greetings all! As an academic business librarian, I am fortunate to be a member of the Academic Business Library Directors (ABLD) group. We hold an annual conference at a member's institution every year and this year's conference was held at the University of Washington in Seattle! The theme of this year's conference was data – specifically “Harnessing the Data Deluge: Wrangling, Managing, Marketing, Curating, Creating and Communicating with Data in Business Libraries.” I was fortunate to present at this year's conference, and I chose to talk about my efforts in connecting the CMU community with private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) data for startup and entrepreneurship research efforts on campus. I explained a 4-part plan that I am attempting to implement at CMU Libraries. It focuses on licensing appropriate PE/VC data sources, creating presentations and workshops for classes and programs, performing an environmental scan to identify additional collaborators on campus, and forming a team of librarians devoted to entrepreneurship research. The presentation went very well and several business librarians asked for additional details afterwards. All in all, it was a fantastic conference that provided additional context to the trends in academic business librarianship.

In addition to the conference, I was also able to enjoy the many sights and sounds of Seattle. This was my first time visiting the Emerald City, so I tried to pack in as much as I could. It all started with Pike Place Market, Seattle’s public market overlooking the Elliott Bay waterfront. The market opened in 1907 and is very VERY busy. You will find everything here from fresh fish (especially salmon) to the most beautiful flowers imaginable. There are some great places to get breakfast that overlook the bay, and it really is the perfect way to start the day. After that, I attended a Seattle Mariners game (they were playing the Los Angeles Angels). My favorite baseball player when growing up was Ken Griffey Jr., the most famous Mariner of all-time. So I just had to get a t-shirt with his name on the back. The Mariners lost, but Safeco Field was gorgeous and I got to check another stadium off the list! Another highly recommended activity I got to do was taking the ferry to Bainbridge Island. The ferry provides a breathtaking view of the Sound, and the island offers a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of Seattle.

Photo Credits: Ryan Splenda
Stay Connected! Pittsburgh Chapter Social Media

Connect with chapter news and events by joining the SLA Pittsburgh Chapter Facebook Group and by following the chapter on Twitter @slapittsburgh

For more ways to stay up-to-date with the chapter, be sure to use SLA Connect for chapter conversations and visit the SLA Pittsburgh Chapter Website for information including issues of the Confluence and chapter meeting minutes.

2018 Promising Professional Award

The SLA Pittsburgh Chapter Awards Committee, Margarete Bower, Eve Wider, and Deb Martin, is pleased to announce that Liz Hogan has been selected to receive the SLA Pittsburgh Chapter's 2018 Promising Professional Award!

Liz is currently an information specialist at Development Dimensions International (DDI) in Pittsburgh. She is also the SLA Pittsburgh Chapter Secretary. Liz will be using the award to attend the 2018 SLA Annual Conference.

Congratulations, Liz! We look forward to your report on the 2018 SLA Annual Conference, which will appear in a future issue of The Confluence.

ABLD 2018 in the Emerald City Experience (cont’d)

view of the Seattle skyline (I'm such a sucker for skylines). Once on Bainbridge Island, I visited the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, which is a contemporary art museum that focuses on work by area artists. The big takeaway for me here were these great little boxes that you opened up/unfolded that exposed scenes that represent topics or ideas (ex. capitalism, homelessness, etc.)

Towards the end of my trip, I got to visit the Museum of Pop Culture, or MoPOP in Seattle lingo. This was definitely one of the highlights of the trip. There were exhibits on Star Trek, Marvel, science fiction, horror, Jimi Hendrix, and Nirvana (so perfect for me!) In my opinion, the two coolest pieces were Jimi Hendrix's 1968 Fender Stratocaster electric guitar – the one he used to play “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the Woodstock festival, and the original switchboard used in Frankenstein (1931) and Bride of Frankenstein (1935). SO COOL!! The group that I went with had so much fun that we closed the museum down, haha. MoPOP is an absolute must for any visitor to Seattle. Last, but not least, I had lunch with a friend at the café that was used in the Twin Peaks TV series (directed by David Lynch). It is called Twede's Café, located in North Bend, WA (about 30 minutes from Seattle). And yes, I had a piece of cherry pie and damn fine cup of coffee!
The Confluence is the newsletter of the Special Libraries Association - Pittsburgh Chapter. The next issue will be published in Fall 2018. Article submission deadline is TBA. Please contact Brooke Hyatt (brookehyatt@gmail.com) and Leslie Poljak (lesliepoljak@gmail.com) co-editors, with any submissions, issues or concerns relating to the newsletter.

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