

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Kim Gregory

Professional development... mentors/mentees.... leadership.... volunteers.... networking....lifelong learning....continued education.... the list goes on and on. These are just some of the reasons that the Special Libraries Association is important to me, and I consider it an honor to be given the opportunity to be a leader in such a fine organization. I can feel a great year ahead!

As I reflected on what issues to address in my first message to my fellow members and leaders, a multitude of ideas sprung forth. All very important, but impossible to expand on all. However, it provides a good foundation for material in future issues! I would like to encourage everyone to reflect on the same and invite you all to share your thoughts in the form of a submission to *The Confluence*. This will promote value within our chapter, and provide a sense of understanding of why we continue to be a part of this organization.

My inspiration

In my former career as a paralegal, I was given several research assignments, and it was off to the library I went. The Internet was just in the infant stage of becoming widespread and our common "in-house" research tool, so it was not an option for me at that time. Since I am already someone who likes to dig and dig until I either find what I set out to look for (and this isn't necessarily information; it could be a newlywed's ring lost on the beach or a contact lens lost in the grass!) or find a referral source, librarianship seemed like a perfect fit. I was so impressed with the various librarians who assisted me in my quest for answers; answers I did not think I would find, nor had the slightest idea of where to begin to look. They were heroes to me, and I wanted to be a hero, too!

Background

Since I am fairly new to this profession, having graduated three years ago, and my work experience spanning little more than two, it was challenging to make a contribution to my profession. Questions conjuring in my brain contributed to fear and panic. How do I make a contribution to my new employer using my educational background? How do I get up to speed with all the important issues facing information professionals today? How can I influence change or progress when I am still learning myself? These concerns, I would soon discover, are shared by many, and the issues we face, we face together on a united front. There is this common thread weaving among us and, much to my relief, I discovered an entire network of collaborators, problem-solvers, lifelong learners and mentors. Networking was a prominent theme at the Mid-Winter Conference in Savannah, Georgia, and was listed as one of the most important aspects of membership in SLA. As I sat at many of the leadership sessions and roundtable discussions, I had a revelation. This is the first time I have been part of such a large volunteer organization, and suddenly I realized that it is purely through the efforts of countless individuals that this organization is so successful. None of us is receiving monetary rewards for participation, and yet there is so much effort and dedication from everyone involved that I simply sat there in wonder - "Wow, how lucky I am!"

Chapter Initiatives: Past and Present

Since I am new to this field and learning very quickly, I might add, I realize that we are all indeed lifelong learners, and the Pittsburgh Chapter would not be what it is today if it weren't for the longtime dedicated members and past leaders. My hope is to learn as much as I can from those who are willing to share, and at the same time, I hope to offer new insight and ideas to those who have been around a while. It is also my sincere wish to inspire those who are new to this profession, providing them with as much support in the way of leadership, program planning and mentoring opportunities as I had received upon my entrance to this exciting adventure.

Continuity

Continuity was the theme I picked up on this year in the leadership sessions at the Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas. The tenure of president seems such a short period of time (more so in retrospect, I am sure) to accomplish the many goals we feel would make our Chapter the greatest Chapter ever! So it was emphasized that there should be a constant flow to successors in the various positions within a chapter. There are several ways of doing this, and I have begun to initiate some of the suggestions that were offered. One suggestion was to form a committee for chairs that anticipate having a large responsibility, or in some instances, co-chairing in order to ease the burden. It is the hope that the following year, those who worked on the committee will step up and fill the chair position, providing experience, direction and continuity of efforts. This will allow the chapter to move in a positive direction and in accordance with its strategic plan, vision and priorities.

Chapter Visibility

Chapter visibility is always a challenge we face, and is becoming important as our roles, titles and responsibilities change within our work environment. It is more critical than ever to be able to market ourselves within this realm in order to remain a vital part of the information movement. We are the record keepers, contract negotiators, market researchers, reference resources, analysts, competitive intelligence professionals, database instructors, webmasters and a plethora of other new and exciting titles. How do we communicate this to the outside world? Denise Callihan, Past President, has initiated an outreach to other information organizations within our community and successfully partnered with them to further our efforts during her tenure. It will remain one of my main priorities, and I anticipate taking it a step further in reaching out to employers in our community who may not be aware of the importance of having an information professional (and/or all the above titles) on staff. Working through some contacts, I am compiling a preliminary list of invitees, and through fund-raising efforts, I hope to underwrite the cost of their attendance at a few of our upcoming programs. I am also working with Denise in the creation of marketing materials that we can use to promote ourselves to them and other potential partnerships that are in the early stages of development.

Professional Development

Again, another aspect of the Chapter's priorities I plan to continue to foster is our professional development. There have been great strides gained within the last year with the debut of the Pittsburgh Professional Development Series. Kudos, John DiGilio, for your creative programming with respect to the excellent presentations given last year, along with the monetary sponsorship you garnered, past and present! This year, in addition to several programs already planned, we have in the works the creation of an electronic resource database for our members to refer to and rely upon should they ever need to do so. Depending on its progress, this may be expanded to a print copy, and used for raising funds by offering it up for purchase. You will be contacted soon by Adele Barsh for input on your expertise.

Mentoring

Mentoring is always a challenge, but I believe something that deserves our attention. We all need mentored in some way, especially those new to the profession, and being creative and dedicated to the cause with time constraints faced by all can be difficult. We have had some success stories and are certainly gearing up for more. Any and all ideas are welcome. Stay tuned for more updates, as you may be called upon to guide and mold those eager inquisitive minds!

Membership

Another theme expressed at both SLA conferences this year is the unfortunate decline in membership at the international level as well as the chapter level. This year, John and I plan to work hard in recruiting new student members. There are some interesting leads at the University of Pittsburgh and we are planning some outreach efforts there in attempts to spark an early interest in the Association. By getting students involved in some way, we can instill a genuine sense of value to an SLA membership that they can take with them should their job

opportunities lie elsewhere. I am also working through some contacts on outreach efforts to those in the information profession who are not SLA members. I hope to invite them to one or two programs this year to let them get a feel for the excellent benefits our Chapter has to offer. We are all in for a treat this year! Also planned is a survey of our membership to determine why some members retain their membership, but remain inactive. This effort will be headed up by Mary Strife, our Membership Chair, and Debbie Rogers, who is serving on the committee. Hopefully we can then use this information in our programming efforts to generate greater and diverse attendance at our meetings. I thought it very interesting during our exciting election process this year that we received responses from almost 50% of the chapter membership, but only around 25% regularly attend our monthly programs! And for those not in attendance at the May Business Meeting when the results were announced, you missed my reassurances to those in attendance that the votes were counted twice. Sorry, I just couldn't resist!

Sneak Preview of Coming Attractions

September 5, 2001 proved to be the "kick-off" date this year! The School of Information Sciences (SIS) at the University of Pittsburgh had its annual student pizza party. It was a chance for students to become familiar with the Special Libraries Association by asking questions and picking up some valuable information to determine whether or not special librarianship should be their career path. The students were very inquisitive and welcomed the opportunity to learn more. The Pittsburgh Chapter also raffled off some t-shirts to the students, generously donated by International Headquarters. Members from our chapter included Denise Callihan, Past President and current Consultation Chair, Tim Gaus, Student Liaison, and myself. Chryssoula Kinna, SLA Student Chapter President, actively promoted SLA at this event, and I would like to thank her for generating all the interest among the new students. It was very successful and beneficial for our Chapter, and I believe we will recruit additional student members to keep the Pitt Student Chapter alive and growing.

Also that evening was the Second Annual Joint Kick-Off event attended by members of SLA, WPLLA, MLA and ARMA and held at the Engineers Club, Downtown. A great time was had by all! It was an opportunity to once again converse and mingle with other information professionals within the city, and just a time to relax and have some fun. There were many prizes donated to this event, and I would like to thank the following vendors who donated on behalf of SLA. Standard & Poors donated a leather backpack, CAS (Chemical Abstracts Service) donated a laptop backpack and leather portfolio and Quest Technology donated 2002 leather pocket calendars for all in attendance as well as a \$50 Lazarus gift certificate. SLA donated a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble and \$25 to Bucca Di Beppo restaurant. There were other door prizes such as Pirate tickets, Steeler tickets and a 50/50 raffle, the proceeds of which were graciously donated back to the organizations! A representative from each association spoke about their respective chapters and organizations and plans for the upcoming year. Everyone will be quite busy planning all those programs and events, and the evening offered a way to get psyched up and ready to roll!

Through the diligent efforts of John DiGilio, President-Elect, the first several programs are nailed down for this year. The first official program at the end of September was at Alexander's Pasta Express and featured Angelspring Consultants talking to us about stress management, which we can all relate to, whether it be personal or professional, or both!

In October, the first of two programs in the Pittsburgh Professional Development series will feature Intraware who inform us of content-asset management. November is the annual student pizza party which has been very well attended in the past several years, even by the Clarion students who made the long drive through Route 28 construction to attend-that is dedication! We're certainly hoping this year brings the same. December hails in our joint holiday party and again provides time in which to relax and enjoy the company of fellow information professionals. In January will be the second program in the Professional Development series and will feature Global Securities Inc. talking to us about research for beginners. February brings another general meeting, and with many great ideas--we will keep you wondering about this one for

now! We would like to celebrate again with the Clarion students, and may drum something up around St. Patty's Day. We traveled to Clarion last spring on International Special Librarians Day and had a "Pub Night" with the students and faculty, and we want to continue this tradition. April 2002 will be the last regular program meeting, and again, we will certainly plan something special during this month.

So you can see that we have some very exciting things happening in our Chapter this year which have carried over from past years. I cannot say enough about the sense of satisfaction and pride that exists when your efforts finally come to fruition and you see this "coming together" for a common goal. I urge you all to become a part of this exciting pulse in some way, and you will be amazed at what it will do for you. If I were you, I wouldn't want to miss out on anything for fear I would miss out on the opportunity to grow personally, professionally and to surround myself with great talent and friendships. It's really catching, so give it a try! If you have any suggestions, ideas or programs you would like to see, please give me a call (412.288.8088-work) or shoot me an e-mail (kgregory@federatedinv.com). All of our committee chairs are currently filled; however, we are actively recruiting committee members to assist in the many exciting things we are planning this year. It would be a great way to get your feet wet!

Thanks to all the volunteers who have agreed to give their time and efforts to this Chapter. I have enjoyed working with everyone, and look forward continuing and building upon these relationships. Absolutely nothing can happen without you.

I would like to also extend a special thanks to Diane Gerber, our Treasurer, for taking care of long overdue filing of some items in the archives, currently located in the Science and Technology Department at the Carnegie Library! I certainly appreciate the time she has taken to do this, and realize it goes above and beyond the call of duty! Thanks again, Diane!

FROM THE EDITOR

By Earl Mounts

Welcome to the first all-electronic issue of the latest incarnation of our newsletter. The competition to name it was fierce as Denise Callihan edged out Nancy Carlson by a matter of hours by being quicker on the draw (i.e., return key). Congratulations to both of them for providing us with "***The Confluence***", a name that emphasizes the melding of the great variety of talents and expertise that all of our members share in creating the best Chapter in the Association. You may wonder "best?". Definitely. This year we have not one but two of our members campaigning for International Office. Lynn Berard (lberard@andrew.cmu.edu) of CMU is the candidate for President-Elect and Barb Spiegelman (barb.spiegelman@verizon.net) is the candidate for Director. We have to do all that we can to assure that Lynn and Barb lead the Association. Send emails to our colleagues around the world and tell them how to make sure their votes really count. And contact Lynn and Barb to find out what you can do to help in their campaigns-they'll appreciate it.

"Best" because our new slate of Chapter Leaders continues the revitalization of the Chapter that began the new millennium with Denise Callihan. Kim's President's Letter leads us forward with optimism and unbridled enthusiasm and John DiGilio has already revealed to us his vision of the future by providing us with high-level programs that enhance our position in our respective organizations. We are definitely embarking on our own Golden Age and I am very proud that I am participating in the adventure.

The events of September 11th are not diminishing in their intensity as we read of colleagues who will no longer share the joys of life. Kim Gregory submitted the following tribute which was published in the September 23, 2001 Post-Gazette and which resulted in a \$40 donation to the New York City Fire and Police Foundations: "All of us from the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Special Libraries Association would like to express our deepest sympathy to all those affected by the tragedy on September 11, 2001. May the strength of our families, communities and professional

circles carry us through this time of grief and bring us to an even greater state of peace and unity. We, as Americans, stand proud of our diversity, and will remain strong and steadfast in standing up for our freedom."

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Kimberly Gregory, John DiGilio, and Denise Callihan have become TechKnowTeam Trainers for the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC). Over the summer, they enrolled in technology trainer training offered by GPLC for staff and volunteers. An orientation to GPLC's technology program and the learning curriculum for selected TechKnow Topics (Computer Basics, Internet, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access) were shared.

As TechKnowTeam Trainers, they will help GPLC enroll more students in their computer literacy effort. They will begin teaching classes for GPLC in the fall. If anyone is interested in joining the TechKnowTeam or would like more information, please contact Arlene Elk at ABLEArlene@aol.com or call 412.552.7061.

CALLIHAN AND POLLIS WOW PITT

Denise Callihan and Ange Pollis were asked by Pitt's FastTrack program (More information about the program is available at: <http://fasttrack.sis.pitt.edu>) to present on Special Libraries and the issues and trends affecting them. In addition, there were speakers for academic, public, and school libraries. We spoke to about 37 students from all over the United States. Many did not know what Special Libraries were so we gave them a good overall view of what they are and what we experience today, along with the types of roles librarians are asked to play. I have to say that we were the hit of the day and I believe made a lot of new converts to our cause!! Many were very interested in learning more and SLA was promoted to all.

The handout follows in outline form.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES-CURRENT TRENDS, ISSUES, AND CHALLENGES

Define Special Libraries

- Examples of various types.
- Environment is changing, Nomenclature is changing. Reflect the organization.

Describe diverse services that special libraries provide.

Today's environment: Challenges of change (*SLA Competency Doc*)

- Transition from paper to electronic media
 - More information
 - Impact of the Web (Tackle the lore and lure of the Web)
- Increasing demand for accountability and services when budgets are shrinking
 - Focus on customers, organization

Remember the value of a "library" is not reflected in the size of its collection or budget, but on its use!

- New forms of work organization in corporate settings (Libraries)
 - End-user computing
(Discuss end-user market; info is a commodity - losing many clients)
 - Work teams (13% of SLA members do not work in libraries)
 - Outsourcing
 - Downsizing

Evolving Roles and Responsibilities - Implications of Environment

- Skills and competencies:
 - Need for new skills, tools and technology to meet challenges
 - Still practicing core competencies in research and collection management, but with a spin - Collection development/Resources - print and electronic, Copyright issues; Cataloging;

- Roles:
 - Consultant*
More advice and remote consultation/less research and reference work

 - Analyst*
Increasing volume and accessibility of info for end-users;
Need for more analysis and interpretation

 - Facilitator/Trainer*
Teach end-users to find and assess info;
Develop access and support tools to facilitate end-user access
Intranet content manager
Design and develop Intranets
Source and manage external content
Integrate external and internal info
Negotiate licenses for e-content
Cost-benefit analysis

 - Product planner and marketer*
Assessing user needs
Packaging info for internal audience
Marketing and promotion

 - Corporate knowledge manager*
Merging of info functions--database management, CI, marketing research etc.
Managing corporate knowledge as a strategic resource

- Survival Tactics:
 - Survival of the fittest means survival of those best able to adapt.

Secrets to Success:

- 1) DON'T BE A SECRET! (Isolation leads to less change and less ability to compete)
- 2) Redefine Library Services - Not Just Librarian (Since info is a commodity, We need to set ourselves apart - Understand your patron's needs, start from their reality...create market-driven services); Remember, Having a big budget does not equal stability
- 3) Build Positive Visibility & Name Recognition- Market your services - Develop a library promotional plan - Demonstrate the effectiveness of library services
- 4) Strive for innovative partnerships within your organization to create new products/services
- 5) Implement /Monitor Virtual Libraries and e-Reference Services
- 6) Move into new areas where "traditional" library skills can be used; Web organization, knowledge management

7) Professional Development/Alternate Careers

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Who are the library's competitors-internally and externally?

How would you market your library/info center?

What are your training plans for your clients/patrons?

How do you manage online information to maximize your organization's return on investment (ROI)?

What are key traits needed to survive as a corporate/special librarian today? Think not in library terms...but in business-terms....

ECHOES OF OLD SAN ANTONE

One of the fun events at the annual SLA Conference is the gathering of the Pittsburgh Chapter members. It is usually an impromptu get-together. Trying to find a convenient time to meet is almost impossible; but several of us (about 15) managed to meet in the hotel lobby and progressed to the cocktail lounge for food, drink, and chatter. It was a time to catch-up with everyone's comings and goings; which exhibitors had the latest gizmos; who was working where. The camaraderie of the Pittsburgh Chapter is another reason to attend the annual conference. The Chapter is continuing its reputation of being "SPECIAL" (Ange Pollis)
Best recollection from the San Antonio Conference: Joining some leading Chapter members to have a late night ice cream cone in a windstorm by the San Antonio River! (Anonymous)

NEWS FROM OTHER SOURCES

A nice little spoof on the value of your library dollars can be found at
<http://www.englilb.cornell.edu/displays/stickershock/> (Ange Pollis)

From Library Juice: According to a survey done by Excedrin, 43 percent of librarians suffer headaches on at least a weekly basis. According to the press release, "librarians stated that people who have no clue on how to use research resources cause the most headaches (56 percent) for them."

-- http://www.bms.com/news/press/data/fg_press_release_1668.html (Ange Pollis)

A Library to End All Libraries:

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/01_30/b3742031.htm (Bob Sullivan)

THE FUTURE OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

As readers of Nature will know, there is currently considerable debate about many aspects of the future of the electronic literature, including ways to improve access to the scientific literature, proposals for making research papers free, and changing the application of copyright.

The debate over the future of the e-literature involves many players, from the scientific community and institutions of higher education and research, to libraries and publishers. Nature has led the way in this debate by bringing the views of these groups before a broad audience, and highlighting the publishing challenges and opportunities.

Nature's free web forum on "Future e-access to the primary literature" can be accessed at
<http://www.nature.com/nature/debates/e-access/>

Nature's 6 September issue carries a special two-page editorial, "The future of the electronic scientific literature;" it is also available on free access in the web forum (see <http://www.nature.com/nature/debates/e-access/Articles/opinion2.html>). It outlines Nature's vision of a landscape of scientific communication that will be much more heterogeneous and diverse than the journals system with which we are familiar today. The article concludes that "Getting there will require novel forms of collaboration between publishers, databases, digital libraries and other stakeholders. It would be unwise to put all of one's eggs in the basket of any one economic or technological 'solution'. Diversity is the best bet." (Earl Mounts)

The Confluence is published 4 times a year by the Pittsburgh Chapter, Special Libraries Association. If you are interested in placing an ad in The Confluence, contact Earl Mounts, Alcoa Technical Center, 100 Technical Drive, Alcoa Center, PA 15069-0001 (Voice: 724-337-2396, Fax: 724-337-2394, email: earl.mounts@alcoa.com)

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Deadlines for copy and ads for the next issues:

Winter 2002-February 15, 2002

Spring 2002-April 19, 2002

Summer 2002-June 28, 2002

Fall 2002-September 20, 2002

Issue reformatted from html to pdf on 9/5/06: R. Callison