

President's Message: Continuing Down the Information Highway

by Linda Hartman, SLA, Pittsburgh Chapter President

It is hard to believe that I am half way around the course in my term as President. The Strategic Planning team has been busy working on our plan that will take us into the new millennium and beyond. They designed the plan's construction so it can be easily updated as our profession and, therefore, our goals change. Please see Nancy Carlson's article elsewhere in this issue.

In the Fall '98 issue of the Pointer, I spoke of the benefits of membership in SLA and how being a part of the Pittsburgh Chapter is like winning the Indianapolis 500. Well, we have won the Indy, Daytona and Watkins Glen International races! Please see Lynn Labun and Earl Mount's article on Association Award winners from Pittsburgh.

In February, the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh invited several local information professionals to a meeting to discuss continuing education for special librarians. Members from our Chapter in attendance were Angela Pollis, Mary Vasilakis and me. The participants also included representatives of other professional organizations, the Carnegie Library and the School itself. Location, date and time, cost and course content were the subjects discussed. If there is something you would like to see offered or if you have a comment on any of the other topics, please let either of us know and we will pass along the information to SIS.

Another opportunity for growth in which I participated was the Association's Winter Meeting in San Francisco. Dave Majka, President Elect and Scott Trask, Chapter Employment Chair also participated in the Meeting. Scott was helping to plan the programs for the Minneapolis and Philadelphia Annual Conferences as he is the Chair-elect of the Metals/Materials Division. Dave and I were learning how other chapters conduct business and how the Association staff can help the chapters.

The meetings were very interesting and helpful. One of the sessions was in the form of a town hall meeting where L. Susan Hayes, the Association's President; David Bender, the Association's Executive Director and Linda Broussard, the Association's new Senior Director of Leadership Services gave the audience three topics to discuss and then listened to our points of view. The topics were: 1) Name Change for the Association - There is no current proposal for a name change, but members are being encouraged to examine the context of the current name which is a symbol which represents the membership. 2) Committees - What do we want our Association committees to do and be? Do we want more or fewer members on each committee? Should committees be sunsetted as their mission changes? 3) Organizational Effectiveness - Organizational structure and responsibilities (the Association's and Units') should be examined in order to be more effective, responsible, responsive and flexible.

Don't forget to celebrate International Special Librarians Day on Thursday, April 15, 1999. Everyone will love to have a diversion after staying up all night completing their taxes. For ideas on ways to celebrate, visit the SLA website at <http://www.sla.org/pr/isldweb.html>.

Have a great spring. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

Sight Bites

by Earl Mounts

I was going to buy a copy of 'The Power of Positive Thinking' and then I thought: What the hell good would that do?--Ronnie Shakes as quoted in Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, *The Employee Handbook for Organizational Change*, Dallas: Pritchett and Associates, 1999, p.32.

Microsoft's new encyclopedia of black culture and history, *Encarta Africana*, published on disk, will have its next incarnation this fall when Perseus Books Group offers a single-volume print version. "We've observed that there is very definitely a print-oriented market", says Jack McKeown, CEO of Perseus, adding that the "air of permanence" of a bound volume adds to its appeal for some customers, even for those who have a PC.--Up Front, *Business Week*, February 8, 1999, p.8.

Some experts now say we should be aware of the 1999 problem. Federal banking agencies and Mitre Corp., a nonprofit technical adviser to government offices like the Pentagon, think there could be trouble. That's because some programmers use "999" as code to indicate "end of file" or "don't delete". Mitre issued a warning about a few dates in 1999, including April 9 (the 99th day of the year), Sept. 9 (9/9/99), and Sept.23, (T minus 99 days until 2000).--Hype, Part 2, *Fortune*, March 1, 1999, p.204. Optimism about the usefulness of the Internet sometimes outstrips common sense. Public Service, a local electricity provider in New Hampshire, advises its customer that in the event of a power failure, they can log onto its Website for more information.--Feedback, *New Scientist*, February 6, 1999, p.100.

Redmond, WA--Microsoft Corp. announced today that the official releasedate for the new operating system "Windows 2000" will be delayed until the second quarter of 1901"--Source unknown.

Chapter Member Profile

by Marge Sroka, Features Editor

Tim Gaus is the solo librarian for Pittsburgh-based Harbison-Walker Refractories Company. Harbison-Walker (HW) produces refractories, which are heat-resistant materials used to line vessels such as blast furnaces, aluminum smelters, cement kilns and some petroleum production units. HW employs 3,800 people in plants and offices located in the US, Canada, Mexico, Chile and Germany. The library is part of the West Mifflin research center.

The library is strategically located among the engineers' offices, making it quite accessible. Its two rooms contain 30 journals, approximately 2,000 volumes, and an enormous clipping and research file collected since the late 1930's. It includes an impressive historical collection of technical literature, such as, a complete run of the different serials of the American Ceramic Society from 1918 to the present, the *Journal of the Iron & Steel Institute* from 1895-1973, and old HW "mix books" (recipes for making refractory brick) from 1897. Electronic research resources such as *Ceram Research in England*, *World Ceramics Abstracts* database, and STN supplements the collection. HW also has a contract with NERAC research service. Harbison-Walker values libraries and librarians. The research library has existed for at least 50 years, and except for in the steel downturn in the 1980's, they have employed professional librarians.

Tim's primary responsibilities are to facilitate research, and to maintain current awareness services for engineers and executives throughout the company. The challenge is to keep a such a large audience informed of new information and developments. He does this by paying close attention to key industry journals and patent literature, and by delivering his findings in a timely fashion. These services and as well as library exposure on the company Intranet market the library.

Another responsibility is heading a project to convert engineering files to a computerized networked format. The company wants its research engineers to have access to at least 40 years of internal reports on their desktop computers. Tim estimates that this labor-intensive task will take 2 or 3 years for completion.

After getting his MLS from the University of Pittsburgh in 1991, Tim worked at the Computer & Curriculum Inquiry Center (CCIC) in the School of Education at Pitt. CCIC's mission is to educate Pennsylvania teachers and future teachers in the array of computer-based classroom tools. Tim assisted in online instruction, but his main focus was to assemble and maintain a textbook library. The collection included representative materials used in all subjects in regional K-12 classrooms. The CCIC served several hundred patrons over the course of a term. Prior to being a librarian, he was a vocational instructor at Goodwill Industries. Throughout his career Tim has fine-tuned his skill at developing cost-effective methods to provide quality service to a variety of audiences.

Chapter News

Mark your calendars for Monday, April 26! SLA's Executive Director, David Bender, will be in Pittsburgh, visiting with students at SIS and he will be the guest of honor at the Pittsburgh Chapter's dinner meeting that evening. Announcements with details as to time and place will be coming to your mailbox soon.

Linda Hartman is the new Reference Librarian at Falk Library of the Health Sciences and Barb Folb is Outreach/Reference Librarian at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. Congratulations to both!

Upcoming Events

April 16, 1999...LAMA Institute-Managing Educational Services: Teaching and Learning in Libraries, Holiday Inn Parkway East, 8:30am to 4:00pm. Call LAMA/ALA at 1-800-545-2433, ext 5036 to register. Details of about the program are on the Palinet page at www.palinet.org.

June 5-10, 1999...SLA Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

Employment News

by Scott Trask, Employment Chair

February was a busy month for employment listings. Be sure to check out the web site at: <http://www.sla.org/chapter/cpit/pghjobs.htm>. Listings include: Medical Librarians, Director of Prospect Research, Reference Librarian, Acquisitions, Cataloger and Investment Librarian. As a reminder it is much easier to post your listing if it is submitted in electronic format. Please email listings to trasks@kennametal.com.

Triple Triumph!

by Lynn Labun and Earl Mounts

The Pittsburgh Chapter has pulled off a hat trick this year with SLA International Awards going to three of our members-Angie Pollis, Barb Spiegelman, and Lynn Tinsley. This may very well be a singular accomplishment in the history of SLA, certainly the Chapter. All three awardees have provided outstanding service and inspiration to our Chapter and have distinguished themselves at the international level.

Angie Pollis, recently retired Manager of the Knowledge Resource Center at US Steel Technical Center and Adjunct Professor at the School of Information Sciences at Pitt, enters the SLA Hall of Fame for her distinguished service to the association in all capacities. Angie is an enthusiastic participant in SLA at both the Chapter and Division levels and is equally active in the American Chemical Society and the American Iron and Steel Institute. She has published articles on a variety of topics including chemical literature, career opportunities, Internet resources, right-sizing, competitive intelligence, fee-based services, and decision-making. For those of us who frequent the annual conferences, Angie's "Shopping the Exhibits" has become a must-do and thoroughly enjoyable activity.

Barb Spiegelman, Manager, Technical Information Services for Westinghouse Electric Company, is SLA Fellow for 1999 in recognition of her inspired and creative leadership in the profession. Barb has served SLA in numerous positions and has chaired some of the most influential committees, including the Competencies Document Publication Committee and the SLA Logo Committee. At the Division and Chapter levels, she has provided leadership in strategic planning, bylaws, marketing, nominations, awards, bulletin editing, and mentoring. She has won numerous awards-Distinguished Alumna of SIS, Center for Creative Leadership, and Westinghouse Technology Transfer Award. Her contributions to the profession are outstanding in the areas of mentoring, teaching, and publishing. Barb was the leader in developing and promoting the Marketing Swap-and-Shop at the Annual Conference, an event which has provided librarians with invaluable resources for promoting their expertise.

Lynn Tinsley, Head of the Engineering and Science Library at CMU, receives the Rose L. Vormelker Award for her exceptional service in the area of mentoring students and influencing practicing professionals. A successful product of mentoring herself, she has sought to carry on this tradition throughout her career. Among her many accomplishments in this area is her participation in the Information Assistant Program at CMU, a program which provides the arena for highly motivated library and information science students to sharpen their reference skills while gaining practical experience in academic and corporate librarianship. She has a great deal of enthusiasm for this work and makes sure that she keeps in touch with her interns throughout their careers. Lynn has ably supported SLA International at all levels by holding offices and leading numerous committees.

We salute our three colleagues who continue to provide us with superior standards that we can emulate. This short article cannot begin to do justice to their vast spheres of influence-we are holding out for more money on the book deal.

Strategic Plan Submitted to Board

by Nancy Flury Carlson, Strategic Planning Chair

A draft strategic plan for the Pittsburgh Chapter, for the five-year period 1999 through 2004, was submitted to and approved by the chapter board on Thursday, February 18, 1999. The new strategic plan is a concise statement of vision, mission, strategies and priorities. It is designed to incorporate the committee's belief that strategic planning is a process, not a document. It accomplishes this by stating the board's ongoing responsibilities for reaffirming or revising the components of the plan at regular intervals. The first component to be considered is the "Priorities" section, which the chapter President is to revise following approval of the draft. After this is completed, the Strategic Plan will be distributed through the Pointer, the chapter web site, and at an upcoming chapter meeting.

The committee met once in November and once in February, using email and file attachments between meetings to complete the draft. At the SLA Winter Meeting DACOLT (Division and Chapter Officer Leadership Training) session, committee member Scott Trask presented a summary of the Pittsburgh Chapter's activities as a "Strategic Planning How-To" overview. In this well-received session, Scott outlined the steps originally taken in 1993 to create the chapter's plan, followed by the rationale, process and milestones related to the 1999 revision of the chapter plan.

I would like to thank the members of the Strategic Planning Committee: Denise Callihan (PPG), Diane Eldridge (Westinghouse Electric Company), Chris Heil (Medrad), and Scott Trask (Kennametal). Their creativity, enthusiasm, focus and diligence drove the successful completion of the strategic plan.

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