

President's Message - Dave Majka

Denise Callihan and I have recently returned from SLA's Winter Leadership Meeting in St. Louis. It is always invigorating to participate in discussions on the hot topics and future directions for SLA. Attendance is small (about 200 professionals), so it is very easy to spend a substantial amount of time with each of the Association's top leaders.

The greatest satisfaction for Denise and me came from the acclaim received for our Global 2000 fellowship contribution. Our Chapter was singled out for special mention during the Chapter Cabinet meeting as well as privately by numerous SLA leaders. These accolades are well-deserved thanks to the outstanding generosity of the membership of SLA Pittsburgh. But, unfortunately, SLA International can award only 20 fellowships for the Brighton conference despite having over 400 applicants. Those who make the cut will truly be the best, the brightest, and the most deserving.

Mentorship, a featured theme of the conference, is being heavily promoted by the Association. There is a renewed emphasis upon attracting and retaining new members who are our future lifeblood and leadership. It has been a cherished hope of mine to see our Chapter launch a mentorship program, and I am gratified to announce that Ange Pollis and a number of wonderful volunteers are working hard to get the program up and running.

SLA has also been grappling with its name and its marketplace identity for some time. Various schools of thought exist regarding the retention of the "S" and "L" words in the Association name as well as better articulating how SLA provides value to its members. The Association has decided to retain an outside consultant to assist with the evaluation of these complicated and controversial issues.

On the home front, my latest plea for volunteers has had a gratifying response in several areas. We now have enough volunteers to begin a telephone outreach program to members who are less active in Chapter activities. Our goal in this effort is to determine what we can do to make our activities and volunteer opportunities more attractive. We value highly your frank opinions on SLA Pittsburgh's initiatives and programs. We would also welcome having your email addresses so that important Chapter news and events can be rapidly and efficiently disseminated.

As we swing into Spring, it is hard to believe that my term of office is too rapidly drawing to a close. I believe that our Chapter has made progress, but much remains to be done. Fortunately, as always, we retain a cadre of selfless and

enthusiastic people who make time in their busy lives for the tasks necessary to maintain and improve SLA Pittsburgh. Long may it be so!

From the Editor - Earl Mounts

Just as the daffodils and forsythia suddenly burst forth and array the earth in glorious hues taken from the sun itself, this issue of the Pointer is brimming with important news by and about Chapter members and activities.

Marge Sroka's Spotlight is on Mary Lee Richener of PPG, a definite role model for all professionals who aspire to continuous development within their organizations.

Lynn Berard goes back to school to teach and rediscovers the fascination of libraries. She also comes out fighting for students and offers some great deals at the Philadelphia Conference.

Kim Gregory keeps us up-to-date on the Student Chapter, Judy Lesso highlights new members, and Alison Brungard harvests the public media for news we need to know.

Denise Callihan regales us with the funniest description of a Winter Meeting that you will ever read.

This issue also includes the Minutes of the February 3 Business Meeting (thanks to Sheila Rosenthal) and Report by Treasurer Nick Kotow and highlights of the Board Meeting in St. Louis by Lynn Berard. All members should read these documents closely so that we can all share in the governance of our organization.

And, thanks as always to Dave Majka for his spirited guidance.

Welcome New Members! - Judy Lesso

Sally Fell, Paul E. Johner, Jill Konieczko, and Student Member Bryan Carson

Spotlight on . . . Mary Lee Richner - Marge Sroka

Mary Lee Richner is a mid-career librarian who has worked for PPG Industries for the past 30 years. Since 1990 she has been the librarian at the Technical Information Center (TIC) of the Coatings Research Center in Allison Park, one of PPG's four research libraries. Mary Lee is one of a three-person team consisting of a chemist, a librarian, and a secretary. TIC has approximately 10,000 volumes and 250 active journals, and specializes in coatings and paints research. The

online catalog and Web homepage provide access to 30,000 PPG associates worldwide.

Mary Lee has held a variety of positions at PPG. While working full time as a patent secretary, she attended night school at La Roche College, and received a Bachelor of Science degree in business. She continued her education at the University of Pittsburgh, completing a Masters degree.

Her first position as librarian was at PPG headquarters where she served as the corporate law librarian. Even though her responsibilities were challenging, she considered opportunities in other areas since she preferred to be involved in a more progressive situation. Since her duties included functions that did not relate to the library, she searched for a position where she could use and expand the knowledge she gained as a librarian. When a librarian retired at the Technical Information Center, she decided to move into the technical field. She embraced the opportunity to experiment with new technologies long before they became the norm. For example, the Technical Information Center launched PPG's first automated library catalog. It has been upgraded several times and has now been expanded into the other research libraries of PPG.

Mary Lee feels an important advantage in making the transition to the technical field was knowing many people within the corporation whom she could contact for assistance when necessary. Two factors that have been critical to her success at PPG have been her mentors and a keen awareness of her surroundings. Mary Lee feels she has learned a lot by being attentive and listening to those around her.

Mary Lee has been a member of SLA since 1990. Her outside interests include gardening with husband Mark, cooking, photography, and traveling. Her special interest is watching her 11-year-old son, Matt, play hockey.

Members in the News

Lynn Labun, Head of Carnegie-Mellon University's Mellon Institute Library, has received the Master of Public Management degree from the H. John Heinz School for Public Policy and Management (CMU). Shortly after she began managing the Library, Labun realized that she needed to acquire additional leadership skills and techniques. After completing a couple of courses in professional development, she appreciated the result of pursuing and accomplishing the requirements of the degree. Not only is Labun impressed by the Heinz School's faculty and curriculum, but also by the program that is tailored to the working professional. Congratulations to one of our most dedicated members!

Ruth Shapiro, recently retired library manager at UPMC--Braddock, has resigned as Director of the Pittsburgh Chapter. Ruth is moving to Madison, Wisconsin, to

be with her family. Dave Majka responded to her announcement by voicing sentiments shared by all of us: "Your many years of faithful membership in the Pittsburgh Chapter of SLA are most appreciated, as is your service over the past year as a Director. Future leaders of the Pittsburgh Chapter will miss having the advantage of your counsel. We wish you all the best." On a personal note, I know that we are all going to miss the advantage of Ruth's wealth of library experience and her down-to-earth solutions for issues that would overwhelm many of us. Good luck, Ruth, and come back and see us!

News from the Student Chapter - Kimberly Gregory

In order to promote Professional Development activities, I have been meeting and corresponding with Hillary Stevenson, vice-president of Pitt's Student Chapter. She is in the process of making arrangements with John DiGilio (Kirkpatrick and Lockhart) and Rob Neumeyer (Mercy Hospital) for tours of their respective libraries.

We have not yet heard anything about the Student Chapter becoming "official". All the petition papers have been filed, and a response is forthcoming.

I attended an open house at SIS on February 16 for prospective library science students. It was a nice event with faculty members and alumni on hand to speak with the students. Refreshments and food were provided by the school. Hillary represented the Student Chapter of SLA and gave SLA applications to prospective members. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to speak with any of the students.

I have been contacted by a student at Pitt concerning a field placement/ internship in my library at Federated Investors and am working on the final arrangement.

Berard Goes to Bat for Students!

Great news for students interested in attending the SLA Annual Conference this year in Philadelphia June 10-15. Opportunities abound to make this conference experience affordable, educational and career-oriented.

Career Services will be FREE this year to all registered SLA student members (\$60.00 for non-members). Enjoy the advantage of having your resume on hand for employers to pick up, peruse the job postings at the conference, and meet with prospective employers. An invaluable networking event--hey, I got my job that way ☺ .

Apply to win FREE registration to the conference, a \$100 value. The Chapter has been asked to supply 5 volunteers to assist with a one day CEU workshop in trade for a full registration fee. For details, ask Hillary Stevenson, (shillary@instadv.alumni.pitt.edu) SIS SLA Student President, or Lynn Berard (lberard@andrew.cmu.edu).

Get a FREE ride to Philadelphia courtesy of SIS. Sue Alman has arranged for a van to take students to the conference. Interested? Send your name to Hillary Stevenson to be included in this magic bus ride.

See you in Philly!

In Pursuit of the MLS - Lynn Berard

I've discovered that the best way to learn is to teach. I must have slept through library school because I'm rediscovering all the lost wonders of library history, from the Alexandria Library to the Electronic Library. So much to know, so little time!

Beginning in the winter of 1997, it's been my privilege to teach at Clarion University of Pennsylvania as an adjunct instructor for the Department of Library Science. Since that first semester-long course with 35 students, I have reinvented 4 courses: Building Library Collections, Bibliography of the Sciences, Introduction to the Information Professions, and Reference Sources and Services. While I've encountered hurdles to jump and time management challenges, I wouldn't have traded getting to know those students for the free time I gave up. What pearls of wisdom I may have passed to them, I've been showered in return with opportunities to learn from each person. The riches to gain from sharing experiences and exploring new ideas with new professionals are priceless.

To "kick it up a notch", as devotees of Emeril, the Food Network chef will recognize, this semester, I am team teaching with a colleague, Matt Marsteller. Matt joined the CMU staff in August 1999 and, since he is an alum of Clarion, I invited him on some teaching adventures with me. We are currently teaching Clarion courses at South Pointe, an industrial park 20 miles south of Pittsburgh. Clarion University is offering distance courses at South Pointe in the academic facility owned by California University of Pennsylvania, a sister state institution. A convenient arrangement for both of us.

Teaching challenges in a distance situation? Many. We are attempting to

teach resource courses without the benefit of a physical library on site. The students come from all walks of life and varied educational backgrounds and do

not have the benefit of being physically present at the library school. However, Matt and I each feel a personal investment in the success of every student and must limit our information passing to 3 short weekends. We are both becoming quite creative at inventing ways to share our time with the students.

Challenges? Yes. Rewards? Many

SLA Winter Meeting in St. Louis -- What a View! - Denise Callihan

St. Louis was my first SLA conference. The main issues of the conference were member recruitment and retention through mentoring and nurturing. Building partnerships with SLA Headquarters and with other organizations was also stressed.

Besides learning about our organization, it was also a great time to learn how to become a good SLA conference attendee. Hope these help any first-timers! See you in Philadelphia!

Some Unforgettable Moments and Lessons Learned for Future Conferences:

Airports Part I. I arrived in St. Louis in the late evening. All of my husband's advice on safe traveling rushed through my head: Don't ask too many questions or you'll look like a target. Don't tell anyone where you're staying. Don't trust anyone! I picked up my bag, and didn't know what to do or where to go from here. I observed people who seemed to know what they were doing. Then I realized they lived in St. Louis when they were greeted by family members, or sped off to the long-term parking lots. I stood in the baggage claim area terrified of moving. How am I going to get to my hotel without asking someone for help AND telling someone where I'm staying? I finally found someone who "appeared" to be a valet of some type. "Where do you need to go?" he asked. I answered cautiously, slowly, "St. Louis....". He looked at me a bit strangely. Then I added, "Marriott Hotel". He told me to wait there and he would take me. After about 20 minutes, a van pulled up that didn't look like other airport shuttles I have seen before. This one had a crack in the windshield, and not many markings on the side. I reluctantly stepped into the van with one other passenger. Our driver was very courteous, but drove at such break-neck speeds--I thought the plane ride was less eventful. Needless to say, I reached the hotel, went to my room, threw back my curtains, and saw the most beautiful view of the St. Louis Arch in the evening moonlight. I still think they got my room screwed up with some other poor soul. All of my other fellow SLA attendees were staying on the "other side" of the hotel, with no direct view of the Arch. I slept like a baby, while our illustrious president had to listen to his toilet flush all night because of a water main break in "his" side of the hotel.

Lesson Learned for the Next Conference: Make plane reservations to arrive late at night. SLA attendees usually arrive early.

St. Louis City Museum. Truly "Unlike Any Museum You've Ever SEEN Before". It has a multilevel enchanted forest, secret caves, a giant aquarium, an architectural museum, and SLIDES! Dave Majka accepted the challenge and slid down one of the roller slides. I truly wish I had had a camera for that one! Just try to imagine it if you can! Scott Trask actually won a door prize, even though he didn't eat too much that night.

Lesson Learned for the Next Conference: AT ALL COST, get on the FIRST bus and make a beeline for the food! Librarians love free food!

Boardwatching. Part of my first day was to view a session of the SLA Board.

Lesson Learned for the Next Conference: Session should be retitled Bored Watching :) I have renewed respect for Lynn Berard who is a Director on the Board and has to appear interested at all times! (All kidding aside, she is superb!)

St. Louis Arch. The Arch was truly unbelievable and awesome to witness! Twilight in St. Louis was my favorite time looking at the Arch from my hotel window. Dave Majka and I actually traveled inside and up to the top of the Arch. From inside the Arch looking out, the view was breath-taking!

Lesson Learned for the Next Conference: Keep the following quotation by Thomas Campbell in mind, "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view" or quite simply, "Everything looks great from a distance!"

Food. I wouldn't say that St. Louis food is bad, but they sure like to mix the strangest ingredients together. I'm still trying to figure out if I ate a turkey or a pork sandwich (Dave swears it was pork).

Lesson Learned for the Next Conference: If you ever have a choice, ask for a vegetarian entrée and you shouldn't have a problem!

Airports Part II. I don't fly very often or very well, but the flight to St. Louis went reasonably well. The flight home was a nightmare! To be extra cautious, I was at the St. Louis Airport at 6:30 a.m., even though my flight was not scheduled to depart until 8:00 a.m. I went immediately to the end of the only line in sight and waited my turn to find out that my flight had been cancelled. "CANCELLED?!?! But I'm early and everything!" Well, what do I do now? I decided to learn from the experienced and began to listen intently to those around me. The first blessing I quickly realized was that it could be worse, I could have been traveling to Philly. I regrouped, had my flight rescheduled for 10:00 a.m., bought an Oprah Winfrey Book Club novel, and relaxed. Relaxed that is until I began to eavesdrop on the Philly flight. Every time the boarding flight attendant piped in with an update on their plane status, I felt my anxiety increase. (Remember, I am terrified of flying!). The announcer explained in detail the plight of the Philly plane--its problems due to the unusual St. Louis cold of the previous evening, the apparent "jump start"

that would solve the problem, until she later announced that it hadn't, and on and on and on. After they attempted the ol' tried and true "running start" of the plane's engines (which also failed), the Philly flight was again cancelled and all those passengers had to come to Pittsburgh. I am happy to report that the Pittsburgh plane arrived with both engines running (but imagine my face when we started to board).

Lesson Learned for the Next Conference: Call ahead to find out if the flight is cancelled AND bring earplugs (I guess flight attendants wouldn't make good librarians--they just don't know that there IS a threshold of knowing too much information).

Highlights of January 2000 SLA International Board Meeting, St. Louis - Lynn Berard

On January 18, 2000, a day and a half before the official opening of the Winter Meeting in St. Louis, the Board of Directors had the opportunity to spend time envisioning the future make-up of our Association and creating strategic initiatives to launch us there. Mary Grace Duffy of Cambridge Hill Partners, a management consulting firm focused on helping organizations reshape, worked with us. On the road to creating "the big picture", Mary Grace guided us through exercises designed to evaluate today, to envision tomorrow, and to develop strategies that are sustainable, dynamic, and, we hope, widely supported. The Board was able to identify five areas that need attention of ALL members. To this end, task forces have been established to study each area and make recommendations for action. Susan DiMattia, SLA President, has appointed a Leader for each of the Task Forces and has requested each Leader to go forth and find members who would be willing to serve on the committee. If you are intrigued by these strategic directions, and would like to make a difference in OUR ASSOCIATION, please send Susan email (sdimattia@cahners.com) and let her know that you want to participate in the reshaping of SLA International.

Task Force on Conference Planning Structure (A00-52)

Charged to present:

- An interim report in June 2000 to include an evaluation of the format, content, speakers, organization of the Knowledge Management Program at the 2000 Winter Meeting in St. Louis.
- A final report in January 2001 to include an evaluation of all elements of Global 2000.
- Evaluation of the Conference Planning Committee role and SLA staff role in planning the Annual Conference.

Task Force on Branding (A00-55)

Charged with developing an implementation plan that could result in the official adoption of a new name for the Association.

This Task Force will report to the Board at the June 2000 meeting with recommendation for an outside public relations firm, an implementation plan with a time-line for presenting the proposed name change to the membership, and a report on the financial implications.

Task Force on Simplification of Association and Unit Structure (A00-53)

Charged to:

- Make recommendations to simplify SLA structure and to eliminate unnecessary administrative tasks of the units.
- Present a final report at Winter Meeting 2001 with a progress report at the June 2000 annual meeting.

Task Force on Partnerships (A00-56)

A member and staff task force is established to create a position paper by June 2000 outlining a rationale and suggested action items for creating strategic partnerships.

Task Force on Membership (A00-54)

Charged to:

- Prepare a definition of membership.
- Create a virtual member category for a trial audience.
- Redesign the student category to offer SLA virtual membership to all qualified students at no charge.
- Design a cafeteria plan to allow all members to choose member services.