



# Social Science Division

## BULLETIN

Winter/Spring 2008

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**The Social Science Division is moving to a blog format!**

**Stay tuned for further details...**

## From the Chair

Heidi Yacker

Hello everyone! In January, at the Leadership Summit in Louisville, **Greta Ober** passed the Social Science Division gavel on to me. I'm very honored to be the Chair of this

Division, especially in this, our 85<sup>th</sup> year. To honor that landmark, we're



planning some great programs for the SLA conference in Seattle this June. They'll showcase the wide range of interests our Division represents. Thanks to our members for developing such wonderful sessions and

events and lots of thanks to our program planner, **Tara Murray**, for her fabulous work getting everything to come together. Our webmaster, **Brandy King**, has put information on the programs on [our website](#).

And speaking of Brandy, be sure to read about her in the [February issue of Information Outlook](#). She's very creative and has done a lot in her brief career! And she's done a lot for our division, too. Check out the ["DSOC Members in the News" section](#) on the website to read the article.

Another DSOC member in the news is our own **Ann Sweeney**. Ann has been nominated as a candidate for the Division

Cabinet Chair-Elect of SLA. Anyone who knows Ann and has worked with her knows how superb she would be in that position. You can read about her and all she's done both with SLA and with DSOC. Check out the ["DSOC Members in the News" section](#) of our website.

A few months ago, I attended the holiday party of my local Chapter, DC/SLA. The dinner speaker was **Mike McCurry**, former President Clinton's Press Secretary. He had some interesting points about the transformation of politics that I'd like (very briefly) to share with you. He believed that, during the Cold War, the world was ordered by a bipolar division between the free market and communism. This gave structure to how politics were conducted in the U.S. – although our political parties differed on issues, they agreed on one thing: how we wanted to promote ourselves globally. Ironically, with the fall of communism in 1989, politics lost that organizing force and our parties became more polarized. A second and equally transforming force, he felt, was (and is) the information technology revolution. Technological achievements that were unimaginable just 10 years ago are commonplace now. Just look at the impact of YouTube on the current election process. The crush of information and its exponential growth has led to distortion of facts and dysfunctional communications. McCurry stressed the need for librarians to assemble information in a coherent way so that rational choices can be made by the public. This was an interesting and thought-provoking speech.

Having this SLA event so nearby brought home two things to me: the benefit of a

geographically centralized Chapter to share experiences and the difficulty of delivering services to an organization like our division with its far-flung membership. It's important for us to find ways for the Division to help us network effectively and share programs and information.

I have a few ideas that I spoke about at the annual business meeting in Denver. These include such things as a place on our website for members for things like sharing job postings, a membership directory, a blog, or a discussion group on issues or books, and maybe an SLA webinar; a DSOC hospitality suite at conferences; member contributions to decisions in programming at conferences; and expanded interactions with professional organizations.

What ideas do *you* have? What makes *you* want to be a member of the Social Science Division? What can the Division do for you? Your ideas and opinions are key here. In the coming months, you'll be contacted to participate in a survey addressing these issues. I hope you'll take the time to help identify ways for this Division to better serve its members.

I'm looking forward to an exciting 85<sup>th</sup> year for DSOC. Keep in touch!

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## ANNOUNCEMENT



SLA's DSOC Bulletin is converting to a blog!  
Keep your eye out for further details about how to access  
updates and articles...

## NEWS FROM SLA

### **SLA Announces Citation to Honor "Knowledge to Go Green" Champions**

President Abram Seeks to Reward SLA Members and Units that Embody Environmentally Sound Principles in Day-to-Day Work

**Alexandria, Virginia, 22 April, Earth Day, 2008** -- In recognition of Earth Day, Special Libraries Association (SLA) President Stephen Abram today announced that he is accepting nominations for a special Presidential Citation honoring SLA "Knowledge to Go Green" Champions. Recipients will be announced at the SLA Leadership Summit in January 2009 to mark the inaugural year of SLA's Knowledge to Go Green initiative.

Abram will accept nominations from individual SLA members as well as SLA Units (chapters, divisions, caucuses, committees and councils) that have implemented green policies, or made significant changes to the manner in which business is conducted, with an eye toward reducing the impact on the environment.

The deadline to apply or nominate for the Green Champion presidential citation is 15 November 2008.

"The SLA Knowledge to Go Green initiative at the association level is a first step, but in order to make a bigger difference we need to truly embrace and apply a green philosophy at the chapter, division and personal level. The implementation of greener practices is unbelievably important for the future of the planet, but also for the profession and the association," said Abram. "Making an impact with this initiative requires innovation, dedication, and willingness to change from each and every one of us. I created this citation because I want to reward those members and leaders who embody the Knowledge to Go Green mentality and have put a priority on greening the way they work, live, learn, and play. We all have it in us to change and become Green Champions, and I seek to recognize those inspirational early adapters already making a difference," said Abram.

Abram is asking for nominations in two categories for the Knowledge to Go Green Champion Citation:

**SLA Members:** Green Champion citations will be awarded to individual(s) that have applied green principles and made changes to the way they do their work on a day to day basis. Applicants should be able to demonstrate the introduction of new green policies, education programs or major changes within their library or at their place of employment.

**SLA Units:** Green Champion citations will be awarded to SLA Unit(s) that have applied green principles to the manner in which SLA events and programs are conducted. Applicants should be able to demonstrate considerable changes to the way in which SLA meetings, communications, promotions or annual conference programs are conducted at the chapter, division, or caucus level.

In January 2008 the SLA Board of Directors implemented a new policy for the nomination and awarding of SLA Presidential Citations. In past years the presidential citations followed the same schedule as other association level-awards, with a brief nomination cycle at the end of the calendar year. The new policy allows the president to accept nominations and reward exceptional service to the association year-round. Citations are granted at the pleasure of the current SLA president for whatever reason they deem worthy of recognition. The Green Champion Citation is a special category created by Abram in recognition of the association's commitment to green practices through the Knowledge to Go Green initiative.

Members can submit nominations for the presidential citations, including the Green Champion Citation, via the form found on the [SLA Web site awards page](#).

# LEADERSHIP SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

## SLA Leadership Summit 2008

*Submitted by Iris Anderson, Chair-elect*

### Louisville, Kentucky, January 23 – 25, 2008

Attending the SLA Leadership Summit in Louisville, Kentucky this January was a real pleasure. Despite frigid temperatures, warm hospitality was evident, from the airport banners welcoming SLA members, to the friendly staff at the Downtown Marriott. Summits are small conferences making planning and logistics much easier for everyone. In fact, details in Louisville were so well orchestrated that we quickly settled in and got busy networking, delightfully, face to face. SLA Kentucky Chapter members, welcoming and helpful throughout, hosted a fun reception at the **Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory** where baseball enthusiasts and novices alike were treated to tours of the inner workings of an industry in which baseball bats are still crafted largely by hand. You can't miss the museum building as

you walk down West Main Street because of a 120-foot, 68,000 pound baseball bat leaning against it on the sidewalk and soaring skywards.



The museum also houses an indoor ballpark and a 15 ton limestone ball and glove, both great for photo backdrops. As you can tell, our stay in the Blue Grass state though short was memorable. Sadly, we did not have enough time to take tours of Kentucky's famous bourbon distilleries which are scattered across the rolling countryside, but I did pick up some literature for a return visit in warmer weather.

### Summit Highlights

The Leadership Summit is a comfortable place for SLA members and incoming officers especially to learn and grow within the organization, whether at the local or Chapter level or within one of SLA's broad subject Divisions. It offers many learning opportunities for all. In addition to meeting with other Division and Chapter members,

there are joint cabinet meetings and some divisions hold board meetings. There is an interesting keynote speaker from outside of SLA and attendees get to hear presentations by the new **SLA President** (Stephen Abram), and **SLA's CEO** Janice Lachance. Breakfasts and lunches are provided by the generous vendor sponsors who also have

tabletop exhibits. It is a welcoming and informal setting in which to meet fellow professionals, SLA staff, and company representatives.

The Social Science Division (DSOC) was well represented by Chair, **Heidi Yacker**,

past Chair **Greta Ober-Beauchesne**, Chair-elect, **Iris Anderson**, and Seattle Conference Program Planner **Tara Murray**.

## Keynote Presentation: Anticipating the Future

*Submitted by Iris W. Anderson, Chair-elect*



The energetic keynote speaker was **Andy Hines**, a consulting futurist, who is on the team of SLA's current realignment project. His Washington, D.C. based company, "Social Technologies," <http://www.socialtechnologies.com/> is at the forefront of assisting clients not simply with predicting the future of an industry but instead with what he termed "framing, scanning and forecasting" the present state of an industry in order to create a vision of the future and then planning for and acting on it. He described this as anticipating the future rather than predicting the future which is always an impossible task given how things change constantly all around us. The trouble with predictions, he said, is that no one can get it right. So what do futurists do exactly? Seems they are very much our information professional cousins, so-to-speak. Futurists explore and examine an issue or industry (*scanning*), analyze trends and problems lurking beneath the surface (*framing*), and create a vision of moving forward in a meaningful way (*forecasting*). He acknowledged the importance of looking at issues deeply in context and time and emphasized the importance of thinking about problems when they first appear. Futurists do not fear change, they embrace it. The rest of the population first has these typical and by now familiar responses:

1. **Denial** – it's not happening.
2. **Acknowledgement** – it's happening but I can't deal with it now.
3. **Mobilization** – let's do something about it before it's too late.

Measuring the shifts and understanding today's trends to shape our future:

Mr. Hines referenced models from the "World Values Survey" (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>) to explain shifts and differences in historical and current societal values at the country and regional level. In general, emerging countries display traditional values that are closely tied to human survival and deeply religious cultures. When countries transition to industrialized societies, values shift towards secular and non-traditional models. Later, this modern growth propels societies' values towards knowledge management and self expression. The latter "post modern" societies value a return to tradition but with some interesting twists: strong ethical values such as concern for the environment, tolerance of different life styles including ethnicity and religion; and self expression, creativity and individual freedom. So how do these values play out in our present and future?

Evidence of some of today's trends:

1. personalization and co-creation efforts
2. simplification of complex tools
3. cultural hubs of ideas and information – ideas crop up everywhere around the globe
4. ethical consumption – e.g. measuring your carbon footprints, "going green"
5. smart everything – tools to let you save your time and energy for the big decisions

6. immersive (social) technology – everything from YouTube to virtual worlds
7. Open source – shift from scarcity to abundance to the extent that we can now give things away for free. We are entering a “gift economy.”
8. company focus on core competencies and outsourcing the rest
9. rapid growth of online learning and life-

long learning – e.g. University of Phoenix (largest online degree offerings in U.S.)

Mr. Hines wrapped up his talk by reminding librarians and information professionals of their most meaningful and valuable role in society. It is **not** in finding information for clients, he said. There is a ton of information out there and anyone can find it. Our value lies in sorting through the mountain of information to find its value for the clients we serve. He ended by reminding us that “Anything that helps people make a choice is a good thing!”

## Interactive Sessions: Remembering the Future

*Submitted by Iris W. Anderson, Chair-elect*

In these breakout sessions attendees were organized into small groups to brainstorm ideas for future directions both for the Association as well as for our individual professional lives. Under the guidance of an SLA leader, group members completed templates to answer questions such as how our environment will change in 2-3 years, how we envision future success as information professionals, how SLA will change over the next 2-3 years, and how

SLA will contribute to our professional success. In preparation for 2009 which is SLA’s Centennial year, we were asked to imagine important events that occurred between 2008 – 2010 in SLA, what events occurred during 2009, and ways in which SLA membership has evolved and changed. All notes from the discussions were shared at each table and collected for future reference and planning efforts. It was a challenging assignment to act as visionaries for SLA and for ourselves.





## SLA Alignment Project: Moving Forward

*Submitted by Iris W. Anderson, Chair-elect*

The management consulting team of Fleishman-Hillard, Inc. <http://www.fleishman.com/> described the principles and process for SLA's realignment project for 2008. Its goal is to position the association and information specialists for the next hundred years as part of the yearlong Centennial celebrations in 2009. The team made reference to Jim Collins' best selling books, "Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies," and "Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the

Leap and Others Don't." Key points for success were offered as follows:

1. Align goals, vision, value and purpose to the organization's core values
2. Position ourselves well in both identity and personality
3. Communicate with clarity, credibility and consistency

The consultants pointed out that a core value of our profession, namely delivering detailed, in-depth research results to clients, is actually at odds with what many customers want today: speed and convenience. In this sense, our profession is not aligned with our clients' needs or with their own perceptions of need. Of course, as information professionals we realize the folly that can occur when research results lack depth or accuracy within broader context and

meaning. To counter this bias, the consultants recommend that information specialists communicate clear messages to describe what we do and why it is valuable to those we serve. We need to refine these messages by using optimal language to communicate our values. Fleishman-Hillard consultants, working closely with SLA staff and futurist Andy Hines and others are advising SLA in this important work.

## Taking Advantage of Collaborative Tools from SLA

*Submitted by Iris W. Anderson, Chair-elect*

This session was my favorite of the Summit. Linda Broussard, SLA's Chief Community Officer, gave the main presentation and cases studies were presented by members of the Boston Chapter on how they are using Survey Monkey and by the Cincinnati Chapter on how they are posting course offerings from Click U on their website. SLA staff has worked hard to provide its members with excellent, innovative free tools that will enable you to stay current and do lots of cool stuff. So if you haven't already done so, take a closer look:

\*Leadership Center – found under the Resources site from the SLA Home Page, this portal includes everything you need to succeed as a leader: recommended practices for divisions and chapters; model governing documents; SLA's logos for downloading and style guide; annual report forms; online certificates you can print yourself to give to vendors or presenters as thank-you's; business cards for unit leaders (paid and free varieties you can print yourself) and a link to Handbooks including the "Public Relations Toolkit," for which our Division served as model. There is a unit Web Masters page with style guides and hosting information. Also of interest is the monthly online newsletter, Leadership Connections.

\*Survey templates – found under Resources, Research and Surveys, SLA Unit Surveys, the go-to place to create your own unit

survey. You can see what surveys have been completed by other SLA Units, how they were designed, questions asked, etc. You can also go to [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and enter the following user ID ([leadership@sla.org](mailto:leadership@sla.org)) and Password (slaunits) to use the software for free.

\*CoPs – found under SLA Community, Communities of Practice, with links to social networks that you can read, create or join, on all topics of professional interest. These are very useful tools for divisions and chapters but also for special interest groups no matter how small. The site includes a list of all SLA Wikis, Blogs and Discussion lists with technical how-to information.

\*Click U – Yes, online university. From the Home Page, go to Professional Development, then Click U. Take another look because the number of courses and topics covered is astounding. There are now accredited courses and a free "course of the month." If you missed the Annual Conference, you can purchase sessions taught last year in Denver and you can hear many conference program podcasts at no charge. Finally, be sure to check out the Leadership and Management Library, a substantial collection of e-books covering topics such as strategic planning, management, organizational behavior, personnel management, and project management. Software download for the ebrary Reader is included.

# Division Cabinet Meeting: Findings from 2007 Annual Reports

*Submitted by Iris W. Anderson, Chair-elect*

Robyn Frank, Division Cabinet Chair, presented selected findings from the annual reports of SLA divisions for 2007. The overall state of the divisions is positive. One third of divisions have a strategic plan and 40 percent have conducted membership needs surveys. Benefits of doing both activities were emphasized and recommended in her talk. Sixty percent of divisions currently produce a web-based only bulletin or newsletter, usually quarterly. Many are currently switching over to a wiki or blog. Over half of divisions allow both members and non-members to have access to their listserv and do not collect fees for posting jobs. In the recruitment area, 92% of divisions have a membership committee although only 16% have a recruitment plan. One half hold a new member reception at the Annual Conference and 60% send out a "welcome packet" to new members. Only a quarter of the divisions have a program

targeted toward increasing student membership participation and 28% of divisions offer a mentoring program. Finally, over one-half of divisions sponsor scholarships or other financial aid that is mostly used to sponsor a student's attendance at Annual Conference. The Social Science Division is very much in sync with these findings and has plans to increase its membership and to conduct a user needs survey of current members in 2008. See SLA Board Document OM0108-B06 for the complete report. To find it, navigate from the SLA Home Page to Inside SLA, Governance, Board of Directors, Board of Directors Meeting Information and scroll down.

## Chapter Cabinet Meeting

*Submitted by Iris W. Anderson, Chair-elect*

Tom Rink, Division Cabinet Chair-elect, gave a summary report of SLA Chapters. The health of most chapters is good. However, the SLA Board approved a merger of the Connecticut Valley Chapter which was too small into the much larger Boston Chapter. He informed us that the units can petition the SLA Board for supplemental funds as needed. Two recently approved requests

were: (1) to bring in a new chair-elect from Australia in the amount of \$2,500 and (2) to the Asian Chapter to hold a regional meeting in India in 2007 in the amount of \$10,000. This was followed by brief presentations by SLA's Chief Financial Officer, Nancy Sansalone and SLA's Treasurer, Sylvia James.

# Joint Cabinet Meeting: News and Announcements

*Submitted by Iris W. Anderson, Chair-elect*

An **Ethics Task Force** was created under SLA's past President, Rebecca Vargha and guidelines on information ethics were developed during her term. The group is now seeking broader participation of the Divisions and Chapters by asking them to appoint "ethics ambassadors" to collect anecdotes, stories and examples of issues faced from the ground up, as explained by Jill Strand, Chair of SLA's Public Relations Advisory Council. A course called "Ethics 101" will be promoted through Click University in the spring of 2008. Also, SLA will sponsor an ethics speaker at Seattle's Annual conference and a global ethics event is planned for the Centennial conference in 2009 in Washington, D.C.

**SLA is going green!** After being inspired by Al Gore's keynote address at last year's Annual Conference in Denver, the Environment and Resource Management

Division (ERM) recommended and the SLA Board approved a recommendation to form a Green Working Group. Since November 2007, SLA initiated a Community of Practice (COP) called the Green Conference Initiative. They have provided a list of environmentally friendly practices to be incorporated into annual conferences, summits and other association events. These practices were in evidence in Louisville and will be followed in Seattle at the Annual Conference in June:

1. SLA Staff brought their own re-usable mugs for purchasing coffee and tea
2. Handouts for the Leadership Summit were not printed and were posted on the web only
3. No conference bags will be distributed in Seattle for the Annual Conference

You can [subscribe to greening news and updates](#) on SLA's website under SLA Community, Communities of Practice.



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