

President's Message

By Denise Callihan

SLA is in the midst of tackling many issues important to the special librarian. I was fortunate enough to attend SLA's Annual Conference in Philadelphia and hear Donna Scheeder address the SLA community at the Annual Business Meeting. Her message, "Change is Our Tradition", was received enthusiastically and I personally found her message inspirational. We are constantly changing and re-inventing ourselves to face the increased demands of our various work environments. It is becoming more challenging to beat the learning curve and harness the power of change. This year as your President, it is my goal to increase our role as change agents in the community. In order to preserve our tradition as catalysts of change, we must increase our visibility and skill levels.

Bring more visibility to Chapter: Have you ever felt under-appreciated in your company or within the community? It's easy to overlook that which you don't see. We need to better market and promote ourselves to our users. With the aid of our recent Web presence and other key accomplishments, I will launch a promotional campaign touting our profession and our Chapter in order to champion our expertise and effectiveness. We have fostered great relationships with local library associations and will increase collaboration efforts to further community awareness. Standing strong, we will be recognized!

Work on Professional Development issues more aggressively: A number of our colleagues led by Ange Pollis have begun work on professional development issues on behalf of students and new members. I would like to further explore, as an Association, new learning and mentoring opportunities that specifically target professional and personal competencies, in an effort to help all of our members lead change. Over the years, we have built solid relationships with vendors who are willing to work with us to offer appropriate training. I will also take advantage of our proximity to two Library Schools, and work with them to tailor opportunities to our needs. In understanding your needs, Dave Majka has undertaken an outreach campaign. Dave's goal has been to contact inactive members in an attempt to understand why they do not participate in Chapter activities, and determine what programming would most attract them and inspire involvement. Armed with this information, we will pursue these recommendations and offer training appropriately. This knowledge will keep our Chapter alive and strong for years to come.

Mentoring will remain a priority, but we must communicate with each other in order to truly exploit the power of our Chapter. In the fall, we will launch a discussion list that will allow members to rely on the collective minds of our Chapter... sharing information... asking questions... providing helpful advice more readily. This is an exciting step towards becoming a more virtual Association.

I actively encourage feedback and advice throughout the year. Please contact me at 724-325-5221 or callihan@ppg.com. Consider volunteering your time and expertise to the Chapter. Volunteers like you help keep our Chapter motivated. Remember, this Chapter is ours!! There's strength in numbers. Let's EMBRACE change!

From the Editor

By Earl Mounts

Our new President, Denise Callihan, has enthusiastic and motivating plans for her tenure and all of us look forward to helping her achieve the forward momentum of the Chapter. Send Denise an email and let her know how we can stay ahead of the information juggernaut.

Marge Sroka's Spotlight is on Barb Richards, University Librarian for Information and Education Services at CMU. Barb is the apotheosis of librarianship and a major influence on this editor's own career. On the Student Member side is Hillary Stevenson's essay which was awarded a travel stipend for the Annual Conference by the Business and Finance Division. The essay provides a formula for success in our rapidly evolving profession.

Please respond to Dave Majka's survey on the Pointer. This is the first time that we have presented you the opportunity to voice your opinions on this important communication issue.

And many thanks to Paula Reed for providing some excellent Sight Bites about the perception of the profession in the public media.

Also in this issue are the Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting held on May 25, 2000. Please remember that the Minutes have not been approved so may contain errors.

Members in the News

Lynn Labun, Head of Carnegie-Mellon University's Mellon Institute Library, is an active participant on the Planning Committee of the Biomedical and Life Science Division's slate of activities at the 2001 Annual Conference in San Antonio. Expectations are high for record attendance at this meeting.

Welcome! New Members

Jacqueline C. Corinth, *Robert Morris College*

Paul E. Johner

Gary Lance Lugar, *U. Pittsburgh, Physics Library*

Luanne Corsetti Samson, *LEXIS-NEXIS*

Carol J. Welch, *Lord Corp.*

and students Andrea M. Ketchum, David Snyder and Susan C. Vargas.

Spotlight on . . . Barbara Richards

By Marge Sroka

Barb Richards is the Associate University Librarian for Information and Education Services at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). She shares her experience and insights with us in response to the following questions.

What are your responsibilities at CMU?

All the reference units and liaison librarians to the various academic departments are a part of my management responsibility. In addition, I have administrative personnel that report to me as well. I do a fair amount of personnel work in my job since we do not officially have a personnel officer. I am also expected to help with development and fund raising. Well, I think you can imagine what a challenge all of this is! Keeping on top of all the activities that are concurrent is the biggest challenge of all. This is of course everyone's challenge in his or her jobs. I believe the unique challenge at Carnegie Mellon is that the pace of change seems very fast and the institution is by nature very entrepreneurial.

What advice can you offer SLA members on handling management and technological upheavals?

Look on the digital future as not only a challenge, but also a great opportunity. I have no doubt that libraries will operate very differently in the future. Librarians need to have a role in that future - not react to the changes that come along. So my advice is learn as much as you can about both management and technology, be creative in applying this knowledge to library operations, and embrace quickly the technology that will enable librarians to perform their roles effectively.

There have been many changes through the years in librarians' roles and duties. If you had a crystal ball, what would your predictions be for the librarian of the future?

Don't I wish I had a crystal ball! But since I don't, the best I can do is say that, in the future, librarians and libraries will become increasingly digital. However, our users will have greatly increased expectations about what kind of services we can deliver. We better be ready to provide them, or someone else will. The technology will get better. The challenge will be to know about it, know how to use it creatively to provide services users want and to be able to manage our libraries to make changes quickly in this digital environment. In academic special libraries, I believe that librarians will take on a greater consulting and teaching role as information providers.

How long have you been a librarian? Have you worked in other fields besides librarianship? If so, does your past experience contribute to being a successful librarian?

I received my library degree in 1969, so I have been a librarian for 31 years. However, for the first 10 of those years before coming to Carnegie Mellon, I had part-time (usually volunteer) positions while I was raising my two daughters and my husband was establishing his medical career. (That's the way life used to be.) Before becoming a librarian, I worked as a hematology research technician at the University of Wisconsin Medical School. I also had the opportunity to be a hematology technician (unpaid) for four months at the Christian Medical College in Vellore

in southern India. All of these experiences helped to broaden my education and skills in all sorts of ways. No experience leaves you untouched.

The more you have, the better you are equipped to deal with whatever comes your way. My experience as a volunteer and a parent certainly contributed to my understanding of the service nature of libraries and the management of projects and people.

Describe your education.

I have a BA in Botany from Oberlin College, an MLS from SUNY at Buffalo, and a Masters in Public Management from Carnegie Mellon. I also have most of a Masters in Teaching from the University of Wisconsin, but was unable to finish this.

Describe some hobbies and/or interests.

My hobbies include gardening, tennis, and reading, especially mystery stories. I am also newly being introduced to sailing as a pastime. Also I have been working on computers since 1978 when I first came to Carnegie Mellon and they still fascinate (and confound!) me. I am the webmaster for the Bower Hill Community Church.

What are your plans for retirement?

In the long term, my husband and I will be moving to Estes Park, Colorado to our home there. I expect to keep busy in retirement by traveling, especially visiting children and grandchildren. I hope to keep in contact with the library field, but at this moment I have no clue as to what that means. I would also like to try my hand at a new venture vastly different from libraries. I have many interests, particularly in horticulture and the environment, and will look for opportunities in the West.

News from the Student Chapter

By Kimberly Gregory

The SLA Pittsburgh Student Chapter at the University of Pittsburgh was awarded the third runner-up award in the category of Student Group Outstanding Leadership from The Special Libraries Association Student and Academic Relations Committee (SARC).

Hillary Stevenson attended a reception held for the awardees on June 11 during the Annual Conference in Philly. Her comments follow.

"I attended the SARC reception, but Dave [Majka] could not make it. The incoming president of SLA, Donna Scheeder, spoke as did Barbara Arnold, the head of SARC. Also, incoming and outgoing Board members were there and freely mingled among the students. A few schools, including the University of Pittsburgh, had displays of their SLA Student Chapter work. After the awards presentation, I had a chance to meet with Donna Scheeder, who remembered that I was the student who took the initiative to petition formal recognition from SLA. Besides myself, Chrissy Kinna also attended the SARC reception.

One of the items discussed at the SARC luncheon was student membership and how to attract students to SLA. Since the profession is "graying", the SARC board members concurred that an appeal has to be made for students to not only join the organization, but become involved."

David Snyder, Bryan Carson, Brian Steinmetz, Ryoko Kato, Jen Fritz, Holly Harden, Eulalia Roel, Chrissy Kinna, and I were among the students in attendance at the 2000 Annual Conference. (I have a feeling that I am forgetting someone, but cannot determine who I am forgetting!) The majority of the students also participated in the Continuing Education sessions and found them very worthwhile and not just because the registration fee was waived. In particular, I found it ironic and useful, that I worked sessions I may not personally have selected, so my eyes were opened and my horizons broadened."

Hillary Stevenson's Prize-Winning Essay for the Business and Finance Division Travel Stipend

One hundred years ago, librarians were called upon to be the sole proprietors of the stores of information known as libraries. At the time the exchange of goods was simple: the patron of yesterday would visit the library on a quest for knowledge and employ the assistance of the librarian sitting behind the tall wooden desk, batch processing new titles in the Dewey Decimal System. The patron would ask for help and the librarian would kindly give it. Today, this arrangement no longer satisfies. The 21st century librarian must know where the right answer lies, access the information, and be able to share and explain the information with the consumer – the patron.

In the last several years, information professionals have witnessed a transition in the information field: a change from independence to interdependence. The 2000 Special Libraries Association Annual Conference theme, *Independence to Interdependence: The Next Phase in the Information Revolution*, exemplifies this change. However, it is one thing to agree with the idea of changing from independence to interdependence, and another to practice it. Let us briefly examine the skills a corporate librarian will need to work *interdependently* in the next phase of the information revolution.

Modeled after the highly acclaimed *Competencies for Special Librarians of the 21st Century*, we will highlight three professional skills and three personal traits that will make a librarian successful in the *interdependent* phase of the information revolution. The three necessary professional skills are the ability to see the organization which the library is a part of as a whole, solid management skills, and the ability to manipulate technology. Three personal traits the successful librarian will hold are excellent people skills, a highly inquisitive nature, and the ability to think in new ways.

The first professional skill, the ability to see the organization which the library is a part of as a whole, is crucial in a time when the world does not know any borders. Political borders may still exist, but that has not prevented concepts such as *transborder data flows* from coming into existence. Special librarians must be able to see their library not as a separate entity from the organization, but as a critical element of the organization. Perhaps that is why many organizations now use the term *corporate information center* in lieu of library. It paints an image of the core of an atom, from which all things spring forth. The library or corporate information center provides the information members of the organization require along with the proper guidance on accessing the information. To be successful, the librarian must realize the role

he/she plays within the organization and how the organization fits into the scheme of the industry. With this proper understanding, the librarian will be able to select databases, journals, and other publications beneficial to all members of the organization. The librarian will also be able to ask the appropriate questions of people in other parts of the organization in an attempt to supply the right resources.

Secondly, the *interdependent* librarian will need to possess solid management skills. If librarians are to be respected by others in the corporation (and others who may not have a clear understanding of the need for a corporate librarian, when their own laptop can carry them into the World Wide Web at the click of a mouse), they must be able to not just manage, but lead. The ability to manage means an understanding of capabilities such as handling personnel issues, overseeing financial matters, relating to others from all aspects of the business, and, most importantly, the ability to trust and to delegate authority. As librarians on one side are bombarded with requests for information and on the other hit by vendors' sales pitches, librarians must be able to trust those around him/her and to delegate authority of certain tasks. What if there is no one to delegate tasks to? Often, corporate librarians are also solo librarians. While it is more challenging, the corporate librarian can still manage him/herself and the department by prioritizing and making decisions that they will adhere to and be able to defend if necessary. Also, forming strong working relations with the corporation's information technology department is a good idea. Reaching out and forming *interdependent* bonds is key.

The last of the three major professional skills is the ability to manipulate technology. Without the above skills – understanding the organization and the ability to manage – this skill is moot. Only through an understanding of the organization and the industry can a librarian decide which technology is best and how to use technology for maximum effectiveness. Deciding what technology to use, presenting justifications for the choice, selecting the most cost-effective pieces of technology etc., also comes out of the ability to manage. Manipulation of technology also lends itself to the *interdependent* nature of the information revolution. Without the technology vendors, programmers, and those in the information technology department of the company, the librarian could not successfully choose the technology, use it, and help others to learn how to use it.

These three professional skills are useful up to a point. There must be something intrinsic to the librarian of the 21st century in which these skills manifest themselves. This takes us to the top three personal traits the librarian should possess long before they receive the ML(I)S. The first is a cliché, but very true: good people skills. Under this umbrella term are good communication skills, diplomacy, and professional empathy. Without being able to communicate well (actively listening, not just speaking well) the librarian will not be able to convey ideas or understand the ideas of others. Diplomacy is also important. Although the catchword of the new century is "global," people still have their own ideas and agendas. Using diplomacy to handle situations, in which people may not support the goals of the library, ensures the librarian a successful outcome. Being diplomatic will let the librarian convey ideas and help the librarian be open to the ideas of others. This is the same result as professional empathy.

Many librarians have said that they first wanted to become a librarian because they enjoyed finding things out. This natural inquisitiveness will let the librarian be successful in the interdependent environment, as they will ask questions of others, see how the corporation functions and its place within the market/industry. Being naturally inquisitive will also let the librarian learn about new technology, such as databases, software programs, and Internet sites; journals and periodicals; and other publications. Generally, people who are naturally inquisitive are those who are on the cutting edge and want to do whatever is necessary to stay there.

Being naturally inquisitive also means being able to think in new ways. Based upon working with others and understanding the organization, the librarian should be able to think in new ways and find ways in which to proactively offer information resources that will allow the organization to achieve its goals. The librarian will interpret data in new ways that the company can use, keep on top of management issues both internally and in the marketplace, information issues, and other topics that are pertinent to the organization and its individuals.

At a time when participation in the Information Revolution is measured in bytes per second, the universe of information knows no boundaries. As the 2000 Special Libraries Association Annual Conference theme states, the revolution is in a new phase: one of *interdependence*. For the corporate librarian to succeed in this phase, he/she must hold certain professional skills and personal traits.

- **Hillary Stevenson**

Opinions Wanted on *The Pointer*

The print version of the *Pointer* has been the Pittsburgh Chapter's main means of communicating with the membership for many years. However, the times, technology, and activities of SLA and its members are changing. Now is a good time to examine how our Chapter distributes important information to the membership. The print version of the *Pointer* is the single greatest financial obligation of the Pittsburgh Chapter. It presently costs the Chapter around \$1,400 a year to subsidize the *Pointer* due to a steady and significant decline in advertising revenues. This amount is nearly equal to the annual allotment that we receive from SLA.

There are electronic means available to distribute information quickly and efficiently to Chapter members who have Internet access, and lower cost alternatives to mail the same information to Chapter members who do not have this capability. The question at hand is: do we still need to have a printed version of the *Pointer*?

This column is a plea for your input on this issue. The print *Pointer* has a distinguished history and is undoubtedly important to many members of the Chapter. I would like to get a sense of the Chapter in regard to HOW important it is to continue to produce it, and whether other less costly alternatives might be acceptable. I would like to hear from as many of you as possible on this issue so that all points of view can be weighed by the Board before any decision is made on this important issue.

The Chapter Board will address this matter at its meeting in the late Summer. Please contact me by phone (412-262-8358) or email (majka@robert-morris.edu) to voice your opinion. All points of view and constructive suggestions are encouraged and welcomed; the more input, the better the decision. Please let me know how you feel about this very important matter

By Paula Reed

Our guest Sight Bites editor this issue is Paula Reed of Mine Safety Appliances. Thanks to Paula for making my job easier!

Where Have All the Librarians Gone?: They've gone to dot coms, one by one US News & World Report, June 12, 2000, page 53.

Although this article addresses retaining school librarians, aka "media specialists," I think SLA members will relate to the description of the changing face of both the library and the tasks of a librarian -- and the lure of corporate positions.--

Spies Like Us: Companies protect their secrets. Pittsburgh Business Times, July 21-27, 2000, front page (HOT OFF THE PRESS!)

I'm always bound to find something serendipitous in the Pittsburgh Business Times and today is no exception. On the surface, this article appears to be about "Shred-It", a confidential document shredding franchise with a location in Monroeville. But then, the reader discovers the article focuses more on local companies' testimonies about the need for confidentiality. AND THEN, you realize that the people companies are trying to protect their secrets from are the PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION GATHERERS - the competitive intelligence professionals - which I have discovered now that I am one - are for the most part people with MLS degrees!!!

SCIP (Society for Competitive Intelligence Professionals) receives an entire section to make comments, but SLA didn't get included in on this one.

(I am a member of both) --

"The fragility and obsolescence of electronic systems are more obvious than the "brittle paper" syndrome latent in 19th-century innovation, a defect that cost millions of dollars in deacidification and microfilming. Nevertheless, university managers smoothly counter that future archeologists will have "Rosetta stone" tools to interpret JPEG and other compression techniques."--A. Anderson: *Information Science Vesus Science Policy*, Science, July 14, 2000, p.243.

According to a survey cited in the July 30, 2000, issue of the *Tribune-Review*, librarians rank 9th in pay among all occupations in the Pittsburgh 6-county area. The top 10 rankings are college /university teachers at \$44.12/hour, advertising/PR managers at \$36.32, elementary school teachers at \$35.50, secondary school teachers at \$34.29, other managers at \$33.72, electrical /electronic engineers at \$30.08, math and computer scientists at \$29.94, other engineers at \$29.67, librarians at \$29.00, and medicine and health managers at \$28.96.