



Newsletter of the Special Libraries Association - Pittsburgh Chapter

Volume 78, Issue 1

Spring 2013

President's Message ~ Eve Wider

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Springtime in Pittsburgh is one of my favorite times of year. I feel for those of you who suffer from allergies, but it has truly been a beautiful few weeks in the East End of Pittsburgh.

In February, with support from the chapter, I was able to attend the Leadership Summit in Dallas. Our President, Deb Hunt, challenged us to go outside our comfort zones in our involvement within SLA. I was reminded that I did this last year by agreeing to be president elect.

My goal for this year is to continue to step outside my comfort zone over the next year. I encourage you all to join me in this goal. Over winter break I read "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking" which made me reflect on my largely introverted self. I've had fascinating conversations over the last few months with librarians about our introverted professional tendencies and how they effect our profession. At the board meeting in late February with the help of Amy Watson, our wonderful Membership chair, I handed out a current list of our membership and asked board members to reach out to people they see on the list who aren't coming to our meetings and encourage them to attend and/or participate in our chapter. We've had all too many layoffs of librarians recently, and we need to support our colleagues searching for new opportunities. We also need to promote the value of our professional skills in nontraditional library settings. Over the next year we'll be talking about this as we plan events so please join us to be part of this conversation. In closing, I challenge myself and you to talk to people you don't know at our upcoming events. Let's all step out of our comfort zones and get to know the amazing members of our chapter.

2013 Promising Professional: Leslie Eibl -Chris Heil

Congratulations to Leslie Eibl, the recipient of the Pittsburgh Chapter's 2013 Promising Professional Award.



Leslie currently serves as Pittsburgh Chapter's Secretary and is employed as a Visiting Reference and Instruction Librarian at the University of Pittsburgh. She previously worked as a Reference Intern at Hillman Library at Pitt, as Librarian at Sanford-Brown Institute and Assistant Librarian at the Bidwell Training Center in Pittsburgh. Leslie is a member of SLA, the American Library Association and the Western Pennsylvania/West Virginia Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

Leslie plans to use the Promising Professional Award stipend to attend the Annual SLA Conference in June in San Diego, where she intends to obtain information to enhance our Chapter meetings, events and outreach efforts, and to network with info professionals outside of the academic environment. We look forward to reading Leslie's report on her conference experience in the next issue of THE CONFLUENCE.

Safe travels to Leslie and all our Chapter colleagues headed for San Diego!

Welcome !

New Chapter

Members

January

Jessica Franco

February

Elizabeth Rapp

Tricia Burmeister

March

Melanie Vunjak

Desirae Sweet

Stephanie Freas

Rocco Cremonese

April

Kathleen Phillips

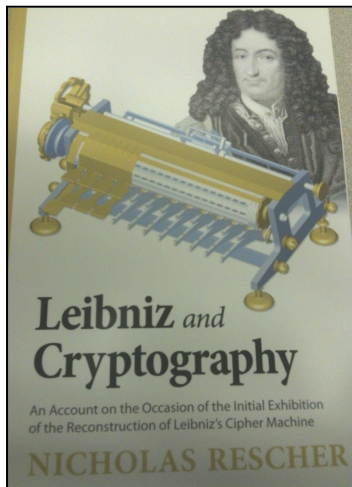
Have you been to www.sla.org recently?

SLA switched over to a newly designed website. The new Website has a simpler and cleaner design, task-based terminology, and easy-to-find links to favorite tools.

Chapter Member News

Mark Vrabel, AHIP, ELS, Information Resources Supervisor at the Oncology Nursing Society, was featured in the Member Spotlight of the January 2013 *MLA News*. He also presented the "New Roles for Librarians" Boost Box session on January 8, 2013 for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Middle Atlantic Region. He discussed some of the "non-traditional" librarian roles he has assumed, such as medical writing (AMWA certification), editing (BELS exam/ELS credential), and social media. The archived audio recording and PowerPoint presentation is available at http://nmlm.gov/mar/training/boost_recordings.html

March Event Recap: The Amazing Intellect of Leibniz – Jennie Crowley



Philosopher. Mathematician. Scientist. Inventor. Librarian. On March 19th, SLA members and students learned about the numerous professions of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz from Dr. Nicholas Rescher, Distinguished University Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh and world-renowned Leibniz expert.

Aptly described as “one of the three smartest people who ever lived,” Leibniz was born in Leipzig, Germany in 1646. He studied law at the University of Leipzig and secured a position as a minor justice official with the Elector of Mainz. During this time, France was considered the major superpower and the rest of Europe sought to contain French ambitions. Despite this political turmoil, Paris was also considered

the intellectual center of the era with the rise of modern physics and the birth of modern philosophy. Leibniz was therefore fortunate when his employer sent him to Paris on a diplomatic mission.

While in Paris, Leibniz reinvented himself as French thinker and writer. He met famous intellectual figures of the day and pursued studies in mathematics, laying the foundation for integral and differential calculus. He also designed a calculating machine for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and presented his invention to the Royal Society in London. Leibniz was soon left without an employer after the death of the Elector of Mainz, and accepted a position as librarian, and eventually court historian, for the Duke of Hanover.

Even while employed at Hanover, Leibniz still found time to pursue his academic studies. He continued his work in mathematics as well as engaged in collaborative

ventures in the sciences. Although he only wrote two books, Leibniz projected his influence and findings in articles as well as letters of correspondence. In fact, it is estimated that he had several hundred contacts in his lifetime! This vast correspondence proved to be quite useful when Leibniz began (another!) librarian post at Wolfenbüttel, one of the largest European libraries of its day.

Although there is little academic focus on Leibniz’s contributions to librarianship, Dr. Rescher pointed out that Leibniz was instrumental in the evolution of the library at Wolfenbüttel. He relied on his correspondence to acquire material for the library, and proposed a new library building, the first to be built on rotunda principles. Leibniz was also the first librarian at Wolfenbüttel to insist on an alphabetical catalog (at the time, books were organized in terms of acquisition date and size). In addition, he systemized

the range of sciences and produced an outline detailing the essential holdings of an adequate library. The library today is one of the oldest surviving libraries in the world.

Dr. Rescher concluded his presentation with a discussion on Leibniz’s cipher machine. Interested in mechanizing cognitive processes, Leibniz worked on a coding ma-



SLA members and guests at the March event. Credit: Eve Wider

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Clarion University Student Chapter Update – Jessica Franco & Lydia Kibler

This year has been an active one for the Clarion University student chapter of the Special Library Association. We have had a lot of professional development opportunities and community service as well as going on a trip.

A big change that the organization has experienced is the transition of the library science graduate program (which made up the majority of our membership) to a completely online format. As a result the organization has had to experiment with our meeting format. For a while we held meetings solely on line using the Wimba classroom software. This allowed all of our members to come together in one audio chat online. We were also able to archive the recordings of the meeting so distance students who could not attend the formal meeting time could still listen to the meeting after the fact. We are now conducting combined meetings. This allows the remaining face to face members (primarily undergraduate students) to meet in person in a classroom in the library, transmitting our discussions in the Wimba classroom, while the rest of the group is still participating in the meeting online, accessing Wimba from home.

The chapter has participated in a webinar on RDA cataloging which was put on by the American Li-

brary Association. We accessed this online and were able to archive it so that our distance students who were not able to attend at the scheduled time could view the seminar as well.

Last year the student chapter of ALA at Clarion University began a program called De-Stress with the Dogs, and this year SLA has taken over the planning of that event which was very successful in the fall semester and is coming up quickly for the spring semester. This service event brings therapy dogs into the university library for an hour or two three nights during finals week so that students may be allowed to interact with them unwind from the pressure of finals week.

We had an additional service event in which we went into a school library and helped catalog books for the librarian who was still in the process of automating her collection. For the project we combined with Lambda Sigma, another library science based organization on campus and invited other students from the library science department to join us as well. We had a great turn out and a lot of fun while being able to get a lot done for this library.

During the spring semester we went on a trip to Erie, Pennsylvania. There we visited the Erie Maritime Museum where we saw how the museum was preserving

and cataloging local history using a lot of realia including the restoration of the US Brig Niagara. We were also able to visit the Erie Art Museum. At the art museum we learned what is done to preserve artwork in terms for the framing, light exposure and contact with other materials. Much of this easily translates to the preservation of rare books and manuscripts as well, particularly concerning the effects of moisture, UV exposure and the need for an acid free or even acid absorbing environment.

In the coming weeks we will have two speakers from the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center in Connecticut. They will be speaking to us about the collection in their library and museum which is focused on the local Native American tribes as well as the portrayal of Native Americans across the country.

As we begin to plan for the upcoming semester, we are looking into incorporating new speakers, events, and other professional development opportunities for our members.



Now available exclusively online:

<http://digitalio.sla.org/>



Spring in Pittsburgh. Credit: Eve Wider

People's Library Update

Last spring, William Scott, an Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Pittsburgh presented "Banks Got Bailed Out, Books Got Thrown Out! The Ongoing Creation, Destruction, and Recreation of the People's Library at Occupy Wall Street" to our chapter regarding his work with the People's Library at Occupy Wall Street in Zuccotti Park.

(For original article of the event see page 3 in http://pittsburgh.sla.org/wp-content/uploads/bulletin/confluence_v77n1_12.pdf)

The OWS People's Library won its lawsuit against NYC and Mayor Michael Bloomberg (<http://online.wsj.com/article/APe5b116a2472e4507957302cba4dae404.html>).

(Continued from page 3)

chine that used the same skipping gear (called "Leibniz-wheel") he had created for his calculating machine. He hoped this cryptographic machine could be used for encoding letters during the War of the Spanish Succession. At the time, the encryption process relied on slides and wheels, and was liable to mistakes. Unfortunately, Leibniz's design was never built because Hanover felt it employed a sufficient staff for its confidential communications. Remarkably, a cryptographic machine with the same sophistication as Leibniz's machine did not appear until post-World War I, 250 years later!

After the presentation, SLA members were able to view Leibniz's cipher machine on display in the Special Collections Reading Room at Pitt's Hillman Library. This reconstruction, based on instructions discovered in Leibniz's correspondence, is the result of Dr. Rescher's research on Leibniz's interests in cryptography, and is the only working model of the machine.



Cipher machine on display at Hillman. Credit: Eve

SAVE THE DATE!

Tuesday evening, May 14, 2013

Pittsburgh Chapter of SLA tour of
the Allegheny Observatory and Li-
brary



The Allegheny Observatory has made historic contributions to astronomy and to accurate and uniform time keeping. The library has been the repository of some unique and specialized materials. It has also posed significant preservation challenges. We plan to have a presentation by librarians who have worked with this collection discussing some of its significant content and how the preservation issues were addressed. Following the presentation there will be a tour of the library space and the observatory building, including the telescope rooms.



Allegheny Observatory. From commons.wikimedia.org, taken by Tom Murphy VII.

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