

President's Message

Dave Majka - majka@robert-morris.edu

One of my presidential tasks is to determine the Chapter's priorities based upon a number of individual strategies adopted last year as part of the Chapter's widely acclaimed Strategic Plan.

In the last issue of the Pointer, I enumerated a number of priorities that I hoped to address in the upcoming year in accordance with the Plan. I have presented these to the Chapter's Board and Committee Leaders at the meeting in July and received their endorsement. Since a number of these either build upon my initial thoughts or are in addition to them, I would now like to share them with you. I have placed them in their context vis-à-vis the Strategies set forth in the Plan.

Strategy #1: Position Chapter members to meet future information challenges

Two years ago, SLA began a very successful series of videoconferences on topics pertinent to information managers, such as negotiating license agreements. Last year our Chapter presented two videoconferences in cooperation with the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of the Medical Librarians Association and the Western Pennsylvania Law Librarians Association. Your President Elect, Denise Callihan, is working on this year's Chapter programming and these cooperative videoconferences continue to be an attractive possibility.

Other programming throughout the year will provide additional learning opportunities for participating Chapter members.

Strategy #2: Increase Chapter membership; encourage member participation in Chapter activities; and develop Chapter leaders

I have proposed several initiatives to the Board to carry out this strategy: Our Membership Leader, Judy Lesso, yours truly, and several other volunteers will conduct an outreach program this year via telephone. We want to thank you for your loyalty and membership and would very much like to hear what types of Chapter activities would be attractive to you. We would also like to obtain your email address if we do not have it so that we can communicate more effectively with the membership as a whole.

Our Professional Development Leader, Angie Pollis, will be coordinating a mentorship program for students at our local library schools. This program will begin small and will be focused on student members, but if it is successful it could be expanded in both number and scope. Please let Angie know if you would be willing to participate in this rewarding opportunity.

I would like to see some initiatives developed to bring us closer to our many members in West Virginia. We have a significant number of members there and it is my hope that Denise Callihan and I can come up with one or more satellite meetings there that will be of interest to members in that state.

I have asked the Board to appoint a Chair of the Nominating Committee in the fall rather than the spring. This would give us more time to identify promising prospects for officer positions, and would give those so identified more time to make plans to attend SLA's Annual Conference. There are a significant number of leadership development activities there that no future President should have to miss.

I have appointed Kimberly Gregory as our Student Chapter Liaison. She and I will work with the leaders of the SLA student chapters at Pitt and Clarion to help them provide a valuable and meaningful introduction to SLA.

Strategy #3: Provide channels for effective communication among members

I have appointed Linda Hartman, our Chapter's Past President, to lead a committee that will examine how the Chapter can best communicate with its members in the future. We are all aware of the communication revolution that has swept over us in the last several years. While this holds much promise, I intend to make sure that the widest possible number of opinions are solicited and issues identified before any recommendations are taken to the Board for decision making.

I have built an email proxy for our Chapter and presently have around 100 valid email addresses out of 135 members (nearly 75%). I will use email judiciously to communicate important Chapter news. If you have not received any messages from me via email, please consider sharing your email address with me.

These strategies support nearly all of the initial Priorities for our Chapter that were suggested by the Strategic Planning Committee and endorsed by the Board. Your feedback and input on these matters are always welcome. I believe that 1999/2000 will be a productive and rewarding one for the Pittsburgh Chapter of SLA, and I look forward to sharing its success with all members of the Chapter.

From the Editor

Earl Mounts - earl.mounts@alcoa.com

Having been a member of SLA for 20+ years, I have been most in awe of the unsung editors of the newsletter. They have admirably discharged their duties of keeping us well informed of Association and Chapter activities, changes in governance, developments which affect our careers, and the accomplishments of our colleagues. More than any other members, they have assured the continuity of the Chapter by collecting, collating, and publishing Chapter activities in a high-quality publication which spans more than 7 decades. I am honored that Dave has asked me to accept this responsibility.

I would like especially to thank Mary Grace Desiderio for making the transition very easy for me by handing over to me a superbly organized file system. The Pittsburgh Chapter wants to thank Mary Grace for her four years of dedication and hard work in contributing to the history of the Chapter.

Members in the News

Matthew R. Marstellar has assumed the position of Physics and Mathematics Librarian at CMU's Engineering and Science Library. He joins CMU from EG&G Technical Services of West Virginia, Inc. Matt is a 1988 graduate of Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Department of Library and Information Sciences.--Submitted by Lynn Berard - lberard@andrew.cmu.edu

Since I haven't seen most of you lately, I wanted to let you know the latest in Hartman news. As you know, Andy, my husband, has been working on Y2K. It turns out that 1999 is going to be Y3H for the Hartmans. We are expecting a new addition in December. (It better not be a millennium baby as it is due December 6.)--Submitted by Linda Hartman - lhartman+@pitt.edu

Joy Richardson, Librarian at US Steel, recently retired after 30 years of service to that company. Joy has been a Pittsburgh Chapter member since 1980.

Minneapolis Mischief

I'm sure that by now you have all heard of the shenanigans at the Annual Conference that made the Chapter famous throughout Libraryland. Here are some personal recollections that make you wish you had been there!

I think my favorite was how we insisted that all present Chapter members get up on the stage and sing "We Are Family." We first rounded up everyone, fanned the flames of enthusiasm, got everyone a white dinner napkin to wave, and earnestly talked the band into playing the background music. In talking the band into this, first we had to try to sing the song to the band over and over, because they didn't know what song we were talking about. Since we were not what you call top singers, it took a long time just to get the band to understand what song we were talking about.

Finally it was show time. We got the high sign from the bandleader and piled onto the steps leading up to the stage. The music started, and we all burst forth with a rousing "We are fam-a-lee! I got all my sisters and brothers with me! We are fam-a-lee! Get up everybody and sing!" Then we all realized at the same time that no one knew any more of the words, so we all went "Da da da, da da da, da da da da, da da da DAH da!" Then we lamely tried reverting back to "We are fam-a-lee" and after a few more tries at that, the band started drifting. I think THEY were embarrassed by this time. Finally we started slinking off the stage and disguised our discomfort with more dancing (now waving the white dinner napkin flags for the rest of the night) Hey, it's a 'Burgh Thing. -Nancy Carlson

On the way back to my table following this debacle of musical talent, one of the members said to me, "My, your Chapter certainly is making a splash!" I could tell from her tone that I was supposed to apologize for us. Instead, I said, "Yes, aren't we? Isn't it wonderful!", and smiled radiantly, as if I knew she would agree. She looked puzzled. I should have offered to send her a picture of the award winners in our attractive "lineup" position. Why do I always think of these things too late?? -Barb Spiegelman

Nancy did such a good job describing the choral group that I don't think I can add more to the scene other than to say that it was one of the highlights of the event. As you probably know by now, the "expressive and interpretive" dancing by the members of the Pittsburgh Chapter was quite an exhibition. The white napkin waving was a technique similar to the "handkerchief" dance usually done at Greek or Eastern European weddings. However, at one exhaustive point in the dance, I said to Bob Sullivan as I used my white napkin to mop my brow--"Would all this white napkin action be considered a Pavarotti moment"?? -Angie Pollis

We did have fun!!!!

Spotlight on . . . Cheryl Paul

Marge Sroka - sroka@sspc.org

This year I'm going to write a series of articles highlighting SLA members at various phases of their professional careers -- from student to retiree. Cheryl Paul, a student SLA member, is a part-time graduate student in Library Science and works full-time as a library technician in Morgantown, WV. She works at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

(NIOSH), an institute under the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Among her duties at the NIOSH Library, Cheryl is Serials Technician for both electronic and print subscriptions, Public Service Representative, and Webmaster of the NIOSH Library System Intranet Web Site.

The Morgantown Library is part of a system of NIOSH libraries located in Pittsburgh, Spokane, and Cincinnati. Cheryl is one of three contract staff employed by Federal Management Systems, Inc. under the direction of a federal librarian. The library is located in the new state-of-the-art NIOSH research laboratory facility. Resources include approximately 6,000 books, 225 subscriptions, 7 computer terminals for NIOSH staff use, various electronic media, and a special collection of NIOSH publications and NIOSHTIC microfiche. Primary customers are NIOSH staff and secondary customers are WVU students and the public.

In January 1998, Cheryl began studying for an MLIS through the Distance Education program of the College of Library & Information Science at the University of South Carolina. Classes are offered by satellite, videotape, and onsite. She takes three courses per year and currently has earned 18 of the 36 credits required for an MLIS. She expects to complete the program in 2001- a great way to start the millennium!

She received her bachelor's degree in Sociology and Anthropology from West Virginia University in 1994. As an undergraduate student she was a work/study student at the Charles C. Wise, Jr. Library for four years. This experience made her realize how much she enjoyed not only working in a library, but also helping people find the information they need. Her dream job would be to stay at NIOSH in the capacity of systems librarian, a position which currently doesn't exist. She has a strong interest in Internet technology and would like to further develop the NIOSH Library System Intranet Web site into a virtual library offering electronic information to all NIOSH researchers. She would also like to develop Web-based training modules to guide patrons through the use of the NIOSH libraries' databases and physical facilities.

She is a single parent of a nine year old son, Hunter, and their hobbies include camping, nature walks, and attending local fairs. They especially look forward to the Mountaineer Balloon Festival which occurs each October in Morgantown where they "chase" balloons.-

Chapter Leadership Award

Allison Brungard - abrunnard@cc.yzu.edu

The 1999 Pittsburgh Chapter Leadership Award was presented at the Annual Business Meeting in May to Barbara L. Folb in recognition of her work as Webmaster, bringing the Chapter into the electronic age in a new and significant way.

Barb volunteered to undertake this effort in 1996, solicited and coordinated input from Chapter members, designed and produced the Chapter's Web presence, and evaluated alternatives on where the page would reside. In February 1998, the Web page was successfully launched on the SLA server. Barb continues to update the pages and request the appropriate input from the Chapter. Her efforts fulfill several of the items which were only at the vision stage when the Chapter's 1992 Strategic Plan was conceived: "launch new activities to respond to external and internal changes", "design/implement strategies for new initiatives", and "use information technology to enable special librarianship."

Barb is currently employed at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic Library. Prior to this position, she worked as a Library Specialist with Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and as a

reference librarian for short-term periods at CMU's Hunt Library and the Falk Library. She received her MLS from the University of Pittsburgh in 1995, and did an internship at the Blue Cross Blue Shield library as part of her graduate work. In her previous career, Barb was a professional French horn player. Our profession should be glad she's now playing our tune! Our sincerest congratulations to Barb for a well-deserved honor!

Awards Committee Cries H-E-L-P!!

Thanks to the stellar work of last year's Awards Committee, many Pittsburgh Chapter members received awards. This year's Awards Committee is chaired by Nancy Flury Carlson, who's looking for help in several ways. First, committee members are needed. Second, information about members is needed. And third, information about possible awards is needed.

The Committee will work on submitting nominations by the early December deadline for several of the Association-level awards. Also, the Committee will determine a recipient for the Chapter's Leadership Award, which is presented in the spring. If other award deadlines and suitable nominees are identified, these will also be pursued.

Nancy's goal for this year is to improve the awards infrastructure, so that it is easier to write award nominations for Chapter members. Sometimes it is difficult to find out all of the required information about a potential award nominee, especially if the nomination is made without the knowledge of the nominee. It's hoped that we can implement a better way to capture basic resume information about our members, including past awards and honors, and past Association-level, Division-level and Chapter-level activities.

Please contact Nancy if you'd like to participate in this year's awards process. Forward information about awards for members of our profession. Also make sure to let the committee know of potential awards candidates.

Send the information to: Nancy Flury Carlson
Westinghouse, PO Box 355, Pittsburgh, PA 15230;
Voice: 412-374-4861; FAX: 412-374-4042;
email: carlsonf@westinghouse.com

Sight Bites

"Ray Bradbury as quoted in Icon magazine: On science fiction-It's a great way of criticizing the present without people knowing it. All of my books have been popular in Russia; the damn fools don't realize that I'm talking about them and their totalitarian society. On the Internet-It's male macho crap. Women are smarter about these things and are not caught up by it."

-Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 1, 1999.

"On August 31, 1999, Xerox will introduce ContentGuard, software that uses its new Digital Property Rights Language to embed copyright protections within any type of digital document. Thomson Learning will use the software to let professors build their own textbooks by selecting content from the company's database and tallying the cost to students. Instead of buying several books per class, the students will pay only for what they need."

-Shield Those Digital Documents, Business Week, September 6, 1999, p.6.

"Librarians, dust off your cataloging skills and study up on the metadata projects. In today's world of information overload, anyone can find some information. Knowing how to organize information so that others can find what they need quickly and easily is a skill that the programmers and developers don't seem to have-and we do. That's cataloging-and now cataloging is cool."

-Nancy Garman, Now That Cataloging Is Cool, Online, September/October 1999,
p.6 <http://www.onlineinc.com/onlinemag/OL1999/editorial9.html>

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