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# S. Kirk Cabeen Travel Stipend Award Essay, "Entering SLA's Next Century: Let the Good Times Roll!"

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## S. Kirk Cabeen Travel Stipend Award Essay: "Entering SLA's Next Century: Let the Good Times Roll!"

*Submitted by Sara Samuel, Engineering Librarian, University of Michigan*

"Let the good times roll!" This doesn't seem to be a phrase we hear much anymore due to the sad economic state of our country. More often we are encouraging one another by exclaiming "Don't give up!" or "Just hang in there!" I think we in the Special Libraries Association can turn this financially challenging time into an opportunity to show just how good we are at our profession. Every day we use our information management skills to help our patrons find what they are looking for, and instruct them on how to use different software programs and services. We can show that we can make the good times roll in even the toughest of times by using our excellent skills to share information with each other.

Most of the time, we are using our skills to reach out to our patrons to give them assistance and educate them on what resources are available. How can we utilize those same skills to address issues such as budget cuts and patrons asking for and expecting more? Librarians can develop innovative approaches to making something happen, especially as we move into the next century where technology and its convenience can make a big impact.

How do we figure out these innovative approaches? The best way is not only to apply our own creative ideas, but to participate in a community of sharing – use our information management skills to help and inform each other. We need to encourage & educate one another by telling our stories, both those we

consider successful and those that didn't go quite as planned. If we share our experiences, together we can come out ahead and build a brighter future. So instead of telling each other "Don't give up!" or "Just hang in there!" start with "Here's what I did" and share your story.

I've seen this type of sharing demonstrated within the University of Michigan Library through a program called Skillshare. Skillshare is a program that was started a couple of years ago for workers in the University Library to learn what staff and librarians in other library departments do each day and how they contribute to the library's mission. I participated in Skillshare this winter and I found it to be a valuable use of my time. I learned what others did within the library and learned about their personal experiences within the information profession. Although this Skillshare program is executed within just one library system, I think we can benefit from this type of sharing across institutions, and a professional organization is just the place to facilitate it. Connecting people and ideas across libraries can be beneficial to us all, and can be an encouragement in this tough economic climate. Conferences are a great place to share this information, and I'm looking forward to all that I can learn from others at this year's Annual Conference.

So, SLA, let's share our experiences and knowledge at this conference, and let the good times roll! ❖

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## A First-Timer's Perspective on SLA 2010 Annual Conference

*Submitted by Sara Samuel, Engineering Librarian, University of Michigan  
2010 S. Kirk Cabeen Travel Award Winner*

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Attending SLA's Annual Conference for the first time was a great experience. I learned a lot, met a lot of people, and had some really great times. Overall, my time at SLA Annual can be summed up into 3 points that will be very helpful for me to "let the good times roll" when attending future conferences:

**1. Be open to different sessions.** Sci-Tech Division put on some great sessions this year – great job, planners! One of the best ses-

sions I went to was a roundtable. It was very useful to be able to chat with others about a topic and hear what others had to say about it. What we talked about is directly applicable a project I'm involved with at work, and it was very beneficial to be in a session where I could share my own thoughts and experiences in addition to listening to others' ideas.

On the flip side, I'm now aware that sometimes a session is not always what it sounds like it