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My First SLA Annual Conference

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I would like to pursue. To facilitate the collaboration among scientists globally on the base of information sharing requires deep understanding of the scientific information flow, integrated technology allowing seamless communication of data and message, commitment to solve intellectual property issues, psychological and sociological support for scientists to enhance trust in the scientific community. All the requirements may be out of the traditional scope of librarianship but I believe librarians should take the initiative to integrate all the elements together because of our role as bridges and our altruistic spirit.

Participating in the SLA conference belongs to my favorite job category—life-long learning. For the SLA 2010 Annual Conference, I have three major tasks planned: 1) networking with my science librarian peers around the country; 2) presenting a poster titled “Managing Librarians’ Professional Knowledge with Personalized XML”; and 3) learning from the Continue Education (CE) course and all the invited presentations.

Communication in person with my peer science librarians is irreplaceable by any other means of communication. I will prepare myself well by planning meetings with specific science librarians around the country. My anticipated poster originates from a course project and carries my goal to set an example of personal knowledge management for librarians. The abstract of the poster will be submitted soon and I will be thrilled if I can present it in the conference

as my debut on the librarians’ stage. The CE course, Chemical Information Sources, Requests, and Reference, will help me to form a comprehensive understanding of contemporary Chemistry information. In the invited talks, besides exposing my mind to the newest interests in our field, there are two essential questions to which I am looking for an answer. The first is how to develop a state-of-art curriculum for delivering chemistry information literacy. The second is how to get the best out of the decreasing budget when facing the ever-increasing expense for resources.

In addition, learning and communicating with various publishers and vendors at the conference will be very helpful for my future work. After all, we need healthy and collaborative relationship with publishers and vendors to supply the best chemistry information to our user community.

Ms. Marion E. Sparks defined her milestone work, *Chemistry Literature and Its Use*, as “a brief guide to the increasing flood of chemical literature” ninety-one years ago. I admire her for being such a visionary female librarian leading her time. Nowadays, the chemistry information is like “increasing flood” more than ever. I challenge myself to write a new “brief guide” to the chemistry information and the scientific collaboration with my whole career and my life. I would feel truly honored if I can be awarded the Sparks Award to attend my first SLA conference. What a memorable starting line it will be! ❖

My First SLA Annual Conference

Submitted by Ye Li

Recipient of the 2010 Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development

As all other first-timers, I waited anxiously to embrace the SLA Annual Conference as well as New Orleans’ music, food, heat and humidity. With the generous support of the Marion E. Sparks Award, I enjoyed every second at the conference in mid-June 2010. Now, I am reflecting on my wonderful trip and feeling inspired by the successful stories of those members we witnessed receiving awards, by creative works the speakers presented, by innovations vendors demonstrated in the exhibition and by the passion about information every one of us shared.

My adventure started with a pleasant dinner with members of the Chemistry Division, the group I spent most of my conference time with. The happy dynamics of the group reassured me that I am in a profession where everyone truly loves their job. With this group, I also enjoyed the Chemistry Division Business Breakfast and Academic Round Table. Exchanging opinions face-to-face and learning from these friends I got to know virtually was such a pleasure. It really helped me to recognize where Chemistry Librarians/information professionals stand and how my peers think and act upon the challenges

of changing roles, fast evolving technology, and tightening budgets. Also, I learned that I could start to contribute to our division with some basic services, such as assisting the Professional Development Committee to organize "how-to" materials online.

On Sunday morning, I followed Judith Curran and Dawn French travelling through the chemical information universe in the CE course, "Chemical Information Sources, Requests, and Reference." They helped me build a comprehensive picture of chemical information and showed me how to link the information pearls into a necklace and present it to our users. What's important is not how many resources I know and how skillful I am with finding information but how I can identify what my users really need, help them in a way they find enjoyable and eventually teach them to help themselves in the future.

For the next few days, my mind was as busy as my steps running among all the workshops. Each session was so well coordinated that all the speakers worked together to tell the full story. This effort truly distinguished SLA from most of other conferences. If you were interested in a topic, you would not want to skip any presentations in the session. The "Future of Science Librarianship" session started with the outlook from Dana Roth, a well-respected chemistry librarian. From the session, I learned that although we are challenged as never before, science librarians will be the ones who scientists and other people turn to when they need scientific information, as long as we keep our mind open and explore any possibilities of collaboration with users. In the "Collection Intelligence" session, three speakers demonstrated the tools and strategies of obtaining and visualizing collection data as well as using them to improve

our collections in academic and corporate environments, respectively. The "Science Information on Mobile Devices" session reminded me of the importance of becoming "mobile literate" to catch up with changes in studying, research and lifestyles. The "Embedded Librarianship," "Grant Librarianship" and "Data Curation" sessions were enriched with valuable experience sharing. While taking notes, my mind was racing to make plans on building data curation profiles for research groups in my chemistry department, selecting grants to apply for my library, and embedding myself into students' and researchers' circles.

The Chemistry Division Vendor Update session provided us a good overview of upcoming changes from our important vendors and alerted me to modify plans for this fiscal year accordingly. Social events organized by various vendors were also eye-opening and very enjoyable. It will certainly be a positive step for me to discuss future directions with our representatives ahead of price negotiations.

I also presented my poster titled "Managing Librarians' Professional Knowledge with Personalized XML" in the All Sciences Poster Session. The heated discussion and astute questions truly encouraged me to continue my work on the project. My only regret was that I did not have enough time to see and learn from others' posters.

The SLA conference gathered us together to learn from each other, share achievements and difficulties with each other, and purely enjoy each other in such a lovely city. I was so fortunate and grateful that I eventually found you all, my colleagues, who I share passion with for our profession. I cannot wait to see you again next year at Philadelphia. ❖