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Aerospace Section

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News from the Aerospace Section

Aerospace Section

Barbara Williams, Chair



The Aerospace Section of the Engineering Division encourages communication and cooperation among information professionals concerned with aerospace, aeronautical and related technologies. In addition, it fosters dialog with entities such as NASA, the AIAA and other important sources of technical data and bibliographical services.

Seems hard to believe that the Special Libraries Association's (SLA) 2012 annual conference has come and gone. Making new acquaintances, frequenting Chicago landmarks, and gaining career-enhancing strategies from presentations, conversations and vendor interactions have all served to create lasting memories. Those of us who were scheduled to fly back to the east coast on the last day of the conference received an extended stay courtesy of Mother Nature. The current trend seems to be for exhibitors to close up shop a day before the conference ends, which makes for marathon vendor visiting. I am all ready looking forward to the 2013 SLA Conference, which will be held in San Diego, California from June 9th – 11th.

Thanks to Adrienne Washburn past chair, for volunteering to take the minutes during the business meeting. 25 people attended the 2012 annual Aerospace breakfast & business meeting, which the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) exclusively sponsored. Unfortunately the caterers served us the wrong breakfast, so we feasted on pancakes, pastries and fruit, and we were given tiny little plates to eat off, as you can imagine we all had quite a chuckle over the breakfast glitch. I am pleased to report that thanks to Caroline Rives, SLA's event manager, the Aerospace section has been credited for the small hiccup we encountered.

To tie in with the Aerospace section's mid-morning program, Mobilizing the Message: It takes a village to recruit creative problem solvers, breakfast attendees were asked to construct definitions that contained no more than five words for Aeronautics, and for Astronautics. Attendees were divided into four tables, the 4th table was comprised of the mid-morning speakers, an AIAA representative and a first time SLA attendee, who all served as judges. Well that's how it was supposed to be but a little birdie informed me that the table deferred to the lone Aerospace professor amongst them. For

those of you looking for succinct definitions to impart to the general public about our specific fields feel free to use our established definitions. Aeronautics studies the mechanics of air, while Astronautics studies the mechanics of space beyond the earth's atmosphere, and Aerospace is the umbrella that covers both terms.

During the business meeting we shared reasons why one might want to consider volunteering for the 2014 Aerospace Chair-elect position. Several reasons presented were: There are lots of people available to help you; Great way to develop new skills in a safe environment and Money is available to defray the cost of attending conferences. During announcements, Roger Williams announced that AIAA plans to launch their new electronic library called Aerospace Research Central (ARC) on August 23rd; ARC will be hosted on the Atypen Literatum Platform. Also shared was a bit of trivia regarding the Aerospace section, did you know that in 1968 we had over 300 members? Our current membership stands at 81.

Of course the highpoint of the breakfast was the awarding of the *George Mandel Memorial Award* to Mary Whitaker from The Boeing Company in Seattle, Washington. Mary is the current Treasurer for the SLA Engineering Division and is highly regarded and respected among her colleagues and peers. Mary gave an eloquent speech, thanking Dr. Mandel for his continued support of this award in honor of his father who died 23 years ago. Many thanks as well to AIAA for their financial



contributions, and the George Mandel Memorial selection committee, which consisted of Andrea Davis from the Dudley Knox Library, and the Naval Postgraduate School; Gale Harris, recipient of the 2011 George Mandel Award; Etna Paulson from NASA Center for AeroSpace Information; and Adrienne Washburn from Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company.

The Aerospace section's session, Mobilizing the Message: It Takes a Village to Recruit Creative Problem Solvers, was very informative. The session's objective was to make the case that it takes a village to help spread the word about what engineers do. We want what engineers do, and the contributions they make to society as universally understood as what doctors, lawyers, and teachers do. The purpose of the session was to begin a dialog for developing strategies for helping the public, particularly young people, understand what the various engineers do and showcasing the types of career paths available. The program consisted of two presenters.

Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman, Professor of the Practice of Aerospace Engineering in the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics at MIT is the director of the Massachusetts Space Grant Consortium. He is responsible for statewide space-related educational activities designed to increase public understanding of space, and to attract students into aerospace careers. Professor Hoffman who started his professional career in astronomy, walked us through his transition from astronomer to engineer, and discussed the attributes common to all of the engineering disciplines. He spoke about the passions that drive engineers and of strategies that spark interest in youth. Dr. Hoffman examined the supposition that students go into engineering because they love math and science as opposed to becoming good in those subjects because they are the tools required to explain the type of problems they are interested in solving.

Gail Dundas, Director of Education & Workplace in Intel's Global Communications Group in Oregon summarized the findings from Intel's "Survey of Teens' Perceptions of Engineering" research that shows high school students are not familiar with what engineers do. Employed at Intel for nearly 15 years Mrs Dundas explained some of the outreach efforts that Intel is involved in to spread the message about what engineers do, and the impact engineers can and do have on society. Intel is a worldwide brand whose vision is to create and extend computing technology to connect and enrich the lives of every person on earth. Intel's Global Communications Group helps define and communicate the strategies worldwide that will bring that vision to life. According to Gail, who holds a Master's Degree in Communications Management, her most rewarding experience has been the shift in awareness by the general public of Intel's positive role in engaging youth in math and science, which she spoke about extensively.

Moving the Aerospace section's session from Monday to Wednesday saw a dramatic decrease in attendance, we only had 30 attendees nevertheless the program was awesome. After the speakers made their presentations there was a lively discussion between the speakers and the attendees. Hopefully the discussion on this topic will continue at individual attendee's organizations, since we are the village that needs to help spread the message. The message we want to spread is that collectively as information providers we are in a position to assist the public with understanding what the various areas of specialization within Engineering does. IEEE Xplore Digital Library was a major contributor of this program and there continued support is much appreciated. ❖

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