

December 2011

Science-Technology Division

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News from the Science-Technology Division

Science-Technology Division

Joe Kraus, Chair



The objectives of the Science-Technology Division shall be to draw together those members of the Special Libraries Association having an interest in the role of library and information science as applied to the recording, retrieval and dissemination of knowledge and information in all areas of science and technology, and to promote and improve the communication, dissemination and use of such knowledge for the benefit of libraries and their users.'

I would like to congratulate Helen Josephine for winning the election for the Chair-Elect position of the Sci-Tech Division. Kudos also go to Margaret Smith as the new Secretary. They will officially start their positions in January of 2012. As the new Chair-Elect, Helen Josephine will have the opportunity to create the slate of sessions for our division at the 2013 SLA Conference in San Diego. I have never been in San Diego before, and I am looking forward to visiting that fair city and attending the SLA Conference.

Helen and several other Sci-Tech members will converge on Atlanta, GA, January 25-28, 2012 for the Leadership Summit.

<http://www.sla.org/content/resources/leadcenter/LeadershipSummit/12leadsummit/>

Please attend Leadership Summit if you have the opportunity. In Atlanta, Helen Josephine will begin planning the sessions for the 2013 Conference.

I am getting a little ahead of myself, though. I would also like to highlight the great work that Cheryl Hansen has done preparing the Division for the 2012 SLA Conference in Chicago next summer. More information is available at [http://](http://www.sla.org/content/resources/leadcenter/LeadershipSummit/12leadsummit/)

www.sla.org/content/Events/conference/ac2012/. This is sure to be an awesome conference!

I enjoyed serving the Sci-Tech Division as your Chair during 2011. I hope you learned more about scientific resources during the June 2011 Conference in Philadelphia and more about the changes in scholarly communication at the October 24th, 2011 Online Seminar (<http://scitech.sla.org/2011/09/online-seminar-new-directions-in-scholarly-communication/>). The recording of the keynote by John Wilbanks should be available by the time you read this.

I would also like to thank the rest of the Executive Board for providing advice and support to me over the last year.

Chair-Elect – Cheryl Hansen
Past Chair – Hilary Davis
Secretary – Lisa Johnston
Treasurer – Nevenka Zdravkovska

I hope you all have a great holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year. ❖

Joe Kraus
joseph.kraus@du.edu

Sci-Tech Division Seeks Mentors and Mentees

Have you heard of the Sci-Tech Division's mentoring program? One of the most directly influential, yet under-the-radar, ways the Sci-Tech Division contributes to professional development is through the mentoring program, which is coordinated by the Student Relations Committee. The mentoring program is entering its thirteenth year, and we are grateful to all the mentors who have volunteered their time to help their mentees.

The program is a great way to build professional connections and learn from your peers. Students, new division members, or new career professionals are paired with an experienced member of the profession in their area of interest. The mentor's main responsibilities are to offer support and to field questions as they arise, and time involved is minimal - typically, the mentor will contact the mentee several times during the year just to touch base and be available for questions during the year. Potential topics of discussion depend on the mentee's needs and may include: specifics about subject-based collections or reference service, job search and interview tips, outreach advice, guidance on SLA involvement and other types of professional development, ideas for jump-starting research projects, tips on how to turn a research project into a poster or publication, etc. Mentors benefit from knowing they are helping out, expanding their professional network, and gaining perspective on issues faced by students and early-career professionals.

Both mentors and mentees have reported very positive experiences with the program. If you are interested in being a mentor or are seeking a mentor, please contact:

Thea Allen
theaallen@gmail.com

Science-Technology Division New Members

Submitted by Sarah Oelker, Membership Committee Chair, Science-Technology Division

The Science-Technology Division welcomes its new members:

Michele Aquilino
Morristown, NJ
USA

Karen Hudock
Orange, CA
USA

Jessica Bottomly
Seattle, WA
USA

Greta Larmer
Wellington
New Zealand

Meira Chefitz
Palo Alto, CA
USA

Tiffany Lopez
Raleigh, NC
USA

Laura Hill
Menlo Park, CA
USA

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Science-Technology Division Member Spotlight

by Emily Kasuto and Sarah Oelker

Featured Member:

Ann Koopman

JEFFLINE Editor, Thomas Jefferson University

A.M. from the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School (may it rest in peace)

Joined SLA sometime in late 1980's/early 90's (both SLA and Sci-Tech Division)

Tell us why you wanted to become a librarian.

When I was in high school I met a wonderful school librarian, who taught me how to write a research paper and who gave me a summer job in the school media center. She was a terrific role model. I wanted to "grow up" to be just like her. In fact, I had a chance to see her again last year and could tell her so. Then I worked in my college library, and those admirable librarians reinforced the decision.

What are some of your interests outside of librarianship?

Ah, I have a passion! I grow African violets. I belong to two local clubs devoted to growing violets, and participate in our annual competitive shows. In fact, I recently qualified as a student judge for violet shows, as well.

What was your background before you became a science librarian?

Well, I just fell into the science gig. My undergraduate degree was a double major in anthropology and religion. I was headed for the social sciences. In library school I intended to go into reference/public services, but veered off into special collections, where I pursued book binding & conservation science. I did some volunteer work and later my thesis at the Field Museum in Chicago. I found I was comfortable with that brush with the sciences.

So when I got married and had to find work within a limited geographic area, I wasn't shy to take a science job that was open. Yes, there was some hard work involved in learning the language, the resources, and special needs of science & engineering faculty. I took some basic courses in math and several sciences, as well. What can I say? The subjects and the scientists & engineers were fascinating. It

stuck.

Tell us a little bit about your current position.

I function as both webmaster and content editor of our library's online services, called JEFFLINE. I contribute some time to our reference service, and do special projects, like our institutional repository. It gives me a lot of variety, so I never get bored. Jefferson is all health sciences, all the time. We have a medical school, nursing and health professions schools, graduate sciences, population health and pharmacy – a lot of ground to cover.

What organizations are you involved in?

I belong to ALA/ACRL and my local chapter of MLA, but do almost all my work for SLA. In SLA, I've held quite a few jobs at both the chapter and division levels (Indiana Chapter, Philadelphia Chapter, Sci-Tech Division). It's always been rewarding work, well worth doing. Now I'm about to embark on a term on the SLA Board, which is both daunting and exciting at the same time.

What do you find most interesting about your work?

I have had the very good luck to be able to move through a series of positions, each of which builds on the last, always thriving on changes in technology. I started as a solo proprietor, doing book binding, paper marbling, and conservation consulting. From there, I went into academic science & engineering librarianship. While doing that, I was tapped to learn and do web work. Because I enjoyed the technology, I eventually parlayed that into web-based services and special e-projects. I love learning new things. Some days a person may feel like Alice racing with the Red Queen in Through the Looking Glass, running as fast as she can just to stay in place, but at least the days are never dull.

What do you think is the most interesting issue in librarianship today?

Oh, there are so many! Do I really have to choose just one? What's interesting to me right now is the evolution of scholarly publishing, and ways libraries can support change through institutional repositories, data curation, and other forms of partnership with faculty.



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What has been your biggest professional challenge?

Well, I guess it would be the “fork in the road” choice that I had to make some years back. I found myself starting to climb the ladder of library administration, and had to decide whether I really wanted to do that, or preferred to stick to hands-on work. I chose the latter, and have never regretted it (except occasionally, when I look at my paycheck). I’ve been very lucky to have a flexible employer, who has allowed me a lot of leeway in defining my own position.

What advice would you give a new member of SLA, new Librarian, or someone starting out in science librarianship?

I am a great believer in Joseph Campbell’s instruction to “follow your bliss.” Do what you love, be open to opportunities and new ways of doing things, be positive and look for the possibilities in situations. Be especially open to “nontraditional” roles, partnerships with faculty or professionals in related fields (like IT or publishing). Start volunteering in the association of your choice (we hope it will be SLA!) – you’ll make friends in the field, learn a variety of skills, and probably pick up a mentor or two along the way. Read SLA’s Future Ready blog – it has a lot of good advice for our student and new members.

**Format of column and interview question ideas derived from Medical Library Association News Bulletin, member spotlight section. ❖*

Competencies Internalized and Thoughtfully Executed

by Cynthia Cohen, San Jose State University
Recipient of the S. Kirk Cabeen Travel Stipend Award

This article comes several months after my Philadelphia travels, made possible by the generosity of the SLA Sci-Tech Division. I am grateful for the honor of the S. Kirk Cabeen Travel Stipend Award, and for this opportunity to reflect on and share the lasting impressions of my second SLA annual conference experience as a student member.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about competencies. Now in the final throes of my MLIS program, I'll soon be writing essays and compiling evidence to demonstrate that I've met the fifteen competencies that San Jose State University requires for completion of the degree. Yet I know that library school is just the beginning, and, as a lifelong learner, I embrace the realization that there will be new competencies to conquer even before I walk out of the library-school door. As it happens, the most impactful session for me from the 2011 SLA annual conference spoke to this very idea.

Moderated by Ulla de Stricker (of de Stricker Associates), "Capitalizing on Content to Grow Competencies" featured three engaging speakers: Fred Wergeles (of Fred Wergeles & Associates), Constance Ard (of Answer Maven), and Deborah Keller (of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security). Not to dismiss the relevance of the initial presentations about each speaker's project, I want to communicate the insight these speakers demonstrated in response to questions from the moderator and the audience. Reflecting on competencies they had needed in retrospect, the speakers highlighted the importance of communication: learning your audience's language (and not expecting them to know—or want to know—library jargon); learning to speak to the bottom line; and learning to communicate with diplomacy and tact, particularly with people who communicate differently than you do. Another common theme was the need for lifelong learning and awareness: keeping up with new developments and learning how to implement them for your clients; engaging in continuing education that cultivates your personal passion, and trusting that it will yield something you can apply to your workplace; and reading what the business leaders are reading, to become conversant in "C-level ideas." The speakers conveyed the value of mentors—from within and

from beyond the library and information science field—to help us build these skills, point us to new information sources, act as sounding boards, and help us separate the fluff in our own work from the core issues. On the evolution of SLA's "Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century," the speakers called for more flexibility and a broader perspective, suggesting that we must see ourselves as researchers, communicators, and teachers; incorporate self-analysis and reflection; and think about what it would take to get ourselves to where the futurists say we are headed.

Yet the single point that most resonated with me was Deborah Keller's impassioned assertion that it's okay to be a generalist. After years of trying to specialize, performing well but constantly feeling far short of the reach of mastery, she now realizes how valuable it is that she can do many different things and has the ability to learn new skills, continually growing her toolbox, portfolio, and worth. Instead of trying to fulfill someone else's vision of you or your role, Deborah Keller challenged the audience to "figure out what you're good at, and be the best YOU that you can be." We shine when we work from our own strengths, but first we must understand what they are. While others can sometimes show us what we cannot see in ourselves, we each must distinguish advice that seeks to place us in a mold that others perceive as appropriate from advice that genuinely seeks to identify the unique value that we each can contribute. Like Deborah Keller, I am a natural generalist who has always felt (and resisted) the pressure to specialize. If I had succumbed and neglected the wide range of ideas that spark my own imagination, you wouldn't be reading this, as I surely would have never found my way to librarianship without having cultivated a broad range of interests.

This self-reflection is key. While piling up competencies can only improve us, the real benefit is knowing what we're capable of and being able to articulate how our own pieces fit, in whatever puzzle we may drop (or be dropped) into. Once armed with that awareness, we can use it strategically to benefit our organizations, our clients, and ourselves. ❖

2012 SCIENCE-TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING DIVISIONS BONNIE HILDITCH INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN AWARD

The Bonnie Hilditch International Librarian Award, sponsored by the Science-Technology and Engineering Divisions, is presented to a librarian outside of the United States and Canada. The purpose of the award is to provide an opportunity for a librarian outside of the United States and Canada to attend the annual Special Libraries Association (SLA) conference. The award will cover conference registration, lodging and airfare, up to and not exceeding US \$2,000. The SLA annual conference will be held in Chicago, Illinois, July 15-18, 2012.

The Awards Committee reserves the right to withhold the award if a sufficient number of appropriate candidates are not nominated.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Be a current member of SLA, preference given to members of the SLA Science-Technology and/or Engineering Division.

Candidate should reside and work outside of the United States and Canada and be working currently in a library, information center, library school or other information capacity, preferably either in the science and technology and/or engineering area.

Submission should be in English.

NOMINATIONS:

Self-nominations are encouraged. Send an online statement including information on the candidate's professional career, professional activities or offices held, special projects or services, publications, and any other related functions that qualify the person for the award.

Documentation must include a current curriculum vita OR resume for the candidate, significant publications, supporting letters, etc.

Please inform the committee if you are currently applying for other SLA awards.

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS: December 31, 2011. Nominations and all accompanying materials should be sent to Sheila Rosenthal, Chair of the Sci-Tech Division Awards Committee, at the following email address: slr@sei.cmu.edu.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES for the SCIENCE-TECHNOLOGY and ENGINEERING DIVISIONS BONNIE HILDITCH INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN AWARD

1. The winner will be responsible for making all necessary travel arrangements (passports, visas, etc.) for a visit to the U.S. as well as for conference attendance.
2. Include a current resume and relevant materials as outlined in the criteria for the award.

2012 SCIENCE-TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING DIVISIONS BONNIE HILDITCH INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN AWARD

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS:

1. Recipient will write a brief article (approximately 1,000 words) on the conference experience for the November 2012 *SciTech News*.
2. Recipient will be asked to serve on the Science-Technology and Engineering Division Awards Committee the following year in order to provide for the continuity and enthusiasm of this award.

NOTIFICATION:

1. Applicants will receive notification of award status by early February 2012. The award check will be sent to the recipient as soon as the receipts are received by the Awards Chairperson.
2. The recipient's names will be posted to the Science-Technology and Engineering Division's Web sites.
3. The announcement and introduction of the recipient will take place at both the Science-Technology Division's and the Engineering Division's Annual Business Meetings/breakfasts.

E-mail nominations and materials preferred.