August 2008

Science-Technology Division

Christine Whitaker

Science-Technology Division   Christine Whitaker, 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.

The Seattle conference was a great experience. All of the Science-Technology Division's (DST) programs were well received and executed. I would like everyone to join me in thanking the Program Planning Committee members for 2008: Kelly Blessinger, Valrie Davis, Pam Enrici, Claudia Lascar, Carol Lucke, and Pam Yorks. Great work everyone!

For those unable to attend the Annual Conference, you can still share in part of the experience. You can meet the candidates for 2009 Board of Directors and watch a short video of the candidates' speeches delivered at the conference. Go to the Board of Directors site at http://www.sla.org.

While you are logged on, click on the Events/ Annual Conference tabs to view SLA Contributed Papers and get some of the Conference handouts. These include James Manasco and Mary Frances Lembo's handouts from "Science and Engineering Resources 101," which feature nanotechnology and aerospace resources. Other session handouts will be posted there soon.

Several sessions were recorded and will be available as podcasts. I am eagerly awaiting their arrival, since I am never able to attend all of the sessions that I need. I will be visiting the "60 Gadgets in 60 Minutes" podcast on the Law Division website. Also of interest is "Podcasting the Librarian Way," soon to be on the IT Division website.

I encourage everyone to start watching the Division websites as well as sla.org to access many of the conference experiences from your home or office. It is a great way to keep up-to-date.

Planning for the Centennial Conference in Washington D.C. is underway, and we look forward to a fun time then. The SLA Centennial Commission has been working hard on year long celebratory events for the Association. This is a really fun thing – an SLA postage stamp! We can promote our Association all year long by using these stamps, so check them out now at SLA Marketplace.

Also introduced at the Conference was SLA's 23 Steps program for asynchronous learning about social software. Sign up now and learn about blogs, wikis and other tech innovations at your own pace. It's all free at SLA.org under Useful Resources.

This is also the place to get a look at the Innovation Lab, where you can get "hands-on" with the latest emerging technologies. The Lab offers a wide variety of Web 2.0 software learning tools to help you become more business savvy and technologically adept. "The Innovation Lab provides tools to SLA units ...to build and implement useful services for your members. "

The free learning opportunities at SLA just keep growing. Now I have no more excuses! ❖

Christine Whitaker
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SLA Centennial Stamps are a great way to show your enthusiasm and support for the Association's 100 year anniversary. Stamps are sold per sheet, each containing 20 U.S. First Class postage stamps with the SLA 2009 conference logo.

1

SciTech Division and European Chapter Student Travel Award Winning Essay – by Hannah Lewin, University College, London

My main motivation for doing the MA course was to be able to take on more responsibility and to be able to enact change and development. In my library assistant roles I have had many ideas about service improvements and marketing opportunities but can only really understand how feasible they are and certainly how I could put them into practice by being in a professional post. So I guess my motivation is frustration albeit in a positive way, as I want to make things better in the information world. The opportunities that the formal course offers, such as being able to critically evaluate new technologies and learn from [the] best, or in fact worst, practice will be invaluable for my professional career.

Engaging with colleagues and tutors on the course is not all academic, it also encourages professional involvement. Our tutors are supportive of our professional body, CILIP, and they work closely together in terms of offering advice to potential library professionals through joint road shows. Individual tutors are also professionally involved in committee work and publications and so I have become involved and have joined the committee of the Career Development Group as student representative and have had an article published in our newsletter *Impact*, inspired by the impetus that this gives your personal development as well as for the dynamics of the profession overall.

I hope to use my degree as a catalyst for a career and not just a series of jobs. I will use it as a theoretical foundation that will be cementing the practical skills that I have already developed on the job. I have a health background and my science A-levels have proven invaluable so I would like to continue in the evidence-based medicine field.

I think that the challenges that face information professionals center around our professionalism and status. We have to prove our worth when the internet gives so much, to promote ourselves as founts of knowledge and navigators through an increasingly complex information landscape. Where the lines between private interest and information provider are blurred, such as in health information websites or wikipedia, we should be trusted to point out the pitfalls of using such information. The challenge is being confident enough to say that our skills as information professionals are our unique selling point; knowing where to find information is a skill, a skill that allows everyone else to concentrate on doing *their* job.

In the UK specifically, public librarians have been under fire. Jobs have been cut and librarians made redundant or downgraded, doing the same job for less money. The main challenge here is communication, communicating to the public as well as government what they do, what service is being provided and how the professional qualification leads to this great service. When I go to the optician or the doctor they display their qualifications on the wall, maybe we should do the same. I don't work in public libraries but have always used them for education and leisure although I have always sought them out. I think marketing a clear message about what libraries can offer is the major challenge both in this sector and in every information job. I think our work is not obvious to most people, which is why I can be found talking to as many people at events and whenever I meet anyone new: self-promotion starts at home.✷

The science of coffee... and more social networking technologies than you can shake a stick at

Hannah Lewin, winner, Sci-Tech Division and European Chapter Student Travel Stipend Award

[*Ed. Note – As part of her award, Hannah was asked to report on her experiences at the Conference*]

Arriving at the Seattle-Tacoma airport at 10pm at night, I was so excited my tiredness evaporated, and I was starving. This was the only time during the conference that I could have described myself thus, as there was a copious amount of food. The only thing I regret not doing at the conference was bringing my gym kit and working off some of the breakfasts, snacks and canapés.

I had a reason to be fairly excited (as well as a little nervous) about the conference. The rule of thumb is to pack as much into the experience as possible, fight the jetlag and just talk to as many strangers as possible. With the exception perhaps of the Seattle vagrants who tried to share a conversation with me as I power walked

2

from my hotel to the conference center (I had the pavements/sidewalks to myself as no one walks in America).

I had printed out my timetable and checked with my mentor Nevenka beforehand that I had everything important in there. I started off by meeting everyone from Sci-Tech and SLA Europe (co-sponsors of the award) at the Zig Zag café before the conference started. We chatted about professional matters such as the important question of whether to have dessert (we did). I missed the first timers session but instead was thrown into the management deep end with the Sci-Tech board meeting and it was fascinating to see what goes on behind the scenes. Discussions revolved around the mixture (or tension) between time to see the exhibitors and time for sessions and how we should be celebrating 100 years of SLA next year in Washington, D.C.

Many of the sessions encompassed understanding how social networking tools and/or the principles behind them can be used to manage information, market our services and communicate our message. Seth Godin's talk at the closing address on combining new technology with old products (adding sundae to meatballs in his book Meatball Sundae) was really interesting. Basically you have to think about why you're using the technology and whether your company is fine with making meatballs, or whether you really should be evolving into a creative innovative producer of the sundae; a combination of the two may not be that palatable. Tools I took home with me included Pbwiki (wikis on a peanut butter sandwich theme), Kaboodle (shopping recommendations), Rollyo (make your own search engine) and the eponymous Twitter (up to the minute postings- a little too much information methinks).

Another session I really enjoyed was the science of coffee. Seattle is extremely hot on this beverage and I sampled about four different kinds whilst I was there. So I like to think by the time this talk came around it was consolidating my practical knowledge with some theoretical background. Coffee is the second largest traded commodity in the world and Finland the largest coffee consumer. A Finnish audience member said it is put in babies milk to literally wean them onto it. Coffee not only gives you a hit, the caffeine goes straight to the brain, but scientists are discovering new properties that might be a result of the antioxidants that are found in coffee in high levels. Decaf is just as good in that respect. More information can be found on the Coffee Science Information Center website http://www.cosic.org/.

An even more off piste session I went to was the last day's discussion of American cinema in WWII hosted by the Military Libraries Division. I'm a lapsed film buff so this was my chance to nerd up on the films often plucked from obscure sources and lost to the digital switchover, and to learn about trends in movie making in this pivotal moment in history. Robert McLaughlin and Sally Parry were a brilliant duo. They are husband and wife and their strong partnership was inspiring. The room was packed with many wanting to ask them about their research and their accompanying book. So now I have to watch Casablanca again...

I experienced so much in Seattle: sunburn, Russian pasties and a brilliant exchange rate. No, seriously, I was honestly spurred on by the enthusiasm of all the people I met, the vendors I harassed and the American can-do attitude. I'd like to thank again Nevenka Zdravkovska and Sheila Rosenthal for looking after me, as well as Dale Riordan and Sarah Oelker for welcoming me at the Newcomers Brunch. And all the other board members who, once I knew them, I then took advantage of this and waved/said hi to them at all times during the conference. I hope to get more involved with the committee and see everyone at another SLA conference.❖

Nevenka Zdravkovska, International Relations Committee Chair, Sheila Rosenthal, Sci-Tech Awards Committee Chair, Hannah Lewin, Sci-Tech Division and European Chapter Student Travel Stipend Award winner, and Barbara Robinson, representing the European Chapter of SLA.

S. Kirk Cabeen Travel Stipend Award –
Winning Essay by Gail Stebbins, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Breaking Rules, Building Bridges

These days librarians are facing their greatest challenge yet, the faceless user. Today library patrons may never enter a library building. How best do we help someone when we know nothing about them? How do we build bridges to assist the unknown user?

One of the ways that we can assist is to observe how our patrons use the Internet to do their research. But how relevant is it to observe information seeking behavior by patrons in ILS and databases like ASP that we ourselves are dissatisfied with? Perhaps, we could break the rules and see how our patrons use the Internet not for research, but for tasks like shopping, getting the news, and even listening to music.

As librarians we need to contact our constituency and survey them to determine which web applications they are currently using and which applications they would like to have to gather information. How do our patrons keep current? Do they subscribe to listservs, do they subscribe to RSS feeds, or perhaps they use Google Alerts? Do our patrons track their book and media collections on LibraryThing or on similar applications? Do they use personal cataloging software to track their media and connect to other members and see what they are reading? Are they using products like Pandora Internet radio that learn about their tastes and deliver content based on those findings? Do our patrons just bookmark sites in their browsers or are they using del.icio.us and other web-based tagging sites? Do they shop online and if so are they using any of the classification features that the shopping e-tail sites offer? Librarians need to gather information on how their patrons use not only the library but all things digital.

In the January 4, 2008 issue of the *Economist* there was an article titled "Going by the book" that discussed how a team of "researchers discovered the main biochemical pathways in drug addiction...without having to do a single experiment." Their secret was library research. The researchers read "over 1,000 studies of the biochemistry and genetics of drug addiction" to draw their conclusions. Interviewing research teams like this one will allow us to replicate this type of experience for others.

S. Kirk Cabeen award winners Betsy Ronan Herzog and Gail Stebbins

As librarians, it is not enough to know how to manage content. We have to build a bridge to our patrons and learn how they interact with the digital world. We have to develop systems that meet or exceed our patron's expectations.❖

Sci-Tech Division Mentoring Program – Call for Participation

The Student Relations Committee of the Sci-Tech Division is expanding and looking both for folks to serve as mentors as well as those who are seeking a mentor. We have had a successful year with 20 members taking advantage of the Mentoring Program. As we continue to build on this success, we hope that more of you will join us in expanding the program by volunteering to be a mentor or a mentee. For more about the Sci-Tech Division Mentoring Program or to sign up go to http://units.sla.org/division/dst/stmentoring.html or contact:

Hilary Davis
Hilary_davis@ncsu.edu
919-513-0654

4

SLA Asian Chapter Conference Announcement

The SLA - Asian Chapter is organizing an international conference of Asian Special Libraries on "Shaping the Future of Special libraries: Beyond Boundaries" to be held at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi, India from 26-28 November 2008.

The Asian Chapter cordially invites all members of SLA to submit papers, to attend the conference and to visit India

Some of the objectives of the Conference are: to bring together special library professionals to a common platform; to promote special libraries; to facilitate the exchange of ideas and help to bridge the knowledge gap amongst the professionals associated with special libraries; and to develop professional competencies.

This conference is expected to attract more than 1000 participants from India, Asia and around the globe. For details please visit: http://units. sla.org/chapter/cas/ICoASL2008.html

Submission of Papers:

LIS professionals are welcome to contribute papers for presentation on the above themes and related themes. The Papers should be based on research surveys; case studies or action plans rather than theoretical explanations and should not have been published earlier. Papers should be sent to asiansla@gmail.com

Dates to Remember
Last Date for Submission of Abstract/ Proposal (Extended)- August 15, 2008
Last Date for Submission of Final Papers - September 15, 2008
Early Bird Registration - September 30, 2008
Last Date for Registration - November 15, 2008

For further information, please contact :
P.K.Jain, Organising Secretary, ICoASL 2008
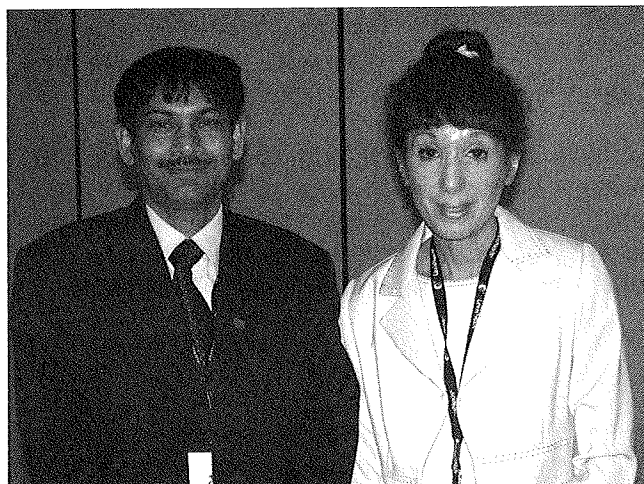c/o. Institute of Economic Growth
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Hilditch Award winner Debal Chandra Kar and Committee Chair Sheila Rosenthal
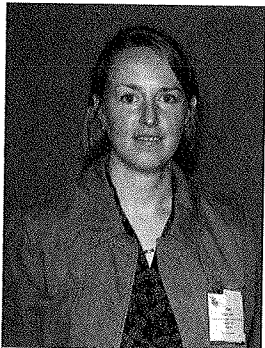

Sheila Rosenthal, Anna Ren, winner of the Sci-Tech Division Achievement Award, and Division Chair Christine Whitaker

5

Science-Technology Division Slate of Officers

Elections will be held September by email ballot.

Candidate for Chair Elect

Hilary Davis, Candidate
for Chair-Elect

Hilary Davis

hilary_davis@ncsu.edu

Hilary Davis is Assistant Head, Collection Management for Engineering and E-Science at the North Carolina State University Libraries. She works with faculty, students and researchers in the physical sciences and engineering and leads the department's data analysis efforts for collection assessment. Hilary was named one of Library Journal's "Movers and Shakers" for 2008. She holds an MLS from University of Missouri-Columbia and an MS in Biology from University of Missouri-St. Louis. As a student member, Hilary found an abundance of networking and professional engagement opportunities with the St. Louis Metro Area Chapter of the SLA. She has been active in both the Physics-Astronomy-Math Division (moderator of Math Round table in 2006) and the Chemistry Division of SLA (recipient of Marion Sparks award in 2005 and liaison to the NSDL).

Hilary is currently chair of the Student Relations Committee of the Sci-Tech Division and has led the Committee to revive the Mentoring Program, embark on a LIS Liaison program connecting library school programs with Sci-Tech members, and to conduct extensive outreach to all 41 LIS programs in the US and Canada. Most recently the Committee conducted a contest to collect ideas for engagement with students by offering two free student memberships to SLA and the Sci-Tech Division [see article this issue] Her aims are to encourage more students to look toward a career in science librarianship by leveraging the opportunities and network of colleagues within SLA, in particular the Sci-Tech Division; to work with the Division to continue on the paths of success already established, such as collaboration with other divisions and vendors to support attendance to the annual conferences by students and international members; and to help foster collaboration both within the Division and with other organizations to actively "grow the profession" and further realize our potential as partners within the broader landscape of E-science. More about Hilary: http://www4. ncsu.edu/~hmdavis4/hilary_davis_resume_ may2008.pdf

Kelly Blessinger and Cheryl Hansen, Candidates for Treasurer

Candidates for Treasurer

Kelly Blessinger

kblessi@lsu.edu

Kelly is currently the Reference Assistant Coordinator for the Middleton Library at Louisiana State University. In this capacity, she serves as the subject liaison and collection development coordinator for Geology, Geography & Anthropology and the Reference collection. Kelly received her undergraduate degree in Earth Science from Eastern Michigan University and her MLIS from the University of South Carolina. Kelly has been active in SLA since 2000, and has served in a variety of leadership positions on the regional and national levels. Kelly served as the President of the Louisiana/Southern Mississippi Chapter from 2004-2005 and in numerous roles in the Geography and Map Section. Her most recent positions within the organization include functioning as the Membership Chair for the Louisiana/Southern Mississippi Chapter and serving on the Science and Technology 2008 Program Planning Committee.

Cheryl A. Hansen

cahansen@esi-il.com

Research Librarian for Engineering Systems, Inc. (ESI) headquartered in Aurora, Illinois with offices in Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, Missouri, Georgia and Florida. Previous positions were with Triodyne Inc., The Illinois College of Optometry Library and the University of Wisconsin-Madison K. F. Wendt Engineering Library. Cheryl received her MLS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1980 and a BA in Art History in 1979. She has been an active member of SLA since 1984. She is a member of the Engineering Division, the Science & Technology Division and the Illinois Chapter of SLA. As a Sci-Tech Division member Cheryl served on the Awards Committee for many years and is currently the Division Treasurer. As an Engineering Division member she has served on their Awards Committee as well as having served terms as Archivist, Secretary, Membership Chair and Division Chair.

Outside of work, Cheryl is married to an engineer, Doug, who is with CBI. They have two daughters, Kate and Ellen who will both be attending college this fall and a large dog, Ike. They will be empty nesters as of the end of August. They live in Naperville in the old section of town with a large garden. Cheryl has been active with a variety of school functions over the years and also has been a volunteer and board member for a group working with teen parents, Greater DuPage MYM. She also serves as an Elder at Knox Presbyterian Church. She was named Volunteer of the Year for MYM in 1999 and in 2002 was honored by the Naperville National Exchange Club with the Kendzora Book of Golden Deeds Award.

Jennifer Hansen

Jennifer.Hansen@microsoft.com

Jennifer Hansen, Candidate for Treasurer

Jennifer is currently the Science & Technology Librarian at Microsoft. In this position, she's responsible for the science and technology content portfolio. She's an avid internal blogger, and enjoys spreading the word about new and exciting technologies. Prior to joining Microsoft, she was a principal in the technology company, WebFeat. Jennifer has been a Librarian for the past 14 years, and she's worked in various types of libraries and library related organizations, from non-profit (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) to public (King County Library System; Monroe County Public Library) to corporate (Microsoft; WebFeat; Reams Asset Management Company, LLC). She's been a member of SLA since 2006. ❖

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Loyal Science-Technology Division Members

These members of long standing were recognized at the Science-Technology Division Annual Business Meeting and Awards Breakfast.

Judith Barnett – 30 years (1978)
Mary Barravecchia – 35 years (1973)
Elizabeth Bryson – 25 years (1983)
William Budington – 30 years (1978)
Bill Cohen – 30 years (1978)
Vera Chase – 65 years (1943)
Lucy Curci-Gonzalez – 30 years (1978)
Cynthia Hill – 30 years (1978)
Maryde King – 35 years (1973)
Cheryl Lamb – 30 years (1978)
Irene Laursen – 35 years (1973)

H. R. Malinowsky – 45 years (1963)
Marvine McNeil Brand – 55 years (1953)
Jean Miller – 45 years (1963)
Paul Murphy – 25 years (1983)
William Ogden – 25 years (1983)
Sarah Omanson – 62 years (1946)
Jean Piety – 50 years (1958)
John Piety – 33 years (1975)
James Reilly – 35 years (1973)
Gloria Zamora – 30 years (1978)

Anna Ren, award winner, and George Zajdel of ASTM International, Achievement Award sponsor

Carol Lucke with Philip DiVietro of ASME

Gloria Zamora, SLA President-Elect, receives her Appreciation Award for her 30 year membership in the Sci-Tech Division from Christine Whitaker, Division President.