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## Engineering Division

Kathy Nordhaus

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# Engineering Division

## Kathy Nordhaus, Chair



The objectives of the Engineering Division are to provide an association for those having an interest in library and information science as they apply to engineering and the physical sciences and to promote the use of materials and knowledge for the benefit of libraries and other educational organizations.

As I begin writing my first "From the Chair" article, I am reminded of the awesome challenge I have before me. Being Chair of the Division was daunting enough, but now, thanks to a bylaws change, I have the distinct honor of being Chair for 18 months. At least, I'm trying to think of it that way. So, to begin, I want to thank you, the members of the Engineering Division, for entrusting the leadership of the Division to me. I hope we all survive!

The bylaw change that gave me the dubious honor of an 18-month role as Chair was done to align the terms of officers to the Association's governance year. For one thing, this will align division/chapter treasury reports with the Association's accounting year. Deciding how long officers will serve is up to each division or chapter. All members of the Engineering Advisory Board, both elected officers and volunteers, have graciously agreed to stay on through December 2006. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them ALL for agreeing to stay on in their positions! What an incredible team! I would like to take this opportunity to tell you who your new officers are.



Mary Steiner (left), outgoing Chair, "passes the gavel" to Kathy Nordhaus (right), incoming Chair.

|                                       |  |
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(See complete contact information at the back of this issue)

As you can see, some people are serving in multiple roles. We are thrilled to have a new Archivist! Bonnie Osif has volunteered to take on the Archives. And, if that was not enough, she has also volunteered to be the Mentoring Chair. I am really hoping that we can link our new members with mentors. Or, even if our long-standing members need help, we can find them a mentor.

The other bylaw change approved in Toronto, and in my opinion long overdue, was the ability to vote electronically! This will improve all of our election processes. Rumor has it that its first use will be in voting on restructuring of membership dues. So, stay tuned!

Prior to the Toronto Conference, the 2004-2005 Officers submitted annual reports. Overall, the Division is doing extremely well financially due to excellent sponsorship and reasonably budgeted expenses. Mary Steiner, Past-Chair, initiated different funding levels for our sponsors – TERABYTE (\$1000+), GIGABYTE (\$750 - \$999) and MEGABYTE (\$500 - \$749). I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our sponsors for helping us have a wonderful variety of programs in Toronto and I hope we can continue this level of commitment for Baltimore.

Janifer Holt, Awards Chair, and her committee did a wonderful job selecting the 2005 award winners who were acknowledged at the Business Meeting in Toronto. Congratulations are in order for Joan Dubis, Boeing Research Librarian in Huntington Beach, Ca. Joan received the 2005 Elsevier Engineering Information/SLA Engineering Division Librarian of the Year Award. She was recognized for her long-term contributions to the Boeing corporate libraries. Joan was not slated to attend this year's conference in Toronto. However, once her management heard that she had won the award, they made sure she was able to attend. Thanks go out to her management for supporting Joan in this endeavor. The Business Meeting was certainly enhanced by her presence. As the newest award recipient, Joan will be joining the Awards Committee to select the 2006

recipient. Please begin thinking about your co-workers, mentors, friends and allies who should be nominated for this award and watch for announcements.

Debbie Letterman received the Inspec Travel Stipend. Debbie is completing her Master of Library and Information Science at the University of Washington Information School. An essay had to be written to be considered for this award. Debbie submitted the winning essay, "How has your library education prepared you to be an effective library professional in a solo library?" (See the essay in this issue of STN) Congratulations, Debbie!

Program planning for Baltimore has begun in earnest. There will be some big changes in programming so please watch for announcements. Full-day CE courses will be held on Saturday ONLY with morning CE courses on Sunday. The Opening Keynote Address will be on Sunday evening. We are trying to co-sponsor as many programs as possible. Some of the programs in the works for Engineering include the Standards Roundtable, a Corporate Librarians Roundtable; and sessions on RFID, Technical Intelligence, Engineering Resources 101: Materials and Computer Science Resources, Open Access – Value of Information/Google Scholar, Materials and Polymer Properties, etc. We will also be co-sponsoring the Sci-Tech Division's Contributed Paper Session. The topic will be Open Access and Institutional Repositories in Sci-Tech and Engineering Libraries. These are just a few of the programs planned, so please let me know of any other programming ideas.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mary Steiner, Past Chair, for her wonderful stewardship of the Division and her support to me during the past year! The Toronto programs she and Dave Hook, Aerospace Section Past-Chair, developed were excellent. I want to thank the 2004-2005 Advisory Board for a job well done. And, last but not least, I also want to thank all my supporters and loved ones – it does indeed "take a village!"❖

Kathy Nordhaus, Chair  
Engineering Division

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## Inspec Travel Stipend Award Winning Essay

By Debbie Letterman

The solo library professional is the consummate information superhero. He or she is generally responsible for handling all of the aspects of the library. However, this requires a vast and diverse set of knowledge and skills. "With great power comes great responsibility" (Uncle Ben to Peter Parker in *Spiderman*.) Cataloging, collection development, reference, training, and management tasks such as budgeting and space planning may all fall under the jurisdiction of the solo librarian. My education at the Information School at the University of Washington has provided me with the ideal background to staff a solo library.

The Information School requires nine core courses, each one covering a different topic or

Knowledge of the underlying systems and retrieval methods are crucial, as such systems and methods drive library access in most modern libraries. Solo librarians may need to provide patrons with training and instruction – for example, how to navigate the library's research databases. Familiarity with issues such as privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and intellectual freedom are crucial to protect patron interests and to avoid legal mishaps. As the sole "proprietor" of the library, the solo librarian **must** have management skills to sort out such issues as budgeting, marketing, and interactions with others.

In addition to the core courses I have taken, I chose a varied set of electives that further diversified my knowledge. An advanced cataloging course provided me with additional information on different cataloging schemes and cataloging tools. The course also included information on other options, such as outsourcing of cataloging functions. Solo librarians may be required to catalog all of the libraries' collection themselves. An understanding of Dewey or Library of Congress is advantageous, but my education provided me with enough fundamentals that I would feel comfortable creating my **own** cataloging system, as some small special libraries do. On the other hand, I might simply outsource all of my cataloging needs, so awareness of that option is useful.



Erica Mobley (left) of Inspec presents award check to Debbie Letterman (right)

focus of information theory. These core classes comprise just over half of the number of credits required for the MLIS degree. At first, I didn't understand the need for the variety of required courses, but as I near completion of my program, I realize that I will graduate with an excellent foundation for solo librarianship.

The core selections in the program covered primarily the theories and concepts behind such familiar library topics as information behavior and services, organization of information and information resources, information systems, architecture, and retrieval, as well as training, research, and management. A solo librarian may well need an awareness of information behavior to assess patron needs or resource usage. An understanding of how to best organize the collection will facilitate patron experience.

Just about every librarian must perform at least some reference, so I made sure my electives included several reference classes. Reference has always been the backbone of a competent librarian, and as a solo librarian, the responsibility for reference and research may fall entirely to me.

One of my electives covered Internet technology basics, including simple web design. As libraries everywhere move to online tools, catalogs, and portals, some skills in this area are a must. A course on computer networking included some hands-on practice with server installations, as well as covering current issues in network security, system configuration, and application protocols. As a solo librarian, I might not have to build the computer network myself, but this class armed me with the knowledge to discuss

such topics authoritatively with technology experts.

One of my favorite electives was a seminar in knowledge management. This class expanded my way of thinking about knowledge in many ways. In a special library environment, the generation, storage, transfer, and facilitation of knowledge among employees can be critical for an organization's success. This course included case studies and analyses of best practices in an array of settings. I left this class with a new paradigm for thinking about how knowledge functions in an organization. Since the librarian is often the knowledge gatekeeper, the insights gained from this course will allow me to approach managing the library's assets in an innovative and productive manner.

Solo libraries are often, by nature, small libraries, and it's not unusual for companies to overlook the value of the service the library provides. An elective class in special libraries brought home the importance of marketing, branding, and advertising your library, as the final project had

students creating a presentation for a hypothetical library and "selling" it to a new CEO of the hypothetical organization. I would expect that this scenario would be played out in many solo libraries at one time or another, so I feel fortunate that I had a "practice run".

The solo library offers one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities for library professionals. While the solo librarian may be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the library, that person also has the chance to create and maintain a thriving, successful repository of knowledge and information. My experiences at the University of Washington Information School has grounded me in theory, yet provided me with enough solid, practical skills that I feel I could handle any task with aplomb – truly an information superhero.❖

Debbie Letterman completed her Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) at the University of Washington Information School, and graduated in June 2005.

### **Engineering Division Members - Volunteer to be a Mentor!**

Mentor new members of the Division, first time conference attendees, colleagues with a new job, etc. It is fun and rewarding to BOTH the person being mentored AND the mentor.

If interested, contact Bonnie Osif at [bao2@psu.edu](mailto:bao2@psu.edu).

## Elsevier Engineering Information/SLA Librarian of the Year Award Acceptance Speech of Joan C. Dubis (Abridged)

Thank you very much. I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to be here and what an honor it is to be named Engineering Librarian of the Year for 2005.

The interesting thing about this award is that a wonderful lady I barely know – Kathryn Harkness of Boeing, nominated me for it. Yes, she is a colleague, but we have never actually met, we live 1500 miles from each other, and the only contact we have with each other is via phone and virtual meetings -- and there are plenty of those!

However, there are two things Kathy and I have in common and which binds us: the love of engineering research and a passion for customer service.

But we are not only two Boeing librarians who are diligent about our work and try to deliver the best possible service to our customers. Most, if not all, my associates try to do the same and it is for this reason that I look upon this award as an acknowledgement of their accomplishments as well. We are a network of librarians who truly depend on each other, and it is this network that makes us all successful. I am proud to be associated with such a fine group of professionals at Boeing.

Now winning an award such as this reminds me of the Oscars ... living in California, what more can I say? ... I really would like to thank some very important people who have made this award possible.

First to Elsevier Science for their generosity and to Ellis Colby, EI President and CEO, and Ross Graber, Director of Marketing and Strategy for being here. Second to the Engineering Division selection committee, particularly Janifer Holt for

her persistence in trying to get through the Boeing firewall to inform me that I had won the award! We eventually relied on the good old telephone to reach each other.... And to Mary Steiner for taking care of some very important logistics which is making this breakfast so very special to me.

Next to my manager, Sue Brewsaugh for her inspiration and deep pockets! Next, to Diane Brenes my colleague at the Huntington Beach Library who is also here today. Not only is she a wonderful associate, but a great friend as well. To give you a quick example of her friendship, when I told Diane of the announcement, she immediately offered to me, without hesitation, her plane ticket to Toronto to accept the award. She hasn't been to this conference in at least ten years and yet she was willing to give up her spot for me. If that's

not a friend, than I don't know who is.

Second to the last, but surely not least, is my sister, Betty Edwards, also here today (I brought my own fan club!). Betty is a law librarian in Boston, and even though we are 3000 miles away, it often feels like she is next door because we are so close.

And finally, I want to thank you, the membership. For without you, there would be no conference, we would not be having this breakfast, and we would not have such a successful professional organization. Thank you for volunteering your time to your local chapters and for your contributions which go to great programs such as SLA's new continuing education effort. You are what makes this organization so great!

Thanks again.❖



Ellis Colby (left) and Ross Graber (right) present Elsevier's Engineering Librarian of the Year Award to Joan Dubis of The Boeing Company.



## Take a Minute with a New Member

In this and future editions we are going to randomly choose an Engineering Division member to highlight. Please let me know if you would like to have yourself highlighted or have someone to suggest. Contact information: Cheryl A. Hansen, Membership Chair, Engineering Division, Engineering Systems Inc., cahansen@esi-il.com.

Jenny Finch is a new member of SLA and the Engineering Division. Jenny is the Librarian for a the Engineering Institute, which recently changed its name from Renfroe Engineering. The firm is located in Farmington, AR. They work as consultants in the area of Automotive Engineering specifically dealing with vehicle dynamics, safety and accident reconstruction. Jenny is responsible for the information needs of the firm and is learning as she goes since she just joined them in April of this year. One of the things that she likes about working for Engineering Institute is that the firm has helped to effect changes in the automotive industry as well as supported changes in federal safety regulations dealing with the automotive industry. She also likes the fact that though the firm is growing, it is still small enough that people work one on

one quite a bit and she is learning a lot as time goes by.

Jenny received her MLS from the University of North Texas in May of 2002 and worked in the public library field until this spring. Jenny is originally from this area of Arkansas and is happy to be back near the Ozarks once again. In her free time she is interested in art, computers, photography and quilting. She attended her first SLA conference this last June in Toronto, where I had the pleasure of meeting her in person. I hope to see her again next year in Baltimore. Please welcome her to the Engineering Division.

Her up-to-date contact information is:

Jenny Finch, Librarian  
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jfinch@enginst.org❖

Cheryl A. Hansen  
Membership Chair  
Engineering Division



## Please welcome the following new members to the Engineering Division

Veronica M. Adams  
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Systems Co.  
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