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## President's Column

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," so states Charles Dickens in the beginning of his well known classic, A Tale of Two Cities. Dicken's words echo in my mind as I review the events of the past few months in health sciences libraries here in our state.

Hospital health sciences libraries regionally and nationally are closing or downsizing accompanied by staff reductions of replacements of professional positions with clerical staff. Yet the *American Libraries* devoted most of the November issue to health and libraries. The cover proclaims, "Information is the Best Medicine - Libraries and Health." An inset article in this issue describes the National Library of Medicine's current initiative to pilot a project with 37 public libraries. Additional articles in this issue discuss public access to MEDLINE, PubMed, and Internet Grateful Med.

The nearly 10 million searches performed on MEDLINE each month demonstrate that the demand for medical and health information is rapidly rising. In spite of the increased need for access to medical information, the economics of the healthcare industry is creating an environment that diminishes the role of the hospital librarian.

Hospital libraries and librarians have traditionally been invisible to the greater community in which they serve. It is time to develop strategic plans so that healthcare executives, local citizens, and leaders perceive our expertise as a valuable resource that makes an important contribution to the well being of our local community, contributes to the bottom line, and serves the need of individual physicians.

Many individuals within the Michigan Health Sciences Libraries Association have a wealth of expertise with electronic access to information and Intranets. We need to help these members seek opportunities to publish in appropriate professional journals that our administrators read. As individual librarians, we can study our local communities to identify opportunities to display and promote hospital library services at local health fairs or participate in other appropriate community functions.

MHSLA has an active, articulate listserv. We need to mentor each other and continue an interactive dialogue through our listserv to develop a framework to support our efforts to increase the role and visibility of hospital librarians.

## MHSLA Conference 1999

*Bridging Traditions: The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Midwest Chapter/Medical Library Association*

October 6-9, 1999, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Amway Grand Hotel

CE courses include:

- Licensing Electronic Resources
- Working Together: Librarians & Information Technology (sponsored by GMR; will be simultaneously broadcast to other GMR sites) Futuring (How to plan & think about the future of organization)
- Additional course are being scheduled.

Details TBA

Speakers:

**Douglas Van Houwelling**, Internet II and the Future of the Internet  
**Rich Wiggins and Chuck Severance**, hosts of a local technology show on cable TV  
**Michelle Bowman**, Futuring. Michelle has a degree in Futures studies (how to get people/institutions to plan and think about the future of their organizations)

Additional sessions:

- Two sessions of contributed papers
- Journal Futures Panel
- Exhibits
- Posters
- GMR/NLM Update

*Call for Papers* will be going out soon. The contact person is: Dick Perrin, 616/592-3696 email: perrinr@lib01.ferris.edu

## Conferences in 2000

Mark your calendars now for the **MHSLA Annual Educational Conference in 2000**. It will be at the Park Hotel in Traverse City. Dates are October 18-20, 2000.

The **Midwest Chapter** meeting is September 23-26, 2000 in Cincinnati, OH.

## Calling All SOLOS!

Nancy Manninen

Nancy Manninen, librarian at Portage Health System in Hancock, MI, is trying to identify solo librarians in MHSLA for several purposes. Such identification would be a basis for networking. One of the best things a SOLO can do for her/himself is to network through professional organizations or discussions lists such as the SOLO librarians List.

(Conversely, one of the OTHER best things is not to obsess about being a SOLO!) Group networking, no matter

what the format, provides support, opportunities, and information. Another reason to identify SOLOS is to track library staffing trends in health care. Are there more SOLOS in health sciences libraries now than there were ten years ago? Will there be more in the next ten years than there are now? Guy St. Clair, for example, projected in 1986 that, "managements will find that they get more value for their money by employing one highly skilled and effective librarian/information specialist instead of a team...and, "there is also the recognition in the profession that one-person librarianship just might become the standard for library staffing in the future."<sup>1</sup> This, of course, implies the evolution of the one-person library from a jack of all trades to a corporate partner in the marshaling of intellectual capital for the institution.

What is a SOLO librarian? A SOLO is a librarian who works in a one-person library situation and does everything from writing the budget to shelving. Probably the best definition is the one provided by the SOLO Division of Special Libraries Association which defines a SOLO as "an isolated librarian or information collector/provider who has no professional peers, within the immediate organization."<sup>2</sup> According to a 1998 survey by the Special Libraries Association, 6% of SOLOS work in medical libraries. They spend less than 10% of their time on any one activity and they do an average of 12 activities on a regular basis. They customarily work more than 100% of the time allocating for their position.<sup>3</sup> These results were also mirrored in an informal survey Manninen did in 1998.

Judith A. Siess, author of the SOLO Librarian's Sourcebook and publisher of The One-Person Library, is developing a course for solo health sciences librarians to be presented through MLA. Manninen is one of the persons working to provide information that SOLO health sciences librarians would find pertinent and timely. Such a course will be as beneficial to the first time SOLOS as well to those who are experienced

SOLOS since it is directed more toward management and image creation issues than technical ones.

If you are a SOLO and want to stand up and be counted for ANY of the above mentioned reasons, please contact Manninen at nimannin@phys.org or 906 487-7846.

References:

1. Siess, Judith A. The SOLO Librarian's Sourcebook. Medford, N.J.: Information Today. p. 129
2. Ibid. p. 9
3. Who Are We? Survey Results. Part I. SLA SOLO Division Member Survey [summarized by Judith Siess]. The One-Person Library 1998 Nov; 15(7):1-2.

## Electronic Journal Club Information

The MHSLA Technology Committee has put in place on the MHSLA web site the means for MHSLA members to participate in electronic journal clubs.

One e-journal club is already up and running as of January 15, with eight members, discussing *'The Value of Information.'* The convener is Sandy Swanson. Mike Simmons is convening another journal club, on the topic of *'Intranets and the Internet, the Role of the Librarian.'* This journal club has not set a beginning date yet for discussions, and still has room for additional members; contact Mike if you are interested.

An electronic journal club includes the following benefits:

Members can participate in interesting and stimulating discussions of issues important to their continuing success in the profession.

Members can interact with colleagues who are geographically remote, but as close as a click on a Web page.

Members can earn CE credit (7.5 points in a 6-month period) for free!

Electronic journal clubs, according to MLA guidelines, have between 3 and 10 members, with one member designated as the 'convener'. The convener solicits members, assumes responsibility for designating a theme, and distributes and collects the forms necessary for members to receive academy points. The convener may also supply participants with copies of the articles being discussed. For Academy credits members must read 6-12 articles on a particular theme, (1-2 articles per month) and 'meet' using some form of electronic communication (a listserv, regular email, synchronous 'chat' software, or asynchronous conferencing software) for six months. Each member must post two or more substantial comments during at least five but preferably all six of the discussions to receive credit for participation. Copies of discussions must be submitted in order to earn Academy points. Members earn 7.5 points for completion of one six-month journal club session; conveners earn an additional 4.5 points. Twenty-two and half points may be earned towards AHIP credential from journal club participation in a five-year period.

The software being used to support the electronic journal clubs is called Web Crossing and is available through the 'members only' section of the MHSLA web page. The software requires registration for active users.

## Practice Guidelines

by Deborah Porter

With more health care professionals and consumers accessing the Internet for health-related information, it is essential for librarians to direct them to quality on-line medical resources. There are numerous clinical practice guidelines available on the Web that can assist physicians in clinical decision-making and patients in making informed decisions about their care. Many medical associations are now posting their clinical

practice guidelines, policies and standards on the web. Additional resources may be located by searching evidence-based health care and health technology assessment. Listed below is a sampling of web sites you might find useful.

### Health Services/Technology Assessment Text (HSTAT) <http://text.nlm.nih.gov/>

Developed by the National Library of Medicine, HSTAT provides free access to clinical practice guidelines and full-text documents, such as the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) Supported Guidelines.

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—Prevention Guidelines <http://wonder.cdc.gov/rhtml/Convert/data/Reports.html>

CDC Wonder provides access to numerous MMWR articles and Prevention Guidelines published by CDC.

### Canadian Medical Association—CPG Infobase <http://www.cma.ca/cpgs>

The CPG Infobase offers access to more than 500 clinical practice guidelines and provides a free, Web-based index to abstracts and full-text documents of current Canadian guidelines.

### JAMA/HIV/AIDS Information Center: Treatment Center <http://www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/hivhome.htm>

The American Medical Association has developed an up-to-date collection of clinical guidelines, information about clinical trials resources and other excellent resources for prevention and management of HIV/AIDS.

### CancerNet <http://cancer.net.nci.nih.gov/patient.htm>

This site contains current, peer-reviewed cancer information from the National

Cancer Institute (NCI), Office of Cancer Information, Communication and Education. The NCI's comprehensive PDQ cancer database contains treatment statements, screening and prevention statements and drug statements for health care professionals and patients.

### Alberta Medical Association's Clinical Practice Guideline's Catalog <http://www.amda.ab.ca/general/>

### New York Academy of Medicine, Evidence Based Medicine Resource Center, Clinical Practice Guidelines <http://www.nyam.org/library/cpg.html>

This site offers a comprehensive listing of clinical practice guidelines by authoring agency, by subject and a glossary of CPG terms.

## Easing Cancer Pain



*Easing Cancer Pain* is an interactive computer program on CD-ROM, designed to empower people with cancer who suffer from pain. It provides a wealth of resources to help them understand their pain and seek effective treatment. The program is divided into three main content areas – assessment of pain, barriers to effective pain management, and treatment of pain.

But the centerpiece of the software is the personal stories section, featuring the narratives of individuals being treated for cancer pain. The video clips in this section allow software users intimate

access to the lives of real people who are living with cancer pain, says Dr. Karen Ogle, who created the program in collaboration with Darcy Drew Greene at Michigan State University's Communications Technology Lab. And with a wide variety of people telling their stories, users can hear those that are relevant to their own situations.

*Easing Cancer Pain* has a unique user interface that creates a calm and relaxing environment: a metaphorical campfire setting that each user can explore on a private and individual journey through the wealth of information that the software provides. The user-friendliness extends to computer novices and those with limited reading skills.

The *Easing Cancer Pain* web site is at <http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/cancerpain/index.html>. The CD can be ordered through the American Cancer Society for \$15, including shipping and handling, at 800-723-0360. Further information can be obtained from Dr. Ogle at [karen.ogle@ht.msu.edu](mailto:karen.ogle@ht.msu.edu).

## Upcoming Conferences

**ACRL 9th National Conference  
"Racing Toward Tomorrow"**  
April 8-11, 1999  
Detroit, MI  
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/preindex.html>

**National Library Week**  
April 11-17, 1999

**Medical Library Association**  
May 14-20, 1999  
Chicago, IL  
<http://www.mlanet.org>

**A Bridge to the New Millennium**  
CHLA/ABSC 23rd Annual Conference  
May 25 to 29, 1999  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada  
<http://www.library.dal.ca/chla99/>

**Knowledge Leaders for the New Millennium: Creators of the Information Future**

June 5-10, 1999  
Special Libraries Association  
Minneapolis, MN  
<http://WWW.SLA.ORG/conf/index.html>

June 24-July 1, 1999  
**American Library Association**  
Annual Meeting  
New Orleans, LA  
<http://www.ala.org/events/>

October 27-29, 1999  
**Michigan Library Association**  
Grand Traverse, MI

**Converge on London**  
8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medical Librarianship  
July 2-5, 2000  
London, United Kingdom

## Personnel/Institutional News

January 21, 1998 (a mild history note) **Marquette General Hospital** sent its' last HUGE bindery shipment. 184 units to Binding Unlimited. From this month forward, about 60 titles less will not be bound. They're now electronic - access via OVID's biomedical and mental health packet. Last side note, I'm the '98/99 chairperson for the UPRLC (Upper Peninsula Region of Library Cooperation Inc) our local ROC. Meetings every other month with an annual Edu/Business meeting in September

The **Saginaw Health Sciences Library** is now circulating five laptop computers to MSU students, residents and faculty for use with their presentations (via Powerpoint 97). If the users' presentation is larger than a floppy can hold, they put it on a write-once CD (we bought the Sony CD-R for about \$350). CD-R's are write-once and cost about 99 cents each in bulk versus the rewritable CD-RW's which can be about ten times that. Our laptops include the highly rated NEC Versa, the Toshiba Libretto (a mini-laptop, so we got an extra full-size plug-in keyboard, too), a Gateway, a Toshiba

and an IBM Thinkpad. All are at least 233's with 32 Mb RAM. We also have two self-contained video projectors (Sharp XG-NV3XB) and two soft-sided cases for them on wheels with space for a laptop inside. The Sharps work in rooms with overhead lights on and with sunlight streaming in! They also came with remotes that double as laser pointers. We bought two infrared remote mouses for use with the laptops. It's been less trouble with equipment troubleshooting than we expected, but teaching new users and negotiating how long something circulates as time-consuming as you can imagine. All items are used heavily.

SHSL is also coordinating all videoconferencing for Saginaw Cooperative Hospitals, Inc. We selected a PictureTel SwiftSite ISDN-based system.

We're happy to answer any questions about what it's like to select or use such devices - call Stephanie or Anne at 517/771-6846.

UPHSLC been up to. Well, just a few video conferences hosted at MTU in Houghton. The "Soaring to Excellence" and "Dancing with Change" programs are interesting from Dupage <http://www.Dupage.edu/teleconference/index.html> Nancy Manninen, Janice Heather, myself, the MTU & Suomi College library staff and some local public librarians as well enjoy the thought provoking topics. They're normally scheduled on Fridays at lunch time and run for about 1 hour and 45 minutes. We get handouts and can either fax or email questions during the live broadcast.