

MHSLA NEWS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHIGAN HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

A Letter from MHSLA President, Keith Engwall

Dear MHSLA Members,

As I write to you for the first newsletter of my term as President, I want to reiterate what I said at the Annual Conference business meeting. This is a difficult time for libraries in Michigan. It is a difficult time for the profession in general, but here in Michigan, the challenges we face are compounded by the division within our ranks. The Michigan Academic Library Association has split off from the Michigan Library Association. I am not criticizing that move, and it may be that good comes out of it, but I am troubled by the implication that libraries cannot find common ground from which to face the challenges before us. I do not have significant reason to fear an imminent split might happen between the Academic Medical Libraries and the Hospital Libraries, but I do have concerns over the general well-being of the organization that might push us in that direction.

On one hand, the organization is fairly healthy. Financially, we are in very good shape. And yet, it seems as though participation in the organization has dropped off significantly. Attendance to workshops and the annual conference is down, as is membership, and finding people willing to serve in leadership roles has been a particular challenge. There seems to be a pulling back, a disengagement, from the organization that I find very troubling. This leads to the question: What can MHSLA do to best meet the needs of its member libraries?



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The mission of MHSLA identifies six areas in which it seeks to help its members:

- providing its membership with opportunities for professional growth
- fostering communication between members and their regions
- facilitating resource sharing
- increasing awareness of new technologies
- providing high-quality continuing education
- conducting research in health sciences information services

One question to ask is how well MHSLA is doing in fulfilling these objectives. But a more fundamental question is whether these are the objectives we should be fulfilling. What can the organization be doing that provides sufficient value to our membership to get them reengaged? I do not have answers for these questions, but I do have an idea of where to start.

During my Term as president, I'd like to perform a needs assessment of Medical Libraries in Michigan. To that end, I am putting forth a call to participate in a small task force to carry out this task, which I will lead. We will need to decide how best to go about the assessment and then plan and execute it. My hope is that we will be able to use this information to reevaluate the mission of the organization and perhaps find new and/or better ways to help the membership. I thank you in advance for your help, for even if you do not step forward to participate in the task force, we will still need your participation in the assessment itself in order for it to be successful.

In the meantime, I wish you well, and invite your feedback and ideas.

Sincerely,

Keith Engwall
President, MHSLA



MHSLA 2014 Annual Conference: Reports from Scholarship winners

Michael Fitzpatrick:

It has been several years since I attended a library conference, so I was pleased to receive the scholarship to attend the 2014 MHSLA Conference. I attended two CE courses on Wednesday: Third-Party PubMed Tools and Introduction to Bibliometrics. Both sessions were interesting and informative as I had little experience with either topic. In the PubMed Tools session we explored different tools, learning how to evaluate them and identify situations where a third-party search tool might be useful. In the Bibliometrics session we discussed several types of bibliometric measurement strategies. I was somewhat familiar with Journal Impact Factors, as we have had users in our institution inquire about them, but the number of other means of measuring and analyzing citations was surprising.

The Keynote Address from Frank Boles was an entertaining look at some of the collections in the Clarke Historical Library. The Thursday afternoon workshop on Community Assets was very engaging and gave a different perspective on identifying strengths for collaboration. It provided a fun opportunity for us to get to know one another and identify the many talents our group members have. Friday's Lightning Round Abstracts and Tech Speed Dating were great ways to learn what our colleagues have been working on and to get a quick peek at new technologies. Overall the conference was enjoyable, informative, and well-run. I look forward to attending again to find out what new technologies are available and how they are being put to use in our various organizations.

Kimberly Kelly:

I was privileged to be granted a scholarship from MHSLA to attend their 2014 conference. This year the MHSLA conference was held at Soaring Eagle Casino in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. The conference was terrific. The accommodations were very nice and everyone at the resort was friendly and helpful.

This was the first time I participated in a continuing education class. The Grey Literature class was my favorite. It addressed issues I encounter at work when I am searching for reputable, in-depth information for non-clinical professionals. I also found the lightning round abstracts on Friday helpful. I especially enjoyed the abstract by Janette Ransom on "Hospital Patient Education Rounding Program."

The special event on Thursday night was delightful. It was a pleasure to tour the new Central Michigan University medical school building. Since the tour I have encouraged students I know, who are considering a career in medicine, to visit Central Michigan and consider them as an option.

I also found the tour and presentation by Frank Boles from the Clarke Historical Library fascinating. I am very interested in Michigan history. Frank was a pleasure to listen to and his presentation was captivating.

The MHSLA conference was a delightful experience for me. All of the MHSLA members were welcoming and I really appreciated that. I received excellent career advice. This was a great opportunity to network and find out more about future career paths. I look forward being colleagues with all of you in the near future.

Michelle Bass:

To be selected as one of the two MHSLA student scholarship recipients was an honor. The two continuing education sessions I went to were packed with new ideas and practical ways to implement skill sets in creative ways. I particularly enjoyed learning about bibliometrics methodologies and applications and look forward to putting these new skills into practice soon. In the Grey Literature workshop, I was introduced to sites for investigation that were outside my usual “box of ideas” and definitely appreciated the emphasis on thinking globally when it comes to Grey Literature searching.

I have been to many professional conferences before, though this was only my fourth in the library and information science field, and I have to say I was overwhelmed by the camaraderie and sense of community between the attendees, particularly in light of the fact that many only see each other in person sporadically throughout the year or only at this conference. The network of health sciences librarians across hospital and academic settings is strong and supportive, a necessity when there is only a single librarian at a given workplace. I only wish more students with an interest in health sciences librarianship would have the opportunity to attend and get a chance to speak with practicing librarians, particularly hospital librarians. As the conference location gets closer to the two library and information science programs in the state, I would urge the organization to extend reduced conference passes for interested students to participate, in the least through a networking event. For my part, I hope to connect with some of the Flint hospital librarians in the spring semester to organize a field trip for the American Library Association Student Chapters at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University.

I am still unsure where I will begin my career geographically and subject specialization wise but I would feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to continue being a part of MHSLA community.

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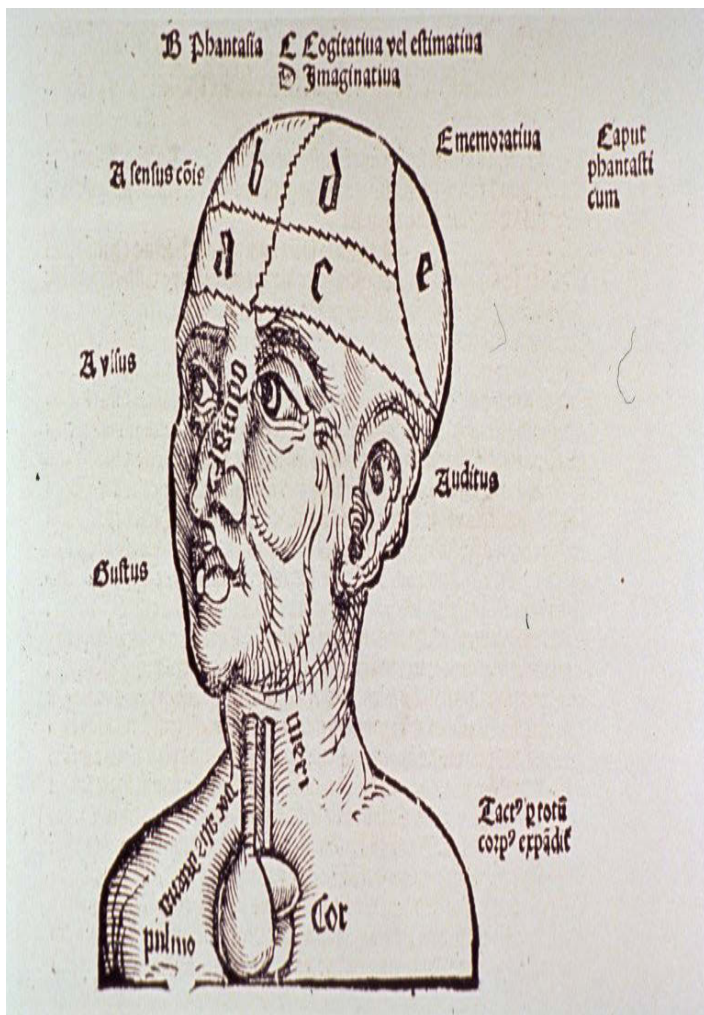
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