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Jennifer Barlow's Inaugural Speech

*Presented at the MHSLA Annual Business Meeting,
October 14, 2004, Kalamazoo*

It's such a thrill for me to welcome you all to Kalamazoo. Our conference theme this year is "A Kaleidoscope of Knowledge," and it's given us a chance to draw together some of the exotic and eclectic cultural traditions that flourish right here in our little backwater burg. For a small city, we really do have a lot going on and I hope you'll take some time to enjoy and explore.

Some of you may not know it, but I actually volunteered to run for President. After nearly ten years on the scene, I've reached a point where I am ready to give back to the community that nurtured me early in my career. This sense of obligation was instilled in me when I was young. My Dad taught in the Economics department at the University of Michigan for many years. At one point he was selected to serve the department in a leadership position. My family was very proud when we heard about it and told him so. Dad's response was typically self-effacing, and I have never forgotten it. He explained that administration is really just a chore, like doing the dishes, and his colleagues had decided it was his turn to do the dishes.



So, in the Barlow tradition of servant leadership, I am stepping up in my apron and rubber gloves to do MHSLA's dishes.

To inspire your confidence, let me tell you how I do my dishes at home. I do all the dishes in my pile, and I check them to make sure they're clean. I promise to be similarly thorough and meticulous in the performance of my duties for the Association.

One cause I would like to promote in my presidential year is an appreciation of our paraprofessional colleagues. These folks are the library's secret weapons. They can make a huge difference in our patrons' experience of service. I was fortunate to inherit a couple real superstars on my team at Borgess, and I've since hired on a third. Their skill at reference interviews and search strategies is renown, as is



CONTENTS

President's Message	1
MHSLA Exhibit at the MI Library Assn. Annual Conference	2
Support Staff Workshop May 11	2
Camp MHSLA Programming	3
A Kalamazoo Kaleidoscope	3
Provide Feedback on the MLA Membership Page	4
In Another Life	4
Journey Toward Learning	4
First Professional Conference	5
New Adventure	5

their dogged determination to deliver. Some of our best innovations in the library have been the brainchildren of my front-line staffers. I simply sit back like Captain Picard on the Starship Enterprise, and say "Make it so," projects succeed, and everybody wins. Support staff are a precious resource. We need to make sure they get meaningful work, recognition, and opportunities to grow.

Another thing I feel strongly about is the old image question. This insecurity continues to plague our profession. There is a widespread lack of awareness of what we do, and I admit this can be frustrating and even insulting. I've had a college-educated friend ask me in all seriousness what the difference is between a librarian and a secretary. But I don't think we'll get anywhere by fretting amongst ourselves, or trying superficial fixes like changing our label. I think we need to relax about the image and let our work speak for itself. If we can't earn respect with expertly delivered, top-quality service, we won't earn it with any kind of slick publicity campaign.

I favor a grass-roots approach. We each have daily opportunities to impress our users with our talents and energy. Let's make the most of them. Dazzle the customer with competence, and put the fussing aside. Then, when images of the stereotypical dowdy librarian arise, our patrons' dismissive reaction will be "That's not like the librarian I know!"

I look forward to working with your dynamic Board in the months to come as we address old issues and tackle new challenges. Thank you, it's an honor to serve.

MHSLA/GMR Joint Exhibit at the MI Library Association Annual Conference

Submitted by Jennifer Barlow

MHSLA made an appearance at the Michigan Library Association's annual conference in October 2004. The conference took place at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme. MHSLA members Joan Emahiser, Barbara Platts, Christine Allen, and Jennifer Barlow staffed a booth promoting both MHSLA and the Greater Midwest Region, National Network of Librar-

ies of Medicine.

Among the eighty-plus vendors attending MLA, our exhibit was unique in that we were not trying to sell anything. Rather, we were there promoting the outstanding consumer health resources available online through the GMR and in the collections of MHSLA member libraries. Our message of collaboration and sharing was warmly received by conference-goers.

The exhibit was funded in large part by an Exhibit Award from the GMR. The GMR sent panel displays and handouts promoting resources such as MedlinePlus, PubMed, Tox Town, and the Household

Products Database. Barbara Platts and Christine Allen prepared colorful posters and handouts describing professional resources available from the GMR for public librarians. Many MHSLA member libraries with consumer health collections sent brochures, which were displayed. The exhibit also featured MHSLA brochures, bookmarks, and a PowerPoint presentation.

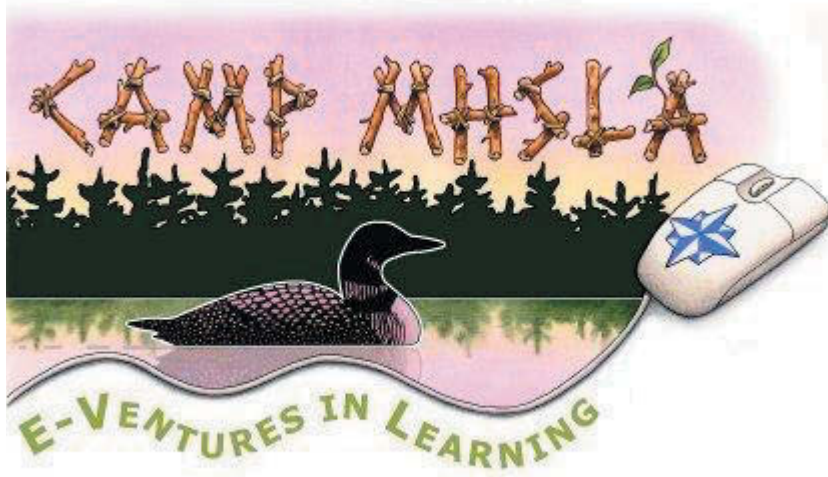
Exhibiting at MLA provided great visibility for MHSLA. At least one networking connection made at the conference has already paid off. A public library director near Kalamazoo contacted Borgess librarian Carol Aebli to ask if she would teach a workshop for the public on finding health information. Carol's presentation is scheduled to take place in February.

Support Staff Workshop May 11

Reserve Wednesday, May 11 for the annual MHSLA support staff workshop. The workshop will focus on the MeL Gateway and will be held at the Michigan Library Consortium in Lansing. Visit the MHSLA Web site, <http://www.mhsla.org>, for more information and the registration form.



Past-President Joan Emahiser Exhibits on behalf of MHSLA at the Michigan Library Association's Annual Conference.



Camp MHSLA Programming

*Submitted by Valeria Long
Education Committee Chairperson*

Program planning for the September 2005 annual conference is well underway. Education committee members met in December, where we brainstormed ideas for CE classes and concurrent sessions. Your comments from the 2004 conference evaluation sparked discussions, along with other topics suggested or of interest to committee members. Potential speakers and presenters are being identified and contacted, and Michigan Surgeon General Dr. Kimberly Dawn Wisdom has been invited to deliver our keynote address.

Unfortunately, time constraints prevent us from offering traditional camp activities such as lariat necklace making, but we are planning programming that promises to be thought provoking and provide timely and useable information. Look for more detailed information in the next *MHSLA News*.

A Kalamazoo Kaleidoscope

Submitted by Jennifer Barlow

The Western Michigan Health Sciences Libraries Association played host to MHSLA's 31st annual education conference, held at the Radisson Plaza

Hotel in Kalamazoo, October 13-15, 2004. Our theme was "A Kaleidoscope of Knowledge," and an amazing array of topics was explored.

Early in the year, MHSLA's Board made the bold decision to subsidize much of the conference, to reduce the financial burden on registrants and encourage attendance. Fees were intentionally set at below break-even rates. A total of eighty-one people registered, excluding vendors. This represents an increase in attendance over recent years (70 in 2003, 68 in 2002, 60 in 2001). MHSLA lost roughly \$8500 on the conference, which translates to a \$105 savings for each attendee.

The educational content offered something for everyone. Nationally-known presenters Jeannine Cyr Gluck and Robert Berkman were on hand to teach continuing education classes, as was the physician – librarian team of Peter Jucovy and Bradley Long from Philadelphia. Conference sessions covered such topics as open access publishing, electronic document delivery, archiving, and evaluation of online resources at the point of care. Updates on the Greater Midwest Region's activities, PubMed LinkOut, and the new Michigan eLibrary catalog helped round out the schedule.

Attendees particularly enjoyed their visits to the two local hospitals. Marge Kars from Bronson Methodist Hospital hosted a welcome reception in the garden-like atrium of her stunning new facility. Jennifer Barlow from Borgess Medical Center arranged a tour of Borgess's Navigation Center, a unique environment for work groups.

In keeping with the kaleidoscope theme, our special event was diverse and dazzling. While dining on elegant food, we enjoyed a bagpipe and drum concert by the Kalamazoo Pipe Band and a "belly dancing" performance by Joette Sawall, founder of the West Michigan School of Middle Eastern Dance. A team of DJs from DJ Plays then took over and coaxed us onto the dance floor with carefully selected songs that were related in some way to books, libraries, science or medicine.

The members of the Local Arrangements and Education Committees worked hard to plan and orchestrate

this event. We were gratified by the strong turnout and positive reviews by attendees. It had been 17 years since MHSLA held its annual meeting in Kalamazoo. We hope you don't wait so long to come back!

Sheila Needs Feedback on the MLA Membership Page

Greetings all! I hope everyone is staying warm. I have a request. I'm currently on the Membership Committee of the Medical Library Association. I have been assigned the task of reviewing the membership information on MLANet, <http://www.mlanet.org>. I'm trying to conduct an informal impromptu focus group.

What is your initial reaction to the MLA membership page? From MLA's home page, click on "Join MLA" on the right hand side of the page. Some things to look for are: Do you find the page to be user-friendly? Does it provide enough information? How does it compare to other sites you've seen? Is there something on the page we no longer need? Things we should add? Feel free to praise it or trash it. I'm open to all comments and suggestions. You may send your ideas to me at bryants@msu.edu.

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In Another Life...

*By Susan Wischman
2004 MHSLA Member Scholarship Winner
Munson Health Care Community Health Library*

- In another life I earned my CMP
- In another life I was on the Board of the MMPI
- In another life I was a Secret Shopper

Now, you ask, what the heck does any of that have to do

with MHSLA or the 2004 MHSLA Annual Education Conference?

Perhaps when I define these acronyms the significance will become apparent.

CMP stands for Certified Meeting Profession. I earned these credentials during my tenure as Corporate Meeting Planner for the Traverse City Convention Bureau. MMPI is an acronym for Michigan Meeting Professionals International. MMPI is an association not unlike MHSLA where colleagues in the Meeting Planning industry meet for networking and continuing education. As a Secret Shopper I was hired by the management of luxury hotels and resorts to pose as a guest and evaluate the level of service delivered by staff.

What all this self-promotion boils down to is the fact that I am eminently qualified to judge whether a meeting or a conference is a success. Having said that, the answer is a resounding "yes." In my opinion the Local Arrangements Committee, in partnership with the Education Committee and the Kalamazoo Radisson did an amazing job and this year's Conference was an unqualified success. From the design of the logo and theme to publicity and registration the execution was virtually flawless. Food was hot, buses were clean and punctual, C.E.'s were valuable and a good time was had by all. Thank you to all of you for all your hard work. You're a tough act to follow.

Having said all that, none of this critiquing or "atta boying" would have been possible without the generous scholarship I received from MHSLA. I met so many nice people and gained an appreciation of high caliber of the Medical Librarian profession, especially in the State of Michigan. My sincere thanks to all of you.

Journey Toward Learning

*By Poonam Prasad
2004 MHSLA Student Scholarship Winner
Wayne State University*

The conference began with a workshop that focused on how to cope with information overload – a common concern of hospital administrators. Some of the panel discussions were on specific areas such as "50 Ways to Be Indispensable to Your Organization," "MeL Catalog and GMR updates," "PubMed Linkouts,"

“Electronic Document Delivery panel,” “Archiving 101,” “Scholarly Communication and Libraries” and “Evaluation of Online Evidence-based Medical Resources.” The conference also included a vendor and poster exhibition. Moreover, the conference organizers arranged social events so that participants could meet each other in an informal setting. The highlight of these gatherings was a dinner that included bagpipe music, oriental dance and piped music.

The tour of the Borgess Navigation Center underlined the importance of working with a group as we were required to do some creative thinking and come up with solutions to real-world problems. The conference offered a chance to learn from real situations which are difficult to replicate in a classroom. I have gained a great deal from my interactions with the librarians working in the field. This conference was a collaborative environment where a community of librarians that share challenges and could speak to the same issues and offer advice and/or a sympathetic ear. From my perspective, conferences such as these can be life-changing events and can be critical in professional and personal development. I recommend that everyone take the time, energy and resources to pursue these opportunities.

My First Professional Conference

*By Mellanye Lackey
2004 MHSLA Student Scholarship Winner
University of Michigan*

I would like to say thank you very much for allowing me to attend the Michigan Health Sciences Library Association Fall Education Conference in Kalamazoo in October. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting interesting librarians and learning about their jobs, their projects and their places of work. This was my first professional conference, and connecting with so many librarians gave me an invaluable networking opportunity. I have already used tips from the keynote speaker to supplement the blog at UMICH’s public health library. Also, it was great to find out what is going on with MeL, the Michigan eLibrary. I have referred this valuable source to several of my users. My participation in your conference made me very excited to begin my career as a health sciences librarian. Hope to see you at MLA!

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A New Adventure

Twenty-year MHSLA member Stephanie John left her position as Director of Information Resources for Synergy Medical in October. She is now the Director of PALNET, a public and academic library computer consortium in Flint. PALNET (<http://www.palnet.info>) runs the Dynix and patron authentication systems for database access for Baker College, Mott Community College and Kettering University.

Stephanie reports that she began work shortly before PALNET brought its brand new system live in mid-December and that she knew she’d get along with the existing PALNET staff when they recognized her reference to a Monty Python movie (“Where’s the machine that goes ‘PING?’”).

PALNET is physically headquartered at Baker College, Flint. The Baker College system has 10 sites, and, with over 35,000 students, is now the largest private college in Michigan. PALNET (formerly FALCON before 12/5/04) will be accepting applications for new agency members this summer.

Stephanie invites MHSLA members to contact her at her new workplace at 810 766-4070 or Stephanie@palnet.info. She’d like to keep in touch with her medical library friends!