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MHSLA's 30th Anniversary

My, how time flies. Thirty years ago, a group of Michigan librarians formally organized under the Michigan Health Sciences Libraries Association. It's amazing to think how much things have changed in thirty years. I've only been active in the association for eight years, and the amount of change that has taken place in that short period of time is mind-boggling.

When I joined MHSLA the Internet was in its toddler years. HTML was the newest bell and whistle. 9600 baud was pretty darned fast. You were at the front of the pack if you had OVID on CD-ROM and networked. Microsoft Windows 3.1 was unstable, but it was the best we had. Today CCS and DHTML is the way to go, T1 lines have left 9600 baud in the dust, OVID is available on the Internet, updated daily, DOCLINE and PubMed have followed suit, and Windows XP is only slightly more stable. Books and journals are available electronically, and Ariel

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is warming its way into our hearts. If all this has changed in only the last eight years, I can only imagine what the last thirty years have been like.

The theme of this year's Fall Education Conference is "Thirty Years of Wisdom" and I hope that you have all marked the dates on your calendar. There is no better value for a conference. Where else can you get CE credit, concurrent sessions, and networking with colleagues, and a social event for under \$350? While the MLA Conference is nice, at the MHSLA Conference you will be networking and meeting librarians in closer proximity and facing the same issues as you. For more information on the Conference visit the Association's web site at <http://www.mhsla.org>.

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Report from the 2003 Medical Library Association Conference

By Jennifer Barlow, Borgess Library

I was excited to take part in the Medical Library Association conference this year. San Diego was abuzz with librarians learning, teaching, networking, negotiating, and enjoying each other's company.

The plenary sessions were my favorite part of the conference. I attended three. The first speaker was Lawrence Lessig, law professor at Stanford and an expert on copyright. He argued the *Eldred v. Ashcroft* case in front of the Supreme Court, trying unsuccessfully to persuade the court to strike down Congress's new copyright law (the Digital Millennium Copyright Act).

Lessig talked about how copyright law has evolved into something contrary to its original, constitutional purpose. It was meant to protect original works "for a limited time," to reward creators for their originality but to also facilitate improvements and innovations. Over the past few decades, thanks to the efforts of some interested parties such as Disney, the law has been skewed in favor of copyright holders and against "fair use" and the public domain.



Lessig calls for a grass roots movement to build a "Creative Commons" where creators can voluntarily share SOME of their intellectual rights. He supports a middle ground, where creators are rewarded for their efforts and originality, but the public's fair use rights are maintained as well. Their organization at creativecommons.org provides boilerplate licenses that creators can use to register and protect their works, while allowing certain kinds of re-use. Creative Commons seeks to strike a balance between protection and free access.

The second plenary session featured Frieda Weise, director of the medical library at the University of Maryland. Her talk was entitled "The Library As Place." She charted the

evolution of libraries, from royal or clerical treasure-troves to places where the public is welcomed. Even though our services keep changing, and we now offer remote access to resources, the library's physical space still has importance and value for our users. We're now much more than just repositories (although that aspect of libraries will always be with us – someone, somewhere will have to maintain print collections). People use our space to meet, study, teach, learn, research, and relax. Good architectural design will make accommodations for all these uses.

The third plenary speaker was Roz Diane Lasker, MD, director of the Division of Public Health at the New York Academy of Medicine. Her talk was very thought-provoking. She challenged some of our assumptions about the impact of information on health. As librarians, our main task is to get people together with the information they need. Once we've done that, we feel satisfied. But does the information we provide actually have any impact on people's lives? Often, regrettably, it does not.

Lasker's research has shown that health information, in itself, has little effect on the health behavior of individuals, on clinical professional practice, or on the formation of health policy. Why is this? Sometimes the information is not reliable or not usable. There may be problems with the research design. There may be bias. The results may simply not be practically useful, since most research questions are framed by researchers without input from clinicians or consumers as to what might be worth studying.

Sometimes, even when we have good information, it's difficult to act on it all by ourselves. Multi-faceted approaches are needed. So, access to information is necessary, but not sufficient to improve health. Lasker sees our role as information intermediaries as important, and she urged us to get involved in partnerships in our communities. Medical librarians can be an important part of a collaborative strategy to improve public health.

Other highlights of the conference for me included:

- a roundtable discussion on copyright;
- a presentation on an experimental vaccine for the prevention of nicotine addiction;
- a Hospital Libraries Section program on collaboration and innovative partnerships;
- the vendors' exhibits (all the big names, and lots of smaller ones too);
- some really great posters – on research projects, new services, evaluation tools, and more;
- the farewell party, where we packed the dance floor and howled as the MLA band played "Werewolves of London."

It was an expensive and exhausting trip, but very worthwhile.

What a Difference an OPAC Makes!

By Michael Simmons

On April 21, 2003, the Sparrow Health System Library went live with the EOSi GLAS ELibrary Web OPAC. With the ability to now catalog and provide links to any electronic resource, as well as print, library clients are able to not only locate resources they did not know about but find those resources regardless of format. Libraries that already have some type of modern OPAC, and there are dozens of vendors, are already aware of these benefits. But try to imagine if you will what it might be like without the trusted trademark of any library, the catalog.

All right, its true, the Sparrow Library had a catalog before GLAS. Between the card shelf list and the DOS-based system it wasn't exactly the Stone Age. However, what to do with those pesky electronic journals, e-books, Web sites, and "What! You can catalog databases too"? At some point a long dreary web page with endless lists of links to everything from e-journals to evaluated web sites



was created. This too was a partial solution. The thing is, it keeps coming back to the catalog. Arguably, still under development, Sparrow's Web OPAC now provides convenient and effective access to all library resources, or at least it will in the months to come. There are other advantages to consider. The Sparrow Library, like so many other hospital libraries, is behind a firewall. Library electronic resources are listed on the Library Intranet page but are inaccessible once you leave the network. The resources that are listed are arranged alphabetically with annotations. This is helpful but hardly a format suitable for the busy health care professional. Issues of authentication and off-site access continue to challenge when and where those resources may be used, but now through the OPAC, Sparrow Library clients can rely upon a single interface when identifying those resources. Providing a Library OPAC also demonstrates the presence of the Library via a medium that has quickly become the standard, the Internet. Adding subject headings, links to online resources with explanations of how and

where access is achieved, the ability to "email the librarian with questions", providing "one-stop shopping" from a reliable source, and access to that source from any Internet connection are but a few of the benefits of a library OPAC. The addition of a remote authentication process would complete this picture.

While there is no one perfect answer to locating and providing access to the multitude of library resources in the modern health sciences library, the humble catalog has evolved and stood the test of time.

Additional Reading:

EOS International. (2003). EOS E-library Service. Retrieved May 16, 2003 from <http://www.eosintl.com/products/elibrary.asp>

Garrison, W. A. (2001). E-books in the catalog: CU Boulder, NetLibrary, and the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries. *Colorado Libraries*, 27(2), 51-2.

Hughes, J. E. (2001). Access, access, access! The new OPAC mantra. *American Libraries*, 32 (5), 62-4.

Matthews, J. R. (2001). The value of information: the case of the library catalog. *Technical Services Quarterly*, 19(2), 1-16.

Williams, M. W. (2001). Navigating the channel between the library Website and OPAC: how we make E-journals available. *Serials Librarian*, 40(3/4), 233-6.

MHSLA 30th Annual Educational Conference Information

Submitted By Diane Gardner

Watch your mail for information on the 30th Annual Educational Conference. Be sure to pack your swimsuit since our location has five indoor pools! If you happen to be strolling on the Holz Brucke when you hear a five-bell chime, look toward the Glockenspiel. Mark your calendars for October 15-17 and a trip to "Little Bavaria" in Frankenmuth, Michigan. Check www.mhsla.org for more conference information.

Midwest Chapter Medical Library Association Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, September 19-23, 2003

By Felicia A. Young, Conference Coordinator

The 2003 Conference Planning Committee invites you to join us the Midwest Chapter of the Medical Library Association's Annual Meeting in Indianapolis from September 19-23. The Indiana Health Sciences Librarians Association will be your host. We hope you will come and explore with us the many ways library professionals are staying current. Our theme is "information@thecrossroads." There will be a wide variety of CE courses, speakers, and contributed paper sessions to enlighten and challenge you. On Sunday, vendor exhibits will showcase their innovative approaches to meet the health care information needs for all.

The conference will be held at Omni Severin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. We hope you will enjoy the restaurants, shopping and entertainment all within walking distance of the hotel. On Sunday evening, we hope you will join us at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art where we will have the museum all to ourselves. Don't forget to visit our hospitality table to find out about all the fun things to do while you are in Indianapolis. Please come and enjoy the informal atmosphere and casual dress code, which will allow you to relax while you exchange ideas and share your knowledge and expertise with others in our chosen field. See you Indianapolis!

Member News

Patricia Wolfram, AHIP, MidMichigan Medical Center--Midland was a Peer Reviewer for the FY03 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) competitive grants program. The Library of Michigan will receive approximately \$4.5 million in LSTA funds in 2003. About half goes toward statewide projects such as AccessMichigan. The other half goes toward funding state proposals submitted by Michigan libraries in the competitive grant program. For further information on the LSTA program see www.michigan.gov/hal.

Ken Nelson is now working at Beaumont--Royal Oak. He

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In honor of April's Volunteers' Month, the McLaren Medical Library recognized ten volunteers for having donated almost 30,000 hours to the medical center.

Diane Gardner writes, "Our volunteers have worked in a variety of departments but we really appreciate them in the library for doing our copying and helping us fill our interlibrary loans."

Barbara Platts, from Munson Healthcare in Traverse City, has been accepted into the fellowship program sponsored by NLM to attend the Medical Informatics course at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts in September. The course is limited to 30 fellows for each session. For more information on this NLM offering; check: http://courses.mbl.edu/Medical_Informatics/index.html.

Cheryl Putnam writes, "We have recently changed the name of our corporation from Saginaw Cooperative Hospitals, Inc. (SCHI) to **Synergy Medical Education Alliance**. The medical libraries and information systems departments combined last year to become the Department of Information Resources. We remain affiliated with Covenant HealthCare, Saint Mary's Saginaw and MSU's College of Human Medicine. There has been no change in our management and we will continue providing the same quality services on which we have built our reputation as a provider of medical education and medical services in the community."