

President's Message

Like many of you, I am busy. I work outside the home 40+ hours a week, try to raise a thoughtful child (she's 5 ½), want to keep my relationship with my spouse on-track, and have all the other things that I refer to as "having a life." In short, there is not really enough time in my schedule for more extra-curricular activities. This begs the question "What possessed you to become involved in SLA—especially to the point writing a President's Letter?"

Part of the answer comes from a desire to share thoughts on the direction of "the profession" with peers. Although I work in a large special library, there is not the time during the day to discuss the direction I think "we" ought to go, or what really makes a Special Librarian, or what direction our careers are going. I have a fantasy that at some point I will have the time, the energy, and the mental processing power simultaneously to carry on such a discussion. Thus far, this has remained a fantasy.

Another aspect has roots in my desire to help others. When I actually think about it, the president of a local chapter of a specialized professional organization is not the most direct place to change the world, but it is the opportunity I was presented with.

The last part of why I am (and intend to remain) involved in SLA is to facilitate the flow of information from the national to the local level. One of the perks of being a chapter officer is receiving all of the newsletters from other SLA chapters. Although I do not read many—OK, most—of them cover-to-cover, they do provide an excellent overview of what our colleagues are doing. I am humbled as I realize how much other chapters do, and I wish I had the time and energy to initiate some of these programs. In lieu of ac-

tually initiating anything, I thought I would list out some of what other chapters do to provide ideas to the whole Cleveland membership base.

- Many newsletters include capsule interviews/member news/FAQs about members. Some of these blurbs include general information about the place where the librarian works.

- Travelogues: When a member visits an international (or extremely different) library they present their experiences in a less formal format—email, electronic document on the web site, or a brown bag lunch.

- Reading lists and discussions of professional topics ("What Should Be Taught In Library School?", "Librarians and Copyright", "Demand Management: A Management Strategy for the Future")

- Joint meetings across regions

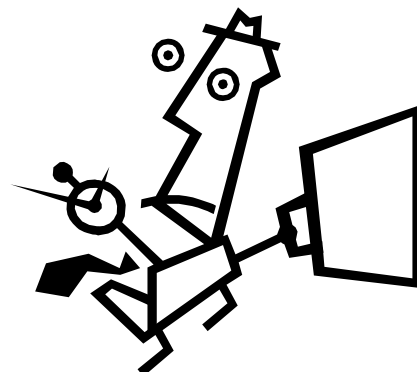
I have enjoyed and been stretched—not to mention stressed—as the chapter President for the last year. I hope to try it again some time (when I have caught up on all my other stuff), and I hope to have the opportunity to work again with all of the members who helped me. I assure you that without the frequent help of Joe Hecht, Cathy Parker, Jean & John Piety, Peter Pogacar, and the ever-impressive Laura Hilbert Ponikvar I would have melted down into a puddle of highly stressed putty. I highly recommend them to any future officer as an excellent safety net.

Shaw Mumford
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I have enjoyed and been stretched—not to mention stressed—as the chapter President for the last year.

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Interview with Judith Siess

by Anna Hood

Judith A. Siess, of Information Bridges International, Inc., is the author of *The SOLO Librarian's Sourcebook*. Judith presents continuing professional education seminars targeted to solo librarians and is actively involved in numerous professional organizations. She also publishes *The One-Person Library: A Newsletter for Librarians and Management*.

I conducted this interview with Judith via email in February, 2001. I am happy to share our dialog on change, growth, and other areas of professional interest with the SLA Cleveland Chapter members.

Which resources (print and electronic) do you use to keep professionally informed? Do you have any favorites that you consider essential reading?

I subscribe to about 15 electronic lists, including: SOLOLIB-L (most important), LIBREF-L, BUSLIB-L, NEWLIB-L, IFLA-L, ASIS-L, MEDLIB-L, several law library ones and a few from Australia and the UK. I belong to the following library associations, primarily for their publications, which I read cover to cover. SLA (including Solo, Sci-Tech, and Library Management—the last especially for their newsletter), Medical Library Association, American Association of Law Libraries, Church and Synagogue Library Association, Canadian Library Association and its special libraries division, Australian Library and Information Association, Library Association (UK), Aslib (UK), and the South African Library Association. I also read *Library Journal*, *Information Today*, *Information World Review* (UK), *Marketing Library Services*,

Searcher (though I am not renewing it), and *e-Content*. Online I subscribe to Free Pint and LLRX (Law Library Resource Exchange), Quote for the Day and Word for the Day and probably a few others that I have forgotten.

My favorites are SOLOLIB-L, LIBREF-L, BUSLIB-L and MEDLIB-L for the lists, *Library Journal* and *Information World Review* for news.

Describe a typical day for you.

6:00 a.m. Get up, check my email, eat breakfast, read the paper.

7:30 a.m. Go back to bed. (This is sweet revenge for all those working mornings when all I wanted to do is roll over and go back to sleep.)

9:30 a.m. Up for the day. Check email again (I am somewhat compulsive about this, but partly because I get about 150 messages a day and it's easier to do it in smaller doses.) Work on whatever requires my most immediate attention: writing a book, writing for *The One-Person Library* newsletter, preparing for a workshop.

11:00 a.m. If I am home I always watch *The Price is Right* on TV, while eating lunch.

12:00 noon Check the mail. If checks for subscriptions or claims forms for missing issues or requests for sample issues come in I get them taken care of right away. Then I start reading the journals that have come in.

NorthCoast Notes, a publication of the Special Libraries Association, Cleveland Chapter, is published annually and has a circulation of 300.

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Check email again and take care of anything that brings. In the afternoons I often run errands and take care of personal stuff. If there are no errands or if I am up against a deadline I will be writing instead.

5:30 p.m. My husband comes home and we have dinner.

7:00 p.m. From now to bedtime I watch TV and read and write if necessary.

10:00 p.m. Watch the early news and go to bed.

Of course this typical day assumes I am at home and not out

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teaching a workshop or attending a conference or seminar. I made 14 trips last year, including a month in the UK (half business and half vacation).

How much of your time is spent mentoring other librarians? Why do you feel mentoring and networking are important?

I don't know how much time I spend, but mentoring is very important to me. More experienced librarians were very helpful to me when I was starting out and I feel it is imperative that I give back to the profession. I have served as a mentor for the Science-Technology Division of SLA for several years and am now on the Solo Librarians Division mentoring committee. (I just developed a FAQ with resources and links to useful information for the Solo website.) In a way, my newsletter and workshops are a form of mentoring in that they transfer what I have learned (from working and reading) to others.

As to networking, I don't know how a solo can work without networking, but it is important for all librarians. None of us know everything so we need to consult with others on occasion. If you just call someone out of the blue you are not as likely to get the help you seek as if you

have met him or her in person. I tell my readers and students to go around to all the libraries in their area and meet the staff and look at their collections. Go to any professional association meetings and conferences (local, regional, and national—even international) that you can. Attend continuing education seminars and courses and vendor demonstrations.

What advice do you offer to information professionals on handling change in their places of employment and their profession? What are some key changes (in the profession or your work environment) that have impacted your career? How did you handle these changes?

My main advice is to recognize that change is inevitable. Also realize that you are not going to be able to keep up with all changes. Being a librarian these days is like being a juggler. You try to keep all the balls up in the air, but you know that eventually one is going to fall. All you can do is make sure that the ball that falls is not an important one.

Once you accept the inevitability of change you can start to plan for it. Be proactive. Assume that something is going to happen (probably bad) and figure out what you will do if (when) it happens. For instance, assume your budget will be cut or you will lose staff and know what services you will cut first. (Hint, cut the ones that will hurt the users first, not back office stuff.) Assume that at some point you will lose your job and keep an eye and ear out for other positions. You say this is pessimistic? Right! I call it creative pessimism. The worst that can happen is that you are pleasantly surprised when nothing bad happens. I think this is much better than being unpleasantly surprised.

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The key changes that impacted me were:

1) The nearly universal availability of online databases such as DIALOG, Lexis-Nexis, and Dow-Jones. This made finding information fairly easy and relatively affordable.

2) The Internet and the World Wide Web. After making our lives easier by putting a lot of information available for free, enabling us to create library Web pages to publicize our services, and allowing us to communicate with each other rapidly and free, the Internet turned on us. It made information too easy and our users began to say the dreaded "it's all on the Internet and it's all free." This phrase is the most hated in the library world.

3) The commoditization of information—or rather the perceived commoditization of information. Good information is not a commodity. There are differences between vetted, reliable information and much of the garbage found on the Internet.

I embraced online searching with great enthusiasm and learned all I could about searching. I did the same with the Internet and Web. The commoditization of information, along with the increasing pressure on business to decrease costs, in-

cluding that of information, finally did me in. I got so fed up with office politics and big business that I decided to go out on my own.

As professionals we must do more than react to change. Can you offer any advice on initiating change? How have you initiated change in your career?

The best way to initiate change is to be so plugged in to your organization that you can see all the places where you can add value simply by the application of existing library services. Is there a department that needs information but doesn't use the library? Go to them and offer to help. Is someone spending so much time looking for information on the Internet that he or she is falling behind on deadlines? Offer to search for him or her. Is the organization about to launch a new initiative? You'd better be involved.

I initiated several changes. I was working in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Illinois at the same time I was in library school. I found a stash of US Dept. of Agriculture publications and reference works in a professor's office. I knew I could use them in my work, but thought that it would be a good idea to open them to the whole department. So I moved them to my office, organized them, and created an online catalog. I also went to the head of the department and asked for funding for online searches for faculty and graduate students. This Agricultural Eco-

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nomics Reference Room is still in existence over 20 years later.

Another example was at my last job. The library was officially the Engineering Library and served only the Engineering Department. I knew I had the expertise and resources to serve the needs of others in the organization and was able to expand services to the entire company. I also made trips to remote offices and affiliates and explained library services to them.

How does the current climate of rapid change affect networking and mentoring relationships between information professionals? Have networking and mentoring relationships become more important? Why, or why not?

The current world of constant and rapid change has only made networking and mentoring even more important. We have absolutely no possibility of keeping up all by ourselves and must depend on others to help us. The electronic lists such as SOLOLIB-L, MEDLIB-L, LIBREF-L, etc. are wonderful ways both to keep up and to share experiences.

How can librarians continue to virtualize their collections/services with electronic journals, ebooks, and electronic service request forms, yet still maintain a valuable presence (physically or virtually) as a professional within their organization? In an environment where so many resources are aimed directly at the end user, how can we still add value to our organizations?

The best way to add value remains to serve as counselors, ad-

visors, evaluators, and organizers and categorizers of information. And not just counselors, etc. but as expert, trained, and experienced counselors, etc. There is no one else in the organization who has been trained as well as we have and there is no one else in the organization who cares as much about the quality of information used by our customers as we are. End-user searching is fine—for the easy questions, but for difficult inquiries the best method is and will continue to be a search

The current world of constant and rapid change has only made networking and mentoring even more important.

by a trained information professional.

What can the solo librarian (or any information professional) do to be visible as a knowledge management resource/expert within her/his organization?

The solo needs to make sure that he or she gets out of the library and to the users. People, no matter how satisfied, will forget you if you don't remind them constantly. Put out a weekly or monthly newsletter. Write for the organization's publications. Deliver searches and documents to people personally. Just the act of seeing you around will remind people that you are the information person. Be proactive. Find information people need and give it to them before they ask for it. (This is especially good for upper management.) Hold an open house at least once a year. Don't do it during National Library Week, either. Hold it during Engineer's Week or Hospital Week or Nurses Week or May 1 (Law Day) or some other

celebration of your users, not of your library. I'd say more, but then no one would take my course.

How have other information professionals responded to your publications and your training sessions? Do you often get requests to address certain key issues? If so, which issues are important to your readers and/or trainees? Do you hear from librarians who aren't solos?

Most have responded quite favorably. I get nice comments on OPL quite often and my workshops are well received. I have never done any advertising for the workshops, but people keep

hearing about me and requesting more. I am scheduled to do six already this year (3 for MLA, 1 for SLA, 1 for AALL, and the one in Barcelona). I was asked to talk about Technology and the Solo at the Computers in Libraries conference a few years ago.

The most often mentioned issues are time management (how do I do it all? Answer: you don't do it all—you prioritize), professional isolation, lack of respect from management (and sometimes from other librarians), low pay (don't get me started on that issue), and the threat of the Internet.

I occasionally get inquiries from non-solos and I know that not all of my subscribers are OPLs, but my primary focus is one-person librarianship. After all, that's what I have been and what I know the most about. I refuse to talk about things I don't know about. That's why I have never

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gone after the OPLs in public libraries (and there are a lot of them).

Oh yes, I teach to medical and law librarians, but much of what I teach is common to all OPLs and I have read extensively about their issues and have even formed a panel of hospital librarians to advise me.

What are your future plans? The Information Bridges International, Inc. website mentions a new book. Is this *The OPL Sourcebook*? Do you have anything else in the works?

I just finished the editing phase of *The OPL Sourcebook*, an updated version of *The SOLO Librarian's Sourcebook*. It will debut at SLA in San Antonio this June. Incidentally, San Antonio marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Solo Division, also in San Antonio. I am currently working on another book, this time for Scarecrow Press, on *Time Management, Planning and Prioritization for Special Librarians*. It should be out for SLA 2002. I am trying to organize a session on one-person librarianship for a future

IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) conference, either in Glasgow in 2002 or Berlin in 2003. I hope to make the library associations aware of the special needs of OPLs and the very large number of OPLs in the world. I hope to do another workshop in Germany and perhaps one for the new OPL group forming in Austria. I will be going to Barcelona in May to teach a workshop for OPLs working at US embassies and consulates. And I am teaching Time Management again at SLA in San Antonio, as well as exhibiting. I think that's enough to keep me busy.

Who would you name as innovative and inspirational librarians—information professionals who have inspired you?

Guy St. Clair and Martha (Marty) Rhine had the foresight to found The One-Person Library newsletter and the Solo Librarians Caucus, respectively. Linda Smith, who was my advisor in library school and is still my mentor and advisor, taught me the importance of joining and being active in pro-

fessional associations and took me to my first (ASIS) conference. Martha Blake, the late librarian at the US Army Corps of Engineers Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, took me on as a practicum student and taught me at least 80% of what I know about customer service.

Judith, thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. This was a great opportunity for me to get a glimpse of a day-in-the-life of an active and inspiring local information professional and pass your advice on to the SLA Cleveland Chapter members.

Thank **you** Anna for thinking of me and for giving me some very thought-provoking questions to answer. It was a good exercise for me.

Judith A. Siess can be reached at jsiess@ibi-opl.com.

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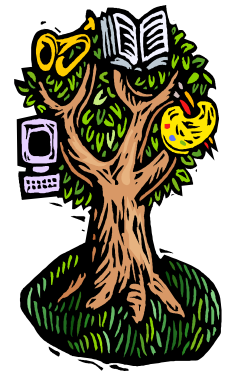
Cleveland Chapter Visits The Gathering Place

by Roni Greenberg

On Thursday evening, October 19, 2000, members of the SLA Cleveland chapter spent a delightful evening of networking and relaxing at The Gathering Place in Beachwood. The Gathering Place is a wellness community that provides education and support to those touched by cancer, either patients, family or friends. In addition to support groups, they provide programs on awareness and coping, classes on healthy cooking, spirituality and cancer, massage therapy, and Tai Chi. A special children's area provides items to help kids understand cancer. The library provides information on various types of cancer, clinical studies, dealing with stress, nutrition and relaxation. To get more information on The Gathering Place you can view their website at: <http://www.touchedbycancer.org> .

We began our first meeting of this year with an hour of networking, meeting other members and catching up on news. We were treated to a tour of The Gathering Place by librarian Eileen Coan. After dinner, Eileen led us in a group session of relaxation and imagery.

Thank you Eileen Coan and The Gathering Place for hosting a great beginning of the year for the chapter.



Cleveland Chapter November Meeting Summary

by Roni Greenberg

The Great Lakes Brewing Company, downtown Cleveland, was the setting for the Cleveland Chapter SLA Holiday 2000 Meeting. On a cold Tuesday evening in November, members of the Cleveland Chapter had the opportunity to nibble finger foods and dessert and taste various flavors of the Great Lakes award-winning beer. Guest speaker for the evening was David Cable from Ernst and Young, Atlanta, Georgia.

After some beer tasting and nibbling we listened to Dave as he spoke about "The Librarian as Trainer." Dave asked attendees what were their training experiences including problems and disasters. Most members attending the program had some problem that happened during a training session. They shared these events and Dave addressed many of these issues.

Dave advised that it is important to know your audience, know their level of expertise and what they want to get out of your session. Practice and being aware and comfortable with your material is important before leading a training class. Dave suggested that if you are training on a particular tool, don't spend lots of time explaining the tool, dive in and

show trainees how the tool works. Showing useful, unique, and important features is helpful. Include resources available for more information and help.

Some other tips Dave mentioned were the importance of controlling the room. Move about and let a participant "drive" so you can see other members of the audience. Dave stressed that it is important to have participants pay close attention. This is easily possible by having laptops closed or handouts available after presentation. Relax, don't pace or jiggle change in your pocket and attention from participants will stay focused.

Dave suggested that when setting up a training session give yourself plenty of time to check your setup and know the room. Have a backup plan in case of technology failures. Dave illustrated the usefulness of having overheads or PowerPoint slides of your presentation in case of technology failure.

Audience participation is important and Dave gained valuable points from the SLA members in attendance. Dave was well received by SLA members at the program and possessed energy that many trainers need. This energy was transferred to those SLA members present.

2000 Chapter Business Meeting Summary

The annual business meeting, sponsored by Computer Select Web, was held on June 7, 2000, in Beachwood. Bridget Protus, current past-president, called the meeting to order and officially transferred the chapter gavel to our new President, Shaw Mumford of Ernst and Young.

Chapter officers for the 2000–01 season were announced after a brief summary of the election results. Unfortunately, only 12% of the member population participated in the election. Ballot issues were discussed and a committee will be formed to address possible changes to the ballot/voting process in the future. New officers are:

Shaw Mumford, **Chapter President**
Laura Ponikvar, **Chapter President-Elect**
Peter Pogacar, **Corresponding Secretary**
Stacey Leach, **Recording Secretary**
Michele Crissinger, **Treasurer**
Bridget McCrate Protus, **Past President**

Five members present at the meeting said they would be attending the SLA 2000 national conference in Philadelphia: Laura Ponikvar, Shaw Mumford, Anna Hood, John Piety and Jean Piety. Other business addressed included possible changes in the scheduling and/or frequency of future chapter meetings.

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Student Scholarships are Available for Betty Burrows

A limited number of student scholarships are available for the 2001 Betty Burrows Workshop/Seminar. Please contact Laura Ponikvar at (216) 421-7440 or lponikvar@gate.cia.edu. For more information about the Betty Burrows Workshop/Seminar, please see the article on the next page.

Join the Chapter List

Are you subscribed to the Cleveland Chapter's electronic discussion list? If not, you are missing important announcements and discussions. Follow the directions below to subscribe.

To subscribe to the list, users should send email to **listserv81@listserv.sla.org** with the following in the body of the message:

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To post messages to the list, send your message to **sla-ccle@listserv.sla.org**.

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Betty Burrows 2001 Workshop/Seminar

by Cathy Parker

The 26th Annual Betty Burrows Memorial Seminar is set for April 27, 2001. Has anything in your life or job changed recently? Then this workshop will help you!!

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This seminar is an opportunity for you to participate in a developmental experience that will pay dividends to both you and those that you influence. Learn insights into overcoming fear of failure and

change, increasing acceptance of new ideas and methods, and creating a climate for achievement. This workshop prepares you to take risks, make better decisions and solve problems. Our invited luncheon speaker is Dr. Richard Rubin, Interim Director & Professor, School of Library & Information Science, Kent State University. We will have a variety of exhibitors with new product information, demonstrations, and news for you. But just as important, you will have an opportunity to network with your colleagues.

The all day workshop will be held at Hilton Garden Inn Cleveland/Twinsburg 8971 Wilcox Dr. (I-480 @SR82), Twinsburg, Ohio 44087 on Friday, April 27, 2001.

Your workshop flyer will have more information, or check the Chapter website (www.sla.org/chapter/ccle) for registration details. If you need

additional information, please contact Cathy Parker, capark@aestpe.com or (330) 849-5285.

Vendors planning to exhibit at the time of publication include: Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), Dialog Corporation, Factiva, FIS Online (Mergent), Intelligence Data/Thomson Financial, and The Research Investment.



Continuing Education Through Distance Learning—What Do We Lose by Going Virtual?

by Anna Hood

Recently, I took a distance learning course that focused on providing access to electronic resources. I found some interesting parallels between the attempt to complete a virtual distance learning course and the challenge of providing effective virtual library services. The two are not as disparate as you may think. Both realms of service beg the question: Are we missing an essential way to connect to our customers by going virtual?

During my enrollment, class discussion and lectures were held via the Web. I submitted homework assignments through email. Sounds simple enough. How different is this scenario from our collective day-to-day working experience? Many times requests for information come to us through email. We follow up with a phone call (conducting the traditional reference

interview in a non-traditional way). We submit search results and research summaries through email.

What went right in my distance learning experience? The class was an excellent networking opportunity. I met people from a variety of libraries (public, academic, and special; libraries in Ohio and across the country). With this mix of classmates, I learned different approaches to cataloging electronic/virtual resources.

What went wrong? There were a myriad of technological problems. My dial-up connection from home was unstable when connecting to the class server. During many of the virtual classroom discussions I would be kicked off the server and be unable to re-establish a connection. My access to library services (remote databases available to students through remote authentication) was never established. Per-

haps most troubling of all was the instructor's level of involvement and instructor's perspective and approach to learning in an electronic environment. This was where some of the strongest parallels between my class experience and the librarian's challenge of providing effective virtual library services were made.

The instructor made assumptions about the types of libraries in which students were involved. The course focused exclusively on academic and public library cataloging environments. There was a burden on class participants as the instructor was not present for over half of the classroom discussions. Without a facilitator class participants struggled to communicate. The instructor's lectures were posted less than two hours before scheduled virtual discussions so most

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Distance Learning continued

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students didn't have time to listen to the lecture before attending the virtual class session. On the whole there was an alarming lack of feedback between the instructor and the students. I never had the sense that the class could be tailored or altered to best suit the students involved.

How does all this relate to virtual library services? If I place myself in the role of student (customer) rather than the role of instructor

(librarian) I can apply my critiques of the distance learning class to the traditional librarian/customer relationship model. Maybe our customers are frustrated with the resources to which we provide desktop access. Are they struggling to use these tools despite our efforts to train them? Are we making efforts to train them, or do we roll out new tools and assume they are intuitively designed? We've heard the same

questions over and over; the questions are familiar to us and we assume those in trouble will ask for help. If the customer does not realize what she is missing, it is almost impossible for her to articulate a question about what's gone wrong.



Are we rigid or flexible in our day-to-day jobs? Do our customers know the virtual resources geared toward the end-user are even available from/through the library?

Do we ask for feedback on our search strategies and/or research summaries so we

can customize our approach to research based on the individual needs of our customers? Are we distant experts placing a burden on our customers? Do we appear to be too busy/burdened to take time out for discussions with our customers? Probably not, but being on the other end of a distance learning class really brought these issues with virtual service to my attention.

All About SCIP

According to the SCIP website, "the **Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP)** is dedicated to helping professionals develop expertise in creating, collecting, and analyzing information; disseminating competitive intelligence; and engaging decision-makers in a productive dialogue that creates organizational competitive advantage." Read more about this organization at www.scip.org.

There is a local chapter of SCIP that holds frequent meetings that may be of interest to you. For more information on the Northeast Ohio (Cleveland/Akron) Chapter of SCIP please contact Alan Dutka at (216) 518-2805 or dutka@nsrc.com. The next scheduled meeting will be held on April 18, 2001.

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Special Libraries Association

Events of Note

Chapter Events

- **April 27, 2001**

Betty Burrows Workshop/Seminar

Increasing Human Effectiveness: Managing the Rapids of Change

Twinsburg, OH

- **May 2001**

Chapter Business Meeting

Officers for the 2001-02 season will be announced

SLA Events

- **April 18-22, 2001**

Knowledge Champions Institute

Arlington, VA

- **June 9-14, 2001**

92nd SLA Annual Conference

San Antonio, TX

Other Events of Interest

- **April 18, 2001**

Northeast Ohio (Cleveland/Akron) SCIP Chapter Meeting

The Competitiveness Assessment Model

- **April 19-22, 2001**

Annual Association of Independent Information Professionals
Conference

New Orleans, LA

- **April 30-May 2, 2001**

Intranets 2001

Santa Clara, CA

- **May 15-17, 2001**

National Online 2001

New York, NY

