

President's CornerBy Susan Fifer Canby, sfiferca@ngs.org

Applause and thanks go Sheryl Rosenthal, Barbara Folensbee-Moore, and Jill Konieczko, the successful planners of the October New Member reception held at the City Museum. We enjoyed our tour and introduction to this museum and the opportunity to meet the new members among us.

I remember the first DCSLA New Member Reception I attended in 1974 with my friend and mentor Gene Kubal, the senior reference librarian extraordinaire at the Pentagon Library. I had met her in the early 70s while working in the Pentagon. Gene was the person everyone went to for help, the kind of librarian who stood out because she was incredibly competent and service-oriented. With her encouragement, I finished an MLS degree at the University of Maryland. As I neared graduation, she advised me of the importance of SLA and had me join her often.

Gene's belief in networking and continuous learning influences my own leadership at National Geographic. For this column I reflected on the level of engagement my staff of 26 has with learning, looking at what they did and what they shared with the rest of us just this past month:

- Two archivists attended an AIIM-sponsored evening event to learn the latest information on Content Management.
- A manager attended and helped run the Oral History Conference held in DC this month.
- A records specialist and manager attended the excellent DC/SLA program organized by Georgeann Higgins on Copyright and Acquiring Permissions.
- A senior librarian scoped out the use of the Nexis portal at the National Academy of Science DC/SLA program planned by Sheryl Rosenthal and Victoria Harriston.
- An indexer completed a CGI Scripts class at USDA Graduate School.
- A cataloger attended the CAPCON demo of the new Connexion client software released recently.
- A cataloger and library analyst attended the kickoff meeting for our new PeopleSoft Time & Labor system.
- Two managers, a records specialist and library associate, took a time management course.
- Seven LIS staff (three librarians, two analysts, and two specialists) earned their National Geographic Learning Systems certificate this month.
- A manager participated in a program sponsored by MacArthur Foundation to address access for documentary filmmakers.
- One records analyst attended classes, working towards his MIS degree at the University of Maryland.

Some of these courses were university-sponsored, some were sponsored internally, and some were professional meetings after work. Altogether 20 individuals participated in a learning session. The learning included five managers, five librarians, three specialists, five analysts and two associates. Four staff took more than one session. We spanned ages from 25 to 56. Five were men, 15 were women.

I am proud of my staff's commitment to continuous learning. If you're thinking, "I don't have time for this." Make time.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Monday, November 17th is the deadline for materials which can be included in the **December 2003** issue. The issue is distributed approximately three weeks after the deadline. The preferred submission format is a Word document sent via email.

Materials for *Chapter Notes* should be sent to the Editor:

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Learning is not a luxury: it must be built into our jobs just as planning is. Our profession requires this level of commitment to make us competitive and to maintain the level of competence that Gene Kubal represented for me.

Congratulations to my staff and to all of you who incorporate learning into your jobs and take advantage of opportunities that DC/SLA offers each month. Best to you all – I look forward to celebrating the holidays with you at the Arts Club of Washington on December 8th.

Member News

Alphonse Vinh delivered the keynote address at the annual conference of the Indiana Library Federation District 4. Alphonse spoke to this enthusiastic and very friendly group of librarians in Indianapolis on October 10, 2003.

Anna Hall has been elected president of the student chapter of SLA at Catholic University's School of Library and Information Science.

It was a cloudy day but the spirits were high in the Library of Congress tent on the National Mall. This was the third annual National Book Festival and the **Military Librarians Division (MLD)** of the Special Libraries Association came armed with season's greetings postcards for visitors to the festival to sign and personalize.

A special postcard designed with a winter scene of the Capitol, as painted by Margaret Huddy, on the front of the card while the reverse side gave visitors a chance to write a greeting or sign their name and hometown. Ms. Huddy, a local Alexandria, VA artist, allowed MLD to use her artwork without a fee. Her husband is a retired Marine who fought in Vietnam and she wanted to help our project.

The postcards will be included in the paperback book kits sent to service members deployed worldwide. The cards were signed by the Librarian of Congress, authors who spoke at the festival and thousands of visitors to the tent. People sent greetings, prayers, anecdotes, and humor to let the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen know that they are not forgotten. This

was not only a successful project but worthwhile as well.

The **Joint Networking Happy Hour** at the Army & Navy Club had the largest attendance in our chapter history. There were 46 librarians and library science students from Beta Phi Mu, DC/SLA and the Maryland/CUA student chapters gathered together for some really fine networking, food and drinks. We played pool, laughed, ate and shared ideas and stories. We enjoyed ourselves so much that many of us were still enjoying each other's company an hour after the end of the Club happy hour. Special thanks to the volunteers who helped organize this extremely successful event!

Sue O'Neill Johnson was named "SIG Member of the Year" at the ASIST Meeting in Los Angeles in late October for her work as Chair of the International Information Issues SIG (SIG III) for 2002-2003. Sue was DC/SLA President 2001-2002. SIG III also won "Best SIG Publication" for its web site and newsletter, <http://asis.org/SIG/SIGIII>.

Welcome New Members!

Submitted by Cynthia Kahn,
ckahn@aamc.org

Please welcome the following new members to the DC/SLA Chapter:


- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Rosalyn Alleman | Ida Eustis |
| Whitney Donaghy | Sarah Nagel |
| Thomas Raszewski | Tina Plottel |
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Head's Up in the Cataloging World!

Submitted by Suzanne C. Pilsk,
pilsk@si.edu

Recently, I was kicked out of my cubicle while the computer guy installed a DVD player. Added to my cataloging repertoire is now DVDs. OLAC (Online Audiovisual Catalogers) has posted a wonderful resource to get me started in learning how to do these:

<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/cts/olac/capc/dvd/dvdprimer0.html>.

I now need to learn a few new tricks and notes and fields and hoops to jump through as I catalog these. Will I do it right? Will I remember all the special notes and facts to quote, record the right corporate bodies in the right fields, and provide proper access? Perform the tricks of the circus dog and not skip an obstacle thrown in my way by these potential multimedia products? How will this affect my confidence in cataloging original records? And really, that is

what it is all about. Confidence.

Cataloging a title -- adding it to a database -- is sharing with the world. And it isn't necessarily a world where people do "gray" a lot. This is an audience of, well, of catalogers! Need I say more? There is a common phrase that is bantered about: "Cataloger's judgment." Yet, whenever I hear (or read on an E-mail list group) someone discussing their "judgment call," others chime in that "Nooooo, that isn't the *Right Way*." Catalogers feel there is a right answer. Witnessing catalogers searching and editing a major database, such as OCLC, I hear, "Why in the world did they code this THIS way!?" "What were they thinking when they thought they could construct THAT heading?!" "These people must not know what a class number MEANS!" "Whenever I see an art record from Ohio, I *immediately* lock it for replacement!" Yadda yadda yadda.

I put my little old records out there. They look so good to me. I work hard and put them together as best I can. And finally, I have to let them go free and hit that "produce" button. I must be confident that my work is complete and correct. Off my records go, being added to the world. Who is going to find them and yell to a coworker "What was she thinking?!" My struggled-over, agonized-over, judgment-called records?

I liked thinking I lived in a vacuum. But a new site was brought to my attention, bringing home the fact that the world is watching me work. If you want to take a peek at other people's cataloging (and snicker behind their backs) check out OCLC's "Watch WorldCat Grow" site at <http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/grow.htm>.

Heads Up!
Meanwhile, I need to readjust my thinking, yet again. OCLC has announced

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that they are now going to have "parallel" records:

<http://www.oclc.org/support/documentation/worldcat/tb/250/default.htm>

What does this mean? This means you can find more than one record in the WorldCat database for the same title. Simply put, your catalog record will be in the language of your library, and if you do not find a record in your language, you can create a new one. If you are an English speaking library, it was standard practice to catalog a book in English or change a foreign language record into English, no matter in what language the book was written. The record describing the title was in English.

Now if you find a record in another language, you do not replace it but instead make a new record. If you are a French-speaking library and find an English record, you add a new record for the SAME title in French. If you are in German, the SAME title will be cataloged

on a new record in German. The same work cataloged by a Russian library will put in another record for the SAME item in Russian. You're a Swahili library? Go for it! Theoretically, for one book, there can be as many records as needed to cover the languages of all the libraries, of the WORLD. At last count, there was an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 languages in the world – YOU DO THE MATH! What happens in Canada? Poor things! And what happens between American English and English English?! Color vs. colour; catalog vs. catalogue?!

This is going to be hard for me. I will need to actually look and think and not just cling to the first thing that I see as a match. I use to just look for a basic, oh - say ISBN number match, and if the library that described the item was writing all the notes (summary notes, access methods, etc.) in some other language, I would just lock, edit into English, and replace. Not anymore. Seems like more original records will need to be done. Sigh, there is that confidence thing again! Hmmm, yes! You can copy a

record and then edit it and submit it. So there are ways to cheat, er, I mean, feel confident that you are submitting a quality original record. But there is going to be more than one "hit" when you search a title that might be cataloged by various libraries around the world. So, heads up!

Correction

A footnote from the President's Corner column in the October *Chapter Notes* was inadvertently omitted. The footnote reads:

¹ Baber, Anne and Lynne Waymon. *Make Your Contacts Count* AMACOM. American Management Association, 2002.

The footnote applies to the sentence:

When you come to your next meeting, think about some tips that I've found helpful¹:

Research Tip of the Month: Think Different

Submitted by Mary Ellen Bates,
mbates@batesinfo.com

This year, I've been on the road for more days than I care to count. And one of the most important skills I've developed is to troubleshoot and work around problems. Does the airport security line snake down the hall and into baggage claim? I'll see if there's another security checkpoint at a lesser-used terminal and beyond the sight of the people standing in line.

Can't get my laptop connected to my ISP from the airport lounge phone? OK, I'll try a different cable, a different access number, and a different telephone. Then I'll try putting a 1 or a 9 before the access number. And if worst comes to worst, I'll plug in my wifi card and start wandering through the airport, looking for a hotspot.

Can't find anything I can eat on a menu

(as a long-time vegetarian, this is a familiar problem)? Build a meal out of side dishes and appetizers -- often the most interesting parts of the menu.

The ability to roll with the punches applies to research as well. What do you do when your search blows up? Run through your mental checklist of problem-solving tricks:

- Am I thinking too restrictively? Is my relevance filter set too high? Will something close be good enough?
- Am I looking in all the wrong places? Am I using Google when what I need isn't likely to be indexed by a search engine?
- Am I forgetting something obvious? If I am looking for information on trade schools, did I remember to look for alternate terms such as "universities" and "colleges"?

There are a number of types of research

projects that are prone to blow up. Let's look at how each of these problem projects can be tackled.

- The "no one knows" questions, such as "how many flags were sold in the six months after Sept. 11, 2001?"

The best approach is to look peripherally. While it's doubtful that anyone has an exact count of the number of flags purchased, there are probably other indicators that would help calculate the increased sense of patriotism. Information on an increase in military enlistments could be useful, as could something as simple as the number of patriotic-themed greeting cards sold. What's important is to figure out the question behind the question -- what would the count of flags sold indicate? What else could help answer the underlying question?

- The "no sure answer" question, such

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as "will Congress deregulate my industry?"

Since it's not often possible to predict the future, particularly when politicians are involved, this kind of question can best be answered by going to people who have a good sense of the legislative climate. Use the web to identify lobbying organizations, industry analysts, legislative affairs staff in affected trade associations, and staffers on the Congressional committees most likely to be involved in writing the legislation. Then pick up the phone, put on your most charming voice, and start asking questions. This type of information is much more likely to reside in people's heads than on the web or in published articles.

- The "no chance of an answer" question, such as "how often was our competitor's network hacked last year?"

Well, calling your competitor's IT department and asking them is probably not the most fruitful approach. A better tactic would be to "think parallel", to paraphrase Apple Computer's ads. Call other companies in your industry and ask their IT department how often they think their competitors' networks have been hacked. Check out the web sites of network security associations and look for published statistics on network break-

ins, sorted by industry. And if you really want to be adventuresome, come over to the Dark Side and start talking to hackers groups. A good place to start would be 2600.com, a web site (and accompanying publication) for telecom hackers. In fact, they even list local hackers' meetings at 2600.com/meetings. Yes, you may have to show up at "the carpeted payphone area, near the restrooms, north of the food court", but whoever else is loitering near the payphones may know some useful hacker gossip.

- The "huh?" question, such as "I need examples of effective HR departments."

A question like this indicates the need for some further definition and clarification. The issues that come to mind include:

Defining "effective HR". Is it measured by reduced turnover of staff? by awards given to the HR department or the organization as "a great place to work"? by number of training programs initiated?

Defining "HR departments". Is this departments within your own organization? your industry? other organizations in your local area? other organizations your size anywhere in the country?

Defining the answer. Is this a request for case studies? HR journal articles? sta-

tics on employee retention and attraction?

- The "bum cite" question, such as "I remember seeing an article on doctors' use of email in a newspaper a couple of weeks ago; can you get it for me?"

As any public librarian knows, the patron asking this question is probably wrong about the time frame and the source, and may even be wrong about the subject matter. Rather than going through the web sites of all the possible newspaper sites for the last few weeks, the best approach would be to ask yourself, "if I can't find exactly what I'm looking for, what would be second best?" This actually gets to the heart of the question, by articulating what is behind the request for a particular article. Probably, what you really want is information on whether or not doctors are using email to communicate with patients. By expanding your search beyond what you think you remember to anything else that would answer the question, you greatly increase the likelihood of solving your information need, if not locating the specific article you have in mind. (And, as a former librarian, trust me... you probably read it in a magazine, not a newspaper, and it was six months ago, not last week.)

Mentoring Minutes

Submitted by the SYP Mentoring Committee Co-Chairs, Cassandra Harper, Cassharper@aol.com, and Mykie Howard, mhowa3@gwu.edu

Mentoring is a highly important educational facet for anyone learning the ways of a new profession. Library school classes or actually working in a library may not be enough to survive in the profession. Mentors help ease students into the ways of the profession. Mentors can help bring out the joy and excitement of why we're doing what we're doing in the first place! It is an experience that should be taken advantage of by both students and professionals.

Mentoring relationships exist for many reasons, not just for student to professional relationships. For instance, a "seasoned" professional may mentor a "newbie" professional, or even vice-versa. Experienced SLA volunteers may mentor new SLA volunteers. Mentoring relationships may also take on many different forms. They can be official and unofficial. With all of today's convenient technologies, you do not have to live in the same town as your mentor/mentee. The main idea with mentoring relationships is that we all have something to learn from each other, no matter what experience levels may be. Give it a shot! You might be surprised by what you'll

get out of it!

If you would like further explanation on mentoring, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Mentoring Co-Chairs, Mykie Howard (mhowa3@gwu.edu) and Cassandra Harper (Cassharper@aol.com). If you need more convincing, please visit <http://www.kylibasn.org/mapsuccess.htm> to read Mykie Howard's own mentoring success story. Please see the Students and Young Professional Committee web page or watch your e-mail for the mentor/mentee application forms. We look forward to hearing from you!

