

The LaSoMi Newsletter

Louisiana/Southern Mississippi Chapter

President's Message

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I know that you will understand the delay in distributing the fall newsletter. Many facets of our lives in the Louisiana and Southern Mississippi area have changed dramatically during the last two weeks. The devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina is almost overwhelming, but we can and will work together towards recovery and a return to normalcy. As I stated in my recent email message, I would really appreciate hearing from you, both to know that you are safe and so that you can provide us with new contact information if changes are necessary.

Many forms of help have been offered by members of the SLA community. Offers of help can be found at the SLA's special weblog: <http://slablogger.typepad.com/ipandanet>. Please feel free to share what you can there and to take advantage of any help that will benefit your individual situation. As previously mentioned, original posts must be sent to ipanda@sla.org, and you can respond or add to existing posts very easily by clicking on the "Comment" link at the end of each post.

While health and safety issues must continue to be our primary concerns, as librarians we are also worried about the collections that have been lost, scattered, damaged or otherwise endangered. Many offers of assistance, support and supplies have been received, and we sincerely hope that you will make your needs known so that the available volunteers can be channeled to secure and preserve these collections to the greatest possible degree. We at LSU have heard from many former and current students who are willing to come in and help in any way possible, so let us know what we can do to support your efforts.

Please also know that the national and international SLA community joins its many individual thoughts and prayers for your safety, security and recovery. The national SLA has begun an effort to collect stories from the region affected by Hurricane Katrina. Forrest Glenn Spencer is preparing a story on Hurricane

President's Message (continued from page 1)

Katrina for the October issue of SLA's monthly magazine *Information Outlook*. The deadline is very short, Monday, September 15, 2005. If you are comfortable sharing stories about your experiences with Katrina, please e-mail him as soon as possible at forrestspencer@hotmail.com and please send a copy of your message to me at lzach@lsu.edu. Some of the questions which interest him are: What were you doing when the hurricane struck? How are you coping now? Have you been in touch with other SLA members down in the Gulf states and how are they doing? What are your impressions of the relief effort? Do you think the critics are correct in their evaluations about the relief efforts? Any short impressions would be helpful, and long essays are not necessary. Forrest and the SLA feel that your story and experience with Katrina are too important not to share with other SLA members. I am also preparing a presentation on the response of the LIS community to the disaster for an upcoming conference in Charlotte, NC at the end of October. I feel that the lessons we are learning about the value of our electronically-mediated social networks, both as a means of communicating with each other in times of catastrophe and as a forum for collecting and distributing offers of support will be valuable to our colleagues elsewhere in the country as they think about their own disaster preparedness scenarios.

I know that all of us in the Louisiana and Southern Mississippi chapter have been deeply affected by Hurricane Katrina, and I want to thank you for taking the time to communicate with me and with each other. However, as professional community we have the strength to move forward and rebuild collections and infrastructure that will serve people not only in the affected areas but around the nation.

Lisl Zach
LaSoMi President

A Sad Note

Retired, former SLA member Suzy Hughes Fletcher and her husband Kenneth Francis were killed in a car accident in Florida near their home in April. A memorial service was held in the House Chamber of the Louisiana State Capitol on May 5 with former speaker Bubba Henry presiding. Suzy created the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library for the House of Representatives and served as its director until her retirement in 2004. She was an active member of our SLA chapter in the 1970s and '80s. Many Louisiana special librarians benefited from her generous networking and sharing of her expertise, boundless enthusiasm and professional drive. An LSU SLIS scholarship has been established to honor Suzy. The Baton Rouge Advocate reported that "A resolution approved by the Louisiana House on her retirement noted that Hughes was known as 'one of the leading legislative library directors in the nation.'"

LaSoMi Chapter Visits Law Library of Louisiana

Saturday, April 30, 2005

Eighteen members and guests of the LaSoMi Chapter of SLA met at the Law Library of Louisiana at 10:30 a.m. in New Orleans. These hardy souls braved torrential rain to get there, continuing the LaSoMi Chapter tradition of nasty, wet weather for our New Orleans gatherings. Refreshments were generously provided by EOS International software company. Our hosts, Director Carol Billings and Collection Development and Documents Librarian Georgia Chadwick described the library, the move to the 'new' building and the history of the building. Following this, they guided us on a tour through the library and special places in the building. Here are some highlights from their presentation.

The building opened in 1910; the Supreme Court moved there in 1958. It later moved out and the building sat empty until this major renovation back to its original beauty. A collection of justices' portraits was taken out of storage to be placed in the foyer and hallways of this 'new' building, for which the librarians created a walking tour of the portraits. Several more security gates were needed than the old building had, @ \$10,000 each, because of the many accesses to the library by elevators and stairs in the new building. The library staff will be involved in creating a legal history museum planned for the basement.

The state's law library serves everyone from the chief justice to the general public. Law librarians have a strong commitment to make government information freely available to the public. Today's concerns include information restrictions for security reasons. Law librarians never give legal advice. Both of the Supreme Court reference librarians have library and law degrees.

The Law Library of Louisiana aka Supreme Court Library (SCL) began as the State Library of Louisiana in 1855 or perhaps a little earlier. The oldest materials were probably all donated by lawyers and others. During the 19th century, states donated their own statutes and court decisions to other states. Because of this, SCL has all the legislative acts of every state. The earliest item in the rare books room is in Spanish, dated 1587. The 2005 budget is \$1.5 million. Much of the collection expenditures fund continuing subscriptions. There are many more federal court decisions than in years past. The collection includes most of the U.S. Serials Set in paper; the electronic version was recently purchased for \$8,000. The SCL collection contains: the federal wing (U.S. Code, U.S. supreme Court decisions, Code of Federal Regulations and the classified American law collection; Louisiana Law; secondary materials; laws of all other states; and small reference and reserve collections.

There are six librarians and three library associates on the staff. Three student workers and two law students do the filing. The library offers prizes to law clerks who do their own judges' looseleaf service filing.

The library's clientele include the Supreme Court justices and their staffs (three law clerks and secretaries), the State Judicial Administrative Office, the 4th Circuit court of Appeals (12 judges) that now share the building, members of the Louisiana Bar, the general public researching legal situations in their lives, and prisoners who need information and copies of materials for their cases. The Supreme Court justices have small office collections and Lexis/Nexis access, which the SCL acquires for them.

The library staff spent several years planning the move to the new building. The library space in the new building is less than they had before so the staff spent one year doing an intensive assessment of the collection to



Meeting and Tour of April 30, 2005 (continued)

reduce the shelf space requirements. The difficult decisions on what to withdraw included weighing what to keep in paper versus the cost of electronic access and withdrawing most paper duplicates. Law libraries collections must be absolutely current yet need to retain all historical legislation which may be cited. All editions of some items must be kept because any edition could be cited in court cases. The staff solicited opinions from their library users of whether to use in paper or electronic format for certain titles and which items could be withdrawn or discontinued. SCL belongs to a law library consortium database which was a useful reference.

The movers, Quality Group, did a great job although they were office movers rather than specialists in moving books and libraries. The move took less than one week. The staff used an elaborate color coding system where each shelf was marked top and bottom and colored bands were put around materials. The staff was on site during all the hours of the move.

Because the new building has such a rich history, the library staff has compiled information which they share when they give tours of the facility and they used to produce a beautiful booklet, [*The Louisiana Supreme Court : an historical guide, 2004*](#). The staff also publishes an interesting newsletter, [*De novo : the newsletter of the Law Library of Louisiana*](#), which has an article describing the planning and move to the building, <http://lasc.org/lawlib&legalres/DENOVO.pdf>.

The chapter business meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m. There was no Treasurer's Report, since the treasurer was unable to attend, but it will be available on-line.

President Kelly Blessinger recapped the year, citing the following activities:

- Virtual Seminar at Hill Memorial Library in partnership with LSU
- Times Picayune Library Tour – an interesting place
- Dr. Lisl Zach and Kelly Blessinger attended the SLA leadership summit in Tampa, Florida
- Annual Upcoming SLA Meeting will be held in Toronto. Bill Armstrong, Kelly and Lisl are expected to attend.
- The chapter survey through which much helpful information was obtained

The **officers for 2005-06** are as follows:

President:	Lisl Zach
Vice President:	Bill Strickland
Past President/Membership Chair:	Kelly Blessinger
Secretary:	Ferol Foos
Treasurer:	Steven Pomes
Newsletter Editor:	Lisa Lewis
Web Master:	Cindy Bencaz
Archivist:	Amy Baptist
Networking Chair:	William Armstrong
New Member Recognition Chair	David Duggar

Awards were presented to various members for service during the past year. President Kelly Blessinger reported that she is currently working on advertising guidelines for the chapter bulletin. Lisl Zach is scheduled to take over as president in July.

AN INTERESTING NOTE: A really nice article appeared in a recent issue of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* about the SLA conference. Dated June 9, 2005, it is entitled "Librarians as Tech-Savvy Sleuths" and can be accessed on the web at their site: www.theglobeandmail.com.

MAHDNESS or *madness* ? Division Chair is an Opportunity to Lead !

by Gerald Patout

Museum, Arts and Humanities Division members traditionally have their informal social gathering at conference on Monday evening and refer to the event as “Monday Mahdness.” But newly-elected division chair Gerald Patout sees this event as not only an energized and refreshing social gathering for professional networking, but also an opportunity to lead and direct this 600 plus members SLA unit into new and perhaps uncharted territory.

Established in 1929 as the Museum Group of SLA, division status was granted to this group in 1971. Museum, Arts and Humanities Division generally appeals to and attracts librarians and information specialists from all types of museums, including art, science and history museums, historical societies and other organizations having special collections focused on arts, architecture and the humanities. An additional forum provided for MAHD membership is in the area of publishing and the various aspects of the publishing process.

As the MAHD chair contemplates his new term of office to run 18 months to meet new changes in SLA calendar and budget year, the usual duties spring to mind – regularly publishing the division’s newsletter in an electronic and interesting fashion; encouraging membership to participate at various levels and times; and planning for and conducting top-notch professional programs at the 2006 SLA conference in Baltimore. Additionally, the division offers two award scholarships, the Neff Scholarship for a student in library school to attend the annual conference as well as the International Travel Grant which enables a foreign professional librarian from a developing country to attend the SLA annual conference. The chair must ensure these awards are well publicized and that the awards truly recognizing noteworthy and outstanding library professionals. Additional information on both of the MAHD awards can be found at the division web site at <http://www.sla.org/division/dmah/award.htm>.

To whet one’s appetite for the 2006 conference and MAHD tentative plans being formulated by the chair, a number of excellent programs are already on the drawing board: a half day continuing education course on digitizing; a lecture by Miles Harvey, author of the intriguing work on cartographic crime, *Island of the Lost Maps* at the magnificent Peabody Institute where Harvey’s investigative tome actually starts out ! ; a program in collaboration with the Education Division entitled, Web Aesthetics; another program on successful digital programs as well as a program on grant funding and sources for library digital initiatives. Finally, a couple of other tentative programs remain in the development stage: one is a visit and presentation from the museum director at one of Baltimore’s most talked about museums, The American Visionary Museum. Another possible program being discussed is a presentation by the Northern Virginia business, the History Factory, and how this very innovative “cultural heritage” assets management enterprise plays a role in the growing archival, library and museum information management paradigm. For a sneak preview of what they do, take a look at <http://www.historyfactory.com>.

MAHDNESS or *madness*? (continued from previous page)

In previous years “Monday Mahdness” was assigned to the division’s Monday night social events, but in the coming year, Chair Gerald Patout hopes he can translate a new feel and commitment for one of SLA’s most interesting divisions into an extended period of energized service and professional development for the membership.

New Member Biographies

Susan S. Cunningham, MLIS, RHIA, has a Bachelor’s Degree in Medical Record Science from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She recently earned the Master’s Degree in Library and Information Science from LSU. She works full-time as a Medical Review Analyst in the Quality/Utilization Management Department of Woman’s Hospital in Baton Rouge. She works with physicians, administrators and allied health professionals on medical-staff committees and special projects. She has worked at three different hospitals in her professional career and would like to work in some type of special library setting or specialized information-related job.

Jennifer Greer is the Retention Analyst under contract to Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. In this position, Ms. Greer has helped shape and reorganize the direction of the retention aspect function of Records Management at LDEQ. Additionally, she has formulated a plan of action by which it will be possible to apply retention values to all records in the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). She is currently responsible for the management and operation of the Inactive Records Center, which serves as the agency archive. During her service to LDEQ, she also has managed the Public Records staff in filling requests, responding to subpoenas and handling special data requests. Ms. Greer holds a bachelor's degree in art history and religious studies, and is currently finishing a master's degree in Library and Information Science from LSU. She has been an active member of ARMA and SAA since 2002 and is currently a member of ARMA's ISO 15489 Task Force and Immediate Past President of the Baton Rouge-Lafayette ARMA Chapter.

Kathrin Dodds is an Architecture branch librarian for Mississippi State University. Her position is unique in that it is located in Jackson, two hours from the main campus. The Jackson Branch serves both the faculty and students of the College of Architecture's Fifth Year program as well as Architecture professionals throughout the state of Mississippi. This unique combination of academic and special libraries is the only one of its kind. Prior to working in academia, Kathrin worked as a competitive intelligence specialist in the advertising industry. She can be reached at: kdodds@library.msstate.edu.

thanks to Ferol Foos and Kelly Blessinger for membership information

Welcome New Members

Our membership chairman, Kelly Blessinger, reports that we have several new members in the LaSoMi chapter this quarter. For more information, see the bios section on page 6.

Kathrin A. Dodds, College of Architecture, Mississippi State, Jackson, MS

Susan Cunningham, recent SLIS graduate, Baton Rouge

Jennifer Greer, Baton Rouge

And a special “welcome back” to Jerome Cummings, McNeese State University Library.

Louisiana Gumbo Project

by Fero! Foos

The State Library of Louisiana has begun to digitize and provide electronic access to important Louisiana historical WPA material not previously available online. Louisiana WPA materials were placed in the custody of the State Library when the national WPA was terminated in June of 1943.



State Library of Louisiana (<http://www.state.lib.la.us>)

The collection has since remained, more or less in storage, and in large degree inaccessible. The materials include both text and photographs. The staff of the Federal Writers Project transcribed newspapers, conducted oral interviews and compiled histories. The text material includes traditional songs, beliefs, customs, sayings, stories, recipes, legends, jokes, and accounts of local history. WPA photographers documented a considerable amount of the agency's varied activities throughout the state, such as urban and suburban lifestyles and construction projects.

The *Louisiana Gumbo Project* was made possible by a \$470,000 National Leadership Grant for Libraries, awarded to the State Library along with the State Museum and the Historic New Orleans Collection. As part of the *Louisiana Gumbo Project*, this WPA collection will eventually include 10,000 photographs and 2,000 documents. Collection is growing every day. Check it out at http://www.state.lib.la.us/la_dyn_tmpl.cfm?doc_id=525

SLA CONFERENCE STATISTICS

By Kelly Blessinger

Total attendance for the SLA 2005 annual conference in Toronto was as follows:

Type of Registration	Total
Member registration	2,246
Non-Member	405
Exhibit Only	715
Press	19
Other (VIP's speakers, students, retirees etc.)	314
Exhibitors	1,584
Total Registration	5,283

Total Conference Attendance figures since 1985:

Year	City	Total
1985	Winnipeg	2674
1986	Boston	5260
1987	Anaheim	4200
1988	Denver	4635
1989	New York	6435
1990	Pittsburgh	4805
1991	San Antonio	5029
1992	San Francisco	5137
1993	Cincinnati	5166
1994	Atlanta	5053
1995	Montreal	6,505
1996	Boston	7,756
1997	Seattle	6,935
1998	Indianapolis	5,547
1999	Minneapolis	6,113
2000	Philadelphia	7,391
2001	San Antonio	5,217
2002	Los Angeles	4,652
2003	New York	6,798
2004	Nashville	3,852
2005	Toronto	5,283

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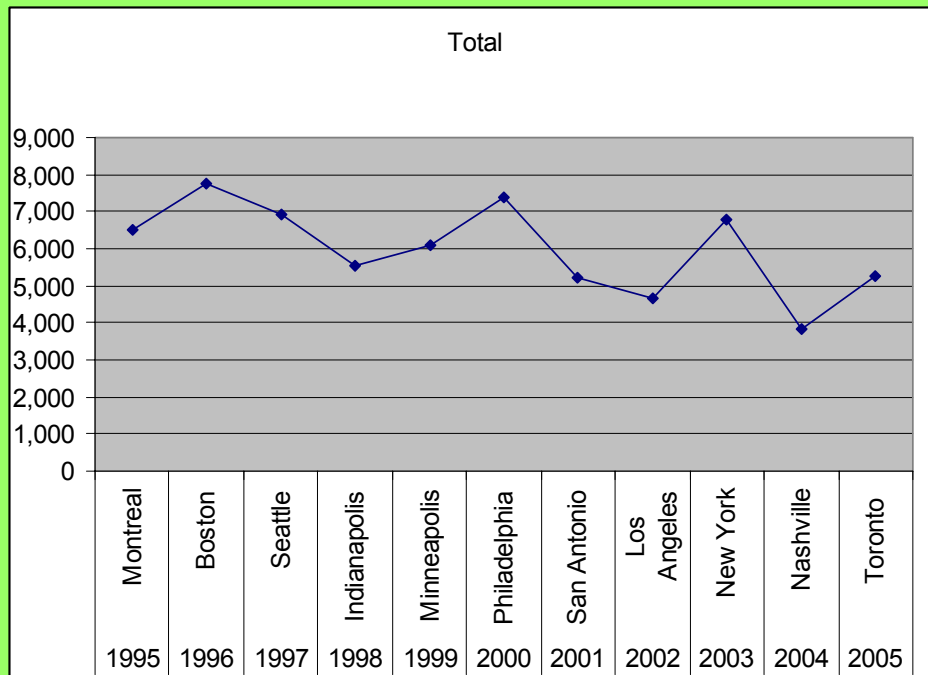
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SLA CONFERENCE STATISTICS (continued from page 8)

The last ten years of attendance are charted below—

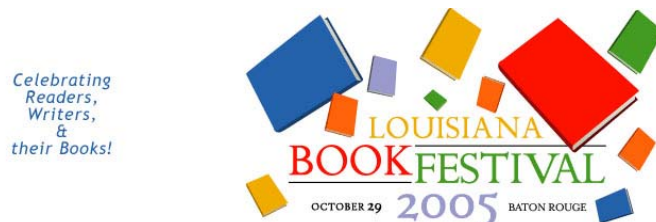


Free!!

One set, 15 bound volumes of the 1973 Louisiana Constitutional Convention documents.

One CD, Operation Safe Haven: a Practical Guide to School Safety. This is a school search reference guide with interactive links to resources, hints from experts on prevention, intervention and crisis response, safe school strategies and prevention tools.

If interested, contact Ferol Foons, ffoons@state.lib.la.us.



The 4th Louisiana Book Festival will be Saturday Oct. 29 with workshops on Friday Oct. 28 in downtown Baton Rouge at the State Library, the new State Museum and the Capitol. Mark your calendars and consider being one of the 500+ volunteers who make the festival possible. For more information, visit the website at www.louisianabookfestival.org.