

FOUR AND A HALF DECADES OF PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK:

A History of
The Toronto Chapter
Special Libraries Association
1940 - 1984

by Helen Katz
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In Honour of the 75th Anniversary of
SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION
1904 - 1984

OUR BEGINNINGS

The hospitality industry in Toronto was the impetus for the founding of the Toronto Chapter of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) in 1940.

At that time, a small group made up primarily of insurance industry librarians met regularly for informal luncheon meetings. On May 2, 1940, they attended a dinner meeting organized by the convention manager of the Royal York Hotel and the manager of the Toronto Convention and Tourists Association. Hotels were eager for convention revenue, and the two hosts proposed that the 1941 Special Libraries Association conference be held in Toronto. The librarians realized, however, that an SLA conference in Toronto would be unlikely without the involvement and support of a local chapter.¹

Several of the librarians met again and drew up a petition for a local chapter which was presented to and accepted by the Executive Board of the Special Libraries Association at the annual conference in Indianapolis, June 1940. Ten librarians signed the petition:

W. S. Wallace
University of Toronto

Allan McKenzie
Canadian Bank of Commerce

Pauline Hutchison
Canada Life Assurance Company

Katherine Gillies
Imperial Life Assurance Company

Lorna Dillane
North American Life Assurance Company

L. Ruth Moorhouse
Manufacturer's Life Insurance Company

Peter Morgan
Confederation Life Association

Edna M. Fuller
David Dunlap Observatory

Winifred G. Barnstead
Director,
University of Toronto Library School

M. Edna M. Poole
Academy of Medicine

Isabel Wilson of the Insurance Institute of Toronto and K. Elizabeth (Hird) Sutton of the Confederation Life Association joined the new Chapter shortly after its founding.

Toronto now had an association of librarians and information specialists dedicated to improving

the communication, dissemination, and use of information for the benefit of their organizations. Many years would pass, however, before Toronto would host an SLA conference.

OUR OFFICERS

Peter Morgan was elected first president of the Toronto Chapter, SLA. In December 1940, he was called for active service in the RCAF and was, therefore, unable to complete his term of office. Pauline Hutchison of the Canada Life Assurance Company completed the 1940/41 Chapter year as president.

To date, 45 persons have served as presidents of the Toronto Chapter:

1940 Peter Morgan
Confederation Life Association

1940/41 Pauline Hutchison
Canada Life Assurance Company

1941/42 Allan McKenzie
Canadian Bank of Commerce

1942/43 M. Edna M. Poole
Academy of Medicine

1943/44 George A. Johnston
Law Society of Upper Canada

1944/45 Katherine Gillies
Imperial Life Assurance Company

1945/46 Marion Thompson
Toronto Daily Star

1946/47 Esther Jacobsen
University of Toronto School of
Nursing

1947/48 Phyllis Foreman (Mrs. Hugh Morehouse)
Hydro/Electric Power Commission of
Ontario

1948/49 Audrey V. Ide (Mrs. R. Bull)
Board of Trade of the City of Toronto

1949/50 Clara G. Miller
Imperial Oil Limited

1950/51 Rowena Phillips
Manufacturer's Life Insurance Company

1951/52 Agatha Leonard
University of Toronto

1952/53 Dorothy Thompson
Ontario College of Education

1953/54 Bertha Bassam
University of Toronto Library School

¹At this time, SLA members in Toronto were affiliated with the Montreal Chapter. Peter Morgan, librarian at Confederation Life Association, had expressed interest in having a Toronto Chapter in the late 1930s. He had corresponded on several occasions with SLA headquarters in New York and with the Montreal Chapter concerning this possibility.

and videodisc technology have also been explored as part of the Chapter's programme activities.

Programmes providing social or personal information content have featured investment advisors and travel consultants. On several occasions, the Chapter has held special programmes to which members were encouraged to bring their managers as guests. When the treasure of King Tutkanhamen were shown at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Chapter members attended a presentation about the display.

Chapter activities have not been restricted to monthly meetings. Annual workshops and seminars have evolved from an ongoing commitment to the continuing education of Chapter members.

The first continuing education workshop was held in 1945/46. A cataloguing course was offered to members who had not attended library school. The course, taught by Bertha Bassam of the University of Toronto Library School, consisted of five lectures at a cost of \$5.00 per student. Fifteen members attended the classes. In 1957, a five-part course was offered through the University of Toronto Library School, and lectures were given on cataloguing, subject analysis, reference work, government documents, and periodicals.

More recently, continuing education workshops have covered topics such as "Marketing the Library", "How to be an Internal Consultant," and, during the recent downturn in the economy, "Recession-Proofing Your Library."

The Chapter has co-sponsored continuing education programmes and monthly meetings with other associations, sharing costs as well as revenues. These events have helped to foster communication with other library organizations. Joint programmes have been held with the Alumni Association of the Faculty of Library Science (now the Faculty of Library and Information Science) at the University of Toronto, the Canadian Association of Information Science (CAIS), and the Canadian Association of Special Libraries and Information Services (CASLIS).

On many occasions, members of the Toronto Chapter have held meetings in Toronto and elsewhere with members of other Chapters.

1947 October in Toronto.
Regional conference with Western New York and Montreal Chapters.
Topics covered training of librarians, and the Special Libraries Association.
The conference included library tours.

1948 October in Rochester.
Regional conference with Western New York and Montreal Chapters.
Programme covered training of library assistants in various settings.

1949 September in Montreal.
Regional conference with Western New York and Montreal Chapters.
Topic: Communication and Cooperation.

1950 October in Niagara Falls.
Joint meeting with Western New York Chapter.
Topic: Hydroelectric Power.

1956 October in Niagara
Joint meeting with Western New York Chapter.
Topic: Parasitism or Cooperation.

1963 November in Thorold, Ontario.
Joint meeting with Western New York Chapter.
Tour of Ontario Paper Company paper mill and luncheon address by Executive Director of SLA.

1964 February in Toronto.
Joint continuing education programme with Montreal Chapter.
Topic: The Challenge to a Profession in the Sixties.

1966 March in Montreal.
Joint meeting with Montreal Chapter and librarians from Ottawa.
Organized by the Committee to Investigate the Organizational Needs of Canadian Special Librarians.

1969 October in Niagara Falls (at Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology).
Joint meeting with Upstate New York Chapter.
Luncheon speaker, Gordon Wright, on "The Planning and Development of a Technical Information and Library Service for Further Education and Industry in the County of Hertfordshire."

1974 November in Ottawa.
Joint meeting with Montreal Chapter, CASLIS, and CAIS.
Topic: Techniques for Library Planning and Evaluation.

1978 October in Toronto.
Joint meeting with Montreal Chapter.

1980 April in London, Ontario.
Joint meeting with Michigan Chapter.
Topic: Networking.

1983 April in Ottawa.
Joint meeting with Eastern Canada Chapter.
Topic: DOBIS.

CONFERENCES

Toronto Chapter hosted two successful SLA conferences. The first conference in Toronto was held in 1953, many years after the Toronto hospitality officers vied for the business. It included a "Forum on Canadian Resources" where representatives of Canadian business spoke about scientific research, industry, business, finance, and government in Canada. The Chapter realized a profit of \$1,000.00 from the conference.

In 1974, Toronto was again selected as the site of the annual conference. The theme of the event was "Toronto the Meeting Place." Barbara Weatherhead was conference chairman. Although the conference itself was a success with record-breaking attendance, the Chapter incurred some debts which led to financial constraints in the following years.¹

GROUPS

The Chapter's Online Users Group, which has been underway since January 1980, sponsored a session on computer terminals and microcomputers in the fall of 1982, and has continued to meet

regularly since that time. The Group includes both Chapter and non-Chapter members.

OUR ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT

Since the founding of the Toronto Chapter, members have played a major role in the management of the Association and its divisions. The following roster of member involvement is not exhaustive. It includes Toronto members' activities at the Association level and at the Division chairman level. Other Toronto members have been involved in Divisions as treasurers, secretaries, and directors.

Roster of Member Involvement

1947/48	Esther Jacobsen University of Toronto School of Nursing	Chapter Relations Committee
	Pauline Hutchison Canada Life Assurance Company	Nominating Committee
1950/51	Pauline Hutchison	Vice-Chairman Insurance Division
1951/52	Phyllis L. Foreman (Mrs. Hugh Morehouse) Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario	Director
	Pauline Hutchison	Vice/Chairman Insurance Division
1952/53	F. Rowena Phillips Manufacturers Life Insurance Company	Chairman Metals Section Science and Technology Division
	Frederick M. Ethridge Consolidate Mining and Smelting Company of Canada Limited	Chairman Metals Section Science and Technology Division
1953/54	Clara G. Miller Imperial Oil Limited	Director (to 1955/56)
	F. Rowena Phillips	Chapter Liaison Officer and Chairman, Chapter Relations Committee (to 1955/56)
1954/55	Marian A. Patterson Academy of Medicine	Chairman Biological Sciences Division
1957/58	Marian A. Patterson	Director (to 1959/60)
1960/61	David A. Rhydwen Globe and Mail	Chairman Newspaper Division
1961/62	Mona Martin	Chairman Insurance Division
1962/63	F. Rowena Phillips	Chairman Standing Committee on Admissions
1966/67	Stephen J. Kees Ontario Paper Company	Chairman Paper and Textiles Section Science and Technology Division
1967/68	Stephen J. Kees Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology	Standing Committee on Statistics

¹The local chapter used to be responsible for organizing the annual conference, but the national office of the SLA now has this responsibility.

1968/69	F. Rowena Phillips	Chairman Insurance Division
1972/73	Carol Lindsay Toronto Star Ltd.	Chairman Newspaper Division
	Harry Greenshields Atomic Energy of Canada Limited	Chairman Nuclear Science Division
1973/74	Serge A. Sauer Dept. of Geography, University of Western Ontario	Chairman Geography and Map Division
1974/75	Donna M. Ivey Consumers' Gas	Nominating Committee
1975/76	Shirley K. Smith Canadian National Telecommunications	Chairman Transportation Division
1978/79	Ethel Auster Ontario Institute for Studies in Education	Chairman Education Division
	Stefanie A. Pavlin Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications	Chairman Transportation Division
1979/80	Jane I. Dysart Royal Bank of Canada	Joint Divisions/Chapter Cabinets Archives Study Committee
	Jane Cooney Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	Chairman Business and Finance Division
1980/81	Beverley Bendell Montreal Engineering Company	Chairman Petroleum and Energy Resources Division
1981/82	Jane I. Dysart	Chairman Chapter Cabinet
	Maureen Roe Kilborn Engineering	Long Range Planning Committee
	Eve Dowie Canada Centre for Inland Waters	Chairman Natural Resources Division
1982/83	Sheila Maxwell Spar Aerospace Ltd.	Chairman Aerospace Division
1983/84	Betty Bassett Xerox of Canada	Chairman Nominating Committee
	Marie Gedula McKinsey & Co.	Chairman Scholarship Committee
1983/84	Leslie Strauss UTLAS	Chairman Publishing Division

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the years, the Chapter and its members have won various Association level and Division level awards. In 1952/53, the Toronto Chapter won the Gavel Award for the largest increase in membership achieved by any chapter in the Association during the previous year.

In 1960, Pauline Hutchison, a Chapter past president, was elected to the SLA Hall of Fame. This award is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the growth and development of SLA. It is offered following retirement

or near the date of announced retirement.

In 1962, the Toronto Chapter won the H. W. Wilson Company Chapter Award for the best project. The theme was "Closer Relations between Chapters and Library Schools in Their Areas." The Toronto Chapter's programme combined a one-half day seminar with visits to special libraries. Fifty students heard lectures entitled, "What It Means to Belong to a Professional Library Association", "How Do I Join a Professional Library Association?", "What SLA Has Done for Me." The Toronto Chapter encouraged use of the programme by sending a

report of it to 29 members outside of Toronto, to library schools in Ottawa and Vancouver, and to ten library associations. The programme was later expanded to accept 33 other students.

Eleven chapters had entered the competition, but the Toronto Chapter won because of three outstanding features of its programme:

1. unusually careful planning and execution
2. an opportunity for each individual Chapter member to participate, including those in widely scattered areas
3. a plan that could easily be adapted by other chapters

The Chapter has been involved in maintaining professional standards in the field of special librarianship. In January 1967, the Chapter commented on a draft of the proposed course for library techniques at Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario. The Chapter has maintained its interest in the library techniques programmes by having representatives on the Library Techniques Advisory Committee at both Seneca and Sheridan Colleges. The Chapter had earlier appointed a representative to the Ryerson Library Arts Advisory Committee, and provided input to its revised programme.

In 1966, David A. Rhydwen was awarded the Jack K. Burness Memorial Award given in memory of the late chief librarian of the Washington Post for distinguished newspaper librarianship. David's achievements included pioneering the use of microfilmed clippings, organizing his library to make it one of Canada's most up-to-date newspaper libraries, and contributing to better understanding of newspaper librarianship. In 1982, David received the Joseph F. Kwapi Memorial Award for achievement in newspaper librarianship and service to the SLA Newspaper Division. The Association has again honoured David Rhydwen in 1984 by presenting him with the John Cotton Dana Award for exceptional services in special librarianship.

Frank Gagne, a student at the University of Toronto School of Library Science, won a coveted \$2,500 SLA scholarship in 1971 for his paper on the subject of special librarianship.

In 1973, Dean Tudor was awarded the H. W. Wilson Award for the best paper published in Special Libraries entitled "The Special Library Budget."

The Kathleen Reeves Memorial Award has been presented annually to the top student in the Special Libraries course at the University of Toronto Faculty of Library and Information Science. The award was established in 1956 by friends of the late Kathleen Reeves, former head of the Ontario Legislative Library.

In 1980-81, the Chapter established a "Member of the Year Award." The award is given to honour an outstanding professional achievement or contribution to special librarianship and information science. The first award was given to Jane Dysart; the 1981-82 award honoured Susan Klement; in 1982-83, the award was presented to Jane Cooney.

The Chapter has been vocal in areas affecting librarianship in general and special librarianship in particular. An Issue of The Courier in 1973/74 included an editorial on the need for a Canadian business periodicals index. Chapter members wrote letters to The Courier editor supporting this recommendation. In July, 1975 Micromedia began publication of the Canadian Business Periodicals Index.

Other Chapter actions on important issues have included input to the revision of the Canadian Copyright Act, and a formal protest against the proposed "deprofessionalization" of Ontario government librarians.

OUR PUBLICATIONS

From the time it was founded, the Toronto Chapter has published various newsletters to keep its growing membership informed of Chapter and Association events. The newsletter has included reports of Chapter officers, current activities, minutes of meetings, and topical articles. A popular feature has been news of members' moves, promotions, and achievements. The publication has always been edited and produced by members, frequently assisted by contributions from corporate employers who have donated time, typing, printing, paper, envelopes, and postage. More recently, the Chapter has paid for most of the costs out of its own funds.

Through the years, the Toronto Chapter newsletter has reflected editorial prerogative as well as changing times both in its frequency of publication and in its title. It has been known as the Bulletin of the Special Libraries Association, Toronto Chapter, Toronto Chapter Review, Toronto Chapter Newsletter, and The Courier. Economic conditions have affected its size. Advertising by local vendors of library supplies and services has helped to offset production costs. Whatever its title, frequency, or size, the newsletter has provided a vital communication link between Chapter members, and a continuing record of their activities over the years.

An important reference source for librarians in the region of Metropolitan Toronto has been the Directory of Special Libraries in the Toronto Area published by the Toronto Chapter. Every one of the nine editions since 1946 has provided valuable information about local special library collections and facilities. It is the primary resource to consult when an interlibrary loan is required.

A professionally developed salary survey of Toronto Chapter members was carried out in 1981. The analysis of the responses to the survey revealed correlations between salaries, education, and working experience.

OUR FUTURE

In recent years the Chapter has been looking thoughtfully at what it does and how to improve

the way it functions. In 1980, the Chapter's first procedures manual was written to guide the executive board and committee chairmen in carrying out their responsibilities effectively. In 1982, the Chapter embarked on a long-range plan. As a first step, a revised executive structure was instituted. Previously all committee chairmen had reported directly to the president. The new structure aimed at relieving the burden on the president and at making various committees with similar functions interact as a division. Committees with responsibilities in the public relations area now report to the president, and those involved with programme and continuing education report to the president-elect. Publications fall under the director's jurisdiction; administrative matters are the responsibility of the secretary; and the treasurer is in charge of Chapter finance.

The Chapter's financial position has been stronger during the past few years due to larger chapter allotments from the national office and to increased membership (over 500 in January, 1984). At the same time, fewer members'

employers are willing to underwrite the expenses incurred by Chapter officers for attendance required at Association meetings. Although the precedent was set in 1948/49, it was decided again in 1982 to use Chapter funds to help pay for the expenses of the president and the president-elect when travelling to the winter meeting and the annual conference.

The Toronto Chapter is now in its forty-fourth year as an active force in Toronto's information community. The small group of ten librarians who signed the original petition for a Toronto Chapter could not have envisaged the 50-fold growth in membership that would take place by 1984. Neither could they have foreseen today's modern information centres where librarians work in an electronic environment of word processors, computerized cataloguing, and nation-wide on-line database retrieval. A local businessman recently observed, "information used to be a business tool, but it has turned into a corporate asset." Toronto Chapter special librarians should know. They have been PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK for four and half decades!

