



SYNAPSE

NEWSLETTER OF ALABAMA HEALTH LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION INC.

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Fall 2003

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We had a great turnout for ALHeLA's 2003 Annual Meeting in Orange Beach. I want to congratulate Geneva Staggs and Jie Li for all of their efforts in putting together another great conference! The combination of excellent CE offerings and speakers, along with beautiful beach weather guaranteed a wonderful time for all.

Several ALHeLA award recipients attended this year's conference. Susan Clemmons, currently enrolled in the MLIS program at the U of A, presented her winning Student Grant essay at Friday's business meeting. If you missed it, you can read it in this issue of the *Synapse*.

Two ALHeLA members received the Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support, which provides funds to assist with attendance at the annual meeting. The recipients were Inga Moten, Alabama State University, and Paula Barnett-Ellis, Jacksonville State University. Congratulations to all the award recipients!

The annual business meeting also brings the election of next year's ALHeLA officers. Many thanks go to Marian Morris, chair of the Nominating Committee, and her committee members Nancy Clemmons and Mary Fran Prottzman. The officers for 2004 will be Martha Verchot, President-Elect; Lee Clemens-Taylor, Secretary; Sylvia McAphee, Treasurer; and Michael Fitts, Gerald Jackson, and Justin Robertson, Members-at-Large. Thank you to all these members for their willingness to serve the organization in these important roles.

As we welcome in the new officers, I'd like to add my gratitude to those who will be leaving the Executive Committee at the end of this year-Inga Moten, outgoing secretary, and Kay Fowler and Susan Gambill, outgoing Members-at-Large. I greatly appreciate your contributions to ALHeLA. We have a great organization, and there are many opportunities for rewarding involvement in it. I encourage you to share your ideas and suggestions with your Executive Committee.

Tracy Powell, 2003 ALHeLA President

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2003 ALHeLA Annual Meeting

Future Splash: The Information Wave

September 11-12, 2003
Orange Beach, Alabama

Forty-four people participated in the 23rd annual meeting of the Alabama Health Libraries Association, held September 11-12, 2003, at the Island House Hotel in Orange Beach. Thirty-four of those were members of ALHeLA, two additional librarians attended from outside the state, another four were speakers, one was the Student Grant Winner and others were guests who joined us for the banquet on Thursday night.

On Thursday, there were 3 half-day continuing education courses offered. Starting off the in the morning, T. Scott Plutchak, Director of Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences at UAB and editor of the *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, talked to us about "Writing for Publication." In the afternoon, there were 2 choices. Penny Dendy, Executive Director of Volunteer Mobile and internationally recognized trainer for USAID and the Kettering Foundation, presented, "Customer Driven Service for the 21st Century." Also, Mary Fielder, Outreach Librarian, Three Rivers AHEC, and Susan Poorbaugh, Assistant Director, Learning Resource Center, Georgia Statewide Area AHEC taught "Writing Successful National Library of Medicine Grants." The CE courses were four hours each. Attendance was twenty-one, fifteen and eight, respectively.

Mr. Jim=s Seafood Buffet at Zeke=s Downunder restaurant was a highlight of the conference. Forty-three diners enjoyed fellowship, door prizes and the gulf seafood at it=s best. Door prizes were provided by the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau and MDConsult.

On Friday morning the group heard about surviving in the Information Age from futurist Konrad Kressley. After his presentation he joined other presenters at the meeting, Scott Plutchak, Penny Dendy, Mary Fielder and Susan Poorbaugh, to make up a panel for a discussion of issues faced by librarians in today=s marketplace.

We wrapped up our meeting with the annual business meeting and luncheon (with after lunch mints provided by EBSCO). Highlights included an update by Janice Kelly from NN/LM and a presentation by the student scholarship winner, Susan Clemmons of her essay, *If They Only Knew: Marketing the Medical Library.*

Tracy Powell was recognized for the great job she has done as president of ALHeLA.

And taking care of the details: Thanks go to Jie Lie, CE Chair, Michael Lindsey, who helped with registration tasks, our presenters, and the vendors and agencies that provided support to the meeting (Alabama Gulf Coast CVB, EBSCO, McGraw Hill, MDConsult, University of South Alabama Bookstore, University of South Alabama Health Systems, and Volunteers of America, Southeast).

The annual meeting offers opportunities for us to get together, learn from each other, and to reaffirm our common goals and interests. If you were unable to attend, make plans now to join us next fall for the 24th annual meeting. If you have suggestions for the meeting, please contact Martha Verchot, ALHeLA=s Vice-President/President-Elect and conference planner for 2004.

Scholarship Award Winners – 2003

For the 2003 ALHeLA meeting, there were three scholarship award winners. **Susan Clemmons** won the student award for her paper *If They Only Knew: Marketing the Medical Library*. She presented her paper at the business meeting, and it is included below.

Paula Barnett-Ellis from Jacksonville State and **Inga Moten** from Alabama State were both winners of the Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support. Their meeting reports are also included in this issue.

Both the student award and the Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support are available each year to help members attend the annual ALHeLA meeting.

Congratulations

The SC/MLA Hospital Librarian of the Year for 2003 has been awarded to Clinical Service Librarian and Associate Professor, **Tracy Powell**, of Lister Hill Library of the Health Science, UAB. Congratulations, Tracy, on this outstanding honor and accomplishment.

Congratulations to **Judy Burnham**, University of South Alabama Biomedical Library, for winning second place for her research poster at the 2003 SC/MLA. Her poster, *Citation Analysis of Complementary Alternative Medicine in Physical Therapy*, was written with Dennis Fell, USA Dept. of Physical Therapy.

Meeting Reports: 2003 Winners Scholarships for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support

An important part of attending the 2003 ALHeLA annual conference, for me, was the opportunity to network with other health librarians and put faces with the names I see on e-mails. I am really grateful that I was awarded a Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support. With the SLLIS, I was able to attend the conference, the annual business meeting, and go to the banquet, where I even won a door prize. Oh yes, the chance to walk on the beach and enjoy the sea breeze was part of the attraction too.

The CE classes I took, on writing for publication and on applying for NLM grants, will both be helpful to me as I pursue career advancement. These courses were taught by people with a thorough knowledge of their subjects who got their messages across well. I attended the *Writing for Publication* session with T. Scott Plutchak, and I feel I learned a great deal from the chance to hear the editor's viewpoint of publishing articles in our field. The second class I attended, *Writing Successful National Library of Medicine Grants*, will be useful for its ideas on types of projects and how to obtain funding for them. Another valuable aspect of the CE classes was the accompanying documents.

For example, some of ideas covered in the handout for Writing for Publication include

- Choosing a topic
- Organizing your article
- Things that drive editors crazy

I know that I will make use of this information as I get ready for tenure within the next few years.

The comprehensive handout for the NLM grant-writing session provided copies of actual grant applications and supporting material. I am glad to have these documents to share with co-workers and to refer to in the future.

In addition, I enjoyed getting to attend the banquet and talk with colleagues in a more relaxed atmosphere. The seafood was excellent, and I especially looked forward to the banquet because I was not able to attend last year.

The speaker for Friday morning, Dr. Konrad Kressley, was both enlightening and entertaining with his address on the future and how we can survive and adapt to coming changes in our field such as new trends in healthcare and technology. The panel discussion afterwards certainly brought out interesting points about technology and the different ways in which people react to changes in their environment. It was reassuring to hear, however, that there is still a place for human connections between people.

I appreciated the chance to attend the business meeting as well. Hearing firsthand about all that ALHeLA has been

doing made me feel more involved in the organization. Overall, I enjoyed the beach, the networking, and the food. I look forward to next year!

By Paula Barnett-Ellis

As part of the Annual Meeting of ALHeLA, I attended the MLA teleconference, "Reading between the lines: Focusing on Health Information Literacy" <http://www.mlanet.org/education/telecon/healthlit/index.html> held in the University Library at the University of South Alabama. The teleconference consisted of a panel that identified issues of health information for consumers and presented strategies for raising levels of health information literacy in various clinical and informational settings. The wrap-around sessions were lead by Kay Hogan Smith. Later, I motored over to the Island House Hotel on Orange Beach for the rest of the meeting. The ocean breezes from my room balcony were a wonderful respite for the end of the day.

The two CE classes I attended were *Writing for Publication* presented by T. Scott Plutchak (UAB Lister Hill Library of Health Sciences) and *Writing Successful National Library of Medicine Grants* presented by Mary Fielder (Three Rivers AHEC) and Susan Poorbaugh (GA Statewide Area AHEC). One of the challenges for submitting an article to be published in a peer reviewed journal such as *JMLA*, is to know that you will write an article and to think like a writer/researcher at the onset of a project. For grant writing, the participants were challenged to think like the grantee and to understand the mindset of the grantor.

Zeke's Down Under provided great atmosphere for this year's banquet. Waterfront and marina views with good seafood were a winning combination. Beach kits, towel, t-shirt, bucket hat, stuffed beach bag, and other door prizes made a splash of a good time.

Friday morning, the invited speaker was Konrad Kressley, Political Science Professor at the University of South Alabama. His topic, *Ready for the Information Age? Professional and Survival Skills for Knowledge Workers*. His talk presented a historical context to human existence, where we are now and what we can expect in the future in terms of how we work and live on the planet. Librarians have become knowledge workers and are being transformed into informationists. Dr. Kressley's gift to all who attended was a personal copy of his latest publication, *Living in the Third Millennium*. A panel of all the meeting's presenters provided discussion of our profession, lifestyles and goals as we grow into the future.

By Inga Moten

If They Only Knew: Marketing the Medical Library

by Susan Clemmons (slclemmo@bellsouth.net)

In the few weeks I have been in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, I have been introduced to a world of databases and information resources that were (and still are) beyond my wildest imagination! Having just completed a master of public administration degree, and a B.A. in sociology, I kick myself daily for living in the dark so long and not taking advantage of the plethora of resources and services provided by my universities' libraries. My mother taught me better than that! (She is, after all, a medical librarian herself.) Undoubtedly, I am not alone in my lack of full utilization of the library. Studies have indicated that traditional stereotypes of librarians as passive bookworms are alive and well among the medical community.¹ Some health professionals do not recognize librarians as helpful guides to the medical information universe. How, then, do we get the word out and library users in?

First Things First: Make a Plan!

It is sometimes quite easy to think of new and fun ways to promote the library. Hearing how other libraries are successfully marketing their services is inspiring. It is easy to assume these strategies can be replicated in any setting and result in the same level of success. Current library users and/or staff may also have creative suggestions on how to promote the library. However, a hodgepodge of "neat ideas" adopted from other libraries, clientele, or staff is not likely to draw significant numbers of new patrons into the library. Rather, marketing efforts must be coordinated and focused.

One of the first steps in formulating a marketing plan is to identify the target community.² Identifying this group involves use and user studies (i.e. surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.) that reveal demographic and behavioral aspects of current library patrons. Typical users of medical libraries will include physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, medical students, hospital administrators, and patients and their families.³ User studies expose which of these groups frequent your library and whether there are any additional users or potential users that are being overlooked. In addition to user studies, use studies help reveal popular (and unpopular) services.

When one knows who uses the medical library and the specific services these individuals use, it is easier to expose who is *not* using the library and what services are *not* being used. It is also imperative to know the "why" behind each of these issues and to identify any potential unmet information needs. This input will help refine the objectives of the marketing plan and is vital to the success of any outreach effort.⁴

Once a target audience has been identified, one can then begin to review some of those neat ideas and select ones that most appropriately meet the outreach needs of his or her library. Below are just a few of the many creative ways medical librarians can market their services.

Some Neat Ideas

- **Library Logo** – A medical library can create its own logo, separate from or in addition to its parent institution. Call your institution's marketing department to make sure there are no restrictions concerning logos. Also ask for any guidelines or assistance they may be able to provide. A logo can be placed on the library's newsletters, Web page, brochures, faxes, annual report, etc. It should reflect the mission of the medical library in some capacity, possibly by including a slogan.⁵ The more it is used, the greater the effect the logo will have on drawing and retaining users. Just consider the power of the Nike symbol!

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- **Waiting Room/Patient Booklets** – Online information not under copyright restrictions can be reproduced and used to compile a booklet or binder of useful information for patients and their families. Introductory material can introduce readers to the library (what a great place to put your new logo!) and invite them to come browse sections that may be of particular interest to them.⁶
 - **Toolkits** – A “toolkit” may consist of “source documents (e.g., practice guidelines), news and announcements, legislative updates, search interfaces to relevant data sets, directory and contact tools, and preformatted searches to selected databases.” Separate toolkits can be prepared for and distributed to each major group of target library users.⁷ This is an excellent way to showcase the extensive range of information libraries provide access to and also to demonstrate librarians’ skills in compiling relevant material.
 - **Anatomy of the Medical Library** – Keeping with the medical theme, one library displayed a model of a human body and labeled various parts with library terms. For example, the mouth was labeled as the Marketing Department and the spine as the Cataloging Department.⁸ Not exactly anatomically correct, but a very creative approach to familiarizing users with different parts of the library!

More Information

The image of the medical library must be portrayed as a place where skilled librarians are eager to help meet the information needs of health professionals. A carefully devised marketing plan that includes creative strategies such as those mentioned above is an excellent start. The following Web resources provide additional information on effective ways to “sell” the library:

- **MLANET Communications Tool Kit**
http://www.mlanet.org/publications/tool_kit/index.html
- **Marketing Our Libraries: On and Off the Internet**
<http://www.librarysupportstaff.com/marketinglibs.html>
- **Reach Out! Using Electronic Resources to Serve Your Community**
<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/mini-courses/outreach/sell.html>
- **Marketing the Library/Information Service: Readings**
<http://www.dochzi.com/bibs/market.html>
- **Colorado Library Marketing Council**
<http://www.clmc.org/resources.htm>

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3. Shisler, op. cit, 251-3.
4. Rambo, op. cit., 403-4.
5. MLA Chapter Sharing Roundtables: Marketing and Public Relations Table 14A. Medical Library Association. MLANET. [Web document]. Chicago, IL: The Association, 2002 [cited July 8, 2003].
<http://www.chaptercouncil.mlanet.org/roundtables2002/marketing_roundtable.html>.
6. Shisler, op. cit.,252.
7. Rambo, op. cit., 404.
8. MLA, op. cit.

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ALHeLA Business Meeting

Friday, September 12, 2003
Island House Hotel Conference Center
Orange Beach

1. **Call to Order:** President Tracy Powell called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the Executive Meeting of June 20, 2003 were approved.
3. **NN/LM Update:** An update was provided in a multimedia presentation by Janice Kelly, Executive Director of NN/LM Southeastern/Atlantic Region.
4. **Treasurer's Report.** Martha Verchot presented the Treasurer's report. As of 8/31/2003, the account balance is \$9719.24.
5. **Committee Reports**
 - a. **Bylaws.** Ellen Sayed, Chair. No report.
 - b. **Directory.** Jana Slay, Chair. No report.
 - c. **Liaison.** Robert Avant, Chair. No report.
 - d. **Membership.** Susan Corbett reported new members for the year are Michael Lindsey, Justin Robertson, Mary Ann Putt, Sheila Snow-Croft, and Susan Corbett.
 - e. **Synapse.** Diane Williams reminded all that the deadline for publication is in two weeks.
 - f. **Web Coordinator.** Patricia Higginbottom provided a Web Site Report and Electronic Discussion List Report. More than one thousand hits have been made to the web site since last year this time. Regular updates have been made to the discussion list. New ALHeLA members are automatically added to the discussion list.
 - g. **Members-at-Large.** Michael Fitts announced Susan Clemmons as the winner of the ALHeLA Student Scholarship. Paula Barnett-Ellis and Inga Moten were awarded the Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support Awards.
6. **Old Business**
 - a. **2003 Annual Meeting.** Geneva Bush Staggs reported that annual meeting has been a success. Thirty-seven members and four guests attended the meeting, forty-five attended the Banquet. Attendance for the CE classes totaled 21 participants for "Writing for Publication", 15 participants for "Customer Driven Service for the 21st Century", and 8 participants for "Successful NLM Grantwriting". Attendees were reminded to complete and submit meeting evaluations.
 - b. **Statewide Planning Grant.** Tracy Powell reported on the progress of the NNLM grant that she, Judy Burnham, Ji Lie, Ellen Sayed, and Kay Hogan Smith are submitting on behalf of ALHeLA. The grant will make it possible to create a statewide dialog among health professionals concerning their health information needs. This meeting will include 15 representatives from various areas of health services. The grant is due in October, and the meeting would occur in Birmingham, March 2004. This group plans to establish a web presence prior to the meeting.
7. **New Business**
 - a. **Nominating Committee.** Marian Morris presented the slate of officers for ALHeLA for 2004. A vote was taken and the new officers for ALHeLA are Martha Verchot as President-Elect, Lee Clemens-Taylor as Secretary, Sylvia McAphee as Treasurer, Michael Fitts, Gerald Jackson, and Justin Robertson as Members-at-Large.
 - b. **Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support Awards.** Tracy Powell reported that this endeavor was a good use of ALHeLA funds and mentioned the recipients, Paula Barnett-Ellis and Inga Moten.

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- c. **ALHeLA Student Scholarship Award.** The recipient is Susan Clemmons, a UA student currently enrolled in the MLS program and an Alabama resident. She holds a Master of Public Administration from UAB and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Samford University. Ms. Clemmons presented her paper, "Marketing the Medical Library (If They Only Knew)" which will get published in the next issue of *SYNPASE*.
 - d. **Health Sciences Librarianship Promotion Award and State or Regional Exhibiting Subcontract.** Geneva Staggs will present a panel at the Alabama Libraries Association Annual Meeting in Montgomery, April 2004. The panel will include medical librarians whose jobs reveal diversity within the profession.
 - e. **Other.** Inspired by the MLA teleconference, "Reading between the Lines: Focusing on Health Information Literacy", Kay Smith and Judy Burnham will collaborate on a generic press release for Health Literacy Month which is October.

Kay Smith will teach the MLA CE course, "Consumer Health Information and Low Literacy Clients: Partnerships and Solutions" on Sunday, October 26 in Philadelphia, PA.

UA SLIS will hold its 14th annual Alumni Day on Nov. 14. UA SLIS has just completed its ALA review.

It was noted that the minutes of the annual meeting should be approved at the next Annual Meeting. The Executive Committee will take up the issue at the next Business Meeting.

A verbal thank you was made to the outgoing officers, Tracy Powell, Geneva Staggs, Inga Moten and Martha Verchot and the Nominating Committee, Marian Morris, Nancy Clemmons, and Mary Fran Prottzman.

8. **Adjournment.** Tracy Powell adjourned the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Inga S. Moten, Secretary*

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