

1. *Newsletter of Alabama Health Libraries Association INC.*
2. the point at which a nervous impulse passes from one neuron to another



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Hopefully, by the time you read this issue of Synapse, spring will have arrived. As I write this column, however, it appears that winter is in no hurry to leave, even though the camellias are beginning to bloom, and the azaleas might blossom just in time for the Azalea Trail Run.



Speaking of springtime, it is hard to believe that the 2010 MLA Annual Meeting is only months away. Entitled "Reflect & Connect," it will be held in Washington, DC from May 21 - 26th. For the first time, MLA is offering an innovative "e-Conference" meeting registration at a reduced rate in order to "...enable members who cannot travel to the meeting to still be part of the meeting community via online access."¹ That's right, you can attend the 2010 MLA Annual Meeting either in person or in virtual format. No matter which format you choose, register by April 21st in order to receive the early-bird discount.

Closer to home, Sylvia McAphee, our Vice-President/President-Elect, is in the process of planning the 2010 ALHeLA Annual Meeting. More details will follow, so check our website for updates. In addition, if you have not already done so, please remember to pay your membership dues. The membership form is available on the ALHeLA website.

At the February meeting of the ALHeLA Executive Committee, members agreed that the Annual Meeting would continue to be held in an "in-person" format, but Executive Committee

meetings will be held in virtual format, in an effort to save time and money. In addition, members voted to form a Disaster Preparedness Committee, with Jie Li as chair.

On a bittersweet note, Katy Allen has submitted her resignation as Secretary of ALHeLA, since she has resigned from her position as Technical Services/Systems Librarian at the University of Alabama's Health Sciences Library. In her new job, she will work in the College of Continuing Studies at the University of Alabama. I am delighted for Katy, yet at the same time, I am sorry that she will no longer be part of ALHeLA. The Executive Committee will soon begin the process of finding a new Secretary to serve for the remainder of the term.

Which reminds me: ALHeLA has an immediate opening for the position of co-editor of Synapse, in the wake of Jason Baker's departure. Paul Mussleman, our current editor, has indicated that he would like someone on the team as "another set of eyes." Therefore, if anyone is interested in flexing his or her journalistic muscle, please contact me.

Finally, I want to thank all of our members who make ALHeLA the great organization that it is. In particular, I want to express my gratitude to Katy Allen, Paul Mussleman, and Andrea Wright for their role in making our virtual meetings a reality. I hope everyone has a wonderful spring!

--Trey Lemley

¹http://www.mlanet.org/am/am2010/pdf/mla10_preliminaryprogram.pdf



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News from Around the State

USA Biomedical Library

Congratulations to University of South Alabama Technology & Information Resources Librarian Andrea Wright who has been awarded the EBSCO/MLA Annual Meeting Grant. This competitive award will provide \$1000 toward Andrea's meeting expenses for the MLA '10 meeting in Washington D.C. in May.

Clista Clanton, assistant librarian at the University of South Alabama Biomedical Library, received funding through an Outreach Award from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine/Southeastern Atlantic Region. The funding will go toward equipment to set up wireless access for a health clinic at the Dumas Wesley Community Center. In addition to working with healthcare professionals at the clinic, Clista will also work with patients on health literacy issues.

Justin Robertson, associate librarian at the University of South Alabama Biomedical Library, received funding through a Community Day Award from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine/Southeastern Atlantic Region. The funding will be used to host disaster preparedness events at Mobile and Baldwin County library facilities.

From UAB:

The Medical Library Association has announced UAB's T. Scott Plutchak as the Janet Doe Lecturer for 2011. The Janet Doe Lectureship is awarded to an individual chosen annually by the Medical Library Association for his/her unique perspective on the history or philosophy of medical librarianship. Established in 1966, the Doe Lectureship is presented at the association's annual meeting and is subsequently published in the Journal of the Medical Library Association. This highly acclaimed award is given to the profession's most innovative and prescient thinkers and writers.



T. Scott Plutchak

Lister Hill Library's Sylvia McAphee and Michael S. Fitts recently presented at a diversity conference. The Diversity Research Initiative at Auburn University facilitates and generates diversity research that is current and relevant locally, nationally, and globally. The title of their talk was The Ties that Bond: Creating a Promotion and Tenure Committee within the UAB African American Faculty Association.



Sylvia McAphee and Michael S. Fitts

News from Around the State (cont.)

From UAB: (cont.)

During a recent and historic visit to Alabama, Winnie Mandela, former wife of South Africa's first black President Nelson Mandela, and herself, the former President of the National Congress Women's League, presented a lecture at the Alys Stephens Center on the campus of The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). This was Ms. Mandela's first visit to the state of Alabama and to the city of Birmingham, whose civil rights efforts inspired South Africa during the apartheid movement. Michael S. Fitts, who serves as President of UAB's African American Faculty Association (AAFA), was honored to not only share the platform with Ms. Mandela, but also to present her with a gift on behalf of AAFA and also the African American Studies Program.



Winnie Mandela and Michael S. Fitts

Also from USA: A Biomedical Library Table-Top Exercise in the Snowy South

On February 11, 2010, due to the winter storm warning issued by the National Weather Service, the Biomedical Library held an emergency Table-Top Exercise in case the University of South Alabama had to close on February 12. While a few inches of snow is not an emergency in the Northern states, it can be paralyzing in the South which has not historically needed to be prepared for it. In the exercise:

1. The library made sure that a librarian working from home would have vendor information and the usernames and passwords necessary to trouble-shoot any access issues for our electronic resources.
2. The library's Technology Librarian would be able to upload messages to the library's homepage about changes to hours and service provision from home, and also sent instructions about using chat, email, etc. for providing reference services. The library also planned to send notification via our Facebook page.
3. The ILL librarian shut down ILL lending and would access DOCLINE from home for borrowing. Access to ILLiad was also enabled from the librarian's home.
4. Virtual Reference Desk hours were scheduled to be provided from librarians' homes, and it was made sure all those staffing the virtual reference desk had the needed software on their home/laptop computers.
5. The completed Pocket Plans (PReP) and current telephone tree lists were sent to everyone via email.

The exercise helped the library staff be prepared for the storm, which did close the library for part of the next day. The library was ready and able to provide virtual reference help and continued access to our electronic resources. Proof that an ounce of preparedness and practice are worth a pound of cure!

Health InfoNet of Alabama News

Health InfoNet of Alabama & MedlinePlus “Go Local” Update

On February 18th, the National Library of Medicine (NLM) announced that it was ending its support for the MedlinePlus Go Local program, linking MedlinePlus to local consumer health sites with directories of health services all over America. Since 2001 NLM had collaborated with numerous local health information projects, including our Health InfoNet of Alabama, to provide this unique service for health information and referral searchers. However, in recent years Go Local site usage began to decline. That fact, along with the economic restraints that precluded a large influx of additional money to revise and promote the sites, led to the decision on NLM’s part to withdraw from the venture.

However, Health InfoNet of Alabama lives on! Although we are saddened by the loss of NLM as an active partner, we remain committed to our ongoing goal of helping Alabama residents find current, authoritative health information and services relevant to their needs, as we have been since we began in 1999. The focus of our efforts was then and is now on collaboration between public and medical libraries in the state to promote library staff training, collection development and reference support for health questions. The Health InfoNet website (www.healthinfonet.org), with its database of almost 4000 health services from all over the state, is an important resource within that overall effort, however it is just one of the resources we offer to our citizens.

As for the database itself, while we are currently considering all our options, we are committed to continuing this important service if at all possible. Among the avenues for future development are a streamlined database of services, possibly focused on free or low cost health services, or alternately a cooperative database managed with other state agencies with a mutual interest in providing this type of referral service.

We are grateful to NLM for their support and collaboration over the past several years, as we are grateful to all of you for your ongoing interest and support. I will keep you abreast of developments as they occur, but please feel free to contact me at 205-934-2208 or khogan@uab.edu if you have any questions. Thank you all so much!

Other News of Interest

Be sure to check out the interview of EBSCO's Lynn M. Fortney in [Volume 6, Issue 4](#) of *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries*. In the interview Lynn comments on databases, link resolvers, and subscription services of interest and value to health sciences librarians.

Lisa Ennis, systems librarian, and Nicole Mitchell, reference librarian, at the UAB Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences have recently published an overview of health sciences librarianship in their book entitled, "The Accidental Health Sciences Librarian". For more information on their book, please visit <http://books.infotoday.com/books/Accidental-Health-Sciences-Librarian.shtml>.

From the Editor

Thanks to everyone that contributed to this issue of *Synapse*. I really enjoy learning of all of the different projects and activities people are involved in such as Nicole and Lisa's book and Lynn's interview. And please, submit information on your and your colleagues projects for future issues of *Synapse*.

So that's it for *Synapse* for awhile. The next issue will not come out until we have a couple of football games under our belt and fall classes have started.

I hope everyone has a great summer and remember, as you are vacationing, working, attending conferences, and all of the other activities of summer, please be compiling and sending in contributions for the next issue of *Synapse*.

--Paul Mussleman

