

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



Over the years, due to the hard work and dedication of its membership, ALHeLA has provided leadership in the state through our outreach and annual conferences. Building upon our past, a very successful 25th annual conference was held at Auburn University in November of 2005. Attendees were able to tour the Southeastern Raptor Center, learn from two CE classes, and gain a better understanding of important public health issues.

This year's conference, held on September 13 - 15, 2006, found us returning to beautiful Orange Beach. Our theme this year, "From Idea to Impact: Health Information and Technology," was one we can all relate to through our daily activities and encounters. We already knew how vital it is to provide the most up-to-date and accurate health information. But providing it in the format that our users want will always be challenging. The two CE classes that were offered during the conference will help us meet some of these challenges and our keynote speaker gave us some tips on forming partnerships. Thanks to Ellen Sayed and Lee Vucovich for planning this year's excellent conference.

Cindy Mitchell,  
President

## ALHeLA Librarians at the Southern Women's Show

ALHeLA members Ellen Sayed and Kay Hogan Smith joined NNLN/SE/A librarians Terri Ottosen and Dale Prince at the MedlinePlus information booth at the Southern Women's Show in Birmingham September 28-October 1. They passed out hundreds of MedlinePlus brochures and bookmarks, pens, and other assorted freebies. In fact, the booth had run out of everything but the pamphlets by early Sunday afternoon! While women were (naturally) the primary audience for this exhibit, bored husbands were often those most interested in MedlinePlus, including one canewalking gentleman who was very pleased to be able to find quality information on diabetic foot within the MedlinePlus Health Topics. As Terri noted, this was a prime people-watching opportunity! Stay tuned for other NNLN/ALHeLA exhibit volunteer opportunities!



## News Around the State

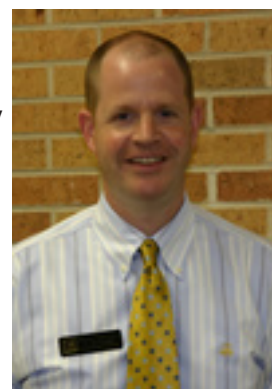
### Baugh Biomedical Library of the University of South Alabama

Trey Lemley is the new Information Services Librarian/Evening Supervisor for the Baugh Biomedical Library of the University of South Alabama. In addition, he is the Library Liaison to the departments of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Microbiology, Comparative Medicine, and Pharmacology in the USA College of Medicine.

Trey is an honors graduate of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science of the University of Texas at Austin, where he was inducted into Beta Phi Mu and Phi Kappa Phi. He graduated from the Indiana University School of Law and attended medical school at Des Moines University. He was a Reference Librarian at Austin Community College and an intern at the Texas State Law Library, both in Austin.

Finally, Trey is a classically-trained musician. He is an organist at several churches in the Mobile area and also serves as Adjunct Professor of Fine Arts at Spring Hill College where he teaches piano.

Justin Robertson, Medical Librarian at USA Biomedical Library, has recently been selected to be a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries*. In addition, Justin has recently been awarded the Technology Awareness Grant from the Southeastern Atlantic/National Network of Libraries of Medicine and has been appointed to the Technology Committee of the Southeastern Atlantic/National Network of Libraries of Medicine.



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What would you like to see here?  
I want to hear your  
suggestions!  
Email Lisa at [lennis@uab.edu](mailto:lennis@uab.edu).

# Alabama Health Libraries Association 2006 Executive Committee

## OFFICERS

### President

Cindy Mitchell  
Auburn University  
Cary Veterinary Medical Library  
Phone: (334) 844-1750  
Email: [mitchcy@auburn.edu](mailto:mitchcy@auburn.edu)

### Past President

Martha Verchot  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Lister Hill Library of the Health  
Sciences  
LHL 119  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013  
Phone: (205) 934-2230  
Email: [mverchot@uab.edu](mailto:mverchot@uab.edu)

### Vice-president/President-elect

Ellen Sayed  
University of South Alabama  
Charles M. Baugh Biomedical Library  
Mobile, AL  
Phone: (251) 460-7850  
Email:  
[essayed@jaguar1.usouthal.edu](mailto:essayed@jaguar1.usouthal.edu)

### Secretary

Michael Fitts  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Lister Hill Library of the Health  
Sciences  
LHL 115  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013  
Phone: (205) 934-3306  
Email: [fitts@uab.edu](mailto:fitts@uab.edu)

### Treasurer

Sylvia McAphee  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Lister Hill Library of the Health  
Sciences  
LHL 250  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013  
Phone: (205) 934-2299  
Email: [smcaphee@uab.edu](mailto:smcaphee@uab.edu)

## MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Paul May  
State of Alabama Health Planning &  
Development  
RSA Union Building, Suite 870  
Montgomery, AL  
Email: [paul.may@shpda.alabama.gov](mailto:paul.may@shpda.alabama.gov)

J. Michael Lindsay  
University of South Alabama  
Charles M. Baugh Biomedical Library  
Mobile, AL 36688-0002  
Phone: (251) 460-6894  
Email: [jmlindsay@bbl.usouthal.edu](mailto:jmlindsay@bbl.usouthal.edu)

Jean Liddell  
Auburn University  
Cary Veterinary Medical Library  
Phone: (334) 844-1797  
Email: [liddeje@auburn.edu](mailto:liddeje@auburn.edu)

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### Bylaws/Handbook

Lee Clemans-Taylor  
University of Alabama Huntsville  
Campus  
J. Ellis Sparks, M.D. Medical Library  
Huntsville, AL  
Phone: (256) 551-4405  
Email: [blct@uab.edu](mailto:blct@uab.edu)

### Continuing Education

Lee Vucovich  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Lister Hill Library of the Health  
Sciences  
LHL 119  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013  
Phone: (205) 934-2231  
Email: [lvucoci@uab.edu](mailto:lvucoci@uab.edu)

### Directory

Jana Slay  
Troy University Rosa Parks Library  
252 Montgomery Street  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
Phone: (334) 241-8602  
Email: [jslay@troy.edu](mailto:jslay@troy.edu)

### Liaison

Judy Burnham  
University of South Alabama  
Charles M. Baugh Biomedical Library  
Mobile, AL 36688-0002  
Phone: (251) 460-6888  
Email:  
[jburnham@jaguar1.usouthal.edu](mailto:jburnham@jaguar1.usouthal.edu)

### Membership

Martha Verchot  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Lister Hill Library of the Health  
Sciences  
LHL 119  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013  
Phone: (205) 934-2230  
Email: [mverchot@uab.edu](mailto:mverchot@uab.edu)

### Synapse Co-Editors

Jason Blaine Baker  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Lister Hill Library of the Health  
Sciences  
LHL 119  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013  
Phone: (205) 934-2230  
Email: [jbb42@uab.edu](mailto:jbb42@uab.edu)

Lisa A. Ennis  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Lister Hill Library of the Health  
Sciences  
LHL 119  
1530 3rd Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013  
Phone: (205) 934-6322  
Email: [lennis@uab.edu](mailto:lennis@uab.edu)

### Web Coordinator/List Moderator

Justin Robertson  
University of South Alabama  
Charles M. Baugh Biomedical Library  
Mobile, AL 36688-0002  
Phone: (251) 460-7045  
Email: [jroberts@bbl.usouthal.edu](mailto:jroberts@bbl.usouthal.edu)

## Utilizing Emerging Technologies in Medical Libraries

John Paul Mussleman, Jr.  
jpmussleman@bama.ua.edu  
Robert Avant Student Essay Award

As is the case with almost all libraries right now, medical and health science libraries are in the midst of great changes brought on largely by advances in technology. While the transition and evolution of library services and holdings occurs, many librarians are experiencing the anxiety and uneasiness that is to be expected anytime a human moves from the known and familiar into uncertain and changing conditions. Countering the fear of change is the excitement at the vast array of new services and products that medical librarians will soon be able to and are already beginning to offer to patrons. Library services and products such as blogs, RSS feeds, and multi-media holdings created and maintained by utilizing the newest technologies will not only afford patrons greater service, but will also make many aspects of the librarian's job easier and the library's services richer and more seamless. This paper discusses and explores some of the ways that librarians can, should, and do use new technologies for providing greater service to patrons.

One of the most significant changes that new technology, namely online technology, has brought to libraries is the ability to carry in mass, or for the first time, totally new works or works in formats in which they have not existed in the past. For instance, until only recently a medical student learning about gastric surgery would have probably only expected to find information in the medical library about gastric surgery in medical library monographs, journals, and other traditional library holdings. It is now possible for medical students and any patron to access online video of physicians performing gastric surgery. There are currently websites that house videos of various medical procedures and these types of videos would be and are valuable pieces of the collections at medical libraries. Along these same lines, as more and more classes are taught online in multiple formats, medical librarians should contact professors and physicians and seek to archive the classes and demonstrations so that they can be accessed by library patrons in the future. All of these materials can be stored in digital format on a hard drive eliminating the need for providing shelf space for large illustrated books recounting procedures or CDs, DVDs, or VHS cassettes.

Beyond enabling new services to be provided to medical students and the general public, emerging and future technologies do and will allow for librarians to provide point of care information for clinicians and all other physicians and healthcare workers. The first and perhaps most obvious way that librarians will be able to provide greater service to physicians in the clinical environment is by providing remote access to the libraries online collections. When providing online point of care information the librarian's mission continues to be to provide the best and most reputable and reliable resources to the patrons; however new duties do arise. Among the new duties are depth indexing and cataloging. Many times those seeking information in the clinical environment do not have time to peruse an eight hundred page medical book or a 10,000 page website looking for the one piece of information they need. Librarians, by depth indexing books, journals, websites, etc., can insure that with a relatively simple search the physician is able to quickly go right to the information which they are seeking. Another service that

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## Essay (continued from p.5)

librarians should provide for point of care patrons is to see to it that online information is formatted and packaged so that it can be accessed through current, new, and even yet to be released portable technologies. Librarians must keep abreast of any new devices for accessing online information coming to the market and periodically evaluate whether the prevalence of the new technology is such that the online material at the library should be formatted in such a manner that it is retrievable on the new devices.

There are many new technologies available to medical librarians for use in enhancing their websites. One of the most frequently employed new technologies is the blog. A blog on a medical library's website allows for librarians to deliver, in numerous formats, a wide variety of information to its patrons. Though the blog is important in that it allows the library to speak to its patrons, perhaps equally important is the fact that it provides a means for patrons to speak to the librarians. Enabling the "comments" feature at the end of blog posts will allow for librarians to receive patron feedback, advice, suggestions, and criticisms.

RSS feeds are another important tool for library websites and ILSes. RSS feeds are useful for many things including alerting patrons when a work on their subject of interest has arrived in the library. RSS feeds can also be used to notify patrons and the library staff when there are updates to the library's blog.

New technologies have thus far proven to be a friend for medical librarians and valuable tools for the patrons of medical libraries. New technologies, while proving themselves to be immensely useful in medical libraries, have not provided any indication that they are ready to take the place of librarians (no more than hammers are ready to take the place of carpenters). It seems to me that medical librarians are left with an easy decision to make: either choose to live in anxiety because of the presence of new technologies and refuse to explore and utilize them (in turn losing patrons), or to get involved with the excitement and utilize the new technologies to provide patrons with seamless, rich, and outstanding new resources and services.



## News (continued from p. 2)



Clista Clanton, Medical Librarian at the University of South Alabama Biomedical Library, has been selected as a member of the EBSCO MLA Annual Meeting Grant Jury of the Medical Library Association for 2006.

Judy Burnham, Associate Director and Medical Librarian at the University of South Alabama Biomedical Library, has been accepted in the Academy of Health Information Professionals at the Distinguished level. In addition, she has been selected as chair of the Estelle Broadman Academic Medical Librarian of the Year Award Jury.



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Ellen Sayed, Medical Librarian at the University of South Alabama Biomedical Library, has been accepted as a member of the Academy of Health Information Professionals at the Distinguished level. In addition, Ellen has been appointed to the Outreach to Health Professionals Committee of the Southeastern Atlantic/National Network of Libraries of Medicine.

## [DRAFT Minutes] ALHeLA 2005 Annual Business Meeting

ALHeLA Business Meeting  
Tuesday, November 15, 2005  
Auburn, AL

1. Call to Order: President Martha Verchot called the meeting to order at 8:39 am.
2. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from last years Annual ALHeLA meeting from November 16, 2004 were approved.
3. Treasurer's Report: Sylvia McAphee presented the committee with a treasurer's report.
4. Committee Reports
  - a.) Bylaws: Ellen Sayed-No report.
  - b.) Directory: Jana Slay-No report
  - c.) Publicity/Liaison: No report (newer committee formed this year will come up with charge and mission statement)
  - d.) Membership: 47 paid members
  - e.) Web Coordinator: Justin Robertson- No Report
  - f.) Members-at-Large: Justin Robertson, Paul May, Paula Barnette-Ellis reported that there were no submissions for the grants this year
5. Old Business
  - a.) 2005 Annual Meeting-Cindy Mitchell provided group with a preliminary report including contributing vendors (EBSCO, Rittenhouse, and Elsevier). 15 attended luncheon, 24 attended banquet, 12 attended Raptor Tour, 14 attended Welcome Reception, 13 attended morning CE, 15 attended afternoon CE, 30 attended business meeting.
  - b.) CE Report-Lee Vucovich- provided 1 morning CE and 1 afternoon CE so that we could better provide a MLA course
6. New Business
  - a.) Nominating Committee-Geneva Bush Stagg-thanked Jodi and Jie Li (committee members) and distributed 2006 Nominating Committee Report and the new slate of officers were approved.
  - b.) Health InfoNet/Go Local-Kay Hogan-Smith- thanked all of those who helped and made the September 30th Live Date a reality. (this made us the 6th site in the nation to go up). Introduced Paul Mussleman a student from SLIS who worked on the project. In addition special thanks was given to Paul May, Lee Vucovich and Justin Robertson for all of their helped but stressed that they could use more volunteers to help keep records up to date.
7. Announcements-None
8. Presentations-Past ALHeLA presidents were called up and presented with poinsettia plants.

## Draft Minutes (continued from p.6)

Martha Verchot was presented with a plaque for her service as President. In addition the CE Instructors were presented with thanks and a gift.

9. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:10am.

Submitted by,  
Michael S. Fitts, Acting Secretary

## Photos from 2006 Annual Meeting



*Photos from upper left clockwise: Pat Higginbottom, Dale Prince, Paul Musselman reading his essay and Lunch*

## How emerging technological advances could affect providing medical information in the future?

Fletch Bowling

Robert Avant Student Essay Award

The onslaught of technological advances could induce serious financial hardship on a medical libraries' budget if not properly managed and this in turn would impact a library's ability to provide its patrons with the information they seek. Providing access to medical information should be the library's primary mission, not spending resources supporting this months latest gee wiz pda/e-reader/phone that plays Frank Sinatra ring tones. Of course the library needs to invest in certain level of technology to meet the expectations of it's patrons but that does not mean it has to invest in every new technological advance the very minute it is released. For example many libraries have wireless internet access for patrons and this technology has become so widespread that patrons have come to expect it. The problem with this technology is that approximately 6+ years after its introduction it is still evolving which requires continuous investment to remain compatible with patrons' client devices such as laptops and pdas. Some of the original wireless access points cost thousands of dollars each and were compatible only with a wireless network adapters manufactured by the same vendor. If your patron did not own that vendors network adapter card, the library would have to provide it for the system to work at all. The second generation (802.11a) wireless access points were never widely adopted because of cost and while the third generation (802.11b) was accepted, it was quickly supplanted by the 4th generation (802.11g). The next generation is as of this writing about 2 years away yet there are already several different interim proprietary standards by various manufacturers. To get the rated speed and range of a particular vendor's standard you must use that vendor's access point and network adapters much like the first generation. The big difference now is that the cost has come down tremendously so implementation may be desirable to get the longer range and higher speeds but this is a judgment call your library must make.

To help guild the decision making process, there are several techniques your library can use to reduce the risk of implementing new and emerging technology. New technology is announced and marketed via white papers, traditional print publications, industry analysts, and increasing by way of e-zines and bloggers. Though it is easy to learn about new and emerging technology through these channels, one must be careful and take this information with a grain of salt until you have some idea of the credibility of the source. Using an old idea from collection development, one learns to rate the reviewer/source of the information and there are several ways you can do this. A good way with traditional print and e-zines is to look at their past reviews of technology and analyze their track records. How many glowing reviews of new technology that turned out duds have they done? Ask your systems department about past technology that failed to perform and then see who did the positive reviews vs the more critical reviews. Do this enough times and patterns will begin to emerge that will lead you to sources you can trust. A common trend with e-zines and technology news websites is to allow the reader to respond to the reviewer, rate the review or even rate the reviewer. A well known technology news site, Cnet.com allows readers to respond to reviews and news articles. A fairly new and very popular site is Dig.com where the readers are quite vocal and are very quick to point out inaccuracies in reviews by casting a "dig" or "no dig" vote along with comments. These votes are used like a weighting system to

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## Essay (continued from p.8)

determine article placement on the site but the exact mechanism is unknown and subject to much debate. While Epinions.com reviews more than just new technology, it is mentioned because not only are products reviewed and rated but so are the reviewers themselves. The reviewers are given a score that shows how many readers “trust” them in a system that works much like the rating system used at Amazon.com. These rating systems allow the reader to quickly judge the quality of both the review and the reviewer thereby saving the time it would take to read enough past reviews to form one’s own judgment.

Another technique to reduce your library’s risk to new technology is modeling. Modeling is small scale implementation of a new technology to see if it is viable and fits in with your existing environment. Small scale implementation will also limit your cost in case things do not work out. Setup a kiosk to allow staff and patrons to sample the technology and be sure and solicit their feedback. A word of caution involving new, unproven technology: If the technology involves networking in anyway, do not place the technology on your production network but rather a small secondary private network that will not harm patrons or staffers in case the technology fails and gets out of control. When dealing with networking technology, a small very harmless looking device can instantly disrupt many users and bring their workflows to a dead stop. A small secondary network can be built very inexpensively so there is no good reason not to use it when dealing with unproven technology.

Emerging technology will certainly affect the way we provide information in the future and hopefully it will make it easier and more convenient for patrons to access it. A library needs to implement it wisely rather than implementing technology for technology’s sake. One should remember that our reason to exist is to serve our patrons with the information they seek, not the latest ring tones.

### From the Editors:

Greetings all! We hope you enjoy this issue and that you all will have lots of ideas and suggestions for the future issues. As the annual meeting at Orange Beach showed, we are a dynamic and creative organization with lots of ideas and talent and the newsletter should definitely reflect that!

Have an idea for an article or column? Let us know! Suggestions and comments -- let us hear them!

Lisa  
[lennis@uab.edu](mailto:lennis@uab.edu)

What Lisa says is true, we do hope you enjoy this issue and that you will provide us with feedback and ideas for enhancements and columns....

Jason  
[jbb42@uab.edu](mailto:jbb42@uab.edu)

## More Photos from 2006 Annual Meeting



Ellen Sayed presents President Cindy Mitchell with plaque for service



Kay Hogan Smith presents Steven MacCall with service award



Speaker Dr. Linda Roussel from the College of Nursing at the University of South Alabama



Nelle Williams wins "really cool" bear made by Geneva Bush Staggs

