

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

With the beautiful, dry, warm weather, it is hard for me to believe it is autumn already. Hard, that is, until I look around our library and see the many students working diligently, and librarians rushing off to orientations, classes and outreach events. Yes, it is September. And September is the time to be sure you have registered for the joint Southern Chapter/ALHeLA meeting, Making the Magic Flow, at beautiful Ross Bridge Resort in suburban Birmingham. There are wonderful opportunities for networking with colleagues, attending valuable CE classes, seeing papers and posters about the work your colleagues are doing, and hearing some dynamic speakers as well. For all the activities offered, please see the [meeting website](#).



ALHeLA will have its annual meeting and lunch on Thursday, October 30, from 12:00-2:00. You can choose to attend the full conference, one day only, or only the ALHeLA lunch; please register online [here](#) or click [here](#) for more registration information. Remember, the “early bird discount” deadline is September 26. The annual meeting is the one time yearly, all of us in health sciences libraries gets the opportunity to mingle and get to know each other better. I hope to see you all there! With the numerous activities the fall brings to

all of us, the executive board is experimenting with models to meet virtually, at least for some meetings. That will allow more people to participate, we hope. Watch for a report on the “experiment” at our annual meeting. September also brings hurricane season to our area (as I write this, Ike is looming). This brings a reminder of the importance of disaster planning. ALHeLA member Jie Li, from University of South Alabama is the Alabama representative of the RAC Emergency Preparedness Committee. According to the NN/LM SEA, the RAC Emergency Preparedness Committee will provide leadership in promoting emergency preparedness, continuity of service and follow-up reporting for events. Please be sure to read her article in this issue of the Synapse, and watch for ways our organization can support this initiative that will be so beneficial for all. For more information see, <http://nmlm.gov/sea/about/emergencyrac.html>.

As this will be my last column as ALHeLA president, I want to thank the executive board for their enthusiasm and support of all ALHeLA initiatives. I have truly enjoyed working with all of you.



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2008 SCMLA /ALHeLA Joint
Annual Meeting
Making the Magic Flow

Birmingham, AL

October 26 - 30, 2008



You are invited to join your colleagues from throughout the southeast for five magical days of learning, sharing and networking at the SCMLA/ALHeLA Joint Annual Meeting, Sunday, October 26th through Thursday, October 30, at the [Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa](#) in Birmingham. See the conference blog for unfolding details. ALHeLA will meet on Thursday, October 30th for lunch and business. ALHeLA members will be able to register online for the entire conference, a one day package, or the ALHeLA meeting/lunch alone.

The theme, Making the Magic Flow, was selected to capitalize on Birmingham, the Magic City. We hope our meeting will provide magic in the way of new information and connections with friends. Dealing with the overwhelming level of information available and moving forward is really the theme covered by all of our speakers.

In addition to the numerous contributed paper presentations and posters, our invited speakers include:

- **Peter Morville**, leader of the consulting firm **Semantic Studios**, and author of [Ambient Findability: What We Find Changes Who We Become](#).
- **David Levy**, Professor at the Information School, at the University of Washington and author of [Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age](#).
- **Rachel Singer Gordon**, speaker and web expert and author of several books including, [What's the Alternative? Career Options for Librarians and Info Pros](#).
- **MJ Tooley** at the Hospital Librarians Luncheon speaking on "Investment Strategies for Hospital Librarians" and providing an update to the "MLA Vital Pathway Project."

The conference hotel, Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa has gorgeous rooms, facilities and grounds. Wireless access is available for \$9.95/day. The conference rates of \$169/night plus taxes and will be available through September 26th, so please make your reservations early. If you call for your reservation, use the code **SCMSCMA** to get the conference rate. Subject to availability, you can get the same rate on rooms for the Friday & Saturday nights before and after the meeting. The cutoff date for those nights is September 1, 2008.

ALHeLA offers scholarships to attend our meeting. Please take a look at the scholarships described on the ALHeLA website. Links are listed below. The deadline for the Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support is **September 10, 2008**. Essays must be submitted no later than **September 17, 2008** for the Robert Avant Student Award.

Some of you may remember our last joint meeting with the Southern Chapter of the Medical Library Association. The meeting was held in Mobile in October of 2000 and was a special anniversary year for both organizations. It was ALHeLA's 20th anniversary and SCMLA's 50th. Many things have

changed since then (Did any of us even read a blog then or know what it was?), but this meeting promises to be just as “magical”. Please join us!

For questions and additional information, please contact Nelle Williams, Program Chair, nwilliam@cchs.ua.edu (205) 348-1364.

For additional information, registration, etc, please go to the following links:

2008 Conference Blog - <http://www.lhl.uab.edu/scmla2008/>

2008 Online Registration - <https://www.acteva.com/go/scmla2008>

2008 Continuing Education Courses - http://www.lhl.uab.edu/scmla2008/?page_id=9

ALHeLA Student Grant - <http://southmed.usouthal.edu/library/alhela/2008alhelastudent.pdf>

Scholarship for Librarians with Limited Institutional Support (SLLIS) - <http://southmed.usouthal.edu/library/alhela/2008alhelastis.pdf>



Conference Registration Award

The Robert Avant Student Award was instituted to encourage students from the University of Alabama, School of Library and Information Studies to attend the Alabama Health Libraries Association Annual Meeting. This year’s meeting is a joint meeting with the Southern Chapter Medical Library Association Annual Meeting on October 26 - 30th at Ross Bridge Resort in Birmingham. The meeting includes plenary speakers Peter Morville, David Levy, and Rachel Singer Gordon as well as great CE opportunities. The winner of this award will receive funding for one CE, meeting registration, and a food stipend. Accommodations for up to three nights at Ross Bridge are also available if the award recipient lives in Tuscaloosa or in any other city outside the Birmingham metropolitan area. The winning essay will be printed in an issue of Synapse and may be presented in person at the ALHeLA Business Lunch on Thursday, October 30th.

To apply for this award, a student should submit an original essay (not related to a school assignment) to vgordon@uab.edu on one of the following topics: 1) How are health sciences libraries managing changes in technology and/or digital content? 2) How can hospital or health sciences librarians collaborate with other health care professionals? 3) How are hospital and/or health sciences libraries providing outreach or marketing of their services? The deadline for applying is September 17th.

See <http://southmed.usouthal.edu/library/alhela/2008alhelastudent.pdf> for more information on applying for this award. Details about the Southern Chapter Medical Library Association and Alabama Health Libraries Association 2008 Annual Meeting are available at <http://www.lhl.uab.edu/scmla2008>.

News from Around the State

University of South Alabama Biomedical Library

New Staff

Robert Britton has joined the staff of the Biomedical Library as the new Electronic Resources/ Collection Development Librarian. He is a May, 2008 graduate of the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, and also holds a BA in Asian Studies from Alabama. In addition, Robert has extensive coursework in Mandarin Chinese at Feng Chia University of Taichung, Taiwan.

Working in the Technical Services Department, Robert will be managing the electronic resources in the Biomedical Library and coordinate acquisition and collection development of print and electronic resources. He will also participate in reference services and act as library liaison to several departments on campus.



Robert Britton

Medical Association State of Alabama Annual Meeting

For the seventh year, USA Biomedical librarians hosted the Cyber Café at the Medical Association State of Alabama (MASA) Annual Meeting this past May providing attendees with laptops to check their email, edit presentations, learn about new technologies, and to have access to the library's information resources. USA Biomedical Library also updated [The Cyber Café homepage](#) with current information to support patient care needs and with updated links to free full-text online articles and books, PDA resources, and information about current technologies.



USA Librarians Justin Robertson, Andrea Wright, and Beverly Rossini staffed the Cyber Café at the Medical Association State of Alabama (MASA) Annual Meeting this past May in San Destin, Florida.

Librarian Justin Robertson, Assistant Director for Public Services, presented a technology symposium "Internet Resources for Clinicians" giving doctors an in-depth look at Internet tools they could use for statistical information, search engines specific to locating medical information, and tools for promoting health literacy. Andrea Wright and Beverly Rossini staffed the Cyber Café, and Robbie Runderson provided technical support.

The library's participation was made possible through a grant received from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine/Southeastern Atlantic Region to support this project. MASA also contributed funding to the effort.

USA Biomedical Librarians Andrea Wright, Beverly Rossini, and Judy Burnham provided library instruction for high school students enrolled in the 2008 STARS (Student Training for Academic Reinforcement in the Sciences) and STRIPES (Special Training to Raise Interest and Prepare for Entry into the Science) programs. These enrichment programs are managed through the University of South Alabama Center for Healthy Communities' Center for Excellence and funded

through a grant from the National Center on Minority and Health Disparities. Dr. Hattie Myles, Assistant Dean for Educational Enrichment in the Department of Special Programs at the USA College of Medicine directs the STARS and STRIPES program at the University of South Alabama campus.

Students from Mobile County Public School System who demonstrate an interest in math and science and a desire to attend college and become health care providers are invited to commit to the academic enrichment program at the end of their high school freshman year. Along with instruction in advanced math and science, STARS and STRIPES students are mentored in communication and study skills and introduced to issues affecting minority health disparities during the three-phase, three-year program. Students conclude their involvement after their high school senior year with successful entry into college and ultimately a career in the health sciences.

USA Baugh Biomedical librarians developed their curriculum for the STARS and STRIPES students to include information literacy and instruction in refining a research topic; developing search strategies; utilizing the Alabama Virtual Library, various databases, and finding aids to access and organize information related to health disparities. Students also described and recorded personal health histories in a family tree.

This is the first year the Biomedical Library has contributed to the effort.

Work Together to Prepare for Disaster

After Katrina, National Network of Libraries of Medicine Southeast Region (NNLM/SEA) realized that libraries need to prepare for disasters. So it took the initiative to work with its network members to prepare for emergency regionally.

In March 2008, the NNLM/SEA established an Emergency Preparedness Committee, which is a NNLM/SEA Regional Advisory Committee. The Emergency Preparedness Committee consists of members from all NNLM/SEA network member states with Daniel Wilson as chair and Beth Wescott as ex-officio.

The RAC Emergency Preparedness Committee will provide leadership in promoting emergency preparedness, continuity of service and follow-up reporting for events. Committee members will:

1. Assist the SEA with developing and implementing a regional emergency preparedness plan to ensure continuity of service for Network members.
2. Serve as regional coordinators for emergency preparedness activities in the state.
 - a. Promote emergency preparedness in individual libraries and the state.
 - b. When necessary, work as part of the regional emergency team to ensure continuation of services and recovery to affected Network members(s) in the state.
 - c. Provide the SEA office with follow-up and reporting of events following a disaster to include a description of the incident, the response, follow-up activities, and lessons learned.
3. Recommend improvements and new avenues for the SEA to promote and delivery emergency preparedness/disaster recovery support to Network members.

The committee had its first meeting on May 28, 2008 at St. Petersburg, FL. During the meeting, Dan Wilson gave a presentation: Introduction to the NN/LM Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan. During his presentation, Dan discussed emergency preparedness, services continuity and what state coordinators may do to prepare the state for emergency. Committee members reported what happened in their own states on emergency preparedness.

NN/LM encourages libraries for form partnerships to back each other during emergency. Libraries need to maintain an up-to-date disaster plan and to identify a back-up library for service continuity after disaster. For small libraries that don't have a partner library, remember the number 1-800-DEV-ROKS. This is the NN/LM's phone number. If your library's service is interrupted by disaster, either natural or otherwise, you may call this number for your patrons' information needs.

Your disaster plan does not need to be complicated. You may simply include the four key elements in your disaster plan:

1. Risk assessment
2. Human safety
3. Preservation of unique resources
4. Service continuity which includes access to online materials, reference assistance, ILL and access to print core textbooks.

For service continuity planning, you may include:

1. Determine your essential services
2. Plan for continuation of your essential services
3. Determine your essential resources
4. Develop a continuity of access plan for your essential resources

The National Library of Medicine has reached agreement with some publishers that, after a disaster, NLM will provide access to about 300 clinical journals for seven days to the medical libraries that their services have been interrupted by disasters. The areas of the journals include emergency medicine, pediatrics and infectious diseases.

Statewide Cooperation

T. Scott Plutchak, director of the Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences, University of Alabama at Birmingham and Judy Burnham, Director of Biomedical Library, University of South Alabama, have had preliminary talks that the two libraries will become partner libraries to back each other for services continuity if either library's service is interrupted. The two libraries will also serve as back up libraries for hospital libraries in the northern and southern parts of Alabama respectively. Planning on back each other is under way. Alabama Health Sciences Libraries Association discussed during its executive board meeting in June to have a plan for statewide cooperation. Jie Li and Lee Vuovich will apply for a grant to organize a state wide emergency preparedness cooperation.

ALHeLA members need to remember 1-800-DEV-ROKS during or after disaster to get assistance for your information needs. Members are also encouraged to use the NN/LM Emergency Preparedness & Response Toolkit <http://nnlm.gov/ep/> to work on their own disaster preparedness plan.

Membership Dues Reminder

If you haven't sent in your membership dues for this year, please consider renewing! The membership runs from January to December and is just \$15.00 for regular membership and \$5.00 for students. Please make checks out to ALHeLA and mail them to Nicole Mitchell at (application forms can be found [here](#)):

UAB Lister Hill Library
LHL 251
1530 3rd Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35294-0013

For more information, visit the the [Membership Information](#) page or contact [Martha Verchot](#) (the Membership officer), [Nicole Mitchell](#), or any of the other ALHeLA officers.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes
Alabama Health Libraries Association
Executive Board Meeting
Friday, May 9, 2008
Montgomery, AL

Members Present:

Katy Allen, Justin Robertson, Trey Lemley, Jie Li, Martha Verchot, Lee Clemans-Taylor, Paul May, Lee Vucovich, Valerie Gordon, Jason Baker, Paul Musselman

- 1) Call to Order – Lee Vucovich
- 2) Approval of Minutes – Paul May
 - a) June 1, 2007 Minutes
 - b) February 8, 2008 Minutes
 - c) Moved by Lee Clemans-Taylor, Seconded by Paul Musselman, minutes APPROVED
- 3) Treasurer's Report – Nicole Mitchell's written report presented by Lee Vucovich
 - a) ALHeLA will pay the commitment to Health InfoNet and continue supporting HealthInfoNet
 - b) As it is a joint annual meeting this year, there will be no incoming funds to offset sponsorship of events at Southern Chapter. There was discussion about what funds are available for exhibiting or CE sponsorship at the joint meeting
 - c) January – renew membership – notifications normally sent in Synapse
 - d) Nicole finalizing changeover and is now set-up with new accounts
- 4) Committee Reports
 - a) Bylaws:
 - (1) Lee C-T continued the discussion from the last Executive Board meeting

about the legalities surrounding the initial seven ALHeLA Board of Directors (appointed at the December, 1989 non-profit incorporation meeting). Throughout the ALHeLA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the terminology: “the Board of Directors” is used. To give one example: in the Bylaws, under Article IV--Officers and Directors, Section Two: Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall consist of the seven (7) individuals who comprised the initial Board of Directors. In the event a vacancy is created on the seven-member Board of Directors, such vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining directors. Another example is in the Bylaws under Article VIII--Amendments. These by-laws may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new by-laws may be adopted by two-thirds of the Board of Directors, provided that at least five (5) days’ written notice is given of the intention to alter, amend, or repeal or to adopt new by-laws at such meeting.....

(2) Lee C-T reported that she contacted Lisa Rains Russell (instrumental in obtaining non-profit incorporation in December 1989). A copy of the email response from Lisa was distributed to all Officers present today. In her response, Lisa commented that the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws may need to be revised to be more like the SC/MLA documents.

(3) Due to the current Officers’ questions and concerns about the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, President Lee Vucovich asked Lee Clemans-Taylor and Trey Lemley (because of his legal background) to look into the issues surrounding the initial Board of Directors to see if and what ALHeLA needs to pursue about this matter. Lee and Trey will report their findings at the next Executive Committee meeting.

(4) Lee Vucovich reported that she had appointed Lee Clemans-Taylor to serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee, and Lee has accepted. According to ALHeLA procedural guidelines, in the event that the immediate past president is unable to serve as the Chair, the president appoints a member of the executive committee to serve as Chair. Lee thanked Lee for taking on this important responsibility.

b) Continuing Education – Katy Allen

(1) Katy Allen reported to the committee that given the joint meeting, SCMLA Professional Development members were managing CE courses this year. Jason Baker from that group has asked how ALHeLA will help. There are several options to consider.

(2) One option is to subsidize or sponsor one CE. If we have financial limits to consider, the SCMLA Professional Development members have chosen very affordable courses. ALHeLA could fully fund one, or subsidize a particularly costly CE.

(3) Another option might be to act as the agency for awarding conference registration plus the cost of one CE to a Southern Chapter member. One of the CE instructors has requested this instead of any kind of honorarium. Discussed idea of routing this SCMLA award through ALHeLA member’s at large committee. This idea was discussed and rejected since SCMLA has its own award committee.

(4) The committee discussed these possibilities, including how the ALHeLA finances will be affected, and how much can we promise to this, especially given the fact that we are not taking in money this year. There was also some discussion if there would be any obstacles for ALHeLA to award a Southern Chapter member, rather than just ALHeLA members, per the request of the CE instructor foregoing his honorarium. This issue was not resolved. The options remain on the table for discussion.

c) Members-at-Large – Valerie Gordon

(1) Updated Robert Avant Flyer

(2) Prize change -- stipend of up to \$100 total for eligible food expenses. The student registration rate is \$95. Discussed idea of publicizing award at regional library schools but decided to limit award & publicity to SLIS students.

(3) Trey Lemley made motion to limit this year’s Robert Avant Student Award to SLIS students; Jason Baker seconded the motion and it carried.

d) Directory – Jana Slay – Lee Clemans-Taylor is working with Jana

- e) Liaison Activities – Kay Smith – reported by Paul May and Lee Vucovich
- (1) SHPDA distributed information in 8 weekly newspapers, 15 twice, 3 times in the weekly newspapers. Also distributed through State Employees Insurance Board, Alabama State Employees Association, and the State Personnel Office.
Health InfoNet of Alabama:
 - (2) Work continues on Go Local. Several new selectors and auditors at USA and UAB added.
 - (3) Statistics:
 - (a) 3498 approved (public) records in the database
 - (b) 93 records currently awaiting review
 - (c) 419 records audited since first of the year
 - (d) Avg. # of site visitors per month 1st quarter 2008 – 1654, an increase from last quarter.
 - (4) Reports filed with NLM in April, including annual self-assessment and quarterly report. Self-assessment sampled results of searches for specific topics (cancer, diabetes, financial assistance, mental health, and sexual health) in Morgan, Jefferson, and Clarke counties as well as statewide. A few surprises, such as a complete lack of community (free or sliding scale) clinics and clinical trials for cancer in Jefferson County – probably due to inconsistent application of service terms. (Please contact me if anyone wants to see reports.)
 - (5) Press release sent to several media outlets across Alabama by Paul May’s assistant at SHPDA, Clark Bruner.
 - (6) Continue to seek new partnership opportunities. Currently working with UAB School of Education, Health Education Dept. to provide students with “community service” hours required by the school. (They help maintain the Go Local database, and work at exhibit events.) Also working with School of Nursing to produce a series of presentations at public libraries (possibly with funding from Libraries for the Future).
 - (7) Exhibits:
 - (a) Nursing research conference – February 21-23, 2008 (NNLM SE/A exhibit award -\$1,807.00, \$780.00 spent on Health InfoNet promotional items)
 - (b) Alabama Public Health Association annual meeting – April 8-9, 2008 (NNLM SE/An exhibit award - \$1742.50, spent \$1597.59.)
 - (c) Alabama Library Association Annual Meeting – April 22-25, 2008 (NNLM SE/A exhibit award - \$1623.00, \$824.61 spent on Health InfoNet promotional items and other needs such as replacement bulbs for display.)
 - (d) Other non-funded exhibits included:
 - Chinese New Year Festival, Birmingham, February 2, 2008
- 5) Membership – Martha Verchot
- a) There are very few renewed members. She will send out e-mail reminders for Dues collection. Notice has been put up in Synapse
 - b) Motion to change dues to \$20 (Paul May/Jason Baker). Lee Vucovich moves to delay change. Discussions held, issue tabled until next meeting.
- 6) Synapse – Jason Baker – moved to a 3 times a year publishing schedule. There is not a lot of content coming in, so ideas are needed. Would like information about hospital librarians to put a spotlight on them. Membership asked Martha Verchot to send out questions to members along with the membership renewal e-mails. Jason Baker will work with her on this.
- 7) Web Coordinator – Justin Robertson – nothing to report other than the possibility of working on

- redesigning the site.
- 8) List Moderator – Paul Musselman
No problems to report. All spam is being effectively caught before it is sent out but there is a lot of it. Paul mentioned it might be a good idea to have some guidelines for what constitutes appropriate content for the list (he mentions this in light of the fact that not long ago he had a request from someone to post a job opening to the list). Paul will draft guidelines for the discussion list to be reviewed at the August meeting of the ALHeLA executive committee.
 - 9) Old Business – Jie Li
 - a) NNLM -wants to have a disaster plan for the region. Have grants available if needed.
 - b) Judy and Scott had discussions about UAB and USA. Lister Hill will partner with Northern Alabama, and USA will partner with Southern Alabama. Discussion held. Ji shared an example of a signed memorandum of understanding.
 - c) Jie Li is working on Biomedical Libraries Disaster plan. Discussions were held about other libraries. She was asked to create an article for Synapse about this, and will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.
 - 10) New Business –
 - a) The executive board discussed possibilities for virtual meetings so more librarians could participate. Justin Robertson proposed Skype, which is free. Viewed as a good idea, but existing system. Justin Robertson and Jie Li will prepare to demonstrate it at the next meeting. Discussion
 - b) Lee Vucovich moved (Jason Baker seconded) that ALHeLA provide a stipend of up to \$15.00 for food/candy for the exhibits it sponsors (when NLM is a sponsor, and food cannot be included)
 - c) The motion was passed Other new business tabled until next meeting
 - 11) Announcements – None
 - 12) Adjournment (Lee Vucovich/Jason Baker) – 1:00 pm

From the Editors

It has been a pleasure to assist with editing this, my first, issue of Synapse. I hope that the result of our work on this issue of the newsletter approaches the level of usefulness and professionalism attained by Lisa Ennis and Jason Baker in their role as editors on prior issues of Synapse. I would like to thank former Synapse editor Lisa Ennis for her excellent service as a co-editor to our newsletter. I would also like to thank my current co-editor Jason Baker for his patience and work with me as I learn the ropes of editing Synapse.

“Thank you” to the ALHeLA membership for giving me the opportunity to serve you as a co-editor of our newsletter and thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue of Synapse. I look forward to continuing the excellent work that has been done by others on Synapse in the past, and I am excited about working with Jason and all of the membership to craft the newsletter into being everything we hope for it to be. Please drop me a line anytime with any comments, suggestions, newsletter content, etc.

Again, thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to receiving input from you all.

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