

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

Greetings fellow ALHeLA members! I hope you had a wonderful spring and you are enjoying a joyous summer! Last September we had our annual meeting here at the Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences. Our theme was "Promoting the Diversity of Scholarship and Health Literacy Across Cultures." Our BBQ Meet and Greet was delightful. Dale Prince taught two classes, one on Website Usability and another on PubMed Searching and both were excellent. The banquet at the Fish Market was refreshing and it was a joy to see everyone and relish in the camaraderie. Our guest speaker, Dr. Constance Hendricks, really enjoyed laughing and talking with everyone and said she was impressed with how "at home" everyone made her feel that night. What a compliment! Her talk, *Promoting the Diversity of Scholarship and Health Literacy Across Cultures*, was thought provoking and enlightening. The business meeting went well and I really enjoyed our lively lunch conversations. I know that this year's annual meeting will be a blast as well! Speaking of which, this year's meeting will be held November 3-4, 2011 in on the Troy University—Montgomery Campus in Montgomery, AL. Jana Slay is working on the meeting planning particulars as we speak. I am sure it will be wonderful as always. There will be more details to come about this year's meeting soon.



The executive committee has been working on several pertinent issues at our virtual meetings this year. One major issue was the pressing need to update the ALHeLA bylaws. Please see Lee Clemans-Taylor's and Nelle Williams' article below on page 3 for the latest progress in this area. We will keep you posted on what we find out about our status.

Another item discussed at our last virtual meeting was the SEA Currents article entitled "NLM & Maryland Institutions to Collaborate on Education Initiatives for Librarians." It can be found here: <http://nml.gov/sea/newsletter/2011/06/nlm-maryland-institutions-to-collaborate-on-education-initiatives-for-librarians/>

The gist of this piece is that the National Library of Maryland (NLM) and 3 other Maryland institutions have partnered together to "enhance the training of librarians and to improve the public's access to, and understanding of, health information." This is something that I think ALHeLA could do as well. We have at our different schools representatives who could come together to form a method of understanding (MOU) within ALHeLA in order to bring about the type of collaboration for our librarians and staff in Alabama that representatives from the National Library of Medicine, the Health and Human Services Library at the University of Maryland at Baltimore, the University of Maryland at College Park, and the Universities at Shady Grove did in Maryland. We could work with NLM to bring this about in our state. What say the membership? Is this something you or your organization would be interested in? Let your executive committee members know. WE WANT AND VALUE YOUR OPINION. The officers will discuss this issue in greater detail at our next meeting.

Finally, if you have not already done so, please do not forget to renew your ALHeLA membership. We need you! Please see our website for more information about the benefits of membership and a renewal form.

Enjoy your fall!

Sylvia McAphee, ALHeLA President

Alabama Health Libraries Association Executive Committee 2011

OFFICERS

President

Sylvia McAphee
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Lister Hill Library of the
Health Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-2299
smcaphee@uab.edu

Past President

Trey Lemley
University of South Alabama
Baugh Biomedical Library
Mobile, AL
(251) 460-7045
tlemley@bbl.usouthal.edu

Vice-president/President-elect

Jana Slay
Troy University Library
Troy, AL
(334) 370-3258
jslay@troy.edu

Secretary

Inga Moten
University Library & Learning
Resources
Alabama State University
Montgomery, AL
(334) 229-1074
imoten@alasu.edu

Treasurer

Nicole Mitchell
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Lister Hill Library of the
Health Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-2230
anmitch@uab.edu

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Robert Britton
University of South Alabama
Baugh Biomedical Library
Mobile, AL
(251) 460-6894
rbritton@bbl.usouthal.edu

Carolyn Holmes
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Lister Hill Library of the
Health Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-2230
carolynholmes@uab.edu

Elizabeth Laera
Baptist Health System
McMahon-Sibley Medical
Library - Princeton
Birmingham, AL
(205) 783-3087
Elizabeth.Laera@bhsala.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Bylaws/Handbook

Lee Clemans-Taylor
J. Ellis Sparks Library
UAB School of Medicine--
Huntsville Regional Campus
Huntsville, AL
(256) 551-4405
blct@uab.edu

Nelle Williams
University of Alabama
Health Sciences Library
Tuscaloosa, AL
(205) 348-1364
nwilliam@cchs.ua.edu

Continuing Education

Michael Fitts
Lister Hill Library of the
Health Sciences
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-3306
fitts@uab.edu

Directory

Jana Slay
Troy University Library
Troy, AL 36082
(334) 370-3258
jslay@troy.edu

Disaster Preparedness

Jie Lie
University of South Alabama
Baugh Biomedical Library
Mobile, AL
(251) 460-6888
jli@jaguar1.usouthal.edu

Liaison

Kay Hogan Smith
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Lister Hill Library of the
Health
Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-2208
khogan@uab.edu

Membership

Errica Evans
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Lister Hill Library of the
Health
Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-3469
Eevans@uab.edu

Synapse Editors

Robert Britton
University of South Alabama
Baugh Biomedical Library
Mobile, AL
(251) 460-6894
rbritton@bbl.usouthal.edu

Emma O'Hagan
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Lister Hill Library of the
Health Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-2230
ehagan@uab.edu

Web Coordinators

Justin Robertson
University of South Alabama
Baugh Biomedical Library
Mobile, AL
(251) 460-7045
jroberts@bbl.usouthal.edu

Andrea Wright
University of South Alabama
Baugh Biomedical Library
Mobile, AL
(251) 461-1424
awright@bbl.usouthal.edu

List Moderator

Lisa Ennis
University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Lister Hill Library of the
Health
Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(205) 934-3545
ennis@uab.edu

Update from the Bylaws Committee: ALHeLA ByLaws

Co-chairs: Lee Clemans-Taylor, Nelle Williams

Brief Background:

Many times over the past few years, concern has been expressed by ALHeLA Executive Committee members about the need for revision to the outdated ALHeLA Bylaws. A major stumbling block to initiating action in this regard has always been the need to retain legal assistance, with the accompanying costs that would be incurred. The last major revision to the bylaws was in 1989, when ALHeLA was officially incorporated as a non-profit corporation.

Work Accomplished:

The big breakthrough in getting started on a revision happened this way! Nelle Williams, ALHeLA President in 2009 realized that what we needed was right there at her doorstep. The Community Development Law Clinic of the University of Alabama School of Law allows law students, as part of their course work, to volunteer to work on community projects. Nelle subsequently contacted the Law School and much has been accomplished:

- A law student (Gretchen Morgan) was assigned to work on preparing a draft of amended bylaws. A retainer agreement between ALHeLA and the University of Alabama School of Law, Community Development Law Clinic was signed by Nelle Williams (as ALHeLA President).
- In April, 2010, a first draft with amendments to the bylaws was finished. It was reviewed by Nelle Williams and Lee Clemans-Taylor (Co-chairs of the Bylaws Committee). Minor changes were noted and changed. Gretchen provided procedures to follow to elect a new Board of Directors—a new Board is necessary because the existing Board was formed under the outdated bylaws.
- In May, 2010, Gretchen provided a final draft of the bylaws to Nelle Williams, including a conflict of interest statement form (for use with the new Board), and a memo about filing Form 990-N with the IRS, if needed.
- Time ran out during Nelle's term as ALHeLA President to set up a special meeting of ALHeLA members to elect a new Board of Directors due to Gretchen's approaching graduation and the timing of the next ALHeLA annual meeting and election of new officers.

Work in progress:

- Nelle Williams has offered to investigate whether ALHeLA has official tax exempt status or not. Due to recent changes with the IRS, we may need to re-file. Nelle will also pursue clarification about whether the Board of Directors can also serve as the elected officers, and, therefore change annually with newly elected officers.
- Nelle Williams and Lee Clemans-Taylor are planning a meeting (possibly at the next annual meeting in November or by a virtual meeting) to elect a new Board of Directors. Notification will be sent out to the general membership at least ten days before the meeting to elect the new Board. As long as we have the required quorum present (seven members under the existing bylaws), the meeting can proceed.
- Once, the new Board of Directors is elected, they will then meet to approve the amended bylaws.

Goal:

A new Board of Directors and amended bylaws will be in place within the next six months to eight months.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes (cont.)

August 2, 2011

Meeting Minutes:

1. Call to order

Sylvia called the meeting to order at 3:00PM

2. Secretary for the day

Susan DeBruin volunteered to take notes for the meeting

3. Treasurer's update

Requested from Nicole at 3:05PM

We have \$8,000.00 approximately in the budget

4. Membership & Dues

Dues info requested from Errica

Errica sent a reminder out to the list to pay dues; that resulted in 5 additional members paying up. Other members wanted to know whether or not they had paid, so Errica sent out another email letting folks know if they had paid by way of a spreadsheet. Errica has plans to advertise for new members; currently we have 25 members who have paid their dues at this time.

5. Bylaws

Bylaws by Nelle and Lee

Not a lot has been done. Nelle has been consulting with law school here. Nelle is asking for volunteers to read certain sections of the bylaws to help with the process. In addition, the law student that had been helping with the bylaws has just graduated – Nelle & Lee would like to send a check to the law school on her behalf in thanks. Members agreed that would be appropriate.

Need a permanent address for the bylaws – Nelle asked what should that be? Others noted in the chat that UAB was suggested as the permanent address during the last meeting. Nelle also commented that UA HSL is available and has been that in the past. Sylvia noted that there were several suggestions for UAB, asked if we needed to vote. Jana moved that the UAB address be the permanent address for the all ALHeLA matters. Lisa seconded the movement. It was agreed that UAB be used as the permanent address.

Tax Exempt Status – Nelle opened that we may have a problem with our Tax Exempt Status. The IRS does not have a record of our status. In the past, this was not a problem but now the IRS is requiring everyone file. Per Lisa Underwood – we DO have tax exempt status. L.U. gave Nelle a contact to follow up with, but it may cost money to follow up with this contact. Nelle requested permission to pursue this avenue. Sylvia commented that would be worth investigating, and also noted that we have two active Tax ID numbers. There were no objections to Nelle pursuing the matter with the contact from L.U.. Sylvia also confirmed that both Tax ID numbers are federal numbers.

Nelle commented on board members: directors are included in the bylaws. Directors need to be appointed but they can be officers as well. Sylvia and Kay volunteered to read bylaws

6. Continuing Education

Michael Fitts: CME committee is reforming. Mike has submitted to group members evaluations for last year's CME course. Meeting will be held before the end of the month, and he will report back after. Mike asked for any feedback/suggestions at this time...

Nelle suggested Systematic Reviews; mentioned that the University of Pittsburgh does courses on this frequently & it fills up fast

Lee suggested something on MedLine Plus Connect

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes (cont.)

7. ALHeLA 2011 Update

Jana kicks off news here

Looking at Nov 3-4; recommending two days instead of one. She has already reserved a classroom space. She is still researching area & catering for banquet.

8. Possible partnership with ALHeLA and NLM—Please see attachment, was e-mailed to officers on 6/20/2011

Sylvia asked for feedback on this proposal

Lee asked for an explanation of the partnership

Sylvia: it is a way for different libraries in the state to work with NLM to get training and funding for external collaborations

Lisa: sounds nice

Generally positive comments on idea

9. Additional Items

Synapse

Sylvia commented that we'll need to advertise the meeting in next *Synapse*. Sylvia asked for update on *Synapse* from Robert. His line-up is:

- Business meeting minutes
- Treasurer's report
- By-laws
- Tax Exemption Status
- Upcoming Meeting
- CE's for meeting
- News & Notes
- Libraries response to tornadoes
- Robert Avant Scholarship Essay

Sylvia and Robert asked for committee heads to send in stuff to Robert by Aug 15th

Andrea will send scholarship info to Robert

Discussed the brochures/postcards for ALHeLA; will send out copies for everyone to look at and decide if we want to print them. If printed we could have them at ALHeLa exhibits at conferences & meetings; also available at libraries

Sylvia believes that not all members are on the list-serve and we may need to double check that.

Sylvia announced that the website has been redesigned – new: <http://alhela.org>

The new website should have all the current information; please let Andrea know if something is incorrect or if you'd like something added

Jie Li commented that all libraries should be prepared for disasters. Attorney's office is looking at MOU for UAB and USA (?) to back each other up during disasters. UAB has already signed it. Nelle asked about UA HSL needing to sign and MOU; Mike and Jie referred her to Scott, but it is likely that UA HSL would need to sign one with Lister Hill.

April 27, 2011 in Birmingham, Alabama

by Sylvia McAphee

One of the most devastating events since our last issue was the April 27, 2011 tornadoes that struck Alabama. I was at home watching FOX 6 news when everything around my neighborhood got dark and eerily quiet. Raised in Alabama, I had 38 years of tornado weather experience. In the areas of Birmingham where I have always lived, I never really felt unsafe because it was always something that “passed over” Birmingham. We usually got severe lightening and/or thunderstorms at the worst. This time, I knew in my heart something was different.

I could feel it. I went outside to see what it looked like since the weatherman said the storm was right around my area. I could not hear the birds, which was really strange, because they should have been chirping away by this time of the afternoon. It was so hot it was unbelievable. I knew it was time to go into the hall and brace for the storm. My nephew, Kenney, was beside himself with fear because he had never experienced anything like this before. I reassured him that we would be all right and that we were taking all the precautions for a tornado just like the drills he learned in school. That eased his nerves a little bit, but ultimately he wanted more assurance that we would be all right. He is ten and really, really inquisitive! I told him that we should all pray and know that we place our troubles and worries in a higher power because this is out of our hands. After we prayed, it was like a weight had been lifted off of him.

By that time, the storm was right over my house. The winds howled and my house seemed to come alive as the fierce winds crashed into the house. I was stoic as I realized that, just like that, it was over. The storm had passed over us. Thankfully, we had no damage and we all were ok. We were so very blessed. Someone called and said that the streets directly behind me had severe damage and that trees were on roofs, signs were torn down, cars were moved and banged up. The list went on and on. I found out later that not everyone was so lucky.

When I saw what happened in Tuscaloosa, Huntsville, Smithfield, Pratt City, and other areas I was floored. I could not believe the death and destruction. It was heart breaking. All I could do was think about all the people who were without power and had lost so much, and in many cases everything. I cannot imagine trying to find out where a missing loved one might be in a time like that. We had friends and family from all over the country calling, texting, and e-mailing us trying to make sure we were all right. At the library, when we went back to work the next day, everyone was checking on one another to make sure they were ok. We had a couple of people who had some damage, but nothing too severe, thankfully. We also checked on our library community friends and colleagues in the heavy-hit areas to make sure they were all right. We had vendors sending us e-mails or calling us to make sure we were ok.

It is so amazing how the library world could come together at a time of crisis. I was overwhelmed at the amount of concern and genuine human spirit everyone showed in this time of woe for Alabama. It really left me feeling like I should be doing more to help others get back to some sort of normalcy, so I participated in different donation and volunteer drives. It was an experience that I will never forget. It goes to show that librarians and library staff can make a difference by working together and standing up for causes they believe in; causes that bring hope to those who need it the most. Isn't that one of the things that attracted us to this profession: the need to help others and see them connect to the resources and services they need? It's definitely something that makes me proud to do the work that I do and have been doing for 15 years and counting ☺ Let's all look forward to the happy days ahead and all the sharing, caring and support we show one another through networking, friendship, and professional cohesiveness that is the core definition of what ALHeLA represents.

Liaison Committee Report

by Kay Hogan Smith

Congratulations on Expanded ALHeLA "Footprint" Among Health Professionals!

As your Liaison Committee Chair I want to congratulate and thank you all for your efforts in applying for funding and exhibiting at many more health professional association meetings this past year than in the past! This past year ALHeLA went to several professional meetings including MASA, the Alabama State Nurses Association, Alabama Library Association, the Alabama Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, the Alabama Public Health Association, the Alabama Optometric Association and the Alabama Gerontological Association, among others I probably missed. This definitely raises our profile as an organization in addition to that of medical librarians in general and the services we can offer to these professionals.

I especially want to thank Judy Burnham and her crew at USA for keeping the Google Docs spreadsheet of state professional association contacts and meetings up to date for us. Let me know if you would like to be added to those able to view and/or edit this spreadsheet. (You'll need a Gmail account.) We welcome your assistance, but if you don't have time to work on the spreadsheet, you might be interested to see if any meetings will be in your area at which you'd like to exhibit on behalf of ALHeLA. It's a fun way to meet people and get to know their research or clinical information needs!

Upcoming 2011 Annual Meeting

The 2011 ALHeLA Annual Meeting will be November 3rd & 4th at the Troy University--Montgomery Campus. We are planning two exciting continuing education classes, as well as a banquet/business meeting.

For more information, please contact Jana Slay, ALHeLA Vice-president/President-elect, at (334) 370-3258 or at jslay@troy.edu.

Robert Avant Student Award Winning Essay

How Can Health Sciences Libraries Promote Diversity in Library Scholarship and Programming?

by Susan DeBruin

For academically inclined persons like me, the start of a new semester is filled with excitement and anticipation. Students will meet new professors and classmates, face challenges, and grow. Being a new student in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, I noticed something when the professors asked each student to introduce him or herself to the class: a large portion of the students were white females with English or History degrees. It made me wonder about the causes behind this homogeneity, and the possible consequences of the lack of diversity in our class.

Health sciences libraries should be particularly concerned about the lack of diversity in our profession. While there is nothing particularly wrong with being a white female with a non-science degree (hey, that's me!), health sciences libraries need professionals with a variety of backgrounds to meet the diverse needs of their clientele. These libraries need individuals who can speak in medical terms with doctors, who can understand the needs of persons with disabilities, who can help a Spanish speaking patient, who can assess resources for the pharmacy student, and more. Health sciences libraries must also provide an open and welcoming environment to persons from all backgrounds and walks of life, as any library should.

So what can health sciences libraries actually do to promote diversity in library scholarship and programming? That is a question that cannot come even close to being answered by my two-and-a-half page essay. But here are some of my ideas.

To start, health sciences libraries can take an active role in recruiting future library professionals with diverse backgrounds. It is rather impossible to create diverse scholarship and programs without a diverse group of professionals to create them. Recruitment can begin with participation in high school and college career fairs, especially those with a science emphasis. This participation would get students thinking about a career in health sciences libraries at an early stage of their education. Given the rarity of undergraduate library science programs, this exposure is especially critical as students may not even be aware of the educational requirements for the library profession in general or the possibilities of a career in librarianship.

Next, medical library associations can take an active role in promoting diversity by forming special committees to advocate for underrepresented groups. The presence and activities of these committees will help raise awareness of the needs of different groups as well as the benefits of promoting diversity within the profession. Special attention should be given to the process of committee formation so that diverse groups are not merely lumped together in the category of "different."

Finally, medical library professionals need to open (or re-open) the dialogue of diversity. From conference presentations to discussion groups to special programs and library events, the awareness and promotion of diversity should be a topic on everyone's agendas. What does diversity mean? Why does diversity matter? How is the medical library profession supporting or suppressing diversity? Diversity is about more than

Robert Avant Student Award Winning Essay (cont.)

multiculturalism, although that is certainly a large and important factor. It is also about having persons from different academic disciplines, different ages, different genders, and more.

The discussion of diversity needs to be part of a continuous dialog. This dialog will allow library professionals to assess the current atmosphere of diversity and generate creative ideas to foster diversity within scholarship and programming. Health sciences libraries can support this dialog through their administration and management. From hiring practices to budget allocations for service programs, the libraries themselves play a crucial role in the development of diversity within the profession.

The promotion of diversity in library scholarship and programming is critical for health sciences libraries. The wealth of knowledge and experience that the profession may gain by creating an open atmosphere for persons with a variety of backgrounds is immeasurable. Like all libraries, the health sciences library is a communal place for the collection and dissemination of knowledge for the public good. As such, it should be a leader in terms of commitment to the promotion of diversity in its scholarship and programming.

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From the Editors

Thanks to all of you who contributed material to *Synapse* this go-around. Feel free to send in your news and announcements as they happen and while they are fresh on your mind. We look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming ALHeLA meeting in November. Lastly, we would like to especially thank Andrea Wright, who patiently walked our editors through the process of this newsletter's layout.

-Robert Britton and Emma O'Hagan