



Synapse

ALABAMA HEALTH LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

Volume 1, No. 3

May, 1981

ALHELA Holds First Annual Meeting

Alabama health libraries made a giant leap forward on April 10, 1981, when ALHELA members assembled for the first time in Montgomery. The headquarters of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama was the site for this historic meeting. Thirty-three ALHELA members were treated to an informative and constructive day.

Mr. George Oetting On Continuing Medical Education

The information-packed day began with an enlightening discussion of continuing medical education in the state by Mr. George Oetting, Education Director of MASA. Mr. Oetting stressed the important role that librarians can play in CME activities, especially in developing ways to pool resources among different institutions. He informed the group that continued membership in MASA requires that physicians complete 150 hours of continuing education activities over a three-year period. MASA accredits CME programs in institutions that request such accreditation. Such areas as facilities, programs, and resources are surveyed by accredited physician teams. Mr. Oetting concluded by urging librarians to get involved in CME programs within their own institutions.



Business Meeting

A business meeting took up the remainder of the morning. ALHELA steering committee chairman Lynn Fortney introduced the other members of the steering committee. Ann Smallwood, of the Alabama Hospital Association, was in charge of local arrangements for the meeting (hats off to Ann for a well planned and pleasant meeting!); Richard Frederickson, director of the Lister Hill Library at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, is the membership chairman; Rachel Jones planned the program for the meeting (kudos for the informative program, Rachel!); Bobby Powell is Secretary/Treasurer; Mary Ann Donnell is our "experienced advisor"; and Kathy Dexter is our Synapse Editor. Dick briefly described how ALHELA came into being. As a result of positive responses to a questionnaire sent out to some 150 people across the state, sufficient interest was generated to make the formation of an organization feasible. The membership drive has been going well, with 56 members at the time of the meeting. Bobby Powell reported that the organization has \$570.00 in the treasury.

By-Laws Approved

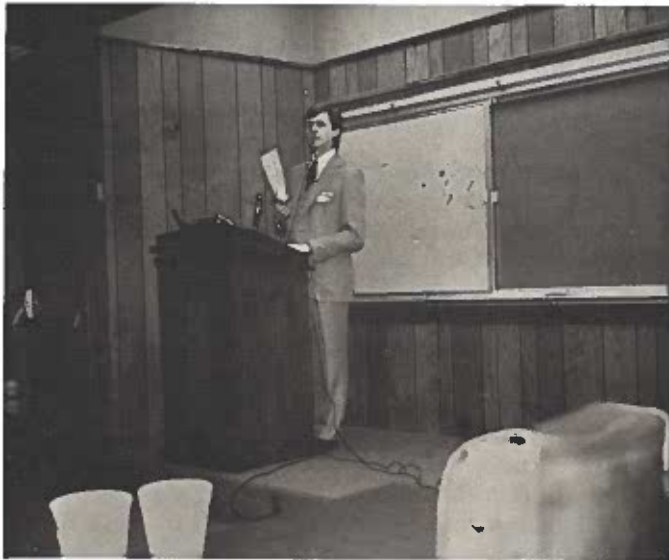
The bylaws were considered on an article by article basis. Copies of the approved bylaws will be sent out to the membership at a later date.

It was decided that the first elections will be held in November. The present steering committee will serve as the first Executive Committee through December 31, 1981. The election will be conducted by mail ballot. Each member will have one vote. (Editor's note: ALHELA members are urged to begin thinking now about supporting ALHELA by serving as officers or committee members. Strong leadership is essential to any organization, and everyone can help out!) (Continued on Page 2)

SYNAPSE is the official publication of the Alabama Health Libraries Association (ALHELA) and is published and distributed by the Southeast Alabama Medical Center, P.O. Drawer 6987, Dothan, Al. 36302.

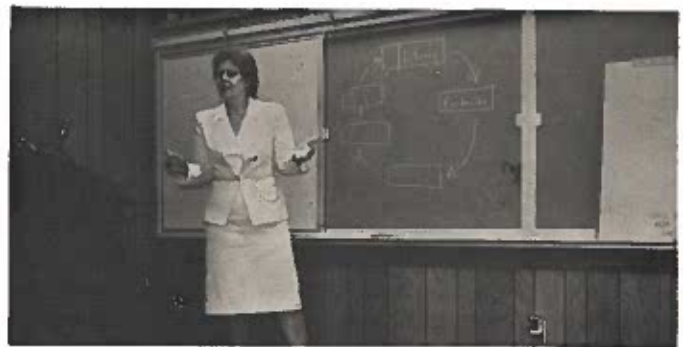
Material For Synapse Solicited

Kathy Dexter, Synapse editor, made an appeal to members to send in material for the newsletter. She stressed that the newsletter belongs to the members and should reflect their activities and interests. General response to the newsletter has been extremely favorable.



Mr. Frank Gannon Discusses JCAH

Following the lunch break, Mr. Frank Gannon, Assistant Administrator of St. Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham, presented a talk entitled, "JCAH Site Visits: What They are and How Your Library Can Help." The purposes, historical review, development of standards, implementation of standards, and summary of the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospitals were given in depth. Mr. Gannon stressed that the entire accreditation process is based on the voluntary participation of each hospital. He outlined the procedures involved in conducting a survey of an institution. He discussed several areas in which the library can assist the hospital as a whole in preparing for the JCAH survey, including maintaining various helpful publications in the library, assisting with inservice and continuing education, updating policy and procedure manuals, and doing research. Much valuable information was gained from Mr. Gannon's presentation and it certainly gave everyone a better idea about what JCAH is all about.



Periodicals Jobbers—What Are They?

Ms. Nancy Rogers of EBSCO Subscription Services, Inc., of Birmingham, answered this important question for ALHELA members. She explained how to evaluate different jobbers by comparing fees, services offered, whether or not personnel are available to offer assistance, and how quickly the jobber responds to problem areas. She also explained the entire process of journal publication and showed how the jobber fits into the picture.

The jobber acts as an intermediary with the publishers, and can save a great deal of time and money for a library, no matter how large or small it is. Ms. Rogers also explained that there are different types of jobbers that specialize in medical publications, school or college publications, etc. The Postal Service plays a big part in the entire periodicals process. Ms. Rogers told how to read a mailing label, and how to track down possible problems with mail delivery, both by the Post Office itself and within the organization. The practical information gained by this presentation clarified a lot of areas in the entire periodical process, and the ALHELA members present enjoyed finding out more about an area that affects everyone.

Future Meetings

The first annual ALHELA meeting adjourned with everyone feeling that the day had been a great success. We are all looking forward to meeting again in November, when it is hoped that even more members will be able to participate.



Letters We Get Letters!

The following letter was received shortly after the last issue of *Synapse* was published. I am always interested in what other health librarians are doing, and I hope *Synapse* readers will find it interesting, too. Madeleine Gardberg at the Mobile Infirmiry was kind enough to share her experiences with us. She writes:

"I just read the new issue of *Synapse* and it got me excited. I think the work you're doing is great. I do hope that you can get some enthusiasm going around the state. I'd like to share some of my experiences with you.

We got Medline in December of 1980. We got to it in a round about way however. A physician happened to mention to me that a new microcomputer in another department of the hospital could likely be adapted to Medline use. In order to try it out, my friend Genny Bush at USA came over and ran a Medline on her code to see if our equipment would work. It did. I was lucky enough to get approval from the Library Committee for some equipment and expenses associated with this project, and the hospital agreed to send me to training. I went to Bethesda in December. When I came back I expected to be proficient in searching but I wasn't. In fact, it has taken me this long just to learn the rudiments of a good search. I think I am learning, though, and it's just a matter of time until I am comfortable with it.

In addition to preparing a bibliography I do quite a bit of other work for my patrons. I usually take the Medline or manual bibliography (which I used in the past and still do to save money) then pull the appropriate references. I then read or scan the abstract or the entire article to see if it is what the patron really wants. Then I look through the articles referenced in that article for additional sources of information that might be helpful. When I'm finished all of this I photocopy all of the important information for my patron.

It might help to do a little explaining. When I was hired by Mobile Infirmiry almost 2 years ago the Library Committee made a decision to have a very current core collection of medical texts and to have a small selection of journals on hand. But the committee felt that to try to duplicate the extensive journal collection of the University of South Alabama would be a great waste of effort and money. This is especially clear when one considers that the clinical collection of USA is a mere 2 miles from us. I found that I could do the maintenance and acquisitions of this library in very little time and had a

lot of time to give extra service to my library patrons. It is a system that is working well. Hospital professionals who have little time in their schedules for unusual problems they encounter in their work often simply ask me if I can find something in the literature to help them. I try to help. I now find that I am doing about 50 literature searches per month. And this includes all of the article reading, reference hunting and photocopying that accompanies each search.

I am lucky that the library is located in a convenient place. This makes it easy for someone to stop in and make a request.

I hope that this sharing of my experiences will be of interest to you or someone else who is a hospital librarian. Please don't hesitate to write or call me if you feel I have left something out.

Again, thanks for being willing to edit the *Synapse*. I feel that it will help a lot of us to know that someone right here in Alabama has some of the same problems and experiences that we do.

Madeleine Gardberg

OFFICIAL RULES For Librarians

Discard Rule No. 1:

If you discard a book, someone will come in and ask for it the next day.

Corollary to Discard Rule No. 1:

If several people ask for a particular book that you don't have, and you subsequently acquire it, no one will ever ask for it again.

Health Reference Librarian's Rule No. 2:

If a doctor asks for an article that he swears appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine* within the past six months, you will probably find that it was published in *J.A.M.A.* three years ago.

Cataloging Rule No. 3:

When cataloging a book, the amount of time spent selecting the perfect subject heading is inversely proportional to the number of people who will actually look under that heading for the book.

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA MEDICAL CENTER OPENS NEW MEDICAL LIBRARY

Moving a library can be exhausting and exhilarating, as SAMC medical library director Kathy Dexter found out this past February. The new 1400-square foot facility, located directly across the hall from the old library, features new modular shelving, double the space of the old area, separate office and workroom, study and reading areas, and an index area. Luckily, the move was relatively uncomplicated. The library's 500+ books and 2,000 bound volumes were transferred within two days, and the entire library was ready for operation within three. Careful prior planning was necessary for the move, and Ms. Dexter will share her experience with anyone who is interested.

On March 19, an open house was held to familiarize SAMC staff and employees with the new library. Approximately 130 people toured the library during a two-hour period.

The arrangement of the library was planned to give the area a spacious look. Ranges of shelving are situated perpendicular to the longest side of the room, with the other half open for reading and study areas. Traffic is channeled past the circulation desk (the rear door is an emergency exit.) The card catalog is located near the entrance, adjacent to the textbooks.

The *Index Medicus* is conveniently located by the Medical Librarian's office, which allows ready access for the librarian, as well as the opportunity to spot and assist puzzled index users. The current journals area features sloping display shelves which are hinged to allow back issues to be stored underneath. The L-shaped circulation desk limits user access to the work room, while allowing library personnel to be readily available to assist users. The work room is separated from the library proper by a glass wall. This allows good visibility of the entire library and enables library personnel to monitor traffic in and out of the library. Adjacent to the work room is the director's office, which offers privacy while still being conveniently located to assist library users.



Since the opening of the new facility, usage has increased dramatically. Attendance figures were up 155% in April. "More and more people are using the library for research and reading than ever before," says director Kathy Dexter. "Since the library is located at the main employee entrance, many people are stopping by on their way to and from work." Usage by physicians has increased as well, since materials are better organized and can be located quickly. (The library is located directly across from the physicians' lounge.) The new library has become a regular feature for groups touring the hospital.

Mr. Steve Phelps, SAMC Administrator, says, "We set out to build and equip a medical library that would be as up-to-date as the Medical Center which many professionals consider to be 'ahead of its town.' That is exactly what we have done."

The computer access to NLM's MEDLARS system is a definite plus as well. Mr. Phelps comments, "The really fantastic thought is that so much of this medical information can be retrieved at a moment's notice. The presence of MEDLARS in our library makes us unique for our section of Alabama. No other hospital library within 100 miles has the system."

SAMC physicians and staff alike have expressed their unanimous approval of the new facility. The Medical Library has become a vital part of this growing institution.



ALABAMA HEALTH LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

1981

NAME _____ DATE _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS _____

JOB TITLE _____

PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS (CHECK ONE) HOME BUSINESS

PHONE NUMBER: HOME _____ BUSINESS _____

DUES: \$10 PER YEAR

SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER (MAKE PAYABLE TO ALHELA) TO:

Ms. BOBBY POWELL
MEDICAL LIBRARY
CARRAWAY METHODIST MEDICAL CENTER
1615 NORTH 25TH STREET
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35234

PLEASE RATE YOUR TOP THREE PREFERENCES FOR PROGRAM TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROLE OF THE HEALTH LIBRARY | <input type="checkbox"/> COPYRIGHT LAWS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH INFORMATION RESOURCES | <input type="checkbox"/> JCAH STANDARDS FOR LIBRARIES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PROMOTING THE LIBRARY TO THE HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR | <input type="checkbox"/> INTERLIBRARY LOAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BASIC LIBRARY TRAINING WORKSHOP | <input type="checkbox"/> NLM GRANT PROGRAM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NETWORKING AND UNION LISTS | <input type="checkbox"/> STATEWIDE COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____ | |

ALHELA SYNAPSE

FORM FOR SUBMISSION OF COPY

1. NAME OF INDIVIDUAL/LIBRARY REPORTING (GIVE MAILING ADDRESS):

2. PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, ACTIVITIES, ETC.:

3. NOTABLE LIBRARY NEWS, NEW PROGRAMS, ACQUISITIONS, GRANTS, ETC.

4. WORKSHOPS, CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN YOUR AREA:

5. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLE YOU ARE WRITING FOR FUTURE SUBMISSION (GIVE ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE):

SUBMIT TO: KATHY DEXTER
DIRECTOR - MEDICAL LIBRARY
SOUTHEAST ALABAMA MEDICAL CENTER
P.O. DRAWER 6987
DOTHAN, AL 36302

EDITOR'S NOTES

By Kathy Dexter



All health library personnel should be aware that the Medical Library Assistance Act (MLAA) (Public Law 89-291) will expire in September 1981 if Congress does not extend authorization for it. Although it is not likely that funds will be eliminated entirely, the amount budgeted stands a good chance of being cut. Congressional hearings will begin soon to consider funding levels for FY 1982. Since 1965 when the bill was enacted, a total of \$127,690,000 has been allocated for the improvement of health information dissemination in the U.S.

The intent of the act was to improve access to all types of health information for health care providers, an ambitious goal which has not yet been fully achieved, though great progress has been made. Many individual institutions have benefited from the Resource Improvement Grants which have enabled them to build basic collections of current textbooks and journals. Consortium grants have made it possible for several institutions to band together for resource sharing.

Improvement of available collections at the community level is vitally important in our own state if we are to achieve the goal of readily accessible materials for health care personnel. Due to the current austerity mood in Congress, it is probable that some funding cuts will be made. Therefore, I urge each of you to do your part to see that the funding levels at least approach those of years past.

Sit down *right now* and dash off a letter or telegram to your senator or representative. The addresses are listed below. Our silence could mean the end of the MLAA at a time when we are just beginning to have an impact on the delivery of health information. Send that letter or telegram TODAY!

Senator Howell Heflin
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4124

Senator Jeremiah Denton
110 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-5744

First District
Rep. Jack Edwards
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4931

Second District
Rep. William L. Dickinson
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2901

Third District
Rep. William Nichols
2417 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-3261

Fourth District
Rep. Tom Bevill
2302 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4876

Fifth District
Rep. Ronnie G. Flipflo
405 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4876

Sixth District
Rep. Albert Lee Smith, Jr.
1723 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4921

Seventh District
Rep. Richard C. Shelby
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2665

(If you don't know which district you are in,
call me at 793-8102 and I'll find out for you!)

AIHeLA Goals and Objectives

At the first AIHeLA steering committee meeting, the following goals and objectives were established:

GOAL: To improve health care for the people of Alabama by the development of an organization which will increase the total information resources available, strengthen existing health libraries, encourage the formation of new libraries, and, through joint effort, utilize more effectively the resources of individual libraries.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To promote the sharing of information resources.
2. To upgrade information resources and services provided by health libraries.
3. To encourage the development of health libraries by making information about the availability of library consulting services more widely known.
4. To provide workshops and educational programs for health library personnel.
5. To facilitate communication among health library personnel, especially those in smaller health libraries, by providing a newsletter, publications, and program meetings.

Why Synapse?

“sin’aps: the point at which an impulse passes from one neuron to another.”

Webster’s definition of synapse inspired the title of the AIHeLA newsletter. The newsletter is a vital communications link between all members of AIHeLA. It is a vehicle for the exchange of information and ideas.



New SAMC Library

Story Page 4