

*President's Message*  
By  
*Jim Lander*

The Chapter owes a great debt to the members who agreed to run for office. Those elected were invited to the Fall Board Meeting to become acquainted with the operations of the Board. The transition from one board to the next board flows smoothly as the matrix and representative-at-large manual provide the responsibilities and timelines for each position.

The Chapter owes a rousing round of applause to the Minneapolis steering committee and the members of the subcommittees for a great annual conference. From the beginning keynote by Eugenie Prime to the final PDA panel of two librarians and a physician, the programming was on the leading edge. We came away with a better understanding of ourselves, our technology, and our roles in the health care system.

Along with the educational aspects of the annual conference, the social events provided attendees several opportunities, including the trip to the Mall of America, hosted dinners, time with vendors, and the reception at the Weisman Art Museum.

At the request of MLA and Chapter Council, an open forum on MLA's Strategic Thinking Document was held Sunday morning led by Ruth Holst. Eighteen members attended this early session and provided constructive suggestions to be taken back to MLA. Thank you to all who helped our parent organization in developing this document.

Rounding out the conference were the educational sessions, including courses, poster sessions, and sunrise seminars sponsored by vendors. Certainly there was something for everybody.

At the Board Meeting, two new policies were approved which will allow the use of a corporate credit card by the organization as well as to pay invoices electronically. The banking policy and the bill payment policy

came from the finance committee and are the culmination of two years' work. The Board accepted the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Membership Expansion and has referred the findings to the Membership Committee. Also referred to the Membership Committee was a request to develop a relationship between the chapters and the schools of library science within their boundaries. This work will begin next year. The Chapter is studying its relationship to library research initiatives. This involves both research and mentoring and has been referred to the Awards and the Education committees. Finally, the membership approved the Bylaws revision at the annual business meeting. These are some of the major activities of the board and its committees.

In his recent book, Robert Putnam\* wrote of the decline in social capital in America—the very fabric of our interrelationships in our society. The annual meeting, the work of our several committees, and the use of discussion lists for assistance, chat, and announcements show that we medical librarians, whether in large academic centers or one-professional libraries, are not bowling alone.

\* Robert Putnam. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

*New Midwest Chapter/MLA  
Board Members*

The following Midwest Chapter/MLA members were recently elected to positions on the Executive Board. Congratulations!

- **President-elect, 2004:** Melinda Orebaugh
- **Membership Secretary, 2003-2004:** Bette Sydelko
- **Representatives-at-Large, 2003-2004:** Karen Anderson, Doreen Bradley, Vicki Killion, Eileen Stanley, Sunny Worel
- **Potential MLA Nominating Committee Candidate:** Dave Boilard
- **Alternate Potential MLA Candidate:** Jo Dorsch

## ***HIGHLIGHTS: Fall Midwest Chapter/MLA Board Meeting***

***By***

***Sandra Martin, Secretary, Midwest Chapter/MLA***

On Friday, September 23, 2002, members of the Board of Midwest Chapter/MLA met at the Radisson Hotel Metrodome in Minneapolis Minnesota. Here are highlights of the activities officers and committee chairs conducted during the year on behalf of the association.

### **Officers**

President James H. Lander represented the Chapter at the First Time New Members Breakfast sponsored by the MLA membership committee at the annual meeting in Dallas, Texas. He also contributed columns for MIDLINE. President-elect Kellie Kaneshiro attended the MLA seminar, "Leadership Reconsidered: Developing a Strategic Agenda for Leadership in Health Sciences Libraries" during the conference. She also attended the New Leaders' Tea and the Chapter Sharing Roundtables. Past-President Billie Broaddus, was active in reviewing Bylaws changes.

Membership Secretary Sheryl Stevens reported 422 paid members for the year. Sheryl was busy revising membership notices; introducing e-mail notification of dues receipts; updating and maintaining the membership databases; and maintaining state membership statistics including MLA status, AHIP status, institutional affiliation, etc. She also arranged the preparation and distribution of the chapter membership directory and added updates to the "members only" section of the chapter web site.

### **Representatives-at-Large**

Representative activities included promoting chapter membership at various professional and consortia meetings, as well as throughout various schools of Library and Information Science. Our representatives also helped to update the membership database.

### **Standing Committees**

Annual Meetings Chair Phyllis Nathan, provided guidance to annual meeting planners. She met and talked with planning committee representatives for 2003

Indianapolis, 2004 Springfield, and 2005 North Dakota conferences.

The Finance Committee, chaired by Chris Shaffer, in an effort to improve and streamline operations, revised existing forms and proposed policies for banking and bill payment that were approved by the Board at the meeting. The committee also investigated and developed procedures for a Chapter credit card.

The Awards Committee offered a \$500 scholarship to attend the annual meeting to Cara Sparks. Cara is a student at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Kentucky.

The Nominating Committee successfully completed elections for President-elect, Membership Secretary, and Representatives-at-Large. The results were: President-elect, Melinda Orebaugh; Membership Secretary, Bette Sydelko; and Representatives-at-Large, Karen Anderson, Doreen Bradley, Vicki Killion, Eileen Stanley, and Sunny Worel.

### **Ad Hoc Committees**

The Bylaws Committee, led by Carole Gilbert, successfully completed its charge with passage of revisions to the Chapter Bylaws and recommended that the Committee be dissolved as of the 2002 Business Meeting.

The Task Force on Membership Expansion reviewed strategies to increase membership that included opening membership to "non-professional librarian" groups. The work of this committee will continue with further exploration of member interest in further expansion efforts and opportunities to partner with other agencies.

### **2003 Annual Meeting**

Next year's annual meeting will be held September 19-23, 2003. The Omni Severin Hotel in Indianapolis, IN, is the planned conference site.

***Information@thecrossroads:  
Indianapolis 2003!***

***By  
Lauren Rider, 2003 Annual Meeting  
Promotions Chair***

Hurry! Be quick! Mark your calendar! Log this into your PDA: September 19-23, 2003! Indianapolis is anxiously awaiting your arrival with a big Midwestern "Welcome!" The 2003 Midwest Chapter/MLA Annual Meeting is the perfect opportunity for you to share new ideas, challenge existing ideas, and get pertinent updates. Based on CE surveys returned by 2002 Minneapolis meeting attendees, you can expect selections from the following CE topics: health informatics, copyright, evidence-based healthcare, Web page development, leadership, and research methodology. Come join us for this meeting of the minds and take in downtown Indianapolis culture that includes theatres, restaurants, museums, a beautiful canal walk, and a mall all within walking distance of our host hotel, the Omni Severin.

This conference is co-hosted by the Indiana Health Sciences Librarians Association. More updates on program content and speakers coming soon!

***New Member Profiles***

***By  
Jennifer Friedman / MIDLINE  
Contributor***

**Amy Jo Hatfield** is a Systems Librarian at the Ruth Lilly Medical Library at Indiana University School of Medicine. Her responsibilities include web management/web presence, information access, electronic resources, and R&D. Her professional interests include medical informatics, institutional repositories, usability, and web applications. Originally from Indianapolis, she has a degree in General Studies from IU and a library degree from the same university. Amy says she

has too many hobbies to mention (and they are always changing) and that she came to computers and libraries a bit later in life. She is thrilled to be part of the field of medical librarianship.

**Jane Nichols** is a Research Services Librarian at the Loyola University Medical Center Health Sciences Library, Chicago, IL. She is responsible for mediated searches, reference desk work, class instruction, Web page development, and assistance with systems. She likes keeping up with the latest uses of technology in libraries. Jane has a bachelor's degree in History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a library degree from Dominican University. Originally from St. Paul, MN, she is currently enjoying exploring Chicago's cultural attractions.

**Lauren Rider** is a staff librarian at Community Health Network of Indiana, based in Anderson, IN. As a Reference/Web/Circuit Librarian, she travels to two separate sites in a 5-hospital network. Some of her specific interests include Web resources, Web usability, and staff dynamics. Lauren is a Georgia native but calls Indianapolis, IN, her current home. She holds a bachelor's degree in exercise physiology from Georgia State University and a library degree from Indiana University/Purdue University in Indianapolis. During her free time, Lauren enjoys cycling and architecture. She is also the Promotions Chair for the 2003 Midwest Chapter/MLA Conference in Indianapolis and could not resist putting in a shameless plug for the event!

**Cara Sparks** is a research assistant and student at the Chandler Medical Center Library at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Her job involves reference desk work, assisting in the management of an electronic journals database, and clinical/family practice rounds assistance. Her undergraduate degree from the same university is in mathematics; she plans on receiving her library degree in May 2003. She hails from Louisville and is especially interested in clinical librarianship and reference work. When not at work, Cara enjoys reading, running, climbing, and cooking/eating food.

*Health Sciences Librarians as Change Agents  
in Medical Informatics Initiatives*

*By*

*Cathy Perley, Ph.D., AHIP / MIDLINE Contributor*

"Go and be agents of change!" With this admonition, Dr. James Cimino, director of the MBL/NLM Medical Informatics course at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, concluded his remarks to fall class participants.

The National Library of Medicine sponsors two intensive MBL medical informatics courses each year. Each session brings together medical educators, health sciences librarians, medical administrators, and young faculty who may not be currently involved in medical informatics activities but have the potential to become agents of change in their organizations. This fall, health sciences librarians and administrators filled 15 of the 30 available student slots. Ten physicians, a hospital administrator, a nurse administrator, a physician assistant, a psychologist, and public health faculty member filled the remaining slots.

Donald Lindberg, Director of the National Library of Medicine, and James Cimino, course director and Associate Professor in the Department of Medical Informatics at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, headed up a distinguished group of scholar presenters from the University of Pittsburgh, Oregon Health and Science University, Yale University School of Medicine, Vanderbilt University, the Marine Biological Laboratory, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, the National Library of Medicine, and the University of California at Davis. Cathy Norton, Director of the MBL/WHOI Library, coordinated the course and led the MBL team.

After an overview of medical informatics as a field, participants heard about current issues, academic informatics, the Unified Medical Language System (UMLS) and Internet futures, PubMed and the NLM Gateway, digital library research, encryption and public policy issues, principles of web page and database design, evaluation methods, informatics and bioterrorism, bioinformatics, clinical decision making, the basics of decision support and of structuring and exchanging ideas, clinical care as an integrator of process and discipline, IT architecture basics, building a system, aligning enterprise and information technology strategies, managing and executing technological change, and telemedicine.

Since these topics were presented to a multidisciplinary audience, specific professional roles were not addressed. As a health sciences librarian, however, the author attended to the discussions with a particular question in mind: in what ways are librarians prepared to participate as change agents in medical informatics initiatives? In other words, what special knowledge and skills do they bring to the table?

As the course progressed, it became clear that one important knowledge set has to do with the organization of information, both in theory and practice.

*(Continued on page 5)*

### ***Health Sciences Librarians as Change Agents...***

*(Continued from page 4)*

For example, librarians understand the concepts underlying knowledge representation, which involves translating the “aboutness” of a document or an image into concrete data that can be used to represent it within an information system. Librarians work with metadata, including the use of Extensible Markup Language (XML) tags. They participate in the development and implementation of UMLS and appreciate its significance in terms of bridging various clinical terminologies and illustrating semantic relationships. They are using this knowledge and these skills to create new information systems and to evaluate existing ones.

A second knowledge set involves facilitating access to information, a traditional role that is useful not only in working directly with client information needs but also in the creation of usable databases and search interfaces. Librarians use heuristic information retrieval techniques to search clinical databases. They translate search techniques into language appropriate to various clinical audiences, understanding the special features that characterize each audience. Finally, librarians design databases used for information retrieval, create and evaluate effective search interfaces, and make these systems available in electronic formats.

A third knowledge set has to do with providing the right information in the right format to the right audience at the right time for the right cost. Librarians understand the critical importance of timing—knowing that information received too late in the clinical decision making process is pointless. And, although librarians as a profession are philosophically committed to disseminating information to all those who need it, they also know that information is not “free.” They understand that the costs of human, clinical, IT, and information resources must be factored into any medical informatics initiative. The economics of information literature and professional experience managing library resources have prepared librarians to do so.

Finally, librarians are professionally prepared to act as boundary spanners, working effectively among various stakeholder groups within and outside of the organization. They understand the significance of culture in professional communities as well as how to bridge cultural differences. Librarians have the communications skills to speak articulately and productively, to listen with sensitivity, and to mediate conflicts. They know how to facilitate collaborative learning. Finally, they understand how to develop open systems capable of responding quickly and appropriately to changing environments and user needs.

Dr. Cimino urged members of the fall medical informatics class to become agents of change in their organizations. Librarians are organizing information, facilitating information retrieval, designing systems that deliver information efficiently and cost-effectively, and spanning intra- and inter-organizational boundaries. By these and other activities, librarians can act and are acting as change agents in medical informatics initiatives. They are working with others in their organizations to initiate, develop, and implement medical informatics activities, utilizing the knowledge and skills that distinguish the profession of health sciences librarianship.

***Expert Searching***  
***By***  
***Nancy O'Brien / MIDLINE Contributor***

When a healthy, young volunteer in an asthma study at Johns Hopkins University died last year due to complications from a chemical she inhaled, questions were raised and fingers were pointed. While the study's investigators had consulted the literature for possible side effects of this drug, their inexperience and limited search strategies failed to retrieve several key pieces of information.

Medical librarians often perform mediated searches for customers. They are trained and educated about databases are constructed and have learned how to fully use the power and intricacies of search tools. They know when to ask probing questions as well as when to question "zero" hits. They know that an English abstract of an article written in a foreign language may be important, especially when retrieval is small. They know how to listen to and talk with clients and determine appropriate parameters for a search. They are expert searchers. Had medical librarians worked with the investigators at Johns Hopkins University, a death may have been prevented.

The issues of expert searching, librarian representation on institutional review boards, and the need to protect human subjects in research has gained national attention. The Medical Library Association has created a task force to define expert searching and what constitutes a reasonable search. This task force, chaired by Ruth Holst, is charged with making recommendations and designing an action plan that will promote expert searching. One outcome of the task force may be written guidelines for expert searches.

In order to establish a baseline, the task force posted a nine-question survey on MLANET in March. Two hundred and fifty-six members responded. Forty-nine percent of the respondents reported that they spend most of their time work day searching. When asked if their skills had improved over the years, 10% said their skills have remained the same, 83% said their skills have improved, and 7% believe their searching skills have deteriorated. One possible reason for declining skills is the frequency of searching; in order to keep skills sharp, there must be ample search request opportunities for practice.

When asked how they maintain their searching skills, replies varied: 91% self-study, 73% continuing education classes, 29% staff meetings, and 23% other. Web-based and chapter meetings were the preferred venues for updates and education. Most respondents did not charge for searches. Only four libraries had guidelines for searching and seven had written policies that identify when expert searches are needed or recommended.

At the Midwest Chapter/Medical Library Association meeting in Minneapolis, Eva Perkins, EPA Research, Los Angeles, suggested that there are seven stages of searching: creation of promotional materials, reference interview, database selection, search strategy, online search, review loop, and presentation of results. When elaborating on each point, she emphasized the need for accountability and reasonable expectations. She stressed that librarians need to take responsibility for the issues they can control, but not for errors in the databases. She spoke about disclaimers, statements describing the search contents, and imposed limits. She spoke about being prepared, building a search from the "perfect citation," and inquiring about what will be done with search results.

These are points that may belong in quality standards for expert searching. The task force is sifting through these issues and will determine if such guidelines are needed to protect and enhance the credibility of medical librarians.

***THANK YOU!***

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- Jennifer Friedman
- Nancy O'Brien
- Cathy Perley

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