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And They Were There - Reports of Meetings

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And They Were There — Reports of Meetings

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The Oklahoma Conference, 1998, March 5-6, 1998

Report by **Bruce Neville** (Collection Development Coordinator for Science and Engineering, University of New Mexico)

The "Oklahoma Conference" was held March 5 and 6, 1998, in — not surprisingly — Oklahoma City. This year's theme was "Challenges of Collection Development: Digital Information, Internet, and Print Materials." For those unfamiliar with the conference — as I was — it is presented by the **University of Oklahoma Libraries** and the **University of Oklahoma Foundation**. The conference centers on some aspect of collection development. There is a single session Thursday afternoon and another Friday morning. Time is set aside for extensive discussion, some of which was quite animated. The conference is a small one (82 participants this year), drawn mostly from surrounding states, but including librarians from all parts of the United States and Canada.

The conference began Thursday afternoon with a welcome from the Conference Chair and very able Moderator, **Sul Lee**, Dean of the **University of Oklahoma Libraries**. In "Chaos Breeds Life," **James Neal**, Director of the Milton S. Eisenhower Library, **Johns Hopkins University**, reviewed a few of his fifty "revolutions" occurring in our world and their impact on libraries. The Virtual Librarian must also become the Virtuoso Librarian, as well as the Virtuous Librarian. **Joan Giesecke**, Dean of the University Libraries, **University of Nebraska**, outlined the steps of "Scenario Planning" and some of the experiences that her library went through in an episode of scenario planning. Rather than working toward a preferred future, scenario planning looks at possible futures, how to deal with them, and how to identify the direction the future is taking as it happens. In his very literary presentation, "Making the Wild Wind Visible," **Dennis Dillon**, Head of Collections and Information Resources, University of Texas at Austin, discussed the respective values of the World Wide Web and of traditional books. Both have their strengths, and both will be with us for a long time. Librarians, he says, must hold to core principles and must redefine their roles and add value, lest they be swept aside by the wild winds of change. Dillon even managed to quote Machiavelli; I don't remember Machiavelli being recommended in library school, but perhaps it should have been. Finally, **Kathleen Born**, Vice President and Director, Academic Division, **EBSCO Information Services**, spoke in "The Role of the Aggregator in the Emerging Electronic Environment" on the role that serials vendors can play in the growing world of electronic serials. By providing a common gateway and by continuing to provide subscription and other services, serials agents can relieve some of the burden from librarians, publishers, and patrons.

Ken Frazier led off Friday morning with a spirited presentation on "Professional Ethics and Collection Development: Dealing (or Not Dealing) with Unprincipled Commercial Journal Publishers." After

reminding us of the meaning of "professional," he detailed three instances of questionable behavior by commercial publishers. Two famous cases had already undergone extensive litigation. The third case, which he called "license to kill," involved the growing trend in electronic licenses to curtail interlibrary loan and other aspects of fair use. In "Building the Global Collection — World Class Collection Development," **Mary Case**, Director of the **Office of Scholarly Communication, Association of Research**

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Libraries, discussed the increasing globalization of research and the difficulty of any library to provide access to these materials for its patrons. She discussed the **AAU/ARL Global Resources project**, which aims to distribute the burden of building the global library among its many members and the need to maintain the commitment in difficult budgetary times. On a similar theme, **Milton Wolf**, Vice President for Collection Development Programs, **Center for Research Libraries**, called for true cooperative collection development and increased resource sharing. Attempts by all libraries to provide the basic core are resulting in the "McLibrary," and no one has resources for the esoteric material. At the same time, control of information production has shifted from the producers in science and government to commercial publishers, resulting in much more "noise" in the information universe. Librarians must return to their original roles as information evaluators. In the final paper of the conference, **Kit Kennedy**, Director of Academic Sales for **Blackwell's Information Services**, spoke on "Digital Information and the Subscription Agent as Information Coach." Ms. Kennedy reinforced **Kathleen Born's** comments of the previous afternoon about the role of subscription agents in the digital age and gave a tantalizing glimpse of Blackwell's product.

For me, the take-home message was that we are in a period of rapid and dramatic change, which is a period both of tremendous uncertainty and of tremendous opportunity. None of us can predict what the "library" will be like in just a few years, but it will be unlike anything we have seen so far. While many things will change, the core "values" of librarianship remain the same, whatever the medium. Unlike many *Cassandras* heard today, the participants felt that the changes would invigorate and strengthen the library profession.

**SLA 98 — 89th Special Libraries Association
Conference, Indianapolis, June 6-11, 1998**

Report by **Donna E. Cromer** (Coordinator of Reference Services, U. of New Mexico) <dcromer@unm.edu>

The **Special Libraries Association (SLA)** held its 89th annual conference this year in "Indy" (I discovered that even the locals are a bit loath to spell out the name completely and that it's perfectly acceptable to use the short form), a surprisingly delightful host city. Once again, the conference was a great success.

The conference is always a mix of half- and full-day Continuing Education (CE) courses, Association business, the Exhibits Hall, and the main course, the many Division-sponsored sessions presented on a wide range of topics sure to be of interest to information professionals.

Each conference typically begins and ends with many CE courses, such as: *Serving Your Web Visitors (and Yourself) More Effectively*; *A Short Course in Web Demographic Measurement Techniques*; *Business is News: A Primer and Evaluation of Business Resources Available to News Librarians*; and *Exceptional Information Delivery: Using the TQM/QIM/SLA Competencies Connection*.

A highlight of any annual conference is the Exhibits Hall, with its special strengths in science and technology and business-related resources. This year, during the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony we were highly entertained by the **Gordon Pipers**, a local group presenting Scottish music and dance.

The main Keynote Address was given by **Stanley Davis**, a noted author and business consultant. The talk focused on the fast pace of technological change as companies race toward the year 2000 and how businesses must adopt lifelong learning processes to keep up. The key to increasing a business' value is by making it knowledge-based, no matter what the business is. A plus was that he managed to discuss libraries and information professionals in a thoughtful manner (how many of you have heard a Keynote address by a manager or business guru whose primary take on libraries was warm fuzzy memories of going to the public library when they were children, but had obviously not set foot in one in years?).

Several Divisions joined with the Social Science Division in celebrating SLA's 75th Anniversary by sponsoring the second Keynote Address: *Private Lives of Public Figures: The Art of Biography*, by **Doris Kearns Goodwin**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, political commentator, and social historian. Once again, a great presentation. Goodwin is a masterful storyteller.

A sampling of the hundreds of programs and the sponsoring Divisions is given below:

Biomaterials (Biomedical & Life Sciences, Chemistry, Engineering, Metals/Materials, and Pharmaceutical & Health Technology). This was a general overview of biomaterials science, including discussion on the major challenges in information retrieval and effective searching. The moderator was **Jack Cooper**, Science Library, University of California Riverside and the speakers were: **Joel Higgins**, Biomet, Inc.; **Renee Bush**, Health Sciences Library, SUNY Buffalo; and **Rodney Pinkston**, STN.

Managing Smarter by Investing in Your Firm's Intellectual Capital (Business and Finance, Information Technology, and Library Management). **Mr. Thomas A. Stewart**, regular contributor to *Fortune* magazine and author of *Intellectual Capital*, spoke about the librarian's role in freeing, organizing, and using all the knowledge which is locked inside the individuals of our firms. The moderator was **Stephen T. Kochoff**.

Competitive Intelligence: Beyond the Basics (Engineering and Aerospace Section). The role of the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP), pointers on using the Internet to find competitive intelligence information, and a real-life example of a librarian providing CI for her organization were discussed by: **Ellen Naylor**, Business Intelligence Source, Inc.; **Helene Kassler**, Fuld & Company, Inc.; and **Dottie Moon**, United Technologies.

Managing a Digital Imaging Project: An Administrative Perspective (Social Science). This session provided an overview, from a management perspective, of the elements that should be considered when undertaking a digital imaging project. Topics addressed included setting project goals, identifying image capture and indexing requirements, preservation concerns, determining the necessary technical infrastructure (hardware, software, storage, and network capabilities) that will support imaging and access, identifying needed internal and external resources, defining required skills and expertise for project staff, managing project activities, establishing workflow routines, and making budget projections. The moderator was **Susan Berg**, Colonial Williamsburg Fd. and the speaker was **Sherry Byrne**, University of Chicago.

Math E-Journals and Beyond (Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics). This was a discussion of the current and projected "value-added" features being offered by publishers and vendors, with emphasis on their value to faculty and researchers in mathematics. Also included pre-prints, archives, free journals, and integrated services, as well as impacts on collection management and document delivery. The moderator was **Claire B. Macha**, University of Arizona.

The growing international membership of SLA was reflected in the wide variety of programs with a global flavor: *The Euro is Coming: Countdown to January*; *News Outside the USA*; *Confronting International Client Needs and Styles*; *Global Cooperation Among Information Professionals: Barriers and Benefits*; *Business Information Markets Around the World*; and the *International Visitors' Reception*. One of the Professional Papers Sessions was titled: *The International Circuit: Libraries Around the World*, with the following papers and speakers: 1) "Libraries and Information Infrastructure at the Research Centers in the Helmholtz Association" (speaker: **R. Ball**, Forschungszentrum Julich GmbH); 2) "Post Cold War Libraries in Russia, China and the Czech Republic" (speaker: **Thomas Edelblute**, United States International University); 3) "The ETH Library: A Key in the Swiss Sci-Tech Community" (speaker: **Wolfram Neubauer**, ETH-Bibliothek); 4) "Management and Delivery of Current Japanese Information: Going Beyond Geographical Borders" (speaker: **Laura L. Wong**, Library of Congress). The moderator was **Sarah Kelly**, Purdue University.

The last day of the conference, Thursday, was filled with more CE courses and for those who just wanted to have a little fun along with their learning, there were numerous tours of interesting sites in the area. 🍷