



EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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President's Review By Janet Tomlinson

It is unfortunate that this is my first report to you as European Chapter President when it is so far into the presidential year. So my initial welcome to you all is muted by an apology that you have not received a Newsletter for so long. However, the organisation and production procedures have been revamped and I hope that you like the new presentation. I wish Neil Infield well as the new editor and thanks to Mary Dee Ojala for her past work in this post.

Resume of Recent Chapter Activities

Now I would like to mention some of our successes during the past months. The chapter has run a variety of very well supported events recently. We had the usual Annual Conference Debrief and Summer Soiree after the Boston Conference where the 1996 European Special Librarian of the Year, Ruth Colyer spoke about her experiences. Having won the prize of the trip to Boston she had high praise for the boost to her professional development that this had given her and the chance to make many contacts.

Sylvia James and Cris Kinghorn organised a Chapter pre-conference seminar at the FID Annual Conference in Graz, Austria. The seminar called *The Globalisation of Financial Information* also included speakers from Finland and Slovenia.

The Chapter Annual Lecture was enticingly entitled *In Cyberspace no-one knows you're a dog*. This intriguing lecture was delivered by David Birch from Hyperion and covered aspects of the validation procedures needed for operating in a world of electronic commerce.

As usual the Annual Breakfast at the Online Conference in December was very well attended and we were pleased to have the SLA President, Sylvia

Piggott present to discuss issues with us. Sylvia followed the Breakfast with a focus group for the Chapter members on the recently released document *Competencies for Special Librarians in the 21st Century*. There was a lively discussion and the European input was taken back to Washington headquarters to be incorporated into future policy-making.

Many congratulations are due to Tuula Salo from Merita Bank, Finland for winning the 1997 European Special Librarian of the Year.

In addition, the Chapter has been developing its own website. This is still fairly embryonic but Karen Beesley and Neil Infield are progressing the work. Check regularly for updates on the Chapter at www.informed-ibs.com/sla/.

Participation

I would like to make the most important theme of this letter participation. By that, I mean participation by the members in the activities of the European Chapter. In particular, the Chapter Board would like to hear what you want from your organisation. As ever, we have been concentrating on recruiting and involving members and we'd like more, especially in Continental Europe. But, most of all we want you to participate and contribute to the Chapter. Any type of support helps and here are a few ideas of what can be done:

- write an article or just a small news item for the Newsletter - Neil would love to hear from you at N.Infield@Hermes.co.uk.
- organise an event in your area - the event could be a single speaker, a seminar, a social evening or showing a video - I will be happy to offer support by way of suggestions for speakers, sponsors, etc.
- let us know if there is an forthcoming library or information event in your area where we could

arrange European Chapter session or social activity

- get your friends and colleagues to join the SLA
- above all-talk to us and tell us what you want.

My contact details, together with those of the other Chapter Board members are given elsewhere in the Newsletter. Get in touch, we'll even listen to complaints!

News from Washington

The big news is that the Association is planning a name change. I don't have any news on exactly when this is going to happen but I know that views are being canvassed and that there is a raging discussion as to whether the word *Library* will be part of the future name or whether emphasis will be on *Information*. If you have any strong views, let Washington know.

You will all have seen the new journal *Information Outlook* and we are negotiating to have more positive coverage of European news. Paul Pedley, who has recently joined the European Chapter Board is furthering this initiative.

Washington is still working on the plans to bring a major SLA conference to Europe and have appointed a European conference organiser to get arrangements under way. The conference is scheduled to be in Brighton in the year 2000. We'll let you know as details unfold.

The main SLA website is now very comprehensive so do check on all the facilities offered by Washington at www.sla.org.

1997 Annual Conference, Seattle

I hope to see many of you in Seattle in June. The Conference promises to be yet another exhausting event involving talks, sessions, meetings, meals and vendor socials from breakfast till midnight and beyond. I still have some copies of the preliminary programme if anyone needs one.

The Chapter is doing its usual session on the Tuesday afternoon, 10th June. Tuula Salo (we make the ESLY winners work for their award), and Veronica Wootliff and Mary Ann Kalambay from Rothschilds will be delivering a European view on partnerships by information units for global operations. The formal session will be followed by the serving of food and drink which offers an excellent opportunity to do some partnering and networking of your own.

The official award for the European Special Librarian of the Year is to be presented at the International Visitors Reception on Sunday 8th June. This is a

particularly good occasion to make contact with special librarians from around the world and the 'natives' are always friendly and helpful too.

Future Events

We have developed plans for three future events so far. One will cover *Intranets* and a second will be on Management Information Systems for Libraries, provisionally entitled *Measuring Performance and Output*. The third picks up the Core Competencies theme and will be held at the Library Resources Exhibition in Birmingham. Details of these meetings are mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter or will be mailed to you shortly.

Finally, I wish to offer thanks to all our sponsors for their invaluable support for the Chapter's activities. Special thanks to Lexis Nexis, Dun and Bradstreet, Silver Platter and Swets Subscription Services - we couldn't do it without you.


Hello from your new editor

Welcome to my first attempt at editing the Newsletter. It is very much a case of learning as I go along so please let me know what you think of it. I am a relatively recent member of the SLA but have already experienced many of the networking benefits of belonging. I see the newsletter as an important part of that networking function, and am keen to hear from as many of you as possible.

My aim is to produce a publication that reflects your interests and concerns. Please phone or e-mail me with any news, developments or comments you may have. I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to Paul Pedley, the latest recruit to the European Chapter Board, for his contribution to the newsletter. Paul works at Theodore Goddard and has a particular interest in law librarianship. Since joining the European Chapter he has been asked by Barbara Silbersack, bsilbersack@thf.com, the chair of the Legal Division to act as a European liaison officer for the Legal Division.

Paul can be contacted at Theodore Goddard on +44 (0)171 880 5899 or by e-mail at paulpedley@theodregoddard.co.uk. Paul has also discovered a listserv for the legal division. To join SLA-LAW send an e-mail message to majordomo@albertus.lawlib.uh.edu with the text *subscribe sla-law*.



European Special Librarian of the Year 1997

By Michelle Darraugh

The Awards Committee of the European Chapter has decided to name Tuula Salo of the Merita Bank in Finland as the European Special Librarian of the Year for 1997.

Tuula has worked for over 25 years at Merita Bank, formerly the Union Bank of Finland, as a dedicated information manager. In addition she has been involved for many years voluntarily in the professional scene as one of the leading personalities in the Finnish Information Industry. Internationally, she has been Chair of the Banking and Finance Group of FID for the past six years.

She is an outstanding Special Librarian, both in her place of work and in the professional arena. In the past year she has successfully amalgamated both of the information centres of Union Bank of Finland and KOP Bank with no loss of staff or status of the departments, during a very difficult merger of the two banks.

Tuula has also completed a very successful year as Chair of the Finnish Information Association, which included several prestigious events including a series of sessions at the Finnish Online Conference in February 1996, where the position of the strong information profession in Finland was recognised by government ministers and Finnish television.

The award this year has been sponsored by SilverPlatter Information Ltd. Tuula will begin the ESLY award year in June 1997 with an all expenses paid trip to the Seattle conference, where she will be participating in several events. The award will be presented at the International Visitors Reception - which is also sponsored by SilverPlatter. If you are planning to attend the conference please support this award by attending the presentation ceremony.

Tuula can be contacted at the Merita Bank, Helsinki, Finland by telephone on 358 0165 56010 or by fax 358 0163 1633928.



SLA at Online 96

By Cris Kinghorn

Online Information, held every December at Olympia in west London is now the world's largest exhibition and conference for the online information industry and the 1996 event attracted more than 16,000 attendees from over 60 countries.

SLA was one of the few professional organisations at the event and this was the first time that the

Association had occupied a booth. Although tucked away on the top floor, an impressive number of members and potential members stopped by. It was primarily staffed by HQ staff - Assistant Executive Director of Programmes and Development, Fred Casey and Doug Newcomb of Public Affairs, (both relatively new recruits to the Association). European Chapter Board Members were also in attendance to speak to those eager to discuss aspects of SLA's support for the profession from a European perspective.

A very popular topic was the recently released Core Competencies document which had been discussed at length at the Focus Group held after Chapter's Annual Breakfast on December 4th. An appeal for members to help staff the stand was also made at the Breakfast and to the Board's great relief some of you were able to offer a couple of hours of your time. Speaking personally, the chance to stop awhile and talk to colleagues and potential members provided some much needed light relief after the rigours of stand visiting!

For the first time Online Information organisers Learned Information, were able to offer to exhibitors hand held scanners. We were able to use them to read the bar codes on the labels of the visiting attendees. Detailed information about each attendee was retrieved from the conference registrations database and forwarded to Washington for follow up.

Only 'serious' enquiries that seemed to provide strong potential for conversion into membership were scanned and over the three day event more than 250 people had their details noted. In a letter to Chapter President Janet Tomlinson, Fred Casey noted that, 'these numbers far exceed any of our expectations'. Additionally Fred and Doug were encouraged by the number of vendors that stopped by to enquire about the possibility of exhibiting at the SLA conference in Seattle this June.

One benefit of having HQ personnel present at a European event was the prime opportunity this afforded those with serious issues to raise. In particular the administrative problems they had experienced when attempting to join the Association, renew membership, or purchase books or videos.

It was good to see HQ representatives hearing at first hand details of some of the less positive experiences of their international members. Hopefully even more of you will take the opportunity to speak directly to HQ staff at this year's Online - provisional plans for the Association's attendance are under way and all the signs are that this year will be even more of a success.

The power of SLA networking by Paul Pedley

I joined the Special Libraries Association in order to network with other special librarians. Little did I realise just what that would mean in the case of joining an organisation such as SLA. Having subscribed to several of the listserv discussion lists, I felt as though it would be hard to play an active part in an organisation whose membership is largely based in the United States or Canada.

How wrong I was. As a result of contact with other SLA members via Internet e-mail, two American law librarians have so far visited me at Theodore Goddard during the last six months. As a result, I have made some very useful contacts. Recently, for example, we needed a copy of the *AmLaw 100* which is a list of the top American law firms. As a result of these contacts, I was able to get a copy sent over by courier as a favour. In return, people have asked me about citations to cases, and so on. I would strongly recommend that SLA members in the European chapter participate in the different discussion lists that are available.

Here are some Internet sites you may find useful:

- The magazine *Information Strategy* is published by the Economist Group, and has the tagline *Europe's magazine for business advantage*. It has its own web site is www.info-strategy.com/.
- There is a directory of SLA lists and world wide web home pages at www.tiac.net/users/hope/slalist.htm. (I can personally recommend Hope's pages and links, Neil).
- Last but not least the SLA web pages themselves at www.sla.org and those for the Seattle Conference at sla.microsoft.com/.

SLA Tea at EBIC Berlin By Neil Infield

The now traditional SLA pre-conference tea at the European Business Information Conference (EBIC) was a great success. The annual event organised by TFPL was held at the end of March, this year in a chilly Berlin.

However the SLA reception for newly arrived delegates was warm and welcoming with a spectacular array of cream cakes. In addition we were fortunate to be graced by the presence of David Bender the Director of the SLA, who was attending EBIC. We hope to have gained quite a number of new Chapter members during the conference. Many thanks to Lexis-Nexis who kindly sponsored the event.

FID Conference Report from Graz By Sylvia James

A one day seminar entitled *The Globalisation of Financial Information* was held as a pre-conference event at the FID semi-annual conference in Graz, Austria on 21 October 96. This seminar was the third Business and Finance Information Group (BFI) of FID, and the first to be co-presented with the European Chapter of SLA. The theme concentrated on the rapidly changing world of financial services and the response required by information professionals working in this dynamic field.

SLA at the Library Resources Exhibition By Wendy Foster

The annual Library Resources Exhibition at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre is 'Europe's largest professional librarians event', with over 4,500 visitors. This year they are focusing on Special Libraries and asked us to contribute. We are going to concentrate on the theme of competencies for Special Librarians, following up the theme of the recently published SLA competencies document.

We have arranged a programme for 5 June including two distinguished keynote speakers.

- Diana Edmunds from Instant Library will start the day off with a talk entitled *Millennium Mystery Tour: a sign post to special library services, systems and skills in the 21st century*.
- Pamela Clark from Perot Systems will close our mini-conference with *Changing client needs and what the information professional needs to do to keep up!*

In between we will have sessions from:

- Paul Pedley (Theodore Goddard)
- Jane Buchanan (BT)
- Ginny Franklin (IEE)
- Rachael Kolsky (AIG)
- Liz MacLachlan (DTI)

Quite an impressive line-up I hope you will agree. In fact it will make a rather good substitute for those of us unable to make it to Seattle. Swets have kindly agreed to sponsor drinks and nibbles, so please do your utmost to come along and support the event.