



EUROPEAN CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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President's Letter By Sylvia James

Happy New year to all European Chapter members!

Hopefully this will be a very good year for you all. As I write this I am looking forward to attending the Winter Meeting of SLA to be held in Washington DC this year. This will be the first Winter Conference I have attended and should give me an opportunity to catch up on news and views about SLA in general, but especially the forthcoming summer Conference and Conference 2000. More about both of those in the next newsletter.

One of the privileges of the Chapter Presidency is to receive the newsletters of all the other Chapters and Divisions of SLA. This gives a real insight into the concerns and activities of the diverse membership of the Association, but I am aware that these have a limited audience in coming to me. European Chapter members might like to read a selection of these newsletters, or could be particularly interested in a specific Chapter, maybe because they are planning a business or pleasure trip to that part of North America and would like to meet SLA members there. You may be thinking of joining a new Division in future and would like to get a flavour of the coverage of the subject area and members active in the field. I would be very pleased to pass on any of these issues, so please let me know if they area of interest.

Since the last newsletter, I have also been involved in assessing a request for a student award, made by a European student for one of the scholarships available from SLA every year. This is one of the Presidential duties that has come up for the first time in recent years in Europe as the awards have probably not been well known outside the USA. The awards are detailed in the 'Who's Who' and for any of you that are considering doing further studies or know of anyone that may benefit from these awards for next year,

please consider making an application. I would be very willing to help anyone who feels they may like to do this.

We are planning some interesting events for the Chapter for 1998, both in London Lisbon (at the EBIC conference) and Turkuu (Finland) at the Nordic Conference and hope many of you will be able to attend at least one of these events.

New Netherlands representative By Maaïke Molenaar



A few months ago I was asked by the Board of the European Chapter to be the Dutch National Representative of the SLA. I gladly accepted this position as I strongly support the idea that membership is to be spread on the continent and especially in the Netherlands as we only have 18 Dutch members at the moment. I feel

that it is very important to information professionals to join an international organisation. The field in which we work is rapidly changing, for example the developments in technology and knowledge management. Therefore we can use all the back-up we can get to work out a new profile for our profession and maintain or establish a strong position in our organisations.

I notice these changes in my job as an Information Specialist at the Information & Research Centre of KPMG in Amsterdam. With a total staff of five persons we supply auditors and consultants with the information they need for their daily business. At KPMG we have a well developed intranet working in which my colleagues and I fully participate where the content and training is concerned. I start, for instance,

every morning by making abstracts of the main financial news items in the newspapers and put these on the intranet.

There is a long road ahead though bringing in new members for the Library Association but I hope to be able to make the first few steps on this road by organising some activities. Right now I'm putting together a mailing to corporate libraries which I will be sending out at the beginning of this year. Also I want to plan a social meeting in Spring.

I hope to meet you soon at an SLA event.

Breakfast Meeting at Online 1997

The annual breakfast meeting at the Novotel during Online week was the 6th concurrent event held by the Chapter at this annual event, all of which have been sponsored by Dun & Bradstreet. Many thanks to Dun & Bradstreet for their continuing support.

Around 70 members attended, including special guests, Marlene Bobka, representing the Pharmaceuticals and Health Division who were invited to co-sponsor the event and David Bender and Fred Casey from SLA headquarters.

Sylvia James described the forthcoming events for the Chapter, while Fred Casey gave the meeting a brief summary of the plans for Conference 2000, Marlene Bobka talked briefly about the Pharmaceuticals and Health Division and David Mort introduced the European Special Librarian of the Year Award for 1998/99.

Distance Learning at Imperial College in March **By Cris Kinghorn**

By now you should all have received the first mailing from Washington about the Distance Learning Programme on March 26th. The Chapter Board is pleased to announce that London will be one of the sites to participate in the panel discussion

"Building Alliances for Greater Gains"

This one way satellite broadcast to the Imperial College TV Studio on Exhibition Road in South Kensington, will bring to us the thoughts of a number of information professionals from a diverse range of organisations. The panel will be chaired by Mary Marshall a Director of the sponsor - Lexis Nexis. The topic is one of considerable relevance to every aspect of the information industry and was noted as a personal competency in the Association's Core Competencies publication...2.4 Looks for partnerships and alliances

Practical examples: Seeks alliances with management information systems (MIS) professionals to optimise complementary knowledge and skills. Provides leadership on the information management team. Form partnerships with other libraries or information services inside or outside the organisation to optimise resource sharing. Seeks alliances with database vendors and other information providers to improve products and services. Seeks alliances with researchers in faculties of library and information studies to conduct relevant and practical studies.

There will be workshop format discussion both before and after the broadcast, as well as a case study exercise and a group discussion to facilitate the greatest possible benefits from the programme.

The Chapter Board is particularly pleased to confirm that bookings can be made directly with us in sterling, at £44 pounds for members and £56 for non members. Please see the insert in this publication for further details.

Visit of Ann Abate - Chapter Cabinet Chair Elect

In late November, an informal lunch was arranged by Paul Pedley for the Board of the European Chapter, for Ann Abate, Chapter Cabinet Chair elect of SLA, during a trip she was making to London. This was kindly hosted and sponsored by Janet Tomlinson at the IEE, current Secretary of the Chapter. During this meeting the Board was able to discuss with Ann some of the issues and concerns they had about Chapter matters and relationships with SLA Headquarters, particularly administrative problems that had occurred recently on the July membership renewals.

This was an extremely useful and informative meeting and Ann was very receptive to all the points made by the Board and promised to take back all the comments and ideas to the full Chapter Cabinet.

SOTA on Knowledge Management

The annual State of the Art Institute (SOTA) entitled 'Knowledge Management: A New Competitive Asset,' sponsored by Disclosure, was delivered to a sold-out audience on November 6-7.

Nigel Oxbrow, managing director of TFPL Ltd., London, explained the objectives of knowledge management are to: increase competitiveness; stay within, and contribute to, corporate strategy; support a virtual organization; improve decision-making; and reduce risk and costs. "But over all," said Oxbrow, "the key objective of knowledge management must be to add value for our customers."

Presentations from leading experts educated SLA members about the concepts, tools, and techniques of knowledge management; the skills and competencies required for practitioners; and real-life lessons from the field. The second day was devoted to a case study and group presentations.

"The successful businesses of today have recognized that the diffusion of technology has established a level playing field in the corporate world," said Executive Director, David Bender. "They are understanding that knowledge is the new competitive asset and today's information professionals are poised with the skills to bring them success in the ever-evolving Information Age."

Offering practical advice to executives, Dr. Jay Liebowitz, professor of management science at George Washington University, Washington, D.C., commented, "You'll fall behind the competition if you don't take knowledge management seriously. Corporate culture needs to be conducive to promoting and sharing knowledge," he said, adding that companies must "create thinking, learning organizations... develop knowledge repositories and have an infrastructure to maintain them."

The proceedings from this year program can be purchased for \$32.00 for SLA members.

International Special Librarians Day 1998 -Thursday April 23

Now celebrating its eighth year, International Special Librarians Day '98 (ISLD) offers information professionals the opportunity to promote the value of their libraries and information centres, services, and accomplishments within their organisations. Educational seminars, open houses, and Association chapter activities are among a host of events coordinated by SLA members.

This year's multi-dimensional theme: 'The Time Is Now!' proclaims the urgent need for recognition for special librarians, or information professionals, in the increasingly knowledge-dependent information age.

SLA's International Headquarters is pleased to partner with LEXIS-NEXIS, the official partner of ISLD '98. They are offering a promotional kit from 20 February on the SLA Web site (www.sla.org/pr/isldweb.html) which contains camera-ready logos, templates for bookmarks and fliers, as well as an opportunity to order free ISLD '98 pins and other SLA merchandise.

The site provides information about the day and offers suggestions on how to promote special libraries for ISLD '98.

Uniclass for the construction industry **By Marshal Crawford**

Developed by NBS Services on behalf of CPIC (Construction Project Information Committee) representing the four major sponsor organisations (the Construction Federation, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers) and the Department of the Environment Construction Sponsorship Directorate.

This new classification system is designed for the organisation of many different forms of information, from documents within libraries to project information data such as bills of quantities, cost data and specifications. Its strength lies in its ability to address the needs of different disciplines within the construction industry and collections of data of different types and sizes. It includes all the topics covered by CI/SfB, CAWS (Common Arrangement of Work Sections for building works) and EPIC (Electronic Product Information Co-operation) and also addresses the weakness of existing systems by introducing new tables and expanded listings.

New Specialist tables and classifications deal with such topics as construction products, project lifecycles, management, construction entities, properties and characteristics, construction aids and work sections. Each of Uniclass's 15 tables represents a different broad facet of construction information and can be used as a 'stand alone' table or combined with other tables to classify complex subjects. It is the first international standard for this subject, namely ISO CD - 12006 - 2 Building construction - Organisation of information about construction works - Part 2: Framework for classification of information.

Uniclass is intended to supersede CI/SfB, which was last revised in 1976. It will be of special interest to anyone designing a new information system for construction, regardless of scale: whole library; project information; or even a narrow computer application which requires a structured list for developing the information model of a system. Each organisation will need to consider its existing systems in the light of this publication.

Gui Standard Icon project sponsored by IFLA

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is sponsoring through its Information Technology Section a U.S. - Scottish Joint Project on GUI Standards for Bibliographic Databases.

Phase II of this project proposes that the standard icon set concluded in Phases I and II be moved into the

standards domain world wide to ensure its adoption for use in bibliographic information systems.

The web site for accessing the icons and current effort on the project is at: www.scran.ac.uk.iconstd.

Bruce Royan's facility SCRAN (Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network), is supporting this and Steven Carr is managing the web site at the same facility.

Wilda Newman is the Project Lead Phase III, and can be reached at wilda.newman@jhuapl.edu

Ship Databases Workshop By Dr I L Buxton

Ships have always exerted a fascination, perhaps because they are the largest moving objects constructed, and so few of them are the same. People like to collect information or pictures of them, and since getting on for a million have existed over the last few centuries, there is no shortage of subjects: passenger liners, warships, sailing vessels, tugs, etc.

The widespread availability of PC's has encouraged the development of databases on a range of shipping subjects. Ship databases range from large commercial ones with over 100,000 records of modern ships to small individual ones recording local shipwrecks or a collection of photographs.

This workshop is intended to enable creators and users of such databases to share their experiences and needs. Common issues to be discussed cover scope, definitions and conventions, sources of information, means of access and potential for linking.

A key element for linking such databases is a unique identity for each ship. Name alone is not sufficient (there have been about 800 vessels called Ann). Proposals for a universal ship numbering system will be discussed, which would allow information in one database, e.g. on building, to be associated with information on the same ship in another database, e.g. photographs or wrecks.

The Workshop will be held on 26 and 27 June 1998 at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, hosted by the Department of Marine Technology. The cost is £45.

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Two 10,000-ton cargo ships at Singapore in 1996. The Panamanian Great Best 1 (left) has had three names in her 23 years, but the Turkish General R Gumuspala only one in 27 years.

Are intranets the key to our future? By Neil Infield

We are constantly being told that intranets are the key to successful implementation of knowledge management within our organisations. I want to try and find out what special librarians in Europe are actually doing with Intranets. Please send me any news of successes, failures or plans for the future. To get the ball rolling I will tell you about what I have been doing within my own organisation. I have been in the fortunate position to be able to create an intranet from scratch. My IT department are happy to provide technical support but, rightly in my opinion, see content management as a task better suited to information professionals.

Having had experience of creating a web site in HotMetal Pro for Windows 3.1, I jumped at the chance to tryout FrontPage 98 from Microsoft. This software really does make developing a web site significantly easier than before. Having said that, my team have had to go through a steep learning curve. The biggest initial problem is that the software is actually too helpful. It assumes that you wish to use one of its own pre-prepared templates and so automatically creates buttons and links on your pages. However although some of the features and buttons provided were quite nice, we wanted to do our own thing rather than use what Microsoft had provided. It took us some time to work out how to turn off the automatic features but once we had we were able to make good progress on building our site.

One of the most time consuming processes was agreeing the look of the site. This is very much a question of taste, and we spent time looking at many sites on the web for inspiration. One important consideration we neglected was to consider which browser we would be using across the organisation. We chose Explorer 3.02 which supports frames and reads specific fonts from the web server. After several weeks of development we discovered that Explorer 2 had been installed which does not support frames. Consequently we now have to wait for browsers to be upgraded before we can launch our Intranet.

One thing that really surprised me was just how enthusiastic other people in the organisation are about having an intranet. Even those who have no experience of surfing the Internet immediately see the benefits to making information easily available to rest of the organisation and want to get involved.

I am sure other members of the European Chapter have been involved in some way with their organisation's intranets. If not why not? Please get in touch and let me know how your organisation has tackled building an intranet, what has worked and what has not.

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