

# the *Chronicle*

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Philadelphia Regional Chapter  
Medical Library Association, Inc.  
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## Informationist Conference Sparks New Ideas

Since the provocative article in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* was published and our Chapter held its program in the fall of 2000, the informationist movement has continued across the country and back again picking up interested parties and gathering steam. Other chapters have held programs, we published an important symposium in the *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, and MLA sponsored an invitational conference on the informationist in Washington, DC in April 2002. Two Philadelphia Chapter members were invited: Diane Wolf as a presenter and attendee, and myself as a representative of our Chapter, where much of this work began.

The Informationist Conference website (<http://www.mlanet.org/research/informationist/index.html>) is an excellent starting point. It provides a summary of the conference agenda, goals, objectives, program, and speakers as well as a background reading list (including our symposium in the *JMLA*, of course). The goal of the conference was “to facilitate a national discussion, derive a consensus definition, and develop recommendations for an action agenda for the informationist professional in clinical and research domains.” Certainly, the goal of a national discussion was achieved as there were representatives from all areas related to medical librarianship, including:

- Accreditation bodies
- Health and medical associations
- Hospitals and health systems
- Library and information associations
- Library and information science programs
- Medical informatics programs
- NLM and National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM)

Diane did note the low representation by hospital librarians—she was the only one! The attendee list covered all parts of the country and was littered with degrees: MDs, MLSs, PhDs, RNs, and a PharmD—a lot of expertise gathered in one auditorium for two days. A facilitator was also present to interactively summarize the key points of each panel session. Whether the goals of a consensus definition and action agenda were achieved remains to be seen. There was definite progress, and we can look to the final conference report (due out soon) for a thorough summary.

The objectives of the two-day conference aimed high:

- Examining the need for an informationist type of health information professional in healthcare and biomedical research settings
- Discussing how informationists compare with existing professions in terms of their unique roles
- Identifying requisite knowledge, skills, and attributes for informationists in different settings
- Determining desirable education and training models and sources for informationists

- Drafting desirable financing models (including salary, third-party reimbursements, indirect costs, grants, fellowships, institutional cost savings, etc.)
- Formulating implementation models that may include grants, fellowships, pilots, etc.
- Determining promotional vehicles for the informationist concept

All objectives were at least touched upon in the presentations and discussions, but clearly, more thinking and discussion needs to take place. Many of the presentations, including Diane's, are available from the website.

The agenda was broken into two parts: exploration and action. The first day included an introduction to the issues by the authors of the original article, Frank Davidoff and Valerie Florance, plus three concept exploration panels-- the Informationist in a Clinical Setting, the Informationist in a Research Setting, and the Informationist's Education. This was a long, intensive day with over 20 presentations! Most speakers and attendees enthusiastically embraced the concept of an informationist or similar roles for librarians. Davidoff's engaging keynote talk discussed the diffusion of innovation, the informationist being an innovation. His final slide asked, "What are we waiting for?" There was much interest in the presentations of existing clinical librarian programs (Diane's and that of William Walsh, an MD at Vanderbilt). John Gallin, director of the NIH Clinical Center, was one of the most enthusiastic, although his idea for retired physicians and researchers to serve after a few days of training as informationists raised some eyebrows. Presenters in the Research Setting panel raised similar issues: credibility, acceptance, expertise, training, and funding. In the final panel of the day, the Informationist's Education, skill sets were defined and future educational models proposed.

On the second day, we divided into groups to recommend and prioritize action on the following questions:

- How should informationists acquire needed knowledge and expertise in clinical and research settings (training and credentialing, KSAs)?
- How should informationists' services be funded in clinical and research settings? (financial models)?
- How should informationists' services be marketed in clinical and research settings (promotion)?
- What are suggested ways to test and implement the informationist concept in clinical and research settings (grants, pilots, fellowships, etc.)?
- What are the ways to assess the value of an informationist (evaluation)?

After the group reports, a final Action Agenda Discussion panel was held. Presenters from the professional associations (AMIA, MLA, JCAHO) and NLM all pledged support for the concept, for further conferences, and for training. I definitely agreed with Betsy Humphreys, Deputy Associate Director of NLM, who felt that the informationist was not a new profession, but a specialized role for medical librarians. There were many

questions, comments, and observations after this final session as well as all the other panels. Hopefully, a summary by the facilitator will be shared in the final report.

The Informationist Conference began with Davidoff's keynote and ended with some of his comments and a surprising aside. He remarked that his informationist article garnered more attention than his previous writings as editor of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*! His final point concerned a need for a more radical approach to funding—informationist services should be a completely justifiable expense like an EKG. How can we fund these positions? This question was one of the key questions in my mind after the conference. Other issues were how to train current librarians for informationist roles and how to recruit qualified and interested people to this specialty. These and other concerns were raised again during an online group chat session led by Florance, Davidoff, and Jean Shipman, chair of MLA's Informationist Task Force, a slightly edited transcript of which is on the conference website.

Eventually, the final report will be posted on the website, and we can all get an idea of MLA's direction and agenda regarding the informationist. At the same time, we can continue discussing these issues within the Chapter and formulate our individual and collective plans for adopting, or not, the informationist concept. §

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## Letter from the Editors

This issue marks the close of another successful year for the Chapter. We received national recognition for holding a forward-thinking panel last fall devoted to the “hot” topic of the “informationist.” This eventually formed the basis for a Chapter-sponsored symposium published in January's issue of *Journal of the Medical Library Association*. Chapter members Anne Seymour and Diane Wolf, who authored articles from the symposium, were invited to attend the spring Informationist Conference, which included representatives from the fields of medicine, hospital administration, librarianship, informatics, etc. Our lead article provides an up-close view of what transpired at this fascinating session, which could have a significant impact on the future of our profession.

Also in this issue are pieces covering the Chapter's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner and Meeting, along with pictures taken from this delightful event. Barbara Henry reports on the opening of a beautiful new library; Jo-Ann Babish describes the development of consumer health library consortia; and our TechnoHumanist, Carlos Rodriguez, covers the popular topic of PDA use in medical libraries.

This transitional time of year for the Chapter means that both incoming and outgoing chairs provided a “Letter from the Chair,” and chapter committee reports highlight both past activities and future plans.

Calendar Editor Nina Galpern is giving up this role after publication of this issue. We greatly appreciate the excellent work Nina did to keep us informed of relevant classes, events, and meetings. We welcome Janet Clinton as Calendar Editor, beginning with the next issue.

As usual, we invite your comments, suggestions, and contributions to the *Chronicle*. Also, photographs are always popular and easy to reproduce on the Web – so bring them on too! §

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### **Letter from the Outgoing Chair**

Well, summer is here already and it's that transitional time of year, when the outgoing officers of our Chapter depart, and the incoming officers take over the reins. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Anne Seymour for her years of dedication and service to the Chapter. Anne's presence will continue to be felt strongly in her new role as Co-Chair of our upcoming Quint Meeting, scheduled to take place during the fall of 2003. Thank you Anne, for your unfailing cheerfulness, creativity, and hard work!

Thanks are also due to Karen Albert for serving as our dedicated Chapter Council Representative for the last three years, to Mindy Paquette-Murphy for her role as AHIP Representative, and to Gerri Stephenson for acting as Development Coordinator. Special thanks goes to Eric Delozier, Incoming Chair, and his Program Committee for a fine year of programs!

Nina Long joins the incoming officers as Chair-Elect/Program Chair for 2002-2003. Our new Education and Credentialing Committee Chair is Daniel Kipnis. Gina Kaiser has agreed to take on the role of Development Coordinator. Esther Dell will be our new AHIP Representative, while Marion Chayes will serve as our new Chapter Council Alternate. Thank you Nina, Dan, Gina, Esther, and Marion for accepting these positions!

Finally, let us not forget those who continue to toil behind the scenes. Thanks to Linda Katz for being our Treasurer as well as Co-Chairing the Communications Committee with Karen Albert. Thanks to Nancy Calabretta for her work on the *Chronicle*, to Joan McKenzie for her fabulous historical posters and for being our resident photographer, to

Sue Couch for taking on the Chapter Council Representative position in time for this year's Annual Meeting, to Brad Long for taking over the Secretary position from Barbara Shearer, to Jo-Ann Babish for keeping good track of our membership, to Robert Lyle for his chairmanship of the Government Relations Committee, to Rachel Resnick for doing a great job as our Benchmarking Liaison, and to Kevin Block for updating our website. (Please forgive me if I've forgotten anyone!)

And I also would like to take a moment to remember the Board Member we lost this year, Ruthanne Spatafore. Ruthanne was an enthusiastic and energetic Chair of the Education and Credentialing Committee. She had many wonderful ideas, quite a few of which were brought to fruition in the form of CE courses that many of us benefited from attending. Ruthanne was very excited about the prospect of the Quint Meeting, and she had already volunteered to be quite involved in the planning. She was optimistic, dedicated, and hopeful, both for her own future and for the future of our profession. Those of us who knew her have been left with a deep admiration for her strength in the face of adversity. Ruthanne and her dedication to our Chapter will be remembered and missed.

Have a safe, happy, healthy summer! §

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### **Letter from the Incoming Chair**

As I write this article, plans are underway for the annual transition meeting of the Chapter's Board of Directors. This year's meeting will be held on July 26 at the Penn State Harrisburg Library in Middletown, PA. Having traveled to the Philadelphia area since 1998 for previous Board meetings, I have to admit that I will not miss the two-hour drive for this one. At the meeting, incoming and outgoing officers and committee chairs report on past, current, and future activities of the Chapter. In addition, the Board also reviews and approves committee memberships for the upcoming year and exchanges policy and procedure manuals.

There are three particular issues that are likely to take precedence at our meeting. First, MLA's Strategic Thinking initiative will probably be considered as a topic or agenda item for an upcoming Chapter program. Second, there appears to be a high level of interest in following the lead of the New York/New Jersey Chapter by offering a continuing education activity in the form of a one-day mini medical school. Finally, planning for the upcoming Quint Chapter meeting is expected to generate lots of discussion. As Anne Seymour reported in the winter 2002 issue of the *Chronicle*, the meeting will be held in Philadelphia in October 2003.

Speaking of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new officers and committee chairs. I look forward to working with these people, as well as with those board members who will continue their dedicated service in existing roles.

I would like to close my first *Chronicle* column by asking each of you to consider applying for membership to a Chapter standing committee. The viability of any organization is dependent upon the participation of its members. There are vacancies on several committees and one (Bylaws Committee) without a chair. The application is conveniently available on the Web and should take no more than five minutes to complete. Applications are welcome from all Chapter members. Your committee service and participation can help shape the Chapter's future.

I look forward to working with all of you during the upcoming year. §

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## **Consumer Health Library Consortia - A Growing Trend\***

Hospital librarians have always realized the benefits of working with fellow librarians for purposes of resource sharing, mentoring and networking. Much of this has been done through successful local consortia. As more hospital libraries offer consumer health information services and as more public libraries realize the need to become knowledgeable about health information, the concept of consumer health library consortia is growing. Three such consortia are the focus of this article.

*The Pennsylvania Association of Consumer Health Librarians* was developed in 2000 by Val Gross, Librarian at the Consumer Health Resource Library at Geisinger Medical Center and Patrice Hall, Librarian at the Lois High Berstler Community Health Library at Hershey Medical Center. After successfully obtaining funds to develop a web catalog, they invited other colleagues nearby to join them in a consumer health library consortium. The purpose of the consortium is to “promote interest in consumer health information and strengthen consumer health library services by providing a means of communication and exchange of ideas among providers of consumer health information and to support opportunities for resource sharing and institutional cooperation.”

Members are from the following institutions: Holy Spirit Hospital, Priestley-Forsyth Library, Moses Taylor Hospital, PinnacleHealth at Harrisburg Hospital, Greater Hazleton Health Alliance, James V. Brown Library, Berwick Public Library, DuBois Regional Medical Center, Centre Community Hospital, Hershey Public Library, Hershey Medical Center, Geisinger Medical Center, C. Everett Koop Community Health Information Center, Overlook Hospital, and the New York Academy of Medicine. The original geographic areas represented were Central and Northeastern Pennsylvania but interest from other neighboring counties and states has widened that representation.

The group meets quarterly, and the location of the meeting changes each time so that members can become familiar with the other consumer health libraries and services. To

date, the group has accomplished several of its original goals. A web site has been developed (<http://www.chlibrary.org/>) that contains an online catalog of two member libraries (Geisinger and Hershey). Lists of all members and consumer health library web sites of members are included on the site. The consortium has achieved significant discounts with two major vendors used by consumer health libraries – the Gale Group’s Health and Wellness Database and Baker and Taylor books. Future plans include continuing education programs, grant projects and the addition of the other member libraries’ catalogs to the web site. The original purpose of the consortium, the exchange of ideas and experiences, is most evident in the fact that both hospital and public libraries are members. Both benefit greatly from each others’ special areas of expertise. For more information on this consortium, Email Val Gross at [vgross@geisinger.edu](mailto:vgross@geisinger.edu)

*LOON (Libraries Online/Outreach North)* in Northern New Hampshire/Vermont began in 1997. Member libraries are Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital Medical Library, Cobligh Public Library, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, Gale Medical Library, Lincoln Public Library, Littleton Public Library, New Hampshire Community Technical College-Berlin, and Northern New Hampshire AHEC Outreach Librarian. The group started with funding from NN/LM to provide access to consumer health information through a group of two hospital, one academic, and four public libraries. The members have sponsored speakers on various health topics and distributed information packets to the public, encouraging the community to use the libraries to find reliable health information. They have also sponsored classes in searching PubMed and HealthSource Plus for librarians and healthcare providers. The highlight of the funded program was a presentation for area public, school and hospital librarians by the late Cecilia Durkin, consumer health librarian in the NN/LM Network Office for the NLM. The members benefit from meeting together, visiting member libraries, and sharing resources through interlibrary loan. For more information, contact Linda Ford at [lford@littletonhospital.org](mailto:lford@littletonhospital.org).

Several consumer health information providers have been meeting in the Toronto, Canada area for about three years. This group, *The Consumer Health Information Providers Interest Group*, includes members from public libraries, academic health science centers, hospital libraries, and government and non-profit organizations (a list of members is available at <http://www.hhsc.ca/chiconf/members.htm>). They meet every two months and most recently hosted a conference titled: “Consumer Health Information: the Canadian Experience.” The purpose of the consortium is to share useful information that allows members to provide quality health information services and share the special expertise of hospital, public, and other types of libraries. They have a new listserv titled the CHIPIG-list at York University. Information to subscribe is available at <http://sundial.ccs.yorku.ca/archives/chipig.html>. For more information on this consortium, contact Don Buchanan at [Buchanan@hhsc.ca](mailto:Buchanan@hhsc.ca).

Consumer health library consortia appear to be a natural outgrowth of the explosion of consumer health information services in hospitals, libraries, and other organizations. The dedicated professionals in these three consortia are proof that sharing, cooperating, and networking have benefited the librarians and the customers they serve. §



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\*Article first appeared in: *National Network* v.26(2), October 2001

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## Member & Library News

We are saddened to report the passing of Harrison Young, husband of **Judy Schaeffer-Young**, Director of the Arthur Bedell Memorial Library, Wills Eye Hospital, on April 6. Judy says, "I keep telling people that we packed more into 11 years than many people pack into a lifetime. One of my projects is going to be to organize 11+ years of pictures and scan the best ones of him to make a CD for family Christmas presents." We extend our deepest sympathy to Judy and the Young family.

**Nina Long**, Director of Library Services and Archivist, Wistar Institute, reports that she has received a grant from the William Penn Foundation for \$44,800 in support of a project to exhibit eight anatomical models produced by Philadelphia sculptor William Rush during the period 1808-1820. The models were commissioned from Rush by Caspar Wistar, M.D. as aids in his lectures to students in anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania's medical school, and are part of the Wistar Museum Collection. The exhibit is planned for mid-October, 2002 and is also supported by a \$5,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historical Commission.

**Andrea Kenyon**, Director of the Katherine A. Shaw Division of Public Services, College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and **Barbara Palmer Casini**, Director, Memorial Library of Radnor Township, have co-written The Public Librarian's Guide to Providing Consumer Health Information; it has just been published by PLA (Public Library Association), a division of ALA (American Library Association). (ISBN : 083898200X; price: \$32.00) It is available via PLA's website: <http://www.pla.org>.

**Thomas Jefferson University's Scott Memorial Library** has received awards from both the American Library Association and the Medical Library Association for its "Cyber Café" brochure. The creative team for the brochure included **Ann Koopman, Betty Warner, Diana (Zinnato) Ryan, Gail Leone, Tim Flanagan, Tony Frisby** and former staff members **Barbara Shearer** and **Bridget Clancy**. The brochure employs a menu theme and was designed to highlight the expanding selection of electronic journals available through JEFFLINE. The ALA award was the "Best in Show" in the category of internet-related publications; the MLA award was number one in the category of "Academic Libraries- One Time Event" at MLA's Swap 'n Shop of library promotional materials.

As a result of the merger of MCP Hahnemann University and Drexel University, as of July 1 the new name for the former MCP Hahnemann University Libraries will be

**Drexel University Health Sciences Libraries;** the Health Sciences Libraries consist of the Hahnemann Library, Florence A. Moore Library of Medicine and Queen Lane Library.

**Karen Albert**, Director of Library Services, Talbot Research Library, Fox Chase Cancer Center, was recently appointed to the Library Advisory Committee of the Nature Publishing Group.

**Barbara Henry**, Community Health Librarian, Community Health Library, Eugene du Pont Preventive Medicine & Rehabilitation Institute, Wilmington, DE, was interviewed by WHYY for its “Delaware Today” television program on May 7. Some of the audio portion of the interview was also run during NPR’s “Morning Edition.”

**Mindy Paquette-Murphy**, Research Information Scientist, Sanofi-Synthelabo Pharmaceuticals, Malvern, PA, is Chair-Elect for the Corporate Information Services Section, Medical Library Association, for 2002/03.

Congratulations to Chapter members who were honored by the Hospital Libraries Section, MLA, for exemplary service; their names were inscribed on a scroll that was unveiled at the annual MLA meeting. They are: **Nancy Calabretta, Christine Chastain-Warheit, Barbara Henry, Mindy Paquette-Murphy, and Diane Wolf.**

**Diane Wolf**, Associate Director, Medical Libraries, Wilmington Hospital Library, Christiana Care Health Services, is on the slate of nominees for the Nominating Committee of the Medical Library Association. (Members of MLA National, keep an eye out for your ballots!)

**Nancy Calabretta**, Reference Librarian, and **Barbara Miller**, Director, both of the Reuben L. Sharp Health Science Library, Cooper Health System, are co-authors of “Recommended Core Collection of Web Sites for Hospital Libraries,” published in *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, v. 20, Winter 2001, p. 1-25.

**Janet Clinton**, Manager of Library Services, Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital, Darby, PA, has written “Happy Anniversary! Consortium for Health Information & Library Services 1976-2001,” which was published in *National Network*, April 2002, p. 7-9.

**Jo-Ann Babish**, Director of the Library at Moses Taylor Hospital, Scranton, PA, is the author of “CHI Services: Planetree- A Patient-Centered Care Concept,” published in *National Network*, April 2002, p. 11-12.

#### **Staff Changes:**

**Lora Thompson** has been promoted from Medical Librarian to Director of Library Services at Easton Hospital, Easton, PA. In addition, she recently received AHIP recognition as a Provisional Member. **Patti Otani** was hired to fill the Medical Librarian position; she was previously Chemical Librarian at Mallinckrodt Baker, Phillipsburg, NJ.

**Gerri Eisenberg**, Associate Library Director at the O.J. Snyder Memorial Library, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine since 1998, has moved to California due to her husband's relocation. (Good luck and have fun out there, Gerri!)

**Stephanie Ferretti** will be joining the staff at the O.J. Snyder Memorial Medical Library, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine as Associate Director, Library and Educational Systems. She is currently Associate Director for Technical Services and Systems at Temple University Health Sciences Center Library.

**Linda M.G. Katz** has been named Associate Director, MCP Hahnemann University Libraries. She will also continue in her position as Library Coordinator of the Hahnemann Library.

**Laura Koepfler** is the new Serials and Electronic Collections Librarian at the Scott Memorial Library, Thomas Jefferson University. She had been Director of Libraries at St. John's Riverside Hospital, Yonkers, NY.

**Gretchen Kuntz** is the new Clinical Liaison Librarian at the University of Pennsylvania's Biomedical Library. She was a social worker in a variety of health care settings for 20 years before receiving her masters of science in information studies from Florida State University in December 2001.

**Ben Jenson** has joined the staff of Penn's Biomedical Library as Head of Document Delivery. A December 2001 MLIS graduate from the University of Pittsburgh, he managed Pitt's Interlibrary Loan Office evenings and weekends while attending school.

**Halyna Liszczyński** has been appointed Director of Library Services at Graduate Hospital, Philadelphia. She comes to Graduate from Faxton-St. Luke's Health Care Medical Library, Utica, NY. §

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## Meet Your Fellow Chapter Members:

### Profile #1: Etheldra Templeton

**Past Positions in Chapter:** Secretary, 1983-1985; Program Committee member

**Present Professional Position:** I became Executive Director of Library and Educational Information Systems at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1998. It was a wonderful opportunity– the expression “died and gone to heaven” comes to mind! The College had committed to a major upgrade of facilities and collections, and came through with the necessary resources. The Library staff enthusiastically embraced a range of new

technologies. Faculty and students were involved and appreciative, and Administration supportive. It was a very exciting first few years. And, since all of us in the medical library environment are faced with a constant learning curve, the excitement continues to this day.

**Previous Experience:** My first job in Philadelphia was at the Medical College of PA Circulation Desk. I started there in 1975, became Director in 1981, and stayed - through many changes and several mergers- for 22 years. I worked with great librarians there (lots of Chapter members).

**What do you find most interesting about your work?** The aforementioned challenges and issues, of course. Also, I've had the opportunity to work on institutional projects here at PCOM. On the business and administrative side, I'm learning a lot from our SCT Banner implementation. On the academic side, I'm involved in Blackboard and Campus Pipeline. I'm intrigued by the Information Commons concept and want to explore how we can collaborate with faculty, the Clinical Learning Lab, Ed Media, etc. I guess the best thing is that I get to wear a lot of hats.

**What qualities or traits do you find most helpful in your work?** Trust and confidence: I trust the library staff to be brilliant given resources and the opportunity to define projects.

**What do you enjoy doing "for fun"?** Reading (just love the Lower Merion Library System and PALCI), Italian Market, 4<sup>th</sup> St. fabric stores, Sunday NYT, team croquet, travel (but I don't do nearly enough).

**Is there anything about you that others might be surprised to know?** I was Doc Gibbs in "Our Town."

**Why would you encourage members to become actively involved in the Philadelphia Regional Chapter?** Because the members are smart, lively, and generous people who share an interest in all things and issues related to medical libraries.

## **Profile # 2: Carlos Rodriguez**

**Current Position in Chapter:** Writer of the "TechnoHumanist Corner," a regular feature in the *Chronicle*.

**Present Professional Position:** I am the Medical School Liaison for the Biomedical Library at the University of Pennsylvania- i.e., I am the Reference Librarian who has been designated as the contact person for the Medical School.

**Previous Professional Experience:** All my professional librarian experience has been at Penn. Prior to being a librarian, I was an Employee Relations Representative in the Human Resources Department of a Fortune 100 company. Before that, I was a Paralegal

for Community Legal Services in the Public Benefits Unit. Although paralegals are considered paraprofessionals, the Public Benefits Paralegals were highly regarded and respected by many of the attorneys. We were the paralegals who not only did our own legal research and wrote briefs, but were legally recognized to argue cases before Administrative Judges.

**What do you find most interesting about your work?** The three most interesting things about my job are the people, teaching, and information gathering. In this job I get to meet a lot of people from diverse backgrounds. I really enjoy finding out about them and their work. I think you learn a lot about a person from what they are researching and how they approach a problem. I love the teaching aspect of the job. It's a great to exchange ideas with people. That keeps me aware of changes and precludes delivering an identical lecture twice. I love the challenge of trying to engage the class in a dialogue. From an information gathering standpoint, I love this part of the job. I am a hunter- a hunter of information. By training, I'm a historian, political scientist and paralegal, so I enjoy gathering facts, analyzing them and understanding the gist of the problem.

**What qualities or traits do you find most helpful in your work?** Flexibility, patience and curiosity are the qualities I find most helpful. I deal with people who sometimes have a very heavy and fast paced schedule. If I want to accomplish something with these people, then I have to be willing to adjust my schedule to theirs. These people know they have crazy schedules and really appreciate when you try to adapt to their schedule. Patience is one of those qualities all librarians need. In my position, sometimes you have a language barrier or the person cannot articulate what their needs are, or Murphy's Law just goes into high gear. On those occasions, I try to be patient. If it's a language problem or the person cannot explain exactly what he or she is seeking, then I play 20 questions. I don't give up. I just keep asking questions until I discover what is needed. If Murphy's Law is at work, then I ride it out as I would an ocean wave. Gosh, curiosity is so important in what I do! Since I don't have a strong life sciences background, many of the projects or problems I take on are "dark" or "unknown territory." When that happens, I have to be willing to go the extra mile to get the job done. I do a crash self-tutorial on the subject or problem. This means I'm always learning and my job stays interesting.

**What do you enjoy doing "for fun"?** I love to ride the waves. Give me a good ocean wave and you'll probably see me body surfing or on a Boogey Board. Barring that, I'm probably listening to music and singing. I love all kinds of music; that makes my kids nuts. They never know what kind of music (hip-hop, jazz, blue grass, classical, R & B, etc.) I'll be singing or playing on the car radio when I pull into our driveway. I don't sing with bands or jazz groups anymore, but I still love to sing. Coupled with the music is dancing. I love to dance. Dancing is an expression of the soul and everyone needs to dance.

**Is there anything about you that others might be surprised to know?** I've had gray hair since at least age 7. So, I don't view gray hair as getting old. English is not my first language. I was born in Puerto Rico, so my first language was Spanish. At the age of 6, I was a "latchkey" kid in the South Bronx. My father used to pay a neighbor's teenager to

pick me up from school and deposit me in the local movie house— The Star. The Star showed old movies and changed its features four times a week; I lived in The Star. [“Louie, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.”— Richard Blaine to Inspector Reynaud in the closing shot of “Casablanca.”] I learned English from the movies. So, I had great language teachers and babysitters in the likes of Gary Grant, David Niven, Sir Alec Guinness, Gregory Peck, etc.

The other thing people that might surprise people is that I never wanted to be a librarian! I came to Philadelphia to go to Penn and work on a Ph.D. in Japanese and East Asian studies. My goal was to be a part-time college teacher and a full-time intelligence analyst for a government agency.

**Why would you encourage members to become actively involved in the Philadelphia Regional Chapter?** Well, this is great group of people who are nice, dedicated, and care about what they do. Being active in the Chapter means that you can play a role in the course and development our profession takes in the Philadelphia area. You can play a part in resolving local issues or questions that national MLA might not be able to address. In short, it's a chance for each individual to have some control over the destiny of our profession. You can help shape the direction of our profession on a local level and maybe on a national level. If that doesn't move you, then at least know that you will meet a group of nice, friendly people. §

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## **Frankenstein Exhibit Coming to Drexel's Library**

In January 2003, Drexel University's Hagerty Library will be one of 80 libraries across the country awarded the opportunity to host a traveling exhibition entitled “Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature.” Developed by NLM and ALA, the application process was coordinated through the ALA Public Programs Office and funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibition “encourages audiences to examine the intent of Mary Shelley's novel.” “Frankenstein” has many implications for medical education, touching on issues of ethics in science and medicine. It offers the opportunity to consider ways in which health practitioners and practices affect both the individual and the larger community and to think about “what makes us human.” All selected sites will host the exhibit through 2005. More information about the exhibition can be found at NLM's [exhibit home page](#). §

Lenore Hardy  
[hardy@drexel.edu](mailto:hardy@drexel.edu)

## **Philadelphia Regional Chapter Annual Meeting and Dinner**

This year's Annual Meeting and Dinner was held at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. We celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Chapter by meeting in the same location in which the Chapter's first Annual Meeting took place. Carol Jenkins, President of MLA, addressed the group on the topic "Will Millennials Want to be Health Sciences Librarians in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century? MLA Prepares for the Future." Carol's talk was both thoughtful and thought provoking. We are extremely grateful that she traveled all the way from North Carolina to join in our celebration.

A number of Awards and Grants were presented and accepted:

The Beatrice Davis Education Award was presented to Karen Lee Olsen, of MCP Hahnemann University, Hahnemann Library.

The Post-Masters Student Grant was awarded to Nina Galpern, of the Fox Chase Cancer Center, Talbot Research Library.

Certificates of Achievement were presented to the Chapter members who wrote articles for the special symposium published in the *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 90(1): 21-85, January 2002 issue. The symposium was entitled "Patient-centered librarianship: the informationist and beyond: a symposium to honor the fiftieth anniversary of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Medical Library Association." Authors presented with certificates included Nancy Calabretta, Christine C. Chastain-Warheit, Marion C. Chayes, Sharon Easterby-Gannett, Bradley A. Long, and Diane G. Wolf. We thank them for their interesting and informative articles!

The Chapter Achievement Award was given to the three editors of the above-mentioned symposium publication. They did an outstanding job initiating the project and pulling it all together. The editors receiving the award were: Cheryl Capitani, Anne Seymour, and Barbara S. Shearer.

Congratulations to all the award and grant recipients!

Reprints of the symposium were distributed to all Annual Dinner attendees. If you were unable to attend the dinner, but would like to receive a reprinted copy of the symposium, please send your name and address to Pat Heller (email address below). §

Pat Heller  
[heller@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:heller@pobox.upenn.edu)



Chapter Chair Pat Heller and MLA President Carol Jenkins at the Chapter's Annual Dinner and Meeting, April 16, 2002.



50<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake



Gail Gill, Lee Chayes, and Margie Smink



Valerie Pena and Lillian Brazin



Collage of Chapter history prepared by Chapter Archivist, Joan McKenzie, with assistance from Barbara Williams and Pat Heller





P.J. Grier and Mary Mylenki



Anne Seymour receiving the Chapter Achievement Award



Left to Right: Sue Couch, Betty Warner, Jo-Ann Babish, Deb Lovett, Alice Kennedy



Lenore Hardy presenting the Bea Davis Award to Karen Lee Olsen



Judy Baker delivering remarks on the Chapter's history



Left to Right: Wendy Wax, Adrienne Jeness, Martha Kirby, Mary Mylenki

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### **A Few Notes from the Government Relations Committee**

We are in the midst of an election year following a reapportionment of some electoral districts. Do you know who your elected representatives are or what district you are in? Do you have patrons facing the same questions?

For information about federal, state, and to a lesser degree, local government officials and issues, try <http://www.congress.org/> You can identify currently elected officials for a specific district by entering the appropriate zip code, thereby eliminating the need to be knowledgeable about district boundaries. To identify your district for the fall elections, which have been affected by the recent redistricting, there is an "Election Candidate Finder" tool on the same page which unfortunately is not yet completely reliable. This is

a free website provided as a public service by Capital Advantage. For the most accurate information regarding new Congressional districts in Pennsylvania, see the Pennsylvania Department of State website on reapportionment:

[http://www.dos.state.pa.us/bcel/elections/2001\\_reap/Congreap.html](http://www.dos.state.pa.us/bcel/elections/2001_reap/Congreap.html)

If you must stay in library land, an abbreviated form (only federal elected officials) of this same service is available at the American Library Association web site. On the ALA home page, click on the "Washington Office" link (column at the right), then on the Washington page click on the "Contact Congress" link. The Washington Office page also contains links to articles and position papers on legislation, legal issues, and congressional trends relevant to libraries.

Issues relating to copyright are always of interest to librarians. I received the following announcement about an interesting internet site from a colleague in the VA. The site contains a tutorial on copyright and an invitation to join a listserv dedicated to copyright issues.

The Center for Intellectual Property (CIP), University of Maryland University College, is pleased to announce the development of an online, interactive tutorial on copyright basics called The ©Primer. The ©Primer is a free interactive online tool to assist educating faculty, staff and students about copyright principles and compliance. It's just a simple click away! <http://www.umuc.edu/odell/cip/cprimer>

Also, if you have not visited the CIP in a while, come back for a refresher! You will find expanded and new resources such as a growing collection of intellectual property policies, and information about digital rights management, the public domain, and much more. Please view the upcoming online workshops and review future research initiatives like the Virtual Academic Integrity Laboratory (VAIL) and the digital-copyright listserv: <http://www.umuc.edu/distance/odell/cip/> §

Robert Lyle  
[Robert.Lyle@med.va.gov](mailto:Robert.Lyle@med.va.gov)

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## **New Christiana Care Cancer Library Opens**

The Junior Board Cancer Resource Library, Christiana Care Health System, opened its doors to the public on May 28, 2002. The library is located in the newly-opened Helen F. Graham Cancer Center, on the campus of Christiana Hospital in Newark, Delaware. The library is a gift to the entire community and the patients served by Christiana Care Health System from the Junior Board of Christiana Care. Their goal is to enable Christiana Care cancer patients and their families to receive more than just treatment and medicine. The library will be a source for getting the knowledge necessary to take an active role in their treatment and recovery. The Junior Board is an auxiliary hospital volunteer group with nearly 500 members that raise funds to initiate worthy special projects for Christiana Care.

The Junior Board Cancer Resource Library is located just off the main atrium of the Cancer Center. One wall of the 1062 square foot library suite is glass and overlooks the DuPont meditation garden with a zero-edge fountain. The view includes a small lake enhanced by a fountain. Adding to the serenity of the space is the special reflected lighting in the room and warm wood tones of the furniture.

The book and journal collections are designed to serve the clinical information and emotional needs of cancer patients, their families and friends. The majority of the materials are written at the lay level. The circulating collection includes books, videotapes, audiocassettes, and CDs. There are two computers that allow Internet access. Pathfinders for reliable cancer web sites and brief bibliographies on specific topics are readily available.

The collection focuses on all aspects of cancer information – from prevention through diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. Items about coping, end-of-life issues, death, bereavement and grief are also available. The library contains a section of cancer-related fiction for children, as well as a non-fiction collection for children who are dealing with their own cancer diagnosis or that of a family member or friend.

The library currently subscribes to about 30 cancer journals, magazines and newsletters. The library is in the process of listing its holdings in SERHOLD and will soon be designated a full member of DOCLINE.

The JBCRL is staffed full-time by a library assistant, who rotates on a monthly basis with the library assistant at the Christiana Care Community Health Library. In addition, the library is staffed half-time by a medical librarian who also serves as the Christiana Care Community Health Librarian. The Junior Board Cancer Resource Library is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 5:30.

Telephone	(302)623-4580
Fax	(302)623-4589
Librarian's office	(302)623-4585 §

Barbara Henry  
Christiana Care Community Health Librarian  
[BHenry@Christianacare.org](mailto:BHenry@Christianacare.org)



## Chapter Website Update

Later this year, a redesigned MLA-Philadelphia Chapter website will debut. We are hoping to improve the layout and organization of the information on the site and add some new features. One of the most visible changes will be a "What's New" section on the home page that will provide links directly to information on upcoming Chapter events and meetings. Future plans include a web based membership directory in addition to the PDF version currently available.

For the "What's New" section to be a success, it is important that I receive regular announcements of upcoming events. It is also important to let Jo-Ann Babish and myself know about changes in members' contact information so that we can keep our membership directory up-to-date. §

Kevin Block  
Chapter Web Master  
[kevin.block@mail.tju.edu](mailto:kevin.block@mail.tju.edu)

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## Quint Meeting Update

A group of interested members from the five chapters involved with our Fall 2003 Quint Chapter meeting met at MLA in Dallas. We decided it was necessary to change the dates by one week due to a meeting of the Fraternal Order of Police with over 15,000 attendees to be held the week of October 20, 2003. The new dates for our meeting will be October 26-28, 2003. The main committees for this meeting are Program, Financing/Budget, Fundraising/Vendors/Exhibitors, CE, Local Arrangements/Hospitality, and Publicity. Our goal is to identify a chair and members for each committee by July 1, a deadline that is quickly approaching. We need volunteers!! The Philadelphia Regional Chapter will primarily be responsible for Local Arrangements/Hospitality, but we need representation on all committees. So, pick up the phone or grab your keyboard and contact me and volunteer! §

Anne Seymour  
[seymoura@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:seymoura@mail.med.upenn.edu)  
Phone: 215-898-4115

## **Benchmarking Network Update**

During MLA 2002, Chapter Council Representatives, Karen Albert and Sue Couch, attended the benchmarking informational sessions concerning current benchmarking data and plans for future surveys.

The Benchmarking Task Force was very pleased with the participation in the latest survey. Nearly 350 individuals (18 from the Philadelphia Chapter) entered their hospital's or system's information. One problem discussed at length was that combined data coming from hospital systems was sometimes reported under the individual library section of the survey. Methods to ensure proper reporting will be examined for future surveys.

The following preliminary information is expected to be available on <http://www.mlanet.org> by the end of June:

- number of hospitals of each size responding to the survey
- aggregate data regarding ratios of hospital FTEs to: library FTEs, library professional FTEs, library support staff FTEs, clinical medical librarian FTEs, volunteer hours, and student assistant hours
- aggregate information regarding expenditures for wages and salaries, professional development and travel, monographs, print serials, audiovisual resources, electronic information resources, delivery services, computer or network equipment, etc.
- budget information including financial support and other income information
- aggregate statistics on numbers of general and consumer health reference questions, mediated searches, and educational program sessions, including numbers of participants.
- other services data including statistics regarding circulation and interlibrary loans.
- numbers of resources available, such as monographs, and serials (print and electronic)
- information on provision of special services, such as: archives, library web pages, web OPACs, consumer health and CME services, photocopying, AV equipment circulation, etc.

The Benchmarking Task Force will be busy this summer and fall, making needed changes in the survey questions. For future surveys, there are plans to include questions regarding special types of libraries--cancer, veterinary, etc, plus more questions about interlibrary loan and consumer health information services. The Task Force hopes to have the new worksheets available online in the fall. Current benchmarking network data worksheets are still available for reference in the Members Only section of the MLANET website. (See: <http://www.mlanet.org/members/benchmark/index.html>)

The next survey is expected to have a data entry period running from February through April 15, 2003. Non-MLA members will be permitted to enter data into the survey in the

future. By September 2002, the Task Force intends to establish an interactive website, with data available in different formats. The Task Force will determine what information to make available to everyone, and what to make available to benchmarking participants, institutional members, or others, for free or for a fee.

There was also talk about possibly merging the data from the MLA Benchmarking survey with that from the survey sponsored by AAHSLD (American Association of Health Sciences Library Directors).

More information will be publicized as it becomes available. Thanks to Karen Albert and Sue Couch for their contributions to this article. §

Rachel Resnick  
Benchmarking Chapter Educator  
[rresnick@dh.org](mailto:rresnick@dh.org)

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## **MLA Membership Committee Update**

The National MLA Membership Committee met at MLA in Dallas. Several of the items discussed are:

- A new, exciting campaign called “MLA Needs You, You Need MLA.” More details about the campaign will be coming to chapters within the next few months. The goal is to get more library professionals to join MLA. Incentives will be offered to referring MLA members – a \$25.00 gift certificate to Borders or Barnes & Noble. The referring member’s name will also be put into a drawing that will be held at MLA national, 2003 for one of five prizes.
- The New Members/First Time Attendees Breakfast held each year at MLA was a great success this year.
- A membership survey was conducted earlier this year to gain input on recommended changes to MLA membership categories. A motion was made to the Board by the Membership Committee for the Board’s May meeting. The board decided to vote upon the motion after the results of the survey were tallied. There was overwhelming support for the recommendation to expand eligibility for student membership to unlimited years with a valid student ID and to expand eligibility to all students regardless of degree program. §

Jo-Ann Babish  
Membership Chair  
[jbabish@mth.org](mailto:jbabish@mth.org)



## **New Chapter Members - 2002**

Mary Carmen Chimato  
Reference Librarian  
Florence A. Moore Library of Medicine  
MCP Hahnemann University  
3300 Henry Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19129  
[mchimato@drexel.edu](mailto:mchimato@drexel.edu)

Daniel Kipnis  
Educational Services Librarian  
Scott Memorial Library  
Jefferson University  
Philadelphia, Pa 19107  
[Dan.kipnis@jefferson.edu](mailto:Dan.kipnis@jefferson.edu)

Genevieve Stoudt  
Student intern  
AstraZeneca  
Wayne, Pa 19087  
[Gsw22@drexel.edu](mailto:Gsw22@drexel.edu) §

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## **Election Results**

The results listed below of the 2002/2003 Chapter officers election were announced at our Annual Dinner and Meeting on April 16th. Due to the untimely death of Ruthanne Spatafore, candidate for Chapter Council Representative, the winner of the Chapter Council Alternate election (Sue Couch) moved into the Chapter Council Representative position, and a special election was held for Chapter Council Alternate.

Chair-Elect: Nina Long (1 year term)  
Treasurer: Linda Katz (2 year term)  
Chapter Council Representative: Sue Couch (3 year term)  
Chapter Council Alternate: Marion Chayes (3 year term)

Congratulations to all! §

Anne Seymour  
Past-Chair/Nominating and Awards Committee Chair  
[seymoura@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:seymoura@mail.med.upenn.edu)



## **In Memoriam: Randy Brenner, 1948-2002**

Randy Brenner worked as a reference librarian at the Reuben L. Sharp Health Science Library of the Cooper Health System from 1989–2002. She received her M.S. from Drexel, where she became friendly with fellow students Barbara Miller and Anne Seymour and instructor Nancy Calabretta. Nancy read the following memorial at the Annual Dinner Meeting, April 16, 2002:

What can you say to memorialize a good friend and colleague who has died way too soon? I could say that Randy was the only person I knew who had been to both Hong Kong and the Galapagos Islands (and lots of place in between). And that would be true. I could say that she and her husband Dennis had the kind of long-term relationship that made everyone who knew them envious. That would be true, too. I could say that Randy had the funniest stories about her pre-librarian careers (psychiatric social worker, hospital internal auditor, accountant), or that we were the only medical library with a supply of Liva Treats in our closet to lure stray dogs who needed a ride to the no-kill shelter. I could say that she was probably the nicest person I've ever known and the most organized – in good ways– and that she loved being a librarian. I could also say that Randy was a big part of the small group of colleagues who helped me rediscover my passion for being a medical librarian when I went to work at Cooper eight years ago. Or that Randy taught all of us who knew her a lot about how to be a good friend and how to make your friends “the family that you choose.” All these things are true but perhaps the best thing I can do is to repeat something I heard recently on NPR. Susan Stamberg was interviewing a patient with ovarian cancer who had been involved in the case of the Missouri pharmacist who dispensed diluted chemotherapy drugs. At the end of the interview, Susan Stamberg said of this woman, “Her spirit is large.” Randy Brenner’s spirit *was* large and *is* large and it is still very much with us. We are grateful for that. §

Nancy Calabretta  
[calabret@umdnj.edu](mailto:calabret@umdnj.edu)

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## **In Memoriam - Ruthanne Spatafore, 1943-2002**

On April 1, 2002, the Biomedical Library at University of Pennsylvania lost a long-time member of the staff, Ruthanne Spatafore. Ruthanne served as head of access services for close to 20 years. She had recently been diagnosed with colon cancer. After several months of treatment and then surgery, Ruthanne was recovering well and due to return to work the morning she suffered an embolism.

Throughout her long career at the Biomedical Library, Ruthanne touched countless lives, first as a weekend supervisor and then as Head of Access Services, a position she had held since 1982. Her kindness, influence, and interest in the lives and careers of library staff and student workers were readily apparent from the generations of former and current staff who attended her viewing and service in New Jersey. Ruthanne’s

commitment to customer service, her dedication to the Penn Library, and her many contributions to the professional organizations to which she belonged were well known. A more recent member of MLA, Ruthanne made a major contribution over a relatively short time as Chair of the Education and Credentialing Committee, arranging for many interesting and relevant CE courses. Ruthanne will be greatly missed by her "family" at the Biomedical Library, throughout the Penn library system, and in the Philadelphia Regional Chapter of MLA. §

Anne Seymour  
[seymoura@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:seymoura@mail.med.upenn.edu)

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## **Chapter Council Outlines MLA's Future Priorities**

The 2002 Chapter Council meeting was held on Saturday, May 18 in Dallas. All chapters except Hawaii were represented. Some highlights of the meeting follow:

Carol Jenkins, outgoing MLA President, gave an overview of her year, which included a [photograph](#) and mention of her visit to Philadelphia and the celebration of our Chapter's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at its Annual Meeting and Dinner. Linda Watson, incoming President, outlined her priorities, which encourage recognition of medical librarians as "health information champions," a more diverse MLA membership, research and development of MLANET to take "command of our own knowledge base," and continued involvement in consumer health and health information literacy.

Carla Funk, MLA Executive Director, spoke to the continued enhancement of MLANET and the intent to develop more web-based continuing education.

Chapter Council Chair Linda Markwell reported on some initiatives for 2002. The July *JMLA* will carry an article on the value of medical library information services. MLA also had a part in the Pew Internet Report, which studied consumer use of the internet, and MLA members were covered in a number of articles in the mainstream media, including *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Business Week* and *Self*.

There was a presentation on the Informationist Conference (see article in this issue) held in April at which 30 invited speakers discussed the concept of the informationist- what it means to various groups, how an informationalist might be educated, how he or she might fit on a research or clinical team, and how MLA and other constituents might implement some of the ideas expressed. Our own Diane Wolf was singled out as an "articulate speaker for clinical librarianship in hospitals."

Credentialing was also discussed at length. There are 1108 AHIP members, which is 32% of MLA. "Tip sheets" have been placed on MLANET to help recruit more AHIP members. AHIP members who renew at the same level between September 2002 and

2003 will not have to submit documentation. There was some discussion about making it easier to document activities and whether MLA headquarters should have a larger role.

The Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona won the MLA/Majors Chapter of the Year Award for a project which used video conferencing to allow chapter members to participate in meetings they could not attend in person. Because there were several strong projects submitted this year, the committee encouraged chapters to resubmit their projects in future years.

Other topics discussed touched upon the recurring overall issues of this year's national meeting:

- Recruitment – In view of the huge imminent expected retirements of medical and other librarians, how can the medical library profession attract more of the "brightest and best" and retain those already in the profession?
- Informationist - How do we proceed with this concept and who are the players?
- Consumer health - How can medical librarians and MLA position themselves to be considered THE experts in consumer health information?
- PDAs - How do we integrate this technology into our libraries and the delivery of health information? §

Susan Couch  
Chapter Council Representative  
[scouch@mail.nbme.org](mailto:scouch@mail.nbme.org)

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## **The TechnoHumanist Corner**

What is rapidly becoming the most popular piece of technology in medicine today? If you said laptops, guess again. If you said PDAs, then go to the head of the class. PDAs seem to be the technological rage these days. Physicians, residents, nurses, medical students and librarians are all jumping on the PDA technological bandwagon. Medical schools are beginning to require their new incoming medical students to purchase PDAs, just as they did with computers a few years ago. PDA market research surveys have been done, but no one knows exactly how fast the PDA market is growing. However, all agree the PDA market is booming.

What accounts for this proliferation of PDAs? They are small, portable and easy to use. But, the real reason for their popularity is that they can deliver information to the user at the point of need and at the point of care. Although point of need and point of care can be synonymous in a clinical setting, in an academic or research setting they can be two distinct events.

PDA (Personal Digital Assistants) are handheld devices that have been around for years. Their primary use was as a personal organizer. They include calculators, calendars, telephone/address books, To-Do lists, daily planners, etc. The PDA gave the busy individual on the go the tools to be mobile and organized. The blend of wireless telecommunications, the World Wide Web as an information provider, and recent advancements in computer technology transformed the PDA from a personal organizer into a potentially indispensable tool. Now, in addition to their original tasks, PDAs can provide database searching, email, spreadsheets, word processing; they can also receive and read PDF documents, and search the World Wide Web. All this computing power is now in the palm of your hand!

If you do not own a Personal Digital Assistant and are considering getting one, here are some factors to consider.

**Size and Ergonomics:** Since PDAs are handheld devices, it is important to consider the size of the PDA and the size of your hand. Personal Digital Assistants primarily come in two sizes: palm-sized computers and handheld computers (which may be as large as a hardcover book). The most commonly seen PDAs are the palm-sized computers that cradle the palm of your hand. When buying a PDA, take your hand size into consideration. If you are looking at a smaller PDA and have large hands, you may find it difficult to input data or manipulate the different screen functions on your Personal Digital Assistant. Similarly, persons with small hands might find it frustrating to use a larger PDA.

**Operating System:** Personal Digital Assistants are classified by their operating systems rather than their size. There are essentially three PDA platforms - Palm, Pocket PC (formerly Microsoft Windows CE), and Psion.

Palm not only is used to describe palm-sized computers, but it is also the company trade name for the Palm Operating System (OS). Other companies such as Handspring, maker of the Visor palm, and Sony, manufacturer of Clie, use the Palm OS for their palm-sized devices. Palms use a stylus to write or tap a touch screen keyboard to input data. Currently, Palms are the most popular of the PDAs; they have 70% of the PDA market.

The second platform, Pocket PC, uses the Microsoft Windows CE operating system. Since Windows CE looks like the Windows on desktop computers, PC users will be very familiar with this screen display. Pocket PCs utilize touch screen technology, but you can also use a separate keyboard to input data. Pocket PCs made by Casio, Compaq, and Hewlett-Packard use Windows CE.

The last PDA platform is Psion. Psion PDAs use an operating system known as EPOC. In Europe, the Psion platform is the platform of choice. It is more popular than Palm and Pocket PC. Psion handhelds perform similar functions to their American counterparts. According to the literature, the most popular feature of the Psion is its keyboard.

**Memory:** PDAs do not have hard drives. All the basic programs, such as the operating system, calendars, etc., are stored in read-only memory (ROM) chips. Data and other programs that are added are stored in random-access memory (RAM) chips. What does this mean to you? When you turn on your PDAs, your programs do not have to load and are instantly available. Also, when you make changes to data, they are automatically stored. Palms and Pocket PCs have different memory requirements. Palms have less memory than Pocket PCs, but use that memory more efficiently than Pocket PCs. However, since Pocket PCs utilize color screens and many of their software programs, e.g., multimedia, require more memory to run, these PDAs have more memory. If you think you are going to use programs that are memory hogs, consider getting a PDA that is memory expandable.

**Display Screens:** All Personal Digital Assistants have LCD screens that are used for inputting and outputting data/information. Handheld-sized computers have larger screens than palm-sized computers. Since all screens are not created equal, factors such as resolution, monochrome vs. color displays, active vs. passive matrix displays, and reflective or backlit screens, become important considerations. For instance, if you want sharper, clearer images on your screen, you should get a screen with a high resolution and an active matrix display. If you are going to be working in areas with low lighting, then you should consider backlit screens.

There are other things to consider, such as batteries, modems, a cradle for your PDA, browsers and other software. One of the most important pieces of software that you will need is the program that will allow you to "sync" your PDA with your desktop or laptop computer. Personal Digital Assistants have become smaller extensions of the larger computers; therefore, people want to save and exchange data between their PDAs and their larger computers. This is known as "sync-ing." The type of synchronizing program you use will depend on the platform of the larger computer. There are separate sync programs for Macs and PCs. Also, in order to sync data between PDAs and larger computers, the programs on both machines must be compatible or the same. For example, if you create a document using MS Word on your PDA and sync it to your desktop computer that has Word Perfect, you will have a problem.

The other important program you will need is antivirus software. If you plan to use your PDA for email or cruising the Internet, get a virus protection program. Antivirus software may be obtained from McAfee (<http://www.mcafee.com>), Symantec (<http://www.symantec.com>) or Trend Micro (<http://www.antivirus.com/>). You can download a free antivirus program from Trend Micro: ([http://www.antivirus.com/free\\_tools/](http://www.antivirus.com/free_tools/)).

I have presented general criteria to consider when shopping for a PDA. For a more detailed criteria and to learn more about prices, accessories, comparison of PDAs, I recommend the following articles:

- *How Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) Work* (<http://www.howstuffworks.com/pda.htm>) by Craig C. Freudenrich on Marshall Brain's How Stuff Works (<http://www.howstuffworks.com>) website. Do not let the article title mislead you. This is one of the best articles I have read that explains in

non-technical language what PDAs are and what you really need to consider when buying one.

- *PDA Buying Guide* (<http://computers.sympatico.ca/viewz/guides/pda.html>) from viewz.com.
- *A PDA Primer* ([http://www.advanceforhie.com/pastarticles/jul2\\_01feature1.html](http://www.advanceforhie.com/pastarticles/jul2_01feature1.html)) by Patty Thierry from Advance for Health Information Executives Online.

For articles about PDA basics and the role of PDAs in medicine, I recommend:

- *The Hand-to-Handhelds Basics in Medical Practice* ([http://www.calphys.org/html/feature-hand-to-handheld\\_basic.htm](http://www.calphys.org/html/feature-hand-to-handheld_basic.htm)) by Aura Bland from the California Physician site.
- *PDAs in Medicine: Information at the Point-of-Care* ([http://www.amip.org/catalyst/pda\\_html/](http://www.amip.org/catalyst/pda_html/)) by Ralph La Tella from The CyberMed Catalyst/JAMIP website.

For a selected few PDA websites providing general resources, links, and information to health professionals, you can visit:

- pdaMD.com (<http://www.pdamd.com/>)
- PDAs for Health Care Providers (<http://educ.ahsl.arizona.edu/pda/index.htm>)  
-Arizona Health Sciences Library
- PDAs for the Health Sciences (<http://www.usc.edu/hsc/nml/lis/tutorials/pdas.html>)
- Healthy PalmPilot (<http://www.healthypalmpilot.com/>)
- Medical Pocket PC.com (<http://medicalpocketpc.com/>)

Well, it's time to go now. Remember, the next time you hear a tapping sound in the library, it may not be someone nervously playing with his or her pencil or trying to get your attention, it's probably someone using a PDA!

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please send them to me. §

Carlos Rodriguez  
[rodrigue@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:rodrigue@pobox.upenn.edu)

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## CALENDAR

**Date:** various dates between July 15 and Sept. 23 (see below)

**Event:** Classes sponsored by NN/LM; see below for dates and topics

**Cost:** Free

**Location:** Varies

**Sponsor:** National Network of Libraries of Medicine

**Info:** Learn more and register at <http://nnlm.gov/mar/online/request.html>

NN/LM Classes:

Keeping Up with NLM's PubMed, the NLM Gateway and ClinicalTrials.gov

July 22 in Bethesda, MD

August 12 in Baltimore, MD

Sept. 23 in Bethesda, MD

TOXNET on the Web

July 17 in Bethesda, MD

August 13 in Baltimore, MD

Introduction to Web-Based Searching: Using PubMed, the NLM Gateway and

ClinicalTrials.gov

July 15-16 in Bethesda, MD

Sept. 9-10 in Bethesda, MD

**Co-sponsors:** The National Training Center & Clearinghouse and New York Academy of Medicine

**Contact:** 212-822-7396 or 800-338-7657

**Date:** various dates between June 27 and August 2 (see below)

**Event:** Drexel University – Continuing Professional Education, College of Information Science & Technology, Summer Workshops; see below for listings by topic.

**Time:** Varies (see below)

**Cost:** Varies

**Info:** Learn more and register at:

[http://www.cis.drexel.edu/grad/cpe/summer2002\\_schedule.asp](http://www.cis.drexel.edu/grad/cpe/summer2002_schedule.asp)

**Contact:** Avis A. Taylor, 215-895-1070

**Drexel workshops:**

WEB AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: TOOLS OF THE TRADE

June 28, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Writing for the Web

July 15, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Creating Web Pages With Dreamweaver: Level I

July 22, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Creating Web Pages With Dreamweaver: Level II

ESSENTIALS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES CERTIFICATE

June 27, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Getting IT: Understanding Information Technology

July 16 - 17, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Databases: Design and Applications

July 29 and 30, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Project Management for Information Technology

RETOOLING FOR PROFESSIONALS

July 9, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Collection Development Using the Internet

July 10, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Cataloging Internet Resources

July 11, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Virtual Reference: Taking the Reference Desk into Cyberspace

July 12, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. How to Make Technology Decisions That Will Stand the Test of Time

July 18, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wireless Technology for Libraries  
July 19, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Hidden Web: Finding What Search Engines Miss  
July 24, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. E-Books: Strategic Use in Libraries  
July 31, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Taming the Intranet Beast  
August 1, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. & August 2, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Proposal Writing for Technology Projects

**Date:** June 24 - August 2, 2002

**Event:** Online course- Measuring Library Service Quality

**Cost:** \$500 for ARL members, \$440 for nonmembers

**Sponsor:** ARL/OLMS

**Info:** <http://www.arl.org/training/quality.html>

**Date:** various dates between July 3 and Sept. 25 (see below)

**Event:** DIALOG workshops

Philadelphia classes

**Time:** Varies

**Info:** Register online at [http://training.dialog.com/sem\\_info/calendar/penn.html](http://training.dialog.com/sem_info/calendar/penn.html)

**Contact:** 1-800-334-2564

**DIALOG workshops:**

July 3, 9:00-12:30 Developing Dialog Searching Expertise, Pt. 2: Intermediate  
July 10, 9:00-12:30 Developing Patent Research Expertise, Pt. 1: Patent Search Basics  
July 17, 9:00-12:30 Developing Patent Research Expertise, Pt. 2: Patent Families & legal status  
July 24 9:00-12:30 DIALOG Applications Briefing: Biotechnology  
July 31 9:00-4:00 Biomedical Information Seminar  
Aug. 7 9:00-12:30 Developing Patent Research Expertise, pt. 3: Prior Art Searching  
Aug. 21 9:00-12:30 Search Basics Using Dialog Web  
Aug. 28 9:00-12:30 Developing DIALOG Searching Expertise, pt. 3: Advanced  
Sept. 4 9:00-12:30 DIALOG Applications Briefing: Medical & Health Devices  
Sept. 11, 9:00-12:30 Developing Patent Research Expertise, pt. 4: Competitive Intelligence  
Sept. 18, 9:00-12:30 Chemical Searching For Non-chemists  
Sept. 25, 9:00-12:30 Chemical Information Seminar

**Date:** Choose from July 3, July 24, Aug. 7, Aug. 21, Sept. 18

**Event:** Advanced Factiva.com Inside-Out Online Training Sessions via WebEx (sessions are 90 minutes)

**Info:** Learn more and register at

<http://www.factiva.com:80/learning/schedule.asp?node=learning1>

**Contact:** 1-800-369-7466



**Date:** July 20-24

**Event:** The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) 95th Annual Meeting and Conference

**Location:** Orlando, Florida (Orange County Convention Center)

**Info:** Call 312-939-4764

**Date:** September 23-24, 2002

**Event:** WEB SEARCH UNIVERSITY

**Cost:** \$595 (\$495 for early registration; \$450 for PALINET members)

**Location:** Crystal City Marriott, Washington, DC

**Sponsor:** Information Today, Inc.

**Info:** Register online at <http://www.websearchu.com>

**Contact:** 609-654-6266 or 800-300-9868

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### **Treasurer's Report**

The Philadelphia Regional Chapter/MLA Mellon/Citizen bank account, as of June 18, has a balance of \$7,444.65 with all transactions recorded in a Quicken database. §

Linda M.G. Katz  
2002-2004 Treasurer  
[linda.katz@drexel.edu](mailto:linda.katz@drexel.edu)

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Medical School Liaison  
University of Pennsylvania  
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Johnson Pavilion  
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215-898-9610/Fax: 215-573-2075  
Email: [rodrigue@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:rodrigue@pobox.upenn.edu)

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Scott Memorial Library  
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215-503-2828/Fax: 215-955-7642  
Email: [kevin.block@mail.tju.edu](mailto:kevin.block@mail.tju.edu)

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**The next deadline is October 11, 2002**