

THE

PITTSBURGH PULSE



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NEWSLETTER OF THE PITTSBURGH REGIONAL CHAPTER, MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, INC.

From the Chair...

I'm a happy librarian, but I'm also pleased to have an alternative identity as a musician. In my free time I often can be found with my horn in hand, playing wood-wind quintets, symphonic, or band music. I attend other groups' concerts and enjoy their performances. There are many different ways to interact with music and other musicians. Because I seek out many musical experiences, I'm alternately the soloist, the accompaniment, or the listener.



As librarians we often are the background music behind the stars in the organizations we work for. We can enjoy that role, but sometimes we need a change, maybe wish for some public recognition or the chance to stand out for a moment. Some of us are the only librarian at work, and may wish for a peer group with a common language. Some of these needs can be met by participating in the organizational life of our chapter. Lead, play a supporting role, or sit back and enjoy the results of other members' hard work. Try all these possible roles, savor their various qualities, and your experience as a Chapter member and a librarian will be enhanced.

**Barbara Folb, Chair
Pittsburgh Chapter, MLA**

The QuintEssential Conference October 26-28, 2003

**Submitted by Nancy Tannery
Falk Library of the Health Sciences**

There is still time to register for the "The QuintEssential Conference: Collaborations, Partnerships and Solutions!" The conference will encompass relevant topics under the "subject headings" of Partnerships, E-Content, New Roles, and Communications. There are over 20 thematic sessions planned for Monday and Tuesday.

The distinguished keynote speaker, Robert S. Martin, Ph.D., Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Washington, DC, will talk about governmental collaborations and partnerships. Monday evening enjoy the good company of your colleagues, good food, and the wit of Dr. John Morreall who will explore the benefits of humor in the workplace. The conference ends with a luncheon co-presentation featuring SLA president Cynthia Hill, and MLA president Patricia Thibodeau.

Plan on spending a few fall days at the Sheraton Society Hill in Philadelphia partnering, collaborating, and finding solutions with many of your colleagues.



www.quintmeeting.org

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AHIP – AHead In your Profession

Submitted by Linda Hartman, Health Sciences Library System, University of Pittsburgh

This year I hope to help many (okay, at least a few) of you complete your application for AHIP. The process isn't that onerous as you will see, but to be sure, let's walk through it together. I am going to follow the steps for a first time applicant rather than a renewing member.

The first thing to know is there are different levels of membership, based primarily on the number of years you have been working as a professional in the health information field. Oh yes, they also want you to have an MLS (or MLIS). If your degree is not from an ALA-accredited program, please refer to the website for additional instructions or feel free to contact me so we can go through the necessary steps. Please refer to the chart on the next page for a summary of the requirements for each academy level.

According to the glossary on the AHIP website "Health information field" includes library, information science, or informatics in the biomedical sciences and/or health care; serving a school of nursing in a general academic library; or working in the consumer health section of a public library.

First get a file folder or two and designate them for your AHIP application. Perhaps have one for the forms to be completed, another for those that are done, and if necessary one for those in-process. You know what works best for you so do it! Do it NOW before the phone rings again.

You will need a few things along the way that might require some digging or thought to complete so you might want to start on them now. They would be:

- Transcript for your master's degree or a copy of your diploma
- Copy of job description
- Curriculum vitae (CV)

Forward ho! MLA has put together a very handy Web page on AHIP and the application process. At any time, please feel free to visit <www.mlanet.org/academy/>. Step 1 in the application process is to review the requirements. Well, if you have gotten this far in the article, you have already done it! See, I told you it would be easy!!!

Step 2 requires you to fill out the appropriate forms. All of the forms are available in PDF. Form BIO is also available in RTF which allows you to type your answers onto the form using word processing software.

Since you need to complete the BIO form for all levels, let's go through that one together. Page 1 asks for your name, institution, contact information, and MLA status

(including institutional and non-member). That's it!!! (You are 20% done with this form. Congratulations.)

Page 2 asks for your Academy Status. Basically, is this a first time membership or are you renewing? For what level are you applying? The second part asks if you want MLA to contact your employer regarding your AHIP membership. If yes, complete name and contact information. (Great, another 20% is completed! Good job!!!)

Page 3 allows for additional employer notification information. For those of you who are first-time applicants, this is where you need the diploma or transcript copy. (Actually it is attached to the application). Next comes your work experience and information concerning it (address, start date, etc.)...okay, you are more than half-way there! Keep with it!!!

Page 4 reminds you to attach a copy of your job description. Also, include a CV if you are first-time applicant or renewing at a higher level. Next read the terms and conditions of applying and then sign and date the form. Only 1 more page to go!!!!

Page 5 may be the hardest as it does require you to part with some cash through a check, money order, or credit card.

Place these completed pages in your folder marked "completed forms." Also in this folder should be:

- Copy of transcript or diploma (1st time applicant)
- CV/resume (1st time or upgrading applicant)
- Check (unless paying by credit card)
- Copy of job description

REMEMBER, you need to send TWO copies of everything.

Now, reward yourself with that favorite cup of coffee, candy bar, or some quiet time alone. Next time we will complete the other required forms.



AHIP Wants You!

Requirements for Academy Levels

Membership Level

	Provisional	Member	Senior	Distinguished	Emeritus
Degree	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years Experience*	Less than 5 years after degree	5 years or more after degree	5 years or more after degree	10 years or more after degree	Retired
Points	8 CE credits per year after the first year	50 points for professional accomplishment over the last 5 years	80 points for professional accomplishment over the last 5 years	120 points for professional accomplishment over the last 5 years	None needed to renew at this level
Notes			All 80 points can be from professional accomplishment. 5 points or more must be from professional organization activities.	All 120 points can be from professional accomplishment. 10 points or more must be from professional organization activities (5 or more from MLA activities)	Must be a member of Academy (not provisional level) for 10 consecutive years before retirement.
Forms	BIO (includes a CV) SRP-1 SRP-2 SRP-3	BIO (includes a CV) Ledger	BIO (includes a CV) Ledger	BIO (includes a CV) Ledger	Emeritus

*Number of years based on full-time employment (24 or more hours per week). If part-time, need to accumulate required full-time equivalent years.

TechLine: It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad...Internet!

Submitted by David Brennan, Barbour Library, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Let's see... there are viruses, spam, popups, worms, port scans, and DOS (denial of service attacks) just to name a few problems. It is amazing that the Internet works at all these days, and now the attacks are getting personal. Just a few years ago, spam was not as common, (see Brennan, D. (1998). Techline. *Pittsburgh Pulse*, 12(1):4) and attacks generally didn't affect end-users who had up-to-date virus scanners. Now spam is a constant headache and if you don't have your system patched almost daily and load many other tools besides, you may be in for some serious trouble.

Even though it is an increasingly dangerous place, we can't stop using the Internet any more than we can stop driving because of the Humvees and Expeditions blocking our view. So what to do? Fortunately, there are enough people in the same situation that new tools and information are appearing all the time to combat our Internet ills. The downside is that keeping up with them can be a full-time job.

Dealing with Spam in the Workplace

For the workplace, we rely on our IT folks to keep us protected, and for them it *is* a full time job to keep patching and tweaking. As end-users, we must be careful not to make things worse – don't open unfamiliar mail, back up data to the network drive, and other routine preventive measures. Many of us are on our own for problems other than the basics. Few workplaces provide much in the way of filtering e-mail, for example. That means if your spam load is increasing daily, you'd better look at your e-mail reader filter settings and get to work. In Outlook, that means use the "Rules Wizard" to set up conditions for deleting spam. With so many people in the same boat, there are new tools all the time for dealing with spam. At minimum, use the tools you already have in order to mitigate the effects.

Protecting Your Home Computer

At home, it is another matter entirely. You are on your own, sink or swim. I just got a new PC and loaded Windows 2000. Only a minute after first getting online (to update my antivirus software no less!), I was hit by the "Blaster" worm. So, another thing to deal with now is the firewall. A firewall (either software or hardware) exists to block incoming or outgoing traffic from your PC to the Internet to stop things like the Blaster worm. For home use, not many of us are going to run out and buy a hardware firewall, so consider downloading a free software firewall such as Sygate or ZoneAlarm. Update your

antivirus program (for example, Norton or AVG, which is free). After that, go to Gibson Research <www.grc.com> and test your setup using Shields Up!, which scans your PC to see if traffic is getting through that shouldn't. The site also has many other useful utilities and links. Then it's off to Microsoft to download all the current patches for your system – that might take a while. After that, take a deep breath and relax – but just for a moment, since you'll have to repeat the "check for updates" on all three regularly. These steps cover your basic security. If you are concerned about privacy and convenience add utilities to clean your temporary Internet files, erase cookies, and block pop-up ads.

It is all too easy to be complacent, and many people (myself included) have been for quite some time. After all, I didn't get too much spam, and my PC had never been hit with anything. That's not the case anymore.

Like other areas of life, we have to make a habit of being more vigilant about our computer's health and protection. That said, one item that has always been vital is backups. It is a real aggravation to reinstall everything on your computer after something crashes it, but it would be a lot worse if you lost your data as well. With CD burners and storage media so cheap these days, there is no excuse not to burn a bunch of disks with your data.

There really aren't many alternatives to keeping up with things, as chaotic as they may be. The only truly safe PC is one not connected to anything at all.

Author's Note: the cover story in the October 1, 2003 PC Magazine <www.pcmag.com> discusses security issues and is geared to end-users.



Stethoscoop

Submitted by **Cindy Robertson, Heritage Valley Health System**

- ◆ “People change and forget to tell each other.” (Lillian Hellman). Well, that is why we have the “Stethoscoop” column...to keep all informed of the constant changes in healthcare. Following the merger of Westmoreland and Frick hospitals, **JAN PETRAK** expanded her medical librarian duties to include Frick Hospital. **ROSEMARY PANICHELLA**, former librarian at Frick, has accepted the medical librarian position at Uniontown Hospital. We wish them both well as they undertake the new and exciting challenges awaiting them.
- ◆ **DAVID NOLFI**, Health Sciences Librarian for the Gumberg Library at Duquesne University and our esteemed editor, is a presenter at the Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA) meeting held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center October 2-5, 2003. David and a colleague are presenting “Pathfinder: Integrating Librarians, Faculty and Technology to Support Student Research,” it discusses their effort to teach students research skills using a tiered approach designed to stimulate students to be lifelong learners who can find, evaluate, and use new information resources.
- ◆ Congratulations to **MARCY BROWN**, librarian for Forbes Regional Hospital in Monroeville, on her recent appointment as co-editor of the Technology section of the *MLA News*. We look forward to seeing her fine work in future issues of that professional publication.

FOUR EASY WAYS TO GET YOUR INFORMATION INTO NEXT ISSUE'S STETHOSCOOP

Mail: Cindy Robertson, Manager
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Heritage Valley Health System
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Beaver, PA 15009

Phone: 724-773-1940

Fax: 724-728-7429

Email: crobertson@hvhs.org

Be sure to include your name, business address, and telephone number with the news you are submitting

MLA Continuing Education Grant

Submitted by **Hanna Kwasik, Chair of the MLA Continuing Education Grant Jury**

Each year the Medical Library Association awards a grant to one or more of its members to provide them with the opportunity to increase their competence in the theoretical, administrative, or technical aspects of librarianship. This grant may be used to attend an MLA course or other CE activities and may range from \$100 - \$500.

Candidates for the CE Grant must: (1) hold a graduate degree in Library Science; (2) be a practicing medical librarian with at least two years of professional experience; (3) be an individual member of MLA; and (4) be a US or Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

For more information about this grant and the application visit MLA's Website at:
<www.mlanet.org/awards/grants/index.html>.

Applications should be submitted to Lisa C. Fried at MLA Headquarters. Deadline for application is December 1, 2003. For additional information, contact:

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The Pros and Cons of Acrobat versus Free PDF Tools

Submitted by Christopher Scott, Gumberg Library at Duquesne University

If you want precise control over every aspect of your PDF (Portable Document Format) files and if money is no object, Acrobat – a software product marketed by Adobe, the company that invented the popular format – is a necessity. Adding layers of security, links, and bookmarks to documents provide other compelling reasons to use Acrobat to generate PDF files. Those considerations aside, there are other ways to generate perfectly valid PDF files, including some that are free of charge. Since Acrobat Standard sells for \$299.00 (and Acrobat Professional for a whopping \$449.00), it is worth exploring these other options if you just need to create basic PDF documents.

GhostScript <<http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~ghost/>>



A popular, although somewhat complicated, application used to generate PDF files in academic settings is the University of Georgia's GhostScript. In a nutshell, GhostScript requires at least two downloads and installations (three if you do not have a PostScript printer driver on your machine), and creating a PDF file is two-step process. GhostScript, through its graphical interface, GSview, allows you to view PostScript files and provides advanced users the ability to perform more complex operations such as converting PostScript to Encapsulated PostScript. For most PDF creators, none of this is necessary, and the time and effort required to set up and use GhostScript is considerable.

DocMorph <<http://docmorph.nlm.nih.gov/docmorph/>>

Perhaps the easiest and most innovative free solution for creating PDF files is the National Library of Medicine's DocMorph. By using your Web browser, you can quickly register and use DocMorph to generate PDF files from over 50 different source file types. Using a standard Web form, simply select the file you want to convert to PDF. DocMorph uploads the file, performs the conversion on the server and provides you with a link to download the resulting PDF. The obvious drawback of this process is that it can be time-consuming with large documents and/or on slow Internet connections. To address these issues, DocMorph developed a desktop application called MyMorph. Once downloaded and installed, MyMorph looks like any other Windows application and works in the same way as its predecessor. When you select the files you want to use to generate PDF files, though, MyMorph will upload and download the files for



you without any manual steps (clicking the links to download) and without tying up a browser window.

Macintosh OS X

For Mac users, OS X provides a Save as File feature that allows you to generate a PDF file from any printable document. Like GhostScript, you must have a PostScript printer driver installed on your machine to use this feature – Adobe provides free PostScript driver downloads on its website. In addition to the popular options detailed here, there are dozens of programs available that provide free or low-cost generation of PDF files. Download.com lists over 30 applications that claim to make PDF documents from various file formats. Most of them are free to try, but you must pay to make them fully functional.



Although no third-party PDF tool provides the list of features that Adobe Acrobat offers, low-cost alternatives exist for those who just want to create basic PDF files. GhostScript provides free software that, once set up and configured, generates quality PDF files. DocMorph and its spin-off, MyMorph, provide free Web-based alternatives, and Mac's OS X includes PDF creation in its print function. Options abound when it comes to making PDF files, so take a look at them before paying a premium for software you may not need.

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Changing Lanes: Terrie Wheeler

Submitted by Marcy Brown, Forbes Regional Hospital



Terrie Wheeler

It was 1995, and administrators at the Pittsburgh VA Medical Center had a proposition for Terrie Wheeler. Wouldn't it make great sense, they mused, for Terrie to manage the Medical Media Department in addition to the Medical Library? Almost nine years and numerous projects later, Terrie marvels at the twist of fate that has broadened her career, offered incredible challenges, and created a pathway to success.

Terrie didn't have a media background, and wasn't exactly sure how managing the media group fit into her career plans. What she *did* have was a vision of the future – one in which the library offered more than traditional reference services and print information – and a desire to serve her organization. Terrie felt strongly that the future would see librarians spending most of their time on Web activities. It became quickly apparent that combining librarians with photographers, videographers, and graphic designers made sense in light of that vision. Collaborative projects capitalized on existing expertise, from visual design and usability, to information search and retrieval.

Today Terrie spends her days performing high-level activities such as Web development and deployment, database design, project management, and administrative problem solving. She has very little involvement with daily library operations and in fact considers herself an informationist above all else. Her organizational placement reporting to the Vice President for Information Management validates that perception.

At the beginning of her stint in Medical Media, Terrie spent a great deal of time learning about medical imaging in general and digital imaging in particular. The department was woefully ignoring its one PC, so she focused on automating traditional media processes. Getting people to use computers is no longer an issue, so Terrie looks for ways to use them more efficiently and effectively. Her most recent assignment as project manager of a new document management system places her in a highly visible role across the Medical Center. She was asked to lead the implementation because of her librarianship training as well as her successes in rolling out new technology.

Traditional library skills have remained important throughout Terrie's career. Classification and taxonomy

skills were useful in a project to identify medical images for retrieval. Indexing and information management are crucial in the document management implementation. Her experience with computer technology is an advantage in every assignment.

But the thing that has helped Terrie the most is a vision. Her vision includes what the larger organization should look like, and how the library can help to achieve that goal: "Vision makes you a leader, and not just a manager." She encourages librarians to cultivate these broader visions. Terrie also sees too many librarians not engaging in the practices, politics, and perceptions of the community in which the library resides. The library's goals should be firmly aligned with the institutional mission. For instance, Terrie developed the first VA Website in 1996, but the library didn't make its Web debut until 2001. It was simply more important for the organizational site to be up and running smoothly.

Medical Media provided a leg up for Terrie, admittedly one not available to many librarians in either hospital or academic settings. When she started managing the department, an administrator told her that she had "horses to trade" because of Media's tangible product that could be seen and valued by VA leaders. Knowledge-based information, in contrast, is rarely valued because of the difficulty quantifying and linking it to improved clinical or financial outcomes. So Terrie realized that she needed to "major in the tangibles" while continuing to bring librarians to the table. Not all medical librarians will have the opportunity to manage this particular tangible. The lesson to be learned, though, is to look for a tangible unique to your organization to which your skills could add value.

Terrie continues to grow in her position, and does so by removing her personal barriers and limitations. She is a life-long learner, and no project or job duty is considered outside of her scope if she can use her talents to help the VA Medical Center. She emphasizes that her responsibility is to make significant contributions to the healthcare system. The Medical Center benefits from the value added by her skills. Terrie benefits from new challenges and keeping the job fresh. Everyone wins. What could be better than that?

If your job includes "nontraditional" responsibilities, and you would like to be profiled in a future issue of The Pittsburgh Pulse, please email Marcy Brown at mbrown1@wpahs.org for more information.