Breckenridge – THE Place to Be!

Submitted by Lisa Traditi, MCMLA 2009 Promotion Committee; Edited by Heather L. Brown

The Colorado Council of Medical Librarians looks forward to hosting you for the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Midcontinental Chapter of the Medical Library Association, September 21-24 in Breckenridge, Colorado.

Look forward to a welcoming reception in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains on Tuesday evening. Make new friends and greet those not often seen as we gather at The Pavilion at Carter Park in Breckenridge.

In addition to the great slate of CE courses and nationally recognized plenary speakers, many of your colleagues will be sharing their work with contributed papers and poster sessions. Plus, we’ve planned time for networking and catching up with colleagues and even a free CE course during the conference, sponsored by our friends at the NN/LM Midcontinental Region.

You may wish to arrive early to enjoy Breckenridge’s annual Oktoberfest celebration or tour mountain homes at the Parade of Homes. Or, extend your stay and just relax, shop, hike, or just watch the Aspen trees turn gold. We’ll see you in September!

Marketing and Promotion Award

Submitted by Barb Jones, Library Advisory Task Force; Edited by Heather L. Brown

The MCMLA Library Advocacy Task Force is sponsoring a contest for “High Altitudes and New Attitudes on Library Marketing and Promotion!” Here is your chance to show off your marketing project or promotional activities that you have used to improve or expand services in your library or for your users. Members are encouraged to submit materials to one or both of the categories: marketing and promotion.

Prizes for the best entry scoring above 80 points will be awarded. Entries will be evaluated on design, presentation and evaluation methods. Divisions for entry are hospital libraries, academic libraries and other libraries. Entries should be submitted to Barb Jones (jonesbarb@health.missouri.edu) by September 1, 2009. Judges for the contest will be members of the MCMLA Library Advocacy Task Force. All entrants are encouraged to display their projects and promotional materials at the annual meeting marketing booth. The winners will be announced during the meeting in Breckenridge.

In this issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breckenridge—THE Place to Be!</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and Promotion Award</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Chair Report</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide to the MCMLA 2009 Meeting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Committee Happenings</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memory of Joan Miller</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Briefs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Literacy Awareness</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports from Chapter Council Roundtables</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Chair Report: Together We Can Make It! We Are Almost There!

Submitted by Jeanne Le Ber, MCMLA Chapter Chair; Edited by Andrew Youngkin, AHIP

Before you know it, many of us will be meeting in the mountainous setting of Breckinridge, Colorado for our annual chapter meeting. I am looking forward to this long anticipated meeting and hope to see you there. Lynne Fox and her meeting planning team have a wonderful schedule of events for us starting on Monday, September 21, 2009. There are 7 continuing education sessions, great social events, fantastic speakers (including T.R. Reid, Michael Kahn and Tom Noel), papers, posters, exhibits and more. Early conference registration ends on August 16. Be sure to visit the meeting website at http://www.mcmla.org/meetings/2009/index.htm to register. It promises to be a meeting with new attitudes at high altitudes.

One exciting outcome from last year’s Cody, Wyoming meeting is a new travel scholarship opportunity for micropolitan librarians. The Wyoming meeting planners made a profit and decided to share their “booty” by funding a member, who lives in a rural area within the MCMLA region, to attend an upcoming annual meeting. There will be one scholarship awarded per year for a total of up to $500. The Honors and Award Committee will be responsible for soliciting applications and selecting the scholarship winner. In these economically difficult times, this scholarship will benefit librarians in smaller communities whose institutions’ may be facing significant budget cuts.

After 4 years of outstanding service to MCMLA, Heather Brown has submitted her resignation as the editor of the MCMLA Express. As the editor of my own library’s newsletter, I know that this task takes an enormous amount of time, energy and patience. Heather has performed this job with grace and vigor, and we will miss her talents. Last year Heather initiated a redesign of the newsletter’s banner and layout, providing a more modern look for our chapter’s main print communication tool. Thank you Heather for a job well done!

Andrew Youngkin, Librarian at the Dixie Regional Medical Center in St. George, Utah, has been appointed to replace Heather. Over this past year, Andrew has worked with the publication committee editing articles for the MCMLA Express. Andrew brings a wealth of writing experience to this task. He has taught several writing courses for the University of Phoenix, taught an information literacy course at Dixie State College and a written communication class at Eagle Gate College. Andrew and Heather will be working together to ensure a smooth transition.

This August Peggy Mullaly-Quijas is offering an online orientation for incoming MCMLA officers and committee chairs. Peggy will use Adobe Connect to provide handouts and two-way communication with attendees. Other than the Bylaws, and Policy and Procedure Manual, our officers and committee chairs have little formal preparation for taking on their assignments. So this kind of training is long overdue. Kudos to Peggy for seeing the need and offering a solution.

MCMLA expresses their sympathy and condolences to the friends and family of Joan Miller who passed away unexpectedly on July 16, 2009. Joan served on the MCMLA Nominating Committee as Chair this past year. Joan was a Senior Reference Librarian at the W. E. Barnes Library at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. We made a donation to the Humane Society of Missouri in her memory. See an appreciation of Joan on page 8. Hope to see you all in Breckinridge, Colorado in September. Thanks for all your support. We are almost there.
Guide to the MCMLA 2009 Annual Meeting in Breckenridge, Colorado

Travel and Lodging

Transportation from the Airport

Breckenridge Hospitality works hand in hand with one of the best airport shuttles service providers around. Please contact the concierge (970-547-5555 or gdlconcierge@vailresorts.com) to arrange a pick up. Private cars are also available.

Greenie Fleet

Submitted by Jerry Carlson, MCMLA 2009 Green Meeting Coordinator ; Edited by Amanda Sprochi and Heather L. Brown

As part of our green meeting efforts for MCMLA 2009, you may have or will notice some unusual questions when registering for the meeting:

• How are you getting to MCMLA?
• If you are driving to Breckenridge, would you be willing to take riders any riders?
• Where are you coming from?
• When are you leaving home? And so forth.

If you're driving and willing to pick up passengers, whether in your home state, along the way, or at Denver International Airport, we want you for the Greenie Fleet, an initiative formed to help your fellow members - and the world - save gas by reducing the number of vehicles converging on Breckenridge. Watch for the Greenie Fleet page on the conference website (http://www.mcmla.org/meetings/2009); if you've already registered and did not answer these questions but have now changed your mind, just e-mail your information to Jerry Carlson (gmc@pvhs.org).

Why that name? Two reasons - Obviously, you're "going green" as in being environmentally responsible. The other you'll probably notice when you get to Colorado, if you didn't know already: The most popular of Colorado's 58 license plate designs features letters, numbers, and a mountain range in white on a green background. Hence, they're known to their neighbors as "Greenies."

Additionally, we're also trying to limit the number of (reusable) bags that are produced for the meeting, so please let us know if you plan to bring your own bag, or use the one bag per room that the Lodge provides.

Lodging

Great Divide Lodge (http://www.breckresorts.com/greatdividelodge)

To qualify for our great rates and to be counted toward MCMLA's room night count:

• register by calling 888-525-1787. (Do not use the online registration)
• use the group: MCMLA and the group code: BC0CRSN
The MCMLA Program Committee has put together an outstanding group of speakers for the upcoming meeting.

On September 23 the Keynote speaker will be T.R. Reid who is a NPR correspondent and the Washington Post’s Rocky Mountain Bureau Chief. Mr. Reid will talk about what he learned while writing books and creating programs on healthcare systems throughout the world.

Later that afternoon, Dr. Michael Kahn from The Children’s Hospital will be our luncheon speaker. Dr. Kahn will speak about how librarians can assist with improving patient safety, implementing electronic medical records, and be involved with clinical decision support systems.

Additionally, the MCR RML will host a workshop on continuity planning. Each participant will leave the session with an outline of an emergency plan for their library.

On September 24 Tom Noel will be our luncheon speaker. Dr. Noel’s presentation is titled “Welcome to Colorado’s High Country and its Biblioholic and Medicinal Landmarks.” It is sure to be an interesting presentation.

And finally, later that afternoon, Mary Ellen Bates will present the Capstone lecture. Ms. Bates will be speaking about negotiation skills and how to painlessly negotiate. She’ll offer tools to use to enhance your negotiation skills.

You can see this is a great group of presenters. Be sure to register now for the upcoming meeting because you won’t want to miss any of these presentations.

Visit the Speakers website (http://www.mcmla.org/meetings/2009/speakers.htm) for more information about these individuals.

**Activities On Your Own**

**Breckenridge Oktoberfest**

http://www.gobreck.com/events/townevents/breckenridgeoktoberfest/

Friday, September 18 – Sunday, September 20, 2009 on Main Street

Grab your stein and lederhosen and join us for the festival that has become a Breckenridge tradition. Offering Oom-Pah music, Bavarian foods and kids’ activities.

**Parade of Homes**

http://www.summitcountybuilders.org/paradeofhomes/

Saturday, September 19 – Sunday, September 20, 2009 / 10 am – 4 pm daily

Cost: $10 donation to The Summit Foundation

Join in this year’s Parade of Homes and tour some of the best homes in Summit County.

More event information available at:

- http://www.gobreck.com/events/calendarofevents/
Seven diverse Continuing Education classes are offered on September 21-22 (Monday-Tuesday) at the MCMLA 2009 Annual Meeting. All classes are approved for MLA credits. Don’t miss these great opportunities to learn new skills and hone your knowledge.

Sign up is now available! Go to the MCMLA 2009 homepage for details: http://www.mcmla.org/meetings/2009/

**September 21 (Monday)**

Lunch will be provided for full day CE registrants

**CE1**
No Fear Molecular Biology 9:30 am - 5 pm

Description: Scientists, Librarians and Technicians! Take the mystery out of NCBI’s resources. Learn about DNA, RNA, Gene maps, BLAST and more. Be fascinated, but not afraid of these complex biomedical databases.

Instructor(s): Helen-Ann Brown Epstein, Colette Saccomanno.

Credits: 6.5 hrs MLA CE. Covers MLA Essential Area of Knowledge 3: Health Sciences Information Services

**CE2**
TOXNET® and Beyond 10 am - 5 pm

Description: Scientists, Government workers, Librarians and anyone curious about the world we live in will learn to unlock environmental secrets from the TOXNET® databases, including TOXLINE, the Hazardous Substances Data Bank, the Integrated Risk Information System, the Toxics Release Inventory, and ChemIDplus.

Instructor(s): Maureen K. Czujak, Sharon Brown

Credits: 6 hrs MLA CE. Covers MLA Essential Area of Knowledge 3: Health Sciences Information Services

**CE3**
Politics in the Library 1 pm - 5 pm

Description: We are all surrounded by politics: the only way to avoid them is to operate in isolation. Whoever you are, this class will help you learn to influence others' perceptions of you, turn enemies into allies, stay in the loop and manage outcomes far into the horizon. Instructor(s): Barb Jones, Marty Magee

Credits: 4 hrs MLA CE. Covers MLA Essential Area of Knowledge 1: Health Sciences Environment and Information Policies
Guide to the MCMLA 2009 Annual Meeting in Breckenridge, Colorado

All information was submitted by Lisa Traditi, MCMLA 2009 Promotion Committee, unless otherwise noted.

Continuing Education Opportunities (continued)

September 22 (Tuesday)
Lunch will be provided for full day CE registrants

CE4
Herding Ejournals & Ebooks 8 am - Noon
Description: It is tough enough rounding them up, but how can you keep your electronic books and journals in the corral? This class will cover many of the basics of acquiring, maintaining, counting, distributing, and using online resources. A must for serials and electronic resource staff and professionals.
Instructor(s): Stephanie Aken
Credits: 4 hrs MLA CE. Covers MLA Essential Area of Knowledge 4: Health Sciences Resource Management

CE5
Measuring Your Impact 8 am - 3 pm
Description: Managers, directors and those striving to get ahead: become familiar with an evaluation process and take away methods and tools for assessment, evaluation planning, creating logic models, data collection and reporting so that your library users and stakeholders will know the value of of your library's services and staff.
Instructor(s): Barb Jones, Betsy Kelly
Credits: 6 hrs MLA CE. Covers MLA Essential Area of Knowledge 1: Health Sciences Environment and Information Policies

CE6
PubMed 8 am - 5 pm
Description: Learn how to use the world's largest biomedical literature database in this full day class, which includes instruction on Medical Subject Headings® (MeSH®). A great class for anyone wishing to enhance their biomedical search skills.
Instructor(s): Maureen K. Czujak, Sharon Brown
Credits: 8 hrs MLA CE. Covers MLA Essential Area of Knowledge 3: Health Sciences Information Services

CE7
Librarian as Professional, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Complexity 1 pm - 5 pm
Description: This highly interactive class focuses on practical and metaphoric tools for excelling in the current health sciences library work environment. From budgeting and standards to the power of optimism and creativity in response to adversity, this class will give anyone who wants to lead the tools they need to succeed.
Instructor(s): Jerry Perry
Credits: 8 hrs MLA CE. Covers MLA Essential Area of Knowledge 1: Health Sciences Environment and Information Policies
The MCMLA Annual Meeting is around the corner and with that, the end of one more term for the Education Committee. Looking back to the 2008-2009 term, the MCMLA Education Committee has accomplished quite a lot. The Committee would like to encourage MCMLA members to send feedback to the Committee Chair (holyokea@slu.edu). If you have any suggestions or observations as you read this summary of our recent activities, we hope you’ll take a moment to share them. The Committee’s purpose is to respond to members’ interests and needs and your suggestions and feedback will help the Committee to plan for the next term.

In the fall of 2008, we developed a survey to collect and analyze MCMLA members’ interests. We asked members about educational development needs, issues their libraries are facing, and other information. At the time, the analyses of the members’ profile indicated eagerness of members to learn and educate themselves. The survey analysis helped the Continuing Education (CE) Committee tremendously in dynamically developing CE courses for the MCMLA ’09 Annual Meeting. In fact, the MCMLA ’09 CE Committee did a terrific job to create a rich set of quality courses to meet different needs of our members. Please find out for yourself by attending the coming MCMLA ’09 to be held in Breckenridge.

The MCMLA Education Web page has been revised and updated. The Committee Members spent a good amount of time to bring you updated information on educational activities, which have been offered at each state within our Chapter. Check it out at http://www.mcmla.org/educate/education.html and let us know how useful the page is to you. To make this page most useful to you, please feel free to send us your suggestions.

The Education Committee has developed a list of classes offered in various settings that are currently available as well as courses offered in the past. We hope the list will help future committee members in developing CE courses and recruiting instructors. This course list is intended to be ongoing and will soon be transferred to a wiki to facilitate collaborative access and maintenance among committee members. You are encouraged to suggest courses or classes that you’ve attended and consider to be worthwhile. Additionally, if there’s a topic that interests you—even if you’ve never seen a course offered that addresses it—please let us know. United we can do better and more!

Near the end of the Honolulu MLA ’09 Annual Meeting, early in the morning of May 22, CE Committee Chairs of all MLA Chapters met with Julia Shaw-Kokot, AHIP, the Chapter Council Liaison to the MLA CE Committee, and with the MLA staff members. Despite the early hour, it was a very productive and lively meeting.

Our Chapter Council Liaison, Julia Shaw-Kokot, has created a wiki for education committee chairs to share information and post ongoing CE offerings. The wiki is available on the Chapter Council Web site and will also be used to post MLA Chapter Council. The Wiki has been a very efficient way of keeping apprised of new information developments, and member experiences. MLA is interested in gathering ideas from Chapter members for CE courses or Webcasts. This is another opportunity for you to share your ideas and provide suggestions.

The MCMLA Education Committee works for the members of the Association and you are encouraged to actively participate in improving the committee’s services. Help us achieve our goals. Your participation is important. Let us know of your interests, how we can best assist you, and again, please share interesting classes/courses/workshops you have attended that you think would interest other members. Even better, become a member of the Education Committee and participate more directly in helping your colleagues to improve their library services further develop/update their librarianship skills.
In Memory of Joan Miller

Edited by Heather L. Brown

From Ted Ficklen, Barnes Library

Joan Miller, Senior Reference Librarian at the Ward E. Barnes Library (University of Missouri-St. Louis) died unexpectedly July 16, 2009. Joan held masters degrees in library science and art history and joined the Barnes Library staff in 2003.

Her dynamic personality and organizational skills guided the planning and construction of the Computer Lab at the Barnes Library in 2004. The lab is still the largest on the South Campus with 53 workstations, along with printers and scanning capability. She forged new relationships with Instructional Technology and the Colleges of Education and Nursing. She believed strongly in friendliness and patron service to all who entered the Library doors. She loved Scottie Dogs and Janet Evanovich mysteries and was a wonderful lunch companion.

From Betsy Williams, St. Louis Chapter of the Special Libraries Association and former Barnes Library team member

I had the pleasure of working with Joan for three years. She was my boss and my friend. I’m sorry to say I didn’t know her as well as I would have liked—Joan didn’t like to talk about herself.

She wouldn’t mention that she was very active in the St. Louis library community. She served on the program planning committee for our SLA chapter this year. She also served as the President-Elect, President, and Past-President for the St. Louis Medical Librarians Association. Joan was an officer of the Mid-Continent Chapter of the Medical Librarians Association (MCMLA) and served as the Hospitality Chair for the regional MCMLA Conference in 2006.

She probably would tell you she held masters degrees in library science and art history from the University of North Texas. And she might talk about her jobs at Tarleton State University and the University of Louisiana. But Joan wouldn’t tell you that at some point in her youth, she worked in Santa Fe as an artist and weaver.

I can tell you that Joan had a colorful personality and chatted up everyone when she was on the reference desk. She organized our monthly staff “theme” lunches—like the one where we all brought white food...because it was January. She made coming to work fun.

She wouldn’t want me to mention any of these things. I do so out of my own need to honor her. I’m sure I can speak for everyone who had the good fortune to know her—we will miss her dearly.

No services are planned at this time. For further information, contact Cheryle Cann at 314-516-5909 or cann@umsl.edu. Memorial contributions may be made in Joan’s name to the Humane Society of Missouri, 1201 Macklind Ave., St. Louis, 63110.

News Briefs

Compiled and edited by Heather L. Brown

ACRL Health Science Interest Group

Beginning with membership renewals in September, the Association of College and Resource Libraries (ACRL) section of the American Library Association (ALA) will add the Health Science Interest Group to its roster of groups. Until an official website and listserv are established, interested parties can join a Google Group at http://groups.google.com/group/acrl-health-science-interest-group?pli=1 (Extracted from post by Siobhan Champ-Blackwell on the ICON listserv)

Lois Ann Colaianni Award

We ALL know or work with someone that is a dynamic and exceptional hospital librarian. Someone who is a visionary that deserves to be recognized for his or her outstanding service in hospital librarianship. Now is the time to nominate them for the Lois Ann Colaianni Award for Excellence and Achievement in Hospital Librarianship. Self nominations are welcome. Visit the website http://www.mlanet.org/awards/honors/index.html for further information or to download an application. Please email Deb Miller, Jury Chair at drmiller@summithealth.org with any questions. Application deadline is November 1, 2009 (Submitted by Marisa Conte, MLA award jury member)
Health Information for the Elderly

There is always great discussion on the Health Literacy Listserv. One of my great passions is interest in resources available to the elderly, so I thought I would share some points I have picked up from this listserv and other sources. Please do pass this information along to the students, faculty and healthcare professionals you serve. As you bring them greater awareness, you foster health information literacy for this special population group.

There was a great article I discovered this week when reviewing the Health Literacy Listserv discussion on teaching the elderly. The article is entitled “The Effects of Aging on Health Literacy” written by Sandra Cornett, RN, Ph.D.; Director, AHEC Clear Health Communication Program Outreach & Engagement; The Ohio State University College of Medicine, Columbus, Ohio. The article is posted on her web site at http://medicine.osu.edu/ahec/4977.cfm. She focuses on the many changes an elderly person goes through and how these changes affect learning and pose potential barriers to teaching the older person. It is a great summary of the issues and includes many tips to improve the teaching/learning process for the elderly. Another article mentioned recently can be found at: http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/doaks_houts_article.pdf. The article, published in 2007 by Doaks and Houts, concerns using pictures for low literacy health education materials. In addition there are links to materials on the ALE Wiki Health Literacy Page http://wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Using_Pictures_for_Low_Literacy_Health_Education_Materials:_Jan._8-12%2C_2007

Great resources...

- NIH Senior Health website http://nihseniorhealth.gov/
- "Glossary of Computer and Internet Terms for Older Adults" http://nihseniorhealth.gov/toolkit/toolkitfiles/pdf/Glossary.pdf
- The National Institute on Aging, "Making Your Printed Health Materials Senior Friendly".

Blogs, News, Media, Links of Interest

In the miscellaneous category, here are links to several general resources which may interest you:

- The Medical Library Association has compiled information on health information literacy http://www.mlanet.org/resources/healthlit/index.html

There is a Health Information Literacy curriculum with a Powerpoint presentation and other supporting documents, and we have permission to use this great resource. I have incorporated some of the content into a tutorial I’m developing for our College.

- Professional resources for health literacy information on the following topics: consultants/speakers; plain language resources; easy-to-read resources; organizational resources; and training resources. http://www.methodistcollege.edu/currentstudents/library/library_detail.asp?PID=15&PCID=46

And now a quarterly plug for my blog, “Health Literacy – for Health and Well Being.” I am blogging with a new design and a new address: http://aa47.wordpress.com/ This blog was created to focus on current events, webinars, national publications, web links and more in the field of health literacy. It is very interesting to see who visits the blog. I have a cluster map which reports daily “hits,” and between October, 2008 and the present the former and current blog have been visited nearly 1100 times. The visitors come from the US, Canada, Great Britain and 28 other countries. The most interesting contact was an e-mail from an Indonesian medical student. It is amazing to me to realize how passionate people everywhere are about this issue.

The Health Literacy landscape changes daily. Possible future topics for this column may include additional discussion about readability, training resources, Health Literacy Month, and more. Please make suggestions for information important to your work in hospital and academic health sciences libraries and share this column with colleagues in your academic and health care settings. Help make the strong voice for “health literacy awareness” heard! It will make a difference for all of us.
Reports from the MLA Chapter Council Sharing Roundtables

Edited by Amanda Sprochi

The Midcontinental Chapter funded two tickets to the MLA Chapter Council Sharing Roundtable Luncheons held at the 2009 MLA meeting in Hawaii. The Roundtables Luncheon is a time to network, share experiences, and meet with colleagues at the annual MLA meeting. The following are reports by the two recipients, Brenda Pfannenstiel and Doug Blansit. For summaries on all of the roundtables, visit the Chapter Council website at http://chaptercouncil.mlanet.org/roundtables/2009/index.html

Table #19: Management of E-Resources (Submitted by Brenda Pfannenstiel, AHIP, Children’s Mercy Hospitals & Clinics, Kansas City MO)

Eight librarians around the table in Hawaii representing a mix of hospital, academic, military, and pharmaceutical librarians discussed e-resources. Collectively, we expressed a good deal of frustration with the challenges of varied licenses, pricing structures, access vs. ownership issues, and rapidly changing management tools. In a short period of time, this animated, collegial, and motivated group discussed link resolvers, federated search engines, PubMed LinkOut, pros and cons of including e-journals in Serials, document delivery options for e-resources, how to keep track of licensing specifics, whether to order e-journals from the publisher or through an agent, Kindles, e-books, print books with single-user e-content . . . and then we ran out of time. Our conclusion was: we need help! We would like to have more training and support from MLA, possibly including a regular column in JMLA, and we proposed organizing a SIG. Particularly for solo and small-staff libraries, the librarians need practical advice and training to swim in the shark-infested waters of e-resource management. We should also probably band together to advocate for more reasonable licensing and pricing from e-content providers, since individually we have little power to influence vendor practices.

Those of you headed to Breckenridge in September will notice the CE course: Herding EJournals and Ebooks. Those of you unable to travel should watch your RML (http://nnlm.gov/mcr) for any potential online classes or information about e-resource management.

I have participated in chapter roundtables at other MLA meetings, and have often found them interesting and informative as we shared what we knew and wished we knew about a given topic. Facilitating or recording at a chapter roundtable is also an opportunity for an extra AHIP point involving approximately two hours’ commitment, one hour for the roundtable itself, and one hour for preparation (facilitators) or reporting (recorders). The only downside is trying to hear across a large table in a noisy room full of table conversations.


It was a distinct pleasure to attend the Sharing Roundtables at the MLA ’09 Convention. These roundtables present an opportunity for interested people to share their experiences with a given problem or opportunity. The self-selected groups give librarians an opportunity to talk to peers who had devoted considerable energy to the topic and who had significant knowledge to share. These small learning communities also form the basis of long-term relationships through the simple exchange of contact information. My roundtable consisted of people interested in keeping up with rapid changes in technology.

Technology is changing so rapidly that it is impossible for even the IT department to keep abreast of all the changes. So how do librarians anticipate which areas will become influential in their daily work? While I know what I do, it was extremely interesting to hear the ideas and experiences of others. At times, hearing similar strategies from others was supportive of the work I was already doing. Sometimes ideas could be relevant to specific environments. And at other times the conversation suggested avenues which I had never considered. Some of the discussion dealt with keeping up with technological changes in general, while others focused on specific technologies of interest (such as remote desktop sharing). In all cases the exchange was lively and interesting. Although the length of discussion was short, it was very easy to trade email addresses with others to swap ideas at a later date.

At each table, one participant volunteered to facilitate the discussion. I volunteered to be the facilitator at my table and found this to be enjoyable. My role was to keep the discussion going, and for the most part this task required little to no effort on my part as all persons at the table were engaged in the topic. As reference librarians are experts at asking questions, it was easy to ask for clarification and attempt to form bridges between the various suggestions. In short, I found the Sharing Roundtable to be both enjoyable and a very profitable use of my time—in some ways a mini-CE course. I thank the MCMLA chapter for their sponsorship and look forward to attending many more roundtables in the future.