

<KEYWORD>

The Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science Student Association Newsletter

October 2007 VOL 5 ISS. 1

Who is that weird guy who is always on the 6th floor??



By Alicia Gibb with help from Josh Hadro

Actually Josh isn't some weird homeless guy who happens to sneak past the security guards everyday (although he does have great sneakers for sneaking), but one of your own fellow classmates at Pratt SILS! Josh Hadro is the SILS Technology Tutor available for your technology tutoring needs for the Fall 07 semester. The service provided to you free of charge by the SILS Office. Josh is available six days a week: Mondays and Thursdays from 3pm - 7pm; Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3pm-6pm; and Saturdays from 12pm-3pm. Though his "office" exists more as a concept than as physical location in space and time, he's always somewhere in the 6th floor Cyber Café - look for the guy near the SILS Technology Tutor sign.

What to ask Josh:

- What is FTP?
- Can I nest HTML tags?
- My CSS stylesheet was workiyesterday, and now it's borked - can you help me?
- Why is my website coming up in red when I wrote the html for black?
- Can you help me with Moodle?
- Given the postmodern critiques of Foucault and Derrida, what are the discursive implications of our modern

techno-socio-political plight?

- Can I buy you a sandwich?
- Do you have any cavities?
- Any anything else at all related to the technologies used in the SILS curriculum.

•What not to ask Josh:

- My internet is down! [That's not a question]
- On my home computer, which you cannot see because it is at my home, this one thing isn't working - can you fix it?
- Why not?
- Why did they name it Cyber Café when there is no double mocha java machine available?
- When are my library books due?
- I once saw this website, with two columns of text on a blue-ish background - do you know the one I'm talking about?
- ¿Eres tu mi mamá?
- I can has cheeseburger?
- ...And anything else that is unrelated to SILS curriculum technology, or that requires Josh to be liable for bad advice.

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Let's get creative in here...

by Alicia Gibb, Keyword Editor

With lots of new programs and eager students at Pratt SILS this semester, the environment at SILS is definitely fostering creativity. Perhaps it is the art students above us dragging lord knows what across the floor which transfers creative

thoughts through osmosis, but my feeling is that SILS is preparing its students to work with a visual culture in practical and increasingly creative ways.

This new approach has had me drawing comics and sewing dresses for highly intellectual class projects; fulfilling both sides of my brain. The creative methods may be imperative for our library and information careers to flourish in the digital age.

As technologies like RFID, Google, and Amazon encroach on our usual job descriptions, we've got to be thinking outside of the box, work together, and form communities. To do all that we've getting our creative on. The traditional methods of this science only go so far – but they

can inspire new ideas. Besides, everyone enjoys a more holistic brain, both of mine sure do, wouldn't yours?

**Thanks to
Meghan Wheaton Cirrito
and Student Government
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and winning a microwave
for student use at Pratt
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located on the Second
Floor lounge.**

KEYWORD

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A Message from Your SILSSA President

Greetings,

By now, all of us, returning or new, are well into the fall semester. It was great coming back from the summer, catching up with classmates, and comparing notes on what we've been able to accomplish so far and what we're looking forward to next. Just as enjoyable has been meeting many of the new students at various events and classes. A little surreal, though: It seems just a few weeks ago since I started library school myself.

One thing that many have noted as we go through school is the deep sense of collegiality and community that librarians have a chance to experience and share. I've seen this while during library site visits in and around New York, and I also had a chance to learn this first-hand at my first ALA conference this past June. Another example: I posted a questionnaire to a couple of librarian listservs for a project I was researching. I hoped for a few hits; within a few hours, I had about 15 generously detailed responses.

I bring up collegiality and community in this edition for a few reasons. First, you'll see these themes running through many of the

events, speakers, and initiatives that SILSSA and other students are planning for this year. The success of these programs depends on the active participation of as many people as possible. [That means you!]

I also bring up these themes because of the field for which we're preparing. Most people understand the importance of creating bonds in the workplace – networking – to help personal and professional advancement. However, the bonds we create at this time also have great importance and relevance, and they can help us keep pace with the richness, complexity, and ever-changing qualities of the careers we're crafting. Becoming more active and involved will be worth the efforts we put in, and all of us will be richer for the sense of community that comes out of this.

Closing things out, we have some great events coming up, but we also welcome your suggestions and ideas so that we all have that many more chances to grow. You can either share them at our next meeting, September 27, or anytime via the website, www.pratt.edu/~silssa. In the meantime, enjoy the fall, and take care!

NEW BLOOD AT ALA CONFERENCE

Laura Magzis

Professional conferences might be old hat to some of you, but as a newly minted professional and soon-to-be SILS graduate, I went last June to my first: the American Library Association (ALA) annual conference in Washington, D.C. My objective was the job fair, or "placement service," as ALA optimistically calls it. Thus far I have not been placed, but perhaps a run-down will come in handy for anyone who plans to go next year.

I had no idea what to expect from the job fair, but I envisioned a bonanza of libraries all fighting to hire me, their dream candidate, for my perfect job. I was therefore somewhat alarmed to discover that it was hidden in a remote corner of the convention center with only about twenty libraries or library systems represented. Most were public systems, with the exception of a Christian-focused law school and a university library that had only ONE job opening – a high-level administrative position that I was obviously not qualified to fill. I crossed those off my

list immediately, and then crossed off libraries in areas where I have no interest in moving. (Sorry, Fort Worth.) This left me with about a dozen booths to visit and more than 100 resumes to hand out. Oops.

I surveyed the job fair area to decide whom to approach, and then, girding my loins for battle, I began the hunt. The procedure seemed to be that applicants spoke with the booth staffers briefly, hand over their resume and receive an application packet, brochures about the library, or a job description in return. Interviews were then scheduled for later that day or the next day.

In 20/20 hindsight, it's obvious that a cattle call like the job fair would attract public libraries almost exclusively, given that academic libraries often consider librarians as faculty and therefore have a lengthy and rigorous hiring process. It's also obvious that libraries having difficulty filling positions for whatever reason (high cost of living vs. librarian salaries, locations

perceived as undesirable, etc.) would be most likely to attend the fair. None of this had occurred to me beforehand. (Maybe I'm a dope.)

Anyway, as it turned out, talking to the various library representatives was edifying in many ways. A few minutes spent

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CONFERENCE NOTES . . .

Nick Higgins

Summer ends every year roughly the same way: I sit here on the boat at the edge of the lake by the weeds ('cause that's where the fish hide), trying to still believe what Dad has told me all these years about the hook and the fish not feeling it, tiring quickly of peeling weeds off lures, and picking up some big fat book that I'll never read all the way through, or, more often than not, dozing, arm over the side, fingers wet. Today, my head resting on Pynchon, fingertips skimming warm lake scum, summer passing fast, Dad asked how the "librarian thing" is working out. I think it's still too early to tell, and still a bit difficult to explain what it is I do. The fact is, I do a lot of different things in a lot of different ways. Other public servants like cops and firefighters similarly have many creative ways of dealing with the

disparate needs of the communities they serve. People seem to know this intuitively about cops and firefighters. Not so with librarians.

I have just finished my first year of library school at Pratt, as well as my first year as a full time trainee at Brooklyn Public Library. This summer I attended my first ALA conference in Washington DC and I was asked to share some of my experiences with incoming students and by doing so to hopefully elucidate the value of ALA membership in general, and conference participation in particular. What follows is pretty much what I told my dad in the boat. I talked mostly about the conference, intending to clue him into wide net that librarians cast in terms of the services they provide and the people they serve, but only briefly, so as not to scare the fish with too much talking.

During the 2006 ALA conference

in New Orleans, librarians partnered with community organizations dedicated to cleaning up the city following Hurricane Katrina. The initiative was named "Librarians Build Communities" and several dozen librarians from around the country pulled on boots and masks and got to work shoveling up the sludge and hauling away the garbage now covering this magnificent city. Being elbow-deep in gunk appeals to the outreach librarian in me, so I signed up for "Librarians Build Communities" at the DC conference.

For a full eight-hour day, I worked with twelve other librarians on a construction site with the DC Habitat for Humanity. The group had been on this site for several months building three low-cost duplexes to be purchased by qualifying families. The ALA volunteers were dispersed among the Habitat for Humanity folks. We were

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new faces

Prof. Christina Pattuelli



Keyword: Can you tell us a bit about your current research?

Dr. Christina Pattuelli: I am still focused on the research I used for my dissertation, which is designing ontologies to enhance access to primary sources for social studies teachers. The point of this research is to make resources more findable and useful as an information tool. My two interests particularly are semantics of web application, and user requirements.

KW: Where do you see the future of metadata? Are keywords fusing into metadata?

CP: The key is in the relationship between the metadata and the keywords. Metadata is the building blocks, keywords are like the mortar between the blocks, and I'm interested in the relationship between the blocks. When metadata is related in a meaningful way, the passage becomes a semantic knowledge structure. Metadata nor keywords are enough – but by linking them you can create something useful.

KW: Do you have advice for future library students of students interested in knowledge organization?

CP: Semantic web ontologies are very controversial. But this is probably more realistic of what the inventors of the web had in mind for web use. So my advice is to investigate, make mistakes, there is no failure because you learn anyway. By playing you have ways of inventing ideas. Students today are fortunate to live in a challenging world. And you need a challenge to explore from folksonomy to ontology and back.

KW: Please tell us a successful moment in your research, one of you're a-ha! moments.

CP: When testing teachers, we created concept maps – which can be

very abstract. By letting them think aloud they were able to navigate the ontology as supporting a narrative. This was a test of my dissertation and it worked!

KW: We've heard you are from Bologna, Italy. Where is the best place to visit in Bologna?

CP: Piazza Maggiore! It is the core of Bologna. For Italians a piazza is a gathering place for the community to discuss politics, ideas, hold meetings, events, even mourn together. There is a beautiful church there. The Piazza is the focus of the city! Bologna is a very progressive city.

KW: Are there differences between the U.S. and Italy in creating systems of taxonomies?

CP: I don't know, I guess the U.S. seems to be more pragmatic and produce more usable tools, but the details get sacrificed. In Italy everything is well done at a theoretical level but not as practical.

KW: Would you please draw a semantic web of yourself?

DALLAS CHILDREN'S LIBRARY OF FUTURE & NOW

Ann Roseman

Recent trends in library design promote libraries as cultural centers. "The libraries of the future," [which are quickly becoming the libraries of the present], often feature cafes, gift shops and everything short of a masseuse. This fall the City of Dallas joins in with the installation of a children's library in the largest shopping mall in North Texas. When one has finished consuming Godiva chocolates or perusing pearls

at Neimans, one can head on over to the children's library titled, Bookmarks, located on the second floor near the AMC Theater. This is the first children's library to be housed at an American shopping mall. NorthPark will furnish the space, lighting and signage. The City of Dallas will provide texts, furniture and staff. The collection will feature three to five thousand monographs, DVDs and CDs for children up to 8th grade. Bookmarks' programming including performances and story-telling events have been in effect since May, 2007. The completion

of the library is slated for November 2, 2007. For more information on the web: www.northparkcenter.com/press_release/120806.html

new faces

Prof. Jessica Lee Hochman

Jessica Lee Hochman is the director of

What is your current research about for your dissertation?

My dissertation is about youth-produced visual culture in informal learning spaces. I am looking at a few informal spaces, such as the culture of graffiti, online social networking spaces and after school programs that are primarily facilitated by youth. Through an exploration of the cultural production in those spaces, I ask whether and if so, how, classroom teachers can gain pedagogical tools from these spaces, that help young people nurture and develop a sense of self.

Can you share with us a success story of your research? An a-ha moment?

I have worked "in the field" as a qualitative researcher, and also conducted textual and more ethnographic research as a philosopher and practitioner of cultural studies. I also think our experiences as teachers and students and individuals who attend to the world around us is its own kind of research, and we draw on this

'data' everyday as we make meaning in our lives. For me, the most difficult part of any kind of research is coming up with the right questions to ask that help me make sense of the information I am trying to study. But it is also the most essential and gratifying part of this work, so I guess for me a 'success' is when I can find a good question.

What courses are you teaching here at Pratt?

At the moment, just 690, but in the spring I will teach a section of 680 instructional technologies.

What is your advice to students on the Library Media Specialist track?

Set realistic goals while challenging yourself. Keep up with youth culture. Read "Information Power."

What advantages do you think LMS students have in this day and age?

I think all teachers today enjoy more ways to communicate with their colleagues, students and the outside world. New technologies such as email contribute to this, as does an increased awareness of the importance of collaboration among educators, and between schools and



their communities. But technology is no panacea, and communication between and among groups of educational stakeholders still has a long way to go, as anyone who works in schools will tell you.

The LMS role has really been revitalized since people in the field began to conceptualize of LMS's as leaders within schools who work with students and teachers alike. I see the LMS as someone who is right in the thick of things in schools, who has to speak the languages of faculty, administration and students, and support learning and inquiry at the most fundamental level.

What do you do when you're not in school?

I love to cook and eat and read about food. I love outsider art, and I love to learn about the lives of the people who make it. I like galleries and museums, but my favorite places to find artwork are random corners of the city, public spaces where people are confronted with art and have to respond. I enjoy the responses of others; for me it's a part of experiencing the work. I am a big fan of anecdotes and stories of all kinds, both telling them and having them told to me. I also love to read fiction.

Pratt Institute

The 20th Annual
Nasser Sharify Lecture
Sunday, October 14, 2007
3-6 PM



CONFERENCE NOTES . . .

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given tool belts that looked ridiculous on us at first but by the end of the day we were all drawing our hammers like gunslingers. Many of my friends are still convinced that the only reason I signed on for this was for the opportunity to use a nail gun. Yes, using a nail gun was totally awesome (as was cutting on a table saw, drilling holes, installing prefab cabinets), but central to this experience was idea that working in public service I not only have an opportunity, but to a certain extent, a responsibility, to serve people in any way I am able. Having this in mind when I got back to Brooklyn I began to initiate more outreach efforts for myself that have, in my opinion, strengthened relationships between the community and the library.

While I was sitting in piles of dust kicking shims under cabinets in a hot duplex, I was talking with the people I was working with, all of whom I still talk to regularly. A children's librarian from Ft. Myers now recommends books to me for programs here in Brooklyn. A librarian at William Patterson University now sends me information on new reference databases he comes across. I try to keep everyone up to date on what I'm up to as well, not so much to fall in line with networking protocol of any kind ("networking" is still a very hard word for me to say with a straight face), but simply because I have found like-minded people I can bounce ideas off of.

This experience helped inform the events and panels I attended during the rest of the conference. The following day began with a talk by Ken Burns

discussing his forthcoming World War II documentary series *The War*. I decided to attend this event after running into a friend of mine who had asked me to help with a veterans history project he was working on. I listened to Mr. Burns talk about how libraries are repositories for the collective memory of humanity and was inspired by his conviction that every individual has a library full of stories locked up inside of them. I listened as he told of his horror upon learning of a statistic that cited a full forty percent of graduating American High School seniors believe America fought with Germany against Russia during World War II.

Footage he showed of his film was devastating, as any responsible representation of war must be, and I decided then that when I got home I would work on my friend's project with the motivation to raise public consciousness of war through the accounts of the people who fought in them. Currently a Brooklyn Veterans History Project is being planned at Brooklyn Public Library and an intergenerational component has been added that has high school students conducting and recording half hour interviews with Brooklyn war veterans. While this project likely would have gotten off the ground without me attending the conference, it very well may have not had me on board, and subsequently would have been missing some elements directly related to this particular presentation.

Following the Ken Burns presentation I attended a panel discussion organized by the Intellectual Freedom Committee concerning the Patriot Act and how it affects American libraries. I

had an opportunity to speak with several library directors from around the country about intellectual freedom issues they are being forced to deal with as it relates to the Patriot Act. Later I sat in on a panel discussion concerning service to low-income populations. Following the panel I spoke with the coordinator of the event and decided to join the Social Responsibility Round Table of ALA in the hopes of working on a presentation for a future conference. Later on, I attended a discussion on serving prison inmates and have taken ideas from this event and applied them to service I am currently involved with in juvenile detention centers.

The point of all this is that much of what you do at a conference can be applied directly to what you are doing at home. The reason I came to this profession is because I feel strongly that the public library is the last remaining institution that serves everyone in society equally. It was this idea that appealed to me a year ago, and it is this idea that continues to move me forward. What I didn't quite know at the beginning, however, was how much work goes into making sure this idea is put into practice from day to day. Time can move very slowly at a library and it is easy to lose focus on what brought you to librarianship in the first place. Going to this conference gave me a shot in the arm. It brought me together with people interested in the same kind of work I am interested in, which infused me with the confidence that I am not alone, and that I have the support of my peers. I hope to see you all there next year.

COLLEGE DAY ON THE PARKWAY!

Nothing gets a student's attention more than the word "Free!" Now that we have your attention, there's a great free event coming up not too far from our great city...

The Philadelphia Museum of Art, along with several of the

city's other cultural institutions, is hosting their annual "College Day on the Parkway" on Saturday, September 29th, 2007. Nineteen museums and galleries in and around the Philadelphia Museum of Art's neighborhood will be waiving their admission fees for all students with a valid college ID. Free shuttle service will be provided, and there will be chances to win prizes!

You can see the full list of participating institutions (including the Free Public Library of Philadelphia!!) at <http://www.philamuseum.org/collegeday>.

SILS in Florence

SUMMER SESSION IN LONDON

By: Timothy Salazar

Pratt-Florence 2007

By: Elizabeth Hahn

Everything about Florence seems to be colored with a mild violet, like diluted wine.

-Henry James

When I first heard about the Florence program at Pratt, I was immediately intrigued. The idea of studying the art and culture of one of the most exciting destinations in the world was nothing short of exciting. In three short weeks, the program promised to enrich my understanding of the study of Florentine culture by bringing together architecture, art, museum and library research and digital technology, with visits to many of the attractions of the city. I am also a large advocate of any study abroad program, as I believe there are things you can only learn by actually being in a new country. Encouraged by my home institution of the Palmer School of Long Island University, I jumped at the opportunity.

When I arrived in Florence on a rainy day in May, I was met with clouds, cold, and fatigue that were the result of a day of travel and an unusually sunless Italian sky. As one of the last in the group to arrive, I made my way to Santa Maria del Fiore (popularly known as the Duomo), situated in the center of the city, where my colleagues had already gathered to discuss the grand architecture of this amazing structure, in large part designed by Filippo Brunelleschi in the 15th century. Professor Anthony Caradonna had wasted no time in diving right into the course program and was lecturing away with an animated passion that carried through the whole course.

Florence is a city that can stimulate the senses with as much pleasure as pain. Standing in the center of the Piazza del Duomo on any day, you cannot walk two feet without bumping into a tourist or tripping over street vendors selling paintings, knock-off bags, and sunglasses. With a ratio of some fourteen visitors to every one local (a statistic I once heard), the city is over-run with tourists nearly year-round. At the same time, the dense amount of history and culture that is visibly apparent at every turn makes Florence uniquely wonderful



and I could see at once that everyone was there for the same purpose: to take it all in.

Florence (Firenze) is the capital of the Tuscany region of Italy and is famous for its delicious Chianti wines and scenic landscapes. It lies on the Arno River, which has a reputation for destructive floods, most recently that of 1966. Popularly known as the birthplace of the Renaissance and seat of the influential Medici family, Florence has been home to a number of famous people throughout history: Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Bartolomeo Ammanati, Filippo Brunelleschi, Giorgio Vasari, Dante Alighieri, Donatello, Raphael, Galileo Galilei, Salvatore Ferragamo, and of course ACF Fiorentina, team of Luca Toni (for any world cup soccer fans).

Possibly in existence by the 1st century B.C., the Romans originally laid out the plan of the city as a rectangular walled castrum (fort), which can still be seen in the modern layout. Florentia ("Flourishing") was built to house veteran soldiers and the main streets, the cardo and the decumanus, intersected at the modern site of the Piazza della Repubblica. The history of the area surrounding Florence stretches back even further to the Etruscans, who established a site at Fiesole in the 9th - 8th century B.C., on the hills rising above the later city. Our group went there to visit one of the highlights of the trip, a tour of Casalini Libri, a book supplier of primarily Italian publications to American libraries and institutions. Founded by Mario Casalini at the end of the 1950s, the main offices are located in the Villa Torrossa,

sils summer session
in london at ucl:
lots of powerpoints

the irony is
i'm writing all these haikus
and not my paper

our hosts were the best
profs. anthony watkinson
and andy dawson

we went everywhere
oxford, cambridge, the world's
end prestigious, indeed

if you don't look down
you might forget to look right
when crossing the street

can't walk on the grass
at oxford unless your name
is harry potter

the bodleian's best
if you can get a tour from
the guy with all the keys (we
did) nature publishing
looks a lot like those web 1.0
defunct dot-com lofts

a bowl of waxed fruit
greeted us at the office
biomed central

if someone told you
that i was drunk the whole
time no, not the whole time

if you get the chance
you should prolly go next
year tell them i said hi

continued on next page

LETTERS

Dear Editors,

A colleague of mine referred me to an article that appears in your current issue of Keyword. The article, written by Sam Robertson, talks about the band, Bloodhag, and the work that they are doing on behalf of literacy. A series of shows entitled "Shake the Stacks" is mentioned and there are many references to the King County Library System in terms of their sponsorship and support of these shows.

My reason for writing is to ask why there is no mention of the origin of this very effective and popular program? In fact, this program began during my tenure as Young Adult Services Coordinator at the Seattle Public Library. If my memory serves me correctly, the year was 1999. This program, which was called "Shake the Stacks" (coined by YA Librarian Emily Dagg – now at the Denver Public Library – and myself),

continued to exist at Seattle Public Library for at least the next four to five years and, subsequently, was duplicated by many library systems throughout the country. Bloodhag was one of the bands that performed on a fairly regular basis at the SPL "Shake the Stacks" shows, and they

"Hopefully, this program will find more supporters in the future and we will see more and more kids getting turned onto the library."

were certainly one of the most popular. SPL also helped Bloodhag establish the contacts it needed to do the great "library tour" of the Pacific Northwest and to connect with the American Library Association. Indeed, the program itself was so popular that the journal,

Marketing Library Services, asked me to write an article describing the program in detail and giving tips for success at other libraries (which I did—and it is still available via the Web).

And so I applaud your own recognition of this wonderful initiative for young adults. Hopefully, this program will find more supporters in the future and we will see more and more kids getting turned onto the library. In the meantime, though, I think it is very important to acknowledge just where this program got its start and precisely how Bloodhag became such an important name in the library world.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

All the best,
Jeff Katz, Librarian
Columbia University

florence trip

continued from previous page

and we got a tour of both the villa and the production facilities just outside of Fiesole. It was a unique opportunity to meet other professionals and to see an aspect not otherwise possible on our own.

Although I have been to Italy almost a dozen times before, and had lived in Florence for three consecutive months when I was intensively studying Italian, the Pratt course added even more to my previous understanding of not only Italian history and art, but of the living city of Florence. In particular, the aspect of conducting research in the national library introduced me to an unexplored element of my current field. (It also made me appreciate a little bit more the efficient and uncomplicated manner of the libraries that I use on a daily basis in

New York City). The course succeeded in bringing us in contact with many of the important sites within Florence, including the Piazza del Duomo, the Uffizi Galleries and library, the Pitti Palace, the Accademia, Orsanmichele, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, and the list continues.

Despite the dense itinerary, we always had ample amounts of free time, during which we were encouraged to visit sites not on the syllabus or to conduct research in the main library, or to just enjoy the city (there is nothing quite like coasting through the hills of Tuscany on a cruiser bike, a side trip I would highly recommend). There was the option to visit Rome during an extended weekend and with more time, I believe that dividing the course equally between the two cities, Florence and Rome, would be excellent,



not only because of the dense amounts of history and art in both, but because of the presence of a national library in each city.

In sum, I gained a lot through my experiences on the Pratt program and the experience in Florence expanded and developed my mind and increased (as if it could go any higher!) my appreciation, admiration, and adoration of all that Italy contains.

Conferences Develop Librarians

by Lisa Chow

I had the opportunity to attend three conferences in my first year of library school. Thanks to a scholarship, I attended my first professional conference, the Medical Library Association (MLA) Annual Meeting in May, which took place in Philadelphia. It was an amazing experience. I registered for two full-day continuing education courses: "Providing Health Information Resources and Services in Other Languages" and "Expert Searching". They were both interesting courses taught by very knowledgeable librarians. One memorable conference moment is being on the bus going to the MLA President's Reception aboard the Moshulu, a ship/restaurant. As I looked around, I

suddenly realized that I was on a bus filled with librarians and that was simply amazing. I had an interesting conversation with the librarian next to me, who was surprised to hear that I work at a public library because very few public librarians attend MLA. At the reception, I met three librarians, one from New Jersey and two from Korea. It was interesting to share our stories about how we chose librarianship, or in some cases, how the profession chose us.

The second conference I attended is the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in June, a month later, in Washington, D.C. A group of us, Public Urban Library Service Education (PULSE) Librarian Trainees, attended the ALA conference together. This helped in reducing conference costs in terms of hotel accommodations, and it was fun to get together for sightseeing and other events. I attended a panel session about public library services around the world, which focused on libraries in Chile, Scandinavia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. It is interesting to see what other libraries are doing in terms of library

resources and services. I was curious about the research that is being done in the field of library and information science, so I attended a session where library science students (most of them in a doctorate degree program) presented their research. Seeing all those ALA tote bags being carried around D.C., it seemed like there was an invasion of librarians. It was reported that this year's ALA conference has the highest attendance ever.

The third one I attended was Library Camp NYC in August. However, it is called an "unconference" because unlike conferences, the attendees determine the

session presented a quick summary of what was discussed to everyone.

Whether conferences, unconferences or whatever else they might be called, these events provide opportunities to learn, meet people in the profession, and share ideas. I find that these events provide a reminder of the bigger picture; sometimes one can get caught up in the details of work. There may be some difficulty in attending these events, in terms of time and money. Conferences can get expensive. Check to see if your employer will cover any conference costs and if conference attendance is considered work time. See if anyone else is attending the conference—perhaps the cost of hotel accommodations can be divided. If you have family or friends that live in or around the conference

area, the cost of hotel accommodations can possibly be eliminated. Apply for conference travel scholarships. Be on the look out for unconferences, which are usually less expensive, if not free, in terms of registration fees. Ultimately, it is our responsibility to contribute to our own professional development.



topics on the day of the event and it consists of discussion sessions rather than lectures and workshops. It was a free one-day event that took place at Baruch College. This was definitely an interesting experience. I have never attended an unconference before, so it was a bit nerve-wracking and exciting at the same time because I didn't know what to expect. Attendees who were interested in moderating or facilitating a discussion session handed in proposal forms at the beginning of the day. The proposed discussion topics were then compiled and organized as needed. The finalized program was determined and announced. The whole process took about an hour. It was amazing how it all came together and many of the discussion sessions were very interesting. Some of the discussion topics included Library 2.0, cataloging, virtual reference, open source software, and green librarianship. Throughout the day, attendees with laptops posted discussion session notes on the Library Camp NYC wiki. There was a wrap-up session, in which one representative from each discussion

For more information:

Medical Library Association -
www.mlanet.org

American Library Association
www.ala.org

Library Camp NYC
librarycampnyc.wikispaces.com/

library of the month



by Shadee Berger

The Cloisters Library and Archives
Fort Tryon Park New York, NY 10040
phone: 212.923.3700

The Cloisters is a trek to get to,

but more than worth the time. From the A Train, walk through Fort Tryon Park. The view of the Hudson River is amazing. The park itself would be a very peaceful destination for afternoon reading.

The Cloisters is a part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It houses a collection of European medieval art. The Romanesque/Gothic architecture, exquisite tapestries, and stained glass provide a beautiful setting.

The herbs in the surrounding gardens are featured in the famous Unicorn tapestries.

The Cloisters library, housed at the top of one of the towers, currently has a

two-person staff. Portions of the collection are from a former Director's personal medieval collection. The staff mostly serves the employees of the Cloisters and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Cloisters Library houses over 50 archival collections, over 15,000 volumes, and 50 serials. The archival collection includes roughly 5,000 blueprints of the Cloisters. The Cloisters catalog is viewable through the Watson Library catalog, WATSONLINE.

The library collection is used by graduate students researching The Cloisters. The library is open by appointment to qualified researchers. If you happen to plan your trip for a mid-afternoon you will be treated to monastically appropriate music from 3-3:30.

ALA Conference

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chatting helped me to form an opinion about each library, and also helped me to dodge a few proverbial bullets when I decided that the people a library chose to send said a lot about the culture of that library. I had some enjoyable chats with the booth staffers, some of whom were librarians and some human resources personnel. I was virtually mugged by a very enthusiastic and cheery HR rep from a big city public library that glanced at my resume and immediately shoved me into the curtained interview booth. There a librarian asked me some standard first-interview questions, such as "What would you do if a patron demanded you get rid of a library book that he felt had 'inappropriate' content?" and "What five ready reference books do you consider most important to keep at the ref desk?" This wasn't a library where I especially wanted to work, but any interview is a good opportunity and I chalked it up to practice.

I was very turned off by my exchange with HR representatives from another big city public library, who seemed as though they were simply going through the motions while thinking about the comp time they were earning. Prior to the fair, I had considered applying to that library,

but after that I didn't bother returning the application. It was a refreshing change to speak with a librarian from a California system that covered city, suburban, and rural areas. Again I completed HR paperwork and had an interview, this one slightly longer and more relaxed, not a strict Q-and-A like the first one. The librarian interviewer asked interesting questions and I actually enjoyed talking to her.



Unfortunately, when some HR reps discovered that I hadn't yet finished my degree (this was in June, and I would finish in August), they simply handed me application packets and said their libraries couldn't even consider me until I had the degree in hand. So, after five or six interviews and a few application packets to hang onto until I graduated, that was it for the job fair. I did have the unexpected good fortune to see a few libraries I had already submitted applications to for advertised openings. I was able to meet and schmooze with their representatives, and I believe that in one case this helped

me make it to the second round of interviews.

ALA has been the subject of some controversy lately for using what some see as misleading assurances of plentiful library jobs in order to recruit library school students. This remains unclear. Having never been to ALA Annual before, I can't say whether this was a typical job fair or not; I can say that, compared to the conference registration materials and programs in general, the job fair was not well-promoted. I knew it existed, and I figured it was silly not to go, but it would have been nice to know how many libraries/library systems were attending, what kind of libraries they were, and so forth. Perhaps tucking the "placement center" away in a corner of the cavernous D.C. convention center is ALA's subtle hint that no, there aren't a hell of a lot of jobs out there. Maybe I thought it would be easy (or maybe I shouldn't have worn a linen suit). So, even though I haven't gotten a job as a result of the fair, it was a new experience and therefore a good one. I hope I'll have the perfect job sometime before next June, but if I go to the job fair again I'll know what to expect.

Laura Magzis finished her MSLIS at Pratt in August 2007.

Last bus to Borispol:

A Pratt Student steps into unknown Eastern Europe

by AllyWazir Rahemtulla

Having completed the first Summer Course, I niftily thought to take wings away to a far flung country. It has been said that on par with learning a new language, travelling earns one an entire new nation. I chose east European countries not vaunted or trodden as fresh pastures for the mind. I mentally charted the Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Hungary. As Proust remarked, 'The real act of discovery consists not in founding new lands, but seeing with new eyes'. Thus I equipped myself with writing pads, camera, basic necessities, few light articles of clothing, and an astute open mind. A journey is an onset of an itinerant's primordial sentiment, akin to nomads, the feeling that one is not rooted to any particular land yet ones place is in the universe.

The flight via Paris to Kiev's Borispol was uneventful except for the non arrival of my frugal possessions. I marveled at the greenery, the Dnieper River and its beauty. The destination was the Central Station a stunning Soviet building adjacent to a modern aluminum and glass terminal. The Metro is an architectural masterpiece, immaculate, efficient, swathing the metropolis. The price of a single journey was a paltry 20 cents hence freedom to the city.

I began learning about the young nation, its emergent consciousness, petered down nationalism and religion whose core ideas were freedom and Ukrainianism. That was only partly true as Russian is the lingua franca, and Ukrainian consciousness an open debate. Kiev is viewed in light of this sentiment, a city with its own folklore and myth akin to the creation of Rome. In the next few days,

I began learning the Cyrillic alphabet assiduously in order to read station names unconstrained by language.

Walking down Shevchenko Avenue lined with elegant tall cypress gracefully reaching the sky, I came to Shevchenko University. Its main building a brilliant red warm colour raised in high Romanesque columns, across a beautiful park of the same name. Shevchenko, a writer, poet and activist, died during the Tsarist control of Ukraine, has become a symbol for new Ukraine. Further along lie Kiev's magnificent and imposing Opera House. Between the Opera House and the Funicular, are Kiev's golden domed St. Sophia and Mikhailisky, and the angular Andreivsky churches reconstructed by army labour.

I bounded southwards to Sebastopol in the Crimea, encountering Russian students who told me about the Russian Navy Day celebration. It made a compelling reason to attend the festivities besides regaling in the city's wonderful architecture and admiring its history. A spectacular naval parade was followed by fireworks in the night over the port. Crimea is rife with corruption as my journey to Odessa showed. Odessa, a magnificent Black Sea port dipped in history whose tree lined cobblestoned streets and elegant buildings and consulates give it a Parisian atmosphere.

I embarked for Chisinau in Moldova which took six hours to cover two hundred kilometers. The gendarme were armed with guns and clad in balaclava. The barren border post lined with iron fence, looming building and stiff faces straight from the Cold War history book. Approaching Chisinau, rustic life stirred with watermelon sellers, herds of cows,



sheep, geese and horse driven carts. Its dour periphery showed impoverishment with people selling worn clothes, bicycle parts and type writer ribbons, while the refreshingly green nub tucked away lovely buildings including a miniature arc de triomphe.

I left for Sibiu and Sighisoara in Transylvania enroute to Bucharest in Romania. By train thence to Budapest, vaunted as Paris of the East, pearl of the Danube. Its beauty unfolds in its baroque architecture, expressed in courtyards, legendary coffee shops such as the New York Coffee shop in the Boscolo Hotel. My highpoint was the Sziget Music Festival where I attended concerts by master musicians Salif Keita of Mali, Cesaria Evora of Cape Verde, Sinéad O'Connor and rock concerts by The Chemical Brothers, and Nine Inch Nails

Through the Carpathian Mountains snaking into Lvov, the city hummed with free market energy, flashy cars and international food and clothing chain. I visited the cemetery, the Opera House and the old city squares and churches renowned for their iconography. As I took the midnight bus to Borispol I reminisced that I had discovered a common humanity, a beautiful country, hospitality and a journey etched in my memory.

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Thursday, October 11

TOUR: American Kennel Society
1:00 pm
260 Madison Avenue (4th floor)
visit SLA@Pratt for more information

Saturday, October 13

Book Fest

The New York Public Library
Office of Children's Services & Office of Young Adult Services
Keynote Speaker: Lois Lowry

Thursday, December 6

SLA Holiday Party
5:30 to 8:30 pm

January 11-16, 2008

The 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting
Philadelphia, PA