

CONFERENCE ADVANCE

SLA 2006: A Researcher's Perspective

BY ANGIE DROBNIC HOLAN
ST. PETERSBURG TIMES

This was my first SLA conference, and I wasn't sure what to expect. Given the climate for news media right now — including rapid technological change, staff reductions, ownership changes and scorn from both ends of the political spectrum — I wondered if news librarians and researchers would be discouraged or frightened. Happily, I found them to be neither. Instead, SLA participants seemed excited about their jobs and happy to get together and exchange ideas. Perhaps the conference attracts this type of proactive news librarian, but as a researcher, I took home a positive message to apply to my daily job. The message: Successful researchers collaborate with each other and their newsrooms, and they proactively offer information and their own expertise. Not only does this make for a job well done, but it can prove the value of research when editors formulate their annual budgets.

Two panels in particular drove home the desirability of continuous innovation. A joint presentation on wiki software showed new ways researchers can compile and distribute information, while a discussion led



Conference attendees enjoy a presentation at *The Sun*

by **Derek Willis** of *The Washington Post* urged researchers to embrace open-source technology and an ethos of radical information sharing.

Wiki

What is a wiki? **Jessica Baumgart** kicked off this panel with a definition, explaining that “wiki wiki” is Hawaiian for

“quick.” A wiki is a piece of software that allows people to build Web sites collaboratively. Anyone can edit a wiki, which allows for rapid-fire updates and fixes. Most of us have heard of Wikipedia, the famous online encyclopedia, which takes its name from the software that allows just about anyone to contribute.

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Leslie Norman of *The Wall Street Journal* recaps the Mary Ellen Bates sessions at SLA.

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KATHRYN PEASE

It seems like I just put the conference advance issue to bed, and now it's time for the post-conference wrap-up. While I am no longer a news librarian (well, I am in spirit), I still learned so much in Baltimore from our knowledgeable News Division colleagues as well as from those with other areas of expertise. It was truly a week of learning as well as laughs.

It is with mixed emotions that I pass the *News Library News* editing torch to **Leigh Montgomery** of the *Christian Science Monitor*. When **Ron Larson** and **Leigh Poitinger** approached me about taking on this responsibility, I was honored yet determined to run the other way. Being fleet of foot is not my forte, so here I am two years later with no regrets. It has been a privilege to serve all of you.

I want to thank my regular contributors as well as those of you who graciously volunteered your time—especially those of you who came to the rescue at the last minute when stories fell through.

A special thanks to *NLN* designer Cheri Dantin who takes this division's words, works her magic and makes them look so great on the page.

Oh, and one more thing: If I can't make it to Denver, will someone please video what **Mike Meiners** bids on next?

“It is with mixed emotions that I pass the News Library News editing torch to Leigh Montgomery of the Christian Science Monitor.”



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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



BY DENISE JONES

A huge thank-you to everyone who helped make the conference in Baltimore a great success. **Jim Hunter** put together a wonderful program offering sessions on topics of interest to us all. In addition to the sessions, Jim planned the Dine-Around many of you enjoyed on Sunday night. Table captains report they had full tables and that everyone seemed to have a good time. Many more thank-yous are in order: to the session moderators whose help with planning and executing the sessions contributed to the success of our conference; to **Jen Evert** for the awards banquet held at the National Aquarium, giving us a chance to see the exhibits and enjoy an evening with our colleagues; and to **Dana Gordon** for the CEs offered on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Attendance was off because the CEs were not offered on the same day for the first time in memory. But those who attended found the sessions invaluable, and the smaller class size allowed for more interaction between the attendees and the presenters.

If you were unable to attend the Baltimore conference you can still benefit from the sessions your colleagues put together for you. **Jessica Baumgart** and **Amy Disch** have prepared handouts, presentations and even audio, all of which are available on the News Division Web site. Jim Hunter said in the spring, "If you can't be at conference, we will bring the conference to you." He has. If you haven't already, please take a look at the conference materials on the division Web site: <http://www.ibiblio.org/slanews/conferences/sla2006/index.htm>

I also want to thank our 2006 conference sponsors. The conference programming would not have been possible without

the support of our friends at ProQuest, LexisNexis, InMagic, InfoUSA, Factiva, *USA Today*, Dialog and MerlinOne. The News Division truly appreciates the support each of you provides.

Other thanks to **Elizabeth Lukes** and her staff at *The Baltimore Sun* library for Saturday's tour. Thanks to **Shira Kavon** who put together mentors and mentees for the newcomers reception Sunday night. What a great way to introduce newcomers to conference and to the News Division. Thanks also to **Claire Wollen** and her team of helpers for a very successful silent auction on Monday night.

As conference planner and now as News Division chair I have called on many of you for help and information. In every instance each of you has been so helpful. I am grateful to all of you for each of those times. I encourage each of you to call on your colleagues whenever you need their expertise. You will find a wealth of knowledge and a willingness to share. The News Division is a

large division - over 600 members - so be sure to call on that knowledge and expertise whenever you need to. You won't be disappointed.

If you recall we had no News Division elections this past spring. That is because SLA shifted the governance year to the calendar year so officer terms will run from January to December. **Jennifer Evert** is chairing this year's nominating committee. She and her committee will have a slate of candidates by early September. Elections will be in October and the results will be announced by early December. Newly elected officers will begin their responsibilities in January. If you have suggestions for nominations please send them to Jen at jennifer.evert@lexisnexis.com

"If you were unable to attend the Baltimore conference you can still benefit from the sessions your colleagues put together for you."

Lessons Learned at SLA 2006: Baltimore, Or, 5,000 Librarians in 5 Days Can't Be Wrong

BY EMILY GLENN
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION LIBRARY

❖ You Can't Make It to Everything:

When I learned I was the 2006 Vormelker-Thomas Student Stipend Award winner, my third action — after calling my husband and my parents — was to make a new folder in my e-mail account. The folder, titled “BALTIMORE!” became my storage space for e-mails and listserv postings about events, both official conference offerings and casual get-togethers, sponsored or inspired by the News Division and other SLA units. Every item that was of interest went into that folder, and by the time I packed my bags for Baltimore, there were more than 25 e-mails, with, I estimate, about 35 events stored in there. I honestly planned to attend every one, plus more sessions and ticketed events. I was prepared to not sleep, if necessary. I made it to a lot of them, but I didn't make it to everything. I followed through on part two of my plan, though, and kept the sleeping to a minimum.

❖ However, You Can Get There at 8 a.m. on a Saturday:

Presented by the News Division, “Graphics Research: Timelines and Deadlines” was a helpful primer on how to find and organize facts and figures for bar graphs, pie charts, and other graphics. Kelly Barry, deputy graphics editor at *USA Today*, and **Jeanette Brown** hosted. Since *USA Today* has made an art and a science out of graphics, the workshop was very useful.

❖ I Need to Work on My Poker Face:

Saturday afternoon, I went on a tour of *The Baltimore Sun's* library, led by **Elizabeth Lukes**. Here, I had my first chance to mingle with members of the News Division I had previously only known through NewsLib. Let's just say I didn't play it cool.



Inner Harbor as seen from the News Division suite

When people introduced themselves, I had an unfortunate proclivity to exclaim, “Yes! I've seen you on the listserv!” with the same slavish enthusiasm as someone might say, “Yes! I've seen you on The Daily Show, Mr. Stewart!” At this, the News Division member would smile and nod in a very patient way. One of my worst offenses of the week was upon meeting **Kee Malesky**. I blathered on and all but offered to shine her shoes. I promise to compose myself a bit better in Denver.

❖ Chicken Wings Are Made of Chicken:

Saturday evening I was late to the first News Division open house, sponsored by LexisNexis. **Denise Jones** kindly let me in, and I watched the end of the 6th game of the Stanley Cup finals with Denise, her husband Jim, and Lisa Richardson. In the fog of my hunger and exhaustion, everything — beef-stuffed croissants, chicken nuggets, suckling pigs — looked like breaded and fried vegetables. Aside from my acci-

dental forays into omnivorous eating, it was a pleasant evening. A plateful of fruit made a perfect dinner. (I'm pretty sure it was fruit...)

❖ Better Living Through E-Learning:

On Monday morning, I went to the SLA Tech Zone to learn about e-learning technologies, or, more simply, how to host a class or instruction session online. I'm thinking about ways of using modules like this to reach out to the remote offices my library serves. I will use what I learned in this workshop for years to come.

❖ There's More Than One Way to Build a Wiki:

“Newsroom Wikis,” presented by the News Division and sponsored by LexisNexis, was a fantastic session, and I'm not just saying that because **Jim Hunter**, my former supervisor, was among the presenters. **Jessica Baumgart**, **Susan Ebbs**,

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PEOPLE



BY JENNIFER O'NEILL

Awards & Acknowledgements

Merrie Monteagudo, library research supervisor at *The San Diego Union-Tribune* reports that Janelle Muñoz of San Jacinto High School in Hemet, California, was awarded the first **Cecilia Iniguez** journalism scholarship June 30th.

The scholarship is named after a *Union-Tribune* librarian who died in April after a long illness. Cecilia's colleagues at the newspaper joined with the San Diego chapter of the California Chicano News Media Association to offer the scholarship to a graduate of the annual Multi-Cultural Journalism Workshop. The workshop is open to high school juniors and seniors from San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino and Imperial counties. The goal is to inspire students to pursue careers in journalism, especially in communities where minorities are underrepresented.

Debra Bade, editor of news research and archives for the *Chicago Tribune*, recently joined the Advisory Board of the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Amy Disch of *The Columbus Dispatch* has been nominated to be the president-elect of the Central Ohio SLA chapter, with her term beginning in January 2007. This summer, she's been co-teaching a class, "Specialized Information Agencies and Services," with Dr. Edwin Cortez, director of the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Dr. Cortez was a former professor of hers at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Cortez has also invited her to be a member of his school's Advisory Board. The board's inaugural meeting will be held in Knoxville this September.

Barbara Semonche, library director for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication, will be presenting a research paper in San Francisco at the August 2006 conference of the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). The title of the research paper is: "Information Technology & Information Literacy in Journalism-Mass Communication Libraries: A Survey." Patrick J. Reakes, associate university librarian, head of the Allen H. Neuharth Library, University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications and Fred C. Thomsen, director of information and technology services, UNC-CH School of Journalism and Mass Communication collaborated on the research.

Carol Bradley Bursack, news researcher/elder care columnist for *The Forum* in Fargo, ND, says while she remains a news researcher, her elder care profile continues to rise. She finds it is a joy to do both. She is now blogging for OurAlzheimers.com, an Alzheimer's, dementia and general caregiving site. This, plus her book, newspaper column and considerable speaking on elder care, expands her credibility in the area, and she says it certainly doesn't hurt her researching either!

On the Move

Jackie Chamberlain, formerly of *The (Riverside) Press Enterprise*, has retired. Or as she puts it, "I've broken the bonds, thrown off the chains, left the building and am free as a bird to do whatever I choose to do — or not!" She's working on a few projects and taking some time just to decide what she wants to do now that she's grown up. She says it's nice to have that luxury after 33 years.

The Oregonian's head librarian, **Sandy Macomber**, retired in May. Executive editor Peter Bhatia stated in his memo to the staff that Sandy "has been a major contributor to *The Oregonian's* growth and success for more than 30 years, and she will be missed — for her professional contributions certainly, but even more for her personal qualities of dedication and contagious cheerfulness." Bhatia also said, "Those who worked with Sandy, above all, remember her cheerfulness and support. She never missed an opportunity for an impromptu pizza party, usually followed by coffee and cookies (homemade) in the library. No matter how stressful things would get, **Nan Robinson** recalls, "She could cure the blues away for everyone, including herself, by ordering a ton of pizzas." **Lynne Palombo** remembers how as a new staffer it impressed her that Sandy "cheerfully would go to great lengths to gather information for any reporter. It was her pleasure, and that was a good role model."

Tim Rozgonyi will be taking over the position of research editor at the *St. Petersburg Times* in September. Tim started his career as librarian at a printing industry trade association in Pittsburgh. He then moved to *The (Pittsburgh) Press* as head librarian in 1992. *The Press* folded after an eight-month strike, and Tim and much of the staff went to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* in 1993. There he was director of information services for more than three years, followed by assistant technology systems editor for 10 years.

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Lessons Learned at SLA 2006: Baltimore, Or, 5,000 Librarians in 5 Days Can't Be Wrong

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Michael Meiners and Jim offered excellent presentations on how they and their staffs had used wikis to organize their professional and personal work. I learned more about different kinds of wikis and the applications one can put to them.

❖ Don't Bid on That T-Shirt, Silly Girl:

Monday evening, I attended the News Division's open house, sponsored by ProQuest, and the auction. This auction was definitely not of the silent variety. Unwittingly, I bid on what apparently was the perennial fruitcake of the auction, a T-shirt reading "Trust me. I'm a reporter." I was inspired to buy the t-shirt for my mother, a reporter, and didn't realize I should have left it alone, so that it might make an appearance at SLA 2007.

❖ If Librarianship Should Ever Get Dull, I Have a Second Career on the Price Is Right:

I think I did a passable job as raffle-prize presenter at the News Division's Monday evening suite party!

❖ Beat the Feds at Their Own Game:

On Tuesday morning, I attended "News Researchers in the Newsroom", presented by the News Division and sponsored by InMagic. This turned out to be the News Division's grand slam workshop for SLA 2006, which is significant since all the division's workshops that I went to were well-attended by enthusiastic groups. Derek Willis showed how he's scavenged useful data from voluminous government and private Web sites via

"Derek Willis showed how he's scavenged useful data from voluminous government and private Web sites via screen scraping."

screen scraping. He has written programs that deposit the information he wants into an easy-on-the-eyes database. This gave me some ideas on how to attack the unwieldy governmental agency Web sites I visit occasionally. The session participants stayed more than 45 minutes late to ask questions and make comments.

❖ The Librarian Fetish Is Alive and Well:

During a run, I saw a sign in a seedy strip club window: "WELCOME SLA!"

❖ An Awards Ceremony Can Include References to the Occult:

Tuesday evening, I attended Baltimore's National Aquarium for the News Division Awards Banquet. After exploring the aquarium, I attended a reception, watched dolphins frolic in a pool outside and then enjoyed a delicious dinner. Mine was an excellent vegetarian meal, thanks to the efforts of **Chris Hardesty**. **Amy Disch**, my friend and guide before and throughout the conference, presented my award. I was only disappointed that Amy was not wearing her newly acquired Webmeistress beanie at the

ceremony. The other award winners' introductions and speeches were thoughtful, humorous and helpful, as I learned a lot about the News Division's people and history through them.

❖ Digital "Archive" Systems Might Get

Creative, Making Collages Out of Your Pulitzer-Winning News Stories and Photos:

On Wednesday morning **Vicky McCargar** presented her and **Peter Johnson's** work on digital "archiving." She showed the unfortunate, everlasting results of depending too heavily on the wrong system, the wrong methods and on digitization itself for archival purposes. She also discussed the results of a survey of news



Mike Meiners models the latest in spirited auction wear

libraries on digitization and archiving.

❖ Track 'em Like a Bloodhound:

On Wednesday, I also attended a session on how to find information on private companies and their employees, sponsored by the Business and Finance Division. This was a topic I had been wondering about for a long time, and I was not alone; the room was filled, with attendees squeezing into the aisles and in the area next to the presenters' podium.

❖ Say "Hello!" Say "Yes!" and Ask Questions:

I met so many interesting, fun people at SLA, both in the News Division and outside of it. As an introvert, it took some guts, but I introduced myself, asked questions and accepted invitations. I was always happy I did. Thank you to the News Division, all of its friendly members and ProQuest for this opportunity. I'll see you all in Denver!

People Who Need People



BY AMY DISCH

There is never a dull moment in the research center of *People* magazine, where the staff locates answers to a variety of questions such as the correct spelling of the name of the designer who created an actress' handbag, unusual ways that common household items have been used, and confirming the ages of the 831 military personnel who died in Iraq in 2004 for a special year-end issue. Director Robert Britton says he and his staff "have a lot of laughs over some of the questions, but they're often very challenging" and can be fun to work on as well. He adds that "*People* is a pretty cool place to work" and "my best job ever."

The *People* research center's holdings are equally varied and quite impressive. Britton says the staff continues to rely heavily on print sources and that he "likes to say that *People* has the pre-eminent celebrity and pop culture library." The collection includes 10,000 books covering a wide range of subjects, with particular emphasis "on celebrity biographies, pop culture, fashion and bestsellers," as well as "400 books on royalty."

The research center has "a few major newspapers and about 100 magazines," many of which are not indexed or available online. Titles include both American and British offerings covering the world of celebrities, as well as "fashion, movies, music and royalty." In addition, there are 15,000 celebrity clip files that include the notes of Time Inc. reporters from the 1920s through 1993, which Britton cites



A room with a view. *People's* library overlooking Radio City Music Hall.

as a "unique and interesting part of our collection."

There are also 3,500 DVDs, which include movies "from *Birth of a Nation* to *Brokeback Mountain*" and television programs "from *Mr. Ed* to *The Wire*." There is a substantial video collection as well, comprised of "years worth of awards shows, celebrity interviews and profiles." The DVD collection sees a lot of use by photo department staff, who will cull footage "for

frame grabs" and by writers and fact checkers searching for notable quotes. DVDs "can also be checked out by staff for general viewing," something Britton views as serving "a purpose beyond just fun. I see them as a pop culture educational tool for an ever-younger staff, some of whom don't know who Shirley Temple is or that Paul McCartney was in a band before Wings."

Continued on next page

People Who Need People

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The research center also maintains a database as part of the magazine's intranet, which includes "contact information for 10,000 celebrities; birth and death dates for 12,000 celebrities, as well as for their partners, children and parents; correct spelling, punctuation and accent marks for thousands of personal names, place names and brand names; correct titles of newspapers, magazines, movies, television shows, songs and much more; and an in-house generated index to magazines which are not available electronically or indexed anywhere."

The research center has a staff of 10 including a director, deputy director, six librarians and two clerks who support the reference and research requests of *People* magazine and by contract, requests of Time Inc. owned *Teen People*, *People en Espanol*, *Who Weekly* (the Australian equivalent of *People*), *In Style*, *Real Simple* and *Essence*. (It was recently announced that *Teen People* will cease publication with its September issue, so the research center's work for the magazine will end as well.) Research includes not only work for the magazines' print publications, but for their online counterparts and any books or television specials they produce.

According to Britton, "Most of the research we do is online," with the aid of the various online services and public records databases the research center subscribes to. Britton adds, "The five Time Inc. libraries cooperate very well with each other," and are all located within close proximity, with the research centers of *Time*, *Sports Illustrated* and *Business* (supporting *Fortune* and *Money* magazines) located in the same building, and the *Entertainment Weekly* research center located a block away.

Besides research, the professional librarians have "additional specific duties," things such as "cataloging books and recording television shows." Britton says that "four



People magazine's library

DVRs are going pretty much nonstop recording the morning shows, late night shows, entertainment news shows, talk shows, reality shows, awards shows and anything else that someone specifically requests." This is a particularly important role for the research center, since "information or quotes" are often needed sooner than transcripts are made available online.

The research center receives a fair amount of celebrity-related questions, but Britton emphasizes there is an equal amount of research done "for serious stories." The magazine has won several awards, both national and from within Time Inc., for its coverage of topics such as "Hurricane Katrina, September 11th, breast cancer, and child abuse and abductions." At the time of our correspondence, Britton told me the magazine was working on a piece that features interviews of two teens, one from Israel and the other from Lebanon.

The research center is open every day of the year except for Thanksgiving and Christmas and even then "someone is always on call." Thanksgiving 2005 was the

day "the news broke that Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey had split," so Britton and his deputy "both worked a lot from home that day."

Staff is available weekdays from 9:30 a.m. until 8 or 9 p.m. (EST) and holidays and weekends from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday evenings, which is the magazine's final close night, staff can work until 1 a.m. or later, and if a major story happens to break on a Tuesday evening, "it can be an all-nighter." (A notable instance of this was September 11, 2001, which was a Tuesday.) A more recent example was *People's* cover story on 'N Sync member Lance Bass, who announced publicly that he is gay. Britton says that "Bass agreed to the interview and photo shoot late in the day in Los Angeles," which was early evening at the magazine's offices in New York. Exclusive stories such as Bass', Britton says, are generally kept under wraps with very few magazine staff knowing about it, "but someone from the library has to be involved." In this instance,

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BY DEREK WILLIS

Most of the sites that you visit on the Web are delivered by the same open-source software: the Apache Web server. Its popularity is due to several factors, not the least of which being that it is free to install and use, but the really good thing about Apache is that its sheer number of users makes it a well-tested and well-documented application.

In other words, your IT department has heard of it and probably relies on it.

Apache can be installed on nearly every operating system, and most Apple computers come with it built-in (if you're using a Mac, go to "Sharing" under "System Preferences" to turn it on). For Windows, there is a single-file installer that will get you started.

So why have a Web server on your desktop? The first reason is that there are thousands of applications that can run on Apache, and you should be able to test them out without having to ask somebody else to install them each time. Also, there are few better ways to learn about how the Web actually works than becoming a Web administrator yourself (see if you can get that title added to your business cards).

The Apache Web server is available from <http://httpd.apache.org/>, and the latest version is 2.2, although many sites still use older versions. Unless you like looking at lots of files, I recommend downloading the Win32 binary, a single installer file. On Windows, this will install Apache in C:\Program Files\Apache Group\Apache2\, although you can change that to whatever directory you like.

After the installation is finished, Apache will attempt to start itself and you can monitor its current status in the right side of the tray at the bottom of the screen. Apache's icon is a reddish feather with an arrow that's either green (running) or red (stopped). Green means things are working, but there's only one real way to find out and that's to fire up a Web browser and enter the following address: <http://127.0.0.1/>.

That "local" address is common to every computer (it typically can be replaced with <http://localhost/>), and if everything went well you should see a message at the top of the page that reads, "If you can see this, it means that the installation of the Apache Web server software on this system was successful. You may now add content to this directory and replace this page."

So how do you replace that page? Apache keeps its HTML files in a directory called "htdocs" in the directory where you installed the server. Index.html is the base file that you saw, and you can either rename it or replace its contents with whatever you want. If you'd like to install wiki or blog software, you'd put it in a folder in the htdocs directory. Remember this: If it's not in the htdocs directory, you won't be able to see it in a browser.

Perhaps the trickiest part of learning Apache is dealing with configuration. While Apache usually works right out of the box with normal html files, any sort of database-backed Web site will involve fussing with the configuration file. The one which occupies almost all of the attention is located in the "conf" directory and is called httpd.conf. You'll use a text editor (not Word) to edit it, and there's a good reason why it creates backups: It's way too easy to make mistakes.

Enabling features or additions in Apache's configuration involves either adding lines to httpd.conf or turning them off by putting a # sign in front of the line. Generally, the Apache newbie will be most concerned with the various modules that can be enabled - they tell Apache which type of database it can connect to and which Web scripting languages, such as PHP or Python, it can use. In most cases, software that requires certain modules will tell you how to enable them in Apache.

Because Apache is built to stay on, you'll need to restart it whenever you change the configuration. Restarting can be done via Windows' Start Menu or using the icon in the tray. You don't need to restart Apache if you simply are adding HTML files to the htdocs directory. And if you've made a mistake in the config file - putting two modules on the same line, for example - Apache won't restart, so you'll know that something has gone wrong.

There are many Apache tutorials on the Web that cover installation, configuration and special tasks, but trial and error will probably be your best guide. Then, when you're ready to show the rest of the newsroom what you've been working on, you can go to IT and tell them that you know all about configuring Apache, because you've been running it on your desktop.

For future story ideas or questions about Tech Tips, please contact Derek Willis at dwillis@gmail.com

A Tale of Two Sessions: Mary Ellen Bates Speaks at SLA

BY LESLIE A. NORMAN
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Mary Ellen Bates, independent information broker, writer, lecturer and all-around information guru, presented two back-to-back sessions in Baltimore: *What's on the Information Horizon?* and *Becoming a Value-Added Information Professional*. The sessions were well-attended and packed with overviews and little nuggets of knowledge which the attendees appreciated in a time of media consolidation and outsourcing.

The information horizon presents professional, technological and resource challenges. The profession is graying while newer generations (i.e. Gen Y) only know the information age as their reference point. Information professionals have always been at the vanguard of technological change, but technology is now available readily to all users, not just the educated elite. And, while IPs and users still need books for information, the information horizon reveals a world where users want information electronically without library intervention.

At the heart of Bates' talk was the question: In the future, will IPs be "knowledge officers" or "filing clerks"? Many library schools still teach the model of the filing clerk rather than the model of a knowledge manager, who acquires, manages and disseminates knowledge streams in better packages than when the streams first arrive at one's organization.

She urged the audience to make the library as pervasive as possible in that the library is no longer an object but the librarian is the library. IPs need to be available at the point of need (not on our time or at our desk) as a mobile, 24/7 access point either in person or by embedding information in different applications. The new model is virtual libraries where the search engine is

created by the librarian using the most authoritative sources and producing the most relevant results for the information environment one is in.

To thrive in the coming information horizon, newly-minted IPs will need the following skills:

- value-added online searching,
- post-processing and analysis of information,
- the ability to market the library,
- leadership skills which manage up, not down, the ladder,
- group dynamics in which communication and collaboration skills are prominent,
- teaching and speaking skills.

The future information professional needs to think in terms of service, not warehousing collections. Customization for users is the byword for special librarians seeking to remain relevant to their organizations. Everything is not on the Net and special librarians can demonstrate this fact by knowing our users' information needs and helping them identify what those needs are, filtering out unusable information, and customizing the information specifically for individuals.

During the second session, *Becoming a Value-added Information Professional*, Bates delved into the details of succeeding as an information professional. An information professional is someone who provides answers, not just information. His or her resources, skills and tools are used for high-end research that gives clients more than they can do for themselves.

A value-added IP knows what information clients want, why they want the research, and the context in which the client is asking for research. He or she understands how clients usually acquire and use information by knowing what other information sources the clients use, what it looks like and how it is presented.



Mary Ellen Bates and Claire Wollen

Presentation provides another opportunity for adding value. Most clients need distilled information, not dense text or a file without a finding aid. If there is no visible added value, clients won't perceive any additional value.

Bates provided many tips and strategies to add value to the information provided to clients. The IP may use information topography analysis, including visualization, data analysis, and meta-information (the landscape of information, what information is discovered and the gaps between information) to add value. Other tips included:

- Use "information-dense" sources to find charts, graphs and tables.
- Look for sources clients don't have or don't know about: telephone research, public records research, invisible content, podcasts, wikis and government websites.
- Use special output features of online databases to create value-added deliverables.

The deliverable should be branded to reflect the information professional's effort to add value. The most important informa-

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SLA 2006: A Researcher's Perspective

Continued from page 1

"A Web site anyone can edit? Isn't that bad?" Jessica asked, then answered her question, "Not necessarily." Inside a newsroom, the upsides of a wiki are tremendous: Decentralized team members can communicate easily and over time; participation is encouraged; and the wiki serves as a central repository for information. Best of all for news libraries on a tight budget, wiki software is open source, which means it's free.

After Jessica's introduction, news librarians shared how they used wikis in their newsrooms. Interestingly, each library used similar wiki software for very different purposes. At the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, researchers used a wiki to create a departmental handbook. Their wiki contains instructions for everything from how to do a background check to how to handle the daily distribution of newspapers. Built by researchers for the use of the research department, their wiki is more of a departmental initiative rather than something intended for the whole newsroom. In contrast, researchers at *The News & Observer* in Raleigh use their wiki to share ongoing research with reporters on major breaking news stories, such as the Duke University lacrosse case. They also use it for long-term stories, such as background material on potential presidential candidate John Edwards. Over at *The Columbus Dispatch*, researchers have created their own city

almanac and linked it to the newspaper's style book. The wiki contains profiles of people and buildings, and quick, accurate summaries of recent news stories, including frequently requested timelines. Look up the proper way to refer to a local sports venue, for instance, and you'll also find out what year it was built and if it had a controversial beginning.

There are downsides to wikis in the newsroom, even if they are few. Perhaps most pressing, reporters and editors who don't have a high comfort level with new technology will simply not participate in a wiki, even when they have much to contribute. Training and education may be necessary to convert them. Also, some IT departments are not friendly to open-source software, which will require researchers to make a strong case for the wiki. Educate yourself on the specific issue and then present your argument, advised the panelists.

Derek Willis

Derek's presentation on news research also focused on using technology to compile and manipulate information. Derek began by describing a hypothetical researcher who finds software that works — say Google, Excel or Nexis. Such tools are useful and time-saving. But sometimes a researcher gets to such a comfort level with the tool, that when the tool's limitations are met, the researcher takes an attitude of "Oh well, that can't be done." At this point, Derek said, the software hinders information gathering and becomes "crutch-ware."

Researchers need to be more broad-minded by looking for new tools that allow us to capture data and then do what we want to do with it, Derek said. Sometimes this will involve simple computer programming, and researchers need to get comfortable with programs like Perl, Python and PHP. Just like the wiki, much of the software Derek uses is open-source and, therefore, free.

As an example, Derek showed a program he wrote in Python that captures press releases from the mass transit authority in Washington, D.C. The agency issues a press release every time a train is forced to make an unscheduled stop. The press release describes the problem as operator error, obstruction on the tracks, or some other specific cause. Derek's program then "reads" the press release, which typically uses boilerplate language, and then copies the report to a database inside the newsroom. Derek monitors the system for glitches or unexpected vocabulary, but the repetitive drudge work is done by computer. Time goes by, and soon the database has a substantial amount of data, enough to draw conclusions about why transit breakdowns occur. Then it's time for reporters to interview officials and write the story.

Derek also preached a message that librarians have appreciated: Information must be shared. Opening data to the whole newsroom should be the rule, not the exception. Even when reporters balk —

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RANDOM WISDOM

Researchers did a good deal of thinking out loud and sharing practices that weren't tied to any particular topic or panel. Here are a few overheard tidbits:

❖ Volunteer to serve on newsroom committees, even if they don't directly relate to research. A librarian's perspective at the table gives fresh ideas that newsroom leaders haven't yet considered, said **Anne**

Holcomb, a solo librarian at the *Kalamazoo Gazette*.

❖ **Mike Meiners** of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* said he looks for opportunities to showcase his researchers as the newsroom's information experts, especially when it involves new technology or software. Giving Nexis accounts to reporters for the first time? Ask Nexis representatives to train the researchers, and then the

researchers can train the reporters and editors.

❖ Rotate weekly tasks among researchers, so that everyone gains expertise. It also can alleviate boredom. "Whether it's a good job or a bad job, every seven weeks, it's your job," quipped **Jim Hunter** of *The Columbus Dispatch*.

—compiled by Angie Drobnic Holan

The Future's So Bright...

BY MICHEAL KNOOP
SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

It seems like a week doesn't go by that there is some article or report tolling the death knell of newspapers. Nothing gets somebody's attention like a threat to his or her career. So **Nora Paul's** continuing education course on News Futures had a captive audience at "Hello."

Nora assembled a varied group of four experts to discuss the future of the news industry. There was an academic, a public radio spokesperson, a scrappy newcomer, and a representative from a major news corporation.

University of Iowa professor Jane B. Singer gave a good "big picture" look. News providers are increasing while their individual staffs are decreasing leading to multiple tellings of the same story. Because of this, big city metro papers are in the biggest trouble. But there is hope. Traditional news outlets are finally moving beyond just rehashing already published/broadcast material on their Web platforms.

This trend segued nicely into an explanation of public insight journalism, presented by Andrew Haeg of Minnesota Public Radio. Their maxim is, "On any given story, someone in the audience always knows more than we do." Public insight analysts read comments posted to the Web site and work with reporters to identify themes and story ideas. The Public Insight Network seems a great way to generate stories that haven't been told over and over before.

Next up, Mark Potts introduced the concept of "micro-localism" with the Web site Backfence.com. Fueled almost entirely by contributions of citizen journalists, this Web site provides more complete local coverage by drilling down to neighborhood level.

The lesson to city papers was clear: Instead of focusing on national coverage

that readers could get from dozens of other sources, papers need to concentrate inward on strong local coverage.

Washingtonpost.com's Steve Fox was the final presenter. While the era of the paper may be over, Fox encouraged, "good journalism is timeless." Convergence doesn't end with the newspaper merging with the Web. Everything needs to be re-examined. How is the news delivered? Don't forget cell phones, podcasts, and BlackBerries. Who delivers it? Through blogging, part of our audience is becoming your competitor. Can you get them to work with you instead of against you? When is it delivered? Perpetually.

After listening to the various presentations, I realized something: I wasn't scared witless; I was excited. I mean, this stuff was really cool. Even better, I could visualize it working at my newsroom.

The biggest trick, however, still needed to be pulled off: How to take the message back to management? As a group, we struggled with that a little more. After the lectures, we broke up into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions. My group never really got beyond how to archive Web site content.

While I realize preserving Web content is critical, this isn't what management needs our help with right now. Our priority needs to be finding a way to reallocate our newsroom resources to work for online. After we make that work, we can approach management with archiving.

As it turns out, I had it easy. Soon after I returned from SLA, the managing editor sent out a memo. It was like he had been to the same session! Emphasis on local coverage; new ways to tell stories, including citizen journalism; and always, always feeding the Web site. Thanks to the CE, I could immediately talk the talk and had good direction on where to walk the walk. Here's to the future.

SLA 2006: A Researcher's Perspective

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"But I don't want my notes to be shared with the whole newsroom!" — researchers can mollify them with password protection and then bide their time. After the big story runs, the reporters may be much more amenable to having their notes on the newsroom intranet or wiki for the benefit of the reporters who come after them. What shouldn't happen, Derek said, is for the information to remain locked up on a single computer, for the benefit of no one.

Conclusion

When it comes to gathering and disseminating information, no one in the newsroom thinks quite like a researcher, as these particular sessions bear out. With the librarians' ethos of information sharing and our typical embrace of technology, we have a unique ability to bring data to our colleagues in journalism. We must continually challenge ourselves to innovate in order to create better journalism and make ourselves invaluable. Gathering with other news researchers to share insights and best practices stood out as the most compelling aspect of the SLA conference.

Links

The News Division has posted notes from the presentations discussed in this article at:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/slanews/conferences/sla2006/>

MediaWiki is the wiki software used by *The News & Observer* and *The Columbus Dispatch*:

<http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki>

Derek Willis has written an essay, "Defeating Crutchware," based on his SLA presentation:

<http://www.thescoop.org/thefix/defeating-crutchware/>

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

MONDAY JUNE 12, 2006
CONVENTION CENTER, BALTIMORE MD

IN ATTENDANCE

News Division Executive Board members:
Denise Jones, Chair;
Jim Hunter, Chair-Elect;
Justin Scroggs, Program Planner;
Jen Evert, Past-Chair;
Peter Johnson, Treasurer;
Merric Monteagudo, Secretary;
Other members and guests.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Denise Jones called the meeting to order at 3:40 pm.
Denise introduced **Patricia Cia** who was attending the News Division's business meeting as the SLA Board Liaison.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes of the 2005 annual business meeting, as published in *News Library News* Vol. 27, No. 4/Summer 2005. **Alice Pepper** moved for approval. The motion was seconded and approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

TREASURER - PETER JOHNSON

Treasurer's Report

*News Division, Special Libraries Association
Baltimore, MD
June 2006*

As of June 1, 2006, the News Division had a checking account balance of \$64,084.58.

As of June 1, 2006, outstanding payments totaled \$10,835.55 — for an actual balance of \$53,249.03.

This total includes \$5,187.37 designated for the C.B. Hayden Fellowship, and \$1,325.93 (or \$1,326.62 depending on which of the previous treasurer's reports you

believe) on behalf of the Florida News Group. This year the division received a \$6,940 membership allotment from SLA, computed at \$10 per division member as of 12/31/2005. For reference, here are the allotments received over the past five years:

As of	Amount
12/31/05	\$6,940
12/31/04	\$6,750
12/31/03	\$7,300
12/31/02	\$7,090
12/31/01	\$7,300

Income/Expense 6/1/2005 through 5/31/06

INCOME

Bulletin Advertising	\$ 1,015.00
Dues Allotment	\$ 6,940.00
Meeting Income	\$23,208.64
Misc. Income	\$ 2,389.16
Sponsorships	\$22,500.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$56,952.80

EXPENSES

NLN design/layout	\$ 2,869.24
2006 Meeting deposits	\$10,480.55
Contribution expenses	\$ 1,000.00
Meeting expenses	\$27,375.15
Hotel deposit	\$ 500.00
Speaker stipend	\$ 500.00
Student Stipend Award	\$ 1,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$44,416.69

*Respectfully submitted,
Peter F. Johnson
Treasurer, News Division*

PAST- CHAIR/AWARDS JENNIFER SMALL EVERT

Jennifer Small Evert thanked the awards committee members: **Richard Geiger**, **Ginny Everett**, **Teresa Leonard** and **Justin Scroggs** and reported on the annual awards banquet to be held Tuesday, June 13 at the Marine Mammal Pavilion, Pier 4, within walking distance of the Convention Center. 104 guests are expected to attend. Complimentary

admission to the Aquarium begins at 6 p.m.

The recipients of this year's News Division awards:

Joseph F. Kwapil Award - Nora Paul

Agnes Henebry Roll of Honor Award - Ellie Briscoe and Kee Malesky

David Rhydwen Award for Outstanding Scholarly Contribution to News Librarianship - Vicky McCargar

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHAIR — DANA GORDON

Dana Gordon reported on two Continuing Education sessions offered at this year's conference. The Saturday session on "Graphics Research: Timelines and Deadlines" was informative, but unfortunately not well attended. The Sunday CE on the future of news was described as wonderful. A Poynter News Researcher Academy aimed at non-management level researchers is in the final planning stages. Dana requested help finding sponsors. Early conference session attendance estimates ranged from about 100 in attendance at Monday's 9:30-11 a.m. session on "Oral History and Peter Drucker;" 143 at the session on "Wiki Applications in the Newsroom;" to 62 at the 7:30-9:00 a.m. "Digitization Vendor Roundtable."

PUBLICATIONS CHAIR - LEIGH POITINGER

*SLA News Division
Publications Annual Report, 2006
June 12, 2006, Baltimore*

NEWS LIBRARY NEWS

Kathryn Pease is the current editor of *NLN*. She has continued to do a wonderful job as editor this year and deserves a big thank you for all of her hard work.

Kathryn's term as editor will end after the Summer 2006 issue, and we are currently looking for a new editor.

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Annual Business Meeting Minutes

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One issue that still needs to be addressed is the availability of *NLN* on the News Division Web site. Traditionally, *NLN* was a benefit available only to News Division members. However, issues are freely available on the division's Web site. If the division wants to maintain *NLN* as a benefit for members only, we need to consider moving *NLN* to a password-protected site.

NEWS DIVISION MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The Membership Directory has been very generously sponsored and produced by NewsBank, Inc. since 1998. We owe a big thank you to NewsBank for continuing to underwrite this valuable News Division tool. Thanks also go to **Linda Paschal** of NewsBank for helping to compile the names and creating the index and to Membership Chair **Alice Pepper** for updating the introductory material.

For the second year in a row, we've produced the directory in a PDF version only in order to save money. NewsBank has printed a small number of hard copies, and interested members can purchase one for \$5 from Treasurer Peter Johnson.

On May 15, 2006, NewsBank emailed to all News Division members a link to the online Membership Directory along with instructions on how to access the News Division's password-protected Web site, <http://www.sla.org/division/dnws>. Members without an e-mail address and those with invalid e-mail addresses were sent letters with the same information.

NEWS DIVISION WEB SITE

This spring, the News Division Board unanimously voted to appoint **Amy Disch** as the next Webmaster of the News Division Web site.

Amy has been helping out with the Web site for the past few years, especially with



Amy Disch inherits the Webmeister beanie from Jessica Baumgart

posting our numerous conference materials. She'll bring lots of enthusiasm, elbow grease and experimentation to the site.

Amy succeeds Webmaster **Jessica Baumgart** (aka "Beanie Girl"), who has maintained the site since 2002. My sincere thanks to Jessica for her hard work over the past several years and for her unfailing good cheer and enthusiasm.

The News Division Web team met on Sunday, June 11 in the News Division suite to discuss future plans for the Web site. The team discussed redesign ideas, technologies that we need to investigate, and the possibility of using some of the News Division's funds to upgrade the site.

Respectfully submitted,
Leigh Poitinger
Publications Director

ARCHIVES - TERESA LEONARD

Teresa Leonard not present, but Denise reported the archives still exist and are accessible at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

BROADCAST - KEE MALESKY

Kee Malesky reported on the cancellation of the planned session for broadcast librarians, "The Smartest Guy in the Room," due to a conflict with the presenters. She invited broadcast librarians (and those interested in

the field) to meet at the News Division suite, Tuesday, June 13 from 4-5 p.m. in order to discuss issues and plan for next year's conference.

GOVERNANCE - LINDA HENDERSON

Linda Henderson reported that a committee of **Teresa Leonard**, **Donna Scheeder** and herself had prepared a Recommended Practices document for the News Division and submitted it to the Executive Board for approval. The document will replace the News Division bylaws and are intended to serve as a reference for division leaders. The Practices delineate the responsibilities of key officers and should aid in the understanding of the relationships among division officers, association officers, and units. They contain valuable, "must-know" information on division responsibilities, association structure, policies and procedures.

MEMBERSHIP - ALICE PEPPER

News Division SLA
Membership Semi-annual Report

May 2006

659 members
83 students / 576 all other categories
705 last year
Biggest drop after four steady years

This has been a challenging time in membership-land.

SLA stopped sending the names of new members, temporarily suspending the practice of greeting newbies with welcome letters.

HQ has now switched to posting PDFs of new member information on the Communities of Practice page. This isn't the most useful format for membership chairs. I'm told that an SLA task force will make recommendations in a few months.

Meanwhile, the membership committee's plan to expand mentoring at the annual conference to offering mentors to all new members was set aside.

We can be more efficient by switching to

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Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Continued from page 15

an e-mail greeting for new members since the Membership Directory is online — the hard-copy publication packet is not necessary.

Membership Directory

The Membership Directory went online in our “membership only” Web site on SLA.org a month ago. Once again, NewsBank President Dan Jones sponsored this fabulous tool. **Linda Paschal** provided the value-added geographical index with the help of **Helene Koutouzou**. **Justin Scroggs** arranged for a small number of print editions and says about 60 have been sold for \$5 each.

Conference mentorship

Shira reports that 10 mentor/mentee couples are getting together at the conference. The mentee coming the furthest distance is from the *Singapore Straits Times*. Student mentees are from New York, Ohio and Kentucky. Two first-time attendees are broadcast librarians from Fox News and E! Entertainment Television. (Shira notes that one of these made the switch from the Information Technology Division because of a past mentee’s good report about us!) Another mentee has switched to a news library from an academic library and wants to meet people in her new field.

The future

This is not getting easier. How do we encourage students and other new members as our libraries are downsized?

Colorful pamphlets, visits to library schools, teaching research to journalism students - none of it works without a positive message about the future of this profession.

Conclusion

Thank you to committee members **Shira Kavon**, **Kathryn Pease**, **Anne Holcomb** and **Amy Disch**. We always welcome new volunteers to the committee.

*Respectfully submitted,
Alice Pepper
SLA News Division
Membership Chair*

PROGRAM PLANNER, DENVER - JUSTIN SCROGGS

Justin Scroggs announced that he was seeking volunteers for moderators and speakers at next year’s conference in Denver. Suggested topics include: non-print, research, hands-on training, non-U.S. and CAR. There are 12 program spots on the schedule and we can slot 10 sessions. Morning sessions are scheduled to begin at 7 a.m.

PUBLICITY - CLAIRE WOLLEN

Claire Wollen announced that silent auction items are being collected and priced in the suite. She thanked everybody who assisted with the auction for their advice and consultation. Last year we received a counterfeit Canadian \$10 bill, which has been sent to the News Division archives.

SMALL LIBRARIES - ANNE HOLCOMB

A mini wiki has been started for small & solo librarians at <http://newslibmini.pbwiki.com/>

NEW BUSINESS

Denise announced that elections will be held this fall.

Chair-Elect **Jim Hunter** suggested a Strategic Planning Committee to be made up of the Program Planner, Chair-Elect, Chair and Past Chair to provide continuity to future planning for the division. This committee will try to set longer-term goals

and priorities. For example, it will try to set objectives for the Web site redesign and figure out what kind of investment it will take.

Chris Hardesty reported that Factiva has for years given a Palm Pilot as a raffle item to use as an incentive to get people to pay their division suite fees. This year Factiva gave us an iPod and LexisNexis donated a digital camera. The camera will be sold in a raffle at the silent auction.

Jennifer O’Neill raised the issue of possible SLA fee reductions for people between jobs or retired.

Because of the change in the governing year, there was no ceremonial passing of the gavel from Chair to Chair-Elect; however, there was a round of applause for **Denise Jones** in appreciation of her service as Chair.

At 4:39 p.m., **Justin Scroggs** moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted,
Merrie Monteagudo, Secretary*

A Tale of Two Sessions: Mary Ellen Bates Speaks at SLA

Continued from page 11

tion should be highlighted, the formatting should reflect professionalism, an executive summary should accompany a table of contents and a cover memo, and the information should be presented in a friendly, not dense, manner.

Mary Ellen Bates packed the sessions with lots of tips, tools and ideas that any information professional could use with success.

PEOPLE

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Christine Baird is the new information editor at *The Star-Ledger* in Newark. **M.J. Crowley** is retiring after “a happy and fun 10 years.” M.J. plans to spend time with her husband — on the farm in Central Pennsylvania in the summer and in Nicaragua in the winter. She says, “I wish each of you the very best. It has always been a pleasure working with you. You ARE THE BEST GROUP as you well know.”

Megan Gallup is leaving the *Daytona Beach News-Journal* — and news librarianship — and is “moving on to a grand adventure” by opening up a Merle Norman cosmetics studio in Orlando. Replacing her as new research editor is **Karen Duffy**, who has been with the company for almost six years.

Wil Roestenburg has left his job at PCM newspapers. He is leaving news librarianship after more than 22 years at several newspapers.

He is starting up his own shop in Knowledge Management. For the moment the name is Knowledge in Action. He promises that if his shop turns out successful enough to make some money out of it, he will come to another SLA conference in the future. He says, “Whatever may happen, I’ll never forget you all. You all carry my best wishes for the future.”

Barbara Oliver reports that **Sabrina Pacifici** has joined *The New York Times* Washington bureau. She says that while inquiring minds may want to know, none wants to know more — and share it all — than this relentlessly curious researcher. Sabrina was an early adopter of, and proselytizer for, blogging, and she has been chief of knowledge management and director of research at one of the nation’s top 20 law firms. Sabrina is the founder, editor, and publisher of <http://www.llrx.com> a free, inde-

pendent Web journal of legal research, published monthly since 1996. She’s the founder and sole author of <http://www.bespacific.com> a current awareness, news-focused blog where readers are linked directly to original court opinions, hearings, surveys, reports and government documents, international news sources, polls, reports from watchdog groups, and journal articles. Though her career (so far) has been focused on wide-ranging research support for legal eagles, her successes dealing with demanding users, tight deadlines, and fierce competitors are a natural fit for one of the busiest, most demanding news operations. Barbara says Sabrina has printer’s ink for blood, a nose for news and requires almost no sleep.

Elizabeth Lukes has left *The Sun* in Baltimore for a law library position at a state agency in Maryland.

People Who Need People

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with a cover story being changed on Tuesday evening, “the librarian on duty worked until 4 a.m.” Staff will also work overnight on special occasions such as the annual Oscar ceremony. Britton says he and his staff’s research efforts are often challenged by the Tuesday evening closing. “We are often unable to answer questions as easily as we could during normal business hours, when a simple phone call could do the trick, so the staff does have to rely on their ingenuity.”

Britton emphasizes that “when you read something in *People*, you can definitely believe it, as every word is thoroughly and carefully checked.” The librarians have a close relationship with the fact checkers and “staff lawyers go over every word of every

story.” If something “can’t be proven beyond doubt or verified by an exact quote,” it is removed from the respective story. “*People* is especially particular about getting ages correct, and all that falls to us to determine.”

When asked what he and his staff do to market the research center, Britton responds “hardly anything actually; it pretty much markets itself.” However, periodic meetings are held with editorial staff members to review procedures for determining “what information on the Web should be trusted” and to reiterate the information available “in the research center database on *People Magnet*,” the magazine’s intranet.

Britton says that “while *People* is a busy place to work,” it is also very friendly and informal, witnessed by the fact that everyone is on a first-name basis with each other and that every day is fairly casual in terms

of dress. “On any given day you’ll see few ties and lots of jeans, and if a man or woman is wearing an actual suit it probably means they’ve come right to work from appearing on one of the morning shows.”

As for the future of the *People* research center, Britton says it is directly tied to the continuing success of *People* magazine and the “exploding popularity” of *People.com*. “The contents of the print and online versions of the magazine are becoming more thoroughly integrated all the time, so a huge aspect of the future definitely lies in that direction.” He adds that “after 32 years, *People* continues to be phenomenally successful, and each year sees the production of more special issues and books than the year before. Whatever projects are conceived of, the research center is always part of the action.”