MESSAGE FROM THE CAPHIS CHAIR

Dear CAPHIS Members,

Happy holidays and happy new year! 1990 is rapidly coming to a close. As I have reviewed committee chair reports, I have been excited by the ongoing activities of our section. CAPHIS has grown by 34 new members in 1990! We now have 249 members.

Jodith Janes is still working on the Core List of CHI books and is requesting that you send your nominations for inclusion in the list. She is especially interested in your recommendations of any newer books that have been published.

Margaret Bandy and the Nominations/Elections Committee have been working on lining up candidates for the upcoming election. If all proceeds smoothly, you will have your election ballot in the mail by mid-January.

Reprinted elsewhere in Consumer Connections is the announcement from the September-October 1990 NLM News, "Input Sought for Revised NLM Collection Development Manual." Although the initial meeting of the groups responsible for the revisions was on November 15, 1990, I am sure that your feedback on the issues surrounding access to consumer health publications will be welcome.

A new subcommittee of the MLA CE Committee has been formed to assist chapters and sections in planning, developing, and providing continuing education. The first task of the subcommittee will be to conduct a survey of needs. The Chair of the CE Chapter/Section Support Subcommittee is Christine Chapman of the University of California, San Diego. Each chapter and section has a liaison. Maggie Wineburgh-Freed of the Norris Medical Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, is the CAPHIS liaison.

Finally, a reminder of our section program and business meeting to be held June 5, 1991, from 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. We will be competing with other sections who are also scheduled for this date, but I think that our program on the Planetree Hospital and Information Center will be something not to be missed. We have requested that a member of the MLA Board attend our business meeting. This will be your opportunity to address any concerns or questions to the board member.

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(Revised December 1990)

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CONSUMER CONNECTIONS is the official publication of the Consumer and
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Deadlines for submitting items:
   Spring issue - February 1
   Summer issue - July 1
   Fall issue - November 1
IN BRIEF.....

This is a new column in Consumer Connections, which has been suggested by Betty Wood. The items in this issues are ideas which she has used. The intent of the column is to provide brief descriptions of ideas being used by consumer health librarians which have been successful for them. We hope that many more of you will be willing to share ideas for future columns. Please do not hesitate to call us or send things to us. Betty says, "We have used the following--nothing very original, I'm afraid":

1. Small groups of children to share our skeleton and baby models. Hopefully they take their brochures home with them;
2. Booth at Children's Fair;
3. Booth at medical, nursing, clergy, and other conferences;
4. Posters in the major waiting areas of the hospital - CICU, MICU, SICU, Specialty Clinic area, Family Practice, etc.;
5. Pamphlet racks in the special waiting areas with materials appropriate for the service;
6. Include a tour of the Health Information Center in all orientation tours for new employees, residents, physicians, etc.;
7. United Way has a hotline called 'First Call for Help' in Wichita, KS. The Health Education Center phone number is on their list for medical information; and
8. Gerontology center at the local university has our number as a reference for health issues.

SECTION COUNCIL

The Section Council met on May 20 and 25, at the MLA Annual Meeting in Detroit. Highlights from these meetings follow:

Permanent status was approved for the Chiropractic Libraries Section. Beginning in 1992, position ads in the MLA News will state the starting salaries and salary ranges.

Section Council has several very active committees. The Communications Committee reported that the survey of section representatives on section attitudes and interests toward increased involvement in Association business provided mixed results. The response showed very slight disagreement with MLA goals being in accord with member or section goals. Further it showed the need for more member input to the Board.

The Continuing Education Committee encourages sections to name a liaison the CE Committee. Suggestions for new courses are welcome, and sections could be involved in the development.

The Section Advising Committee reported that five sections are cooperating in a pilot program to test operating agreements between sections and MLA. Permanent status was recommended for the Medical Informatics Section, pending approval of their bylaws.

The issue of electing the Section Council Chair nationally was discussed. After internal debate and consultation with sections during business meetings, the section representatives voted overwhelmingly to retain the current method for electing the Council Chair.

The National Program Committee (1992) is asking sections to submit their preferences for program time allotments.

The Section Council is interested in coming up with a model on how to handle standards within the Association. A Section Council Committee will clarify and define the problems and recommend possible models.

Sections need to study the model bylaws provide to all sections and follow them when revisions are needed.
A FOND, BUT RELUCTANT, FAREWELL.....

On September 28, 1990, Dorothy Gilroy, Chief Librarian at the Cincinnati Center for Developmental Disorders and former Chair of the Consumer and Patient Health Information Section, retired. Dorothy has been a key member of the section for many years serving on committees and presenting posters and papers. The Toy Library at the CCDD has become internationally known because of Dorothy’s presentations and publications.

Like many of her Cincinnati colleagues, I was extremely reluctant to say farewell. Dorothy has been a leader in the health sciences community in Cincinnati and the state of Ohio. On a personal note, Dorothy has been a "cheerleader" and supporter of many neophyte librarians, myself included, encouraging us to become involved in organizational activities in many professional groups.

I am not surprised that it has been extremely difficult to find someone to replace Dorothy at CCDD. She acted in so many roles in addition to her position as chief librarian. Finding someone with the intellectual, interpersonal, and "juggling" skills that Dorothy has will be a daunting task.

We don’t begrudge Dorothy her newly found time to travel with her husband Maury, to garden, to be even more active in her church and neighborhood, but we envy those people who will be sharing more of her time than we will now that she has embarked on a new direction. Best wishes!

-----Submitted by Lisa McCormick

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

The book is written not only for health information professionals, but for all information professionals who manage public access microcomputers or who are planning future facilities. Managing Public Access Microcomputers, is a step-by-step guide to planning, installing, managing, and marketing microcomputer services. Each chapter focuses on a specific topic: funding, planning facilities, equipment and peripherals, local area networks, software collections, user services, support personnel, and administrative issues.

Read from cover-to-cover, the work provides a thorough discussion of this burgeoning public services area; in addition, individual chapters serve as excellent quick-reference resources. The book may be ordered from MLA. The price is $29.00, MLA members; $36.00, nonmembers.
The Medical Library Association (MLA) is requesting a proposal to develop software and mount a service on a computer owned by the vendor which will meet certain technical specifications to automate the MLA Exchange. Since the Exchange Advisory Committee knows of no software or service that does what is has described, a vendor may propose an alternate service that might meet needs but is quite different from the Committee scenarios. Vendors will be supplied with information outlining present services and describing needs in relation to an automated service.

The MLA Exchange allows a library to list unwanted journal issues and request wanted issues from the lists of other libraries. The MLA Headquarters staff receives the lists, duplicates them, and mails them out to all MLA institutional members.

The Exchange has existed in some form since around 1900. Over time the costs of collecting, copying, and mailing the lists have increased considerably. In early 1988, the MLA Board of Directors suspended the Exchange because of its low rating on a membership survey and its cost. So many MLA members complained about the suspension that the Exchange was reinstated in July, 1988. Automating the Exchange is seen as the most likely means of satisfying the needs of the MLA membership at a reasonable cost.

If you have questions or concerns about the Exchange, please contact any member of the Exchange Advisory Committee. The members are listed in the MLA Membership Directory.

INPUT SOUGHT FOR REVISED NLM COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

The breadth and depth of the collection of the National Library of Medicine affect in a profound way the services the Library is able to provide to its user constituencies. The general policy statement on the scope and coverage of the NLM collection was adopted by the NLM Board of Regents in 1976. Included in the statement was a specification that the policy should be codified and subjected to periodic review. A plan for revising the 1985 edition of the Collection Development Manual of the National Library of Medicine has been developed and will be implemented soon. The Revision will result in publication of a new edition of the Manual in early 1992. As part of the process, input is being solicited from the medical library community.

Perceptions and opinions about policy statements, scope and coverage criteria, definitions, inclusions, and exclusions are of particular interest. Second, many medical librarians have used the Manual as a model for writing local manuals and policy statements or as a general guide to selection of biomedical materials. NLM is interested in observations about the utility of the 1985 Manual for these and other internal purposes. Finally, NLM is interested in suggestions for improving the general ease of use of the Manual through changes to its layout and physical characteristics. Responses will be reviewed as part of the overall revision process and will make a vital contribution to the effort.

Comments and suggestions are welcome at any time. Please forward your comments to: Daniel T. Richards, Collection Development Officer, NLM, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894.
Did you ever want to know the possible side effects of a prescription? Ever wonder if a lab test will hurt or what a test really tells you? Ever want to learn more about nutrition? Breast-feeding? Diabetes? Wellness? You can get free answers to all your health-related questions from HealthAnswers, Bronson's consumer health information center.

Glenda Evans, medical librarian at HealthAnswers, provides answers to more than 800 people every month. "Many people can't think of all their questions when they're talking to their doctors. Many times they're confused or scared, or afraid they're taking up too much of the doctor's time," Evans says. "Our service really aids the doctor/patient relationship because we are able to explain things in layman's terms. Patients become more educated about their condition, medications, and treatment and then are better able to give physicians the information they need."

HealthAnswers is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is located on the main floor of Bronson's East Medical Center next to the Gift Shop. Hundreds of visitors come in each month for free pamphlets on health care topics.

More expensive booklets and books may be checked out for two weeks. Videotapes on dozens of topics are available for checkout, as well.

Many HealthAnswers clients call on the telephone for information. Topics often called about include nutrition, substance abuse, pregnancy, women's health, wellness, Alzheimer's disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and aging.

"I watch the morning news before I come to work every day," Evans says. "We always get calls on whatever health subject is on - especially new medications." If that morning's topic is one that HealthAnswers doesn't already have information on, Evans stops at Bronson's medical library on the way to her department to get those resources.

Evans stresses that she and other HealthAnswers staff members never give visitors or callers advice or offer diagnoses of their medical conditions. Instead, staff members always read the requested information directly from a reference source. "We are not practicing medicine here," Evans says. "We give people information that can help them make their own informed decisions about whether to seek professional care or what treatment option is best for them."

After giving information over the phone, Evans offers to copy the reference material and send it to the caller. If the information isn't immediately available among HealthAnswers' resources, Evans taps into the data base at Bronson's medical library and then gets back to her caller. She documents every inquiry and every piece of information given.

"People don't need to give their names when they call," Evans says. "The only thing we ask for is their ZIP Code," which helps HealthAnswers keep track of the geographic areas people are calling from.

For callers who request information about specific diseases and may need long-term support in dealing with their condition, HealthAnswers makes
referrals to community service agencies and support groups. HealthAnswers can refer clients with very rare illnesses to the National Organization of Rare Diseases, which has a successful pen pal program that puts disease suffers in touch with each other for support.

Health Answers has established a satellite resource center at the Center for Women’s Health at Bronson Crosstown Center for clients there. In addition, HealthAnswers serves as the registration point for the educational programs offered by Bronson’s wellness, digestive health, older adult services and women’s health departments. The HealthAnswers facility also houses PhysicianAccess, a free service that matches people who need physicians with physicians who are accepting new patients. "The relationship between HealthAnswers and PhysicianAccess is very beneficial to many callers," explains Deb Taylor, who coordinates the physician referral service. "People who call for information often decide they need to see a doctor. We can help them with both."

Less than two years old, HealthAnswers has been tremendously well-received in southwest Michigan. "The success of HealthAnswers proves the need in the community for this kind of information service," Evans says. "We are happy to be providing so many answers for people in our region."

HEALTH ANSWERS FOR KIDS

"Why do I hurt?" What’s happening to me?" Those are poignant questions, coming from a six-year-old who doesn’t understand why he’s in the hospital, why he can’t play like his friends. For a parent, seeing a child’s pain is difficult enough; coming up with answers can seem impossible.

But a new program sponsored by the Bronson Health Foundation can help.

It’s called HealthAnswers for Kids. Like the HealthAnswers service designed for adults, the program is a free medical information resource. It supplies easily understandable information about diseases, treatments and procedures through children’s books that are available at all times in the pediatric unit. The books are about specific illnesses, with answers to many questions children have while they’re in the hospital.

HealthAnswers for Kids was developed by Marge Kars, director of Health Information at Bronson, and Deb Carpenter, Bronson’s Child Life coordinator. They researched materials available and, with help from a bibliography published by the Association for the Care of Children’s Health, picked many publications that will answer questions for Bronson’s young patients.
Who's Afraid of a big bad librarian?

A few months ago I had an experience that really shocked me.

My friend Herb from Atlanta came to visit me with his wife Judy, who makes her living as a needlework artist. While they were here, at Judy's request, I drove her to a local bookstore so she could look for books about needlework. On the way I stopped by the Alachua County library to pick up a book I wanted to show Herb.

"Come on in the library with me," I said. "I'd like you to see where I work.

For some reason I couldn't fathom, Judy didn't seem to want to - but at my urging she reluctantly got out of the car and came inside. She followed me through the staff offices and upstairs, but when I walked out of the stairwell onto the main public floor of the library, she hung back.

"Come on," I said, "I'll show you our computers."

"Uh, I'd rather not," she said. Her voice was so odd that I looked at her more closely, and saw what I should have seen before. She was terrified. Her whole body was rigid with fear.

Mystified, I found my book as fast as possible and beat it back to the car. As we drove away she said in a small voice, "I don't know what it is, but I'm scared of libraries."

I was astonished. Judy is a well-read artist. How could she be afraid of libraries?

"But how do you do research for your needlework?" I asked, bewildered.

"That's why I always check bookstores," she said. "Most of them don't have much though."

"Do you mean to tell me you've never been to the Atlanta public library?"

She looked incredulous. "They wouldn't have books about needlework, would they?"

"Of course!" I said, "The Atlanta library is enormous. They'd have tons of stuff."

"Really?" She looked wistful. "Do you think next time you're in Atlanta you could take me there? Maybe if I was with you, it'd be all right."

It has been several years, but that incident still haunts me. I love Judy dearly and the idea that libraries... which I also love... could frighten her, is very upsetting. What makes it worse is that she's not alone.

Alerted by her reaction, I started asking other people how they felt about libraries, and uncovered a disturbing fact: Though few people care to admit it, if you ask gently and make it clear that their answer won't be held against them, you quickly learn that Judy is far from unique.

Library phobia is very, very common and not only among the uneducated. You'd be amazed how many people with college degrees are afraid to darken the door of a library. And what drives me crazy is: I don't understand why. I'm beginning to suspect, though.
Phobias don't appear out of thin air; something causes them. Since several people have told me they were "put down" by librarians when they were kids, I'm starting to believe that what scares people about libraries is something done by librarians - members of my very own profession. And a lot of us must do it, because there are an awful lot of library-phobics out there.

That really upsets me.

So I'm appealing to you. If you suffer from library phobia or know somebody who does, do you have any idea what caused it? If so, write and tell me about it. I really want to know.

Because whatever it is we've done, it's got to stop.


Carol Hole

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

If you haven't yet seen the article by Claudia Morain in AMERICAN MEDICAL NEWS (v.33(43): 5-6; November 16, 1990), titled "Between the Boutiques," you need to borrow a copy to read this description of the development of a consumer library in a posh shopping mall in Palo Alto. A project of Stanford University Hospital's Office of Community and Patient Relations, the library costs $220,000 per year to operate. Says Ellen M. Mahoney, M.D., a Palo Alto surgeon, "If you look at pure cost effectiveness, no, it's not cost effective. But $220,000 a year doesn't sound like too much to me for something that's this well used. I think it's worth every bit of that. It improves the quality of lives and the excellence of medical care."

Barbara Giloth, AHA's Manager of Patient Education in its Division of Ambulatory Care in Health Promotion, has an article in the February 1990 issue of TRUSTEE (v.43(2):20-21; February 1990), "Health information centers provide a needed service," in which she describes the core components of information centers for consumers. She provides numerous examples of consumer health information centers already in existence in hospitals across the country. She lists six critical issues to which a hospital must commit if and when a consumer program is to be developed. These are the items with which to arm yourself when approaching administrators on the subject of expanded consumer library services: 1) Commitment by top management; 2) Definition of type of service, such as walk-in versus call-in; 3) Sufficient space and a desirable location; 4) Organization, under whose management the service will be placed; 5) Staffing..."the involvement of a professional librarian appears critical..."; 6) Adequate funding. She cites these benefits of a consumer library service: improved community image and public relations; marketing potential; planning for future hospital services based on types of questions asked by patrons; increased hospital usage; and the support provided to staff for planning patient education and discharge.

CONSUMER CONNECTIONS

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