
Biofeedback

*Biological Sciences Division
Special Libraries Association*

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Jo Anne Boorkman

Summer has been a busy time for the many Division members who have been planning the programs, tours and CE course for the 1994 Annual Conference in Atlanta. Here's a preview of what is being planned for us when we meet again next June.

Two exciting programs are being planned for Monday. In the morning, speakers from NAL's Animal Welfare Information Center will present *Meeting the Information Needs of the Animal Welfare Act*. This program will be co-sponsored with the Environment & Resource Management Division. The afternoon will be devoted to the Biotechnology Roundtable program *Technology Transfer of Biotechnology* co-sponsored with the Food & Nutrition Division and Pharmacy Division. Topics in this session will include: Intellectual Property Rights; Federal Laboratory Consortium; Process of Technology Transfer; and Agencies to Facilitate Technology Transfer.

Tuesday morning we will have our annual Business Meeting followed by a program on *Accessing Information Sources of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. This program is co-sponsored with the Insurance Division and Pharmacy Division. In the afternoon we are co-sponsoring a program with the Science & Technology Division on *Electronic Journal Publishing*.

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Wednesday is our morning to take in the Exhibits and visit with vendors and especially thank our sponsors--look for those "Heartfelt Thanks" signs. In the afternoon, we are sponsoring a contributed papers session *Visioning our Collections*, where four timely papers on collections development in the life sciences will be presented followed by a panel discussion.

Thursday provides a choice for members. The CE Course: *Navigating the Internet: Resources and Services* will be taught by Joan M. Marcotte Gregory. For those of you who would rather tour, a day-long tour to visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Yerkes Primate Center is being planned.

We will also have our Open Houses, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday evenings to relax and socialize over drinks and munchies.

Our program planners have lined up programs that promise to be stimulating and timely. Of course, a key component of the Annual Conference is meeting with our colleagues and I think we've provided opportunities for that, too. I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta--at our programs and business meeting and informally at our Open Houses, in the halls, and at the Exhibits.

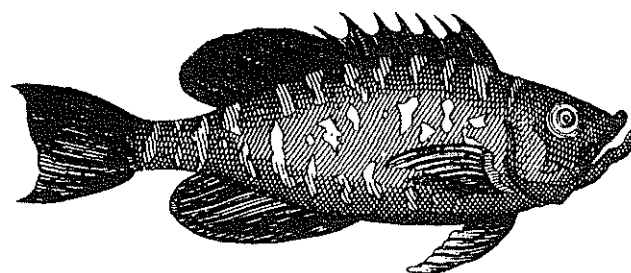
BSD Roster Change

Janice Kemp is now Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee. Her address is as follows:

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Nominees Sought for Division Offices

The Nominations and Elections Committee for the Biological Sciences Division is asking for nominations of members interested in running for the Division offices open this year. We are currently seeking candidates for the position of Division Chair-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer. If you are interested in running for one of these offices, please contact the Committee Chair, Janice Kemp. She can be reached at (301) 504-5834 or on Internet at JKEMP@NALUSDA.GOV. The list of nominees will be published in the Winter issue of *Biofeedback* and the election will be held in the early spring.



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Letters to the Editor

I have read the 1993 student stipend award winning essay, and I am rather concerned about its message. The parts pertaining to librarianship in general are fine, but the claim that "biotechnology needs to be taken out of the realm of the risky..." and the position that all fears on the part of the public are unjustified are simply ill-informed, biased promotion. If the writer had qualified her remarks by limiting them to those librarians employed by biotechnology companies, where promotion is the purpose of the information dispensed (and, thus, where the practice of censorship/disinformation is necessary), they would not be so inappropriate. However, information centers concerned with providing *complete, unbiased* information about biotechnology do exist, and for librarians working in them, Ms. Meil's suggestions are unacceptable.

I am an MLS candidate with a B.S. in Biology who has been working in the Biotechnology Information Center at the USDA's National Agricultural Library for quite some time. I have made every effort to provide our patrons with balanced information, since our center is part of a publically funded library. It is not our place to be advocating biotechnology, but merely to gather and disseminate all available information pertaining to agricultural biotechnology. Contrary to Ms. Meil's blanket statement that all scientists are confident of the safety of biotechnology, there are significant numbers of scientists voicing concerns and acknowledging that risks do indeed exist and need to be considered, not ignored in the name of profits. I am acquainted with Ms. Meil, as she was employed part time until recently in the Plant Genome Information Center here at NAL. If she had consulted those of us in the BIC who are familiar with the variety of literature, organizations, and information sources covering biotechnology, perhaps she could have produced a piece based on the "complete information" she mistakenly cites as necessary to allaying fears about biotech. I can only wonder why she did not do so. Her list of sources was extremely limited, and not even current.

I would very much like to know the source of funding for the student stipend. I feel that this should have been published along with the essay, as such information can be very revealing.

Lara Wiggert
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The Past Chair of the Career Development/Public Relations Committee replies:

The Career Development/Public Relations Committee each year solicits essays from student members of SLA to provide a stipend to attend the annual conference. The funding is provided by the Biological Sciences Division. At present there is no outside funding solicited or given.

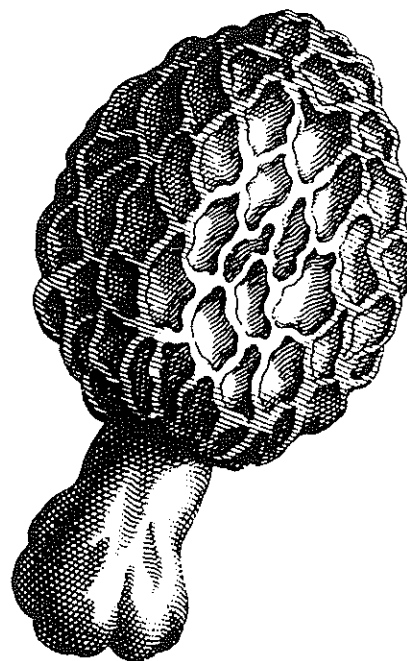
Last year, the announcement for the essay competition appeared in the Winter issue of *Biofeedback*. One of the requirements stated that "Persons wishing to apply must ... submit an essay of 1,000 to 1,200 words discussing a problem, issue, or challenge facing biological sciences librarianship... Essays will be judged on the basis of good argument development and critical analysis, clear language, conciseness, and creativity."

By definition, an essay is "a literary composition usually dealing with a subject from a limited or personal point of view." The committee examined each essay submitted with that in mind, and judged them on the criteria stated above. It did not expect a submission to compete at the level of a research paper, nor to be heavily referenced. In my experience over several years, essays with references are the exception, rather than the rule.

I believe that the key here is that the essay, unlike a research paper, is meant to identify a topic, formulate an argument for a particular view, and defend that argument. Ms. Meil chose a topic that certainly has many differing viewpoints, as Ms. Wiggert has pointed out. But nowhere in her essay did I find that she had made a "blanket statement that all scientists are confident of the safety of biotechnology." In the context of her argument, I, at least, interpreted her essay to be about librarians working with biotechnologists, and that they presumably would have, in Ms. Meil's words, "become comfortable with biotechnology and offer confident estimates of safety."

I certainly appreciate Ms. Wiggert's concerns about the nature of the essay and the competition. By discussing controversial topics within the biological sciences, all librarians can become more confident in the quality of information provided to a variety of interest groups.

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Montreal in 1995

*Patricia Yocum
Chair-Elect*

Do you:

- need to know more about an emerging topic?
- have a burning issue you want to hear discussed?
- offer a specialty you can share with your colleagues?
- know of a stellar place the Division should visit?

Planning for the 1995 Annual Conference scheduled for Montreal is under way. As chief program planner I am currently inviting all interested Division members (friends too!) to contribute to Montreal programming. The Division will have a variety of opportunities to explore topics, promote current awareness and foster networking. All ideas are welcome! Volunteers are too! We need members to plan individual sessions and especially need volunteers to handle local arrangements.

Here is a great chance to see your ideas converted into reality. No idea is too small...or too big! To volunteer, contact me via e-mail (preferred) or voice:

PATRICIA.YOCUM@UM.CC.UMICH.EDU
(313) 741-4667 Mon., Wed. (generally)
(517) 797-2665 Tues., Thurs. (generally)
(313) 995-4644 Fri.

Best initial contact is via e-mail. If this choice is not available, know that I do return phone calls although often on a delayed basis.

Hope to hear from you soon.



New Member Profiles

Pia Fish

Pia is the Assistant Head of Library Services of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. There are three divisions of scientists doing their work at the Center: basic scientists, clinical scientists, and public health scientists. The needs of these disparate groups are quite different; reference questions in particular come from every direction! In addition to reference and administrative duties, Pia is the online coordinator for the library. Before coming to the Center nearly two years ago, her professional experience was in hospital libraries and other medical settings. She has an M.L.S. from University of Maryland at College Park.

Suzanne Harris

Suzanne has recently completed her M.L.S. at Rutgers University and has relocated to the Dayton, Ohio, area. She is interested in reference work in a science library in an academic, corporate, or hospital setting. Suzanne has a M.Ed. from Mississippi State University with a concentration in the sciences and has been a high school science teacher. Most recently, she was employed as a reference librarian at the Washington Township Public Library in Long Valley, N.J.

Erin Nagorske

Erin is the librarian at the Illinois Natural History Survey in Champaign, Illinois. The Survey is a state agency whose function is to collect and disseminate information on the biological resources of Illinois. In addition to serving this agency, the library is also one of 38 departmental libraries of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Erin previously was the Library Manager at the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness in Washington, D.C. She has a B.S. in wildlife management from Eastern Kentucky University and an M.L.S. from Catholic University.

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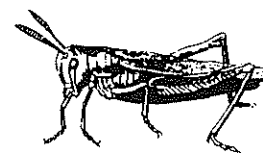
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