

CASLIS TORONTO NEWS

CASLIS

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

From Our President

Greetings CASLIS Members.

Seems like so many things have been on the go since the last newsletter. I began this column fresh on the heels of the buzz of the Holiday Social, and since then, we've convened two successful brown bag career sessions at FIS, and a well-attended session on clear language at Metro Ref.

February event

Starting with Sally McBeth's great seminar on conveying your message in clear language, check out her website for more details: <http://www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/clearlanguageanddesign/>. You can read Margaret Williams' review for a description of the event, starting below in the middle of page 3. A special thank to **Peter Asseltine** and **Tom McGreevy** for arranging Micromedia Proquest's in-kind support through the use of their data projector. With evening rental running around \$150, this represents a considerable savings to the chapter, and allows us to steward organizational resources responsibly when offering valuable programs to members.

Holiday Social

Stepping back in time to all the rounds of thanks necessary for the terrific (albeit sometimes very cozy) holiday social. It requires a great team effort to throw such a good party. First off, a blessing upon **Barbara Slawek** for suggesting the Textile Museum in the first place.

Janet Reid, the Museum Manager, was a dream to work with – very helpful and down-to-earth – as were the event team that supported us that night – **John** in the gift shop, our docents **Marg** and **Susan**, and **John** who saw to our organizational needs and kept checking back in to see how things were going. And I know there were others working diligently behind the scenes to make this possible. Really a terrific team.

At Janet's suggestion, we contacted **Don Andrews**, who has catered events at the Museum before and is familiar with its catering guidelines. He worked with my colleague **Lisa Diner** to create a selection of yummy sweets and savories that were on budget, and could be assembled from the Museum's closet-sized kitchen. His **Empire Catering** team did a marvelous job of keeping us fed and beveraged throughout the evening.

Kudos also to **Sandy Iverson** and the new grads and students who formed the core of the drink ticket sales team (**Pat Biros**, **Chrislyn Manning**, **Rani Pooran** and **Stan Orlov**) for not only helping us recoup our wine costs, but encouraging contributions to the Daily Bread Food Bank – for a total of just under \$70. Special thanks to Pat for being the anchor on the first shift and getting our procedures in place.

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Denise Roeleveld, SLA Registrar, and her crew did a great job of getting everyone signed in quickly so that they could scoot off to Museum tours, gift shopping, and kibbitzing.

And, as many now know, we had to cut off Registration due to space limitations, so a round of applause to **Kathleen Story** and **Astrid Lange** for publicizing the event sooo well, and to **Naaznin Adatia**, who pinch hit in membership by putting out a round of calls to guests at our recent events, encouraging them to join us again.

Thanks go out to **Cynthia Penman**, whose membership in the Museum allowed us to book the Members Lounge at a discount, which we could then pass along to our members and guests.

Particular thanks go to our sponsor for the evening, **Micromedia Proquest**. A welcome and gracious sponsor of the Holiday Social for a number of years, MPQ's support allows CASLIS and SLA to host a very festive Social where we can catch up with old friends and acquaintances, and meet new colleagues in a warm and inviting setting.

To me, the power of a professional association lies in the support that we can offer one another. Whether simply at the level of professional interaction, or moving into deeper friendships over time, our strength as an association depends greatly on how we as members share our knowledge, our wisdom, and our empathy with colleagues – commiserating over losses and tough times, and celebrating joys like new jobs and personal triumphs.

In the midst of catching up with colleagues, one could feel a positive vibe in the room. I was delighted to receive several suggestions for CASLIS, as well as offers of volunteer time. But I was particularly struck by the power of networking when someone mentioned his hopes for future work to me, and someone else overheard him in passing and commented that such a position had recently been posted on the FIS Job Site. This was a precious gift, given freely, that affirmed both giver and receiver. And, to me, that's what being involved in CASLIS and SLA is all about.

Upcoming events: Watch for new location of April event

Looking ahead to spring events, we have already sold out the CBC Tour, and are busy identifying a venue for our April event, which has been bumped from Metro Ref. Coinciding with International Special Librarians' week, the April event features the insights of two of CLA's leading lights: **Gwynneth Evans** and **Carole Joling**. Please keep an eye out for the new location, which will be flagged on the listserv and website once nailed down. They will be bringing their insights on working abroad. For even more ideas on working abroad, check the FIS Brown Bag on the topic featuring **Lisa Diner**, coming up in March.

Erika Steffer

w: 416-304-1731

e: esteffer@russellreynolds.com

Recruiting for next year's executive

CASLIS Toronto is looking for a few folks to volunteer for the 2005/2006 Executive.

Why join??

- Looks great on a resume!
- Meet lots of new people in your field
- Have fun with us!
- Make a difference in your profession and your association!
- Get connected!!

We are looking to fill the following positions:

- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Newsletter Editor
- Facilities and Catering
- Publicity and Listserv

If you would like more information about specific positions available this year, or would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please contact Yvonne Barber at ymbarber@yahoo.ca or visit <http://www.caslistoronto.on.ca> for more details

February Program

Reaching More Clients Effectively: Crafting Documentation in Clear Language

Speaker: Sally McBeth, Manager, Clear Language and Design (CLAD) Associates

February 15, 2005

Toronto Reference Library

Clear language cuts through the smog.

Sally McBeth, manager and founder of the Clear Language and Design (CLAD) program at East End Literacy, introduced participants to the principles and techniques of communicating effectively in writing.

The first principle is to understand the purpose of what you are writing. When you're writing, think about the desired response from your reader. What do you want the reader to do with your content? The second principle is to know your audience. Look at your writing through the reader's eyes. Can you tell what it's about, why you should read it, and what you're expected to do as a result? The third principle is to test your message with your target audience and refine it based on the feedback you get.

Sally discussed five techniques for achieving these principles: organization, tone, language, sentence structure and design. The most important point is to organize your writing so that you state the purpose first – even if it's to deliver bad news – then give essential details and tell readers how they can take action.

Sally demonstrated how communication is blocked when your tone is bureaucratic, plaintive or negative. She talked about language to avoid such as needless words, jargon and acronyms. She suggested ways to break down long, complex sentences by using headings and bulleted lists.

Sally put us to work deciphering official notices, crafting the next email to our boss and developing techniques to remember 30 words she flashed at us for 10 seconds. As we worked, it became clear that there are no hard rules, and that a technique may be effective in one situation but inappropriate in another. Participants raised subtleties such as using the passive voice to avoid assigning blame and being rewarded by academia for using complex language.

Sally shared examples of her own work, which range from community health brochures to online financial calculators. She also pointed us to an interactive tool we can use on the CLAD web site to calculate if our work is at the right grade reading level, based on the Simple Measure of Gobbledegook (SMOG) readability formula. While it takes longer to use (10 minutes) than the tool built into your word processor, it provides more accurate results and can help you organize your writing from the start.

If you would like to learn more or have your work assessed, CLAD offers training, writing, editing, usability testing and consulting services.

Further information:

Clear Language and Design (CLAD)

<http://www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/ClearLanguageAndDesign/>

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)

<http://www.nald.ca/>

Plain Language Association International (PLAIN)

<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/>

Margaret Williams, Manager, Collections, Canadian National Institute for the Blind,

margaretj.williams@cnib.ca

WEB WATCH

Search toolbars: making searching easier

By Michel-Adrien Sheppard

The purpose of a toolbar is to place frequently used operations at the user's fingertips. In the case of search toolbars, we are talking about small plug-ins that are easy to download and that can be "docked" along the top of the browser just below the address bar. At minimum, a search toolbar has a search field for entering query terms and launching a search without having to go to the search engine's website. But most toolbars offer much, much more.

Alexa toolbar

<http://download.alexa.com/index.cgi>

Allows you to search Google directly from the toolbar. Gets rid of those annoying popup ads, provides information about sites visited (e.g. Who owns this site? How much traffic does this site get?), links to the Internet Wayback Machine database so you can see older, archived copies of sites

Alta Vista toolbar

<http://www.altavista.com/toolbar/default>

Searches the Alta Vista database (including images, video, audio and news), blocks pop-ups, highlights search terms, does site searching, recalls earlier searches, provides rudimentary translations, includes reference lookups such as converters (measurements and currency), time and a dictionary

Ask Jeeves toolbar

<http://sp.ask.com/docs/toolbar/>

Search for news stories, dictionary definitions, weather forecasts and more, prevents pop-up ads, offers site searching and search term highlighting, lets you instantly email any web page to a friend

Dogpile Toolbar

<http://www.dogpile.com/info.dogpl/tbar/>

Offers most of the regular features (like pop-up blocking, search term highlighting), connects to a metasearch engine with results clustering – searches Google, Teoma, Yahoo, Ask Jeeves, About, LookSmart etc., provides access to maps, dictionary and thesaurus searching, images, audio, and news; includes an RSS reader tool that lets you add personalized content feeds like sports, business and entertainment news, Web summaries or blogs to the toolbar

Google toolbar

<http://toolbar.google.com/>

The best known toolbar, supports all the features of Google (searching news, images, groups, directory etc.) along with pop-up blocking, search term highlighting, search term location on a page, plus the ability to automatically create blog posts linking to a web page. Added feature is the “AutoFill” which allows you to store personal contact information to automatically fill in online forms with one click (for example for ordering from e-commerce sites)

Groowe Toolbar

<http://www.groowe.com>

Access to numerous engines like Yahoo, Teoma, AllTheWeb, AltaVista, MSN Search, Google, Gigablast, etc. In addition, it makes it easy to perform specialized searches with the features of each search engine, e.g. through simple drop-downs, you can get images back from AllTheWeb, or search only against Yahoo's human directory, or get news results back from AltaVista

MSN Toolbar

<http://toolbar.msn.com/>

Uses the MSN search engine, offers similar features to other toolbars plus one-click access to MSN services like Hotmail and MSN Messenger

Vivisimo Toolbar

<http://vivisimo.com/toolbar/toolbar-download.html>

Comes with all the regular Vivisimo features like results clustering, and access to many web, news and specialized search tools (e.g. PubMed); also offers “Drag and Drop Search” – you can select desired text on any web page and then drag and drop that text into the toolbar search box

Yahoo! Toolbar

<http://toolbar.yahoo.com/>

CNET offers very high praise for this toolbar: "With a generous portion of specific types of searches, more customization options than you can shake a stick at, a pop-up blocker that goes above and beyond, and even a spyware killer, Yahoo Toolbar gets our seal of approval."

(http://reviews.cnet.com/Yahoo_Toolbar/4505-3514_7-31213298-2.html?tag=top)

Allows searching of the Web, images, local services, news, products, maps, Yellow Pages, directory, stock quotes, site searching; integrates with My Yahoo! Features such as Yahoo! e-mail (requires that you have a personal Yahoo! account)

Conclusion:

Advantages of using toolbars:

- Convenience: you no longer need to visit a search engine web site – instead of having to enter the engine's URL or going to your favourites, you just plug your search terms into the toolbar search window and away you go
- Added functions such as quick look-up features (e.g. one-click access to dictionaries) are packed into a tiny amount of screen space.

Disadvantages:

- Loss of screen real estate: if you install more than one toolbar, less room will be left over to display the web pages
- Possible development of lazy search habits: most people will likely load only one toolbar onto their desktop and that will mean that its associated search engine will become the default. How likely is it that the average user will then remember to try out different search engines?

Michel-Adrien Sheppard (msheppard@blgcanada.com) is the Communications Librarian at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP in downtown Toronto.

Who We Are and What We do

This is the continuation of our series of profiles of CASLIS Toronto executive members to give people a better idea of the roles available to volunteers. This month, the newsletter profiles Robert Pestrin, FIS student liaison.

Robert Pestrin graduated from York University with a Bachelor of Arts (Sociology Major, Chemistry Minor). During his undergraduate studies he was an associated biochemistry researcher at York University and Vice-President of a security firm specializing in corporate espionage. Upon graduation, Robert had the opportunity to sell the security firm, at which time he focused his interests on competitive research and strategy by providing business consulting services to industry specific companies.

Robert decided to attend FIS as a way to formalize his research skills and learn the different aspects of information and knowledge management. While at FIS, Robert got involved in CASLIS Toronto because he had an interest in corporate research and information management.

He was appointed to the position of CASLIS-FIS Student Liaison which involves promoting CASLIS Toronto to the FIS community. In discussion with Erika Steffer, there was a need to increase awareness, promote membership and bring CASLIS members, industry professionals, closer to the FIS community.

Robert and Erika Steffer co-planned the CASLIS Brown Bag Series. They decided to bring industry professionals to FIS as a way to promote career opportunities that do not fit within the traditional perception of librarianship and more importantly to provide students with career advice.

Robert and Erika decided on five sessions, with guest speakers talking on various career-related topics ranging from networking to resume writing to career opportunities in the United States.

The speakers have included: Helen Kula, Sandy Iverson, Erika Steffer and Lisa Diner. The Brown Bag Series drew a diverse crowd of students from all three streams and interested faculty. Robert and Erika were very pleased with the turn-out and hope to see the series continue next school year.

Robert will be graduating this coming April and will be working for a downtown law firm starting in early May. In 2006, Robert will start his MBA. Robert will be passing on his position to Stanislav Orlov, a very bright and energetic first year FIS student. In doing so, Robert would like to see his other idea, a CASLIS-FIS Mentorship Program, be implemented by September 2005.

Robert Pestrin may be reached at: _____
Stanislav Orlov may be reached at sorlov@rogers.com

The Evolution of CASLIS Toronto

*This year, we are also profiling prominent CASLIS members who represent the full range of generations and experiences among special librarians over the 30 years of existence of the chapter. This month, the newsletter profiles **Barbara Fingerote**.*

Barbara Fingerote, one of the founding members of the Toronto chapter, has been the assistant librarian at the law firm of McCarthy Tétrault in downtown Toronto for 16 years. She received her Master of Library Science (MLS) degree from the University of Western Ontario in 1972.

Barbara joined the CLA as well as SLA as a student in 1970, "for \$2 each" she likes to add. At the time, there was no separate Canadian special libraries association in the Toronto area.

The first meeting of CASLIS Toronto was held in January 1975 at the University of Toronto. "We wanted to have a Canadian association presence [for the special libraries field]. The push was not anything against the SLA per se but SLA was very US-oriented", she explains.

Despite all the changes in libraries since 1975, Barbara stresses that "the more things change, the more they stay the same. The same issues keep coming back."

She adds that these issues appear and reappear in the programming activities undertaken by CASLIS Toronto and cover a few major themes: marketing and the need to make the presence of the library and librarians felt, management and leadership, and the adoption and application of technology. The technology theme has been there since the beginning of the Toronto chapter. "The image of librarians being behind the times and [being] slow to embrace technology is just not true," she insists.

Barbara likes to emphasize how special librarians in particular are the very opposite of the widespread public stereotype of the librarian. This is not only true of the chapter's leadership over the years, but of members in general.

"Special libraries tend to attract more business-minded, action-oriented people not that excited about sitting in a back room ... People who want to sit back and hide won't survive in this profession today, whether they are in special or other libraries," she asserts.

In the past 3 decades, CASLIS Toronto has also played a crucial role in nurturing leadership in the profession.

“Because of its small size, [the chapter] has been a breeding ground for a number of people who went on to bigger positions,” she explains. In particular, Barbara mentions people like Maggie Weaver, Suzanne Baker, Laura Knapp, Tracy Palmer, as well as a “much shier, quieter” version from the early 1980s of the very extroverted Stephen Abram, the current CLA president. Who would have guessed he learned it all here at CASLIS Toronto, eh?

A trip down memory lane

30 years ago: The CASLIS Toronto newsletter mentions 2 new databases (or “information retrieval systems”): the New York Times Data Bank (“Canadian content is minimal”) and QL Systems.

The cover story in the January 1975 issue of *Popular Electronics* describes the Altair 8800, the first successful personal computer. For \$395 US, you can order a kit to build the Altair yourself. When assembled, it has 256 bytes of computer memory; Lockheed establishes the *Dialog* online retrieval system; *Chemical Abstracts* annual author and keyword subject indexes are computer produced; West Publishing's *West Computer Law Retrieval System* is made available; *InfoGlobe*, the online information division for the *Globe and Mail*, begins service.

Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov wins Nobel Peace Prize. Literature prize goes to Eugenio Montale (Italian poet). Pulitzer for fiction won by *The Killer Angels*, Michael Shaara. Governor General Award for fiction goes to Brian Moore, for *The Great Victorian Collection*.

Canadian Film Awards – Film of the Year – *Les Ordres* (about the October Crisis). *Yes, Virginia, There Is A Santa Claus* wins Emmy for outstanding children's production; *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* wins Emmy for outstanding comedy series; *Upstairs, Downstairs* wins Emmy for outstanding drama series.

Saturday Night Live and *Wheel of Fortune* premiere. Home videotape systems (VCRs) developed in Japan by Sony (Betamax) and Matsushita (VHS). Saigon falls. White House officials John N. Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman found guilty of cover-up in the Watergate scandal that led to resignation of Richard M. Nixon. Teamsters president Jimmy Hoffa goes missing. U.S. President Gerald Ford survives 2 assassination attempts. Khmer Rouge forces of Pol Pot in full control of Cambodia. Civil war in Lebanon begins. American Apollo and a Soviet Soyuz spacecraft dock with each other in orbit. Franco dies. Japanese mountain-climber Junko Tabei first woman to reach peak of Mount Everest. Arthur Ashe first black man to win Wimbledon singles title. The movie *Jaws* spoils the fun of many a beach holiday.

20 years ago: As part of its “continuing investigation of applications of automation”, the Toronto chapter hosts a program on automated interlibrary loan systems.

Windows operating system released by Microsoft; *CAS ONLINE* incorporated, along with non-CAS databases, into *Scientific and Technical Network (STN) International*; every procrastinator's favourite computer game *Tetris* developed at Moscow Academy of Science.

Nobel Peace prize: International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War; Literature prize: Claude Simon (France); Pulitzer for fiction: *Foreign Affairs*, Alison Lurie. Emmys: Outstanding drama series is *Cagney and Lacey*, outstanding comedy series is *The Cosby Show*, outstanding children's series is *Sesame Street*. Governor General Award for fiction: Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, non-fiction: Northrop Frye, *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. Genie for Best Canadian motion picture: *The Bay Boy*; best performance by a leading actor: Gabriel Arcand for his role in *Le Crime d'Ovide Plouffe* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087098/>), best leading actress: Louise Marleau (*La Femme de l'Hôtel* - <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087249/>)

Mikhail Gorbachov becomes leader of the Soviet Union. U.S. Food and Drug Administration approves blood test for HIV. Air India flight 182 blown up over the Atlantic: all 329 aboard killed, majority of passengers are Canadian citizens. Wreck of the Titanic located by French-American expedition. Live Aid concerts in Philadelphia and London. Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior bombed by French secret service. In one of corporate branding history's worst blunders, New Coke released. Madonna launches *Like a Virgin* World Tour. *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon strip begins syndication.

10 years ago: CASLIS Toronto sponsors a presentation on telecommuting by Ulla de Stricker and Maggie Weaver.

Java programming language announced to the world; Master of Library Science at the University of Toronto replaced by Master of Information Studies (MIS) degree with three specializations: Archival Studies, Information Systems, and Library and Information Science; CNN Interactive is launched, marking the take-off of multimedia broadcast news sites on the Internet; federal government releases Information Highway Advisory Council final report which recommends national Internet access strategy based on four principles: "universal, affordable and equitable access", "consumer choice and diversity of information", "competency and citizens' participation" and "open interactive networks".

Nobel Prize for Literature: Seamus Heaney (Ireland); Nobel Peace Prize: Joseph Rotblat and Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs; Pulitzer for fiction: *The Stone Diaries*, Carol Shields. Emmys: Outstanding Drama Series – *NYPD Blue*; Outstanding Comedy Series – *Frasier*; Governor General Award for fiction: Greg Hollingshead - *The Roaring Girl*, non-fiction: Rosemary Sullivan - *Shadow Maker: The Life of Gwendolyn MacEwen*; No Genies in 1995; Gemini (Canadian TV): *Due South* (Best dramatic series), *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* (Best comedy series), *The Fifth Estate* (Best information series).

Nerve gas attack by religious sect in Tokyo subway kills eight and injures thousands. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin gunned down after attending a peace rally. Dayton accord ends Croatian-Serbian-Bosnian war: 200,000 dead, 2.7 million refugees. Oklahoma City bombing. More than 170 countries extend Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty indefinitely and without conditions. Rock and Roll Hall of Fame opens in Cleveland. O.J. Simpson trial. Last *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon strip ever: in the final panel, 6 year-old Calvin and his stuffed tiger Hobbes are outside in freshly-fallen snow: "It's a magical world, Hobbes ol' buddy!" Calvin shouts with typical unrestrained enthusiasm. "Let's go exploring!"

From CASLIS National

a) CLA conference grant: CASLIS National is pleased to offer 1 conference grant of \$1,500 for use in attending the CLA Conference in Calgary, June 15-18, 2005. The closing date for applications is **April 1, 2005**.

Eligibility requirements are explained on the CASLIS National website at <http://www.cla.ca/caslis/grants.htm>

Applications should be sent to:

Colleen Neely

Technical Services Librarian
Carleton University Library
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
Tel.: (613) 520-2600 x8140
Fax: (613) 520-3583
colleen_neely@carleton.ca

b) CLA conference content

Planning is well under way for the 2005 Conference and a number of CASLIS programming proposals have already been accepted including: *Knowledge Management: An Integration of People, Process and Technology*, *Managing the 21st Century Library Volunteer*, and *Leadership Without Power*

c) Code of Ethics

Discussions have begun on whether CASLIS should adopt an official code of ethics for special librarians. Part of the reasoning behind the idea is that it is hard to promote ourselves as a profession at the same level as other professions that have standards of conduct (not to mention licensing and recertification). Advantages of adopting a code of ethics include:

- enhancing our image in the eyes of prospective members
 - educating newly graduating informational professionals
 - promoting the image of the association
-

CASLIS Toronto Listserv

Members are encouraged to subscribe to the Toronto Chapter's unmoderated discussion group. The list provides a forum for discussion topics of interest to Canadian information professionals working in special libraries. The listserv is hosted by Yahoo! Groups.

TO SUBSCRIBE: Send a message to
caslistoronto-subscribe@yahogroups.com

After subscribing, you may receive a message saying that your e-mail address has been rejected. Do not fear! Yahoo Groups will only accept invited members to join their groups. Astrid Lange will review your e-mail and sign you up.

For more information, see the CASLIS website at : <http://www.caslistoronto.on.ca/Listserv5.html>

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President: Erika Steffer ESTeffer@russellreynolds.com	Membership: Vacant
Vice President: Yvonne Barber yvbarber@yahoo.ca	Secretary & Newsletter Michel-Adrien Sheppard criticalmass@idirect.com
Treasurer: Stuart von Wolff sd.vonwolff@utoronto.ca	FIS Student Liaison: Robert Pestrin <hr/>
Registration: Jane Bergman jane_caroline@hotmail.com	Member-at-Large: Barbara Fingerote bfingero@mccarthy.ca
Facilities and Catering: Lisa Diner ldiner@russellreynolds.com	Publicity & Listserv & Web site Astrid Lange info@caslistoronto.on.ca

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