

TRANSITIONING FROM SPECIALIZED LIBRARIANSHIP TO KNOWLEDGE CULTURE LEADERSHIP

SLA: 2000-2009

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In July, 2000, having just been inaugurated as SLA's President, Donna Scheeder dramatically described the defining attribute of the Special Libraries Association.

"At SLA," Scheeder said, "change is our tradition."

It was a phrase that would come to be associated with Scheeder's presidency, and it would resonate strongly with the association and its members during the last years of SLA's first century. Scheeder's words clearly expressed an historical link and an organizational evolution that was unique in professional associations. And it was a fitting description, for SLA in the coming decade would require—in ways that could not even have been imagined by SLA's membership and leaders as recently as twenty years earlier—a continuation and expansion of that same tradition. While stretching back to the association's very beginnings, this "tradition of change" seemed to take on an energy of its own during the first decade of the 21st Century.

No one could have anticipated that such demands would be made on the association in the new century, and certainly no one could have expected or even thought about the powerful external influences that would be brought to bear on the association. A combination of almost overwhelming disruptions confused all levels of society, everywhere in the world. The devastating terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the horrendous tsunami of December 26, 2004, the 2005 hurricanes that very nearly destroyed one of America's great cities, a polarized American citizenry in which a dangerous bias toward anti-intellectualism seemed on the verge of becoming standard (and, for many, perhaps even sanctioned as a national characteristic), and a gratuitous foreign war that threatened to bankrupt the

United States for generations to come, all seemed to combine to make life astonishingly difficult for all people. Members of SLA were caught up by these forces just like everyone else.

But the drivers of change were not all external. The very discipline SLA's members practiced was demanding change as well, and the service sphere in which they performed their professional duties was continually confronting them with new challenges, often on a daily basis. By the turn of the millennium and the association's progress into the final decade of its own first century, librarianship as a profession was the subject of much discussion. Both practitioners and interested observers wrestled with library and information science as a distinct profession, with the profession's role in society, and with trying to pin down what exactly its contributions to the common good were expected to be. The elements of knowledge services—information management, knowledge management, and strategic learning—were being continuously defined, made use of, re-defined, and refined to such an extent that it soon became clear that they were expected to contribute to the success and well-being of the populace, and their growth and development were expected to contribute significantly to the global economy. Service delivery methods were examined on an ongoing basis. As leaders in the library and information science profession struggled with defining their own work and the workplace framework in which their professional skills were utilized (and being stretched in the examination process), the profession experienced a very real sense of dislocation and disconnect.

On the one hand, some segments of American society, possibly inspired by efforts being made in other countries, continued to think of all libraries as cultural institutions, to be equated with and supported as museums, historical societies, local symphony orchestras, and the like are supported. In these countries, the role of the library in supplying the specific and practical information that had come to be associated with John Cotton Dana's "New Library Creed" for the support of business, science, and all sectors of the economy seemed to be missing. So in the new century it began to appear that division between the profession's two types of librarianship—practiced for well over a hundred years—was about to be made even more distinct.* It was a division that might have been coming for some

* In an interview with the author in *Information Outlook* 7 (9), September, 2003, the distinction is made, in discussing American librarianship, that in the early days of the profession "what Americans required was a two-track type of librarianship, one concentrating on academic, scholarly, cultural, and societal needs, the other providing practical and utilitarian information for the workplace."

time, since the U.S. Federal government seemed to be leading a move in this direction. In 1996 the creation of the U.S. Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) combined the Library Programs Office, which had been a part of the U.S. Department of Education, and the Institute of Museum Services. The creation of this combined government agency further strengthened the characterization of libraries as cultural institutions, since libraries would now be associated formally with museums, to serve society as cultural and educational institutions. The role of libraries in the delivery of specialized information, knowledge, and learning in support of research in the corporate, medical, legal, government, and other specialized arenas was being largely ignored in favor of traditional or classical librarianship. Libraries *qua* libraries would be part of the nation's cultural framework. For the members and leaders of SLA, this designation of libraries as cultural institutions was unsettling, particularly as many of SLA's members were working in organizations where the traditional concept of a library did not connect with the reality of their work.

Thus, as the new decade and the new century began, many of SLA's members and leaders began to be concerned about the viability of the association's connection with the library and information science profession. With the acknowledged and specific role its members play in the specialized organizations in which they are employed, was it appropriate for SLA to continue as an organization focusing exclusively on libraries and librarianship? As a professional association, would SLA—as an organization of information professionals and knowledge workers—not be able to function more effectively if it broadened its focus? Perhaps it was time to reconceptualize the construct of specialized librarianship (if that was what the discipline was to be called) and transform SLA to something other than a “library”-focused organization.

As we have seen, such efforts had begun much earlier in the association's history. In the 1960s, when some companies and organizations changed the operational designation of their specialized libraries to “information center,” it was these types of concerns that drove the change. In fact, three decades later some of these functional units were no longer even bothering to emphasize “information,” for their managements had decreed that they were to be known as the company's “knowledge center” or “research center.” The designations were numerous, and the word “library” was but one designation for the functional units in which SLA's members practiced their profession.

A parallel development involved job titles assigned to specialist librarians in the organizations where their functional operation was something other than a “library.” Along the way, the publication of the association's several documents looking at competencies for success in this particular branch of the library and information science profession had more

informally demonstrated this not-so-subtle evolution. In the 1992 PREPS document, referred to in the last chapter, the field is referred to as “special librarianship.” Following PREPS, the work of President Didi Pancake’s Special Committee on Competencies for Special Librarians resulted in the 1996 publication of the association’s famous *Competencies for Special Librarians of the 21st Century*. By the association’s Winter Meeting in New Orleans in January, 2003 European Chapter member Neil Infield presented the results of his research, identifying some 150+ *additional* job titles for people working as specialist librarians. At about the same time, it began to appear (perhaps by common consent but probably through reasoned discussion among association leaders and staff as they began to re-think SLA’s role in society) that the association’s members and practitioners in this branch of library and information science would begin to be known as “information professionals.” So it happened, and when the competencies document (which had been designed all along to be a “living” document, to be subject to continual revision) was prepared for its next iteration, to be published later in 2003, it had evolved into *Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century* and it was published as such.

Reflecting this direction, a motion to change the name of the association was on the agenda for that year’s annual conference, in New York City. As a result, the conference ended up being a memorable one, not only because it would provide the introduction of a new executive director to the membership, but because it would give the membership the opportunity to address a subject that seemed to have been a major focus of attention for some time.

Three years of research, discussion, and brand name debates went into finding and recommending a new name for SLA, and in June, 2003 President Bill Fisher found himself presiding at an annual meeting in which discussion was lively, with the members in attendance clearly divided into two camps over the issue. In the event, the motion to change the association’s name was defeated. Two-thirds of those voting were required to vote in favor of a bylaws amendment, and in this case the number approving the change was 73 votes shy of the 594 required for approving the motion. Thus the name change, as proposed in 2003, was defeated, and “Special Libraries Association” was retained as the association’s formal name.

Acknowledging the vote, the new president, Cindy Hill, held a press conference to announce that the association would retain its nearly 100 year old name. She commented that, “The name Special Libraries Association is a highly recognized brand name in the information industry. It stands for professional excellence, ethics, and best practices in the management of knowledge-based organizations. Our members have always been on the cutting edge, applying information tools and technologies to advance the missions of our parent

organizations. Keeping our name allows us to build on our heritage over the past century while keeping our focus on the expanding information economy of the 21st.”

Interestingly, the association was soon able to enjoy a compromise in the name-change controversy and to adopt an arrangement that worked. The business practice known as DBA (“Doing Business As”) is commonly used and generally accepted globally, permitting organizations and businesses flexibility and leverage in using variations of their legal name. The practice was adopted by the SLA Board of Directors at its meeting in January, 2004, the subject having been raised during a strategy session by President-Elect Ethel Salonen during a discussion about expanding membership outside of North America. Noting that the term “special library” has little or no significance outside the United States and Canada, the board decided to adopt the DBA practice in referring to the association. The matter was sent to the association’s Chapter and Division Cabinets for discussion, and the prevailing sentiment was for the board to go ahead and act on the DBA model, noting that the action is not a legal name change but simply a device for the association to use as it targets or communicates with specific audiences. Also noted during the discussions, however, and probably having some influence in the acceptance of the gesture was that it was simply common sense to move to the DBA business practice, since most people use the “SLA” acronym in normal conversation and in writing about the association anyway. Taking this action merely recognized what was already being done and followed accepted general practice, both within the association and in external references to it.

So change was coming to SLA, and the association was clearly moving toward a somewhat different model, one that would reach beyond a membership limited to specialist librarians. The “new” SLA would include information professionals and other knowledge workers employed with their strategic partners in providing the highest levels of service delivery in their parent organizations. Indeed, just past the midpoint of the decade, SLA’s Executive Director was exactly on target as she described the members of the association she now managed. Janice R. Lachance, who had come to the association in 2003, described how the benefits of change were indeed enabling the association’s members to take on roles in their parent organizations that would not have been considered, even in the not-too-distant past:

“Change is making it possible for information professionals to become leaders inside their organizations ... to become agents of change as technology transforms the way you gather and utilize information ... librarians and info pros have become like the hub of the wheel playing an

integral role in all decision-making and education practices surrounding them....

In this new information, knowledge, and learning environment, Lachance found a new leadership role for SLA's members, a role not only limited to leadership but to setting standards, for this new world, she said, "is giving those of you who make your living in the world of information the opportunity to be the trust intermediary between those who create and provide information and those who rely on accurate and reliable information." It was becoming clear as the knowledge culture became a reality—both in society at large and in the parent organizations where the association's members were employed—that the SLA member's role was fast becoming one of responsibility as well as service.

Inspiration for that leadership in their own professional lives was evident to all of SLA's members, for the first years of the new century were characterized by important, high-impact situations that demanded the highest standards of leadership from the association's own membership. The carefully thought out name-change proposal was not the only out-of-the-ordinary activity (there were several more, as will be seen) but as it happened, the association's leadership was well prepared. During her presidency in 1999-2000, Susan S. DiMattia had appointed a number of committees and commissioned studies to assist the association in getting the best value in its interactions among the membership, the staff, and SLA's volunteer leaders. Among the findings of this work was the need for simplification in the management of all area's of the association's endeavors, and as DiMattia was succeeded by Donna Scheeder, the move toward simplification continued. Following Scheeder, Presidents Hope Tillman and Bill Fisher put considerable effort into making the recommendations for simplification work, and by mid-decade, the SLA Board of Directors had moved to a governance policy model in which the board concentrates on strategy and policy, with tactical responsibility expected of SLA staff and the members and volunteer leaders of the association's various units and sub-units. It was a management model that, by the time it had evolved into a working framework for the association, was exactly what the association needed for its governance.

For SLA's members, this new "tone" in the management of the association was an appropriate direction, for it was clearly aligned with what was being experienced in the wider management environment. In business, industry, and in the broader research fields, the delivery of information and the provision of services supporting information delivery were changing. The previous generation had witnessed the rise of knowledge management as an operational function in many organizations, although eventually much of the attention given to knowledge management seemed to emphasize the electronic capture

and dissemination of information in supporting the knowledge-sharing elements of knowledge management. This level of knowledge sharing was exactly what specialist librarians had been doing ever since they were established as a separate and unique branch of the library and information science profession. Nevertheless, despite the trend toward electronic knowledge management—a trend which would, of course, eventually be absorbed into the knowledge services construct—many managers and thought leaders in knowledge management worked hard to ensure that social networking and personal interactions in the management of information, knowledge, and strategic learning were recognized for the essential role they play in the process.

Indeed, as the growth and development of knowledge management had moved forward in the two previous decades, much interest had been shown in the specialized libraries field. Himself a professional librarian (although not employed as such), Larry Prusak was one knowledge management leader who recognized early on that the role of the specialist librarian is to “get to know and understand the actual work of individuals” in the librarians’ service sphere, and to spend time with those individuals, learning “their concerns, their ‘mission-critical’ projects, their business environment, their aspirations, languages, and masters.” Later, writing with Tom Davenport (also an acknowledged motivational thought leader for specialist librarians), Prusak specifically identified specialist librarians as “knowledge brokers,” information and knowledge professionals “suited by temperament and their role as information guides to the task of making people-to-people as well as people-to-text connections.”

Not surprisingly then, Peter F. Drucker—the 20th century’s major thought leader in organizational management—influenced the thinking of SLA’s leaders and members as they moved forward with their new thinking. Much credit for the development of the association as an association of knowledge services professionals must be given to Drucker, as the important role he played was obvious in many areas of the SLA’s growth and development in the last two decades of its first century. In helping to change the organization’s service philosophy and to incorporate change, few people were thought about, spoken of, and, indeed, read and listened to as Peter Drucker. Connecting leadership and the highest standards for management and service delivery, Drucker’s many comments and ideas about the role of the knowledge worker permeated the thinking for a great many SLA members. As his keynote presentation for the SLA Annual Conference in Los Angeles in 2002 approached, Drucker had written about management for over fifty years, and SLA’s members expected that the connections between leadership and excellence in service delivery would be part of the master’s message, as indeed they were.

Such thinking naturally meant that the association would continue to struggle with its own societal role in the new knowledge economy, which President Judith J. Field had anticipated when she spoke about the societal move to the knowledge culture. There would be challenges, and this was to be the case with SLA as the new century began. Indeed, the challenge posed was substantial: to position the association so that it could provide for its members the very support and leadership they needed, and to attain for themselves leadership positions in the organizations where they were employed. To meet that challenge, change would be required, and change, as President Scheeder and her many colleagues made clear, was as entwined in the association's corporate structure as was its organizational mission, its vision, and its values. Indeed, as was described at the beginning of this history, SLA's creation had come about because of a need for change, with the recognition that undertaking major change would enable specialist librarians, different from other librarians, to provide the highest levels of service to their respective organizations and industries. That commitment to change continued, and it was an evolution and a historical framework that President Scheeder described, a part of the association's present and future organizational culture and structure that she had clearly identified: "...we must lead change: change in our methods of practicing special librarianship, change in the education of new professionals, and change in the way our association continues to meet our professional needs. ... SLA must change ... to transform the association and prepare it to meet the challenges of the knowledge revolution."

Given what was happening in the larger environment, in the global community, in the library and information science profession, and in the many organizations and institutions seeking to deal with the management of information, knowledge, and strategic learning, it was incumbent on SLA to move embrace its transformation. Nothing less than a reconceptualization of the association was required, and such a reconceptualization could now take place, as SLA was, in the concept put forward by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "change adept." A management authority whose influence on specialized librarianship had begun at an SLA Annual Conference in 1986, Kanter defined the "change-adept organization" as one which is constantly investing in innovation, in learning and professionalism, and in collaboration. These were exactly the characteristics that defined the association as the last decade of its first century began, positioning SLA for moving forward with the transformation and reconceptualization that would be required for success in its second century.

The timing for major change is another element of successful change management, and selecting the right time to make the change can contribute significantly to whether change management and change implementation are successful. That was the case with Executive Director Bender as the new century began. Concluding that the association was in a very

strong position, both in the library and information profession and in the wider universe of associations in general, and also concluding that SLA had become the change-adept organization it needed to be to tackle the dramatic changes that would be required in the near future, Bender decided to retire. Commenting that “these may be the best of times for SLA” and noting that “the time for significant changes in leadership is during good times,” Dr. Bender announced in June, 2000 that he would leave SLA at the end of July in the following year.

Bender’s accomplishments were summarized by President Scheeder when the announcement was made: “SLA has been very fortunate to benefit from David’s leadership, vision, and knowledge over such a long period of time. During a remarkable twenty years, he achieved an enviable list of accomplishments, including the growth of SLA into a global organization, the move of its headquarters, and the development of the Virtual Association that has benefited us all. Most associations lack the kind of quality and length of service in their chief staff officers that our profession has experienced in David. We are going to miss him terribly.”

Bender’s final months with the association were eventful, for many groups and organizations, as well as individual colleagues, wanted to honor him for his contributions to specialized librarianship and, particularly, for his efforts on behalf of the association. An early gesture was the creation of a new endowment fund, the David R. Bender Fund for International Development. Designed to honor Bender on the occasion of his retirement, the fund created an endowment that would grow over the years and support the association’s international agenda, including fellowships, conferences, and membership benefits. The association board approved the fund at its January, 2001 meeting, and a taskforce of members, chaired by Clare Hart and the author, was appointed by President Scheeder to lead the fundraising efforts. By the date of Bender’s actual retirement, the fund had received pledges in excess of \$110,000.00 including a kick-off donation from Factiva for \$25,000.00.

Other activities honoring Bender included a gala reception at the San Antonio Annual Conference, in June, 2001, and a special presentation—including a specially produced “secret” testimonial video which Bender did not know about—from staff, members, and SLA leadership at the conference general session. It was a different conference for the 5,217 participants, marking not only as it did the accomplishments of the association during the past year, but taking a longer look back through Bender’s employment and the different directions the association had taken over those 22 years. In his State-of-the-Association address, Bender quoted from his first such address to the membership, in June, 1980, in which he shared with his new colleagues the news that the association faced “a decade of

crisis management, within the association and within our libraries [as we] learn that our resources are not limitless.” Jumping forward 11 years, Bender quoted from his 1991 presentation, in which he commented on the complexity “driving the year’s events,” noting that—in those uncertain times—the association could choose to be assertive or passive, dynamic or hesitant. It was, he said, “a time when, as my relatives back in Ohio would say, it is necessary to either fish or cut bait. I say, ‘let’s go fishing!’”

Then Bender brought the association up to date with the state of its affairs, the association as he saw it in 2001:

Today, SLA is at a crossroads, not merely because of the pending changes in staff leadership and management.... In truth, the crossroads at which we now stand is a convergence of various forces: generational shifts, technology, the global economy, the social climate within our profession, and the status quo—for better or worse. To permit “analysis paralysis” accomplishes nothing. Our gut instincts for survival and success are an important part of the continuing effort to lead the association forward.

In concluding his farewell address, Bender offered four points for strengthening the association, each of them relevant to the current state of affairs at SLA:

1. Return to the concept of community building
2. Make innovation a priority
3. Create authentic learning opportunities
4. Implement financial models that allow for wise assessments of revenue streams

As it happened, one of the final achievements of Bender’s affiliation with SLA had crowned his long enthusiasm and many successful efforts for bringing the association into the global arena. As society moved toward a global focus in all its realms, SLA’s networking role became critically important to its success, and the association’s ability to serve as an international organization—despite having most of its members in North America—brought many benefits, as had been realized in its first international conference, in Hawaii in 1979. As the association moved toward the new century, it was clear that another such conference would be of value, and preparations began for SLA’s Global 2000 Conference, to be held in Brighton, U.K.

The conference, bringing together some 650 information professionals from throughout the world, was organized by the association, working with an impressive array of other sponsoring organizations. To ensure full participation at all levels of employment, 25 information professionals from developing countries were named Conference 2000 Fellows, selected from a pool of over 1,000 applicants, with SLA members raising more than \$80,000 to provide funding for their conference attendance.

The “messages” of the conference were summarized by John Crosby, Chief Marketing and Communications Strategist for the association, shortly after the conference closed:

1. Innovation in the profession is (and must be) a priority
2. Enhanced collaboration at all levels is badly needed
3. Global alliances among information- and knowledge-related professional associations is required immediately
4. SLA’s future growth is dependant on attention to developing nations, particularly with respect to closing the much-talked about “digital divide”

Connecting his impressions of the conference to the association’s role in the information and knowledge services environment, Crosby took a bold stand and challenged SLA and its leaders to use the conference as the opportunity for moving the association forward: “Clearly, SLA must survive on dues revenue, and it has done so for 91 years with a significant level of growth. So there is clearly a rub in terms of generating inclusiveness while keeping the association afloat. Where do we go from here? See point number one above: innovative ideas will move us forward in developing access for the profession where SLA has rarely ventured.”

With the announcement of his retirement, the search for Bender’s successor began, and by the late spring of 2001, Roberta Shaffer had emerged as the final candidate in the search and was hired to be SLA’s next Executive Director. Shaffer was introduced at the San Antonio Annual Conference, coming to SLA from her position as Dean, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Texas at Austin. In announcing her appointment, it was noted that in her new role, “Shaffer will lead SLA through many new changes, including direction of new branding, membership redefinition, and simplification strategies, and assessment of the Association’s partnerships and events.” While the management of change and Shaffer’s role as a change agent/architect for the association seemed to be what SLA’s leaders were seeking, the connection did not succeed and Shaffer resigned in February, 2002. Following Shaffer’s resignation, Lynn Smith, SLA Deputy

Executive Director, was named Acting Executive Director, and a decision was made to postpone the search process until after the new Board of Directors was seated, which would take place at the annual conference of the association, to be held in Los Angeles the following June.

Following the conference, the search began in earnest and by the first week of July, 2003, as we have seen, the Honorable Janice R. Lachance was chosen to be the 13th Executive Director of the Association. Lachance came to SLA from an outstanding career, having in her previous position served the Clinton administration as Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the federal government's independent human resources agency. Appointed to this position by President Clinton and unanimously confirmed by a bipartisan U.S. Senate, Lachance provided policy and program leadership for 1.8 million federal employees, and it was during her term of service that President Clinton recognized the importance of the federal government as a model employer and advanced Lachance's position to Cabinet status, giving her the standing and support needed to elevate human capital issue to the highest possible priority in the United States. After leaving OPM in 2001, Lachance transitioned to a successful management consulting practice specializing in strategic planning, communications, human resources management, and organizational transformation for membership and non-profit organizations, all of which supported her candidacy for the association's executive leadership.

With the arrival of Executive Director Lachance (later designated the association's chief executive, with the title Chief Executive Officer, or CEO), the prospects for inevitable and desirable change took on a new immediacy. Throughout the association (perhaps because of Lachance's warmth of personality or, more likely, because of her talents as a no-nonsense business manager who knows how to get the best responses from her colleagues), there was a renewed sense of enthusiasm for reviewing the association's goals, for identifying its members and potential members, and for a collegial and collaborative effort for working together to achieve mutual goals.

As it turned out, and despite the rejection of a new legal and formal name for the association at the very conference at which Lachance was introduced to the membership, the association's Board of Directors was prepared by November of the same year to publish a new vision, mission, and core values statement for SLA. Moving to a new strategic plan had been a leadership objective for some years, and President Cindy Hill, during her term as president-elect, had been able to rally the SLA Board of Directors and the various association units advising the board to action. The document, significantly, contains no reference to "libraries" or "special" or "specialized" libraries or to the profession of librarianship, and it makes clear that the role of the specialist librarian/information

professional is to be one that provides leadership in information, knowledge, and strategic learning management, together with a level of service delivery that is unequaled anywhere else in the parent organization employing the SLA member.

The new vision for the association stated that SLA was a global, not a North American organization, and it identified its members not just as “information professionals” but as “innovative information professionals,” making it clear that—as they assume membership in the organization—they are expected to provide the highest levels of excellence in their work. At the same time, the vision statement linked SLA members with their “strategic partners” in their organizations, in their profession, and in their wider sphere of influence. To support this vision, the association’s mission was identified as promoting and strengthening the members through three specific initiatives: learning, advocacy, and networking. Perhaps the most significant of the new statements was the association’s commitment to its core values, which were identified as leadership, service, innovation and continuous learning, results and accountability, and collaboration and partnering. The vision statement was a remarkable achievement, ushering in a new era for the association in which its vision was specifically spelled out for its members and all others affiliated with or interested in SLA.

SIDEBAR (include in text if not separated out as a sidebar)

**SLA Vision, Mission and Core Value Statements
(Adopted October 2003)**

Vision

The Special Libraries Association is the global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners.

Mission

The Special Libraries Association promotes and strengthens its members through learning, advocacy, and networking initiatives.

Core Values

Leadership

Strengthening our roles as information leaders in our organizations and in our communities, including shaping information policy.

Service

Responding to our clients' needs, adding qualitative and quantitative value to information services and products.

Innovation and Continuous Learning

Embracing innovative solutions for the enhancement of services and intellectual advancement within the profession.

Results and Accountability

Delivering measurable results in the information economy and our organizations. The Association and its members are expected to operate with the highest level of ethics and honesty.

Collaboration and Partnering

Providing opportunities to meet, communicate, collaborate, and partner within the information industry and the business community.

In a related development, the association's leadership was soon able to put forward a new strategic plan. Though work on revising SLA's strategic plan had begun prior to Lachance's

arrival (and, in fact, there had been many long-range and strategic plans throughout the association's history), the new plan—undertaken through the efforts of member volunteers—was presented in a new environment created by the new Executive Director in which the process was able to move forward quickly. It was fitting that a new plan should be prepared, and with the 2004 plan, SLA's strategic planning for the first time clearly spoke to the association's vision, mission, and values statements, themselves published only a year earlier. The plan was characterized as a "visionary framework" for enabling association stakeholders to "make decisions that drive the future," emphasizing innovation and learning and seeking to position members to "meet and exceed" their professional goals and demonstrate their "critical contributions" to the success of the organizations that employed them. With the plan, association leadership made clear SLA's move into the whole area of organizational development, in order to better provide members with the tools they required for leadership in the organization. The plan took up the advocacy banner with strength, committing the association to providing services to members that would enable them not only to educate others about the strategic importance of information and information professionals, but to developing a credentialing mechanism that reaches out and attracts "individuals in the profession and related fields," to make SLA the "big tent" for information, knowledge, and strategic learning professionals that the marketplace was calling for. At the same time, the plan addressed the association's commitment to its networking initiative by stating that the association would "provide opportunities for members, non-members, and those in related professions to learn, share, and collaborate with each other in order to leverage information, ideas, and innovations" and "provide collaborative and relationship building opportunities for professional growth and knowledge sharing."

As the new strategic plan's first year came to a close, in-coming President Pam Rollo recognized that the connection between the plan and the association's new vision, mission, and values statements would be considerably enhanced if attention were given to the basic, day-to-day activities that supported them. Noting that "Presidents of SLA often ask members to become involved in *ad hoc* investigations into subject matter and topics that are highly relevant to the profession and its needs," Rollo created six task forces to address a range of needs, challenges and opportunities facing the association, its members, and the information profession at large. The work of these volunteer groups was impressive, and the set of recommendations they put forward strongly influenced association leaders—at all levels of the association—as they and the membership sought to implement the 2004 strategic plan and incorporate SLA's vision, mission, and values statements into their work. Some of these recommendations had been anticipated in general terms during the previous years. For example, the focus on innovation and learning had been a goal in the association for many years, and as the needs of knowledge workers for new styles of professional

learning emerged, SLA had been successful in strengthening its continuing education role. One of the association's well-received efforts in this area had been its Career Planning and Competencies portal, available on the SLA website. Including articles about specialized librarianship as a career, with additional references for career advancement and competency development, the portal proved to be a valuable benefit for many SLA members, and non-members accessed the portal to obtain information about careers in the field.

Indeed, the subject of professional development was now one of the major topics of discussion for SLA's leaders, and it is not difficult to see why. As early in SLA's history as the annual conference of 1914, it became clear that specialized training and learning was to be a hallmark of the association. As we have seen, that commitment to education and strategic learning continued throughout the association's history. By the last two decades of the 20th century, as Carolyn Sosnowski, SLA's Information Specialist discovered when she conducted a survey of professional development programming during those years, SLA had become an organization dedicated to providing the best and most topical professional development it could for its members. High on the list of subjects for professional development programs were workshops and courses focused on management issues such as leadership, budgeting, communications, and the like. Marketing was a continuing theme, and eventually evolved to include public relations as well and, in the early years of the present decade, to include branding as a subject worthy of attention. In the 1980s and 1990s, time management was a popular subject, as demonstrated—as noted earlier—with the association's first computer-based training program, offered on that subject in 1988.

Also during the 1980s and the 1990s, workshops on the subject of fee-for-service were offered frequently, spinning off into courses on entrepreneurship and consulting by the mid-1990s. During this same period, management courses on one-person/solo librarianship were a mainstay of the professional development offerings, along with courses on copyright compliance and workshops relating to technology and digital information. Early programs on "evaluating the library" eventually gave way to how-to workshops on the information audit, the knowledge audit, and the knowledge services audit, with the goal of establishing the value of information centers and their services a natural outgrowth.

The association's first internet-related course ("Introduction to the Internet: Browsing the Virtual Shelves") was offered in 1993. Since then, the courses evolved, as Sosnowski put it, "from 'what is it?' to 'how to use it,' to exploring the resources, to the development of intranets, training end users to search, and evaluating and training for specific internet

tools.” By the late 1990s, knowledge management courses were finding their way into the SLA professional development programs, and the cataloging alternatives courses of a few decades ago were now offered as courses on taxonomies, metadata, and thesauri.

“On and off through the years,” Sosnowski said, “other topics were offered, treating subjects such as negotiating, training, competitive and business intelligence, researching particular topics and industries (e.g., patents, finances, etc.). For a while, artificial intelligence workshops were offered but these quietly disappeared from the roster of SLA courses.”

As the association progressed toward the end of its tenth decade, conference courses, virtual seminars, and several other instruments became available for association members on a variety of topics, including blogging, project management, text and information mining, business planning, portals, content management, communities of practice, and wireless technologies. With such offerings, it was obvious that the association’s membership was requiring a high level of sophistication and content in its strategic learning needs, and in 2003, the association’s Professional Development Committee revised its description of its charge and, under the leadership of Chair Lynne McCay, created its own vision statement and identified a set of goals to be realized by 2007. Recognizing that professional development is not only of value to its own members but an important marketing tool for bringing new members into SLA, the program was envisioned to be global in scope, a portfolio of offerings and activities that “anticipates and responds to the needs of learners as they advance in their personal journeys.” Like the larger vision, mission, and values statements and the association’s strategic plan, the professional development vision anticipated addressing several target audiences beyond members of the association.

When she became President in June, 2004, Ethel M. Salonen made it clear that professional development was to be the theme of her presidential year, announcing the development of a million-dollar continuing education initiative. By August, 2004 Past-President Sylvia Piggott, now Chair of the Professional Development Committee, was able to describe the initiative as designed to enable the association to “transform professional development for information professionals.” Seeking to establish SLA’s professional development effort as the premier program for lifelong learning and for the improvement of professional skills and leadership development, the campaign would finance an “SLA LearnCenter,” an online system for providing access to courses and content in a variety of subject areas, the acquisition of distinct course libraries (hoping to offer more than 200 courses) in multiple languages, and the conversion of a variety of SLA learning experiences into self-paced online courses.

With the enthusiastic encouragement of the association's membership, leadership, and staff, the "new" professional development effort moved forward, and by the SLA Annual Conference in Toronto, in June, 2005, the association announced its new online learning system, Click University. It was to be the first such learning system designed specifically for information professionals and with its creation the range of offerings for information professionals was clearly widened. Eliminating travel, registration, tuition, fees, and similar limitations to successful professional development participation, Click University was designed to allow SLA members access to the learning materials they require on a cost-effective basis. An exclusive benefit of membership for SLA members, course offerings included training in core skills such as software and technology use, management, communications, and leadership strategies, and effective practices and methods for the collection, sharing, and use of information and knowledge in the modern working world. Frequent virtual seminars were presented, and in 2007 a series of certificate programs was established, leading off with a dual certificate program in competitive intelligence, followed in 2008 with a dual certificate program in knowledge management and knowledge services and a certificate program in copyright management. An added inducement for study was the electronic book library of some 1,000+ titles available through Click U, providing books on leadership, management, entrepreneurship, organizational behavior, project management, and related subjects to members free of charge. These electronic resources, together with digitized versions of *Special Libraries* (1909-1996) and digitized versions of *Information Outlook* published since 1997, provided SLA members with a wealth of captured information and knowledge for them to use in strengthening their role in the professional workplace, all at no cost to them, as a benefit of membership in the association.

Outpacing the professional development committee's original goal of offering 200 courses, Click University's opening-day roster included ten course libraries with a combined total of 320 courses. The campaign had been significantly enhanced by funding from Elsevier, and additional contributions provided for future development and support of the program. By January, 2007, the association was able to announce that Click University courses were accredited through the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET), an action which authorized SLA to award the IACET Continuing Education Unit (CEU) to SLA members who complete courses through the program. In announcing the accreditation, Lachance noted that the effort had successfully developed courses that met the "high standards" of IACET, an "honor and testament to the value of Click U's training and development classes."

In addition to the partnership with IACET, the association began to further look beyond its own boundaries to seek professional development opportunities. For example, in early 2007, SLA announced a partnership with the Professional Learning Centre (PLC) of the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto, enabling SLA's members to attend online courses at a significant discount. While the school's courses were "constantly evolving to ensure that they reflect the competency demands of today's information environment," the first group of offerings was impressive: "Power of One: Information Professionals Working Alone," "Legal Research on the Web," "The Information Professional as Educator," and "Introduction to Records and Information Management" reflected the interests of SLA members in courses that were not available through the association. Another important professional development and organizational alliance was also announced in 2007, between SLA and the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA). The two organizations offered SIIA's "Certified Contents Rights Manager" course jointly, and SLA members were given a substantial discount to take the course.

Thus it might be said that, from one point of view, the association's professional development offerings were launching SLA's re-conceptualization and transformation. Indeed, Piggott's message to the membership was headlined "SLA Campaign to Transform Learning," and just a few months earlier, in August, 2004 Lachance's column in *Information Outlook* had been titled "A Time for Transformation." Lachance stated that the time had come for "deep transformation of the professional development experiences you get from SLA ... not simply incremental improvements that we achieve year after year [but] a re-creation, a totally grand conception of the nature and scope of learning you will need in the future." Noting that learning is one of the three cornerstones of SLA's current mission, Lachance described how the three are "intertwined":

...learning is a high priority for the association. Our vision statement adopts learning as the cornerstone of our profession's future. The goal is to make SLA professional development services a source of pride for all of us—globally focused, balanced across all phases of the information professional's career span, and driven by leading edge technology. ... Making an innovative transformation with our learning experiences is not something we take lightly. As a global association with a diverse membership full of varied interests and needs, we must continue to offer a range of services that meet your expectations.

By now it was becoming clear that SLA's leadership role was one of its greatest assets, and certainly for the membership the association was being recognized for its leading role in speaking for library and information science professionals. While working closely with other library and information-related professional associations, SLA's unique role in bridging both traditional librarianship and supporting its members in the management of knowledge services for their parent institutions was one that gave it strength, as an association, and ensured that it was listened to. Advocacy had been identified as one of the association's three initiatives in its strategic plan, and Douglas Newcomb was given full responsibility to implement the program when he was named the association's first Director for Public Policy in 2001. Newcomb, who had come to SLA in 1996 to implement the transition of *Special Libraries* to *Information Outlook* (at that time Newcomb's expertise was in the magazine start-up field) and who had subsequently served the association in a variety of staff leadership positions, was charged with moving the association's former government relations program to a policy development program, one in which the focus would not be on merely reacting to government programs already in place, but to identify and support new policy initiatives with respect to the information, knowledge, and learning disciplines that would have societal impact and benefit.

In 2001, SLA began publishing its "Public Policy Update," a monthly online information document for members, to alert them of issues affecting the delivery of information and, in many cases, providing them with information that would not come to their attention otherwise. The February, 2001 update, for example, described the European Union's plan to extend, with some limitation, private copying of protected work, as is allowed in the analog world, to digital media. By mid-2004, the update had become SLA "Public Policy Connections: The SLA E-News Source for Advocacy Issues," leading the association in a direction which had, for most of SLA's history, been avoided. While SLA as a professional association had for generations sought to advance the cause of the library and information profession, there had not been a tradition of active advocacy. Indeed, for many years, an advocacy role of not considered a proper role for SLA, since its incorporation as a 501 (c) (3) organization had specifically forbidden any actions that might be construed, in the legal sense, as "lobbying." But times change, and it was clear that the association had a voice that could be heard.

In December, 2004 the association published its public policy platform, completing its transition into a fully formed advocacy organization. Noting that "government bodies and related international organizations play a critical role in establishing the legal and social

framework within which SLA members conduct information services,” SLA would maintain an active Public Policy program. The public policy platform was spelled out, ensuring that SLA would support government policies that were fair and balanced, that strengthened library and information management in government agencies, that promoted access to government public information, that encouraged the development of new information and communications technologies, and that protected individual intellectual freedom and the confidentiality of library records, safeguarded freedom of expression, and opposed government censorship.

A month later, SLA announced the launch of its new Legislative Action Center, “a grassroots advocacy service for SLA members to use in learning about, and acting on, public policy matters affecting the information profession.” An online service, the center was designed to enable members to review legislation, learn how to communicate effectively with legislators, identify appropriate elected officials and media with whom to communicate, and share views with lawmakers via targeted e-mail, fax, phone and wire service. CEO Lachance described the center as a service whose “time has come,” and speaking about the influential role that specialist librarians and information professionals have in society, Lachance noted that “with over 12,000 members and countless others in our global community, we have to find ways to shape the development of policies that affect our work and our organizations” and commented that the “new Legislative Action Center puts the power to communicate in the hands of the people who matter most.”

That opportunity for shaping the development of policy came a little sooner than anyone had expected. On August 15, 2006 the Office of Environmental Information of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a document, “EPA FY 2007 Library Plan: National Framework for the Headquarters and Regional Libraries” in which the agency announced plans to deal with budget cuts by downsizing or eliminating library services. For many in the library and information science profession, the announcement was a shock, and there were particular concerns about, as CEO Lachance put it, “the ability to access data and information necessary to scientists, policy makers and corporate entities to operate in the public good.” As it happened, not only were librarians—especially specialist librarians employed in scientific research in organizations which relied on EPA’s libraries—concerned. EPA’s own scientists began stepping up protests against closures on the grounds that it would make their work more difficult by impeding research, enforcement and emergency response capabilities. Some observers saw the library plan as designed to “suppress information on environmental and public health-related topics.” The association announced its strong

opposition to the closures, and many SLA members in the scientific research fields informed association leaders that the closure of the EPA libraries would directly impact their work directly. Taking a particular step, the association encouraged Congress to determine if research had been conducted on the impact the reduction of services might have on public health and safety.

As part of its public policy work, the association entered into a dialogue with EPA. Officials from both organizations met several times in an effort to clarify media reports that libraries were closing and that materials were being discarded within the EPA's regional library network. "SLA has been diligent in reaching out to EPA officials, getting status reports, and sharing the expertise of our members, and we will continue to work closely with EPA on this issue," CEO Lachance said.

The effort paid off, for by April 6, 2007, at a meeting at SLA Headquarters, Mike Flynn EPA Director, Office of Information Analysis and Access Office of Environmental Information told SLA that further closures and changes to EPA library network were "frozen" as the agency worked "to develop and implement policies and procedures, as well as goals and a strategic direction that would best serve the needs of the public and EPA scientists." Lachance responded by stating that the meetings had been open and informative and that the association appreciated that EPA was responding to SLA's concerns and giving members a voice as its planning continued. Flynn responded by writing to Lachance: "I assure you that we are working diligently toward the goals I have discussed with you. EPA is committed to increasing access to environmental information through a combination of online and traditional library services via the EPA Library Network." Flynn himself appeared before the members at the association's 98th annual conference in Denver, CO in June, 2007, strengthening the respectful bond between EPA and SLA.

As it turned out, later in 2007 the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approved a bill that including funding that "shall be used to restore the network of EPA libraries recently closed or consolidated by the administration" and commented that "the Committee expects the EPA to restore publicly available library facilities in each region" and directed EPA "to submit a plan on how it will use this funding increase to reopen facilities and maintain a robust collection of environmental data and resources in each region by December 31, 2007." In mid-January, SLA Public Policy Director Newcomb reported to the association's membership that "thanks to SLA and other library associations, the 2008 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency budget, approved in the omnibus budget bill, allocates \$1 million to

restore EPA's network of libraries,” and “requires the EPA to provide Congress with a report regarding ‘actions it will take to restore publicly available libraries to provide environmental information and data to each EPA region within 90 days of the enactment of this Act.’” The funding was in addition to the budget requested by the EPA, and was to be used specifically to restore the network of regional EPA libraries closed or consolidated.

When she became SLA’s Executive Director, Lachance had immediately recognized that she could bring to the association her own goals about SLA as an international organization. Beginning with her impressions of her first International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) meeting, held in Berlin in August, 2003 Lachance recognized that the focus of the meeting was on learning and knowledge sharing, matching SLA’s own focus, and she left the Berlin meeting with a strong understanding of the association’s great potential for global membership growth and networking opportunities. “It is clear,” Lachance wrote to the membership, “that developing and delivering our programs and services in ways responsive to the needs of all information professionals, no matter where they call home, will strengthen our association and make our members more effective professionals.”

Certainly that trend continued, and it began to be apparent that SLA’s international focus was having an effect. In fact, whereas “internationalism” had seemed to be a rather exotic and exceptional item of interest in the past, it soon became incorporated as a defining characteristic of the association. It was simply accepted as fact that SLA was an international association. As a result, one change that, while historically sad, was inevitable: the end of the association’s International Relations Committee, one of SLA’s oldest committees. The committee had begun its life in October 1940 as the Committee on Cooperation with Special Libraries in Latin America. It went on to be restructured as the International Relations Committee in the middle of World War II, in 1943, but by the early years of the new century it had outlived its usefulness, especially now that “internationalism” as a subject was no longer a unique or exceptional element of the larger organizational structure. In January 2003, the committee disbanded.

In taking its place as an active player in the international community, it soon became apparent that the association’s vision of itself as an advocate for advancing the role of information, knowledge, and strategic learning in society would be considerably enhanced as new initiatives were pursued. One of the most striking was the invitation to the association and its executive director for participation in WSIS, the World Summit on the Information Society.

A program of the United Nations established to advance the development of international communications technologies, WSIS began with a first meeting in Geneva in 2003, followed by a “Phase Two” summit held in Tunis in November, 2005. Lachance attended and participated in the Tunis meeting, bringing considerable recognition to SLA for its involvement in this important international effort and positioning the association as an international leader in the information and knowledge services community.

In positioning the association for reconceptualizing and transforming itself into a position of leadership in the development of to the knowledge culture, the most visible sign of the “new” SLA was the relocation of the Association Office—now once again being referred to as the association’s “headquarters”—away from downtown Washington, D.C. In the summer of 2004, the association took possession of new office space on Patrick Street in historic Alexandria, VA, the location of a number of other professional associations. Having purchased the new building during the previous year, SLA was able to sell the Washington, D.C. building, which SLA had inhabited since 1986, to the German Marshall fund. The new 15,000 square-foot facility was chosen because it could be designed to include a technology-focused information center that could to serve as an “evolving model” for the worldwide community of information professionals. Additionally, modern meeting facilities and a telecommuting center for members, visitors, and contract personnel would be available at the Alexandria location.

In addition to the move to the new office space, other operational issues were given much consideration during the decade, perhaps related to the many and on-going efforts for strategizing and providing the highest levels of service delivery for the association’s members. One of the most important changes had to do with the legal functioning of the association as a membership organization. In 2005, members approved amendments to the association Bylaws to permit electronic voting, and the impact on the management of the association was immediate. The first e-vote was held in September and October, 2005 and members approved a Bylaws amendment for a dues restructuring, following which the association’s Board of Directors approved a two-tier dues system enabling some flexibility based on the member’s annual salary. Electronic voting was also utilized to facilitate the 2006 Board of Directors election. Another governance change approved alignment of the association’s governance year to match SLA’s fiscal year. To accomplish this alignment, one “class” of association officers was required to serve for eighteen months rather than the customary twelve.

No one complained very much (and indeed, the transition was made easier when the board elected to hold its meetings as conference calls, thus eliminating much of the usual travel connected with those leadership roles). One of those whose term of office was affected was

President Rebecca Vargha, who was required to serve eighteen months. Bringing to the presidency her own set of values that matched those newly forged by the association, she spoke often and openly about her “personal SLA core values,” frequently inviting SLA’s members to come along with her. Vargha understood that change and managing change were essential elements in the association’s strength, and she came to her leadership position with two specific goals. Planning for the association’s centennial celebration in 2009 was to be an important focus, simply because of where the eighteen months of her presidency fell in the association’s history. As SLA’s first century drew to a close, it was Vargha’s responsibility to put in place a team that would be responsible for ensuring that the association’s 100th anniversary celebrations—to be held in conjunction with its 100th annual conference in Washington, DC in 2009—came up to the standards expected. Appointing a Centennial Commission to plan both the centenary and the conference, Vargha called on Davenport Robertson, a leader with strong credentials in the association, to serve as the commission’s chair.

Vargha’s other priority involved giving the association the opportunity to demonstrate that it was continuing—at the close of its first century—as a change-adept organization. She chose to focus on membership growth and retention. President Vargha asked the association’s members to commit to net growth in the association’s membership of 1,000 new members by SLA’s anniversary year. It was an ambitious agenda, one that ensured that Vargha’s eighteen-month presidency would be demanding, challenging, and at its conclusion, rewarding for all of SLA’s members and affiliated stakeholders.

Seeking to further identify and strengthen the association’s relationship with those members and stakeholders, Stephen B. Abram came to SLA’s presidency in 2008. Abram too was determined to focus on the association’s future. His role as a futurist and as a long-term member who had given the association some 25 years of volunteer service in the areas of strategic planning, public relations, and branding stood him in good stead for leading SLA. Giving attention to collaboration, teamwork, networking, and, as he put it, “two-way communication,” Abram was committed to the three pillars of the association’s vision and sought to strengthen SLA’s networking, advocacy, and education roles throughout the global membership.

Setting the tone of his presidency before he took office, President-Elect Abram chose as his presidential theme observing 2008 as a year of SLA innovation (“Innovate 2008”). He put out a call for volunteers, seeking ideas for what he described as Innovation Labs, places where SLA members could volunteer to work collaboratively on innovative pilot projects that would “diffuse” throughout the association and attract more involvement from members. While open to a wide variety of projects and ideas, Abram specifically called for

volunteers to work on creating short Podcasts on pay and performance issues (for example, “How did I get that raise?” “How did I get this job?”); using blogs in specialized libraries; using the Wikis Sandbox to discuss creating sustainable knowledge; supporting students as they transition into the workplace; developing reusable learning for specialized information professionals through SLA’s Click U; a program called “Learning 2.0,” in which every SLA member would devote fifteen minutes daily to learning; social networking; and a special program called “The Testimony Project,” in which the association would collect and disseminate testimonials from leaders and decision-makers.

Noting that the great strength of the association was its volunteers, Abram created a new participation and appointment process for recruiting volunteers to develop programs, inform policy, and influence the future of the profession. Seeking to ensure a balanced pool of people appointed to serve as committee, council, and task force members and as liaisons and representatives to affiliated organizations, Abram sought to increase the pool of volunteers, increase the diversity of SLA volunteers, and ensure the internationalization of the volunteer process. It was an ambitious direction for the association, and it brought much attention to SLA as its members took up their various appointments in support of this new and innovation direction for the association.

In January, 2009 Gloria Zamora began her presidency as a recognized leader in the association, having served in a number of leadership roles, including director and treasurer. In ushering in the association’s anniversary year, Zamora initiated a year-long celebration that was planned to not only honor and reflect on SLA’s past, but to focus on the future and the role of the association as a society of information professionals with increasingly responsible roles in their organizations and in society. Having been an SLA Fellow since 1999 and having been recognized with the John Cotton Dana Award in June, 2007, Zamora clearly understood SLA’s great potential, and particularly the association’s potential beyond the traditional library and information science profession. Elected on a platform in which SLA would give attention to “strategic membership,” as she described her concept, Zamora noted that was not satisfied with simple membership growth. For SLA to succeed, the organization required “the targeting of selected groups or professionals.” Recognizing the obvious strength of SLA in its services to information school graduates and information professionals, Zamora urged the association to go further, to continue to market to these groups but at the same time to attract those who do not see themselves as information professionals, “as we might define those terms,” to identify potential members from complimentary fields who would bring different perspectives and competencies to SLA.

For Zamora, and to be a theme of her presidency, the position of SLA as a leadership association was its great strength. Noting that the association represented “a much larger

constituency of information professionals than any of the other professional information societies, Zamora envisioned an organization in which that strength would not only enable SLA to provide excellence in service delivery to its members. Along with that strength, the association would have—and embrace—the responsibility to participate in policy development and implementation at levels not generally associated with professional associations. From Zamora’s perspective, the association would then use that leadership strength for working with government, with other associations and organizations, and with whatever operational entities might require the association’s support, in order to effectively influence the growth and development of a knowledge-based society. In doing so, SLA would continue, as Zamora put it, “to enhance its reputation as an honest information broker while taking a lead role in information policy development.”

As SLA’s first century came to its close and as SLA moved into its second century, the association, its leaders, its members, its staff, and all its many stakeholders were prepared for their second century. Looking back at how the association’s first century began, we can understand and admire the association’s founders for what they were attempting to do. For them the goals and aspirations they put forward were as innovative and creative as those of SLA’s members at the end of the century. Different goals, yes, to meet the demands of different times, but those differences did not inhibit the association’s members and leaders in 1909 and they do not inhibit SLA’s members in 2009. As the association’s members seek to move SLA forward into its next hundred years, the demands of managing information, knowledge, and strategic learning have changed from those that challenged the association’s founders. But those changes have only served to strengthen the members’ professional goals and aspirations. They are prepared to continue that tradition of change, exploration, and growth. They are willing, even eager to continue moving forward and, when necessary, to identify and move on beyond what no longer serves them, so that they can be enabled to provide the highest levels of service delivery for their specific clientele, just as their original leaders did. As Donna Scheeder said, for SLA “change is our tradition.” The association spent one hundred years getting ready, leading change, continuing to lead change, and providing its members and the information, knowledge, and strategic learning communities with standards of excellence no other organization or community can claim. As we look back at the end of the association’s first century, we meet the gaze of SLA founders looking resolutely forward. We now—with equal resolution—turn our gaze forward.