

## *SLA at 100: Chapter 8 1960-1969*

### *Turmoil in Society and New Thinking about Librarianship*

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With respect to the remarkable period of the 1960s it does not seem to matter what subject is being discussed, those seeking to characterize the decade often have the same point of view. Whatever the subject—international politics and society, educational achievement, religion, economic growth, the advent of technology, or the many other subjects that define the differences in the generations—it is commonly agreed that the 1960s were a time when all of society was caught up in massive, fundamental change.

Issues relating to librarianship and the management of information were naturally part of this enormous “upheaval” (a word frequently associated with the decade). As the second half of SLA’s century came into full flower, the move toward different ways of thinking about librarianship—especially with respect to specialized librarianship—was beginning, just as the wider global society underwent massive societal change. Given the circumstances, a strong argument could be made that without the societal influences and changes of the decade, the natural evolution of the librarianship of SLA’s earlier decades into the knowledge services of today might have been long delayed, if not postponed or thwarted altogether.

What were some of those changes that society was experiencing? And how did these changes affect the role of research and development and the underlying role of information management as the decade proceeded? Even if we restrict our view to the fields we generally referred to then as “sci-tech,” amazing events were taking place. The Atlas Computer was installed at Harwell in 1961, the same year that Alan B. Shepard Jr. became the first American in space. Two years later, Valentina Tereshkova was the first woman in space. South Africa’s Dr. Christian Barnard performed the first heart transplant in 1967, and in 1969 America’s Neil Armstrong became the first person to walk on the moon as most of the world sat mesmerized in front of television sets. Could these accomplishments have even been considered, much less achieved, without the support of specialized librarianship?

Not every event of the 1960s represented a triumphant success. The entire world was frightened and confused with the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961. In 1963, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated—an alarming, traumatic event in and of itself—and Lyndon B. Johnson became America’s leader. By the later years of the decade, despite the passage of the Civil Rights and Economic Opportunity Acts in 1964 and the introduction of Medicare in 1965, the horrors continued, with the murders of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy in Los Angeles. All this took place against the backdrop of (or perhaps in the background of, depending on one’s point of view) the ever-

escalating war in Vietnam. Like all modern wars, the Vietnam War required the skills of specialist librarians. Not only were their particular skills required for the war effort, but like all librarians, specialist librarians were often torn between their professional duty to support the massive research and technology needs of a war (even an undeclared one) and their natural and idealistic disinclination to support the war. The association itself took no position with respect to the war. It could not, for with a strong contingent of members who were employed in scientific and technical research institutions, in companies that conducted research and development for the military, and others who worked in military libraries, SLA as an institution could neither oppose nor support the war.

The emerging and (to some) surprising growth in education and learning was another characteristic of the decade that provided particular direction to the association and its development. Spurred on by post-Sputnik educational funding for science and engineering and an unprecedented increase in Federal funding for research and development, specialized scientific libraries became a special focus in industry and academe. After the powerful needs of World War II, the growth of business and industry in the years that followed, and the intellectual needs of the so-called “Cold War,” it is no surprise that attention to higher education rose to new heights. College education became the norm, and if some students of the 1960s moved beyond the usual social restraints as they pursued higher education, that situation was initially not of concern. This is not to say that the “establishment” (another favorite catch phrase of the period) comfortably accepted the students’ new intellectual pursuits. They did not, but at the same time it was clear that citizens of the free world, and especially in the United States, were stretching themselves so that when they did move from their learning communities and enter the worlds of research and commerce, their modes of thinking were definitely unlike those that had come before. Consequently, their thinking about the role of information and its importance to their endeavors posed new challenges to those who had to deal with the management and delivery of information, knowledge, and strategic learning.

A parallel development of all this upheaval—perhaps not a result but surely a highly relevant and corresponding circumstance—was an economic boom that pulled America out of a 1960 recession into the longest economic expansion in American history. Again librarians, and particularly specialist librarians, found themselves in the right time and the right place, as their parent organizations were able to capitalize on their particular professional skills. Business information was required, both general and related to specific business endeavors, and it was required at all levels, clearly establishing once again John Cotton Dana’s much-desired role for librarianship in providing practical and utilitarian information.

It could be argued that in the 1960s—as the economy grew, as science, technical, and medical (STM) research required more and more interaction with information professionals, as society yearned for more and more answers to its driving questions—specialist librarians came into their own as knowledgeable, respected,

and authoritative information professionals, to be counted on to provide the facts that society, industry, and business required.

Nevertheless, it was not an easy time for the library and information science profession. Those who had committed to careers in librarianship and information management, and particularly those who were drawn (by design or by chance) to specialized librarianship, found themselves once again experiencing a curious professional unease. By 1960, what is now thought of as traditional librarianship (and the expectations that such library work elicited from those not affiliated with the profession) found itself in a not-very-subtle competition with the more specialized, mission-specific, and product-focused information delivery required by science, industry, and business. As the century had moved into its second half, there was still great tension between what people wanted a “library” to be and what levels and types of service delivery were required by different groups of information customers.

The tension was carried forward into the tumultuous decade of the 1960s, but it did not originate with the decade. With respect to information management, Elizabeth Ferguson, who had been the association’s president in 1952-1953, had her own perspective—put forward later—on the tensions and disruptions of the 1960s. As SLA celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1969, Ferguson recalled that the upheavals and excitement of the 1960s had been clearly anticipated in the previous decade:

Does anyone think that the term “confrontation” has just been invented by the Black Panthers or the Students for Democratic Action? As I look back at my activities, it seems to me that I had nothing but confrontations. Three come readily to mind: 1) with the newly self-conscious documentalists in the Washington, D.C. Chapter and at a University of Chicago seminar; 2) with ALA loyalists at the University of Illinois, the home ground of Robert Downs then president of ALA (SLA had “disaffiliated” just before my term and this action was much resented); 3) with the good friends in the California Chapters who felt that Headquarters, and actually that nasty old East Coast, treated them like stepchildren.

Ferguson went on to detail that the issues that had caused those “confrontations” had been resolved by the time she was looking back and, as we shall see, they had indeed been resolved. Documentation, for one, had played an important part in the disruptive but healthy intercourse that was required of information professionals in the 1950s and the 1960s. As Ferguson put it in her memory piece, “documentation of course has been superseded by that vast reality called information science which needs no defending nowadays.” It was a curiously prescient observation, for by the time Ferguson was speaking, in October, 1969, information science had become inexorably linked with librarianship. The connection had been difficult, and even a leader as secure in her understanding of SLA’s future directions as Past-President Ferguson could offer a word of caution. Concluding her comments, Ferguson referred to the “vast reality” of information science by stating in 1969 that “SLA, however, still has a way to go to live with it comfortably.”

In any case, however difficult the inclusion of documentation as an integral component of librarianship in the larger, more traditional library profession might have been, the shift from librarianship to a form of librarianship that included documentation should not have been a difficult transition for specialist librarians. That it was, and that the service delivery model followed by specialist librarians did not naturally lead SLA's members in the direction of re-defining their work to include documentation, seems to have been a missed opportunity for the association. There were attempts to be more inclusive, such as SLA's participation in Library/USA, an exhibition at the 1964 World's Fair in New York. At the fair, SLA joined ALA and the American Documentation Institute in supporting the staff of the exhibit, at which visitors were able to observe librarians utilizing electronic information resources, some of which were already being utilized in the specialized library field, particularly in scientific and industrial research centers. For the first time, a variety of activities that previously had been unavailable, or even considered, could be demonstrated for an admiring public.

But the advocates of specialized librarianship and the advocates of documentation could not together create a single discipline. While we will probably never know exactly why this particular collaboration effort was never realized, some ideas have been put forward. Robert V. Williams seems to have come up with the best analysis of the situation, identifying four reasons why the differences between specialist librarians and documentalists were too great to be bridged: the upheaval in the information world brought on by the much-described "explosion" of scientific information after World War II, the development of techniques and processes for the management of scientific information by the scientists themselves (and not by specialist librarians), and the association's own apparent move toward business and finance information with less attention to sci-tech information. As important as anything else, though, was that specialized librarianship was retreating "back" into something akin to general librarianship. Williams described the situation by noting that specialist librarians "emphasized general education in librarianship to the neglect of the scientific fields they had to serve. They were now librarians first and foremost, and only knowledgeable about their subject areas second, if at all."

For Williams, it was an opportunity lost, for despite being the first American documentalists, specialist librarians lost that position of strength. As he put it, "they relied on general library education for the development of their profession," giving them an affinity "closer to the general librarians than it was to those who were now beginning to call themselves documentalists." The documentalists wanted a new profession, a new discipline, but the specialist librarians wanted documentation and specialized librarianship to be part of general librarianship. It was a situation that could not be resolved, and in the end, it was not.

Still, for many the very idea of "living comfortably" with these issues, in Ferguson's terms, was difficult and much diplomacy and professional respect would be required from all parties during this tense time. The discussions, arguments, and debates were even characterized by some as "information wars," battles to be fought

between the humanists and the scientists, much as C.P. Snow had described the intellectual conflict between those disciplines. It was, as Mark D. Bowles describes it, a professional battle over information retrieval between scientists (documentalists) and humanists (librarians), a situation he characterized as “one of the most significant intellectual concerns of the twentieth century.” For Bowles, the whole situation was important “not only because of its central place within the scientific discourse of its time but also because of the conflict it initiated over information retrieval.” The conflict centered, he wrote, on “the library as a professional battleground between librarians and a relatively new professional group called documentalists,” and “at stake was which professional group would control the future of scientific information....”

Lest anyone doubt the seriousness of what was at stake, Bowles goes on to quote Jesse Shera, already described in this history as one of the great leaders of librarianship, who recognized this “schism within the profession.” Shera characterized the gap between the documentalists and the librarians as American librarianship’s “most critical test” and he urged that effort be made to build collaboration. Bowles—like Williams—raises the question of whether the cultural “divide” (with respect to information management) could not have been narrowed if librarians had been a little more welcoming of technology: “I argue that when the history of information during the last half of the twentieth century is analyzed, it is a story best characterized as the ‘information wars.’ Librarians, with their strong background as humanists, lost part of their identity, power, and profession in their battle against the documentalists and scientists. They lost this battle because of such cultural obstacles as the privileged position of the sciences in relationship to the humanities and because they resisted the coming of the computer to the library.”

Bowles’ analysis of these so-called information wars identified far more complex reasons for the breach than that deceptively clear statement implies. “By the post-World War II period,” he writes, “those who called themselves documentalists narrowed their customer base primarily to serve the sciences. Scientists were the ones most vocal about the information crisis, and during the heightening of the Cold War, government contracts for scientific activities were flowing quickly.... The documentalists wanted to tame the information crisis by becoming the main professional group for controlling information.”

Bowles continues his description of this unhappy state of affairs by noting that “the real difficulty was that the documentalists and librarians had vastly different backgrounds and outlook about how to manage scientific information and what to do about science in crisis.” These differences, with the documentalists emanating from science and engineering and librarianship from the humanities, had to do with their institutional affiliations, the information customers they served (as well as the service expectations of those customers), and differing concepts about, as Bowles put it, “what constituted information.” Librarians, in Bowles’ analysis, were “the defenders of the book as the basic unit of information, while documentalists believed the data contained in books, research papers, technical reports, and governmental studies

were the unit of information. ... Documentalists did not want to do away with the book; rather they wanted the book to exist as a 'reservoir' of knowledge."

Despite the fact that before the war specialist librarians were "advocates of new library mechanisms," even they (as Williams has also noted) "became more technologically conservative after the war." It has even been asserted, by Irene S. Farcas-Conn, that specialist librarians were (as Bowles quotes from Farkas-Conn) "adamantly" opposed to automation. Bowles makes the case that it was fear that held the librarians back and restrained them—as a profession—from becoming enthusiastic about computers and automation. The societal status of science in these Cold War years, combined with a lack of such status for librarianship, brought about a major identity crisis for librarians, and they feared for their future. At the same time, according to Bowles, the language of automation was perceived by librarians as being threatening as well as incomprehensible, and they feared that their role as arbiters of information delivery, much to their dismay, would be taken from them. These fears, along with weaknesses in the education of librarianship, put librarians at such a disadvantage that the profession's resistance to automation grew into a hazard that would not be resolved for decades.

Looking back, it seems that there is no question but that the increased volume of scientific information, the rapid development of storage and retrieval systems, and the strong perception among documentalists that they were somehow different from other information professionals contributed to new thinking about librarianship. Another concept along these lines was the movement to review and evaluate library services as they were being offered. The war and the immediate postwar years had, it would seem, determined that libraries were not being used as efficiently as they might have been. What was being experienced, not just in the scientific community but throughout all areas of study, research, and learning was an amazing sea-change in how information would be captured and then retrieved for use. The people who managed information and the artifacts and information tools that contained the information—the specialist librarians, the documentalists, information scientists—were at a loss as to what to do. As early as 1961, it had become apparent that the much-talked-about "information explosion" was causing serious disruption in the productive management of the research process.

Responding to the pleas of the scientific community, President John F. Kennedy appointed his U.S. President's Science Advisory Committee, chaired by Alvin Weinberg, then Director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (Weinberg was later to direct President Richard Nixon's Office of Energy Research and Development). In 1963, the panel published its report, *Science, Government, and Information: The Responsibilities of the Technical Community and the Government in the Transfer of Information*. Popularly nicknamed "The Weinberg Report," the document became famous for asserting that the transfer of information is "an integral and inseparable part of the research and development process."

One proposed solution was the establishment of science information centers and with those who were employed in specialized librarianship it was obviously a

concept whose time had come. Almost immediately there was a strong movement to re-conceptualize the “special library” as an “information center” for the parent organization, and many specialized libraries changed their names as their organizational managements recognized the value of the broader term. In fact, though, the concept of the specialized library as an information center was not new in the 1960s. As early as 1929, shortly before his death, John Cotton Dana had described the specialized library as a “centre of information” (as he spelled it) that could provide “men of affairs” with industry-specific “knowledge of what has been learned by inquiries the world over.” Dana himself noted that this entity would not be a library in the traditional sense, and that “library” was not always the appropriate word to describe where specialist librarians worked. By 1941, Dana’s “centre of information” was already being described as an “information center,” as newspaper reporter Leland R. Smith noted when he wrote about specialized librarianship: “These librarians often don’t even call their place of business a library.... Their libraries are ‘information centers,’ the librarians are fact finders. And they have their fingers in a lot of queer pies.”

So by the time the Weinberg Report was published, those queer pies now included not just business—as Dana had proposed—but many other subject areas and fields of interest that needed to develop and sustain libraries in support of the larger organization’s work. Their value to their organizations should have been obvious—and recognized—but that was not to be the case. Not surprisingly, the report was greatly discussed and generated much excitement within SLA. Of particular concern was the report’s description of the role of the specialized library, which led to perhaps the first publicly expressed concerns about the image of specialized librarianship. Although much of the discussion about the report at the association’s meeting in Denver in 1963 seemed to relate to seeking further connections with the leaders of the American Documentation Institute (who were also in attendance at the Denver meeting) there were, nevertheless, serious and highly charged debates about the Weinberg Report.

While Past President Winifred Sewell applauded the fact that the Weinberg Report had “buried some misconceptions, such as the idea that a machine can solve all our problems or that good scientific communication is a substitute for good management,” she was disappointed that “through omission or commission,” some misconceptions sneaked through. Still, Sewell (who had been SLA’s president in 1960-1961) saw a silver lining, particularly in terms of the association’s role in providing instruction and education for scientists with respect to managing information: “We applaud the recommendations of the Committee that would have each scientist be educated in the techniques of information handling and that would have him spend half his time in creating new information and half in digesting information from others and communicating his own. ... Perhaps one of the implications of the Report for librarians is that we must take an active part in providing for the continuing education of the scientist in new developments in information and communication.”

William S. Budington, who would be the association's president in 1964-1965, stated his opinion that organizational support for information management would be a key element in its success, and that success in managing information would require "whole-hearted support toward bettering the situation—fiscal support, professional support, and philosophical support." Like many who commented, Budington was not shy about asking how libraries and librarians could have advanced information management if they were not supported and recognized, and he commented that "at least some blame for past history belongs to administrators and users who attribute failure to librarians and their creaky procedures" simply because "in many cases, librarians and their techniques have been denied any opportunity for growth and development." On the other hand, he remarked, "librarians must certainly accept blame, if they have not pressed their case or lit the fires of imaginative progress."

Budington was also proud, he said, to be a member of an organization which put the report forward to its members for reading and discussion. His final comment, though, was the point which captured the attention of his listeners. He told them they would not like what he said, saying "I don't like it either." He was frustrated with the image of the librarian that the report portrayed, and he did not like what he read. "On those rare occasions [when] the word 'librarian' was used," he said, "it was used in the sense of the passive archivist, as a storekeeper of literature." Budington went on to note that in the report's text, "when the literature was processed (bibliographically described, indexed, or abstracted), it was credited to the documentalist. And when there was intellectual interplay between man and the literature, as in information retrieval, it was accomplished by the literature scientist."

"This," Budington said, "is not my concept of librarianship," but he had to admit that "the image of the librarian was honestly reported as the members of the Science Advisory Committee and the writers of the Report saw us."

"The image," Budington said, "is our fault, not theirs."

And how did such an image come about? "At the turn of the century and for the first couple of decades of this century," Budington said, "the leaders of our profession, for the most part innocent of the advantages of formal library school training, brought the profession to new heights." These were laudable achievements, he said, and succeeding generations "approved of what they had done, and enshrined the results in tradition, in library school curricula, and in our professional associations."

But that enshrinement created a strongly conservative profession, Budington said. "Even our Association became conservative, and we excluded from meaningful membership all who do not work in a library," he said, noting that it was only within the last year that "the SLA Bylaws granted active membership to one employed not in a library but in an information center."

Budington then went on to make a passionate appeal for librarianship to get back on track: "Librarianship is more than the traditional work in a library.... [It] encompasses all aspects of the information activity. We are again on the verge of the same type of



achievements that our predecessors accomplished half a century ago. If we turn our eyes from the past, divorce ourselves from tradition, and become a participant in meeting the challenges implied by *Science, Government, and Information*, we will make librarianship meaningful and have no cause for concern about our image.”

This was in 1963. By September 1966 President Lyndon Johnson had appointed his National Advisory Commission on Libraries (sometimes referred to as the Knight Commission, after Douglas M. Knight, the commission’s chairman). The President created the commission, he wrote to the members of SLA, to “appraise our libraries and to recommend actions which would ensure a more efficient, effective library system for the Nation.” In his letter, the President stated why he felt so strongly about the commission and its work: “Our ability to advance human welfare depends upon how well we use what we know.”

President Johnson wanted answers to three questions. He wanted to know what part libraries could play in the development of the Nation’s communications and information-exchange networks, he wanted to know if “our Federal efforts to assist libraries are intelligently administered” or if they were “too fragmented among separate programs and agencies,” and he wanted to know if the Nation was getting the most benefit for the taxpayer’s dollar spent.

By the end of the decade, some answers were beginning to appear, as the turmoil and upheaval in the library and information science field moved from defining the problem to seeking a solution. The Commission published its report, *Library Services for the Nation’s Needs: Toward Fulfillment of a National Policy*, and it was a seminal moment in the history of librarianship and in the history of society’s long relationship with information, research, and knowledge.

Not surprisingly, SLA was there. By 1969, when Congress was ready to move forward with legislation to put the recommendations of the commission into law, SLA President Herbert S. White presented the association’s position to Congress. He stated that after considerable discussion, the association’s Board of Directors voted endorsement of the Report, “and specifically of its recommendation for the establishment of a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.... In further discussion, the Board of Directors of the Special Libraries Association also expressed its support of the proposed establishment of a Federal Institute of Library and Information Science, and stated our strong interest in participating in the planning and implementation of this Institute.” The institute, sadly, did not come to fruition but the commission was established.

In his presentation to the Committee, President White made it clear that the specialized libraries community expected to be represented in the deliberations of the Commission, urging “that in the establishment of the National Commission, in the selection of its membership, and in the delineation of its specific responsibilities, greater emphasis be placed on the interaction with and reliance upon special libraries and information centers, particularly as these occur in the private sector.” Sounding what might have been the first notes in the call for the development of a

national network of library and information resources, President White emphasized that for many specialized disciplines “the great information resources are in fact located in specialized collections held by governmental agencies, non-profit foundations, and private corporations [and] a total effective nationwide resource utilization program, such as I am sure is envisaged by the National Advisory Commission and by the sponsors of HR 8839, must take cognizance of the existence of these specialized collections, and must consider equitable means to draw them into the total resource.”

As the Commission moved forward, due in no small part to President White’s leadership and that of his fellow officers and other SLA leaders, staff, and the association’s membership, SLA’s interest in and support of the Commission and its work continued and grew, with SLA being particularly prominent in the Commission’s early years.

Obviously the issues pertaining to the so-called information wars drove much of the thinking of SLA’s leaders and the association’s programming in the decade of the 1960s. Still, Ferguson’s recollections of concern about the other issues of the 1950s that influenced the decade of the 1960s were valid as well. Fortunately, concerns about SLA’s relationship with the American Library Association receded into the background, and the perceived intellectual and organizational “distance” between the association’s members on the West Coast and those on the East Coast proved not to be a barrier to success for the organization. Apparently happy to report that the librarians/documentalists conflict had been (at least to some extent) settled, Ferguson reported that by 1969 “the other differences are pretty well resolved by now” as well, noting that a “good working relationship” with ALA had been built up. With respect to the distance issues, the feelings among some members that the coasts of America were too far apart, professionally speaking, Ferguson said that “surely California feels integrated by now, having put on several exciting meetings and given us many officers. I don’t really think this was all due to the jet plane but that surely helped.”

Despite the challenges to librarians and information scientists, the larger profession of librarianship looked particularly inviting to many, even to those not affiliated with the profession. In an editorial in 1964, the popular and long-established magazine *Esquire* invited qualified management apprentices to seek a career in librarianship. “Young Man, Be a Librarian” caught the mood of the times. Arnold Gingrich, the magazine’s editor, noted that with the information explosion and with Federal funds being made available for the support of libraries, the opportunities for men to advance and advance quickly were open. Preceding as it did the awakening awareness of the need for re-thinking the role of women in the professional realm, the editorial typically encouraged males to move into a field traditionally recognized as one of the “nurturing” professions. With its great need for quality management (regardless of the gender of the managers, as was recognized very shortly throughout the profession), the article noted that librarianship—until now not

recognized as one of the “management” fields—needed good managers. *Esquire* was doing its best to lure new managers into careers in librarianship.

In specialized librarianship those opportunities were being seized upon in full force, and people like Winifred Sewell, William Budington, Alleen Thompson, Frank E. McKenna, Elizabeth Usher, and Herbert S. White were quite happy to speak out about the need for management expertise in the profession, frequently referring to specialized librarianship as a model for the profession at large. As she ended her presidential year in June, 1961, Sewell noted that the association itself was now being looked at from a management perspective. Her Goals for 1970 Committee was actively pursuing a course which would determine whether “the continued proliferation of activities is a good thing for SLA.” A year later, that committee had refined its purpose, to think and plan for the future of SLA “in light of the information needs of the organizations for which members work and of the broad social and scientific changes that have taken place in our times.” Recognizing that “the composition of the membership is changing and the information requirements of their organizations are changing, what we need from SLA and what we can accomplish through it must also be changing.” The Committee then called for a “long-range look at the way SLA is organized, the many and varied services it performs and—even more important—should be prepared to perform if it is to keep pace with its members’ needs for mutual service in the dynamic and specialized society in which we all live and work.”

One interesting fact to come from the committee’s work was the role of SLA members as leaders. In its initial findings, the Goals for 1970 Committee identified nearly 500 people in leadership roles in the association, about 8% of the association’s 5,700 members at the time. Of these, 13-14 per cent were serving in “double, triple, or sometimes quadruple capacity,” leading the committee to question if the association was “trying to do too much in too many directions.” To decide if this situation was “a good thing for the association,” the committee called for a “thorough and realistic” management review and by 1963, the review had been completed. In the committee’s final report, Sewell reported the committee’s recommendations which were to, first, “assure adequate availability of the right kind of special librarian/information specialist through recruitment, basic training, continuing education, and maintenance of standards.” Success in this effort would then enable “recognition of the information field and the basic part played by the special librarian” and lead to success in another direction (perhaps harking back to the debate about librarianship vs. documentation), the responsibility of “insuring the necessary secondary bibliographic resources” are available to the users of specialized libraries. Finally, the committee’s report recommended that a “basic and continuing research program” be initiated, in order to provide the knowledge required “to analyze the trends and changes,” including experimentation “in techniques to solve problems as they are identified.” Success in accomplishing these goals and encompassing this philosophy, the committee concluded, will provide the specialist librarian with “an exciting and challenging future in a field that is basic to continued human progress.”

Management concerns were not limited to the management of the association. Concurrent with the work of the Goals for 1970 Committee, SLA's leaders also organized a study of the role and need for standards for special libraries. In 1959, the association's Professional Standards Committee had encouraged SLA to look at standards for this specific branch of librarianship itself. When the standards were published, in December, 1964, President Budington wrote that the promotion of high professional standards "relates to the competence and endeavor of individual members" and also "pertains to the characteristics and performance of the service units and organizations that are called such names as special libraries or information centers." The goal was to promote the "achievement of excellence," and the objectives and standards put forward by the association clearly laid out the expected role of specialist librarians within their parent organizations and within society itself. Three stated objectives of the specialized library were listed, that the specialized library is a "major source of information in the organization it serves," that it "acquires, organizes, maintains, utilizes, and disseminates informational materials germane to the organization's activities," and that it serves "all who have appropriate need of its services."

By March, 1965, three months after the publication of the "Objectives and Standards for Special Libraries," a group of library consultants, educators, library managers, and "practicing special librarians" submitted their "frank opinions" about the document. Although there were some concerns about generalizations in the document, by and large the effort to articulate and publish objectives and standards for specialized libraries was applauded, with the general consensus being that the document was a "valuable contribution" to the overall library profession. As it turned out, the document was used as a vehicle for taking the subject of standards for specialized libraries into the larger management community. Gordon E. Randall, for example, who was employed as the Librarian at IBM's Thomas J Watson Research Center Library in Yorktown Heights, NY spoke on the subject for the American Management Association. In his presentation, Randall made a point of alluding to the great diversity and variation of specialized libraries, noting that this first publication of standards was of necessity general in nature and that for each of the subjects addressed in the standards document, Randall said, it was necessary to recognize these differences.

Randall's presentations to the wider management community (and those of other association leaders) were a logical step in SLA's continuing development as an information- and knowledge-focused organization, increasingly distancing itself from traditional librarianship. There had been concern among the association's leaders, even prior to World War II and the confused and difficult times that followed, that the perception of those not affiliated with libraries and librarianship about the role of libraries in society was detrimental to the successful management of specialized libraries. In particular, as has been described here, SLA's leadership was especially concerned about those who did not understand the unique attributes of specialized librarianship. By the early 1960s a decision had been made to make official those concerns. Having experienced a change in staff leadership, with Bill Woods now

serving as Executive Secretary (with his title to be changed later to Executive Director), the association's leaders decided to move forward. For Woods and the members of the Board, it became important to pursue a program of public relations for the association and for this branch of the profession, to ensure that the larger world would come to understand what specialized librarianship is.

As a result, a number of initiatives were put forward, including the establishment of a designated operational entity specifically charged with raising awareness about the distinctive role of the specialized library. SLA's new Publications and Public Relations Department was organized early in the decade, just after the association had initiated the John Cotton Dana Lectures in Special Librarianship. The lectures, established during the Association's 50th anniversary year, and named to commemorate Dana as the founder of SLA, were presented "to inform students about the field of special librarianship and information work." By 1968, more than 70 lectures had been presented. Typical lecture topics had to do with specialized librarianship as a "dynamic" profession, the library/machine relationship, the impact of technology, and career planning for specialized librarianship, this last delivered by Future President Vivian D. Hewitt of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in New York, NY. Hollis L. Griffin from the Argonne National Laboratories spoke about "The Librarian and Computers: A Partnership for Library Science" and Elizabeth Ferguson spoke about "Cooperative Library Systems and Special Libraries." All in all, the list of presentations is extensive and evokes a sensational and almost breath-taking impression, and particularly for today's practicing specialist librarians and the association's leaders, a sense of great pride. These people knew that the work they were doing was important, and that their contributions—often unacknowledged and seldom supported at the level at which they needed to be supported—were critical to the success of the organizations which employed them. Their pride, too, in their role in contributing to the common good comes through, and the attention they gave to preparing their presentations testifies to the fact that they wanted to encourage others to join them.

As the years passed the focus of the Dana Lectures changed and the topics of the presentations ranged from the introductory to the very serious, including advance looks at how some of the speakers expected the profession to evolve. Of particular interest—and providing a good indication of the subjects that concerned managers of specialized libraries and information centers in the decade of the 1960s—is the lecture presented by Dr. L.H. Linder of the Aeronautic Division, Philco-Ford Corporation, Newport Beach, CA. Speaking in 1967 on the subject of "Some Problems and Prospects in Special Librarianship," Linder introduced his subject by briefly describing special libraries and stating SLA's goals, and then, as he described his presentation later, he "attempted ... to define special librarianship by reviewing the older, more conventional definitions as well as recent ones," commenting that specialized librarianship is viewed as dynamic librarianship through its emphasis on an almost total service orientation on the part of the special librarian.

Linder then enumerated “some typical problems confronting special librarians,” including user apathy toward the library, the “knowledge explosion” (noting that “no immediate solutions are foreseen for this”), and education for special librarianship, commenting that “the lack of uniformity in training is seen as the reason for great diversities in skills and accomplishments which characterize our field.”

Linder continued his lecture by reviewing three new developments which he predicted would lead to success in the management of information, particularly as undertaken in specialized libraries and information centers: “The first is ‘Micro-Techniques’ which are operationally successful in many places and which enable us to store larger amounts of information than formerly in our same libraries. The second is ‘Automation’ used here primarily in the sense of automating or mechanizing existing procedures, especially those in the technical processes areas.” The final development Linder discussed was “‘Networks,’ seen as affiliations or linkages of equal but independent libraries or information centers. While many problems remain to be overcome before such networks can be truly successful, they alone hold the promise of salvation for us from the combined effects of ever increasing outpourings of recorded information and continued proliferation of specialties within and between disciplines.”

The success of the John Cotton Dana Lectures in Special Librarianship was matched with a great burst of enthusiasm about promoting specialized librarianship itself, particularly as a career choice. A new recruitment brochure for high school students (“What is a Special Librarian?”) was published and disseminated, along with “data sheets” describing different kinds of specialized libraries. In 1961-62, “Is Knowledge Power?”—a television film featuring Senator Hubert H. Humphrey—introduced a panel of scientists and librarians talking about the role of information in their work, and prints of the film were obtained for free circulation among the association’s members. Another recruitment pamphlet was issued, this one for college students (“Special Librarianship—Information at Work”). Ruth S. Leonard, a consultant on professional standards, prepared and the association published additional recruitment materials, including two more pamphlets, “Objectives of Special Libraries” and “Profiles of Special Libraries.”

Related to these attempts to attract new people to the profession, the SLA membership (and particularly its leaders) continued to examine the role of the specialist librarian. In 1966, as the association prepared for its annual convention, to be held in Minneapolis, Convention Program Chair and Past President Grieg Aspnes issued what was almost a call to arms for specialist librarians. Challenging SLA members to prepare for the convention by thinking about their theme (“The Special Librarian—Vital Link in Communication”) and to accept their role in their organizations as communicators, Aspnes identified five communication problems “common to most special librarians, no matter what the size of their library or subject matter”: communicating with the user (or would-be user), with management, via indexes, with “The Machine” (“machines are inching into our libraries ... what is our responsibility in trying to understand them, to talk their language, to use them to

improve our services?”), and with SLA headquarters. Aspnes concluded: “As a special librarian, you have responsibilities greater and more varied than the average public, college, or school librarian in these areas of human communication.”

By the end of the decade, that role of manager, communicator, and knowledge leader in the employing organization had evolved into a *pro forma* job description for many in specialized librarianship. Epitomized by Herbert S. White, specialist librarian, manager, and scientist, (and later an important educator for the profession) who became the association’s president in 1968, it became a function of the association’s leaders to encourage innovative and opportunity-focused thinking in SLA’s members. White’s column in the association’s journal in February 1969—typically titled “Toward Professionalism” to be thought provoking—was a good example of how the association was attempting to lead its members into re-thinking their professional engagement. White felt strongly that librarianship, “and special librarianship in particular” was at the time “a profession in transition.” Commenting on how “dynamically” the field was involved in change, he predicted that the end results of that change “will depend on us.” It was a “challenging and exciting situation,” White said. At the same time, he pointed out that the concept of specialized librarianship itself faced a threat, one that “arises from the fact that, quite suddenly, we have competition in the information business.”

That focus on management and competition carried over into the operations of SLA as an association. Recognizing that specialized librarianship was a profession in change—advancing through a transition that was taking it in different directions depending on the requirements and leadership of those in the management community who employed specialist librarians—SLA’s leadership took important steps to ensure that the organization would be structured to respond to its members and their needs. The management of the association and communication among the various SLA groups, sub-groups, and all other affiliates became a major focus. Simultaneously, the convergence of information management with what would become in later years known as “knowledge management” and strategic learning—both to support members in their work and to train them for leadership responsibility in the association—were all taken up by SLA’s leaders and its staff in order to provide better services for the members of the association.

In his comments, White had made reference to that “branching road to specialized librarianship,” an image that proved to be remarkably appropriate over the next several decades of SLA’s history. One of the association’s greatest strengths—and at the same time one of its greatest challenges—would be its very diversity, as Randall and others had noted in their presentations to the wider management community. The fact was that SLA was made up of information professionals who provided practical and authoritative information to their identified users; SLA’s members did work that was different from the work of other librarians. At the same time, though, the vast number of types of organizations that required the skills of specialist librarians and the many different subject specialties and disciplines that their work supported was continually an issue. Attempts were made within SLA to

bring information professionals with similar or related issues together. And that “branching road” was not going to stretch very far into the distance or structure the profession’s future if SLA—the primary support organization for information professionals working in specialized librarianship—could not provide the foundation and the infrastructure the profession required. Ultimate success came about through much trial and error in the development of the association office and the restructuring efforts of the SLA leadership. It was in the decade of the 1960s that the management of the association, as a serious operational function, began to fall into place and, at the same time, the association *as an association* became a stronger, more focused organization. SLA made progress in these directions in four distinct areas: the organizational structure of the association, its management operations, services provided for members, and, of particularly note, the education and training of specialist librarians.

In all vibrant organizations, structural and operational elements must be reviewed from time to time and SLA in the 1960s was no exception. In 1962-1963, after much discussion and debate, the SLA constitution and bylaws were replaced by a single bylaws document. The Executive Board became the Board of Directors, and the second vice-president became chairman of the Advisory Council. The new office of chairman-elect of the Advisory Council was defined, the office of elected secretary was abolished (the secretary to the board would be appointed by the president), and with respect to membership, requirements for Affiliate and Associate Membership were altered. At long last, groups within chapters were officially recognized and additional chapter affiliations were permitted. In 1964-1965, certainly in keeping with the tenor of the times, official SLA policy was reaffirmed to state that membership and participation in the association and its units was not limited in any respect by race, creed, color, or national origin and that all meetings were to be conducted to assure compliance (with the association itself identified an Equal Opportunity Employer).

The management of the association as an operational entity also underwent many important changes in the decade. A retirement program for office staff was established and the office operation moved to a new space, since Stechert-Hafner needed the space which the company had previously been renting to the association at its offices in New York City. As a result, SLA moved to 235 Park Avenue South, staying in New York City. Bill Woods served as Executive Director until 1967. He was briefly succeeded by Acting Executive Director Eleanor W. Gibson, until George H. Ginader was appointed to the position. Under Ginader’s leadership, the association began to use an investment management service to handle portions of the SLA Reserve Fund and its Scholarship Fund, a “pay plan” was initiated for association staff, and a mechanized system for managing subscriptions and membership records (with membership nearing the 6,500 mark) was put in place. The association office entered into a new era, one in which the same levels of professionalism that its members practiced in their work came to be expected in the management of the association’s office and resources. By the time the decade came to its end, proceedings had been put in place to seek reclassification from the



Internal Revenue Service, to establish SLA as a Section 501 (c)(3) organization, that is, as an educational, scientific, literary, or charitable organization, to replace the association's previous 501 (c)(6) classification, as a trade association.

A critical element in the management of the association, which also related directly to the services SLA provided for its members, was the association's publications program. Until the 1960s, publications sponsored by the association were generally the work of well-meaning and extremely hard working SLA members who—along with the occasional paid staff—gave much time and energy to ensuring that the knowledge developed in the specialized libraries community was shared for the benefit of all who were affiliated with that community. By the late 1950s, it had become apparent that this unstructured arrangement was not in the best interests of the association or its members, and in 1960 the association office established a publications department. By the next year, as noted earlier, the department had been expanded into a "Publications and Public Relations" department, and the first exhibit of SLA publications and services was presented at the Annual Conference in Los Angeles. The *Bulletin* was replaced by *News and Notes*, a quarterly publication that sought to supplement *Special Libraries*, and the association contracted with University Microfilms to supply microfilm copies of *Special Libraries* as they were required.

The association's list of publications continued to expand, with the Science-Technology Division's *Scientific Meetings* taken over as an SLA title, joining *Special Libraries* and *Technical Book Review Index* (each of which now charged \$10 per year for subscriptions). By this time, the association's Translation Center had become an essential resource for the specialized library and research community, and the center's *Translations Register-Index* also became one of SLA's publications. The relationship between SLA and its Translation Center was sadly short lived, as it soon became apparent that the translations activities were too specialized for the association to manage effectively. In 1969 the sponsorship of the SLA Translations Center was transferred from SLA to the John Crerar Library in Chicago (where—as noted earlier—the translations had been housed since 1953), with the name changed to the National Translation Center.

Personnel concerns turned out to be a focus throughout the decade and the SLA salary surveys continued, becoming established as triennial by the end of the decade. A personnel survey questionnaire was published in *Special Libraries* in March 1960, coinciding with the establishment of the association's Placement Policy Committee, which itself a year later adopted a formal policy for the association's Placement Service. By the end of the decade, the SLA Employment Clearing House was authorized to replace the former Placement Service.

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\* The National Translation Center was later transferred to the Library of Congress. That operation closed in 1993 and the holdings were transferred to the National Research Council Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (NRC-CISTI).

Bringing association leaders into direct contact with the membership continued to be an important service to members. While presidential visits to chapters had been a part of the association's services for members for many years, in 1961 the duty was expanded to include the president-elect, establishing SLA's commitment to bringing members together with the association's leaders as often as possible. The visits of the SLA president and president-elect to chapters has been an established protocol ever since.

One of the most popular services for members was a column published in *Special Libraries* seeking to invite members to respond to a "what-would-you-do?" type of situation. Written by New York Chapter member Louise Stoops, the column posed a management situation to which readers were invited to respond, typically one in which the specialist librarian's workflow or service delivery was affected. The following month, readers' responses were published. Related to Stoops' popular column was the continuing concern of SLA leaders with training and education for specialist librarians and the role of SLA in influencing those with decision-making responsibility with respect to training and education.

Since the earliest days of specialized librarianship, the conflict between the typical generalist education undertaken for librarianship and specific training for John Cotton Dana's specialized service delivery had been an ongoing concern (as has been noted). As the new decade began, the association was able to move further into the education arena. SLA's Education Committee was formed in 1961, and later that year the first H.W. Wilson Company contribution (\$2,000) to the Scholarship and Student Loan Fund gave SLA the means by which the association could influence the selection of candidates for further education in librarianship. Building on that interest in education for specialist librarians, Past President Elizabeth W. Owens published "A Survey of Special Library Education," Lucy J. Maddox wrote about "Collegiate Training for Library Technicians," and another article, "Recruiting Librarians with Advanced Training in Specialized Fields," a summary of a study which had been conducted by the Recruitment Committee of the Georgia Chapter in 1958-1959 were all published in the July-August 1960 issue of *Special Libraries*. Three years later, Christopher G. Stevenson attempted to provide insight into what would be required in educating librarians of the future in "Library Education: The Shape of the Future." By September of that year, the association had sponsored its first forum on education for specialized librarianship. Planning for continuing education and what is today referred to as "professional development" began to move forward seriously as education seminars were tackled in 1966-67, and several such education programs were held. By SLA's 1969 Annual Conference (the term "convention" having been replaced in 1967, to emphasize professional program content), SLA was able to initiate continuing education seminars for the members.

Concern continued about formal education for specialized librarianship. While it may seem odd that just as this concern was growing, the association discontinued its student loan program (on the belief that such loans were readily available elsewhere), the fact is that this was not a negative development. No sooner had this

decision been made than the association determined—as the decade drew to a close—that its financial contributions to the formal education of specialist librarians would henceforth be in the form of direct scholarships. SLA’s leadership was firmly establishing the association as an educational organization, just as it was described in its formal and legal organizational statement.

Like the world around it, SLA was experiencing major changes in the 1960s. These changes involved not only the association’s services to its members and the way specialist librarians were perceived, but also a fundamental re-thinking of the role of the specialized library. The 1960s did not mark the first time that SLA had looked toward the future of the profession, but it was the first time serious questions were raised as to whether or not there was a future, and what SLA and specialist librarians could do to assure a positive answer to that question.