

# View from the head of the table

## The challenges of building on success

Last June I assumed the presidency of an Association that I care very much about, as demonstrated by my active involvement with the Special Libraries Association for more than twenty-five years. I can see all of our past successes, and the challenge of my presidential year is to build on these to achieve new standards of excellence.

The biggest challenge will be to structure programs and activities that develop the professional and personal competencies we require to be successful leaders in the twenty-first century — if you are not familiar with our competencies document published last year visit our web site at [www.sla.org](http://www.sla.org). We now have a new vision statement for our professional development program which includes an expanded career advisory component. Our courses will continue to be offered in a variety of formats including distance education modules, video conferences, self-study programs and courses offered at our annual conference and winter meeting. These courses will incorporate the latest in technology and will be reinforced by our exhibit hall as we aggressively seek new technology vendors.

Another challenge is identifying the brightest students entering our library science programs and encouraging them to join the Association. We are fortunate that we can offer six scholarships each year. Many chapters offer partial tuition stipends to students and all are encouraged to involve students in chapter activities. Our chapters and divisions support students by offering several travel stipends to attend the Association's annual conference where they meet fellow students, members and the Association leadership, and can take advantage of our career advisory services and other mentoring opportunities. We encourage students to form student groups at the different li-

brary schools and we recognize their best projects at an annual reception for students. These efforts are very important for the continued health of our Association. We want students to select the Special Libraries Association as their association, and in time assume leadership roles within the Association.

Last June the board of directors adopted a new strategic plan, which identified our initial priorities. They are programs that focus on development of professional competencies, improvement in the perceived value of the information professional to their organization and a continuation in our efforts to build a world-class virtual association. These efforts are designed to improve membership services for our current members and to enhance services we offer to our non-North American members who are joining the Association in greater numbers each year.

We continue to seek more collaborative ways to work with other associations. Last March we sponsored, with the Medical Library Association and the American Association of Law Librarians, a very successful video conference. Plans are underway to do something similar this coming year. We are also including some activities at our annual conference which will have greater international focus. Successful activities will then become regular features of conferences including our October 2000 conference in Brighton, England.

Our professional world is changing rapidly, the need for quality information providers is increasing and it is my responsibility as president of the Special Libraries Association this year to see that the Association provides programs designed to prepare members for the knowledge age.

*\* Judy Field, president,  
Special Libraries Association*

## Libraries **Alive!**

The practitioners' consortium - an independent Australian consulting company creating library services for the 21st century. Verve and zest in information management?

For details please contact  
**Ian McCallum**

on (02) 6247 4089 or email at  
[ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au](mailto:ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au)

### TRIAD

DATA MAGIC PTY LTD  
Tel (03) 9696 4866

Visit our Web site, come to  
our stand at VALA or call us  
for more information about:

- Database Creation  
*Use DB/Textworks and BookWhere for information capture and management*
- Web Publishing  
*Use our Web Hosting Service to put your database on the World Wide Web*
- Data Conversion Services  
*MARC, ASCII and other formats*

with  
**Inmagic DB/TextWorks  
DB/Text WebPublisher  
BookWhere?**  
and many other products and  
services.

Resource Options  
Brisbane  
Tel (07) 3849 1383

Information Enterprises  
Australia, Perth  
Tel (08) 9335 2533

Enterprise Information  
Management, Sydney  
Tel (02) 9958 7099