Library Employee Honored

Jan Sohigian, the Lamar Soutter Library’s Administrative Assistant, was the recipient of the University of Massachusetts Medical School’s “Employee of the Month Award” in April. She is the second Library employee to win this award in the past two years. Jan was recognized for her outstanding work and for her commitment to customer service. As the recipient of the “Employee of the Month Award”, Jan received several gifts from the University, some of which she shared with her fellow Library employees. She, along with 12 other employees from UMass, will be honored at the Governor’s Performance Recognition Dinner and at the UMass Employee Appreciation Awards, both occurring in September. Jan was presented with her award at a ceremony in the Faculty Conference Room. The staff of the Lamar Soutter Library celebrated this honor with a party for her after the presentation. Library Director Elaine Martin noted that “the Library is extremely fortunate to have a second employee receive this award. Jan’s name is permanently etched on this year’s plaque honoring each “Employee of the Month.”

MLA Goes North of the Border

Recently, a number of staff of the Lamar Soutter Library attended the first joint meeting of the Medical Library Association and the Canadian Health Libraries Association. At this May 5-10 annual MLA convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, presentations by these professionals from UMMS were well-received. Slides of their presentations are available on the Library’s web page.

A paper describing the implementation of wireless technology for access to the University’s campus-wide backbone via laptop computers was given by Deputy Director Debbie Sibley, Systems Librarian Mary Piorun, and Assistant Director for Access Services Mary Ann Slocomb. It was presented as part of a session on “Innovative Solutions to Networking Issues” for the Educational Media and Technologies Section of MLA on Tuesday, May 9. The visual portion of the presentation, with the authors’ e-mail addresses, may be viewed at http://library.umassmed.edu/~mpiorun/mla2000.html. The documentation for the program, including the circulation procedures and the form to be signed by the borrower, are accessible there as well. The audio portion was taped and is available for sale through MLA.
ADA Issues at LSL

Linda Hayes, the Lamar Soutter Library’s Coordinator for the Americans with Disabilities Act, has been serving in this capacity since March, 1999. Linda has consulted with Deputy Director Debbie Sibley and John Peters of Facilities Management about the ADA compliance of the library.

Linda says, “I have learned a great deal in the past few years about not being able to do the everyday things you automatically do during the day, and how you can adjust with the help of others. Maybe I can make a difference to someone who needs assistance like I did.”

In surveying the Library from the perspective of her motorized cart, some of the problems identified by Linda in her inspections around the library have included:

- Step stools and trash cans impeding progress in the stacks.
- Chairs left pushed out from tables.
- An elevator that requires a great deal of maneuvering to get in and out.
- Impossible angles to navigate when trying to access the bathrooms.
- Elevator buttons too high to reach with any degree of comfort.
- The Government Documents section is far too narrow for any wheelchair.
- Fire alarm pulls are out of reach.

Some steps have been taken to make the Library more ADA-compliant. There has been a shifting of trash cans at the ends of the stacks so that there is better wheelchair access. One of the photocopy card machines and the telephone in the photocopy room are now at a level for wheelchair-bound patrons.

After visiting the Palmer Public Library, Linda had some further suggestions:

- Automatic or remote door openers.
- A pay phone that can be operated by a person with vision or hearing problems.
- Door openers that are levers, which are more easily gripped than round knobs.
- Better signage at a low level.
- Better lighting in the stacks, reading areas, and hallways.
- Talking books.
- Large print books.
- Information on programs and how to get assistance to use materials.

The Lamar Soutter Library also has a computer workstation for the visually-impaired. Programs loaded for use are:

- Jaws for Windows 3.3
- Kurzweil 1000 V4.0
- Zoom Text Xtra
- Microsoft Access

The Library is taking a hard look at ADA issues, as the major renovation will require many changes to render it legally compliant. But it looks like we are on the right track.

The Library Collection: Help Us Help You

The Lamar Soutter Library welcomes and encourages suggestions for books to be added to the Library’s collection. Request forms are available at the Circulation Desk or on the Library’s webpage at http://library.umassmed.edu/MatReq.html.

Items are added to the collection in support of the mission of the Library and its written Collection Development Policy, as the budget allows.

For more information, please contact Barbara Ingrassia, Assistant Director for Library Technical Services, at (508) 856-1041 or by e-mail at: Barbara.Ingrassia@umassmed.edu.
Doctors of Literature; Or, The Pen is Mightier Than the Scalpel

What do Anton Chekhov, Robert Coles, Robin Cook, Michael Crichton, A. J. Cronin, Arthur Conan Doyle, Oliver Wendell Holmes, W. Somerset Maugham, Axel Munthe, William Nolan, Walker Percy, Oliver Sachs, Richard Selzer, Tobias Smollett, and William Carlos Williams have in common? All are doctors better known as writers than as physicians. As outstanding authors, these and other literary medics have distinguished themselves in fiction (short stories and novels) and non-fiction (poetry, plays, essays, autobiographies, and reportage).

Among the Americans, Boston ophthalmologist Robin Cook has won fame for his medical thrillers, including Coma, his most famous, which was translated into film. Cook’s novels often feature unscrupulous physicians or medical researchers. Though Michael Crichton graduated from Harvard Medical School, he never practiced medicine, though scientific subjects often appear prominently in such popular works of his as Andromeda Strain (a science-fiction thriller) and Jurassic Park, both of which also found later success at the movie box office.

Highly respected Walker Percy (1916–1990), a graduate of Columbia University’s medical school, contracted tuberculosis after practicing for a year. As he recuperated, he began to write and never returned to medicine. Percy’s first novel, The Moviegoer (1961), won the National Book Award. Finally, there is poet William Carlos Williams, a practicing pediatrician who delivered 3,000 babies in a working class neighborhood of Rutherford, N. J.; he posthumously won a Pulitzer Prize for his two-volume work, Paterson (1946).

Well-known writers from the British Isles include the Scotsman A(rchibald) J (oseph) Cronin (1896–1981), a physician who wrote many admired novels about the medical profession. Two of Cronin’s most widely read, The Citadel and The Keys of the Kingdom, also were adapted as popular films. Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle created perhaps the best-known detective of all time, the masterful Sherlock Holmes, whose last name was inspired by another distinguished literary physician, Oliver Wendell Holmes. Sherlock’s amazing deductive reasoning powers were based on those of still another physician, Edinburgh professor, Dr. Joseph Bell. Though he never practiced medicine, the great storyteller Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) learned medicine at St. Thomas Hospital in London. Author of over sixty books, Maugham’s illustrious works include Of Human Bondage (1915) and The Moon and Sixpence (1919).

As for the theater, one of the greatest dramatist of modern times, Anton Chekhov (1860 –1904) struggled to make ends meet as a practicing physician in Czarist Russia but gained world acclaim for his plays and short stories.

Nor can we omit the many famous medically trained non-fiction writers including:

- Robert Coles, a Harvard child psychiatrist and Pulitzer Prize winner, for his many books on the lives of children, among them the
Seven poster proposals submitted by The Lamar Soutter Library staff have been accepted for display at the North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries’ 2000 annual conference, to be held October 22-24 in Newport, Rhode Island.

Focusing on the theme “Portals to Partnership,” the poster titles and their presenters are as follows:

- **Closing the Health Information Divide: UMass HealthNet.** Javier Crespo, Asst. Director, UMass HealthNet; Elaine Russo Martin, Library Director.
- **Expanding the OPAC.** Mary Piorun, Systems Librarian.
- **The Worcester Gateway: A Portal for Partners in Consumer Health.** Gael Evans, Reference Librarian; Kelly McManus, Corporate Librarian; Barbara Ingrassia, Asst. Director for Technical Services; Elaine Russo Martin, Library Director.
- **Usability Testing Evidence-Based (EBM) Web Tutorial.** Robert Vander Hart, Reference Librarian; Peg Spinner, Reference Librarian.
- **Librarian-Faculty Collaboration to Provide EBM Resources to Family Medicine Residents in Community Settings.** Patricia Carney, Reference Librarian; Peg Spinner, Reference Librarian.
- **The Worcester Gateway: A Portal for Partners in Consumer Health.** Gael Evans, Reference Librarian; Kelly McManus, Corporate Librarian; Barbara Ingrassia, Asst. Director for Technical Services; Elaine Russo Martin, Library Director.
- **Expanding the OPAC.** Mary Piorun, Systems Librarian; Pauline McCormick, Cataloger; with Andy Dzaugis of UMass/ Memorial Health Care and Kay Landry of Heywood Hospital.
- **From a Paper-Based System to a Database: Using Microsoft Access to Track Reference Desk Usage.** Mary Piorun, Systems Librarian; Jim Comes, Associate Director.
- **Integrating Information Retrieval Skills Training with the Undergraduate Medical School Curriculum.** Gael Evans, Reference Librarian; Peg Spinner, Reference Librarian.
- **Librarian-Faculty Collaboration to Provide EBM Resources to Family Medicine Residents in Community Settings.** Patricia Carney, Reference Librarian; Peg Spinner, Reference Librarian.

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**Doctors of Literature cont. from page 3**

5-volume *Children of Crisis.*
- Oliver Sachs, a neurologist and author of *Awakenings,* a moving account Parkinson’s Disease victims and later a major motion picture starring Robin Williams
- Richard Selzer, a retired Yale medical surgeon and author of the highly acclaimed *Confessions of a Knife.*
- Bernie Siegel, author of *Love, Medicine & Miracles: Lessons Learned From a Surgeon’s Experience with Exceptional Patients,* emphasizing the link between mind and body, how patients overcome major illness using will, faith, and conviction rather than surgery and drugs.
- Lewis Thomas, a gifted essayist and past president of Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital, whose *Lives of a Cell* won a National Book Award.

Finally, we remember English physician, Dr. Peter Roget (1779 - 1869), who in addition to having had a distinguished medical career, left us with his most lasting achievement, twelve years in the making - a work continuing to provide first aid to every writer, the indispensable Roget’s Thesaurus.

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