

[Remarks delivered at the 61st Annual Meeting of the Philadelphia Regional Chapter of the Medical Library Association on May 1, 2012, at the Philadelphia Racquet Club]

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Gary Kaplan, from Thomas Jefferson University and your chapter Chair. On behalf of the MLA Philadelphia Regional Chapter, thank you for coming to our 61st Annual Dinner.

As many of you know, at these annual dinners we take care of some chapter business, recognize our generous sponsors, fete our accomplished colleagues, hear from a distinguished guest speaker, and then catch up with colleagues over a delicious dinner.

I've been coming to these dinners for most of my 10 years in medical librarianship and speaking to you this evening gives me a chance to reflect on how valuable the chapter has been to me. I consider many of you my friends and mentors. Seven years ago, you put together the CE at duPont Hospital in Wilmington, DE, called "Filtering the Evidence" that gave me a strong foundation in evidence based medicine that I continue to rely on every day in my work.

Last Spring, when the board began planning this year's activities, we looked to MLA National President, Gerry Perry's priorities. One was about translational science, so we added it to the list of options on the programing survey and it took first place. Throughout the year we've offered several great programs on various parts of this topic including Team Science at the fall webcast, Data Curation at our March program, Translational Bioinformatics at last week's continuing education workshop, and culminating with tonight's guest speaker.

It's my hope that seven years from now people will look back at these activities and see the same kind of value I see looking back on the chapter's earlier work on EBM. I think the two topics have a lot in common. Diane Rein spoke at last week's CE about the need for all health related disciplines to become "habituated" in the concepts of bioinformatics in a way that reminded me so much of the ongoing efforts of medical librarians to support and encourage evidence-based practice among our clients. I felt a bit of that habituation taking root this weekend while reading an article in the paper. It was about a newly discovered form of intellectual disability and my librarian habituated mind was already scanning for the source of

the original publication (American Journal of Human Genetics), but when the story mentioned a link between the disability and the NSUN2 gene I thought, “ah, I’ll check that in the Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man database!” (which, by the way, for those of you who weren’t at the training—it’s no longer an NCBI db, so give yourself a refresher at omim.org and watch for news over the next year year, because the federal funding that continues to support its curation is in question).

With your continued support—membership, serving on the board and committees, networking at events and online, and generally inspiring each other—I’m confident that seven years from now the chapter will continue to be adapting, innovating, and providing value to its members. But it’s no small thing; I urge you not to take it for granted. I probably don’t have to tell you it’s hard work, but it’s also fun and extremely rewarding.

I’m pleased to report that this year we didn’t take it for granted and our chapter is in great shape because of it. We have 92 current members, a tick up from last year at this time. As you’ll hear from Mitzi, our treasury is sound. And thanks to our committed, hard working board, we’ve held valuable events on the kind of niche topics that distinguish our chapter: translational science, expert searching, mobile technologies in health science libraries, and on the medical humanities front, a screening of the Quay Brothers film at and about the College of Physicians.

Among many other efforts the board is working on, I’d like to mention three:

First, Andrea MacDonald from Jenny Pierce’s CE committee is posting about relevant, non-chapter sponsored educational opportunities. We have a great working relationship with SLA Philly. If you’re involved with other regional organizations that provide complimentary CE opportunities, please talk to her. These partnerships are vital for our chapter.

Second, Christine Davidian from PCOM and Mark Puterbaugh’s Web Committee has taken on the role of jobs coordinator. Please send her jobs for posting. I was excited to see her first post was for a position at our region’s newest medical school, Cooper Medical School at Rowan University. I look forward to a chapter tour and reception when the dust settles across the river.

Third, Priscilla Stephenson from the Philadelphia VA is our chapter’s

steering committee co-chair for Connections: MLA Quad Chapter Meeting, coming up in Baltimore, October 13-16. Please talk to her about the exciting program being developed. I look forward to seeing a big MLA-Phil turnout at the Inner Harbour, continuing our successful tradition of joint meetings: 3 by the Sea, and the Quint meeting before that.

Thanks to the board for your hard work and creativity. It's been my pleasure to work with you and I'm grateful for all that you've done.

Thanks to Pat Wynne, Rod MacNeil and Ed Tawyea at Scott Memorial Library.

Thanks to everyone who supported the early literacy efforts of pediatricians by donating kids books to the Jeff Reads "Reach out and Read program."

And to all of you, it's been an honor to serve as your chair this year. Thanks so much for this opportunity.

Finally, please give a big hand for Lydia Witman and her Program Committee of Liz Mikita, Barbara Pilvin and Jan Skica for organizing this lovely event tonight!