

Seeking Inspiration to Guide Our Future

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BY GLORIA ZAMORA, SLA PRESIDENT

We're having a celebration in June, and you're invited!

The biggest event (by far) of our centennial year is our annual conference, which will be held 14-17 June in Washington, D.C. I don't know if the annual conference advisory council possesses a sixth sense, but they sure hit the mark with their theme, "From Information to Inspiration: Knowledge and Vision Shaping the Future." With the major changes taking place in our economy and society, there is no better time than now to seek inspiration in shaping not only our profession's future but our employers' futures.

Our keynote speaker, former U.S. Secretary of State and retired Army Gen. Colin Powell, has the leadership experience to inspire us to see a greater vision for our association. Because Gen. Powell was the chairman of America's Promise Alliance, an organization dedicated to ensuring that America's children have access to the resources needed to make them responsible, productive adults, I envision him calling on us to contribute to this cause--to offer our knowledge of information, and our dedication to service, to help not only America's youth but youth and adults throughout the world to move forward.

The workshops and seminars promise to be inspiring as well. The conference planners from the divisions, along with the centennial commission, have put together an outstanding set of programs and activities. In reviewing the preliminary conference program, I see so many opportunities for both new and longtime members to engage in the discussion about our future and prepare themselves for this challenge.

A quick glance at the titles of the many workshops and seminars demonstrates the diversity of the conference program and highlights the fact that the information profession is anything but staid, quiet and dull. Three of my favorite titles are "Creating Groupies: How to add value, make yourself irreplaceable and beat the pants off Google," "Onion editor calls for an end to reading," and "Lies, damned lies, and annual reports." If it's personal fulfillment you want, you can learn about succession planning and find out how to be socially responsible when making decisions.

When you're not attending a session, you'll want to visit the INFO-EXPO and meet with the more than 300 exhibitors who'll be demonstrating the latest in information and technology products. To some information professionals, this is the foremost reason to attend an SLA conference. SLA has probably the best INFO-EXPO of any professional organization, and it alone is worth the registration price.

If you want to broaden your horizons, sign up for the tours to the remarkable museums and institutions that Washington, D.C., has to offer. From Mount Vernon to the Library

of Congress to the Holocaust and Spy Museums, Washington has plenty of sites to inspire the imagination. I cannot underestimate in any way the enormous amount of work put in by the Washington, D.C. Chapter to ensure that we all have a wonderful time in their home town.

Whether you're touring the town, walking the aisles of the INFO-EXPO, or attending a session, you'll be surrounded by--and have the opportunity to network with--your fellow information professionals. Whenever SLA members are asked to name the most important benefit of membership, networking is *numero uno*. What does networking mean to most of us? It means the ability to interact with colleagues, virtually and in person. It also means learning from a diverse group of individuals bound together by a common interest. These opportunities are what make SLA membership so vital to professional growth, and each of us has the opportunity to participate in SLA's greatest networking event, the 2009 Annual Conference.

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention the Alignment Project. In January, we rolled out some major results of the past two years' research; at the conference, we should have additional information to share with you on this exciting initiative. I know you will be as anxious as I am to hear more about new growth opportunities for SLA and key value drivers for the association and our profession. Until then, keep repeating this mantra: Align in '09!

Finally, the centennial commission will have some additional tricks and activities to unveil in Washington, including the announcement of the membership's decision on the winner of the centennial video contest. And you never know who might show up to wish us well on our 100th anniversary. Those of you who were in Savannah earlier this year were introduced to the reincarnation of John Cotton Dana. Who might be visiting us in Washington--someone from the past, or the future?

Please join me in June in Washington, D.C., to find out!