

August 2002

# The Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development

Cory Craig

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## Recommended Citation

Craig, Cory (2002) "The Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development," *Sci-Tech News*: Vol. 56: Iss. 3, Article 6.  
Available at: <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/scitechnews/vol56/iss3/6>

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## **The Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development**

**Cory Craig  
Chemistry Division**

The 2002 Special Libraries Association (SLA) Conference in Los Angeles was not only my first SLA conference, but also the first library conference of any type that I have attended. After obtaining my M.L.S., I worked for an environmental organization for a number of years, then went back for my second master's in ecology; I recently began my first position as a librarian at the University of California, Davis. I was fortunate this year, in that I was selected as the 2002 recipient of the Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development by the Chemistry Division of the SLA. The stipend I received as part of the award allowed me to take advantage of the many educational, networking, and other professional development opportunities offered at the annual SLA meeting.

As a new chemistry librarian, one of my professional development goals is to become involved in the professional associations that advance the role of science librarians as information professionals and shape the technology and role of science libraries. Attending the 2002 SLA conference in Los Angeles gave me the opportunity to find out about how SLA functions, meet other SLA members, and learn more about each of the SLA divisions.

As a chemistry librarian, I was of course, drawn to Chemistry Division events. I found the Continuing Education course "Chemistry and Chemical Librarianship for Non-

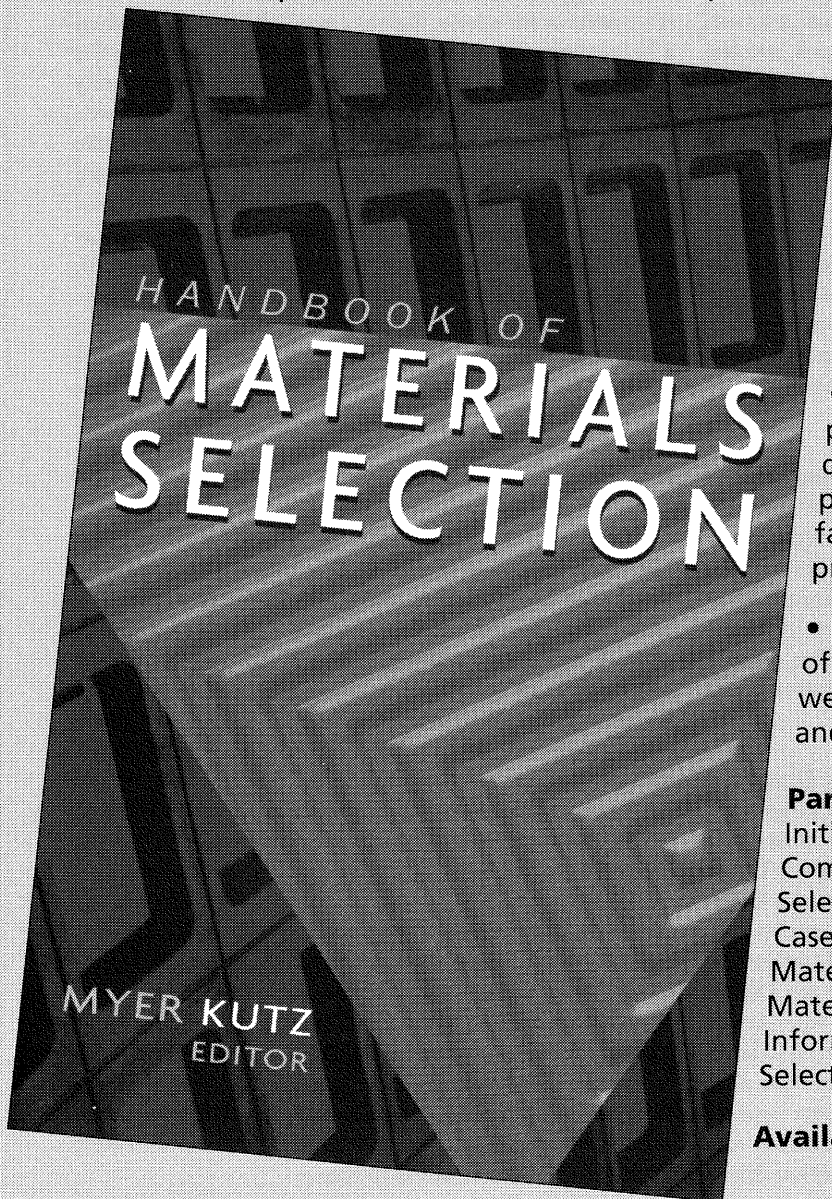
Chemists" and the TriSociety Symposium particularly valuable. The chemistry course provided an excellent overview of chemical reference tools, and it helped me to refine my skills in the use and identification of chemical information resources. This type of class is particularly useful in the field of chemical librarianship due to the highly specialized nature and language of chemical information.

The TriSociety Symposium offered an excellent opportunity to get up to date on the latest issues in chemical librarianship. I found the discussions very enlightening; I was particularly interested in the talks reporting results of studies on electronic journal use. This multi-society symposium also offered the opportunity to meet and interact with many well-known librarians that have made significant contributions to the chemical information community. I also found poster sessions were a great way to find out about innovative approaches to problems and to meet and interact with other librarians.

I was also happy to have the opportunity to meet other members of the SLA Chemistry Division. My experience is that the Chemistry Division (and SLA in general) is very welcoming and helpful to new SLA members and first-time conference-goers. I would encourage others to take advantage of the networking and professional development opportunities offered by SLA.

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