

## T. Scott Plutchak, twenty-third editor of the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*



The Medical Library Association is fortunate to have a fine new editor of the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*. T. Scott Plutchak is an enthusiastic, thoughtful, and friendly person who will bring the highest standards to the Medical Library Association's (MLA's) scholarly journal. The new editor will officially assume full editorial responsibility with the July 2000 issue.

Scott is currently director of the Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences (since October 1995) and associate director, academic programs information technology (since September 1997), at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Previous affiliations have included the Health Sciences Center Library at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri, from 1987 to 1995; technical information specialist at the National Library of Medicine (NLM) from 1984 to 1987; and NLM library associate from 1983 to 1984. The new editor's educational background includes a bachelor of art's degree in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

and a master of art's degree in library science from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. Scott is a distinguished member of the Academy of Health Information Professionals and was named 1999 Academic Librarian of the Year by the Southern Chapter of MLA.

### The role of a scholarly journal

Scott recognizes the role that a scholarly journal must continue to play in the development of a profession in an era of rapid technological developments in scientific communication and journal publishing. In a recent interview, he stated:

As librarians, we have a unique vantage point—the revolution in communications technologies underlies much of our subject matter at the same time that we'll be using those technologies to better serve our readers. This is a very exciting time for scholarly publishing and I intend to put the *Bulletin* very much in the thick of it.

Scott acknowledges that the *Bulletin* plays a pivotal role in the literature of health sciences librarianship and he considers it indispensable to the development of the profession. He noted in a recent communication that "We are now in what can be considered the second great incunabula period. As we experiment with the new communications technologies and weigh the relative advantages and disadvantages of the traditional formats and the revolutionary ones, the *Bulletin* should be a leader in scholarly communication."

### Balancing act

The new editor makes a distinction between MLA as an organization

and the health sciences library profession insofar as this distinction is reflected in MLA's primary publications. The *Bulletin* serves the profession as the primary place where the profession is discussed, debated, and recorded. Recording the advances in research in the profession and the practice of the profession in MLA's journal requires balance to allow the *Bulletin* to memorialize significant research and broad themes in the profession, but at the same time publish works that are immediately practical and useful.

A similar balancing act is required as the *Bulletin* enters the electronic world of publishing to meet the expectations of readers who appreciate a paper publication, but to move forward with plans for an electronic version to position MLA and the *Bulletin* as leaders in scholarly communication initiatives.

### Interest in publishing, writing, and editing

Early experience in publishing, writing, and editing was gained at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, where Scott served as the editor of the school's literary magazine, *The Wisconsin Review*. Following his year as an NLM associate, he was offered a permanent position at NLM and began serving as assistant editor and then editor of the *NLM Technical Bulletin*. Shortly after moving to St. Louis, he began editing *MCMLA Express*, the newsletter of the Midcontinental Chapter of MLA (MCMLA).

Scott is a widely published author and presenter at various educational venues. Recent publishing and scientific communication projects have included a ten-week seminar in the University of Alabama

Honors Program during 1999 entitled "Getting the Word Out: Publishing in the Age of the Internet" and a chapter in MLA's *Current Practice in Health Sciences Librarianship* series [1].

#### Alt.country musician

Readers who have attended an annual meeting of MLA in the not too distant past may remember seeing Scott dressed in his signature black ensemble, black hat and cowboy boots with his guitar, helping to pitch the next annual meeting of MLA. Scott maintains a secondary

career as an "alt.country" musician and currently appears on a semi-regular basis in a nightclub in the Birmingham area. He notes that "Like other library directors, most of what I try to make happen in my day job comes to fruition weeks or months later, usually at someone else's hands. But when I'm playing my guitar and singing it's right there. I just play the song as well as I can and then move on to the next one. It's tremendously satisfying and refreshing."

Please join me in welcoming T. Scott Plutchak as the twenty-third editor of the *Bulletin of the Medical*

*Library Association*. Our profession and the future of the *Bulletin* will be well served with our new editor.

*J. Michael Homan, Editor  
Mayo Clinic  
Rochester, Minnesota*

#### Reference

1. PLUTCHAK TS, WELLIK KE. Types of libraries and institutions. In: McClure L, ed. Health sciences environment and librarianship in health sciences libraries. New York, NY: Forbes Custom Publishing and Medical Library Association, 1999: 31-60. (Current Practice in Health Sciences Librarianship, v.7.)