New Division Officers for 2015 Elected

By Sam Boltik, ERMD Immediate Past-Chair
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Please join together in congratulating the newly elected (or re-elected) Environment and Resource Management Division Executive Board members and Forestry Section Chair to take office beginning January 1, 2015.

The newly elected or re-elected officers are as follows:

- **Division Chair-Elect**: Madison Bolls (newly elected)
- **Treasurer**: Amy Schuler (re-elected for two year term)
- **Director**: Brendan Thompson (newly elected to two year term)
- **Forestry Section Chair**: Julie Blankenburg (re-elected)

The full 2015 Division Executive Board is as follows:

- **Chair 2015**: Abbey Gerken (gerken.abbey@epa.gov)
- **Chair-Elect**: Madison Bolls (bolls.madison@epa.gov)
- **Immediate Past-Chair**: Samuel Boltik (samuelgb@verizon.net)
- **Secretary**: Chris Clotworthy (clotworthy@rff.org)
- **Treasurer**: Amy Schuler (schulera@caryinstitute.org)
- **Directors**: Eric Tans (tans@mail.lib.msu.edu) and Brendan Thompson (bthompson@rmi.org)

Thank you to everyone who put forth nominations, all those who agreed to stand for election or re-election and for everyone in the Division for participating and supporting the organization.
Hello ERMD!

I’m excited to update all of you on our upcoming activities for the SLA 2015 Conference and introduce our new ERMD board members. This year we are welcoming Madison Bolls, our new Chair-Elect, and Brendan Thompson, who is joining the board as Director. I’d also like to thank our re-elected board members, Amy Schuler, Treasurer, and Julie Blankenship, Forestry Division Chair, as well as Samuel Boltik, who will be continuing his service as Past Chair. I’d also like to offer my support and encouragement to anyone considering running for a position on ERMD’s board or joining ERMD as a new member.

I hope that everyone’s travel plans for the annual conference in Boston are coming along well. ERMD will be holding the Division Board Meeting on Saturday, June 13th from 2:30pm -3:30pm and the Division Business Meeting on Saturday, June 13th from 8:00am – 9:00am. Please consider attending these meetings to help us plan for future ERMD activities and to meet other ERMD members.

ERMD is also planning two very interesting sessions for the upcoming conference. They’re scheduled back-to-back so please join me in running through the halls of the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center in my attempt to catch both!

Our first session will be “Green Building Standards” on Sunday, June 14th from 11:45am – 1:15pm. This session will familiarize attendees with Green Building standards such as LEED, GreenGlobes, and EnergyStar and provide examples of their application in libraries. The Architecture, Building Engineering, Construction, and Design Section of the Engineering Division will be co-sponsoring this session.

Next up is “Cultivating Seed Libraries” on Sunday, June 14th from 1:30pm – 3:00pm. We’ll hear from Boston-area seed libraries about what seed libraries are, how they work, and discuss the ecological and community benefits associated with seed saving. Please help us get the word out and encourage your colleagues and friends who will be at the conference to attend these sessions.

While we’re moving ahead with planning for Boston, it’s almost time to begin thinking about the 2016 conference in Philadelphia. Our Chair-Elect, Madison Bolls, will be acting as our division’s lead planner and would appreciate input from ERMD membership on ideas for session topics and division meetings.

Finally, I’d like to thank our members for their participation and support for both ERMD and SLA. Please feel free to contact me or our other board members with your questions and ideas for our division. Contact information for all ERMD’s board members is available on the ERMD website. I hope to see you all this June in Boston!
Greetings:

Happy New Year! Plans have already been made for programs at this year’s conference in Boston. The next issue will be the last one before the conference, so it would be great if some Boston-area folks could provide some articles with tips on visiting the area. The Spring Issue’s copy deadline will be April 17. Also, please send my your professional news and other story ideas. An attachment in MS Word or plain text format is fine. I will format it to fit with the newsletter.

ERMD News will be featuring a Boston-area special library in the next few issues prior to the SLA 2015 Annual Conference to be held in Boston. Marcia Olson has contributed an article about her workplace, Gradient Information Resource Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Do you know of a great new resource? Have you had an article published in a professional journal? Share this important information with the other members of ERMD. I welcome ideas and volunteers for bibliographies, book reviews and DVD reviews. Please send me an email at baw@cwsl.edu.

Special thanks to the contributors in this issue:

- Sam Boltik
- Abbey Gerkin
- Marcia Olson
- Bobbi Weaver
About Gradient

Gradient is an environmental and risk sciences consulting firm headquartered in Cambridge, MA. Since 1985, Gradient has applied sound science and rigorous data analysis to help national and global clients resolve their complex environmental challenges relating to chemicals in the environment, the workplace, and consumer products.

Gradient scientists are nationally recognized experts, based primarily in Cambridge, MA and Seattle, WA. Our nearly 100 professionals have expertise in toxicology, ecotoxicology, epidemiology, environmental science and engineering, environmental forensics and chemistry, geology, hydrogeology, and health physics.

Our projects are varied and range from critically assessing the scientific basis of product safety and product liability claims, assessing the potential harm from chemical or radiation exposures, addressing environmental liabilities and ensuing costs, and communicating complex scientific concepts clearly to community members, legislators, and juries.

Gradient Information Resource Center (IRC)

Gradient's Information Resource Center (IRC), located in our Harvard Square office, provides research and information services to the entire company. The IRC was established in 1986 with one information specialist just 9 months after the company's founding to serve as the central repository of all Gradient project materials. Today it is staffed by four full-time information specialists who have 75 years of combined work experience at Gradient. The IRC Manager started the library and has been one of the owners of the company since 1999.

During that time Gradient's library has evolved to be a full-service information resource center providing project-specific reference and research, document retrieval, database development, business development and marketing support, records management and archiving services, and current awareness services.

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The IRC's physical footprint has been shrinking over the years even as our services have expanded. The physical collection consists of 6000 books and reports, and 25 journals and newspapers. Most of the collection is now digital and available to all staff electronically. Our comprehensive holdings of more than 150,000 project documents, journal articles, maps, standards, and reports, encompass information on a wide variety of topics from the evolution of waste disposal practices and industrial processes, to the changing state of knowledge of chemistry and toxicology, to federal and state regulatory resources. Our proximity to world class university libraries in Boston and Cambridge and to the Boston Public Library allows us to leverage the deep resources of those institutions as well.

Online Resources

Gradient's in-house library is extensively indexed and electronically searchable using both our online catalog and our enterprise-wide search tool, Coveo. **GradLink**, our corporate intranet, is the main entry point for staff to access IRC services and full-text documents. Our intranet resource pages provide links to a wide variety of general and technical reference tools such as PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Toxnet, Ex-Pub, ACS Legacy Archives, and HeinOnline. We offer continuous training on how to better use these tools throughout the year.

The IRC keeps staff informed of the latest environmental and business news via highly-targeted and filtered daily news alerts that allows staff to pursue leads and opportunities for reaching out to clients. Customized alerts on the latest journal literature on topics such as nanotoxicology, hydraulic fracturing, and dietary supplements are delivered via email. Staff are instructed on how to set up their own table of contents alerts so they can keep abreast of their journals of interest and request articles or further research from the IRC staff.

Document Management

Gradient operates in a research-intensive environment and both receives and creates thousands of documents each year in a variety of different formats. The IRC is charged with organizing and cataloging these materials so that they are fully searchable and accessible to all staff. Our document management process ensures that we comply with all legal, company and client requirements regarding the management, retention, confidentiality and disposition of all project documents in any media.

Marketing

The IRC has always been central to Gradient's core mission. Our scientists place a premium value on the quality of the information that goes into Gradient work products, journal articles and expert reports, and they are highly supportive of IRC services. Most staff interact with the IRC on a daily basis through requests for research and journal articles, news alerts, and document management requests. The IRC manager attends the weekly marketing meeting to keep abreast of business development initiatives and maintains a database of project experience that is used for clearing conflicts of interest and in marketing materials.

Every year we host a National Library Week Awards celebration that pokes light-hearted fun at the staff's information foibles and some of our more outlandish research requests. It is a highly anticipated event and throughout the year staff often nominate each other or even themselves for an award.
Gradient Information Resource Center
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Challenges and Opportunities

In 2015 the IRC will be heavily involved in redesigning our intranet and migrating completely to a SharePoint platform.

Gradient has grown significantly in 2014, hiring more than 25 new staff, taking on additional office space in Cambridge, and expanding our Seattle office. We are exploring ways to improve information access to remote users by investigating cost-effective e-book options.

Gradient respects the intellectual property rights of others and works hard at being a copyright compliant company. With so many new staff, this will remain a key focus of the IRC and we will be presenting additional training on copyright in the corporate environment in the upcoming year.

We are excited by the challenges and opportunities staff transitions and continued company growth will bring. We look forward to welcoming you to SLA Boston in June and invite you to visit Gradient’s Information Resource Center either in person or at www.gradientcorp.com.

If you’ve got it, let us know.

Email Bobbi Weaver at baw@cwsli.edu with news on your
• publications
• promotions
• new resources
• or anything else you would like to share.
December 2-3, 2014 marked the 30th anniversary of the catastrophic chemical explosion and leak from the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India. One book that gave a moving presentation of the time leading up to the disaster and its aftermath was Dominique LaPierre & Javier Moro’s *Il Etait Minuit Cinq a Bhopal* (ISBN: 2221091310; 2001). This review is of the English translation of that title. Both editions are still available for purchase from various online booksellers.

In this book, the authors follow a family who traveled to Bhopal to find work on the railroad. Like many other poor families, this family’s crops were destroyed by insects in their homeland. Union Carbide saw a market for its insecticide, Sevin, and established a manufacturing plant in Bhopal to help serve its India market.

Union Carbide’s presence in the community was first seen as a boon. Much-needed jobs were brought into the community. However, as the sales of Sevin waned, the plant fell into disrepair and safety systems were neglected.

Though Sevin was less toxic in its application than DDT, its manufacture still required the use of a highly-toxic chemical, methyl isocyanate. There was more of this chemical kept at the plant than normally recommended under safety standards. Factors such as the heat and equipment disrepair caused an explosion and release of the chemicals into the air, killing thousands in the surrounding community.

The authors developed the characters of the real-life players almost in the style of a novel. This device makes the characters more human to the reader and really drives home the tragedy of this disaster. The authors wrote about the various weddings and religious ceremonies that were occurring on the night of the disaster. By showing how the residents of Bhopal were conducting life as usual, it helps the reader comprehend some level of the shock that was encountered by the victims that fateful night.

Although U.S. lawyers visited the area after the disaster and promised large awards, that did not happen. Union Carbide paid the Indian government a settlement of $470 million dollars. Sadly, much of those funds were depleted and survivors were paid an estimated $1,400 for the death of a parent, considerably less in cases of serious personal injury.

Legal disputes regarding the Bhopal tragedy have continued to the present day. For more information about these cases, visit the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre’s page, *Union Carbide/Dow lawsuit (re Bhopal)* at [http://business-humanrights.org/en/union-carbidedow-lawsuit-re-bhopal](http://business-humanrights.org/en/union-carbidedow-lawsuit-re-bhopal).

This film is available on Amazon.com ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) in instant video or in DVD format. It is also available for purchase from the movie’s web site at [http://www.bhopalithemovie.com/](http://www.bhopalithemovie.com/). A trailer for the film is available on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttD-1oT9M7M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttD-1oT9M7M).

This film is a documentary concerning the 1984 fatal gas leak from the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, but this film focuses on the damage still being experienced by the present-day residents of Bhopal. Though the Indian government contends that the area has been decontaminated, the film makers interviewed activists and residents who argue otherwise.

In the movie, activists asserted that the site of the abandoned pesticide plant still has not been properly decontaminated. Furthermore, they contended that chemicals from the plant have seeped into the city’s groundwater, polluting the...
Bhopali (DVD) review
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water that residents must drink everyday.

The survivors of the gas leak and their children also have suffered lasting effects from the disaster. A study by one clinic found that children in Bhopal are 10 times more likely to be born with birth defects than children born in the rest of India. (See, Randeep Ramesh, “Bhopal water still toxic 25 years after deadly gas leak, study finds,” The Guardian, Dec. 1, 2009, available at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/01/bhopal-chemical-studies-toxic-levels).

The Chingari Trust Rehabilitation Center (http://www.chingaritrustbhopal.com/) was featured in the film. The Center treats many of the children impacted by birth defects and other physical challenges. The film showed some of these children, and the film’s producers interviewed their parents about the emotional and financial impact their children’s conditions have had on the families.

An exact number of people who died as an immediate result of the chemical explosion and gas leak in 1984 is not known; however, estimates have been as high as 25,000 deaths based upon reports from hospitals, medical examiners, managers of funeral pyres and managers of burial grounds. Activists interviewed in the film contended that today more than 100,000 people are still chronically ill from the Bhopal contamination.

The film also featured survivor and activist, Sanjay Verma. Verma was an infant at the time of the 1984 disaster. His sister escaped the gas cloud with him in her arms. Verma’s parents and remaining siblings perished from the poisonous gases. In the film, Verma visited the orphanage where he and his sister were sent after the loss of their parents.

The film ended with a reply of a commercial for Dow Chemical (now the parent company of Union Carbide) where the narrator stated how Dow emphasizes the “human element” in its manufacturing. (The commercial can be seen on YouTube® at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsCG26886w8). Before the showing of the film’s credits, there was a note that both representatives from Dow Chemical (http://www.dow.com/) and Union Carbide (http://www.unioncarbide.com/) did not respond to requests for interviews from the filmmaker. Union Carbide does maintain an information page concerning the Bhopal tragedy at http://www.bhopal.com/.

Boston-area ERMD members:

We want to hear from you!

Please share your tips on where to sleep, eat, tour, shop and play in Boston during the 2015 SLA Annual Conference.

Email your stories to Bobbi Weaver at baw@cswl.edu.
# ERMD 2015 Officers
## Executive Board

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