MEDLI
E-News

News from the Medical & Scientific Libraries of Long Island

President's Message
Jeanne Strausman, President 2008-09

Greetings All,

I hope you are having a nice winter and have had an enjoyable holiday season. Thank you for electing me the President of MEDLI and I am hopeful we will have an eventful year.

The fall program was an exciting one. Lucy Winer, an award winning film producer/director joined us for a discussion of her soon-to-be-released film entitled *Kings Park*, which discusses the history of the Kings Park Psychiatric Center. It was a wonderful presentation and we all look forward to the release of the film. I will keep you all updated on any information I get from Lucy. Thanks to all of you who came to the presentation and for those of you that couldn't come, I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

I am hoping in the spring to coordinate a joint meeting with BQSI/MB. If anyone has any ideas for continuing education classes or would like to be involved on a committee, please feel free to contact either Christina Riviera or me. Also, if any of you have any items for the newsletter, please contact Christina. I would also like to congratulate Christina on becoming our Vice President/Chair-elect, and to thank Gerri Flanzraich for continuing as Treasurer and for Curtis Carson for continuing as Secretary.

Enjoy the rest of your Winter and please keep those ideas coming!

-Jeanne Strausman
President of MEDLI

Highlights from *Kings Park*
2008 MEDLI Fall Program

November 3, 2008–MEDLI members, as well as local public and academic librarians, gathered for a first-hand look at the soon-to-be-released documentary *Kings Park,* from award-winning film maker and producer Lucy Winer.

The following is a summary of the film from the ***Fledging Fund*** (http://www.thefledglingfund.org/media/mental-health-and-homelessness/kings-park.html)

Kings Park offers an unprecedented look at public mental health care in America by focusing on the story of a single abandoned institution, Kings Park State Hospital. The film begins with director Lucy Winer's efforts to come to terms with her commitment to Kings Park as a teenager in the late 1960's. Winer's goals are purely personal when the film begins, but she is soon overtaken by a driving need to understand the institutional world to which she was confined. To this end, Winer seeks out other former patients, their families, and hospital staff who share firsthand accounts of hospital life from their dramatically different perspectives, bearing witness to the many changes in treatment, policy and attitudes over the past century.

The film ends with a vision of today. Accounts are shared of the well intentioned, but brutally executed "emptying out" of the hospital, followed by scenes that capture the successes and tragic breakdowns of community mental health care in the surrounding area. In this way, Kings Park brings to light our nation's current crisis in mental health care and helps us to understand how we got here, revealing the high price we pay for our unacknowledged prejudices about mental illness and the painful legacy of these soon to be forgotten asylums.

Lucy Winer is pictured to the left discussing clips from her film **Kings Park**

Special thanks to Lucy Winer for sharing her story and project with MEDLI and to all that attended.
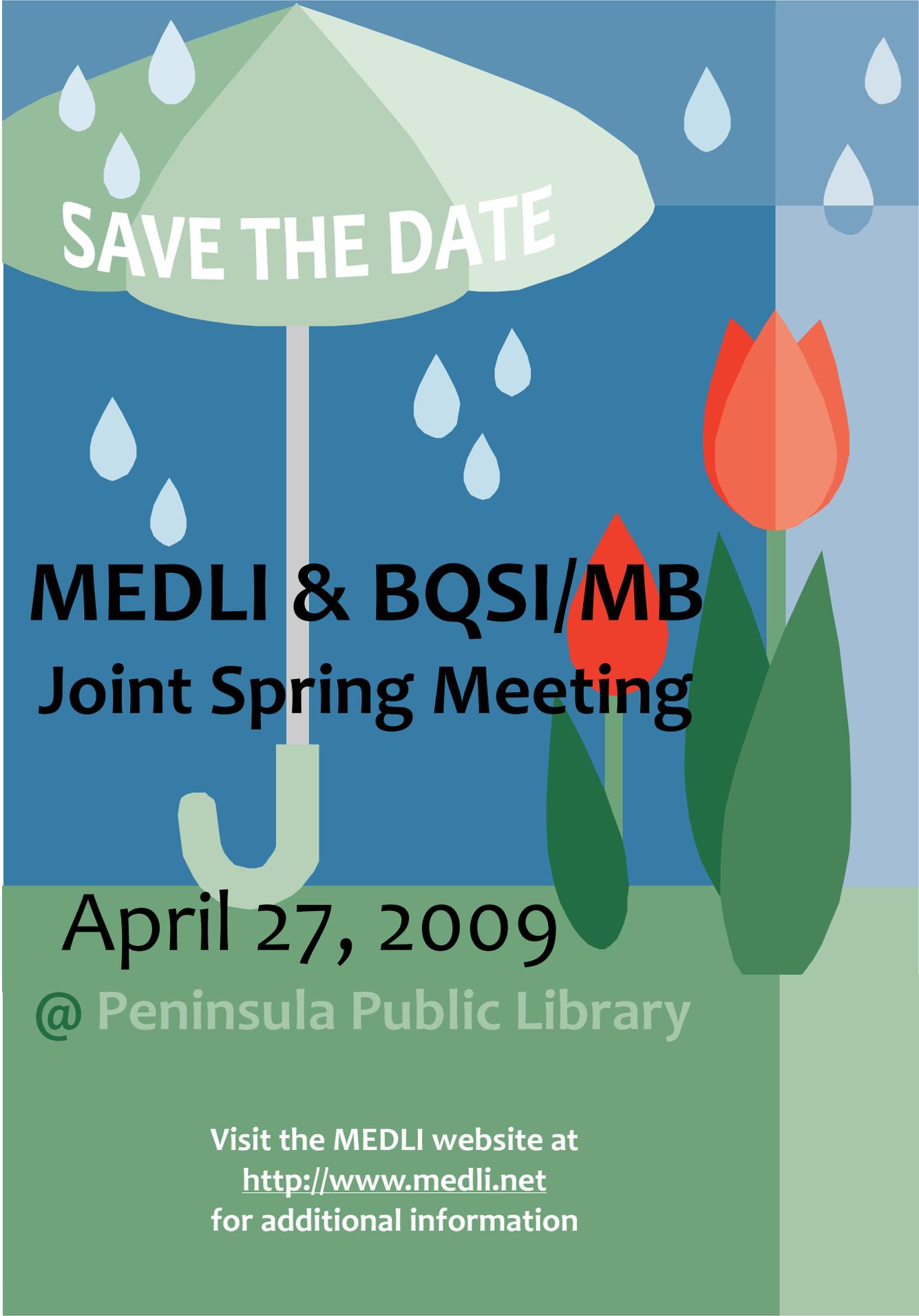
SAVE THE DATE

MEDLI & BQSI/MB
Joint Spring Meeting

April 27, 2009
@ Peninsula Public Library

Visit the MEDLI website at
http://www.medli.net
for additional information

Using Computers to Improve Our Health

The Flu and Research by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Can we use computers to understand generosity? The behavior of crowds? The root of prejudice? Can we use computers to improve society? Researchers have recently made a lot of progress in developing computer models to improve our understanding of human behavior and the world we live in.

If you really think about it, each one of us is already a modeler. We create mental models every time we try to predict the outcome of a sporting event, an election or the stock market. But our mental models are based on limited facts and are skewed by our perspective and assumptions. Computer models, in contrast, rely on objective data. They can account for many more factors than the human brain, and they can be tested, adjusted and verified.

Computer models have many potential uses. Simulations of how people behave in the face of natural disasters could help prepare local and national officials to respond. Mathematically capturing the behavior of pests or beneficial insects could improve agricultural practices. And modeling social networks can help doctors develop better strategies to change unhealthy behaviors.

Using computer models, researchers are trying to predict—and propose ways to minimize—the effects of a future flu pandemic. Flu outbreaks in 1918, 1957 and 1968 killed millions worldwide. NIH-funded researchers looked at the measures that different health officials took in past pandemics and analyzed their effects. They used this information to build computer models and confirm the models could simulate what happened during past outbreaks. Then they used them to simulate an outbreak of pandemic flu as it spread throughout a large city.

The simulations helped researchers identify public responses that could significantly slow the spread of infection. Tactics like closing schools and giving anti-viral treatments, the models found, could give researchers more time to develop vaccines. The models are also helping researchers understand how people react to these public health measures and how to optimize their timing.

Computer models can help researchers combat other diseases, too. Last year, NIH-funded researchers created a computer model of cholera transmission in Matlab, Bangladesh. Cholera bacteria, which spread through contaminated water and food, can cause severe symptoms that include diarrhea, vomiting and leg cramps. The disease can lead to death by dehydration in a matter of hours if left untreated.

The computer simulation showed that cholera transmission could be controlled if about 50% of the population got an oral vaccine. Public health officials now know they could likely control cholera with

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a modest investment using a mass vaccination program. These types of models can help health officials figure out which vaccination strategies would work best in different settings.

Last year, NIH-funded researchers computerized weight, height and other data collected over a 32-year period from a socially intertwined network of over 12,000 adults. They found that friendships can have a crucial influence on a person's weight. In fact, the likelihood of becoming obese increased by nearly 57% if a close friend had become obese.

This year, using the same technique, the scientists reported that close relationships exert a strong influence on smoking. The greatest effect was in married couples. When a husband or wife quit smoking, it reduced the chance of their spouse smoking by about 67%.

This research suggests that it may be possible to harness social networks to help people change behaviors, such as smoking, for the better.

No computer model is perfect. Even the best can only take into account the things that we know about and can measure. Modelers also routinely have to make decisions about what to include and exclude.

Researchers continue to design and test new computer models. As they improve, they give researchers new insights into the most effective ways to affect people's health.

Article from **NIH News in Health**, January 2009

MEDLI Listserv
Stay Connected

Do you have a question or want to share some information? Then be sure to use the MEDLI listserv. You can subscribe to the listserv by going to https://lists-1.liu.edu/mailman/listinfo/cwp-medli.

Database Purchasing
Possible Group Purchases

BQSI/MD is exploring the following databases for possible future group purchasing:

ProQuest Hospital Collection—Collection of health care journals, evidence-based resources, and full-text dissertations.

Exam Master—Web-based study tool for board certification, USMLE.

PubsHub—Extensive database of critical submission criteria for per-reviewed medical journals and meetings.

CardiosourcePlus—(The American College of Cardiology) provides a comprehensive collection of online resources for students, clinicians, researchers, and other health professionals including news, practice guidelines, clinical trials database and much more.

If you are interested in any of these, please contact Jeanne Strausman; jstrausm@nyit.edu.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine
Use in the United States Rises

Approximately 38% of adults in the United States aged 18 years and over, and nearly 12% of U.S. children aged 17 and under use some form of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), according to a new nationwide government survey, *CDC National Health Statistics Report #12*. This survey marks the first time questions were included on children's use of CAM, a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products (e.g., as herbal supplements, meditation, chiropractic, and acupuncture) that are not generally considered to be part of conventional medicine.

For additional information, including the complete CDC report, please visit http://nccam.nih.gov/news/camstats.htm.

A Closer Look at RSS: Keeping Track of Medical and Health Related News

Mozilla Firefox and Live Bookmarks (Feeds)

The last issue of MEDLI E-News touched briefly on RSS. *Really Simple Syndication* (RSS) is one of the easiest ways to keep up with news and information that's most important to you. An RSS feed contains headlines, summaries, and links to full news stories. If you click an RSS link, you will see XML (or eXtensible Markup Language) code in your browser. In order for an RSS feed to work, you need to use an RSS aggregator, otherwise known as a feed reader. There are a number of web-based feed readers available including Bloglines and Google Reader. Now that we know what it is and how it works, let's take a closer look at what RSS can do, utilizing Mozilla's Firefox browser (now in version 3.0.5).

Unlike many other web-based feed readers that require the user to visit their webpage and then log in with a user-created name and password, *Live Bookmarks* is built into the Mozilla Firefox browser. There's no need to log in, and managing RSS feeds is as easy as 1-2-3.

STEP 1: Finding the RSS Feeds

One of the most impressive things about Firefox is its ability to automatically discover feeds associated with many—but not all—websites. When the feed is automatically detected, the orange feed icon will display in the location bar. Click on the feed icon and then choose the feed(s) to which you want to subscribe.

No feed icon? No worries. If you visit a site that has an RSS feed available, but it is not automatically detected by the browser, just click on the RSS icon found within the webpage. This takes us to step 2.

STEP 2: Subscribing to the RSS Feed

Whether Firefox has automatically detected the feeds or you have clicked on an RSS feed icon found on the webpage, now is a good time to review/preview the content that was most recently added. If you decide it's valuable to you, you can simply click on the "Subscribe Now" button and you're already to step 3.

STEP 3: Fine-Tuning Your Subscription

Once you choose to subscribe to an RSS feed, the last step, which is optional, is to edit its name and location-but only if you want to-this is not necessary. Click "Add" and you are now subscribed to an RSS feed, which can be conveniently placed on your browser under the location bar by saving the feed to the "Bookmarks Toolbar."
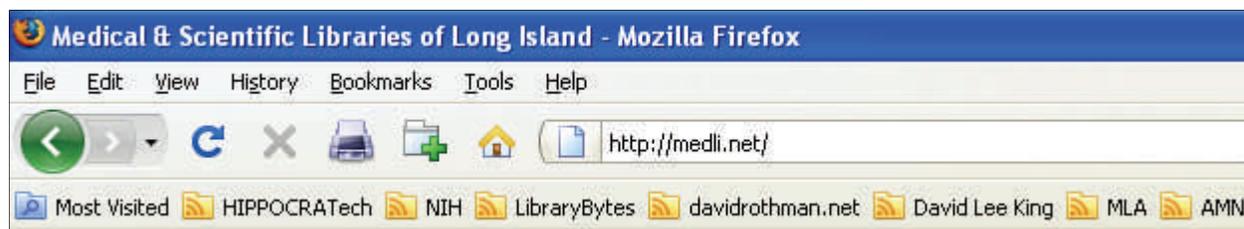
Example of Firefox browser using Live Bookmarks for health-related information and news from a number of resources including blogs, professional organizations and government agencies. Some of the feed names have been edited based on the user's preference, which is one of the features that allows Firefox to be customizable.

A Closer Look at RSS
Continued...

In these three steps, Live Bookmarks can be set-up to manage RSS feeds for medical and health information and news (or any other type of information) that is useful to the user.

RSS Feeds: Where to start?

The best places to start are the websites that you are *already* visiting for news and information. Look to see if there are RSS feed icons and give it a try.

RSS Featured Site: MedWorm
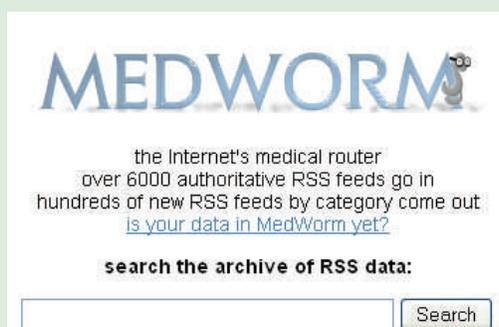
MedWorm (http://medworm.com) is a medical RSS feed provider as well as a search engine built on data collected from RSS feeds. It collects updates from over 6000 authoritative data sources via RSS feeds. From the data collected, MedWorm provides new outgoing RSS feeds on various medical categories to which you can subscribe via the free MedWorm online service, or another RSS reader of your choice.

If you would like additional information on RSS, please refer to the following sources:

- Mozilla Firefox Support/Knowledge Base: Live Books (Tutorial).
- PALINET. A Gentle Introduction to Internet Feeds (Tutorial).
- Rothman, David. How to Generate a Custom RSS Feed from PubMed (Blog entry).
- Varnum, Ken. RSS4Lib: Innovative Ways Libraries use RSS (Blog).
- Vogel, Teri. RSS and Webfeeds: A Field Guide for Librarians. (PowerPoint).

About MEDLI
Membership Information

The purpose of MEDLI is to initiate, sponsor, and contribute to educational programs pertaining to medicine and related subjects. Keeping with this educational goal, MEDLI strives to bring to the medical library community continuing education seminars for both educational advancement in the profession and Medical Library Association certification and/or recertification.

Twice yearly general membership meetings, e-mails, and our website keep the active medical librarian abreast of new ideas, changing roles, and technological advances in the library field.

Membership in MEDLI is open to anyone interested in the exchange and dissemination of medical and scientific information. Our members currently include librarians, hospitals, library suppliers, and others interested in libraries and medicine.

Networking of medical librarians through the regional medical library network, interlibrary loan, and educational meetings will continue to be an important objective of the Medical and Scientific Libraries of Long Island.

Don't wait, join today. The membership application is available online.

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Visit MEDLI on the web @ www.medli.net

MEDLI MEDICAL & SCIENTIFIC LIBRARIES OF LONG ISLAND