

ORALL NEWSLETTER

OHIO REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES

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President's Column – Rob Myers

What's in a Name? And Things More Relevant

Prior to learning the voting results of the initiative by AALL to change the name of the Association from the American Association of Law Libraries to the Association for Legal Information, I had been contemplating writing a column devoted to whether ORALL should follow suit and change its name along similar lines. It might have seemed strange to be the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries, a chapter of the Association for Legal Information. I had been thinking we might become ORFLI (the Ohio Regional Association for Legal Information). I'm glad we've dodged that bullet, with the outcome of the vote being 80% in favor of keeping the name the American Association of Law Libraries.

While many librarians weighed in with their various views regarding the name change in the lead up to the vote, I kept my views mostly to myself (aside from brief discussions with close colleagues). As a librarian, I am accustomed to locating and presenting information covering a range of views on a particular issue without expressing my own particular view on the issue. (Yes, I do hold strong views on many issues, but I don't bring them to work.) The ability (and duty) to be a non-biased presenter of information is a main reason I chose to become a law librarian in the first place. As a person holding a leadership position within a chapter of AALL, I felt obliged and reluctant to unduly bias the conversation. Now that the vote has passed, I feel compelled to state why I voted against the name change.

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Newsletter

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Profile

ORALL is a 4-state chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries [Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan]. It was formed in 1949 "to further the development and usefulness of law libraries and to stimulate a spirit of mutual helpfulness among law libraries of this region." An annual conference is held each fall. ORALL publishes or sponsors the following publications: *Core Legal Collection* [bibliographies for Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan], ORALL Membership Directory, ORALL Newsletter, Ohio Legal Resources Annotated Bibliography & Guide 3rd.

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President's Column *continued*

Technology is changing nearly every profession, but the basic functions of the people working within those professions haven't changed. The medical field has changed dramatically due to technology compared to what it was in the 1860s when a physician's bag looked more like a carpenter's toolkit. However, the basic duty of a physician still remains diagnosing and healing patients, and thus we still call them physicians. Similarly, carpenters have been building houses for thousands of years, but few carpenters use a hammer and handsaw to construct a house today. The technology of compressors, nail guns, electric saws, and building materials have changed the speed and accuracy with which houses are built and yet, we still call the tradesmen who build houses carpenters.

The basic function of a librarian has always been two-fold: 1) to collect, organize and make easily accessible a wide array of material on a particular topic or topics, and 2) to provide personal (or group) assistance to people who are in the pursuit of specific information, wherever it may be located. While technology has changed the tools that we use, the core functions that librarians perform have not changed. In fact, a host of online technologies frequently borrow from the terminology used by librarians. (Who can forget the "Libraries" and "Files" on Lexis? Many online vendors still use the word "library" to group together specific practice-oriented material.) Providing technical and reference services still remain at the core of what we do.

I've always believed that what we call ourselves is defined by what we make of it. The tools of our trade are changing, but the trade itself is still as relevant as ever—if not more relevant. Rather than changing our name in an attempt to look more modern, we should focus our efforts on using our expanding our tool kit to become better at what we do as librarians. Physicians and carpenters haven't felt a need to change what they call themselves. For that matter, lawyers haven't felt a need to change what they're called even though their tools have changed in parallel with ours. A final point before I get off my high horse... I joined AALL and ORALL because I wanted to be a member of trade associations that were narrowly focused on that which I do as a law librarian. I understand AALL feeling a need to expand its membership by including others on the periphery and even outside of law librarianship. However, I believe this would have watered down the core focus of AALL. I don't think it would have been long before a start-up trade association was created to fill the needs specific to those who practice law librarianship. I was more than prepared to be a founding member of a newly formed Association of American Law Librarians.

For a column that wasn't going to focus on the AALL name change, it sure ended up that way! In lieu of discussing the name change, I had planned on bringing the chapter membership up to speed by mentioning a few of the things that various ORALL committees have been working on as of late. With the remaining space I have, that is what I intend to do.

Maureen Anderson, Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee, and Angela Baldree, Chair of the Education Committee, have been busy working behind the scenes planning for the Annual Meeting to be held in Dayton on October 19 through October 21. From the few details I've seen I've been privy to, it appears that this is going to be a meeting not to miss! If you have not been to the ORALL website lately, please take a look. Jennifer Mart-Rice and the members of the Internet & Social Media Committee have done a wonderful job giving the site a makeover. Beau Steenken and the Nominations Committee have been busy lining up candidates for the positions of Vice-President/President-Elect, Secretary, and Executive Board member. The slate of candidates will be announced soon. Paul Venard and the Newsletter Committee have been busy compiling content for this latest issue of the ORALL Newsletter (and selling an advertisement or two!). Lastly, Lisa Britt Wernke and the Grants Committee recently announced the availability of an AALL funded grant for one ORALL member to receive free registration to the AALL Annual Meeting in Chicago. The deadline for applying for this grant is April 1st, so please submit your application soon. The Grants Committee will be announcing the availability of ORALL sponsored grants to attend the AALL Annual Meeting, the ORALL Annual Meeting, and one grant to attend a special meeting (CALI, AALL Lobby Day, IUG, SLA, etc.) very soon. Stay tuned. You're already relevant!

* * *

LWI One-Day Workshop: Collaboration In and Out of the Legal Writing Classroom by Ingrid Mattson, Sara Sampson and Susan Azyndar, the Ohio State University Moritz Law Library

On December 11, 2015, Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University hosted a Legal Writing Institute (LWI) One-Day Workshop. Because our dual-degreed law librarians are in the pool of professors who solo-teach the first-year legal writing and analysis course (which also covers legal research), one of our Reference Librarians partnered with a Legal Writing faculty member to choose a theme, select presenters, and administer the event.

Given the collaborative approach we take to plan and teach legal writing at Moritz, the conference organizers, Ingrid Mattson and Katherine Kelly, chose the theme "Collaboration In and Out of the Legal Writing Classroom" with the hope that people would present on a wide array of issues impacting legal writing and research instruction in law schools today. We were fortunate ORALL was well-represented among both presenters and attendees at the workshop including Amy Burchfield (Cleveland Marshall), Brian Cassidy (Cleveland Marshall), Susan deMaine (Indiana University - McKinney), Sara Sampson (Ohio State), Stephanie Ziegler (Ohio State), Jacqueline Orlando (Capital University), Paul Gatz (Ohio State), Matt Cooper (Ohio State), Susan Azyndar (Ohio State), and Rick Goheen (Toledo).



Ingrid Mattson and Katherine Kelly

The workshop provided a number of valuable teaching ideas and practices that can improve how we teach law students, ensure our execution of new ideas is effective, and enable us to fulfill our obligations under new American Bar Association (ABA) rules.

Pedagogical Lessons

Underlying many of the presentations was a reliance on pedagogy, or theories about how education works. For example, Amy Burchfield talked about encouraging her students to embrace the struggle of legal research. Our students, like most people, are probably not good judges of how well they are learning. True, long-term learning often feels uncomfortable and is slow. Most law students have been good students in the past and may not react well to the struggle needed to truly learn new material. Amy talked about how she encouraged her students to embrace the struggle needed in learning.



Amy Burchfield

We also need to make sure that our students can and will use the knowledge and skills we teach them in many different situations. The mere act of retrieving knowledge makes that knowledge easier to recall in the future. (This is called the testing effect of retrieval- practice effect.) This repeated, spaced retrieval is so important. Ellen Deason, who teaches Civil Procedure at Ohio State, partnered with Reference Librarians Paul Gatz, Stephanie Ziegler, and Sara Sampson, who were teaching Legal Writing, to incorporate a research project into Ellen's Civil Procedure class. Students used the research skills that they learned in Legal Writing to find a long-arm statute in a particular jurisdiction, which required retrieving knowledge about annotated codes. At the conference, the participants in this assignment discussed how this assignment worked. Sara noted that her students seemed to be better at research in their final memo and hoped that the repetition required contributed to their long-term learning of research skills.

If you're interested in learning more about best practices for teaching, check out *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Harvard Univ. Press 2014) or *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (Jossey-Bass 2010).



Ellen Deason, Sara Sampson, Paul Gatz, and Stephanie Ziegler

Collaboration and the New ABA Rules

During her talk on revising an advanced legal research course, Susan deMaine drew attention to the new ABA rules regarding learning outcomes and experiential courses (i.e., simulations), a timely and important reminder as we all revise our syllabi to comply with these rules. Her presentation raised points that apply well beyond the syllabus, however.

The ABA simulation rules, for example, require that experiential courses must include “opportunities for self-evaluation.” Reflecting on one’s experiences fits this bill—and conferences like this one offer us the opportunity to assess our own approaches in the classroom, retool them, and try out new ideas. The presentations and the discussions that followed are a way of collaboratively shaping our pedagogy.

Successful collaboration demands self-evaluation. In order to contribute meaningfully to the conversation about pedagogy, for example, conference participants engage in questions such as: Will this technique work in my classroom, and if not, why? How does this approach to learning match up with my own experiences? What areas of my class do I need to rethink?

Several sessions in the OSU LWI one-day workshop modelled collaboration concretely by including the voices of multiple participants who shared principles and experiences of working together on particular projects. We not only witnessed the results of working together; we also had the opportunity to experience working together. During Craig T. Smith's (University of North Carolina) session, all of the attendees collaborated while working on a short team-based quiz. The quiz relied on self-evaluation, as the group presenters discussed challenges they worked to surmount, and the quizzes required team members to reflect on and articulate how they arrived at an answer. (As an aside, the scratch-off answer cards Craig uses in his class and which he introduced to the audience at the workshop are a fun way to engage a group you are instructing, and Ingrid has begun using them in her Advanced Legal Research course this semester.)

Collaboration furthers our goals and aptitudes as instructors; our students can benefit from developing collaboration skills, too. After all, legal work increasingly requires teamwork. Collaboration likely impacts other learning outcomes. A skill in itself, students must use collaboration to accomplish a particular goal, which could be reaching some agreement in a negotiation, arriving at a shared understanding of how to synthesize a set of cases, or drafting a letter to a client.

We attended the one day workshop expecting to leave with ideas to apply in the classroom; we were pleasantly surprised to find such a valuable opportunity to reflect on how well collaboration meshes with the new ABA rules.

Conclusion

Each presentation made it clear: successful collaboration requires advanced planning. Sometimes the need for planning is obvious. If you are going to introduce new curriculum, team-teach for the first time, or host a conference, planning should begin several months in advance to accommodate any necessary details, practice, or coordination. On a less obvious note, however, meaningful collaboration often requires relationship building over the long term. Collaboration—as evidenced at the workshop among casebook faculty, legal writing faculty, law librarians, and other law school departments—is most effective when the collaborators have developed open lines of communication. If you're inspired to collaborate with a colleague or counterpart in the future, start planning now, even if it's just a quick conversation in the hallway, to maximize your success.

* * *

The Distractions of Technology

by Kimberly Mattioli, U Indiana University Maurer School of Law

Since the moment I became a librarian, I have had a problem with technology. It's not that I can't keep up with the developments or that I can't figure out ways to incorporate technology into my work. My problem is much simpler in a way—I find technology too distracting. With my desktop, my phone, and my iPad sitting in my office, how could I not be drawn to the glowing screens and the limitless websites before me? The Internet is never-ending, and so too, it seems, is my ability to be distracted by it. With a little dedication, however, I have managed to find some online technology tools that help me to be less distracted and more productive during my working hours. It's ironic, but maybe unsurprising, that the Internet has been both the cause of and the cure to my technology woes.

If one of your problems is that you have trouble staying off distracting websites, then a technology that can be helpful is website-blocking browser add-ons. There are ones that are browser-specific—StayFocusd for Chrome or LeechBlock for Firefox, for instance. These extensions allow you to block distracting websites completely or will limit the amount of time you can spend on them per day. You are also able to determine what times you want the blocker to function. Some, including LeechBlock, also allow you to put a 30 second delay on any website you try to load. The idea is that if it takes some time for the site to load, you'll remind yourself that you're not really supposed to be there in the first place. Similarly, extensions such as Kill Procrastination for Chrome don't actually block the website, but present you with a quote telling you that you're procrastinating. You can choose to continue on to the website if you wish, but perhaps seeing the quote will give you the motivation you need to return to work.

One of the times I have the biggest problem with distraction is when I'm trying to write. A librarian's day is always filled with unexpected interactions—it's the nature of the job. It makes getting writing done difficult, and when you add those necessary distractions to the unnecessary ones created by the Internet, it can be nearly impossible to meet deadlines. Thanks to distraction-free word processing apps, my writing time has been more productive. There are several of these apps, both free and paid—two of the most popular ones are Ommwriter and FocusWriter. Unlike with traditional word processing software, these apps hide the interface when you're typing. That means that you'll be writing on a clean, blank background with no ribbons, buttons, or tabs. The backgrounds are customizable so you can pick something that is relaxing to you or go completely blank. The writing area also will go full screen, allowing you to ignore your clock, your email notifications, and anything else that might get in your way.

A final area that had me wasting time was actually an area I tackled with the best of intentions—getting organized. I tried tool after tool, but I had a hard time getting organized in a way that was efficient for me. I ended up spending more time trying to structure my to-do lists than I did on completing my to-do list! I learned that what I needed was a simple, no-frills place to keep my list of tasks. I

finally found Workflowy, and my time has been better spent ever since. Workflowy is a tool that creates outlines for you—that's it. There are no colors, boxes, columns, pictures, folders, or anything else. In style, it looks similar to Microsoft Word, but it has the advantage of being cloud-based. I access Workflowy from my desktop when I'm in the office, and then have the app on my iPhone and my iPad. It may not be as pretty as some of the other organizational tools out there, but that's exactly why I like it. The no-frills interface has saved me a lot of time.

I am by no means an expert in time management or in distraction-free work, and what has been successful for me will likely completely backfire for others. It also took some trial and error to discover what types of tools worked for me, but in the end, incorporating these tools into my work day has improved my time management skills. If, like me, you have trouble blocking out the vast world of the Internet, you might benefit from looking into some of these tools or others like them...just be careful not to get too distracted.

* * *

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, here are the nominees for the Executive Board for 2016-2017. These nominations will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in October 2016.

V.P./President-Elect – Ingrid Mattson, Reference Librarian, Moritz Law Library, Ohio State University

Secretary – Lisa Britt Wernke, University of Cincinnati, Collections & Access Librarian, Robert S. Marx Law Library, University of Cincinnati

Executive Board Member – Larissa Sullivan, Cataloging & Acquisitions Librarian, Valparaiso University Law Library

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A Note from Your Newsletter Editor

Our next newsletter will be published in June 2016, just before the AALL Annual Meeting in Chicago. If you have any advice or tips for new/er librarians attending AALL, we ask that you share.

Thanks to all who help keep this newsletter running on a quarterly basis; if you have any interest in contributing in whatever way, don't hesitate to drop me an e-mail at pvenard1@udayton.edu