

ORALL NEWSLETTER

OHIO REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES

MARCH, 2023

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President's Column – Sarah Starnes

Spring is in the air, and with spring comes new growth. It brings with it the opportunity to try new things and open up to new ideas. Probably the biggest idea is also my biggest announcement. Dates for the 73rd Annual Meeting have been confirmed and we've moved the conference to a new month. We are happy to report that this year's meeting will be held at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn in Akron, Ohio on November 1-3, 2023. Please keep an eye out for additional information, including a call for proposals and hotel registration information. The Education Committee and Local Arrangements look forward to seeing you later this year! Any questions can be directed to me, local arrangements, or Stephanie Ziegler, Chair of the Education Committee

Something else new that should be on everyone's radar is Chat GPT. When I set out to write this column the last week in February, I had a very interesting conversation with Chat GPT-3. It informed me that while it "doesn't have a specific relationship with law librarians," it can help with legal research, document analysis, and answering legal questions. I questioned its ability to do such things and it did admit to me that it's not able to provide legal advice,

replace human interaction, interpret complex legal issues, and guarantee accuracy. I was pleased to see it would admit weakness and state up front that it may not always be right. Last, I asked for a fun fact about librarians, and (unsurprisingly), it mentioned that law librarians may be known for their sense of humor and deep knowledge of trivia and obscure legal facts. This makes me think maybe a trivia night might be in order during our annual meeting.

Since my initial conversation, Chat GPT-4 was released and recently it tested and successfully passed a bar exam. Just that quickly, the shift from 3 to 4 improved responses from 3,000 words to over 25,000 words.

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Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries

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Newsletter

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Profile

ORALL is a 3-state chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries [Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky]. 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.

Unsolicited contributions are encouraged; contributions submitted for publication are subject to editorial review. For extra copies, contact the editor.

Deadlines for submissions: Feb. 28, May 30, Aug. 30, and Nov. 30

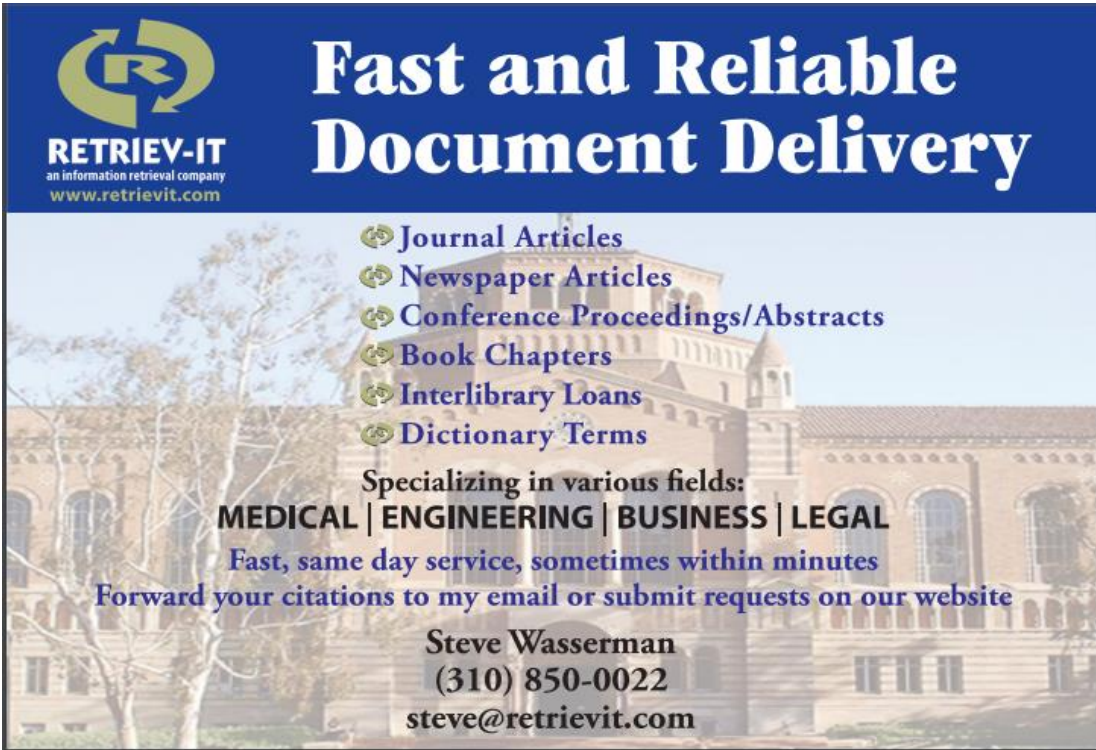
Advertising (per issue) : \$150 for full page, \$90 for half page, \$55 for quarter page, and \$35 for eighth page.

President's Column *continued*

I decided to put it to the test and ask it the same questions I asked Chat GPT-3. When asked what it can do for law librarians, it changed its answer to state that it is “designed to assist with a wide range of tasks,” including natural language processing, generating summaries, providing contextual information, and generating new content based on prompts. It clearly identified itself as a tool for legal research and analysis and while “powerful” is not a replacement for a librarian’s expertise or experience. It also indicated it only has information up through September 2021. Interestingly enough, when asked what it couldn’t do, it provided the same list except for one change: it switched out guaranteeing accuracy for conducting physical research. Last, when asked about a fun fact, it highlighted National Library Week, “book cart drill team[s],” and “Library Idol” held by the American Library Association.

We talk all the time about how our profession has changed and is changing, but it stands true and will continue to change as we are introduced and adapt to new technologies. Who knows what changes lie ahead, but I know that we’ll all be there to greet it, learn about it, and educate others on it.

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* * *

15 Tips and Tricks of Being a Solo While Keeping Your Sanity Intact

by Julie Smith Maekask, Eastman & Smith Ltd.

What an exciting time! You are the only librarian in your organization. Ah, wait, you're the only librarian? How do you survive?

You Are Not Alone: Have a network of folks you can depend on, pick their brains, hang out with or who will listen to your tale of woe. (Like ORALL!)

Librarian, Meet Organization. Organization, Meet Librarian: Get to know the people in your organization, the organization's goals and its culture. Be visible and accessible.

Education: Not a little old lady sporting a bun and comfy shoes whose purpose is to shush? Then educate your clientele about what you can do.

Mom Was Right, Manners Count: Those soft skills matter. Often what people recall is what you are like to work with, not what you did.

You Say Potato, I Say Solanum Tuberosum: Use legal terminology in lieu of libraryspeak as library terminology is not well known outside library circles.

Like Fine Wine, Good Results Take Time and Sometimes the Wine is Corked: We live in reality, not TV Land. Results typically do not appear the moment they are wanted. Thus managing customer expectations is necessary. And yes, "no" is an answer.

Triage, Not Just for Doctors: The ability to discern what gets top priority is a necessary skill. Know how to multitask, manage time/projects and, some days, to just roll with it.

Use Your Transferable Skills: Have a degree in another field? Are you an expert on spreadsheets? Can you make a motor purr? When applicable, use those skills in your job.

Be Proactive Pat: Volunteer, speak up, tell people you are interested or take on a task. If you are not proactive, you run the risk of others putting you in a box or missing out on an ideal project.

There Are Way Too Many Cats if Curiosity Kills: Be curious about your organization, profession, coworkers and the world around you.

Use That Brain: Thinking skills and intuition are invaluable.

Look for Ways to Say Yes: If something isn't available, then what is? (Don't forget, solution needs to be ethically/legally compliant.)

Cloning is for Sheep: It is okay to say that you cannot do something or do it right now. You are one person. This may take a bit of finesse.

Get a Hobby: Hobbies can be relaxing, make us more interesting and even refresh our brains so we can refocus on work.

Lock Yourself in the Loo: Feeling overwhelmed? Hide somewhere for a couple of minutes, breathe and relax. Your performance will not be up to par if you're frazzled.

By knowing yourself, your organization, your co-workers, your colleagues and using your skills, your torch will remain lit and sanity intact.

* * *

Sovereign Citizens in the Public Law Library
by Rachel Dilley, Supreme Court of Ohio

If your law library serves the general public, you may have encountered at least one patron who strikes you as odd because of the nature of their legal information request. This patron might seek tax case law from 1933, an obscure nineteenth-century admiralty law case, or an early twentieth-century state statute covering automobile registration. The patron seems to be pro-se but is not working on the typical domestic or criminal law issues that your other pro-se patrons do, nor is the patron an academic or history researcher.

You might have a sovereign citizen on your hands. Sovereign citizens are people who believe a variety of erroneous legal theories based upon misreading of the law, technicalities, and misinformation they've read on the internet. Though there are many flavors of sovereign citizens, the common thread is that they do not believe laws apply to them; they believe that they are free to self-govern or form their own systems of justice.

Law librarians who serve public patrons should, in my opinion, know the basics about the misguided theories sovereigns believe so that you can recognize these patrons when they show up requesting obscure legal material. The [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) offers good background information on this topic. A 2022 Penn State Law Review [article](#) by Holly Christensen also provides an overview of sovereign citizens' beliefs.

How does a law librarian deal with a sovereign citizen patron you suspect is clogging up the legal system with inappropriate—if not vexatious—paperwork? While sovereign citizens might be flooding dockets with lengthy filings, a law librarian can do little to influence this situation.

At the Supreme Court of Ohio Law Library, our experience with sovereign citizens is that once they discover that our assistance in acquiring legal resources is available, they are prone to asking many separate follow-up questions and jump to new topics quickly, sometimes filling our ticket queue. Once we provide a “sovereign” patron with the resource requested, two more email requests from the same patron pop up in our queue like a game of whack-a-mole. Just as with any general public patron, we provide the sovereign citizen patron with their requested resources, unless the request is overly burdensome or if it would fall under a UPL scenario. We address inquiries from the general public in the order in which they are received, which can sometimes slow down the sovereign patrons’ rapid-fire questions as they wait for us to respond to their earlier requests.

Of course, we are polite in our responses to sovereign patrons and keep reply emails brief. If a patron is impatient or rude, regardless of what kind of patron it is, we simply ignore the tone but honor the request for information. We use the following disclaimer with responses to our public patrons: “Legal research is often complicated, even for what seems like a simple question. As a law librarian I can provide information, but I am not qualified to answer legal questions. If you need someone who will research and interpret the law for you, you should consider talking to an attorney.”

There are rare opportunities when a patron is exploring sovereign citizen theories they’ve read about on the internet. They are perhaps open to or curious about these erroneous legal ideas but are also, admirably, fact checking. When a research question like this comes along, we provide accurate information debunking the misinformation they’ve read. However, established sovereign citizens asking for our assistance are not seeking to have their minds changed. As our professional ethics dictate, we recognize their intellectual freedom. We must allow the courts to address any misguided legal theories they put forth.

In today’s political climate, public law libraries may see an increase in patrons who are sovereign citizens. Though sovereign citizen patrons utilize the knowledge and resources of government libraries when they do not believe in the legitimacy of that government, we as librarians have an ethical obligation to serve them.

* * *

ORALL Peep Show Contest 2023

by Kathleen M. Dugan, Cleveland Library Association/Cuyahoga County Law Library

It is time for the 5th Annual ORALL Peep Show contest. Since there are many new ORALL colleagues, I thought I would take this opportunity to explain what the fun is all about and encourage every law library to participate. This contest helps create joy in a stress-filled world.

For years, the American Bar Association (ABA) ran an annual Peep Show contest where participants created and submitted law-related displays or dioramas using PEEPS® brand marshmallow candies.¹ As an example, some entries represented courtroom settings where the candies stood in for judges, jury members, the parties, etc. Most displays used various props to support their themes, and some became very elaborate. The ABA created categories for winners, but no prizes were awarded.

When that contest ceased in 2018, I thought that ORALL could have some fun picking up where the ABA left off with our own law-related Peep Show contest. Since 2019, I have solicited contest entries from law libraries of all types, including county law libraries, academic law libraries, special law libraries, and law firms. If you would like ideas or some inspiration for creating your own Peep Show display this year, all of the prior entries are contained in photo albums on the ORALL Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/OhioRegAssnLawLib/photos_albums

Law Libraries may submit more than one entry, but just remember to observe applicable intellectual property laws.

This contest is totally optional. Although no prizes will be awarded, winners will have bragging rights. The winning categories this year are:

- Funniest
- Most Creative
- Most Topical (i.e., a trending topic)
- Most Thought-Provoking
- Best Law-Related Theme
- Most use of PEEPS®

I hope that this announcement gives you plenty of time to prepare your displays by the April 7th deadline. As I receive submissions, I will post them to the ORALL Facebook page in a new photo album for Peep Show 2023. Everyone will then have two weeks to vote online for their favorites. When it is time to vote, I will email a link for a Google survey to the ORALL listserv. Winners will be announced during National Library Week on Tuesday, April 25th, which is National Library Workers Day!

Again-this contest is solely for fun and to provide a collegial opportunity for staff to engage with each other. I have found that it is a great team-building project. If you are a solo librarian, you can submit your own display or work with nearby libraries to submit a joint entry. I hope that this information is helpful to understand a little about this event, but please feel free to contact me with any questions that you have.

¹ *The Washington Post* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* also ran contests for many years.

* * *

5TH ANNUAL ORALL PEEP SHOW

Join in the fun!
Submit an entry from your library by
Fri., Apr. 7th at 5p.
Peep the details in a later email.



* * *

The Re-Awakening of ORALL's PLL-SIG by Carolyn Vinyard, Bricker and Eckler LLP

Greetings from C-bus. Happy New Year, Happy Valentine's Day, Happy St. Patrick's day and Happy, Happy for all other events you have and are going to celebrate!!! Praying all going well in your corners of our world.

As mentioned at our 2022 ORALL Meeting in Lexington we are wanting to rebuild and invigorate our PLL-SIG.

Soooooooooooo – 4 Zooming Conversation dates have been scheduled for 2023 to meet new colleagues, discuss issues of interest, share ideas, ask questions, learn from our collective knowledge and hopefully plan some educational sessions for our 2023 Annual Conference and Meeting in Akron.

Please know that all ORALL members are most welcome to join us! It would be grand to have our academic and public librarian colleagues join in as we often interface and use your expertise and talents to further our firm goals.

The dates are --

- Friday, March 17, 2023 -- 12:30 - 1:30 (bring your Baileys Irish Cream)
- Wednesday, May 31, 2023 -- 12:00 - 1:00
- Thursday, August 3, 2023 -- 12:30 - 1:30
- Wednesday, November 1, 2023 -- 2:30 - 3:30 (in person at ORALL Annual Conference and via Zoom).

Some ideas for conversation prompts for our first Conversation include -- changes at Courthouse News Service; Trellis expanding OHIO coverage; how do you handle informing your in-house clients/patrons about the wealth of updating information to both digital and print sources (FKA - routing information); handling a firm merger; supporting the growth of our profession

If interested in joining the Conversations please contact Carolyn Vinyard, Research Analyst, Bricker & Eckler LLP (soon to be Bricker Graydon) at cvinyard@bricker.com.

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Report of the ORALL SIG Committee
by Jeanmarie Byrge, ORALL SIG Chair

I am pleased to announce that the Annual ORALL Special Interest Group (SIG) for County Law Libraries Spring Meeting will be held on April 28th at Ohio's Salt Fork Lodge and Conference Center.

In addition to having some great programs lined up, I hope the venue selected will provide a genuine retreat from the day to day business of providing legal services to our communities.

For those who are able to arrive the evening prior to the event we'll meet up at the pub and weather permitting move outdoors to relax around a fire-pit, enjoying pizza and the lush landscape of one of Ohio's Great Lodges. In between programs there will be oversized leather sofas and spectacular views meant to calm and inspire.

As an added bonus, at the end of the day Friday, the Advisory Committee will convene for the first post-pandemic in-person meeting. For newcomers, this will be a great opportunity to join in and have input on the committee's future endeavors.

For more information about this year's event, contact myself or SIG Vice-Chair Kristy Wells.

* * *

From the ORALL Archive
by Rachel Dilley, Supreme Court of Ohio

During Covid-19 work-from-home era, librarians at the Supreme Court of Ohio Law Library organized ORALL print archival material dating from 1949 through 2000 and created finding aids for that material.

While processing the ORALL archive, I was not surprised to find a conference proceeding handout which addressed computerization in libraries. After all, the profession embraces technology. What did surprise me, however, was how *early* our community of law librarians was interested in computer use. At the May 1965 conference, ORALL (then OALL) law librarians learned about the hourly search services provided by IBM. This was two years before OCLC began operations.

Think about how searching the Pennsylvania Statutes could, in 1965, be completed in "less than an hour." An hour for search processing time was a vast improvement to the manual search, even with a good index! After reading this in the handout, I opened Westlaw and searched the word "vexatious" in the Pennsylvania code, and it took two seconds for my results.

The ORALL archive never fails to remind me that we stand on the shoulders of forward-thinking giants.

LEGAL RESEARCH
BY COMPUTER

by

Mr. Don Kraft

How can Computers help the Law Librarian is a new field and one yet to be explored.

A very favorable trait of the computer is that the work is consistent. And another, is that the time element is a great factor.

The services are for hire...if one is interested, an IBM office could be contacted. Service can be rendered on the hourly basis.

The searcher, based on his knowledge and experience with statutes, lists in advance the words which, if found in a section, would cause him to read it carefully. If the search is properly organized all sections which are relevant will be identified.

The entire Pennsylvania Statutes can be searched in less than an hour.

Law Journals and treatises are now in the operational stages.

The retrieval system by computer works like a funnel -- the key people should be at the out-put and not at the in-take. The system should give you just what you want. In the future, it may be that a typewriter will be installed at the transmission terminal.

The America and Delta Airlines now have a manned machine relationship.

Don Kraft
IBM Data Processing, Chicago, Ill.

Ohio Association of Law Libraries
May 21, 22, 1965
Cincinnati, Ohio

LEGAL RESEARCH BY COMPUTER

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Cincinnati, Ohio

May 1965 - 6

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New Librarians in ORALL

Ryan S. Overdorf joined Indiana University as a Research and Instructional Services Librarian in 2023.

Previously he was the Senior Electronic/Media Services Librarian for the LaValley Law Library at the University of Toledo College of Law. At Toledo he supported law school events through expertise in audio-visual design, operations, and troubleshooting. In addition, he served as an active member of that university's ADA Compliance Committee, bringing to the Committee his expertise in Web accessibility.

He currently serves as the Chair of the Adaptive Technologies Committee for the Legal Innovation and Technology SIS of the American Association of Law Libraries.

The opportunity to teach legal research in his home state is one of the things that drew him back to Indiana University. His interest areas include criminal law, constitutional law, and telecommunications law.

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***A Note from the ORALL Secretary
by Jackie McCloud***

We hope you were able to attend the annual meeting this past fall. If you were unable to attend the annual meeting, you can keep up to date with ORALL's activities by checking out the [2022 ORALL Annual Meeting Business Meeting Minutes and Committee Reports](#), as well as approved Executive Board Meeting Minutes from [October 19th, 2021](#), [November 15th, 2021](#), and [April 12th, 2022](#).

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A Note from Your Newsletter Editor

Thank you all once again for your contributions to this quarter's newsletter. We have a wide variety of submissions this quarter; this newsletter is and will always be about sharing the tips, tricks and news you feel other ORALL members will find valuable. With the submissions this quarter, you have taken advantage of that to share an assortment of information.

I am very grateful to IU for once again hosting the listserv. It seems to have already helped the sharing of information (not only for the Newsletter), which will hopefully keep the newsletter stocked with valuable information.

Our next newsletter will be published in June, 2023. Please have any information you would like to share in that newsletter to me by the end of May. Thank you.

If you ever have any questions, concerns or ideas, please e-mail me at pvenard1@udayton.edu.