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# FCIL *Newsletter*

Volume 12

May 1998

Number 3

## From the Chair

*William B. McCloy, University of  
Washington Gallagher Law Library*

It hardly seems possible that at the time of this writing the 1998 Annual Meeting in Anaheim is only three months away, and by the time of the next newsletter in October those meetings will already be a memory. As reported in last October's newsletter, of the ten programs proposed by our SIS (plus two we proposed co-sponsoring), fully half were selected. Though it's sometimes hard to see the reasons behind what is accepted and what is rejected, one thing is certain. Our SIS continues to be among the leaders in quality educational programming in the Association, and I, for one, am excitedly looking forward to hearing what our colleagues have prepared! (For a listing of programs related to foreign, comparative and international law, see elsewhere in this issue, the AALL preliminary program, or our excellent website, maintained by Anne Burnett.)

Though I had not really intended it, the theme of my remarks this time appears to be member involve-

ment and recognition. As I glanced at the programs we are sponsoring or co-sponsoring this year, as well as the related workshop, I came up with the following impressive list of names of FCIL members participating as speakers, coordinators, or moderators: Dan Wade, Marci Hoffman, Katherine Topulos, Dennis Sears, Jean Davis, Roberta Shaffer, Gail Partin, Chris Corcos, Lyo Louis-Jacques, Anne Burnett, Jolande Goldberg, and Christina Tarr. (I hope I didn't leave anyone out!) And this doesn't even include those of you who lead working groups, serve on committees and work behind the scenes with little or no recognition. I also would like to highlight the fact that many of our members were speakers and organizers at the recent ASIL annual meeting. Though I was unable to attend, knowing the FCIL people who participated I'm certain it was an outstanding program.

And how could we fail to congratulate the FCIL

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### Attention FCIL SIS Members

All section members should find an inserted ballot for the election of FCIL SIS officers within this newsletter. The instructions for completing and returning the ballot are printed thereon. There will be no separate mailing of ballot forms; therefore, If you are a member of the FCIL SIS and have not received a ballot, please contact Jonathan Franklin (jfrank@umich.edu or 313-764-6150) or Anne Burnett (aburnett@arches.uga.edu) or (706) 542-5298.

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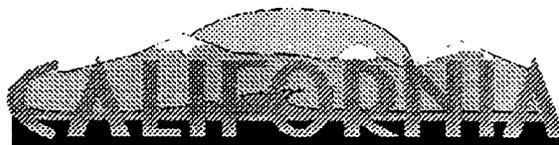
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members who were recently elected to the AALL Executive Board? Margie Axtmann has been elected Vice-President/President-Elect of our Association and Frank Liu a member of the Executive Board (Frank is also currently the President of the Asian American Law Librarians Caucus which jointly sponsors our Asian Law Working Group and has co-sponsored many programs with us through the years). Please take advantage of Margie and Frank's involvement at the highest levels of our Association to make your suggestions and concerns known. And, once again, consider volunteering for an AALL committee yourself. The Annual Meeting Program Selection Committee and its recent offshoot, the Professional Development Committee, are two examples of areas where we might make a positive impact on programs and activities in the areas of foreign, comparative, and international law.

Also take special note of the Annual Meeting schedule listed elsewhere in this issue. As I mentioned in my remarks at last summer's business meeting, the schedule in Anaheim will be radically different from what we have been used to in the past. In particular, our FCIL SIS Business Meeting and Reception for Attendees from Abroad will be held on Wednesday afternoon, from 1:30-3:00. Plan to stay in Anaheim through this last day of the conference. We were unable to secure the early evening slot and earlier date we have enjoyed in the past, so due to the time of day, we will plan on light refreshments for our reception. We sincerely hope that you all will be able to join us and will encourage any visitors from abroad to be our guests.

I have received feedback from only a small number of members regarding the issues I highlighted in the October newsletter, concerns about program selection and whether the Association truly understands the needs of our membership. If you are interested in this or the related issue of the difficulties we face in scheduling our numerous working groups and committees within the newly restructured schedule, I encourage you to think through the options and prepare to discuss alterna-

tives as we meet in Anaheim. The annual business meeting is an appropriate venue for discussion of issues such as these, though my feeling is that it tends to be too short (and sometimes too formal) for extended discussion. Perhaps we could gather over a meal or otherwise informally and hash these issues out more completely face-to-face. I'll be looking forward to seeing you all before long – in sunny California!



*FCIL Newsletter* is published in October, February and May by the **Foreign, Comparative, and International Special Interest Section of the American Association of Law Libraries**. The main goal of this Section is "to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on foreign, comparative, and international law, and to represent its members' interests and concerns within AALL."

*FCIL Newsletter* is sent free to members of the FCIL SIS. It is available for that "exchange of ideas and information."

The newsletter can be read on the Word Wide Web at: <http://www.aallnet.org/sis/fcilsis/fcilsis.html>.

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**Deadline for next issue:** September 15, 1998

## IALL Meets in Rome

The International Association of Law Libraries will hold its 17th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship in Rome, Italy on September 20-24, 1998. Topics covered this year include Vatican and Canon Law and the Italian legal system and resources. Trips include private tours of the Vatican Law Library and a visit to Florence.

Look for more information in the Winter 1996 (v. 24, no. 3) of the *International Journal of Legal Information* or contact the IALL secretary, Mrs. Britt S.M. Kjolstad at Post Office Box 5709, Washington, D.C. 20016-1309. Subscribers to the journal will automatically receive mailings about registration, hotel, etc.

## Allison to Speak in Anaheim

From AALL press release dated February 25, 1998:

Noted legal technology expert G. Burgess Allison will be one of the keynote speakers at the American Association of Law Libraries' (AALL) 91st Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California, July 11-16, 1998. Allison will speak on Tuesday, July 14, addressing the enormous impact technology has had on the legal profession.

Allison is the Manager of Information Systems for the Center for Advanced Aviation System Development, a division of the MITRE Corporation, a not-for-profit corporation that operates federally funded research and development centers for the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration. He is the author of *The Lawyer's Guide to the Internet*, the American Bar Association's (ABA) best-selling book for 1995-1996, as well as two new ABA books -- *The Lawyer's Quick Guide to Netscape Navigator* and *The Lawyer's Quick Guide to Internet Explorer*. He also serves as Technical Editor of *Law Practice Management* magazine, and he writes the magazine's featured technology column, "Technology Update." Allison has been writing "Technology Update" since 1983, and

received the LPMS Distinguished Writing Award in 1992.

"Burgess Allison's speech will bridge the virtual gap, connecting the information and technology needs of the practicing bar with the cutting edge expertise of law librarians," said AALL President Judy Meadows. "His presentation is also guaranteed to be full of insight and humor."

## Babelfish Provides Free Online Translations

Researchers of foreign and international law often come across promising Web sites in foreign languages. A new online translation service, Babelfish, provides free translations from German, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese into English and vice-versa. Babelfish can be accessed at <http://babelfish.altavista.digital.com/>. Please note that this computerized translation program, offered by the Web search engine Alta Vista, does not handle complex sentences, ambiguous words, or synonyms perfectly. National Public Radio's All Things Considered provided examples of translation mishaps in a story aired on February 12, 1998. For a summary of the All Things Considered story, or to access a RealAudio file of the actual story, point your Web browser to <http://www.npr.org> and run a search for "babelfish."

### FCIL SIS Officers

The current officers of the FCIL SIS are:

Chair: William McCloy, University of Washington  
Gallagher Law Library

Vice Chair/Chair-Elect: Maria Smolka-Day,  
University of Pennsylvania Law School Biddle  
Law Library

Secretary/Treasurer: Jonathan Franklin, University  
of Michigan Law Library

Immediate Past Chair: Margareta Horiba, Tulane  
University Law Library

## FCIL SIS-related Functions in Anaheim

*For updated information about FCIL activities in Anaheim, please check the FCIL Web site at <http://www.lawsch.uga.edu/fcil/fcil.html>. Also, if you have items to add to this list of events, please let me know at [aburnett@arches.uga.edu](mailto:aburnett@arches.uga.edu).*

# JULY

### Saturday, July 11, 1998

FCIL-SIS Education Committee meeting, 5:00pm - 6:00pm

### Sunday, July 12, 1998

Program A5, 10:00am - noon

*The Guiding Principles of the 21st Century: The 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Dan Wade, Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Library (Coordinator)

Michael Cooper, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute

Marci Hoffman, University of Minnesota Law Library

FCIL-SIS Electronic Issues Working Group, 12:15pm - 1:30pm

FCIL-SIS Subcommittees Concurrent meeting, 4:00pm - 5:00pm

includes:

Publications Subcommittee

Clearinghouse for International Placement

### Monday, July 13, 1998

Program C6, 8:30am - 10:00am (cosponsored with History & Rare Books SIS)

*Bacon's World: The Law in the Renaissance (Navigating the Law through the Ages Part 2)*

Katherine Topulos, Duke University School of Law Library (Coordinator and Moderator)

David J. Seipp, Boston University School of Law

Program C9, 8:30am - 10:00am

*Approaching the New Horizon: Foreign and International Research Instruction in the Law School and Law Firm*

Dennis S. Sears, Brigham Young University Howard W. Hunter Law Library (Coordinator and Moderator)

Jean J. Davis, Brooklyn Law School Library

Roberta I. Shaffer, Covington and Burling

Program D8, 10:15am - 11:45pm

*Discover a New Horizon for Government Information Resources*

Cecily Giardina, Dickinson School of Law Library (Coordinator)

Gail Partin, Dickinson School of Law Library (Moderator)

Martha Kiszely, New York Law School Library

John A. Shuler, University of Illinois at Chicago

Association Luncheon, noon - 2:00pm (keynote speaker: John Perry Barlow)

FCIL-SIS members traditionally sit together - see announcement on p.8.

Alternative lunch for FCIL-SIS members not attending Association Luncheon

Program E5, 3:15pm - 5:15pm

*Fifty Years after Nuremberg and Tokyo: The Future of International and Domestic Prosecutions of War Crimes*

Christine Corcos, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center Library (Coordinator)

Lyonette Louis-Jacques, University of Chicago D'Angelo Law Library (Moderator)

Christopher Blakesley, Louisiana State University Law Center

Michael Scharf, New England School of Law

FCIL-SIS African Law Working Group meeting, 5:30pm - 6:30pm

## **Tuesday, July 14, 1998**

Program G7, 11:00am - noon

*New Horizons in United States-Mexican Relations and Their Impact on Mexican-Americans*

Dan Wade, Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Library (Coordinator)

FCIL-SIS CIS/East European Law Working Group meeting, noon - 1:30pm

Program H7, 1:30pm - 3:00pm

*The Information Society: European Union Documents in the United States*

Anne Burnett, University of Georgia Law Library (Coordinator and Moderator)

Andrea Severson, University of California Government & Social Sciences Information

Barbara Sloan, European Commission Delegation to the United States

International Association of Law Libraries reception and movie, 8:30pm - 10:30pm

## **Wednesday, July 15, 1998**

FCIL-SIS Asian Law Working Group meeting, 7:30am - 8:30am

FCIL-SIS Latin American Law Working Group meeting, noon - 1:30pm

FCIL-SIS Business Meeting and Reception for Attendees from Abroad, 1:30pm - 3:00pm

# Top Ten Comments on Using the Internet for International Legal Research

The following “Top Ten” list summarizes comments made by FCIL SIS members Gail Partin and Anne Burnett during a program of the annual meeting of the American Society of International Law (ASIL), on April 3, 1998. FCIL SIS members Marci Hoffman and Jill Watson also participated in the program, and numerous FCIL SIS members attended and contributed tremendously to the exchange of ideas regarding the program’s theme: “The Challenge of Electronic Resources for International Legal Research.”

## **#10 Seek and Ye Shall Find...Maybe!** - search engines, browsing, serendipity

Those of us who use online commercial databases such as Lexis and Westlaw are often frustrated by the inability to run complex boolean searches of the Web using search engines. A recent CNN story reported that there are over 300 million Web sites, and that even a good search on a good engine will only retrieve 1/3 of the relevant sites. So, even with a good search engine, used efficiently, you still need to be creative and flexible and rely upon serendipity to find materials on the Web.

## **#9 Black Holes in Cyberspace** - gaps on the Web

Sometimes we have to burst the bubble of an enthusiastic student or faculty member who believes that everything is on the Web. Many times, the Web just does not provide.

## **#8 Let’s Get Organized!**

Sometimes, gaps are not easily discerned because of the Web’s unstructured nature: Web directories, such as Yahoo, have attempted to provide subject arrangement, but they include only a fraction of Web resources. There has been much discussion of cataloging the Web, but the informal and transient nature of the resources makes updating a nightmare.

## Related to this is **#7 Lots of Needles in a Haystack**

The distribution of all these pieces of information to millions of locations around the globe rather than being collected in a few key libraries can be viewed as both a plus and a minus. Now, instead of having to call somebody at the UN or Amnesty International to ask for a document, and asking these folks to spend their time copying or faxing or mailing, one might find and print these documents from the Web in a matter of minutes. So, the storage and distribution responsibilities are disseminated over a larger group of people.

Of course, it still might be more efficient to just pick up the phone and ask!

## **#6 Location, Location, Location** - the peripatetic Web site

So, you’ve discovered a great site containing tons of useful materials, and you’ve either bookmarked it or added it to your collection of links. The next day you click on the link with great confidence, only to discover that the site has moved. If you’re lucky, you’ll be automatically for-

warded to the new location or at least provided with the new URL. Or you may end up searching for the site all over again. All of these options cost the researcher time.

### **#5 Here Today...Gone Tomorrow**

Web sites, especially the good ones, seem to drop out of cyberspace altogether! Or they are “under construction” and not accessible— permanently.

So, what will or will not be available fifteen years from now?

### **#4 Is the Internet Really A Free Lunch?**

There *are* cost factors to consider...

Some are obvious and direct such as the growing number of sites beginning to charge fees:

- flat fees for membership, or
- subscriptions, or
- per document charges, or
- per search fees.

Even when the site is free, there are indirect costs:

- hardware
- software, such as browsers, plug-ins, and user training
- communication costs, such as internet service providers (ISP)

And finally, there is still the cost of the researcher’s time, which can be considerable given the relative disorganization of web-based information.

### **#3 You Get What You Pay for...**

The web is like a wild frontier town. There is virtually no quality control or accountability. It often requires the vigilance and persistence of an investigative reporter or detective to discover the owner of a web site or what their true agenda is. So, although we may get a site for free, we cannot be assured of the quality, reliability and accuracy of the information included there.

### **#2 Are We Shooting for the Moon? - heightened expectation levels**

The Web can be an especially powerful medium for quick and relatively inexpensive access to vast quantities of research information for even the most remote areas of the world. It levels the playing field, so to speak.

But right now, and especially with foreign & international law, there is much that is still unavailable electronically -- and may never be available electronically. Unfortunately, researchers are starting to expect everything to be “on the Web.” This can lead to dangerous conclusions by the uninformed - - “if its not there, the information must not exist!” The mere existence of the Internet seems to stifle full and complete research.

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*continued from p. 7*

### **#1 Jump start with ASIL & the ERG**

Web researchers are in desperate need of guidance and direction, as evidenced by comments made during several programs at ASIL's annual meeting. The ERG and ASIL are perfectly poised to fill that void... as a jump start research tool ( a place to start)

....as a self-directed Internet guide (a place to learn)

....as a quick reference source (to locate a discreet piece of information)

Perhaps the ERG's best contribution is that it is particularly well-suited for instructional use. Access the ERG at <http://www.asil.org/resource/Home.htm>.

## **Meet Us for Lunch in Anaheim!**

Join your fellow FCIL SIS members for lunch on Monday, July 13, 1998 in Anaheim! Traditionally, section members attending the Association Luncheon sit together, and those not attending the luncheon meet at an alternative site. If you would like to sit with the group at the Association Luncheon, please contact Tracy Thompson at [tracy.thompson@yale.edu](mailto:tracy.thompson@yale.edu). If you prefer to lunch with section members at an alternative site, contact Jonathan Franklin at [jafrank@umich.edu](mailto:jafrank@umich.edu).

