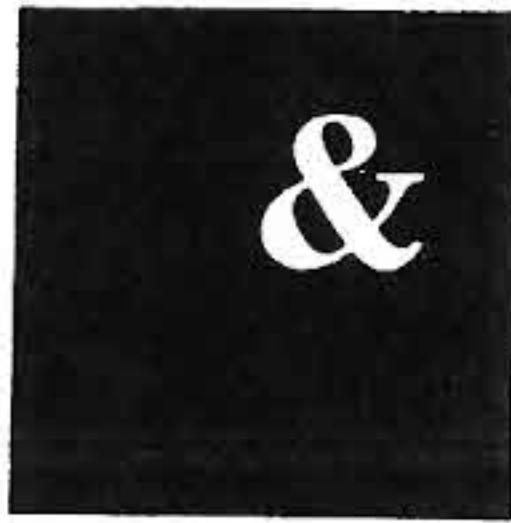


STATE, COURT & COUNTY LAW LIBRARIES



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A Special Interest Section of the American Association of Law Libraries

Chair's Message

National Conference on State Court Libraries

November 11-14th found many of us in attendance at the conference held in Columbus sponsored by the State Justice Institute. Erick Low and Paul Fu directed the event, with Peggy Rogers of the National Center for State Courts as co-ordinator. The two and a half day sessions were divided into focus groups after a day of floor testimony from each participant. A strategic planning effort resulted in issues identification and recommendations from each focus group. The process was an exhaustive look at concerns with possible solutions, and provided an opportunity for us to hear from some judges and court administrators in working sessions for the first time. The lovely Ohio Supreme Court library hosted a gala reception for us Friday evening, and Ohio's Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer spoke at lunch. On Saturday the State Court Administrator, Steve Stovall gave us parting remarks. Focus group leaders were David Badertscher for technology, Deborah Norwood for public services, Marcia Koslov for finance and Pamela Gregory for management, staffing and organization. The conference

consensus statement: Our consensus is that law libraries are integral to the administration of justice. The law library community, governing bodies, and participants in the judicial process must communicate effectively and work jointly to implement strategies that insure access to legal information and excellent library service for all. Congratulations are due to Erick, Paul and Peggy and to all of the participants for making this effort so worthwhile. Many of the State, Court & County membership paid their own way to this event, about half I'd estimate. Here is a recap of the recommendations of each focus group: (cont'd next page)

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

We thank you for your overwhelming response to our plea for content for your newsletter. If this issue is late it is because we had to make the agonizing editorial decision of what to include and what to save for the next issue. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND US YOUR ARTICLES, ETC. - we still need your assistance - Deadline for the next issue is March 1, 1993.

This issue is crammed with information on the National Conference on State Court Libraries; the Standards Committee Discussion; and on the activities of our Board. There is a summary of the Research Needs Survey. More comprehensive results are available from the Editors as are additional reports on the National Conference mentioned above. There is good news about West's Award of Excellence and lots more!

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE (continued)**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY**

Discussed communicating the library's role in the administration of justice/integrating into court operations, building bridges, schmoozing, care & feeding of clerks, upgrading of library staff. This group wanted to economically provide access to

information/quality control, collection development policies, fair distribution of services, education & training of library staff. Quality service for all constituents was an objective as was the public's access to legal information. This group set many goals in the area of communication, identification of advocates, developing funding sources, and marketing. They stressed communication outside the loop. As all of us did they discussed standards, and how to blend court standards with library standards.

FINANCE

Finance identified ten issues:

Public sector funding is not growing, and our organizational structures are maybe barriers to secure funding. We must become part of the management team.

There is a need to define funding contributions and expectations from disparate user groups.

We recognize that alternative forms of legal information are more expensive, not only to purchase, but to maintain.

We need to redefine staffing levels. What is adequate, and how competent they must be for our futures.

There are new demands on libraries and legal information, with impacts on funding for such needs as ADA.

Court revenues are changing. With alternative dispute resolution fees/fines are no longer stable sources of revenue.

There is an impact on space because of technology.

Pricing of legal materials and information far exceed inflation and are vastly different from other types of books and information.

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

Issues

1. How do we communicate and to whom? How do we determine and sell our role and mission to our management/leadership/users/funders?/ When? Where?

2. What is an effective organizational structure for state and county law libraries within their parent organizations?

3. Our users are not our decision makers or funders. How can we achieve commonality of interests within and among our users and decision makers?

4. How can we put teeth into the AALL standards for court libraries? How do we get judicial managers and leaders to buy into the standards?

5. Should there be formal coordination between our libraries?

Recommendations

1. Court libraries should define their roles and missions and communicate these visions effectively to their judicial decision makers, leaders, funding agencies, users, and the public.

2. Studies should be performed to determine an effective organizational structure for state and county law libraries.

a. Funding should be sought to support a study of organizational effectiveness in court libraries as part of the process of judicial planning.

b. Future judicial planning must contain issues affecting court libraries.

3. Empower our users and make our decision makers users.

a. Court libraries should seek to foster commonality of interests with and among our users and decision makers.

4. We should disseminate the AALL court library standards to judicial organizations and advocate their implementation.

5. We should explore formal coordination between court libraries within each state or region.

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

Access

1. Court libraries should support a multi-media technology based approach in a cost effective manner to accomplish informed access to information resources.

Relationship of Library and Librarians to other Departments

2. Librarians are the professionals trained to manage and retrieve information. Therefore libraries should be part of the management team that plans and responds to technology for the court's research needs.

