View from the Chair

Joan Bellistri, GLL-SIS Chair

I enjoyed seeing everyone in Baltimore. Talking to GLL-SIS members and attending GLL-SIS programs, I can only say - don't we do great work? My goal is to spread the word to the rest of the world – well, maybe, at least, to our institutions, the greater legal community and beyond. How can we get our message out? This is something I struggle with but am sure working together we can do it.

The Publicity and Public Relations Committee Marketing Mavens project is a great source of ideas and source of inspiration. Check it out and remember to share what you have done to promote law libraries. At our first Board meeting in Baltimore we talked about the possibility of a resource guide on how to promote law libraries with an accompanying video, customizable for different libraries and audiences. There are other guide topics for consideration as well. (It is not too late to volunteer and be a part of the fun.) The work of the Best A2J Practices Committee is another opportunity to demonstrate the importance of law libraries in access to justice. Involvement in the Equal Justice Conference and the Self-Represented Litigants Network, which is part of this committee's charge, leads to partnerships and recognition of the value of legal information and library programs. (We have grants for that.) Participation in non-library organizations like these provides us with the opportunity to explain ourselves and showcase our work. That is why I agreed to do a webinar entitled “Utilizing Libraries and Pro Bono to Open Access to Legal Services” for the National Association of Pro Bono Professionals in August. We can all seek out other organizations like bar associations and legal service providers for promotion of our library services. I have the opportunity to attend the Mid-Atlantic Association of Court Management at the end of the month. I will need to have my elevator speech at the ready to answer the inevitable question: “Why we need libraries when it is all online?” Working on our message together and sharing our experiences will make it easier. The Advocacy Committee is instrumental in fighting for libraries' relevance and keeping GLL-SIS members abreast of important library issues.

GLL-SIS has many other committees that keep us going. Thanks to everyone
View from the Chair (continued)

Joan Bellistri, GLL-SIS Chair

who volunteered for committees – you still can – it is not too late. Our Strategic Plan is expiring. We are looking to an exciting path to our future with Dan Cordova as our guide and Strategic Planning Committee chair. Our new plan will keep GLL-SIS on track. The Standards Committee will review court and appellate standards for revision. Join the Education Committee or submit a program or suggest a webinar. Contact the Membership and Mentoring Committee and find a mentor at the Mentoring Skills Inventory. The Bylaws Committee will keep an eye on AALL changes as they come. The Nominations Committee will ensure that GLL-SIS leadership continues. (Please consider saying “yes” when they call.) The work of the Awards Committee and Grants Committee can be fun and keeps our members engaged. Thankful that Sara Pic and Christine Morton are taking over the Newsletter Committee as co-editors. (Thanks to all of the work of John Barden as editor for so many years.) Please consider writing an article to share what is going on in your library or tell us about something cool that you have learned. The role of the Technology Committee has changed with AALL staff doing the actual website work. However, we still have to monitor the content and provide direction as to GLL’s online needs.

I am excited about the new AALL year for GLL-SIS and hope that I can live up to Holly Gerber’s standards as chair. Glad that she is still around. We welcome Jenny Silbiger, as vice chair, and Joe Lawson, as new board member. Special thanks to Jenn Dalglish and Dan Cordova and all of the Committee Chairs for their time over the years. The work that everyone put into our breakfast meeting and auction (thanks again Gail) and the annual meeting programs was exceptional as always. Hoping for another good year with your help.
As fall begins, we look back on the educational experience and professional and personal friendships made at the Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference quickly kicked into high gear with the comedic talents of Baltimore native John Waters and the availability of Sunday brunch style libations.

For a more in-depth review of the conference, please enjoy the four articles authored by our Annual Meeting grant recipients - Joseph Lawson, Marissa Mason, Ryan Metheny, and Malinda Muller. Each offer their unique perspective on and takeaways from the Annual Meeting. Catch up on the happenings of GLL-SIS by reviewing the Executive Board meeting minutes, Financial Report, and the Grants Committee report on the Fundraising Campaign and Silent Auction. Malinda Muller explains the GLL-SIS Membership and Mentoring Committee's charge and describes their Skills Inventory. And learn about the recently opened Museum and History Center for the Northern District of Illinois.

Sprinkled throughout the newsletter are photographs taken at the Annual Meeting or which highlight an aspect of the associated article. We would like to continue including photographs in future GLL News editions. If you attend or participate in a professional conference, seminar or library association event, please take a moment to pictorially capture the event and submit it for publication in the GLL News.

Lastly, we would like to offer our sincere thanks to John Barden, former GLL News editor. John generously and expeditiously offered his time and expertise to bring us up to speed on all aspects of the GLL News and our editorial responsibilities.
AALL Announcements

VOTE FOR AALL’S FUTURE LEADERS / ELECTION IS NOW OPEN

The 2019 Executive Board Election is open — online voting for the next AALL vice-president/president-elect, treasurer, and Executive Board members runs through 11:59 p.m. (EDT) on Tuesday, October 31.

AALL elected members of the board represent you and your interests as law librarians. It's important to make an educated decision, and we encourage you to learn more about the candidates before voting by reading their biographies and statements, as well as the Q&As with the candidates featured in the July/August issue of AALL Spectrum. You can also listen to the recordings from the president-elect candidates forum, the treasurer candidates forum, and the Executive Board members candidates forum.

Five GLL-SIS members are running for Executive Board positions: Joy Shoemaker and Cornell Winston are running for Treasurer, and Angela Baldree, Joe Lawson, and Jason Sowards are running for Executive Board Member.

Vote today and help shape the future of AALL!

2019 AALL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE / REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

The 2019 AALL Management Institute will provide managers with skills that help them excel in their roles, support organizational strategy, and solve business issues. From engaging staff for high performance to building partnerships, this three-day institute will take your management skills to the next level. Managers (including aspiring managers) will have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from across the country, learn in a small group setting, and develop techniques that have long-term value and impact.

DETAILS

March 28-30, 2019
Palomar Hotel / Chicago, IL
Register by Monday, February 25
$875 / AALL Members
Limited to 50 participants

FACULTY

Maureen Sullivan is an educator and organization development consultant whose practice focuses on the delivery of consulting and training services to libraries and other information organizations. She has extensive experience with organization development, strategic planning, management skills and leadership development, introducing and managing organizational change, work redesign, and the identification and development of competencies.
Member News

The Washington County Law Library, in Hillsboro, Oregon is pleased to welcome Amy Gregory as our new Assistant Law Librarian. She is excited to join Washington County and the law librarian community. She hopes to leverage her new membership in GLL-SIS as she learns the profession.

Amy is originally from the Seattle area and moved to Beaverton, Oregon at the end of 2011. She has worked in libraries since her first job at the age of 16, in a myriad of roles from page to librarian. Prior to shifting focus to law, she worked for the Forest Grove City Library in Oregon as a Reference Librarian focusing on youth, especially young adults. While legal reference is a bit of a jump from providing storytimes and running escape rooms, she enjoys providing reference services to all ages and looks forward to learning more about legal research and law library services.

In her free time, she loves to play video games, sew (especially quilting), read, and bake. She is an avid LARPer (Live Action Role Player) and met her husband while LARPing. She also enjoys travelling, both to explore new places or re-discover favorites. Perhaps you’ll see her at an upcoming AALL conference.

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

Government Law Libraries – Special Interest Section

Executive Board – Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Wednesday, June 20, 2018, 2:00 p.m. Eastern


Meeting Leader: H. Gerber

Scribe: J. Durham

Date of Next Meeting: Sunday, July 15, @ 1:00 p.m. Eastern in Baltimore, MD

Meeting Minutes and Agenda

Preliminary Items / Action Items from Previous Meeting:

- Dan moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Holly. Approved unanimously.

Other Business:

- Holly reminded the Board that the GLL reception has been canceled for 2018. She said
Executive Board Meeting Minutes (continued)

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

that plans for the GLL breakfast meeting are moving forward. Emily Feltran will speak briefly at the beginning of the breakfast meeting.

- Holly said that the next GLL Board meeting will be held at the annual conference in Baltimore on Sunday, July 15, at 1:00 p.m. Joan will send a notice to Board members about the location.

- Holly said that the SurveyMonkey subscription ($288.00) is being renewed. None of the Board members objected. GLL maintains a subscription for votes and projects, such as the work of the Strategic Planning Committee.

- Holly said that AALL does not plan to sponsor representatives to the ALA cataloging committee meetings. Thus, some of the SISs are being asked to contribute to a fund. GLL is being asked to contribute $750.00 for 2018 – 2019. Because a commitment is not required until August, the Board decided to postpone a vote until the new 2018 – 2019 Board has taken office. Joan will place this item on her first GLL Board meeting agenda.

- James provided a brief Treasurer’s report. The restricted (LexisNexis guide series) fund contains $11,360.58. The unrestricted fund contains approximately $26,031.14. This is an estimate because the most recent quarterly report is from March, with a new report due to be sent by AALL headquarters this month.

- James also presented two motions from the GLL Grants Committee. The Board approved a Grants Committee budget for 2018 – 2019 at the same rate as this year, which is $6,000.00. The vote was unanimous with a motion from Rob, seconded by Carol. The second motion from the Grants Committee also was approved unanimously with a motion from Carol, seconded by Dan. This motion allows the GLL Grants Committee to split allotted grant funds between multiple applicants, at the Committee’s discretion.

Approval of Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from the GLL Board conference call on Wednesday, April 18, 2018, were approved unanimously, with a motion from Holly, seconded by Rob.

- The special meeting minutes from the GLL Board conference call on Thursday, May 31, 2018, were approved unanimously, with a motion from Carol, seconded by Joan.

Action Items From This Meeting:

- GLL Board Liaisons should provide annual committee reports in both Word and PDF formats to the Board and to the GLL webmasters, Mary Jo Lazun and Kate Fitz, as soon as possible. Assigned to: GLL Board Liaisons. Date due: ASAP.

- Inform GLL Board members of location of next meeting at the Baltimore conference. Assigned to: Joan. Date due: ASAP.
Executive Board Meeting Minutes
Sunday, July 15, 2018

Government Law Libraries – Special Interest Section
Executive Board – Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Sunday, July 15, 2018, 1:15 p.m. Eastern (Baltimore Convention Center)
Meeting Leader: H. Gerber
Scribe: J. Durham

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 22, 2018, @ 2:00 p.m. Eastern (conference call)

Meeting Minutes and Agenda

Preliminary Items / Action Items from Previous Meeting:

- Rob moved to approve the minutes from the previous conference call meeting on Wednesday, June 20, 2018. Seconded by Dan. Approved unanimously.

- Other Business:
  - Dan agreed to serve as the Chair of the GLL-SIS Strategic Planning Committee in 2018 – 2019. The GLL-SIS strategic plan will be updated this year. Jenn Dalglish has been working on the strategic plan survey. GLL-SIS recently renewed our Survey Monkey account for this purpose.
  - The Board discussed the possibility of combining two GLL-SIS committees in 2018 – 2019: Best A2J Practices and Pro Bono Partnerships. Joan will consider the options and report to the Board.
  - Joe reported that AALL is still examining the possibility of sponsoring a cataloging liaison to American Library Association (ALA) technical services meetings. Still under discussion.
  - The Board discussed the restricted (library guides) account and how to pursue using those funds during the upcoming year. Dan mentioned that this topic should be part of the GLL-SIS strategic plan update for 2018 – 2019. The Board may investigate the possibility of co-sponsoring a guide with LISP-SIS. Other possible guide topics might include civics education, what government law librarians do, or even an online video guide.
  - Joan will be assembling the GLL-SIS committees (chairs and members) this summer.
  - Joe Lawson suggested that the GLL-SIS Publicity and Public Relations Committee might consider a monthly announcement, highlighting an aspect of our GLL-SIS website.
  - James provided a brief Treasurer’s report. He stated that the Board will face funding issues in 2018 – 2019 because AALL headquarters has confirmed that vendors will not be providing funding for events (unless the event has an educational component...
Executive Board Meeting Minutes (continued)

Sunday, July 15, 2018

about the vendors’ products). Thus, The Board will need to make careful decisions about the 2019 GLL-SIS breakfast meeting, the sponsorship of local (versus out-of-state) VIPs at the upcoming D.C. conference, the 2019 GLL-SIS reception, and sponsorship of conference panels / sessions / workshops.

- Joan thanked Holly (as outgoing Chair) and Dan (as outgoing GLL Board Member) for their service to GLL-SIS during the past year.
- Joe moved to adjourn the meeting. Rob seconded. Approved unanimously.

Action Items From This Meeting:

- Assemble GLL-SIS committees by assigning a Chair and members for each. Assigned to: Joan. Date due: By end of summer.
GLL Financial Report
2017–2018

Beginning Balance (January 1, 2018)
Restricted Funds (Resource Guides) ........................................ $11,360.58
Unrestricted Funds ............................................................ $25,976.14
Total Fund Balance (@ 1/01/2018) ....................................... $37,336.72

Income (October 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018)
Contributions (corrected credit from AALL business office) ....... $3,741.00
Contributions (donation to GLL Grants Committee) .................. $500.00
Dues ........................................................................... $2,685.00

Expected Income (May 2018 – September 2019)
Dues .............................................................................. TBD
GLL Business Meeting Registrations 2018 ................................ TBD
GLL Online & Silent Auction 2018 (and related donations) ........ TBD

Expenditures (October 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018)
GLL-SIS Equal Justice Conference Grant ................................ $2,000.00

Expected Expenses (May 2018 – September 2019)
AALL Annual Meeting – Two $2,000.00 Grants ....................... $4,000.00
AALL Annual Meeting – One $500.00 Travel Grant ................. $500.00
Awards Committee Expenses (estimate) ............................... $1,000.00
Education Committee - Annual Conference Programs (estimate) $2,500.00
GLL Breakfast and Business Meeting 2018 (estimate) ............ $6,000.00
Publicity Expenses (estimate) .............................................. $75.00
Survey Monkey Subscription ............................................... $288.00
VIP Sponsorship for Annual Meeting (estimate) .................... $100.00

Balance (May 31, 2018)
Restricted Funds (Resource Guides) ....................................... $11,360.58
Unrestricted Funds ............................................................ $27,161.14
Total Fund Balance (@ 5/31/2018) ........................................ $38,521.72

Respectfully submitted,
James G. Durham, Secretary/Treasurer
2018-2019 GLL-SIS Grants

Christine Morton, U.S. Courts Library for the 2nd Circuit, Chair, GLL-SIS Grants Committee

The GLL-SIS Executive Board has approved the following grants for 2018-2019:

- One $1,500 grant to attend the AALL Management Institute to be held in Chicago, Illinois, March 28-30, 2019.
- One $1,500 grant to attend the Equal Justice Conference to be held in Louisville, Kentucky, May 9-11, 2019.
- Two $1,500 grants to attend the AALL Annual Meeting to be held in Washington, DC, July 13-16, 2019. One grant is designated for a new librarian with less than five years of experience and one grant is designated for an experienced librarian with more than five years of experience.

The monetary amount of the grants may be increased at the discretion of the GLL-SIS Executive Board. Any increase in monetary awards will be reported in the GLL-SIS Newsletter, website, and the My Communities listserv.

GLL-SIS Annual Silent Auction and Fundraising Campaign Results

Christine Morton, U.S. Courts Library for the 2nd Circuit, Chair, GLL-SIS Grants Committee

It was another successful year for the Silent Auction and Fundraising Campaign. For the third year in a row, over $4,000 was raised!

The 2018 Silent Auction featured 27 items for bid which were kindly donated by 13 GLL-SIS members and friends. The total raised at the auction was $866. The 2018 Fundraising Campaign received contributions from 24 GLL-SIS members ranging in donations from $2 to $1,000. The total raised by the Fundraising Campaign was $3,230. The grand total raised by the Silent Auction and Fundraising Campaign was $4,096.

The Grants Committee extends a heartfelt thank you to all those who donated items, bid on items, and assisted at the Silent Auction. The Grants Committee would like to recognize the following members and friends for their cash contributions and auction donations this year:

- Elaine Apostola
- Donna K. Bausch
- Joan Bellistri
- Janet Camillo
- Kathy Carlson
- Georgia Dupre Chadwick
- James Durham
- Ann Fessenden
- Barbara Fritschel
- Sara Galligan
- Amanda Haddin
- Patty Horvath
- Peggy Jarrett
- Mary Jenkins
- Cathy Lemann
- Elizabeth Terry Long
- Sandra Marz
- Christine Morton
- Malinda Muller
- Terri Ross
- Merle Slyhoff
- Regina Smith
- W. Clinton “Buck” Sterling
- Maryruth Storer
- Julie Tessmer
- Gail Warren
- Jean Willis
GLL’s Skills Inventory Builds Connections and Competencies
Malinda Muller, LA Law Library, Chair, GLL-SIS Membership and Mentoring Committee

During the 2017/18 committee year, the GLL-SIS Membership and Mentoring Committee took a fresh look at updating the committee’s charge. With the support of GLL’s technology committee and our board, the M&M team renewed its commitment to the Skills Inventory adding to the committee’s charge the mandate to “establish, maintain, and promote a web-based mentorship skills resource for members.”

The purpose of the mentoring database is to link GLL-SIS members (seasoned or new) with someone in our SIS who can help by providing a source of input and perspective on an administrative or reference skill set, issue, project or procedure. For those who may not yet be familiar with this resource, or deferred its usage based on lack of current needs, projects, etc., there is no better time than the present moment to take a tour and get acquainted with the areas of experience available for a current or future need yet to be determined but that may help you circle back to the inventory when that need arises.

Navigating the Skills Inventory is meant to be intuitive. First: from the main GLL-SIS page, www.aallnet.org/gllsis, select the link to the Skills Inventory containing the list of 9 main Areas of Expertise. Click through the applicable area of expertise option to identify specific sub-topics under each area. By selecting a specialized sub-topic, you will find a listing of the colleagues who have offered to provide input, perspective, experience and insight. Select a participant’s link to be directed to the specific AALL member’s profile and contact information.

In order for this unique, one-on-one, direct connection style system to work, we also have a call out for volunteer mentors. Time on task is not the most important criterion. You know if you have been deep in some area at some time and have ideas, experience and perspective to relay, and a willingness and interest in making meaningful connections. Where do you fit in? No doubt everyone in GLL, newer or seasoned, qualifies to help another by being…..

Willing to mentor a colleague seeking assistance in an area of unfamiliarity.
Willing to mentor new members of GLL-SIS or the profession.
Willing to mentor those interested in changing specialties.
Willing to mentor those interested in changing their career to government law librarianship.
Willing to mentor those needing help with resumes, cover letters, job interviews.
Willing to mentor those wanting assistance with research projects.

So, whether seeker or potential mentor, please consider a first step by taking a tour of the inventory. For those interested and willing to help out their colleagues, complete the Skills Inventory Survey. For any questions, comments or to report any problems with the process, please feel free to contact the administrator by selecting the Skills Inventory Coordinator link on the main inventory page and sending the committee a note.
Federal Court in Chicago Opens Museum and History Center

Gretchen Vam Dam, U.S. Courts Library for the Seventh Circuit

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois opened its new museum and history center in the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago. “It is an exciting day for our court to dedicate public space that allows members of our community to learn about and reflect upon the profound impact this court has made on our district and nation,” said Chief Judge Rubén Castillo during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Chief Judge Castillo, U.S. District Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer, U.S. District Judge Charles P. Kocoras, Clerk of Court Thomas G. Bruton, U.S. Courts’ Circuit Librarian Gretchen Van Dam, and Northern District of Illinois Court Historical Association President Martin V. Sinclair, Jr. cut the ribbon, signifying the official opening of this public history center. Chief Judge Castillo presided over the ceremony, followed by remarks from Judge Pallmeyer and former Chief Judges Marvin E. Aspen and Charles P. Kocoras.

The history center highlights the court’s history through artifacts, art, documents, and interactive video presentations, educating visitors as the court approaches its 200th anniversary in 2019. For nearly 200 years, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois has decided key cases on civil rights, public corruption, organized crime, among other important issues. James Benton Parsons, the first African-American to serve as a federal judge in a U.S. District Court, served in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, including service as the district’s chief judge. Exhibits and displays were created and assembled by Circuit Librarian Gretchen Van Dam and Research Librarian Erin Schlicht of the Library of the U.S. Courts of the Seventh Circuit. Court librarians will continue to rotate the exhibits in the future, highlighting special anniversaries of the court’s cases, places, and people.

The new history center has space to host lectures, with a number of upcoming lectures planned to celebrate the court’s 200th anniversary. All are welcome to visit the history center, as it is open to the public during courthouse business hours.
Connecting and Joining the Conversation with a Little Help from GLL-SIS

Joe Lawson, Harris County Law Library

Many thanks to the GLL-SIS Grants Committee for awarding the Dr. Joel Fishman 2018 AALL Annual Meeting Travel Grant for County Law Librarians in support of my travel to Baltimore. It was an honor to receive a grant generously donated by Dr. Fishman, whose decades of public service at the Allegheny County Law Library are an inspiration for all government law librarians. The meeting was educational and productive, and I am glad I was able to attend with the assistance of a GLL-SIS grant.

Making Connections

A big part of any annual meeting is the chance to connect with law librarians, vendors, and others in person. In our connected world, it seems very little requires a personal appearance, but I have always found it helpful to touch base periodically with colleagues face to face. Of course, this year, my personal appearance was also required as I needed to raise my right hand and be sworn in as a member of the GLL-SIS board. This is my first round of service on the board, and I am very glad to be serving under Joan Bellestri’s leadership. Joan’s work in Annapolis is inspiring, and she and the other members on this year’s GLL-SIS board brought so many good ideas and so much good energy with them to AALL 2018 that I left the meeting confident this year will be great for our section. I also left the meeting with a new children’s book, titled The New Li-BEAR-ian and donated by Gail Warren for the GLL-SIS silent auction, so I was confident I would be popular with my toddler when I returned home to Houston. Thankfully, I was right!

In addition to connecting with colleagues, I also made an important connection with the folks at Procertas, a growing company that offers a unique legal tech training platform. In the last two years, my law library has built a robust educational program called the Legal Tech Institute, which offers learning opportunities on tech skills needed for modern legal work. We offer on-demand, weekly, and monthly classes, but the missing piece was an on-demand option available in the law library that allows patrons learn at their own pace with law librarians nearby for assistance. Procertas offers that option, but the company had not yet worked with a public law library. After connecting with company founders at AALL, we have since worked out the details of making this innovative resource available to patrons at the Harris County Law Library and, potentially, all public law libraries. I am grateful to have attended AALL 2018 with the assistance of a GLL-SIS grant so I could make this important connection.
Connecting and Joining the Conversation with a Little Help from GLL-SIS
(continued)

Joe Lawson, Harris County Law Library

Talking Tech Training

Legal tech skills are moving at a fast clip from the category of “recommended to stay competitive” to “required to practice competently.” Many law librarians have responded by incorporating legal tech training into legal research classes and providing access to training resources. Now that I direct the Legal Tech Institute at my law library, I find it very helpful to be a part of the conversation about emerging efforts to get our patrons up to speed. During the legal tech training discussion den, I picked up a plethora of tips on certifications available, software that is useful for instructional purposes, and sources of teaching tips to help me build my program. It was remarkable how many law librarians joined the discussion – we had to add multiple rings of seating! It was also remarkable to see so few government law libraries represented.

I also contributed to the conversation as a panelist for a program titled Technology Competence in Legal Practice: Where Do Libraries Fit In? Sitting on stage with four academic law librarians, I asked the audience “how many of you offer legal tech training for your law students?” Many hands went up. Then I asked, “And how many have offered those programs for 5 years or more?” All but one hand went down. I then pointed out that more than 80% of attorneys in my jurisdiction graduated more than 5 years ago, so it is important for public law libraries to offer these programs to help the solo and small firm practitioners who do not have access to big law resources, like law firm librarians and other sources of legal tech training. I also pointed out that teaching small law attorneys to become more efficient with tech can have positive implications for self-represented litigants since solos are more likely to practice in the areas individuals need, such as family law, and can potentially offer fee arrangements individuals can afford. Many of my GLL-SIS colleagues see the same barriers impeding access to justice as we do in Harris County, Texas, and I am hoping more of us will join the conversation on legal tech training as a means of supporting our small law patrons and those they might better serve.
Connecting and Joining the Conversation with a Little Help from GLL-SIS (continued)

Joe Lawson, Harris County Law Library

Experiencing Baltimore

When in Baltimore, one has the blue crab...so I did. Quite a bit of it. And it was delicious. Fortunately for many of my colleagues, I was not the only conference-goer to enjoy the crab cakes. In addition to the famous cuisine, I also took advantage of Baltimore’s proximity to Annapolis and the Chesapeake. My wife and I drove to Annapolis on Saturday before the opening reception to set sail on the Schooner Woodwind, a crewed 74-foot sailboat that leaves port for public cruises every day of the week. If you’ve never sailed, it’s a great way to get on the water. If you have, the experience is even better because you appreciate all the work you don’t have to do to maintain such a beautiful ship. Either way, it’s a great way to relax, enjoy the sun, and make some waves before getting down to business at the annual meeting. Since Annapolis is a short drive from Washington, D.C., I hope to enjoy a day on the water again next year at AALL 2019.

A Volume of Librarians

Marissa Mason, New York State Court of Appeals Law Library

Not for the first time, I found myself rambling around an unfamiliar city in one-hundred-degree weather, seeking Poe landmarks. You could say I was in hot pursuit.

At this year’s annual meeting in Baltimore, aside from the wealth of educational sessions, meetings, and events I had scheduled for myself, topping my tourism agenda were the grave of Edgar Allan Poe and the Poe House and Museum. The Baltimore Poe House, which the family rented in the 1830s, consists of a series of small, unfurnished rooms connected by a winding stair just barely wide enough for a single person. Objects of interest include Poe’s portable writing desk and the family telescope which he used as a young man. As I ascended the narrowest staircase to the attic, I was thinking of Poe’s life in that house, and the stories and poems likely written there, but I was also reflecting on my first AALL meeting in 2015. It was my first time in Philly, and I had arrived a day early to explore, starting with the Poe House. As much as I enjoyed the Philly Poe House (it has a striking mural outside and a suitably creepy basement), it was not enough to totally distract me from my increasing anticipation of the start of the conference. I had recently moved out of state for my first professional job and was not feeling entirely sure of myself. However, the following morning at CONELL, my nerves were immediately calmed as I connected with people who would become great friends, and whose companionship was invaluable throughout that first, overwhelming AALL experience.

At the Poe house in Baltimore, I found myself reflecting on how much I’ve grown as a
A Volume of Librarians (continued)

Marissa Mason, New York State Court of Appeals Law Library

professional over the past three years, and how much more confident I feel in the milieu of the
national conference experience. This time around, rather than attending CONELL as a newbie, I
was representing GLL-SIS at the marketplace, happy to share my experience with such a
diverse and welcoming group where I believe anyone can find a place for themselves.
Throughout the conference I continued to note the sense of familiarity and ease I felt, whether
wading into the Fastcase suite or browsing the exhibit hall. I reconnected with old friends from
CONELL, spent quality time with past colleagues from other parts of the country, and met so
many new people—including a chance meeting with someone from my own small city of Albany.

In the end, I came away with a renewed energy for the profession, inspired by my colleagues’
good work and creative thinking. The very scale of the meeting inspires a certain awe. In the
thick of it I found myself thinking about possible collective nouns for a group of librarians—I
think my favorite is “a volume librarians”, which works on multiple levels. For further
consideration of this question, see the crowdsourced site All Sorts: A Linguistic Experiment,
and Kerrie Stevens’ 2013 article “What is the Collective Noun for a Group of Librarians?”.
Those who have suggested “a hush of librarians” have clearly never attended an AALL meeting.
Thank you to GLL-SIS for awarding me a grant, without which I would have been unable to
attend.

AALL 2018: Boldly Communicating Where Few Have Communicated Before

Ryan Metheny, University of Southern California-Gould School of Law

The 2018 American Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting and
Conference in Baltimore featured, as always, an excellent lineup of
educational programming, including a compelling set of programs on the
“Marketing & Outreach” track. From gathering and using patron input to
developing relationships with stakeholders to wielding statistics effectively,
I came away empowered to communicate boldly the value of government
law libraries’ work.

Speaking of bold communication, how about Baltimore native John
Waters? While some of the subject matter was a bit, shall we say,
unorthodox for a professional conference, the keynote speaker certainly
set an example for unabashedly getting across one’s message. The
transgressive and cult film producer/director did this through his
somewhat brief address (standup set?), but also through his remarkable
life and work. Whatever else one might think about him, Waters never backs down from
his message, and there is a lesson there for government law librarians as we
communicate our value to those we serve.

The program “Reaching the Invisible Customer,” organized by Karen Selden of the
AALL 2018: Boldly Communicating Where Few Have Communicated Before (continued)

Ryan Metheny, University of Southern California-Gould School of Law

University of Colorado and featuring management consultant Pat Wagner, conveyed a number of valuable tips for boldly marketing the value of law libraries. Wagner made the point that effective marketing, somewhat counter-intuitively, necessarily involves listening, intently, without distraction or agenda, to your customers. She suggested that we learn what our customers need and want in a deeper way than, for example, a simple written survey can provide, by investing time and effort in personal conversations. Then, when both developing your services and communicating their value, learn to focus on the concrete benefits your services provide. As librarians, we tend to focus on our resources’ features, i.e., what we like about them, rather than those resources’ benefits, i.e., what customers get out of them. When we learn to reverse that paradigm and see things from the point of view of our customers, patrons or stakeholders, we can much more effectively communicate the value of law libraries.

In “It’s All about the Relationships: Marketing to Your Library’s Stakeholders,” Carol Ottolenghi of the Ohio Attorney General office, Katie Brown of Charleston School of Law, and Saskia Mehlhorn of Norton Rose shared their practical experience with effective outreach to those above the law library in their organizational hierarchies. Ms. Mehlhorn, especially, had some humorous and, apparently, hard-won tips to share. She exhorted the attendees to be visible to stakeholders (make sure they know you); to persevere in your outreach (without being annoying); and, to be memorable in some way, perhaps through something as simple as a tri-fold brochure (which is harder to ignore than an email). This program also imparted the experience of one library in successfully renaming their departments to better convey the value of each by using the MBA/management-speak of the library’s stakeholders: Technical Services became “Core Operations” while Reference became “User Experience”. Important communications to management were put into a management-friendly “Action Plan” format.

Lastly, the wonderful program “Telling Your Story: Using Metrics to Display Your Value,” featuring Steve Lastres of Debevoise & Plimpton, TJ Striepe of University of Georgia School of Law, and Joy Shoemaker of the Ninth Circuit Library, provided valuable insight into boldly approaching one of the great conundrums of law library outreach. All law libraries gather statistics, but this program imparted some great ideas for doing so in a process-driven way aimed squarely at convincing stakeholders of our value. In particular, the speakers suggested that the choice of which statistics to gather and use should be driven by the mission statement or strategic plan of the organization collecting the data. From that, determine which types of data/statistics can help tell the story of how the library helps the organization achieve its larger goals. So, much like the other two programs, this talk exhorted librarians to see our work, and communicate our value, through the prism of our stakeholders’ concerns.

Getting more into the nitty-gritty, court librarian Joy Shoemaker gave attendees to this
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program great insight on overcoming the difficulties of gathering and maintaining statistics, and reporting them in an accessible and compelling way. Gathering and maintaining usage data was especially tricky for the Ninth Circuit, since it consists of many different libraries that had each been doing things slightly differently. This process also involved overcoming a lot of dread among librarians, since some statistics, like usage of print, showed, of course, a steady decline over the years. However, as Joy correctly pointed out, whether you gather a statistic doesn’t dictate if or how you report it! (Even if you might continue to use that number in different ways, like budgeting and collection development.) In our data-driven world, statistics are increasingly important to decision makers, so we should invest in carefully curating and compellingly presenting them.

Leaving the conference this year, I felt empowered and, yes, emboldened to communicate the value of government law libraries. I may not decide to grow a pencil-thin Waters-style mustache or make any shocking films about law libraries, but I nonetheless feel confident that I can communicate the tremendous value of our work.

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AALL Program Summary: We Made it Through! Before, During, and After the Disaster Hits: Improving the Disaster Plan After the Event

Malinda Muller, LA Law Library

We tend to think of extreme weather as an unpredictable, external source of destruction, and as human-induced climate change continues to progress, extreme weather is becoming more frequent and dangerous. According to the NOAA, 2017 tallied up more than 16 natural disasters including hurricanes, extreme wildfires, hail, flooding, tornadoes, and drought. While fear may cause us to want to avoid this new reality, learning about and planning for it in both our personal and professional lives is becoming increasingly mainstream and “natural” to do. The program, “We Made it Through! Before, During, and After the Disaster Hits: Improving the Disaster Plan After the Event” was offered on Sunday, July 15, during the 2018 annual conference. Evidently this was a compelling topic because the room where the presentation took place was practically full. Especially compelling was the universality of the speakers’ circumstances.

Our speakers hailed from the University of Puerto Rico Law Library and the St. Louis County Law Library. Samuel Serrano-Medina and Jeannette Lebron, of the University of Puerto Rico Law School Library, presented on the before, after, impact, “going forward,” and “never forgetting” Hurricane Maria, a category 4 storm with sustained winds of 155 mph that also impacted several islands in the Caribbean on September 20, 2017. Lacy Rakestraw, Law Library Director for the St. Louis County Law Library, shared her experience with the
AALL Program Summary: We Made it Through! Before, During, and After the Disaster Hits: Improving the Disaster Plan After the Event (continued)

Malinda Muller, LA Law Library

aftermath of a different kind of “storm,” namely, the man-made kind with the shooting (and aftermath) of Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager, by a white Ferguson police officer. Sharing their experiences, having been portrayed and covered wildly in the news and relatable from a distance, brought us closer to understanding both the emotional and logistical impact of dealing with the unknown and the unexpected. Is it possible, that no matter in what state an AALL colleague resides, there exists an underlying notion or awareness that a disaster can come upon us? Yes!

Let’s begin with the University of Puerto Rico Law School Library. You may realize that Puerto Rico was hit by two hurricanes back to back in September 2017, first Hurricane Irma and then Hurricane Maria. With Irma, staff watched and monitored the wind increases up to 150 MPH. Staff did what they physically could do, namely, covered and disconnected computers, moved as much as possible from the floors, secured and covered windows and doors, even made sure the water drains were cleared. The path of destruction hit the island resulting in days to just partially to restore power and water service. Within days, Maria hit the island directly, destroying everything in its path. After Maria, all services collapsed. No water, power, or telecommunications. The library suffered intensive water damage from the (flat) roof to the carpets and flooring, broken windows, lighting and electricity, heat, and air compromised. Not to mention water damage to the books. Mold and mildew grew everywhere. The recovery process for this group is instructional for us. Aside from character, what did this brave and courageous group of professionals do to process and move forward, as well as take away from, the experience that they can share in hindsight with the rest of us? Here are a few teachable steps and tips the team followed:

- Complete required damage evaluation documents. This is the information needed to claim insurance compensation, FEMA, or any other help. Consider everything from floor to ceiling. Remember to count all the art work you simply walked by multiple times a day and check to see if the insurance company requires the library to obtain permission from the insurance company before discarding any books.
- Identify and utilize specialized mitigation companies. There may be several who cover specific tasks (or have the right equipment).
- Clean everything — books, ducts, carpets, furniture, etc. Divide library duties.
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- If the mandate is to open as quickly as possible, identify and prioritize what services you can offer, including printing and copying and an appreciated, carved-out study area.
- Select the most used books and offer an on-demand service for students.
- Negotiate with vendors for discounted prices for renewal of subscriptions the following year or replacing damaged materials that were on subscription.

Finally, the team shared what they will reconsider in their next plan. A few pointers include establishing a direct contact or a meeting point after a disaster and pre-assign response teams and tasks such as damage valuation, cleaning teams, student services, document collection and review, etc. The program closed with a summary of what the staff took away from the experience, including one that resonates with and validates our own purpose: “Libraries are essential. Students from all parts of Puerto Rico demanded library space. Libraries need to act fast, because it’s an essential service.”

Across the globe, more local, Lacy Rakestraw and her team experienced what this reviewer, at least, had not before considered: that man-made disasters can come close, call for extreme leadership, and disrupt what is generally considered a neutral safe zone.

To begin, I’ll take the position that readers will recall the Saturday in August 2014 and the shooting of Michael Brown, a black unarmed teenager, by Darren Wilson, a white Ferguson, Missouri, police officer. Located within the government complex, the St. Louis County Law Library became an impacted entity almost immediately. Initially, riots and looting occurred throughout the city. Government buildings, including the prosecutor’s office, were also targeted as the seat of protests by citizens calling for the county prosecutor to bring charges against Officer Wilson. Almost immediately, buildings within the government complex were ordered to go into lockdown mode. The library, while still remaining open, was impacted by both internal administrative and external community forces.

Some of the immediate questions for presenter, and Director of the library, Lacy Rakestraw, were, “What do we do to keep business as usual but keep patrons / staff safe? How do we communicate? Open or close the library?” As the grand jury convened throughout the fall, visitors were impacted by intermittent lockdowns, barricades around the government buildings, and the increase in a security presence. Added to the element of surprise and day to day unpredictability was the unexpected attack on government
AALL Program Summary: We Made it Through! Before, During, and After the Disaster Hits: Improving the Disaster Plan After the Event (continued)

Malinda Muller, LA Law Library

websites and servers by a hacking group which brought about the decision to take down all government website and Internet access, including the library, for several days.

The impact of electronic services going offline in the law library served to alert the team to the vulnerability law libraries face as online dependency increases in current times. Lacy remarked on the difference in response by younger vs. seasoned practitioners who entered the library and discovered that online access had been cut off. Imagine what we all have likely made reference to from time to time that actually came to fruition here: namely, that the attorneys who were taught in law school how to do research via print materials were fine and the younger attorneys who were accustomed to doing research electronically, starting with law school, basically malfunctioned and turned away at the door upon learning the library’s online research systems were unavailable. What followed was staff stepping up to triage, catching the blank looks in their patrons’ eyes and adapting a teachable moment opportunity to offer mini tutorials on print tools such as digests.

In closing, Lacy offered her own take on how to plan for this type of disaster in the areas that the library can actually have some control over and a tip for having more engagement on the overall administrative decision making level. Graciously sharing those “lessons learned” Lacy advises us: 1) Obtain a seat at the administrative table along with all related department heads. Rumors and conflicting information can cause more confusion without a library representative having the correct information in a time of stress and rumors. 2) Have a print staff directory and exchange cell numbers – electronic access and email won’t always be up and this can impact staff as well as the patrons. 3) Take the opportunity to capitalize on the library as “place,” becoming a center of gathering where patrons and employees could meet and define civil engagement through dialog related to the events. 4) Develop mini tutorials on how to use the print materials. They can sit and gather dust and still be timely years down the road... that is if you, like the St. Louis County Law Library, have been able to justify and retain your print primary and finding aid resources. If the question arises in the trendy move to downsize, at least we all have a great case study available to put out to our decision makers as justification. Another great outcome of this informative program.
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Memories of the GLL-SIS Business Meeting

Christine Morton, U.S. Courts Library for the Second Circuit

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Holly Gerber, 2017-2018 GLL-SIS Chair, awards the Dr. Joel Fishman Professional Publication Award to Ryan Metheny

Recipients of the Bethany J. Ochel Award For Distinguished Service to the Profession: Jacquelyn Jurkins, Regina Smith, Maryruth Storer, and Scott Burgh