View from the Chair

**Holly Riccio (she/her), California Judicial Center Library**

There are three things I have a professional affinity for: (1) alliteration, (2) ice breakers, and (3) a great quote. Over the course of my term as GLL Chair, you will likely see me employ all of these in various contexts—columns, My Communities posts, meetings, webinars, etc. For now, I will kick things off with three quotes that resonated with me as I sat down to pen my inaugural GLL Chair column.

“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making plans.”

— John Lennon

“The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.”

— Robert Burns

“ Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much.”

— Helen Keller

Due to complications from COVID, I was unable to join everyone in person at the AALL Annual Meeting in Denver in July, but I know those of you that were there were energized by seeing each other in person after so long and engaged by the various programs, including the inspiring and informational keynote from my court’s very own Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye. Among the many topics she touched upon during the **Opening Session** keynote and fireside chat with AALL President Diane Rodriguez, the one that resonated the most with me is what defines great leadership, which the Chief described as being built on foundational concepts such as kindness, compassion, collaboration, and collegiality. Leaders who lead by example in these ways create a community that embodies them as well, and that leads to better outcomes overall. Even though I have only been a GLL member for a few years, I have seen these concepts exhibited time and again by our members, and they are hallmarks of the law librarian professional overall.
When I agreed to run for GLL Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, I had no idea what would be in store for me personally by the time I stepped into the GLL Chair role. This past April, I experienced the most devastating loss imaginable—I lost my partner of almost 20 years to cancer. I share this partly because (as many of you may already know) I am a pretty open book most of the time, but also because I have had to—and may have to continue to—lean on my fellow GLL colleagues to help me along the way. I owe huge debt of gratitude and thanks to outgoing GLL Chair Miriam Childs for her incredible leadership and inspiration this past year. Many thanks are also in order to the rest of the GLL Executive Board, all of the GLL committee chairs, GLL committee members, and everyone who stepped forward to volunteer in any capacity for our SIS.

I am currently working on assembling and confirming the 2022-2023 GLL committee rosters, updating the GLL Handbook, and reviewing the GLL Strategic Directions with an eye towards initiatives and projects that are ripe for development this year. If you want to volunteer for a GLL committee, there is still time to do so—please just reach out to me directly, as I am sure there is a volunteer opportunity for everyone, and there’s always room for more volunteers!

Life happens to all of us while we are busy making plans, and as a result, those plans often don’t pan out the way we originally anticipated. But the power of any group—and especially the amazing group of legal information professionals that call the GLL-SIS their home—is the strength of their peer power.

This issue of GLL News is chock full of content, much of it related to the AALL Annual Meeting. Even if you were there in person, check out the articles from the GLL Grant recipients and perhaps gain some additional insight from their experiences and takeaways. Leadership is another theme that is threaded throughout this issue, with the announcement of the GLL Fall Leadership Program and articles on the library as social media partner and one GLL member’s personal leadership journey.

Life happens to all of us while we are busy making plans, and as a result those plans often don’t pan out the way we originally anticipated. But the power of any group—and especially the amazing group of legal information professionals that call the GLL-SIS their home—is the strength of their peer power. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as your GLL Chair, and I look forward to walking the path in the year ahead, side by side with my GLL colleagues.
From the Editor’s Desk

Sabrina A. Davis (she/her), Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library

First, many thanks to Sara Pic for recommending me to follow in her footsteps as editor of GLL News. Although I just recently received my 10-year pin from AALL and have been a fairly active member, this is my first official role for GLL-SIS—and I couldn’t be happier! My first volunteer role within AALL was as Associate Editor of Technical Services Law Librarian, and it’s nice to stick with my volunteering roots.

In this issue of GLL News, we are taking care of business with the GLL-SIS Executive Board Minutes, the 2021-2022 GLL-SIS Financial Report, and the very impressive GLL-SIS fundraising campaign results. We’re also introducing a new feature called, “Meet the Board Members”—in this issue, get to know a little more about Vice Chair/Chair-Elect Karen Westwood and Past Chair Miriam Childs. Karen Westwood is also the featured “Marketing Maven,” and, in her role as Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, she wants your input on the future of the GLL Business Breakfast meeting.

In addition, this issue features three original articles. Lynne Palombo reflects on her experience working with the Oregon Judicial Department on social media endeavors, and I’m pleased to say that two MLIS students at San Jose State University contributed to this issue as well. Jessica Ottinger shares her leadership journey, while Anna Andrews reviews two webinars presented through AALL.

We also have four AALL Denver grant recipient reports from Tom Baer, Sarah K. C. Mauldin, Amy Small, and Kaden Taylor, as well as a reprint of Amanda Hildebrand’s blog post for the Houston Area Law Librarians on her first AALL conference experience.

We round out the issue with our standard GLL member news, AALL announcements, and a reminder about the GLL-SIS mentorship program. Finally, keep an eye out for further details about the GLL-SIS Membership and Mentoring Fall Leadership Program.

My last serious note on this page is a quick reminder to vote in the AALL election, which runs through October 31—more details about this are available in the AALL announcements.

And now, because I have quite a bit of white space on this page, here are a few random facts about myself, as well as picture of my dog, Whiskey Jane.

- Least favorite food: Olives (shudder)
- Favorite drink: Tea (hot or iced)
- Favorite color: Mint green
- Favorite smell: Cinnamon
- Favorite TV show: Golden Girls
AALL Announcements

2022 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION

Online voting for the next AALL vice president/president-elect, secretary, and Executive Board members opens October 1 and runs through October 31. Elected candidates will begin their terms in July 2023. The AALL members elected to the Board will represent you and your interests as law librarians. It’s important to make an educated decision, and we encourage members to learn more about the candidates before voting opens.

- Read the candidate biographies and statements
- Read the Q&A with the candidates from the July/August issue of AALL Spectrum

Candidate Forums

- Access the recording from the 2022 AALL Candidates Forum for Secretary (09/15/2022)
- Access the recording from the 2022 AALL Candidates Forum for Vice President / President-Elect (09/22/2022)
- Access the recording from the 2022 AALL Candidates Forum for Executive Board Member (09/27/2022)

NEW! AALL ONLINE LEGAL INFORMATION (OLIR) RESOURCE


Access the new resource at bit.ly/AALLOLIR

The AALL Advancing Access to Justice Special Committee (2021-2022) has compiled information for law librarians, legal information professionals, and members of the public to easily locate free online primary legal materials. AALL thanks the members of the Committee for their hard work on this project.

Information is included for U.S. states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, U.S. Federal Government, and Canada. Each document contains information about state and local public law libraries, including whether the public law libraries provide services to incarcerated people.
Member News

- **Heather DiChiara-Schilling** was promoted to Assistant Director of the Texas State Law Library. Heather has been with the library for more than 7 years in a variety of roles. She is a reference whiz and logistical expert who keeps the library’s daily operations humming right along. As the head of our Document Delivery program, she has particular expertise in Texas criminal procedure and court records. We’re so excited to see what Heather will accomplish in her new role!

- **Heather Holmes** was promoted to Education & Engagement Law Librarian at the Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library.

- **Joseph Lawson**, Director of the Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library, was honored as a recipient of the 2022 Fastcase 50 award.

- **Lori-Ann Craig** was promoted to Deputy Director of the Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library.

- The Agricultural Law Information Partnership at the USDA National Agricultural Library is proud to announce that the USDA Office of the General Counsel Legislative Histories Collection is now available on the National Agricultural Library Digital Collections (NALDC). The Legislative Histories Collection, originally compiled by the USDA Office of the General Counsel, includes over 1,500 key federal agricultural legislative histories spanning 1921-1971.

---

GLL FALL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

What makes a good leader?

Integrity? Vision? Communication? Self-Awareness? A sense of humor? Humility? We have the opportunity to display leadership qualities daily regardless of position, however, did we learn about this in library school?

The GLL Special Interest Section has over 100 newer law librarian members. Considering this unique group, the Membership and Mentoring Committee offers a program for those who have worked in the profession for 5 years and under. Coming this fall, 2022, the committee will once again host a session with a GLL leader who will share insights about their law librarianship career path, professional experience and provide leadership tips. There will also be time for conversation and questions with our guest and to meet each other.

Newer law librarians: Please watch for more information regarding this professional development opportunity coming soon.
GLL-SIS Mentorship Program: Build Your Skills

GLL-SIS Membership and Mentoring Committee

Welcome to the GLL Hosted Mentorship Program Community

The GLL Mentorship Program is available for peer to peer assistance and input on more than 75 diverse and specialized areas of expertise and experience including:

Change Management  Collecting & Reporting Statistics
Handling Press / Journalist Inquiries  Law Library Policies
Library Space Planning  Project Management
Strategic Plans  Vendor Relationships
Adjunct Teaching & Instruction  Internship Programs
Social Media  Job Searches, Interviewing, Resumes
Publishing, Authorship  Serving as a Reference
Summer Associate Programs  Collection Downsizing
Curriculum Design  Legal Information Literacy
One Person Libraries  Circulation Management
Community Partnerships  Digital Reference Services
Inter Library Loan  Website Design and Development
Library Systems Administration  Digitization, Digital Repositories
Emerging Technologies  Bibliographic Management Software

GLL is on-board with support - Visit the GLL Mentorship Program, identify a topic and reach out to a participating volunteer:

https://www.aallnet.org/gllsis/resources-publications/mentorship-program/

A colleague is looking forward to connecting with you!
Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Government Law Libraries – Special Interest Section

Executive Board – Minutes

Date and Time: **Wednesday, June 15, 2022 @ 12:00 p.m. PDT / 3:00 p.m. EDT**

Present: M. Childs, H. Riccio, K. Westwood, P. Petroccione, L. Reppe, A. Small, S. Pic

Not Present: J. Durham

Meeting Leader: M. Childs

Scribe: K. Westwood

Date of Next Meeting: August 2022, TBD

Minutes

Preliminary Items / Action Items from Previous Meeting:

- L. Reppe moved to start meeting, A. Small seconded. Meeting began at 12:04 p.m.
- Approve agenda
- Approve minutes – K. Westwood moved to approve, P. Petroccione seconded
- Status of action items -
  - Education Committee – Sarah Larsen’s AALL speaker would like her honorarium to go to a non-profit. M. Childs is checking with AALL on that process
  - Jenny Silbiger’s program on “Alternative Facts: The Lies of Executive Order 9066” (documentary film) was successful; it will also be a program at the AALL Annual Meeting

Other Business:

- Updates from committees – M. Childs requests all committee Annual Reports to arrive by July 1 so the tech committee can post them to the website
- AALL updates – Jean Willis has invited Beth Wright, an attorney from the Native American Rights Fund to be our VIP speaker at the annual meeting
- The PR committee will have a poster at the annual meeting and requests funds for printing and mailing materials. M. Childs moved to provide funds for this, L. Reppe seconded. Unanimously passed.
- Other – H. Riccio will reach out to committee chairs regarding changes or updates to the the GLL Handbook (changes will be made on website). The current strategic plan will also be placed on the website.
- Adjournment – A. Small moved to adjourn. H. Riccio seconded. Adjourned at 12:57 p.m.
## 2021-2022 GLL-SIS Financial Report
*(Fiscal Year October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)*

### Beginning Balance (October 1, 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Funds (Resource Guides)</td>
<td>$11,360.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Funds</td>
<td>$35,484.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fund Balance (@ 10/01/2021)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$46,844.83</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Income (October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dues</td>
<td>$1,170.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donation</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income (@3/01/2022)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,195.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expected Income (March 2022 – September 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dues</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLL Online Fundraiser 2021 (Grants Fund)</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenditures (October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022) $0.00

### Expected Expenses (March 2022 – September 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printing &amp; Shipping (items for Annual Meeting)</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>$780.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Justice Institute Grant</td>
<td>$1500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AALL Annual Meeting Grants (4)</td>
<td>$6000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Honoraria Donation – Business Meeting, July 17, 2022</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Meeting Breakfast</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Actual Balance (March 31, 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Funds (Resource Guides)</td>
<td>$11,360.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Funds</td>
<td>$36,679.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fund Balance (@ 3/31/2022)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$48,039.83</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen E. Westwood, Secretary/Treasurer*
This year’s AALL Annual Meeting in Denver provided members a wonderful opportunity to meet in person and catch up after two years of virtual meetings. Mindful of the brief amount of time we had together on Sunday, July 17, 2022, in lieu of holding a silent auction, the Grants Committee again conducted a fundraising campaign.

I am very pleased to report that 30 GLL-SIS members enthusiastically responded, and a total of $4,691 was raised for the GLL-SIS 2022-2023 Grants Fund. This total does not break the record we set last year but was one of our most successful fundraising efforts.

Please join the Grants Committee in acknowledging and expressing our appreciation to the following members for their generous monetary contribution this year. Many of the people on this list have opened their wallets and contributed items for our silent auctions for decades and we appreciate their steadfast support!

Janet Camillo, Michele Campbell, Kathleen Carlson, Georgia Chadwick, Miriam Childs, Linda Corbelli, Amy Crowder, Luci Curci-Gonzalez, James Durham, Susan Falk, Mary Jenkins, Catherine Lemann, Sue Ludington, Catherine McGuire, Kristen Matteucci, Laura Moorer, Christine Morton, Malinda Muller, Sara Pic, Patricia Petroccioine, Holly Riccio, Mariann Sears, Jenny Silbiger, Amy Small, Jocelyn Stilwell-Tong, Leslie Strauss, Maryruth Storer, Gail Warren, Karen Westwood, Jean Willis,

Thank you!
Meet the Board Member: Karen Westwood

GLL-SIS Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Hennepin County Law Library,
AALL Profile Link

What are you most proud of?

When we were first sent home in the early days of Covid, my county set up hotels to house vulnerable adults who were in shelters. They put out a call for people willing to work at the hotels with these mostly elderly and ill neighbors experiencing homelessness. Some employees had to take these positions, because it was the only work available to them, but I volunteered for a couple of days each week even though it was optional for me. It was completely out of my comfort zone, and in the early days of Covid, as we wiped down surfaces like maniacs, it felt like a risky enterprise. But it was something that held meaning for me and I really wanted to do it. I continued until the county turned the hotels back and addressed housing issues in a different way. In looking back, I find that it remains something I’m proud of.

Which characteristic do you value most in others?

I love a sense of humor. Give me a dry wit and I’m happy. Add a foreign accent and I’m in heaven! I don’t like sarcastic or mean-spirited humor, but the ability to laugh (especially at ourselves) strikes me as so particularly human and also a great way to get through the past couple of years!

Which characteristic do you value most in yourself?

This is a loaded question to someone raised in a Scandinavian household, where we were taught not to be proud or boastful. I’d say that as a law library leader, the characteristic I value most in myself is my genuine pleasure in seeing people succeed. I’m proud of the luminaries in our profession, and I also really enjoy helping the people I work with be successful in what they do.

What are some of your hobbies?

The obvious one to anyone who has seen me at conferences is knitting. But my latest love is cooking with fruit I’ve foraged. I’ve identified all the best sour cherry trees in my neighborhood, and I made syrup from chokecherries picked at our cabin in the Wisconsin woods. Turns out it’s fine on pancakes, and delicious in a gin and tonic.

Do you have a favorite word or quote?

You know, I don’t. I’m fickle. What seems profound to me one day, seems trite when I look back later (this is why I am unlikely to get a tattoo). Last weekend I visited the Paul and Sheila Wellstone memorial site near Eveleth, MN (Senator Paul Wellstone died in a plane crash 20 years ago – just days before the election). Senator Wellstone used to often say, “We all do better when we all do better,” and that’s something I’ve been thinking on these days.

You get to listen to only one song for the rest of your life – what is it?

Hope this doesn’t sound pretentious, but it would probably be “Finlandia” by Jean Sibelius. I have a lot of personal reasons for loving it, but it’s also an irrepressible earworm, so I’d be able to hum it forever!

(Continued on next page.)
What is a non-travel item on your Bucket List?
I really want to see a moose in the wild. As long as I haven’t yet seen one, I’m likely to keep camping. If I was serious about this, I would probably try to camp in an area with moose.

What advice do you have for the next generation?
You are more than you think, and you are fully enough. To the degree you are able, everything you attempt, at work or otherwise, should begin with that premise.

Meet the Board Member: Miriam Childs
GLL-SIS Past Chair, Law Library of Louisiana, AALL Profile Link

What are you most proud of?
My nearly 20 years as an employee at the Law Library of Louisiana.

Which characteristic do you value most in others?
Kindness.

Which characteristic do you value most in yourself?
My sense of humor.

What are some of your hobbies?
Cats, music, and WWII history.

Do you have a favorite word or quote?
Since I was 7 years old, my favorite word is: information.

You get to listen to only one song for the rest of your life – what is it?
“Rock the Casbah” by The Clash

What is a non-travel item on your Bucket List?
To learn bespoke tailoring.

What advice do you have for the next generation?
Never underestimate yourself, and always do the right thing.
Libraries continue to pave the way in providing the public access to information, teaching information literacy, and acting as pillars of resources for their communities. The leadership found in these libraries is essential for the benefit of both libraries and their communities. The California Library Association’s program, “Developing Leaders in California Libraries,” provides a variety of leadership resources for those interested in leadership development in California libraries.

One of these resources is “My Leadership Journey,” which is a series of recorded discussions with professionals in leadership positions in libraries and museums across the United States. The 2021-2022 line-up of leaders consist of a variety of different leaders in the world of librarianship from librarians, directors of academic and public libraries, the California State Librarian, the President of the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association and the President of the Chinese American Librarians Association, the President of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Vice President/President-Elect of REFORMA, to the President of the American Library Association. These leaders come from diverse backgrounds and have all come into librarianship in different manners.

After watching all of the “My Leadership Journey” interviews, I drew a few major takeaways from what the leaders shared. The first is that though the leaders all had different approaches to leadership, a majority were in agreement that clear communication, passion, and commitment are essential to being a successful leader and having a successful team overall. Soft skills are critical, especially in a service profession such as librarianship. Good communication is invaluable when interacting with patrons and for building trust among your team. Quite a few of the leaders brought up the issue of trust in leadership, including how, in order to earn trust and therefore commitment from a team, one must have clear communication to build credibility, as well as follow-through to prove that you will remain true to your words and your ethics. Another theme that centered around communication was being open to receiving ideas and feedback, and that this is necessary to change management in the rapidly evolving field of librarianship.

Another major theme is saying yes to opportunities that you are passionate about or creating those opportunities yourself. Several of the featured leaders express that passion leads to commitment to a team or a project, and that having passion for what you do will help to carry both you and your team through when times are difficult. On the other side of that coin is compassion to help those that are struggling with the ongoing changes in the profession and work towards solutions.

I would be happy to have the opportunity to meet any of the featured leaders and further discuss their perspective on leadership, librarianship, and how the two intermix. I particularly enjoyed Dr. Romelia Salinas’ discussion of holding true to your ethics and convictions in a service-oriented field.
such as librarianship. This resonated as I believe that it is so important to have a strong understanding of yourself, your values, and how far you are willing to go to defend those values when placed in a position of power. As I continue to learn and grow as a future librarian, I hope to carry forward these learnings and become an active voice and participant in the future of librarianship and the direction that it goes in. The “My Leadership Journey” series provides insights into the minds of a diverse set of library leaders and is an invaluable resource for those who wish to learn more about both leadership and librarianship, regardless of how long or short they have been on this career path.

Bio:

Jessica Ottinger is a Master of Library and Information Science Student at San Jose State University. She earned a B.A. in Communications and a B.A. in International Studies-Business from University of California, San Diego. She participated in a special library internship program with LA Law Library in Summer 2022 to pursue her interest in law librarianship. Malinda Muller is the project lead for the internship program. Malinda also chairs the GLL Membership and Mentorship Committee, which hosts the peer to peer “GLL Mentorship Program: Build Your Skills initiative,” where new and seasoned members can connect, one-to-one, for peer assistance and input. Access the Mentoring Skills Inventory program at the GLL website https://www.aallnet.org/glisis/resources-publications/mentorship-program/.

Student Article: AALL eLearning: Webinar Reviews

Anna Andrews, MLIS Student at San Jose State University,
anna.andrews@sjsu.edu

In today’s environment of increasing costs and tightening budgets, there’s a pressing need to seek new funding avenues and to communicate effectively in pursuing them. This article will review two recent AALL webinars that can help you do just that, with tips on grant funding and improving your writing skills.

The AALL webinar, “Grant Funding for Libraries,” recorded on February 15, 2022, provided an overview of how to get started finding grants and offers tips on the application process. It was presented by Amy Small, the current Director for the Texas State Law Library, Stephen Wolfson, the Associate Director for Research and Copyright Services at the University of Georgia School of Law, and Anthony D. Smith, the Associate Deputy Director for Discretionary Programs in the Office of Library Services at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The webinar was coordinated by Amy Emerson, the Assistant Dean for Library and Information Services and Associate Professor of Law at Villanova University’s School of Law, and was moderated by Bonnie Shucha, the Associate Dean and Director of the Law Library at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

The program began with Small and Wolfson sharing their experiences in applying for grant funding for their institutions. Small successfully applied for three grants to digitize and publish a section of historical statutes online, and she discussed the benefits of looking for smaller, more local grants, rather than large, federal grants, especially for those new to the process. As Small noted, these
smaller grants can be easier to apply for, can help you prepare for pursuing larger grants in the future, or may even be just the right size for your project. To start the search process, Small suggested first identifying, defining, and summarizing your project. According to Small, good projects for grants include those that will provide a new service or new technology, are self-contained with discrete timelines, and can be maintained after funding expires. Small noted that identifying discrete projects makes it easier to break them into phases, which can allow each phase to be a candidate for its own grant funding if needed. Finally, once grant funding has been obtained, Small advised documenting everything as you go, including costs, deliverables, and timing, not only for your own records, but also to make writing the progress reports required under the grant simpler.

Wolfson discussed his experience applying for National Endowment for the Humanities grants to digitize the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. While his first application was unsuccessful, he noted the importance of continuing to try, and at the time of the webinar, he was waiting to hear back on his second application. Wolfson outlined his lessons learned from the application process, which included taking advantage of a coordinator if you have one and paying attention early in the process to things that may cause delays, such as knowing which stakeholders may have to sign off and their timeline for doing so, preparing a budget early on, and drafting sample support letters to send to those who you may ask to write you support letters. Wolfson highlighted the importance of consulting with others to make your application as strong as possible, including looking at winning grants as examples and having someone not connected to your grant read it to make sure you’re making a strong case.

Finally, Smith introduced the IMLS and the specifics of five of its discretionary grant programs that he oversees. A common thread throughout the program was that successful grant applications are for projects that will generate something new, be it a new model, tool, or service, and that will have a reach beyond just the applying institution. Smith noted that partnerships may be helpful in achieving this, especially for larger projects. Finally, Smith encouraged applicants to reach out to grant providers before submitting an application in order to start a dialogue, which can help with better understanding how to make the application as strong as possible. Smith noted that many people don’t take advantage of this, but that there is nothing wrong with doing this and they should. If you’re interested in learning more, you can find this program here in the AALL’s eLearning section.

The webinar, “So, You Wanna Sharpen Your Writing Tools?,” was a joint production of the Professional Engagement, Growth & Advancement SIS (PEGA-SIS) and the AALL Continuing Professional Education Committee. This program, recorded on April 26, 2022, provided tips and insight into how to improve your writing. In this webinar, Sabrina A. Davis of the Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library moderated an interview with Jesse Katz, who is an editor at O’Melveny & Myers. Prior to joining O’Melveny, Katz worked at the Los Angeles Times, where he shared in two Pulitzer Prizes, and then at Los Angeles magazine. In addition to providing writing tips, Katz shared details on his path to becoming a legal editor and what his job entails.
According to Katz, great writing is writing that focuses on actions and appeals to the senses, and in this way shows, rather than tells. He used the phrase “extremely committed” as an example, noting that instead of saying a firm is extremely committed to pro bono work, it would be clearer to describe the work itself and the number of hours worked, which gives a concrete picture of that commitment. When asked about common writing traps that people encounter, Katz noted that knowledge of a subject can result in a lack of clarity. As Katz described it, once you know about something, it’s hard to remember what it was like not to know it, and so it’s important to pause in the process and think about the audience. Katz advised asking yourself who the audience is and what they need to know. Another common problem Katz identified is how to start a piece of writing. His recommendation was to get right to the point in the first few sentences and provide any explanation or foundational information after that. In other words, he advised us to lead with the conclusion.

Katz also addressed ways to overcome writer’s block, offering tips such as challenging yourself to write a five-minute brain dump on your issue or writing a letter to a loved one describing the issue. If the problem is that your issue seems too large to know where to start, Katz suggested narrowing the issue down until you have just one idea and then building back up from there. Katz ended his interview with two additional tips to improve your writing. He suggested paying attention to verbs and using active verbs whenever possible, which ties back to showing and not telling by making your writing more visual. He also suggested leaving time at the end of your writing process to print your work and read it aloud, which can help you pick up on cumbersome sentences and improve the flow. To learn more, you can find this program here in the AALL’s eLearning section.

Bio:

Anna Andrews is an MLIS student at San Jose State University. Anna earned a B.A. in English from UCLA and a J.D. from the UCLA School of Law. She previously practiced transactional real estate law. As part of her studies, she completed an internship at LA Law Library in the summer of 2022. Malinda Muller is the project lead for the internship program. Malinda also chairs the GLL Membership and Mentorship Committee, which hosts the peer to peer “GLL Mentorship Program: Build Your Skills" initiative, where new and seasoned members can connect, one-to-one, for peer assistance and input. Access the Mentoring Skills Inventory program at the GLL website https://www.aallnet.org/gllsis/resources-publications/mentorship-program/.

Advancing Organizational Communication: The Library as a Social Media Partner

Lynne Palombo (she/her), State of Oregon Law Library, lynne.palombo@ojd.state.or.us

Introduction

The State of Oregon Law Library has good news to share. The Oregon Judicial Department, under which we operate, has adopted social media guidelines and approved an official Oregon Courts Twitter Account!
It took years to be able to write that simple sentence. And it could not have been written without the State of Oregon Law Library.

The history behind that decision provides some valuable insights, including the key role a library can play as partners in organizational communication.

**Background**

Like many libraries, the State of Oregon Law Library (SOLL) experimented with social media early on. We joined Twitter in 2009, Facebook a few years later, and started a blog. Though our initial intent was to extend the library’s access and outreach, our experience ultimately positioned us to help advance communication efforts across our broader organization—the Oregon Judicial Department.

Social media appeals to organizations because it is free, easy to publish, and increases visibility. This ease, however, creates challenges. These challenges include dormant accounts, irrelevant content, unauthorized responses, and legal obligations. State Law Librarian Cathryn Bowie modified job duties and responsibilities in a previous position to address those challenges.

I joined SOLL in 2018 as a communications librarian, responsible for the law library’s digital presence. I stay current on practices to produce content on social platforms and web communication. I use that knowledge—along with years of experience as a news researcher, librarian, and data visualization specialist for Oregon’s major newspaper/online news source—to enhance our services.

One of my priorities when I arrived at SOLL was to create written social media guidelines to assist staff who manage and contribute to the law library’s social media channels. Guidelines that articulate roles and responsibilities help keep a team organized and mitigate the concerns of using a highly interactive third-party platform. For example, knowing public records laws and records retention policies will inform/dictate how you approach blocking users and deleting comments.

That written first document, combined with the library’s existing social media experience, gave us the foundation to approach judicial branch leadership with an offer to help OJD to move forward with social media.

**A General Hesitation or Slow to Adopt or…?**

Oregon’s judicial branch did not adopt social media as quickly as the law library and the other two branches of government. YouTube was the exception. In 2013, the Oregon Courts channel was created. The YouTube channel provides a range of videos and has built a base of more than 1,000 subscribers. However, the comments feature is off, allowing more narrative control.

In general, courts are very traditional institutions accustomed to relying on conventional and distant one-way communication (e.g., published opinions, press releases, and news stories). Social media platforms are more personal and allow for direct communication and public interaction with users and between users. While direct communication can be a valuable tool in promoting and amplifying official messages, a lack of institutional control is built into the social media communication model. How could the courts use this new technology while remaining free from risk? The judicial branch was both curious and hesitant.
A few years later, OJD created a workgroup of circuit court judges, trial court administrators, and the Office of the State Court Administrator staff to evaluate a social media pilot project. The goal was to expand outreach and public awareness and create a systematic content creation approach. Feedback from the workgroup was unenthusiastic. After reviewing the proposal, the workgroup expressed concerns about staffing, content management, lack of expertise, and control over negative comments. The project was placed on hold. Oregon’s pause was not unique. A 2014 report by the Conference of Court Public Information Officers in Partnership with the National Center for State Courts and The E. W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University on the topic of new media found only 38% of respondents reported having social media policies in place.

The workgroup ultimately made two recommendations. The first was to create a dedicated public information position exclusively for communication duties and not as part of other functions. The second was to develop a social media strategy as part of a coordinated OJD communications plan implemented by the public information officer.

Collaboration Project

Over the next several years, OJD strengthened its internal and external communication efforts, including hiring a dedicated public information officer and developing an updated Strategic Campaign. A new communication committee was formed. Because of SOLL’s existing history with social media and my related expertise, I was invited to join. I presented the law library’s rules for running our social media accounts and terms of use for engagement to the committee. I attended all meetings, answered questions, conducted product evaluations, and partnered with OJD’s new public information officer to develop a document and plan that could serve the wider audience. We did a lot of research and wrote many drafts together. The committee, a collaboration project with judges, trial court administrators, and judicial staff, recommended the Chief Justice approve social media guidelines developed initially by SOLL and built on models from other state judicial branches. The guidelines articulate roles and responsibilities, mitigate the challenges and risks of using highly interactive third-party platforms, and align with the OJD strategic communication priorities and key messages. The committee also recommended a plan to archive all social media content for management, and public records purposes and to launch an OJD Twitter account.

Next Steps & Key Takeaways

While the OJD Communications Office is responsible for the new Twitter account, SOLL will continue as a partner and consultant.

Our next steps include coordinating the management of multiple accounts, style guidelines, training and education, archiving, and content generation ideas.

Most importantly, we have demonstrated our value in another area critical to our parent organization’s success and assured ourselves a continuing seat at the table for future projects and
needs. It is not always easy to step outside the comfort of the law library, but once you do, relationships develop, and doors will continue to open.

**Lessons Learned**

- Connect goals to organizational objectives. A social media team does not operate in isolation. Align purpose and audience to your organization’s strategic initiatives.

- Remember your goal. It is easy to get sidetracked with emerging trends and new tools. We realized early on none of those can exist without a foundational policy.

- Do the groundwork. Planning and preparation are essential. Anticipate which internal stakeholders your project intersects with and bring them onboard to help author your guidelines. Presenting the final product with input from legal counsel and our tech team gave our document additional credibility.

- Keep good records. Maintain a project diary and keep status reports or summaries. Detailed records will save time and effort if when the project gets delayed.

- Maintain enthusiasm. Delays happen. Team members change, people are busy, and even a pandemic could develop. External delays can be frustrating. You cannot prevent or change delays, but you do have control over your reaction to them. I made it a point to bring up our social media proposal whenever possible. Ultimately, a friendly one-on-one reminder propelled the project through to the end.

- Librarians are good communicators. Think about all the communication in law libraries: research questions, the reference interview, training, emails, meetings (in-person and virtually), and negotiations, to name a few. Often librarians don’t realize that the skills they already possess are transferrable and can be used outside of the law library setting.

- Join a professional organization outside of the library discipline. Take note of your skills and see where they can apply outside the law library setting. A few years ago, I was asked to speak at the annual meeting of The Conference of Court Public Information Officers (CCPIO) on storytelling through data and graphics. I have now been a member of CCPIO for four years. The expertise of this group was essential in researching and implementing our project.
GLL’s Marketing Maven: Fall 2022 -
Karen Westwood, Law Library Director,
Hennepin County Law Library, Minneapolis, MN

Barbara Engstrom, King County Law Library, GLL-SIS Publicity &
Public Relations Committee Co-Chair,
Barbara.Engstrom@kingcounty.gov

Seizing Outside-the-Box Outreach Opportunities

We keep waiting for the dust to settle post-pandemic, but a thought occurs to me. What if the dust doesn’t settle? What if the future holds only constant change and endlessly revised expectations? Karen Westwood and the Hennepin County Law Library (HCLL) provide great examples of seizing unique marketing opportunities from arising circumstances to create awareness of her library and their services. These include four very different programs that one might not necessarily think of when looking at outreach opportunities.

Karen, when we first started talking about showcasing your outreach efforts, I noticed that you seemed a bit hesitant about focusing on projects that were not directly “on brand” (for lack of a better term) for traditional county law library services. I admit that made me even more curious. Tell me about the Afghan refugee events that HCLL has been participating in. What is the program, how did you get involved, and what services does HCLL provide?

Barbara, it’s true that I’m always trying to make more people aware of Hennepin County Law Library and here’s an example of that paying off. I have worked to partner with my Hennepin County Library (HCL) public library colleagues ever since I began working here about seven years ago. Earlier this year, HCL was approached by a local Rotary group. They were hosting monthly “get to know about living in Minnesota” sessions for newly-arrived Afghan refugees. My HCL colleagues enthusiastically signed up AND reached out to us in the law library. It seemed to them that there would be a need for information on legal rights for these new arrivals and the same kinds of questions we all have would be common for them too—landlord/tenant, small claims, etc.

Our new Outreach Coordinator has been to two of these sessions and, indeed, talked to someone about a used car he had purchased that didn’t come with a clean title. She was able to make some good referrals for this patron. She also carries with her “Legal Stuff,” a booklet prepared by the Hennepin County Bar Association (Legal Stuff Booklets (mnbar.org)). This booklet was originally written for high school students, but we’ve found it to be a very helpful overview for many non-attorney patrons—and the participants in these resettlement events take them to study at home. It’s unclear how long these resettlement events will continue, but we plan to participate in them for as long as they are beneficial.

I was intrigued by your partnership with the Hennepin County Purchasing and Contracting Department for outreach to small businesses. As county law libraries, we have so many areas of overlap with county services, but we operate in silos. Tell us a bit about this partnership and how it came about.
Last year I joined a countywide group called the “Disparities Reduction Community of Practice.” This is a group of employees throughout the county who compare notes on initiatives they are trying—no matter how small—to reduce disparities in our community (particularly racial disparities). In that group, I worked on a presentation with a man who works in the county purchasing department. I’ve been learning how important purchasing and contracting is for a county—it’s not only through hiring that counties can reduce disparities. Paying attention to who gets county contracts can also make a big economic impact.

Through my purchasing friend I met a county employee whose job it is to help small business owners qualify to get county contracts. She meets with entrepreneurs and others and walks them through the variety of forms needed to succeed. As we all know, new entrepreneurs—particularly women and minority owners—don’t always have the technology and experience to help navigate complicated government requirements. We are now set up to try a four-month pilot project in which we’ll make our conference room available one day a month for assisting these folks. Our first event, on September 14, saw a dozen attendees show up within the first hour so we’re cautiously optimistic that this will really fill a need.

The law library connection on this is a bit tenuous, but we created a short list of popular titles related to establishing and running a business and will have it available to hand out during these sessions. And if anyone has to wait to be seen, we’ll encourage them to browse in the law library while they wait. I’m looking forward to where this takes us.

In our conversation you mentioned a partnership with a colleague who runs a private legal research and writing business. If I’m not mistaken, the plan is for you (or your staff) to be regular guests on the podcast and discuss interesting legal research questions that have come up and the resources available at HCLL to help answer the questions. I love this idea because it allows you to get in the podcast game without having to do all the production legwork that goes with hosting your own podcast. Tell us more!

Happy to tell you about my pal Mike Carlson and his foray into a small legal research and writing business (https://graypaperlegal.com/). As part of building his business, he thought he’d produce a weekly webcast about some interesting aspect of legal research and asked me to co-host with him. Mike spent quite a few years as a Reference Attorney for Westlaw, and then had some roles at the state bar association where I met him when he asked me to present CLEs on occasion. Mike and I often have wide-ranging discussions about research and tech, so this seemed like a great chance to get the Hennepin County Law Library name out there. We plan to air a 15 to 20-minute segment in a weekly webcast Mike is calling “Gray Matter(s).” So far, we’ve recorded two—one session on finding a regulation on “cabotage” which you can see now on the website, and another on the neural net technologies behind Casetext’s new search function. We hope to keep it casual and informative. I was still undecided as to whether to accept Mike’s invitation when I went to an AALL session in Denver called “Shameless Self-Promotion for Law Librarians” featuring Greg Lambert and Jean O’Grady. I spoke to Jean afterwards and she encouraged me to take advantage of this opportunity to get the word out about my library and the value of professional researchers. So, I’m on board now—we’ll see how many viewers we get. This is an example of an immediate benefit to attending an AALL educational session!
Karen, you also mentioned that the Hennepin County jail is undergoing a cultural change and the law library was asked to teach regular workshops in the jail as part of project HOPE—“Helping Others by Providing Education.” What are the primary legal research needs in the jail and what resources are available? How do you envision your participation functioning in the context of this program’s mission to help break the cycle of incarceration by giving inmates opportunities to develop skills they will need for success upon release?

We have the good fortune to be right across the street from the “Public Safety Facility”—what we know as the jail. We have provided information to written requests from the jail for some years now. But the sergeant we’ve been working with wondered if we might present some workshops on expungement (everybody around us loves expungement these days!). We didn’t think expungement seemed like the right topic, given that most folks in jail haven’t even begun serving their sentences yet, but we were interested in having a conversation. We landed on a plan to visit the jail one hour each week (in a different housing unit each week—we’ll cover the whole jail in a month). We’ll do a short presentation on legal research and then field questions. We don’t know yet what kinds of questions will be the most popular, but we plan to teach them a bit about research generally and then explain why we send the material we send. For instance, a typical jail letter will request “everything on” the statute they are charged with. We are likely to send them information from a state jurisprudence and a copy of the jury instructions for that offense. We can explain why this is a good way to get a handle on the important aspects of the charge and how the jury instructions clearly lay out what the state needs to prove. We’re having background checks done now and hope to get trained and started within the month.

At the end of the day, Barbara, I’ve revised my pre-pandemic goals of having more people coming into the law library and using the law library. It is now my goal that our county residents know that there is a county law library that is open to them and that we’ll provide help in using the resources. I believe that the usage metrics will increase after that. But currently our biggest hurdle is that we are invisible to so many people (including people who work for our county and for the courts!). Just getting out more and working with different entities will help spread the word—at every outreach event it’s not just the residents who learn about us, it’s the other organizations who are also appearing at the event. As we plant more seeds and get the word out, I’m hopeful that more and more residents will think to turn to our law library whenever they have a legal issue they want to know more about.

Wow, Karen what an amazing array of outreach programs you’ve got going—Marketing Maven, indeed! I think you’ve hit the nail on the head with your revised goal of what success looks like for law library outreach. With increased expectations that law library services (and government services in general) will be remotely accessible, driving traffic into our physical library spaces becomes less and less likely. Blunting the invisibility factor and increasing awareness that the law library exists and can offer cognizable assistance encapsulates the true value of law library outreach. Thanks for taking the time to share your expertise and for providing new ways to think about marketing ourselves!
Food for Thought: The GLL Business Breakfast Meeting

Karen Westwood, GLL-SIS Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Hennepin County Law Library

As we look back on the 2022 AALL Meeting in Denver, I’ve been reflecting on how wonderful it was to get together again and see colleagues. Many things seemed “back to normal,” but I found myself looking at them with fresh eyes. One of those “fresh takes” was the GLL Breakfast Business Meeting that traditionally takes place early in the morning of the first full day of the conference. I’m interested in your thoughts on a couple of questions that came up for me:

First, after a couple of years of virtual GLL meetings, we returned to holding our annual business meeting in person at the AALL meeting. There were about 50 people present this year. I’m wondering if we should separate the business meeting from the in-person meeting. Maybe we should hold it virtually the week before AALL so more people can participate? I’d love to know your thoughts on this (if there’s interest, it may require a bylaws change, but we can have our bylaws committee investigate and propose changes if necessary).

Second, those of us in person enjoyed a delicious breakfast. But because I was the treasurer this year, I now realize just how expensive those breakfasts are. Our members each paid $35 for the breakfast this year, but the actual cost for each breakfast was closer to $55 – and our SIS pays the difference. In the past, legal vendors often sponsored the breakfast so the impact on the SIS bottom line was minimal. But that was not the case this year, and I get the distinct feeling from headquarters that we should not expect the level of sponsorship we’ve become accustomed to. While the final number has not been calculated, the GLL-SIS contribution to the breakfast is likely to be in the $2,000 range. It struck me as not being very fair that everyone’s dues pay for just a few of our breakfasts. So, my second question to you is—to eat or not to eat?

From my perspective, the most meaningful parts of getting together at the beginning of the annual meeting is to network, to enjoy a keynote speaker, and to celebrate GLL awardees. I’m wondering if a meeting that didn’t include the business meeting and food could be successful in accomplishing this. I’m sure members have creative ideas. Please send them my way and the GLL Executive Board can discuss and make a proposal to the membership about how to maximize our time together next year.

Thanks in advance for your input!

GLL 2022-2023 Officers are sworn in when in Denver.
In July, I had the opportunity to attend the 2022 AALL Annual Meeting with the help of a GLL-SIS grant. Thank you to the GLL Grants Committee for your support! The meeting proved to be a valuable experience where I learned from many librarians within the GLL community and the greater law librarian community.

My conference began with the GLL Breakfast and Business Meeting where we heard from Beth Wright of the Native American Rights Fund (NARF). Beth presented on the U.S. Indian boarding school system that forcibly removed native children from their homelands and culture. She discussed NARF’s peacemaking initiatives that help to encourage healing within the affected native communities, and she explained that healing is a necessary first step to seeking justice. Beth ended her keynote by addressing the threats to tribal sovereignty following Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta. It was powerful to hear Beth describe the consequences of the decision and how native communities will be affected.

The Opening Session Keynote by California Supreme Court Chief Justice, Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, was equally informative. Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye described the challenges that face the California Court system. Litigants in the California Courts include 4.3 million people without legal representation. The problem is tremendous in family and landlord/tenant cases, where 90% of cases have at least one party who is unrepresented. The Chief Justice asserted that the need for access to legal information is high due to the wide gap in legal representation, and that law libraries are in a unique position to help courts address access to justice issues. She summed up her thoughts well with the statement that courts and libraries can “advance access to justice through access to information, together.”

My time at the conference was also filled with many interesting programs. I was especially excited to attend the two GLL-SIS-sponsored programs. The first GLL sponsored program that I attended was “Bringing the Law Library to the Community: Access to Justice with Remote Services.” Cat Bowie and Karen Westwood presented two different projects on remote services from their respective libraries. Cat’s project highlighted the State of Oregon Law Library’s (SOLL) efforts to streamline and expand services to incarcerated adults. SOLL’s goal was to provide online legal resources to adults in custody, but they faced a large roadblock: the facilities did not provide internet access. The library’s solution was to take on the licensing fees for all of Oregon’s correctional facilities. This helped the Department of Corrections to redirect their funds to building a secure internet system for the adults in custody. With the secure network system and funds for online legal resources in place, the library enlisted the help of their users to select and test the resources. Karen discussed the Hennepin County Law Library’s efforts to acquire a computer kiosk to assist library users who needed to attend remote hearings. The kiosk idea was
presented by Civil Legal Aid in Minnesota, which secured CARES Act funding to purchase over 200 kiosks for Minnesota communities. The library accepted a kiosk, and it proved to be a valuable resource for patrons. Patrons quickly learned to use the kiosk to complete their legal research and to attend Zoom hearings. Both of these programs were excellent examples of how law libraries can implement creative ideas to address the access to justice gaps in their communities.

The second GLL-sponsored session that I attended, “Coping with Vicarious Trauma: Tips for Law Librarians on the Front Lines,” was presented by Domonique Quevedo from Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and Sarah Larsen from the Minnesota State Law Library. In the session, the speakers explored the risks of vicarious trauma and provided participants with coping skills and tips for working with people who have experienced trauma. To address vicarious trauma, they outlined the “ABCs” of mitigating the effects. The “A” stands for “Awareness.” The speakers emphasized that it is important to maintain awareness of your own limits so that you can recognize a situation that may lead to vicarious trauma. “B” is for “Balance.” The speakers highlighted the importance of self-care when working with victims of trauma and how it is vital to maintain a balance in order to prevent compassion fatigue. Finally, “C” stands for “Contact.” “Contact” refers to the necessity of maintaining a connection to oneself and to one’s own supports and resources. A support system helps one to process and alleviate symptoms of vicarious trauma. I found the “ABCs” to be a valuable framework for handling vicarious trauma, and I am eager to give this framework a try in my own library when dealing with particularly challenging situations.

Another session that I found very informative was, “The Reference Interview: Discovering What They Really Want,” by Megan Butman from Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C. and Michael Saint-Onge from Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP. One of my goals during the conference was to seek out sessions that could help me to further build on my research and reference skills. For this reason, I was excited to attend this presentation. Megan and Mike presented on many challenges that arise during reference interviews and offered tips for turning a challenging interview into a successful one. They illustrated the challenges and techniques using reference interview role plays. I found the role plays to be a fun and engaging way to present ideas. I took away several techniques that will help me to ask more probing questions, find a balance between answering and questioning, and set appropriate boundaries with the requester.

Overall, I had a very enjoyable and productive time at the Annual Meeting. I am grateful for the GLL grant that enabled me to attend the conference. I gained new knowledge that I can immediately implement into my work, ideas to share with my colleagues, and had the opportunity to connect with law librarians from across the country.
AALL Grant Recipient Report: Denver on a Dime

Sarah K. C. Mauldin, DeKalb County Law Library,
smauldin@dekalbcountyga.gov

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to GLL for providing me with a generous grant to attend the Annual Meeting in Denver.

I have been a regular Annual Meeting attendee for many years, but Denver was the first one that I had the opportunity to travel to as a court librarian. My original plan was to take another year off before returning to in-person meetings, partly for reasons of public health but mostly because I haven’t yet been able to massage my budget to include support for attending professional development programs. To my surprise, I was invited to speak on a program about collaborative scholarship. This invitation as well as my status as an incoming AALL committee chair and the Immediate Past President of SEAALL suddenly made the trip a must, and, thus, the hunt for funding was on. While I only had a few days to pull it together, I was able to apply for a GLL grant in time and was lucky enough to be selected.

The trip was amazing, but different than the meetings I attended in the past. Before moving to my present position at the DeKalb County Law Library, I worked for almost sixteen years as a law firm librarian. Changing library types radically changed the experience of the conference, altering the kinds of programs I attended, the way I approached the exhibit hall, and the number of events I was invited to. While my dance card wasn’t as full as it had been in the past, I still found the meeting as educational and invigorating as ever.

I had the opportunity to attend some great programming and learned many new things that I can apply immediately to provide better service to my patrons. Some of the highlights included:

- “All Boats Rise: Court Navigation Using Law Libraries”
  This session described how a law library and legal aid organization partnered to provide enhanced navigation services for pro se litigants. The program met with initial resistance from local attorneys but has thrived since its implementation. The speakers were delightful and inspiring and reminded me that persistence and creativity are vital when introducing new initiatives.

  This session described creating apps to provide legal information to public patrons, focusing on designing with the end user in mind. It was a good reminder that legal information must be relevant and understandable to be useful and that user-centered design requires end users to be meaningfully included throughout the development process.
• “Research Your Rights: How Design and Plain-Language Writing Can Increase Accessibility to Legal Information”

This session explored the nuts and bolts of creating legal information resources that real people can use and understand. Attendees were encouraged to try our hand at describing a seemingly mundane process (making toast) to someone without using words. The session was memorable and fun.

• “Black Land Matters: Advancing Justice by Mitigating Generational Land Loss”

This session introduced the audience to the issue of heirs’ property and the ways in which families lose land when property is passed down through generations without a will. The speakers did an excellent job of explaining how the problem came to be and what law librarians can do to help people faced with partition actions.

Aside from programming, the best part of attending the meeting was getting to reconnect with friends and colleagues and to meet so many new people. I knew it would be great to see everyone after so much time away from each other but was surprised by how wonderful it was.

Thanks again to GLL for this generous grant. It made my trip to Denver a reality and I am truly grateful.

AALL Grant Recipient Report: Amy Small

Texas State Law Library, Amy.Small@sll.texas.gov

First of all, a heartfelt thank you to the Grants Committee for making my attendance in Denver possible. Given this year’s theme of “Advancing Justice for All” and its particular relevance to the work we do as government law librarians, it was a conference that I did not want to miss!

More than anything, it was so nice to be able to see the people who I’ve gotten to know via Zoom over the past two+ years. Thanks to the monthly GLL Board and State Law Librarian Roundtable meetings, I probably saw more of my AALL colleagues during COVID than I did many of my friends and acquaintances in Austin! GLL-SIS has been a great source of community as we all navigated various hardships: pandemic, the turbulent political climate, staffing, natural disasters, and personal losses.

As such, the GLL Business Meeting was the perfect way to officially begin the conference on Sunday morning. I was pleased and proud to be there to see my fellow Texans from the Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library receive the O. James Werner Award for Distinguished Service to Persons with Disabilities. Their STAN project was innovative and amazing—richly deserving of the recognition. As an added bonus, I was able to catch up with a former Texas State Law Library employee, Amanda Hildebrand, who has gone on to bigger and better things in Harris County. She has been integral to the success of the STAN project and I’m so happy to see her career flourishing.

After that, the programming got started!
I had three key focuses for the sessions that I chose to attend. I was looking for sessions that would educate and inspire me to:

- Improve the visibility and reach of my library,
- Be a better mentor and supervisor for my employees, and
- Strengthen relationships with other Texas and state law libraries.

Of course, many of these sessions were coordinated, moderated, or presented by GLL-SIS members.

**Improve the visibility and reach of my library**

“Bringing the Law Library to the Community”: I wrote a more detailed summary of this session that can be found on the LISP/SR blog. For the short version here, this was an all-star GLL-SIS panel about the creative ways libraries have expanded their reach due to COVID or other issues like incarceration.

“You, Too, Can YouTube”: While our library has a great web presence, we are still working on developing a collection of videos that our patrons will find useful. I was hoping to take away some tips for creating quality videos and building a YouTube channel in a strategic way. The speakers’ experiences with branding, creating a “voice” for their library, and navigating the technical side were certainly inspiring—upon returning home, one of the very first things I did was to buy a high-quality microphone! That was one thing the speakers said over and over—lousy audio quality will turn listeners off quickly.

“Incorporating User Experience Design and Design Thinking into Research Guide Development”: The Texas State Law Library’s research guides are one of the features of our website that I’m most proud of. They’re great collections of resources that our patrons clearly love too—they get more than half a million views per month. That said, I know there are ways that we can make them better and more useable for our patrons. This session was a great overview of specific changes that we can make to our guides so that they are accessible for people with disabilities and easily understood by a wide audience.

“Research Your Rights: How Design and Plain-Language Writing Can Increase Accessibility to Legal Information”: This session was very appealing to me, coming from a public law library with a high proportion of pro se and lay patrons. Our goal is to make our website a great source of free legal information, but we have struggled with making this content not only easy to understand, but actually engaging. The speakers’ approaches to designing clear and usable forms, infographics, and websites were practical and entertaining!

**Be a better mentor and supervisor**

“Training Early Career Librarians”: By and large, most of our new hires are librarians early in their career, often without reference or legal research experience. It’s one of my responsibilities to get them acclimated and teach them the skills they’ll need to be successful. I take this responsibility very seriously, as I know the training they receive from me will form a foundation for the rest of their career. While I have a decent legal reference training regimen, this session helped me realize ways
that I can continue encouraging and mentoring new librarians—including by helping them find mentorship opportunities outside the library.

“The Reference Interview”: As we all know, a law librarian can’t be effective without solid reference interview skills. As I mentioned above, many of my new hires come to us without reference experience. It is my job to make sure they have ample guidance when learning the finer points of this essential skill. By now, I’ve been a librarian long enough that a reference interview feels like second nature—I was concerned that I hadn’t taken enough time to take the interview process apart so that I could explain it to someone new. I wanted to make sure I was giving my new folks an adequate toolkit! This session was a good way to take a step back and look at the art of the reference interview with fresh eyes.

“Coping with Vicarious Trauma: Tips for Law Librarians on the Front Lines”: “Vicarious trauma” refers to the adverse emotional effects that people experience as a result of assisting someone who is experiencing trauma. Being a public law librarian has always been emotionally taxing, but the fallout from the pandemic and the 2021 winter freeze has really amplified the toll on our librarians. I hoped that attending this session would allow me to do a better job of acknowledging this trauma and helping my employees find strategies for dealing with it in a healthy way. Thanks to the suggestions from the speakers, I intend to put more effort into creating a dialog with my employees about the hardships of the job and the importance of self-care.

Make connections


In addition to being good opportunities to chat with and get to know colleagues from all across the country (Alaska all the way to south Florida and everywhere in between!), the various gatherings were a chance to exchange ideas and talk about our projects. Thanks to the conversations I had at these events, I have a lot of projects and collaborations brewing! Hopefully I’ll be able to share more by Boston 2023!

Of course, gathering with colleagues who were able to travel highlighted the absence of those who were unable to join us. Several people who contributed to conference sessions or the GLL Board or committees could not be present, but that doesn’t mean that their contributions were missed or unappreciated.

Reflecting on my time at the 2022 Denver conference, I feel so fortunate to be part of the GLL community. Throughout the past several years, my library and I have benefited from the expertise of my government law library colleagues and all the innovative and creative projects at their institutions. This year’s conference was a perfect distillation of my general GLL experience—several wonderful days of gathering knowledge and professional connections that I could take back to support and improve my home library. Thank you to the session presenters, moderators, and coordinators who shared such valuable information with us, and again thank you to the GLL-SIS Grants committee for making my attendance possible.
AALL Grant Recipient Report: Kaden Taylor

Utah State Law Library, kadent@utcourts.gov

As a newer law librarian with the Utah Courts, this year was my first opportunity to attend the AALL Annual Meeting. After attending this year’s conference, I left Denver grateful for this profession and the tireless work of all government law librarians who continually strive to make access to justice available to as many different people as possible.

I appreciated the annual meeting’s theme of access to justice. At the Utah Courts where I work, we are implementing several changes to improve access to justice in our system, and several of the panels I attended directly addressed some of the issues we are trying to resolve. I learned how Minnesota and Indiana are using kiosks to provide legal services at the “All Boats Rise: Court Navigation Using Law Libraries” and “Bringing the Law Library to the Community: Access to Justice with Remote Services” panels. I am part of a committee with the Utah courts which is also discussing the possibility of using kiosks and court navigators to reach rural areas, and these panels helped show how these can be successful in providing legal information to locations that may not otherwise have it readily available. I also attended a session on YouTube (“You, Too, Can YouTube: Making the Case for Law Library Channels”) and was able to learn more about how different court systems use their YouTube channels to promote the courts, provide information, etc. I also had the opportunity to present at a panel along with Beth Jennings and Hallie Pope with the University of Utah on how design and plain language on court forms and websites can help provide access to justice. I believe in access to justice and was thrilled that so many panels revolved around this topic.

This conference also allowed me to meet with and get to know government librarians specifically, which I appreciated after only being able to remotely talk with others over the past year and a half. I have come to find this group to be very supportive of each other, and attending sessions or get-togethers with everyone at the conference has only shown me more how dedicated everyone is to our roles as librarians.

I am grateful to GLL-SIS for providing me a grant to help me get to this conference. The experiences ranging from presenting, attending panels, and getting together with other librarians were all enjoyable, and I’m glad to be part of a profession filled with librarians wanting to make a difference and provide justice to those who may not always receive it.
My First AALL Conference

Amanda Hildebrand, Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library, amanda.hildebrand@harriscountytx.gov

***Originally posted 8/3/2022 on the HALLmarks Blog, an official publication of the Houston Area Law Librarians. Reprinted here with permission.***

This year’s AALL Annual Meeting took place in-person for the first time since 2019, convening in Denver, Colorado for four days of educational programming and networking events. I had the opportunity to attend, marking my first in-person conference experience just a few months after attending the SWALL/HALL Joint Annual Meeting virtually in April. As expected, traveling, connecting, and learning came together in an exciting and overwhelming weekend, along with a few twists and turns.

- **Traveling**
  After a delay, another delay, and then cancellation of my connecting flight, I ended up stuck in DFW airport at close to midnight on Friday. The line at the American Airlines customer service counter was a couple hundred people deep. After confirming via app that I had been switched to another flight on Saturday (earliest arrival time in Denver was 8 p.m. Mountain Time) I stayed over in Dallas for the evening. I headed back to the airport Saturday morning to wait for my evening flight, so I unfortunately I missed all of Saturday’s events. I finally arrived in downtown Denver and took a quick walk around in the half hour of remaining daylight, admiring the Midwestern vibes of the architecture, and then turned in early to get to the registration booth right when it opened on Sunday. I was the only one in line and had extra time to ask questions and look around the conference center before starting the day.

- **Connecting**
  One of the highlights of the weekend was meeting my AALL Mentor, Jenny Silbiger, State Law Librarian of the Hawai’i Supreme Court Library, in person. I applied to the AALL Mentorship Program a few weeks before the conference, and Jenny and I were connected just a few days before. We officially met at the GLL-SIS Breakfast and Business Meeting on Sunday morning and saw each other at various programs throughout the weekend, including at the film screening of Alternative Facts: The Lies of Executive Order 9066 and the subsequent panel discussion, “Stop Repeating History: Applying the Lessons of Korematsu in the 21st Century to Advance Justice for All,” both sponsored by the Asian American Law Librarians Caucus. Jenny’s warm and welcoming personality made me feel like we had already known each other a long time, and she was a great support during my first conference experience.

I also had the chance to catch up with Amy Small, Director of the Texas State Law Library, at the GLL-SIS Breakfast and Business Meeting. I had the pleasure of working with and learning from Amy at the State Law Library while I was in my graduate program, and it was great to see her in person after almost a year and hear about what’s happening in Austin.

A moment of transparency: I realized, I think in the moment I walked into the Diversity & Inclusion Symposium Reception hosted by Lexis Nexis, that I had never found myself in a situation where I had to “network” among a large group of people. After dipping my toes in – luckily, I had Harris County Hainsworth Law Library Director (and the Annual Meeting Program Committee Chair) Joe Lawson to give me a few pointers at the start of the reception – I was very happy to then get the chance to meet local law librarians at the SWALL/HALL/DALL/UNT joint reception later that evening.
HALL Vice President David Baker very kindly introduced me to other members, and it was great to meet previously virtual faces IRL.

Besides meeting local law librarians face-to-face, I had expected the opportunity to meet other “green” law librarians during the Conference of Newer Law Librarians (CONELL) to be the main attraction of the weekend. I was looking forward to hearing about the experiences of those in a similar boat as me and to hearing about the opportunities that are available to those of us who are new to the profession. Fingers crossed that I will be able to attend in an upcoming year!

- Learning
I attended educational programs on Sunday and Monday. Sunday’s programs started off with a bang with the keynote address from California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye. I found many programs featured presentations by law librarians, professors, and other prominent legal professionals from the West Coast. As a California transplant finishing up her fourth year living in Texas, I realized that there was a lot going on outside of my local legal community in Houston. I enjoyed the sessions that covered conceptual topics, such as critical race theory or open educational resources, but sessions covering the practical policies, procedures, and strategies other law libraries and librarians have developed to address legal needs in their communities were especially interesting and illuminating.

While attending programs, I wrote down a few key takeaways in the first page of my notebook, copied here (the first two were paraphrased from Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye’s keynote address):

1. Problem finds courts last (Chief Justice)
2. State’s history = legal history (Chief Justice)
3. Transparency through partnerships
4. Libraries are liked + trusted + non-intimidating
5. Teaching through narrative

The conference’s theme was “Advancing Justice for All,” and the diverse programs I attended encouraged me to think about how the law library is uniquely situated in the legal system as one of the last trusted public institutions. There was a focus both on the future of law librarianship, led by advances in legal tech (I later joked to my mom that the Exhibit Hall looked like Tomorrowland), and the unique circumstances of the present. Government, academic, and private law librarians all seem to find themselves wearing many different hats, including instructor, social worker, court navigator, web designer, social media expert, and community liaison, and this was reflected in the varied program topics and expertise of the presenters.

What I would do differently
Before heading to Denver, I heard useful advice from coworkers and AALL members who hosted events and coffee chats prior to the conference. However, I had to experience the conference to fully appreciate a couple of the pointers. I took a quick turn around the Exhibit Hall after the keynote address but didn’t return to have a more detailed look at the booths (and freebies). I also completely forgot to look at the posters, and, because I had to leave early on Tuesday, I also missed the poster presentation session.

Another moment of transparency: I doubt that I’m alone in feeling moments of imposter syndrome pop up while surrounded with experienced and energetic professionals from all over the country. I reminded myself that since it was my first conference, I was still getting my sea legs. Next time, I will
also remind myself that many other law librarians have expressed experiencing similar feelings at their first AALL (and beyond) and it’s perfectly normal.

And lastly – I wished I had packed my roller skates, or at least some walking shoes! After moving from room to room in the conference center all day (plus traveling from sea level to high altitude), I was itching to be outside and get my blood moving. Next time, I’ll get up earlier and take advantage of the morning yoga sessions!

• Thank you!
A huge thank you to the members, Board, and Grants Committee of the Houston Area Law Librarians for the opportunity to travel to AALL with funding from the HALL AALL Grant.

Thank you to my supervisors and coworkers at the Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library, Joe Lawson and Mariann Sears, who shared their advice and support before and during the trip. And another thank you to Joe, whose grant recipient report from AALL 2019 inspired the formatting of this post.

Top Left: AALL badges of Amanda Hildebrand and Jenny Silbiger, mentor and mentee. (Photo courtesy of Amanda Hildebrand.)

Top Right: Jenny Silbiger, Amy Small, and Amanda Hildebrand at AALL 2022 in Denver. (Photo courtesy of Jenny Silbiger.)

Left: Many, many GLL members at AALL 2022 in Denver. (Photo courtesy of Jenny Silbiger.)
GLL Officers & Board Members 2022-2023

Chair
(2021-2024)
Holly Riccio

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect
(2022-2025)
Karen Westwood

Past-Chair
(2020-2023)
Miriam Childs

Secretary/Treasurer
(2022-2025)
Sara Pic

Board Member
(2020-2023)
Amy Small

Board Member
(2021-2024)
Patricia Petroccione

Board Member
(2022-2025)
Brendan Starkey

Board Member
(ex-officio)
(2022-Current)
Sabrina A. Davis

---

GLL Committee Chairs & Board Liaisons 2022-2023

Advocacy
Chair - Anna Russell
Board Liaison - Amy Small

Awards
Chair - Emily Donnellan
Board Liaison - Sara Pic

Best A2J Practices
Chair - Joan Bellistri
Board Liaison - Patricia Petroccione

Bylaws
Chair - Leslie Greenwood
Board Liaison - Brendan Starkey

Education
Chair - Liz Reppe
Board Liaison - Holly Riccio

Grants
Chair - Christine Morton
Board Liaison - Sara Pic

Membership & Mentoring
Chair - Malinda Muller
Board Liaison - Miriam Childs

Newsletter
Chair - Sabrina A. Davis
Board Liaison - Amy Small

Nominations
Chair - Geraldine Cepeda
Board Liaison - Brendan Starkey

Publicity & Public Relations
Chair - Tara Cunningham
Board Liaison - Holly Riccio

Standards
Chair - Jocelyn Stilwell-Tong
Board Liaison - Miriam Childs

Strategic Planning
Chair - Sarah Mauldin
Board Liaison - Karen Westwood

Technology
Chair - Jennifer Gonzalez
Board Liaison - Karen Westwood