

Legal History and Rare Books Special Interest Section Annual Report 2008-2009

The Legal History and Rare Books Special Interest Section (LHRB-SIS) got off to a strong start this year with an excellent slate of programming at the July 2008 Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon. We sponsored or co-sponsored the following programs and workshops: “What’s in This Box? Managing Archival Collections,” “Law Library Journal at 100: The Evolution of a Publication,” “Evolution of a Research & Legal History Website: From Funding Through Implementation,” “Beer and the Law: A Legal History of Beer, Brewing and Government Regulation from the German Purity Law to the Microbrew Movement,” “Oregon’s Death with Dignity Act: A Legal History,” and “Explore the New World of Legal History Research – Be Prepared to Wiki!” Thanks to the Education Committee, and especially its chair Laura Ray, for developing such a diverse and interesting slate of educational programs.

Our first LHRB reception at the Lucky Lab Brewpub was such fun that we decided to make it an annual tradition! Kudos to Laura Ray and Mark Podvia for organizing last July’s reception, and to Scott Pagel and Jennie Meade for offering to host the 2009 reception at the George Washington University Law Library.

After many years in the planning, the highlight of LHRB’s year was the debut of the Morris L. Cohen Student Essay Competition, jointly sponsored by our SIS and Gale Cengage Learning. The contest was very successful in encouraging scholarship in legal history and rare books and exposing students to AALL. We were pleased to have received many fine entries for the inaugural competition, which rendered the selection process extremely competitive. Our first award winner, Benjamin Yousey-Hindes, is a doctoral candidate at Stanford. Ben will be fêted, and will present his winning paper, “A Case Study of Canon Law in the Age of the *Quinque compilationes antiquae*: The Trial for Balaruc,” at the 2009 Annual Meeting. It is impossible to recognize everyone involved for their work on this project over the years, but special thanks go to Stephen Wasserstein (Gale), Fred Shapiro, and Cohen Essay Competition Committee members Katherine Hedin, Jennie Meade, Rob Mead, Mark Podvia, and Sarah Yates. Most importantly, all of us in LHRB are indebted to Morris Cohen for his inspiring leadership in the areas of rare books, legal research, and historical bibliography.

Another highlight of the year was the inaugural issue of LHRB’s electronic journal, “Unbound: An Annual Review of Legal History and Rare Books.” Compiled by Mark Podvia and hosted on our website (<http://www.aallnet.org/sis/lhrb/>) by Kurt Metzmeier, “Unbound” contains substantive articles culled from LHRB Newsletters. “Unbound” also appears in HeinOnline, ensuring that a wide audience will be able to read and appreciate the many scholarly contributions of our section’s members.

Published thrice yearly, the LHRB Newsletter continues to feature substantive content and interesting columns, thanks in large part to our Editor Mark Podvia and Articles Editors Jennie Meade and Kurt Metzmeier. Also deserving a tip of the hat are our regular columnists: Sarah Yates (rare book cataloging), Anne Mar (recent acquisitions), Amy

Taylor (exhibit news), Fred LeBaron (member news), and Dan Blackaby (legal history news). Joel Fishman edits the extensive collection of book reviews that run in every issue.

This year, the Publications Committee was charged with investigating electronic newsletter templates and making recommendations for the LHRB newsletter. After surveying AALL Special Interest Section and Chapter newsletters and finding a variety of styles, formats, and practices, the committee suggested no immediate changes to the LHRB newsletter. The group recommended that decisions about software, templates, and matters of design be left to the editor. Thanks to Chair Joni Herbst and her committee for investigating this issue on our behalf.

Our SIS Webmaster Kurt Metzmeier kept our website up to date, added a spiffy new image of our mascot Hughes-Humphreys the bison, and performed a much-appreciated inventory of our site's pages at the request of AALL Headquarters. Bookmark our site to stay on top of our SIS's activities, and visit often: <http://www.aallnet.org/sis/lhrb/> .

LHRB's first brochure debuted at the 2008 Annual Meeting, with great success. Featuring a fine rendering of Hughes-Humphreys, the brochure was the work of the talented LHRB Publications Committee, with special thanks to Stacy Etheredge and AALL's Julia O'Donnell.

One of the pleasures of serving as LHRB's Chair is getting to know so many like-minded colleagues, and being able to recognize them for their contributions to our SIS. I am grateful to everyone who has served on a committee, staffed a table at CONELL, contributed to our newsletter, or done any of the many large and small things that keep our section running. It has been a pleasure to serve as your Chair, and I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me. I close by thanking my colleagues on the board. Stacy Etheredge, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect from 2007-2009, will succeed me as Chair at the close of the Annual Meeting in July 2009. Also serving with distinction during the past year are Dan Blackaby, Secretary/Treasurer (2008-2010); and Laura Ray, Immediate Past Chair (2007-2009). Amy Taylor will join the board in July 2009 as incoming Vice Chair/Chair-Elect.

Karen Beck, Chair
2008-2009