



Newsletter

Volume 29, Number 1

July/August 2002

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Visit Our Web Site

www.aallnet.org/chapter/mall

MALL Listserv

To subscribe, point your browser to:
<http://aallnet.org/mailman/listinfo/mall-l>

Post messages to:
mall-l@aallnet.org
firstname lastname

President's Column

KAREN WESTWOOD
President

*H*ello Colleagues:

The MALL year has officially begun with the finalizing of the Committee Chairs. For those of you who aren't on the MALL listserv (and get on it if you're not), here is our roster:

Archives: Dennis Skrade
Awards: Donna Trimble
Consulting & Community Outreach: Susan Larson
Education: Elvira Embser-Herbert and Mary Rumsey

Exchange: Timothy Baland

Government Relations:
Margie Axtmann

Internet Applications:
Anita Anderson

Membership: Barbara Golden

Newsletter: Barb Minor

Nominations: John Tessner

Placement/Recruitment:
Wendi Cline

Public Relations:

David Zopfi-Jordan

Publications: Judy Zetterberg

Technical Services Special Interest Group:
Janice Leichter

In addition, we have two special groups in operation this year. Vicente Garces is heading up the Bibliographic Institute and Aimée Blatz is shepherding an LSTA Grant which will be used to produce a training session for public librarians on how to locate legal information on the internet.

With these fine folks in charge, my greatest contribution to the association will be to stay out of their way!

Here's to another fine year of programs, networking and friendship in MALL. Call me if you have any ideas or concerns about our Association. §



Member News

BARB GOLDEN
Membership

As of July 30, 2002, we have received 131 membership applications. *Are you missing from the roster?* The application form, which must be completed by both new and returning members, can be found at <http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/mall/mbrform.pdf> or requested from the Chair. Look for the MALL Directory to appear in the MALL "Members Only" section in August. Members will receive an email announcement when this is available. We will not be distributing print copies this year.

It's official. **Marvin Anderson**, Minnesota State Law Librarian, will be retiring this year. Mark your calendars for a party on Monday, September 9, 2002. More details later.

Anna Cherry has joined the staff of the Minnesota State Law Library in the new part-time position of Public Services Librarian

and Publications Coordinator.

Kim Jones is now **Kim Farries**, Head Librarian at Rider Bennett Egan & Arundel.

Besides at Faegre & Benson, you'll find **Nina Platt** on the cover of the July 2002 Library Journal. The inside article is "Creative Intranets," pages 40-42.

Please join the committee in **welcoming** the following **new members** to MALL:

- ◆ **Rose M. Coad**, Indexer
- ◆ **Michelle Davis**, Global Securities Information, Inc.
- ◆ **Kirsten Dierking** AND **Christopher Latchana**, Hamline University Law Library
- ◆ **Kate Gerundo**, **Rebecca Iserman**, **Patricia Kemp**, **Katia Shultz**, AND **Trina Tinglum**, University of St. Thomas Law Library

- ◆ **Tony Grgas**, West Group
- ◆ **Allyn M. McColley**, Rice County Law Library
- ◆ **Jan Rivers** AND **Theresa Wolner**, Dorsey & Whitney LLP
- ◆ **Sarah Yates**, University of Minnesota Law Library

We will begin profiling our new members in the next issue.

REMINDER: If you have news you'd like to share with the membership in the next newsletter, please contact one of the Membership Committee members:

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Volume 29, Number 1	July/August	July 29, 2002
Volume 29, Number 2	September/October	September 9, 2002
Volume 29, Number 3	November/December	November , 2002
Volume 29, Number 4	January/February	January , 2003
Volume 29, Number 5	March/April	March , 2003
Volume 29, Number 6	May/June	May , 2003

Minnesota Legal Periodicals Index to Debut Online at LawMoose.com

The *Minnesota Legal Periodicals Index* (MLPI) has just turned seventeen and is ready to step out!

MLPI first appeared in *County Law Library Project* (now Program) *Bulletin* No. 29 dated July 29, 1985. It was introduced as "a sample of what we hope will be a new service from the State Law Library" and was "intended to fill the gap in current indexing services."

Now, in collaboration with Pritchard Law Webs, publishers of LawMoose, Home of the Minnesota Legal Web, the State Law Library is proud to announce the availability, beginning August 21, of a web-searchable archive of nearly 19,000 entries (and growing), representing articles published in Minnesota law journals and newspapers as far back as 1984. Currently eighteen Minnesota legal publications (eight law reviews published by three Minnesota law schools, six bar association publications, and four commercial publications) are indexed and selectable by title, author, subject, periodical name, and year of publication. Added to the web-MLPI are hyperlinks to the full-text articles and cases discussed in articles when available on the web. Already there are more than 1300 such links.

Be the first to see the unveiling of the web-MLPI and learn how it, as well as other resources and features of LawMoose, turns the Web into an indispensable tool for the Minnesota legal community:

TITLE: Now You Can Find Those Articles without Rum-maging through Your Piles of Files: How to Use the Minnesota Legal Periodical Index and LawMoose in Your Practice

TIME: August 21, 2002 12:00 – 1:00 PM.
Bring your own lunch. Beverages will be provided.

PRESENTERS: Marvin Anderson, Barbara Golden, LaVern Pritchard , plus question and answer period

LOCATION: Minnesota State Bar Continuing Legal Education Center, 3rd Floor, City Center, Minneapolis
Directions at <http://www.minncle.org/aboutus/directions.htm>

COST: \$10

CLE: Approved for one general CLE credit

Submitted by Barbara Golden



LaVern Pritchard reports that LawMoose now includes coverage of Wisconsin law and the Wisconsin legal community (in addition to Minnesota) and that LawMoose's World Legal Resource Center provides search covering U.S, foreign, and international law. MALL member Cary Griffith reviewed the site (before its scope expansion) in 'LawMoose's Virtual Spider Spins Its Web in New Directions' in the July issue of *Corporate Legal Times*.



THANK YOU TO MALL

ANITA ANDERSON

I want to give my thanks to MALL for the generous grant of the registration fee for the AALL Annual Meeting. Although my employer has supported my attendance at the Annual Meeting in the past, due to state-wide budget shortfall, funding was reduced this year. I am very grateful for MALL's support.

I am also honored to have the opportunity to represent the special interest sections of AALL as this year's SIS Council Chair. The SIS Council is made up of the chairs of the thirteen SISs and the SIS Council Chair. The AALL Executive Board also provides a liaison to the Council. The purpose of the Council is to provide an opportunity to share common concerns and to provide an effective means of communicating with AALL leadership and Headquarters staff about SIS policies, procedures, and activities. As Council Chair, I will be serving as the coordinator for communication and cooperation. To facilitate my work I will attend the AALL Executive Board meetings this year in the capacity of observer and information resource.

My first duty was to attend the Board meetings in Orlando, including the orientation session. There was comfort in familiar faces at the orientation session, especially new board member

Nina Platt. During those first two days it was interesting to observe the workings of the Board. I was particularly impressed by how efficiently the numerous topics in the Board notebook (a very full 3" binder) were discussed and dispatched. I was also grateful to seasoned Board members who provided much needed advice on protocol.

One topic of particular note to me during the first two days of Board meetings was the report of the Annual Meeting Educational Programming Committee (AMEPC). This special committee's charge is to investigate how programming for the annual meeting is chosen, scheduled, etc. During the discussion of the report, Barbara Bintliff gave me my first official assignment: I am to poll the SIS chairs regarding the report and provide guidance to the Board regarding implementation. I am to focus especially on Recommendation #1 which currently reads: "Permit meetings, roundtables, etc. during AMPC selected educational programs." The Board has a number of concerns about how this could be implemented without conflicts for the SISs. For example, they want to avoid the situation where an SIS sponsored program could be scheduled at the same time as a meeting for the same SIS.

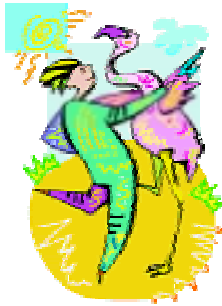
Board meetings took a break after Friday. Saturday and Sunday

were full of SIS related meetings and events. Leadership training for incoming SIS chairs and vice-chairs took up Saturday morning. I paid close attention to the program as I will be providing the training next year. After lunch with SIS and Chapter leaders, we had our business meeting. The SIS Council had a lively discussion about the AMEPC report and future dialog via the SIS Council listserv was planned, with my report to the Board to follow.

State, Court and County Law Libraries SIS (SCCLL) executive board met Saturday afternoon to report and vote on several action items. Sunday morning came early with SCCLL breakfast, business meeting and silent auction. This is our second year for members to donate and bid on auction items with the proceeds going toward our grants program. As SCCLL chair I ran the business meeting and was able to have some fun with it. I honored two of our members, Georgiana Wellford and Ken Svengalis, with "Chair's Award of Excellence." I thanked our committee chairs with colorful paper cranes and distributed numerous certificates of appreciation. I was particularly giddy when I was able to turn over the official hat and gavel to Mike Miller, our new chair.

The week continued with valuable programs and plenary sessions, gatherings with new and old friends, helpful discussions with vendors, and (of course) dancing. Thursday morning the new Executive Board met with discussions regarding the board's sched-

ule for the coming year, responsibilities of board liaisons, and chapter visit preparations. After the close of this meeting I retrieved my packed suitcases and waited for the airport shuttle. I was exhausted but also eager to begin a new year with new challenges. §



MALL Receives LSTA Funding

MALL is the recipient of LSTA (Library Services Technology Act) funding to help public library personnel work with legal resources and serve pro se patrons.

Last year the Internet Applications Committee submitted a grant proposal for LSTA funding. This July the LSTA grant review committee recommended that MALL's proposal for "Legal Research @ Your Library" training be funded. The requested dollar amount of \$11,750 was awarded.

The training workshops will be held in greater Minnesota for public library personnel. Some of the desired outcomes of the training workshops are to enable public library staff to distinguish legal research from legal advice; to demonstrate appropriate communication skills when working with patrons with law-related concerns, including pro se patrons; to learn how to create alliances and partnerships with other entities in order to better serve the pro se population. Also, library personnel will learn when and how to refer a patron to an attorney, a legal-aid

service, or other legal resources.

In addition to the training, participants will be able to assess their knowledge of legal resources prior to the workshop by taking an online assessment and provide the instructor with real life legal reference questions so the instructor can offer examples of legal resources suitable for that question and locale. Upon completion of the training workshop, participants will complete an online evaluation form and an online assessment form.

Next steps include establishing a task force to oversee grant management and selecting a database developer to help in developing a database to support online registration, the online assessment and the online evaluation. §

–AIMEÉ BLATZ

ACQUISITIONS ASSISTANT - ORDERING

William Mitchell College of Law, a well-respected institute of higher education for more than a century, seeks a detail-oriented individual familiar with academic library procedures and on-line library systems (ideally Innopac). You'll be responsible for material ordering and receiving, accounting record maintenance, and processing gifts.

Qualifications include a high school diploma and some college (BA/BS degree, preferably with library science or archival classes, would be ideal). A good math aptitude and strong multitasking skills are necessary. 1-3 years in a direct service-oriented position and/or experience working with legal materials a definite asset.

To apply, please send cover letter and resume, including salary requirements, to Human Resources at hr@wmitchell.edu, or fax (651) 290-6460. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. AA/EOE.

Human Resources, William Mitchell College of Law Library
871 Summit Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105

The Internet Column



MORGAN WILSON
Hamline University School of Law

It's A Blogs World

The Internet is a growing, organic body of content that can evolve as quickly as a new site is added to its web. One of the current hot trends in web creativity is the phenomenon of the blog, which in its more common incarnation seems to function like a public diary. How can these stream-of-consciousness meanderings have any relevance to the practice of law librarianship? In reality, these compendiums of seemingly random data can provide much useful information. Let's take a look at the basics of blogs and their application to our profession.

Terminology and Origins

Blog is a shortened form of the phrase "web log." Blogging is the verb for maintaining a web log. A blogger is a person who creates and maintains a web log, and is also the name of a popular blog creation tool (<http://www.blogger.com>).

A blog is presented in reverse chronological order, updated regularly, and usually generated by special blogging software (see below). The content could be anything along a wide spectrum, from online personal diaries to the posting of interesting web resources with no commen-

tary. In my opinion, the blogs most useful for librarians lie in the middle of this spectrum – pointing to information on other websites and blogs while providing comments and opinions about this information. (See also <http://www.llrx.com/columns/notes46.htm>)

Blogs have been around since the early days of the World Wide Web, but were not noticed by the mainstream media until 1999. Since then, the popularity of blogs has grown steadily. There are many good accounts of blog history on the web, including <http://www.llrx.com/features/lawblog.htm> and <http://www.salon.com/tech/column/rose/1999/05/28/weblogs/index.html>.

Library and Law Blogs

Librarians were in the first wave of Internet adapters, and naturally they have taken to blogging, too. A sample of some general Library Blogs include The Shifted Librarian (www.theshiftedlibrarian.com), Virtual Acquisition Shelf & News Desk (<http://resourceshelf.freepint.com>), Library Stuff (www.librarystuff.net), LibraryPlanet.com (www.libraryplanet.com), and librarian.net (www.librarian.net).

LibraryPlanet.com), and librarian.net (www.librarian.net).

Lawyers like to talk, write, and listen to other lawyers talk, even on the Internet, so there are many specialized Law Blogs. Ernie the Attorney (<http://radio.weblogs.com/0104634>) has the best list of legal blogs. Some others you may wish to explore are How Appealing (<http://appellateblog.blogspot.com>), Bag and Baggage (<http://bgbg.blogspot.com>), and the LitiGator (<http://radio.weblogs.com/0110436>).

Combine law and libraries and you get Law Library Blogs. Many of us are already familiar with LLRxBuzz (www.llrx.com/buzz/buzz120.htm), which does bear the characteristics of a blog. I invite you to take a look at Leah's Law Library Weblog (<http://radio.weblogs.com/0109773>) and my own Exploded Library (www.explodedlibrary.info) for further examples of law library blogs. The Virtual Chase Alert (www.virtualchase.com) is perhaps the most useful resource, but it's not strictly a web log, although it does offer an RSS feed (see below).

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Blog

As with most developments on the web, there are plusses and minuses to the practice of blogging.

Good things about blogging:

- ◆ Blogging software makes it very easy to maintain a blog.
- ◆ Blogging blurs the distinctions between reader, author, and commentator.
- ◆ Informality – most blogs have no pretensions about being polished work and there is a general understanding that blog information is not to be taken at face value.
- ◆ News feeds offered by some blogs can help with the information overload problem.
- ◆ Blogs can be very current and are a good way of keeping one's finger on the pulse of developments affecting the profession.
- ◆ Blogging can be fun and opens a door into the blog community.

Bad things about blogging:

- ◆ Blogging is too easy – *anybody* can maintain a blog.
- ◆ The informal nature of blogs makes it possible for the blogger to add inane or inaccurate comments, or even do more sinister actions like alter /distort another person's words.
- ◆ There is a lot of redundancy in blogs – many point to and feed off each other – although this is not always a bad thing.
- ◆ Combined with listservs,

group emails, automated searches, clipping services, print and electronic journals, and everything else, blogs simply *add* to the information overload that all law librarians (also known as human filters) must deal with daily.

- ◆ The power of blogging can be abused. Blogs have been to create Google Bombs, a deliberate way of overwhelming one item (usually unfavorably) with another unlike item by seeding search engines. See also: <http://www.microcontentnews.com/articles/googlebombs.htm>

The Exploded Library: My personal experience with blogging

I had heard about blogging in abstract terms since 1999, but I only started reading blogs while taking a creative writing class at the Loft last spring. While I was researching the background of a particular character, I discovered LiveJournal (www.livejournal.com), a site that allows people to create their own *anonymous* online diaries. Some LiveJournals are painfully personal and detailed, others contain creative writing, some are mutterings about jobs or co-workers, some seek advice about relationships, or rant about pet hates or unresponsive companies.

In LiveJournal it is possible to indicate your interests and find other people with similar interests. Then those people can get together and form a LiveJournal community. One such group that immediately caught my eye was the Library Lover's community. Within this community I found links to other library blogs outside of LiveJournal.

I will momentarily digress and mention that there are many different tools and software for blogging. LiveJournal, Blogger (www.blogger.com), Movable Type (www.movabletype.org), and Radio Userland (radio.userland.com) are some of the better-known programs. There is something about LiveJournal that lends itself to more personal, diary-style journals, rather than work-oriented opinions about discoveries on the web. This isn't to say that a LiveJournal couldn't be work-related.

Everybody has different learning styles, and I learn best by doing. So I decided that the best way I could learn how blogs really work was to make my own work-related blog. This was how the Exploded Library (www.explodedlibrary.info) came into being.

I chose Radio Userland for one main reason: it offers two applications of the new RSS news feed technology (<http://gils.utah.gov/rss>). First, it offers a news aggregator of other people's RSS news feeds. If a blog has the icon (or says that it offers

Blogs World (Continued)

RSS/XML), you can add it to Radio Userland's news aggregator. This means that I can monitor 20 RSS blogs easily in the one place, rather than having to view 20 separate web sites. Then if a post or story catches my eye, it's very simple to post it to my own blog and add comments to it. This technology makes it so easier to maintain a blog. Genie Tyburski of the Virtual Chase compares it to receiving a digested version of a listserv. Second, Radio Userland automatically makes an RSS version of your own blog, which makes it more convenient for

other people to read or monitor it. If readership is important, it certainly helps to offer an RSS feed of your web log. Radio Userland is the not only way of doing this – it just makes it very easy and seamless. The downside is that at \$40, Radio Userland costs more than most of the other blogging software.

It is very easy to setup your own plain vanilla blog on Radio Userland. It is more of challenge to create a highly customized blog, such as the Shifted Librarian (www.theshiftedlibrarian.com). For me, customizing the Ex-

ploded Library will be an ongoing project. But it is a worthy one, because it's a part of my job to stay up-to-date with the technology and the information offered by blogging.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Newsletter Committee member Morgan Wilson for documenting his venture into the cutting edge world of blogs. Watch future issues for excerpts from his conversation with Genie Tyburski. And we wish Bill Jack a speedy recuperation and return to his always anticipated Internet Column. §



AALL 2002: Hot Fun in the Summertime

Do you have pictures or stories that will convey the excitement of the Annual Meeting in Orlando to MALL members who stayed home?

Exercise your creativity and send them on in for the next issue of the Newsletter.

**Next Deadline:
September 9th**



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