



# SFALL Newsletter

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Editor's note: Apologies on the delay. This newsletter includes some "old news."

## Invitation to the Annual Meeting

The SFALL Annual Meeting will take place at 4:00 pm on Friday, June 9th at  
Lombardi's Ristorante

located in Bayside Marketplace at 401 Biscayne Boulevard in Miami.

There will be a brief business meeting during which the new Vice-  
President/President Elect, **Robert Hudson** and  
the new Treasurer, **Edee Hammer**, will be inducted.

Then, we will enjoy a cocktail party with the following food selections:  
antipasto, assorted cheeses, margherita pizza, and breaded mozzarella with  
marinara sauce.

The cost will be \$25 per person. Please send your check for this amount, payable  
to South Florida Association of Law Libraries,  
to Jeanne Korman at Thomson/West; Bank of America Tower - Suite 2770; 100 SE  
2nd Street; Miami, FL; 33131.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER from Katherine Rosin - May 2, 2006

Once again, I find that I have no time to think of anything to say much less to actually write an interesting, coherent piece for the SFALL Newsletter. However, it occurs to me that everyone else is just as terribly busy as I am, which means that no one really has time to read lengthy writings anyway. So, here is something short and hopefully sweet.

### **RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND VOTE**

I want to remind everyone to renew their SFALL membership and to vote for a new Vice President/President Elect and a new Treasurer. You should have received your 2006-2007 Official Ballot via e-mail. If you need another one, let Helen Wohl or me know. The 2006 Membership Application Form is at the SFALL web site - the link is at the Member Listing page.

### **APPLY FOR SFALL SCHOLARSHIP - \$500! TO THE LUCKY WINNER**

Hopefully, some of you applied for this year's SFALL scholarship money - \$500! - to help defray the expenses of attending the 2006 AALL Annual Meeting in St. Louis. The 2006 Scholarship Application form can be found at the opening page of the SFALL web site.

### **ANNUAL MEETING TO TAKE PLACE ON JUNE 9TH**

The SFALL Annual Meeting will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at a place yet to be determined. The members of the SFALL Board are looking into several possibilities and are also seeking suggestions from the membership for convenient and not-too-expensive restaurants. At this meeting, we will be bringing the newly elected SFALL officers on board. After the business part of the meeting is concluded, there will plenty of time for eating, drinking, and socializing.

### **AN INTERESTING AND ENJOYABLE MARCH 9TH MEETING**

The March 9<sup>th</sup> SFALL meeting was attended by a small but lively group. The meeting was arranged through the planning efforts of Sid Kaskey. Sid was also the facilitator for the panel discussion. Thanks, Sid. Thanks also to Kerri-Ann Philp for hosting the meeting.

The topic was "What Can or Should be Expected of a Law Librarian to Know and Do." The audience participated with the panel in the discussion. Our distinguished panel members, listed here alphabetically, were Liz Chafari, Karl Gruben, Pat Pardo, and Johanna Porpiglia.

### **HUMOROUS EXPERIENCES**

I think that everyone found it interesting to hear about the backgrounds and job histories of everyone else, specifically the fun anecdotes. We all laughed as Sid told us of the time when he was first in Library School and he wondered who Elsie (LC) was since the cataloging professor continually referred to her. Liz Chifari was

once asked to locate the Grand Leachability (Gramm Leach Bliley) Act and she also told us of an attorney who, when asked to find the seminal case in a particular matter, began to search for the Seminole case. Jeanne Korman remembered hearing about looking up something in the "All Directory" and this mysterious source turned out to be the "Oil (pronounced as All or Awl in Texas) Directory."

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

Part of the discussion related to the importance of mentoring. I was able to address both sides of mentoring since I was lucky to have a very experienced law firm librarian as my mentor when I was starting out in libraries, and several years later, I in turn was a mentor to a new law librarian and was influential in her decision to get her MLS.

### SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS IN THE MAKING OF A LIBRARIAN

It seemed that everyone also enjoyed sharing their views about some of the significant characteristics and abilities to look for when hiring a new law librarian. Various attributes were mentioned such as intellectual curiosity, perseverance, and the ability to get along in the law firm or other institutional environment within which the library resides and which the library serves.

### MUTUAL SUPPORT AND CONTINUAL EDUCATION

The camaraderie shared by the group was much in evidence as well as our interdependence which was discussed in terms of the need to rely on each other not only for the resources of our libraries but also our know-how. We agreed that the learning never stops and that we continually learn from each other - regionally within our local association as well as nationally through listservs and our professional organizations.

### A WHIRLWIND YEAR

Last but certainly not least, I want to say that I never did have the time to pursue all the ideas and plans I originally had for this year. I have acquired a growing appreciation for SFALL through the offices I have held - Treasurer, Vice-President/President-Elect, and now as President. I had a wonderful Board this year - Sid Kaskey, Jeanne Korman, and Calmer Chattoo - who all contributed greatly to and were highly supportive of SFALL. Although I wish I could have known more and done more, I have had the chance to learn and focus on some new things, and best of all, I have had an opportunity to become acquainted with more of the members of SFALL and to become better friends with those members whom I already knew.

## GETTING ON MY SOAP BOX ONCE AGAIN

Before I sign off, I have to briefly stand on my soap box, in honor of my favorite cause on behalf of Librarians - salary. I hope that all of you talented, intelligent, highly educated, hard working, ingenious people always try to fight individually and collectively for the increased compensation that we should have and that so many in our profession never achieve. Shun the job postings with the ludicrously low compensation levels and toot your horn within your firms, schools, courts, and companies. Demonstrate the value and the power that you possess and demand, respectfully but forcefully, the professional status and the accompanying remuneration that is so well deserved. That's all for now.

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### Looking for Volunteers

SFALL is scheduled to have five meetings over the next association year [starting in the fall through June of 2007]. The program committee will be headed by Jeanne Korman and she needs your help.

We need volunteers to help organize and coordinate at least one meeting. You will be expected to help locate a meeting venue; arrange for food/beverages/ and help publicize the meeting.

Volunteer to be responsible for one meeting. It is a painless way to become involved and help your association. Please contact Jeanne Korman and she will let you know where she needs help.

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### Reviewing Online Master's Programs by Nora Everlove

The Internet has changed much of how we do business including the business of education. In the last decade, the traditional MLS program has become almost a thing of the past. Today, most library students take more classes via computer

than in the classroom. It is especially so in Florida where both USF and FSU have strong online programs. FSU came first to technology but USF was quick to follow. Our company employs five USF graduate students and even the students in Tampa are taking most of their classes online. I wanted to research the program to have a better understanding of their educational process. Fewer things have changed since I graduated in 1982 than I would have expected. Content, core classes, student/teacher ratios, seminar classes all seem very familiar. However, the delivery method is really different.

USF Directory, Dr. Vicki L. Gregory says that USF still requires some face time with their students. USF still augments its' Internet program with classroom extension programs in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Sarasota, Jacksonville and Orlando. Students are still required to meet with professors three full days a semester for many classes. Reference and cataloging are never taught solely online. The typical USF student has a mix of online and traditional classes.

The summer semester always has a light schedule but only two face-to-face classes are being offered at the main campus in Tampa. There are three classes offered on the East Coast this semester. Of the total curriculum, the school offers fourteen totally online classes and twenty blended classes. The blended classes require some face-to-face time. Just over a quarter of the USF students are considered primarily traditional classroom students. The rest are primarily Internet students.

So, what are the advantages and disadvantages of online programs?

Convenience. Ironically, students report they prefer the traditional classroom classes but Dr. Gregory says the online classes fill up the fastest. Of course, the online classes can pull from all over and are not limited by geography. Traditional classes are capped at thirty-five students but average in the low 20s. The convenience of online typically wins. Beyond convenience, the online classes are more self-paced. One of our staff member reports, "the best part for me is the ability to work at your own pace." I talked to several of our staff members and they strongly prefer the online classes. Many commented there was a lot of down

time in the face-to-face sessions. They felt the content was stretched to fit the hours allotted.

How the classes are taught. It isn't simply a matter of converting a face-to-face class to online. The professors have to tinker with how the class is delivered. The online classes are capped at thirty, a little less than the classroom maximum but the workload is much heavier. Dr. Gregory says, "The Faculty complains about students who feel they are on a one-to-one basis. Instructors have to answer questions thirty times rather than using the bulletin boards." Students tend to forget that the professors are not available 24/7.

Relationships with instructors and other students. A Dr. Gregory note one of the more difficult parts of an online program is the faculty does not know the students to the same extent. It is harder to remember names and harder to write a letter of recommendation that sites a students specific strengths. The faculty knows whether they are good students but may not be able to elaborate. When I asked one of our graduate student staff members about the limitations of online classes, she noted the counterpart from the student's perspective, "You don't get to know the experts in your field. It is hard to really glean the personal insights, gained from years of study and practical experience, through an online course."

Regarding student networking, Dr. Gregory says they do notice a pattern of students tending to group together by taking classes together. The difference is the grouping is by interest rather than by geography. Students are still making friends and contacts to help them in the future.

How the comprehensive exams are handled. Questions are posted through the electronic blackboard system at a specific time. They are sent back through an electronic drop box or fax. Why fax? Students seem to feel more confident that it really got there!

*See You in St. Louis!*