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The CRIV Sheet

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Message from the Chair

When Frank Houdek, an AALL Past President, wrote his first article as CRIV Chair, he commented that chairing the CRIV was tougher than being President. Not a great recommendation to potential successors! Of course, he went on to help the Committee reinvent itself amid vast changes in legal publishing and law librarianship. Frank will be sorely missed this year for making it look so easy.

I like to say I was shanghai'd into taking over the chair, but in fact, I am very pleased to head such a great group. This year's Committee has librarians with a plethora of expertise in acquisitions and serials, as well as great creativity. Academic, private, and court libraries are represented. We hope that we can represent the interests of all types of libraries, because we know that a large academic library has different concerns than a small private firm library.

Committee chairs are listed in this *CRIV Sheet*, but I want to mention that Stephanie Edwards is now chair of the CRIV's Mediation Subcommittee. If you have a particular problem with a publisher, you may contact me, though I encourage you to contact Stephanie directly. The CRIV will continue to monitor the law library listservs; we will continue to do what we can to resolve problems before they get too big and to provide clues to publisher mysteries.

As evidence of the CRIV's success and reach, we were recently contacted by representatives of the British and Irish Association of Law Libraries, who wanted to create their own version of the CRIV, borrowing some of our ideas to help their own members deal with publishers. We would not have such an impact without CRIVPage, our Web site with tools to help librarians deal with publishers. If you have not seen it lately, you have missed some major additions, including a Divested Titles List for all of those titles that have passed through various publishers' hands in recent years.

We have a busy agenda again this year. If comments to the CRIV are any indication, our site visits to Aspen and CCH were timely and useful to librarians. We plan more site visits this year and are currently in negotiation with specific publishers to arrange dates. When we know more, we will, as usual, poll librarians to determine the issues to be discussed prior to our visit.

In May, the CRIV also sponsored a site visit by a publisher to a number of libraries. The idea was for publisher executives to see librarians on their home turf, so that they might better

understand librarians' concerns. BNA visited Richmond, Virginia, law libraries in cooperation with the Virginia Association of Law Libraries. The visit went so well that the CRIV wants to continue the effort, hopefully working with local Chapters in areas near the publishers' headquarters.

The CRIV is also looking for other ways to get librarians and publishers talking about consumer issues. Some publishers are too small to be able to host a site visit, yet the little guys are often eager to enter a dialogue with the CRIV. It may be possible to schedule meetings with publishers and the CRIV at next year's Annual Meeting. We are open to a variety of options and venues.

Speaking of the Annual Meeting, we have proposed a number of programs for next year. These are directly in response to concerns raised by members throughout the year and at the Philadelphia meeting. The CRIV will keep you informed when and if they have been accepted.

One of the most effective ways to influence publishers is to tell them what they're doing right. The CRIV is responsible for reviewing and recommending new legal research publications for the New Product Award.

Most of the nominations come from publishers themselves, but the CRIV urges librarians to get in on the act. If there's a new database, Web site, newsletter, or treatise out there that you have found to be particularly useful, speak up.

The CRIV invites librarians to speak up in our own publications. If you have a particular bone to pick, a story to tell, or have developed a particularly useful strategy for working with publishers, please share it through *The CRIV Sheet* or "CRIV Notes," our monthly column in *AALL Spectrum*.

Other groups within AALL are also tackling legal publishing issues. An Economic Study of Law Book Pricing is under way; if you monitor law-lib, you will have seen postings for it. The CRIV urges all librarians to take the time to participate in this study. Once we have reliable data, librarians will be better prepared to deal with cost increases. A Special Committee on Fair Business Practices will address the rescission of the *FTC Guides for the Law Book Industry*. The goal is to establish standards of practice for both publishers and librarians.

Please feel free to call me (860/509-6549) if you have any suggestions or concerns about the CRIV. I am in the office from 1 to 5, Eastern time.

Editor's Corner

Welcome to another year of *The CRIV Sheet*! As Chris mentioned, we are planning on a busy year, so look for a number of new articles, as well as for new postings on the CRIVPage!

Stephanie Edwards, the new Mediation chair, starts off this *CRIV Sheet* with a summary of the past year's events in Mediation. She also provides a much-needed update on the Aspen system upgrade, and an explanation of what this upgrade means for your library.

As mentioned in an earlier "CRIV Notes," the CRIV launched a new program of vendor site visits to local law libraries in an effort to expand the already successful site visit program. Frosty Owen reports on the first such venture, when BNA visited two Virginia libraries armed with questions and curiosity.

Next, we introduce a new CRIV member and a new series of articles. In an analysis of past articles, we have noticed that the CRIV frequently concentrates on the experienced librarian, and we realized that newer librarians may need more detailed explanations of publisher practices, procedures, or services.

To assist in this learning process, the CRIV has launched a new series designed for the novice librarian. The articles will cover a subject in brief, and will provide references to more detailed information. This first article is on jobbers, what they do, and how they relate to publishers. Since the CRIV is looking to expand its focus beyond the larger, well-known publishers, it is a good time to welcome you to "Jobbers 101" by Rebecca Lutkenhaus!

We close this issue of *The CRIV Sheet* with selected profiles of CRIV members, so that AALL librarians can see what motivates individual members to improve vendor relations.

As always, I would like to encourage writers to submit articles (or suggestions for articles) to me at mwu@burns.nlc.gwu.edu! The CRIV is always looking for submissions to help librarians navigate their way through the seemingly treacherous streams of acquisitions, customer service, and publisher contacts.

Michelle Wu

*George Washington University
Washington, D.C.*

Report from the Mediation Chair

September 25, 2000

Organization

Recent changes and consolidations in the legal publishing industry are reflected in the new organization of the CRIV Mediation Subcommittee this year. We have recently decided to assign each of the major vendors/publishing groups to a different Subcommittee member. In this way, the work will be divided up more equally among the members of the Committee, and everyone on the Committee will have more of a chance to be involved. More importantly, we believe this change is one more way the CRIV can promote an effective working relationship between the Committee and vendors/publishers. Concerns and questions relating to all publishers should still be forwarded to the Mediation Chair, who will coordinate the assignments.

Summary of Activities

In the last couple of months, the Mediation Subcommittee has followed up on 10 complaints from librarians, distributed fairly evenly among the major publishers: West (three), Lexis (two), Aspen (two), CCH (one), and other smaller publishers (two).

In one of the complaints involving Aspen, a firm librarian reported that an effort to consolidate three accounts in 1999 resulted in most of the library's standing orders being canceled. By the time the librarian turned to the CRIV for help, more than eight months had passed and the standing orders still had not been reinstated. When the CRIV got involved, Aspen Director of Customer Service Judith McRee immediately assigned the problem to one particular customer service representative.

Although there were some problems initially with follow-through (the librarian reported that she received no response at first to her voicemail and e-mail messages), progress is being made toward a resolution at this writing.

An account problem of this magnitude requires a great deal of patience and determination to solve. For help on follow-through with problems that persist for weeks and even months on end, see the tips offered elsewhere in this issue of *The CRIV Sheet*.

A complaint in August about inaccurate price listings on the West Web site was quickly addressed by West. A librarian at Dorsey & Whitney in Minneapolis reported that her library ordered a set of *West's Supreme Court Reporter* at the price listed on the Web site (\$4027.75). Her sales representative had price information that was consistent with this quote. However, when the billing was received, one invoice was for the quoted price, and another for an additional cost of \$915.27, to cover the interim volumes and advance sheets that would bring the set completely current. The librarian pointed out that this was 25% higher than the price listing on the Web would lead one to expect for a current set.

West immediately responded to this complaint by investigating the completeness and accuracy of all of the product listings in the West Group online store. Customer Service managers at West determined that the error was confined to this particular set, and probably resulted from the fact that the updating of this set is unique in West's product line. Within a couple of days, West made a correction to the Web site, expanding the product description to include current supplementation. The additional invoice charges Dorsey & Whitney received for current

Stephanie Edwards

*Roger Williams University
Bristol, Rhode Island*

supplementation were dropped, and the complete set was supplied at the price listed on the Web site.

Thanks are in order to Betsy Sandell at Dorsey & Whitney for bringing this error to our attention. We all have come to rely on publishers' Web sites to obtain the price and other information that influence what we purchase. Remember the old days when West declined to publish a price list and told everyone to contact their sales reps? We need to continue to insist on access to correct price information.

A recent posting by Robert Ryan (Librarian at Hill Farrer & Burrill in Los Angeles) took West to task for a sudden change in billing and shipping practices for Rutter Group products. Rutter is owned by West, but until recently, updates with that imprint were shipped with Rutter shipment notices. With no advance notice, Ryan received a Rutter update in September accompanied by a West shipment notice (although the Rutter account number was still clearly referenced). Julie Merriam at West explained that the stock of Rutter notices ran out, and West decided to print the shipment notices on West stock. However, after speaking with customers like Ryan, West is looking into ways of making the notices for the Rutter line stand out better for the convenience of Rutter customers.

Aspen System Upgrade

Keeping customers abreast of any changes in billing practice is essential to good customer service. In May 2000, a CRIVGram was issued to inform members of AALL that Aspen was beginning to implement its new system upgrade. According to the letter to law librarians from Aspen's Ernest Manzella, Jr. (quoted in the body of the CRIVGram), the conversion was to begin in late June (it was, however, slightly delayed, until early July) and was expected to take several months. At the time of this writing in September 2000, all of the pieces of the conversion process are not yet in place. Aspen has promised to keep the CRIV up to date on the status of this major project. In the meantime, there are a few important changes Aspen customers will begin to notice.

First and most importantly, **new account numbers have been assigned to every account with the conversion to the new system.** Your new account number will be evident in the upper right hand corner of the invoices you receive, and in the lower right hand side of statements you receive. During the transition period throughout the conversion, you will be able to

reference either the new account number or the old account number for all customer service and ordering functions. However, after the conversion to the new system is complete, Aspen will ask customers to use their new account numbers.

Customers concerned about duplicate accounts will need to note the new account numbers as well as how the names and addresses appear (some of the duplicate accounts result from slight variations in this information). Unfortunately, most duplicate accounts that existed before the conversion will continue to exist in the new system, unless you bring them to the attention of Aspen Customer Service and request a single account. You may e-mail this information to Judith McRee (Director of Customer Service, Judith.McRee@aspenpubl.com). Include the following information if possible:

- Name of Account (firm or school and library name)
- Account numbers
- Correct *Ship To* and *Bill To* addresses
- Zip Code
- State clearly which accounts you wish to maintain and which you wish to eliminate
- Your name (or name of librarian contact), and e-mail address so that this information may be confirmed.

Invoices with a new format and look are being mailed for all standing order shipments and new orders shipped since July 2000. The account number, invoice number, purchase order number, and date of the invoice appear in the upper right hand corner of the invoice. The new format allows for a slightly expanded description of the product. New statements are also being sent out for all accounts. According to Aspen, credits and any open invoices will be automatically transferred to the new account. If customers used purchase order numbers at the time of order, those numbers will appear on invoices and statements.

The remittance address (Aspen's post office box in Baltimore, Maryland) is clearly noted on invoices and statements. If you have other, previous addresses for Aspen payments in your system, you should update your records to show that the Baltimore post office box is the correct address to use. Notify your accounting department also so that it will also have this information.

The CRIV will publish further information about Aspen's new system as it becomes available.

BNA Site Visit

Frosty Owen

*Hunton & Williams
Richmond, Virginia*

Roles reversed! BNA representatives Pat Swords (Vice President, Sales and Marketing), Charlotte Kuene (Market Manager, Legal Products), Richard Cornfield (Executive Director, Legal Publishing Group), and Kammie Hedges (Director, Library Relations) visited Hunton & Williams and the Virginia State Law Library on June 5, 2000.

The idea of having executives from a publishing company go on a site visit to a couple of libraries was discussed by CRIV members earlier this year, and after some discussion, members approved the plan for implementation. CRIV members felt that this type of visit would benefit both publishers and AALL members. It benefits publishers by allowing them to see how their products are processed and used in actual law libraries, and it provides AALL members with the rare opportunity to interact directly with the publisher's decision makers. Further, smaller or less funded libraries, the ones that may not be able to send a librarian to AALL, have an equal opportunity to participate in this type of site visit. With these goals in mind, CRIV member Frosty Owen and BNA's Kammie Hedges planned a day that proved to be very successful for both the publisher and librarians.

In past site visits, the CRIV has solicited questions and complaints from AALL members prior to the actual visit. These questions are organized by topic, and are sent to the publisher (stripped of identifying information, of course) in advance. CRIV members use the questions to guide discussions at the publisher's site. As the roles were reversed this time, the CRIV asked BNA to collect questions from its staff. The questions were forwarded to the CRIV, which worked with Donna Bausch (Virginia Association of Law Libraries), to distribute these questions to VALL members. The questions would be presented at a luncheon panel discussion to which all VALL members were welcome.

For this initial effort, the CRIV chose two widely differing libraries, so that BNA could fully experience the different challenges libraries face. One, Hunton & Williams, represented large for-profit firm libraries, and the other, the Virginia State Law Library, represented the more "cash-strapped, technology challenged" government libraries. The day started off with the Hunton & Williams library staff hosting a breakfast for BNA executives. Introductions were made by the library and IT staff. A roundtable discussion ensued with library staff, IT staff, and BNA representatives about how current BNA products were used and what future developments would interest the library. The two-hour discussion centered around cost of products, portal technology, Internet usage, CD-ROM technology, and intranets.

Twenty VALL members from around the state joined BNA executives for lunch and participated in an active discussion of a wide range of issues affecting various types of libraries. Some of the issues discussed included the different challenges faced by different categories of libraries; BNA's commitment level to maintain print resources; the retention of both print and electronic documents for archival purposes; and future costs. While no definite conclusions were reached, VALL librarians felt that this open discussion started a valuable dialogue that will continue for years to come.

The afternoon was spent with Gail Warren (State Law Librarian) and her staff discussing the challenges faced by publicly funded libraries with a varied constituency.

The CRIV would like to extend its thanks to Donna Bausch, Gail Warren, members of VALL, and BNA for their willingness to participate in this new effort.

Jobbers 101

Rebecca Lutkenhaus

*Drake University
Law Library
Des Moines, Iowa*

Acquisitions and serials staff today are faced with escalating workloads. Selecting, ordering, claiming, reconciling invoices, and general troubleshooting consume large amounts of time and resources. Luckily, there are jobbers and vendors available who offer services that can relieve some of the pressure by managing these tasks for libraries.

A jobber or vendor purchases a quantity of books, media, or periodicals from various publishers at discounted prices, and then resells these materials to libraries and information centers. Generally, libraries can obtain the same materials at a lower price by ordering directly from a publisher rather than through a jobber, but using a jobber offers advantages that can more than offset the higher cost.

When using a jobber, a library can submit all or most of its orders to the jobber rather than having to submit individual

orders to each publisher. The library can also submit claims to the jobber, who then contacts the individual publishers to follow up on the orders. Most jobbers even have tracking systems to monitor the progress of orders, and periodically notify libraries of their status. Having a jobber handle communications with publishers can save libraries significant staff time and effort.

Depending on the jobber's scope, it may be necessary to use multiple jobbers to satisfy all of your procurement needs. Jobbers may be subscription agents, offer continuation services, offer automated monographic ordering services, specialize in multimedia, or offer a variety of other services. Most offer a combination of services, and some may also publish their own original titles in addition to serving as a vendor of titles for other publishers.

The following is a sampling of jobbers that specialize in serving libraries in North America. For more information about any of the services, access the jobber's Web site. There are many more jobbers that may offer just the specialized service that you require. A helpful listing of jobbers and vendors is provided by AcqWeb's *Directory of Publishers and Vendors* (<http://acqWeb.library.vanderbilt.edu/acqWeb/pubr/vendor.html>). For jobbers offering unique or specialized services, this site provides a brief annotation summarizing the jobber's primary focus.

If you are new to jobbers and the jargon associated with the services they provide, a good introduction to what jobbers are and what they do is provided by G. Edward Evans in *Developing Library and Information Center Collections*, 3rd ed., published by Libraries Unlimited, Inc. This text also offers explanations of the various plans and services that jobbers offer.

Ambassador Book Service (<http://www.absbook.com>) boasts a database of 2.1 million book titles and 9500 video titles that is searchable through its Web site. Its Periodica service offers customized journal subscription services. It supplies book titles from select foreign countries in addition to North American titles, and maintains an inventory of 40,000 volumes. It provides titles from all American and Canadian publishers, including government agencies, university presses, societies, and non-profit organizations. Through its continuations/standing order service, it supplies monographic series, annuals, yearbooks, and conference proceedings.

Bernan Press (<http://www.bernan.com>) is a well-known publisher of reference publications. In addition, it distributes titles on behalf of a variety of publishers. The publishers it represents are primarily foreign and domestic government agencies or international organizations. A complete listing of the publishers it distributes for is available at its Web site.

Blackwell's Book Services (<http://www.blackwell.com>) handles standing orders for series titles and firm orders for books published or distributed in North America. Blackwell's also offers approval plans, a new titles announcement service, and book processing services. It provides searchable bibliographic databases through its Web site to assist libraries in locating information. It also maintains a government documents department for customers who do not maintain GPO accounts.

Coutts Library Services (<http://www.coutts-ls.com>) can provide any in-print book, video, A/V title, or CD-ROM available to wholesalers in the U.S., U.K., or Canada. It currently provides more than 23,000 titles through its continuations service. In addition to continuations/standing orders, it offers firm order plans, approval plans, and a new title notification service. It also offers cataloging and provides customers with a Web-accessible bibliographic database.

EBSCO Information Services (<http://www-us.ebsco.com/home/default.asp>) has been providing serials management services to libraries for more than 50 years. It provides searching, ordering, claiming, and collection development support. Its EBSCO Online product provides access to thousands of e-journals through a single interface. It also provides CD-ROM and Web access to full text databases. EBSCO offers specialized services to law libraries, corporate and special libraries, and government agencies.

Faxon (<http://www.faxon.com>), like EBSCO, offers services handling all aspects of serials acquisition and management. Some of its key features include consolidated invoicing and renewal, identification of electronic resource alternatives, provision of serials data, price projections, and customized reports.

Gaunt (<http://www.gaunt.com>) is a distributor for many non-American English language periodicals and publishers in addition to providing reprinted titles. It has exclusive and non-exclusive distribution rights for a variety of legal publishers in Europe and Australia. A list of publishers and periodicals for which it has exclusive distribution rights is on its Web site.

William S. Hein & Co. (<http://www.wshein.com>) specializes in providing services to law libraries. It provides a large variety of services including reprints, subscriptions, continuations, and government documents. It is also a publisher in its own right, and recently purchased Fred B. Rothman & Co. It offers standing order services for books, treatises, and serials, and current service to texts, treatises, serials, state reports, and state codes in all media. It is the largest distributor of legal periodicals with exclusive reprint and back stock rights to 500 law reviews and journals.

Midwest Library Services (<http://www.midwestls.com>) provides books from more than 20,000 U.S., Canadian, and U.K. publishers annually, including university and small presses, reprinters, institutes, and non-profit organizations. It offers standing order services for series and continuations from U.S. publishers, but does not supply magazines, journals, or looseleaf updating. It offers Web-based notification and selection through its InterAcq system.

Yankee Book Peddler, Inc. (<http://www.ybp.com/index.htm>) was recently acquired by Baker & Taylor, another well-known jobber. YBP offers firm order plans, approval plans, slip plans, and continuations services to libraries. It has developed GOBI, an online interactive bibliographic information service providing access to nearly two million titles. YBP also offers a variety of processing and cataloging services to libraries.

Selected CRIV Member Profiles

Why do AALL members volunteer for the CRIV? What do they hope to accomplish? That's what we wanted to know when we distributed a little survey recently. We are publishing some of the results to help you understand why we do what we do, and to demonstrate the expertise members bring to the Committee.

Rebecca Lutkenhaus, Member 2000–2002

I have been the Acquisitions Librarian at Drake University Law Library for nearly two years. In that capacity, I communicate with publishers to order materials and rectify problems. This is the only professional library position that I have had, so I am definitely still learning.

My biggest pet peeve is when customer service representatives do not follow through on requests. I also think publishers need to continue to make it easier for libraries to communicate with them (through special librarian phone lines, and better Web forms that are actually read by someone at the publishing company who will respond to the sender, etc.).

Since my position involves a great deal of interaction with publishers, I felt that participating in the CRIV would enable me to learn more about publishers' policies and organizational structure. I also wanted to assist in improving communication and correcting problems with publishers.

Anne Myers, Member 1999–2001, CRIVPage Webmaster

I have been a tech services librarian for almost 23 years, beginning in general libraries as a Spanish cataloger. I have been in law libraries for 20 years, first as a cataloger (University of Virginia) and then head of tech services (University of Maine and Boston University). My contact with publishers covers new orders, returns, billing, serials receipts, new editions, notification, approval plans, and electronic resources sales and licensing (not necessarily in that order). I work with publishers primarily when things have reached a problem stage for my staff, but I am the point person for electronic titles.

What are your pet peeves when it comes to publishers?

Communication black holes. Staff retention problems and/or reorganization so that we end up working with four account reps in a year, usually without notification. Automatic backorder of titles because of holds on our account, because the university doesn't pay within 30 days (duh).

Inflexibility in billing, shipping, notification options. Inability (or the appearance thereof) of keeping up with technology (e.g., electronic invoicing, ordering and claiming, IP addressing). Difficulty in finding out prices.

Why did you volunteer to join the CRIV?

I have seen the CRIV be an active player in keeping relations between librarians and vendors on an even keel as everything around them was in turmoil. That's good for us; it's good for

business; and it's good for AALL. As an experienced tech services librarian with good contacts, I think I can see above my own frustrations and issues with vendors to work on improving communication and relations.

The CRIV has done a great job at reacting to problems and complaints made by members. What I think could be improved is more pro-active work in addressing issues before there are big complaints. I'm seeing the beginnings of this with site visits and in-depth dialog by senior people with the CRIV on issues, best practices, future trends, etc. But there could be more.

Stephanie Edwards, Member 1999–2001, Mediation Subcommittee Chair

I have been involved with Acquisitions and Serials Management since 1987, first as a Bibliographic Specialist in Acquisitions at Penn's Biddle Law Library for seven years, then as Acquisitions Librarian at Roger Williams University School of Law for five years. In these positions, I served as the library's primary liaison with publishers and vendors, and the in-house "problem solver" for order, check-in, routing, and invoice problems. Since 1999, I have been the Collection Services Librarian at Roger Williams. Wearing this hat, I supervise but no longer deal directly with day-to-day acquisitions and serials matters. Because I am also in charge of collection development, I now deal more with pricing, packaging, and comparing value and service overall amongst the existing products and publishers.

What are your pet peeves when it comes to publishers?

LACK OF INFORMATION. I notice with dismay that it becomes more and more rare for a customer service rep to be able to access an actual copy of a title in order to answer a question about it. It is sometimes even hard for the c.s. rep to identify the item in question or find it in his or her database! This can significantly delay the delivery of service, whether for an order or resolution of a problem.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH PROBLEM RESOLUTION.

On a couple of occasions, we waited for errors to be corrected or assistance with account problems for months, sometimes through several billing cycles.

I strongly believe in the CRIV's mission, and have been interested in the Committee's work over the years. I volunteered to serve at a particular time when it seemed to me that relations between publishers and librarians seemed especially clouded by an atmosphere of mistrust and frustration.

I honestly feel that the CRIV has done a wonderful job in the challenging period of the past several years. The Toolkit, Webpage, "CRIV Notes," and CRIVGrams are great resources, and we are all getting feedback that they are being used. The CRIV has done a good job of keeping the AALL membership abreast of developments in legal publishing; let's also make sure that we find ways of conveying back to the publishers the impact these changes are having on libraries.

REQUEST FOR MEDIATION

AALL Committee on Relations with Information Vendors

For quicker response, visit CRIVPage on the WWW, where you can fill out and submit this form electronically:
<http://www.aallnet.org/committee/criv/mediation/requestform.htm>

Note: Prior to filing a request for mediation, individuals are expected to have made a reasonable attempt to resolve the issue at hand. To avoid duplication of effort, please provide a complete account of your efforts to communicate with the vendor. Copies of notes from conversations with the vendor would be helpful.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Library: _____

Address : _____

Telephone number: _____

Fax number: _____

Vendor : _____

Nature of problem: _____

When the problem was first reported: _____

Send this form and supporting documentation to :
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fax : 401-254-4539