

NOCALL News

Northern California Association of Law Libraries
A chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries



President's Message

Sarah Lin

Happy Holidays, NOCALLers! There's no sense denying that it's a bit of a struggle this year, but I hope that there are some bright spots in your personal and professional lives.

Since September, I've continued to work on implementing our Black Lives Matter Statement action items. We stand ready to donate to BLL-SISs education grant, once it is up and running. The BLL Education co-chairs have this on their agenda and will let us know as soon as they're ready to accept our donation. That will be our 3rd and final donation.

Our Student Trustee, Stacy McGee Thomas, was selected in late September and we're delighted to have her on board. Please consider connecting with Stacy on LinkedIn or reaching out to welcome her via email. Collectively we have a broad range of experiences that I'm sure would be beneficial for her to hear about.

We adopted a Code of Conduct, available on our website: <https://nocall.org/about/the-nocall-code-of-conduct/>. Thank you to the Board members for their thoughtful contributions and to our webmaster, Eli Edwards, for getting it up on the website. This is a way for us to show our commitment to being a welcoming organization for everyone!

Another welcoming action the Board made recently was to offer a discount on our Active membership for paraprofessionals/library technicians, so they need only pay \$10. If you know of someone who would benefit from joining NOCALL, please share the word! We felt this was important because we are a library organization, not just a librarian organization, and paraprofessional positions so rarely offer avenues for professional development.

Lastly, at our January Business Meeting we will vote on a resolution to transform our BLM Statement into a resolution that offers more long-term adherence to those principles by making them a part of our guiding practices & principles and keep us accountable after the current Board has moved on.

I hope many of you were able to attend our COVID-related webinars in November and looking forward to seeing you at our January Business Meeting, currently set for January 27th, 2021. Wishing you health, mental & physical, as we finish 2020 and look forward to 2021!

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HEADNOTES FROM HOLLY

Holly Riccio

CONCEPT COMPANION... I recently bought a set of [Concept Companion](#) cards, the brainchild of a former boss and mentor, and am delighting in working my way through the box of 88 concepts that span a variety of fields of study. I was working with their creator when he was still brainstorming and crowdsourcing them, and I recall contributing a few ideas at that stage. Not only can the cards be used to explore and learn new concepts, but the creator suggests also using them as part of any brainstorming process, to aide in generating new ways to approach and address a problem. This month's column will shine a light on a few of the concepts, and how they might apply to our world, or why they struck me as particularly relevant.

ZEITGARNIK EFFECT... This is the concept that people remember interrupted tasks better than completed tasks, since the mere process of the interruption and restarting of the task creates a tension that boosts retention. On the surface, this makes me think I should be remembering a lot more about a lot of things, since there are many days that seem like nothing but a string of interrupted tasks. I am not sure the concept applies if the interruptions are not self-imposed, but it is a good reminder that, overall, it behooves us to occasionally interrupt whatever we are doing with some other activity or break. It's good for our bodies, and concurrently good for our minds.

POLANYI'S PARADOX... This refers to the theory that much of what we know is very difficult to explain in words, and even beyond our explicit understanding, or as philosopher Michael Polanyi put it, "...we know

more than we can tell." I have been working on projects involving the creation of manuals, guides and other task/process documentation, and this paradox has certainly come into play, although I didn't have a name for it until now. This also has some parallels to the issue of using jargon in communications and forgetting to explain things in commonly understood terms. We, as legal information professionals, have a vocabulary all our own, and while it is perfectly acceptable—and effective—to use this language when we communicate with each other, we need to remember to translate it before communicating with our stakeholders and non-library colleagues.

NEMAWASHI... I am willing to guess that most people reading this column have had instances where they had a new project or initiative that they wanted to launch and, after developing the business case and other relevant data points, they have gone about gaining consensus through informal conversations with stakeholders, in an effort to gather their feedback and support. Does this sound familiar? Well, now you have a word for it: nemawashi. It comes from the Japanese and, literally translated, it means "going around the roots," referring to digging around tree roots, in preparation for transplant.

CONCEPT FOR 2020... In going through the concept cards, it got me to thinking about this year, and whether there are one or two overarching concepts that encapsulate this year. The obvious one, on the surface, is Murphy's Law, which states that anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. Couple that with the Robert Frost quote that says "...the afternoon knows what the morning never suspected," and that's 2020 for you in a nutshell.

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PROFESSIONAL READING IN REVIEW

Elisabeth McKechnie and Kristin Brandt,
U.C. Davis Law Library

“Balancing Act: Workflow Apps for Avoiding Bandwidth Overload,” by Geraldine Kalim and Rachel Evans, *Computers in Libraries*, Oct 2020, Vol. 40 Issue 7, pp. 4-8.

Remote work has forced many of us to rely more heavily on communication and workflow tools. This article, written by two law librarians, discusses tools for interacting and collaborating while teleworking. The authors identify best uses and “love factors” for each tool and describe how tools are currently used in their library. For example, the authors love Slack because it “frees up email” and “brings the water cooler online,” creating a sense of community which sets it apart from other tools. I especially appreciated the authors’ sidebar with helpful mantras for managing work and life.

“Caring for our Colleagues: Wellness and Support Strategies for Remote Library Teams,” by Cynthia Hudson-Vitale and Rebecca Miller Waltz, *College & Research Libraries News*, November 2020, pp. 494-497, retrieved from <https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/24688>.

How are your colleagues doing? Many individuals are experiencing uncertainty, stress, and isolation due to the current health crisis and necessity of remote work. This article identifies ideas and tips for promoting well-being in six areas: physical, emotional, spiritual, professional, social, and mental. Some of the tips are very practical. The authors suggest limiting virtual meetings to 45 minutes, committing to once-a-week “meeting-free” days, establishing spaces for non-work conversations, and scheduling virtual coloring sessions. This article is a useful resource for teams, but also for those of us who would like to incorporate wellness into our own daily lives.

“Stopping Text From Being Copied-Yellow Dots and the EURion Constellation,” by Jill Hurst-Wahl, Hurst Associates, Ltd., retrieved from <https://hurstassociates.blogspot.com>

This article discusses something I was completely unaware of yet is very important to an academic librarian: yellow dots. If you copy documents for use by others, you may find to your dismay that pages of the photocopy are missing. The EURion Constellation is a series of small yellow dots, invisible to the naked eye, which signal a copier to stop copying. Created to prevent counterfeiting bills, it is now used by some publishers to prevent book pages from being copied, whether or not the item is fair use. Worse yet, your office printer may be adding the dots to a document which can be traced back to your printer. The article gives a set of links for further information on the EURion Constellation and how it is being used.

“How to Elevate Your Presence in a Virtual Meeting,” by Joel Schwartzberg, *Harvard Business Review*, April 8, 2020, retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-elevate-your-presence-in-a-virtual-meeting>

In a Zoom world, most business and library communications are being held online. This handy article gives tips and tricks on how to maximize your presence when attending meetings or teaching online. The article gives six tips to keep your “impact actual when your presence is virtual”. For example, talk to the camera, not to the faces on the screen. Keep your voice louder than usual to convey credibility. Frame yourself in the shot so that your head isn’t cut off and be mindful of your background. We all want to convey our best selves when communicating online. The simple tips given here are easy to understand and can be utilized by any of us.

GRACE LO

Robert Crown Law Library, Stanford Law School

How did you choose law librarianship as a career?

I'm working as a reference librarian in a law school now. When I was a law student, I already kinda figured that I would eventually end up in academia in some capacity but I really wanted "real-world" lawyering experience first. I accepted a job offer as a corporate finance lawyer in Hong Kong, and stayed in that job for five years. There were a lot of positives about that job - living in Hong Kong was an adventure, my co-workers and bosses were great, and of course, big law pay was nice. But a few years in, I realized I didn't really want to make this my long-term career and took stock of what I really enjoyed about the actual work. It pretty much boiled down to learning and researching about new businesses and different industries. Most everything else about the work - negotiations, contract drafting, client management, etc., I pretty much felt indifferent to actively averse. So it made sense to look for a new job where researching would be the bulk of my job.

Back in law school, I had talked a lot with my classmates about other jobs that people do with a law degree. One of my friends mentioned she had had a chat with a reference librarian about law librarianship, and it popped back in mind when I was looking for a career change those several years later. I did some digging on my own about what a law librarianship career would be and what would I need to do to become a law librarian. I found the University of Washington's Law Librarianship MLIS program, which seemed like a perfect fit for what I wanted - a one-year program for students who already had a JD and were interested in law librarianship. Being in the UW MLIS program really solidified my decision to become a law librarian. I really enjoyed learning about what was actually needed to be a librarian and being able to do some of that work at Gallagher. The faculty at UW were very knowledgeable and informative about this career path, and my classmates were supportive and fantastic people. I was fortunate enough that this opening at Stanford Law Library opened up just as I was finishing my MLIS degree and I got the job - it's been a great experience so far!

If money was not an issue, what new library service would you offer your patrons (lawyers, students, the public etc.)?

Ebooks, ebooks, ebooks. Digital versions of everything. Especially right now with the pandemic, access to our physical collection is severely limited, even to librarians. A lot of students had been relying on the library's print versions of textbooks and study aids. It's incredibly frustrating to tell them that they can't access something right now that they would normally be able to walk into the library and use whenever they wanted. Being able to provide digital access to those materials would be amazing.

If you were not working as a law librarian, what would you most likely be doing?

When I was thinking about my career change away from big law, I briefly thought of leaving law behind completely and opening up a board game café. Board game cafés were probably my biggest stress reliever when I was living in Hong Kong. I had a little daydream of coming back to the States and opening up a shop stuffed full with board games that would serve bubble tea and snacks on the side. Though of course, in reality, running a place like that would probably leave little time to actually play the games myself, so that's probably going to remain a daydream. A more likely answer is that if I wasn't a law librarian, I probably would have looked for work as a researcher for a policy thinktank or NGO, or stayed a lawyer, but that's not as fun of an answer.

What was the last book you read that you really enjoyed and why?

The Mark Inside, by Amy Reading. I finished around the beginning of summer, so it's been a few months since I've done any purely fun, leisure reading. It's about the true story of J. Frank Norfleet, a man who got conned and took revenge by out-conning his con artists. I love a good heist story, and this is a really fascinating analysis of Norfleet's autobiographical account of events, which includes wry notes about his credibility, along with interesting side stories about the history of fraud and grift in America. The book is born from the author's dissertation, and the academic tone still lingers, but the content is thoroughly engaging and lends itself well to narrative storytelling.

COMMITTEE CORNER COMMUNICATIONS CLUSTER

Jocelyn Stillwell

Our "Access to Legal Information" Chair, Tayrn Marks at Stanford, invites you to join her committee:

The Access to Legal Information Committee is a retooled new committee, with the exciting goal of figuring out how NOCALL can support access to legal information across Northern California (and maybe beyond!), and then implementing those ideas (we have a few already, so please join to help us get started on them!). The only committee member right now is me and I definitely need help -- please contact me (tlmarks@stanford.edu) if you'd like to join! This is your opportunity to be part of creating this committee and supporting access to legal information -- the only skill you need is enthusiasm for this initiative! Time commitment is flexible (it is still 2020 . . .) and we'll take any time you have to offer.

And the PR Committee Chair, Courtney Nguyen from the SF County Law Library, has this information on her committee:

The PR Committee promotes NOCALL and its members to each other and to the law library community at large at events such as the Fall Workshop, Spring Institute, and AALL Annual Meeting. The Committee also handles NOCALL's social media. New Members are always welcome! We'd especially love help from NOCALLers who are familiar with social media. The time commitment is very flexible! Our busy periods are around specific events such as the Spring Institute and the AALL Annual Meetings.

RYAN VANDENBROECK

Baker Mackenzie

How did you choose law librarianship as a career?

I had worked in market research - specifically internet surveys - for about five years after college. Over time, it became increasingly clear to me that it wasn't the career for me ... particularly due to that pesky issue of not having a statistics background. By the time I recognized that my brief career as a market researcher was winding down, I sought out a new opportunity that allowed me to still wear my research hat. I flirted with the idea of law school quite seriously but, deep down, I knew that library work was where my future lie. Of course, there was still the option of combining the library work with legal work, which was very intriguing to me. A great friend was already working as a law firm librarian so I sought out his advice on getting into the field, and, down the line, how to succeed in the field. While working on my MLIS at San Jose State, I worked in an archive but soon jumped on an opportunity to work as a contractor library technician in the Hewlett Packard law library. After completing my MLIS, I continued my part-time work at HP but also worked part-time as a technician at Gunderson Dettmer for a few months. Shortly thereafter, I started my first role as a Research Librarian at Baker McKenzie, where I've been ever since. I've held three different roles at Baker McKenzie - Research Librarian, then Resources Librarian, and now a Research Supervisor.

Quick note: as of just-before-press time, I have accepted a new role with Troutman Pepper and will be starting there in early December. I look forward to the new opportunity!

If you were not working as a law librarian, what would you most likely be doing?

I was an ancient history major in college and very much considered a career as a history academic or perhaps in archaeology or museum work. The adventure of working in a museum, at an archaeological dig, or a great university still sounds enticing sometimes. But I'm very happy being able to work with fantastic lawyers, librarians, and others in a positive environment... and I get to stay in the Bay Area, where I've lived my whole life.

What do you consider the perfect meal?

I like to think that I'm as easy-going an eater as there is - there's very little that I'll turn down. But my favorites include anything I've cooked on the charcoal grill, a good piece of fish, a nice steak, garlic crab... or even pizza or Taco Bell!

What was the last book you read that you really enjoyed and why?

Most books I read are about either music or baseball (go Giants!). But I used to regularly read historical fiction. It had been several years since I had read a novel but, on my last vacation, I started Ken Follett's *A Column of Fire*, his most recent book in the Kingsbridge series. I'd recommend this series (starting with *Pillars of the Earth*) to anyone who enjoys historical fiction.

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