

NOCALL News

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sarah Lin

Well friends, we made it past the pandemic one-year mark and I hope there's a ray of hope for better days in each of your lives. This time last year we had cancelled our Spring Institute, so I'm definitely thrilled that we'll get to have an event this year. Thanks to the hard work of VP Delia Montesinos, we'll gather virtually on April 21-22 & 28-29 for professional development and Zoom togetherness. After the Spring Institute in April, we'll meet virtually on May 19th for our May Business Meeting. Look for registration information soon!

In this issue's column I wanted to share some of what I learned from attending a recent digital accessibility conference: axe-con 2021 (<https://www.deque.com/axe-con/>). I got interested in web accessibility after RStudio had a blind intern last summer. Our intern, JooYoung Seo, was with us to work on accessibility in our software products, but he also gave a quick review of our internal systems that really wasn't flattering (you can view his 2021 studio::global conference talk at <https://rstudio.com/resources/rstudioglobal-2021/accessible-data-science-beyond-visual-models-non-visual-interactions-with-r-and-rstudio-packages/>). I think I must have assumed that online materials were just naturally accessible and hadn't given it further thought, which was an unflattering realization. But that's ok; when you realize you've done the wrong thing, what matters is what you do with that knowledge. When a librarian in my SLA-UX community mentioned that the company Deque Systems (pronounced D-Q) was having a free digital accessibility conference, I asked my boss for two days off to attend.

Speaking to the tendency of designers (of all kinds) to ignore accessibility, keynote speaker Vint Cerf argued that "in the absence of experience, it's hard to rely on intuition." It's not a great excuse, but it goes a long way toward understanding why accessibility isn't top of mind for a lot of us. The only problem is that inclusion isn't something to tack on toward the end of a project. George Dei reminds us that, "[I]nclusion is not bringing people into what already exists — it is making a new space, a better space for everyone."

One of the speakers I most enjoyed was attorney and disability rights advocate Haben Girma. Haben was the first deaf-blind person to graduate from Harvard Law School, which got me thinking that accessibility is also an

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access to legal information issue. We have to make sure people have the ability to reach a source of legal information, but we also need to make sure they can consume & act upon the information they receive. It was cool to see the braille computer Haben uses, and the rest of the conference reminded me that there are many other considerations to also keep in mind in order to help those with other disabilities. That people with a vision impairment greatly outnumber the blind means that we want to be aware of colors, contrast, animation, and fonts. Users with cognitive disabilities might also have issues with animation and fonts, as well as reading level (I had to agree with the speaker who reminded me that in writing, we often set out to display our intelligence, rather than making sure our audience can understand).

Two accessibility issues that affect all of us are images and PDFs (additional issues I'd never spared a thought for until this conference). For images, people who can't perceive them visually need a description, and the SVG file format enables markup to add text to images so that screen readers can communicate what the image is about (<https://www.deque.com/blog/creating-accessible-svgs>). This is particularly consequential if the image is being used to communicate information, rather than being a decorative element. PDFs can have a similar problem, and can come across as images that screen readers cannot access (<https://accessibility.psu.edu/pdf/pdfissues/>).

I have pages and pages of notes from my two days of conference and the start of a very long list of actions to take at work to make sure our internal and external content is accessible. I hope the examples I've shared make you want to read Haben's book and investigate accessibility at your institutions. Whether temporary, situational, or permanent, all of us will experience accessibility issues during our lifetimes!

NOCALL News

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HEADNOTES FROM HOLLY

Holly Riccio

ONE YEAR MARK... This past month marked one year of working remote—the new normal, the new next, the new new, the new now. Regardless of what you call it, it's been a roller coaster ride of a year, where everyone had an unlimited ride pass. While it means not being able to have in person chapter events, the silver lining is that it has opened up access to other chapter programming that in years past would have been unavailable and unknown to many. I have not only learned so much from colleagues across the nation, but also forged new professional connections and refreshed existing ones. Seeing colleagues in a small Zoom square on my laptop has been a reminder more than once that I should reconnect with them on some work initiative or professional volunteer activity.

MAKING NEW FRIENDS... I recently started attending the Ari Kaplan Virtual Lunch (which since it is lunch East coast time, is more like a virtual breakfast for me). I had been made aware of it after hearing Ari speak as the PLLIP Summit keynote last summer, and I kept meaning to join in, but never got around to it. I finally attended and am now trying to make it a regular habit, barring other conflicts or bad hair days. Sometimes it takes moving out of our regular routine and comfort zone to get re-energized and excited again. Having new colleagues in small Zoom squares on my laptop has done just that for me. No shade or disrespect to any of the virtual get-togethers and brown bag meetings I've been participating in regularly since the pandemic, but new faces are always good, especially nowadays.

SURPRISE, YOU'RE PRESENTING... When the SEAALL chapter sent out a call for program submissions for their virtual Annual Meeting, I decided to resurrect a program idea with a fellow law librarian and SEAALL member. We submitted our program proposal (on the importance of storytelling in leadership) last year and when I didn't hear anything back, I assumed the program had not been accepted. Fast forward to the first week of March, when I was on an AALL committee call with a different fellow law librarian and SEAALL

member, who casually said to me as our Zoom meeting was finishing up that she was looking forward to my program at SEAALL in two weeks. I think the silence and "deer in headlights" look on my face said it all—I did not know the program had been accepted and that we were presenting it in two weeks' time. Long story short, my co-presenter and I channeled our inner Tim Gunn and had a true law librarian "Make It Work" moment, sans fabric and models. One of the things we told program attendees was to mine their own experiences for great stories—who knew that this program would give me one of my very own that I am sure I will be using for years to come?

PROFESSIONAL READING IN REVIEW

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

"Tarnished Legacies: Presidential Libraries Grapple with the Histories of their Subjects," by Lara Ewen, *American Libraries*, January/February 2021, pages 28-31. Retrieved from <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/magazine/issues/january-february-2021/>

Generally, when thinking of presidential libraries, you expect it to be a comprehensive, unbiased source for archival information about that president. Well, yes and no. Some presidential libraries, those administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) are more memorials to those presidents than dedicated to awarts and all presentation. They are not centers for scholarship and do not address racism, for example. Any inclination the libraries may have to address historic racism was impeded by an executive order issued by then-President Trump in September 2020 titled "Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping". Other, non-NARA presidential libraries may be affected by collection directives or pressure from the president's descendants or the library's own trustees. Telling all the truth can negatively affect a library. For example, in 2015 some donors stopped contributing when it was discovered that President Woodrow Wilson, while

university president at Princeton, refused Black students admission. These libraries walk a tightrope between an idealized presentation and putting out use-neutral facts. The Wilson Library has since recovered and is updating its exhibitions to reflect a full and balanced legacy. Another example of a presidential library that got it right is the Jefferson Library at Monticello. A recent exhibit discussed Sally Hemings and her role as Jefferson's enslaved mistress with the discovery of her rooms at the mansion. An informative and interesting article.

"Increasing Student Attendance at Library Workshops: What the Data Tells Us," by Richelle L. Witherspoon and Philip O.L. Taber, *College & Research Libraries*, Vol. 82, No. 1, pages 113-128, 2021. Retrieved from <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/24756/32579>

How can we improve attendance at library programs? The authors sought to answer this question in a study examining over 200 programs offered by academic libraries in the U.S. and Canada. Programs were evaluated on a number of factors frequently attributed to success, such as time, duration, faculty buy-in, and incentives. Only four factors were significant in boosting attendance: topic, session location, advertising, and target audience. Course/assignment-specific programs and other specialized skills topics were most popular. In-library workshops were less successful than workshops hosted outside the library. "Push" advertising, or direct emails and in-class announcements, brought in more attendees than more passive notices, such as social media posts. Workshops targeting specific groups were more successful than those aimed at the general student population. Overall, the results suggest that students respond to topics of immediate relevance to them, brought to their spaces, and advertised directly to them.

"Characteristics Influencing Academic Librarians' Political Skills: Keys to Organizational Effectiveness and Career Success" by Kathy M. Irwin, *Journal of Library Administration*, Vol. 61, No. 2, pages 207-230, 2021.

Political skill is necessary to influence others and academic librarians lack it. The author surveyed 274 academic librarians to determine their ratings

via the Political Skills Inventory. The article goes into great detail in describing what factors seem to increase political skill ability, such as race, supervisory role, experience and age. Length of tenure on the job seemed to track with political skills best. With each year of service, librarians have greater opportunities to work with a wide range of people, develop expertise and understand the organization better. However, to develop these skills the librarian must actively reflect on their experience and work to develop these skills throughout their careers. Other methods of learning like mentoring, drama-based training and coaching are also discussed in the literature review. Overall, it is recommended academic librarians work harder to develop political skills to enable them to deal with the rapid changes occurring in the industry.

"A Call to Action for Librarians: Countering Conspiracy Theories in the Age of QAnon," by Stephanie Beene and Katie Greer, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, vol. 47, (2021) 102292

Given the recent occurrences in Washington DC on January 6, 2021, the existence of pervasive misinformation, disinformation and outright lies has become apparent to information professionals. This article gives a basic introduction to QAnon, one of the leading purveyors of wild conspiracy theories, how it's organized and who "Q" may be. In today's climate, it behooves librarians to become teachers of fact-checking and critical thinking. The article goes on to discuss how conspiracy thinking occurs and how to counter it. Teaching critical thinking is key when conducting bibliographic instruction. When interacting with those immersed in conspiracy theories, it is advised that, instead of offering contrary information, empathetic listening and careful language will be more effective. Monitor your vocabulary, body language and vocal tone when interacting and avoid escalation. Those with less education and analytical thinking are more likely to believe unfounded conspiracy theories. "In place of logical and probabilistic reasoning, conspiracy theorists tend toward magical thinking." Ultimately critical thinking must be taught and librarians are well-placed to do the teaching.

LEGAL TECH RECAP

Kristie Chamorro
UC Berkeley School of Law Library

Greetings! I'm excited about taking over this column as Delia Montesinos moves on to penning the President's Message in May.

Delia has done such an incredible job of keeping us all informed on the legal tech front. As the Instructional & Educational Technology Librarian at Berkeley Law, I need to keep up on legal technology developments - the *Legal Tech Recap* column has been one of my go-to resources.

I'm going to continue with Delia's format for the column, but I may mix it up with a few in-depth articles on specific legal tech issues that catch my eye. Please let me know if you spot any new legal tech tools or developments that you would like to see included in this column - any and all feedback is welcome!

BLOOMBERG LAW

Added the [In Focus: Remote Work](#) page to "help employers and practitioners navigate the myriad employment and labor law issues created by the exponential growth of the remote workforce during the pandemic." This new page includes reference materials, Chart Builders, Fast Answers, Practical Guidance, Trackers, and other filtered Bloomberg Law content.

Bloomberg Law also added merger agreement enhancements to its [Draft Analyzer](#) drafting workflow tool for transactional attorneys. Jean O'Grady reviews the new features in a [recent Dewey B Strategic post](#).

CASETEXT/REVEAL DATA

In the February episode of [Casetext's Modern Lawyer](#) podcast, the CEO of [Reveal Data](#) discusses his vision of the future of legal technology, a \$200 million investment from K1 Ventures, and why legal technology is attracting major investments.

GAVELYTICS

Rick Merrill, the founder and CEO of [Gavelytics](#), leads a product walk-through of Galvetytics 2.0 on the March [Artificial Lawyer TV](#) episode. Gavelytics also released a webinar, [Ready for Battle? Know Yourself, Your Competition, Your Judges & More](#), covering the new state trial court data and analytics features of Gavelytics 2.0.

ELSEVIER

On March 16, the University of California [announced](#) "a pioneering open access agreement with the world's largest scientific publisher, Elsevier, making significantly more of the University's research available to people worldwide - immediately and at no cost." Marta Margeta, the chair of the UC Academic Senate's Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication, [stated](#) that the agreement "is a boon for researchers, students, and all other members of the public who will be able to read, use and build upon UC's research and scholarly work. At all times, and especially now during a global health crisis, openly and rapidly sharing our research can and will save lives."

HEINONLINE

Provided a [March 2021 update](#) on material added to their new [States Constitutions Illustrated](#) database and a link to their new [State Constitutions Illustrated LibGuide](#).

KIRA

[Kira](#) is a machine learning tool that identifies, extracts and analyzes content in contracts and documents. A recent AALL Committee on Relations with Information Vendors (CRIV) blog post, Document Analytics in Academia, explains that Kira is offering a "Kira for Education" initiative to some academic community members. The post explains that contracts analytics companies don't typically target law schools, and points out that "it may be time to consider the best way to expose our students to these increasingly popular products."

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION

Announced that its August 2021 [ILTACON conference](#) will be a hybrid event, with both live-streamed programming and an in-person conference in Las Vegas.

LEXIS/LAW 360

[Expanded](#) its [Context](#) language analytics platform with the recent release of Context Attorney Analytics. This addition to the Context platform provides users with an understanding of their opponent's experience in particular practice areas and jurisdictions, as well as insights into their previous arguments and litigation strategies. Jean O'Grady described this new tool as a "[look inside your opponent's brain](#)" and Bob Ambrogi gives [an overview](#) of its features.

Law360 added a [Coronavirus Regulations: A State-by-State Review](#) with an interactive U.S. map (powered by LexisNexis State-Net). Users can click on any of the states or territories to view legislative, regulatory, and executive order information related to Coronavirus.

A recent [Geek in Review](#) episode featured Rachel Travers, Law360 Vice-President and General Manager, who discussed the launch of [Law360 Pulse](#) and updates to Law360 content.

LAW.COM RADAR

Jean O'Grady reported in a March [Dewey B Strategic post](#) that [ALM Law.com Radar](#) (which was previously branded as Legal Radar) was voted the best legal news product in the *What's Hot and What's Not* 2020-21 survey.

LEX MACHINA

[Released](#) its annual Patent Litigation Report with LexisNexis looking at trends in both federal district court and the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB). The 2021 report "focuses on 2020 and how it compared to other years given the changes caused by COVID-19."

VLEX

[Announced](#) agreements with the American Bar Association, Emerald Publishing and Wiley, which will enable vLex to provide new collections covering a wide range of practice areas and jurisdictions.

WESTLAW/THOMSON REUTERS

Emma Wood, Associate Librarian at UMass Law, wrote a recent guest post for the RIPS Law Librarian: [Perusing the News: A Review of Thomson Reuters' Westlaw Today](#). She highlights the pros and cons of using [Westlaw Today](#) for keeping current on legal topics in an academic setting.

WOLTERS KLUWER

A new partnership between [WK Legal & Regulatory U.S.](#) and [Courtroom Insight](#) will enable mutual subscribers to access enhanced labor arbitration research resources, including labor arbitrators' awards and biographies. A number of blogs picked up on this new relationship, including [Bob Abrogi](#) and [Jean O'Grady](#).

THINGS TO YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT

Recordings from a recent legal tech event hosted by Stanford Law School, [Legal Tech and the Future of Civil Justice](#), are available online. The sessions include *Legal Tech and Access to Justice* and *Access to Data as Access to Justice*.

[How-To Geek](#) explains how to use [Chrome's new "Live Caption" feature](#) to get live captions for any video or audio in Chrome.

[Krisp](#), is a noise cancelling app for Zoom and other conferencing apps, was recommended by a number of presenters at [ABA Techshow 2021](#). Krisp mutes background noise from both you and other participants, whether it is a barking dog, street traffic, or even keyboard clicks.

["I'm here live. I'm not a cat."](#) I think it is a safe bet that we've all seen this embarrassing Zoom moment by now. A recent [AALL Legal Innovation & Technology SIS post](#) provides tips for those who decide to give Zoom filters a try.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Hilary Hardcastle, NOCALL Secretary

In this final installment of the Committee Corner, we focus on the three committees that comprise the Recognition Cluster: Awards, Grants, and Memorials.

Awards

Jocelyn Stilwell-Tong leads the Awards Committee. This committee is always chaired by NOCALL's Past President, and it is great fun to be on! Because the Awards Committee focuses on celebrating the careers of our members (through our Award for Professional Achievement), and the people who have helped our profession (through our Award for Advocacy), it involves reading nice things about our colleagues and finding ways to honor them. The committee work involves soliciting nominations, reading them, and meeting once or twice in March or early April to talk about those nominations. The hard part is narrowing down the field, because we have such a talented community.

How can you help?

While this committee is fully staffed for 2021, we encourage you to consider volunteering for it in years to come! And in the meantime, you can always help by submitting nominations for deserving friends and colleagues.

Grants

Cathy Hardy and Sherry Takacs co-chair this committee. The Grants Committee has the wonderful job of giving away NOCALL's money to our much deserving membership! The committee solicits grant applications for events that meet NOCALL's pre-established criteria, reviews and evaluates the submitted applications, selects candidates, and notifies the recipients.

How can you help?

Apply for a NOCALL grant! Grants are not limited to NOCALL or AALL events, but can cover any

workshop, seminar, or conference whose topic is of importance to the law library field and professional development. To apply for a grant, use the revised application form on the NOCALL website and submit to grants@nocall.org for review.

Memorials

The Memorials Committee is co-chaired by Leslie Hesdorfer and Jane Metz. It was created with the goal of remembering and honoring NOCALL members and past members who have passed away. The committee generally notifies the membership of someone's passing via the listserv, collects memories for publication in the NOCALL News, and arranges for a donation by the association in memory of the colleague we have lost. When possible, we also share the NOCALL memories with the family of the person who has died.

How can you help?

You can help by notifying us when you become aware a NOCALL member or past member has died, and by taking a few moments to write your memories to share. And please let us know if you'd like to join our committee! We can be reached at memorials@nocall.org.

ANNE BERNARDO

Tulare County Public Law Library

How did you choose law librarianship as a career?

I'm sure the influence of my 3d and 6th grade classrooms being located in the schools' library may have had a bit to do with that (and being president of the library club), but law librarianship happened on my long and winding road of public service. It chose me. And it wasn't so much the law librarian's job duties (which of course I loved), but it was these benefits that swayed me over - Monday through Friday 8-5, no weekends, no early mornings or late nights - perfect for a mom with her second newborn. My two girls have grown up and moved away, but I've stayed here ever since. It's still a perfect career, always presenting me with new challenges and the chance to connect with the library world's smartest thinkers.

What's the best advice you've ever received working as a librarian?

Not during librarianship, but I've carried this advice with me and find it still applies because "It's all in the timing." Sometimes timing may come in the form of serendipity, and that may be due to some hard-earned work. But most of the time when I have a project to finish or an idea to bring to the table, I will first turn it every which way, measure our bandwidth (staffing, budget, partners), and then check in with my gut feelings. Only then can I determine if and when it will be moved forward. And I like to work on multiple projects at the same time. Multiple deadlines keep me from getting bogged down on any one matter. Maybe this is the same as spinning plates while riding a unicycle, but I see it more like hopscotch, and my momentum is to keep picking up goodies along the way with my eye on that last calendar square. Timing was definitely in play during the COVID-19 closure when I was working on reopening the law library, managing a modernization of the library's space, and providing remote services at the same time (gut). Adding in the bonus of a state grant award (serendipity), the library renovation was completed, new furnishings were configured for social distancing, and we reopened to the public under COVID guidance in November.

Who or what has had the greatest impact on your law librarian career?

Volunteerism. By taking on various roles in different types of library activities and nonprofit organizations, volunteering has helped teach me the leadership, patience, and humility needed to better serve the public. It has heightened my sensitivity to social and racial inequalities and has taken me back to my roots. Volunteering allows me to switch focus and keeps me on my continuing journey into realizing the kind of person I want to be.

Is there anything obscure that you know more than the average bear about?

Having served as a symphony manager for quite a few years, I know the inside workings of bringing an orchestra concert to the stage, be it classical, pops, ballet, outdoors in a national park, and internationally. I know about player egos, sound and lighting, donors and grants, volunteers, and the politics in the arts.

What would people be most surprised to learn about you?

I can't remember punch lines. You can tell me a joke and repeat it to me the next week and then again later, I will laugh every time because the punch line is always new to me. I'm sure there's a word for this.

What is your favorite legal book and why?

The late Judge Roderic Duncan's *Win Your Lawsuit*, Nolo, 2010. I had the fortune to meet Judge Duncan at a California Law Revision Commission hearing, what a true gentleman. His self-help book is easy to read, detailed enough and sets the right tone for a good outcome. It is so helpful for those representing themselves in court, and though it is now out of print, we still use it often in our law library telling everyone this is a great starting point.

MONICA WATKINS

Research & Information Operations Administrator,
Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

How did you choose working in a law firm library as your career?

I initially applied for a library position at the firm because I was looking for a change from my current library position at a pharmaceutical company. I hadn't given much thought to the library actually being a "law" library or even if it would be much different. The technical processes were similar. I think what sold me on the field was the overwhelming feeling of pride I felt working at Wilson Sonsini. Being part of a team whose work contributed to the legal staff's successes in even the most smallest ways, felt honorable. My entire 23 years of "law library" experience has been with the firm. I am proud to work for a firm that is not only successful but held in high regard throughout the legal industry.

What's the best advice you've ever received working in a law firm library?

Never be afraid of change. It's inevitable. Take initiative. Adapt and grow.

If you were not working in a law firm library, what would you most likely be doing?

Interior Decorating & Personal Shopper

Is there anything that most people don't know about you that you would like to share?

I've always wanted to start a nonprofit for underserved preteen girls. A program based on the importance of self-esteem and self-worth.

What's your idea of the perfect meal?

A homecooked meal shared with family and friends over silly jokes and lots of laughter.

2020-2021 NOCALL Officers and Committees

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