

# NOCALL News

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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As a child, I was fascinated by the 1976 film *Logan's Run*. For those of you who are unfamiliar, the story is set in the year 2274 in a hedonistic computer-run utopia in which, to maintain some sort of ecological and societal equilibrium, its citizens willingly submit to ritual suicide when they turn thirty. This is accomplished via something called "Carousel," a public spectacle in which masked tricenarians don red-and-white jumpsuits, float upward, [and ultimately explode](#) into a shower of white sparks, in what they believe will result in a "renewal." While I found the idea quite terrifying, the idea of stepping out of the way at age thirty also kind of . . . made sense? To an eight-year-old watching the film on TV, thirty was unfathomably old – why would anyone want to live that long, anyway?

Years later, as a professional librarian, I secretly wished a process like Carousel could exist, if only within the law librarian world: Why were all these elderly librarians [bogarting](#) the plum positions? Why couldn't they step aside for us young folks? Well, my father recently passed away (no condolences necessary – he was very excited to go!), and there is nothing like the death of a parent to focus attention on one's own age and mortality. Particularly when one works as an academic law librarian, and is thus required to interact with a never-ending, self-renewing crop of fresh-faced 25-year-old students, year in and year out. I am quite aware that I'm old enough to be a parent to most of these students (frankly, I'm only a few years out from hitting grandparent territory). And now that I have become one of those elderly librarians I once scorned, I plan on bogarting my position like no one has ever bogarted in the history of bogarting.

Perhaps I'm subconsciously taking a cue from our own [United States Congress](#), where the median House member is around fifty-eight years old, and the median Senator a downright geriatric (as [medically defined](#) – don't shoot the messenger!) sixty-five. Senator Dianne Feinstein rather famously and ferociously clung to her position until her ninetieth year, relinquishing her post only on account of death (and even then, one suspects, quite reluctantly). Likewise, eighty-four-year-old Representative Nancy Pelosi is seeking another term in 2024, which would put her, too, at a rickety ninety years old upon completion of said term. And let's not forget that the country is rapidly and unenthusiastically hurtling toward a presidential election in which the victor will end his term as either an eighty-two-year-old, or an eighty-six-year-old, should he survive the next four years. So, no, I don't feel especially guilty about entrenching myself in my current position until my desiccated corpse disintegrates upon contact with the Reference Desk.

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Besides, most of my inspirations are old, too! I am thinking here of seventy-one-year-old musician [Keiji Haino](#), who continues to put out new music at a dizzying pace. Or middle-aged noise rock troopers [Wolf Eyes](#), a psychonaut duo showing no signs of slowing down. Or 66-year-old artist [Raymond Pettibon](#). Or... I don't know... Paul Rudd? My point is: plenty of elderly people are still living useful, purposeful, and productive lives, and I plan to, as well. I'm not going anywhere, as long as I feel I still have something to offer the students at my institution (and as long as my paychecks keep clearing). To paraphrase a bumper sticker popular with Second Amendment enthusiasts: you can have my copy of the Bluebook when you pry it from my cold, dead hands. I am old, and I am a law librarian. And I make no apologies – I'm not ready for Carousel quite yet.

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## Professional Reading in Review

Refugio Acker-Ramirez and Kristin Brandt  
U.C. Davis Law Library

**“Relational & Collaborative: Librarian Leadership,”** by Mara Cota, *Journal of Academic Librarianship* (March 2024), vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 1-4.

This article discusses relational collaborative leadership that prioritizes interpersonal relationships and the value of learning. The author identifies four key modes that library leaders can use to anchor their leadership: investing in relationships to nurture a positive environment, communicating effectively, encouraging self-determination that involves sharing the work and recognizing contributions, and learning from others. It is the author's experience that incorporating these four pillars improves library cultures by promoting healthy workplace relationships and effective collaboration.

**“Navigating Change: Dealing with Staff Loss and Job Realignment in Libraries,”** by Andrew Adler, *Journal of Library Administration* (February 15, 2024), vol. 64, no. 2, pp. 217-223.

The author describes their experience dealing with multiple library position cuts at a small liberal arts college over a period of several years. With each position loss, the library underwent major realignments, redistributing responsibilities, outsourcing some services, reducing operating hours, and cutting back on collection development. If you find yourself in a similar situation, the article emphasizes being flexible, pushing back while compromising when needed, continuously advocating for positions, saying no to unrealistic expectations, seeking support networks, allowing oneself to have strong feelings but maintaining professionalism, and above all, being kind to staff and patrons.

**“Teaching Critical Use of Legal Research Technology,”** by Jennifer Elisa Chapman, *The Journal of the Legal Writing Institute* (February 15, 2024), vol. 28, pp. 123-157.

Technology has substantially changed how we perform legal research. In this article, the author examines several ways in which legal research technologies can be problematic for novice researchers. For example, editorial enhancements and design features may encourage superficial analysis. Black box algorithms may exclude, include, or classify information without the researcher's understanding or knowledge. Keyword searching can present challenges for researchers lacking knowledge of applicable legal terms of art. Generative AI technologies may mitigate as well as exacerbate the above issues. The author argues that law librarians and legal research and writing faculty should emphasize critical use of legal research technologies and gives ideas for providing students with structured practice opportunities.

**“Libraries Under Cyberattack,”** by Marshall Breeding, *Computers in Libraries* (March 2024), vol. 44, no. 2, pages 17-19.

A recent cyberattack against the British Library disrupted services for months and exposed personal information of users as well as library staff. A similar attack against the Toronto Public Library has left users without access to the website, catalog, and other services. Library technology expert Marshall Breeding urges libraries to strengthen security protections, perform regular

audits, and review disaster recovery procedures or use hosted systems with dedicated security specialists. Breeding also calls attention to the “weak link” in system security – human personnel – and exhorts libraries to train workers to recognize and prevent social engineering attempts.

## Legal Tech Recap

Kristie Chamorro, UC Berkeley Law Library

Happy Spring! I’m back to my usual format this time around with the legal tech tools and updates that have caught my eye over the past few months.

As always, please let me know if there are any new topics/trends/tools that you would like to see included in future updates.

### Ai.law

[Ai.law](#), a legal tech startup that uses AI to generate litigation documents, recently added a new complaint drafting module. This new tool generates a complete complaint in Microsoft Word based on input from the user.

Bob Ambrogi [reviewed](#) the tool’s key features, noting its ability to suggest legal claims based on the facts provided and ways to potentially boost recoverable damages. Ambrogi tested the tool with a hypothetical scenario and found that while it generated a “good first draft,” he noted that it included some overly dramatic language that would need toning down and stressed the importance of carefully reviewing any AI-generated document.

### Bloomberg Law

Bloomberg Law’s [recent product updates](#) include the [Transactional Reference Library](#) that centralizes reference materials on transactional law topics and the enhanced [Judicial Standing Orders on AI Tracker](#) with new filters and alert functionalities.

Other updates were covered in the February [CRIV/ Bloomberg liaison call](#), including: enhancements to Bloomberg’s docket content and functionality and the simplification of the Bloomberg Law homepage. During the call, Bloomberg also

addressed questions about future plans for the platform. While they do not intend to offer alternative subscription models or disaggregate content, they are working on adding archival versions of secondary sources and expect to further integrate AI functionality for legal research, contract drafting, analytics, litigation drafting, and document summarization.

### CoCounsel

[CoCounsel](#) celebrated its first birthday on March 7th with a blog post [highlighting](#) the evolving attitudes towards GenAI in the legal field. The birthday celebration continued on a [recent episode of “The Geek in Review,”](#) where the hosts were joined by Pablo Arredondo, Vice President of CoCounsel at Thomson Reuters and co-founder of Casetext, who shared insights into the development GenAI in legal research and discussed the technical and strategic journey of bringing CoCounsel to market.

### descrybe.ai

[descrybe.ai](#), a year-old legal research startup with a mission to democratize access to legal information, recently completed its goal of creating AI-generated summaries for all available U.S. state supreme and appellate court opinions.

Ambrogi [reported](#) on this milestone, noting that the platform enables users to sort search results by relevance or recency and provides paragraph-long summaries of matching opinions. He also points out that descrybe.ai plans to add federal district court and appellate opinion summaries by the first half of 2024. In the March 6 edition of the [Kassi & . . .](#) legal tech podcast, the co-founder of descrybe.ai discusses her mission to leverage AI to improve access to justice.

### HeinOnline

HeinOnline recently integrated [Altmetric](#), a tool designed to help researchers analyze the societal impact of scholarly works by tracking online attention across various sources. By following online conversations across news outlets, websites, blogs, social media, and more, the tool assigns an “Altmetric Attention Score” for research materials that have a DOI and at least one metric from an outside online source.

HeinOnline also introduced a [Liking & Commenting](#) feature that allows users to like and comment on scholarly articles, view other users' activity, and manage their preferences in their MyHein profile.

### Hotshot

[Hotshot](#), an online learning platform for legal professionals, recently unveiled the first five courses in an [AI and legal practice series](#). Ambrogi [covered](#) the release, highlighting the roster of top AI experts featured in the series and Hotshot's plans to add a dedicated learning track that will include a certificate of completion and CLE credit.

### Lawmatics

[Lawmatics](#), a cloud-based CRM platform for law firms, recently introduced [custom dashboards](#) that allow firms to create unique dashboards displaying the precise data they want to track. The new feature enables users to create custom metrics and visualization sets, and arrange them in their preferred layout.

### LegalOn Technologies

[LegalOn Technologies](#) recently launched [LegalOn Assistant](#), a "secure generative AI assistant" that answers contract questions, drafts clauses, and summarizes contract language in plain English. Jean O'Grady recently [reviewed](#) the assistant's key features and shared testimonials from current users who have found the tool to be user-friendly and a significant time-saver.

### Lex Machina

In late March, [Lex Machina](#) (LexisNexis) launched [Litigation Footprint](#), a new tool that analyzes data from over 27 million cases to create visual maps of the litigation histories of parties across federal and state courts.

A number of legal tech blogs covered the launch. Ambrogi gave a [detailed review](#) after a product demo, noting the tool's useful filtering options, as well as its potential uses for business development, competitive intelligence, and state court case strategy.

O'Grady [highlighted](#) the dynamic displays that provide users with an immediate, comprehensive overview of a party's litigation footprint.

### Proxiio

On April 4, [Proxiio Global Solutions](#), an India-based provider of litigation and corporate legal services, [announced](#) its U.S. expansion and leadership team. Ambrogi [reported](#) on the expansion and underscored Proxiio's focus on core lawyering tasks and its investment in state-of-the-art infrastructure and information security.

### Things You Should Check Out

My top podcast episode from the last few months is the April 2 episode of The Ezra Klein Show, [How Should I Be Using A.I. Right Now?](#). Klein interviews Ethan Mollick, a Wharton School professor and AI experimenter, about his insights on understanding and using GenAI in your everyday work. Mollick writes a [terrific newsletter on AI](#), co-hosted a [video series on Practical AI for Teachers and Students](#), and authored a new book [Co-Intelligence: Living and Working With AI](#).

Speaking of AI, LexisNexis Legal and Professional released its [2024 Investing in Legal Innovation Survey: The Rise of GenAI at Top Firms & Corporations](#). O'Grady [explained](#) that the survey reveals the mixed reception of GenAI in the legal industry. While 53% of Am Law 200 have adopted GenAI tools, a disconnect exists between law firms and their clients regarding GenAI usage —38% of law firms think their clients oppose the use of GenAI for client work, yet 68% of in-house counsel actually approve of law firms using GenAI for their company's work. The survey reveals that, amidst ethics and security concerns, most legal executives intend to increase their investment in GenAI, while also adjusting hiring patterns to include more AI specialists.



## PAULINE AFUSO

Alameda County Law Library

### *How did you choose law librarianship as a career?*

Happenstance? Luck? I was in college, a student worker in a music library, and I attended a career information seminar with my boss on librarianship. There was a community college librarian, who was so enthusiastic because there was new funding to grow libraries in the community colleges; a medical librarian, who was a bit down on her area – not a lot of growth or support, future dim, etc.; and a special librarian, who worked for a corporation, who was also enthusiastic because of all the new tools she got to use to help here clients find information. Through her, I found out about the SLA Jobline, and heard about a job as a library assistant at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Library in Pasadena California. That was my first job in a law library, and I had a wonderful manager (Evelyn Brandt), who encouraged me to go to library school and choose law librarianship as a career.

### *How do you, as a librarian of many years, continue to keep yourself vital in this profession?*

I try to stay involved with various professional organizations by volunteering for committees and attending meetings. Currently, I'm on LIS-SIS, GLL-SIS, and NOCALL committees. Last year, a friend convinced me to join WestPac, and presented on A2J issues that public libraries face. By keeping up with all these committees, I'm able to stay in touch with friends and colleagues, I often have fun, random conversations with them. In fact, I'm working with a colleague of mine from Hennepin County on ideas to submit for next year's AALL meeting.

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

It really isn't a new service, but if money were no object, I'd find a way to fund reliable Legal Aid services to provide clinics and pro bono/low bono legal services for patrons. We just got word that the Alameda County Bar Association will be ending the Lawyers in the Library program at the public libraries at the end of June, which is terrible on so many levels. I mean, we could even provide LDA.

But if you are asking resources that we could have in our library, in addition to upgrading our computers, I'd like space and equipment for some sort of technology lab, where local attorneys and adventuresome pro se patrons can use to trial prep. I know law schools and large firms have these things, but we do not have the funding to provide any of that for our patrons.

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

Hmm, is this obscure? In the land of the Golden Warriors and the Giants and a bunch of other teams, I'm a hockey fan, and I love the Minnesota Wild (they have [fun commercials](#)). I hope that someday I'll be attending a Stanley Cup parade in St. Paul. Meanwhile, I do root for the Sharks, and I love that the team skates onto the ice via

a shark's mouth. Seeing that last March was one of the highlights of the year! And I plan to to a Sharks game in a couple of weeks because they are playing the Wild. In addition, this year, I started taking ice skating lessons with Emily Bergfeld and Megan Books at Oakland Ice. So far, it has been really fun, even though we are all beginners.

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

Since I'm new to Northern California, I think it is safe to say that most people don't know that my favorite musical is Forever Plaid, which came out in the early 1990's. Among other places it played at the Canon Theater in Beverly Hills while I was in library school at UCLA. I loved it so much, that I arranged a couple of field trips with some of my school friends to go see it, and in total, I've seen in live, in some form or another 22 times. [It is also a movie!](#)

***What is your favorite legal book and why?***

I'm not sure if this is a legal book or not, but I do like *Getting to Yes* by Fisher and Ury. I read it in law school when I was taking the ADR clinic, and it always struck me that meditation techniques that I learned, including the negotiation processes from this book, struck me as being very useful for reference librarians. It reminds me to be neutral when I talk to people at the reference desk, and it also reminds me to look for options. I think that books might be where I learned the phrase, "make the pie bigger" as a way to find new solutions between litigants. What an awesome expression. And it reminds me of [pie!](#)

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## Sacramento's Annual Free Museum Weekend

Amreet Sandhu, Sacramento County Public Law Library



Pictured (L-R): Librarians Vanessa Christman, Amreet Sandhu, Elena Smith, & Garrett Shields, resting after a day of important work increasing access to justice.

Sacramento public law librarians from the Sacramento County Public Law Library and the California State Library's Witkin Law Library staffed Sacramento's Annual Free Museum Weekend on Saturday, March 2. Approximately 300 people attended, learning more about the resources and programs available to them through both Sacramento area public libraries. The California State Museum hosted the event, in its stunning and historic Gillis Hall, which is the main point of public access and a beautiful place to gather, read, and access information.

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