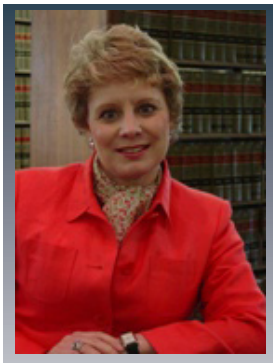
Southeastern Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries'

Southeastern Law Librarian

Winter 2009 *www.aallnet.org/chapter/seaall* Volume 34, Issue 1

Presidential Postings



Amy B. Osborne, SEAALL President

At this time of year when the holidays have come and gone and spring is still months away it's easy to get stuck in the winter doldrums. While we may daydream of flowers blooming and warm sunshine, for many of use these dreams are fulfilled only by looking at images virtually on our computers. However, there is one other harbinger of spring which we can all look forward to and that is the SEAALL Annual Meeting.

This year's theme is Renew, Refresh, Rethink and Rock 'n' Roll and in the midst of these cold winter days (at least for our more northern SEAALL members), this is exactly what we will be looking forward to doing when spring comes around. Maureen Eggert and the Program Committee have put together a terrific assortment of programs. There is indeed something for everyone. Whether you teach legal research, are interested in becoming an author or want to recruit top librarians to your institution this year's meeting will definitely leave you renewed, refreshed and rethinking how things are done at your library.

In addition, the Local Arrangements committee under the leadership of Ann Puckett has chosen a terrific venue for the meeting and they have many fun things in store for meeting attendees. Be sure to take advantage of the University of Georgia Library tours – visiting other libraries is an excellent way to gain new idea for your library. On Thursday the opening reception will be held at the State Botanical Garden. What better way to welcome spring than to visit this beautiful site and reconnect with SEAALL colleagues. There will also be plenty of time to visit the quintessential college town Athens...who knows, you might even see Uga.

As I've said, Maureen Eggert, Ann Puckett and all of the members of the Local Arrangements and Program Committees have been hard at work ensuring that this year's SEAALL meeting is informative, interesting and fun. These is one other person who plays an integral part in seeing that the meeting takes place and that is the SEAALL Treasurer, Paula Tejeda. Paula ensures that all bills are paid so that food and drink will be there when needed and that meeting space will be reserved. Although her work is done "behind the scenes" that does not mean that is no less important and so if you get a chance be sure to thank Paula for all of her hard work as treasurer.

So, in the midst of winter you can look forward to spring and the opportunity to Renew, Refresh, Rethink and Rock 'n' Roll with your SEAALL friends. I hope to see you in Athens!

And now, a word . . . or two

We have about two months before SEAALL's annual meeting in Athens. I hope everyone is getting ready for a grand time in this enchanting city! It will be a wonderful opportunity to re-connect and renew, to refresh and to encourage.

I look forward to seeing you there!
Carolyn Santanella, editor

What's New!

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With the growing popularity of internet resources, such as blogging, Myspace, and now Second Life, how do you decide which one would most benefit your library? According to Brian Barnes, Librarian at the Mississippi School of Law Library, Facebook, now has over "150 million" users, 75% of which include his first-year law students. In his article, Brian discusses the pros and cons of using Facebook to connect with his Law students, and how it can be used as a powerful communication tool for your library.

If you would like to share your experiences using one of the above internet resources, (or one(s) not listed), please submit articles/comments to jroach@nhcgov.com.
Thank you!

ATHENS!

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Annual Meeting Institute
We've posted more details about the institute. If you've even had to think about cutting any serials subscriptions you'll want to attend. Attendance is limited to 40.
http://www.law.uga.edu/library/seaall2009/institute.html

Annual Meeting Registration
The SEAALL 2009 Annual Meeting preliminary program and registration materials are now available.
http://www.law.uga.edu/library/seaall2009/index.htm

We look forward to seeing you in Athens in April.

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The Southeastern Law Librarian (ISSN 0272-7560) is the official publication of the Southeastern Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries. It is published quarterly and is distributed free to all SEAALL members. Editorial comments or submissions should be sent to:

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Submissions may be sent in hardcopy or electronic format. Direct transmission via electronic mail is preferred, but all standard size diskettes are acceptable, if delivered in Word, or plain ASCII format.

Newsletter Deadlines are:
Summer July 31, 2008
Fall November 30, 2008
Winter January 31, 2009
Spring April 30, 2009

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Using Facebook in a Law Library

Brian Barnes
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Many articles in law library literature have over the past several years extolled the virtues of internet resources, specifically 2.0 resources in recent years. Some libraries have taken this path while many others have not and have continued the more traditional and time tested ways of connecting with their students. However, in this librarian's opinion, law students of today are not the same students as five years ago, much less ten years ago. This is why I advocate every law library should implement Facebook as a tool for reaching their patrons.

As I promote Facebook I temper my excitement concerning 2.0 materials in realizing that some work for reaching patrons and some do not and there is no absolutely correct answer. Some libraries create MySpace pages, some libraries create wiki's and manuals, a few libraries even brave the territory of Second Life and many libraries create blogs. All of these things are options for reaching patrons but we as librarians, limited as to time, have to choose what can best reach the 22-30 year olds who dominate law school populations. The tool for this is Facebook.

A recent announcement noted that Facebook now has 150 million users, many of whom are young adults. These users include over 75% of first year law students at my law school, per a recent survey. I assume we are fairly typical in this regards and I have not been able to find statistics to this point to counter this assertion. With such a significant portion of students using a singular resource like Facebook a library should try to capitalize on this centralization of patrons for prime promotion and teaching opportunities. At least three different approaches, the Fan Page, personal interaction, and applications can be used to accomplish this task.

The Fan Page Approach

The first, and easiest step is to create a Fan Page for your school. You will have to have a personal Facebook account to do this but that can take as little as thirty seconds to create and is quite self explanatory. This Fan Page can contain basic information including hours, logo's, pictures, and many other informative opportunities from this base page. This is easy to do, I promise, with a series of drop down boxes and simply inputting text, no real programming is required for Fan Pages. This Fan Page also involves a "Wall" which is a kind of like a discussion board where questions can be posed and answered by members and administrators of the group. A powerful tool of Facebook and Fan Pages is the picture tool. A library could load pictures of the library, of student workers and staff, and more especially of patrons (with their permission obviously). When loading these pictures the library should "tag" these students as one of the most powerful aspects of Facebook is the sharing of pictures of users. These pictures will then appear on the students' profiles and notifications will appear in their "feed" letting their "friends" know about the picture and creating a fairly high level of name recognition for the page among the student/staff person's "friends".

While this may not sound that impressive Facebook is a very viral environment (and that is meant in the healthy spreading the word idea, not as in computer viruses). Assume that a law library has ten student workers, at least seven or eight of these workers will have a Facebook page. I venture to guess, based on my student workers, that each of these seven or eight student workers has between 150 and 200 friends, some many more, I have one with over 1,200 friends as of this morning. If this student worker, I'll call him James, gets tagged in a picture, in 1,200 peoples feed James' picture pops up in an album of the library. Of these people some may think it is a good idea to join the library group, especially if they go to school with James. While James is an extreme situation because of his extraordinary number of friends simply grabbing a couple of pictures of James and then working with the Fan Page a bit can gain a law library an avenue into this plugged in group that exists nowhere else. His friends become your fans and then you can connect with them in their environment. Pictures are also a valuable resource for gaining time on a possible users screen as pictures are updated less frequently than status or often even notes, thereby staying in a users photo feed longer than other possible avenues.

A possible concern that some have with a Fan page is providing a "wall" (discussion board) is preventing someone from defacing this digital wall with foul language or some sort of other unwanted commentary. Facebook is more restrictive than MySpace in this manner and if a librarian is administrator for the page they can delete posts that need to be deleted. I comment on this topic in a reluctant manner as I am fans of many pages and very rarely have I seen this type of conduct. Additionally, fans of a library just do not do that type of thing, with rare occasion, and we as librarians should not quash good resources for a random incident that will probably never happen.

continued on page 4

Facebook in a Law Library *continued from page 3*

• Pros:

- A presence on a website that 75% of law students use on a normal basis

- Viral atmosphere with law school students can make this grow quickly

• Cons:

- Concerns at patron created content on the "wall"

- Creating an original base of students for the Page can be challenging

What to Do When They Get There

Assuming you have been able to put together a library Fan Page with some followers the key is then to keep them following and create a niche of some sort in their busy lives. I personally believe in cross posting announcements when it comes to reaching out to patrons. Cross posting allows a librarian to use the same material they are putting in a blog, slightly vary it and put it in a message to all members of their group, slightly vary it more and put it in the law school newspaper, and perhaps even slightly change it up for a podcast or vodcast if you have reached those levels of technological advancement. Examples of things that normally populate library Fan Pages are hour changes, notices about fire or tornado drills, information about coming events, and even news about new books or online resources. There will be some overlap in viewership but there are definite newsletter readers who do not Facebook or podcast and there are Facebookers who would not pick up a law school newspaper if you put a dollar in every tenth copy.

The More Personal Approach

In addition to creating a fan page I propose that librarians take a much more personal approach to using Facebook with patrons. I admit I am not the stereotypical librarian as I am 28, very into 2.0 technology, and can largely identify with the students in my library so being their "friend" may be easier for me than some; but we are all unique in some way and many of us get to know our students quite well over the course of their three year law school career. If you are comfortable with it I suggest you jump wholly into Facebook, fill out all of the information, put pictures of yourself, play some of the simplistic games and have fun with it. This information sharing can build bonds with previously unknown students who did not know you were a cat person or never made the connection you went to the same alma mater. If the students know you better they will be more willing to ask for your guidance and hopefully you will have a bigger and better influence on their law school career.

This recommendation for a personal page is not solely based upon familiarity. I also highly advocate using your personal page and the Facebook staples of "Status Updates" and Facebook chat to further your impact on your "friends", the law students. Status updates are a bit like tweets with twitter or, in more common speak, like small informational blasts about what you are doing or how you are feeling. This can be manipulated for library purposes by using status updates like "Brian reminds to not forget to return those items before you leave for Christmas" or "Brian wants a big crowd at the special presentation on the First Floor at 10". These short updates, which are minimally invasive on the students, pop up on a large number of students' laptops every morning as they check their status before (or during) that first class of the day.

Perhaps even a more useful tool than status updates is the Facebook chat feature. I currently am friends with about 200 students at my law school of 550 students, additionally friends with over 50 attorneys who I can lean on for answers. All of these "friends" of mine have the ability to obtain referencing from me when I'm online by simply instant messaging me. Reference chat has been around for over a decade with AIM, Yahoo, MSN and more recently Gchat dominating the scene. However, most law school students are on Facebook throughout the day and if we can put a librarian at their fingertips, a few taps on a keyboard away, we are a more valuable resource and more integral to their learning process. I finish this promotion of Facebook chat by reflecting upon how in the past week I have given out weekend hours, been told that a professor couldn't get electronic equipment to work in a classroom, chatted with the IT personnel to get them on the case, made a couple of suggestions of books to students who did not do as well as hoped in Torts and even walked a student worker through checking out a miscataloged book at 8:45 on a Saturday night without him actually having to call me at home.

I do caution librarians the same as I caution my students. Remember to not put things that will make you look bad on the internet, this includes Facebook. I refer to this as the grandmother test. No pictures kissing someone that is not your significant other, try and keep alcohol out of your pictures and avoid directly saying or even alluding to things the administration might hold against you. These things are just not worth the hassle. This would seem like common sense but at times this sense is not all that common. Additionally, and 2.0 authors debate this, I do not believe a librarian should friend every single possible patron of their

library. I see the purpose in this idea, to swell the masses of friends and thereby hope to proliferate about more information. However, I feel that if a student does not want to be your "friend" or has expressed no interest in library matters why would a Facebook contact be any different?

• Pros:
- Reference chat on Facebook is often used more than other chat means
- Status updates provide passive news or notes to students in their "feed"

• Cons:
- Concerns of librarians opening their personal lives up to students
- Personal pages on Facebook often require much more of a time commitment than other resources

Facebook Application, the Final Frontier

I hesitated to include this in the article as I do not want to scare anyone away from this great tool of Facebook but I want to introduce you to the difficult to build but "really cool" option of applications. Earlier I mentioned that you could play fun, simple games on Facebook. Facebook is a 2.0 resource in the way people create almost all of the information but Facebook is even more so a 2.0 tool in that the people use the open source nature of Facebook to build applications. These applications then will be submitted to Facebook for approval (normally a couple of day turnaround process) and placed in the directory. Once approved an application can do innumerable things, dependent on your level of programming expertise (and patience) and can be a great resource for your students. A few law schools, such as Mississippi College School of Law, have built applications that are kind of like mini law school Web pages with handy links to resources but most importantly this application allows for searching the schools online catalog from a patron's own profile. This does two things in that it takes the catalog to where the patron is repeatedly on a daily basis instead of forcing them to come to the library's Web site which they visit much less frequently than Facebook. Secondly, it provides the library an opportunity to publicize itself with a good looking application, logo and a "cool" factor among students that is hard to obtain with many young adults. The obvious drawback to building an application is the required programming skills needed by the creator and the time it takes to build the application.

• Pros:
- Can put the library catalog literally on a student's own profile
- Creates a "cool", new technology that shows progression and advancement by a library

• Cons:
- A background and ability in PHP coding and access to a server to host the application is required
- Initial creation does take a substantial investment in time

While Facebook cannot properly be called a "new" resource, its rapid growth amongst many of our law school students make it a place law libraries should be familiar with and hopefully a place to gain better perspective and more contact with our patrons. This article has thrown a lot of information at someone new to Facebook if you have any questions or would like to follow up on a certain point please feel free to contact me at barnes01@mc.edu or friend me on Facebook.

AALL & CONELL Annual Meeting Grants

The SEAALL Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the availability of the CONELL Registration Grant and the AALL Annual Meeting Registration Grant.

The CONELL grant was created to provide funds for CONELL tuition and one night stay in a hotel for a law librarian who will attend AALL but lacks financial assistance to attend CONELL, the Conference of Newer Law Librarians, which takes place on the Saturday before AALL begins.

The AALL Annual Meeting Registration Grant was created to provide funding for a law librarian who lacks financial assistance to attend the AALL Annual Meetings. The award will cover the cost of full registration at AALL.

Applications and eligibility requirements for each grant may be found on the SEAALL Scholarship web page: http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/seaall/scholarship/index.htm

The deadline for both scholarships is Monday, March 23, 2009 at 5pm Eastern Standard Time.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

jrs, Chair, Scholarship Committee

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Bob Oakley Memorial Symposium: The Future of Today's Scholarship

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The Georgetown Law Library will be holding a symposium on the topic of preserving the research value of blogs on July 25, 2009.

We believe that blogs have become part of the canon of legal scholarship and that future legal researchers will turn to blogs as sources for their scholarship. This conclusion, however, presents great challenges for future researchers of material currently populating the blogosphere. How will these future researchers of today's blog scholarship find valuable, historic blogs? How will they be assured of perpetual access to this scholarship? How can any researcher be confident that documents posted to blogs are reliable?

This symposium will bring together academic bloggers, librarians, and experts in preservation to brainstorm and debate these topics and to develop best practices to ensure that the value of blog scholarship is not easily lost.

Our first panel will lay the groundwork for these discussions by presenting librarians' and legal scholars' views on the future research value of today's blogs. Will future legal scholars turn to legal blogs as reputable and reliable sources of information? In this panel, experts on legal research will analyze the much-debated issue of whether future legal scholars will be interested in the analysis found in blogs or the documents posted to blogs. In addition, the panel will also address the rise of legal blogs and blogging as a phenomenon.

Our second panel will assemble a group of national experts and leaders from a variety of backgrounds to share their perspectives, experiences and visions with respect to the problem of blog preservation. Specifically, this panel will discuss who is responsible for blog preservation; how will we begin the process of prioritizing and collecting legal blogs; and what are the current standards, as well as the technological, economic, and social considerations that must be addressed, in Web harvesting and digital preservation.

Our third panel will be devoted to examining the issue of the reliability of legal documents uploaded to blogs. From Newsweek's posting of the "Torture Memos" to ScotusBlog's postings of Supreme Court briefs, news agencies and bloggers regularly upload legal documents to support their stories. Although these web sites and blogs are often the only sources for these documents, few electronic documents have any verifiable proof of reliability. Future researchers wanting to rely on these documents must be aware of this issue and must be able to confirm that the posted document is complete and unaltered from the version authorized for publication by the author. This panel will discuss this issue and the current standards for proving the authenticity of a document in order to foster a system for preserving the value of blogs and documents found on blogs for future researchers.

The symposium will conclude with a working group break out session to create a uniform standard for preservation of blogs for bloggers and librarians.

Our late director, Bob Oakley, firmly believed that librarians have an obligation to ensure access to information and was committed to meeting the challenges posed by information in a digital form. In this spirit, we dedicate this symposium to him.

Details about the symposium can be found at http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/ftls/

SEAALL Briefs

Compiled by Karin Den Bleyker

ALABAMA - *Faulkner University*

Ms. Elizabeth "DeDe" Bradsher has been named Assistant Director of theLaw Library at Faulkner University's Jones School of Law.

NORTH CAROLINA - *University of North Carolina School of Library and Information Science*

Periodically SILS offers a class related to law librarianship. During the Spring 2009 semester, **Scott Childs** of UNC School of Law and **Connie Matzen**, with Smith, Anderson in Raleigh, are co-teaching "Legal Information."

GEORGIA - *Georgia State University*

The article, "Choosing the Top Candidate: Best Practices in Academic Law Library Hiring" by Georgia State University College of Law Librarians **Ronald Wheeler**, **Nancy P. Johnson**, and **Terrance Manion** was recently listed on SSRN's Top Ten download list for LIT: Practice of Law Librarianship (Topic), Legal Information & Technology, PLL: Administration, Management & Leadership (Topic) and PLL: Administration, Management & Leadership (Topic).
http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1313213
The article appeared in Law Library Journal, Vol. 100, p. 117, 2008.