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Presidential Ponderings

...from Jason R. Sowards

This Presidential Ponderings is being composed at a Starbucks in Reno, Nevada. In just a few days, I will assume the position of Law Librarian for the Nevada Supreme Court. This new position isn't exactly what I thought the next step in my career would be, but it's exciting, and I cannot wait to start. As I described the move on social media (which is where many of us make our announcements of major life events "official"), this new position is an opportunity to do something really different, in someplace really different. In our profession, we all encounter change, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not, but we always handle it with aplomb and come out the other side better for the experience -- even if it's realizing that we never want to do that again. I'm anxious to see what this next step teaches me.

If you attended the annual meeting in Raleigh, I hope that you will agree that it was an indisputable success. Attendance exceeded expectations and the programming (based on those who completed the program evaluations) was very well received. As chair of the program committee, I worked with some amazing people who consistently stepped up and made the conference one to remember. To give praise one more time, thank you to Jane Bahnson, Eliza Fink, Colleen Martinez-Skinner, Nichelle Perry, Franklin Runge, Todd Venie, and Carol Watson. But the program committee was not alone in the success of the meeting. Local arrangements, headed by Kim Hocking and Lisa Williams, handled the needs of the program committee most expeditiously and graciously, and I'm especially thankful for their patience with me.

And thanks also go to those of you who agreed to serve on our many committees, both for the first time and for perhaps the eighth or ninth time. We are an organization that excels based on the continuous commitment of its members. Thank you to all who served last year and who were assigned to committees for the upcoming year. I'm excited to see what we will do together over the next year!

Last but not least in the gratitude department, I (and we as an organization) need to thank our outgoing executive board members who guided us over the past few years: Caroline Osborne as immediate past president, Wendy Moore as outgoing member at large, and Kate Irwin-Smiler as outgoing treasurer. Kate, as the guardian of our money, made a substantial commitment to serving SEAALL as treasurer for many years. The longevity and institutional knowledge in this role provided the stability an organization needs to succeed.

So, let's talk about the future. One of the first acts of the executive board was to make a modest dues increase. As stated in the email announcement, membership dues have not increased in the past to meet the rising costs of services and projects the organization would like to offer. I hope that the increase in dues will help us bring membership benefits that make belonging to SEAALL an obvious good investment. One of the first projects I would like to get going is a refresh of our website, not only in terms of appearance, but also in added functionality that should make becoming and remaining a member easier.

Finally, you received an email from SEAALL Secretary TJ Striepe announcing a vote to amend the SEAALL bylaws. The most substantive change to the bylaws is to amend who may be an officer. The potential change allows those individuals who were elected to the executive board to petition the board to remain a member should their membership status change. Based on the first paragraph of this Presidential Ponderings, this vote clearly affects me personally. As an organization comprised of members who have no idea where their work lives may take them, amending the bylaws to accommodate professional growth to those who have stepped up to lead the organization is not only forward thinking but also incredibly gracious. Whatever your thoughts are on the proposed amendments, please exercise your rights as a member and vote!

In closing, I would like to remind you all that we will meet in Austin during the American Association of Law Libraries annual meeting. Committee chairs will be responsible for providing brief progress reports on what they are currently working on while we enjoy some tasty hors d'oeuvres. And I also think at this point in its history, it should go without saying that seersucker attire is encouraged to continue the SEAALLsucker tradition.

I look forward to seeing y'all in Austin!

Closed Stacks



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When you read as much as the University of Tennessee's Sibyl Marshall, organization isn't just a choice -- it's a necessity. Sibyl, head of public services at the Joel A. Katz Law Library, reads over 200 books a year. However, her physical bookshelf might lead you to believe otherwise. That's because Sibyl gets a majority of her reading material in two ways: 1) e-book downloads to her Kindle, and 2) from the Knoxville public library.

My Books: **historical-fiction (278)** x & **i-own-it (211)** x & **to-read (1033)** x

Search and add books

bookshelves (edit)

- all (2054)
- read (1010) +
- currently-reading (3) +
- to-read (1033) -
- gave-up-on (8) +
- africa (44) +
- american-history (129) +
- ancient-history (4) +
- animals (69) +
- anthropology (2) +
- archeology (3) +
- asia (41) +
- atyn52 (51) +
- australasia (13) +
- biography (79) +
- books-about-books (23) +

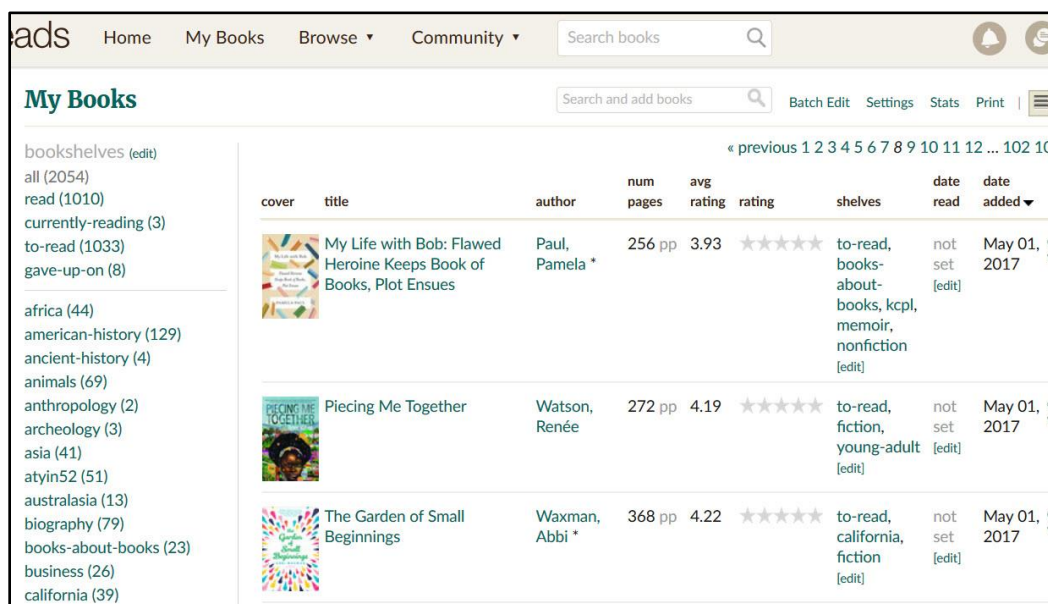
cover	title	author	num pages	avg rating	rating
	The Lacuna	Kingsolver, Barbara	508 pp	3.76	★★★★☆
	The Atomic Weight of Love	Church, Elizabeth J. *	352 pp	3.86	★★★★☆
	The Book of Harlan	McFadden, Bernice L. *	400 pp	4.10	★★★★☆

Sibyl's best advice for staying organized? Goodreads. There, she keeps a highly specific and comprehensive set of shelves, organizing a list of over 1,000 books marked "want to read." The books on that list are further categorized by what format they are held in at the local branch of Sibyl's public library and/or the main library on the University of Tennessee campus. Other designations within the list include whether an audio version of the book is available and whether or not Sibyl already owns the title in digital form.

Sibyl also participates in several reading challenges throughout the year and will use Goodreads to pick the books that fit into the reading challenge categories before she begins, tagging them with the name of the challenge to help her remember how she planned to complete it. Her favorite reading challenge is a year-long event sponsored by BookRiot. In that challenge, readers are given 24 tasks (such as "Read a superhero comic with a female lead" or "Read a book about books") meant to challenge/stretch participants as readers and expose them to new genres and subjects.



Another innovative way that Sibyl stays on top of this incredible volume of literature is what she calls her "Reading Map." The Reading Map helps Sibyl challenge herself to read works by authors who are in a very different station of life than the one in which Sibyl finds herself. Using Google Maps, she tags each book she completes based on where the author is from (for fiction) or where a



majority of the book takes place (for nonfiction). Sibyl often chooses the next item from her "want to read" list based on noticeable gaps on the map.

It's safe to say that Sibyl's love for and dedication to reading is impressive, but the novel way in which she organizes her reading has impressed even her most tech-savvy co-workers.



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Steve Matthews & Jordan Furlong, *Creating an Online Publishing Strategy for Law Firms* (2017)

ISBN: 978-1-63425-418-2

Although this book is directed to lawyers and law firms, I found its advice beneficial to anyone with a publishing requirement. Simply replace the words *law firm* in the title with *law library* or *yourself*, and the information will help almost anyone give structure to a publishing plan. This skinny book is a quick but effective way to help the reader develop a publishing strategy, choose which platform to showcase work, create a publishing culture in one's organization to motivate colleagues, and measure the effectiveness of a strategic framework.

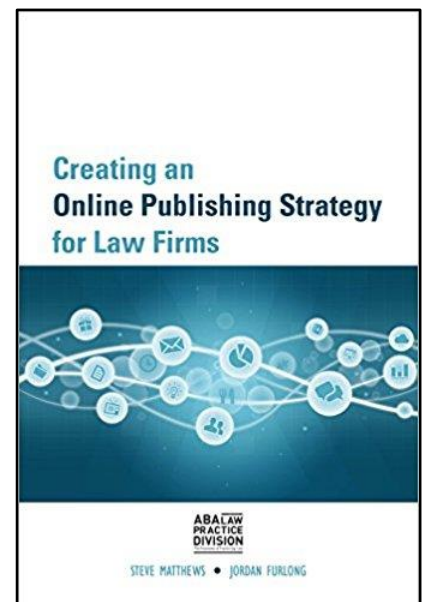
As defined in chapter one, a publishing strategy is "meant to deliver outcomes that enhance [one's] profile and support [one's] business development." (I replaced *law firm* with *oneself*.) The strategy should answer the questions:

- (1) Why do we create and distribute content to our professional community?
- (2) Who is the audience we want to reach?
- (3) How do we create and present content?
- (4) On which platform do we distribute our content?
- (5) How do we measure whether or not our strategy is working?

Throughout the book, these five questions are analyzed and answered. Chapter two gives the reader guiding principles on what type of content to publish and in what medium (newsletters, blog articles, microsites, and multimedia). Chapter three discusses how to distribute content on hosted platforms such as *Above the Law* or on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, with consideration to content distribution methods (push, pull). Chapter four focuses on creating a publishing culture, from the impediments to creating a strategy, to essential elements of establishing a publishing culture, to motivating participation.

The final chapter explores ways we can measure online exposure and how to make sense of different data measurements. A good description of Google Analytics and search engine rankings as well as other tracking activities is given.

To wrap up, this book exists to help with marketing for law firms but can also be used to market oneself in any legal field, including law librarianship. It is an easy read with very relevant and succinct guidance on publishing strategies. Good luck with all future publishing endeavors!



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Michael Hunter Schwartz, Sophie M. Sparrow, and Gerald F. Hess, *Teaching Law by Design: Engaging Students from the Syllabus to the Final Exam*, 2nd Edition (2017)

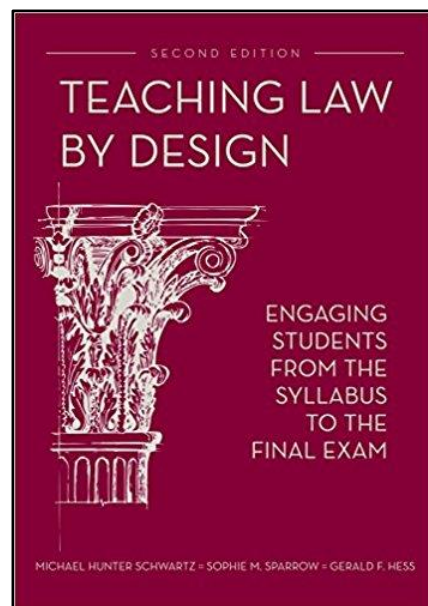
ISBN: 978-1-6116-3701-4

The first edition of *Teaching Law by Design* has been incredibly popular among our faculty -- both the seasoned, tenured professors and the younger, up-and-coming recent hires. We have several copies in our collection that circulate often, so I'm glad I got my hands on the second edition to review it before it disappears into some faculty office for months. It's a user-friendly guide that we should also familiarize ourselves with, as faculty services librarians, both for our own legal research instruction and for working with professors in a liaison capacity.

The authors include chapters on learning theories, student perspectives on teaching and learning, designing courses and individual class sessions, and motivating students. (We need all the help we can get with that last one!) Also covered is the actual teaching of the class, integrating experiential teaching and learning (big buzzwords for law schools, especially legal research classes), assessments (another big buzzword), troubleshooting, and developing as a teacher. Everything in the book is well written and explained clearly, in plain language.

Some of the advice should be obvious, like treating students respectfully, using a variety of teaching methods to keep class exciting, giving students a chance to be actively involved in class, explicitly telling them your expectations, and offering feedback, so students know where they stand. But then again, many of us have probably studied under, known, or worked with professors who desperately need those fundamental lessons! I'm sure many of our law librarian readers are already pros at this, but these are quick, easily digestible, and worthwhile lessons for other law professors.

The chapters contain useful concrete suggestions for course design and lesson planning, and they are really practical and helpful. The authors suggest you start out thinking about assessment techniques, even before you set course goals and objectives or plan the syllabus. That sounded counterintuitive to me at first, but it is a wise move. Getting ready to teach advanced legal research for the first time by myself this fall (as opposed to co-teaching), I want to change some things I've always done, update my



curriculum, challenge myself, and provide the best learning experience for my students. I feel like I'm off to a good start with the advice and examples in this book.

I appreciated the examples of experiential exercises (role plays, simulations, basing problems on current events), even though I have already tried several of those in my past classes. I want to fine-tune advanced legal research, now that it's mine and mine alone to plan and teach, and I know these examples will help. For professors who have stuck to lecturing and the Socratic method for years or decades, this book should provide some innovative new ideas to switch things up and make teaching and learning more interesting and effective for all involved.

As if it wasn't clear by now, I strongly recommend the new second edition of *Teaching Law by Design* for all academic law libraries. If you don't already have a copy, order it ASAP so it's available for faculty as they plan their fall syllabi. If you do have it in your collections, or when it comes in, make a point of informing the professors you work with that you can put the book right in their hands, so you look even more heroic than you already do.

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Joseph Madison Beck, *My Father & Atticus Finch: A Lawyer's Fight for Justice in 1930s Alabama* (2016)

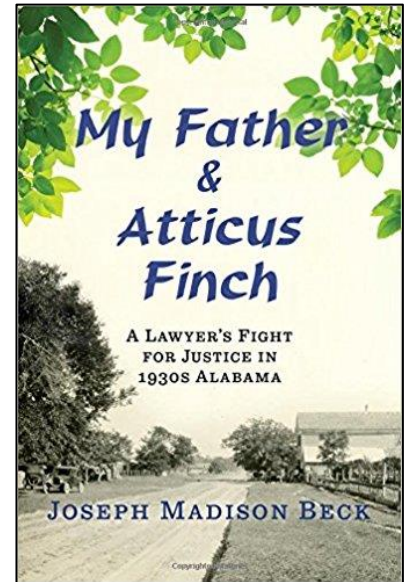
ISBN: 978-0-3932-8582-6

Part memoir, part historical fiction, and part gripping courtroom drama, *My Father & Atticus Finch* centers on the author's father, Foster Beck, and the story of his work in the late 1930s defending a black man accused of raping a white woman in the case *State of Alabama vs. Charles White, Alias*, and its appeal. Despite the obvious correlations between the case and the fictional trial of Tom Robinson in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee maintained that she didn't remember the case, despite its wide publicity during her early adolescence in Monroeville, AL. Instead, she always contended that the trial was an amalgamation of the events and individuals involved in the "Scottsboro Boys" series of trials that began in 1931. Regardless, *My Father & Atticus Finch* thrillingly recounts the unjust trial of an innocent man in the Jim Crow south, and chronicles the toll that defending him took on young Foster Beck and his struggling law practice.

For me, the courtroom scenes are the most enjoyable to read, though the author also tenderly recounts his parents' courtship, which also takes place around the time of the trial. While Foster Beck admits to accepting the case as a boon to his

new law practice, the character grows to accept and passionately defend Charles White, a much more demanding and intimidating client than the fictional Tom Robinson. This turnabout is particularly satisfying given the complexity brought to the character of Atticus Finch by the 2016 publication of Harper Lee's *Go Set a Watchman*. An early, unpublished draft of what would eventually become *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Watchman* is set in the late 1950s, and shows us a scared, small, sick Atticus Finch, still reeling from the death of his son, Jem, and sadly, active in the KKK and deeply opposed to school integration.

For an interesting, unique, and in-depth treatment of a fascinating early civil rights case, look no further. *My Father & Atticus Finch* is a thought-provoking, but quick read—and a timely reminder of the devastating consequences of denying one another's humanity.





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Library Profiles

Lawton Chiles Legal Information Center at the University of Florida

I went on a hunting expedition to determine the last time the Legal Information Center at the University of Florida, Levin College of Law, was profiled in the SEAALL newsletter and I found us way back in the summer of 2010. At that time, we highlighted our very picturesque reading room, with its tall wooden doors and floor-to-ceiling windows. Although our library still proudly displays its reading room entrance, it has seen some changes in the last seven years. With new faces and spaces, it's a good time to have another profile on the LIC.

Our New People

We've had two new hires in the past year as well as a few familiar faces in new positions. Gail Mathapo (below left) came to our team as a new reference librarian from her previous position as Associate Director of the Mason Law Library at the University of the District of Columbia in Washington, DC. Sarah Lewis (below right), our new tax and reference librarian, was a practicing public finance and corporate attorney in Atlanta for ten years before joining the world of academia. Our access services department has seen reorganization, as multiple staff members have switched into new positions. Elisa O'Malley is our new access services manager, Liz Cousins is our new daytime circulation assistant, and Brian Russell, our dedicated senior desk worker, has become our new evening circulation assistant.



Additionally, the four University of Florida student-run journals and their staff have been integrated into the Legal Information Center with head of access services, Patricia Morgan, as supervisor. We're currently in the process of renovating part of the library to accommodate the four journals. There's a possibility for another Library Profiles once the new journals area is finished!



Our New Projects

We've implemented a room-reservation program to ease the check-out process of our 12 study rooms. Law school students can just log in with their school email addresses and use the friendly interface through D!BS to reserve rooms with a

click. Our rooms can be booked through smart phone, tablet, laptop, and computer -- even by scanning a QR code on the room's door. This new process has significantly reduced the burden on circulation desk staff by discontinuing the old-school check-out process, with its paper recordkeeping, student ID verification, and physical keys. And no more study room mediation!

Thanks to our technology and digital services librarian, Avery Le, we now have a Legal Information Center blog. It's a good spot to find updates on the LIC, new resources available, research tips, and events in the local community and in the wider librarian world. The blog can be accessed through our newly designed library homepage or directly at <https://www.law.ufl.edu/library/blog>.



Our New Place

Last summer we welcomed the office of admissions into the Legal Information Center. Admissions is now nestled next to the entranceway across from the circulation desk. This placement allows better visibility for the office, plus alumni and prospective students now have a clear view of the beautiful doors of our O'Connell reading room when they first enter Holland Hall, the building housing the majority of the law school.

The renovations have proved very beneficial for the law librarians in our technical services area. The repurposed space now boasts three new offices with large windows displaying old Florida oak trees, with their spindly branches and green leaves, creating beautiful vibrant scenery. The natural lighting and opportunity to gaze out at the tree landscape has been a fantastic benefit in the past year.



At the far end of our offices, a huge portrait of Napoleon can be seen watching over all of the staff and librarians in the LIC. With his relaxed but confident stance and Napoleonic code scroll at his side, we like to think of him as a mascot and protector of written law.

Well, that's the LIC . . . for now! More updates to follow as we consistently improve our library for patrons, students, and faculty.

Meet & Three



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Meet . . .

Hello fellow Southeasterners! This is Eliza Fink, digital resources librarian at the University of Tennessee College of Law. I'm relatively new to the profession, and truthfully, I love talking about myself, so when my colleague was assigned this column, I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to volunteer for this section of the newsletter. An added benefit of that decision was going back and rereading the Meet and Three columns of other SEAALL members, some of whom I've now met at annual meetings, and being reminded of their paths to law librarianship.

As for my own path to this career, like many of you, I found myself unsatisfied as a practicing attorney and from there things took a rather predictable path . . . until last year when I, a social butterfly, found myself entering the world of technical services. Though the reference desk was not my favorite part of my work, I never saw myself working outside of public services, and yet here I sit in my office tucked away from the patrons.

The transition away from public services was intimidating when I began at UT. Having spent so much of my time doing research in my previous positions, I wasn't sure what I would do with my time. Of course, that was a silly question. Between teaching, communicating with vendors, updating ERM records and serving on committees, I barely have time to catch up on endless emails. I've also come to enjoy a quieter version of my normal work day, where I'm able to prioritize my work with few urgent requests. Teaching and meetings with students and colleagues fulfill my need to talk (and, boy, do I like to talk), but I've also greatly enjoyed the opportunity to learn about educational technology and digital collections in a way that the time commitment of reference work might have prevented me from doing. I've also gained a greater understanding of what my colleagues do to help the library run so smoothly and give the reference librarians everything they need to staff the "front of the house." It took some convincing, but I'm finally ready to accept it. I love technical services.

Another love of mine? Television. And with that, here are three shows I recommend you watch ASAP.

And Three . . .

1. **United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell**

Entering its second season on CNN, *United Shades of America* follows comedian and activist W. Kamau Bell as he travels the country to meet different groups of



Americans, including Muslim Americans, protestors at Standing Rock and current members of the Ku Klux Klan. To say Bell's interviews in these segments are brave is an understatement, but what really stands out to me is the way he makes the interviewees feel comfortable enough to share their

stories. Bell's relaxed demeanor in the face of the often-vitriolic answers he receives assures both participants and viewers that his only intention is to understand their thought processes, and maybe get a few laughs along the way. Recommended viewing: Season 2, Episode 1, in which Bell visits with immigrants and refugees across the country and attends an Alt-Right meeting with founder Richard Spencer.



2. Crazy Ex-Girlfriend

When the CW's musical-comedy *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* premiered two years ago, I was working in a community college library that was often completely empty hours before close. I'm only slightly exaggerating when I say I found the end of the internet multiple times. When I found the show, I was admittedly skeptical of the premise (and

the title). A woman chasing her ex-boyfriend across the country, leaving behind a successful career in New York City? I couldn't handle watching another romantic comedy that made a female protagonist into a weeping mess over the "one thing" that could make her happy. What I found in this show is something completely different than that. Yes, Rebecca Bunch (played by Golden Globe winner and show creator Rachel Bloom) can be obsessive over hunky doofus Josh Chan, but the way the show uses that obsession to warmly and realistically portray Rebecca's struggles with depression and anxiety is something I've yet to encounter in any other television show. It doesn't hurt that every episode of the show is laugh-out-loud funny, and brilliant musical numbers have been on my playlists for months on end. Recommended viewing: To get a taste of whether this show is for you, try a few songs on YouTube. My personal favorite is the hilarious "Sexy Getting Ready Song." Broadway fans will also appreciate the passion and production of the show's opening act, "West Covina."



3. iZombie

As a teenager obsessed with WB shows like *Buffy* and *Dawson's Creek*, I'm sure I assumed I would eventually get over the angsty drama of the channel's programming. I guess that's somewhat true (even though two of my three favorite shows air there), because *iZombie* is anything but angst-ridden. Loosely based on the comic book series of the same name,

iZombie started its third season in April. Having watched most of the episodes when they aired, I've now forced three people to sit through the whole series on Netflix. And they all loved it! Fans of *Veronica Mars* will enjoy the return of creator Rob Thomas' case-of-the-week, with the added bonus of hilarious one-liners and a well-rounded, lovable cast. To give you a hint at the tone of the show, the protagonist, a zombie who solves crimes by eating the brains of murder victims to induce clue-ridden flashbacks of their lives, is named Liv Moore. A zombie named Liv Moore. Bah-dum-ding! Recommended viewing: The whole series, really. The episode that aired on 5/30/17 was probably my favorite to date, featuring straight-man detective Clive Babineaux getting completely wrapped up in the world of Dungeons and Dragons. Perfection.



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Making the Switch: Tips for Moving Around in Law Librarianship

I had the pleasure of attending SEAALL's conference in Raleigh this year for the first time. Professional development is something I value greatly, and as my family lives in Raleigh, attending was a win-win. One of the sessions I attended was "You Can Fit in Anywhere! Skills Portability in the Law Library World," where the presenters discussed making career switches between different areas of law librarianship. As it turns out, I was, on that day, in a weird limbo, as I made the transition from a law school library to a law firm library. Further, I was about to go from "paraprofessional" to "librarian," so it was a change not only in institution but in type of work.

The point of this article is to add to the discussion of how one can make a switch from an academic library to a law firm library, particularly if you are in a support-staff role now. I would also like to give my impression so far -- 8½ weeks in at the time of this article's submission. I have no authority to preach on the matter as I have only been in the game a short time. However, I can share my thoughts and what I did to make the jump between professional spheres, and I hope you find them useful. I highly doubt I am saying anything novel, but the below information is what worked for me.

First, in making the switch, I would like to emphasize education. My new position is "Master's preferred," and I am in the process of obtaining that degree. (End of July 2017, specifically. Not counting though.) I feel confident in saying that my being in school was helpful in getting the new job because it showed I was invested in the field. The hiring of any employee is a risk, but if the institution you wish to work for sees you are enrolled in a graduate program, then it can be viewed as a commitment to the profession.

Next, if you have the option to take some kind of legal research course, do so. I was able to take a first-year student's legal research course as an independent study for my graduate program, and I am seeing that decision was really helpful in my new capacity. "Networking" is emphasized across many fields, and I can attest to the usefulness of getting to know people. It is difficult and nerve-wracking to put yourself out there, but it can open up doors for you. Now, once those doors are open, you still have to earn the position, but it helps to have friends on the inside. Establish a meaningful connection with them outside of LinkedIn. This comes easier for some than for others, but it is just something you have to work at.

As stated above, at the time of this article's submission, I am 8½ weeks into my librarian role at a law firm library. Your experience might vary from mine as workplace cultures are different, but I have found the job to be challenging and rewarding. I had a fear going in that I would not be able to maintain my work-life

balance, but so far, I have not had issues. I am grateful for that. Again I will say that taking the legal research course was highly beneficial. Law firms move at a much faster pace than a small academic library, so there has been some learning there. I encourage you to be efficient and ask questions no matter how small or silly sounding.

In summary, if you are in a support staff role in an academic library but wish to move to another area of that field, I suggest enrolling in a master's program and taking a legal research course. Meeting people in real life, not LinkedIn, is useful, and once you accept the new position, identify the culture of the institution and adapt to it as needed. Good luck!

Recent Acquisitions



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The resource that gets my nod for the recent acquisitions column this go round is the Library Marketing and Outreach Interest Group's Facebook community. As my department's duties have expanded to encompass more and more marketing activities, I have found this community to be an invaluable source for ideas, advice, and support. As far as the postings themselves, I find them to be an excellent mix of best practices/"how I did it good" posts, journal articles, brainstorming exercises, and app reviews. Want to find out how other libraries present social media analytics data to stakeholders? Looking for a fun idea to use as an orientation activity? Curious about new apps for creating on-the-fly videos? These are just a handful of the topics that have been explored over the past few days, chimed in on by professionals across the country with a variety of backgrounds and expertise. One of the posts led me to another new obsession, the Librarian Design Share page (<https://librariandesignshare.org/>). Here, you see materials and campaigns produced by some of the best minds in library marketing. I suggest that anyone involved in marketing the library take a look around this site for inspiration.



You're invited to the . . .



SEAALL Business Meeting & Reception

*AALL Annual Meeting
Austin, TX*

07.17.17 // 6PM-7PM

Hilton Governor's Ballroom Salon D

SEAALLSucker
Attire Encouraged!

Food, Drinks, & Friends





Attention!

Want to know the secret to success?

Become an author in the Southeastern Law Librarian!

Share your articles, notes, photos, comments, ideas, rejected blog entries, or anything else that will fit into a Word document in the SEAALL Newsletter! Guaranteed to be your first step to conquering the librarianship world or your money back!

Please submit your work or refund requests to blaine@flcourts.org.

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