

# Southeastern Law Librarian

Spring 2018

[www.aallnet.org/chapter/seaall](http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/seaall)

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**SEAALL President**  
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## Presidential Ponderings

...from Kristina L. Niedringhaus

As I prepared to write my first presidential ponderings, I was again struck by the collective knowledge, energy, and innovative spirit of SEAALL members. These qualities shone through at the SEAALL Annual Meeting in Nashville. The institute theme was “Change, Challenge, and Opportunity,” and we kicked off the day with keynote speaker Todd McCullough, cofounder of Ampersand and thought leader in innovation-driven business growth. His talk, “On Innovation: Turning Threats into Opportunities,” was a great kickoff to a day filled with discussion of using disorder to your advantage, collection management, rethinking physical space, and how librarians can leverage disruptions in the legal market. The annual meeting also had great programs covering a wide variety of topics including implicit bias and microaggressions, legal technology, goal-setting, digitization, assessment, and how our colleagues at the University of Puerto Rico have been dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

Special thanks to the members of the local arrangements committee, program committee, and our presenters for putting on a fantastic meeting. Make sure you mark your calendar for the 2019 institute and annual meeting, March 21-23, 2019, at the [Omni Homestead Resort](#), Hot Springs, VA. You will be hearing more from the local arrangements and program committees in the coming months.

The SEAALL Annual Meeting is also a time of transition for the SEAALL officers. I want to thank Michelle Cosby (immediate past president), Charles Pipins (member-at-large), and T.J. Striepe (secretary) for their service and Jason Sowards who has served for the last year as SEAALL president and now serves as immediate past president. I would also like to welcome Suzanne Corriell (member-at-large), Kat Klepfer (secretary), and Louis Rosen (vice president/president elect). I also want to thank our outgoing committee members and chairs. Volunteers drive SEAALL and make it the organization it is today. Committee assignments for 2018-2019 are complete and if you volunteered to be on a committee you should have already received an email

regarding your committee. If you thought you volunteered and did not receive an email, or would still like to volunteer, please let me know.

The AALL Annual Meeting will be here soon. I really enjoy attending conferences such as SEAALL and AALL because I always learn something new. I love to attend programs that help me solve a problem I currently have but I also make a point to attend at least one program, and hopefully more, on something that is outside my normal sphere. In addition to the great programs, I learn so much from networking and socializing with my colleagues. It is fascinating to hear about the projects and events happening at other libraries. If you are attending AALL, in Baltimore, I hope you will attend the SEAALL reception (and very brief business meeting) on Monday, July 16, 2018, 6 - 7 pm. We will be meeting off-site at the Pratt Street Ale House, 206 W. Pratt Street, very close to the convention center. I hope to see you there!



Jonathan Beeker

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## Closed Stacks

My wife and I have a lot of stuff. Not *Hoarders* level by any means, but definitely more books, pictures, souvenirs, tchotchkes, objets d'art, and the like than we can artfully display in our little two-bedroom home at one time. A few years ago, we hit upon the idea to keep a lot of our things stored away in boxes and periodically curate exhibits of our collections in this bookcase in our living room. This method offers a ton of advantages: 1) our house doesn't look like a junk shop, 2) we get to reminisce as we go through our things every time we redress the shelves, 3) friends and family are drawn to the display every time we change it out, 4) we can scratch the itch to redecorate economically, with things we already own, and 5) fewer things to dust. Don't get me wrong, we still have piles of books (especially on bedside tables and tucked away under beds, couches, and tables) and roughly 25 percent too much stuff on any given surface, but this method has been a fun, creative, and often challenging way to conquer the clutter.

When it's time to change things out, we often employ a theme or themes to get our creativity flowing and to



put natural limits on what we select to drag out of the closets. With June underway and summer on the doorstep, we crammed our cabinet with curios and books related to a few of our favorite things about this time of year, including food and travel.



Starting at the tippy top with framed woodblock prints from a set of Japanese calendars for the year 1965 (pictured are June, July, and August), the first shelf includes a handful of some of my favorite cookbooks, including two examples from a genre I didn't realize existed until recently – art-inspired cookbooks.

I highly recommend Salvador Dali's 1973 *Diners de Gala* mostly for the vaguely unsettling depictions of elaborate dishes, as I've yet to try any of the recipes. (Mine is a modern reprint.) The other example, from St. John's Museum of Art in my hometown of Wilmington, NC, is called *The Cook's Canvas* and it's full of less intimidating recipes and more appetizing artwork.

Further down, and throughout, you can see not only books about travel, journeys, and quests, but also various souvenirs from our recent travels. To my mind, the best souvenirs are very cheap, if not literally free. (See bookcase for pebbles, crockery, and glass from the Thames, Mississippi, Hudson, and Potomac riverbanks, not to mention a pinecone and dried wildflower from our trip to Berkeley, CA, earlier this year). One exception I make is for toys depicting iconic modes of mass transit. (Bonus points for spotting each of these in the packed shelves.) I also chose to display one of my birthday presents from earlier this year, Brian Cook's *Landscapes of Britain* featuring the artist's iconic designs from the Batsford series of travel guides popular in the 30s, 40s, and 50s.



That really only scratches the surface of our current display case, but I hope you've enjoyed the tour!



## Readers' Advisory



Jason Murray

Reference Librarian and  
Assistant Professor of Law  
Library

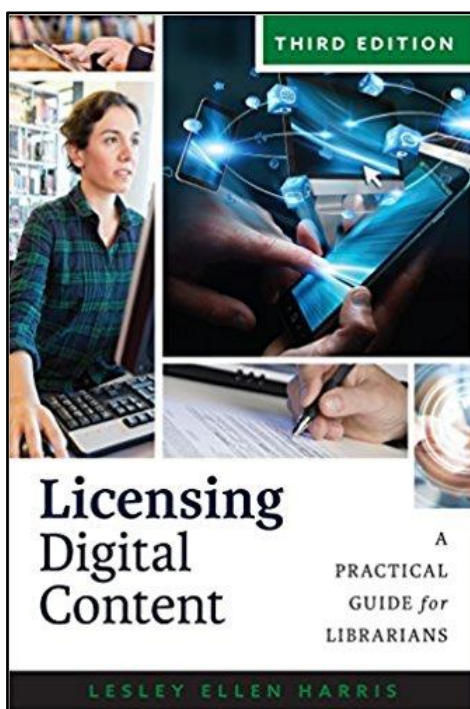
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### Lesley Ellen Harris, *Licensing Digital Content: A Practical Guide for Librarians, 3rd Edition* (2017)

ISBN: 978-0-83891-630-8

*Licensing Digital Content: A Practical Guide for Librarians, 3rd Edition*, is published by the American Library Association and is written for libraries and librarians. It can also benefit vendors, publishers, aggregators, corporations, and museums, because it allows them a glimpse of the digital licensing process, “through a library’s eyes.” Law librarians might already be familiar with some material and concepts covered in this book, nevertheless, this book is a “must read” for all librarians, and all libraries could benefit from this book. I recommend adding this book to your collection.

Much of libraries’ purchased information is now digital, and with libraries creating their own digital information, it is critical for librarians to at least have a foundation in the terminology and principles related to acquiring, licensing, and negotiating agreements for digital information. Author Lesley Ellen Harris does a great job of making the complexities of digital licensing easier to understand for all librarians unfamiliar with the topic. Moreover, Harris’s knowledge and insight in the field of digital licensing make this book a useful and practical resource for librarians.



Harris identifies and defines key terms specifically related to digital licensing and discusses when to license and how to do your own licensing. She also details how to negotiate digital license agreements, providing tips for successful agreements and checklists to help librarians ensure the agreements are good for their library and their patrons. Harris notes the importance of, and explains keys to, negotiating for your specific library’s needs and how to negotiate agreements that are “supposedly” non-negotiable. (Hint: The vendors want your business.)

This book is thorough and concise, with only 181 pages, including three appendices, a glossary, a list of online resources, and an index. Digital licensing

is a global issue and the book reflects this. The book walks librarians through the digital licensing process from knowing when and what to license (Chapter 1) to finalizing license agreements (Chapter 8). Sandwiched in between are chapters discussing the lingo of digital licensing, key clauses, and boilerplate clauses;

demystifying the licensing experience; making the negotiating process less scary; and common questions on licensing. Two of the appendices contain sections of the United States Copyright Act, one section on fair use and one on inter-library loan. The other appendix contains a digital licensing clauses checklist. The glossary is very helpful and contains numerous terms related to digital licensing that might not be commonly known, even to law librarians. Because digital licensing is such a large and complex field, Harris also includes a list of online resources for further study. This book is meant to be used as a guide and reference resource on digital licensing, and the index makes it easy to find the location of the specific sub-topic of interest.

## Readers' Advisory



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### John D. Bessler, *The Death Penalty as Torture: From the Dark Ages to Abolition* (2017)

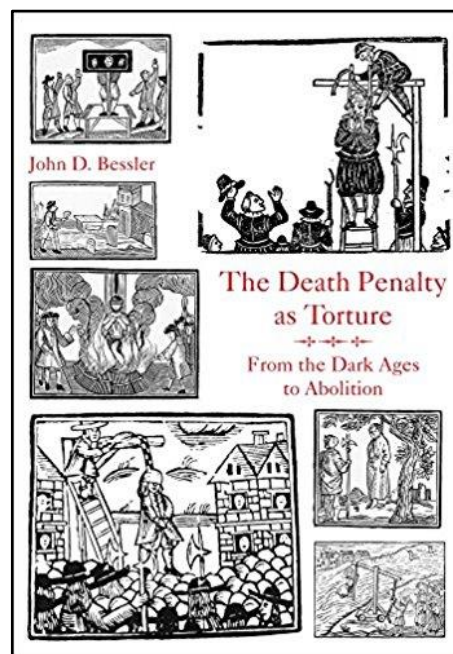
ISBN: 978-1-61163-926-1

I would recommend this book for those who have a law degree, or at least possess the patience to read a scholarly legal tome. The author is actually an associate professor of law at the University of Baltimore School of Law, and has written extensively on capital punishment. The book has nine chapters, each of which reads like a well-written law review article, followed by extensive footnotes.

In the first chapter, Prof. Bessler describes the many types of torture which had been employed by judicial authorities in European states to extract information and confessions. After guilt was determined, corporal punishment or execution quickly followed. Although the chapter is entitled "The Dark Ages," many of these barbaric practices were used until the end of the nineteenth century.

In his second chapter, Bessler describes how the radical writings of Montesquieu and Beccaria spread around the world and dramatically affected Enlightenment views on crime and punishment. Beccaria's *On Crimes and Punishments* was read by intellectuals and politicians, and started a debate on how they should treat the accused. At the time, death by hanging was the ordinary sentence for any criminal act, from petty theft to murder. Punishment for a very bad crime, such as treason, meant death by torturous methods.

In the remaining chapters, Bessler takes the reader through legal arguments that cover U.S. case law, foreign court decisions, and international treaties to which the U.S. is a signatory. It is quite evident that he has thoroughly researched this topic. He makes a convincing argument that all elements of the standard capital punishment system in this country constitute torture, and that the U.S. is in violation of international agreements.



Since I am a law librarian, and have read about capital punishment, I thought that I knew much about the topic. This book has shown me that I did not. Even though the physical book has 416 giant pages filled with tiny print, it still seems like it is a condensed product. Whatever your beliefs on capital punishment, this book should be in your library.

## Readers' Advisory



Louis M. Rosen

Reference Librarian and  
Associate Professor of  
Law Library

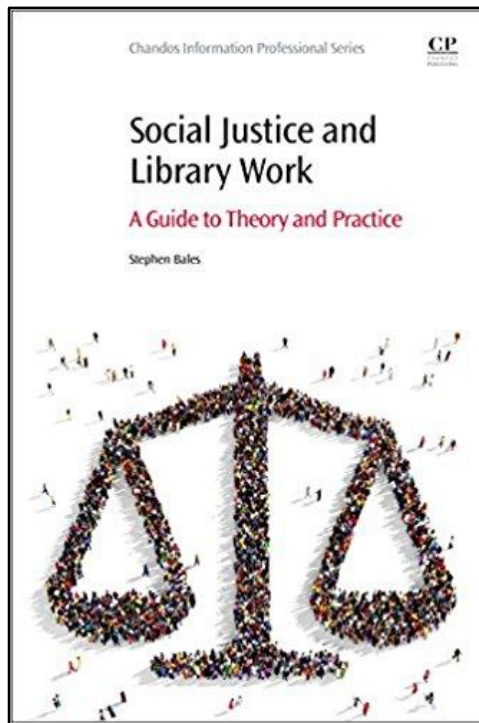
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### **Stephen Bales, *Social Justice and Library Work: A Guide to Theory and Practice* (2017)**

ISBN: 978-0-08101-755-5

Continuing my deep dive into the positive, affirming, public-serving, action-oriented aspects of librarianship, I was delighted to discover *Social Justice and Library Work* and select it for our law library collection. Bales' introduction describes the book as a "practical guide" for any library workers who seek "a transformative professional praxis that aims at the goals ascribed to by social justice and its close relative human rights." And that's what we all do, to one extent or another, in our law libraries, right? Engaging in a professional praxis involves "[putting] theory into practice in a conscious, reflective way," so Bales organized his book into chapters based on theory and practice.

The theory chapter begins with a literature review of foundations for a social justice praxis in libraries, and follows that list with even more recommended reading on librarianship as it relates to politics, class, labor, critical information literacy, and diversity (women, LGBT, race and ethnicity, and people with disabilities), for a total of 55 sources with detailed synopses and full citations. This chapter would be a gold mine for any LIS students writing papers or librarians writing articles about twenty-first century librarianship.



The longer practice chapter lists 250 options for libraries and other information organizations to engage in social-justice-oriented work, divided into 12 broad categories of resources, including subscription and free online databases, indexes and directories, publishing outlets for books and periodicals, online information hubs and portals, advocacy groups, and legal resources, among others. The legal resources won't come as a surprise to most of us, including links and contact information for the ACLU, the ABA's

Consumers' Guide to Legal Help, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Southern Poverty Law Center, among several others. But I could see creating a LibGuide or similar guide for our public patrons, or adding to an existing one, with these sources Bales went to the trouble of compiling.

After the theory and practice chapters, the praxis chapter showcases seven

fascinating and diverse library organizations that all engage in radical, progressive librarianship. Reading more like a series of articles, Bales shines a light on librarians who are fighting the good fight against the status quo in different ways. Free Government Information, the “information activist” organization that runs <https://freegovinfo.info/>, would probably resonate with our fellow law librarians the most, with a team of librarians and volunteers striving to make government information as available, accessible, and transparent as possible, especially in an era when agencies are less likely to value sharing information or preserve formerly-accessible research and data. But there are other library groups out there whose stories Bales highlights, like the Los Angeles Anarchist Book Fair, the Brooklyn-based Lesbian Herstory Archives, and the Seattle Public Library’s Books on Bikes Program, that might not be doing exactly what we do, but can certainly inspire us and give us ideas for our own libraries.

This book should be absolutely mandatory for any academic library, particularly for institutions that have a library and information science graduate program, however, despite being interesting and inspirational reading, I would not call it a necessary purchase for most law libraries. I definitely recommend it for those law libraries that have a strong commitment to social justice and outreach to their communities, beyond just law students, professors, and attorneys.

**Congratulations!**

## **SEAALL Scholarship Winners**

### **SEAALL Student Scholarship:**

Daniel Molina  
Emily McCutcheon

### **Lucille Elliot Scholarship:**

Linda Sobey  
Louis Rosen  
Cassandra Patterson

### **SEAALL AALL Registration Grant:**

Jason Happ

**No one applied for the CONELL Grant.**





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## Readers' Advisory

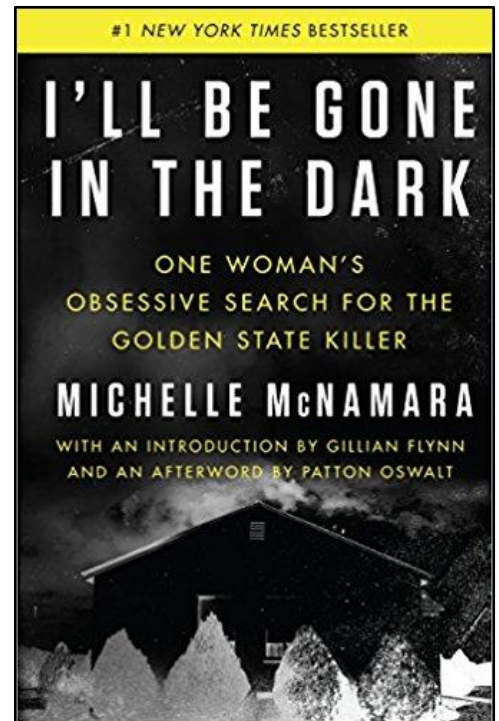
### **Michelle McNamara, *I'll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer* (2018)**

ISBN: 978-0-06231-978-4

If you aren't familiar with the current surge in popularity being experienced by the "true crime" genre, you might not have heard of Michelle McNamara or her blog, "True Crime Diary." In that space, McNamara created a community for true crime fans and amateur sleuths to discuss clues and theories on the most famous unsolved cases. As that community grew, so did McNamara's personal obsession with catching the Golden State Killer, a moniker she herself coined after DNA evidence linked a series of southern California murders to the East Area Rapist, a man who had terrorized Sacramento neighborhoods from 1976 - 1979.

In her research for the book, McNamara amassed 3,500 files related to the case, dozens of handwritten notebooks, numerous digitized police reports, and 37 boxes of evidence given to her by the Orange County prosecutor's office. In the book, as much a memoir as a crime procedural, McNamara discusses how an unsolved murder in her childhood neighborhood led to her interest in true crime. When she heard about the Golden State Killer in 2007, she became laser-focused on catching him. She writes about this quest, "There's a scream lodged permanently in my throat now." Detailing her late nights and long days, the endless rabbit hole of online message boards and the emotional roller coaster of identifying a possible suspect, McNamara paints a tense, but deeply-human, picture of what her life was like once it began to revolve around a serial rapist and murderer.

Unfortunately, this nine-year obsession came with unintended and tragic consequences for McNamara. In April 2016, she died in her sleep due to an undiagnosed heart condition and the mixture of Adderall and Xanax she was taking to help her focus on the investigation and gain relief from the nightmares she was



***"There's a scream lodged permanently in my throat now."***

having from its grisly details. Though the book describes many of the killer's crimes in macabre detail, perhaps the most heart breaking passage is repeated at the beginning of several entries: "The following chapter was pieced together from Michelle's notes."

McNamara's husband, comedian Patton Oswalt, and her fellow investigator, Billy Jensen, worked together to make sure that her life's work was not forgotten. After the book was published, the two began a book tour, discussing the case and its progress with fans of the book all over the world. In the midst of this tour, on April 24, 2018, Oswalt and Jensen received the news that McNamara died waiting on: An arrest warrant had been issued and the alleged Golden State Killer was in custody.

In a cruel twist of fate, the method by which the killer was eventually caught is something McNamara discusses in detail in one of the book's more optimistic passages. Though he left DNA at several crime scenes, neither the FBI's DNA database (CODIS), nor the national DNA database (NDIS), have ever gotten a match for the Golden State Killer. McNamara discusses at length how this means that neither the killer, nor any closely related family members had ever been arrested for crimes that require DNA collection. However, modern genealogical research has created a DNA database far more comprehensive than either of those repositories through the voluntary donation of DNA by people hoping to learn more about their family history. Unfortunately for McNamara, at the writing of the book the only sites containing this information had strict policies not to share DNA, including with law enforcement. Last year, a major breakthrough came in the form of a crowd-sourced DNA database website with no such restrictions. Detectives were able to track down a third-cousin of the alleged killer, Joseph DeAngelo, and by process of elimination, solved the long-cold case.

***"You'll be silent forever and I'll be gone in the dark."***

In a particularly chilling description of one attack in the late 1970s, McNamara recounts the killer warning a victim against making noise, lest he cut her throat. "You'll be silent forever and I'll be gone in the dark," he growled in a disturbingly poetic quote that would give even the least-interested reader chills. In an open letter written to the killer before her death, McNamara turns this quote around on its author, threatening that the killer's days of freedom were coming to an end. "One day soon," she writes "you'll hear a car pull up to your curb, an engine cut out. You'll hear footsteps coming up your front walk . . . This is how it ends for you. Open the door. Show us your face. Walk into the light." While McNamara's death is a great tragedy, she lives on through *I'll Be Gone in the Dark* and in the countless hours she put into seeking closure for victims' families and finally seeing the Golden State Killer behind bars.

**You're  
invited...**



**SEAALL  
Business  
Meeting & Reception**

AALL Annual Meeting  
Baltimore, MD

**Monday, July 16, 2018  
6-7 pm**



Pratt Street Ale House  
206 W. Pratt Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

**SEAALLSucker  
Attire  
Encouraged**



**Jason Murray**

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## Recent Acquisitions

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One of our recent acquisitions, about a year ago now, was the Wolters Kluwer Online Study Aid Library (WKOSAL). I believe this is one of our library's best investments in the three years I have been at Barry University. Every year, we go through the process of reviewing our databases and the contracts that are up for renewal or cancellation, and every year there are some we add and some we cancel.

As anyone in librarianship knows, databases can be, and often are, extremely costly. As such, when we make our selections, we want to ensure we are fulfilling the mission and needs of our law school and our students, while also getting the most "bang for our (limited) bucks." The WKOSAL has been a database that does give us that "bang for our bucks." Its interface, usability, and functionality are fantastic! Importantly, our students have been extremely excited about the resource, and it has seen much higher usage than the previous database we used for study aids.

Prior to obtaining access to WKOSAL, our library purchased most of the Wolters Kluwer study aids in print, and we still maintain copies of many. Some of these include Examples & Explanations titles, Glannon Guides, Emanuel Outlines, and the CrunchTime series. Depending on the study aid, we normally maintain one to five copies. Newer editions go into our reserve collection for four-hour checkout, and older editions are cataloged in our general collection. Obviously, students are not allowed to make personal notes in the study aids, and if all copies are checked out, other students must wait until one is returned. We wanted to eliminate these restrictions and also enable students to access the study aids from anywhere, allowing those hardcore studiers to take them to the beach to study, if they chose to. This is where the WKOSAL has shown its value.

The benefit of having WKOSAL for our students is enormous, in that every student can have access to the same study aid at the same time – no limitations to only a handful of students getting access. Additionally, there are no time limits on how long they can check them out.

They can simply download them to their favorite device and access them offline for the entire



semester. Moreover, students now have the ability to take and retain personal notes within the study aid on WKOSAL. If all of that was not enough, our access to WKOSAL can save students from having to buy their own copy, which can mean hundreds of dollars of savings. (Students who are in love with the tactual experience of having a book in hand can still check out our print editions, or buy their own.)

With all of these benefits, plus the user friendly interface of the database, the WKOSAL was a great investment for our library.



## Meet & Three

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Francis X. Norton, Jr.

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### Meet . . .

While preparing to write this “Meet,” I read prior “Meets” that had already been published in the newsletter. I also perused the first sentences of famous old first-person narratives, like “Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show,” and all that Holden Caulfield kind of crap, but I don’t feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, I’d rather talk about New Orleans.

Before I moved to New Orleans, I couldn’t even point to its location on a map. Today, after having lived here for more than sixteen years, I can point to its location on a map, but more importantly, I also know why the city was founded, and why it developed as it did.

This is the three-hundredth anniversary of the founding of New Orleans in 1718. Before it was established, France already had colonists and administrators along the Gulf Coast. The French planted settlements at Fort Maurepas (Old Biloxi) and Massacre Island (Dauphin Island) in 1699, Mobile in 1702, Natchitoches in 1714, and Fort Rosalie (Natchez) in 1716. In fact, there was considerable debate among different administrators and officials as to where the new planned settlement should be located. Many wanted it to be located on a coastline, since seafaring ships had difficulty entering the Mississippi River. Some wanted it far upriver on high ground that was safe from flooding.

Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, an officer of the Company of the West and commandant general of the lands claimed by France, decided on a portage used by indigenous tribes to travel between the great river and the lake. Seafaring ships could come into Lake Ponchartrain via the Rigolets, with smaller craft then transferring cargo down the bayou to a point where it could be carried overland to the town. Until the Mississippi’s mouth could be dredged, however, ships had to stop at a small fort near the gulf, La Balize, and then small craft had to transfer cargo 33 leagues upriver against a strong current, which could take weeks.

The new name was to honor the powerful Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, who was the regent for the eight-year-old Louis XV. A proper sounding name was important to attract colonists and investment, since officers of the company believed that names like Mobile and Massacre Island had not been advantageous for either.

A Scottish gambler named John Law controlled the French company in charge. In 1716, Law founded a bank in Paris that soon became the Royal Bank. He acquired other trading companies, and became controller general of finances in 1720. Law was soon in charge of the entire French economy, but it was built on debt and paper. Since everything depended on the public buying more shares, he wildly

promoted the possible bounty of the new colonies. When the Mississippi Bubble finally broke in 1720, Law fled France, and the colonists in New Orleans, which was really just a collection of flooded huts, lost all promised support.



## **And Three Meats on Bread . . .**

### **1. The Po-boy.**

The bread is what makes this sandwich impossible to replicate anywhere else. The almost French bread is from local bakeries like Gendusa or Leidenheimer. If it is made anywhere else, it won't taste the same. This particular po-boy came from Parkway Bakery & Tavern. You can order it dressed (lettuce, tomato, and pickles) or undressed. You can get it with roast beef, fried shrimp, fried oysters, fried catfish, or even fried potatoes. You can get it with sliced turkey, hot sausage, Italian sausage, or even alligator sausage.



### **2. The Muffaletta.**

The bread is a round Sicilian sesame loaf. It is filled with genoa salami, ham, mortadella, provolone, Swiss cheese, and olive salad. This particular muffaletta came from Terranova's Supermarket. The family only makes them on Saturday mornings, and sells them in halves. Because they are so large, I can only eat about one quarter of a muffaletta in one sitting. I remember once being at Katie's Restaurant and watching a tourist receive the giant muffaletta he had ordered for lunch, suddenly realizing that the waitress had been correct in her description.



### **3. The Lucky Dog.**

This is the hotdog sold by vendors pushing the hotdog-shaped carts through the French Quarter. They are also available at the New Orleans Airport, the Superdome, and a few other locations. The name was made famous in the novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Full Disclosure: This is actually the very first Lucky Dog that I ever ate. It was very good.

**SEAALL BUSINESS MEETING  
FINANCIAL REPORT  
PERIOD OF  
July 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018**

**INCOME**

2018 SEAALL ANNUAL MEETING		<b>\$55,477.20</b>
Registration	\$39,700.00	
Coffee Break	\$7,000.00	
Sponsorships/Exhibitors	\$8,777.20	
MEMBERSHIP DUES		<b>\$12,200.00</b>
Associate	\$120.00	
Individual	\$900.00	
Institutional	\$11,130.00	
Student	\$50.00	

**TOTAL INCOME** **\$67,677.20**

**EXPENSES**

AALL 2017 ANNUAL MEETING		<b>\$5,301.18</b>
SEAALL Reception/meeting	\$4,346.18	
Chapter VIP Expenses	\$955.00	
BANK SERVICE CHARGE FOR DEPOSIT SLIPS		<b>\$163.53</b>
CHAPTER LIABILITY INSURANCE		<b>\$472.00</b>
FEE FOR SEAALL DOMAIN NAME		<b>\$40.34</b>
INTUIT SUBSCRIPTION		<b>\$116.82</b>
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ANNUAL REPORT FEE		<b>\$61.25</b>
POSTAGE		<b>\$205.80</b>
PREPARATION OF SEAALL TAX RETURN		<b>\$625.00</b>
REFUND ON OVERPAYMENT OF DUES		<b>\$30.00</b>
REFUND ON SEAALL MEETING 2017 REG		<b>\$200.00</b>
SEAALL 2018 ANNUAL MEETING		<b>\$52,613.64</b>
A/V costs	\$398.25	
Conference Hotel Expenses	\$38,692.23	
Friday Reception	\$11,500.00	
Speaker fee	\$250.00	
Water and food for bags	\$153.16	
Transportation	\$1,620.00	
SEAALL ONLINE ELECTION FEE		<b>\$640.00</b>
STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS		<b>\$8,195.00</b>
AALL Registration Grant	\$695.00	
Lucille Elliott Scholarship	\$2,000.00	
Student Scholarship	\$5,500.00	
WILD APRICOT SUBSCRIPTION		<b>\$756.00</b>

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$69,420.56**

**CURRENT TOTAL IN BANK** **\$8,786.55**

**ENDING BALANCE BY JUNE 2018** **\$10,786.55**





Paul Jerome  
McLaughlin, Jr.

Instruction and Reference  
Librarian

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## Crafting Relatable Tales: Teaching Students the Importance of Multidisciplinary Legal Research Using a Story Arc Structure

In response to the law becoming more multidisciplinary, law students must be trained to search for information in any source. To meet the standards of their profession, law librarians must teach students the process of legal research and how legal information and theories interweave with other disciplines. Librarians must also prepare students to conduct research in fields such as forensics, medicine, economics, and many others, to find the materials they will need for their academic writing and in their practice. During law school, students are instructed to frame legal issues as stories to make them more relatable to those unfamiliar with legal arguments and the legal system. Librarians can help their students learn how to conduct legal research by introducing research as a process that helps them gather information from legal and non-legal sources to complete a story arc from its beginning to a desired conclusion. By introducing multidiscipline research to students and encouraging them to think of the research process as gathering the pieces needed to tell the story they would like to share, librarians can help them in both their academic and professional careers.

An opportune time to introduce students to conducting research using non-legal sources is during research sessions connected with their upper-level writing projects. Eugene Volokh, in his book *Academic Legal Writing*, writes that the creation of a solid upper-level paper requires that a student find a legal topic that has a problem that needs to be addressed, that the student research the topic thoroughly and then propose a possible solution to the identified problem that is legally coherent and understandable to readers. Students often come to the library seeking help researching their topics after having found articles on HeinOnline, Lexis, or Westlaw, but without the information they need to structure what they have found into a coherent academic paper.

When introduced to the notion they can look outside of case law, statutes, regulations, and legal secondary sources to bolster their papers, law students often ask, "Can I use that even though it's not a legal source?" After being assured they can use sources from outside the legal realm, students tend to ask the follow-up question, "When do I know when I've found enough information to write my paper?" Introducing students to the idea that they are using the information they find to tell their readers the story of their topic from its beginning to a resolution gives students a flexible structure to work from that can support research on a variety of topics and help them determine when they have enough information for their papers.

Librarians must instruct students in how to establish a systematic approach to the research process rather than trying to establish a set research plan dependent on



select sources. By teaching students to create and use a research process that can be applied to any field of knowledge, librarians can help students avoid the pitfalls of relying on too narrow of a range of resources and encourage them to be flexible in their use of a wide variety of electronic and print sources. Students should be taught to approach their research by examining the who, what, where, when, why, and how of their topic to determine the search terms they will need and how to combine their terms with Boolean operators to get the most efficient results within the systems they are using. Librarians should stress that initial searches can provide the foundations of a paper, but that several searches in a variety of disciplines might be needed to find adequate information that allows understanding of a topic from its beginning to its current state, and to formulate workable solutions for problems.

When introducing students to multidisciplinary research, librarians can describe using information from outside the legal realm as utilizing supporting materials to set the scene of their story and for the structure of their story arcs. Story arcs can be described as having three acts: the setup, the conflict, and the resolution. In legal research and writing, the setup act consists of providing the reader the background information they need to understand a legal topic and how it has affected the legal field in the past and up to its current state. The conflict act of legal story telling describes how the current state of the topic of interest is causing an injustice or societal issue that must be addressed. The resolution act consists of the student putting forward a solution for the problem that they have identified that would eliminate or reduce negative impacts of the topics discussed. Using a story arc approach provides students flexible guidelines to follow that can be adapted for research projects with scopes varying in breath from focused case comments to wider social justice issues such as providing access to legal information and help to citizens, with little or no need to alter the overall structure of their research plan unless specifically needed for the topic they are researching and writing on.

Librarians can emphasis the need for using information outside the legal field in scholarly legal writing by explaining that providing information from legal sources alone would make for an unrelatable story. By adding information from other disciplines, topics considered to be dry to some readers can be made more interesting and understandable by putting concepts into a relatable context for readers. As an example, using a multidisciplinary research approach for legal topics can better explore the difficulties faced by governments when establishing an age threshold for marriage due to cultural influences, family economic pressures, and the lack of education and outreach services that could break the cycle of child marriage in a region. Students looking for solutions to legal conundrums can use multidisciplinary research to find problems in other fields that have similar elements to those they are researching and adapt solutions that have been used to address such problems into a legal format. Using solutions from other disciplines allows students to be flexible in their search for answers to problems, while giving them the security of working from established problem solving plans and citing to connected scholarly works.

While not filled with fantastic creatures or tales of advanced space travels, legal writing is a form of storytelling. Librarians can help students hone their skills by introducing them to the three-act story arc and explaining how such a writing structure can be used for their legal research and writing. By making the legal research and writing processes more understandable, and encouraging them to use sources from a variety of disciplines, librarians can not only enhance their students' skill, but also help them in their quests to vanquish injustice and social inequity in all their forms.

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