

VALL REVIEW

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The *VALL REVIEW* is the official newsletter of the Vancouver Association of Law Libraries. VALL is composed of members of the law library community interested in discussing issues and sharing ideas. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent VALL policy or position. Unsolicited submissions are welcome. VALL reserves the right to edit submissions.

<http://www.vall.vancouver.bc.ca>

Vancouver Association of Law Libraries
PO Box 48663, Bentall Centre
Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1A1

THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Joanne Lecky

How quickly time flies! It is hard to believe that we are now well into 2004, the cheers of happy New Year are faint echoes and spring is right around the corner.

VALL and VALA

In the 2003 Roundtable the VALL membership, expressed an interest in forming a relationship with VALA. I am very pleased to announce that an official relationship has been formed between VALL and VALA (Vancouver Association of Legal Administrators). Based on our discussions it was decided that a new subsection be created under VALA - called Knowledge Management.

One jointly organized meeting will be held per year, and will be included as one of VALL's 8 monthly meetings - the presentation or speaker will be of interest to both groups.

Gillian Crabtree will be the contact liaison person between the VALL and the new subsection. For further information, or to sign up as a VALA member, please email Gillian, gcrabtree@ekb.com.

March Luncheon

The VALL Program Coordinators, Elena & Gillian, are doing an excellent job with luncheon programs this year. We have a most interesting topic on the agenda for March - Annie Rochette, Assistant Professor of Law at UBC, Director of Legal Research and Writing Programme, will discuss the teaching of legal research and the issues that arise between online vs. traditional print-based legal research.

Annie would like to hear your comments and ideas about student preparedness when they begin their articles. So put your thinking caps on and be prepared to discuss your thoughts during the luncheon.



FROM THE EDITORS

Shawna Ford & Jean Chong

We look forward to ongoing interest by you in our newsletter content. There is a wealth of expertise that exists among the VALL membership and we encourage you to submit your **Tip or Trick** or perhaps send us a blurb on an Internet resource that you have found useful.

We also modified the format of the VALL Review based on a VALL member recommendation. We are always open to suggestions, so please continue to send us your feedback. We won't take it personally...honest!

Thanks to everyone who contributed in this issue. To assist our contributors for future issues, we are drafting brief guidelines for article submissions – we will keep you posted. As always, please continue to forward your ideas, thoughts and submissions to jean.chong@lss.bc.ca or shawna.ford@lexisnexis.ca.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Brenda Wong

Workshop Open to VALL Members

"Life in the Fast Lane"

Organizations must prepare employees at all levels to remain high performers during turbulent times of change. This course is designed to help employees at all levels to remain high performers during turbulent times of change. *Life in the Fast Lane* provides employees with a structured approach for managing change. This course will help employees more thoughtfully and purposefully apply various strategies that will help them thrive during periods of change.

This workshop is one of many available through Thomson University, a continuing education institution dedicated to the professional development of Thomson employees. Previously presented to CLLG and HALL, Carswell looks forward to offering this program in Vancouver.

UBC Robson Square Campus

April 7, 2004

9am – 4pm

Limited to first 20 participants

Please RSVP to Anne Marie Kelly 1.877.685.1109 or annemarie.kelly@thomson.com

Presented by Jayne Jackson, Manager of Human Resources, Training and Development

New Members

Andrea Andersen, BC Courthouse Library Society - Surrey Branch

Joe Schmidt, Realnet Canada Inc. jschmidt@realnet.ca

FEATURE ARTICLE:

Internet Legal Information and Lay Public: How Realistic is Self-Help?

by Jean Chong, Librarian. Legal Services Society of B.C.

Canadian and U.S. legal aid organizations have made efforts to provide plain language legal information on common legal problems, as part of their service to reduce barriers to justice for low-income individuals. Due to some funding cuts for legal representation, some Canadian and U.S. legal aid organizations turn to publishing self-help legal information on the Internet for the unrepresented litigant, in order to augment other services.

In the past few years, evaluation resources have been developed by the legal aid community in order to analyze and evaluate client access to the Internet and provide their opinions on web-based information for usability and comprehension. Below are some examples of these resources:

- A limited number of published studies are available through the Management Information Exchange (MIE) (<http://www.m-i-e.org/index.html>). MIE is primarily a fee-based clearinghouse of journal articles, evaluation tools and studies on legal aid services.
- More articles can be found at Lstech.org (<http://www.lstech.org/>), a web portal on recent technology applications in legal aid services, including web usability studies. Both sites focus on U.S. developments.

Closer to home, in July 2003, Community and Poverty Services at the Legal Services Society of B.C., conducted the first survey to track internet access among incoming **LawLine** (http://www.lss.bc.ca/legal_info/law_line.asp) callers in an effort to gain better understanding of their use of computers and level of Internet access. Law Line is a province-wide, toll-free phone service which provides legal information to B.C. residents. As of mid-Sept. 2003, the service was expanded to include short legal advice for qualified low-income callers.

Summary

The survey included 200 callers, over half (53%) of incoming calls during a 1 week period. Findings included:

- 77% of respondents used a computer; three-quarters of this group had a home computer as one of their Internet access points.
- 44% of respondents had no post-secondary education and 57% of these respondents used a computer.
- Regardless of educational background, 50% of respondents preferred staff guidance from Legal Services Society of B.C. (LSS) in order to use the LSS website site and other legal information websites.

The findings suggest that simply providing access to "self-help" Internet legal information is not always sufficient. There is an expressed need for a legal information intermediary (lawyer, law librarian, paralegal, court services staff, etc) to assist with problem-solving tasks, such as:

- a) correctly self-diagnose their own legal information needs
- b) understand how to translate their information need into legal concepts and terminology so a user can even begin to find information on their own
- c) correctly identify authoritative legal information sources that best meets their need and their literacy level.



As you can see, the above basic tasks are skill competencies that law librarians exercise daily. However for the layperson, legal information is like medical information: need is intermittent and surfaces at critical times – i.e. to deal with a family matter, estate/probate, health care or financial transaction involving significant amounts of their own money. Users can scarcely be expected to invest substantial personal time to understand legal information changes long after their problem is resolved.

R. Susskind in his book, Transforming the Law*, espouses a new legal services world for lawyers, law firms, courts and other associated bodies, which shifts from legal advisory services to a broader service model. Susskind believes this service model includes legal information services packaged as part of online legal guidance and other technology-based services for the user. Unlike published articles from legal aid organizations, he does not discuss much about the layperson's computer literacy and their ability to navigate among burgeoning Internet legal information and a complex legal system.

More than ever, it is essential for legal information intermediaries to be proactive in their knowledge of public authoritative Internet legal information and provide effective and efficient referrals to experts and reliable information resources.

*Transforming the Law". By Richard Susskind. London, England: Oxford University Press, 2000.



TIPS & TRICKS

Submitted by Donna MacKinnon, Manager, Information Services, Stikeman Elliott LLP

B.C. Statute Citator

Donna MacKinnon reported that she ran into a confusing reference in the B.C. Statute Citator last month. While researching the "Cost of Consumer Credit Disclosure Act" it showed as being "IN FORCE" however the text following indicated that it was NOT in force. She then checked QP Legal-eze, Quicklaw, and the BC Courthouse library resources, all of which indicated the Act was NOT in force. Donna sent a query to Canada Law Book, the publishers of the Citator, asking them for clarification. Here is their response:

Donna,

I can understand the confusion. The heading "In Force" was intended to identify for the reader that the information that appears below it relates to the coming into force of the legislation. In this case the note that follows indicates that various orders that were to bring the legislation into force have been rescinded, ultimately meaning that the legislation is not yet in force. The heading was not meant to say that the legislation was in force. We are going to change the heading to clear up the confusion.

This example shows that it is important to check multiple sources and to be ever vigilant to the fact that mistakes or misunderstandings can occur in the best of sources.

CD-ROM Recycling

Have you ever wondered what to do with all those old CD-ROMS? BTR Recycling, a company in Richmond, will grind up your used/obsolete CD-ROMs. The materials are then used to make goggles, protective face shields, and some computer components. The CD-ROMS can be mailed to 1999 Savage Road, Richmond, B.C., V6V 1R1 or dropped off M-F 8:30-5. For further information call 273-7889.



COURTHOUSE NEWS

Submitted by Debbie Schachter Head, Strategic Planning and Development, BCCLS

BCCLS User and Potential User Needs Assessment Survey

BCCLS has just completed a comprehensive survey of users and potential users in B.C. The survey results will assist BCCLS in the development of its strategic plan by identifying areas of service which may need improvement and allowing us to focus our resources in the next few years. We thank all law firm librarians and library staff who took the time to participate.

Website Development Continues

Following the suggestions provided by VALL members, lawyers, and our staff. BCCLS is refining the Website in order to make functions more intuitive. All upgrading should be completed by March.

Some of the initiatives include:

- Complete order verification information when submitting an online order using the photocopy order form
- Updating the global navigation buttons and graphics
- Refining the search engines in all of our databases to provide more accurate search results
- Combining the Links search form with the Links browsing categories
- Improvements to website management

Access to WestlaweCarswell

Reference staff at the Vancouver Courthouse Library now has access to Law Source on WestlaweCarswell. In addition, as of March 1, all public access computers at libraries outside of Vancouver will have free access to LawSource. The only cost to users at the public access computers is the standard 25¢ per page charge for self-service printing. Staff in the regional libraries of New Westminster, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George and Victoria will also be able to provide assisted searching of LawSource in addition to free public access.

Collection News

Some recent print acquisitions; the *Annotated British Columbia Court Order Enforcement Act*, *Collaborative Family Law: Another Way to Resolve Family Disputes*, the third edition of *Law of Dismissal in Canada*, *British Columbia Planning Law and Practice*, and a Trial Lawyers Association publication entitled *Powerful Courtroom Persuasion*. Some titles from or dealing with the United States are the *Oxford Companion to American Law*, *Legal English: An Introduction to the Legal Language and Culture of the United States*, and *Winning Alternatives to the Billable Hour: Strategies that Work*.



VENDORS CORNER

NEWS from Irwin Law (www.irwinlaw.com)

Hot off the Press

- **Maritime Law** - by Gold, Chircop, & Kindred - 944 pages (January 2004). First general treatment of Canadian maritime law to be published in Canada since 1916. This comprehensive text covers the whole of modern shipping law from Admiralty jurisdiction to salvage and wreckage. Price: \$59.95
- **Law of Torts. 2nd ed.** by Philip Osborne. Price: \$44.95.
- **Law of Partnerships and Corporations. 2nd ed.** - by J. Anthony VanDuzer. Price: \$49.95.
- **Computer Law. 2nd ed.** by George Takach. Price: \$60.00.

Coming Soon

- **Law Society of Upper Canada Special Lectures 2003: The Law of Evidence (hardcover).** Due out March 1. Price: \$95.00
- **Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime** - by Hubbard, Murphy, O'Donnell, & DeFreitas After some delay, this timely and practical guide to domestic money laundering laws will soon be out. Price: \$64.95.
- **Canadian Libel and Slander Actions** - by Vancouver lawyer Roger McConchie and David Potts. A comprehensive, step-by-step guide to litigating a libel and slander action. Price: \$75.00.

Contact: Aimee Couëslan (1-888-314-9014, acoueslan@irwinlaw.com)

NEWS from CLE (www.cle.bc.ca)

Hot off the Press

- **British Columbia Company Law Practice Manual—2nd ed.** The second installment of the 2nd edition will be released at the end of February. The April update will include the consolidated statute, chapters revised to account for the amending statutes and the final regulation, and final versions of the forms. Price: TBD
- **British Columbia Commercial Arbitration—an Annotated Guide.** Provides quick access to concise summaries of important case law under BC's *Commercial Arbitration Act* and *International Commercial Arbitration Act*. Includes in-depth commentary, complete text of the Acts, regulations, and related legislation. Price: \$110.
- **Land Title Transfer Forms Guidebook: 2nd ed. —2004.** Thoroughly revised and updated to assist in completing the new electronic transfer forms, the newest edition of the "Green Book" was prepared to coincide with the launch of the Land Title Branch's Electronic Filing System (EFS). Price: \$50.

Coming Soon

- **Practice Manuals.** This spring, CLE will do a soft launch introduction on our website www.cle.bc.ca of five manuals (*Probate Practice, Motor Vehicle Accident Claims, Family Practice, Family Law Sourcebook, and Real Estate Practice*); available in an easy-to-use, searchable web format with full text links and downloadable forms and precedents. Access to the web version, will be sold by title, recognizing current customers of the print product. The full web version will be launched in fall 2004. Course materials will include the last 6 months titles in PDF, downloadable, with full text searching; access to be decided. *For further information, please contact Susan Munro (smunro@cle.bc.ca).*

- **Annual Review of Law & Practice—2004.** The 13th annual edition has a new chapter on **Privacy**. Due out March 2004. Price: \$95.
- **Local Government in Transition** - by Vancouver lawyer William Buholzer. Provides lawyers and those in government with an explanation and overview of the *Community Charter*, and its relationship to the *Local Government Act*. The book features concordances for most chapters as well as a general concordance. Due out May 2004.
- **Collaborative Law.** Authored by family lawyer Nancy J. Cameron, one of Vancouver's foremost authorities on collaborative law and practice. Due out summer 2004.

Contact: Karen Imeson, Sales & Marketing Liaison (604-893-2110, kimeson@cle.bc.ca)

NEWS from LexisNexis Butterworths (www.lexisnexis.ca)

The first half of 2004 promises to be very active with over 15 new titles scheduled to be published. Among them are:

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| ▪ On Trial – Advocacy Skills Law & Practice (Adair) | \$115 |
| ▪ Advertising and Marketing Law in Canada (Pritchard) | \$75 |
| ▪ Canadian Franchise Review (Hanuka) | \$195 |
| ▪ Law of Limitations , 2nd Ed. (Mew) | \$135 |
| ▪ Canadian Companies' Guide to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act | \$75 |
| ▪ Employment Litigation Manual (Knight/Goodfellow/Overhold) | \$165 |
| ▪ Sexual Harassment: A guide to Conducting Investigations | \$65 |
| ▪ Law of Evidence in Canada , 2nd Ed. Supplement | \$65 |
| ▪ The Law of Municipal Finance (Ross/Noe) | \$105 |

The feedback on our PDF add-ons for the Butterworths newsletters has been quite positive. If you currently subscribe to the print version, you can add on the PDF and distribute locally or post it on your local intranet for only between \$60 - \$99 for each Newsletter.

Contact: Arthur Vaz (604-689-4133, arthur.vaz@lexisnexis.ca)