

VALL Review

Vancouver Association of Law Libraries

Volume 26, No. 2

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The President's Desk

It seems to be a formal requirement in the genre of presidents' letters to open with a comment about the time of year, and summer has certainly arrived. Having just looked at Sarah Munro's missive written as the executive was preparing to change over last year, I find that in my experience this year has flown by like last year did for her, and soon a new executive with new priorities will be taking over to bring their own stamp to VALL.



Sarah Sutherland
VALL President
2013-2014

Since the last issue of VALL Review the programming chairs have been busy. We have had three excellent lunchtime seminars: Ludmila Herbst spoke to us on the topic of "New BC Limitations Act" on October 10, which was very interesting particularly the component on the history of limitation acts generally and specifically in British Columbia, and how the new act came into being. Steve Matthews did his presentation the "Technology Springboard" on November 28, which discussed the history of technology in libraries and made some predictions about future developments. Importantly Steve focused on both the social and technological aspects of technology adoption in legal organizations. Finally, George Tsaiikos gave a talk on "Continuing Student Development" on February 19; this gave a glimpse into the development of the legal research educational program at the law school and what the students are learning before they arrive as summer and articling students. Sarah Glassmeyer presented to us on Librarians and Libraries as Educators, also generously staying in Vancouver long enough to present to us after her presentation at the SLA Conference on June 11.

However, recognizing that professional development and relationship building is not fed by lunchtime seminars alone, Bronwyn and Joni have been active organizing events in other formats. There have been two coffee

VALL Review

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mornings: first in September was hosted by Teresa Gleave at Fasken Martineau, and the second in January was hosted by Sarah Richmond at Alexander Holburn Beaudin & Lang.

There have also been two after work drinks nights: the first at the Railway Club was held in December, and the second was held in conjunction with SLA-WCC and the UBC SLE Student Club in February and was coordinated by the new SLA-WCC president Lindsay Tripp and Bronwyn Guiton from VALL. Finally Bronwyn Guiton hosted a lunchtime meeting at Lawson Lundell in March where people were invited to bring their lunches and discuss training techniques they use in their libraries. SLA-WCC also kindly invited VALL members to participate in their summer get together at Van Dusen Gardens July 9.

The executive generally, and the programming committee specifically, hopes that by providing more kinds of events, VALL members can find formats that work for them. As the VALL programming year accelerates to its conclusion in June, and Larisa Titova gets ready to take over the president's role, I find myself grateful to the other executive members who have collaborated to make this year such a positive experience. Thank you everyone, and I look forward to what the future holds – I know VALL will be in good hands.

From the Editors

Alyssa Green, Vancouver Public Library
and **Kathryn Rose**, Bull Housser & Tupper LLP

The year has flown by and it is already time for the changing of the guard. Kathryn will be staying on for another year and welcoming Taryn Gunter as her co-editor.

In this summer issue, we reach out to our student members and recent grads with a feature article on law library job searching tips, techniques and advice. We also have an update on the many changes happening at the Courthouse Library and Quickscribe, and a look back at the many programs and events that took place in 2013-2014.

Looking forward to the upcoming Fall issue, we will have articles from the Peter Bark Bursary recipients reporting on the conference highlights from SLA and the upcoming Access 2014, the annual VALL survey results, and much more.

As always, please get in touch with us at vallreview@gmail.com. We'd love to hear your content and article ideas for future issues. And we would especially love to hear from you if you are interested in writing an upcoming article!

Enjoy the remaining days of summer, and happy reading!

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.

ISSN 1712-065X

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Law Library Job Searching Tips, Techniques and Advice

Sarah Richmond, Alexander Holburn Beaudin & Lang LLP,
Taryn Gunter, Harper Grey LLP,
and **Kathryn Rose**, Bull Housser & Tupper LLP

The 2014 classes of Librarians and Library Technicians have graduated and the job hunt has begun for many. As three VALL members who have recently joined new firms, Sarah, Taryn and Kathryn share their legal library job hunting experience, advice and successes.

Sarah Richmond, Library Manager/Research Lawyer at Alexander Holburn Beaudin & Lang LLP

My advice to anyone who is looking for work in law librarianship, is to start making contacts with people in the field as early as possible.

Why?

It is important to get to know other professionals for reasons beyond just getting hired somewhere. First, by meeting people who already work in law librarianship, I was able to hear about others' work experiences. By listening to their stories, I gained a better understanding of the different sectors to which I could apply (i.e. private firms, courthouse libraries, government libraries, and academic libraries) and it allowed me to better understand the types of environments for which I was best suited.

Second, by meeting professionals and becoming a student member of VALL and CALL, I was able to develop an understanding of the current issues that are facing this field of work. In 2010, I volunteered at the CALL Conference in Windsor, Ontario; I had the great pleasure of meeting law librarians from across the country and attending seminars. It is important to be aware of current trends and issues in law librarianship so that you can have richer discussions with professionals, and speak intelligently when it comes time to interviews. Then, when you do start working, you'll have already developed those good habits for staying on top of issues in law librarianship.

Third, by meeting people in the different communities to which you are applying, you may hear about job openings, professional development events and the like. You will likely also be introduced to other people working in this, or a similar field. Don't think of it as "networking"; rather, just think of it as meeting interesting, like-minded professionals! This job searching technique can be just as effective as browsing job boards online.

How can you start?

If you are looking for work in Vancouver or elsewhere in BC, I first recommend browsing the VALL Directory or law library websites (firms, courthouses, law school, etc.). Then, simply email a few law librarians/ technicians, etc. and introduce yourself. Invite those contacts for coffee or lunch and ask about their career. Be open about your goals to find work so that the person can offer advice, if he or she chooses. Be prepared to talk about your job aspirations, issues in law librarianship, and about the other contacts you've made so far. The law library community was very friendly and supportive to me during my job search! Thank you!

Taryn Gunter, Library Technician at Harper Grey LLP

Making contacts in the law library community is the ideal way to make the connections so useful for attaining employment in legal librarianship. However, if you are fresh out of school, or transferring from a different library field, you may be wondering how you should build a knowledge base in the fairly specialized field of legal librarianship when you have little or no experience with legal research, or even the basics of Canadian law.

If you are still in school, check out what might be on offer in terms of law librarianship at the institutions where you are studying. For example, in BC, SLAIS offers '[LIBR 533: Legal Information Sources and Services](#)' at various points through the degree program. For library technicians, Langara College has offered Special Topics courses focusing on health and law libraries. Even if these courses are not being offered at a convenient time, regular coursework, such as reference services, might offer the opportunity to explore legal research questions and resources.

Other educational options might include taking courses in legal research through an adjunct law school or legal assistant program. You could also take an online course, such as [CRIMI 1161: Introduction to the Canadian Legal System](#), offered at Thompson Rivers University through their TRU Open Learning course.

Another, more self-directed way to start learning the basics of the legal process in Canada, as well as gain an introduction to legal research, is to check out legal websites, particularly those aimed at the public, or associated with university law programs.

[Clicklaw](#) offers basic legal information and education, geared to the general public and high school students. It's a nice starting point if you're very new to the legal system. The [Courthouse Libraries BC](#) website also provides several useful guides, including video tutorials, to conducting legal research. The [Law Society of BC](#) has a useful section on

[Legal Information and Resources](#), found under the For the Public heading.

The [Best Guide to Canadian Legal Research](#) also offers a primer in research essentials, including how to research, and what resources and tools to use, and when. It also provides easy to understand explanations of topics such as the Canadian legal system, BC Statutes, how to write a legal memo, and so on.

University websites are especially useful in learning about conducting legal research and which resources should be consulted (even if you cannot directly access resources such as Quicklaw or Westlaw). Both the [University of Victoria](#) and the [UBC Library](#) websites provide a variety of guides to conducting legal research. What these resources can also provide is an understanding of how your clients, that is the legal community, conduct research, which can only help you understand your role better.

(Don't forget to also check out the [Department of Justice's](#) page on Canada's system of justice and the [BC Courts](#) page to understand what the courts do, and the process of law).

Other sources of current information on the legal system are legal blogs, some of which are specific to legal librarianship:

- The [Stream](#) from Courthouse Libraries BC
- [Clawbies](#) for award-winning blogs (nominated by peers and others in the legal community)
- [Lawblogs](#) is a general aggregate site, with organization by subject area
- [Slaw](#)

For a sense of what actually working in the legal library field might be like, be sure to read the *VALL Review*, particularly the "Day in the life of..." series [ed. note: and look for a comeback for those popular articles in issues to come!]. And, as you are making contacts in the legal community, ask them about their work days, and how to go about acquiring knowledge.

Perhaps even as you gain more knowledge about the legal system and research, you might be wondering what you could offer a position in a law firm if you do not have actual law library experience. Look at what experiences and transferable skills you do have, particularly any work experience where you developed good people skills, adaptability, creativity, and a willingness to continually learn. In a service centered profession, these are key qualities. For example, retail or restaurant experience can translate into an ability to work with a variety of personality types, sometimes under quite stressful conditions. That ability can be as important as knowing where to find case law or how to look up

legislation. You can learn all the tricks and tips to conducting legal research, but you have to have the right attitude as well as aptitude.

Kathryn Rose, Library Technician at Bull, Housser & Tupper LLP

Like my colleagues above, I too believe in the importance of getting involved and networking. Joining VALL, CALL and SLA are good ways to start, but it is about being more than just being a name on the membership list. Volunteering is a great way to get your name and face known, and doesn't need to be time consuming. Host a VALL event, such as a coffee morning or library tour, or write an article for the VALL Review (hint, hint, nudge, nudge! [Get in touch](#) if you are interested!) Or if you have more time to dedicate to volunteering, consider reaching out to a law firm and volunteering on an ongoing basis. My greatest success was making connections through my practicum, which led to volunteering for the VALL Executive and ultimately my job at Bull Housser.

Once you have made connections in the field, informally meeting with a legal librarian or library technician is very helpful in preparing to apply for a position and acing a job interview. One of the most important things to prepare prior to going into a job interview is your benefit statement – what you are good at, what you have done previously, and what skills you bring to the position. It's common for the interview to start with the question, "Tell me about yourself", and having a well-crafted benefit statement can start the interview process off on the right foot by immediately showcasing the skills you have.

Where to look for jobs? [BCLA List-servs](#), [The Partnership Job Board](#), and the [VALL website](#), of course!

Happy job hunting, and good luck!

What's New at Courthouse Libraries BC

Mandy Ostick, Courthouse Libraries BC

Legislative Research Workshop

Courthouse Library staff are planning a legislative research workshop in the fall for VALL members. Please stay tuned for details.

New Directions for CLBC Print Collections

Courthouse Libraries BC has made changes to our print collections. We'd like VALL members to know what these changes are and why we've made them.

The two main reasons for these changes are:

Reduced library funding:

One of our main funders has had to substantially reduce funding to CLBC and their other grantees. We anticipate a \$500,000 reduction in revenue for 2015. CLBC CEO Johanne Blenkin has recently outlined the service reductions we've made as a result of this funding reduction in a post for our library blog *The Stream*: [Courthouse Libraries BC 2014/2015 Service Reductions](#). We've also had to cancel a lot of print subscriptions in order to achieve the spending reductions we need for 2015.

Shift to digital:

VALL members know that legal information is going digital and Courthouse Libraries are too. We are reallocating information resource spending away from high cost, low use print resources. Instead we are increasingly focused on acquiring online resources that we can put in all our 29 branches and 2 access points across BC, and offer online to BC lawyers via the Lawyers' Reading Room on our website. We are no longer buying print versions of material that is highly accessible online, such as case law.

Changes to our print collections due to reduced funding and shift to digital:**Print law reporters**

We've made the decision to cancel print case law reporters, even ones that continue to get heavy usage such as *Canadian Criminal Cases* and *Dominion Law Reports*, because the cases reported in these volumes are so accessible online. Purchasing these materials in both print and online formats is not a good use of resources, even if both are heavily used. While we think it's time to say good-bye to these traditional research tools, we understand that more training for clients and many forms of assistance finding and using online materials will be necessary to help clients make this transition. We are cancelling the subscriptions to case law reporters so we won't be receiving new volumes, but all volumes of the print law reporters we have will remain on the shelf at the Vancouver Courthouse Library.

Print legislation

We continue to subscribe to official BC sources of statutes and regulations, which are in print format, but we have cancelled subscriptions to print legislative materials from other jurisdictions. As with case law, the legislation we have received to date will remain on the shelf, as we understand that VALL members and research lawyers rely on Courthouse Libraries BC for access to historical legislation.

Looseleaf subscription services

We have reached the conclusion that the amount of money we spend on looseleaf updates does not equal the value our clients get from these updates. I'm sure VALL members understand how increasingly unmanageable our large number of looseleaf services has

become, particularly the escalating costs of “pay as you go” subscriptions. Additionally, we estimate that courthouse library staff spent 1,900 hours in 2013 on filing and replacing missing looseleaf contents in 2013, which would have been better spent on client service, creating web content, and training. I’m sure that VALL members know the difficulties of managing looseleaf subscriptions on a budget and the often disappointing content of looseleaf updates. For another CLBC perspective on looseleaf services, I recommend my colleague Nate Russell’s News from Courthouse Libraries BC column in the March 2014 issue of *The Advocate*, which puts the case to lawyers that the era of the looseleaf is over.

We are drastically reducing the number of looseleaf service subscriptions we maintain at BC courthouse libraries. However, as with case reporters and legislation, cancelled looseleaf subscription services will remain on the shelves of the Vancouver Courthouse Library for as long as they are useful (labelled with their cancellation date), as we would with any legal text.

Materials on specialized practice areas and jurisdictions other than BC and Canada

BC Courthouse Library print collections are increasingly focused on the practice areas most used by small firm and solo lawyers, such as family, criminal, civil litigation, wills & estates, and personal injury. This approach is in keeping with our [strategic plan](#)’s emphasis on meeting the needs of lawyers in smaller firms, smaller communities, and newer calls. These practice areas are also the most heavily used areas of our collection, particularly civil litigation and criminal law. We also continue to acquire Canadian and BC legal materials in areas such as ethics, administrative law, real estate, employment, and many other areas of use to small firm and solo lawyers in BC. Areas we are less and less focused on are specialties like tax and entertainment law, and law from other jurisdictions. While the focus of our print collection is getting tighter, we have online tools to provide access to legal information resources beyond our core collection areas. For example, Hein Online and LLMC Digital offer access to a wide range of materials beyond what we acquire in print format. VALL members I’ve talked to have noticed the increasingly tight focus of our print collection, and understand that Courthouse Libraries BC isn’t in a position to supplement law firm library collections with infrequently used expensive specialty publications.

Print materials in our smaller, local libraries

We recently made the decision to substantially reduce print acquisitions for our 22 local courthouse libraries. While most VALL members don’t use these small print collections, this decision shows how our digital shift and funding reduction will impact all BC Courthouse Libraries, not just Vancouver.

What stays the same:

When talking to VALL members about these new directions with our collection, I heard that many of you won't feel the loss of cancelled looseleaf services, as you weren't in the habit of relying on loans of looseleaf titles. (We didn't circulate them outside the library until a couple of years ago.) Those of you who frequently use the library in-person might feel differently.

I also heard that VALL members want to make sure that historical case law reporters and legislation will remain on the shelves at the Vancouver Courthouse Library, as you rely on Courthouse Libraries BC for convenient access to these materials. I can confirm that this material will remain on the shelf. The titles are cancelled, but given continuing high levels of use of historical case law and legislation, and lack of an online equivalent for some of these resources, we have no plans to discard this material at the Vancouver Courthouse Library.

What also remains the same is that we welcome feedback from our VALL colleagues on our collection, whether it's our overall strategy or individual titles. One of my goals in writing this piece for VALL Review is to solicit feedback. I encourage VALL members to contact me if you would like to discuss our plans for courthouse library collections, given the realities of the digital shift and budget reduction.

Mandy Ostick
Director, Digital Library
Courthouse Libraries BC

Quickscribe Update

As many VALL members are aware, Quickscribe recently launched a brand [new version](#) of Quickscribe Online on August 14th. Quickscribe 2.0 features a dynamic annotation component that is designed to enhance your legislation research.

The new version will help to facilitate high-level discussion and collaboration on relevant legislative issues both from within and outside your firm.

As part of this initiative, Quickscribe has assembled an impressive [list of experienced legal professionals](#) who will contribute timely annotations throughout the legislation and bills.

Annotations may include references about the intent behind the legislation, upcoming/recent changes, related case law, decisions, white papers or even links to other related legislation. Annotations can be shared and responded to in a forum-style environment.

As always, the VALL community has been very supportive of these types of initiatives and Quickscribe would like to thank all those who have contributed their thoughts on this project.

Training

If you would like to set up a time for a training session at your firm this fall, please feel free to [contact](#) Mike Pasta.

VALL Programs: 2013-2014 in Review

Bronwyn Guiton, Lawson Lundell LLP

The second lunchtime seminar of the 2013 - 2014 season happened on Thursday, November 28th, with Steve Matthews of Stem Legal discussing how law librarians are using technology outside of the law library in order to benefit their employers. His PowerPoint presentation and some of the websites he discussed have been posted to the Speakers' Notes section of the VALL website.

A few weeks later I led an intrepid group of eight law librarians on our first ever law crawl. On Thursday, December 12th the nine of us toured the Gowlings library, where Library Manager Johanna Sigurdson was our host, the Singleton Urquhart LLP library, where Librarian Sarah Munro was our host, and the Davis LLP library, where Wendy Holmes, the now-retired Manager of Library, was our host. Of note, we were joined by Holger Aman, Acting Manager of the Law Courts Library at the Supreme and Federal Courts in New South Wales, Australia, and Genevieve Cragg, Account Manager, British Columbia, Wolters Kluwer CCH Tax & Accounting Canada. These two guests were excited to join us for the tour and subsequent drinks to learn more about VALL and the Vancouver law library community.

Speaking of drinks, after the law crawl ended at Davis LLP, the group headed over to The Railway Club for after work drinks. All VALL members were invited to this event and the association provided some appetizers for the group.

To ring in 2014, Sarah Richmond, the new Librarian at Alexander Holburn Beaudin + Lang LLP, hosted a VALL coffee morning at her library on Thursday, January 16th. It was a lovely social with at least 15 members in attendance.

Our third lunchtime seminar of the year was on Wednesday, February 19 and our speaker

was George Tsiakos, an Instruction Librarian at the UBC Law Library. George Tsiakos discussed the UBC Law Library's role in teaching legal research and writing skills to law students. He highlighted what is taught in the upper year advanced legal research course and the new first year legal research and writing course. Finally, George provided some advice on how law firm librarians can assist law students in further developing their legal research skills. His PowerPoint presentation has been posted to the Speakers' Notes section of the VALL website.

Following on this lunchtime seminar, a bring-your-own-lunch discussion has been set up for Thursday, March 6 at Lawson Lundell LLP to share our own teaching best practices. This event was new and free for VALL and provided an inexpensive counterpoint to our other educational programming. Positive feedback from this event motivated the organization of a second brown bag lunch on Tuesday, August 19th. The event will again be at noon at Lawson Lundell, but based on the member feedback, the topic will be the best library materials for natural resources law (i.e. forestry, mining, LNG, etc.).

On Tuesday, February 25th, VALL members were invited to a joint social with SLA Western Canadian Chapter and SLA@SLAIS at The Railway Club. This event was spearheaded by Lindsay Tripp of SLAWCC who is also a Copyright Librarian at Langara College. This ticketed event saw a handful of VALL members, however it was undeniably a popular event for the students of SLA@SLAIS!

The programming committee was delighted to hear from Joanna Spurling this Spring, when she offered to host a tour of the Vancouver Art Gallery library and catacombs. Joanna works both at that library and at the Koffman Kalef LLP law library. Subsequently a tour was organized for VALL members on Tuesday, April 22nd. This was followed by VALL-sponsored appetizers at the Art Gallery Café.

Past President Sarah Munro stepped up to assist the Programs Committee this Spring and worked with the BCLMA/KM leaders to organize a joint seminar for Wednesday, May 14th. This was the third annual joint seminar with BCLMA/KM but was most likely the last as well given the increasing challenge of finding common programming needs that have yet to be covered. The topic this year was competitive intelligence and attendees heard from Euan Sinclair, the Director of Knowledge Management at Lawson Lundell LLP, Jeff Voon, the Business Development Research Specialist at Fasken Martineau DuMoulin, and Patti Wotherspoon, and Information Specialist with VPL's InfoAction.

With the SLA annual conference in Vancouver this year, the Programs Committee was able to look at some of the visiting luminaries as options for our June lunchtime seminar

speakers. Sarah Glassmeyer, the Director of Community Development at CALI.org in Chicago generously accepted our invitation to come speaker at our June 11th seminar, the day after the SLA conference ended. Sarah spoke to VALL about libraries and librarians as educators. This lunchtime seminar took place in the main boardroom at Blakes LLP, the firm of our 2013-2014 Vice President, Larisa Titova. A last-minute cancellation by our original venue, the Shangri-La Hotel, necessitated this change.

On Wednesday, July 9th, 2014, VALL members were once again invited to a joint social with SLA Western Canadian Chapter. This time the location was Truffles Café at VanDusen Botanical Gardens. We had beautiful weather for this after-work social and attendees enjoyed the Truffles Café patio.

As the Programming Committee looks ahead to the 2014-2015 year, we have reviewed the 2013-2014 membership survey for guidance on next year's activities.

VALL Review Newsletter Article Content Submission Guidelines

Please take a look at the guidelines below and contact the *VALL Review* Editors if you have any further questions. You do not have to be a VALL member to write for us. Anyone is welcome to contribute to the *VALL Review* as long as you meet the guidelines below. Thanks for your support and interest!

Purpose of VALL Review

- To provide short news and articles on library information and knowledge management developments of interest to VALL members with a priority focus on legal information and related issues concerning the legal sector.
- To highlight resources of interest to VALL which would be useful to the legal community and for professional library staff development.

Authors are advised to submit their draft articles that meet the minimal criteria:

- 1) In Microsoft Word, plain text or RTF.
- 2) Maximum of up to 800 words for full articles.
- 3) Single spaced with paragraphs.
- 4) Functional URLs and corresponding footnote bibliographic information for further reading.
- 5) Identification of author, their official position title and parent organization.

Publishers and vendors should only highlight for submission any new product developments that the vendor has not yet publicly released or that the vendor would like feedback from its customers. (Note: If a vendor has already released public marketing information to all customers on its corporate web site, *VALL Review* editors will exercise rights to determine if there is sufficient space to include the submitted information, in light of other VALL content publishing priorities.)