

AWSIL news

October 2014

CONTENTS

- [Report from the Chair](#)
- [Conference Preview: AWSL at WLA 2014](#)
- [2014 AWSL Member Fall Social](#)
- [Member Q &A: Christina Johanningmeier](#)
- [Library Profile: The University of Wisconsin Law School Library](#)
- [AWSL 2014 Officers](#)

Report from the Chair



Greetings! It's my honor to report on a busy summer season completed for our division and some exciting fall events to come at the annual WLA conference.

Looking back to the events that we've hosted since our last newsletter, we began the summer with a tour of the Forest Products Laboratory, led by librarian Julie Blankenburg. This tour allowed us to learn more about the practical aspects of moving a library and to see a very unique collection.



Forest Products Laboratory Library - Wood specimen collection and library

The tour was followed in July by a social on the Memorial Union Terrace, where we were able to spend a couple of hours catching up before the Union sirens signified that a summer storm was afoot. We hosted an additional social in September, where several new UW-Madison SLIS students joined us and shared their experiences being new to the field. An interesting conversation about our previous professional lives began and it was fascinating to hear about the varied paths that led us all to our current roles and interest in special libraries.

I'm pleased that we've seen some new faces at these events, including our incoming chair-elect Christina Johannmeier. This issue of the newsletter includes a Q&A with Christina, who comes to our division by way of a role as an archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Her arrival as chair-elect exemplifies the theme for our upcoming conference session "We Are All Special Librarians." In talking with her about her background and her new leadership role, the common threads between us as special librarians are apparent. She has spent her first few years following her graduation at SLIS building up a great deal of subject knowledge on historical manuscripts and becoming a point person that is now fostering several students in their first practical experiences as catalogers. The depth of knowledge she has built up in a relatively short time period and her eagerness to share it as a manager are the sort of traits that I have heard many of us discuss at our gatherings. I'm excited to have her unique perspective in the group, especially as many of us take on increasingly multi-faceted roles.

I will leave the details regarding this year's conference programming to Kris Turner, our incoming chair for 2015, as he has outlined further on in this issue. Suffice to say, he has done a wonderful job conceptualizing three compelling programs and tour, in addition to our business meeting and a social. I expect to see a mix of librarians at these events and hope that many AWSL members are there to "connect, engage, and transform," as this year's conference tagline states.

It has been a great pleasure to serve as chair this year and I look forward to continuing to support division in years to come.

One final note, we owe many thanks to Molly Hamm for providing interim support as editor of this newsletter.

Yours with gratitude,
Jennifer Edmonds

AWSL at the 2014 WLA Conference: A Full Dance Card!

AWSL is always well-represented at the annual WLA conference. This year, however, the division has outdone itself. Special Libraries will be presenting three sessions, hosting our annual business lunch, enjoying a social, and sponsoring a trip to the Circus World Museum and Archives! The entire conference looks like it will be filled with useful information, but we are especially proud of our contributions. Please take the chance to attend one of our sessions or the Circus World Trip. Have lunch with your officers at the business meeting or have a drink and relax at the social.

The conference will be held from November 5 to November 7th, at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells. You can register online here, and if you stay at the Kalahari, you also get a waterpark pass included with your stay. I know I will be partaking in the hot tubs after a day immersed in librarianship.

Below are summaries of all the events that AWSL will be sponsoring or presenting at the conference. If you have an idea for a conference presentation or would like to be more involved in AWSL, please let us know. In the meantime, we hope you can make it to the Dells and to see you there!

Kris Turner, Reference and Technology Services Librarian, UW Law School Library

Conference Preview: AWSL Sessions and Events at WLA 2014

Wednesday November 5th

We Are All Special Librarians! What Public and Academic Librarians Have in Common with Special Librarians

Time: 11:00am - 11:45am

Track: Collaborations & Innovations

Presenters: Kris Turner, Reference and Technology Services Librarian, UW-Madison
Jen Edmonds, Knowledge and Research Manager, ERDMAN

Many librarians who end up in special libraries do not intend on working there. These accidental librarians often start in the public or academic realm and transition to law, business, medical or another special library. How can these special librarians help you? Find out what topics special librarians can help with, ranging from tricky legal questions to business operations to a medical question with this panel discussion.

Association of Wisconsin Special Librarians (AWSL) Business Meeting

Time: 12:00pm - 1:30pm

Location: Damon's Bar and Grill in the Kalahari

Come discuss the last year's events in AWSL, become more involved in the group and meet the officers as we discuss issues that impact the special librarians across all of Wisconsin!

Pointing the Way: Making Signage in Your Library Clear, Concise and Useful

Time: 4:30pm - 5:15pm

Track: Library Issues & Challenges

Presenters: Kris Turner, Reference and Technology Services Librarian, UW-Madison
Liz Zimdars, Reference and Public Services Librarian, Sun Prairie Public Library

One of the many challenges libraries face is disseminating information to its users. Once they are in the building, where do they go? What services do we offer and what resources are here? Creating signage can help make the library environment less stressful, more positive and perhaps even a little more fun. Join AWSL and special guest Liz Zimdars as we explore great (and not-so-great) signage.

Association of Wisconsin Special Librarians (AWSL) Social

Time: 5:30pm - 7:00pm

Location: Ivory Coast Restaurant in the Kalahari

Enjoy a drink and dinner with your AWSL colleagues. Relax and meet some new friends and enjoy the conference!

Thursday, November 6th

Although no AWSL events schedule on Thursday, there are plenty of other great sessions, discussions and events for you to attend!

Friday, November 7th

Circus World Library Research Center and Archives Tour

Time: 8:00am - 10:45am

Bus: Departs from front of Kalahari Conference Center at 8:00 a.m.

Presenters: Pete Shrake, Archivist, Robert L. Parkinson Library & Research Center.

Don't miss your chance to step into three-ring history! Ask questions of the resident librarian and archivist, see their special exhibits and rare artifacts, and go behind the scenes to see how the research library is run! *Note, we will just be touring the library and archives, not the full Circus World grounds.*

Apps to Make Your Professional and Personal Life Easier

Time: 10:45am - 11:30am

Track: Leadership/Professional Development

Presenters: Kris Turner, Reference and Technology Services Librarian, UW-Madison

So many apps, so little time! What apps can be used in a professional capacity? What apps can you recommend to patrons with their first smartphones or tablets? Join AWSL as we delve deep into the murky but exciting world of IOS and Android apps. We'll talk about professional apps for librarians, productivity apps for everyone, and interesting new apps that may make both your personal and professional life easier!

2014 AWSL Member Fall Social

It was a sunny, slightly chilly, late afternoon at the Memorial Union Terrace on September 16th when AWSL members and University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Library and Information students gathered for some lively conversation at one of the most scenic and fun spots in Madison.

The brainchild of former Chair Anne Moser, this is the fifth year that AWSL has sponsored a social at UW-Madison for SLIS students interested in special libraries. It's a great way for students interested in special libraries to meet librarians working in the field in an informal setting. We shared stories of our paths to our current positions and fields of study, of interesting jobs we've had and interesting people we've met at those jobs. It was a fun time. I hope to hear your stories at the next social.

Carrie Doyle, Head of Acquisitions and Serials, UW-Madison, Law Library



Kris Turner, Melissa Schultz, Kaitlin Svabek, Jennifer Edmonds, Christina Johanningmeier and Amy O'Shea enjoy conversation and scenery at the AWSL social at the Memorial Union Terrace in Madison.

Q&A with Christina Johanningmeier

Position: Visual materials assistant archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Describe your current job: I am working on a backlog cataloging project. The first part involves retrospective conversion cataloging, converting records of collections on shelf cards to the Historical Society's online catalog (ArCat) and WorldCat. The rest of the project involves reaccessioning and cataloging visual materials collections, primarily photographs but also drawings, lithographs, posters, ephemera, architectural drawings, paintings, basically anything that is visual, two-dimensional and not a moving image. Some of collections get improved inventories, are processed, or rehoused, if needed. Students and volunteers are helping with this project, and it's a real joy to work with them.

Previous professional endeavors: I began working at the Library-Archives Division while pursuing my degree at SLIS at UW-Madison. I have conducted shelf-reads and space inventories, entered item records, accessioned and processed manuscript collections up to 100 cubic feet, working with video, film, and audio. The space inventory and item record (barcoding) projects gave me a good look at the collections, box by box, familiarizing with state and local records, as well as the manuscript collections. This groundwork helps a great deal with the current project. Most of the visual materials are manuscript collections, that is, they are from personal collections, but some are part of state or local collections. It's great to have that familiarity.

Why did you decide to work in the library profession? I began my working life in newspapers, as a reporter and editor. What I enjoyed most about that work was being able to give people a voice. This work feels like an extension of that, a way to have people tell their own stories, but in a much broader context and in a more permanent way.

What is the favorite part of your job? When I discover more about a collection, where it came from, who the person was, and I am able to write a good catalog record or add to an existing one, I'm thrilled. It makes my day.

What is the least favorite part of your job? When I can't immediately find a good solution to a problem, whether it is a paperwork backlog or a cataloging problem, I find that frustrating. The good part of my job is that there is a lot to do, so I can move on to something else; usually a solution comes to me in the meantime.

Do you have a role model as a librarian? What I try to do is learn from every person. Everyone has a strength, something he or she can teach you, so I have a kind of virtual file in my head of what I have learned from almost everyone I have spent any time with, in this profession, newspaper editors, professors at my undergraduate alma mater, people I worked with in kitchens and race tracks.

What is your favorite book of the last year? My favorite serious book is "Beyond the Frontier," by David S. Brown. My guilty pleasure is the "Bones" series by Kathy Reichs.

What is your dream vacation? I would like to spend a week or two in New York City, ice skate at Rockefeller Center, ride a horse in Central Park, go to Greenwich Village, visit the museums, the whole works.

What are your hobbies? Watching TV detective shows, taking pictures, gardening when I have a yard.



Exterior of the Law Library from Bascom Hill

Library Profile: The University of Wisconsin Law School Library

The University of Wisconsin Law Library sits at the divide between special and academic libraries. Since the library is located on UW-Madison's campus, it serves plenty of undergraduates and faculty that are looking for a book or article on legal research. However, the law library also serves as an important cornerstone of legal knowledge for all of Wisconsin. In conjunction with the State Law Library, the UW Law Library provides tools and resources for attorneys, members of the public and, of course, law students who are all working very hard and often in high stress situations, to locate a case or law that will help them with their study.

The Law Library has 21 full time staff members, of which 11.5 are full-time librarians. Seven librarians are public services staff and the remaining 4 are technical services, specializing in acquisitions, cataloging and other important 'back-end' work. The ".5" librarian is the evening reference librarian who also works half-time as a technical services assistant. The Law Library serves a diverse group of patrons. Law students, faculty, undergraduates, attorneys, members of the public and other librarians will often frequent the library in search of a specific resource or to have a question answered.



The UW Law Library Reference Staff



The Habush, Habush and Rottier Reading Room

The library shares a building with the law school, which is a relatively recent development. Originally, the law building and law library were in two adjacent buildings, with a courtyard between the two. In 1996, the two buildings were combined into one, with an elaborate series of connecting ‘catwalks’ that oversee a large atrium. During that construction, the law library gained more space, including the expansive and gorgeous Habush, Habush and Rottier Reading Room. The Reading Room has a series of large

windows that overlook Bascom Hill, the main area of UW’s campus, and is easily the most popular location for studious law students. The Law Library is also home to the famous “Freeing of the Slaves” mural by John Steuart Curry. The painting was originally destined for the US Department of Justice Building in Washington D.C., but it was deemed too racially controversial. The painting was then snatched up by the law school dean at the time, Lloyd Garrison. The dean felt a connection to the work, as his grandfather was William Lloyd Garrison, the famous abolitionist. The mural is located in the Quarles and Brady Reading Room.

One strange quirk of the buildings being combined is that the entrance to the law library is on the fifth floor of the building, and that is the only public entrance or exit. The library does occupy five levels, but the layout takes some getting used to, as many befuddled first year law students can attest! The fifth floor holds the reference collection, circulation and reference desks, rare book room and government statutes and reporters. The fourth floor houses the United Nations collection and additional law reporters. The third floor is home to a portion of the Library of Congress collection and print periodicals. The second floor completes the LC collection and also has statutes and case law for all 50 states and US territories. US Government documents are kept on the first floor, as well as a staff only area of compact shelving. The Law Library, along with Memorial Library on campus, is a government repository library. The library keeps and catalogs numerous publications not just from the US government, but also Wisconsin and the United Nations.



The “Freeing of the Slaves” mural in the Quarles and Brady Reading Room

The Law Library also subscribes to a large amount of electronic resources, many of which can be accessed by law students or the UW community in general from home. Ranging from the Law-specific resources provided by Westlaw, LexisNexis and Bloomberg to sites such as Proquest that give researchers the ability to search the Congressional Record via full-text, the resources are rarely found wanting.

The Law Library also provides access to a variety of technology for its patrons. There are two computer labs on the second floor, one of which is equipped with a digital projector for classroom use. There are also six public workstations on the fifth floor that are connected to two printers. Patrons can also print wirelessly from their laptops. The Copy Center has two book scanners (flatbed scanners with book edges) and document feeders as well as two more traditional photocopiers. The library was also provided with tablet and phone charging stations by Westlaw, one of the databases to which the library has purchased access. There is free Wi-Fi throughout the whole library (and indeed, the whole campus!).

Kris Turner, Reference and Technology Services Librarian, UW Law School Library

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AWSL News: The newsletter of the [Association of Wisconsin Special Librarians](#)

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