

LLAM NEWS



LAW LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND
A Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries

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President's Message: "Up with Librarians"

Perhaps my column this month will be a bit more "Touchy-Feely" than my other columns will be, so I'm begging your indulgence as you read this. I'll call this month's "Up with Librarians!" The reason is this: in the past few months I've encountered a number of people who think that librarianship, far from being moribund, is now well into a renewed phase of growth and development. It is indeed an exciting time to be a librarian!

Story Number 1: Not surprisingly, my first story has to do with my four year old son Matthew. I asked him a few weeks ago if when he grew up he wanted to be a librarian like his dad. His reply? "Nope! That's too much work!"

His comment (I hope) has less to say about sloth than it does about the perception of our profession. Imagine librarians being accused of working too hard! It really is a wonderful image that we should foster at every opportunity. His words made me realize that if we sow the seeds early enough of what we do and what our profession offers, we're making librarianship a healthy and stable career well into the next century.

Story Number 2: In October I spoke about new legal information products and websites at the Online World '99 conference in Chicago. I also moderated a law librarians' roundtable there, attended by about 20 librarians. What I had expected to hear from my colleagues, of course, was the standard "whine and moan" session about how we librarians are undervalued, underpaid, and undersupported by our institutions.

However, what I heard was music to my ears! Instead, librarians were buzzing about all of the following: how much their institutions appreciated them; how they felt that their job positions were secure; how they had been given more responsibilities in their institutions; and even how they could hire additional staff members. What were these librarians doing!?

The two-part answer is amazingly simple, really. They were marketing their library services to anyone and everyone who would listen, and they were training their library customers how to use the information resources at their disposal. If you aren't marketing your talents to your users, how can you expect them to retain your services? Furthermore, almost everyone these days feels squeezed by technology and the Internet; people are clueless and worried. That is, everyone except those employees in institutions who know that their library will guide them through technology changes wisely and efficiently through such programs and tools as regular Internet training sessions, one-on-one information research tutorials, and intranet creation and management.

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Mark Your Calendars!

December 7, 1999
Annual LLAM Holiday Party
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Center Club

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