

NEWSLETTER

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*"OSALL aims to link and support everyone interested in Law
Librarianship in South Africa"*

EDITORIAL

The first issue of 2005 introduces our new up-to-date letterhead, which matches the design of our website. Ruth Ward of Werksmans arranged for the attractive new website homepage for us, in 2004, and now Salome Vranas of Deneys Reitz has kindly coordinated all of our documents with the same letterhead. As Salome commented "OSALL started in 1976, but there is no need to look as if we are still living in 1976!!" We hope that our readers approve of our new look.

This newsletter includes the updated "About OSALL" document, the OSALL Advertising Policy, and the OSALL Listserv Policy. Please acquaint yourselves with them.

This issue of the newsletter includes an interesting account of a day in the life of Carol Clark, the librarian at Webber Wentzel Bowens. Carol has many years of experience in managing a law library, and is an example to us of how to run a successful law library.

The article by Mark Zweig on "hyper-responsiveness" was included, as responsiveness is an excellent trait that we can try to have as law librarians. It certainly is good public relations to be on the ball, and get back to our clients as soon as possible, even if it is just to let them know the state of play.

The new website that has been launched by the Constitutional Court, and the new library, are both very special and important developments for the law library world in South Africa. The May issue of the OSALL Newsletter will include an article on the Constitutional Court Library.

Constitutional Court launches new website

A dynamic national and international legal information resource! The Constitutional Court of South Africa announces the launch of its new website. The launch coincides with the tenth anniversary of its establishment on 14th February 1995. This national and international legal information resource is intended to be a focal point for legal research in the fields of Constitutional, Public and International and Human Rights Law.

For more information, go to -

<http://www.constitutionalcourt.org.za/site/mail-page.html>

NEWS

ABOUT OSALL

OSALL is the Organisation of South African Law Libraries – the national law library organisation of South Africa and was established in 1976. There are about 100 members from university libraries, bar associations, private law firms, the government sector, courts and publishing houses. Our head quarters are in Gauteng but we have members all over South Africa. We welcome membership applications from anyone interested in law librarianship.

We aim to link and support everyone interested in law librarianship in South Africa. To enhance and develop the practice of law librarianship and provide opportunities for professional growth for law librarians and training for those who work with legal materials in libraries or information centres in South Africa.

To this end we arrange meetings and workshops of a subject nature and on topics of professional interest. We have an affiliation with **SLIS** (Special Libraries and Information Services Group) and **SAOUG** (South African Online User Group) and share meetings, workshops and conferences with these two organisations which ensure a close relationship with other librarians and library bodies in South Africa. We also have informal links with various international law library associations such as BIALL, CALL, SLA, AALL and New Zealand

We have established a close working relationship with various legal publishers in South Africa as well as agents for overseas legal publishers.

We issue a newsletter four times a year and have developed a website (sunsite.wits.ac.za/osall) and listserv to encourage the sharing of information.

Please contact the OSALL Committee for more information:

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People like people who are responsive

Mark C. Zweig

This article originally appeared in *The Zweig Letter, the voice of reason for architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting firms*. *The Zweig Letter* is a publication of Zweig White.

It just doesn't matter what type of business one talks about. Whether you are a housepainter, you sell window blinds, or you are in the architecture, engineering, or environmental consulting business— ALL of your clients, customers, and suppliers will like you more if you are responsive. And the more responsive you are— I call it "hyper-responsive"— the better.

This notion of hyper-responsiveness is so simple, yet is all too often in our business, pooh-poohed by those in our firm's top ranks. Principals are the worst offenders. They are too busy. They don't want to be too eager. They don't use the technology that would make them more responsive. They simply don't think it's important.

It's really a shame. We at ZweigWhite are here to make our clients more successful. Business is hard enough as it is. But the sad reality of this hyper-responsiveness issue is this— a **SOLID MAJORITY OF YOU WILL NOT DO THIS ONE THING THAT IS TOTALLY WITHIN YOUR CONTROL: BE RESPONSIVE!** I have been in this industry for 25 years now. And I truly believe that, as competitive as our business is today, you could be a mediocre designer with middle-level people and middle-of-the-road prices, yet grow faster than any other firm in your market by being more responsive than your competitors.

I am not talking about returning all phone calls the same day. How about within an hour or, better yet, 10 minutes? I am not talking about returning all e-mails the same day. How about within 10 minutes, or better yet, two minutes? I know this probably sounds crazy, and most of our readers will tell me I have lost my mind on this issue. But the impression of caring and good service is just too valuable to waste by being slow on your feet.

Beyond that, it's actually more fun to work in an environment where the clients are amazed on a daily basis with the service they are getting. Everyone gets energized and motivated by the positive feedback that streams in from letters, calls, and e-mails raving about the service. More work comes in, bad clients are weeded out, profits go up, cash flow improves, morale improves, and the feeling of job security of each employee improves just from returning calls, faxes, letters, and e-mails faster than anyone else.

To make this happen, it has to be valued by the top management of the company. The individuals in the top jobs— the principals, the VPs, the CEO, CFO, COO,

office managers, marketing director, HR director, IT director, the associates and senior associates— ALL of these people have to believe in the competitive advantage that hyper-responsiveness will give the firm. They have to demonstrate this daily in their own actions.

Not everyone will see the benefit. Not everyone will do it even if they do. That's a problem IF you really believe in the power that comes from being hyper-responsive.

Participation in the hyper-responsiveness program is not limited. ANY firm can do this that wants to do it. You don't need any more resources. You just need a change in attitude. It's a simple strategy that can turn everything around.

So how do you think your firm stacks up on the hyper-responsiveness scale? If you believe in the power you'd get from being hyper-responsive, what are you going to do— today— to make that happen? And if you don't believe in what I am saying, just try it for a week and see what kind of reaction you get. It'll make you a believer!

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A day in the life

Carol Clark, Webber Wentzel Bowens
Reprinted by kind permission of BIALL. This article originally appeared in the November 2004 edition of the BIALL Newsletter. All rights reserved.

It's good to know that interest in BIALL is not just limited to Great Britain and Ireland. Carol Clark of the major South African law firm Webber Wentzel Bowens recently joined BIALL and has kindly agreed to let us know how her typical day unfolds in Johannesburg

No alarm clocks are necessary where I live. The screeching Hadedas (Sacred Ibises) in our garden wake me very early each morning as they fly passed my window. (It is tough on weekends!)

I try and leave home around 7h30 and bless my good fortune in living only 5kms from work, being able to drive through leafy suburbs and not having to negotiate traffic-laden highways and the kamikaze-like minibus taxi-drivers! Webber Wentzel Bowens is one of the largest firms of attorneys in Africa. We used to be in the centre of the city of Johannesburg, but moved to a very modern building in a new office development in the northern suburbs three years ago.

Our official working hours are 8h30 to 16h45 Monday to Friday. I usually like to arrive ahead of starting time so

that I can settle in, check my e-mails, etc before the day starts in earnest.

During a visit to London in August this year I went to several solicitors' libraries. From what I learnt there, and thinking about what I could say, that would give you a South African perspective, brought me to the conclusion that, generally speaking, librarians in law firms have much the same duties and routines. Of course we have a different legal jurisdiction here and Roman-Dutch law is practised.

There are 3 of us in the library, 2 full-time and one part-time member of staff, and we are all qualified librarians.

The working day starts with the scanning of 7 daily newspapers for articles that will be of interest to the fee-earners. These items are photocopied and sent to the relevant people and also filed in the information files in the library. One gets used to constant interruptions, what with 'phones ringing and people coming in with requests all the time. I often think that our job is not dissimilar to that of a chef, who has a whole lot of pots on the boil at the same time, and who is frantically trying to get the different orders ready as quickly as possible! The newspapers perused, it is then on to the requests received, either telephonically or via e-mail. We are often asked to track down draft legislation or unreported judgments mentioned in the Press. This can sometimes take as long as a whole morning or afternoon, depending on whether you are fortunate enough or not, to get hold of the right person in a particular government department or at the court!

As I see it, our primary task is to keep the fee-earners up to date with the law, and to this end we continuously send out e-mails (often with attachments), alerting them to new Bills or Acts or regulations. The government gazettes are published in Pretoria on a Friday. We receive them on a Monday, and immediately scan them for any pertinent legislation which will then be disseminated. We also subscribe to various electronic databases, such as JUTASTAT and SABINET, which you might know of. These databases contain legislation and cases, and have all the latest gazettes. Our library is fully computerised and we use INMAGIC. We spend a fair amount of time training users on all these systems.

Then there are all the other tasks and routines like book orders and journal subscriptions, filing of looseleaf services, cataloguing and indexing, passing of invoices – all well-known to all of us.

I know it is supposed to be bad for one's health and effectiveness, but I usually work through lunch hour. The shops are not close enough to be a distraction, and this is often a good time to catch up on all the administrative work in the library, without too much interruption. On a Wednesday we have a management meeting at lunch

time. The management team i.e. the CEO, Accountant, Human Resources Manager, Office Manager, Marketing Manager, Training Manager and Librarian have lunch, a bit of a rap and discuss various things which pertain to the management of the firm. We were all a bit stiff in the beginning, but have relaxed a great deal and formed a nice bond. On a Friday the managers have lunch with the partners in their dining room. This gives us an opportunity to interact with the top echelons of the firm on an informal basis. Once a quarter we have "The Call To The Bar", which is a finger lunch for the entire staff (400 people). The long service awards are usually presented on these occasions and yes, I have received one!

We have had some exciting things happen in our firm. Never will I forget 2 February 1990, when the then Senior Partner's secretary came racing down to the library to tell us that the ANC was about to be unbanned, and that Nelson Mandela would be released from prison! This was world breaking news, and because the senior partner was legal adviser to one of the leading newspapers and had to comment on this, we were one of the first to know! This news was nothing short of a miracle, and I still get goose bumps when I think about it. Nelson Mandela has since visited our firm (unfortunately I did not meet him on that occasion) and his son served his articles here.

Our firm is also civic-minded, and we have a "Young Artists Competition" every year, where under privileged children below the age of 20 are invited to submit their art. The winning entry is used as the design for our Christmas card. The work of the finalists is exhibited in our atrium for clients and staff to see. The cocktail party at which the prizes are given is always heart warming. We also have a "Journalist of the Year Award", when a prize is given for the best legal writing in the press or TV programme. Entries are judged by people outside the firm. The awards in this case are usually made at a special breakfast at the firm. As a manager I am usually invited to these functions and thoroughly enjoy meeting people from worlds very different from my own.

I find it exciting working for a large firm of attorneys. We have offices in other cities - Cape Town, London, Paris, Luxembourg, Isle of Man, Dublin and Geneva. We often receive requests from these offices and I enjoy communicating with people on the other side of the world. The contacts that I have made at the two IALL Conferences that I have attended, have also been invaluable when it comes to requests for foreign legislation and cases, and I am very grateful to all those of you who are always so helpful and giving of your time.

When I can, I like to work late or over a weekend - not because I am a goody two shoes - but because the library is usually much quieter then, and one get through a lot of work in peace! I try to lead a balanced life and go to "Walk for-Life" on Tuesday and Thursday evenings

and Saturday mornings. I also have other extra curricula interests and activities which usually take place after work.

Working life for me is certainly not dull or dreary. I am privileged to work for a firm of such high standing in the business and legal community. I am also fortunate to work in such a pleasant, stimulating environment and to be exposed to, and may I say influenced by, people of great integrity and intellect.

OSALL ADVERTISING POLICY

Advertising on the OSALL listserv is subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Listserv members or students**
Any listserv member or student who is looking for a position in the library/information science field may advertise his/her CV free of charge in a once-off posting on the listserv, subject to the approval of the Chair in consultation with the Committee.
- 2. Part-time/temporary positions**
Any organisation that wishes to advertise a part-time/temporary position of up to 6 months in the library/information science field may do so free of charge for a once-off posting on the listserv, subject to the approval of the Chair in consultation with the Committee.
- 3. Permanent positions in commercial organisations**
Commercial organisations that wish to advertise a full-time position in the library/information science field may do so at a charge of R300.00 for a once-off posting on the listserv, subject to the approval of the Chair in consultation with the Committee.
- 4. Permanent positions in Universities, government and/or non-profit organisations**
Universities, government and/or non-profit organisations that wish to advertise a full-time position may do so free of charge for a once-off posting on the listserv, subject to the approval of the Chair in consultation with the Committee.
- 5. Conferences organised by Library organisations, universities, government and not-for-profit organisations**
Library organisations, universities, government and not-for-profit organisations may post their law- or library related conferences, seminars and workshops free of charge on the listserv, subject

to the approval of the Chair in consultation with the Committee.

6. Commercial organisations: Conferences and products

Commercial organisations may post their law- or library-related conferences, seminars, workshops or products on the listserv at a charge of R300.00 for a once-off posting, subject to the approval of the Chair in consultation with the Committee.

7. Commercial organisations sponsoring OSALL

The OSALL Chair may waive the above-mentioned fee if the commercial organisation sponsors an OSALL meeting or an OSALL member to attend meetings or conferences for the current financial year.

8. Please contact the OSALL Chair if you wish to advertise on the listserv. The decision of the Chair is final in all matters regarding advertising.

OSALL LISTSERV POLICY

The OSALL listserv:

- ❖ Enables the sharing of information
 - ❖ Is a forum for members' queries about law librarianship
 - ❖ Provides a means of communicating information about OSALL events and activities
1. *Listserv members are not under any obligation to respond to queries posted on the listserv.*
 2. *The listserv should be used as a last resort.*
 - Please be sure that the listserv is the correct place to find the information you need.
 - List the sources you have already consulted.
 3. *Treat others on the listserv as you would like to be treated – rules of common courtesy apply.*
 4. *"Flaming" - the use of strongly worded messages or negative/personal criticism - is unprofessional and should be avoided.*
 5. **Do not use capitals to type messages.**
 - Such messages are difficult to read.

- The use of capitals is considered "shouting"; if you really need to emphasize a point, use asterisks: *...*

6. Please do not use the word "Urgent" in your subject line: all listserv queries can be regarded as urgent.

7. Provide a subject line that is full and accurate enough for listserv members to decide whether they should read the message or not.

8. Keep your message short and to the point.

- Remember that the listserv may be regarded by some people as intrusive.

9. Avoid sending messages to the listserv with attachments.

10. Some points to bear in mind when answering queries.

- Replies may need to be edited before being posted.
- Quote the original request in your reply.
- Send the reply to the person who posted the request.
- Please double check the To: field before you press the send button.
- Alert the listserv immediately when someone responds to your query.
- Thank people personally who answer your request, and not on the listserv.

11. Whenever possible, give short feedback to the list as your answer may be valuable to others who have similar queries.

12. Advertising on the listserv is subject to the OSALL Listserv Advertising Policy

WHO GOES WHERE

Elise van der Pijl has recently left the Johannesburg Bar Library. We wish her luck in her future endeavours.

Lynette Miller has recently been appointed the part-time librarian for TWB & Partners (Tugendhaft Wapnick Banchetti). This new firm is made up of previous partners of Moss Morris. The rest of Moss Morris have merged with Routledges Modise.

Martie Penning, who was with Moss Morris Library, has decided to move into quite a different direction - Estate Agency in Pretoria. We wish her all the best with her new venture.

Get your Survey throughout the Annum.

Let specialists keep you abreast of legal developments in the following subjects:

- ◆ **Capital Gains Tax** (Wouter Scholtz)
- ◆ **Civil Procedure** (Mervyn Dendy)
- ◆ **Competition Law**
(Robert Legh & Daryl Dingley)
- ◆ **Delict** (Mervyn Dendy)
- ◆ **Environmental Law**
(Michael Kidd)
- ◆ **Labour Law** (John Grogan)
- ◆ **SILCS** (Siber Ink's Labour Law Case
Summaries; editor Kari Cousins)

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PUBLICATIONS NOTED

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JOURNAL ARTICLES

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Having a bad day? How does it compare to these incidents?

Submitted by Danielle Heij, Brink Cohen Le Roux

Having a Bad Day?

There was a case in a USA Intensive Care ward, where patients always died in the same bed, on a Sunday morning, at about 11am. This puzzled the doctors, and some even thought that it had something to do with the supernatural. No one could solve the mystery, as to why the deaths occurred around 11am, on Sundays. As this was being recorded on the hospitals health register, a team of experts assembled to investigate the cause of the incidents one Sunday morning. Just when the clock struck 11.....Pookie Johnson, the part-time Sunday sweeper, entered the ward and unplugged the life support system so he could use the vacuum cleaner.

Having a Bad Day?

The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were being released back into the wild, amid cheers and applause from onlookers. A minute later, in full view, a killer whale ate them both.

Still think you are having a Bad Day?

A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen shaking frantically, almost in a dancing frenzy, with some kind of wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current, she whacked him with a handy plank of wood, breaking his arm in two places. Up to that moment, he had been happily listening to his Walkman.

STILL think you're having a Bad Day?

Two animal rights protesters were protesting at the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn, Germany. Suddenly, all two thousand pigs broke loose and escaped through a broken fence, stampeding madly. The two hopeless protesters were trampled to death.

What?! STILL having a Bad Day?

Iraqi terrorist Khay Rahnajet didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "return to sender"

stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb, he opened it, and was blown to bits.

There now, feeling better?

A final thought –

English is a crazy language!

Source unknown

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig in neither from Guinea, nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't cross, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth?

One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend.

If you have a bunch of odds and ends, and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital?

Ship by truck and send cargo by ship?

Park in a driveway, and drive on a parkway?

Have noses that run and feet that smell?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language, in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which, an alarm goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all.

That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.
