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NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER

Vol. 15 No. 3  
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# OSALL

## Organisation of SA Law Libraries

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

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P.O. Box 783779, Sandton 2146

To access our website: <http://sunsite.wits.ac.za/osall>

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*This newsletter is published four times a year.*

### **Editorial**

This bumper newsletter has many interesting articles. I hope that you will enjoy reading it, and that it will inspire you in your role as a law librarian, to aim for excellence. Lynette Davis is an icon in law library circles, and I have reprinted an article written about her – she was the June International Law Librarian of the Month. What an honour! There are also reports on the SLIS/OSALL Conference, and the BIALL Conference.

Welcome to our new committee members, who have kindly offered their time and skills to OSALL. The new members are Mzoxolo Gulwa, who is our vice-chair, Bheki Kubheka, who will do fundraising and workshops, Salome Vranas, who will do our marketing and liaison, and Rika van der Walt, who is our new secretary. Thank you all for being willing to stand for the committee.

A very big “thank you” is due to Elizabeth Bourne, who has given of herself unstintingly, as vice-chair, for the past two years, and contributes in many ways to OSALL, with her wisdom and law library experience; and to Louise Pretorius, who has been our secretary for the past two years. Louise compiled an invaluable database of all OSALL members, for which we are most grateful. A big thank you too, to the “old” committee members, who have given another two years to serving OSALL – Danielle Heij, our chair, Lydia Craemer, our listserv administrator – a very vital portfolio, Ruth Ward, our website administrator, Selma Savitz, our treasurer, and myself, Fiona Rennie, the newsletter editor. From my personal experience of being on the committee, I have found it an enriching experience, and I have learnt a great deal about editing.

The layout of the newsletter has been changed to two columns, partly to accommodate more detailed information about the members of the committee.

Enjoy!

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## OSALL Website – WOW!!

The OSALL website was recently revamped most professionally by Ruth Ward, Librarian at Werksmans. It is a most useful tool for us all to use. It has links to numerous other websites – international organisations, South African legal websites, public domain websites, other library organisations, local and international, and other selected handy sites, such as Worldlii, LLRX and the Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations.

Thank you very much, Ruth. Do use this great resource!

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## Spotlight on International Librarian: Lynette Davis from South Africa

Reprinted by kind permission of ABA Journal, July 2004, from the article from the LexisNexis intranet; "The New Law Librarian" by Terry Carter.  
[www.lexisnexis.com/infopro/spotlight](http://www.lexisnexis.com/infopro/spotlight)

The LexisNexis Librarian Relations group is pleased to introduce our June International Librarian, Lynette Davis, Librarian at the Johannesburg Bar Library in South Africa. Read about how the social and political changes undergone by her country in the last 10 years, as well as the technological changes happening worldwide have shaped her librarian career in our article "A Proudly South African Librarian".

Lynette Davis, a librarian at the Johannesburg Bar Library, is proudly South African. Her country just celebrated the tenth anniversary of its first democratic elections, an event that brought about many social and political changes in South African society. Many of these changes, including the establishment of a constitutional court, a new constitution, and a far-reaching Bill of Rights, have activated dramatic changes in the practice of law in South Africa. While the social and political fabric of the country has undergone transformation, South Africa is still a country that offers great natural beauty, wonderful wildlife, a fine climate and warm, hospitable people.

Lynette's patrons have referred to her as the librarian emeritus - an apt description in light of the fact that she first encountered law librarianship in 1965. Prior to embarking on this career, Lynette earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a postgraduate Higher Diploma in Librarianship; spent some time working in a public library and in the library at the University of the

Witwatersrand. Her first encounter with law librarianship came while cataloging at the University, when she was asked to spend mornings in the Law Department library, watching over the collection of old Roman-Dutch books. While maintaining a dual role in cataloguing and law librarianship, Lynette completed a Master of Arts thesis cum laude on the cataloguing and classification of a South African legal collection. Eventually, she assumed a managerial position in the library of a large Johannesburg law firm, where she found the pace to be more stimulating than in academic circles.

After nine years in private practice, Lynette returned to the University of the Witwatersrand to lecture to library students. However, the legal environment beckoned again in 1983, when she accepted a position as chief librarian of the Johannesburg Bar Library, where you will find her to this day. The library contains about 37,000 volumes and serves 600 Johannesburg advocates. Like the United Kingdom, South Africa has a divided profession of advocates and attorneys who operate distinctly from one another. Just last year, Lynette decided to hand over many of her duties to a new chief librarian, but she remains involved with queries, technical services and a new branch library in a financial area of greater Johannesburg.

Lynette has seen many changes over the years in the provision of effective information services. For example, she witnessed the advent of the plain paper copier and the fax machine -- two revolutionary inventions that changed the way people communicate and share information. The effects of this 'revolution' continue today, with the proliferation of global Internet access and email connections. Lynette believes that efficient use of information services requires an awareness of both local and worldwide developments - a task made easier with the help of modern-day methods of communication. A more subtle change that Lynette has observed in her career was the arrival of comprehensive access tools to South African legislation, government gazettes and law reports. She believes that electronic tools are invaluable to effective information retrieval, but should be viewed as a complement to, rather than a replacement of, other reference sources. The Internet and CDs provide useful extra backup to hardcopies already possessed by the library system but hardcopy subscriptions have not been cancelled. One must be certain that information found on the Internet is from a reliable source.

While technology has streamlined many of the tasks that once could be performed only by human hands, Lynette firmly believes that there is no substitute for the knowledge and expertise of the skillful law librarian. To this end, she maintains membership status in numerous professional organizations, including IALL, AALL and BIALL. In 1976, she and two

colleagues founded the Organization of South African Law Libraries (OSALL), of which she has been made the first (and only) honorary member in recognition of her services to OSALL and the local law library community.

Lynette welcomes those challenging research tasks where the help of a living and breathing librarian is indispensable. For example, one aspect of South African legal research utilizes old and rare books.

Since the common law is Roman-Dutch, one may be accessing very old sources for totally practical purposes. Lynette finds this type of research challenging because of the range and time-span of materials involved. She may be asked for the latest legislation and then immediately thereafter for a January 1720 court decision from the Netherlands.

One of Lynette's favorite pastimes involves vacationing with her husband to places both near and far. She has traveled extensively abroad in the past; however, the poor exchange rate for South Africans makes this an expensive option at the present time. Fortunately, her home country offers some rich and enticing travel opportunities, such as the beautiful mountain areas on the eastern side of South Africa. These parts include the Drakensberg, which has been declared a world heritage site both for its wealth of primitive rock art and its scenic splendor. While the exchange rate may prohibit Lynette from visiting other areas of the world, it does make it easier for others to visit South Africa and see for themselves why Lynette is proud to call it 'home.'

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## SLIS/OSALL CONFERENCE 2004



by Danielle Heij

The SLIS/OSALL Conference was held at the impressive Sandton Convention Centre, situated in the heart of the bustling Johannesburg business life. Members were greeted by a traditional praise-singer, who set an enthusiastic tone for the day's proceedings.

The morning session was opened with a keynote

ORGANISASIE VAN SUID-AFRIKAANSE REGSBIBLIOTEKE X ORGANIZATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN LAW LIBRARIES X UMKHANDLU WASE NINGIZIMU AFRIKA WEMITAPO YEZINCWADI ZOMTHETHO X MOGKATLO WA LAEBORARI TSA MOLAO WA AFRIKA BORWA X UMBUTHO WAMATHALA EENCWADI ZOMTHETHO ASEMZANTSI X INHLANGANO YEMALAYIBRALI YEMTSETFO YENINGIZIMU NE-AFRIKA X MOKGATLO WA DI LAEBORARI TSA MOLAO TSA AFRIKA BORWA X NHLANGANO WA TILAYIBURARI TA NAWU TA AFRIKA DZONGA X MOKGATLO WA MAKGOBAPUKU A MOLAO A AFRIKA BORWA X NDANGULO YA LAYIBURARI DZA MULAYO DZA AFURICA X IHLANGANO YAMABULUNGELO WEENCWADI ZOMTHETHO YESEWULA AFRIKA

address by Prof Nakata from Sydney, who spoke on the value of indigenous knowledge in business. His address was followed by presentations from a broad variety of speakers, including Andrew Kok from RAU, King O Mchombu from the University of Namibia, and Eva Kavuma from MTN.

After a delightful "standing" lunch, which gave us ample opportunity to move around and network, I attended two of the parallel sessions, and listened to Susan Veldsman teach us all about licence agreements. This was a very valuable discussion, and Susan thoroughly explained the main points that need to be included in a licence agreement. These include: the parties, recitals (background), definitions, permitted uses, usage restrictions, term and termination, delivery and access, licence fee, licensee's undertakings, warranties, force majeure (conditions beyond the control of the parties), governing law (i.e. the contract must be governable under national law), dispute settlement, schedules and signatures.

A good licence should also contain a cancellation clause, continued access after a merger or takeover, dispute settlement outside a court via an expert/arbitrator, and terms, conditions and pricing after a merger.

She warned us to be careful of accepting an agreement which has automatic renewal, a right by the publisher to modify terms or the fee at any time without consultation, different national laws in the same contract, warranties on the part of the licensee, or ILL which is limited to for example five copies.

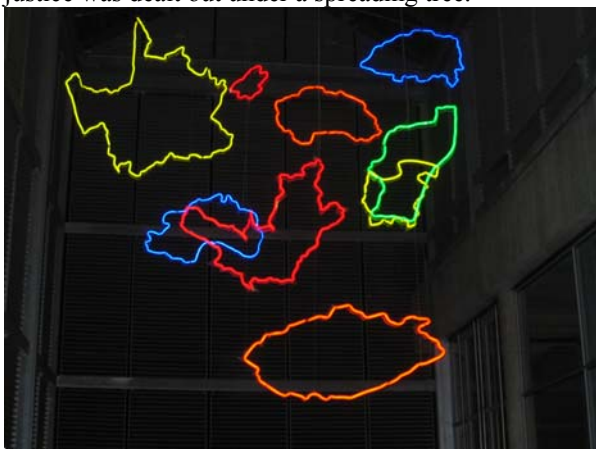
In the next breakaway session, Salome Vranas and Lydia Craemer guided us through tracking government legislation through legal resources, with expert advice on how to find gazettes, national and provincial government legislation.



We then all climbed aboard the bus for the Constitutional Court tour. The tour was most enlightening (if somewhat politically biased), we were taken through most of the prison itself, and were shown the cells where Nelson Mandela was held for a brief period, before we passed into the court. The courtroom itself is very impressive, each brick has been taken out



of the original prison and built into the courtroom. Each judge's seat is decorated with a cow's skin to symbolize his or her individuality. There are many symbolisms present in the whole of the Constitutional Court, whose architecture resembles the shape of a tree and its branches, echoing the tradition that in Africa justice was dealt out under a spreading tree.



The artworks in the court are truly something to admire, and I especially enjoyed the hanging neon lights in the shape of each of our provinces. After the tour we were treated to a fabulous light supper in the prison, together with much needed coffee and tea to ward off the cold mid-winter air.



In spite of the late night, everyone was present bright and early the next morning to listen to the keynote by Reg Rumney. After some very good and practical presentations by Glynis Steer, Mymie Vos and Belinda Roux, we listened to Roy Page-Shipp who talked on "The New World of Information Supply", and informed us that anyone with a credit card can buy any article in the British Library, delivered in 24 hours, for the price of £15.00.

Sej Motau then enlightened us on Clientology and, quoting Gandhi, explained that a client is not an interruption of our work, but the purpose of it. The conference was rounded off with the Canadian speaker Stephan Abram informing us of the "Challenges Ahead". Most interesting was the new technology he touched on, especially the virtual (laser) keyboards, disposable phones, wi-fi and wireless.

ORGANISASIE VAN SUID-AFRIKAANSE REGSBIBLIOTEKE X ORGANIZATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN LAW LIBRARIES X UMKHANDLU WASE NINGIZIMU AFRIKA WEMITAPO YEZINCWADI ZOMTHETHO X MOGKATLO WA LAEBORARI TSA MOLAO WA AFRIKA BORWA X UMBUTHO WAMATHALA EENCWADI ZOMTHETHO ASEMZANTSI X INHLANGANO YEMALAYIBRALI YEMTSETFO YENINGIZIMU NE-AFRIKA X MOKGATLO WA DI LAEBORARI TSA MOLAO TSA AFRIKA BORWA X NHLANGANO WA TILAYIBURARI TA NAWU TA AFRIKA DZONGA X MOKGATLO WA MAKGOBAPUKU A MOLAO A AFRIKA BORWA X NDANGULO YA LAYIBURARI DZA MULAYO DZA AFURICA X IHLANGANO YAMABULUNGELO WEENCWADI ZOMTHETHO YESEWULA AFRIKA

Beulah Muller, the SLIS chair, ended the conference on a high note, with her own small film on "Librarians in the Movies" which entertained everyone enormously. We appreciate the hard work involved in bringing such a valuable conference to life. For more information, visit the SLIS website [www.slis.co.za](http://www.slis.co.za) for links to the presentations.

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## BIALL 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL STUDY CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION "CHANGING TIMES, NEW CHALLENGES"

By Charmaine Bertram, Deneys Reitz

I can honestly say that the day I received the call, from the OSALL Chair, to inform me that I was awarded the BIALL Conference Scholarship, was one of the highlights of my life thus far. I immediately phoned hubby to tell him, only to be reminded that that ever elusive passport I have always meant to get is still missing in action. Well needless to say I had a few sessions of begging and pleading at Home Affairs and to my amazement they came through just in time with both the temporary passport (just in case) and the permanent passport. My firm offered to make all my travel arrangements to enable me to be covered by our travel insurance. So that was one less stress factor for me.

On the day of my departure I arrived at the Airport much too early. After I had coffee with my husband I checked in and wondered around the departure hall. It was then that I met Lucy Graham from the First Law Library. I have to thank Lucy for keeping me company; it made the wait shorter and relieved some of my stress at travelling overseas for the first time. Heathrow was chaos, and the interrogation by the customs official not much fun at all, funny how they can make you feel guilty about absolutely nothing. I was finally let "into" the country and was taking a nice leisurely stroll over to gate 5 when I spotted some familiar looking faces looking very harassed and walking in the opposite direction. After a 10 hour flight my brain wasn't working too well and I had to really think where I knew them from. Then it hit me, they were on the same flight and I overheard them saying that they were going to Edinburgh. Well that is where I was going, so why were they going in the opposite direction on the escalator? Panic, was it me going the wrong way or was it them? No, it could not be me, I am after all a librarian, I have maps of Heathrow, I know where gate 5 is, I interrogated at least 3 airport officials to make sure I was heading in the right direction. What was I to do? What else but

run after them. Off course after I put them on the right track I could not get rid of them again. I had two strays that weren't going to let go of me until they found someone they know in Edinburgh. Now of course here am I thinking hey this isn't so bad, maybe I can get a lift with them in Edinburgh to my hotel and save some of my precious pounds that my firm very generously gave me for these kinds of expenses. Alas it was only once I broke a nail removing their bags from the conveyor that I found out that the daughter who came to pick them up drove a little Mini and she was horrified at the amount of baggage they had and wondering whether it will all fit, thus no lift.

My taxi ride was interesting, as we pulled out of the airport a whole truck full of new cars for the rival taxi company arrived and my up to then silent taxi driver turned into the biggest chatterbox I have ever met. Needles to say it was all about politics and them losing their income. Well, my sympathy soon turned into something very bad when I was slapped with a charge of £15 for an 8 minute drive. No wonder he was loosing business. I arrived at my hotel much too early, they were not ready for me. I promptly stored my bag with them, asked for a map (the tourist kind, small and easy to fit in pocket, not the encyclopaedia I had printed of the internet) and set off on foot to explore. Princess Park is truly one of the most glorious parks I have ever seen. Not sure if it was the actual park or just the lots of wonderful green around me that impressed me the most. Coming from autumn grey Johannesburg into Spring Edinburgh was incredible. I decided to take one of the city tour busses and ended up on the Majestic. What a wonderful experience, I saw this as part of my research. I did the full hour tour and marked the map to remind myself where I wanted to go back to. Then it was me and my hiking boots again, a word of warning for those of you who want to go to Edinburgh, yes the city is a nice size for walking around in, but them maps never tell you that the next corner is going to lead to the longest flight of stairs or the steepest road you have ever climbed or walked in your life. Let's put it this way, you will not be seeing any photographs of me shortly after I crawled up those stairs!!!!After I got lost for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in a side street I settled for lunch consisting of tea and chocolate shortbread (what else was I supposed to eat while in Scotland?)

I returned to my hotel at about 16:00 keeping in mind that I had been awake since 06:00 the previous day. It was time for bed. Quick word about the hotel, not much to say apart from minimalist, bright pink passages with green doors (at least on my floor), big bright yellow square painted on my room wall was the sum total of décor and no shampoo or soap in the bathroom. And all this for £69 per night. Two hours later I had to wake-up and bath in record time, I was going to be late for the overseas delegate's dinner.

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Thank God it was being held in my hotel. Dinner was interesting, but the company was fantastic. Most of the Biall committee as well as all the overseas representatives was there. Everyone went out of their way to make us feel comfortable. They made me feel so comfortable that I only went to bed at 12:00, something I definitely regretted Friday morning when I had to get up at 06:00 to be on time for breakfast and registration.

If there is one thing the Biall organisers know how to do, it is to pack the programme really full. Day one consisted of 5 very interesting papers and the member's forum. The quality of the papers was really outstanding and the exhibitions just as wonderful. On the first day there was a special reception for all new and overseas delegates. It was at this function that I met two fellow South Africans, Eliska Kriel who has been working in the UK for 5 years and Dilshaad Brey from the UCT Law Library. Dilshaad was in London for six weeks on a scholarship from the Institute of International Legal studies, they then send her to the conference.

The first night of the conference was spectacular. We were taken by bus to the Our Dynamic Earth exhibition for a tour of the exhibition and an informal dinner. This was followed by some gambling (not with real money) and a very cold bus trip back to the hotel. It was now roughly 01:00 and still it was not the end. Everyone from our hotel ended up in the Hotel "entertainment" area. This is where I met Tori Trotta from the American Law Library Association. What a wonderfully cheerful person. Bed time was around 03:00 and you guessed it, the next morning was even harder to get up. But I managed, and I was on time for breakfast and one of the first to arrive for registration.



The first session of the day was one of the most enlightening. A panel discussion with Tori Trotta to tell us about the American Experience, Susan Doe and Ann Hemming both from Biall and representatives from LexisNexis UK and Sweet & Maxwell. The topic: "Fair business practices for legal publishers" It was the kind of meeting that we have wanted for a while in SA.

Then followed the parallel sessions. I attended "The

persistence of perception: the myths surrounding the long term storage of digital formats” yup with a title like that it can only be an American speaker. Very interesting and scary, what we would call a real eye opener. Next I attended “Adobe PDF and document management: an overview” Really enjoyed this one. After lunch I attended what I believe to be the best presentation of the whole conference. It was a paper presented by Susan Mansfield entitled “Live long and Prosper: demonstrating the value of your information service” Mind blowing, we hope to bring you the article version of this paper in the Osall newsletter very soon. My last session for the day was “Budgeting and marketing: increasing value in hard times”.

It was the end of the day, by this time my mind was spinning, I had to go to my hotel room and make notes, in order to remember what I want to tell people at home about. Sleep, sleep, glorious sleep, just ten more minutes mother, what is that noise, that buzzing in my ears. Where am I? Hotel room, what day is it? Still Saturday. What time? Ice cold. I am going to be late for the formal dinner. NO. Shower, dress up, make-up at break neck speed. Storm down the passage. Get to reception. Why am I alone? \*%&^\$%% I did not reset my cell phone time, the message (the noise that woke me) that came in from my husband had South African time on it. I was too early. Well go back to my room, redo the make-up, properly this time, reply on some messages and then it is off to the Presidents Reception and Biall Annual Dinner at the Sheraton Grand Hotel.

The night was unforgettable. First we were entertained by some Scottish Bagpipes and Sword dancers. In the dining hall itself we were then entertained by some local Clan Drummers followed by a Whisky toast and the Annual Dinner. (I ate the Haggis, yes I did and in small quantities it is not so strange). Later we were again entertained by a local band called Jim Mc Rae and this was followed by a Scottish Disco. The evening at the Sheraton ended at 24:00. We all walked back to our hotels in a group and talked about the day’s experiences.

Sunday morning started much the same as the others with breakfast and a stroll to the conference venue. The day consisted of two papers followed by the Biall AGM and two more papers. The conference was formally closed at 16:00 by Victoria Jannetta the BIALL Chair.

While all the papers were very good I can honestly say that I benefited most from the second day, and even if the conference consisted of only those papers I would still have said it was worth while going. It was time to say goodbye to all the new friends. Most were rushing off to catch a train or plane. The few that stayed over in the city that night all met up in smaller groups to go to dinner. It turned out to be a very noisy night, not

because we became unruly, we were much too tired for that by this time, but because this was the night that England lost to France in the Euro 2004 soccer competition and some residents were very happy with that and some were a tad upset at the thought.

Monday morning I was out of bed at 06:00 again. I had to pack, eat breakfast and go to the Castle. I could not go home without doing that. I also did my final gift shopping and took some time to sit on a bench on in the park and write postcards, these I posted in the Castle. It was a wonderful day, the weather started getting a bit cold but luckily only at the time I was due to meet my taxi back to the airport. This time I took the rival taxi company and it cost me £15, 50. I have news for the other taxi driver. I think he will stay in business a little longer if any South African has to pay the fair.



At the Airport I was informed with a smile that my Edinburgh flight to London was delayed by an hour. Panic stations, I only had one hour and 20 minutes between my flights. Seeing the obvious panic on my face, the check-in clerk assured me that there was no need for panic since the London - South Africa Flight was also delayed. I would still have to wait a full hour on Heathrow before I could board my flight to SA. OK, relax again no problem. The flight left much later than expected but I was not worried, I would have an hour and the Captain assured us that he would make up some time. Which he did. Since my boarding pass for the SA flight was already issued in Edinburgh, I did not have any worries; I only had to be at the gate at 20:55. We landed at Heathrow at 20:15. Still I was not worried. I would have lots of time for some last minute shopping. At about 20:25 as I was taking a skwizz at some very nice things in Harrods I suddenly went cold. Did I hear correctly? Did the announcer really say what I thought he said? Did he really say “would passenger Bertram delaying flight BA 57 to Johannesburg, South Africa please board immediately at gate 2”????? How many Bertram’s on a flight to Johannesburg can there be? Was it me holding up the flight? Impossible I still had at least 15 minutes before the flight would begin boarding. Turns out I did not. The very friendly man waiting for me at the top of the escalators was very upset with me for holding up the



take-off of the flight. It was only when I showed him my boarding pass that his rage turned towards the \*&^%& people in Edinburgh who have no idea what is going on at Heathrow. He apologised and explained on my behalf to the crew why I was late. Of course I did not have him inside the aircraft to explain to all 200 passengers why they had to sit and wait for me before they could go home. If looks could kill. Conversation was very scarce on the flight home.

All in all it was a very eventful and interesting experience. If you have the opportunity to apply for the scholarship next year, do so.

I would like to thank Academic Marketing Services and OSALL for the opportunity. It was one of the highlights of my life. I would also like to thank my firm Deneys Reitz for their generosity in providing me with pocket money for all those unforeseen expenses that might pop up, and did. Last but certainly not least a big thank you to BIALL for the hospitality and excellent conference and Cathrine McArdle for always keeping an eye on me

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## Who goes where

Meryl Federl ([federlm@law.wits.ac.za](mailto:federlm@law.wits.ac.za)) was appointed the Director of Legal Training at Wits University from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004. She is responsible for training students and academics in electronic legal research, and for the overall management of the law school library.

Diana Riley ([d.riley@cpt.bowman.co.za](mailto:d.riley@cpt.bowman.co.za)), librarian at Bowman Gilfillan in Cape Town, sent us this piece about her studies:

"I registered at the University of Cape Town in 2002 for a part-time MBibL. The title of my dissertation is 'The Information needs of attorneys in a large South African law firm.' The dissertation includes an extensive literature review (South African and foreign literature) on the subject as well as empirical research. The empirical research involved a questionnaire to all Bowman Gillfillan attorneys as well as follow-up interviews.

I expect to complete my dissertation (and thus the degree) before the end of this year. I intend to publish the results of my findings. If anyone is interested in speaking with me, they are most welcome to contact me.

I certainly hope that this small contribution will encourage other law librarians involved in research projects to also come forward."

Rhoda Mafikeng ([r.mafikeng@bowman.co.za](mailto:r.mafikeng@bowman.co.za)) was recently appointed as Assistant Librarian, at Bowman Gilfillan. Bowman Gilfillan, whose library is headed by Elizabeth Bourne ([e.bourne@bowman.co.za](mailto:e.bourne@bowman.co.za)), has recently moved to a wonderful brand new office in West Street, in Sandton. Bowman Gilfillan and John and Kernick merged earlier this year, and are now known as Bowman Gilfillan.

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## Are you a Super Librarian??

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### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You welcome everyone into your library. Your library is there to serve everyone.

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You help people at the very moment when they need to find important, life changing information.

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You're always looking for the next great database, or website, or novel, or the best ever library automation system.

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You gladly share your knowledge and skills with other librarians, and you make the time to mentor new librarians.

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You can't wait 'til fall when the new publisher catalogs arrive. And, oh yeah, the leaves are also pretty.

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You get books and more from other libraries near and far if you do not have them in your own collection. (Librarians might be Muggles, but we have a little magic up our sleeves!)

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You help people in their quest to get rich, get thin, get healthy, get happy, or get justice.

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You connect people to the world via newspapers, magazines, computers, databases and the Internet.

### **YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You provide educational and recreational activities for children and teens that foster their love of reading. You

provide educational and recreational activities for adults that foster their love of reading.

**YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN IF**

You still get a rush when you find the answer.

**YOU ARE A SUPER LIBRARIAN.**

Now everyone will know it.

Do you know MORE ways to be a Super Librarian?

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## Reports of the OSALL Committee

### Listserv Report August 2004



Lydia Craemer

The OSALL listserv has enjoyed another busy year, serving as a valuable communication tool between OSALL members and “lurkers” within and without the legal fraternity, both locally and internationally. The list membership currently stands at 190 subscribers. As always one has the brickbats, but fortunately also the bouquets, with which to contend.

Let’s deal with the brickbats first. Two common complaints regarding the listserv rear their heads with regularity. Firstly, is the listserv not becoming a document delivery vehicle ? We see a lot of requests for document supply, mostly either judgments or legislation. I would hope that these requests are the “last resort” requests – requests made because all other conventional avenues are exhausted or the item in question is unusual or hard to obtain. A comment was made to me by a librarian who has recently joined the law library world, that this “give and take” seemed unusual to her ; don’t we utilise normal ILL channels ? Perhaps worth a reassessment ?

Secondly, the issue of etiquette - the please and thank you. It can be that, in our pressurised work environments, we forget in our rush to add “please” to requests. A request without a “please” can have a rather demanding tone to it. So, please remember “please can...” Of “thank you” we have no shortage ! I suspect that the “Thank you” messages are a disguise for telling other listserv members not to pursue the matter further. However, if the query one puts out is difficult or obscure, please add a note giving the

solution to the problem as well as “thank you”.

One question that has been raised is this “Could the listserv become more of a discussion list?” Overseas listservs engage in lively debate about various issues. Examples: should law librarians have a code of ethics to which they adhere ? How do you go about assessing the value of your library ? How do you train paralegals in your firm ? How do you survive being a solo librarian ? Do you and your library staff do “fun” things to keep the work environment pleasant ? Often the question will be put to the list, the enquirer will summarise responses and give feedback to the list. Our most recent attempt was the matter of one of our supplier’s less than satisfactory service, which garnered about half a dozen responses ! I guess we have some catching up to do.

However, to keep the scales balanced, we have the bouquets. The highlight of 2004 would be notification to the listserv about the profile of Lynette Davis that was featured on the LexisNexis website. It would appear that listserv members appreciate interesting articles about law librarianship or exciting new developments in arenas such as copyright law (e.g the Canadian judgment on photocopying in libraries). I think most listserv members were seriously impressed when Shaik Mohamed Nordin of Malaysia got the article about Law librarians in the ABA journal to us so quickly. And we knocked the socks off Francis Wong in Canada when she got 6 copies of an ELD decision from listserv members in response to her request ! The latest member to join is an individual from the University of Botswana. He/she is the first listserv member from the African continent. Finally, we have indirectly assisted a lay person in making her way through the maze of the South African legal system. Ms B Sutton is trying to finalise the estate of her late father, who was divorced in East London when she was small, and the executor requires a copy of the divorce order. She was sent from pillar to post by various statutory bodies and, in desperation I suspect, did a search on the Internet, which presented her with the OSALL website. She then contacted me as listserv administrator with her query about obtaining the divorce order. Fortunately M&R does family law and administration of estates and I was able to give her some information, passed on to me by colleagues who practice family law and administration of estates, about where she would obtain the document. She was extremely grateful for the assistance.

Over the past year, OSALL has been in negotiation with Sabinet about the migration of the listserv to Sabinet. We are still of the intention of changing the host organisation so that we enjoy the benefits of an archive facility and a more user-friendly program which enables list members to have more control over their subscriptions. I’d like to close, by thanking all the



listserv members who make my life as listserv administrator a lot easier, and to the Committee for being there when I need advice. May the coming year be as good as this past one.

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## Newsletter Report August 2004



Fiona Rennie

This has been my second year of editing the newsletter, an enjoyable portfolio. I have learnt much about editing, cutting and pasting, etc! I have been assisted by many library colleagues, who have contributed articles, poems and given me leads to interesting websites. In particular, thanks are due to Danielle Heij, our Chair, Lydia Craemer, Charmaine Bertram, and Nico Ferreira, for his regular "Publications Noted", a very important regular feature of our newsletter.

Some of the articles of particular interest, for the period August 2003 – May 2004, were Professor Jenkins' speech at our AGM, and an article in the August 2003 issue, "Human Genome Project", which raised many ethical issues. In this issue, I also reprinted "Capturing legal know how", by Tayo Abijade, a librarian who Danielle met, while at BIALL in 2003. This concerns library documentation, and was of great interest for us law librarians.

Law librarians in South Africa have been fortunate, to have attended several international law library conferences, this past year! Mary Bruce's article on attending the International Association of Law Libraries 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Course on International Law Librarianship (IALL), September 2003, featured in the November 2003 issue; Danielle Heij's report back on the Canadian Association of Law Libraries (CALL), was in the May 2004 issue, and Charmaine Bertram's report on the British and Irish Law Librarians' Conference (BIALL), which she attended in June this year, will be published in the August 2004 issue. We are fortunate to have these opportunities, and it is clear that our law library standards are on an international footing.

John Montgomery, previous Director of Legal Information at Wits Law School, gave a most interesting talk on SAFLII, a South African legal legislation website, run along similar lines to the other

Legal Information Institutes worldwide. Lee Padayachee contributed an article on Tralac, The Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa. I have tried to maintain a balance of articles from overseas, and from South African contributors. I recently included a section of news of our colleagues, as it is good to keep up with the movements and news of colleagues, who also often become our friends! There have also been a few amusing and fun items, largely contributed by Lydia Craemer, who has a wicked sense of humour! Gail Dendy has given us the first verse of a lovely song for librarians, and I hope to have the song completed soon, by other creative law librarians.

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## Publications Noted

Nico Ferreira  
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[ferrenm@alpha.unisa.ac.za](mailto:ferrenm@alpha.unisa.ac.za)

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## A final thought –

”They are subversive. You think they’re just sitting there at the desk, all quiet and everything. They’re like plotting the revolution, man”—Michael Moore on librarians.

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