

NEWSLETTER

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

EDITORIAL

This newsletter includes two most interesting articles – Diana Riley has kindly allowed us to share the results of her dissertation, for her Master's Degree, on the provision of information services to attorneys. She was awarded a distinction for her paper. Congratulations, Diana! It is a topic we would do well to take note of, as this is our bread and butter!

Lydia Craemer's report on the BIALL Conference makes for entertaining and interesting reading. Lydia was chosen as the South African representative for 2005, and she certainly made the most of her time overseas in Harrogate in the UK. Well done, Lydia!

This newsletter is longer than usual, as August is AGM time of year! The reports of the Committee are included. Being on the OSALL Committee is a big but rewarding commitment. Thank you very much to all the Committee Members, for all that they have contributed to OSALL this past year. We have quite a collection of skills and experience between us. OSALL's membership has been increasing, and the OSALL Listserv seems to play a vital role for many of us.

Danielle Heij, the OSALL Chair, has recently become engaged to Michael Botha, and will be getting married on the 21st January 2006. Congratulations, Danielle!! We wish you and Michael many, many happy years together!

The December issue will contain some light articles, to get us in the Christmas spirit!

NEWS

The provision of information services to attorneys

Diana Riley, Bowman Gilfillan, Cape Town

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Introduction

My talk this afternoon is based on the results of a study which was carried out to investigate the information needs of attorneys in a South African law firm. I reported on the results in a dissertation, which was submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Library and Information Science at the University of Cape Town.

My research attempted to answer the following questions:

- Why do attorneys seek work-related information?
- What type of information do attorneys require?
- Which sources and systems of information do attorneys use?
- What are the factors that influence the information-seeking behaviour of attorneys?
- What is the role of the law librarian and library in the provision of information to attorneys?

Research design

The study consisted of a review of the relevant literature and a questionnaire, which was sent to the survey population, namely the attorneys of Bowman Gilfillan. Questionnaires and interviews are the most frequently used data collection methods in the study of the information needs of attorneys. Attorneys generally have well-developed verbal and

written skills well-suited to completing questionnaires and dealing with interviews.

Literature review

My review of the professional literature indicated that there has been a fair amount of research into the information needs and information seeking-behaviour of legal practitioners, including attorneys.

However, most of the published research relates to the United States, Canada and Great Britain and little in-depth research appears to have been undertaken to establish the information needs of legal practitioners and in particular attorneys in South Africa. **Lee's 1979 research** into library and information services to legal practitioners in Cape Town appears to be the only in-depth research undertaken on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of attorneys in South Africa.

And it is the apparent lack of research on the subject of the information needs of attorneys in South Africa as well as my career long involvement in law librarianship which is the reason why I undertook this study.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent out via email to the approximately 250 Bowman Gilfillan attorneys in Sandton and Cape Town. The email also introduced and explained the purpose of the questionnaire.

Mention has to be made of a factor that relates specifically to this study and that is that attorneys generally bill their clients at hourly rates and are thus inclined to be reluctant to engage in non-billable activities – such as completing a questionnaire.

Nevertheless the response rate of 50% is regarded as adequate. I also have to mention Liz Bourne's invaluable contribution in ensuring an adequate response rate – ***I'm told chocolate bribes were involved and that attorneys received a chocolate bar for***

returning a completed questionnaire. Although a successful strategy I thought it prudent not to report on this in my dissertation.

Why do attorneys seek information?

The information age has been characterized by widespread and voluminous production and consumption of information. As such attorneys operate in an information-intensive environment. Attorneys' most important role is to act as their clients' legal representative and to be able to provide a legal service to their clients attorneys require information.

The law changes constantly as new legislation and decisions of the court are introduced that interpret the law. New legislation often takes immediate effect and can have immediate consequences for clients.

Keeping up-to-date with new legislation and the latest court decisions can therefore be regarded as the most important reasons why attorneys need information. If attorneys do not keep up-to-date with new legislation and the latest court decisions, there is the likelihood of providing advice or an opinion based on out-dated law.

Attorneys often have to meet deadlines and as a result immediacy / timeliness is of great importance. The latest most up-to-date legal information should therefore be speedily available.

Which sources of information do attorneys use?

- **Primary and secondary sources of law** - The contents of a law library are traditionally made up of primary and secondary sources of law. Legislation and law reports are examples of primary sources of law, whilst secondary sources of law include legal textbooks, loose-leaf publications and law journals. These primary and secondary sources of law can also be categorised as formal sources of information – formal sources

of information are those sources of information which involve written modes of communication and includes paper and electronic text.

It is hardly surprising that attorneys rated legislation the most frequently used and important source of information and also rated law reports, textbooks and loose-leaf publications highly.

- **Electronic sources of information** - Legal practitioners in South Africa have access to a vast number of electronic resources. The proliferation of legal information, and the publication thereof in printed and electronic format influences both attorneys and law librarians. Whilst various studies have found that the legal profession continues to rely on the printed media, the attorneys of Bowman Gilfillan indicated that they used the print and electronic medium equally frequently.

It is likely that the young average age of the respondents in this particular study contributed to this particular finding. The literature review indicated that various studies have found that younger attorneys are more likely to use electronic resources.

The advantages of using electronic resources include fast and easy access to information due to the search capabilities of electronic resources and the ability to easily incorporate information into existing work documents. However, the attorneys also indicated that it is cumbersome to scroll through digital text whilst reading and they therefore sometimes preferred the printed medium. A lack of knowledge of electronic information media also prevented their use of these sources of information and this highlights the need

for law librarians to train attorneys in the use of electronic resources.

- **Informal sources of information** - Attorneys also consult informal sources of information and conversations with their colleagues and their own personal collection or library are examples of informal sources of legal information.

Rating the library in relation to informal sources of information the attorneys in this study indicated that they referred to other attorneys within the firm most often, followed by the law librarian and library. However the attorneys did rate their colleagues within the firm and the law librarian and library equally important. The literature review confirmed that various studies have indicated that attorneys prefer to consult their colleagues, an informal source of information, to formal sources and systems of information.

- **Non-legal information** - Law libraries are also increasingly being called upon to provide an information service on any topic attorneys request information on, including non-legal information. For example - attorneys may need information on the administration of the legal practice or information about their client or their client's business. It can therefore be said that the law library is increasingly being expanded into a generalised information service.

How important is the law library?

Various studies have found that attorneys regard law libraries as a very important source of information. If attorneys are to service their clients well and administer their practices effectively, they need well-stocked and staffed law libraries at their disposal. Libraries and information centres in law firms, like in other

corporate organisations, exist to provide information support to the professional staff of the organisation. In a law firm the user group consists of a relatively small group of busy and frequently very demanding fee earners (attorneys) and the law librarian needs to ensure that the information needs of the attorneys are met. It is important for an attorney to do fee-producing work, whilst the law librarians disseminate the information and publications attorneys require. The attorneys of Bowman Gilfillan rated the library as very important in the satisfaction of their information needs and this was illustrated by respondents who indicated that a lack of relevant library resources has the potential to delay their flow of work and could have cost implications due to time-delays.

Why do attorneys use a law library?

Attorneys can be said to use a law library or consult a law librarian for the following reasons:

- To locate a specific publication
- To find specific information
- To find a few "good" journal articles
- To do legal research
- To keep up-to-date with the latest legal developments

The Bowman Gilfillan attorneys indicated that they used the library or consulted a librarian most frequently to find specific information or a specific publication and rated these their most important reasons for using the library.

Interestingly - although the attorneys indicated that they did not use the library or consult a librarian often to keep up-to-date with the latest legal developments, they did rate this an important function of the library. As attorneys' most important information need is to keep up-to-date with the latest legal developments it is hardly surprising that they should rate this an important function of the library.

The importance of current awareness services

It is clear that the attorneys regard establishing the current status of the law and keeping up-to-date with the latest legal developments as their most important information needs. This highlights the importance of the current awareness services function of a law library as its purpose is to keep attorneys up-to-date with the latest developments in the legal field. Interestingly the attorneys in this study indicated that they most often kept up-to-date with the latest legal developments through discussions with other legal professionals and that they rated these discussions their most important method of keeping up-to-date. As such, attorneys rated their colleagues more highly than various recorded sources of information, including law journals and law reports, Legalbrief, LAWSA's Current law and the library bulletin.

How do attorneys access the library's resources and services?

It is interesting to note that attorneys do not necessarily visit the library to access the resources and services offered by the library, but most often use their desktop PC's to access the library's resources. Attorneys rated this the most important method of access to the library's resources. They commented that electronic access to information via their office PC saves time as it obviates a visit to the library. Personal visits to the library and consulting the librarian were however also highly rated and regarded as the next most important methods of access to the library resources and services.

What should law librarians know?

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) has defined a set of competencies for law librarianship, which defines the profession of law librarianship and its value to the legal field. These competencies are an indication of the skills and knowledge required by law librarians to serve their users well.

The attorneys rated these attributes as follows:

- The law librarian's **knowledge of information sources** and **electronic searching skills** were rated their most important attributes.
- Also highly rated were the law librarian's **ability to assist users with legal research, legal research skills, the ability to keep attorneys up-to-date with the latest legal developments and the ability to provide training in the use of legal resources (both print and electronic)**.
- The law librarian's **knowledge and understanding of the law** was not rated an important attribute. This appears to be in contrast to the position of the American Association of Law Libraries, which includes knowledge of the legal system and legal profession as one of the competencies of law librarians. Based on the knowledge obtained from working as a law librarian, I am of the opinion that a law librarian should in fact have knowledge of the law in order to be an effective law librarian.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that attorneys require a vast amount of work-related information to provide a legal service to their clients and that their most important information need is to establish the current status of the law and to keep up-to-date with the latest legal developments. They therefore require access to primary (legislation and case law, etc) and secondary sources of law (textbooks, etc) as well as non-legal information.

Law librarians and libraries undoubtedly have an important role to play in the provision of work-related information, but we will have to heed the information needs of our users and ensure that the resources and services of the library are tailored to meet the information

needs of the users. This could in turn lead to benefits for library and information services, such as a reduction in the marginality of the information service and a possible increase in the use of information services.

QUOTATION:

“ ... it is only through customer satisfaction that success or effectiveness can be truly measured – and satisfaction can only be obtained by meeting user need”.

Recommendations for future research

As I mentioned previously, little appears to have been written on the information needs of legal practitioners in South Africa. I attempted to add to the body of knowledge in the field by researching the information needs of the attorneys in a large South African law firm. However, further in-depth research should be undertaken on the role of the law librarian and library in the provision of information to legal practitioners. This research could include a survey to the staff of law libraries questioning the role of the information professional in law libraries and the type of services delivered. Further research could also be conducted on the information needs of legal practitioners such as advocates and judges. I think that research into the information needs of judges could be of particular interest as subsequent to the passing of the new Constitution almost every legal question is examined through the lense of the Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution.

Gateways, Gatekeepers and Gatecrashers – BIALL conference, Harrogate, 9-12 June 2005

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“Harrogate is the queerest place with the strangest people in it, leading the oddest lives of dancing, newspaper reading and dining” – Charles Dickens, 1858¹

March 2005

It's with a degree of "WOW!" that I receive the news from The Chair of OSALL, that I have been awarded the BIALL sponsorship 2005. Not because I haven't been to the UK before, but because of being awarded the privilege to attend an overseas conference for the first time in my career. The subsequent announcement that goes out on the OSALL listserv certainly brings home the fact that I have been declared the official OSALL delegate. I receive messages of congratulations from other listserv members, exhorting me to enjoy it to the fullest. I tell my family that evening. My husband is very pleased for me, but wonders why I wanted to go to such a nondescript place, as opposed to Edinburgh, London.....? My teenage daughter glares at me through slit eyes and demands to know who's going to test her prior to her exams ? My son's reaction is typically South African: "Yo!" Moodie & Robertson receive a formal communication from Danielle that I am OSALL's official delegate and the Partnership is very pleased.

May 2005

Well, registration is done, and travel arrangements have come together. I watch "3Talk with Noeleen" to pick up some tips for overseas travel, especially business travel, and it proves to be very informative. I realise that the suitcases I have are only fit for a trip to Durban by car, and my dilemma is solved by another overseas traveller when an appropriate case is loaned to me. Things move really fast from here onwards. I arrange with my friend

¹ BIALL newsletter, May 2005

Vera, who lives in Abingdon (near Oxford), to visit her the day before and for two days after the conference (she tells me that if I hadn't made plans to visit even briefly, she would have been "as mad as hell" with me !). She also volunteers to take me up to Harrogate and bring me back to Abingdon after the conference. People are amazed to hear of this offer, but I explain that Vera is a cameraman and travels the length and breadth of the UK in the course of her work, so travel of this nature is normal for her. Gifts are bought for BIALL's President, current Chair, Vice Chair, and all other overseas delegates. The Constitutional Court library kindly gives me bookmarks to take overseas, and Salome makes bookmarks with OSALL's logo and website address for distribution to delegates.

June 2005

I leave Johannesburg on the evening of 7 June 2005 and travel to Heathrow. The flight is uneventful, and I even manage to nab 40 winks. The arrival procedures run smoothly – Immigration lets me through with a smile and good wishes when I state the reason for my visit as being the South African delegate to an international conference and I have no trouble in locating my luggage quickly. Dave, Vera's partner and my "taxi", is stranded in a 20 mile (32.19 km) traffic jam and it takes him four hours to reach Heathrow from Abingdon (normally 2 hours). I spend the time waiting for him by relaxing at Costa's Coffee Shop. After he arrives we have a cup of coffee – sorely needed - and then we leave for Abingdon. The trip to Abingdon is clear of traffic upheavals and we get into Abingdon at noon. I grab some more sleep that afternoon and spend a lovely evening with Vera, Dave and Vera's daughter Millie. The next morning we leave at 8.30 for Harrogate and arrive there at 11.30. We grab a quick cuppa at a tearoom in Harrogate, and then part ways. I start my conference experience with the Pre-conference seminar on Treaties and International law.

The Pre-Conference Seminar is held at the Majestic Hotel, an imposing Victorian hotel. It

starts with a lunch for all attendees and I feel rather out-of-place when it seems all other attendees have met before. I have my lunch at a table with some librarians from the UK and they are surprised when they ask me "Where do you work?" and I reply "Very, very far away ; in Johannesburg, South Africa". That breaks the ice, we chat, and then settle down to the afternoon's business after lunch. The first paper by Professor Anthony Aust is an introduction to International law. The second paper, presented by Paul Barnett and Nevil Hagon of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office concerns practical issues that are encountered when researching treaties and contains useful tips. Attendees also get an insight as to all the hustle and bustle and protocols behind a treaty signing and the glitches that can occur. The third paper is a breath of fresh air in the stuffy room we are in ; Amy Osborne of the University of Kentucky introduces herself and her topic in a novel way: with Southern Hospitality consisting of bourbon filled chocolates "to wake everybody up" ! Well, it works and we all thoroughly enjoy her presentation on EISIL (Electronic Information System for International Law). She is a content editor for the site, and takes us through how the system works and what benefit we can get from it. After the Pre-Conference Seminar I go to my hotel, check in and make myself at home. At 7.45 pm I arrive back at the Majestic to meet up with the other international delegates and some of the BIALL Committee members for dinner. Susan Doe, the BIALL Chair and I spot each other easily (perhaps my beaded SA flag on my lapel helps?) and she then introduces me to my dinner companions: Susan Oag from ALLG, John Sadler from CALL, Barbara Tearle (BIALL President), Hazel Hewison (BIALL Vice Chair) and other BIALL Committee members. We take a walk to an Italian restaurant where we have an enjoyable evening ; such an enjoyable evening, that we get asked to leave at 11.30 pm because the proprietor wants to go home ! On the way to our hotels, I remark to Barbara Tearle that law librarians work hard, but we also play hard. Her response: "You have captured the essence of the conference in a nutshell".

Fortunately for all delegates, we have a 10 am start the next day. Those who attended the Pre-Conference Seminar have an advantage over other delegates because we registered and obtained our conference bags the day before. Susan Oag and I keep each other company through the day. Before the commencement of the day's events, Susan Doe announces that this conference is the biggest BIALL has ever had, with 402 delegates and 39 exhibitors. She also asks each overseas delegate to stand up so the audience can see them. The first session on "Outside the box: how developing relationships within your organisation can help the information service to influence and grow outside core service areas" encourages one to market the strengths of the information service, and one's own strengths, to key decision makers within your organisation. This is done by aligning the information service with the strategic aims of the organisation and raising one's personal profile and the profile of the information service. The second session on "Everything you wanted to know about digital copyright and other things you didn't want to know about it" is presented by Professor Charles Oppenheim. He is an entertaining speaker and educates us about where copyright exists (in literary works, including machine readable formats) and doesn't exist (it doesn't exist in a single fact), the exceptions to copyright laws and how to handle copyright issues in a digital environment.

Lunch is a stroke of genius. Delicious packed lunches consisting of freshly made sandwiches in a variety of flavours, crisps, fruit, a health snack bar and water / fruit juice all contained in a sturdy small carrier bag. Now one can net-sit / net-stand, net-eat and network without the risk of cutlery and crockery cascading to the floor ! After lunch we return to the auditorium for the Keynote Address by Richard Susskind, IT Advisor to the Lord Chief Justice. His topic is "Reflections and projections". First we are given a reminder about the technologies of the 90's: no cell phones, e-mail, Internet, home computers, no laptops, handheld devices or broadband connections. The turning point came

in 1999 with "the Dotcom blip" which had an entrepreneurial gold-rush feel to it, but illustrated an error of judgment as to the short-term value of Internet business. However, the dotcom phenomenon strengthened the presence of the Internet, which influenced and pervaded the legal fraternity (from judges to the courts, solicitors and major clients), legal academia, and the lives of ordinary citizens. In the next 20 years IT will have a further transformational effect by giving access to justice for both the legal world and for the ordinary citizen. Information will have to be structured and professional to add value for clients. Technology will change to accommodate the need for information. This will also result in a shift from "closed government" to "open government" where more information will be publicly accessible on the Internet. One will then see the emergence of "Clicks and Mortals" where the human element in service delivery is important in a digital environment. The day came to an end with a session about "Are you a Meeter and Greeter, or a Bouncer?" Librarians can create the impression of a "bouncer" ; the physical environment of the library can lead to the impression that librarians are remote and isolated. To counteract that impression and be seen as a "meeter and greeter", get involved with the other staff in the organisation. Give input in technology projects and tackle new challenges. Self-presentation and self-promotion are important to being a "meeter and greeter".

After all the stimulation of the day's sessions, the new and overseas delegates have an opportunity to mingle at a special reception. Then it's time for the Member's Forum when once again I will have to present myself to the attendees as the OSALL delegate. I am the last overseas delegate to address the attendees – the order is alphabetical by organisation. I have about two minutes to speak, so tell the gathering briefly about when the OSALL was started, its membership, what we do in terms of meetings and conferences and who the current Committee Members are. The other overseas delegates speak of the conferences they are

organising for 2006, and I end my speech with the following remark: “Unfortunately I can’t invite you all to a conference for reasons already given to you, but I would like to invite you all to South Africa *sommer maar net* which loosely translated from Afrikaans means *for the hell of it*” This is greeted by laughter and results in people saying to me “you’re the South African delegate ; I saw you at the Member’s Forum”. Strange how a remark like that makes an impact ! After the close of proceedings, attendees prepare themselves for the Summer Garden Party, sponsored by LexisNexis Butterworths UK. We gather on the lawns of the Cairn Hotel, sipping Pimm’s and playing games like carpet skittles, bowls and croquet with a three piece jazz ensemble providing musical accompaniment. Later we move indoors to the dining room and have a delicious meal, complete with a choice of a Spanish red wine or a South African white wine. Boy, do I get teased about the wine served in my honour ! After the meal, a disco gets going in an adjacent room. I pass on the disco, preferring to save my energies for the Annual dinner. I have an interesting chat with a BIALL committee member and we discover that BIALL and OSALL wrestle with similar issues.



Summer Garden Party

Saturday 11 June kicks off at 9.15 am. The delegates all gather at their chosen breakaway sessions, of which there are eight, running in sets of four over two hours. I choose to go to the session on “Handling gatecrashers: conflict management and resolution”. The speaker makes it an interactive session with attendees. We examine how conflict arises, what the driving forces are behind conflict and how we can change our attitudes and circumstances

over which we have control to manage and resolve conflict. We also discuss how these techniques can be used in the workplace amongst colleagues and between departments. The session is lively and the hour flies by. After tea I attend the session on “ Lawpaths: from gestation to delivery”. This discusses the Lawpaths virtual learning environment where university law librarians are invited to share content and databases that relate to the training of students in the use of legal materials. After lunch I choose to bow out of the afternoon sessions and go for a walk around Harrogate. Harrogate is situated on the Yorkshire Dales and is like Braamfontein ; one is walking up and downhill most of the time. Shopping is included in the expedition and on my way back to the hotel, I decide to visit the Parliament Street Café and treat myself to a chocolate milkshake (a weakness I have). The young gent behind the counter makes it for me and hands me not only the Sundae glass filled to capacity, but also the metal container in which the milkshake is made. Seeing the surprise on my face he says, in a broad Yorkshire accent, “You might as well have what’s left, love, otherwise we’ll just throw it away.” The amount left constitutes at least half a glass extra ! (Note: haven’t felt like a chocolate milkshake yet....)



Cairn Hotel

Once back at the hotel I get ready for the BIALL President’s Reception and Annual Dinner at the Majestic Hotel. In keeping with the Bollywood theme² for the evening, I am fortunate to have a beaded blouse that looks like a kurti (Indian blouse) and have bangles to wear and dots for

² The Indian film industry equivalent of Hollywood, based in Mumbai is called “Bollywood”

my forehead, purchased before departure. Arriving at the Majestic Hotel, the North and South Rooms where the Reception is held are beautifully decorated in Indian style, with garlands of flowers around the pillars, small elephant statues with flower garlands, Indian parasols, and alcoves filled with velvet covered mattresses, accessorised with silk and beaded pillows. Some women are resplendent in Punjabis and Saris, while some men are dressed in the Indian male kurtis and pants, complete with turbans. We are given a Mombay Breezer cocktail and Indian snacks while mingling. The dinner begins in the Ballroom at 8 pm. As we enter the Ballroom, I see a magnificent stage in the style of an Indian temple, dominating the room. The Indian theme is continued with opulent table décor, garlanded columns and Indian music playing. The tables for the BIALL Committee members, overseas delegates and special guests are right in front of the stage. I am seated at a table with Susan Oag, members of the BIALL Committee, and John Sinkins of Wildy and Sons. While enjoying a three course Indian dinner, we are entertained by Indian temple dancers and a Sitar and Tabla duo. After dinner, awards are presented to the Law Librarian of the Year, and to Wildy and Sons for Customer Excellence. After the formalities are over, the Bangra disco kicks off in the adjoining room. I decide to go and work off some energy and go to the disco, where Claire Germain (AALL), her husband and I boogie for a while. At about 00.15 am I decide to call it a night. On my way out I am accosted by Susan Oag and she asks me "Have you got your tattoo ?" Bemused (yet sober) I ask "Tattoo ? What tattoo ?" I get shown in the direction of a table where Indian ladies are decorating party goers with henna tattoos (known as Mehndi). I get a lovely mehndi on my left hand as a memento of the night. Then I adjourn to my hotel for some much needed sleep.



Lydia at the BIALL President's Reception and Annual Dinner

Sunday morning arrives with a 9.30 start (how can they be so cruel?). The delegates who do attend look rather tired (?!). The first session covers LexisNexis Butterworths' new platform that will be in use worldwide on their electronic products. The second session on "Negotiating skills: from books to bundles" discusses how we as librarians can negotiate better deals from publishers of electronic products when we invest in such products, and the techniques we can use when doing so. The last session is on "Portals: where we are, and the road ahead". We are told what portals are and why we need them, what we can do with them and what the status quo is at present in regard to the use of portals by law firms. Some the examples we are shown look impressive and have the potential to make the lives of law firm employees much easier by streamlining work processes and having information at their fingertips. The conference is formally closed by Susan Doe, and she hands over the Chairmanship to Hazel Hewison. The delegates get treated to a last yummy packed lunch and say goodbye to fellow delegates. It's also the last photo opportunity for many. The delegates separate and wend their ways home. I wait at my hotel and am collected by Vera and Dave. We have a four hour journey back to Abingdon ; the traffic is heavy, not unlike a week day. Once home, we have a light supper and collapse into bed.

My last two days in the UK are spent with Vera. The flight home is very pleasant. I get three seats all to myself by the window and am able to say a last farewell to the UK as we leave the shores flying over Brighton. I watch "Million Dollar Baby" and have a decent snooze. Once off the aircraft I get through Immigration,

baggage collection and Customs with no hassles. The family is (understandably) very pleased to see me. On my return to work, once jet- and conference-lag has worn off, when asked how my trip went, my answer is either "fabulous" or "wonderful". I'd like to say "Thank you" to BIALL, Sweet and Maxwell, AMS and the OSALL Committee for giving me an opportunity of a lifetime, as well as a special "Thank you" to Moodie & Robertson for their sponsorship and support.

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WHO GOES WHERE

Recent developments at the Sandton Bar Library:

Diana Shield was appointed as Chief Librarian as from June 2005.

Mzo Gulwa joined the staff mid July.

Joyce Nukeri has returned after her maternity leave.

Dorothy Wheeler (the Archivist for the Society of Advocates) has been devoting some of her working time to assisting us in the Library as well as dealing with inquiries addressed to the Archives.

The staff at the Bar Library is as follows :

Diana Shield (Chief Librarian)

Lynette Davis

Mzo Gulwa

Bridgette Williams (at Schreiner Chambers from September)

Fanus Olivier

Jean Aspeling

Joyce Nukeri

For any enquiries please telephone the number at Sandton which is (011) 292-6910 or fax request to (011) 292-6911

REPORTS OF THE OSALL COMMITTEE

OSALL FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 2004 – JUNE 2005

Selma Savitz

This financial report for the year ending 30 June 2005 was prepared for OSALL by account officer R.W. Furney.

Income and Expenditure

Total income for the year was **R16,883**

Of this amount, **R11,547** was made up of subscriptions, a marked improvement on last

year. We are very grateful to Lexis Nexis who sponsored our AGM last year, and they are again the sponsors this year. **(R2000.00)**

The interest rate on our savings is again very low, interest being **R1,516**.

A number of advertisements have been placed, both in the newsletter and on the listserv, and these have contributed **R1,820**

Expenditure was **R8,987**. A really worthwhile expense was the sponsorship OSALL provided for our members who attended various conferences. We sponsored Tanya du Plessis of the University of Johannesburg, who attended the SLA conference, and Mary Bruce who was our speaker at the SAOUG conference. Lydia Craemer attended the BIALL Conference, sponsored by Thompsons whose continuing support for attendance at the BIALL conference we greatly appreciate.

Our greatest expense was our own meetings and functions, including the book vouchers given to our guest speakers.

Brink Cohen Le Roux again sponsored Danielle's membership of BIALL.

At this point, I would once again like to thank **Deneys Reitz** who have again sponsored our wonderful newsletter, and also a number of other items, such as the lovely OSALL bookmarks that our conference delegates took along as gifts.

Our net income for the year was **R7,896**

Assets & Liabilities

Our Investment Account balance is **R33,887** and our Current Account is **R9,288**

The **R1140.00** listed as Sundry creditor is what we pay our auditor.

Therefore our total assets stood at **R43,175**

Unfortunately our auditor has resigned, and we will have to find a new auditor for next year. If anyone knows of an auditor who would be willing to deal with our books once a year, I would appreciate hearing from you after the meeting.

As you can see, we have done quite a lot better this year, as everyone has been very co-operative. There were only 2 payments this year that could not be identified. We have been fortunate in our sponsorships and in the amount of advertising we have received.

Therefore the committee decided not to increase the fees for this financial year.

We hope you will all continue to pay your subs as you have this past year, and to benefit as members of OSALL.

OSALL AGM WEBSITE AND LISTSERV REPORT

2004 - 2005

Website - Ruth Ward

Listserv – Lydia Craemer

Ruth Ward sends her apologies for not being present due to illness. I am doing the website report on her behalf. The website is being steadily maintained. As far as hosting of the site is concerned, we have decided to stay with Wits until there is clarity about a possible merger of SLIS, SAOUG and OSALL. Wits does not allow advertising on the website, which is one reason why we considered moving host. Ruth suggested that librarians who receive unreported judgments or judgments that are difficult to track down submit them to her for uploading on to the website. We are not trying to become publishers, but rather make these judgments available as a service to the library community. We welcome any input or suggestions where the website is concerned.

And now to the listserv:

It's that time of year again when we take a retrospective look at the listserv for 2004/2005. The listserv is still running smoothly ; technical hitches are few and far between. Membership continues to grow ; on 22 July 2005, we had approximately 195 members. It is interesting to note that after a conference where OSALL has

participated, new members join the list, whether they are OSALL members or lurkers.

The development of the Listserv Advertising Policy this year was a necessary step. Listservs are increasingly being used as job boards, and suppliers find them a useful mass mailing medium. We instituted the policy for three reasons:

1. To serve the library community
2. To keep advertisements to a minimum because they can prove annoying
3. To incorporate advertising as an additional income generating source

So far the policy seems to be keeping things running smoothly and no hefty objections have been raised by the listserv community about its implementation.

Last year I mentioned that OSALL had been in negotiation with Sabinet about hosting of the listserv. When the proposed merger of SLIS, OSALL and SAOUG was mooted, the Committee considered it best to put negotiations on hold until merger discussions delivered a concrete way forward with regard to whether the listservs of the organisations would merge or stay independent. On going back to the OSALL membership about a possible merger, a clear point of consensus was that the OSALL listserv should stay independent, which demonstrates the value it has to listserv members. If the listserv is going to move host, we would like the listserv and website to migrate together to one site. The door has not been closed on Sabinet's hosting of the listserv ; we're on hold for the moment while we mull over the way ahead for us as an organisation.

This brings me to a consideration of the nature of the listserv, and what we as members want from it. An interesting development came to light at the SAOUG conference in June. Mary Bruce spoke on blogs and wikis. The possibilities of changing the listserv into a wiki-based discussion group would give a flexibility and built-in archive/discussion chain character to communication between listserv members, which could prove very useful to the law library

fraternity. This may be an interesting new way of approaching a listserv format, and is worth consideration. To paraphrase Salome Vranas: "the listserv may have started in 1998, but we don't have to remain stuck in the technologies of 1998!"

The last point I wish to raise is the possibility of new blood coming in to administer the listserv, whichever direction it may take. I have seen Committee members change, but the more things change, the more the listserv administrator remains the same. It is a challenging post and with election year approaching, maybe some of you will entertain the thought of applying for nomination as listserv administrator. No pressure.... You have a year to mull it over.....

May the listserv continue to be the useful, and sometimes indispensable, resource that it is – thank you to all listserv members for making it possible.

OSALL MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATION REPORT

2004 - 2005

Salome Vranas

The marketing and PR portfolio is a new portfolio on the OSALL committee.

One of first tasks was to bring OSALL documents all in line with the new website so that everything looks uniform. I gave the OSALL newsletter a new dust jacket, revised the About OSALL brochure and gave it a face lift. I also revised the Listserv and Advertising Policy documents and gave them each a new look.

I have made bookmarks with the OSALL logo and contact details on the one side and a little quotation on the reverse side which we can use as hand outs.

I have requested Tanya du Plessis from the University of Johannesburg to hand out some of these bookmarks at the SLA conference which

she attended a few months ago. Lydia Creamer from Moodie and Roberson also took along a few bookmarks to the BIALL conference and Danielle and I distributed bookmarks and membership forms at the SAOUG conference which was held at the CSIR in June.

I have made little notepads with a little pencil and a bookmark which was handed out at the AGM to all members who attended.

One of the next projects on the list in the next month or 2 will be to make the legal profession more aware of OSALL.

OSALL NEWSLETTER

2004 - 2005

Fiona Rennie

This has been my third year of editing the newsletter. Since the last AGM, the newsletter has been revamped in its look, and for this I would like to thank Salome Vranas, for all the work she did on getting the cover of the newsletter to match our website design, and it is also in colour. We have been able to send out the printed issues in colour, thanks to the generosity of Deneys Reitz Attorneys. Another new feature has been to include photographs, which have enhanced the newsletter.

Some of the articles of special interest have been the one in our May issue, on the "Corporate law library's role in information provision", which is the findings of Diana Riley's dissertation, for which she was awarded a distinction. Diana's findings are of particular interest to us as law librarians. Merle Ruff's article on the Constitutional Court website and library, is also a most interesting article, and it is a most important resource for all South Africans.

Law librarians have had a good year again, with regard to attending overseas and local

conferences, and reports on these have been included in newsletters, so that we can all benefit. Carol Clark shared with us, in the November issue, about the IALL Conference in Helsinki; and the August issue will contain Lydia Craemer's report of the attending the BIALL Conference in Harrowgate, in the UK, and Danielle Heij's report on the SAOUG Conference, which was held recently at the CSIR in Pretoria.

I have included articles from websites, and overseas journals, such as Mary Ellen Bates Tip of the Month, in the November issue, on research tools; two articles by Dennis Kennedy on 'Blawgs', a wonderful new technology, that we can use, and an article on website usability, from FreePint, an overseas journal. Lydia Craemer has told me about most of these interesting articles – thank you very much for all that you have contributed, Lydia.

Thank you, too, to Nico Ferreira, for his regular section on publications that he has noted, and to Danielle Heij for her ideas and jokes. My colleague, Charmaine Bertram also assists me each month, with the final collating. The newsletter seems to be a joint effort!

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Contributed by Nico Ferreira, UNISA
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Some light relief!!

Submitted by Lydia Craemer, Moodie & Robertson

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Last night as I lay sleeping
 I died or so it seemed
 Then I went to heaven
 But only in my dream
 Up there St Peter met me standing at the pearly gates
 He said "I must check your record, please stand here and wait"
 He turned and said "Your record is covered with terrible flaws
 On earth I see you rallied for every losing cause"
 I see that you drank alcohol, smoked and used drugs too
 Fact is you've done everything a good person should never do
 "We can't have people like you up here
 Your life was full of sin"
 Then he read the last of my record took my hand & said "Come in"
 He led me up to the big boss and said
 "Take her in and treat her well
 She used to work in an attorney's office, she's done her time in hell".

A final thought –**Where do you fit in?**

Submitted by Charmaine Bertram, Deneys Reitz

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FOR THOSE BORN BEFORE 1986

According to today's regulators and bureaucrats, those of us who were kids in the 60's, 70's and early 80's probably shouldn't have survived, because our baby cots were covered with brightly coloured lead-based paint which was promptly chewed and licked. We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, or

latches on doors or cabinets and it was fine to play with pans.

When we rode our bikes, we wore no helmets, just flip-flops and fluorescent 'spooky dokey's' on our wheels. As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or airbags - riding in the passenger seat was a treat. We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle and it tasted the same.

We ate chips, bread and butter pudding and drank fizzy juice with sugar in it, but we were never overweight because we were always outside playing. We shared one drink with four friends, from one bottle or can and no-one actually died from this.

We would spend hours building go-carts out of scraps and then went top speed down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into stinging nettles a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and could play all day, as long as we were back before it got dark. No one was able to reach us and no one minded.

We did not have Play stations or X-Boxes, no video games at all. No 99 channels on TV, no videotape movies, no surround sound, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no DVDs, no Internet chat rooms. We had friends - we went outside and found them. We played elastics and rounders, and sometimes that ball really hurt!

We fell out of trees, got cut, and broke bones but there were no law suits. We had full on fist fights but no prosecution followed from other parents.

We played chap-the-door-run-away and were actually afraid of the owners catching us. We walked to friends' homes. We also, believe it or not, WALKED to school; we didn't rely on mummy or daddy to drive us to school, which was just round the corner. We made up games with sticks and tennis balls.

We rode bikes in packs of 7 and wore our coats by only the hood. The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke a law was unheard of...They actually sided with the law.

This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers and problem solvers and inventors, ever. The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all.

And you're one of them. Congratulations!

Pass this on to others who have had the luck to grow as real kids, before lawyers and government regulated our lives, for our own good.

For those of you who aren't old enough, thought you might like to read about us.

This my friends, is surprisingly frightening.....and it might put a smile on your face:

The majority of students in universities today were born in 1986.....They are called youth.

They have never heard of We are the World, We are the children, and the Uptown Girl they know is by Westlife not Billy Joel. They have never heard of Rick Astley, Bananarama, Nena Cherry or Belinda Carlisle.

For them, there has always been only one Germany and one Vietnam.

AIDS has existed since they were born. CD's have existed since they were born.

Michael Jackson has always been white.

To them John Travolta has always been round in shape and they can't imagine how this fat guy could be a god of dance.

They believe that Charlie's Angels and Mission Impossible are films from last year.

They can never imagine life before computers.

They'll never have pretended to be the A Team, RedHand Gang or the Famous Five.

They'll never have applied to be on Jim'll Fix It or Why Don't You.

They can't believe a black and white television ever existed. And they will never understand how we could leave the house without a mobile phone.

Now let's check if we're getting old...

1. You understand what was written above and you smile.
2. You need to sleep more, usually until the afternoon, after a night out.
3. Your friends are getting married/already married.
4. You are always surprised to see small children playing comfortably with computers.
5. When you see teenagers with mobile phones, you shake your head.
6. You remember watching Dirty Den in EastEnders the first time around.
7. You meet your friends from time to time, talking about the good Old days, repeating again all the funny things you have experienced together.
