

OLA Annual Report 2015-16

OLA Unit:

Legal Reference Round Table 2015-16

Division, RT, Committee Board Members:

Chair: Sue Ludington, Washington County Law Library

Vice-Chair: Kelly Reynolds, University of Oregon Libraries, Law Library

Overall goals and responsibilities of your unit:

To improve the quality of legal reference service in all types of Oregon public libraries, by opening up lines of communication and increasing professional interaction between Oregon public law library and non-law public library reference staff.

Specific objectives and activities planned for the 2015-16 OLA membership year:

Advocacy: Continue to bring increased awareness of county law libraries and their unique assets, and educate the OLA community on current trends to alter traditional models of service in Oregon.

Education: Sponsor or coordinate an educational program related to law librarianship, legal reference services, government/civics, or similar topic for the 2016 OLA Conference.

Leadership: Update the LRRT website to provide current, Oregon-specific resources and referral lists that public library staff may quickly and efficiently utilize when assisting patrons with legal reference questions.

Collaboration: Collaborate with the State of Oregon Law Library (SOLL) and the Reference Round Table (RRT) to develop legal reference training for public library staff; conduct one or more trainings for at least one Oregon public library.

Progress made toward goals for 2015-16, if categorized:

Advocacy: LRRT members attempted to keep the larger membership informed of county law library trends, challenges, and contributions via a handful of articles submitted to the OLA Hotline blog and announcements sent to the Libs-Or mailing list.

Education: The LRRT and Reference RT (RRT) co-sponsored the OLA Conference session “How to Show and Tell a Legal Research Story: Searching Nolo and Fastcase.” The standing-room-only crowd clamored to hear about these two databases being offered by the State of Oregon Law Library; program evaluation forms affirmed attendees’ on-going gratitude for law- and legal-reference-related programs offered at the annual conference.

Leadership: Minor updates were added to the LRRT website (including links to all LRRT-sponsored OLA conference presentation materials), and all other links have been verified as up-to-date. Oregon-specific referral lists were not added, as it became clear more time would be needed to select and present the most pertinent sources.

Collaboration: The RRT and LRRT sponsored and contributed to one legal reference training held in March 2016 at the Tillamook County Library. Ten reference library workers and one attorney attended the 3-hour session that included expanded discussion on legal reference best practices. Presenters included the State Law Librarian and her staff.

Goals for 2016-17:

Advocacy: Continue to keep the OLA community informed about the resources, services, and expertise available at Oregon public law libraries through Libs-Or and the OLA Hotline. Submit one article to the OLA Quarterly on legal reference interview strategies, researching Oregon law, trends in “access to justice,” or other law library topic relevant to the theme.

Education: Sponsor or coordinate one or more educational programs related to law librarianship, legal reference services, attorneys and the public, or similar topic for the 2017 OLA Conference.

Leadership: Conduct a content review analysis of the LRRT website to assess what information is genuinely useful and relevant to OLA members. Determine whether the website has potential for being a ‘go-to resource’ or not and, if so, what content users expect to find. Identify the characteristics that make the LRRT site unique.

Collaboration: Investigate the logistics and feasibility of a collaborative project involving ownership and maintenance of the already-established Oregon Legal Research website and blog. Solicit feedback from librarians from county, state, court, and academic law libraries, and develop a proposal for going forward.

Comments:

The LRRT is pleased it has added a few more members this year so we are now 14 strong! After another successful program at the OLA Conference, attendees at our annual business meeting discussed the apparent demand for more education, prompting us to deliberate a possible half-day pre-conference. While the current LRRT Chair and Vice-Chair will remain in place for the 2016-17 year, the unit will continue to encourage others to consider taking on leadership roles in the future.