

OLA Annual Report 2016-17

OLA Unit:

Legal Reference Round Table 2016-17

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 2016-17 OLA membership year:

***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.**

Progress made toward goals for 2016-17, if categorized:

***Advocacy:* LRRT submitted a few articles/announcements to the OLA Hotline and the Libs-Or mailing list, along with several shares of outside articles pertaining to public law libraries, federal funding for libraries, and access to justice endeavors. Additionally, LRRT Chair Sue Ludington joined colleagues in Salem for Library Legislative Day, which enabled her to convey directly to legislators the unique value of public law libraries and to advocate for continued funding. Unfortunately, we failed to write and submit an article for the OLA Quarterly.**

***Education:* At the 2017 OLA Conference, the LRRT and Reference RT (RRT) co-sponsored a half-day pre-conference program titled “Thrive in the Hive: Working Together to Provide Exceptional Legal Reference Service.” Several outside speakers were brought in to inform attendees of legal services and resources in Oregon, supplemented with reference/research guidance by law librarians. While attendance wasn’t as high as anticipated, those that did participate indicated considerable satisfaction and gratitude for the session.**

Leadership: Regrettably, we did not tackle the LRRT website and conduct a review of content this year as intended. A thoughtful re-design remains a goal for the unit, and we'll aim to do a thorough examination in the coming year.

Collaboration: This past year saw several conversations regarding transfer of ownership and maintenance of the Oregon Legal Research blog and website; these led to a handful of law librarians tentatively agreeing to serve as periodic contributors if/when there is a transition. Much more work needs to be done to develop the project framework, but identifying future partners was a good first step.

Goals for 2017-18:

Advocacy: In accordance with the Advocacy Continuum, continue to bring increased awareness of Oregon county law libraries and their unique services to library workers (and, indirectly, their patrons) through periodic posts shared via Memberclicks (and Libs-Or) and news updates submitted to the Hotline. Again, attempt to submit one legal reference- or Oregon law-related article to the OLA Quarterly.

Education: Sponsor and/or coordinate one educational program related to law librarianship, legal reference, or civics/government/current legislation at the 2018 OLA Conference.

Leadership: Continue to review and revamp the LRRT website, with special emphasis on analyzing what content is most desired and helpful to the broader OLA membership. Identify one or more Oregon-specific legal research tools (eg bibliography of online legal sources or statewide directory of legal assistance) for development and promotion.

Collaboration: Team up with RRT and Answerland partners to create, coordinate, and implement an Oregon Reference Summit (an expanded version of Answerland's previously successful Virtual Reference Summit) which will be held in Spring 2018. Continue talks surrounding the future of the Oregon Legal Research blog and website, and come up with realistic action plan.

Comments: The LRRT membership has experienced little growth in the last year, with 15 members currently. However, one of the newest members – a county law librarian – has agreed to step up as Co-Chair for the upcoming year; we are so excited for LRRT leadership to enjoy new energy! We were pleased to hold a mostly-successful pre-conference at the Annual Conference this past year; however, the amount of work to put together a half-day event may not have proven to be the best use of our resources. It's anticipated that future LRRT-sponsored conference proposals likely will be crafted with the standard 60 or 90 minute session length in mind. Lastly, we are especially eager for the collective effort to resume Answerland's popular Reference Summit in 2018! LRRT looks forward to working closely with RRT and Answerland partners to put together an outstanding full-day educational program for library reference staffers from all over the state.