

OLA Annual Report 2018-19

OLA Unit:

Legal Reference Round Table 2018-19

Division, RT, Committee Board Members:

Chair: Sue Ludington, Lane County Law Library

Vice-Chair: vacant (as of November 2018)

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 2018-19 OLA membership year:

Advocacy: Continue to seek new ways to bring increased awareness of Oregon county law libraries and their unique services to library workers (and, indirectly, their patrons), including through Memberclicks, Libs-Or, and the Hotline. Explore more involvement with Answerland in terms of legal reference contributions via the QuestionPoint service. Stay abreast of potential legislation that may further impact county law libraries.

Education: Sponsor and/or coordinate one educational program related to law librarianship, legal reference, or civics/government/current legislation at the 2019 OLA-WLA Annual Conference. Consider Washington partnerships and topics of relevance to this broader audience.

Leadership: In addition to continuing to review and revamp the LRRT website for relevance and utility, investigate the development and possible implementation of a legal reference training model for use with public library employees, one that could be customized based on specific needs.

Collaboration: Anticipate partnership with Answerland and RRT for the 2019 Oregon Reference Summit. Put concerted effort into coming up with solution for Oregon Legal Research blog and website, perhaps seeking out possible collaboration with Oregon Council of County Law Libraries.

Progress made toward goals for 2018-19:

Advocacy: Another year passed without LRRT submitting any meaningful articles or announcements to the OLA Hotline or Libs-Or mailing list (aside from solicitation for conference and workshop program ideas). However, RT members were once again heavily involved with legislative advocacy work during the 2019 legislative session. This year we faced SB 858, which would have expanded HB 4097 statewide (the bill passed in last year's short session but impacting Multnomah County only); several RT members contributed their expertise and professional perceptions, and garnered support from the lawyer community, to assist OLA's lobbyist who spoke in opposition of the bill (which died in committee).

Participation in Answerland this year has been extremely sparse, with only a handful of legal questions coming through the service. LRRT members are unclear of reasons why, but the topic will remain a priority.

Education: LRRT had a visible presence at the 2019 OLA-WLA Conference through sponsorship of two programs: a 3-hour pre-conference titled "Promoting Democracy Through Civil & Political Reference

Services: What Every Adult & Youth Librarian Should Know” (co-sponsored with OLA’s Reference Round Table [RRT] and Library Development and Legislative Committee), as well as a 75-minute session titled **“Aiding and Abetting: Public Library & Law Library Partnerships”** co-presented by LRRT member Lee Van Duzer. While the preconference had slightly below-average attendance, those that did expressed gratitude for all they learned. The regular session saw close to 30 attendees who eagerly listened to stories of public library partnerships from both Oregon and Washington, and imagined how such programs could be employed in their communities.

Leadership: The LRRT website continues to need attention, as only minimal updates were incorporated this year. Regrettably, for example, we never uploaded the 2018 conference program materials to Northwest Central, and we have yet to upload those from 2019. However, all links are active and content is sufficiently meaningful.

Creating a public library training model was not attempted this year; however, guidance gleaned from the LRRT-sponsored session at the OLA-WLA Conference has planted the seeds for developing such a product. A goal for 2019-20!

Collaboration: Even though LRRT was not an official sponsor of the Oregon Reference Summit this year, we set up an info table at the event (alongside RRT) and prospective LRRT member, Amy Gregory, presented a well-attended session called **“Conquering the Headlights (Stop Being a Deer When it Comes to Legal Reference Questions).”**

The Oregon Legal Research website and blog continue to be an unresolved project. LRRT Chair Sue Ludington is in regular communication with its creator, Laura Orr, and discussions about the future of the site are on-going -- although Laura is eager to have a resolution this next year.

Goals for 2019-20:

Advocacy: Continue to boost awareness of Oregon county law libraries and their unique services using various forms of marketing and outreach. Be cognizant of legislative activity pertaining to county law libraries, and contribute expertise as demanded.

Education: Sponsor and coordinate at least one educational program related to law librarianship, legal reference, or civics/government/current legislation for both the 2020 OLA Annual Conference and the 2020 Oregon Reference Summit.

Leadership: Research current LRRT members’ arrangements with Answerland and the process by which legal questions are being filtered to participating law librarians. Pursue development and delivery of a statewide-appropriate training model for public library employees. Identify and apply improvements to the LRRT website.

Collaboration: Pursue professional connections with county law library contacts who are not involved with OLA, and brainstorm ways to offer support (e.g., collection development, remote legal reference, in-house staff training). Devote this year to finding a permanent solution to the Oregon Legal Research website and blog.

Comments: LRRT membership has enjoyed an upswing this year (a total of 19 members as of July 30, 2019), and hopes the trend continues. With four county public library systems now responsible for providing public law library services, we anticipate more non-specialized library workers will find value in taking part in the RT. We look forward to increasing the ranks and influence!