



Gateway (St. Louis)

A Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators

Gateway Connection

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Association of Legal Administrators – Gateway Chapter



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From the President, Donna Sobkoviak

“A man or woman only learns in two ways, one by reading, and the other by **association** with smarter people.” (Will Rogers) Quite an applicable quote when it comes to being involved in an **association** like ours. The ALA Gateway Chapter members are those “smarter people” who have the knowledge and ability to manage law firms of any size. The Association of Legal Administrators’ national, regional and chapter organizations provide the resources and networking opportunities that allows its members to master their challenging positions.



I have been a Law Office Administrator for nearly 19 years, the first five of which without the benefit of being a member of ALA. I can tell you from personal experience the immediate rewards I realized upon joining. My first meeting was the Annual Legal Management Educational Forum and I was struck not only by the high quality of education, but also by all

the “smarter people” (members) offering me advice regarding issues that were directly pertinent to my firm. I can now say that my membership has helped me become one of those “smarter people.” Equally rewarding are the personal relationships I have with fellow members. Some have retired, others have changed firms and a few have even moved away but the bond has remained.

As a member, I have strengthened my benefits by being involved in some of the Gateway Chapter’s project committees and, for the past several years, serving on the Board. In our particular administrative roles, we often find ourselves working in a solo capacity. The experiences that I have had while working for the Gateway Chapter have provided me with the rewarding opportunity of working as a team. And, WOW, did that pay out huge dividends for our Chapter in 2010! The Gateway Chapter worked together to “beef up” the benefits of being an ALA Gateway Chapter Business Partner, and in turn, reached out to many potential new Business Partners and were able to increase our sponsorship by 39%!!

I am proud to say that this increase in the Chapter’s income has meant that our members now benefit from higher quality education at a reduced cost. In addition, the Chapter has been able to offer an increased number of scholarships at a higher dollar value per recipient to its members for attending the annual Regional and National conferences. There is simply no better time to become a “smarter person!” If you are considering membership in our association, feel free to contact me directly at (314) 872-0347 and, perhaps, attend an educational meeting as my guest so you can experience first-hand the rewards of ALA!

Donna Sobkoviak | 2011-2012 ALA Gateway Chapter President

Records Management in Law Firms: A Paradigm Shift

By Teresa Pritchard Schoch, MSLS JD,CRM,ERMM | Principal Consultant for IKON

As the discipline of records management develops policies and standards world-wide, (See; e.g., ISO 15489, International Standards for Records Management¹, Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records 2, EU standards, and DOD 5015, U. S. standards), which are aimed at defining and organizing the exponentially increasing amount of information created annually, law firms are not immune from the requirement that they must control what they create. While the paperless firm has been discussed for decades, lawyers likely are the last group to discard their yellow pads and sticky notes.

Nonetheless, the immediate need to grasp the content of thousands of boxes, and the labor costs to continue to do so, is getting the attention of law firm management when the time comes to sharpen pencils and cut costs.

The need to systematically toss duplicate paper copies is obvious. Making sure they are accessible electronically is not so obvious. Achieving 100% electronic capture of records will not solve a firm’s problem unless those documents are easily retrievable. While smaller firms might

¹ ISO 15489 defines records management as; “the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.” Further, a record is defined as;“information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.”

be able to handle the retrieval of its information utilizing robust full text retrieval software, the more information created in one base, the less likely the results of full text searching will be effective.

The first piece of advice for organizing a firm's electronic document system is to not create the documents in the first place, or, if they are created, to not maintain them unless they are either necessary to the ongoing business of the firm, or required to be retained by law. In order to capture and retrieve information relevant to the practice and management of the firm, compartmentalized areas involved in information management will either cooperate or duplicate. Since retrieval is easier, and costs are lower with less information duplication, communication and cooperation throughout the firm will be essential to a successful records management system.² While territories may have been marked for years, these departmentally created walls no longer serve any purpose.

True records management in a law firm will result when all members of the staff who create documents are able to recognize the value of that information and have the ability to identify it as a record. The information will need some level of categorization depending on the size and type of practice of the firm. The degree of categorization will range from automatically capturing basic data to a varying degree of sophistication in index creation based on the firm's type of practices.

Achieving a solid records management system will require more labor on the part of record creators. The mandates for a firm wide records management scheme must come from top management for not only legal reasons, but for practical reasons. Both the declaration and classification of records need to be consistent for the system to work.

Once a records management system is operational, the compartmentalized groups that existed in the past will look more and more alike. Creation, systematic deletion, organization, retrieval and reutilization will drive the need for firm wide information management with individual roles adapting to the needs of a new paradigm.

For assistance with document and records management strategies, chapter members can contact Mike Rathgeb at (314) 616-9748 or mike.rathgeb@ricoh-usa.com.

14th Annual Operation Bunny Hop

Rally your troops and participate in ALA Gateway's 14th Annual Operation Bunny Hop! Donate to ALA Gateway Chapter... just \$5 will sponsor a basket. And... volunteer to assemble baskets on Friday, April 15th from 9AM-5PM. Sign-up to volunteer with Kimberly Curran Cole at kimberly.cole@thomson.com or (314) 495-7773. Please make your donation payable to ALA Gateway Chapter.

In 2010, ALA Gateway Chapter prepared 1,600 baskets for under-privileged children. This year, we're committed to preparing 2,000 baskets which will benefit organizations such as Boys & Girls Town of Alton, Boys & Girls Town of Missouri, Child Center - Mary Grove, Community Women Against Hardship, Covenant House, Edgewood Children's Center, Griffin Center,

² It is good records management practice to identify the custodian of a record, with the original record designated as such. In the event the record is audited, the working copies are easily distinguished from the original.

Shriners Hospital for Children, St. Louis Crisis Nursery, The Evangelical Children's Home, and Voices for Children. It is no easy task but we can do it with your help!

Questions? Contact Ana Helton at ahelton@reelawfirm.com or (314) 446-3368.



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The image features a large, modern hotel building with a central tower, set against a blue sky and green landscape. The text is overlaid on the top and left sides of the image.

Catching Up With... Donna Sobkoviak!

Donna Sobkoviak is the Office Administrator of Summers Compton Wells PC, as well as newest ALA Chapter President. She has been an ALA member since 1997. We recently quizzed Donna for the “Catching Up With...” section, and her answers are below.

1. My main responsibilities are... *Human Resources, Financial, IT and Facilities*
2. I became a legal administrator when... *When my hairdresser told me there was a law firm looking to hire someone. I knew that I wanted to manage a business but never thought it would be a law firm.*
3. The thing I like best about being a legal administrator is... *I really enjoy working with very intelligent people. I have learned so much from the attorneys and they have always supported any means of furthering my knowledge.*
4. The thing I like least about being a legal administrator is... *When a project that I feel is important ends up hitting a brick wall because of differing opinions on how to proceed.*
5. The hardest situations I have had to deal with are... *Upgrades, conversions and software training, since they are usually very time consuming and preparation is critical in order for a smooth and accurate data and user transition.*
6. As a legal administrator, I never thought I'd have to... *Call the fire department because smoke was coming out from one of the men's toilets. It turned out that MSD was smoke bombing the sewers to check for leaks and the toilet was not sealed properly.*

7. The best advice I'd received from a fellow legal administrator is... *Remember that everyone has a different perspective so you should not react to a confrontation until you evaluate where that person is coming from.*
8. I decided to join the ALA because... *I was very curious about whether other legal administrators encountered the same things as I did in my job... yes, they all do believe it or not.*
9. My impression of the Gateway Chapter is... *The Members and the Business Partners are all very nice and always willing to help each other out. It is simply the best way to continue gaining knowledge about my job and to network with others.*
10. If I were not a legal administrator I would be... *A business owner but I could never figure out what type of business I would want to own so I guess this is the next best thing.*
11. In my spare time I like to... *I enjoy reading, running, traveling, eating out and shopping. I also spend my free time watching movies and hanging out with my husband, Darryl and my dog, Harley.*
12. Three words that best describe me are... *Multi-Tasker, Organized, and Analytical.*
13. The biggest change I've seen in the legal industry is... *That is easy, technology advances that continue to keep us more connected while making our jobs easier. That is why I do not hesitate to upgrade or convert our systems because I know the benefits that our attorneys, staff and administration will gain from doing so.*
14. The most challenging part of being a legal administrator is... *Scheduling group partner meetings with the attorneys since they are always so busy!*

ALA Gateway's New Website

ALA Gateway Chapter has a new website! The website is filled with tools to view the latest news, upcoming meetings, and most current newsletters, post your own position openings in the Job Bank, RSVP for meetings and pay online, view the monthly calendar to make sure you don't miss any networking, education, or other chapter events, and allows members to update your member profile, register for meetings, and much more... If you haven't already, please take the time to explore our new site and provide feedback to ensure our website offers everything you need to stay connected. Visit us at www.ala-gateway.org. If you have questions, please contact our Webmaster, Kara Brostron, at kmbrostron@lashlybaer.com or via phone at (314) 436-8366.

Business Partner Renewals

The Gateway Chapter is pleased to announce that we are planning our annual Business Partner program for the renewal period August 1, 2011, through July 31, 2012. We will offer current and prospective Business Partners an opportunity to sponsor the Chapter at various levels, making it possible for us to plan community service events and provide educational opportunities and networking events for ALA Gateway Chapter members and Business Partners. Renewal packets will be mailed by the end of April.

We appreciate the support of our Business Partners!

Member / Business Partner Highlights ***Congratulations to the following for their achievements...***

Jennifer L. Barton, ALA Member | Earned her Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR[®]) certification in January 2011.

Kara M. Brostron, ALA Member | Was selected to receive a \$1,000 scholarship giveaway from our Diamond Sponsor, Mid-America Coffee, to attend ALA Annual's Conference & Exposition this May.

Holly Berry, ALA Business Partner | Named in the 2011 40 Under 40 listing by *The St. Louis Business Journal*. [Click here](#) to view complete list.



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Be on the Lookout ***for the 2011 Salary and Benefits Survey Questionnaire***

There's a new format this year! This survey is beneficial to your organization because it is the most comprehensive law firm specific salary survey for the St. Louis Metropolitan area; and every year salary and benefits sections are expanded to provide the most information needed to help with compensation and benefit discussions.

What you'll need to do:

- Check your email for the survey forms. If you have not received them, contact Sarah Whitehead
- Read the instructions before you start the survey
- Collect the documentation you need (information is for the St. Louis Metropolitan area only. Please do not include information from Kansas City or other areas)
- Enter your firm's data and email the two sections of completed survey to Anders Minkler & Diehl LLP no later than April 25, 2011
- Please make your \$200 check payable to: ALA Gateway Chapter and send the check only to: Sarah Whitehead, Greensfelder, 10 S. Broadway, Suite 2000, St. Louis, MO 63102.

In order to maintain confidentiality, all information is sent directly to Anders Minkler & Diehl. No one in the Gateway Chapter ALA will have access to this data. If there are only 1-2 responses for a question, those answers are removed from the survey results so identification of the submitting firm(s) is not possible. All data collected is confidential and individual firm data will be destroyed once the results are compiled.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact saw@greensfelder.com, (314) 345-5415 or Angela Louis, louis@psplaw.com, (314) 335-1348.

View it on the ALA National Website - Question of the Month

Q: I've been asked to put together a presentation on work-life balance for our firm's partner retreat. Can ALA help me find resources?

A: Yes, of course ALA can give you a hand with this project.

The lion's share of articles and other material on work-life balance in the legal industry concentrates on lawyers; staff get very little attention. This probably has more to do with lawyer attrition having been studied extensively, and its economic impact measured, than with any other factor. As far as we can determine, that same topic in reference to staff is rarely discussed in legal-industry publications, let alone studied. Another point to be aware of is that many pieces focus on women's issues revolving around childbearing and parenthood – and we all know that there are many other areas to consider when discussing work-life balance. [Read more...](#)



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2011 Business Partner Appreciation | February 24, 2011

Calendar of Upcoming Events (2011 through 2014)

2011

April 20, 2011

- Program: Diversity in Your Organization
- Time: 12PM-1:30PM
- Location: Thompson Coburn LLP | One US Bank Plaza | St. Louis, MO 63101

May 22-25, 2011

- Program: ALA National Annual Educational Conference & Exposition
- Location: Orlando World Center Marriott Resort & Convention Center | Orlando, FL

July 15-16, 2011

- Program: ALA Chapter Leadership Institute
- Location: The Cosmopolitan | Las Vegas, NV
- Contact: Lisa Mikita, ALA Headquarters

August 10, 2011

- Program: 2011 Leadership Forum and Business Partner Exposition
- Time: 8:00AM – 4:30PM
Followed by a networking opportunity with Business Partners

August 12-13, 2011

- Program: ALA Board of Directors Meeting
- Location: Hotel Monaco | Denver, CO
- Contact: Lisa Mikita, ALA Headquarters

September 15-17, 2011

- Program: Region 3 & 4 Conference & Expo
- Location: The InterContinental | Kansas City, MO
- Contact: Lisa Mikita, ALA Headquarters

September 22-24, 2011

- Program: ALA Large Firm Administrators Retreat
- Location: The Ritz-Carlton Chicago | Chicago, IL
- Contact: Lisa Mikita, ALA Headquarters

November 11-12, 2011

- Program: ALA Board of Directors Meeting
- Location: Kiawah Island Golf Resort | Charleston, SC
- Contact: Lisa Mikita, ALA Headquarters

2012

January 2012 2012 Nominating Committee Selection & Meeting

February 15, 2012 2012 Slate of Officers Presented to Membership

March 21, 2012 Election of 2012-2013 Officers

April 23–26, 2012

- Program: ALA National Annual Educational Conference & Exposition
- Location: Hawaii Convention Center, Hilton Hawaiian Village | Honolulu, Hawaii

2013

April 15-18, 2013

- Program: ALA National Annual Educational Conference & Exposition
- Location: Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center | National Harbor, MD (Washington DC area)

2014

May 19-22, 2014

- Program: ALA National Annual Educational Conference & Exposition
- Location: Metro Toronto Convention Center | Toronto, Ontario, Canada

2011-2012 ALA Gateway Chairs and Committees

Bar Liaison	Dianne Feltz, Co-Chair Angela Schaefer, Co-Chair
Community Challenge Weekend	Sherry Smith, Co-Chair Joe Taylor, Co-Chair
Diversity	Michelle Martin, Chair Jacquie O'Quinn Timothy Tyler
Education/Professional Development	Sherry Hurst, Chair Tracy Bollig Mary Jennings Cindy Reeg Angela York
Human Resources	Mary Jennings, Chair Lisa Hollerbach
Membership Committee	Patty Brokaw, Co-Chair Debbie Schneider, Co-Chair
Newsletter	Angela Louis, Chair
Operation Bunny Hop	Ana Helton, Co-Chair Lisa Lange, Co-Chair
Salary Survey	Sarah Whitehead, Chair Steve Heinle Angela Louis Carla Lucz
Business Partner Expo/ Business Partner Relations	Cheri Meier, Chair Patty Barbachem Julie Hill Lisa Waligorski
Website	Kara Brostron, Chair



SPRING SEMINAR

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Wednesday, April 27th 8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Location: Archdiocese of St. Louis
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Meeting Cost

Full Day Seminar – Member	\$40.00
Full Day Seminar – Non-Member or Guest	\$50.00
Half-Day Options – Member, Non-Member or Guest	
Option 1: 8:45 am – 1:00 pm	\$25.00 includes lunch
Option 2: 10:30 am – 2:30 pm	\$25.00 includes lunch
Option 3: Noon – 4:15 pm	\$25.00 includes lunch

Registration: Please visit our calendar page on the Chapter’s website: www.armastlouis.org to register. You may pay online with a credit/debit card when you register, or you may also select the “pay at the door” option and pay with cash or check. (no credit/ debit cards will be accepted at the door).

PLEASE NOTE: The Chapter is billed for reservations. Kindly give a 3-day notice of cancellation or send a substitute. Otherwise you will be invoiced for the cost of the meeting. Thank you.

RANDY KAHN

Randolph A. Kahn, Esq., is a recognized authority on the legal, compliance and policy issues of business information, records management, electronic records, e-business processes, and information technology. As founder of Kahn Consulting Inc., Mr. Kahn advises corporate counsels, records and information management and information technology professionals in both government and corporate institutions on policy issues related to the management of digital information and electronic records. In addition to his role as founder of Kahn Consulting, Inc., Mr. Kahn conducts webinars, seminars, lectures, and keynote addresses across the country each year. Mr. Kahn’s clients include federal, state, and local agencies; federal and state courts; Fortune 500 corporations; information technology vendors; and other organizations. Specific areas of expertise include electronic records management; electronic filing; enterprise email management strategies; electronic and digital signature legality; and electronic discovery.

