



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



As my term as ALA Gateway Chapter President comes to an end, I not only reflect upon our Chapter’s accomplishments over this past year; but I am also very anxious for what the new term has in store for us all. The planning process has already begun and it includes some new exciting ideas that will help us connect with other Chapter’s Members, Business Partner Sponsors and some excellent educational speakers. I feel very confident that our new Slate of Officers, as well as the existing and new incoming Chairs, is a very devoted and talented group. I look forward to my continued involvement and I hope that all of our members make it their goal to take advantage of their membership benefits by taking the time to attend as many events as possible.

The best way to sum up my past year of experience is to say that I feel as if we have “taken it to the next level”. By that, I mean that instead of just being handed a job to do and then doing it the easiest and quickest way; we took the time to analyze how we might make it bigger and better. I know that all of you are very familiar with that description. We supervise employees that “meet expectations” and those that “exceed” them. Those members that took the time to “exceed” include: our Professional Development Committee by offering incredible education over the past year; our Business Partner Relations Committee that helped us connect with the right people; our Website Chair who not only helped with our new site but also came up with our new logo; our Membership Chair who recruited and orientated our new members; our Community Connections Chairs that got us involved with some new charity events; our Bar Liaison and Diversity and Inclusion Chairs that oversaw our awareness events; our “thrifty” Treasurer who kept good track of our money; our Secretary who kept our records and oversaw our meeting schedules; our Past President, President-Elect and Vice President who handled so many projects over this past year; and, of course, the many others who I have listed below.

I want to offer my sincere gratitude to all of you for your hard work and dedication and my job evaluation score for all of you would be **A+!!**

Donna Sobkoviak
2010 – 2011 ALA Gateway Chapter

President-Elect	Julie Hill
Vice President	Patty Barbachem
Secretary	Lisa Waligorski
Treasurer	Lisa Lange
Past President	Angela Louis
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 Timothy Tyler Dianne Feltz Althea Respass
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 Sherry Smith, Co-Chair
Newsletter	Angela Louis, Chair
Operation Bunny Hop	Ana Helton, Co-Chair Lisa Lange, Co-Chair
Salary Survey	Donna Sobkoviak, Co-Chair Sarah Allen, Co-Chair Jennifer Sloop Angela Louis
Business Partner Expo/ Business Partner Relations	Cheri Meier, Chair Patty Barbachem Julie Hill Lisa Waligorski
Website	Kara Brostron, Chair

***Catching Up With...John D. Lawson
Director of Operations, Stange Law Firm***

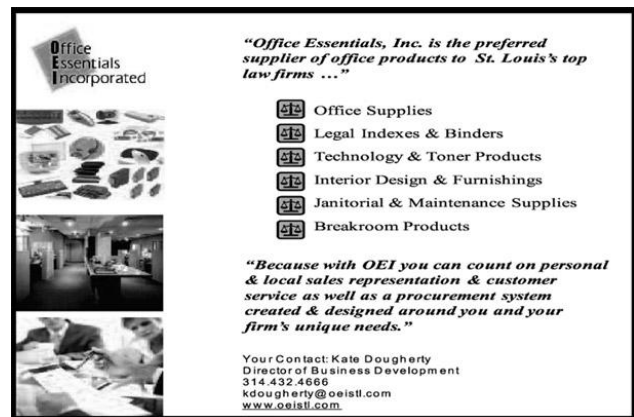
John is married with one and half children (14 & 1 due in August) and lives in the City of St. Louis. John has spent time as a paralegal, military officer and program manager for the Department of Defense.



- 1) *I decided to join the ALA because...*
It is an opportunity to network with other legal administrators who share similar challenges.
- 2) *The things I like best about being a legal administrator are...*
I really like being able to affect change in the organization and bringing new ideas on how to operate efficiently as a firm.
- 3) *The things I like least about being a legal administrator are...*
Dealing with entitlement mentalities from attorneys and staff. People get to where they are through hard work not just through longevity.
- 4) *The hardest situations I had to deal with are...*
Stepping into a firm that had no previous management structure other than the two partners, defining my role and creating HR, Billing, Client Relations, & Marketing functions.
- 5) *As a legal administrator, I never thought I'd have to...*

Roll up my sleeves and move desks with my non-billable staff.

- 6) *The best advice I've received from a fellow legal administrator is.....*
Hire someone to deal with the billing and accounting. (Thanks Dennis)
- 7) *My impression of the Gateway chapter is...*
A smooth running and structured organization.
- 8) *If I were not a legal administrator I would....*
I would probably still be in a tank somewhere with the U.S. Army. It is a hard lifestyle to give up.
- 9) *In my spare time, I enjoy...*
Trying to find a place where my blackberry does not get signal.
- 10) *Three words that best describe me are...*
Optomistic, witty, focused.
- 11) *The biggest change I've seen in the legal industry is...*
The shift from traditional methods of client retention to internet driven advertisement.
- 12) *The most challenging part of being a legal administrator is.....*
Being in all 5 of our offices at once.
Everyone has a DEFCON 5 problem.



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Pitney Bowes Legal Solutions

Article provided by Jodi Carroll from Pitney Bowes

In today's ever changing and increasingly competitive legal market, managing the operations of law firms and corporate legal departments requires the right mix of people, processes and technology. Adapting to change, leveraging best practices and deploying the right tools can make the job much easier.

Partnering with a recognized industry leader can give your firm or legal department access to expertise gained from working with the top firms and helping them enhance their operations and reduce operating costs. With more than 30 years of serving the legal marketplace with document and records management, facilities management and litigation support services, Pitney Bowes has become the trusted partner for law firms and general counsel.

For firms that require on-site assistance, **Pitney Bowes Legal Solutions (PBLS)**, offers a range of **scalable solutions tailored to a firm's changing needs**. Dedicated mail, print, copy, and records specialists can help streamline operations and maintain on-premises service centers.

PBLS helps optimize staffing and business equipment expenditures, and manage workload overflows which can significantly affect costs.

For example, when a law firm with more than 500 attorneys was looking for a partner to help establish world-class document management and records support across their network of offices - they selected Pitney Bowes Legal Solutions.

The result was a uniform technology platform for document and records management in each office, supported by trained professionals; a litigation support system in each office that handles batch printing, advanced scanning, OCR, etc. on-site, improving speed and quality; and deployment of the MFDs, resulting in significant cost recovery and savings. This transformation was done quickly and seamlessly, exceeding the client's expectations and timeframes for service support, delivery and quality.

Firms and legal departments can also utilize our nationwide network of regional and national processing centers, enabling them to securely access imaging, reprographics, finishing and other services to meet high-volume and specialty requirements. Rather than maintaining underutilized assets in-house, firms and general counsel can improve resource allocation through our "on demand" delivery of services, including eDiscovery.

Whether it is onsite, near-site at one of the many regional document solutions centers or off-site at our National Processing Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, we are here to offer you and your firm or legal department the most flexible, innovative and cost effective services available. For more information, please visit pb.com.

Larry Smith Stepping Down as ALA Executive Director

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River Bottom Saloon-112 Sidney St-St. Louis, MO 63104-314.621.9598	
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January 17, 2012 (Lincolnshire, Ill.) – The Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) announced today that Executive Director Larry Smith will be leaving the organization to pursue other opportunities in association management. His departure will take place in the coming weeks, and ALA President Karen D. Griggs, CLM, will lead the search for a new executive director.

"ALA has benefited from Larry's dedication and his valuable contributions to our success

during the past two years," said Griggs, who chairs ALA's Board of Directors. "We wish him much success in his future endeavors."

During his tenure as Executive Director, ALA expanded member benefits, maintained high member retention levels and strengthened the Association's financial reserves.

"It has been a privilege to serve such a talented and committed group of professionals in our field," said Smith, whose career has spanned law and association management. "I look forward to seeing the Association continue its growth in the future."

Smith joined ALA in late 2009, after serving for seven years as a director at the American Bar Association.

Business Partner Appreciation Event

Tuesday, February 28, 2012
11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

ALA cordially invites you to our Business Partner Appreciation Event featuring food stations from our catering sponsors. This is a casual luncheon to mingle and visit with all of our business partners. The event will be at: Thompson Coburn LLP, One US Bank Plaza - 35th Floor, St. Louis, Missouri 63101.

Parking is available at the US Bank Parking garage off Washington or 7th Street garage right across the street from US Bank building.

Please register your attendance no later than Thursday, February 23, 2012.

NEW THIS YEAR - VIRTUAL SCAVENGER HUNT - you will start receiving questions for different business partner websites daily one week before this event. You will need to visit these websites and answer the questions in order to qualify for gifts from the business partners that will be presented at the luncheon and a GRAND PRIZE of an IPAD.

Update your ALA Gateway Profile

The chapter is working to update all ALA members' profiles and ensure that everyone has a photo. If you do not have a photo or your photo is outdated, please take a minute to update or add one. Information regarding your login and password is below. If you do not have time to login, please email me your photo and I can update it for you.



If you have problems, please contact Kara Brostron at info@ala-gateway.org or via phone at (314) 436-8366.

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

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Question:

I've been hearing a lot about the benefits of implementing Legal Project Management. What is it, and how can I go about putting it in place in my firm?

Answer:

Project management itself has been around for some time; it is an approach to promoting efficiencies and improving repeatable processes, and has worked well in manufacturing and other industrial settings. In contrast, legal project management (LPM) is more about the collaboration and interaction between firm and client; communication is critical to making LPM work successfully.

A good resource for exploring this topic is the [Legal Project Management blog](#). In addition to thoughtful postings by experts, the page offers links to educational resources, outside Web-based content, published reference works and more.

The project team approach described in the article "[Getting Things Done and Developing Law Firm Leaders Through Project Teams](#)" presents simple guidelines for assigning temporary work teams to important business projects. The same methodology can be used for handling client matters.

The [Fall 2010 issue](#) of *Edge International Review* offers several articles on legal project management by Pamela Woldow and Douglas B. Richardson, two of the top names in this area. Woldow publishes her own blog, "[At the Intersection](#)," with many postings on LPM and related topics.

"[Elephant? What Elephant?](#)" (*Law Practice Today*, September 2010) suggests that LPM can be described as a change management challenge for both firms and their clients.

Legal project management often incorporates a strong technology component. The International Legal Technology Association's October 2010 [White Paper Project Management](#) offers a collection of articles on some of the many ways IT and LPM



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ATTORNEY RATES AVAILABLE

intersect.

The authors of "[Legal Project Management from the Inside: 10 Things Law Firm Leaders Need to Know about Implementing Legal Project Management](#)" (*Law Practice Today*, August 2011) suggest that starting small can improve your chances of success with LPM.

Consultant Susan Raridon Lambreth of LawVision (she was formerly with Hildebrandt Baker Robbins) has written a number of articles on [legal project management](#), and chairs the [Practicing Law Institute's Project Management program](#). Law library staff can locate print materials for your review.

You may also wish to check the law library for a copy of [The Legal Project Management Quick Reference Guide](#), 2nd edition, by Jim Hassett.

The Association of Corporate Counsel has incorporated principles of legal project management in its [Value Challenge program](#). The focus of this program, which has gained much publicity since its inception, is on showing law firms how to reduce costs to corporate clients while improving the value of services and still maintaining strong profitability.



As you'll note from reviewing the materials, there are a few key points to keep in mind when preparing to implement legal project management in your firm: make sure to obtain buy-in from the management and executive committees; clarify expectations; and start slowly. Good luck!

The following articles, books or websites may require you to log in or may require purchase.

The [ALA Management EncyclopediaSM](#) has a number of articles on topics that are associated with legal project management. Look for articles on value billing and profitability planning in the Financial Management section, and on strategic and business planning in the General Management category. The *Encyclopedia* is available at no charge to all current ALA members.

[Legal Management](#), ALA's educational journal, also publishes articles on management topics. Review the online archive for access to information and guidance from industry experts. The [January/February 2011](#) and [July/August 2011](#) issues offered articles on LPM.

The Lawyer's Guide to Collaboration Tools and Technologies, a recent book by Dennis Kennedy and Tom Mighell, offers practical advice on using new technology tools to encourage a team approach and make it easier to work with others. It's available in [ALA's online bookstore](#).

Your fellow administrators can be excellent sources of practical information. You can post your question to ALA's online member [discussion forums](#) to ask your peers for any ideas or samples they can share, and you can search for discussions on specific topics. These groups can be a great way to learn how other firms handle the same management issues your own firm is facing.

Special Note: ALA members have free access to the ALA Reference Desk. [Send us](#) your question on legal management. Staff will conduct personal research on each question.

The Editors' response in this study is not intended as legal advice. Readers are encouraged to seek appropriate legal and other professional advice.

Visit the [Question of the Month Archives](#) to read past articles!

About Legal Marketplace

[Increase your company's exposure](#) to the leaders and decision makers in law firms, corporate legal departments and government agencies by linking your company's website from the "Legal Marketplace" section. This section of the website is a highly visible area that allows ALA members and other visitors who are looking to buy products and services, to acquire information about business partners and suppliers to the legal community. Listings in the Legal Marketplace are fully text searchable, easy-to-use, and accessible 24/7 from any computer. Listing your company is cost-effective and easy. Go to <http://www.alanet.org/legalmarketplace/about.asp> for more information.



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The LMRC's New Look

Do you have a legal management problem, question or issue that you need to resolve? The Legal Management Resource Center (LMRC), created and hosted by the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA), is designed to immediately provide the information you need or to quickly direct you to other resources, most on the Internet, where the knowledge you seek can be found. If you need quick personal assistance, ALA members can use the [ALA's Management SolutionsSM Reference Desk](#), where our expert group of researchers will help you find the answer to your legal management question.

The Legal Management Resource Center is now part of ALA's website. Don't worry we still have all of the same information that you need but with a new look and improved functionality.

Visit one of our new and improved features found at <http://www.alanet.org/lmrc/default.aspx>:

- Document Directory - resources on a number of topics designed to help you, the Legal Administrator.
- ALA Management EncyclopediaSM - Concrete, practical information on legal management issues. Now available to all ALA members.
- Peer Consulting Directory - ALA Members can locate the experts they need.
- Communities - members of our Leadership Community and LFA Community can access them.

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<http://www.alanet.org/clm/default.aspx>.



Calendar of Upcoming Events (2012 through 2014)

2012

February 20, 2012 **2012 Slate of Officers Presented to Membership**

- **Program:** Monthly Educational Meeting
- **Location:** Husch
- **Speaker:** Rita Alli, Past President of ALA National, Director of Professional Development, Recruiting and Diversity for Stoel Rives LLP.
- **Topic:** Building a Culture of Client Service Among Your Staff - Client service is what distinguishes a good law firm from a great law firm. Building a culture of outstanding client service starts with your staff and how they deliver services to your internal “clients” – the lawyers.

March 21, 2012

- **Program:** Installation of 2012-2013 Officers – Monthly Educational Meeting and ALA Update
- **Location:** Ball Park Hilton
- **Speaker:** Karen Griggs, ALA National President

April 11, 2012

- **Program:** Monthly Educational Meeting
- **Location:** The Westin

- **Speaker:** Patti Groff, Past President of ALA National – Disaster Planning

April 23–26, 2012

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

May 16, 2012

- **Program:** Monthly Educational Meeting
- **Location:** Thompson Coburn
- **Speaker:** Jeff Lanza, Retired FBI Agent, Special Agent for over 20 years. He investigated corruption, fraud, organized crime, cyber crime, human trafficking and terrorism and will speak to the ALA Gateway Chapter on Leadership Ethics: Maintaining Integrity in a New Era of Crime.

June 20, 2012

- **Program:** Moneta Group – Retirement Plans
- **Location:** Ritz Carlton - Breakfast
- **Speaker:** Dave Davidson

July 18, 2012

- **Program:** Diversity
- **Location:** Point of View
- **Speaker:** Diversity Awareness Partnership

August 9-11, 2012

- **Program:** ALA National Annual Law Firm Financial Management Conference
- **Location:** Chicago, IL

September 13-15, 2012

- **Program:** ALA National Annual Region 3 Conference
- **Location:** Minneapolis, MN

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
Community Challenge Weekend	Angela Schaefer, Co-Chair
Diversity	Sherry Smith, Co-Chair
	Joe Taylor, Co-Chair
	Michelle Martin, Chair
	Timothy Tyler
	Dianne Feltz
	Althea Respass
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