

| o FALL | o 2011

Region 4 Leadership *focus*

KEEPING REGION 4 CONNECTED: ARKANSAS, COLORADO, LOUISIANA,
NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, TEXAS & UTAH



A MESSAGE FROM TONI R. BEASLEY, REGION 4 DIRECTOR

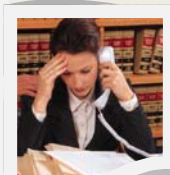
After planning, attending, and really enjoying the 2011 Regions 3 & 4 Conference & Exposition, I still have education on my mind. To me, education is like rain. Rain is critical to making our ecosystem develop and sustain itself - to flourish and be successful. Many of you reading this newsletter are experiencing the effects of the serious drought in our region. Without the much needed rain, our reservoirs are drying up causing plants and trees to shrivel up. Many animals are having a difficult time trying to sustain themselves.

Education is critical to each of us being able to flourish in our profession. Without education, our reservoirs go dry, making it difficult for us to be effective and our firms to be successful. Just like in Austin, TX (where I live), a little rain shower helps to keep the plants from shriveling up and the reservoirs from drying out too

quickly. However, we need the big storms to saturate the ground, allowing the nourishing water to get to the roots of the plants, and replenish the creeks, streams, rivers, and lakes.

Your chapter meetings and ALA webinars are great ways to get that rain shower. You are able to take advantage of opportunities to get a 45-minute to 2-hour session on a particular topic. These education meetings are vital to refreshing our minds. The Regional and Annual Conferences are critical to filling our reservoirs. The first-class education tracks and series, exhibit halls filled with the products and information to help our offices be more productive, and the networking with other members across the country and beyond give us the opportunity to grow and flourish in our profession and in our positions.

I know many of you reading this newsletter attended the 2011 Regions 3



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Getting to Know You!

Over the next few newsletter releases the Region 4 management team, as well as Chapter presidents, will be highlighted.

President—Utah Chapter



Matt Fankhouser (left), on the slopes with his sons and brother

Professionally, the one thing that I would like to accomplish this year... get the attorneys I work with to be better business developers and more comfortable with doing business development.

In my spare time, you'll find me . . . golfing or doing something fun with my family.

My first involvement in ALA was... the Utah ALA business partner expo four years ago.

*My favorite takeaway from an ALA conference is...*that Microsoft Excel rules!

President—Arkansas Chapter

Professionally, the one thing that I would like to accomplish this year... to become a better leader.

In my spare time, you'll find me . . . reading and gardening.

My first involvement in ALA was... working on a vendor fair committee.

*My favorite takeaway from an ALA conference was...*bringing home the platinum award from the Annual Conference in Orlando.

Bonnie Vickery (center)



President—OKC Chapter



Lisa Rose (seated) with her husband and their two Golden "children."

Professionally, the one thing that I would like to accomplish this year... is to increase my knowledge of technology and gain a better understanding of social media and how it can best be utilized in the field of human resources.

In my spare time, you'll find me . . . spending time with my family and friends, working in the garden and rooting for the OKC Thunder!

My first involvement in ALA was... when I joined our chapter after accepting my first job in the legal field. ALA has been a life saver.

My favorite takeaway from an ALA conference was... to experience firsthand the commitment ALA provides to its members by providing such great educational sessions and networking opportunities.

What Does ALA Mean to You?

By Andrea D. Everage, MHR, PHR

Region 4 Communications Officer



In the Regional Council Meeting conducted during the Regions 3 & 4 Educational Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri, Region 4 Director, Toni Beasley, posed the question: “What does ALA mean to you?”

The attendees’ responses ranged from light-hearted to deeply philosophical and each brought a unique perspective.

My own self-reflection made me a little emotional! My membership in ALA has provided me a treasure trove of intangible benefits. As the American Express slogan states, “Membership has its privileges.” I value the friendships and associations I have built within my local Chapter (Tulsa). I have the privilege of working in a constantly evolving profession amongst professionals deeply committed to leadership and management of their organizations. I enjoy the benefits of powerful networking opportunities with both ALA members and business partners. Oh, and the education?! How can anyone accurately quantify how much we learn from one another and from exposure to excellent speakers at the local, regional and national levels? There are benefits aplenty, but is it all about me? Is there balance if I take and do not give back? Where is the “yang” to my “yin?”

I challenge you to build upon Toni’s question by asking yourself, “What will I leave behind, and who am I influencing?” In what way have you challenged yourself to grow beyond your own four walls? When was the last time you poured yourself into the life of another? Where do you want to develop and grow? For those new to legal administration I encourage you to take a first step by seeking opportunities to serve in your Chapter. I am naively assuming “seasoned” administrators

have already begun their journey of service. If that is not the case it’s not too late to take that first step! You will be amazed by how quickly your connections grow, and by how your borders broaden. If you think you do not have time to get connected in your Chapter consider this: You don’t have time **not** to get connected. A time-worn principal states that your load is made lighter when shared by another, and I have found that to be true on more than one occasion. Recently, I fought with Microsoft Excel to get a function to properly calculate. Accessing my resources, I sent an S.O.S. email to my Chapter members and quickly had the issue resolved. Left alone I could have worked on the problem for hours rather than minutes. Now, that’s powerful!

Always remember that your fellow administrators, across the street and across the country, stand ready to help you remain successful both personally and professionally. Make it your pleasure to serve your Association by giving of your time and whatever talents you possess. You need ALA, and ALA needs you! ♣



President - Tulsa Chapter

Professionally, the one thing that I would like to accomplish this year . . . One thing? That is difficult because I have many goals and ideas for the office which I would like to implement that hopefully will make it a better place to work. One thing I personally would like to accomplish with regards to ALA is getting more members involved in Chapter activities and in leadership roles.

In my spare time, you'll find me . . . running!

My first involvement in ALA was . . . at a Chapter Meeting in 2006 that Susan Lyons (outgoing administrator) took me to. It was such a friendly (and helpful) group of people who wouldn't want to get involved?

My favorite takeaway from an ALA conference was . . . no matter what, don't give up. If you have to reassess, re-evaluate and revamp, do it! But nothing is accomplished by not doing or not trying. Keep going!



Charlene Reid, running in the Race for the Cure

Upcoming Events . . .

October 27-28, 2011

Intellectual Property Retreat

Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C.

Early bird deadline September 26, 2011

April 22-26, 2012

Annual Conference & Exposition

Hawaii Convention Center, Hilton Hawaii
Village

Honolulu, HI

[See ALA's Calendar of Events](#)

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& 4 Conference. I hope you all left the Conference, as I did, filled with knowledge and information that will make you more productive, more effective, and a better leader. I will attend Chapter meetings and webinars to build on the knowledge and information I gained at the Conference, so my reservoirs will not dry up too quickly. Then, I'll be ready to attend the Annual Conference to saturate myself with knowledge and information again. Each time I get educational nourishment, I am growing stronger professionally and personally.

I hope you will refill your reservoir with education at the 2012 Annual Conference & Exposition, which will be held April 22-26, 2012 in Honolulu, Hawaii. You can get more information at: <http://www.alanet.org/conf/2012/>. Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 2012 Region 4 Conference & Exposition, which will be held October 4-6, 2012 in Denver, Colorado.

Don't let yourself get into an education drought. Keep your skills and ideas alive with the education and resources offered by ALA and your local chapters. It's the best way to keep your ecosystem thriving. ♣

Joe Offutt Receives ALA Region 4 Outstanding Volunteer Award

By Tracy Spore, Dallas Chapter

Joe Offutt is a Dallas Chapter member who is well respected by his colleagues, the members of his firm, and the legal community in general. He joined International ALA and the Dallas Chapter in 1984 and has been a consistent member for over 26 years.

Offutt served the Dallas Chapter immediately after joining. Within a few short years he became a member of the Board. In the late 1980's, Joe became a charter member of the Fort Worth Chapter, but ultimately returned to his roots by rejoining the Dallas Chapter as a primary member. (During his time with the Fort Worth Chapter, he continued to maintain a secondary membership with the Dallas Chapter.)

Since joining ALA, Joe has been involved in Chapter life at every level, holding almost every leadership position available whether it be on the Board, as part of a committee or section, or as an advisor to other Chapter leaders. What sets Joe apart, however, is that he does not just "hold a position" on the Board or Committee when elected. Instead, Joe exemplifies what it means to SERVE his colleagues.

Every position Joe has accepted over the years has benefited from his leadership. For example, during his Presidency in the Dallas Chapter (2006/2007) He was instrumental in garnering support for the Business Partner program for which our Chapter is now well known. As a member and co-chair of the Chapter Membership Committee, Joe has always demonstrated what it means to actively seek out new ALA members in the Dallas area who have not joined the local chapter. He coaches them on the many benefits of membership and encourages them to become active in the Chapter.



Joe is the glue that binds the Chapter together. Professionalism and a wonderful sense of humor work hand-in-hand to help Joe break down any barriers that may exist within the Chapter, bridging the gap between new administrators and seasoned professionals. He is also the person who is not afraid to speak up when he sees things may be going awry and offers advice on next steps or possible solutions. Everyone knows Joe!

Whenever there is a function or an activity, Joe can often be found in the thick of things offering up his enthusiasm and support. He is an advocate of all Chapter-sponsored social functions, community challenge events, and business partner programs; all of which benefit from his attendance. Peruse the pages of a decade's worth of Chapter newsletters and you will find Joe's picture or an attribution to him in almost every issue.

Joe's historical knowledge is often called upon by new Chapter leaders. They ask his advice in the hopes of avoiding potential pitfalls, which allows them to build upon lessons learned by past Boards. The ability to access this historical information has allowed the Chapter to continue to improve year after year. He is a member of the Past President's Advisory Committee for the Chapter and has participated in multiple Board Retreats over the past few years. He is never more than a phone call away.

Education is also important to Joe. He has frequently attended Regional Conference, Annual Conference, and CLI. He encourages others, especially Board members, to also attend as a way of serving their firms, colleagues, and the Chapter through professional growth.

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How to Work a Room

By Stephen G. Dempsey, CLM

At-Large Director, Regions 4 & 6

One of the best benefits of membership in ALA is the networking that occurs at Chapter meetings, regional and specialty conferences and at the national conference. One can always meet someone who shares your experiences and concerns or is able to offer a new idea of how to deal with an issue. To take advantage of this benefit requires that one be able to walk into a room full of strangers and mingle and speak with them. Many people are uncomfortable doing so, or not sure how to do it well. Following are tips on how to “work a room” and network successfully.

As with most tasks that look simple, successfully working a room requires some preparation and effort. Before you attend a networking event ask yourself two questions:

“What am I hoping to achieve at this event?” and

“What knowledge do I possess that will be of interest to other attendees?”

Networking is a two-way street. Thinking about what information or resources you would like, and being aware of what you have to offer others is great preparation. Planning answers to these questions will allow you to avoid being caught tongue-tied or without a smooth response. When thinking about the first question – are you hoping to expand your list of contacts by meeting new members, or do you have specific concerns that you would like to discuss with others? To the second – what experiences, knowledge and information can you share with your fellow networkees? Thinking about these questions before you arrive allows you to be a more nimble conversationalist.

Once you are comfortable with what you are looking for and what you have to offer, the next step is to prepare to enter the room. Before

entering make sure to check your coat, if necessary, but absolutely check your attitude. Negative self-talk before entering the room will hinder your ability to connect with the other attendees. A positive and open attitude attracts people to you. Don’t look at it as walking into a room full of strangers. Redefine the term “stranger.” There has to be some connection to the people in the room or you wouldn’t be attending. (i.e. all ALA members, Microsoft users, coffee drinkers, etc.)



One way to get comfortable with the crowd seems counterintuitive, and that is to arrive early. Arriving early allows you to become comfortable with the room and also to be part of the “crowd” when others start to arrive. Enter the room and start from the outside of the crowd. Approach others and introduce yourself. Approach individuals, it is less intimidating than approaching a group. Share a piece of information that is likely to be a common thread in the room (I have been in ALA for four years but never been to a conference before...) . If possible wear something that is a conversation starter such as a broach, pin, ribbon or distinctive tie. As you begin to speak with others remember to listen and ask questions about them. Feel comfortable bringing other people into the conversation. There are likely others attending who have not read articles like this and won’t be as suave and smooth as are you.

With some planning, adopting the right attitude and listening as well as speaking you will be working the room in no time, and truly enjoying one of the greatest benefits of your ALA membership. ♣

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Joe has served as a guest speaker, active participant in round-table section meetings, member of a Texas grass-roots large-firm group (that meets several times per year), an occasional panelist for Chapter General Meetings, and a peer-consultant at the Chapter level.

Joe Offutt is the epitome of an Outstanding Volunteer and illustrates what it means to be a successful servant-leader within ALA. ♣

President—Ft. Worth Chapter



Desiree (Desi) Hoskison

Professionally, the one thing that I would like to accomplish this year... Professional growth mirrors personal growth, we never stand still. Sometimes we slip into dissatisfaction of where we are or how we perceive our own value at that time. For me, positive growth is when I am able to tackle new projects and watch the fruits of my labor take hold. For 2011, my firm decided to centralize all incoming calls. Our focus is on the prospective client, utilizing seasoned personnel to maximize each call. In addition to the elevated quality control, we now have the capability to track our marketing. We are working close with a marketing group who is tracking each call coming in with a specific ad identifier. We capture this information in a Conversion Management Program to use for future marketing budget decisions. It has been very exciting and educational for me, as well.

In my spare time, you'll find me . . . Recently, my youngest child moved away to college, so I found myself at a loss as to what my new role would be. It really has taken me about a year to become comfortable with the change. So, while I am still exploring what I like to do I did begin gardening. However, in Texas summers are not pleasant for that past-time. I enjoy a good book and the quiet around my house.

My first involvement in ALA was... I have been a member of ALA since 2001. At first I felt a little lost, but my friend and co-worker, who was also a member would push me to join a committee and then to a chair on the Board. This began my journey. I feel if you are a member of this organization, if you have a chance to serve, this will help you along not only in your professional development but also in your personal development.

My favorite takeaway from an ALA conference was... Most of the classes are wonderful, but I have to say meeting so many people who share your type of work and can understand what you are talking about, has to be absolutely the best part of ALA. So, I guess my favorite [thing] is definitely the networking.

My Conference Experience

By Cheryl Medlock

Holden & Carr, Tulsa, OK

Although only a year into my position as a Firm Administrator as well as to the legal field, I've attended my share of conferences in a different industry, both regionally and globally. I've sat through many sessions as my mind wandered to other things because it wasn't relevant to my job, my area of the country or my company. So when I registered for the Region 3 & 4 conference in Kansas City, I had prepared myself to be underwhelmed but hoped for the best.

My expectations were exceeded. Right off the bat, at the Welcome Reception, it became apparent to me that the welcoming atmosphere of my local ALA chapter extended to others as well. These folks knew how to let their hair down and have a little fun before diving into the sessions the next day.

From the opening speaker, to each session that I attended, the speakers were informative, as well as entertaining. My first two sessions (Profitability in the New Environment for Law Firms and Characteristics of a Successful Law Firm) complimented each other well. Our speakers spoke about how to identify the needed roles within the firm and mentoring the right people to fulfill those roles. Tough decisions have to be made for those attorneys we have "retired" already, even though they are still employed.

The speakers emphasized the need to develop a strategic plan that includes new ways of measuring the success of an attorney other than their billable hours. Non-billable time can be just as profitable in the long term such as management time, mentoring and business development. Look at creative ways to share origination credit so that the attorney who actually works a file for 15 years is rewarded along with the person who brought the client to the firm.



The second day of the conference gave me some awesome Excel tips and ways to put those spreadsheets to work in "Smart Compensation Decisions". I found this session particularly interesting in giving me some different ways to look at compensation as it relates to profitability. Often we don't track the profitability of a client. No one needs a large client who enhances our revenues but ties up resources so much that we make no money. Again the speaker went back to the importance of having a plan and to consult the plan when making decisions.

I can't report on this conference without including something about the wonderful exhibitors. There were vendors I already knew about and some that I did not. They were all very friendly and responsive to questions. I always believed that if you find just one vendor who can help your business at these expos, then it was worth the walk through. I believe I found that vendor. Of course, all of the giveaways were really cool too.

Bottom line ... I will attend again and again if the conferences continue to be as useful. The speakers were good and the attendees were always willing to share their experiences and knowledge. I just wished that I could have cloned myself to attend concurrent sessions. ♣

Scenes from Around the Conference Kansas City, MO September 15-17, 2011

