

Region

4

Observations

Spring 2009

Region 4 Observations is published for the members of Region 4 of the Association of Legal Administrators. Region 4 is made up of the states: Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah



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Annual Educational Conference and Exposition
May 18 –May 21.

See our own Region 4 Member Susan Koran take the gavel as ALA President

Your ideas and contributions are invited and appreciated.

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Thank you to all that contributed.

The Gift of ALA

By Judy Anderson

One day I may write my “ALA Memoires”! and I would start with an outline of why the Association is important to me. The list of what I have gained from it might begin with a list of ... about 10 things:

1. I have gained a collection of good friends, not just as a group, but as individuals (some near and some far away).

2. I have gained a network of professional colleagues who care about my success; people who will go to great lengths to help me find answers to my questions and who will gently redirect my path if I begin to wander.

3. I have access to a paid professional staff who will do research for me and maintain databases for me and plan education for me and on and on....

4. I have a steady schedule of continuing education, from basic to advanced levels, presented either locally, regionally or nationally.

5. As an active ALA volunteer, I have an opportunity to first LEARN leadership skills and

then to PRACTICE those skills (without fear of ridicule when I stub my toe).

6. Similarly, I have opportunities to develop skills of public speaking, meeting leadership, conflict resolution, and negotiation (without fear of being fired).

7. I have opportunities for praise for a job well done....or just praise for a job DONE.

8. I have gained an opportunity for professional development through association with others in my profession, some of whom have had similar experiences to my own and many whose experiences are very different.

9. I have a group with whom I can feel “normal”; after spending time at the office where I’m neither fish nor fowl (neither lawyer nor staff) and where my assignments neither begin nor end (they just ARE), what a blessing it is to be surrounded by others who not only understand, but also care.

10. I have gained one opportunity

after another to have fun...side-splitting, laughing FUN...with folks who are as “un-normal” as I am.

And so....to me ALA is a gift. But like any gift, I don’t realize the benefit of it unless I reach out and take it.


May I offer to each member this same gift---this gift of ALA. It’s there for you, prepared, presented, waiting ... waiting for you to take advantage of it. Waiting for you to reach out and accept it.

Solid education, meaningful networking, fun camaraderie, professional development. It’s all there. I invite you to join in; be a part of the activities and, therefore, of the benefit.

Please come along with us.....accept the gift of ALA.

Judy Anderson

Judy is a member of the Tulsa Chapter.



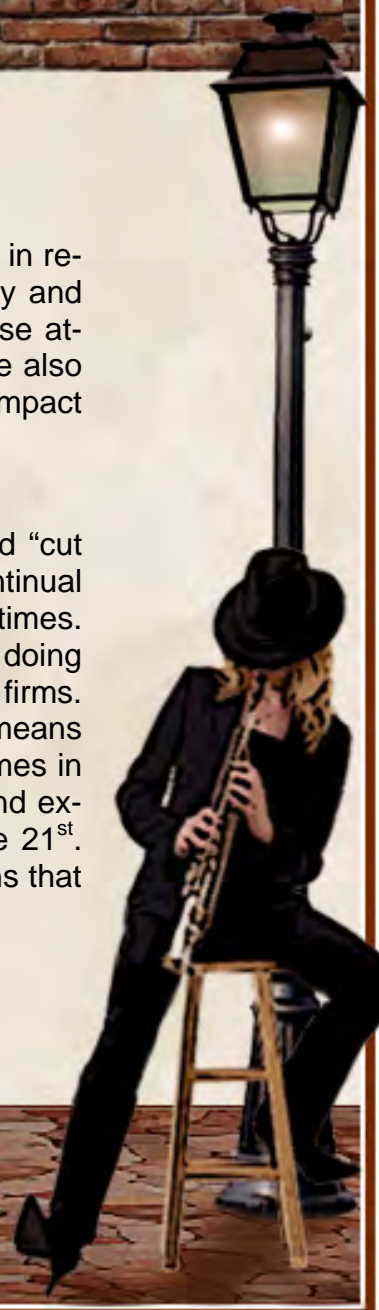
ALA Annual Educational Conference and Exposition


New Orleans
GET JAZZED!

What's In It For Me?

That may be the question you or even your firm is asking in regard to any educational conference. With the current economy and the tightening of belts around the country, firms are paying close attention to controlling costs within their firms. Hopefully, they are also concentrating on the revenue side as this will have the greater impact on the bottom line.

Does the current economic climate mean that we should “cut out” education? I certainly hope that is not the response. A continual commitment to education is even more important during these times. ALA can offer its members insight as to what other firms are doing during these times along with the tools necessary to lead our firms. ALA is having fewer educational conferences in 2009. That means the opportunity to gain the insight for “you” to be successful comes in fewer opportunities. The 38th annual educational conference and exposition is being held in New Orleans on May 18th through the 21st. The annual conference provides a wealth of educational sessions that can certainly meet your needs.



 **ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS®**
The Source of Legal Management Information and Knowledge



**ALA Region 4 Educational Conference and Exposition
San Antonio Crowne Plaza Hotel Riverwalk
October 2-3, 2009**

For a more condensed educational conference, be sure to attend the Region 4 Educational Conference and Exposition on October 2-3, 2009 in San Antonio, Texas. The regional management team is currently planning this conference and is hoping to be able to provide an answer to the question above “What’s in it for me”.

We are planning to have sessions which relate to the current economic climate and how each of us can survive this crisis as well as equipping us with tools to hopefully help us do better than “just survive”. Since it is very difficult to determine what the state of the economy will be in October, providing some flexibility with regard to speaker topics will also be considered in case something needs to be changed or tweaked as we come closer to the conference. There will also be many other educational sessions not focused on the current economy, so stay tuned.

Besides the educational opportunities, you can expect to have plenty of networking opportunities as well as the ability to interact with our business partners in the exhibit hall to find out how they can help you and your firm.

Take the Next Big Step

Have you thought about sitting for the Certified Legal Manager (CLM)sm exam? For more information, visit ALA's website at

<http://www.alanet.org/education/cert.aspx>

The next exam will be at the Annual Conference May 17, 2009

Congratulations to our latest CLM's!

Renee Hymel, CLM
New Orleans, LA

Jo Ann Light, CLM
Metairie, LA

Deena Marsh, CLM
Houston, TX



Heather McConnell, CLM
Houston, TX

Yvonne Mills, CLM
East Palo Alto, TX

Emma Rice, CLM
Houston, TX

"She Wore a Yellow Ribbon"

There is an old John Wayne movie by the name above which as the movie come to a close has our hero riding into the sunset. At the last moment a rider approaches to tell the good Captain Brittles that he has been granted a new assignment and can stay with the Calvary.

Well, my time on the Region 4 team is a little like that. Having served my original term and ridden off into the sunset I had to opportunity to be return and serve again. "You wondered where this was going".

As my second term comes to a close in New Orleans I must say it has again been a great opportunity and a rewarding experience. I have met and worked with more great ALA members and learned even more. But I must say it is the people that make it special. I am always so struck by the terrific talent that exists in this association.

Having had this great experience I want to encourage any and all of you to take the opportunity to serve in positions in your chapters or on the Regional or National level. *Be more than just a member.* Our association is better because of those who volunteer their time and effort to make it successful. Be one of those volunteers. I can tell you it will be well worth the time and effort you make to do it.

Thanks to all of you for letting me ride into the sunset a second time.

Semper Fidelis
Greg Madden

Meet Our New Region 4 Team Members

Biographical Info:



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Executive Director
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Steve is the executive director at Marshall, Gerstein & Bourn LLP, an 80 attorney intellectual property firm. He has nearly 14 years of law firm experience at mid and large size firms. Steve has served in a number of positions with the Wisconsin Association of Legal Administrators (WALA) including chair of the chapter's annual educational workshop, vice president of education, president-elect, president and past president. He remains actively involved as a past president and has continued to assist with WALA's Annual Conference of Education. He is also an active member of the Greater Chicago Chapter. Steve served as chair of the 2008 Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) annual conference in Seattle, and served on ALA's 2006 and 2007 annual conference committees. Steve currently serves on the Region 3 Management Team as communications officer (2008-2009). He has been a session manager and presenter at various annual and regional conferences, has served as a judge for the Presidents' Awards of Excellence, was a recent presenter at the State Bar of Wisconsin and was a presenter at the 2008 Chapter Leaders Institute. Steve received ALA's Volunteer of the Year Award in 2008.

Prior to his work as a legal administrator, Steve spent 13 years working in higher education as an administrator in business and student services. This included managing the business operations of Marquette University's school of dentistry, and a stint as Dean of Students at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. Steve received his Certified Legal Manager (CLM) designation through Association of Legal Administrators in 2005. He holds an MBA from Our Lady of the Lake University, a MA from Truman State University, and BA from Creighton University.

Biographical Info:

Jim is the Legal Administrator for Rosenstein, Fist & Ringold in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has 24 years of experience in law office accounting and administration, with the last 18 years with his current employer. Jim became an ALA member in 1990 and attended his first Regional Conference (Region 8 at the time) in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1990. A member of the Tulsa Chapter, Jim has served in a variety of positions. He is currently serving a two-year term as President and has previously served in that capacity on two other occasions. ALA Tulsa board positions held by Jim have been as the Chapter's President, Past President, President Elect, Vice President and Treasurer. He has chaired many Tulsa Legal Symposiums and Tulsa Legal Expos as well as serving on the Salary Survey and Web Site committees. On a regional level, Jim has served as the Regional Nominating Committee Chairperson (RNC) and served as a member of the RNC. Jim presented "Controls, What Controls? A Discussion of Internal Controls in Law Firms" at the 2007 Region 4 conference in Oklahoma City and has been a presenter at the Chapter Leadership Institute (CLI). He is a frequent speaker at ALA Tulsa chapter meetings. Jim attained a B.S. in Accounting from Oklahoma Christian University in 1982. He became a Certified Public Accountant in Oklahoma in 1993 and is a member of the Oklahoma Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.



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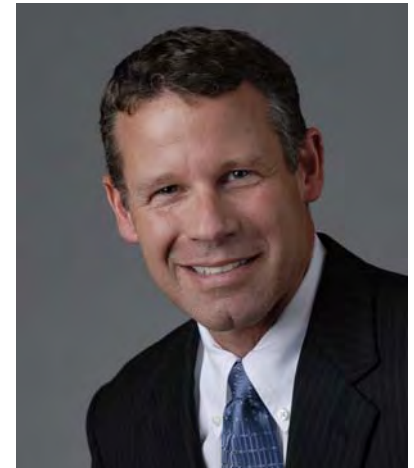
Your Regional Management Team 2009-2010 Ready to Come to Your Chapter



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Do not hesitate to ask any member of the Region 4 Management Team to come to your chapter for a visit, whether it is a chapter anniversary, officer installation or an opportunity for a team member to make a presentation. If it does not involve a speaking opportunity but is a celebration of some sort, a team member would also like to attend some of these events. We can present programs on ALA Benefits, Legal Management Resource Center or other leadership topics a particular team member is comfortable with. If a team member gets to come to your chapter, he/she will also want an opportunity to have dinner, breakfast or to simply meet with your Board during the visit.



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The management team has a certain number of visits budgeted for this year so the next time you visit with one of the Region 4 Management Team members, be sure to ask for a chapter visit if it works with your chapter schedule. We would love the opportunity to be of service.



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Tulsa Chapter
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Congratulations to the past years chapter Presidents.

Whick Turner
Alamo (San Antonio)

Angelia Hadden
Arkansas

Angie Kalsbeck, CLM
Austin

Harry Storey
Dallas

Ellen Zedler
Fort Worth

Kristie Ratliff, CLM
Houston

Jason McCord
Mile High (Denver)

Gale E. Johnson
New Mexico

Stephen Wolf, CLM
New Orleans

Michelle Stewart
OKC (Oklahoma City)

Kim Shibi
South Texas

Mark Hall
Utah

Jim Hoffmeister
Tulsa



Member Spotlight

Renee B. Hymel, CLM

Legal Administrator
Mouledoux, Bland, Legrand & Brackett, LLC
New Orleans, Louisiana



Renee B. Hymel, CLM
New Orleans, Louisiana

What are your primary responsibilities at your firm? Full-scale management – everything from the employee issues, HR, operations, projects, build outs, IT to accounting. Everything but the practice of law falls under my territory.

Tell us about your first experience as a Legal Administrator. Back 10 years ago, I was hired by my former employers to take care of the accounting, then quickly my employers realized there was so much more to running a law firm than just accounting. I had insurance renewals, employee issues, HR... you get the idea. I became the office manager due to necessity. I was not afraid of the challenge or responsibility. It was a wonderful learning **experience.**

What do you like best about being a Legal Administrator? I love the fact that there is ALWAYS something new and exciting to master. I never know what the day will bring and what interesting thing I will come across. Of course I always have a plan for the day but rarely does that plan get accomplished. There are always interruptions and distractions but the fires are extinguished.

How long have you been a member of ALA? I have been a member since 1999 so this year is my 10th anniversary.

Why did you join ALA? Another administrator had told one of my previous employers about the benefits of ALA. They realized how valuable the networking would be and recognized that the educational opportunities were very helpful for someone learning the ropes or even a seasoned veteran looking to stay on the cutting edge.

As an ALA member, what benefits provide the most value to you and your firm? Positively, without a doubt, the networking has proven to be the most valuable. I have been able to throw questions out on our network and get solid answers that help me avoid the mistakes my colleagues have already suffered through. Their experience can become mine by tapping into my circle for their advice. You can never have too many friends.

Member Spotlight, Cont'd.

As President-Elect of the New Orleans Chapter you attended the Chapter Leadership Institute last summer. How do you think your experience at CLI will help you as Chapter President and enhance your membership in ALA?

CLI was an awesome experience. I got to see a great deal more of the workings of ALA on a regional and national level. I found it incredibly motivating and inspiring. I walked away from that business trip believing I CAN make a difference. The quote, "If you think you are too small to make a difference, you've never been in bed with a mosquito" has stayed with me and given me the courage to stand up and stand out. Leading can be a rewarding experience and most importantly don't be afraid to choose a path.

We are all looking forward to attending the 2009 ALA Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, which will be held this May in New Orleans. What can you tell the attendees about New Orleans?

I am born and raised in New Orleans and I am so PROUD to call it home! New Orleans has a flavor all its own. From the architecture to the way of life, it has a different beat than anywhere else in the world. The people are so friendly and there is always something to do. There is a real love of life in this city. From music to art to food... and boy do we know how to eat, you won't leave New Orleans hungry (except hungry for another visit)! Some of the best food in the world can be found in New Orleans. The convention is set right on the edge of the French Quarter. There it is about as eclectic as things get so you are guaranteed to find something right up your alley. You could enjoy beignets and coffee right on Jackson Square. Then take a flight of stairs right there to the Moon Walk and enjoy a view of the Mississippi River with the beautiful Natchez paddle wheel river boat. The calliope plays tunes as it docks for passengers. The pace is peaceful when you want to slow it down and soak up the atmosphere. That is why they call it "The Big Easy." If speeding things up is your style, Bourbon Street is a few blocks over with the best night life this side of anywhere. The fun never ends in New Orleans.



Congratulations on your recent achievement of CLM! Why did you decide to pursue this certification?

My current employers were very interested in my plans to sit for the exam. They new the prestige of the certification and the education that studying would bring me. Unfortunately Katrina put those plans on hold but I kept my eye on the prize and my employers checked with me often about when I would sit for the test. I began studying

in early 2008 and traveled to Austin for the October testing date. What a wild ride those months turned out to be. I learned so much in that brief amount of time about myself and my career of choice. It was a wonderful, yet stressful experience, but I would recommend it highly to others. Covering the study material has opened my eyes to topics and situations I would not have even begun to understand otherwise. Knowledge is power giving you the strength to succeed. I believe that and I know it has helped me become a better administrator.

Member Spotlight, Cont'd.

What would you tell others interested in becoming a Certified Legal Manager? It is a wonderful learning experience to study for the test. You will be surprised about how much you learn about administration, yourself and your colleagues. My study group became much more than just colleagues I had met through the organization. They are now wonderful friends. The journey to achieving those three little letters is a VERY rewarding one and if at first you don't succeed, try and try again. Failure is NOT an option!

What are you plans for the next five years?

While studying and soaking up as much as I could about becoming a better administrator, I have become so much more focused on setting goals and reaching them. When I found out I passed the test, I relished that feeling for a few days and then realized... I need a new goal! What would I work on now that I had accomplished that goal? I needed something to throw myself into and really focus. Setting some short-term and long-term goals was one of my new goals! The planning is where it starts. And it is true – WRITE IT DOWN – it helps. Knowing my own weaknesses, I focused on my organizational skills and planning for short-term projects. For long-term, aside from running a top notch law firm, I want *to be the best president* for the New Orleans Chapter that I can be. I want to improve my IT skills, improve operations and staying up on HR details. My background is in accounting so my experience with the legal assistant side of the office is foreign to me. I want to know more about what goes on there. That would be my most challenging long-term goal. Overall I must say, I love where I work. It is a great feeling to like going in to work every day so on the five-year plan, I see myself focusing on the quality of my work life. Keeping it positive, challenging and productive for me and my staff is paramount.

Dallas members enjoying networking opportunities in Austin, 2008 mem-

