

Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors

Minutes

Quarterly Meeting

October 4, 2016

Montgomery County (MC) Circuit Courthouse

The Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) meeting began at 10:10 a.m.

The following people attended: Steve Anderson (Maryland State Law Library), Tonya Baroudi (Prince George's County), Joan Bellistri (Anne Arundel County), James Durham (Maryland State Law Library), Mary Jo Lazun (Charles County), Kate Martin (Montgomery County), Catherine McGuire (Maryland State Law Library), Lonni Summers (Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts) and Julia Viets (Montgomery County); participating by phone: Florence Barnes (Carroll County).

Welcome: Host **Kate Martin** introduced **Judy Rupp**, Court Administrator of the Montgomery County Circuit Court, who welcomed the Conference to her courthouse. She spoke about MC Court issues:

- Ms. Rupp commented on the new Courthouse annex, where the meeting was held – the large windows and direct light represent the transparency of the legal system in Montgomery County.
- Montgomery County Circuit Court is actively pursuing access to justice issues.
- She spoke about the challenges of the family law section, the largest division in the Montgomery County Circuit Court, with its very active pro se litigants.
- She also reported on the planned renovation of the law library, now in progress.

Chair **Tonya Baroudi** offered congratulations to **Joanie Bellistri** on being awarded the Maryland Legal Services Corporation William L Marbury Outstanding Advocacy Award. The ceremony will take place December 5th, 2016 at the Lord Baltimore Hotel in Baltimore, MD.

Catherine McGuire suggested simplifying and combining the three recommended core collection titles lists into a single list (Maryland, General, and Self-Help titles). If possible, the combined list would link to bibliographic records from the Maryland State Law Library catalog. This would assist public libraries, self-help organizations and other Maryland libraries in evaluating their legal collections. This would also assist the self-represented to identify titles related to their research process.

Combining the three lists into one elicits these issues:

- The lists currently make distinctions between Maryland, general, and self-help collections. Is this distinction still relevant?
Response: The new list would continue to make distinctions among the three within each header.
- What kind of standards should be followed to add or subtract titles from the list?
- Is a broader or more specific coverage better?

Joanie Bellistri gave a report on the Self-Represented Litigant (SRL) subcommittee of the Maryland Court Access and Community Relations Committee. In order to improve service, they are reviewing the kinds of questions that are being asked by the public in the Maryland courts.

Lonni Summers discussed this AOC initiative to study the ways that Maryland Court offices communicate with the public. It would be helpful to know who's asking the questions, what their asking, when and how long the inquiries

last. Lonni asked the Conference to send her data on what kinds and types of phone questions our libraries are receiving.

Mary Jo Lazun spoke about the latest meeting of the Courthouse Equity Subcommittee of the Judicial Council and summarized the report that has come out of the subcommittee:

- Funding is key for effective programs, services and access (see page 6 of the report).
- There are county-by-county disparities among the courts and court libraries.
- **Steve Anderson** has drafted proposed Maryland legislation that would standardize how funds for court libraries are funded, collected and distributed.
- Issues for further consideration include: Would it be a good idea to centralize library services?
- Should we establish a tiered system for smaller and larger court libraries that would run from the basic to more complex?
- What do the American Association of Law Libraries standards recommend?

Joanie Bellistri reported on further news from the Maryland SRL Subcommittee of Maryland Access and Community Relations Committee, the Access to Justice (A2J) Commission and A2J Department.

- The A2J Department has added a new guardianship video.
- The SRL Subcommittee has developed “Get Help” prescription pads for Maryland courts. Several conference members have personalized them for their Court.
- The Law Library Association of Maryland and the Maryland Library Association wrote letters in support of a national Justice For All grant for the A2J Commission.
- **Joanie Bellistri** attended a meeting organized by the A2J Commission to discuss the term “civil legal aid.”
- A Maryland limited scope conference is being planned by the Maryland Bar/Delivery of Legal Services Committee and the A2J Commission; **Mary Jo Lazun** and **Joanie Bellistri** will attend.

Tonya Baroudi presented a strategic plan for the Conference, based on previous suggestions. Members reviewed and commented on this version. **Catherine McGuire** will collect all suggestions, rewrite a clean version and post it to the proper websites. The group also reviewed the Conference protocols. **Kate Martin** will review and add Conference suggestions.

Lonni Summers informed the Conference that the A2J Department may not give out grants this year, but this may change. Watch for notices from the A2J Department and the AOC.

Joanie Bellistri passed along information about Dave Pantzer and People’s Law Library (PLL). The PLL is setting up a cooperative network of legal information, which may include a “Brochure/Content Bank.” He hopes for the Conference’s support.

Mary Jo Lazun and **Sara Witman** (Gordon Feinblatt LLC, Baltimore) presented a program on “Big League Resources on a Budget: How to Use Your Library” as outreach to small and solo law firms. **Joanie Bellistri** proposed a similar program for the Partners for Justice Conference.

Steve Anderson commented on a Conference email. **Mary Jo Lazun** asked how court law libraries pay for expenses outside the library proper – i.e., family magistrate collections or Maryland Rules books for courthouse departments. Conference members discussed how each of their libraries deals with this issue.

Kate Martin gave a report on her new Fast Facts family law packet project. She hopes to reduce printing waste and make family law issues and court procedures more understandable to the general public.

Tonya Baroudi ended the meeting by speaking about the next annual meeting at the JECC, with representatives from courthouse libraries across Maryland. She asked for possible ideas on law library topics. The meeting should take place in early December.

Adjournment was at 3:35 p.m., followed by a tour of the Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library.