

Minutes: Final

Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors

Quarterly Meeting

May 24, 2016

Charles County Circuit Courthouse

The Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

The following people attended: Flossie Barnes (Carroll County), Tonya Baroudi (Prince George's County), Joan Bellistri (Anne Arundel County), Sandy Brewer (Howard County), James Durham (Maryland State Law Library), Mary Jo Lazun (Charles County), Kate Martin (Montgomery County), Catherine McGuire (Maryland State Law Library) and Lonni Summers (Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts).

Welcome: Host **Mary Jo Lazun** introduced **Debbie Elms**, Court Administrator of Charles County, who welcomed the Conference to her courthouse. She spoke about her vision of a public law library --

- Libraries serve the public by working with relevant resources, leveraging technology, and yet staying within straitened budgets.
- She welcomed "hare-brained" ideas: setting up public kiosks, working with different courthouse departments, supporting Alternate Dispute Resolution issues, focusing on access to justice (A2J) resources.
- The court has been developing a pilot program to build a seventh circuit community to share resources and knowledge, possibly beginning with electronic sources.
- She has learned that her MDEC implementation will be bumped up to 2017 and considers the project exciting and *not* daunting.

MSBA Bar Bulletin article: Chair **Tonya Baroudi** offered kudos to **Sandy Brewer** for her MSBA Bar Bulletin article, authored with Dave Pantzer, on "[Delivery of Legal Services to Maryland Public Librarians.](#)"

Partners for Justice Conference: **Sandy Brewer** gave a report on the recent May Partners for Justice Conference (PFJ) at the University of Baltimore Law School. It was geared to attorneys to encourage more pro bono work. She said the best part was the networking and face time with other A2J activists. One of the better programs was on criminal record expungement.

Joan Bellistri coordinated a PFJ program with Pam Ortiz, on "*How Technology & Imagination Can Take You From Frustration to Solutions.*". Materials will be available on the CMCLLD wiki. Joan urged conference members to be actively involved and work on designing programs

for the next conference that showcase how public law libraries work with self-represented users.

Equal Justice Conference: **Joan Bellistri** described the 2016 American Bar Association Equal Justice Conference she attended in Chicago. The Self Represented Litigant Network gave a preconference workshop and Joan is part of the working group. Librarians came from across the county. Also in attendance were lawyers, legal service providers, judges and court administrators. Joan Bellistri coordinated a program, "Design Thinking and Collaboration Legal Services Delivery" with **Pam Ortiz**. Materials will be available on the CMCLLD wiki. Joan encouraged attendance at next year's meeting in Pittsburgh. The more collaboration with these groups, the better.

Outreach to other organizations:

Catherine McGuire: Bill Tench, the St. Mary's County circuit court (SMCCC) administrator and law librarian, is retiring. The issue: the SMCCC library is supplied and open to the public, but there is limited court support for a full-time librarian. Can the Conference, the seventh circuit or Mary Jo Lazun help out? Suggestions were offered:

- Set the library up as a simpler resource center
- Shift the materials to the public library
- Combine resources with nearby Calvert County and/or other seventh circuit courts
- Go with a virtual library in form of a Westlaw subscription
- Organize a call between Bill Tench, Catherine, Joan and Tonya to discuss issues

Recommended lists for Maryland Court Libraries. **Catherine** spoke about the List project, Appendix C, which includes a list of Maryland sources, general legal titles and a self-help collection. This project began ten years ago with specific titles listed. Should it instead have general topics instead? The Ken Svengalis book, *Legal Information Buyer's Guide & Reference Manual*, lists titles by topic. Requiring a broad list of titles requires a lot of money to purchase and maintain these titles. With budget cuts, few libraries can afford them all.

- What does the American Association of Law Libraries standards require?
- Could the titles be in any format, digital or print?
- Who uses these standards, small, large or public libraries?
- Instead of "recommended," use "suggested?" Or say which titles are best for starting a Maryland law collection?
- Make the descriptions long or short?

It was decided to review and revise the list by next fall, adding stars for suggested titles.

LUNCH generously provided by **Mary Jo** and the Charles County Circuit Courthouse.

Sandy asked advice about how to deal with an inappropriate letter she received from a prison inmate.

Library Maryland Judiciary Statistics: Joan opened a discussion about library usage statistics needed on August 1. We agreed to simplify categories. Catherine will work on these and post a revised category list on the wiki.

Mary Jo spoke about her new library. It is a separate 1840's building that was formerly a jail. It has two levels and an elevator for wheelchair access. Mary Jo offered to lead a tour at the end of the meeting.

Catherine asked about library policies on food. Everyone agreed it can be a problem and requires tact to control.

CMCLLD Trifold: Kate Martin reported on the progress of the "Finding Maryland Law" trifold to be distributed to courts and organizations throughout the state. Scott Stevens has agreed to help out with updating content and delivery. All the grant money has been spent and a sample was shown to members.

The trifold can be customized for each court and members was asked to provide a contact person within each of their courthouses. Kate also said she would contact Dave Pantzer and find out how he distributes his Peoples Law Library flyer. She estimates more than 20,000 copies will be distributed.

The Honorable Helen I. Harrington, Judge of the Charles County Circuit Court spoke. She congratulated the librarians on their work to improve access to justice and reminisced about her time working in a library. Her words were very much appreciated by the Conference.

Kate asked the Conference about courthouse library referrals/prescription forms as information triage. Suggestions included applying for a grant for public kiosks to use as navigation around the courthouse and the use of preset form/info packets.

A2J articles for "Voices for Justice": Tonya and Joan suggested a CMCLLD marketing idea – writing A2J articles with the assistance of "Voices for Justice," "a national communications initiative that taps the awareness-raising power of the media to spotlight the critical role of civil legal aid in assuring fairness for all in the justice system."

Conference strategic plan: Steve Anderson discussed the CMCLLD strategic plan. The consensus was that Steve should write a draft based on topics in the judiciary strategic plan and submit it to the Conference.

Minutes of the November and February meetings were approved. **Kate** agreed to use the wiki for the approval process next time.

Better marketing – Elevator speeches. Tonya led a group activity to improve our elevator speeches. We spoke about: defining our audience, what we want to sell, what our strengths are and why our audience should care. Then we broke into groups to design a scenario and a sample two-minute speech. Our goal is to promote the library, pique interest in our issue and elicit questions.

Next meeting: Kate agreed to host the next Conference meeting in Montgomery County in the early fall.

Adjournment at 3:20 p.m., followed by a tour of the new Charles County Courthouse library building.

