

# **NEWSLETTER**

A Publication of the Western Pennsylvania Law Library Association

## A Column of Content

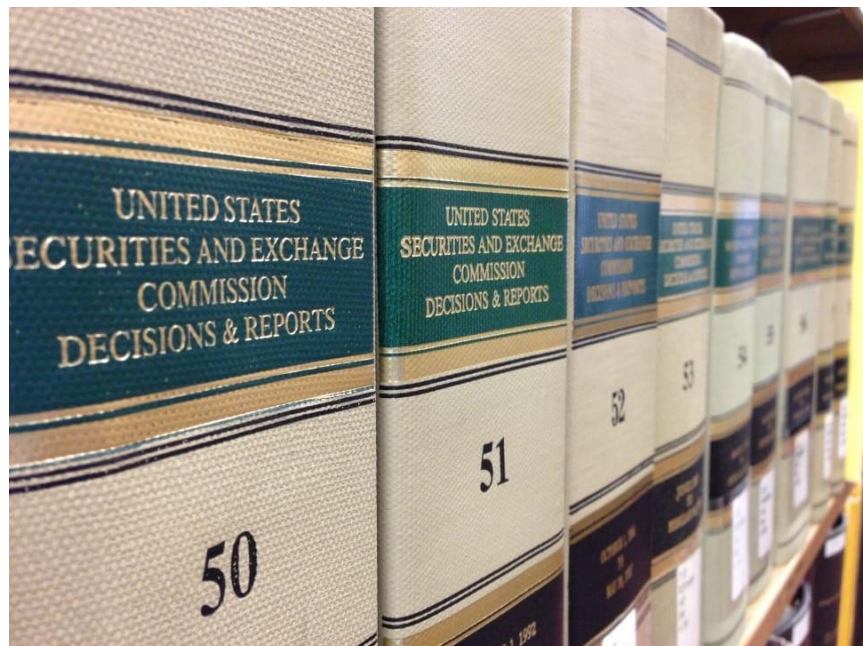


|                                                 |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Member News</b>                              | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Annual Luncheon &amp; Board Announcement</b> | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>President's Welcome Message</b>              | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>AALL Annual Conference 2026</b>              | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>AALL News</b>                                | <b>9</b>  |
| AALL Webinars                                   | 9         |
| The Education Edge - an AALL Newsletter         | 9         |
| Unbound                                         | 9         |
| AALL In Podcast                                 | 9         |
| <b>From the Shelf</b>                           | <b>10</b> |
| A Selection of Recent Reads                     | 10        |
| <b>Last Call for Comment</b>                    | <b>11</b> |
| <b>WPLLA Contacts</b>                           | <b>12</b> |

# Member News

See what's going on with WPLLA below!

- The 2026-2027 WPLLA Board was announced at the Spring Luncheon!
- We've had a couple members retire within the last few months, and we'd love to give them a shout out for their dedicated years of service:
  - Lee Carnes - formerly at K&L Gates
  - Lori Hagen - formerly at ACLL & Duquesne Law Library
- Other member libraries have seen recent hires as well; such as Julie Graves Krishnaswami as the [new director at the Gormley Law Library](#) of Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University
- WPLLA presence at AALL Annual Conference in Cleveland, OH! Seven members attended this year; one presented a poster, one was an award recipient, one led a session, and some were first-time attendees and/or grant recipients.
- 2026 - 2027 Membership Renewal update



# Annual Luncheon & Board Announcement

At the luncheon held at McCormick & Schmick's on May 21st, the WPLLA Board for the incoming year was officially announced!

- President- Daniel Parker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit Court
- Immediate Past President- Britiny Hommey, Beaver County Law Library
- Vice-President/President Elect- Shannon Barron, ACLL/Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
- Secretary- Victoria Stasiv, Steptoe & Johnson PLLC
- Treasurer- Jamie Knizner, Washington County Law Library
- Member- At-Large- Linda Tashbook -University of Pittsburgh



- Pictured is incoming WPLLA President, Dan Parker

Thank you to our members for voting. If you're ever curious about serving on our board in the future, feel free to ask someone who's served before about what it's like. On the following page you'll find a welcome message from our incoming President.

- From L-R: Jamie Knizner, Victoria Stasiv, Shannon Barron, Daniel Parker, Linda Tashbook, Britiny Hommey

# President's Welcome Message

As August begins to wind down, I am delighted to welcome everyone back from WPLLA's summer hiatus and to the start of another year together. It is truly my privilege to serve as your Chapter President, and I am looking forward to the opportunities ahead to reconnect, exchange ideas, and strengthen the professional community that makes the Western Pennsylvania Law Library Association so valuable.

As I discussed at the Annual Meeting this Spring, at its heart, WPLLA is about people. Our collective knowledge and experience are tremendous resources, but the relationships we build with one another are equally important. Whether we work in academic, firm, court, government, corporate, or other settings, we all benefit from having colleagues who understand our work, can offer a fresh perspective, and are willing to share their expertise. Those connections help us meet the challenges of our day-to-day work while also supporting our longer-term professional growth.

As we begin the new program year, I encourage everyone to renew their WPLLA membership. This year, annual dues have increased modestly to \$35 for all members. The increase will help ensure the future financial viability of the Debra May AALL Conference Memorial Scholarship, an important investment in the professional development of our members and in the future of our association. Renewing your membership, however, is only the beginning. I hope each of us will make a point of reaching out to colleagues throughout

the year. Invite a fellow member to attend one of our monthly meetings or social events, particularly someone we have not seen recently or who may work remotely. A personal invitation can make all the difference in helping someone reconnect with the group.

We should also look beyond our current membership. Who are the law librarians, legal information professionals, and others working in related roles in our region who have not yet found their way to WPLLA? Consider colleagues at nearby institutions, newer professionals, and people whose roles may have evolved to include legal research or information management responsibilities. An invitation to attend a meeting or to learn more about WPLLA can introduce them to a professional community they did not realize was available.

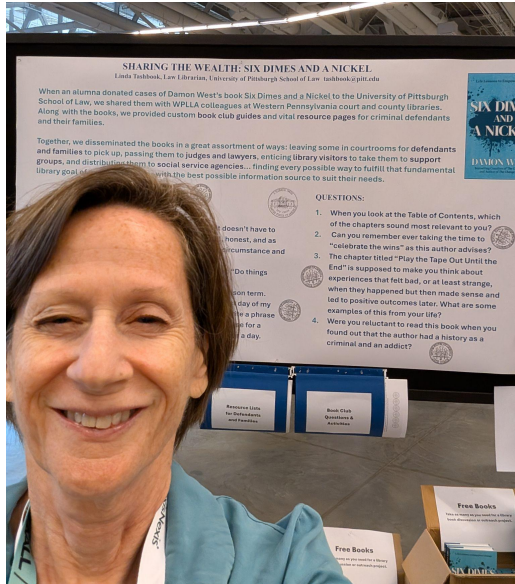
At the same time, I hope we will reconnect with retired or lapsed members. Retirement or a career transition may change someone's relationship to the profession, but it does not diminish the value of the knowledge, friendships, and experience they bring to our group. WPLLA is stronger when we maintain those connections across institutions, career stages, and generations.

Professional associations thrive when their members actively participate in creating the community they want to have. Every conversation, introduction, shared resource, meeting, and informal gathering gives us another opportunity to support one another's work and professional growth.

I am excited about the year ahead and grateful for the opportunity to serve as Chapter President. I hope you will renew, reconnect, reach out, and join us often.

- Dan Parker

# AALL Annual Conference 2026



- For at least an hour on every day of the AALL conference, Pitt Law Librarian, Linda Tashbook displayed her poster, *Sharing the Wealth: Six Dimes and a Nickel*, about collaborating with WPLLA court and county libraries to distribute this excellent book by Damon West to defendants, support groups, social service workers, and book clubs.



- Britiny Hommey was the recipient of the 2026 AALL GLL-SIS Law Library Advocate Award! The above image was taken at the Government Law Libraries Awards Breakfast on Sunday morning, July 19th. It was at this breakfast that Britiny was also able to meet her GLL mentor (and media maven), Laura Moorer. Britiny highly recommends joining a Special Interest Section.



- The Cleveland Public Library has a section [detailing the above 'Free' stamp here.](#)

The theme for this year's conference was **Leading with Aloha** - pictures incoming!



- (to the left): Area outside the Grand Ballroom with props and leis for pictures
- (below): the exhibit hall is open!
- (farther below): proof of sustenance



Barrio



## Hot Topic: Adapting to SSRN's Changes to the Legal Scholarly Communications System

WPLLA member Karen Shephard (Pitt Law's Information Services Librarian) had the opportunity to co-present a Hot Topic Session at this year's AALL Annual Meeting and Conference in Cleveland. What began as an accepted "Discussion Den" proposal in early April, soon turned into an expanded "Hot Topic Session," at the request of AALL Programming, due to anticipated high interest in the matter.

SSRN's Sarah Fancher (Head of Content Process - SSRN, Elsevier) joined law librarians Ben Keele (Scholarly Services Librarian, Univ. of Minnesota Law School) and Shephard to highlight and clarify changes occurring at SSRN (the preprints platform formerly known as the Social Sciences Research Network). The three were part of a panel discussion that also opened the floor to questions from the approximate 80 AALL members in attendance.

The program, entitled "Adapting to SSRN's Changes to the Legal Scholarly Communications System" was developed to address deep concerns and gain clarification about SSRN's recent decision to end support for its "commercial products" which included eliminating the Legal Studies Research Paper Series, a promotional vehicle for amplified scholarly outreach and branding for many institutions for decades. Institutional rankings also ended while top papers by authors will continue to be showcased.

At the time SSRN's announcement was made, SSRN also shared plans to end the capability of series managers, including many librarians and staff members, to post papers to the platform on behalf of faculty authors. But this changed by the time the session was held, following extensive communications from law

librarians with SSRN support team members, expressing beliefs that faculty author participation and presence on the platform would plummet if this action was taken. Fancher announced during the session that SSRN would permit these "submitter accounts" to continue "into 2027 and beyond." Further details will be forthcoming later this fall.

Many additional concerns were raised during the Q & A segment of the program. Fancher affirmed that SSRN was refocusing its mission as a premier preprint service and continues to be open to hearing and considering user concerns.

For additional details, and to stay abreast of these changes as they develop, please see the resources included below as part of a handout provided at the program by SSRN's Sarah Fancher:

### **Summary of changes at SSRN in 2026 related to the "strategic refocus" as an open-access platform:**

- All commercial products are phasing out this year – free services will continue
- Site subscriptions (seat-based licenses allowing individuals to subscribe to topic-based email alerts in the Legal Scholarship Network and elsewhere) will transition to complementary access
- Institutional landing pages ("Research Paper Series" or similar) and metrics will be removed by end of year
- Institutionally-branded email alerts will phase out by end of year
- Rankings (Top Papers, Top Authors, Top Organizations) have been retired
- Paid "Jobs & Announcements" (publicizing faculty job openings or calls for papers) will not be sold after October 31, 2026

- Option to apply a CC license at submission will be introduced July 2026; opt-out (accept standard SSRN terms of use) available
- Revisions will phase out, likely in Q3 2026 (current ability to overwrite PDF file with a new document)
- Some submission guidelines are tightening
- Verified email address required
- Abstract-only submissions; slide decks no longer typically accepted
- Use of AI tools should be disclosed)
- Submitter accounts (privilege to submit/manage papers on behalf of faculty) **will continue** into 2027 and beyond – technical and logistical details to come by October 1

### Resources

- [SSRN Blog](#) - primary communications channel
- [SSRN Customer Support Center](#)
- [SSRN Submission Guidelines](#)
- [SSRN Policy on Generative AI](#)
- [SSRN Terms of Use](#)

### Key Contacts

Clare Stone, PhD - Director, SSRN

Sarah Fancher - Head of Content Process, SSRN

General feedback - [ideas@ssrn.com](mailto:ideas@ssrn.com)

### Thoughts Post-Conference

“This year I was so appreciative to attend AALL in Cleveland to accept the AALL GLL-SIS Law Library Advocate Award in-person. I also was able to meet my peers and one mentor in person! I was lucky enough to attend each day so in addition to roaming the exhibit hall as time allowed, I saw the opening keynote, at least nine sessions, one breakfast, and three mindful moments with the Mindfulness Caucus. I was sad to miss out on the evening Dungeons & Dragons mini-session, as I’m sure that was a lot of fun.

Many sessions I went to were packed, one notably being the “Intranets with

Intention” panel. Who owns the page? Who edits/ uploads the content? Do you have library branding? These are commonalities between all library types. Another session that was more interactive utilizing a ‘Choose Your own Adventure’ style Q&A was the “Mapping the Law” panel which discussed the journey (challenges and all) of two librarians taking a grant-funded road trip across their state of Oregon and surveying their county law libraries. This journey fostered advocacy, outreach, and connection between the law libraries in Oregon.”

- Britiny Hommey

“I was very grateful to ‘win’ the scholarship to attend the AALL conference last month in Cleveland. Being surrounded by fellow law librarians was an immense experience, especially still being relatively new to the profession.

While I enjoyed many panels, and loved getting to walk around the exhibit hall, the panel which resonated the most with me was “Being New & Alone: Newer Law Librarians on Being Solo and Small team Savant”. Featuring four newer librarians (three firm librarians, and one county law librarian), they discussed the “what we wish we knew or had been told to us” when starting in their current positions. There was sharing of sob stories, mistakes, and triumphs. Listening to their stories better helped me to realize that even a year into my current position, it is still ok to ask questions of my own supervisor and my peers. That I am not expected to know everything.

I also very much enjoyed getting to meet my AALL mentor, after talking monthly on Zoom for the last year. I was able to reconnect with former SLA colleagues, and meet new ones.

While I was only able to attend for two days of the conference, my time left a lasting impression on me. I am already looking forward to future AALLs.”

- Stefanie Maclin-Hurd

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# AALL News

## AALL Webinars

- AALL Webinar: Fire and Water: Planning for Disaster on September 15th at 2:00pm (EDT)
  - Webinar link: [Insert link here](#)
    - Note: at least one of our WPLLA libraries had two flooding incidents this summer! Has anyone else experienced a natural disaster?

## The Education Edge - an AALL Newsletter

- Looking for ways to support your professional growth? Have you checked out the latest edition of AALL's newsletter, [The Education Edge](#)?
- Find the most updated issue at the link above. Each issue now includes a *Question of the Month*, inviting members to share their insights, experiences, and tips with colleagues across the AALL Community. Selected responses will be highlighted in the following month's issue-so your ideas can help inspire others.
  - In June, they asked members: What impactful ways have you engaged the community/public with your library?
  - Responses can be viewed [here](#)

## Unbound

- The Fall 2025/Winter 2026 issue of Unbound: A Review of Legal History & Rare Books is available at <https://www.aallnet.org/lhrbsis/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2026/02/LHRBSIS-Unbound-Vol16No1.pdf>
  - Interested in joining a special interest section? AALL has numerous to choose from, check them out [here](#).

## AALL In Podcast

- They've put out a few episodes highlighting purposeful leading, and generative artificial intelligence
  - Find the latest episode [here](#) or on Spotify, PocketCasts, or Apple Podcasts

# From the Shelf

A Selection of Recent Reads<sup>1</sup>

- *Everyday I Read: 53 Ways to Get Closer to Books* by Hwang Bo-Reum (2021)
  - This warm and reflective collection of essays invites us to think on our relationship with reading. Why do we read? What is it that we hope to take away from the intimate, personal experience of reading for pleasure? Rarely do we ask these expansive questions of ourselves and of our relationship to the joy of reading. In each essay, Hwang Bo-reum contemplates what living a life immersed in reading means. She goes beyond the usual questions of what to read and how often, exploring reading & writing, when to turn to a bestseller vs. browsing the corners of a bookshop, the value of reading outside your wheelhouse, falling in love with book characters, and more!
- If you watched Nolan's *Odyssey* (2026) and are craving more books of that type here's two:
  - *Elektra* by Jennifer Saint (2022)
    - Three women tangled in an ancient curse. Told from the perspectives of Princess Cassandra, Clytemnestra, and Elektra this story of Agamemnon's family curse is written with a fresh take on an old tale.
  - *The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller (2012)
    - Patroclus, an awkward young prince, follows Achilles into war, little knowing that the years that follow will test everything they've learned and everything they hold dear. Set during the Trojan War.
- *Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil* by V.E. Schwab (2025)
  - This story is set across centuries (1500s-2019) with three main characters - themes include immortality and feminism. The plots intertwine in a much unexpected way. Hunger. Love. Rage. These are cornerstones for the book. Make way for a new type of vampire novel.
- *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy (1878)
  - This classic story has heartbreak, embarrassment, laughter, jealousy, shock, and love. Somehow Tolstoy pulls every emotion out. There's plotline A with Anna & Vronsky and plotline B with Levin & Kitty. While a massive tome to undertake, the 800+ page novel is a commitment. Thankfully Tolstoy does not pry the readers along, but rather jumps right into the dramatics with the iconic first line, "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

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<sup>1</sup> If you would like to suggest a book you have read recently (fiction, nonfiction, audiobook, etc.) send an email to Britiny Hommey; include in the subject line: **WPLLA Newsletter Book Suggestion**.

# Last Call for Comment

## PA General Assembly: a look at legislation

- Through the 2025-2026 regular session\*, there's a handful of proposed bills relating to libraries that have been working their way through the House and/or Senate.
  - \*did you know that when the new regular session begins any bills that weren't passed in the previous session need to start over again?
- For brevity, the list below will show the bill number & title and will link out to the [palegis.us](https://palegis.us) memo
  - [SB 1103 Pennsylvania Right to Read Act](#)
  - [HB 1178 Rural Library Grant Program](#)
  - [HB 769 Requiring School Libraries](#)
  - [HB 1589 School Libraries in all Public Schools](#)
  - [HR 36 DOC Prison Library Study](#)
- **Reminder** that Nov. 3, 2026 is the day of the [General Election](#).



## Articles from the WPLLA listserv & beyond

- [How AI Tools Can Help with Legal History Research](#) by Kerr published 3.17.26
- [27 Ways to Access Scientific Research](#) by Pacifici published 3.05.26
- [Investigating three real-world incidents in our cybersecurity evaluations](#) by Anthropic published 7/30/26

# WPLLA Contacts

Members: consider becoming an active part of our organization by assisting with the newsletter, or serving on our social media team. We promote our profession every day through educational events, forums, social events, and more.

## WPLLA Board and Committees 2026 - 2027

### President

Daniel Parker

### Webmaster

Linda Tashbook

### Vice President

Shannon Barron

### Newsletter Committee

Britiny Hommey (editor)

### Secretary

Victoria Stasiv

Daniel Parker

### Treasurer

Jamie Knizner

Victoria Stasiv

### Member-at-Large

Linda Tashbook

### Immediate Past President

Britiny Hommey

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A Column of Content is published online, quarterly, by the Western Pennsylvania Law Library Association

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