



Next Meeting

When: Wednesday, April 6, 2005, 5:30/6-8 p.m.

Where: eBistros.com restaurant
Pinellas Business Center
10901 Roosevelt Blvd. N.,
Suite 800
St. Petersburg, FL 33716
<http://www.ebistros.com>



Online Directions: Go to www.mapquest.com and type in the street address to print a map.

RSVP: Anita Lindsay, arlindsay@yahoo.com, by Thursday, March 30, 2005

What's Planned

Heighten your awareness. Sharpen your senses. Now that we are "Living with Terrorism," let Steve Collins Purl, of *AAA Investigations and Protective Services*, show you strategies to strengthen homeland security and enhance your personal safety.

An optional dinner will be available for \$8. Buffet includes sandwiches, drinks and desserts.

For further information on meetings, please see the Meeting Schedule:
<http://tbic.org/sis/meeting.htm>.

Farewell, Dear Friend

Madison Mosley, Jr., Director of the Law Library and Information Services, and Associate Professor of Law, at Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, passed away March 29, 2005, after a lengthy illness. He was an active member and supporter of Suncoast Information Specialists for many years. We will miss him.

Minutes of Feb. 23, 2005, Meeting



The February 23, 2005, meeting of the Suncoast Information Specialists (SIS) was held at the Tampa Campus of the Stetson University College of Law with 10 members in attendance.

President Paul Wetmore called the business meeting to order at 6:45 p.m., after about an hour of networking and a box supper arranged by Vice President Steve Cannata, director of Stetson's Tampa Campus Law Library,

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the December 2004 meeting, which were published in the online newsletter. Plans for upcoming meetings were discussed, but details of the April meeting, to be held in Pinellas County, were not yet finalized. (See announcement of Next Meeting elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Treasurer Wanda Barrett could not attend and there was no treasurer's report, but Webmaster and Past Treasurer Betsy King noted that there was about \$1,000 in the treasury and that membership stood at about 45.

Betsy announced that the Special Libraries Association (SLA) would hold a workshop March 11 at the FAMU Law Library in Orlando. The focus will be on the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and its impact on what libraries will be responsible for in the area of records management.

The evening's program focused on the funding crisis facing the state's county law libraries and on advocacy for public access to such legal resources. The guest speaker was Rebecca Frank, director of the Pinellas County Law Library. (See "Public Access to Legal Information Is Endangered" elsewhere in this newsletter.)

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. and was followed by a tour of the Stetson Law Library conducted by its director and SIS Vice President Steve Cannata.

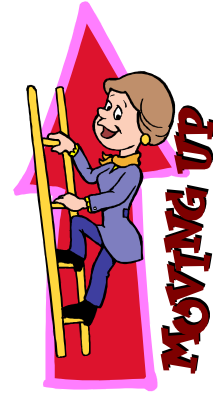
By: Jean Andrews, Secretary

Toot Your Own Horn—Members on the Move



Have you moved to a new job...received some kind of recognition in your current job...or have some news to tell about your library or your life?

We want to help you toot your horn in **SIS-INFO**, our online newsletter. Please call Sandy Hawes, Editor, 1.352.588.8262, with your news or send an email to sandy.hawes@saintleo.edu.



Look for New College of Florida/USF—Sarasota-Manatee librarian **Caroline Reed's** article, "Reaching Out to Connect with Users: The Jane Bancroft Cook Library Experience," in the Spring issue of *Florida Libraries*.

Further congratulations go to **Caroline Reed**, New College/USF—Sarasota- Manatee librarian, on her recent promotion to the rank of Assistant University Librarian.

Alicia Ellison, recently tenured HCC-Ybor Campus librarian, takes over the duties of SIS Listserv Owner from **CD McLean** this month. Thanks to both for their service.

Interesting Research and Resources

Copyright issues have been in the LIS news several times this spring. Here are some of the best sites and articles.

Look for "Righting Copyright: Fair Use and 'Digital Environmentalism'" at BookForum, <http://www.bookforum.com/boynton.html>.

Or, subscribe to the free electronic newsletter, "Copyright, Licensing & E-Commerce News." Send an email request to copyright attorney, author, and consultant, Lesley Ellen Harris, at lesley@copyrightlaws.com.



Need more copyright resources? Take a look at the Library of Congress Website, <http://www.copyright.gov>. This interactive site can be used for one-on-one training, as a faculty tutorial, or to develop customized hand-outs for your library.

Or, refer to the American Library Association's Website section on copyright at <http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/WOissues/copyrightb/copyright.htm>.

The newest report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project has been creating quite a buzz on the local electronic discussion boards. The report by Senior Research Fellow Deborah Fallows, PhD, is entitled "Search Engine Users: Internet Searchers Are Confident, Satisfied and Trusting—But They Are Also Unaware and Naïve."

If you haven't taken a look at it yet, you can find a summary at http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/146/report_display.asp or the full report at http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Searchengine_users..pdf.



Alicia Ellison has compiled a "quick-and-dirty little page" of links to resources and online articles about the Gaming Generation's information-gathering habits. Go to <http://hccfl.edu/aellison/nextgens.html> to see it. She also recommends this article from the Capital Times, "A Brave New Gamer World," which can be found online at <http://www.madison.com/tct/business/index.php?ntid=25318>. Thanks, Alicia!

Do you use OCLC resources? If so, you may be interested in their new "online training clearinghouse" (*OCLC Abstracts*, v.8, n.8). This addition to the OCLC Professional Development area of the Website provides links to online courses offered by OCLC's Regional Service Providers. Go to the Web and take a look. <http://www.oclc.org/education/regional/usa/default.htm>.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health launched a pilot OpenCourseWare (OCW) project in March at <http://ocw.jhsph.edu> with two courses. Eight more are scheduled for April, with more to come. The site features open and free access.

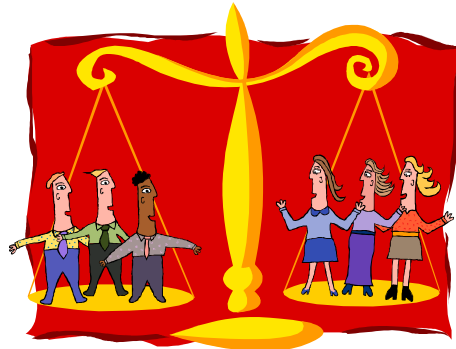
Thanks to Treasurer **Wanda Barrett** for locating the sample resolution and sample letter that are included in this newsletter to accompany the "Public Access to Legal Information Is Endangered" article. She found the material on the Miami/Dade law library Website. Find out more by viewing <http://www.mdcll.org/html/FAQ.htm>.

**“Public Access to Legal Information Is Endangered
and Law Libraries Need Your Support,”
Said Rebecca Frank, Pinellas County Law Library
Director, Speaking at the Feb. 23rd Meeting**

Who uses Florida’s county law libraries? If you answered “lawyers,” you’d be only partly correct. Actually, says Rebecca Frank, director of the Pinellas County Law Library, more than half of the users are members of the general public. Both they and people who work in the legal profession are in danger of losing this valuable resource, thanks to a state constitutional amendment and the Florida legislature’s failure to come up with realistic funding sources.

That’s a serious problem, especially when more and more people find themselves unable to afford a lawyer and try to represent themselves in court proceedings. Without access to critical information, whether it be the text of a law, a legal form, or a record of relevant court cases, they are likely to be severely limited in their ability to protect and exercise their rights.

That was the urgent message delivered by Frank, who was the guest speaker at the SIS February 23rd meeting at the Tampa Campus of Stetson University College of Law. The issue is not entirely new, nor is it unfamiliar to SIS members, who drafted a letter of support last year when it appeared that state funding would be eliminated altogether. The letter was never sent, because at the last minute, the state legislature came up with a source to cover some of the needed funds. Unfortunately, that source—payment of fines by criminals—has turned out to be a rather poor choice. And once again, the law libraries, which provide Florida’s citizens free access to legal documents and resources that they can’t get anywhere else, are in serious jeopardy. Information professionals are needed to help spread the word and offer support for the effort to preserve Florida’s law libraries.



“We’re not out of the woods yet,” said Frank, who thanked SIS for its proactive support last year and characterized the 2004 legislative action as simply “throwing some crumbs” to the libraries. The problem goes back to 1998, she explained. At that time voters approved an amendment to the state constitution, its selling point being the stated intent to equalize court services among the counties. The amendment, however, turned out to have a devastating effect on county law libraries. The law, which went into effect in July 2004, was “confusing,” according to Frank, and the commission that decided what constituted “essential court services” did not consider libraries to be among them.

Last year, as the law’s effective date loomed, counties started complaining that the state had shortchanged them. The outcry resulted in the legislature’s decision to

provide some funds from fees for criminal infractions. But, as Frank noted, criminals don't usually bother paying these fees. Worse yet, the fees are subordinate to others that criminals may be ordered to pay. The bad news for law library budgets that were based on the expected income from these fees: The collection rate for the first quarter was just 48 percent, and Frank isn't optimistic about improvement.

Currently there are 28 county law libraries in Florida's 67 counties. (Hillsborough's is in downtown Tampa near the courthouse, and Pinellas has three locations.) The number is shrinking. The Collier County Law Library in Naples has just shut its doors, transferring its materials to the local public library, and the current word is that the Broward County Law Library may close and give its materials to the local public library as well. While public libraries are the first line of information access for many people, they aren't ideal sources for specialized legal information and the librarians who are experts in helping users find their way through the often complicated resources, whether in print or from databases such as Lexis/Nexis. And, because specialized legal publications and other legal resources are expensive to maintain and keep current, it seems unlikely that public libraries (already facing financial pressures) would be able to afford the additional costs.

One problem the county law libraries face is their low visibility, even though they serve an estimated 20,000 people a week, both attorneys and members of the public. Many people don't even know there are county law libraries or that they are open to the public at no charge.



Interestingly, Frank noted that for a while, many attorneys thought they could get everything they needed in their own offices through online databases, such as Westlaw and Lexis-Nexis. They have now discovered that not everything is online, and (surprise!) these database subscriptions are expensive, so once again they are back to relying heavily on the county law libraries.

Law libraries are trying to increase that visibility, and SIS members suggested some ways they could help. A packet of information including a list of legislative contacts has been compiled (See "What can you do to help?" elsewhere in this newsletter). SIS members as a group and as individuals are encouraged to help in the effort to preserve the right of citizens to have access to free legal information.

"We're gearing up to fight," said Frank, "and we welcome your support."

By: Jean Andrews, Secretary

What can you do to help?

Contact the Subcommittee on Judicial Appropriations with a letter (sample below) of support for the County Law Libraries in Florida, or come to the next SIS meeting to voice your opinion about whether or not we should send a resolution (sample below) on behalf of our membership. Thanks in advance for your interest and assistance.



Subcommittee on Judicial Appropriations

Location: 221 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300
Contact: 850.488.6204

Representatives:

Negron, Joe (R) Chair
Mahon, Mark (R) Vice Chair
Benson, Anna Holliday (R)
Gelber, Dan (D)
Kottkamp, Jeffrey (R)
Planas, Juan-Carlos (R)
Ross, Dennis (R)
Ryan, Timothy (D)
Seiler, John (D)

Staff:

DeBeaugrine, Jim Staff Director
Cooper, Lisa Administrative Assistant
Davila, Michelle Administrative Assistant

http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/committees_detail.aspx?id=2101



Sample Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF (INSERT NAME HERE)
REQUESTING FULL AND ADEQUATE FUNDING
FOR COUNTY LAW LIBRARIES

WHEREAS, the voters of Florida approved an amendment to the Florida Constitution, commonly referred to as Revision 7 relating to the funding for the Judicial branch of government, and

WHEREAS, as a result of said amendment the Florida Legislature has passed legislation which eliminates the sharing of filing fees for the funding for our County Law Library, and

WHEREAS, currently over eight five percent (85%) of the funding for our local Miami-Dade County Law Library comes from filing fees, and

WHEREAS, our County Law Library has many responsibilities to the people of Florida and it is critical that the a new funding structure is implemented so that the Law Library is not disrupted and can continue to serve the public, and

WHEREAS, our County Law Library protects democracy by providing legal information to the judiciary, attorneys and all persons throughout the county, rich and poor alike, through many sources, including but not limited to statutes, case law and legal treatises, and

WHEREAS, our County Law Library is a source of legal information for those individuals who do not have the ability to hire legal representation and is essential to the administration of justice, and

WHEREAS, our County Law Library provides legal forms and information to assist the public in resolving legal matters concerning landlord/tenant, property, family, probate and other civil matters, as well as criminal law, and

WHEREAS, our County Law Library needs reasonable and adequate funding to ensure that justice continues to be carried out in a fair, timely and impartial manner, and

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that the (INSERT NAME HERE) hereby recommend and request that the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation fulfill this obligation and ensure that the County Law Library receive full and adequate funding.

Section 1. The foregoing is true and correct.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____.

ATTEST: _____
President

Vice President

Secretary



Sample Letter

Dear Senator/Representative:

The voters of Florida approved an amendment to the Florida Constitution commonly referred to as Revision 7 of Article V relating to the funding for the courts. As a result of this amendment, the Florida Legislature has passed legislation which eliminates the current sharing of filing fees by the County Law Libraries effective July 1, 2004.

At the present time, over eighty-five percent (85%) of our local Law Library's budget comes from filing fees.

The County Law Library serves many functions for the people of Florida. It not only serves the judiciary and attorneys--it is a public library and serves all pro se litigants and members of the public. It is critical that a new source of funding be implemented so that the County Law Library can continue to serve the people of Florida by providing public access to legal information.

Please ensure that the County Law Library receives adequate funding to ensure that justice is available to all citizens. I am requesting that you and the members of the (county/town) delegation to the Florida Legislature fulfill your obligation and ensure that the County Law Libraries of Florida receive full and adequate funding.

Opportunities to Help



Do you have an idea for a presentation? Do you know someone who would be perfect to speak at a meeting? Would you like to volunteer your services? If so, please contact us by calling 813.622.8252 or 352.588.8262, or by sending an email message to sis@tblc.org or sandy.hawes@saintleo.edu.

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c/o Tampa Bay Library Consortium
1202 Tech Boulevard, Suite 202
Tampa, FL 33619

Phone: 813.622.8252
Email: sis@tblc.org
Electronic list: <http://tblc.org/sis/list.htm>
URL: <http://tblc.org/sis/>

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