

## From the Editor

With this issue, “Questions and Answers” returns as a regular feature of *Law Library Journal*. Its absence from the past two issues was a result of the resignation of columnist Nicholas Triffin, who had compiled the column alone or on an alternating basis since 1982. Nick resigned because of other commitments on his time, including his recent appointment as editor of Oceana’s *Law Books in Print*.

This issue’s column is compiled by members of the reference staff of the University of Pennsylvania Biddle Law Library. The Biddle staff will continue to produce the column for even-numbered issues of the *Journal*. In odd-numbered issues, the compilers will be Alice Youmans and Joan Howland of the University of California-Berkeley Law Library and Myra Saunders of the UCLA Law Library. Readers with questions for the column should send them either to Cynthia Arkin at Biddle or to Myra Saunders at UCLA.

“Questions and Answers” has been a part of *Law Library Journal* since 1953.<sup>1</sup> Its first compiler was Marian Gallagher. In her first column, the compiler attributed the idea for the column to Josephine Smith of the Minnesota State Law Library.<sup>2</sup> The first published question concerned how best to make incomplete volumes of periodicals available to the public while awaiting receipt of issues needed for binding.<sup>3</sup>

Marian Gallagher remained responsible for the column, with occasional guest assistance, through 1958. After 1956, Mary Oliver served as co-compiler. Between 1959 and 1961, the column was done by John Heckel of the Los Angeles County Law Library and Kathleen Farmann of the Ohio State Law Library. In 1962, one column was compiled by Heckel,<sup>4</sup> one by William Stern,<sup>5</sup> and one was published without attribution.<sup>6</sup> In 1963-64 the column

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1. 46 LAW LIBR. J. 93 (1953). There was an earlier attempt to establish a question-answering column under the heading “Reference Question Clearing House.” See 33 LAW LIBR. J. 97 (1940). The prospective compiler was Margaret Hall, then of the Columbia University Law Library. The published column included a proposed 3x5 card form on which questions could be submitted and a list of “Sources of Reference Data,” which Hall hoped would be enlarged through reader contributions. No actual questions (or answers) were included in the column, which appeared only once. That year’s annual meeting, however, featured a “question box” session, 33 LAW LIBR. J. 362-77, which had been promoted in the pre-meeting issues of the *Journal*. 33 LAW LIBR. J. 52, 104.

2. 46 LAW LIBR. J. at 93.

3. The answer: plaster paste for temporary binding, and storage in pamphlet boxes. *Id.* at 93-94.

3. *Id.* at 93.

4. 55 LAW LIBR. J. 436 (1962).

5. 55 LAW LIBR. J. 44 (1962).

6. 55 LAW LIBR. J. 119 (1962).

did not appear in *LLJ*, but it returned in 1965 “[b]ecause of many requests,”<sup>7</sup> again under John Heckel, who now was librarian at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Heckel continued to compile the column, with the assistance of occasional guests through 1970. He returned to put together a special column for the Spring 1982 75th Anniversary Issue of the *Journal*.<sup>8</sup> Lorraine Kulpa began editing the column in 1971 and continued with the frequent help of guest editors through 1976, when she became editor of *LLJ*. Michael Gehringer succeeded her and continued the column with occasional guests and regular assistance into 1981. Donna Tuke compiled the final 1981 column,<sup>9</sup> and after two guest columns in 1982, Nick Triffin and Jim Heller took over.

Throughout its history, “Questions and Answers” has reflected the contemporary concerns of its readers. The column’s coverage has been broad, always including substantive reference and research questions, sometimes providing advice on handling newer technologies,<sup>10</sup> on collection management and development,<sup>11</sup> and on matters of professional concern,<sup>12</sup> as well as a number of other topics. The questions and their answers have at times been whimsical,<sup>13</sup> and sometimes highly practical.<sup>14</sup> Over the years the most frequently asked questions seem to have been about state bar admission requirements;<sup>15</sup> a recurring theme in the questions has been the origins of various symbols of justice.<sup>16</sup>

7. 58 LAW LIBR. J. 288 (1965).

8. 75 LAW LIBR. J. 299 (1982). The special column is filled with information about the history of AALL and of law librarianship. The questions cover topics such as the development of looseleaf services, the role of women in AALL, the history of AALL chapters, the Roalfe Plan, and references to the history of *LLJ*. Included also are lists of AALL officers, annual meeting dates and places, *LLJ* editors since 1955, and a list of Andrews Award winners. The lists brought up to date an earlier published compilation. See Heckel, *American Association of Law Libraries: Charter Members, Officers and Meeting Places, 1906-1956*, 49 LAW LIBR. J. 225 (1956).

9. 74 LAW LIBR. J. 694 (1981).

10. See, e.g., 46 LAW LIBR. J. 239-40 (1953) (how to file microcards); 48 LAW LIBR. J. 64, 69 (1955) (how to make microcards unbend); 54 LAW LIBR. J. 228, 229 (1961) (whether microcards should have punched holes).

11. See, e.g., 50 LAW LIBR. J. 20, 20 (1957) (best method for counting volumes in collection); 53 LAW LIBR. J. 129, 129 (1960) (whether there is a best way to shelve the National Reporter System); 65 LAW LIBR. J. 90, 93 (1972) (how to identify a classic work in law).

12. See, e.g., 74 LAW LIBR. J. 694, 696 (1981) (continuing education for law librarians); 75 LAW LIBR. J. 552, 558 (1982) (figuring highway tolls for deducting annual meeting travel expenses); 62 LAW LIBR. J. 61, 64 (1969) (whether law librarians and AALL officers should endorse commercial legal publications).

13. 68 LAW LIBR. J. 317, 317 (1975) (cookbooks for lawyers); 75 LAW LIBR. J. 299, 305 (1982) (why Moses was the first law librarian).

14. 46 LAW LIBR. J. 239, 239-40 (1953) (how to budget time for looseleaf service filing); 59 LAW LIBR. J. 316, 319 (1966) (what are microspots?). Microspot answers are at 60 LAW LIBR. J. 104, 106 (1967) and at 60 LAW LIBR. J. 166, 166 (1967).

15. See 53 LAW LIBR. J. 33, 34-35 (1960); 68 LAW LIBR. J. 317, 318-19 (1975); 69 LAW LIBR. J. 94, 94 (1976); 72 LAW LIBR. J. 343, 345 (1979).

16. See 52 LAW LIBR. J. 232, 233-34 (1959) (who is the goddess of justice?); 64 LAW LIBR. J.

Indexes to the column have been published twice; in 1967 covering volumes 46-59 (1953-66),<sup>17</sup> and in 1975 covering volumes 60-65 (1967-72).<sup>18</sup> The column also is indexed in the subject/author/title index of Dorothy Warden's cumulated index to volumes 51-75 (1958-82) of *LLJ*.<sup>19</sup>

The "Questions and Answers" column and the various open question answering forums held at AALL annual meetings<sup>20</sup> were started as means for sharing information among members of a profession who didn't have access to the easy means of communication available now. Today, perhaps we all share a greater awareness of what others in the profession are doing, of our common problems, and of the similarities among our institutions. We have more avenues for communication through publications and personal contacts in national, regional and local associations and the committees and special interest sections within them. We are linked through common computer-based sources for cataloging and research data. We can communicate with other individuals through electronic mail and can initiate or take part in group discussions with friends and strangers through electronic conferencing services.

Yet, despite these changes in the profession's information and communication environment, "Questions and Answers" endures and remains a popular feature of *Law Library Journal*. Regularly, I am told by readers that they turn to it first after receiving a new issue of *LLJ*. Frequently, I get inquiries about the best ways to locate information in past columns. When editorship of the column opened up last summer, many highly qualified people applied to take over the column; some institutions volunteered to compile it temporarily until a new columnist was found.

In 1985, thirty-two years after its founding, the column is still a primary source for information sharing among law librarians. One reason is its permanency; as long as volumes of *LLJ* remain on the shelves, "Questions and Answers" will be there as a source of historical information and information that remains useful. Another reason is that, perhaps because of its format, perhaps because its columnists will field questions on almost any topic, the column cuts through some of our tendencies toward over-specialization and compartmentalization, and reminds us of our common concerns as a profession. Librarians in all types of law libraries tell me that they read "Questions and Answers"; so do librarians at all levels of position and responsibility.

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246, 249-50 (1971) (origins of the symbol of justice); 70 *LAW LIBR. J.* 92, 93 (1977) (why do judges wear black robes?); 73 *LAW LIBR. J.* 740, 744 (1980) (what are the scales of justice?).

17. Thurman, *Index to "Questions and Answers,"* 60 *LAW LIBR. J.* 109 (1967).

18. Warden, *Cumulated Index to "Questions and Answers,"* 68 *LAW LIBR. J.* page following 124 (1975).

19. Warden, *Law Library Journal Cumulated Index,* 75 *LAW LIBR. J.* 693 (1983).

20. See *Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting,* 33 *LAW LIBR. J.* 169, 362-77 (1940); *Proceedings of the Forty-Sixth Annual Meeting,* 46 *LAW LIBR. J.* 336, 362-72 (1953).

So, after a brief absence, the column is back. We are fortunate in having talented and experienced librarians interested in compiling it. They are eager for your questions. Write to Cynthia or to Myra, and let's keep them busy.

Dick Danner