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From the Editor: Passing the Torch*

Janet Sinder**

¶1 As I write this in my office, very near to the Statue of Liberty,¹ the image of a torch is not far away. The passing of torches evokes long-distance runners, not an inapt metaphor for the life of the *Law Library Journal* editor: working on one issue, reading the page proofs of the previous issue, and reviewing possible articles for forthcoming issues, all at the same time, and realizing the process will repeat itself four times every year.

¶2 I recently reread Frank Houdek's piece from the last issue he edited² and was tempted just to reprint much of it under the title, "Ditto." One of the points that resonated strongly was Frank's statement that his years as editor were the time when he knew the most about what was going on in law libraries. Reading, rereading, cite-checking, editing, and proofreading articles on all aspects of law librarianship have provided me with an in-depth education on the issues facing the profession today.

¶3 Editing a journal has two facets—one intellectual, the other practical. On the intellectual side, it has been exciting and challenging to edit the journal during a time of acute change in our profession. The first volume I worked on was volume 100, in which much space was given to a celebration of the history of law librarianship and *Law Library Journal* itself.³ By 2013's volume 105, the mood had become more anxious than celebratory, with several articles focused on how law libraries can save themselves during the current crisis in legal education.⁴

¶4 On the practical side, I've become an expert cite-checker, *Bluebooker*, and proofreader, and I've learned about running heads, extra leading, and internal footnote reference linking. Despite the fact that editing *LLJ* can sometimes seem

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1. If I could fly there, it would only be 2.9 miles. GOOGLE MAPS DISTANCE CALCULATOR, <http://www.daftlogic.com/projects-google-maps-distance-calculator.htm> (last visited Aug. 23, 2013).

2. Frank G. Houdek, *From the Editor: Endnote*, 99 LAW LIBR. J. 937, 2007 LAW LIBR. J. 59.

3. Each issue contained a Centennial Feature article: Frank G. Houdek, *The Essential Law Library Journal*, 100 LAW LIBR. J. 137, 2008 LAW LIBR. J. 6; Bernita J. Davies, *Law Library Journal: The First Fifty Years*, 100 LAW LIBR. J. 363, 2008 LAW LIBR. J. 18 (reprinting 49 LAW LIBR. J. 157 (1956)); Frank G. Houdek, *A Law Library Journal Centennial Timeline: Highlights from One Hundred Years of LLJ History*, 100 LAW LIBR. J. 541, 2008 LAW LIBR. J. 24; *AALL Special Interest Section Recommended Reading Lists*, 100 LAW LIBR. J. 713, 2008 LAW LIBR. J. 35.

4. See, e.g., Simon Canick, *Library Services for the Self-Interested Law School: Enhancing the Visibility of Faculty Scholarship*, 105 LAW LIBR. J. 175, 2013 LAW LIBR. J. 8; Genevieve Blake Tung, *Academic Law Libraries and the Crisis in Legal Education*, 105 LAW LIBR. J. 275, 2013 LAW LIBR. J. 14.

like a lonely occupation, there are numerous people helping behind the scenes. At AALL headquarters I worked most closely with Julia O'Donnell (who left AALL in 2012 to pursue opportunities in Austin) and Ashley St. John. I have been lucky to have an excellent copy editor in Christine Schwab, and I especially want to thank Chris Keech, at ALA Publishing, who has masterminded the typesetting and production of *LLJ* for the past six years. Chris was also the main designer of the new look adopted for the journal beginning with volume 101. No matter the delays on the editorial end, Chris has always managed to find a way to get the issue out on time.

¶5 I am particularly grateful to the people who have written regular columns for *Law Library Journal*, contributing between two and four articles per year,⁵ as well as the six librarians who have worked on the "Keeping Up with New Legal Titles" book review section during my term.⁶ Special recognition must be given to Mary Whisner, who has come through with a "Practicing Reference" column for every issue over the past six years (and for many, many more before my editorship).⁷ Just as many readers of the *New Yorker* magazine look first at the cartoons, many *LLJ* readers probably flip to Mary's column before reading anything else.

¶6 Learning about the topics on the minds of law librarians was only one benefit of editing *LLJ*—another was working closely with so many law librarians across the country. Editing isn't writing; you don't produce anything that you can really call your own. On the other hand, it is incredibly rewarding to help people get their ideas across as clearly as possible, and I am extremely appreciative of the fact that so many authors have trusted me with their work. It's difficult to see one's work torn apart and put back together by someone else, so I have been pleasantly surprised by how amenable authors are to the process. Now that my editing days are behind me, I'm looking to turn my hand to writing, and I hope to be as willing to trust an editor to use his or her "outside" perspective to improve my work.

¶7 In passing the torch to James Duggan, I want to thank him and wish him the best of luck as he takes over as editor in volume 106. James and I have been working together over the past year, which has been a great help to me (and I hope has not proved too traumatic for him). I'm sure that under his editorship the journal will continue to promote its original vision, "a higher standard and usefulness of law libraries."⁸

5. Raquel J. Gabriel, Phillip Gragg, Jean M. Holcomb, Darla W. Jackson, Lynne F. Maxwell, Diane Murley, and Christine L. Sellers.

6. Amy Atchison and Laura Cadra (volume 100), Creighton J. Miller, Jr., and Annmarie Zell (volumes 101 through 104), and Benjamin J. Keele and Nick Sexton (volume 105).

7. Her first column was Mary Whisner, *Golf Buddy Reference Questions*, 91 *LAW LIBR. J.* 413 (1999).

8. *Editorial*, 1 *LAW LIBR. J.* 30, 31 (1908).