

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This is the third issue sporting the new format for the *International Journal of Legal Information* (IJLI). I have only heard positive comments, which is very gratifying. Our colleagues at Cambridge University Press have been wonderful to work with and we are beginning to find our own new rhythm for editing and production. Please send me your comments about the new format. I would love to hear them.

In this issue, we have five, very diverse feature articles. Two articles cover little-known aspects of legal institutions in India and Bangladesh – at least they are not well known outside of those jurisdictions. The other three articles return the IJLI to a focus on law librarianship. The articles explore new ways of thinking about legal research, a reexamination of legal citation and bibliography, and one law librarian's interesting, amusing, and ultimately enlightening account of tackling an unusual reference request. Of course, like all issues of the IJLI, this issue also contains the ever-popular *International Calendar*, edited by **Aslihan Bulut**, and *Book Reviews*, edited by **Thomas Mills**. What issue of the IJLI would be complete without those?

The first article in this issue is by **Uma Narayan**. Ms. Narayan is a former member of the International Association of Law Libraries (IALL) Board of Directors and was the principal organizer of the fabulous IALL 26th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship, held in Mumbai, India, December 1–5, 2007. Ms. Narayan has composed a useful, historicized description of the organization and function of the Constituent Assembly of India, placing an emphasis on the critical role played by Sir Benegal Narsing Rau in the formation of that institution. Her historical, highly accessible take is truly unique and helps fill an important gap in the recent literature on the subject.

Following Uma Narayan's article is a piece by **Al-Ifraan Hossain Mollah** that focuses on the legal framework of village courts in Bangladesh. I am sorry to say that there does not appear to be a great deal of recent and credible legal literature on Bangladesh – at least not that examines aspects of that nation's legal infrastructure beyond the national government and courts. This is a very welcome drink of water in the somewhat arid landscape of Bangladeshi legal literature. Mr. Hossain describes a state-sponsored local justice system that helps form a system of restorative justice. It aims to ensure and dispense justice to Bangladeshi people in rural areas in an affordable and convenient manner. In line with this view, Hossain explains that village courts have been established to redress petty civil and criminal issues. His article examines the feasibility of the present legal framework of village courts in delivering justice efficiently at the grassroots level in Bangladesh. It's fascinating reading.

A law librarian colleague from here in the United States, Dr. **Yolanda Jones**, has undertaken an examination of a concept she terms *Expansive Legal Research*. According to Dr. Jones, the *Expansive Legal Research* perspective "includes elements inspired by *Expansive Learning and Activity Theory* such as a focus on an activity-centered context of both the individual and social aspects of human behavior; the design-oriented nature of human problem-solving; the role of tacit knowledge and unwritten rules in daily activity and practice; and a cultural historical approach to learning and development, where both the user and their tools are undergoing a constant process of growth and change and transformation." Dr. Jones believes her approach, and its underpinning theory, may provide a new understanding of legal research instruction. Her article aims to impart a new and useful tool for legal research instructors, like many law librarians, who are looking for a theoretical foundation for their pedagogy in light of the Boulder Statements on legal education. This is an important article and will, I expect, be cited extensively in the future.

I confess to being rather involved in the evolution of the next piece for this issue. It is written by a colleague, **Hester Swift**, librarian for Foreign and International Law at the venerable Institute for Advanced Legal Studies in London, UK. Ms. Swift works with special collections, and I was directed to her for help with a reference question I had. A faculty member at my own institution, Emory University School of Law, was going to the UK and was hoping to locate and view collections of indentures. Indentures are a broad category of legal documents that include a wide

range of contracts for the sale of land, marriage settlements, conveyance of goods, and various other legal agreements. Indentures have been around for centuries and the older ones have recently become quite collectible. Hand-written on vellum or parchment, some contain elaborate decorative scrollwork, illuminated capitals, or other ornamentation, and many often still bear their original wax seals of the various parties. They are fascinating documents. Ms. Swift describes how she had to educate herself on the nature and use of indentures, and the process she took to locate collections in London and elsewhere for my Emory colleague to visit. It's a classic "how I did it" tale that will appeal to everyone – not just reference librarians. When Ms. Swift described to me her process, I urged her to write about it for the IJLI. I am so happy she obliged. And you will be happy, too!

Finally, we conclude with another law library piece. **Charlotte Stichter** has written a strong piece – what she describes as a bibliographic article – that urges us to reconsider our approach to legal bibliography and to help predict the most probable path that legal citation and bibliography is likely to pursue going forward. Her article identifies the leading citation guides in use in the United States - the Bluebook and others – and a number of secondary sources. She places them in an historical continuum, and then examines selections from works that “extol, critique, or excoriate—but for the most part continue to recommend adherence to—these traditional guides.” Ms. Stichter's article is a really useful review of and guide to these resources that every lawyer, judge, and law librarian use.

As you can see, this issue is full of interesting, thought provoking, and helpful pieces. I hope you read all of them. It is especially nice to have a number of really fine articles composed by our law librarian colleagues. Please consider composing your own article for a forthcoming issue of the IJLI!

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