

# AALL Spectrum®

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## from the editor

By Catherine A. Lemmer



## The Stepping Out rEvolution

"Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You're off to Great Places!  
You're off and away!"

You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself in any direction  
you choose."  
—Dr. Seuss, *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*

Public library reference librarians are no longer called upon to settle bar bets, and law librarians don't pull, copy, and deliver copies of cases. Technology, the great disruptor, has produced more convenient and efficient alternatives. This month's Member to Member question asked you to submit examples of ways you have "stepped outside the box" in the past year. The responses ranged from developing support for fundraising efforts to earning new credentials to creating bar exam simulations. In short, examples that show how law librarians are stepping up and out of our perceived role and doing amazing things for our library users. All great answers to that oft-repeated question, "So what do you do now that no one uses books?"

In *The Atlas of New Librarianship*, David Lankes wrote, "Knowledge is created through conversation. Librarians are in the knowledge business; therefore librarians are in the conversation business . . . [L]ibrarians approach their work as facilitators of conversation. Be it in practice, policies, programs, and/or tools, librarians seek to enrich, capture, store, and disseminate the conversations of their communities." This is a compass direction that feels relevant for these times in legal education and legal practice.

So what am I doing "now that no one uses books," as the question goes? The prevailing winds have me involved in a pretty cool conversation at present. Over the past few years I have been fortunate to work as the law library liaison to the Program in International Human Rights Law (PIHRL) here at Indiana University's Robert H. McKinney School of Law. The projects have involved extradition, post-conviction appeals, and a wide variety of individual student research projects. The work has been incredibly challenging, interesting, and rewarding.

Earlier this year, the Pentagon's Guantánamo Bay Military Commission Convening Authority granted *NGO Observer Status* to the PIHRL. The PIHRL then formed the "Military Commission Observation Project" (MCOP) to handle the selection of students, faculty, staff, and alumni to observe and evaluate the criminal proceedings either first hand in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, or via secure video feed at Fort Meade, Maryland. Professor George E. Edwards, director and founder of



This photo, from *The Gitmo Observer*, shows Professor Edwards on a U.S. Military C-17 flight from Andrews Air Force Base to Guantánamo Bay in June to attend the hearings in the case against Khalid Shaik Mohammad and four other alleged masterminds of the September 2011 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

the PIHRL, and his students are preparing a Fair Trial Manual for all NGO observers to use when evaluating whether the defendant has been afforded a fair trial. The Fair Trial Manual and the other work of MCOP is detailed on the *The Gitmo Observer* website ([gitmoobserver.com](http://gitmoobserver.com)).

I have contributed to the PIHRL's work by assisting the students in their research of international and human rights law and developing and maintaining *The Gitmo Observer* site. The site serves as a research resource as well as a news and current awareness venue. I'm truly enjoying my "out-of-the-box" project. I feel recharged by the opportunity to explore a new topic and new methods of working with my students and faculty. If the winds keep blowing my way, I also hope to be selected as an NGO observer to go observe the military commission proceedings at Guantánamo Bay in early December.

We all stand in different times and places. What might be innovative in one place may have already been tried somewhere else. What may have been tried and ultimately discarded three years ago might now work. The goal is to keep evolving. So don't be discouraged if what you are trying for the first time seems like old news to someone else. If the service or idea is new and supports your patrons and clients, don't hesitate to join the rEvolution! ■

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