



Association of Law Libraries of ALLUNY Upstate New York

Volume 50, Issue 1*

March, 2025

Issue Highlights:

- Save the Date: ALLUNY Spring Institute, April 25, 2025
- ALLUNY Grant Opportunities
- Joint Reception planned for 2025 AALL Annual Conference

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Message From the Co-President Karen Oesterle

Dear ALLUNY Members,

Warm greetings to you in March 2025! ALLUNY had a busy and productive 2024 and I thank each individual who contributed to these efforts. I am especially grateful to **Jessica Petitto** for serving as President and **Nina Scholtz** and **Debbie Simonik** for serving on the Executive Board 2023-2025. I also thank **Olli Baker** for stepping in to fill the remainder of Debbie Simonik's Board term; **Lisa Worhacz** for her work as long-time Newsletter Editor; **Kristin Neri** and **Christine Demetros** for accepting Vice-President and Board positions; **Tom Hemstock** for agreeing to serve as chair of the Membership Committee; **Melissa Sievers** for taking on the role of Newsletter Editor; and **Chris Lund** for joining that committee.

Our 2024 Spring Institute, *Eclipsing Inequality: The Librarian's Role in Advancing Social Justice*, presented numerous paths to assist underserved populations and promote access to justice. The 2024 Annual Meeting, *Pioneering AI from Classrooms to Courtrooms*, was very well attended and speakers shared significant insights on tools and ethical considerations concerning AI use in various arenas.

Our archives were relocated from Rochester to Albany Law thanks to **Rob Cunningham** and Clarice Affronti, an enterprising and accommodating Albany Law student. Albany Law has agreed to house our records and **Lisa Suto** will manage this repository, which also includes two boxes of historical material returned to us from LLMC. Meanwhile, **Chris Lund** and I updated the Meeting Manual to reflect all the changes we have seen during the last five years.

We hosted several 2024 librarian gatherings. Our June 12th Happy Hour was purely a social event and at our Sept. 11th Lunch & Learn, we discussed AI from different perspectives based on law school, court, and law firm library perspectives. Our Holiday Lunch & Learn/ Send-off for **Elaine Knecht's** retirement on December 5th was festive, celebratory, and a touch bittersweet.

We selected Library School Liaisons to strengthen our ties with that community and its students. **Christine Demetros** serves as our Syracuse Liaison and **Elaine Knecht** as our Buffalo Liaison. We are still seeking an Albany Liaison, so if connecting people and hosting events appeals to you, contact a Board Member! The Board is also in search of a Committee Chair for the Archives Committee to assist Lisa Suto – please let us know if you are interested.

There is a lot going on with ALLUNY this Spring and we hope you will each be part of the activities as you are able. The [ALLUNY Spring Lunch & Learn](#) was held on March 12th. Lunch & Learn/Happy Hour gatherings are held quarterly to increase interaction among ALLUNY members and encourage connections. [Contact Karen Oesterle](#) for more information.

Our Spring Institute will take place on April 25th, and I hope many of you will join us in person in Syracuse or on Zoom. Portland, Oregon will host the AALL Annual Conference July 19-22, 2025. Please remember that grants are available for upcoming meetings and conferences! See [Page 2 of this Newsletter](#) and the [ALLUNY Website](#) for details.

And last, with the kind permission of Kristie Chamorro of the University of California Berkeley Law Library, I want to share with you her latest column, Legal Tech Recap, published in NOCALL's recent newsletter. The full text of the article is appended following the last page of this newsletter, and you can also access it on [NOCALL's website](#).

With all best wishes for a wonderful Spring, Karen Oesterle



* From 2019-2024, the ALLUNY Newsletter was converted to an online blog format, with updates published on a rolling basis with no Volume/ Issue numbers assigned. The most recent edition of the newsletter published as a standalone edition was Volume 44, Issue No. 1, published in March 2019. We have chosen to resume our Volume numbering at Volume 50 in order to maintain a consistent alignment between Volume number and calendar year.



ALLUNY Meeting Grants

ALLUNY offers an annual grant to cover the Registration Cost of the Spring Institute. To be eligible, you must be a member of ALLUNY in good standing. If interested, please complete and submit the [ALLUNY Spring Institute Grant Application](#) at least one week prior to the registration deadline. Recipients will be notified by email at least three days prior to the event registration deadline. For any questions, please contact Karen Oesterle, Chair, ALLUNY Grants and Awards Committee at koesterle@pli.edu.

ALLUNY also offers grants of up to \$500 towards the cost of registration and/or travel expenses associated with attending the [AALL Annual Conference](#). This grant is available to any ALLUNY member in good standing. To apply, complete and submit the AALL Annual Conference Grant Application at least one week prior to the event registration deadline. Recipients will be notified by email at least three days prior to the registration deadline. For any questions, please contact Karen Oesterle, Chair, ALLUNY Grants and Awards Committee at koesterle@pli.edu.



“Join us for a day of discussion and insights on streamlining the path from degree to employment in the legal information field.”

SAVE THE DATE!

FRIDAY, APRIL 25TH, 2025

ALLUNY 2025 Spring Institute

Syracuse University Law Library & Virtual

Join us for a day of discussion and insights on streamlining the path from degree to employment in the legal information field. Stay tuned for more details, including registration and agenda updates!

Questions?

- Contact: Kristin K. Neri, Vice President
- kneri@nycourts.gov | (315) 671-1150



Call for Nominations

ALLUNY is seeking nominations for the following Board positions:

- Vice President/President Elect (2025-2028)
- Secretary (2025-2027)
- Treasurer (2025-2027)
- Board of Directors (2025-2027) [Two positions]

Summaries of job duties for each of these positions are available in the [Operating Manual posted to the Members Only section of our website](#).

ALLUNY cannot function without the commitment of its members, so please consider running for one of these offices.

If interested, please [contact Jessica Petitto](#).



AALL 2025 Joint Reception

The ALLUNY Board is working to revive our past tradition of hosting a joint reception with LLAGNY (New York City/Metro Area) and NJLLA (New Jersey) during the 2025 AALL Annual Meeting & Conference in Portland. The reception is tentatively scheduled for 6:00pm - 8:00pm on Monday, July 21st. Exact location and additional details to be announced shortly.



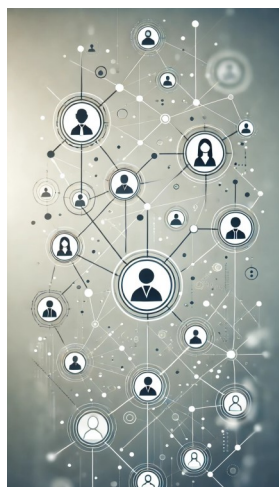
In Memoriam

It is with a heavy heart that we share the sad news of the passing of our friend and colleague, **Debbie Simonik**, whom we lost on December 9th. Debbie was a member of the Bousquet Holstein Law Firm in Ithaca for the last three years and a loyal member of the ALLUNY law librarian community. When ALLUNY needed volunteers in 2022 to keep the association going, Debbie stepped forward and enthusiastically served on both the Executive Board and the Annual Meeting Planning Committee during 2023 and 2024. After sustaining a knee injury while visiting family for the 2023 holidays, she cruised through knee replacement in January, recuperated in Florida, and was delighted to get back to New York in March (in her words) in time to help run the Spring Institute!

Debbie is survived by her three children, Christiane, Ian, and Joe, her grandson George, and many other family members. Please keep them all in your thoughts and prayers.



Member News



"I am still in the very early, but active planning stage of creating an "Annotated Deleted Directory" of all deleted federal webpages. This project will be a nod to the efforts of all the web archivists who have been saving these resources all along."

At our 2024 Annual Meeting, the ALLUNY Membership voted to grant "Lifetime Member" status to **Cyndi Trembley**, **Donna Byrne**, and **Bob Weiner**. Congrats to all three, and we thank them for their long dedicated service to the profession!

Welcome to the following new members, who have joined ALLUNY since our Annual Meeting:

- Martin Ambroz
- Melinda Appleby
- Yage Huang
- Suzanne Johnson
- Aly Nicole Marzouq
- John Moreland
- Ella Pieterse
- Rachel Towne

Member **Nichole McCarthy** of Cornell's Legal Information Institute ("LII") has recently had an update to her job title and responsibilities. She has submitted the below description describing her current role:

"In November of 2024 my title changed from Original Content Collections Manager to Director of Student Research and Content Development. This was intended to be a more accurate description of my role and responsibilities at the LII, but was also the result of growing collections and additional responsibility.

Since I started with the LII in April of 2021 (happy 4 years to me), I primarily oversaw Wex, the LII's free legal dictionary and encyclopedia. I was tasked with hiring and overseeing law students who write the content, growing and adding new collections, and finding new ways to organize that content.

In March of 2024, I held the [LII's first hackathon](#) to answer the question "how would you organize the content in Wex?" We are still working through all of the incredible feedback we received during this event and plan to implement some of the winning suggestions.

Since then I have created a mortuary law collection and a Wex QA team. The Wex QA is a team of undergraduate students who review Wex entries and flag content that they believe should be reviewed by the Wex Definitions Team (the law students). This was created with the intent of improving the quality of the content in Wex and to provide undergraduate students with research experience.

In November of 2024 I acquired the responsibility of the Women & Justice Collection. Originally the Avon Global Center for Women & Justice, this database was acquired by the LII in 2017, and operated as The Women & Justice Collection (WJC) through 2024. In 2025, this was renamed The [Gender Justice Collection](#) with the intent of being more inclusive and the goal of expanding the collection. Historically, the Gender Justice Collection has had a heavy focus on international law. We intend to maintain that focus while adding a new section on U.S. Resources by State to the landing page; I hired a team to begin that work in January.

Additionally, I am still in the very early, but active planning stage of creating an "Annotated Deleted Directory" of all deleted federal webpages. This project will be a nod to the efforts of all the web archivists who have been saving these resources all along. The plan is to provide links, organized by agency, to the archived version of the original webpage, the archived version of the deleted or censored page, and a very brief write up of the changes and when they occurred. More on that soon!"

ALLUNY Board Meeting Minutes January 6, 2025 (Approved March 3, 2025)

ALLUNY Meeting

Held on Zoom

Monday, January 6, 2025

Present: Christine Demetros, Jessica Petitto, Angela Patti, Allison Perry, Nichole McCarthy, Melissa Sievers, Chris Lund, Karen Oesterle, Lisa Worhacz, Laura Suttell, Kristin Neri, Olli Baker

Meeting called to order at 10:02 AM (Oesterle)

Old Business

None

New Business

- Karen Oesterle attended Debbie Simonik's funeral to express condolences and gratitude on behalf of ALLUNY.
- Olli Baker will fill Debbie Simonik's position as Board Member until the 2025 elections (approved by Board in accordance with bylaws). Webmaster updated the website, and Social Media Chair will publicize.
- Newsletter Committee will replace the blog format, modernize the old print layout, and publish quarterly to expand readership.
- ALLUNY will attempt to reestablish the joint reception with LLAGNY and NJLLA at the next AALL. For the past few years, ALLUNY hosted an informal meet up for members, but prior to that, planning alternated annually between ALLUNY, LLAGNY, and NJLLA. Vendor (e.g., Bloomberg) sponsors helped with room/catering costs. As soon as ALLUNY receives confirmation from the other Chapters, the co-Presidents will reach out to vendors.
- ALLUNY may consider participating in the AALL Annual Meeting Chapter VIP program, which covers the AALL registration fee for approved guests – non-AALL members and non-librarians -- to expand relationships and exposure with people outside of the legal information profession.
- Spring Institute Planning Committee will convene shortly to select a date/topic.
- Question raised about whether ALLUNY needs to pay AALL a renewal fee-based number of members. No one remembers having ever done so. A few board members remember an insurance fee, but AALL discontinued that requirement a few years ago.
- 2025 membership renewals: Tom Hemstock, Albany Law School, is the new Membership Chair, but the membership renewal email must come from the Board. Treasurer will send a draft. Webmaster will add/update the online application.
- Next meeting Monday, March 3.

Adjourned 10:20 (Oesterle)

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Worhacz, Secretary



**ASSOCIATION OF
LAW LIBRARIES OF
UPSTATE NEW YORK**

Website:
www.alluny.org

Social Media:

[Facebook](#)
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2024-2025 ALLUNY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Committees

Archives

Chair: Vacant

Communications

Listserv: Sidney Sinclair
Newsletter: Melissa Sievers
Public Relations: Sue Ludington
Social Media: Laura Suttell
Website: Melissa Sievers

Continuing Education

Chair: Kristin Neri
Vendors & Corporate Sponsors:
Jessica Petitto

**Government Relations/
Advocacy**

Chair: Vacant

Members & Elections

Membership: Tom Hemstock
Elections: Nina Scholtz
Grants & Awards: Karen Oesterle
Nominations: Jessica Petitto

Parliamentarian

Chair: Nichole McCarthy

LEGAL TECH RECAP

Kristie Chamorro, UC Berkeley Law Library

Once again, AI seems to be everywhere, and legal tech is no exception! As usual, I've started with spotlighting the latest updates from legal tech tools and platforms. I've then zoomed out in the last section for a look at some big-picture GenAI news.

As always, please let me know if there are any new topics/trends/tools that you would like to see included in future updates.

Bloomberg Law

In January, Bloomberg Law [launched](#) two new GenAI tools (in beta): [Bloomberg Law Answers](#) and [AI Assistant](#). Bloomberg Law Answers creates brief responses directly in search results with specific citations to different components of each answer, pulling from court opinions, practical guidance, and other key sources. AI Assistant is a chat-based, document-specific tool that appears in a side panel when viewing sources, allowing users to generate summaries and ask targeted questions about the documents they are viewing.

Bob Ambrogi [highlighted](#) that both tools prioritize source attribution by incorporating footnotes within their answers, specifying the origin of each part of the response. On a [recent episode](#) of *The Geek in Review* podcast, Bloomberg Law's Chief Product Officer emphasized that these new tools represent a broader application of GenAI within their platform.

ContractPod AI

In fall 2024, [ContractPod AI](#) introduced [Leah Intelligence](#), a contract review solution that leverages GenAI to enhance contract assessment and risk mitigation and to allow users to tailor specific contract language, use cases, and industry-specific regulations. Discussing the new features on a recent [The Geek in Review podcast episode](#), Atena Reyhani, Chief Product Officer, explained that Leah Intelligence not only positions ContractPodAI as a leader in generative AI for contract lifecycle management but also extends its capabilities

to broader enterprise applications, including compliance, obligation management, and entity analysis.

Hercules AI

[HerculesAI](#) (formerly ZERO) has launched [Verify](#), an AI-powered legal billing compliance tool designed to help law firms detect and correct billing issues. A standout feature of *Verify* is its ability to process outside counsel guidelines and firm billing policies without requiring manual rule creation. Ambrogi [covered](#) the launch of *Verify*, noting that it helps firms stay on top of compliance at multiple stages—when time is recorded, after it's submitted, and during the pre-bill review process.

Lexis

Lexis made legal tech headlines with the launch of [Protégé](#), its new "personalized AI assistant." *Protégé* is a big step up in LexisNexis's AI tools, allowing users to draft full transactional documents and litigation filings, analyze complex contracts, and even generate visual case timelines. It plugs in with document management systems like iManage and NetDocuments, so it can personalize output based on a lawyer's role, writing style, and preferred jurisdictions and can link citations back to source materials for verification.

Ambrogi [pointed out](#) that "[a]t the core of the *Protégé* release is its use of 'agentic AI' – technology that can autonomously complete tasks based on user goals, including reviewing its own work and identifying areas for improvement. The launch was also covered in [Artificial Lawyer](#), the [Geek in Review podcast](#), and [Law.com](#).

NeosAI

On February 5, Assembly Software unveiled enhancements to [NeosAI](#), the GenAI-powered features within its [Neos case management](#) platform. Ambrogi reported on the updates, including a [How It Works](#) video demonstration that offers a hands-on look at the new capabilities.

Trellis

In November 2024, [Trellis](#) introduced [Trellis AI](#), a suite of GenAI tools that leverages its state trial court database. The new tools include motion drafting, case assessment, and legal research. Ambrogi [reported](#) on the launch, noting that “Trellis AI is drawing from an extensive database of court filings, which seems to have the potential to be particularly powerful.” Legal Tech Hub also covered the Trellis AI news in its [January Legal Tech briefing](#).

Wolters Kluwer

In the last newsletter, I covered the new GenAI features added to [VitalLaw](#). VitalLaw was also the focus of the January [CRIV semiannual call with Wolters Kluwer](#), which focused on its core features, including the Practical Content platform, new support resources, and recently introduced Hot Topics, available on selected practice area dashboards.

THINGS YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT

DeepResearch

On February 2, OpenAI introduced [Deep Research](#), a tool for generating complex, detailed reports with up-to-date information. Initially available only to Pro users, it is set to expand to Pro and Team users in the future. The launch made headlines, from the [New York Times](#) to [Bloomberg](#). Many commentators have been testing the tool, including experiments by Ambrogi, who used it to compile a [compendium of legal ethics opinions on GenAI](#) and to identify the [best small firm law practice management tools](#). A detailed review on [The Verge](#) examined how it handled a legal query, highlighting its ability to generate structured legal summaries with real cases, while noting its limitations, such as missing key recent developments and requiring human oversight to ensure accuracy. For a comparison of how it performed against three other AI research tools, check out the [Digital Digging](#) blog.

DeepSeek & Local AI

Another [headline grabbing](#) launch that [made waves in the stock market](#) was the January 29 release of [DeepSeek R1](#), an open-source GenAI model from Chinese AI research company DeepSeek. It captured widespread interest for delivering performance comparable to leading AI models at a fraction of the cost. Greg Lambert discussed its potential impact on legal tech in a [recent 3 Geeks and a Law Blog](#) post, noting that DeepSeek R1 can run locally—on individual computers or in secure on-premises environments—giving the potential for secure, on-premises AI in law firms and corporate legal departments. He also flagged concerns about the model’s Chinese origins, potential security risks, and regulatory issues, leaving it up to legal tech professionals to decide whether it’s a “game-changer or just another flash in the pan.”

Josh Kubicki underscored the growing importance of local AI in a recent [Brainyacts post](#), explaining that locally run AI can keep data private and allow for customization without relying on cloud-based services. He stressed the need to understand its potential for enhancing efficiency on legal tasks while also addressing security, compliance, and ethical concerns.