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My ALLUNY Memories

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ALLUNY

My ALLUNY Memories

by Ellen McGrath, University at Buffalo Law Library

I had joined ALLUNY in 1987 when I started working at the University at Buffalo Law Library as a cataloger. But my real involvement in ALLUNY started in 1991. As a tenure-track faculty librarian looking to increase the service portion of my curriculum vitae, I volunteered to be on the ALLUNY Newsletter Committee. As a result, Kathie Sullivan, the Newsletter editor, contacted me and asked me to write a column for the newsletter. She was very persuasive. And she clinched it with the argument that there was not enough content in the newsletter of interest to technical services law librarians, a fact that I had noticed.

So the "Technical Tips" column was born in the March 1991 issue of the ALLUNY Newsletter. I think Kathie named it, with my blessing. My c.v. was enhanced not only in the service category, but also in the professional contributions category. I enjoyed doing the column. I would set aside all sorts of interesting tidbits that crossed my path. Then when the deadline drew near, I would sit down and try to pull them all together. The column was often a hodge-podge of these items, but it did force me to stop and think about what was happening in technical services that law librarians should know about. I was never quite sure if anyone was actually reading the column, but I was grateful for the opportunity to produce it on a regular basis.

Then in 1993, Ellen Rappaport contacted me about something I had written in the column, I can't even remember what. One thing led to another, and soon Ellen and I were co-writing the column. Being a co-columnist with Ellen was wonderful. And not just because it meant that I only had to write every other column. It established a dialogue that was generated by our writing and sharing of the columns, but that then spun off into other areas. I learned a lot from Ellen during the six years we shared the column. We "chatted" a lot, mostly by e-mail, sometimes by phone. The time flew by and finally in 1999, I thought I should give someone else a chance to share in the wealth. So I persuaded Andrea Rabbia to replace me as co-columnist with Ellen. Unfortunately, Ellen passed away last May. I miss her very much, but I feel very lucky to have worked closely with her and I have ALLUNY to thank for that!

I needed to give up the column because I was getting active on another ALLUNY front, as well as in AALL, and I had to parcel my time out accordingly. I had volunteered to be on the ALLUNY Grants Committee. So I somehow ended up chairing it (and being the entire committee!) in 1998. Dave Voisinet did the persuading that time. The Grants work was a lot of fun. How could giving money away not be fun? I got to meet ALLUNY members when they applied for grants and I became acquainted with a succession of ALLUNY officers as they advised me about the grants. After all, I had no committee, so someone had to help me! There had been a bit of a lull in the awarding of grants. The officers were very appreciative of my efforts to pub-

licize the grants and give that money away, a fact that made me feel very good. I chaired Grants until 2002 and then passed the torch into Laura Suttell's capable hands. Since I was chair no more, I applied for a grant myself and was awarded one to attend the ALA/CLA annual conference in Toronto in June 2003. Thank you again ALLUNY!

As soon as I started writing for the ALLUNY Newsletter, I was hooked. So I often submitted conference reports and other miscellaneous pieces to the various editors and they were always accepted. ALLUNY is great for your ego! Volunteer for a small role and you end up a columnist or the chair. Write something, anything, and you will see it in print.

I have only attended three ALLUNY conferences: Albany in 1997, Binghamton in 1999, and Rochester in 2002. In Binghamton, I was thrilled to be present when Ellen Gibson (my director at the time) received the Anthony P. Grech Memorial Award for her book *New York Legal Research*. The collegiality I felt at each of those ALLUNY meetings was amazing. The conferences are small enough that you get to meet a lot of people and really get to converse with them. And the activities are not only program-related. There are tours and meals that are an integral part of the conference and so help to build relationships. Every time I do attend a conference, I am impressed at the passion evident in the members' feelings for ALLUNY. I have observed heated discussions during some ALLUNY business meetings, which left me with a sense of admiration and involvement. Nobody could ever accuse ALLUNY members of being indifferent. To me, ALLUNY means a great group of knowledgeable, enthusiastic, fun, and caring people.

Happy 50th Anniversary, ALLUNY, and here's to 50 more!

