



# Librarian's Report

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## *Things I have learned at the HLA library*

It is a funny thing, attempting to write in the present for an audience that will read in the future. As many of you will have learned by the time you actually hold this issue of the Journal in your hands, I left my position as Law Librarian at the HLA at the beginning of the summer. I occupied the role for over two years, and in that time, enjoyed the pleasure of working in an intellectually stimulating environment with some of the highest quality people I have known: staff, members, and Trustees alike, whose support afforded me tremendous opportunities for personal and professional growth. The decision to leave was born of family reasons – geographic relocation to Ottawa to join my partner of several years – that coincided with a job opportunity with the Library of Parliament.

While I am excited for the next chapter in my life personally and professionally, leaving Hamilton and the HLA is bittersweet. I have done much reflecting on the many, many things I have learned in my time here. There can be no underestimating the importance I place on the legal and legislative research skill acquisition or serious understanding of the law,

but in this, my final article for the HLA Journal, I want to share with you a few anecdotes that speak to a little bit of the lighter side of things I have learned in my time at the HLA

## *Even in the serious world of legal publishing, you run across some very amusing titles*

In my first month at the HLA, during

the course of some routine shelving, I noticed a book on one of the bottom shelves with a title that made me giggle out loud in the stacks: *Almost All the Bear Trap Cases*. Not only did I not know what a 'bear trap case' was at the time (and while I knew better than to take it literally, I could hardly help but picture a bunch of angry individuals who had been injured by bear traps suing the trapper for damages), but the absurdity of a book purporting to discuss not all, or a selection of, but *almost* all of them struck me as inordinately funny. I told a friend that day that I now had the goal of, at some point, being able to legitimately recommend that book to someone or to use it in answering a legal research question. As luck would have it, I did – about six months later – and I think I probably smiled to myself about it that entire morning.

On another occasion, I was flipping through a publisher's catalogue on their website when I spotted a book

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called *The Joy of Torts*. Never one to pass up a pun, I played off both the tort/torte synonym and the clear parallel with the classic *The Joy of Cooking* and held up the catalogue and said aloud, to nobody in particular “Ooh, *The Joy of Torts*. I hope there’s a recipe for a good chocolate one!” A member who is regularly in the library happened to be standing nearby and he smiled and responded “For those with an appetite for justice? I understand the law is very binding in this area... unless you eat a lot of fibre first.”

### ***You never know WHAT you’re going to hear or see in the lawyer’s lounge***

One thing I have found to be consistently true in my two years at the HLA is that you can open the lawyer’s lounge door at any given time and, for all the serious conversations that take place in there, very often walk into the middle of uproarious laughter and random comments that are hilarious, particularly without context. I once opened the door to hear a loud voice proclaim “Behold, I am here with my pink post-its and I’m ready to litigate!!” Another time, I opened the door just in time to hear someone enthusiastically bellow “...so I said “HEY, how you doin’, lady justice, rock on with your bad self!” I have witnessed musical theatre-style singing, shadow boxing, and numerous comedic impressions! I have always found it affirming that, given the immense stresses lawyers are under in their professional lives, the lounge is very often such a lively and entertaining place!

### ***Everything is exciting to someone***

One day in June, I unpacked a box that contained the *2017 Income Tax Guide*, and out of the inside cover fell a small booklet that turned out to be a free commemorative publication of the 100 year anniversary of the Income War Tax Act. A colleague, who was going

to do the processing, asked whether we should actually catalogue the small commemorative booklet separately, and I said I didn’t think it needed separate cataloguing, that it could just be tucked inside the cover of the book it was sent with. After all, I said, it wasn’t like we were to have dozens of people clamouring to get their hands on a booklet celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Income War Tax Act. No sooner were the words out of my mouth than another colleague popped up from her desk and said “WAIT, you have a booklet about the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Income War Tax Act?! There is a party in September to celebrate that anniversary!!” I looked at her in a little disbelief, and she continued enthusiastically “Yeah, one of the committees is planning this party! This would be perfect to distribute there – oh wow, people are going to be so excited! Can you email the publisher and get several dozen more copies?” Which goes to show that, all kidding aside, what might be easy to gloss over in one context can be amazing and perfect in another – and that I had to eat my just-uttered words!

I want to conclude my portion of this article by extending my sincere, heartfelt thanks to all staff, Trustees, and members of the Association for their support and many kindnesses during my tenure with the HLA. It has been a pleasure and a privilege! Whomever may be the next Law Librarian here, he or she will be coming to work in a truly outstanding organization. In the interim, much of the library work will be in the capable hands of Membership Coordinator and Library Assistant Caleb Cook (who also produces this Journal) and Library Technician and Office Assistant Karen Cooper, who has recently rejoined the HLA after a decade of working for the Halton Law Association. I will allow Karen to introduce (or reintroduce) her-

self to you in her own words below.

I am very pleased to have recently returned to the Hamilton Law Association as their Library Technician. As many of you know, I had previously worked at the HLA for 27 years before accepting a position with the Halton County Law Association in August of 2007. Oh my goodness, I cannot believe how quickly the past ten years have flown by!

My employment with the Halton County Law Association library, which is located in the Milton Court House, provided a wonderful opportunity to manage all aspects of their library, as well as organize many continuing professional development programs and social events. I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside so many dedicated individuals who worked tirelessly for the betterment of their organization. I met so many terrific people, many of who I will continue to see in my new role. My nearly ten years in Halton provided me with an excellent opportunity to grow professionally and to expand my skills and knowledge in many different areas, however, I am equally thrilled to be back at the Hamilton Law Association.

I look forward to once again serving the members of the HLA. I am excited to reconnect with many of you, as well as to meet many of the newer members of the Association. ■

K. Cooper