



# LLNE News

*Newsletter of the Law Librarians of New England*  
Volume 25, Number 4, 2006

## Feng Shui 102

*By Sharon Persons*

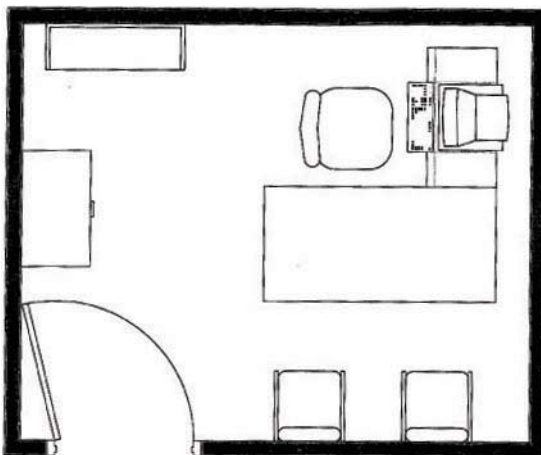
Earlier this year, we ran an article introducing the general principles of feng shui and promised to apply these principles to enhance the office space of Susan Vaughn, co-editor of the LLNE News, and Reference Librarian at Suffolk Law Library.

Feng Shui is concerned with the flow of chi or energy in spaces. The flow of life kept us both hectic and harassed until just a few weeks ago, when we squeezed in the make-over as a nice pick-me-up (like getting a new haircut or buying a new outfit) instead of editing articles for this newsletter. We began by setting the right tone with giant espresso drinks from the Starbucks just around the corner. The heady aroma of hazelnut latte acted as a kind of aromatherapy to set the mood and clear out any bad energy.

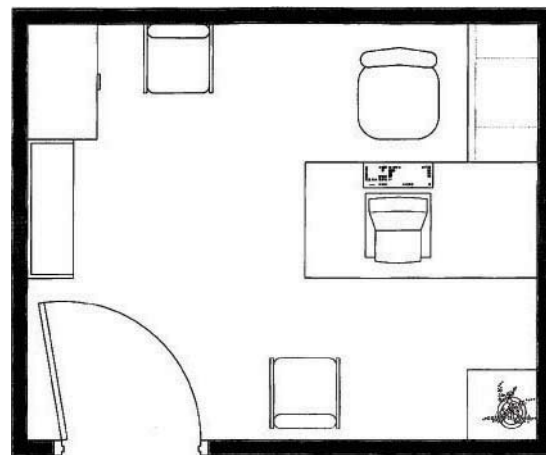
Susan's office had a generally good layout. The desk was in the "power corner" opposite the door. The furniture was in good repair and there was not too much of it. There were a few problems, though. The one wooden bookcase in the room had sliding glass panels that kept it from being really useful and a series of projects that had gotten away from Susan were being stored as stacks of paper in boxes on the floor. Similarly, there was a lot of paper stacked on the desk and attached haphazardly to the two large cork boards in the room. There is a joke about the plaintive complaint of someone who had just paid \$1000 for a feng shui weekend workshop and was told the first principle was to clutter clear and thoroughly clean their house instead of some magic crystal-hanging. Sadly, this is true. Accumulation of any kind, including clutter and dirt, holds stagnant energy and stops chi from flowing. (Some feng shui books even suggest clutter-clearing your colon with a colonic, but I did not mention that to Sue.)

The other problems I noted were that the lateral file cabinet near the door jutted out into the entry of the office; the bookcase faced the doorway, thereby making a solid wall of wood and horizontal shelves that symbolically repelled the visitor; and that Susan's back would be to the door most of the time when she was at her desk since her computer was on the desk return instead of facing the door. Part of feng shui is just good psychology, and it can be somewhat insecure and unsettling to have people able to walk up behind you without you being aware of it. I also asked Susan about any problems she was having in the space. She mentioned the glass doors on the

*continued on p. 7*



Before



After

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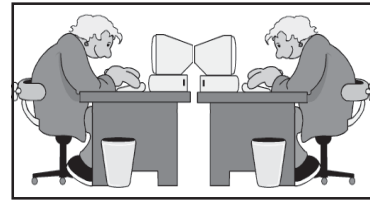
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## CO-EDITORS' NOTE

Hello Friends,

It is that time of year when we all make resolutions to clutter clear and to turn over a new leaf. To get you off on the right foot, we are featuring the second installment of the feng shui makeover of Co-Editor Susan Vaughn's office at Suffolk Law Library. Hope you and yours have a wonderful New Year.

*Your Co-Editors*



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# President's Message

With the start of the new year, we look forward to our dual celebration of LLNE's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the AALL Centennial! It provides us with a good opportunity to reflect on what these organizations have meant to us personally and professionally. As we welcome 2006, I would like you to think about what YOU want and need from LLNE. In our profession, change is constant and the Board wants to make sure that our organization is evolving and responding to your needs. We want to continue our wonderful traditions, but we also want to make sure that we are satisfying your professional association needs as we continue winding our way through the 21st century!

Looking far ahead into the future, LLNE will be taking part in the Northeast Regional Law Libraries Conference, October 17-19, 2007 at the Marriott Eaton Centre Hotel in Toronto, Canada. Thus far, eight other AALL chapters (ALLUNY, GPLLA, LLAGNY, LLAM, LLSDC, NJLLA, ORAL and SNELLA) and the Toronto Association of Law Libraries will participate. This conference will take the place of our Fall Meeting that year. We are still arranging our specific responsibilities in the process. Please contact me if you are interested in helping out with the planning or preparations.

Congratulations to Joan Shear for another successful round of the Introduction to Legal Research class. I would also like to thank the other teachers in the program for an outstanding job: John Nann, Susan Sullivan, Anne Stemlar, Barbara Morgan, Mark Frongillo, Denise Sharif and Filippa Anzalone. LLNE greatly appreciates their participation!

Under the charge of our new chair Jennifer Kessler and Andrea Rasmussen, our LLNE Service Committee has been busy trying to promote and organize various efforts. Most recently, they promoted a [Coats for Kids Coat Drive](#). If you have other suggestions for Service Committee activities, please contact Jennifer or Andrea.

Happy New Year to everybody! I look forward to seeing many of you at the Spring Meeting in Hartford!

*Michelle Pearse*

## LLNE News

Mark your calendars! The spring LLNE meeting will be held on Friday, April 21st, at the University of Connecticut School of Law Library. The theme will be insurance law and research. Specific programs and speakers have not yet been confirmed, but likely topics include: the insurance industry's response to recent disasters (e.g., Hurricane Katrina, the September 11th terrorist attacks, etc.); history of the insurance industry; disaster planning for libraries; and insurance research. A formal announcement and registration materials will be distributed in late February, 2006. If you have any questions, please contact [Yan Hong](#), Insurance Law and Reference Librarian.

## Member News

Northeastern University School of Law Library is delighted to announce that two new librarians have joined our staff. Kyle Courtney joined us in September as the new Reference/Electronic Services Librarian and Alfreda Russell joined us in January as the new FacultyResearch/Legal Instruction Librarian.

Kyle most recently worked as the Interlibrary Loan/Faculty Research and Information Delivery Assistant at Harvard Law School Library. Alfreda has most recently been the New England Region's Librarian Relations Consultant for LexisNexis.

Again, we are delighted that they have joined us and please look for them both at upcoming area conferences.

*Sue Zago, Associate Director,  
Northeastern University School of Law Library*

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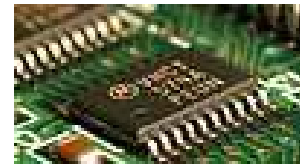
Elaine Apostola

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# High Tech Hints



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## Grokker – Federated Searching on Steroids?

By Susan Vaughn

Yesterday I attended, from the comfort of my own office, a webinar that showcased a Grokker solution employed by the library at Sun Microsystems. If personalization is the next frontier of search management, then Grokker is the covered wagon bringing librarians closer.

How to describe Grokker? It is a federated search engine that organizes retrieved information visually by topic. It is a collaborative tool that allows a researcher to personalize and share results. It is a search application that has powerful filtering tools that enable patrons to quickly find relevant information. For example, in the demo the retrieved results were easily narrowed down by date using a slide bar that ranged from oldest (blue) to newest (red).

The features that make this application a stand-out are the high degree of visualization of results, the ability to personalize retrieved items to create your own research set, the collaborative aspects, and the ability to very fluidly narrow your search results. This is a very smart design and my description doesn't really do it justice. Since it is a very visual tool, here is an example of a Grokker map on digitization and books I created using the demo feature on the Grokker website:

I highly recommend going to the [Grokker web site](#) and trying it out yourself.

The librarian from Sun, Christy Confetti Higgins, said that the Grokker portal has made information easier for researchers to find and that they have seen an increased use of subscription content since the implementation of the Grokker solution. She quoted one employee as saying, “Now I use Grokker instead of going to Google first.” Given the power of Google, I think that is a very telling statement about the success of the Grokker solution at Sun. More about [Grokker at Sun Microsystems](#) is available on the website.

Although wowed by presentation, I was at first doubtful about its application to legal research. After all, we are admittedly dependent on the Scylla and Charybdis of the big legal publishers' online legal research services. So how can federated searching help us? Believe it or not Grokker has an [application devoted to Legal Services](#). Using this application you could search LexisNexis, Westlaw, Findlaw, and Grokker's 23 built in information sources. Grokker's current menu of data plug-ins include: EBSCOhost, Expanded Academic, netLibrary ebooks, Library of Congress MARC records, Google, Yahoo! and Teoma.

I also have to add an aside about the program used for the webinar, WebEx Event Center. It really knocked my socks off (okay not really, it was a little chilly in the library yesterday). The participants used a PowerPoint or went online to the Grokker application and their discussion was broadcast through a conference call. WebEx had several valuable features including a list of panelists and participants, an online chat and a question and answer element. What a great tool for an online class. More information on this product or and a demo can be found on the [WebEx site](#).



Dear Miss Nomer:

I'm a fairly new paraprofessional employed in a large academic law library. I love to talk and talk, especially about myself, to all near me. I burst upon my colleagues and babble bubbles of exciting escapades for hours on end. As I shower others with my witty banter about my on goings, I get goose bumps knowing how my fountain of youthful stories enlivens everyone. For instance, let me tell you about what happened to me last night. [Due to space constraints, Miss Nomer has removed the sixteen pages that followed.] Each day, I begin by detailing what I did since yesterday to each student assistant and staff person. I wind my way through circulation, reserves, reference, interlibrary loan, rare books, archives, cataloging, acquisitions, serials, and administration. By the end of the day, after I have joyously cavorted with all of my associates, I am more charged than ever to spread the word about me. Now, Miss Nomer, I'm wondering if I should expand my horizons by reaching out to the rest of the law school and the university. It's about time that more people got to know the whole of me.

Wyndan Baggins

Dear Wyndbag:

It seems to Miss Nomer that you are working awfully hard not to be actually working. You do not want to strain your voice too much in your travels so why not take small steps by expanding first to the offices nearest to the library. Better yet, gather people into groups so you can reach out to dazzle more than one person at a time. Also, rather than just blowin' in the wind, you could blog and podcast your life for even greater access to the wonders of your world. Turn yourself into an RSS feed. After all, Miss Nomer applauds fostering effortless communication. And your oral skills will definitely come in handy when you are standing in the unemployment line.

Miss Nomer

Dear Miss Nomer:

Please help me and my co-workers. We are caught in a collection crisis. Our head of collection development is celebrating her birthday very soon. We want to impress her by showing how much we care. We are torn between buying her that new Porsche she raves about and paying for that Hawaiian adventure she craves. What should we do?

Collection Confliction,

Emma Cissop

Dear CC:

What wonderful, generous human beings you are! Miss Nomer has openings for letter screeners and Miss Nomer adores diamonds, emeralds, and anything from Tiffany's.

Forever yours,

Miss Nomer

Dear Miss Nomer:

My problem is Pete. Not exactly Pete himself but what he does that irks me to no end. We work in a small law library with very little office space. Pete and I share the same telephone. He insists on using the speaker phone at all times, claiming that he needs to multitask. He gets calls from his wife, his mother, his father, his children, his friends, and on and on. I am forced to listen to conversations that range from the very silly to the most embarrassing to the extremely personal about each of the people he knows. And when I need to use the phone, he hovers by me listening to my every word. What can I do to get him to be more respectful and to keep his chatter away from me? I want to dial m for murder and ring his bell!

Hung Up and Speechless

Dear Peterfried:

Breathe, for Pete's sake, and yours. Silence may be golden but in your case the opposite could be a goldmine. Bug that phone. Record those conversations. Duplicate them. Post them on the Internet. Podcast each conversation for Pete's entire family to relish in their stew. And think about the one phone call you will make to your attorney when Pete has you arrested for harassment.

Miss Nomer

bookcase, the back to the door, the piled-up projects and papers, and the fact that it was difficult to share her computer screen with visitors without being too intimate with them (rubbing knees) because the space was too small for them both to sit comfortably in front of her computer.

To fix these problems, we took the glass doors off of the bookcase. We also turned the bookcase 90 degrees so that its narrow profile faced the door and reversed its position with the lateral filing cabinet. This allowed the narrower profile of the bookcase near the door, which made it more welcoming and moved the wider lateral file cabinet deeper into the room where it did not affect the flow as much. With the bookcase on the other wall, a person walking up to the office now saw an expanse of open wall instead of the solid wood bookcase framed in the doorway like a closed door. To do this we had to remove the largest of the cork bulletin boards from the wall near the entry.

We took the stacks of documents out of the boxes and placed them neatly on the bookcase shelves, along with the few books that Sue kept in her office. We also moved her computer onto the desk surface facing the door and made the return a flat work surface. There was quite a bit of space between the desk and the walls, so we moved the desk diagonally deeper into the room to free up more space near the door (and get deeper into the power corner). We also moved one of the visitor chairs from in front of the desk to in front of the lateral file cabinet (which was rarely opened). This made the chair easily accessible for the visitor needing to view the computer screen. The far corner in front of the desk was then very empty, so we scavenged a table from another office to place there. We also moved the existing paper organizer to the corner of the desk away from the entry so that it did not act as a wall to visitors. Susan decided to buy another organizer so that all her papers could stand up neatly on her desk.

In this first pass-through of the office, we checked for and corrected obstructions to the flow of people (energy), barriers to entry or movement, any disturbing psychological factors (like the bookcase or the back to the door), as well as correcting the problems that Susan identified in using the office (like needing space for a second seat at her desk from time to time).

In the second pass-through of the office, we checked the space against the symbolic representation of the bagua. The bagua is an eight-sided figure in which each of the eight corners (plus the center) represent different life areas and energies, such as skills and knowledge, fame, and children and creativity. The nine bagua symbols are the same nine mystical trigrams that are the basis of the famous divination system, the *I Ching*. Each of the areas of the bagua has corresponding colors and elements that enhance the energy in that area of the room (and the occupant's life). The bagua is oriented by

placing the career corner in the center of the wall in which the main entry door is located. In a square room, the bagua can actually be thought of as a square grid of 3 x 3 blocks superimposed over the room, so that each "corner" is really a square measuring one third of the room on each side.

With this symbolic map superimposed over Susan's office, we could see that the desk was in the relationship corner. We enhanced this area by moving some of Sue's photographs of her husband and pets into that area. In the relationship area, you want pictures of 2 or more things or to place two or more vases or lamps or whatever. The point is that things must relate and not be alone.

The empty corner in front of the desk which we had filled with a scavenged square coffee table was in the "helpful people" corner, and we decided to enhance it with a vase of white flowers, which is the best color for that area. The corner with the lateral file cabinet was the wealth corner, whose colors are red, green and purple, so we decided to hang some beautiful scrolls in these colors that Susan had brought back from a trip. The wooden bookcase was now in the "ancestral/family" corner, whose element is wood, so that worked well and Susan decided to also add some pictures of her family there. The "skills and knowledge" area turned out to be the doorway, so I explained that Susan could enhance this area with a symbolic cure by taping to the wall of this corner behind the door a tiny envelope which contained a list of the skills she wanted to obtain or polish. A blue envelope and paper would be best, since that is the best color for this area.

The second desk chair ended up in front of the desk in the career area. Susan decided to order a poster she liked to place there, one that had a water theme or the color black, which stands for water in the bagua system. The fame area was in the center of the wall opposite the door, where one of the scrolls, and the remaining cork board were located. The scroll worked well, since it had the colors red and green and contained pictures of birds. Animals and people stand for fire, as does red. Green stands for wood, which feeds fire, so that is a good secondary color for the fame area. We also added a dog calendar to the cork board in this area. I suggested that she could further enhance this area by adding red or green paper over the cork as a base for whatever papers she put up there.

When we were done, we were pleased with the room. It felt more open and welcoming, functioned better for the ways it was used, and had a more organized and clutter-free feeling. We had also hung art and more prominently displayed photographs of cherished people and animals and so went a long way toward warming up the space.

***See following pages for finished product...***

WEALTH	FAME	RELATIONSHIP
ANCESTORS	HEALTH	CREATIVITY/ CHILDREN
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	CAREER	HELPFUL PEOPLE/ TRAVEL

Symbolic representation of the bagua.



A cleaner and more welcoming entry.



Chair and table relocated to the "helpful people" corner.





Decluttered corkboard and view of the relationship corner.



Glass removed from bookcase and contents reorganized.



A law librarian transcended.

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## My Experience with a NELLCO Internship

By Virginia McVarish

I am a library assistant at Harvard's Widener Library in Serials Services, part of Access Services. I also have a JD degree which I received from Harvard Law School a number of years ago, and I am pursuing an MLS degree at Simmons. I am now two courses from graduation.

Although I did have some negative experiences both in law school and law practice, I had two jobs as a legal researcher that I greatly enjoyed. So law librarianship seemed like a logical next step, although I approached the prospect with a fair amount of trepidation.

I decided to test the waters of law librarianship step-by-step. First, I joined and became active in LLNE. I met many wonderful people, most of who had previously worked as practicing attorneys. My next step was to take Raquel Ortiz's Legal Information Services class at Simmons. I found that although the class was lots of work, I enjoyed it. The class also helped me to realize how much I had already learned that would be of use to me as a law librarian.

I also began speaking with law librarians about a job in legal reference upon graduation from Simmons. Many told me that I would need reference experience, preferably in law, to achieve this goal. This motivated me to apply for a NELLCO (New England Law Library Consortium) internship in legal reference at Harvard Law School. (I chose Harvard because of its reputation of course, but also because I work full-time at Harvard University, and it was the only internship that would work logistically.) To my delight, I was accepted. I immediately contacted Simmons, and I was able to arrange to earn Simmons credit for the internship.

Making the internship work took flexibility on the parts of Karen Storin Linitz, head of reference at the law school, and my supervisors at Widener. I ended up doing the internship from 1:00 to 5:00 PM on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. I received three hours release time from my position at Widener (as I would have for any Simmons course) and I made up five hours of work there on evenings and weekends.

During the internship, I researched and drafted a research guide to Australian law on Mondays and Thursdays, and I worked with a librarian at the reference desk on Saturday afternoons. I really enjoyed answering patrons' questions

and am looking forward to a job that entails more time doing reference work.

The best part of the internship, by far, was meeting and working with a variety of great librarians. I worked closely with and received guidance and support from Liz Lambert, a reference librarian at Harvard. Checking in and chatting with Liz at the end of almost every day made the internship more enjoyable and educational. I also met with Margaret Cianfarini, Serials Librarian, and Michelle Pearse, LLNE President and Senior Bibliographer for Anglo-American Law. Both were very generous with their time in discussing their jobs with me. All the librarians I worked with were extremely helpful, each in his or her own way.

Overall, my internship was a very positive experience. I liked the librarians as people, and I was treated like a professional and a colleague by them. I found that "shadowing" the librarians while I was at the reference desk was an especially effective way to learn. The internship gave me practice at legal thinking and allowed me to update my Lexis and Westlaw skills, as well as introducing me to other databases.

In retrospect, I would have liked even more time at the reference desk and more practice with Lexis and Westlaw. Further, juggling a full-time job and an internship was a challenge. But, I would definitely do it again, and I would highly recommend a NELLCO internship to others interested in the field of law librarianship.

Applications for NELLCO internships at numerous law libraries are being taken now. To find out more, consult the [NELLCO website](#).

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