

LEGAL NETLINK ALLIANCE EXCHANGE PROGRAM 2013 – Denmark to the United States

By Vibeke Sloth Dam

In the fall of 2013 I had the experience of my life: For a three month period I left my job in Aalborg, Denmark, to travel around the United States to visit four different law firms in Atlanta, New Orleans, Louisville and Omaha. The trip was arranged by the Legal Netlink Alliance Executive Committee, which reached out to the U.S. LNA member firms and coordinated my visits.

My trip started out in Atlanta, GA, where I stayed with the law firm Schulten Ward & Turner LLP. Within



Kyle Citrynell and Vibeke Sloth Dam at Churchill Downs.

the first couple of weeks I learned a lot about the similarities and differences between American and Danish law simply by talking with different lawyers and observing conference calls, meetings, court hearings, etc. I also learned that everything is bigger than what I am used to in Denmark, including the cities, houses, cars and highways. For example, the population in Atlanta is about the same as the total population in Denmark!

After 3½ weeks in Atlanta my trip continued on to New Orleans, LA.

In New Orleans I stayed with the law firm Krebs Farley & Pelleteri PLLC, which is a firm highly specialized within construction and surety law. New Orleans is a wonderful city and it was a great experience to take a ride on the old street car and experience the unique atmosphere around Canal Street, Bourbon Street and the French Quarter.

My third visit was to Louisville, KY, where I stayed with the law firm Seiler Waterman LLC. In Louisville I observed different jury trials and court hearings, which was very interesting, particularly because of the huge differences in litigation practice between American and Danish law. The largest difference is definitely the extent to which jury trials are used in the United States compared to Denmark, where jury trials only are used in serious criminal cases. I was also surprised to see how actively some judges are involved in the proceedings, and how much the trial is influenced by the personality of the judge.

My fourth and last visit was in Omaha, NE, where I stayed with the law firm Gross & Welch PC, LLO. Before I came to Omaha everybody had made a little fun of the city, but Omaha turned out to be a lovely city with a lot of great people – and of course some good steaks.

The trip was both an educational, social and cultural experience. Besides learning about the American law system I attended different sports

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A great group photo of LNA members at the Gibraltar meeting.



Jay Frank and Mitch Melamed are all smiles with Former Vice President Walter F. Mondale at the Minneapolis meeting.



LNA members celebrating the organization's 20th anniversary with dinner at the James Jerome Hill Reference Library in St. Paul, MN.

Mark Your Calendars!

June 27-28, 2014
 Milan, Italy
 LNA EU Summer Meeting

October 16-17, 2014
 Dallas, Texas
 LNA Fall General Meeting

What was your favorite LNA meeting destination and why?



Scott Schulten

Capri. Because it's Capri! The hotel was beautiful, the evening venues were fantastic, and there were boat rides!



Audrey Mross

Anchorage, Alaska. It was my first LNA meeting and first time visiting Alaska. And it felt great to get out of the Texas heat!



Mitch Melamed

Chicago. The very first meeting. Where the dream of this organization became a reality.



Clark Opdahl

St. Andrews in Scotland where I was able to play a once-in-a-lifetime round of golf at the Old Course on my birthday.

FIRM Spotlight

NOGUEIRA, ELIAS, LASKOWSKI E MATIAS ADVOGADOS

Nogueira, Elias, Laskowski e Matias Advogados combines tradition and a modern approach to legal services in the areas of business and corporate law. Located in Itaim Bibi in the City of São Paulo, the firm also has regional offices in Brasília and Manaus.

One of the firm's Founding Partners, Rubens Carmo Elias, is a retired São Paulo's State Supreme Court Justice. In 1956, he founded the law firm of Elias and Laskowski Associates. In 2008, that firm joined J.R. Nogueira and Associates, a well-respected firm established in 1991 by experienced lawyers with over 30 years of successful practice in corporate law. The firm's current configuration was completed near the end of 2011 with the addition of partner Eduardo Felipe Matias, an established business law attorney with over 15 years' experience.

The firm provides a wide array of legal services to individuals and businesses, and is particularly known for its quality work in the areas of real estate and health care. One partner serves as coordinating professor for post-graduate courses in real estate law at Sao Paulo, and another partner chaired the Brazilian Board of Mercy Hospitals.

Partner, Eduardo Matias believes the firm provides a different level of legal representation to its clients. "Our firm is unique in that the partners are involved at all stages of a client matter," said Matias. "Continuous improvement is also a strong characteristic of our firm. Attorneys are consistently obtaining post-graduate degrees and advanced training to better serve our clients."

In addition, the firm has a strong Sustainability Project, a program dedicated to improving business strategy, practice

and workplace from a sustainability perspective. In 2013, the firm joined the United Nation's Global Compact, an initiative designed to mobilize the international business community to adopt core values in the areas of human rights, anticorruption, labor relations, environment, and social responsibility.

The firm joined LNA as a part of its growth program, and believes that providing clients with top tier legal services all over the world is a true benefit. It's also one avenue for helping Brazil grow its position as a country dedicated to investing in other places across the globe. ■

EXCHANGE PROGRAM

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events (football, basketball and baseball), went on a couple of road-trips around the country, visited tourist attractions such as CNN and the World of Coca Cola, lost money at the famous Churchill Downs horse track and participated in a huge Thanksgiving party. Not least I met a lot of wonderful, helpful and kind people, who definitely influenced my view on American society.

I truly appreciate the four member firms' willingness to facilitate my visit and especially the families, who showed great hospitality by letting me stay at their home and making me a part of their family during my visit.

It is my hope that other young attorneys in the future will have the possibility to experience what I did by visiting other LNA member firms in different parts of the world. The LNA exchange program is valuable, professionally and personally. ■