

June / July 2021  
Vol. 2021, No. 3

## HUMAN RESOURCES



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How HR Tech Solutions Can  
Increase Efficiencies and  
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## 2021 ALAMN BUSINESS PARTNER SPONSORS



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**Fluid Interiors**  
**Loffler Companies Inc.**



**ABA Retirement Funds Program**  
**American National Bank**  
**Associated Bank N.A.**  
**Beacon Hill Legal Staffing**  
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**SurePoint Technologies**  
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**ALAMN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)** are educational forums specific to functional specialty. Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting attendees need not be **ALAMN** members.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By *Caitlin Niedzwiecki, ALAMN President*



As we move into summer, I am very excited for the many upcoming **ALAMN** events and the opportunity to see many of you, both virtually and in person! If we could get every member to attend at least one event between now and the end of 2021, it would bring me so much joy. Luckily, there is a great slate of options...

The Membership Development Team has kicked off a monthly virtual coffee date called "ALAMN Coffee and Connect." This informal event is open to all members and is a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other, reconnect (for those of us who have been acquainted a long time), and chat about anything from personal to professional topics. The first two meetings have been well attended and fun! No matter what your previous involvement in the chapter has been, this is a great event for you. The next Coffee and Connect is on Wednesday, June 23 at 3:30 pm.

Another great virtual option coming up is the General Meeting on Tuesday, June 8 at 11:30 am. With corporate trainer and business consultant, Ted Schick, as our guide, we will examine our professional lives, discuss the ever-changing workforce, and reflect on how our careers define us. Register on the **ALAMN** website to receive the Zoom link for this event.



Many of you will be excited to learn that we are planning some in-person events this summer as well! The Summer Social is scheduled to be held on Thursday, July 29 at Brit's Pub. Many of us have not gathered in person since before the pandemic, and I cannot wait to see you all! The Summer Social has always been a highlight of the year for me – a chance to connect with members and business partners, all while enjoying a cold beverage and some yummy snacks. Stay tuned for more details and registration info for this event.

The biggest event of the summer (and year) is the **ALAMN** Annual Education Conference coming up on Wednesday, August 25. This event is to take place at Edinburgh Golf Club in Brooklyn Park. Located about 15 minutes northwest of downtown Minneapolis, Edinburgh boasts both indoor and outdoor facilities and free parking for guests. The Education Team is hard at work planning the activities of the day, and it is sure to be a can't-miss event!

Keep an eye out for information on scholarship opportunities, including the First-Time Attendee, Outstanding Member, and Opportunity Scholarships. We will be seeking nominations for these scholarships soon, and the timing is perfect, because there is still plenty of time to register for the ALA Annual Conference this October 3-6 in Austin, TX. The first early bird deadline is fast approaching, so if you plan on attending this year you will want to register on or before June 25. At that point, the price goes up from \$1,299 to \$1,499 for members. It is also a good idea to book your hotel room now while there is plenty of availability left in the ALA room blocks. I plan to host a welcome party for **ALAMN** members the first night of conference (Sunday, October 3), so keep that in mind when making your travel arrangements.

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# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - CONT.

*continued from page 6*

Also speaking at the ALA Annual Conference in October will be ALAMN member, Gretchen Luessenheide. She will be leading two one-hour sessions: one on grammar, and one on proofreading and punctuation. Both sessions will fulfill continuing education writing credits.

As of the ALA Annual Meeting on May 6, our very own Sarah Evenson (former ALAMN President) is now ALA's

President Elect! I am so excited to see what is in store for the association under Sarah's leadership. Sarah will be sworn in as President next May during the annual conference in Kissimmee, FL (May 15-19, 2022). Save the date! We will need to bring a strong MN chapter presence to that conference.

Our chapter is recharged and ready for some networking, education, and fun this summer. Hope to see you all soon!

## ALAMN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JUNE 2021

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
28	29	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	3	4	5
6	7	<b>8</b>	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	<b>17</b>	18	19
20	21	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	24	<b>25</b>	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

#### JUNE

- 1 HR Committee**  
12:00 – 1:00 pm
- 2 Large Law Firm Chief Officers**  
12:00 – 1:00 pm
- 8 General Meeting**  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm
- 17 Small/Medium Group**  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm

### JULY 2021

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	<b>7</b>	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	<b>20</b>	21	22	<b>23</b>	24
25	26	27	28	<b>29</b>	30	31

#### JULY

- 22 Finance SIG Meeting**  
12:00 – 1:00 pm
- 23 Coffee and Connect**  
3:30 – 4:15 pm
- 25 Membership Development Team**  
10:00 – 11:00 am

- 7 Large Law Firm Chief Officers**  
12:00 – 1:00 pm
- 20 Finance SIG Meeting**  
12:00 – 1:00 pm
- 23 Membership Development Team**  
10:00 – 11:00 am
- 29 Summer Social – in person!**  
Brit's Pub  
3:30 – 6:00 pm

**\*PLEASE NOTE:**  
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)  
attendees need not be  
ALAMN members

## ALAMN Has Adopted ALA's Mission Statement

ALA is the premier professional association connecting leaders and managers within the legal industry. We provide extensive professional development, collaborative peer communities, strategic operational solutions, and business partner connections empowering our members to lead the business of law.

# ALAMN MASTER CALENDAR

ALAMN leadership has created a master calendar for 2021. This calendar includes the all-member events and special interest group meetings. Service team meetings are not included on the master calendar and will continue to be scheduled by service team chair(s). You will notice fewer events on the ALAMN master calendar. Our goal is to elevate the quality of and attract more attendees to each event.

Be sure to check out the Full Calendar on our ALAMN website for more details about upcoming meetings and events!

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small/Medium</li> <li>• Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New Year Social w/ BPs</b></li> <li>• <b>General Meeting 1</b></li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>General Meeting 2</b></li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• IP</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Leadership Orientation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ALA National Conference</b></li> <li>• <b>ALAMN Career Fair</b></li> <li>• Small/Medium</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>General Meeting 3</b></li> <li>• Small/Medium</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ALAMN Summer Social</b></li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual ALAMN Education Conference</b></li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• IP</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Salary Survey Results</b></li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ALAMN Fall Social</b></li> <li>• <b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Educational Event</b></li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Law Firm Leaders Networking Event</b></li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Small/Medium</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• IP</li> <li>• Large Law Firm</li> </ul>

# KNOW YOUR LEGAL JARGON

**Lex Communis** – Latin for "common law"

Refers to common facets of civil law that underlie all aspects of the law.



## ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE HR TEAM?

By Kelly Thaemert, CLM



We have all been asked by our partners what other firms are doing. We have all been in the situation where we wish we knew how someone else would handle a situation (and this could not be truer than current times).

We all wish we knew what we did not know. These are all reasons why the HR Team within ALAMN is so important and useful.

As most firms are beginning to plan to head back into the office, it is so helpful to know how other firms are handling this. Recently there was an e-mail sent to the HR e-list. Questions like “When are you heading back to the office?” and, “Will you be allowing hybrid options when returning to the office?” and, “Are you requiring employees to be vaccinated?” are just a few of the questions asked.

We count on each other for information. So many of us are a department of one, and it is helpful to know what others are doing so we can inform our partners. Especially during this pandemic, it is nice to know we are not alone. Sharing information has always been the norm, but it became a monthly, weekly, and sometimes daily norm at the beginning of the pandemic.

I often think to myself what I would do without the group of ALAMN members and Business Partners I have been lucky enough to get to know in the 8+ years I have been a member. In my HR world this group of people has helped me through most recently the pandemic, fun things like admin week, not so fun things like discipline, and so many other things. At any time I can pick up the phone, and I know there is another member or Business Partner on the other end of the line ready and able to answer my questions.

If you have not already added the HR Team to your Profile on the ALAMN website, you definitely should. You can submit questions to the group, or you can answer questions when other members submit questions. So many good questions are asked. I find myself thinking that I did not even know I wanted to know the answers to the questions! You can join the HR group by hovering over the Home tab on the ALAMN website and clicking My Profile. Then hover over the My Features tab and click E-Lists. You can simply select any of the E-list names that are “Off” to “On,” and you will be subscribed. Oh, and since you are in your profile, don’t forget to add your profile picture!! (Hover over My Profile and click on Change Profile Picture.)



## WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS... MAKE LEMONADE!

On May 11 – 12 Business Partner Sponsors GLJ Benefit Consultants and Affinity Consulting held the Lemonade Take Two virtual conference. We asked the attendees to share three key takeaways from the event. Here is what they had to say.

### Zhakalazky Carrion, Docketing Manager and Schwegman Lundberg & Woessner:

1. Regarding productivity - Plan your work, Work your plan & Celebrate. Set as goals 3 things that you are going to get DONE every day. Top productivity tip "Preparing for tomorrow Today".
2. Regarding setting up goals - Are your goals right-sized, setting you up to achieve the goal? You need milestones in the middle to be able to celebrate/reward yourself and visualize yourself to get to the main goal. "Nobody climbs Mount Everest in ONE day" There are smaller goals to achieve to get to the final peak. TIPS: Must set realistic expectations, clear boundaries, avoid negative thinking, reset regularly, time-box actions, rebuild habits to get to your goals, find your confidence, self-care, and self-worth while achieving your goals.
3. Regarding having Top Performers – Debbie Foster did a great job sharing her experience and advice regarding this topic. She mentioned 3 key points for you to use around your team mates, "Let Them Talk" (Listen to them, hear them out, listen to their ideas. Start making little changes that will make a difference.); "Say Hard Things" (Nobody likes to do it, but they must be said. Encourage your team mates to ask you for feedback. Ask "I would love for you to share two things that need to be changed" ... Never say "Is there anything that needs to be changed?" because you might just get a "No."); and finally, "I appreciate you" (Let your people know that you appreciate the work that they do.)



# LEMONADE

Education | Inspiration | Entertainment

Bonus: I really liked this slide regarding a Leader's journey a lot of people saw ourselves moving along this constant cycle in our careers (YKWYDK- You Know What You Don't Know).

### Greta Larson, Manager of Professional Development at Fredrikson & Byron:

1. We need to work on getting our remote working policies in order. We need to have the technology to accurately track non-exempt support time and pay them for all of their time worked.
2. The opioid crisis has continued during the pandemic. It was suggested that we address this as employers including working with our health care provider to share information on employees who have opioid prescriptions and discuss alternatives to pain management with the employees. There are so many unknowns surrounding health issues with employees who may have had Covid or negative side effects of the vaccination. They expect changes in worker's compensation expenses.
3. On the discussion of rewarding employees, the quote that stuck with me is that as a supervisor you need to "hear how gratitude sounds to your staff." Acknowledging good works comes in many forms. Be the leader who takes the time to understand how to motivate their team. Is it money, recognition, praise, gift, time-off or written/verbal gratitude, etc.?

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# WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS... MAKE LEMONADE! - CONT.

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## Laura Broomell, COO at Greene Espel:

1. The way we work may be a distraction to others. Take an inventory of how you work and ask some people close to you if the way you work is distracting to them.
2. The Monday Morning Meeting newsletter was highly recommended. You can subscribe here.
  - The Path to Top Performers in nine words:
  - Let Them Talk – and let them talk first; and make sure you listen! The only time you should talk first is when you need to be vulnerable.
  - Say Hard Things – ignoring bad behavior does not make it go away. You look foolish to others if you can't have tough conversations.
  - I Appreciate You – sometimes “thank you” isn't good enough.

## Patti Ploehn, Administrator at Henningson & Snoxell:

1. Even the “professionals” have technology/ Zoom@/sound issues!
2. Anything and everything one says may be taken out of context and misconstrued (Dear Helga).
3. Let them Talk , (forgot the 2nd one!) say I appreciate you – Debbie Foster. I have learned many of these lessons over the years, and do, indeed, let staff have their say, and I do appreciate staff. My retired managing partner always said, “praise in public, criticize in private.”
4. This got me thinking about the need for guidance and support for someone like me who is heading toward the day when I leave my firm. I am working on getting business partnerships in place for whoever takes my place in a few years.

## Kelly Thaemert, CLM, Firm Administrator at Hellmuth & Johnson:

I was reminded that I need to let people talk. I cannot interrupt or even show that I want to interrupt. I know I need to get MUCH better about this.

### The Leader's Journey



## Pamela Gerads, Director of Human Resources at Merchant & Gould:

1. Understanding how other firms are looking at a telecommuting environment post-pandemic.
2. The importance of listening as a leader (coach) and using that information to build a better team environment.
3. Using LinkedIn more aggressively for maintaining contacts as well as gaining new clients.

## LOFFLER

HELPING THE LEGAL INDUSTRY SUCCEED IN THE NEW YEAR AND BEYOND - 2020 OFFICE TECHNOLOGY SUMMARY -

**15%**  
INCREASE  
IN HOME OFFICE  
PRINTER  
PLACEMENT



**231K+**  
MANAGED  
IT SERVICES  
TICKETS  
HANDLED



**450+**  
TEMPERATURE  
SCANNERS  
PLACED AROUND  
THE UNITED STATES



**23,381**  
HOURS WORKED ON  
CLIENT IT  
PROJECTS



**5,000+**  
NEW UNIFIED  
COMMUNICATIONS  
PHONE SYSTEM USERS  
INCLUDING 2 NEW  
CLOUD UC  
CLIENTS PER WEEK



WITH NATIONWIDE COVERAGE  
NOW INCLUDING ND, IA & NE

## ALAMN COMMUNITY SERVICE – THE FOOD GROUP

*Sponsored by the Community Services Team*

On Thursday, May 20, ALAMN Members and Business Partners volunteered at [The Food Group](#) (formerly Emergency Foodshelf Network) in New Hope. This is the second time our organization has volunteered at The Food Group. We assisted with packing bulk black beans for local food shelves. The 13 volunteers packed 750 lbs. (625 meals). This equates to 57.6 lbs. or 48 meals per volunteer. Way to go team!

The Food Group is a local nonprofit focused on using nutritious food to strengthen community. It works at the intersection of food access, equity, and nutrition issues related to food and hunger in 32 counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Food Group breaks down barriers to growing good food locally and getting good food to those who need it most.



### Thank you to our volunteers!

- Zhakalazky Carrion – Schwegman Lundberg & Woessner, P.A.
- Pam Gerads – Merchant & Gould, P.C.
- Katherine Hubbard – Madigan, Dahl & Harlan, P.A.
- Sheila Johnson – Minnesota State Bar Association
- Sarah Kostial – Associated Bank
- Stacy Locsin – Patterson Thuent IP
- Claudett McCune – Coordinated Business Systems, Ltd.
- John McKenna – Cushman & Wakefield
- Curt Okerson – Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.
- Daniel Owens – Olsen Thielen CPAs and Advisors
- Teresa Reiner – Gallagher
- Chris Siebenaler – Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company
- Pat Stender – Cousineau, Van Bergen, McNee & Malone, P.A.



## HOW HR TECH SOLUTIONS CAN INCREASE EFFICIENCIES AND ENHANCE BENEFITS PROGRAMS

*By Sara Ausman, Twin Cities Regional President, Alerus*

Human resources specialists often end up spending too much of their time managing systems and babysitting data, instead of focusing on areas where they can provide the most value.

Fortunately, there are technology solutions available that can help businesses automate some basic functions, allowing HR professionals to focus on higher-order work. Called human capital management (HCM), these types of solutions have been available for large enterprises for some time, but only recently have become available for small businesses through new, user-friendly, and scalable offerings. So how could this technology help your business?

### **Reduced risk of errors**

It all starts with payroll. It's the most fundamental human resources function of a business. But the right HCM payroll solution can amplify the function — helping employees maximize their paycheck with automatic contributions to benefit programs, automatic transfers, and more. Payroll also houses key data needed by many other HR systems. The integrated nature of HCM means core data is shared, so you can access payroll, time and labor, and HR from one system, reducing the chance for data entry errors.

### **Streamlined vendor management**

Many employers are offering more and better benefits to stand out when hiring and to retain quality employees. HR managers must also evaluate and manage vendors for payroll, retirement, health care, and insurance. An HCM solution can merge all these core functions into one package. That means fewer vendors to manage, a central point of contact, and a business advisor who understands the full picture of your payroll and benefits offerings.

### **Greater productivity**

Many of today's intelligent software and cloud solutions can handle routine tasks faster and more efficiently than their human counterparts. This allows HR professionals to focus on strategic planning and the needs of personnel

— creating staffing plans, supporting employees, overseeing hiring, and creating employee satisfaction initiatives.

### **Increased employee engagement**

A key component of HCM is that employees are empowered to play an active role in managing their information and customizing their benefits packages. Using a secure login, employees can update personal information (such as changing their address or adding a new dependent) and confirm their information on file with fewer steps and no paperwork. The system can also introduce tools such as retirement benefits management programs, enabling employees to take a more active role in planning for their future without requiring HR's assistance.

Businesses often perceive a need but may not realize the need is rooted in something more fundamental. If your business could benefit from retirement or health plans that are easier to use, the real need may be for a system which simplifies the benefits program but also provides other efficiencies and perks. With turnkey solutions to fit any organization, now may be the right time to explore HCM systems and learn what they can do for your business.



Sara Ausman has more than 30 years of experience in the financial industry. As regional president at Alerus, she is responsible for strategic planning, business planning, and driving initiatives designed to strengthen Alerus' reach in the Twin Cities. She seeks to deliver value to clients in areas such as commercial banking, private banking, retirement plan administration, and wealth management.

Alerus is a diversified financial services company providing innovative and comprehensive financial solutions to businesses and consumers through four distinct business segments—banking, retirement and benefit services, wealth management, and mortgage. These solutions are delivered through a relationship-oriented primary point of contact, along with responsive and client-friendly technology.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR ALAMN BOARD

### What keeps you motivated and productive?

#### **Caitlin Niedzwiecki, President**

Challenging work keeps me motivated. And that feeling I get when I meet a goal I've set or wrap up a long-term project.

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#### **Kelly Thaemert, Past President**

Knowing that others depend on me and expect me to show up.

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#### **Stacy Locsin, President-Elect**

My two daughters keep me motivated and productive. Even as they reach adulthood and gain independence living on their own, I know they look at me as a model for how to interact in their personal and professional lives. I want to be sure I continue to lead by example by staying motivated and productive; instilling a strong work ethic and a dedication to goal setting.

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#### **Pat Stender, Administrative Director**

The main thing that keeps me motivated is working with a great group of people who all respect each other, continuously learning new things, checking things off my to-do list, and having a little fun along the way!

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#### **Samantha Tschida, Communications Director**

I keep myself productive by having realistic daily to do lists. This keeps me organized and provides great satisfaction when I'm able to cross a task off.

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#### **Vanessa Kahn, Education Director**

I enjoy learning and being challenged. There is always something more to know and learn about people. Being faced with a variety of challenges and situations keeps me motivated because there is always something new. When you do a good job and care about your work and relationships, people gravitate to you.

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#### **Chong Lee, Membership Director**

The challenge of learning new things. The hope of improving the status quo. The sense of accomplishment when a project is completed. The pressure of expectations and deadlines.

A man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, is smiling while talking on a black smartphone. He is sitting at a desk with a laptop in front of him. The background is a blurred office setting.

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### COFFEE & CONNECT

Each month the Membership Development Team hosts a virtual “Coffee & Connect” get together.

Coffee brings people together to check in with each other, talk about family and friends, or just chat about anything and everything.

Join the Membership Development Team and your fellow ALAMN members for conversation and connections with your best legal resource community – ALAMN.



#coffeebringsustogether

Wednesday, June 23, 2021 3:30 – 4:15 pm [Register Here](#)

Tuesday, July 20, 9:00 – 9:45 am

### ALAMN’s Shining Star: Gretchen Luessenheide

The Board is pleased to announce that Gretchen Luessenheide has been selected as a Shining Star for the Minnesota Chapter! Gretchen is the Executive Director at Barna, Guzy & Steffen. Gretchen is a very active member of ALAMN - she is currently (and has been for 5+ years) the Editor of *The Verdict* and is also a member of the Communications Team. In the past Gretchen has been a member of the Education, Business Partner Relations, and Conference Teams.

At this year’s ALA Annual Conference & Expo in October in Austin, Texas, Gretchen will be teaching two sessions! One session is on grammar and the other on proofreading and punctuation.

As Editor of *The Verdict*, Gretchen would like everyone to know that she is always looking for new content and encourages all members to submit articles.

Outside of ALA, Gretchen is the proud mother of six and grandmother of three. She loves to knit and actually spins and dyes her own yarn! When she looks up from her spinning wheel, Gretchen enjoys reading and highly recommends *My Own Words* by Ruth Bader Ginsburg (or anything RBG related). Other recommendations from Gretchen: binge-worthy TV show – *Billions*; vacation spot – Paris; ice cream flavor – chocolate!

The Board joins all ALAMN members in thanking Gretchen for her commitment and contributions to our chapter!