Writing a Winner

How to put together a successful AALL Annual Meeting program proposal

Photo on opposite page: Author Maureen Eggert introduces her successful 2006 AALL Annual Meeting program, D-5: “Up and Down the Career Ladder: Finding the Right Rung for You.” If you plan to submit a program proposal for the 2008 Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon, Eggert suggests you do all your preparatory reading, such as the Program Planner’s Handbook, well before this year’s Annual Meeting.
I have proposed four programs for AALL Annual Meetings. I don't mean to brag, but all four programs were accepted, and two of them were held in the same year. I list these accomplishments as encouragement—if I can get my program proposals selected, so can you.

While I cannot guarantee that reading this article will assure your proposals' acceptance, I seem to have been doing something right and hope that after reading this, you will as well. In addition to my own perspective, I consulted with other successful program planners to glean their advice and expertise. Both Ronda Fisch, director of knowledge management at Reed Smith LLP in Pittsburgh, and Frederick Barnhart, associate director of the Loyola University of Chicago Law Library, had two proposals each accepted for the 2006 Annual Meeting.

Plan for this Meeting-induced inspiration by not filling your schedule for the weeks after your return and, if possible, by scheduling a vacation day during the second or third week after the Meeting. This will give you a couple of weeks to catch up on your work before taking time to work on your proposal.

Selecting Your Topic
If you have the option, wait until something really interests and motivates you or until someone requests your help in carrying out an idea. “Give in to the excitement,” advises Barnhart.

You do not have to know about the topic. In fact, reading or hearing about something and wanting to know more can be the best motivator for proposing a program. If you are unfamiliar with the topic and want to learn about it, unless you are very new to the profession, it is likely that other librarians will share your interest.

You may not have the luxury of waiting until a topic inspires you. If you need to coordinate or speak at a program to meet tenure requirements or obtain travel funding, you must be more proactive. If you know someone who is a good speaker and has a particular area of interest, design a program around that person. You do not have to share his or her interest in teaching tax research or learning how to catalog ephemera, but if your speaker is interested and conveys this well, all you need to do is create a program that highlights his or her skills.

Another way to select a topic is to discover what interests other people. Regional organizations, special interest sections (SISs), and caucuses are often eager to submit proposals on topics of interest to their members. If you belong to any of these groups, attend the meetings and take part in any meetings regarding programs. Often members will suggest program ideas, and officers or committee chairs will need someone willing to transform the ideas into a formal proposal.

Talk with people at meetings and conferences to determine if some of your own ideas interest others. While talking with them, keep your need for speakers in mind; do not be shy about taking names and asking for cards.

Talking with others could even lead you to consider redoing a program that was initially done poorly. All of us have exited a program wondering, “What were those planners thinking?” or “Where did they get that horrible speaker?” Often an unsatisfactory program is one that failed to deliver what was promised. If the “History of Electronic Cataloging” program turned out to be an in-depth history on the font types used for cataloging labels, then the original topic is still open for you to use. Find some other people who attended the program, ask them what they hoped the program would cover, and then write your proposal with their objectives in mind.

Co-workers can be another good source of ideas. If someone has done a training class or given a presentation that you found useful and informative, you might be able to create a program from his or her class, complete with at least one speaker.

Also, do not forget about non-law libraries as yet another source for ideas. Topics of interest to them, such as marketing, management, and implementing new technologies, can be given a legal twist. These other libraries may see new trends before those of us in law. For example, Generation Y and Millennial students first appeared in undergraduate classrooms and libraries before arriving in law schools or firms.

Consider a Different Perspective
Your program does not have to appeal to (continued on page 29)
CALL Involved with Illinois Legislation

Many members of the Chicago Association of Law Libraries (CALL) attended a special program on the Illinois Legislative Process that was held at Chicago Kent College of Law on November 3. Kip Kolkmeyer, legislative consultant for the Illinois Library Association, and John J. Cullerton, state senator to the Illinois General Assembly, shared their knowledge and experiences about how the Illinois legislative process works. Much of the discussion focused on how librarians can be more effective participants when they advocate for legislation, but many of the subsequent questions also addressed the transparency of the process and the types of materials that are generated by the Illinois General Assembly.

At its November 17 business and breakfast meeting, CALL members received an overview of animal rights legislation from Marcia Kramer, director of legal/legislative programs for the National Anti-Vivisection Society. Specifically she addressed the topic of “How animal rights legislation is proposed and passed in Illinois” along with legislative programs for the National Anti-Vivisection Society. Kramer also addressed the topic “How animal rights legislation is proposed and passed in Illinois” along with legislative programs for the National Anti-Vivisection Society.

CoALL Members Retire, Celebrate the Life of Justice Byron White, Publish Article, Hold Brown Bag Series

Colorado Supreme Court Librarian Martha Campbell retired in January 2007 after 32 years with the state judicial branch. An article about her retirement appeared in the November 30, 2006, issue of Law Week Colorado, which is available online at www.lawweekonline.com.

Tenth Circuit Librarian Cathy Eason assembled a permanent exhibit in the Byron White Tenth Circuit Courthouse that celebrates the life of the former U.S. Supreme Court justice for whom the building was named.

The Colorado Association of Law Libraries (CoALL) has begun a series of monthly brown bag lunches in downtown Denver. Each brown bag, which is free, is hosted by a different law firm or university and includes a roundtable discussion about a topic of interest to law librarians, a presentation by a speaker, or a virtual seminar. The schedule is available at www.aallnet.org/chapter/coall/brownbag.asp.

Wanda McDavid’s article, “Casemaker: Colorado Legal Resources at Your Fingertips,” appeared in the November issue of the Colorado Lawyer.

LLNE Celebrates 60th Anniversary, Holds Annual Fall Meeting

The Law Librarians of New England (LLNE) gathered for its annual fall meeting and to celebrate the chapter’s 60th anniversary on November 3. The meeting was hosted by Boston College (BC) Law Library and held at BC’s Connors Family Conference and Retreat Center in Dover, Massachusetts. The theme of the meeting was “Innovation and Training: Reaching Out with New Technology.” To view the full agenda and other meeting materials, visit www.aallnet.org/chapter/line.

This year marks LLNE’s 60th anniversary. To celebrate, all members who attended the fall meeting were given free tote bags and T-shirts that were adorned with LLNE’s new logo. During the luncheon an anniversary raffle was held, and in keeping with the 60th anniversary theme, six members won $60 gift cards to Borders. The grand prize winner won a $300 gift certificate to any Omni Hotel to commemorate the LLNE meeting held back in 1946 at the Historic Omni Parker House, where LLNE members voted unanimously to become an AALL chapter.

MAALL Members Welcome New Consortium Director

The Mid-America Law Library Consortium (MALLCO) welcomes Robert F. Rowell as its executive director. Rowell initially will work part-time to coordinate activities of the consortium, negotiate subscription agreements, maintain communications among member schools, spearhead initiatives of the board of directors, and seek grants. The consortium will impact Mid-America Association of Law Libraries (MAALL) members in 19 law schools in nine states: Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.

Hiring an executive director will facilitate cooperative activities benefiting all MAALL libraries, whether it is in resource sharing, negotiating group pricing, or offering participation in networking projects. MALLCO hopes to follow the successful model established by the New England Law Library Consortium (NELCO).

Rowell is a member of both AALL and MAALL and comes to MALLCO with a wealth of experience in association management. For additional information about MALLCO, please visit www.aallnet.org/chapter/maall/mallco/consorthistory.htm. The MALLCO president is John Edwards, associate dean for information resources and technology and professor of law at Drake University (john.edwards@drake.edu).

Baton Rouge and New Orleans Law Librarians’ Host SEAALL’s Annual Meeting

After a year of postponement due to the disasters associated with Hurricane Katrina, the Baton Rouge Area Association of Law Libraries (BRAALL) and the New Orleans Association of Law Librarians (NOALL) are ready to serve as hosts for the Southeast Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (SEAALL) annual meeting.

The 2007 annual meeting will be held from Wednesday, April 11, through Saturday, April 14, at the Sheraton Baton Rouge Convention Center Hotel. The theme is “Mystic Krewe of SEAALL.” Krewe is a group organized for civic and social purposes. Generally associated with Mardi Gras, the term refers to the members of organizations who participate in the annual parades and carnivals.

The Krewe of SEAALL is composed of members from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

The pre-conference SEAALL Institute, “Law Librarians and Legal Technologists: Building Synergies in the New Internet Age,” will be held Thursday, April 12, at the Sheraton Baton Rouge Convention Center Hotel.

The Louisiana members of the SEAALL Krewe are busy planning an awesome meeting with excellent accommodations, programming, and entertainment.

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committee news

AALL/LexisNexis Call for Papers Committee Update

The AALL/LexisNexis Call for Papers Committee finished its first round of publicity by the end of October this year, in an effort to give all potential entrants plenty of time to get started. The deadline for this year’s competition is March 1.

We bombarded the library schools, special interest sections, and chapter newsletters with requests to post our publicity, and we hope for a bumper crop of entries.

If you have any questions, please contact any member of the committee: Chair Renee Rastorfer, rrastorfer@mac.com; Joe Gerken, gerken@buffalo.edu; or Ed Greenlee, egreenlee@law.upenn.edu. Happy writing!

Submitted by Renee Rastorfer.

Government Relations Committee News

A new issue of The AALL Washington E-Bulletin, which will bring you up to date on the activities of the Government Relations Committee (GRC), is available on AALLNET at www.aallnet.org/aallwash/ebulletin112006.pdf. You can receive the newsletter by subscribing to the Advocacy online discussion forum through the link on the Washington Affairs Office page or the Online Discussion link on AALLNET.

One article in particular concerns the new Congress and lists the new committee chairs in both the House and Senate. We hope you will take a few minutes and see if your representative or senators are listed.

When the time comes for us to contact a member of Congress, you are very important to our efforts. Congress members want to hear from their own constituents. The GRC has been working to improve our chapter contacts, and we look forward to working with you. Thank you for the terrific help we’ve had from you thus far.

Submitted by Keith Ann Stiverson.

Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships Survey

The Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships surveyed all 50 states in December to determine how certain legal organizations envision partnerships with law librarians. Members contacted state-wide bar associations and/or state-wide legal aid organizations to ask about potential collaboration. As background to the survey questions, members conveyed brief information about AALL and the special committee, as well as some examples of pro bono activities currently underway or supported by law librarians. Results of the 50-state survey will be reported in an upcoming Members’ Briefing in Spectrum.

Submitted by Sara Galligan.

Publishing Initiatives Caucus Database

The AALL Publishing Initiatives Caucus has created a database of articles by law librarians. These articles appear in legal publications that are read by practicing attorneys, legal administrators, law professors judges, and others in organizations that employ AALL members. The database is available at http://baseportal.com/cgi-bin/baseportal.pl?htx=/Publishing_Initiatives/main.

It features an alert service that notifies subscribers of new articles written by law librarians. Both RSS and e-mail subscription options are available. If you wish to suggest an article to be added to the rapidly growing database, contact the Webmaster via a link that appears on the database.

Submitted by Bonnie Sluchi.

Scholarships Committee Offers Money for Law School and Library School Students and Continuing Education

Need money to support your educational goals? The AALL Scholarships Committee wants to give it to you. Every year AALL awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to law school and library school students and AALL members. The following scholarships are awarded annually:

General Educational Scholarships, supported by AALL and the LexisNexis John R. Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund:

- Graduate Library School Scholarships, for students with JD degrees or for students without JD degrees.
- Law School Scholarships, for students with MLS/MLIS degrees or for those seeking a dual JD/MLS degree.
- Scholarships for Library School Graduates Seeking a Non-Law Degree
- Scholarships for Continuing Education Classes.

Additional Scholarships:

- AALL and Thomson West George A. Strait Minority Scholarship
- James F. Connolly LexisNexis Academic and Library Solutions Scholarship.

The application deadline for all scholarships is April 2. Applications for scholarships must be received no later than April 2.

Visit AALLNET for complete information, instructions, and applications at www.aallnet.org/services/scholarships.asp. Spread the word to anyone who might be interested.

For further information, contact AALL Scholarship Committee Chair Scott Childs at 919/962-1605 or scchilds@email.unc.edu or AALL Headquarters at 312/939-4764, extension 10, or membership@aall.org.

Submitted by Scott Childs.

Theresa A. Clarke, Northern Illinois University College of Law, David C. Shapiro Memorial Law Library, DeKalb, IL 60115 * 815/753-9497 * fax 815/753-9499 * tclarke@niu.edu.

from the secretary—continued from page 6

the support of the Copyright Office, a House bill was introduced in May but died in committee due to opposition from photographers and the textile industry.

Baish addressed the board regarding the November 7 mid-term elections. She is hopeful that a Democratic majority will provide needed oversight and be more sympathetic to AALL information issues.

She also reported on the recent Depository Library Council meeting held in Washington, D.C., in October where there was discussion of some regional libraries merging. Law librarians have expressed the need to have a regional library in their state, especially as GPO distributes fewer print titles to selective depositories. Finally, Baish reported on the recent resignation of her new Advocacy/Communications Assistant Bryan Stevens.

Celeste Smith, the new AALL education manager, reported to the board on the new Continuing Education Grants Program. She also described plans for a Webinar to be held in April or May 2007.

AALL Lawyer

Finally, the board was very fortunate to have as its guest during the first day of the meeting, Lisa Stegink, AALL lawyer from Neal Gerber Eisenberg in Chicago. Stegink addressed the board about the legal and fiduciary duties of boards of directors’ members. It was useful for board members to meet her and have the opportunity to ask her questions.

If you have questions about any of these matters, please feel free to contact me or any member of the AALL Executive Board.
• Conversation Creation: Developing interesting or fun advertising, e-mails, catch phrases, entertainment, or promotions designed to start word of mouth activity.

• Brand Blogging: Creating blogs and participating in the blogosphere, in the spirit of open, transparent communications; sharing information of value that the blog community may talk about.

• Referral Programs: Creating tools that enable satisfied customers to refer their friends.

From this core list, I can think of dozens of things I can do, some of them tomorrow, to create buzz for the library. For instance, I could run Westclips on my firm’s name, forwarding attorney mentions to the attorneys and heads of practice groups. My firm’s marketing department must be doing this, but why can’t the library create some buzz too?

I could also create a funny and entertaining flash video about the library, the firm, and our favorite library users to show during National Library Week (though I shouldn’t feel shy about creating buzz outside the protection of Library Week). And what are “communities” if not practice groups and “discussion forums” e-mail strings among practice groups?

Status Skills

WOMMA’s Web site is a powerful example of a marketing tool, but there are dozens of others on Stover’s blog. For example: Trendwatching.com reports on an emerging trend that’s right up librarians’ collective alley: Status Skills. The report defines Status Skills this way: “In economies that increasingly depend on (and thus value) creative thinking and acting, well-known status symbols tied to owning and consuming goods and services will find worthy competition from ‘STATUS SKILLS’: those skills that consumers are mastering to make the most of those same goods and services, bringing them status by being good at something, and the story telling that comes with it.”

Skills are a product of information and training, and librarians fit squarely in the skills-providing business.

There is something very interesting to me about the idea of status. I believe it compels us along much faster than anything else. When we find and offer status, we link into the core needs of our patrons.

Last year I challenged my firm’s new associates and partners to become experts in CCH, explaining that it would bring them status (or at least make them useful). The strategy worked, and this year I have a line of attorneys waiting to talk to the CCH trainer and have had dozens of reachable moments with them all year long.

Future Trends

This leads nicely to a recent Stover post about the Virginia Library Association meeting this year, which had the most interesting keynote speaker. Thomas Frey, senior futurist and executive director of DaVinci Institute (www.davincinstitute.com), spoke about The Future of Libraries: Beginning the Great Transformation (www.davincinstitute.com/page.php?ID=120).

I was awestruck by Frey’s predictions for the future of libraries. To skip to the end does not do him justice, but in the interest of space, let us start with his ninth trend: “We are transitioning from a product-based economy to an experience-based economy.” He explains:

As the world’s population ages and the Baby Boom generation approaches retirement, many of them will begin to shed their belongings to create a more free and mobile lifestyle. Each item that a person owns demands their attention, and the accumulation of physical goods to demonstrate a person’s wealth is rapidly declining in importance. Experience becomes the key.

He goes on to ask us:

How would you rate your last library experience? Chances are that you’ve never been asked that question. However, in the future, the patron experience will become key measurement criteria.

This idea that status comes from what you do and what you know, and no longer what you have, is very intriguing. It highlights an opportunity for librarians to create exciting, meaningful experiences for our users, which gives them status and power. This will create for librarians Frey’s 10th and final trend: “Libraries will transition from a center of information to a center of culture.”

I hope this inspires you to think of three things you can do in your library right now to confer status on to your users, moving us to the very center of our organizations’ culture. Call it buzz. Who knew it would be so simple in this new age? Elizabeth LeDoux (edoux@cov.com) is senior research librarian at Covington Burling in Washington, D.C.
ALL-SIS Announcements

Awards Committee Seeks Nominations for Annual Awards. The Academic Law Libraries Special Interest Section (ALL-SIS) Awards Committee seeks nominations for three awards and one grant: the Frederick Charles Hicks Award for Outstanding Contributions to Academic Law Librarianship, the ALL-SIS Outstanding Article Award, the ALL-SIS Outstanding Service Award, and the ALL-SIS CONELL Grant. Additional information about these awards and the grant can be found at www.aallnet.org/sis/allsis/awards/criteria.asp.

Nominations or submissions may be sent electronically or in print to Awards Committee Chair John Edwards, Drake University Law Library, 2507 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311-4505 or John.Edwards@drake.edu. The application deadline is March 31.

Programming Update. ALL-SIS will sponsor 12 programs at the 2007 AALL Annual Meeting and Conference. Ten of these programs will be AMPC programs, including a workshop, and two will be alternate programs. A listing of these programs can be found at www.aallnet.org/sis/allsis/annualmeeting/2007/programs.htm.

Submitted by Eric Gilson.

FCIL-SIS News

The Nominations Committee, chaired by past Foreign, Comparative, and International Law Special Interest Section (FCIL-SIS) Chair Mirela Roznovschi, announced that Dennis Sears, associate director for legal research instruction at Brigham Young University's Howard W. Hunter Law Library, accepted the nomination for the office of vice-chair/chair-elect. Marylin Raisch, international and foreign law librarian at the Georgetown University Law Libraries, accepted the nomination for the office of secretary/treasurer.

Other members of the Nominations Committee were Duncan Alford, associate dean for library and information services and associate professor of law at Charlotte School of Law, and Victor Essien, international law librarian and adjunct associate professor of law at Fordham Law School.


Other programs include "Globalization Moved My Cheese: Or, How Do I Find International Law?" and "Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons." It looks as if FCIL-SIS members will have plenty of reasons to head for Louisiana in July.

Meanwhile, the FCIL-SIS Strategic Planning Committee is updating the SIS strategic plan for 2007-2010. Committee members include Molly (Mary) Brownfield, Victor Essien, Barbara Garavaglia, Carolyn McKelvey, Mary Rumsey, and Dan Wade.

Members are encouraged to submit suggestions to any committee member.

Submitted by Mary Rumsey.

SR-SIS Member Publishes New Book

Mary Whissner, assistant librarian at the University of Washington's Gallagher Law Library and long-time Social Responsibilities Special Interest Section (SR-SIS) member, has published a collection of her "Practicing Reference" columns from Law Library Journal. The edited and updated collection is called Practicing Reference: Thoughts for Librarians and Legal Researchers.

The book is divided into three sections: reference interaction, coping as a reference librarian, and research techniques and sources. Its insightful and often humorous perspective is both refreshing and informative. The book is available from Hein Publishing and can be ordered at www.wshein.com/Catalog/Product.aspx?sku=6192.

Submitted by Ron Wheeler.

SCCLL-SIS Update

State, Court, and County Law Libraries Special Interest Section (SCCLL-SIS) Vice Chair Sara Galligan, manager of the Dakota County Law Library in Hastings, Minnesota, is AALL's representative to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). SCCLL members assist in this effort by attending programs close to their libraries.

In September, Joan Bellistri, law librarian for the Anne Arundel County Public Law Library in Annapolis, Maryland, attended the NCSC program titled, "Court Solutions: Solving Court Business Problems," which was held in Baltimore.

In December, Sandy Marz, director of the Washoe County Law Library in Reno, Nevada, attended the NCSC program titled, "Creating a Paperless Court System," which was held in Las Vegas.

The SCCLL Executive Committee adopted the SCCLL Strategic Directions 2006-2011. A year-long effort, SCCLL took a critical look at what is important to our members. This document will guide SCCLL committees and the board for the next few years.

SCCLL will sponsor two non-AMPC programs in New Orleans. Look for "Rising to the Challenge: How Do We Develop a Constructive Response to West's Price Increases and Nondisclosure of Supplementation Costs?" and "Marketing Your Public Library—Rising to the Challenge of Reaching the Public and Local Attorneys."

Submitted by Cathy Lemann.

After the Storm—continued from page 15

carriages, artists, and musicians in the French Quarter have returned. The broader library community provided the New Orleans convention industry and the city's economy with a much needed boost when the American Library Association had its annual meeting here in June 2006 (see related story on page 16). The 18,000 librarians who descended on the city had probably never before heard as many heartfelt expressions of gratitude and appreciation from cab drivers, bellhops, and waiters as they did that week.

With the 2007 AALL Annual Meeting and Conference in New Orleans only months away, the members of the Local Arrangements Committees continue to work hard to prepare for and welcome our fellow law librarians from across the country. For those who remember the 1991 Meeting here, and for everyone who has been anticipating this year's Meeting, a great time is promised for all. New Orleans is ready for you.

Brian Huddleston (bhuddle@loyola.edu) is senior reference librarian at Loyola University New Orleans Law Library.
Meet the OBS-SIS

This month we feature the Online Bibliographic Services Special Interest Section (OBS-SIS) with this history submitted by OBS-SIS Chair Susan Goldner, technical services librarian at the University of Arkansas At Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law.

The OBS-SIS is primarily concerned with issues that revolve around the MARC record. Just like uses made of the MARC record have changed and grown, so has OBS.

The OBS-SIS has its roots in the OCLC Committee of AALL, which was established in the 1970s when libraries began to make use of MARC records. In 1977 it became the OCLC-SIS, with the modest goal of exchanging information about OCLC. That name only lasted two years.

In 1979 RLIN/Ballets users joined the group, and the name was changed to On-Line (later Online) Bibliographic Services-SIS. Following the name change, the goals of the group were expanded to include working for improvements in the bibliographic utilities on behalf of law librarians.

OBS has committees devoted to each of the utilities, growing to three committees in 1984 with the addition of WLN. Change in this area continues as first WLN, and now RLIN, merged with OCLC. The OCLC and RLIN Committees host a discussion list and plan both programs and roundtables to help librarians cope with this latest merger. Soon we may be back to just one committee for bibliographic utilities.

In the 1980s, more and more law libraries used MARC records in their local automation systems. As a result, the focus of OBS expanded to include local systems issues. Ever since, the Local Systems Committee has facilitated the sharing of information about systems, regardless of vendor. Though OBS does not attempt to coordinate user groups for the various local systems vendors, it has begun to facilitate opportunities for formal and informal user groups to meet during the AALL Annual Meeting.


The committee produced two editions of The Law Library Systems Directory as part of the AALL Publication Series. As our systems grew, this directory helped librarians keep track of what functions were offered at other institutions and provided contact information so we knew who to go to for advice.

Since most law library systems managers work in technical services, it is not surprising that OBS shares many members and issues with the Technical Services-SIS. The two sections have a joint newsletter, TSSL, which is an essential publication for providing the records. This topic produces such a wide array of opinions that an ad hoc committee was formed, charged with producing a recommendation for ethical behavior when sharing MARC records.

A program we sponsored in 2005 concerned the ethics of grabbing MARC records from other libraries using Z39.50, which can be done without the knowledge of the library providing the records. This topic produced such a wide array of opinions that an ad hoc committee was formed, charged with producing a recommendation for ethical behavior when sharing MARC records.

Just as the practice of law librarianship becomes more and more complex, so do the issues addressed by OBS. While at its core the MARC record is a technical format, its function is primarily a public one—providing information about and access to information. OBS is concerned with both the backroom aspects of library automation systems and with the enhanced patron services that these systems can provide.

The author wishes to thank Ellen McGrath, head of cataloging at the University At Buffalo State University of New York Charles B. Sears Law Library, for her extensive history of OBS in 25 TSSL 9 (March 2000).
New Librarians

Ron Fuller joined the S.J. Quinney Law Library at the University of Utah staff as an assistant librarian. Prior to this position, he was a law clerk for Judge Randy Olsen in Alaska and a 2005 graduate of the Brigham Young University Law School.

Todd Ito is a new reference librarian at the University of Chicago’s D’Angelo Law Library. Ito received both his JD and MSLS degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He previously worked as a circulation manager at the Walter Royal Davis Library at UNC-Chapel Hill and was a reference intern at the Duke Law Library and at the Kathrine R. Everett Law Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Karen R. Schneiderman has joined the Drexel University College of Law Library as research and instructional librarian. Schneiderman is a recent graduate of Kent State University School of Library and Information Science. She also has extensive legal practice experience.

New Places and Responsibilities

Georgia Chadwick is the new associate director of the Law Library of Louisiana. She was previously collection development and documents librarian.

Miriam Childs is the new head of technical services at the Law Library of Louisiana. She was previously a technical services librarian.

Terry Cullen is the new public services librarian at the University of San Francisco Doreline Zief Law Library. Cullen was previously a temporary reference librarian at Zief as well as a contract editor for the Washington State Bar Association. Prior to moving to the Bay area, she was access services librarian at the Weiner-Rogers Law Library at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Stephen M. Donweber has been transferred and promoted to the position of senior legal information and educational technology librarian at Boston University Pappas Law Library. Donweber served as the reference and electronic services librarian in the law library from April 2005 to September 2006. Prior to joining the library staff, he was the reference librarian intern at the University of Pennsylvania’s Van Pelt Library.

Charles Gaudin is a new technical services librarian at the Law Library of Louisiana. He previously worked at the Jefferson Parish Public Library and Northwestern Louisiana State University.

Jennifer S. Murray is the new assistant director of the Superior Court Law Library for Maricopa County in Phoenix, Arizona. Prior to joining the library, Murray worked in both private and academic law libraries, most recently for Greenberg Traurig in Phoenix.

Katie Nachod is the new reference electronic resources librarian at the Law Library of Louisiana. She previously worked at the Tulane Law School Library.

Trina Robinson joined the George Washington University Law Library in 2006 as the head of acquisitions. She was previously the acquisitions librarian at Tulane University Law Library.

Paula Seeger has joined the University of Minnesota Law Library as circulation librarian. She was previously the reference outreach services librarian at the Dane County Legal Resource Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

Professional Activities

Coral Henning, director, and Jean Willis, assistant director for support services, both at Sacramento County Public Law Library, offered a one-day workshop titled, “Fundamental Legal Research Skills for the 21st Century (Non-Law) Librarian,” during the California Library Association conference in Sacramento.

Memorials

“AALL Spectrum has been advised of the deaths of Joyce Maiden and Sara Robbins.


Ms. Robbins was head of the Brooklyn Law School Library for more than 20 years. She was also an active member of AALL, joining the Academic Law Libraries (ALL), Computing Services, Research Instruction and Patron Services, and Technical Services Special Interest Sections. She served as ALL-SIS chair in 1996-1997. She was also a member of the Law Library Association of Greater New York. Ms. Robbins died tragically in December 2006.

AALL Spectrum carries brief announcements of members’ deaths in the “Memorials” column. Traditional memorials should be submitted to Frank Houdek, Law Library Journal, Southern Illinois University Law Library, Mall Code 6803, Lesar Law Building, Carbondale, IL 62901, houdek@siu.edu.
every type of law librarian. However, there is nothing wrong with considering how to broaden your program's appeal. Mentally reach outside your specific area in the library world and think about what topics others would find interesting.

Could the program include someone from a firm or court library as well as an academic library? Could you include a technical services perspective, even if you are a public services librarian? If your program is a topic likely to have broad appeal, the fact that you both realized this fact and took the time to locate speakers from varied backgrounds can make your program stand out from other similar ones. In fact, if a program appeals to all areas of librarianship, it might make a great workshop, says Ronda Fisch.

You can also be creative with your program's format. The Annual Meeting Program Committee (AMPC)—the AALL committee that selects the Annual Meeting programs—is eager for some “non-traditional” presentations. While there will always be standard lecture formats, a less typical format can work in your program's favor. Consider including a skit, soliciting audience participation, using a mock interview, or incorporating a lengthy question and answer session into the more traditional panel of speakers. The size of the audience and the length of the program may limit the extent of your creativity, but do not hesitate to try something out of the ordinary.

The converse to the above advice is: Do not water down your program so much that it does not interest anyone. While you should try to think outside your initial comfort zone, you also need to be realistic. If your program is about how to teach legal research to Generation Y law students and the Academic Law Libraries SIS is sponsoring the program, you should not be concerned that the program will not appeal to law firm techies.

Recruiting Speakers
Occasionally a program is designed with a particular speaker in mind, but this is the exception. Usually you need to locate people who plan to be or are willing to be at the Annual Meeting. Speakers do not have to be AALL members, but they are usually more affordable than outside speakers.

If you plan to use outside speakers, it is important to communicate with them early on. Clearly explain that their attendance is contingent upon the program's acceptance, says Heidi Letzmann. If the person requires an honorarium, find out the amount and make sure to include it in your proposal, she adds.

Contacting people you don't know and asking them for a favor may seem awkward at first. Remember that librarians are people who like to help and most understand the challenges of planning a program. While working on my four programs, only one person never returned my contact attempts. All others were uniformly helpful; even those who were unable to speak were willing to answer questions and suggest people they thought might be good speakers.

Fred Barnhart had a similar experience. He says it surprised him how easy it was to ask people to speak and how willing people were to do it.

Use your networking time at the Annual Meeting to locate and sound out potential speakers. If you have an idea of your program's topic before the Meeting, use the AALL Directory and make a list of people you would like to meet. Include speakers whom you have enjoyed from past programs and authors of articles on your topic.

Your program does not have to be fully developed in order for you to start making inquiries of potential speakers. Let people know that you are considering a program and ask if they might like to participate in it.

The previously mentioned chapters and SISs are additional sources of speakers. You do not need to be a member to ask for volunteers. I developed one program because I wanted to know more about how to manage a culturally diverse staff. Although not a member of either group, I turned for assistance to the Asian-American Law Librarians Caucus and the AALL Black Caucus. Both groups helped with ideas, suggested speakers, and provided the talent for the skills we presented as a precursor to our formal speaker. Not only was our terrible acting a light touch to a serious topic, it achieved two previously mentioned aims of a good program, getting speakers from outside my own area (and ethnicity), and using a more creative program format.

Sometimes you can be your own speaker. If you are the go-to person for technology in your library, the expert on tax research, or have found yourself repeating the story of your library restructuring multiple times to a variety of people, consider turning your experiences into a program where you are one of the speakers.

Follow the Rules
While “follow the rules” is basic advice, it is easy to forget this admonition as you begin the process of writing your proposal under an impending deadline. In your pursuit for a scintillating topic, engaging speakers, and focused learning outcomes, take care to overlook due dates, word counts, and even rules of grammar. The AMPC might be forgiving, but why take the chance?

Your proposal is only the first step to a successful program. If you cannot meet the initial deadline or follow content requirements, your proposal will not even be considered. Furthermore, the AMPC often has multiple program proposals on the same topic, so it accepts the one that is best developed and most well written, says Letzmann.

One of the toughest rules to follow is composing a program description in 110-125 words or less. Compacting all your brilliant ideas into 125 words that both explain and entice is a difficult task, but it is worth the effort. Distilling your program into a sound-bite requires you to give the project some serious thought, and it will be easier for you to market your program when the time comes.

Deadlines can prove another challenge. As mentioned above, the due date for a program proposal is August 15, soon after the Annual Meeting. Not only will you be catching up on work, but your potential speakers may be busy doing the same thing. This can make it difficult to get firm commitments, particularly when the date is almost a year away.

Do not let this or similar problems keep you from meeting your deadline. If you do not have guaranteed speakers, explain what type of speakers you expect to get (firm or court librarian, public or technical service, etc.) and who you are working with. If you have a mildly reluctant speaker (perhaps someone who is interested but already committed to another program), ask if he or she would be an “emergency back-up” and list him or her until you can locate someone with less on his or her schedule. It is acceptable for your proposal to be a work-in-progress, but it is not acceptable for it to be late.

As when writing legal memoranda or other highly structured documents, clear document guidelines have been provided—follow them. The Program Planner’s Handbook, available in April, includes instructions on how to write learning outcomes, down to what words to both avoid and include. If someone has gone to all of this trouble, it is foolish (if not downright stupid) to ignore the information.

If you find it difficult to create your proposal while keeping all the rules in mind, simply write the proposal your way first; then go back and edit so that length, vocabulary, and overall content comply with the guidelines. The time you take to make the changes, like all good editing, will improve the quality of the proposal, which should increase the odds that it will be accepted.
The votes are in. Four members were elected to the AALL Executive Board in this year’s Association elections.

James E. Duggan, associate director and professor at Southern Illinois University School of Law Library in Carbondale, was elected vice president/president-elect for 2007-2008. He will assume the presidency at the conclusion of the 2008 Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon.

David S. Mao, section head of the Congressional Research Service Knowledge Services Group at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., was elected treasurer to a three-year term.

Jean M. Wenger, government documents/foreign and international law librarian at the Cook County Law Library in Chicago, and Sally H. Wise, director of the law library and professor of law at the University of Miami School of Law Library in Coral Gables, Florida, were elected to three-year terms as members of the Executive Board.

AALL Headquarters received 1,677 online ballots and 30 paper ballots by the election deadline of December 1, 2006.
Ask and Listen
Ask questions early and often. Do not wait until the day before the deadline or until you have wasted hours developing an inappropriate program. To paraphrase a cliché, a phone call in time saves nine.

The AMPC will support you in planning and carrying out your program. Just as we expect our patrons to ask us questions, committee members expect you to call, and they are very helpful when you do.

The AMPC also holds an open forum every year at the Annual Meeting, Letzmann says. A person considering proposing a program should plan to attend. This year the open forum will be held on Tuesday, July 17, at 12:1 p.m.

Include Options
Program slots run 30, 60, 75, or 90 minutes, and some program lengths are harder to fill than others. Exactly which length has too many or insufficient applicants can vary by the year. If you want a program of a particular length, ask for it and explain why the length is optimal for your program. (You may have to go down to the “other” information box at the bottom of the proposal in order to have enough space to explain.)

However, unless it is impossible to alter your program, you should also indicate that you would be willing to make changes to your program in order to fit a needed time slot. You might be required to cut a four-speaker, 75-minute program down to a three-speaker, 60-minute program, but that is better than not presenting your program at all.

If a proposal is not accepted, do not be discouraged. Letzmann says that roughly 200 proposals are submitted each year, and only about a third of them can be accepted. She and Ronda Fisch both suggest that if your proposal is not accepted the first year, rework it and resubmit it the following year.

Follow Through
Once your program is accepted, you still need to stay involved, particularly if you are going to be the coordinator and/or a speaker. From the very beginning, make sure that you keep track of all your drafts, potential speakers (including their biographies and contact information), and your list of deadlines. Upon finalizing the speakers, keep their contact information and the dates in one place when making phone calls. Stay in touch with your speakers and remind them of due dates.

There are no absolutes for what will result in a good program proposal. Generally, audiences do not want to attend a program that consists of a parade of PowerPoint slides, but the “And You Thought Gadgets Were Only for the Kitchen” programs, which have become a much anticipated staple at the Annual Meeting, utilize just this format. What makes the difference is that the format is clearly announced in the title, and the slides are accompanied with informative and lively banter.

This illustrates that it’s most important that you thoughtfully consider what is appropriate for your program, based on its content, speakers, and intended audience, and that you clearly convey your decisions to both the AMPC and your intended audience. It’s better to have a small but complementary audience than a large group of dissatisfied attendees. “Quality over quantity,” advises Letzmann.

And don’t forget, as with many things, program planning gets easier with practice.

Maureen Eggert (negger@law.wfu.edu) is associate director for research and instruction at Wake Forest University Professional Center Library in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Tips for Writing a Successful Proposal

Make sure that you have done all your preparatory reading, such as this article and the Program Planner’s Handbook, well before this year’s Annual Meeting. Try to set aside a day or two in April or May to become familiar with proposal requirements and deadlines.

Do not fill your schedule for the weeks following the Annual Meeting. If possible, schedule a vacation day in late July or early August to work on your proposal.

Select your topic when something really interests and motivates you. Reading or hearing about something and wanting to know more can be the best motivator for proposing a program.

Design a program around a good speaker. You don’t have to share his or her interests; all you need to do is create a program that highlights his or her skills.

Discover what interests other people. Regional organizations, special interest sections, and caucuses are often eager to submit proposals on topics of interest to their members. Often they need someone to transform their ideas into formal proposals.

Co-workers can be another good source of ideas. If someone has done a training class or given a presentation that you found useful and informative, you might be able to create a program around it.

Broaden your program’s appeal. Mentally reach outside your specific area in the library world and think about what topics others would find interesting.

Be creative with your program’s format. Consider including a skit, soliciting audience participation, using a mock interview, or incorporating a lengthy question and answer session into the more traditional panel of speakers.

Don’t water down your program. While you should try to think outside your initial comfort zone, you also need to be realistic. You can’t please everyone with one program.

Don’t be shy about asking people to speak. Use your networking time at the Annual Meeting to locate and sound out potential speakers. Chapters and SISs are additional sources for speakers.

If you use outside speakers, communicate with them early on. Clearly explain that their attendance is contingent upon the program’s acceptance, and if the person requires an honorarium, find out the amount and make sure to include it in your proposal.

Follow the rules. Do not overlook due dates, word counts, and even rules of grammar. If you cannot meet the initial deadline or follow content requirements, your proposal will not even be considered.

Ask questions early and often. The Annual Meeting Planning Committee will support you in planning and carrying out your program. Attend the open forum this year in New Orleans on Tuesday, July 17, from 12-1 p.m., to learn more about program planning.

Be flexible. For example, indicate that you would be willing to make changes to your program in order to fit a needed time slot.

Try again. About 200 proposals are submitted each year, and only about a third of them can be accepted. If your proposal is not accepted the first year, rework it and resubmit it the following year.

Stay tuned for more 2008 Annual Meeting program planning information coming this April.
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possibly over to the zoo, or visit the campuses of Loyola and Tulane.”

— Mary Whisner, assistant librarian for reference services at the University of Washington Gallagher Law Library in Seattle

“Beignets at Café du Monde, followed by a leisurely stroll around Jackson Square, checking out the sidewalk artists and enjoying the delightful performances from the street musicians. When we were there in August 2006, I purchased a beautiful watercolor that really captures the essence of New Orleans!”

— Dina Dreifuerst, librarian relations manager at Jones McClure Publishing in Houston

“THE FOOD!! Nowhere in the world have I found such mouthwatering, sensual food. My first experience was a honeymoon where every moment not spent in the hotel was at a marvelous restaurant, like Brennan’s, starting the day with scrumptious Eggs LaFourche or Eggs Hussard or, later in the day, gorging on Bananas Foster. I was introduced to the most stimulating Oysters Rockefeller and Alligator Soup with sherry at Antoine’s. I could be found swooning over the Lobster Étouffée at Galatoire’s, energizing myself with very strong coffee with chicory and dozens of beignets at Café Beignet, and indulging myself with shrimp Po’Boys, red beans and rice, or crayfish gumbo that would take my breath away. I have returned many times to N’awlins, and its fantastic food never disappoints.”

— Gayle E. Webb, director of Riverside County Law Library in Riverside, California

“Visit the D-Day Museum, located only a couple blocks from the convention center. Enter expecting to stay a couple hours but find yourself staying four. Why a D-Day Museum in New Orleans? Because this is where the landing craft was invented and constructed that was fundamental to the success of the invasion.”

“Walk Bourbon Street and be captivated, delighted, intrigued, and grossed out. It has no equal in the world. “Go on a swamp boat tour. Don’t bother asking about lifejackets as they don’t have any; in case of sinking, just step out of the boat, but watch out for the gators! By the way, the guides bring marshmallows to tease the gators to the surface.”

“Take a horse-drawn carriage tour of the French Quarter. Things look different from a few feet higher in the air and at the slow pace of a carriage ride.”

“Go on a Garden District walking tour and learn about why the dead are buried ‘above the ground’ and how the remains are rotated through three levels in most family graves. Macabre.”

— Thomas W. Stallard, director of Legislative Intent Service in Woodland, California

For more responses to this month’s “Member to Member” question, please visit www.aallnet.org/products/pub_sp0702.asp
Brand New Convention Center
The conference itself ran very smoothly. New Orleans is probably the best conference I’ve been to in terms of transportation between the hotels and the conference locations. For those of us who like to walk, the Morial Convention Center is a comfortable 15 minute stroll from most of the hotels on Canal Street. After a long day at the conference center, laden with freebies from the exhibit floor and handouts from the programs, I quickly found myself blessing ALA for the regularly-running sponsored shuttle buses.

Easy to navigate, although it is one very long building (read as “wear your librarian shoes”), the Morial Convention Center is essentially brand new. Walking through the freshly carpeted passageways and strolling the spotless exhibit hall, I found it difficult to connect that this was the same place I had seen on the news, full of horror and sorrow. Now it was bustling with librarians’ and exhibitors’ laughter and learning. A mixture of sadness at the past and of hope for the future was in the air.

Community Volunteer Days
Upon reading this article you may think that everything is well on the way to mending in New Orleans. Nothing can be further from the truth. In terms of hosting a conference, New Orleans has proven itself ready and able. In fact, it was one of the more comfortable and enjoyable conferences to which I’ve been. Yet, in terms of revitalizing the city, Crescent City dwellers, including the legal community, have a long way to go.

Money and services are still desperately needed. While in New Orleans, I took advantage of the ALA-coordinated community volunteer days. I chose to work with Common Ground, a volunteer organization spearheading revitalization efforts in the Ninth Ward, where one of the levees broke. The experience was one I will not forget.

Bused to the volunteer coordination center (a converted grade school) in the middle of the Ninth Ward, we donned full-body Tyvek suits, full-filtered breathing masks, work boots, goggles, hats, and gloves, all in 90-degree heat. We then were bused to “our house,” one of the few still standing in the area. There, using crowbars, shovels, hammers, and our hands, we removed everything in the house, down to the studs in the walls, and threw it all on the curb. The dishes were still in the dishwasher ... along with a dead fish stuck in the kitchen window and a high water mark halfway up the stairs to the second floor. Yet the owners weren’t giving up; they wanted to come home.

One of the most breathtakingly beautiful sights I saw in New Orleans was in the Ninth Ward. A few of the yards overflowed with towering yellow sunflowers. As we gazed in wonder at this oasis of beauty amidst destruction and chaos, the Common Ground volunteers explained that sunflowers help to leach contaminants out of the soil. It will take many generations of sunflowers doing what they do naturally before tomatoes and other edible crops can be planted and harvested for consumption. The beauty of the sunflowers mixed with the indomitable spirit of those who planted them overwhelmed me.

Wearing many hats while I was in New Orleans, I had the pleasure of presenting a $3,000 check to the New Orleans Bar Foundation on behalf of the Kane County Bar Foundation. In August 2006, the Louisiana Bar Foundation released “The Legal Community Responds: Disaster Relief Efforts Update.” Some of the statistics are astounding:

The New Orleans Indigent Defender Board has 28 attorneys employed; 70 are needed to match case load ... 52 percent of the 17,047 Louisiana active lawyers had offices in impacted areas ... hundreds of Orleans Parish prisoners arrested for misdemeanors and non-violent offenses before the storm remain imprisoned without being formally charged.

And the list goes on.

Rise to the Challenge
I am proud and humbled to have been a part of the New Orleans experience. Yet, this experience is not over, not for those who make New Orleans their home. The city continues to need our support. I urge you to “Rise to the Challenge” as AALL members and attend the 2007 Annual Conference in New Orleans. I guarantee you will have both an educational and enjoyable time.

By continuing to host and attend conferences there, much needed revenue and commerce is brought into New Orleans. AALL and its members have a fantastic opportunity to add their voices and their strengths to history and the forward momentum New Orleans struggles to gain.

Halle Mikyska (MikyskaHalle@co.kane.il.us) is the director of the Kane County Law Library. She is on the Kane County Bar Foundation Board and is the current president of the DuPage Library System Board. For fun, she works part time as a reference librarian at the St. Charles Public Library.
Do You Have a Captivating View from Your Law Library?

Many law libraries have interesting or dramatic views of cityscapes, mountain ranges, or beautiful vistas. If your law library has a great view, this is your chance to share it with AALL.

In order to be publishable, pictures must be of relatively high quality. While we can work with a print, digital submissions are better. Digital submissions must be high-resolution (300 dpi). When scanning photos, set the scanner at high-resolution/print quality/300 dpi. When taking pictures with a digital camera, make sure that the camera is set to take the largest photo possible.

Depending on the number of submissions received, we will publish one or two photos in each issue of Spectrum and post them on AALLNET at www.aallnet.org/view/view_month.asp. Photos will be published on a first-come, first-served basis. Publication of a submitted photo is not guaranteed. If you have questions, or to submit photos, please contact AALL Director of Publications Julia O'Donnell at jodonell@aall.org.
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