

Proceedings of the Members' Open Forum

Conducted at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the
American Association of Law Libraries
Held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday Morning
July 19, 2000

¶1 **President Margaret Maes Axtmann** (University of Minnesota Law Library, Minneapolis, Minnesota): Now I call upon Tory Trotta who has agreed to moderate today's Open Forum.

¶2 **Ms. Victoria K. Trotta** (Arizona State University, Ross-Blakley Law Library): We now commence with the Members' Open Forum. May I remind you that the Open Forum provides members with an opportunity to raise and discuss issues without following the requirements imposed by parliamentary procedures. Action may not be taken during the Open Forum. However, issues may be raised and referred to the president for further action. I ask for those of you who wish to speak to come up to the microphone, identify yourself and your institution, and we will just rotate mikes. We will start with Greta.

¶3 **Ms. Greta Boeringer** (Covington & Burling, New York, New York): My name is Greta Boeringer. I'm a member of the Diversity Committee. I would like to commend Bob Oakley for his focus on the future, the future of this country, this world, and our profession as a diverse future, a future of increasing diversity. I want to express my concern in this forum about the "Core Competencies" and the fact that it did not include anything about diversity except something about the diverse technological savvy of the people that we teach.

¶4 From spending about two years carefully reading job ads and applying for some jobs, I realized that our employers are looking for a cultural competency. Most job ads are requesting people who are comfortable with diversity. We are facing increasing diversity in our faculties and in the student bodies that we work with. Certainly for those of us in public libraries, the patron base that we are serving and attempting to serve, and in our law firms, our attorneys and the staffs that we coordinate and work with are increasingly diverse.

¶5 As law becomes what they call globalized, we are having to deal with diverse vendors. Our ability to cooperate with, work with, and get what we need from the people that we are working with is incredibly important, and I think having diversity included in our core competencies is very important.

¶6 I've discussed this with the Diversity Committee and will be submitting some quite modest proposals that really work within the framework of what you have, making the language a little bit more inclusive. I just wanted to present this to the membership. Thank you for your time.

¶7 **Ms. V. Trotta**: Thank you.

¶18 **Ms. Janet Sinder** (Duke University School of Law Library, Durham, North Carolina): I want to convey my concern about the advertising on the name badges this year. I think this is one of the few things that we get for which you don't have a choice, you have to wear it, and I really think it's inappropriate for something that we get from the Association to have advertising on it. Thanks.

¶19 **Mr. Richard Humphrey** (Indiana University School of Law, Indianapolis, Indiana): I am president of the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries. On behalf of the nearly five hundred members of ORALL and at the request of ORALL's Executive Board and in the interest of furthering professional development opportunities in our Association, I would respectfully request that AALL appoint a special committee to investigate the feasibility of establishing a "B" list of cities for Annual Meetings. This would decrease the escalating cost of registrations and would increase the probability that more of our chapter members would be able to attend these meetings. We would suggest that consideration be given to attending at an "A" list city one year and a "B" list city the next. This would be very helpful in allowing particularly our county law librarians to be able afford to attend these meetings. Thank you.

¶10 **Ms. V. Trotta**: Thank you for your comments.

¶11 **Ms. Leah Chanin** (Howard University Law Library, Washington, D.C.): I wanted to follow up with what I think is a more comprehensive statement of the previous statement about the badges. To me that was just a tiny addition. You had to really look around to find AALL on them; you also have to look hard to find it on the *Spectrum* cover.

¶12 But I'm very concerned about the pervasive presence of LEXIS and Westlaw, to mention two in particular. They are the most pervasive. They are ubiquitous, and while I certainly respect their contributions to the Association, I think we should take a really deep look at what is necessary in the convention, what assists us in our deliberations, what is good for our social activity, and what we might eliminate in order to lessen such a pervasive presence of particularly these two vendors. Because they are overwhelming the convention in my opinion, and I almost begin to believe they are buying our soul. So I think we should really look carefully at what they are doing and how big they are and how little our presence is. Thank you.

¶13 **Ms. V. Trotta**: Thank you. Janis.

¶14 **Ms. Janis Johnston** (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Albert E. Jenner Memorial Library, Champaign, Illinois): I am treasurer of AALL. Many of us on the board share the concerns that have been expressed about retaining a balance between the Association's interest and the interest of our vendor supporters. During this coming fall, I will be working with the executive director and the Finance and Budget Committee to develop a set of policies to govern our relationships with vendors who wish to support Association activity. That document will be available to all members at a later date.

¶15 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Thank you. Anybody on this side? Okay, Sam.

¶16 **Mr. Samuel E. Trosow** (University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall Law Library, Berkeley, California): I, too, would like to address the question of the pervasive influence of the vendors in this convention.

¶17 I think the question of name tags is sort of what really brought it out; I think that is really where the line was crossed. A lot of the things you don't have to carry with you, but this is sort of a mandatory thing that must be attached to your body during the entire convention. I see some people covered it. I covered it with a sticker. I think some people covered it with a Minnesota thing. People came up with all sorts of creative ways of doing it. I think it is very inappropriate to put the name of one vendor on a name tag.

¶18 If part of our strategic direction number four is a diverse legal publishing industry, of course we want to maintain good relations with vendors, but I think we have to try to do it in such a way that it does not privilege one or two vendors above the rest. And if I was speaking on behalf of the small vendors, which I'm not, I would be very upset about it, too. I think there are a lot of small vendors that feel almost crushed by the power of the two corporations that are trying to control the flow of legal information.

¶19 It's not just a question of a name tag. It's the pervasive culture in its totality. It flows from just the presence. You can't separate it. If you look through the program booklet, those names are constantly coming up. I'm not saying there should be a ban, but I'm saying we have to make a very conscious decision in this organization as to what is an appropriate role for vendors, especially the large vendors, and where that is crossed. And I really would like to see the Executive Board and the program committee for next year take this up as a very, very serious item. And this in no way detracts from the very thoughtful comments that Bob Oakley made about how we have to really have this discussion with them. But I really think that it has to be two-sided and these concerns about the influence of certain organizations have to be taken into account. Thank you very much.

¶20 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Melody.

¶21 **Ms. Melody Lembke** (Los Angeles County Law Library, Los Angeles, California): I have mentioned this before, but I would like to mention again—and it has nothing to do with age—that I would like to have our functions recognized as being important enough not to have them at 7 A.M. When I became a member of this Association, I can remember attending conventions that had one speaker at a time and you could only attend those programs. Finally, we had multitrack programming which reached the diversity of interests of this Association. I would like to see recognized that a part of this group does most of its functioning in meetings, and I just don't function well at seven in the morning.

¶22 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Thank you.

¶23 **Ms. Rachel W. Jones** (Dickstein, Shapiro, Morin & Oshinsky, LLP, Washington, D.C.): About the badges, this is a comment and maybe it's a reflec-

tion of my age, but I would like to see us move to a first name only in nice big, bold letters so I can read it, and I would also like to see it rest somewhere above a woman's bosom, if you will, and a man's belly button.

¶24 **Ms. Marian Parker** (Wake Forest University School of Law, Professional Center Library, Winston-Salem, North Carolina): Marian Parker, Wake Forest University Law School, formerly with LEXIS and Matthew Bender, working with librarian relations in support of this organization.

¶25 I am not aware that any of the companies that have provided support to this organization have pushed an agenda of their own and asked to have certain things done. The companies have provided funding to support the programs that AALL has planned. There may be things . . . I personally didn't think about the badge but listening to what people say . . . but the funding for the opening reception, the luncheons, the research programs, the scholarships, the grants—all of these things that make it possible for us to do so many of the important activities of the Association—are being generously supported by many of our publishers. I would hate to see us cross the direction in the other way that interfered with our ability as a professional organization to forward our agenda.

¶26 **Ms. V. Trotta**: In the back.

¶27 **Ms. Prano Amjadi** (Santa Clara University, Heafey Law Library, Santa Clara, California): Approximately ten years ago, there was a resolution passed at the Annual Meeting regarding recycling and the Association's role with recycling. Two of the sections of that resolution had to do with having the ability to recycle materials that can be recycled, aluminum cans and glass, at the Annual Meeting. Another section was for Headquarters to look into using recycled material as appropriate. I just have not heard a lot about that or any sort of statements as to what the Association has been doing along those lines, particularly in regard to whether local committees are being made aware that this is something they should be looking into when they are dealing with convention centers—having these sorts of things done. So I just wanted to bring that up and hope that the people who are working on things for next year will look into those issues. Thank you.

¶28 **Ms. V. Trotta**: Thank you. Jill.

¶29 **Ms. Jill Sidford** (Shearman & Sterling, Washington, D.C.): Following on Bob Oakley's comment about his agenda for the coming year, although he didn't discuss this specifically, I'm hoping that he has included an examination of online sources that have changed from standard databases to Web-based sources.

¶30 It appears to me that with the transition from the traditional format of these, primarily Westlaw and LEXIS, licensing problems have arisen and the content of the databases is not clearly the same content as what we were formerly searching. It's significant because of equivalencies, knowing the content, the currency of the information, going from one file in what we consider the traditional database to what would seem to be the same file in the Internet-based database. It's also significant because as we delete hard copy subscriptions from our

libraries and we rely more and more on these online sources, we are depending on what the source is today. What are we going to do about this information that may have been lost from either our law library or various regional libraries because of the decisions we made based on what is in that database today? So I'm hoping that there will be some initiative at least to begin the investigation of how we can ascertain exactly what is in those files.

¶131 If you go to the vendor, they will tell you that you can look in the scope notes or the guide, but all of us who have used those know that they are not clear and even the documentation that is there is not specific enough to tell you about certain things that may not be included in the online publication as opposed to the print publication.

¶132 I think that this is a very important issue in terms of looking at libraries of the future and what is reality or a changing reality for us now. Thank you very much.

¶133 **Ms. V. Trotta:** I'll wait for someone from this side. Don't be shy. No one on this side?

¶134 **Mr. Julius Marke** (St. John's University Law School, Jamaica, New York): You may recall the proverb about the man who fell backward. He wanted to know where he was coming from rather than where he was going. As we rush pell-mell into new technology and virtual libraries, a scholar may one day want to know how we functioned. Somewhere we should establish what a traditional library was in the year 2000 so that in the year 3000 somebody can say: "Oh, that's how they operated. Interesting. How did they do it?" It's just a thought on my part, but perhaps we should be more involved.

¶135 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Thank you for your comment. Back to this side. You get two now since we had two over here.

¶136 **Ms. Elaine Blaxter** (University of Strathclyde, Andersonian Library, Glasgow, Scotland): I am the imminent past chair of BIALL, the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians. I want to thank everybody for a wonderful welcome for myself and my colleagues. We have had a very stimulating conference, and Philadelphia is certainly not like the American city that I had imagined. It's been an interesting experience.

¶137 As a point of information, going on from what Bob Oakley stated today, it may interest the membership to know that a BIALL project this year was sponsored by Maxwell. It allowed one of the academic members of our organization to carry out a piece of research, and it led to a publication called *Trends of Legal Information*. We actually surveyed our membership in all sectors, and very in-depth interviews helped identify where we are now and where we think we are going in the future. If anybody is interested in that publication, they can actually contact BIALL at www.biall.org.uk. Thank you.

¶138 **Ms. Anne Morrison** (Dalhousie University Law Library, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada): Good morning. I am president of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries and I would like to add my thanks to those of Elaine. We have both

been very privileged people for the last year, doing what presidents do. I want to thank you for your hospitality, and I must say how much I've enjoyed my association with Margie this year. Thank you, Margie.

¶139 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Ready for more comments. This is your opportunity to talk to the executive board. We know you have things on your mind.

¶140 **Ms. Sheila Stone** (University of LaVerne, LaVerne College of Law Library, LaVerne, California): This is my first year at the convention and I've really enjoyed it. I was frustrated several times, however, when I got to a meeting and, although I was not late, there were no handouts left. I wish there was a way that there could be enough for everybody, that we could more accurately try to guess how many people are going to be there. I guess it's kind of hard to accurately guess, but there were lots of times when I wasn't late that I missed something and it was kind of frustrating. Thank you.

¶141 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Thank you.

¶142 **Ms. Judith Meadows** (State Law Library of Montana, Helena, Montana): Judy Meadows for the Professional Development Committee. Following up on that comment, I think this is a reminder to our speakers and our program planners. When you are working with your speakers, make sure you get their handouts in time to put them in that booklet that gets bigger and bigger as a handout. That is why it is done, to help make sure attendees get their handouts. Planners can assist with that.

¶143 **Ms. V. Trotta:** We have somebody in the back. We will start with you.

¶144 **Ms. Iris M. Lee** (George Washington University, Jacob Burns Law Library, Washington, D.C.): Because Judy Meadows mentioned the big book, I want to say that the big book is very heavy. I don't know if we can repackage it, make it a loose-leaf book, or perhaps issue it on a daily basis with all the programs for a particular day so you don't have to carry a huge book. I saw some people had torn their books apart. I refuse to carry mine; I just take notes at sessions, and I will take it home and look things up in it. But it's very, very heavy; and you know we have to carry jackets or drapes because the rooms are cold. If we could reformat the binders, it would be a help.

¶145 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Let's try this side.

¶146 **Ms. M. Parker:** I wanted to add that I, too, believe we could publish the handouts that accompany each of the programs in a better way. All of us don't go to every program. If they were available at the AALL Web site, available in some downloadable form, or on a CD to take home and use, or just have the handouts at the program so that we pick up the ones from programs that we attend and then get the ones that we need that we weren't able to attend in an alternate format, I think it would benefit us in a lot of different ways.

¶147 **Ms. V. Trotta:** Thank you. Something over here?

¶148 **Ms. M. Lembke:** Not loose-leaf, but a daily book might not be bad because I do take them home. We add it to the collection. Staffers use them when

they listen to the audiotapes. I want them all, and I hope that we make a concerted effort to pick up the ones or add the ones that weren't in the book to an available source. There were some today that are in the book that didn't have a hand-out. Some way put all of this together, because I didn't carry it around either; it was just too big.

¶149 Mr. Robert Hu (Gonzaga University School of Law Library, Spokane, Washington): I have just heard from the Treasurer's Report that the Association is making plans for getting together something to strengthen the finances of the Association. We all remember a couple years ago when a proposal to increase the membership dues was voted down. I'm wondering how we are going to strengthen our financial shape without increasing the membership dues.

¶150 Ms. V. Trotta: Thank you.

¶151 Mr. Mark Estes (Holme Roberts & Owen LLP, Denver, Colorado): Let me follow up Marian Parker's suggestion by offering one additional revenue approach. That would be to make the program materials available in a salable format in a separate form. In that way individuals who could not attend the Annual Meeting—lawyers, other librarians—could buy the tape and buy a CD-ROM of the entire program materials. Of course, then they would need to raise the dues, too.

¶152 Ms. V. Trotta: Anybody on this side who wants to speak first?

¶153 Ms. Sarah Andeen (Greenberg Traurig, Phoenix, Arizona): One of the things that has come up is that a lot of people have been complaining about the program and how it is not fitting their needs. You hear a lot from the program planners about how it's really easy to propose a program and that sort of thing, and even if you don't want to go through all the work, just bring your idea to one of the program committees. Well, one of the things that might make it easy to do that is if you had a form here at the annual conference where people could just fill it out, drop it in a box, and the committee could go through those forms and maybe work up some of the suggestions into workable programs. People keep hearing, "just submit your ideas." Well, if you had a box and form for that sort of thing, people might be more willing to do that.

¶154 Ms. V. Trotta: Thank you.

¶155 Ms. J. Johnston: As treasurer, I would like to respond very briefly to the comment about increasing revenues that was raised earlier. I would like to encourage everyone to provide us with ideas about how we can add to our revenue sources. We will look very seriously at the issue of the dues increase, but we also want to look closely at ways in which the Association can become a bit more entrepreneurial in marketing our skills and talents and abilities to all of those outside of our organization who would like to know a lot more about legal information and legal research. So if you have ideas, please do let us know because we really do need to address the issue of funding for our operating budget. Thank you.

¶156 Ms. V. Trotta: Anybody else? It's noon already. So thank you all for coming and for your comments.