

AALL Spectrum

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Cover:

View of the Great Wall of China from the outskirts of Beijing. (photo credit Richard Leiter.)

from the editor

Patience and Preparation

The Knot under my right shoulder blade felt like just that: a mass of swollen, twisted threads of tissue. Its tightness radiated both dull and sharp pains in my neck and shoulder, which had me fearing arthritis. I imagined cutting that Knot would bring immediate release from the pain.

I recalled a Denver acupuncturist who had helped a few years ago with a whiplash-like injury caused by a bicycle accident. Hoping she knew someone in the East Bay, I called her—and got her voicemail. Forced to my own resources, I found a Chinese-trained acupuncturist only a few blocks from a BART station and home. More importantly, he could see me that afternoon.

After listening to my symptoms and observing me, he began the treatment with a massage. Starting on both sides of my neck, he worked down and out. It felt so good—except I noticed he avoided the Knot under my right shoulder.

In fact, he massaged everywhere else on my back and both arms while scrupulously avoiding that spot. As I practiced breathing, I realized he was preparing my body for the release of all that knotted energy. He was gently loosening the twisted threads until, one-by-one, he relaxed and untied the fibers. I imagined it somewhat like a spillway designed to guide overflowing water on a less destructive path.

That preparation also reminds me of how we as librarians must prepare our users/customers/patrons and staff for changes. While a change in format may seem inconsequential or of great benefit/merit to us, it may be a different matter to our users.

Consider, for example, Shepard's Citators. Learning to use Shepard's in print was a rite of passage for several generations of attorneys. Once learned, even the most experienced attorney, after years of not Shepardizing, could find the books and check a citation

themselves—provided the library had the books. Now, after years in practice without Shepardizing a case themselves, attorneys who need/want to do the task themselves find the books are gone, along with their ability to Shepardize. The research world changed while they were busy doing other things, and they were not prepared for that change.

Librarians prepared the regular researchers for online Shepard's and KeyCite but not all the other infrequent researchers. Looking back now, it is as if we failed to patiently identify and tie each thread of excellent customer service for every customer. Of course, weaving a net that catches every possible customer requires more resources than we can invest.

Instead, we must be patient and prepared when our decisions frustrate our customers. If we are, we may even be able to unravel their stress knots (somewhat like how my acupuncturist unraveled mine).

This issue should help prepare you for some of your own stressors: Karen Brunner



by Mark E. Estes

shares some ideas for National Library Week (page 8); Roger Skalbeck shows how to find copyright registration information (page 14); James Hart explores researching human rights law (page 16); Debbie Ginsburg, Meg Kribble, and Bonnie Shucha address the Web 2.0 challenge (page 28); Rich Leiter shares insights from a trip to China (page 10); and Karen Silber describes some of what we can expect at the AALL Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. (page 22) The *NOCALL News* column, "What are YOU reading?" by Nora Levine inspired this issue's "member to member" question. Follow www.nocall.org/publications.html to the *NOCALL News* link to read the column.

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