

AALL Spectrum

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from the editor

Reflections on Generations

Recently I attended my parent's 60th wedding anniversary celebration. While it was a smaller and somewhat quieter celebration than their 50th anniversary, it had a wider generational spread, including great-grandchildren as well as grandchildren. Watching the inter-generational interactions reminded me of the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., and the challenges facing multi-generational organizations—both within AALL and our individual institutions.

Remembering my frustration as a new law librarian at not being appointed to a committee, I've always tried to encourage newer librarians to share their voices and ideas. So it shouldn't have surprised anyone when, at the close of the Open Forum, I remarked on the dearth of younger librarians and gently castigated my generation for not encouraging them to attend the Business Meeting and Open Forum.

Perhaps also not surprising, some immediate re-tellings of my remarks suggested I had been castigating the younger members rather than the older members. I think I quashed that rumor by happenstance after talking to a Gen-X/Y/Millennial who probably tweeted my correction later that evening. Happily, some similar conversations led Jason Eiseman, librarian for emerging technologies at Yale Law School, to call me and suggest another form of mentoring called shadowing.

Shadowing involves taking turns playing shadow with your partner. Sometimes you follow and observe and sometimes your partner/shadow follows and observes. The idea intrigued me, but, being impatient, I didn't want to wait. "Perhaps we can shadow after the fact," I suggested. "You write 350 words about your experiences at the Annual Meeting and I'll do the same, and we'll see what happens. Ideally it becomes a *Spectrum* article."

Jason dutifully wrote 350 good words. I wrote well over 1,300 in my first draft. We shared and compared our journals, finding at first glance that no tension, energy, or story seemed to result from relating the two. We agreed that it was a failed idea.

Later, after sharing my initial disappointment with friends, I looked anew at the two journal entries. With that fresh view, I realized we both wrote about what we did. Jason wrote about using technology, specifically Twitter, to "look into other sessions and gain a perspective on unfolding events." I also wrote about using technology: in my case, e-mail to check in with the office and home, as well as thoughts about the programs I attended and of spending face-to-face time with colleagues.

Jason clearly distilled his experience more than I did. Still, our contrasting sets of activities may suggest what infrastructure can create successful cross-generational association meetings and new ways to serve our customers— for example, expanded and more robust wifi

access throughout meeting venues with a large pipe for video files, extensive power sources to replenish portable devices, and physical spaces for boomers to interact.

This thread of technology continues throughout this issue: David Whelan shares innovative technology ideas from small law libraries (page 16); Susan Herrick shows how video clips can communicate real-life research scenarios to law students (page 26); Barbara Fritschel discusses effective surveying techniques (page 14); James Donovan cautions against cavalier use of surveys (page 20); Femi Cadmus and Loretta Orndoff describe why and how to use the *AALL Biennial Salary Survey* (page 24); Jennifer Murray provides some guidance regarding working with the mentally ill in a public law library (page 10); and Cindy Spohr offers some excellent pointers for better presentations (page 8).

And finally, this month's "Member to Member" question "What movie has had the most influence your life?" (page 35) generated many emotionally compelling and inspiring responses. I learned more about my fellow law librarians and added some more movies to my must-see list. I hope the responses have a similar impact on you.



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