

10,000 Lakes, 1,000 Hands

The last 10 years have been a blur to many of us. We've taken on more and more responsibilities, leading to changed roles within our institutions. We've become more vocal to policy makers. We've watched the legal publishing industry become nearly unrecognizable. And we continue to struggle with describing and defining our profession.

When AALL President Bob Oakley and I met for the first time to discuss plans for the 2001 AALL Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, we were sure of two things: Our profession was changing faster than anyone could imagine. And we did not want to use the word *millennium* in our planning process.

AALL was in Minneapolis in 1990; meeting statistics will provide one of the bookends for the last decade of programming:

- In 1990, 44 Special Interest Section meetings, one Chapter meeting/function, 37 committee meetings, 56 programs, a Conference of Newer Law Librarians and two preconference workshops.
- In 2001, 111 SIS meetings, 20 Chapter meetings/functions, 57 committee meetings, 76 programs, four preconference workshops, Teaching Research in Court and Agency Law Libraries Conference and CONELL.

The last time AALL was in Minneapolis, programs included the first Annual Legislative Update, the Changing Structure

of the Publishing Industry, CD-ROM in Law Libraries and Beyond CONELL. In 2001 we are moving ahead in our investigation of our profession and the concerns we deal with every day. The five tracks for the 2001 meeting tell the story of our "New Realities, New Roles," the theme of this year's Annual Meeting. Each track was highlighted in issues of *AALL Spectrum*: agents of change (February), globalization (March), partnership (April), practitioner's toolkit and reinventing law librarianship (June). This year, we've moved from CD-ROM to e-books. From beyond CONELL to getting the salary you want — two sides of the same coin?

As an association, we have seen the concepts embedded in these program tracks expanded in recent board initiatives, strategic plans, Washington Affairs events, and moderated listservs and discussions. Membership categories have been broadened. Our professional publications have continued to develop and evolve. And we have continued to explore strategic partnerships. Our Washington Affairs office speaks for our members on copyright, preservation and access issues. Our members speak to both local and national legislators to influence pending legislation and incorporate librarian opinions on the record. The Professional Development Committee responds to member needs by developing and producing programming in diverse geographic areas.

What does all this rhetoric mean to you, the individual member attending your first or your 10th Annual Meeting?

All of these Association and member activities influence the content of the programs at the Annual Meeting. Members' concerns are noted via surveys, messages to leaders, conversations at board visits to Chapters and the SIS system. Programs are proposed by individual members, committees, task forces, SISs and Chapters. True partnerships among our member groups are reflected in the 76 programs offered in July. Program coordinators, moderators, speakers, Annual Meeting Program Committee liaisons, local arrangements and headquarters staff — at least 500 individuals — have worked together for more than 18 months to produce a set of programs that will help AALL members see where we're going in the next few years, if not the next 10 years. The owners of these 1,000 hands did a great job and each deserves a pat on the back. If a meeting is successful, it is due to the hard work, vision and cooperation of hundreds of people.

It is impossible to ignore what was written in 1990 as we look ahead. "This is an important time for AALL, one in which the role of professional associations is changing much as our own roles are changing in the places where we work," said Dick Danner, AALL president at the 1990 AALL Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, in the June 18, 1990, issue of the *Northwoods News*. I'll second that thought.

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