

## Proceedings of the Members' Open Forum

Conducted at the 96th Annual Meeting of the  
American Association of Law Libraries  
Held in Seattle, Washington  
Wednesday Morning  
July 16, 2002

¶1 **President Nicholson:** Please stay for the Members' Open Forum. May I remind you that the Open Forum provides members with an opportunity to raise questions 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 call upon Dwight King who has agreed to moderate today's Open Forum.

¶2 **Mr. Dwight King** (Notre Dame Law School, Kresge Library, Notre Dame, Indiana): Thank you, Carol. Folks, these can be depressing times. I'm still waiting for my money from Nigeria. (Laughter) And those other things advertised on the Internet, they don't work either. (Laughter) A friend of mine went for a bike ride with his eight-year-old son on Father's Day. As they pedaled along, the boy asked, "Dad, will I grow up to be rich and famous or will I end up like you?" (Laughter) I mean, you can't even dress up like a big hot dog anymore and run down the base-line of a baseball stadium without some guy whacking you with a bat. (Laughter)

¶3 Yes, these can be depressing times, but there is good news, because AALL always welcomes your comments about the Association, and thus we have the Members' Open Forum.

¶4 Are there any questions about my jokes? No? Then let's begin. Please use the microphone nearest you and tell us who you are before you tell us what's on your mind.

¶5 **Ms. Alva T. Stone** (Florida State University College of Law Library, Tallahassee, Florida): I have a couple of questions regarding the ease of communication with AALL. One of them occurred to me this year when I sent in my contribution to the George Strait Minority Scholarship—get one more plug in there. Call me old-fashioned, but I didn't send an electronic funds transfer; I didn't give the Association my credit card number. I did it the old-fashioned way; I wrote out a paper check and addressed an envelope. I might have even addressed it by hand because I don't have a secretary.

¶6 What I want to know is why doesn't AALL show its zip plus four code on its letterhead or in any of its publications? This device was invented by the United States Postal Service twenty years ago, and it's supposed to help direct mail more efficiently and accurately, reduce handling, and significantly decrease the potential for human error and possible misdelivery. It leads to better control over USPS costs and, in turn, stability of postage rates. Every time I address something to the

Association, I wonder why we just have the five-number zip code. It's a minor detail I know, but it bothers me.

¶7 The other question I have relates to accessing the Association's Web site. It's been a couple of years since I was a chair of an SIS or a committee, and I get lazy or forgetful and sometimes I key in AALL.org instead of AALLNET.org. I'm just wondering if we have registered the alternative domain name AALL.org, because I don't think anybody else owns it. And if we have registered it, why can't we create a URL forwarding device so that using that domain name—using that URL—we can get to our Web site. Maybe somebody has already addressed that question and can answer it.

¶8 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you, Alva, for your questions. Yes?

¶9 **Ms. Maryruth Storer** (Orange County Public Law Library, Santa Ana, California): I have several comments about the possible revision of the site selection policy for Annual Meetings. It's been said that now that we have a professional exhibit manager and such wonderful people at headquarters—and they truly are wonderful—that there is not as much need for members living in or around the city where the meeting is being held to volunteer their time. I served on the 1998 Local Advisory Committee when the meeting was in Anaheim, and I know we still do ask our members in the area to contribute quite a bit of time. If we limit our meetings to just five or six cities, we could run the risk of burning those people out.

¶10 The other comment I have is that our current policy has a regional rotation, and as it is those of us on the West Coast bear the brunt of the furthest travel distances most of the time, which is not only a higher cost issue, but a jet lag issue. Even under the site selection policy, in a four-year period, between 1997 and 2000, three of our meetings were in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. So I think it's really important to keep the regional aspect so that at least once every five years those of us on the West Coast can look forward to a meeting in our own time zone. I've also enjoyed traveling around in my years in AALL. It has given me a chance to see places I might not otherwise have gone. I think we ought to think about that, too. Thank you.

¶11 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you, Maryruth. Yes?

¶12 **Ms. Janine Miller** (Great Library, the Law Society of Upper Canada, Toronto, Ontario): I'm the president of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries, but I am also a full-fledged individual member of this Association and have been for a very long time. My suggestion or request to the Board is that when you send out surveys that you want all members to complete, you either don't send them to foreign jurisdictions or if you intend to have foreign members complete them, you allow space on the survey which so indicates. It's very annoying when you get halfway through a survey that takes forty-five minutes, and then you find it asks you which state you're from, and then you don't know what to do with the rest of it. I just threw out the salary survey after having gone through that process. If it's only relevant to have U.S. information, exclude us from the mailing list or else put in a slot to say foreign. Thank you.

¶13 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you. Yes?

¶14 **Mr. Stuart Zimmerman** (Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, Portland, Oregon): I'm here with LaJean Humphreys and Jacquelyn Jurkins to comment on the site selection process for the 2008 conference. It has been sited in Portland. That was done without the knowledge or input of any Portland area librarians. So first off, I would encourage the Association to look at the process to see that this does not happen again.

¶15 Secondly, I would encourage the Association to build a bridge by starting a correspondence with the Portland area librarians to let us know what we can expect. There are some downsides to having the conference in Portland in terms of logistics and practical things. We're very curious to know what accommodations are going to be made to cover those things. Information has not been particularly forthcoming, and we'd encourage the Association to start communicating. Thank you.

¶16 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you.

¶17 **Ms. LaJean Humphries** (Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt, PC, Portland, Oregon): I want to second Stuart's comments. I think we all greatly appreciate the work of the Seattle arrangements committee. I think they did a tremendous job. We understand that about seventy-five people spent hundreds of hours working on making this a very successful and wonderful conference.

¶18 For those of you who may not be aware, the state of Oregon does not have seventy-five law librarians. There are probably only 150 librarians total in the state. So to expect Portland even to have the bodies to do the work, even if they have a lot of support from AALL headquarters—well, it is going to be quite a miracle for us to accomplish that. So I agree with Stuart. There needs to be more communication and a little more thought involved in the site selection process. Thank you.

¶19 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you. Yes?

¶20 **Ms. Marie Erickson** (Law Library of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana): I would like to second Maryruth's support of having a regional rotation. I'd also like to say that, particularly for newer members, aside from the pleasure of going to a new city and being a tourist for a little while, it's very important to go on library tours to see how other libraries handle things, even if the lesson you learn is, "Oh, my God, let's not do that." I think that if we go to a rotation of five or seven cities, whatever the number that is being bandied about, we will lose that very valuable educational part of the conference, and I'd be very disappointed if that happened. Thank you.

¶21 **Mr. D. King:** Anyone else? Yes?

¶22 **Ms. Monica Martens** (National Indian Law Library, Boulder, Colorado): I would just like to thank AALL for assisting us in holding two meetings this year for people who work in the field of federal Indian law and tribal law. We've had two fantastic meetings, the Native Peoples Law Caucus and also a group of librarians who are interested in collaborative collection development, in addition to four

scheduled sessions on Indian law. We're just so happy to have had such a great meeting. It's going to be up to us to continue this energy, but there has been a lot of energy created. Thank you.

¶23 **Mr. D. King:** Yes, Mark.

¶24 **Mr. Mark Estes** (Holme Roberts & Owen, Denver, Colorado): Regarding site selection of Annual Meetings, I chaired a committee last year on the Annual Meeting program selection process. As part of that process, we looked at attendance at Annual Meetings. It's particularly important to note, in the context of what we heard earlier today about the financial importance of the Annual Meeting to our revenue stream, that what we found in looking at Annual Meeting attendance was that it appeared to be largely and heavily driven by how far away the bulk of our members are. If you put it in a region where there are more members, more members attend. When we move it to a different region, the attendance drops. Take a look at the numbers for Indianapolis or Philadelphia. The difference is almost completely parallel to the number of members within those two different geographic regions.

¶25 We have to realize that the times have changed. The Association depends upon the success of Annual Meetings not only to provide us all an opportunity to come here together, but also so it can continue to fund the other activities that we depend upon. If we don't have members coming, vendors don't participate in the exhibit hall. If they don't come to the exhibit hall, we don't make as much money and we have to raise the registration fees. It is important that we put the meetings where the members will attend. I am confident that despite blips and hard feelings that we have right now, that we will look past this and find it will be successful. Thank you.

¶26 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you, Mark. Yes?

¶27 **Ms. Carol Billings** (Law Library of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana): Thank you, Dwight. I would like to second what Mark says. I certainly agree in part with Maryruth and Marie that we'd like to move around the country and see different places and give an opportunity for various groups of members to assist in the planning, but I think it is possible to sort of do both. I think we really need to take into very strong consideration the economic impact of being in places where there are many members, to take into consideration that some cities have far more convenient facilities for us, ease of transportation, the location of convention centers and hotels, things of that sort, that make it a pleasant experience and cause more members to attend.

¶28 I think it's possible to go to a limited rotation of five, six, whatever number of cities, and still take into consideration the wisdom of being in specific places rather than extending the places within that region where we can go. I hope we will give very serious consideration to all these factors and not have a knee-jerk reaction and reject this idea before considering all the implications.

¶29 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you, Carol.

¶30 **Ms. Jacquelyn J. Jurkins** (Multnomah Law Library, Portland, Oregon):

First, I'd like to say that Portland was somewhat against the decision when we first found out that the 2008 meeting was to be held in our city. There are forty law library association members in the state of Oregon, excuse me, Oregon. And probably I should say the "state of Portland" because it is the largest city there.

¶31 But be that as it may, we also checked the criteria for site selection, and we didn't feel we met any of them. If you come, we'll be happy to do what we can to give you a warm welcome; but we are very concerned that we will not be as successful as many of our meetings have been in the past. I am well aware that the Annual Meeting has to support the Association.

¶32 So I'm hoping for two things. One, that the committee seriously reviews the site selection process. Two, that the Association involves the membership earlier where they expect to meet and just improve communications. Thank you.

¶33 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you for your comment. Yes, Carol.

¶34 **Ms. Carol Bredemeyer** (Salmon P. Chase College of Law Library, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Kentucky): I'd also like to support the rotation system for conferences. I think it will also help us in an economic area where the cities know that we will come every five or six or however many years. We might be able to negotiate lower hotel rates, thereby making the meeting less expensive as far as out-of-pocket costs to our institutions and members.

¶35 The Association of American Law Schools uses a rotation of meetings every so many years, and these cities know they come back and they get great hotel rates—a lot better than we're getting at this meeting, for example. So I think that there would be some definite economic benefits, not only to the Association, but also to our pockets.

¶36 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you, Carol. Yes?

¶37 **Ms. Karen E. Westwood** (Minnesota State Law Library, St. Paul, Minnesota): I'd like to change the subject.

¶38 **Mr. D. King:** That's fine, you can do that.

¶39 **Ms. K. Westwood:** This year, for the fifth year running, the Social Responsibilities Special Interest Section sponsored a book drive to benefit needy public schools in the whole city. It's the SIS's attempt to give back a little something to the city that hosts the Annual Meeting. This year's theme was "Bookless in Seattle." The books and money generated by this drive will go to a school that teaches children in transition and homeless children. If you still would like to contribute to the drive, you can make a check out to AALL with "Book Drive" in the memo. At this point, you might as well send it directly to AALL headquarters. Steve Ligda knows what to do with it. Thank you.

¶40 **Mr. D. King:** Yes, go ahead.

¶41 **Ms. C. Billings:** A modest proposal for the future. At the opening luncheon I was a little disappointed that when the distinguished guests were recognized, it was done in a very general sort of way. They were not named, they were not introduced. I've heard some other people agree with what I'm about to say. I feel that when we are inviting special members of the host community to come and be

with us, when they make the time and effort to honor us by being there, I think we should recognize them a little more specifically and have a chance for them to stand up and be recognized. I hope we will take the couple of extra minutes it takes to do that.

¶42 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you. Yes?

¶43 **Ms. Theodora Artz** (University of Dayton, Zimmerman Law Library, Dayton, Ohio): Back to the host city question. It's obvious, from an organization of this size, that we're somewhat limited in our choices of cities anyway. But when people talk about distances being critical, it is critical, but it's not the only factor. It may be that cities like Indianapolis and Orlando, fairly or not, were perceived by some as not having much to do and not having a comfortable climate; things like that which really had nothing to do with distance. I do agree that it is fair to move it around somewhat, in that it would control distance and cost of travel, but it does seem fair to have a limited selection of cities because we're limited anyway.

¶44 **Mr. D. King:** Thank you.

¶45 **Mr. Samuel E. Trosow** (University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario): I know that it's important for us to sell a lot of expensive hotel rooms, because that way we get some of our overhead taken care of, but I think it's counterproductive in the long run not to really go out of our way to alert our membership, especially our lower income membership, people who are not in upper management, people without budgets such as students, that there are alternative types of sites available. Last year in Orlando I stayed at a hotel that was all the way at the end of the strip. It was about half the cost of the other hotels. It was not listed as one of the conference hotels. I looked in the elevator and realized it was owned by the same company which owned hotels that we were going to be paying twice as much to stay at. We can't do that to our members.

¶46 Every summer universities all over the country have dorm rooms that you can get for \$30 or \$40 a night American. So it's a little cheaper than some of the hotels. I really think if we want to increase attendance at these things we have to look at the housing options. It's not just a question of your airfare, in terms of how much distance you have to come, it's the cost of housing if we're going to have a five-day conference. I'm so thrilled to hear that the library school students are joining in larger numbers. We have to make a concerted effort to get people like that to these conferences. That's where our future membership is coming from.

¶47 So please, I know that we're under a lot of pressure from the hotels and the convention centers to sell premium, high-price rooms, but I think we also have to make low-cost options available. Frankly, I've given up on using the housing service because I know that I can get cheaper rates just going to the hotel directly. I don't think that's a service to our members. Thank you.

¶48 **Mr. D. King:** Yes?

¶49 **Ms. Elizabeth M. McKenzie** (Suffolk University Law School, Boston, Massachusetts): Regarding what Carol Bredemeyer said, comparing AALL rotating cities to AALS, one important point is that AALS does not have local arrange-

ments committees. They do not count on their local members to do a thing for the conference. That's an important thing, because we do.

¶50 You can hear in the Oregon librarians' comments real concern about whether it is going to be a viable meeting because there are so few of them to carry this burden. We're looking at Boston coming next year after a nine-year absence, and there are many of us in Boston so that makes it viable. If Oregon only has a few members statewide, that's going to be tough for those people. So I think it would be at least a courtesy to notify the local librarians when the committee is thinking about deciding to hold a meeting in their area.

¶51 **Mr. D. King:** Anyone else? Well, I guess that concludes today's Open Forum. Thank you for coming and thank you for your comments. (Applause)