

**Proceedings of the Members' Open Forum
Conducted at the 100th Annual Meeting of the
American Association of Law Libraries
Held in New Orleans, Louisiana
Monday Afternoon
July 16, 2007**

¶1 **Mr. James Heller** (College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia): As the agenda says, the open forum gives you an opportunity to raise questions, discuss issues, without following the requirements imposed by parliamentary procedures. The only procedures are those which I impose from the podium. Action may not be taken. Issues may be raised and referred to the president or to the Executive Board or to anybody you want, because your comments will be noted. We're recording, so if you want to speak, please come to one of the mikes that is working and say your name and your institution. The only rule I have is you can't discuss the weather, either inside or out. You can't discuss Scooter Libby, and you can't discuss New Orleans politics. (Laughter.) You can discuss things like the conference schedule, the educational programs, the volunteering, institutes or the lack thereof; anything related to law librarianship, and that's it. The floor is open.

¶2 **Ms. Carol Billings** (Law Library of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana): On behalf of all my dear friends here in the Social Responsibilities SIS, and especially my partner, Alison Alifano, I would like to thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for the way you have supported our book drive. It has been absolutely phenomenal. I think you all know because there's been a lot of announcements that the book drive this year is to benefit the libraries of the New Orleans Recovering School District, and most of those schools suffered terribly and either lost their libraries completely or have a lot of damage. At this point you and a couple of our generous vendors, but primarily—this is the wonderful part—just plain old members like you and me already have donated \$7000 in money and gift cards, and we have huge heaps of books, boxes here and at my library and ones that have been sent to the school district. Tomorrow we think that the guy from the school district is coming to pick up the heaps here, so we may actually be running out and putting the arm on some of you to help carry the books out too, but we are just so gratified by what you've done. Thank you very sincerely.

¶3 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you. More? This is your chance. Any comments about the schedule, the conference schedule?

¶4 **Mr. Joseph A. Hodnicki** (University of Cincinnati College of Law, Robert S. Marx Law Library, Cincinnati, Ohio): I will probably get booed for doing this. About twenty-five years ago we discussed moving the date of the conference so that it would be easier for more law firm librarians to attend. I'm an academic librarian now, but when I was a law firm librarian, summer was the busiest time of the year; new summer associates coming in, new analysts coming in. It's very convenient for us academic librarians to take this time of year, but it's also easy

for us to attend a conference in January, and it would be much easier for law firm librarians to do that. I know that that issue died many decades ago, but I think maybe it should be revisited again. That's all I have.

¶5 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you, Joe. We could have it like for four consecutive weekends in July, maybe? Just an idea.

¶6 **Mr. J. Hodnicki:** Well, that won't work for the firm librarians. This is the busiest time of the year with new people coming in, to be particular that they know how to do research and learn if they don't, but I'm sure those of us who go to AALL in early January could also find time in the second week in January. That would be convenient for law firm librarians to also attend. I think we would get more law firm librarians, and I think we're losing out on their contributions by having it in the summer. Thank you.

¶7 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you. Next?

¶8 **Ms. Maria Protti** (City and County of San Francisco, San Francisco, California): I would like to thank Ron Wheeler and whoever else helped out in getting our group connected with Habitat for Humanity. I heard some good things happened there in helping people to reconstruct their houses, and I just think that's a wonderful thing that AALL was involved in that.

¶9 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you. I could mention that Second Harvest was another volunteer opportunity here in New Orleans during the conference.

¶10 **Mr. James P. Walsh** (Mercer University Law Library, Macon, Georgia): Regarding getting law students interested in becoming law librarians, I don't know if the Association's ever considered a fund to set up a book award for students who achieve high grades in legal research or legal research and writing; maybe could do it with a publisher, West Publishing or something, to give those students an award and possibly get them interested in becoming a law librarian. Thanks.

¶11 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you.

¶12 **Mr. Charles Dyer** (Consultant & Retired Public Law Library Director, Bellingham, Washington): Although I am now a retired law librarian who does some consulting and research, I am still very active with AALL. I would like the Association to consider the fact that many Baby Boomers will be retiring in the next few years, and yet still will be quite capable physically and potentially financially to come to AALL meetings and to contribute to the Association's endeavors and to continue to work hard for various things that the Association does, and in that regard I think it might behoove the leadership of the Association to do some thinking and some strategizing with regard to how that tremendous resource might be employed.

¶13 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you, Charley.

¶14 **Ms. Ann Hemmens** (University of Washington Gallagher Law Library, Seattle, Washington): I just want to say a special thank you to the AALL staff for supporting the community service projects. Without the help of Heidi Letzmann and Pam Reisinger and Steve Ligda, this really wouldn't have happened, so my hat's off to you. Thank you very much for helping with that.

¶15 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you, Ann. Anything else? Education programs, schedule, the weather? Nothing? Initiatives? Go ahead, Carol.

¶16 **Ms. C. Billings:** I think we've all discovered since this is the first year of the shortened schedule that there have been a lot of conflicts with social events that we customarily go to in the late afternoon or early evening. I assume a lot of this happened because many of the groups which arrange these events were unaware of when some of the other groups were going to have their things at the time they had to finalize their dates, especially because the loss of a whole day meant that many groups had to change from their traditional nights.

¶17 I would hope that in the future there will be the possibility of some coordination perhaps, where people can be more aware of who else is planning on having something at a particular time, so we don't have multiple groups with lots of common members being torn between what to go to, where it's impossible. Maybe there's some way there can be some bridge where some folks in the chapters at SIS and other groups can kind of get together on this before their times are set in stone.

¶18 **Mr. J. Heller:** There is some kind of electronic means of communicating a tentative program or something like that. Mark?

¶19 **Mr. Mark Estes** (Holme Roberts & Owen, Denver, Colorado): Charley made me remember a different line about retired librarians. I think we all know librarians who ought to retire. We have too many of our members who are psychically departed from work, but yet they are still physically present. We need to find a way to encourage these members to have fun and leave librarianship, so their lives will be better.

¶20 **Mr. J. Heller:** Thank you. Are there any that you'd like to recognize now? (Laughter.) There will be an article in the *AALL Spectrum* about that.

¶21 **Ms. Marianne Alcorn** (Arizona State University Ross-Blakley Law Library, Tempe, Arizona): I would like to comment about the hotels. When we are setting up the contracts, with all the business we're giving to a hotel that's a convention hotel, it seems like they should let us use their gyms when we're visiting. Can we can ask our people who do the contracts to also somehow get us into the gyms.

¶22 **Mr. J. Heller:** Okay.

¶23 **Ms. Leslie Campbell** (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Washington, D.C.): Although I'm past chair of the Social Responsibilities SIS, I'm not speaking for the SR at this point in making this comment, but we have discussed it. The fact that we have only one business meeting now makes me concerned that this is going to lead to a chilling effect on the bringing of resolutions. I know some people may breathe a huge sigh of relief in hearing that, but it's a very important forum for discussion. We've talked a little about remedying the situation with some online e-mail exchange when there is a resolution coming up, and I think that's a good solution if it has to be a given that there will only be one meeting.

¶24 But very often discussion happens because you're here, you're present, you're thinking about the issues, and that's the great value in being at this meeting. We're all here together, issues come up, discussions are had. The fact that a resolution maybe has been made at the first business meeting, people have come to maybe consider lobby talk and then it's discussed the second, is an ineffective way to have a discussion, and I think we're short-circuiting ourselves, our institution, and our members by not having groups, and I'm a Penny Hazelton graduate and she always said you have to go to the "meetings," all of them. They're very important as a member. Thank you.

¶25 **Mr. J. Heller:** Now, you just have to go to the meetings. Is there a substantive issue you want to bring up? I mean, a topic for a resolution? I don't know.

¶26 **Ms. Christine L. Graesser** (Brown, Rudnick, Berlack, Israels LLP, Hartford, Connecticut): I think that part of the problem may be that we don't know what the procedure will be. Maybe as we're working out and feeling our way through this shortened schedule, we should figure out how we can accommodate resolutions, because right now it just doesn't seem like it's very feasible—we've only got one chance.

¶27 **Mr. J. Heller:** So I assume that's an issue that the Board can address, how to get resolutions in front of the Association. Ann?

¶28 **Ms. Ann Fessendon** (U.S. Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit Library, St. Louis, Missouri): We're looking into it.

¶29 **Mr. J. Heller:** Anything else? Come on. This is your chance. Okay, we're done. Thank you.

[Whereupon the Open Forum concluded at 4:39 P.M.]