

# CONELL; A New Librarian's Key to AALL

by Jennifer S. Murray

The Conference of Newer Law Librarians was an indispensable experience for newer members of the profession who attended the 2001 AALL Annual Meeting and Conference in July. CONELL introduced new law librarians to the association by helping them learn firsthand how to become involved with AALL and reap the benefits of membership.

CONELL is the best means to establish a social and professional bond between new law librarians. Let me use myself as an example. I spent three years in law school bonding on a social and professional level with my fellow students. I then graduated and went on to practice law, and my fellow students became my fellow attorneys. These experiences provided a connection to the state bar association.

But I did not cultivate

that same connection to AALL during my library science studies. Had I not gone into law librarianship, I would have discovered the same camaraderie with my fellow library science students.

However, I chose a different career

path than any of the other library science students at my alma mater. As a result, until I attended CONELL, I did not feel that same connection to other new law librarians. This, of course, is just my story. Every law librarian enters the profession with his or her own unique perspectives and experiences.

Some law librarians have library science degrees. Some have law degrees. Others have neither degree. Some worked in law libraries before, while some are now working in law libraries for the first time. Regardless of a law librarian's background, CONELL allows new law librarians to learn and socialize with others who are also just entering the field. The participants learn about what the

profession can offer. They gain the camaraderie that they likely were not developing before they entered the profession.

So how did this year's CONELL build a connection between the new law librarians and AALL? First, the participants learned about the profession by meeting leaders in the field. We were introduced to AALL President **Bob Oakley**, *Law Library Journal* Editor **Frank Houdek** and Chair of the AALL Annual Meeting Program Committee **Kathie Sullivan**. Listening to leaders in the profession provided invaluable insight into AALL. The participants then broke into discussion groups where we discussed the future of the law librarian. Would we be necessary? The lively discussions that ensued allowed

us to quickly learn more about each other. You will be relieved, I am sure, to learn that we unanimously decided that law librarians would be necessary in the future.

Next, a panel of speakers discussed tips and advice for job success, AALL volunteer opportunities

and how to conference. **Rachel Jones** of Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky LLP encouraged us to become *visioneers*, a combination of visionary and engineer. She detailed how volunteering generates creativity. This creativity allows the individual to be flexible and adjust more easily to new situations in the workplace.

**Tim Hunt** of the Supreme Court at Rochester, N.Y., taught us how to be successful in our jobs by being SMART: S: smile, M: market yourself, A: appreciation, R: remember names, T: talk less. **Kelly Browne** of the University of Connecticut School of Law Library gave us tips on how to negotiate our way through the AALL conference. She explained what tools she used to make the best use of her time,

including printing out the conference schedule from the Internet to identify ahead of time and highlight those functions that we want to attend. She also recommended taking a nap each day. She was right. I did not follow that advice, and I came back from the conference very tired.

During the second half of the day, participants were treated to a gangster tour of St. Paul, Minn., by bus. There were two separate tour buses. My bus was entertained by a local tour guide in character as Nina Clifford, the notorious madam of a local brothel. She pointed out the local apartment building where John Dillinger stayed and had a wild shoot out with the police while he was in Minnesota. We were impressed by the architectural feats of the Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Governor's Mansion (and, no, Governor Jesse Ventura does not reside there). The tour also included a visit to the 90-year-old federal courthouse, which is now called the Landmark Center and is used for performing arts and historical exhibits. (I also saw Snoopy and Charlie Brown along the way.) Finally, the Wabasha Street Caves, a local nightclub that used to be a speakeasy during Prohibition, was a unique, and very cold, building deep in the side of a mountain. The man-made caves are allegedly haunted. (To read more about the caves, go to the Web site <http://www.prairieghosts.com/castle.html>.)

At the end of the day, participants appreciated the value of CONELL. With its professional programs, networking opportunities and social events, CONELL is a new law librarian's key to the profession. By attending the conference, I discovered the many doors that AALL can open for me. I look forward to next year's conference, meeting new colleagues, and becoming reacquainted with colleagues that I met this year. My thanks to all the CONELL speakers, participants, and CONELL Committee Chair Al Podboy Jr. for their work in making the event a wonderful experience.

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