What advice do you have for first-time AALL Conference attendees?

“I have been to about 30 conferences and look forward to each one, from the professional learning opportunities to meeting vendors and especially to seeing past and present colleagues and meeting new ones. Here are my seven suggestions for successful newbie conference goers:

“(1) Attend CONELL. The people that you meet can be life-long colleagues as your professional life evolves.

“(2) Look at the program in advance and select one or two sessions that interest you, even if they are just a bit outside the scope of your current job.

“(3) Socialize, and don’t stay in your room at night. There are lots of events, including free ones, to meet people and have fun.

“(4) Spend time in the Exhibit Hall to see the range of products and services that are available to different types of law librarians.

“(5) Attire: Bring comfortable shoes. You will be on your feet a lot. For daytime, business casual is fine. Bring something a bit more dressed up if you attend the Closing Banquet.

“(6) Try to set aside a few hours to see the city. You may never get back there again.

“(7) Rest up beforehand. You will be tired by the time that you go home.

“BONUS suggestion: Consider shipping conference materials, vendor handouts, and souvenirs back home rather than stuffing them in your suitcase or carry on.”

— Martha Goldman, library services manager at Jones Day in New York City

“Don’t be shy to meet new people, and do buy the CDs for the programs you liked and the ones that you missed. Visit those vendors—you never know what new trends are emerging; it’s a changing environment. Record and summarize what you learn each day. Evenings are good for this—I keep mine in my PDA, and they extend back to 1997. They have proven helpful to me countless times.”

— Kevin L. Clanton, library director at Clark County Law Library in Las Vegas

“Last year was my first ever AALL Conference. The best advice I can give to first-time attendees is to participate in everything offered to never members. Take part in CONELL, sign up for a mentor, and volunteer. All of these opportunities provide information and the chance to network and connect with others in your area of concentration. Second best piece of advice: pack snack bars and water. The conference can get busy, and one needs to eat.”

— Sara S. Repinski, acquisitions librarian at the University of South Carolina Coleman Karesh Law Library in Columbia

“Go to one program not related to work but related to something you like or want to learn about. You never know in this business what you don’t know or when you will need it. And, following your bliss for one hour on the boss’ dime is not wrong either. Hang out with your local friends; but also make a friend with someone in another type of library or another region of the country. The larger your network is, the better your connections in the future. You can’t do that on the listserv or in Facebook. And, you may learn something, too, about other aspects of this legal business we’re in.”

— Lucy Curci-Gonzalez, director of library services at Kenyon & Kenyon LLP in New York City

“Eat a good breakfast, stay hydrated, and wear comfortable shoes.”

— Julia Sosnowsky, Pepper Hamilton LLP in Detroit

“Don’t gossip or talk trash in the elevator—you never know who you’re riding with... and may meet at the next job interview.”

— Ellen J. Platt, senior reference librarian at Santa Clara University

“Like everything else in life, the Annual Meeting is about balance. Balance professional education with enjoyable socializing; balance exploring the vendor booths with exploring the city; and balance planning out your whole meeting before you leave with having the flexibility to change your well-laid plans.”

— Danielle R. Francis, librarian relations consultant at LexisNexis in New York City