

## Proceedings of the Members' Open Forum

Conducted at the 97th Annual Meeting of the  
American Association of Law Libraries  
Held in Boston, Massachusetts  
Tuesday Afternoon  
July 13, 2004

¶1 **President Johnston:** 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 Merle Slyhoff who has agreed to moderate today's Open Forum.

¶2 **Ms. Merle J. Slyhoff** (University of Pennsylvania Law School, Biddle Law Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania): I'd like to thank you all for staying for the Members' Open Forum.

¶3 Earlier today, I attended a program titled "The Centennial Bar is Now Open." And during that session, many leaders of the Association and the profession talked about their careers and the Association as it was a number of years ago. It was the perfect segue for what we are about to discuss now.

¶4 Already today you have heard a number of people speak about the new strategic direction that will be developing over the course of the next year. This will help us focus on where the Association will go. But we need information before we can do that. And one of the most important pieces is where our members want the Association to go.

¶5 There are some handouts in the back that say "AALL Strategic Direction" on the top. This lists the questions that we will be looking at this afternoon. If for some reason you feel that you need to develop your thoughts rather than express them here today, feel free to fill out this form, mail or fax it back to me, or send me an e-mail. There also will be many other opportunities during the course of the year for you to express your opinion. For example, we'll have a moderated list that will be focused on different membership types in the Association.

¶6 When you speak today, please identify yourself and use the microphone. We are taking notes on all the various things that you say, but please don't think that if you mention something that you will necessarily see your idea in the final product. We are going to take every thought, every idea we get, digest them, and put together a document that will serve our membership in the best way possible.

¶7 Please don't feel that you need to answer just the questions that I'm asking, but here are a few things to get you thinking.

¶8 You all know that AALL currently has many projects, programs, and initiatives underway. We are looking at new strategic directions, ways to move us forward. What should we keep in our new strategic direction that we're currently doing? What would you like us to continue doing?

¶9 **Ms. Judith Meadows** (State Law Library of Montana, Helena, Montana): I think that everybody in this room would probably agree with me that our initiatives in Washington, advocacy on information policy and other issues that are important to the Association and law librarians in particular, should definitely be continued. (Applause.)

¶10 **Ms. M. Slyhoff**: When you're thinking about what to carry forward, it could even be the activities that committees are doing because as you're developing a strategic direction, of course you're looking at the current committees, trying to determine if we need new ones, if there are ones that we should redesign. So make your thinking broad as you're thinking about this. I'm going to go on and ask the next question, but that doesn't mean that you can't think of something along the way and answer a previous question.

¶11 I think the membership's goal and the Board's goal for AALL is to continually move the Association forward. So as a follow up to what initiatives should we continue, what new initiatives should we be looking at? Are there new topics and new areas that we should be addressing in a new strategic direction? Think about what your particular committee, chapter, or SIS is doing. Is it something that the Association as a whole is not currently doing?

¶12 **Ms. Ellen J. Platt** (Santa Clara University, Heafey Law Library, Santa Clara, California): We've been sort of batting this idea around, and it certainly hasn't gotten to any kind of structured level yet. But I've been cold-called a couple of times by people from the local library tech programs looking to place students, and I have also talked to some students seeking practicum opportunities from the library school. It occurred to me that maybe at the chapter level, at least, NOCALL or any chapter could facilitate this by talking to its members to get them to think about that five-, ten-, twenty-, or fifty-hour project that they never had the money or staffing for, that they'd never hire anybody else for. The chapter could look at the practicum guidelines and create a listing of possible places in which students could be placed. Students could look at the list on the chapter's Web site, pick one out, and then draft the proposal or the project in a way that would fit into their practicums.

¶13 This would be a good way for the academic relations people to reach out to the chapters. It would then be our payback to library schools and tech schools. And it also would create this pool of known potential employees and make regular library students more aware of law libraries.

¶14 **Ms. M. Slyhoff**: Thank you.

¶15 **Mr. Robert L. Oakley** (Georgetown University Law Center, Edward Bennett Williams Library, Washington, D.C.): Many of our members are now in the process of reinventing their libraries. We had some initiatives on this in the

past, such as the report of the futures committee, which have helped to lay out some of the things to think about. We know what some of the background is to the rising prices, the development of technology, a lot of different things going on that are causing it. But I think it's going to be something that continues to go on, and it's something that our members are going to continue to need support with.

¶16 **Ms. M. Slyhoff:** Thank you.

¶17 **Mr. Paul D. Healey** (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Albert E. Jenner Memorial Law Library, Champaign, Illinois): I want to follow up on Ellen Platt's comment. One of the things that I think we, as an organization and a profession, are facing and are aware that we're facing is an increasingly chronic need for new law librarians. As an organization, we need to be very coordinated in how we approach that issue and how we go about trying to resolve the problem.

¶18 One small part of that, which connects to what was said earlier, is that we are the one national library association that has almost no presence in library schools. SLA, ALA, all the rest have student chapters that tend to be fairly active. We do not. And we need—not from a chapter level or an SIS level, but from the national organization level—a way of getting to the library schools, making ourselves known to library students, letting students participate in the American Association of Law Libraries.

¶19 In my mind, that includes having a presence in the library schools. Many of us are on campuses with such schools. We could probably manage to organize student chapters, perhaps have a student membership rate and a student rate to the conference, which the other organizations do. It's not the only thing we need to do to bring people into the profession, but it's a crucial thing that we could be doing but are not doing now.

¶20 **Ms. M. Slyhoff:** Thank you.

¶21 **Ms. Carol Bredemeyer** (Northern Kentucky University, Salmon P. Chase College of Law Library, Highland Heights, Kentucky): To follow up on what Paul said, just this last semester, our chapter arranged to provide cookies to the University of Kentucky Library School students during their final exams. You know, especially those of you in law schools, how much food will attract people. So this is one way we've started to try to do that. I would suggest that some of you also try to do it in your chapters.

¶22 **Ms. Janice E. Henderson** (Covington and Burling, New York, New York): The Law Library Association of Greater New York has had a mentoring program to the local library schools for several years now, which has been very successful. If any chapters would like to start their own programs, get in contact with one of us and we will be glad to tell you how we did it. Also, this past spring, we spoke at two library schools, Queens and Pratt, again mentoring the students and also telling them about the practicalities of being law librarians. So we are doing great things in New York. Thank you.

¶23 **Ms. Laura Ray** (Cleveland State University, Cleveland Marshall College of Law, Cleveland, Ohio): Also following up on this line, I applaud the organization for

its diversification of educational programming format. I would urge that we continue to diversify and try to come up with some additional formats to provide our young people or folks who have not presented before with some new and different ways for presenting, such as poster sessions, fifteen-minute podium presentations that might be packaged together on a topic, etc.

¶24 **Ms. Lajeane Humphries** (Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt, Portland, Oregon): Speaking on my own behalf, I would like to say what you should keep is the great educational programming. I think that's one of the real strengths of AALL. And speaking for many of my law firm colleagues in Portland, Oregon, I want to bring up the topic of 2008 when AALL will be coming to Portland.

¶25 **Ms. M. Slyhoff**: Could we possibly hold that? We are going to have time at the end where we'll have just general discussion. But rather than lose the momentum of speaking about—

¶26 **Ms. L. Humphries**: Thank you.

¶27 **Ms. M. Slyhoff**: But please come and bring that issue back.

¶28 **Ms. Marnie Marie Warner** (Massachusetts Trial Court Libraries, Boston, Massachusetts): Following up on what Judy Meadows said, I'd really like to see a media campaign on why law libraries are needed in this country at all. I think in some ways the Florida situation is not unique, but what we can do as a national organization is to say that law libraries are needed and why. We should think big. Why can't we get in *Time* magazine or something national like that with the message that there is a need for a democratic society to have access to its laws? (Applause.)

¶29 **Mr. Paul D. Callister** (University of Missouri-Kansas City, Leon E. Bloch Law Library, Kansas City, Missouri): This last year I was dropped as a new director into a library in the middle of being reviewed by the ABA. And one of the concerns I developed was that we are in a period where we need to redefine how you measure a library—not just on the basis of the ABA standards, but in terms of what information our reviewers are looking for.

¶30 In my case, I found the ABA to be a great friend and ally. But we spent an enormous amount of time on easy-to-identify issues such as how many hours our reference desk was open and not nearly enough on exploring the issue of how integrated the library was in the education and research missions of the library. I'm wondering if that's a topic—how you measure a library and how that plays into the ABA review—that could be pursued with earnest by the organization.

¶31 **Ms. Carol D. Billings** (Law Library of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana): Yesterday we were all delighted in seeing Shirley David receive the Gallagher Award. We heard of Shirley's great accomplishments, the way she had reached out to the judges on her board, and were thrilled to learn that it was they who had nominated her. I think that was a wonderful example of how reaching out to the people we serve can develop the kind of appreciation and regard for law librarians that we all lust after so much.

¶32 I hope we will continue to do a better and better job of bringing the people whom we serve to our meetings to see how great our fellow members are and

to experience the outstanding educational programs that we present. I think any time any of us have had chapter visitors and speakers from our home territory, they have always gone home raving about how impressed they were. I hope we can do more and more of that.

¶33 **Ms. Kit Kreilick** (Fordham University Law Library, New York, New York): I wanted to follow up on the comments about educational programming to say that it's time for the Association to start webcasting many of the programs we do at our Annual Meetings. This will allow those who cannot attend these meetings to take advantage of the learning that goes on here. It will also make them available for the future so that new staff members can take advantage of good programs that have been offered in the past. This is really a great educational resource. We need to be using the existing technology, especially now that it's getting cheaper. (Applause.)

¶34 **Ms. M. Slyhoff**: In her report, Susan Fox referred to a situation in which money was no object and we were the "shining city on the hill." What would your ideal Association look like? Let's make believe we won the \$ 45 billion lottery and money is absolutely no object. What would it look like?

¶35 **Mr. Luis Acosta** (Law Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.): If money wasn't an object, then it would be nice to have an AALL staff member who is focused solely on marketing and public relations. As far as I know, none of the current staff members' job descriptions really are concerned with presenting law librarianship or the importance of law libraries to our democracy. If we had an extra \$100,000 laying around, we could hire somebody to do that. That would be great.

¶36 **Ms. Alison Alifano** (Sullivan and Cromwell, New York, New York): If we had all the money we needed, I would have two conferences so that more staff members could attend because often only a few people can go. It would be nice to have another conference at another time of the year so that other people could also take advantage of the educational programming that they can't now.

¶37 **Mr. Scott L. Fisher** (Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, Woodbridge, New Jersey): If we had all the money in the world, I'd like to see us do a joint meeting with the American Bar Association so that they could see us in a different light than they currently do. (Applause.)

¶38 **Mr. Stephen Good** (Texas Tech University School of Law Library, Lubbock, Texas): If we had all the money in the world, I'd like to have the opportunity to do more site visits to other law libraries—any kind of law library. I just want to see how people actually go about their everyday work, what cool things they've integrated into their day-to-day life that we should consider.

¶39 And if I could make a bit of a confession, I had the best intentions of going to all kinds of programs here in Boston. But I keep bumping into great librarians, and I just end up talking with them in the hall. And it's like—"whoops, missed that session." I realize that we have e-mail, we have listservs, we have newsletters. We have all this stuff. But there's just something about actually talking to another librarian from another part of the world, even a different type of library altogether, just talking

about everything—what’s going on in the world, what’s going on in the world of legal publishing, what’s going on in librarianship, how much houses cost in San Diego.

¶40 There’s something that happens face to face talking to another librarian that can’t really be replicated on the phone or through e-mail. There’s just a casualness. There’s a . . . “Oh, cool, I didn’t know you were interested in that.” It develops just because you’re standing there and you’ve got some time to chat.

¶41 So if we could get more opportunities to meet other librarians one on one, that would be great. I would love to be able to take our entire library staff to visit another library that’s doing things radically different or that’s a lot older than ours or a lot more technologically advanced than ours and just have everybody in our library talk to their corresponding person in the other library.

¶42 **Ms. Stephanie Davidson** (Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Library, New Haven, Connecticut): I’d say if money wasn’t an object, we should take all of the technology that we use in our work in teaching and draw it into the conference. We use Internet access, we use a lot of technological materials when we teach. And yet we can’t use them effectively in conferences. That includes Internet access to presenters, Internet access to attendees.

¶43 **Ms. Rita T. Reusch** (University of Utah, S.J. Quinney Law Library, Salt Lake City, Utah): If we had all the money in the world, it would be really nice if we could use it to free ourselves from such incredible crippling dependence on the vendors to put on these events. (Applause.) I know that we need them in this day and age, but it’s really troubling. It’s hard for us to try and function objectively when we are doing it that way.

¶44 **Mr. R. Oakley**: One of the things that many of us have concerns about are issues related to the legal publishing industry. AALL has done some experimentation with alternative methods of scholarly publication. It would be really interesting to see us begin to explore more opportunities for that kind of thing in the legal publishing world as well.

¶45 A second item that occurs to me is that there’s so much going on with globalization, which we’ve been reminded of by the theme of this conversation here in Boston, that we ought to probably be doing more to reach out and incorporate the issues of globalization into our programs.

¶46 **Ms. Mary Whisner** (University of Washington, Marian G. Gallagher Law Library, Seattle, Washington): If money weren’t an object, I wish we could do more outreach for underserved groups. Yesterday I went to an excellent roundtable on serving prisoners and pro se patrons. There are people out there who are doing great things, sometimes in county law libraries or state law libraries, modestly in some academic libraries. But if we, as an association, had money maybe we could do more outreach or somehow help get people to the legal information that they need.

¶47 **Ms. Carol Avery Nicholson** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Law Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina): Well, I’ve never had all the money in the world. I really can’t think in those terms. But one thing did occur to me when I was talking to a vendor yesterday. That person happened to mention something that I

think we are all aware of. And that is the fact that those of us in academic law libraries try our best to help prepare our students to go into the firm environment. But there seems to be something on the other end that doesn't quite work. So what I'd like to suggest is that we communicate more between different types of libraries to make sure that we are doing everything that we can to ensure that our future lawyers are ready when they go into the firms. I'd like to see more communication between firm librarians and academic librarians and court librarians to make sure that we're all doing our part, and to have educational programs through the Annual Meeting to enhance that process.

¶48 **Mr. Jonathan Franklin** (University of Washington, Marian G. Gallagher Law Library, Seattle, Washington): I have two things. One would be—expanding on Carol's point—to look outside law libraries to other types of specialized libraries and other types of general libraries and see what we can learn from them by meeting them face to face in an interactive situation.

¶49 Secondly, I would love to expand the Washington Affairs Office to get the legislative and the judicial impact of what we can do out into the local communities.

¶50 **Mr. Mark Estes** (Holme Roberts & Owen, Denver, Colorado): You asked for a vision on the hill. It's a vision that can't be defined by a single item. It is not so different than what we have now, mind you, but it is all of us working together in ways that Carol hinted at, of all of us cooperating together.

¶51 To me, though, it starts with public access. Access means not just that the information is at a terminal but there is an informed and skilled librarian available to assist the user to understand and to use the tool.

¶52 There are educational programs, frequent educational programs, adapted to the changing needs and demands of us and our users, things that we can do in a short turnaround time. Three to six weeks is as long as these have to take. They must be equipped to meet our needs.

¶53 It is an organization that is building and expanding its diversity so we have new members, matching society's rapidly changing face. It is a community that provides consulting services to ourselves, to each other, and to those who would use us if they but knew about us.

¶54 **Mr. Scott Matheson** (Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Library, New Haven, Connecticut): Just to kind of underline and tie together these points, if we had unlimited funds, we could set an example of working together between academics and private firm libraries and state, court, and county libraries to help underscore the skills that people need to go out and practice law on a day-to-day basis. It would help, perhaps, set an example for the people who run my law school and the people who run Mark's law firm to talk to each other about how to better educate the folks we turn out of law schools.

¶55 **Ms. M. Slyhoff**: I think we could probably continue on this topic for a long time, but we want to make sure in our half hour that we do have time for you to raise other issues. As I mentioned in the beginning, there will be many opportunities for you to help us strategize. And as you see the e-mails and discussion lists come up, I strongly

urge you to respond to them. If you think of anything, contact any of the Board members or Susan Fox at headquarters. The information will get to the right people.

¶56 So I thank you for all your comments. But now I would like to open it up—we have about ten minutes left—for just general comments. And I want to make sure that the person who was going to raise the issue—is she still here? Yes. Thank you. I couldn't see you.

¶57 **Ms. L. Humphries:** AALL will be in Portland in 2008. The other day I took one of the wonderful tours of Boston, and the guide talked about one of Boston's more notorious mayors who coined the phrase, "vote early and vote often." With that in mind, the downtown law librarians in Portland would like to recommend that you reserve your room for 2008 early and often. There are seven hotels within one mile of the Oregon Convention Center. They have a total of 1417 rooms. Thank you.

¶58 **Ms. Camille Broussard** (New York Law School Library, New York, New York): I would like to thank all of our Texas colleagues at the local arrangements table for next year's San Antonio meeting for so patiently, professionally, and civilly reminding us all that the great state of Texas is not just the home of George Bush. It is also the home to many great law librarians, many great libraries, and, of course, home to Molly Ivins, Lyndon Baines Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson, Lloyd Bentsen, Sarah Whittington, and Ann Richards. I look forward to a great 98th Annual Meeting in the Lone Star State and thank them for preparing to welcome us. (Applause.)

¶59 **Ms. M. Slyhoff:** Are there any other issues that anyone would like to raise at this time?

¶60 **Ms. C. Billings:** I can't miss the opportunity to offer a little commercial for our upcoming centennial. A year from now, we will begin the celebration because even though the big festivities will go on in St. Louis in two years, it's going to be an all-year celebration with many, many activities going on throughout 2005–06. Our committee is mainly just going to be suggesting, coordinating, trying to help with some of the organizational aspects. But the success of this centennial will depend on all of you suggesting programs and activities and having things going on globally and in chapters and in your libraries.

¶61 We're going to be sending out some suggestions and ideas very soon. I know you've already picked up some things, like tool kits here. Please be on the lookout for announcements and opportunities. We will be thrilled to have your ideas about ways that you would like to celebrate.

¶62 **Ms. M. Slyhoff:** You're on, Camille. I saw her run back up just as she sat down.

¶63 **Ms. C. Broussard:** I need to amend the record. I forgot perhaps the greatest Texan of all, Barbara Jordan. (Applause.)

¶64 **Ms. M. Slyhoff:** Are there any other comments at this time? (No response.) Well, I highly encourage you to watch out for the strategic direction, get involved, strategize, and have a great rest of the year. (Applause.)

[Whereupon the Open Forum concluded at 3:35 P.M.]