

Animal Law Caucus Annual Report 2015-2016

Major activities for the Animal Law Caucus (ALC) for 2015-2016 included hosting a guest speaker at the ALC business meeting in Chicago, sponsoring therapy dogs at the AALL Annual Meeting, and ongoing outreach both face-to-face at the Annual Meeting and virtually, via online discussion list, website, and Facebook. ALC Officers for 2015/2016 were Nancy Babb, President; Shaun Esposito, Vice President/President-Elect; Wendy Moore, Secretary; and Xiaomeng “Alex” Zhang, Member-at-Large. ALC committees include Bylaws, Education, Legislative, Nominations, and Public Relations.

The Education Committee, chaired by Stacey Gordon, submitted a program to the AALL Annual Meeting Program Committee, titled, “Context Matters: Service and Assistance Animals Under Federal Law,” to be presented by renowned animal law scholar Rebecca Huss, Professor of Law, Valparaiso University. Unfortunately, the proposal was not accepted. Happily for the Caucus, Professor Huss generously agreed to attend and give her presentation at the ALC Business Meeting instead. This meeting was held on July 17, 2016 to a standing-room-only enthusiastic audience. The Caucus will continue to pursue programming at future Annual Meetings. The Caucus sincerely thanks AALL colleagues Joseph Mitzenmacher and Debbie Ginsberg for their assistance with technology at the meeting.

For the first time this year, the Caucus sponsored and hosted therapy dogs and their handlers in the Exhibit Hall throughout the Annual Meeting. ALC member Coral Henning initially suggested the visits and researched therapy animal groups in the Chicago area, contacting Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy. Rainbow provided three dogs and handlers during the Opening Reception on Saturday and two dogs and handlers during the Exhibit Hall Break on Sunday. Nancy Babb also contacted local court comfort dogs via the national Courthouse Dog Foundation; dogs and handlers from the Lake County and Will County State’s Attorney’s Offices attended the Exhibit Hall Break on Tuesday. The dogs displayed the different skills they use in their work and the handlers answered questions and shared information. The Member Services Pavilion provided a helpful and manageable centralized location for the visits, and the Caucus greatly appreciates the assistance of AALL staff. Feedback about the dogs has been very positive, both from AALL members and from the visiting groups, both in person and via social media posts. The Caucus hopes to continue to sponsor therapy animal visits at future annual meetings.

The ALC participated in the CONELL Marketplace at the 2016 AALL Annual Meeting. ALC members staffed the table, distributed brochures, promoted the therapy dog visits, and answered participant questions. Members also created displays and handouts for an ALC poster in the Exhibit Hall.

All Annual Meeting activities were supported by the Public Relations and Education Committees. The Caucus would like to recognize the work of Casandra Laskowski in creating graphics and promotional materials for the Caucus.

The ALC continued to maintain and enhance the ALC Web site at: (<http://community.aallnet.org/animallawcaucus/home>), led by the Public Relations Committee and Webmaster Cynthia Condit, and to network via Facebook at: (<https://www.facebook.com/Animal.Law.Caucus/>). Prior to the Annual Meeting, members created interactive maps highlighting vegan/vegetarian dining in the Chicago area; after the meeting, members created albums for sharing Annual Meeting photos via Facebook, Google Drive, and Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/kaxxie/sets/72157668438873044/>). All attendees are encouraged to continue to share photos, especially of the therapy dogs.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Babb
President, 2015-2016