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# Partners in Law

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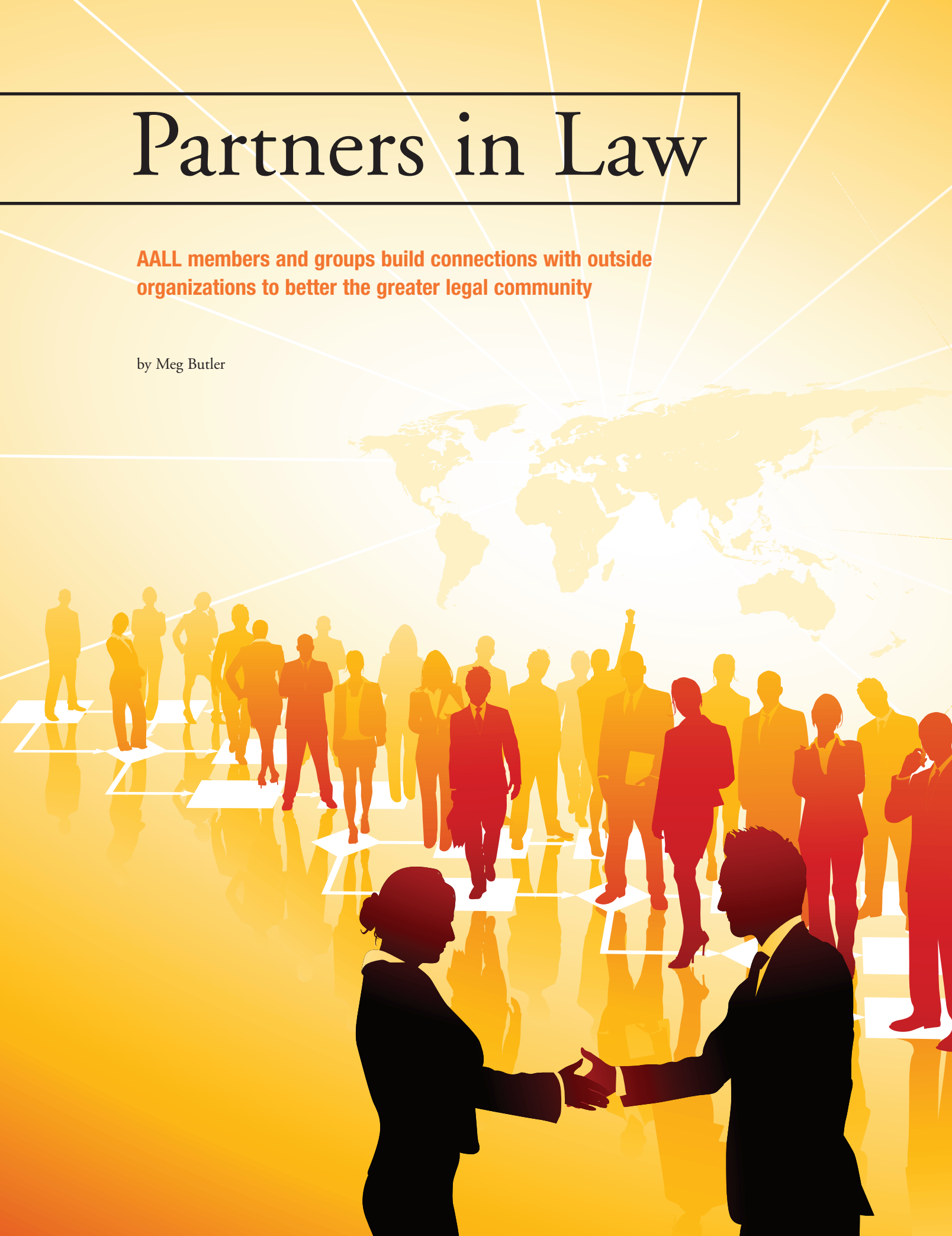
Meg Butler, Partners in Law, AALL Spectrum, Feb. 2009, at 28.

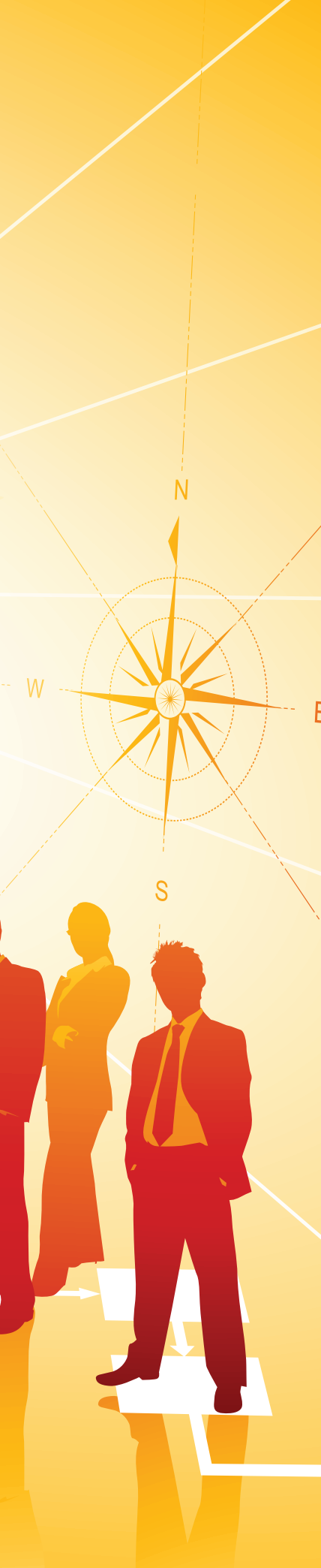
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# Partners in Law

**AALL members and groups build connections with outside organizations to better the greater legal community**

by Meg Butler





Lending their expertise to such causes as computer-assisted legal instruction, patent information, and Chinese law libraries, AALL members and groups consistently reach out beyond the profession to forge relationships with other members of the legal community.

While these projects ultimately further the strategic goals and the mission of the Association, they also increase the standing of librarians and law libraries in the legal community and beyond. And individual AALL members gain opportunities to learn, grow, and achieve meaningful goals outside their profession.

"For the first time in the history of United States and China, a conference on the state and development of legal information and law libraries of the two countries is to be held in Beijing, China," say Janis L. Johnston and Frank Y. Liu, American co-chairs of the Steering Committee for the China-U.S. Conference on Legal Information and Law Libraries. "American participants will be able to witness the enormous progress that China has made in multiple dimensions, including the modernization of its legal system and the development of its legal information. Through the conference programs, participants will learn about the Chinese legal information systems and interact with Chinese law librarian colleagues."

Johnston and Liu are very enthusiastic about the opportunity to develop a coalition of law librarians and legal information professionals from the United States and China to share experiences and exchange views regarding legal information development and law library management.

The conference steering committee members have been very involved in working with government and academic representatives to plan the conference. Among the conference planners' goals, the American law librarians will provide advice and consultation in organizing law library professional organizations in China, as well as assisting the Chinese law library profession to develop educational programs to train law library workers.

AALL and the International Association of Law Libraries (IALL) are cosponsoring the conference. The conference will support the needs of members of both organizations, and it

will provide opportunities for members to learn and grow their knowledge and skills. Jules Winterton, president of IALL and associate director and librarian of the University of London Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, will promote the conference among IALL members and to other librarians in Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, and Hong Kong. The efforts and support of IALL will enrich the experiences of all conference participants.

The synergy of the Chinese and the American conference planners reflects the value and power of cooperation. A number of conference steering committee members have a history of maintaining cooperative and exchange relationships with major Chinese universities. From those relationships, both American and Chinese steering committees and advisory boards were established, with the members building on the mutual trust and long-term cooperative working relationships to plan the conference.

Conference planners expect that bilingual proceedings of the conference will be published. "It is planned that a permanent joint institute on legal information and law librarianship may be established to plan for future conferences and promote cooperative exchange programs between the two countries," says Liu.

The cooperative work of AALL with other organizations is not limited to the international context. On national levels, AALL has a formal representative program in which AALL members are appointed to represent AALL's interests and concerns with other organizations. The recently renamed Government Relations Office works closely with a number of organizations to promote AALL's core values. On both local and national levels, special interest sections of all stripes work with organizations and support AALL representatives as they work with organizations of all type.

### Team Advocacy

Mary Alice Baish, director of the AALL Government Relations Office, works on a number of projects with other organizations to promote AALL's core values and goals regarding legal information policy. She frequently participates in chapter meetings to increase AALL members' awareness of the Association's legal information policy concerns.

While recently speaking at an event sponsored by the Law Library Association of Greater New York (LLAGNY), Baish addressed AALL's concerns regarding public information on government Web sites. Government information, such as statutes, cases, and regulations, are increasingly available on the Internet. Baish notes that, while increased free public access to the law is valuable and important, improvements are needed to assure that primary sources accessed digitally are authentic. She also explains that confusion exists regarding cases, statutes, and regulations published online. Users relying upon the online versions may wonder: Are they "official"? Are they accepted by courts as official, just as official print versions are accepted?

In March 20007, AALL published the groundbreaking *State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources*, analyzing whether state online legal resources are official and authenticated. The report found that state online legal resources are not always identifiable as official, that print versions may be seen as "more official" than online versions. Also, the report found that state online legal resources are not authenticated. As states move to make online legal resources the sole official published source for primary legal documents, such as statutes and regulations, AALL believes that the online legal resources should be as trustworthy as any documents that may have been published as official print versions in the past.

Because lack of authentication presents a problem not only to law librarians, but to citizens who seek the convenience of online access to legal resources, AALL convened a National Summit on Authentication of Digital Legal Information. A number of collaborative efforts were sparked by the summit. Delegates to the summit included members of the judiciary, the legal community, state governments, and AALL leaders. Following the conference, the issue has been covered by the American Bar Association (ABA) Legal Technology Resource Center, *The Judges Journal*, and *Green Bag*. The Association of Reporters of Judicial Decisions (ARJD) recently revised its statement of principles regarding "Official" On-Line Documents.

The Government Printing Office (GPO) is taking a lead role in providing access to authentic online legal resources. An authenticated collection of online public and private laws of the 110th Congress is available, as well as the 2009 Budget of the U.S. Government. Beginning with the 111th Congress, bills will be authenticated as well.

On the suggestion of Commissioner Michele L. Timmons, Minnesota Revisor of Statutes, and with the encouragement of then AALL President Ann Fessenden, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) convened a study committee on authentication of online legal resources. NCCUSL appointed Timmons to chair the Study Committee on Authentication of Online State Legal Materials. Under her leadership, the committee will investigate the need for and feasibility of drafting and enacting uniform state legislation providing for the authentication of state online legal materials and for the preservation of records of those materials.

Former AALL president Barbara A. Bintliff, Nicholas Rosenbaum Professor of Law and Director of the University of Colorado William A. Wise Law Library, was appointed to the study committee as an observer. She explains that the study committee has met by teleconference and that she expects the committee to make its report late next year. "I'm pleased, gratified to find out how well-regarded AALL is among the group of commissioners," says Bintliff. "Our responsibility as librarians is to help people find and use legal resources," and the study committee is relying on the *State-by-State Report* as a "guiding document for their deliberations," she adds.

### Formal Representatives

To formalize AALL's relationships with partner organizations and to benefit AALL members, the AALL Executive Board formally appoints representatives to a number of organizations. The representative program helps assure that groups whose activities and policies could affect AALL member libraries are aware of the needs, goals, and thinking of the Association.

AALL representatives fulfill their charges in ways that best match the needs of the organizations with which they work. They also file annual reports, informing the Executive Board of the work that they have done. Information about the representative program, including representatives' annual reports, is available on AALLNET.

CALI, the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction, is one organization that has a formal representative. CALI seeks to advance legal education through computer technology. Many law schools are CALI members, encouraging their students to take advantage of CALI's online lessons in specific legal topics.

Kristina L. Niedringhaus, law library director and associate professor of law at Cleveland State University, serves as the

AALL representative to CALI. Reflecting the natural connections between CALI and the Academic Law Libraries Special Interest Section (ALL-SIS), Niedringhaus also serves as the chair of the ALL-SIS CALI Committee. The committee's members also populate the Legal Research Community Authoring Project Advisory Panel, a CALI committee responsible for reviewing legal research lessons available on the CALI platform and for identifying areas that need additional lessons.

"CALI sees it as a great opportunity to get the expertise of law librarians, and that's a great way for law librarians to promote themselves," says Niedringhaus. She notes that John Mayer, CALI executive director, and Deb Quentel, CALI director of curriculum development and general counsel, "are very innovative and have a mindset that they want to know what law librarians think would be helpful." CALI relies upon librarians to create lessons on legal research that it can publish on its platform.

As an AALL representative, Niedringhaus says that she tries to consider the AALL strategic plan and more formally think of ways that the Association can benefit from its relationship with CALI.

Representatives are also appointed to the American Bar Association (ABA). Mary Alice Baish is the AALL representative to the ABA Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress. Baish's appointment reflects AALL's commitment to raising the profile of the Law Library of Congress.

For nearly 10 years, Baish has been working to improve funding for the Law Library of Congress, and she has also worked to support the library's annual budget request. The 110th Congress saw the introduction and reporting of H.R. 6589, the Lofgren bill, which would have established a separate line item for the Law Library of Congress and authorized additional appropriations for the operation of the Law Library of Congress, including cataloging. Although the clock ran out on the Lofgren bill, Baish says, "Our hope is to continue to work with the ABA in January and find a sponsor for the bill on the Senate side."

Barbara Bintliff is also the representative to the American Bar Association (ABA) Council of the Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar. As the accrediting agency for law schools, the council develops standards for law schools, addressing requirements for curriculum, foreign programs, and libraries, among other things.

Many organizations have formal

representatives educating the council on issues relating to law school accreditation. As the representative for AALL, Bintliff attends all council meetings and presents reports on AALL activities and communicates the AALL position on issues. She notes that it is “very important to be at the table.” As the representative, Bintliff is able to emphasize librarians’ expertise in legal research, strengthening the council’s respect for law librarians. “I try to keep the unique contributions of law school libraries at the front of their consciousness,” she says.

## IP Partnership

Special interest sections also work to promote AALL and the work of its members. The Private Law Libraries Special Interest Section (PLL-SIS), for example, has an intellectual property group that works very closely with the Patent Information Users’ Group (PIUG). “More and more law firm librarians are becoming members of PIUG and are going to their meetings,” says past PLL-SIS Chair Lucy Curci-Gonzalez, director of library services at Kenyon & Kenyon LLP. “There’s been a lot of synergy of us bringing the IP law aspect and them bringing the scientific and technical aspect,” improving the knowledge and training of all who attend PIUG meetings and conferences.

PLL-SIS Intellectual Property Committee Chair Paulette Toth, information services manager at Kirkland & Ellis LLP, notes that many of the PIUG members are employees of pharmaceutical corporations or industry, rather than lawyers and law librarians. At PIUG, law librarians have worked to raise awareness with vendors about patent research issues that may be different for law librarians.

“We’re trying to get our voices heard, to get vendors to address our needs that differ from those in industry,” says Toth. Some of those needs are administrative, such as transactional billing and the ability to track product usage for bill-back purposes, and some are technical, such as training needs.

To help encourage the relationship between vendors and law librarians, Toth moderated the first patent information vendor panel at the 2008 AALL Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon. She asked the vendors “real nitty gritty librarian questions,” and the vendors and the librarians were able to network and identify needs and services. Vendors are now seeking Toth to offer their support for local programs, such as a recent program on chemical patent searching offered in New York City.

Curci-Gonzalez also notes that the PLL-SIS fosters relationships with other

organizations. For example, the PLL-SIS has a “Very Important Participant” (VIP) program. Through that program, the PLL-SIS invited former Legal Marketing Association (LMA) president Kevin McMurdo and Rachael Loper, chair of LMA’s Strategic Alliances Committee, as guests for the 2008 AALL Annual Meeting. The PLL-SIS paid for the VIPs to attend the conference and provided stipends to offset their costs in Portland. According to Curci-Gonzalez, Loper was impressed with the depth of the liaison program, and she hopes to create similar opportunities in her own organization.

## Helping to Provide Equal Justice for All

The State, Court, and County Law Libraries-SIS (SCCLL-SIS) takes another approach. Instead of financially supporting visitors to attend the AALL Annual Meeting, in recent years the SCCLL-SIS has raised money to send its members to participate in the annual Equal Justice Conference. Barbara L. Fritschel, librarian for the U.S. Courts Library, is coordinating the 2009 silent auction that the SCCLL-SIS conducts to fund travel grants for members to attend professional conferences such as the Equal Justice Conference and AALL Annual Meeting. The annual Equal Justice Conference is sponsored by the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association. The auction begins online in mid-June and continues at the SCCLL-SIS meeting during the Annual Meeting.

The funds raised at the 2008 AALL Annual Meeting will support two SCCLL-SIS members to attend the 2009 Equal Justice Conference in Orlando. Marcus Hochstetler, law librarian and director of the King County Law Library and SCCLL-SIS chair, explains that supporting members to attend conferences is really important. “Those who have attended Equal Justice Conference have said how valuable the experience was and have continued to participate on the local or national level,” he says.

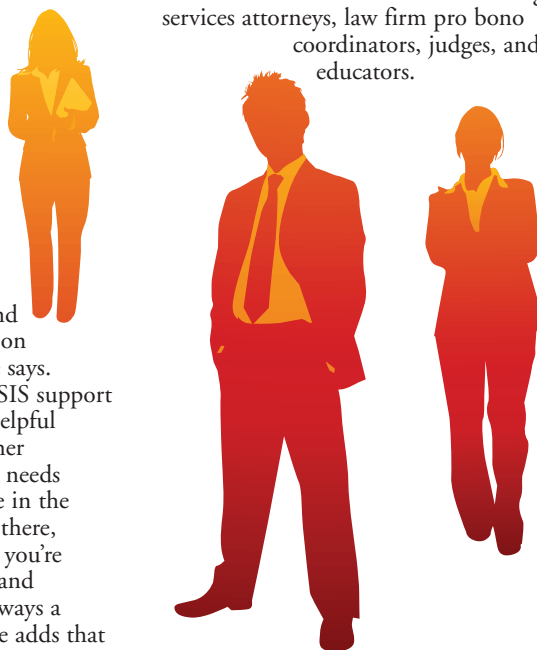
Hochstetler explains that SIS support for conference attendance is helpful to build relationships with other organizations and to serve the needs of library users. “It helps to be in the room,” he says. “If you’re not there, there’s a void for those people you’re trying to serve. Other people and organizations don’t know the ways a law library can help serve.” He adds that “connections and collaboration with

court-related organizations are important to our staying relevant in coming years, so we’re remembered when times are tough.”

Describing her experience at the 2008 Equal Justice Conference held in Minneapolis, Jane Colwin, state law librarian at the Wisconsin State Law Library, says, “The librarians weren’t just an accessory.” Colwin received a travel grant for the 2008 Equal Justice Conference in Minnesota, and she found the experience valuable. “The people there seemed to get it that librarians are likely partners” to work on improving legal services delivery, she says.

At the conference, Colwin saw that there are many, many efforts to assist self-represented litigants. She notes that partnership opportunities exist to help self-represented litigants as they wend their ways through the court system. Partnerships could be built, she saw, with local bar associations, paralegal training programs, law schools, retired citizens’ groups, and others.

At the recent Equal Justice Conference, the SCCLL-SIS taught the legal aid community about ways law librarians can contribute toward common equal justice efforts. Several law librarians participated as panelists in programs, both during the preconference and the regular conference, addressing topics such as helping self-represented litigants and partnering with law libraries. Eleven law librarians attended the conference, and the SCCLL-SIS and the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries (MALL) cosponsored an exhibit booth. Between the librarian participants and the exhibit booth, conference attendees were able to interact with legal services attorneys, law firm pro bono coordinators, judges, and educators.



## Cataloging Consultants

The Technical Services Special Interest Section (TS-SIS) works with other library organizations on the development of cataloging standards that will reflect the special characteristics of law materials and meet the needs of law libraries and their patrons. The work of the TS-SIS with organizations such as the American Library Association (ALA) and the Law Library of Congress affects the daily work of law librarians.

TS-SIS member John Hostage, authorities librarian at Harvard Law School, is the official AALL representative to the ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA). The ALA CC:DA will provide feedback to the Joint Steering Committee for the Development of Resource Description and Access (JSC) about the development of the Resource Description and Access (RDA) standards, which will succeed the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules, second edition.

Law librarian participation in the development of ALA recommendations to the JSC is critical. ALA receives recommendations from representatives from all parts of the library community regarding the special needs of all types of

materials. Types of libraries represented include music libraries, museum libraries, public libraries, and more. Hostage explains that the CC:DA "gives a voice to the various stakeholders in the whole cataloging community. [By having a representative to the CC:DA], we can have input into discussions when questions come up about law materials."

During Kathy Winzer's tenure as AALL representative to the ALA CC:DA, she and Hostage implemented a wiki to receive comments on the draft versions of the RDA. Hostage is hopeful that the wiki will be useful and enable librarians to participate more fully in the development of the RDA. The wiki will preserve feedback about the draft RDA, making it easier for Hostage to pass feedback along to the CC:DA.

Yael Mandelstam, head of cataloging at Fordham University Law School Library, is the AALL representative to the ALA Subject Analysis Committee (SAC). As representative, she serves as a member of the SAC Subcommittee on Genre Form Implementation, liaising with the TS-SIS Classification and Subject Cataloging Policy Advisory Working Group (CSCP), which is currently drafting proposed law form/genre terms to submit to the Library

of Congress. The genre is one of many issues that the ALA SAC, through its subcommittees, addresses.

The CSCP also uses a wiki to facilitate communication among librarians who are working on the law genre/form project. The group is considering the thesaurus terms that would form the basis of Library of Congress authority records. As the CSCP encounters terms that are used across disciplines, those terms are recorded and will be given to the SAC Subcommittee on Genre/Form Implementation. As questions about policy issues arise, the CSCP consults with Jolande Goldberg, a law specialist from the Policy and Standards Division of the Library of Congress, to assure that CSCP's contributions will meet the needs of the Library of Congress. To facilitate that work, the Policy and Standards Division has invited members of the CSCP to meet while in Washington, D.C., for the upcoming AALL Annual Meeting.

"When I work on genre headings, I go to reference librarians," Mandelstam says. "I want to know how people are using our catalog." She interviews librarians and shares information, such as how treatises are defined by reference librarians to library patrons, with the CSCP to inform the work of the group. With the availability of faceted display browsing, in which users may run an online catalog search and then click on narrowing links that will focus the search for the user, the addition of genre/form information in bibliographic records will hopefully improve the library user's experience.

The good news is that AALL is an organization that builds connections and relationships with other organizations. AALL and its members work on projects every day that will further the strategic goals and the mission of the Association. The better news is that those relationships with external organizations increase the standing of librarians and law libraries in the legal community and beyond. For AALL members, opportunities to learn, grow, and achieve remarkable goals are increased through the relationships with other organizations.

"Participating in planning the [China-U.S. Conference on Legal Information and Law Libraries] has given me the opportunity to meet with some of China's top legal scholars and law librarians and exposed me to Chinese negotiation styles and business culture," says Sergio Stone, foreign, comparative, and international law librarian at Stanford Law School. "This experience has allowed me to join exciting new projects at my home institution." ■

**Meg Butler** (*margaret.butler@nyls.edu*) is reference librarian at New York Law School Library.

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