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From the President

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Hurricane Katrina Response

On behalf of AALL, I express deepest sympathy to all our colleagues whose lives and jobs have been affected in New Orleans and other areas in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama following the devastating Hurricane Katrina on August 29. We share your suffering and worries, and we keep you in our thoughts and prayers. A blog was set up on AALLNET, AALL LawLib Assist, so that our members in the affected areas and elsewhere can report on their well being and the well being of those in our community and to help us gather information from and about our community.

Enhancing the Visibility of Law Librarians

I would like to convey my deep thanks to those of you who responded to my August 2005 "From the Desk of Claire" questions about the big issues: (1) What perceptions do people have of law librarians and law libraries? (What do you hear?) (2) What perceptions do you wish for them to have?

International Networking

How does it affect you, the members?

- Allows you to have a voice in shaping your own future in an increasingly globalized world of information and services
- Provides current and future opportunities to make international contacts and opportunities
- Provides a potential network of contacts to help retrieve difficult-to-find legal materials and research assistance, as well as controlled vocabulary and technical know-how
- Provides forums to advocate positions of interest to law librarians in the United States
- Positions the Association to seek grants with national and international agencies and organizations, and seek corporate support

(3) What will it take for us to be seen in the ways we wish to be? Your thoughtful responses were incorporated into the environmental scan conducted for the AALL Executive Board Strategic Directions Retreat in October.

AALL and ABA Council of the Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar

What happens to academic law librarians will directly affect the future of all law librarians. Should there be a diminished status of one sector of the law library profession, it will result in a diminished status for all.

In August, I represented AALL at the Chicago meeting of the ABA Council of the Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, the most influential group on legal education, responsible for setting accreditation standards for law schools. AALL representation and participation at these meetings is particularly important, as serious issues and challenges have arisen relating to the future of academic law libraries. Some deans question the relative core value of the law library in the law school. There are issues of cost, space, and the role of the law library in legal education.

In January 2005, Victoria Trotta, then AALL president, sent a letter taking a strong AALL position on retaining the status of the law library director (www.aallnet.org/board/trotta_aba_letter.pdf). In my oral presentation to the group on behalf of AALL, I expressed the willingness to engage in a dialogue between deans and librarians on those issues. I also invited ABA council members to the St. Louis Meeting, and I hope that we can have some of these people as VIPs, since they are quite influential and can spread the word about our contributions.

AALL and the World

In August, I also attended the **International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)** meeting in Oslo, Norway (www.ifla.org) with Susan Fox, who is our institutional representative, and Bob Oakley. I then attended the **International Association of Law Libraries (IALL)** meeting in Florence, Italy (www.iall.org).

Goal III of our AALL Strategic Directions sets out that law librarians will influence the outcome of legal information,

technology policy, and librarianship issues of concern to AALL members. National and international policies increasingly affect our abilities to do our jobs. When we address any issue of concern, we must be prepared to carry on global conversations and solicit a wide range of opinion. As a result, it is important for AALL and its leaders to participate actively in national and international cooperative activities and provide leadership on information policy matters.

AALL action is most effective when combined with those of other professional associations. Several international organizations, such as UNESCO and WIPO, recognize IFLA as the preferred speaker on matters of international policy that impact librarians and users. This speaks to IFLA's growing influence on the shaping of information policies.

I went to the IFLA meeting in Oslo, Norway, in August. At the meeting, IALL President Jules Winterton, IALL Past President Holger Knudsen, Susan Fox, and I met with IFLA senior staff and leadership to discuss the transition of the Law Libraries



AALL President Claire M. Germain meets with incoming IFLA President Alex Byrne, university librarian at the University of Technology in Sydney, during the IFLA meeting in Oslo, Norway, in August.

Discussion Group into a section. There is hope that this transition will occur by early 2006, a goal first pursued in 2001 by past AALL Executive Director Roger Parent.

Among recent initiatives, IFLA plans to integrate the Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) office into headquarters in The Hague. IFLA also plans

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to hire a full-time program officer to handle the Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters (CLM), the committee that Bob Oakley serves as consultant.

The benefits of international meetings are numerous. Personal contacts are formed that lead to various communications and exchanges. Recently, a Norwegian law librarian told me that he had been inspired by U.S. law librarians in writing his own book on Norwegian law research. We can

also learn from what law librarians in other countries are doing. The BIALL meeting in Harrogate, Yorkshire, in June 2005 (www.biall.org), was focused on issues that we wrestle with—how to enhance the visibility of the library within the parent organization—and the speakers were particularly engaging.

More about the ABA Council

Justice Lacy, the outgoing chair, was a VIP

in San Antonio (from the Academic-SIS) and a big hit. She was enthusiastic about her experience with us at the Conference. More information about the ABA council members can be found at www.abanet.org/legaled/council/council.html. The incoming chair is Steven Smith, dean and professor of law at California Western School of Law in San Diego. ■