The “Members’ Briefing” for the July 2007 AALL Spectrum included a report of the work done by the Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships in 2006-07. Much of the article summarized extensive surveying completed by committee members. Using surveys and interviews, committee members gathered information about pro bono efforts in law libraries. The committee spotlighted pro bono activities in the various types of law libraries.

Members of the committee also contacted external sources (primarily legal aid and bar association pro bono providers in the fifty states) to determine ways to strengthen pro bono partnerships between law libraries and external organizations. For online access, Chris Siwa at AALL did a marvelous job of creating an online database for the survey results, which he loaded onto the special committee’s web page so members would be able to retrieve information on pro bono partnerships by individual state.

The committee also participated in programs outside of AALL. These include the Self Represented Litigation Network (SRLN) and the Equal Justice Conference (EJC). For SRLN, the committee made a recommendation to the AALL Executive Board for monetary support for the network. The network is a growing group of organizations and working groups dedicated to assisting self represented litigants.

In March, Sara Galligan attended the 2007 Equal Justice Conference (EJC) in Denver. One aspect of the program that looked promising for the Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships was the EJC’s emphasis on leveraging pro bono partnerships to increase access to justice.

The special committee, with a one-year term ending in July 2007, made the following recommendations for continued pro bono partnerships:

- The committee recommended creating a new joint committee within the LISP-SIS and the SCCLL-SIS as an entity to continue pro bono partnership efforts and activities for law libraries. These two SIS sections will include this recommendation as an action item at their July 2007 business meetings.

- Maintain a presence on the AALL web site, either under the auspices of some other AALL entity or as special committee page. This should include the link to the 50-state survey that includes feedback from bar and legal aid associations regarding new ways to strengthen pro bono partnerships with law librarians. The link is located on the special committee’s web page.

- The Special Committee on Pro Bono Partnerships recommended that the AALL Executive Board become an organizational supporter of SRLN, including both ongoing financial support and service on SRLN’s management group. The recommendation is to begin with $5,000 per year. This request was submitted for AALL Executive Board action during its March meeting; it was continued for
discussion at the AALL Executive Board Meeting in July. The special committee also recommends that the Executive Board consider appointing an association representative to SRLN.

- EJC encourages pro bono and partnerships. AALL should try to stay involved by sending members to the meetings. For the next EJC meeting in Minneapolis, AALL members should consider developing a program proposal about law librarians and pro bono partnerships.

Committee members included: Sara Galligan, Chair, Camille Broussard, Charles Dyer, Pamela Gregory, Marcus Hochstetler, Jean Holcomb, Scott Larson, Monica Sharum, and Jill Sidford, with Bobbie Denny leaving the committee due to retirement. Steve Anderson was our Executive Board liaison.

Sara Galligan, Chair
2006-07