Public Relations Committee 2008-2009

First, the P.R. Committee had a large presence at the 2008 Annual Meeting. Not only did we participate in the CONELL Marketplace, we also had a very large display set up in the Exhibits area showcasing the winners of the "Day in the Life" photo contest and the "Excellence in Marketing" awards.

We also facilitated an open roundtable discussion during the Annual Meeting, extending a special invitation to those who submitted entries to either contest. The "giveaway" was a post-it note pad with AALL’s logo on it.

Throughout the year, we embraced the strategic goal of education by writing a total of nine articles for AALL Spectrum. Subjects ranged from a survey of public relations efforts in smaller law libraries to a book review with suggestions on personal networking. This was a great opportunity for several of our members who had never before been published in AALL Spectrum to see their ideas in print.

During the fall, we discussed whether to have the "Day in the Life"(DITL) contest for 2009. Usually it is held every two years, but feedback from previous years said this is something "fun," and many members look forward to the contest each year. Thus, we decided to continue the photo contest.

Nearly 30 members from 23 different law libraries across the country submitted 82 photos to the contest. In addition to mounting the winning photos on AALLNET.org, we also asked the photographers to submit a short paragraph about what inspired them to take the photo. Portions of those quotes were added to the photo site. Photo winners will be displayed in the P.R. Exhibit at the 2009 AALL Annual Meeting. A list of winners is attached.

With the Board’s expressed desire to stop depending so much on vendors, we worked with AALL HQ to create and update a new “Excellence in Marketing” (EIM) award brochure. We eliminated references to vendors and vendor sponsorship while providing a new look for the brochure. A list of winners of the awards is attached.

However, judging from the lowered number of submissions for both the DITL contest and the EIM awards, the P.R. Committee recommends alternating these contests every year instead of trying to have both of them every year. Hopefully, this alteration will lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of entries.

Additionally, the chair of the P.R. Committee signed up to blog on the AALL Spectrum blog as a way to further discuss and/or disseminate public relations information or ideas. The committee also discussed putting up a wiki somewhere to collect marketing ideas and initiatives, but decided to postpone that until AALLNET has completed its migration. A p.r. wiki is an excellent project for the 2009-2010 year.

The committee requested funding from the Executive Board to purchase “give-aways” for the 2009 Annual Meeting as a way to attract members to our exhibit area and table at CONELL. Due
to the downturn in the economy, this request was understandably denied. Therefore, the chair and vice-chair expended personal funds to purchase bookmarks and a bookmark display from the ALA store. These bookmarks, along with the remainder of the post-its from last year, will be our “give-aways” for our table at CONELL and at the P.R. Exhibit.

Finally, the decision by the Executive Board to add the position of vice-chair to the committee was an excellent one. The vice-chair has worked closely with the chair in all P.R. matters and, as a result, is very well prepared to carry on the work of the P.R. Committee in the 2009-2010 year. Hopefully this practice will continue in future years.

The officers of the Public Relations Committee during 2008-09 were Amy Hale-Janke, chair; Cindy Spohr, vice chair, chair-elect; Karen B. Brunner, Bret N. Christensen, Eugenia A. Minor, Tawnya K. Plumb, Carol J. Schmitt, Duane A. Strojny, and Catherine S. Whitney, members-at-large. Catherine Lemann served as the Board liaison and both Hillary Baker and Julia O’Donnell served as staff liaisons.

Winners of the DITL Contest:
Overall Best Photo
1. Absorbing the Law, by Vicenç Feliú
2. A Big Blue World, from Sharon Bradley, photo by Bob Brussack
3. Closing Time, by Brian Barnes

Category 1: Librarians as Information Evaluators and Managers
1. Throwing Green, by David Hanson
2. Information Manager, by Robert Linz
3. The Maze, by Craig Ford

Category 2: Librarians as Expert Researchers
1. Blended Reference, by Jessica Van Buren
2. Tracing 2 centuries worth of legislative history, by Brian Barnes
3. On the Russian Steppes, by Sharon Bradley

Category 3: Librarians as Teachers and Trainers
1. A Big Blue World, from Sharon Bradley, photo by Bob Brussack
2. Musing on Clio - Rare Books Lecture 2009, by Amanda Runyon
3. On the Outside Looking In, from Carol Watson, photo by Leslie Grove
3. This is the Information You Need, from Ruth J. Hill, photo by Claudette Smith-Brown

Category 4: Librarians as Trailblazers in New Technology
1. Try this instead, by Coral Henning
2. Self Portrait, by Barbara Scanlon
3. Old Dawgs and New Tricks, by Sharon Bradley

Category 5: The Artistry of Librarianship
1. Absorbing the Law, by Vicenç Feliú
2. Closing Time, by Brian Barnes
3. Simple Marketing, by Jessica Van Buren

Category 6: Most Humorous
1. Cask of Amontillado (with apologies to Edgar Allen Poe), by Sharon Bradley
2. Reference Assistance or Bust, by George Taoultsides
3. Information Overload, by Amanda Runyon

Winners of the EIM contest:

Best Brochure- University of Minnesota Law Library
Best Campaign - Law Library Association of Wisconsin
Best Use of Technology - Arizona State Univ. Ross Blakely Law Library
Best PR Toolkit - Sacramento County Public Law Library
Best Newsletter - no award

By Amy Hale-Janeke, chair