Animal Law Caucus Annual Report 2011-2012

Background

The Animal Law Caucus (ALC) was organized at the 2010 AALL Annual Meeting in Denver when Marie Erickson sent out a notice on Law Lib, calling for a gathering of those interested in Animal Law. Over fifteen law librarians from academic, firm and public law libraries attended the meeting, and it was decided to form a caucus of like-minded individuals.

In the fall of 2010, Michele Finerty, Coral Henning, Leslie LaCount, Maureen Moran, Melissa Serfass, Michele Thomas and Harriet Zook developed the ALC website, constructing its content and format. The site made its debut in January 2011. To further communication between caucus members, Nancy Babb facilitated the ALC Facebook page and discussion list.

2011/2012 Activities

Philadelphia Meeting Program

The AALL Animal Law Caucus 2010/2011 Education Committee (Stacey Gordon, Stefanie Pearlman and Michele Finerty) began the year with a successful and well-attended program at the AALL meeting in Philadelphia. Entitled “The Development of Human Attitudes to Animals,” it was presented by Dr. James A. Serpell, the Marie A. Moore Professor of Humane Ethics & Animal Welfare and the Director of the Center for the Interaction of Animals & Society at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Veterinary Medicine. That presentation was followed by Suzanne Mawhinney’s account of the Dog Therapy Program at USF.

Committee Activities

In the fall of 2011, Marie Erickson, who served as the caucus president since its inception in at the 2010 AALL Annual Meeting in Denver, stepped down from that role, and Michele Finerty became the interim president. She appointed two committees, the Bylaws Committee and the Nominations Committee, and Jaye Barlous agreed to serve as Acting ALC Secretary.

The Bylaws committee was comprised of Michele Thomas, Chair, Lynn Hartke and Casey Duncan. The Bylaws were approved by the ALC membership at its 2012 business meeting in Boston.

In March 2011, the AALL Executive Board approved new guidelines for the creation and operation of caucuses within the association. The guidelines stipulate that caucus bylaws are to be reviewed by the AALL Bylaws Committee for their approval and that each caucus must
submit an annual report to AALL. ALC Bylaws will be sent to the AALL Bylaws Committee for committee review and approval. Pam Reisinger will serve as the ALC liaison to AALL.

The Nominations Committee, comprised of Melissa Serfass, Chair, Shaun Esposito, Wei Fang and Lyonette Louis-Jacques, created a slate of candidates. Because Jaye Barlous, ALC Acting Secretary, was a candidate, the election was facilitated by Harriet Zook, the ALC Webmaster, and the following individuals were elected to the 2012/2013 Executive Board:

Michele Finerty, President, 2012/2013
Vicki Steiner, Vice-President, 2012/2013
Jaye Barlous, Secretary, 2012/2013
Kate Fitz, Member-at-Large 2012/2014

**Boston Meeting Program**

For the 2012 meeting in Boston, Education Committee members Stacey Gordon and Stefanie Pearlman developed and coordinated the successful program, “Lessons from the Snail Darter: The Relationship Between Wildlife Law and Economic Development,” which was presented as an official AALL program. The featured speaker was Zygmunt J. B. Plater, professor of law at the Boston College School of Law, whose expertise in the area of environmental law led to his involvement in a number of important environmental protection cases, including the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Tellico Dam case. Professor Plater represented, among other parties, the interests of the endangered snail darter.

**Boston Activity Area Table**

Another notable achievement in Boston was the ALC table in the Activities Area. Organized by Jaye Barlous, with the generous assistance of Nancy Babb (donating the beautifully-colored table sign and popular stickers with the ALC logo) and Vicki Steiner (who arranged for donations of 5 copies of signed books authored by Gary Francione, the well-known and respected author in the field, two documentaries, ALDF DVDs and brochures, as well as additional brochures donated by the nonprofit organization Compassion Over Killing). Vicki also created a vegan/vegetarian dining guide that featured the top restaurants selected by polling local animal law attorneys, and Harriet Zook created the ALC brochure. Jaye Barlous provided the ALC brochures, and made arrangements with the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ADLF) for handouts and giveaways such as pens, temporary tattoos and animal pamphlets. She also did the raffle signage and provided an animal-paw-print box for business cards.

A number of ALC members kindly staffed the table, thereby performing an important outreach for the ALC. They were: Nancy Babb; Jaye Barlous; Rebecca Bearden; Shaun Esposito;
Stefanie Pearlman; Mary Persyn; Vicki Steiner; and Anne Marie Swartz. The books and the DVD sets were raffled off at the closing of the Annual Meeting.

**Looking to the Future**

The ALC membership directory on the website indicates that we have over 80 members and growing. Beginning in September 2012, the ALC website will feature a new monthly column, entitled “In Your Own Words.” ALC members are invited to place items about their work and interests in furthering animal law. An important aspect of Animal Law involves both state and federal legislation for animal protection and welfare. Therefore, Michele Finerty will establish a new legislative committee to follow these initiatives. The 2012/2013 Education Committee members Stacey Gordon, Stefanie Pearlman, Susan David deMaine, and Vicki Steiner are developing a program proposal for the 2013 Annual Meeting in Seattle.

As the ALC president, I am pleased to recognize the hard work of the ALC members mentioned in this report, as well as those who have come forward to volunteer for future projects. The support of ALC members has given the Animal Law Caucus a significant presence in AALL. Furthermore, it has brought together law librarians from across the country whose common goal is to recognize and to further the ongoing work in animal law and animal welfare.

Respectfully submitted by Michele Finerty, 2011/2012 Animal Law Caucus President