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## Fast Dancing

James Hambleton

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rush around. A relatively small number of people attended the convention. So small, in fact, that we shared the Sheraton with a convention of organists.

I have two vivid memories of the 1976 meeting. The first is of Oscar Trelles wearing a cream-colored linen suit with a straw Panama hat. With his olive skin he looked most elegant. I wanted to look that elegant, sometime. My second is a statement made by someone—in memory it was either Oscar Trelles, Mort Schwartz, or Bardie Wolfe—who was talking about how complicated the field of law librarianship had become and how no one could know everything. He had gone into a meeting and sat and listened for about half an hour and was concerned because they were discussing a subject about which he knew absolutely nothing. His concern mounted until they started talking about the eighty-ninth key. Suddenly he felt great relief because he realized he had wandered into a meeting of the organists.

### James Hambleton\*

#### *Fast Dancing*

A breezy summer night, a great dance band, cliffs over the Mississippi River, and too much champagne . . . those are the memories I have of my first Annual Meeting. The night of the closing banquet had a profound effect on my career in law librarianship, but let me start nearer the beginning.

I had only been working in law librarianship for a couple of years, busy learning the ropes on my first job. I was excited when my boss told me that he would help support my attendance at my first professional meeting, the 1974 gathering in St. Paul, Minnesota. I remember the opening reception on a terrace overlooking the Mississippi. The next few days were busy with programs, meeting new people, and finding out that others faced the same issues at work as me. All too soon the whirlwind was over, and the closing banquet was at hand.

After the banquet, the band struck up some great oldies, and I threw myself into the music on the dance floor. A group of us sat together, sharing some champagne (which I think we liberated from the banquet). One of my fellow revelers and I both enjoyed dancing, so we spent the better part of our time on the dance floor, and the remainder with the champagne. As the night wore on, fewer of us were left at the party, but my partner and I danced on.

At the end of the evening, as the band packed up, we took the last bottle of champagne out on the terrace, and watched the moonlight sparkle on the Mississippi. We toasted our first AALL meeting, law librarianship, and every-

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thing else we could think of, until the bottle was empty. Then, as a final gesture, we tossed our glasses onto the rocks below (this was before I became environmentally sensitive). We said goodnight, and I grabbed a few hours sleep before flying home the next morning.

So how did this night profoundly effect my career as a law librarian? Just a few years later, after completing my law degree, I was looking for my first "dual-degree" position. My dancing partner had become well known in law librarianship. When I applied for a position with Roy Mersky, he carefully checked his famous grapevine for comments from people who knew me. When asked by Roy what she knew about me, my fellow reveler responded, "Well, I don't know what kind of librarian he is, but he sure knows how to dance!" With a recommendation like that, Roy couldn't help but hire me, and I've been dancing as fast as I can ever since.

**Paul D. Healey\***

*A First-Timer Reflects\*\**

It is impossible to become a law librarian or participate in the flow of information through the American Association of Law Libraries without being aware of the prominence and excitement of the AALL Annual Meeting. After sorting out that AALL can mean either the organization or the Annual Meeting, one quickly becomes aware that this is an event of great importance to the profession and members of the organization. As a library student, I could only watch the 1994 Annual Meeting come and go via the *AALL Newsletter* and the law-lib listserv, so it was with great anticipation that I made plans to attend the 1995 Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh just six weeks after starting my first job as a law librarian. All in all I would have to say that my first Annual Meeting experience lived up to my expectations. I met many wonderful people, learned interesting things, and generally had a good time. But, perhaps because I am so new to law librarianship, I couldn't help but wonder about the purpose and function of such a gathering for our organization and profession. As part of those musings I also wondered about the effect of e-mail and the Internet on the Annual Meeting.

It seems to me that the Annual Meeting is a chance for members to gather, learn, share information, see products, discuss issues, pass on leadership duties and responsibilities, and set a future path. It is also a chance to have regular,

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\* Reference Librarian, William Mitchell College of Law, Warren E. Burger Library, St. Paul, Minnesota.

\*\* Revised from an earlier version, Paul D. Healey, *A First-Timer Reflects*, 27 AM. ASS'N L. LIBR. NEWSL. 94 (1995).