Chair’s Column:

Getting Involved With LRL

By Sabah Eltareb, LRL Chair 2013-2014
Assistant Director, California Research Bureau
California State Library

Halfway through my term, I am reminded of how very fortunate I am to be serving as LRL chair. We have fabulous, dedicated, hard-working members who are generous with their time and expertise. I have seen this demonstrated time and time again, especially when a request is posted to the listserv and the response is so quick.

As a small staff section, there are a number of ways to get involved in LRL, each of which may demand a varying degree of commitment—time, travel, and money. It is such a personal decision that we make all the time, and a number of questions that must be asked and answered, both individually, and perhaps, if approval is needed and being sought, from leadership or management. I do not want to scare anyone off and hope that my perspective may be useful, coming from a member who had not been particularly active prior to being elected as LRL secretary a few years ago.

When I first heard about LRL, I was excited to learn that there was an organization made up of my counterparts in other states, colleagues with the same clientele, working on similar requests, facing the same issues and concerns who could understand the demanding pace and varied request types. As I learned more about LRL, I was surprised at how many different types of legislative libraries there are, varying in size and staff, as well as governance. Coming from a library housed in the executive branch, created during a budget crisis to provide library services and research assistance to the state legislature and other state constitutional officers, I have long known that this is another area of difference from most LRL members.

I was very content being a “member in name” for a number of years, attending some of the Summits and maybe one or two PDS’. Even when travel funds were available, out-of-state travels fell under a different set of approval guidelines, and if approved, were only for a very small portion of the total expense. So I thought long and hard about every conference or PDS. What wasn’t part of the equation—at least pre-officer (PO)—was wanting to attend to reconnect and network. While everyone was nice and pleasant, they all seemed to know each other and I wasn’t quite sure where or how best to break in. More on this shortly.

When Elizabeth Lincoln first contacted me in 2011 and asked me to consider running for the position of LRL secretary, I was flattered (of course) and a little shocked. After all, I was not an active member and I did not work in a legislative library so I was not sure how other members would feel. As I was deliberating the offer, I was thinking about the primary responsibilities that Elizabeth conveyed: 1.) a four-year commitment (secretary, vice-chair, chair, past-chair), and 2.) while vice-chair and chair, I would also be part of the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC), meeting three to four times per year, and assigned to one or more subcommittees.

By this time, California’s fiscal situation had deteriorated to the point that travel was restricted to “mission critical” so I knew that I would not be getting any financial support. As to how much extra work and time would be involved? Well, that wasn’t a known variable. I decided to grab the opportunity and haven’t

Continued on page 13
LRL Elections

By Jeanne Mejeur, NCSL, and Eddie Weeks, Tennessee

This year’s elections will be conducted in accordance with the freshly minted LRL bylaws approved at last year’s Legislative Summit. In amending the bylaws, members of the two Bylaws Committees wanted to find a way to have more input from the full membership on our elections, rather than just those members who were able to attend the Legislative Summit where our elections were conducted in the past.

Here’s how the new process works: The Nominating Committee consists of the immediate past chair, vice-chair and one additional member of the staff section. Accordingly, Eddie Weeks chaired the committee this year, assisted by vice-chair Sonia Gavin and LRL member Mary Camp.

We solicited candidates for the office of secretary through a listserv message (okay, we kind of screwed that up, but we backed up and got it right the second time around). The LRL Nominating Committee will then review the list of nominees and conduct telephone and email interviews of those candidates. The committee will present its list of nominees for the 2014/2015 slate of officers to the LRL Executive Committee prior to April 30, as required by the bylaws.

The slate will be presented to the full LRL membership for election during the month of May. The elections will be conducted electronically, with votes due by May 15. The results of the election will be announced no later than June 1.

As in the past, the current chair automatically becomes the immediate past chair and the current vice-chair becomes chair. The current secretary becomes vice-chair and the newly elected secretary joins the Executive Committee.

Stay tuned for more information on the elections via the listserv.

For more on the revised LRL Bylaws, visit:

Legislative Library Infostravaganza!

By Kristin Ford, Idaho

Legislative libraries are about as different from state to state as they can be. Some occupy multiple floors of their building and have staff in the double-digits. Some are one-person operations. Some are within the legislative branch, others are combined with executive or judicial branch libraries.

One great thing about the Legislative Research Librarians’ staff section of NCSL is that it has brought all of these different creatures together by focusing on what we have in common, and allowing us to help each other with questions and requests. The NCSL discussion list has been invaluable to most of us when it comes to questions about our legislatures, laws or libraries. But wouldn’t it be great to have a dynamic database that hosts all sorts of information about our libraries that we can access at any time? So when my director comes to me at 4 p.m. on a Friday and wants to know how many other libraries provide certain services or use certain products, for example, I could pull up our Legislative Library Infostravaganza database and get the information immediately, rather than waiting for partial responses from the few people who are still in the office.

This was a dream of mine when I was the LRL chair eight years ago, and now that I am not chairing, redistricting, or hosting a PDS, I am ready to get back at it. I have a number of survey areas and questions prepared, and now it is time to update them, and bring in views and help from other legislative librarians to polish this up and start working on an implementation phase. Oh, the glory ahead of us! I predict a special category of the Pulitzer Prize for this creation!

(My thanks to Sabah Eltareb for lighting a fire under me to revive this project!)

Love information?

Love to have it organized in searchable databases?
Of course we do! We’re librarians!
Isn’t it time to have information about ourselves and our legislative libraries collected and organized?

If this sort of summer (or ongoing) project appeals to you, please contact Kristin Ford, 208-334-4863 or kford@lso.idaho.gov.
2014 Notable Document Awards

Submission Deadline: June 2, 2014

By Elizabeth Lincoln, Minnesota

The annual Notable Document Award is presented by the Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section. The award recognizes excellence in documents that explore contemporary topics of interest to legislators and staff by presenting substantive material in an outstanding format. Be sure your state is represented in the nominations this year!

The purpose of the awards is to:

- Formally recognize excellence in documents that explore topics of contemporary interest to legislators and staff by presenting substantive material in an outstanding format.
- Advertise the extensive range of information available to legislators and staff.
- Increase participation by legislative research librarians in the States Information Network.
- Encourage deposit of documents with NCSL and the Council of State Governments (CSG) by subject-appropriate publishing organizations.

See the guidelines for selection and a list of previous winners on the LRL home page.

Nominations are due Monday, June 2, 2014. Watch for a reminder and a nomination form on the NCSL LRL listserv soon. Contact Elizabeth Lincoln at elincoln@lrl.leg.mn or Jeanne Mejeur at jeanne.mejeur@ncsl.org if you have questions.

2013 LRL chair Eddie Weeks presented one of the 2013 Notable Documents Awards to John Turcotte, director of the North Carolina General Assembly’s Program Evaluation Division, for its document, Options for Creating a Separate Department of Medicaid Require Transition Planning.

LRL Copyright Webinar

State Government Information and the Copyright Conundrum

May 7, 2014

By Kris Kasianovitz, Stanford University

Why should we care about copyright of state government information? Isn’t it all in the public domain? It’s public information just like federal government information, right? WRONG!

LRL will present a webinar on May 7, 2014 on copyright issues related to state government documents. Unlike federal government documents, which are almost universally in the public domain for the purposes of US copyright, state government documents now receive copyright protection by default. Despite this current default, our interactions with state agents and librarians have led us to the conclusion that many state agencies view their documents as being in the public domain.

The consequences of the divide between the legal default and the perception of state agencies is a significant impediment to institutions seeking to digitize historic state publications, capture and archive born digital publications, and freely disseminate these materials to the public via library catalogs or digital repositories.

Bernadette Bartlett, Library of Michigan, Justin Bonfiglio, University of Michigan Copyright Office, and Kris Kasianovitz, Stanford University, will discuss constraints that copyright law places upon citizens, researchers, academic institutions and digital repositories, like HathiTrust, to release scanned post-1923 state government publications.

The presentation will include an introduction to their recently launched project FSGI: Free State Government Information Project http://stategov.freegovinfo.info/ and possible paths forward to address this little discussed but major issue.

Join us for a lively discussion of our project and tell us how NCSL members can help!

LRL Newsline ♦ Spring 2014

LRL Members’ Corner

We’re happy to share news about LRL members. Whether it’s new staff, retirements, job changes, graduations, or other news, the LRL Members’ Corner is a great place to share your news with your counterparts in other states!

New Connecticut Librarian

From Carrie Rose: We have had some changes in staff at the Connecticut Legislative Library. We recently hired Christine McCluskey as our newest reference librarian. Christine earned her MLIS from Rutgers University and has prior experience as a newspaper reporter. She has already proven to be a valuable addition to our team! If you see her at a future PDS, please give her your usual warm welcome!

Congratulations to Danielle Mayabb, Nevada

From Teresa Wilt: Congratulations to assistant librarian Danielle Mayabb, who just finished her Master’s Degree in Library Science and was selected for recognition at the 2014 Honors Day at the University of North Texas. Danielle will receive the Outstanding Masters Student in Nevada/Utah Cohort Award, to be presented at the Honors Day Convocation in April 2014.

Wisconsin Staff Update

From Pat Reichart: The Wisconsin LRB Library welcomed two new librarians recently. Calli Neumann joined the library in October. She will work on cataloging and serials, as well as with the library’s digital collections. Keely Merchant began as the new Wisconsin documents librarian in January. Eileen Snyder left the LRB in December to become the Wisconsin documents librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library.

Minnesota Staff Changes

From Elizabeth Lincoln, who became director of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library last fall: David Schmidtke has been named as deputy director of the library and Betsy Haugen is now the head of reference services. We’ve hired Peder Garnaas-Halvorson as a library assistant and Reed Polakowski as the acquisitions specialist. Our most recent hire is Alyssa Novak as a reference librarian. Congratulations on the promotions and welcome to the new staff!

NCSL Publications

Reports


LegisBriefs

March 2014

● Individual Development Accounts for Foster Youth–Vol. 22, No. 09
● Is Financial Assistance During a Court Case a Lawsuit Loan?– Vol. 22, No. 11
● Land Conservation–Vol. 22, No. 12

February 2014

● State and Federal Minimum Wages–Vol. 22, No. 6
● Community-Based Medicaid Funding for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities–Vol. 22, No. 7
● Improving Access to Medicaid Dental Benefits–Vol. 22, No. 8

January 2014

● Cockfighting Laws–Vol. 22, No. 1
● Improving Children’s Mental Health–Vol. 22, No. 2
● Transforming Transportation with Electricity–Vol. 22, No. 3
● Immigration Reform and State Trends–Vol. 22, No. 4

December 2013

● Preventing Smoking During Pregnancy–Vol. 21, No. 45
● Giving Veterans Hiring Preference–Vol. 21, No. 46
● Treating the Whole Person by Integrating Care– Vol. 21, No. 47
● The Role of Fiscal Notes in the Legislative Process–Vol. 21, No. 48

November 2013

● Solving the Transportation Funding Crisis–Vol. 21, No. 41
● Teen Pregnancy Among Youth in Foster Care–Vol. 21, No. 42
● Addressing Child Safety in Disasters–Vol. 21, No. 43
● Healthy Women Healthy Babies– Vol. 21, No. 44

October 2013

● The Rise of Career Academies–Vol. 21, No. 37
● Public Health Department Accreditation–Vol. 21, No. 38
● Women’s Legislative Caucuses–Vol. 21, No. 39
● Revolving Door Laws: Avoiding the Appearance of Conflict of Interest– Vol. 21, No. 40
NCSL Legislative Summit

Join your legislative colleagues from around the states at the 2014 NCSL Legislative Summit and bring home hundreds of ideas from the land of 10,000 lakes. For 40 years, the Legislative Summit is where legislators and staff come together across the aisle to tackle critical problems and find solutions that work. You’ll:

- Connect with legislative staff and legislators from across the country;
- Learn about the latest and best ideas; and
- Grow with networking and professional development opportunities.

With more than 100 sessions, the Summit covers the latest issues and provides opportunities to make new friendships and connections. Plan to be in Minneapolis, Aug. 19-22. You’ll come home brimming with ideas!

**Preliminary Agenda**

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<th>Tuesday 8/19</th>
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<th>Thursday 8/21</th>
<th>Friday 8/22</th>
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<tr>
<td>New Attendee Orientation 11:00 am-Noon</td>
<td>Prayer Breakfast 8:00 am-8:45 am</td>
<td>Walk for Wellness 6:30 am-8:00 am</td>
<td>Bipartisan Bike Ride 6:30 am-8:00 am</td>
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<td>Staff Sections 7:45 am-8:45 am</td>
<td>General Session 9:00 am-10:00 am</td>
<td>Republican and Democrat Breakfasts 9:00 am-10:15 am</td>
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<td>General Session 9:00 am-10:15 am</td>
<td>Issue Forums 10:15 am-11:15 am</td>
<td>Staff Sections 9:00 am-10:15 am</td>
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<td>Standing Committees 10:30 am-12:30pm</td>
<td>Issue Forums 11:30 am-12:45 pm</td>
<td>NCSL Business Meeting 10:30 am-12:30 pm</td>
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<td>Opening</td>
<td>Standing Committees 12:30 pm-5:00 pm</td>
<td>Exhibit Hall Luncheon 12:30 pm-2:00 pm</td>
<td>General Session Luncheon Seattle Kick-Off 12:30 pm-2:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Session 1:30 pm-2:45 pm</td>
<td>Legislative Staff University 3:30 pm-5:00 pm</td>
<td>Issue Forums 2:15 pm-3:30pm</td>
<td>Ancillary Groups 2:00 pm-5:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standing Committees 3:00 pm-5:00 pm</td>
<td>Young and New Professionals/Ancillary Groups 5:15 pm-6:30 pm</td>
<td>Issue Forums 3:45 pm-5:00 pm</td>
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<td>Staff Sections 3:00 pm-5:00 pm</td>
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<td>Opening Reception</td>
<td>States’ Night</td>
<td>Nicollet Island Social Event 6:30 pm-9:00 pm</td>
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<td>Mill City Museum 6:00 pm-7:30 pm</td>
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For more information, visit the Legislative Summit home page. Registration is now open. Look for more information on LRL activities at the Legislative Summit in the coming weeks.
Louisiana’s Legislative Libraries

By Frances Thomas, Louisiana

The Louisiana Legislative Council was created in 1952 as the first agency to staff the Louisiana Legislature and included a library. In 1981 the Legislature abolished the Legislative Council, splitting the staffing functions between the two chambers. The Council’s library remained with the House and retained its records. In 1990, the library was named in honor of David R. Poynter. Former library director Suzanne (Suzy) Hughes was one of the founding members of NCSL Legislative Research Librarians staff section.

The Huey P. Long Memorial Law Library was established under the Office of the Louisiana Attorney General. It was transferred to Legislative Council by Act 368 of 1980. Upon dissolution of the Council, the library was transferred to the Senate.

The collection of the Poynter Library includes historical legislative documents, legal materials, statistical and research publications, Louisiana government documents, periodicals, newspaper clippings, databases, and reports mandated by law or resolution by the Legislature. Staff includes a library director, four librarians, and two paraprofessionals. Librarians have subject area assignments for research and the indexing of legislation. The paraprofessional staff answers a district office line which supports House legislative assistants.

The Poynter Library recently upgraded its web publishing software to Inmagic’s Presto and recently posted its new webpage to the Internet. You can find it at http://house.louisiana.gov on the House Staff drop-down menu or go to it directly at: http://drplibrary.legis.la.gov. Photos of the capitol are located to the right of the page, if you are interested in seeing the location of the next LRL professional development seminar. The library will also soon launch a new internal site for staff that includes catalog access; one for legislators will follow at a later date.

The Huey P. Long Memorial Law Library is located in the Louisiana state capitol and provides legal information, resources and reference services to members of the Louisiana legislature, their staff and legal researchers from Louisiana state agencies. A collection of approximately 7,700 volumes of current and archived titles is maintained in addition to subscriptions to major electronic legal databases.

Both the House and Senate libraries staff the Public Information Update Service (PULS) line which answers calls from constituents on legislation. Originally focused primarily on identifying legislation and its progress in the legislative process, it now assists with website navigation.

The Poynter Library is located on the 13th floor of the state capitol; the Long Memorial Law Library is on the 14th. These two floors have been reinforced to support the weight of the books, giving them permanent homes in the capitol. The Poynter Library serves the members and staff of the Louisiana Legislature; the Long Memorial Library additionally serves state agencies. We work cooperatively to provide information to our users from our unique resources.

Frances Thomas and Elizabeth Hecker, directors of the Poynter and Long libraries respectively, invite you to Baton Rouge for the LRL Professional Development Seminar this Oct. 1-3. The program will include tours of the Louisiana new and old state capitols, Louisiana House and Senate libraries, and a visit to the Law Library of Louisiana (La. State Supreme Court library) in New Orleans. Downtown Baton Rouge has restaurants, museums, and live music. In addition we can promise some good food, lively conversation and perhaps a little lagniappe.
2014 LRL Professional Development Seminar


Hopefully you’ve read the article on Louisiana’s two legislative libraries on the previous page. Now learn about the plans taking shape for the 2014 LRL Professional Development Seminar. It’s being held Oct. 1-3, 2014, in Baton Rouge, La.

The program is being planned by LRL vice-chair Sonia Gavin and our Louisiana host librarians, Frances Thomas, director of the House library, and Elizabeth Hecker, director of the Senate library.

We’ll have full day sessions on Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 1 and 2. On one of the afternoons, we hope to take an afternoon to visit New Orleans and tour the Supreme Court Library. We’ll have a half-day session on Friday morning. On Friday afternoon, we’ll be planning a community service project, similar to last year’s presentation of books to the local children’s hospital in Boise.

There also might be a pre-conference session on Tuesday, Sept. 30, to demonstrate Inmagic software being used by the Louisiana librarians but those plans are still preliminary.

The list of potential programs so far includes:

- Opening roundtable: Five Minutes of Fame
- Library Technology
- Louisiana State Law Institute and Statutory Revision (La.’s official law revision commission since 1938)
- Louisiana Civil Law Tradition and Legal History
- Tours of Old and New State Capitols and legislative libraries (the Old State Capitol is a museum of Louisiana politics)
- Indexing Legislation
- Legislative Response to Catastrophic Disasters
- possible tour of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness command center
- Louisiana's economic development and the film industry
- Tour of the Law Library of Louisiana (the Supreme Court)
- Generational Differences in Libraries and Succession Planning
- Afternoon visit to New Orleans and sharing a meal in the French Quarter
- Possible preconference demonstration of Inmagic software

Stay tuned for program updates in the coming weeks.

Louisiana Websites:

State News

For this issue, State News contributors were asked for news from their library, and to respond to two questions:

- What are the top three “hot-topic” requests your library staff has fielded this year?
- What are the most unusual, most interesting or the toughest requests you’ve received this year?

ATLANTIC NORTHERN
Carrie Rose, Regional Director

From Carrie Rose and Christine McCluskey, Connecticut

- Here are some of the most high profile issues from Connecticut:
  - Minimum wage: Connecticut was the first state to pass a $10.10 minimum wage
  - Common Core: Legislative has been proposed that would place a moratorium on the implementation of the Common Core Standards
  - Hospital conversions: There has been legislation proposed to put a moratorium on the conversion of nonprofit hospitals to for-profit entities

From John R. Barden, Maine

- Medicaid expansion is the hot topic in Maine this session.

From Michael Chernick, Vermont

In Vermont, the top three issues from my perspective are:

- Continuing issues surrounding health care reform, including startup problems with Vermont’s own exchange known as Vermont Connect, and financing of Vermont’s projected 2017 Universal Pay Health Care coverage (Green Mountain Care). No proposal will be forthcoming from the Governor’s office until 2015.
- Local property tax rates—Vermont has a complex locally collected statewide property tax, that in addition to general revenue sources (including lottery proceeds), and certain local supplements to the statewide tax, funds public education. Over 30 municipalities, including Burlington and Montpelier that usually support their school budgets on Town Meeting Day, voted in the negative. Tax rates were rising in some instances higher than the spending rate due to the statewide formula. Legislation to address the issue, at least partially, is now a major topic of deliberation.
- Thirdly, a proposal for a major restructuring of Vermont’s school districts, introducing more multiple town districting and eliminating a number of local school boards, is under discussion. Proposals for consolidation have been floated and died for many years. Vermont’s last total revision of district boundaries occurred in 1915 when a one-town-one district mandate was established. In the 1960s, a number of local single-town high schools merged into regional institutions. But, this did not address the plethora of local districts, many with only K-6 or K-8, and some without a school at all.

Also of interest, on Town Meeting Day, the City of Burlington passed three major gun control municipal charter amendments related to bars and restaurants with liquor licenses, the safe storage of guns, and domestic abusers. The proposals need state legislative approval as Vermont is a Dillon’s Rule state. They will go no further in 2014 than being introduced as legislation. Vermont has a statutory provision, known informally as the Sportsman’s Bill of Rights, providing that all gun regulation will be statewide and not municipal. However, it may be an issue for another year.

ATLANTIC CENTRAL
Julia Covington, Regional Director

From Cathy Martin, North Carolina

Our three hot-button issues are homeowner association concerns, Common Core and the recent changes to state income tax laws.

As for what are the most unusual, most interesting or the toughest requests, that is a tough request itself because most of the really interesting requests are confidential! From the public, we’ve had challenging requests from folks who seem somewhat “lost at sea,” including one who has had a history of being kicked out of public meetings and one who has a history of suing libraries and other entities for civil rights violations. In some ways, the folks we can’t help at all are the toughest requests.

The Department of Health and Human Services has also come under fire for mishandling Medicaid and food stamp claims (including software and staffing failures) and the legislature has held numerous lengthy public hearings involving the Secretary and her staff (the duration and scope of which are unprecedented) – this has kept us all very busy. We’ve also delved into campaign finance laws and “revolving door” history.

From Julia Covington, North Carolina

The North Carolina Legislative Library’s Committee Minutes Digitization Project is our library news. We are embarking on an exciting new project in collaboration with the North Carolina State Archives to digitize our standing committee minutes. To test the waters, we’ll begin with a pilot project in late summer.
2014, in which we’ll digitize the 1997-1998 Senate non-appropriation minutes. This will involve a total of ten committees and 18,176 pages. The role of the Legislative Library staff will be to convert the TIF pages to PDF documents. State Archives will then work their magic with CONTENTdm and make the documents available on the web. We can almost hear the cheers from NC researchers now!

From Cheryl Jackson, Virginia
I’m not sure that we have three hot topics but the most requested item remains past-year budgets, for comparison with the current budget. In library news, one new young staffer came to the library this session and asked if he could have one of the legislative summaries from the 1970s. We invited him to check it out to take to his office for research or to make copies, but he said that he wanted to keep the document, because he "liked old things." We thanked him, but gently reminded him that the library's purpose is to collect documents to share with the public, not give them away. Nice guy, though!

GULF COASTAL
Elisa Naquin, Regional Director

From Eddie Weeks, Tennessee
Hot topics for Tennessee:
- Primacy of coal mining regulations (state taking over from feds)
- Funding for higher education
- Election of Attorney General / Creation of Solicitor General

Tracking down exactly when and how Tennessee surrendered its primacy of coal mining regulation to the Federal government was a doozy…

From Frances Thomas, Louisiana
Hot topics for Louisiana this session are:
- Common Core State Standard
- Student data privacy
- Tulane University scholarships (Legislators can each nominate one candidate)
- Medical marijuana (Louisiana has a law on the books, but has not the necessary licensing to put it into practice.)
- Payday lending (most lobbied legislation this session)
- Coastal lawsuits against oil and gas companies for environmental damage/liability
- State minimum wage

Also of interest, HB 503 makes the oldest published edition of the Bible in the Louisiana State Museum system the official state book.

From Helen Hanby, Alabama
I don’t think there have been any hot topics this session. Alabama is having a relatively quiet, noncontroversial session. This is the fourth year of a quadrennium and the legislators’ main goal seems to be getting through the session and getting on the campaign trail.

The Legislature will meet its total allotment of 30 legislative days, but instead of meeting just Tuesdays and Thursdays, Wednesdays have been meeting days, too. Wednesdays are committee meeting days, so the Legislature convenes after committee meetings. The session will be finished on April 7.

GREAT LAKES
Anne Rottmann, Regional Director

From Anne G. Rottmann, Missouri
For Missouri hot topics this session include:
- Medicaid reform/expansion. The House has a bill that has been introduced and had a hearing, but there are five senators who have already made the promise that if it gets to the floor of the Senate, they will filibuster as long as needed.
- The comprehensive rewrite of our criminal code, something that has not been done since 1977.
- Tax cuts but only with tax credit reform, particularly the low income housing tax credit and the historic preservation tax credit.
- Education and what to do with failing districts. Missouri law now allows students to transfer to another district with the failing district paying the costs. This has the potential of bankrupting the failing districts and there is one currently in that position.

From Debbie Tavenner, Ohio
Without being specific, the library staff has recently responded to requests that have required:
- the preparation of lists of special days created by the legislature and special license plates;
- the preparation of tables about legislators’ sponsored legislation, spanning long periods of time (even pre-computer!), and organized by numerous variables such as certain subjects, just enacted legislation, or in most cases EVERYTHING;
- research into the legislative careers of former members of the General Assembly; and
- the preparation of specialized directories of types of businesses in legislators’ districts.
From Pat Reichart, Wisconsin

For legislation, our hot topics would be elections, tax reform, technical colleges, and parity for oral cancer drugs. Several election bills passed and there was a January special session on tax reform and workforce training. One of my favorite bills this session is AB422 or the rubber duck bill: it creates raffle provisions for the racing of rubber or plastic ducks.

In library news, the Wisconsin LRB Library welcomed two new librarians recently. Calli Neumann joined the library in October and along with cataloging and serials, she will work with the library’s digital collections. Keely Merchant began as the new Wisconsin documents librarian in January. Eileen Snyder left the LRB in December to become the Wisconsin documents librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library.

CENTRAL NORTHERN
Jonetta Douglas, Regional Director

From Elizabeth Lincoln, Minnesota

The hot topic questions at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library have been more dull this year than recent years. Last year we worked almost exclusively on questions on some perennial hot button issues—stadiums, same-sex marriage, gun issues. This year, during the shorter session, Governor Dayton declared the session an "unsession" and most of the questions relate to his goals of eliminating superfluous legislation, simplifying taxes, reforming rulemaking, and putting reports in plain language.

However, we have other Library news. There have been a number of staff changes at the Legislative Reference Library in the last six months. Elizabeth Lincoln was hired as the director, David Schmidtke became the deputy director, and Betsy Haugen became the head of reference services. In addition, Peder Garnaas-Halvorson was hired as a library assistant and Reed Polakowski was hired as the acquisitions specialist. The most recent hire is Alyssa Novak as a reference librarian.

Library staff have been working with other legislative staff on accessibility issues related to the Legislature's website. One of the Library's publicly-accessible computers now has JAWS screen reader software installed for use by all visitors to the Capitol and for staff programmer testing.

The Library has rolled out two new searchable databases in recent months. Mike Schatz, the library's programmer rewrote the programming behind the Library’s acquisitions system. The system allows library staff to track our purchased library materials, but more importantly, the reports mandated by the Legislature and other state documents.

This project allowed us to make the mandated reports information publicly searchable. This capability allows House and Senate committee administrators, state agency staff, and others to track the reports required to be sent to the Legislature by mandate, agency name, or by date. (Here’s a link to the Mandated Reports database: http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/mndocs/mandates_search.aspx)

Another database the Library made public earlier this year is the Minnesota Agencies database. The database includes background information on thousands of state agencies, boards, task forces, and commissions, including a brief history, links to reports, links to pertinent statutes, laws, or rules, and lists of members. The librarians have been slowly transferring information compiled in nearly 100 three-ring notebooks to an internal database over the last several years.

From Jonetta Douglas, Iowa

Here is what was on tap for Iowa this session. The Governor’s four priorities were bullying in the schools and beyond, veterans benefits, apprenticeships and worker training, and universal internet access.

Some legislative priorities were K-12 and higher education funding, economic development initiatives for businesses, worker training, elder abuse (protection from financial exploitation), criminal law sanctions for child kidnapping, drones, and ignition interlock devices for drunk drivers.

SOUTHERN CENTRAL
Molly Otto, Regional Director

From Molly Otto, Colorado

The hot topics in the Colorado legislature this session are:

- Fracking
- Recreational Marijuana
- Flood prevention
- School immunization

Interesting research requests:

- Statutory determination of resident and residence
- Naturalization of foreign born persons

From Shelley Day, Utah

My most frequent requests are for:

- Legislative history research, whether I conduct the research for a legislator or staff member or provide guidance to researchers outside the legislative arena.

- Project guidance for the 90 legislative interns serving our 104 legislators. This includes teaching interns how to access/use various online databases (subscription and in-house), helping them to craft letters whether to the U.S. Congress or constituents, and directing them to key contacts or information resources in local, state, and national agencies and organizations.
LRL Newsline ♦ Spring 2014

- Website feedback, information requests, and special assignments. I respond to a myriad of individuals, organizations, corporations, media stations, and legislative staff across the nation during session; track, compile, and run the Selected Highlights report at the end of session; research issues and compile docs presented to caucuses.

WEST COASTAL
Maeve Roche, Regional Director

From Brooke Daly and Mary Pagenkopf, Alaska

Hot topics from Alaska:

Our legislature is in session—we’ve just passed day 60 of the 90-day session so everyone is in high gear.

Education: Governor Parnell declared this “the education session.” His bill (SB 139) proposes many reforms. One that many seem to agree on is a repeal of the outmoded high school exit exam. Debate over details and funding continues.

Education: SJR 9/HJR 1 proposes to amend the Alaska Constitution. Article VII, Sec. 1, Public Education, says in part, “No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution.” This sentence would be removed. In Article IX, Sec. 6, Public Purpose, states “No tax shall be levied, or appropriation of public money made, or public property transferred, nor shall the public credit be used, except for a public purpose.” These resolutions would add, “however nothing in this section shall prevent payment from public funds for the direct educational benefit of students as provided by law.” To amend the Constitution, a resolution must pass both Houses by a 2/3 majority, then be placed on the ballot to be voted on by the citizens. House and Senate votes are still pending.

In-state natural gas pipeline and liquefied natural gas project (SB 138): this bill would launch a huge resource development project that has been proposed many times over the last 30+ years. There seems to be optimism that the project could move forward this time.

From Jaemin Lee and Maeve Roche, California

Our hot topics:

- Questions related to sexual crimes: preventing sexual assault on college campus, addressing rape kit backlog issues, and handling sexual violent predators.
- Privacy and digital assets issues in social media: privacy, verification, cyber stalking, identity theft, and probate law (dealing with electronic assets after someone dies).

Our unusual or most difficult request:
- Searching legal basis for a law that was authorized by many different acts that were included as a package bill, e.g., rape kit backlog request, SAFER Act, etc.
- Searching for statutes from 1850, before codification.

From Jerry Curry, Oregon

The most pressing issue we’ve encountered here in Oregon is with the rollout of both a new Oregon State Legislature homepage and the Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) which provides access to session related material.

With the passage of Measure 21 in 2010, Oregon has adopted annual sessions with an approximately month-long short session occurring in even years. Our short session just recently adjourned and this was the first session in which these new resources were introduced.

One problem with keeping with the same page look and feel for over a decade is that people become very accustomed to how to utilize the former resource. Given the new changes and despite greatly improved searching and access to resources, there were and still have been a lot of questions regarding navigation.

Also, during the changeover to the new SharePoint-based pages, a fair amount of older legislative information was removed from readily available online access, which has caused some degree of frustration from the user community. All in all, the changes have been very good but have created some challenges for the reference librarians here at the State Library.

Some major issues Oregon recently attempted to tackle during our short session included: marijuana dispensaries and decriminalization, the Columbia River Crossing I-5 bridge linking Washington and Oregon, and legislative oversight regarding major state IT projects, such as the Cover Oregon health insurance exchange.

From Teresa Wilt, Nevada

In library news, one of our great assistant librarians, Danielle Mayabb, just finished her Master’s Degree in Library Science and was selected for recognition by the University of North Texas as the Outstanding Masters Student Award in the Nevada/Utah Cohort. We are proud of her accomplishments!

~ ~ ~ Got News?? ~ ~ ~

If you have news to share about your library, please get in touch with the regional director for your state and we’ll include it in the Summer issue of LRL Newsline!
Professional Development Ideas?

By Sonia Gavin, Montana

To enhance our professional development for the Legislative Research Librarians staff section, I am looking for ideas and suggestions for topics. These would be for summit, webinars, and our own LRL PDS. In addition to topics, suggestions for faculty would also be great. We all have a vast array of expertise, so volunteers as faculty would also be greatly appreciated. The ultimate goal is to have a list of topics and resources we can tap into for future events. I have combed through back issues of the Newsline, as well as the topics that were suggested during the Boise PDS.

From the feedback given at the Boise PDS, some topics include:

- Converting/digitizing/preserving non-print resources
- Conflict resolution within legislative staff
- Functions we perform outside of the traditional library role
- Workshop on Lexis/Nexis or Westlaw
- Performing staff evaluations
- Promoting and advocating for your library
- Maintaining a print collection in the digital age
- Issue specific topics, such as legalizing marijuana

In combing through old issues of the LRL Newsline, I found more exciting topics that you have suggested. These include:

- Bill drafting and bill management systems
- Filling gaps in legislative information, current and historical
- RDA and cataloging
- Training programs that are offered for staff by the library
- Organizing favorite websites
- Digital subscription management

Some recurring themes in the suggestions include preservation of historical documents, providing access to our historical documents, staff development and interaction, promoting the library and our services, and keeping up to date on the trends in information management.

I am looking for volunteers who would like to serve on a subcommittee to determine more topics and ideas. My email is sgavin@mt.gov for anyone who wants to propose an idea, volunteer to serve as faculty, or is interested in serving on the committee.

Legislative Staff Achievement Award

Legislative librarians do wonderful work for their legislatures so it’s nice to have the opportunity each year to recognize one of our own.

The Legislative Staff Achievement Awards are presented annually by each of the NCSL staff sections to recognize members who have demonstrated excellence in their legislative careers and who have provided support to the staff section.

The awards are presented at the NCSL Legislative Summit and the honorees are recognized at the Legislative Staff Luncheon during the Summit. This year’s staff luncheon is being held on Thursday, Aug. 21, in Minneapolis.

As is tradition with LRL, last year’s LRL honoree, Mary Camp of the Texas Legislative Reference Library, will serve as the chair of this year’s Awards Committee.

Please submit the name of a person or library—it can be yourself or your library—along with a description of specific accomplishments and LRL involvement. More details on criteria for the award are available on the LRL web page.

Please submit nominations by email to the Awards Committee chair, Mary Camp, at Mary.Camp@lrl.state.tx.us and cc LRL liaison Jeanne Mejeur, at jeanne.mejeur@ncsl.org. The deadline is Friday, May 23, 2014.

Your nomination should include the following information:

- The name of the librarian or legislative library;
- A description of NSCL involvement;
- A description of specific LRL involvement and contributions; and
- A summary of their legislative accomplishments.

For more information, contact Jeanne Mejeur at 303-856-1467 or visit the links below:


Chair’s Column, continued from page 1

regretted it. Yes, it’s been a challenge at times to juggle the extra demands from both LRL and LSCC, yes, I have paid for my own travel and expenses associated with LRL and LSCC, and more importantly, yes, I have loved being part of the LRL executive committee, loved getting to work with and know the librarians in the other states, and getting to work with and know other legislative staff and NCSL staff, too.

That comment I made when I mentioned feeling like a “member in name” and not knowing how best to break in—working with others is a sure way to start getting to know colleagues really fast.

As I mentioned before, there are a number of ways to get involved in LRL, from responding to a request for assistance from a colleague, to being a member or chair of a committee, to being a presenter of a program at Summit, PDS or in a webinar, to attending Summit and/or PDS, to volunteering your state to host an upcoming PDS. Some of these require formal approvals, all benefit from as many of us participating as possible.

Elizabeth, as coordinator of the Nominating Committee in 2011, and Jackie Curro (Maryland) and Kristin Ford (Idaho), as the other members of the committee, thank you, again.

As a member organization, our interests, efforts and energy shape the direction of our staff section.

This edition of the LRL Newsline includes a number of opportunities to get involved. Please contact the chairs of the committees if something catches your eye. Please contact me if you would like to discuss another project or for any reason at all.

PDS Planning Updates

By Eddie Weeks, Tennessee

The Professional Development Seminars Committee is pleased to announce that it will soon serve notice of preliminary planning which will begin the preparation of invitations for cities to possibly hold future LRL fall seminars.

Following Baton Rouge in 2014, preliminary pre-planning involves Helena, Mont. in 2015, and Austin, Tex. in 2016. Denver, Colo. (with NCSL’s facilities) will serve as a backup site for either of these locations.

If your state would be interested in hosting a future LRL PDS, please contact LRL officers and our liaison, Jeanne Mejeur. Be sure to consult with your leadership or your supervisors, as appropriate, prior to offering your state’s services as host.

LRL Future Fall Seminars:

- 2014  Baton Rouge, La.
- 2015  Helena, Mont.
- 2016  Austin, Tex.

Save the Date!

LRL 2014 Professional Development Seminar

Oct. 1-3, 2014
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

LRL members toured the Idaho Legislative Library at last year’s Professional Development Seminar in Boise. If you look closely at the tall vase in the foreground, you’ll see Lucille Ball, the library’s pet fish!