

# NEWSLINE

## LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH LIBRARIANS

VOL. XXIV No. 3

Fall 2000

*National Conference of State Legislatures*

### Chair's Column

by Johanne Greer, Maryland, LRL Chair

"Outstanding programs," "scrumptious food", and "this one will be hard to top" are just some of the unsolicited accolades offered by the librarians who attended this year's Professional Development Seminar held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Many thanks to our hosts, Suzy Hughes, the library director of the Legislative Research Library and Arthur McEnany, the Law Librarian for the Senate Law Library, who with the help and guidance of Rita Thaemert at NCSL, arranged programs spanning many interesting areas from technology in libraries to technology in legislative chambers and committee rooms. Overviews of all of the sessions are in this issue of NEWSLINE, and I would like to thank the volunteers who

helped them.

All of our meals were arranged, including a delightful dinner at the Governor's Mansion the first evening, October 18. Since the Governor could not attend dinner, the Speaker of the Louisiana House, the Honorable Charles DeWitt, Jr. welcomed us to his great state. The food was delicious and the ambiance was an example of southern grace and charm at its best.

The informative and entertaining program on the Louisiana legislature really gave us a flavor for politics in this unique state. Panelists included Emile "Peppi" Bruneau, the House Speaker Pro Tempore and E.L. "Bubba" Henry, a former House Speaker as well as Edgar "Sonny" Mouton, the former Senate President Pro Tempore. The mediator, E. Anne Dunn is the Director of Governmental Affairs Division, for Louisiana's House Legislative Services.

The success of the Professional Development seminar was also due in part to the large turn out of librarians. We are all so fortunate to be part of an organization like NCSL that affords us the opportunity to get together with other people who do what we do. We can share our ideas and concerns among ourselves and go back to our respective states with a fresh new outlook. The listserv that NCSL supports for the librarians provides immediate responses to questions that might otherwise take weeks to research, not to mention the expenditure of work hours. For example, Lynn Randall from Maine, who was not able to attend the Professional Development Seminar or the Annual Meeting last summer, read the Chair's Column in the last issue of NEWSLINE, sent me some information that was extremely helpful to address my concerns

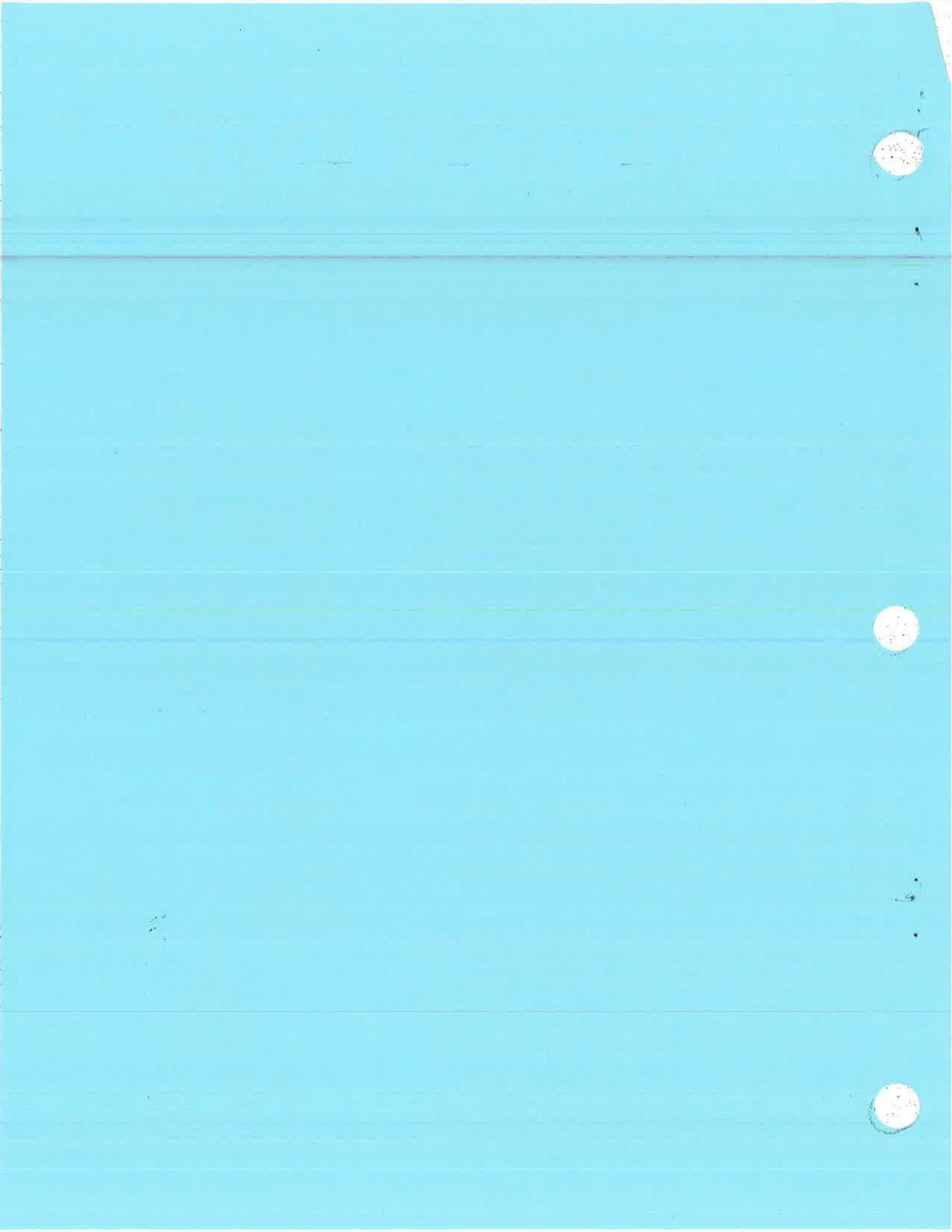
about copyright laws and preserving newspaper articles. Diane Bolander, Staff Chair for NCSL also reinforced the concept of using NCSL both to enrich our career paths and to enhance our personal lives when she spoke to us at the seminar. These are just a few of the ways NCSL bolsters our careers.

We have a wonderful group and I am honored to be an active participant in it. I urge all of you to look to NCSL to reinforce your professional development and to provide assistance to your library through its many resources. It is truly an organization that supports us so that we can better support our legislatures.

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## Professional Development Seminar October 18-21, 2000 Baton Rouge, Louisiana

### Technology in the Workplace: Utilizing the Web

Home pages, intranets, special features

Thursday, October 19

by Joyce M. Grimes, MLIS,  
Legislative Reference Librarian,  
South Carolina

Louisiana, one of the first states to open their legislature to the world of the Internet, took creative steps in the mid 1980s by asking Karen Paterson, State Demographer and INFO Office of Database Commission Webmaster, to coordinate state agency Web sites to make all of the sites user friendly, with a common look for easy navigation. The Internet's dynamics require constant evaluation of services. A current project identifies public services to make available via the Internet in lieu of onsite. There was an active discussion of archived Web site information on intranet as well as Internet records.

Kim Manning Dodd, Researcher and Webmaster, Senate Legislative Services, gave an excellent power point presentation with a handout on the history of the Senate's Web development and especially the need to identify Web trends through analysis of traffic at the Web site, which is <http://senate.legis.state.la.us/>

Mark Gilbert, IS Applications Analyst, House Clerk's office, said that their mission is to provide legislative information and research sites to a wide variety of users. The House Internet homepage has these categories: Representatives, House Staff, House's Guide, Resources, Search, Issues/Delegation, and Legislature, along with subcategories. They strive to provide easy to navigate generic

databases. The House via Internet provides live broadcasts of chamber and committee meetings. Guillermo Cordon, IS Applications Specialist in the Clerk's office, and Frances Carlson Thomas, Information Specialist/Librarian in the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library, House Legislative Services, reviewed information that is available to staff on their intranet at the Web site <http://house.legis.state.la.us/>

The Louisiana legislature outsources to Brian Broussard, Public Systems Associates, Inc., development and maintenance of a joint legislative site Web portal to the state legislature. It is not chamber specific, but provides a dynamic joint chamber pictorial with excellent wording and ease of navigation to encourage public accessibility. The Web site is <http://www.legis.state.la.us/>

### Coordination of Web Information - Charting the Future

Thursday, October 19

by Ellen Cork, Information  
Systems Librarian, Texas

Louisiana's Office of the Database Commission includes the Demographer, Karen Paterson. She coordinates Web information in a central location by getting all state Web sites together on one electronic mall. The site known as INFO Louisiana contains a link to Louisiana News. This enables state agencies to put up news from their offices that will remain on the site for one month. There is a link to a Student's page. Under Education there is a link to the library page that takes the user to the State Library of Louisiana. Additionally, there is a database catalog that searches all of

Louisiana state departments' databases.

There are links to Federal databases, local governments, a state employee's page and a retirement page. Work is underway to add more services such as renewing driver's licenses online, and obtaining birth certificates, hunting and fishing licenses.

A task force was formed to address the concerns about saving online publications but the recommendations have yet to be implemented.

Overall, the mission of the database is to have the ability to move seamlessly across departments and to be more intuitive to users.

### Louisiana's Legislature: A Historical Perspective

Thursday, October 19

by Deb Priest, Assembly  
Information Center, New York

Special interest groups sitting by members telling them how to vote; lobbyists delivering buckets of chicken and watermelon to the Floor during session; children squabbling to press buttons for a vote or biting member's legs, and smushing ice cream into white suits of legislators; members nominating colleagues as the State Fossil, and grappling with legislation to create a 13<sup>th</sup> month. These were some of the images of pre-modern Louisiana government presented to the LRL on Thursday afternoon.

Edgar "Sonny" Mouton, President of the Senate, John Hainkel, along with our own Suzy Hughes, hosted panel members Emile "Peppi" Bruneau, House Speaker Pro



As the group walked the hallways of the capitol, we noticed the large plasma screens mounted near the ceiling that display the day's scheduled committee meetings. Beside each committee room door was a smaller screen displaying that committee's agenda and notation of what items were currently under discussion. Video cameras and large plasma screens were installed in all committee rooms with assisted hearing devices available when needed.

Our tour ended in the executive corridor connecting the legislative chambers. In front of the original governor's suite is a plaque marking the place where Huey Long, then a U. S. Senator, was shot September 8, 1935.

#### **Technology in the Library: Choosing an Integrated Library System**

Friday, October 20  
by Nan Bowers, Legislative Librarian, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Nevada

David Warner, Maryland Legislative Library, presented a detailed account of the selection process that led Maryland to choose the SIRSI system. From the library's current 10-year-old DOS system, Maryland was looking to move to an integrated system with a relational database and windows NT platform. Primary use for the system would be database searching and cataloging. As a member of the five-person selection committee, David visited vendors at conferences, attended a vendor-sponsored workshop on migration to a new system, and prepared a sample RFP.

Other criteria for the new system included good customer support, an off the shelf product, ease of use, and Internet/intranet potential. The legislative computer staff must also approve the selected system. The

committee reviewed the literature, surveys, research evaluations, and spoke to librarians using various systems. Four finalists emerged from the study: SIRSI, The Library Corporation, Sydney Plus, and EOSI's Q Series. Intensive research on the four systems included requests for information, vendor demonstrations, site visits, and then the process of elimination began. Cost, customer support and system limitations came into play and SIRSI emerged as the best choice for Maryland's needs. Marian Rogers, Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, commented her library recently choose SIRSI after an extensive selection process. Both David and Marian offered to talk with librarians about their experiences in selecting a library system.

#### **Electronic Records Retention**

October 20  
by Eddie Weeks, Legislative Librarian, Office of Legal Services, Tennessee

Presenters were Faye Phillips and Emily Robinson of the LSU Special Collections Department.

The Federal Government, through the National Archives, has been dealing with electronic records and their retention since the 1960's. They still have no consistent policy. The National Archives has issued a series of policies, instructional guidelines, and GRS's for the retention, destruction, and deletion of "e-records." These have been overturned by courts, reinstated by other courts, and suspended and replaced by other policies and guides.

Further muddying the waters is the emergence of "d-records," or digital records, items never intended for print format. These, like e-records, suffer from an unstable format and the risk of software obsolescence. Electronic

information is already being lost. It is time to stop discussing the problem and to start acting on the problem, but no one knows what the correct course of action, nor is there any agreement for a current course of action. Paper and microfilm remain the preferred storage format for archival purposes.

#### **LRL Business Meeting** Baton Rouge, Louisiana October 21, 2000

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:30 am by Johanne Greer, Chair.

Thanks were expressed to Suzy Hughes and Arthur McEnany for organizing a wonderful program for this Professional Development Seminar.

A resolution was presented to Susan Gilley (OK) detailing her many contributions to the staff section and conveying the gratitude of LRL for all her work over the years.

#### **Archivist Position**

Irene Stone (CA) has accepted the position of Archivist for the staff section. She will be reinstating the photo album that Susan Gilley had maintained that is now missing. Irene solicited input as to what kind of scrapbook we would like. Suggestions included pictures from Professional Development Seminars, lists of attendees, and brochures.

#### **Promoting Legislative Libraries**

The group shared promotional ideas and samples of materials. Johanne mentioned the problem of ensuring that the library is credited for work it does. Several people use a stamp to brand work products. Irene passed out a list of California Research Bureau products that John Jewell

compiled. Alice Winn (VA), Debbie Tavenner (OH) and Jan (NV), Anne Rottmann (TX), Dale Propp (TX), Shirley Dallas (WA), and others shared current and planned brochures and other publicity material (bookmarks, news summaries, new materials lists, business cards) getting across basic messages as to phone numbers and services offered. Robbie LaFleur's (MN) publicity materials include a page with photos of public services staff and a topic list for orders for their current awareness service.

Jennifer Bernier (CT) mentioned reaching out to new employees with targeted e-mail and getting them in the library for orientation when they stop by on a quick introductory tour.

Dale Propp (TX) suggested that a collection of these materials be made available on the LRL Web

#### **Indexing project for NCSL**

Doug Sacarto (NCSL) is interested in having LRL participate in a project to identify and index legislative staff subject expertise (updating the 1994 directory of key policy contacts). Doug has developed a subject list but requests our help in collecting and maintaining data. Some states might not be too hard, but many, especially those without legislative libraries, would be very difficult. CSG also provides directories we would not need to duplicate, though these directories are fairly general. Susan Gilley suggested that providing a central phone number to call for referral to a subject expert would be the most effective way to go for a stable, reliable resource. Deb Priest (NY) commented that librarians could certainly serve as gateways to subject expertise in their states.

**Regional Coordinators** were recognized and applauded for their good work. 1999-2000

Coordinators have been Jennifer Bernier (CT), Clare Cholik (SC), Tracey Kimball (NM), Irene Stone (CA), Frances Thomas (LA), Marian Rogers (WI), and Joyce Grimes (SC). For 2000-2001, Suzie Carroll (LA) will replace Frances Thomas; others will continue.

#### **Future Professional Development Seminars**

The 2001 seminar in Richmond, VA, will be joint with RACSS, (Research and Committee Staff Section). We plan to visit LEXIS and Williamsburg. Possible joint sessions with RACSS include a leadership skills workshop presented by the Virginia State Librarian and a workshop on targeting your writing to your audience. A riverboat ride on the James River is also possible. Other topics might include marketing library services, researching state statutes, team building, and evaluating Internet sources. Suggestions are solicited and should go to Nan Bowers (NV), vice-chair. The 2002 seminar will be in Bismarck, ND. Possible locations for the 2003 seminar were discussed including Alaska and Washington.

#### **2001 Annual Meeting - San Antonio**

Dale Propp gave an overview of planning for LRL activities at the 2001 Annual Meeting. Possibilities include a bus trip to Austin for a tour of the legislative library and state capitol and a session on assertiveness for librarians in the political arena (picking your battles).

#### **Notable Documents**

Deb Priest described the Notable Documents program and solicited nominations of documents including serials, documents from other levels of government

(municipal, county) and government-related organizations (lobbyists, think tanks, not-for-profit) to be considered for recognition. Nan Bowers (NV) and Debbie Tavenner (OH) shared experiences with nominated documents that had turned out to be political hot potatoes. It may be wise to investigate any political climate surrounding a document before nomination.

#### **NCSL Publications: Paper and Internet**

Concern was expressed about our ability to track NCSL publications that do not appear in paper, but are only published on the Internet. Rita will work on internal communications about publications so that a complete list can be provided in the NEWSLINE. If you have problems getting materials from the Health Policy Tracking Service, tell them you're on the key contacts list. Dick Merritt is the main contact.

#### **Suggestions for professional development topics**

The group discussed other possible professional development topics. Ideas included: surveys (on services, subscriptions, etc.); budget planning; decisions on keeping hard copy of materials available on the Web.

#### **LSCC**

Nan Bowers reported on the LSCC meeting and referred us back to Diane Bolender's report. Nan will be serving on the task force on promoting NCSL services for legislators and staff. Packets of materials for orientation sessions are available. The task force is interested in reaching out to staff who are not aware of NCSL and in making the Web page more user friendly. The CD that was produced 1 1/2 years ago apparently was not very effective (few remembered it) and may well be dated now. The 'MyNCSL'



We've printed this draft list in NEWSLINE to see if we get any corrections from other people's memories. We are putting out a request that material relating to these seminars be sent to Irene Stone, California Research Bureau, for the LRL scrapbook. Thank you.

### Web Sites

This message was forwarded from Brian Weberg, Group Director of NCSL's Legislative Management Program.

Thought you'd find this interesting.

-----Original Message-----

From: Brager, Stephen <[sbrager@usaid.gov](mailto:sbrager@usaid.gov)>

To: '[parlamentoxxi@eGroups.com](mailto:parlamentoxxi@eGroups.com)'

<[parlamentoxxi@eGroups.com](mailto:parlamentoxxi@eGroups.com)>

Date: Sunday, October 01, 2000 2:41 PM

Subject: [parlamentoxxi] Web site with info on parliamentary libraries

I recently came upon a site that might be of interest. No doubt a number of you--particularly those who work directly with legislative libraries--are already aware of the site. In any case, the website of the International Federation of Library Associations has papers (many of which are in more than one language) from their annual conferences for the last 6-7 years on-line.

The following are just examples from this year's conference in Jerusalem (<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/66intro.htm>).

A list of past years' conferences can be found at <http://www.ifla.org/IV/index.htm#3>.

"The role of the research services in the modernization of the Mexican Congress," <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/100-98-e.htm>

"Issues for smaller legislative research services," <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/096-98e.htm>

"The creation of a Parliamentary Research Centre" [Cameroon] <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/137-98e.htm>

The role of Parliamentary Libraries in Eastern Europe in ensuring public

access to government information: the case of Russia," <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/071-112e.htm>

"The workings of the Parliamentary Library in India: how it responds to the needs for information and research support in the context of new information technology," <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/072-112e.htm>

## NCSL Publications

Copies of all NCSL publications listed here are available from the Marketing Department at 303/830-2200.

### BOOKS

Linking Child Welfare and Substance Abuse Treatment

Treatment of Alcoholism and Drug Addiction: What Legislators Need to Know

### STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

Education Standards, Assessment and Accountability, Vol.25, No.9

Expanding Commercial Wind Power in Four States, Vol.25, No.10

Commercial Wind Power and Bird Species, Vol.25, No.11  
Wind Power Development: Policy Options, Vol.25, No.12

### LEGISBRIEFS

Marketing Regulation in the States, Vol.8, No.37

Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence, Vol.8, No.38

Tax and Landowner Revenues from Wind Power, Vol.8, No.39

Psychotropic Medication and Children, Vol.8, No.40

Nuclear Medicine, Vol.8, No.41

Obesity in America, Vol.8, No.42

Medical Errors, Vol.8, No.43

Streamlined Sales Tax for the New Economy, Vol.8, No.44

Funding Childhood Immunizations, Vol.8, No.45

Language Services Under SCHIP, Vol.8, No.46

NARAB and the Future of Insurance Regulation, Vol.8, No.47

Internet Coverage of Legislative Proceedings, Vol.8, No.48

Thanks to all of the staff section members and others who submitted columns and information for this issue. NEWSLINE is published four times annually by NCSL's Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section.

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