

# NEWSLINE

## LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH LIBRARIANS

Winter 2003

### Contents

- Chair's Column
- LSCC
- Fall Professional Development Seminar
- Hong Kong Internship
- News
- NCSL Publications

---

### Chair's Column

*by Robbie LaFleur, Minnesota*

*LRL Chair*

It seems like just yesterday that former(!) Governor Jesse Ventura was giving back the state surplus in "Jesse checks" and making outrageous comments about coming back as a size DD bra or religion being a crutch for the weak-minded. Now things are deadly serious. Minnesota wrestles with a multi-billion dollar deficit, and even though our new governor, Tim Pawlenty, makes jokes comparing the deficit to a tyrannosaurus rex, not much seems funny when all our agencies are facing deep cuts.

So I didn't mind traveling to Tucson in January to get away; Arthur McInerney, Nan Bowers, and I all attended the LSCC quarterly meeting. Nan and I are both on the Technology Committee, and attended meetings that discussed the fledgling state bill tracking system and proposed changes to the NCSL Web site. Nan's report is in this issue. As part of the NCSL Web site improvements, the staff section pages will be revamped.

This is an opportune time for us to beef up the content of the LRL staff section page. I'd like to hold a brainstorming session this summer at the Annual Meeting and get volunteers for contributing to any resources or lists that would benefit us and other NCSL Web site users. Should we update the "Core Reference Collection" or provide information on legislative history materials in each state? When you get time, check out our page and other staff section pages. Make suggestions on our list! I will compile any I hear about.

I hope many of you are planning to come to the Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Besides talking about Web site improvements, we are planning interesting programs, including a field trip to the library of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. We'll learn about effectively searching news resources from the newspaper's librarian, Richard Geiger. Let's hope that the newspaper headlines then aren't filled with stories of war.

### Legislative Librarians on the Web

Last summer I asked librarians from legislative libraries to respond to a survey regarding their involvement in Internet and intranet sites. I compiled the varied and interesting comments and examples, and they led to a lively discussion at last fall's Professional Development Seminar in North Dakota.

The intent of investigating Web site participation was to inspire librarians to become even more involved in using the Web to present the information we hold and to contribute our skills and knowledge to improve our legislatures' Web sites. By pulling together examples of different features on the various states' sites, I hope you can

find examples that might work for you, or discover who you can call when you want to begin a similar project. One librarian wrote, "We're pretty much isolationists. I hope that changes soon!"

Thank you to all the LRL members who contributed information. And thank you to Shelley Day, my collaborator on the session and co-editor of the document.

The document is posted at <http://www.leg.mn/lrl/pdf/ncslWebarticle.pdf>

If you read it and have any comments to add, please do so. Even those who have contributed already may have new developments to report. Either send a message to the list or send a message to me to post ([rlafleur@lrl.lib.mn](mailto:rlafleur@lrl.lib.mn)). I will add any changes to our report.

---

### **Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee**

*By Nan Bowers, Nevada*

#### **The Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee held its winter meeting in Tucson Arizona January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.**

Robbie and I both attended the meeting of the technology task force, which, along with NCSL staff, is working hard to get the National Bill Text and Status System up and running. The system is designed for identifying, searching, tracking, managing and reporting on current state legislation. There are 11 states providing 2003 data to the system currently, and more coming online as their sessions start. Check out the latest link [http://www.ncsl.org/public/ncsl/billstatus\\_start.cfm](http://www.ncsl.org/public/ncsl/billstatus_start.cfm)

Task force members are still contacting and encouraging non-participating states, who, for fiscal, time, or priority reasons, are reluctant to sign on to the project. A survey of participating states concludes the time-cost-difficulty issues were not really as much of a problem as originally anticipated. The basic help text and video help are complete. Development continues for the help text and video of the advanced search features.

The second technology task force project concerns NCSL Web services. Doug Sacarto, NCSL staff, showed examples of a new design for the NCSL home page and education policy page. Staff section pages will also be modified. Task force members offered suggestions, and Doug will present updates at the next LSCC meeting in May. Other NCSL Web news included a report on the first meeting of the newly formed Web Site Advisory Group. Members include legislators, legislative staff, and NCSL staff, and they will provide a continuing review of Web issues from their three respective points of view.

Many LRL members are now receiving the daily email of NCSLnet News. The online newsletter links to many newly published articles, news items, and meeting information tracked by NCSL staff. If you are interested in receiving a sample copy of signing up, contact Doug at [doug.sacarto@ncsl.org](mailto:doug.sacarto@ncsl.org).

The National Legislative Program Evaluators Society (NLPES) staff section kindly allowed us to excerpt parts of their LSCC article.

---

#### **Friday, January 24**

*Notes from the Strategic Planning Task Force Meeting (Heather Moritz):* Rich Jones explained the various outreach activities/mailings that NCSL has conducted for new and returning legislators. Various materials were handed out to task force members.

Rich provided a summary evaluation of last year's outreach process for new legislators. Most were very satisfied with the process and few changes were recommended. Legislative staff will be receiving an email outreach message sometime within the next month or so, if NCSL can get up-to-date email addresses. Rich also provided a handout explaining how staff appointments to Standing Committees will be made. The task force discussed the process and some minor changes were proposed.

The task force then discussed activities that members had undertaken since the Maine meeting to identify the needs of legislative staff who work for individual members. It appears that there are unmet needs there and the task force discussed various ways to reach these staff members and what types of information might be helpful for them.

Some of the approaches included pushing basic contact or reference information about NCSL, developing a Web page that could link staff to other parts of the NCSL Web site that might be of interest, and involving them with other sections' listservs and other existing communication devices. Task force members will give more thought

to Web page content and other approaches for getting these staff more involved with NCSL and this will be discussed further in Quebec.

The task force objective related to the Trust for Representative Democracy was tabled again, because Karl Kurtz was unavailable to brief the committee.

*Notes from the Legislative Staff Management Task Force Meeting (Kate Wade via conference call):* Brian Weberg guided the task force in its discussion of two surveys: the Staff Salary Survey and the 2003 Survey of Employment Levels and Staff Demographics. On the latter, data collection last occurred in 1996 and this is the higher-priority survey (of the two) for NCSL. The 2003 survey will make a distinction between Professional Staff and Clerical/Support Staff. The task force wanted to focus the 2003 survey on race, but it may be desirable in the future to consider in the survey other demographic information such as age, gender, and ADA employment.

The Staff Salary survey remains in the same format as in years past and will include surveys of IT staff and Administration/Human Resources staff. Brian noted that NCSL staff section liaisons and state liaisons are very supportive in the completion of these surveys.

The task force is also developing a "Diversity Best Practices Booklet," offering information legislative staff agencies can use in building diversity as an agency value, incorporating diversity in recruitment strategies, and supporting diversity on a daily basis in the workplace. This booklet will continue to be developed for review in Quebec City.

Another project discussed by the task force was NCSL Staff Support to Legislatures for Minority Recruitment Services. The general concern is that a sustained and proactive approach is the most successful strategy for identifying minority candidates, and this is a challenge for legislative offices with limited personnel resources. Groundwork will be laid this year in articulating the "mission" of this proposed NCSL support service. Finally, all staff sections are encouraged to identify minority staff in their offices and support their involvement in NCSL activities.

---

## **Saturday, January 25**

*Meeting of Staff Section Officers:* This meeting was called to provide a forum for staff section officers and other interested parties to discuss common issues. Linda Worrell (NCSL) provided a PowerPoint presentation that showed trend data on recent staff section professional development seminars.

The *Professional Development Task Force* discussed the Annual Meeting schedule. They also stated that they would be looking for volunteers for the staff section booth and that an orientation meeting for new staff section officers would be held at the Annual Meeting. Details regarding the changes to LSMI were also provided. Tuition will be set at \$1,950 (based on expected attendance of 20 people). The Institute will be held August 2-9, 2003, and no scholarships from the NCSL Foundation are expected at this time. They are also dropping production of the four-color brochure in favor of electronic marketing.

Next LSCC meeting: May 1-4 in Quebec City

---

## **Session at LRL's Professional Development Seminar Bismarck, North Dakota, October 9-12, 2002**

### **Friday, October 11**

#### ***Education and Research are Critical to Living in Peace***

*By Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson, Montana*

The tall, striking, ponytailed Native American man strode purposefully to the podium at the front of the room. He was a man with a mission. A mission to educate the room filled with legislative librarians about the issues, and uphill battles, facing Native Americans in today's state legislatures. "Education and research are critical to living in peace," he said. "All races are equal in the sacred circle of life."

However, Tex Hall, the Chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes and the President of the National Congress of American Indians, went on to illustrate numerous ways in which the Native Americans in the United States have

been treated unequally. "There are 579 Native American tribes in America," Tex said. "Yet, the Native Americans are treated as lesser citizens."

On the state level, although Native Americans make up eight percent of North Dakota's population, there is only one Native American legislator. There is fifty percent unemployment on the reservation. There is a separate hunting license for the reservation and the state won't recognize the tribe's license, choosing instead to confiscate hunters when they leave the reservation.

On the national level, Tex spoke of several lawsuits involving Native Americans, including one out of Browning, Montana, where the tribe is seeking assets from trust land held by the Bureau of Indian Affairs since 1887. Tex said it's been six years since the lawsuit was filed and nothing has yet happened. In other words, no money for the tribe.

In 1995, after 14 years of involvement with school administration, Tex, who lives on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota, was selected as the national Indian Educator of the Year. This is right in keeping with what he says is one of his primary motivators-to educate people about Native Americans. Take Lewis and Clark for example, he said. At the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Knife River was a thriving Indian community, bigger than St. Louis. However, as a result of the expedition, and the appearance of the white man in their midst, the whole Native American community was knocked out by small pox. The Chief, a friend of Lewis', blamed Lewis who, after his exploration days were over, became the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In that capacity, Lewis failed to inoculate the Mandan Indians in the Knife River settlement. Subsequently, they were wiped out by small pox. A hush fell over the room as Tex echoed the Chief's dying words, "My face is rotting. We will never trust the white man again."

In his talk to the librarians, Tex spoke of recent projects he has had a hand in. One he is particularly proud of is the Four Bears Bridge, a \$45 million, one mile long bridge not far from Bismarck, North Dakota. Undaunted by a rejection by the Corps of Engineers on the project, Tex went to Congress and asked for help. And he got it-the resulting decorations on the bridge will reflect Indian Country. Tex also procured a memorandum of understanding from North Dakota regarding the bridge. "There's been a book written about this," Tex said with a chuckle. It's called *The Damned Indian Tribe*.

Tex concluded his talk by stating that he is looking forward to the upcoming legislative session. He believes "all can coincide and exist on "Turtle Island." (Native Americans refer to North America and Canada as Turtle Island.)

---

## **Hong Kong Internship**

*By Jan Wolfley, Nevada*

The cabin never darkened; the sun never set. The sky remained a vibrant blue for the first 12 hours of a 14-hour flight. Little did I know my westbound flight across the Pacific Ocean would chase the sun for the majority of my voyage. Dusk finally came 11/2 hours prior to landing at Hong Kong's Chep Lap Kok International Airport. By the time I had passed through Customs, obtained my luggage, and found my escort to Hong Kong Island, night had set enabling the city lights to glow against the darkened sky. Wow! Illuminated skyscrapers dotted harbors and horizons. Red taxis zoomed through traffic. The Star Ferry bustled passengers across the Victoria Harbor to Kowloon. Indeed, I had arrived at the City of Life!

Let me start from the beginning. NCSL, with the support of the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, organized a legislative staff intern exchange program between U.S. state legislatures and the Legislative Council (LegCo) of the Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region in China. Staff members from three NCSL staff sections participated in the exchange in October-November 2002. The staff sections included Legislative Information and Communications staff (LINCS), Research and Committee staff (RACSS) and Legislative Research Librarians staff (LRL). Each intern was assigned to their LegCo counterpart and assigned an in-depth project. My four-week-long attachment was to LegCo's Research and Library Services Division.

The Research Division undertakes research studies on public policy issues for the council and its committees. The library provides reference services for Members of the Legislative Council, their personal assistants and staff of the Legislative Council Secretariat. The library, opened since March 1995, has a staff of three professional librarians and two-and-one-half clerical staff. Members of the public are allowed access to records and papers of the Council and its committees; however, the items are not circulated to the public. Library holdings are organized into three basic collections.

The core collection consists of Hansard from 1890 to present and records of open meetings of the Legislative Council and its committees from 1994 to the present. The general collection is comprised of parliamentary and

government publications, reference politics, CD-Roms, and online databases. Finally, the special collection includes materials on specific issues such as HKSAR Basic Law and court papers. Materials are in both Chinese and English with a ratio of 1:4 (Chinese to English). The book collection numbers over 30,000 items, periodicals number over 60 titles, and newspaper subscriptions number over a dozen titles.

Library staff duties are quite similar to legislative libraries in the states. Collection development, Innopac cataloging, circulation, and reference service all make up a staff member's day. The three members of the book selection committee are each assigned a specific subject area: political science and law, social sciences, and general reference materials. Items not available from the LegCo library are borrowed through interlibrary loan from the public and university libraries of Hong Kong.

The LegCo Library is compiling a Hong Kong Basic Law Collection Project. The in-house electronic database is still in its trial stage. Portions of the collection include links to articles, news items, and court judgments relating to the HK Basic Law. Additionally, links are available to the Basic Law reference collection of the Hong Kong Central Library and the Basic Law Bulletin of the Department of Justice and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute.

As mentioned earlier the library's collection includes records of meetings of the Legislative Council and its committees relating to the Hong Kong Basic Law. My project dealt with the issue of the accountability system for principal officials. The Chief Executive of the HKSAR announced in his 2000 Policy Address a plan to develop and implement such a system. In 2001, the LegCo Panel on Constitutional Affairs conducted a public consultation exercise on the issue.

Since that time, a series of panel meetings have been held to discuss the particulars of the system. I was asked to identify the committees and documents in the current term (2000 to present) that were relevant to the issue of the system of accountability for principal officials. The committees involved in the project included the Council, House Committee, subcommittee to study the proposed accountability system, Panel on Constitutional Affairs, and Panel on Public Service. The documents contained in the project included LegCo questions and motions, meeting papers, minutes, reports and LegCo briefs.

My project was challenging due to the fact I used Microsoft Word in Chinese. Fortunately, my supervisor gave me a 'cheat sheet' showing pull-down menus translated into English. Occasionally my computer had a mind of its own as the word processing program reverted to its Chinese default. I overcame that obstacle with the generous assistance from the library staff.

Currently, the Basic Law Collection has been uploaded to the LegCo Intranet for evaluation by the Legal Services Division's trial use and comments. At the end of February the collection will be available to additional LegCo divisions for their comments.

The evolving project requires extensive research and analysis. The library staff is continually searching for relevant news and journal articles and sorting papers of meetings to update the information available in the Basic Law Collection. The long-term product will be a vital addition to the LegCo Secretariat, library, and its patrons. I can only hope my contribution enhances the library's enormous endeavor.

I would like to thank those people who were supportive of my month-long internship. First, Bob Erickson, LCB Research Director and an 'old hat' on Hong Kong travel, gave me invaluable insights to the people and government of the country. I thank my two co-workers, Teresa Wilt and Sarah Brundle, for preparing and emailing materials needed for my many 'emergency' presentations. And lastly, I thank my supervisor, Nan Bowers, for believing in me and nominating me for the internship.

My four-week internship in Hong Kong was an opportunity of a lifetime. I would encourage members of the LRL group to consider future staff intern exchange programs organized by NCSL. Exchanging ideas, comparing problems and solutions, and shadowing counterparts all have an enriching and productive effect on our role as librarians. I hope that someday you, too, can experience the City of Life.

---

## News

### *from Louisiana*

After serving 33 years, Suzanne "Suzy" Hughes retired from Louisiana's David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library. Suzy, a native of Texas and a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, came to House Legislative Services in Louisiana in 1970 after working briefly in the Texas House of Representatives as a student.

Suzy was active in NCSL for many years, serving as chair to the LRL Staff Section and vice chair of the Legislative Information Needs Committee. She also served as a member of the NCSL Information Policy Task Force.

She and her husband, Ken Francis, will be moving to Apalachicola, Florida, upon the completion of their new home.

Suzie Johnston is the new director of Louisiana's David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library.

### ***Some News about Libraries***

#### ***Florida***

In late January, Florida Governor Jeb Bush proposed moving the state library to Florida State University or some other public library. He said it would save \$4.9 million annually. His office provided few details about how the move would work, making many skeptical that it would save costs and could result in decreased public access and less funding to build or maintain the collection.

Florida State University is not interested in acquiring the state library, because it allows access to only the university community and the proposal offers no personnel or funds. Currently, any Florida resident can use the library, housed with the Florida history museum a block from the capitol and across from the Supreme Court.

Then in mid February, an informal agreement between Gov. Bush and the interim Secretary of State was reached to save the state library. Librarians across the state organized a huge letter-writing campaign and a Web-based petition drive. For now, the archives and state museum will stay, but what to do with the 350,000 circulating book collection? House Republicans threatened a revolt over the library closing.

#### ***Washington***

Governor Gary Locke's budget proposes to severely cut the library that already took a big hit last year but avoided closure. The state Senate's adjustments to the current budget, the supplemental budget, call for cuts to the library before June 30. Both proposals would leave the library with a fraction of its state-funded employees. The House Appropriations Committee proposes in its supplemental budget to retain the library's funding.

The Washington state library administers \$3 million in federal funds for grants, training and services to libraries across the state. The cuts would require the library, celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, to either close or cut its hours.

Also on the line is a valuable set of federal documents, the Serial Set. The library gets the papers from the federal government for free, as long as the public has access to them. The set includes congressional proceedings and other federal and state documents. The Serial Set, with an estimated value of more than \$6 million, provides historical documentation about the state and federal government, and current information, for example, about cancer research highways. The Serial Set was established by Congress to ensure that the public could access government information--public access being the most fundamental requirement of program participation.

#### ***Washington, D.C.***

Libraries and bookstores would be exempt from expanded government surveillance allowed after the Sept. 11 attacks, according to legislation introduced by Vermont Independent Rep. Bernie Sanders. The bill seeks to repeal a section of the USA Patriot Act that lets the federal government secretly view records of materials checked out of public libraries or purchased in bookstores and observe library computer Web activity.

Some libraries have placed warning signs to tell patrons that federal agents could be monitoring their Internet practices, email contents or passwords. One reason for the provision was the discovery that some hijackers had used public library computers to carry out attack planning.

#### **Reminder**

Once again, LRL regional coordinators are being asked to gather LRL directory updates from your states. Please contact states and fax the updates to Rita Thaemert at NCSL, 303-364-7800. Thank you.

---

### **New NCSL Publications**

All NCSL publications listed here are available from the Marketing Department at 303/364-7700.

### **Books**

- "Let's Roll!" A Call for State Action to Provide Homeland Security
- Land Use in the Upper Mississippi River Basin
- A Guide to Property Taxes: Property Tax Relief
- Professional Development in Education Toolkit
- Meeting the Challenges of Rural America
- Welfare Reform series: Programs that Help Low-Income Families
- Promoting Walking and Biking: The Legislative Role
- Child Support 101: Lesson Two
- Protecting Children: A Guide to Child Traffic Safety Laws
- The Role of School Leadership in Improving Student Achievement
- Children, Youth and Family Summary: 2002 Legislation
- Transportation Series: 2002 Legislative Summary
- State Welfare Series: Strengthening Marriage and Two-Parent Families
- State Tax Actions 2002
- Making E-Communications Work: Strategies to Manage Web Sites and E-Mail

### **State Legislative Reports**

- Keeping Rural Emergency Medical Services Afloat, Vol.27, No.15
- State Criminal Records, Vol.27, No.16
- Post-Adoption Services: Issues for Legislators, Vol.27, No.17
- Affordable Housing: Issues and Trends, Vol.27, No.18
- States Enact New Terrorism Crimes and Penalties, Vol.27, No.19
- Geothermal Energy: A Primer on State Policies and Technology, Vol. 28, No.1
- Juvenile Justice State Legislation in 2002, Vol.28, No.2
- State Crime Legislation in 2002, Vol.28, No.3

### **Legisbriefs**

- CyberCrime: Securing Technology, Vol.11, No.1
- Traffic Safety and Children: Booster Seats, Vol.11, No.2
- Slot Machines and Video Gaming in the States, Vol.11, No.3
- Performance Budgeting Update, Vol.11, No.4
- Juvenile Confinement Conditions and Services, Vol.11, No.5
- Cuba: To Trade or Not to Trade? Vol.11, No.6
- Fighting Poverty with Individual Development Accounts, Vol. 11. No.7

- Safe Storage of Guns, Vol.11, No.8
- Skin Cancer Prevention and Control, Vol.11, No.9
- Options for Prenatal Care Under Medicaid and SCHIP, Vol.11, No.10
- Protecting the Privacy of Newborns, Vol.11, No.11
- Driving Drunk with Kids in the Car, Vol.11, No.12
- TEFRA Medicaid Option for Children with Mental Illness, Vol.11. No.13
- Insurance Mandates for Childhood Immunizations, Vol.11, No.14
- Legislative Term Limits, Vol.11, No.15
- Financing Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment, Vol.11, No.16
- Health Centers and the President's Growth Initiative, Vol.11, No.17
- Protecting Personal Information, Vol.11, No.18

---

Thanks to all of the staff section members and others who submitted columns and information for this issue. We welcome your ideas and submissions. *Newsline* is published four times annually by NCSL's Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section and is edited and formatted by Rita Thaemert.