Chair's Column

Sabah Eltareb, Assistant Director, California Research Bureau, California State Library

Welcome to the fall 2013 edition of the LRL Newsl ine newsletter. As chair, I want to thank you all for being such wonderful colleagues and for the opportunity to serve as an officer. It is an honor that I will do my best to live up to and I want to thank you all - again, and in advance - for your guidance, feedback and suggestions on what I can do (or not do) in leading our staff section.

This issue is jam-packed full of news, and summary highlights and photos from the NCSL Legislative Summit held in August in Atlanta, Georgia, and from the LRL PDS held in September in Boise, Idaho. So, sit back and enjoy catching up with colleagues or recalling memories from the events(s).

The LRL Business Meeting in Atlanta included the traditional passing of the baton to the new slate of LRL officers: Eddie Weeks moved to immediate past-chair, Sonia Gavin moved to vice-chair, and Jennifer Bernier was elected secretary. Thank you, Eddie, for pulling together a group of LRL members attending the Summit to capture highlights of the LRL-sponsored sessions, including a tour of the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum. At the Business Meeting, we awarded the LRL Legislative Staff Achievement award to Mary Camp, passed out certificates to the winners of the LRL Notable Documents Awards, and also voted to approve amendments to the LRL bylaws.

After a four year hiatus, and thanks to Kristin Ford’s quest to get us back on track to meeting for the opportunity to learn from each other and to network, LRL has resumed holding a Professional Development Seminar (PDS). Yay! Thank you, Kristin, for all your hard work as state host and programming co-chair, along with getting some of the sessions streamed live for members unable to attend. Thanks also to LRL members whose program sessions provided inspiration and provoked discussions: Julia Covington, Jane Basnight, Cathy Martin, Mary Camp, Sonia Gavin, Eddie Weeks, Sabah Eltareb, and Kristin Ford. As we (re)discovered during the roundtable session, while our libraries may be very different, we face similar issues and concerns. The LRL Service Project delivered 30 books and a hand-crafted blanket and quilt to a local children’s hospital. Thank you to everyone for your generous donations and especially Sonia for donating the blanket and quilt. Finally, thank you, Jennifer, for working with attendees to capture highlights of the sessions.

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Legislative librarians participated in excellent professional development programs during the NCSL Legislative Summit in Atlanta, and enjoyed spending time with colleagues from other states.

Members and guests gathered for a Dutch Treat Dinner the first night and welcomed old friend and former Oregon librarian, Dave Harrell, for the dinner. Dave was in Atlanta and happily took time to join his former LRL friends and colleagues.

**LRL Business Meeting**

During the Legislative Summit, LRL held its annual business meeting and LRL chair Eddie Weeks presided over the meeting. Eddie had forgotten his gavel, but fortunately immediate past chair Mary Camp provided him with an excellent replacement.

It was a busy meeting. Members approved the amendments to the LRL Bylaws. Members also elected Jennifer Bernier of Connecticut as LRL secretary and the chair’s tiara was passed to Sabah Eltareb of California.

The Legislative Staff Achievement Award was presented to Mary Camp of Texas and the 2013 Notable Document Awards were presented honoring 13 outstanding legislative documents. (see p.18 for more on the Notable Document Awards.)
Following are summaries of LRL sessions.

Legal Thinking and Writing for Drafters

*By Cheryl Jackson, Virginia*

*Most drafting is thinking, not writing. If the thinking is done well, great writing isn’t needed. But if the thinking is not done well, great writing won’t help.*

Overview: The presenter for this session was Becky Lennahan, Consultant and Former Deputy Director of the Colorado Office of Legal Services. Legal thinking and writing are at the core of what legislative staff does. This session focused primarily on skills that a lawyer brings to the task of bill drafting, aided in the drafting process by librarians and others. The presentation was divided into two parts: (1) what others involved in the drafting process bring to the table, and (2) what the professional draftsman is expected to bring to the table.

Where Drafters Need Help From Others: It is important that drafters understand the purpose of the bill (which differs slightly from legislative intent). Determining a sponsor’s purpose involves people skills in addition to writing skills, and the single most important thing a draftsman can ask a sponsor is, “Tell me about the problem you’re trying to solve.”

Drafters also need others to provide subject matter expertise and to review preliminary drafts. Several “takeaway” points for drafters include: (1) don’t be intimidated to ask questions; (2) be confident about what you know and what you don’t know; and (3) ask people for advice, but don’t ask them to do your job.

What the Draftsman Brings to the Table: Drafters must have good writing skills (spelling, grammar, and punctuation), but must also write with clarity. Drafters also need (1) knowledge of statutes and drafting conventions; (2) knowledge of state government; (3) knowledge about the history of an issue in the legislature; (4) knowledge of the legislative process; and (5) legal skills, including an understanding of case law, statutory construction, and how the law will be applied in the “real world.”

Common Goals: Nonpartisan and Partisan Staff Roles

*By Stephen Bibbs, Hawaii*

Sabrina Lewellen, Assistant Secretary of the Arkansas Senate moderated the session, with panelists Sallie Bolton, from the Kentucky House Speaker’s staff; Walker Reagan, research director for the North Carolina General Assembly; and Jen Jankowski, staff for the Utah House Democratic Caucus.

The legislative process functions on the ability of divergent interests to agree on the best governance for their citizens. The process can be difficult and slow, and many times visible in the interactions between the partisan and the nonpartisan staff offices. This session tackled the often unvoiced issues characterizing such a dynamic.

Reviewing a recent change in majority and state leadership, panelist Walker Reagan, highlighted North Carolina as an example of the estrangement between staffs which can occur suddenly. In 2011 a Republican majority was elected to the state General Assembly after years of Democrat leadership. With the newly elected members arrived new staff members eager to implement the new majority’s legislative priorities. More young and inexperienced partisan staff occupied administrative positions with a new leadership than in the past. However much they were knowledgeable of political campaigns, they were not as familiar with the legislative process. The nonpartisan staff experienced a resultant isolation from elected members and their staff. There were assumptions that everyone knew what they were or should be doing. While in fact, the partisan staff were uncertain of their role in the process and had no experience with what duties the nonpartisan staff actually performed. The nonpartisan staff themselves became unsure of what was expected of them.

Sallie Bolton, the panelist from Kentucky, spoke on her state’s balanced situation where the roles of both partisan and nonpartisan staffs are well-defined. For example, bill drafters are nonpartisan and do not provide input into legislation. They provide research and analysis but no policy making guidance. Partisan staff members direct operations and advise on policy. Ms. Bolton states that most likely because of these known distinctions of functions, there are no conflicts, “So far, it works.”

The panelist from Utah, Jen Jankowski, remarked on a characteristic confusion between permanent and caucus staffs. While the partisan and the nonpartisan staffs share the legislative environment, they often do not share a legislative memory. Nonpartisan staff tend to be more long term in the
capitol than the partisan staff members and benefit from a certain hindsight of experience. Expectations that all share the same experience and knowledge can result in what should be avoidable legislative cul-de-sacs.

The session was then opened to floor discussion. State delegates shared both common and unique issues surrounding nonpartisan and partisan roles. In some states, legislative duties were separate and precise; in others they overlapped. Both systems sometimes worked and sometimes each resulted in conflict.

The importance of nonpartisan staff offices to build trust with individual legislators, their staff and with the caucuses could not be overstressed. There was mention of an inclination for partisan staff to sometimes presume that nonpartisan staff would favor a long standing or past standing majority. Such a lack of trust is perceived when partisan staff offices hire their own staff to duplicate and not necessarily supplement nonpartisan staff services.

Panelists and attendees agreed the path to mutual trust and respect lies in communication. While roles need to be defined and explained, communication determines the extent of cooperation. Whatever avenues this communication takes, orientation meetings, facilitation retreats, distributed updates featuring people and services, the commitment to communication between nonpartisan and partisan staffs nurtures a trusting, working relationship that can only benefit the legislative process.

Public Access to Legislative Information

By Julie Pohlmans, Wisconsin

The Public Access to Legislative Information session reviewed two of the frequent themes legislators and staff encounter regarding public information: getting and providing access to the information and determining what is and should be considered public information.

Eddie Weeks of Tennessee spoke on some of the difficulties that exist in making information publicly accessible, such as costs that may be associated like copying or digitizing, the format and availability of the material, and location discrepancies in terms of where the material is accessible and where access is wanted. Resolving these issues can be difficult and may include handling requests on a case-by-case basis or working with your state’s public record’s specialist.

Jon Heining of Texas tackled the issue of what should be made available to the public, and what shouldn’t, with technology being the prime influencer of the discussion today. Social media and the usage of both personal and work devices to conduct all manner of an individual’s business can put a lot of pressure on an organization in determining what is public information and then providing access to it. Due to constraints such as staff time and the limitations found in statutes and rules, access requests can create frustration for both parties.

Some things to keep in mind: Be thoughtful when creating legislation to take into account changes that may occur with technology, ask the question “is transparency making government better? Is the information substantive and useful?” What is the return on investment in making certain information public? A handout was provided containing useful court cases and links of interest on the topic.

State Net Training

By Mary Camp, Texas

Marcie Wasserman led the LRL staff section in a discussion about the services offered by State Net. NCSL has partnered with State Net to assist legislators and legislative staff with computerized tracking of legislative and regulatory information across all 50 states.
State Net monitors every bill in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Congress and every state agency regulation. Marcie instructed us on how to navigate the website and how to conduct a typical search. She explained how the system can conduct full text searches as well as compare various versions of bills and side-by-side analyses. State Net offers additional resources such as fiscal notes, data on members of the legislature, and archived legislation.

We discussed some of the challenges of real searches. Marcie invited us to provide her with input so that they can continue to tweak and make their product the best it can be.

Sara Saunders (back to camera) welcomes LRL members and guests to the Jimmy Carter Library.

Jimmy Carter Library and Museum Tour

By Jennifer Bernier, Connecticut, and Sonia Gavin, Montana

The Jimmy Carter Library and Museum Tour sponsored by LRL was a huge success. A full bus-load of people visited the museum, with about 15 of them also attending a guided library tour.

The museum chronicles the life of President Carter, from his days growing up in Plains, Ga. through modern day. His parents belonged to the Plains Baptist Church, which strongly influenced him during his presidency. He also served in the Navy, and was assigned to submarines. A replica of the periscope from the type of submarine he served on was part of the display, along with a reproduction of the oval office from his days in the White House. Some of the other displayed items included replicas of the clothes he and First Lady wore on their wedding day, various gifts from his presidency, memorabilia from his campaigns for the Georgia governorship and presidency, and awards including his Nobel Peace Prize.

The library is located on the museum’s second floor. Our guide, Sara Saunders, the library’s Supervisory Archivist, explained that the Presidential Library system, which is part of the National Archives, began with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. President Roosevelt donated his personal and Presidential Papers to the government, as well as land and money to begin fundraising for a library where his records would be preserved. Ms. Saunders also described legislation passed by Congress since then specifying the items that must be preserved and how the Presidential Library archivists must make the materials publicly accessible. Security requires each researcher to be interviewed for about 15 minutes before they may touch (no archival gloves necessary) the library’s documents. All visitors are welcome, but those age 16 and under are asked to be accompanied by a responsible adult.

The library’s records are in paper, audio, picture proof, microfilm, and video formats. Some records are digital and others have been digitized. The documents include such things as paper and audio files from the Carter presidency, photographs the 12 presidential photographers took during his four years in office, records of his many accomplishments, and documents from colleagues. Ms. Saunders explained that each document page, including those of all drafts and rewrites, is reviewed. References to third parties are redacted for privacy before cataloging. The most popular documents include the photographs which record the variety of functions the Carters participated in: awards ceremonies, political meetings, and other everyday events.

The tour concluded with a peek inside the humidity-controlled, refrigerated vault containing records boxes from Jimmy Carter’s presidency. We wondered out loud how long it would take to go through all of document this information. Our guide explained that documenting the records is an ongoing process, with no estimated completion date possible, as records are continuing to be declassified and people with affiliations with the Carter family continue to donate records.

For more information on this library or other libraries near you, visit the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum and the National Archives’ Presidential Libraries websites.
LRL 2013 Professional Development Seminar

The 2013 LRL Professional Development Seminar was held Sept. 18-20, 2013 in Boise, Idaho. It marked the first seminar for LRL members since 2009. While LRL has sponsored webinars in the intervening years, the attendance of 20 participants showed that legislative librarians support in-person professional development opportunities.

We began the seminar Wednesday morning at the State Capitol with a welcome from Jeff Youtz, director of the Idaho Legislative Services Office; Kristin Ford, our hostess with the mostess and Idaho legislative librarian; and LRL chair Sabah Eltareb, assistant director of the California Research Bureau. We also met Cyd Gaudet, library research assistant for the Idaho Legislature, who helped Kristin with all the meeting planning.

Following the welcome, we went around the room for introductions and “Five Minutes of Fame,” where everyone had a chance to share what was new, exciting or challenging in their library. It was interesting and very informative discussion and offers of help and advice flew back and forth throughout the session.

Our sessions were held in new hearing rooms in the renovated Idaho State Capitol, which is known as the Capitol of Light because it was designed with light flowing into the rotunda and all portions of the building. We were in the new addition that had...
Kristin leads the group on a tour of the Idaho State Capitol and here explains the creation of the columns used in the Rotunda.

The many windows in the dome allow light to filter throughout the Rotunda.

Our tour included a stop on the floor of the Senate Chamber.

been added in underground wings attached to the Capitol, but the wings are atriums and full of light. Interiors of the new additions were carefully matched to the Capitol building materials and between the light and the historic feel of the rooms, it was hard to believe we were in the basement level.

Following a quick break, Kristin led us on a tour of the Capitol, which is beautiful, and following that, we enjoyed a group luncheon in the Legislative Dining Room. We spent the afternoon in very informative sessions. Following on the next page are summaries of the Wednesday afternoon programs.

LRL members visit the Idaho Legislative Library.

View of the Idaho House Chamber from the Visitors’ Gallery.
Evolution of a Legislative Library Website

By Molly Otto, Colorado

Cathy Martin, Julia Covington and Jane Basnight from the North Carolina Legislative Library discussed the development of their legislative library website. Cathy gave an overview its evolution from a humble website in the 1990’s to their current streamlined and interactive website. Julia discussed redesigning the website by using Maine’s legislative library site as a model for North Carolina. Finally, Jane talked about populating the website with relevant resources and accessing them.

Julia Covington and Jane Basnight discuss the evolution of the North Carolina legislative library’s website.

Cathy pointed out that their website development began in the “dark ages,” characterized by hard-wired technology, VAX services and bulky computer monitors. They soon made progress, by adding the library presence on the North Carolina General Assembly website and gradual integration into the web. Cathy mentioned that as hardware and software technology improved, their library website became less static and more interactive, with the addition of quick links and rich text, which enhanced the site’s content. She also emphasized the importance of working with the IT staff and communicating with all those involved in website development.

Julia explained the website redesign process. She said that staff looked at other legislative libraries’ websites, and decided that Maine’s site was a good model for North Carolina. Julia realized that the two most difficult groups of resources to organize and post on the site is the federal, North Carolina and other states’ research resources, and the various legislative publications. Julia took several classes in Dreamweaver, which she said was extremely helpful in managing these resources. She likes the Dreamweaver program since it is clean, easy to navigate and logical. Additional improvements Julia made to the website design include: creating individual webpages for different functions; reducing the list of links; and promoting resources.

Jane discussed populating the website’s content. She explained how she and staff analyzed vertical file materials, historical resources and items located on a shared drive. These items were then placed within the five areas on the library website: Research; Collections; Services; Training; and Guides.

Cathy, Julia and Jane agreed that updating their website was a worthwhile and collaborative project. They emphasized that communicating with those involved and asking for assistance is crucial, ongoing training is important, and keeping the website clean and sleek. Their presentation was interesting and well organized.

Social Media in Libraries

By Karen Mau, Hawaii

Twitter, a Blog, and Pinterest are the various social media applications being used by the Legislative Reference Library of Texas to expand their reach to patrons to keep them informed on legislative matters and library services. Director Mary Camp shared with us the experiences of their library. Each social media application was chosen to address a specific need. Twitter is used to announce new reports, materials added to the collection and Tweets on Texas issues. The library blog shares a week in review and noteworthy legislative information. Pinterest provides a visual and fun reference to books, state symbols, state history and much more!

A huge benefit of these applications is that they are free and extremely popular with the public. They also reach a wider audience, and for Twitter, there is the spontaneity of using no more than 140 characters to get your idea across. Some concerns that Mary shared were the appropriate use of staff time to post/Tweet, how often new content is added and the need to remain unbiased.

To follow the Legislative Reference Library of Texas on Twitter go to: @TexasLRL, to follow their Blog or on Pinterest.
Finding Statistics You Need for Your Legislators
By Frances Thomas, Louisiana

Linda Clark, Data Dissemination Specialist for the Los Angeles Region of the Census Bureau, discussed the different levels of census data and how to easily find it. She explained the difference between the decennial census which counts every person and American Community Survey’s annual estimates based on small population samples.

Ms. Clark discussed the levels of census geography and how to get to the data through the American FactFinder (factfinder2.census.gov). FactFinder provides quick access to information on your community. There are tutorials on the website that give instruction on advanced searching. Census workshops are available through the regional offices. To find information on conducting a workshop for your library go to: http://www.census.gov/regions/, select your region, and click on “request a workshop.” The information presented can be tailored to your group’s level of expertise and needs.

We rounded out the day with an optional social event at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival. It included dinner on the grounds of the outdoor festival and the hilarious and entertaining play, “The Faux Foreigner.” A great time was had by all who attended and all were very grateful to Kristin for packing extra blankets, as by the intermission, it had gotten cold and we all snuggled together under quilts and blankets to enjoy the second act!

Our Thursday morning sessions kicked off with two programs featuring distinguished faculty from Boise State University.

Nonpartisan Research in a Partisan World
By Beth Christianson, Saskatchewan

Dr. David Adler, Director of Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University, spoke to us from the perspective of a Congressional Research Service staff member. The importance of the non-partisan CRS has increased greatly over the last 30-40 years. At the same time, it has become increasingly common for partisan pressure to be brought to bear on non-partisan institutions like the CRS. Dr. Adler used the example of a CRS researcher who was asked to research what the Constitution has to say about the Legislative Branch ceding power to the Executive Branch in the context of war measures.

Dr. Adler warns that non-partisan constitutional research is essential to a healthy democracy, and agencies like the CRS and Legislative libraries must not bow to partisan pressure to twist facts in order to support a legislator’s agenda. Dr. Adler used a state-level example of the popular request for data backing up the doctrine of nullification.

The Constitution was framed with the hope that citizens could govern themselves with reasoned discussion and debate, rather than have government imposed, sometimes with force, upon them. Non-partisan research services like the CRS are essential to this goal.

State Legislatures: Past and Present
By Christine Chen, Oklahoma

This session was presented by Dr. Gary Moncrief, a University Foundation Research Scholar and University Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Boise State University. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Washington and Rutgers University.

His vivid analyses gave all of us another look at our legislatures today. He said that legislature, research and librarian are his three favorite things. He mentioned that legislatures are not likable because they are large, diverse, relatively open, and messy and suffer from the collective action problem. Legislature is not an efficient institution.

He also pointed out the changes of state legislatures over the decades. From the backwater institution in the 50s, reapportionment revolution in the 1960’s, modernization movement in the 1970’s, increased autonomy and growing “careerism” in the 1980’s, use of the initiative to define legislatures in the 1990’s till the heightened partisanship, fiscal stress and new technology in the New Millennium.

The three perspectives of the legislatures:

• Short-term vs. longer-term: sequential consequence is “can’t see the forest because of the trees”

• Geographic: consequence is “it’s hard to see the forest because everyone’s defending his or her particular tree”

• Partisan consequence is “don’t want to see the forest because my party’s trees are the only true trees”

He concluded that leadership is the key and non-partisan staff is also really important.

Having spent the morning inside, we headed outside to the Capitol Park for a picnic lunch. It was a beautiful fall day and it was great to be outside. Following lunch, we took a scenic Trolley Tour of historic sites in Boise and then were back to work for the remainder of the afternoon. Following are summaries of Thursday afternoon’s sessions.
The Art of Reference Interview-Sonia Gavin
By Juan Carlos Ortega, Puerto Rico
Ms. Gavin showed some examples of how the reference interview eases the process to find the right information for the patron in an expeditious way. She emphasized showing approachability to the patron, showing interest to his or her needs, and listening/inquiring. She agreed with the audience that during the interview the reference librarian asks more questions of the patron than vice-versa.

Among her advice, and some offered by the audience, were to avoid jargon unfamiliar to a lay person, avoid giving legal counseling and opinions and instead refer to a qualified source, and give the reference sources for the information provided. Also, to teach how to do things while showing the answer to the query, and to know your patrons. Finally, the audience agreed on that it always pays to follow-up on the outcome of the query, since most of the time the patron has additional questions.

Exemplary Service, Exemplary Staff, Exemplary Self: The Power of Professional Development
By Jane Basnight, North Carolina
Using humorous slides and Zig Zigler motivational quotes, Eddie Weeks gave a rousing presentation on how we as professionals can become the best that we can be. The process of professional development starts with self and our attitude and aptitude. We must strive to be accessible and approachable to others while our information product should be concise as well as precise. Staff communication is paramount to insure organizational efficiency. Rules and roles should be well defined and all staff should be brought into the process. Exemplary service involves follow up and follow through and respecting deadlines. All the while we must be the calm at the center of the storm and remain approachable. Finally, we must have a can-do attitude to get the job done and be aware of what other librarians are doing so that we can be better and lift ourselves and others up.

We all spent the evening enjoying a Dutch treat dinner at The Bardenay Restaurant. The food was great and the company even better, as everyone continued to get to know one another. With 20 attendees, there was a nice mix of long-time members and newer legislative librarians and the entire conference was a bonding experience.

On Friday morning, we held two excellent and informative programs, with lots of interactive discussion. Session summaries follow.

Setting up for our Friday morning programs.

Dealing with Difficult Patrons and Workplace Safety
By Julia Covington, North Carolina
The last day of our PDS began with a presentation by Sabah Eltareb entitled, Dealing with Difficult Patrons and Workplace Safety.

To get us started, Sabah asked us to write down the top three most difficult problems we have with patrons. After a few minutes, we went around the room and shared our experiences.

Sabah, who is presently serving on a state library task force looking at workplace safety issues, described the safety practices in place in her library and gave us some general rules to follow:

• Regularly find out what issues staff are facing.
• Provide staff training. Staff need a general understanding of what’s acceptable behavior and what’s not, and how to respond when they encounter a difficult patron. Some staff are very proactive; others won’t engage patrons. A “neighborhood watch” model works very well. Encourage staff to continually scan the environment.
• Share information among staff. It is very important that everyone know what’s going on. Keep it simple and try to cultivate a sense of shared responsibility, a “We’re all in this together” feeling among the staff.
• Document issues when problems arise and look for trends over time.
When an angry patron’s voice increases, your voice needs to decrease to diffuse the situation. It is best to “trust your gut” and call for police if it seems that the situation is getting out of control. Police are trained to deal with people who are behaving in an unstable, threatening manner. It is important to call for help when needed.

A group discussion followed and everyone continued to share anecdotes about their libraries. Thanks to Sabah for an engaging and interesting program!

**Public Records and Public Research**

*by Cathy L. Martin, North Carolina*

Handling public records and research requests can be challenging, and who knew an inquiry into the process could be so creative and illuminating? But with her tiara firmly in place, our hostess-librarian Kristin Ford employed fairy tale princess methodology to illustrate the challenges and offer much food (especially potatoes) for discussion.

The mission of legislative librarians is clear when it comes to work for legislators—we do it all. But less clear is how to handle requests for records and research coming from outside the legislative walls.

Among the challenges are whether researchers have the legal right to documents (are they public?), to what extent are librarians required to perform research for the requestors versus simply providing documents, how much, if anything, can librarians charge for copies? Kristin reviewed the scant case law (which fails to provide clear parameters) and the ethics and canons of librarianship (which follow the traditional line of helping people help themselves, but not doing research for patrons). The ensuing discussion was lively.

Attending librarians described their states’ laws and experiences, including the usefulness of records retention schedules plus their experience with prisoner requests, media requests, student projects, time limits, and custodianship issues. Though state law provisions differ, none fully address every public records scenario and it’s often necessary to rely on one’s experience and skill in handling unusual or “hard case” scenarios.

After the conference was over, most participants enjoyed a lunch together on the outdoor patio of a downtown restaurant near the Capitol. It was hard to leave, after having spent three days with such a wonderful group of friends and colleagues, but it’s safe to say, all left refreshed and recharged for their work back in their legislative libraries.

As a fitting finale to the meeting, LRL officers visited St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital. Each seminar attendee had brought new children’s books as part of the LRL PDS volunteer project. Together, the group collected almost 40 books to donate to the hospital, along with two beautiful quilts handmade by Sonia Gavin of Montana. LRL was one of the first staff sections to participate in a PDS volunteer project, which was suggested by the LSCC as a way of giving back to the communities we visit.

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**LRL PDS Volunteer Project**

(lr) Kristin Ford, Karen Mau, Sabah Eltareb, Cathy Martin and Eddie Weeks pose with the quilts and books collected for the local children’s hospital.

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Sabah Eltareb, Kristin Ford, Cathy Martin and Eddie Weeks presented the books and quilts to staff at the St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital on behalf of LRL.
State News

State News for the Fall issue focuses on these questions:

1. What issues would you be interested in learning more about?

2. What problems or issues have you experienced, worked your way through, or are working your way through?

3. Any that you would like to take the lead in sharing with colleagues?

4. Are you interested in joining or leading a committee that would be responsible for coordinating overall LRL program planning development and learning opportunities, either virtually, such as webinars, or on the ground at the Legislative Summit or Fall PDS?

Atlantic Northern Region

Carrie Rose, Regional Director

From John Barden, Maine

1) Our Maine IT director just got back from a NALIT (IT staff section) conference and was sharing some of the systems that other state legislative IT departments utilize. I would be interested in learning more about how LRL staff interact with their legislatures’ bill drafting and bill management systems as well as their wish list for the programs.

I also would be interested in hearing about the types of resources other legislative libraries are creating to fill in any gaps in legislative information (current or historical).

2) One of the problems/issues we are facing is that much of our current research is focused on getting older information into electronic format either by scanning or data collection, which can be a slow process.

3) and 4) Right now Maine’s Legislative Library is down a staff member and staying too busy for outside activity but I anticipate that there may be some interest once things are more settled in the library.

From Jennifer Bernier, Connecticut

1) I would be interested in learning about staff training programs each library may offer to non-library staff. Are there formal training programs in place when new staff are hired? How does the word get out? What are the most popular programs? Is training provided to new legislators?

How does each library formally track research requests? Is there concern about FOI requests of the data? How are ongoing patron questions answered by different librarians handled for continuity of the patron? How is data to commonly asked questions or to an uncommon question archived for future use? Is there software out there that can assist or an internal Wikipedia-type resource that can help organize this information?

How does each library organize their favorite sites?

Can a recent graduate share their thoughts on RDA? Are there “new” concepts going through library school right now that could be beneficial to libraries?

2) Right now Connecticut is experiencing some staff changes after a very busy interim while preparing for session.

3) and 4) Connecticut is also too busy right now to join a committee or coordinate a program but is open to volunteering in the future.

Atlantic Central Region

Julia Covington, Regional Director

From Sara Zimmerman, Delaware

LRL Program Ideas: Public access to pre-computer documents. Or just connecting with the public more over the resources a legislative library will have.

Library News: I’ve started the process of getting the library cataloged and added to the State Catalog and I’m rather excited about it!
From Annette Haldeman, Maryland

LRL Program Ideas: (suggestions from Annette and some of the other librarians)

- Effective use of social media by the legislative library
- Digital preservation initiatives
- Branding and outreach to patrons
- Digital subscription management
- Unique Library Special Collections and what has been done to classify, organize, preserve, and advertise these collections

Library News: The Maryland Department of Legislative Services Library said farewell to two of its librarians in the summer of 2013. Don Osborn, one of our catalogers, accepted a position as the Director of the Learning Resource Center at the York Technical Institute, in York, Pennsylvania. We wish Don well in his new endeavors.

Longtime legislative reference librarian, Jackie Curro, retired in August 2013 after 18 years of service with the Department of Legislative Services Library. Jackie was an active member of LRL for a number of years and served as the Chair in 2008-2009. We miss Jackie, but wish her all the best in enjoying her retirement and getting to spend more time with family and friends.

This October, the library welcomed its two newest librarians. Elizabeth Bateman is our new legislative reference librarian, while Sarah Loundin is a new cataloging librarian. We are excited to have them on board here in the Maryland Department of Legislative Services Library and wish them well as they start their legislative careers.

From Cheryl Jackson, Virginia

One of the issues we are dealing with now is access to newspapers that have paywalls on the Internet. How do we best provide quick access to newspapers for staff, when so many papers now only allow 20 or fewer views per month without a subscription? It is not cost-efficient to get the office individual subscriptions, nor does it comport with licensing agreements to get one subscription and “share” the logon and password. Otherwise, things in our library are fine and dandy.

From Julia Covington, North Carolina

This September, we were very fortunate to be able to send three librarians to the LRL PDS in Boise, Idaho. Jane Basnight, Julia Covington and Cathy Martin attended the conference and gave a presentation “Evolution of a Legislative Library Website.”

Gulf Coastal Region
Elisa Naquin, Regional Director

From Frances Thomas, Louisiana

1. Program Ideas:
   - Succession planning.
   - Archiving of electronic documents—or are only print and microfilm archival?
   - Research sources and strategies—for the new legislative librarian.

2. Current Projects or Issues:
   - Migration to Presto for our online catalog using Inmagic DB/Textworks
   - Budget cutbacks—maximizing resources at a time of tight budgets

3. We could take the lead in showing:
   - Indexing legislation using Louisiana’s indexing program.
   - Inmagic applications

4. We’d be willing to show Inmagic users how we use the software in more depth if they came a day early.

From Eddie Weeks, Tennessee

1. Program Ideas: Storage of electronic records, cataloging techniques, best practices of other LRL members

2. Current Issues: Loss of print publications, electronic firewalls prohibiting access to needed information, pay subscription services

3. Yes

4. Yes
Great Lakes Region
Anne Rottmann, Regional Director

From Debbie Tawerner, Ohio:
1. I would be interested in learning more about how or if our colleagues are using WestlawNext or LexisAdvantage. I am also always interested in digitization.
2. The problem I seem to have is that every year I say I am going to review the collection to weed it and I never seem to be able to make time. Kelly and I decided this year we were going to attack a couple of problem areas (i.e. running out of space). Do others approach it this way? Do others have written weeding policies? I have read some weeding/collection reducing policies, but it would be nice to have something from a similar library.
3. I do not think I can take the lead on anything at this time.
4. I do not think I could be involved in the committee’s suggested, but maybe Kelly or I could be involved in the notable document committee. Not as a lead, however, but a member.

From Pat Reichert, Wisconsin:
1. Do other legislative libraries have electronic databases at their disposal? Which ones? And how do they manage them? Communicating with user groups in general but more specifically about assessing user needs. Problems/issues other libraries have with mandated reports—How do you handle them? Who is responsible for tracking and claiming them, etc.?
2. RDA cataloging. Some aspects are easy to remember (spell out “page” and “Department”), others are going to take some adjustment.

From Anne Rottmann, Missouri
1. I am always interested in what sources other libraries have found to be of great use be they electronic or print and I am also always looking for ways to promote the library to staff and members. Also digitization—always an issue.
2. Finding ways to make the library as valuable as possible in tight financial times.
3. I do not think that I want to take the lead on anything right now, but would be willing to be a member of a committee.

Central Northern Region
Jonetta Douglas, Regional Director

From Jonetta Douglas, Iowa
I want to take this time to say how much I enjoyed being able to watch sessions from the PDS. It was great to have them streamed live and it creates such a feeling of being included. Thank you for thinking of those of us who couldn’t be there.

This is not really an issue, but it has been an interesting project and we continue to work our way through it. Our office has been working on a database for documents that are required to be filed with the General Assembly. We have attempted to get all reports that must be filed by state entities listed and provide one spot for these entities to come and file their reports. I then go in and make sure the report matches the title and publish the report to our web page. A message is then sent to the producer of the report and to the House and Senate, as well as any other legislative recipient with whom the report is required to be filed. I have made it sound pretty simple, but it has been quite an endeavor. We have gotten good participation and favorable comments. Of course, we are still working out the bugs, adding and deleting from the lists as necessary. The agencies have been very cooperative, but it is still a work in progress.

Central Southern Region
Molly Otto, Regional Director

From Tracey Kimball, New Mexico:
1. Are there ways people - either LRL members or others - have succeeded in getting feedback from legislators and legislative staff on our services? The times I have requested comments and suggestions from legislators or staff on a particular project have garnered the usual low response and polite but unhelpful comments. Or are there ways to actually measure our value to legislators and staff?
2. I think an eternal problem is always some version of getting our services to the people who need them, whether they know it or not. We had some great examples of how colleagues use their websites, social media and so on to bring information to people’s desktops - I’d like to see more.
3 & 4. Not at this time.
From Shelley Day, Utah

1. In thinking about pertinent issues that would be valuable to add to the bank of potential programs, succession management comes to mind. Donna Scheeder (Director, Law Library Services, Library of Congress) presented an especially informative session on succession management in 2006 at our LRL PDS in Madison, Wisconsin. As we baby boomers are dropping off the radar in droves, succession management may again be an interesting and very pertinent topic of discussion for our small but mighty LRL group, whether it’s approached as a round table discussion, presentation by an expert, or in another format. I think it would best be approached by a presentation (by an expert in the field) in one session followed by another session of an effectively managed round table discussion. Some ideas to consider focusing on (there are many more for sure, and these kind of all blur into each other anyway):

- How LRL services are frequently used in the legislative arena, and how the effectiveness of those services can adapted to meet the needs of the new wave of legislators and staff;

- How traditional library functions are evolving from state to state including increased collaboration with staff from IT, public information, constituent services, media, archive, research, and outsourced companies;

- How the Millennial generation can be strategically included in succession management to become expert staff in their states and within NCSL as baby boomers are headed for retirement;

- How the Millennial generation in each state can effectively be made aware of NCSL staff sections and encouraged to participate in NCSLs and LRL in order to support and strengthen the staff section; and

- How LRL, with the influx of new staff, can effectively share institutional knowledge and educate the Millennial generation, including the exploration of the implementation and benefits of a mentoring program comprised of contracted or part-time post-retirement legislative staff assisting new staff year round or session only, and other such measures individual states may take in building and preserving institutional knowledge.

From Christine Chen, Oklahoma

I am interested in digitizing older/fragile materials and make them more accessible. Still learning our new library system (OCLC WorldShare Management Service).

From Molly Otto, Colorado

1. It might be interesting to develop a spreadsheet or table on the differences and similarities between the legislative libraries, which might include: library services; library statutory provisions; where the library is in the overall legislative structure, etc.

2. Current Projects and Issues:
   - Electronic conversion/access/preservation of non-print materials (legislative tapes)
   - Legislator biography/history database and required reports database
   - Changing role of legislative libraries.
   - Other projects:
     - Updating and combining LRL websites
     - Compiling information on projects undertaken by individual libraries, which would include the successes and lessons learned/what would be done differently."

West Coastal Region

Maev Roche, Regional Director

From Maev Roche, California

1. We recently inquired with several training-oriented entities within the California legislature as to how legislative staff get training on legislative bill drafting. From what we have learned, legislative staffers receive training on the overall process of staffing a bill, but no training on bill drafting itself. Staff propose an idea and prepare some background information and submit this to our Legislative Counsel’s Office, who they rely on to draft the bill language. What is the bill drafting process in your state? What type of training does the staff receive?
Welcome to two new Maryland legislative librarians! Sarah Loudin, catalog and index librarian, and Elizabeth Bateman, legislative librarian, joined the Maryland Dept. of Legislative Services.

Former LRL chair Jackie Curro retired in August 2013, after 18 years of service as a legislative reference librarian for the Maryland General Assembly. Don Osborn, a cataloger in the Maryland legislative library, accepted a position as the director of the Learning Resource Center in Pennsylvania.

Congratulations to Sonia Gavin of Montana, for passing her MLS exam and for adopting a new puppy, Jami, a nearly 4 month old Bassador, a Basset/Lab mix! Sonia shared details of her exam: “As part of fulfilling the requirements to earn my Masters of Library Science from the University of North Texas, I had to complete my End of Program exam, which I did the week after the convening of our wonderful PDS in Boise, ID. I have passed the exam, and will complete my classes in December with an emphasis in law librarianship.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Lincoln who received a well-deserved promotion to director of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, following the retirement earlier this year of Robbie LaFleur.

Long-time Nevada Legislative Librarian Nan Bowers retired earlier this year. Teresa Wilt was promoted to fill the position. Jan Wolfley is now senior assistant librarian, and Danielle Mayabb is now assistant librarian. A fourth position in the Research Library remains unfilled.

Librarian Susan Gilley retired in July, after 36 years with the Oklahoma government. Susan is a former LRL chair and was the first legislative librarian for the Oklahoma Legislative Council. When the Council was abolished in 1981, the legislative library and the librarians were transferred to the state library. In 2000, Susan became the administrator for the Legislative and Law Divisions of the state library. Her retirement plans include reading, sleeping late and spoiling her two-year old granddaughter.

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State News, continued from previous page

2. We are always looking at ways to improve our work processes, particularly keeping up with the high volume of requests and tight deadlines we get during our busy periods when the legislature is in session. It would be interesting to hear from other libraries about how they handle this challenge.

From Kristin Ford, Idaho

1. Digitizing and/or conservation of old records; databases/software/technology to help us inventory/index/organize collections.
2. I’ve had a large collection of old legislation donated to me, and I’d like to consider digitizing but also indexing it somehow. Preferably in-house.
3. I probably won’t have time before next summer.
4. I just planned/coordinated this year’s PDS, so I’ll probably take a break and let others contribute their skills next year.

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The Value of Libraries

A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life.

Henry Ward Beecher

A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle.

Khalil Gibran

If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.

Cicero
The 2013 winners of the Notable Document Awards were selected from among 43 documents submitted by 17 states. All of the documents were impressive and commendable, making the judging a challenge, but the committee found 13 documents that stood out for their content, design and features.

The 2013 Notable Document Awards Committee was chaired by Elizabeth Lincoln, director of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. Committee members were Carol Blackburn, also with the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library; Ingrid Hernquist, legislative librarian for the New Jersey Office of Legislative Services Library; and Frances Thomas, director of the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library for the Louisiana House of Representatives.

Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Fiscal Policy: State Employee Compensation and Turnover
Idaho Office of Performance Evaluations

Texas Senate Research Center

Public Policy–Education: 2013 Nevada Education Data Book
Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau

Public Policy–Public Safety: Digging into One-Call: A Review of Montana’s Underground Facility Damage Prevention Program
Montana Legislative Services Division

Historical And Cultural Resources: Civil War Sesquicentennial in Virginia: Impact at the Halfway Mark
Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission
Performance Evaluation:
Options for Creating a Separate Department of Medicaid Require Transition Planning
North Carolina General Assembly Program Evaluation Division

Legislator's Guide:
Kentucky's Boards, Commissions, and Similar Entities
Kentucky Program Review and Investigations Committee

Legislator's Guide:
Firearms Laws in Minnesota: A Guide for Legislators
Minnesota House Research Department

Natural Resources:
Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana

Environmental Quality Board
Report on Silica Sand
Final Report
March 20, 2013

Natural Resources:
Report on Silica Sand
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Legislatively Mandated:
Human Trafficking in Pennsylvania: Policy Recommendations and Proposed Legislation
Joint State Government Commission, Pennsylvania General Assembly

Read more about the Notable Documents Awards, including links to documents, on the LRL home page.

Notable Online Resource:
Legislative Reference Library of Texas Pinterest Boards
Texas Legislative Reference Library
Chair’s Column, continued from page 1

Looking ahead, we hope to continue to hold an annual PDS and to build in a service project as part of the agenda. We had an overwhelming positive feedback for 2013 and want to build upon the momentum of strong content in an engaging environment. We would like to vary the location yearly and are working at a long-term plan of doing so by regions designated in our LRL Regional Director categories. There is a lot of work and approvals required to host a PDS and Eddie is chairing a committee to get us started on long-term planning. Right now, the plan is tentatively shaping up for the LRL PDS 2014 to be hosted in a Gulf Coastal state and 2015 in a Central Northern state. Stay tuned for details. If you are interested in your state hosting a future PDS, please touch base with Eddie.

We also want to continue to sponsor interesting and relevant professional development program sessions, virtual and onsite, in webinars, Summits and PDS’. Sonia is heading up a committee to begin compiling suggestions received from evaluations of the PDS and will be incorporating those generated by the responses to the questions posed by the Regional Directors (yes, one of the revisions resulting from the LRL bylaws amended in Atlanta). These will be culled for development and production as LRL sponsored programs. If you are interested in leading a program or have any additional suggestions, please let her know.

We have all tapped into the collective expertise, knowledge and wisdom of LRL members in fielding requests. The responses to questions posted to the LRL listserv have been quick and helpful. Sharing and learning, whether via the listserv, webinar or onsite programs produces ongoing professional development all the richer because of our contributions. While LRL may be a small staff section in terms of numbers, we have been incredibly hard-working and effective with our programs, services and initiatives. It truly is an honor to serve as chair and I look forward to the coming year.