



Legislative Research Librarians NEWSLINE

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Spring 2005

Chair's Column

*David Harrell, Legislative Research,
Legislative Library, Oregon*

As I look out the window to the world around me, spring is revealing itself in every possible way. Blossoms abound, fragrant flowers refuse to be turned back by the rain, and tiny bumps of earth suddenly offer us things green and new. Once stark trees lacking foliage now are lush with bright green growth, giving us a glimpse of the lovely seasons yet to visit. It is a time of renewal and optimism, even in the midst of a legislative session, even when we are stunned by sadness, when we lose a dear friend and accomplished colleague. We persevere in the face of this unexplainable loss. As surely as summer will follow spring and summer becomes fall, winter visits everyone. To be loved and remembered fondly is perhaps all that is important, all we can hope to expect. We make the world better by our helpful actions and offerings of assistance. As a generous person who happened to also be a librarian, Suzy Hughes made the world a better place. We shall miss her and her husband, Kenneth Francis, taken before the full amount of their goodness was exhausted.

On a more pleasant note, Seattle in August is very difficult to improve upon, baseball team aside, so please consider attending the annual conference this year. There are excellent pro-

gram offerings scheduled and of course, many of your friends and colleagues to see and catch up with.

Please submit your nominations for 'Notable Documents' to Lisa Mecklenburg Jackson at Ljackson@mt.gov. Be sure to congratulate her as Montana is poised to ban open containers in vehicles; then only Mississippi will still allow such a problematic practice. Nominations are also being accepted for LRL Legislative Staff Achievement Awards and should be sent to Janna Goodwin at janna.goodwin@ncsl.org. While on the topic of suggestions, be sure to send any input regarding the Core Reference Collection to Suzie Johnston at johnston@legis.state.la.us

For this edition of Newsline we asked members to share legislation from their state which would be interesting, thought provoking and perhaps even humorous. So, here in Oregon, known for cutting edge thought, problem solving and subsequent enabling legislation, I have for your consideration 2005 House Bill 3367, which "Prohibits exhibition of commercials and previews with motion pictures after time that motion picture is

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legislative
research
librarians

Legislative Research Librarians
Staff Section

National Conference of State Legislatures
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Chair's Column continued

advertised to begin. Allows action for damages". Free popcorn for everyone with deep discounts on Good and Plenty and Junior Mints!

Be well and embrace every day...

David

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Minnesota Legislative Library Profile

by Sarah Quimby, Minnesota

The Minnesota Legislative Reference Library was founded in 1969 and since then has been providing members of the Legislature with fast, thorough, nonpartisan research, as well as helping members of the public navigate the often-complex legislative process. In carrying out this mission, we wear a lot of hats: researcher, educator, legislative historian, writer, publisher, programmer, cataloger, and unofficial statistician. Not surprisingly, we have a uniquely multi-talented staff. We are also unique in some other ways. To demonstrate, here are some very unofficial statistics about our uniqueness:

- Of the staff surveyed, four out of thirteen (30%) are left-handed or ambidextrous, well over the estimated average of 10% for the general population.
- LRLers exhibit a strong preference for driving manual transmissions (over 60%).
- Finally—and this is most unusual within the library community—70% of us prefer dogs to cats, with



three staff members refusing to state a preference in true nonpartisan fashion.

Like our staff, the library itself performs many different roles. Our reading room is one of the few quiet nonpartisan public spaces in the bustling Capitol complex and is not only a center for research but also a meeting place, an exhibit space, and not infrequently, a place for state employees to come in for a lunchtime snooze behind a newspaper. Our primary mission is to serve the research needs of the Legislature, and about 50% of our reference questions come from members and legislative staff. The other half of our patrons are members of state government and the public, and we help them find such things as ancestors in the legislature, bill numbers, and how to contact their representatives. We also find time to answer questions such as, "What is up with your governor?!" (asked during the Ventura administration), and, most recently, "Can you help me tie this necktie?"

We have our own website, from which we link to many of our resources, databases, and publications. Our pathfinder series, Resources on Minnesota Issues: www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/issues/issues.asp, was created to provide background information on pressing legislative issues. Frequently asked questions about the history of the legislature and state government inspired "Historical Information about the State Legislature," at www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/histleg/histdat.asp and its companion page, "Historical Information about Minnesota State Government," www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/mngov/mngov.asp. Do you want to know

who the Speaker of the House was in 1849? If redistricting has any effect on turnover in the Legislature? What the ratio of bills introduced to laws passed in 1929 was? Your answers are here.

The Minnesota LRL has taken an active and enthusiastic role in using technology to streamline our current awareness services. Three of our current awareness services: Table of Contents, Inside Issues, and Inside Issues: Books and Reports, are now also online and sent to subscribers via e-mail. We have recently added an RSS feed to our front page, for those who would like to be updated immediately when we receive a new report. We are also working on turning our files on past legislators into an interactive database, so members of the public can search the database for a name, birthplace, or college attended and get biographical and legislative service information about past legislators.

We are also the official caretakers of legislative history materials in Minnesota. We house the past ten years' worth of committee minutes, bills, and tapes of hearings and floor sessions (earlier years are at the Minnesota Historical Society). Our tape room was recently moved from a separate room in the basement to the Library's reading room, which has streamlined operations considerably.

Our collection has many unique items—some 24,000 unique items, out of a collection of over 41,000. Many of these unique items are part of our collection of Minnesota state documents. In addition to all of its other duties, the Library is the coordinator of the Minnesota State Documents Depository system. In addition to collecting every document published by state agencies, we carefully read each years' session laws to track and collect mandated reports. Where we once dis-

tributed fiche copies of Minnesota state documents; we now are investigating ways to archive and distribute state publications, electronically. Another standout is our clippings files. Since 1969, we have been clipping and indexing articles from the metro and outstate Minnesota newspapers by topic, House and Senate district, and personality. These files have proved their worth time and time again as copyright law changes and the quality of indexing in electronic databases goes up and down.

There is always something new on the horizon at LRL, as technology—and indeed, the Legislature itself—changes. We are looking forward to finding unique new ways of extending our services and, with it, new “hats” to wear.



Minnesota capitol

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Research Librarians
 FROM: LRL Notable Document Awards Committee
 RE: The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) LRL Notable Document Awards

The NCSL's Legislative Research Librarians Section Notable Document Award will be presented at the NCSL Annual Meeting in Seattle. The purpose of the award is to:

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

The winning documents will be highlighted at the NCSL annual meeting and will be announced in the LRL Newline, State Government Research Checklist, State Legislatures, and State Government News.

Legislative research librarians should submit titles for consideration based on the criteria on the enclosed nomination form. There is no limit to the number of titles you can nominate; 6 copies of each document should be submitted with a nomination form. (If this is a problem and deters you from nominating an item, send 1 copy, and we will contact the issuing agency for the rest.) The deadline is **May 20, 2005**.

Please be aware that documents produced by or under the auspices of NCSL's Legislative Research Librarian Section are not eligible for the award. A “document” for purposes of this award is defined as one produced by a federal, state, or local government agency, by a foundation, consulting firm, or quasi-public or private sector non-profit organization. Format includes print, microfilm, CD-ROM, periodical/serial, or URL.



In Memory of

Suzy Hughes

*Former Director of the David R. Poynter
 Legislative Research Library of the
 Louisiana House of Representatives*

Legislative Staff Achievement Award

It's time to recognize the outstanding service provided by legislative libraries and librarians throughout the states. We need your help in identifying candidates for the annual LRL awards.

Please send us the name of a person or institution - it can be yourself or your library - using the criteria listed below as a guide, along with a description of specific accomplishments and LRL involvement.

The nominating committee members this year include last year's recipients Marian Rogers (WI) and Nan Bowers (NV). Fax or email your nomination by **Monday, May 16, 2005** to me (303-364-7800 or janna.goodwin@ncsl.org). While there is no monetary award, it is a privilege to be recognized and listed as exceptional representatives of our profession.

The award will be presented at the NCSL Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, August 16-20, 2005. Many of you are the only legislative librarian in your state, and you provide tremendous services. There may be no other LRL member that knows enough about your job to nominate you - so go ahead and write up your successes. Isn't it about time you got some recognition from your peers?

Don't put this off too long don't wait until the deadline. Think about it and send a nomination to a member of the committee now, or by May 16th. Criteria is as follows:

THE LIBRARIAN WHO HAS:

- Provided outstanding support to the state legislature or legislative institution
- Provided outstanding support to NCSL or the LRL Staff Section
- Enhanced the profession of special librarianship within the legislative context
- Demonstrated innovative approaches to the field of legislative librarianship
- Made a major creative contribution to enhance legislative library services in one or more of the following areas:
 - organization of information
 - integration of the library into the legislative process
 - excellent research products
 - publicity
 - excellence in reference services
 - managerial expertise
 - information technology
 - others

THE LIBRARY THAT HAS:

- Provided outstanding support or assistance to NCSL or the LRL Staff Section
- Maintained a professional, qualified staff
- Actively participated in professional library associations
- Contributed significantly to major developments in the field of legislative librarianship
- Demonstrated creativity in several of the following areas:
 - maintaining a collection that meets legislative needs
 - orienting new patrons to library services
 - targeting services to meet legislative needs
 - integrating new technologies into legislative services
 - alerting patrons to information resources
 - other

Past recipients can be viewed at www.ncsl.org/LRL/award98.htm#recipients

State News

For this Newslines, we asked, "What's the most unusual piece of legislature you've seen this session?"

From Kristin Ford, Idaho:

In Idaho, the most unusual bill this year might have to be the Bill That Brought Down the Senator. We had a bill that would have reduced the minimum distance required between a school and a facility with a liquor license. Turned out, the sponsoring senator had a financial interest in the bill, even though he denied it. The Committee on Ethics was convened for the first time in 14 years, and the Senator finally resigned moments before he was voted out of the Senate. No one can remember this ever happening before in the Idaho Legislature.

From Robbie LaFleur, Minnesota

Librarians at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library are in the thick of a busy session, with issues that seem to recur each year. These include stadium finance, gambling, education finance, and the defence of marriage. January marked the first ever art exhibit in the Library. It received great attention from members and staff; we hope to have many more. (See: www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/exhibit/mn100.asp)

Unusual legislation? Clearly, legislators just can't take it any more. H.F. 2084 says, "A member of the legislature must not receive an incoming cellular telephone call that creates an audible noise in the house or senate chamber during a house or senate floor session or in a legislative hearing room while a hearing is being conducted." It would be a misdemeanor.



From Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson, Montana:

Lisa reports an unusual piece of legislation, H.B. 610: An act allowing the Department of Transportation to issue permits for the removal of rocks from within a highway right-of-way; clarifying that rocks or other items that have fallen or are deposited within the right-of-way of a highway maintained by the department are the property of the department; and limiting the liability of the department. It missed the deadline for general bill transmittal

From Preg Jones, Nebraska:

Term limits will force the retirement of 20 of the 49 senators currently serving in Nebraska's unicameral legislature in 2006, and within the next four years, that total will equal 34 of the 49 senators, a 69 percent turnover. As the Legislature prepares itself for the impact of term limits, conversations within the Legislature have turned to what can be done to preserve institutional knowledge and assist newly-elected senators in navigating the legislative learning curve. In our division, the Legislative Research Division, we have been considering ways in which our research library can be of assistance. For example, we've been compiling notebooks on major issues that the Legislature revisits from time to time, such as redistricting and school finance.

We would greatly appreciate hearing how other legislative libraries have or are preparing to serve legislative bodies impacted by term limits.

From Tracey Kimball, New Mexico:

We created a few prize categories for New Mexico's unusual bills this year. And the winners are...

Best Short Title for a Bill: The Right to Eat Enchiladas Act (would give tort protection for some claims

of injury arising out of weight gain or obesity; did not pass).

Best Amendment: Thank God for Mississippi/Gracias a Dios por Mississippi (a new state motto to reflect the fact that New Mexico is usually not quite last in state rankings for education, health care, etc. The original bill suggested a stately "Respect the Past, Embrace the Future" to replace our mysterious current motto, "It Grows as It Goes"; did not pass).

Best Memorial: Ban Junk Food From House of Representatives, which would authorize state police officers to confiscate "any junk food found in the possession of a member of the house" and set graduated penalties that include fines, a requirement to participate in a junk food rehabilitation program and placement on the junk food offender registration list for life (did not pass).

Our session is over but we also have unusual news from the executive side. The New Mexico Game and Fish Department is considering springtime paintball "disruption hunts" to keep wild elk away from public lands used for grazing. Paintball tagging was suggested as a nonlethal method of discouraging elk from using meadowlands leased to cattle ranchers. Response from the paintball community is mixed. One supporter said the attraction is "I'm not killing Bambi. I get to go tag up Bambi", while another member pointed out that weekend paintball warriors are not usually campers or hunters. The department expects to seek approval for the hunts, which could start next spring, from the Game Commission.

From Marilyn Johnson, North Dakota:

North Dakota's 2005 session has under consideration regulation of internet poker. Our most unusual

pieces of legislation may well be House Concurrent Resolution 3035 and its companion, House Bill 1509. Both measures have passed the House.

H.B. 1509 bill would permit companies to set up Internet Poker sites in North Dakota. The companies would then be regulated and taxed. In addition each player would be charged a \$10 annual registration fee. The sponsor of the bill projects the licensed sites and registered players could bring in as much as \$500 million in new dollars to the state treasury a year.

Before H.B. 1509 becomes effective, North Dakotans have to approve an amendment to the constitution allowing introduction of Internet poker. That mechanism is provided by H.C.R. 3035. Without voter agreement at the June 2006 primary election, H.B. 1509 means nothing. If both H.C.R. 3035 and H.B. 1509 are approved first by the Legislative Assembly and then H.C.R. 3035 receives voter approval, North Dakota stands to become the first state in the nation to license and regulate Internet poker.

The second week in March an executive in the Internet gaming business from London and others from elsewhere came to testify in support of the measures as did the 2004 winner of the World Series of Poker. The CEO of the largest Internet sports and gaming business in the world told legislators his company alone would raise \$10 million a year in tax revenue for the state. Those in the business say they welcome regulation because customers want a site in which they can have confidence. Opponents to the bill addressed issues of expanded gambling, including growth of crime, addiction problems, enforcement of regulations, access by underage players and the potential of huge court costs.

Because there is a question of

whether the industry is legal in the United States, Internet gaming companies operate abroad in such places as Costa Rica and Antigua, a Caribbean island nation. The 1961 federal Wire Act prohibits gambling over phone lines. In November of 2002 the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans said the act applied to sports betting, not to all internet gambling.

The United States Department of Justice recently contacted the North Dakota Attorney General saying, you can't be doing this folks. It's illegal the feds believe because of three federal acts that may apply: the Wire Act, the Travel Act and the Anti-Gambling Act. (So what are the odds of ending up in court?)

Nevada and the U. S. Virgin Islands heard the same message from the U.S. Department of Justice when their legislative bodies approved bills to allow and regulate internet casinos. The bills never went into effect as they require U.S. Department of Justice approval to do so. Don't cash in your chips just yet. You can bet on more news from North Dakota.

From Marian Rogers, Wisconsin:

Some legislation was introduced this year which might be considered unusual because we've not seen these concepts before —

— 1.) authorizing public and charter schools to establish single-sex schools and courses

—2.) prohibiting shooting of farm-raised deer or other captive wild animals without being in physical possession of the weapon (hunting via the Internet)

— 3.) prohibiting the Wisconsin Department of Corrections from using state or federal funds to provide or fa-

cilitate sexual reassignment surgery or hormonal therapy for prisoners or forensic patients

NEWS:

Already this year the library staff has been active in outreach activities. Librarians participated in the Spring LRB Seminars for legislators and legislative staff, presenting programs on "Making the Most of LRB Research and Library Services", "Using the Index to Locate Legislation and Bill Histories", and "How to Use the Budget Index Report". Later this Spring we anticipate hosting tours for students in the master's library studies program. Another first for us is participation in a continuing education program for librarians on "Locating Wisconsin State Documents on the Internet."

In March, two audio features were rolled-out on the LRB's Web Site:

1) "LRB Podcasts".

www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/podcasts/index.htm Each podcast (audio files in MP3 format) presents some aspect of the legislative process in Wisconsin. So far, topics include discussions of specific concepts of Wisconsin constitutional law, an explanation of voice-over Internet protocol, a discussion about tourism and economic development in Wisconsin, and an overview of legal services provided by the LRB. The podcasts are of short duration ranging in length from 4 to 6 minutes.

2.) Links on the 2003-2004 Wisconsin Blue Book page to audios of Wisconsin state songs (in MP3 format) have recently been made available. www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/bb/songs.htm Three audios are featured: the State Song ("On, Wisconsin"), State Ballad ("Oh Wisconsin, Land of my Dreams"), and the State Waltz ("The Wisconsin Waltz").

NCSL Publications

Books and Reports:

- Learning the Game—December 2004
- Making Your Case— December 2004
- Traffic Safety Legislative Summary 2004—January 2005
- State Taxation in a Changing U.S. Electric Power System: Policy Issues and Options-- January 2005
- State-Tribal Series: Indian Gaming in the States – February 2005
- Coordinated Human Service Transportation—March 2005
- The ABCs of IDs for Immigrants in the United States— March 2005
- Measuring Progress Toward School Readiness— March 2005
- 2005 Guide to Leaders and Legislatures— March 2005
- State Roles in Health Update— March 2005

LegisBriefs:

- *State Arts Endowments* January 2005, Vol. 13, No. 6
- *Community Health Centers: An Update* - January 2005, Vol. 13, No. 4
- *State-Tribal Partnerships On Child Support* - January 2005, Vol. 13, No. 1
- *Refusing Drunk Driving Tests*- January 2005, Vol. 13, No. 3
- *Capping Support For College Presidents* - January 2005, Vol. 13, No. 2
- *The Property Tax: Key Local Revenue* - January 2005, Vol. 13, No. 5
- *Customizing Jobs For People With Disabilities* - February 2005, Vol. 13, No. 9
- *Rural Development Legislation* - February 2005, Vol. 13, No. 10
- *Restricting The Sale Of Pseudoephedrine To Prevent Methamphetamine Production* - February 2005, Vol. 13, No. 7
- *Voip: The Future Of Telephone Service* - February 2005, Vol. 13, No. 12
- *Online Enrollment In Medicaid And Schip* - February 2005, Vol. 13, No. 11
- *Governing Early Education Programs* - February 2005, Vol. 13, No. 8
- *Regulating Vendor Lobbyists: A New Trend* - March 2005, Vol. 13, No. 18
- *Health Savings Accounts* - March 2005, Vol. 13, No. 17
- *State Tobacco Tax Trends* - March 2005, Vol. 13, No. 16
- *Stem Cell Research* - March 2005, Vol. 13, No. 15
- *New Departments Address Disability Issues* - March 2005, Vol. 13, No. 14
- *Enforcing And Evaluating Victims' Rights Laws* - March 2005, Vol. 13, No. 13
- *Human Trafficking* April/May 2005, Vol. 13, No. 24
- *Recording Devices In Movie Theaters* April/May 2005, Vol. 13, No. 23
- *Surviving Cancer* - April/May 2005, Vol. 13, No. 22
- *Backyard Burning* - April/May 2005, Vol. 13, No. 21
- *Changing The Face Of Long-Term Care* - April/May 2005, Vol. 13, No. 20
- *Women And Cardiovascular Disease* - April/May 2005, Vol. 13, No. 19



Have a wonderful spring!

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