



# Legislative Research Librarians NEWSLINE

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Summer 2003

## Chair's Column

*by Arthur McEnany, Louisiana  
LRL Chair*

Welcome to the summer issue of the 2003 Newsline. The newsletter this quarter includes summaries of LRL sponsored sessions at the recent NCSL annual meeting held in San Francisco, an article about the New Mexico Legislative Library, our web site survey, and an article on the electronic distribution of table of contents from a on-going project in the Minnesota Legislative Library.

Since this is my first column as staff chair, I would like to introduce myself to everyone and how I become involved in the Legislative Librarians staff section.

My name is Arthur McEnany, Legislative Law Librarian and Senior Analyst for the Louisiana Senate. In October of this year, I will be beginning my 28th year with the Louisiana Legislature. I spent the first five years as a Legislative Research Librarian for the Louisiana Legislative Counsel. In 1981, I became the Law Librarian for the Louisiana Senate. In 1985, the administration of the Huey P. Long Law Library was transferred from the Attorney General to the Louisiana Legislature and I took over that responsibility as well. In the latter part of the 1980's, due to a staff vacancy, I begin to draft legislation in the are of Wildlife and Fisheries for the Senate Natural Resources Committee and have been doing that ever since. I am a product of the New Orleans Catholic school system. I received a B.S. in History and an MLS from LSU. I also have an M.A. in History from the University of Arkansas, having participated in the PhD program there as well. I am an Army veteran and served in Viet Nam in 1968 and 1969.

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## Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section

National Conference of  
State Legislatures  
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*Chair: Arthur McEnany, Louisiana*

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## Chair's Column

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It was early in my career that I became involved with the LRL and NCSL. Some of my former colleagues were initial members of the LRL and I became involved early on, especially at the annual meetings. Louisiana was the state host for a couple of the annual meetings back in the 1980's and early 1990's and that made it easy to become a willing participant in both NCSL and the LRL staff section. I have been active ever since.

Our staff vice-chair, David Harrell of Oregon, has put together a rather nice program for the Professional Development Seminar (PDS) which will be held this year in Portland, Oregon on October 15-18. I strongly urge all that can attend to please do attend. We'll start off the first day by taking a bus to Salem and touring the State Capital as well as the State Library. On Friday, October 17, we'll tour the Multnomah County Library and have a visit from the Oregon Historical Society. Disbursed through out these two days there will also be lively presentations on Legislative Innovations, Current Awareness Services, and Document Delivery in the Internet Age. We are all aware that money for staff travel is difficult to come during these tight budget times, but I am hoping that we can have a nice turnout for our Oregon PDS this October and once again urge all that can attend, to please

do attend. I hope to see you there.



## Profile of a Member Library: New Mexico Legislative Council Service

*By Tracey Kimball, New Mexico, LRL Secretary*



You have to love a job where you help people grappling with the questions involved in being informed and active citizens, such as:

- Who's that woman with the turquoise eye shadow and gray hair that I always see talking when I turn to channel 16?

- I am going to be stationed in New Mexico (from an Italian air base) and I am trying to find out information on shipping my wine collection to my new residence. Whom do I contact or can you send me the information and procedures for accomplishing this task?

And then there was the east coast lawyer who visited our capitol this spring, hoping to trace any building staff from the '50s when, as a child of ten or so, he took part in an experiment that teleported children from New Jersey to Santa Fe.

I've been the librarian at the New Mexico Legislative Council Service for eight

years and seldom had a boring day.

Most of our business is standard legislative fare regarding bills, statutes, and hot issues. The library is small, with about 2,500 titles in our subject collection, 5,000 state agency publications and 120 journals and newsletters. We also maintain newspaper clippings files in print from three local daily papers, sorted into 300 or so subject headings.

Our primary paid electronic service is WestLaw. We created an in-house catalog and in-house databases of legislator biographies and indexing for selected journal articles, using InMagic software.

For the 2002-2003 legislative year, roughly 50% of our reference requests came from legislators and legislative staff, 40% from other government agencies, and 10% from members of the public.

During the interim we have a two-person crew that includes our new library support staffer, Zeldabeita. For the recent past and foreseeable future, retired public library director Valerie Brooker joins us as a reference librarian during session.

Our small shop has very few non-library functions. I edit several of our office's session publications, including the legislators' *Handbook* and *Voting*

*Record.* Some projects that started out for our own reference use, such as annual indexes to the general appropriation act and charts of the effective dates of chapters, have become office publications once we got them circulating and created a demand. We consult on the office's legislative web site, but haven't yet been given the go-ahead to create our own intranet page.

As a designee of our office director to the advisory committee of our state Compilation Commission, last year I was able to participate in creating the requirements for a new publishing contract for our statutes and in evaluating the vendors. New Mexico was the first state to publish its statutes on CD-Rom, but after almost 20 years with Michie/LexisNexis/Matthew Bender we are pioneering once more with a small publisher, American Legal Publishing.

This year's challenges, as far as I can tell, will be to come up with a library preservation policy for our office strategic plan, and being LRL secretary. But I probably shouldn't try to forecast, given the unpredictable nature of our business and the fact that New Mexico is the land of the Roswell UFO, the Taos hum, three or four decades' worth of unsolved cattle mutilations, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Maybe we'll be working on document delivery by

teleportation: Beam the books up, Scotty.



## **Annual Meeting Notes**

This year's NCSL Annual offered quite a variety for LRL members who attended. Aside from the Business Meeting and Awards, there were quite a few sessions that offered librarians a variety of substantive topics. Read the summaries below.

### **The Virtual Legislative Office**

*By Marilyn Johnson, North Dakota*

LRL joined the Leadership Staff Section, the Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section, the National Association of Legislative Information Technology and the National Legislative Services and Security Association in panel discussion of creating paperless legislative offices. Moving into an office the size of a broom closet, newly elected Representative Rob Schaaf of Missouri, with assistance of a technology-wise assistant, eliminated paper from the cramped quarters. All mail arriving that requires reading or a response is scanned. If visitors don't find Representative Schaaf in his office, they're offered an opportunity to leave messages-digitally. The resulting videodiscs-from the digital camera-allow Representative Schaaf to review and react to

constituent and lobbyist concerns. Believing technology in the legislative workplace should be designed and employed with end result of better legislation, Representative Schaaf is actively introducing his colleagues to its benefits. As the first to connect to the Internet on the Missouri House Floor, Representative Schaaf was soon showing other members how to and why. On the legislative staff side, Bob Erickson, Research Director of the Nevada Legislative Council Bureau, reported his office now scans all standing committee minutes and testimony.

LRL's Robbie LaFleur from Minnesota raised the archival flag. Preserving online information when paper copy no longer exists must be a priority if historical documentation of the legislative process is to exist. In addition to the preservation issues raised by virtual legislative offices, legislators face the cost of standardizing online access between the three branches of state government. Panelists discussed issues of time and staff necessary to scan documents, the impact of online legislative access to both legislators and the public, the balance between efficiency and effectiveness in online access, and the use of private contractors to provide online legislative services. Effectively eliminating paper from legislative offices necessitates careful planning for cost, archival protection,

user friendly access, and coordination between staffs of the legislative, executive, and judicial agencies.



### **Programming Versus Content in Building and Maintaining Legislative Web Sites**

*By Clare Cholik, South Dakota*

This session on Monday afternoon explored the variety of approaches that legislatures use to manage their Web sites. Harold Berkowitz, Chief of Information Technology for New Jersey's Office of Legislative Services said that a computer executive group consisting of legislators and the heads of staff agencies oversees their Web site. He said the group usually defers to the Office of Legislative Services when making decisions. Their site is not publicized. He noted that adding live proceedings to the site was difficult. Voting records were also hard to include. He added that New Jersey would like to add messaging capabilities to their site to allow for some public interaction.

Mike Cason discussed the Web sites of the Louisiana Legislature. He works for Public Systems Associates which has a contract with the Joint Legislative Computer Center to serve as their information technology department. He said that Louisiana maintains a Joint site along with one for the House and one for the Senate. They all serve the

same purpose, but they keep their individual identities. Both chambers have to agree on decisions surrounding the joint site.

LRL's Robbie LaFleur, Director of the MN Legislative Reference Library, explained that Minnesota's legislative Web site is managed by both content managers and information technologists. The management group meets monthly and makes decisions in a very open process. Minutes from the meetings are posted. She said that they are very sensitive to legislators and that publicity is very important to them. Since the management is shared, everybody gets credit for the Web site. Some of the challenges they face include budget shortfalls, which have put substantive new developments on hold. Also, Robbie said that since the funding for the Web site comes from all of the various office budgets rather than from a single appropriation, it is easy for legislators to cut into the electronic services upon which they have come to depend.

Keith Felte, Deputy Executive Officer of the Senate Rules Committee, and Cheri Meadows of the Legislative Portal Project talked about the Web sites of the California Legislature. The Senate and the Assembly each have a site, and they also each have an Intranet site. The Rules Committee in each house

has the overall authority over the sites. Most of the work on the sites is done internally, but they also do some outsourcing for design work. Each of the caucuses also has a site, and they are outsourced. They advertise their sites by handing out brochures at public forums. The Legislative Council Bureau, a nonpartisan staff agency, also has two Web sites and an Intranet site which were created internally by the Legislative Data Center.

The last speaker was Andy Harvey, the Webmaster for the Legislative Council Bureau in Nevada. He said that the Nevada Legislature has one Web site, which is easier than having multiple ones. He said they use Microsoft FrontPage and the work on it is done internally. The various departments are updating their own information more and more. They charge lobbyists for on-line bill tracking and have started doing on-line opinion polls.



### **All the News That Fit to Find: Web News Sites**

*By Stephen Bibbs, Hawaii*

New challenges confront the selection process of research services in an era of easy, widespread publication and access, especially in the ephemeral, interface-rich world of the daily news...how best to collect and provide not only the content but the process of Net publication. In this afternoon session, Donna

Scheeder of the Congressional Research Service and Richard Geiger of the *San Francisco Chronicle* gave examples of selected issue oriented titles and reliable gateway sites. Mr. Geiger explored the SFGate.com (the Internet presence of the San Francisco Chronicle) as a typical newspaper Internet interface, and contributed links to selected databases and compilations of online news resources. Ms. Scheeder offered issue oriented online titles with various added e-services, and examples of current exploitation of these services by information research providers. This area of e-services holds much potential for information specialists. (See listing of these resources on LRL's Web site.)

Though Net news is somewhat similar in information publishing layout to hardcopy press (e.g., Politics, Sports, Business, Editorials), the expanded capabilities of presentation can sometimes upset the definition (and archiving) of content. Printed news is not always all online. Online news may include not only added value (linked references, movie and audio clips, random photo files, etc) but also continued revisions, buried updates and perhaps short lifespans. What information resources reference services can provide from this publication format depends on both individual publisher preferences and Internet

technology. These two concerns are linked to the immediacy of news and the perception of the Net as media. Newsprint stock may lend itself to stacked or clipping archives, however current Internet news syndication provides the library itself with opportunities for electronic content development and publication.

Libraries and research services can extract and publish (or "push") content to their patrons. News alerts of headlines, articles, columns and issues tracking are becoming more the norm of Net news enhancements and thus areas for information selection services. Ms. Scheeder suggests registering for these free or nearly free enhancements offered by news providers, extracting the content access and pushing this information to patrons, whether in the form of Web pages, organization email alerts, listservs, weblogs, or even hardcopy bulletin sheets.

The Legislative Library of the Hawaii Legislative Reference Bureau provides such a clipping service, "iClips," of daily, relevant, Web referenced article titles. Scanning selected online newspapers and subscribing to articles via RSS news feeds, the Library publishes "iClips" on the LRB Web site and sends the daily edition to the legislative offices as an HTML email, "Headlines to Your Desktop." Still

providing limited access to past editions, the LRB Library mostly views "iClips" as quotidian value, a bulletin of article titles, clipped when accessed, and archivally dependent on the specific policies of the news providers and the save-to-file inclinations of the patrons. "iClips" may be accessed at <http://www.hawaii.gov/lrb/iclips>. A similar approach to issue specific content is projected.

The "much" behind the "little" is a librarian's area of expertise. Both Richard Geiger and Donna Scheeder stressed there is much in the way of valid, authoritative news services on the Internet. One approach to that "little" window of access is the development and publication by libraries of content access. Exploiting the characteristics and services of evolving online news allows libraries to enhance their shelves with an Internet based collection of resources, both immediate and changing.



### **Tour of the San Francisco Chronicle** *By Jan Nakayama, Hawaii*

Amongst the glass and steel structures of the Sony Metreon and the Moscone Convention Center, and numerous bars, restaurants and hotels, the stately structure of the San Francisco Chronicle stands at the corner of Fifth and Mission Streets. The area, known as "SoMa" or "South

of Market" Street, has become a "hot spot" in San Francisco. In a way, it seems an unlikely place for one of the largest regional newspapers in the country. But the *Chronicle* was first published in 1865 and has been in its present location since 1924.

The lobby of the building has three distinct features. To the left of the front door, encased in glass and placed on a pedestal, is the Royal manual typewriter used by Herb Caen. For over 50 years, he was the three-dot columnist for the *Chronicle*. It has been said that Herb Caen defined San Francisco. Throughout his career, he used the Royal to write his daily column. On the far wall, there were three television screens tuned to various news channels. And finally, one cannot miss the domed ceiling. Scattered throughout the dark blue background are letters of the alphabet, painted in gold.

Richard Geiger, the Research Director for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, led us on a tour of the newsroom. Mr. Geiger said that it is now a very quiet newsroom. Gone are the teletypes and typewriters, which were replaced by computers. However, the *Chronicle* is one of the last major newspapers to have its layout done manually. Exacto knives and rules are still used in the Composing Room. Next year, the layout will be done by computer.

Previously, the library had a designated space. It consisted of a large clipping and photograph file, and the *Chronicle* had developed its own subject headings. There were also several reference resources. However, with each renovation, the newsroom became larger and the library became smaller. Some of the files remain, but microfilm, clippings, and film negatives were moved to the basement. There is no longer a librarian on duty. Mr. Geiger hoped to set-up a library area during the next renovation.

Researchers are assigned to different sections of the newsroom, such as business, entertainment, and sports. They receive requests for information through a text-based email program. Once the password is entered, a list of requests/messages appears on the screen. The researchers, as well as reporters, have access to Factiva and LexisNexis databases. They will also do research at other libraries and locations. Typically, a researcher provides background information and checks facts for the staff.

From the gritty aura of a metropolitan newsroom, we then toured the corporate-style offices of SFGate.com. This Web site is affiliated with the *San Francisco Chronicle*. One is able to search SFGate.com for articles from the *Chronicle*. But according to Mr. Geiger, SFGate.com has its own

columnists and is "skewed" toward a younger audience. It is one of the top news web sites, along with the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*. A researcher is also assigned to SFGate.com.



#### **What do online searching and food have in common?**

The two premier legal online services were gracious enough to feed the librarians who attended the Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

The attendees enjoyed snacks and drinks at an afternoon reception on Monday, catered courtesy of LexisNexis, and ate lunch at the LRL Staff Section meeting on Thursday courtesy of West Publishing.

Their generosity was much appreciated!



#### **Business Meeting**

*By Robbie LaFleur,  
Minnesota, LRL Past Chair*

After a short welcome to the librarians present at the staff lunch, we formally noted that our meal was provided (and appreciated!) courtesy of West Publishing.

The Notable Document award process was described by one of the committee members, Sabah

Eltarib from the California State Library, and the winners announced. (Be sure to check the list on the Web site.)

Though Irene Stone's LRL Legislative Achievement Award had been formally announced at the all-staff meeting the day before, we followed up with our heartfelt congratulations. Irene received an official plaque from NCSL, and an even cooler Lucite award from our staff section.

Secretary Elect Tracey Kimball, from the New Mexico Legislature, was announced and welcomed as our newest officer. Janna Goodwin was introduced as our new NCSL liaison, although most attendees had already had the pleasure of meeting her at previous meetings or at the reception. Robbie figuratively turned over the gavel as chair to Arthur McEnany.

The group considered an invitation from NLPES, the legislative auditor staff section, to hold a joint PDS in Tallahassee, Florida, in 2004. Since it nicely balances a West Coast PDS in 2003 and it may save money for our two organizations, the group thought it was a fine idea. We had tentatively considered Madison in 2004; we could go there the next year. (After that, Hawaii?)

More importantly, we have our 2003 Professional Development Seminar (PDS)

coming up soon. Everyone was warmly encouraged to attend the session in Portland this October.

Finally, we noted that with the new revisions to the NCSL Web site, this is a perfect opportunity to add valuable content to our staff section part of the site. Discussion will continue at the fall PDS. Keep in mind that any ideas can be easily executed with the help of Janna Goodwin, our web-savvy staff liaison.

Respectfully submitted (since our secretary was trapped in Oregon in special session), Robbie LaFleur



## **LRL Web Site Survey**

In order to better serve LRL members, we are conducting a survey about its Web site. Please take a moment to observe LRL's presence on the web at

[www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/LRL/](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/LRL/)

and answer the survey included with this newsletter. Later in the month, you will be able to take the survey online; keep an eye out for it on the Web site.

Thanks!



## Join LRL in Portland, Oregon!



**Legislative Research Librarians  
Professional Development Seminar  
October 15-18, 2003  
Portland, Oregon  
Downtown Embassy Suites**

**See accompanying brochure for details,  
or visit our Internet site  
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/LRL/pds03.htm>**

## News from the States

### Minnesota's Contents Page Project

By Elizabeth Lincoln,  
Minnesota

The Minnesota Legislative Reference Library has had a traditional table of contents service for as long as anyone on staff can remember. This labor-intensive process involved copying the table of contents of every magazine as it arrived, and then copying, sorting, and mailing thousands of sheets of paper to our subscribers. The purchase of a flatbed stand-alone scanner a few years ago prompted us to start thinking about switching to electronic delivery of contents pages. When we were in the market for a new copier last fall, we found a copier that had scanning capabilities that could be linked to our network. This networked scanner/copier made this project fit more easily into the Library's workflow and enabled us to make this project happen. We switched to electronic delivery of our contents page service in February.

The contents page of each newly arrived periodical is scanned soon after it arrives each morning. Each scanned file is attached to an email that is sent to a listserv established for that periodical. For the first few months, one of the library aides manually attached each scanned contents page to the message but we were able to write a program to automate this process in June.

The primary advantage is that electronic delivery speeds up this service dramatically. Our subscribers receive the table of contents within an hour or so of the arrival of the periodical in the Library. It also saves at least an hour a day in staff time, and many of our patrons really like receiving things electronically.

Subscribers who want to receive notification of a lot of periodicals are sometimes annoyed at the number of emails they get during the busy legislative session. The inability to cut and paste the citations into an email reply to request articles was confusing for some. (The file is an image

rather than text.) The only other problem was that some of our patrons don't really like receiving things electronically. Those patrons are relieved to find that the Library fulfills their article requests with paper copies.

The scanner/copier has been great for a couple of other reasons--we have used it constantly to get an article or short report into a patron's hands quickly.

Library staff are working on a pilot project archiving mandated state documents electronically and the scanner has been invaluable for quickly scanning those mandated documents that aren't available on the web or in some other electronic format.



### Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau's Upcoming Move

By Marian Rogers, Wisconsin

Bureau will relocate to newly remodeled space on the capitol square. This new space will be in the same building and in close proximity to other legislative service agencies. Since the legislative library

### 2003 Notable Document Awards

Eight research reports were honored by LRL at NCSL's 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in San Francisco. A "document" for purposes of this award was 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. Eight reports from Kentucky, Nevada, Montana and Utah were selected. Check out the winners and their reports at:

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/LRL/03notable.htm>

will occupy less space than is currently in use, LRB library staff is facing some interesting challenges in weeding and downsizing the current collection to fit into the smaller space. To build team spirit we've adopted the famous World War II Rosie the Riveter slogan: "We can do it!" A poster of Rosie is hanging in the library window with a voice bubble--"the library team says:". All members of the library team have Rosie the Riveter t-shirts, which we plan to wear in the days leading to and during the move. Each t-shirt came with a 2x3" sticker image of the poster. One of our creative librarians made the stickers into lapel pins--which we are wearing now. Of course when the move is completed and we are snugly housed in the new space, we will say: "We did it!"

In other news, for the second fall semester in a row, we are hosting a graduate library school student in a fieldwork practicum project. This student will not only be immersed in the day-to-day tasks involved in the operation of a government library, she will have the added-value experience of helping move the library. (She has a T-shirt and lapel pin, too!)



## 2003 Legislative Research Librarians Legislative Staff Achievement Award Winner **Irene Stone** California



Irene Stone's career in public policy information service began with the California State Library in 1968. She was responsible for the introduction of online database search services to the California executive and legislative branches. In 1985 she accepted the opportunity

for the State Library to take over the responsibilities of the Assembly Office of Research Library. Irene retired in 1990 after 22 years of exemplary service, but returned to the California Research Bureau in 1996 as a 'retired annuitant.' Again she was innovative. She developed "Studies in the News," a weekly current awareness tool for elected officials. It provides access to research reports that are hot news on television talk shows and in newspaper stories.

Irene was instrumental in the creation of the NCSL Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section. She served as chair in 1973-74, just the beginning of her contributions. Irene has been masterful at welcoming new members of the LRL staff section and making them feel instantly a part of the team. In her role as staff section archivist she has documented our history. It is safe to say that more legislative librarians have met Irene over the years than any other person.

With severe budget cuts looming, Irene retired once more in June, 2003. One of Irene's coworkers wrote, "Her standard of excellence is still the measure in providing services to the governor's office and the legislature." With this award, her service to NCSL and the LRL staff section is equally appreciated.



## NCSL Publications

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### Reports:

- *Tackling the Schoolyard Bully*
- *Diversity and Minority Recruitment*
- *2003 Annual Meeting Program*
- *When Violence Hits Home: Domestic Abuse and Families*

### State Legislative Reports

- "Long-Term Care and Cost Containment"

### LegisBriefs

- "Institutional Controls as Brownfields Cleanup Tools," Vol. 11 No. 34



Good news from Montana! The following news comes from Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson in Montana, who recently became the mother of TWINS. She reports, "I had the twins, July 27 at 10:36 and 10:37 p.m. via C-section. Their names are Anja (pronounced Anya) Lark and Rane (pronounced Rain) Carrie.

Both Anja and Rane are Norwegian names. Anja was 5 lbs. 6 oz. and Rane was 5 lbs. 12 oz. They are very sweet babies and actually very good. They sleep for about 3-4 hours at a time, including the night. All is well in motherland!"

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