Chair's Column

Mary Camp, Legislative Reference Library, Texas

Dear LRL Colleagues,

It’s been fun, it’s been fabulous, but it is time to say so long. This is my last column as chair of the LRL staff section, and I must take this opportunity to brag about our accomplishments, to thank some very special people for creating one of the most exciting and successful years ever, and to let you know what is on the horizon for us!

While we have been somewhat limited by travel restrictions, we have managed to be very productive and stay connected, utilizing technology to not only collaborate and communicate, but also to produce and present an outstanding webinar, *Creating Databases for Statutorily Mandated Reports* (October 2011). The webinar was attended by 39 participants from 24 states. Another webinar will be produced in October 2012.

All of this could not have been accomplished without the cooperation of you—the entire LRL community. Thank you for responding to the various questions and needs throughout the year. With your assistance we received updates from 33 states. Our listserv subscribers grew from 91 participants from 36 states and Puerto Rico to 109 participants from 42 states and Puerto Rico.

First and foremost, I would like to give special recognition to Jeanne Mejeur. Jeanne has done an outstanding job as our NCSL liaison. She has been the catalyst in turning our visions into a reality. Jeanne tirelessly emailed, called, and followed up on every detail of the LRL’s webinars, state directory updates, and the 2012 Annual Legislative Summit program.

I would also like to give a special shout-out to the regional coordinators! Thank you for spreading our message throughout the states and giving your valuable time and attention. We could not have done it without you!

Continued on page 2
Chair’s Column, continued from page 1

And next, the Legislative Summit in Chicago—WOW! It should be fun and informative. Our section has some spectacular activities planned, as well as ushering in a new slate of officers. Eddie Weeks (TN) will be the incoming chair, Sabah El-tareb (CA) will move into the chair-elect position, and our secretary-elect will be Sonia Gavin (MT). These talented team members will hit the ground running, and the LRL staff section will be ready for another exciting year.

During the Summit, our section will again bestow the highly coveted Notable Documents Awards upon some very deserving states with extremely talented legislative staff. We received nominations for 45 documents from 11 states. The committee is busily sorting and evaluating these documents, and nominees are eagerly awaiting the results.

And it just keeps getting better! Shelley Day of Utah and Kristin Ford of Idaho have been selected as the honorees for this year’s Legislative Staff Achievement Awards! These two amazing women have served NCSL in various capacities throughout their careers and continue to be instrumental in the LRL staff section. Congratulations to both of them!

Finally, the LRL staff section will be represented on this year’s staff nominating committee. I have been appointed, and feel extremely honored and privileged to participate in this very important process. We have eight positions to fill, and I am looking forward to the interviews and the outcome. Members will serve on the Executive Committee for conference year 2012–2013.

Please stay tuned for another exciting year, and thanks for the memories.

NCSL Publications

NCSL Reports

- State Actions to Promote Healthy Communities and Prevent Childhood Obesity—A. Winterfeldt, D. Shinkle and L. Morandi
- State Budget Update: Spring 2012–NCSL Fiscal Affairs Program

NCSL LegisBriefs

April 2012

- Airport Security Screenings—Vol. 20, No. 13
- State Lodging Taxes—Vol. 20, No. 14
- Health Information Technology and Privacy—Vol. 20, No. 15
- Voter Rolls: Ensuring Accuracy—Vol. 20, No. 16

May 2012

- No Child Left Behind: Writing the Next Chapter—Vol. 20, No. 17
- Taxing Oil and Gas Production—Vol. 20, No. 18
- Chemotherapy Treatment Options and Policies—Vol. 20, No. 19
- Right-To-Work Laws—Vol. 20, No. 20

June 2012

- Improving Babies’ Health and Reducing Medicaid Costs—Vol. 20, No. 21
- States Address Diabetes in Minority Populations—Vol. 20, No. 22
- Shackling Juveniles During Court Appearances—Vol. 20, No. 23
- Overseeing Capitol Restorations: Preservation Committees and Commissions—Vol. 20, No. 24
State News

State News From the Regional Coordinators:

For this issue, the Regional Coordinators asked the legislative librarians in their regional states about challenges and changes in their libraries.

From Frances Thomas, Louisiana

As with many states, Louisiana has experienced budget cuts and we are trying to "streamline" our operations. Periodical and annual titles are under review. We eliminated duplication of federal legal publications also held by the Senate’s Huey P. Long Memorial Law Library. Also challenging our library are the continuing changes in technology. Some titles are no longer available in print and demand for online services continues to increase. Technological resources, such as cataloging of electronic versions of legislative documents and database creation, have enhanced our ability to support the work of our legislature.

From Johanne Holmes Greer, Maryland

The Library and Information Services unit of the Maryland Department of Legislative Services is in the process of interviewing applicants for a cataloger/indexer position. One of our longtime librarians, Barb Speyser, is retiring in October after a long and distinguished career. We posted the job notice on various library listservs and received almost 100 resumes from around the country and even from Canada! Seventy percent of the potential candidates had or were about to receive MLS degrees. This might be an indication of the job market for our profession.

We are also working with the Office of Information Systems in the department to revamp the Maryland General Assembly webpage, in the hopes of making it more user-friendly. The library will be responsible for providing and maintaining metadata for department’s publications, a result of the new website enhancements.

From Nan Bowers, Nevada

Training needs identified and initiated. We sent out a survey earlier this year to gauge the library usage, research preferences, and training interests of our research and committee analysts. Now we are attempting to better inform the analysts about the library and research techniques. How to do this? We’ve began a twice monthly emailing of library tips with graphics. We’re looking into small group training on specialized databases and online research tools, PowerPoint presentations made available on a common drive, ‘podcasts’ on short, focused topics placed on the common drive, and one-on-one help. This is a lot of work, and setting priorities and actually putting together the presentations are going more slowly than I had hoped. But, we are making progress.

Periodicals management. The subscribing, check-in, routing, and shelving of periodicals used to be routine. They were paper issues. Now, a third of the currently received periodical titles are digital, and each year there are print titles converting to digital only access. Some titles, often university affiliated, are taken over by private publishers who quadruple the price (think State and Local Government Review). We’re working through procedures for cataloging, routing, handling copyright concerns, instituting password protections, and archiving issues for the digital titles. We’re working on how to handle the irregular appearance of agency newsletters and how RSS feeds supplement the digital issues of periodicals. It’s a dynamic area of library work, exciting and frustrating.

LRL
Visit us online for news and updates on LRL activities.
LRL Legislative Summit Sessions
August 6-9, 2012 • Chicago, Illinois

LRL officers have planned some excellent and informative sessions for LRL members attending the NCSL Legislative Summit in Chicago. We’ll also enjoy a fun evening together at our annual Dutch Treat dinner and hold our annual Business Meeting. Below are the details on our programs and activities.

Monday, August 6, 2012

Records Retention: What to Keep and How to Keep It (CLE)
3:15-5:00 pm
RACSS, LRL & ASLCS
Legislative documents are generally considered public records and as such, must be preserved. But not all documents are the same. Staff working papers, emails, and internal communications may have different requirements. This session will look at the requirements for preserving legislative documents to ensure appropriate use and legal compliance.

Moderator: Mark Mitchell, RACSS Chair, Committee Administrator, Legislative Research
Commission, Kentucky
Speakers: Walker Reagan, Division Director, Research Division, North Carolina
Kristin Ford, Legislative Librarian, Legislative Reference Library, Legislative Services Office, Idaho
Sonia Gavin, Legislative Information Resource Manager, Legislative Reference Center, Montana

LRL Dutch Treat Dinner
6:30-8:30 pm
Join legislative librarians from around the country for a delizioso evening at our annual Dutch Treat Dinner. This year’s ristorante is recognized for its classic, yet contemporary, Italian dishes and has been called “one of the loop’s premier dining spots” and “an intimate grotto straight from an Italian hill town.” Spouses and guests are welcome. Meet at 6:30 pm, at Trattoria No. 10, 10 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60602.

Tuesday, August 7, 2012

LRL Roundtable: Evaluating Information Authenticity Webinar Discussion
8:00-8:45 am
The proliferation of information on the Internet and the lack of editorial oversight of much of that information makes it vital for legislative staff to be skilled in evaluating the authenticity of information. LRL officers and members will discuss the challenges of authenticity and help shape plans for an LRL webinar on evaluating information resources.

Facilitator: Mary Camp, LRL Chair, Director, Legislative Reference Library, Texas

LRL: Rare Book Shop Site Visit and Program
4:45-5:45 pm
Legislative librarians appreciate the value of rare and historic documents and publications. In this site visit to Kurt Gippert Bookseller, members will hear from an expert on rare and historic collections and peruse the more than 30,000 books and documents dating back to the 1550s, including one of the earliest law books and an original land deed for George Washington. Space is limited and reservations are required. Please RSVP to jeanne.mejeur@ncsl.org.

Moderator: Shelley Day, Legislative Information Liaison, Legislative Research Library, Utah

Continued on page 5
Wednesday, August 8, 2012

LRL Business Meeting
8:00-9:15 am
Legislative librarians hold their annual Business Meeting, to elect officers, present the Legislative Staff Achievement Award, announce the 2012 Notable Documents Awards winners, and plan activities for the coming year. Breakfast will be provided.

  Presiding: Mary Camp, LRL Chair, Director, Legislative Reference Library, Texas

LRL Libraries: Solution Providers for State and Local Government
4:30-5:30 pm
Libraries are incredible resources and have moved beyond being mere storehouses of knowledge. As they adapt to new technologies, they provide services in exciting new ways, both in legislatures and their communities. Peer into the future and examine how libraries can continue to be vital partners in research and information services.

  Moderator: Eddie Weeks, Legislative Librarian, Tennessee General Assembly
  Speaker: Cathleen Bourdon, Associate Executive Director, American Library Association, Illinois

Thursday, August 9, 2012

Researching the History or Intent of Legislation (CLE)
2:15-3:30 pm
RACSS, LRL & Legal Services
Legislative history is important in determining why a legislature passed a law and what legislators meant by the language they used. Legislative history and intent is used by courts to establish the intended meaning of language in the law and ensure its correct implementation. This session provides guidelines for researching state legislative history and intent.

  Moderator: Mary Camp, LRL Chair, Director, Legislative Reference Library, Texas
  Speakers: Eddie Weeks, Legislative Librarian, Tennessee General Assembly
  Deborah Haskins, Assistant Director, Office of Legislative Legal Services, Colorado
  Mark Kuster, Attorney, Legislative Council, Texas

Avoiding Bias and Preparing Balanced Research
3:30-4:45 pm
RACSS & LRL
Nonpartisan staff pride themselves on maintaining a neutral position in their work but preserving that balance has become more difficult in today’s supercharged political environment, where the line between opinions and facts can become blurred. This session will look at the challenges and discuss best practices to maintain nonpartisan integrity.

  Moderator: Pepper Sturm, Chief Deputy Research Director, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Nevada
  Speakers: Eddie Weeks, Legislative Librarian, Tennessee General Assembly
  Sharon Wenger, Principal Analyst, Legislative Research Department, Kansas
  Jerry Howe, Managing Policy Analyst, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, Utah
2012 Legislative Staff Achievement Award Honorees

Shelley Day
Legislative Information Liaison
Legislative Research Library
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel
Utah

Shelley Day has served as the Legislative Information Liaison in the Utah Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel since 1991 and has managed the research library since 2000.

She conducts research on policy issues for committee studies and legislation, conducts customized training, and provides project guidance for legislative interns and constituent services. She coordinates, edits, and contributes to the production of major legislative publications.

As the Utah State Legislature webmaster since 1995, Shelley has been involved with other legislative staff in designing, maintaining, and updating content on the website. In 1998 she and her director represented the office when presented with the Roy B. Gibson Freedom of Information Award by the Utah Headliners Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. The Utah Legislative Website also received NCSL’s first Online Democracy Award in 2005. Shelley also developed the Legislative Kids’ Page in 2002.

Shelley has played an active role in NCSL’s Legislative Research Librarian (LRL) Staff Section. She hosted LRL in 2004 at NCSL’s Annual Meeting in Utah and planned two of the LRL sessions. She has spoken at LRL Professional Development Seminars, on the Legislative Library Web Sites Panel in 2002 and on the Legislative Website Functions and Design Panel in 2008. She has served as chair of the LRL Staff Section and served an additional three years as an officer. During her tenure on the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee she participated in the Outreach Work Group and Technology Subcommittee and the E-Learning Subcommittee. She also coordinated and moderated NCSL’s first LRL Webinar, “Researching Legislative History and Intent” in 2010 and oversaw its second Webinar, “Creating Databases for Statutorily Mandated Reports,” in 2011.

Shelley has coordinated the NCSL America’s Legislators Back to School Program in Utah since 2001 and spoken at numerous conferences about the program. At the invitation of NCSL she was a plenary speaker at the national Civic Education Network Meeting in 2006. Also at the invitation of NCSL in 2008, she was a presenter at Trust for Representative Democracy: Voices of the People, a leadership seminar for master teachers across America.

Shelley is a member of the Utah State Library Board and Utah Library Association. The 2012 Legislative Staff Achievement Award from LRL recognizes Shelley’s service to the Utah Legislature and for her tireless efforts to promote legislative information for legislators, citizens, and students.
Kristin Ford has served as Legislative Librarian for the Idaho Legislature since 1999. In addition to research, cataloging, and indexing, she conducts legislative research classes for law students and CLE seminars for attorneys, participates in new legislator orientation, and assists the public with legislative history research. She staffed the Idaho Citizen’s Commission on Redistricting in 2011-2012, designing the website, writing the guidelines, and providing information for the commission.

During the past decade, Kristin has authored several articles which were published in Legal Reference Services Quarterly. She contributed an article, “Researching Uniform and Model Laws,” that appeared in West Group’s Perspectives: Teaching Legal Research and Writing. She also co-authored an article with two Idaho senators on the judicial use of legislative history that was published in the Idaho Law Review.

In 2011, Kristin’s work as a legislative librarian was featured as part of an NCSL Executive Committee project highlighting legislative careers. This project serves to inform and to draw young people into public service. Each of the staff sections was featured in a video and, representing LRL, Kristin did a wonderful job of talking about the role and importance of legislative libraries in the legislative process.

Kristin has been active in NCSL in other ways. As an LRL officer, she participated in the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee and was a presenter at the Annual Meeting in 2005.

She is a longtime member and has been very active in the Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section (LRL), serving one year as Chair and another three years in other section offices. She served as a regional coordinator and as a member of the Core Collection Update Committee. Her contributions to LRL by serving six years on the Notable Documents Committee, of which she is currently Chair, are as notable as the documents which they review.

Kristin is active in other professional organizations, including the Western Pacific Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries. She served as Secretary for that organization during the same time she presided over the LRL staff section.

The 2012 Legislative Staff Achievement Award from the Legislative Research Librarians recognizes Kristin’s dedicated service to the Idaho Legislature and her profession.
Library Profile:
Montana Legislative Reference Center

By Sonia Gavin
Legislative Information Resources Manager, Montana

Since 1976, librarians in the Legislative Reference Center have assisted Montana’s legislators and legislative staff by answering reference and research questions, obtaining and circulating materials such as research reports and state and federal legislation, and providing interlibrary loan services. Resources collected focus on issues of current concern to the Montana Legislature.

In addition to serving the Legislative Branch, we help other state agencies and the general public with questions about Montana’s legislative process. The public is welcome to use our collection for legislative research.

Reference Center holdings include over 8,000 titles covering a broad range of issues studied by the Legislature and include publications from other states’ legislatures, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and the Council of State Governments (CSG). Legal materials such as West’s Uniform Laws and legislative interim committee publications are also available.

The Reference Center collection includes many historical volumes. These include the Montana Code Annotated (1895-present), the House and Senate Journals (1879-), Session Laws (1889-), papers of the 1972 Constitutional Convention, Montana legislative rule books (1925-), Lawmakers of Montana “Copper Books” (1957-), and session committee minutes (1979-).

Memos written by Legislative Services Division (LSD) staff and selected memos from the Legislative Environmental Policy Office (LEPO) and Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD) comprise an archive of past research. We also have LSD Interim Committee Reports back to the 1950s. Many Interim Committee Reports and staff research and legal memos are available at the Legislative Reference Center.

Montana Legislative Reference Center staff help legislators, legislative staff, state agencies, and the general public access resources on topics of concern to the Montana Legislature. We locate objective, timely information, answer quick reference questions, and research background information.

To assist clients, library staff use indexes, library catalogs, references in articles, publisher’s catalogs, etc., and procure identified resources. Once materials arrive, we enter them into our tracking systems so that clients are aware of available resources and items can be found when needed.

In a typical month during the interim, the Center handles over 100 questions from state agencies and the public and over 100 questions from staff and legislators. During session, we handle over 300 questions per month from November through March, with a high of over 500 in January. We also check in and route materials to staff and legislators, procure items through interlibrary loan, and purchase, catalog, and index materials.

Montana State Capitol in Helena, MT

Continued on page 9
Montana, continued from page 8

The Library Director, Sonia Gavin, is responsible for library administration and planning, oversight of research and reference operations, including assessing questions for appropriate avenues of response, and purchasing decisions for the collection. The Library Technician, Pam Weitz, is responsible for general library maintenance, which includes making sure the electronic databases are up-to-date, obtaining materials through interlibrary loans and orders, and keeping the collection in a highly functional state. She also provides reference services and compiles lists of indexed articles and recent library acquisitions.

At the beginning of this year, through reorganization, the Reference Center has become part of the Communications Office. This new office has five staff members who fulfill the information needs of staff, legislators, and the general public.

The Communications Office provides:

- Reception and general information to legislators and the public;
- Publication distribution;
- Legislator information and telecommunications;
- Oversight of the broadcasting of legislative functions;
- Reference and research services through the Legislative Reference Center.

The Communications Office is under the direction of Kevin Hayes, the Publications Coordinator and Session Information Officer. In addition to the Reference Center Staff, the office includes K’Lynn Sloan Harris who is our Audio/Video Coordinator and Andrew Franks-Ongoy, our Publications and Web Content Specialist.

The Legislative Reference Center is located in the basement of the State Capitol building. The State Capitol building was opened for use on the Fourth of July, 1902, and in 1997 underwent an extensive renovation. The Capitol is over 100 years old.

Workers have restored the Capitol in time for its centennial celebration. Changes were made to the building so state government will be able to work better, but the main idea was to bring back the look the Capitol had when Montana was a new state.


Notable Documents
Awards Update

A record number of nominations were received for this year’s Notable Documents Awards. Forty-five documents were submitted from 11 states. That is an increase from the 38 nominations received from 11 states in 2011.

Publications from California, Idaho, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin were nominated.

Kristin Ford of Idaho is serving as chair of this year’s Notable Documents Awards Committee. Serving with Kristin on the committee are Carol Blackburn and Elizabeth Lincoln of Minnesota, Ingrid Hernquist of New Jersey, and Frances Thomas of Louisiana.

The Committee will meet via conference call on Wednesday, July 18, to consider the nominated documents.

Winners of the 2012 Notable Documents Awards will be announced in Chicago at the LRL Business Meeting, held in conjunction with NCSL’s 2012 Legislative Summit.
Announcing a New Online Resource for Recruiting Young People into Legislative Service

by Mike Sanseri, photography director for the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission

Baby boomers comprise about one-third of the national workforce, but nearly half of all legislative staff responding to a recent NCSL survey were 50 years of age or over. Replacing the institutional knowledge of those seasoned staffers as they retire will pose a major challenge to legislative staff directors and human resource departments. Attracting young people to work as legislative staff will be increasingly important in the coming years.

To address this problem, Nancy Cyr, director of the Nebraska Legislative Research Office, launched an effort during her tenure as NCSL Staff Chair to develop a website with a series of videos that describe the dynamic, rewarding world of legislative service.

After three years of work and the collaboration of hundreds of legislative staff around the country, the Legislative Careers website has now been launched. The site is designed to encourage college students, recent graduates, and those looking for a career change to consider legislative service as a career. Colleges and universities will also find it useful in promoting legislative internship programs.

“In addition to demonstrating our love of legislative service, the goals of the website are to highlight the variety of professional opportunities available in state legislatures throughout the country; demonstrate the rewards and benefits of a career in public service; and spark interest and encourage young adults to participate in government and consider legislative service as a career,” Cyr explained.

The Legislative Careers page features an introductory video that shows the depth and breadth of staff involvement in the legislative process. Visitors can then navigate to the Career Paths tab on the site to view video testimonials from young legislative staffers in 10 areas of specialization coinciding with NCSL’s organizations of professional staff. The site also has a page with links to job openings in statehouses throughout the nation.

Legislative staffers featured in the Career Paths videos include:

- Zach Twilla, California Senate
- Cory Stewart, Louisiana House
- Rashada Houston, Florida Legislature Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability
- Kelly Dudley, Kentucky Legislative Research Commission
- Matthew Lawrence, Oregon Senate
- Scott Grosz, Wisconsin Legislative Council
- Kristin Ford, Librarian, Idaho Legislature
- Ashley deMauro, Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus
- Jason Watts, Hawaii Senate
- Carlos Galvan, Texas Legislative Council