Chair's Column
Jacqueline Curro, Library and Information Services, Maryland

If you weren’t able to join us at the Professional Development Seminar in Sacramento, you missed an outstanding seminar. Our California host librarians, Linda Heatherly and Dan Mitchell, “blew us away” with their programs and arrangements. All of the sessions that you’ll read about in this Newsline couldn’t have been more interesting. A special thanks goes out to all of the presenters.

Sadly, this was the last PDS that we will share with our NCSL Staff Section Liaison, Janna Goodwin, who is no longer at NCSL. We will all miss the excellent support she provided to the LRL Staff Section and her seemingly unbounded energy, and we wish her all of the best. Our new Liaison is Heather Morton, who most of us already know from the subject assistance that she provides and her work on the NCSL – StateNet project. I know we’re all looking forward to working with Heather and getting to know her better in this new role.

In the midst of holiday parties and preparations for Maryland’s legislative session that begins in January, we heard here in Annapolis that state employees will have the day after Christmas and the day after New Year’s off with no pay. Up to three more furlough days are expected before the end of the fiscal year. I know that other states are facing budget deficits, as well, and will have to make cuts. As these cuts affect our library budgets, I know we will be calling on each other more than ever for assistance. Let’s also share ideas and examples of how we’re dealing with our budget crises.

Best wishes, Jackie.

National News from LSCC
By Gary VanLandingham, NCSL Staff Chair

The Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC) is working on several major projects to strengthen NCSL’s services to legislative staff. As you may know, the LSCC is comprised of two representatives of each of the ten staff sections, plus staff who are serving on the NCSL Executive Committee. The LSCC recently met in September for its first meeting of the year; it will meet in January, May, and July as well.

Rest assured that LSCC meetings aren’t a junket. The meetings are pretty grueling—the first meeting of the day begins at 7:30 a.m. and various subcommittee and working group meetings last until 6:30 p.m. that evening and then again the next morning, followed by Executive Committee meetings throughout this second
day. So, folks don’t go to LSCC meetings to hang out, but instead often look forward to getting back to their day jobs where the pace is somewhat saner (at least on a good day).

Currently, the LSCC is working on several major initiatives:

- The Legislative Institutions subcommittee is assessing major trends that are affecting legislative staff nationwide, including the pending retirement of Baby Boomers, technology changes, economic stresses, and increasing partisanship and term limits. The subcommittee will develop strategies to help legislatures address these challenges and guide NCSL activities in future years.

- The Marketing and Outreach subcommittee is developing better ways to market NCSL’s services so that legislative staff and legislators understand what NCSL can do for them and how they can best get involved with the organization.

- The Professional Development subcommittee is working to strengthen NCSL’s training programs for legislative staff, including options for expanding programs for staff entering management positions as well as those beginning their legislative careers.

- The Technology subcommittee is working to develop a capacity to deliver high quality professional development programs via the internet to staff that cannot travel to NCSL meetings.

- The Staff Section Officers subcommittee is working to ensure that staff sections receive needed support from NCSL in hosting professional development seminars. The committee is also working with the technology committee to identify ways that the staff sections can use e-learning technology to deliver skills development programs for staff who perform specific functions in their legislatures such as committee research and program evaluation.

- The Standing Committees workgroup is working to strengthen the role of legislative staff in NCSL’s Standing Committees, which meet three times a year to develop NCSL’s lobbying position on federal issues.

- The Member and District Staff Training workgroup is developing a prototype seminar that will be held next spring for member and district staff.

- The Strategic Planning workgroup is establishing plans to accomplish goals of Nancy Cyr, who will serve as Staff Chair next year.

It is truly an honor to serve as your staff chair this year. NCSL is the premier organization for legislative staff, and it provides a wealth of opportunities to learn, share information, and meet colleagues and make friends who share our role in supporting representative democracy. This fall, I and the other national officers (Nancy Cyr, Staff Vice Chair, and Sharon Crouch-Steidel, Immediate Past Staff Chair) have had the pleasure of visiting each of the 10 staff section’s professional development conferences. Each of the meetings was superb, and showed the talent and dedication of legislative staff.

If you have any questions or suggestions for LSCC programs, feel free to contact me at gary.vanlandingham@oppaga.fl.gov, or the other national officers. You can get more information on all of NCSL’s programs for legislative staff at its Website at www.ncsl.org.

California State Library

By Jacqueline Curro, Maryland
LRL Chair

Dan Mitchel led us on a tour of the California State Library, where we began in the lovely lobby of the Stanley Mosk Library and Courts Building. A memorial dedicated to Californians who died in World War I, the lobby walls are covered by 12 mural panels illustrating the history of warfare painted by Frank Van Sloan.

The stunning art work in the building includes Maynard Dixon’s magnificent 1928 mural, A Pageant of Tradition, in Gillis Hall, the main reference room of the California State Library. Our tour included a stop in the Witkin State Law Library, and continued to the Library and Courts II Building where we visited the Braille and Talking Book Library, and the California History Room.
Delivery of Information: California Research Bureau’s Outreach

By Robyn Cockerham, Louisiana

Founded in 1991, the California Research Bureau (CRB) is a division of the California State Library. The organization is physically located in the Library-Courts Building II. Additionally, they are fortunate to maintain a presence in the California State Capitol Building. As noted in their informational pamphlet, “the CRB provides research and reference services to elected officials and their staff, without regard to political party.” Their primary goal is to provide research to the governor, members of the California Legislature, other constitutional officers, as well as the staffs of the elected officials. This research often includes the preparation of in-depth research reports on selected topics that are subject of current or probable future legislation.

Their presentation was divided between three presenters: Dean Misczynski, Steven DeBry, and Dan Mitchel. Dean, the retiring director of the CRB, discussed the development of the luncheon seminars that the CRB offers to its clientele. These seminars are restricted to “innovative, intellectual content.” Dean reiterated that the CRB prides itself on being non-partisan, objective and neutral in regard to policy changes for the State of California.

One of the most highly-regarded services that the CRB delivers is their Studies in the News. Steven DeBry was kind enough to explain the process that is required for this publication. He explained that the primary goal is to collect studies with new public policy information. Additionally, Steven gave us a sample edition of Studies in the News. Following Steven’s discussion, Dan Mitchel shared the results of a recent survey that the CRB conducted with user participation regarding Studies in the News. This included a handout of the survey and a discussion of survey results. Dan also offered advice on how to do user surveys.

This extremely informative session was yet another example of the planning and forethought that the organizers and our California hosts put into this conference!

California Legislative Data Center

By Eddie Weeks, Tennessee

Bill Behnk provided us with a wonderful behind-the-scenes view of the California Legislative Data Center: seven floors of space dedicated to serving the computer needs of 120 legislators (plus staff plus district offices plus clerks plus...).

They do all the computer preparation and repair of all laptops and desktops owned by the Legislature. Each computer is preloaded with all the software needed to perform a person’s specific duties; that computer is then assigned to that person.

The Assembly and Senate have different computer systems (the Assembly using Toshiba and the Senate using Dell), making this job even more difficult.

Over 9,000 bills a year are filed and tracked in the California Legislature. The Legislative Data Center maintains a test room, a replica of the Floor of the House and Senate, to make certain that their programs are up to the challenge. Their bill drafting and tracking programs were created in-house with outside consulting help; they have over 14 terabytes of storage available.

The Legislative Data Center also creates and sends out constituent letters and newsletters – over six million a year.

We were also privileged to see a demonstration of their new bill tracking system: the Legislative Information System. Dave Tomlinson showed how this state of the art system will permit a user to see how any bill or amendment will affect the text of the current Code. In addition to traditional bill tracking features, this new system also provides feedback for users and permits a user to track a Code section back to law, amendment, and bill.

In short: Wow.
On Friday morning we were welcomed to California’s state capitol building with a wonderful tour. Our guide shared with us an array of facts and lore.

The capitol of California resided in five different cities before settling in Sacramento in 1854. This includes a temporary residence in San Francisco due to flooding in Sacramento in 1861 and 1862. The construction of the current building was overseen at one point by architect Ruben Clark who was rumored to have been driven mad by the project. There may be some truth to this since he quit after being constantly accused of hiring workers sympathetic to the confederacy during the Civil War. Once built, the only major renovation was done from 1976-1982 after the state architect said it was no longer earthquake safe. It can now withstand a 7.5 quake on the Richter scale.

The 31st state to join the union, California’s unique history is revealed in its symbols. The state motto, “Eureka!” meaning “I have found it,” reflects the gold rush era California is known for. Also depicted in the Great Seal, and in other artistic pieces in the Capital, is the Roman goddess Minerva. She was born as a grown woman from the head of Jupiter, as California was never a territory but “born” directly into statehood.

The Assembly is decorated in a green color scheme modeled after the House of Commons of the British Parliament. Both chambers have prominent portraits hanging above the dais. In the Assembly, a copy of a portrait of Abraham Lincoln in the White House hangs above the phrase Legislatorum est justas leges condere etch in 24 karat gold leaf. Translated, it means “It is the duty of Legislators to make just laws.”

The Senate chamber has a red decor, including a lush carpet, similar to the House of Lords. The chamber also has painting and a Latin phrase displayed in its chamber. The Senate’s phrase reads senatoris est civitatis Libertatem tueri meaning “For the liberty of the people.” The portrait of George Washington, also a copy of the one in the White House, is the oldest item in the Sacramento capitol building. It was given to the Senate in 1854 and, according to legend, was saved from a fire that same year by Governor John Bigler.

While both chambers use the same original desks bought from German immigrant John Breuner’s furniture company in 1869, legislative action is different. In the assembly, votes are cast electronically with the roll displayed on a large tally board easily seen by the gallery. However, in the Senate, voting is handled in the more traditional way by calling out “aye” or “no.”

A highlight for many on the tour was the display of portraits of former governors. While it may not be unique to have these paintings in a capital building, the process may be. After leaving office, each governor has $30,000 to commission an artist of his or her choosing. There are few ground rules—such as the picture and frame must be “dignified” and it must be a painting as opposed to a photograph. If standards are not met, the Joint Rules Committee may reject the portrait. Our guide pointed out two controversial pictures. One stir occurred in 1947 for Governor C. C. Young. His portrait had an outdoor background, the governor wearing a blue suit instead of the traditional gray, and a slight smile or smirk on his face. The other was more recent of Governor Edmund “Jerry” Brown whose term ended in 1983. He hired an expressionist painter and the result, while still dignified, sets it apart from the others.

These are just a few of the highlights; there is much more that could be said about the artistic beauty and history of the Capitol. You can read more and take a virtual tour at [http://www.statecapitolmuseum.com](http://www.statecapitolmuseum.com).
At 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 16 we began our day with a breakfast at the hotel.

After that, Jacqueline Curro, LRL Chair, and Senior State Legislative Librarian of the Department of Legislative Services of Maryland called for a quick round of introductions of attendees.

Susan Hildreth, the California State Librarian greeted and welcomed the group. She then graciously shared the details about how she came to hold that most prestigious position. She confided that it was quite unexpected, yet exciting and sometimes disheartening as she had already packed to move to another library position in Texas. She also responded to our requests about what it’s like to work with the state’s famous governor. She also talked about library buildings of the 1920s. At the end of her introduction she invited everyone for a reception and movie that same night hosted by the library.

After Ms. Hildreth’s introduction, we held a "What’s Up in Your Library?" roundtable session, hearing from three librarians about new projects, programs, and ideas in their libraries.

**Panelists:**

**Mary Camp,**
Director, Legislative Reference Library, Texas  
[http://www.lrl.state.tx.us](http://www.lrl.state.tx.us)

Among the library’s many features available, Mary introduced the audience to the Bill Search and the Legislative Archive. Also, she discussed the access to information of past legislatures including PDF full-text reports, member list, and the "Texas Laws, past and present" feature, which is a timeline of significant events of Texas legislation and the year of inception of the different state codes. Indeed, our friends in Austin have a most useful Website.

**Eddie Weeks,**  
Senior Librarian, Office of Legal Services, Tennessee  
[http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/joint/staff/ols/library.htm#staff](http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/joint/staff/ols/library.htm#staff)

A long time attendee of our meetings and still going strong, Eddie Weeks has been the librarian in Tennessee since 1996. In a 180-degree turn from the previous featured library, the Tennessee General Assembly Library serves mostly the state legislature with few resources available to serve the general public. Eddie explained to us the bumpy road of his endeavors to advance his library to meet the expectations of a modern legislative library in the 21st century.

Jan Nakayama, Research Librarian, Legislative Reference Bureau Library, Hawaii  
[http://hawaii.gov/lrb/library.html](http://hawaii.gov/lrb/library.html)

Jan talked to us about their project for a digital version of the Hawaii Constitutional Convention Studies 1978. Her library is under the Legislative Reference Bureau in Honolulu.

**Lunch with Nancy Cyr, NCSL Staff Vice Chair**

By Jacqueline Curro, Maryland  
LRL Chair

Our lunch on Thursday was sponsored by the Thomson West Company.

Nancy Cyr, Senior Legal Counsel, Legislative Research Division, Nebraska Unicameral Legislature, and Staff Vice Chair this year, joined us to speak about the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee. She explained the structure of LSACC, and identified its subcommittees: Legislative Institution, Marketing and Outreach, Professional Development, Technology; and its workgroups. She encouraged us each to consider becoming involved by running for an at large position and to contact her; the Staff Chair, Gary VanLandingham, Director of Florida’s Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability; or the Immediate Past Staff Chair, Sharon Crouch Steidel, Director, Information Systems, Virginia House of Delegates; if we have questions.
Planning for the Future: Technology and Changing User Expectations

Presenter: Donna Scheeder
By Cathy Martin, North Carolina LRL Immediate Past Chair

We ended our very full week of programs with a presentation by LRL friend and colleague Donna Scheeder, who is currently the Director of Law Library Services at the Law Library of the Library of Congress. In this engaging and useful program, Donna addressed how changes in user demographics require us to reassess the needs of legislators and staff and to draft newer technologies to meet these needs.

Breaking us out in small groups, she asked us to examine such questions as: How are our users changing with each election? How is technology changing? What do these new users want and how does technology affect how they want it? We observed that users are getting younger, which means they're more mobile and visually driven, and among other things—want more “chunked” information (lots of information up front with lots of depth so they can choose what they want to use) in formats they can manipulate. How do we figure out how to meet their needs?

Donna offered several methods to assess this, including trend analysis (what you read to track trends - blogs such as beSpacific and Docuticker); data collection (user statistics, user surveys/satisfaction surveys, focus groups) and observation (looking at members’ Websites, learning how they communicate with constituents, how tuned in were they in their pre-legislative lives?).

Focusing on tools such as RSS feeds, blogs, wikis, mashups, video and photo sharing, social bookmarking and widgets, Donna suggested a number of ways each kind of technology could be used to fulfill our missions as legislative libraries: documenting the legislative process, enhancing the dialogue with citizens, and building a knowledge base for the legislature. She also cited mobile applications, virtual worlds, e-games and twittering as newer ways to connect with and deliver information to users. Donna’s recommended methods of moving forward “the easy way” are: use these technologies yourself, repackage content you already have, start with some examples as demonstration projects, develop interim policies, brand what you do, work across your organization.

She then suggested using SWOT analysis to see how our services are meeting or can meet these needs: strengths (What we’re good at, what members think we’re good at, supporters?); weaknesses (What do we need that we don’t have? What in the legislative environment is a barrier to success?); opportunities (What’s happening that you can take advantage of?); and threats (barriers to success, competitors?).

Thanks to Donna for such an engaging and enlightening program!

Note: Donna has graciously provided her full PowerPoint presentation for posting on the LRL Website. Please take the opportunity to view the whole program.

Legislative Website Functions and Design

By Laura Parker, California
Shelley Day, Legislative Information Liaison with Utah’s Legislative Research Library & Information Center, shared a brief history and popular features of the Utah State Legislature Website (http://le.utah.gov). Starting with one page in 1995, the website now offers a wealth of information including real-time bill tracking with optional automatic updates, legislative histories, audio and/or video of floor debates, legislative calendar with links to committee agendas and materials, aids to finding specific laws, and RSS feed instructions. Shelly’s artistic training helped

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shape a crisp, accessible Website that welcomes the lay reader. Ongoing attempts to broker a common look and feel for Utah's legislative Websites have been edged out by a House and Senate determined to host Web pages that look and feel different, a situation that drew knowing smiles from librarians in the audience.

Elizabeth Lincoln, Reference Group Services Manager, announced that next year is the 40th anniversary of Minnesota's Legislative Reference Library (http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/), whose early goal was to marshal public policy information and resources for a more professional legislature. Early electronic efforts included "Links to the World," a subject list of Internet resources that's still heavily used by legislative staffers. "Resources on Minnesota Issues," a recent addition to the library Website, summarizes important topics for legislative staffers and provides links to supporting documentation. On the day they're sworn in, new legislators can access customized Web pages that facilitate use of library services.

All the librarians use HTML to edit and add content to LRL Web pages in real time. The ability to add content via HTML is one of four basic principles guiding current library development. The other three are maximizing electronic access, supporting legislators' remote use of resources from any browser, and providing seamless connectivity among the legislatures' Web pages.

By Eileen Snyder, Wisconsin

After a tour of the California Legislative Data Center and a brief overview of the new California Legislative Information Service, we received a brief introduction to NCSL's new Bill Information Service. Run by State Net, an organization that has been tracking legislative activity in the states for 30 years, the Bill Information Service allows users to look up legislation across all 50 states. To access the service, go to the LRL home page, and look for "Bill Information Service" then follow the links from there.

The service was launched in April 2008, after a test period in which a few states participated. It offers several ways to search. There are a number of preset searches for hot topics. In addition, the system allows searches of the text of the bill or bill summary, as well as the index. The system then allows for a uniform presentation of the results across all the states.

State Net currently gets most of the information in the database by crawling the web and harvesting legislative information from legislative websites or from third party sites, whichever is publicly available. Some of their information, however, comes through FTP sites or by telephone. State Net works with the states to ensure the information is as accurate as possible. In addition, they proof some of the information in the state journals against State Net's data. If they find an error, they call the state for clarification.

Some changes that State Net is contemplating include updating the hot topics list more frequently and adding the capability to save searches.
1. Welcome
Jackie Curro welcomed members to the business meeting. She expressed that she had a really great time at the PDS and hoped that all members did too. She encouraged everyone to fill out the evaluation forms provided. Jackie also acknowledged Thomson West and expressed appreciation to that company for providing Thursday’s plated lunch.

2. Recognition of Regional Coordinators
Jackie recognized the regional coordinators and the important role that they can play in encouraging legislative library staff in their assigned states to become more involved in LRL. Discussion followed about using regional coordinators to reach out to librarians who do not use the listserv. Eddie agreed to create a list of questions for the regional coordinators to use when contacting those librarians.

3. 50 State non-NCSL Database Update
Jackie announced that Tracey Kimball is currently working with a committee of LRL members, has a model with established criteria, and is planning on using a WIKI to obtain and maintain the information.

4. NCSL LSCC Issues
   NCSL Web Redesign Committee Update: Jackie announced that the new NCSL Webpage redesign may be accessible near the end of January or beginning of February 2009. Cathy Martin reminded members that NCSL is encouraging staff section liaisons to work closely with members in this redesign process.

   Electronic Access to PDS Programs: Elizabeth announced that e-learning is taking priority and that the LSCC Technology subcommittee is working to develop a capacity to deliver high quality professional development programs via the Internet for staff who cannot travel to NCSL meetings due to budget constraints. She reported that the staff sections have been charged with providing 12 e-sessions online this coming year. She also reported that LRL is encouraged to provide as much PDS content online as possible.

   Staff Section Name Change Discussion: Jackie announced that NCSL is now going to refer to current staff sections as ‘staff organizations’ and is encouraging staff sections to change their names if they currently include the term ‘staff section’ in their title. Cathy reminded members that LRL serves legislators and staff, not the public, and that as long as those using our services know who LRL is, it matters less whether the public knows.

5. Recognition of California Librarians
Jackie thanked Dan Mitchel and Linda Heatherly for everything they did, expressed appreciation for their organizational efforts, and complimented them on being great hosts. She then presented each of them with Barnes and Noble gift cards.

6. 2009 PDS in Minnesota
Jackie mentioned that the 2009 LRL PDS is tentatively scheduled to take place in St. Paul, Minnesota. Janna reported that RACSS will not be jointly meeting with us.

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7. Other Business
Jackie asked members if any other business needed to be considered. Questions were raised about networking options to supplement the LRL listserv and a discussion ensued. Janna announced that NCSL IT staff is designing a customizable message board for the LRL Web site and that it will eventually replace the ‘My NCSL’ feature. Cathy suggested that contacting key staff for updates makes a big difference in accurate and reliable information, and Janna committed to contact key staff to ensure that information is as accurate and reliable as possible. Janna also explained that NCSL is currently working out the bugs in multiple lists for specific usages after inconsistencies were noticed by members in regards to the NCSL mailing list, LRL listserv, and staff contacts directory. Eddie reminded members that Donna Scheeder would appreciate input from LRL members in regards to the redesign of http://thomas.loc.gov (The Library of Congress, Thomas). Robyn volunteered to talk to Donna Scheeder about what kind of assistance/feedback she’s looking for from LRL librarians in her work on redesigning the Thomas Web site. Cathy asked Janna to inquire with NCSL about any potential problems of LRL as a staff section contributing to the redesign of a government Web site.

8. Adjournment of the 2008 PDS
Jackie adjourned the business meeting at 10:00 a.m.

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**NCSL Publications**

Reports:
- 2008 Early Care and Education Legislation (Web only)
- Smart Growth and Environmental Health
- Children of Incarcerated Parents (Web only)
- Access to Health Care (4 documents)
- SCHIP Snapshot
- Treating Juveniles Like Adults: Policies and Options
- Healthy Community Report
- Environmental Management Primer (early 2009)
- Reimbursement for Child Care Providers
- Spent Fuel Transportation Primer (Web only)
- Child Abuse Prevention
- Infant-Toddler Mental Health Primer
- Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opiate Addiction: Evaluation Report (Web only)
- Family Economic Success: A Legislator’s Guide
- State Budget Actions (early 2009)
- State Tax Actions (early 2009)
- Mason’s Manual (publish October 2010)
- Redistricting 2010

Issue Briefs
- Best Practices: What Works in Prevention?
- SCHIP/Medicaid On-Line Enrollment
Legislative Research Librarians
National Conference of State Legislatures
7700 East First Place