



# NEWSLINE

## LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH LIBRARIANS

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Winter 2000

### Chair's Column

by Susan Southworth, Connecticut  
LRL Chair

By now, all of us must be surrounded by members, lobbyists and interns! By quirk of the calendar, Connecticut's constitutionally prescribed dates will make this year's session the shortest possible. In the words of our Senate President Pro Tempore, "[W]e first need to do no harm and then focus on priorities that really matter." That's about how I feel as LRL chair!

One thing I am encouraged about is the increased use of the listserv as an efficient and effective method of contacting our colleagues to ask questions or to share information. We are all too familiar with those ubiquitous multi-state surveys with impossible turn-around times; the listserv can shortcut those requests, providing quick and trustworthy results. I'd like to encourage even greater participation. For those of you who have experienced difficulty getting into the listserv, contact Rita or me, and we will make it a priority to clear up any problems.

It's time to start the program planning for Annual Meeting and the idea of another roundtable has been broached. I know the coordinators have asked already, so please forgive the redundancy....BUT, in order for a roundtable to work we need both topics and volunteers to facilitate. A facilitator doesn't have to be an instant expert, just acquire a reasonable familiarity with the issue and be willing

to direct the flow of conversation....LRL members never seem to be at a loss for words! Please let me know if you can help out, and don't forget, being on a program panel could be your ticket to Chicago!

We have also been asked again to work at Annual Meeting with Project Citizen, a program promoting and encouraging civics education for our youth. Last year we imported Genie Tyburski of The Virtual Chase to teach the intricacies of the Internet to the attending civics teachers.

This year we believe that our own LRL membership is equipped to respond to their request for another such program. I'll be talking with Project Citizen personnel in more depth but want to put out feelers for individuals who think they might be interested and able to participate. It's nothing more than what we do every day, teaching resources. And judging from the group's enthusiastic response last year, you'd have an appreciative audience. Please contact me if you'd like to VOLUNTEER. Again, this can be a great selling card for getting to Annual Meeting.

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National Conference of State Legislatures

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## Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee

Tampa, Florida

January 20-22

### Task Force on Promoting the Legislative Institution

by Susan Southworth

This Task Force focuses on two major projects: civic education and the creation of a coffee table style pictorial celebration of the chambers of the fifty states.

**CHAMBERS PROJECT:** Gene Rose of NCSL addressed the need for a professional architectural photographer to ensure consistency and quality. A corollary benefit would be that NCSL, as contractor, would own the copyright to the photographs, thereby making them available for future use without restriction. There was discussion about the necessity for identification of the market for this title (legislative leaders, libraries, historical commissions/societies, etc) as a part of the fundraising effort. One letter has already been sent to major potential contributors.

**CIVIC EDUCATION:** Karl Kurtz previewed the Trust for Representative Democracy, a civic education initiative to be announced at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner in February, and also reported that the pilot America's Legislators Back to School Day was reasonably successful last September, with more states and legislators set to participate in 2000. There was discussion about the Civic Education Award that is to be given out for the first time at this year's Annual Meeting. Detailed criteria are being formulated, and will need to be confirmed at the next meeting of LSCC in April.

### Staff Development Task Force

by Johanne Greer, Maryland

The purpose of the Staff Development Task Force is to study the issues of recruitment and retention of legislative staff. Last fall the task force sent, via the Internet, surveyed all state legislatures for feedback on what motivates staff to work for legislative bodies at the state level. The task force is still collecting data by keeping the survey open online with the hopes of having more people respond. The additional responses might include more partisan legislative staff.

The data is still being analyzed and has not been formulated but answers at this point have proven to be interesting. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 36 to 55, or born between 1945 and 1964. Before coming to the legislature, roughly half of the respondents worked in the public sector, such as the federal government or another state agency or local branch of government.

Many people came to the legislature after a career in the military. The majority of the respondents work for the legislature because the work is interesting and challenging. The second most popular reason is being able to balance the work with their lifestyles. A large number of respondents said they are gaining experience so that they can move on to higher paying jobs. Roughly a fourth of the respondents answered that they continue to work for the legislature because of job security.

Benefits, such as health insurance, paid vacation and sick leave, etc. were the main reason people gave for remaining with their current employer. On the other hand, people responded that the lack of opportunities for advancement was the reason most people would look for other employment in the next 2 to 4 years.

When the survey is closed and a final analysis is prepared, an article will be published in *State Legislatures* that will have all of the survey questions tabulated.

## Coordinator's Corner

The question distributed by regional coordinators for this issue of *Newsline* was a request for suggestions for LRL roundtable topics at Annual Meeting in Chicago, July 15-20.

### Coordinator Clare Cholik, South Dakota Legislative Research Council

from Anne Christensen, Nebraska Legislative Reference Library

One of the most pressing issues for us is how to remain useful to legislative staff since the Internet has become the research tool of choice. We can offer them access to periodical/newspaper databases and back files of newspapers, but we have noticed that the number of requests we handle per month is down 30-40% from just three years ago. We have tried to highlight new acquisitions and our subscriptions, but we still have reduced traffic in the library.

*from Marilyn Johnson, North Dakota Legislative Council*

More and more again on using the Internet for research. At the Indianapolis meeting, if that's where it was, the law librarian from PA left me with a lot of food for thought...much of which I still recall!

Roundtable discussions covering what's new or what's troubling in our own library experiences provides nitty gritty stuff that can lead to innovation at the home place.

Somewhere on the program, how about reps from ECS, CSG, NGA, and NASBO sharing with LRL on services and contacts available. Some folks from these groups might already be in the exhibits area during Annual Meeting, anyway.

Consider having Cheryl Rae Nyberg, who does the Subject Compilations of State Laws, do a program to establish a dialogue with LRL members.

Also, how about inviting Lynn Hellebust from the Government Research Institute in Topeka, Kansas?

**Coordinator Tracey Kimball, New Mexico Legislative Council Service**

*from Tracey*

It seems too hard for me to go to two meetings a year, so I probably won't get to Annual Meeting again, but I think the idea of roundtable discussions is a good one. I'd be curious about what other professional organizations--AALL, state library association, Special Libraries Association, indexers, whatever, state or local levels?--people find most helpful in their legislative library practices, and why.

**Coordinator, Marian Rogers, Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau**

*from Marian*

1. Which electronic sources do you monitor for acquisition of electronic documents?
2. What sources do you use to acquire print publications from other states?
3. What do you do to "promote" your library to your clientele? What works/doesn't work?

4. A discussion about preservation of paper materials in digital format (versus preservation of electronic information, although that's not a bad idea either).

*from Debbie Tavenner, Ohio*

I enjoy the roundtable discussions, but if they are at lunch they need to be a breezy topic, like maybe how has the Internet changed our jobs. I enjoyed the discussions last year on the catalogs and documents and definitely feel we need to have leaders ready to go with some questions or guidance. In Sante Fe, we learned about surveying our clients--maybe one of us actually took a survey or information audit.

It seems too that a fair number of us are getting new or changing cataloging systems. Maybe that would be an idea for a discussion. Another thought is what sorts of special collections are our libraries responsible for maintaining?

*from Anne Rottmann, Missouri*

I think the roundtable is a very good format for exchange of information and ideas. Topics could be: electronic storage of information, what is knowledge management and how do we as librarians use it? PR for our libraries--what works and what doesn't?

*from Leo Kennedy, Michigan*

"Yes" to repeating the roundtable discussion format.

*from Taran Ley, Illinois Legislative Research Unit*

"Librarian responsibilities, cataloging."

**Coordinator Jennifer Bernier, Connecticut Legislative Library**

*Lynn Randall, Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library*

Here's a topic I would like to discuss: digital conversion of newspaper clipping files. We are just at the point of beginning this type of project and would like to talk with others about it.

## State News

### South Carolina *Joyce Grimes*

With the completion of the State House renovation project, in late summer 1999, the library moved from its temporary location back to the Capitol Complex. The historical collection is maintained in the Dennis Building and the various state codes and current supporting collections are shelved in the State House.

Two weeks at Legislative Staff Management Institute in July 1999 was greatly needed! Although a demanding LSMI schedule--that included living in a postage-stamp sized dorm room and sharing a hall bathroom--I personally found the experience immensely rewarding. Fellow librarians, if you haven't submitted an application for 2000, I encourage you to complete the paperwork!

### North Dakota *Marilyn Johnson*

During this interim, the North Dakota Legislative Council Library continues to convert bills as introduced to CD-ROM. No more microfiching! Sessions on disc will run from 1975 through 1999. After fourteen years of daily use for legislative history records, the Canon microfiche reader/printer takes its place as a backup unit. The new Minolta means no more tilting heads sideways to read and print. And you thought my poor posture came from a birth defect.

In addition to the new reader/printer, we are considering the ImageMouse Digital Retrieval System. Priced in the neighborhood of a thousand dollars, this equipment will allow us to read, scan, and print microfiche from our laptops or PCs. Unfortunately, the state's micrographics personnel who are testing the system report significant problems but still plan for a live show and tell demonstration at the end of February. If anybody has experience with the ImageMouse, we'd sure be interested in hearing about it.

Efforts to make standing committee records available on-line stall but eventually.... A new fine feature from the Legislative Assembly's Web page available during the upcoming 2001 session will be detailed committee hearing schedules. Until then, look at the Legislative Council's interim memos online from <http://www.state.nd.us/lr/99memos.html>.

### New Mexico *Tracey Kimball*

Susan Lilley has joined the New Mexico legislative library as library associate. She returned to the New Mexico library community after 13 years as a professional writer and editor in Hawaii. Her previous library positions included work at the New Mexico State Library, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, and with school and public libraries in California. She can be reached at (505)986-4656, e-mail [susan.lilley@state.nm.us](mailto:susan.lilley@state.nm.us).

We survived a move last October that was part of an overall project to remodel our "Roundhouse" capitol and annex a next-door building for legislative and other offices. The legislative council service, including our library, moved to the top (fourth) floor of the capitol, and the library now has more space for both our collection and visitors.

Our best-laid plans for a simple move, of course, got derailed by furniture delays, so between packing and unpacking and temporary shelving and reshelving, we've probably moved every book at least six times. The semi-final move was two weeks before session, when we resorted to a book brigade passing everything hand to hand. Sometime later this year we expect to get a final shelf arrangement and move it all one last time. But we'll think about that tomorrow.

### Oklahoma *Susan Gilley*

#### Personnel Changes:

Kristi Curt, Oklahoma legislative librarian, left in October to accept employment in her home state of Illinois, leaving Susan Gilley in her home state of Oklahoma and in a state of mourning. Susan is recovering somewhat since Christine Chen began work in March. Christine joins Susan in the midst of the legislative session, receiving a "baptism by fire" introduction to the legislative process.

#### New Responsibilities:

Oklahoma librarians are offering hands-on training/instruction in Internet skills to members (only two have participated) and their secretaries/assistants, as well as to legislative staff. During the fall, legislative librarian Susan Gilley and law librarian Louisa Voden provided one-on-one instruction in basic browser and navigation skills, search engines and directories, and evaluation of Web sites. Instruction for each topic lasts approximately 90 minutes. Fifty received individual instruction in navigation, 45 in searching, and 26 in

evaluation. During session, two hour group classes on a topic are offered twice each week for a month. Twenty-two completed (and seven are pending) the group basic skills classes. Twelve have registered during the first week for group search engines and directories.

Our target audience consists of about 150, with slightly more than half full time; the rest are session only (Monday-Thursday, February-May). We believe the response has confirmed the perception of need. It has also justified the inclusion of the training room in the new library facility. The lab has seven student terminals plus the teacher's terminal/projector. This project has been demanding and time-consuming but a valuable service with high visibility and positive feedback.

## What's New?

*Also from Susan Gilley*

### Reference Sources:

<http://www.vote-smart.org> provides names and districts of elected officials by constituent address

<http://www.naa.org/hotlinks/index.asp> provides links by state to newspapers having a web presence (not always full text, searchable, etc)

<http://lli.org/> (note: not web) not only is one of best subject directories but also has a "New this week" list evaluating/recommending Internet sites on variety of topics (can sign up to be e-mailed)

I missed contributing to the favorites but others covered most of mine. Argus Clearinghouse and Northern Lights for searching. I use Amazon and Barnes & Noble sites to verify bibliographic info and for reviews. I use NCSL for state links and GPO Access for CFR and FR.

## 2000 LRL Professional Development Seminar

Get prepared for some wonderful Southern hospitality--Louisiana is hosting this year's fall Professional Development Seminar. It will be in Baton Rouge, October 19-21. Mark you calendars!

*Also from Marilyn Johnson*

Kentucky's Legislative Research Commission prepared a nifty report: Genetic Testing in Health, Life, and Disability Insurance in Kentucky. Laura H. Hendrix. Research Report No.289. Jan 2000. Included at the back is a fifty-state appendix. "Other State Laws on Genetic Testing."

*from Marilyn Cathcart (just retired), Minnesota Legislative Reference Library*

February 1, 2000

Hello, LRL Friends! Thank you so very much for the certificate of recognition that you prepared for me. I received it today and was very pleased and appreciative of your thoughtfulness. I will miss all my LRL colleagues very much. I have enjoyed working closely with many of you and always appreciate the intelligence, creativity, persistence and dedication of legislative librarians. In a special library world, you all are truly very special.

Some of you know Sally Reynolds who retired a few years ago. When I asked (in a stunned voice) why she was retiring, Sally answered "Because I can." She has been my role model in this! My plans are to enjoy life, quilt, take up weaving again, cook healthy meals, exercise, document the year 2000 in photos for my grandchildren, show my Scottish Terrier to her championship and love up my family--especially my two little granddaughters, Julia and Simone.

*Best wishes to Marilyn C. from LRL*

## NCSL Publications

Copies of all NCSL publications listed here are available from the Marketing Department at 303/830-2200.

## BOOKS

Major Health Care Policies: 50 State Profiles, 1999  
 State Responses to Maternal Drug and Alcohol Use: An Update  
 The State Role in Spent Fuel Transportation Safety: Year 2000 Update  
 State Child Support Automated Systems  
 A New Public Perspective on Representative Democracy: A Handbook for Legislative Interns  
 School Violence

State Tax Actions  
SCHIP: Money Matters  
Child Support Issues: 1999 Legislative Summary  
Teaching in Colorado: An Inventory of Policies and Practices  
SCHIP and Access for Children in Immigrant Families  
Deinstitutionalization of People with Developmental Disabilities: A Technical Assistance Report for Legislators  
Keeping Kids Enrolled: Continuity of Coverage under SCHIP and Medicaid  
State Children's Health Insurance 1999 Annual Report

#### STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

State School Finance Litigation: 1999 Summary and Analysis, Vol.24, No.8  
Improving Teacher Quality: Teacher Policy Inventories, Vol.24, No.9  
State Crime Legislation: 1999, Vol.25, No.1

#### LEGISBRIEFS

A New Era for the World Trade Organization, Vol.8, No.1  
Who May Sponsor Legislation? Vol.8, No.2  
The Problem of Uninsured Motorists, Vol.8, No.3

Business Incubators Hatch Home-Grown Jobs. Vol.8 No.4  
Using DNA to Fight Crime. Vol.8, No.5  
Interstate Licensing of Nurses, Vol.8, No.6  
New Hire Reporting to Collect Child Support. Vol.8, No.7  
Concealed Weapons, Vol.8, No.8  
Beginning Farmer Programs, Vol.8, No.9  
Limits on Contributions to Candidates. Vol.8, No.10  
State Legislatures Drive Workforce Development Reform. Vol.8, No.11  
Teacher Pay for Performance, Vol.8, No.12  
Partisan Caucus Staff, Vol.8, No.13  
State Overseas Trade Offices, Vol.8, No.14  
Reforming K-12 Mathematics and Science Education, Vol.8, No.15  
Preventing Tobacco Use Through School Programs, Vol.8, No.16  
Eliminating Syphilis, Vol.8, No.17  
Growth Management and Transportation, Vol.8, No.18

Thanks to all of the staff section members and others who submitted columns and information for this issue. Your ideas and submissions are always welcome. *Newsline* is published four times annual by NCSL's Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section and is edited and formatted by Rita Thiemert.

## NOTABLE DOCUMENT AWARD

The National Conference of State Legislatures' Legislative Librarians Section presents an annual notable document award. The award is designed to give recognition to documents for excellence in the presentation of contemporary issues relevant to state legislators and staff. Awards will be presented at the 2000 NCSL Annual Meeting in Chicago.

### PURPOSE

- To recognize excellence in documents that explore topics of contemporary interest to legislators and staff by presenting substantive material in an outstanding format.
  - To advertise the extensive range of information available to legislators and staff.
- To increase participation by legislative research librarians in the States Information Network.
- To encourage deposit of documents with NCSL and CSG.

### AWARD CRITERIA

- Prominent display of title, author, publisher, date, and contact source.
- Title reflects actual content.
- Relevant to identifiable readership.
- Contributes knowledge of concern to legislative bodies.
- Innovative in presentation and organized in a clear fashion.
- Contains strong bibliographic information.
- Published in last two years.
- Expands understanding of government processes, function, or relationships.
- Attempts to provide balance and perspective from within the political spectrum.

Up to five annual winners may be selected. Eligible documents considered for award are produced by federal, state, local government agencies, and not-for-profits.

**Deadline for nomination is April 15, 2000. For further information contact:  
Deborah Priest, Director, NYS Assembly Info Center  
(518) 455-4780**



## The National Conference of State Legislatures' Legislative Effectiveness Committee

collecting information on innovative practices, new programs or changes your state has made to improve effectiveness in the legislative management area. We are looking for those practices and programs, large and small, that have worked well for your state and that other legislatures would benefit from learning about. The subject area is wide. It could relate to legislative orientation, improvements in the legislative process, or improvements you have made to manage the leadership offices, legislative offices, or nonpartisan offices.

Please feel free to copy this questionnaire and send as many suggestions as you have. The Legislative Effectiveness Committee believes that there is much strength in learning from each other. Please send your suggestions to Bruce Feustel at NCSL by May 15, 2000. (Address, fax and e-mail addresses are listed at the end of the questionnaire.)

We thank you in advance for your support.

If you would like to receive results from this survey, please check here \_\_\_\_\_ and fill out the following contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

### Survey

1. Briefly describe the innovative legislative management practice, program or change.
2. What is the underlying problem the practice, program or change addresses?
3. What types of legislators and staff are involved?
4. What is the cost?

5. What advice would you give a legislature considering a similar practice, program or change?

6. Please include the following contact information for a person who could respond to questions from other state legislatures about your practice, program or change:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this survey by May 15, 2000, to:

Bruce Feustel  
Legislative Management Program  
1560 Broadway, Suite 700  
Denver, CO 80202

Or e-mail it to: [bruce.feustel@ncsl.org](mailto:bruce.feustel@ncsl.org)

Or fax it to Bruce at (303) 863-8003

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