

# LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE SECTION NEWS

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Association of College & Research Libraries

November 1986

## LPSS CHAIRPERSON'S COLUMN

I urge as many of you as possible to attend the mid-winter meetings in Chicago. LPSS has requested one contiguous block of time for its meeting in the hope of concentrating our energies and minimizing the conflicts which inevitably arise. Mid-winter is the ideal time to get to know section members on an informal basis (we intend to continue our tradition of Sunday evening dinners). It is also an ideal opportunity to find out if the problems that confront you in your library have been solved by someone else, or can be addressed by LPSS.

I hope to devote the major portion of our business meeting to an open discussion of both persistent and emerging issues confronting academic librarians who work with legal and political materials. I am particularly concerned about the lack of communication between the library community and the private sector publishers who produce the great majority of the reference works and microform research collections on which we depend. I think we are not getting the kinds of products and services we need because we have not been willing to work together to see that our interests are understood.

In an era of library networks, online catalogs, and bibliographic databases, and a time of unprecedented interest in international relations and global security issues, the literature of this subject remains among the least well indexed of any discipline. We need to ask why this is and what can be done about it. On-line access to the chapters of monographs and annuals would be particularly useful to researchers in

this area. If the bibliographic utilities don't see this as a priority, shouldn't we try to convince a private sector vendor that this could be a profitable service?

With microform research collections, the problem is an abundance of tantalizing products that don't always live up to the expectations their advertising creates. The microfilming of rare and archival collections offers great benefits to scholarship. Nonexistent or gravely inadequate guides and finding aids, misleading advertising by vendors and uninformative collection level cataloging by libraries has made the reality much dimmer than the promise, however. At the same time, the prospect of resource sharing arrangements, by which many libraries with guides would borrow from a single purchaser, threaten to destroy the economic feasibility of the enterprise. How can we work to get better and more accessible collections without removing the incentive to preserve valuable research materials on film?

I do not think that LPSS alone can resolve all aspects of these and other questions. But I hope we can make a start. We need to define problems and develop strategies for their solution. The next step will involve working with other groups, both within and outside ACRL and ALA, that need to be persuaded to work together.

Those of you who cannot attend our meetings at mid-winter, but have thoughts on these or other issues you would like to see LPSS address, should write to me or any member of the executive board with your ideas.

Peter Allison, Chair, LPSS

LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE SECTION  
OFFICERS

CHAIR:

Peter Allison, New York University

VICE CHAIR/CHAIR-ELECT:

Natalie Schatz, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

PAST CHAIR:

Kathleen Gunning, University of Houston

SECRETARY (two-year term):

Elizabeth Sibley, University of California, Berkeley

MEMBER-AT-LARGE (two-year staggered term):

Rosemary Allen Little, Princeton University (85/87)

Kate E. Adams, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (86/88)

CHAIR, REVIEW AND PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Steve Atkins, University of Illinois

CHAIR, PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:

Marta Lange, North Carolina State University

CHAIR, NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:

Natalie Schatz, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy



ACRL/LPSS EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

New York Hilton Hotel, June 28, 1986

Committee and Section Review

A draft of the Section Review, prepared by the Review and Planning Committee (R. Palen, Chair) was reviewed. Cath-

leen Bourdon commented that several reviews were too proforma and not sufficiently substantive or analytical. More documentation, including highlighting past programs and sample newsletters, was needed. Hannelore Rader added that each section will have to review themselves carefully according to the Strategic Plan and relate goals to the plan. Standards must be toughened. A review is planned for every three years so sections should begin collecting documentation for the next review.

The draft of the Section Review was discussed and a number of additions were made. Added under goals of a unit: increase communication among members and officers and visibility of the section; broaden and strengthen section activities; form a liaison with similar organizations (i.e. GODORT); and increase membership. Under specific actions or activities of the section, it was suggested we add a list of committees/officers, copies of newsletter, meeting and program announcements, number of people attending program, liaison activities with GODORT, and section handbook. As for future goals and plans, it was recommended that we add more articles to the newsletter, and solicit from section members their opinion on what issues the section should address. Under budgetary or staff support, it was suggested we request speaker honorariums, as well as funds to pay for the newsletter, telephone calls, and handbook costs.

Kathleen Gunning will redo the draft and route it to members by the beginning of August. Peter Allison will forward the final draft to ACRL by the beginning of September. Members who have further comments should send them as soon as possible to the Chair.

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Chair: Peter Allison. President, ACRL: Hannelore Rader.

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## Section Manual

Items to be included in the Section Manual should be the constitution and bylaws, past program information/flyers, brief record of officers, newsletters, and a list of deadlines. Peter Allison will prepare a draft for mid-winter. A committee will then be appointed to review it.

### LPSS Committee Structure

Peter has not made any appointments to standing committees. Steve Atkins volunteered to chair the Review and Planning Committee since Roberta Palen has resigned. The Bibliography Committee could be disbanded until there is a new project or it could come under the Publications Committee. Peter will try to get a block of time (ex. 8 a.m.-12 noon) for next year's LPSS meetings so that all the standing committees (Review and Planning, Conference Program, and Publications) and the Executive Board can meet consecutively.

### LPSS Committee Structure

Natalie Schatz has scheduled a luncheon meeting with the speakers of the program for June 29th. The schedule for the program includes a welcome by Kathleen Gunning, and an announcement by Peter Allison of Committee and Conference program plans for 1987. Natalie will mention the section newsletter and introduce the speakers: Glen Peter Ahlers, Assistant Director, Washburn University of Topeka School of Law Library; Vivian Campbell, Assistant Law Librarian, Law Library, Georgetown University; and Marnie Warner, Law Library Coordinator for Child Court, Massachusetts. Each speaker will have 15-20 minutes to speak followed by a question/answer period. A reception provided by Brodart will follow the program. Kate Adams will be responsible for circulating a list of attendees at the program. She will forward a copy to Brodart. Dinner is planned after the reception.

### Newsletter and Publications Committee

Marta Lange, Chair of the Publications Committee, reported on the content and

format of the newsletter. The newsletter is to be published twice a year. The Spring issue will contain the Chair's column, information about the upcoming conference program, minutes of the mid-winter Executive Board meeting, committee reports, and feature articles. The Fall issue will include the Chair's column, report on the annual program, book shelf, review of committee meetings, and articles. A topic for future discussion is what other publications the section should be producing. One idea was working with publishers to improve their products.

With time running short, the Chair requested that the remaining committee reports be written up to be sent to her. The second meeting of the Executive Board scheduled for July 2 was cancelled. The Chair will also update the roster of committee members.

Elizabeth A. Sibley, Secretary



### NEW YORK PROGRAM 1986

Four speakers addressed "Issues in Providing Legal Information to Non-Lawyers" at the LPSS program on June 29 at the New York Hilton. Kathleen Gunning, Chair of LPSS, and Natalie Schatz, Program Chair, presided over the panel that included: Glen Peter Ahlers, Assistant Director, Washburn University of Topeka School of Law Library; Marnie Warner, Law Library Coordinator for the Child Court, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Vivian Campbell, Assistant Law Librarian for Collection Development, Fred. O. Dennis Law Library, Georgetown University Law Center; and Robin Mills, Law Librarian and Associate Professor of Law, Emory University.

As a member of the American Association of Law Librarians (AALL) Legal Information Service to the Public Committee, Ahlers outlined the various ways in which the committee works with law librarians to provide outreach to colleagues who are non-lawyers. The committee, formed in 1981 to promote public access to legal information, works with AALL chapters to sponsor programs at

national, regional, and state library conferences and workshops. It also maintains a clearinghouse for the acquisition and loan of legal research and workshop materials. These materials include items on topics ranging from doing general legal research; finding state, county or local legal information; establishing guidelines for provision of legal reference; and establishing legal collections for non-law libraries. A bibliography of materials available is due to be published soon in Legal Reference Services Quarterly or can be obtained by contacting the Chair, Legal Information Services to the Public Committee, AALL, 53 West Jackson Boul., #703, Chicago, IL 60604.

In addition to the committee, AALL local chapters designate contact people who will serve as consultants to librarians in single libraries. These contacts offer assistance in such areas as selecting a core legal collection and selecting specific titles. Librarians may contact local AALL representatives for advice and assistance in legal reference matters.

Since 1977 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts civil court libraries have coordinated efforts to increase statewide access to legal information. Warner explained that, by state law, civil court libraries must serve the public of Massachusetts. Only seventeen such libraries exist, however, resulting in insufficient and uneven access in various areas of the state. A major step in improving public libraries legal reference capabilities occurred in 1977 with the publication Basic Law Collections for Massachusetts Libraries by Maria Sekula. Since that time civil court libraries have made efforts to train non-law librarians and have also bought books to place in public libraries. In 1982 a legal research workshop for librarians was held in conjunction with the Massachusetts Library Association conference. At the present time "round three" of this training effort emphasizes helping public librarians make the best use of basic legal tools.

The public's need to find the law versus the scholar's need to study aspects of law cause core collections of legal sources to differ in public and academic libraries. Vivian Campbell

emphasized themes applicable to both types of libraries. First, currency is critical. A core legal collection must be current since today's law is the only law that matters. Collections including monographs on single issues such as "How to write a will" must be carefully monitored to be sure they are consistent with current law. Superseded or outdated items should be withdrawn. Second, selectivity is important. In establishing any collection, it is important to know user's needs when selecting legal titles. Law school libraries and the state library are often the best sources of information on legal collection questions.

Reference tools that Campbell identified as important for core collections include Legal Research in a Nutshell by Morris Cohen; a legal research guide for the particular state (if available); Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory; a directory of state bar members; Black's Law Dictionary; either the Index to Legal Periodicals (Wilson) or Current Law Index and Legal Resource Index (Information Access Corporation); and Lawyer's Almanac: A Cornucopia of Information About Law, Lawyers and the Profession. Core primary materials should include one version of the United States code; the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations; and municipal and county ordinances, decisions, and regulations. Large libraries may wish to include court decisions at the federal and state level along with digests that serve as topical indexes to those decisions. Among important secondary sources mentioned are Shepard's Citators that lead to subsequent decisions concerning court decisions and laws; legal encyclopedias that serve as good sources for case law; and form books that provide assistance to laymen doing their own legal work.

Getting legal information to the public is strongly emphasized today. In addition, increasing numbers of people are consulting sources other than lawyers to solve legal problems. Both of these facts challenge librarians in providing legal reference service. According to Mills, librarians are not likely to get into trouble by providing legal reference unless they advertise "legal advice" or misrepresent them-

selves as lawyers. "Engaging in the unauthorized practice of law" is a complicated issue since it is difficult to establish what the "practice of law" is. In addition, legal liability for giving out the wrong information is difficult to prove. In three cases in which reference books contained inaccurate information, none of the publishers was held liable. Therefore, the main concerns in the provision of legal reference should focus on the cost, space, staff time in collection upkeep, and staff time in providing lengthy service.

Pro se users, or persons representing themselves in litigation, can require a great deal of professional time. Each library must establish its own policy with regard to the amount of service provided. Persons with ready reference legal questions often begin by asking for basic information like the state code regarding divorce but often progress to ask questions like "What if..?" or "How does this apply to me?" Libraries must recognize their limitations and above all know where to refer such questions. Files listing social agencies, state offices, local lawyers, or basic pamphlets done by the state bar can help people help themselves and get to the expert help they require.

Marta Lange

North Carolina State University



#### SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING UPDATE

LPSS will be joining forces with the Alternatives in Print Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Roundtable to co-sponsor a session on alternative sources of public policy information at the annual conference meeting in June. Confirmed speakers include: Ben Bagdikian, Frances Moore Lappe of the Institute for Food and Development Policy, and Marc Levin, Librarian at Berkeley's Institute for Governmental Studies. Virginia Harris from Michigan State University and SRRT lined up the first two speakers. We hope that Terry and perhaps some other representatives from

SRRT will be at our mid-winter planning meeting.

Peter Allison, New York University



#### MACHINE-READABLE DATA FILES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Political science as a field has always been a leader in the use of numeric machine-readable data files (MRDF) for both teaching and research. In the early sixties, the introduction of statistical data on IBM cards, the computer tape, and the use of statistical programming packages revolutionized many social science fields. In the late sixties, the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research was founded at the University of Michigan to collect, format, and distribute major statistical datasets in all areas of political science. The Consortium is now known as the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), having broadened its scope to include all of the social sciences. The ICPSR became the largest databank for numeric MRDF in political science, covering individual studies, international relations, public administration, local and national attitudes, and major demographic files. These datasets, collected from major agencies, public opinion centers, and individual researchers, now number in the thousands. The ICPSR's Guide to Resources and Services 1985-1986 is an excellent introduction to these datasets.

#### I. Public Opinion Studies

Public opinion studies investigate a variety of subjects, and among the most well-known studies are those concerned with political choices. The Roper organization distributes the results of its opinion surveys in machine-readable format on a subscription basis. The National Opinion Research Center produces the annual General Social Survey; the tapes from this survey are available through ICPSR. Nearly everyone who watches television news is familiar with the ABC News/Washington Post polls and the CBS News/New York Times polls, which

are available to researchers in machine-readable form.

Many European countries have their equivalent of American public opinion studies. To name only two, there are the Euro-barometer and the Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften (Allbus).

## II. Election Results

Election statistical data are the basis of many studies by political scientists. Both American and foreign election data are available to researchers in machine-readable format. The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan has collected both pre- and post-election interviews from U.S. presidential elections beginning in 1948. The datasets for the National Election Study and other election studies are fully described in the ICPSR Guide to Resources and Services.

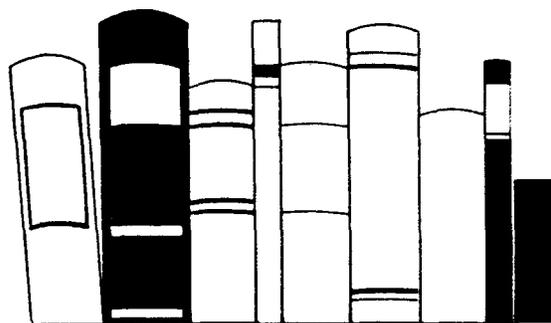
## III. Federal Government Information

The ICPSR distributes the Criminal Justice Archive and Information Network, a collection of datasets concerned with crime and the criminal justice system. Beginning with the 1960 census, the Census Bureau has made available the computerized data files compiled for the decennial U.S. Census of Population and Housing, The Census of Government (conducted every five years), the County and City Data Book, and County Business Patterns are all sold as MRDF. The information contained in these files is basic to policy decision making for local and municipal governments.

Census data is also being produced on floppy diskettes which can then be reformatted to produce datasets for instructional purposes. At the University of Florida, the Political Science Department has asked the University Library to format all of the County and City Data diskettes in dBase III.

Numeric machine-readable sets in computer tape, online, diskette, and CD-ROM will proliferate at an accelerating pace. They are essential to the field of political science in teaching and research and can have a profound impact on its future.

Ray Jones, University of Florida



## THE BOOK SHELF

EDITOR: Judith Nixon, Purdue University

### WOMEN & POLITICS

1980. q. \$95, libraries; \$75, institutions; \$32, individuals. The Haworth Press, 28 East 22 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10010

Here is a much-needed journal in the field of political research, one which provides a scholarly examination of women in the political sphere. Edited by Sarah Slavin and a solid editorial board, the articles reflect the broad, multi-disciplinary purview of its contributors.

Normally 100 pages or more, this journal offers regular features such as book reviews and bibliographies, as well as some less common columns such as "Women & Politics Data Bases." Readers can look forward to a generous offering of internationally focused material and frequent "Special Themes Issues." This journal is of the highest scholarship and therefore appropriate only in academic libraries where there is an interest in the subject.

### LEGAL REFERENCE SERVICES

1981. q \$40, libraries and institutions; \$25, individuals. The Haworth Press, Inc., 149 Fifth Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10010

Building from its founding aim to reach "those who think of themselves as 'law librarians' and who work with collections that center around legal research," this journal offers information valuable to almost any reference outpost today. The annotated bibliographies and well-researched articles, while

usually focused on particular legal issues, afford timely discussion on current issues and services.

Recent articles examine such topics as animal welfare and rights, copyright, euthanasia, political surveillance, and American Indian law. Regular features include database and reference book reviews. This lively journal is recommended for both specialized and general reference collections.

Ellen McDonald

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

Osmanczyk, Edmund Jan. The Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements. Philadelphia and London: Taylor and Francis, 1985.

The Encyclopedia is a comprehensive single volume compendium of basic information on the United Nations, its specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations which cooperate with the United Nations. This work contains entries on organizations, subjects, terms relevant to international affairs and international agreements. Users will find the list of acronyms at the back of the volume most useful in identifying organizations.

Under the index entry for Treaties is an alphabetical list of treaties by popular name with the signatory date and the proper page reference in the Encyclopedia. For those treaties and agreements which are not printed in their entirety there is always a bibliographic citation to the full text. In short, this is a much-needed reference tool for all academic libraries.

Natalie Schatz

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

Coco, Al. Introduction To Legal Research. Washington, D.C.: West Pub. Co., 1985. \$15.95.

If you have ever needed a book that would help undergraduates, lay people, or fellow reference librarians understand how to do legal research, then this book may be the publication you have been looking for. It explains in easy to understand language how to

research a legal question through statutory, regulatory and case law. Primary source material and finding tools (digest, encyclopedias, periodical indexes, citators) are covered. The emphasis is on federal law, but mention is made throughout the book to the similarity of state legal research. Many sample pages are included; librarians that do bibliographic instruction on legal research could use these pages as overheads. The appendix is an annotated bibliography of the major titles covered in the book. Recommended to all libraries that help non-lawyers through the maze of legal publications.

Judith M. Nixon, Purdue University

SOUTH AMERICA, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN 1986 by Harold Blakemore & others. Europa Publications Limited, dist. by Gale. 1985. \$90.00

This excellent encyclopedia is divided into three parts. Part I: Background to the Region provides four timely introductory essays that set the region in historical, international-political, and socio-economic context, and it also provides a chapter on the "Major Commodities of Latin America," a worldwide list of research institutions studying Latin America and the Caribbean, and a select bibliography of pertinent periodicals. Part II comprises the regional organizations, and Part III the country surveys. The country surveys for fully independent countries include: history, economy, statistical survey, directory, and bibliography. These tend to be longer (3 to 8 pages) than in the Europa Yearbook 1986, a World Survey, with the expanded narrative introductions accounting for most of the increase. But dependent or associated territories tend to receive a briefer coverage than in the Europa Yearbook World Survey.

South America, Central America, and the Caribbean 1986 is one of the best regional reference-research sources available. Like the other Europa Publications it is first-class and would be my first referral source for research on the region's more noteworthy countries. But reference librarians should warn researchers of smaller ter-

ritories to use the Europa Yearbook 1986, a World Survey for greater coverage.

Jose Luis Sanchez,  
The George Washington University

Encyclopedia of U.S. Government Benefits: A complete, practical, and convenient guide to the United States government benefits available to the people of America. Beryl Frank, ed. Rev. ed. Dodd, Mead & Co.: 1985

This encyclopedia has been in publication since the early seventies, and has gone through several revisions. It provides information on government benefits ranging from volunteer programs such as ACTION to youth employment programs. The entries are in alphabetical order and cover a spectrum of government involvement including information on the National Parks and Forests, federal agencies, research programs, and social service programs.

While an excellent source to retrieve information on certain government programs, the Encyclopedia duplicates other directories and guides to government information, such as the U.S. Government Manual, and Donald Whitnah's Government Agencies. Both of these sources provide as much information on government agencies if not more than the Encyclopedia does.

The Encyclopedia would have been more useful if the editor had included "how to" information that would explain how to take advantage of these benefits,

rather than simply describing the agency. Even though the coverage is uneven, and it duplicates other sources, the Encyclopedia contains useful information for a wide variety of readers.

Caroline Tibbetts,  
University of Delaware

Reams, Bernard D., Jr.; Murray, James M.; and McDermott, Margaret H. American Legal Literature: A Guide to Selected Legal Resources. Littleton, CO, Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1985. \$27.50.

This bibliography is aimed at the public, including librarians who need improved access to legal information rather than the legal profession. Although the authors emphasize representative rather than comprehensive selections, this could be useful in setting up a nonprofessional law collection. The subject bibliography of monographs may be the most useful part of the bibliography as it provides information sometimes hard to come by in a format that is easy to access.

Information in the Appendices includes an outline of the U.S. court system, selected lists of law book publishers and of legal research texts, and a selected list of online database files and vendors.

American Legal Literature is recommended both as a selection and reference tool for the collections that wish to provide legal information to the public.

Jan Spahr, Virginia Tech

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