

LPSS News

Volume 9, Number 1

November 1993

Breakfast, with Political Correctness on the Side: LPSS in New Orleans

The prologue to the LPSS program at the ALA annual conference in New Orleans was a delightful continental breakfast, generously sponsored by West Publishing Company. The breakfast afforded an opportunity for LPSS officers Beth Sibley and Caroline Tibbetts to talk about the section and encourage new people to become involved in section activities.

The first speaker, Dr. Daniel Fogel, Graduate School Dean at Louisiana State University, began by grappling with a definition of political correctness. In his view it is pressure to adhere to a particular set of tenants, almost always regarded as pejorative. Those exerting the pressure can be from the left, the center, or the right. As a conformist pressure, political correctness is antithetical to the academic enterprise. At their best, he said, universities are "vibrant centers of ideological debate" where "the imagination of otherness" is cultivated. Fogel disputed claims from the political right that academia is under the heel of leftist thought police, and indeed claimed that conformist pressures from the center and right have historically been--and continue to be-- stronger. While allowing that there have been particular instances of conformist zealotry, he asserted that on the whole universities manage to accommodate a great deal of diversity. He concluded with the sobering thought that those truly worried about political correctness should turn their attention to elementary and secondary schools, where textbooks and curriculum are subject to almost unimaginable levels of thought control and censorship.

Dr. Paul Lewis, a political scientist at Tulane University, was the second speaker. A seasoned veteran of the cultural wars, Dr. Lewis is utterly convinced that there is a leftist bias in academia that affronts not only academics freedom but fundamental democratic values. Dr. Lewis became a crusader in the culture wars to oppose a 1990 proposal called "Initiatives for the Race and Gender Enrichment of Tulane University." According to Dr. Lewis the proposal mandated a quota system for hiring blacks and women, curriculum changes to promote multiculturalism, sensitivity training for faculty and staff, and assorted other measures to promote and accommodate diversity at Tulane. To prevent adoption of the proposal Dr. Lewis went to the press and mobilized Tulane alumni in opposition. The proposal was defeated in a divisive, widely publicized campaign. Asked why he had not relied on academic governance channels to fight the proposal, Dr. Lewis replied that leftist zealots succeed in academia because internal opposition to them is typically weak: muddled, guilt-ridden liberal colleagues do not to oppose them, and other colleagues, sequestered in their labs and narrowly focused on their research, do not care one way or the other. The best court for defeating leftist zealots, he claimed, is the court of public opinion. "Publicity is to political correctness," he said, "as sunlight is to mildew."

The final speaker was Dr. Danny P. Wallace, Associate Dean of the School of Library and Information Science, Louisiana State University. Dr. Wallace began his talk with the observation that there is very little in the professional library literature on political correctness, and then speculated as to why. In his view the answer is not that librarians are not concerned about the issue, or that we're already so politically correct that it pervades everything we do, but that librarians have a deep, long-standing commitment to intellectual freedom that is at the heart of their professional ethics. Resisting conformist pressures, from the left or right, is a

(continued on pg. 2)

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As you can see from a quick survey of our Newsletter, the Law and Political Science Section continues to be an active and creative section. Although we are busy, we encourage the involvement of members, both long-standing and new.

Aside from all of the on-going work of our committees, the section is involved in three other significant projects:

- Pre-Conference Program for 1995: The Conference will be devoted to legal sources and research for non-law librarians
- A program for the 1994 Miami Annual Conference entitled *Binding Together a Multicultural Society: Challenges for Academic and Research Libraries*. Unlike many other ALA programs on the same topic, this program will look at the multicultural debate at the broadest level, and what the implications are for academe. This program will be sponsored jointly with the ARTS and AFAS sections.
- The Section has begun to prepare for its five year ACRL section review.

Charles Spornick
Chair, LPSS

Table of Contents

Breakfast with	Side Order of Political
Correctness	1
Message from the Chair	2
LPSS Needs You	2
Bibliographies Review	3
Executive Board Minutes	6
Business Meeting Minutes	7
Midwinter Schedule	8

(Breakfast...from pg. 1)

professional obligation. He stressed that there can be no precise definition of intellectual freedom, that it cannot be pushed to extremes, and that it always recognizes gray areas. In contrast political correctness operates in the realm of extremes. Political correctness, he said in the context of speech codes and the like, "is acting nice carried to the extreme." Dr. Wallace cautioned that a strong commitment to intellectual freedom does not mean that librarians are free of the problems at the center of the political correctness debate. Diversity in the profession is a continuing problem, which can be best addressed by recruitment efforts by practitioners in the field.

The New Orleans Program Committee is especially indebted to Sybil Boudreaux, University of New Orleans, for her efforts making local arrangements.

Ron Heckert
University of California,
Berkeley

LPSS Needs You!

Heard the rumor that it's impossible to get on an ACRL committee? That's not true of LPSS, a growing dynamic section of ACRL. We need people who are willing and able to take on challenging assignments! Some examples of our current committee activities are:

- The Bibliographies Committee is expanding its review series to include databases and CD-ROM sources.
- The Library Instruction Committee prepares an annual pathfinder for the conference program and has stimulating discussion groups.

A brochure describing the committees is available from the Membership Committee Chair, Cathy Doyle, Christopher Newport University Library, Newport News, VA 23606 for a copy.

From the Bibliographies Committee

United States Political Science Documents A Review

United States Political Science Documents is published by the NASA Industrial Applications Center, University of Pittsburgh, 823 William Pitt Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15260

A. Scope

According to the introduction, USPSD journals were selected on the basis of a survey of about 1,000 U. S. political scientists. A core of 142 journals most often used by political scientists was selected for comprehensive indexing. These journals are all published in the United States.

B. Does the journal fulfill its' stated purpose?

The editors are clear about their intent in producing USPSD. "USPSD is devoted to providing a higher level of analysis than is usually the case for the core of journals with the highest standing." Testing the accuracy of this claim would require determining which journals have the "highest standing". The editors claim to have done this, although pertinent facts--when the survey was done, how the names of those surveyed were obtained--about the survey of political scientists are not revealed in the introduction.

C. Coverage

1. Number of publications indexed

USPSD indexes all articles from 142 journals that are considered most useful by some 1,000 political scientists. A check of two journals, Foreign Affairs and American Hispanic Historical Journal showed that indeed each article in the volumes examined for the USPSD were indexed.

2. Subjects included

Most of the journals are predominantly political science. Also included are some titles in the field of peace, sociology, economics, area studies and history.

3. Geographical areas and language

English language. Emphasis is on the United States with other countries included proportionate to their interest to political scientist.

4. Types of publications

All journals

5. Sources of publications covered

All published in the United States.

D. Format

1. Author, subject and title indexes

USPSD uses five indexes: author, subject, geographic area, proper name, and journal. Subject and geographic keywords are selected from the Political Science Thesaurus. Each index cites a full citation with at least six of following elements: accession number, author name(s), source, special features, key subject descriptor, key geographic areas, and proper names. The accession numbers refer the reader to a citation and abstract in a separate volume. The abstract has the equivalent of tracings, listing each heading in the five types of indexes under which the article is listed.

2. Cumulative indexes and frequency of cumulations

USPSD is an annual publication covering the journal literature published in one calendar year. There are no multi-year cumulations.

3. Binding

The index is in two sizeable, hardbound volumes. The pages are sewn.

4. Print size legibility, typeface

The print is small enough to allow entries to be compact, but large enough to read comfortably. Accession numbers and index terms, which are boldfaced, and the well-thought out spacing makes using the USPSD fairly easy.

5. Style

Citations are very easy to read because separate parts of the standard bibliographic citation are labeled (example: TITLE: From the Global Village to Global Computer), since they are index terms. The Rotated Subject Descriptor Display contained in the index aids in finding relevant subject headings.

6. Availability of on-line or compact disc versions

Availability as an on-line database through DIALOG (file 93). The cost for searching the on-line version is \$1.08 per minute, no charges for types, and offline prints are fifteen cents for the full record.

E. Frequency

Published once a year, covering the literature for the previous year. The most current issue is 1989, published in 1990.

F. Editing, typos, use of cross-references

Quality of editing appears high. While there are no true cross-references, the descriptor list in the index helps the user find appropriate headings. The numerous indexes also make access easy.

G. Overall Usability

The six different indexes make it possible to look up articles in many different ways. The use of bold headings and italics makes skimming for appropriate information a speedy process. The patron does have to go through two steps, as with any abstract, whereby the index is consulted in order to get the abstract number.

H. Cost

\$275.00 annually for 1990 and 1991

I. Summary of positive aspects

This index provides excellent access to all the articles published in a single year in many important journals.

J. Suggested changes

Abstract numbers can be difficult to use because each one is eight digits, even if seven of them are zeros. Abstract numbers giving the year, followed by a dash and then the abstract number with no zeros in between would be easier to use. For example: Abstract 8900000001 would be 89-1 and 89003658 would be 89-3658.

Large entries in the subject index might be subdivided by geographic location (i.e. Political Parties might become Political Parties--United States and Political Parties--Europe).

The introduction should give more detail about the all-important survey by which the included journals were selected. A copy of the survey could be included in the "Design Philosophy" section of the index. The date that the survey was conducted would also be useful. Ideally, it would be repeated each year, so that new journals would be added to the index.

The annual nature of the publication necessarily means that it is never very current; perhaps quarterly or biannual issues that are cumulated annually would be a good idea.

Better yet would be a compact disc version, provided it was produced by a CD-ROM producer such as Silver Platter, using effective and easy-to-use search software. As more and more print indexes are being produced on CD-ROM, usage of the print USPSD can be expected to fall.

This review was prepared by Cathy Seitz-Whitaker of the University of Pittsburgh for the Bibliographies Committee and is one of a continuing series of reviews of sources in political science and law prepared by the committee. Our next issue will feature a review of Current Law Index.

Annual Conference, New Orleans, 1993

Executive Board Minutes

The meeting opened with a discussion of programs, the prospect for coordinated programs and speaker honoraria, which can run as high as \$20,000 for a major speaker. Linda Phillips, from the ACRL Board was introduced and said she would be reporting the concerns of our section to the Board.

Activities Section Council There is a proposal to create a Section Council that has more responsibility than a reporting body. In RASD the section chairs are members of the board. The nature of representation from the ACRL sections will be discussed at the Monday ASC meeting.

Committee Reports:

Bibliographies Committee Chair Brian Carpenter reported they will be having representatives from Congressional Quarterly and Legislate at their meeting to discuss on-line products. The committee will begin to review on-line and CD-ROM products in the future.

Program Planning for Miami Charles Spornick reported they are planning an ambitious program on multiculturalism in conjunction with AFAS and ARTS with major speakers and is seeking financial support from ACRL. This program would deal with broader implications of multiculturalism, rather than a specific aspect.

Library Instruction Chair Bill Orme reported that their discussion group on CD-ROMs and electronic databases was well attended. The committee critiqued the pathfinder on political correctness for the program.

Membership Committee Chair Beth Sibley said the Friday night social was a success and will be repeated in Los Angeles. The breakfast proceeding the program, sponsored by West Publishing Company, has been planned and should be a good opportunity to recruit new members. Membership has dropped 36 people since last year.

Preconference Planning for 1995 . Caroline Tibbetts and Natalie Schatz will now be co-chairs, replacing Jim Hart, who resigned. Budget details, including ACRL overhead, were detailed. Outside vendor assistance will be sought in an effort to keep costs down. Volunteers are still needed to work, but will now need to pay their registration to the conference, due to ACRL policy.

Review and Planning is working on a draft of the section review, which is due next summer.

GODORT Liaison Brian Carpenter reported that GODORT is considering reorganizing as an ALA division. They will reorganize along functional lines, rather than type of government, which concerns state, local and international documents librarians. Discussion will continue on this topic.

Annual Conference, New Orleans, 1993

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

The meeting opened with a discussion of the role of the Activities Section Council. Caroline Tibbetts sought volunteers who would draft a resolution to reorganize the ASC. Discussion followed on the role of the Council and its value as an information source. Stephen Atkins will draft a statement outlining how the Council might be modified to better serve the interests of the section.

Tibbetts volunteered to become Liaison to the ACRL Board as Past Chair and proposed that this model take effect in future years. Judy Solberg proposed that Caroline act as liaison for one year and report back if this approach is a fruitful use of time and energy.

Cathy Henderson, from the ACRL 1995 national conference planning committee, invited LPSS to create programs for the conference.

Publications Committee Chair Steven Stillwell, Jr. reported on the newsletter survey conducted in Spring 1993. The results were not an impressive mandate for the newsletter, which has only been in existence a short period of time. Electronic methods of access and articles in *CRL News* were considered as alternatives, but ACRL has decided to fund two newsletters in this coming year. The section manual will be updated this year.

Bibliographies Committee Chair Brian Carpenter reported they met with representatives from CQ and Legistate to discuss what the vendors would like to see in reviews of their databases. A review of Selected Rand Abstracts was discussed.

New Orleans Program was well-received. Seventy people attended the program and the breakfast sponsored by West Publishing.

Miami Program Planning Charles Spornick reported they are planning a joint program on multiculturalism with two other sections.

Library Instruction had not met as of this meeting.

Membership Committee Chair Beth Sibley announced that forty-one people, including six new members, attending the breakfast on Sunday. An orientation program was proposed for the Midwinter meeting for new members.

Review and Planning Committee Chair Marifran Bustion announced they will work on the section's five year review for ACRL.

Preconference Planning for 1995 Jim Hart has resigned as chair, Caroline Tibbetts and Natalie Schatz have become co-chairs. Jim has prepared a outline of the program and a budget for ACRL's approval at Midwinter.

Midwinter Meeting Schedule

Saturday, February 5

Executive Board	9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
Miami Program Planning	11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Chicago Program Planning	11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Publications	2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
Pre-Conference Planning	2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 6

Bibliographies	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Review and Planning	9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
Library Instruction	2:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Membership	2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Monday, February 7

Business Meeting	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Pre-Conference Planning	2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Remember the LPSS Social!
Friday, February 4th from 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Biltmore Hotel
Rendezvous Bar

LPSS News (ISSN 0885-7342) is published twice a year by the Law and Political Science Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association at 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Tel. 1-800-545-2433. Editor: Catherine Doyle, Christopher Newport University Library, Newport News, VA 23606. Available from ACRL. Copyright, American Library Association, 1993.

LPSS News
Association of College and Research Libraries
A division of the
American Library Association
50 E. Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611-2796

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
American Library
Association