

LPSS NEWS

Law and Political Science Section, Association of College and Research Libraries
Volume 16, Number 2, Spring 2001

ALA ANNUAL 2001 SAN FRANCISCO

TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE

**PLEASE CHECK THE ALA
WEB SITE FOR FINAL
SCHEDULE**

[HTTP://WWW.ALA.ORG/EVENTS](http://www.ala.org/events)

SATURDAY, JUNE 16

12:30-1:30 PM

MARTA LANGE/CQ AWARD
LUNCHEON

2:00-4:00 PM

LPSS PROGRAM

"NEW TECHNOLOGIES, NEW
OPPORTUNITIES:
COLLABORATING WITH
FACULTY"

SUNDAY, JUNE 17

8:00 – 9:00AM

HISTORIANS DISCUSSION
GROUP

9:30-10:45 AM

ALL COMMITTEE MEETING

11:00-12:30

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETING

2:00-4:00 PM

MARTA LANGE/CQ AWARD
COMMITTEE

Closed meeting for committee
members only.

LPSS SOCIAL/HAPPY HOUR
TIME & PLACE TO BE
ANNOUNCED ON THE LPSS
LISTSERV

NEW TECHNOLOGIES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES: COLLABORATING WITH FACULTY

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

This program will examine the effectiveness of innovative programs that use new educational technologies to improve information access. A panel will examine how faculty, students, and librarians can collaborate to advance information literacy by exploring the emerging core of best practices used to bring the library into the classroom. Panelists include two faculty and a librarian, all active with the application of technology in teaching. Presentations will be followed by an interactive period among the panelists with audience participation.

SPEAKERS:

Frada Mozenter, Social Sciences Reference Librarian, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Teodora Delorenzo, Professor of Political Science, California State University, Chico

Artemus Ward, Professor of Political Science, California State University, Chico

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's hard to believe that my year as Chair is winding down already. It has been another productive year for LPSS. Just some of the accomplishments include a new look for the LPSS web page, thanks to John Stemmer; reinvigorated efforts to recognize LPSS members, headed by Madison Mosley; and comprehensive product reviews and resource lists from the Vendor/Publisher Liaison & Review Committee, chaired by Atifa Rawan. Thomas Mann, Lynne Rudasill, and everyone on the 2001 Program Planning Committee have worked hard for over a year to plan the June 16 program, "New Technologies, New Opportunities: Collaborating with Faculty," which I predict will be standing room only. I also want to extend special thanks to Lucia Snowhill for her continued excellent work on the newsletter and to Pat McCandless for managing the listserv.

And, now, a plea for volunteers: as I mentioned in the last "Chair's Message," LPSS received a \$1500 allocation from the ACRL Board to use for innovative activities that support the ACRL strategic plan. At the Midwinter meeting, the Review & Planning Committee proposed that the section use the allocation to develop a web-based, interactive legal research guide for end-user patrons and librarians who are not specialists in the law. The committee recommended that the money be used to pay a graphic designer to design a template and film and edit video clips for the site. Several people volunteered to work on this project, but we still need a coordinator. If you're interested in leading this project, please contact Lisa Stimatz, LPSS Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, or me as soon as possible. I have enjoyed working with you all this year and look forward to our future Section activities. Hope to see you in San Francisco.

--Jan Lewis, LPSS Chair

Cheryl Nyberg **Recipient of the Marta Lange/CQ Award**

Congratulations to the 2000 Marta Lange/CQ Award winner Cheryl Nyberg, Reference Librarian, Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington.

This award recognizes Cheryl's service to librarians who specialize in law and political science, in accordance with the award's goal to honor a practitioner who has actively advanced law and political science librarianship. She has published numerous articles and books, is a frequent presenter at professional meetings, and is active in the Association of American Law Libraries. Known since 1979 for her annual annotated bibliography, *Subject Compilation of State Laws*, Nyberg also published in 2000 a significant new work, *State Administrative Law Bibliography: Print and Electronic Sources*. Cheryl Nyberg's fastidious research, her dedicated publication, and exemplary service have been to the benefit of all law and political science librarians.

Please join us Saturday, June 16 at the Congressional Quarterly (CQ) sponsored luncheon honoring Cheryl during the ALA Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

--Susan Parker, Chair, Marta Lange/CQ Award Committee

DRAFT MINUTES: LPSS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

ALA Midwinter Conference, Washington DC
January 13, 2001

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Section Chair, Jan Lewis, welcomed everyone. Attendees introduced themselves.

Minutes : General Membership Meeting

The minutes of the July 2000 membership meeting were approved as distributed.

Committee Reports

Library Instruction: Betsy Williams announced that the topic of Sunday's discussion group is the training of reference assistants. The discussion involves all issues--which libraries use reference assistants, how reference assistants are utilized, etc. All were encouraged to come and participate.

Marta Lange/CQ Award: Kelly Janousek presented the report. The committee will meet on Sunday to select the winner of the 2001 award, which is a plaque and \$1,000 from Congressional Quarterly. This will be the sixth recipient of the award. Previous winners are: Grace York (2000), Yolande Goldberg (1999), Laura Gasaway (1998), Grace "Betty" Taylor (1997) and Robert Goehlert (1996).

Following a preliminary review, this year's nominees are all excellent candidates. At the ALA Annual Meeting, the award will be presented at a luncheon, also sponsored by Congressional Quarterly. The luncheon will immediately precede the LPSS program. Once the location of the luncheon is determined, probably in April or May, an invitation will be sent to the LPSS list. Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come, first, served basis.

Membership Committee: Madison Mosley reported that this committee wished for more discussion, via the LPSS listserv, concerning the inclusion of History librarians in LPSS before they make a recommendation at Annual in San Francisco. LPSS Chair will begin a discussion with the chair of the Criminal Justice Discussion Group to see if they would like to formalize a relationship with LPSS. The Review and Planning Committee also had some discussion of this issue. That committee suggested that someone interested in History work on creating an LPSS History Discussion Group. The only formal procedure is for someone to ask the LPSS chair for permission to create a discussion group. They also wish to

encourage members to use the listserv more to seek answers to questions/problems. The Membership Committee would like a spot at the San Francisco social. The committee also requested new ribbons. The Board approved the motion to seek funding from ACRL for new ribbons. M. Mosley will work with the LPSS Chair. The Board approved the motion to provide a door prize at the Social Hour as an incentive to attend. The Board also approved the LPSS chair providing the funds, if the budget allows, or the committee seeking donations from publishers/bookstores, etc. Gwen Halford reported on the LPSS Social to be held this evening. LEXIS/NEXIS and National Journal are sponsoring the event. There will be six different dishes and a cash bar. The Board thanked Gwen for her work in making the arrangements. J. Lewis thanked the Membership Committee for their work on the Election Day promotion.

Nominating Committee: Lisa Stimatz reported the slate of LPSS candidates. Madison Mosley (Stetson University College of Law, St. Petersburg, FL) and Barbara Norelli (Skidmore College, Clifton Park, NY) are candidates for Vice-Chair/Chair-elect. The candidates for Section Secretary are Thomas Mann (Northwestern University, Evanston, IL) and Christine Angolia (University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO). Kathleen (Kathi) Fountain (California State University-Chico, Chico, CA) and Dorothy (Dotti) Marcinko (Auburn University, Auburn, AL) have volunteered to run for Member-at-Large.

2001 Program Planning Committee: Tom Mann and Lynne Rudasill reported that the program for San Francisco is "New Technologies, New Opportunities: Collaborating with Faculties". A panel of two teaching faculty and one librarian will give presentations. Frada Mozenter, a Reference Librarian at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte will speak on the general topic of collaborating with faculty with technology. The second speaker, Teodora Delorenzo, Professor of Political Science at California State at Chico, will deal with distance education issues. The final speaker, Artemus Ward, also a Professor of Political Science at California State University at Chico will provide a presentation of materials that deal with specific software that can be used in the classroom and in conjunction with librarians. The program is scheduled for Saturday June 16, 2-4 p.m. The CQ/Marta Lange Award luncheon will be held immediately prior to the program. They thanked Jeannie Welsh and Kathi Fountain for finding the speakers.

2002 Program Planning Committee: Lisa Stimatz encouraged people to volunteer for the committee and will send a request for volunteers to the listserv.

She also asked for suggestions for topics.

Publications Committee: Elaine Coppola reported that the committee's charge had been reviewed and there were no specific instructions for the listserv. The committee wishes to add listserv information. A request to post a commercial advertisement had been received and the committee wished for direction in giving a response. There was a proposal that the listserv become a closed list, but ALA policy requires that listservs be open. Listservs qualify as meetings and, therefore, are open to all ALA members. A policy statement concerning the purpose of the listserv will be developed by the committee and be presented to the Board at Annual in San Francisco. There needs to be explicit wording prohibiting commercial advertising on the listserv. Althea Jenkins at ACRL may have a template. The deadline for the Spring newsletter is in March. Please send your items to Newsletter editor, Lucia Snowhill (snowhill@library.ucsb.edu). The Committee would like input on information to be included in the newsletter, if the timing works out. If anyone has comments and/or suggestions about the LPSS web page, contact John Stemmer, LPSS webmaster. The file of database reviews has already been sent to him.

Vendor/Publisher Committee: Atifa Rawan reported that the committee had reviewed in the Fall newsletter—*Polling the Nation* and *CIAO*. Reviews of *Alternative Press Index* and *FindLaw* are ready for publication. The committee is planning to compile a list of digitization projects of Law and Political Science materials. A request for information on suggested sites will be posted in the Spring newsletter. This is a possible topic for the 2002 conference.

The Committee is also trying to invite someone either from the *National Journal* to attend our meeting in San Francisco to talk about their pricing patterns or another vendor such as Columbia University Press to talk about CIAO as a scholarly communication initiative.

ABC/CLIO has sold *ABC PolSci* to Cambridge Scientific. Cambridge has merged *ABC PolSci* with their *Political Science Index*. Any library with an *ABC PolSci* subscription will automatically be transferred to the Cambridge product. The committee is also looking at overlapping information in free e-journal databases. The committee will try to add the dates of their reviews to the database file.

Review and Planning Committee: Marifran Bustion reported that the committee felt LPSS needs its own strategic plan, using the ACRL plan

as a basis. Merle Slyhoff will coordinate the development of the plan. Each LPSS committee should look at the ACRL Strategic Plan. The committees should then inform M. Slyhoff of how those committees are meeting the plan. She will also look at the AALL plan and provide a copy to all committees. She will also send a request for information to the list. The deadline for receiving this information was set at the end of March 2001. It was also reported that ACRL has allocated \$1500 for every section to use for innovative programs. The committee plans on developing a website on doing legal research for the end user. There will be a mix of styles: PowerPoint, web video, text, FAQ, etc. If a section will not spend the money by the end of August 2001, then it can ask for an extension into the next fiscal year by sending a brief proposal to the ACRL Board. This is a one-time allocation, which ACRL hopes to be able to do again. Stephen Stillwell will write the proposal. A task force will be created to implement the project. The task force will consist of volunteers from the various LPSS committees as well as individual LPSS members. The project will not be added to the charge of an existing LPSS committee. The website will initially concentrate on national information then include state information, beginning with those states with the smallest populations and level of income. Eventually information on all the states will be added. The Institute for Information Literacy is willing to help sections. It is assumed that this will be placed on the LPSS website which may be moved to the ALA official site. The Board approved establishing a task force to work on the project. Michael Jackson agreed to be on the task force, but not coordinator. S. Stillwell will send information out on the listserv and ask for volunteers.

New Business

Other ACRL News: Jan Lewis announced the ACRL President's Forum, which will be held on Sunday. Lunch will be provided by Ebsco. ACRL has preliminary figures from the membership survey. The leading concerns are: customer service and expanding technology.

2003 ACRL Conference: The 2003 conference will be held in Charlotte, NC. J. Lewis asked that the

Board begin thinking about LPSS participating. The theme of the conference has not yet been set. An ad hoc committee was appointed to work on ideas for programs. Dennis Lambert, Lisa Stimatz, Michael Jackson, Jan Lewis and Lynne Rudasill volunteered.

GODORT Liaison Report

Gwen Halford is no longer the LPSS GODORT liaison. A new liaison needs to be appointed. Christine Angolia reported that the transition to electronic documents continues, driven by the House subcommittee. The subcommittee's goal is for most, if not all, documents to go online. Although the Senate restored funding, GPO continues to redefine its operations due to budgetary constraints

Significant personnel changes have occurred as a result of 60 GPO (Government Printing Office) staff retiring. As of January 12, no Bush transition team member was appointed to talk with the GPO; therefore, the Printer remains until a new appointment is made. Money for printing and other GPO activities continues to decrease, and GPO's budget this year will request the funding it needs to invest in the electronic products. The challenge continues to obtain the funding amount GPO believes is necessary to support the continuing transition to electronic titles and databases. GODORT is urging librarians to continue to work with and inform Congressional staff who are interested in the FDLP of its value and who work closely with their Congressmen as to the value of the program to their Congressional districts. Librarians need to emphasize what the FDLP does for their constituents. The GPO indicated that consumer and educational materials are still being printed in paper format by agencies. Last year depository materials were produced as follows: Microfiche titles have decreased, print titles have increased slightly, online titles have greatly increased. Changes in the budget continue to have an impact on bibliographic access to government publications, and this budget year GPO will pursue sufficient funding for the services they offer.

The Board meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

--Submitted by: Gabrielle Carr, Secretary

BE ACTIVE IN LPSS

Consider joining an LPSS committee and/or becoming a mentor. Reap the rewards of meeting and working with your colleagues around the country. LPSS needs volunteers. Contacts are:

Committees: Lisa Stimatz, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect e-mail: lzs3@psu.edu

Mentors: Madison Mosley, Chair, Membership Committee e-mail: mosley@law.stetson.edu

REVIEWS

ALTERNATIVE PRESS INDEX

Marketed by Congressional Information Service,
Published by National Information Services
Corporation (NISC)

[3100 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD, 21218.

E-mail: sales@nisc.com

Web site: www.nisc.com]

The *Alternative Press Index* (API) is an acknowledged resource for locating citations from 250 "alternative, radical, and left publications" in North America. The API is a valuable resource for political science researchers in that most of their source material is unique, and cannot be found in mainstream journal and newspaper indexes. Of course, their source publications offer a decidedly ideological take on political, economic, environmental, cultural and social issues.

Produced by the Alternative Press Center in Baltimore, API coverage is from 1991 forward; and includes all articles of five or more paragraphs in length. A complete list of source periodicals is available on the Alternative Press Center's web site at <http://www.altpress.org/>. Journals indexed in API include: *Capital & Class*, *Democracy and Nature*, *Environmental Action*, *Human Rights Tribune*, *Latin American Perspectives*, *Middle East Report*, *Public Citizen News*, *Socialist Review*, and the *Utne Reader*. Publications are indexed quarterly, with a total of 20,000 records added each year. There is also some abstracting available for individual records.

API is provided online through the *BiblioLine* interface (other *BiblioLine* databases are Black Studies Database, Info-Latinoamerica, and Women's Resources International). If an institution subscribes to more than one NISC product using the *BiblioLine* format, the databases may be searched simultaneously. API is also available on CD-ROM.

There are three search levels: quick, advanced, and expert. The quick search interface offers four fields: keyword, phrase, author, and publication date. Each field has an index button which links to a searchable alphabetical index. An index search on

"Managua" yielded 12 citations; a keyword search also retrieved 12 results. An index term may be automatically pasted into the search field. Instructions for the quick search state that Boolean operators are not required, however, "the use of Boolean operators is likely to improve results." The advanced search offers more fields: author, keyword/phrase, index terms, title, publication, source (allows searching for words in a title), publication year, article type, cross reference, and record ID. Article type searching is very useful for finding editorials, book reviews, etc. The expert search screen allows for simultaneous searching of up to 15 field tags, which is probably decidedly too complicated for most of our users.

Use of API's internal navigation tools is advised; there are links on every screen to all search levels, and to the other NISC databases, as well as help buttons which link to appropriate instructions depending on which part of the database you happen to be using at that moment. "Clear Search" buttons are at the top and bottom of each search screen, in the same location as most other databases' "search" button, so that it is rather easy to hit "clear search by mistake." Records may be marked, and results may be displayed as full records, titles, marked citations only, or marked full records only. The default display mode is title only.

Each record includes basic bibliographic information; and I came across one record with a link to the publishing organization's web site. There are buttons for printing/saving which convert the records to a less-graphic intensive format. The user must then use the browser's printing or saving capabilities. At the very bottom of the results screen (you would miss it if you didn't scroll all of the way down), is an e-mail field, which allows the user to e-mail marked records only. Using API online would be much easier if it was available through a more traditional database interface. I find the *BiblioLine* format to be somewhat cumbersome and confusing for the average user.

API is accessible via the World Wide Web through IP addressing, and subscription prices vary according to the number of users. The base subscription rate is \$695, with an

additional 50% for 2 to 5 concurrent users, 125% for 6 to 10 users, and 200% for 11 to 15 users. Institutions wishing to subscribe for more than 16 current users must contact NISC directly for pricing information.

Overall, API Online is a valuable resource for social science and humanities research,

particularly in that it provides viewpoints and information that is not readily available through traditional resources.

Gerri Foudy,
University of Maryland at College Park

FINDLAW (<http://www.findlaw.com>)

One of the great advantages of the Internet has been the increased availability of copyright-free government information, especially legal information. But the abundance of Internet sources leads to another problem: how to keep track of it all. *Findlaw* (<http://www.findlaw.com>) has been doing just that since 1996. It began as a list of legal resources on the Internet presented at a meeting of California law librarians and has grown from a simple directory of legal information on the web to a true portal. Providing legal news, services such as free email and web hosting, message boards, and even it's own online magazine, *Findlaw* is truly a megasite for legal information.

Users beginning at the homepage can pick a topic from a Yahoo-like directory structure, or choose from one of the four channels geared to specific audiences: Legal Professionals, Students, Business, and the Public. In addition, there is a channel page devoted to legal news, and a "my findlaw" channel that allows you to create your own page with the resources you use most often. The channels are a good way to focus on information targeted to specific users -- forms, salary information and job ads for lawyers, law school directories and outlines and exams for students -- but all the channels have links to basic legal resources such as cases and codes, and legal subjects (the basic *Findlaw* subject directory).

As a reference source, *Findlaw* is a good place to start when doing legal research on the web, especially for libraries or patrons that do not have access to Lexis or Westlaw. Through the "Cases and Codes" link, users will find directories to virtually all the freely available

government resources at the federal, state and local level. *Findlaw* mirrors many of the resources available freely on the web. It has the *U.S. Code*, *Code of Federal Regulations* and the *Federal Register* files from the GPO-Access site, with all the same search features. *Findlaw* also has its own searchable databases of appellate court and state supreme court decisions, often with better search interfaces than those on the courts own web sties. Unique to *Findlaw* is one of the most comprehensive freely available databases of Supreme Court opinions on the web. They have decisions from 1893 - date, and they are searchable by keyword, citation, party name and browsable by year and citation.

In addition to primary source legal materials and pointers to other sources on the web, *Findlaw* has its own library of full text materials from government, bar associations, consultants, lawyers, law firms and legal publishers. These materials provide good background information on legal subjects and are often a good starting place for those new to a topic. Many of these sources are also incorporated into the "Self Help Legal Guides" available on the Public channel.

Findlaw's strength as a reference tool is its compilation of quality legal materials on its own server. As a simple web directory, it is often less effective. Like most web directories, it often suffers from information overload. For example, under the topic Health Law, it has a listing of health databases and statistics sites that is over 7 screens long (over 70 entries). Although the entries have been evaluated and annotated, lists such as these are ineffective due to their length and the lack of focus specifically on law.

Another drawback to *Findlaw* is that with such a variety of information and tools, the quality is sometimes uneven. Most of the documents on *Findlaw* are signed, and information about the authors provided, but the provenance of some of the services provided is less clear. For example, there is a searchable database of lawyers available, and many pages (especially the self-help pages) provide a prominent search box to "find a lawyer." What isn't obvious is that this database is made up of only lawyers who have registered to be included in the directory, and those that pay a premium will be listed first in the search results.

Despite these weaknesses, no other web site comes close to providing such a comprehensive guide to legal information on the Internet. With the standard caveat for all web searchers to carefully evaluate the authority of the information you find, *Findlaw* will be a great addition to any reference librarian's set of tools.

Carrie Ottow
Oregon State University

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OPINION: Lighten up or Leave Me Alone

In doing research for an article I wrote in 1995, I "discovered" the *Guidelines for Medical, Legal and Business Responses at General Reference Desk*. I did not find them particularly impressive and they did not benefit the article. I dismissed them. I became more upbeat when I read the *Guidelines* had been revised in 2000. I was certain the intervening years had shown the need for a more substantive document. Imagine my dismay when I compared the two versions. I found little had changed between the 1992 and the 2000 documents.

The most obvious change occurred in section 4.0. "Telephone or Mail Reference" in the 1992 document became "Telephone, Fax, Mail and E-Mail Reference" in the 2000 statement (emphasis mine). Both versions of the *Guidelines* contain axiomatic statements that are hammered into the education of all MLS students. For example: "Staff is responsible for providing complete and accurate responses to users' questions..." (emphasis mine) and "Materials recommended should be the most comprehensive and the most current available." (emphasis added) I am left wondering for whom was the document written.

I am aware that some librarians without a legal education consider legal questions to be a landmine. Yes, it is true that most legal questions cannot be answered in the same fashion as "factual" questions. However, library users come to us for assistance. I posit that assistance goes beyond "instruction in the use of resources" (see Section 2.0). Sometimes the user doesn't want instruction, but want to read something (cases, commentary and the like) pertinent to the user's situation.

I feel we librarians have a duty to help library users navigate the resources to which we have, as the *Guidelines* admonish, directed them. No librarian is going to do lawyerly things for library users. We are not going to become advocates for their cause or file legal papers on their behalf or advise them of their legal rights. Yet, these *Guidelines*, in my opinion, were written with the idea that librarians need to put on the brakes when it comes to legal reference.

What a limiting idea.

Madison Mosley
Stetson University College of Law

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HELP DEVELOP A DIRECTORY OF DIGITIZED COLLECTIONS

The Vendor-Publisher Liaison Committee is working to develop a directory of digitized collections in political science and law. Anybody wishing to submit sites for inclusion in the directory can send their suggestions (a URL should be sufficient) to Karen Rupp-Serrano at krupp-serrano@ou.edu. The directory will be made available to the LPSS membership when completed.

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