

Volume 24, Number 2 Spring 2009

*Preliminary
LPSS event schedule*

2009 ALA Annual - Chicago

Saturday, July 11, 2009

10:30 am-12:00 noon. **Executive committee meeting**

1:30-3:00 pm. **Section program:**
"Political Engagement: Facilitating
Greater Participation in Civil
Society"

3:30-5:30 pm. **Instruction committee discussion group**

6:00 pm - . **LPSS social event** (tentative)

Sunday, July 12, 2009

8:00 am-10:30 am. **All committee meetings** (specific committee meeting times TBA)

10:30 am to 11:30 am. **General membership meeting**

3:30-5:30 pm. **Vendor/publisher committee discussion group**

6:00-8:00 pm **Marta Lange/CQ Press Award reception** honoring Lynne Rudasill

Consult the official ALA/ACRL schedule for locations. Times listed there may differ slightly from actual meeting times listed above.



Get to know **Lucy Lyons**, page 3.
(Photo provided by Lucy Lyons)

Section program in Chicago will address civic engagement

We recently experienced the historic election of President Barack Obama. His win relied greatly on a get out and vote campaign staffed by thousands of volunteers; an unprecedented percentage of his donations from small donors; and great use of decentralized, social networking technologies. How are these all similar? They are examples of political and civic engagement.

Recognizing dropping rates of participation in civic life, higher education organizations have begun programs to encourage greater political engagement by today's students.

The LPSS program at ALA Annual features a panel presentation on how libraries can facilitate development of lifelong critical thinking and research skills needed for citizenship by today's students. The panelists include

- **Nancy Kranich**, president of the American Library Association in 2000-01 and currently a lecturer at the Rutgers School of Communication, Information and Library Sciences;
- **Liz Hollander** served for nine years as executive director of Campus Compact and is currently a senior fellow at the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University;
- **Joanne Griffin**, business reference librarian, and **Holly Sorensen**, assistant director, work at Des Plaines Public Library, site of the FY 2006 LSTA-funded Building Community through Creative Conversations program.

The program is scheduled for Saturday, July 11, 1:30 – 3:00 pm. Consult the conference program and the LPSS website <<http://www.ala.org/acrl/lpss/>> for location and updates.

LPSS, GODORT to return to APSA Annual with free preconference in Toronto

LPSS is again partnering with the ALA Government Documents Roundtable to present a free preconference at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, which will meet in Toronto early this coming September.

"Library 2.0: Knowledge, Power and Pedagogy in Net Space – Evolving Collaborations and Roles" will highlight how today's political science librarians can help faculty and students maximize the value of the exciting, daunting worlds of networked information.

Appropriately, this "short course" will be held at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information on the afternoon of Wednesday, Sept 2. Organized around themes of "students as researchers" and "the promises and pitfalls of online information," this free preconference will provide

(See TORONTO, page 4)

Message from the section chair**Virtual meetings worked at Midwinter**

by Ann Marshall

LPSS held its first ever virtual meetings for the ALA 2009 Midwinter conference. It's still too early to truly assess the how this medium will work for us, but my initial sense is that this was an incredibly valuable experiment. Vice Chair/Chair Elect Erik Estep and I conducted a survey of those who participated and, in the upcoming months, we'll look very carefully at the survey results and will report back to the membership in much more detail. For now, I'd like to share some initial reactions and impressions.

I think many of us, myself included, had our apprehensions as the virtual meetings approached: Will the technology work? Can we really be productive when we can't see each other? How strange will it be to talk or type into this empty void? How does one lead a virtual meeting?

The virtual meetings also required logistical preparation. We held optional virtual, drop-in sessions for committee chairs, to help us get used to the new technologies. Chairs had to schedule pre-ALA meeting times that worked for their committee members, and committee chairs needed to publicize their own meetings and the connection instructions.

But, once the virtual meetings began, many of our initial apprehensions fell away. Sure, there were awkward silences and moments when several of us tried to speak at the same time. We also discovered that virtual meeting can be incredibly efficient, at times even more-so than in-person meetings. Unlike attending ALA, there was no need to study maps and ALA

schedules and no need to travel by air, then by shuttle, then by ALA bus, then by foot, to finally arrive at a one-hour meeting.

The cost savings were impressive. At our hybrid in-person/virtual general membership meeting in Denver, we had five virtual participants. If we estimate the travel costs for just these five members conservatively at \$800 per person, this adds up to a collective savings of \$4,000 for a single meeting. Our only technology cost was a \$15 Verizon fee, which allowed internet access to one laptop, enabling web conferencing software.

We did have some difficulty with getting good audio via telephone conferencing with a cell phone. LPSS (or ACRL more generally) may want to invest in better telephone conferencing hardware as well as a subscription to a web conferencing service that offers advanced features not available in the free version.

In addition, if we expect increased virtual participation at our general membership meeting, we may want to experiment with moving this meeting from a Saturday to either a Friday or Monday, to make it easier for virtual participants to take advantage of regular business hours at their home institutions for access and scheduling.

Our virtual meetings caught the attention of others at Denver. While the College Libraries Section has been doing virtual meeting for several years now, I believe that we were the only ACRL section to have a

(See *VIRTUAL*, page 6)***Virtual meeting testimonial from newly active member...***

LPSS has at least one new active member as a result of meeting virtually. Me.

Since I was not attending ALA Midwinter, I thought I was going to miss out on opportunities to become involved with LPSS. However, in January I received invitations via the LPSS Listserv to participate in LPSS Virtual Meetings. This was the perfect solution, especially as a new member, to become involved, "meet" new people, and volunteer when possible. I took full advantage.

When trying anything new, a bit of apprehension set in as I was dialing into the meeting. What were they going to be talking about? Would I have anything to contribute? After getting connected and introductions were done, the apprehension drifted away. In fact, the virtual meeting was the perfect venue to get a feel for the committee and better understand what was happening in LPSS.

I attended two meetings, the Library Instruction Committee chaired by Chris Palazzolo and the Publications Committee chaired by Lucy Lyons. Each committee was extremely welcoming and offered opportunities to be involved with the committees. Even though we could only hear each other, both meetings were productive and ran smoothly.

The virtual meeting was also very economical. As I estimate, the only cost of attending a virtual meeting is the telephone call, which was approximately \$6 per person per meeting. Based on a coworker's attendance at ALA Midwinter, this is a savings of approximately \$930, a budget relief to librarians and our institutions. In addition to being economical, the virtual meeting also fit into my regular workday, around classes, meetings, and reference hours.

— Jodi Shepherd

An LPSS member to know:***Lucy Eleonore Lyons***

by John Hernandez

Lucy Lyons is the Coordinator for Collection Analysis and Subject Specialist for political science and journalism at Northwestern University Library in Evanston, IL. Over her 15-year career, in addition to working at Northwestern, Lucy has worked at Arizona State University, the Humanities and Social Sciences Library of the New York Public Research Libraries, and Columbia University's Butler Library. Lucy earned her MLS at the Pratt Institute in New York City. Outside of librarianship Lucy enjoys hiking camping and kayaking.

Tell me about your road to librarianship.

Before attending college, I worked in a factory for several years. As an undergraduate, I attended Pierce College in LA and worked in the library, then San Diego State University, where I worked for the political science department and social sciences research lab. While earning an MA in political science at Ohio State University, I worked in the polimetrics lab.

Afterwards, I was head of research for the psychiatric services department of UCSD doing research on death and depression. I had a lot of experience in quantitative research and grant writing, but I eventually came to realize I did not want to focus solely on numbers any more.

I really enjoy libraries, so I took a job at the International Relations and Pacific Studies Library at UCSD, and that helped me decide on librarianship as a career. I have worked in several library divisions including collection development and management, public services and technical services.

Since so much of your pre-librarian work involved quantitative analysis, with your current job in collection analysis, have you come full circle?

It's funny -- I knew I didn't want to focus so much on numbers back then, but now I'm back to doing just that. On the other hand, I like it more than ever. Collection assessment is an opportunity to be creative, to design original methodologies, the re-think processes such as budget allocation, and much more.

What are your thoughts on the changing library profession?

Change is constant in our profession. I have not been bored, because there is always something new to learn. When I was a reference librarian, we used print sources pretty extensively, which meant librarians and patrons interacted in person quite a lot. Everything changed when we moved to more electronic resources.

In a way this is sad because people nowadays tend not to ask as many questions of the librarian. Instead, they turn to another electronic resource when they cannot find what they want, rather than engage someone for help. Collection development is far more

complex than ever.

Are you involved in organizations outside of ALA/ACRL?

I am involved in the American Political Science Association and the International Studies Association. I originally became a member of APSA back when I was a graduate student. Later as a librarian, I met a colleague who had attended the Women's Studies Conference. She had such a good experience that this inspired me to reacquaint myself, so I began attending subject-specific conferences again, instead of only the ALA. It is very helpful to attend panel discussions, from which I learn about trends in scholarship. It has also helped me connect with other fields such as journalism. Most recently I attended a panel on assessment hosted by the International Studies Association. (See "Cultural Shifts in Academe," page 5.)

Do you have any advice for LPSS members?

I'd encourage LPSS members to collaborate more with other ALA sections and organizations outside of ALA. It is difficult to begin new initiatives, because we are all overworked. So maybe collaboration and sharing tasks would help. I would like to see group efforts to build resource pages that could be hosted by academic associations.

What are your thoughts on the new Obama administration so far?

My summary: the new president has his hands full as we try to recover from the devastation wrought by the previous administration.

Is there a section member whom you'd like to know better through a profile or interview in the LPSS News? Could you capture an interesting colleague in 500-600 words?

Send your suggestions to the editor at <bpencek@vt.edu>.

The LPSS website is the official repository of the minutes of the meetings of the LPSS executive committee and of the general membership. Get the gritty details of LPSS in action at <<http://www.ala.org/acrl/lpss>>.

Political science professor explores ACRL 2009 conference

by Craig Leonard Brians

As a faculty member who writes a political science research methods text, I am acutely interested in information literacy, building these skills for our students, and assessing the effectiveness of our efforts.

I traveled to Seattle and participated in this year's ACRL conference. I scheduled meetings at the conference and attended sessions, hoping to increase my knowledge of librarians' current research on how students (and others) find and use information.

I found that my presence at this conference was a surprise to many I met. Whether sitting next to me in a panel or on a shuttle, librarians universally asked me why I was at their meeting and what I had learned.

Most people I met were instructional librarians, who quickly warmed to me when I mentioned my long-standing interest in teaching and research on information literacy. This frequently prompted lengthy conversations about the techniques they employed with students at their colleges and universities. Additionally, these instruction librarians also told me what they wish their faculty members would do in working with students conducting research.

I found that librarians were generally more outgoing than teaching faculty at one of their conferences. When I said "good morning" to a librarian in the hotel elevator, this often led to a substantive conversation that

continued after we exited on the main floor.

I was surprised when I entered the exhibit floor and saw a Las Vegas-style trade show. The book exhibits at political science conferences are fairly low-key, dominated by folding tables with stacks of books and the occasional banner for a large textbook publisher.

At the ACRL exhibit hall, I was greeted by a cacophony of sights and sounds. There were multimedia presentations on big screens to the right, and an MC-type coming at me with a mic from the left. It was somewhat overwhelming.

I did speak to a number of representatives, and learned a good bit about several products that our own library receives – and continue to learn about these resources as I get email every day from the vendors.

On the downside, the ACRL conference registration was shockingly expensive compared to academic meetings I've attended. It cost me two to three times as much, which seemed odd since almost everything at the ACRL seemed to feature an industry sponsor.

In sum, would I go to another conference dominated by librarians? Absolutely. I learned a great deal, made many useful research contacts, and gained knowledge that will directly benefit my teaching and research. (Craig Brians <brians@vt.edu> is associate chair of the Virginia Tech political science department.)

TORONTO: free 'short course' for APSA still accepting topic suggestions

(Continued from page 1)

hands-on lab sessions as well as discussion of resources and techniques to enhance research and learning.

Event co-planner Chris Palazzolo says participants will be able to select among sessions where they can expect to:

- Discover and apply new, dynamic librarian-faculty collaborations and methods for engaging students with the research process.
- Share techniques for effectively discovering and efficiently retrieving relevant information from free and subscription-based resources.
- Learn how to the LPSS research competency standards in program and course assessment, as well as for designing student research projects.
- Better understand the political economy of information/ research and issues such as digital access, authors' rights, the many faces of Google (Scholar, Books, etc), copyright, and how they apply to social science research.

The planning task force will accept suggestions for topics from prospective attendees through the end of June. Email them to task force chair Bruce Pencek <bpencek@vt.edu>.

As an ACRL-supported outreach event cosponsored by the APSA Political Science Education Section, the short

course must give priority for space and handouts to political science faculty and graduate students attending the APSA meetings.

The event will be open to FIS students and librarians in the Toronto area on a space-available basis; the organizers will appreciate some advance notice.

Ann Marshall will keynote the afternoon, describing her work in the University of Rochester's ethnographic study of student library-use patterns. Her presentation will be book-ended by Syracuse political scientist Derrick Cogburn, chair of the APSA Information Technology & Politics Section.

John Hernandez, Chris Palazzolo, and Bruce Pencek will reprise their roles from the pilot APSA short course two years ago, assisted by political scientists attending the conference. FIS student Bill Mann and LPSS member Jenny Mendelsohn, the university library's faculty liaison coordinator, provide local insight and management.

Located at 140 St. George St., Toronto, the FIS Bissell building is part of the John P. Robarts Research Library complex, a walk or short subway ride (exit St. George station) from the APSA site at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Boom or bust**The ups and downs of library collections in Alberta**

by Nadine Hoffman

The University of Calgary is in Alberta, the heart of the oil and gas industry in Canada. Almost 50 percent of the university's revenues come from the provincial government. Significant revenue from oil and natural gas royalties for the Alberta government makes budgeting volatile. This is evidenced by a projected \$8 billion surplus in August 2008 and a \$1 billion projected deficit in February 2009.

The cyclical nature of Alberta's economy and library budgets means collections are tricky to maintain at a constant level. The last bust cycle in the early 1990s led to a 42 percent cut in the library's budget, leading to cancellations of almost half the serial titles.

The past few years saw an increase in our purchasing power due to a boom and the strength of the Canadian dollar. We were able to fill some gaps in our collections; however, our purchasing power dropped significantly when the Canadian dollar decreased by 15 percent in October 2008. Our collections staff moved quickly to ensure renewals to important subscriptions and brought a halt to monograph purchases. These speedy actions will result in a balanced budget.

Next year's budget is uncertain. We anticipate no increase in revenues and likely will see an increase in costs for resources; there may be a need to cancel some serials. We are not over-reacting to the situation. Rather, we see this as an opportunity to reassess priorities for long-term collection development and will balance user needs with content and format.

In short-term and long-term plans, we will assess our must, should, and like to have resources for the future. We need to ensure we will be able to collect our must have resources and strive to acquire should have items; the like to have resources are acquired during boom times. Sometimes we can fill gaps in library collections later.

Life is never boring in Alberta. We have been through downturns before. We roll with the punches caused by the ebb and flow of oil and gas prices. While the near future may be difficult, we have survived busts before and we will survive having gained experience from the past.

Have you or colleagues responded to the economic crunch in ways that other LPSSers could apply themselves? Share your first-hand stories in the News, the LPSS listserv, or our wiki.

Share your good news, too. Announcements of LPSSers' new jobs, promotions, publications, awards, and so on can encourage the rest of us.

Cultural shifts in academe: ISA talks assessment

by Lucy Lyons

By now, most librarians have heard of the concept of a "culture of assessment" even if its definition remains unclear and its practice, irregular.

In New York City, in February, the program of the 50th Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association (ISA) listed a panel called "Taking the Fear Out of Assessment and Evaluation: Lessons Learned." Much to my utter surprise – and not only because the panel took place at 8:00 am – the room was packed, extra chairs were sought, and about 130 academics attended.

Perhaps this level of interest is due to falling budgets and rising demands for accountability. The speakers also identified growing requirements from official bodies as reasons for greater assessment activity. Assessment plans are now heavier weights in the overall rating of federal grant proposals. And measurable outcomes have been identified by accreditation associations as vital to the evaluation process.

The title of the panel – "Taking the Fear Out" – proved that incorporating assessment into academic departments is much like attempts to incorporate it into libraries. Last August, the politics of assessment and the management of reducing resistance to change were recurring themes at the 2008 Library Assessment Conference, in Seattle, subtitled "Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment." (See <http://libraryassessment.org/schedule/index.shtml> for details.)

On a positive note, speakers at both events noted that assessment provides an ability to speak the language of administrators, who do not, in any case, know the language of librarianship or of every academic field. As assessment programs in libraries continue to grow, we will be in a better position to react to the needs of academic departments – eg, by quickly providing the quantitative data and qualitative narrative, related to library support of subject fields, for internal program reviews.

It is good to know (judging from the turnout at the ISA panel) that such collaborative work may well be on the increase.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS succeeded, but remember to attend section events at ALA Annual

(Continued from page 2)

virtual component for all of our 2009 Midwinter meetings. ACRL presidential candidates Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe and Kelly Janousek, who visited our general meeting, both complimented us on our virtual meetings pilot.

Terry Epperson, membership co-chair of ANSS, attended our general membership meeting, in order to report back to ANSS. Terry commented that, "the literature tells us that this sort of approach [ie, virtual meetings] works best when the participants can take advantage of strong pre-existing rapport, and you folks certainly seemed to have that in spades."

Perhaps most importantly, the virtual meetings led to new participation in LPSS, the ease of access brought in several LPSS-ers had never been to a committee meeting before.

As we all know, we are living in very difficult economic times, with travel budgets one of the first items to be cut. Despite this, since there is no true substitute for seeing each other face to face, I do hope that I will see many of you in Chicago for the full slate of LPSS events!

Finally, a big thank you to everyone for your help with this project. It was truly a team effort, and I appreciate especially the LPSS committee chairs' willingness to move boldly ahead while there was still so much uncertainty about how the virtual meetings would unfold. And, for our hybrid in-person/virtual general membership meeting, special thanks to Erik Estep and Kathi Fountain for maintaining the chat window, to Lorena O'English for working the web cam, and to Evan James Rusch for helping pass around our makeshift cell phone teleconferencing microphone.

Also, thanks goes to Cynthia Carlton and Lorraine Porcello, at the University of Rochester, for helping with tech support for *freephoneconference.com* and *dimdim.com*, two free technologies which served us well for this experiment.



You'll have to travel to Chicago to attend the Marta Lange/CQ Press Award reception honoring **Lynne Rudasill** on July 12.

(Photo provided by Lynne Rudasill.)

www.ala.org/acrl/lpss

An invitation to help staff the LPSS booth

at the American Political Science Association Meetings

**Metro Toronto Convention Centre Exhibit Hall
Sept. 3-6, 2009**

*We're also accepting recommendations for printed materials to
distribute at the LPSS booth.*

Contact Ann Marshall at <ann.marshall@rochester.edu>
or at 585-273-3451.

Guidelines for contributors

The deadline for the next edition of the *LPSS News*, subject to decisions by ACRL, will be around Sept. 10. Expect to receive the fall edition of the *News* by mail about mid-November

For next spring's edition, figure March 10 and mid-May, respectively.

Email articles, illustrations (*at least 300 dpi resolution, black and white preferred*) and correspondence to the editor at <bpencek@vt.edu>. Please cc: submissions to the associate editor at <jrshepherd@csuchico.edu>.

Length: most articles should run fewer than 400 words. (The review of *PolicyFile* runs a bit under 700 words.)

Write in short paragraphs. Use the most direct, energetic style you can muster. Have a point, and don't be reluctant to have a point of view, too. Write as an analyst or critic, or at least as a journalist, not a booster.

Write to be useful to the membership. The format and publication frequency make features, not old news, the strength of the newsletter.

While only the newsletter reaches every member of the section, other section media may be more appropriate venues for what you have to say. The LPSS listserv is the best place to post, discover, and comment on breaking events. Our website is the natural location of our official reports and meeting minutes. The LPSS wiki will become what you make it.

ProQuest 'PolicyFile' gives access to think tank research

by Barbara Morgan

Fall semester found me assisting students with seemingly many more than usual challenging research topics. On several occasions, I was unable to find sufficient information in our standard political science and law related databases.

In searching for additional resources, I became aware of a database, *PolicyFile*, that was extremely useful in providing access to current public policy research on state, national and international issues. It was first created by Chadwyck-Healey in 1997 and is now produced by ProQuest.

Its purpose is to index and make available, in full-text, publications issued by a wide variety of research organizations across the political spectrum, as well as many nonpartisan entities.

While many organizations now include their publications on the internet, it is oftentimes difficult, not to mention time consuming, to identify which ones have published research and/ or analysis on a particular topic.

As of January 2009, *PolicyFile* reviewed 371 public policy think tanks, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, university centers, advocacy groups, and other entities. The list includes many well know names, for example, the American Enterprise Institute and the Brookings Institution, but also many less well known yet increasingly important ones such as the Environmental Law Institute, the Electronic Privacy Information Center, and the International Food Policy Research Institute.

Documents are selected to be indexed from a review of all organizational web pages at least once per week.

More than 111,000 records

from 1990-present are now available; approximately 250 new records are added weekly.

The complete record, including title, author, organization, subject headings and an abstract, is fully searchable. Links to the organization's webpage and the full-text of the document are provided.

An alphabetical list, concise

In review

description of and URL for all organizations covered by *PolicyFile* appear under "Organizational Browse," where one may select an organization and view all the records available.

The "Quick Search" box on the homepage searches all records, automatically searches for plurals and different forms of the same word, and is set to be a Boolean "and" search.

The "Search" page allows more search options including Keyword(s), Keyword(s) in Title, Organization(s), Organization Type(s), Subject(s), and Records Added Within.

The list of results is sorted in relevance order by default but can be changed to chronological or reverse chronological order. The full record with abstract is available with a click on the hypertext title of the document. A durable URL for each record is included on all results pages.

The user may choose to narrow results by a particular organizational type, e.g. U.S. Domestic, International, etc. Records may be marked for emailing, printing, downloading (including downloading directly to RefWorks, ProCite, EndNote, or Reference Manager),

or saved in My Archive, which permits saving searches with an email alert service.

A November 2008 search for presidential candidates' positions on health policy in Google Custom NGO Search versus *PolicyFile* illustrates the advantages of the subscription product.

Most of the top 20 hits in *PolicyFile* were links to relevant, full-text, in-depth reports and analyses, including documents from The Commonwealth Fund, Public Citizen, Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Urban Institute, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, American Enterprise Institute, and AARP.

While the top 20 hits in Google Custom NGO contained several links to relevant information on the Kaiser Family Foundation webpage, the list also included links to an open letter to the candidates from Physicians for Human Rights, links to articles on the candidates' tax policies, and an article from the California Health Care Foundation on the positions of the presidential candidates in 2000, among other links of limited relevance and value.

Of course, *PolicyFile* is not perfect. The subject headings and organizational types used are very broad and as a result are oftentimes less than helpful. The "Search" page is limited to natural language searching (which ProQuest calls concept searching) and doesn't allow the use of Boolean operators or nesting.

However, according to the folks at ProQuest a "next-generation" platform for *PolicyFile* and other ProQuest, CSA, and Chadwyck resources should be out in beta this year.

LPSS News
ACRL – American Library Association
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2795

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

IN THIS ISSUE

Preliminary LPSS schedule, 2009 ALA Annual	1
LPSS programs APSA preconference	1
Chair’s message: successful virtual meetings	2
V-meeting testimonial	2
LPSS member to know: Lucy Lyons	3
Poli sci prof samples ACRL conference	4
Hard times in Alberta	5
ISA seeks culture of assessment in academe	5
Guidelines for News contributors	6
In review: <i>PolicyFile</i>	7

© 2009 American Library Association
ISSN 0885-7342

LPSS News is a publication of the Law and Political Science Section,
Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association,
50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611-2795.

Web: <www.ala.org/acrl/lpss>

Wiki: <wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/LPSS>

Contacts:

Editor: Bruce Pencek <bpencek@vt.edu>
University Libraries
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24062-9001

Associate Editor: Jodi Shepherd <jrshepherd@csuchico.edu>
Meriam Library
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0295