

# LaDocs

Newsletter of the Louisiana Library Association Government Documents Roundtable

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2004

number 1

2004

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March 23, 2004

Letter from the editor

Welcome to the latest edition of LaDocs! It has been quite a few years since our group has published this newsletter, so please bear with me as I try to find a format that works for everyone. My hope is that this newsletter will be an electronic-only newsletter that will reside on the LLA/GODORT web site and be distributed on the Bayoudocs listserv.

Currently, I am the only individual working on the content and distribution of this newsletter. Therefore I will attempt to publish two issues a year to start, and as others join me in this endeavor, we may be able to publish more often. Why am I taking on this challenge? Because I saw a need and offered to fill it and I may be just a tad crazy, but we'll see! The success of this venture will rely on you the documents community. I am counting on you to share your viewpoints and information on these pages. Let me know what you think, and I'll create a letters to the editor column. Tell me who's retiring, starting new positions, and leaving old, and I'll establish a documents *people on the move* column. Have an idea for a short article and need a place to publish it? Your article can be the feature article of an issue. The possibilities are only limited to your imagination!

Good Luck!

Lora

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About the LaDocs editor:

Lora Amsberryaugier is the Federal Documents Librarian for the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans.

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Interviews with the documents community are a good way to get to know the people that share a common interest – federal, state and international documents. The LaDocs newsletter will try to include an interview in each issue. The editor will be looking for a volunteer interviewee or someone to conscript for the next issue.... The first person of choice is Lori Smith winner of the Margaret T. Lane award for 2004.

## LaDocu**menting** People

Lori Smith has worked at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana since 1991. She is the Government Documents Department Head and is the sole person responsible for both the state and federal depository collections at the Sims Memorial Library. In her position she provides reference service and bibliographic instruction for the documents collection. She maintains the bibliographic database and promotes her department's materials by creating web based bibliographies for patrons and by personal contact with community leaders. She has an extensive list of web pages created to assist others in using her collection.

Lori has a long history of providing leadership to the Louisiana documents community. She has served as Chair of LLA/GODORT twice and Chair of the Louisiana Advisory Council for the State Depository Program. As a member of a sub-committee she co-authored the Louisiana State Federal Depository Library Plan which is what we follow today.

She is an accomplished author of many journal articles and has presented information on documents at state and national conferences. Her most recent publishing activity is the book *Tapping State Government Information Sources* which was published in November of 2003.

I "talked" to Lori via email and this is what I learned about this remarkable Margaret T. Lane award winner:

### **Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in Oxford, Indiana. It's a tiny town in the northwestern part of the state. I didn't realize how tiny it was until I got to Indiana University and one day it dawned on me that there were more people living in my dorm than there were living in Oxford.

### **When and where did you get your MLS or MLIS degree?**

I got my MLS from Indiana University (Bloomington) in 1987.

### **Was there something in particular that led you to library school?**

A: After graduating with my bachelor's degree in Finance, I spent a year working at the drive-through window at a Dairy Queen. Since that wasn't exactly the

direction I wanted my future to take, I went through career counseling. They gave me an aptitude test that indicated I should pursue a career in Library Science. That option had never even occurred to me. However, it seemed so obvious once the test suggested it. I immediately started investigating library schools.

**What library classes and work experience have been the most beneficial to your career?**

I think every single class I took in library school has helped me in some way, but it was a course in library administration that gave me the philosophical foundation upon which I've built my career. In that course, Dr. David Kaiser told us that the role of libraries is to "acquire, organize, preserve, and deliver the human record." When I get frustrated with software that won't work, or with patrons asking the same questions endlessly, it helps me to keep that lofty goal in the back of my mind. As for work experience that's been beneficial, about 90% of the things I know about documents, I learned from the paraprofessional I worked with at St. Louis Public Library, Judy Schreyer. She taught me the GPO rules, the basic reference tools, and a multitude of other things that I still use today.

**Do you have other librarians in the family?**

Yes. After I finished library school, my older sister decided to get her M.L.S. as well. She had been a middle school band director, but she's now a school librarian in Michigan.

**How did you decide to work with documents? Was this always the plan or did you start out life as a librarian and by happy circumstance find yourself working with these intriguing materials?**

I took a government documents course in library school, but I never intended to specialize in them. They were just one of many types of literature I studied to prepare myself to be a general reference librarian. After I graduated and began looking for a job, I was called in to interview for a telephone reference position at St. Louis Public Library. They noticed that I had a government documents course on my transcript and asked if I'd be willing to interview simultaneously for a position in their Documents Department. I agreed, and it was the Documents position that they offered to me. I was more excited about the prospect of living in St. Louis than I was about working with documents, but I took the job. After about six months, I was hooked on documents forever.

**What were some of the joys and sorrows of writing your first book?**

After I began writing, it was really hard when I finally had to admit that a book with 50 state chapters was just too big a job for me to complete alone. I was very fortunate to find four co-authors who were willing to assist me with the writing. However, we each had our own unique writing quirks. (For instance, one co-

author consistently put an unnecessary period after two-letter state abbreviations.) Since the chapters were supposed to be as consistent as possible, I had the co-authors send their chapters to me. I edited out their quirks and tried to standardize references to specific publishers, and so on. The editing was less work than it would have been to write the chapters myself, but I definitely had moments when I would have gladly throttled each of my co-authors.

### Have you already decided on a follow up title?

If I ever get the urge to write another book, it will most likely be a novel about vampires entitled *Dr. Blood's Castle of Screaming Death*, or something along those lines. Other than doing a revised edition of my first book, I think I'm probably done with non-fiction.

### What is your favorite state or federal

When I do bibliographic always tell classes that my document is *Sprocket Man* (the comic book from the Consumer Commission), however, my real



### document?

instruction, I favorite federal bicycle safety Product Safety favorite is the



*Statistical Abstract.*

Thus far, my favorite state document is *Official Publications*. It's not an exciting title, but it's very useful.

## **What is your opinion regarding the GPO's move toward a predominantly electronic depository collection?**

I think it is wonderful how many documents are currently available on the Internet. They are much more easily accessible to the public than they were as print copies in depository libraries. However, until a foolproof method is found for long-term preservation of electronic publications, and until we can ensure that electronic information won't be altered or deleted in accordance with the philosophy of the current administration, I think it's a bad idea to stop issuing documents in print. Since I do believe that the role of libraries is to "acquire, organize, preserve, and deliver the human record," I won't really be satisfied until libraries can realistically accomplish all those things with electronic publications.

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## **Other People in the News**

Maureen Olle, Regional Documents Librarian at LSU, Baton Rouge, broke her leg recently in a rollerblading accident. Please wish her a speedy recovery!

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## **LaDOCumenting Events**

LLA Conference, Monroe, LA – March 22-24, 2004

Spring DLC, St. Louis, MO – April 18-21, 2004

Government Documents Cataloging Workshop, Baton Rouge, LA – May 13, 2004

Louisiana State and Federal Advisory Council meetings, Baton Rouge, LA – May 14, 2004

Annual ALA Conference, Orlando, FL – June 24-30, 2004

Please send your comments and ideas for future issues to Lora Amsberryaugier ([lamsberr@uno.edu](mailto:lamsberr@uno.edu)).