Museletter   Muse Law Library

10-2000

Museletter: October 2000

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Museletter

Fall 2000 Regular Library Hours

Sun.-10:00 a.m.-
Midnight
Mon.-Thurs.-7:30 a.m.
- Midnight
Fri. – 7:30 a.m.-
9:00 p.m.
Sat. – 9:00 a.m. -
9:00 p.m.

Fall Break
(Oct. 13-16)

Fri. Oct. 13 – 7:30 a.m.-
10:00 p.m.
Sat & Sun. Oct. 14-15 –
8:30 a.m. –7:00
p.m.
Mon. Oct. 16 – 7:30 a.m. -
6:00 p.m.
Tues. Oct. 17 – Resume
regular hours

IN THE PUBLIC EYE: MEET THE PUBLIC SERVICES STAFF
BY JAMES WIRRELL

The Public Services staff serve library patrons from both the Reference and the Circulation Desks. The Reference Desk provides research and informational assistance to law school students, faculty, local attorneys and other library patrons. The Circulation Desk provides access for patrons to the library's materials. As you can read below, the library's public services staff members are a diverse lot who are always ready to assist patrons with their questions and concerns.
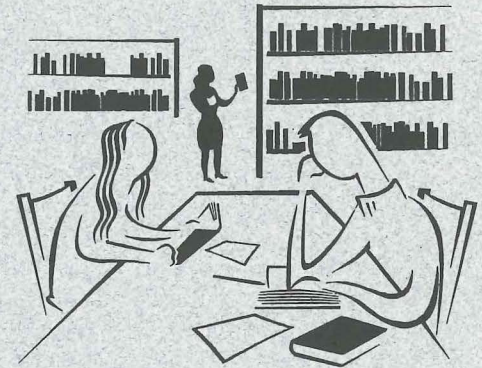
John Barden and **Gail Zwirner** are the full-time Reference/Research Services Librarians. **John**, who began working at the law library in 1998, staffs the reference desk approximately 12 hours per week. When he is not at the reference desk, he works on a variety of projects relating to the library's collections. Currently he is supervising the processing of Judge Merhige's papers and the development and arrangement of the Law School archives. **John** also teaches first year law students legal research in the law skills program. He has a law degree from the University of Virginia, a library degree from UNC-Chapel Hill, and a Ph.D. in American history from Duke. Good news reached us this month that John passed the Virginia bar exam. He has worked with rare books at Monticello and still writes and speaks on topics in early American history. John recently was elected to the vestry of the Church of the Epiphany in Richmond.

Gail Zwirner handles interlibrary loans, staffs the reference desk, and is a legal research instructor in the first year law skills program. **Gail** is very involved with the Virginia Association of Law Libraries, having served this organization in many capacities, including president. She served on the committee that encouraged the creation of the Virginia Administrative Code, and, along with **Tim Coggins** and **Sally Wambold**, helped assess Virginia's commitment to providing legal information via the internet. **Gail** served as a law firm librarian for several years before she moved to the University of Richmond. Outside of librarianship, **Gail** commits a great deal of time to her passions of revitalizing urban environments and preserving historic buildings. She has served on the board of the Fan District Association, and currently chairs its Master Plan Committee. She is the President of the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation, whose primary mission is to purchase substandard housing and renovate it for resale.

James Wirrell is Circulation/Reference Librarian. In this role, he oversees the operation of the Circulation Desk and also works at the reference desk. James is currently placing the library's collection of law school exams on the law school's intranet. He also is an instructor of legal research to first year law students in the law skills program. James, a Canadian who grew up in Vancouver, has law degrees from both the University of Illinois and the University of British Columbia in Canada, a library degree from the University of Illinois, and a Masters degree from Regent College in Vancouver. He also spent a year at the University of California – Hastings as an exchange student as part of his Canadian law degree. He enjoys traveling, British history, and web design, and is currently working on revamping his several websites.

W. Lois Brown, the newest addition to the library staff, started in September of this year as Circulation Assistant. In this capacity **Lois** will conduct daily inspections of the library, keep track of overdue items and fines, and assist in the general operations of the Circulation Desk. **Lois** earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Administration of Justice from Virginia Commonwealth University and is currently taking evening classes as she works toward an Information Systems degree from the University of Richmond. She is also learning the craft of working with stained glass. When **Lois** is not working or learning new things, she is at home trying to keep her three dogs out of trouble.

WEBSITES OF THE MONTH: ELECTION 2000

The Internet provides another medium beyond TV, radio, and print sources for educating voters about the November elections. Political websites have become much more interactive since the 1996 campaign, now offering video options, chat lines, and web polling (appropriately disclaimed to be "unscientific").

As of this writing, the Presidential election is predicted to be the closest election in decades. Absent any debate "bloopers," the polls show the current voting trend to be well within the "margin of error." Virginia's senate race is also "too close to call," and, along with the New York senate race, is discussed at length by the pundits.

Vote November 7

As in the 1996 campaign when candidate websites were first introduced, the candidates are subject to "spoof" sites. For example, the official Bush site is www.georgewbush.com. The campaign also captured several variables, such as george-bush.com and bush2000.com that will link to the official site. However, if you enter bushcheney.com or gwbush.com, you'll encounter some rather unsavory language and photographs most likely not welcome by the Bush campaign. Al Gore's official site is www.algore2000.com.

All network news organizations have websites, but CNN and CBS offer the most comprehensive sites. CNN's "Allpolitics" (www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS) led the news services in the last election, and offers more "bells and whistles" this year. All services offer their latest tracking polls, but CNN includes the critical electoral college vote analysis. Another CNN site, "Election 2000" (www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000), includes videos of debates and stump speeches. CBS' site (www.cbsnews.com) links to sources for extensive election coverage.
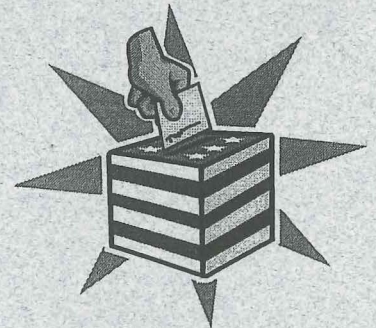
Both major parties have official web presence, and both, frankly, commit more space to attacking the opposing party than presenting their own party's positions. The Democratic National Committee site (www.democrats.org) offers links to state voter registration information. "Voter Outreach" links target ethnic and social groups for inclusion in the Democratic Party community. DNC leadership history and resources can be found under "Party Headquarters." You won't be surprised to see a "Support the DNC" link, allowing individuals to donate money to support the party.
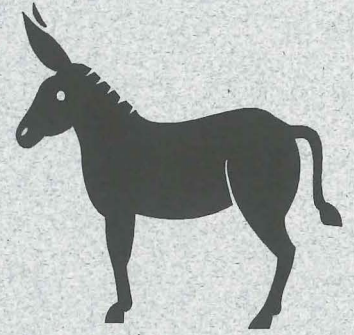
The Republican National Committee's site (www.rnc.org) also offers a "Newsroom" with the latest news releases and commentary. Their position papers and reports on social security, education , taxes, and defense appear under a "Key Issues" link. The "GOP Directory" connects to state party information.

The Reform Party (www.reformparty.org) and Green Party (www.greenparty.org) both have web presence for Election 2000.

The Federal Election Commission site (www.fec.gov) is the official repository for required reports that disclose how much money a campaign has raised and spent for presidential and congressional campaigns. The FEC also provides "media," "citizen," and "candidate and committee" guides that include FOIA information, policies, regulations, and forms.

Concerned about campaign finance reform and "soft money" contributions? The Center for Responsive Politics' site (www.opensecrets.org) provides a list of organizations giving $100,000 or more in soft money. Organizations with strong Virginia ties, such as America Online, American Trucking Associations, CSX, Dominion Resources, and Philip Morris, have given hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Democrats and Republicans. The FECInfo site (www.tray.com/fecinfo) is a user-friendly site that can be searched by name, state, Political Action Committee, or individual to find campaign contribution information. Special analyses include contributors by occupation or zip code and candidates receiving the most out-of-state money.

Project Vote Smart (www.vote-smart.org) is the major program of the Center for National Independence in Politics. The site was selected by the American Political Science Association as the best political website, and now includes research and voter information for over 40,000 candidates. Candidate information includes biographical information, issue position papers, voting records, campaign finances, and evaluations of the candidates by special interest groups.

Policy.com (www.policy.com) is the perfect site for a "policy wonk," and claims to be the Web's most comprehensive public policy resource. The "issues library" covers issues from A to Z (or at least W) — agriculture to welfare & housing. The "Community" section provides a list of think tanks, advocacy groups, associations, foundations, businesses, and many international organizations.

To get your children started in the process, link to "Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids" (bensguide. gpo.gov/). Link to the appropriate school grade, and find descriptions of the branches of government, how laws are made, citizenship, and the election process.

The University of Michigan has compiled an Elections 2000 reference guide at www.lib.umich.edu/libhome/ Documents.center/elec2000.html. It provides many references to sites for children, Library of Congress Subject Headings for research strategies, recommended periodical indexes, candidate resources, and lobby group websites.
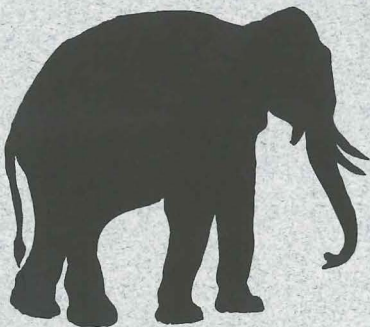
October 10th was the deadline for voter registration, but if you meet the criteria submit an absentee ballot in Virginia, use the application at www.sbe.state.va.us/ Election/absente1.htm. It must be signed, witnessed, and filed in person or by fax (sorry not web filing at this time) with the appropriate Registrar's office by November 2. Richmond's fax number is 646-7848 and information number is 780-5950.

—G.F.Z.

Lexis/Westlaw Update

Lexis added two major sources to its system this month. *Computer Law* by David Bender, is billed as the "only treatise available that covers the concepts and techniques of evidence and discovery procedures as they apply to computer based information and to the protection of computer software under intellectual property laws."

Also added is *Current Leasing Law and Techniques—Forms*, a comprehensive, practical guide that contains legal analysis, checklists, practice commentary and forms for leasing transactions.

Lexis recently acquired Mealey Publications, Inc., which publishes very popular current awareness tools for attorneys on various hot litigation topics such as toxic torts, environmental insurance, construction defects, tobacco, and asbestos.
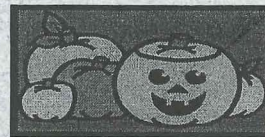
Westlaw added the newest restatement, the *Restatement of Law Governing Lawyers* to its databases. The new "Forms-All" database contains forms from over 50 forms databases, and includes documents from *West's Federal Forms* and *American Jurisprudence Pleading and Practice Forms Annotated*. The Personal Injury Jury Verdicts Database contains jury verdict and settlement summaries related to personal injury law.

News from Dr. Catalog: When Was That Law Journal Really Published?
By Sally Wambold

Recently, a law faculty member was trying to determine exactly when certain issues of several law reviews were published and distributed. He wanted to accept a publication offer for his article from the law review that most closely met its published publication schedule. There's an easy way to get this information — through the online library system.

Receipt information is recorded in the serials module of the online catalog when the library receives the item. A library staff member can help you locate a comparison of receipt dates for 3-5 years, which will give you a good indication about whether or not the law review will likely be published by the promised date. Using the online system means that you do not have to look at the stamped receipt date on the front of each issue of a particular title.

Contact a librarian at the Reference Desk if you need this type of information.