

A PUBLICATION OF THE MARYLAND STATE LAW LIBRARY

IN THIS ISSUE:

- [HISTORY OR MYSTERY: THE SEARCH FOR LEGISLATIVE INTENT IN MARYLAND, A PRIMER](#)
- [LIBRARY EXPANDS HOLDINGS OF PRACTICE-ORIENTED MATERIALS](#)
- [FINDING A LAW REVIEW WAS NEVER EASIER](#)
- [PIXELS](#)
- [CALVERT COUNTY LAW LIBRARY WEB PAGE DEBUTS](#)
- [CIRCUIT COURT LAW LIBRARY CATALOGS IN DEVELOPMENT](#)
- [SELECTED NEW PUBLICATIONS AT THE LIBRARY \(EXTERNAL LINK\)](#)

## HISTORY OR MYSTERY: THE SEARCH FOR LEGISLATIVE INTENT IN MARYLAND, A PRIMER

BY RUDOLF B. LAMY

There is no legislative history in Maryland before 1976.

Much more accurately, there is no *formal* legislative history, as we now know it, before 1976. There are sources that can be used to research legislative history and intent before 1976, but the bill files that we are used to working with nowadays simply did not come into existence until then. The farther back in time your search for legislative history goes, the harder it becomes to track down what you are looking for; always assuming of course that the information you want exists at all.

Searching for legislative history and intent can take you to many interesting and amazing times and places. The Library can be your guide through the labyrinthine process of finding just the right documents to solve your legislative puzzles.

You may want to prepare for your search by starting with a document available on the Library web site, "[Ghost Hunting: Searching for Maryland Legislative History](#)." We also have the April 2005 presentation on the subject done by the Library's former director, "[Deciphering the Codes: Researching Legislative History \(In Maryland\)](#)" (also available to watch on video in the Library).

Once on your way, you may find yourself on a convoluted path full of House or Senate Journals, Governor's Task Force Reports (for a list of these, see the [Library's Publications page](#)), committee proceedings and newspapers, using multiple libraries, archives and web sites. You might even find yourself exploring the ever-arcaic world of English common law. The documentation you find may also be in multiple formats. Depending on the age of the legislation you are researching, you could even be accessing information in microform, print and electronic formats all for the same hunt.

Just remember that the Library and its staff stand ready to lend you their expertise and assistance in tracking down a solution to your latest legislative mystery.

## LIBRARY EXPANDS HOLDINGS OF PRACTICE-ORIENTED MATERIALS

BY STEVE ANDERSON

The Library staff has been hard at work over the last several months purchasing new resources of direct benefit to legal practitioners. Some of these new sources are online, but others continue to be acquired in print, due in part to that format preference by some publishers.

In addition to the new databases and law review portal mentioned in the articles below, the Library has significantly expanded its holdings of Maryland-related continuing legal education (CLE) handbooks. These practice-oriented materials published by [MICPEL](#), as well as [Lorman](#) and [NBI](#), provide in-depth insight to cutting edge topics of interest to legal professionals. The handbooks are also beneficial to lay researchers because the works usually thoroughly explain the topics they cover.

The Library believes that its CLE handbooks collection contributes to a vital and growing part of Maryland's legal knowledgebase. These handbooks also help fill a gap in legal information that has developed during the past several decades. On the one hand, law reviews have become increasingly academically-oriented, whereas in the past they were more focused on practice tips. On the other hand, classic legal treatises have risen in price, so that fewer attorneys and law libraries own them. Consequently, publishers are not greatly increasing the number of state-specific legal treatise titles.

CLE providers now are quite prolific in the publication of the handbooks that accompany their educational programming. The rapid increase in "desktop publishing" allows the providers to reprint the materials submitted to them by the speakers themselves. Although there is some editing process depending on the provider, much of the material is written solely by the speakers presenting at seminars. This has made some commentators critical of the quality of the handbooks, and indeed the adequacy and accuracy of the materials vary from writer to writer. Nevertheless, as professionals, most attorney-authors have detailed subject matter knowledge and share this valuable information in a refined and dignified manner.

The State Law Library is the only library in Maryland that strives to acquire a comprehensive collection of these materials. Not only should this service provide immediate benefit to researchers today, but as the preeminent repository for Maryland legal publications, it is hoped that the collection will provide some value to researchers in coming years. Admittedly, many CLE handbooks are written with immediate practicality in mind. Still, some information also will be historically important; it will at least provide a sort of "legal time capsule" for Maryland-based law practice. The Library's MICPEL handbooks, for example, already date back thirty years, and some of this information is used regularly, though researchers are advised to bring their information up-to-date using other sources. The recent addition of Lorman and NBI CLE handbooks serves to strengthen the entire collection.

If you need to find CLE handbooks on a precise topic, just search the [Library's online catalog \(MOLLIE\)](#) or [e-mail the Reference Desk](#). State Law Library staff is always willing to assist.

## FINDING A LAW REVIEW WAS NEVER EASIER

BY MARY JO LAZUN

Need a quick way to see if the Maryland State Law Library has a particular journal? Try our new "[Journal & Law Review Portal](#)." This easy-to-use portal lists all journals the Library subscribes to via Hein Online, Westlaw, LegalTrac and in print. Online, full text access to over 1300 titles is at your fingertips for those on the Judiciary network and have a Westlaw password. In fact, the Library is the first nationwide to use this portal service to "deep link" to individual Westlaw files.

The software that makes this possible is the SerialsSolutions "Access and Management Suite." SerialSolutions partners with major publishers to get complete lists of their online publications. As providers, like Hein Online, add journals to their collection, these are immediately available to us via the "[Journal & Law Review Portal](#)."

Finding a journal is efficient as long as you know just a few words of the title. You can browse a list of journals or just type in a couple of key words and a list of all journals with those words in the title will appear. Simply click on the link to go directly to the journal. (Note: for Westlaw titles you will need to login after clicking on the link.)

You can find the "[Journal & Law Review Portal](#)" at: <http://www.lawlib.state.md.us/opacmenu.html>.

# **PIXELS**

**BY DONNA WIESINGER**

Library users now have access to several new online subscription databases, including selected Loislaw and CCH titles, plus public access to the BNA Tax Management Library. The new databases are available from all six of the library's public computers, and with one exception, do not require a login and password – just click the link from the computer's start page to begin!

Selected materials from the BNA Tax Management Library include items from the Federal and tax practice libraries, including the Weekly Reports, IRS and Treasury Regulations, tax forms, tax legislation and BNA's reputable Tax Management Portfolios series.

Selections from the Loislaw database include CLE publications and Aspen Law & Business treatise libraries on various topics, including general litigation, product liability law, real estate law, employment law and practice, employment discrimination law and family law.

The CCH titles are currently divided into three separate databases, accessible via three different links on the start page.

Titles under each database include:

CCH Business:

- *Contract Appeals Decisions*
- *Maryland Corporation Law and Practice*

CCH Human Resources:

- *Maryland and Federal Unemployment Insurance*
- *Social Security Reports*

CCH Tax (requires login/password; ask at the Reference Desk for assistance)

- *Federal Estate & Gift Tax Reporter*
- *Tax Court Reports*
- *Maryland State Tax Report*
- *Standard Federal Tax Reporter*

Stop by and explore these new resources!

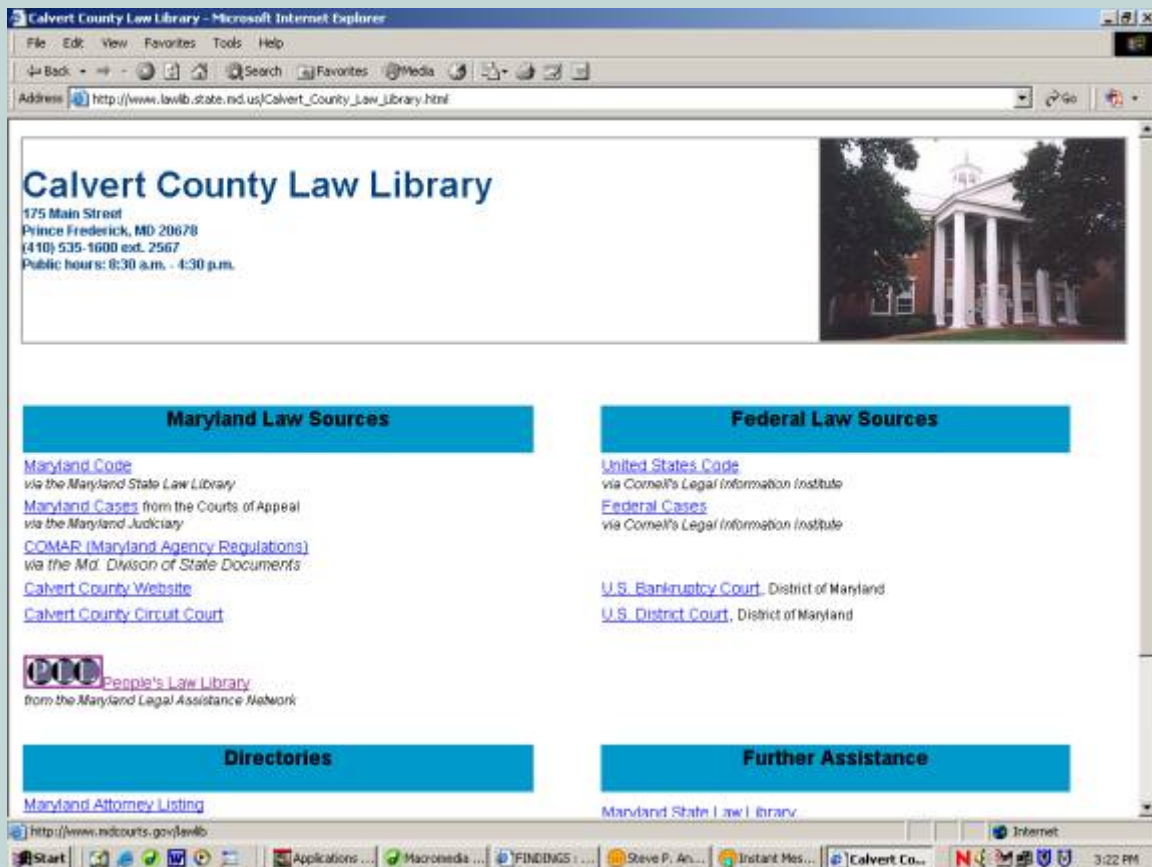
If you have any questions about these new sources, or would like to schedule training on the use of any of the databases, please contact Donna Wiesinger, the Systems/Electronic Resources Librarian, at 410-260-1435, or [donna.wiesinger@mdcourts.gov](mailto:donna.wiesinger@mdcourts.gov).

# CALVERT COUNTY LAW LIBRARY WEB PAGE DEBUTS

BY CATHERINE MCGUIRE

This month saw the debut of a new "start page" for the [Calvert County Law Library](#). Designed to be simple, straightforward and easy-to-use, the page is hosted on the Maryland State Law Library's website under the link for [Maryland County Public Law Library Materials](#). The site was set up by the Outreach Program to include the websites most likely to be first needed by Calvert County Law Library users. Links include the Maryland Code, cases and COMAR, Federal cases and the U.S. Code, and the People's Law Library, as well as several useful directories and sites for further research.

Similar pages are under development for several other county law libraries, with edits and amendments based on each library's particular needs. These pages will be loaded alongside the Calvert County page from the State Law Library's website as they are completed.



*Screenshot of the new Calvert County Law Library web page.*

# CIRCUIT COURT LAW LIBRARY CATALOGS IN DEVELOPMENT

BY CATHERINE MCGUIRE

Maryland Circuit Court library personnel met in Annapolis for their 9th annual meeting in October 2006. One of the topics under discussion was the need for smaller Circuit Court libraries to develop catalogs of their collections, with the assistance of the State Law Library. A catalog is a compilation of records describing the contents of a specific library's collection. It can be used for collection development, as a reference aide, or as a budget tool, among other things. A catalog can be as simple as a list that includes information on author, title, publisher information, and publication date. For some small libraries that do not have the resources to purchase database software, a spreadsheet or word processing table will be sufficient to provide the necessary information.

There are several arguments in favor of each county law library developing such a simple catalog list. First and foremost, a straightforward listing of all the items in a library functions as a tracking mechanism for the maintenance of the collection. With an up-to-date and accurate list of the publications the library receives, library staff can monitor incoming materials and ensure that looseleaves and supplements are regularly and appropriately received and updated. Staff can contact publishers when updates are not received in a timely fashion. Should a publisher send along an unsolicited item, staff can easily check the list to see if the title is received or not, and return to the publisher unsolicited items, avoiding unnecessary invoicing or "accidental acquisition" (stamping a received item into your collection, then later finding out you don't actually own it). When budget time rolls around, a chart is already in place for the library staff to calculate rising costs, estimate for future revenue needs and thus accurately request funding. A list also aids in the evaluation of the overall collection. With all titles in one place, it becomes easier to assess the full collection and make decisions as to which topical areas need new titles. The list can be sorted by publication date and weighed against a retention policy in order to decide which items can be removed from the collection.

A catalog or simple list also functions as a public reference aide. Should a patron call the library to ask if that library has a particular publication, library staff can quickly and easily check the list and confirm the availability and publication date of an item. When shared outside the individual library, the catalog becomes an indispensable bridge in connecting patrons to their needs.

The State Law Library's Outreach Program proposed at the Annual Meeting that each library develop such a list in consultation with the Outreach Program for posting on the State Law Library's [Maryland County Public Law Library Materials](#) web page. With a web-posting of catalog lists, colleagues and patrons will no longer need to contact a library to confirm if an item is owned. If a particular item is not owned by the local law library, nearby libraries' collections can be quickly searched to see who might have the resource.

There are a healthy number of software packages that can be tailored to a small library's catalog needs. However, keeping in mind the space, staff time and budget constraints of most Maryland Circuit Court libraries, the best program to use in creating a catalog is probably Microsoft Excel. This application has sorting capability, making it possible to structure the catalog by title, author, published date, update due date or some other field.

The Outreach Program is in the process of drafting proposed collection and retention outlines for small county law libraries to use as guidelines. Included in the draft will be suggestions for creating a local catalog using Excel. With the active participation of county law libraries statewide, citizens will have greater access to legal information at their local courthouses.