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# BUILDING COLLECTIONS AND SERVING CUSTOMERS

BY STEVE ANDERSON

As you read about all of the Library's many accomplishments and services in the articles below, it is worth considering just what it is that libraries do and how each adds value to society. In my view, libraries do two things, although many activities are included under each topic.

First, libraries build collections of information resources and then preserve them for posterity. For example, the State Law Library tries to continually expand its resources, including the purchase of continuing legal education (CLE) handbooks, new online databases, and, of course, ongoing supplementation to hundreds of legal treatises. Additionally, the Library strives to ensure that future generations have access to these materials by retaining fragile or old books in the newly-rebuilt Special Collections Room. The Library serves as a depository for state and federal government publications, as well.

Second, libraries guide customers to these collections in order to make them as easily accessible as possible. Traditional concepts, such as reference services and cataloging practices, demonstrate how libraries can streamline the research process. Today, of course, websites, such as the Library's new one described below, and online catalogs go a long way toward promoting access to information resources.

One State Law Library staff member, Acquisitions Librarian Bernice Bernstein, recently received an award that exemplifies the commitment that librarians have to building collections. The [Maryland Daily Record](#) recently honored Bernice, a long-time Library staff member, as one of its "[Unsung Legal Heroes](#)." At the Library, Bernice is in charge of processing and arranging payment for most of the incoming publications. Indeed, because of Bernice's commitment and service ethic during the last 42 years, the Library's collection is much, much richer. Thanks, Bernice!

Happily, a second recent award demonstrates the Library's obligation to promoting access to information. Most notably because of the efforts and creativity of Outreach Service Librarian Catherine McGuire, the American Association of Law Libraries gave its [2008 Law Library Publication Award \(Print Division\)](#) to the State Law Library for its [Fiscal Year 2007 Annual Report](#). This publication, along with other promotional materials, fosters awareness about the Library as a valuable resource for legal and historical research.

The Library is committed to enhancing and preserving its substantial collection and strives to promote access to it. The Library's staff is recognized by the legal community for its many efforts on behalf of Maryland's citizens and looks forward to continuing such exemplary service.

# PIXELS

BY MARY JO LAZUN

## A New Design for the Library's Website

The Library recently went through the task of redesigning its web site. Like many web sites, the old one had outgrown its original design, making it difficult to maintain and add new information. Previous site statistics helped us determine which pages were most used and gave us guidance on how the pages should be clustered. For example, our "Sources of Maryland Law" page was the most used page, so it is featured on the new site as the focus of the "Research Tools" section. We also found that our directions page about "Parking" was highly used, but a bit buried in the previous design. These statistics, along with conversations with individuals who use the site, helped us come up with an organization that is both flexible and easy to maintain.

Another factor that influenced the redesign was the recent "acquisition" by the Library of the of the [Maryland Peoples Law Library \(PLL\)](#). The PLL web site focuses on providing self-help legal resources for Maryland residents. With the PLL focus on legal self-help, the Library web site now can focus on describing the Library's collections, services, and research tools. To ease the transition for people who have bookmarked favorite pages, temporary redirect pages were set up so that people would be forwarded to the new page on the Library web site or to the appropriate page on PLL.

New to the web site are the "Just For . . ." pages for the Library's major user groups, including: Judiciary employees, legal professionals, the self-represented, historians, librarians, and students. The goal of these pages is to provide a single page with links to the tools and resources that each audience requires. The "Legal Professionals" web page, for example, highlights services the Library offers like document delivery and its list of legal databases. Similarly, the "Historians" page highlights the Library's extensive collection of Maryland history materials and newspapers. The site also includes a search tool for both the entire Library web site and its catalog. These search boxes are available on all the site's web pages.

Here is a brief overview of site:

- **Navigation Bar:** The red navigation bar has "mouseovers" that link to most major pages on the site. It acts as a table of contents for the web site.
- **Collections:** Describes materials that we have in the library. The gem of this section is a subject listing of **ALL** Task Force Reports. Many of these pages have special search boxes to search a single collection in the Library's catalog, i.e., Maryland Law, Task Force Reports, and Federal Documents. A link to our new books is also in this area.
- **Research:** Includes "Sources of Maryland Laws" with links to the three public versions of the code, county codes, judicial opinions, COMAR, etc. Many of our previous "library publications" are on the "How To Guides" page. This page has links to information on conducting legislative research, reading citations and more.
- **Services:** Includes links to our major services like reference and document delivery and includes information about our public computers and interlibrary loan policy.
- **Just For . . .:** Are pages designed to provide cross-links to resources targeted for our various patrons. The concept is a single page that has the most needed resources for a particular audience.
- **About Us:** Contains links to the "Findings" newsletter, staff listing, hours and directions, the Library's mission statement, etc.
- **Site Map:** Is an index of all pages on the web site.

The new Library site was developed using Dreamweaver. In fact, the Library is indebted to Theresa Thomas of the Court Information Office who showed staff how to use Dreamweaver's template features that made design and updating the site much more manageable.

The Library also applied the new web site "look and feel" to its catalog, journal portal, and computer workstation home pages. A redesign of the Library's CourtNet page will be coming soon.

# AN EMPHASIS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

BY CAROLE ROCHÉ

The reference librarians at the Maryland State Law Library share a common goal: excellent customer service. The Library's customers include not only the employees of the Judiciary, but a wide range of others, as well, including: self-represented litigants, attorneys, paralegals, students, and historical or genealogical researchers. While some patrons know exactly what it is they need, many others do not. We strive to meet the expectations of our patrons by doing the following:

- **Welcoming the Library Customer**

A visit to any library can be a daunting experience. It is our hope that a visit to the State Law Library is never troubling for any researcher, and we welcome all to use the Library's rich resources.

- **Asking Questions**

One of the most unique challenges for every research librarian in striving to provide excellent customer service is eliciting enough information from the customer in order to provide useful resources. In order to understand what a researcher needs, it is crucial to have an accurate understanding of the researcher's needs. A "reference interview" is quite important and includes open-ended questions, clarification questions, and follow-up questions in order to establish a framework for the researcher's work.

- **Providing Resources**

We have so much to offer at the State Law Library. Indeed, the vast number of resources can be overwhelming to a customer at times. After conducting an effective reference interview, we are able to direct customers to the most appropriate resources.

- **Following Up**

What else can we do to be of help? A final check with a customer is necessary to determine that he or she has the necessary resources and is able to work with the resources in an effective way.

- **Providing Flexible Hours of Service**

Not only is the State Law Library open during regular business hours, but it is also open Tuesday and Thursday evenings until 9:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

While our diverse clientele keeps the reference staff busy, our commitment to excellent customer service remains foremost!

# LAW AND WATER AT THE MARYLAND STATE LAW LIBRARY

BY RUDOLF B. LAMY

It's Spring in the Mid-Atlantic. Trying to use water flowing through your property, have you found yourself suddenly up the Riparian Creek without a paddle? Perhaps you're trying to get a boat back in the water and find yourself adrift in the Admiralty Sea. If so, you will find the Maryland State Law Library a very fine source of water-related legal resources, riparian or admiralty.

Water rights are not just about that stream on your property; they can be an important part of boundary disputes as well. You will find a broad assortment of water rights material in the Library's collection:

- State Documents such as "**Riparian forest buffer design and maintenance**"
- CLE materials like "**Boundary disputes: resolving client conflicts**"
- Older treatises such as "**Maryland water law: water laws and legal principles affecting the use of water in Maryland**"
- And law review articles on interstate disputes like "**Virginia v. Maryland: the United States Supreme Court resolved whether Maryland has the regulatory authority over Virginia's use of the Potomac River**"

While riparian rights cover inland waterways, admiralty law governs the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland's Atlantic shore. Admiralty is a well-covered subject in the Library's collections, where you will find such titles as:

- "**American Maritime Cases**"
- "**Benedict on Admiralty**" (7th revised)
- "**Admiralty & Maritime Law**" (4th)
- "**Law of Maritime Personal Injuries**" (5th)
- "**Law of Seamen**" (5th)
- "**Admiralty in a Nutshell**"

The Maryland State Law Library also offers a fine selection of maritime law and admiralty- themed law reviews in both hard copy and electronic formats. These include:

- "**Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce**" [electronic resource]
- "**Loyola Maritime Law Journal**" [electronic resource]
- "**The Maritime Lawyer**"
- "**Tulane Maritime Law Journal**"
- "**Coast Guard Law Bulletin**"

If you are a maritime or Maryland history aficionado, the Library also has items of interest for you, too:

- "**Courts of admiralty in Colonial America: the Maryland experience, 1634-1776**"
- "**Courts of admiralty and the common law: origins of the American experiment in concurrent jurisdiction**"
- "**USS Constellation: from frigate to sloop of war**"
- "**Steamboat on the Chesapeake: Emma Giles and the Tolchester line**"
- "**The Baltimore Clipper: its origin and development**"
- "**Design makes a difference: shipbuilding in Baltimore, 1795-1835**"

The Chesapeake Bay itself is represented quite well in the Library's collections. You will find law, history, maps and stories about the Chesapeake with just a quick search of our online catalog. If you are looking for books, journals or electronic sources; if you are practicing law or studying history; whether your interest is admiralty, maritime law or Chesapeake Bay fisheries; the Maryland State Law Library offers you the opportunity to select from a broad and varied collection of "watery" materials. There is more to the Library's resources than its collections. The Library Staff stands ready at all times to answer your questions. If maritime law and admiralty are new to you, we can help you sail through those uncharted waters.

# CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION MATERIALS AT THE MARYLAND STATE LAW LIBRARY

BY RUDOLF B. LAMY

Judging by the response to questions we receive about continuing legal education (CLE) materials, many Maryland legal practitioners are unaware that there are several CLE handbook publishers providing both Maryland-based and national resources. If you are interested in keeping up-to-date with the latest in CLE, the Maryland State Law Library is the place for you.

The best know purveyor of CLE in Maryland, of course, is the Maryland Institute for the Continuing Professional Education of Lawyers (MICPEL). The State Law Library's online catalog lists over 100 offerings from MICPEL dated between 2000 and 2008. These range in topics from Accounting to Torts and cover both Maryland and federal law.

What many attorneys are now finding is that the Library acquires CLE material from other publishers as well. For example, the Library lists in its catalog over 90 recent titles from Lorman Educational Services of Eau Claire, WI. In addition, the catalog contains more than 30 titles from the last few years by the National Business Institute (also of Eau Claire). These publications are also wide ranging in subject matter; they cover everything from the Americans with Disabilities Act to Zoning.

There are times when you need to know what the law was like a good number of years ago. To assist in handling older cases and legal research into past procedures, the Library also keeps a fairly comprehensive collection of retrospective CLE materials from MICPEL.

In addition to the usual CLE materials, the Library has about 150 titles from the Thomson/West "Nutshell" series listed in its catalog. If you need a good, solid overview of an area of law you are unfamiliar with, the West "Nutshell" series may be exactly what you are looking for.

If you'd like to keep abreast of the latest in legal materials written specifically for the general public, the Library can assist you with that also. The Library has an extensive collection of self-help titles, including almost 200 from NOLO Press and another 200 from the Oxford Press / Oceana "Law for the Layperson" series.

# A STEP BACK IN TIME

BY CAROLE ROCHÉ

Some of the most interesting work conducted by the customers of the State Law Library involves historical and genealogical research. Our most useful resources for historical researchers and genealogists include the following:

- Baltimore Sun on microfilm, dating from 1832
- Annapolis Capital, microfilm and full text online
- Newspaper Archive database
- Family genealogies
- Cemetery records
- Compilations of court records, such as land records
- Books about individual Maryland cities and counties
- State agency publications

As much as we have to offer our customers, however, our customers often bring useful resources to us, as well. Three websites often mentioned and well worth noting are the following:

## **Baltimore County Public Library Legacy Web – Historic Photographs**

This website offers a vast collection of historic photographs in and around Maryland. [This link](#), for example, takes you to a digitized photo of the Baltimore County Courthouse taken on a winter day in the 1920's.

## **Find-A-Grave**

Find-A-Grave offers an extensive listing of both famous and non-famous graves. It is possible to use the simple search engine to search specific cemeteries by surname. The site includes information about particular graves and, very often, photographs.

## **Dead Fred**

Not yet as extensive as Find-A-Grave, Dead Fred provides another way to conduct research on cemeteries online. Dead Fred houses nearly 82,000 records of graves. The site offers search tips, discussion forums, and more. Dead Fred is also the publisher of ***The Desperate Genealogist's Idea Book***.

# UPDATE ON GRANT FUNDING FOR CIRCUIT COURT LAW LIBRARIES

BY CATHERINE MCGUIRE

The Fiscal Year 2008 Grants are almost complete, with only a little bit of paperwork left to close out the season. This fiscal season saw a substantial revision in the way the State Law Library administers grants. In order to comply with new Judiciary grant procedures, the Outreach Program of the State Law Library began work in December on creating the necessary new processes.

Previously, Library grants had been sent out as a payment to each grantee library at the end of the Library's fiscal cycle, to be used by Circuit Court libraries in the following fiscal year (i.e., grants were sent in June 2007 to be used July 2007 through June 2008). This, however, created some difficulties. The new Judiciary policy requires that funds appropriated for a fiscal year must be used in that fiscal year. To fit the Library's grants program onto that cycle, "short term" grants were issued, using the Library's Fiscal Year 2008 appropriation for grants to be used by the end of FY08. Going forward, grantee libraries will use FY09 funds in FY09, FY10 funds in FY10, etc.

New forms were drawn up to conform with Judiciary standards, so that all Maryland State Judiciary grant programs will use similar forms. Quarterly reports are now required, with reimbursement available also on a quarterly basis.

On a practical level for the 2008 fiscal year, it has meant some increase in paperwork and new procedures for both the Outreach Services Program and for the grantee libraries. The former grant policy required only a mid-year report from grantees, with a summary final report. Throughout 2008, by contrast, deadlines for the various requirements, reports, applications, and reimbursements had to be confirmed and reconfirmed to make sure everyone understood what they were expected to submit and receive.

Now, in July, these challenges will be close to an end. As of July 1, 2008, grant recipients for the FY09 grant year can begin to spend FY09 funds. FY08 grants will close out by mid-August. Grantee libraries will be following only one policy, and while there is more paperwork involved in the new policy, the timelines are clearly laid out, the reports are kept to the simplest requirements possible, and having gone through the cycle once, everyone should find the next cycle much easier.

During FY08, over \$200,000 in grants were distributed to Circuit Court libraries. About half of the funds were used for public Westlaw or Lexis access in the libraries. Approximately another 25% were used for subscriptions and publications purchases; about 10% for facilities-related expenses (furniture, shelving, etc.); approximately 10% on salaries for library personnel; and about 5% on computers and other projects. Because all end-of-year reports are not yet in, these numbers are approximate, but show the general distribution of usage.

The new requirements for grants, specifically the reimbursement method of disbursement, may present some issues. However, the reporting requirements, with their added specificity, will help to aid the Outreach Program, and all Circuit Court library-related personnel, in determining where funds are needed, why funds are needed, and how a particular library measures up to other libraries in apportioning expenses. Hopefully, with a clearer picture emerging, all libraries will benefit.