

1989

Book Review of Canadian Association of Law Libraries Newsletter/Bulletin

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Repository Citation

Heller, James S., "Book Review of Canadian Association of Law Libraries Newsletter/Bulletin" (1989). *Library Staff Publications*. 113.
<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/libpubs/113>

des Bibliothèques de Droit, Vol. 1- , No. 1- .
Downsview, Ont., Canadian Association of
Law Libraries, 1970- . 5 issues/yr. \$60.00/yr.

Published in English five times a year, this newsletter/bulletin is the official publication of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries (CALL). Each issue includes professional news and developments, articles, reports of committees and special interest groups, and book reviews. Statistical surveys prepared by CALL committees and special interest groups are periodically published. The proceedings of the annual conference are published yearly, as is an annual index.

The news and developments section informs CALL members of activities of the national and regional Canadian library associations and of other law library-related developments. Feature articles range from one thousand to five thousand words and address such disparate topics as public legal education in Canada and early courts in Alberta. Book reviews averaging about five hundred words critique scholarly legal treatises as well as literature on law librarianship. Surveys may be limited in scope (e.g., salaries of law firm librarians) or very broad (e.g., comprehensive data on academic, courthouse, and law association libraries). Each issue also lists CALL officers and chairs of committees and special interest groups.

The newsletter/bulletin has the dilemma of trying to be both a vehicle for informing the more than four hundred CALL members of professional activities and a scholarly journal. Compounding this problem is the historical difficulty the editors have had in getting publication copy from members. Recent changes, however, have led to a more professional and useful publication. Issues are now planned one year in advance, resulting in a tighter and better defined publication. Other recently implemented changes include regular columns on regional membership news and reviews of databases. Furthermore, contracting with a desktop publisher has improved the style and editorial oversight.

The newsletter/bulletin succeeds quite well as the sole publication of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries. Substantial progress has been made in the past year which should make it even more valuable to CALL members and to others wanting to keep abreast of developments in Canadian law libraries.

James S. Heller