Policy debate on the provision of broadband telecommunications capacity and the delivery of electronic information services is heating up again in the wake of recent court decisions, Federal Communications Commission proposals, and pending legislation. A series of ads in major daily newspapers by the newspaper and telephone industries (specifically by the Regional Bell Operating Companies or RBOCs) have raised questions among librarians about ALA's position concerning the issues addressed by the ads. In one ad, ALA was listed as a potential information provider.

The issue prompting this campaign for public attention is under what conditions the regional phone companies should be allowed to provide information services. The issue itself dates back to the breakup of the Bell system in 1982 through an antitrust decision (the Modified Final Judgment or MFJ). Judge Harold Greene of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, who has continued to preside over issues resulting from divestiture, prohibited the RBOCs, newly created in 1984, from entering unregulated businesses such as electronic publishing because of the RBOCs' dominant power in their local service areas. While this dominance over local telephone service is eroding, most telephone customers are still able to obtain local service from only one company. Judge Greene last year reluctantly lifted the restrictions.

The RBOCs now have what they want through the courts and oppose any legislation to undo the court decision or to impose restrictions on their provision of information services, but they would like to get into other areas still off limits to them—provision of cable TV signals and programming, and provision of long distance service. The regional telcos claim they need to carry TV signals as economic incentive to replace copper wire with high-capacity fiber to the home. The cable industry would like to get into the phone business. The newspaper publishers are the most vocal opponent of RBOC entry into information services, fearing loss of classified ad revenue. Adding to the policy ferment are FCC proposals to further deregulate the telecommunications industry, including allowing the phone companies to provide a "video dialtone" service. Various bills (among them, HR 3515, S. 2112, HR 2546, S. 1200, and HR 3701) are pending in Congress supported by one industry group or another, and hearings have been held on most of them. Public interest, consumer, and education group reactions have been mixed.

ALA's Committee on Legislation, active in recent years on telecommunications issues such as opposing access charges on enhanced service providers, and promoting library interests in legislation to establish the National Research and Education Network, has not yet recommended an ALA position on the issue of RBOC provision of information services. The arguments for opposing phone company provision of information services are strong. The RBOCs, which often have monopoly power in their local service areas, would have the incentive and the ability to discriminate against competing information providers or to subsidize their own information services with regulated revenues, despite statutory protections. For protection of free expression, the common carrier controlling the local conduit should have no control over the content carried over that conduit.

However, some librarians have argued that sophisticated information services will never reach rural libraries or residents of rural and sparsely populated areas until the phone companies are permitted to provide them. Some have suggested that libraries should work with phone companies and negotiate favorable arrangements to make library services available to the public via phone company gateways.

The Committee on Legislation discussed these issues recently, felt that further information services was needed and that ALA would recommend a position in the future.

(Cont. on page 269)
“Far and away the best mutual fund coverage ever.”

Kenneth L. Fisher, Forbes Magazine

Morningstar Mutual Funds has become what many believe to be the most comprehensive, timely, and useful source for mutual fund information. Now you can offer your library users the same resource that over 25,000 investors nationwide use to research, analyze, and track mutual funds.

Over 1240 Funds Covered
Morningstar Mutual Funds provides comprehensive coverage on 1,240 mutual funds — load, no-load, equity and fixed-income funds.

An Easy-To-Use Research Tool
Take a look at the sample page. At your fingertips are 13 years of historical performance information; rankings against other funds; top holdings and how they’ve changed recently; etc.

More Than Just Numbers
We don’t just produce a mass of statistics, but go one step further with a candid written analysis of each fund based on a one-to-one interview with the fund manager. Plus, our unique 5-star rating, which measures both return and risk, helps you identify the best “all-weather” funds.

Updates Every Two Weeks
When you order, you’ll get a hardcover binder filled with reports on 1,240 funds. Then, every two weeks you’ll receive:

- A 32-page report summarizing the current performance of all funds covered.
- A new issue of over 120 updated, full-page fund reports.

Annual Price: $395
Available exclusively through Morningstar.

To order, or for a free brochure, call:
800-876-5005
When ordering, please mention code 9KE
53 W. Jackson Blvd. Chicago, IL 60604
Stanford develops preservation fact sheet for scholars

Stanford University Libraries has developed a fact sheet on what scholars can do to promote preservation of library materials. It was distributed by Stanford staff at the Modern Language Association Annual Convention in December 1991. Free copies are available from the Commission on Preservation and Access, 1400 16th Street, N.W., Suite 740, Washington, DC 20036-2217; (202) 939-3400. Duplication or adaptation is encouraged.

Clareson reports on highlights of three ALA preservation meetings

The ALA Midwinter activities of three groups, the Cooperative Preservation Programs Discussion Group, the Preservation of Library Materials Section (PLMS) Task Force on Preservation Education Needs, and the PLMS Discussion Group, have been summarized in AMIGOS Agenda & OCLC Connection by Tom Clareson, AMIGOS preservation service manager. For free copies contact Tom at AMIGOS, 12200 Park Central Dr., Suite 500, Dallas, TX 75251; (800) 843-8482.

NARA publication provides information on preservation photocopying

A National Archives and Record Administration 1990 publication, Archival Copies of Thermofax, Verifax, and Other Unstable Records (Technical Information Paper, no. 5), contains valuable information on photocopying and photocopiers, according to the Science Panel of the Commission on Preservation and Access. It covers the photocopying process, its suitability for archival purposes, how to test for "archivally acceptable copy," and a number of practical suggestions to improve any preservation photocopying program. The 31-page publication (order number PB90-171836/GAR) is available from NTIS, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161; (703) 487-4650. Copies cost $17.00 in paper or $9.00 in microfiche, plus a $3.00 handling fee. Orders not charged or pre-paid are subject to an additional $7.50 fee.

CPA plans preservation management seminar for 1993

The College Libraries Committee of the Commission on Preservation and Access, in cooperation with SOLINET, Inc., is planning to offer a second Preservation Management Seminar in 1993. The first seminar was held at Washington & Lee University from July 20–27, 1991, and was judged by the 16 participants to be an overwhelming success. The 1991 program was designed to provide librarians who have part-time preservation responsibilities with strategies for preserving general collections. For more information contact SOLINET, 1438 W. Peachtree St. NW, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30309-2955; (800) 999-8558.

Submissions for this column may be made via: Internet: JHEDBERG@LUCY.WELLESLEY.EDU; Fax: (617) 239-1139; or mail: Jane Hedberg, Wellesley College Library, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181-8275.