



STATE LIBRARY NEWS

For the People, the Government and the Libraries of New York State

Winter 2005

LEGISLATORS: HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT FEDERAL LAWS?

Would you like to know more about federal laws relating to Medicaid, education, or rights of people with disabilities? *Major Acts of Congress, 1st Edition* provides information about federal laws affecting these and many other subjects. Published by Macmillan Reference USA (2004), this three-volume set includes 262 entries and covers the years 1787-2003. You can search this valuable tool from your home or office computer with your State Library card. For more information, call (518) 474-5355 or email <refserv@mail.nysed.gov>.

IN MEMORIAM

Richard Hoenzsch, Senior Librarian in the State Library's Computer Applications Group, died February 28. He was a member of the State Library's staff since 2000. His work was very instrumental in extending access to State Library electronic resources, including the online catalog and digitized collections, over the Internet.

New York State Library News is produced by the Friends of the New York State Library and the New York State Library to inform New Yorkers about the collections and services of the State Library.

Editor: Miriam S. Soffer

This newsletter is not published at State expense.

RESEARCH LIBRARY OPENS NEW COMPUTER CLASSROOM



Sheldon Wein assists Suzanne Skaarup in the State Library's new computer classroom.

"Most people learn by doing," says Senior Librarian Sheldon Wein. He demonstrated this axiom recently when he led the State Library's bright new computer classroom's inaugural workshop. Equipped with desks and computers, the classroom provides a state-of-the-art site for people to learn how to navigate the burgeoning numbers of databases offered by the State Library. Men and women who work in government and business gathered at this workshop about how to use ABI/INFORM, a database for information about business, finance, and economics. A background in business and accounting, along with special skills as a librarian, make Wein an extremely

effective instructor on this topic.

"The ability to offer hands-on training is a major service improvement for our patrons," says State Librarian Janet M. Welch. "With the information they learn in these classes, they can feel confident that they will get the best results from searches they conduct both here at the Library and from their home or office computers." The new classroom is located in a section of the Library's main reading room on the seventh floor of the Cultural Education Center.

For information about upcoming workshops, visit <<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/press.htm>>.

FRIENDS ELECT JANE SCHNEIDER PRESIDENT

At the annual meeting on March 22, Friends of the New York State Library elected the following officers: President, Jane Schneider; Vice President, Clesson Bush; Secretary, Joseph F. Shubert; Treasurer, Jeffrey W. Cannell. Other members of the Board of Directors are: Jean G. Burns and Arden Leach. Their terms run from April 1, 2005

through March 31, 2007.

Nancy Johnsen Curran, elected for a two-year term in 2004, continues to serve.

The Staff and Friends of the New York State Library thank Lee W. Stanton for serving as Co-President in 2004/2005, and for his commitment to the Friends and the State Library.

FORMER STATE LAW LIBRARIAN BREUER HONORED

The Association of Law Libraries of Upstate New York (ALLUNY) presented a plaque honoring Ernest H. Breuer, former State Law Librarian for his role in founding ALLUNY. Sally Legendre, Associate at the State Library, accepted the plaque on behalf of the Library at ALLUNY's recent annual meeting. Breuer founded ALLUNY June 11, 1954 to promote use of the Law Library in the upstate area.

Today the New York State Library's State Law Library is one of the largest public law libraries in upstate New York. The majority of questions coming by telephone to the library's main reference desk are for legal or legislative information. Many of the queries involve requests for pointers to current New York State or local laws.

Other holdings include federal and other states' statutes, reports, and digests. Online databases available for searching at the Library provide access to federal and state laws and regulations, congressional documents, and citations to articles in legal periodicals.

The library also has some rare and special collections, including retrospective holdings of New York State laws, regulations, and judicial materials. The Law Library draws scholars from around the country interested in examining some of its early law materials housed in the Manuscripts and Special Collections Division. The individual trials and special pamphlet collection, two copies of the extremely rare 1694 Bradford laws of New York, an almost complete collection of Blackstone's and Kent's Commentaries, and all the editions of early colonial and state laws of New York represent some of the treasures in the collection.

Visit the State Library's Web Site <<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov>>



Search Excelsior, the online catalog of our holdings and access national and regional databases. Use the State Library Web site to:

- **Renew your driver's license.** Check out the New York State DMV Internet Office.
- **Learn more about New York State Canals.** Discover the history of the Erie Canal.
- **Read it online.** Select from over 13,000 eBooks on the Project Gutenberg Web site.
- **Express your views.** Find the names and addresses of members of Congress and alert them to your concerns.

And Much More

Instructions for reaching these sites are available at:

<<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/friends/nysl.htm>>

If you don't have Web access from your computer, dial into our catalog at (518) 474-9851. For more information, call (518) 474-0719 or e-mail: <excelsior@mail.nysed.gov>.

STATE LIBRARY EMPOWERS LOCAL LIBRARIES

State Library grants help adult literacy and family education programs flourish in local libraries throughout New York State.

■ **Parent and Child Library Services Grants.** A total of \$285,000 was awarded to libraries across the State for family projects on literacy, computers, math and science, as well as storytelling and parenting proficiency. "These low-cost high-impact programs help public libraries meet local literacy needs and support student achievement," says Anne Simon, State Library staff.

■ **Adult Literacy Grants.** The State Library awarded \$190,000 for 2004-2005 to 14 competitive Adult Literacy Library Services Grants to 11 public libraries and 3 public library systems. The grants enable libraries to help adults who read below the sixth grade level or who are learning English as a second language to improve their reading skills. A wide variety of imaginative programs include writing workshops, GED preparation and assistance for adults with learning disabilities.

WHAT'S NEW?

■ Need assistance with grant or proposal writing? Check out the State Library's two new databases related to foundations and grants. *Foundation Search* may be used onsite only, but *Big Online America* may be accessed remotely with your NYSL borrower's card.

■ Tired of fumbling for change for the photocopy machine? Try out our new copy card system. Buy a debit card at the dispensing/revaluing station at the Reference Desk (seventh floor, Cultural Education Center). Insert the card into the copier and charges will be deducted from your account.

■ Want to add full color illustrations to your magnum opus? User our new color copier to reproduce single sheets and unbound journals.

TELL US

Send comments and questions about the New York State Library and its newsletter to Mary Redmond <mredmond@mail.nysed.gov>

NEW YORK STATE LAUNCHES SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Poster © and designed by Chris Raschka



Detail from poster for 2005 summer reading program.

"Tune in @ your library," is the theme of this year's annual statewide summer reading program. Emphasizing the joy of reading and the broadening experiences children can derive from books, local summer reading programs harmonize with State Commissioner of Education Richard P. Mills' statement: "While children benefit enormously from the literature they are introduced to in school, the summer should offer kids the chance to read strictly for pleasure." The program also gives children a chance to explore the Internet.

Musical performances, puppet shows and storytelling are included in many summer reading programs. The State Library partnered with the Nassau Library System and a statewide committee of librarians to develop a programming manual of suggested activities. The 2004 Statewide Summer Reading Program attracted over one million readers. For information about the summer reading program in your community, contact your public library.

NOVEL DATABASE UPGRADED

You can find more health information than ever on NOVEL thanks to an upgrade to the Health & Wellness Resource Center from Thomson Gale. This upgrade includes material on medical topics, drugs and herbs, fitness, health news, and health organizations.

You can access this and other NOVEL databases at your local library or on your own computer if you have a State Library Borrower's Card. For more information about NOVEL, see <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/library/novel>. To learn how to apply for a State Library Card, visit <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/apply.htm>.

BE A FRIEND

Join the Friends of the New York State Library. In addition to the deep satisfactions of preserving your heritage and sustaining a world-renowned public research library, you can obtain special discounts at local bookstores. Select:

■ **Sustaining Membership.** \$25. Receive discounts at three book shops: 20% at Borders Books & Music in Colonie, 20% single use discount at the Book House in Stuyvesant Plaza or Market Block Books in Troy, and 25% off one purchase at the Open Door Bookstore in Schenectady.

■ **Contributing Membership.** \$50 or more. Receive all of the above plus recognition in *New York State Library News*.

Every Friend also receives:

■ **Free admission** to the Friends Annual Meeting featuring a talk by an author of a recently published book.

■ **Invitations** to other stimulating programs at the State Library.

■ **A subscription** to the *New York State Library News*, an illustrated quarterly newsletter.

■ **Remote access** to Health Reference Center-Academic, a database for health and medicine.

To join Friends of the New York State Library, complete the form below and mail it with your check.

New York State Library News

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Make check payable to *Friends of the New York State Library* and mail to: Treasurer, Friends of the New York State Library, PO Box 2247 Empire Plaza Station, Albany, NY 12220

NEW COLLECTION SPOTLIGHTS CIVIL WAR



Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth (1837-1861), Commander of Company A of the First Regiment of the New York Zouaves, was the first casualty in the Civil War.

"Whatever may happen, cherish the consolation that I was engaged in the performance of a sacred duty; and tonight, thinking over the probabilities of the morrow and the occurrences of the past, I am perfectly content to accept whatever my fortune may be, confident that He who noteth even the fall of a sparrow, will have some purpose even in the fate of one like me."

*Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth
Washington, May 23, 1861*

This letter from Colonel Ellsworth to his family, dated the same day that Virginia voted to secede from the Union, is one of thousands of personal expressions included in *Civil War Unit Histories: Regimental Histories and Personal Narra-*

tives, a new microfiche collection now available at the New York State Library.

Produced by University Publications of America (UPA), this collection brings together letters about personal experiences and official military records to paint a brilliant portrait of life during one of the most trying times of our nation. It offers civil war scholars and historians new insights into the military and the human side of a period when 3 million Americans served, and more than 600,000 soldiers died.

Many of these narratives written between 1861 and 1920 were published by private presses and state government, but they were scattered and difficult to locate. UPA assembled these documents and now presents a well-organized, indexed, accessible microfiche collection of documents from Southern, Border, Northern, Midwestern, and Western States and territories. New York State contributed 1,630 fiches, surpassing by far the number given by any other single state or territory.

Genealogists will find a wealth of information in the collection's state adjutant general reports. They include company rosters; casualty lists with place and dates of mustering out; lists of promotions and dismissals; desertions, death, and the missing; and names of enlisted soldiers granted honors from the secretary of war.

Social historians, researchers, regional writers and students will revel in this remarkable resource about daily life in the Army during the 1860s. Military historians will delight in the personal accounts of battles and major campaigns, camp life, skirmishes, and prisoner of war experiences. There is also information about the role of the U.S. Naval Forces in the Civil War, including the Red River Expedition of 1864.

For more information go to: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/refserv.htm> or come to the State Library.

BUDGET UPDATE

The New York State Legislature did not adopt the Governor's proposal for a public benefit corporation to oversee the Office of Cultural Education (OCE), which includes the State Library, State Archives, State Museum and Public Broadcasting. This means that the State Library and the other three OCE entities will remain in the State Education Department.

In other budget news, the Legislature restored the \$4.5 million in statewide library aid cut by the Governor last year. The Governor then approved the 2005/2006 budget with the library aid restoration included.

New York State Library News
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Albany, NY 12230

State Library Hours

Monday through Friday
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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(518) 474-5355 or e-mail
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