

## The USGenWeb Project

# NEWS

Volume 1, Number 2

March 2004

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

**Isaiah Harrison, National Coordinator**

For those who are receiving this newsletter the first time, "Welcome!" And for those who received our first issue, "Welcome Back!" If you missed the first issue, you can view a copy at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwpub/>

This issue of the newsletter is being distributed through a newer and more inclusive mailing list. Every effort has been made to incorporate all the address changes and requests to be removed from the mailing list that were submitted as a result of the first issue. I hope we have been successful, but please don't be too hard on us if we have made an error. Simply resubmit your request for a change to USGenWebNews@cox.net.

## WEBMASTER NEEDED

After many years of performing the task of Webmaster for The USGenWeb Project, Pam Reid has resigned and a new Webmaster is needed. The job requires:

- Excellent website design skills and technical expertise
- Effective liaison with the National Coordinator and Advisory Board
- Timely response to requests for updates from project members
- Familiarity with the various project lists and sites to identify and incorporate pertinent information
- Strong leadership skills for eliciting and coordinating a team effort

If you are interested in the position or if you would like to help the new Web Master, please contact the National Coordinator, IsaiahH@cox.net.

## PROJECT VOTING CHANGES

**Ellen Pack, Election Committee Chair**

In order to receive a voting password in USGenWeb national level elections and polls, you must be Registered with the EC (Election Committee).

If you were a member of USGenWeb on 1 February 2004 and your name was submitted to the EC by your State or Project leadership, you were automatically registered. If you are not sure you were automatically registered, you may ask your area EC Representative, or you may submit a Registration form.

Members joining USGenWeb after 1 February 2004 will not be automatically registered, and **must** register themselves. Also, if your Project participation or Email Address changes, you must inform the EC by contacting your EC Representative.

**To Register:** <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwelections/register.html>

**To identify and contact your EC**

**Representative:** <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwelections/current.htm>

## **RUMOR CONTROL: GENDEX**

**Isaiah Harrison**

Visitors to GENDEX <http://www.gendex.com> are now greeted with the following announcement:

**NOTICE: After operating for eight years (since March, 1996) GENDEX will be terminating its genealogy operations on April 22, 2004. All genealogy data will be removed from the system at that time. The *GED2HTML* program will still be available for download from another site, accessible via the link below. Thanks for your support for the past eight years! -- Gene Stark**

Shortly after this announcement appeared, the rumor started showing up on a number of discussion lists that The USGenWeb Project was closing. Not true. It is the GENDEX site that is closing.

It is sad to lose GENDEX. Gene says, "The original concept for GENDEX was as a kind of portal that would provide a unified point of access to a large number of databases that would be hard to find search systematically."

Costs for collocation services and for upgrading hardware to accommodate ever-increasing amounts of data, and the time required to fix bugs, develop server software, and respond to communications from users are some of the reasons given for the closure. (Free Genealogy is not free!) Additionally, reevaluation of the role of GENDEX in a constantly changing Internet environment and the opportunity to end the operation without negative financial considerations played a part in the decision.

Those of us who've been around for a while will remember when a weekly check of our surnames on GENDEX was *de rigueur* and will recall the great anticipation we felt when finding a new entry. Thank you, Gene, for providing us with the resource and the memories.

## **PROJECT BYLAWS REVISION**

**Roger Swafford, Bylaws Revision Committee Chairman**

The BRC (Bylaws Revision Committee) is conducting final review of first draft proposals available for viewing at <http://home.mchsi.com/~sagitta56/>. During the process announcements have been made to the USGW-ALL and DISCUSS mail lists to solicit input from the membership.

Our goal is to complete the revision process for presentation to the membership for adoption during the upcoming election cycle. After nearly two years and more than 4200 emails (and counting) there is light at the end of the tunnel. The committee report consisting of revised bylaws, definitions of terms and implementation recommendations will be presented to the Advisory Board by the middle of May.

A revision is, in effect, a new set of bylaws which must be presented for adoption in the same manner as the original bylaws. The Advisory Board's options will be to:

Accept the report with the result that the revision will be posted to the national website and placed on the ballot for the next election cycle

Vote to strike out portions before posting and placement on the ballot

Vote to return the report to the BRC for additional work

Vote to file the report without further action

Members are encouraged to send feedback on the revisions to committee members or to the Discuss-L mail list. ( [USGENWEB-DISCUSS-L@rootsweb.com](mailto:USGENWEB-DISCUSS-L@rootsweb.com) )

## **PROPOSED LEGISLATION WOULD**

## WREAK HAVOC FOR GENEALOGISTS

The following article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyright 2004 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at <http://www.eogn.com>.

A new bill before the U.S. Congress proposes to overturn one of the most fundamental concepts of the present copyright laws. If passed, facts would become copyrighted for the first time in U.S. history.

The Database and Collections of Information Misappropriation Act (HR3261) would make it a crime for anyone to copy and redistribute a substantial portion of data collected by commercial database companies and list publishers. At first, that sounds like a good idea. However, a bit more thought shows that nobody would be able to republish stock quotes, historical health data, sports scores, or voter lists. In fact, a lot of genealogy information could not be republished.

If passed, Google and all the other search engines would be crippled, probably driven out of business. These are online databases that collect information, or facts, from other online sites so that the user can quickly find the information they seek. If Google and the others are not allowed to collect facts that are now copyrighted, how will they be able to index the Web for you?

Art Brodsky, spokesman for public advocacy group Public Knowledge, says the bill would let anyone drop a fact into a database or a collection of materials and claim monopoly rights to it. This would contradict the core principle of the Copyright Act, which states that mere information and ideas cannot be protected works.

Let's say that a commercial genealogy service such as Ancestry.com or OneGreatFamily.com publishes the fact that your great-great-grandparents had a child named John. Once that "fact" has been published by any commercial service, that original publisher would hold the copyright on the fact, and no one else would be allowed to publish it again. The Family History Library, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Genealogical Publishing Company, and others would be prohibited from publishing that information again in any of their online or printed works. In fact, private individuals would similarly be barred from publishing the information in their own derivative works. If a commercial site publishes a fact about your ancestors, you would not be able to place that fact on your own Web site or in any book or report that you give to others.

**The language in this proposed legislation contradicts the core principle of the present copyright acts, which state that mere information and ideas cannot be protected works.**

H.R.3261 which may be viewed at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.html> Just enter HR3261 in the search engine. There are two versions, the current being HR3261RH.

Want to help? You can do your part to protect access to and use of genealogical data by writing to your Representative today. You can find their email address at: <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

Want to help more? You can write to the sponsors of this bill and tell them you don't want it!

Howard Coble, North Carolina 6th District - Republican

David Hobson, Ohio 7th District - Republican

James Greenwood, Pennsylvania 8th District - Republican

W. "Billy" Tauzin, Louisiana 3rd District - Conservative Republican

F. James Sensenbrenner, Wisconsin 5th District - Republican, Chair of House Judiciary Committee (the committee passed it out.)

Robert Wexler, Florida 19th District - Democrat

Michael R. Turner, Ohio 3rd District - Republican

Rob Portman, Ohio 2nd District - Republican

William Delahunt, Massachusetts 10th District

Lamar Smith, Texas 21st District

## **MAP PROJECT**

### **Marti Graham**

The OKGenWeb Maps expert, Sharon McAllister, has produced a great set of Railroad Maps for OKGenWeb. She has now expanded her effort to include regional maps for the other 47 continental states. The maps are large and contain a great deal of information including the location of many defunct towns.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~okgenweb/okprojects/xref/rr-maplinks.html>

(Editor's Note: I've checked out these maps and they are a great resource. If you are looking for maps you may also want to check out the United States Digital Map Library

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/maps/>

## **LOGO CONTEST**

It's time to update our logo and I am happy to announce a request for submissions of new logo designs for The USGenWeb Project. Our current logo has served us well for many years, but it is appropriate from time to time to look for a new and refreshing image.

Our new logo should be crisp, clean and adaptable for use in a variety of sizes and on a variety of styles of pages with a wide range of color schemes. One criticism of the current logo has been that it excludes Alaska and Hawaii, so if you use a map of the U.S. in your proposed design, please include those states. Additionally, a special logo authorized by the AB for use during the millennium year(s), included an eagle. This bird has captured the imagination and loyalty of a good number of project members, so submissions including an eagle would certainly be appropriate.

Web pages with the current logos can be found

at: <http://www.usgenweb.com/volunteers/namelogo.html>

Please submit your requests by 1 May 2004 to [IsaiahH@cox.net](mailto:IsaiahH@cox.net).

## **MEET THE NC**

### **Isaiah Harrison**

If you live in the Tucson/Green Valley area and would like to meet the National Coordinator in person, this is your opportunity. I will be at the Starbucks in the Safeway store at 260 W. Continental Rd., Green Valley at 2:00pm Tuesday, March 30. So stop in and join me, have a cup of coffee and talk about the project, genealogy or whatever. Look for the USGenWeb logo.

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**You are receiving this newsletter because you are a member of The USGenWeb Project. For address changes, or to be added to or removed from the mailing list**

**visit <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwelections/current.html> and contact your EC Rep.**

**To submit articles, letters and ideas, write to [USGenWebNews@cox.net](mailto:USGenWebNews@cox.net) The USGenWeb NEWS is archived at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwpub/>**

### **Newsletter Staff:**

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