

# Inform Quarterly

*A Newsletter from the Illinois State Library's Reference Section*

Jesse White • Secretary of State & State Librarian

## From the Reference Desk

This issue of *Inform Quarterly* begins the New Year with a mix of items, from Reference staff promoting its services to other state agencies, to accessing government documents through the State Library's online catalogue, to finding valuable information through old fire insurance maps, to a link to ALA's top 21 reference Web sites.

The Reference staff encourages you to contact them when you need information for that special report, analysis, historical perspective or other project. The staff can steer you in the right direction to a wealth of resources, including online databases, books, reference materials and more. Save time and energy by letting the Reference Section staff put you on the right track to the information you need.

### To request materials or find answers to your questions, please contact:

Reference phone • 217-782-7596  
Reference fax • 217-524-0041  
Map Collection • 217-782-5823  
Patent & Trademark Division • 217-782-5659

"Ask the State Library"  
[www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com)

Access the State Library database at  
<http://library.ilcso.illinois.edu/isl>

Illinois State Library hours:  
Mon. – Fri., 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

*We look forward to hearing from you!*

## Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases

Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases housed in the State Library's extensive Map Collection are an example of a resource that started out with one intended purpose and over time has become valuable for other purposes. The maps detail the buildings and structures of usually larger towns or cities during the 19th and 20th centuries, often with keys to designate what materials were used. The original purpose of the maps was for insurance companies to determine what and for how much to insure the structures at the time.

Today, the Sanborn maps are used by a number of users for a variety of purposes. Archaeologists may need to know what structures may be found or were found in an area being excavated. Renovators may need to find out details of a historical structure for restoration purposes. Realtors or developers may need to address possible environmental concerns at a particular property. And researchers may use the maps to help reconstruct in their minds an old neighborhood for genealogy purposes.

The Sanborn maps have been digitized and made available online for state employees through CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois), of which the State Library is a member. State employees may access these maps by visiting [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/what\\_we\\_have/gateway/maps.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/what_we_have/gateway/maps.html). Scroll down and click on Illinois Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970. The maps also are available on microfilm for use at the State Library.

## Reference on the run

The Reference Section staff has been on the run for the last few months meeting with various state government agencies to promote its programs and resources available to state employees. Included in the presentations are demonstrations on how to access resources through the State Library's Web page and its online catalog. The Reference staff welcomes the opportunity to meet with your agency to share what the library has to offer and to learn more about the specific informational needs of state employees. To schedule a Reference Section presentation, please contact Blaine Redemer at 217-782-5430 or [bredemer@ilsos.net](mailto:bredemer@ilsos.net).

## State Library online catalog

The State Library's online catalog — I-SHARE — is not just a listing of materials available at the State Library. The catalogue also offers access to offerings from 64 other academic and special interest libraries throughout the state, with more libraries scheduled for addition this summer.

In addition to library holdings, the catalogue allows direct access to many state and federal documents. With federal and state governments providing more of their previously print-only resources online, accessing the catalog allows patrons to access most of these government documents as well. Log on to <http://library.ilcso.illinois.edu/isl>.

*Serving Illinois state employees • Winter 2007*



## Bestseller/current interest titles

- **America Back on Track**, by Edward M. Kennedy. 973.931 KENN
- **Dispatches From the Edge: A Memoir of War, Disasters, and Survival**, by Anderson Cooper. 070.92 COOP
- **Fake: Forgery, Lies & Ebay**, by Kenneth Walton. 364.16 WALT
- **Fiasco: American Military Adventure In Iraq**, by Thomas Ricks. 956.7044 RICK
- **Greatest Story Every Sold: The Decline and Fall of Truth from 9/11 to Katrina**, by Frank Rich. 973.931 RICH
- **Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War**, by Nathaniel Philbrick. 973.2 PHIL
- **Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front, in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families**, edited by Andrew Carroll. 956.70443092 OPER
- **The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream**, by Barack Obama. 973 OBAM

## On the Web

[www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaourassoc/rusasections/mars/marspubs/marsbestref2006.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaourassoc/rusasections/mars/marspubs/marsbestref2006.htm) — From the American Library Association's Machine-Assisted Reference Section (MARS) comes the eighth annual list of "Best Free Reference Web Sites 2006." Some of the criteria for selection of the 21 sites are the quality and depth of content, user-friendly design, ease of navigation and reliability.

## Reference staff profile

Robert Jones is one of the newest members of the Reference staff even though he's been with the section for two years. Robert came to Reference from the State Library's Talking Book and Braille Service where he worked with the talking book machines. In addition to his work in the Reference Section, Robert also works with Project Next Generation, Secretary of State Jesse White's mentoring and technology program for junior-high age students. Robert has been very busy this year as he is working with the INFORM Service by day and earning his library degree through the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana in the evenings and on weekends.



## Reference staff honored

Three State Library staff members were recognized in December by the Captain Joseph Bowman's Company Illinois Regiment, the Revolutionary War Re-enactment Unit for the State of Illinois. Raymond Collins (right) and Francie LaCamera (second from right) of the Reference Section, and Helen Knecht (left) in Circulation were honored for their assistance in research leading to the creation of historical markers that chronicle Lt. Col. George Rogers Clark's 1778 march of his band of troops in capturing of the town of Kaskaskia, leading to securing the Illinois Territory for American forces. The employees each received a plaque from Regiment representatives Garrick Williams and Thanh Melick.

## ReferenceUSA has new look

The reference database that provides information on virtually every business and organization in the country — ReferenceUSA — has been updated and has a new look. The database was updated to be compliant with Internet Explorer 7.0.

ReferenceUSA is updated monthly and offers information on more than 14 million businesses across the country, including contact and corporate information, a management directory, links to company news, company descriptions, UCC filings and, coming soon, UCC profiles/summaries. The database is only available at the State Library or by contacting the Reference staff.

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## Library card expired?

If you are an Illinois state employee and your State Library card has been lost or has expired, call the Circulation Desk and the staff can assist you over the phone.

**217-782-7573**

