The USGenWeb Project

N E W S

Volume 1, Number 9
November/December 2004

EAGLE LOGO REMOVAL
Shari Handley, National Coordinator
Ginger Cisiewski, the creator of the "Eagle Millenium" USGenWeb logo, has revoked permission for use of the logo on any site connected with The USGenWeb Project. She has threatened legal action against any site using or displaying the logo if it is not removed within 10 days.

Please remove this logo from your pages and replace it with another of the approved logos located at http://www.usgenweb.org/volunteers/logos.shtml . The "Eagle Millenium" logo is no longer an official or approved logo of The USGenWeb Project, effective immediately.

I'm also going to initiate some Advisory Board discussion about perhaps updating the logos and offering some additional or improved choices, and how we might go about that. Stay tuned!

TOMBSTONE TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT
Shari Handley, National Coordinator
The USGenWeb Project and its Tombstone Transcription Project are the subject of a really great, really positive article by Johnna Pro in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. How nice to see this great project receive such good press!

Read all about it at http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/04302/402844.stm .

Wow! Thanksgiving is just around the corner already! Do I hear sleigh bells in the distance? Can't be!

On behalf of The USGenWeb Advisory Board, I'd like to wish you all happy, safe holidays, filled with love, laughter, family and friends.

Nollaig shona daoibh!

REGISTRATION FORM FOR REPORTING CHANGES
Ellen Pack, Election Committee Chair
"The USGenWeb Election Committee would like to remind everyone of the Registration Form that is available for all members. If you have a change in project participation or address, please notify the EC by using this form.
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/register.html
If you have any questions, feel free to contact an EC Rep:
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/current.html

BYLAWS REVISION NEWS
Roger Swafford, Bylaws Revision Committee Chair
The Bylaws Revision Committee (BRC) is in recess pending appointment of replacement members. This is an opportunity for members to make a significant contribution to foster the growth and stability of USGenWeb. Interested members, please contact the National Coordinator: srh@tyaskin.com or Committee Chair: sagitta56@mchsi.com .

Tasks pending are further review of articles and sections before resubmission of the committee report to the Advisory Board and adding a preamble to each of the proposed articles. A dedicated email list is available for members to discuss proposed changes and provide feedback to committee members. To join the list send "subscribe" to USGW_WEB-L-request@rootsweb.com .

EVALUATING GENEALOGY WEB PAGES (PART II)
By Greta Thompson
In the last issue I suggested some resources for providing good information on the Web. This time I'd like to focus on some resources for evaluating web pages when you're looking for information.

I'm sure you know the basic rules of genealogical research, e.g., don't trust information that you can't trace to its source and the original or a film of the original is likely to be more accurate than a transcription. You'll find these basic rules in a number of "how to" websites, and it's good to review them occasionally. You'll find a group of them listed on Cyndi's Beginners Guides, Hints, and Tips at http://www.cyndislist.com/beginner.htm#Guides.

One of my favorites is the graphics-intensive, but fun RootsWeb Guide to Tracing Family Trees at http://rwguide.rootsweb.com/. Perhaps the best of all the online guides are those provided by Family Search, Research Guidance at http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset_rg.asp and Research Helps at http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset_rhelps.asp ; but many people may find them intimidating just because they are so complete and detailed.

Let's step back and look briefly at five overall characteristics you should look for in a good web site: authority, objectivity, accuracy, currency, and relevancy. [See Jim Kapoun, College and Research Libraries News 59 (July/August 1998), pp. 522-523. This article is frequently cited.]

AUTHORITY. Who is responsible for the site? Is an individual and/or sponsoring organization named? Have you heard of them before? Are credentials given? Is it a commercial, educational, or government site?

OBJECTIVITY. What are the goals of the site? Is information presented without obvious biases or assumptions? Is the webmaster or sponsoring group trying to prove or sell something? Is conflicting information presented and weighed?

ACCURACY. How does the information on the site compare to information that you already have? Are sources given, and how credible are the sources? Can you verify the information either in the sources listed or in other sources? Are variant spellings given? Has the site been proofread? If it's full of spelling and grammatical errors, it may be wise to question the accuracy of names, dates, and places.

CURRENCY. Are the links working and up-to-date? Does it look as if information has been continually added and updated? Are the "new" or "updated" graphics attached to items posted in 1998 or 2001? Is there a working email address for you to contact the site's owner?

RELEVANCY. Is the information on the site what you are in fact looking for. Is this about your Smith family…or someone else's? Of value to you considering the questions you have?

Finally, I want to recommend a site that I found particularly fresh and helpful for evaluating web pages: Evaluating Web Pages, Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask at http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html.
Like many others, it's done by a university for its students, so some of it is only tangentially related to evaluating genealogy pages; but most of it is useful. I liked the two column format in which "questions to ask" are paired with "what are the implications?" of certain answers; and I was intrigued by its analysis of the URL and its attention to the perimeter of the page.

Happy Holidays, everyone.

VIEWING TEXT IN AN EMAIL OR A WEB PAGE
Sharon Rhodes, Editor
I have received many emails from people with vision problems. Some find it easier to read serif fonts while others prefer sans serif. For some, a larger print is necessary. Here are instructions for setting browser preferences so nearly every email message and web page is easier to view. Before changing your settings you might want to note the original settings in case you want to change them back.

These instructions are for IE 6 and Netscape 7.2. You should update your browser to the latest version for the most recent security protection updates. Most operating systems recommend that you run a system backup prior to any install.

Internet Explorer
In the top left corner of the browser window select 'tools' then 'internet options'. A box will open. Choose the General tab. Near the bottom choose 'fonts'. Select your preferred font then click 'ok'. Now choose 'accessibility'. Check 'ignore font styles specified on web pages' and / or 'ignore font sizes specified on web pages'. Click 'ok'. You may need to close and re-open the browser to see the changes.

Netscape
In the top left corner of the browser window select 'edit' then 'preferences'. A box will open. In the category column

on the left click the arrow to the left of 'appearance' so the options appear below. Click 'fonts' to choose display fonts and size. Uncheck the box next to 'allow documents to use other fonts'. When finished click 'ok'. You may need to close and re-open the browser to see the changes. In Netscape you can also change the font size by choosing 'view' in the upper left corner. Then choose 'text zoom'.

Opera
The instructions for Opera are located here:
http://www.opera.com/features/access/visual/

HOLIDAYS, KIDS, HISTORY, TRADITION AND FUN
Sharon Rhodes, Editor
This is a November and December newsletter. There will not be a newsletter December 1st because of the holidays. Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Chanukah, Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Some Links

Kids
USGenWeb Kidz Project
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwkidz/
COKidsGenWeb Project
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cokids/

Thanksgiving
Our very own Massachusetts GenWeb site provides a link to Massachusetts history:
http://www.masshome.com/tour.html
A Virtual Tour of Plimoth Plantation
http://pilgrims.net/plimothplantation/vtour/index.htm
History Resources
http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/colonial.htm

Christmas Celebrations around the World
http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/xmas/around.html
This site includes recipes and songs
http://www.santas.net/aroundtheworld.htm
This site lists the year that each state recognized Christmas Day as a holiday, scroll to bottom
http://www.the-north-pole.com/around/US.html
More Recipes
http://www.santaclaus.com/recipes.html

Chanukah for Kids
http://www.zuzu.org/chan.html
http://www.torahtots.com/holidays/chanuka/chanuk.htm

Games
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/games/index.html

Song Lyrics and Music Midis
http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/music.htm

Kids Online Books
http://www.icdlbooks.org/library/basic/
http://www.storyplace.org/storyplace.asp

Coloring Pages
http://pbskids.org/lions/printables/index.html

Activities
http://yucky.kids.discovery.com/flash/fun_n_games/category_creepycraft.html

Older kids and Adults History
http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the USGenWeb Project .