

# SNELLA'S *OBITER DICTA*

Official Newsletter of the Southern New England Law Librarians' Association

Vol. 23 no. 8

September 2007



## SNELLA News

**Job Listing**

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### SNELLA Listserv

#### TO POST A MESSAGE:

Send your email message to:

[snella@aallnet.org](mailto:snella@aallnet.org)

#### To unsubscribe to the SNELLA List-serv:

Send a blank email to:

[Leave-snella-64348Y@aallnet.org](mailto:Leave-snella-64348Y@aallnet.org)

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2007-2008

President: Maggie Hobden/ Bingham McCutchen LLP/ One State Street/ Hartford, CT 06103- 3178/ 860-240-2816/ Fax 860-240-2800. Email: [Maggie.hobden@bingham.com](mailto:Maggie.hobden@bingham.com)

Past President: Louise Tucker/ Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library/15 West Street/ Litchfield, CT 06759/ (860) 567-0598/ Email: [louise.tucker@jud.state.ct.us](mailto:louise.tucker@jud.state.ct.us)

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Government Relations Committee: Steve Mirsky /Connecticut State Library/231 Capital Avenue/Hartford, CT 06106/ 860-757-6594.

Publications: Lawrence Cheeseman/ Connecticut Judicial Branch/ Law Library at Middletown/ One Court Street/ Middletown, CT 06457-3372/ Email: [lcheese@comcast.net](mailto:lcheese@comcast.net)

Publicity Chair: Roseanne Shea/Proskauer, Rose/1585 Broadway/New York, NY 10036/email: [rshea@cl-law.com](mailto:rshea@cl-law.com)

Scholarship: Sandee Molden/ Cohen & Wolf/ 1115 Broad Street/ Bridgeport, CT 06604/ (203) 337-4146.

Public Relations/ CBA Liaison/ AALL Relations Liaison: Dottie McCaughtry / McCaughtry & Associates, Inc./ 44 Portland Drive/ Ashford, CT 06278/ 860-429-7637.

Articles, comments or questions about the publication should be submitted to the Editor: Lawrence Cheeseman or Associate Editor: Jeffrey Dowd/ Connecticut Judicial Branch/ Law Library at Middletown/ One Court Street, Room 208/ Middletown, CT 06457-3372/ 860) 343-6560/ FAX (869) 343-6568. Email address: [lcheese@comcast.net](mailto:lcheese@comcast.net) or [jeffrey.dowd@jud.state.ct.us](mailto:jeffrey.dowd@jud.state.ct.us).

All material submitted for publication is subject to editorial revision. Electronic submission is encouraged.



## Law Librarian I/II (Hartford)

Law Librarian I/II (Hartford). The CT Judicial Branch is seeking a qualified individual to manage a Courthouse Law Library and to perform professional to advanced library duties which include providing legal reference and research guidance, instruction in database searching, copy cataloging, collection development, serials maintenance and fiscal control. Travel to other court locations is required.

Minimum Qualifications: A Master's degree in Library Science or Information Science from a graduate school accredited by the American Library Association. Starting Salary: \$53,809/\$56,356 – plus benefits. Resumes must be received by October 15, 2007.

Applications should be submitted through the online application site at: [www.jud.ct.gov](http://www.jud.ct.gov) under the quick link for Job Openings. On-line applications are preferred; however, you may mail your resume to:

Connecticut Judicial Branch  
Human Resources- Recruitment  
90 Washington St.  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Please reference Ad I.D.  
#07-1000-186**

# **SNELLA Fall 2007 Program**

## **October 18, 2007**

**Connecticut State Library Van Block Conference Facility**

**75 Van Block Avenue, Hartford, CT**

**Registration-Coffee 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**

**Program 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

**Lunch 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

### ***Librarians Take on the USA PATRIOT Act***

Peter Chase and other plaintiffs will speak on their experience in the Doe v. Gonzales litigation. Covered will be a discussion on the gag order, the Act's Section 505 impact, and Connecticut's new public act regarding library records and privacy. An audience question and answer session will follow. Then hear from our SNELLA-AALL Government Relations Liaison about what AALL is doing regarding legislative initiatives.

#### ***Guest Speakers:***

**Peter Chase: *Director***

***Plainville Public Library***

***Joined by other plaintiffs in Doe v. Gonzales***

**Steve Mirsky: *Library Specialist***

***SNELLA - AALL Government Relations Liaison***

***Connecticut State Library***

Cost \$20.00 for SNELLA members; \$25.00 for non-members – includes lunch

Registration Deadline October 8, 2007

Please return the below registration form and payment (made out to SNELLA) to:

Claudia Jalowka, Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Libraries,

90 Washington Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# Connecticut Law Search Engine

*The quick way to find Connecticut legal information, including cases,*

**Tip:** After you execute a search, use the refinements at the top of the results page to restrict your search to specific publications such as CT statutes, OLR research reports, or recent CT cases (July 2000 forward).

<http://lawsearcher.googlepages.com/>



*This search engine is provided with the understanding that it represents only a starting point to your research.*

Have suggestions? Contact Chris Roy at [lawsearcher@gmail.com](mailto:lawsearcher@gmail.com) --- See Also: [Connecticut Agency Decisions Search](#)

## How CT Librarians Said No to PATRIOT Act Demands and Why It Matters Today

By Steve Mirsky

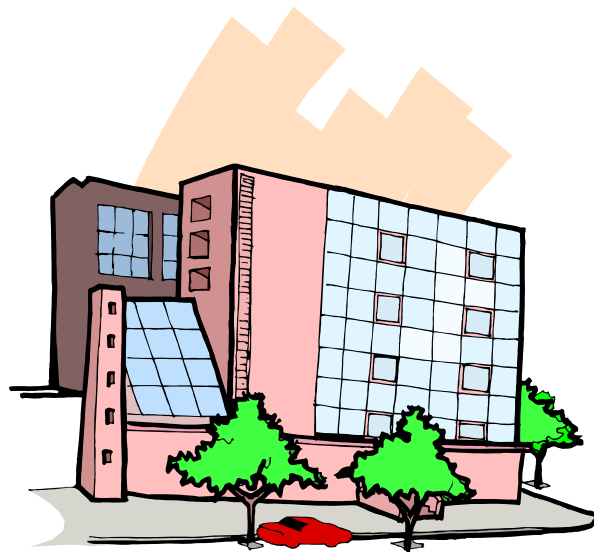
On October 18th, the Southern New England Law Librarians Association, a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries will host a fall program at Van Block entitled "Librarians Take on the USA PATRIOT Act ". Peter Chase, Director of the Plainville Public Library and other plaintiffs involved in the Doe v. Gonzalez litigation will speak about how and why they stood up to FBI agents.

The standoff began in 2005 when the FBI issued a National Security Letter (NSL) to the Library Connection, a nonprofit consortium of 27 public and academic libraries in central Connecticut. An NSL is an administrative subpoena authorizing the FBI under the USA PATRIOT Act to demand without prior court approval access to information deemed relevant to an authorized investigation aimed at combating international terrorism. In this case, it included subscriber information and electronic records held by an internet service provider. The Library Connection's NSL was dated May 19, 2005 but not received until July 13, 2005. The letter not only demanded access logs generated for a specific Library Connection member's IP address without a court order but also gagged the member from identifying itself as an NSL recipient even after the information was revealed in a New York Times article on September 21, 2005. John Ashcroft, Attorney General at the time, accused those who question seizing library records under the Patriot Act of indulging in hysterical extremism. With the assistance of the ACLU, "Doe" (Library Connection) successfully fought the gag order leading to Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's August 2, 2005 decision ordering full disclosure of all related court records. Shortly after this ruling, the American Civil Liberties Union posted key documents including the unredacted National Security Letter on their website. George Christian, Library Connection Executive Director was quoted as saying, "We pursued this matter because librarians should protect the privacy of our patrons. As an American, I am embarrassed that our government would go to such extremes to stifle free and open debate and keep nonsensitive information related to our case away from public scrutiny." Many involved in Doe v Gonzalez surmised that the librarians would have been inclined to comply with the NSL had it been approved by a judge.

Since the Patriot Act was passed in 2001, the number of NSLs issued has increased phenomenally. According to a March 2007 report issued by the Justice Department's Inspector General, over 143,000 NSLs were issued between 2003 and 2005. However, relatively few have involved criminal prosecutions since most defendants have chosen to plea bargain rather than risk lengthy jail sentences. Exceptions include Sami Al-Hussayen, an Idaho computer science student, who fought charges that he conspired to support terrorism by serving as a webmaster for various Islamic web sites. His defense included the argument that he maintained these web sites as a volunteer and the content was protected by the First Amendment. Al-Hussayen was eventually acquitted on June 10, 2004. In another case, Humanitarian Law Project v. Ashcroft, the ACLU filed suit on July 30, 2003 on behalf of six advocacy and community groups whose members and clients claimed they were targets due to their ethnicity, religion, and political associations. On March 17, 2004, a judge ruled that the section of the act prohibiting the provision of expert advice or assistance to people designated as foreign terrorist organizations unconstitutional. However, the judge limited his decision to parties involved in this particular suit meaning that it wouldn't apply to similar instances in the future. In another case, the ACLU and other organizations filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Department of Justice in August 2002 seeking statistics related to the government's implementation of the Patriot Act. After the request was denied, they filed suit on May 19, 2003 in ACLU v. Dept. of Justice only to find that the District Court of the District of Columbia ruled that the information could be withheld on national security grounds.

The public's right to privacy and free access to government information remains threatened. Beyond showcasing the unique personal experiences involving the Doe v. Gonzalez case, SNELLA's Fall Program

will also provide a blueprint for those who are challenged again in the future. Since many librarians advocate for privacy and free permanent public access to government information as part of their jobs, they have a vested interest in shaping public policy that ensures these rights are preserved. The full program agenda and sign-up information is located at: <http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/snella/events.htm>



# KEY INTERNET SITES 2007

- **Library of Congress Internet Resources Page**

URL: <http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/us.html>

Directory of Guide to United States Law, an annotated bibliography with hyperlinks to publications, information guides or lists relating to U.S. law including “American Indian Tribes”, International and multi-national legal sources, NAFTA and WTO.

- **FindLaw Internet Legal Resources**

URL: <http://www.findlaw.com>

Links to federal, state and international legal materials. Features a free searchable database of U.S. Supreme Court cases from 1893.

See also: <http://www.lexisone.com/legalresearch/index.html>

- **Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Libraries**

URL: <http://www.jud.ct.gov/lawlib>

Links to Connecticut and federal legal materials, and to Connecticut law library catalogs. Includes a Reference desk. Original materials include Connecticut legal bibliographies and pathfinders, particularly on family law.

- **Internet Law Library**

URL : <http://www.lawguru.com/ilawlib>

Federal, state, and foreign statutes. Includes law of all jurisdiction arranged by subject.

- **U.S. Federal Government Agencies**

URL: <http://www.firstgov.gov>

“Your first click to the U.S. Government.”

- **Yahoo: Law Subject Directory**

URL <http://dir.yahoo.com/Government/LAW>

Compiled subject guide.

- **Thomas—Legislative Information**

URL: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

The information resource for current, up to the minute federal legislation. Searchable databases.

- **Cornell Legal Information Institute**

URL: <http://www.law.cornell.edu>

A comprehensive, highly useable site.

**ENTIRE 2007 EDITION**

**Available at:**

<http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/snella/publications.html>



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**A Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL)**

## **Editor**

Lawrence Cheeseman  
Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library  
One Court Street, Room 208  
Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: (860) 343-6560

FAX: (860) 343-6568

Email: [lcheese@comcast.net](mailto:lcheese@comcast.net)



**OUR INTERNET ADDRESS IS**

**HTTP://**[www.aallnet.org/chapter/snella/](http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/snella/)

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Lawrence Cheeseman, Editor  
Jeffrey Dowd, Associate Editor  
Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library  
One Court Street, Room 208  
Middletown, CT 06457

## **FIRST CLASS MAIL**