

## RESOURCES FOR ART IN ONLINE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

by Andrea Morrison



overnment information in paper and digital formats is a rich resource for fine art, graphic art and images for library users. Over the history of our country, U.S. federal and state governments

published artwork, illustrations, graphics, maps, photographs, posters, portraits and illustrations, and now much of this artwork can be accessed through digital collections. There is usually no charge to access this information and very few copyright restrictions. Indiana state government information provides a wealth of artwork relating to our state, both current and historical. This article will discuss the type of art available in online government information and describes selected exemplary resources issued by the U.S. federal and Indiana state governments. Only some of the vast wealth of resources will be highlighted. Art resources inspiring to children will be included. Hopefully, this introduction to artwork in online government information will inspire librarians from all kinds of libraries to refer to this information regularly.

According to the New Oxford American Dictionary the noun art may be defined as "... the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power" and also as "works produced by such skill and imagination."<sup>1</sup> Art has been commissioned and/or published by government agencies and officials in many ways: for use in texts and traditional publication; for maps, posters, photographs and other graphical and digital images; for murals or other decorative artwork for buildings; for permanent art galleries such as portrait collections; in design and architecture; and in retaining and preserving our cultural heritage in museum and other collections. In some cases, the artists are government employees creating art for a publication or website. This article will provide a selection of significant resources for art published in government information, both current and historical examples. International intergovernmental organizations can be an excellent resource for art, world culture and society, and photographs, but they are not included in this article. Consult the chapter on

social/cultural issues in *International Government Information and Country Information*, 2004<sup>2</sup>, especially for cultural and heritage art, and consult all chapters for digital images and photographs.

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND ART

Many government agencies have commissioned and published art, however, this category focuses on those responsible for promoting art.

The U.S. National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) ([www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov)) is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established. Its mission is to bring the arts to all Americans and provide leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest national founder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.<sup>3</sup> The NEA website has numerous publications of interest including *NEA ARTS*, a bimonthly newsletter including current information on the NEA's national initiatives, programs, awards, grants, and events.

Of special note for those serving children, the NEA has published *Imagine! Introducing Your Child to the Arts*, 2004 (<http://www.arts.gov/pub/imagine.pdf>), a guide to introducing children to the arts. Made for parents, the publication includes activities and suggestions in literature, dance, music, theater, visual arts, folk arts, and media arts aimed specifically at children ages 3-8 years old. It also includes a pull-out guide of arts activities. A hard copy may be ordered at no fee from the agency from the NEA > Publications web site.

The Indiana Arts Commission (<http://www.in.gov/arts/>) is a state agency that serves the citizens of Indiana by funding, encouraging, promoting and expanding the arts. It awards grants to artists and for art programs. E-newsletters published by the Commission include, *Arts Inform*, a quarterly that covers state and federal arts news as well as advocacy issues; *Arts92*, a monthly gazette that highlights opportunities from Indiana and beyond, and the *Arts Eye*, a bi-monthly with information and inspiration for people in the Arts. The commission has just completed the final version of their

strategic plan, *Leading the Arts in Indiana*<sup>4</sup> (Jan. 2006). Other web resources available from the Indiana Arts Commission include links to art education and cultural projects and a calendar of art events.

## GOVERNMENT PORTALS

U.S. government portals are Internet guides to subject information. They are intended to allow public access across federal agencies by topic, permitting unified searching, and are usually created by a partnership of agencies. Portals are featured on the broader topics list found at the main U.S. federal government information portal, FirstGov.gov. For example, a topic web page on History, Art and Culture (<http://www.firstgov.gov/Citizen/Topics/History.shtml>) links to official information and services from the U.S. government in this field. Links to federal agencies, libraries and museums are included. The other topics and portal pages are also very useful in finding art and graphic images published by the U.S. government. The Science and Technology topics page links to Science.gov, a portal site for unified scientific searching. Most federal agencies thus linked to have sections or categories with images or photographs that can be downloaded freely and used. Sometimes on the portal site, the category for images will not be obvious, but there is always a search option for the site: search on the term “photographs” or “Digital collection” or “images.” Other art is often featured on educational or learning pages of the agency. These may include comic books or coloring books, usually with an educational theme, teaching some aspect of the topic or the history of the topic to children. Most agencies also feature a kid’s page with interactive art.

## HISTORICAL

*The United States Congressional Serial Set* (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwss.html>) is a collection of U.S. Senate and House documents, reports and other miscellaneous congressional materials. It is one of the most valuable resources for U.S. history, international relations, law, politics, culture, and society. Many beautiful, historical images and artwork are included in this publication, portions of which are published on the Library of Congress web site and throughout the American Memory digital library. The reports are usually from Congressional committees dealing with proposed legislation and issues under investigation. Commonly referred to as the *Serial Set*, this title began publication with the 15th Congress, 1st Session (1817). Documents before 1817 may be found in the American State Papers (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwsp.html>). The Library of Congress provides these fully machine-searchable text and digital facsimile images for these titles. Research and Law libraries in Indiana may also hold the print copies of

the *Serial Set* and/or commercial databases from the companies Readex and LexisNexis. Artwork of special note are the illustrated reports from explorers, discoverers, scientists and naturalists, such as Audubon illustrations, the official reports from the Lewis and Clark expeditions and Commodore Matthew Perry’s three-volume report on his 1852-54 exhibition to Japan.

The *Serial Set* contains a wealth of both color and black and white maps. Those published prior to 1850 are considered exceptionally valuable. Some of these maps and illustrations have been reproduced through the Library of Congress’ American Memory library collections and are also available through purchase of digital collections from the companies Readex and LexisNexis. Three libraries with excellent collections of these congressional materials in print are the Indiana State Library federal documents collection<sup>5</sup> and the Indiana University Libraries in Bloomington, Government Information, Microforms and Statistical Services (GIMSS)<sup>6</sup> and the Indiana University Fort Wayne Helmke Library<sup>7</sup>. More information about the illustrations in the *Serial Set* and historical illustrations in other government publications may also be found in Charles Seavey’s article, “Government graphics: the development of illustration in U.S. Federal publications, 1817-1861.”<sup>8</sup>

## KID’S ART

The portal specifically for kids, Kids.gov, has a section on kids’ art education as well as activities for watching and doing ([http://www.kids.gov/k\\_arts.htm](http://www.kids.gov/k_arts.htm)). Children’s books published by the U.S. government have featured plants, animals, cartoons and characters like Smokey the Bear to relay the message. Digital versions of these publications may be found by searching the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications, by the U.S. Government Printing Office, (<http://catalog.gpo.gov/>). Examples of a comic book, coloring book and kid’s cartoon website include:

- *Sprocket Man*. Washington: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Division, 1978?, a bicycle safety guide for children in comic book format, (<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/341.pdf>)
- *My ABC’s of NASA*. Cleveland, OH: Lewis Research Center, 1991. (ERIC no. ED355479) ([http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content\\_storage\\_01/0000000b/80/25/7e/7e.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/7e/7e.pdf)). This booklet is an alphabet coloring book for the elementary student. Words and pictures for each letter of the alphabet are relate and illustrate some aspect of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration, such as “astronaut” for A, “rocket” for R and “S” for sun. Each alphabet letter is on a separate page.

- *Bam!* Website, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ([www.bam.gov](http://www.bam.gov)). This site features cartoon characters with some animation to teach about health issues and recommend ways to make their bodies and minds healthier, stronger, and safer. *BAM!* also serves teachers and parents with health and science curriculum and teaching activities.

Other links to art for children is available through the award-winning web site *Ben's Guide*, by the U.S. Government Printing Office via its GPO Access web site. The Parent/Teacher section links to a directory of online Arts & Recreation government information for kids. (<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/subject.html>)

## MUSEUMS AND FINE ARTS

Here is just a selection of national museums that curate both public and private art, including fine arts and sculpture. Many digital collections are available.

- National Gallery of Art ([www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)) [close preview] The National Gallery of Arts collection illustrates major achievements in painting, sculpture, and graphic arts from the Middle Ages to the present. It features exhibitions, online tours, educational programs and many other resources. The NGA also has a kid's page, National Gallery of Art | NGAkids home page ([www.nga.gov/kids](http://www.nga.gov/kids)) [close preview] which offers interactive discussions of paintings and sculpture in the National Gallery of Art, educational activities, and an animated musical story.
- Smithsonian Museums ([www.si.edu/museums](http://www.si.edu/museums)) This online directory to the Smithsonian museum describes and links to the museums, most of which have online exhibitions and include both private and public art. Library users interested in architecture and government buildings will also find the history of the buildings here.
- Archives of American Art (AAA) ([artarchives.si.edu](http://artarchives.si.edu)) contains over 14 million items and is one of the largest sources in the world of primary source documentation on the visual arts in America. Users may access information through AAA's online catalog, finding aids and guides. The kid's page has many educational activities.
- The Indiana State Museum Fine Arts collection consists of over 8,000 pieces (<http://www.in.gov/ism/MuseumExhibits/museumArt.asp#art>). A division of the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, the museum's exhibits and collections feature a permanent Indiana history gallery, Indiana artists in the art gallery, building exhibits and exhibits on cultural and natural history with art and artifacts. The museum links to state historic sites.

## MAPS

- USGS National Atlas (<http://www.nationalatlas.gov/>) offers geographic and statistical maps in an online, interactive atlas of the United States. Data topics include information on geography, people, economy, transportation, communications, and government. Sections link users to printable maps, wall maps, making maps and make sections. Making maps allows users to customize an online map for printing or viewing. It is considered one of the best comprehensive Federal sources for national maps and geographic information on the Internet.
- USGS National Map, by the United States Geological Survey (<http://nationalmap.gov/>) is an online interactive map that provides free access to high-quality, geospatial data, imagery, and information. Users customize the map view depending on their selections of political and geographic features. It is produced by a consortium of Federal, State, and local partners who provide geospatial data to enhance the public's ability to access, integrate, and apply geospatial data at global, national, and local scales.
- Geography and Map Reading Room, of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/>) links to online maps collections and other online resources outside the Library of Congress and government agencies. Online exhibits, such as the current exhibit "Maps in Our Lives" provide graphical illustration of the beauty of mapping. The exhibit features maps illustrating the historical evolution in surveying from 1790 to 1999 in celebration of a thirty-year partnership between the Library's Geography and Map Division and the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM).
- Indiana Information Council (IGIC), Indiana State Library, is a nonprofit membership organization of GIS users, professionals and educators. Funded in part by the state of Indiana and administered by an elected board of directors, IGIC is recognized as the official statewide coordinating body for Indiana geographic information. It provides an interactive resource for making customized maps called *Indianamap*. Other features are information about the orthophotography project for Indiana counties which will produce a base map of Indiana for geographic information systems (GIS), a GIS inventory and the Huck Finn project. The Huck Finn project provides learning experiences for kids through fun and

creative learning. The lesson plans and activities cover art, geography, literature, math, science and government, history and in Indiana communities.

- *Our Hoosier State Beneath Us*, by the Indiana Geological Survey. (<http://www.indiana.edu/~librcsd/etext/hoosier>) This online digital resource is a set of brief illustrated articles is part of a set of about 250 such articles with brief introductions to the geology of Indiana with beautifully illustrated black and white drawings.

## PATENTS

Your inventive users will delight in the illustrations accompanying patents in the patent databases published by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. A patent for an invention is a grant of property rights by the U.S. government through the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and by law the grant excludes others from making, using, or selling the invention in the United States.<sup>9</sup> The Patent Full-text and Full-Page Images Database (<http://www.uspto.gov/patft/>) is linked from the Patent Office's homepage, USPTO, Patents > Search. All patent images from 1976 forward are available in text as well as TIFF image format in the patent search systems; however pre-1976 patents are available in TIFF image format only. For more information, consult the Two Patent and Trademark depository libraries in Indiana: the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library and Purdue University's Siegesmund Engineering Library.

Patents can be a source of entertaining illustrations. The website "Wacky Patent of the month"<sup>10</sup> publishes an archive of selected unusual patent illustrations. One example is a patent granted to Harry Houdini [Figure 1] March 1, 1921 for a diver's suit. The invention related to deep sea diving suits or armors, and its object was to provide a new and improved diver's suit that would allow the diver, in case of danger, to quickly divest himself of the suit while being submerged and to safely escape and reach the surface of the water.

## PERFORMING ARTS

The Library of Congress Performing Arts Division's Reading Room (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/perform/ihas/>) links to several different digital collections relating to the performing arts, including the historical digital collections in American Memory. It features Music, Theatre & Dance: A Performing Arts Digital Library. Users can access streaming video of performances, sheets music, texts and images. The site also links to an annotated list of web resources for the performing arts and music, including Indiana University.

## PORTRAITS

Digital portraits are also available from federal and state governments. The National Portrait Gallery (NPG),

part of the Smithsonian Institutions, provides a portrait search either just in the NPG's collections and also with the Catalog of American Portraits of public and private images (<http://npgportraits.si.edu/code/emuseum.asp>). Portraits are available from Congressional Pictorial Directory, via the U.S. Government Printing Office's GPO Access database, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/pictorial/index.html>. The U.S. Government has published collections of portraits of major political figures, including presidents and first ladies, governors and legislators: most current information is available and some historical information has been digitized. The Indiana State government Indiana Official Governors' Portraits Collection, held by the Indiana Historical Bureau, which has statutory authority to maintain the collection. The Governors' Portraits collection consists of a portrait of each governor, general information about the painting, a brief biography of the governor, and a biography of the artist who painted the portrait. (<http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/govportraits/index.html>)

## POSTERS

An outstanding example of government posters are those published by the U.S. Works Projects Administration (WPA) by the Library of Congress in its digital online library, American Memory Over 900 posters are digitally reproduced from the American depression-era,



"Exhibition of Paintings." Ill. : Federal Art Project, WPA, [between 1936 and 1941], in *By the People, For the People*: Poster From the WPA, 1936-1943. Digital ID: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b49490>

1936-1943. "The *By the People, For the People: Posters from the WPA, 1936-1943* (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaposters/wpahome.html>) collection consists of 908 boldly colored and graphically diverse original posters produced as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. This collection is the largest known collection of the approximately 2,000 posters originally produced. Created by silkscreen, lithograph, and woodcut, these posters featured topics such as health and safety programs; cultural programs including art exhibitions, theatrical, and musical performances; travel and tourism; educational programs; and community activities in seventeen states and the District of Columbia. Some of these posters have transcended history into popular culture, others are significant for their art and design. For example, see [Figure 2] for an illustrated poster advertising an art exhibit

## PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Prints and Photographs Division Reading Room, by the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/>) This website provides catalogs and indexes to print and digital images, some published in American Memory collections. The Prints & Photographs Online Catalog describes about 65% of the Divisions holdings, includes many digital images. Another resource by subject is the Division's Lists of Images on Popular Topics. Not all images are in the public domain. One of the most heavily used online collections is the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) collections. ([http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs\\_haer/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/)) This collection includes images of comprehensive range of building types [Figure 3] and engineering technologies digitized from measured drawings, black-and-white photographs, color transparencies, photo captions, and also data pages. Prints and Photographs Division Reading Room also links to a digital collection of caricature and cartoons.

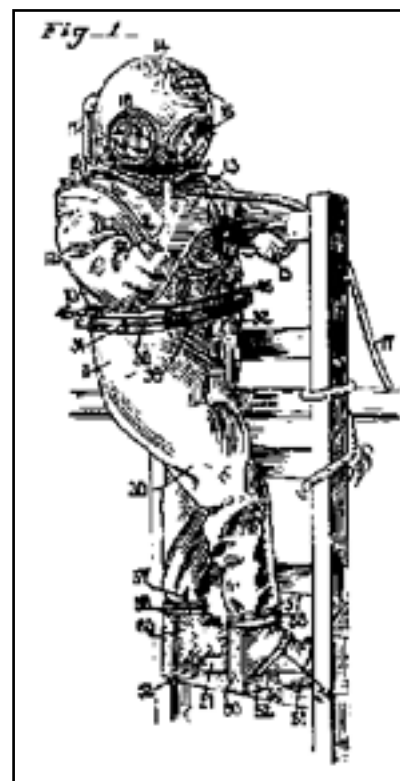


Buffalo herd, created for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by Bob Savannah  
<http://www.fws.gov/pictures/lineart/bobsavannah/buffaloheard.html>.  
 Accessed March 13, 2006.

## SCIENTIFIC ARTWORK AND IMAGES

Most government agencies have digital still image collections. Users may consult the Science and Technology section on FirstGov.gov for links to official U.S. government on this topic. Science.gov ([www.science.gov](http://www.science.gov)) the science portal links users to the federal scientific agencies and photo and graphic images by scientific discipline. Here are selected sites of interest from a variety of scientific disciplines. Check each agency and its databases for copyright and use restrictions and guidelines.

- The multimedia gallery from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (<http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/highlights/index.html>) offers a great selection of images, videos and interactive features about Earth, space, the planets and NASA's programs. Information is gathered from the Hubble Space Telescope, the Kennedy Space Center, and a variety of spacecraft, such as explorer. Its Art Gallery section features the work of notable artists, such as Norman Rockwell, commissioned to document the history of the agency. Users may subscribe to an 'Image of the Day' RSS Feed' to automatically download the latest NASA. Podcasts permits users to download new NASA audio and video content when it becomes



From *Wacky Patent of the Month*, by Michael J. Colitz, Jr. 1997, 2006, <http://colitz.com/site/1370316/1370316.htm>, accessed March 13, 2006.

available. NASA still images, audio files and video generally are not copyrighted. The agency confirms they may be used for educational or informational purposes, including photo collections, textbooks, public exhibits and display on the Internet.

- NOAA Photo Library, by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration ([www.photolib.noaa.gov/collections.html](http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/collections.html)) This digital collection offers images on severe storms (lots of tornado images!), the National Weather Service Historical Weather Collection, America's coastlines, sunset and sunrise images and much more. Image collections are available in album and catalog formats.
- The National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) offers a constantly updating database of images related to nature and the environment. (<http://images.nbii.gov/>) NBII is a program of broad-based, collaborative program amongst federal, state, international, non-government, academic, and private industry partners. The database includes photographs of plant and animal species, scenic landscapes, wildlife management, and biological fieldwork. Most images are freely available for general, educational, and scientific use.
- The USGS Digital Satellite Data website (<http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod/satellitedata.html>) is an excellent resource for linking to outstanding satellite images. Users may locate, view, download, or order global land remote sensing data derived from a variety of air- and satellite-borne sensors, including Landsat satellite imagery and data from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's polar orbiting weather satellites.
- The Picture/Graphics page, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://www.fws.gov/pictures/>) links to

National Image Library with hundreds of digitized 35mm color slides; wildlife sketches by artist (line black and white art); wildlife pictures, duck stamp images back to 1934; and an ecosystem photo gallery. The buffalo herd line drawing is one example of art commission by this agency from artist Bob Savannah. [Figure 4]

- DefenseLINK images from the U.S. Dept. of Defense. (<http://www.defenselink.mil/multimedia/>) This site images from all branches of the military: the Air Force, Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Marines. Included are web photos, graphics and news photos. Images are in the public domain, however, users are asked give credit to the photographers.

The purpose of this article was to highlight selected government information resources relating to art that exemplify the variety of art available. The author is compiling a more comprehensive guide; please send your favorite art resources in government information to Andrea Morrison ([amorriso@indian.edu](mailto:amorriso@indian.edu)) to be included. Other topics not covered, but no less inspiring, are the architecture and design of public buildings and monuments in our state and national capitols; historical murals and paintings in government buildings; musical and performing art; and artwork commissioned, published or displayed by government agencies. For these, go directly to the Internet site for the building or agency. For an A-Z list of U.S. federal agencies, consult Firstgov-gov ([http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All\\_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml)) or for Indiana State agencies, consult Access Indiana's state agency directory (<http://www.in.gov/ai/agencylist.html>). Enjoy browsing and using art resources in government information. The horizon is limitless.

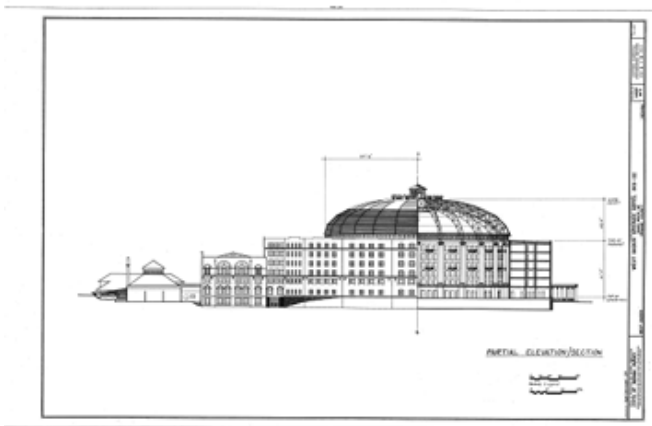
## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "art n." *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, second edition. Ed. Erin McKean. Oxford University Press, 2005. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Indiana University - Bloomington. 13 March 2006 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t183.e3887>>

<sup>2</sup> Morrison, Andrea M. and Barbara J. Mann. *International Government Information and Country Information: A Subject Guide*. (How to Find It, How to Use It) Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. National Endowment of the Arts About Us WWW page, <http://www.arts.gov/about/index.html>, Accessed March 13, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *Leading the Arts in Indiana, the Indiana Arts Commission Strategic Plan: 2006-2011*, by the Indiana Arts Commission. Accessed March 13, 2006. [http://www.in.gov/arts/about/strategic\\_plan\\_draft1.doc](http://www.in.gov/arts/about/strategic_plan_draft1.doc).



West Baden Springs Hotel, State Route 56, West Baden, Orange County, IN. Drawing in Historic American Engineering Record (Library of Congress) Digital Collection. Digital ID: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.in0122>. Accessed March 13, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Indiana State Library home page. Accessed March 13, 2006, <http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/isl/whatwehave/fedddocs.html>.

<sup>6</sup>Indiana University Libraries in Bloomington, Government Information, Microforms and Statistical Services (GIMSS) home page. Accessed March 13, 2006, <http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=386>

<sup>7</sup> IPFW Helmke Library, PIRS Public Information Reference Service, Accessed March 13, 2006, <http://www.lib.ipfw.edu/581.0.html>

<sup>8</sup> "Government graphics: the development of illustration in U.S. Federal publications, 1817-1861," by Charles A. Seavey. *Government Publications Review*; 17 (2) Mar/Apr 90, 121-142.

<sup>9</sup> "What is a patent," U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, <http://www.uspto.gov/main/faq/index.html>, Accessed March 13, 2006

<sup>10</sup> *Wacky Patent of the Month*, by Michael J. Colitz, Jr. 1997, <http://colitz.com/site/wacky.htm>, Accessed March 13, 2006.