

Start spreading the news . . .



By Jane Levin, JEL Media

Do not ever go to New York in summer! That said this city is a "must-see" location, even if you are a London/Paris girl at heart like me. It truly is the "city that never sleeps". Like all large cities of the world, it's a bit dirty and run-down in places, but it is the vibe that you go to New York for, not the beauty. I have never seen so many slim (yes, slim) and fashionable young people as I have in Manhattan. And you will be sorely disappointed if you are looking for gruff and rude New Yorkers – they are rare . . . except in parts of Queens.

The best way to stay in New York, if you are on any sort of budget, is in a rented apartment. Believe it or not, it is cheaper than staying in a one-star shoebox hotel room. The best way to see New York is on foot and using the fantastic public transport system. After the Statue of Liberty and Times Square, make sure you visit fantastic areas like Greenwich Village (kind of Sarah Jessica Parker meets Brunswick Street), Gramercy Park (go to Ess-a-Bagel for the best

chopped liver bagel EVER), and Smith Street in Brooklyn, with its cute bars, multicultural eateries, and more laid-back vibe. Any *Sex and the City* fan must visit the Meatpacking District (where Samantha lives – it really has meatworks on one side of the road and boutiques like Stella McCartney on the other).

And then there is Central Park (New Yorkers' only form of greenery). Particular highlights are: The Ramble (a nice walking area), the Loeb Boathouse (where you can sit sipping champagne overlooking the water), the Bethesda Fountain and, for dog lovers – go to the great lawn.

For arts lovers, start at Museum Mile on the Upper East Side. The Metropolitan Museum of Art is the best museum I have ever seen and the Whitney and Frick Museums are fabulous for modern art. Don't bother with MOMA Queens – wait for MOMA in Manhattan to re-open from renovations. The Guggenheim isn't so fabulous, but definitely worth

a visit is the powerful Museum of Jewish Heritage near Battery Park. I was lucky enough to see Jimmy Smits of *LA Law* and *NYPD* fame in a free Shakespeare in the Park performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*, as well as the American Ballet Theatre perform at the MET. But even more exciting was winning cheap tickets to see the hottest show on Broadway – *Avenue Q* – which I can best describe as "Adults-only Muppets on drugs".

And of course, there is the shopping. New York is actually cheap to shop in if a) the sales are on and b) you stay out of designer stores. For bargains, go to Orchard Street in the character-filled Lower East Side or for shoes go to 8th Street in the West Village.

Words of warning: \$1 notes and \$100 notes are the same colour and size; ask New Yorkers for the best restaurants to avoid diners for every meal; New York has gone security crazy; and don't forget to tip. And no, unfortunately, I didn't get to meet Kwame and Bill from *The Apprentice*. ■

www.un.org

The purpose of the United Nations (UN) is, among other things, to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and to be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations in attaining these ends. It is a large mandate and its component parts are reflected in the United Nations website (UNW).

The UNW is, in short, massive. Available in six languages, it covers all aspects of the goals and work of the UN. As this website has been created for a wide audience, its content does not always have a legal focus. The corollary being in-depth knowledge of the UN and its operations is not needed to understand the content of the UNW. Further, the website is both clear and logical. Therefore, as a legal research tool, the UNW is a fine source of information.

The main (or welcome) page of the UNW is a simple menu/directory. Along the first column is information

about the UN: covering the aims, bodies, key staff and foundation documents. Along the second column, some of the major areas in which the UN is undertaking work are listed. As of August 2004, this includes, the situation in Iraq, UN actions against terrorism, and civil societies/ business.

Along the top and bottom of this main page are other links which provide access to the UN daily briefings, documentation and maps, and the UN multimedia centre (please note, the online multimedia library is not exhaustive). Of greater interest to lawyers would probably be the online UN publications and online databases. Significant amounts of information are accessible, however, some information is subscription-based. There is, in addition, a link to the UN bookshop and overseas ordering is permitted.

There are, also, along the top of this main page, five topic based links, which include:

- peace and security;
- economic and social development;
- human rights;
- humanitarian affairs; and
- international law.

Once clicked, these links lead to separate menus and there is substantial information on each of these areas. While a large portion of this information will be of relevance to lawyers who work or have an interest in these areas, it is the international law link which I looked at in more detail. The international law link leads to a menu which contains excellent background documents and information including, but not limited to, UNCITRAL, the International Court of Justice, treaties, the International Criminal Tribunals of Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and the International Criminal Court.

In addition to these particular links and menus of the UNW, the Index and Search functions (located at the bottom of the main page) are also effective and efficient ways to find specific information.

The UNW is an excellent tool for legal professionals requiring information on most international law topics, UN bodies and related publications. This website is user-friendly, plain English (or one of five other languages), well-resourced and, generally, current. It is an invaluable resource for lawyers and the international community alike. ■



Vanya Kumar, Associate, Baker & McKenzie