

Society of American Archivists
Preservation Section (Liaison: Zimmelman)
Annual Report 2005-2006

Officers: Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, Chair
Sheila McAlister, Past-Chair
Steve Dalton, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect
Clark Center, Member-at-Large
Stephen Van Buren, Member-at-Large
Patricia Morris, Program Committee Chair
Rebecca Hatcher, Education Committee Co-Chair
Susan Koutsky, Education Committee Co-Chair
Laura Finger, Outreach Committee Co-Chair
Anne Ostendarp, Outreach Committee Co-Chair
Anne Rothfeld, *Infinity* Co-Editor
Tonia Sutherland, *Infinity* Co-Editor
Julie Graham, Web mistress

Report from Annual Meeting:

- **Number of attendees:** 75
- **Election results:** Brenda Gunn, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect; Rebecca Hatcher, Member-at-Large
- **Summary of meeting activities (or attach minutes or newsletter accounts):**
The 2006 Business Meeting began with a welcome by Chair Gregor Trinkaus-Randall. He noted that he had asked the reporting committee chairs to produce hardcopies of their reports for distribution so that they could give an abbreviated oral report at the meeting because of the length of the planned program. He then gave his report of the year's activities.

Report of the Preservation Section Chair, Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, August 4, 2006, Washington, DC

I have to begin my brief remarks by stating that this year would not have been possible without the assistance and support of the members of the leadership. In some cases people may not have felt that they were as active as they could have been, but let me assure people that their comments and questions were well worth it for me. Sheila McAlister not only provided a smooth transition from her year as Chair, but she also acted as a sounding board for me on numerous occasions. Moreover, for the second year in a row, she ably administered our electronic voting, thus setting a standard for the rest of SAA, which is considering moving in this direction in the near future. Ann Rothfeld took on the first issue of *Infinity* essentially by herself and did an excellent job. Tonia Sutherland joined her as a co-editor for the second issue with added enthusiasm and skill. It has been a pleasure working with both of them actually to publish two issues of *Infinity* this year. Julie Graham brought the Website up-to-date and posted both issues of *Infinity* as well as migrating the whole website to SAA. Other things are planned for the Website in the future. Keep posted. Rebecca Hatcher and Susan Koutsky had to deal with my multiple ideas for education projects and ways to bring preservation and disaster preparedness to the eyes of more at SAA. Pat Morris responded quickly and with success when I suggested that we should propose sessions for this year's program that dealt with the hurricanes and how they affected archives and other repositories in the southeast. Steve Dalton, who takes over from me in a couple of hours, has long been a close friend and colleague. He also acted as a sounding board for a number of ideas that I have raised. The rest of the officers had to put up with my phone calls, emails, etc. throughout the year as I sent out things for reactions and badgered them to learn what was happening. Thank you for putting up with me. Finally, I

have to thank all of you, Richard Pearce-Moses, and Nancy Beaumont for giving me this opportunity to serve SAA and the Preservation Section in these trying times for many people and archivists in the hurricane-ravaged states.

We got off the mark last August with a bang named “Katrina.” For better or worse, the impact of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma dictated much of what occurred this past year. As Chair of the Preservation Section, I was designated by Richard Pearce-Moses to be SAA’s representative on the weekly conference calls sponsored by Heritage Preservation. These calls brought together representatives from SAA, FEMA, LC, NARA, NEH, IMLS, AASLH, NEDCC, CCAHA, HP, SOLINET, AIC, SI, NPS, NCPTT, the various State Archives and State Libraries in the affected states (when available), SHPO’s, and others whom I know that I have forgotten. They served as an excellent means for each group to coordinate activities with other groups as well as a chance for each group to learn what the others were doing. On almost every call we were given updates from FEMA (often Alan Aiches) and from appropriate people in the affected states. This also gave the rest of us a chance to ask questions that served to refine further their reports. I know that all join me in thanking Larry Reger, Jane Long, and the rest of the Heritage Preservation staff for hosting these conference calls and for moving things along as much as they did.

As a follow-up to the conference calls and other activities, the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Weinstein, promised President Bush that the all fifty states would have statewide disaster plans in place by September 2006 and that those in the southeast would be in place by June 2006. To respond to this challenge, CoSA undertook to develop a framework by which the fifty state archives could conduct an assessment of their state archives and their states and develop the major components of a statewide disaster plan for records. On April 18-20, 2006 CoSA held a *Hurricane Conference* at the Georgia State Archives in Morrow, GA. I was asked by Richard Pearce-Moses and Nancy Beaumont to represent SAA at this conference. After a reception on Tuesday evening, on Wednesday morning the attendees were addressed by representatives of the southeastern states archives who had completed the draft assessment portion of the framework and then by representatives from NARA and FEMA. That afternoon the group was divided into groups to discuss the draft framework (two groups for each component: assessment, model for a basic preparedness document, and a toolkit with guidance and a resource directory). Finally, on Thursday morning, following a demonstration of *dPlan*, the facilitator divided the participants into groups to discuss the salient points raised during Wednesday’s discussions. All these remarks and comments were then presented to Maria Holden (New York State Archives) and Christine Wiseman (Georgia State Archives) to rework the framework into a more finished document. The results of their work were distributed to participants in June 2006 so that each state could begin work on its disaster plan.

Another issue that has been raised is the impact of the information included in the Heritage Health Index on archives, libraries, and other cultural institutions. I was contacted by James Eason, Chair of the Visual Materials Section, following that Section’s mid-winter leadership meeting, concerning the possibility of developing a preservation self-assessment tool that might lead archives to the designation as a “trusted preservation repository.” I contacted the Preservation Section leadership for their reaction to this concept. The response was overwhelmingly positive. As a follow-up to this discussion James and I drafted a letter to Richard Pearce-Moses proposing the concept for discussion by Council. In the middle of June, Pearce-Moses contacted us for a more detailed reading of our proposal. We both feel that this work was outside the scope of a joint project of the Preservation and Visual Materials Sections. We noted that many Sections, Roundtables, and Committees had key roles to play and should have a voice in developing the self-assessment tool. We suggested that SAA form a task force to develop the tool. Pearce-Moses noted that as with any volunteer task force within SAA, success will depend on a clear task from Council, strong leadership from the chair, willing workers, and likely some resources. We will learn soon what the outcome of this proposal has been in Council.

In June of this year *dPlan: The Online Disaster Planning Tool* was officially launched for use by institutions across the country. While it will probably always be a “work-in-progress” because of the evolution of disaster planning, it is fully functional and usable. At the moment the resource list is essentially only for Massachusetts, but with CoSA’s work and some extra time and funding from the Institute for Museum and Library Services expanding the resource section to become national will proceed apace. We are also looking at creating a “button” for our Websites that can also be put on other Websites (e.g. State Libraries and Archives, regional conservation centers) to link directly to www.dplan.org.

This was the first year that the Preservation Section really put to use the Section’s Announcement List. I found that it was a great way to keep members up-to-date on events that affected all of us as well as many others. I hope that you found it useful receiving the information as well. I trust that future leaders will also make good use of the List. It worked well for me.

Finally, just a few announcements. Volunteers are always needed to make the Section function well. If anyone is interested in becoming involved, they should contact Steve Dalton, the incoming Chair. I know that he will be able to put you to work. CoSA and SAA have set up the *Great Ideas! InfoExpo* in the hallway near the exhibit area. One of the topics is Disaster Planning and Recovery. If you haven’t been there already you should check it out. One of the booths deals specifically with *dPlan*, and Rebecca Hatcher could use some assistance manning the booth if people are available. Also, FirePASS has a booth in the exhibit area. This is a fire protection and detection system that uses hypoxic technology to deal with fires. The Library of Congress will be testing it so it might well be worth while checking them out. Finally, I would like to note that I asked the Committee Chairs to shorten their verbal remarks and provide hardcopy of their reports for all who were interested. Thank you.

Following the Chair’s report there was a welcome from the Council Liaison, Nancy Zimmerman, an announcement of a new publication by Tawny Nelb, and the announcement of a journal publication and a call for papers by David Gracey. Maria Holden of the New York State Archives then discussed the CoSA disaster preparedness initiative and described CoSA’s Disaster Preparedness Framework that focuses on disaster preparedness for the State Archives’ records and records throughout their respective states. Tom Clareson then gave his brief annual report on Funding Available for Preservation Projects.

Chair Trinkaus-Randall then introduced the speakers for the program. Kristen Laise from Heritage Preservation discussed some of the highlights (or lowlights) of the Heritage Health Index. In the process, she discussed the methodology of the creation of the survey and how the survey was actually carried out. Jane Long, also of Heritage Preservation, then discussed the role of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force in general and especially in regards to its role during the hurricane crises in 2005-2006. One of the key roles that the Task Force played was to host and coordinate national conference calls on a weekly basis that included many cultural institutions and those responsible for these institutions to help ascertain the conditions on the ground in the affected states and to coordinate response and recovery efforts. At the end of her presentation, Ms. Long introduced the *Field Guide to Emergency Response*, which had just been published by Heritage Preservation with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and was now available for purchase. Finally, the last speaker was Alan Aiches from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Mr. Aiches was on the ground in Louisiana for most of the previous year coordinating efforts to respond to the damage to cultural institutions. He spoke clearly about the problems that institutions’ staffs faced both in the initial logistical nightmare of returning to their institutions and in being able to recover materials. His presentation was clearly illustrated with slides.

Completed Projects/Activities: Actually, few projects were completed due to the total immersion of the section leadership in the response to the hurricanes. The leadership did update the website and migrated it from the UCLA to SAA server. One thing that was accomplished again was the electronic voting that occurred thanks to Sheila McAlister's initiative the previous year. Serving as a potential model for SAA elections, this voting procedure again produced a much higher response than did the paper ballots of two years previously.

Ongoing Projects/Activities: None carried out.

New Projects/Activities: Activities that were explored including the scanning of old issues of *Infinity* to mount them on the website. This was begun but no results were forthcoming at this time. The Education Committee also investigated the possibility of surveying the SAA membership as to their preservation needs and ideas for preservation sessions. The initial steps were undertaken. In addition the Outreach Committee began the process of investigating the possibility of having a poster session as part of the Section Meeting. That did not proceed very far. Finally, as noted above, in conjunction with the Visual Materials Section, the Preservation Section proposed to Council the idea of creating a means by which repositories could survey their own preservation readiness and progress towards becoming a "trusted" preservation repository. Council acted upon this at their August meeting and decided to set up a Task Force to look into the matter. One additional activity was undertaken this year. Thanks to SAA and the establishment of the Section listservs, Chair Trinkaus-Randall was able to keep the membership up-to-date with the content of the Heritage Preservation conference calls and other activities dealing with the hurricanes and Section activities. One such event was the establishment by SSA and SAA of the fund to assist affected archives. By using the listserv, Trinkaus-Randall was able to publicize its existence and to urge members to contribute. It was a great means of communication and numerous members commented on it at the annual meeting.

Diversity Initiatives: Nothing to report.

Questions/Concerns for Council Attention: None.

Previous Chair's reports published in *Infinity* in 2006:

From the Chair:

As everyone knows, this has been an active period of time in dealing with disasters - what with Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma as well as floods in the northeast. I have been fortunate to have represented the Society of American Archivists on the weekly conference calls hosted by Heritage Emergency National Task Force, as many of you know. Initially these calls were focused on trying to find out the extent of the damage in the affected areas and locating colleagues dispersed by the hurricanes. As time progressed and colleagues have been found, as people have been able to gain access to the affected areas to assess the damage, and as reliable information has been disseminated; discussions have focused more and more on status reports and efforts to begin remediation activities, which will take months if not years to accomplish. One side benefit of these conference calls is that we, the representatives of many organizations such as the Society of American Archivists, the American Institute for Conservation, the National Park Service, the American Association for State and Local History, the representatives of the various State Historic Preservation Offices and State Archives, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, the various Regional Alliance for Preservation members, and many others have been able to discuss and coordinate recovery and assistance efforts. Hopefully this will continue in the future and will lead to some more cooperation as events occur in the future.

It has been heart warming to see and hear of the activities undertaken by archivists to assist colleagues in distress. Some institutions have provided temporary employment for those out of work. Some have offered storage space for collections while buildings are rehabilitated. Many have volunteered to help in any way possible, and many have contributed to the SAA/SSA fund to assist archivists in the affected areas. We would be remiss in not mentioning the role that the Society of Southwest Archivists has played in serving as a conduit for information about these events. I would also like to thank Richard Pearce-Moses, current SAA President, for the activist role that he has played in responding to this crisis.

So where does this leave us, the members of SAA's Preservation Section? If nothing else, it should make all of us either think seriously about developing our own disaster plan or updating the one that exists, no matter how old it is. What are some of the lessons learned at this early date? In the first place it is crucial to know your environs. The collections that appear to have survived the best in New Orleans and Mississippi (where the buildings are still standing) were located on the second floor. There was at least some recognition that Mother Nature will flood areas when there is that possibility. Are you in a flood plain, and, if so, what steps have you taken to protect your collections? How many of us have really prioritized our collections? In at least one instance in New Orleans, the collections were prioritized and the boxes were marked with fluorescent tape so that they could be found easily in the dark with a flashlight. This served them well as they were able to locate and move these collections quickly and easily once the staff was allowed back in to assess the damage. How many of us have a staff list that is current with home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, and email addresses so that everyone can be contacted in the event of a disaster? Have we backed up our IT data and housed it at a different location that would not be directly affected if our institution were to be hit by a disaster?

I could go on for a long time, but I think that you get the message. How many times have we expressed the need for an institutional disaster plan and not gotten anywhere? Now it is the time to push either to get one developed or to update the one that has sat on the shelf for "lo these many years." Disaster planning is crucial to the survival of our institutions, their mission, and to our collections. Let us not let this opportunity get away, and let us build on the momentum to create our plan. For a number of years, the name of my disaster workshop was "After the Deluge, What Next?" Do you know? Now that we have all heard or read about the impact that Mother Nature has had on the institutions and collections in the southern states, it is important for us to come to the realization that we could be next. Disaster planning so often gets put off as it is not something that needs to be done yesterday or something that the Dean needs now. It is something that is always lurking in the shadows waiting to be done. Let us dust off what was once started and move ahead. Let this be a challenge to each and everyone of you!

Gregor Trinkaus-Randall
Chair
Preservation Section

From the Chair:

As many of you have gathered from the various emails, this has been a busy and exciting year in the preservation field – especially in the realm of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. While the Heritage Preservation-sponsored conference calls dealing with the response to the hurricanes began to wind down after the middle of February, it is obvious that response and recovery of cultural resources as well as people's homes, businesses, and lives will continue into the foreseeable future. The issue that we need to address from all this activity and response is clearly one of examination of where we are regarding our own preparedness – both personal and professional. How would we survive were we to be hit by a Category 3, 4, or 5 hurricane or an equivalent tornado, earthquake, etc.? Would our collections survive? Have we undertaken the basic steps to protect lives and property as well as the collections under

our care? We need to take a good hard look at our situations and be honest about our preparedness. If we are not prepared, then we need to do something about it.

Richard Pearce-Moses, current President of SAA, and Council moved to bring these lessons home to the archival (and library) community by inaugurating *MayDay* – a day on which we can take one small step to make ourselves better prepared to protect ourselves and our collections. I sincerely hope that many of you took advantage of this opportunity to take that initial step and will continue to do so in future years. One way that this can be facilitated is through the use of ***dPlan: The Online Disaster Planning Tool***. After a couple of years of announcing that its release was imminent, ***dPlan*** was released officially in early June for the use of cultural institutions throughout the United States. For those of you who might not have seen the announcement, it is included elsewhere in this issue of *Infinity*. The URL is <http://www.dplan.org>. It is hoped that the availability of ***dPlan*** will encourage institutions to develop their own institutional disaster preparedness plan.

On another disaster-related front, I was fortunate to represent SAA at the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) meeting (“Hurricane Conference”) in April at the Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Georgia where the goal of the day and a half meeting was to jump start the development of statewide disaster plans for records and records repositories for all fifty states. The emphasis in this meeting was to discuss and suggest revisions for the “Framework” that had been developed to assist in assessing the risks to records holdings in individual states and planning responses so that a comprehensive plan could be developed not only for the State Archives itself but for repositories throughout the state. Since the southeastern states (9) tend to be the most frequent target of hurricanes, these states had been asked to complete the assessment tool prior to this meeting so that everyone present could learn how well it worked for them. Subsequent discussions allowed the creators an opportunity to gather input from a variety of sources to make the tool more effective and more comprehensive. Since these states are the initial guinea pigs for developing a disaster plan, their experiences will serve the rest of the states as they develop their own plans by the end of September 2006.

As you have probably noticed, there are a number of preservation-related sessions on the program this year. Thank you to the program committee, especially Pat Morris, who pulled a number of these sessions together particularly after the hurricanes last fall. Speaking of this year’s SAA meeting, we are going to try to keep the business meeting portion of our Section meeting to a minimum so that we can hear about three important topics. The meeting is from 12:15 to 2:15 on Friday, August 4, 2006. If you need to, bring your lunch. Alan Aiches from FEMA will speak about the impact the hurricanes had on cultural resources in Louisiana in 2005. Mr. Aiches was on the ground in New Orleans and other parts of Louisiana and participated in many of the Heritage Preservation conference calls updating the rest of the participants on the status of events regarding cultural resources on the ground. Kristen Laise from Heritage Preservation will discuss the Heritage Health Index and its implications for future activities in the preservation of our cultural heritage. Finally, either Jane Long or Larry Reger, also from Heritage Preservation, will take a broader look at the disasters of the past year, glean lessons learned, and discuss the Heritage National Emergency Task Force. This promises to be an exciting program so I hope that as many of you who can attend will do so.

Gregor Trinkaus-Randall

Chair
Preservation Section