

CONGRESSIONAL PAPERS ROUNDTABLE NEWSLETTER

From the Chair:**Request for Annual Meeting Program Session Proposals**

I would like to request that all members of the Roundtable consider submitting proposals for sessions relating to congressional papers for next year's annual meeting in Philadelphia. As most of you know, last year we submitted three proposals which, for various reasons, were not accepted. This year the Steering Committee is developing a strategy which we hope will greatly enhance our chances of having at least one session accepted. This will include meetings at the annual meeting in Seattle to discuss and formulate sessions. We will invite our designated liaison from the SAA Program Committee to participate in these meetings. Ideas will then be presented to the membership at our Roundtable meeting. Following the meeting formal proposals will be drafted and sent to the program committee.

Please consider suggesting sessions which include any subjects on congressional papers of interest to yourself and others. Your ideas may take any form, from a formal proposal with session description and participants, to just a list of possible topics. Please send your suggestions to myself or any of the Steering Committee members. If you would like to discuss your ideas, please feel free to contact any of us by telephone. We take all of the proposals to Seattle where they will be examined and presented at our Roundtable meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bob Blesse, Roundtable Chair

Annual Meeting Information:

Of particular interest at this year's annual meeting will be the following eleven sessions in which fourteen members of the roundtable are participating.

Session 2	Documenting Ourselves	William Moss
Session 6	Partners in Acquisition ...	Don Lennon
		Barbara Walton
Session 15	Writing for Publication	Sheryl Vogt
Session 44	Still Open for Business...	Ellen Gartrell
Session 53	From the Ground Up...	Bob Blesse
Session 56	Fugitives in the Archives...	Bill Marshall
Session 59	See You in Court...	Mary Boccaccio
Session 82	Copyright Primer	Robert L. Byrd
Session 84	... Standards for...Description	Karen Jefferson
Session 91	...Regional Archival Associations	Michael Dabrishus
		Virginia Cain
		Saundra Taylor
Session 94	Get it in Writing...	Bonnie Hardwick

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steering Committee Members:

Robert Blesse, Chair
Special Collections Department
University Library
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, NV 89557-0044

Carla Kemp
University of Florida
University Libraries
Gainesville, FL 32611

Mary Boccaccio
East Carolina Manuscript Collection
J. Y. Joyner Library
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858-4353

Connell Gallagher
Bailey/Howe Library
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405

Cynthia Pease Miller
Office of the Historian
138 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Karen Dawley Paul
Senate Historical Office
Hart Senate Office Building
Suite 102
Washington, DC 20510

Congressional Papers Survey:

A survey will be conducted of repositories that acquire congressional collections. It will include sections about the repository, acquisition, processing, funding, conservation, reference and outreach. Copies will be made available at the Roundtable meeting in Seattle and will be mailed to Roundtable members who are not able to go to Seattle. Please answer the questionnaire. It will enable us to facilitate the processing and reference access of congressional papers and help us make recommendations to members and repositories regarding a timetable for transfer of the member's papers. Results will be shared with the Roundtable.

Reminder:

ROUNDTABLE MEETING: FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 10:30am

New Publication:

As one of its technical leaflets series, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference has published a revised edition of Processing Congressional Collections by Mary Boccaccio and David W. Carmicheal. It is available for \$1.50 each from Richard H. F. Lindemann, Aldermann Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903. 19 pages with bibliography.

Send change of address and items for the newsletter to **Cynthia Pease Miller**.

Editors: Cynthia Pease Miller and Connie L. Cartledge



The Society of American Archivists

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February 26, 1990

Robert Blesse
Special Collections
University Archives
University of Nevada at Reno
Reno, Nevada 89557-0044

Dear Bob:

Program Committees welcome sessions submitted or sponsored by sections and roundtables, as well as other SAA groups, because those groups know best what is on the minds of their members. As you suggest, these groups are ideal sources of good ideas for program sessions. This does not imply, however, that each of these groups is in any way guaranteed one or more program slots. (Neither, on the other hand, is any group "denied" time on the program.) The Program Committee simply must have the freedom to choose the best 90 or so sessions from among those proposed--more than 250 this last year, and some proposals are regarded as better than others at providing the material for a program that is, as a whole, both intellectually stimulating and well balanced.

Having watched several Program Committees in action (most recently in Seattle), I can say with assurance that the members of that committee seek to include the fullest range of issues and groups possible. Inevitably, though, some groups propose better-designed sessions than others, or propose sessions that seem to the members of the Program Committee more likely to fit into the overall fabric of the program. The rating is done objectively, by members assigning ratings that are then tallied, so unless the entire Committee is somehow prejudiced against a topic or a group (unlikely, given the desire to have the Committee itself be as broadly representative as possible), the best should rise to the top. An effort is made to combine topics where this would be desirable, or where necessary when elements from two or more proposals must be consolidated in order to achieve a strong program session.

I have observed that some SAA groups are more successful than others, over the long run, perhaps because they have encouraged their members to think the way a Program Committee thinks. Some SAA groups actually lay out for their members the ingredients of a successful proposal, and others assign the task of drafting

proposals to an ongoing group that, naturally, gets better at this sort of thing over time. Others invite members of the upcoming Program Committee to meet with the group in order to hear what it will be looking for in a proposal.

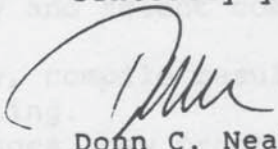
Your Roundtable is probably not the only group disappointed that it does not have a session in Seattle. For instance, one of our largest groups, the College and University Section, was not successful either. In neither case, though, was there an attempt to "deny" the group input into the program. Without getting into the substance of your or any other proposed session, I can only tell you that the Program Committee did what it is charged to do: select from among the large number of sessions proposed the proposals that seem to it most appropriate and well-developed. It does try to maintain some balance among the various archival themes that need to be articulated at the meeting--preservation, automation, outreach, and so forth, and that consideration will also influence whether or not a particular proposal is accepted or modified. In an ideal world, each SAA group would be able to make a contribution to one or more of these larger themes, and everyone would be happy. Unfortunately this is not always the case.

Although in scheduling a session we again have to fit a particular session into the overall mosaic of the three or four days of session, we do try to be sensitive to any special circumstances. Sometimes those are not communicated to us before we do a tentative assignment, but we can usually work things out--as we did last year. If a proposal is clear about these special needs, we will do whatever we can to accommodate them.

I'm sure you and the other members of the Roundtable are disappointed that none of your proposals were accepted. All we can guarantee is a fair hearing for a proposal, though; after that, it is truly the survival of the fittest.

As you requested, I will share your letter--and my response--with the members of Council, and with the chair of the 1991 Program Committee.

Sincerely yours,



Donn C. Neal
Executive Director

Three Year Plan: : Publish results and discuss at annual

On behalf of the Roundtable, Chairman Bob Blesse responded to a request from SAA for a three-year plan. Copies of the full report are available from Bob and at the Roundtable meeting in Seattle. The plan covers 1990-1992.

In addition to describing the ongoing activities of the Roundtable (proposing sessions, newsletter, and disseminating information from the House of Representatives and Senate) and the projects already underway (documentation and survey on how congressional collections are processed), it includes two new projects: a survey on how the Roundtable can best serve the needs of its members and a bibliography. The following is a summary of the plan. Contact Bob Blesse for further information, with your comments, or to sign up to help with any of these projects.

A. Annual meeting sessions

Year 1 (1990): In lieu of having sponsored a session, present portions of proposed sessions at roundtable meeting.

Years 1-3 (1990-92): Solicit proposals from membership and submit at least two for each annual meeting. Work closely with SAA Program Committee liaison to ensure acceptance of at least one proposal.

B. Newsletter

Years 1-3 (1990-92): Produce at least three newsletters with a maximum of 6 pages (three sheets).

C. Congressional Documentation Project

Year 1 (1990): Discuss the project at the annual meeting and publish progress in newsletter.

Year 2 (1991): Continue to support project.

Year 3 (1992): Discuss and publish results. Assist in disseminating information about project.

D. Survey membership to see how roundtable can best serve its needs

Year 1 (1990): Propose survey and select committee to write questions.

Year 2 (1991): Conduct survey, compile results, publish in newsletter, discuss at annual meeting.

Year 3 (1992): Implement changes, new programs, etc. as indicated by survey results.

E. Support survey on how congressional collections are processed

Year 1 (1990): Publish proposal and discuss at annual meeting. Offer assistance in conducting survey and compiling results.

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Year 2 (1991): Publish results and discuss at annual meeting.

F. Disseminate information from House and Senate Historical Offices

G. Compile a bibliography of printed material on congressional papers

Year 1 (1990): Discuss at annual meeting and select committee to compile the bibliography. Publicize in newsletter and request citations from membership.

Year 2 (1991): Publish a draft of bibliography in newsletter and handouts at the annual meeting.

Please consider suggesting sessions which include any subjects on congressional papers of interest to yourself and others. Your ideas may take any form, from a formal proposal with session description and participants, to just a list of possible topics. Please send your suggestions to myself or any of the Steering Committee members. If you would like to discuss your ideas, please feel free to contact any of us by telephone. We take all of the proposals to Seattle where they will be examined and presented at our Roundtable meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bob Blasse, Roundtable Chair

Congressional Papers Roundtable

c/o Miller

6601 Glenbrook Road

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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Session 6 Partners in Acquisition...

Session 16 Writing for Publication...

Session 14 Still Open for Business...

Session 53 From the Ground Up...

Session 56 fugitives in the Archives...

Session 59 See You in Court...

Session 82 Copyright Primer

Session 81 ...Standards for...Description

Session 91 ...Regional Archival Associations

Session 94 Get it in Writing...

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