



The Archival Spirit, November 1998

Newsletter of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, Society of American Archivists

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From the Chair: Kinga Perzynska

As I was gathering my thoughts on my return from Orlando, I wondered if I was indeed returning to the "marginal" world of archives as it was characterized by one prominent SAA speaker. Are we really a noble and hard-working, yet marginal, people? Are we working on the periphery of other well-established and onward-marching professions? Was the comment a reaction to the impact of Disney World and its gigantic and hideous Dolphin Hotel where the SAA meeting attendees wandered about, seeing each other, and feeling pushed to the fringe of a cultural extravaganza?

I think, however, that our Section's meeting provided this year that through our thoughts for future projects we are expanding our ambitions beyond the margins. We don't want to hide in our basements and lonely, but proudly, struggle with tons of papers and leftover electronic bytes. Our ideas to provide professional service to our institutions and researchers are reaching beyond marginal and lonely. We actually think we can expand our role and become archivists and records managers. Isn't it a very risky thought! We can become indispensable.

During the Archivists of Religious Collections Section's Business and Steering Committee meetings that took place in Orlando's Dolphin Hotel on Friday, September 4, 1998, we had very good attendance and participation. I would like to thank everybody who came forward and offered to work with the Steering Committee and two newly formed committees, the Communications Committee and the Models and Resources Committee. I would like also to thank Margery Sly, from the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for her presentation on Local Church Archives Maintenance. Her experience of preparing regional workshops for Presbyterian church personnel will help the Models and Resources Committee to gather information and develop resources on local church records maintenance workshops.

I would also like to thank again Yvonne von Fettweis for her eight years of devoted service on the ARCS newsletter. Daniel Stokes from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission agreed to become the new Editor of The Archival Spirit. Please contact him as soon as possible with any news you would like to share. I would like to specially thank Tim Driscoll for offering to prepare and maintain our Section's Web site at the Andover Harvard Theological Library. My words of appreciation also go to Mark Duffy from the Episcopal Archives of the USA, who agreed to serve as the Interim Vice-Chair after Paul Millette suddenly left this position a few weeks ago. Paul promised to stay in touch with us and try to keep working in religious collections in Vermont where he has decided to move.

At the Steering Committee meeting the following members were approved and new ARCS committee objectives were developed:

1. Communications Committee

Purpose and objectives:

- Describe Editor's duties and advise (two-year term)
- Provide assistance as needed with newsletter production
- Create Web site
- Update directory
- Update ARCS brochure
- Produce and solicit articles for Archival Outlook

Update a bibliography of work relative to the ARCS area of interest

Chair: Robert Johnson-Lally

(617) 746-3795

Robert.Johnson.Lally@chancery.rcab.org

Editor: Daniel Stokes

(202) 501-5610; FAX (202) 501-5601

daniel.stokes@arch1.nara.gov

Web Master: Timothy Driscoll

(617) 496-5153

timothy_driscoll@harvard.edu

Kate McGinn

(626) 584-5311

kmcginn@fuller.edu

Mark Duffy

(512) 472-6816

mjduffy@uts.cc.utexas.edu

Robert Shuster

(708) 752-5910

Robert.D.Shuster@wheaton.edu

Ellen Pierce

(914) 941-7590

epierce@maryknoll.org

Kinga Perzynska

(512) 476-6296

cat@onr.com

2. Models and Resources Committee

Purpose and objectives:

Gather information on and develop resources on local workshops

Identify new needs and plan regional workshops on Local Church Archives Maintenance

Develop and recommend standards, conventions, or guidelines related to the religious section

Develop programs for sessions to be presented at SAA and other national, regional, and at international conferences and meetings

Chair: L. Dale Patterson

(973) 408-3189

Dpatterson@gcah.org

Robert Johnson-Lally

(617) 746-3795

Robert.Johnson.Lally@chancery.rcab.org

Kinga Perzynska

(512) 476-6296

cat@onr.com

Brian Sokolowsky

(801) 240-5921

SokolowskyBW@LDSChurch.org

Christine Taylor

(206) 382-4857

ChristineT@seattlearch.org

Lucinda Glenn Rand

(510) 649-2507

Iglenn@gtu.edu

Margery Sly

(215) 627-1852

mslyarc@shrsys.hslc.org

Both committees are going to work on the above issues and objectives gradually in the future. Note that the Program Committee was included in the Models and Resources Committee and the Directory Committee has merged into the Communications Committee.

Please contact me or the committee chairs if you would like to get involved in the work of one of the committees.

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting
Archivists of Religious Collections Section
Friday, 4 September 1998, Orlando, FL**

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 by King Perzynska with a request for a moment of silent reflection. A sign-in sheet was passed around the room. Perzynska introduced Kate McGinn, who offered to serve as secretary in Mark Thiel's absence. She then informed section members that Paul Millette, Iliff Theological Seminary, and Vice-Chair had resigned his position. After acknowledging Millette's contributions to the section, Perzynska explained that his mid-term resignation would require a special election to fill the post.

Discussion ensued. One member suggested the post be filled by appointment, but Perzynska objected given the duration and heavy workload of the office. Members agreed.

The section by-laws were without provision, however, so in consultation with Robert Johnson-Lally, Archdiocese of Boston, two new amendments were proposed. In the discussion of the second proposed amendment, members questioned the expense of a mail ballot. Another member asked how other sections handled such issues. Perzynska informed members that most other sections did not even have by-laws, so they dealt with the issue informally.

It was suggested the ballot be run in the Archival Spirit. Mark Duffy, Episcopal Archives, explained that what the proposed amendment guaranteed was the option to mail a ballot if necessary. At this point Perzynska announced that Duffy had agreed, by special appointment, to serve as interim Vice-Chair. A vote was called on the proposed amendment.

Perzynska then introduced Sr. Blaithin Sullivan, SCJ, Chair, Nominating Committee. Sullivan in turn introduced the other members of the committee, Nora Murphy and Loretta Green. Sullivan praised both for their hard work and turned the floor over to Murphy to introduce this year's candidates. Candidates stood as they were introduced.

They included:

- 1 For secretary: Dale Patterson, United Methodist Church and Diane Wells, Episcopal Diocese of Olympia
- 1 For at-large steering committee member: Robert Johnson-Lally, Archdiocese of Boston, and Nancy Saddleback, Sisters of the Saint Benedict of Madison, WI.

Ballots were distributed and collected after members voted.

Perzynska then announced that Lori Hefner, section liaison to SAA, had stepped down to be replaced by Dennis Harrison. Perzynska praised Hefner for her work on behalf of the section, especially, most recently for her successful efforts for the ARCS to remain so named.

Perzynska introduced Robert Johnson-Lally, who apprized members that it was time to update the section directory. He distributed forms but explained they would also be made available electronically and through the newsletter. He requested the forms be completed and returned to him by 15 February 1999. The procedure for obtaining the new directory would be the same as the old: to send a SASE envelope (at least 5" by 7") to the Archdiocese of Boston.

Perzynska congratulated Charles Nolan, Diocese of New Orleans, recipient of this year's Sr. Claude Lane Award.

Mark Duffy then solicited nominations for next year's award, which, he reminded members, is given to individuals committed to furthering the cause of the section with the SAA. Nominations could be given to Duffy or the members of the nominating committee.

Perzynska and Duffy then updated the section on the recent steering committee meeting of the ICA/Section on Archives of Churches and Religious Denominations Liaison Committee. The meeting was held in Chicago and graciously hosted by Elisabeth Wittman, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Perzynska encouraged section members to consider the ICA. In response to a question from the floor, Duffy explained that ICA is the International Council on Archives. The Section on Archives and Religious Denominations, he explained, was formed in 1996 with the intent to strengthen religious collections support in eastern Europe and developing nations and to establish a world-wide network of religious archives. He announced that the Section on Archives of Churches would meet in Nuremberg in 1999, while the ICA was scheduled to meet in Seville in 2000. Both Perzynska and Duffy offered to entertain questions. Duffy suggested interested individuals may also want to visit the ICA webpage.

Perzynska announced the formation of two new committees within the section: the [Communication Committee](#) and the [Models and Resources Committee](#). Each committee, she hoped, would engage more people in the section thus distributing responsibilities among a group of individuals instead of on a few. Moreover, she hoped these committees would prevent disruptions created by resignations or emergencies. She invited individuals to join either or both of the

committees. Terms for the committees were set at two years.

The goals of the Communication Committee, she elucidated, were to maintain and broaden the newsletter, establish and maintain a section webpage, update the directory as needed, submit material to Archival Outlook, perhaps develop a special focus newsletter to come out once annually, and revise the ARCS brochure. Members who have already agreed to serve on this committee include Tim Driscoll, Mark Duffy, Robert Johnson-Lally, Kate McGinn, and Bob Shuster.

The impetus to form this committee came in part from Yvonne Fettweis's resignation as newsletter editor. Fettweis was acknowledged for her tremendous contribution to the section as editor of the newsletter for eight years. The section applauded her efforts and those of her staff at The First Church of Christ, Scientists, Boston. Perzynska then petitioned members for a newsletter editor, explaining that the post would be for a two-year term instead of an eight-year term.

Proposed goals of the Models and Resources Committee included to study and assess policies, standards, and guidelines of SAA and adjust these to our section; to develop and promote regional workshops; develop standards and recommendations for guidelines, develop sessions for academic conferences, and prepare a bibliography for the ARCS. Members who have already agreed to serve on this committee include Robert Johnson-Lally, Dale Patterson, Kinga Perzynska, Margery Sly, Brian Sokolowsky, and Christine Taylor.

Perzynska made one last plea for membership involvement before turning the floor over to Sr. Blaithin, who reported election results. The elections were both very close, with 51 members voting.

¹ Diane Wells was elected secretary and;

¹ Robert Johnson-Lally was elected to the steering committee, at-large position.

Sr. Blaithin and Murphy then solicited candidates for next year's ballot. Candidates for vice-chair, the at-large steering committee position, and, due to Millette's resignation, chair-elect are needed.

Perzynska invited interested members to attend the Steering Committee meeting that would convene at 11:00 in Australia 1. She then called on Elisabeth Wittman, who encouraged individuals to serve on the SAA Appointments Committee. This committee, Wittman explained, assists the vice-president in appointing committees. She discussed her work on the awards committee and her efforts to solicit names for various slots. She announced Bill Brock, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, as a new member of the Sr. Claude Lane Award and Bob Shuster, Billy Graham Center, as a new member of the Theory and Archival Writing Committee.

Perzynska added to this that members of the ARCS board would be calling on members asking them to volunteer to serve.

Tim Erickson then asked to be recognized. He spoke on behalf of the SAA 1999 program committee. The theme for next year's meeting, to be held in Pittsburgh, will be contemporary records. One goal of the meeting will be to include archivists from beyond North America. He explained that members of the program committee would be more than willing to help shape session proposals.

Perzynska reminded section members that the 1998 session sponsored by ARCS, Kindred Spirits, would be Saturday. She then turned the floor over to Christine Taylor.

Taylor informed the group that one of two sessions sponsored by the section had been accepted on the program this year. Taylor then introduced Margery Sly, Presbyterian Church USA.

Margery Sly, presented on behalf of Michelle Francis. Sly began with a brief history of the Presbyterian Church, USA, focusing upon its composition and geography. She then explained the role of regional history offices within the denomination. As well as store regional records, she noted, the offices help churches develop archives. They offer advice on all aspects of the profession, from storage to record schedules to maintenance. Services are rendered by phone, through pamphlets, and in workshops. After a review of the pamphlets produced by her office, Sly discussed the various outreach programs her office engages in. These include field trips and roving workshops dedicated to an array of themes, such as disaster plans, starting a church archive, and oral history. In instances where staff are not available or travel is not feasible, traveling displays are used.

Sly emphasized the commitment of the Presbyterian Church USA to its history. A commitment manifest in the newsletters produced by the denomination and the annual celebration of the Heritage Sunday. Heritage Sunday, the Sunday closest to 21 May, is designated as a time when congregations celebrate their history in some unique way. Regional denominational offices facilitate these events and offer guidance. Sly concluded that the Presbyterian Church liked to do things "decently and in order" and that this included remembering its history.

Perzynska stressed again the need for regional workshops. She then asked for approval of last year's minutes,

explaining she had forgotten to do so at the start of the meeting.

Christine Taylor asked to be recognized. She proposed a resolution to express the section's gratitude to Yvonne Fettweis and her staff for their tremendous efforts on behalf of the newsletter for the last eight years.

In the time remaining section attendants introduced themselves and their archives. From this it emerged that many people were involved in planning and teaching workshops. The section dealt briefly with the issue of devising some kind of network to share schedules and expertise.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20

ARCS [homepage](#)

ICA/Section on Archives of Churches and Religious Denominations (ICA/SKR)

As announced in the last [Archival Spirit](#), the third ICA/SKR Steering Committee meeting and tours were held in Chicago from July 29-31, 1998. Before the Steering Committee meeting on July 30, a few of the Steering Committee members attended the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists conference at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein (July 24-29). Papers on Appraisal and Access to Church Records in Germany, Israel and the Netherlands, were presented by Dr. Helmut Baier, archivist from the Evangelical Lutheran Church Archives in Nurnberg, Germany, and Jan C.M. van Haastrecht, archivist from the Reformed Church of the Netherlands in Haag.

On July 29, participants from Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, and the United States of the ICA/SKR were hosted by Elisabeth Wittman at the Lutheran Center in Chicago and had a tour at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives. On July 31, they were invited to visit the Billy Graham Center Archives and the Wade Center at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois.

The working session of the Steering Committee took place on July 30, and its agenda included discussion and reports on: future membership increases, conference preparation, and relationships with different international organizations related to the SKR programs and activities. An ICA/SKR informational brochure will be available at the beginning of 1999 and it will be distributed to different denominational archives, with a special focus on Latin America.

Future SKR conferences will include Access to Private Archives, held with the Section of Business and Labor (ICA/SBL) and the Section of Archives of Parliaments and Political Parties (ICA/SPP) which will take place on October 19, 1999, in New Delhi. The SKR members will prepare a section on access to religious collections.

The Steering Committee of SKR also approved a one-and-a-half-day Congress on Church Archives, Challenges in the Professional Management of Church Archives (September 20-21, 2000) in conjunction with the Fourteenth ICA Congress in Seville (September 22-28, 2000). A Program Committee and a tentative sessions proposal should be ready by the first half of 1999. German Church archives will help with the schedule and organization of the Church Congress in Seville. A keynote speaker will be selected and contacted by early 1999. Several proposed speakers were named and the group agreed that the SKR is well-situated to attract a speaker who could illustrate the impact of archives of religious communities on culture and civil society.

The issue of new media in the archival environment was also underlined, especially that the 2000 ICA Congress is titled Archives of the Information Society in the New Millennium. It is anticipated that 50 to 60 people will attend the Congress on Church Archives and about three sections with three presenters each are planned.

Serving Congregations

Margery Sly, Manager of Special Collections, Department of History and Records Management Services, Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), stood in for Michelle Francis and gave a presentation on the services provided to congregations by DOH. The Department is the national archives of the Church. Headquartered in Philadelphia, with a regional office in Montreat, NC, and a records management program at the denomination's headquarters in Louisville, KY, it serves the church's national offices and agencies, synods, presbyteries, and local congregations as well as scholars and the general

public.

The Department offers a range of services to congregations. It supplies record keeping and records management advice and accepts records of congregations that have permanent value for deposit, supplying reference service in the records to both the church and other users. An in-house microfilming program in Philadelphia films church records at cost and stores the master negatives. An annual local history seminar, held at the Montreat office, trains church members in archival and church history techniques through workshops that include starting a church archives, publishing a church history, resources for researching a congregation's history, celebrating a church anniversary, disaster planning, and oral history. Members of the DOH staff also teach workshops at synod, presbytery, and other church events. Each year the Presbyterian Church celebrates Heritage Sunday, with the DOH offering bulletin covers and celebration suggestions built around a different historical theme each year. The DOH offers a range of publications and brochures that support these programs and has a traveling display program that gets the word out about the Department at events the staff cannot attend.

Anyone interested in additional information or copies of publications should contact Margery Sly, 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147; 215/928-3896; mslyarc@shrsys.hslc.org; or Michelle Francis, PO Box 849, Montreat, NC 28757; 828/669-7061; pcusadoh@montreat.edu.

Resources Survey to be Conducted

The Section is conducting a survey to discover the types of resources our archives provide to constituents. For example, the United Methodists offer bulletin inserts on historical figures, booklets on how to write a local church history, information on how to be a local church historian/archivist (including a 30-minute video), and a tour guide of denominational landmarks. We would like to compile a list and discover the types of outreach we do and perhaps find out what we are not doing. Please send a list of the resources that your institution makes available to people, churches, or communities to: Dale Patterson, Archivist/Records Administrator, General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, 36 Madison Avenue, P.O. Box 127, Madison NJ 07940.

VOTE - ELECTION - VOTE - ELECTION - VOTE

Please read the statements of the candidates for Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, vote for one, and return this ballot to Loretta Zwolak Greene, Sisters of Providence Archives, 4800 37th Avenue, SW, Seattle, WA 98126, postmarked by March 15, 1999.

Mark Duffy - Archivist, Archives of the Episcopal Church

Members of SAA join the sections in the expectation that these gatherings will bring them into contact with colleagues engaged in similar contexts. The Archives of Religious Collections Section is intended to serve that purpose for the membership. The Steering Committee has been challenged to give this objective more substance than the section's annual convening. The Models and Resources Committee and the Communications Committee are the ways in which the Steering Committee has enabled structure to promote participation. For the first time in many years, the section has the potential to support individuals who carry out such activities as the newsletter, directory publication, and program planning. New efforts in collaboration will allow the section to renew leadership roles, open up volunteer assignments, and spotlight problem-solving strategies. The new committees offer the Steering Committee and the membership a vehicle for continuity, coordination, and involvement that will require less work from any one individual and more advantages for the profession as a whole.

Bill Sumners - Director and Archivist, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

Ever since I have been able to attend SAA and the ARC Section meetings and serve on the Steering Committee, I have realized the limitation of what sections can accomplish. The most value we can provide is useful, concise, relevant information that is common to most of our collections and staffs. Section meetings, the newsletter, and input to annual meeting programs at SAA and other regionals are some ways we can meet the needs of section members. The motivation to get members involved in the section and SAA is a continuing challenge to the SAA staff and the volunteer leadership of our organization. Certainly the Internet provides a new world of information for all of us as archivists of religious

collections. The real trick and mystery is to discover, within the resources available, what information and services are most needed by section members.

VOTE FOR ONE: _____ Mark Duffy _____ Bill Sumners

Nominations for Steering Committee Sought

The Nominating Committee for the Archivists of Religious Collections Section (ARCS) is seeking candidates for two positions: Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect and At-Large Member of the Steering Committee. Descriptions of these positions are provided below; the terms for each begins at the end of the Business Meeting in 1999. A separate nomination form should be used for each nomination and should be sent to Loretta Zwolak Greene (Sisters of Providence Archives, 4800 37th Avenue, SW, Seattle, WA 98126; FAX (206) 938-6193; lgreen@providence.org) and postmarked by April 1, 1999. All persons nominated will be contacted prior to being placed on the ballot. Nominees will need to submit biographical information and answer a question developed by the Nominating Committee by April 15, 1999. In addition to Ms. Greene, the 1998/99 Nominating Committee includes Sr. Blaithin Sullivan, CSJ, Chair, and Nora Murphy, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect - The total length of the term is six years: two years as Vice-Chair, two years as Chair, two years as immediate past Chair. A member of the Steering Committee, the Vice-Chair serves in an advisory capacity to the Chair, assists with the planning of the Annual Meeting, and may be assigned specific responsibilities by the Chair. The Vice-Chair presides in the Chair's absence or inability to serve. The Chair presides at all meetings of the Section and of its Steering Committee; serves as liaison with SAA in general, its Council and other Sections; appoints committees as the need arises; and renders reports to the Section membership, the Council, and the SAA membership on matters deemed pertinent or identified by the officers and the Steering Committee. The immediate past Chair serves as chair of the Nominating Committee and assumes such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the Chair.

At-Large Member, Steering Committee - The term is for two years. As a member of the Steering Committee, at-large members serve in an advisory capacity to the Chair, assist with the planning of the Annual Meeting, and may be assigned specific responsibilities by the Chair.

Please provide the following information to the Nominating Committee:

- 1) Name of nominee and office for which being nominated
- 2) Address and institutional affiliation of nominee
- 3) Daytime telephone number of nominee
- 4) Is the individual aware of this nomination
- 5) Name of person making the nomination
- 6) Daytime telephone number of person making the nomination

Editor's Notes

The Archival Spirit is published three times a year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists. For membership information, contact SAA at: 527 South Wells, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607; (312) 922-0140; FAX: (312) 347-1452; e-mail: info@archivists.org.

The Editor would like to include in future issues your local news or newsletter information, items of interest in your area, and comments on current or recent projects. Send this information by mail, e-mail, or FAX to:

Daniel A. Stokes
Program Officer
National Historical Publications and Records Commission
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 111
Washington, DC 20408
(202) 501-5610
(202) 510-5601 (FAX)
daniel.stokes@arch1.nara.gov

thank those who contributed material to this issue of the newsletter: Kinga Perzynska, Kate McGinn, Margery Sly, Dale Patterson, and Nora Murphy.

Deadlines for the next issues of The Archival Spirit: **February 19** for the March 1999 issue; **May 15** for the July 1999; and **September 15** for the November 1999 issue.

The transition to a new Editor has not been as flawless as one might hope, as demonstrated by the date on which you are receiving this copy of the November 1998 newsletter. Future issues, however, will arrive as scheduled, and I apologize for the inconveniences created as a result of the delay in getting this issue to press.

ARCS [homepage](#)