From the Chair

By Gwynedd Cannan
November 29, 2007

Our meeting in Chicago was another productive gathering of our various members with an energy and enthusiasm that was inspirational. At that meeting, there was a change of command as Loretta Greene handed over the gavel to me. The fact that, with the gavel, she handed over a section in good order with excellent direction is a tribute to her outstanding leadership. As we proceed during the next two years I plan to look backward to my predecessors’ example and guidance while, with your help, moving forward.

I am still processing the information gleaned from Chicago. Many new ideas for projects and programs were proposed. There was a good response from the membership surveys, and we want to consider the suggestions and bring in the participation of those who volunteered. During the next year we will add to the good work that has been done by the Models and Resources Committee. The section will also take part in seeing that the SAA religious archives reader is launched for publication. We will keep you informed on both of these projects and we want to hear from you as we proceed.

While technology in some ways is giving us all headaches, we mustn’t lose sight of the great advantages it is affording us. The listserv provides a wonderful opportunity to “continue the conversation” throughout the year. In a forum of peers, we can seek answers to problems, flesh out ideas for solutions, and broadcast our successes. The website and the newsletters are other excellent electronic venues for communication and exposition.

The steering committee itself plans to use the listserv to let the membership know how projects are proceeding. We invite you to let us know what you think. Let us know how the work of Models and Resources is helping or how it can be better. Use the listserv to air your ideas for new directions, projects, and/or program proposals. Think about putting yourself or others forward for positions on the nominating committee or as candidates for the Claude Lane award.

We could start with a discussion on our identity as religious archivists, thus dovetailing with the theme of the 2008 SAA conference. How are we perceived and how do we want to be perceived? These questions are especially pertinent as we plan for the publication of a religious reader. We are important, even vital, to our institution, so how do we communicate that importance? Let the conversation continue...
committee members transitioning off this year: Lisa Jacobson, secretary; Diane Wells, nominating committee chair; and Judy Hueneke, representative-at-large. The Chair also thanked Mark Duffy for his work on behalf of the Section as our liaison to the Council. Loretta informed the members that the session titled, “Artifactually Speaking: Getting a Handle on Objects in the Archives” was endorsed by the Section and encouraged everyone to attend.

Approval of 2006 Minutes:
The Chair called on the Secretary for approval of the 2006 Section minutes. The Secretary reported that the minutes for the 2006 ARCS Section meeting were published in the Winter 2007 issue of Archival Spirit. The Secretary called for any correction or changes. Hearing none, she moved that the 2006 annual meeting minutes be approved. The motion was seconded and the 2006 minutes were approved without dissent.

Approval of Section Reports:
The Chair moved on to the next order of business by informing those present that Section committee reports appeared in the pre-conference edition of Archival Spirit. She asked for any changes or corrections to the committee reports. Hearing none, she moved that the reports be approved. The motion was seconded and the committee reports were approved as published.

SAA Council Liaison
The Chair called on Mark Duffy, the outgoing Council Liaison to introduce Margery Sly. Mark informed the Section that this is the first time two members of this Section have served on the Council in succession. Margery opened her report by stating how pleased she is to be serving as the Section’s liaison to the Council. If members have any issues or concerns, she asked that they contact her. Margery encouraged members to attend the annual business meeting. The topics for discussion include benefits for institutional members and the proposed dues increase. Margery stated that she is looking forward to working for the Section on Council.

Call for Proposals — Religious Archives Reader:
The Chair introduced Peter Wosh, the editor for SAA’s print and electronic publications. Peter called everyone’s attention to the Call for Proposals on publications. He stated that a reader on religious archives has been identified as a priority by SAA. The last such publication was published around 1980 by August Suelflow. Peter stated the proposal could be for one person to write a book or it could be a series of articles on current trends in religious record keeping. It is important to provide a list of potential authors and identify several people to be editors. Handouts in your registration packet explain the process and requirements. He stated that proposals are due by October 30th but emphasized that the initial proposal could be very preliminary – merely lay out your realistic time-frame. Please submit several proposals. Loretta mentioned that the Section members that the steering committee has been discussing this and the committee will be sending out more information.

Elections:
The Chair then called on Diane Wells for the Nominating/Elections Committee. Diane stated that 3 positions are open this year. She thanked those members of the Steering Committee who are transitioning off. Diane then introduced the candidates for election: Audrey Newcomer, Representative-at-Large; Liz Scott, Secretary; and Alan Lefever, Vice-Chair/Chair Elect. Diane asked for additional nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she moved that the proposed slate of candidates be accepted in turn. The motions were seconded and the candidates were elected without dissent. Diane closed the elections by encouraging anyone interested in running for a position to indicate this on their survey form.

Sister M. Claude Lane Award:
The Chair called on Robert Johnson-Lally to give a report on the Sister M. Claude Lane Award. Robert noted that there were two nominations this year and he thanked those who made them. He announced that the winner this year is Roger Dahl of the Baha’i National Archives. For more information about the Award, go to the SAA website. He encouraged everyone to send nominations to SAA’s awards committee. This award recognizes what we do. The deadline is February 28th. Loretta mentioned that there is a complete list of past recipients on the Society of Southwest Archivists’ website.

New Business

Members’ Discussion and Comments: Models & Resources Committee
The Chair informed everyone that Models & Resources was initiated many years ago for the members and by the members. Lisa Jacobson, the outgoing chair of the committee, gave a report. Lisa stated that a brief report on Models & Resources appeared in the pre-conference issue of Archival Spirit. The past year was active for the committee. New information sources were compiled and posted to the ARCS website on Manuals & Guides, Training Opportunities, General Resources, Other Religious Archives Organizations on the local and regional level, and Preservation and Disaster Planning. Lisa expressed gratitude to the
committee for their work this past year. Marcia Stein from the Society of the Divine Word Chicago Province, Sara Harwell of the Disciples of Christ, and Michael Campbell of Loma Linda University. A special note of thanks was also extended to Mark Duffy for posting all of this information on the ARCS website. Possible directions for the coming year are policies and grants. Are there other ideas? Anyone who is interested in taking up the leadership for this committee is encouraged to contact the steering committee.

Loretta then opened this topic for discussion by asking members if they found Models & Resources helpful and if they were aware of it. She stated that e-mails have gone out to announce the posting of new information. Loretta asked if it is buried too deep on the website and wanted to know if there are other topics members want to see. She emphasized that the web pages for Models & Resources are fluid – they are always growing and changing. Stephanie Morris stated that she found the Models & Resources useful. Carole Priette from the Daughters of Charity said that she found the websites for Sections buried too deep within the SAA website. Margery Stry informed everyone that SAA is working on this. Loretta suggested that members bookmark the website for easy access. Loretta asked if there were other topics members wanted. Edie Jeter suggested forms. Stephanie Morris said that she is often contacted by other religious who are trying to start archives for their community, so having sample policy statements and basic stuff is helpful. Jennifer McGillon said she liked the idea of having information about grants available.

Content of Section’s Annual Meeting:
The Chair then asked members what their thoughts are regarding the annual meeting. Do they like the style? Do they want both a business meeting and a program or one or the other? Carole Priette stated that she would like to see it be a program as this is our forum. Bob Shuster suggested a program as well as time for brainstorming and interaction. It was also suggested to change the format from one year to the next. Marcia Stein stated that a business section needed to be included. Loretta seconded this by stating that yes, it was necessary for routine business such as elections. It was also suggested from the floor that a panel style discussion be part of the meeting so members can learn how different people are approaching the same topic. The steering committee will look into various options for future meetings.

At this point, the Chair asked all new ARCS members and first time attendees to stand. About 18 people stood up and introduced themselves. Loretta extended a warm welcome and encouraged everyone to become involved in the Section.

Kathleen O’Connor suggested that the Section sponsor tours of religious archives at SAA conferences. Loretta mentioned that this is a possibility and the SAA program planning committee needs to be contacted. If tours are arranged, they need a certain number to register to make it cost effective. Also, anyone attending SAA can go on the tour. Tours of religious archives would not be for ARCS members only.

2008 Session Ideas:
The Chair introduced Mark Duffy to talk about the 2008 conference theme. Mark informed the Section membership that the theme for next year’s conference is R/Evolution and Identities with a focus on diversity, technology, and public awareness. Mark suggested that there be several session proposals from the Section. It is important to state who we are, where we are, and where we are going. There is also an interest in sessions with international themes, particularly Pacific Rim. SAA now has a new Section endorsement policy for sessions. The Program Committee must strongly consider those session proposals that are endorsed by the Sections and Roundtables. Consider proposing panel discussions, workshops, and other types of presentations. October 12th is the deadline for proposals.

Elisabeth Wittman asked why the Archivists of Religious Collections Section was listed on one of the SAA handouts as a diversity initiative. Loretta and Mark said they did not know but they would investigate how that happened.

Session ideas proposed from the floor – Kathleen O’Connor suggested a session about missionaries to the Pacific Rim. Marcia Stein suggested a session about how communities around the world who have been touched by missionaries are being documented or are documenting themselves. Bob Shuster suggested a session about cooperation between U.S. and overseas archives of religious communities. Malachy McCarthy mentioned a session about the role of religious institutions on social history with an international focus. Mark Thiel suggested something around the many languages involved in documenting diverse populations and the challenges this presents for processing and developing multi-lingual finding aids.

General Announcements:
Loretta encouraged members to sign up for the ARCS listserv. Dale Patterson, who maintains the listserv, told members that directions for joining the listserv are on the ARCS website. The list is through Yahoo Groups and the registration process is easy.
Loretta asked that anyone with suggestions for next year’s reception in San Francisco please contact the steering committee.

**Program:**
Gwynedd Cannan introduced Edie Jeter, of the International Mission Board Archives for the Southern Baptist Convention, as the program speaker. Edie gave a very interesting and informative talk titled “Email Management Requirements: Optimism and Forbearance.”

**Closing:**
Loretta Greene welcomed the new chair, Gwynedd Cannan and officially passed the gavel. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Jacobson, Secretary

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**Diocese of Olympia Archives - Virtual Tour**

1. **What is the mission of your Archives?** The Archives is the official repository for records created by and about the Diocese of Olympia – the Episcopal Church in Western Washington. Its mission is to identify, collect and preserve records of enduring value to the Diocese and to serve its informational and records management needs. The Archives serves the broader mission of the Diocese by using its resources to support the ministry and community life of diocesan congregations, ministries and institutions. It does this by providing reference and research services, by offering information regarding the collection and preservation of records and by supplying records management assistance.

2. **How many people work in your repository?** There is one permanent, part-time professional archivist with occasional assistance from a professional project archivist and volunteers.

3. **Describe your repository:** The Archives is located on the third floor of Diocesan House, a one hundred year old mansion built for one of Seattle’s early town fathers, John Leary and his wife, Eliza. The house, with its intricate wood carvings and ornate Rookwood tile, is on the National Register of Historic places and is a venue for architectural tours.

The Archives office is the former billiard room in the house complete with its own Rookwood fireplace featuring a castle motif. Two attic rooms provide archives storage and a third functions as both storage and reading area.
4. Describe the holdings of your repository: Materials in the Archives relate to the history and development of the Diocese of Olympia and date from 1853. They document the early years of the missionary territories of Oregon and Washington, the official establishment of the Diocese of Olympia in 1910 and the growth of its congregations and ministries.

Collections include bishops’ papers (1854-present); publications such as the Journal of the Missionary District, 1853-1910, the Journal of the Diocese of Olympia from 1911 to the present, diocesan newspapers (Olympia Churchman, Evergreen Messenger, and Episcopal Voice) and their predecessors dating from 1882; parochial reports from 1935 to the present; and records of the various diocesan offices, organizations, commissions and committees, as well as parishes, missions and affiliated institutions and ministries.

In addition, the Archives maintains a large photograph collection as well as collections of slides, video and audio recordings, CDs, DVDs, architectural drawings, scrapbooks, memorabilia, artifacts and vestments.

5. Who uses you repository? The Archives welcomes requests for information from diocesan offices, congregations, researchers and the general public. Services provided include:

- Reference & research services
- Photocopying & photo-reproduction services
- Archives and records management assistance to congregations
- Tours of Diocesan House

6. Are there any interesting projects that you are currently undertaking? The Archives is currently working on a grant application which, if successful, would allow it to process, scan and make its diocesan newspaper photo collection digitally available on the WEB.

7. Are there particular collections or aspects of your repository you want to highlight? Our collections of bishops papers as well as parish, mission and institutional histories are of particular interest – as they span a period of more than 150 years and document not only the history of the Episcopal Church – but also that of the social and cultural history of the Pacific Northwest. Materials relating to local ethnic communities, to the involvement of the Church in ecumenical affairs and to social justice issues should also be noted.

8. Where are you located and what is your contact information?

Archivist and Records Manager
Diane Wells
Archivist and Records Manager
The Diocese of Olympia Archives
Obituary: Sister Margaret Ahl, 1923-2007

Daughter of Charity Sister Margaret Ahl died at DePaul Provincial House on Sunday, October 14, 2007. Margaret Catherine Ahl was born in 1923 to Mary E. Connolly and William H. Ahl in Jamaica, N.Y. Peggy, as she was known, entered the Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg, Md. in 1943 where she became known as Sister Angelica for the next 35 years. Once it was permissible, she eagerly resumed her own name, Sister Margaret.

Sister Margaret taught at St. Peter’s School in Wilmington, Del. She completed her nursing studies at Catholic University earning both an RN and a master’s degree in nursing education in 1973. For the next 21 years, she served as director of three hospital-based nursing schools, Providence, Detroit, Mich., St. Vincent’s, Jacksonville, Fla. and Catherine Labour in Boston, Mass. Sister Margaret began studies at Boston University and achieved a doctoral degree in education in 1975. She laid the foundation of a baccalaureate program in nursing for the Palestinian Arabs at Bethlehem University on the West Bank. Her last assignment in nursing education was in Buffalo, N.Y. where she developed the diploma nursing program into an associate degree program in 1986.

Sister Margaret Ahl assumed her duties as Provincial Archivist for the Northeast Province of the Daughters of Charity in January 2000 after attending the Modern Archives Institute in Washington D.C. During her tenure she instituted an oral history program to document the lives of the Daughters of Charity in the Northeastern US and Canada, oversaw the transition from paper-based to electronic finding aids, and revised and updated the archives policy and procedure manual. In addition Sister Margaret researched and wrote brief biographies of ninety Daughters of Charity. The collection of biographies was printed and distributed to the community. In 2005 Sister Margaret supervised a major renovation of the Daughters of Charity Archives facilities in Albany, NY that included an expansion of the Archives offices and the addition of a dedicated processing area.

Sister Margaret was a member of several professional organizations including the Society of American Archivists, Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious, Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, Capital Area Archivists and the Archivists of Religious Collections Section. Her vision, gentle demeanor and keen intellect will be missed by all who knew and worked with her.

ARCS Officers and 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. Feature pieces as well as announcements of acquisitions and projects are welcome. Send submissions to: Wesley W. Wilson at wwwilson@depauw.edu.

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