

Date: December 1, 2011

Name of Section/Roundtable: Reference, Access and Outreach Section (RAO)

Officers:

Otto, Kathryn, Chair, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/12, University of Wisconsin--River Falls
Severn, Jill, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/12, University of Georgia
Sjoberg, Lisa, Communications Liaison, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/12, Concordia College
Gerencser, Jim, Immediate Past Chair, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/12, Dickinson College
Zanish-Belcher, Tanya, Steering Committee Member, 8/15/2010 - 8/27/2012, Iowa State University
Mary Manning, Steering Committee Member, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/12, Texas A&M University
Greg Kocken, Steering Committee Member, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/13, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire
Stankrauff, Alison, Steering Committee Member, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/13, Indiana University South Bend
Blodgett, Jan, Web Liaison, 8/27/2011 - 8/10/12, Davidson College
Baxter, Terry, Council Liaison 8/27/2011 - 8/10/12, Multnomah County, Oregon

Interns:

Kuba, Jenifer, RAO Intern with Steering Committee, 10/1/2011 - 8/10/12
Bagley, Scott, RAO Intern with National History Day Committee, 10/1/2011 - 8/10/12
Strauss, Amanda, RAO Intern with Reference and Processing Collaboration Group, 10/1/2011 - 8/10/12
Blake, Julie, RAO Intern with 23 Things Initiative, 10/1/2011 - 8/10/12
DeBardelaben, LaNesha, RAO Intern with Teaching with Primaries Working Group, 10/1/2011 - 8/10/12
Kim, Helen, RAO Intern with Communications Initiative, 10/1/2011 - 8/10/12

Report from annual meeting:

- Number of attendees: est. 90
- Election results: Via electronic voting in advance of the meeting, Alison Stankrauff and Greg Kocken were elected to 2-year terms on the Steering Committee, Mary Manning was elected to a 1-year term to replace Terry Baxter (who was recently elected to SAA Council and is now Council Liaison), and Jill Severn was elected to the Vice Chair/Chair-elect position.
- Summary of meeting activities:
The Section meeting included reports and updates from the RAO National History Day Committee, Reference & Processing Collaboration Group, 23 Things for Archivists Project, and the Teaching with Primary Documents Working Group. Updates were also provided on the RAO Internships and the Skills Survey. The meeting also included announcements from the SAA Council Liaison, the 2012 Program Committee, the DACS Technical Subcommittee, OCLC Research, and NHPRC. The remainder of the meeting consisted of presentations by Peter Carini (Dartmouth), Anne Gilliland (UCLA), and Doris Malkmus (Penn State) regarding research, teaching techniques, and strategies for engaging different audiences with archival resources.

Completed projects/activities:

All projects currently being pursued through the auspices of the section are expected to continue through the next year. Activities and accomplishments of those project groups are included below among ongoing projects/activities.

Ongoing projects/activities:

Following on the positive report regarding the RAO internships from the previous year, a call was put out for applicants interested in such internship opportunities. Eleven applications were received, and given the large amount of interest, RAO Steering decided to award 6 internships (listed above), each intern being assigned to a particular group or task. Since the contributions of these interns continue to prove valuable to the activities of the section, and the program itself is viewed as a valuable means to get newer professionals involved in the profession, the RAO internship program will be continued in the coming year.

Over the past year the members of the National History Day Committee, co-chaired by Doris Malkmus and Shaun Hayes, followed up on their 2010 survey, which indicated a need for information for teachers and students about how to use archives. These findings led to the development of the National History Day and Archives Toolkit wiki [<http://nhdarchives.pbworks.com>]. This resource was formally launched in late summer 2011 and provides information for archivists and other professionals about how best to facilitate and encourage use of primary source materials by NHD participants, as well as providing information for teachers and students about how they may best make use of such materials for their research and presentations.

Following the successful pilot of the 23 Things for Archivists [<http://23thingsforarchivists.wordpress.com>] program in 2010, RAO vice-chair Kathie Otto led the effort to update the online resources from the pilot, to develop new resources covering additional "things," and to guide another cohort of archivists through the program. A group of 15 archivists began the 23 Things program in June 2011, completing in August. Plans to continue adding new "things" and to update existing "things" are in the works. This online resource allows interested individuals to work through the program at any time at their own pace, or even merely to do specific "things" that they may be interested in.

The Reference & Processing Collaboration Group, during the fall of 2010, adopted a new name – the Working Group for Data-Driven Decisions in Processing & Public Services, reflecting a commitment to using assessment as a tool to drive future practice. A wiki has been launched for sharing information about the activities of the group [<http://datadrivenarchives.pbworks.com>]; included are conference presentations, examples of processing manuals, articles, and other web-accessible resources. A survey, which is expected to be distributed in fall 2011 and which focuses largely on processing activity and less on reference, has been prepared by working group co-chair Dan Santamaria. The results of this survey will help determine future directions for the working group and its relationship to the RAO Section.

Jill Severn, with the assistance of intern Rachael Dreyer, continued to compile and examine results from the 2010 RAO Skills Survey. Preliminary results were shared through a report at the business meeting in Chicago. Raw data has also been shared with Elizabeth Yakel and Wendy Duff, as the information overlaps with issues they have been examining in their own research, and Yakel presented a few interesting observations regarding the data from her perspective at the business meeting as well.

During the past year, a formal charge for the Teaching with Primary Documents Working Group was drafted and adopted. The co-chairs for the group are Tanya Zanish-Belcher and Mary Manning. Intern Alexis Antracoli assisted with the development of a bibliography of useful resources on this topic. Future activities include gathering additional resources and making them available to interested audiences online, surveying practitioners regarding experiences and techniques of teaching about primary sources, and possibly publishing survey results and other useful information.

Assistance was sought by SAA Council for the judging of submissions for the "I Found It In The Archives" contest. RAO Steering member Terry Baxter and intern Rachael Dreyer agreed to assist in the process.

The development of a mission statement for the section is ongoing. A draft mission will be prepared and distributed for comment later this year. We hope to have a finalized draft available for discussion and, hopefully, approval at next year's annual meeting.

New projects/activities:

George Bain is leading an outreach effort to encourage C-SPAN to include programming that would highlight archives, particularly during archives month. He is working with colleagues to develop lists of potential interviewees from the archives and historical communities, and hopes to submit a proposal to Brian Lamb and C-SPAN producers sometime during fall 2011.