



Congressional Papers Roundtable

NEWSLETTER

Society of American Archivists

Fall 2010

From the Chair: A place around the table

By Jill Severn

Fall is always a time of renewal and regeneration for me. I am energized by my connections with colleagues at the SAA conference, the temperature begins to drop here in Athens, Georgia, and thousands of students return to campus ready to make their mark on the University if not the world. This renewed vigor and enthusiasm dovetails wonderfully with the beginning of my time as chair of the Congressional Papers Roundtable for the 2010/2011 year. The steering committee and I have lots of plans, goals, and ideas to build on the wonderful work of past committees; and to explore new directions for the roundtable. At the core of all of this exuberance is a commitment to be responsive to the needs and interests of members of Congressional Papers Roundtable, and to ensure that each member has a clear path to share ideas and concerns and to become active in the organization—in short, that all mem-

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CPR Pre-Conference and Annual Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2010

Matt Fulgham began the meeting by welcoming attendees to the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives in Washington D.C. He gave a brief overview of the Center's activities over the past year.

His staff has accessioned 4-5,000 linear feet of records as well as processed loan requests from congressional committees wishing to temporarily borrow materials. In addition, the Center's outreach staff has led several tours a week for congressional members and staff.

Processing activities at the Legislative Archives has included improving description of records available online and screening records on investigative materials from the late 1950's. Matt reported on the 9/11 Commission records and work towards preparing them for public access.

Ashley Smoot of the Legislative Archive gave an overview of the Congressional Records portion of the Electronic Records Archive (ERA). This portion of the ERA will be isolated from the rest of the project and not made accessible to the public. The Congressional Records portion of the ERA is designed to hold office documents, videos, databases, email archives and other types of electronic records found in the Legislative Archive.

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bers of CPR have a place around the table.

One of the best ways that members find a place with CPR occurs during the preconference sessions offered each year at the SAA conference. This year's preconference day was a perfect example of collegiality and formal and informal knowledge-sharing. It was great to learn more about our CHARM colleagues who work directly in Senate and House offices to manage archival records. It was also reassuring to learn more about the successful efforts of the Center for Legislative Archives to tackle the continuing challenges electronic records. Credit for a wonderful program goes to Brian Keough, past chair of CPR and to his preconference committee (Chris Burns and Leigh McWhite) and to Richard Hunt and his team at the Center for Legislative Archives who were kind and gracious hosts for our meeting.

A new avenue for members to become more involved in CPR is through an intern program established for 2010 and 2011. After careful review of applications, the steering committee was pleased to offer internships to three candidates, Shannon Lausch, a graduate student in the Library and Information Science program at the University of Illinois; Cary Osborne, Political Papers Archivist at New Mexico State University, and Debbie Davendonis-Todd, Bob Graham Political Papers Archivist at the University of Florida. The interns will work on special CPR projects that match their interests and experience (s) and participate in the general activities of the steering committee throughout the year. The steering committee is thrilled to welcome Debbie, Cary, and Shannon to the group!

As my steering committee colleagues Betsy Pittman and Lori Schwartz, our new CPR intern Shannon Lausch, and I look ahead to planning the program for next year's preconference and regular CPR meeting activities, we certainly recognize the high standard set for us by Brian and his team and those who have preceded him. We also know that in addition to SAA celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2011, CPR will be celebrating its own 25th anniversary. This significant milestone calls for something splendid and



Matt Fulgham presenting at the 2010 Congressional Papers Roundtable Pre-Conference. (Courtesy of the Center for Legislative Archives.)

grand to commemorate this small but mighty group. The program committee is only just beginning to envision what such a program might include—if I have my druthers there will be cake—so this is the perfect time for CPR members to share ideas with us! To make a suggestion, send me an email at jsevern@uga.edu

Leading up to the conference in August, the steering committee has initiated two projects that should begin to honor the quest for “something splendid and grand” as well as echo the 360 degree reflection commitment adopted by SAA for its 75th anniversary. To understand and to commemorate CPR's origins and history, I have asked Linda Whitaker and Rebecca Johnson Melvin to lead the work of a committee to begin to develop a written history of Congressional Papers Roundtable's first 25 years. This work will certainly be a major undertaking to craft, and Rebecca, Linda, and new CPR intern Cary Osborne will undoubtedly call on many members to share recollections and perspectives. To get to know and understand CPR's current members and their needs and interests, I have also asked members of the steering committee to develop an online survey to be distributed in the winter of 2011. CPR's new intern Debbie Davendonis-Todd will work with the committee on this project. The results from this survey should help future CPR steering committees have a clearer sense of mem-

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(From the Chair, continued from page 2)

bers and their preferences.

One of the vital ways that CPR has endeavored to remain focused on the future has been its strong commitment to supporting research and initiatives that serve the needs of members tackling the evolving challenges of congressional papers. Certainly, electronic records remain at the top of the list of these evolving challenges for most archivists managing congressional collections, and CPR through the leadership of past steering committees has done much to meet this challenge directly. Today, the e-records taskforce led by Betsy Pittman and Leigh McWhite continues its charge to give CPR members more tools and resources for managing electronic records. Some of the resources in development by the working group include: checklists to follow when accepting electronic records; templates for crafting an electronic records policy; and a comprehensive set of resources for general advice, locating and working with vendors, funding, and tracking relevant research in the field. In the year ahead this committee will continue to develop these resources and will add them to the CPR web site. As these materials become available, it will be helpful to the taskforce to receive feedback and suggestions from members. In the meantime, if you have a keen interest or good experience in managing this exciting if challenging area of archival work, consider volunteering to serve on the taskforce, which will likely continue as a permanent standing committee for CPR. Contact Leigh McWhite (slmcwhit@olemiss.edu) or Betsy Pittman (Betsy.Pittman@uconn.edu).

I also encourage members to make active use of our enduring tools for connection—the CPR listserv, the CPR newsletter, and the CPR web site. All of these means of communication offer a place to ask questions, seek advice, float ideas, and share opportunities. To post to the listserv, just send your message to: cpr@forums.archivists.org. CPR publishes its newsletter twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. Newsletter editors Morgan Davis and Gary Spurr announce the deadlines for submission via the listserv. To submit an article or announcement in the CPR newsletter, send materi-



CPR Pre-conference attendees, 2010

als to Morgan Davis (mrd@ku.edu) and Gary Spurr (spurr@tarleton.edu). The CPR web site has also been a great place to find information and resources related to congressional papers. With the migration of the site to the content management system of Drupal adopted by SAA, the CPR site has even greater potential to be a place for adding more dynamic content. In midsummer of 2010, Brian Keough established a small working group led by web manager Robin Reeder and newsletter editor Morgan Davis to manage the transition of the current CPR site to the new Drupal environment. This committee is now reviewing the new site and will shortly announce the availability of the CPR site in its new context. Once this basic move is accomplished, the working group will explore possibilities for expanding and enriching the site and will keep members updated as new options become available.

I hope this preview of the year ahead has energized members as it has energized me and the CPR steering committee. I also hope that this overview will spur members looking for ways to become more involved with the special projects in development for CPR to join the fun. Feel free to contact the steering committee and me directly. Our contact information is available on the CPR web site at <http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/cpr/steering.asp>.

Cheers,
Jill Severn
Chair, Congressional Papers Roundtable
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706-542-5766

(Minutes, continued from page 1)

Jan Zastrow and Nan Moser presented their findings from the "Survey of Senate Archivists." This survey included 11 of the 13 archivists working in the Senate. Jan and Nam asked each archivist to compile a list of tasks they perform and then used those lists to create a chart showing the similarities and difference in what was considered archival duties within each office.

Similarities included developing policy, records management, advising and training staff, basic preservation, preliminary arrangement and description, liaising with the archivist of the Senate and working with IT to capture digital information. There were many differences in how the archivists described their job duties, with some functioning as art registrars, bibliographers and website managers as well as traditional archival duties.

The survey also found that archivists in the Senate are dealing with a wide variety of electronic records and also noted that since the Library of Congress is no longer preserving the websites of members of Congress, it is up to the archivists to preserve that data.

The pre-conference meeting adjourned for a tour of the National Archives collections and vault, followed by lunch.

Congressional Papers Roundtable Business Meeting

Following lunch the Congressional Papers Roundtable opened its business meeting with a report from the chair, Brian Keogh and the introduction of Steering Committee members.

Archivist of the Senate, Karen Paul, gave a report from the Senate Historical Office. Her office has prepared several new publications including oral history interviews and a brochure on the Kennedy Caucus Room. The Senate Historian, Donald Ritchie, has published a book through the Oxford University Press titled, "The U.S. Congress: A Very Short Introduction." The history office has also prepared a new online document pertaining to notable investigations in the Senate.

Karen reported that the *Modern Political Archives Reader*, of which she was a co-editor, had been awarded the Waldo Leland Gifford Award for excellence in the field of archival theory and practice.

There have been 14 Senate office closings in the past year with all selecting repositories for their papers with the exception of one who was undecided and one who declined to place their materials at a repository. Departing staff are given a form to fill out



Sharon Fitzpatrick conducts a special tour of the "Legislative Treasure Vault" containing the most historical and valuable records of the House and Senate from 1789 to present.

which captures information on who worked on what types of projects within the office, information which is otherwise lost. The history office is developing a toolkit for use when opening a Senate office which may be useful for future Senate archivists.

Robin Reeder gave a report from the House Office of History and Preservation. She reported that the office is preparing for the end of Congress and is in contact with members who are leaving. They have increased their temporary storage space to accommodate the 50 departing members. The office is also participating in briefings for members leaving the House to talk about records issues.

Sheryl Vogt gave a report from the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress. She distributed extra copies of the Congress Week Poster and discussed the APSA Legislative Studies Section newsletter.

Jill Severn gave an update from the Reference, Access and Outreach section regarding a "More Product, Less Process" impact study being conducted. The section is looking for information about how institutions have implemented the method.

Robin Reeder and Jill Severn gave an update on the migration of the CPR website to the new SAA Drupal environment. The content has been transferred over and website users will soon be directed to the new page.

Heather Moore gave an update from Capitol Hill Archivists and Records Managers (CHARM). CHARM is developing professional activities for members such as tours and discussions. Recently the group toured the Russell Senate Office building and attic storage lockers.

The business meeting was adjourned and immediately followed by a tour of the Capitol Visitors Center.

Preserving Bumper Stickers: A “Sticky Situation”

Bearing diverse messages ranging from the mundane to the profane, bumper stickers are routinely—though often reluctantly—collected by archives, museums, and libraries, because their material instabilities create challenges for storage. These items frequently adhere to adjacent paper collections and to each other over time, distort and shrink, and emit gases as they age that degrade paper collections often stored in the same box. The “sticky situations” caused by such materials, though well known, have not been studied in-depth by the conservation community. To that end, I am undertaking a research project to examine the manufacturing history of bumper stickers and how the materials in bumper stickers interact and affect long-term permanence and durability.

Although the bumper sticker might seem to be a simple object, a typical one is made up of four basic layers: printing, a substrate (normally, these days, the vinyl on which the text is printed), an adhesive layer, and a coated backing paper intended to prevent the adhesive from sticking before it is placed on a surface. (Sometimes there is an additional coating layer on top of the printing.) Because each layer offers possibly distinct preservation challenges, the bumper sticker is, in fact, a fairly complex physical entity.

In phase one of the research project, I have examined thousands of stickers and noted characteristics including printing method, substrate material, patent information, and deterioration (be it ink, substrate, adhesive, or liner). I have been fortunate to study collections in the Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas; Dole Institute for Politics, University of Kansas; LBJ Presidential Museum, Austin, TX; Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin; and the National Museum of American History, Division of Political History, Washington, DC. More visits are planned. I am very thankful to the many archivists, curators,



*Images courtesy of the Presidential Campaign Memorabilia Collection, Duke University
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/americanvotes/>*

and librarians who have helped me in this endeavor.

In addition, I have met with manufacturers and scientists who conveyed crucial product and production information helpful in developing preservation best practices for materials that retain a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer. I hope to undertake scientific testing in the future, but that work will require source material for study.

If any members of the Congressional Papers Roundtable would like to donate duplicate stickers to the cause (particularly ones in poor condition), I would be thrilled to use them for my research. I look forward to sharing my findings with the archival community in published and presentation forms and welcome your insight and experiences about this project.

Whitney Baker
Conservator/ Associate Librarian
University of Kansas Libraries
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Excerpt from: “Who Writes to Their Senators? Preliminary Data from the Daschle and Dole Casework Files.”

By Gary Aguiar, South Dakota State University
Presented at the
Great Plains Political Science Association
September 18, 2010, Sioux Falls, SD

This report offers a very rudimentary introduction to my project, which is just in its beginning stages. I am exploring the possibilities in newly-available casework files in two senatorial archives. This report offers a descriptive analysis of the basic variables collected so far. I am seeking guidance on where this future research might go. In particular, what hypothesis might we be able to test with these data? The typical congressional office may receive up to several thousand pieces of mail weekly. Who sends these letters and what do they hope to accomplish? This first analysis attempted to collect as much demographic information as possible from the files examined.

METHODS

This report explores the newly-available casework files from the Tom Daschle Papers at South Dakota State University and the Dole Institute Archives at the University of Kansas to understand the nature of political participation. These two congressional archives are the sole depositaries of any casework files. As members of Congress contribute their papers to an archive, they typically destroy casework files. In every other archive, the archivists themselves obliterate the files. One other senatorial archive has retained these files; the Pete Domenici Archives at New Mexico State University, which has not opened, but has agreed to provide access to the casework files.

These archives contain constituent-initiated letters on both particularized (constituency casework) and national (lobbying on bills) issues. These letters are usually organ-

ized by congressional staff in two separate and distinct filing systems. The messages on national issues are filed under a “Mail Communications” or similar heading. Often, these letters are tallied to be reported to the Member and senior staff. These documents are generally available in most congressional archives.

In this study, we focus on the particularized messages, usually a constituent’s request for congressional intervention before a government agency. These cases are maintained in the district offices. Each file begins with the initial contact letter and often includes follow-up work and notes from the congressional staffer and a federal agency. As noted, the common practice of congressional archives has been to destroy these “Constituency Casework” files, because they contain private information that could harm the letter-writers if released publicly.

Prior to my efforts, these archives have not opened these documents to researchers. I negotiated access to these documents with these three congressional archive centers. These files contain privacy information, including Social Security Numbers and street addresses as well as revealing information about health, psychological, personal, financial, criminal and social welfare status. As part of the agreement with the archives and pursuant to each university’s Human Subjects Committee/Institutional Research Board approval, I have been granted access to these documents under special arrangements. Unlike other material in these archives, researchers who access the casework files must follow stricter rules:

Access under supervision; if supervision is not available, the research session will need to be rescheduled; if supervision becomes unavailable during a research session, the research session will end at that time.

- Research to occur on-site only; no materials will be allowed out of archival offices.
- No private information is to be recorded, transferred or transmitted in any way, whether manual or electronic/digital.
- Materials to be reviewed must be clearly identified before access is granted.

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- Information to be recorded must be clearly identified and approved before access is granted.

I have further instituted a protocol that my research assistants and I will not link any casework file to the data record we create. Hence, once a researcher has coded the data, we cannot refer back to that file in any way.

DATA

The results presented here represent a tiny fraction of the total available files. We began our data collection reviewing the files that had not been stored at the time the Senator closed his office (December 2004 for Daschle and June 1996 for Dole). The Daschle casework files are contained in 43 boxes from the three district offices (approximately 5,100 files). The Dole casework files have more than a dozen boxes from four district offices. The analysis here is from two boxes from the Aberdeen, SD District office (200 files, which is all of the Aberdeen files) and three boxes from the Kansas City, KS office (509 files, which has two more boxes untouched). Of course, looking back over each senator’s careers, we are looking at hundreds of boxes with an average of more than 100 files in each box. Maybe as many as 50,000 casework files for each senator!

The files offer a rich insight into the troubles and travails that ordinary citizens encountered in their dealings with the federal bureaucracy. They include truly heart-breaking stories of families that have lost everything because of death, injury or illness and the inability of government agencies to provide assistance. The files also contain a few eccentric individuals who are clearly looking for a sympathetic ear for their stories about extraterrestrial visits, stolen weapons, inadequate television coverage, and unauthorized cosmetic surgery in military hospitals.

Table 1 reports preliminary analysis of the differences in contactors. A somewhat higher percentage of men write letters than women. (However our analysis is slightly skewed in that when a married couple submitted a letter, we coded the first named individual, typically the

husband.) In both cases, relatively few contactors felt the need to contact the senatorial office more than once. Typically, the staffer provided regular updates on their case.

Table 1.
Comparison of Constituency Casework Files
Senator Tom A. Daschle - Aberdeen (SD)
District Office, 2004 (n=200)
Senator Robert J. Dole - Kansas City (KS)
District Office, 1996 (n=509)

Variable	Daschle	Dole
Percent Male	59.0	59.8
From In-state Address	96.5	85.5
Initial Contact via Phone	58.0	21.8
Initial Contact via Mail	31.0	75.0
More than one contact	12.5	18.1
Average number of words	187	302
Topic	Daschle	Dole
Crime/Prisoners	0.0	6.1
Economy/ Financial Hardship	3.5	11.4
Education	1.5	2.2
Health/Medical	31.0	13.0
Human Needs/ Housing	25.5	8.4
Immigration/ Visa/Passport	7.0	17.5
Military Matters	13.5	9.8
Social Issues	1.0	4.3
Taxes/IRS	0.5	6.9
Veteran’s Affairs	12.0	12.6



INSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

New Mexico State University

The 2010 fall semester started with a bang in the Political Papers Archives at New Mexico State University. The Domenici Public Policy Conference, the major event of the fall, was held September 1 and 2, featuring appearances by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson of Texas, and retired U.S. senators Sam Nunn and Pete V. Domenici.

The subject of the keynote on Thursday afternoon was the 2010 midterm elections, with arguments by Karl Rove, Fox News analyst and commentator and former advisor to President George W. Bush, and Joe Lockhart, political analyst and commentator and former press secretary to President Bill Clinton. Sam Donaldson of ABC News attempted to moderate the discussion, but the two featured speakers set their own pace.

Two more featured speakers were the candidates for governor of New Mexico, Diane Denish, currently Lieutenant Governor, and Susana Martinez. Each candidate put forth her program for the state to rousing applause.

Following the end of the conference, attendees were able to tour the Archives, home to the Senator Domenici collection. Senator Domenici himself returned to campus on Friday to tour the Archives and to begin a process of reviewing material for proper identification.

The collection was received in 2007 and work began on getting it organized in August 2008. The Political Papers Archives and the

Domenici Institute of Public Policy and Defense work in cooperation to promote research and studies in public policy.



Senators Sam Nunn, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Barbara Couture, President of NMSU, and Senator Pete Domenici.



Karl Rove and Joe Lockhart debate 2010 midterm elections, moderated by Sam Donaldson.

-Cary G. Osborne

University of Hawaii at Manoa

The Hawaii Congressional Papers Collection at the University of Hawaii at Manoa recently received the last shipments of material from former Rep. Neil Abercrombie's 20 years in Congress--for a total of almost 400 record boxes.

The Abercrombie Papers are closed to researchers until 2025. This collection joins those of former representatives Thomas Gill, Patricia Saiki and Ed Case (the latter closed until 2037) and of former senators Spark Matsunaga and Hiram Fong

-Ellen Chapman

The University of Texas—Pan American



The University of Texas-Pan American Archives is pleased to receive a grant from the NHPRC for detailed processing of former Congressman Kika de la Garza's Congressional Papers. De la Garza served in the House of Representatives from 1965

through 1997, representing South Texas' 15th Congressional District. In addition to being Chair of the Agriculture Committee from 1981 to 1994, de la Garza was also instrumental in founding the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and helped with the passage of NAFTA. His Congressional Papers contain a wealth of information pertaining to the development of infrastructure in South Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border. The grant period runs from October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2012. Approximately 657 linear feet will be processed and made available to researchers.

- Diane S. Tyink

Ohio State University

The papers of Deborah Pryce are now available to researchers at the Ohio Congressional Archives located at The Ohio State University. Pryce, a Republican from the 15th Ohio District, served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1993 to 2009. Starting in her first year in Congress, Pryce became involved in the leadership of the House Republicans. Elected freshman-class president in 1993, she also served on the Planning and Learning Committee that helped craft the GOP's "Contract with America." Following the 1994 elections, Pryce was a member of the transition team tasked with shifting control of the House to the Republican Party. In 1996, she was

made a Deputy Majority Whip and two years later was elected secretary of the House Republican Conference (HRC). After serving as conference secretary in 1998 and 1999, Pryce ran unopposed for the position of vice chair of the HRC in 2000. Two years later she won a three-way race for conference chair. Pryce served as chair of the HRC in the 108th and 109th Congresses (2003-2007), making her the highest-ranking Republican woman ever to serve in the House.

As a freshman legislator in the 103rd Congress, Pryce received assignments on the Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committee and the Government Operations Committee. As a member of the Banking Committee she sat in on the hearings held by the committee in July and August 1994 to investigate the Whitewater controversy. In the 104th Congress (1995-1996), Pryce switched her committee assignments to a seat on the Rules Committee, which remained her committee focus for the majority of her congressional career. While on the Rules Committee she chaired the Legislative and Budget Process Subcommittee from 2001 through 2004. In 2005, Pryce left the Rules Committee to accept a seat on the newly organized Financial Services Committee, where she became the fourth-ranking member. During her career in Congress, Congresswoman Pryce's major public policy interests and her most noted legislative accomplishments centered on women's issues, children's services, and health care, particularly in the area of cancer research.

A detailed finding aid for the Deborah Pryce Papers is located online at <https://library.osu.edu/find/collections/ohio-congressional-archives/deborah-d-pryce-papers/>

Of note, accessible through the on-line finding aid are 86.7 megabytes of electronic documents originating from Representative Pryce's press office, and 54.6 megabytes of electronic documents from the press office of the House Republican Conference dating from 2003 to 2006. These electronic documents are presented in Adobe PDF format compiled into key word searchable portfolios arranged by record type and/or date.

- Jeff Thomas

Tarleton State University

Tarleton State University is now home to a little piece of Washington, D.C., thanks to an exhibit and gallery honoring former Congressman Charlie Stenholm. Stenholm was recently on campus to dedicate the gallery and to thank the many participants who played a role in recreating his Washington office, and 26 years in Congress, with exacting detail.

Stenholm graduated in 1959 from the two-year Tarleton College and went on to receive his bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas Tech University. He credits a Tarleton professor with his decision to pursue a career beyond the farm.

Tarleton staff members involved in the project included Donna Strohmeyer, Laurie Gaiser, Janice Horak, Trudy Carlson, Lori LaRue, Lori Jefferies, Donna Savage and Gary Spurr.

- Gary Spurr

House Clerk's Office of History and Preservation

Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the appointment of Dr. Matthew Wasniewski as the new Historian of the House of Representatives. Dr. Wasniewski, who currently serves as the historian in the House Clerk's Office of History and Preservation, received the unanimous recommendation of the House Historian Search Committee appointed by Speaker Pelosi with the input of House Republican Leader John Boehner who concurred on the appointment.

The appointment of Dr. Wasniewski follows the retirement of Dr. Robert Remini as Historian earlier this year after serving for five years. Speaker Pelosi decided at that time to have a panel of distinguished historians conduct an impartial and professional search for the replacement, rather than rely simply on a Speaker appointment, as House rules permit.

- Robin Reeder

University of South Carolina

Take a listen! South Carolina Political Collections is pleased to announce the third installment of *In His Own Words*, the Bryan Dorn edition. *William Jennings Bryan Dorn: In His Own Words*, is a digitized collection of audio clips from the Dorn collection. Mr. Dorn, known for his oratory skills, had a unique style of both entertaining and informing his audiences. The collection of 75 clips come from his 1974 and 1978 bids for South Carolina governor, his work with the American Legion, and excerpts from his oral history interviews.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time listening to Mr. Dorn's campaign speeches and oral history recollections. A truly dedicated public servant, Mr. Dorn's career representing South Carolina in both state government and in Congress spanned over 30 years, from 1939 to 1974! This has been a unique opportunity for me to re-live important moments in South Carolina and national history. I edited the clips only for length in hopes of making the listener feel as if he or she was sitting in Mr. Dorn's audience.

- Debbie Davendonis

University of Kansas

As of October 2010, approximately 80% of the Dole Senate Papers have been processed. Legislative, Office Administration, Personal/Political, and Press materials have been completely entered into the Archon database. These materials are fully searchable online, and have thus far seen extensive use by visiting researchers. The Dole archivists fully expect to meet the expectations of the grant before May 2011.

In preparation for National History Day, the Dole Archive will make available electronic copies of over 200 documents to assist local high school and middle school students with research projects. These documents cover a variety of topics such as the Vietnam War, the Equal Rights Amendment, and Food Stamp Reform. The Dole Archive will also award a monetary prize for the best project that includes discussion of the US Congress.

- Robert Lay



News Round-Up

Uranium in Archival Collections Featured in Two News Stories

Within one week two separate incidents of uranium found in archives were reported in the news.

The Knoxville News Sentinel reported on September 24, 2010 that uranium had been found in the collection of Senator Estes Kefauver. Archivists at the Howard H. Baker Center for Policy, which houses the collection, alerted the campus director of radiation safety. The specimen was found to be, “slightly radioactive, but not dangerously so.”

The uranium was found in a small gift box marked “uranium.” The inscription on the box indicated that it had been a gift to the Senator from a mining company.

On September 28, 2010 the University Daily Kansan reported on a uranium sample in the collections of the Spencer Research Library. The sample was collected by a chemistry professor while studying the purity of uranium in connection with the Manhattan Project.

Naturally occurring uranium, such as the samples found in these two archives, is considered to have a safe level of radioactivity. Although if uranium is found in collections it should be handled with caution.

University of Missouri turns over Western Historical Manuscripts Collections

The Missouriian reported on November 10, 2010 that the University of Missouri system has decided to turn over management of the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection (WHMC) to the Missouri State Historical Society.

WHMC holds the congressional papers of Senator Tom Eagleton, Senator John Danforth, Rep. Harold Volkmer as well as many other members of congress from Missouri.

The change of management is seen as a cost cutting measure for the University, although collections will remain in their current locations within the UM schools in Rolla, St. Louis, Columbia and Kansas City.

Website Creates Senate “Vanity Index”

Slate.com published what they call the “Senate Vanity Index” on October 28, 2010. In compiling this index, reporters visited all 100 Senate offices and counted the number of awards and pictures on the wall, giving more weight to pictures of the Senator with “celebrities, presidents or foreign dignitaries.”

Save the Date!
SAA Annual Meeting
August 22-17, 2011
Chicago, Illinois