Meeting Minutes

August 23, 2002
Birmingham, Alabama

Attendees:

- Thomas Battle, Howard University
- Tracey Berezansky, Alabama Department of Archives and History
- Lynn V. Bernard, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
- Michele Christian, Iowa State University
- Mark Conrad, National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)
- Gordon Daines, Brigham Young University
- Lisa Daulby, Royal Bank of Canada
- Jean Deken (Incoming ERS Webmaster), Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC), Stanford University
- George Despres, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Lincoln Laboratory
- Christine Di Bella, University of Michigan
- Phil Eppard, State University of New York (SUNY), Albany
- Patricia Galloway, University of Texas
- Tamar Granovsky, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Lincoln Laboratory
- Michael Hooks, Jet Propulsion Laboratory
- Bob Horton, Minnesota Historical Society
- Jennifer Jacobs (ERS Newsletter Editor) University of California at Irvine Libraries
- Edith Jeter, International Mission Board
- Joanne Kaczmarck, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)
- Kris Kobi, Global Electronic Records Association
- Joseph M. Komljenovich, Federal Reserve Bank of New York
- Nancy Kunde, University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Nancy McGovern, Cornell University
- Ken Megill, Software Directions (affiliated with Cuadra Associates)
- Margaret Merrick, Presbyterian Historical Society
- Mark Myers Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives
- Cal Lee (Outgoing ERS Chair, ERS Steering Committee), University of Michigan
- Chad Owen, University of Louisville
- Richard Pearce-Moses, Arizona State Library and Archives
- Gord Rabchuk, Royal Bank of Canada
- Rose Roberto, The Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL/NASA)
- Tom Rosko, University of Kentucky
- Tom Ruller, New York State Education Department
- Deborah Skaggs, Frank Russell Company
- Cindy Smolovik, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Southwest Region
- Rob Spindler, Arizona State University
- Cheryl Stadel-Bevans (ERS Steering Committee), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
- Ed Staples, Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Lee Stout, Pennsylvania State University
- Jill Tatem, Case Western Reserve University
- Kate Theimer, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
- Bill Walker, Amigos Library Services

1. General Announcements

Tom Battle introduced himself as the ERS Council Liaison. He encouraged us to contact him if we have any concerns or issues of which we would like Council to be aware.

Rob Spindler informed us of some of the highlights of the annual Preservation and Access for Electronic College and University Records (ECURE) conference. He also distributed fliers with information about the event, which will be held in Mesa, Arizona on October 9-11, 2002. Those interested in ECURE should visit **http://www.asu.edu/ecure/**.

Cal Lee announced that there is working going on within the National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council (NECCC) that might be of interest to members of the ERS. And has currently identified three sub workgroups on records management issues: "E-mail: Legal and Records Management Issues," " Creating and Maintaining Proper Systems for Electronic Recordkeeping," and "Generating and Retaining Signed Electronic Records." Many archivists are involved in this work, including several members of the ERS. More information is available from **http://www.ec3.org/**.

In her capacity as representative of the SAA 2003 Program Committee, Cheryl Stadel-Bevans encouraged us to consider submitting session proposals for next year's conference in Los Angeles. She conveyed that we should only request audio visual equipment that is necessary to the session, since the use of this equipment is an expense for SAA. Cheryl also reminded us that we should be sure to complete all components of the proposal form, which is due to SAA by October 7. She also emphasized that we need to confirm all speakers before listing them on the form. This has been a problem in the past. Finally, Cheryl indicated that international speakers and those coming from outside of the archival profession can receive free registration for the conference.

Nancy McGovern alerted us that the Instruction, Research, and Information Services Division and the Cornell Institute for Digital Collections of Cornell University Library is developing a digital preservation training program called "Digital Preservation Management: Effective Short-Term Strategies for Long-Term Problems" with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The program will consist of an on-line tutorial and a one-week on-site workshop. It aims to enable effective decision making for administrators who will be responsible for the longevity of digital objects. Those interested can visit the digital programs site at **http://www.library.cornell.edu/digital/** or go directly to the page about the workshop at **http://www.library.cornell.edu/iris/research/workshop.html**.

Cal Lee mentioned that Tom Ruller will be teaching the SAA Basic Electronic Records workshop on October 21 in Edwardsville, Illinois.

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2. Kudos and Thanks

Cal Lee extended thanks to the following individuals:

- Chuck Thomas for all of his work on the ERS newsletter and web site
- Joe Laframboise and Jean Marie Deken for their service on the Steering Committee
- Tom Ruller for almost a decade of administering the ERECS-L mailing list
- Chris Frey for serving as the outgoing Webmaster and Jean Deken for agreeing to take on this role for the coming year
- Cheryl Stadel-Bevans, Nancy Deromedi, Geof Huth and Steve Hussman for reviewing and endorsing proposed sessions for the SAA 2002 Annual Meeting on behalf of the ERS
- Nancy Deromedi and Cheryl Stadel-Bevans for representing the ERS at an "office hours" table at the International Archives and Information Technology Exposition at this year's conference from 10-11 am on Thursday. Nancy and Cheryl distributed copies of the newsletter and bookmarks about the ERS. They reported that this went very well.

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3. Election

Cal Lee distributed ballots and asked everyone to please vote for Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect and Steering Committee. Rosemary Pleva Flynn was the sole candidate for Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, while the Steering Committee candidates

included Charlie Arp, Kate Theimer and Mary Cordato. Cal explained that, according to the ERS bylaws, two of the Steering Committee positions are vacated each year, and one of those open positions is filled by the outgoing Chair. Cal will fill this open position, while the ERS members are called on to vote for the other position. Kate Theimer said a few words about herself. All other candidates were unable to attend the ERS meeting. Cheryl Stadel-Bevans volunteered to count the ballots.

We are pleased to announce the election of Rosemary Pleva Flynn as the new Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect and Kate Theimer as the new Steering Committee member.

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4. NHPRC Electronic Records Research Agenda

Bob Horton gave an overview of a current project called the NHPRC Electronic Records Research Agenda being managed by the Minnesota Historical Society. It aims to provide input into the NHPRC planning process, improve the electronic records grant program in order to improve electronic records management in the nation, investigate ways to enable archivists to use information technology in more sophisticated and effective ways, and promote more effective electronic records grants and projects. Bob is the director of the project and Cal Lee is serving as its consultant. The Advisory Board to the project met in St. Paul, Minnesota on May 31 - June 1 of this year and identified a number of considerations and themes to define the direction of the project and the NHPRC agenda more generally. Bob encouraged everyone to contact him with any questions and to attend the session on Saturday at which Bob, Cal and Mark Conrad would present on some of the preliminary work and facilitate a dialog with the audience about themes from the Advisory Board meeting. Cal also encouraged everyone to respond to the project's online survey if they have not already done so. Information about the project can be found at **http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/eragenda.html**.

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5. Newsletter Editor Report

Jennifer Jacobs encouraged ERS members to submit information to her for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter. She pointed out the last issue as an example, which included a number of brief reports on efforts to accession electronic records. She would like to receive more of these reports to inform members of current practice in this area. Everyone should also consider sending Jennifer information about new standards, events, projects or resources related to electronic records.

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6. Reports on Old Business

During this portion of the meeting, we discussed the status of the following three areas of activity, all of which were addressed by small break-out groups during last year's Annual Meeting.

6.1 Copyright discussion group

Last year, we discussed the possibility of putting together a white paper, FAQ or some other type of document on the preservation concerns related to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Cal Lee reported that he still considers this to be a pressing concern, but he apologized for not getting much work done on this in the past year. He did send out calls for participation last year, and several individuals contacted him to express their interest. At this year's meeting, we discussed the possibility of writing a white paper that could then be submitted to Council for review and potential approval as a statement from SAA.

6.2 Standards

Nancy Kunde summarized several standards efforts, including the ongoing work between SAA and ARMA on "Conversion and Migration Criteria in Records Keeping Systems (ANSI/ARMA-16-200X)." This project is planned as a collaborative effort among archivists and records managers. It plans to address the fundamental issues related to converting and migrating from one records system to another, while preserving the records structure. Nancy encouraged ERS members to take part in this effort by formally joining the Conversion-Migration Task Force. She also announced that the Task Force would be holding a meeting immediately after the ERS meeting. More information about this work can be found at **http://migrationtaskforce.homestead.com/** (note: your browser must support Javascript). Nancy also said that she would be happy to answer any questions through email.

6.3 Membership Needs and Information Sharing

6.3.1 Electronic Mailing Lists

Cal Lee began this discussion by summarizing some recent discussions about the ERS leaders about the future of ERS's use of electronic mailing lists for discussion, announcements and coordination. The mailing list formally associated with the ERS is which has been around for about a decade and is moderated: **http://listserv.albany.edu:8080/archives/erecs-l.html**.

ERECS-L mailing list has continued to serve as a valuable resource. Many have grown increasingly concerned, however, that the list does not get much traffic and that its moderated status may stifle dialog. In May 2001, Rosemary Pleva Flynn created another list called SAA-ERS as an un-moderated eGroup (now a Yahoo! Groups) list described as "a discussion forum for the Electronic Records Section of the Society of American Archivists." While greatly appreciating Rosemary's work in setting up a second list to facilitate more active dialog, the leadership shares a concern about hosting any ERS-backed lists through Yahoo! Groups, given its commercial nature and possible concerns about intellectual property, privacy, advertising, etc. Cal suggested that, aside from our need to be careful about what sorts of forums we officially endorse and support as a section, we also need to recognize that some people will simply decide not to take part in a discussion that requires them to sign onto Yahoo!'s user agreement.

Cal has also set up a list through the University of Michigan specifically for the SAA leadership. He suggested that there would also be value in working with the SAA office to set up an additional list composed exclusively of ERS members, in order to make announcements or solicit feedback on issues of specific interest to the section. He has spoken with Teresa Brinati, Susan Fox and Brian Doyle in the SAA office about this, and they have told him that SAA could host such a list, based on the section affiliation information in their membership database. There are many potential advantages to hosting this members-only list through SAA. One disadvantage is that it seems, at least in the near future, SAA will not be able to support a Web-based archive of postings to that list.

Tom Ruller expressed that there are at least three distinct needs we would like to address through our electronic communication: wide information dissemination, active discussion (not currently met very well) and section communication. Tom suggested that ERECS-L does a good job of addressing the first and, to some extent, the third, but it does not very well address the need for active discussion. He also pointed out that it's important for us to identify what we see as the goals of any given list. It's possible that moving electronic records discussions off to another list could be perceived or serve as a direct competitor to discussion the Archives and Archivists lists. Patricia Galloway argued that too much traffic on the list could be a liability rather than an asset; we do not want to overload subscribers to the list with too many messages. Cal Lee conveyed from Rosemary Pleva Flynn that she was exploring the option of using the "self-moderation" feature of the Listserv software, which allows all subscribed members to post freely but requires a moderator to approve any messages from those not subscribed to the list.

Tom Ruller proposed that we run ERECS-L un-moderated for a year as an experiment to see whether it can serve both the dissemination and discussion functions at the same time. We could then revisit this issue at next year's meeting. Cheryl Stadel-Bevans offered a slight amendment to this proposal, suggesting that we use the self-moderation feature for the next year. All members present unanimously approved the following motion:

The administrators of ERECS-L (Rosemary Pleva Flynn and Kevin Glick) will run the list in self-moderated mode for one year as an experiment to see whether or not it can successfully serve the dual roles of disseminating valuable information and fostering active discussion. The administration of the list will then be revisited at next year's annual meeting.

We also discussed the possibility of creating ad hoc lists for various groups or topics within the ERS. Cal Lee suggested that we could ask SAA to create such ad hoc lists, or he would be willing to host them at the University of Michigan. He pointed out that longer-term lists would probably warrant hosting by a persistent organization, rather than someone like him he would just be offering a temporary service. He once again emphasized that one drawback to using SAA for email lists could be that they do not currently have support for Web archives of the messages. Kevin Glick suggested that it would be helpful to allow wider access to discussions of smaller discussion lists. He said that there is often a paradoxical situation in which those with the most expertise on a topic do not post to the larger discussion lists but instead discuss issues among themselves. Having a wider window into these discussions could be quite instructive. Cal agreed that this could be valuable but also pointed out that some groups, particularly those working on the details of a document or policy statement, may not want their discussions to be public. This would probably have to be managed on a case-by-case basis. The question arose about the possibility of creating more ad hoc lists through the existing Listserv server made available through the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany.

Phil Eppard of SUNY, Albany is responsible for this arrangement, and he was no longer present at the meeting when this discussion arose.

Several ERS members agreed that it would be good to make use of the SAA-hosted ERS-members-only list for announcements related to the section itself. In addition to email, Rose Roberto suggested that we use a new section of the ERS web site to more actively push out announcements. Cal Lee pointed out that the newsletter and web site have traditionally been quite closely tied together, with the "Current Stories" on the front page reflecting the newsletter items. Unfortunately, the site is now quite out of date, and we could benefit from much more active postings to it. Christine Di Bella suggested that we think even more broadly and creatively about online communication and collaboration options. She pointed out that many groups at the University of Michigan make use of Web-based groupware and collaboration software to carry out group work. Perhaps the ERS could make use of such of such tools. Cal asked Christine if she would be willing to head up an effort to explore such options. She agreed to do so. Other volunteers for this group were Rose Roberto, Kevin Glick, and Jean Marie Deken. Kevin also suggested that we should ask Rosemary Pleva Flynn to take part.

Patricia Galloway pointed out that this discussion has many overlaps with the recently released exposure draft of the SAA Task Force on Electronic Publishing (TFEP). Tom Battle agreed, and he suggested to everyone that they read and comment on that exposure draft, which is available at **http://www.archivists.org/governance/tfep-report2.asp**.

6.3.2 Membership Survey and other Issues

Nancy Deromedi reported on the membership survey that she had distributed in order to get contact, interest and expertise information from respondents. This was an activity that we discussed at last year's Annual Meeting. Nancy reported that she had received only two responses and asked the section for advice on how to proceed. Jean Marie Deken suggested that we hold off on sending out another survey until we have made more progress on the issue of web site functionality. Patricia Galloway suggested that it might be easier to get responses from people who are subscribing to an online forum. They would be a more captive audience and might have more incentive to contribute information about themselves, particularly if they were allowed to decide whether they wanted to share this information with anyone who visited the site or only to select individuals, such as members of the ERS. Richard Pearce-Moses said that we may be able to accomplish the goals of the survey by adding some fields to the SAA's planned online membership directory.

Tom Ruller suggested that we express to SAA Council that we are very interested in having an online membership directory and that we would like to suggest to Council what fields and functionality would be included in that directory. Some suggestion from the group were added fields for professional interests or areas of expertise, URLs to home pages, and separate management of home and work address). Richard suggested that the ERS provides the sort of expertise that is necessary to consider these issues, which are much more general than the needs of the section itself. He suggested we specifically move to "support Council to develop" an online member directory. Cheryl Stadel-Bevans and Nancy Deromedi both volunteered to further pursue this issue.

The ERS membership present unanimously passed the following motion: The Electronic Records Section conveys our interest in supporting SAA Council to develop an SAA online member directory, to include not only information from the existing paper directory but also data elements and functionality that can better support online collaboration, communication and data sharing.

As a member of the Task Force on Electronic Publishing, Cal said that one of their concerns was matching up the "vision with the reality," thinking creatively about new possibilities but also keeping in mind the current architecture of the SAA and the sorts of services and functions it can support in the near future. Cal said that he is familiar with many open-source software (OSS) options for online collaboration that also support the sorts of member profiles and permission controls that we have been discussing. Slashcode, the software used by Slashdot and many other sites, is one popular example. Cal said that he was not sure the extent to which the SAA office could support such software, since they're moving toward a content management approach based on Microsoft Site Server.

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7. Recent Activities (since last year's meeting)

7.1 Response to NARA's Call for Comments

Cal Lee explained that in October of 2001, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) sent out a call for comments on a Public Citizen Petition related to portions of 36 Code of Federal Regulations 1234, "Electronic Records Management." On October 19, Peter Hirtle emailed Cal as the Chair of the Electronic Records Section and Jelain Chubb as the Chair of the Government Records Section, asking for their assistance in drafting an SAA response to NARA. Peter said that the issue "falls squarely in the realm of the Electronic Records Section" and thus asked Cal to take the lead on the process. The following individuals from the two sections contributed texts and comments during the process of drafting the response document: Paul Bergeron, City Clerk, Nashua, New Hampshire; Jelain Chubb, Missouri State Archives; Christopher Frey, University of Michigan; Geof Huth, New York State Archives; Craig Kelso, Missouri State Archives; Joe Laframboise, Kansas State Historical Society; Cal Lee, University of Michigan; Scott Leonard, Kansas State Historical Society; Pat Michaelis, Kansas State Historical Society; Marry-Ellyn Strauser, Missouri State Archives; Matt Veatch, Kansas State Historical Society; and David Wallace, University of Michigan. Cal then worked with Peter Hirtle and Richard Pearce-Moses to further refine the document, before it was ultimately endorsed by SAA Council, sent to NARA and posted on the SAA web site: **http://www.archivists.org/statements/ers_grs_response_4_January.pdf**.

Richard Pearce-Moses interjected that Council was "ecstatic" to receive the document authored by the two sections. Cal said he hopes the ERS can continue to take part in such activities by providing expertise and assistance in drafting SAA responses to timely issues.

7.2 ERS Endorsements of SAA 2002 Sessions

Cal Lee explained that the endorsement of session proposals is a very important activity of the ERS. He thanked again Cheryl Stadel-Bevans, Steve Hussman, Nancy Deromedi and Geof Huth for their great work on managing endorsements for this year's Annual Meeting. This resulted in many valuable sessions on this year's program. Cheryl, who took the lead on this last year, said that part of the endorsement process is ranking the proposals to give the Program Committee a sense of our priorities.

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8. New Business

8.1 Session Proposals for SAA 2003

Nancy Deromedi will be in charge of the session endorsement process for this year. She encouraged people to submit sessions for endorsement. She said that she would also soon be sending out a call for a couple volunteers to help her in this process. Since proposals are due to SAA on October 7, Cheryl suggested Nancy set a deadline of some time around October 1 for submission to ERS for consideration. Cal also added that one role the ERS endorsement group can play is advice on putting together a proposal. If you have an idea for a session but don't know exactly who to include or how to organize it, you can contact Nancy or another member of the endorsement group.

8.2 Email elections?

Cal Lee raised concern that many of our most active members, including many of our officers were unable to attend the meeting this year. He threw out the idea of possibly carrying out elections through email, in order to better represent the full section. He pointed out that there can be some advantages to only counting the votes of those members present, but suggested that these might be outweighed by the disadvantages. Cal explained that any decision on this matter would require a change in the bylaws, since they currently state: "The Vice Chair will be elected by the section members present and voting at the annual meeting of the section." and "Each year, at the Annual Section Meeting, one new member of the steering committee will be elected by a majority of Section Members present and voting."

Cal discussed what he saw as a variety of technical options for possibly carrying out a an electronic vote. Since SAA will have a member directory on the server in order to support authentication of users, Cal argued that it should be possible to carry out the vote through the SAA web site. There are some authentication concerns, but Cal believed that these probably wouldn't be insurmountable, given the fairly low profile of the ERS elections in comparison to (say) the U.S. presidential election. Through our email discussions before the meeting this year, Geof Huth raised the concern about ensuring anonymity of voters. Cal provided some ideas for how he thought this also could be addressed through an online voting system. An such system would have to assume a lot of trust, but that is probably true with any type of voting that we would reasonably explore.

One ERS member suggested that we were actually just talking about the option of having an absentee ballot. Tom Ruller suggested that one option could be to include a ballot in one issue of the ERS newsletter and then allow members to submit their votes by mail. Richard Pearce-Moses moved that Cal and Richard explore this further.

The ERS members present unanimously passed the following motion:

Cal Lee and Richard Pearce-Moses will further explore the possibilities for carrying out remote voting for ERS leadership positions. They will report back to the section about this on or before the next annual meeting.

8.3 Other Business

The meeting ended with an announcement by Richard Pearce-Moses about the NHPRC fellowship program that offers $10,000 for one year of archival research. This includes 2 trips to Boston. NHPRC is encouraging applications for research on electronic records issues, and Richard urges those interested to consider applying.

Submitted by Cal Lee, Outgoing Chair, Electronic Records Section August 30, 2002

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