



Infinity

The newsletter of the SAA Preservation Section
Summer 2006, Volume 22, number 1

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FROM THE CHAIR:

As many of you have gathered from the various emails, this has been a busy and exciting year in the preservation field – especially in the realm of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. While the Heritage Preservation-sponsored conference calls dealing with the response to the hurricanes began to wind down after the middle of February, it is obvious that response and recovery of cultural resources as well as people’s homes, businesses, and lives will continue into the foreseeable future. The issue that we need to address from all this activity and response is clearly one of examination of where we are regarding our own preparedness – both personal and professional. How would we survive were we to be hit by a Category 3, 4, or 5 hurricane or an equivalent tornado, earthquake, etc.? Would our collections survive? Have we undertaken the basic steps to protect lives and property as well as the collections under our care? We need to take a good hard look at our situations and be honest about our preparedness. If we are not prepared, then we need to do something about it.

Richard Pearce-Moses, current President of SAA, and Council moved to bring these lessons home to the archival (and library) community by inaugurating *MayDay* – a day on which we can take one small step to make ourselves better prepared to protect ourselves and our collections. I sincerely hope that many of you took advantage of this opportunity to take that initial step and will continue to do so in future years. One way that this can be facilitated is through the use of ***dPlan: The Online Disaster Planning Tool***. After a couple of years of announcing that its release was imminent, ***dPlan*** was released officially in early June for the use of cultural institutions throughout the United States. For those of you who might not have seen the announcement, it is included elsewhere in this issue of *Infinity*. The URL is www.dplan.org. It is hoped that the availability of ***dPlan*** will encourage institutions to develop their own institutional disaster preparedness plan.

On another disaster-related front, I was fortunate to represent SAA at the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) meeting (“Hurricane Conference”) in April at the Georgia State Archives, Morrow, Georgia where the goal of the day and a half meeting was to jump start

the development of statewide disaster plans for records and records repositories for all fifty states. The emphasis in this meeting was to discuss and suggest revisions for the "Framework" that had been developed to assist in assessing the risks to records holdings in individual states and planning responses so that a comprehensive plan could be developed not only for the State Archives itself but for repositories throughout the state. Since the southeastern states (9) tend to be the most frequent target of hurricanes, these states had been asked to complete the assessment tool prior to this meeting so that everyone present could learn how well it worked for them. Subsequent discussions allowed the creators an opportunity to gather input from a variety of sources to make the tool more effective and more comprehensive. Since these states are the initial guinea pigs for developing a disaster plan, their experiences will serve the rest of the states as they develop their own plans by the end of September 2006.

As you have probably noticed, there are a number of preservation-related sessions on the program this year. Thank you to the program committee, especially Pat Morris, who pulled a number of these sessions together particularly after the hurricanes last fall. Speaking of this year's SAA meeting, we are going to try to keep the business meeting portion of our Section meeting to a minimum so that we can hear about three important topics. The meeting is from 12:15 to 2:15 on Friday, August 4, 2006. If you need to, please bring your lunch. Alan Aiches from FEMA will speak about the impact the hurricanes had on cultural resources in Louisiana in 2005. Mr. Aiches was on the ground in New Orleans and other parts of Louisiana and participated in many of the Heritage Preservation conference calls updating the rest of the participants on the status of events regarding cultural resources on the ground. Kristen Laise from Heritage Preservation will discuss the Heritage Health Index and its implications for future activities in the preservation of our cultural heritage. Finally, either Jane Long or Larry Reger, also from Heritage Preservation, will take a broader look at the disasters of the past year, glean lessons learned, and discuss the Heritage National Emergency Task Force. This promises to be an exciting program so I hope that as many of you who can attend will do so.

Gregor Trinkaus-Randall
Chair, Preservation Section

FROM the CO-EDITORS

Many of us are attending the upcoming SAA annual meeting and with so many terrific sessions, one person is unable to hear all the panelists. We would like to propose an opportunity to our section members: if you are attending a session, please consider writing a conference panel review for *Infinity* fall 2006 and spring 2007. This undertaking allows section members opportunities to promote a nexus between "virtual" and "real-world" intellectual spaces. As newsletter co-editors we hope that this project will serve not only to inform but also to stimulate discussion and an expanded and informative newsletter. If you have any additional questions, please contact either Tonia Sutherland, tsutherland@library.umass.edu, or Anne Rothfeld, anne_rothfeld@nlm.nih.gov.

***The Northeast Document Conservation Center and the Massachusetts Board
of Library Commissioners Announce:
dPlan™: The Online Disaster-Planning Tool***

What is dPlan?

dPlan is a *free* Web-based fill-in-the-blank program for writing institutional disaster plans. It was created, tested, and refined by the Northeast Document Conservation Center and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

How does dPlan work?

Log on to www.dplan.org and enter your institutions' information into a template that guides you through the creation of a comprehensive disaster plan. Explore **dPlan**'s features in an introductory demo on the homepage.

dPlan's easy-to-use program automatically supplies language for a final plan. The resulting printable, customized disaster plan contains checklists of all disaster procedures, salvage priorities, preventive maintenance schedules, current contact information for personnel, insurance and IT help, as well as a list of supply sources and emergency services.

Once completed, your password-protected plan is stored on a secure server so it can be updated on a regular basis. An automatic e-mail is sent every six months to remind you to update your plan.

Who needs dPlan?

According to the Heritage Health Index, produced by a partnership between Heritage Preservation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, 80% of collecting institutions do not have an emergency plan that includes collections with staff trained to carry out the plan.

dPlan is designed to help institutions of all sizes:

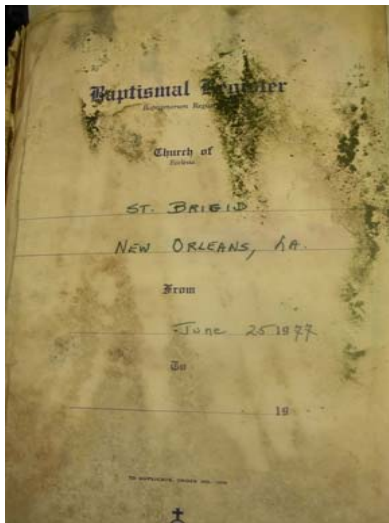
- Small and medium-sized institutions that do not have in-house preservation staff
- University libraries, museum campuses, or statewide library systems that need to develop separate but related plans for multiple buildings, locations, or branches
- State agencies or professional associations that seek to structure training programs on disaster planning

To use dPlan, or to view the introductory demo, go to: www.dplan.org

For more information, contact Lori Foley of NEDCC, lfoley@nedcc.org
or Gregor Trinkaus-Randall of MBLC, gregor.trinkaus-randall@state.ma.us

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978. 470.1010
www.nedcc.org

Article of interest: “When the Hypothetical becomes Hydrated”
by Ann T. Boltin and Lisa H. Lewis, Diocese of Baton Rouge



*St. Brigid Baptism book damaged
by Hurricane Katrina.
Photo courtesy of Lisa H. Lewis*

Before Hurricane Katrina, the disaster plan for the Diocese of Baton Rouge was prepared by an archives graduate student for a preservation class project based on hypothetical scenarios. The Archives Department of the diocese was well aware of a disaster’s potential for harm to its collections. In the collective imagination, preparations for a tornado, a chemical spill or an explosion at a nearby oil refinery were considered. Although there were projections of the possibility of flooding in the greater New Orleans area, few believed that would happen. But no one had imagined the tremendous impact that this disaster would have on Baton Rouge and other nearby communities.

Precautionary measures were taken at the diocesan offices the weekend before Hurricane Katrina. Computers were backed up and unplugged, blinds were closed and traditional hurricane “battening down of the hatches” was done. However, little else from our disaster plan was used. No one had previously anticipated the immense scope of this

disaster and its implications. With no precedent, adequate preparations could not have been made.

After the storm, local community groups and individuals got busy dealing with the swarm of evacuees, limiting available resources. Housing evacuees, assisting at shelters, collecting supplies, and providing necessary information strained the shared resources of commodities, transportation and office space necessary to effectively deal with the challenge. Cooperation crossed personal boundaries into the institutional realm. Within a week of the hurricane, the Archdiocesan Archives of New Orleans had moved in to share the offices of the Baton Rouge Diocesan Archives.



Students from LSU's School of Library and Information Science volunteer their time in the conservation room.

The records of the Archdiocese moved much slower than either the floodwaters or the population. The Baton Rouge office served as a collection point for the records of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. A room was prepared and supplies ordered. All priests were encouraged to bring their church records, wet or dry, to Baton Rouge. It took nearly a month for the documents to begin to trickle in. In the meantime, the staff educated themselves, as best as they could, on wet collection recovery procedures. However, no instructions or examples were available that compared to the condition of the materials. Some were covered in oil; many smelled of sewage or were covered in slime. Most had been wet for weeks or even months. Records arrived in garbage bags and plastic containers; one church brought in a file drawer with the records still stuck inside. Some records were wet, others just dirty or moldy, but many needed attention and all came with interesting stories. Some had been floated to safety in coolers, others had been taken upstairs until the hurricane had passed, with half being brought down too soon, only to be flooded when the levees breached.

These records were effectively salvaged and preserved due to partnerships formed in the spirit of cooperation. LSU's Hill Memorial Library offered the use of their freezer to kill existing mold, keep wet records from further molding, and buy time to formulate salvage plans. This allowed the Baton Rouge diocesan archivists to work on a manageable number of boxes in an organized manner. Local companies donated supplies to help furnish our on-site conservation room. Plastic crates from Pepsi Cola® were inverted and

arranged to form a surface around which air could freely flow and the books and documents could be dried. Baton Rouge Press provided a roll of blank newsprint which was cut into sheets and interleaved between wet pages to absorb moisture.

Resourcefulness and flexibility became the norm. It seemed an overwhelming task, but the work proceeded in earnest. NEH awarded an emergency salvage grant to offset some of the costs. Dedicated students from LSU's School of Library and Information Science program and a few community volunteers were recruited to assist in the recovery efforts. The work progressed, slowly but surely, as the records of eleven church parishes were defrosted, dried, cleaned and re-housed. Over 120 sacramental books and ten cubic feet of school records were salvaged; all will be microfilmed and the books copied for future use in the parishes. The originals will be archived.

Eight months after the storm, a thorough review of the disaster response is in order. It is now apparent that more than one scenario must be considered in disaster planning: the case where the local community hosts another community which has been evacuated as well as the case where the local community itself experiences the disaster directly and has to be evacuated. Therefore, preparation plans have changed. Disaster planning has trickled down through the administration. Although some evacuation procedures existed before Katrina, it is now mandatory that pastors in evacuated areas ensure the evacuation of essential records, even if the pastor himself decides not to leave. No longer is disaster planning a mundane exercise outlined on paper destined to live out its useless days in the dark, dusty depths of someone's file cabinet. Rather, disaster planning is approached from the standpoint of what could really happen.

This archives department has been charged with the writing of a disaster plan not only for their own holdings, but also for the records of all churches within the diocese. Furthermore, all disaster planning documents are being revised from a more practical point of view. It's not just a required exercise anymore; emergency preparedness now requires the identification of real measures to aid in real-life, community changing situations that now seem all too possible.

2006 Annual Meeting Preconference Sessions:

Preconference Program #0708:

Preservation of 20th Century Visual Materials (NEW)

Monday, July 31, 2006 – Tuesday, August 1, 2006, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Instructor(s): Leslie C Shores and Tawnya Mosier

Pre-conference Program #0702:

Oral History: From Planning to Preservation

Tuesday, August 1, 2006, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Instructor(s): Fred Calabretta, Associate Curator & Oral Historian, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT

2006 Annual Meeting Sessions:

101. Institutional Approaches to Digital Recordkeeping in Government: Frameworks and Collaboration

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 9:30 AM-11:00 AM

Addresses how institutions are tackling digital recordkeeping, using tools such as ISO standards; functional and work process analysis; XML; enterprise architecture; and the OAIS "Blue Book."

106. Archives Seminar: Creating Capability for Digital Preservation Partnerships

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 9:30 AM-11:00 AM

Addresses recent work on inter-organizational collaboration and partnership development, focusing on developing capacity to manage digital content.

208. Big Bird's Digital Future: Appraisal and Selection of Public Television Programming

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 1:00 PM-2:30 PM

The Preserving Digital Public Television project is a collaboration with Thirteen in New York, WGBH in Boston, PBS, and New York University to assure that digitally produced public television programming lives into the future. This project also addresses issues of moving image digital file formats, metadata, ingest methods and repository design, selection and appraisal. This session reviews the project's work on appraisal and selection and provide an overview of the project's progress.

301. The Current State of Electronic Records Preservation

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 2:45 PM-4:15 PM

This collaborative session explores the current state of electronic records preservation. Two speakers address new research in preservation technologies and issues of scalability. Specific details of the preservation strategies and updates on the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) system are presented.

303. Planning for Sustainable Digital Programs

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 2:45 PM-4:15 PM

Managing a digital project, but want to know how to create a sustainable program? Learn how three nationally renowned institutions have planned for long-term sustainability. Speakers discuss how effective planning is needed to sustain a project beyond initial grant funding, the importance of long-term planning, and multi-faceted approaches to sustainability that combine grant funding with integration into national programs.

305. Extended Archival Description: Context and Specificity for Digital Objects

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 2:45 PM-4:15 PM

Combining and integrating metadata sets with Encoded Archival Description (EAD) further widens the possibilities for archival description. This panel presents an exploration of the potential of EAD to improve navigation throughout digital collections of cultural and heritage institutions and enhance access to their holdings.

307. CoSA Incubator Session: The “National Initiative”

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 2:45 PM-4:15 PM

The “National Initiative” is a proposed grant program resembling those supporting the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) and the Library Services and Training Act funds. It would provide funds to each state and territory through a formula based on population and geographic area. The program would help to improve the care of and access to archival records in public and private historical records repositories. Facilitators will encourage active discussion and feedback from the audience.

308. Photographic Negatives: Rethinking the Archival Image

Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 2:45 PM-4:15 PM

As archives face daunting numbers of unorganized, unidentified negatives, and as negatives increasingly give way to pixels, session panelists will attempt to rethink theoretical and practical approaches to negatives in archival institutions.

****SAA Preservation Section Meeting****

Friday, August 4, 2006 at 12:15 PM-2:15 PM

Following the annual business meeting, a FEMA representative will address on-the ground response to cultural resources affected by Katrina, and a Heritage Preservation staffer will review Heritage Health Index findings and the Heritage Emergency National Task Force response to the hurricanes. Also to be discussed: poster session and publications fair.

402. Developing Standards for Digitally Created Microfilm

Friday, August 4, 2006 at 2:30 PM-3:30 PM

Digital imaging standards are available for equipment (i.e., scanners) and image quality, yet little attempt has been made to develop standards for microfilm created from digital images. Vendors, users, and caretakers discuss the need for standards, perhaps similar to those for traditional microfilm, for this new “hybrid” microfilm process.

408. Public Records in the Electronic Age

Friday, August 4, 2006 at 2:30 PM-3:30 PM

Speakers discuss how the Washington State Archives collected records from 39 separate county recording systems and created a standard method for the public to access these records online. They also review how to enable greater access to electronic public records from multiple sources and some of the initiatives that will shape how archivists work over the next five years.

410. Use It Or Lose It: Preserving Your Digital Documents

Friday, August 4, 2006 at 2:30 PM-3:30 PM

Learn the eight fundamental challenges to preserving any digital content and nine simple strategies you can employ to increase the likelihood for survival of your digital products at work or at home. Spindler provides a basic orientation to digital preservation concepts.

503. New Challenges in Collaboration: Library and Archival Perspectives on Digital Content Management and Preservation

Friday, August 4, 2006 at 4:00 PM-5:30 PM

The panelists, who represent a variety of institutional perspectives, suggest ways in which the spectrum of information professionals can better collaborate to achieve shared goals.

508. Future Shock: Saving the Signals of Audiovisual Records

Friday, August 4, 2006 at 4:00 PM-5:30 PM

Panelists present examples of reformatting projects and discuss theoretical and practical best practices. Among the topics considered in this open forum are the efficacy of external hard drives, compressed storage, optical discs, laser discs, digital audio tape, and audio extraction by laser.

510. Archives Seminar: Possibilities and Problems of Digital History and Digital Collections

Friday, August 4, 2006 at 4:00 PM-5:30 PM

The co-authors of *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* lead a discussion of their book and, in particular, the possibilities of digital history and of collecting the past online. The discussion includes reflections on the September 11 Digital Archive and the new Hurricane Digital Memory Bank.

Plenary Session III: Disaster Preparedness and Recovery

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 8:00 AM-9:00 AM

NAGARA President Tim Slavin leads this session on the tough issues associated with Disaster Preparedness and Recovery. US Archivist Allen Weinstein discusses lessons learned in the wake of the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes.

603. Cultural Content Online: Criteria for Choosing Digitization Projects

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 9:30 AM-11:00 AM

This session explores the myriad reasons for making choices of what to digitize.

607. CoSA Incubator Session: Local Government Records

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 9:30 AM-11:00 AM

This session will be an open forum on the issues being considered during CoSA's NHPRC funded grant project, "Closer to Home: Archival Programs for Local Government Records." Task force members welcome this opportunity to hear opinions, insights, and suggestions from all attendees and to discuss next steps.

610. Must the Show Go On? Managing Digital Records of Visual and Performing Art Organizations

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 9:30 AM-11:00 AM

The speakers present InterPARES 2 findings relating to digital material produced in the course of artistic activities. Includes a discussion of guidelines for creators of digital art.

701. What I Did Last Summer: The 2005 Hurricanes' Impact on Archives, Libraries, and Museums

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 12:30 PM-2:00 PM

Representatives of three repositories present their perspectives and experiences, detailing their roles in supporting the recovery of local government records, historic sites, and private sector records; executing a disaster plan by calling in a national vendor and shipping materials for freeze drying; and managing a storage facility on lower ground and inaccessible for several days.

707. New Archival Collaborations Between Traditional Government Archives and Academic Data Archives

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 12:30 PM-2:00 PM

"Born digital" records and data are of major importance to both traditional government archives and academic data archives. Panelists discuss examples of such collaboration and offer generic recommendations about sharing archival expertise in the areas of records appraisal, digital preservation, descriptive standards, and user services.

710. We Did It and So Can You: Tackling Electronic Records Issues

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 12:30 PM-2:00 PM

This session details how the Aerospace Corporation, the International Mission Board, and the New York State Archives addressed three issues: preservation and accessibility of existing archival electronic records, standardization of electronic archiving and records management to facilitate sharing, and e-mail management.

801. How We'd Like to Spend Next Summer: The Type of Actions We Should Take to Deal with Regional Disasters in the Future

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 2:15 PM-3:45 PM

Speakers outline their ideas for dealing with the problems that are unique to regional disasters. Their suggestions could lead to specific projects in disaster preparedness preplanning and the coordinated development of approaches to response better suited to large natural disasters.

809. Emerging Digital Preservation Standards: Certification of Trusted Digital Repositories and PREMIS

Saturday, August 5, 2006 at 2:15 PM-3:45 PM

Incorporating essential preservation metadata and storing digital assets in a trusted digital repository are critical components in doing digital preservation well. Targeted at archivists engaged in digital projects, this session explores these components in detail by explaining the recently published PREMIS Data Dictionary, describing a methodology for certifying trusted digital repositories, and considering how government archives might utilize that methodology to certify their digital records programs.

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(<http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/preserv/>)

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Please consider submitting an article for the next issue of *Infinity*, Fall 2006
Deadline September 15, 2006