

The Official Word – *The Government Records Section Newsletter*

The membership of the Government Records Section is made up of individual Society of American Archivists (SAA) members who are concerned with the administration, organization, and care of the records of government.

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From the Chair

This is a challenging time to be a government archivist or records manager. Budget cuts are forcing us to defer needed purchases and investments. Some of us have witnessed or have good cause to fear layoffs or furloughs. All of us face the challenge of explaining the value of our work in an era in which the size and scope of the public sector is the subject of intense debate.

We persevere nonetheless, and why wouldn't we? In addition to working with fascinating—if not always widely appreciated—records, we have the satisfaction of knowing that our work, unglamorous as it may be, plays an integral role in upholding the rights of our fellow citizens and sustaining a free, open, and democratic society.

I realize that, owing to cuts in travel funding, some of you may not be able to come to Chicago this year. However, it's still possible to remain actively involved in Government Records Section even if attending the Annual Meeting isn't an option for you. Thanks to Charlene Johnson (North Carolina Central University), our brand-new Newsletter Editor and Webmaster, you will soon see—and be able to contribute to—a burst of Section activity online. The Government Records Section "website" will be thoroughly revamped, and you'll be able to friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and find us on LinkedIn, too. The Section will also take on a new graphical identity; for a "Sneak Preview," see page 3.

If you are planning to come to Chicago, I hope to see you at the Government Records Section annual meeting, which will be held on Thursday, August 25 from 3:30-5:30 in Room Columbus I/J of the Hyatt Regency Chicago on the Riverwalk. We'll hear from our Council liaison, Kate Theimer, learn about the Best Practices Exchange and other upcoming events of interest to government archivists, and reveal the results of the 2011 section Steering Committee elections.

We'll also vote on a couple of bylaws revisions. One of these revisions addresses an ambiguity in the current bylaws and ensures that SAA members who are employed by government archives outside of the United States have the right to serve as Steering Committee members and Section officers. The other brings Section election procedures into alignment with current SAA requirements.

In lieu of a speaker, we're going to devote the remainder of the meeting to brainstorming about the future of Government Records Section. What's good about the section, and what needs to change? How can we ensure that the section is an effective voice for the needs and concerns of government archivists within SAA? What kinds of projects should we take on? How can the section help us address the myriad challenges that we face?

If you won't be able to join us in Chicago but would like to share your thoughts on the future of the section, please feel free to drop me a line at [bweddle\[at\]mail.nysed.gov](mailto:bweddle[at]mail.nysed.gov) so that I can convey them at the meeting. Thanks!

Bonnie Weddle

2011 Government Record Section Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 25, 3:30-5:30PM, Hyatt Regency Chicago on the Riverwalk, Columbus I/J

1. Welcome from the Chair (Bonnie Weddle)

2. Introductions
3. 2012 Program Committee (TBD)
4. Report from Council liaison (Kate Theimer)
5. Announcements
 - a. 2011 Best Practices Exchange (Mark Myers)
 - b. Other (TBD)
6. 2011 Steering Committee elections (Bonnie Weddle)
7. Proposed revisions to Section bylaws (Bonnie Weddle)
8. Brainstorming the future of Government Records Section (Bonnie Weddle, facilitator)

Annual Meeting Sessions of Interest to Section Members

Session 101 - Skeletons in the Closet: Addressing Privacy and Confidentiality Issues for Born-Digital Materials
Aug 25, 2011, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM, Grand E/F

Session 104 - "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses": Documenting the History of U.S. Immigration through Records in the National Archives
Aug 25, 2011, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM, Grand C/D North

Session 107 - What Happens After "Here Comes Everybody": An Examination of Participatory Archives
Aug 25, 2011, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM, Columbus E/F

Session 207 - The Future Is Now: New Tools to Address Archival Challenges
Aug 25, 2011, 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM, Columbus E/F

Session 302 - Practical Approaches to Born-Digital Records: What Works Today (*Part 1 of 2*)
Aug 26, 2011, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM, Grand A

Session 310 - To Which We Serve: Perspectives from the Navy and Marine Corps Archives
Aug 26, 2011, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM, Columbus G/H

Session 405 - 360° Records Management: New Research into Metadata, Systems, and People
Aug 26, 2011, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM, Grand C/D South

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Annual Meeting Sessions of Interest to Section Members (Continued)

Session 409 - Geospatial Preservation: The State of the Landscape
Aug 26, 2011, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM, Columbus I/J

Session 505 - Open-Source Tools for Taming Records Management
Aug 27, 2011, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM, Grand C/D South

Session 507 - Never a Straight Road: Three Case Studies Documenting the 20th Century Development of Archives

Aug 27, 2011, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM, Columbus E/F

Session 607 - Defining National History Through National Archival Portals: Russian, German, and Taiwanese Perspectives

Aug 27, 2011, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM, Columbus E/F

Session 610 - Practical Approaches to Born-Digital Records: What's Coming Next (*Part 2 of 2*)

Aug 27, 2011, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM, Grand C/D North

Session 701 - New Perspectives for the 1940 Census

Aug 27, 2011, 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM, Grand E/F

Session 704 - The Web Is a Mess: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Web Archiving

Aug 27, 2011, 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM, Grand C/D North

Session 705 - Theft Transparency in the Digital Age: Stakeholder Perspectives

Aug 27, 2011, 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM, Grand C/D South

Session 709 - Archivists in the Midst: Collaborating with Records Creators for Early Intervention

Aug 27, 2011, 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM, Columbus I/J

A Sneak Preview

GRS

Newsletter Editor and Webmaster Charlene Johnson is currently in the midst of revamping and expanding the Section's website (which is actually one section of the larger SAA site). Our new site will provide access to information about the Section and its leadership, newsletters, links to resources of interest to government records archivists, and links to our new FaceBook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages.

It will also look quite different. Charlene, who has extensive graphic design experience, has designed a new Section logo for the Section that will serve as the centerpiece of our new graphical identity—streamlined and elegantly simple. You'll see this new identity not only on our Web site but also in the next issue of *The Official Word*, which received its last redesign (and assumed its current name) in 2006.

You'll hear—and see—more about the new website at the Section meeting on August 25 and via the Section listserv. Just to whet your appetite, here's a first look at our new logo.

Proposed Bylaws Revisions

The following revisions will be presented to the membership for adoption at the annual meeting.

*Text to be added to the bylaws is in **bold**. Text to be removed is ~~struck through~~.*

III. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall consist of the officers and four at-large members. The at-large members shall serve two-year terms, three members being elected at each annual meeting with additional members elected if for any reason unexpired terms need to be filled. The profile of the Steering Committee (excepting the newsletter editor) shall consist of two representatives of local government, two representatives of state/**provincial** government and two representatives of federal/**national** government. However, a change in status of a Steering Committee representative shall not require the removal of that member from the Committee, even if that change would lead to an uneven balance of representation. The Steering Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the chair and its members may be assigned specific responsibilities by the chair. The Steering Committee shall plan each annual meeting of the Section.

IV. Election of Officers and Steering Committee

The section shall conduct annual elections via an online ballot system provided by the Society of American Archivists.

There shall be a Nominating and Elections committee consisting of the immediate past chair of the Section (serving as chair of the Committee) and the three Steering Committee members whose terms are not expiring at the conclusion of the next annual meeting.

The Committee shall solicit from the Section members the names of volunteers or persons recommended for the positions to be filled in the next election. **Formal calls for nominations shall be collected by June 1.**

Basic ballot information (e.g., introductory message to voters, listing of offices, number of vacancies for each, names of candidates, and links to candidate statements) shall be submitted to the SAA staff by June 15.

Supplementary ballot information (e.g., candidate photos, biographies, and statements), if desired, shall be posted to the section website by July 1.

Online ballots containing basic ballot information shall be prepared by SAA staff and made accessible during the first week of July and shall remain open for at least two weeks.

Section members who are in good standing on June 30 shall be eligible to vote. Members who join after this date shall be eligible to vote during the following year.

The Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the number of nominees for membership on the Steering Committee is not less than the number of open positions. ~~The Nominating and Elections Committee shall announce the nominees to the membership of the Section in the last newsletter issued before the Annual Meeting. No additional nominations shall be proposed or accepted thereafter. If, however, the Committee did not recommend a nominee for that vacancy, nominations for that vacancy may be made from the floor at the Meeting.~~

~~Any member of the Section who is unable to attend the Annual Meeting may request an absentee ballot from the chair of the Nominating and Elections Committee; such ballots must be received by the chair of the Committee at least seven days prior to the Annual Meeting. Voting at the Annual Meeting shall be by secret ballot if there are more nominees than can be elected; only members of the Section may vote. The Nominating and Elections Committee shall be responsible for tabulating and announcing the results of the election. In the event of a tie, the Nominating and Elections committee shall do an immediate recount. If that recount verifies the tie, the election will be decided by the flip of a coin, with one of the candidates choosing heads or tails. Elected officers and Steering Committee members shall assume office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting of the Section.~~