SAA PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVES/SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ROUNDTABLE

ANNUAL MEETING – CHICAGO, ILL.

AUGUST 24, 2011

A meeting of the PLASC Roundtable was held at the Park Hyatt, Chicago, on August 24, 2011. The meeting convened at 1:05 p.m., Adrienne Pruitt, Secretary, presiding. No other members of the steering committee were able to be present.

**MEETING CONVENED**

**INITIAL REPORTS/BUSINESS**

**Introductions:**

* Adrienne Pruitt, Free Library of Philadelphia, Secretary
* Deborra Richardson, National Museum of American History, Council Liaison
* All attendees introduce themselves

**Call for session proposals:**

* Sarah Buchanan of the Program Committee, called for session proposals for next year’s annual meeting to be held in San Diego, Aug. 6-11, 2012. There will be new lightning rounds in which talks are 5 min. each. Proposals are due October 3, 2011.

**Election results:**

* **Kerrie Cotton Williams, Chair**, Archivist and Manager of the Archives division for the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History
* **Adrienne Pruitt, Secretary**, Special Collections Archivist, Free Library of Philadelphia
* **Sharon Pullen, Webmaster**, Archivist, Office of Suffolk County Clerk
* **Valerie Wingfield** and **Heather Kramer** continuing as steering committee members
* **Deborra Richardson,** continuingcouncil liaison

**Chair report:**

* Lost two members of the steering committee, Gregg Grunow and Theresa Yoder, due to budget/overwork ; we want to thank them for their service during roundtable’s formative first year. Renee DesRoberts, who founded the roundtable, taking time off to welcome her own little archivist
* Prepared for electronic elections, but the nominations were uncontested, and vacant positions filled
* Use of list-serv increased as people asked advice; hope this will continue
* Roundtable endorsed two program proposals. One of them was accepted: “Exposing Hidden Collections through Consortia and Collaboration” - on Sat. at 8 a.m.
* Operating Guidelines established to help with the creation of committees, deadlines, filling positions on the committee– more flexible than bylaws
* Future needs: virtual communication, Skype or Go-to-Meeting to connect with peers through open houses or panel discussions. Could help those wearing a lot of different and hats and with no $.
* As of Monday, 834 members on our participant list

**Committee reports:**

* Newsletter: Published this March thanks to Valerie Wingfield and Renee DesRoberts, response positive. Watch for a call for news items in the fall.
* Webpage: Gregg Grunow, our previous webmaster, added many references and resources to the roundtable’s web page, especially for genealogy. Also categories for Local History, Museum Artifact Collections, and Photograph Image Collections, so if there are very useful resources you would like added, please let us know.

**NEW BUSINESS**

* “Documenting History in Your Own Backyard” initiative discussed by Council Liaison Deborra Richardson. This is a “connecting and collecting project” designed to reach local and possibly underserved communities and help them to document and care for their own archives. How do communities self-select their history? How can they prepare their records for donation to an institution? How can this be scaled nationally? In an interview with 5 self-documenting communities, Deborra found that their needs were 1) a place to talk; 2) step -by-step “how-tos” in the vernacular, not in archivist jargon; 3) a place to see successful models of other community archives; 4) a list of larger organizations that are willing to help communities interested in self-documentation.

While Canada and the UK have good national archives portals, the U.S. does not. SHRABs and regional organizations offer some localized archival support, but a self-sustaining, consistent, national toolkit needs to be built to help under-documented communities work with their own records. It is not clear yet what this toolkit would look like – a wiki? Web portal? Participatory social media? If 20% of the population still doesn’t have internet access, this might not be so useful. Outreach to communities is important, but it’s also important not to be patronizing or dictatorial, but to build trust.

The Smithsonian “Will to Adorn” program <http://www.smithsonianconference.org/expert/exhibit-hall/cfch/> was mentioned as an example of a self-documentation project done in collaboration with a larger organization. Deborra urged the roundtable to help come up with programs, resource lists, etc., in support of this program, especially as we often work with these communities at public libraries. A call for suggestions should be sent out on the PLASC list-serv.

* *Treasures at the Museum* is a new book by Deborra Richardson that introduces the concept of archives to children in kindergarten through 4th grade. Two children go with their aunt on a tour of the Archives Center (based on the one at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History) and learn what archives are, why they’re important, and how archivists do their work. Deborra kindly passed around a copy of the book. It will be published on Sept. 7**.**

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPORT**

We were fortunate to have incoming SAA president Gregor Trinkaus-Randall with us for the meeting, and he shared with us the following:

* Council created an Annual Meeting task force to look at issues like site selection, social responsibility, accessibility, costs, and content sharing. Volunteers are being sought. The deadline to volunteer is Sept. 26. The task force is expected to make its final report in Oct. 2013.
* A working group on the *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* was created.
* The World Intellectual Property Organization is meeting in Nov. 2011 and SAA (specifically, Peter Hirtle) is requesting observer status. There is only one other archivist, a representative from the International Council on Archives, attending. WIPO treaty actions are binding to US archivists, so we need representation!
* SAA endorsed OCLC’s “Well-Intentioned Practice for Putting Digitized Collections of Unpublished Materials Online.”
* Two new awards were created: the Diversity Award and the Emerging Leader Award.
* A certified parliamentarian has been engaged to review the SAA constitution, bylaw, and amendments. Some inconsistencies were found that will be dealt with at the business meeting. Voting procedures will also be dealt with at the business meeting.
* Mark Greene shared with council a plea for assistance from a Japanese colleague in dealing with their badly damaged records. Council is exploring ways to help, including lifting copyright from the new Ritzenthaler volume on preservation for easier distribution to Japanese archivists.
* Reminded us of the distinction between sections (established by council, specific structure) and roundtables (bottom-up, no limits on membership). Sections are eligible for a/v assistance at meetings, and roundtables weren’t. New decision is that if a roundtable can make a compelling case for a/v assistance and present it to council by April 1st, the proposal will be forwarded for evaluation to the finance committee and may be funded.
* Vendor emails, a contentious subject, were discussed. Vendors were given a one-time use of the membership database. You can opt out of this when you renew your membership, but that also drops you from all SAA email announcements. Council is looking at the possibility of creating an attendees-only email list at the time of registration next year.
* **Deadlines:** Updated leadership info is due to Renee Mueller by Sept. 12. Program proposals are due Oct. 3rd, and roundtable endorsements are due Oct. 17. Roundtable annual reports should include activities and questions for council related to SAA’s strategic priorities. Annual reports are due Dec. 1. Any recommendations for Council action are due to liaison on Dec. 28. If we want a short description of next year’s roundtable meeting in the program, it is due on Feb. 13, 2012. The deadline to let Brian know if we want electronic voting is June 1, 2013 ; basic ballot info is due June 15, supplementary info July 1.
* In November or December, a call for volunteers will go out from SAA. Last year, some volunteers not chosen for positions didn’t receive official notification letters until the chosen had already been announced. Council will work to rectify this.

**PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT**

* Kathy Marquis, Public Services Librarian at the Albany Country Public Library, and Leslie Waggener, Archivist at the American Heritage Center, spoke about a book proposal they have been asked to submit to ALA on the subject of historical collections in public libraries. The book will in some ways be an extension of an article they published earlier this year, “Historical Collections - Is Adding One Right For Your Public Library?” in *Public Librarian*, Vol. 50, No. 2, March/April 2011. They will also be presenting a session along with Mary Mannix at the annual meeting of the Public Library Association in 2012. There are two usable options in public history rooms: fully developed archival collections, and historical collections of primarily printed materials. The book’s focus will be on the latter. They asked the roundtable to please contact them with comments, suggestions, and possible chapters. They will also send the Table of Contents to the roundtable list-serv for comments and discussion. The last book on this topic was done by Faith Phillips in 1994.

**OPEN DISCUSSION**

* Metrics:How many public libraries employ archivists? Suggestions included looking at how federal funders track grants by institution type - this might help with a census on funding and census of institutions
* Representatives of NEH, NHRPC, and IMLS encouraged us to visit their booths in the exhibition hall to learn more about funding opportunities.

There being no other new business, the meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Special thanks to Caitlin Goodman and Eric Fair for their assistance in the compilation of the minutes.