

Council Minutes

*September 1, 1998
Walt Disney Dolphin Hotel
Orlando, Florida*

Tuesday, September 1

President William Maher called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, September 1, 1998. Present were Vice President Luciana Duranti, incoming Vice President Thomas Hickerson, Treasurer Robert Sink, and Council members Valerie Browne, Bruce Bruemmer, Fynnette Eaton, Anne Gilliland-Swetland, Peter Hirtle, Karen Jefferson, and Helen Tibbo. Also present were incoming Council members Jane Kenamore, Dennis Harrison, Wilda Logan Willis and Executive Director Susan Fox. Absent: Lori Hefner and Sharron Uhler.

Adoption of the Agenda

Bruemmer moved and Hirtle seconded adoption of the agenda as amended. PASSED.

Approval of the Minutes

Eaton moved and Tibbo seconded approval of the minutes as amended. PASSED.

Report of the Executive Committee

Bruemmer reported on electronic votes taken via the Council listserv. Maher called for a vote on July 25, 1998 relating to a statement on National Archives and Records Administration facilities. Having received an electronic quorum, Maher moved and Sink seconded the motion to adopt the position statement on the NARA Space Plan. The motion passed unanimously. The Executive Committee approved an educational conference to take place prior to the 1999 SAA annual meeting in Pittsburgh with the understanding that the conference may conflict with the Council meeting but not with program offerings. The Executive Committee also approved a statement on the NARA Electronic Records Working Group and forwarded the statement to the National Archives.

Report of the President

Maher gave an update on plans for a Graduate Archival Educators Conference preceding the 1999 annual meeting. He said that Beth Yakel and Richard Cox, with cooperation from the Universities of Michigan and Western Ontario, received funding from a private foundation to support expenses to hold such a conference. Yakel approached SAA to request that the Society become formally associated with the conference. In consultation with Council, Maher responded that SAA would be willing to do so but within certain parameters. Concerns included a request that organizers not hold the conference on the same day as the Council meeting and whether or not the conference would be of limited or open attendance. Organizers assured Maher that the meeting would be open to all graduate archival educators as well as Ph.D. students.

Duranti moved that SAA should be directly involved in graduate archival education not merely by issuing guidelines but also by organizing conferences. She said this type of conference should occur under the SAA umbrella, not by independent entities. She recommended that Council ask the Committee on Education and Professional Development (CEPD) to look into the matter and make recommendations.

Jefferson suggested putting the issue into the new strategic plan. She questioned who the motion was for. Maher said the purpose of the motion was to inform the Society that SAA should take a leadership role in informing graduate archival education. Then the issue could be turned over to CEPD to look into ways to insure that SAA had an active role in working with graduate archival educators in the future. Once the motion was adopted the Society could incorporate the concept into the strategic plan as an element of a goal. He said SAA should be involved in an active way in advancing the field of graduate archival education.

Gilliland-Swetland said that one thing SAA could do would be to look at the whole educational environment. This would include support for and encouragement of research agendas, tenure track process, as well as nurturing graduate archival education. She was concerned that universities were pulling and pushing against each other, causing an unhealthy development.

Hirtle expressed unease at the prospect of SAA taking over the subject matter. If he were the organizers of the proposed Pittsburgh conference, he would interpret Council's proposed action as an attempt to take over the conference. He preferred a much broader approach as articulated by Gilliland-Swetland.

Duranti stressed that archival education was a part of the SAA mission and should be strongly supported. Gilliland-Swetland said that one of the reasons this conference occurred was because archival educators were frustrated that SAA was not proactive. She said there existed a strong danger that archival educators would pull away and form their own association.

Maher said that after the Pittsburgh conference there needed to be a series of next steps, which should come from the SAA leadership.

Maher then reminded Council that he had questioned whether or not the Task Force on Organizational Effectiveness definitions of Committees, Board, and Representatives had been formally approved. A review of the minutes revealed that they had been and that Fox would incorporate them into the Council Handbook.

Report of the Vice President

Duranti reported completing all appointments.

Report of the Treasurer

Sink reviewed FY98 actual figures. While the budget year concluded with a small surplus, he said, the Society was still stalled in adding to the reserve fund. The FY98 contribution equaled less than .5% although Council policy is to cover six months' reserve. SAA's present reserves covered 21 weeks.

Hirtle reminded Council of an earlier discussion, initiated by Lori Hefner, that that the six month reserve policy may be too high, and three months might be better. He inquired whether Council should consider formally changing the reserve policy. Fox said it would be better to discuss the issue at the winter Council meeting with the auditor's report.

Maher suggested that if Council were to consider changing the level of reserves it should do so in relation to SAA income and expense and in relation to the market. He reminded Council that SAA expanded its programs in the early 90s due to grant income and robust publications sales.

Executive Director's Report

Fox presented a proposal to upgrade the SAA website. She reminded Council that the iteration currently on the web was always meant to be a temporary place holder and solely a means to establish the Society's presence. The proposed upgrade would revamp the site's architecture, develop templates for content, and incorporate interactive elements such as order processing, meeting registration, and membership database interaction. Browne moved and Tibbo seconded the motion to authorize Fox to allocate \$3,333 each from the Education, Publications, and Norton special projects funds to subsidize the upgrade. PASSED.

Bruemmer said that the death knell to any website occurred when it was not dynamic and contained outdated information. Duranti said it was a new service for SAA, but one that must continue. She said that all activities in the office would need to be given a very hard look in order to prioritize funding. Maybe SAA needed to cease certain activities. If it is necessary to open a new expense, Council would have to close another. She said she would rather have a few things done well. It may be that the Society could drop activities which are no longer useful or which have been superceded by technology.

Eaton said the member survey should help gauge views on the website. She thought it was essential for the Society to have one. The member survey may identify other areas which may be dropped. Tibbo said that technology is expensive, more so than print communication was in the past. She suggested it may be possible to cut back on some print materials.

Hirtle said that all agreed that the web was important and that updating it a priority. He said the question at hand was whether in this instance to subsidize the upgrade from special funds but then to incorporate future upgrades into the budget. Fox said that was her intended aim.

Maher said he was uneasy about Council not having adopted a policy for handling the special project funds. He said the Society ran the risk of pulling out all the gains made in investments from more robust markets. Making the decision without a policy for funds struck him as risky. He agreed with the need to incorporate the website into regular budget planning. Fox reiterated that this was a one-time request, much like a down payment on a house. All future work would be incorporated into the budgetary cycle. Maher requested that at the end of the current budget cycle Fox report back on savings or gains made from the web, if any.

Fox gave an update on the new software system, reporting that this would take top priority for all staff upon return from the annual meeting. All staff would engage in intensive training in October and November and the goal was to have the new system live by the first of the new year.

Fox gave a brief report on the American Archivist and Publications editors review process, saying that she would be meeting with the Editorial Board and the Publications Committee to elicit feedback on their evaluation.

Fox said that Brinati and Sander would join Council later in the afternoon to give Publications and Education Office reports.

Due to the fact that it was close to time for a conference call Fox suspended her report.

Conference Call with John Carlin

Maher thanked Carlin for taking the time to meet with Council via the conference call. Carlin apologized for the fact he could not be there in person, and said he hoped to meet with Council in person in Pittsburgh. He said that Lew Bellardo was unable to make the call due to pressing business with the Executive Branch. He introduced Lori Lisowski as participating in Bellardo's absence.

He said he was grateful for the time and energy SAA devoted to developing a position paper on the NARA Space Plan. He said it would be helpful to NARA to have the guidance, and it clearly shows SAA to be a partner on the issue. He said NARA recently completed a round of 19 public meetings with a cross section of participation. The challenge now would be to get a better read on not just people the agency was now serving but also on those they did not serve very well. He said NARA needed more access for more people in order to be successful.

He said the GRS20 issue had become a procedural problem due to the court becoming involved and therefore controlling the time line. On the one hand the Electronic Records Working Group (ERWG) was just wrapping up and now he was starting an intense review of next steps. The ERWG had done a good job, worked hard, laid out a broad set of options and choices. It looked like the next steps would involve a process of narrowing choices rather than trying to invent something new. He said his decision would be based on what was one, archivally sound; two, consistent with the judge's orders; and three, sensitive to the agencies -- not to burden them with something they would not want to be burdened with and therefore would not carry out.

Hirtle said he was pleased to hear there were plans for another Electronic Records Working Group to follow on the work of the first. He asked if the next group would again have outside consultants and if so, would he rely on their services on voluntary basis or would he reimburse?

Carlin said he would not allow the next working group to exist without the benefit of outside help. He said he needed to take a serious look at funding consultants and that would certainly be a topic of conversation.

Maher asked for elaboration on the deadlines and process involved.

Carlin said that the only way to have a sane conclusion to the process was not to wait until the judge's deadline to act. He was impressed with the broad input from the archival community. Some of the work involved occurred in terms of making decisions as an internal process and that it was important to bring in others to take a fresh look. He said he would have to decide what he is comfortable with in going forward at this time. The challenge for the internal ERWG folks was to give him more help in assessing the comments. NARA does not carry a huge club and he would need to factor in agency concerns. He said he wanted to conclude the process within three weeks, and get a report to the judge in time to give him a chance to respond. The judge had been reasonable in allowing time and flexibility. The more NARA worked cooperatively with him the better chance he had of continued cooperation.

Maher requested that Carlin let Fox and SAA know conclusions as soon as feasible. Carlin said he certainly would, that he wanted SAA to have the opportunity to comment. In order to have sound archival policy it would be important to have SAA input.

Hirtle said it was exciting to see comments from SAA members attending the NARA Space Planning meetings. He noted that the Society succeeded in having either a member or a Council member attend nearly all the meetings. He said that NARA was discussing issues all archivists face and therefore it would be able to set a direction for the entire profession. He was concerned that there were archivists opposed to the closings, and that regionals had spoken out against the plan. When SAA comes out with a position, the Society would need to have very good information in order to make a judgement. What were the standards for archival facilities, especially in relation to Archives I, and why were the presidential libraries also not included in the plan? He suggested that Carlin make clear that the presidential library funds are untouchable. He said this sort of information needed to be communicated to the profession so that SAA could properly defend a decision, once made.

Carlin admitted he had not necessarily communicated in the most perfect fashion. He said the agency was doing the best it could and that he appreciated Hirtle identifying areas where there were shortfalls. He said Archives I got out of sync because of the charters. The preservation committee discovered a few years ago that if the agency did not do something about the re-encasement issue in seven years, they would face a problem which would lead to an impact on the charters themselves. That crisis kicked off

working with Congress on how to deal with Archives I. He said they would not be able to renovate the Rotunda without kicking in the Americans with Disabilities Act and other facility needs.

He said it would take a long time to deal with Congress on Archives I needs because of the large amount of funding it would take. Some people have suggested that NARA should conduct a cost analysis to see if it would be cheaper for Archives I to move elsewhere. However, from a practical point of view being on the mall with the charters is a good PR tool to raise funds in the private and public sector. Although it is costly, it is one of the best investments they could make.

He conceded he needed to get the message out more clearly regarding presidential libraries. He said they did not have a space problem; they were built with private funds. The goal was to have archival and pre-archival records under control in facilities comparable to those of the presidential library system.

Maher asked Carlin to refresh his memory about any public statements NARA would issue coming out of the series of public meetings. Carlin said they had a lot more research to do. In contrast to the GRS20 issue, NARA had some control of the timing. He did not have a set deadline and would work until he received the information he needed before proceeding. Action would be on the records side first. He said he would include much more communication with SAA as the planning moved ahead.

Maher asked if there were any updates on issues relating to declassification. Carlin said that NARA was addressing the issue behind the scenes. He said things had changed dramatically in NARA's favor within the past two weeks. He was following the issue closely; NARA had a lot at stake whether or not the Executive Order would work or continue to work. He said he and his administration were in daily contact with the Department of Energy, and the Department of Defense, and the Clinton administration.

Maher thanked Carlin for his time.

Council Committee on Committees

Committee chairs reported that Kenamore would serve on the Council Committee on Boards, Task Forces, and Representatives, Harrison on the Council Committee on Sections and Roundtables, and Willis on the Council Committee on Committees.

Browne introduced a change in guidelines for the Coker Award as proposed by Alfred Lemmon, chair of the Awards Committee. Browne moved and Duranti seconded the motion that Council accept the recommendations of the Coker Award Subcommittee to replace the word "holdings" with "projects" so that the paragraph would read: "Works and activities must involve projects located primarily in North America." PASSED.

Eaton discussed a proposal from the Technical Subcommittee on Descriptive Standards. Bruemmer said this brought up an issue of what Council's obligations are to provide liaisons with subcommittees and other units. He suggested there might be a danger of creating a bureaucracy and a drain on resources. He preferred to have subcommittees report through their parent committee, especially if it involved requests for funding. The sense of Council was that this was the preferred reporting mechanism and instructed Eaton to communicate to the Standards Committee that its subcommittee reports did not have to be reviewed by Council unless the Standards Committee thought it contained an issue needing Council action.

Sander joined the meeting to discuss a proposal for distance education. She first noted that for the first time in over five years the annual meeting workshops would exceed their income projections by \$5,000. She then presented her proposal for an on-line distance education course in electronic records. She said she saw it as a way to capture a segment of membership she had previously been unable to reach, those who cannot afford to travel. She requested Council approval of a test course which would require \$10,000 from the Education Fund to develop the course. She reminded Council that she had received approval in June 1997 to expend \$15,000 for self-study booklets which remained unexpended due to her personal leave. Upon return from her leave she found the SAA website presented a better option and therefore requested to use the original funding for this purpose.

Gilliland-Swetland recommended engaging in additional training for course instructors because of the different nature of this type of instruction. She inquired about contact time with students. Sander said she was in contact with IACET which had guidelines regarding contact hours.

Tibbo suggested that what Sander proposed was not a workshop but a course. Sander said that the course would involve asynchronous learning and that six weeks was generally accepted by continuing education programming as equivalent to a two-day workshop.

Maher suggested incorporating a feedback loop into the plan, including CEPD, and coming back to Council in January with a mechanism to incorporate the loop.

Tibbo moved and Browne seconded the motion to accept Sander's request for \$10,000 from the Education Fund to develop an online course. PASSED.

Hirtle reported that the College and University Archives Section would be sending a revision of the C&U Archives guidelines (originally passed in 1979) to the Standards Committee for approval and vote. The C&U Section did not know that the guidelines needed Standards Committee approval. Hirtle noted that ten years ago the then Standards Board published a brochure on how to get a standard passed in the Society and clearly there was the need to re-issue a similar brochure.

Hirtle then introduced a communication from the Science, Technology & Health Care Roundtable regarding medical records privacy legislation. The main issue of concern was that proposed legislation did not make provision for historical research and contained no limitation to privacy strictures. He suggested that it would be good to develop a one-page position paper containing the archival perspective on privacy issues and to begin our lobbying on the issue early.

Maher expressed one concern with the document, which he said was an excellent example of the kind of work SAA units need to do to inform Council on issues of concern to the profession. He thought the presentation leaned too heavily in the direction of privacy issues. He asked Hirtle to clarify with the Science, Technology & Healthcare Roundtable that what Council needs is not strictly privacy issues, but an element that allows for accessibility under appropriate circumstances.

Council Committee on Task Forces, Boards, and Representatives

Bruemmer said he expected an RFP to explore possible outsourcing of the American Archivist by the end of the annual meeting.

Bruemmer said that the Awards Committee was redrafting guidelines for the Jameson Award subcommittee in light of dissolution of the Public Information Committee. He proposed that the guidelines be submitted to Council at the winter meeting.

Proposed SAA Archival Listserv

Bruemmer said SAA would need to find another site for the Archives and Archivists listserv. Although he had reached an initial agreement with Weston Thompson to serve as list moderator, his institution, the University of Kentucky, recently instituted a freeze on hosting electronic mail lists. Bruemmer said he was searching for a new home for the list and that he was fairly confident he could press some university into service.

Fox reviewed position descriptions for Council and Officers, stating that she thought those contained within the Council Handbook suited the purpose well. Eaton said that for the purposes of the Nominating Committee the descriptions would need slight revision to include the amount of time and resources needed of individual members when serving in leadership positions. Eaton offered to work with Fox on creating a set of descriptions for Nominating Committee use.

NARA GRS20

Duranti said that because she was a member of NARA's GRS20 working group she would not be able to participate in the discussion at hand. Eaton expressed appreciation for the work of Hirtle and Gilliland-Swetland with her on the issue. She said the final document contained both specifics and general concepts, although it was difficult to complete the task in August with so many people on vacation.

Maher said that what made the process particularly difficult was the imposition of a court-imposed deadline. SAA was fortunate to have three individuals tasked to complete the document because the Federal Register was particularly dense. He said Council would need to consider whether or not it needed to be prepared for the next step in the process. Duranti asked Hickerson to take responsibility if the need for a response arose while she was out of the country. Hickerson agreed.

NARA Space Planning Study

Maher said he assumed Council read the list-serv reports on regional hearings. He said that with the conclusion of the hearings Council was in a wait-and-see position until the next working group sent out a call for additional comments.

Teresa Brinati joined the meeting and gave a brief statistical report on the Publications Program. Maher thanked her for her thoroughness and good work.

Proposal to Reorganize Council

Bruemmer presented a proposal to reorganize Council. Following on the work of the Task Force on Organizational Effectiveness, Bruemmer found that "most [Council members] believed that assigning one Council member to each of over 80 membership units did not meet the expectations of the Sections and Roundtables and was an ineffective and inequitable method of communication. Often officers and Councilors lost track of Council assignments, Councilors found it impossible to attend all the

meetings of their units at annual meetings, and unforeseen circumstances affecting any one Councilor meant that eight to nine units went unrepresented."

Bruemmer proposed that Council disband its present subcommittee structure and replace it with three new committees: Committee on Education and Standards, Committee on Programs and Publications, and a Committee on Representation. He noted that "disbanding the Subcommittee on Sections and Roundtables is a significant change... the change will focus Councilors' time and effort more effectively, and will enable the President to assign Councilors to issues that will involve many membership units."

Jefferson expressed agreement with the proposal. She said communication had improved with the institution of the leadership listserv and with the leadership luncheon, which allowed more opportunity for members to interact with Council. Eaton said that it was useful to draw units into issues under Council consideration and that Council should continue that practice. She suggested developing a taxonomy of issues to identify who should follow up, in other words formalize the process.

Hirtle said he was unconvinced. While acknowledging that communication had not been working, he felt it was because Council was not aggressive enough in contacting units. Council sometimes took actions without first consulting the units. He noted that for the past few years there had been a perception that Council does not value Sections and Roundtables. If Council took away even the pretense of having representation to them, then the action could be construed as reinforcing that perception.

Maher agreed with Hirtle. Hickerson said in his experience Council representation varied from Section to Section and Roundtable to Roundtable. He said he saw a real desire on the part of units for some sense of connection with the governing body. He did not view the fact that under the proposed plan they would be able to approach any member of Council as positive. He suggested harder thinking about alternative communication mechanisms.

Browne suggested that all of Council be assigned one Section or Roundtable. Willis asked if it would be possible to have the chairs of Sections and Roundtables meet with Council before Council meetings. Hirtle described earlier attempts to hold a similar meeting and challenges contained within. Hickerson said he proposed something very similar last year.

Bruemmer moved that his proposal be communicated broadly, have Council revisit the issue at its Winter meeting after gathering input from the leadership list, the leadership luncheon, and other venues. Hirtle seconded. PASSED.

Browne presented a revised charge for the Council Committee on Representatives. After a brief discussion Browne moved and Duranti seconded the motion that Council adopt the proposed guidelines for the structure and function of the Council Committee on Representatives. PASSED.

Status of Copyright Legislation

Maher gave a status report on the Digital Millennium Copyright Bill and the fact that copyright extension issues may be incorporated into it. Hirtle suggested that Council develop a resolution opposing copyright extension to be presented to membership at the business meeting. Eaton then moved and Bruemmer seconded the motion that Council request Hirtle and Maher to draft a resolution opposing the extension of the term of copyright for another 20 years, including support for fair use. PASSED.

Hiss Status Report

Maher reminded Council of a resolution passed at the winter meeting to sign on as a co-plaintiff to the suit in support of releasing Grand Jury records related to Alger Hiss. Maher said that Public Citizen, the lead plaintiffs, were moving quickly toward filing the case. Members of the Executive Committee received copies of the draft affidavit. The Executive Committee was in the process of reviewing the materials. He discussed the desirability of identifying distinguished archivists to write affidavit in support of the case.

Duranti questioned whether SAA should be involved, and suggested that it might be better to open the issue to individual member comment. Hirtle said that it was an unfortunate fact that much of present day archival policy was made in the courts.

Hickerson questioned the jurisprudence that may possibly be a position archivists may not be comfortable with. Sink said he was unsatisfied with the affidavit's addressing the issue of access.

The concluding sense of Council was to ask Hefner to continue working on the issue, as she offered, with the assistance of Hickerson, Hirtle, and Kenamore.

Strategic Planning

Tibbo introduced two documents, "SAA's Strategic Plan 2000" which she authored, and Gilliland-Swetland's "Framework for SAA's Strategic Plan 2000."

Duranti suggested holding Planning Day at the winter Council meeting, rather than in its traditional slot in June.

Bruemmer expressed concern with the process and whether or not it would be possible to gain full participatory buy-in within the short time line of completing the plan by August 1999. Duranti suggested Council members develop a list of goals, share them on the listserv for comment, and begin the process with discussion on the Leadership Luncheon to be held later in the week. Then, she said, by January Council would have the raw material from which to work.

Bruemmer said that he thought the strategic plan should be distilled into a very basic and manageable set of goals, no more than three or four. Duranti cautioned that while the Society may identify three or four strategic goals that would not mean that it would not accomplish anything else. It was not a zero sum game.

Maher said he would be more comfortable if Council would call it Goals 2000 instead of a strategic plan, making it into a vision statement or a short-term strategic plan.

Duranti suggested Council write a one-page synopsis of what the Society does well and what should be continued, then on another page list goals and activities the Society was not achieving with a time line for accomplishing those by 2003.

Council then examined the SAA mission in light of four functions: advocacy, education, information, and service. Some suggested goals included: promotion of archives and archivists, internationalization of the Society, focus on pre-employment education and developing a forum for graduate archival educators. Duranti advocated fund-raising and development, and research involvement. Maher expressed the need to build membership. He said the Society needed stronger and more vibrant representation from younger membership in order to elicit the same commitment exhibited by the older members. Hickerson saw a need for SAA to play a role in public advocacy of professional policy and principles. Eaton acknowledged a need to promote diversity.

Council agreed that the interim process would involve four steps: first, elicit feedback on strategic planning from the leadership luncheon; second, have Council take notes and report via the listserv; third, draft a preliminary document for presentation on the leadership listserv; third, engage in a cycle of feedback from members; and fourth, arrive at the winter Council meeting with a rough cut of possible goals for deeper discussion.

Communiqué re Associate Member Change in Status

Maher reported on a letter he sent to Hilary Kaplan in response to an earlier letter to him from her regarding the 1997 business meeting vote to change the status of Associate members. He said his sense of Kaplan's desired outcome was to have a Council reversal of the business meeting decision. He said the issue may arise again at future business meetings. He referred the communiqué to the Task Force on Dues and Member Benefits.

He then thanked Council for a very good year. He said it was a rewarding experience to work with such a fine group of people.

Sink read the To-Do list.

The meeting adjourned at 5:56.