



THE SOCIETY of
AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

The ACADEMIC ARCHIVIST

*The Newsletter of the College and University Archives
Section of the Society of American Archivists*

Vol 16, No. 1 Spring/Summer 1999

PITTSBURGH!

As we prepare for our Pittsburgh business meeting on August 26th at 8:00am, it's a good time to recap activities and decisions made at our last meeting in the hot, muggy and very surreal Orlando. This issue of the *Academic Archivist* will also highlight programs of interest to College & University Archives section members.

MEETING TIMES:

Steering Committee Meets

The College & University Archives Section Steering Committee meets on Wednesday, August 25th between 1:00-3:00pm. Please see your Annual Meeting program for specific location information.

Section Meeting

The College and University Section will meet from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Thursday, August 26th. Please see your Annual Meeting program for the specific location.

WE NEED YOU!!!

To be an active member of this Section. The **Vice Chair** position is open and we are seeking candidates who are interested in serving in this exciting spot. Your primary responsibility is the production of the Section's newsletter, *The Academic Archivist*. You will also work with the Chair and Steering Committee members on issues of interest to the Section.

Come On, See the World, Get Involved!!

Contact Bill Massa, (Yale University), Carole Prietto (University of Washing at St. Louis) or Nanci A. Young (Smith College) **ASAP** if you are interested in running for the position, or can suggest potential nominees.

FROM THE CHAIR:

The academic calendar is my chronological year. Having been involved in the academic world for much more than half my life, I have always felt that the beginning of the year is when the school term starts. The end of the school term was the end of the year. Summer is a break, a hiatus. So, we are coming to the end of the year and even though summer is not really a quiet time in the Archives, I still look forward to it as a respite.

This year I must plan for the SAA meeting to be held in Pittsburgh late in the summer. It will come at a very bad time as the academic year starts at the same time as the meeting. At my university, I have many ongoing projects with numerous professors and generally I will talk to classes about what we do in Archives, how we identify significant historic documents, and how to preserve documents. That is followed by archival projects with several classes. Therefore, the beginning of the school year is a busy time.

The Conference in Pittsburgh, August 23-29 with the theme "Meeting the Challenge of Contemporary Records," promises to be an exciting time. Certainly as we move toward the new millennium we will be facing tasks of monumental proportions. For those of us old enough to be focused on saving paper documents, we wonder, will we be able to

move fast enough, and learn enough to keep what we should keep?

I hope to see all of you in Pittsburgh. The Steering Committee will meet from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, August 25, 1999. We will have at least two new openings on that Committee. If you want to become involved please e-mail me at kacah00@tamuk.edu. If you can, plan to attend the Steering Committee meeting.

The College and University Section will meet from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Thursday, August 26th. I hope to see all of you there. We have been asked to consider a Strategic Plan for the 21st Century. This seems like such an extraordinary task, I hope that we can count on many of you for assistance.

Business Meeting Agenda

August 26th, 8:00am -10:00am

- a) Call to Order
- b) Approval of September 1998 minutes
- c) Report by Chair:
- d) Report by Vice Chair
- e) Report of Nominating Committee
- f) Report by 2000 Meeting Planning Committee
- g) Report by Council Liaison
- h) Study/Discussion Groups
- i) Adjournment

Minutes of the C&U Section Meeting, September 4, 1998

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Jackie Esposito (Penn State University) at 8:35a.m. The minutes of the

Chicago, IL meeting held on August 30, 1997 were read and approved.

Jackie announced that the SAA statement on Digital Copyright was available on the SAA website at: <http://www.archivists.org>; announced that the C&U Guidelines have been forwarded to Council for review; that the C&U Strategic Plan for the 21st century needed to be completed. In addition, she asked how best we could use the C&U homepage located on the SAA website to improve communications between the Steering Committee and members-at-large. She put out a call for volunteers for the Steering Committee reminding the membership that active involvement makes a better Section. She also announced that on behalf of the Section she would be send to Council a letter of recognition for John Harlan's work as the Archives Listserv creator and moderator.

Additional announcements were made concerning the time of Office Hours at the Annual Meeting, and for a workshop conducted by Helen Samuels at the forthcoming CASE meeting in Seattle in September.

Jackie announced that the Task Force on Annual Meeting was recommending that future meetings be negotiated with earlier meeting dates in mind. The C&U archivists continue to be vocal in expressing their concern that the Annual meeting dates coincide with the opening of the academic year and put a majority of the membership at a disadvantage, as they are unable to come to the Annual Meeting. This concern seems finally to have been heard by SAA Council. She also announced that the Birmingham meeting in 2002 starts on August 19, a

significantly earlier date than all other meetings. Other announcements included SAA's intent to conduct an electronic survey of membership needs and assessments.

Nanci A. Young (Smith College) presented the Vice Chair report. The newsletter continues to prove difficult to put out without the contributions of the membership, and therefore has become irregular in its production. She asked for volunteers to act as liaisons for topical subjects, and regional organizations. She suggested that a subcommittee in the future take a look at the nature of the way information is exchanged in the Section to determine whether or not there are more suitable avenues to provide information to the membership. She suggested using the C&U homepage as a potential point of information exchange.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by William Massa (Yale University) gave its report. Due to a misreading of the Section By-laws, Jackie Esposito was required to withdraw her candidacy for another term of Chair of the Section. She did so quite graciously. The only nominee for the position was Cecilia Hunter (Texas A&M, Kingsville). Nominations were sought from the floor. There were none. Votes were taken and Cecilia Hunter proclaimed the Chair-elect for the Section.

Margaret Merrick (University of Louisville) spoke on behalf of the 1999 Program Committee and gave deadlines for program proposals.

Jackie gave brief overviews of SAA Council activities, including up-dates on the Task Force on Membership & Dues; the Task Force on Annual Meeting; and the Task

Force on Diversity. Activity reports of the task forces may be found on the SAA website and reported in issue of *Archival Outlook*.

The floor was opened for announcements and new business. Rob Spindler (University of Arizona) announced that there will be a White Paper pre-conference on preservation and access issues to be held in the Fall of 1999. Roland Baumann (Oberlin College) announced the formation of the "Electronic Oberlin Group" similar to the Dublin Core Group. Tom Frusciano (Rutgers University) asked whether or not the Steering Committee could review the C&U By-laws with an eye to changing the term limits of the Chair to either a) serve a longer term, or b) allow the re-election of the Chair to a second term. He also suggested that a committee look into making the Vice-Chair position made into a Chair-elect position. This would allow for continuity in the operations of the Section. The present system does not appear to be working as well as it once had. Jackie asked if Tom would be willing to write his concerns to the Steering Committee and then they could begin to review the process and make recommendations to the general membership.

At this time the meeting was turned over to the leaders of the breakout sessions:

- 1) Care and Feeding of Vertical Files, led by Susan Harrison (College of St. Benedict).
- 2) University Archives: Active or Passive Collecting?, Led by Nancy Turner (Ball State)
- 3) Creating an Archives Web Site, led by Burt Altman (Florida State University)

- 4) Documenting Off/On Campus Student Activism, led by Margaret Merrick (University of Louisville)
- 5) Cooperative Relationship Between Archives and Outside Organizations, led by Larry Wagenaar (Hope College)
- 6) Managing Electronic Records, led by Phil Bantin (Indiana University--Bloomington).

Reports were made by the scribes of the breakout sessions for the interest of all attending. Written reports are available in this issue of the *Academic Archivist*.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34a.m.

Reported by Nanci A. Young, Smith College.

RETHINKING TERMS OF SECTION OFFICERS

From Tom Frusciano, University Archivist at Rutgers University, NJ.

"Several years ago when I was chair of the College and University Archives Section and Nanci A. Young was vice-chair, we debated extending the terms of officers from two to three years. Our feeling then was that two years was not enough time for the section leadership to really accomplish goals and objectives of the section. I believe that this circumstance still exists and would like the C&U Section Steering Committee to discuss this issue.

Another factor in my request is that the number of archivists willing to run for office has been rather dismal. I served on the nominating committee with Bill Massa, and the response to Bill's request

for candidates was limited, to say the least. Perhaps an extension of the term of office would help this situation.

It is my understanding that any proposed amendment to the bylaws requires it to be introduced and discussed with the steering committee, then presented to members-at-large during the section meeting and through the Academic Archivist. Please consider this a formal request for further discussion."

A note from Nanci: As a member of the C&U Section who has served as Vice-Chair twice, I can confirm Tom's thoughts that a two-year term can be a disservice to the section. The learning curve is such that once your officers begin to feel comfortable with the process and their advocacy role, its time to move on. Serving as an officer for the C&U Section is a great challenge, given the time constraints placed on us by all of our constituencies. To add another round of paperwork and time to the thinly sliced pie is difficult, to say the least.

I would put forth two ideas for the membership to consider, and then ask for discussion at our upcoming Section meeting: 1) extend the terms of the offices of Chair and Vice Chair to at least three years, or 2) have the Vice-Chair become a "Chair-elect" position. Both of these ideas allow for a longer period of sustained leadership for the Section, and provide more opportunities and commitment for those willing to serve the longer terms. Your input is vital to the Section. Please bring your thoughts and concerns to members of the Steering Committee and to this discussion in August.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM!!! Sessions of C&U Interest

There are many sessions at this year's Annual Meeting of interest to or are being presented by C&U Section members including (to name a few):

"Developing Strategies for Managing Electronic Records within Academic Institutions."

"Getting the Job Done: Project Management for Archivists."

"Documenting the Duderstadt Presidency at the University of Michigan."

"Records Schedules: They Aren't Just for Records Managers Anymore."

"Recent Developments in Copyright Law: Overview and Impact."

Many more sessions of interest are in the Annual Meeting program!

Remember When?

In Orlando we proved that not all great things had a Disney© trademark. Our 6 great discussion break-out groups included:

1. Care and Feeding of Vertical Files.
2. University Archives: Active or Passive Collecting?
3. Creating an Archives Website
4. Documenting Off/On Campus Student Activism
5. Cooperative Relationships Between Archives and Outside Organizations
6. Managing Electronic Records

The following sessions have been reported by your colleague scribes for your enjoyment and memory jog:

"Care and Feeding of Vertical Files"

Most C&U archivists are intimately familiar with the benefits and challenges of vertical files. From fairly new files which take up less than one file drawer to decades-old files which now stretch across tens of file cabinets or hundreds of boxes; from single-series vertical files, to those divided into multiple major series; from newspaper clippings to institutional publications to copies of office records, this important resource comes in many varieties. But the challenges of the vertical file are also extensive: what types of materials to include; what filing system to use; what process to use for clipping, sorting, and filing; how to handle fragile media; challenges brought by the rise of electronic publishing (web sites) on our campuses.

The archivists in our discussion group seemed to agree that vertical files are an important reference tool. However, maintaining the files can take up extensive amounts of time. In some cases, the time required is difficult to justify in the face of other clearly mandated responsibilities that may be more clearly mandated -- such as records management.

Our discussion revealed no easy answers, but one promising strategy emphasizes taking advantage of the "vertical files" created and maintained in other university offices, such as public relations, communications, alumni affairs, or athletics as part of their daily work. Some C&U

archivists have established a clear understanding of what type of vertical files these other departments maintain and have made arrangements with that office to have the file transferred to the archives periodically. In such a scenario, the archivist leaves the responsibility for "current" vertical file material to other offices on campus, instead focusing on access to and preservation of non-current vertical files.

Reported by Weston Thompson
University of Kentucky

"University Archives: Active or Passive Collecting?"

Fourteen archivists participated in the discussion group, all reflecting different levels and experiences in their collecting practices. None of their universities/colleges had a records manager although the consensus reflected a need for one. Most archives were short-staffed at best, and had passive and active components in collecting materials.

There is more awareness on campus of university archives due to outreach activities. Archives needs to be more specific in what they target, and do essential activities to obtain records which document the history of the university. Only some of the group collected faculty papers. In many cases limited resources and lack of administrative support dictate what is collected; the issue was how best to collect materials. Some techniques include writing guidelines, periodically issuing form letters and following up with calls, providing box at printers office to collect campus publications, creating a hit list for faculty papers, and using advisory committee to help target collections.

The terminology of the word "passive" came into question; does it mean having to accept

everything that comes into the archives, or having the right to go to offices and departments to evaluate and secure records for the archives? An archival and collection policy would provide appropriate guidelines and authority in most instances.

An important part of collecting materials for the archives includes keeping an active, good relationship with the upper administration and especially their staff. Such a relationship will ensure getting the records either annually or at the end of the administrator's tenure, and will also help to gain or solidify support in the hierarchy. The group briefly touched on the subject of electronic records and the concern that much information was either getting lost or that the administration didn't want or know how to deal with the issue.

Reported by Margot Garrett, Woods Hole Oceanic Institution

"Creating an Archives Website"

Burt Altman, of Florida State University led the discussion concerning the creation of archival web sites. The eight archivists in the group ranged from those who have extensive Web experience to those just starting out with Web projects that were looking for ideas. Among the issues discussed were: the importance of finding out what constituent groups want out of your Web site - to that end, Burt Altman distributed a copy of an article which talked about how he surveyed his user groups prior to mounting his Web site. Two people whose archives also serve as records centers commented on the usefulness of the Web in disseminating records retention policies within their institutions. Other issues included how to go about structuring the

content in a non-linear medium such as the Web; staffing implications that can result from a Web presence; and working with a systems staff. An issue that received a great deal of discussion was making finding aids available -- do you use EAD? HTML? plain text? What are the staffing and service implications of publishing finding aids on the Web? Needless to say, we asked a lot more questions than we answered! But it was a good opportunity to hear about how others are grappling with the issues of electronic access.

Reported by Carole Prietto
Washington University in St. Louis

"Cooperative Relations Between Archives and Outside Organizations"

Over the course of discussion we explored a variety of issues related to cooperative archival relationships, both those that tried only to unify materials at the bibliographic level while keeping them physically separated, as well as true "joint archives" which bring collections from various institutions together both physically and bibliographically.

One of the things we noted was the apparent lack of such cooperative programs in the college and university setting as well as in the broader archival community. The Joint Archives of Holland Director Larry Wagenaar discussed the manner in which his institution was formed and how it has worked over the course of its ten-year history. It is nearly unique as different institutions have brought collections together in one physical location, provided for professional care, and built bibliographic and

intellectual aids so that researchers could come to one location to find materials in any one of the collections that it cares for. Ann Ostendarp from Dartmouth College discussed her work with the St. Johnsbury Cooperative that is exploring the possibility of bringing collections together in the next couple years. They are in the process of applying for an NHPRC grant. Theirs is located in a very small community where no institution is more than a few minute's walk from another, and the financial capacities of each of the institutions who wish to be a part of the archival collaborative varies widely. This collaborative program has yet to be implemented.

Other individuals in the discussion noted the potential for litigation, especially in areas of the country or in settings which have a more litigious atmosphere. This seems to be less of a problem in smaller communities than it is in large university settings in major urban centers.

It was noted that any joint archival program requires consideration of many things including a detailed contract outlining the obligations of the various parties, how materials will be accessed, who will have the ability to use them, how they will be promoted, and a host of other issues. It was agreed that it would be wise to explore the possibility of a full-blown session along these lines for a future SAA meeting so that the broad membership could explore the challenges and possibilities of cooperative archival agreements.

Reported by Lori Trethewey,
Joint Archives of Holland

"Managing Electronic Records"

After a few minutes of general discussion, the group decided to focus on the question of how to start an electronic records management program. The strategy the group decided to explore was forming partnerships. Phil described the situation at IU where he has become part of a team devoted to addressing data administration issues. This group named the IU Data Stewards Committee is made up of data managers and other IT personnel. Working with and through this group, Phil has been able to accomplish more than he could have on his own. The group discussed how important it was for archivists to identify and work with individuals on their campus involved in data management and data warehousing activities. Attempting to manage electronic records alone by going door-to-door, so to speak, is an unrealistic and ineffective strategy. A more appropriate strategy would be to identify key players, particularly those in upper management, and to use their knowledge, connections, and resources to identify other partners.

Other allies can include university counsel, the auditors, and departmental administrative assistants. These people already have an interest in what archivists do. We just need to find the "hook" that will attract their attention. Some strategies for doing this include demonstrating how we can help them to remove "old stuff" from their computer, office, files, etc., aid them in risk management, and provide accountability for the institution.

Overall, when working with electronic records, archivists must remain patient. It takes time to bring people on board, and there will be setbacks. We need to take a

broader, long term view of what we want to do and where we want to be in order to be effective.

Reported by Cheryl L. Stadel-Bevans
Cornell University

Steering Committee Members

Cecilia Hunter, Chair (1998-2001)
Texas A&M University—Kingsville

Nanci A. Young, Vice-Chair (1997-99)
Smith College Archives

Margaret Merrick, Chair, 1999 Meeting
Planning Committee (1996-99)
University of Louisville

William R. Massa, Chair, Nominating
Committee (1996-99)
YaleUniversity

Bill Brown, Section Parliamentarian,
University of Miami, Fl (1996-1999)

Larry Landis, Oregon State University
(1997-2000)

Robert Sherer, Tulane University
(1997-2000)

Mark Vargas, University of Wisconsin-
Milwaukee (1997-2000)

Carole Prietto, Washington University of
St.Louis, (1998-2001)

