Descriptive Notes

FROM THE CHAIR   **Jerry Simmons**

From a look at past newsletters, it seems to be a tradition to remark on the sweltering summer weather building up to the annual meeting. "It's unbearably hot! Must be time for SAA!" Why should this year be any different? I'll admit that this will be my first trip ever to Chicago, so I'm hoping the weather might be cooler and dryer. I just did the research and my sources say the average temperature in Chicago in August is 81. So let's hope we experience that average.

No matter what the temperature outside, I'm sure the conference center will be cool and inviting, making it perfect for our annual Description Section reunion. I'll point out now that our meeting time will be a bit later in the afternoon, a bit of a switch from past meetings. The Description Section will meet on Friday, August 26, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please make sure to check the on-site programs or sign boards in the conference space for the meeting location. We'll kick things off by announcing the new vice chair/chair-elect for 2011-2012. Thanks again to those section members who put their names on the ballot!

We will look forward to hearing reports from special committee representatives and liaisons during the meeting as well as a special program presentation by Erica Boudreau of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum. Erica's presentation will feature Kennedy Library's new award-winning digital archive. The Description Section congratulates the Kennedy Library staff for winning the 2011 C. F. W. Coker Award!

If you're looking for a great training opportunity, there are three pre-conference workshops on the schedule to consider. Bill Landis will be leading Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) [class # 1210]. Two stars of archival description, Michael Fox and Kris Kiesling, will be leading Encoded Archival Description [class #1216]. And for the first time, SAA will offer Encoded Archival Context - Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (EAC-CPF) [class #1213] under the instruction of Kathy Wisser. As of July 25th, there are still spaces available in these classes, so register now!

Thursday, August 25th is the kick-off for sessions, so make note of these description-related presentations your program schedule:

- Changing Trends in Collecting, Preserving, and Accessing Performing Arts Archives (#308)
- Re-Arranging Arrangement and Description: Original Order and Provenance in Modern Multi-Formatted Collections (#410)
- More Access to More Content: The EAD Finding Aid and other Effective Tools for Large-Scale Digitization (#504)

- Reading Spaces in Digital Places: a Quick-and-Dirty Approach for Making Born-Digital Personal Papers Available Online (#509)
- Thirty Years On: SAA and Descriptive Standards (#706)
- The Giver Who Keeps on Giving: Donor-Assisted Appraisal and Description (#708)
- The Social Networks and Archival Context Project: EAC-CPF at Work (#710)

In closing, I remind section leaders, committee representatives, and liaisons to contact me to reserve a spot on this year's Description Section agenda. If you have reports or items for the agenda, please contact me at jerry.simmons [at] nara [dot] gov.

It's been a pleasure to serve as Chair of Description section! Stay cool, and I'll see you all in Chicago!

✦ ✦ ✦

FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR   **Sarah Keen**

After three enjoyable years serving as your Newsletter Editor, it is my time to step down and pass the reins to another Section member. It has been a pleasure to serve the Description Section and be the first person to hear about the great description-related projects and events that my colleagues involved in. The newsletter thrives on your news items and short articles, and your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Nominations for the appointed position of Newsletter Editor are being accepted and self-nominations are highly encouraged. Being the Newsletter Editor is a great way to serve the archives profession and the Description Section and learn more about SAA governance. I am happy to answer questions you may have about the position and the time commitment – just e-mail me at skeen30 [at] gmail [dot] com.

Nominations for the position should be sent to section chair Jerry Simmons (jerry.simmons [at] nara [dot] gov) and vice chair Joyce Chapman (chapmajc [at] email [dot] unc [dot] edu). Please include the nominee's name, institutional affiliation and e-mail address. Nominations will be accepted until August 15, 2011.

✦ ✦ ✦

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: DESCRIPTION SECTION WEB LIAISON

Nominations are being accepted for the appointed position of Web Liaison for the Description Section. Questions about the position should be sent to the current Web Liaison Janet Carleton via e-mail at carleton [at] ohio [dot] edu. Nominations for the position should be sent to section chair Jerry Simmons (jerry.simmons [at] nara [dot] gov) and vice chair Joyce Chapman (chapmajc [at] email [dot] unc [dot] edu). Please include the nominee's name, institutional affiliation and e-mail address. Nominations will be accepted until August 15, 2011.

✦ ✦ ✦

<div align="center">

2010-2011 LEADERSHIP LIST   **STEERING COMMITTEE**

Jerry Simmons, Chair   Christine de Catanzaro
Joyce Chapman, Vice Chair/Chair Elect   Jennifer Meehan
Erin Lawrimore, Immediate Past Chair   John Nemmers
Donnelly Lancaster Walton, Secretary   Claudia Thompson
Janet Carleton, Web Liaison
Sarah Keen, Newsletter Editor   Tom Hyry, Council Liaison

</div>

✦ ✦ ✦

NEWS & NOTES

Legacy Archival Calendar upgraded for access to Digitized Collection at UD Library
L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library

Supported by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the University of Delaware Library has digitized the George S. Messersmith papers for online access. Researchers, who previously relied on discovery in the collection through use of a 700+ page typescript calendar, may now use an online finding aid to learn about the collection. The NHPRC grant allowed for "repurposing" the exhaustive descriptive data for this significant collection, migrating item-level document summaries from the legacy calendar into EAD-XML, an international standard for archival description and online access. The finding aid descriptions are linked to digitized documents stored in the Library's Institutional Repository, D-Space, where readers may "browse this collection" by various fields or use advanced searches to query full text of the PDF documents. Optical character recognition of the digitized documents maximizes searchability of the collection in D-Space. A Berkeley XML database on the Library's server supports browsing, searching, and delivery of the collection. More information about the collection is available here:
http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/findaids/messersmith/index.html

---

NYU Libraries and Partners Developing Next-Generation Archives Management System with Grant from Mellon Foundation

New York University has been awarded a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to lead a partnership in developing the software that integrates Archon and the Archivists' Toolkit (AT) into an open-source, next-generation archives management system. The integrated product—known by the working title ArchivesSpace—will incorporate the best features and functions of Archon and the AT.

The project is a collaboration among the libraries of NYU, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where Archon was developed, and the University of California, San Diego, which developed AT in partnership with NYU.

ArchivesSpace will capitalize on the functional strengths of AT and Archon, both of which were released in 2006, to create a more powerful, flexible, and resilient archives collection management and

access system. By design, ArchivesSpace will be less costly to maintain and will appeal to an even broader segment of the archives community than either of the two existing tools.

The design for ArchivesSpace is the result of a year of research and planning, also funded by the Mellon Foundation, by the three partner libraries in consultation with archivists and technologists from a variety of academic and archival institutions.

ArchivesSpace will be open source, but user institutions will be asked to join a membership support structure. Members will be encouraged to participate in the governance of ArchivesSpace and in the prioritization of enhancements and fixes, and will have access to helpdesk resources.

The main benefit of membership, however, will be sustainability, according to NYU Dean of Libraries Carol A. Mandel. "By supporting ArchivesSpace, members will ensure that the software keeps growing and responding to the needs of the community," Mandel said.

Both AT and Archon have a strong community of members. "The Archivists' Toolkit (AT) is widely recognized for its tremendous impact on archival practice and the promotion and adoption of descriptive standards," said Brian E. C. Schottlaender, the Audrey Geisel University Librarian at UC San Diego. "We look forward to further collaboration with our partners in building an archival software tool that capitalizes on the strengths of both AT and Archon."

Paula Kaufman, Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Dean of Libraries and University Librarian, UIUC, emphasizes the importance of long-term use of the software. "Archon has served the needs of a wide range of archival organizations, including many that are very small," she said. "ArchivesSpace development and membership will assure continued support for their archival work."

Comprehensive information is available on the project website: http://archivesspace.org/.

ArchivesSpace: Opportunities for Community Participation
Mark Matienzo, ArchivesSpace

Given the recent announcement regarding funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the development of ArchivesSpace <http://forens.es/8>, I am sure many of you are interested in learning how you can participate with the project. As the Technical Architect for ArchivesSpace, I am responsible for developing the agendas for the project's Technical Review Team, overseeing its technical development, and engaging with the wider archives development community. There are several opportunities for participation that are either available now or will be in the near future.

* Join our discussion group. This is an open discussion group related to the project. To sign up, visit the group's home page at <http://groups.google.com/group/archivesspace>.

* Participation in our technical review process (contact me offlist if interested). We will be undertaking a technical review of the specifications developed for the project to determine any potential issues that may arise during implementation, including those related to performance and scalability. If you would like to assist with this, please let me know. The specification documents are available from the ArchivesSpace website, located at <http://archivesspace.org/>.

* Although formal review of the functional specifications is closed, the project team is still interested to hear about any current AT or Archon features that appear to be absent from the ASpace functional specifications and that either AT or Archon users consider indispensable.

* Participation in our technical planning process (contact me offlist if interested). We're also going to be investigating potential modifications to the project that will allow it to better manage electronic records, better integrate with other systems (e.g. repositories), and better provide enhanced functionality, improved performance, or improved scalability. If you are interested in participating in this capacity, please let me know.

There will also be ample opportunities for your participation as the project moves forward, including user testing, documentation, and the like. Please feel follow up with me if you have any further questions.

California Digital Library Announces Release of XTF Version 3.0

The California Digital Library (CDL) is pleased to announce the release of version 3.0 of [XTF](http://xtf.cdlib.org/) (http://xtf.cdlib.org/), an open source, highly flexible software application that supports the search, browse and display of heterogeneous digital content. XTF provides efficient and practical methods for creating customized end-user interfaces for distinct digital content collections and is used by institutions worldwide.

Highlights from the 3.0 release include:
- Scanned book display support in default UI
- Stability improvements to index rotation support
- Globalization and RSS support
- Further Unicode improvements
- Many bug fixes

See the full [change log](http://xtf.cdlib.org/documentation/changelog/) (http://xtf.cdlib.org/documentation/changelog/) for further details.

XTF is a combination of Java and XSLT 2.0 that indexes, queries, and displays digital objects and is based on open source software (e.g. Lucene and Saxon). XTF can be downloaded from the [XTF website](http://xtf.cdlib.org/download/) (http://xtf.cdlib.org/download/) or from the [XTF Project page on SourceForge](http://sourceforge.net/projects/xtf/) (http://sourceforge.net/projects/xtf/), where the source code can also be found.

The XTF website also provides a [self-guided tutorial](#) and a sample of the [default installation](http://xtf.cdlib.org:8080/xtf/search) (http://xtf.cdlib.org:8080/xtf/search), demonstrating the capabilities of the tool out-of-the-box. Both of these resources provide a quick view of the capabilities of XTF prior to download.

Offering a suite of customizable features that support diverse intellectual access to content, XTFinterfaces can be designed to support the distinct tools and presentations that are useful and meaningful to specific audiences. In addition, XTF offers the following core features:

- **Easy to deploy:** Drops directly in to a Java application server such as Tomcat or Resin; has been tested on Solaris, Mac, Linux, and Windows operating systems.
- **Easy to configure:** Can create indexes on any XML element or attribute; entire presentation layer is customizable via XSLT.
- **Robust:** Optimized to perform well on large documents (e.g., a single text that exceeds 10MB of encoded text); scales to perform well on collections of millions of documents; provides full Unicode support.
- **Extensible:**
    - Works well with a variety of authentication systems (e.g., IP address lists, LDAP, Shibboleth).
    - Provides an interface for external data lookups to support thesaurus-based term expansion, recommender systems, etc.
    - Can power other digital library services (e.g., XTF contains an OAI-PMH data provider that allows others to harvest metadata, and an SRU interface that exposes searches to federated search engines).
    - Can be deployed as separate, modular pieces of a third-party system (e.g., the module that displays snippets of matching text).
- **Powerful for the end user:**
    - Spell checking of queries
    - Faceted displays for browsing
    - Dynamically updated browse lists
    - Session-based bookbags

These basic features can be tuned and modified. For instance, the same bookbag feature that allows users to store links to entire books, can also store links to citable elements of an object, such as a note or other reference.

Examples of XTF-based applications both within and outside of the CDL include:

- eScholarship (http://www.escholarship.org), the University of California's open access scholarly publishing and research platform.
- Mark Twain Project Online (http://www.marktwainproject.org), developed by the Mark Twain Papers Project, the CDL and the University of California Press.
- Calisphere (http://calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/), a curated collection of primary sources keyed to the curriculum standards of California's K-12 community, developed by the CDL.
- Various collections at the University of Sydney, Australia, including: Frontiers of Science, University of Sydney Library (http://frontiers.library.usyd.edu.au/); the Sydney College of the Arts Archive (http://va.library.usyd.edu.au)
- The Encyclopedia of Chicago (http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/), developed by the Chicago History Museum, The Newberry Library, and Northwestern University
- The Chymistry of Isaac Newton (http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/) and The Swinburne Project (http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/swinburne/www/swinburne/), Indiana University

History of Medicine Finding Aids Consortium announces new partners

The History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) is pleased to announce the latest release of its History of Medicine Finding Aids Consortium (http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/consortium/index.html), a search-and-discovery tool for archival resources in the health sciences that are described by finding aids and held by various institutions throughout the United States. As with the initial release the new content crawled consists of finding aids delivered as EAD, PDF and HTML from a diverse institutional cohort. NLM is the world's largest medical library and a component of the National Institutes of Health.

The site now indexes over 1,600 finding aids from 12 institutions.

The new content contributors are:
- Drexel University College of Medicine Legacy Center, Archives and Special Collections
- Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Center for the History of Medicine, Harvard Medical School and Boston Medical Library
- Otis Historical Archives, National Museum of Health and Medicine
- University of Pennsylvania Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing
- Washington University, St. Louis School of Medicine
- Yale University Library, Cushing/Whitney Medical Library

These institutions join the original consortium members:
- NLM History of Medicine Division
- Columbia University Health Sciences Library
- Medical Archives, Johns-Hopkins University Medical Institutions
- University of California-San Francisco
- University of Virginia Health Sciences Library
- Virginia Commonwealth University

For more information about the project or requests to join the Consortium, please contact John P. Rees, Archivist and Digital Resources Manager, NLM, at reesj@nlm.nih.gov.

The Archives of American Art launches its redesigned website
Barbara D. Aikens, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

The Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, is pleased to announce the redesign of its website www.aaa.si.edu with streamlined online access to our research collections and oral histories, digital content, exhibitions, *Journal,* events, and blog. Descriptive content has been consolidated and access points simplified based on researcher feedback from ongoing usability testing conducted over the past three years. The result is a hub page for each of AAA's 5,800 collections that provides a summary and links to additional resources when available, such as EAD finding aids, images, and fully digitized collections. Sitewide keyword indexing and global search results are powered by Google.

The website redesign has been generously supported with funds from the Terra Foundation for American Art. Terra's visionary support has also made possible the Archives' large scale digitization initiatives providing our users with a "virtual reading room" experience. 107 fully digitized collections

totaling nearly 1.5 million digital images are now available online, representing nearly 1,000 linear feet of archival documents including the recently added Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, digitized with funds provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the Terra Foundation.

✦ ✦ ✦

FEATURE ARTICLE

Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection is open for research
Laura Slezak Karas, New York Public Library

The New York Public Library's Manuscripts and Archives Division is pleased to announce that the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen collection is open for research.

Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen were gay civil rights activists and partners for over forty-five years. Barbara Gittings (1932-2007) began her involvement with the homophile movement in 1958, when she established the East Coast chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), the first lesbian organization in the United States, which had been founded in San Francisco in 1955. From 1963-1966, Gittings edited *The Ladder*, DOB's national magazine. She also marched in the annual Independence Day pickets in the 1960s, which were the first organized demonstrations for gay rights. From 1971-1986, Gittings acted as the coordinator of the American Library Association's Gay Task Force (ALA GTF), creating gay bibliographies and topical reading lists. Her involvement on panels and exhibits at American Psychiatric Association (APA) conventions directly influenced the APA's decision in December 1973 to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. In addition, Gittings was a charter member of the board of directors for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (1973) and the Gay Rights National Lobby (1976), which later became the Human Rights Campaign.
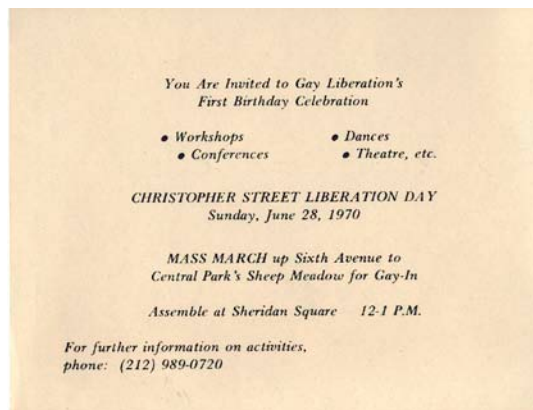

Barbara Gittings and Randy Wicker demonstrating during the Second Annual Reminder Day, July 4, 1966 (Image ID 1605796)

Kay Tobin Lahusen (1930-) began her involvement with the homophile movement in 1961, when she joined DOB. Lahusen is known, often under her pen name Kay Tobin, for being the first openly gay photojournalist. She photographed and reported for *The Ladder* and *Gay Newsweekly*, and is responsible for many famous pre-Stonewall photographs. Some of the most reproduced images from this era are Lahusen's depiction of the Independence Day pickets, in which she also marched. In 1970, Lahusen co-founded the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), and later organized the Gay Women's Alternative. In 1972, Lahusen co-authored *The Gay Crusaders*, the first collection of short biographies of gay activists.

The Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen gay history papers and photographs contain correspondence, organizational records, topical files, photographs, writings, and sound recordings created by gay pioneers Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen. The records document their careers as activists as well as their efforts to document the gay rights movement from the 1960s to 2007.

Including biographical files and family papers in addition to the documentation of the gay rights movement, the collection spans the years 1855-2009.

Some highlights of the collection include editorial files for *The Ladder* (1957-1968) and early correspondence among Daughter of Bilitis members as well as early homophile movement leaders (1960-1969), such as Frank Kameny. The collection contains forty-four years of correspondence with Kameny, as well as documentation of Gittings and Kameny's activities as counselors in cases of discrimination against homosexuals in federal employment and the armed forces. Correspondence, ephemera, and photographs document the gay rights pickets at Independence Hall, the White House, and the Pentagon, among other locations (1965-1969), while an invitation to the first Christopher Street Liberation Day parade (1970) illustrates the cultural shift that occurred after the Stonewall riots.

You Are Invited to Gay Liberation's First Birthday Celebration

• Workshops   • Dances
  • Conferences   • Theatre, etc.

CHRISTOPHER STREET LIBERATION DAY
Sunday, June 28, 1970

MASS MARCH up Sixth Avenue to
Central Park's Sheep Meadow for Gay-In

Assemble at Sheridan Square   12-1 P.M.

For further information on activities,
phone: (212) 989-0720

Invitation to the first Christopher Street Liberation Day march, 1970, sent to Kay Tobin Lahusen from the organizer, Craig Rodwell (Box 80 Folder 5).

Left to right: Barbara Gittings, Frank Kameny, and Dr. H. Anonymous (Dr. John Fryer) on the "Psychiatry: Friend or Foe to Homosexuals?" panel, American Psychiatric Association's annual meeting, 1972 (Image ID 1606144).

The collection also contains materials surrounding the famous "Psychiatry: Friend or Foe to Homosexuals?" panel at the 1972 APA annual meeting; there Gittings and Kameny advocated for change alongside Dr. H. Anonymous, who spoke to the difficulty of being a closeted gay psychiatrist.

The collection exhaustively documents the first sixteen years of the ALA GTF (1970-1986), the first gay caucus in a professional organization. Materials range from correspondence and photographs relating to the "Hug a Homosexual" gay kissing booth at the annual meeting in 1971, to the compilation of gay bibliographies, to the correspondence sent to Gittings as coordinator. Some correspondence shared stories of extreme isolation across the United States and abroad, and expressed gratitude for the books lists that eased the correspondents' loneliness.

Notably, the collection includes notes, drafts, and sound recordings of interviews for *The Gay Crusaders* (1970-1972). Finally, Lahusen's pre- and immediately post-Stonewall photographs of the gay rights movement (1962-1978) now can be viewed online in the New York Public Library's Digital Gallery (main page: http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/index.cfm).

In addition to the original material documenting Gittings and Lahusen's involvement in the gay rights movement, the collection also contains early ephemeral materials like the first issue of *Vice Versa* (1947), and early newsletters and pamphlets from the Daughters of Bilitis, the Mattachine Society, and ONE, Inc.

The Manuscripts and Archives Division holds approximately sixty-five collections pertaining to the history and culture of gay men and lesbians. In addition, the Division holds thirteen collections relating to the history of the AIDS/HIV epidemic. Although gay and lesbian history and AIDS history are not a single subject, they are interrelated and twenty-two collections are categorized as both. These collections can be found by conducting keyword searches in the Find Archival Materials tool (http://www.nypl.org/find-archival-materials). For more information regarding the Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen gay history papers and photographs, or any collections held by the Manuscripts and Archives Division, please contact the Division at mssref@nypl.org.

✦ ✦ ✦