NOTES FROM THE CHAIR...

All Archives are Local

The Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries has recently released a report that details the problems with the management of the records of Michigan’s 2300 local governments. Dramatically entitled “Michigan’s Local Government Records are in Danger!” this report outlines a basic and essential response to the problem of dealing with that state’s records. (Available at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_mhc_rms_localtf_whitepaper_149325_7.pdf.)

But this problem is hardly unique to Michigan. I have spent over 15 years of my life (the bulk of my career) working in or serving local governments and improving their records management programs. In that time, I have run across some of the best archives and records management programs I have seen anywhere (for instance, Westchester and Warren Counties and the Town of Huntington in New York State) and some of the worst. I’ve seen storage areas that were almost indistinguishable from the outdoors, governments holding 75 years worth of canceled checks, and governments that had mishandled their archives to the point of total destruction. New York State’s Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund and similar programs in states across the nation have served to improve the state of local government records management, but the vast majority of states have inadequate programs and funding to ensure the management and care of these often overlooked records.
I am happy to see that Michigan is working to change this situation in its state. With a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the Michigan Local Government Records Management Task Force "conducted a survey in July 2004 of local government officials to analyze whether local governments need records management assistance from the state of Michigan, and the possible ways to meet that need." With responses from nearly 20% of local governments in the state, Michigan has discovered what I would have expected: Fewer than one third indicated that their records had inadequate protection, and under one half said they had adequate storage space for their records. These are absolutely basic needs for records, and most local governments across the country cannot fulfill these needs.

The task force’s report goes a step beyond identifying the problem: it also recommends some possible strategies for developing some basic records management in the state’s local governments. The task force outlines a number of ways to ensure the development of comprehensive retention and disposition schedules, professional records management training, adequate records storage, and preservation. The report also outlines the need for improved local government records legislation and a method for funding a program of local government support.

Michigan is taking a first step, an essential step, to improving the state of records management in the state as a whole, and I wish them luck. Yet this project of Michigan’s reminds me that we, as government archivists, have a duty beyond the particular records we care for or the particular client base we serve. We have an obligation to care about all government records, regardless of the level of government involved, and we have a special obligation to ensure that the records most likely to be in danger, those of local governments, are cared for properly, made accessible to the public, and preserved when their preservation is essential to the mission of government.

Geof Huth, GRS Chair

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**NOMINEES SOUGHT FOR GOVERNMENT RECORDS SECTION STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Government Records Section is seeking nominations for three new members of its Steering Committee, one from each segment of government (federal, state, local). These new members will replace three outgoing members at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. Nominees must be members of SAA and the Section. The election will occur during the Government Records Section Annual Business Meeting to be held during the 2006 Joint Meeting of SAA-NAGARA-CoSA at the Hilton Washington, DC, August 2 -- August 6. The date and time of the Business Meeting is still to be announced.

The Section Steering Committee consists of two representatives of local government, two representatives of state government and two representatives of federal government, plus an appointed newsletter editor. Members serve two-year terms, three members, one from each segment of government, being elected at each annual meeting. The Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the chair, and its members may be assigned specific responsibilities by the chair.

If you have an interest in serving on the Government Records Section Steering Committee, know of an individual who might like to serve, and/or just have questions about the workload expected of a member of the Committee, please contact me at nancy.melley@nara.gov or 301-837-1972.
Nominations will close prior to the annual meeting. Section members can vote either by absentee ballot prior to the annual meeting or in person at the annual meeting.

Nancy J. Melley, CA
Chair, Nomination Committee
National Archives and Records Administration
College Park, MD 20740

BROADENING PERSPECTIVES AT THE 2006 JOINT MEETING


As part of efforts to strengthen the archival and records profession, the Council of State Archivists (CoSA), the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA), and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) are pleased to announce a joint meeting of the three organizations. The conference will serve as the annual meeting for each of the three organizations, giving members (and others) the opportunity to gather at a single meeting to strengthen our collaborative efforts. The joint meeting concept was ratified by the governing boards and councils of all three organizations, and is part of the ongoing collaboration by CoSA, NAGARA, and SAA to advance the causes of our profession.

Archivists and records managers will gather in Washington, D.C. for a wide array of informative education sessions, preconference workshops, tours of local repositories, archival open houses, special events, exhibits, and networking opportunities. An important goal of the meeting is to broaden our perspectives and to focus on the commonalities between archivists and records managers working in different spheres to preserve and make available the rich documentary heritage of the nation.

The Program Committee received more than 140 proposals for the joint conference’s eighty sessions. The co-chairs, Bob Horton of the Minnesota Historical Society and Tom Hyry of the Yale University Library, actively sought proposals that incorporated the concerns of those working in government settings; that addressed topics of concern to all the sponsoring groups; and that concerned other aspects of contemporary archival theory and practice. Look for traditional sessions, open sessions on works in progress, panel discussions, workshops, roundtables, and special focus sessions designed to highlight innovative archives or records management programs, new techniques, and research projects.

The main session days (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) will each start with a joint plenary session focusing on a high-interest topic. The president of each of the three organizations will lead one of the hour-long plenaries. The Thursday plenary will focus on Technology, led by SAA’s Richard Pearce-Moses. On Friday, CoSA’s David Carmicheal will lead a plenary on Advocacy and Public Awareness. Saturday’s plenary on Disaster Planning and Preparedness will be led by NAGARA’s Timothy A. Slavin. In addition, the Council of State Archivists is organizing an information fair which will focus on three topics—Disaster Preparation and Planning; Archives Week; and Diversity.

Packed with famous sights, free attractions, and an endless calendar of special events, Washington, D.C. offers a variety of experiences for history-minded conference-goers.
The conference hotel, the Washington Hilton, enjoys a garden setting that overlooks the city’s impressive skyline. Conveniently located on upper Connecticut Avenue and only a quarter of a mile from the Dupont Circle Metro station, the hotel sits just minutes from Georgetown, Adams-Morgan, Embassy Row, the Washington business district, and all local points of interest.

Washington, D. C. has something for everyone—art galleries and museums, a thriving restaurant scene, diverse styles of architecture, a rich and compelling history, and verdant spaces and blooming trees tucked amid city streets. The Metro provides visitors with a convenient mode of travel around the city and its environs—more than a third of federal government employees ride the Metro to work, and millions of visitors use its 86 stations, 904 rail cars, and just over 106 miles of track to navigate the capital. For more on this exciting conference, visit the Web sites for the Society of American Archivists (www.archivists.org), NAGARA (www.nagara.org), and CoSA (www.statearchivists.org).

Compiled by Jennifer Davis McDaid, Deputy Coordinator of the Virginia State Historical Records Advisory Board, The Library of Virginia, and Co-chair of the 2006 Joint Meeting Host Committee.

FROM THE EDITOR…

The Editor welcomes information, articles, reviews, photos, and any submission that might be of interest to federal, state and local government records managers and archivists. Next publication date: June 2006. Email your content to bergeronp@ci.nashua.nh.us or fax it to my attention at 603-589-3029.

Includes travel information, neighborhood history and facts, what to do, where to stay, where to eat, where to shop, area maps, community links, and an events calendar.

METRO: http://www.wmata.com/
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority site: maps, stations, schedules, fares, alerts, and trip planner. Information on connections from BWI Airport to Washington DC also available at: http://www.bwiairport.com/ground_transportation/washington_dc__wmata/

Visiting the White House: http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/tours/
Public tours are available for groups of 10 or more people. Requests must be submitted through one’s Member of Congress and are accepted up to six months in advance, and are scheduled on a first come, first served basis approximately one month in advance of the requested date.

U.S. Capitol Guide Service:
U.S. Senate link: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/visiting/a_three_sections_with_teasers/visitors_home.htm
U.S. Congress link: http://www.house.gov/house/tour_services.shtml

Passes are required for all tours of the Capitol. Free, same-day timed-entry passes are distributed for guided tours beginning at 9:00am, on a first-come, first-served basis at the Guide Service kiosk located at the southwest corner of the Capitol grounds (across from the Botanic Gardens). During the summer months, the line for passes forms quite early in the morning; plan accordingly. Separate passes are required to visit the Senate or House galleries, and these passes can be obtained from your Senator’s or Congressman’s office.
ZIMMELMAN NAMED CHIEF OF CALIFORNIA ARCHIVES

California Secretary of State Bruce McPherson recently named Nancy Zimmelman as Chief of the Archives Division. This position heads the division within the Office of Secretary of State containing the California State Archives and serves as the State Archivist. Ms. Zimmelman has been an archivist with the California State Archives since 1987. She has been the Legislative Records Archivist directing the California Legislative Archives Program and the archivist responsible for care and research use of the Los Angeles Police Department files of the investigation of the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy.

Since 1992, Ms. Zimmelman has been Administrator of the Western Archives Institute, a two-week training program providing an introduction to basic archives management theory and practice. She was Project Director for the 2003 Western Archives Institute-Institute for Native American and Tribal Archivists and is currently a member of the California Indian Heritage Center Advisory Group on Libraries, Research and Archives.

Among her professional affiliations, Ms. Zimmelman is a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists, the Society of American Archivists, the Society of California Archivists, and the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators. She has made presentations at numerous professional conferences. She was a Special Consultant for the A*CENSUS project as the author of the report on continuing education needs for the archival profession.

Ms. Zimmelman has a Master of Arts degree in history with a Graduate Certificate in Archival Administration from Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Oakland University in Rochester, MI. She received advanced training in archives administration through a fellowship funded by the NHPRC.

Ms. Zimmelman may be contacted at nzimmelm@ss.ca.gov.

VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES RELEASES ONLINE COLLECTION

The Vermont State Archives has released the beta version of Vermont State Archives ONLINE, a collection of searchable public databases developed to increase access and use of the State of Vermont's archival records: http://vermont-archives.org/database/

The following databases are currently available as the Vermont State Archives completes this beta, or testing, phase.

Records Series Database: The Record Series database offers series level access to records that have been transferred to the Vermont State Archives by their creating State agencies, departments, or courts. The Records Series Database includes all record series preserved in the State Archives vault in the Secretary of State's Office located in Montpelier, VT. It also includes series currently held in the State Records Center vault in Middlesex, VT. Series are added as legal custody of archival records are transferred from the records creators to the State Archives.

The NYE INDEX: The NYE INDEX was created by Mary Greene Nye, the Editor of State Papers, 1927-1950, as a name and subject index to Manuscript Vermont State Papers (Record Series SE-118) and the Stevens Papers. The Vermont State Archives automated more than 53,000 cards from the NYE INDEX, covering all 18th
century records indexed by Mary Greene Nye. The NYE INDEX database is searchable by name, record description, and date. The index for 19th century records will be added as time and resources allow.

Reference questions and records requests, as well as comments and feedback regarding Vermont State Archives ONLINE, are welcome. See http://vermont-archives.org/database/contactus.htm for information on how to contact the Vermont State Archives.

The Vermont State Archives, 26 Terrace Street in Montpelier, Vermont, is a division of the Vermont Office of the Secretary of State. Effective July 2003, the VSA has the authority to identify, take custody, administer, and preserve the archival records of Vermont State government.

MARYLAND AND MAINE ACQUIRE REVOLUTIONARY DOCUMENTS

The Maine Attorney General recently notified the town of Wiscasset that it had located its missing 1776 copy of the Declaration of Independence in Fairfax, VA. The document was one of several printings of the Declaration that were distributed to towns in existence in 1776. Wiscasset was one of 34 towns in Maine that received copy. At that time, Maine was part of Massachusetts. Notations appear on the back of the document that attest to its origin as Wiscasset’s original copy.

The State of Maryland has agreed to pay $600,000 to an anonymous private owner, to acquire George Washington’s handwritten, two-page speech resigning his military commission before the Continental Congress meeting in Annapolis, MD. The speech is a significant point in American history as it established that the military should be subservient to civil authority. Maryland’s statehouse displays a mural depicting Washington’s resignation, but the state does not own any documents original to the event. The purchase will also include a handwritten letter sent by James McHenry to his wife, in which he described the resignation. The acquisition should be completed within a year.

PRESIDENT BUSH REQUESTS $338 MILLION FOR NARA, $0 FOR NHPRC

President George W. Bush sent Congress a proposed FY 2007 budget that requests $338,054,000 for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), an increase of $12,519,000 over the FY 2006 appropriations of $325,535,000.

The President’s request provides no funding for grants and staff support for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), NARA’s grant-making arm. Over the past four decades, NHPRC has awarded more than $153 million to more than 4,000 state and local government archives, colleges and universities, and individuals to preserve and publish important historical records that document American history.

The Electronic Records Archives (ERA) program, a key NARA strategic goal aimed at providing a means to preserve and make accessible electronic records far into the future, is funded in the FY 2007 request at $45,455,000, which is $7,920,000 over the FY 2006 appropriated level. This higher funding level will allow NARA to build the first increment of ERA and to ingest in their original formats a number of very important electronic records, including those of the Columbia (Shuttle) Accident Investigation Board and the National Commission on
Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9-11 Commission). Subsequent versions of ERA will address long-term preservation and access issues.

For NARA’s overall operating expenses, the President’s budget proposes $289,605,000, an increase of more than $7 million compared to this year. The additional money is needed to fund staff pay raises as well as increases in the cost of rental space and security measures.

In addition, $655,000 of the operating funds will go to support the Public Interest Declassification Board; $3,692,000 for the staffing, operation, and maintenance in FY 2007 of the Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, California, which is scheduled to be transferred to NARA later this year; $6,900,000 toward construction of an archival storage addition to the Nixon facility that will house the Nixon records now in the College Park, Maryland, facility; $485,000 to begin preparations for a new George W. Bush Presidential Library; $4 million to relocate the regional archives operations of the Central Plains Region in Kansas City and the Southwest Region in Fort Worth; and $6,120,180 for repairs and restoration to facilities owned by NARA, such as the National Archives at College Park, the National Archives Building in downtown Washington, and the Presidential libraries.

NHPRC ANNOUNCES TWO NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission is pleased to announce that two new grant opportunities have been posted to its web site. Archival & Records projects and Publishing Historical Records have application deadlines of October 1, 2006. More information can be found at http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/announcement/ and online applications are available at Grants.gov at:

NARA, National Archives and Records Administration, Publishing Historical Records Modification 1 http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=8078

NARA, National Archives and Records Administration, Archival and Records Project Grants Modification 1 http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=8084

NARA DEVELOPING STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2007 – 2017

NARA has published a sixteen-page, interim document in the development of a new Strategic Plan for the National Archives – a process led by Dr. Allen Weinstein, US Archivist, and senior staff. This Strategic Directions document details the mission and vision statements and the goals and strategies that will become the basis of NARA’s Strategic Plan. The Agency sees six strategic goals that reflect its mission and vision over the next decade:

1. As the Nation’s recordkeeper, we will ensure the continuity and effective operations of Federal programs by expanding our leadership and services in managing the Government’s records;
2. We will preserve and process records for opening to the public as soon as legally possible;
3. We will solve the challenges of electronic records in the Government;
4. We will provide prompt, easy, and secure access to our holdings anywhere, anytime;
5. We will increase civic literacy in America through our museum, public outreach, and education programs; and

6. We will equip NARA to meet the changing needs of our customers.

The Strategic Plan Support Group is currently working with managers of specific business areas to determine the best performance measures, for each area, that will indicate whether or not the goals are being achieved. A draft of the complete Strategic Plan will be available for comment in June.

NARA and GOOGLE LAUNCH PROJECT TO DIGITIZE HISTORIC FILMS ONLINE

U.S. Archivist Allen Weinstein and Google Co-Founder and President of Technology Sergey Brin have announced the launch of a pilot program to enable researchers and the general public to access a diverse collection of historic movies, documentaries and other films from the National Archives via Google Video and the NARA website.

"This is an important step for the National Archives to achieve its goal of becoming an archives without walls," said Weinstein. "Our new strategic plan emphasizes the importance of providing access to records anytime, anywhere. This is one of many initiatives that we are launching to make our goal a reality. For the first time, the public will be able to view this collection of rare and unusual films on the Internet."

The pilot program – a non-exclusive agreement – undertaken by the National Archives and Google features 103 films from the audiovisual collections preserved at the Archives.

Highlights of the pilot project include:
- the earliest film preserved in the National Archives holdings by Thomas Armat, “Carmencita – Spanish Dance,” featuring the famous Spanish Gypsy dancer, 1894;
- a representative selection of US government newsreels documenting WWII;
- a sampling of documentaries produced by NASA on the history of the spaceflight program; and
- motion picture films, primarily from the 1930’s, documenting the history and establishment of a system of national and state parks. Included is early footage of Boulder Dam and the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The National Archives and Google are exploring the possibilities of expanding the on-line film collection and making the Archives extensive textual holdings available via the Internet.

SAA PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES MAYDAY PROJECT

Richard Pearce-Moses, President of SAA and Director of Digital Government Information for the Arizona State Library – Archives and Public Records, recently announced an initiative intended to increase awareness for the need to be prepared to deal with potential risks to community records: “The Society of American Archivists hopes that your organization will join us in the "MayDay Project" - a collaborative campaign to improve professionals' readiness to respond to disaster. The MayDay Project encourages all records and archives professionals to do something on May 1st of each year - even if it's something simple - to help ensure that they are prepared to respond to a disaster."
## GOVERNMENT RECORDS SECTION STEERING COMMITTEE
### 2005-2006

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<tr>
<td><strong>Chair</strong></td>
<td>Geof Huth, Acting Director Government Records Services New York State Archives 9A47 CEC, Albany, NY 12230 518/402-5371 fax 518/486-4923 <a href="mailto:ghuth@mail.nysed.gov">ghuth@mail.nysed.gov</a> <a href="http://www.archives.nysed.gov">www.archives.nysed.gov</a></td>
<td>Jan Hart, CA Senior Archivist City of Irving Irving Public Library 801 W. Irving Boulevard Irving, TX 75060 972/721-3729 fax 972/721-8056 <a href="mailto:jhart@irvinglibrary.org">jhart@irvinglibrary.org</a></td>
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<td><strong>Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect</strong></td>
<td>Barbara Rust Archivist National Archives—SW Region P.O. Box 6216 Fort Worth, TX 76115 817/831-5624 fax 817/334-5621 <a href="mailto:barbara.rust@nara.gov">barbara.rust@nara.gov</a></td>
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<td><strong>Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Amelia Winstead</strong> State &amp; Local Government Services Manager Records and Information Management Services Georgia Department of Archives and History 5800 Jonesboro Road Morrow, GA 30260 678-364-3790 fax 678-364-3860 <a href="mailto:awinstea@sos.state.ga.us">awinstea@sos.state.ga.us</a></td>
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<td>Lucy G. Barber Director of Technology Initiatives National Historical Publications and Records Commission, NARA 700 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 106 Washington, DC 20408 202/357-5306 <a href="mailto:linda.barber@nara.gov">linda.barber@nara.gov</a></td>
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<td><strong>Web Liaison</strong> Wayne Everard, Archivist New Orleans City Archives Louisiana Division New Orleans Public Library 219 Loyola Avenue New Orleans, LA 70112 504/596-2610 fax 504/596-2609 <a href="mailto:weverard@gno.lib.la.us">weverard@gno.lib.la.us</a></td>
<td>Paul R. Bergeron, CA City Clerk 229 Main Street Nashua, NH 03060 603-589-3010 fax: 603-589-3029 <a href="mailto:bergeronp@ci.nashua.nh.us">bergeronp@ci.nashua.nh.us</a></td>
<td>Aimee M. Felker, CA, CRM Executive Office of the President Office of Administration 1800 G Street NW, 10th Floor Washington, DC 20006 202/395-6471 fax 202/395-6352 <a href="mailto:afelker@oa.eop.gov">afelker@oa.eop.gov</a></td>
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Official Word: The Government Records Section Newsletter
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<tr>
<td>New England Archivists of Religious Institutions (NEARI)</td>
<td>Framingham, MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td><a href="http://www.csjboston.org/NEARI.htm">http://www.csjboston.org/NEARI.htm</a></td>
<td>For information contact: <a href="mailto:archives@csjboston.org">archives@csjboston.org</a></td>
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<td>Council of Intermountain Archivists (CIMA)</td>
<td>Ogden, Utah</td>
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<td>May 11–12</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lib.utah.edu/cima/">http://www.lib.utah.edu/cima/</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ohioarchivists.org/conference/">http://www.ohioarchivists.org/conference/</a></td>
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<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
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<td>April 20–22</td>
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<td>Association des Archivistes du Quebec</td>
<td>Saguenay, Quebec, Canada</td>
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<td>June 1–3</td>
<td><a href="http://www.archivistes.qc.ca/perfectionnement/congres/index.html">http://www.archivistes.qc.ca/perfectionnement/congres/index.html</a></td>
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Also of interest…