

**Society of American Archivists  
Preservation Section (Liaison: Lenoil)  
Annual Report 2006-2007**

**Officers/Leaders:**

Steve Dalton, Chair  
Brenda Gunn, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect  
Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, Immediate Past-Chair  
Patricia Morris, Program Committee Chair  
Stephen Van Buren, Member-at-Large  
Rebecca Hatcher, Member-at-Large and Education Committee Co-Chair  
Susan Koutsky, Education Committee Co-Chair  
Laura Finger, Outreach Committee Co-Chair  
Anne Ostendarp, Outreach Committee Co-Chair  
Tonia Sutherland, Newsletter Editor  
Julie Graham, Web Liaison

**Report from Annual Meeting:**

- Number of attendees: (approximately) 115.
- Election results: Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect – Elizabeth Slomba, Nominating Committee – Julie Graham, Member-at-Large – Susan Koutsky
- Summary of Section meeting activities: See below.

**Completed Projects/Activities:** The Chair and Chair-Elect, along with the previous two Past-Chairs, conducted a conference call in the fall of 2006 to discuss strategic planning for the Section. A number of potential strategic initiatives were discussed. The notes from that conference call are included at the end of this report. As a follow-up to the call, plans were made to devote the normal meeting of the Preservation Section's Steering Committee at Annual Meeting to strategic planning. In order to allow for an in-depth discussion, an expanded time slot was requested and granted. The meeting, held on Wednesday, August 29, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, yielded the ten strategic initiatives detailed in the "Summary of Section meeting activities," above.

**Ongoing Projects/Activities:** [None submitted.]

**New Projects/Activities:** Strategic planning, as described in various sections throughout this report, was the major new undertaking this year.

**Diversity Initiatives:** The evolving strategic plan will address several diversity issues, as detailed above and below.

**Questions/Concerns for Council Attention:** Can the Preservation Section meeting at SAA's Annual Meeting be expanded to three hours in length? We would like to devote either the first or the final hour of the three-hour block to an "All-Committees" meeting, which would be held in the same meeting space. When will SAA provide an electronic ballot for the Section's annual election?

**Notes from the Preservation Section's Conference Call, October 19, 2006**

Participants: Steve Dalton, Chair; Brenda Gunn, Vice-Chair; Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, Immediate Past Chair; Sheila McAlister, Past Chair

**General Goals:**

- The Section intends to develop a three-year strategic plan for 2007-2009. The plan will deliberately address the three Strategic Priorities recently defined by SAA Council.
- The Section hopes to conduct a mini-retreat for the purpose of strategic planning on Wednesday, August 29th, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., pending provision of meeting space within the Fairmont Hotel by SAA. The mini-retreat will involve as many members of the Section's Steering Committee as can attend.
- Prior to the mini-retreat, the Section's Steering Committee intends to establish and maintain on-going electronic communication – via Instant Messaging, conference calls, or some other means – about strategic planning. Brenda Gunn will investigate cost-effective options.
- The Section plans to enlist assistance from at least one additional web editor (possibly Sheila McAlister) to help us accommodate our planned expansion of preservation-related web content.
- The Section intends to expand membership on our Program Committee and to refine our methods for program development. Specifically, we will develop an outcomes-based evaluation form for attendees of preservation-related programs at Annual Meeting. The form will be administered by selected Section members; and, the evaluation data gleaned from the evaluation form will become part of our criteria when considering program development and endorsement. [QUESTION – Should this be crafted as a proposal to Council?]

### **SAA's Strategic Priority #1 – Technology:**

The Section wishes to make the SAA Website a more vibrant vehicle for the exchange of preservation information. Specifically, we'd like to:

- Make more back issues of *Infinity* available in electronic form. It was suggested that archives students at various schools – UT, South Carolina, Simmons, NYU, etc. – might be drafted to assist in marking up back issues.
- Establish and maintain a preservation blog.
- Update and (re-)present an expanded “Selected Readings” database. This may best be done as a collaborative effort in partnership with the Visual Materials Section
- Solicit case studies and create an online “poster session” about innovative MayDay activities. Regional preservation offices (e.g., at CCAHA, NEDCC, SOLINET, Amigos, etc.) could be partners in this effort. Guidelines for submitting a MayDay case study would need to be established. NOTE: This would also serve SAA's Strategic Priority #3 – Public Awareness and Advocacy.
- Expand our Section's web resources to include preservation-related, Spanish-language materials. Perhaps a Spanish-language brochure about the Section and its activities could be created and made available electronically. And/or, we could create a portal to pre-existing Spanish-language preservation publications available electronically. NOTE: This would also serve SAA's Strategic Priority #2 – Diversity.

The Section also plans to emphasize technology within our educational outreach. For example, we intend to:

- Make digital preservation the theme of our Section's Business Meeting in 2007.
- Develop the curriculum for a practical, 1-day workshop on digital preservation in conjunction with SAA Education Director Solveig De Sutter.

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### **SAA's Strategic Priority #2 – Diversity:**

The Section wishes to better identify the preservation needs of underserved institutions and populations. Specifically, we intend to:

- Charge our Education Committee to update the existing preservation needs survey originally drafted by Sheila McAlister in 1999. Administer this survey to archivists working in historically Black colleges and in Native American archives. The results of this survey should be assessed by the

Education Committee; and, recommendations for action should be forwarded to the Steering Committee

- Expand our Section's web resources to include preservation-related, Spanish-language materials. Perhaps a Spanish-language brochure about the Section and its activities could be created and made available electronically. And/or, we could create a portal to pre-existing Spanish-language preservation publications available electronically. NOTE: This would also serve SAA's Strategic Priority #1 – Technology.

### **SAA's Strategic Priority #3 – Public Awareness and Advocacy:**

The Section wishes to create an inspirational MayDay resource for the SAA website. Specifically, we would like to:

- Create a web-based, virtual poster session heralding creative MayDay activities that could also be adopted by other archives around the country. Regional preservation offices (e.g., at CCAHA, PALINET, NEDCC, SOLINET, Amigos, etc.) could be partners in this effort.
- Guidelines for submitting a MayDay case study would need to be established.
- Recruitment could begin immediately after the guidelines are established, and might include: Paul Bergeron, City Clerk in Nashua, NH, Christine Wiseman, Georgia State Archives.

NOTE: This would also serve SAA's Strategic Priority #1 – Technology.

### **SAA Preservation Section**

#### **Annual Business Meeting, August 31, 2007**

##### **Report of the Chair**

A business meeting comprised the first hour. Section Chair Steve Dalton outlined key strategic initiatives adopted by the Steering Committee at a strategic planning retreat held on Wednesday, August 29. Those initiatives are as follows.

The Preservation Section intends to update its Handbook detailing the responsibilities and activities of each of our Section's committees:

- Each committee will update its own portion of the Handbook, viewing prescribed practices against what actually happens;
- All suggested changes will be subject to approval by the Steering Committee;
- This initiative will be coordinated by the Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect.

The Steering Committee, along with other invited participants, will conduct a one-hour electronic meeting every month in order to maintain momentum regarding Section initiatives. Member-at-Large Rebecca Hatcher agreed to investigate free Internet options and advise the Steering Committee.

The current committee structure will be reviewed to ensure that it still meets our Section's needs.

The committee structures of other SAA Sections will be considered during the review. Incoming Section Chair Brenda Gunn volunteered to coordinate this effort.

The Section will implement a new policy wherein each Section committee will have one graduate school student serving as an intern every year. This is seen as an opportunity to address SAA's diversity strategic priority. The application process will be competitive. Notice of this effort will be sent to all student members of SAA as well as all graduate library schools. This effort will be managed by the Outreach Committee.

Internal committee structures will also be reviewed:

- Every committee will have two co-chairs;

- Terms of service will be better defined;
- Each Co-Chair will serve a two-year term;
- The terms will be staggered so that each committee has one senior co-chair (i.e., one who has already served for one year) and one junior co-chair, who is new to committee oversight;
- An effort will be made to include a greater number of contributors from among Section members.
- The Section Chair will investigate the possibility of SAA expanding our Section meeting to three hours, with the last hour devoted to an “All-Committees” meeting.

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A new system for evaluating Section-sponsored programs will be investigated. The Visual Materials Section’s method of evaluating programs will be reviewed for possible adaptation/adoption. Sheila McAlister will spearhead this effort.

Regarding elections:

- Two elected Steering Committee positions will be added (as directed by the Council).
- The Nominating Committee will be responsible for creating the ballot every year.
- The Nominating Committee will aggressively pursue SAA’s provision of an electronic ballot. This latter point will be a step toward meeting SAA’s technology strategic priority.

Creation of an ongoing, web-based, virtual May Day poster session will be investigated: Regional preservation centers (eg, CCAHA, NEDCC, etc.) and regional archival organizations (eg, SSA, NEA, etc.) will be approached as potential partners. This effort will be coordinated by the Outreach Committee. If deemed doable, the Section’s Web liaison(s) will work with the Outreach Committee to implement the initiative.

In anticipation of increased web-related activity, a co-web Liaison position will be created. Sheila McAlister has volunteered to serve in this capacity.

### **SAA Council Report**

After concluding his report, the Chair then introduced Nancy Zimmelman Lenoil, Council liaison to the Preservation Section. Nancy’s report emphasized two main topics:

- The proposed SAA dues increase, which Nancy urged Section members to support;
- Changes for Sections/Roundtables, including these key points:  
Affirmation that Sections/Roundtables are the foundation of SAA and an efficacious way of meeting the diverse needs of the membership;  
SAA intends to support Sections/Roundtables with increased services to meet identified needs;  
Infrastructure to support greater communication and participation has been expanded;  
All Sections/Roundtables will be guaranteed space at the Annual Meeting;  
Opportunities to participate in leadership have been strengthened.  
Nancy also reminded the Section about the requirements to prepare reports to Council.

### **Committee Reports**

**Program Committee:** Chair Patricia Morris was unable to attend the Section Meeting, but she delivered a written report. The Program Committee submitted Section endorsements on two program proposals, which were both accepted for this year’s Annual Meeting. A third proposal, submitted without Section endorsement, was also accepted. In 2008, the Program Committee hopes to put together a database of preservation topics presented as programs at Annual Meetings over the years. We believe this will be useful in providing a retrospective of the topics and should provide some guidance to the Section for future topics, some of which may need to be repeated. A graduate student has agreed to serve as an intern starting in 2008.

**Education Committee:** Co-Chair Rebecca Hatcher, delivered the following report.

- The Education Committee includes the following members: Rebecca Hatcher (co-chair); Susan Koutsky (co-chair); Liz McAllister; Kara McClurken; Katie Salzmann; and Sarah Souther.
- The Education Committee met during the 2006 SAA annual meeting in Washington, DC. Members present included Kara McClurken, Liz McAllister, Sarah Souther, and chairs Rebecca Hatcher and Susan Koutsky. The committee discussed preservation education issues, including progress on developing a survey to identify training needs and creating an “ask an expert” booth at SAA;
- Rebecca was in contact with the Section chair and the SAA office about both the survey and the booth. The survey idea is also one envisioned by the Section leaders, so the Education Committee is waiting for further direction from the Steering Committee before proceeding.

Due to the cost of booths at the annual meeting, Rebecca and Susan brought the idea of an “ask an expert” booth before the Steering Committee to see if it fit with the Section’s strategic direction.

Kara McClurken forwarded an idea during the year about having a respirator fit-testing session at SAA. Rebecca and Susan also brought this idea up at the Steering Committee meeting.

**Outreach Committee:** Neither co-chair was able to attend the Section Meeting. There were no significant initiatives to report.

**Newsletter Committee:** Editor Tonia Sutherland was unable to attend the Section Meeting, but she delivered a brief written report. *Infinity*, the newsletter of the Preservation Section, was published once this year as a Winter 2007 issue. The Fall 2007 issue has been on hold since September due to low submissions. We are encouraging members from other sections to contribute to our second issue dedicated to digital preservation. We hope to circulate the Fall 2007 issue before the end of the year.

NOTE: The following note from the Section Chair appeared in the Winter 2007 issue of *Infinity*.

Dear Colleagues:

The Boston College (BC) Libraries, where I serve as Preservation Manager, are actively pursuing digital projects even as a formal, system-wide digital preservation strategy remains in development. Is this wise? I suppose one could charge us with acting prematurely, but I view our circumstances – widely mirrored in cultural institutions across the country – as a practical reality. Archivists, librarians, and curators increasingly work in digital environments and, sooner or later, must engage with bits and bytes. The challenge, of course, is to do so responsibly, i.e., programmatically; and programs take time to develop and fully mature. In the meantime, BC is doing its best to follow sound, established practices regarding application of digital technologies.

Much has been written and taught about traditional preservation planning. Indeed, collegiality and the freesharing of approaches to that noble task helped shape the core activities comprising today’s successful preservation programs. A similar dynamic has evolved now regarding development of digital preservation programs. All over again, as we share our stories – successes and failures – we collectively draw closer to discerning best practices.

In such a spirit of collegial sharing, both this and the next issues of *Infinity* will spotlight digital preservation activities in the field via a series of brief case studies. We are most grateful to: the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); the National Library of Medicine (NLM); the Smithsonian Institution Archives, Rockefeller Archives Center, and the Collaborative

Electronic Records Project (CERP); the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC); and the Post Street Archives for their valuable contributions in this issue (see below).

Your institution is also invited to participate by contributing a brief case study. Submission guidelines are available from Infinity Editor Tonia Sutherland, who will be responsible for ensuring balanced subject coverage. If you are considering making a contribution, please notify Tonia of your intentions at [tsutherland@library.umass.edu](mailto:tsutherland@library.umass.edu). And please be aware that, if the topic you are targeting already appears to be sufficiently addressed, Tonia may suggest an alternative choice.

Please note that “Digital Preservation” will also be the main topic of discussion at this year’s meeting of the Preservation Section, which will be held on Friday, August 31st, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. A panel of experts will be on hand to make short topical presentations and to respond to your digital preservation questions. It should be fascinating!

I look forward to seeing everyone in Chicago.  
Steve Dalton  
Chair, Preservation Section

**Web Liaison:** Julie Graham was unable to attend the Section Meeting, but she delivered a brief written report: The website is constant data with occasional updates. For now all is status quo.

**Nominating Committee:** Chair Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, reported on this year’s election process, stressing the following matters:

- Election results (see above);
- The election was once again conducted electronically, as has been the case for the past two years;
- There was a problem with the original ballot. One candidate for the Member-at-Large position was accidentally left off. That situation was remedied by use of a corrected ballot during a follow-up election for Member-at-Large candidates only. Susan Koutsky was the ultimate winner.

**SAA 2008 Program Committee Report:** Following the Section’s committee reports, Joel Wurl then addressed the section in two separate capacities – first as co-chair of the SAA Program Committee for the 2008 Annual Meeting and then as a representative of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Joel announced that the theme for the 2008 Annual Meeting in San Francisco is “Archival R/Evolution & Identities.” He explained that the Program Committee will be looking, especially, for program proposals exploring various dimensions of such questions as: Who are we? Where are we? Where are we going? He then strongly encouraged Section members to contribute program proposals and reminded us that endorsements may be provided for up to two proposals.

In his capacity as a Senior Program Officer in the Division of Preservation and Access at NEH, Joel then reported on various grant opportunities at NEH that are available to archives professionals, including: Advancing Knowledge: The IMLS/NEH Digital Partnership grants. Through this joint program, NEH and IMLS support cross-disciplinary collaborations between archives, libraries, and other cultural heritage institutions seeking to develop new digital access tools. NEH is especially encouraging projects that involve digital sources and methods through its agency-wide Digital Humanities Initiative. Funding forecasts are too uncertain at this point, but both the House and Senate are considering increases in allocation for fiscal year 2008.

**IMLS Report:** Susan Malbin, Senior Program Officer for Discretionary Programs at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), was also on-hand to give an IMLS report. Like Joel Wurl, Susan

also referenced Advancing Knowledge: The IMLS/NEH Digital Partnership grants program. She also spoke about Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action, a new, multi-faceted initiative launched in response to Heritage Preservation's *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections*, which revealed that immediate intervention is required to prevent the loss of a significant amount of our country's cultural heritage collections. The Connecting to Collections initiative comprises four components:

- A National Conservation Summit meeting, which was held in June of this year in Washington, DC.  
Four forums to raise public awareness on preservation and conservation needs, which will be held in cities across the country from January 2008 through June 2009.
- Establishment of a Conservation Bookshelf, which will include books, bibliographies, a guide to online resources, DVDs, and other high-quality materials, and which will be distributed widely.
- Planning Grants to support collaborative efforts to address the recommendations of the Heritage Health Index. These awards will be made available to each state in 2008 and 2009.

The Connecting to Collections initiative was launched in celebration of IMLS's 10th anniversary.

**New Publication Announcement:** Karen Gracy, Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Studies, was on-hand to introduce her newly published work titled *Film Preservation: Competing Definitions of Value, Use, and Practice*, which was published in 2007 by SAA.

**Regionals Report:** The business meeting portion of the Section meeting concluded with general announcements from regional preservation centers regarding current projects, workshops, etc.

#### **Panel Presentation on Digital Preservation**

The second hour of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of key digital preservation issues. A panel of experts – including Elisabeth Long (University of Chicago), Peter Hirtle (Cornell University), Ann Gilliland (UCLA), and Nancy McGovern (University of Michigan) – discussed such matters as digital preservation program development, copyright, metadata, and digital archive audit and certification. Each panelist delivered a 5- to 7-minute presentation on the essentials of his/her chosen topic. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a very lively discussion between the panelists and the audience. One SAA Fellow approached the Section Chair following the panel discussion and exclaimed that it was the best “program” he had attended at the Annual Meeting so far.

*Respectfully submitted by Steve Dalton, Section Chair, 2006-2007*