



The Archival Spirit, November 2002 (Fall Issue)

Newsletter of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, Society of American Archivists

INSIDE

- 1 [From The Chair](#)
- 1 [Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting August 22, 2002](#)
- 1 [VIA - Voices and Images of Alaska Project](#)
- 1 [Paths of Mercy Heritage Room Connects Past, Present and Future](#)
- 1 [Editor's notes](#)

From the Chair:

As you can see from the minutes, which appear in this issue of Archival Spirit, we had a very good section meeting at Birmingham thanks to the hard work of our program planner, Diane Wells and the great facilitators she recruited; Diana Sanderson, Wes Wilson, Bill Sumers and Eddie Jeter. We had excellent discussions on preservation issues and interesting insight into web development and use for a religious archives. Thanks to all who participated. If you missed it, then I hope we get to see you in Los Angeles.

One of the most obvious results of this meeting was how far we have come as a profession. So much has happened since I entered the archives field almost twenty years ago. Back then many of us were struggling with just having a proper supply budget and a few were working on records management issues while trying to manage research requests. All of us seemed overworked. Most of us didn't realize that we were on the edge of great changes. There was the computer revolution, which allowed for the development of the MARC cataloging format and that allowed many repositories to begin to catalog their collections. This was ultimately followed by the EAD for use on the Internet. Many of us began to work with oral history, and then with such concerns as preserving photographs, video, electronic records, and managing mold outbreaks. Of course, we are still overworked! And don't get me started on those research requests! But, it became clear to me just how much we have grown as a profession over the past twenty years as I sat and listened to the conversations at the meeting while archivists from colleges, dioceses, other regional depositories, monasteries, and denominational centers shared their expertise. We along with the rest of the profession, I suppose, have grown over the past twenty years. As a group we have every bit the expertise and insight as many of our colleagues in small universities or historical societies. We can be proud of our accomplishments. But what impressed me the most was our willingness to share our experiences with others. And that is what I want to encourage each of you to continue to do. If you have questions as you do your work feel free to contact members of the section for help and advice. If the person you contact can't help you, I feel confident she or he will be able to suggest someone who can. When looking for help, start with our website, <http://www.arcs-saa.org> and select from the leadership of the section. Or make a new friend and contact someone from our ARCS directory. As a group, we have learned a lot and we are willing to share. Take advantage of that expertise. Make use of your membership in this Section. If you haven't already discover what a helpful and friendly group we are.

Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting

August 22, 2002

Officers Present: L. Dale Patterson, Chair; Diane Wells, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect; Mark J. Duffy, Past Chair/Nominating-Elections Committee Chair; Gwynedd Cannan, Secretary

Members Present: 53

The Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists met Thursday, August 30, 2001 at the Hilton Washington & Towers Hotel, Washington, D.C. The business meeting was opened at 8:10 AM by the Chair.

Opening Remarks of the Chair:

The Chair greeted the assembly. He encouraged members to submit nominations for officers and stressed the importance of the participation form.

2003 Program Committee

The Chair introduced the SAA representative for the 2003 Program Committee, Steve Dalton. Mr. Dalton reported that the next annual meeting will be held in Los Angeles from August 18 to August 24, 2003. The theme is "Spotlight on Archives" showcasing diversity of archival enterprise. The committee is expecting papers on the entertainment field, but encourages submission on any aspect of archival work. The program intends to examine archival principals and traditions. Acceptance chances are better if all parts of the proposals are completed and have firm commitments from speakers. They should be endorsed by a section or roundtable with name and email address. International speakers will receive travel money. Mr. Dalton can be reached at 978-470-1010, Andover, Ma. Dalton@nedcc.org. Michael Fox and Janice Ruth are additional contacts.

The Chair encouraged all to consider submitting programs to be sponsored by ARCS. He invited members interested in submitting programs to come to the Steering Committee Meeting.

Secretary's Report:

The Chair called on Gwynedd Cannan, Secretary, who announced that the minutes of the previous meeting had been published in the March 2002 issue of Archival Spirit.

ACTION: It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the August 30, 2001 meeting of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section be approved as published. **Carried.**

Nominating/Election Committee Report:

The Chair called on Mark J. Duffy, Nominating-Elections Committee Chair. This year's candidate as representative-at-large was the Committee's unanimous choice. Diana Sanderson, from the Presbyterian Historical Society in Montreat, North Carolina, has a record of participation in ARCS. She attended the very first Steering Committee meeting and has frequently been involved in planning programs.

Mr. Duffy encouraged the members to put forth nominations of self or others. He also asked the members to complete the participation form noting that the forms are indispensable for generating ideas for next year. Mr. Duffy also encouraged members to submit articles for the newsletter.

SAA Council Liaison

The Chair then introduced the SAA Council Liaison, David Haury, who reported that archives and archivists have been unusually prominent in the national news this past year. The SAA has actively supported the archivists' position on three issues of special concern: the Presidential Order holding back the papers of President Reagan contrary to the provisions of the Presidential Records Act; the removal of government papers by Mayor Giuliani of New York; and the Eldred vs Ashcroft case contesting the 1998 Sonny Bono copyright extension act.

The Chair thanked the liaison. He encouraged the members to participate in the SAA student leadership raffle prize that supports a scholarship fund.

Report on Elections:

Mark Duffy reported that the ballots had been tallied and announced the following result: Diana Sanderson was elected Representative-at-large with 46 votes. There were 3 abstentions.

Communications Committee Report:

The Chair called on Robert Johnson-Lally Mr. Johnson-Lally showed the members the 2001 membership directory. He reported that the directory had been generally well-received. It is hoped that it will soon be posted on the website where it can be updated. Mr. Johnson requested that the section relieve him of the duties of managing the directory as he has served out his term on the Communications Committee.

The Chair thanked Mr. Johnson-Lally for great service. He reported that he himself made frequent use of the directory as Chair of the section.

Website

The Chair called on Mark Duffy to report on the website. Mr. Duffy reported that the website was up, running, and being used. The newsletter is online at the same time that the print version is being delivered to members. Tracking is intended in order to determine how we want to use the website in the future. Mr. Duffy asked members to help with the website. He has worked on it since its inception along with Tim Driscoll and he would like others to contribute. Labor consists primarily of updating.

The Chair complimented Mark on the website, affirming that it was helpful and easy to use. He asked for input from members on how to make it more useful.

Sister M. Claude Lane Award Committee Report:

The Chair called on Elisabeth Wittman, Committee Chair who reported that there would be no nominee this year for Claude Lane Award. The award is a cash prize available to someone with significant contribution to archives of religious collections. Ms. Wittman informed the members that a nomination form will be in the SAA newsletter as well as the SAA website. She announced that the three members of the Committee were herself, Julie Randle from the Virginia Theological Seminary, and Kate McGinn, from the Free Methodist Archives in Minneapolis. Mark Duffy commented that the rules of the award dictated that at least one of the members must be from the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA). Ms. Wittman will check into this issue. In response to a question on the origin of the award, it was announced that Sr. Lane was a founder and director of the Catholic Archives of Texas and the Texas Catholic Conference. She also developed SSA. On her death, the SSA raised money for a memorial that includes the cash award.

New Business: International Council on Archives/Section of Archives of Churches and Religious Denominations:

Mark Duffy gave a report on the International Council on Archives (ICA), Section on Archives of Churches and Religious Denominations. The 2002 meeting was held in New York at the Episcopal Church Center. The committee worked on reaching out to worldwide archivists of religion in a network. Mr. Duffy brought a copy of the newsletter and handed out new brochures. He encouraged ARCS members to consider a membership. The dues are expensive but our dues contribute to the membership of third world archivists. This association is a good way to redistribute knowledge of the profession.

The Chair encouraged members to pick up brochures. He then turned the meeting over to Diane Wells to start the program.

Program

Discussion Groups:

The business meeting was followed by a program featuring two simultaneous group discussions on the topics: Web sites & Archives: How are we using them, led by Bill Sumners and Edie Jeter of the Southern Baptist Convention and Preservation Practice in Our Archives, led by Diana Sanderson of the Presbyterian Historical Society and Wes Wilson of DePauw University Periodicals.

Reflections and Recommendations from Discussion Groups:

Stephanie Morris from the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Salem, Pennsylvania reported on the discussion of the *website group*. It was suggested that a webmaster be hired to deal with the technical aspects. One should look at other websites and freely borrow for menus and links. Ms. Jeter had demonstrated how her archive had digitized minutes up to 1979 which permitted correspondence to be available to researchers online with full text retrieval. A thesaurus further enables the searcher to translate general terms to keyword form. Websites allow researchers to be more informed when they come in to visit the archives. Confidential material should not be on the website. Watermarks and information regarding citations should be available for material that can be downloaded.

Diana Sanderson spoke for the *preservation group*. There was emphasis on audio visual materials including sound recordings and digital formats. Many institutions have no time, no money, no expertise. Archivists can self educate themselves on the different formats. There is a lot of information on the web and a list of relevant websites was passed out. The Models and Resources Committee will be establishing a website with links. Archivists should help each other with best practices and sources for preservation education.

Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked all for participating. He felt good ideas were offered and that there had been good discussion.

He encouraged members to contact the officers and other members if they had questions. He announced that Session #35 Finding our roots: One of our own was a session given by ARCS members and announced the time and location of the Steering Committee meeting. The Chair commented that this SAA gathering consisted of a great program this year and that Birmingham offered interesting things to see. He ended by saying that the city shows what happens when people pay attention to their faith. Birmingham is an intersection of religion and society where citizens stood up against oppression and then learned to co-exist in a spirit of reconciliation.

The Chair thanked all for coming and added that he looked forward to future input from members.

Adjournment

The meeting closed at 10:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted by:
Gwynedd Cannan, Secretary

VIA - Voices and Images of Alaska Project

The Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association in Anchorage is launching a two-year project to inventory all historic film, video and audio collections in Alaska. The completed project will result in a MARC format union catalog database available via a variety of online gateways. While focusing on collections in Alaska, the project organizers want to include collections outside Alaska that would be of significance to those interested in Alaskan history and culture. Archivists of religious collections whose holdings might be considered are urged to contact Kevin Tripp, Senior Project Archivist, Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association, 907-279-8433, kevin@amipa.org.

Paths of Mercy Heritage Room Connects Past, Present and Future

The Sisters of Mercy have always maintained archives to preserve the history of those who have walked before, the works they have carried out and the lives they touched. Until recently, these historical documents, photos and stories were not readily accessible to members or to other Mercy colleagues.

All that changed with the opening in 2001 of the Paths of Mercy heritage room on the sisters' regional community campus in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

The Regional Community of Detroit is part of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, an international community of Roman Catholic women who serve in North, Central and South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Visitors to the heritage room are greeted by a sign welcoming them "a hundred thousand times" in English, Spanish and Gaelic. They then walk through an arched pathway to view exhibits tracing Mercy history from its foundation by Catherine McAuley in 19th century Ireland to the present day. Displays emphasize the international nature of the community, with all text printed side-by-side in English and Spanish. Flip books below the display panels provide additional information about each topic.

A "cozy corner" offers visitors a place to sit and reflect in comfortable rocking chairs, surrounded by books, photographs and other items. Sisters' artwork, music and poetry are showcased in the room, which was designed with freestanding components to allow maximum flexibility as new materials are added. The room can accommodate meetings of up to 12 participants.

"The heritage room is not just a celebration of our past, it is also about carrying that past into the future," says Sister Linda Werthman, president of the Regional Community of Detroit.

Displays were developed with assistance of two firms, Column B Creative Museum Solutions (Ypsilanti, MI) and Project Arts & Ideas (Dearborn, MI). Sister Maureen McGarrigle oversees the Paths of Mercy, working with community archivist Sister Michaeline Lewandowski to maintain the space as one of remembering, reflection and journeying into the future.

"As we told our stories, we chose the metaphor of walking, journeying, being on pilgrimage, being on the path," says Sister Gilmory Bauer, a member of the community's leadership team. "We recalled the inner fire, faith and vision that sustained the founding and pioneer members of our congregation, enabling them to overcome great obstacles.

"We hope that in sharing of these stories, we will create new stories through which all our hearts will be touched and

our souls filled with the Spirit that makes ongoing commitment possible.”

Sharon Graganta

Editor's notes

The Editor would like to include in future issues news items about what American religious archives are doing and would be especially interested in hearing about new projects, notable acquisitions, and opinion pieces. Let us help you connect with others in the field. Send news and notes to Wesley W. Wilson wwwilson@DEPAUW.EDU.

Publisher: Bob Shuster

Archival Spirit is published three times a year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists. Feature pieces as well as announcements of acquisitions and projects are welcome. For membership information, contact SAA at: 527 South Wells, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607; (312) 922-0140; FAX: (312) 347_1452; e-mail:info@archivists.org.

[End of document. HTML document version prepared May 25, 2002.]