

The Archival Spirit, December, 2012

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

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ARCS Joins the ‘I Found It in the Archives’ Parade

Terry Reilly, Section Chair

University of Calgary, Calgary, AB

In the 1980s when I was working at the Anglican General Synod Archives in Toronto we developed an in-house *Researcher of the Year* award. We would take the researcher out to lunch and present him or her with a certificate and then publicize their research project. It was a good way to let our sponsors know that the archives were “useful.” Participating in the SAA’s *I Found It in the Archives!* contest is a chance for all of us to use social media to let the world know about our researchers’ successes. At our October ARCS Steering Committee Conference Call I started a discussion about how ARCS can encourage members to participate in the 2013 *I Found It in the Archives!* competition.

SAA is encouraging a special effort to involve people who have sought out archival collections by engaging them in a fun contest that makes use of online social platforms. *I Found It In The Archives!* is a collective effort to reach out to individuals who have found their records, families, heritage, and treasures through our collections. [Here](#) is the SAA submission process.

Ask your users, your friends, and people you’ve never met to share their stories of discovery. You can make a YouTube video, a Facebook page or post it to your blog. Or you can invite someone to write an essay, as did section member [Sr. Paula Diann Marlin](#) in last year’s competition. Then tell ARCS how you are doing. Let us know if local or your organization’s media carry stories of your entry so that you add to the awareness effect. How many people visit your website or get in touch with your archives as a result of your promotion? Each person who clicks on your repository’s website is being exposed to who we are and what we do.

I am encouraging you to submit your nominations to the ARCS Steering Committee by February 1st. We will set up a on-line vote among the ARCS membership to choose a winner to join others in this year's national competition, culminating in August 2013 when the national winner will attend the SAA Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The Steering Committee will submit the ARCS entry **by March 1, 2013.**

**Section Business Meeting Minutes,
San Diego , August 10, 2012, 1:00pm**

Elizabeth Scott, Secretary

St. Michael's College, Colchester, VT

Call to Order/Welcome Terry Reilly, Chair

Introduction of new members

A number of people who had never attended the meeting before stood and introduced themselves.

Council Liaison Donna McCrea

- Council Updates—
 - Annual meeting taskforce adopted a revised code of ethics
 - Adapted an advocacy agenda for SAA
 - Sections are invited to produce issue briefs
 - Sections should find it easier to use social media
 - If you need anything, contact her
- Terry thanked her for her help in doing the bylaws.

Program

Introduced by Colleen McFarland, who included a brief statement about proposals for the 2013 meeting.

Catch and Hold presentations (moderated by Anne Thomason)

Kathy Hertel Baker, talked about how to craft successful sessions

- Relate proposals to conference themes
 - Use the theme as an inspiration, not a constraint
 - Craft something that already relates—don't struggle to fit stuff into topic
- New spin on a topic. A new topic is golden but it still has to appeal to a large audience. The Program Committee gets at least 2x as many proposals as there are slots to fill.
- Having diversity on your panel is important—you want to appeal to a broad audience
- Tips
 - Follow the instructions
 - Proofread
 - Have your speakers and your chair lined up—while commitments are not necessary for all of them, it adds WEIGHT.
 - Choosing an alternative session format helps
 - Good title helps get a look but it needs to have substance

Jodi Allison Bunnell talked about good presentations

- Everyone can do this
- Content
 - Who are you talking to?
 - How formal do you need to be?
 - How much background do you need?
- Presentation

- Use what supports your points
- Audience interaction—keep your presentation short; focus on audience interaction
- Do not read your slides
- Do not use crucified chipmunks, too much info, too small font, too much color—there are many examples
- Preparation
 - Practice
 - Who Cares—always ask this, ALWAYS
 - Do not use live internet
- On site
 - Make sure things work
- Confidence builders
 - Toastmasters, acting classes, public performance, educational opportunities

Business Meeting

- **Approval of 2011 Minutes** Elizabeth Scott Approved
- **Chair's report on the year's activities**
Began to work by conference call. The service project. Big pieces of work don't happen every year, but this year they have.
- **2012 ARCS Bylaws**
 - We revised the Bylaws over the year. We are asking for approval in principal, but we can continue to wordsmith after the next year
 - Changes will take place at New Orleans if approved by Council
 - Changes include shortening Chair/Vice Chair terms
 - Move to electronic elections
 - Approved with no dissent
- **Elections**
 - Paul Daniels, Secretary
 - Jim Havron, Member-at-large
- **ARCS committee reports**
 - Newsletter: Newsletter went out with much help
 - Website: Moved the website onto Drupal ARCS microsite. The older one still exists for the next year. *Archival Spirit* issues are up as PDFs. Mark [Duffy] got a transaction report off the server in 2011: old site had 8138 unique visitors, 21,232 visits, and 1.68 pages per visit. After home page, the member directory was the most hit, then the newsletter. The listserv page was hit a lot as well. Now that this is all done, Council actually voted in June to allow more flexibility with external sites.
 - Service event: 25 people went, a number of whom were not ARCS members
- **Results of call for volunteers**
 - Newsletter editor: David Kingma, Gonzaga University
 - Website manager: Wes Wilson, DePauw University
 - Models and Resources: vacant
- **Endings and beginnings**
 - Mark Duffy and Liz Scott ended long terms
 - Mark is recipient of M. Claude Lane Award
 - Emilie Leumas is the co-chair of the New Orleans host committee, and *ex officio* on the Program Committee

Creating a New Tradition: The ARCS / SAA Service Project

Colleen McFarland, Vice Chair

Mennonite Church USA, Goshen, IN



On the morning of Wednesday, August 8, 2012, two dozen archivists assembled outside of the conference hotel and boarded a charter bus that took them to a place few San Diego conference goers or tourists see – the Jacobs and Cushman San Diego Food Bank. We went there not to see an exhibit on the history of hunger or advise the food bank on record keeping, but to provide assistance in sorting and distributing food that feeds San Diego’s hungry. We were greeted by Ian, a volunteer supervisor, who put us to work assembling boxes of food for San Diego County’s low income seniors. For the next two and a half hours, we taped boxes together, hauled containers of bottled and canned goods from pallets to the box assembly line, filled the boxes with the bottled and canned goods, stacked the completed boxes onto pallets, and recycled the cardboard containers that originally held the bottles and cans. According to our final count, we assembled 480 boxes of food to be distributed at one of the food bank’s 51 distribution sites for senior citizens.

But that’s not all we did. We laughed at our initial clumsiness in working with non-archival boxes. We marveled at the weight of bottled juice (and wished that we had been in physical training before the service project). We sweated in the unairconditioned warehouse. We danced and sang along to the 1980s music on the radio. And we talked – a lot. Our labor strengthened not only the community of San Diego, but also the community that is SAA. We may have arrived at the food bank as colleagues, but we left the food bank with new friends



I am delighted to share with you that there will be another service opportunity at the SAA Annual Conference in New Orleans – perhaps even two service opportunities to accommodate more participants. As the project is in the planning stage, I welcome your input. Please be in touch with me at colleenm@mennoniteusa.org with ideas, comments, or suggestions. I look forward to hearing from you!

Reflection on “Beyond Borders of Belief: Spirituality and the Archival Enterprise”

Scott Cline

Seattle Municipal Archives, Seattle, WA

The session, “Beyond Borders of Belief: Spirituality and the Archival Enterprise,” was a remarkable experience for me. In my many years of attending SAA meetings, I have seldom come across a session with religious content that so boldly presented ideas that could transcend the parochial and have (or, at least, should have) universal appeal to the profession. While presenters were primarily (though not exclusively) religious archivists or archivists of religious institutions, much of the message spoke to an innate spirituality that I believe lies at the heart of what we do. Some of the ideas expressed were in the best tradition of Hugh Taylor’s musings on spirituality and the transcendent nature of archival work.

“Beyond Borders of Belief” totally energized me. I hope that those presenting and those in attendance will be a vanguard that moves the notion of spirituality into writings and conference sessions outside the strictly “religious” realm. My own view is that we need far more discussion, debate, contemplation, and deep understanding of the sacred—both religious and secular—so that we can better appreciate the profound nature of what we do.

This session and Session 108, “Let a Record Be Kept Among You: Archival Theory and Religious Thought,” presented a discourse that should resonate with archivists. The ability to draw on theology, philosophy, and spirituality—in all of their complexities—to entertain notions of archival practice and behavior is sorely needed in our profession; these sessions have given us a model.

SAA Manuscript Repositories Section’s *Jump In* Initiative

Chris Burns

University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

The steering committee of the Society of American Archivists’ Manuscript Repositories Section introduces a new initiative encouraging archivists and their institutions to *Jump In* to managing born-digital content.

Building on the recently released OCLC research report, “[You’ve Got to Walk Before You Can Run: First Steps for Managing Born-Digital Content Received on Physical Media](#),” the initiative is looking to help archivists take some of those first steps this year. Pledging to do so and submitting a short report about your experience will enter you into a raffle to win tuition to a one-day SAA Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) course (\$185 value). Selected participants will also be asked to discuss their experience at the Section’s business meeting held at the SAA Annual Meeting in New Orleans in August, 2013. Time will be set aside at the Section meeting for all participants to meet with a group of electronic records specialists to discuss their experience.

Participants must let the Section know by **January 15, 2013**, of their intent to participate. Go to the Section website - <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/manuscript-repositories-section/jump-in-initiative> for more details.

2013 Sr. M. Claude Lane Award

Greg Kocken

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, WI

The Society of American Archivists' Awards Committee is currently accepting nominations for the Sister M. Claude Lane, O.P., Memorial Award. This award was created in 1974 and recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to the field of religious archives. Criteria for nomination include: Involvement and work in the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists.

- Contributions to archival literature that relates to religious archives.
- Participation and leadership in religious archives organizations.
- Evidence of leadership in specific religious archives.

Only individual archivists are eligible for nomination. The award is funded by the Society of American Archivists, in conjunction with the Society of Southwest Archivists, in honor of Sister M. Claude Lane, the first professionally trained archivist at the Catholic Archives of Texas in Austin, who served there from 1960 until her death in 1974. A certificate awarded by SAA and a cash prize provided by the Society of Southwest Archivists is presented to the winner at the annual Society of American Archivists meeting.

For more information on the Lane Award, and to download the nomination form, please see:

<http://www2.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section12-lane> All nominations shall be submitted to the Awards Committee by **February 28, 2012**. Electronic submission of nominations is accepted.

In Memoriam: Audrey Newcomer

Nancy J. Werner, Chancellor

Archdiocese of St. Louis

December 6, 2012



Members of the Curia:

It is with deep sadness that I inform you that Audrey Newcomer, Director of Archives for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, passed away last evening. I know you have been praying for Audrey and her family since we learned of her sudden illness. I ask that you continue to keep her husband Gary, and their two sons, in your prayers during this very difficult time. In addition, please pray for her beloved colleagues in the Archives Office as they mourn Audrey's loss.

Editor's Post Script

David Kingma

Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA

Are traditional newsletters now an obsolete form of communication?

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FHNCTYW>