

The Archival Spirit

June, 2014

ARCS

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

Communication Builds Community

Last fall, I had already chosen the topic of this column; it would discuss the results of the ARCS member survey conducted in the fall of 2013.

Unfortunately, there's not much to discuss. From our membership of over 400, only 25 ARCS members took the survey. For you statistics fans, that's a response rate of 6%.

Additionally, informal conversations among steering committee members revealed that about one third of our respondents currently serve on the steering committee.

It's difficult to interpret the anemic survey response. Are ARCS members so disinterested in the section that it's not worth the effort to answer a few open-ended questions about the section? Perhaps, but nearly 100 members spend a few hours of their time annually to attend the section meeting. Did technical difficulties with SAA listservs obstruct members' access to the survey link? Maybe, but there's no way to know for certain. I can report that SAA has recently made some changes to listserv administration that will improve communication among section members. Past SAA practice was to set section mailing list preferences to "NOMAIL" for all new section members. As a result, lots of section members never received listserv messages. SAA now enables new

section members to receive listserv emails automatically. If you have not checked your listserv settings recently, [log in](#) using your SAA profile information and make sure you're receiving mail from listservs of interest.

Without communication between ARCS members and the steering committee, it's difficult to build a sense of community and purpose in ARCS. The steering committee may try another survey next year with multiple choice rather than open-ended questions to make it even more convenient for you to share your opinions about ARCS and its activities. Or we may engage the membership in a strategic planning process, seeking volunteers from the membership at large to help shape the vision and future of ARCS. As always, I welcome questions and suggestions from all ARCS members. Please email me at colleenm@mennoniteusa.org to share your thoughts and comments.

*Colleen McFarland, Section Chair
Mennonite Church USA, Goshen, IN*

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Rev. Donald Hawkins, S.J.



Archives ♦ Records: Ensuring Access — Washington, D.C., August 10-16

Section Program

We are excited about our program for the 2014 section meeting! The title is: *Consolidating, Downsizing, and Renegotiating Relationships: Feats of Archival Agility in Religious Repositories*. The program will focus on discussing how religious repositories have found successful methods of becoming more agile when faced with diminishing resources from parent organizations.

We are still looking for two more speakers. Our original call for speakers read:

Interested in sharing a successful story of archival agility? Have you found creative ways to dealing with downsizing and diminishing resources? Do you have examples of successful collaboration with other repositories and cultural institutions, including libraries, museums and historical societies? What about ecumenical collaboration? We would like to hear your story at the ARCS Section meeting in 2014.

Presenters will likely speak for ten minutes each. The section meeting will be held at 12:30 on Friday, August 15th.

If interested, or if you have questions, contact Anne Thomason at annera23@gmail.com

See you at SAA 2014!

Anne Thomason, Vice Chair

Section Social

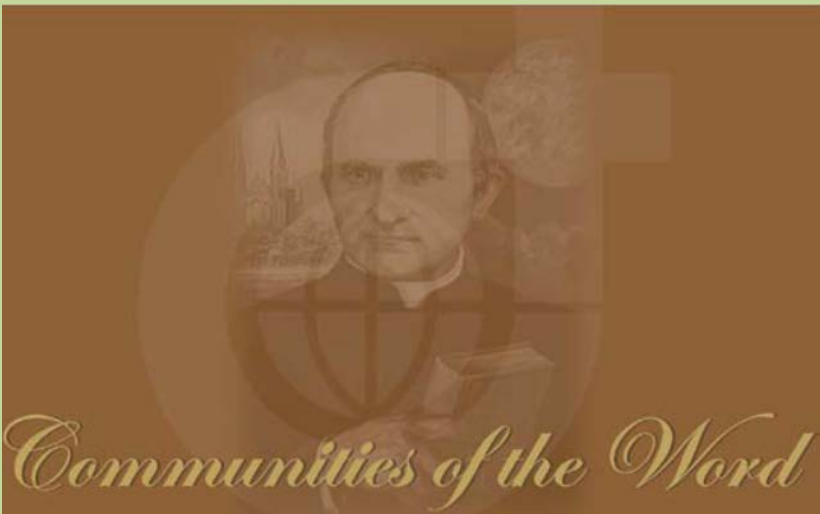
If you're planning to attend the Archivists of Religious Collections Section Meeting at SAA (Friday, August 15, 12:30 – 2:00 PM), please join us for an informal reception immediately following the meeting. At 2:00 PM we'll make our way from the Marriott Wardman Park to the nearby Lebanese Taverna, 2641 Connecticut Avenue, directly across from the Woodley Park Metro stop. We can continue our discussions, network, or just enjoy some archival fellowship. There are signature Taverna cocktails (like the Phoenicians, 1001 Nights, or an Oasis), wine by the glass and a hummus bar. Feel free to check out the other treats on the menu at <https://www.lebanesetaverna.com/restaurant/washingtondc.html>.

We hope to see you at both the section meeting and then at the Taverna.

Dee Gallo, Local Arrangements

From the Members

Stories of the Chicago Province, 1895-2012



Society of the Divine Word

The Robert M. Myers Archives proudly announces the publication of *Communities of the Word: Stories of the Chicago Province, 1895-2012*, which it sponsored and for which it supplied research assistance. The Society arrived in North America and established the Techny community north of Chicago in 1899. From there the Society grew to include communities throughout the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. Their histories make up the compiled stories of *Communities of the Word*, written by the men who lived, learned, and worked in their communities. Like Charles Dickens' serialized novels, a new chapter will appear every month. Unlike the Dickens serializations, the medium is electronic. A new installment will appear each month on the Chicago Province website, under Resources, on the Robert M. Myers Archives Holdings page or by using this link: http://www.divineword.org/robert_m_myers_archive_s/communities_of_the_word.aspx

From the Editor

As you can see, the *Archival Spirit* has received a make-over. I hope you find it visually appealing, and easier to peruse.

But the more important work remains to be done: to expand and re-invigorate its contents. The ultimate test of any newsletter is simply about its relevance ... as a trusted forum for interesting, meaningful communication and a means to foster affinity within its community of readers.

Please consider joining me in a small working group to take this next step. New ideas—and competencies—are very much needed. You may expect this commitment to last no longer than six months.

David Kingma, Newsletter
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In Memoriam

Rev. Donald Hawkins, S.J.
Jesuit priest, teacher & archivist

Fr. Hawkins served as archivist of the Jesuits' New Orleans Province and was a recognized authority on the local history of the Jesuits, who arrived in Louisiana at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century.

Online obituary: <http://bit.ly/1dpdXyo>