



# Museum Archives Section

## Business Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 26, 2011

3:30-5:30

### Greetings

Leanda Gahegan (National Anthropological Archives) is introduced as Incoming Chair of MAS.

Susie Anderson (Philadelphia Museum of Art) and Francine Snyder (Guggenheim Museum) introduce themselves as current Co-Chairs.

### Program Committee Announcement

Tiffany Sherman is on 2012 program committee. The next annual meeting will be held August 6-11, 2012 conference in San Diego, CA, and the theme will be "Beyond Borders," which broadly includes the visible, invisible, theoretical, etc.

This year, each person who submits a proposal can only be on one proposal to encourage diversity.

October 3, 2011 is the deadline for proposals with endorsements from sections and roundtables due on October 10, 2011.

### Council Liaison Report

Deborra Richardson gives Council Liaison report. Richardson is Chair at the Archives Center at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

The Council is planning the 2012 annual meeting, and met on Monday (August 22) to talk about shaping that meeting. At the meeting, members unanimously decided to form task force to study the annual meeting, consisting of 9 members, 4 of whom are chairs of subgroups:

- Social Responsibility
- Virtual Access
- Meeting Content
- Meeting Model

### Other Activities:

- Established a glossary to update Pierce's glossary of archival and records terminology.
- Approved a proposal to submit a request that SAA be granted observer status at an International Intellectual Property meeting in 2012
- Endorsed the well intentions practice of putting unpublished materials online. Council wants to put larger collections online. In addition to endorsement, there is a preface explaining copyright rules and regulations. (Richardson mentions Peter Hirtle's work in copyright)

- Established diversity award. Will be awarded for the first time at 2012.
  - Selection from any individual, group, or institution;
  - Accepting self nominations – criteria has to do with established definition of diversity;
  - Award is for an individual or group who has worked to extend diversity (improving and promoting it).
- Established emerging leaders award. Will also be awarded for the first time in 2012.
  - Honor archives professionals (with formal training or otherwise) who have been in the field between 2 and 10 years and are considered “movers or shakers.”
  - Persons can be self nominated but will need to submit three letters of recommendation/support.
  - Based on the TOTAL experience of the awardee.
- Met with a parliamentarian who helped council review constitution and by-laws, and council will present amendments on Saturday, when members will vote on changing *how* we vote in SAA in the future with an attempt to help SAA members who are not in physical attendance at annual meetings have their voices heard.
- Discussed “documenting history in your own backyard” – overarching way to bring together information on programs that are happening across the country. Small institutions, families, etc. In other countries, there are standards for managing such initiatives, and the Council is interested in implemented similar procedures in the US.
- Discussed a request addressed to Mark Green regarding colleagues in Japan and the state of their records in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami. Archivists have expressed desire for help and further assistance.
- Asked that future reports include strategic priorities that are met or addressed relating to whatever it is sections or roundtables are doing. When thinking about new steering committee, consider appointments for SAA and possible officer slots. Please send 2-3 sentences listing skill sets and addressing reasons for running for office.
- What are people’s responses to getting emails from vendors? “Drop ‘em!” SAA has traditionally given out snail mail addresses when vendors purchase a booth at SAA. Now vendors would prefer to be given email addresses for *one time use* during the period near the annual conference. Vendors help pay for conference activities, and so email addresses were given out as a trade off for that financial support.

### **Ballot Results and New Officer Introduction**

Katy Rawdon is Incoming Chair-Elect. Will help over the next year and become full chair the following year. She is the Archivist and Librarian at the Barnes Foundation, and a long-time member of SAA, MARAC, ARLIS, and the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries. Welcome, Katy!

Katy says hello and thanks MAS for its support. She is excited about the opportunity to serve and believes museum archivists have experience and knowledge that is incredibly useful to the archives profession as a whole. MAS has grown considerably since her first interactions with the group, and hopes museum archivists will have a

more prominent voice moving forward. She looks forward to speaking with all of us over the next few years.

## **Introductions**

Officers:

- Matt Herbison: Web Liaison, Archivist at Drexel Medical School
- Erin Murphy: incoming Web Liaison, Archivist and Records Manager at Harvard University
- Adrianna Del Collo: Newsletter Editor, Archivist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art
  - Be in touch with Adrianna as news, events, and activity come up and deserve to be shared with the community. Newsletter is a fantastic resource for the group. Contact Andrea with content to add to the newsletter. Readership extends outside of the section. (ADC says thanks and asks for feature articles from 1500-2000 words)
- Megan Senseney: Secretary, Project Coordinator at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, UIUC
  - Documents goals and objectives to provide Council in the future.

International Representation:

- David Farneth at the Getty Museum Library and Archives and Susie Anderson will be speaking at an upcoming conference in Sao Paolo, Brazil. Extend the reach of MAS internationally! Get in touch with Susie or David with topics and ideas. Susie will be talking about artists' records. David will be talking about systems and metadata in Museum, Libraries, and Archives. He'd like to hear about federated search, and user-friendly metadata.

## **Working Group Update**

The Working Group is looking at ideas for sharing resources across institutions and including members who are unable to attend annual meetings. This year the work has been primarily behind the scenes, but there is an active call for involvement: regional liaisons and technology coordinator. Also seeking a name for the project! Give us names!

Further discussions will follow directly after Business Meeting (5:30-6:30)

Standards Committee is working on a Standards Portal -- Portal for all of SAA with approved documents for archivists. Site just went live on August 24, 2011.

Subjects covered: administrative and management, arrangement and description, reference and access.

## **Pecha Kucha/Repository Updates:**

- *"SaveMLAK and Disaster Relief Activities by Archivists,"* Yayoi Tsutsui, SAA student member
  - Tsutsui is an archivist from Tokoyo, and completed her MLIS at UT - Austin in 2008. She first attended SAA in 2009. When the earthquake struck Japan in March 2011, she was in the basement level of her office.
  - Communication tools as part of disaster planning: twitter, skype? Which device do you use? Cell phones were useless except as flashlights.

- Identify how many archives in disaster area.
- SaveMLAK website provides information on aftermath and relief efforts after earthquake. MLAK = museums, libraries, archives, and kominkans (community centers).
- One current project includes archiving web sites that were not renewed after March 11: <http://www.tepco.jp/fukushima1-np/c344-j.htm>
- Photobooks from recovery efforts are arranged on a back table to share and look at after meeting.
- *"Treasures at the Museum: Suggested Activities for K-4 Students before Attending a Museum,"* Deborra A. Richardson, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution
  - Project started about ten years ago when niece and nephew were curious what Richardson did for work.
  - Goal of project: introduce children to the profession when they're young and make archives a part of their lives if you want to bring greater diversity into the profession.
  - Deliverable: A story about visiting a museum and visiting the museum archives. Written for children to help them digest and understand their experiences at the museum and in the archives. It introduces key concepts like selection and appraisal and utilizes critical thinking skills.
  - The Smithsonian Archives Center now uses it as a tool for tours and during historical interpretations of exhibitions for children. Next year, Richardson will report back on her project and how successfully the resource was used in her home institution.
  - The resource is inexpensive (\$6, on sale today for \$5). There are fliers throughout the conference center for members who are interested in using the title with their own collections.
- *"Cataloging the Papers of Alfonso Ossorio: A Space Odyssey,"* Erin Murphy, Harvard Art Museums
  - Alfonso Ossorio was an abstract expressionist, b. 1916 in the Philippines.
  - Collection includes artifacts like cans of dripping paint and turpentine.
  - Collection's importance to Harvard: class notes from when AO was a student at Harvard.
  - About 50 record cartons, oversized materials, and physical objects.
  - Archive/Museum is under renovation and understaffed! The office is stored in temporary housing.
  - Processing was challenging under renovation conditions and with an active set of researchers sharing the space, as well.
  - Original deed of gifted stated that EVERYTHING not used had to be given back to the Alfonso Ossorio foundation – including paperclips, envelopes, EVERYTHING.
  - Renegotiated deed of gift to cut returned materials in half, but still had to store those materials until they were returned!
  - Lessons learned: interns are an excellent resource, but it was a challenge to make room for everyone in the given space; in the future,

- consider the space needed for storing the supplies used during processing.
  - Overall, successful project and great way to make connections across connections.
  - Finding Aid coming soon online, take a look!
- *"Expanding Access at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives,"* Jim Moske, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
  - 3 recent projects at The Met archives.
  - Objective: Broaden access to historical resources to communities outside the institution; define access policy for records of past directors and secure approval for that policy from the board of trustees. (There has never been a formal consistent policy governing access, and the collections are not fully processed.) Convince stakeholders to get on board, conduct peer institution review, visit other museum archives with general counsel, worked with counsel to draft a policy that provides access and protects privacy, the full board is expected to sign off on policy this September
  - Policy elements: records are closed until processed, and ALL records (processed or otherwise) are closed for 35 years.
  - Collection digitization: no digital items prior to 2007. As of today, a digital collection is available online and was released in the spring of this year.
  - Next project: fully digitize first complete manuscript collection (papers of Henry G. Marquand). Will collaborate with department of digital media to launch collection on the website
  - Collaboration with museum curatorial departments: curators are not required to transfer their materials to the central archives, but the archivists are increasing consultation activities and advising curators on keeping and managing their records (arrangement decisions, etc.) – Costume Department has formally transferred over 100 linear ft. to archives from the 40s to the 90s.
  - Adrianna Del Collo has now been promoted to position of Archivist! Congratulations!
- *"Establishing the LACMA Archive,"* Jessica Gambling, Los Angeles Museum of Art
  - Project Archivist at LACMA establishing museum's institutional archives. Funded by one year planning grant, 3 year implementation grant from the Getty Foundation Working on first year of implementation grant now. Currently concentrating on oral histories and online exhibitions.
  - Original archivist left the museum and a new project archivist came a year later. Meanwhile, building plans were changed. Balch Art Research Library is new home to archives.
  - No concrete goals for processing records or making them accessible was written into original grant, but that is a real objective for the LACMA staff. Records are currently stored all over the place in offsite storage with 1400+ boxes stored in the basement.
  - Started working on RIM policy with general counsel to improve odds of active departmental records eventually becoming usable collections.

Interviewed staff regarding records created and maintained in different departments.

- Respect des fonds: reconsidered terms of original grant to address respect des fonds issues. Originally tasked with addressed two specific exhibitions, but there was not a discrete exhibition collection for either exhibit.
- Highlights: Exhibition records relating to contemporary LA artists (mostly 1980s); Photo Archives (1965-present).
- Future processing will be on a project-by-project basis. Use DACS, LCSH for LACMA's standards. LACMA's finding aids uploaded at the Online Archive of California (OAC), and Archivist's Toolkit was used for encoding those finding aids.
- *"Not Just Paper: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Archives,"* Kathryn Jones, Museum of Fine Arts Houston
  - New electronic records archive is being implemented! -- 1.5 years into 2 year grant from NHPRC, preserving digital records and ensuring ongoing access.
  - New website at start of the year, one click away from the homepage – worked with IT dept. to create content management system to control online content – features include online slideshows (see website).
  - Finding aids are online and research guides are being actively added.
  - Exhibition slides are currently being scanned from 1960s to present.
  - New manuscript collection: Edward J Wormley Collection and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy Records.
- *"What's New at The Frick Collection,"* Sally Brazil, The Frick Collection and Frick Art Reference Library
  - Archives dept. was founded in 1997 and includes 3,000 linear ft of materials, housed in various locations in two different buildings. Most active internal users are in the curatorial department, followed by museum administration.
  - Highlights: added content to Frick Collections web site, and created finding aids via archivist's toolkit (approximately 50 online now); archival materials were consulted for construction and refurbishing activities throughout the museum; New orientation film for Frick visitors now includes dozens of archival materials.
  - Digital projects: scanning photographs for preservation; collection of correspondence between Frick and Carnegie – will be up soon!
  - Upcoming: The Mellon-funded worldwide Rembrandt documentation project will begin this September.
  - The library is also creating a new directory on their website – the directory is now open and the database administrator is always seeking additional content.
- *"Coming Last: Advocating for an Institutional Archive at a 35+ Year Museum,"* Sarah Demb, Museum of London
  - Situation at Museum of London: the museum is over 35 years old and it combines two even older collections. There is a culture of archives at the museum, but to date it has not included institutional records. An archive room exists for predecessor records and holds accession/loans files.

- Collected archives (ie: special collections) include: PLA, Sainsbury, and LAARC.
- Before records management: Dembe was the de facto institutional records archivist. Project came into being due to increase capacity for smaller museums in London. Began with survey followed by plan for moving forward and implementation. Plan included hiring full-time professional archivist and Dembe is now filling that role.
- Benefits of records management: quick wins and guidance regarding what records management is and why it's important and how it can help; training and awareness raising; point of contact now in place for staff resources; restructured shared drive with rules and file plans for creating folders and naming files, etc.; records schedule is now implemented; disposal authority lets people dispose of things when needed
- Issues: storage space is lacking and there are economic/physical constraints
- Next steps: identify long term storage for paper and electronic archives; catalogue archives in MIMSEY
- *"Beyond Folklore, Steel, and Shoofly Pie: The Center for Pennsylvania Culture Studies Collection in the Archives and Special Collections at the Penn State Harrisburg Library," Heidi Abbey, Penn State Harrisburg Library*
  - Overview: about PA Center for Culture Studies at PSU Harrisburg, which is in Middletown, south of Harrisburg. Thus university has 4,200 students, it is 1 of 24 campuses in the PSU system, and it is officially a 4 year program.
  - The Archives and Special Collection were built in 2000, and are located on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the library. Collections include: Alice Marshall Women's History, Center for PA Culture Studies; Holocaust and Jewish Studies; Special Interest and Rare Books; Three Mile Island Ephemera
  - AMWH Collection: 230 cubic ft with 7,000 books/pamphlets; 6,00 postcards, women's suffrage
    - 3-year reprocessing project: the collection was reinventoried in 2008-2009 and relabeled in summer 2010. The finding aids were completed in 2011.
    - Series by format, new box labels – graduate students were responsible for 80% of work.
  - CPCS: 100 cubic ft.; photographs, manuscripts, scrapbooks; etc.
    - John Yetter Collection: Yetter was photographer and author, resident of Steelton PA, collection includes 2,000 photos, 55 cubic ft.
    - Categories: athletics, buildings, businesses, churches, employment, people, schools, etc.
    - Re-housing collections: project began spring 2011; moved from flat filing to 55 archival manuscript boxes; easier access/retrieval and less damage/handling; project completed in summer 2011.

## 2012 Session Discussion and Suggestions

Open floor for announcements:

- Michelle Elligott of MoMA in NY says: Look out for an announcement on Museum Archives Listserv; nine month archivist conversant in conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s
- Deborah Wythe says reposting in process for electronic records management position at the Brooklyn Museum
- Susan B. from Harvard Art Museum has left resources on chair with photo and link to an ongoing project
- Federal Funders table is set up in exhibition hall – stop by!

Brainstorming for 2012:

Last year's brainstorming resulted in one of the 2011 sessions that will be taking place on SAA 2011 on Friday, August 26, 2011.

Proposals:

- Electronic Records in a Museum Context
  - Lorraine Stuart (MFA, Houston) is interested in electronic records in a museum context specifically; Sarah Dembe (Museum of London) is working on forthcoming book; David Farneth (Getty Museum Library) mentions that Getty has established a working group to address ERM issues; Riccardo Ferrante (Smithsonian Archives) has expressed a desire to follow up on his work with ERM; Susan Miller (CMA) is first Electronic Records Archivist in that role. She wants to know where to start and is seeking advice from anyone who is willing.
  - Many institutions are struggling with best practices and current needs vs. funding.
  - Places of interest/Spearheaders: MFAH, Brooklyn Museum, Cleveland
  - In many ways, museum archives primed for success because institutions are smaller and archivists tend to have a good rapport with our records creators (curators, admins, etc.) – museum archivists can get involved earlier in the records lifecycle than other archivists.
  - The more collaborative the session, the more likely our proposal will be accepted. This may include collaboration outside the archives, with IT, General Counsel, etc.
  - Potential formats: Lightning round with discussion, or a format featuring communication/workshopping as part of session.
- Combining traditional RM with ERM Implementation
  - Discuss practical aspects of implementing ERM and accompanying workflows. Discuss what archivists do for ERM when there is no traditional RIM program in place.
  - Susie Anderson (PMA) suggests doing an implementation walk through
    - Getting Started; Surveying; File Plans; Storage space and Servers; Etc.
  - We say the format doesn't matter because the rules are the same, but the process is so different that it's hard to suggest format doesn't matter.
- Museum Archives and Stuff (dealing with physical objects)
  - Susan van Salis (Harvard) suggests a session on 3D collections.

- Discuss digitization of artifacts; discuss how to manage digital projects related to physical objects and artifacts; discuss collections care and cataloging,
- Proposed discussion format: 2 people talk for 15 minutes and then invite the audience to engage in a more interactive conversation.
- Potential overlap with the architectural roundtable: contractor information with blueprints, construction photos, etc.
- Frame it as a session on 3-D collections? Non-traditional formats?
- There is strength in diversity of objects in MAS archives collections. Maybe do a session on what comes out of the working group?
- British Museum's 100 object project. PSU has followed suite and chosen 100 objects as part of that initiative. A session related to the "100 Objects Project"?
- Cross Border Theme (Museums, Archives, Local Government)
  - Cross Border theme speaks to the museum/archives intersect and includes collaboration with local governments, varied locations, etc.
  - Discuss collaborations between curators, technologists, archivists, etc.
  - Katy Rawden (Barnes Foundation) mentions that there's a lot of talk now about how are libraries/archives/museums are going to start speaking to each other, but we already do that.
  - Deborah Wythe suggestions a session on Archives and IT.
- Item-level cataloging vs. group description
  - A session on collection/Object issues, and interacting with curators to talk about the objects that make up a collection.
- Federated Searching/Aggregation
  - Getty and federated searching: OIV and the Smithsonian were one of the first to do that, OCLC just produced related documentation.
  - Federated searching is an interest of so many institutions, and that may be an area of cross-institutional collaboration.

Susie and Francine close the session. Thanks for coming! See you in San Diego!