

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
February 2 – 4, 2010
Washington, D.C.**

**President's Report: August 2009 – January 2010
(Prepared by Peter Gottlieb)**

I devoted most of my first four months as SAA President to monitoring the confirmation of David Ferriero as 10th Archivist of the United States, revising the strategic plan, reviewing and responding to the American Library Association's sixth draft of its statement on traditional cultural expressions, and guiding several other Council and Executive Committee decisions on other business.

Archivist of the United States. Soon after the end of the Annual Meeting in Austin, we learned that the nominee for Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero, would have his U.S. Senate confirmation hearing on October 1. I asked Council members to help compile a list of questions for the hearing. I shared this list with the Council of State Archivists, the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, the Academy of Certified Archivists, and ARMA International, with a proposal that we work together to develop a common set of questions. Although NAGARA declined to participate, the other organizations agreed, and after a series of e-mail and telephone communications we submitted the joint list of questions to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on September 28. I represented SAA at the October 1 confirmation hearing and introduced myself to Ferriero there.

Ferriero had deflected my requests to meet with him before his confirmation, always stating his interest in meeting once he had assumed his new position. Nancy and I kept in touch with him and his NARA staff, holding a conference call on December 17 and scheduling a visit to his office on January 7. That hour-long meeting (attended by Ferriero, Nancy, and me) went well. We discussed the DC 2010 Joint Annual Meeting and NARA's participation in it, the need for NARA to do more to fulfill its national leadership role, digitization of historical records by commercial firms, and NARA's electronic records challenges. Ferriero expressed genuine interest in working with SAA, and particularly in working to make the DC 2010 meeting a success.

SAA's Strategic Plan. Revision of SAA's strategic plan began even before the end of the Austin meeting and continued throughout these first months of my term. Nancy and the SAA staff contributed greatly to the process by editing and adding to my drafts and by compiling action plans. The Executive Committee read and

commented on a draft in early November, and I sent an expanded version of the draft to Council members on December 16. Anticipating the need to rethink the draft public awareness outcomes and activities at the February 2010 Council meeting, Nancy and I held a conference call on December 18 with Dorothy Pirovano and Kathleen Boylen, principals in the Chicago-based public relations firm PCI, with which Nancy is familiar. We discussed what SAA needs to decide concerning its public awareness objectives and how the Council might most effectively discuss these issues at the February meeting.

American Library Association’s “Traditional Cultural Expressions” Document. It became clear in mid-October that SAA should comment on the American Library Association’s latest (sixth) draft of its statement on traditional cultural expressions. The Intellectual Property Working Group had already started its own communication with the ALA Office of Information Technology Policy that had produced the draft statement, and the issues that the statement raises are in many ways similar to those in the *Native American Protocols*. I asked several other SAA groups for their comments by December 4, including the Diversity Committee, the Native American Archives Roundtable, the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable, and the Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives Roundtable. SAA also circulated a call for comments to all SAA members. All the groups except the Native American Archives Roundtable responded. Using the salient points in the groups’ comments, I wrote SAA’s official response to ALA’s draft, asked Executive Committee members to review it, and sent the final version to ALA on January 6.

Other Council and Executive Committee Items. In addition to the issues mentioned above that I asked the Executive Committee to review, I also referred two other matters to them. One was a request from OpenTheGovernment.org for SAA to sign on to a letter praising Senator Patrick Leahy’s work to defend the Freedom of Information Act. (The Executive Committee voted in favor of SAA signing on.) The other matter was a request from the Texas State Library and the American Association for State and Local History for SAA to participate in a future grant project that would identify lessons learned and best practices from the IMLS “Connecting to Collections” initiative. (The Executive Committee declined to support SAA participation.)