

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 10, 2009
Austin, Texas**

**Discussion Item: SAA History Commission
(Prepared by: Russell D. James, CA)**

BACKGROUND

SAA turns 75 in 2011. Preparing for such an historical event takes much time and planning. Many subunits of SAA need to be involved in such a celebration: Publications Board, Membership Committee, Awards Committee, Fellows Steering Committee, Archival History Roundtable, Oral History Section, etc. Having one or two groups coordinate efforts outside of their realm of expertise and sphere of influence might not be the most effective organization for such an effort.

DISCUSSION

There are many groups who can help in the effort of putting on the best year-long celebration of SAA's history. Every section, board, roundtable, and working group can become involved in some way. Archives Month could be centered around SAA history, May Day could include special emphasis on SAA records in the SAA archives, student chapters can become involved, the Annual Meeting could be dedicated to our 75th anniversary, publications could be published about our history, and the student poster session at the Annual Meeting could have an archival history focus.

There is more to SAA history than just the existence of the association for 75 years. We are a part of a greater whole, the history of archives, archivists, and the archival profession. We should celebrate the development in appraisal, preservation, arrangement and description, and reference over time. We should look back on collection strategies and development, the role of records management in our profession, and other issues to see how we, as a professional organization of archivists, have led the way for who we are today. We could celebrate the giants on whose shoulders we stand: Solon Buck, T. R. Schellenberg, Margaret Cross Norton, and others. We should highlight the role of the archivist and archives in our society.

To have one or two groups do all of these things seems to put SAA's many resources to limited use. Distributing such work over too few people could overburden them and not make use of viable resources beyond the group's/groups' sphere of influence.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the SAA Council approve the formation of a special commission or board to oversee and coordinate the various activities of the subunits of SAA in the celebration of SAA's 75th anniversary and SAA's subsequent role in the celebration of archival history as a whole; to facilitate discussion, presentation, and publication on archival history in this momentous year; and to encourage every subunit in SAA to undertake some project, initiative, or activity in celebration of and directly related to either the history of SAA or of the archives profession.

Support Statement: Creation of such a commission or board will centralize activities related to SAA's 75th anniversary and make it easier for those who want to become involved to do so.

Fiscal Impact: None.