

**Date:** November 20, 2008

**Name of Section/Roundtable:** Congressional Papers Roundtable

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**Report from annual meeting:**

**Number of attendees:** 56

**Election results:**

Linda Whitaker, Chair  
Brian Keough, Vice Chair/Chair-elect  
Chris Burns, Steering Committee 2008-2010  
Leigh McWhite, Steering Committee 2008-2010

## **Steering Committee 2008-2009**

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## **Summary of Meeting Activities**

### **Pre-Conference Session:**

Twenty-four CPR members attended our preconference session entitled "Congressional Collections: The User's Perspective," presented by Sean Kelly and Scott Frisch, of the Department of Political Science at California State University-Channel Islands. Kelly and Frisch have consulted over 100 congressional papers collections to date in their joint research and book publications and have become vocal advocates for their use by political scientists. Their session was intended to introduce archivists to aspects of appraisal, arrangement, and description that affect the usability of collections and to broaden understanding on both sides of the optimum in processing and the constraints upon achieving it. The discussion with them continued throughout the day, as they joined the CPR business meeting and program and also attended the annual CPR dinner.

## **Business Meeting and Program:**

The CPR met from 1:00 to 3:00 pm on August 27<sup>th</sup>, with sixty-two members present for its business meeting and program. The **business meeting agenda** included:

1. Brief remarks by Carla Summers, standing in for Tom Hyry as SAA Council Liaison, noting the new "Leadership Manual," the formation of an SAA Working Group in Government Affairs, and the work of Lee White as a de facto SAA lobbyist;
2. A look ahead at the 2009 joint program with the Council of State Archives on Sustainable Archives for the Austin meeting, presented by SAA Program Committee member Dorothy Hazelrigg, including description of the new endorsement policy;
3. Report by Jeff Thomas as chair of the CPR Nominating Committee on proposed slate for 2008-2009 and proposed change in bylaws to allow for electronic balloting;
4. Election of chair, chair-elect, and two new steering committee members;
5. Approval of by-laws change to allow for electronic elections;
6. Report from Jeff Thomas, as chair of the editorial board for the NHPRC Guidelines Project, on the completion and publication of *Managing Congressional Collections* by Cynthia Pease Miller;
7. Report on the activities of NARA's Center for Legislative Resources by Matt Fulgham, in particular on developing capacity to transfer electronic records from agencies, the White House, and congressional committees;
8. Report on activities of the House Office of History and Preservation by Robin Reeder, including collaboration with Senate Archivist Karen Paul in securing passage of H. Con. Res. 307 (see item 9, below), the sharp rise in consultations with both committees and members of Congress regarding possible disposition of their records generally and electronic records in particular;
9. Report on the activities of the Senate History Office by Kate Cruikshank (reading a report submitted by Senate Archivist, Karen Paul), including the institution of brown-page lunches by the Secretary of the Senate, focusing on records management, recent publications and oral histories completed, improvements on the Senate website, new online features, and a progress report on the *Congressional Archives Reader*, edited by Karen Paul;
10. Report on legislation by Kate Cruikshank, including unanimous passage of H.Con. Res. 307, expressing the sense of Congress that the papers of its members should be carefully preserved, and progress in sponsorship of H.R. 6056, legislation on Preserving the American Historical Record;
11. Reminder about the Privacy and Confidentiality Roundtable program on Privacy and Confidentiality in Electronic Records, in the time slot immediately after our meeting.

The second hour of the meeting was devoted to a **panel presentation**, "Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Restrictions and Privacy Issues in Congressional Papers Collections," which was presented by Leigh McWhite, Political Papers Archivist,

University of Mississippi; Dorothy Hazelrigg, Curator, South Carolina Political Collections; and Jan Zastrow, Congressional Papers Archivist, University of Hawaii at Manoa. The challenges presented by privacy issues, particularly in case files and constituent correspondence, were explored from the perspectives of pre-planning (the ideal), developing policy with researchers at the door, and modification of policy through collaboration with researchers.

### **By-laws Change:**

In response to the April 2008 announcement of SAA capability to conduct roundtable elections electronically, the section of the by-laws on the Nominating Committee and Election was amended to allow for electronic elections. The following is the old text, with **additions added in bold-face type** and deletions indicated by ~~strikethroughs~~.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND ELECTION**

The Nominating Committee is composed of the immediate past chair, who serves as chair of the committee, and the two second year member representatives. If any of these cannot serve, the roundtable chair shall appoint members from the Steering Committee as needed.

The Nominating Committee solicits candidates for the next year's leadership, using a notice in the newsletter and on the roundtable's listserv (if any) and receiving the names of volunteers of persons recommended, and prepares an appropriate slate for the elected roundtable positions from those nominees agreeing to place their names in nomination. The committee ensures that there is at least one nominee and no more than two nominees for vice-chair/chair-elect and that the number of nominees for Steering Committee is not less than the number of positions to be filled. All candidates for election must be individual members of SAA and the roundtable. The committee ~~publicizes~~ **submits** the slate **of candidates to the newsletter editor no later than June 1 for publication in the newsletter** issued preceding the annual meeting. **The committee also submits the ballot to the Society of American Archivists no later than six weeks prior to the SAA annual meeting. The Society of American Archivists** ~~The committee prepares a ballot and~~ **conducts the an election on-line through services available from its membership database.** ~~at the annual roundtable meeting.~~ Only members of the roundtable may vote. Any member of the roundtable who is unable to ~~attend the annual meeting~~ **vote using the on-line ballot** may request an absentee ballot from the committee chair; absentee ballots must be returned to the committee chair prior to the annual meeting. ~~Voting at the annual meeting~~ shall be by secret ballot if there are more candidates than can be elected for any position. Candidates with the highest number of votes shall be elected. New leadership assumes office at the conclusion of the annual meeting of the roundtable.

If for any reason the vice-chair is unable to succeed to the office of chair, a new chair shall be elected following the same procedures as election for a vice-chair. The Steering Committee shall appoint any other vacancies to fulfill unexpired terms of elected positions, after which a normal election shall occur.

### **Steering Committee Meeting:**

The Steering Committee met on August 28 from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m., with the following agenda items:

1. Presentation by Mark Greene of his request that the CPR consider its possible role in facilitating lobbying activities on behalf of the SAA, building on the knowledge members might have of the inner workings of the offices of members of Congress, followed by discussion of both his suggestion and recommendations for prospective members of the new SAA Government Affairs Task Force;
2. Report on the successful completion of the NHPRC-funded publication, *Managing Congressional Collections*;
3. Brief discussion of previously suggested projects, i.e., collaborative digitization project to support university courses on Congress, and recovering the hard-to-find literature of congressional papers archivists;
4. Presentation of possible 2010 preconference plans for collaboratively planned events with the archivists of the House and Senate, focusing on presenting visually to members of Congress modes of preservation, exhibition use, and research use. of congressional collections;
5. 2009 Preconference and program proposal ideas.

### **Completed projects/activities**

In June 2007, the CPR received a one year grant of \$37,600 from the NHPRC for the development of guidelines for managing congressional papers, to be administered through the offices of SAA. Cynthia Pease Miller was hired as the author for the project starting on July 1, 2007. A six-person editorial board consisting of Jeff Thomas, Ohio State University, chair; Rebecca Johnson Melvin, University of Delaware; Herb Hartsook, University of South Carolina; Linda Whitaker, Arizona Historical Foundation; Kate Cruikshank, Indiana University; and Alan Haerberle, Office of Senator Orrin Hatch, committed to oversee the project and act in an advisory role for the author. Following submission of a final draft to SAA in November 2007 and review by independent readers, the editorial board worked with Miller to develop the final draft submitted to SAA in March. From March through mid-July, intensive collaboration with SAA publications staff developed design, readability, and aesthetic dimensions of the manuscript, culminating in its publication just in time for the 2008 annual meeting, as planned.

The Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (ACSC), in order to facilitate dissemination of the publication among its members, worked with the SAA Publications

Department to increase the printing from 500 to 800 copies, thus injecting an additional dimension of collaboration into the project.

**Diversity initiatives**

None undertaken in 2007-2008.

**Questions/concerns for Council attention**

None