

**Society of American Archivists
Manuscript Repositories Section Meeting
The Fairmont Chicago
Friday, August, 31, 2007
8:00-10:00 am**

Minutes

1. Welcome and introductions

The meeting was attended by about 110 Section members and other SAA members.

Beth Bensman, Chair, welcomed everyone and introduced the Section officers and members of the Steering Committee.

2. Announcements

Sherry Williams, Council Liaison, reviewed the Council's proposal and rationale for a dues increase, to be voted on at the business meeting.

Beth Bensman, 2008 Program Committee Representative, discussed procedures for session proposals for next year's meeting. The meeting theme is Archival Evolution/Revolution, and the deadline for proposals is October 12. Selection criteria are included on the proposal form, and Beth also noted other changes to this year's form. Sections can make up to two endorsements, as well as submit any number of their own proposals.

Announcements from the floor

Sara S. "Sue" Hodson, Huntington Library, spoke about Senate Bill 548, currently pending in Congress, which would restore full market value tax deductions for donations of self-generated papers. The bill is sponsored by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Robert Bennett (R-UT). Sue attended a meeting convened by NEA chairman Dana Gioia, who had been asked by the senators to prepare a report analyzing the situation. The meeting was attended by about a dozen representatives from libraries, historical societies, museums and arts organizations, as well as two staffers from Senator Leahy's office. In response to questions and discussion, Sue clarified that due to changes in House membership the bill has a better chance of passing in the House now than did similar bills in the past. There is currently no deadline for contacting senators. Sue will look into the possibility of an expression of support by SAA as a whole.

3. Elections

Amy Cooper Cary, Past Chair and Chair of the Nominating Committee, thanked members of the Nominating Committee, reviewed duties of the Steering Committee, and introduced the candidates. Members of the Section voted, and ballots were collected.

4. Updates

Section history

Amy Cooper Cary reported that she and Sammie Morris, outgoing member of the Steering Committee, are working on a Section history which they expect to complete this year. They are using materials in the Sections archives and asked for assistance from any members who have additional materials.

Abandoned property law and manuscript collections

Tara Laver, Steering Committee member, reviewed a handout about the Acquisition and Appraisal Section's [Abandoned Property in Cultural Institutions Law Project webpage](#). This document, which resulted from an Acquisition and Appraisal section presentation at the 2005 annual meeting, information gathered by Mark Greene, and subsequent research by section members Brenda McClurkin, Tara Laver, and Michelle Sweetser, lists links to existing state laws. Tara noted that most current laws pertain to museums and are sometimes defined to include archives, and that existing laws could be used as models for states that currently don't have laws. She asked for corrections and ideas for improvement to the site.

Section website

Paul Atwood, Web Liaison, reported that an annual meeting page has been added to the website this year. This page includes annual reports, meeting minutes, and links to speaker's papers. Paul asked members interested in being considered for the position of co-web liaison to contact him.

Section handbook

Karen Spicher, Vice Chair, reviewed new [guidelines for SAA sections](#), and noted that our website already includes all information required by these guidelines. Karen suggested that our current goals and projects, which can currently be found in our meeting minutes and annual reports, could be made more prominent on the website.

5. Presentation

Two speakers addressed issues relating to electronic records in collections of personal papers.

Catherine Stollar Peters, Archives and Records Management Specialist, New York State Archives, spoke on "Digital Archives in Manuscript Repositories". She briefly reviewed several case studies of collections processed at the Ransom Center, and gave urls for documentation on these. She reviewed the Ransom Center's policies for applying archival theory to digital materials, unique aspects of digital materials, and software tools used in managing these materials. Catherine reviewed forthcoming literature on the topic, and concluded by outlining methods for assisting authors in maintaining their digital materials before transferring them to a repository. Visuals from Catherine's presentation are available at http://archivists.org/saagroups/mss/StollarPeters_Chicago2007.pdf.

Kevin Glick, Head of University Archives and Electronic Records, Yale University, spoke on "Collection Development Policies for Digital Materials". He stressed the importance of including digital materials in collection development policies, and

reviewed advantages and disadvantages of several approaches for collecting them: traditional, pre-custodial intervention, non- or distributed custodianship, and “snapshot” methods. Kevin discussed skills required for addressing digital materials, including knowledge of archival fundamentals, soft skills, and technical skills, and discussed ways that repositories could build these skills in staff. A link to Kevin’s presentation will be added to the Section website.

Questions and discussion followed the presentations. A suggestion was made that the Section could develop recommendations for authors to assist them in managing their digital documents. In response to a question about discovery tools, the speakers stressed the need for an access portal on top of repository software and development of ways to extract metadata for searching. As out-of-the-box software may not have these capabilities, a functional analysis and development of tools will be needed. Further discussion raised the possibility of soliciting input from the scholarly community for functional analysis and systems design, to ensure that these will be responsive to how scholars do research.

6. Questions, election results, recognition of committee members, and wrap-up

Beth thanked the speakers for their presentations. She recognized Matt Darby, Morna Gerard, and Sammie Morris, who have completed Steering Committee terms, and thanked them for their contributions. She gave special recognition and thanks to Amy for her three years of service as Vice Chair, Chair, and Past Chair.

Amy announced winners of the election:

Vice Chair/Chair Elect: Matt Darby

Steering Committee:

Rebecca Bizonet

Helice Koffler

Katherine Salzmann

Beth adjourned the meeting at 10:00.

Submitted by Karen Spicher

2007 Sep 12