

**Society of American Archivists  
Manuscript Repositories Section Meeting  
Hilton San Francisco  
Friday, August 29, 2008  
9:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m.  
Minutes**

**1. Welcome and introductions**

With approximately 150 Section members and other SAA members in attendance, Karen Spicher, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She introduced the Section officers and Steering Committee members, and recognized those departing the Section leadership: Past President/Chair of Nominations Beth Bensman, Web Liaison Paul Atwood and Steering Committee members Kate Colligan, Tara Laver and Steve Mielke.

**2. Election**

Beth Bensman thanked members of the Nominating Committee and introduced the slate of eight candidates. Members of the Section voted, and ballots were collected.

**3. Updates and Announcements**

Sherry Williams, Council Liaison, introduced the Section's new liaison, Tom Hyry. She then recapped some recent Council actions: the creation of the Government Affairs Working Group to assist with advocacy issues; the awarding of two minority scholarships; the institution of online ballots for the next SAA leadership election; the creation of a Task Force on Cultural Property; and the new charge for the Diversity Committee to work with Native American Roundtable to move forward with Native American Protocols.

Teresa Mora, 2009 Program Committee representative, discussed the meeting's theme of "Sustainable Archives," selection criteria, and procedures for submitting session proposals electronically via e-mail; the deadline for proposals is October 8. Sections may endorse up to two proposals and submit as many of their own proposals as they choose. The meeting will be held jointly with the Council of State Archivists.

Karen announced that the Section would implement online elections for next year and called for comments from the membership; there were none.

Jennifer Schaffner, RBMS liaison to SAA, provided an update of current RBMS activities, including its review of descriptive standards for rare books and serials, including DCRM(S): Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Serials); the addition of "Introduction to Archives for Rare Book Librarians" to the Rare Book School curriculum, and the potential for a "Rare Books for Archivists" course; and the Security Committee's plan to develop a method of tracking missing or stolen material.

There were no announcements from the floor.

Karen announced the establishment of a memorial trust fund by the Library of Congress in honor of Mary Wolfskill, former head of the Manuscript Division's Reference and Reader Services section, and long-time member and former chair of our section. Donations can be made at <http://www.loc.gov/donate>. She also addressed the need for Section members to update their SAA profiles to include both the Section announcement and discussion e-mail lists.

**4. Panel on Archives 2.0**

Karen introduced the three speakers for the panel, Kate Theimer, ArchivesNext; Stephen Fletcher, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Paul Hedges, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Kate Theimer, creator of the ArchivesNext blog [<http://www.archivesnext.org>], provided an overview of the most common web 2.0 tools and how archives are using them, as well as a brief discussion of her own experiences blogging about the archival profession. She explained that the purpose of most web 2.0 tools is to give the user freedom from the desktop, create highly collaborative environments and the ability to share content and opinions with a wide audience. These tools allow users to personalize the experience of visiting a web site, and represent a value shift, from one where institutions were attempting to maintain control of the experience and content to one where users can re-use content in new and creative ways. [An extended version of her talk with PowerPoint can be found here: <http://www.slideshare.net/adraivan/web-20-for-archivists-version-2>]

Stephen Fletcher, Photographic Archivist, North Carolina Collection, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, discussed A View to Hugh [<http://www.lib.unc.edu/blogs/morton>], a blog documenting the archive of photographer Hugh Morton, estimated to hold 500,000 photographs and 60,000 linear feet of motion picture film. Stephen commented on the reasons for creating the blog and some of the challenges he and his staff have faced. The blog has allowed him to show the progress being made with processing the collection, highlight Morton's images, shed some light on the work that archivists do, and solicit information on unidentified images. The blog has also become an important forum for discussing Morton's legacy, at times engendering controversy over how Morton had been represented in several blog posts. [<http://www.lib.unc.edu/blogs/morton/>]

Paul Hedges, Information Technology Director, Wisconsin Historical Society, discussed his organization's use of Web 2.0 tools. WHS uses Flickr [<http://flickr.com/photos/whsimages>], a photo sharing web site, to post images from WHS collections. He stressed that the decision to use Flickr was based on the outreach and marketing potential of the site, as well as the business needs of WHS's 10 historic sites. Staff at these locations have been able to upload images from digital cameras to Flickr, taking advantage of EXIF metadata, such as date, time and camera settings, embedded in these files. He also discussed the "Odd Wisconsin" blog [<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/odd>], a popular feature of the WHS web site, that focuses on "strange but true" aspects of Wisconsin history. Paul also provided a preview of the new WHS web site that will launch in Fall 2009. He described the web site's use of guided, faceted navigation, which will enable users to have more control over how they move through the site. Another search feature will allow users to more efficiently bring together all historical material related to specific topics. [<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/>]

Questions and comments:

A question was raised about commercial agreements; speakers shared concerns about managing repository-wide agreements with vendors.

Are undergraduate and graduate students using the A View to Hugh blog? Stephen responded that the blog has been used in a graduate class project, and a student who is assisting with processing has contributed to the blog. However, it is difficult to gauge student use overall, because of the limitations of the available use statistics.

Someone asked about content management systems. WHS is using Moveable Type, which does some content management. UNC uses CONTENTdm.

As contextualization of information is labor-intensive for archivists, and when historians try to contextualize, they often do not agree, how can archivists justify this? Stephen discussed the loss of context for the Morton negatives, and how processing is attempting to restore this. Paul discussed the need to document original provenance and describe this objectively and how the public can contribute to this process.

## **5. Wrap-up and election results**

Karen thanked Kate, Stephen and Paul for their presentations, and called Beth to the podium. Beth thanked

all of the candidates for agreeing to run and announced the winners of the election:

Vice Chair/Chair Elect: Sammie Morris

Steering Committee: Barbara De Wolfe, L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin and Elizabeth Russey

Karen adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Submitted by Mat Darby

16 September 2008