

# THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARCHIVIST

Vol. XXVIII, Number 3

Fall Issue



Photo of Jay Trask and Shaun Boyd, Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists Fall 2011 meeting attendees. For more information, see page 3.

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SOCIETY OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARCHIVISTS

## Notes from the President



### SAA and the Regionals

In his 2010 Presidential Address, Peter Gottlieb called for what he termed a “federation of archives organizations.” By “federation” Gottlieb proposed “a new national organization that our existing associations could voluntarily join, with

which those associations would align in terms of basic policies, and to which they would commit support in the interests of serving all members—their own as well as the federation’s—and pursue agreed-on goals.” He offered ALA as an example of this model, with individual chapters paying dues to ALA, but not requiring chapter members to become ALA members. He presented a list of benefits arising from the formation of a federation of regionals and SAA, primarily in three areas: advocating for archives; defending archives; and enhancing members’ professional resources. For more information than I can cover in this article, I urge you to read Gottlieb’s address: [http://www.archivists.org/governance/presidential/Gottlieb\\_PlenaryII\\_08132010.pdf](http://www.archivists.org/governance/presidential/Gottlieb_PlenaryII_08132010.pdf)

Patrick Quinn wrote an article for the *Midwestern Archivist* in 1983 which outlines the history of the rise of the regional associations, and the needs they arose to serve, and much of it still applies today. <http://archivists.metapress.com/content/6m46xu5045830812/fulltext.pdf>

As an SAA attendee last year, I listened in some dismay to Gottlieb’s speech, as did many of you. One of the great benefits of membership in a regional association is in its affordability, thus making it accessible to a larger spectrum of archivists (unlike SAA, whose programs are too costly for many). I felt that a “federation” such as Gottlieb was

proposing was bound to affect the dues structure of regional associations in an adverse way. Nevertheless, I would like to see SAA and the regionals collaborate more fully than they do – short of a federation.

The reason I bring this up is that a couple of weeks ago, I received an email from SAA President Gregor Trinkaus-Randall inviting representatives of the regionals to a forum at next year’s SAA annual meeting to discuss how regionals and SAA could cooperate more fully. Note that he does not advocate for a “federation” as did SAA’s previous president.

Here is the text of his email:

One of the themes that I noted in my SAA Address was the issue of cooperation and collaboration between institutions and between organizations (archival and non-archival). Included in that discussion was the possibility that the Regionals and SAA could cooperate or collaborate on a variety of potential areas for the benefit of the profession. Nancy Beaumont has since brought to my attention that in an August 2007 SAA Strategic Planning session there was a suggestion to bring together archival organizations to take a look at how they might serve

the profession by working together, i.e. cooperation and potentially collaboration. With this in mind, Nancy and I have been discussing the possibility of holding a Forum at SAA to do just that – bring together representatives of the Regionals and SAA to examine ways in which cooperative activities could be undertaken (not federation!). There would be no foregone conclusions, but it seems that there may well be a number of areas in which the profession, the members, and the organizations could benefit from such a discussion. I feel strongly that this needs to be a two-way street. Everyone has something to offer. We would develop an agenda so that it would not be just a freewheeling discussion with no focus. It would also have a moderator.

*Continued on Next Page...*

***SAA and the Regionals continued . . .***

I am emailing you because I would like your input to several items.

1. Any suggestions for a moderator/facilitator?
2. What topics do you feel would be good starting points for discussion?
3. Other issues that you feel should be addressed or worked out ahead of time.

SAA would like some feedback on this by November 1<sup>st</sup> – if you have thoughts on any of the above, please email me at: [beverly.allen@colostate-pueblo.edu](mailto:beverly.allen@colostate-pueblo.edu) This will also be posted to the SRMA listserv, so you may post your comments there if you prefer.

Beverly B. Allen

**Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists Fall 2011 Meeting**

*- Sara Szakaly*

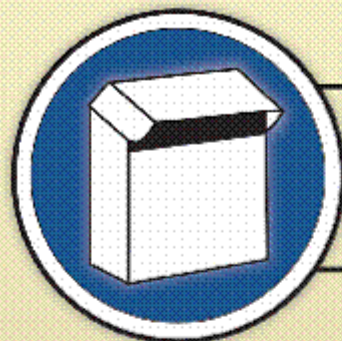
This October, I was became the proud recipient of a Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists (SRMA) scholarship to attend the fall meeting in Boulder. As a newcomer to both SRMA and the Rocky Mountain area, I am especially thankful to be given the opportunity to see more of Colorado, to learn more about its archival institutions, and to meet its archivists, librarians and curators!

With a two and a half hour drive to Boulder ahead of me, my day began very early down in Pueblo. The early morning drive, however, was beautiful! Having recently moved to Colorado from Indiana, I am still utterly fascinated by the landscape of this state. I arrived at the Norlin Library in Boulder in time to meet other attendees and enjoy some coffee. Knowing that SRMA isn't a particularly large organization, I was impressed by the large number of people there. It was great to see that SRMA members are active and dedicated to the organization.

The theme of the fall meeting was "Hidden Collections;" a theme which brought out presenters whose stories and collections covered a wide variety of topics. Sergio Lugo and Ellengail Beuthel from the Rocky Mountain Philatelic library began the day with their story of hardships and successes they experienced starting a philatelic library from the ground up. I was moved by their dedication, in addition to the dedication of the many other volunteers and donors who have made the library possible. The next presenter, Sybil Barnes from Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), discussed the history and importance of RMNP's library. I wasn't even aware that National Parks had libraries! Holly Geist then gave a fun presentation about her fully processed collection at Denver Water, during which I was glad to learn that she is making a point to collect current materials, such as Denver Water advertisements.

The middle of the day consisted of tours of CU Boulder's Preservation Department, Special Collections and Archives. Having worked in University Archives and Special Collections departments at Indiana University and Notre Dame, I very much enjoyed the opportunity to see how things are done at another university. After a delicious lunch, the afternoon presentations began. The first of which was unlike anything I have ever seen at a conference; Bryce Jackman, an extremely entertaining balloon artist, astonished me with his talents, and informed all of us about the history of balloons. I was even lucky enough to receive some balloon art of my own!

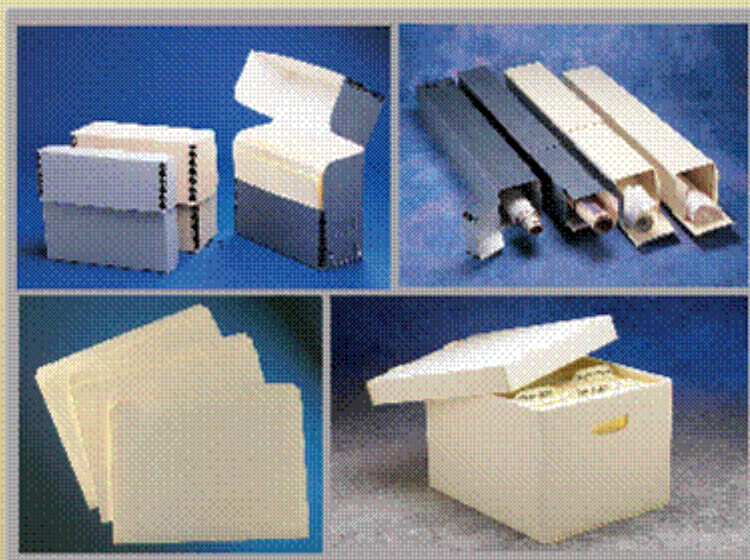
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*SRMA Fall Meeting continued . . .*

Next came Jamie Wilms, curator at the Lakewood Heritage Center. She discussed the more risqué items in their archival collection, which, of course, made for an enjoyable presentation. Lone Arranger Ronda Frazier enlightened us all about her work at the Jefferson County Archives. She is an example of the difference one person can make in the endeavor to preserve historical documents and make them accessible to the public. Eric Harbeson, the final presenter, talked about the holdings at American Music Research Center in Boulder. Music is, as he said, the key to understanding how a group of people was truly feeling during a certain period of time. As such, both sheet music and sound recordings are absolutely key components of the archival record, and their preservation is of great importance.

Overall, I had a wonderful day at SRMA's fall meeting. It was a great opportunity to learn about "hidden" collections and institutions that I may have never come across otherwise. Being new to the organization, it was especially useful for me to have a chance to meet other archives professionals. I am definitely looking forward to attending more SRMA events in the future!

## Archives 360° - SAA's Annual Meeting and Anniversary Celebration

- *Cyns Nelson*

August 2011 brought the Society of American Archivists (SAA) to Chicago, where participants gathered to exchange ideas, create new lines of inquiry, and reflect on 75 years of knowledge building. This conference marked my fourth year of attending the national meeting, and it offered a turning point. The sea of unfamiliar faces that greeted my first conference in 2007 has taken on a recognizable pattern with the faces of colleagues who return year after year. And now I see myself in that design. So, a word of encouragement to folks who still feel lost at these types of events: You ARE part of the picture, keep looking for evidence of your distinct contribution.

SAA 2011 celebrated the anniversary of the professional organization. As with most anniversaries, the occasion provided an opportunity to look back—or, in this case, "listen back." One focus of the conference was *This Archival Life*, a project to capture individual stories. The Oral History section spearheaded this effort, providing recording devices, basic instructions, release forms, and strong encouragement. The idea was to get SAA members to interview one another, recording a conversation that might illuminate what it means to be an archivist. Throughout the conference, volunteers staffed a table where anyone could drop by and pick up a digital recorder. I worked a shift at this table, and I can report that people who heard about the project loved its concept. Unfortunately, I'm obliged to also report that participation was sharply underwhelming. The incongruity is revealed in two scenarios . . .

**SCENE ONE: No, But I'm So Glad You Are Doing This.**

*A woman stops to ponder the This Archival Life poster.*

**Me:** "Would you like to check out a recorder?"

**Woman:** "Huh?"

*Continued on Next Page...*

*SAA Annual Meeting continued . . .*

**Me:** “It’s part of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. We’re encouraging people to interview one another, to record a story or conversation about SAA.”

**Woman:** “What a great idea!”

**Me:** “Yes! Do you want a recorder?”

**Woman:** “Oh, no. I wouldn’t know who to interview. But I am soooo glad you’re doing this!”

**SCENE TWO: You Must Be Contagious.**

*People walk briskly between sessions, and no one is stopping at our table.*

**Me:** “Would you like to check out a recorder?” [Cornering someone with my eyes.]

**Someone:** “No, thank you.” [Ditching my gaze and veering from our table.]

**Me:** “Would YOU like to check out a recorder?” [Calling enthusiastically to a person 20 feet from the table.]

**Person:** [Smiles.] [Moves in the opposite direction.]

**Me:** “We’ve got recorders to hand out!” [Sounding desperate, perhaps dangerous.]

**The Flow of People:** [Gives our table wide berth.] [Our table has become a dollop of plague.]

As these two scenes illustrate, the story project suffered from a lack of early exposure. People were not mentally prepared to participate and were reluctant. (Note: Organizers suggest that this might be a regular part of future conferences.) On the other hand, a more successful effort this year involved pre-arranged video oral histories with SAA members, all of whom had been identified as Society leaders. I volunteered to interview Mary Jo Pugh, longtime editor of the *American Archivist*. We had a wonderful, nearly two-hour conversation. Her personal history will become part of the organizational history, and her memories will serve as a bridge between generations of archivists.

I know that it’s poor form to conclude an article by introducing something fresh, but I’m doing it anyway. One concept—entirely new to my radar—emerged in the research forum as well as two different sessions: Linking Open Data. For our purposes, the idea would be Linked Open Data in Libraries, Archives, and Museums (LODLAM). I’m still wrapping my mind around basic principles, but the promise is that structured data (such as the metadata comprised in catalog records or finding aids) could be tied together in a way that is machine searchable, just as text documents are now searchable through Web sites. With this utility, the existence and meaning of “things” could be shared without necessarily exposing the “thing” itself. The Smithsonian’s streaming talk offers more explanation: <http://lod-lam.net/summit/2011/09/15/intro-to-lodlam-talk-live-from-the-smithsonian/>

Links also characterize the long-term benefit of attending national meetings such as SAA. The annual conference facilitates links between people, ideas, projects, and potentials . . . past and future. My sincere and deep thanks to Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists for awarding me a stipend to attend the 2011 conference. The experience, for me, was one of enduring value.

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## National History Day

- *National History Day Committee of Society of American Archivists Reference, Access and Outreach Section*

Dear Archivists and Librarians,

The National History Day Committee of SAA's Reference, Access and Outreach Section is proud to announce a new online toolkit featuring a wealth of resources for teachers/students and archivists/librarians about National History Day (NHD).

See the NHD toolkit at: <http://nhdarchives.pbworks.com>

National History Day provides structure and guidance to teachers and students learning to work with archival materials. It also provides one of the most effective approaches for archivists who want to reach out to middle and high school students.

See the NHD site at: <http://www.nhd.org/>

NHD sponsors annual competitions for middle and high school students using primary sources to create original papers, documentaries, websites, exhibitions, and performances. The program guides teachers and students to high quality use and citation of archival sources. If you are thinking of reaching out to middle and high school students, National History Day may offer the structure you want for success.

The toolkit is an ideal resource for **archivists and librarians** who wish to get involved in National History Day. In it you will find practical information about outreach to NHD teachers, the annual calendar for NHD competitions, how to create subject guides for the annual competition, examples of excellence in outreach and collaborations, and information on managing class visits. There is also helpful information about how to work with novice researchers and best serve their needs.

**Students and teachers** will find videos about primary sources and archival research, information on how-to find archives with primary sources on specific topics, friendly explanations of what to expect when students visit an archives, and links to reliable online digital collections.

**Interactive!** Site visitors are invited to leave comments, contribute their repository information to the NHD list of participating repositories, and even suggest digital collections to add to the list of online primary sources .

This site puts educators, students, and archivists "on the same page." If you like it, tell your colleagues, tweet your friends, put it in your blog.

The Society of American Archivists National History Day Committee

Shaun Hayes, Doris Malkmus, Polina Ilieva, Kathryn Otto, Tanya Zanish-Belcher, Lisa Sjoberg, George Bain, Laura Katz Smith, Sherry Berger, Rob Sieczkiewicz, Gregory Kocken, and NHD Director of Curriculum Ann Claunch and Executive Board officer Steve Cure.

## Keeping it Fresh

- Karen Jones

During 2010, many Colorado institutions applied for NEH Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions (PAGs) and several were successful. I asked the awardees to share their successful projects with the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists (SRMA) community in the hopes of assisting those who may want to apply for the next funding round. NEH PAGs for 2012 will be offered in February. The deadline for 2012 grant applications is early May for projects starting January 2013. For more information, see <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>. The maximum award is \$6,000.

Awardees for projects finished last year were:

UNC, Michener Library, Greeley

Denver Museum of Miniature Dolls and Toys (DMMDT)

Molly Brown House, Denver

CSU Art Museum, Ft. Collins

Southern Ute Cultural Center, Ignacio

Ute Pass Historical Society, Woodland Park

Half of these projects included purchase of environmental monitoring equipment; a basic requirement for maintaining optimal and stable collections storage.

Jay Trask manages the grant for the Archival Services Department, University of Northern Colorado. The purchase of temperature/RH monitors will allow them to determine the best course of action needed to improve the environmental conditions within the Library and encourage the long-term preservation of its collections. Additionally, the NEH designated the initiative a We the People project. Designated projects “encourage and strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture through the support of projects that explore significant events and themes in our nation’s history and culture and that advance knowledge of the principles that define America.” The collection includes their archive of James Michener, including his manuscripts and working drafts.

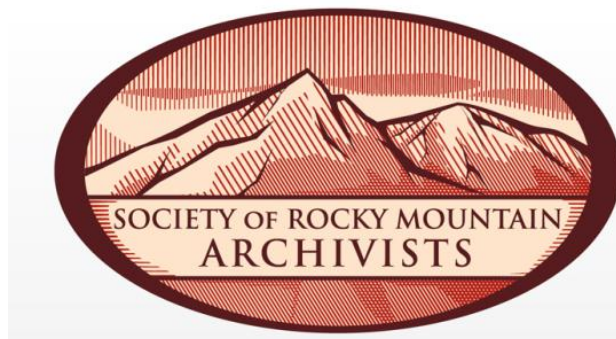
Jay noted that the process wasn’t difficult, but found it helped to start working on the grant narrative early enough to allow time to ask others to review it. He found the NEH staff extremely helpful when he had questions and thought their application guide was very easy to follow.

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- ◆ 1/8 page (1 1/2" wide x 4 1/2" tall) = \$50
- ◆ Business card (3 1/2" wide x 2" tall) = \$50



*PAGs continued . . .*

Jillian Allison, Coordinator of Education and Programs at the Denver Museum of Miniatures (DMMDT) reported that their funding will allow them to work with a conservation consultant to assess the current storage conditions of the collection in order to develop a plan for making improvements. The environmental monitoring equipment, including data loggers and light monitoring equipment, will be part of that assessment. The consultant will also provide staff and volunteers with basic, informal training on techniques and methods of preventative care. The museum is housed in a late 19th c. historic home rented from the Colorado Historical Society. The house presents some challenges and limitations for collection storage; most of their storage is in the basement.

Jillian found the grant application process short, but noted that she has taken a grant writing class and has about three years of grant writing experience. She gave a lot of thought to picking the right project size project, given the time allowed and size of the grant, and was up-front about any problem areas. She noted that being able to purchase supplies through regional co-op organizations like Colorado-Wyoming Association of Museums and Mountain Plains Museum Association demonstrated collaboration and an ability to purchase at a discount that funders like to see.

Kelly Rasmussen, Collections Curator at the Molly Brown House Museum, reported that they also received funding to support improvements to their environmental monitoring capability on-site with the purchase of updated hygrothermographs/dataloggers, software for the data loggers, light monitor, and UV light sensor. She recalled that it took about two weeks of planning and organizing the materials to get the grant ready to be submitted. One thing that really helped with the process of writing this grant was that the museum received a Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) grant from Heritage Preservation in 1996 and then had a ReCAP in 2010 to revisit and update the recommendations for preservation that were made in 1996. CAP provided insight on the priorities that staff needed to direct their focus; it also created connections with conservators in the area. She stressed you must know the needs of your institution. And it never hurts to apply to any relevant funding source.

The University Art Museum at Colorado State University, the first collecting and climate controlled art museum in Fort Collins, received two grants. The first was an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant to purchase a collections management software system (Gallery System's EmbARK) and catalog objects in EmbARK in order to facilitate access to and management of a collection of approximately 3000 works of art. This project lays the groundwork for its long-term goal of providing on-line public access.

The second was an NEH grant to support preservation training for staff members, consultation with conservators, and purchase of preservation supplies in order to complete the re-housing phase for their native arts objects and works on paper. The completion of re-housing and labelling will facilitate safe access for research, teaching and exhibitions.

The final PAG awardees listed here were submitted by institutions assisted by The Museum Training Network (MTN), a nonprofit organization formed to assist small, rural and tribal museums, libraries and cultural institutions in the Rocky Mountain West. The training delivery methods are online, in-person and on-site via a Mobile Conservation and Training Laboratory. Terri Schindel, founder of MTN, works with personnel from each institution to locate funding sources through local, state and federal grants to implement the assessment and training/project priorities.

*Continued on Page 12...*

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*PGAs continued . . .*

The Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum in Ignacio, Colorado received funding to allow MTN and Mobile Conservation and Training Lab to assist in the preparation of the museum's display collection in the new \$35 million Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum, which is scheduled to open May 20 2011 (See [succm.org](http://succm.org) for more information). The grant allows for two on-site workshops for the museum's staff on collections care including rehousing the collections and environmental monitoring techniques, and the purchase of supplies and equipment. Ms. Schindel will be onsite to train staff beginning with a core collections curriculum and advancing to the conservation-technician level. The advantage of training onsite is training opportunities are for everyone and the trainers mentor projects to completion.

The new museum will have a full-scale permanent conservation laboratory when it opens. Schindel hopes she'll get to come back and use that facility, which will be the only one of its kind in the Four Corners. "The lab won't just be for the 1,500 or 1,600 artifacts the museum has," museum board member Marvin Cook said. "It will be open for tribal families, tribal members who want to store their family pieces at the museum," (*The Durango Herald*, November 2010).

The Ute Pass Historical Society in Woodland Park, Colorado also received funding to allow the Mobile Conservation and Training Lab to conduct training for museum staff and develop a plan for improving collection storage, as well as the purchase of dataloggers to monitor the facility's environmental conditions. The Ute Pass Historical Society possesses a collection of over 10,000 artifacts documenting the history of native Ute people, settlement of Ute Pass communities in the 1860s, and the history of the Colorado Midland Railway.

Here's hoping that the projects described above will inspire SRMA member organizations, both large and small, to write their own PAG proposals. Start by thinking hard about how to tailor and prioritize your potential preservation project and begin the process. Good advice and assistance is available for the asking!

Thanks to these contributors for sharing their experience and insight!

Jay Trask, [jay.trask@unco.edu](mailto:jay.trask@unco.edu)

Jillian Allison, [education@dmmdt.org](mailto:education@dmmdt.org)

Kelly Rasmussen, [krasmussen@mollybrown.org](mailto:krasmussen@mollybrown.org)

Terri Schindel, [terrischindel@aol.com](mailto:terrischindel@aol.com)

## Volunteers Opportunities

Are you looking for volunteers? Are you looking to volunteer your services?

If you have any archives related volunteer experiences coming up please submit them to Caroline Blackburn, SRMA electronic Resources Manager ([srmaerm@srmarchivists.org](mailto:srmaerm@srmarchivists.org)) to be placed on the website.

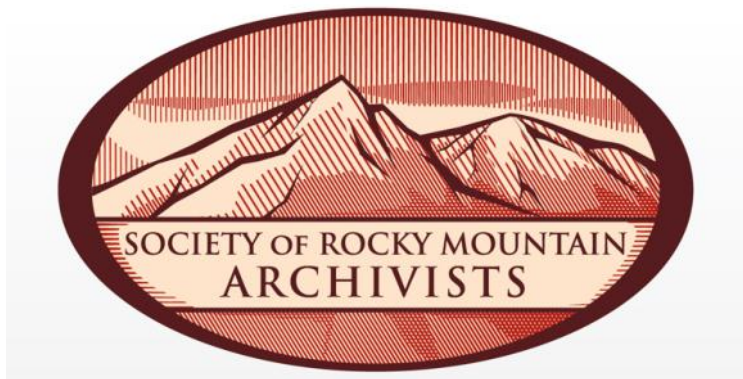
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## Membership Information & Benefits

SRMA membership is drawn from regular and volunteer staff of archives, historical societies, museums, businesses, government agencies, libraries, colleges and universities, religious institutions and other persons who are concerned with the identification and care of information that documents the history of our region. Individual membership is open to any interested person. Institutional memberships are welcome and encouraged.

SRMA membership facilitates the exchange of archival knowledge and assistance. It advances the interests of

individual archivists and of the archival profession. Members automatically receive the SRMA newsletter, membership directory, regional archives directory, and informational materials. The Society also has an editorial board for the publication of occasional papers. We invite you to complete the membership application form located on the SRMA website to enhance your personal career developments and to further the cause of the archival profession in the Rocky Mountain region.