

CAA



NEWS

Spring

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For membership information,
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hunter@schnectadymuseum.org

**“Archives: Lost and Found in Translation”
MARAC Spring 2005 Meeting
in Albany**

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) will hold its Spring meeting at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Albany, New York, from April 21 to April 23, 2005. Co-sponsored by the New York Archives Conference and the Capital Area Archivists of New York, the conference will include a variety of informative sessions and workshops, half a dozen local tours, a luncheon speaker, and a reception at the Albany Institute of History and Art. The program will appeal to anyone working with historical collections.

The program theme, “Archives Lost and Found in Translation,” promises a wealth of interesting presentations. Speakers will explore the many ways in which archival documents are

continued on page 2

**NHPRC Funding Eliminated
in 2006 Proposed Budget**

In the FY2006 Budget recommended by the White House on February 7, 2005 the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) has been targeted to receive no funding. This means that there will be no money for grants and no money for the administration of the NHPRC. The NHPRC has been an important source of funding for archives and manuscript repositories in New York State. The New York State Archives has received NHPRC grants to supplement the Documentary Heritage Program grant money. Eliminating the NHPRC will limit available DHP funds and eliminate an important source of funding for records repositories in New York State.

The Society of American Archivists, the National Association of Government Archivists and Records

continued on page 4

Capital Area Archivists of New York State

MARAC (continued from p.1) translated, from literal translation of Dutch colonial documents into English, to the translation that occurs when people use archives to write works of history and fiction. Although something is occasionally lost in translation while interpreting archival materials, more often insights are gained into our past and future. Copies of the program are available online at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/spring2005.pdf>.

The conference will provide many opportunities to explore Albany and the surrounding Capital District. Tours of Historic Cherry Hill, the recently renovated New York State Archives and Library facilities, the Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway, the State Capitol, Albany's Underground Railroad sites, and Peebles Island State Park (home of New York's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation) will be available to conference attendees. Those who prefer to explore on their own will have ample opportunity to learn about the heritage of New York State, including Dutch exploration and settlement, early American history, the colorful Albany political landscape, and the region's rich architectural tradition. Several local institutions will also be offering free or reduced admission to conference attendees. These institutions include the Albany

County Hall of Records, Bennington Museum, Rensselaer County Historical Society, Schenectady County Historical Society, and Schenectady Museum. Additional information about all of these events are available in the program and at MARAC's Web site at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/spring2005.htm>.

All CAA members are encouraged to attend and reminded to register as members of CAA only. Profits from the conference will be distributed according to registrants stated affiliation with CAA, MARAC, or NYAC. Please consider registering as a member of CAA to insure we receive the full benefit of co-sponsoring what is sure to be a great meeting in Albany. To qualify for the reduced advance registration rates, your registration must be postmarked by March 23 or April 7.



State Archives and State Library Renovate Facilities

-Jim Folts, Head, Reference Services, New York State Archives

The State Archives and State Library—Manuscripts & Special Collections opened a new public research facility on the 11th floor of the Cultural Education Center on November 8, 2004. An open house was held on Saturday, November 20. The three-year, \$7.5 million renovation project has resulted

in expanded, redesigned public research spaces; a classroom for instructional purposes; a renovated conservation laboratory; moveable box and flat document storage units (25,745 shelves) that nearly double the useable storage space; and a self-contained HVAC system which meets current standards for archival storage. Visitors are welcomed in a redesigned lobby, whose walls display facsimiles of historical documents in the State Library and State Archives. The public research facility includes areas designed for reference interviews and catalog searches, microfilm viewing, and use of original materials.

Planning for the renovation began over ten years ago, and movement of collections to temporary storage spaces in the CEC and elsewhere began nearly five years ago. The State Archives adopted bar-coding to facilitate the move of 80,000 boxes. Archives staff also employed an automated needs assessment database to identify records to be reboxed for safe transport and storage. The research room shared by the State Archives and State Library—Manuscripts & Special Collections was closed for two weeks—one week in early 2001, when the public research room was relocated to the third floor of the CEC, and one week in November 2004 when the new research facility opened.

Capital Area Archivists of New York State

Other facility improvements are in progress or being planned. In mid-2003 the State Library began to renovate its main research facility on the 7th floor of the CEC with new furniture, carpeting, window blinds, and reconfigured research spaces. The State Education Department Office of Cultural Education is now studying and planning for collections storage and program facility needs of the State Museum, State Library, and State Archives during the first several decades of the 21st century.

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DHP lending Library Available to Capital Area Archivists

-Susan D'Entremont DHP
Regional Archivist

Did you know that the Capital District Documentary Heritage Program has a small lending library of material available to archivists, librarians and others responsible for historical records? These publications range from basic introductory

texts for the novice archivist to more in-depth books and articles on specific topics. A list of the lending library's holdings is now available on the CDLC web site. Visit the site at <http://www.cdlic.org/>. Click on "Programs and Services," then "Documentary Heritage Program." A link to the lending library is listed under "CDLC's regional DHP services." This list of publications is in pdf format.

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Riding out of the Sunset -Bob Arnold III

Governor George Pataki recently signed legislation important to accountability, management and decision-making in local governments. This new law eliminates the sunset provision on the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund established by the State Legislature in 1989. The Fund is created from a small portion of the filing fees for deeds, mortgages, court documents and other records in the County

Clerk's offices of New York State and is administered by the New York State Archives, part of the State Education Department.

Fifteen years ago, local governments and their professional associations came together to secure funding to address problems with the ever-growing volume of records in local governments. This effort resulted in the creation of the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund in 1989. The Improvement Fund, which had a 2005 sunset date, annually supports, through a competitive grants process, hundreds of projects to improve the management of local government records across the state. It supports the identification and protection of archival records, the deployment of information technologies, the destruction of obsolete records and the storage of inactive ones. Since the Fund's grants program commenced in 1990, New

For submissions to the next

CAA NEWS

please contact John Diefenderfer, CAA Newsletter Editor
at
jdiefenderfer@dc-northeast.org

Articles and announcements are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Capital Area Archivists of New York State

York's local governments have had the benefit of some 7000 grants totaling nearly \$130 million.

The Fund also supports a system of regionally-based technical assistance, in which State Archives professionals, backed up by specialists in Albany, provide free consultation and technical assistance to several hundred local governments, monitor Improvement Fund grants and together present about 125 workshops annually. Regional Advisory Officers work in a direct, and symbiotic way with New York's more than 4300 local governments, making hundreds of field visits each year, speaking at meetings of local officials, and providing technical advice where local resources are not available.

In addition, the Improvement Fund supports the Documentary Heritage Program and its Regional Archivists, plus the DHP grants program for not-for-profit records repositories – local historical societies, museums and others. In the Capital District, literally hundreds of local governments

and records repositories have received technical assistance, training and grants via the Improvement Fund.

The Improvement Fund proved highly popular and when Legislation to eliminate its sunset was introduced by Assembly Majority Leader Paul Tokasz and Senator Mary Lou Rath, more than 800 local governments passed resolutions of support. Local supporters sent hundreds of letters, and emails and made a huge number of phone calls to the Legislature supporting the bill. Virtually

NHPRC (continued from p.1)

Administrators, and Council of State Historical Records Coordinators have formed a Joint Task Force on Advocacy to take action on this issue. While they are working on a detailed plan the Task Force recommends faxing letters to members of the House Appropriations Committee from New York State. The committee begins meeting March 1, 2005 so it is important to fax your letters as soon as possible. For more information about writing to your Representatives contact a CAA

Board Member, or Susan D'Entremont, DHP Regional Archivist. The SAA website at <http://www.archivists.org/news/nhprc-FY2006.asp> has guidelines for drafting letters to Congress, fact sheets, talking points and lists of Senate and House Appropriation Committee members.

Membership in Capital Area Archivists of New York (CAA) is available for individuals and institutions. Dues are only \$5 per year, and membership benefits include our informative newsletter and three meetings a year.

To renew your membership or to become a CAA member see the CAA website for forms and information:

<http://library.albany.edu/caa/>

Become more involved with CAA

Would you like to become more involved with the governing and planning of the Capital Area Archivists of New York? CAA is looking for enthusiastic and organized individuals to serve as officers on our Board. If you are interested in the possibility of holding office, please contact Amy Schindler, President of CAA, at (518) 437-3934 or aschindler@uamail.albany.edu.

Capital Area Archivists of New York State

“The Challenges of Restricted Collections” CAA Fall Program

CAA’s Fall program was an informative discussion led by local archivists facing the difficulties of holding and providing access to restricted collections. At the meeting Robert Freeman, Executive Director of the NYS Committee on Open Government spoke on public access to government information; Chris Hunter, Director of Archives at the Schenectady Museum spoke on managing corporate collections and the balance between access, intellectual property and corporate litigation; and Rachel Donaldson, archivist for the Foundation of NYS Nurses spoke on the recent HIPAA legislation and potential restrictions on medical records in archives.

According to Rachel Donaldson, HIPAA regulations may limit archivists’ provision of certain types of information to the general public. However, there is no specific case law determining how those regulations will be interpreted and applied by the courts. Detailed information on the potential impact of HIPAA on your collections is available on the US Department of Health and Human Services web site at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa> and a list of resources shared during the program is available at <http://library.albany.edu/caa/Events/fall2004.htm>.

The General Electric records at the Schenectady Museum present another set of access challenges for Chris Hunter the Director of Archives. According to Chris, managing the GE records requires balancing the corporate needs of the GE legal department, with the research and access needs of scholars, historians and activists.

Robert Freeman, Executive Director of the NYS Committee on Open Government spoke on public access to government information as an important function of a democratic government. The Committee on Open Government is responsible for providing advice to the NYS Government, the public and the news media, issuing regulations and reporting its recommendations to the Governor regarding the Freedom of Information Law and the Open Meetings Law in New York State. Information on these laws and the Committees’ legal opinions are available at <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coog/googwww.html>.

CAA members would like to thank all three speakers for an informative and lively Fall Program. We would especially like to thank Rachel Donaldson and the staff of the Veronica M. Driscoll Center for Nursing for hosting the meeting.

Upcoming Workshop

The DHP is sponsoring a

workshop, "Introduction to Appraisal and Selection of Historical Records" on March 15, 2005 from 9:30-3:30 at CDLC. This workshop shows participants how to identify, evaluate, and select records with potential historical value. It introduces core terminology, concepts, and standards used by the archival profession relating to the appraisal and selection of records that should be placed in an archives. See <http://www.cdlc.org> for further information.



Happy 25th Anniversary to the Daughters of Charity Archives!

On October 14, 2004 the Daughters of Charity Archives celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary and Sister Elaine Wheeler celebrated her 25th year as Archivist. The celebration was a tribute to Sister Elaine’s career, her enthusiasm, and dedication to the archival profession. During the festivities she was presented with letters of commendation from Christine Ward and Kathleen Roe of the New York State Archives for her work with archives in the Capital District and beyond.

The Daughters of Charity Archives is responsible for managing the historical records of the Northeast Province of the Daughters of Charity and documenting their service to the poor and disadvantaged in the fields of healthcare, education and social welfare.