



Metropolitan Archivist

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Cover Image: From left to right: Dan Sokolow, Archives Coordinator; David Taylor Archives, North Shore – Long Island Jewish Health System; Ron Young, Archivist, Merrill Lynch; Jocelyn Wilk, Assistant Director, Columbia University Archives & Columbiana Library; Steven Wheeler, Director, Archives and Philanthropic Programs, NYSE Group; Daniel May, Company Archivist, MetLife; Nelson Chai, Chief Financial Officer, NYSE Group; Mindy S. Gordon, President, Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. and Senior Archivist, Rockefeller Archive Center Janet Linde, Archivist, NYSE Group; Althea Bernheim, Consultant, World Trade Center Documentation Project; Jennifer Winters, Archivist, GAP, Inc.; Stephen E. Novak, Head, Columbia University Medical Center Archives & Special Collections; and Trina Yeckley, Archivist, NARA-Northeast, NYC. Courtesy of the NYSE Group.

The mission of the ***Metropolitan Archivist*** is to serve members of the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York (ART) by:

- **Informing** them of ART activities through reports of monthly meetings and committee activities.
- **Relating** important announcements about individual members and member repositories.
- **Reporting** important news related to the New York metropolitan area archival profession.
- **Providing** a forum to discuss archival issues.

The ***Metropolitan Archivist*** (ISSN 1546-3125) is issued semi-annually to the members of ART. Comments, questions, or submissions for features should be directed to editor, Rebecca Altermatt, at archivistra@gmail.com. Deadlines for submissions are May 30th and November 30th. Similar inquiries and submissions for reviews should be directed to XXXXX.

Preferred length of submissions is 800-1000 words for feature articles and 400-500 words for reviews.

The ***Metropolitan Archivist*** and ART assume no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

The ***Metropolitan Archivist*** accepts advertisements from businesses which provide services that would be of professional interest to ART membership. Rates and other related information can be obtained by contacting the editor or visiting the ART website at www.nycarchivists.org. Job advertisements can be posted directly to the ART web site by contacting the ART web master at jobs@nycarchivists.org.)

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Presidential Message

by Mindy S. Gordon

The coincidental occurrence of two celebratory events held during Fall 2006, honored the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York for their influence in the New York Archives community. I ventured to Albany in late October to accept the 2006 William Hoyt Annual Archives Award for Excellence in Advocacy from the State Education Department and the New York State Archives. This award recognizes the role ART played in several noteworthy events of the recent past, particularly recognizing the work of a number of core individuals who have participated meaningfully in several episodes in our organizational history. This award also recognizes the role of each and every member of the Round Table who contribute to other efforts and may compose newsletter features, select award winners for the annual October ceremony, serve a term (or two) as a Board member, assist in program planning, produce an annual calendar and, also, attend monthly events. All are to be congratulated upon this level of recognition.

Another equally gratifying event was the opportunity for some members of the Round Table to participate in the Opening Bell Ceremony at the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday October 10th, 2006. Both these events are detailed in separate articles within this newsletter.

As a member of ART for a number of years and as a former Vice President, I have great admiration for the strength and focus which this group of talented archivists continues to sustain. While we do share the same goals as other archives organizations, we have the great fortune of being a part of the New York archives community. New York metropolitan archivists work within a community with one of the largest concentrations of archivists in the country, representing a wide range of institutional work environments and disciplinary practice. However, there are many more characteristics we possess in common with our cousin-archivists than those in which we differ. Many archivists I have spoken to maintain that this field has satisfied not only

a professional goal but fortified an individual satisfaction. This particularly defines us as archivists. It is perhaps where we differ most from those in different fields. That we choose to pursue archival issues in our designated 'leisure time' with this certain direction and passion is also a reason for the reigning success and survival of ART.

This commonality overrides other boundaries, determining that procedures practiced are dictated by archival theory and not political treatise, corporate benefit, or competition. ART's greatest resources are reflected by the strength and talents of member volunteers, who chose to do what they like to do best and choose to do so as members of ART. I thank everyone involved in ART, past and present, for his or her devotion to the perpetuation of this now world-famous organization.

Have you Subscribed to ART's Electronic Bulletin Board?

This bulletin board/mailing list is available to all ART members, who can post job listings news bulletins, or discuss matters of interest to the local archives community

To reach the list, visit:
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From this introductory page, you can join or read the list. Once you have subscribed, you can post to the list either from the above web page or directly by email at **nycart@topica.com**

Questions, comments or suggestions about the bulletin board should be directed to Daniel Sokolow at:
webmaster@nycarchivists.org.

Editor's Note

I'd like to recognize the volunteers who help make this newsletter possible. Kristen Nyitray, Head of Special Collections and University Archives at the Stony Brook University coordinates and edits our book reviews; Ellen Mehling, Outreach Librarian in Special Services at the Central Library of Queens Public Library, is our "oral historian" who seeks out and interviews our colleagues in the profession; and Celia Hartmann is our ART Features compiler and co-editor who will soon complete her degree at the Palmer School of Long Island University. A new volunteer this year is Bonnie Marie Sauer, a project archivist with the Winthrop Group, who is the lay-out guru. Kristen, Ellen, Celia, and Bonnie are integral to the successful completion of yet another Metropolitan Archivist.

The newsletter is always looking for interested volunteers to help by writing articles or book reviews, or by reviewing area exhibits. We especially seek an Issue Coordinator who will assist in collecting the components for each issue of the newsletter and handing them off to Bonnie. Also, if anyone would like to write a column or is interested in creating an editorial cartoon for the newsletter, please contact me as well. Email is best - archivistrja@gmail.com.

*Rebecca Altermatt
Communications and Outreach Coordinator*

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Coming to Light: The Louis I. Kahn Monument to Franklin D. Roosevelt

By Gina Pollara

In the late 1960s, New York City Mayor John Lindsay appointed a commission to study the reuse of the 800-mile-wide, 2-mile-long stretch of land in the East River, then called Welfare Island. Purchased by the city in 1828 from the Blackwell family, the island became notorious in the mid-1800s for the squalid environment that existed in the many municipal hospitals and prisons that were erected there after the change in ownership. Charles Dickens visited several of the institutions and wrote about the horrible conditions he found in his 1842 book *American Notes*, which chronicles his first trip to America. The unsanitary and overcrowded lunatic asylum (as it was then called) became the subject of a series of exposés written by the intrepid journalist Nellie Bly in 1887. The Octagon, the centerpiece of this facility, has recently been restored. It is now flanked (overshadowed, really) by two buildings just opened for residential use. The Small Pox Hospital at the southern end of the island is another of the few extant buildings from this earlier era. (This landmark is sometimes referred to as the Renwick Ruin as it was designed by James Renwick, the architect also responsible for the design of St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. (A much more thorough history of the island can be found in a very useful and informative book, *The Other Islands of New York City*, by Sharon Seitz and Stuart Miller.)

By the late 1960s, the island had fallen into disuse, and most of the buildings had been abandoned. Many proposals were made, but Lindsay's commission settled upon a master plan drawn up by the architects Philip Johnson and John Burgee. They proposed a mixed-use, mixed-



The Cooper Union exhibition installation on the Kahn/FDR Monument Park. Courtesy the Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture Archive.

race, mixed-income residential community that they called the "New Town in Town." In 1969, New York City leased the island to New York State for a term of ninety-nine years. It fell to the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC), under the direction of the urban planner Ed Logue, to implement the Johnson/Burgee plan.

At the same time, the Four Freedoms Foundation (the predecessor organization to the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute in Hyde Park, New York) was looking for a site in New York on which to build a memorial to FDR. In addition to being elected to the United States presidency for an unprecedented four consecutive terms, FDR had also been a New York State senator and governor. Since the fate of Welfare Island was being debated at that time, it was proposed that the memorial be sited on the southern tip and the island renamed in Roosevelt's honor, an idea that was endorsed by The New York Times on April 12, 1970.

With funding from the Rockefeller Brothers,

the UDC and the Four Freedoms Foundation commissioned the renowned architect Louis I. Kahn in 1972. On September 24, 1973, Welfare Island was officially renamed Roosevelt Island in anticipation of the three-acre, tree-lined monument park designed by Kahn that was to occupy its southern tip.

It was seen as a fitting tribute both to FDR and to the

island that was to be redeveloped as a new residential community based upon principles inspired by his ideals. The choice of Kahn could not have been more appropriate:

Kahn's conviction about the ability of enlightened design to better mankind echoed the ethos of the New Deal, and one of Kahn's earliest projects was social housing in a utopian development in Roosevelt, New Jersey.

At the time of Kahn's unexpected death in 1974 the design was complete and had been approved by UDC. Three months later, UDC contracted with Kahn's associates and the New York City architectural firm Mitchell/Giurgola to finalize the construction documents according to the Kahn design. This work was finished and the monument was ready to be built in the mid-1970s when the city underwent a fiscal crisis. As a result of that and the subsequent bankruptcy of UDC, the project was shelved, but efforts to get the monument built continued.

Under both Governors Carey and Cuomo, state funds were appropriated for the project, yet fundraising efforts fell short of the total amount needed to begin construction. In the mid-1990s, the site was cleared, graded, and sculpted to the triangular form of the Kahn design to allow the ground to settle prior to construction. The mound

is clearly visible today. It is as a result of this work that the south tip of the island was opened to the public.

In August 2006, I assumed the duties of Executive Director for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Monument Park Project for the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute. I had first learned of this project - one of Kahn's last completed designs and

the only one remaining that can be built posthumously as he intended it - while an architecture student at The Cooper Union. I became very familiar with it when as Associate Director of the Irwin S. Chanin School



*Perspective. Louis I. Kahn, 1973. Louis I. Kahn Collection.
(c) University of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania
Historical and Museum Collection.*

of Architecture Archive, I co-curated the exhibition on it held at Cooper in January/February 2005.

The subject appealed to me as both an architect and a devotee of the work of Kahn. The project's long and important history called upon my skills as a researcher and archivist. My colleague and co-curator, Steven Hillyer, the Director of the Architecture Archive and I pieced together a fairly complete account of the project, which was published in a catalogue produced in conjunction with the exhibition.

One of the best archival pieces we located during our research for the show was a copy of a film that was produced in 1980 under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts narrated by Orson Welles. Running a little over ten minutes, it is a beautiful summary of the importance of FDR as well as a succinct and striking description of the monument itself. Most surprisingly is how relevant this piece is today, twenty-six years after it was made. It is a testament to the deep and enduring significance of this project. It is my privilege to be involved with the current efforts to finally realize this monument park.

On to Smooth Sailing: The New York Yacht Club Archives Project

By Vanessa Cameron and Teresa Bogar

John Cox Stevens and eight other progressive New York yachtsmen met aboard Stevens' new yacht Gimcrack during the afternoon of Tuesday, July 30, 1844. Gimcrack was anchored off the Battery at the foot of Manhattan Island. Stevens proposed forming a club among New York businessmen and residents, which could serve as an organization for weekend New York Harbor racing, and summer cruises in the cooler New England waters. These nine individuals agreed to form the New York Yacht Club (NYYC), electing Stevens to serve as Commodore. In 1851, a group of these members had built what was to become, perhaps, the most famous yacht in the world. This was the schooner America, which sailed to England and defeated the pick of the British fleet, one against fourteen, in a handy manner in a race around the Isle of Wight, and thereby won the Royal Yacht Squadron One Hundred Guinea Cup for her owners. Thus began the history of the famed America's Cup (named for the yacht, not the country) and the dominance of the NYYC in the sport of sailing.

According to a respected maritime antiquities appraiser, "The Library of the New York Yacht Club, which includes material that entered the collection at or near the founding of the Club in 1844, is without a doubt the finest and most extensive privately held gathering in the United States of books, manuscripts and photographs relating to yachting and pleasure boating." Among these treasures are the archives, which consist of approximately 200 linear feet of material. The Archives include correspondence, photographs,



serials, publications, letterpress copybooks, architectural drawings, ephemera, printed material, clippings, digital media, maps, charts, scrapbooks, oral histories and artifacts from the 1840s through 2003. Materials are currently stored in an environmentally controlled storage space at the 44th Street clubhouse in Manhattan and at the Club's facility in Newport, RI.

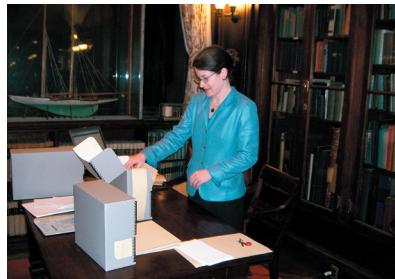
When the Project Archivist started in September 2006, much of the collection was unprocessed but some boxes had been labeled and roughly described by member volunteers. While these efforts were enormously helpful in the descriptive work, there was no overall arrangement strategy or intellectual control. The containers and stacks are blissfully free of vermin and mold; materials are generally in good physical condition despite their somewhat cramped home. While storage space is an issue here as it is at many other repositories, the biggest challenge in processing this collection is dealing with the nature and volume of the correspondence, which represents approximately 80% of the collection. Members, officers and committee chairs often had multiple functions within the Club and each series contains correspondence from multiple creators. Cup events tended to consume most of the Club's activities, so that while the establishment of the America's Cup Committee centralized much of the workflow pertaining to the races, many other committees, members and outside groups were involved in the events as well. The Club's structure has changed quite substantially since its inception,

with over 26 committees and 3,200 members today.

The Club successfully defended the Cup twenty-four times then lost it to Australia's Royal Perth Yacht Club in 1983. From 1851 through 1983 the America's Cup was central to the NYYC's identity for both its members and the general public. While the archives

project encompasses all of the Club's records, the America's Cup records represent the initial and most labor-intensive phase, constituting an entire series of the records. Gaining intellectual control over this portion of the collection was designated as top priority because researchers use this material the most. And a surge of interest in these materials is anticipated as the 32nd America's Cup challenge in 2007 fast approaches.

Wish us fair winds!



*Left: Vanessa Cameron processes the America's Cup Papers, 2006.
Right: New York Yacht Club Library, 2006. Photos courtesy Yess Bogar, New York Yacht Club.*

Credits:

Vanessa Cameron, Project Archivist, received her MSIS from the University of Texas at Austin in 2005. She has for UT's Center for American History, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Columbia University's Avery Library, and the Bronx County Historical Society.

Teresa (Tess) Bogar, Librarian, received her MLIS from the University of Texas at Austin in 1996. She has worked for the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, the CNN New York Library, The Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute, and has served as 'solo librarian' at the New York Yacht Club for three years.

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Interview with the Archivist: Alexandra Bernet

By Ellen Mehling

Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML), the home of many of Columbia's greatest treasures, is housed on the sixth floor of Butler Library. The range of the library's holdings spans more than 4,000 years, from cylinder seals created in Mesopotamia to artists' books on which the ink is barely dry. In addition to printed and manuscript resources, the library contains cuneiform tablets, papyri, ostraca, astronomical and mathematical instruments, maps, works of art, photographs, posters, early printing presses and papermaking equipment, type specimens, sound and moving image recordings, theater set models, puppets, masks, ephemera and memorabilia. The Rare Book and Manuscript Library includes unique and rare materials related to all subject areas.

EM – What is your name? Where were you born? Where did you grow up?

AB – Alexandra Bernet. I was born in Staten Island, N.Y. and I grew up there.

EM – Was there anything in your childhood to indicate an interest in archives or history?

AB – I don't think so...my mother was a teacher; my father was a newspaper photographer. I don't think I actually got that interested in, maybe archives or special collections, until I got older, although my first job in college was in the library.

EM – In what subject was your undergraduate degree?

AB – English, like so many other librarians. And a minor in film history, for added uselessness upon graduation.

EM - (laughing) How did you come to get a degree in library science?

AB – After a long, hard road of many many bad jobs. I temped and I waitressed and I bartended, was a secretary...and I finally thought, 'I don't

want to do this anymore. I have to think about what I'd really like to do.' I had some friends who were librarians, and had paraprofessional and professional people that I knew when I was living in Athens, Georgia. I moved there for a couple of years...and I thought, 'Maybe I'll get a job in a library and if I like it, then I'll go get a degree, and if I don't like it then I'll figure out something else...and I was a para for a year and a half, and I really really loved it, and then I went to grad school at Rutgers, from there.'

EM – Where do you work now? What is your title?

AB – I work at Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library and I am a Project Archivist. I've been working on a series of grants since I started there almost three years ago.

EM – What project are you working on now?

AB – Currently, now, I just started a new project where I'm supposed to be converting our finding aids to EAD...we've been a bit behind the curve on a lot of other places...also testing 'The Archivist's Toolkit' and Archon as well. We have a very large collection and a very small staff, so we've been sort of withering. We finally said, 'We just have to take

the time and suck it up and just start figuring out a way to do this right' so I'm on an eight-month grant, which I'm about a month into right now.

EM – Do you think that beyond that you'll be staying at Columbia?

AB – I would like to stay at Columbia, I hope to stay at Columbia...(laughing) They have an infinite amount of things to work on. I think...we figured it out...if someone processed just our backlog, it would take 120 years. So every time we get a new collection, we say, 'So it's 125 years of backlog, or 132 years now'; we just keep tacking on numbers on to the end of it...(laughing)...it just feels insurmountable.

EM – What are some other projects you've done at Columbia?

AB – I just finished the Herman Wouk papers; he wrote 'The Winds of War' and 'War and Rememberance', which were miniseries if you remember. I liked doing that. I also worked on the Fred Friendly papers; he was the President of CBS News and he was also the producer for 'See It Now', from which the movie 'Good Night and Good Luck' was made...about the McCarthy...played by George Clooney. He did not look like George Clooney, not even a little bit.

EM – No? Oh...so they prettied him up for the movie?

AB – (laughing) Oh yes they did.

EM – I understand you're active at the Archivists Round Table – you're the treasurer?

AB – Yes, I'm the treasurer.

EM – How long have you been doing that?

AB – I'm wrapping up the end of my two-year term in the spring, so about a year-and-a-half now.

EM – Are you interested in continuing, or are they going to have to get someone new?

AB – The treasurer before me was there for six years, and they said he really liked it...but I don't believe he liked it six years worth; he may have liked it four years worth! (laughing) I do like it; I like being the treasurer, not so much for the money managing aspects of it, but I get to see and greet and talk to everyone who comes in, because they have to pay me the money and sign the slip...so I like that aspect of it. I like the fact that I get to know the people who come all the time and where they work...I like the social aspects of it. I like getting money. I like writing the checks too, for people. Since it's not my money it makes it a little easier to write thousands and thousands of dollars in checks...(laughing)

EM – And my final question, if you could work in any archives, real or fictional, what would be your dream job?

AB – If I had my fantasy world I would love to work in a little, small-town type archives where I could do a little bit of reference, a little bit of processing and some exhibits and have great volunteers and work with people, but I need to live in a big city, which is why this will never happen for me!

GET INVOLVED!!

Volunteer with ART

What can you do to contribute to ART-NY's success? Start by contributing to one of these committees.

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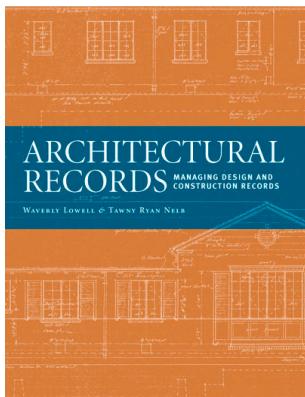
Calendar: Review Contributions, Solicit Photographs.

Fundraising: Take part in coordinating efforts to meet ART's Fundraising Goals.

Programming: Assist in selecting locations, topics, and speakers

Communications and Outreach: Write for the Newsletter, Design Brochures and Invitations

Reviews



Architectural Records: Managing Construction and Design. Waverly B. Lowell and Tawny Ryan Nelb. Society of American Archivists, 2006. 250 pp.

Reviewed by Sharon A. Pullen.

Referring to their work in the introduction the authors describe it as a manual “intended mainly for archivists” that they hope may be “useful to individuals responsible for managing design records, whose duties include developing records schedules and long-term use and care.” Toward that goal, they have created a slim volume densely packed with information, much of which is new to archivists who have not been responsible for architectural or design records. However, the dual nature of their envisioned readership has created a more frequent emphasis in the text on basic archival principles and practices than is necessary for the experienced archivist.

Chapter one is a brief eighteen pages that takes us from the “first known architect, Imhotep” through web-based project management (WBPM) and Building Information Modeling (BIM.) It also includes eighteen illustrations ranging from a detail of Egyptian sculpture to photographs of 1980’s era CAD workstations. Even though Egyptian, Greek, and

Medieval architecture may be familiar to the reader, this chapter introduces details of the architect’s training and responsibilities not generally emphasized by art historians.

The second chapter thoroughly explores the process of records creation within the specific sphere of architectural practice. The authors present a standardized view of the design and construction process dividing it into four major phases: planning and programming; design; construction; and post construction. Records created or used during each phase are explored and numerous sample illustrations are included. This chapter certainly convinces the reader of the complexity of the records created during a design project. A very useful table entitled “Essential Records for Documenting a Design Project” can be found on page twenty-seven. Unfortunately, Chapter Two is also where one of this manual’s primary weaknesses is discovered. Despite, or perhaps because of, the detailed description of the numerous records created during the design process, I found myself looking for a glossary. There is none. Many of the unfamiliar terms used are subsequently explained within the text, however, a glossary would have been a useful addition to such a manual and much more efficient than rereading the text to find a definition.

The third chapter gives more detailed definitions of records that are unique to design collections. It also includes many illustrations, as well as references to the Gallery of Color Images. On page forty-eight, the text stops in the middle of a sentence, the end of which is found on page fifty-four. Between these two pages is the “Gallery of Color Images;” forty pages

of color plates referred to throughout the manual. This placement of the color images is not unusual in an art history volume, and I suspect it had something to do with printing costs, but the unfinished sentence makes a disconcerting break in continuity.

Chapter four looks at archival appraisal from the specific considerations of design collections. Page eighty-three includes another useful table “Generic Recommendations for Appraisal.” The following two pages reproduce a graphical “Appraisal Grid” that is organized by type of record and contains six columns headed: permanent; retain many for documentation; retain a few for examples; destroy or transfer; case-by-case; and reformat. Here again, though, the authors include lengthy explanations of archival theory that have a pedantic quality more suited to a novice reader than a working archivist.

The above statement holds true for chapter five as well. The specifics of arrangement and description of design records are covered in detail including: project index; series description; folder list; and EAD encoding for a project index provide a very clear visual presentation of the differences in describing design materials and more common types of archival records. The information that is specific to appraisal of architectural/design records is complex and the addition of information on basic practice common to all archives is distracting.

The last three chapters are the most useful to an archivist who is a newcomer to architectural/design records. These chapters include very specific techniques

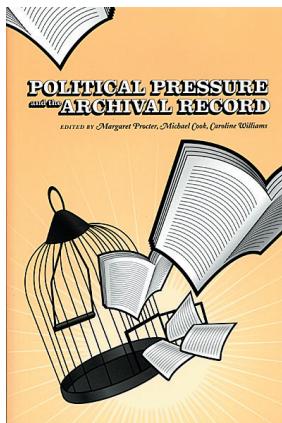
and recommendations for cleaning, encapsulation, humidification, storage options, and working with conservators. Chapter seven contains a time line representation of the various materials used in the creation of architectural records that begins circa 1840 and runs through 2000. Various types of media and the composition of the papers and other materials supporting them are discussed in clear detail. Both budgeting strategies for conservation costs and recommendations for prioritization of items to be conserved are addressed. This chapter is a very “nuts-and-bolts” approach to the preservation of the specific types of material found in collections of design records. Chapter eight outlines policies and special concerns related to patron access of design records. Recommendations are made for the furniture and equipment necessary to protect such records from damage during use by researchers. There are discussions of the special considerations inherent in researcher access to design materials and those in reformatting and digitization.

In conclusion, this book, although planned as a manual for archivists, has tried to address two very different readers and may frustrate both as a result. The repetition of basic principles of archival practice adds material unnecessary for the archivist, and, perhaps uninteresting to the records manager looking for more practical solutions. The chapters sometimes seem to be an anthology of articles on the various aspects of architectural/design archives rather than the logical progression described in the table of contents.

The field of architectural records archives is a complicated one, with a definite need for updated literature. In writing one book for two audiences, the authors have produced neither a manual for practitioners, nor an

introduction to the field for novices with archival responsibilities. This book reads like a somewhat pedantic textbook, not a manual written for practicing professionals. It is clear the authors have a deep concern for the preservation of design records and are greatly experienced in that archival specialty, but this work is unlikely to inspire that same commitment in its readers.

Sharon A. Pullen is the first Archivist in the Office of the Suffolk County Clerk. She holds a Master of Science degree in Library and Information Science, a graduate Certificate in Archives from the Palmer School at the C.W. Post campus of Long Island University, and an M.A. in History from SUNY Stony Brook.



Political Pressure and the Archival Record. Margaret Procter, Michael G. Cook and Caroline Williams, eds. Society of American Archivists, 2005. 345 pp.

Review by Mario H. Ramírez.

In a post 9/11 world where wiretapping, the USA Patriot Act and an increased surveillance of our

daily lives have become the norm, the extent to which the archival record and archival institutions themselves are subject to the inquisitiveness and intervention of governmental bodies is a topic that has become increasingly prevalent in archival discourse. Indeed, with governmental archives having to re-classify previously unclassified materials and the President of the United States penning legislation that prohibits public access to Presidential papers, archives are not only demonstrating an inability to escape the editorial reach of the State, but being reminded of their long standing, historical subjection to the whimsies of political power. Bearing this in mind, the organizers of the conference “Political Pressure and the Archival Record,” held at the Liverpool Centre for Archive Studies in July 2003 (the proceedings of which the essays in this volume comprise), culled together presentations that sought to explore the different facets of the relationship between archives and politics in order to gain a multilayered and historically informed perspective on the current state of affairs between governments and the records they keep.

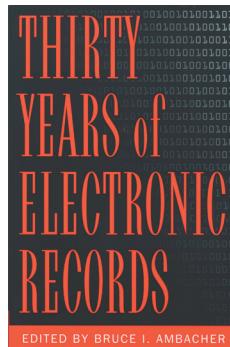
Using a broad set of criteria requiring them to engage with questions on, among other things, the destruction of records as a political act, the effects of ideology on the record and the nature and use of records resulting from repressive policies, conference presenters authored essays that explored both the historical and current impact of government and politics on the keeping and development of the archival record, and its ramifications for future understandings of contemporary society. The twenty essays that comprise this volume, which are divided into six

thematic sections, range in scope from: discussions on the role of colonialism on the formation of archival holdings and collective memory; records access in Belgium and the former West Germany; the state of archives after the genocide and conflicts in Sarajevo and the Balkans; police archives in Britain; security issues in New Zealand; the Bush Administration's "information lockdown"; and the future prospects, control and access to electronic records. Although disparate in subject matter, uniting these essays is an overarching concern with the intricate and often subtle ways in which shifts in the political landscape (wars, regime changes, etc.), and political pressure from both internal and external forces, can often change, manipulate and block access to the archival record; and the subsequent impact this has on the knowledge and identity formation of everyday people.

By presenting various case scenarios, the essays in *Political Pressure and the Archival Record* help explore the multifaceted and concrete ways in which political pressure manifests itself and the vehicles which are used to deliver it; taking what was once an abstract news clip and transforming it into a reality that we can identify with. But moreover, the international nature of the gathering and presentations provides the reader with insight into machinations of power from several locations and lends a certain perspective on the ways in which we as archivists, record makers and records users are often subject to many of the same spheres of power and influence. Although uneven in their breadth and level of engagement, the essays included in this volume bear reading insofar as they help inaugurate an informed discussion on how we, as

an international archival community, can begin to strategize and work against the political pressures exerted on us and those we exert upon ourselves. In tandem, making a case for continued open access to archival resources and for an equally as open interpretation of history and historical fact.

Mario H. Ramírez is Project Archivist for the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College of the City University of New York.



Thirty Years of Electronic Records.

Bruce I. Ambacher, ed. The Scarecrow Press, 2003.
190 pp.

Review by F. Jason Torre.

The term 'electronic record' is a confusing and daunting mystery which turns even the most experienced of archivists green when spoken aloud, especially when one contemplates the potential pitfalls and work involved in the successful preservation of those ubiquitous collections of ones and zeroes that encompass and consume our daily lives. Luckily for us, there has been a dedicated group of archivists at the National Archives and Records Administration over the years that have been willing to tackle the mystery on our behalf. Like

other pioneers of the past, they faced their share of skeptics, insufficient funding, equipment shortages and dwindling staff. *Thirty Years of Electronic Records*, compiled and edited by Bruce I. Ambacher, strives to tell this fascinating story through a comprehensive collection of first hand accounts and commentaries written by the very people who shaped the programs and the theories we are still struggling with today.

Thirty Years of Electronic Records tells the story of the work done by twelve specialists who have been associated with digital preservation in government over the past thirty years. As the editor states in his introduction to the volume, the work is a biased one since it seeks to both explain and celebrate the events and decisions made by the program's various leaders over the course of their tenures. This honest declaration of the book's underlying theme is commendable but at the same time it is the work's biggest weakness.

In any history on a particular topic, the reader wants an objective and honest assessment of the facts and events that shaped a historical period in time. Additionally, they are eager to hear from those who lived and breathed the work being depicted, but there is a fine line between relaying interesting facts and anecdotes and unnecessary musings of those involved. Both may be found in the same chapters, making them cumbersome to read and digest.

To combat the too personal musings and the temptation of endless name lists disguised in prose form, some of the authors used a variety of writing techniques to convey their thoughts or the events with which they were involved. This varied style works within the overall chapter organization

continued on page 19

ART News

New York Archives Week Awards Ceremony

One of the highlights of Archives Week is the annual awards ceremony, which honors individuals or organizations for their support and use of archives. This year's awards ceremony was held October 11, 2006, at the American Numismatic Society in downtown Manhattan, preceded by a lively and well-attended cocktail reception.

The awards are given annually for Archival Achievement, Outstanding Support of Archives, and Innovative Use of Archives.

Sarah Lawrence Women on the Home Front

The Sarah Lawrence College Archives will make its first digital project available online by the end of the year. The project, funded by a Digital Metro New York grant from the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO), involved the digitization of a scrapbook compiled during World War II by the Student War Board of Sarah Lawrence College, an all-women's college until 1968. The 160-page document has approximately 800 images, including photographs, newspaper clippings, citations from the Red Cross and U.S. government, and correspondence regarding student participation in the war effort. The scrapbook provides an in-depth look at the work done toward the war effort by college women on the home front. The digitized document has been cataloged using Luna Insight and will be accessible via the Archives website (<http://pages.slc.edu/~archives>) making it available to a wider audience than previously possible and ensuring the preservation of the original scrapbook.

The project, undertaken by David Nicholls, Library Systems Administrator, and Abby Lester, the College Archivist, will be used to establish a software, hardware and workflow framework for future digitization work. The aim is to improve the accessibility of material to the College community and the public.

Award for Archival Achievement Deborah Wythe

This award recognizes an individual or archival program that has made an outstanding contribution to the archival profession, or a notable achievement of value to the archives community, its patrons, or constituents. The recipient must be a member of the Archivists Round Table or an archival program operating within the New York metropolitan region. This award is not issued annually, but only if appropriate candidates are nominated.

This year's winner was Deborah Wythe, who accepted the award. The Archivists Round Table acknowledged her for her significant contributions as both practitioner and educator in the area of museum archives; her innovative work at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, where she is creating a new model for the integration of digital collections and institutional functions; and her status as a dedicated and generous mentor to junior and veteran archivists alike. Currently Head of Digital Collections and Services at the Brooklyn Museum, Deb previously served as that institution's Archivist and Manager of Special Library Collections from 1986 through 2005. An active member and past chair of the Museum Archives section of the Society of American Archivists (SAA), she is editor and contributing author of its second edition of Museum Archives: An Introduction.

Deb's introduction to museum archives came as a research fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, working on the records of the Musical Instrument Department, while completing her dissertation on 19th century Viennese piano builder Conrad

Graf. After earning her doctorate in musicology at New York University, she served as curator of the Steinway Collection at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/CUNY.

In the 1980s the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), noting the dearth of museum archives programs and citing the loss of important cultural records, started awarding funds for the establishment and development of museum programs. Deb came to the Brooklyn Museum through one of these NHPRC seed grants and was faced with the formidable undertaking of creating the 100-year-old institution's first archival program. She was charged with the establishment of collection development plans, records surveys and management, appraisal and preservation strategies, processing priorities, descriptive practices, access guidelines, and reference services.

Significantly, Deb realized that her mission extended outside the doors of her own institution. A founding member of SAA's Museum Archives section, she has used this forum to help educate her colleagues and advocate for the advancement of professional practices in museum archives through the dynamic exchange of information and collaborative efforts. The publication of Museum Archives: An Introduction is the most tangible outcome of that vision. This comprehensive, lucid and handsome work is a resource not only for museum archivists but has much to offer both seasoned and fledgling archivists operating within a broad range of institutions. Now as a new member of the SAA Publications Board, she will

have an opportunity to participate in the selection and development of publications of similar quality, utility, and substance.

As Head of Digital Collections and Services at the Brooklyn Museum, she has developed a central clearinghouse to manage the museum's far-flung digital resources. Tasked to utilize existing resources within the museum, Deb gathered staff and technical resources from many different departments and grant-funded projects to integrate the museum's digital collections. The outcome has made images more accessible, eliminated duplication, and increased productivity. The project is forging a new model for how digital assets can be managed for diverse purposes within a single institution. Much of the success of this venture is attributable to Deb's energy, logic, and persistence.

Finally, Deb has been a generous colleague and mentor to countless archivists both within and outside the museum archives community. She is a natural teacher and, like the best educators, is both knowledgeable and enthusiastic to share her expertise, whether she is introducing a new intern to basic archival practice or making a presentation to her peers at a professional symposium. Always available for practical advice, technical support, and boundless encouragement, Deb has demonstrated herself to be a rare and valuable resource, as well as a talented and inspiring leader.

The award was presented by Charles Desmarais, Deputy Director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Award for Outstanding Support of Archives: Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO)

This award recognizes an individual or organization for notable contributions to archival records or archival programs through political, financial, or moral support.

This year's winner was The Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO) and the award was accepted by Dottie Hiebling, Executive Director, and Richard Kim, Digital Projects Manager. METRO was recognized for its outstanding support of digital projects in New York City archives. METRO assists local digital projects with funding, professional collaboration, and

training for staff. Its exemplary support for local archives was launched in 2002 with grant money from the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (LSTA). As this program evolved, METRO has emerged as a major educator and supporter of digitization in the New York area. METRO's Digitization Advisory Council, comprised of local experts, collaborates with OCLC in developing this program, and they continue to direct digitization initiatives at METRO.

METRO has distinguished itself by endowing significant local history digitization efforts with

start-up funds. In many instances, it has funded smaller repositories without access to traditionally large foundation or government digital project grants. During 2005 and 2006, Digital Metro New York distributed \$140,000 to 17 libraries to facilitate launching and completing digital projects. Some projects include Brooklyn Public Library's Democratic Party Scrapbooks and Fulton Street Trade Card Collection; CUNY Graduate Center's Erie Canal holdings; rare books at the Leo Baeck Institute; and historical visual records of Pratt Institute. These modest grants – each totaling less than \$10,000 – allow collections to begin small by piloting learning and infrastructure development of digitization projects.

Further, METRO offers excellent workshops on practical digitization issues – from website enhancements to metadata to podcasting – conducted by national leaders for interested archivists and librarians. Registration fees are underwritten by LSTA grants. This training is

supplemented by METRO's Digitization Special Interest Group (SIG), an informal and valuable professional development and resource sharing network.

In 2006 METRO introduced Digitization Planning and Training Grants, for which repositories can apply for matching funds to retain specialists addressing specific digitization problems. METRO's website features a range of useful resources highlighting digital standards and best practices. We applaud Metropolitan New York Library Council's rapid and effective commitment to developing a sophisticated user community with a high level of professional discourse – achieving important results in promoting access to the unique local history collections of our smaller repositories.

The award was presented by Clifford Lynch, Director of the Coalition for Networked Information.



*Pictured from left to right:
Charles Desmarais, Deborah
Wythe, Dr. Niles Eldredge,
Barbara Mathe, Richard
Kim, Clifford Lynch, Dottie
Hiebling, Mindy Gordon
and Brian Andersson.
Photo courtesy New York City
Municipal Archives.*

Award for Innovative Use of Archives: “Darwin” at American Museum of Natural History

This award recognizes an individual or organization for use of archival material in a meaningful and creative way, making a significant contribution to a community or body of people, and demonstrating the relevance of archival materials to its subject.

This year's winner was the exhibition "Darwin" at the American Museum of Natural History and was accepted by Dr. Niles Eldredge, Curator "Darwin" and Curator, Division of Paleontology, American Museum of Natural History.

The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York acknowledged the American Museum

of Natural History for its splendid and groundbreaking exhibition on *Darwin*, in recognition of the Charles Darwin bicentenary in 2009. This extensive installation – consisting of original manuscripts, notebooks, personal mementos, laboratory equipment, historic plant and fossil samples, and even live tortoises and iguanas – was organized in conjunction with London’s Natural History Museum, Cambridge University Library, and Darwin’s Down House. Record audiences attended the exhibition, which was extended due to popular demand.

Simply put, *Darwin* traces the evolution of evolution – the chronological development of the naturalist’s theories of natural selection, which laid the foundation for modern biology and the field of genetics. Visually appealing installations use specimens and diagrams from the Galapagos Islands to illustrate Darwin’s studies and how he empirically evaluated his evidence. Over 100 documents include correspondence from Darwin at 22 pleading with his father to go on the *H.M.S. Beagle* expedition, original notebooks containing sketches of his evolutionary tree, as well as manuscript pages his *The Origin of Species*. The reconstruction of Darwin’s studio with his personal artifacts provides an exciting laboratory for his ideas – and audiences are actually given insight into the workings of the mind of one of the 19th century’s creative geniuses.

Significantly, a human side of the scientist emerges: keepsakes from the devastating loss of his ten year-old daughter, Annie; his debilitating illnesses; daily walks in his gardens; and his

struggle over two decades that his theories would challenge the fundamentals of the accepted religious order. As Darwin the man is demystified, we are even more in awe of the epistemological obstacles he overcame and his crisis of conscience, which conflicted with the devout faith of his own wife.

The exhibition closes with a statement from the Museum’s curators: ‘For 150 years, the theory of evolution by natural selection has not been seriously challenged by any other scientific explanation.’ It further asserts that the 200 scientists at the American Museum of Natural History find no scientific proof to support the theory of intelligent design.

Given recent attacks against science – underfunding and politicization of research; minimal support for stem-cell inquiry; incursion of intelligent design into the science curriculum, even in New York State – the Museum is to be commended for this well-timed and persuasive show. With corresponding declines in math and science education – affecting America’s future competitiveness in the global economy – this compelling exhibition attracted a broad general audience, exposing them through archival displays to the beauty and durability of the scientific method.

The award was presented by Barbara Mathé, Museum Archivist and Head of Library Special Collections at the American Museum of Natural History.

Book Reviews

continued from page 15

given the book by the editor, but it is dependent upon the information being conveyed. During the times it does not work the book’s overall theme helps to maintain the reader’s interest. The book’s self-professed celebratory makeup ties the sum of the parts together and allows the reader the flexibility to jump around between chapters without losing factual context or literary quality.

In *Thirty Years of Electronic Records*, Bruce Ambacher has given readers an exhaustive look into the world of government archives and public policy decisions. His skilled selection of contributors and their topics has created an excellent reference work that will be invaluable to professors of general archival education, teachers of electronic records courses or the interested reader that more than make up for its sometimes for it minor

shortfalls. However, whether read in whole or in part, this volume is a useful addition to any departmental reference collection.

F. Jason Torre is University Archivist in Special Collections and University Archives at Stony Brook University. He earned his MLS and Archives Administration certificate from Long Island University, CW Post.

Archivists Roundtable Wins State Archives Award

The Board of Regents and the New York State Archives selected the Archivists Roundtable of Metropolitan New York to receive its 2006 William Hoyt Annual Archives Award for Advocacy.

The award was presented to Roundtable President Mindy S. Gordon and immediate past President Joseph M. Komljenovich at a luncheon ceremony at the State Education Department in Albany on October 23, 2006. The award is named after the late Assemblyman William Hoyt from Buffalo, who was a staunch supporter of archives and records management in New York State.

The award recognizes the Archivists Roundtable of Metropolitan New York for its many efforts on behalf of archives: initiating the first New York City Archives Week in 1989, speaking out on



Chancellor, Board of Regents, NYS, Robert M. Bennett, presents the 2006 William Hoyt Award for Excellence in Advocacy to ART President Mindy S. Gordon.

the necessity of retaining mayoral records as part of the city's government archives, working in concert with other partners after the attack on the World Trade Center to locate members and ensure both their personal well-being and assess damage to collections, managing the World Trade Center documentation project, and advocating for appropriate care of and access to historical records.

The annual Archives Awards program recognizes outstanding efforts in archives and records management work in New York State by a broad range of individuals and organizations. The award

was presented by Robert M. Bennett, Chancellor of the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.

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Workshop Update

On October 18, ART members were treated to an outstanding workshop at the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. The workshop topic was planning, designing, installing and marketing an historical exhibit. Aided by his highly experienced staff, Dr. Louis Levine, Director of Collections and Exhibitions, provided a conceptual framework for exhibits - whether large public installations or small, in-house displays.

Dr. Levine stated that the starting point for an exhibit is a story. What is the story or message that you want to tell? Write it down. Refine it and eventually reduce it to one sentence. At each phase of the design process, check that the sentence continues to apply.

Bonnie Gurewitsch, the Museum's archivist, developed Dr. Levine's themes by focusing on how the concept relates to the exhibit space or area. Is it linear, like a hall way, or is it a room, or a combination of both? Consider how many cases the space can hold. How many people will pass through the space? Practical considerations include: is there an electrical outlet and if so, where is it located. If the space is dark, how can it be lit?

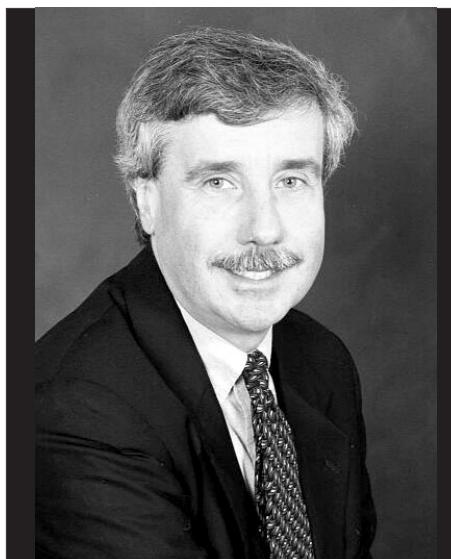
Dr. Levine introduced a 5 phase design process, a fundamental planning tool that can be used to solicit institutional support, plan resources, develop budgets, consider constraints and reach the installation phase in a highly disciplined way. It is an essential tool regardless of the planned size of the exhibit and the audience.

The archivists were then led to the museum's main exhibit area to consider one aspect of the workshop – the voice, or voices, used in an exhibit. Participants were given the opportunity to discuss the voice that provides a narrative between the exhibit areas (the curator's voice), and the voice of a participant in the exhibit. Dr. Levine believes "Less is more" in this context.

The Director of Communications, Abby Spilka, discussed marketing an exhibit. Two important tips she offered were: make your title "pithy and charming" and use one "iconic" image throughout your marketing materials – press releases, brochures, etc.

Ms. Spilka ended her very practical presentation with this advice: get a photographer to take installation shots when the exhibit opens – this can go a long way to helping you secure funds for your next one.

Wosh Receives Arline Custer Award



Peter J. Wosh received the 2006 Arline Custer Award for best book from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference for Privacy and Confidentiality Perspective: Archives and Archival Records (SAA 2005), which he co-edited with Menzi Behrnd-Klodt. The award was presented to Wosh, who is director of the archives program at New York University, during the MARAC fall conference in October.

Meeting RoundUp

Fall 2006



September

The first meeting of the 2006-2007 ART programming year introduced us to the collections and history of The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. Janet Greene, Director of the Library, provided an informative presentation detailing the history of the collection. She explained how the General Society's historic records were transformed, over time, from an unexpected discovery within the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at NYU in 2002 to an independent, processed collection at the General Society courtesy of a NHPRC grant in 2005. She also highlighted some of the more interesting items within the collection. Her talk was preceded by a brief presentation by Dr. Michael Stoller, Director of Collections and Research Services at the NYU Libraries of NYU, who was eyewitness to the original discovery of documents in 2002 when he was employed in the Wagner Archives. After the presentations, attendees had an opportunity to tour the General Society's historic library room, got a glimpse of selections from the archival collections, and examined a display of locks from the

Mossman Lock Collection. The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen served as host.

October

The Annual New York Archives Week Awards Ceremony took place at the American Numismatic Society in Lower Manhattan. Awards were presented to *Darwin* at the American Museum of Natural History for Innovative Use of Archives; *Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO)* for Outstanding Support of Archives, and *Deborah Wythe*, for Archival Achievement. See page XX for more details on this year's awards ceremony.

November

Working together to tackle the challenges that electronic records pose for repositories, team members from the Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA) and the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) discussed their experiences during the first year of the Collaborative Electronic Records Project (CERP). This three-year project seeks to develop, test, and share technology to preserve the growing body of

digital records that will be added to those archives' holdings. Project archivists Nancy Adgent (RAC) and Lynda Schmitz Fuhrig (SIA) talked about methods used and issues faced during the first phase of the project. In addition to the project archivists, Dr. Darwin H. Stapleton, RAC Executive Director, briefly related the project's origin and concept. Riccardo Ferrante, the CERP Project Manager and SIA Information Technology Archivist & Electronic Records Program Director, gave a brief overview of the technological aspects of the project. The National Museum of the American Indian served as host.

December

The annual holiday party was held at the historic Fraunces Tavern. The festive evening consisted of plenty of food, drink, socializing and a new twist on the ever-popular holiday gift raffle. This year several select prizes were raffled off to a few lucky winners and those attending brought unwrapped gifts or gift cards for children ages 5-21, to be donated through the Children's Aid Society 2006 Snow Angel Holiday Toy Drive.

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