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Vice President's Column: MAC Meetings and Symposia Update

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Vice President's Column: MAC Meetings and Symposia Update

By David McCartney, University of Iowa

I'm back from my annual trek to Nebraska's Sand Hills country, a late fall ritual that began as a habit of "escape" about a dozen years ago, not long after I started working in my present position. It's a chance to slow down for a few days, to seek solitude, to renew and reflect.

Usually, I head west from my office in Iowa City with noble expectations of accomplishing something. Catching up on work-related to-do lists, for example, or organizing and tossing out stacks of notes. In reality, of course, nothing of the sort happens. The days are filled instead with hiking, reading, taking naps. It's a time to renew acquaintances and friendships in a part of the country that is far removed, yet only a day's drive, from where I live.

The yearly excursion is a welcome break, but it is also a professional exercise in its own way. Each year I notice changes in the landscape. The 1926 McPherson County Court House in Tryon (pop. 92), for example, is no more, replaced by a modern, single-story structure that is less costly to maintain. Other signs of change: rusted gas pumps that were last inspected in 1984, a vacant school and abandoned playground, a four-room motel I once stayed at regularly that is now closed because the friendly owners, an older couple, moved to North Platte to be close to medical services. I miss seeing them.

As archivists, we notice these subtle and obvious changes over time, and we are reminded of our roles as documentarians. The changes are, at times, unsettling, but we are also reassured when we note how others preserve community memory. For example, the *Tryon Graphic*, McPherson County's weekly newspaper, closed in 2009 and merged with the newspaper in a nearby county, the *Stapleton Enterprise*. A popular feature is its *Graphic* archives column noting events of 20, 30, 40, 50, and 75 years ago. It is one reminder of how history matters to all of us.

Anyone up for a trip to the Sand Hills sometime?

Mark your calendars for MAC's upcoming meetings in 2016 and beyond.

2016 Annual Meeting, "ArchivesFest," Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 27–30, 2016

The City of Festivals hosts our upcoming Annual Meeting this spring. The Hilton Milwaukee City Center Downtown will be our venue, and it will be a great launching point to explore the fascinating history of a vibrant city. The Local Arrangements Committee, cochaired by Michael Doyle and Anna Stadick, promises to have some terrific activities lined up, including tours and a reception at the Harley-Davidson Museum. The Program Committee, cochaired by Colleen McFarland Rademaker and Amy Cooper Cary, is putting the finishing touches on a well-rounded schedule of sessions that will feature a wide range of topics in a variety of formats. Information about registration and hotel reservations will be available on MAC's website (midwestarchives.org) soon.

2016 Fall Symposium, Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 7–8, 2016

Ann Arbor's Hilton Garden Inn will be the setting for a useful and informative symposium on copyright law and its implications for archives and special collections. Melissa Levine, lead copyright officer at the University of Michigan, and Aprille McKay, lead archivist for University of Michigan Collection Development at the Bentley Historical Library, will lead the two-day program. The Symposium Organizing Committee cochaired, Martha O'Hara Conway and Olga Virakhovskaya, are coordinating the event. (Please note that there is no football game in Ann Arbor that weekend!)

2017 Annual Meeting, Omaha, Nebraska, April 5–8, 2017

Our Annual Meeting next year will be at the Hilton Omaha downtown, close to the Old Market and the Holland Performing Arts Center, and a short drive to the Henry Doorly Zoo. The Program Committee, cochaired by Erik Moore and Sasha Griffin, and the Local Arrangements Committee, cochaired by Amy Schindler and Mary Ellen Ducey, are starting to lay the groundwork for what promises to be a great meeting in the western reaches of the MAC region.

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