MAC News

Midwest Archives Conference

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Grand Rapids: A City of Reinvention
By Richard H. Harms, Calvin College, and Portia Vescio, Michigan State University

Did You Renew Your MAC Membership?

Don’t forget to renew your MAC membership in order to keep receiving MAC publications and meeting discounts. Only individual voting members whose renewals are postmarked or submitted on-line by January 31 will be able to vote in the MAC spring election. If you misplaced your renewal form, visit the MAC Web page at http://www.midwestarchives.org/renewal.

The Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) for the Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has been busily planning ways to celebrate MAC’s 40th anniversary in the spring. When we meet on April 19–21, 2012, at the Amway Grand Plaza hotel located in downtown Grand Rapids, be prepared to look back into MAC’s history and forward to the future of the profession. This duality is reflected in the Conference theme of “MAC at 40: The Future is Now.”

Just as the digital age has forced archivists to reinvent old processes, so has Grand Rapids had a history of reinventing itself with the times. Foremost in Grand Rapids’ history are the mile-long rapids on the Grand River, Michigan’s longest river, called by the native Ottawa “Owashtanong,” or “Large Water.” For the native people, the relatively flat terrain west of the rapids was ideally suited for habitation—the nearby forest provided game and food, while the rapids made catching the river’s giant sturgeon easier. Today, people can watch the fish during their fall/spring migration at the fish ladder on the west bank of the river, a half-mile walk from the conference hotel.

Grand Rapids was named by Louis Campau, the first European settler and scion of a French fur-trading family based in Detroit. When settlers, investors, and speculators from New England and New York came to the area during the 1830s, they saw the rapids as a potential power source for industry. Eventually, they transformed the extensive hardwood forest into saw mills, flour mills, forges, and foundries.

In 1850, Grand Rapids was known popularly as “Valley City,” with a variety of industries serving the surrounding agricultural community. One of the city’s early industrial successes resulted from the discovery of gypsum near the river. Initially sold as “land plaster” to fertilize soil, by 1880, manufacturers were (Continued on page 3)
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combining ground gypsum with water and dyes to create a material that proved to be a durable wall coating. A decade later, gypsum was used in plaster, plaster mills began making wallboard, and Grand Rapids became known for a short time as the “gypsum center of the world.” The mines are no longer active today; instead, they are used as dry, secure storage for microfilm, including 70 percent of the state’s county legal records.

Among the nineteenth-century industries in Grand Rapids were furniture factories. In 1876, three of these firms displayed their best items at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, bringing national attention to the city. The furniture was designed to incorporate hand-crafted elements with a number of machine-carved elements. Factories produced new product lines about every third year and trademarked a “Grand Rapids Made” label. Annual markets were so well-attended by buyers that factories from as far away as New York and Boston opened showrooms in Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids eventually began calling itself the “furniture capital of the world.” The link to the furniture industry is still very much alive today as five of the world’s leading office furniture manufacturers are located in the area, including Steelcase and Herman Miller.

The businessmen, lumber barons, judges, and legislators who shaped the city settled in Grand Rapids’ first “neighborhood,” an area adjacent to downtown that is now known as Heritage Hill. Heritage Hill’s 1300 homes date from 1848 and represent over 60 architectural styles, including the Meyer May House, a prairie-style house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built in 1908. A bus tour of Heritage Hill is one of the featured events of MAC’s 2012 Meeting.

When furniture sales began to decline, the Chamber of Commerce set about to attract new industry to the city and to diversify the local economy. However, economic diversification came slowly, and, as a result, unemployment rose during the late 1920s. The local response was the creation in 1929 of the scrip labor program. Workers were paid in scrip, rather than cash, and the scrip could be redeemed to pay city bills or to make purchases at the city grocery store. The city also distributed free bread and milk to needy children and families. Consequently, Grand Rapids came to be known as the “city where no child goes to bed hungry” and the “city where every man has a job.”

After World War II, a young political candidate, Gerald R. Ford (1913-2006), won election to the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1974, Ford became the 38th President of the United States. Today, Grand Rapids is home to the Ford Presidential Museum, located across the river from the Conference hotel. The Ford Museum is the location of the Thursday night reception and 40th anniversary celebration event. Open to the public since September 1981, the Ford Museum is unlike other Presidential museums in that the museum component is geographically separate from the Presidential library and archives.

Grand Rapids has a history of supporting community programs such as the symphony, ballet, civic theater, and art. The Public Museum was founded by a group of civic leaders in 1854, and, over the next century, the Museum established itself as one of the area’s premier educational institutions. It continues to fulfill this role for West Michigan today. In addition to the Public Museum, there are the Grand Rapids Art Museum and the Children’s Museum. Grand Rapids is also the home of the Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, as well as ArtPrize, an open art competition in which the public votes for their favorite piece. Some of these great attractions will be featured in tours, so sign up if you are interested in learning more!

If art is not for you, then one of Grand Rapids’ sports teams may be more to your taste. There are minor league hockey and baseball teams, as well as a flat-track women’s roller derby team. If beer is more to your liking, you can find out why the city came up with the slogan, “Cool City. Great Beer.” Grand Rapids is home to many local breweries.

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including Founders, named in 2011 as the number two brewery in the world.

Downtown Grand Rapids, the cultural and entertainment center of West Michigan, serves as a hub for conventions, major events and concerts, and important gatherings both large and small. Courtesy of the Grand Rapids Public Library.

While LAC would like you to experience as much of the city as possible, the Program Committee would like you to attend this year’s sessions, beginning with Plenary Speaker Kate Theimer. Kate is the author of the popular blog, ArchivesNext (http://www.archivesnext.com/), which is one of the leading sources for information on archives’ use of Web 2.0 tools. There are several other forward-looking sessions, as well as one session that will introduce you to MAC members whose names you recognize, but whose achievements you may not know.

Keep up with all the latest Conference information and more details regarding your future visit to Grand Rapids on the LAC conference blog, http://2012mac.wordpress.com, and please feel free to contact the 2012 LAC Co-chairs Portia Vescio (vescio@msu.edu) or Marian Matyn (marian.matyn@cmich.edu) with any questions. The MAC Web site will also have breaking information. We’ll see you in the spring in Grand Rapids!

Pal Program Returns to 2012 Annual Meeting

Attention new archivists and first-time meeting attendees: are you looking for someone to help guide you through your first MAC meeting? If your answer is “yes,” the MAC Pal Program is for you. Debuting last year in St. Paul, the Pal Program is returning to the 2012 Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids. MAC Pals matches new members and/or first-time attendees with experienced members to help shepherd you through your first meeting. Your Pal can answer your off-the-record questions and introduce you to other MAC members.

Long-time members, we need your help, too! Please consider serving as a MAC Pal to assist your fellow members. This is a great opportunity for you to share your knowledge and experience. If you would like to request a MAC Pal or serve as a MAC Pal, simply check the appropriate box on the Annual Meeting registration form. An official MAC Pal event will take place on Thursday before the reception, and Pals are free to get together at other individually arranged times throughout the conference. For more information, contact LAC Co-chairs Portia Vescio (vescio@msu.edu) or Marian Matyn (marian.matyn@cmich.edu). You will be notified in early April of your MAC Pal’s name and contact information.
Revision to Constitution and By-Laws
Set for April Members’ Meeting

After asking the membership twice in as many years to approve amendments to the By-Laws and Constitution, MAC Council thought it best to make a thorough review of the documents to ensure that they are appropriate for our twenty-first century needs. A special task force headed by member Menzi Behnd-Klodt concluded that several more changes should be made to bring the documents in line with current practices and technologies. The revisions made by the committee, among other things, permit the greater use of passive distribution of information (by permitting the electronic publishing of information); acknowledge the use of contract services for activities formally conducted by officers and other members; make more specific the language concerning standing and special committees; and permit the appointment of special, limited-term leadership positions for individuals. Copies of the marked-up documents and proposed final drafts are available for review on the MAC Web site homepage. These documents will also be sent to each member in good standing prior to the annual meeting via E-mail. A vote on the revisions to the Constitution and By-Laws will be made at the membership meeting at the 2012 Annual Meeting on Friday, April 20, 2012. For print copies of the revised Constitution and By-laws, please contact: Joshua Ranger, MAC Secretary, Polk Library, 800 Algoma Blvd., Oshkosh, WI 54901.

Bowen Graduate Scholarship
Support Available

MAC is soliciting applications for the 2012 Louisa Bowen Memorial Scholarship for Graduate Students in Archival Administration. The award is named in honor of Louisa Bowen, archivist and active MAC member, who died in 1996. To be eligible for the $750 scholarship, the applicant must be a resident of or full-time student in the MAC region; be currently enrolled or accepted into a graduate, multicourse program in archival administration; and have a grade point average of at least 3.0 in the most recent academic year.

Application information is available from the MAC Web site, http://www.midwestarchives.org/bowen, or from the Louisa Bowen Memorial Scholarship Committee Chair Tom Steman. Completed application materials must be received electronically or be postmarked by March 1. The award will be announced at the MAC Annual Meeting.

Tom Steman
University Archivist/Associate Professor
St. Cloud State University
314C Miller Center
720 Fourth Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498
320-308-4753
tdsteman@stcloudstate.edu

Emeritus Scholarship for First-Time MAC Meeting Attendees

The Emeritus Scholarship provides a one-time travel stipend of up to $500, or two $250 stipends to graduate students or practicing archivists who have not previously attended a MAC meeting. The award may be used to cover travel, lodging, registration, workshop fees, and any other meeting expenses. MAC membership is not required, nor do applicants need to reside in the MAC region. The scholarship was envisioned by emeritus member Tim Ericson, and initial funding was provided by other MAC emeriti.

Applications for the scholarship may be downloaded from the MAC Web site at http://www.midwestarchives.org/. Applications must include an essay of no more than five hundred words and one letter of support. Applications and supporting documentation may be submitted either electronically, or by postal mail or fax, and must be received by February 1. Electronic submissions are preferred. Please send all submission information to Ann Bowers, chair of the Selection Committee.

Ann Bowers
Center for Archival Collections
Jerome Library
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403
419-372-2413
Fax: 419-372-7996
abowers@bgsu.edu
2012 MAC Leadership Candidates Announced

The Nominating Committee of Tanya Zanish-Belcher (chair), Rebecca Bizonet, and Erik Moore announce that the following members have agreed to run for office in the upcoming election. The Nominating Committee determined the slate using the nominating guidelines.

**Vice President (one position)**
Menzi Behrnd-Klodt, Klodt and Associates, and Xyte, Inc.
Mary Ellen Ducey, University of Nebraska

**Treasurer (one position)**
Pam Hackbart-Dean, Southern Illinois University
Daardi Sizemore, Minnesota State University–Mankato

**Council (one position)**
Tamar Chute, Ohio State University
Jennifer Johnson, Cargill (Minnesota)
Erik Nordberg, Michigan Technological University

**Nominating Committee (two positions)**
Alison Stankrauff, Indiana University South Bend
Glenn Longacre, National Archives and Records Administration, Great Lakes Region
Michelle Sweetser, Marquette University
Lonna McKinley, National Museum of the U.S. Air Force (Ohio)

MAC’s election will be run electronically this year, from February 6 through March 5. If you need to request a paper ballot, please contact MAC Secretary Joshua Ranger. As in years past, the candidates’ biographical information and statements will be posted on the MAC Web site prior to the election, http://www.midwestarchives.org/.

The elected officers will begin their terms at the conclusion of the annual members’ meeting in April 2012.
Apply for the 2012 Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship

Please consider applying for the Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship, designed to provide financial assistance to minority students pursuing graduate education in archival administration and to encourage ethnic diversification of the MAC membership and of the archival profession as a whole. Two $750 scholarships, accompanied by one-year memberships to MAC, will be awarded.

In order to be eligible for a scholarship, the applicant must: be of African, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Latino descent; be a student currently enrolled in or accepted in a graduate, multicourse program in archival administration; and have a grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). If the program is not listed in the SAA Directory of Archival Education, http://archivists.org/prof-education/edd-index.asp, the applicant must provide proof of the multicourse standard by submitting copies of course descriptions from the institution’s current departmental catalog.

Applicants are not required to be residents of or students in the MAC region. Applications are available on the MAC Web site, http://www.midwestarchives.org/motley, or from Scholarship Committee Chair Elizabeth Myers. Applications must be received or postmarked by March 1. Awards will be announced no later than June 1.

Elizabeth Myers
Director, Women & Leadership Archives
Loyola University Chicago
1032 W. Sheridan Road
Piper Hall, 306
Chicago, IL 60660 USA
773-508-8837
Fax: 773-508-8492
emyers@luc.edu

“$40 for 40” Campaign Underway to Support Motley and Bowen Awards

Help MAC celebrate its 40th birthday with a $40 gift to the Motley and/or Bowen Scholarships! Each award provides $750 toward tuition for students pursuing graduate education in archival administration, plus a free MAC membership. Named in honor of archivists who made significant contributions to the MAC community, and who left us too soon, these annual awards exemplify MAC’s goal of mentoring and supporting our future colleagues. Read more about the Campaign’s target goals, the honored MAC members for whom the scholarships are named, and the deserving recipients at http://www.midwestarchives.org/40-for-40-campaign.

Deadlines for MAC Newsletters:

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Send items to:

Jennie Thomas, MAC Newsletter Editor
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum
Library and Archives
2809 Woodland Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115
216-515-1942
jthomas@rockhall.org

Between-Meeting Council Actions

Council passed the following motion unanimously via E-mail on September 9, 2011:

To approve the Radisson Cincinnati Riverfront, Covington, Kentucky, as the location of the 2012 Fall Symposium.
Below represents only a summary of the Council minutes for October 19, 2011. For the full minutes and submitted reports, please consult the MAC Web site or contact Joshua Ranger at ranger@uwosh.edu or at Polk Library, 800 Algoma Blvd., Oshkosh, WI 54901.

MAC Council met on October 19, 2011, at the Sioux City Hotel, Sioux City, IA, with all Council members in attendance, either in person or by phone.

President Ellen Swain reported that preparations for the “$40 for 40” scholarship fundraising drive are nearing completion in time for the membership renewal period. In addition, a special appeal to emeritus and founding members will be sent by emeritus member Mark Green for donations. Swain reported receiving an E-mail from SAA President Gregor Trinkaus-Randall about holding a forum on regional organization cooperation. Council agreed that MAC should participate in the event. Related to this, Swain wants to hold a forum on sub-regional cooperation in the Midwest at the MAC meeting in Grand Rapids.

Vice President Mark Shelstad reported on the progress of the RFP for conference planning services. Two bids were received that were in line with MAC’s needs. Further discussions with the vendors will be required before the task force can make a recommendation. Shelstad noted that the costs for these services could possibly be added to the registration fee. Shelstad hopes that the vendor will be able to observe the 2012 Annual Meeting to gain understanding of MAC’s practices.

Shelstad continued his report by updating Council on upcoming meetings. Planning for the 40th anniversary celebration is underway. Hotel contracts have been signed for the 2012 Fall Symposium in the Cincinnati area, as well as for the 2013 Annual Meeting in Indianapolis. Secretary Joshua Ranger, as a representative of the planning committee, presented a proposal for the 2013 Fall Symposium to be held in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Ranger reported that MAC’s polling, in preparation for the February election, showed a strong desire for a program on “refining the on-line presence of the archives.” Council believed that this program could be offered as an “advanced” topic, and the planning committee will pursue this. Ranger gave details of two hotels that were identified in Green Bay as potential venues. Council asked for further investigation into hotels, and approved Green Bay for the location of the 2013 Symposium.

In addition to his secretary report, Ranger presented the recommendations of the Working Group on Review of MAC Constitution and By-laws. The Group’s suggestions included numerous changes amounting to an official “revision” of the documents. These changes will need to be approved by the membership at the members’ meeting in April. Council voted to accept the recommendations and pursue the vote. Ranger then presented the progress report of the Marketing Tools Working Group. The group asked Council to consider offering an Archival Issues “subscription-only” rate for out-of-region individuals. Council debated this at length and decided to defer a decision until the spring when dues will be discussed. Council voted to approve funds for a small promotional campaign recommended by the working group.

Treasurer Anke Voss, in her report, recommended that MAC hire out both periodic audits and tax preparation services to ensure fiduciary responsibility and compliance with an ever-changing tax environment. Council voted to approve funds for 2012 tax preparation, as well as for past state of Illinois filings that MAC was previously unaware were required. After discussion, Voss proposed an unbalanced budget, effectively highlighting the need for MAC both to increase its revenues and cut expenses. Council voted to approve the budget and will address the issue of the regular imbalances in April.

Council member and Publications Coordinator Kathy Koch reported that MAC is still experiencing problems with its printing vendor. This situation will be watched closely. She also noted that a new copyeditor has been hired with hopes that she will stay on.

Membership Committee Chair David McCartney reported that the MAC Pals Program will be continued, and he recommended that an individual be added to the Committee to coordinate this. Council voted to approve this and other small changes to the Committee’s guidelines. Also, after some discussion, Council tasked McCartney to examine an alternative to the new members’ dinner, which has proved to be very expensive.

Council voted to approve the 2012 election slate proposed by the Nominating Committee.

Steven Van Buren, representing Archival Issues Editor Barbara Floyd, announced that the Board wishes to pursue on-line, moderated discussions of AI articles via the MAC Web site. Council agreed that this should be investigated and attempted.
Treasurer’s Report

By Anke Voss, Treasurer, Midwest Archives Conference

MAC’s operating budget looks to be in good shape; however, expenses are on the rise, especially the cost of printing and distributing our various publications, even though we are committed to using an on-line (rather than mailed paper) ballot this coming year. Other monthly charges on the increase include on-line financial services (i.e., Memberclicks) that provide membership, conference vendors, and advertisers with the convenience of electronically submitting membership renewal, and conference registration, donation, purchase, and other payments.

Further, we are adding some new financial support services to our annual budget. To our knowledge, MAC has never had an external audit of its records and prepared tax returns. As requested by Council, I consulted with accounting firms to see about the feasibility of outsourcing MAC’s annual tax filing and auditing services. Consequently, Council has agreed to contract for preparation and filing of the federal and state tax forms at an annual cost of approximately $1,000, starting in 2012. Regarding audit services, my investigation led me to advise Council against annual full external audits (which would cost approximately $6,000 each time), but to instead recommend periodic review (AUP) engagements at a cost of approximately $1,000-$2,000 per engagement. I also urged that in years when no external reviews are conducted, Council ask our Finance Committee to conduct an internal audit, beginning in 2012.

Because MAC does not have the annual income to cover the expenses outlined above, I had no choice but to propose an unbalanced budget for 2012, with the difference to be covered by operating reserves. This will be MAC’s third consecutive unbalanced budget. To plan for balanced budgets in the future, I will be recommending to Council in April that it consider an increase in dues to at least sustain our current level of operations. The alternative would be to continue using operating reserves to balance recurring annual budget shortfalls for the foreseeable future.

You may ask, why should MAC not continue to fund its budget by drawing on its substantial operating reserves? Indeed, our investments are relatively stable, although in the current financial climate, returns on investments are very sluggish. I believe it would be unwise to bank our financial future on drawing down our reserve funds, which are meant to ensure stability during times of uncertainty and to provide a foundation for expanding member services, such as those proposed by the Task Force on Education. While we could certainly tap our operating or investment reserves to fund new initiatives, I believe a more prudent approach would be to build an investment portfolio that can realize a level of return capable of funding future expansions of MAC’s mission.

New Committee Begins Work

MAC President Ellen Swain has appointed a new Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) with two immediate charges: (1) to recommend base endowment levels for the Louisa Bowen and the Archie Motley memorial scholarships, and (2) to propose investment guidelines and strategies for these and other investments. A standing committee was recommended by the 2010 Financial Advisory/Development Task Force. As the name suggests, FAC will serve in an advisory capacity to Council and MAC’s other elected officers.

Committee members have been consulting with representatives from Lincoln Financial Advisors Corporation in Columbus, Ohio, to determine the most appropriate investments for the two scholarship funds. The Committee assignment is timely, as MAC begins the “$40 for 40” anniversary campaign to “top off” the two scholarship funds.

MAC’s development coordinator, treasurer, and immediate past treasurer will serve on FAC. Other members serve at-large. The current Committee membership includes: Matt Blessing (chair), Martha Briggs, Miriam Kahn (development coordinator), Dennis Meissner, Anke Voss (treasurer, 2010-2012), Kenneth Wirth, and Craig Wright (past treasurer).