

The MONTANA Archivist

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MONTANA NEWS

Montana to Host National Conference on Digital Projects

The Montana State Library, the Montana Historical Society Research Center, the State Law Library of Montana and the Montana Records and Information Management Division of the Secretary of State's Office are pleased to host the 2008 Best Practices Exchange May 21-23 in Helena. A product of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP), this forum allows librarians, archivists, records managers, and other information professionals from across the country to meet and share their experiences in managing and preserving digital state government information for public access. The Best Practices Exchange is not a traditional conference in that there are no "speakers" in the traditional sense of the word. Instead there will be facilitated group sessions conducted throughout the two and a half day meeting. Participants in each session will contribute to the discussion by sharing their own experiences, ideas, and knowledge. The major themes and ideas generated from the sessions will then be discussed at the large group sessions. For more information on the conference and to register see <http://www.bpexchange.org/2008/register.php>

The Montana SHRAB sponsored a well-attended, half-day workshop entitled *Archival Basics for the Accidental Archivist*.

The workshop was held in conjunction with the Montana History Conference, October 18-20, in Helena. Attendees included beginning archivists, volunteers, and librarians who took on the position of archivist without any formal training. Sami Pierson, director of the Libby Public Library, and Jodie Foley, Montana State Archivist, instructed the attendees in the fundamentals of archival appraisal, acquisition, and access, as well as common preservation problems and the use of proper storage materials. SHRAB members hope to make this workshop an annual event. Watch newsletter for announcement.

Upcoming Events

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| March 6, 2008 | Museum Association of Montana Annual Conference, Livingston |
| May 21-23, 2008 | Best Practices Exchange, Helena. |
| May 28-31, 2008 | Northwest Archivists Annual Meeting, Anchorage AK |
| July 23-26, 2008 | NAGARA (National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators) Annual Meeting |
| August 26-31, 2008 | Society of American Archivists Annual Conference, San Francisco |

GRANT/SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

AASLH Bookshelf Project to Offer Free books to Libraries, Museums

A shelf of books intended to provide small and medium-sized libraries and museums with essential resources needed to improve the condition of their collections is being offered free by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



The American Association for State and Local History says the bookshelf contents were selected based on recommendations of a panel of experts convened in cooperation with Heritage Preservation. The collection includes books and DVDs, as well as a guide to online resources and an annotated bibliography of all the materials. It addresses such topics as the philosophy and ethics of collecting, collections management and planning, emergency preparedness, and culturally specific conservation issues. Such texts as *The National Trust Manual of Housekeeping* (published by the British National Trust in 2005), the *Field Guide to Emergency Response* (published by Heritage Preservation in 2006), and *Essentials of Conservation Biology* (published by Primack in 2006) are included. The Bookshelf will be distributed free of charge to 2,000 institutions.

Under a cooperative agreement, AASLH is purchasing, promoting and distributing the IMLS Connecting to Collections Bookshelf. Recipients will include attendees at Connecting to Collections events as well as institutions that apply for the bookshelf using an electronic process.

Applications must be submitted online and are available at: www.aaslh.org/Bookshelf. The application period will be March 1-April 15. Priority will be given to smaller institutions, but large museums and large libraries with special collections are also eligible to apply. Please note that federally operated institutions, for-profit institutions, and libraries that do not hold special collections are not eligible to receive the Bookshelf. For more information, contact Terry Jackson at AASLH, 615-320-3203 or email jackson@aaahl.org.

NHPRC Grant opportunities

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) recently announced several new and revised grant opportunities. The application deadline for all of these grants is **June 2008**.

- Digitizing Historical Records

The Commission seeks proposals that use cost-effective methods to digitize nationally-significant historical record collections and make the digital versions freely available on the Internet.

- Electronic Records Projects

The focus of the NHPRC's Electronic Records grant program is to support projects that will lead to sustainable electronic records archives that preserve digital records with enduring historical value.

- Professional Development Grants for Archives and Historical Publishing

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission seeks proposals designed to improve the training and education of professionals in the archival and historical publishing communities.

- Strategies and Tools for Archives and Historical Publishing Projects

The National Historical Records and Publications Commission seeks proposals to develop new strategies and tools that can improve the preservation, public discovery, or use of historical records.

If you have questions on any of these grants, please contact NHPRC staff at <http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/contact.html>.

SHRAB Scholarships

A great way to gain funding to help you attend the NWA meeting in Alaska!!

The Montana State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) is pleased to announce the continued availability of scholarships of up to \$1,000 to paid and volunteer staff of Montana's cultural heritage institutions to attend training, educational workshops, or courses on topics related to the management and/or preservation of historical records. Funding may also be used to bring recognized experts into an institution for consultation related to the management, accessibility, or preservation of the historical records in its care. The scholarships are made possible through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

An application for these funds is available at the SHRAB website: http://www.montanahistoricalociety.org/research/library/rc_brdscoms.asp or by contacting Jodie Foley, Montana State Archivist, at jfoley@mt.gov or (406) 444-7482.



WORKSHOPS/TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Museum Association of Montana to offer PastPerfect workshop

Museum Association of Montana will be hosting a one-day Past Perfect workshop on March 6, 2008 as part of its annual conference. The conference runs through Saturday, March 8, in Livingston. Information on the conference is available on the MAM website (www.montanamuseums.org).

Society of American Archivist's Professional Development Offerings

The Education Calendar lists SAA's offerings in all available formats: **Face-to-Face**, **Online On-Demand**, and **Online-Real Time**. Be sure to check back often to see what's been added to the schedule. For more information, contact education@archivists.org or 312-922-0140.

OCLC Offers Managing Archival Collections Course

Managing Archival Collections: An Introduction will be offered Thursday, January 17, 2008, 9:00 am-4:00 pm, at UCLA (Los Angeles, CA). Registration deadline is January 14. This workshop will provide an introductory overview of archival theory, guidance on the development and management of archival analog and digital collections, the accessioning and processing of collections, providing reference services and outreach via EAD finding aids and digital projects.

You will learn:

- ✓ An understanding of the tasks involved in collecting, processing and making archival collections available for research.
- ✓ An overview of national standards, such as Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS), for processing and describing collections in digital or analog formats.
- ✓ Guidance on strategies to promote archival collection on the Web



ARCHIVAL MUSING...

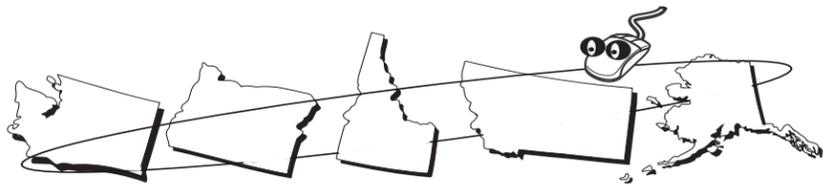
Northwest Digital Archives: Your First Stop for Archives in the Northwest

By Jodi Allison-Bunnell, NWDA
Program Manager,
Orbis Cascade Alliance

The Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA), a program that provides enhanced access to archival collections and facilitates collaboration among archives, libraries, and museums in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska, has completed its grant-funded programs with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), and reached a major milestone in its quest for long-term stability. The NWDA, which began in 2002 with support from the NEH and NHPRC, is now a program of the Orbis Cascade Alliance, an academic library consortium with 34 member institutions in Washington and Oregon.

The NWDA website is located at <http://nwda.wsulibs.wsu.edu/> and is free to all researchers. Researchers can find information about more than 4500 archival collections located in the Northwestern United States through keyword, subject, repository, and genre searches. The database offers researchers the ability to find detailed information about collections across institutions, at a greater level of detail than is available through any other tool. Collection information is also exposed to search engines.

As an Alliance program, NWDA will continue to pursue its goals of creating great information services through collaboration. The merger will allow the NWDA to create a robust future that will include both sustaining its current database, building a digital content program, and continuing active involvement with national-level conversations on the present and future of access to archival materials across diverse institutions.



Participating institutions have agreed to pay member fees to sustain the program beyond grant funding and continue open and free access for researchers. Member institutions are the Eastern Washington State Historical Society, Gonzaga University, Idaho State Historical Society, Seattle Museum of History & Industry, Whitman College, Montana Historical Society, University of Montana, Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State University, University of Oregon, the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies at Western Washington University, Pacific Lutheran University, University of Washington, Washington State University, Lane Community College, University of Alaska Fairbanks, the Alaska State Library's Historical Collections, Whitworth University, Lewis & Clark College, the University of Idaho, Portland State University, the Washington State Historical Society, the Seattle Municipal Archives, Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Willamette University, Western Oregon University, Portland Community College, Oregon Health & Sciences University, Central Oregon Community College, and Oregon Institute of Technology.

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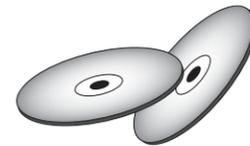
NEW RESOURCES

1. *Rescuing Family Records: A Disaster Planning Guide*

To help families prepare for potential disasters, the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) recently released *Rescuing Family Records: A Disaster Planning Guide*. This practical manual describes the records that protect a family's finances, health, civil rights, and family history. Some, such as deeds and mortgages, may be obvious to readers, but others, such as leases, proof of intellectual property, and certain tax records, are easily forgotten in the moment of crisis. The manual prompts readers to think through all the records that may help their family survive disaster and return to normal afterwards. It includes:

- a checklist of records, with space for recording whether and where the record is duplicated;
- various options for duplicating and protecting records, and the pros and cons of each;
- a discussion about why certain records may need to be certified; and
- a brief introduction to caring for historical family records.

The 24-page manual is available for \$10, plus \$3 postage and handling, from the Council of State Archivists. To order, visit <http://www.statearchivists.org/shop/rfr-buy.htm>. Proceeds will be used to support CoSA's ongoing Emergency Preparedness Initiative.



2. *Thinking Digital . . . A Practical Session to Help Get Started!* by Gregory C Colati, Jessica Branco Colati

Archivists and others who are responsible for planning and implementing digitization projects at the beginning and intermediate level will benefit from this CD. This two-disk CD set includes the complete audio files and PowerPoint slides (PDF) of the entire web seminar.

Discussion includes:

- * Quality choices
- * Cataloging/metadata choices
- * Management choices
- * Storage choices
- * Delivery choices
- * Digital records

For more information see SAA website:
<http://www.archivists.org/catalog/pubDetail.asp?objectID=2310>

3. *American Archivist Online*

American Archivist, the journal of the Society of American Archivists, is now available on-line for the years 2000 and before. Users can search the full text of the journal, browse by author and tables of contents, and view or print individual articles. Individual and institutional members and journal subscribers will have access to all digital content via a link from the SAA home page. All older content will be available in digital form in a single, unified publication as soon as SAA is able to complete the digitization of back issues (the goal is within the next two years). SAA remains committed to publishing the print version of our journal for the foreseeable future.

WEBSITES, BLOGS AND WIKIS...OH MY!



Institutions planning digitization projects may want to review the following online articles aimed at assisting libraries, archivists and museums in establishing projects based on best practices.

How should you store your digital data? (<http://www.tasi.ac.uk/advice/delivering/storage.html>)

Questions to Ask Before Starting a Digitization Project (<http://www.cdpheritage.org/digital/projectmanagement/index.html>)

Western States Digital Imaging Best Practices (http://www.cdpheritage.org/digital/scanning/documents/wsdibp_v1.pdf)

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Copies of the Montana SHRAB manual, *Preferred Practices for Historical Repositories* are still available, free of charge. This publication is a checklist and self-assessment manual and provides information on a wide variety of management and preservation topics related to archives and museums. Copies are available from Jodie Foley at (406) 444-7482 or jofoley@mt.gov. Additional copies of the SHRABs other publications, including *So You Have a Box of Papers...* and the quarterly newsletter are also available.



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