

Documentary Heritage Program
Advisory Committee
April 28, 2011
Capital District Library Council, Albany, NY

MINUTES

Present: Michael Aikey, Todd DeGarmo, Susan D'Entremont, John Diefenderfer, Stacy Draper, Chris Hunter, Henry Mueller, Amy Rupert, Geoff Williams

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am.

I. Approval of minutes of July 7, 2010 meeting.

John Diefenderfer noted that he was as the July 7, 2010 meeting, but he is not listed on the roster. Minutes will be amended to include John. Minutes approved with change.

II. Reports

A. Regional Archivist

Susan asked if anyone has a contact at SUNY-Cobleskill library. They have contacted both Susan and Geoff Williams during disasters, but Susan has not had success following up. No one has contact. Geoff stated that their special collections are likely extremely small.

Susan reported that the distribution of archival supplies that she did last year with extra money was extremely well-received. She received several hand-written thank-you notes, including one from the CEO of Silver Bay YMCA. She asked if DHP should do this again if there is money left over at the end of the year. The committee agreed to do again. There have not been many site visits this year due to the contract situation, so we would need to think of another way to distribute the supplies equitably. Susan noted that the State Archives recently developed a DHP handbook. She will distribute to the committee electronically.

The teacher program at Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library went well. Many of the attendees were education students or new graduates, and they were enthusiastic. This might be an audience to target in the future. Stacy noted that she has done workshops with Sage education students that went well. Maybe DHP should do one of these workshops every year, moving it around the region, and advertise with education programs at places like Saint Rose. Henry noted that the State Conference of Social Studies will be in Saratoga this year. Maybe we could hold a program at the NYS Military Museum. Chris Hunter noted that he will be speaking at a meeting of Science teachers on October 14.

Susan reported that she had not been able to connect with folks at the State Museum about possibly sponsoring an award at the regional History Day contest. A discussion followed about what DHP can do to energize History Day in our region. Susan will send a message to other DHP regions to find out what, if anything, they do.

Susan reported on CDLC Digital Collections. CDLC will be merging their site with those of several other councils and the information will move to a server at Northern NY Library Network. It will be a difficult transition, but the end product should be much better. Greenwich Public Library and Northville Public Library have joined CDLC Digital Collections, and the William K. Sanford Library/Colonie Town Historian have submitted a joint application.

The Albany Public Library is opening a newly renovated local history room (the Pruyn Room). The ribbon cutting will be on May 12 at 11:00 am. DHP is offering two workshops in June: June 14, Oral History Basics, presented by Ellen McHale at CDLC; June 22, Basics of Archives, presented by Susan at Brookside Museum in Ballston Spa.

B. Other

Geoff Williams reported that the State swept \$700,000 from the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund, the same fund that funds DHP grants. He reported that there will be a Capital Area Archivists meeting on genealogy on May 23, and that the New York Archives Conference will be at Skidmore in early June. Also, the Capital Region Archives Dinner is scheduled for October 5 at Jack's Oyster House in Albany. Paul and Mary Liz Stewart of the Underground Railroad Project will be speakers.

III. Business

A. Plan of Service

Susan reported that CDLC will soon be creating a major plan of service for the State. Much has changed in terms of money, technology and staff since the last plan of service, so CDLC will use this opportunity to take a serious look at our goals and programs. CDLC will likely hire a consultant to help in this process. DHP will be included in this plan, and input from the Advisory Committee will be needed.

B. Documentation Training

Susan noted that CDLC is due to offer the documentation workshop. She asked whether people felt this was still a useful workshop to offer in this era of reduced budgets. Few institutions have been applying for the DHP documentation grants. Several committee members whose institutions have been involved with documentation projects felt the training would still be useful. Stacy noted that even when projects don't bring in a lot of information, they raised the collecting awareness of the Historical Society's staff and of the value of records among other

institutions in Troy. Perhaps more of a roundtable program rather than a formal workshop would meet the needs of the Capital District DHP constituents.

C. New Advisory Committee Members

Gretchen Koerpel will be leaving the committee because she is moving to Tennessee. Several committee members suggested John Scherer, Clifton Park historian and former NYS Museum employee. Susan will ask him if he would like to join the committee.

D. Other

Geoff Williams stated that he was at an event at the Albany County Hall of Records and met people worried about the records of closing Catholic churches and schools. John Diefenderfer noted that the records often go to the diocesan offices, but that researchers cannot access them there. Several committee members suggested possibly doing a program on church records. There is a fair bit of interest in this topic, but it is tricky because different denominations have different ways of dealing with records. Perhaps we could offer a program with a variety of churches involved and/or a consortium of churches.

Another workshop idea is to offer another program for non-profits on topics such as records management, establishing a relationship with an archives, donating archival material. Todd mentioned that the Folklife Center has trained volunteers from a couple of organizations whose records the Folklife Center holds. The volunteers come in weekly to work on the material with the ultimate goal of having something ready for Archives Month in October. Stacy mentioned that some organizations provide them with money for archival supplies to care for their records. Susan noted that she did not yet have the guidelines for the work plans for next year, but will incorporate some of these ideas if possible.

IV. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan D'Entremont

Action Items

- Distribute DHP Handbook to Committee (Susan)
- Ask other DHP regions about their involvement in History Day (Susan)
- Ask John Scherer if he would like to join DHP Advisory Committee.