

# Documentary Heritage Program News

## Spring 2008

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### Advisory Committee

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New York State Military Museum

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Center for Folklife  
Crandall Public Library

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Daughters of Charity

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History Project

Amy Rupert  
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Region 4

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Executive Director  
Capital District Library Council

### Where's my DHP News?

You may have noticed that this is the first issue of the DHP newsletter to land in your mailbox for quite some time. Due to budget constraints, we have begun seriously curtailing our print mailings. **Most DHP information is now transmitted through our email newsletter.** In many ways this is an improvement over the print newsletter because we are able to send you timely news of workshops, exhibits and other archives-related programs that are offered throughout the region and the entire Northeast. However, our problem is that we do not have email addresses for many of you.

The DHP email list is currently a low traffic list. There are usually two to four messages every month. Anyone is welcome to join the list. **If you would like to be added to (or removed from) the list, please send your name, institutional affiliation (if any) and email address to Susan D'Entremont at [susan@cdlc.org](mailto:susan@cdlc.org)**

Not sure if you are already on the DHP email list? If you receive occasional messages from Susan D'Entremont with DHP News in the subject line then you are on the list.

### Help the Nation's Historical Records!

As noted above, the Documentary Heritage Program is suffering under severe budget constraints. The United States Congress will soon be considering a bill to establish a program of formula-based grants to states. Individual states could use this money for grants to institutions in the state and for statewide services to support preservation and use of historical records. The legislation is called the Preserving the American Historical Record Act (PAHR). The proposed program would be similar to what is already provided to libraries through LSTA and museums through IMLS.

If PAHR passes, not only would additional money be available to continue our DHP services, but there would be a large increase

in money awarded to individual institutions through a greatly expanded DHP grant program.

We are urging people to contact their U.S. representative to ask him or her to become a co-sponsor of the bill. Telephone calls to the representative's office can be especially effective. Often it takes as few as ten calls on an issue to convince a legislator that the issue is important.

A very small part of our region is represented by John McHugh, who has already signed on as a co-sponsor. If you are in Rep. McHugh's region, please contact his office to thank him for his early co-sponsorship.

The State Archives has developed short information sheets specific to every New York congressional district. If you would like a copy of the one for your district, please contact Susan D'Entremont (contact information below). Much more information about PAHR, including the draft bill, sample letters, and background information is available on the Society of American Archivists web page at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)

### Archives Dinner

Save the date! The Capital Region Archives Dinner is a great way to kick off Archives Month. This year's dinner will be held on Wednesday, October 1, 2008 at the Mansion at Cedar Hill in Selkirk. The speaker will be William "Chip" Reynolds, Captain of the Replica Half Moon. The Half Moon is a full-scale, operating replica of the Dutch ship of exploration that Henry Hudson sailed in 1609. The Half Moon is

The Documentary Heritage Program's **Regional Archivist**, Susan D'Entremont, is in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She can be reached at:  
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a traveling museum that conducts programs about the unique history of New Netherland.

This year's location will be of interest to attendees because it is a historic building that is currently undergoing extensive renovations to return it to as close to its original state as possible. The owners have been using historic documents to help them in this renovation. For more information or to reserve tickets, contact Susan D'Entremont, Regional Archivist.

## *Endangered: Today's Digital Information*

Most of us are now creating our records in a digital format, whether it be digital photographs, web pages, word processing files stored on CDs, or some other digital format. Archivists know that these formats are much more vulnerable and unstable than traditional formats, such as paper and photographic negatives. However, it can be difficult to explain this to non-archivists.

The Library of Congress has a wonderful digital preservation web site that provides information in straightforward language about the fragility of digital information, the imminent danger of it being lost, and steps that can be taken to preserve digital material. It also demonstrates in a few words why preserving digital materials is different, more difficult and more expensive than preserving traditional print items. The site is a good place to learn about the issue and to download material to share with supervisors and boards of trustees. It also provides information on preserving your personal digital archives, such as digital family photographs. Eye-opening facts are scattered throughout the site. For example, did you know that the average life of a web site is less than four months? The site's homepage is [www.digitalpreservation.gov](http://www.digitalpreservation.gov)

## *Copyright Help*

Many people ask the DHP for advice on the copyright status of material in their institution's holdings. Copyright law is very complicated, but there is one tool out

there that will help you to determine whether the material you hold is in the public domain. (Material in the public domain is out of copyright and may be used however the institution desires.) This is Peter Hirtle's copyright chart. Mr. Hirtle is an archivist at Cornell University, and he has a special interest in copyright. His chart is updated at least annually, more often if the law changes significantly. Check out the chart at:

[www.copyright.cornell.edu/public\\_domain/](http://www.copyright.cornell.edu/public_domain/)

## *Lone Arrangers*

Lone Arranger is a semi-official professional term for people who are the sole staff member in an archives. Lone arrangers may be paid or volunteer, and their archives may be part of a larger organization, but the archives itself has only one staff member. Many of our DHP repositories are staffed by lone arrangers. The profession has long acknowledged the unique difficulties of being a lone arranger in a profession that is already quite small.

To help deal with the isolation of their situation, two archivists recently created an online community for lone arrangers. Their hope is that this will provide a forum for discussion among lone arrangers as well as a way to network and share ideas on how to survive being a lone arranger. To join the group, or just view the site without joining, visit <http://lonearrangers.ning.com/>

## *Workshops*

**Introduction to Appraisal and Selection of Historical Records**, Thursday, June 5, 2008, 9:30 am - 4:00 pm. Capital District Library Council, 28 Essex St. Albany. \$15 (includes lunch). Appraisal is the term archivists use for the process of identifying potentially valuable records, assessing them, and selecting which ones will be retained by the archives. This workshop will help you make decisions about what types of historical records your repository should accept for long-term retention. It will introduce core terminology, concepts and standards related to archival appraisal and selection. It will **not** discuss appraising material for monetary value. For more information or to register, contact Susan D'Entremont (contact info in box on

front).

**Developing Digital Projects**, Tuesday, June 17, 2008, 9:30 am-4:00 pm. Capital District Library Council, 28 Essex St. Albany. \$40 CDLC members/\$60 non-members (includes lunch). This workshop will provide an overview of digital projects. It will cover the benefits and costs of digitization; basic principles of scanning, selecting and preparing material for digitization; making your material searchable once it has been scanned; the pros and cons of outsourcing digitization work; and basic information on selecting hardware and software for your project. For more information or to register visit [www.cdlc.org](http://www.cdlc.org) (click on the calendar link) or contact Susan D'Entremont (contact info in box on front).

**Basics of Archives**, Tuesday, June 17, 2008, 9:30 am-4:30 pm, Liverpool Public Library, Liverpool, NY. \$30. (does **not** include lunch). This is an introductory full-day workshop for those who work with historical records but are not trained archivists. Participants will learn about basic practices for collecting, protecting, and helping people use archival resources. For more information, contact Susan Hughes at (315) 446-5446 or [Hughes@clrc.org](mailto:Hughes@clrc.org)

**Introduction to Scanning and Digital Imaging**, Tuesday, July 8, 2008, 9:30 am-3:30 pm, Capital District Library Council, Albany. \$25 CDLC members/\$40 non-members (includes lunch). This workshop is an overview of the practical aspects of scanning material for digitization projects. Topics will include: basic scanning terminology; a discussion of many popular file formats and the benefits and drawbacks of each; image and file size, image storage, and quality control; and a demonstration of good scanning techniques. For more information or to register visit [www.cdlc.org](http://www.cdlc.org) (click on the calendar link) or contact Susan D'Entremont (contact info in box on front).