

Documentary Heritage Program
Advisory Committee
July 13, 2011
New York State Military Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY

MINUTES

Present: Michael Aikey, Susan D'Entremont, John Diefenderfer, Stacy Draper, Chris Hunter, Geoff Williams

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am.

I. Approval of minutes of April 28, 2011 meeting.

Minutes approved.

II. Reports

A. Regional Archivist

Two workshops were offered in June, and they were very well received. They were: Oral History Basics (10 people) and Basics of Archives (18 people). Ellen McHale of the New York Folklore Society presented the oral history workshop. She did an excellent job and there were a lot of questions and discussion.

CDLC has received the signed contract for DHP. The way the contract language was written this time, the money categories are completely inflexible once the contract has been signed. CDLC has put \$500 in purchased services for the coming year, which can be used for a variety of things, including fees for workshop presenters. The State Archives is investigating how to change the language in the next contract to allow more flexibility between categories.

Mary Ellen Conboy, volunteer archivist at The Academy of the Holy Names in Albany, received the annual award for service to the school. In her remarks she thanked the Documentary Heritage Program for guiding her in the process of establishing the archives.

CDLC will be hiring a consultant to help with a major strategic planning effort. DHP Advisory Committee members may be asked to participate in a focus group.

B. Other

Two committee members offered to lend their expertise to repositories listed in the Regional Archivist's report. Susan will give Chris Hunter's name to Zion Lutheran Church, Schenectady and John Diefenderfer's name to Sisters of Saint Joseph in Latham.

III. Business

A. Workshop/Roundtable Planning for Next Two Years

The most requested workshops on past DHP workshop evaluation forms are, in order of popularity: digitization of historical records, arrangement & description, appraisal & selection, and writing basic policies for archives. Other topics suggested include resources & funding for small repositories; outreach – how to get the word out, using social media; preservation; area history; and subject access to historical collections.

Based on the expressed interest, Susan will develop an introductory workshop on digitizing historical records. She has done presentations on this topic before, so developing the workshop shouldn't be too time-consuming.

We will continue to offer Basics of Archives every year or two as long as there is interest.

Several committee members mentioned church records as a workshop topic. Many committee members get questions from churches. Different denominations have different levels of support and rules concerning records. Many have baptism, marriage and death records of interest to genealogists. Architectural records are often held. Perhaps convene a focus group on how we should approach the issue. Some potential contacts include: Jim Corsaro; Laura Linder, First Reformed Church of Schenectady; Jim Folts, First Church in Albany; Jim Mancuso, First Presbyterian, Schenectady; Maria Holden, St. Peter's Church, Albany. Stacy mentioned that the Troy Irish Genealogical Society may have input on putting records online.

Susan has had difficulty finding someone affordable who is able to present a digital preservation workshop. Chris Hunter offered to work on this and possibly co-present. Geoff Williams suggested Denis Meadows of the State Archives.

B. Survey Monkey & Other Ways to Gather Info from Constituents

There doesn't seem to be one way to reach all constituents. People are probably more likely to fill out surveys if they come in an easy format, such as Survey Monkey. The problem is that DHP does not have email contact information for many constituents. Advisory Committee members offered to help contact repositories to collect contact information. Susan will bring a list of repositories that need to be contacted to the next meeting.

Committee members noted that DHP information is buried deep in the CDLC web site. It is difficult for people not familiar with CDLC to find. Susan will talk to CDLC web master and director about making DHP information more prominent.

C. Capital District DHP Blog

Susan introduced the idea of a blog to disseminate more complex information that can be shared through the email list. Advisory Committee members felt that was a good idea.

D. New Advisory Committee Members

John Scherer, Clifton Park Historian, accepted a position on the DHP Advisory Committee. He is unable to make July meetings due to his annual vacation.

Amy Rupert has accepted a job in Massachusetts, so she has resigned from the committee. Susan will talk to Tammy Gobert at RPI about suggestions for Amy's replacement. Geoff Williams suggested Tony Opalka, who is the Albany City Historian and works as a preservation analyst for NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. Susan will bring additional suggestions to the next meeting.

E. Other

There was a brief discussion about the History Day program in the Capital Region. It is difficult to get in touch with anyone and nothing much seems to be happening with it beyond recruiting judges. Is this anything DHP can help with?

Tentative meeting dates for the following year: November 15, 2011; February 15, 2012; May 1, 2012; July 24, 2012.

IV. Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan D'Entremont