

State Historical Records Advisory Board Meeting
Cassia County Historical Society
War Memorial Room
East Main Street
September 13, 2001

Attendees: Duane Bogstie, Denton Darrington, Carol Schreiber, Steve Smylie, Steve Walker, Bruce Walters. Guest: Darrell Roskelley, Cassia County Clerk

Introduction and Update on status of NHPRC Grant #99-003 - Steve Walker

The SHRAB Strategic Plan has been published and distributed to state legislators, county commissioners, mayors, and county and municipal clerks. As proposed by the Strategic Plan, to better inform the public of the importance of historical records and archives, a proclamation has been sought to proclaim an "Archives Week" or some other recognized period. As many activities to inform the public of the efforts of the SHRAB and the importance of historical records throughout the month of October, it was decided to expand the "Archives Week" idea and seek a proclamation to declare October 2001 "Documentary Heritage Month."

Steve plans to present special preservation workshops around the state that includes the videos "Providing A Future For The Past," and "Into The Future: On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age." Also displayed for the SHRAB members was a table-top exhibit that outlined the importance of historical records. The tri-fold table-top display was purchased for \$250. This display will accompany all SHRAB presentations throughout the state. The workshops will provide basic information on how individuals can preserve their own heritage and what we can do together to preserve Idaho's Documentary Heritage. The State Historical Society and members of local repositories where the workshops will be held will arrange for publicity.

Steve W. will also be attending a two-day pre-conference workshop on electronic records as well as the annual Association of Records Managers and Administrators Conference in Montreal, September 30 - October 3. In addition, at the end of October through the middle of November, Steve will be joining Records Managers from Idaho State University and the University of Idaho to provide 3 two-day training sessions for college and university officials. The training is sponsored by the State Board of Education and will be conducted at the U. of I. on October 30-31; B.S.U. on November 7-8; and at the joint U. of I. - I.S.U. facility at Idaho Falls on November 14-15. The sessions will provide basic information on the management of records, including those in electronic formats.

The video "Into The Future: On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age" was shown to the members and guests present and discussion ensued about long-term retention and preservation of electronically created records.

Duane Bogstie discussed participation in a State Metatag Task Force dealing with electronic records created on the Web. He felt that most webmasters participating in the task force do not

see webpages as the same as other government publications. In essence, they did not see the web pages as records having potentially historical significance that made them worthy of long-term preservation. When records managers attending the task force tried to present a different point of view of the significance of the webpage information, they were effectively silenced by behind-the-scenes political maneuvering that shuffled the question of retention to another, yet to be formed, task force.

Steve W. stated that the SHRAB might want to consider recommending guidelines for the context of material that goes on a website and how long and in what format it is retained. Static information such as laws of proclamations might be best preserved if printed out onto acid-free paper or filmed according to preservation microfilming standards. It is essential that we develop long-term retention strategies for specified electronically created records.

Steve Smylie noted that October 25th was the second statewide E-Government Bootcamp. He wished that the SHRAB could be invited to raise some of these issues and propose some solutions at a future Bootcamp. Many purchases and government interactions are now electronically driven. The importance of good record-keeping needs to be stressed.

Electronic records typically are not treated with the same respect as traditional paper records and often little, if any, planning is given to the long-term preservation of historical information that exists only in electronic form. As a result electronically created information is simply disappearing or left stranded in outdated software and hardware formats. Little thought is given to preserving the metadata that is created along with the record. Statewide standards and specific migration routines need to be defined if the State's vital electronic records are to have any chance of being retained for the future.

Concern was expressed that many E-commerce transactions are created on the fly and are entered directly into databases without an "official record" of the transaction even being created. Without good records in place there exists incredible potential for fraud.

Creation of metadata to lock-in data pertaining to the transaction and linked to a record identifying participants and other information material to the transaction in an "official record" is not being done. Many state and local government workers respond to these concerns and concerns of retention by answering that they hope before any of this becomes a liability, they will be retired and it will be someone else's problem.

Steve W. stated that many officials in the rush to accept new technologies haven't thought through how to make them work effectively in the long-term perspective. He hoped that the state wouldn't find itself embroiled in lawsuits to prove how short-sighted these decisions often are. Steve raised concerns about the security and privacy rights of individuals. Websites are often attacked by outside hackers who manipulate information, and the historical records held in electronic form could be altered or destroyed by viruses introduced accidentally or deliberately by workers. Safeguards on some restricted information should be in place to protect individuals' privacy rights.

Denton Darrington pointed out that preservation techniques need to span all technologies throughout time. We are making the transition from paper records to faxes, e-mail, webpages, voice-mail, and whatever else. We have issues of personal information in records that shouldn't be displayed or given widespread access to the general public.

Steve W. pointed out that records creators need software that permits the redaction of some pieces of electronic records, such as social security numbers, medical information, private phone numbers or addresses. He also expressed concern of the encryption of records without some provision for retention of decryption keys. If the records are encrypted, the records will not be accessible by anyone when encryption software and techniques are allowed to become outdated and expire.

Steve Smylie volunteered to draft a letter to the Governor and other state officials expressing the SHRAB's concerns regarding electronic records management, preservation, and potential liability.

Guest Darrell Roskelley, Cassia County Clerk, offered a proposal to the SHRAB to consider that might address long-term retention concerns of county clerk's records. He suggested that counties scan paper records and send the originals to the State Archives for long-term storage and preservation. Backups of electronically created records could also be sent to the State Archives where it could be migrated or made into microfilm. The records held by the State Archives would then be the sole official archived record. The microfilm and migrated copies of the information could then be provided back to the counties for future reference. This way one agency would be microfilming and maintaining appropriate standards rather than 44.

Steve Walker said that microfilmed copies and duplicates of migrated electronic records should be distributed to repositories around the state as well to prevent catastrophic loss in case of a disaster at the State Archives building.

Darrell Roskelley produced a sample cd with County Commissioner minutes and court documents for the SHRAB members. He felt that records saved to cd's in a standardized format could be used for daily active use while long-term records preservation concerns could be handled by the State Archives. Darrell stated that the technology currently exists to provide far better access to records than in the past and we need an agreed on plan to use it. We also need statewide funding to accomplish this process. County courts need to be allowed to scan the records and send the originals to the State Archives far sooner than in 5 or 7 years. Rules need to be made to let the originals be preserved and maintained by the State Archives.

A discussion of rules, guidelines, and policies needed to streamline and enforce records management activities then ensued.

Steve W. asked Bruce Walters to explain what is generally done in corporations to promote records management.

Bruce explained that the records management program at Washington Group International has a cover letter signed by the president, the chief financial officer, and chief legal officer that tells all

employees that this is company policy and it will be enforced. The Governor of Idaho needs to do the same thing for the state. Training then needs to be provided with all the agency records coordinators to enable them to follow policy and do their jobs better. All government agencies need to know that there is a records management program that is to be followed. Individuals are not to be destroying any records unless they follow policy.

Steve W. suggested that the SHRAB may want to consider making some kind of recommendation to give the Governor so that records management procedures can be better implemented on a statewide basis. Many officials, especially those concerned with information technology only look to provide access to records that are active which might be at the most three years. Yet many records need to be legally retained for years after they are referenced on a daily basis. Records need to be properly “archived” to a storage format that ensures the record is secure and can be accessed years later. We need webmasters and others who publish information on the web that these can be unique government records and methods to ensure authenticity, reliability, and preservation must be in place. The sad fact is that Idaho has already lost unique historical records produced in electronic formats and will continue to do so until we recognize that we must have a routine method of preserving these records from the moment they are created. Records provide accountability of government agencies and officials to the public and that is the essence of our democracy. We must ensure records accessibility over legally mandated retention periods.

Bruce reviewed the two letters he wrote on behalf of the SHRAB. A letter to Governor Kempthorne encouraged support of phase2 of the Merle Wells State Archives building. Bruce also wrote Ken Grimmett of the State Department of Environmental Quality thanking him for his help in providing grant information to the SHRAB. Steve W. encouraged members to review the reports submitted by Chris Flynn and John Yandell who attended the NAGARA conference as substitutes for SHRAB members Terry Abraham and Bruce Walters.

Tentative dates and locations were set for future SHRAB meetings. They are as follows:

Tuesday, December 11, 2001 in the Boise Area

(Dept. Of Agriculture Bldg, 2270 East Old Penitentiary Road, Boise,
Lower Conference Room 1)

Monday, April 8, 2002 in the Panhandle region

Friday, July 12, 2002 in central or eastern Idaho

Thursday, October 3, 2002 or Friday October 4, 2002 in coordination with Dan Prenzing, State Board of Education Coordinator for the Idaho Council for Social Studies

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Walters, Secretary