

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Having watched the weather news for a month or more, I suspect that most of us have new pieces of history to record. I had the good fortune of finding one large piece of a well established newspaper that covered a new school being added to our university; the growth of the university; and the success of its president—all attached to a story of hurricane destruction in Haiti.

Then we watched our weather reveal the beauty and grandeur of snow. That was followed almost immediately by collapsed roofs, destructive trees, iced roads hidden by several feet of snow, and blocked by the above.

Some of you probably lived through long-recalled floods. Unhappily, I foresee learning of damage to some of your archives. If we all escaped such stories throughout this very unusual winter, then I would think we are recording miracles.

And some who did not escape may also have miracle stories to tell. I already have one nice tribute to one of you who valiantly lived through a very tough crisis.

Disaster is not welcome in an archives. I have hoped and prayed to be spared such trauma, and thus far I have been primarily, although not totally spared. It was harder than I anticipated to find nearby firms that might help us deal with a disaster. This winter does call us to check and perhaps re-vise our disaster plans. In addition, we are called to remind our co-workers of their responsibility in a disaster,



S. Francis Assisi

and of course, there is always funding to be considered.

Lest I leave you with a very heavy message, let me end with one touch of beauty. For weeks we watched some really magnificent icicles shape themselves into stalagmites, while St. Francis acquired and lost a snow cap and snow slippers, and Bernadette knelt half buried in snow before Our Lady. All those sights could be seen and tracked daily from the windows of a small courtyard as we travelled from chapel or to dinner. Part of the picture also was our oldest extant building. We were thus called to wonder about our predecessors, and we gained a small collection of photos to preserve the history for us. The season and the site left us a gift both simple and profound.

May we always be grateful for these gifts. And as time passes, may we follow the modern means to collect and preserve them.

I wish you all a Glorious Easter season!

Sincerely,

Francis Assisi Kennedy, OSF, [archives@oldenburg.org](mailto:archives@oldenburg.org)

## ARCHIVISTS COOPERATE TO MAKE SMALL ARCHIVES ACCESSIBLE TO CONVENT AND LAITY

The archives in Mount St. Benedict Monastery is a small one. None the less two Sisters, Evelyn Strei and Laurian Lasha, work part time as archivists. Sister Evelyn is in charge of photos and artifacts. She prepares displays when a Sister dies and also keeps the display areas filled with current material.

Sister Laurian is in charge of maintaining information about community history.

This information is fed into the Past Perfect computer program which allows one to know what is available in the archives. The archivists help the members of the monastery to find information when they need it for various projects.

On occasion lay people will inquire about using the information found in the archives.

This past year the monastery celebrated ninety years as a community. Many items from the archives were made available for visitors to view. The two Sister archivists worked hard to add to the celebration This helped make the four month event a huge success.

Many “loan arrangers” might have been jealous.

*Laurian Lasha, OSB, laurianl@yahoo.com*

## **A GOOD WAY TO IDENTIFY PHOTOS**

Many archivists have some interesting stories of attempts to identify unmarked photos. Sister Colette Livingston, an Ursuline Sister from Cleveland relates a method that has worked for her.

Sister writes, “When I come across an old photograph, and I do not know everyone who is in the picture, I copy it and hang it outside my Archives for the nuns who live here in the motherhouse for all to see. I attach the caption, “Who are we? Do you know?”

Then a few weeks later, I publish the names of the Sisters in the photo.

Our nuns seem to enjoy immensely solving or seeing the solved mystery.”

## **TWO IMPORTANT CHRISTMAS GIFTS**

We readers did receive one interesting story about Christmas gifts. Now I suppose we can all look out for the Easter Bunny!



Sister Julianna Vagnossi, CSSF wrote, “I was the ‘newbie’ at the ACWR conference last September in Milwaukee. I asked a question of the gentleman who presented on preserving media, asking whether we had to preserve a working machine for every format of the same data or just the ones for the original and current formats.

Anyway, my counterpart and mentor in Chicago, Sr. Mary Kathleen Elliott, CSSF, sent me a CD of arias sung by Enrico Caruso made off the original *wax cylinders!* It may not have been something to use in the archives, but it was one which reminded me of that keynote address.

My second gift was a *real* office with an internet-connected computer and scanner and *everything!* It is close to the archives, which makes work so much easier. Before this I’d carry my flash drive around the convent as I searched for an open computer, feeling for all the world like a ‘wandering Armean.’

God is so good!”

## **INTRODUCTORY ARCHIVES WORKSHOP FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES**

The Catholic Library Association is pleased to announce the fourth Introductory Archives Workshop for Religious Communities to be held at the Techny Towers Conference and Retreat Center, Techny, IL from July 25-30, 2010. The 5-day intensive program is directed toward individuals who are interested in learning about archival theory and practice or who wish to update their archival training.

Unlike other archival workshops, the sessions will focus on the unique types of records found in the archives of men’s and women’s religious communities. These records document not only the communities themselves, but also the evolution of Catholicism in the United States, and its

impact on educational, social and charitable institutions that shaped the nation's history.

The program, directed by professional religious archivists, will include lectures, tours, and opportunities for sharing experiences.

Complete program and registration information and a registration form are posted on the Catholic Library Association website at [www.cathla.org/preservation.php](http://www.cathla.org/preservation.php), or contact the CLA at [cla@cathla.org](mailto:cla@cathla.org) or phone 413-443-2252.

## CSA HERITAGE ROOM RENOVATION

After stained wall covering from leaks from old radiators on the floor above, damaged carpet, and numerous other miscellaneous mishaps, the heritage room of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine underwent a renovation, which was completed in fall 2009. In various shades of green, the stain-resistant carpet, textured wall covering, and fresh paint have given new life to the room, which houses photographs and artifacts pertaining to our history. The Sisters of Charity came to Cleveland, OH in 1851, establishing hospitals, orphanages, and schools.



Among the treasures is a life-size hand-carved wooden statue of Mary, given in 1862 by Bishop Amadeus Rappe, the first bishop of Cleveland, who brought our sisters from France. The statue, which had first been in a cupola outside the orphanage, and then repainted several times, was totally stripped of its many layers of paint by a restoration firm and then finished with colors found in the crevasses of Mary's cloak, which were discovered after the 17 layers of paint were removed.

Also, the silver plated sanctuary lamp, which the Sisters brought with them on the boat from France, and used for many years, was finally able to be hung from the ceiling. A self-guide to the Heritage Room was also updated to reflect various new items added to the room. Though this renovation was not a Christmas present, it was a welcome Thanksgiving blessing!



*Mary Denis Maher, CSA, [smdm@srssofcharity.org](mailto:smdm@srssofcharity.org)*

## ANOTHER HAPPY ARCHIVIST

Sister Dorothy Anhauser is also rejoicing with a new helper. She relates that Sister Brenda Thompson has been assigned "to be my assistant. She has been busy digitizing contents of the archives artifacts and heritage library. At present we are putting letters written to Bishops and their replies in acid free sleeves. The bishops attended all elections and approved the candidates who were entering our convent in the past. This is no longer the case."

Congratulations to both of you as you come to each other's aid.

## NEW MEMBERS ELECTED TO ACWR BOARD

Sister Rose Marie Martin, O.P., is the newly elected vice-president/president elect of ACWR. Her term will begin in August of this year.

S. Rose Marie, a member of the Dominican Sisters Grand Rapids, served as Technical Services Librarian at Aquinas College, Grand Rapids for 30 years. She was Regional

Coordinator for the Congregation since May 2006 and the Archivist for the Congregation since January 2007.



S. Rose Marie

She holds a BS degree in Education from Central Michigan University and a Masters degree in Librarianship from Western Michigan University. S. Rose Marie is enrolled in the Archival Certification program at University of Michigan and completed the Catholic Library Association Archival Workshop in October 2007

The memberships she currently holds are: Michigan Archival Association, ARMA. West Michigan Chapter of ARMA, and ACWR.

During her years of ministry S. Rose Marie has served on various congregational, professional, and civic committees and boards and is currently serving on the West Michigan Arthritis Foundation Board and as Secretary for the Aquinas College Alumni Association.

S. Rose Marie stated, "I believe strongly in the value of religious congregation archives for the current and future history of the church and the world. We have much to contribute and need to find the best way to preserve and to broaden our sharing of this valuable resource."

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Kathleen Hertel-Baker is the newly elected secretary of ACWR beginning her position in August.



Kathy Hertel-Baker

Kathy Hertel-Baker has been working as a professional archivist for the past 14 years. She is originally from Erie, PA, where she benefited from a Catholic education provided

by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Northwest Pennsylvania. She earned a BA in History from Hiram College, and an MA in History with a concentration in Archival and Museum Studies from Duquesne University.

Kathy has worked for a variety of organizations including Carnegie Mellon University, the Heinz History Center, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center. She is currently the Director of the Archival Center with the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. Outside of work, Kathy enjoys doing theatre, horseback riding, and traveling. She is married and has three cats.

The ACWR Board congratulates and welcomes Rose Marie and Kathy to their new positions with ACWR.

## **SISTERS IN HEALTHCARE HISTORY PROJECT**



John Bavaro

In December 2003 Doctor John Bavaro of Slippery Rock University invited representatives of the religious congregations in Western Pennsylvania to a meeting to discuss a project to capture the history of women religious in health care delivery in the Western

Pennsylvania area. Eleven communities were represented at this informational meeting. Dr. Bavaro explained that he had received the support and permission of his Dean and the University President to pursue the "Sisters in Healthcare History Project" because he believed that if the story of the impact of religious women on health care was not told, it would be lost. This meeting was the beginning of a journey, one with many dead ends, circuitous routes, detours, and challenges. The representatives were asked to consider joining the project and to respond to the willingness to proceed by January 22, 2004.

By January 2004 seven congregations decided to take part in the project. This number increased to 16 with 13 communities very active. Dr. Bavaro requested from each congregation a letter of endorsement and non monetary support. The journey began in earnest in March 2004 with an enthusiastic belief that the exhibit would be completed in the fall of 2005. This deadline was moved many times throughout the years. Members agreed to complete focus documents, collect artifacts and pictures, research the story and meet the deadlines.

From the start of the project there was great necessity for the archivist of each congregation to be involved. For some this task was easy because the archivist was the representative from the congregation. For other groups there was little early communication with the archivist.

It became important for those involved to believe that the story to be told had value and importance. Some of the considerations which would lead one to tell the story were: 1) to foster appreciation; 2) to make history alive and real; 3) to dispel "old wives tales" and to correct the historical record. Archivists know the importance of preserving the past in a historically proper manner.

As the meetings progressed there were present in the group several different levels of involvement. Some congregational representatives were enthusiastic and greatly committed. Some were unsure of their dedication to the project and others were reluctant to take part and rather lukewarm in their involvement.

Early in 2004 the overwhelming size of the job ahead became apparent. How could the story be told in an interesting and compelling way that would interest others and not bore them with the myriads of stories, items, and memorabilia coming from sixteen congregations. Additionally, it was necessary to design a process which would give each

group an opportunity to tell enough of the story that the vision and mission of each would be highlighted in a way unique to that congregation.

Some representatives had to work to convince the archivist of the community that this was a worthy project. During all this time the persons involved were full time workers in some aspect of their community life and Dr. Bavaro was a full time professor at the University.

Many things also changed as the years passed. The history department of the Slippery Rock University was most involved and then the personnel changed and the interest waned. The art department planned



Slippery Rock University students viewing exhibit.

to use the project for interns and then other ideas surfaced and they moved to new things. Student work study participants graduated and new students needed to be educated as they came on board. Some of the design teams quit leaving the work incomplete.

Meanwhile, several congregational administrations changed and some of the new members were more or much less supportive. Several of the congregations were involved in mergers.

This article is designed to give everyone hope that if one sets out on a worthy journey it is good to believe that it can be done. On October 27, 2009 the exhibit opened at the Martha Gault Art Studio at Slippery Rock University. A reception was held for university personnel, benefactors, Slippery Rock

students and faculty. Dr. Robert Smith, University President and Dr. John Bavaro greeted guests. The University hosted a special reception for the Sisters of Western Pennsylvania on Saturday, November 7, 2009. Dr. William Williams, Provost, joined Dr. Bavaro in welcoming the sisters and their guests. The well attended event was enhanced by lovely hors d'oeuvres and music



Sisters of Western Pennsylvania at special event on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>.

provided by the student flute quartet from the music department. Pictures of the event and descriptions of the project are available on the exhibit website ([www.sistersinhealthcare.org](http://www.sistersinhealthcare.org)). The exhibit was available from October 27<sup>th</sup> through November 20<sup>th</sup> and was well attended during those days.

Not every part of the exhibit is complete. However, the long and circuitous journey is winding to a close. Many positive things have emerged:

1. The project and the particular congregations involved have received very positive publicity in local media.
2. The sisters in the area have been given additional opportunities to talk in classes at the University about their social outreach and the works in which they are involved today.
3. An excellent website has been designed. All communities have a virtual exhibit on the web with a link to their particular websites.
4. All of the artifacts are stored in acid free and archival containers.

5. The story of the past has been told and is continuing to unfold.
6. The completed exhibit is professionally done and has been very well received.
7. Slippery Rock University has been most supportive.

At this date, the group continues to meet to plan for the future storage and use of the exhibit. As this Newsletter goes to press one striking thing to remember is that the archivist plays a most important role in telling the story of each congregation. It falls to that person to make certain that the Archives is a living, breathing place where history rests to be told so that the generations to follow can learn from the giants of the past.

Louise Grundish, SC [lgrundish@scsh.org](mailto:lgrundish@scsh.org)

## **EXHIBIT REVEALS ROLE OF COURAGEOUS WOMEN IN SHAPING U.S. HISTORY**

The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland is pleased to announce the traveling exhibit, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, ([www.womenandspirit.org](http://www.womenandspirit.org)) produced by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious is coming to the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage ([www.maltzmuseum.org](http://www.maltzmuseum.org)) in Beachwood, OH on May 9, 2010. A project supported by the Foundation of Cleveland at its earliest stage, the exhibit's first run at the Cincinnati Museum Center attracted more than 50,000 visitors who learned about the tremendous contributions of women religious throughout American history to today. The exhibit runs through August 2010.

Rare artifacts, poignant photographs, compelling video and first-person accounts tell the stories of pioneering women who established schools, hospitals and other enduring institutions and continue to work for peace and social justice.

To date, key sponsors of the Cleveland presentation include Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, Notre Dame College, Ursuline College/Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland, National City/Now A Part of PNC, Cleveland Clinic/Marymount Hospital, the Cleveland Foundation and Mt. Sinai Foundation.



Exhibit picture documenting sisters' contributions to shaping American's health care.

WOMEN & SPIRIT is a project of The Leadership Conference of Women Religious, an association of the leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The Conference has more than 1,500 members, on behalf of about 95% of America's 68,000 women religious.

Archivists from the Dioceses of Cleveland and Youngstown are participating in supplying material for the local exhibit. Joanne Gardner, HM, June Hansen, CSJ, and Colette Livingston, OSU, Mary Denis Maher, CSA, and Elizabeth Wood, SND, are among ACWR members involved in the process.

*Mary Denis Maher, CSA, [smdm@srssofcharity.org](mailto:smdm@srssofcharity.org)*

## **EXHIBITION HONORING THE HISTORY OF CATHOLIC SISTERS IN THE UNITED STATES WILL BE IN DUBUQUE, IOWA, FEBRUARY, 2011**

An exhibit focusing on the History of Catholic Sisters in the United States will make a stop at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa, February 2011 through April 2011. "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" draws upon first-hand narratives to tell the story of an innovative

group of women who helped shape the nation's social and cultural landscape. Communities of women religious who pioneered in the Upper Mississippi River Valley are planning a special "local" exhibit to accompany the national story.

The exhibit sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) is now opened to visitors at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Be sure not to miss it.

*Sr. Deanna Marie Carr, B.V.M.*

Editors Note: One wonders how many of us will be fortunate enough to see more than one or even several of these exhibitions. It is a shame that more of them could not travel farther.

## **ACWR MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

ACWR currently has 270 members. Our membership directory includes 269 members from 39 states one member from Halifax, Canada. The ACWR office received word of the death of a member, Suzanne Rodriguez, SSJ, and we offer our sympathy and prayers.

### **ACWR NEWSLETTER**

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