

# ACWR NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 1

February 1992

## ARCHIVISTS FOR CONGREGATIONS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

### MEMBER PROFILE REVEALS PERTINENT INFORMATION

Responses to the questionnaire mailed to members of Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious have been tabulated by a contingent of the ACWR Committee. This membership profile shows the following results:

Fulltime archivists . . . . .	56%
Archives with operating budget . . . . .	71%
Archivists receiving salaries or stipends . . . . .	21%
Average salary . . . . .	\$11,457.00
Archives that budget for yearly meetings . . . . .	61%
Archivists who have had archival training . . . . .	75%
Archivists whose works have been published . . . . .	15%
Archives having computers . . . . .	35%
Computer-literate archivists . . . . .	44%
Average suggested yearly donation . . . . .	\$ 25.00
Suggested location of national office:	

Midwest.....23	Silver Spring.....8
Chicago.....19	ACWR president's location....6
Washington, D.C....13	Central United States.....5
St. Louis.....8	Other suggestions.....22

A total of 139 responses was received. Some observations about the membership of ACWR can be made as a result of the questionnaire.

Slightly more than 50% of the respondents are fulltime archivists for their congregations and fully 75% have had formal workshop training in the archival profession, even if only at workshop level. While fewer than 25% of the religious archivists who responded to the questionnaire have either a salary or a stipend, better than 60% work with a yearly budget which includes participation in professional archival meetings. Two questions dealing with computers reveal that religious archivists are not strangers to this type of technology.

The response to all questions was almost 100% except for the final two: only 69 respondents suggested a specific amount for the yearly donation, and 74 suggested one or more locations for the national office. Many respondents felt unable to suggest a yearly donation: what would the money be used for? would small congregations be expected to donate as much as large congregations? Similarly, several respondents indicated uncertainty about establishing a

#### IMPORTANT DATES IN 1992

June 28-July 1	History of Women Religious Conference Marymount College Tarrytown, New York
September 6-11	International Congress on Archives Palais des congres Montreal, Canada
September 11-16	Society of American Archivists Le Centre Sheraton Montreal, Canada
	ACWR meeting will be scheduled during the SAA Conference being held in Montreal, Canada.

national office: how would it function? how would it be financed? could not the necessary work be carried out by the officers at their own work sites?

Regarding the location of a national office, if one should be established, the preponderance of responses favored a central location in the United States: Chicago, Illinois; South Bend, Indiana; or St. Louis, Missouri. Others stated that a national office for ACWR should be located near the LCWR office in Silver Spring, Maryland or at least in Washington, D.C.

Many respondents took time to include personal notes of encouragement and gratitude to the ACWR Committee for what has been initiated and accomplished to date. The Committee, in turn, expresses its thanks to the ACWR members for investing their time and interest in this organizational project of the Member Profile. The information gained from the questionnaire will be used in designing future educational initiatives and setting organizational policies.

+++++

### "A-H LINKUP" IS PLANNED FOR TARRYTOWN HISTORY CONFERENCE

The ACWR Sub-committee for Programs met in Baltimore in early February to design the program for ACWR participation in the History of Women Religious Conference titled "Women Religious and the Social Fabric" and scheduled for June 28 to July 1, 1992, at Marymount College in Tarrytown, New York.

With the goal of increased collaboration between archivists and historians, ACWR proposes a trio of sessions under the theme "A-H Linkup." Each of the sessions will be focused on a topic of mutual importance to archivists and historians: ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS, METHODOLOGY OF ORAL HISTORY, and IDENTIFICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS. At each session, an archivist and a historian will make brief presentations on the issue from their respective standpoints; a facilitator will then initiate a dialogue/conversation between the two presenters and then between them and the audience. These sessions will be preceded by an introduction to ACWR for historians and archivists unfamiliar with the organization. Intended as a continuous applied education program, the sessions will, however, be useful to archivists and historians as stand-alone gatherings.

All ACWR members are encouraged to attend this upcoming NHWR conference. For further information, contact Karen Kennelly, CSJ, Mount St. Mary's College, 12001 Chalon Road, Los Angeles, California 90049.

+++++

### SURVIVING PROFESSIONAL CULTURE SHOCK

OR

### THE PERILS OF BEING A USA-TRAINED ARCHIVIST IN THE ETERNAL CITY

Undertaking any new project or job is always challenging. So, when our General Minister approached me with a request to go to Rome to evaluate and reorganize the archives at the Generalate, I accepted with the realization that this would be a CHALLENGE unlike any I'd experienced before! My first "sojourn" in the Eternal City was from October '91 through mid-January '92. I tried to approach this new project with an open mind and without any pre-conceived ideas regarding what I might find. However, my mental preparation wasn't really enough to completely immunize me to the effects of professional culture shock which assailed me soon after my arrival!

The first and most obvious difficulty encountered was that of the poor environmental situation. Extreme humidity, together with more dust and dirt than anyone should ever have to contend with, is a way of life for a Roman archivist.

Government regulations, and not personal preference, economy, or the health of the archivist or her collection, determine the level and hours of heating buildings. Consequently, everything is very damp and the collections are subject to extreme fluctuations of heat and humidity. Another "shock" involved the discovery that not only were our collections stored in an assortment of some of the worst possible envelopes, folders, and boxes, but there are no "archivally correct" supplies to be purchased in Italy! In both instances, the greatest frustration lies in knowing what to do and in also being thwarted by the lack of resources which we in the United States have come to take for granted.

I think the greatest surprise to me (and to others from the United States whom I met at meetings of the Association of English-Speaking Archivists in Rome) was the attitude of "native" archivists (and long-term "ex-patriots") for whom the areas of environmental control and basic preservation and conservation strategies were simply non-issues. This was best expressed by the archivist for the Discalced Carmelites who, when questioned, simply shrugged eloquently and said that "what survives, survives, and what doesn't, doesn't."

Another area in which we in the United States differ significantly from our European confreres is that of arrangement and description of collections. There, documents seem to be grouped by subject and/or type of document, e.g., Relations with the Holy See, Chapter protocols, etc. No attempt is made to keep together the records of any generating office.

Once these difficulties had been identified (and I recovered my mental composure), I began to look for solutions that would not only be possible but would also not compromise my standards too much! After meeting with our architect, we determined the best course of action for us was to invest in a small room dehumidifier and to bend the heating regulations to allow us to heat the building which houses the archives for about eighteen hours daily rather than the ten hours which had been the previous norm. The problem of obtaining desired supplies hasn't yet been completely solved, but we have received information about purchasing materials from an English-based distributor for University Products, an American company, as well as the possibility of obtaining supplies from Germany. With regard to arrangement and description, we've developed a plan for reorganizing the record groups according to principles of provenance and original order. A decision has been made regarding a collecting policy for the archives. Since we are a decentralized congregation, the Generalate Archives will not be the repository for material specific to any of our ten individual provinces. Such things as jubilee books of parishes and institutions, correspondence regarding a local community, etc. will be retained at the province level. The Generalate Archives will be the repository for records of the General Administration and for records of the congregation created prior to the establishment of provinces.

Lest the reader get the mistaken impression that all is grim and bleak in Rome, I must say that the job has numerous perks. I was able to experience the thrill of "DISCOVERY" when coming across items such as a photograph of two of our original sisters which had been buried for years in an album discovered in an old trunk, and the excitement of holding in my hand items which I have long heard about but had never seen, like the medals and commendations awarded to our sisters for their heroic nursing service during the Franco-Prussian War.

All in all, my time in Rome was very rewarding, and I look forward to my next

"tour of duty"--even though I didn't throw a coin into the Trevi Fountain!

--Mary Serbacki, OSF  
Stella Niagara, New York

+++++

IDAHO MONASTERY WILL HOST ARCHIVAL/MUSEUM CONFERENCE

To plan a conference on the preservation of archival and museum collections, Sister Carm Ternes, archivist of the Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, invited historians to a no-host luncheon at the Country Haus in Cottonwood. This initial meeting drew twenty-one historians, archivists, curators, librarians, and records managers from eleven towns within the area.

Following a discussion of their needs and interests, priorities were determined from a worksheet listing.

This and additional planning meetings have resulted in a series of workshops to be presented at a two-day conference scheduled for October 2-3, 1992 at the monastery in Cottonwood.

Areas of preservation to be covered by the presenters include:

- 1) determining collection policy
- 2) learning techniques in cleaning historic documents, photographs, clothing, leather, wood, and metal artifacts
- 3) regulating the proper environment
- 4) preserving, handling, boxing, and properly covering artifacts.

It is important to note that these hands-on workshops are geared toward personnel of under-funded institutions. Because the Idaho Historical Society is matching grant funds of the Idaho Humanities Council, there will be no admission fee for the two-day conference.

For further information send inquiries to: Carm Ternes, OSB, Archivist, Monastery of St. Gertrude, P.O. Box 107, Cottonwood, Idaho 83522.



Interior view of St. Gertrude's Museum, located at Monastery of St. Gertrude, three miles southwest of Cottonwood, Idaho. Founded in 1931, the museum features historical and cultural exhibits which include items from Buckskin Bill and Polly Bemis. The Rhodes Emmanuel Memorial section was added in 1988.

+++++

ARCHIVAL MANUALS ARE AVAILABLE TO ACWR MEMBERS

Sister Mary Linus Bax, has three manuals which she is willing to share with ACWR members. Sister has been in the archival profession since 1975, and was on the team for the LCWR workshops with Sister Evangeline Thomas and Father Norbert Brockman. In addition to this, Sister Mary Linus has given numerous other workshops and lectures in the United States and Canada.

Her Policy Manual has been widely distributed and is in the seventh printing. Although written specifically for the Sisters of the Precious Blood, it and the other manuals can be easily adapted to any congregation.

The manuals available are (1) Policy Manual, (2) Annals, and (3) Manual of Procedures. The cost of each is five dollars (\$5.00).

Those interested may send their requests and checks to: Mary Linus Bax, CPPS, Salem Heights Archives, 4960 Salem Avenue, Dayton, Ohio 45416.

+++++

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY OF SERVICE HEIGHTENS INTEREST

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of New York are celebrating 175 years of service (1817-1992) in New York City. A wide variety of events has kept Sister Rita King and Sister Anne Courtney, archivists, very busy. They have provided information for speeches, brochures, press releases, liturgies, T.V. programs, radio broadcasts, and exhibits.

One of the interesting projects involved locating a copy of the letter written by John Connolly, Bishop of New York, in 1817, to Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton requesting sisters to open an orphan asylum. Sister Aloysia Dugan, DC, archivist at Emmitsburg, Maryland, was contacted and she sent a copy which will be used for a brochure.

Another result of this year of celebration has been a renewed interest in the history of the congregation by many, including their own sisters. It has brought a deeper realization of and gratitude for their rich heritage of 175 years in New York City.

+++++

ACWR COMMITTEE MEMBER THANKS ACWR MEMBERS

"I want to thank all the ACWR members who responded to my inquiry about the use of computer hardware and software in archives. Your comments and suggestions were very helpful. At a later date I hope to share with you the progress I make along those lines. Currently I am also involved in organizing and indexing our correspondence collection which dates back to 1869. Being very interested in the process of documenting religious life, I find myself continually challenged to encourage local communities to document their ministry and religious activities in the 'annals.' Individual members are encouraged to write their autobiographies.

In the interest of networking with historians who are writing on topics about women religious, our archives has recently done research for Anne Butler who is writing about the pioneer women during the period of 1865-1915, and Suellen Hoy who is doing research on Irish postulants and novices who emigrated to the United States in the 18th century."

-- Josephine Kennelly, CCVI  
San Antonio, Texas

+++++

+++++

The Association of English-Speaking Archivists, a group of archivists who live and work in Rome, Italy, has joined the ranks of ACWR. The archivists, who serve their respective congregations of women religious in Rome, meet periodically for support, sharing of information, pooling of resources, and professional updating. We welcome them to ACWR!

+ + + + +

Books Received: Counterpoint Melodies: Mary Gertrude Regan, BVM and Mary Cecilia Dougherty, BVM by Jane McDonnell, BVM (Dubuque: Sisters of Charity, BVM, 1991) v, 115, photos, index.

The ACWR office wants to begin building a library of published works dealing with religious congregations and/or their founders. If you have such works, please send a copy to: ACWR, c/o Rosalie McQuaide, CSJP, 10319K Malcolm Circle, Cockeysville, Maryland 21030.

Also, ACWR would like to begin receiving your archives newsletters. These will provide information which can be shared with the larger membership. Please use the address given above. Thank you!

+ + + + +

Since publication of the ACWR DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS in September 1991, several archivists and historians of congregations of women religious have joined ACWR. An updated DIRECTORY will be ready for distribution by September 1992.

+ + + + +

Sister Carm Ternes, OSB, sends this information concerning the computer in her archives at Cottonwood, Idaho:

HARDWARE: Radio Shack: Tandy 1000 TL Computer  
Tandy CM-5 Monitor  
Panasonic  
KX-P1180 Printer

SOFTWARE: FilePro 16: The Small Computer Co., Inc.  
40 West Ridgewood Avenue  
Ridgewood, New Jersey 07450

She is very satisfied with this combination as it allows the setting up of her file system according to her needs. To her, the biggest advantages are the quick retrieval of information and the print-out of that information for the need of the moment.

+ + + + +

ACWR Committee member Sister Mary Serbacki will be returning to Rome on April 7, 1992, and will be there throughout the summer. She states the date for her return to New York is set for September 9, 1992. Anyone wishing to greet her during this long sojourn may reach her at this address: Mary Serbacki, OSF, Casa Generalizia, Suore Francescane, Via Cassia 870, 00189 Roma, Italy.

+ + + + +

Any questions or comments regarding ACWR are to be addressed to Rosalie McQuaide, CSJP, ACWR Committee Chairperson, 10319K Malcolm Circle, Cockeysville, Maryland 21030. The telephone numbers are (301) 628-6141 (home) or (301) 625-2220 (Catholic Relief Services).

+++++

## ACWR ANNOUNCES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Elsewhere in this newsletter members will find a needs assessment which ACWR is sponsoring. The purpose of this survey is to assess the educational "needs" of archivists for congregations of women religious.

As is known, ACWR is a professional organization established to bring archivists together to confront current issues and problems, and to explore "needs" and opportunities facing religious women's archives today.

But, how can the organization confront members' problems and explore their "needs" if it does not know what they are? This assessment will give each ACWR member the opportunity to state the problems and educational "needs" she encounters in the daily discharge of her work in the archives.

The results of the survey will serve as a tool to enable ACWR to develop workshops and other programs of instruction designed to meet the expressed "needs" as learned through the assessment.

Please return the assessment information sheet by March 15, 1992, to: Josephine Kennelly, CCVI, Incarnate Word Archives, 4707 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209.

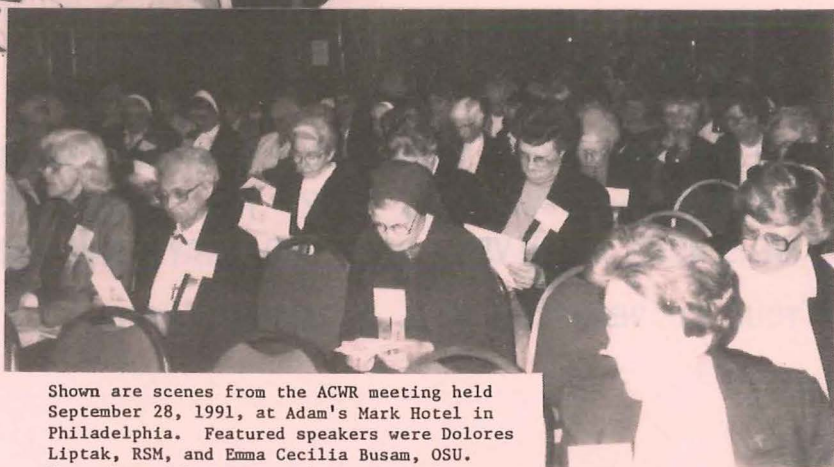
+++++

QUESTION: Where did Noah keep the honeybees during the great flood?

ANSWER: In the ark hives, of course!

+++++

## ACWR MEMBERS GATHER AT SAA CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA



Shown are scenes from the ACWR meeting held September 28, 1991, at Adam's Mark Hotel in Philadelphia. Featured speakers were Dolores Liptak, RSM, and Emma Cecilia Busam, OSU. More than eighty ACWR members attended.

+++++

ACWR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FROM THE FOLLOWING NINE CATEGORIES, PLEASE LIST WHAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR GREATEST EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. PRIORITIZE THE NEEDS MAKING NUMBER ONE THE MOST IMPORTANT AND SO ON.

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY ONE: THE BASICS OF ARCHIVAL ORGANIZATION (POLICIES, PLANS, PROCEDURES, BUDGETS)

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY TWO: ACQUISITION AND APPRAISAL

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY THREE: ACCESSIONING

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY FOUR: ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY FIVE: FINDING AIDS

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY SIX: ACCESS AND REFERENCE SERVICE

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY SEVEN: CONSERVATION

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY EIGHT: USING COMPUTERS AND MICROGRAPHS IN THE ARCHIVES

\_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY NINE: OTHER

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE ACWR NEWS, COMPLETE AND SEND BY MARCH 15, 1992, TO: JOSEPHINE KENNELLY, CCVI, INCARNATE WORD ARCHIVES, 4707 BROADWAY, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78209.

YOUR COOPERATION WILL BE APPRECIATED.



+++++