

## **Preservation Planning In North Carolina: A Report on the State-Wide Conference**

On April 26, 1991, eighty library, archival and records management professionals met in Raleigh to discuss the preservation of North Carolina's records. Common issues were investigated and suggestions were made to help direct the future preservation activities of the North Carolina Preservation Consortium.

The meeting had been called by the Consortium as a key event in its year-long program to develop a preservation plan for the state. It has carried on these activities with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Cannon Foundation.

Four topics were discussed in separate sessions at the day-long conference, and the findings from each are presented below.

### **EDUCATION**

Those meeting to discuss education decided that there are three groups that must be educated. They are:

1. The general public.
2. Library, archival and records management professionals.
3. Administrators and resource allocators.

Aside from getting educated about the benefits and necessities of preservation, professionals and administrators in particular must be aware of the possible legal implications of their failure to respond. The conclusion is that it is impossible to set a priority on which of these groups needs to be reached first. The Consortium was advised to seek the means most appropriate to each group.

General guidelines were established. In order to educate all elements and regions in the state, the North Carolina Preservation Consortium must work with existing associations; it is better to use extant frameworks than to create new ones.

In order to reach into the specific communities with their divergent needs, the Consortium must investigate these

communities and create cooperative education partnerships.

These were some of the specific suggestions:

1. Use extant newsletters. Supply these sources with preservation news specifically of interest to their readers.
2. Attend professional meetings. Dispense literature; demonstrate supplies and techniques; and make presentations specifically tailored to the preservation interests of the particular groups.
3. Existing literature and videos should be made available to these groups. Information about their availability (who distributes them, etc.) and evaluations of their usefulness should be available as well.

Some suggestions were made for specific groups. The general public, for instance, can best be reached by public service spots featuring North Carolina celebrities. Distribution of book marks, brochures, etc. that carry a preservation message is another technique. Some constituencies may be best served by establishing mandates, such as requiring disaster plans in public libraries as a prerequisite for the receipt of LSCA funds, or by reaching some minimal preservation baseline before Consortium funds can be made available to an institution. The key, it was stressed, is to fit the message and its delivery to the specific group instead of trying to create a newsletter or program for all.

In addition, nevertheless, the Consortium should offer some selected programming, if no other group in the state is supplying it. Programming that conveys information useful to all types of professionals working with records-such as programs on disaster preparedness and environmental concerns-should be stressed. The Consortium can also encourage other organizations such as the Society of North Carolina Archivists (SNCA), the North Carolina Library Association (NCLA), the state chapters of the Association of Records Managers (ARMA), and the NC chapter of the Special Libraries Association (SLA), to hold such workshops for their members and others. Co-sponsorship would be a goal,

as well. And to help coordinate such cooperative efforts, the Consortium should begin to establish a good working relationship with these and other bodies. Ad-hoc planning committees involving them may be the best route.

## **REPROGRAPHY**

Those meeting to discuss reprography and reformatting issues ranked three priorities.

### *A. Education is the first priority.*

1. NCPC should develop information and leaflets based on existing models as the beginning of a resource notebook. Models to be followed could include those developed by the NY State Archives; perhaps bodies such as NCLA and SNCA could possibly help coordinate this initial effort.
2. NCPC should tie educational activities on reformatting to existing groups and resources-such as SNCA, Southeastern Library Network (Solinet) and NCLA.
3. NCPC should develop a state directory of resources in such areas as microfilming, programs, vendors, and supplies. In addition, the dispersal of literature on microfilming standards and how to write a contract would be helpful, as would lists of local resource persons.
4. NCPC should provide educational materials and training for in-house reformatting projects such as preservation photocopying.
5. NCPC should stage and/or develop workshops on reformatting issues. Non- print media must be included in this realm and in the above points, as well.

### *B. Quality microfilm is the second priority.*

1. NCPC should assess the needs and possible solutions for preservation microfilming projects and permanent film storage.
2. NCPC should coordinate a network of reciprocal storage, using the RLG model.

3. NCPC should publicize sources to help assure uniformity of standards and acceptability of vendors and to provide means for continued quality control.

4. NCPC should educate not only the professionals, but the user community, as well. NCPC is encouraged to use existing channels for this.

*C. Funding is the third priority.*

1. NCPC should seek any source-private, federal or state-to address cooperative reformatting needs of selected institutions.

2. NCPC should make use of advocates in the General Assembly and in such groups as the North Carolina BAR Association, Registers of Deeds, etc. to support funding of reprography education and projects.

**CONSERVATION**

Those meeting to discuss conservation-the "active" part of preservation such as hands- on repair and protective treating of library and archival and record materials-saw education as the key to the issue.

*A. Numerous groups must be educated.*

1. Resource allocators such as state legislators, private foundations, collection custodians and administrators must be targeted and told of the problems and expense of conservation.

2. The general public must be educated.

3. Library, archival and records management professionals must be educated, too. Conservation theory and practice must be part of library school and continuing education programs.

*B. Professionals already working in the field, who are charged with the responsibility of the preservation of their collections, must be educated.*

1. NCPC needs to disseminate conservation literature and

information. Enough good information already exists; so it will not be necessary for the Consortium to draft new material. It can merely be adapted and distributed. Care must be taken to keep abreast of changes in theory, practice, and materials.

- a. Some brochures can be printed and distributed.
- b. Other information can be supplied to various existing newsletters emphasizing procedures or practices of particular interest to the readers of these particular newsletters.

2. NCPC should provide workshops for collection custodians- either by supplying workshops already provided by such bodies as SOLINET, by contracting to other groups, or by developing them itself. The workshops most needed are:

- a. Workshops on decision making. These would inform participants what they can and can not undertake themselves.
- b. Less technical workshops on hands-on repair for common materials.
- c. Workshops on library binding as a preservation measure.

Care should be taken to arrange workshops in such a way that they be available to all without having to drive long distances.

## **DISASTER-PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

The group considering the issues in this field made distinctions between "silent" disasters-those that build slowly day to day-and catastrophic kinds that overwhelm at one moment. Distinctions were also made between disaster-preparedness and disaster recovery. Under these headings, the Consortium was called upon to help educate, coordinate and respond.

### *A. Education*

1. The Consortium should first sponsor workshops on disaster preparedness- being ready for cataclysmic events and preventing daily ones. These workshops should be held in different parts of the state over a regular schedule-to allow more and more people to begin to take first steps.

2. The Consortium should next sponsor or encourage the

sponsorship of workshops that address the prevention of silent disasters. This would include workshops on care and handling; integrated pest management; security, etc.

3. NCPC should dispense model disaster plans and information on how to develop plans.

4. NCPC should produce and dispense bibliographies, vendor lists and other publications and guides that would help prevent both silent and catastrophic disasters. Enough good manuals exist so that little original work needs to be done. The Consortium should find the best materials for the individual constituencies.

5. NCPC should reach into user groups-such as the DAR, UDC, genealogical societies and local history organizations-to build up interest in and demand for disaster preparedness in records holding communities.

6. NCPC should educate resource allocators, administrators and all levels of government. Each group should be made aware of disaster preparedness as being a part of public policy. Materials held for the common good demand protection from loss, theft, vandalism, and all types of disasters.

7. NCPC should pool information and act as a clearinghouse for preservation.

### *B. Coordination*

1. NCPC should coordinate disaster preparedness on local levels. It can do so by encouraging county or city disaster management officials to include disaster relief and materials for records holding groups in each county or city.

2. NCPC should coordinate disaster preparedness on the state level with the Division of Emergency Management.

3. NCPC should act to evaluate and possibly certify disaster plans. It could distribute the best throughout the state.

4. NCPC should work with local NC ARMA chapters already

developing disaster planning manuals, supplier lists and bibliographies. This can serve as a model for the Consortium to follow as it works with other groups in drawing up disaster manuals appropriate to their interests.

### *C. Disaster Recovery*

1. NCPC should offer programming on developing disaster recovery skills.
2. NCPC should establish a hotline.
3. NCPC should coordinate joint response within and beyond the state.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

All these issues were reported on at the day's final session. There, common factors were noted, and general recommendations were made. Thus it was decided that, to achieve the goals of its action agenda, the Consortium will follow certain common principles:

1. The Consortium will use existing frameworks. It will work within extant membership bodies and use their newsletters and meetings to disperse general preservation information and information specifically useful to particular interests. In most cases, existing preservation information will be adapted.
2. The Consortium will forge new networks. It will work with archival, library and records management groups to make sure that the preservation needs of these individual constituencies are being met. An advisory board made up of representatives of various constituencies would be one method of achieving this.
3. The Consortium will work towards cooperative goals. In developing new information and sponsoring workshops, it will aim for the betterment of all involved-library, archival, and records management communities. Care will be taken to hold workshops in a logical manner-so as to offer a series of building

blocks for skills. And introductory courses will be offered periodically as well.

4. The Consortium will constantly evaluate its effectiveness. It is mandatory that the effect of all of the Consortium's educational programs be gauged-not just to determine the value of the programs and to better them; but to have data available to prove to possible members and funders that the Consortium's activities have had an effect. Its goals and priorities must be reviewed periodically as well.

5. The Consortium will seek higher levels of preservation awareness and funding.

It will work to educate the general public and the resource allocators within the state. It will seek funding for itself to carry on its goals and to help fund specific cooperative preservation programs within the state.

### **1. NCPC WILL INFORM FOR PRESERVATION**

- By distributing a statewide preservation plan.
- By ensuring provision of disaster preparedness workshops.
- By ensuring provision of workshops on conservation, reprography and other workshops in logical order.
- By adapting and disseminating preservation information to various groups, targeting resource allocators, professionals and all other communities of interest.

### **2. NCPC WILL COORDINATE FOR PRESERVATION**

- By working with various groups in helping them to meet their needs cooperatively.
- By keeping all interested parties abreast of cooperative preservation developments and opportunities.
- By encouraging ventures in cooperative programming and funding.

### **3. NCPC WILL LEVERAGE SUPPORT FOR PRESERVATION**

- By educating the public and all levels of resource allocators to the necessity of preservation and its funding priorities.
- By seeking appropriate funding for cooperative preservation projects.