

# ARLIS *focus* NEW ENGLAND *Spring 1999 vol.12,no.1*

## **From the President**

It is with great regret that I announce my resignation as president of ARLIS/New England. My husband has accepted a tenure-track position at Slippery Rock University and we will be relocating to western Pennsylvania at the end of this month. It has been my great pleasure to have got to know so many of you, and I have been impressed by the significant number of talented and committed professionals there are in this chapter.

In accordance with the chapter by-laws, and in consultation with our regional representative to ARLIS/NA, current Vice President Stephen Nonack will act as interim president for the remainder of 1999. A special election will be held as soon as possible to elect an interim vice president to replace Stephen. The newly elected vice president/president-elect will serve as the interim vice president in 1999, effective immediately, and then continue as vice president/president elect in January 2000 and become president in January 2001. The Executive Committee has decided to hold the election for treasurer (which would have ordinarily been held in November) at the same time. The treasurer's term of office will begin January 1, 2000 and continue for two years.

If anyone is interested in running for either vice president/president-elect or treasurer, please notify any member of the Nominating Committee: Jennifer Hegarty [j.hegarty@nUNET.neu.edu](mailto:j.hegarty@nUNET.neu.edu); 617.373.4550), Katy Poole [kkpoole@mit.edu](mailto:kkpoole@mit.edu); 617.253.9331) or Linda Zieper ([lzieper@umassd.edu](mailto:lzieper@umassd.edu); 508.999.8526).

All the best to you in the future. I hope to see many of you in Pittsburgh next year!

*Caron Carnahan*

## **Digital Projects in the Arts: Current Realities/Future Projects**

*ARLIS/New England Chapter Meeting  
Providence, RI, May 14, 1999*

More than sixty New England-area Art librarians, visual resource professionals, and others with an interest in art and information technology gathered at Brown University on Friday, May 14, to take part in a day jam-packed

with interesting presentations, demonstrations and activities.

Carol Terry welcomed the chapter members and other guests, and reminded us that it has been five years since the chapter hosted the ARLIS national conference in Providence. On this beautiful spring day, those of us who had attended that conference during the depths (literal and figurative!) of winter were able to appreciate not only the fine weather, but also the remarkable changes that Providence has experienced in the past few years.

The first speaker was Rosemary Cullen, the head special collections librarian at the John Hay Library at Brown University. Rosemary presented the African-American Sheet Music Digitizing Project, for which Brown had received a grant from the Library of Congress in 1996. The grant furnished the funds to digitize and create full MARC catalog records for 1700 pieces of African-American sheet music in the John Hay Library collection, which contains over 500,000 pieces of sheet music overall. The sheet music selected for digitization dates from the 1820s to about 1920, and provides a means for exploring various social trends, racial attitudes, religious beliefs, and dialect as well as the evolution of music in African-American culture. This rare and specialized collection, previously available only to scholars able to travel to Providence to view it, is now accessible to a world-wide audience via the Web (currently at [http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/University\\_Library!/general/aasmproj/aasmproj.html](http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/University_Library!/general/aasmproj/aasmproj.html), though the site will be moved to the Library of Congress Web page upon completion of the project). The American Memory site (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>) has information about other related projects also sponsored by the Library of Congress.

Norine Duncan, curator of the Art Slide Library at Brown, and Lori Jargo, library Web master at Brown, spoke next about ANITA, a text-only catalog containing records for about 90,000 of the 225,000 slides and photographs in Brown's Art Slide Library. ANITA was named after Anita Glass, a beloved lecturer and member

of the Brown Art Department in the 1960s and 70s. Mrs. Glass had a talent for finding slides in the collection quickly, and ANITA the catalog is designed to do the same. Simple searches result in a list of records matching the requested criteria; full records, including the accession and call numbers necessary to physically retrieve the slide from the drawers, are linked to this list via the accession number.

ANITA is a closed file consisting of records migrated from the VRMS database previously used by the Brown Slide Library. ANITA was created using FileMaker Pro 4.0 and Homepage 3.0; it's available on the Web at <http://128.148.111.9/anita/>. The goal of ANITA is to make these records available to a campus-wide constituency, and to provide a user-friendly Web interface to allow for unmediated searches. Norine pointed out that this was a considerable change from just one year ago, when the decidedly user-unfriendly automated catalog, created in VRMS, resided on just one computer in the slide library, and most searches were performed by staff. Though ANITA was created on a shoestring budget, it enables users to consult these records while the slide library builds its new catalog, IRIS, using FileMaker Pro.

Following a brief recess (much needed to absorb all that we had already heard, as well as some more caffeine), Max Marmor, director of the Arts Library at Yale University, introduced the Academic Image Exchange Project, a Digital Library Federation project (for information about the Federation, visit its Web site at <http://www.clir.org/diglib/dlfhomepage.htm>). The current participants in the Academic Image Exchange Project first met in New York City in January 1999. They include art history instructors, art librarians, and visual resources professionals who hope to overcome some of the barriers preventing the digital distribution of art images to those in the academic world. Using projects such as the Society of Architectural Historians Image Exchange (<http://www.upenn.edu/sah/imageex.html>) as a model, the Academic Image Exchange members propose "scaling up" these kinds of bare-bones, under-funded projects, often administered by individuals, to create a common, authoritative site that becomes THE site for obtaining public domain or rights-cleared images for educational use.

The Academic Image Exchange Project would be a clearinghouse for images donated by scholars and others. Its initial intent is to create a core of images supporting the art history survey.

The creators of several existing digital image archives have already committed to contribute to this new project, and it is hoped that scholars with their own, valuable collections of visual resources will be inspired to contribute as well. Additionally, collections of public-domain images will be included. The hope is to "jump start" the transition to the use of digital images in teaching by creating a collection of art images of high enough quality and broad enough variety for classroom teaching. It is hoped that the availability of such an archive will provide incentive for institutions to invest in the considerable infrastructure required to teach with digital images.

The exchange would differ from other image licensing schemes in that the greater part of the labor--scanning, cataloging, etc.--would be shifted to the image donor, who would be required to comply with the standards set by the exchange. While the exchange will be a non-commercial endeavor, there may be a nominal institutional subscription fee to compensate the staff necessary to verify data, administer the database, and perform other necessary Web site maintenance. Robert Baron was recently hired as the project manager, to explore development issues and relationships with various organizations such as CAA, ARLIS and VRA, as well as publishers and other licensing schemes. A "barn-raising," held at Carnegie Mellon the weekend of May 22, 1999, was planned to provide an opportunity for participants to develop a mock-up of the image repository Web page, to determine specific needs in terms of image content, and to discuss a business plan for soliciting funding.

After this very interesting presentation, Caron Carnahan, ARLIS/New England president, addressed chapter business. Caron thanked the meeting hosts, Carol Terry and Norine Duncan, and introduced the other chapter board members, as well as new chapter members in attendance. Linda Zieper, the chapter newsletter editor, informed attendees regarding the timing of the spring Focus, and solicited news contributions from members.

Caron announced the winners of the 1999 Freitag Award: Ellie Nacheman, who will put her award toward the completion of her index of Rhode Island artists, and Trudy Jacoby, who will use the funds to continue her photography of gardens for the Trinity College visual resources collection.

In Scott Kehoe's absence, Caron presented his treasurer's report, and on behalf of Marie

Companion, announced an upcoming position vacancy, assistant visual resources curator, at Wellesley College. This position will be advertised in the Boston *Globe* this summer. Caron also reminded attendees that there will be chapter elections for the offices of treasurer and vice-president/president-elect later this year, and that members should consider running for either of these offices or serving on the nominating committee.

Mary Daniels announced that Lisa Starzyk-Welden has completed her inventory of the chapter archives; a summary list was distributed. Mary reminded chapter officers to keep hard copies of board correspondence that might take place via e-mail.

Caron asked members to participate the ARLIS/NA's Strategic Plan update by completing the survey available in ARLIS/NA's Web site. Chapter member Ann Whiteside is on ARLIS/NA's Strategic Planning Committee.

High Wilburn informed attendees that IFLA will be meeting in Boston in August 2001, and suggested that the chapter consider hosting a "satellite" ARLIS meeting during the conference. Jeannette Dixon at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts is ARLIS/NA's liaison to IFLA; Hugh, Sarah Dickinson, Carol Terry and Merrill Smith are providing local input. Hugh said that the chapter should be ready to make a recommendation to ARLIS/NA in October regarding the viability of such a satellite meeting, and what its program might be.

Caron concluded the business meeting by reminding attendees that their badges provided free entry to the RISD museum, and that a reception would be held at the Providence Athenaeum later in the afternoon. Attendees were then free to explore the culinary offerings of Thayer Street, and to choose from among three afternoon programs.

One program was a demonstration of IRIS (Image Resource Information System), a cooperative project of Visual Resource professionals at Brown, RISD, Roger Williams University, Smith College, Trinity College, Wesleyan University, and the University of South Florida. IRIS was developed using FileMaker Pro 4.0. Cooperative members began development of the new system as a replacement for VRMS software, a DOS-based image cataloging system that is no longer vendor supported, and that has no multi-user version. While there are some features specifically designed to make migration from a VRMS

database easier, IRIS can be used by anyone for new cataloging.

IRIS was developed over the course of the past two years, and makes use of the VRA core categories. Features include special fields for label data (these allow for abbreviations which may not be allowed in other data fields), auto-entry for many fields, links to on-line authorities, and documentation. While data is input into a relational database, some data is also imported into a flat file database that will allow faster searching, especially from the Web.

Norine Duncan, who demonstrated the system, began using IRIS at Brown last August. She hopes to have it ready for distribution later this summer, at a cost of \$250; notice will be posted to relevant listservs when it is available. Norine notes that while cooperative members will do their best to respond to questions about the system's design, IRIS will not have the kind of support one might expect from a commercial vendor, and that purchasers should expect to utilize local support for FileMaker Pro problems and questions. In addition to the documentation included with the package, purchasers will have the option to join an e-mail list devoted to IRIS discussion. Norine can be e-mailed at Slides@Brown.edu for further information.

Carol Terry and other members of the staff at the RISD Library and the Providence Athenaeum demonstrated their new collaborative library system from Innovative Interfaces. In Spring 1997 both libraries were in the process of planning for a new library system. It was to be the first automated system at the Athenaeum, and an upgrade from Data Trek at RISD. Each library had chosen Innovative Interfaces, primarily because it is the system in use by all of the other academic libraries in the state. The two libraries' proximity, timing, choice of system, and complementary collections led them into discussions of a joint project. This was endorsed not only by their institutions, but also by the local foundation, which was funding much of the project at both places. Working together meant considerable savings for each library.

A contract was signed with Innovative in April 1998 and the libraries began the process of implementation and training. The success of the project was assured by the close working relationship of the technical services staff of the libraries. The OPAC, cataloging and circulation modules were in place at RISD for the start of school in September 1998 while the Athenaeum delayed implementing the circulation module

until later in 1999. Acquisitions and serials modules came later in the fall.

Since the OPAC used a Web interface, RISD was able to use iMacs for the public catalog; they were purchased for the children's room at the Athenaeum as well. The collaboration continues as the RISD Library and the Providence Athenaeum find ways to share collections, and ultimately to improve library services for all their patrons.

The catalog can be viewed at <http://library.risd.edu> or <http://www.providenceathenaeum.org>.

A third afternoon option was a tour of the Rhode Island School of Design Archives. RISD, which, like other American art schools was founded as a consequence of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, did not have an archival program until July 1997, when the archives was funded by a two-year NHPRC grant. The collection, consisting of scrapbooks, clipping files, historic photographs, publications, and other materials, is very well organized and is in sporadically heavy use by the development, public relations, provost's and president's offices. Historic records are still being sought out and are occasionally found in unused storerooms on campus. The archivist, Andy Martinez, and his assistant, archival technician Doug Doe, have also developed a records management manual with retention and disposition schedules for ninety school and museum departments. Those on the tour were particularly interested by a display of graduate portfolios by candidates for the Masters in Fine Arts degree, and an album of photographs documenting a RISD Museum show in the early sixties which was curated by Andy Warhol.

Following these afternoon programs, members and guests were invited to participate in a walking tour of Benefit Street, led by Mac Woodward of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and Barbara Barnes of the Providence Preservation Society. The reception at the Providence Athenaeum was an elegant and refreshing finale to this instructive and busy day.

*Andrea Frank, with the assistance of Norine Duncan, Stephen Nonack, and Carol Terry*

#### **ARLIS/NE Board Meeting, Asian Paradise Restaurant, Providence, 3/14/99**

ARLIS/New England board members attending the chapter meeting in Providence on May 14, 1999, met over lunch to discuss important developments.

In attendance were Caron Carnahan, president; Stephen Nonack, vice-president/president-elect, Jennifer Hegarty, past president; Andrea Frank, secretary; and Linda Zieper, newsletter editor.

The meeting began at 1:00. Caron informed those board members present that, because of family circumstances, she would be stepping down as president of ARLIS/New England in June.

None of the board members had a copy of the chapter bylaws at hand, but it was agreed that Stephen Nonack would take over as chapter president in June, as long as this was permitted by the bylaws.

[Later perusal of the bylaws, in fact, confirmed among the vice-president/president-elect's duties that s/he will "act as chief executive officer in the event the president is unable to serve."]

Discussion followed as to whether or not the office of vice-president/president-elect should be filled via a special election. It was agreed that (again, pending compliance with the bylaws), instead of holding a special election, the responsibilities assigned to the vice-president/president-elect for the remainder of the year would be taken on by other board members. [The bylaws state that "If the office of vice-president/president-elect, secretary or treasurer becomes vacant, a special election shall be held promptly."]

The board members discussed ways in which the resulting burden on the remaining board members could be eased. One suggestion was to discontinue, at least temporarily, the practice of "bundling" various mailings to the membership. This would allow board members or others responsible for specific mailings to get that information out to the membership in a timely fashion without having to coordinate with other mailings that, for various reasons, might cause delay. Caron said that she would be willing to continue helping out with tasks that could be accomplished from a distance, such as mailings.

Discussion then turned to the process of informing ARLIS/NA and the chapter membership about this development. Caron will contact Deborah Kempe, the Northeast regional representative, to inform her of this development and the board's plan for how to proceed. Caron will relay Deborah's response to the other chapter board members via the board listserv. Once a plan has been finalized, Caron

will post an announcement to the chapter listserv.

Several other chapter matters were also discussed at this meeting. Caron outlined some potential meeting sites for the forthcoming year, including Mass MOCA in North Adams, MIT, and Hartford (perhaps the Wadsworth Athenaeum). Caron will make preliminary contact with Mass MOCA, and find out if they would be able to accommodate such a meeting. Stephen suggested that this might be an opportunity to have a joint meeting with

ARLIS/Western New York. Board members also discussed, in a general way, programming ideas for future meetings, and whether chapter membership might be ready for a break from some of the more technologically oriented meetings we've organized in the recent past. Several chapter members have expressed interest in running for board positions, and Stephen inquired as to whether it would be necessary to form a Nominating Committee if there were sufficient candidates who had volunteered. It was agreed that a Nominating Committee should, in all cases, be formed each year. [The bylaws state that "The president shall appoint a Nominating Committee of at least three persons."]

Finally, it was decided that the Freitag Award folder, which is ever-expanding and currently in the possession of Susan Roeper, be sent to the chapter archives, except for files from the most recent years, which may be helpful to award committees.

### **From the Membership**

*Matthew Burfeind* provided personal and professional announcements: he got married last February to another librarian His wife, Jennifer, iworks at Fidelity Investments. And there are big changes at the Boston Architectural Center. The BAC is in the midst of a full-scale automation project, using Endeavor's Voyager system, and plans to have its catalog on-line in September.

*Trudy Jacoby* would like to correct the report of her talk at the Worcester meeting that appeared in the fall issue of *Focus*, which attributed to her the statement, "art instruction is mostly digital." She had instead said that the first Art History course had just been taught digitally at Trinity College. She added that "In truth, I expect that it will be quite a while before classroom instruction is mostly digital. I do expect a more rapid shift to digital review units for classroom images."