

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS  
MEETING # 35  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2008  
THE U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING  
ROOM S-211

MINUTES

The meeting opened at 10:05.

Members of the Committee in attendance: Nancy Erickson, Chair (Secretary of the Senate); Lorraine Miller, Co-Chair (Clerk of the House); Allen Weinstein (Archivist of the United States); Richard Baker (Historian, U.S. Senate); Terry Birdwhistell (Associate Dean of Special Collections and Digital Programs and Co-Director, Wendell H. Ford Public Policy Research Center, University of Kentucky); Bernard Forrester (Archivist and Coordinator, Special Collections, Robert J. Terry Library, Texas Southern University); Guy Rocha (Nevada State Archivist, Nevada State Library and Archives); Jeff Thomas (Archivist, Ohio Congressional Archives, The Ohio State University.).

**I. Chair's Opening Remarks - Nancy Erickson**

Erickson opened the meeting and extended a special welcome to the newest member of the Advisory Committee, Professor Jeff Thomas, the archivist of Senator John Glenn's papers at the Ohio State University. Thomas is the appointee of House Minority Leader John Boehner. Erickson noted the Senate's special affection for Thomas's work in organizing Senator Glenn's papers. Erickson said that she enjoyed talking about Senator Glenn – whom they both agree does not age – and his wonderful wife Annie. Thomas was one of the founding members of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress and recently chaired the Society of American Archivists Taskforce on guidelines for managing congressional papers.

Erickson recognized the staff who prepared the minutes of the last meeting. She said a review of the minutes would recount the robust discussion the committee had on a resolution to encourage Members to archive their papers and send them to a repository and research facility where they could be made available to the public.

Erickson noted that on March 5, 2008, the House took the lead and passed a version of the resolution. Later on June 20, the Senate unanimously concurred with House Concurrent Resolution 307, which

expresses to current and former Members of Congress the importance of maintaining personal papers. The resolution also urges Members to deposit or donate their noncurrent papers to a research institution that is properly equipped to care for them and make them publicly available for research and educational purposes at the earliest possible time.

Erickson noted that this resolution is particularly important to the House and Senate Archivists because it provides access to Members' offices and allows them to talk with Members' staff about House and Senate interest in the archiving of personal papers. Erickson said that Karen Paul would discuss later in the meeting her plan to talk further with Senate offices about Members' papers.

Erickson commended the Advisory Committee members for their advice and counsel that resulted in the passage of the resolution. She acknowledged that Lorraine Miller, Clerk of the House, should be singled out for her efforts to get the attention of Chairman Robert Brady, who introduced the resolution in the House, as well as Miller's associates, Chief of the House Office of History and Preservation Farar Elliot, and House Archivist Robin Reeder.

## **II. Recognition of Co-Chair – Lorraine Miller, Clerk of the House**

Erickson recognized Lorraine Miller, Clerk of the House. Miller thanked Erickson and bid good morning to everyone.

Miller welcomed Jeff Thomas and noted that the committee would rely heavily on his advice. Miller then acknowledged her appointee to the committee, Bernard Forrester. She thanked the Secretary for hosting the meeting and remarked on the beauty of the room named after one of the beloved presidents from the great state of Texas, Lyndon Baines Johnson. The room, she observed, is a historical reminder of a great member of the Senate and a great President.

Miller noted the absence of Dr. Joseph Cooper, Speaker Nancy Pelosi's appointee, who could not attend the meeting due to illness.

Miller reported that she took pride in the strides made in the Clerk's office, in particular getting House Concurrent Resolution 307 passed. She acknowledged Chairman Brady and ranking member Vernon Ehlers of the Committee on House Administration for their support and for introducing the resolution on the floor. She also acknowledged the Advisory Committee for its work on the substance of the resolution.

Miller praised Robin Reeder for her work and described the process of contacting freshman Members of the House to raise their awareness of records issues. Reeder sends written information and then follows up with a phone call to urge Members and staff to learn the process of organizing and archiving Members' papers early in their career. Miller reported that it was a successful program greatly appreciated by staff and that Speaker Pelosi supported the effort.

Miller talked next about the electronic records initiative that the Clerk's office embarked on last year. She reported a huge shift in the work in-house that was previously done in paper format but that is now being done almost exclusively in electronic format. The chief of our Office of History and Preservation, Farar Elliot, has overseen the electronic records project with the help of Bob Reeves, Deputy Clerk for Technology, and with the assistance of the House electronic records taskforce that has met several times during the year. Miller said the initiative is very important, so she invited Bob Reeves to this meeting.

Miller had just returned from a visit to Brussels, with the European Parliament, where she met with its archivist. She reported that our European counterparts were using cutting-edge processes and technologies. She hoped that the task force for the Clerk's office would review and implement some of the cutting-edge processes in the next few months as well.

Miller thanked Richard Hunt for his assistance on the electronic records front to help the Clerk's staff ensure the preservation of House records. She said electronic records are growing vastly, both in volume and complexity. She also noted that these new, evolving formats have brought home the need to review the resources, both in the Office of the Clerk, and in the Center for Legislative Archives, so we are equipped to deal with the challenges of electronic records. As mentioned at the last Advisory Committee meeting, the Office of History and Preservation has been developing and implementing new

records management outreach mechanisms to educate and communicate with committees and with Members. Later, Robin Reeder will give an update on that subject.

Miller then shared with the committee some of the other accomplishments in the Clerk's office, noting the production of an expanded version of *Black Americans in Congress*, which will be followed by a series of books highlighting Hispanics, Asians, and Pacific Islanders in Congress. These are very informational books. *Black Americans in Congress* updates the public on the history of the 121 African Americans who have served in the House and the Senate since 1870. There will also be a companion website on the same topic.

### **III. Recognition of the Archivist of the United States – Allen Weinstein**

Miller then introduced Allen Weinstein, Archivist of the United States. Weinstein said he was absolutely delighted by the number of Senators who came to the wonderful dinner in July for a special viewing of the *Running for Office* exhibit, based on the Senate collection of Clifford Berryman cartoons. Weinstein suggested that both the Secretary and the Clerk have discussions with the Archives staff as soon as possible after the fall elections to offer the same hospitality to new Members of Congress, both in the House and Senate.

Weinstein remarked that NARA staff had been developing guidelines and requirements for a separate instance of ERA for House and Senate records, and he recognized Bob Spangler for his leadership on this electronic records initiative.

Erickson thanked Weinstein on behalf of the Senate for the wonderful evening hosted by the Archives. She said that both Senator Reid and Senator McConnell strongly encouraged their Members to join them for the buffet dinner at the National Archives on July 15, where they were treated to an evening tour of the Clifford Berryman exhibit, which was on display at the Archives from February through August 2008. Erickson remarked that this was another example of the partnership between the Senate and the National Archives in that the collection of 2,400 editorial cartoons donated to the Senate have been carefully stored and maintained in the National Archives. She said it was a real treat for her staff to work in partnership with the National Archives staff on this exhibit, and it was a wonderful evening.

She said she thought that the National Archives had received a tremendous amount of press coverage for the exhibit and noted that the dinner was another opportunity to reinforce to Members the special partnership that exists between the Senate and the National Archives.

Erickson thanked Weinstein for the kind invitation he extended to the Senate and House to host the newly-elected Members' of Congress at the National Archives. She said they were hopeful that they could spend an evening during the Senator-elect orientation, which would be held on November 17, 18, and 19.

#### **IV. Approval of the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The committee approved the minutes from the January 28th meeting as written.

Erickson then asked Jeff Thomas to introduce himself to the committee.

Thomas thanked Erickson and began by also thanking Minority Leader John Boehner for his appointment. He said it was quite an honor to be here and saw a number of familiar faces he had worked with before, either at the Congressional Papers Roundtable (CPR) or the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (ACSC). Thomas said that he had followed the work of the Advisory Committee for years and had used many of the committee's recommendations in his work at Ohio State, which led directly to Ohio State being a founding member of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress.

Thomas shared that he had been at Ohio State for about ten years working mainly with the papers of Senator John Glenn. Prior to that he served at the Iowa Historical Society for 13 years where he worked with congressional collections. He recently had completed serving two years as Chair of the Congressional Papers Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists. During that time, he had the privilege of being the chair of the Editorial Board for the CPR publication, *Congressional Collections*. Thomas said he was very pleased to be at the meeting and looked forward to working with committee members.

Erickson acknowledged Karen Paul's ongoing work in running a highly successful series of brown bag

luncheons for Senate staff with archival responsibilities in their respective offices. At the most recent meeting, held on July 21, every seat in the room was filled. The meeting brought people together who would otherwise not have an opportunity to be in contact with one another to discuss archival issues. Erickson said she was very grateful for Paul's work on that front and for the dedicated cadre of Senate staff archivists who have helped make those brown bag lunches so successful. She noted that Paul would also report on her work with offices of retiring Senators, as well as with the Office of the Vice President.

Karen Paul began by thanking the members of the committee for support in passing the resolution on Member's papers, which thanks to the Clerk, moved so quickly. Paul thanked three people on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. She thanked staff members Adam Sedgewick (Democratic), and John Grant (Republican). They both said they would do all they could for the measure, and they did. They pledged to help in any and every way, and they are good friends on the committee. Paul also thanked Homeland Security Committee Archivist Elisabeth Butler for continuing to remind the committee of how much the resolution meant to the Advisory Committee and to archivists around the country who now have something to use when they approach a Member to solicit donation of papers.

The Senate is incorporating the resolution into handbooks, pamphlets, and staff briefings. It has been publicized in the Congressional Papers Roundtable newsletter and the website of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress. Paul hoped to be able to devise ways to use it during new Member orientation rather than waiting a few months until Members have settled in. Paul invited suggestions on ways to use the resolution.

Paul described the newly instituted and still evolving brown bag meetings. At the first meeting, Paul discovered that there was a need for basic information on archiving, such as how to box and describe files. This resulted in the creation of a two-page "cheat sheet" on how to archive, which can be used by office managers to assign to staff or interns. Paul thanked Alan Haeberle, the archivist from Senator Orrin Hatch's office, in particular for his help creating the guidance. The meeting also led to the creation of an archives listserv.

The second brown bag meeting was a well attended talk on electronic records given by staff from the National Archives. This meeting also led to a two-page summary of best practices on managing electronic records, which was distributed via the listserv.

The most recent meeting was about managing email. Despite a general reluctance of people in Hill offices to discuss the issue, this meeting was standing room only. This meeting produced guidance on managing email that was distributed on the listserv. The next session will feature staff from the Library of Congress who have been working on a web archiving project.

Paul described how the listserv has transformed her daily routine. Previously, guidance was created and disseminated, but now she feels like a talk show host, answering widely ranging questions extending from conservation issues to electronic records. The listserv has helped make “archiving” and “archivists” good words and has allowed for better communication of information.

Paul discussed an initiative begun in August to encourage more electronic archiving by committees. About three Congresses ago, the Center for Legislative Archives began producing reports indicating what each Senate committee was archiving. This has led to an increase in the volume of records sent to the Archives because the Senate Rules Committee uses the reports at committee budget time. Paul and Dick Baker plan to talk to the Rules Committee about asking more specific questions about each committee’s plans for archiving electronic records. Since the committees were told that they were going to get reports on their electronic archiving, they have begun to do more, and so dividends have already been gained.

The committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is a leader in this effort, thanks to Elisabeth Butler, but the Senate Committees on Energy and Natural Resources, Appropriations, and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions have also recently transferred electronic records, including emails.

Paul also noted that the National Archives’ Modern Archives Institute, which is held twice a year, is now advertised on the listserv. Thirteen senators either have archivists on staff or have staff that

recently attended the institute. Previously, there had not been more than five or six senators with staff with archival training.

Paul has been working intensively with senator's offices that are closing and reports that 100% so far have designated homes for their papers. She has also been working with the offices of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates on what to do if the office must close down quickly. This may be a once-in-a-lifetime activity to help move a senator to the White House. It may be necessary for the Archives to preserve a senator's electronic records for the time being in anticipation of a future presidential library, but this is unclear at this point.

Paul stated that there have been meetings on the finding aids project that was discussed extensively at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee. Discussions have covered standard terminology and definitions. Paul hoped more effort will be put into this project in the coming year.

Erickson asked if Paul had surveyed the 13 archivists who had attended the Modern Archives Institute to get feedback from their experience. Paul said that there had not been a systematic survey, but that there had been discussion of setting up a taskforce between the House, Senate, and National Archives to consider adding specific courses on relevant topics or conducting a shortened version of the institute for a congressional audience. She plans to continue the discussion. Richard Hunt said that the two alternatives under consideration were either to bring a handful of congressional staff to the Archives for the two-week institute, or to hold a one- or two-day institute on the Hill that would focus specifically on congressional paper issues and address a larger congressional audience.

Paul said that some parts of the two-week course were essential, such as sessions on arrangement, description, and electronic records. The advantage of the two-week course is that the participants are away from the Hill and so really get an archival perspective on things. However, more people could attend a shortened course given on the Hill. Paul suggested that the brown-bag lunches were evolving into minitraining sessions, too.

Erickson thanked Paul for her work and requested a report from Robin Reeder, Archivist for the U. S. House of Representatives.



Reeder said that she wanted to talk about the electronic records initiative that the Clerk began in the House. She described working with the Center for Legislative Archives as a very positive experience, citing in particular the guidance and assistance received from Ted Clark from the National Archives. She pointed out that Clark currently works in the Electronic Records Services Division of the National Archives, but that he is assigned to the Center for Legislative Archives to serve the needs of House and Senate committees. She reported that together they had met with 20 House committees and three chief administrative support offices. She said they had a few more committees to meet with and expected to do so in the near future.

Reeder said that the responses from the committees have been overwhelmingly positive, especially from committees that had converted exclusively to electronic records but were printing their electronic records to paper because they thought that was the only format that the National Archives would accept. She noted how pleased the committee staff were to learn they no longer had to do this extra work. Reeder said she and the Clerk are working together to come up with recommendations for committees on how to proceed with regard to electronic records, and that those recommendations would be completed soon.

Reeder reported that the Clerk's office has been working on implementing new archival outreach plans to committees and to Members. The change in leadership and staff this Congress presented the office with the opportunity to approach new incoming staff to help them with their record-keeping practices. She reported that one recent trend from committees is the practice of sending records to the Clerk's office at various times during the Congress, instead of waiting until the end of the Congress to transfer all the records at once. These periodic transfers made life more chaotic for the Clerk's office.

Reeder informed the committee that her office is currently in the process of sending the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress records to the Center. She thanked Tom Eisinger and Donald Collier from the Center for Legislative Archives for their help. To show the increase in numbers, she said that for the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress they had received 3,337 boxes, totaling 1,391 linear feet, or 1,724,840 sheets of paper. She noted that this was a 253% increase from the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Reeder also said that they have been working on increased outreach to Members' offices with a focus on

increasing Members' awareness of the importance of archiving their papers. As a result, the number of consultations with Members has risen from 26 to 43 since January of 2008, an increase of 165%. She said that House Concurrent Resolution 307 has been an essential tool for explaining to Members the importance of their congressional papers, and she thanked the Clerk for her support and assistance with this resolution. Reeder also thanked the Secretary of the Senate and Karen Paul for their collegiality regarding the resolution.

Erickson thanked Reeder and congratulated her on the remarkable 253% increase in records transferred.

Miller also thanked Reeder and Farar Elliot, Chief of the House Office of History and Preservation, for their hard work.

#### **V. Annual Report of the Center for Legislative Archives – Richard Hunt**

Erickson invited Hunt to discuss ongoing projects and activities at the Center.

Hunt asked the Chair's permission to invite Bob Spangler from the Electronic Records Services unit to talk about recent developments with ERA and electronic records initiatives within the National Archives. He noted that the Center's electronic records initiatives are in response to the activity that the House and Senate archivists have undertaken, resulting in an increasing volume of electronic records in preparation for transfer. Hunt said that Spangler would be able to answer questions that he could not.

Spangler thanked the committee for allowing him to speak. He noted that he would be briefly discussing what Professor Weinstein had alluded to at the start of the meeting: the congressional instance of ERA. He explained that the Electronic Records Archive was the National Archives' response to the challenges they are facing from the increasing volume and increasing variety of electronic records. He noted that the committee would be hearing more of these volume figures, mainly because they are so breathtaking. He emphasized, however, that it is the variety of those records—the different and changing formats that they receive and anticipate receiving over the next few years—that create an enormous challenge for ERA.

Spangler explained that ERA became operational during the summer of 2008 and is currently being used

in a pilot phase to process and preserve records of four selected executive branch agencies. He stressed that the main message he wanted to deliver to the committee today, the exciting part, was that the Archives was discussing going forward with creating a dedicated storage location for congressional digital records. In other words, an “instance” of the system would be dedicated to the electronic records of Congress. He explained that ERA would allow the Center for Legislative Archives to find, retrieve, and return digital records upon request to committees, using the same procedures followed for paper records. They are currently examining the ways in which the ERA platform can be adapted for the particular storage and retrieval needs of Congress.

Spangler said the next important step is the formal gathering of requirements through the offices of Karen Paul and Robin Reeder, in order to figure out exactly what the procedures would be and how to adapt those for the electronic system. He said this effort would be coordinated by the Center through the work of Richard Hunt and Ted Clark, working with the staff of the Archivists on the Hill. Spangler then asked Ted Clark to continue the ERA discussion.

Clark said he was in discussions with Robin Reeder and Karen Paul about the need for formal requirements, but that they had not yet established a definitive timetable. They are continuing outreach to the committees themselves, to ensure that everyone is aware of these new initiatives and the ways in which they can participate and aid in that process, but there is no formalized date for completion.

Clark reported continuing efforts with the ERA team at the National Archives to examine how the current system works and how congressional records can eventually be incorporated into that system.

Bernard Forrester asked Clark whether by congressional electronic records, he meant strictly e-mail, or whether the term also included the transition of documents to Microsoft Word and PDF files.

Paul replied that it meant all of the above.

Clark said that the formats discussed specifically are video, audio, photographic, website files, and office files, which incorporate Microsoft Office, Corel WordPerfect, or PowerPoint – typical files that people use in day-to-day work. Discussions about email are underway, but Clark said email presents a

lot of challenges. He reiterated the importance of talking with the House and Senate about their use of these different formats and standards so that they can be preserved and retrieved in the future.

Forrester asked about tapes—does this refer to videotapes?

Clark replied that video is one of the formats under discussion with different committees. He said that we have identified committees that are recording some of their hearings and broadcasts, and some of those are digital recordings produced for websites. He said that there is a lot of variety and many formats within video itself, as well as within photographs or audio, and we are looking at how best to collect and preserve those, according to current processes.

Forrester asked if they had talked about access to C-SPAN, noting that they would have the largest volume of video and audio recordings.

Clark said that Reeder had mentioned outreach to some CAO offices regarding the House recording studio, which currently handles the video for House offices and committees, as well as for floor proceedings. He said it was their understanding that C-SPAN has its own archive and its own operations, and that C-SPAN is outside the scope of the organizations that we traditionally work with. He added that reaching out to C-SPAN and having a dialogue may be something that we should look into as well.

Guy Rocha said that he was in Reno the previous Saturday, where the Senate Majority Leader was signing an operating agreement after 22 years of negotiation. The chief videographer had all of her equipment with her and shot the event. Is this something that they are talking about, the video recordings generated for 20 years by the Senate Democratic Communications Center (DCC)? Is this something they are addressing?

Paul answered yes. She said that the DCC is in the process of changing formats by the end of the year, and that they have been sending their videos to the Archives for several years. She said that the DCC is moving into a new digital format, and that we are in the process of setting up a meeting to discuss that.

Clark confirmed this, stating that they are looking to preserve these DCC recordings.

Rocha noted that it was just by happenstance that he was exposed to the dimension of this particular type of record generation. Rocha continued that it struck him that digital issues are the critical ones that archives face in the future. He noted that he wanted to speak further on the matter.

Erickson agreed, noting that the DCC would have a Republican counterpart, and that they would want to reach out to that organization as well – adding that every press conference held by the Republican leader and Democratic leader has probably been videotaped.

Paul said that on the Republican side the recording is done by the Republican Conference, and those party records are not official records. Therefore, the Republican videos would go with the Members' collections, unless the Conference decided to change its policy.

Rocha asked why the Conference is not willing to pursue the recommended course of action.

Paul reasoned that, although the Democratic and Republican policy committees fall under the same legislation that governs the ownership and disposition of committee records, the Republican Conference, which is the unit that is producing these records, does not.

Rocha understood. He continued by asking how they could engineer some kind of consent on the other side that is not mandated to preserve the records.

Paul asked if he meant other than simply make recommendations.

Rocha said yes.

Paul said that this was a good question.

Hunt said that the Conference would have to see the advantage in making that decision. And, increasingly, as the volume of digital records is continuing to grow, many of the records creators are

looking for some place to store their non-current recordings, so they are finding compelling reasons to consider the Archives.

Paul agreed.

Hunt said that these types of records would never have come to the Archives in the past, when paper records were stuck in file cabinets, so we have new opportunities. He said he wanted to underscore that Ted Clark has worn out his shoe leather this year, making committee visits with Robin Reeder and Karen Paul, and he noted that they have learned a lot. He continued to say that based on the tenor of this discussion, there is a lot more they need to know about electronic records. They need to know exactly what is coming and what requirements will have to be met when building the system for the preservation of records. Hunt emphasized the need for assistance in reaching out to committees and to the other records creators in the House and the Senate to learn technical data about their electronic records. He said they do not need to know the content of these closed records, and that they are not trying to be intrusive into committee business. Instead, they are offering assistance and guidance. Any support the committee can give to support this outreach effort would be appreciated.

Miller asked Clark if they had any sense of the volume of records, noting that she is aware that the House volume is increasing exponentially.

Clark said that the one number that he can reference in terms of the digital records that they will be receiving this year is a 1200% increase over all previous electronic holdings of congressional records at the National Archives. This is not just an explosion; it's an exponential explosion. This increase is why the National Archives saw an obvious need for ERA to play a role in resolving storage issues. Clark said that ERA is geared towards preserving large amounts of electronic records for federal agencies, as well as for Congress.

Hunt added that the increase in volume noted above was not the result of the missionary work Ted has been doing with the House and Senate Archivists. This increase preceded their work and reflects electronic records that were transferred under established practices by committee archivists. So we

expect that future increases will be even more dramatic give the success of the outreach efforts with committees.

Miller noted that it seems as if they have spent a lot of time trying to figure out formats and requirements. She asked if guidelines would be coming out sooner rather than later.

Clark said the goal is to gather information to determine the volume of records being held and to determine transfer dates. He said the process would be examined in depth to make decisions to ensure that future researchers and others could access the information in a useful manner. He said that those are all questions that are tied to the types of requirements that they are looking at as they go forward.

Erickson pointed out that there were a number of archivists at the meeting, including Elisabeth Butler and Nan Moser. She asked if it would make sense at some point to have the archivists who have been successful help Clark with outreach to committees.

Clark replied that it would be helpful to have them involved, and, as Hunt had pointed out, our primary goal is to have conversations with those interested parties and stakeholders on the Hill. This ongoing and wide-ranging discussion will affect many different organizations, including those that primarily provide IT resources and support to committees and Members, and the committees and Members themselves, who have the obligation to preserve their records. The role of the National Archives will also be discussed as we tackle how we will preserve electronic records and provide access to the committees in the short term. In the long term, we will also have to provide access to the public, when the records are open twenty or thirty years from now.

Erickson noted that Alan Haeberle was in attendance and could also be involved in the Senate and House archivists' effort to help Clark with outreach to committees.

Hunt said that he has discovered communities of interest within the House and Senate that have been collaborating and addressing many of the same issues being discussed. He noted, however, that these IT resources and committee staff are not archivists and are not thinking about long-term preservation of

records. The Center is the remaining piece of the puzzle and will need access to those communities to offer assistance and guidance on the archival front.

Thomas asked if the Center was concentrating on committees and their requirements.

Hunt responded that official committee records represented the extent of the Center's jurisdiction.

Thomas asked if new recommendations and requirements would apply to Members and their staff.

Clark replied that they could and that he would be looking at specific formats such as video, audio, photographs, website files, and other office documents. Those formats are used in the same manner by the committees and by Members' offices. Consequently, the standards and recommendations for congressional committees will be applicable to repository organizations seeking to preserve files in the same formats in the future. Thomas stated that this would be a terrific development, since there is concern at the repositories that collect Members' papers. Clark indicated that he is hopeful that the recommendations for various formats would be universal and widely applied.

Forrester stated that he is faced with the same problems with his collection in terms of obsolete video formats such as Betamax and VHS. He asked Clark if he had been dealing with these types of records, or with more modern mediums. Clark responded that some committees have retained videocassette tapes and Betamax tapes. Clark said that he is part of a National Archives working group trying to determine the best way to preserve these different special media formats, and that they have been talking to Library of Congress staff about how they have dealt with the diverse formats that they have received.

Forrester said he thought that the crucial question was dealing with the transfer of the records to new formats. Clark responded that a lot of different options could be discussed with respect to transfer and preservation. He expressed hope that each option would be formally addressed as they continue organized discussions about these issues. For example, in the discussion targeted on video requirements, they would address issues of transfer and preservation unique to that medium.



Forrester asked if Clark was trying to get a sense of what is out there at this juncture: how much two-inch tape, how much one-inch tape, how much on VHS, etc.

Hunt replied that the Center is focusing on electronic records formats and digital issues in this particular initiative. Special media issues raise a number of related and separate issues. There is a separate division within the National Archives—not represented here today—that could speak about the preservation and migration of information captured on film or other media. Special media is a major challenge for the National Archives, which has an enormous amount of video and other recordings on media that have quickly become obsolete.

Forrester asked about programs such as WordPerfect that are no longer used. Clark indicated that their survey found the program was still in use in some Members' offices.

Birdwhistell commended the Center for its work and said that the Advisory Committee recognized that many of the people present in the room had been working on the problem of electronic records for a long time. He said the committee's position needs to be one of support and acknowledgment of the amount of resources it will take to make this goal a reality. Birdwhistell said it was important at this juncture to increase efforts to convince the people who create the records that this would be a viable way to preserve them because a lot of records have already been lost.

Hunt remarked that Birdwhistell's acknowledgment of the necessity of resources was timely, and he noted that Clark is currently the lone individual responsible in the National Archives for all electronic records of the House and the Senate.

Erickson joked that perhaps we needed to buy him more shoes.

Hunt responded that more shoes would be step one, but that step two would require creating a staff to meet the needs of the House and Senate at this critical juncture. Hunt said that the Advisory Committee had been in existence almost 20 years and elevated the Center to a certain level in the 1990s, but that a lot has changed since then. So, if he was asked if there was a sufficient level of resources to meet future needs, he had to answer no. Hunt said that just completing the ongoing survey and requirements

gathering would take more than Clark could do alone. He said Bob Spangler has also provided enormous assistance, and gives the Center what time he can, but Spangler has wider responsibilities for electronic records coming from the entire executive branch – the White House and federal agencies.

Erickson jokingly interjected that surely he would rather work for the House and Senate.

Miller asked Hunt whether he had at present determined the amount of resources needed.

Hunt stated that determining resource-needs was an important part of the work that Clark was doing. He said the survey was necessary for anticipating the volume of records and for answering questions regarding hardware, storage, software, and staffing requirements. Hunt reminded the panel that Clark had been on the job for less than a year, so we were still in the fact-finding stage.

Miller reaffirmed the importance of the guidelines and the need to get a sense of the cost. She stated that if we have a responsibility to preserve the records, we also have the responsibility to do it correctly so that the records are accessible to the public and to the Members who want to review them. She said it was important to get the guidelines in place, adding that there was a desire to include them in the freshmen Members' packets, to take advantage of the opportunity to educate them about archiving at the very beginning of their terms.

Erickson stated that the Advisory Committee could play a role in securing adequate funding for the Center's electronic records needs through actions such as writing a letter to the Appropriations Chair and ranking member. Miller suggested a hearing before the House Administration Committee as the way to formally establish a concrete record for the Congress and the need and justification for adequate funding. She also suggested that members of the Advisory Committee could testify before the House Administration Committee on this subject.

Weinstein supported the idea of a hearing, but he suggested that anyone appearing before the committee have a hearty breakfast that morning because he feared that the numbers being talked about are staggering.

Rocha supported the Clerk's proposal and would speak to the issue as an administrator, not as an archivist and a historian; he sees the Center as saddled with an under-funded mandate. Rocha believes that Miller had suggested something very concrete to address the problem. He read from the Center's annual report a sentence that referred to the tremendous growth in the volume of records and the challenge of meeting the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with resources that "have been difficult to muster over the last two decades in the face of the growth" in holdings. Rocha asserted that as a member of the committee he was prepared to try to help meet those challenges by testifying on behalf of the Center.

Erickson and Miller thanked Rocha for his support. Erickson thanked Clark for his presentation and reminded him that if he ever needed a place to rest while working on Capitol Hill he was always welcome at her office and the office of the House Clerk. She appreciated Clark's work and Hunt's leadership on electronic records and said that it would have been impossible when they started back in 1990 to realize that we would be at this critical juncture today.

Hunt asked to make a few remarks about the annual report. He said that the progress made on electronic records was attributable to the support that the Secretary and Clerk had given the Center by opening doors on the Hill and allowing its staff to work closely with Hill staff. Hunt said that in his nearly 20 years at the Center, his past experience was that Center staff and House and Senate staff worked independently and separately, but lately they are collaborating as partners and accelerating the progress that is being made. He said he hopes that the collaboration continues so more good work can be done.

Hunt recalled the Advisory Committee meeting a year ago when Rocha reviewed the previous annual report and asked him directly whether the Center had the resources to meet its rapidly growing challenges and responsibilities.

Hunt said that for the first time he had not just automatically said "yes." Rocha's question induced Hunt to examine the Center's staffing pattern from the 1980s forward and to examine the growth in holdings over the same time. Hunt reported that, coincidentally, the Office of Record Services for the Washington area, which includes the Center, has started the same type of examination as an office-wide endeavor. It has been fortuitous that Archives administrators and managers are being trained to conduct the kind of analysis that will help to determine staff requirements to fulfill our responsibilities to the

House and Senate in the years ahead. Hunt said he did not have the answer for the committee at this meeting, but felt an obligation to bring the matter to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

Hunt also mentioned that a web harvest of House and Senate websites, as requested by the House and Senate, would take place in the coming months at the close of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. He said recent news releases indicated that the Library of Congress and a consortium of non-profit and governmental partners were concurrently conducting a federal government-wide harvest. He said the Archives would continue with its scheduled harvest of House and Senate websites since the Archives had conducted previous harvests, had protocols in place to ensure permanent preservation, and a proven track record of success. He said there may be some duplication of efforts, but there would be a two-year window to examine what the consortium produced before returning to the Advisory Committee for a recommendation on whether to continue the harvesting activity.

Hunt ended with some comments on the Center's records description activities, which the committee had deemed a priority. He said that he had never adequately reported how much effort, time, and resources the staff had spent gaining intellectual and physical control of the records. Hunt wanted the committee to understand that he was certain that the Center now had better control and better access to the records than it ever had in the past, but that the next-generation finding aid project is a long-term and large-scale project. Hunt said since he did not have the bench strength to give that responsibility to a single person, he had shared the responsibility among the archival staff who were busy doing many other things. This was a mistake on his part, and Hunt said that the project required an archivist experienced in description, who would have the full-time responsibility of leading the staff and working with Karen Paul and Robin Reeder on the issue. Hunt requested advice, guidance, and assistance from the Advisory Committee on how to best proceed, and how to address some of the issues raised.

Karen Paul reinforced Hunt's remarks and noted that the questions that need to be addressed concerning the Center's finding aids are extraordinary. The size, complexity, and unique nature of Senate and House holdings mean that there are no pre-existing models to adopt. She thought that a task force might tackle the problem, but it must be composed of real experts with track records in that venue. She said some of the member institutions in the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (ACSC) might be conducting descriptive work that would be relevant. In the long-term, Paul said that what is needed

are finding aids that meld with those at the centers and other institutions and that would raise the level of descriptive uniformity on a national basis.

Paul reminded the committee that at the last meeting Sheryl Vogt pointed to the problem of nonuniformity by indicating that a researcher could search on national databases for a particular issue or a particular Member of Congress and find all relevant information. Paul agrees that the Center needs at least one staff member dedicated to the task, who would work with a task force to develop a model that fits and builds on the rich data that the Center already has. Paul noted that since 1982 all of the old Senate transfer sheets have been converted to PDF format, and they have detailed listings of the contents of the series. This information could somehow be folded into finding aids. She confessed she was not the person able to do this, but observed that someone who has been working in this field needs to be enlisted.

Hunt said that Paul made an interesting point. He said he has been increasingly aware of how the unique attributes of House and Senate records require distinctive approaches and solutions. There are no off-shelf solutions to many of the Center's problems. After five years on the job, he was beginning to see the world differently and appreciate the unique and distinctive needs of the House and Senate.

Thomas made the observation that description for electronic records should meet the same standards as description for paper records.

Hunt agreed and noted that the requirements gathering efforts on electronic records was also gathering descriptive data as well.

Paul said there are a lot of resources available on description. She noted that the Library of Congress has created a legislative indexing vocabulary and is a pioneer in setting standards in the area of description.

Forrester suggested the Society of American Archivists (SAA) as a resource, since one of their primary functions is creating finding aids for congressional papers, and the National Archives has had cooperative projects with SAA in the past.

Paul agreed the SAA would certainly have experts in the field of description.

Paul stated that Senate transfers are very odd currently, compared to what they had looked like in the past. She said that with the appearance of electronic records, central files have disappeared. Personal staff files are being transferred now, which require a different kind of description to give value-added description to the files. Paul felt it was not fair to expect committee staffs to do that value-added description.

Weinstein said he had just attended the SAA meeting and said that the overall concern addressed was how to pay for projects of this magnitude. He said while running the National Archives he had to make choices about resources available, and that the Advisory Committee will have to do the same when making recommendations. Weinstein said the budget was not there to hire the staff necessary to develop a plan for better description. He challenged Hunt to prepare a checklist of criteria by, so that the committee could start thinking about how to proceed given the lack of resources in a troubled economy.

Erickson stated that the continuing resolution would be a reality for the months to come.

Hunt said that the Center would certainly calibrate what it could do with current resources. He also wanted to start looking ahead and setting some long-range goals to establish milestones for future progress and staffing requirements.

Erickson said she appreciated that.

Rocha said that Hunt echoed his sentiments and in his 32 years in state government he had never seen it so bad. He said that, even so, a plan must be prepared for future needs. Rocha said that there was a major transition taking place in technologies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Birdwhistell said that over the years he had been on programs at the University of Kentucky that had been halted due to lack of funding and agreed that the committee would have to prioritize the goals suggested. He said most importantly the public needed to know that the records would be preserved. He felt that Hunt understood that concern.

With the close of the previous discussion, Erickson asked Dick Baker to talk about the Senate Historical Office's new publication, *Pro Tem*.

Baker said the publication was designed to be read within 30 minutes. He said that you may not want to be an expert on the subject of the President Pro-Tem (PPT) of the Senate, but the publication was a good device to go through two centuries of congressional history and understand the personalities who are drawn to this particular job. Baker said it was designed to be read on an airplane or a short commute and hoped the committee would enjoy it.

Erickson said there were some great anecdotes in there. She particularly liked the ones about the PPT who was afraid to speak on the Senate floor. She said Dick and his staff had done a great job on this publication and it had been an honor to join him in presenting it to Senator Stevens, a former PPT. She was looking forward to presenting it soon to Senator Byrd, the current PPT.

Erickson said that this meeting marked the end of her chairmanship of this committee and also brought to a close the term of the committee's six appointed members, but she hoped that she would see many of the committee members back for another two-year appointment during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Erickson said that she had been Secretary of the Senate for not quite two years and had loved every minute of it, but she had to say that chairing the Advisory Committee meetings and getting to know all of the committee members had been among the highlights during her tenure as Secretary. She commended the members for their service to the Congress and for their input and leadership on many issues. She said in appreciation for their service, she was pleased to present each member with a copy of a new book, the re-printing of Glenn Brown's illustrated *History of the United States Capital*. Erickson said that it was a favorite of Majority Leader Harry Reid and hoped they would enjoy it.

Erickson then invited the members to a special tour of the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC), which is scheduled to open in December. She said that starting in mid-October, the operations team would invite guests to tour the CVC as part of their test-and-adjust period to make sure everything would run smoothly. The CVC will be an incredible facility and will provide an opportunity for the public to learn

about the legislative branch of government and the remarkable Capitol building. She announced that the next Advisory Committee meeting would be held there.

Erickson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded and approved. The meeting was concluded at 11:25.