

User Group Meeting
Friday, October 22, 2010
The National Archives (NARA – A1)
Washington, DC
1PM – Room G-24
(22 in attendance)

Handouts

- ✓ October 20, 2010 Press release (See Item # I below)
- ✓ Researcher News, Autumn 2010 issue
- ✓ Agenda

Diane Dimkoff welcomed everyone to the meeting and discussed the following agenda items:

- I. **Archives at College Park (Archives 2) Saturday Pilot**
See the press release (handout) for the upcoming Saturday records retrieval pilot at A2
- II. **WiFi Update – Live in November!**
We are going live at the end of November.
- III. **Update on NARA’s proposal to use colored paper**
To further distinguish original records and copies, and to streamline the checkout process, we will soon begin using colored paper in all of the public access pc printers and the photo copiers.

We are waiting for one more test. Right now, we are leaning toward the buff color. We encourage you to stay after the meeting; view the sample colors; and give us your feedback. Please see the notebook (the names of the colors are shown for your easy reference.)
- IV. **Research Forum/wiki**
We have developed a research forum for the wiki and encourage you to participate.
www.ourarchives.wikispaces.net
- V. **Archivist’s Reorganization**
We received a request from a user to discuss the Archivist’s reorganization. We are not able to give you that information. The Archivist will roll out his plan to NARA staff in his own time and in his own way. We are hoping to hear more soon. When we do, we will invite him to come to the user group meeting to talk to you.
- VI. **Other Items**
 - a. *Holiday hours (rest of 2010)*
 - **November**
 - We will close at 5PM on Wednesday, November 24.
 - We will be closed Thursday, November 25, 2010.
 - We will be open on Friday and Saturday, November 26-27.

➤ **December**

- We will close at 5PM on Thursday, December 23.
- We will be closed Friday - Saturday, December 24-25.
 - We will be open Monday, December 27.
 - We will close at 5PM on Thursday, December 30.
 - We will be closed Friday - Saturday, December 31- January 1.
 - We will open on Monday, January 3, 2011

b. Security and Access Issues

Diane Dimkoff introduced Jim Morton who is a member of NASS' Holdings Protection Team and the A-1 liaison. He is working with Diane on the color paper and green bag issues.

- **Monitor** - The large monitor in the researcher lobby shows that we are videotaping in the research room to protect the records.
- **Color Paper – See Item II above.**
- **Green Bags** – More bags have been ordered. We will also have larger clear plastic bags for cartographic or other oversized materials. Bags will include labels marked “inspected by”.
- **Users’ Concern over NARA’s Staff** – Users expressed concern about NARA’s internal policy regarding employees going through the security process without being checked.

A: Higher level administrators have discussed this and presently, this is the policy. There are other budgetary and personnel concerns to be considered.
- **Users’ Complaint for Early Entrance to the Archives** – (This issue was discussed at the September 29, 2010 meeting). Due to the congestion in the entrance lobby of the Archives, one user is requesting early entrance to the research lobby, prior to the 9AM posted opening time.

A: The posted hours state an opening time of 9AM. Several factors prevent opening up earlier than the posted times; other scheduling problems cannot be prevented:

 1. There is no way to secure the research areas prior to opening at 9AM. A 1 is not in a closed core as the research rooms are at Archives 2, so there would be no security in the research areas.
 2. Cleaning crews are working to clean the research areas prior to 9AM.
 3. Staff is setting up for the day. We have research room staff meetings prior to our 9AM opening.
 4. NARA has accommodated researchers and granted entrance to the main lobby, so that they do not have to stand out in the weather. NARA has also allowed for researchers to be processed while they wait for the 9AM opening.

c. E-version of the Serial Set – The E-version of the Serial Set of the US Government publications is now available to the public free of charge in all NARA research rooms nationwide. Has anyone other than Claire Bettag tried it? She gave it a “thumbs-up”. The WiFi test went very well.

d. Exhibit Case –The new featured document exhibit case in the research lobby is another way we hope to bring more documents to all. We will change the display

quarterly. Please stop by to see this quarter's document about a boy running away to join the circus.

- e. ***On-line Public Access*** – The on-line public access (OPA) will go live in December. Having a demonstration is a good idea and we will work on scheduling that. Archives.gov is also being redesigned and will be launched in December.

VII. **Q and A**

Q: Posted User Group Minutes - Would you adjust the right margins of the user group minutes? When we print them out, the right margin is cut off.

A: Ok-that's an easy one!

Q: Building Temperature – Users complained about the temperature in the A1 research room (2nd floor); it seems to get colder around 10AM.

A: The temperature today is 70 degrees and was 72 degrees yesterday. We will continue to monitor the temperature.

Q: We would like to discuss research with our fellow researchers and would like to do this here on site.

A: We will not organize meetings. However, we are happy to allow you to use G-24. However, this room is heavily used; you must contact Jessie White for room availability.

Q: The RG -94, 7th Cavalry records aren't here. I was told they were at A2, in Footnotes' possession being scanned. What will happen once they are scanned? When will the records be available?

A: The only records at A-2 being scanned by Footnote are the RG94 Entry 96 Final statements.

Q: Has anyone asked for non- digital copies yet? How do you dish that out?

A: We will not be taking any records out of circulation until they are fully available digitally. Like our microfilmed records, we do plan to take digitized originals out of circulation once we have made the records available digitally. However we will provide the originals if the researcher has a compelling reason to see the original.

Q: Have you ordered the microfilm reader/scanners?

A: No, as you know, ordering equipment is very difficult at the end of the fiscal year. We have sent the request to Adrienne Thomas and she has approved the expenditure.

UPDATE: Adrienne has released the funds and we are beginning the procurement process.

- Q: The colored book scanner at A1 is gone; when is it coming back. It is different from the one at A2; it would be really nice if you could standardize your equipment.
- A: We try, but have little control over that. We are told that the updates for the A2 book scanner must be downloaded electronically. We are working with the computer support staff to get the pc connected and up and running. This will happen but not overnight.
- Q: Other complaints concerned the outrageous prices charged and turnaround time by vendors for cartographic orders; spot lighting damaging images; and a comment that lights are hot and expensive, suggesting NARA buy adapters.
- A: Diane asked Jonathan and Patty to give her information on these issues. She also asked users to come to her directly when things need addressed, so that she can address the issues as they arise.
- Q: Cartographics Research Room Rules – After one of the users had been working there for a few weeks, he noted that the rules changed. Why are records requested one day be refiled that night? Why can I have two carts when working with a client, and another time, we can't look at each other's carts? Why do the rules have to be so complicated? Could you write down the rules?
- A: ***Diane gave her email to everyone.*** She is the policy person for research rooms in both buildings. DDimkoff@NARA.GOV The rules are written, and we continue to do in-house training with new and veteran staff members.
- Q: Another question on the rules concerns the pull times; what is the amount of time one can keep records. We are told we have to look at them within three days and that they can be kept for 30 days if continually used. Is that 30 calendars or 30 work days?
- A: **It is 30 calendar days.** Each researcher may request and place on hold a **maximum of 2 carts of records**, regardless of how many boxes are on those carts. In consideration of researchers waiting to use records charged out to another researcher, we are establishing a 30-day limit for how long a researcher can continually hold the same archival records. We will automatically refile records continuously used and held by the same researcher after 30 days. If records are refiled due to the 30-day limit, that researcher will have an opportunity to request those records again after 10 business days have passed. Under this policy, researchers are urged to consider the time required to conduct research and request records in amounts that can be viewed within 30 days. If the nature of one's work requires slow and thorough research through each box over a period of days, we urge requesting only a few boxes. This will avoid tying up an entire cart of materials that nobody may use for a long time. If everyone requests only what is need for a limited timeframe, then others will have more timely access to the records that they need.

- November 19, 2010 – Archives 2
- December – no meeting

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- Meetings will be held quarterly.