

## Meeting Notes

COSTEP-CT met July 7, 2010 at the Connecticut Historical Society.

Present: Kathy Craughwell-Varda (Conservation ConneCTion), Jane Cullinane (Conn. State Library, Preservation Office), Mark Jones (Conn. State Library, State Archivist), Tara Kennedy (Yale Univ.), Rich Malley (Conn. Historical Society), Lizette Pelletier (Conn. State Library, Public Records Office), Ryan Potosnak (FEMA, field services, currently in Conn.), Anita Uhlan (FEMA, Boston). Note taker: Jane

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tara Kennedy announced that Yale University is hosting a free two-day workshop in October by the Image Permanence Institute on how to save money on energy costs while still maintaining a safe storage environment for collections. See <http://ipisustainability.org/>

Mark Jones showed us the poster about Archives Month (October 2010). The poster was created through a grant to the State Historic Records Advisory Board and, it is hoped, will encourage the scheduling of workshops and meetings on history during that month.

## INTRODUCTIONS

We introduced ourselves to the new members of the group from FEMA. Kathy Craughwell-Varda said the Conservation ConneCTion is offering a series of workshops on disaster preparedness, beginning in July 2010, and on collection storage needs. Mark Jones said the State Library is receiving probate court records due to the planned consolidation of the courts from over 100 to 50. Ryan Potosnak and Anita Uhlan work for the Environmental and Historic Preservation section of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Ryan is working with the cultural heritage organizations affected by the flooding in March and the tornado in June.

Anita's speciality is flood plains. A 100 or 500 year flood could occur any year. The odds are 5% for a 100 year flood and 0.2% for a 500 year flood. But these indicators are solely for insurance requirements. While flooding is unlikely, it could occur anywhere, not just in a designated flood plain.

Anita is compiling a list that the Secretary of Interior could use to contact people who would know the cultural community's situation in the event of a disaster.

## DISASTERS IN CONNECTICUT

The Barnum Museum in Bridgeport was damaged by the tornado in June. Even though their disaster plan had a section on preparedness for a tornado, there was no warning & there was no time to prepare. The dome of the building and the roof were damaged, windows were blown in, wind and rain entered the building. They have worked on the larger building issues but did not address the collections and now items in the collection are moldy. The humidity in the building was too high.

We agreed that COSTEP-CT should compile a list of disaster events involving cultural heritage organizations in Connecticut. We thought of these events:

2010 June - Tornado - Barnum Museum, Bridgeport

2010 March - Flood - Indian and Colonial Research Center, Mystic

2000 - Flood - Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford

? - Fire (arson in book return) - Danbury Public Library

? - Car crash into building - ? Museum on Main St. & Capitol Ave. in Hartford

? - Lightning strike - Keeney Memorial Center/Wethersfield Historical Society

## REGIONAL RESPONSE

The Barnum Museum is hoping to have a volunteer day when archivists from around the region could come help treat damaged items. We think it would be helpful to have a catalog of resources that could be

shared by other institutions for an event like this or in the event of a disaster. For example, who could lend HEPA vacuums suitable for museum materials or bring them for a working visit? An online survey would compile a list of skills, materials and equipment, perhaps by region.

Since Connecticut doesn't have counties as a legal entity, the State Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security has established 5 regions for the state. [In a follow up email, Ryan sent the url <http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?a=1939&q=291026> that lists the 5 offices in Bridgeport, Middletown, Hartford, Colchester and Southbury. There is a map at <http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?a=1903&q=295316&demhsNav=|> ]

Ryan mentioned the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, which is not the same as the AIC-CERT program we discussed last month. This is a program where neighbors help neighbors. Ryan wondered if the Connecticut CERTs have ever considered cultural heritage materials in their planning. [I found information on the Connecticut Citizens Corp Council on the DEMHS site at <http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?a=1932&Q=328152&PM=1&demhsNav=|> and a list of CERTs in Connecticut <http://www.citizencorps.gov/cc/CertIndex.do?reportsForState&cert=&state=CT> ]

### **VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

One of our goals is to "Write a statement on the value of cultural resources to local economy and public perception that this is a good place to live."

We discussed several ways to measure value. Kathy Craughwell-Varda heard a report on NPR about the benefit to the economy when cultural heritage is marketed and brings in tourist dollars. When the state of Colorado cut funds for marketing cultural heritage, state revenues fell by \$18,000,000. If marketing is eliminated it takes 7 years to get the visitor number back.

Cultural heritage also brings a sense of place to residents, enhancing the quality of life. Connecticut offers mountains, beaches, shopping, farming and industry. We also have the historical and the modern, for example, we have notable 18th century and mid-20th century houses.

The national COSTEP brochure <http://www.nedcc.org/disaster/downloads/COSTEP%20brochure.pdf> has a statement on value in the section called "Saving what matters" that says what we were aiming for.

For our next meeting, Tara Kennedy will try to edit this statement and will seek permission from NEDCC to use or adapt the COSTEP language. The rest of us will bring bullet point examples of the value and variety of cultural heritage offered in Connecticut. We'd like examples of the diversity of time periods, geography, interest groups and types of materials.

### **NEXT MEETING**

We'll meet Aug. 18, 2010, at 10:00 at the Connecticut Historical Society.