Virginia Archives Month Planning Guide

Background

Archives Week has been celebrated throughout the archival community since approximately 1988. A formal observance of Archives Week in Virginia, including the production of a poster by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) Virginia Caucus in conjunction with the Library of Virginia and the Library of Virginia Foundation, began in 2002.

In 2006, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) coordinated a nation-wide observance of American Archives Month. Published resources for American Archives Month planners are available from the Society of American Archivists, regional archival organizations and various states.

Benefits of Participating in Virginia Archives Month

By participating in Archives Month activities, either through hosting activities at your institution, or by participating in regional or statewide events, you can increase the visibility of the archival program within your institution. Through programming and other outreach activities, your participation can increase visibility and public awareness of your collections and your institution.

Participation in Archives Month activities will promote the value of archives, archival collections, and the professionals who care for our history.

Theme

Each year, a unifying theme for Archives Month events and observances is designated by the coordinators of the state-wide Archives Month observances in Virginia. The theme is generally based on the theme designated by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) (http://www.marac.info). The theme is developed by the MARAC Outreach Committee and can be found on the MARAC Archives Month page.

A list of previous themes of Archives Week and Archives Month Activities is found in Appendix A.

Events

Events do not have to be elaborate or require extensive funding. Creativity and utilization of strengths in collection and personnel are all that is required to stage a successful event. See the sites listed in Appendix B: Additional Resources for event ideas and inspirations.

Planning

The key to a successful Archives Month observance is planning. Some questions to ask when planning might be:

- What is it you want to accomplish with the event(s)?
- Who is the target audience for the event(s)?
- What are some possible venues for the event(s)?

- What institutions, organizations, or individuals might be able to assist with the event(s)?
- Will it be necessary to create a budget to track donations and expenses for the event(s)?
- What type of media coverage (television, radio, newspaper, etc.) is desirable to have for the event(s)?

Publicity

Effective publicity is essential for successful events. Consider a varied approach that utilizes various types of media. Some types of media to utilize when publicizing events include:

- traditional media (television, radio, newspapers and other print publications)
- professional and affiliated organizations (MARAC, Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Library Association, etc.)
- computer-based applications (websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other Web2.0 applications)
- posters in local businesses (if appropriate)
- Virginia Archives Month website, publications, etc.

One resource that is available at no-cost to institutions within Virginia is the posting of institutional events on the Virginia Archives Month website, currently hosted by the Library of Virginia. By including events on the Virginia Archives Month website, we are able to create a unified resource for those who are interested in attending, participating and planning Archives Month events.

Sponsorship and Donations

Identify organizations, both non-profit and for-profit, that might be willing to sponsor your event(s). Even if you do not think that your event(s) require additional funding, support from the community will further highlight the event. Be creative on how you can include local organizations in your event. You might even consider promotional "give-away" items with the sponsor's name and logo on them.

The most important aspects of sponsorships and donations are:

- Be up-front with the potential sponsor(s) and donor(s) about what their contribution will go towards.
- Acknowledge the sponsor(s) and donor(s) verbally at the event(s), in any printed materials that might be distributed, and in any media coverage that your event(s) receive.
- Send thank you notes to all sponsors and donors for their support of the event.

After the Events and Celebrations are Over

Following the last event, there are still tasks that need to be accomplished. Thank you notes need to be sent to donors, sponsors, volunteers, and others that have provided support and assistance in Archives Month activities. Take notes about what was successful and what worked as well as what did not work as well and notes on what improvements might be incorporated into future Archives Month activities. Finally, once all that is complete, get ready for next year – Archives Month will be here before you know it!

Appendix A: List of themes for Archives Week and Archives Month, 2002-2009

Year	MARAC Theme	Virginia Theme
2002	[none]	"Celebrating Virginia's Archives and Special Collections"
2003	"Discover the Cultures within Archives"	"A Commonwealth of Cultures" Virginia's Archives and Special Collections"
2004	"Playing with History: Recreation and Amusement in Archives"	"Playing with History: Virginia's Archives and Special Collections"
2005	"In Archives We Trust: Preserving Our History"	"In Archives We Trust: Preserving Virginia History for Her People"
2006	"Archives Bridges from the Past to the Present"	"Bridging Past and Present: Virginia's Archives and Special Collections"
2007	"Exploring New Worlds: Archives in our Lives"	"Exploring New Worlds: Virginia's Archives in Our Lives"
2008	"What is the Archivist Footprint?"	"Preserving the Past, Shaping the Future in Virginia"
2009	"To Choose Our Better History"	"Choosing Our Better History"

Appendix B: Additional Resources

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) each have pages devoted to American Archives Month. These sites contain guidance and suggestions for all aspects of Archives Month planning as well as a glimpse into what other institutions around the United States are doing to observe American Archives Month.

Society of American Archivists American Archives Month:
http://www.archivists.org/archivesmonth/index.asp
Council of State Archivists (CoSA) Archives Month main page:
http://www.statearchivists.org/archivesmonth/index.htm

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) has a page devoted to Archives Month activities throughout the MARAC region.

http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/archives_month/index.html