



AASLH
American Association
for State and Local History

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**Field Services Alliance Winter Retreat
Mill City Museum, Minneapolis, MN
February 6-8, 2005**

Minutes

Submitted by Corrie E. Cook

Attending:

Chuck Backus, Kentucky Historical Society
Britta Bloomberg, Minnesota Historical Society
J.D. Britton, Ohio Historical Society
Corrie E. Cook, Indiana Historical Society
Timothy Glines, Minnesota Historical Society
David Grabitske, Minnesota Historical Society
Carol Harsh, Smithsonian, Museums on Main Street
Bob Herskovitz, Minnesota Historical Society
Jeff Larrabee, Army National Guard Historical Services
Melinda Markell, Upper Midwest Conservation Association
Patrick McCormack, Minnesota Historical Society
Tom McKay, Wisconsin Historical Society
Pat Miller, Illinois Heritage Association
Karla Nicholson, American Association for State and Local History
Connie Rendfeld, Indiana Historical Society
Jim Strider, Ohio Historical Society
Jerome Thompson, State Historical Society of Iowa

6 February 2005

Session 1: Getting Reacquainted: Rendfeld welcomed everyone to the FSA retreat and invited attendees to share new initiatives at his/her institution since the annual meeting in St. Louis. Each present member reported. The session was adjourned.

7 February 2005

Session 2: Update on FSA's Current Status: Rendfeld called the meeting to order and attendees reviewed the minutes from the 2004 annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. Two

minor corrections were made before Glines moved to approve the revised minutes. Backus seconded. Motion carried.

Rendfeld reported the results of FSA's survey of members. Eleven surveys have been received, revealing some trends but also some variants. For example, a very high percentage of respondents reported providing resources through the internet, producing a hard copy newsletter, and administering needs assessments of constituents; however, the reported budgets ranged from \$3,000 to \$250,000 and while the smallest reported constituency was served by one staff person so also was the largest reported constituency. To gather more responses and provide more conclusive results, each present member volunteered to contact the field services groups within a few states. Rendfeld will circulate a list of each member and their selected states as well as a survey with revisions based on suggestions from members. Results should be submitted to Rendfeld and she and Cook will tabulate results for presentation during the 2005 annual meeting. Nicholson mentioned that this survey could develop into a directory of the services available to local history groups.

Before the reports of the Goal Committees, Rendfeld reported for John Harris (Indiana Historical Society) that new resources and leaflets are available on the FSA web site. Members should check their information on the FSA web site's directory and let Rendfeld or Harris know of updates.

Goal I: To maintain and further develop a forum to share information and promote collegiality among the field services professionals and other interested colleagues.

Rendfeld will send information on the FSA annual meeting to Natalie Norris at AALSH. A voluntary meeting of committee members is planned from 11AM-12PM and the FSA annual meeting will begin at 1PM on Wednesday, September 21, 2005, during the AASLH annual meeting in Pittsburgh.

Goal II: To strengthen the field services/AASLH collaboration.

Miller reported that the "Ask FSA" articles of AASLH's *Dispatch* focus on unique issues that small museums face. FSA's name and logo appear as part of these articles. Harsh will serve another term on AASLH's Program Committee as an FSA representative. Miller will organize volunteers to man an "Ask FSA" area of the AASLH booth during the 2005 AASLH annual meeting.

Goal III: To develop a theory and methodology of practice for field services work.

Grabitske reported that he, Harris, and McKay lead a training session on good workshop exercises during the annual meeting in St. Louis. He circulated responses to requests for individual organization's field services mission statements. Also circulated were McKay's guiding principals and practices from the Wisconsin Historical Society's office of local history.

Goad IV: To develop access to materials, workshops, programs, and other resources which help field service professionals do their work.

Harsh presented a proposal for offering expertly lead workshops that are easily replicable by various speakers in various places. More discussion on the proposal was postponed.

The Nominating Committee members are Rendfeld, Glines, and Britton. The committee will prepare a slate of chair, vice chair, and secretary for the annual meeting. The chair appointed at the annual meeting will meet with committee chairpersons to discuss committee recruitment.

Session 3: Survey of the profession: See notes under 7 February 2005, Session 2.

Session 4: AASLH collaborations: Nicholson circulated AASLH's most recent professional development brochure. She asked if FSA members would be interested and willing to lead half-day workshops on board development the day before the regularly scheduled AASLH workshops. Representatives from institutions interested in hosting and/or co-sponsoring an AASLH workshop in 2006 should contact Nicholson for more information on the details and benefits.

Harsh presented a proposal on providing workshop materials and presentations in CD format along with a list of expert presenters as a way to make expertly lead workshops more accessible to constituents and easier for speakers. After much discussion, it was generally agreed that FSA does support plans to bring more and better training to constituents; however, more development of this proposal is needed. During the annual meeting, Harsh will report on a revised proposal based on member recommendations that examples of workshop materials, formats, templates, teaching plans, etc. be developed in CD format to accompany a list of expert speakers.

Nicholson reported that 87 individuals participated in AASLH's on-line workshop on archival basics. AASLH will continue to develop this method of training with the goal of providing one new workshop per year.

Nicholson reported that the AASLH Award Program will soon eliminate the Certificate of Commendation. A new award will be presented based on leadership and innovation in the field. The March 2005 issue of *Dispatch* will list the 29 winners of the *Save Our History* grants. \$256,000 was awarded by the History Channel through this grant.

A resolution from the Council of AASLH was circulated by Nicholson. AASLH is working to earmark federal funding for formula grants in 2008. If the funding is approved, state agencies could oversee the distribution of these grants in 2010. An AASLH task force

regarding the progress of this initiative is to be expanded in spring 2005 and members interested in serving on the task force should contact Nicholson. Miller raised a resolution that this task force recommend a portion of the sought federal funds be allocated for capacity building or training and that a flexible definition of small museums be made. McKay seconded. After discussion, the resolution was approved and will be sent by Rendfeld to Terry Davis (President and CEO, AASLH), Sandra Clark (task force leader), and cc-ed to Nicholson.

February 8, 2005

On behalf of the members, Rendfeld thanked Glines, Grabitske, the Mill City Museum, and the Minnesota Historical Society for hosting the FSA winter retreat. Harris, Rendfeld, and Cook offered to host the 2006 winter retreat in French Lick, Indiana. Possible dates and more information are forthcoming.

Session 6: AASLH Initiative on Incremental Standards

Nicholson reported that AASLH is applying for an IMLS 21st Century Museum Professionals grant to develop incremental standards aimed toward small and mid-sized historical organizations. The three year project will be lead by a part-time director and guided by three committees: process (support provided to constituents striving to meet standards), standards (content and gradation of the standards themselves), and sustainability (raising funds, maintaining management, providing rewards). Nicholson asked for volunteers to serve on these committees and to be listed as committee members in the grant application. Larrabee expressed an interest in all three committees. Britton volunteered for the sustainability committee. Markell requested more information and Nicholson offered to provide a white paper on the project. After much discussion, a general concern for the awards component of the initiative was expressed. It was recommended that a field services staff person be involved as part of a review of constituents striving toward these standards. Field services staff members should be well informed on the development of this project as they will likely receive constituents' requests and questions.

Each Goal Committee convened individually before the last session.

Concluding Session: Today's Challenges & Wrap-up: Miller expressed the need to expand the base of FSA members. It was generally agreed that this goal could be accomplished through collaboration, national recognition, increased visibility, personal invitations, and hosting meetings outside the Midwest. Based on member recommendations, the current goals of FSA will be revisited during the annual meeting. Possible changes could include the establishment of a "missionary" goal and clarification on the overlap between Goal III and Goal IV.

Rendfeld adjourned the meeting.

