



# The Archivists' Bulldog



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## **Governor Ehrlich visits Archives for Annapolis City Charter Event**

by Mimi Calver



On April 20, Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. came to the Archives to help kick off the celebrations for the 300th anniversary of the granting of the Annapolis City Charter on November 22, 1708. Also taking part in the ceremony were Annapolis City Alderman for Ward 2, Mike Christman, and chair of the Annapolis Charter 300 Committee, Chuck Weikel. State Archivist Ed Papenfuse welcomed the guests and talked about the history of the granting of the Charter and the controversy that surrounded it at the time.

For the event, a huge mural depicting the granting of the Charter was hung from the balcony of the Archives' search room. The mural will hang from the outside of the building for about three months as part of its tour of all 8 wards of the City leading up to the 300th anniversary year in 2008. The mural is a copy of a painting by local artist Lee Boynton that hangs in the Annapolis City Council Chamber.

Also on exhibit was the original 1708 Charter that has not been on display since the 275th anniversary celebrations in 1983. The Archives' paper conservation staff will conserve the Charter for exhibition in 2008. Dr. Papenfuse presented the governor with a framed copy of the Charter, made from a high resolution scan of the original, to hang in the State House near the portrait of Queen Anne who granted it.

## **MARAC Conference in Baltimore**

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) held its spring meeting in Baltimore April 20-22, returning to Maryland for the first time since 2002. The conference was a major success in both attendance (over 300 registrants) and program, especially the plenary address on the future of the National Archives given by Dr. Allen Weinstein, Archivist of the United States. Dr. Edward Papenfuse, Maryland State Archivist and a founding member of MARAC, graciously introduced Professor Weinstein, and prefaced many of Weinstein's remarks on the problems facing the profession with regard to access and preservation. (full text of Dr. Papenfuse's remarks given below).

Dr. Weinstein spoke on many topics, but captured the greatest attention as he pledged a

transparent audit of the steps that led NARA to withdraw and re-classify previously available documents at the request of the Air Force and a re-commitment of NARA to public access to public records with responsible stewardship of national security concerns.

Dr. Papenfuse was not the only MSA staffer to contribute to the success of the meeting. Michael McCormick, Director of Reference Services, served as co-chair of the Program Committee, putting together the educational sessions that form the core of such a conference. Jennifer Hafner, Deputy Director of Research and Student Outreach, assisted on the even more demanding Local Arrangements Committee which is responsible for the venue, scheduling of rooms, AV support, and various logistical challenges any group of 300 people can present. Jen also provided inspiration and instruction in the social highlight of the meeting, an evening of duckpin bowling, a true Bawlmer experience.

The venue proved as intriguing as many of the presentations. The Tremont Plaza Hotel has acquired and refurbished the former Baltimore Masonic Temple as the Tremont Grand conference center. A \$25 million dollar project has restored the architectural majesties of the meeting rooms and banquet halls. Attention to detail in embellishments, tromp d'oeil painting, and stained glass restoration in styles ranging from Neo-Classical to Arabesque commanded attention.

Even so, topics were equally compelling, ranging from the post-Modern literary criticism of Jacques Derrida and his deconstruction of record keeping to community based documentation via oral histories or university/high school partnerships. Again, MSA staffers led and contributed to engrossing sessions.

On Friday Vicki Lee and Jenn Cruickshank of the MSA Conservation Lab partnered with Kathleen Ludwig and Hilary Kaplan of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to present *In Katrina's Wake: Disasters Do Happen*. Vicki chaired this session, and provided an overview of how MSA staff responds to the challenges of disaster locally and throughout the state. Jenn presented a short course in the responses and resources required to be prepared for emergencies. Ludwig and Kaplan took us on a photo tour of the NARA effort to assist with the recovery and conservation of the Orleans Parish government records that had been submerged in six feet of water and inaccessible for two months after the flooding of the city. The session dramatically demonstrated how rapidly and unexpectedly emergencies arise.

On Saturday MSA staff chaired two panels. Chris Haley, Director of the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland, led *African American Documents: Enslaved, Free and In-between* which specifically discussed what types of documents describing the African American experience might be found in the mid-Atlantic states. Dr. David Taft Terry, formerly of the Archives and now executive director of the Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History, Karen James of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and Don Wilson of the Ruth E Lloyd Information Center, Prince William Public Library spoke to the questions of research in the "peculiar institution" and resistance to it. The MSA Underground Railroad web site was highlighted as a new tool for examining the demographics of slavery.

Finally, Robert Barnes, Reference Archivist, was joined by June Lloyd of the York County, PA, Heritage Trust and Ann Toohey of the Library of Congress to discuss *Archivists, Librarians, and Genealogists: Forging New Alliances*. The era of electronic records is re-shaping genealogical demand as dramatically as Alex Haley's *Roots* created it. Resources such as *mdvitalrec.net*, Ancestry.com, and on-line databases of source documents such as *mdlandrec.net* and NARA's *Access to Archival Documents* are making a trip to the physical archives seemingly less necessary. Barnes and the other panelists discussed how these changes require archivists to proactively work with librarians and researchers to insure that scarce resources are not expended

upon duplication, and that archives concentrate on acquiring and making available unique materials.

The conference proved highly successful, and marked the largest participation in a MARAC meeting of MSA staff in years. Networking such as these events allow is an invaluable asset to professional development. MARAC is considering a return to the metropolitan Washington region in the fall of 2008, and MSA staff will surely play an important role.

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### **Ed Papenfuse's Remarks at MARAC to Introduce the Archivist of the U.S.**

On April 21, Ed Papenfuse appeared at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference and gave the following remarks as the introduction of the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Allen Weinstein.

It is my privilege this morning to introduce Allen Weinstein. Professor Allen Weinstein was confirmed as the ninth Archivist of the United States in February 2005. Dr. Weinstein, a former Professor of History who has held positions at Boston University, Georgetown University, and Smith College, is the author of numerous essays and books, including *The Story of America* (2002), *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America—The Stalin Era* (1999), *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (1978 & 1997), and *Freedom and Crisis: An American History* (3rd edition, 1981).

From 1985 to 2003, he served as President of The Center for Democracy, a non-profit foundation based in Washington, DC, that he created in 1985 to promote and strengthen the democratic process. His international awards include the United Nations Peace Medal (1986), The Council of Europe's Silver Medal (1990 and 1996), and awards from the presidents of Nicaragua and Romania for assisting them on the road to democracy.

His other awards and fellowships have included two Senior Fulbright Lectureships, an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, the Commonwealth Fund Lectureship at the University of London, and a Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Fellowship.

Dr. Weinstein is no stranger to controversy. His scholarship led him to conclude that a former favorite son and rising international star of this great state of Maryland, Alger Hiss, was a Soviet Spy, although a few of us still have lingering doubts about the conclusiveness of the evidence.

While some latitude will inevitably be allowed the people we elect to office to make decisions concerning access to the records they create for the period of time they are in office, we ought not to permit them to do so beyond a reasonably prescribed time limit once they are out of office. Since becoming Archivist, Dr. Weinstein has had to cope with a former National Security Advisor who saw fit to take some of the records of his office home, and over the past few weeks he has been drawn into the fray over reclassification of records, pushing them back under the shroud of inaccessibility, and prompting the New York Times on Sunday to run a piece by Scott Shane entitled "Why the Secrecy? Only the Bureaucrats Know." As the Washington Post reported on Tuesday, Dr. Weinstein took decisive action, eliminating reclassification as a secret policy of the National Archives.

In a democracy such as ours, a democracy which Dr. Weinstein has dedicated his public career to espousing its virtues around the world, there needs to be a time, a persistently forward moving date, after which all that has been identified as permanently valuable information is totally free, uncensored, and accessible. There should be no turning back.

Apart from the question of what of public records should remain secret and for how long, Dr.

Weinstein's most daunting task is mastering the complexities of creating a permanent electronic archives. Under his leadership and that of his predecessor the budget for creating and providing a permanent National Electronic Archives has grown substantially.

As yet there is no such thing as a permanent electronic record in a perpetually authoritative retrieval environment. Jstor, the cooperative electronic journal web site, probably comes as close as any experiment in establishing one, and our efforts to place all land records in Maryland online may prove a viable model for the future. We now have 160,000,000 million archivally secure and accountable land record images on line, and counting, encompassed in 120 terrabytes of live archival storage. This is but a drop in the bucket of the essential electronic records of governance, about which historians, reporters, and the general public are clamoring for access.

Dr. Weinstein has made it clear that to answer the most pressing questions of declassification and access to permanent records requires historians, archivists, librarians, and the public in general to focus on what we currently save, why we save it, and how to save it permanently electronically from the moment of its creation. It will do us no good to worry about preservation and access years after the outmoded system that created the electronic record is no longer functioning and the record is as difficult to decode as the Venona telegrams with which Dr. Weinstein is so familiar in the Alger Hiss case. When we get to the point of the Archives at the State and National level being the direct and immediate repository of all permanent electronic records regardless of their security clearance and timing of accessibility, then the future of a truthful history and a well-functioning democracy will be secure.

Nearly 40 years ago, on the first day of my first real job out of graduate school as an Assistant Editor on the American Historical Review, I was shown to my office and told to use it wisely. It had just been vacated by a distinguished visiting, younger scholar, by the name of Allen Weinstein of whom there were great expectations. When I visited my old office not too long ago for a meeting at the AHA headquarters in Washington, all other previous occupants of that office had long been forgotten, and I was told with pride by the current occupant that he had the privilege of sitting in Allen Weinstein's chair. The wisest course for me at the moment is to do what I was asked to do, and that is to present to you the 9th Archivist of the United States, Dr. Allen Weinstein.

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### THE ARCHIVISTS' BULLDOG

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The Editor welcomes editorial comments and contributions from the public.

The Archives maintains a web site on the Internet at <http://msa.net>

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