

SPNHC: THE SECOND TEN YEARS (1995–2005)

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Abstract.—In 1985, the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) was created to meet the concerns of a growing number of individuals involved with the development, management, and care of natural history collections. After 20 years of existence, the Society continues to be unique among natural history professional organizations, because of its international scope and multidisciplinary approach to collections management and care. The second ten years of the organization is featured with national recognition for outstanding commitment to the preservation of collections, as well as a strong record of conducting annual meetings, providing continuing education opportunities, producing literature that adds to the knowledge base of the museum community, and a variety of successful projects. In celebration of the Society's twentieth anniversary, the history and accomplishments of SPNHC during the last decade are documented.

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) is a “multidisciplinary organization composed of individuals who are interested in development and preservation of natural history collections. Natural history collections include specimens and supporting documentation, such as audio-visual materials, labels, library materials, field data, and similar archives. *Preservation* refers to any direct or indirect activity providing continued and improved care of these collections and supporting documents. The Society actively encourages the participation of individuals involved with all aspects of natural history collections” (SPNHC 2004a). The purpose of SPNHC is to

- provide for and maintain an international association of persons who study and care for natural history collections. SPNHC also provides a bridge between natural history collection managers and technical, professional, governmental, and non-governmental organizations.
- encourage research on the essential requirements for preserving, storing, studying, and displaying natural history collections. SPNHC recognizes and rewards contributions to the understanding of natural history collection management and preservation.
- publish a professional journal and encourage the dissemination of information about natural history collections. SPNHC publishes natural history collection related technical materials, including *Collection Forum*, semi-annual newsletters, technical leaflets, best-practice guides, and several books.
- hold annual meetings and sponsor symposia and workshops to foster the exchange of ideas and information (SPNHC 2004a).

Williams (1995) documented the history of SPNHC during its first ten years of existence. This contribution follows Williams (1995) in documenting the history of SPNHC between 1995 and 2005.

THE BYLAWS

The Society's bylaws were revised in May of 1995 to more thoroughly address the activities of the Society and to meet compliance requirements. They have

Table 1. SPNHC Officers from 1995 to 2005.

Inclusive years	Individuals/offices		
	<i>President-Elect</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Past-President</i>
1994–1996	G. W. Hughes	C. L. Rose	G. R. Fitzgerald
1996–1998	S. Y. Shelton	G. W. Hughes	C. L. Rose
1998–2000	S. B. McLaren	S. Y. Shelton	G. W. Hughes
2000–2002	R. Huxley	S. B. McLaren	S. Y. Shelton
2002–2004	I. Hardy	R. Huxley	S. B. McLaren
2004–2006	T. White	I. Hardy	R. Huxley
	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Managing Editor</i>
1995–1997	M. E. Taylor	Julia Golden	J. E. Simmons
1997–1999	M. E. Taylor	L. Palmer	K. Shaw
1999–2000	M. E. Taylor	L. Palmer	J. Waddington
2000–2004	E. Benamy	L. Palmer	J. Waddington
2004–2005	Judith Price	L. Palmer	J. Waddington

provided direction for the organization in developing useful policies and operational guidelines. Collectively these documents are available from the SPNHC Council in hardcopy format and on the SPNHC website (www.SPNHC.org).

THE COUNCIL

The SPNHC leadership is provided by the Council which consists of six officers and six Members-at-Large. The officers include the President, Past-President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, and Managing Editor. The President, Secretary, and Members-at-Large are elected offices with specific terms; the Treasurer and Managing Editor are appointed for one- to two-year terms, with the provision of being renewed repeatedly by mutual agreement. Individuals elected to presidential positions accept a six-year commitment, but serve in three different capacities separated into two-year increments (President-Elect, President, and Past President). The Members-at-Large hold the longest term of three years; each year two Members-at-Large are retired and replaced. This structure provides consistency of direction and operations over time for the Council, as well as training for future officers (Williams 1995). The long-term service of Council members filling the non-presidential positions has provided stability to the Society over the past ten years. Executive officers and their terms are given in Table 1, while the Members-at-Large and their respective terms are given in Table 2.

THE COMMITTEES

Much of the success of SPNHC is directly related to activities and accomplishments of the Standing Committees and Sessional Committees. The Standing Committees are long-term entities, continuing from the term of one President to the next. Standing Committees provide essential, organizational functions or services to the membership. Sessional Committees exist at the discretion of the President in office. For the most part, Sessional Committees serve a temporary purpose or a subset of the membership on a short-term basis.

Table 2. SPNHC Members-at-Large between 1995 and 2005.

Inclusive years	Individuals
1992–1995	L. Barkley and R. R. Waller
1993–1996	G. Brown and S. Y. Shelton
1994–1997	P. S. Cato and S. B. McLaren
1995–1998	E. E. Merritt and A. Pinzl
1996–1999	C. Leckie and A. Suzumoto
1997–2000	B. P. Moore and L. L. Thomas
1998–2001	E. Benamy and R. Huxley (subsequently became Secretary and President-Elect, respectively, and were replaced by R. Johnson and W. Gannon)
1999–2002	C. Ramotnik and J. Solomon
2000–2003	P. Work and G. Anderson
2001–2004	A. Pinzl and S. M. Woodward
2002–2005	C. Ramotnik and T. White (subsequently became President-elect and replaced by L. Ford in 2004)
2003–2006	L. Dietrich and J.-M. Gagnon
2004–2007	E. Benamy and R. K. Rabeler

Standing Committees

During the past ten years the nature of the Standing Committees has been considerably more stable than the previous 10 years. While the first ten years featured the creation, elimination, combination, and renaming of standing committees, the second ten years has merely involved the 1996 absorption of the Resources Committee into the Conservation Committee, and the 2001 renaming of the Awards and Recognition Committee as the Recognition and Grants Committee. At the end of the second ten years, the Society recognizes 12 Standing Committees. Four of these committees remain critical in fulfilling the functions of the organization (Bylaws, Election, Executive, and Finance committees), six are important in providing services to the general membership (Archives, Conference, Conservation, Documentation, Education & Training, and Recognition & Grants), and two committees (Membership and Publications) serve the general membership while also fulfilling organizational functions. Details about the current committees are provided in the following text.

Archives Committee.—“The Archives Committee preserves the institutional history of the Society . . . by accepting, storing, and providing access to the documentary records of the Society. Space is generously provided for this by the Smithsonian Institution Archives” (SPNHC 2004b). Because of the association with the Smithsonian Archives, the Society endeavors to have the Committee Chair be a SPNHC member who is employed by the Smithsonian Institution. Accordingly, J. P. Angle chaired the Archives Committee from 1989 to 1996, followed by R. D. Fisher who has been chair since 1996.

Bylaws Committee.—“The Bylaws Committee is responsible for the continued development of the Society Bylaws as needed, as well as monitoring Society activities to ensure agreement with the Bylaws” (SPNHC 2004b). The Committee has played an important role in centralizing and condensing the operational documents of the Society, as well as providing direction for policy and procedure development (Williams 1999). Because the presidential positions involve ongoing

Table 3. Annual meetings of SPNHC from 1995 to 2004.

Year	Host and location (date; theme)
1995	Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario (2–6 June; <i>10th Anniversary of SPNHC</i>)
1996	The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (12–15 June; <i>Historic Natural History Collections</i>)
1997	University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin (8–13 July; <i>Natural History Collections on Campus</i>)
1998	University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta (25–30 May; <i>Collections on the Move: Strategies for the Next Millennium</i>)
1999	Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education and the National Museum of Natural History (27 June–2 July; <i>Research and Collections</i>)
2000	Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History and Geological Survey of Canada, Halifax, Nova Scotia (8–14 July; <i>Maritime Heritage</i>)
2001	California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California (21–26 June; <i>Living Collections</i>)
2002	Redpath Museum, McGill University and the Canadian Museum of Nature, Montréal, Québec (8–13 May; <i>Hazardous Collections and Mitigation</i>)
2003	Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas (15–19 June; <i>Modern Museums: Balancing Tradition and Technology</i>)
2004	American Museum of Natural History, New York (11–16 May; <i>Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Salvage</i>)

work with the Bylaws throughout a six-year commitment, the Committee is chaired by the Past-President. Hence, leadership of the Bylaws Committee changes every two years, synchronized with presidential terms (Table 1).

Conference Committee.—The Conference Committee “coordinates the logistics and scheduling of the annual meetings, recommends sites for future meetings, and submits those recommendations to the SPNHC President for a full Council vote. The Conference Committee is responsible for soliciting invitations at least a year in advance from institutions to host the Annual Meeting of the Society” (SPNHC 2004b). The Committee is chaired by the President-Elect because that individual will be serving as President during the years of the annual meetings in question, and because an official of the Society is needed to serve as liaison with hosting institutions of conferences (Williams 1995). As a result, the leadership of the Conference Committee changes every two years, synchronized with presidential terms (Table 1).

Historically, the annual meetings of SPNHC more or less have alternated between Canada and the United States (Table 3). However, at the end of the second ten years the 2005 annual meeting will be held in Great Britain. This will be the first meeting held outside North America, marking a major step toward the goal of having an international focus. The annual meeting normally occurs in May, June, or sometimes July, depending on local arrangements. During the past decade, local committees responsible for conducting the annual meetings, often have identified a theme for their respective conferences (Table 3). While the number of attendees at any particular meeting has not always been formally documented, the average number of participants at any single meeting is estimated to be around 150 individuals.

Conservation Committee.—“The Conservation Committee is responsible for acquiring, developing, and distributing information to the Society that will pro-

mote the long-term preservation of natural history objects and associated materials. The Conservation Committee encourages and facilitates collaborative projects among curators, collection managers, and conservators that contribute to best practices for collection care and the preservation of collections” (SPNHC 2004b). For example, the Conservation Committee was involved in the *Symposium on Contaminated Collections: Preservation, Access, and Use*, in April 2001 (details are provided under “Cooperative Projects”). The Committee also has assisted, directly or indirectly, in the production of Society publications, such as Rose et al. (1995), Metsger and Byers (1999), and special volumes of *Collection Forum* (Caldararo et al. 2001, Johnson 2001).

The Conservation Committee has been chaired by C. A. Hawks and C. Leckie (co-chairs, 1993–1995), B. P. Moore (1995–1998), D. H. Dicus (1998–2000), L. Kronthal and J. Southward (co-chairs, 2000–2003), and B. Hamann and J. Southward (co-chairs, 2003–2005). Activities and membership interest in this Committee have made it one of the largest committees in the Society, ranging from 11 to 28 members (average, 21). The Committee accommodates its large membership by dividing activities into several subcommittees.

Especially important to the Conservation Committee are the sub-committees for research, resources, citations, and special projects. The research subcommittee is a source for monitoring research activities and directing research needs. The resources subcommittee is primarily concerned with providing two traveling exhibits of commercially available, conservation-quality, supplies that can be used in collections. The citations subcommittee is responsible for collecting references of recent literature for the *SPNHC Newsletter*. The special projects of the Conservation Committee initially involved a subcommittee in charge of the fluid assessment project. This work was completed in 1999, and the results were published in *Collection Forum* (Waller and Simmons 2003). With the completion of the wet assessment project, a project investigating adhesives was initiated.

Documentation Committee.—“The Documentation Committee is concerned with the permanence and quality of all documents associated with the management and care of natural history specimens. Committee goals are to: 1) identify major documentation issues; 2) build documentation guidelines; 3) gather documentation models for acquisition/deaccession, collection management, and collection development; 4) recommend minimum information standards for collections; and 5) develop terminology” (SPNHC 2004b). Primary projects of the Committee have involved the NHCOLL-L Internet listserve, a terminology project resulting in the book *Museum Wise: Workplace Words Defined* (Cato et al. 2003), assisting with a workshop (*Use of Digital Technology in Museums*), and various studies pertaining to documentation standards, research, and legal issues. The Committee has been chaired by S. McLaren and J. Golden (co-chairs, 1993–1994), S. Kraft and J. Zak (co-chairs, 1994–1995), J. Zak (1995–1998), T. White (1999–2002), K. Goulette and T. White (co-chairs, 2002–2004), K. Goulette and R. Monk (co-chairs, 2004–2005).

Education and Training Committee.—The Education and Training Committee serves the Society by facilitating training opportunities and the exchange of information (SPNHC 2004b). Since 1988, the Committee has aided in coordination of logistics and acquisition of resources for most major workshops at the annual meetings (Table 4). The procurement of outside funding from corporations and

Table 4. Special training workshops provided at annual meetings between 1995 and 2004.

Year	Topic
1995	Managing the Modern Herbarium
1996	Valuation and Insurance of Natural History Collections
1997	Quality Management—Quality Collections Care
1998	Moving Collections
1999	Rigging: Lifting and Moving Large Objects; Finance and Funding: Linking Collection Care Needs to Money in the Museum; CO ₂ Fumigation: Atmospheric Treatment of Museum Objects for Pest Control
2000	Permits Workshops: Across Borders
2001	Living Collections; Identifying Risks to Collections
2002	Chemical and Biological Emergency Preparedness and Response in Natural History Museums
2003	Use of Digital Technology in Museums
2004	Emergency Response and Salvage Techniques

foundations, as well as federal and provincial agencies, has improved the quality of the Society's workshops. The Committee also has played a major role in developing material for SPNHC publications (Metzger and Byers 1999). The Education and Training Committee has been chaired by S. C. Byers and E. E. Merritt (co-chairs, 1994–1996), I. A. Hardy (1997–2000), and L. Abraczinskas and L. Benson (co-chairs, 2000–2005). The chair position was vacant during the latter part of 1996 and early 1997.

Election Committee.—The Election Committee is responsible for nomination and election of officers (SPNHC 2004b). The Election Committee has been chaired by J. Price (1991–2000) and R. Rabeler (2000–2005).

Executive Committee.—The Executive Committee carries out the day-to-day business of the Society. It is composed of the executive officers, specifically the President, the Past-President, the President-Elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Managing Editor of the Society's journal (SPNHC 2004b). As a committee the members can legitimately conduct meetings and develop proposals for Council. In some instances, this Committee acts to address specific needs of the Society (Williams 1995). The current President serves as the chair of the Executive Committee, thus the leadership parallels the term of the President (Table 1).

Finance Committee.—The Finance Committee is responsible for monitoring the Society's financial accounts, handling reserve funds, developing fiscal policies, and attending to other financial matters required by Council. The Society receives funds from memberships and subscriptions, donations, grants, and revenue from book sales. There is an ongoing need to oversee income and expenses to provide funds for operations, protect the tax status of the organization, and fulfill the intent of designated donations. Collectively, this has resulted in a solid financial position that has allowed the Society to participate in new opportunities, such as federal grants and special committee projects (Williams 1995). Resourcefulness of SPNHC committees, substantial sales of Special Publications, and responsible financial management of revenues, have resulted in the net worth of the Society increasing about 260% during the past ten years; in turn, this has allowed the Society to proactively take advantage of opportunities that serve its mission and goals.

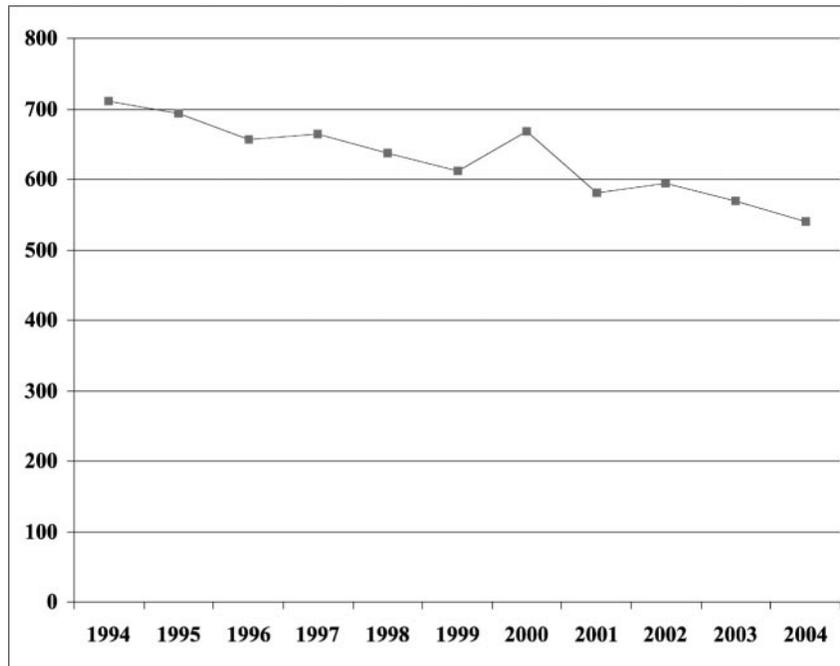


Figure 1. Total SPNHC membership (regular, life, associate, and subscribing members) between 1994 and 2004, derived from annual reports of the SPNHC Treasurer.

The SPNHC Treasurer typically serves on the Finance Committee, and sometimes co-chairs the Committee. The Committee has been chaired by J. Golden and S. B. McLaren (co-chairs, 1993–1999), S. L. Williams (1999–2002), and L. Palmer and R. Waller (co-chairs, 2002–2005).

Membership Committee.—The Membership Committee is responsible for activities that promote membership growth and encourage the retention of existing members (SPNHC 2004b). Part of this responsibility has involved the production and distribution of materials, such as brochures and posters, to solicit new memberships and promote products of the Society. In 2001, the Committee reported membership representation in the United States (63%), Canada (9%), United Kingdom (5%), and 20 other countries. The Membership Committee has been chaired by A. Pinzl (1992–1997), A. Pinzl and L. Benson (co-chairs, 1998–1999), A. Pinzl and J. MacKnight (co-chairs, 1999–2000), J. MacKnight and J. Mygatt (co-chairs, 2000–2002), J. MacKnight and J. Bryant (co-chairs, 2002–2004), and J. Bryant (2004–2005).

The total membership (regular members, life members, associate members, and subscribing members) in 1994 was 711 members. While on a year-to-year basis, it would seem that the total membership has been relatively stable over the past ten years, it has been dropping an average of 2.2% a year, such that the total loss in membership between 1994 and 2004 is 24.1% (Fig. 1). A notable increase in membership occurred in 1999–2000 followed by a significant decline the following year, possibly due to short-term support of Local Committee members of the Washington, DC annual meeting. The drop in membership between 2000 and

2004 has been 19.2%, compared to 11.8% between 1995 and 1999. This general decline may be partially a reflection of downsizing, amalgamation, and attrition experienced at member institutions. Retaining and building membership remains a formidable challenge for the Society.

Publications Committee.—The Publications Committee is charged with developing and maintaining publication policies, and using these policies to provide regular publications and website material that serve as a positive reflection of the Society's purpose. As a benefit of SPNHC membership, the Society publishes *Collection Forum* and the *SPNHC Newsletter*. *Collection Forum* is a high quality, peer-reviewed journal that serves the mission of the Society, whereas the *SPNHC Newsletter* is an outlet for timely information, organizational communications, and short articles. As an added benefit of membership, the Society has produced four issues of *SPNHC Leaflets*, to provide members with technical information, such as anoxic microenvironments (Burke 1996), adhesives and consolidants (Elder et al. 1997), identification of plastics (Williams et al. 1998), and dataloggers (Arenstein 2002).

During the past ten years, the Society and the Publications Committee have been challenged by low submissions of publishable manuscripts. This has caused considerable disruption in the publication schedule such that *SPNHC Leaflets* was not published between 1998 and 2002, and *Collection Forum* was published irregularly after 1996. The *SPNHC Newsletter* has been produced twice a year, and more or less on schedule.

While the Society's serial publications have had difficulties, the Publications Committee can be proud of the books produced on behalf of the Society. The first to be published in the second ten-year period was the *Storage of Natural History Collections: A Preventive Conservation Approach* (Rose et al. 1995), followed by *Managing the Modern Herbarium* (Metsger and Byers 1999), and *Museum Wise: Workplace Words Defined* (Cato et al. 2003). As the end of the second ten-year period approaches, the Publications Committee is involved with books entitled *Museum Studies: Perspectives and Innovations* (a book honoring the memory of Carolyn Rose) and *Fundamentals of Health and Safety for Museum Professionals*. The Society has entertained external proposals for the translation of some SPNHC books to Spanish, French, and Chinese; no translation has come to fruition yet.

The Managing Editor serves as an appointed officer of the Society and as the Chair of the Publications Committee. The Committee Chairs have been J. E. Simmons (1993–1997), K. Shaw (1998–1999), and J. Waddington (2000–2005). The *SPNHC Newsletter* Editors have been P. M. Sumpter (1993–1995), S. L. Williams (1996–1997), T. White (1998–2001), C. Norris (2001–2003), and A. Bentley (2003–2005). The Webmaster has been T. Vidal from 1997–1998 and J. Greggs from 1998–2005.

Recognition and Grants Committee.—The Recognition and Grants Committee is responsible for “developing and exercising standards and protocols, so that the Society can recognize and award deserving individuals for exceptional achievement” (Williams 1995). The Society recognizes individuals through the *Carolyn Rose Award* (renamed in 2002), the *President's Award*, *Honorary Membership*, *Special Service Award*, and the *Faber Grant* (SPNHC 2004b). In 2001, because of tax-related questions about funding associated with the Faber Award, the name

of the Committee was changed from the Awards and Recognition Committee to the Recognition and Grants Committee, and the *Faber Award* was changed to the *Faber Grant*. The Committee has been chaired by S. L. Williams (1994–1996), G. W. Brown (1996–2000), S. J. Krauth (2000–2002), and J. DeMouthe (2002–2004).

The highest honor of the Society is the *Carolyn Rose Award* (previously the *SPNHC Award*), which recognizes individuals for lifetime accomplishments that serve organizational mission and goals. Only two individuals have received and accepted this award, specifically Mary-Lou Florian and Carolyn L. Rose. Because of the role that Carolyn Rose fulfilled in the Society as a leader, mentor, and role model (Anon. 2003), contributing significantly to the national image and financial future of the Society, the *SPNHC Award* was renamed the *Carolyn Rose Award* shortly before her untimely passing.

The *President's Award* recognizes members for exceptional service to the Society. Eight individuals have received this award, specifically S. B. McLaren (1993), P. S. Cato (1995), J. Waddington (1998), S. L. Williams (1999), J. Golden (2000), C. L. Rose (2001), A. Pinzl (2002), and C. A. Hawks (2003).

Honorary Membership provides a mechanism for the Society to recognize and include an individual (non-member) as part of the organization for independent activities that are in close agreement with the mission and goals of SPNHC. Such independent activities might be political, social, financial, or professional in nature. In its 20 years of existence, the Society has not awarded any individual an *Honorary Membership*.

The *Special Service Award* was created in 1996, to recognize and thank individuals for outstanding short-term contributions to the activities of the Society, such as chairing local committees of annual meetings. The following individuals have been so recognized on one or more occasions: L. Barty, E. Benamy (2), I. Birker, F. Blondheim, B. Brown, G. Brown, K. Button, J. DeMouthe, D. Dicus, E. Dietrich, R. Fri, J.-M. Gagnon, J. Greggs, I. A. Hardy, J. Jacobs, S. Krauth, L. Latta-Guthrie, J. MacKnight, R. Monk, B. Moore, A. N'Gadi, C. Norris (2), J. Price, D. Quilligan, L. Schlenker, R. Simons, P. Sumpter, M. E. Taylor, L. Thomas, L. van Zelst, T. Vidal, D. von Endt, T. White (3), S. L. Williams, A. Wilson, and J. Zak.

Projects that help to advance the management and care of natural history collections are funded on a competitive basis through the Faber Grant. While the original intent of the grant was to motivate individuals to conduct and present original collection-related work, very few individuals have taken advantage of this opportunity, even after the amount of available funding was doubled. Recipients of the Faber Grant are J. Golden (1996), J. Pestovic (1999), L. Benson and R. Kubiawicz (2001).

Sessional Committees

As previously stated, Sessional Committees are intended to address specific short-term needs for SPNHC. Sessional Committees that provided annual reports of activities during the past ten years are as follows:

- Sessional Committee on Long Range Planning (G. W. Hughes, Chair, 1995–1996) reviewed accomplishments of the first ten years of the Society, iden-

tified strengths and weaknesses, and proceeded to define a five year plan. As a result, the organization's mission was clarified, goals identified, and priorities established (Anon. 1996a). The Committee was resurrected (L. L. Thomas, Chair, 1998–2000) to evaluate the progress of what became known as the Five Year Plan. The Committee's work assessed each standing committees' activities in terms of the Society's overall goals. It was decided that Members-at-Large would take an active role in working with the committees to achieve these goals (Thomas 2000).

- Sessional Committee on Professionalism (S. L. Williams and K. Shepard, co-chairs, 1996–1998; E. Merritt, Chair, 1998–2000) investigated strategies for increasing professionalism in collection management and care, ultimately resulting in articles published in the *SPNHC Newsletter* (Cato and Sharp 1996, Williams 1997).
- Sessional Committee on Student Participation (C. A. Hawks, Chair, 2000–2002), recognizing that the future of the Society is dependent on new members, investigated strategies and made recommendations to develop student membership and participation.
- Sessional Committee on Transportation of Dangerous Goods (S. B. McLaren, Chair, 2003–2005) attempted to educate the SPNHC membership about the regulations and hazards of shipping inappropriate substances, resulting in a *SPNHC Newsletter* article (McLaren 2004).
- Sessional Committee on the SPNHC Website (J. Macklin, Chair, 2003–2005) assessed the SPNHC Website (2003–2004), and pursued enhancing the administration, design, and content of the Website (2004–2005).
- Sessional Committee on Threatened Collections (P. T. Work, Chair, 2003–2005) was established to assist the Society in determining how best to respond to crisis situations involving threatened or orphaned collections.
- Sessional Committee on a SPNHC Business Plan (R. Huxley, Chair, 2003–2005) was set up to create a business plan for the Society.
- Sessional Committee on Publicity and Outreach Relations (R. Arenstein, Chair, 2003–2005) was to review the best means to coordinate publicity for the Society.
- Sessional Committee on the Celebration of the 20th Anniversary (A. Pinzl, Chair, 2004–2005) was created to explore various ways to commemorate this milestone anniversary.

COOPERATIVE PROJECTS

Historically, SPNHC has been involved with cooperative projects with several other professional organizations, with the most recent instance being the joint meeting at the American Museum of Natural History with the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER). Another example occurred in 2000, when President S. B. McLaren represented SPNHC and natural science collections on the White House Millennium Council to discuss the future of the Clinton Administration's *Save America's Treasures* program. Still another example is the collaboration with the National Park Service and the National Museum of the American Indian, in hosting a 2001 symposium, entitled *Preservation of Native American and Historical Natural History Collections Contaminated with Pesticide Residues* (Bischoff et al. 2001). While other examples of

similar cooperative efforts exist, a review of newsletters and annual reports indicates long-term association with the American Association of Museums (AAM), American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), Heritage Preservation (previously known as the National Institute for Conservation), and the World Council for Collections Resources (WCCR).

The formal relationship with the AAM is based on SPNHC representation on the AAM Registrars Committee, by E. Merritt since 1999. During this time projects of special interest have included professional development (Cato and Sharp 1996), best practices (Cato et al. 2001), collection stewardship (Merritt 2002, 2003), and ensuring the future of collections (Merritt 2004).

Individuals with joint memberships in SPNHC and AIC have been instrumental in both organizations collaborating with each other on a variety of projects from the very beginning of SPNHC. During this time, C. L. Rose served as the primary liaison between the organizations and represented SPNHC on the AIC Advisory Council, which serves as a sounding board for finding solutions to fundamental problems and assessing new ideas. Through representatives, both organizations have deliberated on issues such as common terminology (Cato et al. 2003), professional ethics, professionalism, and health and safety. AIC also provided funding for the 2001 symposium dealing with pesticide residues in natural history collections. While both organizations have expressed an interest in having a joint annual meeting, this desire remains unfulfilled.

SPNHC has worked with Heritage Preservation on projects since the 1980s. During this time D. von Endt has been the liaison between the two organizations. One of the most significant projects has been the Heritage Health Index which is a project intended to quantify the status of collection preservation throughout the United States (Anon. 2002a). Natural science collections were designated as one of six categories to be surveyed, with SPNHC members invited to assist in the planning and design of the questionnaire. Members also provided input on the list of collections to be surveyed and follow-up to assure a high percentage of successful returns.

As a result of the 1992 International Symposium on Natural History Collections in Madrid, SPNHC achieved international exposure and became involved with the continuation of the WCCR (Anon. 1996b). This momentum was perpetuated under the direction of C. Collins as he coordinated the Second World Congress on the Preservation and Conservation of Natural History Collections, at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom in 1996. SPNHC collaborated with other natural history organizations in providing oral presentations, poster presentations, and workshops that encouraged “over 320 individuals, representing about 175 institutions and 50 countries” to the meeting (Anon. 1996c).

THE SUPPORTERS OF SPNHC

The success and accomplishments of SPNHC would not have been possible without the organization’s strong supporters. Fundamental to its existence is a strong membership. Society operations are dependent on dedicated individuals who contribute through annual meetings, committee work, publication, and other activities. Institutional support usually involves the hosting of annual meetings. However, the support that institutions provide by sending staff to annual meetings and allowing them to participate in roles of leadership and service, is equally

important to the Society. Furthermore, it is difficult to estimate the financial support provided by the institutions where Officers, Members-at-Large, and Committee Chairs are employed. Release time for publication reviews, *SPNHC Newsletter* and *Collection Forum* editing, as well as underwriting postage, telephone calls, office supplies, and a myriad of other kinds of support cannot be overstated. While there has been internal support, such as donations from the membership and institutions hosting annual meetings, increasing external support has come from governmental sources, foundations, and corporations.

The second ten years began with a completion of a project supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), ultimately resulting in the publication of the second collection storage book (Rose et al. 1995). In 1997, IMLS also provided funding for an annual meeting workshop, entitled *Quality Management—Quality Museums* (Anon. 1997).

The National Park Service, through grants of the National Center for Preservation Training and Technology (NCPTT), has provided funding for two SPNHC projects. In 1999, an NCPTT grant was received to assess the conservation research priorities of natural history collections. Results of this project have been reported by Cato (1999, 2000a, 2000b) and Cato et al. (2001). In 2001, the NCPTT awarded SPNHC a grant for a collaborative project with the National Park Service and the National Museum of the American Indian to “address issues related to the use and repatriation of museum objects that may be contaminated with pesticides” (Anon. 2000, Bischoff et al. 2001). With additional funding from AIC and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (Department of Anthropology), a four-day symposium was conducted at the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia. A summary of the symposium, entitled *Preservation of Native American and Historical Natural History Collections Contaminated with Pesticide Residues*, was formally presented at the SPNHC and AIC annual meetings. The proceedings of the symposium were subsequently published in *Collection Forum* (Johnson 2001).

Other external funding has been important to the Society in supporting conferences and workshops. In addition to the financial and in-kind contributions from hosting institutions and local supporting resources, various foundations and corporations have sponsored some conference and workshop activities. Examples of foundation support include the Royal Ontario Museum Foundation and the Bay Foundation. Corporations that have repeatedly provided support through sponsorship, advertisement, or displaying products and services (listed alphabetically), include the Canadian Heritage Information Network, Delta Designs Ltd., Herbarium Supply Company, KE Software, Lane Science Equipment Corporation, Spacesaver Corporation, University Products Inc., Gaylord, and Viking Metal Cabinet Co. Inc.

In 2001, SPNHC was a recipient of the *Award for Outstanding Commitment to the Preservation and Care of Collections* from AIC and Heritage Preservation. This award commended “the sustained strategic effort made by SPNHC to improve the level of care provided to natural history collections in North America and around the world, its promotion of best practices through the journal *Collection Forum* and the *SPNHC Newsletter*, and the society’s pursuit of outside resources and collaborations to produce special publications and other resources, including posters, list-servers, and displays” (Anon. 2002b). The Society was a

novel recipient, as an organization with no paid employees. Hence this Award acknowledged the tireless volunteer hours contributed by many people with demanding full-time jobs. The Award provided a special moment in time for members to savor the fruits of a mutual passion for collections.

CONCLUSION

As with Williams (1995), it is hoped that the information presented here “will help those who participated in these events to reflect on what has been achieved,” as well as to “help new members understand how these events have been important to the history and future of the Society.” Equally important, this information reflects both strengths and weaknesses of the Society, providing insight for meaningful improvement. This is a time to reflect on the accomplishments of the Society over the past 20 years, and new challenges that must be met to ensure future success. While SPNHC has a strong international reputation for serving the interests of natural history collections, producing quality literature for the museum community, and operating from a solid financial basis, it also faces challenges from irregular publication of *Collection Forum*, membership loss, and waning institutional support for collections and collection staffing.

Currently, SPNHC is the most important resource in the world for serving the interests of natural history collections. Also, because SPNHC represents an organized group of specialists, has mechanisms in place for building a body of knowledge and recognizing superior performance of individuals, and has repeatedly demonstrated its interest in professional excellence (Williams 1997), it remains a viable source for professional development of the field.

The *Award for Outstanding Commitment to the Preservation and Care of Collections* demonstrates the synergism of a collective effort under the direction of good leadership. At the beginning of the third decade, it is clear that the importance of both individual commitment and organizational cooperation has not diminished.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are grateful to I. A. Hardy, S. Y. Shelton, and J. B. Waddington for critically reviewing early drafts of the manuscript. Also, appreciation is extended to A. Pinzl and an anonymous reviewer, for helpful suggestions and insights.

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