

April 2007



# SPRING CONFERENCE

June 26-29

Are you registered?

Don't miss out on the fun!

If not, please do so immediately. Click on the following link for a conference brochure:

<http://www.georgiarecords.org/conference.pdf>

### Classes being offered are:

- Active Records Management
- World Class Customer Service
- Workplace Safety
- Implementing a Retention Schedule
- Case Studies
- Legal Foundations of Records Mgt.
- Project Planning
- Effective Facilitation of Meetings/Workshops



GEORGIA RECORDS ASSOCIATION

LIVE WIRE

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# EATING THE ELEPHANT

Donna J. Kopp,

Records Management Center Paulding County School District

*How do you eat an elephant?*

*One bite at a time!*

*How do you develop a records management program?*

*One slow, small step at a time!*

Anyone who has tackled the implementation of a records management program or is attempting to start one sees the similarities. At times, the "elephant" appears to be insurmountable. Yet, with a little support and a lot of determination, it is possible.

Paulding County Board of Education recently started the huge project of developing a records management program (a/k/a "eating the elephant"). With each "bite", we found ourselves a little closer to our goal. What was that goal? To develop a centralized Records Service Center for all Paulding County schools. Since the School District's earliest beginnings, permanent student records, personnel records and financial records have been kept at various locations. They've been stored in basements, attics and unused trailers. Something had to be done!

We received a lot of support from many different sources. Starting in 2005 with a visit from a Circuit Rider Archivist (CRA) from the Georgia

Historical Records Advisory Board (GHRAB). He gave recommendations for greater record management efficiency throughout the District. In 2006 we received a grant from GHRAB. Fayette County and Fulton County supplied us with many tried-and-true suggestions of what worked in their systems and warned us of some things that did not work. What a help that was! To this day, we call on our friends in Fayette and Fulton for their advice and wisdom. Support also came from attending the GRA conferences.

Small bites of the "elephant" were made in February 2006 when the Paulding County School District Central Offices moved to a new facility leaving portions of the "old" Central Office available for renovation. Work was immediately started on remodeling the existing offices into a large open area specifically designed for record storage. A mobile file system giving us 14,504 linear inches of storage space was installed. The vault full of filing cabinets and boxes was tackled next by organizing boxes and drawers into record series and then applying retention schedules to each. An inventory work-



sheet indicating contents and retention period was attached to each box to be stored and many, many boxes were found to be beyond the retention period and were shredded. The Records Service Center officially opened in September, 2006.

The next giant step was absorbing the huge number of permanent file folders that had accumulated at one of our high schools. Our Maintenance Department was called and arrangements were made to pick up and deliver to our office 200 banker boxes full of permanent records. The elephant had returned! Our future goal is to process, scan and store the contents of these permanent records into an electronic records management data base. Very few documents will be stored in the actual, physical file.

Is the project completed? Absolutely not! There are still storage areas throughout the system that we have not yet tackled. However, with retention schedule in hand and our need for precious space ever present, we will continue to chew away at this "elephant" – one box at a time.

For those systems who are contemplating a move toward better records management, there is a wealth of information and support available. All you have to do is ask..... You do not have to eat the "elephant" alone!



Paulding before

Paulding after

WOW! Great job!!



## COBB COUNTY MAXIMIZING SPACE

Larry Walker, Division Manager

Cobb County Government (Marietta, Georgia) Records Center recently took the initiative by maximizing the records storage space within the Records Center warehouse. Half of the Records Center consists of mezzanine style shelving units (upper & lower sections) for boxed records storage while the other section of the Records Center consists of pallet shelving units to also store boxed records. The pallet shelving units did not effectively maximize the cubic feet storage space.

The Records Management division coordinated the funding to contract a vendor to install identical mezzanine style shelving units (upper & lower sections), which replaced the pallet shelving units. As a result of this shelving installation, the cubic feet space was increased by 6,000 cubic feet (6,000 boxes).

We are in the process of moving the boxes stored at our off-site records storage facility back into our main Records Center warehouse. This move drastically reduces the amount of time it takes to drive back and forth to retrieve record requests from the off-site facility and increases our ability to consistently provide quality customer service and satisfaction.

# Congratulations!

## THE FOLLOWING GRA MEMBERS THAT HAVE COMPLETED THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM:

**Jeannie Crane    Becky Herbert**  
**Andrew Luna    Tara Pearson**  
**Stella Sturia    Pam Taylor**  
**Judy Weaver    Pat White**



## 2007 Archives Awards Program — Nomination Deadline: June 1st

The Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board (GHRAB) sponsors an annual awards program to recognize outstanding efforts in archives and records work in Georgia. By publicly recognizing excellent achievements, the Board strives to inspire others. GHRAB has ten award categories, so someone you know, or a program you know about, is sure to fit. Please nominate that worthy individual or organization by June 1st so that GHRAB can give them the credit they deserve.



To obtain a nomination form or view previous award recipients, visit [www.GeorgiaArchives.org](http://www.GeorgiaArchives.org).

### 2006 Award Recipients

#### Advocacy

Representative Bill Cummings, Brenda S. Banks retired from the Georgia Archives, Georgia Archives Week Planning Committee, Walter H. Hopkins of Walter Hopkins Co./Space Saver, Marshall W. Williams of the Morgan County Archives

#### Archival Program Development

Atlanta Regional Commission, Columbus State University Archives, Forsyth County Board of Education, Georgia Southwestern State University

#### Documenting Georgia's History

The Foxfire Fund, Gilmer County Genealogical Society

#### Research Using the Holdings of an Archives

Authors Staci Catron-Sullivan, Susan Neill, Ouida Word Dickey, John. J. Fox III

#### Educational Use of Historical

##### Records

Georgia Historical Society, "Linking American History: Past to Present" Teaching American History Grant - Henry, Fayette, and Cobb County Schools, Cathy E. Loving of the Atlanta Public School System

##### Student Research Using Historical Records

Russell Wall - Georgia College and State University (Undergraduate Level), Abigail Derr - Columbus High School (Grades 9-12),



Janice Royal, APS coordinator of pre-school programs, presents plaque of appreciation to historian/archivist Cathy Loving.

## MEET THE TREASURER OF GRA

Judy Weaver is originally from Topeka, Kansas and lived several years in Missouri before coming to Georgia, which is now definitely home.

She has worked for the City of Gainesville for the past 18 years. Judy started in the Housing Relocation Department then moved to the Finance Department and then to the Police Department in May, 1992. She worked in Criminal Investigations as their secretary until promoted to Records Manager in July, 1998. In 1998 she joined GRA and is currently serving her second term on the Board and as Treasurer.



She has three daughters and 1 grandson. In her spare time, she enjoys stamping, scrapbooking, and spending time with her family. In the fall, you can catch Judy with her family in front of a UGA Football game.

### A note from Cecil Banks, GRA President

I just wanted to take a few lines to bring you up to speed on the exciting changes in the GRA Executive Board member selection process. As you know the GRA Bylaws were modified to permit the election of GRA Executive Board members by the GRA membership. The change will allow members the ability to select Board members and will allow the board to be a reflection of the association membership. Nominations and voting are open only to GRA members in good standing.

Nominations will open during the Spring '07 conference (June 26 - June 29) and continue through August 31, 2007. The Nominating Committee will submit the slate of nominees to the Board of Directors and ballots will be sent to members by October 1, 2007. The election results will be announced during the Fall '07 conference and newly elected officers will begin serving January 1, 2008.

Positions for nomination: President, Secretary, Directors (3)

Nominating Committee Members: Cathy Loving, Faye Thompson, Patricia White, and Mark Hill. (Thank you all for volunteering to serve!)

Regarding the Certificate Program: Congratulations to the first Certificate Program graduates!

Remember, if at any time you have questions regarding program class requirements or your current standing, please contact Judy Wilson before taking the class.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Spring Conference.

# Future Events

2007 Fall Conference  
November 27-30, 2007  
Brasstown Valley, Young Harris, Georgia

2008 Spring Conference  
June 24-27, 2008  
Sea Palms, St. Simons Island



## TALES FROM THE VAULT...

**(nightmare situations... no names/locations listed to protect the innocent and guilty!)**

We had a clerk for over 20 years who maintained a "water file." Everything relating to water went into it - bids and contracts for bridges (over water), agreements with our County water & sewer systems, newspaper clippings of articles and letters to the editor about a proposed lake, flood damage records, ordinances and resolutions on outdoor watering bans & schedules. It probably worked ok while we were a small town of 8-10,000 residents, but we are four times that size now. It took us a year to separate things out, file them by record series, and get rid of the really old things that should have been destroyed ages ago.

We ran across a folder of "Zoning Ordinance" legal ads -- miscellaneous clippings that should have, by our current standards, been included with the individual signed ordinances. Just found that this morning, so it is probably why I thought of this.

**Think about it!**



Please submit your ideas/suggestions for the newsletter to [jallison@habershams.com](mailto:jallison@habershams.com)

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## **Preservation: A Word on e-Discovery Now**

By Jeffrey D. Bridges

Records Practice Manager & Chief Legal Counsel

*“It is clear beyond reasonable dispute that The Company has been guilty of gross spoliation of evidence. ... The court imposes limits upon The Company’s ability to present evidence in its defense and will instruct the jury as to their ability to draw an adverse inference from The Company’s failure to produce certain e-mails and evidence.”*

There are few Orders that could be more damaging to a company’s legal defense than one containing this quote. Yet more and more companies are experiencing this trauma first hand. Such Orders are based in spoliation; failure to preserve evidence in a case after a company’s representative is reasonably aware of a potential matter requiring a suspension of routine destruction of information.

The rapid development of technology in electronic communications; including e-mail, instant messaging and voice mail; has left a vacuum in company preparedness to deal with litigation. Once viewed as a convenience and novelty, these technologies and their successors awaiting introduction pose a devastating threat to the businesses. For the past several years, efforts to create order were underway. These efforts culminated in December 2006 with significant changes to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure governing electronically stored information.

As these new technologies have developed, so has a heightened awareness by the plaintiff’s bar of the challenges companies face with preserving evidence for litigation. With the advent of electronic records, especially e-mail; lost or unable to locate evidence has taken a life of its own. The cost of recovering and producing this evidence can spiral into the millions of dollars. This cost factor has given parties the legal equivalent to a weapon of mass destruction to wield in exacting punitive results from opposing parties who are unable to easily produce requested information.

Although faced with this challenge, many companies are seemingly unaware of steps necessary to safeguard their position and avoid a claim of spoliation. To avoid that charge requires solid corporate infrastructure. It begins with having a policy regarding preservation of information in place. Companies must ensure that all employees are aware of their obligation to preserve evidence and adhere to that preservation. Finally, this adherence should be monitored for accuracy and compliance.

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Paraphrased from the Order in *Broccoli v. Echostar Communications Corporation*, 229 F.R.D.506 (2005 D.Md.)