FINAL REPORT: 2nd Joint Conference, VRA + ARLIS/NA 2011
Collaboration: Building bridges in the 21st century
March 24-28, 2011   Minneapolis, Minnesota

This final report of the 2nd Joint Conference of the Visual Resources Association and the Art Libraries Society of North America, held at the Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis, is respectfully submitted by the local planning committee on June 10, 2011.

Sub Committee Reports:

LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS – Rebecca Moss & Jessica McIntyre – ARLIS/NA, Heidi Raatz & Brian Shelburne – VRA

Report given at both ARLIS/NA and VRA Membership Meetings:

Nearly three years and 16 local committee meetings later, the Minneapolis conference is here, and boy are we glad!

We're glad not just because we no longer have to meet on a monthly (or more frequent) basis, or because the many details that have gone into planning are mostly done – we're glad because we are proud of what we have accomplished and we hope all the hard work we've put into this joint conference is evident.

Back in April 2008, fifteen of us from the ARLIS Twin Cities Chapter and the VRA Midwest Chapter met for our first local committee meeting. Minneapolis was selected as the site for the second joint conference, in part because the Twin Cities are rich in arts institutions giving us a deep well of talent upon which to draw, and we also had a wealth of conference planning experience in the group, with a former ARLIS/NA president, a former VRA president, and several Board members. Of those original fifteen attendees, thirteen are still here along with the help of a few others. This is a very creative, professional and hardworking group.

Planning a joint conference took us out of our comfort zones. Traditions which seemed sacred for ARLIS/NA or VRA needed to be re-examined as we were charged with finding areas of convergence. Balancing the needs of both groups took compromise, but with the help of two very active and accommodating Boards, we built the right bridges and found our way to what we think is a great blending of the traditions of both organizations. We hope that our experiences will pave the way to more joint conferences in the future. We have much to learn from each other and in these ever changing times, the more we collaborate the better our chances of success.

Our general procedures included:
- A pbworks wiki to store all our content online. All meeting agendas and minutes, sub-committee sections, contact info and other content were kept here.
- A listserv for the larger group messages, though email certainly was our main method of communication (I'm at 773 messages and counting). We used a blog to centralize our messages to the memberships, Twitter for timely messages and Flickr for images.

- Skype and GoToMeeting allowed some of us to attend meetings remotely. Proper microphones and speakers would have helped from a tech standpoint, but overall, it was great to get decisions made and updates shared with everyone.
- Meetings took place at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), which offered a spacious room with free parking. We also met occasionally at the College of Visual Arts and at the University of Minnesota.
- Our meetings were 2-3 hours in length, and we typically provided refreshments of some kind; we even requested a small budget line for this purpose.
- We met with both Boards for the CPAC meeting in July at the Hilton, where we met TEI representative, Chris Roper and the Hilton hotel contacts. Each of the sub-committees reported to the whole group and many of the big decisions were made at this two-day meeting.
- It also gave us a chance to show off the Twin Cities with tour previews and bond over some fun dinners and Scrabble games.

Post Conference Thoughts:

We've been able to see the conference evaluations from both organizations and have a better idea of the successes and failures of the conference. For the most part we think we more than achieved our goals of presenting a good blend of sessions, workshops, tours, events and activities that served the broadest population of attendees. It is always difficult to make assumptions about what will work best, especially with a joint conference, but it had to be done, and we had lots of help from both Boards and an excellent local committee.

What worked best was the integration of some new formats such as the Case Studies, having an event at one of the local museums, and having lots of walking tours to encourage folks to see the city. What worked against us was the weather, a failure on the part of the catering staff at one event, and the very tight schedule giving little time for breaks.

Overall, most attendees were positive about the joint conference structure and there seems to be lots of support for holding joint conferences more regularly.

PROGRAM – Jessica McIntyre & Heidi Raatz – Co-Chairs

Overview:

Our conference theme was Collaboration, and collaborate we did! Taking what we hoped was the best from both ARLIS and VRA conferences, we scheduled a program that feedback shows was packed with quality content. Thanks go, of course, to the membership for submitting such wonderful content for us to schedule. The theme inspired programming both from veteran presenters and from fresh sources. A proposal for Jule Sigall to speak as a plenary on copyright nicely bookended the conference with a workshop on copyright by Nancy Sims. Our other plenary speaker, Wing Young Huie, wove in the local artist element, inspiring us with his work. Meetings, events, sessions, and workshops found their place in the tight schedule, and there was still room for networking, entertainment, and unopposed time to visit the exhibitors hall.

Process:

As in every other committee area, the program was guided by a merging of the ARLIS/NA and VRA timelines and approaches. This year, we went with ARLIS Boston's method of issuing a call for papers, though we also offered an option to submit a session proposal. The call for papers, sessions, and workshops was issued in May, due in July. A call for poster sessions and committee meetings was issued in October.

In every communication that we sent, we strove to keep in mind that what one organization might recognize immediately would require some explanation for the other.   The calls for proposals defined formats, gave an overview of the timeline for the programs submissions, and broadly outlined some thematic areas that would likely be of interest to our conference attendees.

We received a total of 74 proposals (32 papers, 29 sessions, 13 workshops) in July. A summary spreadsheet of the proposals, the full text of proposals, and selection criteria were available to the Boards at the CPAC meeting in late July.   Our most basic selection criteria were that the proposal be relevant to our topic of Collaboration, of interest to a broad community of attendees, and to be well-formed.

The Program Committee reviewed and sorted the proposals prior to the CPAC meeting, and had general recommendations that were discussed with both Boards and the local planning committee. Both the planning committee and the CPAC had suggestions for merging the papers into sessions, and in some cases refiguring the proposed sessions.

In some ways, rethinking the program in light of the joint conference allowed us to rethink the format of the program. We were careful to honor some expectations of each organization, and also to bring in new elements that might appeal to both. As a new form, we suggested including case studies formats, similar to those at MCN. These

ended up as 4 sessions with 4-5 separate case studies each. Each presenter had a brief allotted time to present before a break-out session at tables, so attendees could ask questions in smaller groups. Our intention was to 1. do something new that neither conference has previously included, 2. encourage cross-pollination, and 3. allow for more interactivity, which is something that has been requested on both VRA and ARLIS previous conference evaluations. As the schedule was developed, this format allowed us to pack a lot more content into the tight schedule, and we anticipated that they would fit well into the mornings, keeping attendees engaged with briefer lectures and allowing time at the end for more interactive break-out discussions or time to network if they weren't interested in talking directly to one of the case studies presenters.

As the proposals were submitted, we broadly scheduled the program. From the beginning, our local planning committee and the Boards had discussed which events needed to be included in the program. Merging the events of both organizations into just a few days was a challenge, but both Presidents determined that any events and meetings that could be held jointly, should be held jointly. Due to organizational bylaws, VRA's business meeting was required to be held separately, so in the end the business meetings remained separate, but for the most part we were able to successfully combine events.

For overall scheduling, we kept in mind recommendations from previous conference evaluations; in particular, attendees would like there to be only 2-3 sessions at a time, and would prefer that the daily schedule not start too early or too late and that there be some free time scheduled during the day for breaks. Unfortunately, packing so much content into such a brief time required an early start for some, though we attempted to keep most of the content for most attendees to the middle of the day. The case studies sessions were especially helpful for us to keep the sessions to 2-3 per time slot.

The call for poster sessions, special interest and user groups that went out in October defined each of these and encouraged groups to meet jointly if possible. We also sent out a call for moderators. Scheduling chapter and committee meetings, and the standing VRA and ARLIS groups (ex. Divisions, Sections) followed. ARLIS has many more groups requesting meeting spaces than VRA does. Due to limitations of space and scheduling time, we prioritized those groups that submitted requests for meeting times and those that were able to meet jointly. Chapter meetings were scheduled in one block of time, but any group or chapter that was not able to meet at their scheduled time was able to self schedule. We provided a room for self scheduling, with a signup board available at the conference, and we updated SCHED as this signup sheet was filled out.

Scheduling workshops ended up being fairly straightforward, because we were able to put them at the beginning of the conference. Finding a space for them worked out well, thanks to MCAD offering gratis use of their classrooms.

Throughout the proposal and scheduling process, AV and Internet was of course a concern to many of the session and meeting organizers. We attempted to balance questions from organizers with the planning timeline. Many of these details were dependent on other scheduling issues, such as the hotel contract and other elements of the program that were still in flux. Thankfully, we had both TEI and especially VRA's Brian Shelburne to coordinate AV along with Rebecca Moss for Local Arrangements. It was clear from the start that we would all prefer making wireless Internet available, but hotel charges for this service greatly exceeded our budget. We shifted sessions or groups absolutely requiring Internet to be scheduled in the same wired room, to keep costs within budget.

Tools:

There was some overlap in the tools that both organizations had previously used for both collection and scheduling, and we used a bit of each. In the beginning, collection of proposals was through the VRA website, because this was a quick and simple method. For later collection, we set up forms in Google.

Scheduling began in a spreadsheet and continued to be updated with an outline of the schedule through October. In November we moved to the SCHED software, which we were able to make public to the organizations and to edit up to and during the conference. Both VRA and ARLIS had used the SCHED software previously and found it easy to use both as a scheduler and as an attendee.

Maintaining the spreadsheet for a while, even when the bulk of the program was in SCHED was useful for more behind-the-scenes tweaking and scheduling that needed to be available to the local planning committee prior to adding it to the public schedule. Current iterations of the spreadsheet were posted to our planning committee listserv, and were also posted to the planning committee. This was helpful as a reference and to ensure that the planning committee was on the same page about the schedule. Because there were almost constant changes to the schedule in the beginning, and most other subcommittees plans related to it, it was vital that everyone was working off the current schedule.

Recommendations:

1. The VRA VP for Program does not enter their role until months later in the process than the ARLIS Co-Chair, Program. Plan for this and any other scheduling differences in advance. In our case, the planning committee began meeting prior to VRA's 2010 conference, and because VRA is busy planning for the current year conference, they are not able to start working on the following year's conference as early as ARLIS does. ARLIS is able to because there is not a continuation of planners. ARLIS planning responsibilities overlap with the prior year (creating the evaluation, getting the calls for proposals ready to send out

soon after the conference), but VRA's can't overlap because the VP for Program serves a 2 year term and has to work on the current year. Both models have benefits – ARLIS planners have more time but VRA has the experience of planning multiple years. It's only an issue to keep in mind in future joint years, so both Co-Chairs are aware of this timeline difference. The calls for proposals might also go out a bit later than in non-joint years, because VRA will have only just finished their conference. However, in late spring of 2010, our committee was also just figuring out the timelines and agreements that would need to be made for the joint conference, waiting for TEI to get up to speed after having shifted staff, and there were many decisions that the Boards and Presidents and local planning committee were discussing, so future joint conferences might not find that the timeline difference for the role of Program is as much of an issue.

2. Note that ARLIS and VRA process proposals differently. The VRA VP for Program reviews proposals and makes recommendations to the VRA Executive Board, while ARLIS/NA typically enlists the entire CPAC and a Program Committee of 2-3 members to go through proposals. This year, we did a compromised version - Co-Chair, Program and VP for Program did an initial survey, consulting with a program committee member, and suggested recommendations to the CPAC for review or changes.

3. Prioritize all joint meetings over those meeting separately, and consider which meetings are necessary for the Program committee to schedule, or whether some can be self-scheduled.

PROCEEDINGS – Amy Naughton – ARLIS/NA Proceedings Editor & Robb Detlefs – VRA Public Relations and Communications Officer

Amy Naughton served as the proceedings editor for ARLIS/NA and worked with Robb Detlefs, VRA Public Relations and Communications Officer. After some initial discussions about how each organization handles proceedings and notes, they were able to determine a merged process for collecting the materials that would be hosted separately via each organization's usual method of disseminating conference materials. VRA used their institutional account on SlideShare to host session, poster, and vendor slam materials while session notes and formal papers will be published in their institutional publications in subsequent issues. ARLIS/NA posted all contributed materials on the conference proceedings section of the ARLIS/NA website.

Thorough documentation of this joint conference took coordination between the two organizations. Sharing of certain duties reduced some work, for example, sharing note-taking responsibilities for panel sessions. VRA travel award winners typically serve as notetakers for their conference sessions, so Heidi Eyestone and Vicky Brown, co-chairs of VRA's Travel Awards Committee, assigned notetakers to sessions.

For conference materials, Amy and Robb developed an excellent method for getting a full set of session materials. Session moderators were asked to collect digital copies of presentations on a jump drive at the time of their session and to return the drive afterwards. Prior to the start of the conference, jump drives (from the MCAD library's lost and found) were reformatted, placed in envelopes with instructions and were attached to the session moderators registration materials.   Moderators found these drives and instructions at the registration desk, and later returned the drive to the same desk. A manila folder, labeled with list of moderators, was kept at the registration desk, so as drives were returned, registration or hospitality volunteers checked off names on the list for those drives that had been returned.   Robb stopped by the desk occasionally throughout the conference to upload information to SlideShare. They anticipated more sessions being uploaded to SlideShare during the conference, but due to the slowness of uploading large files only a small number of presentations were actually uploaded and the rest were uploaded shortly after the conference ended. After the conference, presenters were able to send revised copies of their presentation if they desired with some presenters removing copyrighted images.

After the conference, Amy and Robb continued to gather and share materials. Vendor slam and poster session materials were added. Due to differing policies concerning copyright and organizational publications, the joint effort stopped after this point. From there, Amy continued to work with moderators and presenters, gathering revised documents and soliciting signed ARLIS/NA publication agreements and collecting minutes from various organizational meetings. One suggestion for subsequent conferences would be to try to collect the publication agreements at the time of the conference in some way similar to the gathering of the presentation materials. The jump drives saved an enormous amount of time and effort and ensured a complete set of session materials. This would be helpful with the publication agreements as well, given that only materials with signed agreements can be posted to the website and approximately 1/3 of presenters never returned the agreement. After a few months of collecting materials and publication agreements, completed materials were sent to Nedda Ahmed, ARLIS/NA's website editor who posted them to the conference proceedings website.

This process worked very well due to advance planning and emails that went out to the moderators prior to the conference, so they knew what to expect. Also, the ease of collecting materials at the session (rather than asking for them after the conference) was ideal and is highly recommended for subsequent conferences.

DEVELOPMENT – Deborah Ultan Boudewyns – Chair

Committee Members:
Mark Jensen
Greta Bahnemann
(Julieann Swanson, as able)

Strategies included contacting key local foundations, companies, and private organizations and non-profits.
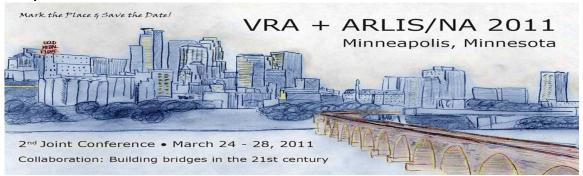
Economic issues appeared to have made an impact on the sponsorship opportunities available from the above network of agencies. Children's education and welfare sponsorships far outnumbered any arts or conference-type event sponsorships available.

The non-profit organizations were very generous and willing to offer any in-kind sponsorship that made sense. Unfortunately, we were not able to capitalize on this because of the lateness of the idea, which required better coordination between the development committee and the tours coordinator. The idea was to target the organizations included on the tours. The Guthrie Theatre, for example, was willing to add extra time, speakers, gifts, etc. Highpoint Center for Printmaking was willing to cut the tour fee in half (though that tour was canceled).

Recommendations:

1. Development and Tours chairs should work together from the start on approaching tour locations together, so that the in-kind opportunities might be worked out from the beginning.

2. Make a connection with a professional Development person from a local institution, in advance, for assistance with how to "get in" with the larger, prominent companies and foundations. There are tricks of the trade and if you are not privy to them, its impossible to get through.

3. Use the following letter and outline of agency types to help the next group get started early. Starting all of this from scratch was hard. Why not use the work from previous years.

Sample letter:

January 7, 2011

Sheila Livingston
Director of Artistic Relations
Guthrie Theater

Dear Ms. Livingston,

Happy New Year and greetings from the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) and the Visual Resources Association (VRA)!

In Minneapolis, from March 24th-28th, ARLIS/NA and VRA will be holding their second joint national conference at the Hilton Hotel Downtown (http://www.vra-arlis2011.org/). Both organizations, international leaders in the field of arts librarianship and visual resource information, will attract professionals in arts, media, and information resources from the US and abroad.

Your organization is already involved in the conference as a tour destination; we now extend an invitation to you to consider sponsoring the tour. By sponsoring the especially scheduled tour http://vraarlis11.sched.org/ , the Guthrie will have the opportunity to promote its significance within the arts and cultural community of Minnesota. We want our conference attendees to see Minnesota's unique partnerships between arts organizations, libraries and educational institutions. A tour of your organization will enlighten our attendees to the successful and creative industry we have in Minnesota. Likewise, your sponsorship will demonstrate the cities' collaborative and engaged interest in the cultural arts, education and information services.

Please consider sponsoring up to $750.00 for the tour to your organization. The sponsorship is tax-deductible, and the donation will benefit both VRA and ARLIS/NA and their missions, which support art library and visual resource professionals who serve communities in academic institutions, museums and galleries, performing arts institutions, libraries, archives and other cultural heritage institutions. Conference sponsors will be recognized, individually, on the conference website, on signage throughout the conference, and as appropriate in welcoming remarks at events.

Consider participating in the second joint ARLIS/NA~VRA Conference in Minneapolis! I look forward to speaking with you soon about this exciting opportunity. On behalf of the ARLIS/NA~VRA Conference Planning Committee, many thanks for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely,
Deborah K. Boudewyns
Local ARLIS/NA~VRA Development Coordinator
Arts & Architecture Librarian, University of Minnesota ultan004@umn.edu; 612-624-1638

Development Strategies - Make lists of:
- Local foundations
- Private Family Foundations
- Private Independent Foundations
- Local Arts Organizations: (some may be useful as in-kind sponsors)
- Local Arts Schools: (some may be useful as in-kind sponsors)
- Local Book Stores, etc.
- Local "Other" Orgs

Events Committee and Development Committee Coordination
- Welcome Party & Convocation Speaker(s)
- Annual Conference Party
- Plenary Speaker(s)
- Dinner

Programs Committee and Development Committee Coordination
- Workshop locations
- Special programs
- All programs – match topics to orgs

HOSPITALITY – Kristen Mastel – Chair & Jeanne Iverson

The Registration and Hospitality desk was open until 5:00pm each full-day of the conference. Wednesday was primarily board meetings and the registration desk was open from 6-8pm, and Sunday was a half day, closing at noon as this was the last day of the conference. TEI did stay around until I believe 3pm on the last day for last minute questions. Subsequent days we were open from 8am to 5pm. Over 25 volunteers filled 33 time slots in staffing the desk, handing out registration materials, conference bags to attendees and answering local and other questions. The volunteers were a combination of VRA and ARLIS/NA members, along with local Minnesota librarians and library science students.

Volunteer Signup:

The first step in soliciting help for the Registration/Hospitality Desk was to work on the schedule for the conference to determine the hours and number of volunteers needed during the conference. Next, we worked with TEI, ARLIS/NA's management company which oversaw daily operations during the conference, to create an online volunteer form for the registration and hospitality desk. We decided the website needed a new *Volunteer* section as there were multiple opportunities and calls for involvement, including the silent auction. As time slots became full we worked with the webmaster to have times removed from the form. Unfortunately, due to miscommunication and an

unforeseen TEI absence, the Volunteer website was not populated with a final list of time slots and volunteers.

Approximately 6 weeks before the conference, we sent notices out to the ARLIS/NA and VRA listservs calling for volunteers. We already had been beating the bushes locally at conference planning meetings and local chapter meetings. Fortunately, during the lunch hour slot we always had at least one local person, as this was the most common time for people to ask for local lunch/dinner restaurant suggestions. Reminders were sent out on the listserv and the publicity team highlighted numerous times on their blog the call for volunteers at the registration/hospitality desk. Unfortunately, the call to library schools in the region only went out approximately two weeks prior to the conference. In hindsight, I would recommend a month prior, so students could possibly rearrange their schedules to attend. However, we did have two Minnesota and one outstate library science students volunteer. In exchange for volunteering for one shift at the desk, students were able to attend sessions and other non-ticketed events that day.

We offered an orientation for registration and hospitality desk volunteers Wednesday an hour before the desk opened and as the desk was opening on Thursday and Friday. As previous conferences noted, these were poorly attended, and in reality it only takes 5 minutes to do a run-through of activities at the desk. I would suggest that future joint conference have one of the coordinators present at the beginning of every shift to do little mini orientations. Also, I quickly adjusted the schedule for the morning volunteers slots, originally 7:30am-10am, as the first evening I identified that there was no need to have volunteers there a half-hour before the desk opened at 8am.

One of the most fortunate things in terms of the Registration and Hospitality Desk was the space. We appreciated immensely having a large room with two windows for the registration and hospitality desk. This allowed space for TEI to do processing of new registrations, corrections, and attend to other logistics. The room allowed us to keep a large supply of conference materials with us, and display in the other window local information. It also allowed a respite spot for everyone who participated in planning of the conference. Frequently local arrangements and program coordinators would use the large flat screen computer to update Schedule, etc. The flat screen computer originally was going to be used to display a twitter/blog/slide share feed so people in the area could see the conference at-a-glance live. However, the large display monitor did not work. We still used the computer extensively to look up locations, bus routes and other local information for attendees. In addition to the registration and hospitality room, there was another room just down the hall for sorting and holding silent auction materials and bag stuffing.

One of the coordinators was at the desk at all times. This was helpful as we also assisted with Silent Auction drop-off and the coordinators had a key to the other room. This was also helpful in answering local and tricky questions. Unfortunately, that meant

that we did not attend any conference sessions, but this is something you should be aware of when volunteering for this position.

Local Guide:

The conference planning committee assisted the coordinators with submitting suggestions for a local restaurant guide by using the conference planning wiki; this worked extremely well. We then created a Word document that listed the restaurant, locale, price point and special notes of what to have at each location. This, along with a hotel supplied listing of restaurants, was available at the registration and hospitality desk and frequently used by the volunteers. It was also available on the conference website under About Minneapolis, and a few restaurants were highlighted on the conference blog.

One of the great rewards was seeing tweets thanking us for a recommendation and alerting other attendees to a particular place. The coordinators also wrote the *About Minneapolis* section of the conference website. This page included: restaurant, public transit and taxi information, museums and music venues, shopping destinations and other general resources such as local newspapers, blogs, etc.

Available at the desk was a three-ring binder that on the front had a printout of the volunteer schedule and inside contained local information such as, skyway map, public art map, ATM's, post office, coffee shop, grocery and convenience stores, transit and other places of interest. I would not invest a lot of time on this as we did not reference frequently.

Conference Bags:

Surprisingly, the most challenging aspect of the registration and hospitality desk was obtaining and stuffing of conference bags. In the ARLIS/NA Conference Planning document it says that obtaining conference bags falls within the realm of the registration and hospitality coordinator. However, we felt that this needed to be coordinated with the Local Development Committee. We recommended numerous possible companies to the Local Development Committee for possible bag contribution, and goodies to be included in the bags. Unfortunately, none of these leads panned out. Unfortunately, the Minneapolis Convention Center stopped supplying bags within the past year for local conferences. With only a few weeks before the conference, the University of Minnesota Bookstore came through with 600 bags.

Next was the challenge of stuffing the bags. On the registration and hospitality desk volunteer form we asked for volunteers on Tuesday night; the evening before the conference. Unfortunately, I did not realize until late in the planning that we did not rent space at the hotel on Tuesday that I could use. So, I held a bag stuffing party at my house with 5 volunteers who assisted for approximately 3 hours. I had all of the local

materials that needed to be stuffed, along with the ARLIS/NA 2012 promotional item, and TEI had all the vendor inserts. That evening we stuffed approximately 2/3 of the bags we needed for the conference. The next day I made two trips to the conference hotel with the bags. We also setup the materials in the extra room so, when the registration and hospitality desk was not busy, I would have a volunteer work on stuffing the last 1/3 of the conference bags. Here are our conference bag lessons for future conferences:

- You have MANY more vendor inserts with a joint conference. There were 5 local materials, 16 vendor inserts and 1 ARLIS/NA 2012 conference promotional item. This is significantly more than each association's conference.
- Stuff the bags at the conference location. Bags end up being very heavy and take up a lot of space once stuffed, making transportation of complete ones difficult.
- If for some reason you cannot stuff the bags at the conference location (such as our situation), you should arrange to have all the vendor materials sent to you and the next year's conference promotional items at least a week in advance of the conference. Hopefully, you can enlist student workers and local volunteers to stuff the bags.
- Try to get an idea of how many insets there will be in advance. Vendors paid to insert items into the conference bags and were allowed to send up to 3 items. TEI received the inserts and did not open the boxes (nor did I ask them to). Many of the vendors sent 3 separate items. More inserts = longer time to stuff a bag.
- Do not prestuff materials. As we waited for the vendor inserts to arrive we prestuffed many bags. Restuffing of bags probably took more time than waiting and starting the process when the additional inserts arrived.

Also, at the registration and hospitality desk many people requested an attendee list. Unfortunately, this fell off my radar and others on the local arrangement committee, as one was not provided at the 2010 ARLIS/NA Conference. TEI did e-mail out a list of attendees after the conference. For future planning, I would include a list of attendees with the registration materials.

EVENTS – Jill Vuchetich – Chair

Committee Members:
Stephanie Kays
Barb Economon
Heidi Eyestone
Christine Dent

Planning:

The Events Committee was formed at the August 3, 2009 local planning meeting. The Events committee worked with several other committees and members during the planning of the conference. Primary responsibilities included the Welcoming Party at the Walker Art Center on Friday March 25, 2011 and the fundraising event entitled "Founders' Fete" on Thursday March 24, 2011.

During the planning phase of these events the committee researched locations and venues. Very early on the committee gathered estimates and contacted facility staff at museums, the university club, and private venues. It was important to make a decision on the venues very early so that other committees could begin their work. There was much planning and programming related to the founders fete event that continued throughout the planning of the conference. For the opening party there was an initial flurry of activity to secure the venue and then a waiting process until the event came closer and then another flurry of activity with the facility people and caterers. In addition the Events Committee participated in the selection of the opening and closing plenary speakers, and the planning for the convocation as well as contributing on other issues presented during the local arrangement committee meetings such as transportation arrangements for the events. Each committee member had an assignment related to the special events. For example, Heidi Eyestone put together the video tribute for the Founders' Fete, Stephanie Kays coordinated the MIA participation for Founders Fete and tickets for all attendees, Christy Dent wrote the press releases, Barb Economon, menu selection for both events. As chair, one of the important duties is to be in contact with treasurers about budget and payments.   Once the conference arrived, each committee member had their assignments to keep the events running smoothly. The committee also sought help from local volunteers to man the coat check on Friday night, hand out drink tickets, and greet people at the door.

Results:

The Founders' Fete was a joint ARLIS/VRA fundraiser in place of 2 separate contributors dinners that would normally have been planned at each organization's conference. The event included a special musical program, a video history of the organizations, admission to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and free special exhibition tickets. The Special Events committe and several other committees worked very hard in making this event a success. In the end, it was somewhat successful. There were some problems with the crush of people at the venue and some misunderstandings with the bus drivers. The event was also hampered by the Gale Mansion (the venue) changing management right before our event and not letting us know. We had worked out details with the prior event manager and those details were not followed by the new management.

The Welcoming Party at the Walker Art Center consisted of free admission for all attendees and included food, beverages, and open access to the galleries and shop. Again, we had some issues with the bus drivers that caused some snags in the flow of traffic. We did offer a coat check which operated pretty smoothly throughout the evening. We had plenty of food and a large enough space for people to circulate. At the Walker, there was a change in caterers in the final planning phase, so just like the night before, this was the first event of the new team. However, we were aware of the change and the new caterer really bent over backwards to provide a wonderful experience for our event. The shop reported record sales for the evening and in fact we had to do some shooing to get people toward the buses at the end of the night. All in all, the event was very successful.

Final Thoughts:

In the end, the attendees had a positive experience with the special events offered at the Minneapolis joint conference. The planning and preparation paid off in light of the last minute changes and snags during the events. It was extremely valuable to have the insight from the previous ARLIS conference at Boston and also the past budgets from other conferences to get an idea of the size and scope of the events. In hindsight, it was very helpful to have committee members working at two of the institutions that were part of the events. Because committee members were also staff members at the Walker and MIA we had timely updates and could gather information quickly. The outside venue, the Gale Mansion, was different. We thought we had everything planned out but in the end we were left in the dark.   It was also important to keep communicating with the other committees up until the bitter end particularly about timing of events, numbers of people participating, etc. Any updates were posted on the conference website. Most attendees were able to find the correct information by some means whether it be in person, by phone, or online.

EXHIBITS – Rosemary Furtak – Chair
Committee Members:
Heidi Eyestone
Suzanne Degler
Shannon Klug

The majority of the contact with the exhibitors was done by TEI from the first contact to receipt of registration, though some special requests were handled by the local contacts. A welcome letter was written for the Exhibitor and Sponsorship Prospectus. With the introduction of the Vendor Slam to ARLIS, education was needed for those exhibitors unfamiliar with this format. Brian Shelburne, who coordinates the Vendor Slam for VRA, was available for questions from exhibitors about how this new format would work. We were pleased to have exceeded our goals for exhibitor participation.

PUBLICITY – Kathy Heuer & Robb Detlefs – Co-Chairs

Committee Members:
Kay Streng
Inga Theissen

The purpose of this committee is to promote the conference to all potential attendees. The committee worked with other conference committees to disseminate pertinent conference information.

The committee was formed at the August 3, 2009 local planning meeting. Kathy Heuer became the ARLIS/NA co-chair and Inga Theissen (a VRA member) & Kay Streng (an ARLIS/NA member) joined as committee members. Robb Detlefs was named the VRA Public Relations and Communications Officer in spring 2010 and then became the co-chair representing VRA.

The committee tracked the listserv activity for the Boston Conference (2009) and also had input from the Boston Publicity Committee. The Boston committee shared with our committee their email lists for other library organizations as well as for library schools. We added Minitex to the organizations list and the library school at St. Catherine's University to the other list. We also received a timeline for information blasts from the Boston committee. We were able to use this as a guide and adapt it for our conference dates (one month earlier than the Boston conference). Our committee did not get any publicity guidelines from VRA, so our strategy plan was based on information from the Boston ARLIS/NA committee and the general ARLIS/NA conference timetable. The conference wiki has a number of documents that we created and the blog contains all of the postings.

Accomplished tasks:

1. Created the conference logo – This was important to do as soon as possible as it was needed in publicity items about one year before the conference dates. Inga Theissen designed our conference logo.
2. Had advertisements placed in the 2010 VRA and ARLIS/NA conference programs, the *VRA Bulletin*, ARLIS/NA's *Art Documentation* and ARLIS/UK's *Art Libraries Journal* – Be aware of the fact that TEI did not automatically create the copy for these ads. However once we did make contact with TEI they assisted in creating the file to be sent to the organizations. It is important to get deadlines for placing of the ads (TEI for ARLIS/NA conference program) and the editors of the VRA and ARLIS/NA publications. We were contacted directly by ARLIS/UK for an ad.
3. Worked with TEI to set up and populate the conference website – A domain name for the conference was selected at the July CPAC meeting -

http://www.vra-arlis2011.org. However, the "site under construction" page was not loaded by TEI until early October. The "dev" web site was launched around November 9th. Refinement of the site proceeded at a slow pace – with many emails required to simply get a background color changed or a link created. It was frustrating to not have any direct control over the site. TEI was typically non-responsive, though when they were engaged with the project, changes were made quickly and effectively. The site was officially launched on December 20th. The next step was to launch the registration page – scheduled for January 3, 2011. TEI indicated that they could load names and email addresses from the VRA membership list. Ultimately, this proved to not be possible. Better initial communication could have prevented any number of delays on this task. After some back-and-forth, it was agreed that members of both ARLIS and VRA would simply use a "bridges2011" code to access the registration page and use a member's rate. Registration was launched on January 18, 2011 (two weeks late). Unfortunately, there were security issues with the site. It was also necessary to make modifications to support single day registration and Events-only purchases. Overall, the website project was extremely challenging. Since TEI had full control of the site, it would have been helpful if they had utilized more of their general experience in this area to create a site more quickly and effectively – working with our organizations to get specific content as necessary.

4. Twitter – Robb set up a Twitter hashtag, # vra_arlis2011, during the July CPAC meeting. This allowed for pre-conference "tweets" to begin and build interest in the event. A link to all postings for this hashtag was available on the conference site - http://twitter.com/#!/search/vra_arlis2011. .

5. Sent press releases to other organizations and library schools – Kathy sent out by email in early January.

6. Created and maintained the conference blog – A Wordpress blog was set up by Robb. It was maintained by Kathy, Inga, and Kay. Our first blog posting was in mid-December, with weekly postings starting in early January. The schedule of weekly postings is on the wiki. The blog was very successful. It should be noted that the blog administrator receives all of the posted comments (both good ones and spam) and that these need to be processed. The ability to subscribe to RSS feeds of the blog was a nice feature.

7. Wrote, edited and published all content on the conference blog, including section that highlighted interesting local information – We set up a schedule of the weekly information releases. Some of these releases were postings that had first been sent to both listservs. Some postings, like the MPLS Buzz, were exclusive to the blog. Kathy, Inga, and Kay wrote the MPLS Buzz items. We also received items from some committees, including a weekly posting from the Silent Auction committee, and occasional postings from Hospitality, Events, Tours, etc. When needed, we edited the submitted copy prior to creating a new blog posting.

8. Sent out weekly blog report to both ARLIS/NA and VRA listservs – Once a week, from early January to the week of the conference, we sent out a short blog

report, listing the titles of all the blogs postings for that week, with links to the entries.

9. Answered questions from conference attendees (emails, blog comments, etc.) or directed such questions to the appropriate person – Questions from attendees were often sent directly to a publicity committee member as our names and email address were listed on listserv postings. We also would read any comments posted to the blog. We would answer these questions or send them on to a member of the appropriate committee that could answer the question.

TOURS – Allan Kohl

Goals in putting together this year's Conference Tours Program included the following:
1. Highlight special cultural aspects of the Twin Cities
2. Keep the price of each tour affordable for the typical conference attendee, thus encouraging broader participation.
3. Keep the cost of operating each tour as low as possible by using smaller vehicles (25- and 29-passenger mini-coaches instead of full-sized motor coaches), and by staggering tour times so that a single vehicle could service multiple tours. The strategy behind this was to maximize the possibility that the tours program income would exceed our costs.
4. Minimize tour cancellations
5. Position the tours program overall to break even, and if possible to turn a modest profit.

A recap of these goals after the conference concluded shows that all of the above goals were successfully achieved.
1. We sold 153 tickets to 11 different tours. Each tour was led by a shepherd from the local planning committee, whose participation fees were waived as compensation. Many tour participants took multiple tours, and the schedule was arranged to facilitate this. So while only a small minority of conference attendees registered for tours, those who did so seem to consider them an important component of their overall conference experience.
2. Tours were priced at three levels, based on a combination of "running time," transportation costs, and destination charges: $25, $40, $55.
3. Our strategy of using smaller vehicles, and having as many of these as possible service multiple tours, allowed us to split transportation costs (by far the largest component of tour expenses) among two or more tours. It also helped that many of our destinations were relatively close to the conference hotel.
4. We only had to cancel one tour due to low registration, and I personally worked with those who had registered for this tour to place them in alternate tours, or into a workshop.
5. Pending final budget review, this year's tours program realized a net profit in excess of $1,000

The tours program I originally proposed was more modest than what we ended up with. Under a certain amount of pressure from the local planning committee, we expanded the initial list from a half dozen tours to double that number, including two out-of-town day trips (which had not been part of my initial proposal). Now that the results are in, I believe that my original plans would have been more appropriate in scale. Nearly all of the added tours did not prove particularly popular (including the two out-of-town trips), and most of these operated at a loss. On the positive side, the overall tours program realized a modest profit, and we only had to cancel one tour outright.

That being said, I would like to caution future tours program planners that some of the conditions working in our favor here this year might not apply to future conferences in other locations. Many of our destinations were fairly close to the Hilton, so that it was realistic to schedule a single bus to service two different tours (thus cutting the transportation price in half for each tour). Moreover, not every conference city will have a bus company with the fleet flexibility to allow for use of smaller, less expensive vehicles (and not every tours coordinator may have the patience to work these arrangements out in detail with a transportation provider). Guides and docents were provided by our tour destinations as part of our arrangements with them; other guides and tour shepherds were all local volunteers, none of whom received any honoraria.

In the end, a relatively small minority of conference attendees seems interested enough in the tours program to arrive early and pay for an extra night in the hotel, in addition to the cost of a tour. Some of our members have even indicated that they are wary of having payments for tours show up on their registration invoices, since supervisors and accounting offices have begun to question the value of tours (which might appear to be primarily recreational) during what is supposed to be a serious professional experience.

I'd like to add an unexpectedly positive note. I included in this year's tours program a series of four free early morning walking "Minne-tours" which conferees could take without having to register. Given the time of day for these (7:45 AM), I anticipated only a modest response. But the first day (Thursday) we had 25 participants; the number grew to 40 on Friday. On Saturday, 55 people showed up. On Sunday, we had 45 people – and they were so engaged that a planned 45-minute guided walk stretched into an extra half hour. Many participants were repeats from one day to the next, and a really nice sense of camaraderie seemed to develop. Consequently, I'd like to suggest that walking tours focusing on the architecture and history of the host city should be considered in future years as a viable part of the tours program mix.

But this positive outcome should not obscure the bottom line: I would not recommend that either ARLIS/NA or VRA attempt a tours program of this scale in future conferences. I would suggest that 4 to 6 tours would be a more realistic number for ARLIS, and 2 to 3 for VRA, when these organizations hold solo conferences. In particular, out-of-town day trips do not seem to be sustainable in the changed economic environment of the past several years. Whenever possible, experiences such as walking tours focusing on local architecture and

other nearby cultural attractions should take the place of tours requiring increasingly expensive "big bus" transportation (by far the biggest component of costs). Another option is to use local shepherds (knowledgeable faculty and staff colleagues) to guide tour participants to their destinations using inexpensive public transportation; in such instances, tour organizers would have to make a convincing case as to why individual attendees would want to go with a group instead of on their own whenever their schedules permit. We must constantly ask ourselves: what is the added value we bring to an organized tour group that would make it worth a member's time and money, beyond going solo on their own?

SILENT AUCTION – Patricia McRae-Baley & Janice Lea Lurie – Co-Chairs

Committee Members:
Julieann Swanson
Allan Kohl

Work on planning the Silent Auction began in April 2010. The Silent Auction Committee was established in July and officially met for our first meeting in August 2010. The Committee met 10 times over a period of 9 months and beginning from scratch, created, organized and implemented a silent auction event that seamlessly combined the cultures and fundraising methods of our two organizations.

Highlights:

This year's silent auction for the joint VRA and ARLIS/NA conference evolved into something new and exciting, which we titled *Shhh… Silent Auction!* Injected with the fun and creativity of VRA's VRAffle, the traditional ARLIS/NA silent auction was transformed via these engaging outreach efforts:

- creating the *Shhh… Silent Auction!* theme and an official logo
- hosting a Jeopardy! inspired game, with Allan Kohl as host Edgar Allan Trebec and providing a cash bar as part of the finale (these drew significant numbers of people to the finale)
- maintaining a dynamic website with a weekly presence on the conference blog featuring witty and highly informative updates penned by Patti McRae Baley
- an online photo/donation gallery curated by Julieann Swanson for the 105 single or ensemble donations
- a page on the website allowing both organization's memberships to get involved with the fund raiser curated by Julieann Swanson dedicated to an inclusive and fun initiative called "Shh…Yourself!" where members could submit images of themselves "shhh'ing"
- Janice Lurie made solicitations for donations from over 25 area local businesses.
- Janice and Patti actively publicizing *Shhh...Silent Auction!,* educating the members on the how to's of the event, and directly soliciting chapter baskets/ensembles to VRA & ARLIS/NA chapter chairs on both organizations' listservs

- announcing special high value donations on both organizations' listservs which required institutional purchase orders
- collecting donation parcels in advance of the conference by committee member Julieann Swanson
- consolidating donations into lots and creating an index for their swift assembly
- preparing a S.O.P. volunteer training document and training the volunteers
- sending out calls via both listservs and the blog for silent auction volunteers and the game show contestants as well as making personal contacts of past volunteers
- working with both organizations to solidify the vital tax/disclosure legal paragraph for inclusion with the donation solicitation letter information, two areas of the *Shhh… Silent Auction!* website and the thank you letters.
- creating templates of thank you letters customized for volunteers and donors

Ultimately, all of these efforts realized donations with a retail value that totaled over $39,000! Although the silent auction was projected to realize $4,000 it exceeded all expectations and totaled $6,410 in sales. Only a handful of lots received no bids; they were primarily service certificates from local vendors. Only one lot went unclaimed by the winner.

Some of our higher value donations included:
- Archivision, Inc. – the Digital Library Base Collection, consisting of 16,000 images; Valued at $15,000 (institutional bids only).
- One's year's access to Archivision, Inc.'s new subscription product accessing their entire digital research library of 53,000 images and videos valued at $3,240;
- A nine-month subscription to Bridgeman Education valued between $500 and $4000.
- The newly published ten volume Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion, valued at $1,995.
- Scholar's Resource, Inc. - Images for your Permanent Collection (institutional bids only) valued at $4,750.
- Original jewelry creations by Christine Sundt.
- Chapter baskets/ensembles from both organizations and a significant number of books and works of art by members.

The placement in the exhibits hall of the vendor slam venue adjacent to the 14 silent auction skirted tables worked to our advantage. Members attending the vendor slam events had to walk by the silent auction tables where all 76 lots were artfully displayed. Staggering the organizations' annual business meetings with the two vendor slam events also drew more attention to the lots. We commend the schedulers of the conference for arranging for this. Our tables did not interfere with the exhibitors, and members had to walk through the exhibits to reach the silent auction, increasing the exhibitors' exposure. The proximity constellation of the silent auction, vendor slam,

finale and the cash bar all held in the exhibits hall came together to make this fundraiser event a grand success.

Future Actions:

Between the number of donors and volunteers, the committee anticipates writing approximately 100 thank you letters.

The committee will prepare a document detailing operational guidelines, procedures and practices for future silent auctions with the working title, "Silent Auctions for Dummies" so that members of both VRA & ARLIS/NA will have a "how to" foundation from which to work.

Conclusion:

The committee wishes to acknowledge and thank Inga Theissen for her work. She left the committee early on but not before submitting templates for bid sheets and the idea of the Jeopardy! game and for providing a PowerPoint template for our use. The co-chairs also acknowledge Allan Kohl for stepping onto the committee when Inga left and for providing so much of the props and the questions for Jeopardy!, designing and printing the lot tags and bid sheets and making the lot tag stands. We also thank VRA Vice President of Conference Arrangements Brian Shelburne and Chris Roper of TEI for their death defying help with logistics and financial aspects.

Outside of *Shhh... Silent Auction!* itself, one of the best benefits of working on the subcommittee was learning about each others' organizational cultures. This coming together was a great way to gain new insights about teamwork, make new friends, and learn new approaches to conveying information, while at the same time giving it a personality and making it fun. Creating a team and working together well even when members are from different cities, often via Skype, was probably the best and most useful experience of all and will be instrumental in the future.

We hope that we have laid the groundwork to re-launch the silent auction as a more enticing, exciting and successful component of future conferences for both organizations, whether we meet jointly or not.