PUTTING OUT FIRES AND SUCKING UP THE WATER

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Preparing for Disasters: Big and Small (and they will happen)

Dr. Harrison Wick
Special Collections Librarian and University Archivist
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Indiana, Pennsylvania
Where to Start?

- Collect Background Information
- Collection Assessment Survey(s)
- Library / Building Infrastructure Concerns
- Collaboration (buy-in)
- Logistics: moving mountains
- Disaster Response Manual and Kit(s)
- Assessment and Revaluation

Knox Mine Disaster (1959) Fort Griffith, Pennsylvania
Courtesy of the Luzerne County Historical Society
Building a Disaster Response Manual

- Know the experts ... CCAHA
- Be involved ... Alliance for Response (AFR)
- Versions: In-house and/or Public
- Format: Paper vs. Electronic
- Keep track of your experiences
- Who should be included (contact information)?
- What information are you going to need and is it relevant?
- Keep it accurate and up-to-date
Creating Disaster Response Kit(s)

- What do you need to include?
- How many kits are needed in your building(s)?
- Who is going to pay for the supplies?
- What are the kits going to look like?
- What existing building equipment can be used?
Disasters encountered
... big and small

- Mold – persistent odors – new/old leaks – pre-existing water damage
- Equipment purchased – grants
- Established collections – recent/potential donations
- Pros and Cons of off-site Storage
Preventative Measures

- Pre-installed tarps
- Water sensors
- Watch for early warnings
- Know your strengths and weaknesses
- Damaged Book Procedures
Some Perspective

Mine Subsidence in Wyoming, Pennsylvania (1890)
Luzerne County Historical Society

Manuscript Group 51: R&P Coal Company Records
Horror Stories along the way – what have you uncovered, discovered, or experienced in your collection storage?
Thank you!

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Ensuring an Emergency Plan is the Right Fit

DYANI FEIGE
CONSERVATION CENTER FOR ART & HISTORIC ARTIFACTS
NOVEMBER 8, 2019
Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA)

❖ 10,500 square foot facility

❖ Staff of 33 includes conservators and technicians; preservation services staff; marketing, development, and administrative staff; and post-graduate fellows
CCAHA disaster assistance
Emergency preparedness workshops
Emergency preparedness and response publications

❖ Emergency Resource Guide

❖ Disaster Recovery Preservation Resources
  • Salvaging Books
  • Salvaging Art on Paper
  • Salvaging Photograph Collections
  • Freezing and Drying Techniques
  • Managing a Mold Invasion

❖ Non-circulating reference library
In the event of an emergency ...

- 24-hour phone line
- CCAHA conservators on-site
- Coordinate contact with appropriate experts
- Free phone advice
CCAHA emergency supplies

❖ Crash cart

❖ Freezer
Treatment
Most frequently ineffective aspects of an emergency plan

❖ Communications
❖ Proactivity
❖ Governance
❖ Practice/Training
In order to be effective, the plan must ...

- Embody a clear organization
- Identify roles and responsibilities
- Clearly define the communication policy and mechanics
- Be a proactive living document
- Delineate the governance policies for all emergency participants
- Include collaboration of all who implement and interact with the plan
- Define the test and scenarios
- Define metrics for the measurement of success
- Define annual testing schedule involving all participants
- Define strategy to return to normal
- Include funding and participation by all stakeholders
When should the plan be updated?

Annually and ...

❖ After an emergency or disaster
❖ Major staff changes
❖ Building changes, major renovations
❖ Major collection changes
❖ HVAC system changes
❖ Regional changes
❖ Neighbor changes
❖ Professional standards change, or new professional standards are recognized
❖ New programs or activities that raise new issues
❖ Mutual aid agreement or vendor changes
Emergency Event Debriefing

**Information Gathering**

**Assessment of Response**
- Were all phases of the event handled in a timely manner?
- Were communications adequate throughout the event?
- Was the response well organized?
- Were staff resources adequate?
- Were emergency supplies adequate?
- Was there any confusion during any phase?
- What problems arose that were not adequately dealt with?
- How can the plan and response be refined to function better?

**The Human Factor**
Test/Training Debriefing

- Allow team members to evaluate the drill and identify what went well
- Identify any gaps in the plan
- Identify any additional needs for training
- Discuss psychological impact drill had on participants
Risk/Vulnerability Assessments

Should be directly incorporated in emergency plan – summary, entire assessment as appendix, etc.

Doing an updated risk assessment can be the first step in evaluating and updating the plan.

Go over plan with risk assessment side by side.

❖ Is everything still accurate?
❖ Is anything missing?
❖ Are the appropriate factors emphasized?
# Emergency Event History Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of event</th>
<th>March 2012, water leak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>Leaky roof in NE corner of building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resulting damage</td>
<td>3 boxes of collections slightly damp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When it happened</td>
<td>Noticed with in 12 hours and collections air dried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Type of event
- Cause
- Resulting damage
- When it happened
- Duration
Updates

❖ A mechanism for updates should be built into the plan itself
❖ Use checklists
❖ Solicit feedback and update suggestions from staff at all levels
❖ Instill importance of updates to highest governing body (board, trustees, etc.)
❖ Be constructive and actually update the plan – don’t just identify gaps
Sometimes it’s an emergency.

Sometimes, it’s not.

Carla Q. Montori
University of Maryland Libraries
Mold: The Archivist's Worst Nightmare

Jill Borin & Kayla Van Osten
Widener University
MARAC Fall 2019
Cambridge, Maryland
Mold Discovery

Archives storage room located on the ground floor.

Bound copies of newspapers developed mold.

Mold was discovered in other areas on this floor.

Concrete building built in 1970 with poor air flow. Airducts had never been cleaned.

The University had a mold mitigation team come in to clean room.
Spot checking boxes revealed more mold on bound books, leather materials, wood, and binders. Even after the initial spot checking, more mold was found several weeks later.

We found that most of these items were stored in non-treated storage carton boxes with holes for handles (around 100).

Determined mold mitigation team needed to clean again.
Assessing Moldy Items

Step 1
- We quarantined the moldy items in sealed plastic tubs.
- We reviewed the items to determine
  a) If the items were of archival value
  b) If the item could be discarded

Step 2
Of the items we kept:
- Cleaned some artifacts (trophies, medals).
- Ordered new copies of books.
- Removed moldy casings (binders/picture frames) but kept paper/photo content.
Boxes, Boxes and More Boxes

• Decided to replace non-treated boxes with DuraCoat™ boxes.

• Decided to move paper materials from large carton boxes into several smaller DuraCoat™ flip-top document cases. (Approximated 3 flip-top boxes = 1 large carton box.)

• Miscalculated amount and had to place 2 orders.
Rehousing Items

- Identified boxes we wanted to transfer to smaller boxes.
- Utilized student assistant to help lift heavy boxes and transfer papers.
- Kept very detailed notes on box numbers and how many additional records would need to be created in the catalog.
- Temporarily labeled each new box with box number on sticky notes.
- Lots of shifting!
- Moved sensitive materials to upstairs storage area.
Finished…Or Not

- The 2nd mold mitigation team recommended removing the carpet in the room.
- In the process of labeling the boxes (sticky notes everywhere), we were told the carpet would be removed ASAP, which led us to creating and printing permanent labels quickly.
- Created document for maintenance team with detailed photos and instructions.
- Moving team boxed the boxes and moved them to another room.
Before

After

Space Gained
Moving process went surprisingly smoothly.

Forced us to evaluate how things were organized and impose better archival standards.

We learned more about our collection.

We discarded materials that did not meet our collection development policy.

Shifting and using smaller boxes allowed us to gain more space and make our materials more accessible.

Happy Outcomes
What We Learned

• Don't get mold!
• Anticipate the process taking longer than expected.
• Always use treated archival boxes with no holes.
• Be mindful of the materials in the collection. (Avoid using binders, look at how leather-bound materials are stored, etc.)
• Tracking dew point and humidity could help convince administration of importance of environmental control.
Contact Info

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Finished!