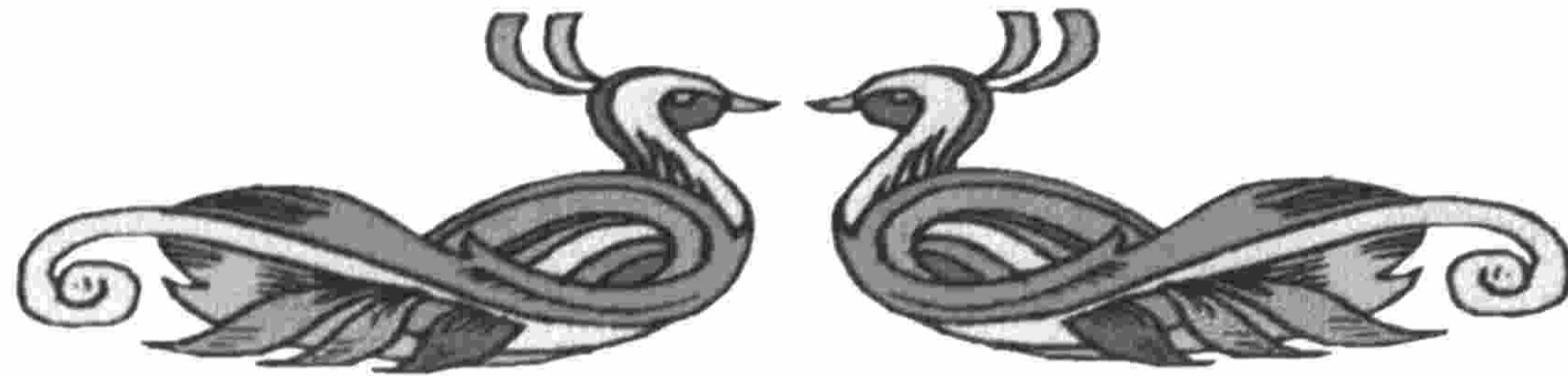


## CHAPTER 7: A NEW CAPTAIN...A NEW CREW – THE ADVENT OF THE “GEORGIAN GENERATION”



With the election of new officers the membership prepared for the “Second Generation”, hereinafter cited as the “Georgian Generation”, to “stay the course” and carry on the work initiated by the founders. It didn’t take long for this incoming group to meet the challenge. At a transitional meeting on 29 October 1987, just a month after the conference, the newly-elected panel was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Since the Secretary was *in absentia*, the reading and approval of the Virginia Beach minutes was waived. However, Lettie, our outgoing Treasurer, reported that the amount of existing funds was equivalent to “\$4,085”. No amount of written documentation or oral plaudits describe the level of appreciation and gratitude owed to that inaugural group; because they not only laid the organizational cornerstone but breathed a living spirit into VAGARA,

In that spirit, our “new captain” recognized the outgoing board (Dick, Bob, Bea, and Lettie) members. Since the latter was the only one present, George singled her out in recognition for the dedicated service to the association. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved for such recognition.

A summary of the post conference survey, as reported by Bill Wolchak, illustrated our members’ approval of the events at Virginia Beach and documented a preference for a 1988 meeting in Williamsburg or the “resort again”. Bill motioned the board to select the former site. With a Ron Livingston (Chesterfield County) second, the board voted without dissent to do so. We had scheduled a return to our official organizational birthplace! Remember Williamsburg in 1985?

Again, in recognition of the accomplishments of our steering committee and “First Generation” of elected officers, George gave credit to “those who had organized the last conference” and appointed the next Chairperson. Jane Cross (Chesterfield County), having previously accepted, was now formally named to organize the next meeting.

Perhaps the most significant development of that session was the initiation of “regional workshops”. Two primary reasons behind the formulation of these training sessions were “to attract new members” and provide additional records management educational opportunities for current members. This was part of VAGARA’s mission...to promote excellence in archival and records management throughout the Commonwealth. Diverse localities were suggested to stage the sessions: Abingdon,

Roanoke, Northern Virginia, Richmond, Danville, Chesapeake, and Harrisonburg. Bill Powell, the incoming Treasurer, was delegated to examine the possibilities.

One item of "old business", which was tabled at the annual meeting, was the changing of VAGARA's name. Suggestions seemed endless upon inspection of the minutes... "PRO, VAPRO, PRIMA, PROVA, RAPR" were actually recorded as substitutes! I can still recall sitting at that meeting and wishing that all those prior substitutes would "VAPRO-IZE". A spirited debate ensued with the result that a motion, by Bill Wolchak, provided that the board members "come up with two ideas of four letters each" and divulge the acronyms at the next meeting. It was, indeed, a most frustrating subject to be seconded and unanimously carried!

In keeping with the tradition to permit current State Archives news, the floor passed to Bill Powell, who described the restoration of staff to their old quarters. The "electrical capacity" had been updated and "fire escape routes improved" to accommodate overall safety. Moreover, he also reported that "tests were made for asbestos and mold spores." On a lighter note, Bill announced that locality schedules for General Services functions would be forthcoming. "Law enforcement schedules" would also be issued "by the end of the year" in addition to the completion of a records management manual."

Passing to "new business", the agenda focused on problems encountered with duplicate mailings for the last conference. In order to remedy the problem, Ron Livingston proposed that the organization invest in a software package "that everybody likes" and empower the "Secretary or the Treasurer" to keep it. Madeline seconded the motion which was approved without dissent. George delegated Bill Wolchak and Ron to review available software and purchase prices.

In dealing with other new items, a motion was initiated to establish an "awards committee" in order "to recognize people in the organization". Irony of ironies! A State representative, Bill Powell, had formulated an idea which would have significant impact on the organization since it would be incorporated into the by-laws and initiate a tradition presenting recognition awards to deserving members annually. Quite an idea, Bill! George then appointed a committee to two, Dick and Dr. Manarin, to study the issue and make recommendations.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned with the notice that a next session (21 January 1988) was scheduled.



While the new Executive Committee "stayed the course" charted by the founders, there was "a new captain and a new crew" which had stirred up a few new waves in this transition meeting.

1988 ushered in an era of change and with it an unusual item by Bob Friedman, now Past President, entitled, "Records Managers Are Change Agents", which appeared in the first edition of the newsletter. As an endearing parent admonishing his children, Bob seemed to be advising the "new generation" to temper change with sagacity. "We, as records managers in our way," he wrote, "must be aware that we bring about change at a pace acceptable to the people in our organizations." Moreover, he advised that "the management of change like the management of anything else requires skill and talent." As his successor, I often translated his comments into "stay the course" and "don't rock the boat." The "new generation", however, would provide innovations of benefit to all members with a pacesetting two-year term.

1988 was characteristic of recognizing the old and welcoming new members. That first newsletter also carried a congratulatory message to Bob for being the winner of the 1987 ARMA "Olsten Award" for providing excellence in records management for the City of Alexandria. Moreover, the newsletter extended greetings to Ruth B. Kerns, Librarian\Archivist of George Mason University and Ed DeWandel, the Superintendent of Records and Micrographics for Virginia Beach.

Yes, VAGARA was changing. The developments and innovations in the months ahead were brought about by the collective efforts of a "second generation" of officers who were elected to strive for excellence in the professional forum which would benefit both State, County, City and Township, Archivist and Records Manager alike. Their diversity of opinion inspired unity in action; and that unity culminated in a creative spirit which instituted a number of resourceful projects from which the organization and its membership still benefits to this day.