

## **National Organization Concerned With Preserving Film and Video Receives Funding To Study Local Television, Names Project Manager**

The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) along with its Local Television Task Force has received initial funding for a two-year project, "Preserving Local Television: Case Studies and Symposium" from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The project, a joint venture of AMIA and the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS), will be managed by former public and commercial television programming executive Sharon Blair.

AMIA and NATAS formed the Local Television Task Force to address the problems of preserving local television programming. Local programming, while considered by archivists to contain the essential records of twentieth century American life, is also recognized as endangered, sometimes discarded or allowed to disintegrate over time. Archivists realize that most of the major historical events of the past century were local to some community before they became of national or international interest. It is equally important to note that the purely local events of a community -- from celebratory parades to natural disasters documented by local television -- are the thread from which a local and larger culture is woven. The project will provide a way for television executives and archivists to communicate and will lead to the preservation of local programming -- and thus, the preservation of the record of our lives -- from communities across the nation. It is anticipated that many nationally-recognized television personalities, most of whom began their television careers at local stations, will lend their support to the project.

Over the next two years, members of AMIA Local Television Task Force working groups will create a database of local television stations and their actual or potential archives. Working group members will direct research -- and case studies will be written -- on the issues for television station archives such as of selection, rights, intellectual control, preservation, and revenue generation. The project will conclude with a national symposium, most likely held adjacent to a major telecommunications convention, for local television station executives and archivists to plan work for the future.

Blair, the newly named project manager, has worked as a public television program executive at KUHT in Houston, Texas and most recently, at Connecticut Public Television in Hartford, Connecticut from which she retired in 2000 as director of national program development. She has also worked as a commercial television news and local program producer at WLWI in Indianapolis, Indiana and WJXT in Jacksonville, Florida and as an editorial assistant at the United Nations in Vienna, Austria. She has twice served as on the board of trustees of the Boston/New England chapter of NATAS and the Connecticut Humanities Council. In 2001, she was awarded a Master's degree in American Studies with a focus on video archiving from Trinity College in Connecticut. Blair earned an earlier Master's degree in television news and public affairs from Indiana University.

Recently, Blair has worked as an archiving consultant for Connecticut Public Broadcasting and has served on an ad hoc advisory group on digital asset management to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In addition, she has consulted on archiving matters for Heifer Project International as well as worked as a free-lance writer.

AMIA, which holds its annual conference November 6-11 in Portland, Oregon, is a non-profit professional association established to advance the field of moving image archiving by fostering cooperation among individuals and organizations concerned with the collection, preservation, exhibition and use of moving image materials.

NATAS is dedicated to the advancement of the arts and sciences of television and the promotion of creative leadership for artistic, educational and technical achievements within the television industry. It recognizes excellence in television with the Emmy Award.

The NHPRC, a statutory body affiliated with the National Archives and Records Administration, supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources relating to the history of the United States.

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