

RAISING THE MATCH AT THE LUTHERAN ARCHIVES CENTER



Conservation Technician Valeria Kremser mending pages from a Mühlenberg journal



Creating new endbands on one of the journals



Journal cover and page, before treatment



Bishop Samuel Zeiser (right) and the Rev. Carl Shankweiler, archivist, on their 23.4 mile canoe trip down the Schuylkill River / Image courtesy of the Rev. Catherine Ziel, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Many cultural institutions use government and private foundation grants to pay for conservation treatment projects. These grants are often “matching grants,” where the funder provides a portion of the total project cost on a guarantee that the institution will raise the remaining amount from other sources.

Raising the match can be a difficult and time-consuming task. It requires institutional staff to anticipate the fundraising mix that will work best for them and then delegate time and resources accordingly. For preservation projects, the usual sources are individual contributions, private foundation grants, corporate support, and special event income.

The Lutheran Archives Center (Philadelphia, PA) received a \$93,000 matching grant from the *Save America's Treasures* program in 2009 to conserve the journals of Heinrich (Henry) Melchior Mühlenberg (1711-1787), the father of American Lutheranism. Mary Redline, researcher and grant writer for the Lutheran Archives Center, wrote the successful request and has been working hard to raise the match ever since. After a year of committed and resourceful fundraising, the Lutheran Archives Center has raised nearly \$75,000. CCAHA recently interviewed Mary Redline to learn more about one institution's strategies for raising the match.

Who are you working with to raise the match?

The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Archives Center established a fundraising committee shortly after we received news of the award. Their goal is to raise \$100,000. Many of the board members have assisted the committee by making personal appeals to congregations and donors.

What approaches have worked best?

The initial appeal was made through the Archives' quarterly publication, *The Advocate*. The publication included a specially designed envelope for contributions as well as information about the project. Subsequent issues have listed the donors by categories and have kept the readership up-to-date with the progress of the fundraising. I also prepared a brochure for use with special appeals to congregations or donors. Board members with personal connections to specific congregations or persons made personal visits. One of the major donors, now retired from a development position, has secured major donations from several institutions.

What aspects of this project seem to most resonate with donors?

Because Henry Mühlenberg is considered the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America, his legacy resonates with those affiliated with the Lutheran church. As 2011 marks Mühlenberg's tercentenary, the project is incredibly relevant. Another motivating factor is that donors know their contributions will be, in essence, doubled—whatever they contribute will be matched by the *Save America's Treasures* grant.

Please talk about the fundraising canoe trip.

The bishop of the Northeast Synod and the archivist visited a site near the Schuylkill River in Berks County last summer. Their idea of doing a canoe trip together evolved into doing a canoe trip to raise funds for the journal restoration. The venture was featured in *The Reading Eagle*, on Channel 69 news, and in *The Lutheran* (a periodical), as well as on YouTube. One donor contributed \$100/mile for the 23.4 mile trip. The trip raised over \$5,000 as well as public awareness of the project.

What approaches haven't worked? We have not been successful so far in getting matching funds from foundations. The economic downturn has limited the availability of funding from these sources.

What are your plans for the journals after they've been conserved?

We plan to feature the restored journals during the anniversary year and beyond. One section of the journals will appear on a traveling poster exhibit from Halle, Germany, during 2011. At CCAHA's recommendation, we are having the journals digitized while they are disbound. This will allow us to share the texts electronically with researchers, and we hope to eventually put portions of the restored journals online.

Overall, has this been a positive experience?

The results have been heartening. We have expanded our institutional capacity, due in large measure to the networking skills of our board. What seemed like such an insurmountable task for a small institution like ours two years ago has caused the board to work together in creative ways.

—LEE PRICE