Submitted by:
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The seeds of the new ARLIS/NA Retired Members Special Interest Group were sown as an email discussion on ARLIS-L in April, shortly after the 2015 ARLIS/NA conference in Ft. Worth. Suzy Frechette initiated the discussion by posting a quote from a member of the Music Libraries Association who asked the MLA board "for ways to keep retired members interested in participating in MLA's meetings and other activities." Some issues mentioned in the MLA post were:

1. Because retired members are no longer subsidized institutionally, the cost of the conference becomes a larger factor in determining attendance.
2. Sentimentality not a reliable pull for attending year after year and danger of feeling "forgotten but not gone."
3. Experience and expertise among retirees still useful re "management, personnel, and other career-related issues." Would like to see Executive Board and committee chairs "reach out" to invite retirees to join.
4. Retirees are a "growing class of members who are eager to help."

Long-time ARLIS/NA members (and retirees) Eileen Markson, Joan Benedetti, and Margaret Webster responded very positively and Joan volunteered to facilitate the formation of a SIG and to collect discussion ideas contributed. In June she reported that 20 people had expressed interest in forming a SIG. She began to create a retired members group email and to compile both a contact list and a list of ideas and comments concerning the possible formation of a SIG. Marlene Gordon wrote to ask if VRA members could be included in the SIG. Joan consulted with Heather Gendron, Board/SIG Liaison, and was told that although there is no "infrastructure in place that blends ARLIS/NA and VRA members," SIG meetings are open to all conference attendees; therefore, VRA members who attend the 2016 conference (which is a joint conference) can attend the SIG meeting. In late April, Webster, who has been active with both VRA and ARLIS/NA and who is currently on the board of the Visual Resources Foundation, offered to co-coordinate the SIG. Heather Gendron requested we choose one person to be the SIG's "primary contact." Benedetti has taken on that role.

On June 30 Benedetti wrote to 23 people on the retired members contact list, asking them to confirm that they wanted to remain on the list and suggesting that they could share additional information about both their careers and their current activities on the contact list. On July 21 she submitted a proposal (reviewed by Webster) to the ARLIS/NA Executive Board for the formation of a Retired Members SIG. On August 25 Heather Gendron sent
news of the SIG's approval by the Board and on September 26 it was announced on ARLIS-L. On November 18 we were asked by Heather Gendron to write a "Statement of Purpose." Benedetti and Webster worked on this and submitted the Statement on November 22. Note that two sentences, which seemed redundant, have been deleted since it was first submitted:

The Retired Members Special Interest Group is a meeting ground (both physically at the annual ARLIS/NA conference and virtually in between conferences) for those who wish to continue to participate in some ARLIS/NA activities after they have retired from their full-time professional positions. Some members of the group may not yet be actually retired: they may be "on the verge" or simply thinking about it. The SIG will facilitate awareness of ways the parent organization can be welcoming to retired members, and will consider how it might assist retired members to maintain an active interest in current professional issues and ARLIS/NA's core values. The SIG membership can also be helpful to ARLIS/NA in better understanding the history of both ARLIS/NA as an organization and the profession itself.

Of the suggestions that were contributed during the year, at least two will be discussed at the first SIG meeting in Seattle:

1. The possibility of a travel award for a retiree to attend the ARLIS/NA conference.
2. Work with the ARLIS/NA Board and Headquarters to add two fields to the Membership Record template: a "former position/title" field and a "Notes" field that would enable a member to include other information about their past professional life and/or ARLIS/NA activities of note.

On December 1 we announced that the first Retired Members SIG meeting has been scheduled for the Seattle conference on Friday, March 11, 7 – 8 am. The latest contact list for the SIG includes 36 persons: 33 are ARLIS/NA members and, of those, 6 are also VRA members; 3 are neither VRA nor ARLIS/NA. We will be collecting information soon on who will attend the Seattle conference.

It's been quite a year! Margaret and Joan are looking forward to the SIG meeting where we will renew acquaintances, meet a few new friends, and discuss the enhancement of ARLIS/NA benefits for all members.