THE commonwealth

RecordsManager

What Good Are Retention Schedules If You Don't Follow Them?

BY C. Preston Huff, CRM, CA, State Records Administrator

Would you want Mike Wallace or Stone Philips to confront you at the water fountain? If you do not comply with retention schedules, there is a very strong possibility that you will be meeting and talking with internal auditors, external auditors, attorneys and various news agencies. A tremendous amount of effort, in both research and negotiation, goes into the development of each records retention and disposition schedule. For the record (no pun intended), a retention schedule lists records series and provides instructions and special guidelines for their care, i.e., how long to retain them, how to maintain them, and procedures for disposing of them. Retention schedules reflect the periods of time that records have administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value. The Library of Virginia produces two types of retention schedules: general and agency-specific.

GENERAL SCHEDULES

The general schedules reflect those records that most state agencies and localities have in common, such as personnel files, trav-

el vouchers, purchase requisitions, etc. Record-keeping rules that apply to one office should apply to all offices for these common records. (A list of existing general schedules is at the end of this article).

AGENCY-SPECIFIC SCHEDULES

The agency-specific schedules address the records that are unique to a given office. Agency-specific schedules are usually created for state agencies rather than localities. For example *driver's license records* are only found in the Department of Motor Vehicles and are reflected on an agency-specific retention schedule.

Virtually all state agencies have agency-specific retention schedules. Even the Cabinet Secretariats, Office of the Governor, and the Lt. Governor's office now have approved retention schedules.

Unlike the general schedules, the agency-specific schedules, however, are not found at the Library of Virginia's Web site.

HOW ARE RETENTION SCHEDULES DEVELOPED?

The crucial first step in developing schedules is to collect data. The data is recorded on a two-sided form called a Records Survey (RM-19 Feb 98). The form can be downloaded from our Web site (http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/forms/index.htm) which offers the form in both PDF and interactive formats. Also at the Web site is a guide, "RM-19 Preparation Instructions".

It is difficult to overstate how critical the record survey process is in the development of good retention schedules. Records managers and archivists base their appraisal decisions on this information and use it to create retention

Dedicated to the efficient and economical maintenance of Virginia's public records

Schedules ...   schedules. The old adage of "garbage in – garbage out" really applies to this phase of records management.

The Library of Virginia records and information analyst assigned to your agency incorporates the records survey (sometimes called a records inventory) into your proposed retention schedule. This schedule is then discussed with you and your agency's management to ensure that it accurately reflects the records series for your office and that the recommendations contained in the draft retention schedule meet your needs.

BENEFITS OF A RETENTION SCHEDULE

There are numerous reasons for having a retention schedule for your office:

• Virginia Public Records Act (§42.1-86.1) states *"No agency shall destroy or discard public records without a retention and disposition schedule approved by the Librarian of Virginia…"*

• Allows for records that are no longer useful to be legally destroyed.

• Helps reduce the space and equipment necessary for filing records, thus saving money.

• Releases electronic storage space on computer disks, video, and audio tapes.

• Ensures that records needed for legal, fiscal, or administrative purposes will not be destroyed prematurely.

• Assists with making reformatting decisions, i.e., converting records to microfilm or scanning them for use on a computer.

• Provides information for a vital records protection plan.

• Ensures the preservation of historical records.

• May indicate the privacy status of a given records series.

IMPLEMENTING THE RETENTION SCHEDULE

Having an up-to-date retention schedule and following it contributes to the overall efficiency of your office. Do not keep records longer than necessary. If you have obsolete records that should have been destroyed pursuant to the approved retention schedule and litigation, investigation

or audit begins, you can not implement the schedule. You must produce the records even though they would have been destroyed had you followed the retention schedule. **The time periods listed on the retention schedule are not merely guidelines. You must destroy obsolete records in the normal course of business.** Destroy such records in a regular, predictable pattern and document their destruction using the Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Nov 99). See http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/forms/ index.htm for a PDF or interactive format. Also, see the Virginia Public Records Management Manual, Chapter 5, Procedures for Destroying Public Records (http://www/lva/lib/va/us/whatwedo/records/manuals/00m-ch5.htm) for details regarding the important process of properly destroying obsolete records.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please do not hesitate to contact the staff of the Records Analysis Section, headed by John Breeden, CRM, Manager, who will be happy to assist in developing or overhauling your retention schedules or to answer any questions about this process that you may have. John may be reached at (804) 692-3612 or e-mail him at jbreeden@lva.lib.va.us.

SUGGESTION

If you have an agency-specific retention schedule that is more than five years old, I suggest that you contact John Breeden as soon as possible to assist in a review of your schedule to ensure that it is meeting your current needs. Typically, older retention schedules usually need tweaking, if not a complete overhaul. Retention schedules should reflect the dynamic changes occurring in your record-keeping and information systems.

Having up-to-date retention schedules and properly implementing them on a routine basis is basic to a well-run, efficient records management program. Let us know if we can be of assistance to you. It takes a partnership between the staff of my division, Records Management and Imaging Services Division and your office to make this work. Call us if you need help.

GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULES FOR STATE AGENCIES

- GS 101, Administrative Records (May 00)
- GS 102, Fiscal Records (May 97)
- GS 103, Personnel Records (Feb 00)
- GS 104, Mailroom Records (Mar 01)
- GS 105, Motor Vehicle Records (Apr 01)
- GS 106, General Services Records (Sep 00)
- GS 107, Food Service Records (May 01)
- GS 108, Fire, Safety and Security Records (Aug 01)
- GS 109, Library and Museum Records (Aug 01)
- GS 110, Electronic Records (Oct 98)
- GS 111, College and University Records (May 01)
- GS 112, Community College Records, formerly 261-GS-1, now replaced by GS-111.
- GS 2000, Y2K Records (July 99)

GENERAL SCHEDULES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN VIRGINIA

- GS 1, Election Records (Feb 96)
- GS 2, Fiscal Records (Sep 01)
- GS 3, Personnel Records (Feb 99)
- GS 4, County, City and Town Administration Records (Jun 01)
- GS 5, Assessment Records (Sep 01)
- GS 6, Land Use and Public Works Records (Feb 96)
- GS 7, Public Utilities (Feb 96)
- GS 8, Sheriff's Records (Sep 00)
- GS-9, Superseded: See GS-4
- GS 10, Fire and Rescue Records (Feb 96)
- GS 11, Parks and Recreation Records (Feb 96)
- GS 12, Circuit Court Records (Jul 99)
- GS 13, Commonwealth's Attorney Records (Feb 96)
- GS 14, County and Municipal Attorney's Records (Feb 96)
- GS 15, Social Services Records (Mar 02)
- GS 16, General Services Records (July 02)
- GS 17, Law Enforcement Records (May 01)
- GS 18, Community Services Records (Feb 96)
- GS 19, Administrative Records (Feb 01)
- GS 20, Health Records (Feb 96)
- GS 21, Public School Records (Feb 96)
- GS 22, Library Records (Feb 96)
- GS 23, Electronic Records (Oct 98) (See GS 2000 for Y2K Records)
- GS 24, Juvenile Residential Programs (Feb 96)
- GS 25, Community Corrections Act Program (Feb 96)
- GS 26, Pretrial Service Records (Feb 96)
- GS 27, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Records (Feb 96)
- GS 28, Treasurer's Records (Jun 01)
- GS 29, Criminal Justice Training Academy Records (Mar 99)
- GS 30, Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program (VASAP) Records (Jun 99)
- GS 2000, Y2K Records (Jul 99)

Records Management Workshops

There is no charge for these courses. All designated Records Officers and others who have records management responsibilities should attend. Details and registration forms are available on our Web site or call us at (804) 692-3600. For more information on the workshops or to register on line go to http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/ rectrain/index.htm. Any changes or additions will be posted to our Web site.

Basic Records Management

The essentials of public records management are discussed, including the Virginia Public Records Act, retention schedules, records surveys, electronic records, records disposal, and disaster preparedness.

Please check Web site for future classes.

Intermediate Records Management

In this workshop, we will discuss how to present and promote records management within your agency or locality, topics include obtaining program support, implementing a program, coordinating Records Officers' duties with other responsibilities, and continuing education.

Sep. 18, 2002   **Northern VA (TBD)**
                       9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Nov. 13, 2002   **Library of Virginia**
                       Richmond
                       1:00 - 3:30 a.m.

New Technologies

This workshop is intended to keep records officers abreast of new technologies and how they affect records management. Topics include imaging systems, electronic document management systems, microfilm, and electronic records management systems.

Oct. 23, 2002   **Waynesboro Public Library**
                       Waynesboro
                       9:00 - 11:30 p.m.

Document Imaging

This workshop discusses how to procure, implement, and operate an imaging system. It is geared toward individuals with responsibilities for purchasing, installing, or managing these systems.

Nov. 13, 2002   **Library of Virginia**
                       Richmond
                       9:00 - 11:30 p.m.

Disaster Planning For Your Records

The Virginia Public Records Act requires state agencies and localities to develop plans to ensure the preservation of public records in the event of disaster or emergency. This workshop explains how to anticipate and mitigate disasters by identifying vulnerabilities, establish procedures to follow in the event of a disaster, and use the Workbook for Developing a Disaster Plan.

Sept. 18, 2002   **Northern VA (TBD)**
                        1:00 - 3:30 a.m.

Managing Electronic Records

Topics to be discussed include types of electronic records, advantages and disadvantages of formats, the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection acts, retention schedules, e-mail, and destruction of electronic records.

Oct. 23, 2002   **Waynesboro Public Library**
                       Waynesboro
                       1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

NEW DIMENSION FOR THE OLD DOMINION
The Evolution of Elections and Voting in Virginia

PART TWO OF A THREE PART SERIES

BY G.L. Lamborn, General Registrar, City of Fairfax & Alice McKenna, Esquire, Officer of Election, City of Fairfax

Two steps forward, two steps back…
Following the Civil War, Virginia came under military rule. A convention met in 1867–1868 to create a new state constitution, often referred to as the Underwood Constitution for John W. Underwood, the convention's president. On 6 July 1869 the voters, including African-American men for the first time in a statewide election, approved the constitution by casting paper ballots. The secret (or Australian) ballot gradually replaced the public declaration of a voter's choice in Virginia elections. In 1884, white Democrats passed legislation establishing Electoral Boards in each jurisdiction to oversee elections. By controlling the local Electoral Boards, the Democrats could control the elections, but the result was widespread voter fraud.

In 1901–1902 another constitutional convention met and, led by Carter Glass, of Lynchburg, imposed special conditions, tests, and qualifications that many African-American and white voters could not meet. The new constitution's suffrage provisions reduced the number of Virginia's voters by more than half. Another factor that enabled conservative Democrats, under the leadership of Harry Flood Byrd from the 1920s to the 1960s, to control state government was disproportionate representation for rural counties with small voting populations as compared to the fast-growing urban areas of the state.

Set against this negative background were at least two positive developments. First, the commonwealth developed one of the first comprehensive election codes specifing uniform procedures throughout the state. (There are, in fact, states today that do not have uniform, detailed election procedures.) Title 24.2 *Code of Virginia* provides instructions to all candidates and election administrators in the commonwealth. Second, Virginia created a State Board of Elections in 1946. The State Board of Elections (SBE) provides guidance to the Electoral Boards and General Registrars and exercises a measure of oversight over statewide electoral processes. The State Board consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary. The Secretary of the State Board serves as the operating head of a staff supporting election operations on a statewide basis. Although the State Board only rarely intervenes in election matters, it nonetheless serves as a check on Electoral Boards that stray too far from acceptable norms. Its specific charter is to "obtain uniformity…legality and purity in all elections."

External forces also played a role in changing Virginia's election procedures. Of particular importance was a series of U.S. Supreme Court rulings that resulted in the "one man – one vote" decisions of the 1960s, such as *Baker v. Carr* and, more significantly for Virginia, *Mann v. Davis.* Enforcement of these decisions, which compelled redistricting based on equal representation, and which removed restraints on voting rights, reopened Virginia's political processes to real competition.

The legacy of the effort in 1902 to limit voting rights was the passage in 1964 of the 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution striking down the poll tax and the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlawed "tests and devices" that prevented citizens from voting. The act of 1965 applied to all seven southern states and parts of nine additional states in the south and west that had some history of restricting voting rights. The act required that such covered jurisdictions submit all proposed changes to voting procedures or polling places to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for "pre-clearance" before the changes might be made. In this way, DOJ could exercise oversight and block any changes it deemed discriminatory or illegal.

Virginia is still covered by the Voting Rights Act. However, three communities—the City of Fairfax, and the Counties of Frederick and Shenandoah—have received exemption from the "pre-clearance" clause because of their demonstrated excellent records of compliance with federal and state law guaranteeing voting rights. Many other Virginia communities with equally solid records are sure to follow.
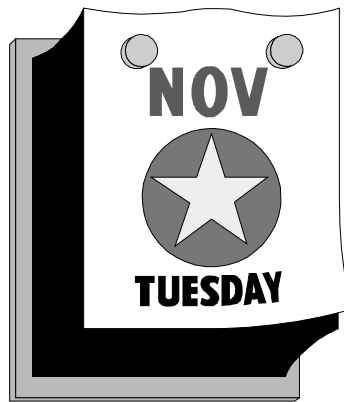
Bits and Bytes

BY Robert F. Nawrocki, CRM, Electronic Records Coordinator

Electronic Records Guidelines
The Library of Virginia's revised Electronic Records Guidelines were approved at the June meeting of the Library of Virginia's Board. Once they are approved the guidelines will be posted on the Library of Virginia Web site. The electronic records chapter of the Virginia Public Records Management Manual is also being revised.

Got Mail?
Would you be interested in a workshop on Managing E-Mail? If you are please drop me a note at rnawrocki@lva.lib.va.us. Also let me know what other electronic records workshops you would be interested in attending.

CD or DVD?
DVDs hold significantly more information than CD-ROMs, 4.7 gigabytes vs. 650 megabytes. Before making the switch you need to remember that there are three competing standards for writing to DVD. There are DVD-RW, DVD+RW, and DVD-RAM and there is no reader that can read all three standards. Each of these standards is supported by a different group of manufacturers. There should be a decision on the accepted standard soon.

DNA Could Save The Day-

But You've Got To Know Where To Find It!

BY William Henson, CRM, Records and Information Management Analyst

Newspapers are filled with stories of how science and technology provide law enforcement agencies with new ways of collecting evidence and solving crimes. This is an area that **Suzanne Ray,** agency records officer for the **Division of Forensic Science (DFS),** knows well. She assumed the duties of agency records officer in 1990, when DFS became a separate division within the Department of General Services, and continued in this capacity after the division was transferred to the Department of Criminal Justice Services in 1996.

The Division of Forensic Science has about 250 employees who work in four laboratories located in Richmond, Fairfax, Norfolk, and Roanoke. They serve law enforcement agencies statewide by performing scientific analyses on evidence recovered from crime scenes, providing training, and performing other support services. DFS is a comprehensive program encompassing the traditional forensic science disciplines of drug analysis, toxicology, firearms and toolmarks, trace evidence, latent prints, questioned documents, and forensic biology (DNA). The labs also do work in related sub-disciplines, such as impressions and image enhancement.

Recent advances in DNA analysis capability are prompting a re-examination of case files from as long ago as 1974. Increased demand for evaluation and subsequent additional reports underscores the importance of carefully maintaining and preserving these important records. DFS currently generates almost 75,000 case files per year statewide. These files must be accurately retained, up-to-date, and readily available when examiners require them for court testimony or to respond to any inquiries about a case. For those reasons, and because of severe space limitations, DFS first began working with the Library of Virginia's **State Records Center (SRC)** almost twenty years ago. Records retention schedules were developed then for case files, certain training records, and a limited number of supporting documents. The laboratories generally hold their case files in-house for five years and then transfer them to the SRC for an additional 25 years. New activity may occur in the files if new evidence is submitted in an old case, a verdict is appealed, or new technology allows for additional analysis.

When it is necessary to retrieve a case file from the SRC, individuals in the regional labs submit their requests to an authorized person, who maintains a log and channels all requests to Suzanne. All Central Lab requests are made directly to her. On receipt of files from the SRC she logs them in and forwards them to the requestor. Case files are sent to the regional labs via DFS security couriers, or in rare cases via UPS or other overnight carrier. The division's relationship over the years with the SRC has been a beneficial one that has provided a secure, central location for all but the most recent case files and has allowed for prompt and accurate retrieval and re-filing.

In addition to her records management duties, Suzanne also serves as the division's Forensic Laboratory Business Manager. She holds degrees in history and public administration, and previously worked for eight years on the archives side of the Library of Virginia in the local records section. When she is not working with old forensic case files, Suzanne enjoys reading, genealogy, and numerous other interests. She is also active in the Bellevue Security Patrol, Neighborhood Watch, and her church.

So You Want To Be Our Print Shop Manager

(We have a little surprise for you!)

BY Russ Riter, Records and Information Management Analyst

Joining **Arlington County** in 1999 as their Printing and Mail Manager, **William (Bill) Neff** was surprised to learn that one of the jobs that went along with the print shop was that of county records manager. After 28 years in the printing business and having worked for large printing companies Bill's organizational skills and abilities were put to the test.

Bill took his first steps into the world of records management in 1999. He contacted the Library of Virginia, Records Management and Imaging Services Division to ask for assistance. Armed with the Virginia Public Records Management Manual and a working outline, Bill went to work. He organized the county's records transfer lists by destruction dates and began to use the Library of Virginia retention and disposition schedules.

Looking around at the county offices Bill soon realized that a major job of coordination was ahead of him. A single county agency might have offices in multiple locations. Bill credits his time and experience as a printing production manager with mail management responsibilities as being most helpful in coordinating records management at the various office locations in Arlington County.

His next move was to look at the records storage area for the county. Bill jokes that after seeing the storage area he seriously con-

sidered arson as the best possible option for the county's records management program. Dismissing arson as an option Bill moved on. Once he had a handle on the records of the various county offices, Bill set out to introduce the different offices to the State Records Management Program.

In February 2001, records analysts from the Library of Virginia conducted two workshops for the county employees on the state's records management program. Basic Records Management and Electronic Records workshops were presented to approximately 75 county employees at the Arlington County Central Library. Bill credits the coffee and sweet rolls with being the primary motivating reason for the large turnout.

After attending several conferences and workshops dealing with the various facets of records management, Bill has turned his attention to the county's electronic records. With the assistance and support of his agency director, Hank Leavitt, a task force has been put together to address the issue of electronic records and the possibility of implementing a county-wide imaging system. Several different departments of the county are involved with the task force, and the county's Department of Technology Services is playing a vital role in the study. Analysts from the Library of Virginia have met with the task force and have provided input. Currently, the task force is in the process of developing a work flow chart and is engaged in looking at vendors for the system.

The county is looking into a system that will scan records to CD and also generate microfilm. The intent is to place the short-term records of the county on CD and to use mixed media to maintain the long-term records. The intent of the dual system is to allow the citizens of the county access to public records via the Internet using a CD based system and to preserve the long-term records on microfilm. Bill says that the county is actively engaged in seeing that all systems and output meet all state and federal regulations for records and security.

Bill has attended several conferences and workshops sponsored by the Library of Virginia in his capacity as Arlington's records manager. He is a member of the Virginia Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators and has found the interaction between its members to be most helpful as he learns and grows in his records management position.

Scan-On

BY Richard M. Harrington, Manager, Imaging Services Branch

Image File Types or Formats – Why They Are Important!

You have probably heard the acronyms such as TIFF, JPEG, or PDF being bandied about by IT people, salespersons, and an occasional co-worker who wants to seem in the "know." There are many image file types currently available besides these three. Including the above, some of the more common are:

Name File	Extension
Bitmap	.bmp
Flashpix	.fpx
Graphics Interchange Format	.gif
ImagePac; PhotoCD	.pcd
Joint Photographic Expert Group	.jpg or .jif Paintbrush .pcx
Photoshop	.eps
Pixar	.pxr
Portable Document Format	.pdf
Portable Network Graphics	.png
Tagged Image File Format	.tiff

You can identify the image type or format by the file extension. This file extension appears with every file. In Word documents, the file extension is .doc, and in Excel, it is .xls. The above file extensions can be used to identify the type of image file format being used by your system when scanning documents or importing them for viewing. To see the file extensions on your computer, don't forget to turn on the button for viewing file extensions in your Windows program.

With all of these formats available, why should you be concerned with which one to use? The primary reason is the need to display the image over a wide variety of computers and software. Ever try to open an image someone sent to you via e-mail only to find that your computer could not open it? Some other reasons for being concerned with file types or formats are: proprietary versus open formats, access systems and performance, long-term use and storage, and initial costs versus long-term costs.

A proprietary format is one that has been created by a particular vendor for use with the vendor's system or software. These formats may end up being supported by only that vendor, making the life expectancy of the images produced dependent on that single company! You may find it far more critical to view an image without special supporting applications, but in an open format that is widely supported, rather than in a proprietary format.

What are the demands on your system? Do you have a small network or a stand-alone system? If the images are large, how quickly will they travel over the network? Do you have a large enough storage system in which to retain the images? Is the work of indexing and making corrections to the image going to be done at the user's desktop or from the server? Addressing these questions can help in determining what file formats you should use.

Are you planning to keep the images permanently or are they transient copies? Deciding on the retention of the original records before imaging will help determine what type of image format should be used. In addition, will you be planning to convert the original master image file to another format (called a derivative) in order to make it more easily accessible? The more information there is in the original master image, the better the derivatives produced from that image will be. This means using an extremely detailed file format such as a Tiff image using grayscale (various shades of gray including black and white) to capture the original record.

Ensuring that image files are flexible and can be easily processed is cost effective. Too much compression or too low a resolution may save money up front, but cost more later. Remember, what you know about file formats can go a long way in helping to make the decisions — that will produce a successful project.

ASK RECMAN   BY Frank English, Records and Information Management Analyst

Editor's Note: "Recman" is our general e-mail address for records management questions: recman@lva.lib.va.us. Questions and answers selected for publication are limited to those that the compiler believes may have a wide audience or general interest. Names and agencies of the correspondents are not published. Please contact us if you have a question.

How do I cancel workshop registrations?

We have an electronic workshop registration form on our Web site. The form enters your registration information in a database that is pre-set to allow a specific number of reservations, depending on available class room size. Once the class is full, no more reservations can be taken. Unfortunately, there is no automatic way to cancel a registration. If you cannot attend a workshop, please send a message to recman@lva.lib.va.us asking that your registration be deleted. We will delete your registration. This will open up space for another person to register.

Why aren't my agency specific schedules available on the Library of Virginia Web site?

Agency specific schedules apply only to a limited amount of records managers. We have consciously decided not to put agency specific schedules on our Web site. They are public records, however, and any agency may put their own specific schedules on their own sites, if it is prudent for business purposes.

Should I destroy unused copies of the 3-part Certificate of Records Disposal (RM-3 Form), printed before 1998?

When the Library of Virginia was pre-approving the disposal of records we used NCR type, 3-ply carbon sets for the RM-3 Form. We no longer require prior approval for records disposal, and our form has been changed. Please destroy any unused RM-3s still on the NCR sets. If you have created new carbon sets for your use based on versions of the RM-3 from November 1999 or later, please continue using them.

Miscellaneous Files

Web Site Changes

By the time you receive this newsletter, our Web site will have been reorganized. The location of all our files will have moved, and your bookmarks to our site will have to be changed. The address for the Library's home page, www.lva.lib.va.us, remains the same. To find Records Management, go to the Library's home page, then click on "What We Do," scroll down to "Services for Government," and then click on "Records Management." The organization of the Records Management pages has not greatly changed, but you will still need to establish new bookmarks.
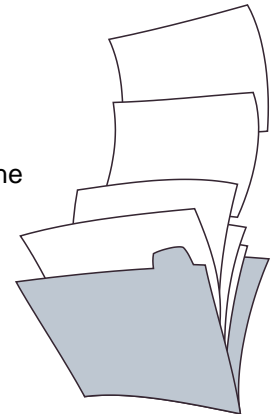
Virginia Records and Information Management Week

Virginia Records and Information Management Week, held on April 1-5, appears to have been a success. We started off with a breakfast sponsored by VAGARA, had six well attended workshops and ended with a Legality of Electronic Records seminar sponsored by the Richmond Chapter of ARMA. Featured speakers included John Montaña and Robert "Bob" Nawrocki, Electronic Records Coordinator. We wish to thank VAGARA Past President Joanne Smith for organizing the week's activities.

More General Schedules Being Distributed

The Records Officers will be receiving GS-15 and GS 16 in the accompanying mailing. The most recent versions of all general schedules can be found on our Web site.

We hope you enjoy this issue and welcome your comments and suggestions for future editions.