



SPNHC Newsletter

Society for the Preservation
of Natural History Collections

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Society has recently completed its Annual General Meeting and it is a pleasure to report that the first year of the Five-year-plan has been successful. Appreciation is extended to the Local Committee at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, for the high quality of the conference. Appreciation also is extended to the Council, committees, moderators, and speakers for their contributions to the program. Finally, the workshop on Quality Management-Quality Collection Care summed up the functional relationships between knowing what to do to protect our collections and having the resources gathered to get the job done.

The mission of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections is to 'improve preservation, conservation, and management of natural history collections to ensure their continuing value to society.' To put this into practice the Society has spent the past year working towards a series of goals. The following summarizes what has been accomplished to date.

The first goal of the SPNHC Five-year-plan is to 'increase awareness of the need to improve the management, care, and utilization of natural history collections throughout the world.' Accomplishments this past year include:

1. SPNHC was represented at the Second World Congress on the Preservation and Conservation of Natural History Collections, hosted by the University of Cambridge. This provided the opportunity to inform a worldwide audience of the existence of SPNHC as well as its importance to them.
2. SPNHC has been providing input into the planning process behind the formation of the World Council on Collections Resources.
3. SPNHC has facilitated discussion on natural history collections through the NHCOLL-L discussion list server on the internet.
4. SPNHC now has a WWW site that provides world wide access to SPNHC information.
5. SPNHC sponsors a traveling display for US conferences that features products that are useful for natural history collections care.
6. SPNHC is preparing a similar traveling display for

Canadian conferences. It will be available for viewing at the 1998 Annual Meeting in Edmonton.

The second goal of the SPNHC Five-year-plan is to 'increase professionalism in collections management and care, and to promote its recognition in the natural history and museum communities.' Accomplishments this past year include:

1. The Sessional Committee on Professionalism was created and has been reviewing the role that SPNHC may play in promoting professional development of individuals responsible for the care and management of collections.

The third goal of the SPNHC Five-year-plan is to 'increase the body of knowledge on the care and management of natural history collections, and improve its accessibility.' Accomplishments this past year include:

1. The two issues of the SPNHC Newsletter listed citations of recent publications concerning care or management of natural history collections.
2. One issue of *Collection Forum* was published and the next issue is near completion.
3. The book based on the proceedings of the herbarium workshop in Toronto is near completion and soon will be available.
4. Progress is being made to produce a glossary of natural history collections terms, a bibliography of existing standards and guidelines used for natural history collections, a note in SPNHC newsletter on research priorities for natural history collections, and a draft report on assessment of wet collections.
5. The Annual Meeting in Madison included high-quality papers and posters followed by a workshop on Quality Management-Quality Collection Care.

The fourth goal of the SPNHC Five-year-plan is to 'increase collaboration with other organizations to implement SPNHC objectives.' Accomplishments this past year include:

1. SPNHC continues to have representatives attending annual meetings at the American Institute of Conservation and the National Institute of Conservation.
2. This year SPNHC sent a representative to the annual meeting of the Registrar's Committee of the American Association of Museums and had an invited guest from the Registrar's Committee attend the SPNHC Annual

Meeting.

3. SPNHC continues to interact with the Association of Systematics Collections on initiatives that serve both organizations.

The fifth goal of the Five-year-plan is to 'expand membership and increase participation in SPNHC activities.' Accomplishments this past year include:

1. SPNHC accepted 99 new members, maintaining the membership level from the previous year.

The sixth goal of the Five-year-plan is to 'maintain and improve the operational effectiveness of SPNHC.' Accomplishments this past year include:

1. An annual plan was written, progress was reviewed semiannually, and a final assessment was done at the 1997 Annual Meeting; this Newsletter article serves as the report to members of the progress.

2. Two new Members-at-Large were elected.

3. The budget for 1996-97 was well managed and reported on at regular intervals by the Treasurer. At this point SPNHC manages a balanced budget and has a reserve fund exceeding \$100,000.

4. The SPNHC archive guidelines are being reviewed and recommendations for improvement are being prepared.

5. The Annual Meeting for 1998 will be in Edmonton, Canada; invitations for specific sites in the years 1999 and 2000 are being finalized.

In summary, evidence indicates that the Council and committees of SPNHC are doing a good job of managing and operating the Society. The primary challenges are to 1) process a greater number of quality manuscripts for publication in *Collection Forum*, 2) increase membership, and 3) continue serving the membership. As President, I will continue my efforts to improve the Society. If you have suggestions for making SPNHC work better, please feel free to contact me.

Grant Hughes (President)

SCHEDULED CHANGES IN SPNHC LEADERSHIP

Carolyn Leckie (Denver Museum of Natural History) and Linda Thomas (Pratt Museum of Natural History) were elected as incoming Members-at-Large to serve three-year terms. The SPNHC membership is grateful to the services provided by the out-going Members-at-Large, Paisley Cato, and Suzanne McLaren.

Lisa Palmer of the Smithsonian Institution will become the next SPNHC Treasurer. She will replace Julia Golden at the end of 1997. The membership of SPNHC is indebted to Julia for her service. During the 1997 Annual General Meeting of the membership, she was recognized by the SPNHC Council for her hard work as Treasurer over the last four years. President Grant Hughes presented Julia with a special plaque acknowledging her efforts and emphasizing the role that she has played for SPNHC.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations were opened at the 1997 Annual Meeting for the following officers: President-Elect, Secretary, and two Members-at-Large. All members of SPNHC are eligible to nominate candidates for these positions. All members in good standing, except current members of Council, may accept nominations for these positions.

In selecting nominees, please consider your contacts with other members, as well as those members who you feel could help the Society continue its services. Once a nomination is received, the Election Committee will contact all people suggested and ask if they are willing to serve in the elected position. The final date for receipt of nominations is 31 October 1997.

It is an easy way to help make an important difference to SPNHC! For further information, or for submitting nominations, please contact Judith C. Price, Chair of the Election Committee (Canadian Museum of Nature; P. O. Box 3443, Station D; Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6P4; Canada; phone, 613-954-7679; fax, 613-954-7675; e-mail, jprice@mus-nature.ca).

TREASURER'S REPORT

In 1996, the Society reached a major milestone—the total net assets reached \$100,000. Membership and subscriptions have remained stable at about 675, and sales of the two storage books have continued to generate revenue. At the Annual General Meeting, the membership approved an operating budget for 1997 of \$39,625.00.

It was announced that Lisa Palmer will succeed me as SPNHC Treasurer. The transition will officially occur at midnight on 31 December 1997. This will allow me to handle all business for the fiscal year 1997, and complete the audit and tax preparations for the current year. This is the same procedure followed during the previous transition of the Treasurer's office. By staggering some of the responsibilities, the new Treasurer can focus on the duties that have the most direct impact on the membership. Although dues notices for 1998 will be sent by me, payments will be sent to Lisa Palmer. This plan should make the transition flow smoothly, with little notice by the membership. We appreciate the fact that Lisa has volunteered to take over as Treasurer. It is a position that is very important to the success of the organization.

It is a pleasure to be able to transfer a fiscally secure Society to the new Treasurer. Until then, I will continue to handle financial affairs. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Council and the membership for the confidence, cooperation, and patience provided during my term of office. It has been a pleasure and a honor to have served the Society in this capacity. Appreciation also is extended to the Department of Geology and Campus Mail System, University of Iowa for their generous support.

Julia Golden (Treasurer)

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The members of the Finance Committee work closely with the Treasurer and oversee revenues and expenditures. The success of both Storage books has resulted in new revenues as well as new financial responsibilities. The Committee has investigated reasonable investment strategies while monitoring debt payments and growing assets. Council approved in principle a preliminary investment plan which incorporates most of the uncommitted assets in a variety of investment mechanisms. The investment goal is to produce additional revenue for future publications and educational ventures. In the near future, a finalized investment plan will be proposed for Council approval. Current interest generation allows the funding of the Faber Award.

The Finance Committee is looking for members with an interest in working on the Committee. Although the Committee's function is quite different than that of most other parts of the Society, the supporting role is very important, and fresh ideas are always welcome. Please send your inquiries to President Hughes or to Finance Committee Co-chairs Julia Golden or Sue McLaren (Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 5800 Baum Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 152063706; phone 412-665-2615; fax 412-665-2751)..

Sue McLaren (Co-Chair)

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE USES CO-CHAIRS

Lori Benson of the Science Museum of Minnesota has recently agreed to serve as Co-chair the Membership Committee with Ann Pinzl. In addition to other Committee activities, Lori will provide membership flyers, publication brochures, flamingo posters, and information about the Society. For assistance she may be contacted at the Science Museum of Minnesota, 30 East 10th Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102 (phone, 612-221-9435; fax, 612-221-4525; e-mail, benson@sci.mus.mn.us).

CALL FOR 1998 AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Awards and Recognition Committee is accepting nominations for The SPNHC Award and The President's Award. These awards are given only when an appropriate candidate is identified. Final decisions are based on documentary information and approval from the SPNHC Council.

The SPNHC Award recognizes an individual's achievements, perhaps life-time achievements, that serve as a significant contribution to the objectives of the Society. Nominees of the SPNHC Award may be a member or non-member.

The President's Award is given in recognition of a SPNHC member's distinguished service to the

development and continued success of SPNHC. Nominees must have performed significant service to the Society, outside of Presidential positions. Normally, this would involve exceptional service to offices, committees, and/or ongoing activities of SPNHC. Nominees must be current or previous members of SPNHC.

For both awards, multiple nominations for the same individual are encouraged. Nominations must include the name of the nominee, name of the award proposed, a description of important contributions of the nominee, and other information supporting consideration of the nominee for the award in question.

Nominations and related questions should be directed by 30 November 1997 to Gregory Brown, Chair of the Awards and Recognition Committee (University of Nebraska State Museum, W-436 Nebraska Hall, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0514; phone, 402-472-2657; fax, 402-472-8949; e-mail, gbrown@unlinfo.unl.edu).

CALL FOR THE 1998 FABER AWARD PROPOSALS

The Awards and Recognition Committee is requesting proposals for a \$1000 cash award to be given for the best project addressing issues on the management, care, conservation, or use of natural history collections. Applicants for the Faber Award must be SPNHC members in good standing for at least 1 year prior to the award date.

The successful applicant will be expected to present a final or interim report at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the Society. Also, the successful applicant will be expected to publish the results, with the understanding that the manuscript will be sent first to the SPNHC Editorial Committee for the first right of refusal.

Each applicant may submit only one proposal per funding period. The cover sheet should include a project title, name(s) of project personnel (including title, address, and phone/fax number), and a single-line spaced, 100-word abstract describing the proposed project. The proposal text should include a statement of purpose, project plan (e.g., participants, methods, materials, schedule of completion, etc.), and proposed use of funds. The application, including cover page, will not exceed 10 pages. The text will have one-inch margins, 10-12 characters per inch, and double-line spacing. Curriculum vita of the principal investigator and letters of commitment may be single-line spaced and attached as an appendix.

Questions regarding proposals should be directed to the members of the Awards and Recognition Committee. Proposals must be postmarked before 31 January 1998. Send proposals to Gregory Brown, Chair of the Awards and Recognition Committee (University of Nebraska State Museum, W-436 Nebraska Hall, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0514; phone, 402-472-2657; fax, 402-472-8949; e-mail, gbrown@unlinfo.unl.edu).

SPNHC 97: NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS ON CAMPUS

The 12th Annual Meeting of SPNHC was hosted by The Natural History Museums Council at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 8-14 July 1997. The central theme for the meeting was Natural History Collections on Campus to provide an opportunity to address important differences between university collections and museum collections.

The first day was featured with the beginning of registration, committee meetings with coordinated schedules and full accommodations, and local field trips. The second day included an open house of the university collections, the first Council Meeting, and the traditional evening icebreaker. The third day consisted of a full day of quality presentations. Hugh Genoways gave the keynote address, entitled "Challenges for University Science Museum Directors." The evening ended with the annual banquet, followed by a dance. The fourth day included the Annual General Meeting of the membership and a continuation of quality presentations. The day ended with a panel session discussing the pros and cons of charging fees for collection data, followed by the second Council Meeting. The final days featured a two-day workshop, entitled Quality Management - Quality Collections Care.

Those members who attended the 12th Annual Meeting enjoyed an exceptional meeting. The University is situated on the edge of an attractive lake that accommodates all water sports. Many attendees used the evenings to sail onto the lake to watch the sunsets. Others walked the bike trails, or the streets with shops and restaurants, leading to the capital building.

The Local Committee provided a multitude of services and arranged schedules such that the entire meeting was fully accommodating, yet maintaining a fine balance between relaxation and invigoration. Although the number of attendees was down somewhat from some previous meetings, there were almost 50 presentations, which collectively established a solid, professionally relevant, program.

The SPNHC membership is indebted to the Local Committee and the University of Wisconsin-Madison for hosting the meeting. A special thanks is extended to Steven Krauth for his efforts in making this event possible.

Further details about the meeting can be obtained by contacting Stephen Krauth (University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706; e-mail, entcoll@macc.wisc.edu).

SPNHC '98 IN EDMONTON

Plans are now underway for SPNHC'98 in Edmonton, Alberta, from the 26th to the 31st of May. For those who missed the presentation in Madison, the conference will have something of interest for everyone. The University of Alberta holds a collection of 17 million objects housed in

20 academic units. At the University of Alberta, the Department of Museums and Collections Services assists academic units with the management, preservation, care, accessibility and interpretation of these collections, and will be coordinating the local arrangements for the conference. In addition to campus tours, it is intended that attendees will be able to visit some of the local sites, including the Muttart Conservatory, the Provincial Museum of Alberta, and the Devonian Botanic Gardens.

The Local Committee also is exploring the possibility of facilitating some pre- and post- conference site visits, to help fill available time. Details regarding the call for abstracts and posters, the workshop, accommodations, program, and the banquet, will be available soon. So, watch your mailboxes, check out the SPNHC web site, and look for updates on various other museum-related listserves. The Local Committee is looking forward to hosting the 1998 Annual Meeting in Edmonton next May!

If you have any questions about next year's conference, contact Museums and Collections Services, University of Alberta (phone, 403-492-5834; e-mail, museums@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca).

SPNHC'99 AND SPNHC'2000

The SPNHC Council has received invitations to host Annual Meetings beyond 1998. The Conservation Analytical Laboratory of the Smithsonian Institution, represented by David Von Endt, is hoping to offer Washington, D.C. as a meeting site in 1999. For the year 2000, the proposed meeting site is in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This invitation comes from the Geological Survey of Canada, represented by Iris Hardy, and the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, represented by Alex Wilson. The members of SPNHC are appreciative of the interest and commitment expressed by these institutions and individuals.

ASC'S ELAINE HOAGLAND ACCEPTS NEW POSITION

After more than 10 years as Executive Director of Association of Systematics Collections (ASC), Elaine Hoagland is resigning to become the National Executive Officer of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). CUR primarily represents faculty at undergraduate institutions who are interested in maintaining an active research career, and who involve undergraduates in research. The membership of SPNHC has benefited greatly from the joint projects of SPNHC and ASC, and it wishes her much success in her new position. It is intended that the strong bridges built between the organizations, developed partly through Elaine's efforts, will continue in the future.

SPNHC LEAFLETS

SPNHC Leaflets represent a publication supplement enclosed with some of the previous SPNHC Newsletters. These supplements are intended to provide subject-oriented technical information that can be useful for the management and care of natural history collections.

The titles of the first two SPNHC Leaflets are "Anoxic Microenvironments: A Simple Guide" and "Adhesives and Consolidants in Geological and Paleontological Conservation: A Wall Chart." Because these publications have been popular, the SPNHC Council has decided to continue the series with a goal of producing one each year, as an additional benefit to SPNHC members.

Based on current format, production levels, and frequency, no additional costs will be transferred to individual members. However, individual members are encouraged to contribute to the series by submitting manuscripts to the SPNHC Publications Committee. Inquiries should be directed to John Simmons, Chair of the Publications Committee (Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas; Lawrence, Kansas 66045-2454; phone, 913-864-3342).

STATUS OF WCCR

The Co-chairs of the Task Force for the development of the World Council for Collection Resources (WCCR), Drs. Des Griffin and Muhammed Isahakia, have been interacting globally to establish the need and focus of the organization. Since the meeting in Cambridge, individuals from several countries have been selected to serve on the task force or to be the advisors in the process of developing the WCCR. Additionally, questionnaires have been distributed worldwide to gain a consensus of how the WCCR can best serve the interests of that part of the natural history community that is affiliated with collections.

At the 1997 Annual Meeting, the SPNHC Council and Committee Chairs discussed the questionnaire and made recommendations to the Task Force. Since the meeting, President Grant Hughes has solicited opinions from the SPNHC leadership as to the positions SPNHC will take with respect to questionnaire responses. This information will be incorporated with that from other organizations to provide further direction and development of the WCCR.

STATUS OF SPNHC HERBARIUM BOOK

"Managing the Modern Herbarium: An Interdisciplinary Approach" is being published jointly by SPNHC and the Royal Ontario Museum Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology. This publication follows from the workshop entitled "Managing the Modern Herbarium," that was held in Toronto in 1995.

The book, now in the final stages of preparation, will be approximately 300 pages in a 7"x10" format. The 30+ contributions range from short abstracts on herbarium techniques to full length papers. The book is divided into two parts.

Part I, "Preventive Conservation and Collections Management" is divided into five sections: Setting the Stage; Creating the Physical Herbarium; The Chemistry of Herbarium Materials and Storage; Aspects of Herbarium Operations; and a Partial Bibliography of Herbarium Resources.

Part II, "Destructive Sampling and Molecular Systematics: Are We Moving Toward a Consensus" comprises the six original symposium presentations. The papers offer an interdisciplinary perspective on the use of herbarium/museum materials in molecular systematics with coverage for plants, fungi, vertebrates, and insects. The section concludes with the position paper on the subject which was produced at the workshop.

This book is intended as a comprehensive resource guide for all those concerned with the maintenance and use of collections of plants and fungi. Additional details of publication will be circulated shortly.

CONSERVATOR'S EMPORIUM

Conservator's Emporium has recently been opened by William and Yolanda Foster, formerly with Conservation Materials, also in Reno. Bill keeps up the business end and Yolanda is a chemist; together they hope to maintain the personal attention which was a hallmark of Conservation Materials under Doug Adams. Conservator's Emporium is at 100 Standing Rock Circle, Reno, Nevada 89511 (phone, 702-852-0404; fax, 702-852-3737). This new company's name is not Kustom Conservation as has been reported previously.

RESOURCES DISPLAY AVAILABLE FOR LOAN

The Resources Subcommittee of the Conservation Committee maintains a display of supplies and materials that are currently preferred for use in museums for the storage and preservation of natural history collections. Examples of items included in the display are: materials used in the construction of storage containers and specimen supports; equipment for monitoring storage environments (e.g., humidity, temperature, insects); and a selection of containers for the storage of collections and documentation. The exhibit is available for loan to interested parties for meetings, conferences, and other museum-related activities. For additional information, or to borrow the display, contact Cindy Ramotnik (U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131; phone, 505-766-2811; fax, 505-

277-0304; e-mail, ramotnik@unm.edu). More details about the display will be available via a Resources Display link to the SPNHC homepage.

MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

The 1997 Annual Meeting workshop, entitled 'Quality Management - Quality Collection Care' was held on 12-13 July. The workshop was team-taught by Mary Case and Will Phillips of Qm². The interactive workshop focused on middle management strategies for successfully completing projects. The workshop was attended by about 20 individuals, and was supported by the Institute for Library and Museum Services, Huntington T. Block Insurance, Inc., and a private donor. Qm² will be investigating possibilities for repeating the workshop so that more SPNHC members can take advantage of this professional training opportunity.

DISCOUNTED PUBLICATIONS

Julia Golden has 10 slightly damaged copies of the first storage book (*Ideas and Practical Solutions*) that will be sold at half-price (\$20). For more information fax J. Golden at 319-335-1821.

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

September 7-11 — International Committee on Documentation in Nuremberg, Germany. For information contact CIDOC Jahrestagung 1997, Germanische Nationalmuseum, Kartausergasse 1, D-90402 Nuremberg, Germany (phone, 49-911-1331-179; fax, 49-911-1331-193).

September 16-18 — 'Identification of Geological Materials' in Denver, Colorado. For more information contact Sally Shelton, San Diego Natural History Museum, P. O. Box 1390, San Diego, California 92112 (phone, 619-232-3821 x226; fax, 619-232-0248; e-mail, libsdnhm@class.org).

September 21-27 — International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP) in Berlin, Germany. For information contact FHTW Berlin, Fachbereich 8, Studiengang Museumkunde, Blankenburger Pflasterweg 102, D-13129 Berlin, Germany (phone, 49-30-47401-301; fax, 49-30-47401-201; e-mail, ruge@rz.b.fhtw-berlin.de).

September 23-26 — 'Anoxic Enclosures and Microenvironments in Museum Storage and Exhibits' in New Haven, Connecticut. For more information contact Sally Shelton, San Diego Natural History Museum, P. O. Box 1390, San Diego, California 92112 (phone, 619-232-3821 x226; fax, 619-232-0248; e-mail, libsdnhm@class.org).

October 11 — Wood and Furniture Conservation Symposium in Amsterdam, Netherlands. For more information call 31-20-6767933, or fax 31-20-6755191.

October 18-22 — 'Preservation of Cultural Heritage: Towards a European Profile of the Conservator-Restorer' at the University of Pavia, Italy. For more information contact Associazione Giovanni Secco Suardo, Via Mazzini 13, 24050 Lurano (Bergamo), Italy (phone, 39-35-800530; fax, 39-35-800531).

October 26-30 — International Committee on Management in Haifa, Israel. For information contact Haifa Museum, 26 Shabtai Levy St., P. O. Box 45134, Haifa 31451, Israel (phone, 972-4-853-0718; fax, 972-4-855-2714; e-mail, haifa8@netvision.net.il/neweng.html).

November 18-20 — 'The Built Environment: Bringing the Past into the 21st Century - Policy, Materials, and Systems' in Boston, Massachusetts. For more information contact Technology & Conservation, 76 Highland Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts 02143 (phone, 617-623-4488).

December 8-12 — 'Preserving Natural History Collections' in Washington, DC. For further information contact CAL Education and Training, MRC 534, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560.

May 10-14 (1998) — Annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums in Los Angeles. For information contact AAM, 1575 Eye St., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005 (phone, 202-289-9113; fax, 202-289-6578).

May 18-22 (1998) — 'The Conservation of Human Mummified Remains' in Arica, Chile (deadline for abstracts is October 1997). For more information contact Debra Meier, University of Nebraska State Museum, 307 Morrill Hall, 14th and U, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0332 (fax, 402-472-8899; e-mail, dmeier@unlinfo2.unl.edu).

June 1-7 (1998) — Annual Meeting of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works in Washington, DC. For further information contact AIC, 1717 K Street, N.W., Suite. 301. Washington, DC (fax, 202-452-9328).

August 2-4 (1998) — Annual Meeting of the Association of Systematics Collections in Baltimore, Maryland. For additional information contact ASC, 725 K Street, NW, Suite 601, Washington, DC 20006-1401 (phone, 202-835-9050; fax 202-835-7334).

September 7-11 (1998) — International Congress of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Dublin. For information contact IIC, 6 Buckingham St., London WC2N 6BA, UK (fax, 44-0-171-976-1564; e-mail, iicon@compuserve.com).

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

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SPNHC 1997-1998**SPNHC COUNCIL
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