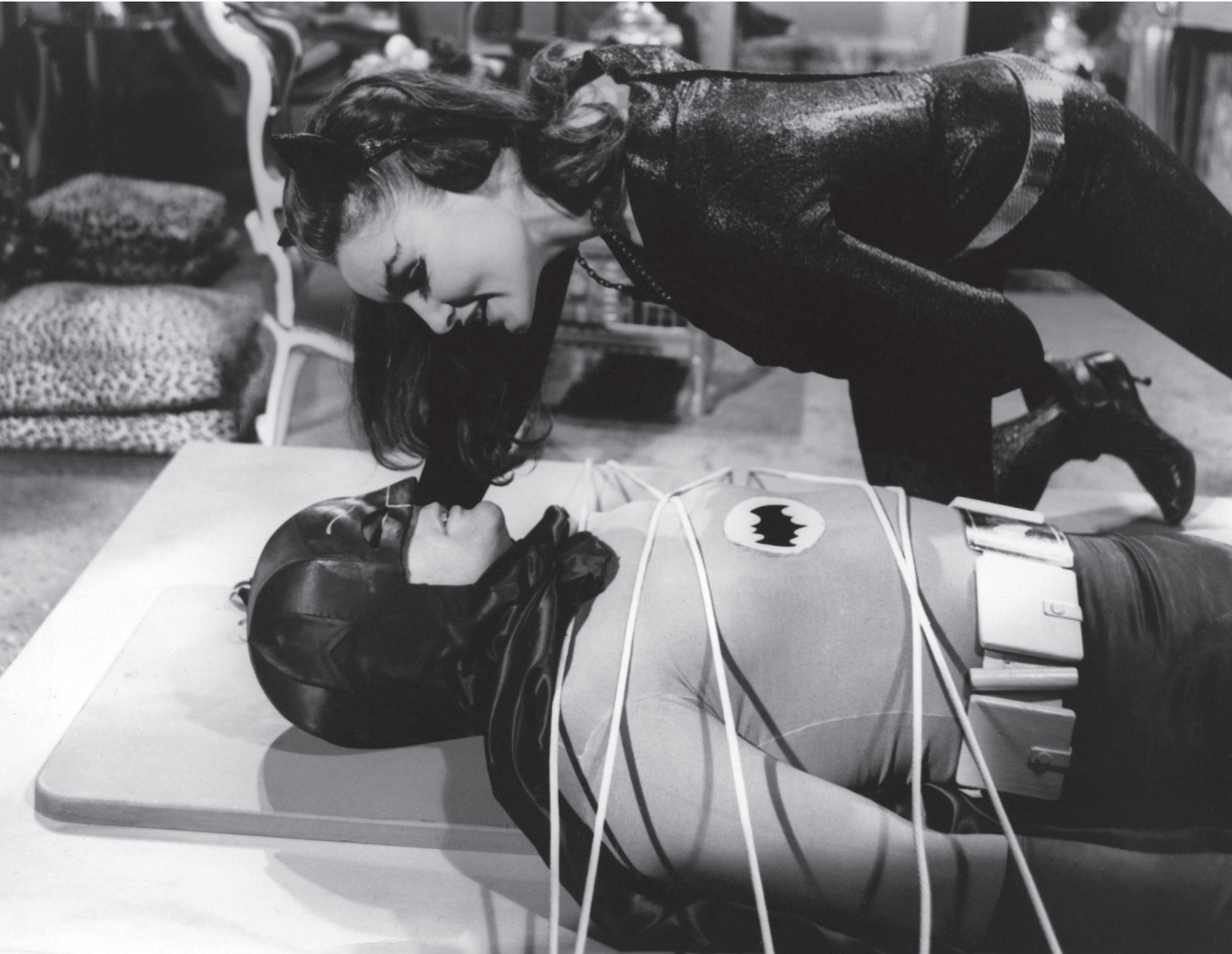


ARCHIVAL

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November/December 2019

Published by the Society of American Archivists



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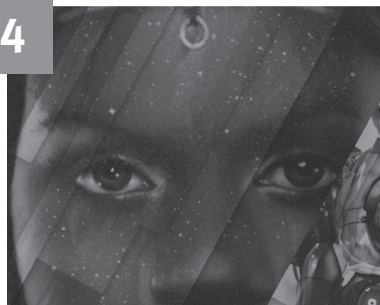


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COVER PHOTO

Cat-napped! Catwoman (played by Julie Newmar) taunts Batman (Adam West) as he's tied to a giant mousetrap in the episode "That Darn Catwoman" (1967) from the *Batman* television series (1966–1968). The photo is from the papers of William Dozier, the show's executive producer and narrator. A recent episode of *Archives on the Air*, a collaboration between the American Heritage Center and Wyoming Public Radio (read more on page 3), highlighted the reception that Dozier received from irate *Batman* comic book fans. One comment from a 1966 letter said, "Dear Mr. Dozier . . . I congratulate you, you did it. You mutilated Batman beyond absorption." *Courtesy of American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.*



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Meredith Evans

president@archivists.org

How Do You Measure a Volunteer?

As I reflect on the past few months, I'm reminded of Kathleen Roe's remarks at the 2014 Annual Meeting, in which she opened with the lyrics from "Seasons of Love" from the musical *Rent*:

525,600 minutes, 525,000 moments so dear.

525,600 minutes—how do you measure,
measure a year?

In daylights, in sunsets, in midnights, in cups
of coffee.

In inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife.

In 525,600 minutes—how do you measure a
year in the life?

My mind raced to zip drives, email, defunct blog posts, tweets, and SnapChat. How do we measure a year in the life? I reflect on what I said and didn't say about the profession in my interview for *An Archivist's Tale* (listen to episode 83 at <http://ow.ly/2jIV30pEOvx>). I am reminded why I do this work—why I hope we do this work. I believe, as Dennis Meissner so eloquently stated during the Leadership Plenary at SAA's 2015 Annual Meeting, that "archives provide essential evidence to protect and enhance our rights as citizens, providing fundamental information that supports and shapes our understanding of historical events and cultural heritage. We help people understand the human experience"

(<https://www2.archivists.org/am2015/leadership-plenary-video#.XZYOCGBKhhG>).

In the same plenary, Helen Wong Smith spoke of the active process of cultural relativism, which includes self-reflection, a nonjudgmental attitude, and accepting a holistic approach to change. Along those lines I stand by my words from last year: "We must be willing to listen to one another. Really listen. Not necessarily to agree but to understand, build trust, and work together to effect change, minimize or remove obstacles, and resolve conflict."

So I ask you to share your expertise, network with colleagues, and enhance your résumé by *volunteering* with SAA. Our members are busy thinking of inventive ways to engage current audiences with the intent to bring in new ones. As we prepare for the next Annual Meeting, I get giddy thinking of what great work we'll hear about along with the bumps and bruises from the journey. I think about the growth of our organization and the ways we strive to improve, shift organizational culture, and meet members' needs. It is challenging to meet everyone's needs and to hear everyone's voices, but we're trying. We are grateful that, despite being

busy, you take the time to read SAA's publications; to support the various sections and committees with your perspectives, funds, and expertise; to schedule and run meetings in person or online; and to create reports, implement surveys, and help other archivists with your resources and talents. Everything you do to support your colleagues around the country and the world makes SAA better and more relevant.

One of the joys of SAA is the variety of perspectives (and objectives) of our members alongside the shared love for what we do. We embrace archival standards and theories and identify new ways to maintain and provide access to content that will inform generations of their histories. We are bold yet quiet; we are advocates advancing the needs of our members to stakeholders and the public through collection development, publications, programming, and outreach. We speak out and we write with allied organizations. We discuss policy and funding and fight to ensure government transparency and accountability. We advocate for the best management of records in any format under any circumstances. So what are you waiting for? Volunteer, get active, stay engaged. ■

ARCHIVAL OUTLOOK



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Archivists**

The Society of American Archivists serves the education and information needs of its members and provides leadership to help ensure the identification, preservation, and use of the nation's historical record.

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MOVING YOUR ARCHIVES FROM THE BASEMENT TO THE AIRWAVES



A Case Study in Public Radio Collaboration

Leslie Waggener and Molly Marcusse, American Heritage Center

What does it take to collaborate with public radio? In our case—just asking.

In 2018, the American Heritage Center (AHC) at the University of Wyoming began a collaboration with Wyoming Public Radio (WPR) to host one-minute stories from the wide-ranging collections held at the AHC. The series, *Archives on the Air*, airs three times a day with a new episode every weekday. WPR also includes podcasts of the series on its website at wyomingpublicmedia.org.

So How Did This Happen?

It began with AHC's Marketing Committee, a group that we formed in 2017 to highlight AHC's resources. When a WPR program titled *Wyoming Minute* caught our ears, we contacted the station to tell them about AHC's abundant Wyoming collections. That led us to Micah Schweizer, the station's cultural affairs and production director.

WPR is located on the university's campus, so it was easy to meet with Schweizer for coffee at the student union. In seeking to pique his interest in including AHC materials on *Wyoming Minute*, we soon learned he had even more ambitious plans.

As he shared in a presentation about the collaboration at SAA's 2019 Annual Meeting: "My thought was how we might use all those stories in all those boxes in the basement of the American Heritage Center to create something fresh for our listeners." He proposed that we create an entirely new one-minute series devoted to stories from the AHC. And not just Wyoming-based stories—stories on any topic within AHC's collections, which includes environment and conservation, the mining and petroleum industries, air and rail transportation, journalism, US military history, and popular entertainment.

Schweizer guessed that most people weren't familiar with the AHC's trove of fascinating material. And, as WPR seeks to put a Wyoming stamp on the national programs it airs, a collaboration like this would give those programs a Wyoming feel. "Plenty of these minutes are about Wyoming, but lots are not. I'd argue they're still local," said Schweizer. "You don't have to live in LA to be interested in Stan Lee and

You don't have to live in LA to be interested in Stan Lee and Marvel Comics. Wherever you live, if you're interested in Marvel Comics, that becomes a local subject.

Continued on page 16 >>

Writing for Broadcast: A Short Primer

When people listen to the radio, they're doing just that: listening. There's no text. There's no rewind button. People will best understand the material when it's simple and direct—written for the ear, not the eye. The mantra is: "Use the fewest, most powerful words."

Short sentences are key. Each sentence should contain one thought. (If there's a comma, give serious consideration to making it a period.) That means most sentences will have just one clause—subject, verb, object. Particularly avoid clauses at the beginning of sentences. Use active verbs.

At first, this will look like bad writing. Don't be alarmed. It's not meant to *look* good. It's meant to *sound* good. You're not writing something to be read. You're writing a script that will be spoken. In that context, short, simple sentences suddenly come to life.

For instance, take a look at this script by Philip Reeves. (He's one of the best broadcast writers—and he comes from a newspaper background!) Then take a listen: <http://www.npr.org/2015/10/27/452316219/young-afghan-smuggler-hopes-to-help-peers-find-a-future-in-europe>. (For the opposite effect, read part of a *New York Times* article aloud to a friend, and see if they understand what you're saying.)

Write the way you speak. Write conversationally. Use contractions. Don't use "dollar" words when "nickel" words will do. And talk out loud while you write. If it doesn't roll off the tongue, change the offending word or phrase.

Building New

Greg Bailey, Jeremy Brett, Francesca Marini,

Texas A&M University is famous for its traditions, but is overcoming its history, often fraught with racism and homophobia. For example, in the past the Ku Klux Klan had a presence on campus—we hold KKK robes in the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives—and in June 2019 a student video revealed how racism continues to manifest itself. A&M also used to be listed as one of the least LGBTQ+ friendly campuses. We are off that list now, and the Cushing Library, with its collections and activities, played an important role in improving the campus climate.

Our collections now cover many areas: LGBTQ+, African American history and political organizations, women's and gender studies, and international literature. We work closely with communities, such as the A&M Black Former Student Network, to develop our collections and actively engage in outreach and collaborative efforts and exhibitions, such as with the Brazos Valley African American Museum. We offer a fellowship to support researchers interested in the Don Kelly Research Collection of Gay Literature and Culture (containing more than 24,000 items), and hope to expand our fellowship program to other areas.

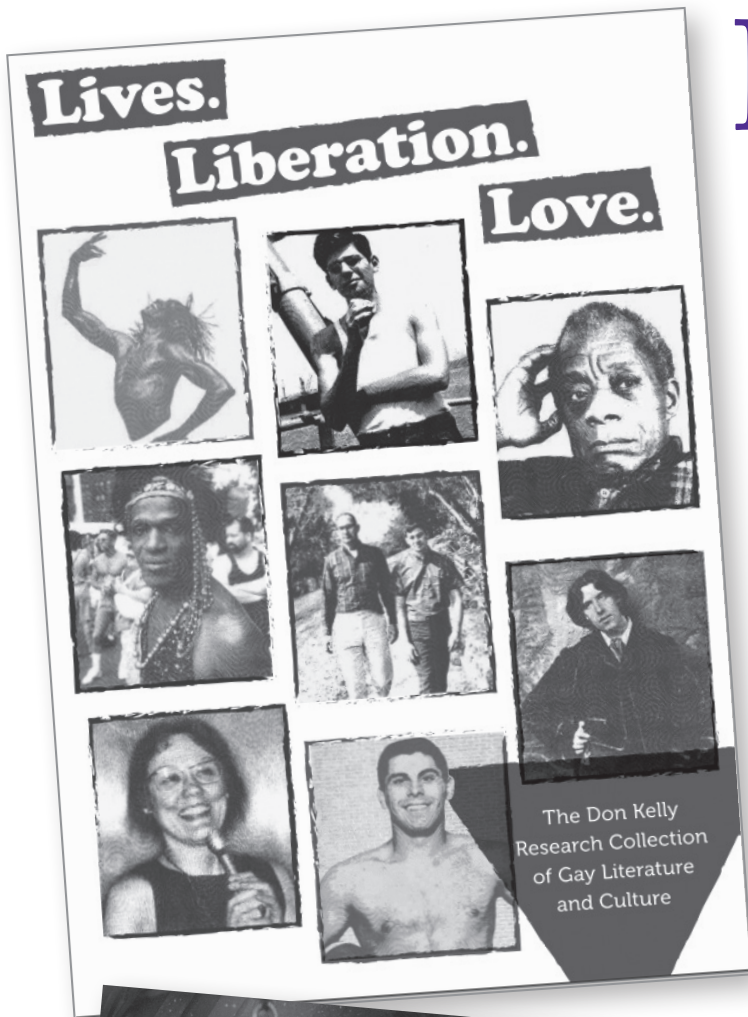
We have been successful in hiring a diverse group of student workers, but we need to further diversify our staff and faculty. One step in the right direction has been participating in the ACRL Diversity Alliance Residency Program. Here are a few other examples of what we are doing at the Cushing Library to create and maintain new traditions and a more inclusive and representative environment.

Acquiring More Inclusive Collections

The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, the first public institute of higher education in Texas, opened in 1876. It was an all-white, male-only institute focusing on agriculture, engineering, and military science, with a requirement to serve in the Corps of Cadets. By the late 1880s, Hispanic and Latino men were enrolled; male international students openly enrolled in the early 1900s, and, occasionally, women were allowed to attend on a limited basis. A major change happened in 1963, when both women and African Americans were admitted into A&M.

In 1976, a group of students applied for recognition of a new organization, Gay Student Services (GSS). Vice President of Student Affairs John Koldus denied GSS recognition, on the grounds that the organization would provide services that were the responsibilities of faculty and staff. GSS filed a lawsuit against A&M—it took years in the courts for GSS to become a recognized student organization in 1985. The university archives holds extensive documentation of the GSS case, as well as strong collections of other LGBTQ+ materials.

Left, top to bottom: Catalog cover for the exhibition based on the Don Kelly Research Collection of Gay Literature and Culture. Catalog cover for the patron-inspired exhibition *The Stars Are Ours*, featuring Cushing's Science Fiction and Fantasy Collection. *Courtesy of Cushing Memorial Library and Archives.*



Traditions *A University Archives Advocates for Diversity and Inclusion*

Jenny Reibenspies-Stadler, and Leslie Winter, Texas A&M University Cushing Memorial Library and Archives

Unfortunately, many underrepresented populations are still poorly documented. Recently we've acquired the Gary Gray Collection. Gray, a former student who had multiple sclerosis, was an advocate on campus for those with diverse abilities. The library's work with the Black Former Student Network to collect materials related to the first African American students to integrate A&M resulted in an event in late November 2019 to highlight these pioneers. We continue to look for additional opportunities and acquisitions.

All Are Welcome in the Reading Room

Our reading room is open to both patrons who use our collection materials and "studiers" who bring their own. The reading room is large, and the studiers and researchers are separated to protect the collections. Studiers are a new pool of visitors: they come to use the space and, once here, become curious about its holdings and are welcomed by reference staff.

On average, 700 new visitors per year request material, mostly undergraduate students. To attract new visitors, the Cushing Library has an unusual advantage: replica weapons based on the *Game of Thrones* television series, an adaptation of the series *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R. R. Martin, whose collection is housed in Cushing. The swords bring an international fanbase of diverse patrons who become our advocates. Having advocates makes a huge impact on our collections and on our mission to be as diverse as the world.

Celebrating a Variety of Audiences and Materials in Exhibits

Our science fiction and fantasy collection, one of the largest in the world and covering nearly 400 years of SF&F history, is expanding based on suggestions from international patrons. For example, we recently added to the collection *The Three-Body Problem* by Liu Cixin and works by Nnedi Okorafor. This exchange inspired *The Stars Are Ours* exhibit in March through September 2019, which had more than 4,500 visitors.

One of the philosophical bases for the exhibit came from the television show *Star Trek*. In the episode "Is There in Truth No Beauty?" (1968), Mr. Spock reveals the foundation of life and culture for his home planet of Vulcan: infinite diversity in infinite combinations. The exhibit reflected this celebration of difference and the infinite variety of nature and humanity, showing that SF&F does not belong to one gender, one race, one sexual orientation, or one kind of person. A few principles guided our selection and design:

- **Neutrality:** Conscientious curators should feel no loyalty to an outmoded concept of neutrality. Our exhibit had a clearly expressed vision: to combat pernicious myths about which groups of people "own" SF&F.

- **"Resistance Items":** We acknowledged recent controversies in the SF&F fandom world. We included posters of actors who faced harassment online because of their race or gender, such as Kelly Marie Tran (*Star Wars: The Last Jedi*) and Amandla Stenberg (*The Hunger Games*).
- **Organization and Identification:** We thought it would ultimately defeat the purpose of celebrating diversity to put people in discrete boxes. Our arrangement was based on a set of SF&F themes (e.g., Space Opera) showcasing different kinds of diversities—of creator, character, or situation—without limiting people's identities. Signage did not explicitly identify diversities, although the exhibit catalog provided indirect contextual information (for example, a reader may look at what pronoun is used to describe the author).

It's important to listen to all voices and have our items and exhibits reflect a holistic picture of our campus and community.

Creating Spaces for Conversations

One major and successful event in shaping conversations on diversity and inclusion is the Human Library, organized by the University Libraries' Diversity Advancement Committee.

A human book is a person you can "check out" to have a conversation to learn more about their identity.

The Human Library is a collection of "human books"—people you can "check out" to have a conversation with and learn more about their identity. In March 2019, the University Libraries held its third annual Human Library. The event has been a way for us to promote diversity inside and outside of the libraries and extends our mission to provide resources from diverse voices. Libraries are where people come to learn about other places, backgrounds, and stories. The Human Library provides a dynamic way to engage directly with these stories.

Encouraging diversity, inclusion, and equity requires collaboration across departments. The university's Office for Diversity is one resource helping us to implement many of our ideas. By working together, we are making a positive difference for and in our community. ■

*Thanks to Rebekah Gager, Museum Studies intern at Cushing Library, for help with editing this article. This article originated from a presentation at ARCHIVES*RECORDS 2019.*



If Not Now, When?

Archivists Respond to Climate Change

Itza Carbajal, The University of Texas at Austin, and Ted Lee, University of British Columbia iSchool

Young people around the world are demanding change. For the past few years in North America (also known as Turtle Island among many Indigenous peoples), youth organizers Autumn Peltier, Anishinaabe-kwe and a member of the Wikwemikong First Nation, and Mari Copeny, resident of Flint, Michigan, have been advocating for clean water. In 2018, Greta Thunberg, a then 15-year-old Swedish student, began to protest every Friday outside the Swedish parliament, calling for deliberate acts to combat climate change.

These student-led movements, occurring in multiple countries, have organized countless marches, festivals, court hearings, and local, national, and international strikes, each demanding stronger intervention and action against climate change by their respective governments. One of the largest of these efforts occurred on September 20 and September 27, 2019. As part of the Global Climate Strike movement, an estimated 6.6 million people, inspired by Thunberg's Fridays for Future student strikes, walked out of their homes, schools, and workplaces to attend more than 2,500 events in 163 countries.¹

Climate change can have an immense impact on cultural heritage and memory work, affecting the collections, buildings, and technological infrastructures in the archival field.

As archivists and archival scholars concerned with the effects of climate change on archives, we saw the September strikes as an opportunity to join the conversation. Climate change can have an immense impact on cultural heritage and memory work, affecting the collections, buildings, and technological infrastructures in the archival field. Thus, climate *action* is important, and we eagerly set out to organize the archives profession in solidarity with these young people.

A Growing Body of Archival Scholarship

In recent years, archivists have written more frequently and critically about human-caused climate change and its effects on our current era (often called the Anthropocene). In addition to existential threats for human society, increasingly extreme weather patterns also create the same threats to archives and archivists. Archival scholarship notes that climate change's destabilizing effects put stress on the communities that archives serve and on the archival mandate to document society's history.

In 2016, the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) conference held an entire track for "Environmental Issues and Archives," with a special focus on audiovisual archivists and collections. SAA's 2019 Annual Meeting

featured a panel presentation on "Archivists Facing a Changing Climate." In 2012, Matthew Gordon-Clark and Simon Shurville wrote about the effects of rising sea levels and its threat to the national archives of low-elevation Pacific island nations.² Eira Tansey has written numerous blog posts and articles about climate change's consequences for archives.³ Benjamin Goldman published the chapter "It's Not Easy Being Green(e): Digital Preservation in the Age of Climate Change" in *Archival Values: Essays in Honor of Mark A. Greene* (SAA, 2019). Samantha Winn published the article "Dying Well in the Anthropocene: On the End of Archivists" in a special issue by the *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, asking the question, "For memory workers, the specter of biological annihilation is accompanied by a more immediate existential crisis: if there will be no one to remember what was, then what will have been the purpose of memory work?"⁴

Despite increasing conference presentations and articles on the topic of climate change, the archival community has yet to treat this issue with the urgency it requires. As climate change will affect the preservation of society's memory, then archivists should play a central role in this conversation.

Hosting Teach-Ins

To carry forward the conversation, we decided on a learning method known as a teach-in. This technique, used mostly in

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Where Are the People?

Documenting Community Development in Government Archives

Natalia Kovalyova, Haley Latta, and Amy Padilla, School of Information, University of Texas at Austin

Above image courtesy of Archive photos, Texas Department of Agriculture Community Development Block Grant records, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

While appraising our first collection—digital folders from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)—we encountered a baffling set of records. These digital files contained quarterly reports, program implementation manuals, slides from workshops, and other information related to several community development programs. The collection also included an assortment of images from staff holiday parties, grant award ceremonies, and construction equipment lineups.

The programs in question were funded via the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) initiative that has been administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) since 1974. As we scrolled through the folders, one particular label demanded attention: *colonia*. Colonias are communities located in the rural areas along the US-Mexico border and are marked by deep and widespread disadvantages. Their residents often lack running water, electricity, paved streets, and internet access. The CDBG initiative focuses on assisting colonias and improving living conditions for residents by pulling together resources from federal and state agencies.

Understanding the funding mechanism and the labor division in the grant administration between federal and state levels was a major task, particularly because many financial documents were reportedly removed by our supervisors for security reasons. The shape of the collection added an extra challenge to the job. Personal archiving habits and preferences in organizing digital files of several TDA officers were evident in the folder structure and labels. Soon enough, the gaps in the collection presented themselves.

What follows are three areas where our expectations were challenged most: what was expected of the CDBG program, what we envisioned the appraisal process to be, and what we expected of ourselves as archivists-in-training. These expectations, and our response to them, shaped many of our decisions. Their resolutions helped us better understand the process and ourselves as future archival professionals.

Picturing Community Development

Our first challenge was in definitions. Understanding that the grant program exists to prevent new colonias from being formed, we expected to see documents that related to success stories: statistics about new jobs, more roads, better housing, and a variety of improved municipal services from street lights to garbage collection. We also envisioned reports about the growing number of communities leaving the label of colonias behind them. Contrary to these expectations, we found the number of colonias growing in Texas. Moreover, we were unable to have an accurate tally of the colonias, as state and federal agencies disagreed on who qualifies to participate in the program and whether the low-income areas in close proximity to urban centers should be included.¹

Within our collection, there were approximately 1,400 photos. Some showed new roads, playgrounds, fire stations, and community centers under construction. Others depicted dilapidated houses and unpaved country roads. Most pictures were not labeled and, save the camera's metadata, undated. Thus, it was impossible to tell whether they documented the program's success, the need for funding, or places that did not require intervention.

Most striking was the absence of people in the photographs: no happy residents enjoying new community centers, running water, plumbing, or gas; very few—accidental almost—construction workers in the midst of a project. From these pictures, infrastructure emerged as the object of governing, and community development emphasized building or improving roads, septic tanks, and pipes. The subjects of governing were conspicuously relegated to the background or were missing altogether, muting “community” in the name of the grant.

Discovering the Human Dimensions in Appraisal

The difficulty we met in determining whether the photos in our collection were essential to the CDBG grant work or a byproduct of the agency's recordkeeping highlighted for us the complexity of the appraisal process in general.

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The Writing Help You've ~~Always~~ Wanted Been Dreaming About

Michelle Ganz, Rebecca Hankins, Joshua Kitchens, and Alison Stankrauff
Founders of SAA's New Professional Writing Virtual Group

Many of us are drawn to writing for various reasons, whether it's a burning desire to share what's in our hearts and minds about the profession or because contributing to archival literature is advantageous for promotion and tenure. The Professional Writing Virtual Group (PWVG) is a newly established SAA group that opens up opportunities for archivists to get involved in writing for the profession and to grow writing skills. This online community is dedicated to supporting and inspiring archivists who want to be better writers in the profession.

Welcoming Writers of All Levels

The founders of the group are Michelle Ganz, archives director at McDonough Innovation; Rebecca Hankins, professor, archivist, librarian, and curator at Texas A&M University; Joshua Kitchens, director of the Master of Archival Studies program at Clayton State University; and Alison Stankrauff, university archivist at Wayne State University.

The group is open to people who have published their work, who haven't published but are interested in publishing, who have ideas but need to get them on the page, who desire writing partners, who need a mentor as they navigate tenure track, and who are just beginning to explore writing for the archives profession. Whether you're interested in writing in general or writing for the profession, PWVG provides a space for people to ask basic questions, seek out writing partners, find new places to publish, share advice, and receive specialized support—such as tenure packet review—that may not be available at your institution. We want PWVG to be a space where people come together to support each other through the writing process.

To join, go to "Communities" and then "All Sections" on SAA Connect, scroll to the Professional Writers Virtual Group, and click "Join." Then send a message introducing yourself to the listserv via SAA Connect or at ARCHIVISTS-professionalwritingvirtualgroup@ConnectedCommunity.org.

The PWVG homepage also has a shared files folder that includes the group's mission statement and resources on

writing and places to publish. We will continue adding resources to this library, highlighting lesser-known opportunities to publish and activities to help you go from idea to published piece.

Making Connections and Finding Collaborators

One of PWVG's goals is to connect members with each other. The listserv is a great way to share broader ideas or advice and find the help you need. However, as a large group, the listserv can be an intimidating setting in which to ask questions. To help members connect on a more personal level, PWVG is introducing Small Group Projects.

The Small Group Project will group four to six writers based on similar interests or, if needed, random selection. Once introduced, the small group will choose how it wants to proceed. Members might choose to share and critique

pieces together as a group or use the group as an informal check-in with each other. We hope that members are able to connect with each other across the profession—and make some new friends! If you're interested in joining a small group, fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/czFMpPjsvLisQUAr6>.

A second resource PWVG launched is an open spreadsheet for writers to find help for a project. Professional writers often encounter challenges in finding co-authors, peer reviewers, researchers, and other collaborators, and we hope the "Connecting Writers and Ideas" spreadsheet will meet this need. The spreadsheet includes a dashboard with instructions on how to use the document; space for your contact information, notes, and ideas; and dropdown menus to note the type of project, subject, and help you need. There's also space for people to sign up for a project listed. If you're interested, browse the spreadsheet at <http://ow.ly/SvF930pJgwi>. Just remember that if you add a project, don't forget to check back in to see if someone is interested in joining you!

We are so excited about the new Professional Writing Virtual Group and the opportunities it provides writers of every level. Come write with us! ■

Original Disorder

A Rookie's Experience in the Archives

J. Hunter Moore, Student, Middle Tennessee State University

A rookie walks into an archives . . . no, this isn't the ominous beginning of an archivist joke, I promise. I was the rookie, a student completing an assignment for an introductory course in archival management taught by Kelly Kolar at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

The Albert Gore Research Center (AGRC), located on campus and containing the official papers of Albert Gore, Sr., was the archives. My class assignment was to process a box of documents, create a finding aid, and write a case study. But here was the scary part: the documents, related to the campus radio station, appeared to have been removed from several desk drawers and emptied into my box.

Listening to Archival Voices

Traditionally, archivists have organized records based on the twin pillars of provenance and original order, many emphasizing the evidentiary value of the archives. Reordering might, in Luciana Duranti's words, introduce "the personal element" of subjectivity into the archives, and consequently risk eroding the public's trust.

But what if the records are clearly out of order? In my case, what if a file containing purchase orders for June and July was located before a file containing the same type of purchase orders for April and May

of the same year? Should it be left there? Is this lack of order to be interpreted as the *de facto* original order?

What I'd learned in the classroom was helpful. T. R. Schellenberg upheld the importance of provenance, but stated that order is "mainly a matter of convenience or use." Prioritizing ease of use over original order argues in favor of placing the earlier file before the later, on the basis of chronological order. But is use the only consideration? Jennifer Meehan suggests that original order and provenance are contextual frameworks rather than guidelines and that the historical context of records is a better basis for making decisions. Any decision by the archivist will have a degree of subjectivity. Terry Cook argued that archivists should accept the fact that their choices will be subjective, that they should make bold choices based on policy and context, and inform the user about what choices were made and why. Cook and Meehan are in agreement that maintaining context via provenance is vital to understanding records, and that use must not become the sole determining factor for arrangement and description.

Is use the only consideration for order?

Continued on page 18 >>



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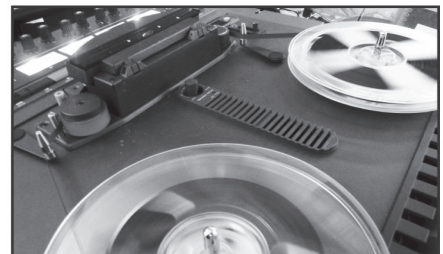
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Teaching with

The 2019

Jennifer Hoyer, Brooklyn Connections, Brooklyn



One hundred archivists and educators gathered to talk about using archives collections in the classroom during the 2019 Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Unconference on August 2 in Austin, Texas. Run by the Teaching with Primary Sources Committee of SAA's Reference, Access, and Outreach Section and hosted by the Harry Ransom Center, the event gave participants space to reflect on and discuss the issues most relevant to them.

Planning for the Unplanned

The TPS Unconference began in 2015 as a free event alongside the SAA Annual Meeting. The goal is always the same—to create more space for conversations about teaching with primary sources from archives and special collections—and yet it looks different every year. The unconference's underlying philosophy is to provide programming that people in the room want to see happen. As such, much of the program is planned the day of the event. But none of this last-minute scheduling is possible without a dedicated team of volunteers who start making phone calls and brainstorming logistics months in advance.

Past TPS Unconferences have offered a combination of breakout sessions and pre-planned workshops. This year, while researching local archives and cultural institution education programs, we learned about Flower Hill Urban Homestead Museum's SMOOT program (Student Minds Organizing Opportunities for Teens), which involves local high school students in developing public programming with the use of archival documents in the institution's collection. Three representatives of the program—Board chair Tabitha Molett, executive director Robin Grace Soto, and SMOOT volunteer and local high school student Adele Rankin—shared a keynote presentation. Mary Johnson of the TPS Teachers Network (<https://tpsteachersnetwork.org/>) also presented on her work.

The remainder of the day featured breakout sessions, organized on the spot as attendees voted on topics they wanted to talk about and organizers quickly scheduled them into a series of timeslots. Potential discussion topics were written on chart paper; attendees could add their own ideas and then voted on three to four favorites with Post-It™ notes, creating an easy way to visualize which conversations people were most interested in. Topics included session assessment methods, outreach, lesson planning, impostor syndrome, handling sensitive topics, STEM, sustainability, and more.

Most attendees came for the entire day, but the event is flexible and open so that people can come for part of the day. About 80% of attendees also planned to attend SAA and CoSA events. We were thrilled to have more K–12 classroom teachers join alongside archivists and librarians than ever before. One

**More K–12
classroom
teachers joined
alongside
archivists and
librarians than
ever before.**

attendee remarked on her feedback survey, “As a high school teacher, I learned about places to find primary sources and resources for my students to do research without having access to a database like EBSCOHost.”

Learning from Breakout Sessions

Bringing a group of strangers together to talk about issues that many of us have struggled with—such as impostor syndrome, handling sensitive topics, or planning successful outreach—can be tricky, but all of our sessions went smoothly thanks to a crew of volunteer facilitators who followed a set of basic suggestions for guiding conversations. Attendees also shared their thoughts from each session by completing an anonymous Exit Ticket in the last five minutes. These are collected to help strategize for future unconferences and responses will be publicly available soon. (The 2018 Unconference Exit Tickets can be downloaded as a zine at <http://bit.ly/2018zine>.)

Primary Sources

Unconference

Public Library, and Carrie Schwier, Indiana University Bloomington



Photo at top: Unconference participants vote on session topics.

Photo above: Speakers from Flower Hill Urban Homestead: Tabitha Molett, Robin Grace Soto, and Adele Rankin.

Attendees of a breakout discussion on assessment thought about creative ways to assess students over the course of multiple years and were curious about multiyear tracking mechanisms. They talked about assessment tools that engage faculty and invite thoughtful responses but don't need to be high tech. They also talked about connecting course objectives with the SAA-RBMS/ACRL *Guidelines for Teaching with Primary Sources*, and then building good assessment based on clear learning goals.

Another breakout session focused on using K-12 professional development as an outreach mechanism. Participants brainstormed how to facilitate collaboration among archivists, librarians, museum educators, and teachers, and how to encourage institutional donors to support professional development offerings for local teachers.

During a conversation on teaching with primary sources as data, a full room of participants thought through both high tech and low tech data collecting projects across several disciplines. Attendees suggested techniques for analysis and interpretation of data, while asking broader questions about what constitutes data in an archival collection. The broader the definition of "data," the more opportunities there are for teaching with primary sources as data.

Providing Useful Takeaways

Spending a day sharing ideas with colleagues is refreshing. One attendee wrote: "I appreciate the practical takeaways from this style of conference—less theory and more things I can use instantly." Another commented that "instruction is becoming a larger part of my position, and it's an area in which I don't have a huge amount of experience. Having the opportunity to speak with others about their experiences and techniques in a somewhat informal setting was incredibly useful in helping me think of new instructional design for my sessions as well as helping to ease some of my anxieties about addressing difficult topics."

And it warmed our hearts to see a participant remark that "this is a fantastic event and should continue frequently." We couldn't agree more—we look forward to seeing you next year in Chicago! ■

For more information from this year's unconference, as well as previous events, visit teachwithstuff.org. If you'd like to get involved with planning or volunteering for a TPS Unconference, email teachwithstuff@gmail.com. If you have suggestions for a 2020 venue in Chicago, we'd love to hear from you!



Find Your Place in SAA

Volunteer for SAA Appointed Groups

Rachel Vagts, SAA Vice President/President-Elect

During my first semester of library school at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, I took my first archives course from Rick Pifer. Rick taught me a lot about being an archivist—in that class and by giving me a work-study job at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Of the advice and guidance he shared, joining SAA and becoming an active member has probably had the greatest influence.

It took me a couple of years to find my place in this organization. I worked for a small college, and it was hard to justify the larger cost of attending a national conference rather than a regional one—until I was invited to my first appointed role in SAA. From my early days as a key contact to the Membership Committee to leadership in the College and University Archives Section to my current role as vice president/president-elect, I have found that having an appointed or elected role in SAA has deepened my commitment to and experience in the archives profession.

I invite you to consider how you might have that experience yourself by volunteering for one of the many appointed roles within SAA.

How to Volunteer

Browse the list of appointments available on the next page. If you're not familiar with the group or position, visit the SAA website to review the group's description and check

out their recent work. If you would like to talk to someone about the group, look for the group's roster and reach out to a current member. There is a wide range of possibilities, and you'll find descriptions, microsites, and rosters of the groups at archivists.org/leaders.

Identify one or two positions that really interest you and apply for them using the volunteer form (archivists.org/membership/volunteer). I suggest that you volunteer for a group to which you can bring your enthusiasm and expertise, rather than simply applying for any and all open positions. Please encourage your colleagues to volunteer, too.

If there are more volunteers than appointed positions available—which unfortunately is often the case—there are other ways to get involved, such as volunteering for service in your favorite section. Each year, many sections struggle to find volunteers to run for elected positions. If you don't get appointed to a position through this process, answer the call in May to serve in your section to build your leadership and service portfolio—then apply again!

The Appointments Process

As SAA's vice president/president-elect, it's my privilege and honor to make appointments for all 2019–2020 vacancies. The SAA Appointments Committee helps me in this

task. Serving on this year's Appointments Committee are Chair Beth Myers (Smith College) and committee members Lauren Algee (Library of Congress), David Benjamin (University of Central Florida), William Jackson (Harley-Davidson Motor Co.), Derek Mosley (Auburn Avenue Research Library), and Kate Stratton (Gates Archive).

The Appointments Committee will review the lists of vacancies and volunteers, consult with current group leaders to learn about the needs of each group, and make their recommendations to me. We will follow SAA's longstanding policy of making appointments that reflect the diversity of our membership, including years in the profession, race and ethnicity, gender, geographic region, and type of archival repository. To ensure that as many of our enthusiastic members as possible can gain experience as an appointed leader, individuals will be appointed to no more than one position at a time, and current leaders will not be reappointed to a second term unless there is a critical requirement to continue some aspect of the work beyond their original term. It will be my responsibility to make all final appointment decisions.

As it was once pointed out to me, we should never forget that we are the Society of American Archivists—not *for*—so please join me in volunteering for an appointed position with SAA. I look forward to working with you!

2020 VACANCIES

Volunteer Form:

<https://www2.archivists.org/membership/volunteer>

American Archivist Editorial Board (4)

Awards Committee (1 co-chair)

- Brenda S. Banks Travel Award (1)
- C.F.W. Coker Award (1)
- Distinguished Service Award (1)
- Diversity Award (1)
- Mark A. Greene Emerging Leader Award (1)
- Josephine Forman Scholarship (1)
- F. Gerald Ham and Elsie Ham Scholarship (1, must be an SAA Fellow)
- Philip M. Hamer–Elizabeth Hamer Kegan Award (1)
- Oliver Wendell Holmes Award (1)
- Archival Innovator Award (1)
- J. Franklin Jameson Archival Advocacy Award (1)
- Sister M. Claude Lane, O.P., Award (1)
- Waldo Gifford Leland Award (1)
- Mosaic Scholarship (2)
- Theodore Calvin Pease Award (1, one-year appointment)
- Donald Peterson Student Scholarship (1)
- Harold T. Pinkett Student of Color Award (1, one-year appointment)

- Fellows' Ernst Posner Award (1, must be an SAA Fellow)
- Preservation Publication Award (1)
- Spotlight Award (1)

Committee on Education (3)

- Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Subcommittee (2)
- Graduate Archival Education (GAE) Subcommittee (1)

Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct (3)

Committee on Public Awareness (4)

Committee on Public Policy (2)

Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (3)

Diversity Committee (4)

Finance Committee (1)

2021 Host Committee (Anaheim, CA) (10–12)

2021 Program Committee (Anaheim, CA) (10)

Membership Committee (3)

Publications Board (3)

Standards Committee (4)

- Technical Subcommittee on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (TS-DACS) (3)
- Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS) (2)

Shout Out to the 2018–2019 SAA Interns

The 2018–2019 term was a great one for SAA interns, and we're grateful to all who served on SAA appointed groups and sections! Check out what they were able to accomplish:

SAA Foundation: Maggie Hoffman worked with the Development Committee to gather content and design a traveling exhibit to promote the SAA Foundation; she researched exhibit formats and possible printers as well as logistics for shipping to various events throughout the year. Maggie continues her SAA leadership with a three-year appointment on the SAA Membership Committee.

Committee on Education: Carli Lowe conducted an analysis of the results from the 2018 SAA continuing education assessment and also assisted with initial plans for a new management course track. She continues her SAA leadership with a three-year appointment on the Committee on Education.

Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Subcommittee: Pamela McClanahan designed and implemented a survey to help the subcommittee understand participant evaluations of the DAS curriculum and exam.

Committee on Public Policy: Rachel Greggs researched news media sites for "letter to the editor" policies and procedures as well as participated in the committee's working meeting in Atlanta last winter.

Acquisitions & Appraisal Section: Taylor de Klerk managed social media engagement, including investigating logistics for hosting a Twitter chat, and conducted interviews and wrote blog posts.

Archivists & Archives of Color Section: Kelli Yakabu assisted with content and production of the section newsletter and blog, *Archiving in Color*, including creating a production manual for future editors. She also organized survey data for the 2019 Directory, including contacting participants and updating information.

Archival Educators Section: Sarah McLusky assisted with creating a pedagogical resource collection for archival educators, which offers a predefined set of simulated archival documents and records for use in courses.

Archival History Section: Natalie Worsham assisted with the section newsletter, *Archival History News*, by copyediting book reviews, preparing articles to post, and writing articles.

Business Archives Section (BAS): Adrienne Duris, in her second year with BAS, continued her work to update the *Business Archives Directory* by coding the listings so they are searchable and sortable in the new directory system.

Human Rights Archives Section: In anticipation of the section's tenth anniversary in 2020, Hsiu-Ann Tom developed a questionnaire to gather information from previous section members and leaders and evaluated the data to present at the 2019 section meeting. Hsiu-Ann continues her SAA leadership on the Human Rights Archives Section steering committee.

Issues & Advocacy Section: Kristin Hare assisted with steering committee communications and wrote articles for the section's blog.



FROM THE ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES

David S. Ferriero

National Archives and Records Administration
david.ferriero@nara.gov

Toward an All-Electronic Federal Government

Our 2018–2022 Strategic Plan embraces a vision that ensures ongoing access to extraordinary volumes of government information in electronic form and commits us to taking significant steps to enable this transformation. In pursuit of that vision, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) continues to make great strides in transforming the way our government’s records are managed, preserved, and ultimately made accessible.

One of the administration’s priorities, through the President’s Management Agenda (<https://www.performance.gov/PMA/PMA.html>) and related Cross-Agency Priority Goals (<https://www.performance.gov/CAP/overview/>), is leveraging data as a strategic asset. This is what NARA has been advocating for with digital government. Data, information, and records need to be seen as strategic assets for agencies, helping to drive decision-making and creating better efficiencies and effectiveness in delivering services and carrying out the mission of agencies.

This past June we received significant support from the highest levels of government with the release of OMB M-19-21, Transition to Electronic Records (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/M-19-21.pdf>). This memo, building on the successes of our first joint OMB/NARA memo released in 2012, requires agencies to transition their recordkeeping to a fully electronic environment that complies with all records management laws and regulations. Specifically, the memo directs agencies to ensure that all federal records are created, retained, and managed in electronic formats with the appropriate metadata.

The memo also establishes targets for agencies to meet. By December 31, 2022, all permanent records in federal agencies will be managed electronically and will include appropriate metadata to the fullest extent possible, for eventual transfer and accessioning by NARA as electronic records. After December 31, 2022, we will, to the fullest extent possible, no longer accept new transfers of records in analog formats.

NARA will be issuing additional guidance to agencies on these new requirements over the next few months, and we will update our regulations relating to the digitization of permanent records. The regulations with digitization standards for temporary records

were updated and finalized this spring (see the blog post on *Records Express* at <https://records-express.blogs.archives.gov/2019/04/17/regulations-with-digitization-standards-for-temporary-records-issued/>).

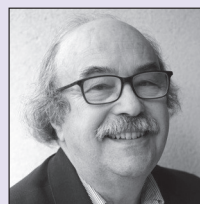
We are in the process of shifting the entire government away from paper and to all-electronic recordkeeping, and we play a major role in helping the agencies get to that point. Our new strategic plan is the road map; by putting records management and digital preservation at the forefront of our priorities, we will help create greater efficiency and effectiveness while making the federal government more responsive to the American people.

We are pleased to have the administration’s continuing support for modernizing federal agency recordkeeping and bringing about the necessary transformation to a fully electronic government.

The new memo is a culmination of all the good work done by federal agencies and NARA since 2012. It reinforces our commitment to digital government and recognizes the progress agencies have made in managing their email and other electronic records. ■

**By December 31, 2022,
all permanent records in
federal agencies will be
managed electronically
and will include
appropriate metadata.**

KUDOS



Gary D. Saretzky, CA, archivist of Monmouth County, New Jersey, since 1994, retired in October. Saretzky earned a BA in photography from Thomas Edison State College and a BA and MA in history with a specialization in archival administration from

the University of Wisconsin–Madison. While in graduate school, he worked part-time under F. Gerald Ham at what is now the Wisconsin Historical Society and attended his first SAA Annual Meeting in 1969. From 1969 to 1993, he was the archivist for the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey, before moving to Monmouth County. A longtime member of SAA, Saretzky served as chair of the Business Archives Section, taught history of photography at Mercer County Community College from 1977 to 2012, and coordinated the Rutgers Public History Internship Program from 1994 to 2016. He has served as a consultant on archives and photographic conservation to more than 50 repositories and received the 2012 Maureen Ogden Award for lifetime achievement in New Jersey history.

MEET THE 2019–2021 MOSAIC PROGRAM FELLOWS

The Mosaic Program is sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries and SAA, with generous grant support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Congratulations to the 2019–2021 cohort!



Sadaf Ahmadbeigi, University of British Columbia | **Internship host:** University of British Columbia Library

Why did you decide to pursue a career in archives? As a student and researcher of Middle Eastern studies, I've spent many years trying to find reliable and accessible

sources. I've also witnessed scholars in similar programs struggling to overcome barriers of geography, censorship, authoritarian regimes, war, and language to access primary documents to finish their research. Published works are only as good, and as inclusive, as the archives that help us. I want to create a way for all of us to have better access to a more inclusive body of materials and pave the path for future scholars. In particular, one of my goals is to create an archives that reflects the lives of queer Iranians whose identities are being denied every day of their lives.

the future. Records can be activated time and again over the course of history through research, displays, installations, and exhibitions, so that the information held within them is interacted with in new ways. We can learn a great deal from what has come before and use it to inform how we move forward.



Kelli Yakabu, University of Washington | **Internship host:** University of Washington Libraries

Why did you decide to pursue a career in archives? Archives have helped me reconstruct my identity. As a fifth-generation Japanese and Okinawan American growing

up near Seattle and away from family in Hawaii, understanding my own background was challenging. Growing up, it felt like "history" always meant "white history." Having archivists and professors introduce me to archival collections of communities of color and other marginalized groups has helped me develop a more inclusive and complex understanding of history. These collections reaffirmed my presence and my family's and community's presence in history.



Nicholas Caldwell, Long Island University | **Internship host:** New York University

What is one thing you wish everyone knew about archives? That there is so much original and interesting knowledge that can only be accessible through archives.

I've read books that are out of print, newspapers from countries that no longer exist, single-run pamphlets from grassroots organizations, and so much more. We often forget that not everything is on the internet, that knowledge is made in many places.



Irmari Fraticelli, University of Michigan | **Internship host:** University of Michigan Library

Why did you decide to pursue a career in archives? At the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, I worked with the Puerto Rican Collection and noticed the lack of

Puerto Rican resources and programs focusing on archival studies and digital curation. I aspire to contribute to the Puerto Rican and Latin American archives communities in helping to increase access to source materials, transparency of our cultural heritage, and collaboration among Latin American countries for better comprehending our story.



Tamara Rayan, University of Toronto | **Internship host:** York University Libraries

What is one thing you wish everyone knew about archives? Archives are not just a preoccupation with the past, but are also a space that holds potential for

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Moving Your Archives from the Basement to the Airwaves continued from page 3

Marvel Comics. Wherever you live, if you're interested in Marvel Comics, that becomes a local subject. And, of course, the fact that Stan Lee's papers are housed at the AHC in Wyoming makes it explicitly geographically local, too."

Writing for Broadcast

When Schweizer first proposed the idea of a segment (or "module" in public radio parlance) based on AHC collections, we were excited but wary. Questions popped into our minds: "How much will this cost?" "How do we write for radio?" and, the biggest question, "Who is going to do all the work?"

Schweizer assured us that, regarding cost, public radio has a strict firewall between fundraising and programming; donations have no bearing on the decision to create new programming. Regarding scriptwriting, he gave us tips on broadcast writing:

- Write short sentences.
- Ditch dependent clauses.
- Write the way you talk, so as not to sound like you're reading.

We began dividing the workload. Deciding the voice for the series, designing a logo, choosing signature music, and creating content were our first tasks. AHC's Molly Marcusse expressed an interest in voicing the series and turned out to be an excellent fit. Schweizer gave her some studio training and she quickly adapted to her new role as radio personality. With input from us, WPR designed a logo and chose music. Creating content was the biggest task, and that fell into our laps. We set a launch date six months in advance and planned to have 100 episodes ready to go. A lot had to be accomplished by that time.

The first line of attack was to seek already-produced text. We pored through old copies of the AHC's newsletter, as well as annual reports and blog posts. We found plenty of material and adapting pieces to one-minute scripts was not difficult since they were already short. Marcusse massaged the scripts to make sure they read well and were timed correctly.



Carl Stalling at the piano with sheet music for "Minnie's Yoo Hoo Theme Song," which he cowrote with Walt Disney (second from left). The song was introduced in the 1929 Mickey Mouse cartoon *Mickey's Follies* and was the first Disney song to be released on sheet music. The story of Stalling and Disney was featured in an episode of *Wyoming Minute*. Courtesy of the American Heritage Center.

However, we knew we couldn't continue to do all the research and writing ourselves. We asked AHC administration for a ten-hour-per-week position and, fortunately, a fund was found that allowed for it. Since script production began in 2018, we've had three university students on the payroll. Each has had a slightly different writing voice, but all have enjoyed digging into the collections and ferreting out interesting tidbits.

An Award-Winning Success

Production is now a well-oiled machine. A student assistant researches and writes scripts and chooses two to three photos to accompany the podcast. Those materials are placed into the AHC's Dropbox account. Marcusse reviews for content and length. Once a batch is ready to go, she records them at the WPR studio. WPR staff mix them, and the stories go to air.

The series allows the AHC to educate the public about who we are and what we do, provides opportunities for university students in the archives, and instills a sense of pride in AHC staff and stakeholders.

For WPR, it's a way to educate and entertain the public, feed curiosity, and give rise to the classic conversation opener, "You know what I heard on public radio today?" The module has been so successful that the Wyoming State Historical Society recently gave the series a first place award in its audiovisual category due to the series' contribution to Wyoming history.

Advice for Pitching Your Own Ideas

Maybe now you're thinking that this type of collaboration could work for you. But where to start? Here's Schweizer's advice:

- On pitching to your local public radio station: "First, figure out who to connect with. It's probably the program director, general manager, or news director. Don't overdevelop your idea. It can be vague or a bit more specific, but leave room for the station to figure out how this partnership fits its needs. For instance, 'We think your audience might really like learning about . . .'"
- On not getting a reply: "People at media organizations get lots of emails. If yours goes unanswered, follow up with a phone call—squeaky wheels and all that."
- On whether all public radio stations want something like this: "To be blunt, probably not. But that doesn't mean it isn't worth a try. *Archives on the Air* happened to work well for the AHC and WPR. Maybe you'll come up with something completely different—a monthly interview with an archivist showcasing one collection at a time or a partnership with a local newspaper or online magazine. The answers are different for each archives and community. Think about who might benefit from exposure to your collections and what medium reaches those people, and then reach out to the organization behind that medium and come up with something new and clever that benefits you both."

Who knows? We could be hearing *your* collection's stories on the air very soon. ■

If Not Now, When? continued from page 6

the 1960s and '70s during the height of the Vietnam war, emphasizes community engagement, participatory discussions, and opportunities for immediate or future action. It's a unique model for learning about complex and timely issues beyond formal coursework. Our teach-ins, coordinated at our respective institutions, would each focus on different ways that climate change affects archives.



Jane Kelly, Adam Kriesberg, and Jessica Farrell organized the 2019 Boston Archives and Climate Change Teach-In in Boston, Massachusetts.

We wanted to mobilize archivists around the world to host local teach-ins to learn about and discuss the relationship between archives and climate change. Providing customized learning modules designed by other archivists would make it easy for anyone to host.

With two teach-ins confirmed in Austin, Texas, and Vancouver, Canada, we looked to expand our reach. Two likely allies were found in the Archivists Against History Repeating Itself collective and the Project

ARCC (Archivists Respond to Climate Change) collective, each made up of archivists working to address some of the most pressing issues affecting the archives profession today.

We spread the call through social media, email, and word of mouth—and people responded. Archivists participated by organizing teach-ins, creating teaching modules for others to use, and translating promotional materials into languages other than English. Many archivists also asked for an online space to talk, which resulted in a Twitter teach-in using the hashtag #Archivists4ClimateAction. As word spread, a number of organizations and news agencies also highlighted the teach-ins, helping to communicate the urgency of these conversations.

Taking Action Now

In total, archivists held seven confirmed teach-ins around the world, and many others hosted similar gatherings, setting the stage for archivists to engage directly with the consequences of ongoing climate change. These teach-ins are paving the way for archivists to consider ways to make their institutions and archival practices more environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable.

Archivists must also learn to grapple with the intersections of climate change and more traditional archival issues regarding government transparency, accountability, freedom of information, and access and service. Mitigating the harm of decades of inaction and damage caused by humans is an immense amount of work, but the enthusiasm and support of many in the archival community who are embracing these difficult issues head-on is reassuring.

Archivists owe it to themselves and the communities they serve the opportunity to have a future. Our collecting and maintaining practices must adjust if we wish to make a commitment to our future. Without climate action, that future may never come.

Archivists Respond to Climate Change

Archives & Climate Change Teach In

For resources on hosting your own climate change teach-in, go to <https://projectarcc.org/2019/09/11/climate-strike-teach-ins>. ■

Notes

- ¹ Eliza Barclay and Brian Resnick, "How big was the global climate strike? 4 million people, activists estimate," Vox, <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2019/9/20/20876143/climate-strike-2019-september-20-crowd-estimate>.
- ² Matthew Gordon-Clark, "Paradise Lost? Pacific Island Archives Threatened by Climate Change," *Archival Science* 12, no. 1 (March 2012), 51–67. See also Matthew Gordon-Clark and Simon Shurville, "'To Take Up Arms against a Sea of Troubles': Finding Safe Havens for the National Archives of Low-Elevation Pacific Islands and Nations Threatened by Climate Change," *Archives and Manuscripts* 38, no. 1 (May 2010), 78–93.
- ³ See Eira Tansey, "Archival Adaptation to Climate Change," *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy* 11, no. 2 (2015).
- ⁴ Samantha Winn, "Dying Well in the Anthropocene: On the End of Archivists," in "Libraries and Archives in the Anthropocene," eds. Eira Tansey and Rob Montoya, *Journal of Critical Libraries and Information Studies* 2, no. 3 (2019).

RETIREEES: Donate Your IRA Distribution to the SAA Foundation

Please consider donating your required IRA distribution to the SAA Foundation. Retirees typically need to pay income tax on withdrawals from traditional retirement accounts. However, retirees ages 70.5 or older who directly transfer their IRA withdrawals of up to \$100,000 to a qualified charity will not owe income tax on the distribution.

You can support student scholarships, annual meeting travel, and disaster recovery, or make an undesignated gift to ensure that the priorities of SAA and the Foundation—including professional and public education, publications, and research—are funded.

Visit archivists.org/foundation to donate now!



Original Disorder continued from page 9

But how does that apply outside the classroom? Fortunately, when AGRC archivist Donna Baker presented me with my box, she also gave me several clues. The first concerned the concept of original order: it doesn't apply if someone dumps the contents of a desk into a box. To illustrate her statement, she reached into the box and randomly pulled out an unlabeled photo of a young couple with two children. She shook her head, paused as if she might remove the photo, and then placed it back in the box. She assured me that I would find other such items and that when I finished we would decide what to do with them together.

Baker let me know that "I couldn't mess anything up," which I understood to mean that she didn't want me to be afraid to make decisions. All the same, she asked that I "keep things in their folders for now." By prioritizing use over original order and accepting subjectivity as a given (along with Baker's gentle encouragement), I was emboldened to take decisive action. I was now ready to restore order to those disorderly files!

When to Order and When to Allow Disorder

Diving in, I immediately encountered the first sign of disorder: a bunch of brightly colored brochures listing the monthly programming for the radio station. The brochures were dated by month and year but were loose in the box and in no recognizable order. Was there any reason to keep them that way? Not if use was the highest value. I put them in order by month and year—my first act toward restoring order.

Next I found several individual documents loose in the box and sixteen or seventeen standard manila file folders (not acid-free) which appeared to be related to the radio station's operations in its earliest years. Sitting on top of the folders was a large three-ring binder labeled "Building Plans" with a smaller bound copy of building plans beneath it. Three of the folders were labeled "Operations Requisitions" followed by calendar dates. Two of these folders were next to each other in the box; one was not.

She told me that "I couldn't mess anything up," which I understood to mean that she didn't want me to be afraid to make decisions.

After looking briefly at the contents of each and seeing that they contained similar forms, I placed the three folders together in chronological order, reasoning that doing so made them easier to use. However, when I left that day I experienced doubt about my decision to put the files together. Had there been an underlying reason for their separation? Did I know enough about the records to make that move?



Moore's box of archival documents, before and after arrangement.

During my final visit to the archives I turned my attention to preservation. The archivist asked me to remove any paper clips. Order once again became an issue when I encountered a group of twenty to thirty paper clips in a relatively small section of records. Upon examination I found that the paperclips each held together a single worksheet showing the number of hours a student had worked at the station and a smaller "scratch" sheet on which an advisor had tallied the hours for the week and signed their initials. Placing these into individual sleeves seemed wasteful (the archivist had explained that the sleeves were expensive) but leaving the sheets loose in the same folder meant that they might lose their order and meaning. I decided that risking the possibility of losing the original order of these particular records was less important than conserving resources. Baker backed up my choice.

After six hours of processing, I realized I should have made an inventory of the contents of the box when I started. This was my biggest mistake. I needed to establish the existing order at the outset, before I moved anything around, if only because I could easily restore the original disorder if needed. Thankfully the scope of my project was small and minimized the impact of any mistakes.

Guided by Use and Context

When original order has been lost, if it ever existed, restoring order requires choices. I believe that use and context are the best guides for making these choices. How much order should be restored depends on the type and quantity of the records. When description is done on the file level, and if there aren't many files, reordering may be unnecessary. On the other hand, if the files contain similar material and are dated, it doesn't take much time and effort to put them back into order. I consciously left some disorder in the files I processed, which I believe was appropriate given their original condition.

Oh, and what ultimately happened to that untitled color photo the AGRC archivist placed back in the box? Based on her knowledge of the records that remained to be processed, she suggested that I describe it as part of "a separate photo collection" in my finding aid's scope and content. ■

Where Are the People? continued from page 7

Missing captions and uncertain provenance were enough of a red flag to consider many records for removal. Our final report, though, recommended keeping the photos, as well as the bulk of the collection. Notably, we did not arrive at this decision after long deliberations about the enduring values of the collection. Instead, we took as our guide a rather practical consideration: Because the records were digital and we did not anticipate significant additional costs in their preservation or storage, we opted for keeping them all.

We also noted that there was an incomplete record of grant documentation in our files. Whether more complete paper counterparts of those reports, manuals, and policy memos existed elsewhere remained a mystery, and the gaps raised a question as to how much of the governmental work in community development goes “off the record,” so to speak. We also wondered how suitable the formal methods of documentation are for capturing the motivation and the experiences of the community partners in CDBG programs. In other words, we ran into the challenge of absences, omissions, and blind spots, most of which are related to “human dimensions” in the archives.

Understanding the Process and the People

The government files we appraised revealed a one-sided story of the colonias—that of the government efforts, provisions, and programs. But the story of the communities in which those programs were implemented is more complicated and layered. Thus, we wrestled with a lingering feeling of not doing enough to represent the colonias and their residents in the archival record.

Learning about a whole segment of citizens within our society that has been living in abysmal conditions and abject poverty for decades had us questioning our own naiveté about government records and the presence of citizens in them. We committed ourselves to learning more about colonias while also questioning our agency as archivists. It certainly seemed that in order to better understand the government, its records, and the people whom government attempts to assist and about whom it creates the records, we must follow an activist path.

Archivists and Activists

Appraising is a complicated and demanding part of the archivist’s job. Our very first appraisal project called us to be compassionate and to respect the humanity of the subjects of the files. It demanded that we make space in the archival narrative for the colonias and design a way for them to be represented in the record.

We came to realize that archivists have the right—and the responsibility—to be advocates for and make space for underrepresented narratives. This job requires heart, determination, and an unrelenting sense of justice. We admire those qualities archivists exhibit on a daily basis. Our experience showed us that appraisal requires the archivist to be deeply passionate about the people represented in the documents, and we will rise to meet that call. ■

Notes

- ¹ Definitional inconsistencies and political implications of shifting criteria for inclusion into *colonias* are noted by many scholars. See, for instance, Mukhija, Vinit, and Paavo Monkkonen. “What’s in a Name? A Critique of ‘Colonias’ in the United States.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31, no. 2 (2007): 475–488; Donelson, Angela J., and Adrian X. Esparza, eds. *The Colonias Reader: Economy, Housing and Public Health in US-Mexico Border Colonias*, University of Arizona Press, 2016.



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MARCH 9–10, 2020 | Aliza Leventhal & Timothy Walsh | Williamsburg, VA

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MARCH 25 | Seth Shaw



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nancy P. Beaumont

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The Vision Thing

2020 is upon us and the vision thing is the inevitable reference in marketing materials and year-end columns like this one. Nevertheless, I will persist. . . .

SAA's vision is laid out in our Strategic Plan¹ and the more detailed dashboard of activities that bring it to life.² Among the *many* activities that are underway:

- The SAA Council is wrestling with how SAA might intervene to ensure fairer (higher!) salaries for archivists. Gathering data is a high priority and requisite activity, so you'll see several mentions in the Plan of conducting A*CENSUS II.
- Our new Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment is drafting a research agenda, searching for a repository that might house existing and future data about the profession, and developing training to help and guide archivists in data reuse.
- Our Education³ and Publications⁴ programs are producing resources to assist you in preparing yourself for the future of archives practice—including crucially important management

skills and DEI competency. Check out five new books and a host of in-person and online education offerings at www.archivists.org.

- And the 2020 Program Committee is hard at work building our Joint Annual Meeting content around the (visionary) theme of "Creating Our Future."⁵

We live in interesting times, and the future of the profession and the association depend on how we make our way through them. Some members currently are engaged—largely via social media—in the ongoing debate about whether SAA should be a "social activist" organization, even as it continues its work to provide the information, education, and public policy advocacy on which members have long relied. It's certainly a worthy debate, one in which other professions are engaged as well. And social media is a great convenience. But social media is no substitute for the face-to-face encounters, the official discussion lists, or the vetted content that SAA affords. I see SAA as the gathering place for the conversations that matter.

I'm reminded of the wisdom of SAA's 51st president, Brenda Banks, who said in her 1996 presidential address: "Armed with the lessons of the past, the willingness to accept and adapt to an ever-changing society, and commitment and conviction . . . we move confidently ahead to meet the challenges of the future with knowledge, courage, and determination."⁶

Brenda's words resonate at this challenging moment in America's history. And they remind us that we have important work to do—in providing both a place to engage in professional discussions and the reliable resources you need to adapt and thrive.

See you in 2020!

P.S. Please notice the ad for *Creating Family Archives*! Your family will finally understand what your job is about when you give them the best gift of the year. Written by SAA member Margot Note (and made possible with the support of our industry partners at Gaylord Archival), the book takes your family and friends through the step-by-step process of arranging and preserving their own family archives. It's the first book that SAA is offering directly to the public—so please help spread the word! ■

Notes

¹ <https://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan>

² <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0819-1-III-A-StratPlanActions-Dashboard.pdf>

³ <https://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/continuing-education>

⁴ https://mysaa.archivists.org/nc_store?filter=All

⁵ <https://www2.archivists.org/am2020>

⁶ <https://americanarchivist.org/doi/pdf/10.17723/aarc.59.4.92486pp6w6p20575>

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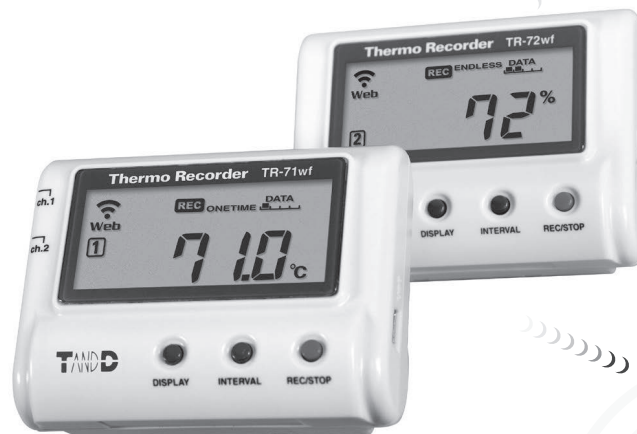
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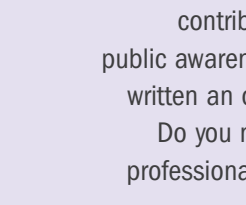
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