

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
November 9 – 12, 2014  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Discussion Item:  
Committee on Public Awareness Work Plan, 2014-2015  
(Prepared by COPA Chair Peter Gottlieb)**

**BACKGROUND**

The SAA Council created the Committee on Public Awareness (COPA) in February 2014. The Council's charge to the committee is: "... provide[s] strategic information and advice to the SAA Council to enhance SAA's capacity to promote the value of archives and archivists to institutions, communities, and society. The Committee recommends to the SAA Council the public awareness priorities on which SAA should focus its attention and resources, within the context of the Society's mission and strategic plan. In addition, the Committee works with staff and outside counsel to develop programs that promote the value and role(s) of archivists and archives nationwide."

The Committee held its first meeting in Chicago, July 12-13, 2014, and reported on the meeting highlights and discussions at the Council's August 11-12, 2014, meeting.<sup>1</sup>

Since then, we have worked via email to draft and refine a work plan for 2014-2015.

**DISCUSSION**

As noted in our August report to the Council, COPA members determined that we should base our 2014-2015 work plan activities on the following ideas:

- That SAA focus public awareness work on two key audiences: SAA members and the general public.
- That SAA develop messages that members can use in their own communications to boost awareness and appreciation of archives and that SAA can use in public awareness campaigns.
- That as vehicles for these messages, SAA continue American Archives Month (AAM) but retool resources developed for AAM, *I Found It In The Archives!*, and other programs and develop a public awareness toolkit for members. Other vehicles for public awareness messages should be the redesigned SAA website and the SAA Annual Meeting. The 2015 Annual Meeting should include a significant public awareness component.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0814-1-IV-B-COPA.pdf>

- COPA members should engage 2014 Annual Meeting attendees – and all SAA members – by inviting them to communicate their ideas on how best to answer the question “What is an archivist?”

We welcome the Council’s feedback on the following work plan for November 2014 – December 2015. Based on that feedback, we will work with the staff to 1) implement activities within the funding parameters in the FY15 budget (i.e., approximately \$8,000) and 2) propose funding in the draft FY16 budget to achieve activities slated for July to December 2015 (and beyond). The draft budget will, of course, be reviewed and approved by the Council in May 2015.

## **Committee on Public Awareness 2014 – 2015 Work Plan**

### **I. Goals**

- A. Inform, excite, engage SAA members about PR.
- B. Create content for use on redesigned SAA website and at 2015 Annual Meeting.
- C. Increase SAA capability to reach national media on issues concerning archives.

### **II. Objectives**

- A. Encourage and enable SAA members to undertake PR and advocacy work.
- B. Collect and/or develop stories that illustrate how archives change lives.
- C. Plan 2015 Annual Meeting with strong, overarching PR/advocacy campaign.
- D. Plan for major press releases, media interviews, etc., on current events relating to archives.

### **III. Strategies**

#### **A. Collect stories about how archives change lives.**

1. Issue call for archives/SAA members to submit stories (both unusual/dramatic and “ordinary”) illustrating how archives change lives.
2. Solicit stories from celebrities and famous individuals.
3. To provide examples for archives/archivists, contact archives that have already submitted stories and request additional submissions.
4. Select best 10-12 stories for use on redesigned SAA website and during 2015 Annual Meeting.
5. Hold contest to select “best stories”; award prizes at 2015 Annual Meeting.
6. Operate “Story Corps”-type video recording booth at 2015 Annual Meeting as means of “practicing” and collecting additional stories (for possible broadcast on SAA website). (See also D.5.)

#### **B. Encourage SAA members to undertake at least one PR/advocacy event in 2014-2015.**

1. Prepare suggestions/guidelines for three kinds of events (using existing American Archives Month content), but also encourage innovation.
2. Encourage members to do one or more events during 2015 American Archives Month.
3. Issue call for reports on events to be submitted to SAA for posting on website; coordinate with Regional Archival Associations Consortium on solicitation of reports. Issue post-American Archives Month call for members to undertake additional PR/advocacy events.
4. Develop and distribute (via website) PR/advocacy toolkit to SAA members.

**C. Plan for national media outreach.**

1. Anticipate 2015 events (anniversaries, premiers of movies, etc.) that will have significant archives connections.
2. Prepare information and talking points about these events.
3. Research appropriate media outlets/contacts for news releases, interviews, etc.
4. Rough-draft press releases for these events.
5. Request archivist experts on the events for media to contact.
6. Establish archivist speakers' bureau/database.
7. Investigate feasibility of becoming a project for the Ad Council of America.

**D. 2015 Annual Meeting.**

1. Conduct PR/advocacy campaign (e.g., "Archives \_\_\_\_ Lives") at the conference.
2. Work with SAA President, Program and Host committees, and staff to integrate campaign with plenaries, one or more workshops, local service opportunity(ies), and collateral materials.
3. Hold one or more public events in Cleveland to broaden recognition/appreciation of archives (e.g., speakers' corner).
4. Use videos of collected "how archives change lives" stories in plenary sessions. (See A.4. and A.6.)
5. Ensure clear, strong PR/advocacy messages to attendees: banners, signage, registration materials, other collateral materials.
6. Operate "Story Corps"-type video recording booth.
7. Invite media to cover one or more plenary speakers (offer personal interview of speakers) and/or an archives-related service project that takes place during meeting.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION**

Does the Council have feedback for the Committee on the proposed work plan?