

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 5-7, 2017
Chicago, Illinois**

**Annual Report: Committee on Public Awareness
(Prepared by Chris Burns, Chair)**

For the 2016-2017 term, the Committee on Public Awareness (COPA) worked on the following:

ArchivesAWARE! Blog

ArchivesAWARE! is a blog hosted by the [Society of American Archivists](#) and managed by its [Committee on Public Awareness \(COPA\)](#). It was established in January 2016 to create an online space in which professionals and students engaged in all aspects of archival work could share their experiences of and ideas for raising public awareness of archives and the value that archives and archivists add to business, government, education, and society as a whole.

The past year featured 19 new posts, which included five new strips of “Beyond the Elevator” and six Federal Funding Impact Stories, which was a COPA initiative to gather stories about federal funding impact in response to proposed budget cuts in the NHPRC, IMLS, NEH, and NEA. Below is a list of this year’s blog posts:

- *Undergraduate Archival Internships: Opportunities for Professional Development and Student Outreach* by Gene Hyde and Ashley McGhee
- *October 5 Is AskAnArchivist Day!*
- *Finding the Hook* by David Carmicheal
- *Beyond the Elevator* (6-9) by Mandy Mastrovita and Jill Severn
- *Going On Air (And In Print)* by Caryn Radick
- *Catching Pokemon: A Historically Themed Pokemon Scavenger Hunt Outreach Activity* by Meredith E. Torre
- *An Interview With The Lead Authors of “Recommendations on Federal Archives and Records Management Issues” For The Trump Transition Team*
- *Share Your Federal Funding Impact Story!*
- *Federal Funding Impact Story* (1-6)
- *A COPA Guide to SAA*

Blog Statistics

Year	Views	Visitors
2016	19,053	11,377
2017 (YTD)	6,642	3,665

AskAnArchivist Day

2016 was the third year of AskAnArchivist Day on Twitter. SAA's Storify of highlights from AskAnArchivist Day 2016 can be found here: https://storify.com/archivists_org/askanarchivist-2016. Modeled on AskACurator Day, participation in the event has grown steadily. AskAnArchivist Day 2017 took place on October 4.

Year	Unique Users	Total Tweets	Tweets per User
10/30/2014	1,949	6,065	3.1
10/01/2015	3,184	7,845	2.5
10/05/2016	3,742	10,005	2.7

Joint Forum at SAA Annual Meeting

COPA Chair Sami Norling co-led the 2nd annual Advocacy Forum at the 2017 Annual Meeting. This year's forum panelists shared their experience and led an interactive discussion on how we can proactively raise awareness of archives in our local communities, advocate for issues of critical importance to our profession, and have a positive impact on the policy dialogue at the local, state, and national level. The forum was cosponsored by SAA's Committees on Public Awareness and Public Policy and the Issues and Advocacy Section.

Kitchen Sisters: COPA assisted SAA staff in welcoming Nikki Silva of the [Kitchen Sisters](#) to SAA's Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon, in July. Silva interviewed a number of archivists and attended presentations at the conference, gathering material for a proposed new NPR podcast series, "The Keepers," that will feature archivists and the collections they manage. The Kitchen Sisters currently are seeking funding from the NEH to support this effort.

Exhibit Hall Office Hours: COPA held "office hours" in the Exhibit Hall at the 2017 Annual Meeting (Friday, 8:00-8:30 am and 12:30-1:30 pm). The office hours were an opportunity to introduce SAA members to the work of COPA, get input on our ongoing initiatives, and gather suggestions for possible future action. COPA member Jill Severn created an eye-catching graphic to help draw people to our table. Our discussion topics included:

- Federal Funding Impact Stories
- Beyond the Elevator
- Effort to gather names of speakers and interesting collections for a possible speakers' bureau
- *ArchivesAWARE!* contributors
- AskAnArchivist Day
- Kitchen Sisters

Joint Working Groups

COPA members currently participate in two joint working groups.

COPP/COPA/RAAC/I&A (COPA Participant: Vince Lee): These semi-regular calls have served as a way for these groups to keep each other up to date on such issues as:

- COPP: Issue briefs; letter of support for Indiana State Archives; records transparency discussion.
- COPA: Federal Funding Impact Stories; Annual Meeting presence; ArchivesAWARE! blog.
- RAAC: Library of Virginia letter of support; projects and activities page on advocacy subcommittee page; video about RAAC with emphasis on advocacy; materials to help regionals.
- I&A: Toolkit with resources and links; archivists on the issues; research teams; postponed archivists design shared page; possible legislative day.

COSA/NAGARA/SAA/RAAC (COPA Participant: Chris Burns): Burns participated on monthly phone calls of the Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness. This group led the effort to create a document for the Trump transition team on archives and records issues. Subsequent discussion focused on potential funding issues to federal agencies, the potential for reauthorization of the NHPRC, and updates on a handful of issues at state archives around the country.

2017-2019 Work Plan

The Committee completed development of our 2017-2019 work plan at our October 2017 meeting in Chicago. (See attached.) We appreciated the funding to hold a face-to-face meeting, which made review of past activities and brainstorming of future plans more effective. We welcome Council members' comments on the plan.

Committee on Public Awareness 2017–2019 Work Plan

I. Goals

- A. Inform, excite, and engage SAA members about public awareness.
- B. Create content for *ArchivesAWARE!* and 2018 and 2019 Annual Meetings, and review and recommend advocacy content on SAA website.
- C. Increase SAA capability to reach national media on issues concerning archives.

II. Objectives

- A. Encourage and enable SAA members to undertake outreach and advocacy work.
- B. Collect and/or develop stories about archives and archivists.
- C. Maintain COPA presence at 2018 Annual Meeting.
- D. Plan for 2019 Annual Meeting with overarching storytelling theme.
- E. Plan for major press releases, media interviews, etc., on current events relating to archives.

III. Strategies

A. Encourage and enable outreach/advocacy participation in 2017–2019.

- 1. Promote AskAnArchivist Day (October) and encourage archivists to participate.
- 2. Review advocacy content on SAA website.
- 3. Relaunch existing American Archives Month content on SAA website.
- 4. Assess member needs for a proposed PR/advocacy toolkit.
- 5. Develop “elevator speech” content for SAA website.
- 6. Develop *Why Do You Love Being an Archivist?* content (short videos, website material, social media content).
- 7. Partner with SNAP on a SNAPChat on the topic of archival awareness (Spring).
- 8. Share examples of outreach programs and draw attention to available outreach/advocacy resources on the ArchivesAWARE! Blog.

B. Collect and disseminate stories about archivists and archives.

- 1. Continue to solicit and generate content for ArchivesAWARE! Blog that features archivists and their work. Develop and promote series (There’s an Archivist for That, Asserting the Archivist, Archival Outreach Innovators).
- 2. Review audio recordings from StoryCorps (2015) and Kitchen Sisters (2017) for clips that could be shared by SAA.

C. Organize and promote activities in conjunction with the 2018 Joint Annual Meeting.

- 1. Organize and propose storytelling panel session (by November 15, 2017).
- 2. Hold media training event for archivists. (Develop curriculum by November 1, 2017, talk with possible trainers, determine format.)

3. Hold Exhibit Hall office hours.
4. Set up a listening booth to highlight clips from StoryCorps and Kitchen Sisters recordings.

D. Develop plans and begin work on activities considered for 2019 Annual Meeting.

1. Begin to plan storytelling focus for 2019 Annual Meeting.
2. Pursue a partnership with The Moth.
3. Coordinate with Program Committee on possibility of special forum programming.
4. Investigate potential for local partnership with members of Austin community.

E. Plan for national media outreach.

1. Anticipate 2018 and 2019 events (anniversaries, premiers of movies, etc.) that will have significant archives connections and identify likely content experts.
2. Prepare information and talking points about these events.
3. Research appropriate media outlets/contacts for news releases, interviews, etc.
4. Draft press releases for these events.
5. Establish list of archives spokespeople with expertise in a variety of archives-related topics.