

**Society of American Archivists**  
**American Archivist Editorial Board**  
**Virtual Meeting | March 31, 2023**

**MINUTES**

**In attendance:** Amy Cooper Cary (*American Archivist* Editor and Editorial Board Chair), Rose Buchanan and Stephanie Luke (Reviews Editors), Sumayya Ahmed, Shirley Franco, Rebecca Hankins, Katharina Hering, Eric Hung, Jessica Lacher-Feldman, María Matienzo, Marlee Newman; Bree'ya Brown (early-career member) and Amanda Greenwood (early-career member); ex officio members Joyce Gabiola (Council Liaison) and Stacie Williams (Publications Editor); and SAA staff Abigail Christian, Jacqueline Price Osafo, Julia Pillard, and Hannah Stryker.

**Unable to attend:** Sylvia Welsh

**I. WELCOME**

- A. Amy Cooper Cary welcomes all to the meeting and introduces the agenda topics.

**II. READERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS**

- A. The *American Archivist* Readership Survey closed March 8.
- There were concerns that the survey did not reach as many people as hoped due to some SAA members opting to not read the communications about it. However, board members shared the survey through emails; word of mouth; local, state, and regional list serves; etc. The survey received 212 responses and most respondents found out through promotional emails and *In the Loop*. The survey serves as an initial benchmark and should be conducted again after a few more *American Archivist* volumes to identify any changes.
- B. [Chart results](#) feedback:
- Most people read promotional emails and look at the journal later or skim the table of contents. Readers mainly read articles that appeal to them, rather than viewing the journal as a book. A fair percentage of members don't read the journal at all. However, this might be typical reading behavior compared to when *American Archivist* was in print. It is even possible that these readership statistics are good, and we don't know it because we have nothing to compare them to.
  - The majority of respondents do not read the reviews section or engage with the Reviews Portal. Hopefully, the Intergenerational Conversations series will change this, but it needs to be better marketed. We need to ask ourselves how we can engage people with the portal. According to the Reviews Editors, one of the portal reviews that received the most traffic was about the *Archives 81* horror podcast. Pop culture reviews are getting a lot of interest, both from readers and reviewers. We might consider pushing more reviews in this nature.
  - There was no reader preference for the continuous publishing model idea, but results were very divided. If continuing publishing allows people to focus on one piece at a time as opposed to scanning a TOC, it might offer more engagement around each article. However, one concern that some

members of the board expressed is the labor of continuous publishing. We should talk to other archival journals about their continuous publishing models. If people don't read the digital journal at all, it makes sense that they may not have a preference of continuous publishing. We may want to analyze the results with overlap:

- Age range correlation to wanting the print version back.
- Data set of people who don't read the digital journal responding to the survey versus the preferences of those who do read it.
- Amy received a few direct comments from older readers who say they miss print. Their comments, as well as the survey results, were broad complaints about functionality/format rather than content. There has clearly been a culture shift, with members engaging with the digital world in very different ways.
- C. SAA staff will have conversations about enhanced marketing for *American Archivist* and encouraging submissions on topics of interest indicated in the survey, especially for special sections. In the future, we might consider presenting a readership survey at the Annual Meeting or announcing it at Section meetings to generate more responses.

**To Do #1 (Eric Hung and Amanda Greenwood):** Create a summary of the results that can be shared through *Archival Outlook* and other communications.

### **III. FUTURE ARTICLE IDEAS FOR INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS: Reviews Editors Rose Buchanan and Stephanie Luke**

- A. [The Intergenerational Conversations series](#) launched on the Reviews Portal January 26. The inaugural year of the series looks at the work of former SAA President John Fleckner whose writings have shaped archival practice. The Reviews Editors hope to release content once a month. The first two of ten articles have been published: a review of "Dear Mary Jane': Some Reflections on being an Archivist," and a review of "Myths of the Archives Profession: A Common Practice?"
- B. When looking at audience engagement, no one is actively commenting on pieces. To make members more aware of the portal, please share the series with all your communities.
- C. The series is worth continuing after a year. We want to consider who or what we can engage with: are there articles from long ago or SAA publications that deserve more recognition? Share article ideas to contribute to future installments of the series [here](#). Other scholars or compilations of past work can be suggested.

### **IV. MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN ARCHIVES SPECIAL SECTION UPDATE: Sumayya Ahmed and Rebecca Hankins**

- A. The February 1 deadline for submissions has passed. The editors extended the deadline to February 15. Cooper Cary assigned submissions to Ahmed and Hankins through Allen Press. Ahmed and Hankins have received thirteen submissions total encompassing twelve different countries covering a wide spectrum. Four submissions have reviewers, two have one reviewer, two are waiting to hear back from reviewers, and one review was received back. A few more need to be reviewed. Feedback will be sent to authors.

- B. The Special Section, which will be released in Fall 2023, will be open access so that international archivists can read it.

V. **COUNCIL UPDATE: Joyce Gabiola**

- A. SAA Council, upon the recommendation of the Section Health Assessment (SHA) Working Group, has created a [member-wide survey](#) to better understand the value that current and potential SAA members receive from their engagement with sections. The survey is open through April 30.

VI. **PREVIOUS TO-DO'S**

**TO DO #2 (Cooper Cary):** Develop a call for submissions about A\*CENSUS II for the July/August issues of *Archival Outlook*.

**TO DO #3 (Cooper Cary):** Finalize language for opt-in on reviewer identity in Editorial Manager to share with the Board; send to SAA staff for implementation.

**TO DO #4 (Cooper Cary, Hering, Hung, Lacher-Feldman, and Matienzo):** Cooper Cary will connect with members to create a bibliography about what's been written about the journal's and SAA's history. [Goal for 86:2]

**TO DO #5 (Cooper Cary):** Review formatting of the rubric so that visual clues encourage explanation rather than brief comments and write an introduction for the rubric which stresses the purpose and value of the responses, especially for reviewers not on the Board. Board members can send examples of other good rubrics or suggestions for additional/revised questions to Cooper Cary.