

Society of American Archivists
AMERICAN ARCHIVIST EDITORIAL BOARD
Chicago
February 29–March 1, 2012

DRAFT MINUTES

In attendance: Greg Hunter (chair and editor), Danna Bell-Russel (Associate Reviews Editor), Bruce Bruemmer, Amy Cooper Cary (Reviews Editor), Michelle Light, Cal Lee, Jennifer Meehan, Chris Prom, Donna McCrea (council liaison), and SAA staffers Nancy Beaumont, Teresa Brinati, and Anne Hartman. **Unable to attend:** Brien Brothman and Paul Conway.

SAA Overview

Nancy Beaumont discussed January 2012 Year-To-Date Financial Statements. The *American Archivist's* net loss of \$51,434.83 exceeded budget by \$18,673.52. The loss can be attributed to higher printing and delivery costs, as well as higher-than-budgeted staff effort. Publications revenue is short of budget by 15%. Membership dues are toeing the line and the Annual Meeting brought in more revenue than was anticipated, but not enough to offset losses in other programmatic areas. Funds from net gains typically go to publishing, education, and technology areas, but currently those areas are lacking funding because of a net loss.

One option for generating revenue might be to explore charging higher rates for journal subscriptions at larger institutions.

TO DO #1 (Teresa, Anne): Explore subscription model and look into how EBSCO configures subscription models.

Digital Friendly Version of *American Archivist*

Board members discussed creating a digital-friendly version of *American Archivist* and offering it as a format option to subscribers/members. Although there would still be a cost associated with production (SAA would need to work through vendors to convert the journal to appropriate e-files), SAA could save with smaller print runs and on postage. In addition, effective digitization could help SAA better meet readers' needs. The existing PDF files of the journal aren't user-friendly, and they're not as attractive as the print edition. The digital version of the journal would need to be a true surrogate for the print journal.

Creating an effective digital version of the journal would be a multi-step process. SAA should first pose the question to members to ask their thoughts on giving up the print version. One option would be that members would get the e-version as a default and could opt into the print version for an additional cost (or offer a discount for those who only receive electronic versions). For members who decide to receive the electronic version, the Editorial Board suggested that when a new issue of the journal is published, SAA should send a postcard and/or an email with the table of contents and abstracts to alert readers to its availability.

TO DO #2 (Teresa, Anne): Look into partnering with a vendor to do a mock-up and share with focus groups of different ages to determine the success of a digital version.

TO DO #3 (Teresa, Anne): Editorial Policy in print edition needs to reflect revised "Letters to the Editor" policy (i.e., responsibility for accuracy remains with letters' authors . . .).

Member Needs and Satisfaction Survey

Nancy Beaumont shared preliminary results of the "Publications" portion of the recently conducted Member Needs and satisfaction Survey, which had a 35% response rate (2,151 respondents). According to the survey results in the area of "Publications," *American Archivist* and *American Archivist Online* are key drivers of membership for individual members. The print edition of *American Archivist* is the top driver of value for institutional members, while the online edition is not a key driver for institutional member value. Survey results show that the print and online editions of the journals were given high marks for benefit performance by all respondents. There are many other pieces to the survey and the complete results are expected in March. Stay tuned for more details.

Director of Publishing Report

Teresa Brinati reported that *The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository* by Christina Zamon was published in February and already is exceeding expectations, selling approximately 127 copies in its first two weeks. The Editorial Board suggested ways to further promote the book:

- Offer the book at a discount at regional meetings; if possible, engage SAA student chapters in those regions to promote the book.
- Consider working with AAM, AASLH, SLA, AIIM to promote the book
- Prepare an interview with the author, which can be plugged into other organizations' newsletters.

TO DO #4 (Teresa and Anne): Implement above promo ideas for *The Lone Arranger*.

Books in the pipeline:

- *How to Manage Processing in Archives and Special Collections: An Introduction* by P. Hackbart-Dean and Elizabeth Slomba; slated for publication August 2012.
- *Telling Stories About Stories: Archives in a Digital Age* by Anne Gilliland; manuscript due in March.
- *Women's Archives Reader*; manuscript due in March.

Fundamental Change Working Group

Chris Prom gave an update on the *Next Archival Fundamental Series*. Each module in the series will provide a general introduction to a specific field of practice and will be roughly 10,000 to 20,000 words long. Initial modules to be developed and published by August 2012 are: "Standards for Arrangement and Description" by Sybil Schaefer, "Implementing Descriptive and Access Systems," by Daniel Santamaria, and "Processing Digital Records and Manuscripts," by J. Gordon Daines III. These modules will serve as supplements to Archival Fundamentals Series II.

The process will be an experiment for SAA, and a strong way to test online delivery and what the pros and cons would be. The modules will be made available electronically, but there will also need to be an attractive print option. They can be sold separately, but can also be bundled together with a new introduction.

TO DO #5 (Teresa, Chris): Have a meeting to discuss how to produce alternate formats and decide on a distribution format.

TO DO #6 (Teresa, Chris): Although potentially costly, investigate DRM system for modules.

The Editorial Board also expressed hope that the Publications Board would pursue publication of a third edition of the Archival Fundamentals Series.

Journal Reviews Department

Amy Cooper-Cary and Danna Bell-Russel reported that online reviews are up and running; additions to the section are in process, including commenting. The Editorial Board discussed various ways to handle comments, and it was ultimately decided that SAA should begin using Drupal's commenting feature, and if the system isn't robust enough to block spam, investigate another commenting system. Comments would initially be open only to members, but if they are easy enough to manage comments could eventually be open to all readers. Someone should review comments to ensure they are relevant to the review.

TO DO #7 (Amy, Danna): Okay commenting feature for specific online section.

TO DO #8 (Teresa, Anne): Draft an editorial policy for comments, decide who will review comments.

Amy and Danna also expressed the need for stronger marketing to drive readers to the reviews. Tweeting and creating Facebook posts to alert people that a new review has been posted could be effective ways to drive traffic. Additionally, SAA could reach out to members with active blogs to promote the existence of the reviews (Kate Theimer's *ArchivesNext* and Terry Baxter's *Beaver Archivist* blogs were specifically mentioned). SAA could also connect with state and regional organizations with active email lists to promote the reviews.

SAA might also pursue publishing student reviews online. It would help the organization form a stronger connection with students and would get the students published.

Balancing Online and Print Reviews: Amy and Danna also discussed a need to establish processes for determining which reviews to run online and which to run in print. Essentially, web reviews should be reviews that people will want immediately, whereas print reviews are not as timely. The Editorial Board also decided that reviews of books should appear in the *American Archivist* print edition.

American Archivist Online Supplement

Teresa Brinati updated the board on the first-ever online supplement. Bill Landis is the driving force behind the supplement idea and is editing 75th anniversary content from the 2011 SAA Annual Meeting. Production – editing and review – is taking longer than anticipated, largely due to the number of authors involved in each of the presentations and the length of the presentations. For future supplements, the Editorial Board discussed putting out a call for a theme and putting a supplement together based on the theme, or looking at Annual Meeting sessions and developing a theme around those sessions. SAA should also formulate a process for identifying high-quality articles in the supplement

queue that would be a better fit for the *American Archivist*. The online supplement is also a good way to test the interest in online-only publications.

TO DO #9 (Teresa): Ask Bill Landis for “lessons learned” from preparing the first-ever supplement, as well as do’s and don’ts for the next supplement.

TO DO #10: Editorial Board members should be on the lookout for themes and potential content for future supplements.

American Archivist Volume 75

Greg Hunter reported that content for 75:1 has been copyedited and organized and that production should begin in March. He will then turn his attention to the content for 75:2.

Redesign of the Journal

Endnotes vs. Footnotes: The Editorial Board decided to test the proposed change to endnotes during the Annual Meeting in August 2012, and will make a decision soon after. Hypothetically, endnotes could first appear in vol. 76, no. 1. Such a change would need to be communicated to authors, as well as to readers, in the From the Editor column. In the digital edition, it would be ideal if readers could easily move from the text to the endnote reference and vice-versa, or mouse over the text to see the reference.

TO DO #11 (Teresa, Anne): Check with vendor to determine the possibility of linking within the PDF, and determine cost.

Further design changes: The Editorial Board also requested that further alterations be made to the design. In the footer, remove the slash marks, and delete the URL. In the footer on the opening page of an article, remove the page numbers and place a full citation after the abstract.

TO DO #12 (Teresa, Anne): Send changes to the graphic designer and re-evaluate the design once changes have been made.

TO DO #13 (Teresa, Anne): Check with Peter Hirtle to see if a creative commons symbol or copyright symbol should be added with author name(s) in each article.

75th Anniversary of the Journal

The Editorial Board discussed ways to commemorate the 75th anniversary of *American Archivist* in 2012. There was primarily interest in creating a friendly, perspectives piece, rather than an analysis. The board also suggested taping and transcribing a conversation between past editors and leaders in the industry during the Annual Meeting in August 2012 for a piece in the journal.

TO DO #14 (Greg): Put out a call asking authors for proposals and a one-paragraph abstract for a 75th anniversary-themed piece.

TO DO #15 (Greg): Ask Mary Jo Pugh to assemble a group of editors, professionals to participate in a moderated discussion during August 2012 Annual Meeting. Contact Oral History Section and engage them in this project.

The Editorial Board also discussed including a piece in *Archival Outlook* to commemorate

the anniversary. The piece would include perspectives from a range of readers--from students to professors to practitioners--on how *AA* has influenced them.

TO DO #16 (Greg): Work with Mary Jo Pugh to assemble former *American Archivist* journal editors to participate in a moderated discussion.

TO DO #17 (Teresa): Determine the best way to download all of the journal content so that members working on the piece will have ready access. See if MetaPress or JSTOR could easily provide such files. Touch base with Paul Conway about CD copies.

The board discussed how to create buzz for the journal's anniversary. SAA could, for instance, post a prominent *AA* article online and ask users to comment on the article to create a discussion, or have members vote on their favorite *AA* articles.

Peer Review Process and Software

The board discussed exploring online tracking systems for article submissions, which would help to streamline the peer review process. msTracker and Open Journal System seem like viable options, but we would need to do further research and know specifics on what we're looking for before we decide.

TO DO #18 (Greg): Determine criteria for a submission system and further research systems.

TO DO #19 (Teresa): Leave a placeholder in the FY 2013 *American Archivist* budget.

Greg also discussed sending specific guidelines to peer reviewers to aid them in the review process, as well as creating a more specific rubric that reviewers can use to communicate the status of the article.

TO DO #20 (Greg): Create and send guidelines and rubric.

Additionally, the Editorial Board decided to eliminate article type designations in the table of contents and at the beginning of each section within the journal. The editorial policy will continue to describe the different types of articles in the journal (e.g., research, case studies, perspectives, etc.), but the journal will no longer include the designations in the table of contents.

TO DO #21 (Greg): In vol. 75, no. 2, provide explanation regarding elimination of article designations in the TOC.

Re-Publishing of International Articles

Greg Hunter discussed the idea of reaching out to international archival journals for significant articles that *American Archivist* could republish. This could possibly lead to other journals reproducing *American Archivist* content. The board thought it would be best to start with content from British and Australian archival communities, since translation would not be an issue. The International Council on Archives would be a good source to identify such articles. SAA would need to explore copyright and permissions republishing such content as well as sharing *AA* content.

Usage Statistics and Google Indexing

Chris Prom discussed Google analytics and *American Archivist Online*. From January 29–February 28, 2012, the *AA Online* received 6,700 visits with 4,000 unique visitors. On average, users spent more than five minutes on the site, and there was a bounce rate of 40 percent (typically, bounce rates are anywhere from 50 to 80 percent). Sixteen percent of traffic was direct, 42 percent was via search engines, and 40 percent was referrals from other sites. It is not yet possible to track articles that are downloaded or read, which would be a useful statistic to have. It would also be useful to have data on what people are searching for on the site.

TO DO #22 (Teresa): Contact MetaPress for data on downloaded articles and other search stats .

One important note was that Google does not consider the website to be "socially engaged," meaning that SAA should boost the number of links to social media services on the site. One option could be to include a "like" button so that users can like SAA through their Facebook account.

It's become clear that MetaPress has difficulty with Google. Google does not crawl the MetaPress site, making it difficult for SAA website content to appear high in search engine results. One option could be to create landing pages that aren't based in the management system.

TO DO #23 (Teresa, Chris): Have a conversation with MetaPress, and perhaps Google, to work toward giving the website content more prominence online.

Inquiry from EBSCOhost

Teresa discussed an opportunity to allow EBSCOhost to index our material. There would be no cost for partnering, and would allow SAA's publications to gain exposure. Librarians use EBSCO to make subscription decisions. We would first need to see an agreement before we take any steps forward.

TO DO #24 (Teresa): Request agreement from EBSCO for review and disseminate to board.

Reading Group at SAA Annual Meeting

Jennifer Meehan discussed organizing a reading group for the SAA Annual Meeting this August. It would be similar to the successful reading group held in D.C. in 2010, where approximately 60 people participated in a brown bag lunch discussion. The board will need to decide on an article for participants to discuss, and preferably one slated for publication in Fall/Winter 2012. The reading group is tentatively scheduled for Thursday (Aug. 9) at lunch during conference week in San Diego, and will require two rooms. Jennifer Meehan will be the contact person/organizer for the group.

TO DO #25 (Jennifer, Greg): Identify article for reading group discussion.

TO DO #26 (Teresa): Let Nancy Beaumont know that for Annual Meeting in San Diego two meeting rooms for 30 people each are needed Aug. 9, Noon–1pm.

TO DO #27 (Jennifer, Teresa): Put out a call for interest in June with follow up in July.