

**Society of American Archivists  
Publications Board  
Virtual Meeting | May 7, 2021**

**MINUTES**

**In attendance:** J. Gordon Daines, Sarah Demb, Dana Lamparello, Monika Lehman, Nicole Milano, Cyndi Shein, and Katherine Fisher (early-career member); *ex officio* member Amy Cooper Cary (*American Archivist* Editor); and SAA staff Teresa Brinati and Abigail Christian.

**Unable to attend:** Stacie Williams (chair and Publications Editor), Terry Baxter, Colleen McFarland Rademaker, and *ex officio* member Melissa Gonzales (Council Liaison).

### **I. Welcome**

SAA Director of Publishing Teresa Brinati welcomed Publications Board members and explained that the Publications Board Chair was unable to attend due to an emergency, Brinati facilitated the meeting.

### **II. Minutes 08/2020 – [Review of To Do Items](#)**

- The Publications Board sponsored the One Book, One Profession virtual event, with panelists discussing themes related to *A Matter of Facts* by Laura Millar, on March 25. The event had RSVPs from 481 people and was well attended. The success has inspired plans for future virtual book discussion events.
- Still on the Board's to-do items is to adapt the annual "Write Away" Forum on SAA Publishing Opportunities" into a series of Zoom forums focused on a specific publishing outlet (e.g., journal, reviews portal, magazine, books, dictionary terminology). The Board plans to host the general event during the second week in August (the week after *ARCHIVES\*RECORDS 2021*) and schedule the series on a quarterly basis after that.

**TO DO #1 (Williams, Cary, Brinati, and Christian):** Schedule and plan a Zoom series on writing for SAA.

### **III. Brief Updates**

#### **A. [American Archivist Editor](#) – Amy Cooper Cary**

Cary is continuing to get up to speed on the editorial process as well as preparing for the first digital issue of the journal—Vol 84, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2021). In addition, the *American Archivist* Editorial Board has been meeting every few months and discussing DEIA in the journal and its processes. Cary has also been working with potential guest editors to develop Special Sections in the journal: one on design records is forthcoming in Vol. 84, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2021); other ideas include ethics/professional conduct and accessibility/disability. The Board has been talking with CODA regarding a collaboration between the journal and the SAA dataverse. The winner has been selected for the 2021 Theodore Calvin Pease Award for best student paper and will be announced shortly.

**B. [Publications Program Overview](#) – Teresa Brinati & Abigail Christian**

- In addition to adding diverse voices and topics across SAA publications, we're also expanding the pool of freelancers. We've worked with a new graphic designer for the cover of *Archival Accessioning* and plan to work with her again. ***If the Publications Board has recommendations for copyeditors, designers, and indexers, please send our way.***
- The One Book, One Profession event on March 25 was a huge success. We are planning a similar book launch event around *Archival Accessioning* with author Audra Eagle Yun and several panelists on July 15.
- The seven Case Studies Series co-sponsored by the Publications Board and various component groups have been very active—in recent months six new cases have been added. Kudos to the section editors of those series.
- The *Dictionary of Archives Terminology* launched one year ago. Since then it garners about 10% of the visitors to the SAA website.
- SAA conducted a brief survey on how and why people read *Archival Outlook*. In two weeks, the survey had 391 respondents, out of SAA's 5,800 members. More than 50% of respondents said they prefer print versions; about 20% said they preferred print *and* digital versions. The results will be used in consideration of the format and budget for the magazine in the next year.
- The March/April issue of *Archival Outlook* featured a special section on *Ahmad v. the University of Michigan* case, per a recommendation by the SAA Council to promote education about the case.
- SAA is now offering expanded access to nine backlist titles via Amazon Kindle at reduced prices. All have all been published 10 or more years ago and, based on sales trends, will no longer be available in print. While they're already available digitally in PDF and epub formats in the SAA Bookstore, the addition of Kindle gives readers more flexibility to select the format they prefer.

**C. [Archives in Context Podcast](#) – Nicole Milano**

- The podcast team is wrapping up [Season 5](#), which was the first themed season, focusing on the events of 2020 and their impact on archivists. The season has at least two episodes still forthcoming.
- Colleen McFarland Rademaker has stepped down as one of the charter producers of the podcast. Milano expressed appreciation for McFarland's contributions. Mary Caldera from Yale University will step into the role.
- The team has also invited someone to step into a new project manager role to think more holistically about the podcast across its two teams. Official announcement forthcoming.
- ***The Publications Board's feedback on the [podcast or ideas for interviewees](#) are always welcome! Send to Milano.***

**D. Early-Career Member Project: Case Studies Series – Katherine Fisher**

In an effort to increase the reputation of and bring renewed energy to SAA's seven case studies series, Fisher has been working with *American Archivist* Reviews Editor Bethany Anderson to solicit reviews of case studies. She recently sent out a call for reviewers, aimed at students, new professionals, and first-time writers as reviews are a great entry point in writing for SAA. ***Let Fisher know if you have recommendations for reviewers.***

## E. SAA Council

The Council last met in [March](#) and has several meetings scheduled for May. Executive Director Nancy Beaumont is retiring in June. An appointed search committee has been working with a recruitment firm to identify and interview potential candidates. The search committee will make a recommendation to the Council in the next month.

## IV. Project Status

Project updates on [books](#) under contract were provided by Brinati and various shepherds:

1. *Archival Accessioning* by Audra Yun is to press and will be available in June. A book launch and panel discussion is being planned for July 14—stay tuned for more details!
2. *Archival Virtue: Relationship, Obligation, and the Just Archives* by Scott Cline is in production and is slated for publication in fall 2021.
3. *Managing Business Archives*, edited by Sarah Polirer, is in production and is slated for publication in fall 2021.
4. *Museum Archives: Practice, Issues, and Advocacy*, edited by Rachel Chatalbash, Susan Hernandez, and Megan Schwenke, is in production and is slated for publication in fall 2021.
5. *Born-Digital Design Records*, edited by Samantha Winn, is part of the series Trends in Archives Practice and includes modules 24, 25, and 26. Awaiting revised manuscript from editor and contributors.
6. The final two books in the Archival Fundamentals Series III have experienced several delays. Initial manuscripts are due in December 2021 for Volume 6: *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* by Margery Sly and Volume 7: *Introducing Archives and Manuscripts* by Peter Wosh.
7. *The Solo Archivist: Succeeding in a Small Repository*, is a revised version of *The Lone Arranger* by Christina Zamon. Initial manuscript is due August 2022.
8. *Teaching Primary Source Research Skills*: SAA just signed a contract with Julie Thomas. Initial manuscript is due October 2021. The author requested a shepherd from the Board. Lamparello is interested in taking on this role, but would like more feedback about what this process entails.

**TO DO #2 (Brinati, Lamparello):** Discuss shepherd role and provide contact information for being in touch with author of *Teaching Primary Source Research Skills*.

## V. Business Process Improvements

### A. Proposals

Brinati explained that this is how the process for book proposals has previously worked:

1. A proposal comes in and is initially reviewed by the Publications Editor to make sure it addresses all of the required elements and includes CVs. If pieces are missing or elements not fleshed out, the Publications Editor contacts the proposer, requests missing info, and/or offers suggestions for fleshing out.

2. When it is deemed complete, the Publications Editor sends the proposal to Publications Board members via the listserv. A link to an evaluation form in GoogleDocs is provided and the deadline for the Board to complete their reviews is typically two weeks.
3. Once all of the Board members' reviews are received, the intent is for the Publications Editor to share via the listserv Board members' feedback, to include a general summation of the feedback and the direction the assessment appears to be moving in, and to see if there is further discussion.
4. Based on any subsequent feedback received from the Publications Board, the Publications Editor would then conclude the discussion via the list and apprise Board members of the decision before contacting the proposer.
5. The Publications Editor emails the proposer about next steps. Proposal review is typically an iterative process; many decisions lead to revise and resubmit. The Publications Editor provides a high-level summary of feedback and also includes anonymized Board reviews to the proposer so that they can make improvements accordingly (or defend against those they may not agree with). The Publications Editor and proposer mutually agree on a date for resubmitting a revised proposal.
6. When the revised proposal is submitted, the Publications Editor initially reviews it to determine if requested revisions have been addressed. If requested revisions were minor, the Publications Editor may make a decision about accepting the revised proposal. For major revisions, the revised proposal is shared with the Publications Board and the review process repeats itself.

Either way, the Publications Editor notifies the Publications Board when a proposal is accepted or rejected.

7. When a proposal is accepted, a Publications Board member volunteers to serve as a shepherd. (The shepherd serves as the liaison between the author and the Publications Board and is a sounding board for any author concerns throughout the writing process or if the author needs someone to provide preliminary feedback on content.)

The Publications Editor contacts the proposer to let them know the good news, apprises them of who will be serving as their Publications Board shepherd, and gives them a heads up that a publishing agreement is forthcoming from the SAA office.

The SAA office manages the business aspect of issuing the publishing agreement.

8. If the proposal is rejected, the Publications Editor contacts the proposer to let them know.

Some of the newer Board members expressed confusion about the workflow, their roles on the Board, and how their comments affect decisions; the proposal review process as explained was not actually operating that way. Newer members would like feedback on their reviews—e.g., if the feedback provided is helpful or addressing what needs to be addressed. Some examples of strong reviews from past proposals would be helpful for them to see as well as communication about their contributions.

All Publications Board members expressed concern that they are not seeing reviews of and comments on proposals from other Board members, nor have they had a chance to discuss any proposals as a group. When revised proposals are submitted, it is challenging to comment on if it's been appropriately revised without knowing what concerns other Board members had. Furthermore, Board members feel like they learn from each other when they see how others evaluate proposals. Members currently feel like they are sending proposals "into the ether," especially as they are not always kept apprised of the outcome of the proposal.

It is also challenging when proposals are sent to the Board incomplete and without a note why. They may be missing résumé/CV information (which has led Board members to search online for that info) or proposals aren't fleshed out very well.

If the proposal is a revision, it may be missing info on what and how revisions were addressed. More context about who the authors are, any concerns about the proposal, or what stage in the process the proposal is at would be appreciated.

In addition, Board members are given the guideline of two weeks to return their reviews of proposals. However, a clear deadline with a specific date would be more helpful.

**TO DO #3 (Williams, Brinati, Christian):** In addition to the email that is sent to new Publications Board members, schedule a brief virtual orientation to bring them up to speed on their roles, responsibilities, and Board processes.

**TO DO #4 (Williams):** Provide example(s) of strong reviews and post to list and/or as a resource on the microsite.

The Board was confused about the process for proposals for the Archival Futures series, which is co-published by ALA and SAA. Cary, co-editor (with Bethany Anderson) of the series, explained that initially the Publications Board did review a proposal for Archival Futures, but in the last year that process has transitioned and been streamlined. Now, just the Archival Futures co-editors and the Publications Editor assess proposals and make all editorial decisions about the series. ALA handles contracts and book production.

**TO DO #5 (Williams, Cary, Anderson, Brinati, Christian):** Revisit workflow for Archival Futures series and clarify steps for Publications Board as needed.

Some Publications Board members were surprised to learn that the author of the proposal on teaching primary source research skills had already signed a contract as there was another proposal very similar in scope. Some Publications Board members had suggested that perhaps the respective authors of the two proposals consider collaborating on one book, or had hoped for a discussion on the Publications Board list about which proposal might be stronger, if both books are necessary, etc., before moving ahead.

In general, Board members have felt somewhat isolated and don't feel that there is a community among the Board. Seeing others' comments and opinions on proposals as well as having more frequent meetings to check in on Board activities and discuss proposals would alleviate that feeling.

**TO DO #6 (Williams, Brinati, and Christian):** Look into alternatives to the Google form such as Survey Monkey or AirTable to find a better way to share proposal reviews with all Board members.

**TO DO #7 (Christian):** Send a Doodle poll to schedule a time for a standing bimonthly Board meeting.

**TO DO #8 (Williams, Brinati, Christian):** Add undiscussed agenda items from this meeting due to time constraints to next Publications Board meeting agenda.