RAO Newsletter   Spring 2016

Notes from the Chair

Greetings from your RAO Chair! We hope that this edition of the newsletter finds you all well and thoroughly engaged in the valuable work of changing lives through archives, to paraphrase from the words of the amazing Kathleen Roe.

While each Working Group and Committee will share updates a bit later in the newsletter, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge some of the great work that these folks have been doing.

° The Teaching with/about Primary Sources Committee (TPS) held their first Unconference at the Cleveland Public Library, in connection with the SAA 2015 Annual Meeting. It was a resounding success! TPS plans to hold another Unconference at the 2016 SAA meeting, so be sure to watch for more information as planning progresses.

° The Access to Electronic Records Working Group completed their survey about how repositories are currently providing access to born-digital and electronic materials, and the challenges that many face. Survey analysis is currently underway, with a full report expected soon.

° The 23 Things for Archivists Committee conducted a survey to determine what new tools the group will highlight in its new release of the NEXT 23 Things. Look for a report on the survey analysis soon, and check out the 23 Thing wiki if you haven't already.

° The Nominating Committee received a wealth of nominations for leadership positions within RAO. Stay tuned for candidate profiles and voting information.

° The Program Committee has begun planning your 2016 RAO Meeting. 2016 will bring the 5th annual Marketplace of Ideas to Atlanta. Read more in our call for proposals in this newsletter! And while we're at it, please save the date for our meeting: Friday, August 5, 1:00 pm–2:30 pm.

While we look forward to the next RAO meeting later this summer, we also wanted to provide you with a recap of the past year's meeting in Cleveland. The RAO Marketplace of Ideas celebrated its fourth year, and the festive atmosphere was enhanced by the color-coded balloons helping participants to navigate the Marketplace booths. Building on the feedback from the previous year's participants, the Program Committee worked to make the Marketplace as easy to navigate as possible with the colored balloons and maps with booth numbers and locations.

We'd like to take a moment to recognize each of the vendors from last year's Marketplace for sharing their skills and expertise with all of the Marketplace participants. The vendors shared a wide range of tips and tricks and demos and supplied something for everyone; these vendors' contributions made the Marketplace a rousing success! Our deepest thanks and appreciation go to Andrea Bainbridge, Rebecca Bizonet, Adriane Hanson, Emilie Hardman, Jack McCarthy, and Abigail Nye, who volunteered to present as vendors during the 4th Annual Marketplace of Ideas.

Andrea discussed "An Inside Job: Leveraging CRM Tools to Build Stronger Relationships with an Internal Donor Base." Rebecca talked about "23 Things...and Counting: Online Learning Platform as an Outreach Tool for Archivists." Adriane's booth addressed online reference work: "Reference Goes Electric: Dispatches from the Virtual Reading Room." Emilie highlighted Harvard's "Special Collections and Archives Class Request Tool" at her booth. Jack's booth shared lessons learned from "The Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Small Archival Repositories Project: A New Approach to Enhancing Access." Abigail's booth asked, "Can I Steal that Idea?': Tips and Tricks for More Effective Social Media."

Rachael Dreyer | RAO Chair
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Notes from the Chair (continued)

Thank you to all of these fabulous Marketplace vendors!

I'd like to close out my notes with a bit of an exhortation. RAO is a very active SAA Section with an engaged membership (that means YOU!), and so I would like to take a moment to invite you to share your comments, suggestions, and concerns with your RAO leadership team. We are a strong section because of each of you and we want RAO to meet your needs as RAO members, as SAA members, as archival practitioners, and as advocates for your collections, for researchers, and for increasing the access and availability of archival collections.

If you would like to see opportunities to participate with this large community of talented RAO archivists, what would those be? Would you like to write for the RAO blog? Would you like us to host Twitter Chats on various topics relevant to your activities and profession-al concerns? Would you like to see us organize local unconferences in difference places? Are there areas of archival practice that aren't being discussed elsewhere that you think RAO should address? Do consider becoming involved with RAO through the annual elections, or volunteering to serve on a working group or committee, but also consider whether there are new areas of expertise or archival concern that need to be addressed in concrete ways.

What can we do to better serve you? Please feel free to contact your Section Chair, Co-Chair, or Steering Committee members at any time to share your thoughts. This is your RAO!

Sell It to Us! Present at the Annual Meeting!
RAO's Fifth Annual "Marketplace of Ideas"
Su Kim Chung, RAO Vice Chair/Chair-Elect

The 2016 RAO Program Committee seeks Hot Topics and Cool Demonstrations for provocative conversation and deep thinking at the SAA Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA.

On Friday, August 5, from 1:00 pm-2:30 pm, RAO will host its fifth annual **Marketplace of Ideas** and seeks purveyors of **hot topics** and **cool demonstrations** to sell their wares to a savvy audience of RAO archivists. Vendors are asked to present a brief (3-4 minute) infomercial to all meeting attendees, before dividing into separate market stalls—we'll have 3 rounds of shopping!

The 2016 RAO Program Committee is especially interested in hearing from vendors who'd like to present on the following topics or themes:

- ° **Access to Born Digital Collections** – This could be a policy discussion regarding privacy or confidentiality, as well as access policy and procedural issues, or the technology and manpower needed to make it happen.

- ° **Assessment** – What stats do you keep? What's important? How do you track these stats? How do you use these at your institution?

- ° **Archival Outreach on a Shoestring** – Do you use any project planning tools for outreach? What do you need to commit to outreach at a minimum level?

- ° **Designing Assignments** – How to design/help design an archival research assignment or program that incorporates faculty and their students?

- ° **Lone Arrangers and Advocacy 101** – How to educate your host institution or non-archivist colleagues about what an archives is, what you/the archives does, and why it's so darn important?

To submit an application, simply complete the application at http://bit.ly/1N0UTpr by **May 10, 2016.**

The RAO Program Committee will notify all applicants about the status of their proposal by May 30, 2016.

Thank you, and see you in Atlanta!

Get Ready! Teaching with Primary Sources Unconference 2016
Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta, GA | August 3, 2016

Mark your calendars for the second annual Teaching with Primary Sources Unconference and Workshops ("the unconference" for short), being held this year in Atlanta, Georgia on Wednesday, August 3. We're thrilled to announce that the renowned Auburn Avenue Research Library (AARL) on African American Culture and History of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library system will be hosting the 2016 unconference. Like last year when the Cleveland Public Library hosted the unconference, AARL's participation means that the event will be free of charge and open to the community. The unconference will be one of the first events held in a newly reno-vated building and we are excited that Morris Gardner of AARL is part of the unconference organizing team. Welcome, Morris!

As it was in 2015, the 2016 unconference will be a public teaching and learning event. While it is scheduled to coincide with the annual SAA conference, unconference participants do not need to be members of SAA or register for the SAA conference. Partici-pants need not be archivists. The unconference is a full day of activities, but participants may come and go as they please depend-ing on their schedules, needs, and interests. While workshops will be organized in advance, unconference sessions will be spontane-ously planned according to the desires of the participants in attendance on August 3.

One of our goals for the 2016 unconference is to foster participation from the wider world of people teaching with primary sources. We hope to meet more educators, museum professionals, public historians, and librarians than we did last year. Individuals employed in or volunteering with K-12, higher education, and community-based programs are all welcome. Our target geographic audiences for non-archivists are individuals who live or work in the state of Georgia and, more specifically, in the Atlanta region. Readers, if you know anyone who may be interested in learning from other teaching with primary sources practitioners or aspiring practitioners, please share this announce with him or her. Unfortunately, we cannot provide travel assistance.

If you would like an idea of what the 2016 unconference might look like (we say "might" because unconferences are flexible, dy-namic events), take a look at the 2015 unconference documentation (bitly.com/SAA15TPS). An unconference is like a collaborative, non-hierarchical conference in which all participants actively inhabit the roles of teacher-learner-conference planner.

Keep up with the latest Teaching with Primary Sources unconference developments by checking the following URL, which we promise to keep updated as the most current source of information about the unconference: bitly.com/SAA16TPS. Registration for the uncon-ference will open in early summer. Unconference organizers can be reached at TeachWithStuff@gmail.com.

Submitted by Jenny Swadosh, TPS Committee; Associate Archivist, New School Archives and Special Collections

Announcing a New Blog: ArchivesAWARE!
Erin Lawrimore, Vice Chair, SAA Committee on Public Awareness

Archivists often commiserate with one another about how what we do is under-appreciated. We frequently complain that we are figuratively, and often literally, tucked away in the basement. Many archivists have worked hard to change that perception, making the case for how archivists change, enrich, and save lives, but there is so much more work to do to raise awareness about our profession. We know how important our work is, but that will never be enough.

ArchivesAWARE! is an online space where professionals and students engaged in all aspects of archival work can 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 blog is hosted by SAA and managed by its Committee on Public Awareness (COPA). Browse through posts here, find out how to contribute here, and share the link with friends and colleagues!

Access to Electronic Records Working Group Update

Stacey Lavender and Rachael Dreyer, Co-Chairs, Access to Electronic Records Working Group

The Access to Electronic Records Working Group has been humming right along! Since our last newsletter update, the working group sent out a survey over the summer, and it closed August 31. The Survey Team Sub-Group (headed by Stacey Lavender) has been busy with the survey data analysis and a report should be forthcoming. Some of the highlights that initially emerged were that most institutions are providing some access to electronic records, but there are still many areas of uncertainty regarding how to move forward with consistent policies and procedures. A fairly significant issue is the many formats in and on which archivists encounter electronic materials and the difficulty in dealing with all file formats. Working Group Co-Chairs Stacey Lavender and Rachael Dreyer have written a blog post for SAA's Electronic Records Section that addresses some of the survey's findings and if you'd like to read more, please check out https://saaers.wordpress.com/2016/02/16/bits-and-baby-steps-rao-engages-with-electronic-collection-material/. The group's co-chairs are currently engaged in developing the working group's next directions, since many of the deliverables of the original charge are nearly complete. With some parts of the working group's work complete, and some parts still ongoing, we would like to thank all who have contributed to these efforts to gain clarity in what is a complex and confounding area of archival practice.

Teaching with Primary Sources Committee Report

Lori Burrell, Co-Chair, Teaching with Primary Sources Committee

It's been a busy fall and winter for the TPS Committee. The Unconference planning for 2016 is well underway and we're excited to partner with Auburn Avenue Research Library (AARL). Matt Herbison and Jenny Swadosh will be co-leading the planning. If you're interested in learning about what went on at last year's unconference in Cleveland, be sure to check out the latest issue of Archival Outlook. The Bibliography subcommittee has been focusing on their WordPress website and will have more to report at August's SAA meeting. The TPS subcommittee on Instruction in Archival Education is currently analyzing the results of last year's survey to archival graduate programs. We are cleaning up data, coding, and categorizing in preparation for a report to be delivered later this year.

2016 RAO Leadership Candidates

Note from the RAO Nominations and Elections Committee │ Lisa Sjoberg, RAO Immediate Past Chair

The RAO Nominations and Elections Committee called for nominations and created a slate of candidates for three positions: Vice Chair/Chair-Elect (VC/C) and two Steering Committee Positions. The committee received 14 nominations in total — two for Vice Chair/Chair-Elect and 12 for Steering Committee member positions — and is currently gathering candidate statements. The statements, along with voting information, will be posted to RAO's various communication channels soon.

Thanks to all the candidates for running!

The Nominations and Elections Committee for this year consisted of the following members:
Jennifer Hecker
Rebecca Petersen
Lisa Sjoberg (chair)

MEET THE "23 THINGS" TEAM

Josh Hager is the current chair of "23 Things" and a Reference Archivist at the State Archives of North Carolina. He brings a wealth of research and experience with social media outreach, including an in-depth study of the most effective ways to utilize Facebook which won the 2014 Pease Award.

Heidi Butler is the Local History Librarian at the Capital Area District Libraries, based in Lansing, Michigan. She has been a lone arranger her entire career in public, academic, and medical library archives, including four years at a government university in the Middle East. Heidi joined 23 Things during her time abroad, since social media is a great way to stay connected to the profession, from any place andS in any time zone.

Marta Crilly is the Archivist for Reference and Outreach at the Boston City Archives. She uses social media and other digital outreach tools to encourage a diverse patron base to connect and engage with Boston's public records.

Meghan Hays is the Local History Librarian for the Shaker Heights Public Library in Shaker Heights, Ohio. She manages the Local History Collection, which focuses on the history of the community of Shaker Heights, with particular attention to its architecture, planned community concept, and intentional racial integration. Her passion for using technology to bring the archives to the public sparked her interest in the 23 Things concept.

An Introduction to "23 Things for Archivists"
Josh Hager, Chair, 23 Things for Archivists Committee

Are you interested in how to use digital and online tools to promote collection access, reference, and outreach? Do you want to know how to turn an interest in social media into connections with new audiences? Planning on forging into new digital territory and want some guidance from fellow archivists? If you answered yes to any of these questions, "23 Things for Archivists" is the RAO Working Group that's working for you. "23 Things" is dedicated to helping archivists "explore, experiment with, and learn about the new and emerging technologies that are changing how information is used and created on the Internet today."

Our primary function at "23 Things" is gathering information about new online platforms that could prove useful for archival reference and outreach. We currently have a wiki (http://23things4archivists.pbworks.com/) where you can learn about nearly fifty different online tools, from blogging in general to Historypin to Audacity and more. Consider for example the wiki entry for Tumblr, which provides an overview of the platform, what audience you are likely to reach, strategies for planning and implementing your own Tumblr, and links to lots of great Tumblrs for inspiration. We are currently working on new content to add to the wiki in addition to the great content that's already there. I encourage you to explore the wiki and see what tips you can pick up.

In February 2016, "23 Things" sent out a survey to RAO membership through the email listserv and the RAO Facebook Page asking about knowledge of "23 Things" and what the membership would like to see from this working group. As of the writing of this article, we have received 72 responses. We appreciate your feedback! The survey analysis is currently ongoing, but we can safely say that RAO membership recognizes the importance of gathering information on emerging digital tools. Furthermore, many members would like a venue to discuss these platforms with other archivists—we are certainly hopeful that "23 Things" might help fulfill this need! In the meantime, we encourage everyone to check out the newly launched blog from the SAA Committee on Public Advocacy, "Archives Aware" (http://archivesaware.archivists.org/). This blog aims "to create an online space where 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."

Stay tuned for more updates from "23 Things" as we work and grow to better serve RAO! If you have any questions, or if you'd like to join our team, please contact me at josh.d.hager@gmail.com or on Twitter @joshhagernc.

From Our Members

*In this issue, we've returned to featuring contributions from RAO Section members, in addition to our usual Steering Committee and Committee and Working Group updates. We hope you'll weigh in on what you think of our new (or rather, renewed) approach—and maybe share **your** reference/access/outreach-related news in future issues.*

Social Media Is Social: Steps to a Successful Collaborative Campaign

George Garner, Curator, Indiana University South Bend Civil Rights Heritage Center

Social media elicits a wide range of reactions from people. It is either the most innovative tool to keep us connected, or it sucks your time with mundane photographs of someone else's dinner plate.

Regardless of your personal opinion, social media platforms are becoming the preferred method of communication in the second decade of the 21st century. We, as natural sharers of stories and photographs, must learn to harness social media if we expect to communicate our message into this century's third decade. If your institution does not have the luxury of a trained social media staff member, this recent example of a collaborative social media campaign from three Indiana organizations could be a useful template for your organization to follow and learn from in order to embrace this powerful, and increasingly necessary, communications tool.

Beginning in January 2016, the St. Joseph County Public Library, the Indiana University South Bend Civil Rights Heritage Center, and the IU South Bend Archives partnered to share compelling images of local African American and civil rights history. Our first post went live on January 14 with an item from the Civil Rights Heritage Center's Collection. It became the highest-reaching post of any in the previous year, with 11% of Facebook viewers engaging by commenting or "liking."

To begin the project, staff from the partnering institutions chose artifacts from our digital repository, Michiana Memory (michianamemory.sjcpl.org). A combined Google Sheet let us pre-plan six months' worth of content with the post date, text, and links. Each of the contributors could see what the other was posting and then could easily complement the other's choices while avoiding duplication.

Images were carefully cropped, recognizing that the screens users will see them on vary widely—from a large desktop monitor to a tiny iPhone. Large documents with a lot of text do not scale down well. Simple, compelling photographs do.

Short, catchy text is also a key component. Though the 140 character limit of Twitter can be constraining, the unlimited character count of Facebook makes it too easy to turn your posts into a thesis. As tempting as it is to share every story about one artifact, resist. Yours is one of hundreds, maybe thousands of posts vying for your users' attention. Short, compelling messages trump long reads.

We tagged each post using the hashtag, "#BlackHistoryMatters." Quick lesson for those who do not know: Hashtags ("#") are used by social media platforms to allow users to quickly and easily categorize for information. Many of you are likely aware of the #BlackLivesMatter

From Our Members *(continued)*

Social Media Is Social *(continued)*

movement building awareness of racial disparities across the United States. #BlackHistoryMatters was respectfully inspired by it, and has been used by a number of historical institutions across the United States. By using a trending topic, our institutions can join in a national conversation that goes beyond our city.

Remember too, the key word in social media is "social," and not "media." Using your platforms as mere marketing tools does not compel your users to engage. Also, tagging other institutions related to the post alerts them and, perhaps, compels them to share your story on their platform, which increases your reach. Sharing and tagging from your personal account drives reach and potential for engagement even farther. Look for relevant Facebook groups as well to share content with.

The details for a successful, collaborative social media campaign are, of course, unique to every institution. But, there are some easily replicable steps:

1. Identify a nationally trending hashtag to unify your message. #ThrowbackThursday (or #tbt) is popular, but there are others. Consider hashtagtracking.com as one of several free tools to help identify and decide.

2. Identify partners for content. What archives or museums in your area have adjacent stories?

3. Identify compelling content. That forty-page document with a lot of text may be historically vital, but if it does not grab your users' attention, it does nothing. Photographs and simple documents are best.

4. Identify organizations to tag. Does your content include local businesses, or universities? Their shares increase your reach while giving them easy, great content.

Be certain to track your results. Use the Facebook "Insights" tool and Twitter Analytics to identify which post(s) result in the highest reach and, especially, engagement.

Instead of treating social media as a necessary evil, or handing it off to another young intern, treating it as the increasingly dominant communications tool that it is only helps your institution engage new audiences and grow. Remember, our archives have literally thousands of compelling photographs and stories waiting to be told. Why not tell them in a way users want to hear them?

Archivists on the Move!

Mattie Taormina has been named director of San Francisco's Sutro Library, a branch of the CA State Library. Mattie is a special collections and archives librarian, most recently at Stanford.

http://www.library.ca.gov/pressreleases/pdf/Taormina_release_2.8.16.pdf

Congratulations on your new appointment, Mattie!

Have ideas, content, or suggestions for the RAO Section newsletter?

Send them to: Rebecca Bizonet, Communications Liaison, at rbizonet@gmail.com

Get in touch with RAO members and leadership!
Find us and talk to us here:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Reference-Access-Outreach-Section-of-the-Society-of-American-Archivists-220623404645294/ (or just search for "Reference, Access & Outreach Section")

Twitter: @RAOarchivists

Forum (email list): information on joining here, http://www2.archivists.org/listservs#.Vw5S3EdQAbM

SAA microsite: http://www2.archivists.org/groups/reference-access-and-outreach-section

Blog: http://raonews.blogspot.com/

Your RAO Steering Committee

Rachael Dreyer, Chair (*American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming*)

Su Kim Chung, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect (UNLV Libraries, *University of Las Vegas*)

Lisa Sjoberg, Immediate Past Chair (*Concordia College*)

Jennifer Hecker, Member (*UT Libraries, University of Texas at Austin*)

Erin Lawrimore, Member (*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*)

Alison Stankrauff, Member (*Indiana University South Bend*)

Rebecca Petersen, Member (*Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University*)

Shaun Hayes, Web Liaison (*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*)

Rebecca Bizonet, Communications Liaison (*Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University*)

Pam Hackbart-Dean, Council Liaison (*Southern Illinois University, Carbondale*)