

# New r:ö:undtable

## for Students and New Professionals

**Rebecca Goldman, SNAP Chair**

After attending my first SAA Annual Meeting in 2010, I came home and put together a photocomic that summarized the conversations I had with students and new professionals over the course of the week. Titled "Post-SAA Howl," the comic detailed the frustrations that new archivists felt about the field in general, such as the difficulty of breaking into the profession and the sense that more experienced archivists weren't responsive to their needs. It sparked some good conversations, but no sustained efforts were made to address any of the issues that I raised in the comic.

Fast-forward to May 2011, when I heard about American Library Association's Young Professionals Working Group. It was at that point that I wondered if the best way to help new archivists might be to work within SAA. I posted a question to Twitter: Why can't

SAA have a group like this? Council member Kate Theimer followed up and suggested that I try to start an SAA roundtable for new archivists. Over the next few months, many in the archival community came together to write a petition to SAA and submit digital signatures in support of this new roundtable. The Students and New Archives Professionals (SNAP) Roundtable was approved by the SAA Council at its January 2012 meeting.

### More than Six Hundred Members

Today SNAP is a lively roundtable with more than six hundred members, representing a wide spectrum of archivists from around the country and at various stages of their careers. As the name suggests, SNAP includes young professionals and students,

but it also has attracted many experienced professionals with an interest in issues that new archivists are facing. SNAP's goals are to advocate for new archivists within SAA and the archives profession, provide a space to discuss issues affecting new archivists, and help new archivists progress in their careers and take on leadership roles within SAA.

"SNAP is the first group I would recommend to a new archivist or anyone interested in becoming an archivist," says Nancy Coeey, who is finishing up her MLS at Florida State University while interning in Washington DC. "It's the quickest way to network with the archival community, especially when you're just getting started," Coeey adds.

It's also beneficial to a "returning archivist," according to Michael Curtis of Peekskill,

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## New Roundtable for Students and New Professionals

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New York, who just started working as a consulting archivist after spending a few years working outside the field. "I felt SNAP was a good venue to refresh my skills and to keep abreast of the trials and tribulations of other archivists who, like myself, were still at the beginning of their profession," Curtis says.

### An Ongoing Conversation

Communication is one of the areas in which SNAP has been most successful. Through the group discussion list, members can discuss issues that new archivists are facing, request and provide advice related to archival education and employment, and promote workshops and events of interest to new archivists. The welcoming atmosphere on the list encourages new members to jump in and join the conversation. SNAP's steering committee uses the list to solicit ideas and feedback on projects, from writing bylaws for SNAP to planning our meeting program during the SAA conference in San Diego this August.

Alison Stankrauff of Indiana University South Bend is an experienced professional who finds the SNAP discussion list useful, and she recommends the group to her student workers and protégés. "I like to know what folks at all levels of the profession are saying," Stankrauff says.

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In addition to the listserv, SNAP runs a popular Twitter feed (@SNAP\_Roundtable), is working on a Facebook page, and is considering establishing a presence on LinkedIn. SNAP steering committee members have also been in contact with other archives-related groups, such as SAA's Mentoring Subcommittee (of the Membership Committee) and the Academy of Certified

Archivists, to improve the services these groups provide for new archivists.

### Potential Projects

As a group that values communication and consensus, one of the challenges SNAP faces is moving beyond conversation to action, developing projects to address some of the issues raised on the list. Our members are concerned about working conditions for archives interns, and one project SNAP is considering is the development of guidelines for interns and internship supervisors to promote ethical and educational internships.

Other projects under discussion include live chats with leaders from SAA and the archives field, providing training for SNAP members interested in serving as mentors in SAA's Mentoring Program, and providing local and online networking opportunities for SNAP members. Through efforts such as these, we hope to provide a model for other SAA groups for engaging members online and staying active between Annual Meetings.

To join SNAP, visit our SAA microsite at <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/students-and-new-archives-professionals-snap-roundtable> and click the Join SNAP link. ■

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