

SOLO

Newsletter of the Lone Arrangers Section, Society of American Archivists

Spring 2023

Letter from the Chair

Lone Arrangers Section Members,

I am looking forward to spring in the Midwest, a time that I hope will bring renewal, growth, and energy for all of you. As I write this letter, I am ending my time as an instructor in a four-credit course in archival research and use at Augustana College. More than ever, I saw the greater impact of archival materials as students learned about how to ethically locate, access, and implement primary sources in their own research and creative projects. Further, students developed a critical understanding of archives and questioned the silences, power structures, and methods toward equity and inclusion within them. In return, the class reminded me of archivists' necessary responsibility to be critically engaged with our daily work and profession.

This past year, the LAS Steering Committee started conversations on the possibility of a name change. The term "lone arranger" is increasingly associated with negative and derogatory connotations due to its association with the fictional show, *The Lone Ranger*. Before proceeding with additional steps, we provided questions in our 2022–2023 survey in order to gauge the membership's interest in this transition. In our survey results and summaries (see page 7), you will be able to gain a better perspective of the membership's comments and suggestions regarding the name change, as well as our path forward with member interests in mind.

In addition to the above, the survey results provided a better look at our membership and indicated additional suggestions for our future initiatives. I am so excited to see the future plans and activities our steering committee members are organizing for the upcoming year. I want to thank all of our members who participated in this year's survey, as well as all of the folks who participated in our fall events and the newsletter. It is because of all of your contributions that we are able to continue progressing the section and the field.

Micaela Terronez
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Highlights

Share what you've been up to with your fellow solo archivists!

Name

Peyton Tvrdy

Position title

Project archivist

Institution

Phoenix Art Museum

What kind of institution do you work at?

Institutional archives

What's the most interesting thing in your collection?

Personally, 8mm audio film public service announcements from the 1970s, but the collection has everything from posters to architectural plans, audio tours, exhibit documents and research, photos, films, reports, newspapers, magazines, correspondence, legal documents, etc. You name it, we have it!



View of the institutional archives at the Phoenix Art Museum. *Courtesy of Peyton Tvrdy.*

What's your major accomplishment in the last year?

I am the first archivist the museum has ever hired, which has been an amazing honor. I started this archive completely from scratch, including setting up an ArchivesSpace server by myself. As a graduate student at the University of Illinois in my last semester, this is my first "real" job in the field that isn't an internship. I feel proud of my accomplishments at the museum despite my inexperience and the depth of the collection. Baby archivists are capable of more than we think!

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While only working twenty hours per week and starting this position in August 2022, I have inventoried over 17,000 documents and have begun a data rescue of old digital media, such as floppy disks. Volunteers attempted to organize the collection over the years, and an anniversary project a few years ago led to people putting documents in whatever folder they felt like, so original order was ruined. Further, at some point, someone scanned countless documents and dispersed them through the folders, regardless of relevancy. Because of this, I focused my inventory to the item-level so that I could attempt to make sense of each folder and file cabinet drawer and rearrange when necessary.

I don't know if I am making all the right choices, and I have relied on advice from professionals in the field. I have created policies, forms, and condition reports thanks to the help of others. Every day I am learning a bit more, and hopefully I'm making a positive dent in this collection. My contract is only for a year, so I'm not sure what will happen to these items in August, but I do hope that the museum continues to support this effort.

Phoenix Art Museum Archives Inventory

Collection Name: 1985 Exhibitions - 1986		Description of Box/Cabinet: This drawer contains the remaining exhibits from 1985 and documentation from 1986	
Accession Number: File Cabinet 4 Drawer 1	Location: PAM C4 D1	Donor Name/Address: None	
Condition of Materials: Materials overall are in good conditions. Some newspaper clippings have been mounted to pieces of paper, which have kept the material from folding, but have introduced glue to the item. Further research on the best way to go forward with these will need to be done. The majority of the correspondence in this drawer are copies. Finding the originals, if they still exist, is a top priority. This drawer also needs significant rearranging. Newspapers, negatives, and photos need to be rehoused.			
Priority Level: <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> None		Comments on Priority: Negatives, newspapers, and photos are high, everything else is low.	
Types of Materials:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/> Maps	<input type="checkbox"/> Photocopies Other	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio Recordings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Magazine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publications	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brochure/Booklet	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reports	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Calendars	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minutes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research Materials	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspaper clippings	Other: scanned mailing lists, paper bag, scanned checks and correspondence, scanned press releases, scanned press agreement, scanned thank you note, scanned agendas, postcard	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exhibit Documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negatives/Photographs		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial records	<input type="checkbox"/> Photocopies Booklets		
<input type="checkbox"/> Film	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photocopies Newspapers		
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photocopies Photographs		
Arrangement of Materials:		Comments:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Alphabetical	<input type="checkbox"/> Chronological	Collection is sorted by year, then by topic. Things not in the right year or folder will need to be moved. Miscellaneous folders will be broken up correctly. Overstuff folders thus far will all be broken up too. Mexican mural incident needs to be rearranged with FOIA. All docent documents thus far need their own folder per year.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Numeric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topic/Subject		
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Arranged			
Proposals:			
1. Remove exhibition and collection folders that are empty			
2. Move green folders into a new collection called Exhibits and Curation			
3. Move Support Groups to their own collection			
4. Move support materials that are in the wrong year/folder to their correct year/folder			
5. Remove newspaper, slides and photographs to their own folders, placing them in clear sleeves			
6. Scan * documents and newspapers for future digital repository			
7. Determine if copies of correspondence exist, most correspondence is scanned			
8. Determine if copies of correspondence exist, most correspondence is scanned			
9. Verify newspaper/letter scans with each other to determine which copies to get rid of			

An example of the author's inventory, which has been printed out and attached to the drawer of a file cabinet to describe the contents. The inventory contains categories such as collection name, condition of materials, types of materials, priority level, arrangement of materials, and proposals for further work. *Courtesy of Peyton Tvrdy.*

Swimming with Archivists: My First Year

By Kristin Morris | Cisco Archivist, Center for Cisco Heritage and Computer History Museum

In the fall of 2021, after almost twenty years working with local history institutions as a curator, oral historian, collections manager, programs manager, education manager, historic site manager, and volunteer coordinator...

I became, through no fault of my own, in one fell swoop and with a little help from a fairy godmother (a former work colleague who just happened to be hiring at her institution) an ARCHIVIST.

A lone business archivist.

The opportunity to join a highly respected institution, caring for the collection of one of the most important technological innovators in Silicon Valley, was one that I just couldn't pass up. But could I be an ARCHIVIST?

I had worked with archives in many of my previous positions. I had processed archives and used them in research and exhibits. But I'm not an archivist. I don't have the credentials or the training or the work experience. Or the love of folders.

I'm an object person, a material culturist. (Archivists run screaming from objects, right?) I'm a people person, gathering stories and sharing the past with other humans. (Archivists just hide behind desks, right?) I'm a historian, diving into all the sources I can find to help myself and others understand the past. (Archivists don't actually read the stuff they process, do they?)

I learned very quickly that my assumptions about archivists were way off base, especially when it comes to lone archivists and business archivists. The collection I care for is similar in so many ways to the collections I've worked with before—a wide-ranging sample of company history that includes paper archives, 3D objects, photographs, ephemera, oral histories, and four terabytes of born-digital material. Most business archivists and many lone archivists are in the same situation. The archives is the catch-all for the organization's past, and we have to take care of it no matter the size or shape.

By joining the SAA Lone Arrangers Section, Business Archivists Section, and Oral History Section, I learned that archivists don't hide behind desks. (But you already knew that.) They are friendly, helpful, engaging, and committed professionals. They share their knowledge freely. They collaborate across many disciplines. They understand their audiences and seek to serve them in diverse and innovative ways.

In the case of lone archivists and business archivists, specifically, I learned that we are never really alone. We must be advocates for our archives, wherever they may be positioned. We constantly have to demonstrate the value of what we do to people who do not understand our

purpose or our priorities. We have to sell ourselves and the stories we tell about our institution's past. We have to reach out and draw people in.

I'm still uncomfortable with the title of ARCHIVIST. I'm not sure it is the best name for what I do. There is so much to the role beyond arranging, processing, describing. (But you knew that, too.)

I am so humbled to be swimming with you all and to have the opportunity to be part of the SAA community.

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New Collection for the Adirondack Research Library: The Dalton-Loines Family Papers

By Matthew Golebiewski, CA, DAS |

Processing and Records Management Librarian, Union College

Working across both libraries at Union College in Schenectady, New York, I am the only archivist at the Adirondack Research Library (ARL). The library is located at the Kelly Adirondack Center, a quiet spot nestled around a 111-acre nature preserve and about a ten-minute drive from campus. Although I currently split my time between the ARL and the Department of Special Collections and Archives at Schaffer Library, I have worked on collections at the ARL through two different positions since 2018. As the lone archivist, I am also the point person when it comes to accepting donations, advising donors, and personally traveling to transport materials back to the library. In fall 2022, I traveled to Texas to receive the Dalton-Loines family papers.

The Loines family were ardent conservationists in Lake George, New York. Stephen Loines (1846–1919), a marine insurance broker based in New York City, began to acquire land parcels in the Northwest Bay of Lake George in the 1890s, including two miles of shoreline that extended from Walker Bay to the western



The Quarterdeck, the Loines family home in Lake George, New York, in 1912. *Courtesy of the Adirondack Research Library of Union College.*

shoreline of Tongue Mountain. Many of these parcels were sold or given to the State of New York to remain forever wild. The Loines built their Lake George home, the Quarterdeck, in 1899, about five miles north of the Town of Bolton Landing.

The photographs, negatives, and papers document construction of the Quarterdeck, time spent with friends and family, and trips abroad. A guestbook documents prominent guests of the time, including Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The photographs document the harmful impact of the International Paper Company on water levels in the lake prior to riprapping and other conservation efforts. Many of the nearby landscape images also show the area before the construction of Route 9N and other highways.

Members of the immediate and extended family lived full and interesting lives; their personal photographs and ephemera are also included in the collection:

- Mary Hillard Loines (1844–1943) was a leader in the women’s suffrage movement and in the conservation movement at Lake George.
- Elma Loines (1882–1983) wrote a book called *The China Trade Post Bag* about her grandparents’ experiences during the height of the tall ship trade with China.



A page from the Loines guestbook with a 1921 black-and-white group photo that includes Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This was the same year FDR was diagnosed with polio.
Courtesy of the Adirondack Research Library of Union College.



Sylvia Loines paddles her canoe in Huddle Bay circa 1920.
Courtesy of the Adirondack Research Library of Union College.

She was a founder of the Master School of Music in Brooklyn, which became the Juilliard School of Music.

- Sylvia Loines Dalton (1885–1974) was an adventurer who enjoyed winter sports and racing cars. She married William Dalton in 1929 after his first wife died.

The collection is an impressive glimpse into the halcyon days of Lake George in the early twentieth century. It is a famous location for summer vacations and the gateway to the Adirondacks, with an extensive history including battles during the French and Indian War and American Revolution.

I recently finished processing the collection, and a finding aid is now available online at archives.union.edu/repositories/2/resources/761. An exhibit and digital collection are forthcoming in late 2023.

The former home of conservationist Paul Schaefer, the Kelly Adirondack Center was established in 2011 to offer exciting opportunities to advance Union’s understanding of the mountains, wilderness, and waterways of the Adirondack Park and the New York State Forest Preserve. Its Adirondack Research Library features a unique collection of rare books, maps, photographs, documents, and the personal papers of some of the region’s foremost conservationists.



SOLO

LAS 2022–2023 Survey Results

By the Lone Arrangers Section Steering Committee | Shaun Kirkpatrick, Rebecca Leung, Katy Sternberger, Hilary Swett, Micaela Terronez, Julie Yamashita

In fall 2022, the Lone Arrangers Section Steering Committee conducted a survey of the section membership. The survey opened on October 26 and closed on November 14. It was advertised on the LAS listserv and at the “UnBOXed: LAS Community Exchange” virtual event held on October 27. We received 99 responses. The steering committee last conducted a section membership survey in early 2021.

Section 1: LAS Members

To start our 2022–2023 member survey, we wanted to know more about our section membership, our profession, and what our jobs are looking like these days (questions #1–9). The following includes what we learned about our members and their positions.

Employment Status: 65 of our 99 respondents described themselves as full-time employees while 14 individuals designated themselves as part-time staff. Additional respondents described themselves as freelancers (4), retired (3), a student (1), a personal archivist (1), a library

director/archivist (1), and a council appointee (1). In addition, some archivists described holding multiple positions as part of their employment, including full time plus one or more side jobs (5), multiple jobs totaling full time (2), multiple jobs totaling part time (1), and multiple part-time jobs equaling full-time hours (1).

Job Responsibilities: The job responsibilities portion of the survey revealed some of the daily work priorities of our members. Respondents indicated their highest priority tasks as processing, research assistance, and collection management. Other frequently recorded high- or medium-priority tasks included cataloging, digitization, digital assets management, acquisitions/collection development, policy/procedure development, and environmental care.

Institution Type: Most respondents work within the following institutions: academic (34), library (24), nonprofit organization (24), religious organization (18), historical society (16), or museum (15). Though fewer in numbers, the membership also includes archivists from within business (11), government (10), private collections (8), arts or culture (6), tribal museum (1), community archives (1), and private PK–12 school (1).

Regions: Over half of members reside in either the Pacific West (31) or New England (24). Smaller numbers derive from the following regions: Mid-Atlantic (11), South Atlantic (6), South (7), Upper Midwest (7), Lower Midwest (5), and Mountain West (5).

Population Area: Over half of respondents live in densely-populated areas: metro, urban, or city (57). Members also recorded their areas as midrange populated: suburban, residential, or small town (37) or rural: sparsely populated area (4).

Years in the Profession: Over half of respondents recorded that they have 10+ years of experience in the field, with 22 archivists recording 11–15 years and 36 archivists with 15+ years. Other respondents recorded their years of experience as follows: 6–10 years (17), 2–5 years (12), and less than 2 years (12).

Salary Range: Members responded to this question with either their present or last job salaries. Overall, members recorded the following salaries: over \$35 per hour (22), between \$25–\$35 per hour (33), between \$15–\$25 per hour (26), and between \$10–\$15 per hour (1). Eight respondents recorded their positions as no-pay volunteers. Another eight preferred not to answer this question.

Employee Benefits: As for employee benefits, 75 respondents recorded paid time off or sick leave, 68 recorded health benefits, 60 recorded dental, and 51 recorded vision. Members also shared additional benefits such as sabbatical (4), health insurance subsidiary (1), retirement matching or contribution (2), 401(k) plans (2), life insurance (1), tuition grant assistance (1), and professional development stipend (1). Beyond this, 18 respondents recorded that they do not have any employee benefits.

Section 2: LAS Newsletter

SOLO is the newsletter of the Lone Arrangers Section of SAA. The newsletter portion of the member survey (questions #10–14) provided information about how members are discovering the newsletter and what kinds of content members are interested in reading. The newsletter is currently published twice annually in March and September as a PDF. The majority of section members, or 58 percent of respondents, have read the newsletter within the last year.

Within the last year, the newsletter has been distributed via several different channels. On the survey, respondents were allowed to select multiple answers. Many solo archivists found the newsletter via the LAS listserv, accounting for 48 percent of readers. The next most popular distribution channel, at 41 percent of readers, was the SAA Announcements listserv, followed by SAA's biweekly e-newsletter, *In the Loop*, at 19 percent of readers. Readers also accessed the newsletter, in order of most to least number of responses, via the [LAS microsite](#) (7.1%), SNAP Section listserv (4.0%), LAS events (2.0%), other regional listservs (2.0%), and word of mouth (2.0%). About one in five survey respondents were not previously aware of the newsletter—but now you know!

The survey asked respondents whether they had ever written for the SOLO newsletter. Several respondents had previously written for the newsletter. While most respondents had not written for the newsletter, almost three-quarters of people either would like to submit in the future (23.2%) or are interested in more information about the newsletter (47.5%).

If more information is what you need, we've got you covered: The current issue as well as back issues of the newsletter are available on the [LAS microsite](#), where you can also find [submission guidelines](#). Deadlines for contributions are January 15 (spring issue) and July 15 (fall issue). We accept articles, photos, and announcements—anything of interest to your fellow solo archivists. If you have any questions or want to submit content, [contact the newsletter editor](#).

When asked about how the SOLO newsletter could be improved, there were twenty-two open-ended responses. Many respondents had no suggestions for improvement and thought the newsletter has been good as is. But we also received the following ideas:

- I would like to see infographics and visualization data. Each issue could have a different topic, such as accessioned records vs. unprocessed records.
- Though I haven't read it recently, I would like articles addressing how other lone arrangers manage the isolation, especially in recent times. I find it challenging and I think others do as well.

Newsletter Accessibility

The LAS Steering Committee is committed to making the SOLO newsletter as accessible as possible for all readers. Beginning with the Spring 2022 issue of the newsletter, we have included alt text for images and URLs, used headings and page navigation, and checked the reading order. If you use a screen reader, [contact the steering committee](#) to let us know about any trouble with the accessible PDF.

- I liked the use of themes in the past, though I realize that takes a lot of work. Maybe add some keywords to each article like type of institution, or career stage of contributor (new archivist, seasoned archivist).

Finally, the survey asked what kinds of content or topics you would like to see in upcoming newsletters. There were thirty-three responses with some great ideas for the steering committee to consider:

- Practical and cost-effective solutions for common issues.
- Time management and setting priorities.
- Mental health for overwhelmed lone arrangers.
- Training and leveraging volunteers effectively.
- How to gain financial support via grants and other fundraising methods.
- Managing the board's expectations for running a small archives.
- Facing difficult topics in your archive.
- Regional services.
- Outreach strategies.
- Digital preservation workflows/setups.
- Content from nonacademic institutions.
- Practical information for managing specific formats or situations is always appreciated.
- Stories about how lone arrangers scale best practices to fit their needs/resources/etc.
- More visual resources like adding video or audio clips.
- Interviews with members at various stages in their careers.
- I like to learn about other people's collections and keep up to date with the latest in archival trends/concerns.
- An "ask me anything" type column that gathers questions/requests that have been posted to the listserv since the prior issue and gives brief answers or links to resources.
- Case studies are always interesting!

If you feel that you have something to share on any of these topics, even if you don't have a concrete idea yet, [get in touch with the newsletter editor](#). *SOLO* relies entirely on submissions from members of the Lone Arrangers Section or anyone who feels they have something to share with solo archivists, so please consider sharing your work, news, and accomplishments with your colleagues! It's so great to hear what everyone is up to and learn from one another. Solo archivists have such a range of experiences to share.

Participating in LAS

The steering committee received a question via the survey about whether you need to be a member of the Society of American Archivists to read the newsletter or contribute content. Good news—you do not need to be a member of SAA in order to participate in any of the Lone Arrangers Section activities. Nonmembers may join up to three SAA sections—make LAS one of them! [Instructions for joining sections](#) are available on the SAA website.

Section 3: LAS Web Resources

The web resources portion of the 2022 member survey (questions #15–21) confirmed what most of us would expect about the current usage of our online resources—but also provided helpful ideas for new directions for our microsite.

First, the stats. The listserv was far and away our most consumed online resource, read regularly by more than half of all respondents. Only 12 percent never read it. This is not surprising; many of us would readily point to our practical and responsive listserv as the most consistent benefit of LAS membership over the years. Most, however, seem to avoid posting or responding to the listserv ourselves: 53 percent have never posted; only 10 percent have done so as much as “occasionally” (no one professes to be a “regular”). This isn’t necessarily a problem—few like to be bombarded with email—but do consider it a nudge to give the listserv a try if you run into a dilemma that only a similarly stretched-thin archivist would understand.

At the other end of the spectrum is our [SAA Connect](#) site. This is where you can search past posts to the listserv and review a small library of attachments that have been shared over the years. According to the survey, 86 percent of respondents “never” or “rarely” look at SAA Connect. The site is admittedly kind of dull and clunky to use, so you are not likely to see many pleas to visit it more often. Though, as web liaison, Shaun Kirkpatrick plans to develop something like a “travel guide” to SAA Connect with recommended search terms that should turn up some useful past discussions.

Between these extremes is the [LAS microsite](#). More than a quarter of respondents look at the site at least “occasionally,” and most of you (a whopping 72 percent) are not “unlikely” to share samples or resources, which suggests that there is some opportunity for growth. It’s also true that 31 percent “never” look at the microsite. So why start? Answers from those who do use the microsite include the newsletter (past issues are available there), the member roster, recent LAS news and announcements, and the existing “Resources for Lone Arrangers” links.

Many of these “Resources” links are fairly old. Aside from updating the existing categories where needed, what else should be added? You had some ideas. Broadly, they included:

1. Sample policies/plans/forms from other institutions (this was, by far, the most requested resource)
2. Case studies of other solo archivists
3. Digital preservation tools, tips, and hardware/software recommendations
4. “LAS Treasures” (presumably meaning content from presenters at section events)
5. How to . . .
 - Balance responsibilities
 - Freelance
 - Manage archives on a shoestring budget
 - Negotiate salary
 - Say no!

All of these seem like good potential avenues. The steering committee will work on updating existing content and looking for SAA resources that we can link to that might address some of these topics. The steering committee can also work with our presenters at events to request their slides or other content, if possible, to share online.

For the rest, we need you! Please consider contributing your sample policies, forms, case study stories, and “how to” wisdom to your soloist colleagues. [Contact the steering committee](#) with documents you’d like to share. In addition, keep an eye out this spring for more specific invitations to help turn these ideas into a more valuable microsite!

[Section 4: LAS Regional Representatives](#)

Questions #22–23 of the survey focused on our Regional Representatives system, which began as a way for archivists who were geographically separated to develop small networks for sharing knowledge and resources. Only 22 of 99 respondents currently see the program as an important function of LAS that they would use “regularly” or “frequently,” which reflects the internet’s influence on how we all work and create community, especially post pandemic.

Section members want events that focus on the unique solo archivist experience, including speakers, social events, and topical discussions. A majority of people (81) responded that they would be happy with a mix of events that connect them to others in their geographic area as well as connecting them to others from similar organizations. Others prefer only events with people from similar organizations, with a handful preferring geographically focused programs.

The Regional Representatives liaisons need your help to make events happen. Would you be willing to host one on-site or virtually? Perhaps you could host a tour of your repository or book a conference room for a workshop or suggest a local restaurant for a casual meetup? LAS steering committee members will do the legwork. Please [contact the steering committee](#) with your event ideas and consider volunteering to be a regional representative, even if you don’t have anything specific in mind yet.

[Section 5: LAS Events](#)

Questions #24–26 of the survey addressed section events programming. The first question inquired as to whether respondents would prefer in-person, virtual, or hybrid style meetings for regional representatives events. Though all of our section-wide events have been virtual in the past few years, due to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread locations of our membership, nearly 77 percent of respondents preferred a hybrid option for regional meetings, indicating some interest in the opportunity to connect in person. Second choice was virtual, with about 18 percent. Only 5 percent preferred to meet in person with no virtual component.

Question #25 asked respondents what type of event they would prefer to attend. It was possible to select multiple answers. Suggested options included “educational workshops and presentations” (about 92% of people chose this option); “in-person/virtual repository tours” (66%); “show-and-tells” (56%); and “social and networking/meet and greets” (53%). There was also an option for respondents to make suggestions for events. One respondent suggested a “live listserv” for group problem solving. Another respondent suggested a keynote address type of presentation by interesting archivists.

For the last question in the Events section of the survey, respondents were asked to suggest a possible topic for future events. Ideas included the following:

- Grant writing
- Magic lantern slides
- Ageism in the archives profession (hiring, downsizing, unconscious bias of archivists)
- Managing expectations of the public, the board, and other staff
- Examples of document/record management systems
- Working with volunteers and interns; ideas for addressing common issues
- Project and time management
- Writing policies and procedures
- Planning a move
- Access to Memory (AtoM)
- Oral history for small institutions/archives
- Pros and cons of DACS
- Digital preservation
- How to set priorities
- Book club or resource sharing events
- Workshop on preservation and physical organization of records for small archives
- Fundraising strategies
- “This is what works for us” type events/workshops where lone arrangers could share information on methods, programs, etc., they utilize and how it works for them
- Brainstorming ideas for deaccessioning collections; outreach
- Strategies in offering out-of-scope materials to other institutions
- Lightning talks for practical solutions (e.g., in-house digitization)
- Streamlining process for efficiency; cost-effective work hacks; advocating for yourself
- Born digital processing, born digital preservation—both on a limited budget
- Donor relations
- Selecting collection management systems
- Embedded archivists in nonacademic settings

In addition, 15 people responded that they would be interested in presenting at a future section event. We are truly grateful for this kind of participation. Our events coordinator plans to reach out to those who indicated interest. If you are also interested, or even just curious about presenting at a future event, please [contact the steering committee](#).

Section 6: LAS Priorities

Leading off the Priorities section of the survey, the steering committee asked three questions about potentially changing the name of our section (questions #27–29). Here is how we framed the discussion:

The Lone Arrangers Section is considering changing the name of our section as part of a profession-wide effort to be more inclusive. The term “lone arranger” has negative connotations among some archivists, based on its association with the fictional character, the Lone Ranger, of radio and television fame. In the show, a stereotyped Indigenous man, Tonto, represents a “sidekick” who plays a minor role while an idealized white man, the Lone Ranger, is portrayed as a “hero.” Once considered a pun, the term “lone arranger” has been increasingly called out as derogatory. Would you support changing the name of the Lone Arrangers Section?

Of 99 respondents, 67 agreed with the idea of changing the name. In fact, some respondents said, “It’s about time!” and later counted the name change as their top priority that the steering committee should be working on (question #34).

When asked if you had comments or questions about potentially changing the name of the Lone Arrangers Section, you provided a lot of valuable feedback. There were thirty-six responses to this question. Here are some examples:

- The playfulness of the name was one of my primary attractions to the group originally, so it is a bit sad to see it go, though quite understandable. It may still work in some informal situations but should probably not be the official name of an SAA section.
- It’s a shame because it is quite catchy and clever, but it’s time to let it go. Plus, solo archivists do a lot more than arrange. Changing the name to Solo Archivists Section would also align with our sister solo librarians and be a consistent reference to similar positions in allied professions.
- I never really thought about its association with the show before you pointed it out but now that you have I’m in favor of changing to something that isn’t offensive. Also it implies the only thing we do is arrange when really we do every aspect of archival work.
- The current name is catchy and makes a point about what we do. Most of the people I interact with don’t even know who the Lone Ranger is so it is not an issue. Changing the name would be making an unnecessary issue out of something that isn’t a big deal to 99% of the rest of the world.
- I reject the “hero”/“sidekick” connotation in archives. If only we had a sidekick.
- While I acknowledge the possible issues, the name describes accurately who we are and what our working conditions are. I feel strongly that we should not change it.
- I did not think of the show *The Lone Ranger*, when I first joined the group some years ago. So I did not think of it as a negative name for the section. But if it gets changed I will be ok with that.
- I honestly never watched the Lone Ranger. The term “lone arranger” works, but if it bothers others, why not change it.

- I understand why some archivists would want to change the name, but personally, I don't have a problem with it staying the same or being changed.
- I think it is completely appropriate to change the name. Most other SAA sections have very formalized names that describe their function/interest area.
- I think an emphasis on smaller archives is important, because while I could be considered a "lone arranger," my archives frequently has grant-funded positions.
- I feel sometimes that too much emphasis is placed on worrying about potential issues with terms and phrases rather than any positive aspects the term could raise. I've always felt the term "lone arranger" portrays archivists who still strive to do their best and provide the best experience for patrons and their institutions even though the odds can be stacked against them—when we may not have a lot else going for us, it's fun to think of ourselves as a type of hero.
- It sounds silly to me. I wouldn't even have guessed it was based on the TV show character. That's not even a frame of reference for me.
- Depends on what the alternate is, and if it's as self-explanatory as "lone arranger."
- I actually had never realized that there was a connection to *The Lone Ranger*! But now that I see it, it's definitely problematic and offensive! I support changing it!
- I understand the issues around the term, but it's one commonly used in and out of the field and is an apt description.
- I mean, I never associated it with the Lone Ranger, because it seems like a literal description of what we do (guess I'm slow on the uptake), but it's also only a small portion of what we do, so not only could it be more inclusive from a people point of view, but also from a job description point of view.
- I'm not clear on how this section is different from the Independent Archivists Section, so the new name should help clarify the difference.

Regarding potential new names for the section, you suggested the following:

- (Han) Solo Arrangers Section
- Independent Archivists Section
- Lone Archivists Section
- One and Only Archivists Section
- Small Archives Section
- Sole Archivists Section
- Solo Archivists and Consultants Section
- Solo Archivists Section
- Solo Arrangers Section

Due to significant interest in the name change, according to the survey, the steering committee has decided to keep moving forward with the process of holding a referendum during this year's section election. In accordance with SAA's governance procedures, we have revised our section's standing rules, which will be reviewed by the SAA Council. In February, we also sent out a new survey asking you to select which section name you prefer, based on your top suggestions from the fall survey. In July, section members will vote whether to approve the final name selection during our annual election.

To end the 2022–2023 survey, we inquired about general section priorities (questions #30–34). Over the course of the year, the LAS Steering Committee provides guidance or services toward several membership activities. In terms of importance, 75 respondents ranked the LAS listserv as the most important service offered by the section. Following the listserv, other highly ranked services included the newsletter (66 respondents), section website/online resources (55 respondents), and networking and professional community interactions (47 respondents). Though fewer in numbers, respondents also marked events (31), the annual section meeting (31), and the regional representatives program (20) as essential activities offered by LAS.

LAS Fast Facts

Both via email and the 2022–2023 member survey, the LAS Steering Committee has received some frequently asked questions and requests for more information about our section. In an effort to share more with our section membership, starting in January 2023, steering committee members are sending monthly emails called “Fast Facts” to the LAS listserv. Keep an eye on your inbox so that you can stay engaged with the community of solo archivists!

In addition to the abovementioned services, respondents also recommended that the steering committee focus on the following:

- Collaboration with the Archives Management Section
- Mentoring programs for new professionals
- Requiring salary to be specified in all archives jobs postings
- Encouraging the ability to read cursive as fundamental knowledge for archives students
- Digital asset management and technical resource sharing
- Practical ways to address common issues
- Transitioning from a solo shop to a small team
- Finding what other people know, and don’t know, and how to fill the void
- Making access to LAS knowledge and resources available to lone arrangers working at pay rates too low to sustain SAA membership

We also inquired about SAA annual meeting attendance in order to further determine member engagement. Of the 99 responses, 62 individuals have not attended the SAA Annual Meeting in the last three years. Similarly, 75 respondents recorded that they have not participated in the LAS Annual Section Meeting in the last three years.

Lastly, we included an open-ended question for members to share the issues and topics that LAS should prioritize this coming year. This section of the survey largely highlighted the prioritization of programming, resources, and education, especially for archivists with low budgets or limited support for professional development. Due to the variety of responses, we are sharing the complete list:

- Name change, regional reps program, events
- Section name change
- Transition to a new name, events, networking

- Pay equity with equivalent positions within organizations requiring similar educational qualifications and experience
- I'd like to see a return to archival basics—processing, appraisal, getting rid of backlogs, etc., rather than the social justice focus that our profession is turning toward
- Solo archivists with shoestring budgets or being MacGyver in the archives
- Member education
- How can solo archivists be effective in their jobs when struggling for internal administrative support? Another topic: for solo archivists coming into brand new archives: where do I start? Building policies and procedures or diving into the work?
- Working collaboratively, the community sharing resources
- More attention to the high cost of membership in SAA. Consider a pay-as-led option and invitations to those paying at a higher rate to donate, effectively subsidizing membership for those who cannot pay as much
- Advocacy

* Note: Some survey responses have been edited due to length or clarity.

Thank you so much for participating in the 2022–2023 LAS member survey. Your feedback and suggestions help to ensure that the steering committee continues to offer new and helpful resources to our section members and that this unique community within SAA remains engaged and thriving.

SOLO

LAS Election 2023

If you would like to help LAS move forward with new initiatives, please consider nominating yourself or someone you know to the leadership team. This year, the LAS membership will be electing the following positions:

- Vice Chair/Chair-Elect
- Newsletter Editor
- Regional Representative B

Contact the steering committee with questions and to submit nominations, due by the end of May.

Lone Arrangers Section Steering Committee

2022–2023

Micaela Terronez	Chair	Augustana College, Tredway Library
Julie Yamashita	Vice Chair / Chair-Elect / Regional Representatives Co-Lead	Lanternman House Museum and Archives
Hilary Swett	Regional Representatives Co-Lead	Writers Guild Foundation
Rebecca Leung	Events Coordinator	Mills College at Northeastern University
Katy Sternberger	Newsletter Editor	Portsmouth Athenaeum
Shaun Kirkpatrick	Web Liaison	Chubb Archives

Get in Touch!

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Visit Us Online!

archivists.org/groups/lone-arrangers-section

solo archivist

n. ~ an individual who is the only staff member

or the only formally trained archivist working in an archives

Dictionary of Archives Terminology, s.v. “solo archivist,” accessed March 1, 2023,
dictionary.archivists.org/entry/solo-archivist.html.



**Lone Arrangers
Section**

SOLO, newsletter of the Lone Arrangers Section, is published twice each year in the spring and fall. Deadlines for contributions are **January 15** (spring issue) and **July 15** (fall issue). Articles, photos, and announcements of interest to the community of solo archivists should be submitted to the LAS newsletter editor at lonearrangersectionsaa@gmail.com.