

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
Chicago, IL**

**Solo Archivists Section: Annual Report
(Prepared by Hilary Swett)**

Year: 2024- 2025

Current Rosters (Include full name, position title, and term end date for each):

Chair

Hilary Swett (2023-2025)

Vice Chair / Chair-Elect

Kim Bradshaw (2024-2026)

Events Coordinator

Alison Quirion (2024-2026)

Regional Representatives Co-Lead

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Laura K. N. Jones (2024, resigned in 2025)

Newsletter Editor

Allison Bundy (2023-2025)

Web Liaison

Vacant (2024-2025)

Council Liaison: Selena Ortega-Chiolero

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

(Please indicate all projects and activities that your component group has completed this year, continues to work on, or plans to implement in the following fiscal year.)

Completed:

Amended standing rules to decrease the steering committee positions from seven people to five. Passed by membership vote in July 2025.

Ongoing:

Each year, we recruit members to sign up for the Solo Archivist Buddy List Directory. This provides contact information encouraging members to contact each other and have more in-depth conversations privately with other solo archivists outside of the listserv. A total of 69 people opted-in for the directory, increased from 56 the prior year;

Held 5 Solo Sessions - bimonthly, informal, unrecorded Zoom meetups that allow members to seek and give support in a conversational way;

Published one issue of SOLO newsletter.

New:

Got a head start on event planning, securing speakers for a presentation at the annual meeting and confirming speakers for two upcoming presentations in 2025. Brainstormed ideas for low-effort, high-value presentations for 2025-2026 term.

SAA STRATEGIC PLAN

(Please review the current [Strategic Plan](#) and indicate below how the component group has or plans to contribute to one or more of the four main goals.)

Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists

Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth

We continue to foster a community for professional interaction. Solo Sessions allow members to talk with their peers about strategies to advocate for themselves and their archives in a supportive environment. Members of the Buddy List can choose to engage peers on a one-on-one basis to seek advice. The SOLO newsletter is a chance for people to highlight their work and learn from others. Online educational speakers are focused on specific challenges and solutions.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field

Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs

We facilitate conversation among members and encourage engagement in a few ways. The Newsletter highlights members who work in different types of settings with different types of collections. The section listserv is consistently a place for posing interesting questions and problems and receiving thoughtful answers from colleagues. By offering content,

discussion, and events in both synchronous and asynchronous ways, we hope members engage in the way that works for them.

SAA ANNUAL MEETING

Number of attendees: 19

Link to meeting minutes:

Summary of meeting activities and highlights:

The SAS Annual Meeting included overviews from each steering committee member about ongoing work and future plans for the section. There were announcements by the SAA Council Representative and the vice chair/chair elect was introduced. Next we held an open, unrecorded, discussion about where we see the section going in the next few years and how to get more members to volunteer for steering committee positions.

This was followed by speakers Lisa Kahn and Samantha Ceja from a small organization, the Center for the Study of Political Graphics in Los Angeles. They shared information about their collection, which consists entirely of oversized posters, and their creation of a digital photography studio to improve access to this massive collection. This was followed by a Q&A period.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

How would you describe the health or energy of the group, and how engaged are the members?

The general impression is that the members appreciate the existence of the section and the ability to utilize the listserv and attend online sessions when feasible. Unsurprisingly, many solo archivists are challenged for time, and may be volunteers / part-time / low-paid employees. Those that participate are engaged, but it isn't unusual to see the same people responding to listserv questions or joining events. Essentially, members want the resource but few have the time or ability to dedicate their own time to contributing/supporting the resource.

Did the component group's leadership encounter any challenges in achieving its goals for the year?

Due to challenges with time management, we were not able to execute the number of educational events we had in past years and we only published one newsletter instead of two as intended.

As with the prior year, we struggled to recruit candidates for steering committee elections, and one steering committee member resigned after one year of their two-year term. This has resulted in current steering committee members taking on additional work.

What suggestions do you have for the SAA Council and staff that might help address these challenges in the coming term?

Incentives for volunteering would be extremely beneficial for solo archivists. We have heard more than once from members that the cost of SAA membership is prohibitive. This is also a barrier for some members when it comes to volunteering for steering committee roles. Some flexibility in the number of steering committee roles that require membership versus allowing unpaid members to participate could help. Perhaps a small stipend to help pay for membership dues, or to attend online events or the annual meeting, or to purchase SAA books would be a viable incentive. Solo archivists are often working in non-academic institutions where there is no expectation of professional service.

What questions or concerns do you have for the SAA Council and staff?