From the Chair…

Greetings fellow Lone Arrangers!

Today I would like to talk about getting things done. It is a rare thing for a Lone Arranger to get to be just an archivist.

I work with donors, lead tours, work on exhibitions, sit on committees, work with professors and students on research projects, teach class sessions, and every once in a while I actually get to process an archival collection. My point is that a Lone Arranger’s number one skill is time management; with so much to do and only so much time to do it, things can get out of control fast. So here are some of the ways that I manage my time.

Lists: without lists I would be lost. They allow me to track long term projects, time-sensitive tasks, meetings, and all the little things that need to get done. I personally prefer the old-fashioned day planner format, but there are hundreds of tech options from apps to electronic calendars. The key is to find a format that you will actually use.

Blocking: making time to work on tasks can be a challenge but creating a standardized schedule can help. For example: I have to split my time between the museum and university archives (60-40 split). I am always scheduled to be in the library on Wednesday and Thursday. By formalizing the schedule it makes it easier to shift my focus to the task at hand while making it easier for my colleagues to find me. I also like to block out periods of time to do specific things; one day a month is set aside to do nothing but scan. I will make that day an all-day-meeting in my calendar and am unavailable for anything else.

Prioritize: While everything that I am working on is important, not everything has to happen right now. I work carefully to ensure that time-sensitive projects get top priority while still making time for projects with no due date.

Long-term planning: when I started at my current position I created a five year plan. The idea was to have an overarching plan with reasonable and attainable goals with benchmarks to be met. With the plan in place I am able to organize tasks based on the benchmarks while keeping my end goals in place. I will admit that the plan had to be altered at times to conform to the realities of the situation. For example: my original goal was to have everything in the museum vault basically cataloged in one year. It was immediately apparent that this was an impossible goal that I could not meet. So I pushed the ‘deadline’ to 3 years. Then I discovered a huge backlog of materials hidden in the basement. So the plan was reconfigured to 5 years. And that was a goal that could (and was) met. As the original plan was coming to completion the next five year plan was put in place.

Flexibility: “The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.” No matter how carefully I plan an emergency/need-it-right-now project can arise at any time. But that doesn’t have to cause total chaos. Tasks can, and should, be shifted to make room for an unexpected situation.

This is just the tip of the time-management iceberg; there are as many methods as there are Lone Arrangers. The key to time management is to find a method that works for you so you can go forth and tackle that mountain of work! Until next time…

Michelle Ganz
Meet our members

Who is on the steering committee?

Michele Ganz
Chair

I am the archivist and special collections librarian at the Carnegie-Vincent Library and the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum of Lincoln Memorial University. I came to LMU from the University of Arizona where I completed my MLS in 2007. My B.A. in Literature was completed at the Ohio State University in 2003. I received my Archivist Certification in 2008. Currently, I serve as chair for the Lone Arrangers Roundtable and am an active member of the ACA. I have worked on a number of special projects and working groups in both ARMA and the SAA.

The most enjoyable aspect of archival work is seeing the fruits of my efforts—taking a collection from unusable mess to a fully processed, usable, discoverable, researcher tool is really satisfying.

As a future effort, I would like to see our professional literature embrace the practical aspects of our work rather than focus so much on theory. I understand the importance of theory as a cornerstone of future growth, but when the theory pushes aside the realities of archival work the result is a disconnect that causes many lone arrangers to feel marginalized.

Archivist and Special Collections Librarian
Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum
Lincoln Memorial University
Harrogate, TN

Alison Stankrauff

I have served as the Campus Archivist at the Indiana University South Bend campus since 2004. I am a lone arranger, and inherited an archive on my regional campus that had not had an archivist for ten years.

Previous to my current position, I served as a Reference Archivist at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati from 2002 to 2004. From 2000 to 2002 I served as a technician at the Reuther Labor Archives at Wayne State University working to digitize the Detroit News photograph collection as well as with the National Association of Letter Carriers Collection. I interned at the Rabbi Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El in metropolitan Detroit. I graduated with my Masters in Library Science with Archival Administration concentration in 2002 from Wayne State University, and I have a Bachelors degree in history from Antioch College.

The aspect I like most about archival work is really connecting people with history. I work at a small ‘regional’ campus of a public state university—and we serve the community. I take this mission to heart—and love serving my various ‘publics': students, the campus faculty and staff - and also the local community and the wider public beyond. It really is so gratifying to make connections near and far and help people along the way!

My concern for the future is that as the Co-Chair for the SAA Mentoring Subcommittee of the Membership Committee, I’d really like to deepen and further the Subcommittee’s (rather new) initiative to connect lone arrangers with peer lone arrangers. This is an opportunity for us lone arrangers to have a particular ‘go to’ colleague with whom we could bounce ideas around, ask questions, share policies with, and address other needs and ideas—just the sort of thing that lone arrangers lack by the very nature of being in solo shops.

Archivist and Associate Librarian
Franklin D. Schurz Library
Indiana University South Bend
South Bend, Indiana

Russell L. Gasero, editor
rgasero@rca.org
rgasero@aol.com

Michelle Ganz, chair
michelle.ganz42@gmail.com

Part of the stack area of the Archives of the Reformed Church in America, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Visit www.rca.org/archives
Emerson College Archives in Haiku

Department of one
Records Management I do
Fun for everyone

Preserve Collections
Don’t let the cockroaches bite!

Archives Instruction
Exhibits on Emerson
Alumni Weekend

Digitization

Reference and Outreach
Researchers Visit Often

Arrange and Describe
Archival Collections too

Make an appointment

Creativity is encouraged for the pages of SOLO!

Send submissions to Russell Gasero —rgasero@aol.com

( Check out my shameless self-promotion on page 6 — give it a try!)
Gregory A. Jackson

I serve as the archivist for Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, PA. I have worked as a museum educator, historic site curator and supervisor and college archivist. I have a BA degree in History from Bryn Athyn College, an MA in Museum Studies from University of Leicester (UK) and is certified by the Academy of Certified Archivists.

I most like learning and understanding more about political, social, and material history by collecting, studying, organizing and preserving historical materials. It is always fascinating to find or receive new material relating to an individual or an organization—especially if it was believed that no further historical material existed.

I think that the “profession” needs to realize that not all archivists work in university libraries and that subject matter expertise is as important as (or perhaps even more important than) a library degree for employment in the profession. The professional certification process provides the theoretical background necessary to ensure archivists have the skills and knowledge necessary to operate at or above the necessary level of competence. Providing education that aligns closely with the Academy of Certified Archivists required areas of knowledge should be a primary goal of the SAA.

Gregory A. Jackson, CA
Archivist
Glencairn Museum
Bryn Athyn, PA

Tiffany Schureman

I have been the Archivist/Research Librarian at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History since 2010. Prior to that, I worked briefly as an Archives Technician at the Tulane Recovery Center (LAC Group). I was a volunteer archivist for the Turks and Caicos National Museum in the Turks and Caicos Islands in 2009 and from 2006 to 2009, I was Project Archivist at LIM College. While completing my MLIS, I completed two internships at the New-York Historical Society and the Brooklyn College archives. My MLIS is from Pratt Institute (2007) with an Archives Certificate and I became a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists in 2010. I have served on several committees in SAA and am currently a Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct member. Most recently, I was on the 2012 Program Committee.

I most enjoy seeing the results of my work when providing reference assistance. People get so excited when I have an answer to their question. It makes all the hard work of processing, writing a finding aid and digitization worth it.

I think advocating for lone arrangers is the best thing the profession could do for a lone arranger. We need the voice of the profession behind us because we do not have lots of colleagues at our home institutions. I believe it would benefit all archivists and not just lone arrangers.

Fort Worth Museum of Science and History
Fort Worth, TX

Amanda Stow

While the American Heritage Center is a “big shop” I am not a stranger to the struggles of the lone arranger. In 2008 I started a lone arranger position at the American Humane Association. Among my main duties I currently assist patrons with their research needs and provide bibliographic instruction to individuals and classes.

On of the most enjoyable aspects of archival work is the connection I make with people. I truly enjoy watching people light up when they learn something new about the past; whether their discovery is for academia or a discovery about themselves through family history.

I would like to see lone arrangers be mentors for not only each other, but for archivists in big shops. I think lone arrangers’ talents are multi-faceted because of their need to adapt to multiple challenges. I see many archivists from big shops with struggles similar to lone arrangers because of their department’s needs. I believe the experience and wisdom many lone arrangers have can enhance the whole archival community.

Amanda Stow
SRMA Newsletter Editor
Assistant Archivist, Reference
American Heritage Center
Laramie, WY 82071

Sandra Baird

I’ve been at Georgetown College for about a year and a half and my position is a bit of a hodge-podge. Along with all of the typical archival duties that lone arrangers have, I am also in charge of the Special Collections, media cataloging and hold hours at the reference desk. Before this position, I was an intern at the Keeneland Library and a student worker in the archives at the University of Kentucky.

What I enjoy most about archival work is the variety of different projects, materials, etc. I really enjoy doing this at a smaller institution because I get to learn what people are interested in and I get to share with them whenever I come across a particular gem.

In the future, for lone arrangers, and the whole profession as well, there needs to be more support and education for digital preservation. I would like to see more financial support in the form of grants and scholarships to help out smaller institutions.

Archives Coordinator
Georgetown College
Georgetown, Kentucky
Caitlin Donnelly

I recently became the Head of Public Services at Kenneth Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas. Prior to that, from July 2008 to December 2012, I was the Archivist at the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, responsible for all duties associated with managing the archival collection. I have a BA in Humanities-American Civilization from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2004), an MA in public history from North Carolina State University (2006), and an MSLS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2008). I have been a certified archivist since 2009. I had additional professional experience with the Missouri State Archives-St. Louis, UNC’s Documenting the American South, the NCSU Special Collections Research Center, the UIUC Government Documents Library, and the National Park Service.

The aspect I like most about archival work is helping people interact with historical resources and the past in ways they find meaningful and thought-provoking. As a public historian, I love connecting researchers and visitors to people who lived in the past and educating them about broader historical contexts.

What I’d like to see happen in the future only partially relates to lone arrangers specifically, but it’s my hope that we can find ways to fund employment for more skilled, talented, and passionate archivists.

Head of Public Services
Kenneth Spencer Research Library
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas.

Alexis Braun Marks

I have been the university archivist at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti Michigan since the fall of 2011. Prior to that I served as the archivist at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit from 2007-2010. While completing graduate work at the University of Wisconsin, Madison I worked for the Wisconsin Historical Society facilitating user studies. Before I returned to graduate school, I worked for the Minnesota Historical Society in the education outreach department as a National History Day outreach assistant. I continue my work with the National History Day program volunteering as a regional coordinator for Michigan History Day.

I really enjoy connecting people to information. There is nothing more satisfying than putting a finding aid online and within days having a researcher contact you to view the collection, or watching a patron in your reading room come to you elated because they found that perfect primary source.

I believe that we need to start using the technology at our disposal to share, teach, and support the diverse community of lone arrangers. Given our differences, but also our inherent similarities there is a great deal we can teach each other.

University Archivist
Eastern Michigan University
Bruce T. Halle Library
Ypsilanti, Michigan

Lone Arrangers Try Webinars

On February 11, 2013, Michelle Ganz presented a webinar on the Basics of Digitization. The presentation was an overview of how she has developed and is managing ongoing digitization in her archives. The webinar was facilitated by Russell Gasero through Go To Meeting.

There were eighteen in attendance and the webinar has been recorded and will be available on the lone arrangers web page—along with the handouts and PowerPoint slide set. Michelle’s presentation touched on equipment, process, technique, and access. The handouts are the forms and guidelines that she uses in that project.

Lone arrangers have sought low-cost continuing education for some time. The desire is to use this process to provide that education. It is estimated that to provide such presentations on a continuing basis would cost about $5.00/attendee or viewer. If you have ideas about what presentations should be included or would like to present a webinar, please contact Russ Gasero (rgasero@aol.com) and discuss the possibilities.
I have been the Archivist and Public Services Librarian at Chatham University since 2008 and am responsible for all aspects of the University Archives and Library Special Collections. I have a BA in art history from the University of Delaware and an MLIS with a specialization in archival studies from the University of Pittsburgh. During my education, I worked on archival projects at the Archives of the Andy Warhol Museum and the Pennsylvania State Archives. I am a member of MARAC, SAA, and the Academy of Certified Archivists. In addition to the LAR, I also serve on the MARAC Membership Development Committee and am the District Representative for New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in SAA’s Key Contact Program. I have written articles on archival ethics and outreach and have presented at both SAA and MARAC on lone arranger issues.

I most enjoy reference work and connecting researchers with the materials that they need. It always feels great to see the look on someone’s face when you’ve found exactly the collection they’ve been searching for. I also enjoy learning more about other times and places, particularly when cataloging or processing. I love the moment when I publish a new finding aid or catalog record and look forward to that collection being found and used.

In the future, it is important that lone arrangers continue to put themselves out there—attend conferences, publish, present, and advocate for their institutions. Ours is a relatively diverse profession, and the make-up of the Lone Arrangers Roundtable embodies that diversity—a diversity we should celebrate. Don’t feel bullied by the “big boys” of the archival world! Show everyone what makes your work special and valuable.

Archivist and Public Services Librarian
Jennie King Mellon Library
Chatham University
Pittsburgh, PA

It was the start of a new year and hopefully a quiet month in the Sand Beach Archives, or so John Harvey hoped. Generally, the time after the Christmas holidays was slow in terms of research and provided an opportunity for the staff to regroup, discuss the joys, excitement, and difficulties of another holiday season as they prepared to pass another year in their lives as archivists.

Time is something about which archivists are so very aware. They live their lives in the pages of the past—dusty, musty, mildew-laden pages is the image so often conjured up by those who have never entered the inner sanctum of the archival repository. The archivist usually works in a fine, climate-controlled office, carefully balanced to minimize humidity and the pests of insects and mold growth. What allows the archivist the sense of time is not the nature of the paper documents, but, rather, their contents.

Time spent researching, reading, and preserving the memory of ages gone by provides one with a certain sense of the boundaries of human life. Reading over the shoulder of a writer of one hundred, or even twenty, years ago provides one with an intimate relationship with the writer that was only intended for the initial reader. An archivist or historian has the privileges of voyeuristic experiences of the lives of hundreds of people, many of whom have long moved on to discover what lies beyond this existence. It has always been and always will be an occupational hazard for the practicing archivist who processes records that many of his or her friends died before he or she was born.

It was just that kind of day that John Harvey was experiencing as he began work on the Tuesday after the New Year’s day weekend. He had hoped it would be quiet and that he would have a chance to reflect on his life at this point in time as he worked on a group of records created by one of the communities most flamboyant entrepreneurs—Lester Smillgren.

The records had been willed to the Sand Beach Archives by Lester, who had died ten years ago on New Year’s Eve. Lester had made his fortune, several fortunes, in the funeral business. He had established a chain of mortuaries in this part of the state. He always joked that he couldn’t possibly lose in this business because people were always dying to have him serve them. His morbid puns and dry witticisms ran throughout the daily diaries he had been keeping all of his life. In those pages were reflections on most of the families in his region. At one time or another he had an encounter with them—usually at one of their most difficult points in life.

But these records were going to have to wait. John wasn’t sure whether he was happy about this or not. Reflecting too much on death and the experiences of...
that she might not find what she had sought for so long. He could see in the
care with which she turned each page how precious the connection with the
past was for her.
That connection that tied her to a family
long gone provided a rootedness for her
in the present. That connection with
friends who had died before she was born
left her with the satisfaction that she was
part of a long line of humanity making its
mark on the world and that one day in
the more distant future, someone would
be befriending her and would appreciate
what her life had meant.
She had told him that she didn’t
know where else to turn. This was the
last church left in the area. She knew
Bernard and Rachel had lived here, but
had found no record of the baptism of
their son, Richard, in any of the records
she had seen previously. Only recently
had she discovered that this Presbyterian
congregation had existed. It had been a
small church and lasted for fifteen years
before disbanding. She had discovered
that the records were still in existence
and in the custody of the Sand Beach
Archives.
She had spoken with John a month ago
and had intended to visit the archives to
see the baptismal register. A terribly snow
storm had prevented her from visiting
prior to Christmas and with great sadness
in her voice she had canceled that visit
and arranged for one today. John had
forgotten about this and recalled the pain
in her voice as she admitted that she was
too old now to hazard driving in snow
and ice.
The warm start of the new year had
erased the memory of the ice on the
roads and she was here, ready to attack
her work as soon as the doors were open
to the public. Now she turned the pages
with the corners of her mouth turning
down further after each turn of the
yellowed page.
The last page turned and John could
see that she had not found what she was
seeking. She quietly closed the volume
and gently picked it up to return it to
him. There was sadness, not anger or
resentment, in her voice as she thanked
him for showing her this book.

This was what he hated most. This was
the failed quest; the research that doesn’t
succeed. It wasn’t the same as not finding
the data that would support a thesis. This
was a living quest. One individual seeking
to create a link with a long-gone past that
gave vitality and meaning to their present
and offered a promise for the future.
The friends who had died before you
were born were friends who offered
inspiration. Their lives provided an
anchor of hope that reminded you that
your life is neither better nor worse than
that of anyone else. Those friends offer a
challenge in the present. They lived and
contributed to the world; they enjoyed
life and struggled through it. You were
part of the chain; another link that
stretched out of the past and into the
future. That was the motivation of her
quest, something else to leave for those
who came after her.
John asked her to wait a moment.
She should look at some other records.
He didn’t want to prolong her agony
or add to her misery, but last month,
someone had searched the records of
the congregation’s session minutes. In
those, they found information that
substantiated a marriage, but never had
been transcribed into the register. For
whatever reason, record books were not
always complete. A careful researcher
always checked all possible sources.

She smiled, knowing he was right,
and began to read through the session
minutes. It was more tedious reading
through the scrawled paragraphs. These
were not written with the same care
and attention with which the careful tables
of the baptismal registers had been
prepared. Slowly, she labored through
the paragraphs.

All at once, he knew. There was no doubt
in his mind. What she had been seeking
was there. Her smiling face, satisfied with
the end of the quest, beamed across
the room to him. She beckoned for him
to come over and pointed carefully to a
paragraph of the meeting on June 15th,
1734:

Rev. Townsend traveled to the
home of Bernard and Rachel Storm

Continued on page 8
Welcome to the first edition of the newsletter of the Lone Arrangers Roundtable.

In this issue there are introductions to the members of the roundtable and now I’d like to introduce myself—and my goals for the newsletter.

I am Russell Gasero, archivist of the Reformed Church in America. I have been in that position for 35 years following a five year stint in the United Nations Archives. I am a lone arranger by choice. I love the lifestyle, demands, and challenges of a lone arranger. I think the wonderful aspect of being among lone arrangers is the free sharing of information and talents. In my four decades as an archivist, I have had ample opportunities to share what I know—and don't know—and to benefit from the skills, knowledge, and talents of so many others.

In all cases, what they had to offer was given freely and with the joy of sharing. This is not to say that lone arrangers are never paid for offering workshops, teaching, etc.—they are and they should be! But, they also give time and assistance freely when asked for help. That is what makes it so much more fun.

I think there is a tremendous amount of talent among lone arrangers and I hope this newsletter will provide a means to share and develop those talents. In this premiere issue, you get to meet the members of the steering committee and, in a shameless self-promotional manner, get to read a brief story of my fiction archives, the Sand Beach Archives, that offers a glimpse at a theme that runs through so many of the statements made by steering committee members—the joy of helping patrons.

Take it for what it is—a way to fill the first issue—but also think about the nature of what we can put in future issues of the newsletter. I’d like to see it be more than just a review of holdings and be more an exploration of who we are as individual lone arrangers through creative aspects (see the haiku from Christina Zamon) as well as some of the images and descriptions of the records in our care.

Why the welcome at the end? In my early life, I spent a fair amount of time learning and working in the printing industry (at least a fair amount of time for a 19 year old) from hand typesetting and letterpress printing to offset platemaking and presswork. The hellbox was the place where mixed up type was dumped to be sorted by young apprentices—the printing devils. It was a tedious job, but the only way to reuse a limited set of characters in an expensive font of type.

If you never worked hand setting type from a California Job Case, you have no idea how wonderful an improvement the modern desktop publishing system with its incredible variety and easy to use fonts really is over the “old days”.

The hellbox will be a place for all sorts of odds and ends about what is happening in the archival world—bits of information that might be useful, and links to sites, videos, training, and so on. You send it to me and I’ll do my best to include it in a meaningful manner to share with everyone.

Be sure to send me a brief biographical sketch, like those of the steering committee, to introduce yourself to the roundtable. Send pictures and links to special exhibits, videos, and more. If you’d like to send an article about your repository or a special item or collection, please feel free to do so.

I look forward to putting all this together and do hope that you will enjoy reading and learning more about your colleagues in the profession. Who knows, maybe there’s another printer’s devil out there.

Cheers,
Russ
Lone arranger and old printers devil

Continued from page 7

Weaver, who was delivering child and neither expected to live. The Rev. Administered the rite of baptism and prayed with the family. Mother and child survived the night and were doing well the next morning. Baptism to be entered into the register upon the return of the session clerk.

With a breaking voice, the elderly woman asked if she might have a copy of this page. John smiled and went off to make one right away. This was what he loved about this work after all.

And that's how life is in the Sand Beach Archives—where all the paper is acid free, all the shelves are steel, and the archivists are held in awe!