

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 2-3, 2018
Chicago, Illinois**

**Annual Report: Committee on Public Awareness
(Prepared by Chris Burns, Chair)**

For the 2017-2018 term, COPA worked on the following:

ArchivesAware! Blog

ArchivesAWARE is a blog hosted by the [Society of American Archivists](#) and managed by its [Committee on Public Awareness \(COPA\)](#). It was established in January 2016 to create an online space where professionals and students engaged in all aspects of archival work could share their experiences 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.

This year, Nick Pavlik took over lead editor duties from the founding editor, Sami Norling. SAA and COPA owe Sami a deep debt of gratitude for getting the blog up and running. At COPA's October meeting in Chicago, considerable attention was paid to creating a plan for the blog for the coming year and the foreseeable future. Out of that meeting came a long list of blog post ideas as well as several ideas for new series on the blog. The past year featured 34 new posts, which included posts in three new series (There's an Archivist for That, Archives + Audiences, and Asserting the Archivist). Below is a list of this year's blog posts:

- *October 4 is #AskAnArchivist Day!*
- *Beyond the Elevator, No. 10* by Mandy Mastrovita and Jill Severn
- *Gearing Up for #AskAnArchivist Day* by Sami Norling
- *#AskAnArchivist Day 2017 Summary* by Anna Trammell
- *Giving It a Try: #AskAnArchivist Day* by Caryn Radick
- *There's an Archivist for That! Interview with Anne L. Foster, Yellowstone National Park Archivist* by Rachel Seale
- *The Houston Archives Bazaar: An Interview with Emily Vinson, President of Archivists of the Houston Area* by Vince Lee
- *Federal Funding Impact Story* (posts 7-9)
- *The National Women's Conference: Taking 1977 into the 21st Century* by Vince Lee
- *Asserting the Archivist* (posts 1-3) by Sami Norling
- *A Bazaar by any other name is still... (an event)?* by Vince Lee
- *There's an Archivist for That! Interview with Samantha Bradbeer, Hallmark Archivist* by Rachel Seale

- *Sound and Vision: And We're Live in 5...4...3...2...1* by Chris Burns
- *What Are You Reading?* by Vince Lee
- *Archives + Audiences: Gerry Canavan on the Octavia E. Butler Collection*
Also featured in March/April *Archival Outlook*
- *There's an Archivist for That! Interview with Teresa Hedgpeth, United States Olympic Committee Archivist & Historical Steward* by Rachel Seale
- *Escape the Room... With Archives!* by Caryn Radick
- *Crafting Your Archives Elevator Speech* by Anna Trammell
- *Archives + Audiences: Journalist David Grann on "Killers of the Flower Moon"*
- *There's an Archivist for That! Interview with Colleen McFarland Rademaker of the Corning Museum of Glass* by Anna Trammell
- *The Great Society Congress: A Collaborative Approach to Digital Exhibits and Outreach* by Danielle Emerling and Jay Wyatt
- *Getting It Together: Launching #WeRateArchives* by Jeanine Roe
- *There's an Archivist for That! Interview with Steven G. Hausfeld, Manager, Nationwide Library and History & Archives Center* by Rachel Seale
- *Archives + Audiences: Anna Shternshis on "Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II"*
- *An Interview with Jason Steinhauer, Public Historian and Creator of History Communication*
- *I'm Not an Archivist but I Play One at the Office: Interview with Cindy Slater of the Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports* by Lindsay Anderberg
- *There's an Archivist for That! Interview with May Haduong, Public Access Manager, Academy Film Archive* by Anna Trammell
- *Archives + Audiences: Wendy MacNaughton on "Leave Me Alone with the Recipes: The Life, Art, and Cookbook of Cipe Pineles"*
- *A Finding Aid to My Soul: An Archivist Storytelling Event* by Chris Burns
- *Advocacy and Outreach at the Annual Meeting* by Sami Norling

The October planning meeting helped COPA chart a course of action for the blog. Series and individual post ideas were developed and assigned to individuals or groups and that clear plan and designation of responsibilities set the stage for the blog's most successful year yet, as can be seen from the statistics below.

Blog Statistics

Year	Views	Visitors
2016	19,053	11,377
2017	12,838	7,545
2018 (to date)	22,879	14,177

#AskAnArchivist Day

2017 was the fourth year of #AskAnArchivist Day on Twitter. A recap from COPA's Anna Trammell can be found here: <https://archivesaware.archivists.org/2017/10/06/askanarchivist-day-2017-summary/>.

Year	Unique Users	Total Tweets
10/30/2014	1,949	6,065
10/01/2015	3,184	7,845
10/05/2016	3,742	10,005
10/04/2017	4,077	8,927

#AskAnArchivist Day 2018 took place on October 3. A recap can be found here: <https://archivesaware.archivists.org/2018/10/12/recap-of-askanarchivist-day-2018/>.

Elevator Speech

COPA member Anna Trammell led our work in this area, with significant results: an eye-catching graphic, prominent placement on the SAA website, a blog post, Archival Outlook mentions, and an Elevator Speech puzzle and card at the 2018 Joint Annual Meeting. Thanks to Anna for her leadership, hard work, and creativity on this one.

SAA website <https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/public-awareness/elevator-speech>
Archival Outlook, March/April 2018, p. 22 <http://bluetoad.com/publication/?i=481853#>

Media Training

The committee spent a considerable amount of time deciding how to tackle media training. After talking with several possible workshop providers, SAA staff and COPA selected Jason Steinhauer, who has been developing the field of History Communicators the last few years. The [Carpe Media! Communications and Media Training for Archivists](#) workshop had 21 attendees (see [blog post by Vince and Rachel](#)). A feedback survey was recently sent to participants. That feedback will inform our discussion for future initiatives. COPA will be working on what to do next, which may be another workshop, a conference panel, or perhaps training more specific to television/radio interviews.

Storytelling

[A Finding Aid To My Soul](#), SAA's first-ever storytelling event, exceeded expectations with more than 100 attendees. There were 5 scheduled storytellers + 9 folks who put their names in a

hat for selection (7 were picked). The event was audio recorded. Content could possibly be repurposed for a blog post or for the new SAA podcast, Archives in Context, which will launch this fall. The big question now is how to build on the success of the event, particularly as we look to the 2019 Annual Meeting in Austin. Should we partner with The Moth Radio Hour, with training in the morning and stories delivered at the event later in the day? Is it an archivists-only event or should it also be open to the public? Is there an opportunity to partner with the Kitchen Sisters? Should the storytelling have a theme? The judging component was a little bit of a challenge; do we want the judging component next year?

Exhibit Hall Office Hours

COPA held “office hours” in the Exhibit Hall at the 2018 Joint Annual Meeting. The office hours were an opportunity to introduce SAA members to the work of COPA, get input on our ongoing initiatives, and gather suggestions for possible future action. In particular, we featured our work on Elevator Speeches, with a 1,014 piece puzzle version of the elevator speech graphic (completed by the end of the conference) and cards with the graphic that attendees could take away.

2017-2019 Work Plan

The Committee finalized its work plan at our October meeting in Chicago. COPA made significant progress in several areas of the work plan this past year (blog, elevator speech, media training, storytelling event). New COPA Chair Caryn Radick is currently leading discussions as to how the committee can continue our progress on these items as well as what additional items from the work plan have the highest priority for completion this year. The full plan is appended below.

Committee on Public Awareness 2017–2019 Work Plan

I. Goals

- A. Inform, excite, and engage SAA members about public awareness.
- B. Create content for ArchivesAWARE! Blog and 2018 and 2019 Annual Meetings, and review advocacy content on SAA website.
- C. Increase SAA capability to reach national media on issues concerning archives.

II. Objectives

- A. Encourage and enable SAA members to undertake outreach and advocacy work.
- B. Collect and/or develop stories about archives and archivists.
- C. Maintain COPA presence at 2018 Annual Meeting.
- D. Plan for 2019 Annual Meeting with overarching storytelling theme.
- E. Plan for major press releases, media interviews, etc., on current events relating to archives.

III. Strategies

- A. Encourage and enable outreach/advocacy participation in 2017–2019.
 - 1. Promote #AskAnArchivist Day (October) and encourage archivists to participate.
 - 2. Review advocacy content on SAA website.
 - 3. Relaunch existing American Archives Month content to SAA website.
 - 4. Assess member needs for a proposed PR/advocacy toolkit.
 - 5. Develop Elevator Speech content for SAA website.
 - 6. Develop *Why Do You Love Being an Archivist?* content (short videos, website material, social media content).
 - 7. Partner with SNAP on a SNAPChat on the topic of archival awareness (Spring).
 - 8. Share examples of outreach programs and draw attention to available outreach/advocacy resources on the ArchivesAWARE! Blog.
- B. Stories about archivists and archives.
 - 1. Continue to solicit and generate content for ArchivesAWARE! Blog that features archivists and their work. Develop and promote series (There's an Archivist for That, Asserting the Archivist, Archival Outreach Innovators).
 - 2. Review audio recordings from StoryCorps (2015) and Kitchen Sisters (2017) and find clips that could be shared by SAA.
- C. 2018 Annual Meeting.
 - 1. Organize and propose storytelling panel session (Nov. 15).

2. Hold media training event for archivists (Develop curriculum by Nov. 1, talk with possible trainers, determine format).
3. Hold Exhibit Hall office hours.
4. Set up a listening booth to highlight clips from StoryCorps and Kitchen Sisters recordings.

D. 2019 Annual Meeting

1. Begin to plan storytelling focus for 2019 Annual Meeting.
2. Pursue a partnership with The Moth.
3. Coordinate with Program Committee on possibility of special forum programming.
4. Investigate potential for local partnership with members of Austin community.

E. Plan for national media outreach.

1. Anticipate 2018 and 2019 events (anniversaries, premiers of movies, etc.) that will have significant archives connections and identify likely content experts.
2. Prepare information and talking points about these events.
3. Research appropriate media outlets/contacts for news releases, interviews, etc.
4. Draft press releases for these events.
5. Establish list of archives spokespeople with expertise in a variety of archives-related topics.