



UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES

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State of MAC: April 5, 2019

Good afternoon. It is my honor and pleasure to address you for one last time as your president. I do this, of course, with mixed emotions.

Because MAC presidents serve two-year terms and my term is coming to a close, we can consider this the biennial farewell message, and I suspect that what I'm feeling today is not much different from the experience of my predecessors.

So what are those emotions?

First, I feel a deep sense of gratitude for those who make MAC the mutually supportive organization that it is. I hope that during your time here in Detroit you have experienced that support, or perhaps have given that support back to a colleague who may need it.

I also feel a lot of relief right now, frankly. Somehow I managed to preside over four Council meetings over the last two years without misfiring procedurally too many times and that I won't need to impose upon my colleagues like that any longer. I am sure they feel that relief too!

But I also feel a bit of melancholy right now. The rhythm of collaboration, discussion, shopping for opinions and insights, learning from my colleagues—that rhythm is one of the benefits of sitting on this perch in MAC. While I plan to remain involved—I have no choice, really, since I'll be officially joining the Presidents' Award Committee in a few minutes—I also am not kidding myself when I realize it won't be the same for me personally in the time ahead.

I'll come back to this theme in a few moments, with an eye toward how this affects us all in our careers and in our personal lives, and what MAC can continue to do and improve upon in this regard.

As our treasurer, Colleen McFarland Rademaker, noted, MAC's financial picture is healthy overall. We strive to make sure that we provide our members with an excellent value in professional development opportunities, great food at receptions and breaks, and chances to network with colleagues and vendors who provide much-needed services to our profession. And doing so while we keep our costs in line with our income. It might seem like simple math: don't spend more than you take in. But it isn't that simple. As we plan meetings and other events, we commit to many expenses before the income arrives. And, while we can base those decisions on our recent experiences with previous meetings, we also recognize that no two meetings are alike. Registration responses vary from year to year, depending to some extent upon the location of our meetings. We have learned what works and what doesn't, and sometimes we take a risk to learn that something might not pan out the way we had hoped. Not taking a risk can itself be a risk, if we continue to repeat practices that have not been successful.

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drop-in workshop equipped with scanning and processing stations. Volunteers from MAC and the Reuther Library were on-site to assist with physical preservation, metadata creation, and scanning. The event was well attended and a smashing success. What an amazing way for archivists to give back to the community while honing their expertise!

The second day of the conference was chock full of activities for all in attendance. While the city buzzed with opening day festivities celebrating the hometown Detroit Tigers, archivists hummed around the many tours taking place. Traditional behind-the-scenes tours of local repositories included The Henry Ford, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor Affairs, and the Burton Collection at the Detroit Public Library, and walking tours explored the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley areas of the city's lower east side. A special tour with plenary speaker Viranel Clerard of the Detroit Mural Project highlighted public art in downtown Detroit.

The Education Committee—led by Amy Bishop (cochair) and Janet Carleton (cochair) and comprised of members Sally Conkright, Chad Conrady, Hathaway Hester, Brad Houston, Kathryn Kuntz, Carrie Schwier, and Anke Voss—provided attendees with some great opportunities for furthering their professional development. Attendees learned about everything from records management to text and data mining.

The Program Committee—led by Carrie Schwier (cochair) and Jennifer Audsley-Moore (cochair) and comprised of Joanna Bares, Stacey Erdman, Lauren Gaines, Kayla Harris, Lindsay Hiltunen, Deborah Kloiber, Hayley Jackson, Brandon Pieczko, Carol Street, and Robbie Terman—developed a program with a little something for everybody and a record number of sessions (27)! This was made possible by scheduling traditional 90-minute sessions, as well as “lightning sessions” of 45 minutes.



The plenary session this year took the form of an interview with speaker Viranel Clerard, a community art advocate, photojournalist and educator for the Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy, and founder of the Detroit Museum of Public Art, a digital catalog of 1,000+ public art murals in the city of Detroit. The interviewer was Michael Smith, the Johanna Meijer Magoon Principal Archivist of the Michigan Historical Collections at the Bentley Historical Library. What an amazing opportunity to hear a conversation about Clerard's journey to Detroit, his fascinating career, and the many intriguing projects he has undertaken!

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The opening reception took place at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, one of the country's preeminent institutions dedicated to the collection, preservation, and display of materials documenting African American culture. The drinks and conversation flowed throughout the evening, and those in attendance were invited to walk through the incredibly moving permanent exhibit at the museum, *And Still We Rise: Our Journey through African American History and Culture*. The exhibit traces the journey of those brought as slaves in bondage from Africa to the new world and the fight for freedom that still continues in modern-day America. What an experience!



The Local Arrangements Committee, consisting of Jamie Myler (cochair), Shae Rafferty (cochair), Lauren Lincoln (cochair), James Hanks, Maria Ketcham, Sarah Lebovitz, Kathryn Lovelace, Kathy Makas, Marian Matyn, Dave Moore, Natalie Morath, and Alison Stankrauff, would like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful archivists who came to Detroit and made this conference something special for everyone. We hope you had as much fun attending this conference as we did putting it on for you. We also hope you remember your time here fondly and return to experience Detroit's inspiring innovation, transformation, and resurgence!

MAC Meetings and Symposia Update

By Joshua Ranger, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh



Do you, like me, find bits of meeting detritus in your various pockets or bags after returning from a conference? A crunched pocket program, a People Mover token, an unused drink ticket from the reception . . . just kidding, that's not actually a thing. This week, I found a receipt from downtown Detroit's Simmons & Clark Jewelers in a jacket. I had a watch battery replaced there the day before the Annual Meeting. It was a charming store featuring chandeliers with shades made from reproductions of their midcentury newspaper ads, and it was a place where I could imagine generations of auto workers putting engagement rings on layaway or manufacturers buying retirement watches for loyal employees. The visit was just one example of what history means to a city so rich in it.

It is truly one of the best fringe benefits of traveling to professional conferences: the opportunity to experience new places that may not be on your vacation bucket list. Detroit was a wonderful host city, and I look forward to MAC returning there in the future. And the meeting itself—one of MAC's largest ever—was first rate. I want to thank everyone on the Local Arrangements, Program, and Education Committees; AMC Source; our sponsors and vendors; and the over 450 attendees and presenters who both shared their knowledge and experiences and learned and grew as professionals.

With Detroit behind us, we now look forward to our next meetings:

Fall Symposium, October 4–5, 2019 Fargo, North Dakota

Another item I found—this time in my backpack—was a bright pencil with the inscription “MAC in NODAK.” This was a gift from our 2019 MAC Symposium coordinators who are busy putting the final touches on MAC's first visit to the state of North Dakota. On October 4 and

5, we will gather in Fargo for a Symposium designed specifically for those archivists working in small shops. Many of us work in one- or two-archivist operations where we must handle all aspects of administration. This makes for a unique work environment, so MAC has developed a Symposium focused on the professional (and, perhaps, the emotional) needs and issues of those who work in them. If you are a solo or small shop archivist, please join us in Fargo for some unique group learning and support from your peers. Additional details will be found elsewhere in these pages.

Annual Meeting, May 6–9, 2020 Des Moines, Iowa

Pinned to my backpack is a button for the 2020 Des Moines Annual Meeting. Looking very much like a campaign button, it speaks to the attention Des Moines and all of Iowa will get as the state's caucuses for the presidential race approach. It has been a bit more than four years since MAC was last in Des Moines (fall 2004!), so we are looking forward to returning to Iowa's capital and for the first time during the spring! Our Local Arrangements Committee is headed by Hilary Seo, Rosalie Gardner, and Hope Bibens, who have already been busy scouting the area for tours and a reception site. The Program Committee chairs Benn Joseph and Marcella Huggard, along with other committee members, will soon be making their call for proposals.

And Beyond

From the time I write this to the time you read it, we will likely know where we are heading in fall 2020 and spring 2021, so watch this space for updates. And, as always, if you want MAC to come to your state or community, please let me know. I would love to find receipts from your hometown in my coat pockets!

President's Page

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You also heard from our Membership Committee chair, Matt Gorzalski. Our membership levels remain steady, and we will continue to reach out to prospective members as well as to those who may be ready to join again. MAC is a microcosm of the profession, and inevitably we experience a turnover each year. As an organization, we recognize that, and we accommodate it as we grow, if not in numbers, certainly in new and revitalized interest.

Finances and membership numbers are the quantifiable nuts and bolts of our organization. But as I alluded to a few moments ago, other nuts and bolts of MAC are perhaps not as straightforward to measure, but certainly no less important.

We will continue to enhance scholarship opportunities for our newest professionals. About 10 or 11 years ago, the Emeritus Award for First-Time Meeting Attendees was established by Tim Ericson, himself an Emeritus Member of MAC. You met this year's recipients earlier in our meeting. Today, I am pleased to announce that, following yesterday's Council action, this award, going forward, will be named the Mark A. Greene Award for First-Time Meeting Attendees.

Many of you knew Mark, a long-time MAC member and leader of our profession—not only regionally, but of course nationally through the Society of American Archivists and his many contributions to the professional literature. Mark's untimely death two years ago was tragic. But in the aftermath of his passing, we have been inspired to memorialize his gifts to the archival profession by strengthening this scholarship financially.

Unlike the Louisa Bowen and Archie Motley memorial scholarships, which are fully funded with endowments that generate income each year for awards, the Emeritus Award has largely survived year-to-year, based on annual giving. While we appreciate that continuing support, we also recognize the need to financially stabilize this particular award. It is our plan to ensure that the newly named Mark

A. Greene Award draws from a similar endowment, so that we can rely upon this as a source of income each year. You may know of a student, a colleague, or a coworker who hasn't been to a MAC meeting before. What better way to indoctrinate them—I mean, get them acquainted with our profession—than to encourage them with the prospect of a travel scholarship? Our treasurer estimates that an endowment of \$20,000 or more will be needed to make this happen, and I know we can do it. Today, I am pleased to announce the beginning of a campaign to raise funds for

this third scholarship on MAC's menu and to announce that a donor who wishes to remain anonymous will commit the first \$5,000 toward that goal today.

Scholarships are one way we look out for each other in MAC. But there are many other ways MAC can improve its practices.

Let's talk about diversity. I'm an older white guy who reminds himself frequently that it's essential to listen, to acknowledge and learn from mistakes, to do better. Our 2017 membership survey, which is accessible on our website, notes that about 95 percent of our respondents are white. Since the response rate was very high—almost 50 percent—there is little reason to think this number would be much different if everyone responded. So, for the benefit of my white colleagues who are here today, I will take a couple of minutes and turn to an essay that appeared last fall in the online publication *Inside Higher Ed*. It was written by Dr. Jessica Welburn Paige, an assistant professor of sociology and African American studies at the University of Iowa, my institution.

For my colleagues of color, please take a break and relax.

Dr. Welburn Paige notes that professionals from underrepresented groups would really appreciate it if we white people became more involved in improving the climate of where we work, whether it's a campus setting, or a corporation, or a nonprofit, or a religious organization. Here is what she recommends:

Diversify your professional networks. Don't let the burden fall on people of color to do this work. You can help carry this load by being mindful of not only representation on the surface, but also from within, by making the invitation.

See diversity as an asset. There are many benefits to diversity. That shouldn't be a revelation, but it is helpful to remind ourselves of this continually. In academia, most programs that consistently rank in the top 10 include more than one faculty member from an underrepresented group. They have more than one or two graduate students from underrepresented groups. This benefit extends beyond academia.

Get to know your organization differently, especially if you, like me, have been ingrained in it for a while. In my case, 18 years now. I admit I fall into a pattern of predictable paths—sorry for the alliteration—but I am fortunate to work for an institution that affords many opportunities

to open doors, and I am compelled to take advantage of those opportunities. I hope your organization does as well.

And, finally, **treat diversity and inclusion efforts with the urgency that you treat other organizational issues.** It will pay off in the long run for everyone.

In case you are interested, Dr. Welburn Paige's essay appears in the October 26, 2018, issue of *Inside Higher Ed*. It is available online.

Other nuts and bolts of MAC include our current efforts to address ways to improve how we help each other. What began in MAC Council as a response to a member's request earlier this year to improve access to child care during meetings has expanded into something more holistic: the family and personal needs of our colleagues in general.

A working group headed by Council member Alexis Braun Marks is now addressing these questions, and they will submit a preliminary report to Council this fall. Alexis is uniquely qualified to lead this effort as she is doing similar work at the national level through SAA. Please contact Alexis or anyone in MAC leadership with your ideas or concerns.

When I was invited to run for MAC president over two years ago, I was both honored and a bit apprehensive. My mother celebrated her 90th birthday last year. She's a lifelong Iowa Hawkeyes fan, and she's doing great, but not without some challenges. My spouse, James, is also doing well but experiences mobility challenges. I had misgivings about running, but after talking with them both and hearing their encouragement, I agreed to do so.

But during my first Council meeting as president, in the fall of 2017 in Columbus, just before our lunch break, I received a text from Floyd County Memorial Hospital in Charles City where my mother lives. They informed me that she fell at home in her kitchen, that her head struck the oven door, and that she was in the emergency room undergoing examination. They assured me that her injury was not life-threatening, but nonetheless I was worried. After further updates from the hospital that afternoon, I decided to cut my visit to Columbus short and return to Iowa a day earlier than planned.

I tell you this not to garner sympathy, but as a reminder that we often balance the professional with the personal. Many of you, particularly women, particularly parents, particularly caregivers, don't need that reminder. But I say

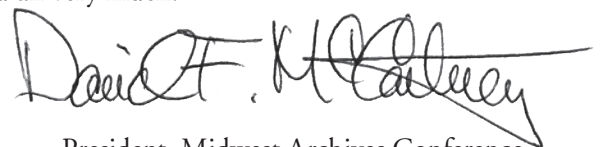
it anyway to let you know that in MAC leadership, we see you, we understand you, we are here for you.

I could have talked today about the ongoing challenges we face from the current administration; that the Trump administration wants to zero out funding for NEH, NEA, IMLS, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. We all know what we face, and we all know what we need to do. Since my last State of MAC address a year ago, we as a nation have taken positive steps, not the least of which is electing a US House that now recognizes the vitality and necessity of these programs.

Today, though, I wanted to step outside that professional ring and get personal. I want to encourage us all to consider what each of us can bring to the table, to remember that the person we brush past in the hall may be quietly carrying something. As I conclude my term as your president today, I look forward to retirement in perhaps three or so years, but I'm also a bit apprehensive about that. A common fear among people who age is the fear of isolation or loneliness, that they feel no longer engaged in their community. For that reason, I hope to linger on as a barnacle after this meeting today, whether you like it or not, and I look forward to keeping in touch in other capacities.

I lived in Anchorage, Alaska, for several years back in the 1980s. That's where I met James, in fact, and, during that time, I had the privilege to learn of Inupiat and other indigenous cultures. An Inupiat village tradition is the blanket toss. It has both practical and symbolic purposes. The practical: Villagers collectively stretch out and hold a blanket tightly, while one villager climbs onto it. And then the toss begins, lifting them into the air. The scout, while high off the ground, catches a glimpse off to the horizon to spot game for a subsistence hunt. That determines how the hunt will proceed. The blanket toss also has, to me at least, a symbolic meaning, and that is one of trust. The one who is tossed has faith in those who support them, by holding on to that blanket tightly. And that's how I feel about MAC. As president, I was lifted by the blanket toss, time and time again. I'll always be grateful for that.

Thank you all very much.



President, Midwest Archives Conference