

To the MAC community:

I hope this message finds you well. I have heard from many of you, and I share the anxiety you are feeling regarding the uncertainty of the times. As a profession, we are experiencing working from home, budget cuts, reduction in hours or pay, furloughs, layoffs, and even closures.

Likewise, we were cut off from each other with the cancellation of the MAC Annual Meeting. While it is absolutely certain that the meeting could not have occurred as planned, forfeiting the time spent together, the professional exchanges that take place, and the relationship building is a loss for us all. Many of you have inquired about the financial impact the cancellation has had on MAC, knowing that the conferences, next to membership dues, are a major source of revenue for the organization. I am happy to note that working with Debbie Nolan, our partner at AMC Source, and with the conference hotel, we were able to come to an amicable decision to invoke the *force majeure* clause in our contract; this allowed all parties to leave relatively unharmed. Many of you who registered for the meeting opted to forego a refund and offered to donate the funds to help cover meeting costs that were already incurred. Your generosity is much appreciated.

We have also been separated from the archives and special collections in which we work. How strange to be an archivist without things. I'm sure you have been busy enough, but it is a unique situation I'm sure few of us envisioned just a few months ago. Typically, we might anticipate such an unplanned separation from our collections due to a building or mechanical issue that would prevent access, not a pandemic. Yet, this new reality draws upon our experiences and resources in new ways. It reminds me of Leonard Rappoport's article on reappraisal, "No Grandfather Clause," which appeared in *American Archivist* 44, spring 1981, where he juxtaposes two worlds; one where all of the world's knowledge is on hand and easily accessible, and another where all of the records are gone. He asks, "How different would the two resultant worlds be?"

With workplace closures and stay-at-home orders, we seemed to have moved very quickly from the world of resources to the world without. Yet, I suspect you, like me, see little difference, much as Rappoport surmised. We are defined as professionals in the way we act and behave, not in the things we manage or collect. We will return. We will reopen. But, how might we act and behave differently? Luckily, we can learn together as we move forward, and MAC will be a special part of that process. How exactly? We can decide together as MAC begins a new strategic planning process to guide our operations and programs.



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