

State of MAC 2022

By Tamar Chute, President, Midwest Archives Conference

This address was delivered on May 6, 2022, at the MAC Annual Meeting

So excited to see people in person and talk archives! I hope you have been as happy to be here as I have been.

I've always wondered what the US president's speechwriters go through to write the State of the Union. Is it like the movie *The American President* where they have to rewrite it in 35 minutes right at the end? (If you haven't seen the movie, you should!) In a way, I felt like poor Michael J. Fox panicking in the Roosevelt Room as I wrote this. Would what I wrote last week have to be redone?

However, I realized that no matter what happens the week before an Annual Meeting, the state of MAC is incredibly strong. We are a solid organization, we are accepting of change, and, in this meeting, we are thinking about our past 50 years while exploring our future. We were built as a volunteer organization, and all of you are part of that legacy.

Now, as I say to my students when I teach, this is the part that's interactive.

Hands up—how many of you have been MAC members for 10 years or more? 20? 30? 40? Anyone who has been a member since 1972?

No matter when you became a MAC member, we all have memories that are an important part of MAC history. Over the last few months as she's done her research into MAC's history during her fieldwork experience, Kasandra Brellenthin has shared little tidbits of MAC history with me. I have to admit that I've laughed out loud on more than one occasion. The word search, video footage, and those fabulous hats that must be from the 1980s!

Perhaps the thing that most struck me was that the very first MAC meeting in May 1972 was on the

exact same dates as this year. So, what did the archivists in 1972 cover?

- Stretching your resources
- Establishing initial control over archival holdings
- Oral histories
- And where does MAC go from here?

Huh! So at *this* conference we're covering:

- Working together and collaborating
- Controlling archival ELECTRONIC holdings
- Oral histories
- And speaking about where MAC goes from here!

We are a consistent group! But we are also exploring and confronting topics this week that we did not always cover in the past:

- Building collections and relationships with Indigenous communities
- Making ALL users feel welcome
- Labor equity in the archives

This to me is the beauty of MAC. We build on our past ideas and discussions, and we bring new ones into the fold. So new ideas become "of course" ideas. We take what we've learned here home to share with our colleagues, perhaps find a new collaborator for that article or project, and think about what we should discuss and learn NEXT time.

For there is always a next time. Even in the pandemic, we knew we would someday get to this place and gather together again. And, so, this year has also been about looking to our future. During the year, MAC Council established an Ethics and Inclusion Committee and a Social Response Committee



(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 2)

to advocate and protect our members and to quickly respond to concerns in our society. We've created a hybrid conference, perhaps not perfect for everyone but a step in the direction of making our meetings more accessible for all. Our new volunteer coordinator is building a framework to identify volunteer opportunities and smooth transitions between terms of service. And our development coordinator and Development Committee launched the campaign to fully fund the Mark A. Greene Award for First-Time Attendees.

There are of course things to be done. I have asked Council to review and propose revisions to a diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility statement for MAC. We will share the statement with the entire membership for comment by the fall Council meeting. Over the coming year, we plan to revise the MAC website to make it easier to find things, such as council resolutions and volunteer positions, building out the site to give members a real sense of the types of opportunities that exist. We will let you know once it's completed, and, at that time, I urge you to take a look and see if any of these positions pique your interest. Please let us know!

In my columns this year, I have focused several times on those volunteer hours that make MAC what it is. Volunteers are the reason that MAC has existed these 50 years. So, to close, let me thank a few outgoing members.

Thank you to Council members Katie Blank and Daria Labinsky for all their work. Katie has been the Council liaison to the Education Committee and Daria to MAC publications, *Archival Issues* and the *Newsletter*. Thank you for your service! Jerice Barrios as treasurer has managed all our finances with great ability, and I'm so pleased she is hanging around for two more years!

And, finally, Michelle Sweetser. I hope Michelle is our only vice president who will ever manage a pandemic online conference followed by an in-person/hybrid conference. She has kept the wheels turning, and I can't say enough about the tremendous job she has done! Michelle and I have a string of text messages that include everything from questions about who has to sign what contract to where should we go for dinner! Michelle, I will miss your level-headed approach to solving challenges, your sense of humor, and the common refrain on Zoom of "what's the weather like in *your* part of Ohio?"

Please join me in thanking Michelle, Jerice, Katie, and Daria.

Welcome to our new members, Benn Joseph as vice president, Lindsey Hiltunen and Laurinda Weisse on Council, and Kayla Harris and Joseph Taylor as members of the Nominating Committee. Welcome also to Jennifer Audsley-Moore, who was appointed to serve on Council for a year. I look forward to working with all of you as we start on MAC's next 50 years.

I hope everyone enjoys the remainder of their time in Madison. We will see you in Indy or Chicago if not before!