

AABC

Newsletter



SUMMER 2023

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Cover photo: Item i-19233, Forest fire hazard rating sign, Beautiful British Columbia Magazine photographs, GR-3265.
Image courtesy of the British Columbia Archives.

The Archives Association of British
Columbia (AABC)
represents & advocates for the
archival community in BC

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MESSAGE FROM THE AABC PRESIDENT KAT LOURO

Another summer is quickly slipping behind us, and I'm pleased to say it was a good one for the AABC. Despite having gaps in our executive team, and amongst our committees and regional representatives, we have achieved a lot. Our site visits, thanks to generous funding from the BC Arts Council, are back up and running and our incredible Education and Advisory Services contractor, Lisa Glandt, has been busy visiting different archives and communities around the province. These site visits provide free advice, support, and a written report follow-up for archives and archival projects. The reports can be used to communicate with management, funders, or audiences on the goals and progress of an archives or archival project. As someone who spent the first 8 years of their career working alone, I cannot emphasize enough how meaningful this free support is. We also continue to offer an AtoM instance for all members, Memory BC, as well as workshops, webinars, roundteas, and other in demand events for our membership and beyond. We've also been approached by other organizations to develop partnerships and to enhance support for community groups, granting agencies, and researchers across the province. It seems like our reputation as a small organization that can get the work done precedes us!



KAT LOURO

However, this summer, like ones before and every summer to come, offered a stark view of our changing planet, and the very real threat of climate change. Here in the Northern half of the province, my town spent many days cloaked in smoke, and colleagues and friends faced evacuation alerts and orders. This July, I decided to wrap up my son's first camping trip early because numerous forest fires were sparked nearby one stormy evening (he did enjoy the show though!). It wasn't my first, and it won't be my last, time driving by an active forest fire and watching firefighters work hard to protect life and property from the highway. This time, it made me reflect on how different my son's summer camping trips will look from my own and the environment he was inheriting. Like archivists puzzling out a confusing

administrative note on an accepted donation from the 1970s, we inherit the nonsensical decisions of those who came before us. All of us have seen in the past few years how quickly a fire can rip through a community, displacing residents for years and erasing tangible cultural heritage and irreplaceable records. We've also seen how fires disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples and rural communities who often have negligible funding and access to resources to protect their cultural heritage without the added existential threat of climate change.

This fact reminded me that, more than ever, we have to work together, care for one another, and share resources and expertise across the GLAM sector. GLAM organizations have seen drastic funding cuts since the province started re-opening from COVID restrictions, with a number of heritage sites closing or having private firms take over their management. Wow, what a lot of doom and gloom! The upside to challenges is they inspire us to take action. One thing I hope to accomplish in my short term as President is to consistently and loudly communicate to the BC Government that archival work is necessary to a functioning democracy and protecting information and tangible cultural heritage, and that this work requires

funding and people. One thing I will keep doing outside of my professional life is remaining optimistic that we can make a better future by voting for political parties that understand that climate change has to be addressed with concrete action and trying to dismantle capitalism (just kidding...sort of). I hope you will join me, and I hope the AABC can offer a bit of help or relief for the sometimes thankless and under-resourced reality of archival work, even if it is just a virtual Roundtea where you can connect with other archival workers.

In closing, I'd like to thank the amazing team at the AABC, our contractors and volunteers alike, for the work they put in everyday to keep the organization moving along. Remember, we are always looking for members to join our team, in whatever capacity they can offer, so please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or other members of the executive if you want to hear about volunteer opportunities.

In Kindness,
Kat Louro

AABC/ARMA VI CONFERENCE

From Past President Katie Sloan

After a slight detour over the pandemic, the AABC's annual conference schedule got back on track this spring. The AABC partnered with ARMA Vancouver Island and hosted the "Access Ability: Exploring Themes of Access in Archives and Information Management" conference. It was held at Camosun College in beautiful Victoria on April 28, and explored themes relating to accessibility in the information management fields.

This spring marked the first time since 2019 that there was an in-person component of the conference. In keeping with the theme of accessibility, the conference was held both in person and online. There were approximately 50 people who attended the conference in person and another 50 who joined us online from other locations in BC and across Canada.

The conference was opened by WSÁNEĆ Elder STIWET who gave a moving welcome. He spoke of the importance of sharing and preserving records of all types, giving the example of his mother passing on oral histories to her children. He stated that, "her stories were the records, we were the filing cabinets". This analogy and his words were definitely a wonderful way to kick off the conference.

The conference itself consisted of several presentations that met a wide range of topics relating to accessibility including:

- balancing accessibility and privacy in archives and information management;

- making born digital documents more accessible for people with disabilities;
- building support for GLAM partners in digital repository networks;
- accessing MLA paper archives at the Legislative Library of BC;
- bringing Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's Legacy Collection online and
- accessing records of religious orders in BC.

Not even strike action could stop this conference. Three of the presentations had to be postponed due to strike action undertaken by federal employees over April. Fortunately, the presenters Jen Wishloff, Robyn Feres-Cameron and Andrea Eidinger were able to present their respective presentations online on June 5 after the strike action was resolved.

A huge thank you to the Conference Planning Committee, to whom this conference could not have been possible; thank you to Katie Sloan, Lisa Glandt, Maria Paraschos, and Kat Louro from the AABC; thank you also to Jessica Nichol and Melanie Denys from ARMA VI, Linda Nobrega from both AABC and ARMA VI, and volunteers William Cahoon and Ted Sloan. The conference could not have been successful without your efforts!

Presentation recordings and slides are now widely available on the AABC website: please check them out [here](#).

AABC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND EXECUTIVE UPDATE

The AABC held its 2023 Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, June 21, 2023. Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting or sent a proxy. The 2023 AGM package and approved 2022 AGM minutes are available on the AABC [website](#). The AABC is saying farewell to outgoing Executive members Daniel Collins, Emily Larson, and Maria Paraschos. Please extend a warm welcome to the incoming 2022-2023 Executive:

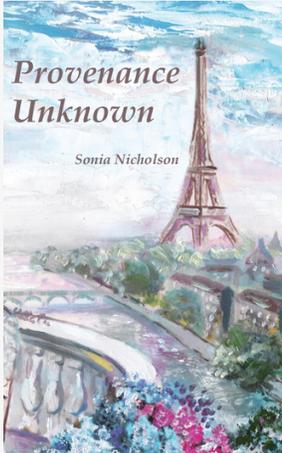
- President: Kathryn Louro
- Treasurer: Alex Neijens
- Secretary: Kate Heikkila
- Member-at-Large: Maureen Atkinson
- Member-at-Large: Kenneth Farvholdt
- Past-President: Katie Sloan

The Vice-President position is still vacant. This is a 3 year term position with 1 year as Vice-President, 1 year as President, and 1 year as Past-President. If you are interested in this position or would like to learn more, please contact Kat Louro at aabc.president@aabc.ca.



ARCHIVIST SPOTLIGHT

SONIA NICHOLSON



I couldn't have written my debut novel, *Provenance Unknown*, without my long-term job at a local municipal archives. But I also couldn't have written it without leaving.

Let me explain.

A quote from Henry David Thoreau might be appropriate here: "How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live." So even though I've wanted to be an author since I was a kid—13, if not earlier—life got in the way. Turns out that was a good thing. Essential, actually. It gave me fuel. But once you have the fuel, you need the time and space to use it.

I've worked in archives for 15 years: 12 as an Archives Specialist with Saanich Archives, the past three-and-a-half as the first-ever paid Archivist for the Saanich Pioneer Society, and ten overlapping years as Archivist with a religious organization. That's a lot of experience to draw from. Initially starting out as a volunteer, I was lucky to have a wonderful mentor who gave me the opportunity to get my hands dirty in all aspects of the field. (Figuratively! Unless we're talking about removing material from old, nasty frames.) My undergraduate degree in French and

Spanish from the University of Victoria gave me a good foundation in history and research, but it was the one-on-one attention and interest from my mentor that made my career.

Sometime during those early years at Saanich, the writing itch got me after a long hiatus. Inspired by the stories around me every day—whether in the Reference Room or the vault—I plotted out what would become *Provenance Unknown*. I was taken with the concept of an archives professional who's obsessed with everyone else's history but won't touch their own. Unheard of, I know. But not impossible. I had to dig into it.

Except remember how pesky life can be when it comes to plans? Between work and my five-year old son, I barely had time to go to the bathroom, let alone write a novel. By the time I'd finished my genealogical charts and chapter outlines, I'd run out of juice. I shoved my college-ruled notebooks into a cupboard and didn't pull them out again until ten years later, when I decided to make a change. Let me tell you, change is scary. And, I acknowledge, not always accessible to everyone—I was lucky to have the support of my spouse. Even still, for me, it meant less money in my bank account. No more sweet government benefits, either. But it also gave me more hours in



The Archivists Who Write at the Provenance Unknown book launch, 2 April 2023, in Victoria.

my day, and the ability to do what I loved: archival work *and* writing.

It was time.

Time to take the story fed by city directories and old journals and articles about WWII in Victoria, and put it to paper — er, screen. Combine these elements with personal experiences that had stayed with me, including three trips to Paris. The smells: aged paper, fresh bread. The settings. Victoria and the City of Light. Stay true to the profession, while (hopefully) entertaining the reader.

I took the old adage of *Write what you know* to heart. And even better, I found kindred spirits to support me on the journey: a critique group of fellow archivists from B.C. aptly named Archivists Who Write. Mutual support. Sharing the creative outlet that writing provides, whether it's novels, scripts, children's books, or plays.

And now I'm a published author. 13-year old me is squealing.

As archivists, we have a tendency to become personally invested in our work. It's hard not to. It makes us even better at what we do, sometimes at the expense of our other passions. But those are important. Part of us.

We preserve the records of others, proof of life outside the vault. It's good to know we can stand up to live it, too.

AUTHOR'S WEBSITE

<https://sonianicholson.com>

TWO-PART BLOG POST ON THE ARCHIVISTS WHO WRITE, PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN ARCHIVISTS:

["Archivists Who Write: A Primary Resource" – Part 1](#)

["Archivists Who Write: A Primary Resource" – Part 2](#)



Anna Carlson's grandson, Donald Hagerup, standing next to a sign on the riverfront advertising the coming Annacis Industrial Estate. Courtesy of Delta Archives, 2021-0350-1061.

IN PURSUIT OF ANNACIS ISLAND

Kevin Hicks

Collections Assistant, Douglas J. Husband Discovery Centre and Delta Archives

Prior to 2021, the Delta Archives had next to nothing related to the history of Annacis Island before industrialization, an island primarily populated by Scandinavian and Japanese immigrant families. The history of the village of Ladner has been heavily documented over the decades while other aspects of Delta's history were to varying degrees left relatively undocumented. Geographically, Annacis Island was among the worst offenders in this regard with 1 copy print photo depicting the pre-industrial park period and a small amount of industrial park records. After looking through an archived email from a previous staff member dated summer of 2016, I found that a woman had offered photos of her family that had lived there.

I knew such a donation had never been accepted so I reached out to her to follow up on whether the offer was still open. Thus began an exciting journey I have been on ever since to uncover and document this nearly forgotten chapter in Delta's history.

I along with our Curator visited the woman in her Port Coquitlam home and were astonished to be offered 5 photo albums along with a spinning wheel passed down through 4 generations of women. Within the donation were 1070 photos related to the Carlson family of Chris and Anna Carlson their children predominantly ranging from the 1910s to the 1950s.

During the visit, I also explained to the donor that I had seen a very large map of Annacis Island owned by one of the island's former residents Harry Person (pronounced "Pearson") in an old news article and desperately wanted that map in order to have a detail map of the island before industrialization. Within a few weeks, she was able to get me in touch with one of his daughters who swiftly donated it to us, annotated by her late father with names of families on the island corresponding to their lot.

My next step was to interview the donor's oldest living cousin named Rolf Floden who had lived on the island as a boy in the 1930s during the summers. He was able to provide great stories and identify more names of who lived where to complement Harry's map. I also managed to get in touch with one of Rolf's neighbours whose father was one of the 2 dozen men brought over from England to develop the island and who was able to share some valuable information into that aspect of the story.

The next week after Rolf's interview the donor and her brother were interviewed. I was also able to convince Harry Person's daughter and her cousin to be interviewed later this year. We even got 10 more photos from the donor to add to the original 1070. With scanning of the collection done and detailed item-level

description work ongoing, I figured this would probably be all the Annacis material I would come into. This was incorrect.

The donor had convinced her late cousin's wife to offer records of their side of the family who lived next door to the first Annacis property. This material got dropped off in late March and really helped supplement the existing collection with some textual records as well as more photos of fishing life and relationships the family had with the Japanese residents of the island.

While this was going on, I had been pursuing info about the Falk family, one of the last three island families. I was not having much luck with this, though I did receive a very welcome donation from another branch of the Falk family associated with nearby Westham Island. In talking to a retired local farmer and antique agricultural machinery expert about a couple of the Westham Island photos, he, knowing everybody that ever was in Delta, was able to point me to an acquaintance of his in Coquitlam who was the last remaining descendent of the Annacis Island Falk's (apart from her own children of course). This was done through a photo reproduction agreement and has resulted in another 140 odd photos that were scanned into the Archives.

And so, this is where the story stands. Annacis Island's last three families, the Carlson's, the Person's, and the Falk's, are all to varying extents now documented in the Archives, the last people to know Annacis Island as an idyllic and productive farming community rather than as the industrial park we know it as today. Work making detailed entries in the database for photos on the original

donation is expected to wrap up in summer 2023. All this from stumbling quite by chance onto an old archived email. My main takeaway is that there is and always will be something exciting waiting to be discovered and offered to local Archives and that even aspects of history that seem lost always have the potential to resurface with the right combination of timing and luck.



Anna Carlson with a goat and a cat on her Annacis Island farm. Given the large number of Carlson photos and her presence within many of them, she has likely become the most photographed person within the Delta Archives. Courtesy of Delta Archives, 2022-035-339.

100 YEARS OF MAY DAY REMEMBERED, PRESERVED, AND SHARED

Mallorie Francis
Assistant Curator
PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives

The PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives is a volunteer driven, non-profit organisation located in down-town Port Coquitlam. Housing both our own object and archival collection as well as safekeeping the City of Port Coquitlam's archival holdings, we are dedicated to caring for and celebrating the diverse history of our community.

2023 is a significant year for heritage in Port Coquitlam, marking the 100th anniversary of the first official May Day event - our most important civic celebration. As this event has played such a critical role in our community for the past century, you can imagine that we as the local museum and archive hold a significant amount of material related to it, including artefacts, photographs, planning documents, and other ephemera. When we began planning our contribution to the occasion in 2021, however, we discovered a problem with our archival holdings - much of the relevant material was sitting piled up in frames, uncatalogued, undescribed, and un-digitized.

In an effort to better preserve and share this collection, in January of 2022 we successfully applied for a Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP) grant, courtesy of Library and Archives Canada. With this funding, it was our goal to process the entirety of our framed storage. A collection totalling over 600 items, this project proved to be a major but important undertaking.

With limited storage space in our archives, the volume of the collection had led to issues of physical accessibility and deterioration. Many of our early May Day photographs, for example, had been previously stored in less than ideal conditions such as adhesive photo albums and unprotected frames exposed to high levels of light. We knew that many of these items had never been catalogued in our database, and that some might not even reflect our local history. With May Day celebrations fast approaching, it was important we take this opportunity to really explore the diverse collection.

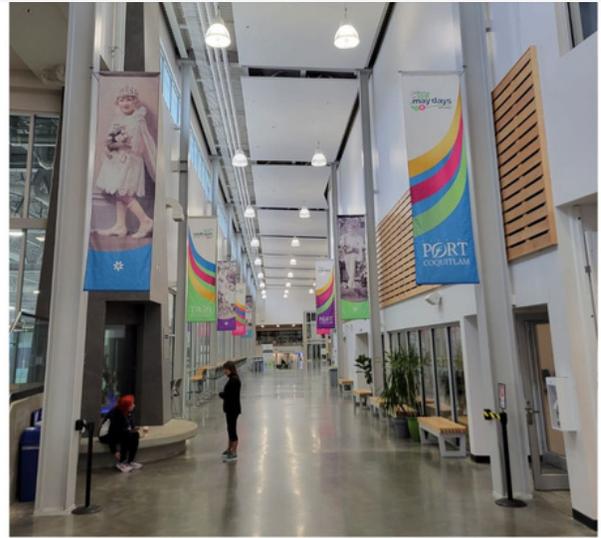


Framed storage before (left) and after (right) project. Courtesy of PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives.

We began the project by conducting a systematic inventory of our framed storage, cataloguing pieces as they were removed from shelving and evaluating them for deaccession. Records were updated or added to our database and online collections portal, and all material was properly labelled before being safely re-housed. This process involved the careful de-framing of almost all photographs, documents, maps, and documentary artworks, allowing us to move archival material to document shelving and condensing the overall storage space required. Importantly, this relocation also provided access for digitization, and high-quality scans of all

documentary material and photographic prints were added to our database for internal and public use.

This digitisation was a central concern for us when considering how we might share the story of May Day with our community. Not only did we want to make our records easily accessible to those browsing online, but we also wanted to physically showcase copies of important May Day photographs throughout the city. With the help of many dedicated volunteers and staff, and with generous funding from Library and Archives Canada, we were able to make this happen.



May Day photos digitised as part of this project on display around Port Coquitlam.
Courtesy of PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives.

The results of our project have culminated in multiple public displays. Digitised photographs have been used by the City of Port Coquitlam on social media as well as on fencing and banners across the city, and PoCo heritage staff have been able to create two May Day exhibits for display in Port Coquitlam City Hall and the Port Coquitlam Community Centre.

As a community driven archive without the resources of many larger institutions, this DHCP grant has provided a wonderful opportunity to meet the needs of our current archive, while also helping

create room for our collection to safely grow. In turn, we have been able to better connect with our community by sharing memories of tradition and celebration throughout Port Coquitlam's history. PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives' expanded online collections portal can be viewed at pocoheritage.pastperfectonline.com. Thank you to all involved for your contributions to such an important project.

EXECUTIVE PROFILE



KENNETH FAVRHOLDT
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Kenneth has been occupied with museum and archival work since 1978 when he was hired as assistant archivist at the Kamloops Museum. He was involved with the Archives Association of British Columbia; a highlight was when he represented the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) as a delegate to an International Conference in Paris, France. As Curator/Archivist of the Kamloops Museum and Archives for a decade, he wrote countless articles on the history of the area and expanded the archives.

Ken also taught English and Geography part-time at Cariboo College, now Thompson Rivers University (TRU). He obtained his M.A. in Geography from UBC in 1997. He has worked as a research consultant for several First Nations in BC on traditional use studies. Ken was Museum Coordinator at the Secwépemc Museum and Heritage Park from 1997 to 2002.

Moving to Alberta after teaching at TRU, Ken was Executive Director at the Osoyoos and District Museum for several years, then E.D. at the Claresholm Museum, Alberta, and after returning to BC, since March 2022, has been the Archivist at the Secwepemc Museum, operated by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. Ken believes the Indigenous perspective in archival work is important, including the emphasis on oral history.

He has taken many courses on archival topics including most recently Indigenous Archives through the AABC.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VOLUNTEER WITH THE AABC

Volunteer for AABC committees today and support archives and the archival profession throughout the province.

We are seeking enthusiastic and conscientious volunteers to sit on our standing and ad hoc committees. Participants will get an opportunity to network and gain valuable skills while fostering the development of the provincial archival community. Participation does not require a major time commitment and committee schedules are flexible.

We are seeking volunteers for the following areas:

- Conference Committee
- Constitution and By-Laws Committee
- Indigenous Advocacy Committee
- Grants Committee
- Membership Committee
- Nominations and Elections Committee
- Programs Committee
- Finance Committee
- Communications Committee
- Regional Representatives
(Central & North Vancouver,
Greater Vancouver, Kootenay
- Columbia, and BC
Northeast)

If you are interested, please contact AABC President Kat Louro at aabc.president@aabc.ca for more information.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Making a donation is as important as ever. We understand that COVID-19 has made it difficult for many professionals to donate, but your contributions provide awards to UBC School of Information students every year and provide support to the annual ACA@UBC conference. This is a key part of the AABC's mandate to foster the development of our provincial archival community.

Help us meet our goal and [donate now](#).

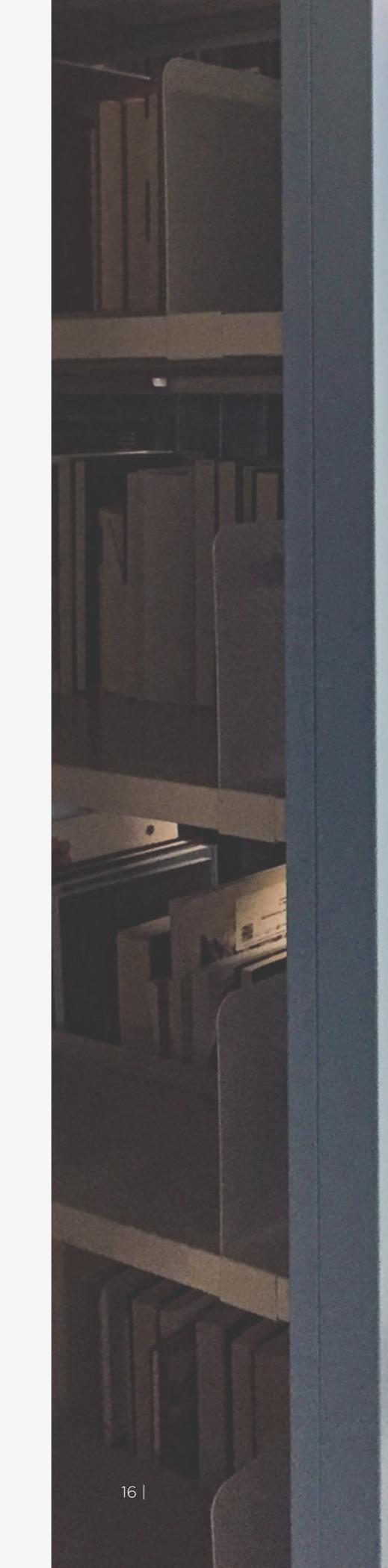
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Help showcase the incredible work of BC's archives and archivists. The AABC Newsletter is back and we need your stories. To be included in the next issue, submit your 250-word newsletter content proposals to aabc.secretary@aabc.ca with the subject line: **AABC Newsletter Proposal**.

We're open to all content ideas, including (but not limited to): articles, paper excerpts, opinion pieces, archives / archivist spotlights, upcoming events, and more!

PHOTOS WANTED

The AABC newsletter editorial team is looking for archival images to feature on these pages. Got something to share? Send a 600dpi or higher scan or photo with a suggested image credit to aabc.secretary@aabc.ca.



CLOSING REMARKS

Kate Heikkila
AABC Secretary / Newsletter Editor

The AABC Communications Committee would like to thank our membership for their interest in the Newsletter. Both the AABC and our newsletter are run by an inspiring and much appreciated group of volunteers. Please join me in thanking the following individuals for their tireless work on this issue of the newsletter:

Manda Haligowski, Graphic Designer
Elizabeth Robertson, Social Media Volunteer
Kathryn Louro AABC President
Alexandra Neijens, AABC Treasurer
Maureen Atkinson, AABC Member-at-Large
Kenneth Farvholdt, AABC Member-at-Large
Katie Sloan, AABC Past-President
Lisa Glandt, AABC EAS Coordinator
Emily Larson, AABC Past Secretary
Mallorie Francis, Contributor
Kevin Hicks, Contributor
Sonia Nicholson, Contributor

Finally, this newsletter would be nothing without our AABC community and readership. Thank you for your support and enthusiasm.

DISCLAIMER

The articles published in the AABC newsletter do not reflect the AABC's position on archival practice and issues. The newsletter instead provides a platform for discussion and dissemination of ideas regarding archival practice and issues from heritage practitioners and stakeholders.