

MARAC

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference

Delaware • District of Columbia • Maryland • New Jersey
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MARAC Steering Committee

2025 July 25, 9:30am

Virtual (Zoom)

Attendance: Zach Hottel (Chair), Deb Schiff (Chair-elect), Mary K. Mannix (Meetings Coordinator), Kevin Clair (Secretary), Amy Fitch (Treasurer/Finance Committee chair), Carley Altenburger (Member-at-large), Katy Rawdon (Member-at-large), Sheridan Sayles (Member-at-large), Jessica Webster (Member-at-large), Diane Bockrath (Delaware Caucus), Jason Speck (DC Caucus), Jen Gathings (Maryland Caucus), Diane Biunno (New Jersey Caucus), Melissa McMullen (New York Caucus), Isaac Alexander (Pennsylvania Caucus), Steven Bookman (Virginia Caucus), Grace Musgrave (West Virginia Caucus), Sara Predmore (MARAC Administrator), Arian Ravanbakhsh (Parliamentarian), Lauren Brown (Archives Coordinator/Historian), Elizabeth Surles (Development Coordinator), Kira Dietz (Awards Chair), Liza Zakharova (Membership co-chair), Tara Wink (Diversity & Inclusion chair), Elizabeth Wilkinson (Education chair), Jen Pulsney (Membership co-chair), Dustin Frohlich (Nominations & Elections chair), Jasmine Smith (Web Team co-chair)

Regrets: Joni Floyd (MARAC Archivist), Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz (RAAC Representative), Missy Nerino (Communications co-chair), Diana Reed (Web Team co-chair)

Agenda:

- **Call to Order (10 min):** Meeting called to order at 9:30am. A round of introductions was held. The agenda was approved at 9:41am.
- **Approval of Steering Committee Minutes (5 min):** The minutes were approved at 9:42am.
- **Officer's Reports (45 min):**
 - **Chair's Report (Zach Hottel):** We are working on transitions over the past several weeks. We are almost done with committee assignments. Everything should be in order and posted in Google Drive.
 - **Administrator's Report (Sara Predmore):** We are up to 550 active members (an increase of 60 since Sara sent her report). These numbers should go up more as people sign up for events. Sara will be on vacation September 1-10. The next Steering Committee meeting will be on October 24 at 9:30am, and the next Membership Meeting (f/k/a Business Meeting) will be on October 31 at noon.
 - **Chair-Elect (Debra Schiff):** Thank you to Elizabeth Surles for taking on the Development Coordinator, and to Zach, Amy, and Ali Zawoyski for their help with this year's leadership transition. Finally, thank you to everyone on their call for their service to MARAC.

- **Meetings Coordinator (Mary Mannix):** Food and beverage minimum at Richmond will be \$18,000. There are three registered vendors for the MARAC Symposium (we have room for eight). No updates from the report for Symposium arrangements. LAC had a productive meeting this week. Mary has a list of names for service awards. We will vote on the full list at the winter steering meeting. Names of potential recipients may be proposed at any time prior to that meeting by e-mailing Zach and/or Sara P.
- **Secretary (Kevin Clair):** Will be reaching out to current position-holders about changes to the Operations Manual next week.
- **Treasurer (Amy Fitch):** Finances are good. We are now in FY 2025/26, but Amy's report is for Q4 2025. There was a loss for the quarter because our Harrisburg expenses came due, but for the year we gained over \$55,000 in income. This is atypical for us, and is due to both of our conferences making money in the last year. We also spent less money on advocacy and on travel/lodging/honoraria. This may not reflect what 2026 looks like. We also had more income from interest and investments than we expected.

Our A/V expenses were lower than expected for Harrisburg, and we had more vendor income than expected as well. The surplus for both conferences is \$37,923. Finance Committee is tasked with recommending to Steering what we should do with this surplus income.

Finance Committee recommends three voting action items for this meeting; these are items 4-6 in the committee report. The first discussion was about how to distribute the surplus income from the conferences. The recommendation is to distribute three awards' worth of funding to the Disaster Relief Fund; the Becker Award fund; the Danna Bell award; and five awards' worth of funding to the general Graduate Scholarship Fund. The remainder would be disbursed to the general operations fund.

There was a discussion about whether consideration was given to support for federal workers impacted by funding cuts. While this wasn't specifically discussed, allocating funding to the general operations fund could support educational programs that may support them. Specific allocations to support federal workers would need to be presented as action items to Steering Committee.

A conversation about awards logistics for Becker and Bell was held; Kira will have more details about this in the Awards Committee report.

Lauren proposed some sort of support for federal workers as an agenda item for the October Steering committee. Zach will take this under consideration.

Action item: A vote was taken on the allocation of surplus funds to the accounts specified in the Finance report. The vote passed unanimously.

Action item: Finance called a vote to open a third CD in the amount of \$40,000. This will extend our ladder and increase revenue. Amy Ruth Fitch will be listed as the authorized signatory for this account. The vote passed unanimously.

Finance recommends instituting a moratorium on new awards for the next three years. An action item will be called in the quarter prior to its expiration to determine if it needs to be extended. In the past two years we have introduced two new awards that draw from restricted funds that require fundraising. As we determine what sort of effect these awards have on our budget, Finance feels it would be prudent to pause financial awards while we assess these impacts.

Deb Schiff noted that based on our discussion today about potential support for impacted federal workers, we could consider expanding the definition of “disasters” as it pertains to the Disaster Relief Fund. We (Kevin or Lauren, most likely) can look into this. The Archival Education Fund is already very broadly defined and could also be put to use in this way. Putting a moratorium on new awards would not prevent us from using existing awards or funds for support for federal workers impacted by funding cuts, in any event. There was discussion about which funds support which awards.

It was proposed to table this vote until we determine what support is available from the Disaster Relief Fund. There was discussion of mutual aid opportunities; legally we may not be able to provide such awards as a 501(c)3.

There are capacity issues in the Awards Committee relating to new awards that are worth considering with this recommendation as well. The Awards Committee would like to do their own strategic planning and consideration of timelines, both for the Becker and Bell awards and for anything new that might be proposed in the future. A pause on new awards would help them to do that.

Action item: Steering voted on the proposal to pause new awards. This passed 14-0 (one abstention).

- **Parliamentarian (Arian Ravanbakhsh):** Nothing to add. Steering could overturn this moratorium at any time if we decide that we can support new awards.
- **Advisory Positions (5 min):**
 - Historian (Lauren Brown): Nothing to add. Joni Floyd sends her regrets.
 - Archivist (Joni Floyd): Absent.
 - Web Team (Jasmine Smith): Nothing to add to the report.
 - Regional Archival Association Consortium (Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz): Absent.
- **Old Business (5 min):**
 - **Disaster Relief Committee Update (Dyani Feige):** Deb Schiff gave the report. There are no dates set for meetings for future work, but Deb will follow up on that.
 - **New Committee Updates: Advocacy, Records Retention, Climate (Zach Hottel):** Zach has completed the call for volunteers to go out to membership. Sara will send out the call next week with a deadline of August 15 for responses. Some volunteers were

recorded in the minutes from the Spring 2025 Steering meeting; if anyone on that list cannot serve, please let Zach know. We will also be looking for committee leadership in these groups.

- **Strategic Plan progress spreadsheet (Zach Hottel):** [Here is the spreadsheet](#). Ali set up this spreadsheet to track progress. Zach asks that committees/groups/caucuses review the spreadsheet and make updates as required so that we know where we are on the current plan and in preparation for the next one.

- **New Business (5 min):**

- **Archives Month (Zach Hottel):** Zach met with some representatives from Communications and Membership to discuss ideas for MARAC involvement in National Archives Month this October. There was a recommendation that Membership could put together a form for individual members to fill out highlighting interesting work that they are doing; Communications would follow up on this with social media posts and other outreach to highlight that work. We would also like to highlight National Archives Month events that MARAC members and their institutions are doing. We would like to invite caucus reps to reach out within their states to better promote these activities.

Liza expanded on this to note that Membership and Communications have a goal of one post per day during October, ideally with 1-3 pictures to accompany the post. Members who participate should expect to write brief summaries or stories about the work they would like to highlight.

Diane Bockrath asked to clarify the scope – are we focusing on archives and Archives Month events, or on individual MARAC members? Liza sees it as an opportunity to highlight the work of individual archivists.

- **Standing and Operational Committees (30 min):**

- **Awards (Kira Dietz):** The Symposium travel awards are now open. These are reduced awards (half a full conference allotment) because it is a one-day event. The Finding Aid and Custer Award deadlines are July 31.

The initial Becker Award has been awarded. We are hoping to get the awardee to write a piece for *Mid-Atlantic Archivist* about what they used the award for and how it helped them.

Awards met to discuss logistics for the Danna Bell award. Next on the to-do list is to pull together a meeting including representatives from Diversity & Inclusion and the Scholarship Committee to determine a home for the award. Progress is slow but happening.

Kira introduced an item on behalf of the Finding Aid Award committee. As people may know, the Finch award is on a July-July work cycle and the Finding Aid Award is on a January-December cycle. This introduces complications to the committee's work. The Finding Aids Awards committee would like to shift the Finch award so that it is also on a January-December cycle. (The Finch award is for "online publications," which can

include finding aids but also exhibits, LibGuides, digital collections, etc.) Calls for nominations would go out in the fall, and both awards would be presented at the spring conference. The hope is that it will provide equal and improved visibility for both awards. More information about this recommendation is available in the Awards Committee report.

As a result of this change, the Custer Award would be the only fall award. The Finding Aids Award committee has noted that it is difficult to solicit nominations in the summer but easier later in the year. Putting Finding Aids and Finch on the same timeline would help with this. If Steering is on board with this timeline change, Awards can get to work immediately on the logistics. Consensus was that this is a logical change and Awards may move forward with it.

- **Communications (Missy Nerino):** Diane Bockrath gave the update. Communications has asked for a table at SAA next month. Missy is still waiting to hear back from SAA about this but hopes to hear in the next week or so. If we get a table there will be a signup list for sitting at the table circulated shortly.
- **Diversity & Inclusion (Tara Wink):** We lost a member of the committee; if there are any volunteers to take up that spot, please let Tara know.

There was some discussion about the sticker program that we used at Harrisburg for people who may not be comfortable being approached in social settings at the conference, seeking clarification about its purpose. There wasn't any feedback about it post-conference but it was appreciated for its purpose of supporting neurodivergent conference attendees. COVID has also exacerbated some of these issues. D&I will explain the program in more detail at future events. We could also include information about the sticker program in the conference program. Consider also asking for feedback about the sticker program specifically after the Symposium and potentially also the Richmond conference.

In cases where lack of skill or confidence with professional communication is the issue, MARAC could consider providing resources to assist with developing those skills, whether that is resources, trainings (either provided by MARAC directly or linking out to them), and/or mentorship. We should do this while also being as inclusive and welcoming as possible to people's comfort levels with the conference environment.

- **Education (Elizabeth Wilkinson):** Nothing to add.
- **Membership (Liza Zakharova/Jen Pulsney):** Conducting a survey of Meeting Match participants. They hope to distribute on Monday.
- **Nominations and Elections (Dustin Frohlich):** Dustin shared a list of open positions for the 2026 ballot.
- **State Caucus New Business and Updates (5 min):**
 - Delaware (Diane Bockrath): Nothing to add.
 - District of Columbia (Jason Speck): Nothing to add.
 - Maryland (Jen Gathings): Nothing to add.
 - New Jersey (Diane Biunno): Nothing to add.

- New York (Melissa McMullen): Nothing to add.
 - Pennsylvania (Isaac Alexander): Nothing to add.
 - Virginia (Steve Bookman): Nothing to add.
 - West Virginia (Grace Musgrave): Nothing to add.
- **Announcements:** Zach will be sending an e-mail out next week to schedule meetings with committee chairs and co-chairs to get a better sense of what they're doing and how he can help.
- **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 11:16am.