

MARAC

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference

Delaware • District of Columbia • Maryland • New Jersey
New York • Pennsylvania • Virginia • West Virginia

MARAC Steering Committee
2025 October 24, 9:30am
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), 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), Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz (RAAC Representative), Kira Dietz (Awards Chair), Missy Nerino (Communications co-chair), Tara Wink (Diversity & Inclusion chair), Elizabeth Wilkinson (Education chair), Jen Pulsney (Membership Committee co-chair), Dustin Frohlich (Nominations & Elections chair), Jasmine Smith (Web Team co-chair), Diana Reed (Web Team co-chair), Dyani Feige (past Member-at-Large)

Regrets: Diane Biunno (New Jersey Caucus), Joni Floyd (MARAC Archivist), Elizabeth Surles (Development Coordinator), Liza Zakharova (Membership co-chair)

Agenda:

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:32am. Introductions. The agenda was approved at 9:41am.

II. Approval of Steering Committee Minutes

The minutes were approved at 9:42am.

III. Officer's Reports

Chair's Report (Hottel): We have been charging the committees approved at our May meeting – Records Retention, Climate Change, and Advocacy. Those committees are meeting and determining next steps. Zach is also working with Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz to determine how to develop a better network with the other RAAC member organizations, to see if we can support each other more and in different ways. This may include meetings among chairs of the RAAC members, creating different networking opportunities, etc.

Administrator's Report (Predmore): The symposium has 73 registrants (should be final as no on-site registration available). Creating a master spreadsheet similar to MAC's, hoping to continue this work

after the symposium. Will be reaching out to committee chairs and others in leadership positions to confirm details.

Chair-elect's Report (Schiff): Nothing to add.

Meeting coordinator's report (Mannix): No late-breaking news from the Symposium chairs. It should be a great program! Will start with a plenary address, a workshop on coastal adaptation, and conclude with a panel discussion in the afternoon. There will be a pop-up exhibit at the Hagley and a tour at the Winterthur afterward.

For consideration after the symposium – Do we want to continue in this programming format going forward? They are great programs but they do not make money for the organization, so we are looking at more cost-effective programming options. The Richmond meeting will be lighter on food options – the midday plenary will not have lunch provided as it has in the past, and there will not be refreshments on the final day during the break. Mary will be pursuing meeting options in New Jersey for the next in-person meeting; food and drink costs will be high at this future meeting as well. Working to keep costs under control.

Sara mentioned that other regional organizations do hold annual symposiums; how do they keep their costs under control for those? Mary will check in with their events coordinators as well, and Zach will be involved with those conversations.

Secretary's report (Clair): Nothing to add.

Treasurer's report (Fitch): Starting with the Q1 financial report (ended 9/30). Our financial situation is good. Net gain for this quarter of just under \$20,000, which is good but modest compared to previous Q1s. This is mainly due to Symposium expenses. Projecting our costs for Q2 to be less than usual because the Symposium is a smaller footprint compared to other events. We expect the Symposium to lose about \$1,000 (after we draw from the Archival Education Fund to cover its costs).

Our CDs (all three of them) continue to benefit from higher interest rates. They will mature over the course of the year and return rates will likely drop. We have already received about 63% of our projected dues income this quarter, which is higher than usual. We're saving a little bit of money on business expenses because we switched phone carriers for Sara at the beginning of the year. Switching to all-digital for our publications is saving us money on design and printing costs as well.

We have paid out for the Becker Award. The recipient claimed under the \$600 limit before the award was to be taxed.

Many thanks to Mary and the Finance Committee for developing the budget for Richmond. We projected budgets for 275 attendees and for 300 attendees. We would break even at 275 and make a slight profit at 300. The Finance Committee was strict about wanting to break even at the lowest attendance projection. We were able to do this by limiting our food expenses during the Saturday morning break and in the plenary (no lunch provided). Registration rates will be \$10 higher for all levels except for students (unchanged) and one-day registration (\$5 higher).

Steering voted to approve the Richmond meeting budget. The vote passed unanimously and the budget was approved (10:02am).

Parliamentarian report (Ravanbakhsh): Nothing to add.

IV. Advisory Position reports

Historian's report (Brown): In late July Lauren wrote a one-page history of the Disaster Relief fund.

Archivist's report (Floyd): Absent.

Web Team report (Smith/Reed): Nothing to add.

RAAC report (Cassidy-Amstutz): RAAC is engaged in a burst of activities. They are hoping to develop sustainable and reliable communication channels across the organization. Andrew is happy to answer any questions.

V. Old Business

New Committee Updates (Hottel): Advocacy, Records Retention, Climate Change. Zach touched on this in the Chair's report, but all three have had charge meetings. The Climate Change and Records Retention committees have been asked to provide updates for the January Steering meeting and to have action items developed for presentation at the Richmond conference.

Strategic Planning (Hottel): We will be developing the next MARAC Strategic Plan in 2026. After conversations among Executive Committee and with Deb, we are planning to hold listening sessions with the membership over the next few weeks/months. Zach and Deb will send out a Doodle poll to the MARAC membership with available times after the Symposium and will be developing framing questions in advance of the meetings for the membership to consider. Written feedback in response to the questions will also be accepted for members who are unable to attend the listening sessions in person.

Disaster Relief (Feige/Schiff): Dyani Feige (previous Member-At-Large) presented on previous work undertaken by the Disaster Relief committee. This work involve revising descriptions of the Disaster Relief Fund and the eligibility, terms and conditions, etc. for the award. The committee consists of Dyani, Deb, Carley, Ali Zawoyski, with Sara Predmore sitting in as well. The work involves developing a rubric for evaluating applications for the award. Previously awards were considered in an *ad hoc* way on a case-by-case basis; the hope was to formalize how we approach applications. Work is almost done. Some things need to be updated on the MARAC website. Also looking at raising the limit of funding for which organizations can apply; no decisions have been made yet about this. It's been a while since we've had funding requests for disaster relief; we're hoping better promotion and up-to-date information about it will assist with encouraging applications.

Operations Manual (Clair/Predmore): [What I said]. Communications updates their Operations Manual documentation if needed at the end of every term, but in terms of day-to-day operations relies on institutional memory (something that is facilitated by their junior/senior chair relationships in different positions). Web Team uses the Operations Manual quite a bit because it has directions for how to manage Web content that is useful for day-to-day operations. Treasurer/Finance has a calendar in the operations manual that is very detailed but that doesn't necessarily need to go into so much detail in the Operations Manual itself.

Other committees may need updates to reflect operations that have changed (and are changing) on the fly as their work evolves. Sara and Kevin have been comparing our Operations Manual management strategies with other RAAC members (mainly NEA and MAC). More to say about this in January.

VI. New Business

Support for Federal Workers (Hottel): We have sent a letter of support for furloughed federal employees to the MARAC list. There are limitations placed on the actions we can take in support by our status as a 501(c)(3) organization (financial aid, etc.). Any feedback from Steering on how to support federal employees? Suggestions included discounts for federal employees on memberships, event attendance, etc. (The bridge membership we have set up is meant for this situation – we can reiterate this in future messaging).

If the government shutdown extends for a longer period of time, we could consider additional travel awards for the Richmond conference. What areas can we leverage as an organization to advocate for our membership without lobbying? Resources to support federal employees can be drawn from different funding areas; the Finance Committee can discuss this. We did something similar in 2019 during the last extended federal shutdown, but did not get as many applications as we hoped. We weren't able to specifically say that the discounts were for federal workers.

Sara said that any potential members who have not already renewed their membership likely will not do so until registration for the conference opens. There were concerns about whether increasing the number of awards would also increase the amount of work we are putting on the Awards Committee, who already have much more work on their plate this year.

Arian reported on related work happening in NAGARA and CoSA that he is involved with; they are still in early stages of conversation, as we are, but he will keep Steering apprised of developments.

Andrew noted that there will be a slow recovery once the government re-opens, as questions about back pay for furloughed federal workers make their way through the legislative and judicial process. Federal contractors are also affected by the shutdown in different ways and could benefit from support that MARAC can provide. There were conversations about mental health support in addition to financial support. MARAC has a history of providing programming in this area – Elizabeth highlighted mental health support continuing education programs that we have offered about once a year.

Can MARAC institute a “buddy” program alongside the existing mentorship program? Rather than younger/newer professionals being mentored by long-time archivists and MARAC members, this would be peer support and checking in. Jen Pulsney volunteered to take this idea back to Membership Committee.

MARAC has the capacity (through Zoom) to host listening sessions with impacted individuals to determine the best way for MARAC (or other RAAC organizations; federal archivists are located nationwide) to support them. We could open these sessions up to archivists outside of the MARAC region as well.

VII. Standing and Operational Committees

Awards (Dietz): There is supposed to be a special election to fill a position on the Finding Aid Awards committee (term ending summer 2026). Amy asked if that needs to be a special election, or can it be

appointed by the Awards chair. Arian will check the bylaws. An appointment rather than a special election would save the organization time and money.

Kira submitted an updated Awards Committee manual to Kevin for the Operations Manual and will be soliciting updates from the various sub-committees this fall.

Unrelated, but Kira spent some time working at the MARAC table at SAA this summer and had a lot of great conversations.

Communications (Nerino): Nothing to add.

Diversity & Inclusion (Wink): Nothing to add.

Education (Wilkinson): Nothing to add.

Membership (Pulsney): Nothing to add.

Nominations and Elections (Frohlich): Nothing to add.

VIII. Caucus updates

Delaware (Diane Bockrath): Nothing to add.

District of Columbia (Jason Speck): Nothing to add.

Maryland (Jen Gathings): Nothing to add.

New Jersey (Biunno/Schiff): The first New Jersey Archives Film Festival will be November 1.

<https://www.njsaa.org/nj-archival-film-festival/2025-festival>

New York (Melissa McMullen): Nothing to add.

Pennsylvania (Isaac Alexander): Nothing to add.

Virginia (Lorna Loring/Steve Bookman): Nothing to add but highlighting that Virginia Archives Month is drawing to a close. The Virginia Caucus has been posting content to its Instagram account throughout and has been getting lots of responses there.

West Virginia (Grace Musgrave): Nothing to add.

IX. Comments for the good of the organization

Sara asked if there was any coordination needed for the General Membership Meeting on Friday, October 31. Kira, Mary, and Amy all have content to present and have communicated with Zach via e-mail about it. Grace Musgrave asked if the meeting would be recorded. We haven't in the past but we could consider it.

Mary reported that we sold 16 rooms at the Doubletree for the symposium and none at the Days Inn, so we do not get our \$500 from the Wilmington tourism office.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:08am.