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## A.R.A. Newsletter

14 August 2020

Welcome new members and sponsors! With your support, we raised almost \$5,000 during our association's first week in existence! At this pace, we will be reaching out to elected officials before long, seeking improved records access and improved research services at our national archives.

Our board members have a passion for research and believe it is important to preserve our nation's history, just like you do. We are all volunteers and receive no compensation for our time or effort.

To our professional members: You are the small businessmen and businesswomen our Congress is working to protect with stimulus legislation. We plan to make sure that our elected officials understand how you need reliable records access to succeed.

We must ensure that any access restrictions implemented due to COVID-19 are not made permanent; we all remember how access and research service

reductions these past few years were initially presented as temporary measures. We believe planning for the safe return of archives staff and patrons to NARA facilities nationwide should be a top priority for our archives and that the best way we can do that effectively is to band together and create a united front.

Strength in numbers will bolster our case to Congress and upper archives management. We know many of you have already individually contacted your elected officials and archives management, without success. By working together as a community, we hope to gain the attention of powerful committees in Congress and obtain increased funding for improved services and the enduring access we deserve.

We know the professional research community is hurting financially and we understand some of you cannot make a financial contribution or pay membership dues at this time.

But there are other ways that you can help:

- Reach out to current clients (cases in your backlog) and let them know their support of our association could be key to us gaining access to the records they seek.

- Reach out to past clients, members, and friends who understand the value research adds to communities. Let them know their support of our organization will allow others to enjoy the same open access to records they cherish. We need **their help** as well to guarantee continued open access to our nation's historical records and improved research services as well.

- Follow, like, and share our posts on social media. Spread the word about our association so that we can bring in new members and raise awareness about the issues related to archives access that are important to us all.

## Steps we are taking

### **Formation of A.R.A. Legislative Committee (Michael Bracey, JD)**

This committee is currently conducting research so that we may make a compelling case to Congress and NARA for continued access to historical records at the same level we had on 12 March 2020. As stakeholders, we believe our voices should be heard and that we should be taken seriously by archives management. Patrons who visit archives frequently (and those who rely on archival records to accomplish their mission) are in a unique position to anticipate future challenges at the archives and inform NARA policy to improve research services for individuals, organizations, and businesses.

### **Formation of the A.R.A. Historical Education and Preservation Committee (Karen Needles, MA)**

Our Historical Education and Preservation Committee is currently creating presentations, video content, and initiating interviews with high profile historians, authors, non-profits, museums, and other private groups in order to educate Congress and the public on the value that historical records add to our society.

### **Formation of the A.R.A. Public Relations Committee (Myra Miller, Ph.D.)**

Our public relations committee is focused on creating content for A.R.A. social media accounts so that our members and followers can track our actions as an organization as well as keep tabs on the reopenings of archival research centers around the world. Please help spread the word by sharing our posts and linking to our website.

### **Conclusion**

We want to hear from you. Tell us what we are doing right, what we should change, and what your concerns are regarding access to our national archives. If you are hesitant to join our organization, drop us a line and tell us why. We believe the issues presented here are important to you and we want to be sure your voice is heard also.

Kind regards,

**Geoff Gentilini**

President at Archival Researchers Association

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