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Archeota, Spring 2019

Sarah Thornton

Megan Price

Francis A. Alix

Anna Belle Rosen

Kelsey Clark

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Sarah Thornton, Megan Price, Francis A. Alix, Anna Belle Rosen, Kelsey Clark, David Ballantine, Kelli Roisman, Rachel Galindo, and Danielle Dantema

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MANAGING EDITOR: Sarah Thornton | FACULTY ADVISOR: Lori Lindberg

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BLOCKCHAIN, IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

By Megan Price

A couple of months ago, based on the current political climate in the US, [I wrote a short article](#) on impermanence and trust. I lamented that all of the certifiable research that has already been accepted as fact on climate change and in other scientific and socially scientific areas could be easily wiped away and/or discounted by a government; and if not by the government, it is still relatively easy for those entities in positions of wealth and power to make it disappear, literally and figuratively. What a loss, and what a roadblock to progress. I envisioned librarians and archivists as the keepers of knowledge (somewhat like Masters in Game of Thrones, but more share-y) and that one role libraries, librarians, and archivists can play now and in the future is one of authenticator or verifier of information. At the time, I was aware of bitcoin, but I don't think I was aware of its technological foundation, blockchain.

Fast-forward a couple of semesters and I found myself in Bucharest at what can only be described as an [Open Access](#) conference, but applied to every facet of society. In one session

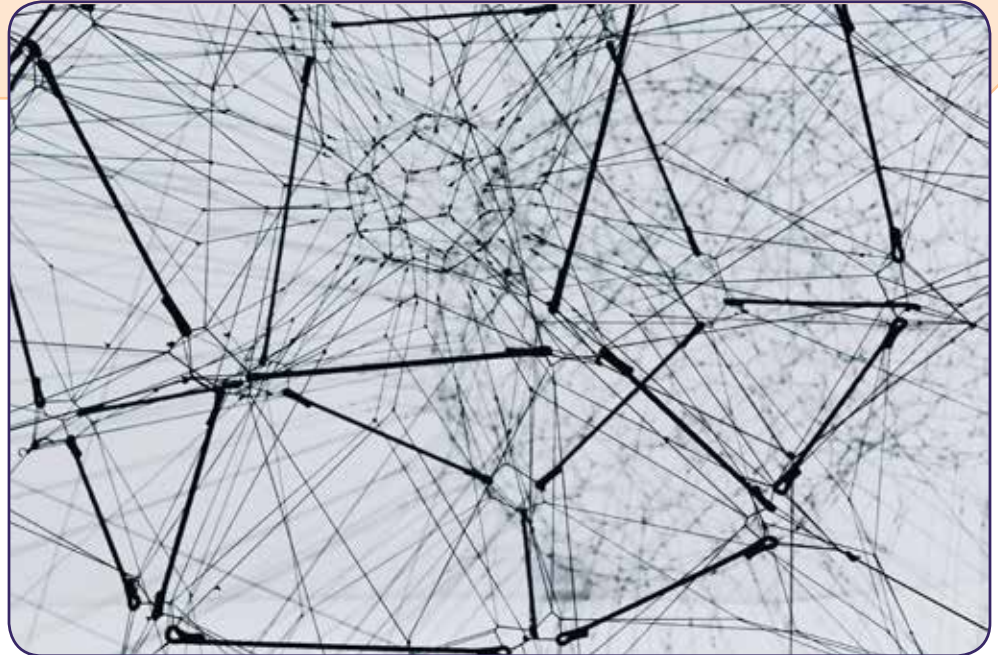


Photo by Alina Grubnyak on Unsplash

entitled “Seeds of Utopia,” [Adina Popescu](#) (an AR, VR and blockchain entrepreneur) explained the use of blockchain in her work as a consultant on a European environmental project and how it would protect environmental data. It became very clear to me in that moment that libraries and librarians should definitely be involved in blockchain. Two weeks later, at the [Internet Librarian International \(ILI\) conference](#) in London, [Alex Green](#) from UK's National Archives spoke on their [Archangel project](#), which will use blockchain to ensure records are verifiable and authentic, and to protect heritage and data. They are seeking collaborators, so I spoke with Green after her presentation to connect her to the work of Drs. [Sandra Hirsh](#) and [Sue Alman](#).

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BLOCKCHAIN, IN THE MATERIAL WORLD (CONTINUED)

[Blockchain](#), in a nutshell, is a decentralized verification system, called blockchain because it is a series, or chain, of blocks that verify the

Blockchain, in a nutshell, is a decentralized verification system, called blockchain because it is a series, or chain, of blocks that verify the information in a previous block has not been altered.

information in a previous block has not been altered. Any type of information can be contained within a block, and to change the original information, a new block must be created and reverified. What makes this process decentralized is that there is no centralized authority to ensure validity. Instead there are a series of nodes stored on decentralized computers that perform a number of complex calculations to prove the block is indeed valid. These nodes are part of a peer-to-peer network, where each node's ability to perform these calculations demonstrates they are worthy of that role. Additionally, a complete copy of the blockchain is stored on the server of each node, so that records are immutable, and any alterations are traced, tracked, and documented.

There has been some speculation around how blockchain, or decentralization, can be used in the [library and information sciences](#), which we can look at with both a magnifying glass and

a telescope. Close up, we can think about the protection of data in privacy and security. Because data is not stored on any one server, but is spread out across a series of servers, if one copy is deleted many other copies remain. The programming details of how this works may not be of interest to all LIS practitioners, but the possibilities of its use are endless. Medical records can be securely stored, controlled, shared, and unshared by the patient, and not owned by the doctor's office or insurance company. Certified credentials and degrees can be owned by the receiver of those items and shared with HR departments and educational institutions when requested. Museums and archives can verify the provenance and metadata of items, and can store digital versions and digitally-born items securely. The opportunities with blockchain are as small as social security numbers, and as large as the inner-workings of [smart cities](#).

The programming details of how this works may not be of interest to all LIS practitioners, but the possibilities of its use are endless.

Pulling back, we can think about the big picture of decentralization and what effects it can have on a society that so greatly leans on technology as a tool/crutch. Removing centralization can

Continued...

BLOCKCHAIN, IN THE MATERIAL WORLD (CONTINUED)

democratize the sharing and access of information, and allows the control of this information to be entrusted to and carried by the hands of the user rather than by a corporation or a gov-

Removing centralization can democratize the sharing and access of information, and allows the control of this information to be entrusted to and carried by the hands of the user rather than by a corporation or a government body.

ernment body. Libraries and archives can act as containers for this information and/or as verifiers of the authenticity of the information they hold. As we are currently embedded in a centralized sharing economy we can envision a decentralized version to benefit not just the corporation or shareholders, but those creating the data/product. Due to their technological prowess, we have relied on corporations to create and manage the architecture of this information sharing -- think OCLC, Facebook, Airbnb. But imagine smaller, [mini internets](#), closed systems and consortiums, that serve to protect data that is created, while simultaneously providing that data as open access.

Before you feel I am leading you down the garden path, there are of course drawbacks and [issues](#) associated with decentralization, primarily

those around cost, trust, tech ability, and hackability, which are all important to be explored and considered. Blockchain and decentralized technology will [pan out](#) differently from one nation, society, or entity to another, based upon on the norms, values, and intentions behind incorporation of these emerging systems.

So what does blockchain mean for the LIS professional? It means an expansion of our responsibilities to include not only the use and instruction of emerging technologies, but their creation and provision. It means envisioning different ways of approaching our edified structures: [Museums](#), [Libraries](#), [Education](#), [Publishing](#). It does not mean throwing out all of our current technology for the sake of using blockchain, but rather in thinking creatively about how our current processes can be improved through the use of decentralization to facilitate access, and to protect resources and potentially invaluable items of political, legal and scientific interest. This can be seen in cases like the [Archangel Project](#), [The Public Knowledge Project](#), [LibChain](#), and others.

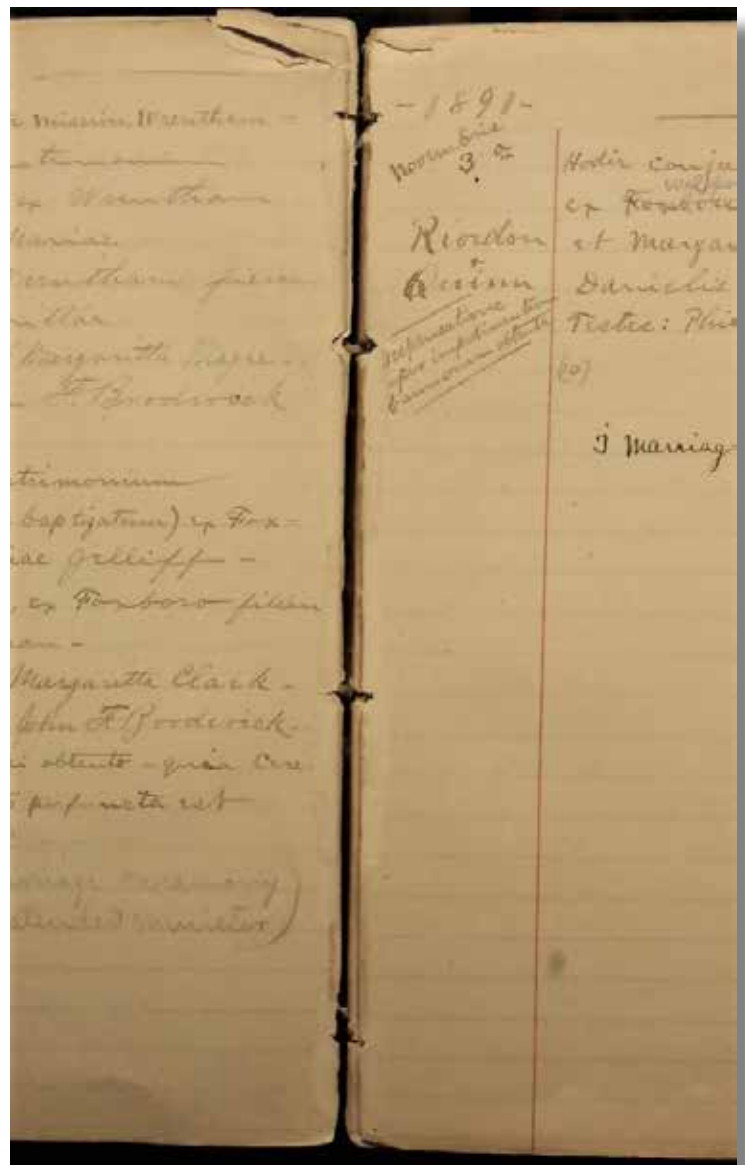
Libraries, archives, librarians, and archivists are sitting at the cutting edge of progress in this area, and while there are risks involved with being an early adopter for any type of technology, blockchain is definitely worth our [exploration](#). As a field, we should identify and claim our own role in this decentralized and democratized method of knowledge guardianship. It is what current circumstances require of us. ♦

DIGITIZING CHURCH RECORDS FOR FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

By Francis A. Alix

Volunteer work is an excellent way to gain or hone skills, network, and learn more about a career field. My volunteer work at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston, Massachusetts has been an insightful and rewarding experience. In my role as Book Digitization Volunteer, I digitize record books containing information on the sacraments administered to the parishioners of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All priests were required to record the administration of several sacraments such as baptisms and marriages, and with dozens of parishes in the Archdiocese, there are nearly 900 volumes to digitize. I work with my supervisor and the project coordinator to ensure a quality product and to resolve any problems or special circumstances with the books.

There are challenges in digitizing old books, but none as significant as the condition of some books. At times, the archivist needs to cut the binding strings to facilitate the digitization process of fragile volumes without



Spine separation at the binding seams. Photo courtesy of Francis Alix.

Continued...

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DIGITIZING CHURCH RECORDS... (CONTINUED)

the book splitting in two. Then, I can carefully scan the sections of the book. Even with my careful hands, some pages separate at the binding seams when I open them up. Some page edges are archivally taped to halt further disintegration before I handle them. After a volunteer shift, the desk and floor are littered with small flecks of paper from the dry paper. Many books are stored in CMI cases to preserve and protect them in their future storage facility. Handling these books takes extra care and a willingness to concentrate on quality, not quantity.

Other challenges include page orientation and binding margin capture. Using Book Pavilion software and a Plustek

OpticBook A300 scanner, keeping every page in the same orientation as I move the books about the scanner plate can be challenging. When scanning tipped-in materials such as notes, I must readjust the software to keep the orientation correct. The work is easier with the new Planar Optibook scanner, but that scanner requires significant programming before using it. Some books have tight bindings or writing to the binding margins that create difficulties capturing the information. Often, that information is cut off or too dark

to decipher because pressing the books on the scanner plate to create clarity may damage the bindings. I need to place the pages along the scanner's plate edge to capture all the information. In addition, some of the volumes are heavy. I have digitized volumes weighing eleven pounds, which does not sound too heavy, but constant handling tires my shoulders and thumbs.

My work is only the beginning of the project. Other volunteers decipher the digitized records in preparation for uploading the information

to a searchable database. The information is transcribed and proofread for accuracy before input. Volunteers deciphering the

information have challenges, too. First, they must translate the information from Latin, the official language of the church at the time, as well as names from other languages. Language guides with basic syntax and common words help the volunteers with that challenge. Perhaps the most difficult part of this procedure is deciphering the priests' handwriting which varies from book to book and sometimes page to page within a volume. Keep in mind that typewriters were not invented until the late nineteenth century, so records had to be

Handling these books takes extra care and a willingness to concentrate on quality, not quantity.

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DIGITIZING CHURCH RECORDS... (CONTINUED)

handwritten. While difficult, some volunteers find the task fun as they figure out the ‘puzzle pieces’ of each entry.

These records help genealogists and the public research family histories and create family trees. My work leads to discoveries and

My work leads to discoveries and knowledge at a personal level, which makes the project so satisfying.

knowledge at a personal level, which makes the project so satisfying. My volunteer experience has helped me better understand archives work and gain technology skills. Since I volunteer in-person, I have met wonderful staff and volunteers that brighten the experience. I am fortunate to have such an interesting volunteer experience that enriches the lives of others. ♦

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Registrum Matrimoniorum in Ecclesia

Diocesis AUG - 1887

has. facili.	L.R. (N°)	REGISTRUM MATRIMONIORUM.	Dispensation.
25 Aug		Ego infrascriptus p[re]s[bi]ter in h[uius]modi denuntiacionibus et mutuo contrahentium consensu habito, per verba de presenti matrimonio conjunxi <i>Josephum Nigman</i> ex loco <i>Wichita, Ks.</i> Filium <i>Josephum Nigman</i> et <i>Mariam Delmar</i> et <i>Josephum Nigman</i> ex loco <i>Wichita, Ks.</i> Filium <i>Edwardi et Catharine Roger</i> Presentibus testibus <i>Edw[ar]do Roger</i> et <i>Maryanne Phillips</i> <i>H. A. Rindorf, S. M.</i>	<i>Dispensatione p[re]s[bi]ter et testibus fuit a 30 quad. (unum).</i>
16 Sept.		Ego infrascriptus p[re]s[bi]ter in h[uius]modi denuntiacionibus et mutuo contrahentium consensu habito, per verba de presenti matrimonio conjunxi <i>Josephum L. Elliot</i> ex loco <i>Wichita, Ks.</i> Filium <i>Blas et Catharine</i> et <i>Josephum L. Elliot</i> ex loco <i>Gallia</i> Filium <i>Edw[ar]d et Maria G.</i> Presentibus testibus <i>Cath. Elliot</i> <i>Alfred J. Rindorf, S. M.</i>	<i>Dispensatione p[re]s[bi]ter et testibus fuit a 30 quad. (unum).</i>
13 Sept.		Ego infrascriptus p[re]s[bi]ter in h[uius]modi denuntiacionibus et mutuo contrahentium consensu habito, per verba de presenti matrimonio conjunxi <i>Josephum Delmar</i> ex loco <i>Wichita, Ks.</i> Filium <i>Josephum et Maria</i> et <i>Josephum Delmar</i> ex loco <i>Wichita, Ks.</i> Filium <i>Josephum et Maria</i> Presentibus testibus <i>Josephus Rindorf</i> <i>Josephus Rindorf, S. M.</i>	
15 Sept.		Ego infrascriptus p[re]s[bi]ter in h[uius]modi denuntiacionibus et mutuo contrahentium consensu habito, per verba de presenti matrimonio conjunxi <i>Josephum Nigman</i> ex loco <i>Wichita, Ks.</i> Filium <i>Josephum et Maria</i> et <i>Josephum Nigman</i> ex loco <i>Wichita, Ks.</i> Filium <i>Josephum et Maria</i> Presentibus testibus <i>Josephus Rindorf</i> <i>H. A. Rindorf, S. M.</i>	

Sample record book entry. Photo courtesy of Francis Alix.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ONLINE OR IN-PERSON VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH THIS PROJECT, PLEASE CONTACT ME AT francis.alix@sjsu.edu AND I WILL TELL YOU MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND WHO TO CONTACT.

BUILDING BRIDGES: SOCIAL MEDIA AS ARCHIVAL OUTREACH

By Anna Belle Rosen

Archival repositories have an opportunity to connect with potential users on several social media platforms every day, providing the ability for people to “follow” and “favorite” archival collections from anywhere in the world. The internet has created the ability to engage with and provide access to so many more potential users and, in turn, archival staffs have realized they must construct a bridge between their collections and all these users. Social media applications provide that bridge. This bridge is illustrated very well by the social media presence of the GLBT Historical Society.

The Historical Society, founded in 1985 in San Francisco, California, is an archival repository and a museum - one of the few museums in the world dedicated to this particular community. For this reason, the Historical Society has the

benefit of a huge following beyond academic researchers interested in their archives. It is located in San Francisco, a city that is filled with popular cultural heritage sites, where people are perhaps more accustomed to interacting with these types of institutions. However, the GLBT Historical Society is an excellent example of

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social media use for an archival repository because it builds on these advantages and uses them in a strategic way – something that every archive can learn from.

The historical society uses the promotional aspects of Facebook quite well, leaning in

to the ability to create a Facebook event that corresponds to exhibits or talks happening at the museum or the archive. Instead of just promoting the event, the society creates the event through Facebook, giving the opportunity for “fans” of their page to indicate their interest, as

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BUILDING BRIDGES . . . (CONTINUED)

well as share the page with their friends. This also allows the Historical Society to easily partner with other cultural heritage organizations in the city for specific events that can all be promoted through Facebook. An October 25 event titled “Conversations with Gay Elders” was held at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, but the Historical Society is a sponsor for the event (GLBT Historical Society, 2017). This creates the ability for users to learn about the archives because of their interest in the Contemporary Jewish Museum or their prior participation in this series of events or even because of their friendship with one of the speakers. Posting this event on their web site would raise some interest but posting the event (and the partnership with the museum) on Facebook allows users to see the literal connections between the organizations, providing further opportunities for engagement.

The GLBT Historical Society also maintains an Instagram, where they post pictures and videos. Instagram is one social media application that has almost no mention in scholarly articles about archival interaction with users. However, when searching on Instagram for “archives” it is clear that many institutions do maintain pages. It’s surprising how little research has been done about archival organizations’ use of Instagram considering how much emphasis is placed on



visual posts in studies of other social media applications. Instagram posts feature photographs or videos and there is even a way to create a live stream of an event. Each post can include a short caption describing the picture or including any corresponding hashtags.

Instagram lends itself very well to archival repositories, as the activity of the GLBT Historical Society account demonstrates. They have

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BUILDING BRIDGES . . . (CONTINUED)

over 500 followers and have only been posting since June 2017 (GLBT Historical Society, 2017). A recent post advertised an upcoming event at the museum, while another provided a behind the scenes look at members of the society installing a new exhibit. Although the society's Facebook page included a similar post about the upcoming event, there isn't a post including the behind the scenes installation pictures. Facebook posts provide more space for content, while Instagram is inherently visual.

This means that the same content is not just posted across platforms, but instead posts are created with a certain audience and platform in mind. This attention to detail represents a deeper

understanding of how archives can interact not just with all internet users but how archives can curate their activity to provide the most impactful content on the best platform. The GLBT Historical Society is not a large organization with a social media team to create the content they post. This means that similarly small orga-

nizations can learn from and replicate the social media activity efforts that this historical society has embarked on without needing a large budget or staff.

The internet has created the ability to engage with and provide access to so many more potential users, and archives have realized they must construct a bridge between their collections and all these potential users. Social media applications provide that bridge. What's clear is that users want to engage through these ap-

This attention to detail represents a deeper understanding of how archives can interact not just with all internet users but how archives can curate their activity to provide the most impactful content on the best platform.

plications. Archives should be willing to not just engage with them but cultivate a deeper understanding of how best they can do that – through an Instagram picture, a tweet, or a Facebook post. ♦

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TOUR REPORT: A VISIT TO CAL POLY POMONA

MARCH 25, 2019

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

By Kelsey Clark

Cal Poly Pomona has always held a special place in my heart. It was the university where I spent the last two years of my undergraduate career, and has served as my alma mater since I earned my Bachelor's degree in History in the spring of 2015. During my time as a student at Cal Poly, one of my favorite ways to pass the time outside of class was at University Library. The building itself was quite impressive – 6 floors in total, with plenty of space available for students to conduct research, collaborate with others, or simply to sit and read in a quiet place.

Spending countless hours at the library serves as one of my fondest memories as a Cal Poly Po-

mona student, which is why I was thrilled when presented with the opportunity to take a behind the scenes tour not only of the library itself, but the W.K. Kellogg Arabian Horse Library and the special collections room as well. Upon arriving for the tour, the group I was with was met by Katie Richardson, who serves as the Head of Special Collections for the library, along with Paul Hottinger, who serves as the Engineering Librarian. Before commencing the tour, Katie and Paul shared some information about the library, which underwent a \$55 million renovation back in 2008. This was done for the purpose of space allocation regarding the numerous collections housed by the library building. While the renovation was successful, one of the main concerns facing the librarians is the need to unify the Arabian Horse Library and the Special Collections gallery, which are currently housed on separate floors, into a single space in order to further allocate and open up much needed space within the library.

Upon entering the lobby, we were greeted by a single escalator and flight of stairs that led up to the main library space. To the right of this lay a critical component of any university library – the academic classrooms. The bottom floor held three classrooms, with an additional two classrooms located upstairs for librarian use. The main purpose of these classrooms was to instruct students in concepts pertaining to



Katie Richardson welcomes SJSU iSchool students to the University Library. Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

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A VISIT TO CAL POLY POMONA (CONTINUED)

information literacy, as well as to provide general information about navigating and utilizing the numerous resources and services offered by the library. Heading upstairs to the second and main floor of the library, we encountered the circulation, reserve, and media desk, which acted as the point of contact for students and faculty seeking to check out materials, pick up inter-library loan items, and place holds on specific items. This desk was manned by student assistants in an effort to foster a greater sense of ease and approachability, especially for other students. Nearby the main circulation desk was the I.T. Center and computer stations, both of which were heavily populated as we were walking through. This was not surprising, as the library experiences upwards of 900 students visiting on any given day, which solidifies the concept of the library as the heart of the university.

Moving past the IT center and circulation desk, we passed into the older wing of the library building, and immediately came across the Knowledge Center of the library, which has served as a point of reference for library users over the past 1-2 years. This center was quite spacious, and contained an interactive kiosk providing information about library services, events and programming, along with a space for students to study and collaborate with their fellow peers. The second floor also housed the Grand Reading Room, which served as the general study area for students, along with 42 study rooms and a reading room used for events such as lectures and conferences held at the library.

Once we had been shown the general library

space, the tour continued on to the special collections gallery, which is located on the fourth level of the library. The gallery room is utilized by both students and faculty for research purposes, along with a space available for special collection instruction sessions. The special collections gallery receives approximately 800 visitors each year (this number is increasing yearly) and is open to non-university students as well. Scholars have come from as far as Italy to conduct research. The one-room gallery is managed by the collections librarian, and houses numerous records such as photographs, newspapers, and manuscripts as part of the special collections. The collections space is constantly managed and updated, but a prominent challenge being faced by the librarians on staff is prioritizing space allocation in the limited available area, and in striving to align their collection and services with that of the library's in order to remain relevant and in-the-know for the users



Paul Hottinger guides students through the University Library, pausing at the student-staffed information desk in the Knowledge Center. Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

Continued...

ARCHEOTA

A VISIT TO CAL POLY POMONA (CONTINUED)



Katie Richardson leads a group of SJSU iSchool students into the University Archives and Special Collections at University Library, Cal Poly Pomona. Photos courtesy of David Ballantine and Sarah Thornton.

they serve. Ongoing efforts to maximize the storage space and to unify the special collections and Arabian Horse Library were also prominent concerns, with digitization of content from both spaces comprising a small yet vital aspect of the librarians' work.

As the tour concluded, the group headed back downstairs to the Arabian Horse Library, where Katie shared one last artifact with us that they had recently obtained. The artifact in question was one of many boxes used to hold archival records, and was in fact a prop from the recent film *Captain Marvel* that the Cal Poly Pomona Library was able to acquire once filming on the movie had ended. This was an example of the perks associated with working as an archivist, and served as a fitting conclusion to a fascinating tour of the Cal Poly Pomona Library.

While the work performed by archivists and special collections librarians may not be fully understood by the public, it must be assured that the efforts of these individuals to preserve and protect the histories for which they have been given responsibility is nothing short of signifi-

cant. Archivists serve as gatekeepers the intermediaries between the general public and these amazing collections which contain vast insights into the past. Without the efforts of individuals such as Katie, Paul and the other members of the University Library staff, history as we know it can never be fully realized or understood.



Katie Richardson shows students an archival box that was used in a recent film production. The movie *Captain Marvel* featured a scene in an archive where these boxes were used as props. When filming was complete, the production company gave away these materials to Los Angeles-area archives, including Cal Poly Pomona's Special Collections. Photos courtesy of David Ballantine and Sarah Thornton.

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THE W.K. KELLOGG ARABIAN HORSE LIBRARY

By David Ballantine

The day was bright, with direct sunlight streaming down on the Cal Poly campus in Pomona. This warm March morning seemed to predict the upcoming summer heat of southern California.

But this day we were comfortable and cool inside the Cal Poly Pomona Special Collections and Archives. Katie Richardson, Head of Special Collections and Archives, led us on the first part of the tour through the W.K. Kellogg Arabian Horse Library.

We passed through a light colored wood paneled hallway with figurines of horses and other animals, then we entered the beautiful Kellogg

Horse Library. With a curved red ceiling along with the lightly colored wooden stacks of books and structural support beams, beautiful paintings of Arabian horses, and other archival items, there was an ambiance in this room like a very posh horse corral. Alexis Adkins, one of the archivists, described it as almost being like a barn.

After all, Cal Poly Pomona was built on the site of cereal mogul W.K. Kellogg's Arabian horse ranch, which he donated along with his horses to the state of California for educational purposes in 1932. This land eventually became part of the California State University system. One gets a sense that Kellogg left more than horses, books, and documents there. He left an equestrian spirit. Titles of books and documents on the shelves included *The Arabian Stud Book* and *North Dakota Newsletter: Arabian Horse Association*.



(Left) Display cases in the entrance hallway to the W.K. Kellogg Arabian Horse library exhibit horse objects, photographs and other materials from the Special Collections. (Right) The reading room. Also visible, through the far windows, is a digitization and processing area. Photos courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

Continued...

A VISIT TO CAL POLY POMONA (CONTINUED)



Painting displayed in the reading room of the K.W. Kellogg Arabian Horse Library. Photo courtesy of David Ballantine.

There were 20 visitors on this day, invited by the Society of American Archivists, Student Chapter at San Jose University. Students traveled from all around southern California to take the tour. One woman drove all the way from Santa Monica for this rare opportunity.

The Arabian horse library contains numerous historical items such as a saddle used in a silent film in the early 20th century and a Farrier's guide (for taking care of horses' hooves) from 1729. Also on display were athletic and agricultural photographs, as well as documents from the Pomona Valley Historical Collection. The papers of Hilda Solis, the former Secretary of Labor under President Obama and is a Cal Poly Pomona alum, are also archived there. Beside the shelves in the Arabian Horse Library is a processing room, which contains scanners, digital equipment, and diligent archival employees performing their duties.

The most stunning piece in the room may have been a large painting of wild horses running in the desert. This brought to mind and heart the traits that those cavalier animals stand for: freedom, abandon, adventure, and wisdom. Many an archival researcher has surely glanced at this portrait for equine inspiration.

Richardson said that they have recognized that equine history is a growing field. They hosted the first Equine History Conference last fall on location at Cal Poly Pomona, in association with the Equine History Collective. ♦



This saddle, displayed in the reading room of the W.K. Kellogg Library, was a prop in the 1921 silent film *Son of the Sheik*, starring Rudolph Valentino. Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

PAPA RENTY: CAPTIVE OF THE ARCHIVES

By Kelli Roisman

In March of this year, a lawsuit was filed against Harvard University over the ownership of a collection of daguerreotypes stored in the archives of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (Lanier v. Harvard, 2019). The Zealy daguerreotypes, as the Peabody refers to them, were taken in 1850 and are the earliest known photographs of slaves. The plaintiff, Tamara Lanier, claims that the daguerreotypes of two of the slaves depicted, Renty and his daughter Delia, rightfully belong to her as a direct family descendant, not Harvard University.

Archival collections such as the slave daguerreotypes are the recorded memories of our past. We are best able to construct meaning from these records when we have information about their context and relationship to the present.

Archival collections such as the slave daguerreotypes are the recorded memories of our past. We are best able to construct meaning from these records when we have information about their context and relationship to the present.

When institutions fail to provide the fullest context, they diminish the value and authenticity of the materials in their collections. Tamara Lanier's claims of family heritage provide context for Renty and Delia. They are not anonymous slaves; they are cherished family members. Ms. Lanier's mother was passionate about preserving family memories, and this passion inspired Ms. Lanier to research her family's genealogy. In her mother's stories, Papa Renty, the family patriarch, is a man with dignity, "small in stature but towering in the minds of those who knew him" (Binkley, 2019). He resisted the dehumanizing system of slavery by learning to read and write, in defiance of the laws in the South that criminalized literacy.

Ms. Lanier had already traced her lineage to her great-great-great grandfather when a friend discovered the connection to the daguerreotypes held at Harvard University's Peabody Museum. After making this extraordinary discovery, she tried for several years to engage with Harvard University in order to share what she had learned about her family's ancestors. On one occasion, Ms. Lanier asked Drew Faust, former president of Harvard University: "Why is it that Harvard, the keeper of these images, is seemingly not interested, when the entire world is amazed?" (The World is Watching, 2019). The

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PAPA RENTY: CAPTIVE OF THE ARCHIVES (CONTINUED)

university will not commit to either refuting or acknowledging Renty and Delia's kinship with Tamara Lanier. By evading the issue, Harvard has suppressed the full context of Renty's life as a man apart from his condition of enslavement, choosing instead to use his image solely as a symbol of slavery.

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The Oxford dictionary defines a symbol as “a thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract”. A symbol may be a person. For example, Einstein is a symbol of scientific genius, an internal quality that he exemplifies. It's important to recognize that Renty's internal qualities were dignity and resilience, and that these are separate from the condition of his enslavement. The president of Harvard University affirmed as much when she stated that “slavery is not an abstraction, but a cruelty inflicted on particular humans” (The World is Watching, 2019). According to Ms. Lanier's lawsuit, Harvard's use of Renty as a symbol prolongs the violation of his human rights and condones the

system of slavery that reduced him to a piece of property to be bought and sold. Ms. Lanier's attorney Benjamin Crump argues that after emancipation, black people did not have any possessions, but “[w]e at least believed when we were freed, we had the right and ownership to our person. And incumbent in that was our image” (The World is Watching, 2019).

The callous dispossession of self-hood is disturbingly portrayed in the Zealy daguerreotypes. The haunting images of men and women stripped and posed front, side, and back to the camera have been described as “violent and oppressive” (Smith 2017). While some of the men and women are shown naked from head to toe, others, including Renty and Delia, are shown from the waist up. It's impossible to know Renty's thoughts as he stared into the camera while enduring this degrading exercise. Unknown, too, are the emotions he felt when

The callous dispossession of self-hood is disturbingly portrayed in the Zealy daguerreotypes.

his daughter was stripped and posed with her breasts fully exposed. In a recent interview, the writer Ta-Nehisi Coates described his response to the photograph of Renty: “This is an enslaved black man with no choice being forced to participate in white supremacist propaganda”

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PAPA RENTY: CAPTIVE OF THE ARCHIVES (CONTINUED)

(Hartocollis, 2019). This injustice is at the heart of Ms. Lanier's lawsuit challenging Harvard's ownership of the Zealy daguerreotypes.

The name of the collection itself glosses over the actual history of how the photographs were obtained. Zealy is the name of the photographer who was commissioned on behalf

of Louis Agassiz, a professor at Harvard University and, at that time, the "most famous scientist in America" (Wallis, 1996). In 1850 Louis Agassiz traveled to South Carolina in order to find specimens of pure Africans to serve as documentary evidence to support

his theory of polygeny, a belief that different races were in fact separate species and did not evolve from a common ancestor. The slave daguerreotypes would help Agassiz establish a typology for distinguishing different human species using anatomical measurements. His ideas were used to legitimize white supremacy and the institution of black slavery. Obviously, referring to the collection as the Agassiz daguerreotypes would invite uncomfortable questions for Harvard University.

This statement illustrates the stark contrast in the legacies of two men, one elevated to prominence and the other consigned to the shadows of anonymity. Ms. Lanier's lawsuit is an attempt to reclaim her grandfather's identity as the man of status described in her mother's family stories.

In an interview this March, Tamara Lanier described the shock she felt when attending a 2017 conference hosted by Harvard University on the history of universities' troubling relationship with slavery (Binkley, 2019). The program featured her grandfather's image on the front cover, and printed inside, she read the distressing words "while

Agassiz earned acclaim, Renty returned to invisibility" (Binkley, 2019). This statement illustrates the stark contrast in the legacies of two men, one elevated to prominence and the other consigned to the shadows of anonymity. Ms. Lanier's lawsuit is an attempt to reclaim her grandfather's identity

as the man of status described in her mother's family stories.

While Harvard's stance is defensive, it does not lack merit. It is natural and appropriate for archivists to be protective of their collections. According to the director of external relations for the Peabody Museum, the daguerreotypes "are extremely delicate, and they're well cared for. We anticipate they will remain here in perpetuity. That's what museums do" (Barry, 2018). Preservation, however, is not all that museums do.

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PAPA RENTY: CAPTIVE OF THE ARCHIVES (CONTINUED)

Collecting institutions have other responsibilities and ethical obligations. The Society of American Archivists lists social responsibility in its values statement. This core value reminds us that our profession shares a broad commitment to the heritage of all members of our society. Harvard could have honored this value by choosing to engage in an open dialogue with Tamara Lanier when she approached the university with the story of her family's genealogy. As it is, Harvard passed on this opportunity and now faces a lawsuit that, regardless of the outcome, will invite public scrutiny over the fate of Papa Renty. Is he being held captive in the archives? If so, when and how will he and his daughter be freed? ♦

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TOUR REPORT: A VISIT TO THE HUNTINGTON APRIL 12, 2019

MUNGER RESEARCH CENTER: A TOUR OF THE COLLECTIONS

By Rachel Galindo

Any visitor of the Huntington Library will take note of its grandeur almost immediately, even as the thick, high shrubbery at its entrance gently ushers you in. My tour of the Munger Research Center with the Society of American Archivists Student Chapter began in the same way, but rather specifically spoke to my interests as a librarian-to-be. For this unique visit, our group met in Munger's large white building where we split in two groups – each group getting an opportunity to see in-person and learn about a variety of archival materials collected, preserved, and

digitized for the Huntington's collections, and to tour the general collection and its exclusive readers' rooms.

The tour of the Huntington's general collection and readers' rooms was led by Head of Reader Services, Anne Blecksmith.

She began in the readers' lounge and explained a bit about the library's processing and retrieval methods. The library uses a program called Aeon -- to house reader accounts and process requests from the collection -- in conjunction with the integrated library system Sierra. It was at this point that I began to feel slightly more grounded since I use Sierra

in my day-to-day library work; the library was beginning to feel familiar. Anne mentioned that prior to January 1, 1994, the card catalog was still heavily active and circulation processes were done by hand, but that since their move to an online catalog the collections were simply easier to search with nearly 1,000 finding aids available through the Online Archive of California. This, one could surmise, opened new and very exciting possibilities for the library.



Anne Blecksmith discusses the Huntington's card catalog.
Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.



Entrance to the Munger Research Library at the Huntington.
Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

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A VISIT TO THE HUNTINGTON (CONTINUED)

After speaking near a few computer stations in the readers' lounge, we stopped just outside of the general reading room, which is known to attract scholars and art admirers alike. From the hallway, all that can be seen from the large wooden doors is a small window, again echoing the refinement and exclusivity one first feels at the Huntington. We took a short walk through this room, which had a surprising number of users present. Eligible readers must be at least one of the following: 1) a member of faculty, librarian, or curator performing high levels of research for their institution, 2) a PhD candidate, 3) an individual with proof of independent scholarship. If you meet any of these qualifications, it's well-worth the application process.

From here we were led down a rather narrow staircase to the basement, which houses some of the general collection. Naturally, at its age, the library has its fair share of paranormal stories which Anne alluded to while describing a bit of the library's history and its collection development. Not surprisingly, Henry Huntington began to seriously collect materials about California in 1931.

Today, there are nearly 500 collection guides and in the process of being digitized, but a famous article by George Scherburn titled "Huntington Library Collections" was the first useful bibliography for the collections and is still in use.

The last stop was the beautiful Ahmanson Reading Room, which we observed from the hallway so we could speak freely without disturbing researchers. According to Anne, there are approximately 35,000 circulating rare books, but after the digitization of an original finding aid, and launching an online catalog, requests decreased significantly. She also spoke briefly about today's

most sought after materials from science fiction author, Octavia E. Butler, which has attracted a unique range of users, from other science fiction writers and artists to researchers and fans of the author's works. As Anne wrapped up this rare tour of the Munger Research Center, she pointed out a Halley's Comet collator, a device researchers use to compare two texts, and a true testament to the uniqueness of the Huntington Library and this tour.



Anne Blecksmith guides students through the basement where the library's collections are held. Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

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A VISIT TO THE HUNTINGTON (CONTINUED)

MUNGER RESEARCH CENTER: A VISIT TO THE ARCHIVES

By Danielle Dantema

The Huntington Library, open to the public since 1928, is renowned for its beautiful collection of plants and flowers in the sprawling gardens as well as rare manuscripts, photographs, maps, and artwork along with many other artifacts and documents. Researchers, scholars, and visitors from all over the world come to the Huntington to explore the vast collections. SJSU MLIS students had the opportunity to tour the Huntington's archives and research library.

The Munger Research Center, a large building on the Huntington grounds that opened in 2004, contains the research library and archives. The archivists at the center have the fascinating and meticulous job to archive the works given to the library by various donors or acquired through purchases, and to catalog the items for scholarly access. We were shown 19th century lithographs, manuscripts from American writer Paul Theroux, letters and watercolors from the Hastings Family Papers collection, a woodblock Chinese Buddhist prayer book from 1085, and Chinese coaching papers and immigration cases from the Exclusion Era in the United States.

The archivists have unique challenges archiving the pieces, particularly in the research efforts needed to process an item into the collections. For example, the lithographs sometimes only have a printer's stamp to identify the piece and many lithograph printers have been out of business for many decades.

The letters from the Hastings Family Papers need extensive background research to iden-



An archivist explains some of the procedures and challenges of processing some of the Huntington's collections. Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

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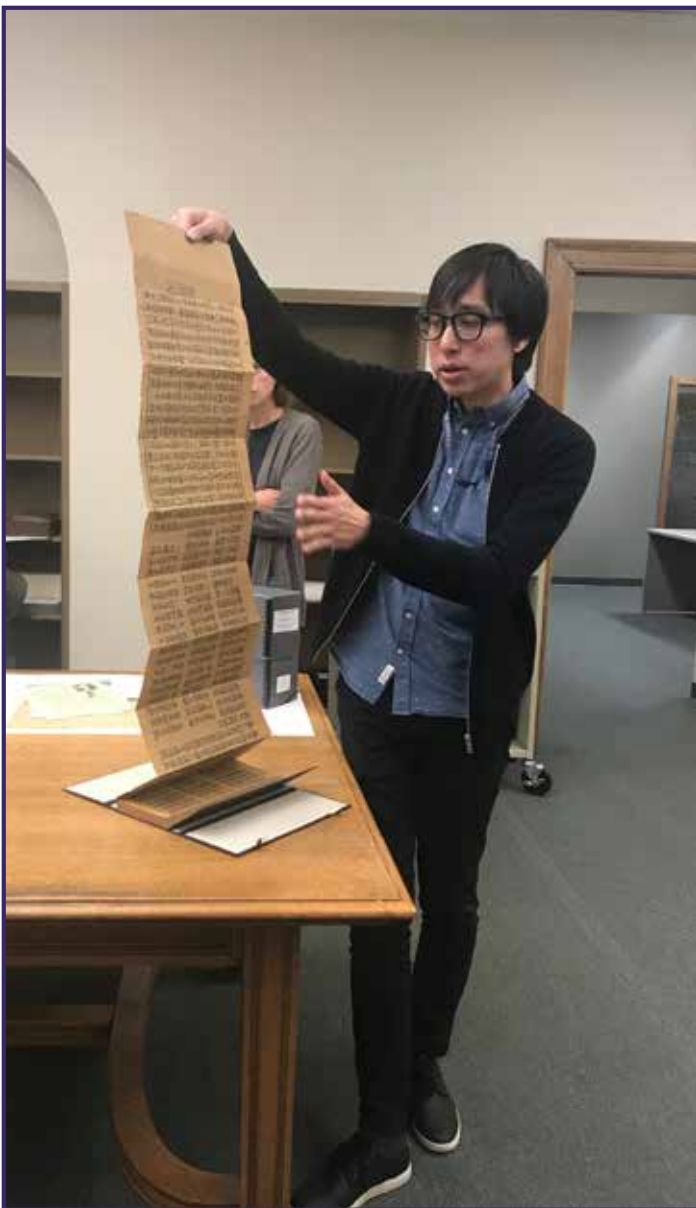
A VISIT TO THE HUNTINGTON (CONTINUED)

tify the authors, and sometimes recipients, of various letters and telegrams. The handwriting often appears similar in the correspondence and sometimes the only indicator of the piece's authorship is a distinguishing signature. Members of the family communicated daily and a number

of family members had the name of Francis, the male spelling, and Frances, the female spelling. American writer Paul Theroux already dated and organized most of his work, offering a reprieve of extensive research needed to accurately archive for future retrieval and reference.

You Chung “Y.C.” Hong, an American immigration attorney in the Chinese Exclusion era, had a collection of coaching papers and immigration cases - a collection that has to adhere to privacy rules. Hong's envelopes containing a specific case's documents already have dates and content details written on the envelope itself, which makes for an easier processing experience. However, careful consideration has to be taken with coaching papers and case documents in order to conform with the Freedom of Information Act for research purposes but also keep the identities of any associated family members and descendants private.

Even with stellar research skills, archivists have to take time to process the collections. Some collections were processed in as little as eight months while other processing efforts are ongoing and will be for many years. Each archivist brings specialized backgrounds, and together they create an excellent team. While there are many paths that can lead someone to become an archivist, familiarity with cataloging, metadata, and preservation management are important in this line of work. ♦



Li Wei Lang, Curator of the Pacific Rim Collections, displays a 16th century Chinese book, one of the earliest printed materials in the collections. Photo courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

CONFERENCE REPORT: SCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2019

April 24 - 27 | Long Beach, California

By Sarah Thornton

There seems to be a common element to the advice that I keep hearing from professional archivists to students: “Get involved in professional organizations!” Serving with SAASC this year has compelled me to delve more deeply into the resources that our parent organization, Society of American Archivists, provides, and this involvement also prompted me to look for professional opportunities closer to home, which led me to the Society of California Archivists (SCA). This year SCA’s Annual General Meeting was held in Long Beach, California, close enough to home that I couldn’t pass up the chance to attend. This was my first professional conference, and it was a wonderful experience.

I knew there would be a few other people at the conference that I knew or had at least met before, but I was still initially daunted by the idea of walking into the conference alone. I was pleasantly surprised to find so many familiar faces. The interactions I’ve had as SAASC Chair over this past year, especially the tours at local institutions, have brought me into contact with numerous people, professionals and students. I was delighted to meet many of them again the conference. The very social atmosphere, encour-

aged by the long breaks between sessions, was such an enjoyable way to renew and reinforce these relationships and to meet new people. The opening reception aboard the Queen Mary on the first night was an especially fun way to make new friends.

The plenary speakers set the tone for the conference, and focused attention on some of the important political repercussions that archives have for social justice. Yusef Omowale is the Library Director at the Southern California Library (SCL), a library and archive located in South Los Angeles that documents and makes accessible



The opening reception was held aboard the Queen Mary, a beautiful setting from which to view the sunset over Long Beach, California. Photos courtesy of Sarah Thornton.

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CONFERENCE REPORT: SCA AGM 2019 (CONTINUED)

histories of struggles that challenge racism and other systems of oppression. Not surprisingly, Omowale's talk centered on the potential impact that community archives can have on the social structures of racism. Michelle Caswel is an Associate Professor of archival studies at UCLA. Her talk on the second day had some very powerful insights into how feminist standpoint epistemology can provide a conceptual and theoretical framework for re-thinking the canon of archival appraisal theory, and how current practices effect on oppressed and marginalized communities.

In addition to the plenary, I attended sessions each day that were extremely informative. At the end of each session the questions and answers portion of these session provided space audience participation. Listening to other archivists interact with the topics – by asking questions about practical applications or by making comments about available resources – was one of the most helpful aspect of these sessions for me, as a student. Although I feel that the archives-related classes that I've taken so far have given me an essential grounding in the concepts and terminology, there are a lot of practical

challenges that archivists face that can't always be accounted for in coursework. Having the opportunity to hear the situations, strategies, and considerations of archivists from a wide variety of institutions helped me to understand how my

Having the opportunity to hear the situations, strategies, and considerations of archivists from a wide variety of institutions helped me to understand how my classroom knowledge intersects with real world practices.

classroom knowledge intersects with real world practices. It also helped me to see how issues that are common to all archives – the need for advocacy, or strategies for collections management, for examples – change shape in ways both

subtle and profound within different kinds of institutions. A museum archive, a government archive, a university archive and a historical society all approach similar archival questions, but they must answer them in very different ways. As I finish my MLIS coursework it will be good to keep this broader perspective in mind.

After attending SCA AGM 2019, I am realizing just how vital and beneficial professional associations will be for my current and future career development, as a way to learn more about archival practices and to build a professional network of peers and friends. I look forward to future opportunities to deepen these relationships, and I will definitely make the time and effort to attend future conferences when I can. ♦

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SJSU SAASC SPRING 2019 EVENTS

February 5	EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ACA EXAM
February 26	BUSINESS ARCHIVES: A VIEW FROM THE FIELD
March 19	LEADERS WANTED: HOW AND WHY TO GET INVOLVED IN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
March 25	A TOUR OF THE CAL POLY POMONA SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES
April 12	A TOUR OF THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY'S MUNGER RESEARCH CENTER

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