

**WESTERN NEW YORK ARCHIVISTS
MARCH 4, 2021, MEETING SUMMARY
VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT: Jessica Anderson, Kathleen Delaney, Dan DiLandro, Dennis Frank, S. Nancy Kaczmarek, Chana Kotzin, Avery Kraft, S. Pat Larkin, S. Mary Serbacki, S. Jean Thompson, S. Mara Walton, Lucy Waite, Ellen Winger, Heidi Ziemer

As we continue to live with the continuing effects of the COVID19 pandemic it is still not possible to hold an in-person gathering. Once again Ellen Winger hosted a Zoom meeting for us.

We welcomed Avery Kraft, a friend of Ellen, who is considering joining the archival profession.

Our conversation was very general and ranged from updates on members' success (or not) in getting the COVID vaccine to the vagaries of working from home or hybrid in the office to dealing with genealogical requests and catching up with some projects while at the same time falling behind on others.

A round-robin format gave some time to each member to share a bit of what had been going on during these past several months. Among the comments and questions:

- Ellen noted that she is now able to be back in her office. The sisters at St. Elizabeth have been confined to their rooms and she has been doing her part in alleviating cabin-fever by doing history talks via the motherhouse's CCTV system. They have lost three sisters to the virus.
- Heidi continues to work remotely. She has been working on making traveling exhibits available. She is working on a future on-line exhibit and has been busy with digital inclusion work and "meeting" with legislators to explain the work and importance of libraries/archives.
- Dennis spoke about the death of the St. Bonaventure University President earlier this week from COVID complications which reality offsets the men's basketball team taking the Atlantic 10 regular season title. He has been working some with the archives and is already bemoaning the coming loss of some of his work-study students to graduation.
- Pat reported that the congregation offices have been shut for a year. The archivist goes in periodically but mainly works remotely. She is primarily working on the

consolidation of the archives from the various communities which have come together to form the Neumann Communities congregation. Most recently they have received the archives from Hawaii. During the cold weather the HVAC unit froze with resulting water damage to offices. Luckily the archives, itself, suffered no damage.

- Jean shared that her hours have been reduced due to the diocesan bankruptcy. She has been receiving requests from Ireland regarding people seeking records so they can claim dual US/Irish citizenship. She has been referring them to the Grosvenor Room at the public library. She wondered how others deal with such requests. Kathleen noted that at Canisius they get such requests but don't have the information necessary to answer the questions and certainly don't have the time to deal with the majority of genealogical inquiries. Mary also gets requests (though not from Ireland) and sometimes finds it to be mutually beneficial as the researcher at times shares information obtained elsewhere; adds to what is already available in the community's files.
- Mara reported on how Sacred Heart Academy has been weathering the pandemic. The students are back in class although about 100 are totally remote. She is keeping things moving with the school's archives as best she can.
- Chana reported on her activities over the past couple of years. The Jewish Buffalo Archives Project has folded but she is now working with Jewish Buffalo History and has developed a website which has recently been launched. She has also been working with interns (digitally during the pandemic) to organize the collections of a local Jewish museum and archives.
- Nancy has been balancing work with the archives at Our Lady of Victory and helping her congregation (Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart) plan for the eventual transfer of their archives.
- Jessica has been back at work since June. People are now able to come in and things are returning to some semblance of "normal." She has been using this time to overhaul the heritage area for the Sisters of St. Joseph.
- Lucy is the Director of Library Services at Villa Maria College and, though not an archivist, does have responsibility for the archives and has been dealing with some reference requests. She noted that the Felician Sisters have lost six members locally to the pandemic.
- Dan goes in to the Buffalo State archives once or twice a week. He has realized how much he can do from home due to

having digitized much of the collection and having the indices available on-line. At this time, in connection with the college's sesquicentennial, the college is looking at the names of buildings on campus, e.g. Porter-named for Peter Porter, slave holder and someone with no real connection to the institution.

- Kathleen goes in to the Canisius College Archives two days/week. They are working on a database of theses. Other projects are also underway to allow them to deal with a few collections. They spend a lot of time "catching up."
- Mary returned to the office January 4 after recovering from back surgery in the fall. The Franciscans at Stella lost 5 sisters and a part-time chaplain to COVID. She has been working on "catch-up" projects and has a lot of files of deceased sisters to process.
- Avery talked a bit about why she thinks archives might be a good fit for her. She is interested in the type of work we do. She also wondered how we found ourselves as archivists. This question led to a number of the group sharing how they had become involved with archival work. Often it is a chance encounter and much depends on networking with others in the archives and library fields.

NEXT MEETING: Probable Zoom meeting in a few months--TBA

REMINDER: CHECK OUT THE WNYA WEBSITE--

<http://www.archives.sbu.edu/wnya>