



# AABC

Newsletter

WINTER 2023 / 2024

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# CONTENTS

2	MESSAGE FROM THE AABC PRESIDENT
4	2023 ARCHIVES AWARENESS WEEK
5	2024 IS OUR PATHWAY YEAR!
6	AABC “YEAR AT A GLANCE CALENDAR”
7	A TEMPLATE FOR AN INDIGENOUS ELDERS’ ARCHIVE <i>Progress Update</i>
10	CROFTON HOUSE SCHOOL <i>Celebrating 125 Years</i>
13	EXECUTIVE PROFILE <i>Kate Heikkila</i>
14	EXECUTIVE PROFILE <i>Jamie Sanford</i>
15	ANNOUNCEMENTS
17	CLOSING REMARKS

Cover photo: Item 94-PIA1, Students with “Crofton House” spelled out on the soles of their shoes.  
Image courtesy of the Crofton House School Archives.

The Archives Association of British  
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KAT LOURO

# MESSAGE FROM THE AABC PRESIDENT KAT LOURO

Welcome to 2024! I cannot believe another year is behind us. As always, my biggest thanks go out to our volunteers and contractors, who have been busy putting on events and providing services to archival workers, and those undertaking archival projects, across British Columbia. Another big thank you goes out to my fellow AABC Executive members, who work off the side of their desks to keep this organization running smoothly. Finally, a special thank you to AABC secretary Kate Heikkila, and communications committee members Manda Haligowski and Elizabeth Robertson for working so hard on this newsletter and our social media presence.

A short summary of what we accomplished this fall: We brought together our volunteers for an invigorating virtual roundtable focused on our volunteers' perspectives and ideas. Myself and IAC member, Kelly Speak, also embarked on the Pathways Pilot Program, which seeks to help non-profits in the broader GLAM sector gain tools and support to better enact equity measures

in their organization. Our anti-racism bursary continues to supply the fee and textbook costs for one applicant for each of our tri-yearly distance education offerings. Finally, we had a successful Archives Awareness Week, with numerous interesting talks and panels. You can find recordings for sessions you missed [here](#).

In January, we also put out a members survey and a survey on our educational offerings to facilitate feedback on what's working, what's missing, and what we can offer to better support. Moving forward, we will have another offering of our Archives 101: Archival Practice for Indigenous Organizations course coming up in March, another distance learning course for "Introduction to Archival Practice" and are hard at work planning our 2024 conference. Details to come!

Coming into the new year is also a good time to reflect on the goals we set out in our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, which is in its last year. Our broad goals were:

- Provide robust and meaningful support for Indigenous organizations and knowledge keepers
- Increase diversity throughout our membership and volunteer base so that the AABC reflects the communities it serves
- Identify and procure stable funding streams
- Provide more educational opportunities on a variety of subjects
- Expand technology platforms and services
- Increase connections with other organizations locally, nationally and internationally
- Become a larger organization with more members, volunteers, and staff

I'm happy to report that we have identified and procured a stable operational funding stream. We've been able to provide money to support site visits and support to Indigenous communities and archives through a generous contribution from the Documentary Heritage Communities Program. We've also increased scaffolding and accountability with the Indigenous

Advocacy Committee, to ensure we are offering meaningful support for Indigenous organizations. The Pathways Program will give us an opportunity to increase our connections with other GLAM aligned organizations, and we've diversified our offerings to include Roundteas, which have expanded our educational offerings. That said, it's clear we still have much we can improve on based on our lofty strategic plan goals. I think we are up to the challenge!

In kindness,  
Kat Louro (she/her)



# 2023 ARCHIVES AWARENESS WEEK

Lisa Glandt, EAS Coordinator

British Columbia's Archives Awareness Week was held November 12 - 18, 2023. This year's theme "The Past, Present, and Future of Archives" brought together presentations and discussions reflecting on the basics of archival theory and practice, while also imagining the ways we can adapt and welcome new ideas and initiatives for the future of our profession. Over 100 members joined us online throughout the week for a range of events including presentations by Genevieve Weber, Manager of Programs and Services at the Provincial Heritage Branch on the Indigenous Naming Project currently underway at the BC Geographical Names Office; and from Amanda Oliver, Head of Archives and Special Collections at Wilfrid Laurier University, and her research on climate change and archives. These two events were recorded and viewing links are available on the [AABC website](#).

Participants joined our Indigenous Archives forum that promoted networking and the sharing of resources throughout introductions and discussion about projects and work being undertaken by colleagues working in

Indigenous archives programs throughout the province. We also heard from UBC's emerging iSchool students, and students interested in our profession, who shared their interests, questions, and observations about archival work. This session was a good reminder that there is always much that we can learn from each other in all stages of our archival experience! The week was wrapped up with the new webinar "The Lone Arranger: Practical Approaches to Arrangement" taught by Lisa Glandt, EAS Coordinator, that was recorded and is available for viewing on the website.

Throughout the week, members also shared their reflections on what "past and present" means through posting photographs from their collections on social media using the hashtag #AAWpastpresentfuture. There is an inherent irony that modern technology and social media (a future many of us could not have imagined), allows us to instantaneously share the past with a wider, global audience...

Thank you for celebrating Archives Awareness Week with the AABC...see you next year!

# 2024 IS OUR PATHWAYS YEAR!

Joy Rowe, Indigenous Advocacy Committee

This January, AABC is taking on a twelve-month commitment to learn, reflect, and implement a plan to “be less extremely white”. Or, because this phrasing may not suit everyone, we could also say that we are taking on a specific commitment to be more aggressively and effectively anti-racist. And we are in good company. Seventy-five other organizations in our sector are doing exactly the same thing with us through a Made-In-BC project called Pathways.

## **What is it?**

The Pathways project is a new, one-year pilot project that took applications and chose 75 organizations of all sizes from the arts, culture, and heritage communities in British Columbia who want to work on themselves to make a more equitable and accessible sector. It's funded by the BC Arts Council in partnership with a consortium of arts & heritage leaders like BC Museums Association, Arts BC, Rural Arts Inclusion Lab and the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance.

## **Why us?**

Most, if not all, archival organizations in

Canada are based on colonial concepts. AABC is no exception.

Since AABC is a leader in the archival community, our actions count.<sup>1</sup> The executive recognizes that they are extremely white and non-diverse, and this is an issue as we continue to do outreach to Indigenous records practitioners to support their archival projects. A key component of our most recent strategic plan was to evaluate how we can make our association more relevant, supportive, and welcoming for BIPOC and marginalized archivists. We need to get this right as every archivist and archives looks to us for leadership.

Pathways is the chance to break new ground, to learn, reflect and then apply. We need to simultaneously look inward and outward and cease to deliver information using the same outdated, colonial mindset. An organization that plans to grow and be around for the future must cross this abyss of self awareness.

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<sup>1</sup>Our direct membership is 237 individual archivists or recordkeepers & 125 archival institutions who touch communities large and small across B.C. (AGM Minutes of June 2023).

### **Why now?**

In 2017, the AABC members proposed & approved a new committee to respond to the then-recent Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and to engage First Nations on archival topics. Now called the Indigenous Advocacy Committee (IAC), the committee has been active (but underutilized) for seven years and has maintained largely the same members, who are either Indigenous (20%) or work in First Nations communities as archivists or recordkeepers (60%). Around the same time, AABC also adapted and rebuilt its Archives 101 training to focus on Indigenous communities, and we have offered this course to 163 participants in 83 Indigenous communities or organizations from 2018 to 2021. We've gotten a start, and we are capable of so much more.

### **What's next?**

As part of our application to the project, we committed to writing an article for each newsletter throughout our Pathways year. As you read and think about our archival realm, please reach out to the AABC representatives with your feedback and ideas, and expect to hear more about the Pathways process in the year to come. And if you are already ready to move to action, consider if you'd like to be the successor to this work and [fill an Executive Committee role](#), join the IAC Committee, or [guide the next regional conference](#) to put words and ideas into action next year.

Get some of your questions answered by going to the [Pathways Project website](#).

## AABC “YEAR AT A GLANCE CALENDAR” NOW ON THE WEBSITE!

Lots of things are always happening behind the scenes at the AABC thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and contractors. We have created a “2024 – 2025 Year at a Glance Calendar” that is now on the website with an overview of operational events, professional development opportunities, committee meetings, and annual AABC milestones. You can find the calendar [here](#).

This is a broad calendar with flexible dates (for events like webinars, roundteas, and workshops), but we hope that you will find it useful if you would like to plan to attend an event or as a reminder to check the AABC website for further registration information.

If you are interested in joining a committee or helping with an upcoming event included in the calendar, please contact the AABC at [info@abc.ca](mailto:info@abc.ca).

# A TEMPLATE FOR AN INDIGENOUS ELDERS' ARCHIVE

## PROGRESS UPDATE

Kelly Speak  
AABC member / IAC member since 2016  
Professional Specialization in Collections Management, UVIC 2016

*Editor's note: We are pleased to share part two of this series from Kelly Speak on creating "A Template for an Indigenous Elders' Archive". See part one in our [Winter 2023 newsletter](#).*

In article #1, **A Template for An Indigenous Elders' Archive: How? Why Now?** I asked, "How can this Indigenous Elder's archive take shape while ensuring it is rooted in the knowledge and practices of Indigenous Ways of Being?"

While I don't have the full answer, I am keen to share with you where the archives stand now, after some hard work, and a good amount of soul searching for the answer...but first, if you want to know how this initiative began, read the first article in the [AABC's Winter 2023 Newsletter](#). You will gain an understanding of why I wanted to take a unique approach.

Fast forward one year...now I have ~28 boxes. There has been some culling (~12 boxes) of unrelated materials and duplicated documents. I have grown to understand the collection and have deliberately let it breathe. That means I have been systematically describing and arranging materials...item-by-item... folder-by-folder...and box-by-box. I have not imposed an archival structure. As a result, there is a very expansive table of contents and a master document of ~200 pages.

Here is a snip only:

<b>Box #20A</b> .....	148
Articles (newspaper & magazines) & calendars & correspondence .....	148
<b>Box #20B</b> .....	152
Reports, Toolkits; Ministry of Advanced Education, FNESC, ILPWG, IAHLA, RMBC, ILE, III .....	152
<b>Box #20C</b> .....	157
Indigenous Languages, sub-committees, working groups, partners, conference, fnesc etc. ....	157
<b>Box #20D</b> .....	164



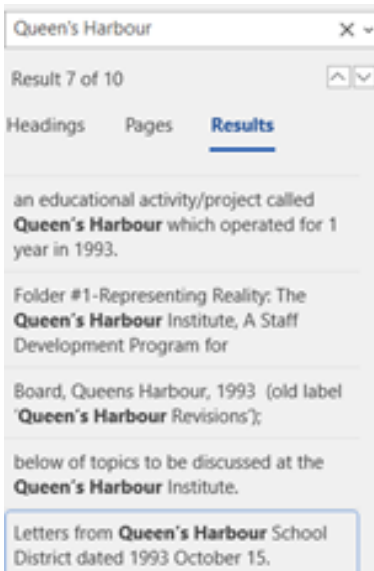
## Question 1

Can I search to find a specific item, folder or box number easily? **Yes, quite easily!**

I continue to tighten the description process and there is some re-sorting and double-checking to make sure I am working consistently, and the entire document is user-friendly.

## Question 2

Can I search for a specific term in the document and find all related results and then click on it to go to the box number and folder number? **Yes.**



Here is an example of a search for 'Queen's Harbour,' a fictional school district created to put educators through simulations to raise their awareness of their own biases in dealing with issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

My approach so far is to describe the entire contents of the archives.

The entire contents are searchable and largely without the use of standard archival practices. I feel like every single item in the archives has value, importance and some materials clearly

reflect the colonial attitudes of the time. This way, the entire contents remain alive, accessible and engaging. These were two of my visions.

Since starting this project, I have continued to focus on developing my own Indigenous mindset. As such, I have also experienced a reaction to some items in the collection. Part of developing an Indigenous mindset is recognizing (and calling out) unacceptable attitudes towards Indigenous people, even if it was published 50 years ago. I came across a newspaper article which made me cringe. I put the blue line under the caption I deem unacceptable.



Globe and Mail, Toronto, Thursday, May 1973.  
Caption says "Reserve residents engage in spirited foot race. Empty beer bottles lie under rails."

### **Question 3**

*Is the caption “Empty beer bottles lie under rails” part of the story? Isn’t the caption “Reserve residents engage in spirited foot race” the reason for the photo and article?*

### **Question 4**

*Was there any self-awareness by the journalist (or photographer) of their own biases towards Indigenous Peoples?*

### **Question 5**

*Are you as shocked about the biased caption as I was?*

One unique way to process an Indigenous Elder’s archive is to experience it - go through it, be curious and be an ally. In doing this myself, I have come to understand how materials in the archives may have impacted the Elder’s words. The caption was unfortunate but reminds us that most archives are infested with colonial thoughts and biases. It is a good exercise to sit with it and share my resistance to such an unfortunate caption.

In exposing this 50-year-old caption in this article, I feel more engaged in my role as an archivist. It will stay there in its ‘other articles’ folder for someone 100 years from now to read it and perhaps ask the same questions, or experience the

same feelings that I have about the caption. Just how many unfortunate obstacles did Dr. Lorna Wánosts’a7 have to step over, go around and possibly ignore to pursue her life’s work?

For these records, I have not imposed a structure that suffocated the collection, rather I have wanted it to breathe whether it spewed biased attitudes, or reflect the many brilliant milestones Dr. Lorna Wánosts’a7 has achieved in her lifelong efforts in Indigenous languages revitalization.

*I am curious to know what you, the reader, would have done differently to create this archive? Feel free to reach out to me [via email](#).*



Crofton House School campuses over the years: Jessie Gordon's parents' house, the Nelson and Jervis campus, and the Old Residence at the current campus in Kerrisdale. Courtesy of Crofton House School Archives.

# CROFTON HOUSE SCHOOL CELEBRATING 125 YEARS

Manda Haligowski  
Archivist, Crofton House School

Crofton House School celebrated 125 years beginning early last year, since its founding in 1898. The main focus was to bring the School's history to the forefront, providing an opportunity to both self-reflect and create links to a broader historical context. The Crofton House Archives is a private archives, primarily serving the immediate School community, but for 125 years its predominantly female staff and students have contributed to the history of both Vancouver and British Columbia. It was a perfect opportunity to further explore and promote those historical connections.

## **All-Girls Education: Dr. Jessie Gordon's Vision**

Crofton House School was founded by Dr. Jessie F Gordon in 1898. As an early student of Newnham College at Cambridge University, Dr. Gordon placed great value on education for women and had a bold vision of creating a girl-centred school where young women would build a solid and well-rounded

foundation to meet life's challenges at a time where education for women was unassumed, neglected or even discouraged.

The School began in the billiard room of her parents' Vancouver home with only four students and staffed by her two sisters: Mary and Edith. The School quickly outgrew the single room (growing from just 4 to an incredible 50 students in 3 years) and in 1901 the Gordon sisters moved to a newly built campus on the corner of Nelson and Jervis in Vancouver's West End.

## **The 1930s: A Dream Under Threat**

In the late 1930s, the School began to struggle in the face of a number of challenges. Dr. Jessie Gordon retired in 1937, leaving a huge role to fill and the School's future uncertain with no presence of leadership. In response, dedicated CHS community members and parents rose to the task of saving the school by incorporating and establishing the CHS Board of Governors. But financial



Dr. Jessie Gordon, founder and first Head of School of Crofton House. Courtesy of Crofton House School Archives.

pressures began to mount. The challenges of the Depression and World War II, coupled with the exodus of families from the West End, left the School facing the difficult decision to either close or relocate.

In 1941, not wanting to let go of the dream Dr. Jessie Gordon started, the Board of Governors

ultimately decided to purchase the Kerrisdale estate of Vancouver Sun publisher Robert J Cromie. The property contained a large family home (now referred to as the “Old Residence”) which was renovated to house boarding students and administrative staff. A second building for classrooms was quickly constructed before the School officially opened at its new location in September 1942. While the campus has seen significant changes over the years, the Old Residence has remained a central fixture, linking the past to the present.

### **Celebrating 125 Years: History at the Forefront**

As the sole person responsible for the school’s archives and museum collections, I was fortunate enough to work with the Communications & Marketing Department to support a number of initiatives and events that happened throughout the year. The celebrations began early last year with the School’s

birthday, held March 3rd. It’s a time when alumnae return to the School en masse to enjoy a special assembly and luncheon. Each alumnae who attended was gifted a printed copy of their yearbook portrait the Archives provided. For this event the Archives provided research and photos for a presentation given by current Grade 7 students to alumnae, curated a display of artifacts and archival records, and supplied over 120 digitized photographs for a slideshow that served as a visual backdrop during the event.

The main collaborative effort between Communications and Archives was a year-long social media campaign involving a monthly Throwback Thursday post and article in the School’s biweekly newsletter. Each month had a corresponding theme, typically related to and aligned with annual School events or holidays such as Carol Service or and their place in a broader historical context such as contributions during war time efforts, improvements to society, and contributions to Canadian culture and identity including provincial impacts in the Arts.



125 Years logo created for the celebration. Courtesy of Crofton House School.

These included [Beatrice Lennie](#) (graduated 1923), a former student, staff member, and sculptor, whose public sculptures can still be found around the city, as well as [Katie Snyder](#) (graduated c. 1910), an ambulance driver in France during World War I. Through these pieces we were able to make connections with other archives. For instance, we profiled [Marion \(Bostock\) Sherman](#) (graduated c. 1909) who was one of the first women to attend St George's Hospital Medical School, University of London, and were able to connect with the Archivist of their Archives and Special Collections. They were even kind enough to share our article through their Twitter account.

The year-long celebration ended with a gala held at the Grand Ballroom of Parq Vancouver. Again Communications and Archives worked together to pull photos and research for a Then-and-Now video, slideshow highlighting various alumnae and their achievements, and a set of historical panels giving an overview of the School's history. This was the most demanding event to prepare for as hundreds of photos were pulled for consideration for the historical panels before the final photos were selected with months of planning, meetings and execution on a School-wide scale with many departments and school leadership involved.

### **Looking Towards the Future**

While the 125th celebrations are now completed, and the Archives settles back into its typical functions, the experience

has provided new insight into what can be accomplished and what connections can be forged. Putting such a concentrated effort into highlighting the School's history has led to an increase in community engagement. Students are more interested in learning about the history of their School, teachers reach out to collaborate on historical research projects, and alumnae are more motivated to donate both their records and their time to document their own stories. Moving past the boundaries of the School itself led to the discovery of exciting connections and the development of richer profiles of staff and students, no longer simply defined by their time at Crofton House.

As someone who has previously worked in extremely small community archives, having the opportunity to work so closely with the Communications team has been a pleasure. The hope is to continue this closer working relationship to explore different and new facets of the School's long and varied history, and leverage their expertise to form stronger and broader community connections. Just because Crofton House Archives is a private archive, doesn't mean that its value needs to be gatekept.

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE



KATE HEIKKILA (SHE/HER)  
SECRETARY

My name is Kate Heikkila, and I have been the AABC Secretary since June 2023. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from UBC and a Masters in Library and Information Studies with a concentration in archives from McGill University. I have worked in a number of municipal archives in BC and Alberta, and currently work at the BC Archives. Right now I am on a temporary assignment, processing the recently acquired archives of The Sisters of St. Ann, a congregation of Sisters who were involved in nursing and education in the province, including staffing a number of residential schools. My base position is as a reference archivist, and I continue to enjoy assisting folks in their research goals.

I gratefully live and work on the lands of the *ləkʷəŋən*, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and outside of the archives I can be found spending time with my horse and wandering around town in search of good pizza and shiny trinkets.

*What has been a highlight of working with the AABC?*

Getting to work on these newsletters has been one of my top jobs as Secretary! It's fun to try to synthesize all the work that the AABC does into a digestible format for the members, and to learn what other archivists are doing throughout the province. If you're thinking about publishing in this newsletter, I'd be ecstatic to hear your ideas!

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Jamie Sanford is originally from Hertfordshire in England and has called BC home since 1999. He has a Masters in Archival Studies from the UBC ISchool and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History (Hons) from Simon Fraser University.



JAMIE SANFORD  
VICE-PRESIDENT

He has been Archivist for 13 years and has spent most of his career working in Municipal Archives including spells at the City of Vancouver, City of Richmond, and the City of New Westminster. He currently is the City Archivist at the City of Coquitlam Archives, a position he has held for over 2 years. He has 2 cats and 2 daughters which keep him quite busy.

*What drew you into a career in archives?*

I was and still am a history nut. I was enrolled in the BA (Hons) History program at SFU. I had planned to do a Master's degree in history until I registered for a 4th year class that involved a paleographic assignment using medieval records. This was my gateway drug, and I started to think about the role of archives and archivists in society. It also helped that the Archival School was based locally at UBC and that graduates seemed to be gainfully employed once they had completed their studies.

Sadly, I do not get a chance to use my paleography skills much as a municipal archivist. However, I do enjoy helping people navigate archives. I still get a buzz when I help a researcher find something they have been seeking or were not sure existed.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## VOLUNTEER WITH THE AABC

Volunteer for AABC committees today and support archives and the archival profession throughout the province.

We are seeking enthusiastic and conscientious volunteers to sit on our standing and ad hoc committees. Participants will get an opportunity to network and gain valuable skills while fostering the development of the provincial archival community. Participation does not require a major time commitment and committee schedules are flexible.

We are seeking volunteers for the following areas:

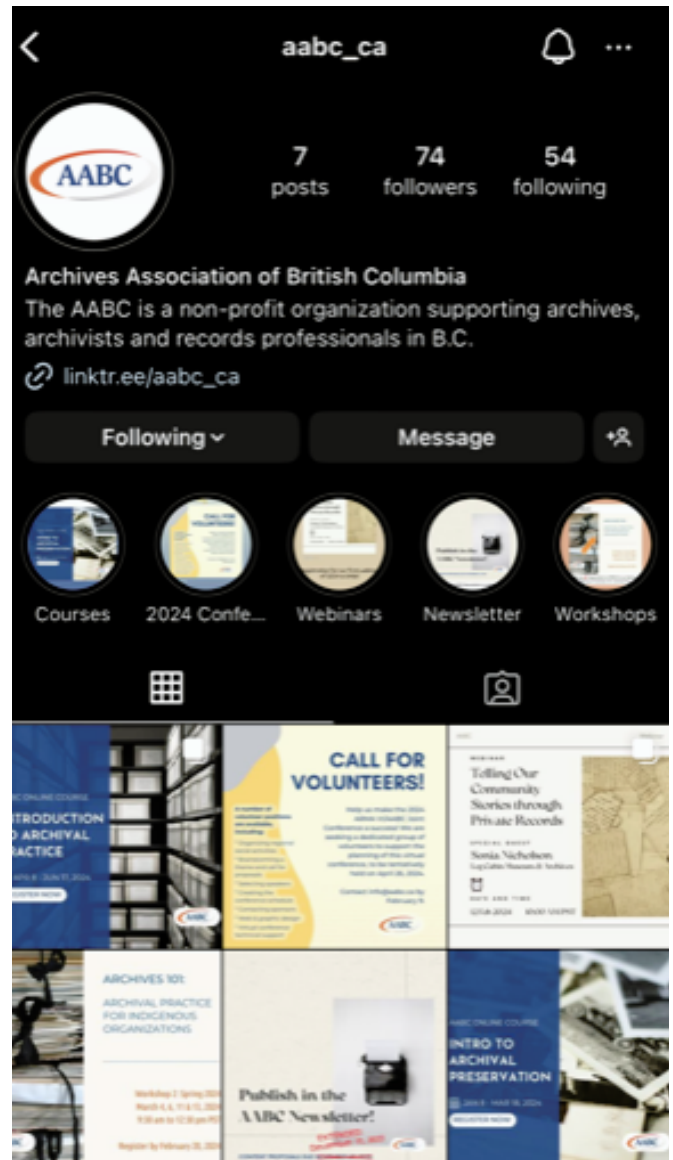
- Conference Committee
- Constitution and By-Laws Committee
- Indigenous Advocacy Committee
- Grants Committee
- Membership Committee
- Nominations and Elections Committee
- Programs Committee
- Finance Committee
- Communications Committee
- Regional Representatives  
(Central & North Vancouver,  
Kootenay - Columbia, and BC  
Northeast)

If you are interested, please contact AABC President Kat Louro at [aabc.president@aabc.ca](mailto:aabc.president@aabc.ca) for more information.

## FOLLOW US ONLINE

We've recently launched an AABC Instagram account: [@aabc\\_ca](https://www.instagram.com/aabc_ca)

Follow us there for updates on what the AABC is doing and other news about BC's archival community.





## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Making a donation is as important as ever. We understand that COVID-19 has made it difficult for many professionals to donate, but your contributions provide awards to UBC School of Information students every year and provide support to the annual ACA@UBC conference. This is a key part of the AABC's mandate to foster the development of our provincial archival community.

Help us meet our goal and [donate now](#).

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Help showcase the incredible work of BC's archives and archivists. The AABC Newsletter is back and we need your stories. To be included in the next issue, submit your 250-word newsletter content proposals to [aabc.secretary@aabc.ca](mailto:aabc.secretary@aabc.ca) with the subject line: **AABC Newsletter Proposal**.

We're open to all content ideas, including (but not limited to): articles, paper excerpts, opinion pieces, archives / archivist spotlights, upcoming events, and more!

## PHOTOS WANTED

The AABC newsletter editorial team is looking for archival images to feature on these pages. Got something to share? Send a 600dpi or higher scan or photo with a suggested image credit to [aabc.secretary@aabc.ca](mailto:aabc.secretary@aabc.ca).





# CLOSING REMARKS

Kate Heikkila

AABC Secretary / Newsletter Editor

The AABC Communications Committee would like to thank our membership for their interest in the Newsletter. Both the AABC and our newsletter are run by an inspiring and much appreciated group of volunteers. Please join me in thanking the following individuals for their tireless work on this issue of the newsletter:

Manda Haligowski, Graphic Designer / Contributor

Elizabeth Robertson, Social Media Volunteer

Kathryn Louro AABC President

Jamie Sanford, AABC Vice-President

Alexandra Neijens, AABC Treasurer

Maureen Atkinson, AABC Member-at-Large

Kenneth Farvholdt, AABC Member-at-Large

Katie Sloan, AABC Past-President

Lisa Glandt, AABC EAS Coordinator

Kelly Speak, Contributor

Joy Rowe, Contributor

Finally, this newsletter would be nothing without our AABC community and readership. Thank you for your support and enthusiasm.

## **DISCLAIMER**

The articles published in the AABC newsletter do not reflect the AABC's position on archival practice and issues. The newsletter instead provides a platform for discussion and dissemination of ideas regarding archival practice and issues from heritage practitioners and stakeholders.