

The ArQuives
Annual General Meeting
June 8, 2020, 6:00 p.m.
via Zoom (virtual meeting)

Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

1. Welcome and land acknowledgement

Raegan Swanson (Executive Director) gave instructions on the Zoom platform and informed everyone that the meeting was being recorded. Raegan called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the 2019 Annual General Meeting of The ArQuives.

Raegan Swanson read The ArQuives' Indigenous Land Acknowledgment statement.

2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting: May 6, 2019

There were no additions or alterations to the draft minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting.

It was moved by Dennis Findlay, seconded by Kabir Ravindra, that the minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting be approved. Carried unanimously.

3. Business arising

None.

4. President's address

Dennis Findlay addressed the meeting:

“Firstly, I want to thank everyone for joining us in this new way for our AGM. For some it will be a new experience and for others it is now just an everyday part of our lives, as we have integrated technology into our daily routines, thanks to COVID 19 and maintaining social distancing to keep everyone healthy and safe.



Secondly, on behalf of The ArQuives, I would like to thank the Directors of the Board who have served during 2019. Rachel Epstein, who finished her term at the last AGM, along with continuing members, Elspeth Brown, Paul Leatherdale, Justin Hughes-Jones, Marcos Persaud, Kabir Ravindra, David DesLauriers, Ana Rita Morais, Leyla Shahid (who stepped down in the fall) and our newest member, Fran Odette who joined us in November. A Board of Directors is essential to guiding any organization through its decision making, navigating the good and bad times. As a team, it has been an absolute pleasure working with each one of you, and I can assure you that our Board Members have put their shoulder to the tasks they took on, and have been doing amazing work.

Thirdly, I wish to sincerely thank the 2019 ArQuives Staff - Raegan, Lucie, Ariana, Carmen, Jennifer, Charly, and Tobaron, the many interns and volunteers (too numerous to name) for their dedication to The ArQuives to help us fulfill our mandate and keep our organization vibrant and healthy. I also would like to mention that in January 2020 we welcomed Jordan Saroya to the team as our new Administrative Assistant. Welcome Jordan.

With the help of the staff and many volunteers, the Board has approved many essential policies, procedures, and guidelines, which are extremely important to a well-functioning and responsible organization. I must applaud Raegan Swanson, our Executive Director for her masterful guidance in this area. For the sake of brevity, I am going to focus on the progress that we have made on our Strategic Plan and its priorities, which we use as a guide to keep us on track. I will only offer one example in each area.

In March 2019, The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives changed its operating name to The ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives. This change was deliberate to more accurately reflect the diversity of our communities (beyond gays and lesbians), that are already represented in our collection. At the same time that we launched our new name, we launched our Online Collections Portal. This site allows the public to search our collection from anywhere in the world. As a direct result, the number of online research requests grew 25%. By sharing what collections we have, we can work with communities to further demonstrate the scope of Canadian LGBTQ2+ histories as well as enhance our outreach, and ability to develop relationships with potential future donors.

Years of fundraising came to fruition in January 2019 when our new lift became operational, rendering the archives further accessible to all members of the public. June saw the opening of our new front entrance ramp, allowing access to the first and second floor of our house. These accessibility upgrades made it possible to host various meetings, exhibitions, and events. Raegan will speak to more of those partnerships and some of the new collections we received shortly.

The ArQuives saw continued success with various grants, including the Documentary

Heritage Communities Program and Young Canada Works, which allowed us to hire archival staff to assist with making the collection accessible to the public. Our multi-year grant from the Canadian History Fund allowed us to continue work with our book, *Out North* which will be released in August 2020.

In 2019 we established the Relocation Committee. We have signed a contract with Colliers Realtors and engaged with agencies and individuals who have the skills to help us move actively forward on finding a new home. This work will continue over the next few years as we work to keep our collections safely housed.

Our 2019 Kaleidoscope Gala was a lot of fun and great success! Thank you to everyone who volunteered and attended. We were able to raise over \$30,000 to help launch our Online Collection Portal and raise funds for our ongoing operations.

The ArQuives is an amazing and important organization in our community. Each year, we change, as all healthy organizations must do to keep themselves relevant. This last year has been no exception. Sometimes the progress is rapid and head spinning, and sometimes it feels like we are watching paint dry, as draft materials work their way through to finished products. But as long as we focus on our mandate of keeping our history safe and accessible for present and future generations to learn from, we will always be Keeping Our Stories Alive.”

Raegan Swanson (Executive Director) reported that the number of research enquiries had increased by 40% since the launch of the on-line database. Raegan Swanson also reported that the book “Out North” was launched on June 2nd.

5. Executive Director’s address

Raegan Swanson addressed the meeting:

“Thank you all for your support over 2019. We had a great year that was full of new partnerships, new collections, and great staff and volunteers. Today I’m going to take a moment to highlight some of the collections and partnerships that made 2019 exciting. But before I do that, I want to take a moment to thank each of the staff who have been essential and instrumental in our success in 2019.

Lucie Handley-Girard, our archivist, has been supervising new archival volunteers, YCW students, and answering queries, all while processing collections and getting them on the online portal.

Ariana Ho, our project archivist who processed many new collections, including over a hundred boxes of AIDS Committee of Toronto. We are thrilled that Ariana will continue to be a part of our team again starting today.



Jennifer Aja Fernandez, our Community Outreach Coordinator who helped facilitate many of the new partnerships we had in 2019.

Tobaron Waxman has continued to work as our Trans Collection assistant.

Shamsa Abdullahi was our YCW student this past year and processed the Supporting Our Youth fonds.

Sorcha Beirne who worked with us over the summer thanks to a grant from TD Bank.

Charly Wreggitt who was working as our Archives Assistant thanks to a different grant from TD Bank.

Carmen Tang was our administrative assistant in 2019 and while she has left our organization, the work that she did was critical to keeping us organized.

As Dennis mentioned, we have added Jordan Saroya to our team and we thank him for all the work that he put in getting things ready for the AGM and in the past few months.

Many new important collections and accruals were added to the collection this year. These include (but are not limited to):

- Marnie Woodrow fonds
- Toronto Centre for Lesbian and Gay Studies fonds
- David Rayside fonds
- Pride and Remembrance Foundation fonds
- James Diamond fonds
- Mirha Soleil-Ross fonds
- Richard Fung fonds
- Queers Against Israeli Apartheid fonds
- Joseph Couture fonds
- Ronald Rosenes fonds
- LGBT Youth Line fonds
- Catherine Lake fonds
- Association for South Asian AIDS Prevention fonds
- Anna Camilleri fonds

The accessibility upgrades made it possible to host various meetings, exhibitions, and events at the house in 2019. The ArQuives partnered with Myseum to create *Legacies in Motion: Black Queer Toronto*, that was curated by Courtnay McFarlane and was exhibited at the Black Artists Network Dialogue (BAND Gallery) and later at The ArQuives. The exhibit focusing on Black Queer activism in Toronto the 1980's and 1990's. The exhibition was a great success and was a highlight of 2019. The ArQuives has continued its partnership with

the LGBT Intergenerational Artist Residency. In late 2019 a retrospective exhibition was held at The ArQuives, curated by Syrus Marcus Ware. The ArQuives also has continued to partner with Nuit Rose, and is thankful for the support of Zohar Freeman. Nuit Rose highlights artworks of up and coming LGBTQ2+ artists from around Canada. The ArQuives knows it is important to showcase the work of younger folks as an introduction into understanding archives as well as for us to demonstrate that the work of younger and lesser-known artists *are* of value to Canadian LGBTQ2+ heritage and the community.

While today is all about 2019, I do want to take a moment to speak to our current situation. COVID-19 has taken its toll around the world and we are sorry that today's meeting has to take place on Zoom rather than in person. The staff and I miss getting to see volunteers and the collection, and we know that many volunteers feel the same. As a non-essential business, we will continue to be closed as the cases in Toronto continue to stay high. While we expected to remain closed until the end of July, the City of Toronto mayor has asked the businesses to allow staff to work from home until at least September, which we will do.

Our cleaning service has continued during our shut down as we have had staff and board members checking in on the house and accepting collections that were in distress. When we open for staff, the cleaning will continue twice a week, with special attention to frequently touched surfaces and high traffic areas. When we open to volunteers and the public, we will evaluate the level of cleaning to make sure that it is adequate.

Many volunteers have been working from off-site and we want to thank you all for your efforts during this time. We will be moving forward to adapt your programming and work plans for 2020 based on COVID, and we appreciate your patience as we wait for information from health and government officials.”

6. Officer's reports:

6.1 Secretary's report

No report.

6.2 Treasurer's report

David DesLauriers spoke briefly on the financial status of the organization.

7. Review of Financial Statements and Appointment of Auditor

David DesLauriers welcomed and introduced Alex Briganti of the accounting firm of Hogg, Shain & Scheck, who reviewed the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2019.

Don McLeod pointed out that the expenses for subcontractors more than doubled in 2019 over the previous year. He asked why there was such an increase in this line. David responded that project costs related to the “Out North” book increased the expenses in that budget line.

Ed Jackson asked where the income from the Gale digitization project is represented in the financial statements. Raegan Swanson responded that the income is reported in the Revenue and Royalties budget line.

It was moved by David DesLauriers, seconded by Justin Hughes-Jones, that the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2019 be adopted. Carried unanimously.

It was moved by David DesLauriers, seconded by Ed Jackson, that The ArQuives appoint Hogg, Shain & Scheck as auditors for the 2020 fiscal year. Carried unanimously.

8. By-law amendments

Raegan Swanson (Executive Director) reported that the Board of Directors had not put forward any proposed amendments to the by-law, and no amendments were proposed by the membership. There were no proposed by-law amendments from the floor.

9. Name Change Amendment

A document on the Legal Name Change Update had been circulated to the membership in advance of the meeting.

Marcos Persaud addressed the meeting:

“My name is Marcos Persaud, I am one of the board members and I wanted to provide you with a status update to our name change.



As you are aware, we wanted to adopt a new name that will serve us well into the future by drawing on community consultations. The result was The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives changing its operating name to “The ArQuives: Canada’s LGBTQ2+ Archives”.

As Dennis mentioned, this change was deliberate to more accurately reflect the diversity of our communities simply beyond only gay and lesbian, but encompassing a true representation in our collection **and of our** people.

Upon filing for our updated name and tagline with the Ontario government, our name change was rejected simply on the basis that acronyms such as “LGBTQ2+” cannot be used for a legal or charitable name.

Reviewing the community’s voice and consultation with our new lawyers, on May 19th, 2020 the board put forward that our legal name be “The ArQuives: Canada’s Queer Archives” by special resolution. The ArQuives requires a tagline but cannot have acronyms. So we feel that this is the best solution, but we will still be carrying on business as “The ArQuives: Canada’s LGBTQ2+ Archives” to the public which is perfectly permissible.

The reasons for having the legal name change are for us to update our banking information, our charitable tax information and the recognition of a more diverse LGBTQ2+ organization but it will not change how we present ourselves as Canada’s LGBTQ2+ archives.”

It was moved by Adam Birrell, seconded by Kabir Ravindra, that the membership of The ArQuives approve the Special Resolution regarding the Application for Supplementary Letters Patent. Carried unanimously.

Ed Jackson enquired whether the prohibition against acronyms in a legal name might one day be challenged. Marcos responded that the government requires full disclosure behind the name of an organization, hence the prohibition on acronyms.

10. Election of Directors

Raegan Swanson reviewed the list of board members and their terms. One director, Paul Leatherdale, will not be seeking re-election. Raegan thanked Paul for his service to the organization.

Raegan reported that there are four available positions on the Board of Directors for a two-year term, and that the Nominating Committee had received four nominations. Dennis Findlay (President) asked whether there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Dennis closed the nomination process.

Aaron Cain introduced himself and spoke to his experience.

It was moved by Dennis Findlay, seconded by Fran Odette, that Elspeth Brown, Aaron Cain, Justin Hughes-Jones, and Marcos Persaud be elected as directors for a two-year term. Carried unanimously.

11. Questions from the floor / Other Business

Marcos Persaud commented that The ArQuives was founded by a white-cis-male-community which has meant that members, the collection, governance and the decision-making process was shaped by one side of the community. He spoke to action items that the Board will implement to address the inadequacies and that it plans to be more proactive.

Stefanie Martin mentioned a letter that a group of volunteers recently sent to the Board following the recent Black Lives Matters protests. She spoke about her experiences at The ArQuives, and reiterated that the organization is not doing enough to address anti-racism.

Renee Saucier addressed the other white people in attendance. Renee spoke to the need for them to work to be anti-racist and acknowledge their white privilege.

Lo Humeniuk thanked Stefanie and Renee for speaking, and mentioned that many volunteers are looking forward to seeing the action items identified by the Board come to fruition.

Mario Ciancibello spoke about his perspective as a volunteer, why people have volunteered in the past, and that historically, everyone has been welcome as a volunteer.

Ana Rita Morais commented that the institution should reflect the collection as a whole, and that many archives are struggling with this.

Dennis Findlay thanked the group of volunteers for sending the letter to the Board and for attending a follow-up meeting with the Board. He reiterated the need to work together.



Elspeth Brown commented that she was excited that the critique of the organization came from people within The ArQuives. She acknowledged that volunteers and staff have done a great deal of work to improve the situation at The ArQuives.

There was no other business or questions from the floor.

12. Adjournment

It was moved by Dennis Findlay, seconded by Marcos Persaud, that the meeting be adjourned. Carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.