



2020 Annual General Meeting Minutes - Draft

May 10, 2021, 6:00 p.m. EST

Location: Zoom

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement – Dennis Findlay called meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

“Greetings everyone and welcome to the AGM for the year 2020 of The ArQuives, Canada’s LGBTQ2+ Archives. I would like to call this meeting to order.

First, THANK YOU for joining us this evening and I look forward to this being a valuable review of our 2020 activities and also an opportunity for us to engage with each other.

The ArQuives is located on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Huron-Wendat. Today, Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land. The ArQuives strives to gather the stories of the unheard and silenced voices of the 2SLGBTQ+ first peoples of this land. We acknowledge that some stories have already been lost, and we aim to ensure that those that remain and those that are to come are preserved for the future.

Despite the pandemic and the dramatic changes which it has brought to our lives and our organization, our Board of Directors, our staff, volunteers, and donors have shown true resilience and adaptability.

I would like to thank Raegan Swanson, our executive director for her skilled guidance and leadership over the past year. We have also been blessed with amazing staff, Lucie, Ariana, Jordan, Jennifer, Matt, Subhanya and Deanna, who have pivoted so skillfully from working on site to primarily working from home without having access to our in-house computer system.

I want to congratulate our volunteers who have taken to the Zoom platform to continue the work of so many of our committees, while others who relay 100% on entering data on site into our database have had to reluctantly wait patiently. I am going to let my Co-President Elspeth Brown get into some of the details in her update, but I must acknowledge the Board of Directors, Elspeth Brown, Marcos Persaud, Ana Rita Morais, David Des Laurier, Justin Hughes-Jones, Aaron Cain, Fran Odette and Kabir Ravindra for moving forward on decisions, which have guided The ArQuives through a very unusual 2020. Finally, I want to sincerely thank all our financial supporters, our Guardians of The ArQuives and every single person who reached deep into their hearts and pockets and gave their support, be that contribution large or small.

In 2020, The ArQuives has continued to make progress in fulfilling our mandate and mission. We could not have done it without the commitment of every single person, so thank you all.”

2. Minutes from previous Annual General Meeting: June 8, 2020 – DD moved to approve, seconded by Patrick Keilty. Minutes were approved.

3. Business arising - none

4. Co-President's address: Elspeth Brown –

“2020 has been an eventful year at The ArQuives. As you all know, we shut down the ArQuives on March 13th, and we've remained closed since then. Staff members have been working from home and have done what they can to address researcher queries, under impossible conditions. As a result of COVID, we had to cancel our annual Gala, which is our single largest fundraising event of the year. This, of course, had a significant impact on our annual budget.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder on May 25th, a group of committed volunteers led the way in demanding that The ArQuives address both transparency and racism more explicitly; this work led to our 18 point Anti-Racism plan, which continues to shape our work in making The ArQuives a more welcoming and inclusive space for all members of the LGBTQ2+ community, in particular Black and other racialized queer, trans, and non-binary people.

In November we embarked on a consultative process to draft and finalize a statement on Historical Inequities at The ArQuives. We held a public consultation on November 27th, which was moderated by Terri Brennan of Inclusive Voices Inc. As a result of this work, we crafted a statement that situates our history within a larger context of colonialism and white supremacy, among other forms of structural inequity.

Despite the pandemic, we note several accomplishments this year in the arena of programming and public events, which Raegan will speak to a bit later. In addition to this outreach, we completely overhauled and redesigned our website and launched it on November 19th. Between our new website and our on-line collections portal, we're making tremendous strides in making our collections increasingly visible to our communities.

The ArQuives was successful in several grant efforts including; a Documentary Heritage Grant to hire a full time archivist for 2 years; 2 COVIC-related grants from Red Cross and the COVID-Emergency Support Fund for Heritage Organizations; and most recently a second round of funding from TD bank to support our on-line database through 2024.

The Relocation Committee continues its work on finding The ArQuives an appropriate facility for the future, as it is increasingly clear we have outgrown our current home on Isabella Street. ERA Architects is working with other consultants, including BTY Global and Colliers International, to develop a cost projection for a new facility, along with a valuation of 34 Isabella. This will lay the groundwork for a Capital Campaign to raise the funds to make our new home a reality, part of our strategic plan.

We ended the 2020 on a very positive note: our new Development Officer Deanna led the charge in a December holiday fundraising effort, which was successful in addressing the shortfall we'd experienced with the Gala cancellation. Many thanks to all of you who contributed this past year.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting developments. We will be conducting a Collections Review and Community Consultation process to get a more accurate portrait of our

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collections. We are working on a reopening plan tied to the Province's COVID-19 health framework, which we will have drafted later this month. Finally, as many of you know, Raegan will shortly be taking parental leave, and we're very thrilled to announce that we will soon have a new, interim ED: stay tuned for an announcement shortly!

In closing, I wish to thank all of you for your hard work and continued commitment to The ArQuives. Dennis and I will be stepping down from the Board after tonight's meeting. It's been a wonderful 6 years on the Board for me, and 11 years on the Board for Dennis. We look forward to continuing to serve The ArQuives in other capacities in the years ahead."

5. Executive Director's address: Raegan Swanson –

"Thank you all for your support in 2020. When we closed on March 13th we didn't know how long we would be closed or what to expect. We thank all of you for your patience while we tried to work out the ins and outs of working and volunteering from home. I want to take a moment to thank each of the staff who have been essential and instrumental in our success in 2020.

- Lucie Handley-Girard, our Senior Archivist, has been answering queries and helping researchers remotely, all while processing collections and getting them on the online portal.
- Ariana Ho, our Project Archivist who processed many new collections and helped with partnerships and archival projects.
- Jennifer Aja Fernandez, our Community Outreach Coordinator who helped facilitate many of the partnerships we had in 2020. Jennifer's contract ended in December and we thank them for all their hard work.
- Jordan Soryoa who is our administrative assistant and start in January just before we started working from home. Thank for being able to transition so quickly.
- Subhanya Sivajothy worked with us this summer as our Young Canada Works Student.
- Tobaron Waxman has continued to work as our Trans Collection assistant.
- Deanna Bickford joined our team in October 2020 as Senior Development Officer and has been working hard to increase our fundraising capacity.

2020 Marked several important events, even with our physical doors closed to the public. We published and launched *Out North: An Archives of Queer Activism and Kinship in Canada* Written by Craig Jennex and Nisha Eswaran, in collaboration with The ArQuives. The book is exhibition and panel discussion for *Where the Shoreline Meets the Water: The Intergenerational LGBT Artist Residency Retrospective* (December 2019-January 2020). This was a retrospective of works produced by alumni of The Intergenerational LGBT Artist Residency, which has been held each summer on the Toronto Islands from 2013 to 2019. The works critically engaged landscapes, longing, and ecologies in Queer and decolonial ways.

As March started, we launched *pack un pack* which was a solo exhibition of artist and photographer Hamidah Hemani. The exhibit featured large and small format photography, which provocatively explored the definitions and constructs of "home, space, and subculture" through a queer South Asian lens. However, shortly after the launch the building closed. We hope to be able to work with them in the future.

One of the many ways that The ArQuives makes its collections accessible to the public is via our Digital Exhibitions site. This summer, thanks to a grant from Young Canada Works, we were able to create two new exhibitions this year:

- **Jim Egan: Canada's First Public LGBTQ Activist**
- **1971 We Demand March**

You can see all 20+ exhibits by visiting digitalexhibitions.arquives.ca

Despite the pandemic, we participated in and facilitated several projects, partnerships, and events. In March we began our ongoing **Queerantime Project** allowing folks to continue donating their digital materials relating to their experiences and creations during the pandemic (and in general).

In September we hosted an online panel with folks involved in the **Pussy Palace** raid which launched a new oral history collecting project about the party.

We also finished up **Roots and Rites/Routes and Writes** in partnership with the Royal Ontario Museum, a writing workshop where South Asian youth submitted their stories for the archives.

In November we launched the **Trans Collections Guide** in partnership with the SSHRC funded *LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory*, a guide years in the making. The Launch included a roundtable discussion on the trans holdings of The ArQuives and the histories and futures of trans archival practices.

As mentioned, I'm about to go on parental leave for a few months but we have put many exciting partnerships and projects in place for 2021. I wish everyone an excellent year."

6. Presentation of Audited Financial Statements

- 6.1. David DesLauriers introduced the budget and general issues in 2020. Introduced the auditor, Alex Briganti from the firm Shain & Scheck.
- 6.2. Alex Briganti presented the audited financial statements. He explained that the ArQuives received a 'clean' review and are in a sound financial situation.
- 6.3. Q&A – Alan Miller asked for clarification re: references to Library & Archives Canada vs Librarian & Archives Canada.

7. Appointment of Auditor – David DesLaurierie moved to appoint Shain & Scheck to continue as the ArQuives auditors. Ana Rita Morais seconded. No objections. It was passed that Shain & Scheck will continue their work with the ArQuives.

8. By-law Amendments – Aaron Cain explained the proposed amendments. The changes are mostly updating wording and acronyms to reflect the ArQuives and community usage. For example, changing from "gay/lesbian positive" to "LGBTQ2+ positive". A chart of old and proposed was shared.

The changes were approved

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9. Motion to amend the Supplementary Letters of Patent – Aaron Cain explained that the Letters Patent also required updating and shared the proposed wording.

The changes were approved _____

10. Election of Directors

- a. Introduction of the process- Raegan explained the process. 5 nominations have been received.

David & Ana Rita wish to continue. RS called out for any other candidates, explained that the Board will be recommending candidates.

Craig Jennex asked how the Board come up with the short list. RS explained the call process, Board looked at applicants, compared candidates to the needs of the Board, how each candidate could fill gaps and highlighted three potential candidates.

JHJ explained in more detail. Colin Deinhardt asked what the gaps were and how many applications there were. JHJ replied that the main gaps were in Communication and Diversity & Inclusion. There were 15 applications received.

- b. Explanation of voting process
- c. Asking for nominees to speak –

AnaRita spoke – detailed her background, and professional work in academia. Expressed her desire to continue.

Daid DesLaurier – detailed his background in banking, now retired. He is on the Finance and Relocation committee and wants to continue.

Renee Saucier – applicant – volunteer since 2018, is a working archivist. Working in archives in NWT. Wants to join Board as she is deeply engaged in archives and sees working as a way to help address historical inequities.

Keith Cunningham – applicant – has a background in working with volunteers, manages team working with teens and youth at risk. Is also a trained therapist. Looks to share his diversity and equity lens with the Board

Raddison Ramoutar – applicant – works in digital marketing and communications, looks to work in social media. Is a screen writer and artist and loves stories and preserving them. Loves that the ArQuives are preserving the histories and stories of LGBTQ+ people.

- d. Actual voting – as there are 5 applicants and 5 spots. They are elected by acclamation. RS welcomes the new members.

11. Questions from the floor/other business – none

12. Presentation: Schem Rogerson Bader- RS introduced Schem, post-doc student working at the ArQuives. Visual artist and partnering with NFB currently but will also be doing their own project a bit later.

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Schem – presented their work – archival digital research, NFB *Parade* with director Noam Gonich. Focusing on activism from the 1970's to near present. Focusing on ideas of resistance, rebellion and representation of those on the 'margins'.

13. Adjournment –

Mario Ciancibello wishes RS a happy delivery & best wishes.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:17pm.