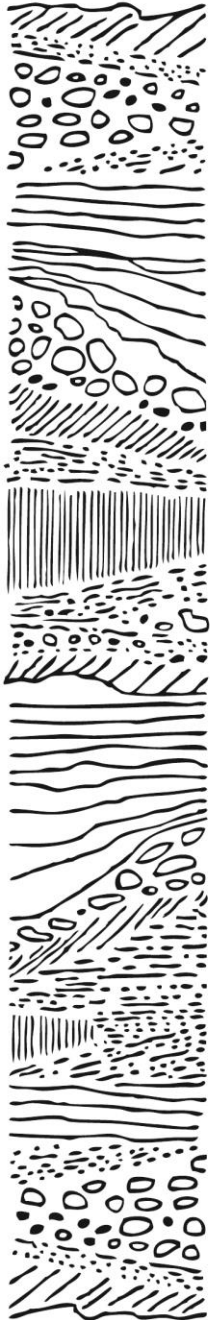




PANYC



Professional Archaeologists of New York City – Newsletter

Table of Contents

- I. President's Message
- II. Meeting Minutes
- III. Announcements
- IV. News Articles
- V. Upcoming Events
- VI. Membership

I. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! As PANYC enters the new year, many of us are returning from the SHA meetings in Seattle. It was a great experience. On a personal note, those of you that are SHA members may know I was nominated to serve on the Board of Directors of the Society. I am happy to tell you I won the election and will report on the SHA conference happenings at our upcoming meeting. Next year the SHA meeting will be closer, in Washington, D.C., so more of you will be able to come. The program theme will be "A Call to Action: the Past and Future of Historic Archaeology."

Since our last meeting, two Columbia Law School legal clinic students have been reviewing our amended bylaws. They've been very diligent and informative. Apparently, State and Federal laws have changed since we last revised our bylaws and we now are required to have some things addressed that we previously were not required to, including a conflict of interest policy and an investment policy. The lawyers have just turned around the document for the committee to review. Although we won't have completed our review by the January meeting, we will discuss some of the changes in more detail at the meeting. The final draft of the bylaws will be sent to you at least two weeks prior to our March meeting where we plan to vote to adopt them. Please mark your calendars for March 26th.

Dues are due. Checks for \$20 per year can be made out to PANYC and brought to the meeting or mailed to our treasurer: Shelly Spritzer, 301 E. 76th St., Apt. 14, New York, NY 10021. Feel free to add a donation if you'd like. It's tax deductible!

We look forward to seeing everyone at the next regularly scheduled PANYC meeting is Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 6:30pm at the Neighborhood Preservation Center.

Linda Stone
PANYC President
January, 2015

II. MEETING MINUTES

Meeting: 6:30 P.M. November 13, 2014. Neighborhood Preservation Center, 232 East 11th Street, New York, NY

Present: Cantwell, Czerkowicz, Geismar, George, Janowitz, Kautz, Linn, Loorya, Martin, Meade, Rakos, Spritzer, Stone, Turck, and Wall

Secretary's Report:

The minutes were circulated to the membership previously via email and provisionally approved at the meeting. *If anyone has any late edits, please send them to Linn (mbl2002@columbia.edu).*

Treasurer's Report:

Spritzer reported that PANYC has approximately \$3600 in savings and 38 paid members. Spritzer sent reminders to all members who have not yet paid 2014 dues. Once everyone has paid, she estimates that we will have 46 or 47 active members.

President's Report:

Stone reminded everyone that the main topic of discussion during this meeting would be the draft of the repository guidelines that Czerkowicz and Kautz have created and for which they have solicited feedback from PANYC as well as a number of other organizations and individuals. Stone will thus shorten her report and she has asked chairs of committees to report only urgent news so as to leave enough time for discussing the repository guidelines.

Stone received an email from Parks about a new **online Parks Department Capital Project Tracker**. Parks is under investigation by the mayor's office, because it has many projects that are more than 10 years old that have run out of funds and are still not completed. Sutphin suggested to Stone that this tracker is a precursor to a CEQR tracker. The link to the Parks projects tracker is: <http://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker>

The **Calver and Bolton exhibit petition** is apparently moving forward. The petition organizer is in conversation with the VP of the NYHS. Geismar has informed Bob Isaac, the petition

organizer that many of the NYHS's collections are online so that he might be able to suggest material for exhibition.

Stone will follow up on PANYC's attempt to **engage the new mayoral administration** by contacting the new LPC Commissioner.

Stone announced that PANYC received an **invitation from the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) to judge student projects for NYC History Day** on March 8th. It is likely a one-day time commitment. Board members felt PANYC should accept the invitation. Stone asked for volunteers and will email more information about the event to the membership.

Committee Reports:

Archives: Geismar has spoken with Marie O'Malley at the SSM. O'Malley will examine PANYC's archival collection to see exactly what is there. She informed Geismar that everything is safe. PANYC's materials are still there and were not damaged by flooding during Hurricane Sandy.

Awards: Cantwell, the former chair of this committee, sent guidelines about the committee's operation to Rothschild, the new chair.

Bylaws: Geismar is in touch with the Columbia Law Clinic, which helped PANYC with its bylaws in the past. A representative from the Law Clinic said that they will be happy to help us with the new draft of the bylaws and will have someone look at them before December. So, there should be new information about this to present at our next PANYC meeting.

Membership: The Board passed along two "new" member applications to be considered by the membership, one from John Turck and another from Joel Klein. Klein is a founding member whose membership had lapsed, so he was asked to re-apply. Both applications were circulated during the meeting. At the end of the meeting, members voted unanimously in favor of both.

MAS & LPC (combined report): Geismar attended the recent MAS meeting. The new chair of LPC, Meenakshi Srinivan, (who came without an attorney) made a presentation to MAS. Geismar felt that she spoke well and attempted to be transparent. Geismar spoke with her briefly before her presentation, and Srinivan "informed" Geismar about the new repository, saying that LPC is concerned about archaeology. After Srinivan's presentation, Geismar asked her publically about archaeology and asked her to please give attention to archaeology in historic districts. Commissioner Srinivan indicated it was among her concerns.

Newsletter: Our new guest editor, Roberts, will continue editing the newsletter. We thank him for his good work. The newest edition of the newsletter was distributed just before the meeting.

Please contact Roberts <troberts@paleowest.com> if you have not received a copy.

NYAC: Stone [and Geismar, both NYAC board members] attended the recent NYAC meeting in Albany that included a tour of rock quarries. The repository guidelines were a topic of discussion. The spring meeting will be held in Watertown in association with NYSAA.

Public Program: Geismar believes that this year might be the 35th PANYC Public Program, so she suggested that an appropriate theme would be one that highlights PANYC. She suggested that founding members might give talks about projects that indicate their continuing participation in New York City archaeology along with a talk by a newer PANYC member. The deadline for providing the museum with a preliminary program is in December, so there is not much time.

Discussion of draft guidelines for the repository:

Czerkowicz began the discussion of the guidelines with some important background information about why and how they were produced. She explained that for several years, Landmarks has

wanted to assess the city’s “neglected” archaeological collections—collections that no one seemed to be interested in researching and for which there was little documentation. The question of what to do with these collections became more pressing once the new repository became available and it became clear that the LPC will need to manage many collections, some of which are in more demand for study. LPC thus wanted to generate a set of collections management guidelines, to ensure that valued collections could be preserved and made accessible. The repository has a limited amount of space, so one thing that needed to be considered was whether anything (and, if so, what) could be deaccessioned.

The process of developing the guidelines included speaking with archaeologists and material culture experts and reading published and unpublished guidance. Czerkowicz found that some archaeologists and some museums had blanket policies for certain kinds of materials very common in their collections, such as deaccessioning all shell, or all brick, or all fire-cracked rock, or all field school collections. She believed that this approach would not work for NYC, however. This has been confirmed through her conversations with archaeologists.

As a result of Czerkowicz’s conversations, many changes to the draft guidelines are already in the works. A new draft will be ready by early December. Czerkowicz reinforced that culling the collection is not the main purpose of the guidelines. The main purpose is to ensure that the collections are preserved and accessible to researchers.

Czerkowicz spoke with the PANYC Board about how to structure the conversation and requested that we organize the conversation around bigger ideas, since there would not be enough time for line-by-line edits. During the Board meeting Stone and other Board members presented a few issues that they felt would be helpful to discuss and Czerkowicz grouped them into three categories, philosophical vs. important line items vs. impacts of the guidelines:

Philosophical:

1. Sampling strategies and “culling.” Stone pointed out that Sutphin is keen for PANYC to discuss these strategies especially for unprovenienced material and poorly documented materials from old field schools.
2. How much should site reports be relied upon? A lot of credence in the guidelines is given to the site report.
3. How are collections researched? What is the research value/ potential of these collections?
4. Context- how to define an important one? In the current draft of the guidelines features like privies, cisterns, and middens are assessed as not being especially significant and yet these are the kinds of contexts most often excavated in urban projects.

Line Items:

1. Is a faunal sample an artifact or an ecofact? Should bones have different sampling guidelines than botanical remains?
2. What to recommend re: botanical samples and faunal samples (that may have a shelf life) and architectural artifacts (that are often numerous, large, and don’t always yield a lot of information, etc.—like window glass and bricks)?

Impacts:

1. Who is to bear the costs (funds and labor) of implementing the storage guidelines, e.g., re-packing artifacts?

2. Is the terminology of the storage space as a “repository” misleading, if there is not going to be room for everything going forward and if the space is not permanent?

Discussion related to these questions ensued, although not in the same order. Conversation about one question often overlapped with others, and sampling (culling) was the issue that received the most attention. Here is a summary:

Sampling: Czerkowicz added that the guidelines are not aimed at excavation techniques or field or lab methods. They are about how artifacts will move to a museum/ repository. A PANYC member pointed out that city agencies will read the sampling repository guidelines as field sampling guidelines, and this is extremely problematic. Czerkowicz acknowledged this issue and stated that what had been previously written in the draft guidelines about sampling specific numbers (e.g., 20) of kinds of artifacts has already been removed. It will be replaced with language that gives much more discretion to the archaeologists. Neither Landmarks nor Czerkowicz want to be the ones making the decisions about what artifacts to keep. The reason why the 20-sherd limits, etc. were initially included in the guidelines was to address older “legacy” collections. These collections were older ones in which sampling had not been done in the field and for which there was limited provenience information. (What should be done with a large box of unprovenienced window glass sherds?)

Geismar pointed out that all archaeology involves sampling. Archaeologists never get the whole picture or all of the objects left behind. Thus, it is reasonable to sample artifacts in the field and in the repository, BUT it is even more important to have a sampling strategy and to explain what that strategy is. Archaeologists have to have some way to try to account for what is missing. Linn pointed out that collections “sampled” in the repository had already been sampled in the field and then probably in the lab, so all of these strategies must be accounted for.

Czerkowicz responded that they have first tried to capture as much information about all of the collections as possible, recording everything. They have not culled anything yet, and will not do so until the guidelines are in place. They are especially concerned about capturing information about objects that have or are in the process of deteriorating, like bags of mortar dust. What should be done with items like that?

Janowitz explained that we don’t know in the present what kinds of questions about materials we might have in the future. A bag of mortar dust is as valuable for chemical analysis as a bag of intact mortar.

Wall agreed and added that Tom McGovern has been doing DNA analysis on bone, including unidentifiable pieces of bone (a type of object that the guidelines consider for culling).

Geismar (earlier) had mentioned that a rock that had been collected during her excavation at 175 Water Street was re-examined 35 years later by Wall, who found an “X” on it. That “X” meant nothing to the archaeologists at the time of excavation, but by the time of Wall’s re-analysis, it had come to be understood as an indicator of African religion and is thought to be a cosmogram. Wall followed up on this point about a recent request she had had from Jed Levin who wanted to know if there was any Colonoware in NYC collections. There probably is, but it might not be recorded as such in site reports, since Colonoware was not something archaeologists were attuned to until recently.

So, this is why many members hold the point of view that we really need to keep everything. We don’t know what questions we will be able to ask of the collections in the future. There is an infinite research potential.

Members asked if the guidelines were being tailored to the current repository space and 10-year lease or if they are being guided by philosophical principles about collections.

Kautz responded that the guidelines are not just about sampling, but about how to store objects so that they are preserved. The main goals of the repository are preserving the collections and making them accessible.

Legacy Collections: Stone asked for clarification about the term "legacy collections." Would new collections one day become legacy collections? Czerkowicz responded that this term is only being applied to a few collections over 35 years old that LPC had identified as neglected and lacking appropriate documentation.

Purpose of guidelines: Stone asked if the guidelines are being tailored to this particular repository space (which is limited) or if they are being formed on the basis of values?

Wall suggested that a way around the issue of limited space might be to have another (larger) repository outside of the city, where space is cheaper, and where things that are not in demand for research now can be kept for the future.

Another member suggested a rotating system whereby items could be brought in from the offsite repository to the one in the city for research.

Research value: Czerkowicz responded that if people express interest in items that have not been studied before, that would help to make the case to keep them.

Wall reminded members about the call for citations that Linn sent to the membership. Wall and Rothschild are assembling a bibliography of publications that use NYC collections as examples to show the research potential of NYC collections. Linn will re-send to the request to the membership. The bibliography would also make a nice addition to the PANYC website and be very useful for researchers.

Linn and Loorya remarked that more people would be interested in studying the collections if it were easier to find out what is there.

Czerkowicz highlighted that Kautz is in the process of creating a fantastic searchable database of the collections, including detailed provenience information (like depth and how excavated in addition to context). Kautz has sampled a wide variety of materials from a number of excavations and reports to develop the database, including:

2003 Hartgen City Hall Park (Tweed Courthouse)

1995 and 1998 City Hall Park projects

Shovel tests from 1985 and 1987 at Snug Harbor

Stone Street project

She's also included materials mailed by Stanley *Wisniewski* in 2011 that they think relate to a dog burial excavated at College Point.

Cantwell suggested that Czerkowicz and Kautz bring the boxes to Solecki, who participated in those excavations and who has an amazing memory and thus can probably supply more information.

Site report: Stone asked members to share their opinions about the guidelines' reliance on site reports. All agreed that site reports are limited by time and budget as well as the technologies and ideas available when they are written. A site report is a first attempt at analysis and not the final word. Site reports thus should not be solely relied upon to determine the research value of objects.

Czerkowicz asked how to change the language of the guidelines to reflect this. How can she explain the importance of archaeology and of collections beyond the results of the site report or publications to audiences who do not necessarily value or know much about archaeology? How is it best to make the case for the value of neglected objects?

Wall responded that this is difficult and that Czerkowicz can ask PANYC for help, but that she and a group that recently sent Czerkowicz a separate set of comments (Cantwell, Janowitz, Linn, Rothschild, Seignoret, and Wall) have also suggested that Czerkowicz form an advisory board of archaeologists and materials specialists for assistance with these kinds of issues.

Czerkowicz made clear that they absolutely will not cull Solecki's or *Wisniewski's collections*, even if lacking documentation.

Specificity in guidelines: Geismar responded that the cases of Solecki's and Wisniewski's collections are good examples of how decisions about collections need to be made on a case by case basis. It is better to write the guidelines so that they allow flexibility.

Stone agreed with and followed up on Geismar's point. Stone had previously asked Sutphin what the next steps would be for the development of the guidelines. Sutphin informed her that after the feedback from PANYC and other organizations has been incorporated, the new draft will be reviewed by LPC, including their lawyers. It is likely that any changes the lawyers make will not be subject to archaeological review. So, this is yet another reason why allowing more discretion in the guidelines to retain artifacts is important. Otherwise, the guidelines could be used by agencies to try to collect and retain (and pay for) as little as possible.

Faunal remains: Czerkowicz asked for the members' advice about faunal remains. She stated that she has encountered some who consider faunal remains to be ecofacts that require only sampling, while others consider them to be artifacts that require retention. What should be done with poorly preserved faunal remains, in particular?

Janowitz reiterated points made previously about new questions and technologies we might have in the future that are impossible to predict in the present. The example of DNA testing is a good one. Decades ago, who knew that such testing would be possible? It is possible that DNA testing will become much easier and cheaper in the future and that there will be other more available technologies as well.

Members agreed. Spritzer followed up with an example about how PANYC members recently used new pXRF technology during a Met Chapter-sponsored workshop to evaluate a brick to determine its chemical composition and origin. In the short time since this Met Chapter workshop, pXRF technology has become even cheaper and easier to use.

Loorya added another example of how researchers are now able to take a small core from a clam or oyster shell and find out information about its whole lifecycle.

George agreed and pointed out that many CRM firms do not have faunal experts on staff and do not have the budget to hire a consultant. Thus analysis of faunal material in site reports tends to be scanty and is usually not performed by experts. This is yet another crucial reason to retain faunal material. One cannot assume that it has already been properly evaluated.

Czerkowicz asked for feedback more specifically about unprovenanced faunal remains. She stated that out of about 80 boxes of faunal material, about 35 boxes worth of faunal remains are not included in site reports. Why are these unprovenanced remains important to retain? She explained that she has received conflicting opinions from faunal experts. Some have told her they believe it is only necessary to keep faunal remains from dense deposits and that items from sheet middens, for example, can be sampled. Others have said that they believe it is necessary to keep everything. And then there are other techniques specific to certain kinds of faunal remains. According to shell experts at the AMNH, for example, it is only necessary to keep the “left handed” valves (with hinge) of oyster shells. The North American Archaeology lab has only retained 30 left-handed valves per excavation context for St. Catherine’ Island. They believe that this will allow for as much DNA and other forms of testing that might be needed.

Members re-iterated that they believe it is important to keep everything, because there is no way of knowing how many samples are enough for the kinds of questions and technologies that will be available in the future. This is especially true for bone, because there are many species of animals and each is composed of so many different bones. There is no equivalent of the left-hand valve in a goat.

Martin asked how the repository will store bone.

Stone replied that McGowan (whom Czerkowicz has consulted about bone) has explained to her the importance of periodic re-evaluation of faunal remains in the repository. He stated that every object has a “shelf life,” and certain materials are easier for curators to evaluate if they are bagged with only like materials and stored together (e.g., bone only in bags).

Czerkowicz added that separate storage for certain items aids their preservation. Semi-humid environments like the repository (about 40% humidity) are ok for glass and ceramics, whereas bone preserves best in more humid environments (about 55% humidity), and metal preserves best in drier environments. So, the idea behind bagging bone and metal separately is to create separate sections of the repository for bone and metal where humidity can be adjusted somewhat to help preserve each material. As of yet, there are no provisions in the repository to store items in more formal separately controlled environments or for waterlogged items (e.g., wood) or items that need refrigeration (e.g., leather).

Impacts of guidelines: Stone brought up the issue that the lease for the repository is only for ten years. She asked if there is a longer term plan in case the Durst family will want the space back when the 10-year lease expires.

Stone and the members again suggested that LPC find a more permanent and affordable storage facility outside of the city so that the repository can be used more for researchers and possibly for mini-exhibits.

Geismar added that we need to talk to the city about this-- to the mayor and/or the new LPC commissioner.

Discussion ensued about the new mayoral administration's attitude towards archaeology and how it still remains unknown.

Loorya mentioned a recent case of botched historic preservation on the new mayor's watch. An old insurance building in Tribeca with one of the oldest intact clockworks was recently sold by the city to a developer, who promised to maintain the landmarked exterior (and the clock). The developer, however, tore out the clock to convert the building to a condo.

Next steps: Wall asked Czerkowicz to outline the next steps. Czerkowicz explained that she would make revisions based on all the feedback she has received and send a revised draft to LPC around Thanksgiving. This new draft will then be circulated to PANYC in early December, and we will have a chance to comment.

Czerkowicz asked that everyone please continue to send her comments <camille.czerkowicz@gmail.com>. Czerkowicz can include a cover letter with recommendations about issues relevant to archaeology, but not under the direct purview of the repository guidelines, such as cost to archaeologists of implementing storage guidelines.

Stone and the membership thanked Czerkowicz for all of her work on the guidelines and for her transparency and willingness to solicit PANYC's advice.

New Business: Janowitz attended the meeting last spring about how natural gas projects are impacting cultural resources. The meeting had nothing to do with Section 106, because the natural gas projects are exempt. The goal was to try to engage archaeologists, historic preservationists, and representatives from natural gas companies in friendly conversation about best practices. Janowitz will send more information about it to Stone to circulate to the membership.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM

Respectfully submitted by Meredith Linn, PANYC Secretary

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

2015 Scheduled Meeting Dates

Thursday, March 26, 2015 (Annual Meeting)

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

*Remaining 2015 meeting dates to be announced soon.

Current Board Members (2014-2015):

President: Linda Stone

Vice President: Joan Geismar

Secretary: Meredith Linn

Treasurer: Shelly Spritzer

Board Members: Anne-Marie Cantwell
Camille Czerkowicz
Diane George
Elizabeth Martin
Christopher Ricciardi

Past President: Alyssa Loorya

To Contact any Officer or Board Member please email: info@panyarchaeology.com

IV. UPCOMING EVENTS

Event	Location	Date	Contact
Exhibit: Unlocking Two Revolutionary Maps: The Ratzel Maps	Brooklyn Historical Society	Through February 26, 2015	http://www.brooklynhistory.org/exhibitions/current.html
Gilded New York: Explore the Visual Culture of Elite New York in the late-19 th and early-20 th Centuries	Museum of the City of New York, 103rd and Fifth Ave.	Ongoing	http://www.mcny.org/content/gilded-new-york
"The High Line as Urban Accelerator: a conversation" New York Historical Society: "Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad" Eric Foner, Randall Kennedy (Moderator)	New York Historical Society, Central Park West at 77th St.	January 21, 2015	http://www.nyhistory.org/programs/gateway-freedom-hidden-history-underground-railroad
High Line co-founder Joshua David, architectural critic Paul Goldberger, and Vishaan Chakrabarti of SHoP Architect	Museum of the City of New York, 103rd and Fifth Ave.	February 4, 2015	http://www.mcny.org/event/high-line-urban-accelerator-conversation
Museum of the City of New York talk: "Stepping into the Yards: a Mega Project on the Hudson"	Museum of the City of New York, 103rd and Fifth Ave.	March 3, 2015 6:30pm	http://www.mcny.org/event/stepping-g-yards
Mobilizing the Past for a Digital Future: the Potential of Digital Archaeology	Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston, MA	February 27-28, 2015	http://uwm.edu/mobilizing-the-past/program/
Society for American Archaeology – Annual Conference	San Francisco, CA	April 15-19, 2015	http://www.saa.org/aboutthesociety/annualmeeting/tabid/138/default.asp x

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V. MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP/NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION:

If you are interested in joining PANYC or if you would like to subscribe to the PANYC Newsletter, please complete the form below and return it to:

Meredith Linn, PANYC Secretary
Email: mbl2002@columbia.edu

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE: _____

ZIP (+ FOUR): _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please indicate preferred mailing address and check below as appropriate.

I wish to apply for membership to PANYC, which includes subscription to the Newsletter, and would like to receive the application form (\$20) ____

I wish to subscribe to the PANYC Newsletter only (\$10) ____

I wish to make an additional donation to PANYC ____

I wish to receive the PANYC Newsletter in digital (e-format) ____

I wish to receive the PANYC Newsletter in printed (mailed) form ____

The PANYC Membership package can be found at: www.panycarchaeology.org

If you have any questions please email: info@panycarchaeology.org