

RMAA Annual Report, 2020–2021

The following summary covers the period October 1, 2020 through October 19, 2021 to include the results of the 2021 Rocky Mountain Anthropological Association election for the Board of Directors. Previous annual reports can be found on the “News/Announcements” page of the RMAA website.

RMAA Board Meetings

Three RMAA meetings of the Board of Directors were held during the past year, all via Google Meet video conference calls. The first of these meetings took place on October 23, 2020 and was conducted as the annual general business of RMAA, as required in the bylaws. Agenda items discussed during this meeting were as follows:

- Building and organizing a list of RMAA/RMAC state and province representatives
- Producing RMAA/RMAC-branded merchandise for fund-raising, and brain-storming other fund-raising methods
- Promoting current research projects and RMAC presentations
- Providing financial and other support to students for participation in RMAC
- Building a list of action items to be addressed before the next meeting

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on November 12 and were finalized on December 4, 2020.

Five weeks later the second meeting of the Board of Directors took place on December 4, 2020 as a follow-up to the annual meeting. Most of this meeting was devoted to discussion of the next Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference scheduled for the fall of 2021 in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. Toward that end, RMAC 2021 co-chairs Bonnie Pitblado and Jason LaBelle were invited to attend. Agenda items discussed during this meeting included:

- Current status of RMAC 2021 planning and expansion of the conference committee to include local help from Adams State University personnel

- RMAC 2021 format and timing considering the on-going Covid-19 pandemic
- RMAC 2021 advertising and publicity outlets
- Potential RMAC 2021 activities beyond traditional paper and poster presentations, and field trips
- Promotion of RMAC 2021 to avocational archaeologists
- Group camping options for the conference
- Scheduling RMAC to avoid conflicts with other conferences
- Need for start-up funds in RMAC 2021 planning, and other RMAC-related fund-raising
- RMAC merchandising possibilities
- Field trip logistics such as busing vs. car-pooling
- Clarifications on the minutes of the previous board meeting

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on December 12, 2020 and the final version was approved at the next meeting on August 13, 2021.

The third board meeting of the year occurred on August 13, 2021, immediately following the cancellation of RMAC 2021 planned for Alamosa, CO on September 9-11, 2021. Agenda items discussed during this meeting were as follows:

- RMAA Treasurer's report
- RMAA/RMAC fundraising to replace lost revenues from cancelled conference registration fees
- RMAA Nominating Committee report and the upcoming election for the Board of Directors
- Finding a replacement for the retiring RMAA webmaster
- Consequences of cancelling RMAC 2021 including future coordination with the Great Basin Anthropological Conference (GBAC)
- Options for helping students find outlets for their posters submitted to the now-cancelled RMAC 2021

The draft minutes of this meeting were made available for review to Board members on September 13, 2021 and will be subject to approval by the Board at the

annual meeting. In Article 2.7 of the RMAA bylaws, the annual meeting of the organization is to occur in September or October each year under normal circumstances. This year, the board agreed to hold the 2021 annual meeting on October 29, 2021, in an online format beginning at 10:00 am. Formal notification of this meeting was made via an emailed invitation to the Board of Directors and RMAC 2021 co-chairs on August 17.

RMAA Officers and Directors

The eight Officers and Directors serving this past year were: Kenneth Cannon, President; Jennifer Borresen Lee, Vice-President; Spencer Pelton, Treasurer; Kevin Black, Secretary; and Directors Brian Andrews, Molly Boeka Cannon, William Eckerle, and Rebecca Sgouros. Four of those eight finished their current four-year terms—K. Cannon, Lee, Eckerle, and Andrews—and their positions opened for the election which ended on October 8, 2021.

Efforts to identify candidates to run for election to the Board of Directors intensified in mid-July. State and province representatives who had previously agreed to help with publicity were contacted at this point. The Nominating Committee, with help from other Directors, found seven people who agreed to run for the four opening positions on the Board. Kenneth Cannon, current RMAA President, volunteered to run for reelection. The other six candidates for the Board of Directors were Paul Buckner, Richard Currit, Beth Horton, Jena Sadd, Matt Stirn, and Aaron Whittenburg.

Director Rebecca Sgouros volunteered to organize a virtual election using the Mailchimp platform. At the August 13 Board meeting, the Directors agreed on a September 7 deadline date for close of nominations. Then, using a master list of about 770 email addresses compiled from multiple sources, on September 9 she distributed the ballot with the need for an opt-in reply (a Mailchimp requirement). Ultimately, by September 16, there were 124 positive replies to initiate a three-week balloting period. A follow-up reminder about the election was sent out on September 25.

Forty-four ballots were received by the October 8 deadline and, unfortunately, there was a tie vote between two candidates for the fourth position. Thus, the election

deadline was extended to October 18, the additional votes cast having broken the tie. The four incoming Directors serving on the board for 2021-2025 will be Kenneth Cannon, Beth Horton, Jena Sadd, and Matt Stirn. Their first duties will commence at the annual general business meeting scheduled on October 29, 2021. The three unsuccessful candidates were notified of the results as well.

RMAA Finances

Spencer Pelton, RMAA Treasurer, provided an updated summary of annual financial activity on October 9. The checking account balance—on deposit in a US Bank in Laramie, WY—was \$12,879.44 as of October 1, 2020, and finished at \$11,998.45 on September 30, 2021. With the cancellation of RMAC 2021 before any expenditures were made, only four checks of \$100 or more were written during the year. The largest of these expenses was \$340 to Labenz and Associates for tax preparation services.

At the start of calendar year 2021, president Ken Cannon renewed RMAA's agreement with Labenz & Associates for tax services. The following month he received a request from Judy Wolf for a donation to help promote Wyoming Archaeological Awareness Month. The Board approved a donation of \$250, which was made in early March. In a similar vein, the Board was approached by Bonnie Pitblado about supporting the September 2022 International Mountain Conference to be held in Innsbruck, Austria. However, although several directors expressed tentative agreement on support for student attendance, no final action was taken.

In early September, the organizers of GBAC sent President Cannon a request for a donation to support their upcoming conference in Las Vegas, NV. After a brief discussion, the Board approved a donation of \$100. Finally, website management by David Rockwell was billed in the amount of \$220.99, paid on September 21.

RMAA Bylaws

At the start of the report period, the Bylaws document in effect was the updated version that had been approved by the Board of Directors on August 14, 2019 and

posted to the “About RMAA” page on the website. No significant new Bylaws issues arose during the past year and, therefore, no changes to the posted Bylaws have been made or proposed.

RMAA Merchandise and Other Fund-Raising

Continuing a conversation on-going from the previous year, the Board of Directors discussed options to generate revenues for the organization beyond any profits resulting from the Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference. One of these options focused on selling RMAA/RMAC-branded merchandise such as apparel (hats, shirts, jackets, etc.), coffee mugs, travel mugs, and the like.

Director Rebecca Sgouros volunteered to head up this effort and, on October 26, 2020 she began by sending the Board some initial ideas on designs for shirts and jackets of various styles. In mid-December, president Ken Cannon suggested the Board consider designing digital greeting cards for fundraising purposes. Specifically, he cited the website ecocards.org that contains the promotion: “Each time you send a greeting card through EcoCards, a minimum \$1* donation is made to the charity of your choice. Create an EcoCard, then choose the donation amount and designated charity for each card sent.” *A 15% processing fee is added per card sent.

In mid-August, Director Sgouros set up an account with the online merchandising company Bonfire.com. On August 27, she initiated a discussion about the details of our merchandising effort, focused on the types and costs of goods the Board members were most interested in selling first. Appropriate prices to attract buyers were a major part of these conversations. In early October, she provided the Directors with a list of four types of shirts and hoodies, and proposed prices for final approval.

RMAC 2021

Planning for the conference began in earnest this year, after the choice of southern Colorado as the location had been decided at RMAC 2019 in Logan, Utah. The initial conference organizers were co-chairs Bonnie Pitblado (University of Oklahoma) and Jason LaBelle (Colorado State University), who intended to include a theme honoring

the career of the late Dennis Stanford given his long history of field work in the San Luis Valley and adjacent mountains in southern Colorado. The conference committee was expanded in September 2020 to include local assistance from Caroline Gabe and Chris Merriman of Adams State University in Alamosa, CO.

Early conversations about RMAC 2021 during the year acknowledged the challenges of organizing a conference during the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. Considering the potential limitations on large indoor gatherings that might still be in place should the pandemic persist, the co-chairs suggested focusing RMAC events on outdoor activities such as field trips to well-known local archaeological sites. Among the sites suggested by Board members and the co-chairs were Cattle Guard, Black Mountain, Upper Crossing, Pike's Stockade, and various rock art sites.

In early March, co-chair Jason LaBelle began contacting prospective field trip leaders to previously suggested sites. The following month, he circulated a general announcement about RMAC 2021 to be posted online, mentioning that registration would open on June 1. However, in early June with inquiries about registration coming in, the online signup system was not yet in place.

Conversations ensued throughout the month of June concerning all the logistical details including the PayPal registration process, presentation abstract submissions, field trips, liability insurance, and proof of RMAA's non-profit status. A phone conversation on July 2 between president Ken Cannon and secretary Kevin Black about online registration and abstract submissions was followed by a request to the webmaster to design the necessary links to accomplish both. These details were in place on the website by July 9. In mid-July, RMAA's state and province representatives were asked to help publicize this year's RMAC.

Also in early July, secretary Kevin Black initiated discussions with History Colorado and BLM personnel about conducting an RMAC field trip to the Pike's Stockade area that might include an extensive, time-consuming hiking component. This idea was generally supported by co-chair Jason LaBelle given that all other planned field trips were to "drive-up" site locations with little hiking involved. Mr. Black made arrangements to conduct a pre-conference field trip in August to evaluate

how many field trip events could be reasonably done in a day considering travel and round-trip hiking time. Plans for this field visit were finalized in early August.

In mid-July, co-chair Jason LaBelle began contacting leaders of the proposed field trips to submit logistical details including maps with parking information, a short reading list, and site-specific talking points to discuss while driving to those locations. In July and August, Dr. LaBelle broadly disseminated a call for registrations to RMAC 2021. Shortly thereafter, the Board of Directors discussed scheduling a meeting to focus on nominations for the coming election at RMAC 2021. At the same time the conference committee members were considering their options in light of the on-going pandemic with the rapidly rising number of cases of the 'Delta variant' of Covid-19.

On August 11, the Board of Directors formally scheduled their next meeting two days hence but, the next day, the RMAC 2021 committee announced their decision to cancel the conference. The registration figure for the planned September 9–11 conference in Alamosa, CO at the time of this cancellation was 41 people, including eight students. Of those 41 registrants, nine had intended to present a poster at the conference. Financially, total RMAC expenditures were negligible because the deadlines to make deposits to reserve blocks of rooms at local lodging establishments had not been reached at the time of the August 12 cancellation. Other routine conference expenditures likewise had not yet been made. In mid-August, the conference committee was asked to provide a summary of RMAC 2021 registrations and costs in time for the annual meeting.

The consequences of cancelling the 2021 conference were discussed at length during the August 13 meeting of the Board of Directors. One question not yet answered was whether to reschedule RMAC in Alamosa for 2022 or to keep the existing odd-year event with Laramie, WY as the next venue in 2023. Related to this odd-year planning has been the practice of holding the biennial RMAC and GBAC conferences in alternating years. But because of the pandemic, GBAC organizers decided to reschedule their cancelled 2020 conference to October 2021. Whether GBAC will resume holding conferences in future even-numbered years is not currently known.

RMAC 2023

As previously decided at RMAC 2019 in Logan, UT, RMAC 2023 will be held in Laramie, WY but the conference committee has not yet been announced and no other details are available at this time.

RMAA Social Media and Website

In early January, president Ken Cannon received a request to post a job announcement. This precipitated a brief discussion among the Board of Directors about whether that kind of posting was appropriate for our online outlets. The directors generally agreed that we should approve such postings so long as they fit our anthropological theme and location in the Rocky Mountain region.

Webmaster David Rockwell submitted his final report on website activity for the previous year on October 13, 2020 and followed with a 2020-2021 report on September 13, 2021. He served as the primary webmaster through August 18, 2021, working from his residence in Montana. On August 19, Mary Sullivan—recently retired from History Colorado in Denver—was announced as the new RMAA webmaster with help in the transition from Mr. Rockwell. Kevin Black, RMAA Secretary, continued as the lead contact for prospective changes and updates.

During the year, three of the nine web pages were updated. Six website pages were not updated this year: About RMAA, Member Projects, Forum, Past Meetings, Links, and Contact Us. Updated pages are as follows:

“Home” page: The most prominent change revised the pop-up screen with a new RMAC 2021 announcement, posted on April 10. This was updated in July when the registration and abstract submission links were created (see below). In mid-August, the pop-up screen and underlying home page were updated with the announcement of the cancellation of RMAC 2021.

“News/Announcements”: A link to the annual report for 2019–2020 was added on November 2. Also, the RMAC 2021 announcement was posted on April 10. In early May, treasurer Spencer Pelton forwarded a fieldwork opportunity announcement to the board for their approval, and it was posted here on May 4 (re: Willow Springs

Campsite in southern Wyoming). On July 19, an announcement was added about this year's election for the four opening seats on the Board of Directors, as well as a call for a new volunteer webmaster. The webmaster language was then deleted in late August.

“RMAC 2019/2021”: This page was revised late in 2020 to the updated heading ‘RMAC 2021’ with a note on further details yet to come. The general announcement about RMAC 2021 in Alamosa was then included on this page in April and revised on June 4 to reflect a delay in setting up online registrations. In early July, further significant revisions were made, setting up the conference registration and abstract submission links. On July 19, language was added about this year's election for the four opening seats on the Board of Directors. The announcement about the cancellation of RMAC 2021 was added on August 13, and the wording of the upcoming election was updated ten days later.

Miscellaneous

On October 15, 2020, secretary Kevin Black distributed the draft of the 2019-2020 annual report to the Board of Directors, and it was posted in final form on November 2. A month later, Mr. Black sent the Board updated spreadsheets on RMAA email contacts and organization history (list of past directors, conference chairs, field trip organizers, etc.). As a follow-up in early December, director Molly Cannon sent the Board a revised and expanded spreadsheet of RMAA email contacts and RMAC sponsors. In mid-December, president Ken Cannon received the mailing list of the Wyoming Association of Professional Archaeologists (WAPA) for integration into the RMAA list.

At the request of the Board, director Rebecca Sgouros set up a general email account and password for the Board's use in late October 2020: <rockymountainanthro@gmail.com>.

Following up on earlier discussions, on October 29, 2020 director Bill Eckerle sent the Board of Directors his initial list of six prominent “Archaeologists of the Rocky Mountain High Country.” His idea has been to create and publicize a kind of ‘Hall of

Fame' of archaeologists who have been most active and influential in their mountain-focused research.

No other RMAA business was reported during the year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Black
RMAA Secretary