

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Shef Rogers, SHARP President



Welcome to our second virtual AGM. I had very much hoped not to have to write those words, but here we are. SHARP begins its twenty-ninth year as a scholarly society with a glimpse toward possible normality, but much uncertainty remains. However, the one thing we can be absolutely certain about is that this year's conference will offer the same intellectual stimulation and fascinating breadth of perspectives and topics that all of us have come to appreciate at SHARP conferences. I am delighted that we've been able to hold a conference with a full suite of papers, and I hope you will find that this year's theme sparks lots of new ideas and collaborations.

As always, I'd particularly like to acknowledge those of you for whom this is your first SHARP AGM. To help with the AGM's proceedings and to provide you with a copy of the agenda, we produce this annual report to summarise the Society's activities since our last annual conference. We hope this will help you identify the various officers of the Society, and if you are interested in more information about anything we do, any member of the EC will be happy to answer your questions; just email them at the address that follows each report.

THE SOCIETY'S STRUCTURE & CONSTITUTION

SHARP is governed by an Executive Council of elected officers, a Board of Directors (chaired by Marija Dalbello for the past two years), and a Nominating Committee. SHARP's activities are made possible through the further efforts of numerous appointees (most obviously the editors of *Book History*, *SHARP News*, *Lingua Franca*, but also the various review editors, the moderators of SHARP-L, the DeLong Book Prize judges, and the archivist), as well as, of course, the membership as a whole. As always, we are very grateful to all those members who volunteer their time to support the Society. A wide range of members contribute in some specific volunteer role to enable SHARP to carry out its activities. If you would like to be more involved in SHARP, please contact any of the EC officers. I'd especially like to thank all those who agreed to stand in the recent elections: we had an outstanding slate of candidates and I'm sure all of us found it difficult to select among them.

Finally, I would like to thank our Executive Assistant, Ellen Barth, for her significant attention to the website, her assistance with the DeLong Prize process, and the many other research tasks she undertakes to help the EC make informed decisions.

PRESIDENT & VICE-PRESIDENT

As of this meeting, Shef Rogers and Will Slauter have completed their first terms and start their second terms. Will has been very active representing SHARP in the American Council of Learned Societies, from whom we gain a great deal of information and the opportunity to join other scholarly societies in shared initiatives. For example, this past spring SHARP members Jesse Erikson, Dipanjan Maitra, Will Slauter, and Sarah Werner participated in a series of ACLS workshops that brought together emerging scholars, representatives of learned societies, and university administrators to discuss ideas and strategies for advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in the academic world. Shef has been a member, along with Colin Ramsey, Lisa Maruca and Sarah Warner, of the new Finance Committee that Board member Danielle Fuller has chaired. That committee will report its findings to next year's AGM. Shef has also been working on clarifying the responsibilities of a new paid Director of Communications, and we will appoint a person to that position as soon as possible for a three-year trial. SHARP membership remains strong and our finances are in good order, so we have options for how we address our

uncertain future, and we are always eager to hear from members about anything you think we should be doing that we are not, or that we could do better.

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FINANCES

Colin Ramsey reports that we remain in a solid financial position, with current balances of \$271,455.00 in our cash accounts and \$125,382.00 in our Certificates of Deposit. Because of the uncertainties of the pandemic, the 2021 budget was intentionally smaller than previous years, and we remain well within that budget: since our membership has held up reasonably well, our income to expense ratio is sound. Because of the University of Münster's support for this year's virtual conference, we have had savings from both our conference travel grants and our subscription to ConfTools. We also received a larger than average pass-through from the 2019 Amherst conference, a result of lower-than-expected charges from the host institutions.

The newly formed Finance Committee has investigated the appropriateness of our corporate structure (which will not change) and possible investment options beyond certificates of deposit for some of our reserves. That committee will report to the full membership at the 2022 AGM. The 2022 budget will be more ambitious, incorporating a new paid position, but is well within our means, and I am confident the Society is well placed to manage whatever the future brings.

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MEMBERSHIP and SOCIETY AND REGIONAL LIAISONS

As of early July 2021, SHARP has almost 800 members. This year, the percentage of North American members has shrunk from 71% to 64%, while the relative number of European members has increased, from 23% to 28%. The number of members from other parts of the world has increased as well, from 5% to 8%. These include members from Oceania (34), Asia (17), South America (5), and Africa (4). Interestingly, our 2:1 ratio of full to student/unwaged members has stayed remarkably consistent across the last three years, despite economic setbacks and increasing academic precarity.

In the context of an especially difficult 18 months, SHARP is grateful for its donors. In accordance with most similarly sized academic societies, SHARP added a new membership level this year. Patron memberships are now available at \$250, while Sustaining memberships remain at \$125. To show our appreciation, starting next year, Sustaining Members, Patrons, and Donors will be listed on our Annual Report, which is shared at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and posted online. We have also changed procedures so that both Patron and Sustaining members receive receipts outlining which part of the membership is considered a donation for tax purposes. Donations to SHARP, which can be made [here](#), allow us to fund several [prizes, awards and fellowships](#), including [ECR Lightning Seed Grants](#) and our new [BIPOC Scholar Research Development Grants](#). They help support our publications, including [Book History](#), [Lingua Franca](#), and [SHARP News](#). They also allow us to subsidize conference technology and travel grants.

SHARP is happy to welcome Dr. Karla Ann Merino Nielsen, Curator of Literary Collections at the Huntington Library, as our new liaison to the Bibliographical Society of America. Anyone who wishes to become a liaison between another scholarly society and SHARP can contact me at members@sharpweb.org for more information.

members@sharpweb.org

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

January 2021 saw the launch of "[SHARP in the Classroom](#)," a section of *SHARP News* devoted to all things pedagogy. The initial cluster included two syllabuses that focused on text technology courses, one syllabus and assignment on scrapbooks, an assignment on using digital collections, and an account of developing a pandemic pedagogy by using lo-tech digital tools. The second issue is well underway for late August publication, with a cluster of student work describing their experience in a

book lab, the syllabuses used for that course, and more. “SHARP in the News” is edited by the current Member-at-Large, Sarah Werner, and issues are planned to be released bi-annually in January and August. SHARP members are encouraged to submit their syllabuses and assignments to this new resource and to contact the editor with queries at sharpclassroom@sharpweb.org.

N.B.: Sarah has been elected to the role of Director of Electronic Resources but will continue to edit “Sharp in the Classroom” until a new Member-at-Large (Pedagogy) has been appointed. Please consider whether this is a role you might be interested in applying for.

atlarge@sharpweb.org

CONFERENCES

Due to expanded duties at her university, Josée Vincent had to step aside as Director of Conferences late in 2020. The President stood in as Acting Director of Conferences until Alison Newman was elected last month to the position. The EC recognised that the Director of Conferences role was a particularly demanding position even prior to the pandemic and is in the process of trialling a paid appointment to help manage SHARP’s communications and to support the Director of Conferences with the myriad details of planning our events. The President is hugely grateful to Corinna Norrick-Rühl and her team at Münster for making this year’s conference possible, and we continue to hope that it will be possible to meet in person in Amsterdam next June.

conferences@sharpweb.org

TRANSNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Jan Hillgärtner will begin his first full term as Director of Transnational Affairs after having been appointed last year. SHARP is currently planning to provide a lightning seed grant for a meeting to establish a book history group in Greece later this year and to support a third research symposium in Vilnius, Lithuania in the second half of 2022. SHARP continued its commitment to support the conference “English Literature in your Pocket: The Tauchnitz Edition and other Paperback Series” which was postponed by one year to November 2021. SHARP has over 30 regional liaisons who also report to the Director about book history activities in their countries and help promote awareness of SHARP.

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PUBLICATIONS

2020/21 has been a busy year for Publications! In the first half of 2020, we brought in a new editorial team and then rolled out the new *SHARP News* at #SHARPinFocus. *SHARP News* is now open access and includes exciting new content such as a pedagogy section and conversations between established and emerging scholars under the expert direction of Andie Silva and her team (<https://www.sharpweb.org/sharpnews/>). In the past year, we also set up our open access journal *Lingua Franca* for the next 6-year editorial period. Co-founder of the journal, Martyn Lyons, stepped down, and we are very grateful to him for his initiative and service. The editorial team now consists of co-founder Susan Pickford alongside Cynthia Gabbay and Mariana de Moraes Silveira. We also rolled out a new design for *Lingua Franca*, which is now available in HTML and PDF on the website (<https://www.sharpweb.org/linguafranca/>). Last but not least, our journal *Book History* was published in hardcover as an annual journal for the last time in December 2020. The three co-editors Greg Barnhisel, Yuri Cowan and Beth le Roux have seamlessly transitioned from our blue annual hardcover to a bi-annual paperback journal format. This gives us a quicker turnaround, more room for more book history scholarship, and actually saves money on postage! We also had important conversations with JHUP about sustainability, and are delighted to report that JHUP was very open to these discussions about recycled paper, the carbon footprint of printing, and other environmental considerations. As Director of Publications, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the editors of SHARP’s publications. Despite the pandemic, our editorial teams have hardly missed a beat. Thank you, and I hope the SHARP community enjoys what *Book History*, *Lingua Franca* and *SHARP News* have to offer.

publications@sharpweb.org

AWARDS

Melanie Ramdarshan Bold oversees the DeLong Book Prize and the *Book History* editors' prize for the best essay submitted to the journal by a graduate student: these will both be awarded at the virtual AGM. Melanie extends her sincere thanks to the judges of the book prize, Brigitte Ouvry Vial, Fiona Black, Archie Dick, and Kinohi Nishikawa. This year also saw the third award of the SHARP 25th Anniversary Fellowship to Dipanjan Maitra (a PhD candidate in English at State University of New York at Buffalo.) Dipanjan's project will explore the role of "press-cutting agencies" in building a transnational information network that contributed to the composition, production and distribution of literary modernism. In 2020 we also introduced research development grants for BIPOC scholars and awarded the inaugural set of grants. The recipients were: Purbasha Auddy (Jadavpur University), Jesse Erickson (University of Delaware), Mark Alan Mattes (University of Louisville), Andrea Reyes Elizondo (Leiden University), and Hannah Yip (University of Birmingham).

awards@sharpweb.org

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Giles Bergel has overseen the upgrading of SHARP's web package this year with our provider and enabled all EC members to transition to a new email server. He has researched new options for managing virtual meetings and social spaces, but the Society has not had to purchase any packages for this year's conference thanks to the generosity of the University of Münster. Giles has also migrated SHARP's picture files off of Flickr, resulting in modest savings without losing any of SHARP's history. He will coordinate with Sarah Werner to ensure a smooth transition.

webmaster@sharpweb.org

ARCHIVES AND RECORD-KEEPING

Vincent Trott has scheduled and minuted Executive Council and Board meetings throughout the year and generally kept the organization functioning smoothly. Along with Ellen Barth and Jan Hillgärtner he organized a workshop for book history ECRs in October 2020 and is helping to run the ECR event at this year's annual conference. He has also worked with SHARP's archivist, Jessica Ryan, to ensure that the society's records are archived effectively.

secretary@sharpweb.org

SHARP BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL REPORT 2020–2021

Marija Dalbello (Chair, Board of Directors, 2019–2021)

In this reporting year, the Board of Directors met twice (December 3, 2020 and June 30, 2021) and participated in the joint Board and Executive Council meeting on August 5, 2020. The minutes of the meetings and the decisions made were recorded by SHARP Recording Secretary Vincent Trott. The Board coordinated closely with the Executive Council throughout the year with various Board members volunteering to assist in the *Lingua Franca* editor search and as award and fellowship jurors. Danielle Fuller chaired the new Finance Committee. The Board has drawn up and approved a document *Why become a SHARP board member?* to serve for orientation and recruitment of new members. Anne Coldiron, Mike Everton, and Ruth Panofsky have completed their terms on the Board this year and we thank them for their service to the Society. We welcome Beth Driscoll, Elizabeth McHenry, and Shafquat Towheed who will officially take up their roles on the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting at the (online) SHARP21 Münster Conference on July 29. Marija Dalbello completed the second of a two-year term as Board Chair.

Membership of the Board of Directors in 2020–2021 (with retirement dates): Anne Coldiron, 2021; Marija Dalbello, 2023 [chair]; Mike Everton, 2021; Danielle Fuller, 2023; Alan Gale, 2023; Lisa Gitelman, 2023; Adam Hooks, 2023; Matthew Kirschenbaum, 2023; Bonnie Mak, 2023; Simone Murray, 2025; Brigitte Ouvry-Vial, 2023; Ruth Panofsky, 2021; Susan Pickford, 2023; Goran Proot, 2023; Nelson Schapochnik, 2023

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N.B.: Due to confusion of dates, the President incorrectly reported that Simone Murray was completing her term on the Board. Her term ends in 2025 and we are delighted that she will be able to continue to contribute to SHARP's leadership.

AGM Agenda

- Welcome & brief remarks on officers' reports *Shef Rogers*
- Acknowledgment of those concluding terms of service to SHARP *Shef Rogers*
- Acknowledgment of organizers of SHARP 2021 Conference *Shef Rogers*
- Announcement of SHARP Prizes
 - George A. and Jean S. DeLong SHARP Book History Prize
Melanie Ramdarshan Bold
 - Book History Essay Prize *Greg Barnhisel, Beth Le Roux, Yuri Cowan*
- SHARP plans for 2022 Conference *Lisa Kuitert and Paul van Capelleveen*
- Members' announcements
- Any other business