

Zoom meeting, 3:00 pm, PRESENT: James Davis (CLS), Kim Roche (Lasch Center), Chris Barrett (Huguenot Society), Teri Lynn Herbert (MUSC), Catherine Stiers (CofC), Sarah Murphy (CCPL), Amanda Holling (CCPL), Gyllian Porteous (Lasch Center), Guest Speaker Ann Marie Willer (NEDCC)

James:

Yeah, it is. All right. We'll just wait a minute or two. It looks like we've got most people. Well, I'm expecting. All right. I think we're going to go ahead and get started. Welcome, everybody, to our May CALM meeting, and we're going to jump right in with our guest and speaker. We've got a very exciting speaker today, I think. Ann Marie is from the NEDCC, which is the Northeast Document Conservation Center, which I might dare to say is the best if not one of the best conservation organizations in the US. And she's going to talk with us, I might be wrong about this, but definitely about her new role with the NEDCC and a bit about disaster preparation. I think if anybody's involved with the workshop that's going on, that will see her face and input through that. So I'm going to give her the floor. And her role is the director of preservation services, I believe.

Ann Marie:

Yes, thank you so much, James. And I will say I have one or two images that I will share later in a few minutes. So if you're able to make me a co-host or give me the power of screen sharing, that will help me later on. So how many of you are in the current South Carolina regional emergency preparedness course? Kim. Okay. Great, thank you. That helps for context. So as James said, I'm director of preservation services at NEDCC. And if you're not familiar with us, please do check out our website. My department is only part of what our nonprofit does in the world of cultural heritage. And my new role really is that I'm stepping in as project manager for the regional emergency preparedness course. Our preservation specialist, Sean Ferguson, was leading that these past few months, and he got a new job with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Ann Marie:

So we're very happy for him, sad to lose him. And so that he could just jump into his new role, I am stepping in as project manager for the South Carolina course. I've been at NEDCC since 2017. And before that, I was at preservation library and mostly in research libraries in a university setting. So my bailiwick is those mixed kinds of research collections, as well as the archives and special collections that research libraries care for. That's what I'm most familiar with. Now, through my work at NEDCC, I've had the opportunity to work with historical societies and perform... I worked with a dance company in Connecticut. I mean, I've worked with a state school out in Washington State. So I've had the opportunity to work with a lot of different types of

organizations as well and that's been a real joy. So anyway, I'm glad to be here for your May meeting.

Ann Marie:

You may be familiar with May Day, May 1st, and in the cultural heritage world, that is the day that reminds us to prepare for disasters. May Day in the French term of help me. So I have a few things I want to say to you and then leave you with a few actionable takeaways that you can do right away or that might actually change how you're doing things as you're planning this month. So just for starters, we do talk about disaster preparedness and response and I'm just wondering, what is it that you are preparing for these days? And I'm thinking that in your meeting, you guys can unmute and speak or feel free to type into the chat, but we're a small enough group. I think speaking is fine. What are you preparing for these days? Tell me.

James:

Hurricanes.

Teri Lynn:

Voting.

Ann Marie:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Teri Lynn:

Insect problems

Ann Marie:

Yeah. Is anyone preparing to reopen as well? No? Okay.

Teri Lynn:

Our library is completely closed and guarded, being remodeled. So no, we're not really.

Ann Marie:

There you go. Yeah. That's like a full stop there.

James:

Well, I don't know if anyone was aware of last night, but protests and civil unrest is a potential thing to think about in Charleston these days.

Ann Marie:

Yeah, with gathering... Well, sometimes pandemic restrictions don't necessarily matter one way or another, but gathering restrictions lifted, warmer weather, and it's

plenty of things to protest about from all different angles. So, yeah, those can definitely have an impact on our institutions. And also, you may have some seasonal changes in terms of your tourism. And as things open up, I'm not really sure we can have a super intensive tourism season. I don't know, but we'll see. Let me see here. So one of the main points that I want to make today is just that it's not just these two steps, preparedness and response, that it's a cycle. So those of you in the class are familiar with the emergency management cycle, the others of you may be as well. I just want to show you this visual for people. Let's see. One participant can share at a time. Okay, good. That's me. Share screen three. I think you see a green circle?

James:

Yeah.

Ann Marie:

Excellent. Okay. Good. That's the plan. So it's four stages that you see here: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. And we think a lot, we talk about risk preparedness and response, and there's these other four steps, and then it goes around in a circle. So the key thing is that there is a mitigation step at the beginning. And then we all do this, but we may not think about it as formally in our planning, this sense of identifying the risks and mitigating them to the best of our ability. Because if you can eliminate the problem, then that's one less thing you have to prepare for. And then you prepare for the things that you cannot eliminate as risks. You respond when stuff happens, and you recover and get back to normal when you're able. So I want to introduce you to a concept that might be new to you. If you're not already familiar with it, it might literally transform how you're doing your disaster planning and make it even more effective.

Ann Marie:

And this is the after-action review. So you may have heard of it as after-action review. Hotwash, I think, is the FEMA slang for it. There are a lot of models out there for after-action review. Some of them are quite formal. You can search online and find like a 20-page manual for how to do this. I'm going to share with you one of my favorite resources. It's like, well, I think, technically, five pages. There's really only two pages that matter, and it'll get you rolling with an after-action review. And that's when you bring folks together after a disaster has happened, and you talk through not only what happened, but you talk about what you people thought was going to happen because that's worth doing. It's like, what did you think what's going to happen as this unfolded? And then what would we do differently the next time? And then here's the key, right? Once you've identified what you're going to do differently, then change your procedures and update your plan accordingly, implement those things.

Ann Marie:

I would also add to, if you answer the question, what worked really well? It's worth documenting what worked really well so that nobody inadvertently changes it in the

future and it's like, "Oh, well, let's do such and such." Like, "Why are we doing it this way?" It's like, "Well, it's because every time we do an after-action review, it comes out that it works really well." Document that as such and make sure that those things remain in your planning and your preparedness. So in fact, I will mention that NEDCC did an after-action review of our COVID shutdown. We were shut down only for two months. We have a very large facility. So our staff was able to socially distance and return to work after two months. But we did an after-action review and it was surprising to discover what worked well. And there were some things that we thought were just really great innovations that nobody really cared about and so, okay.

Ann Marie:

Now we know. Haven't helped us if there was another pandemic shutdown, which, I don't know, still seems like you never quite know at this point. I'm starting to feel very confident. But there for a while, we really weren't sure if we were going to be shut down over the winter or whatnot. So do that after-action review, ask the four questions that are outlined in the handout, and let me put this link in the chat. I can also send these later as a follow-up email for James or Kim to share. Yes, earthquakes. So this is actually an after-action review tool from UNICEF. And they have a whole toolbox, and that's the link, I'm sending you two. The after-action review is just on pages 12 to 16. Okay. So file that away, do that. Now, I want to talk about disaster plans. So in the current course, we did a survey about if people had disaster plans or not. And you have seen results of surveys like this before, and you can probably guess what the results look like, but I want to show you what that looked like this particular time.

Ann Marie:

This is spring of 2021. So sorry, I'm just flipping through there. Here we are. So in this case, 54% of the respondents and again, there were 83 respondents. They said, "Yes, we have a disaster plan, but it's out of date." And 20% said, "Yes, we have a disaster plan and it is up to date." So gold star to the 20%. 13% said, "No, we don't have one." And 13% said, "I don't know if we have one." So there's room for improvement there. This is not a typical at all, and I'm not dissing any of the group in the South Carolina course. We have run similar courses in other places, and these other organizations have done surveys on disaster preparedness and this is fairly typical. So I've also mentioned that sometimes you need a disaster plan for funders, maybe even insurance purposes. But, for example, in Rhode Island, the state library in Rhode Island, they won't give you any of their grant money unless you have a disaster plan, if you're a library seeking funding, like their special grants for preservation and other things.

Ann Marie:

So good idea to have one. But here's the corker. When we do an after-action review, we often find that people didn't use the disaster plan. But why do this disaster planning if people aren't going to use it? So here's what I've determined over the course of my career and then working with a lot of organizations. Sometimes people,

again, they don't know if a disaster plan exists, they don't know how to get to it, or maybe they know where it is and it's in their office and they don't know how to get to it from home, like online or something. So sometimes that's why they don't access the disaster plan. But what I figured out is that usually, the disaster plan is primarily for training purposes, and secondarily for your major disaster response, like your multi-day hurricane regional disaster type of thing. When you have a major response going on, people do tend to go to the disaster plan because it's complex enough where they know that they need the additional resources and guidance that are in that plan.

Ann Marie:

For every day emergencies, people do tend to ignore it. So the toilet that overflows or the air conditioner condensate line that's clogged. So this is what I recommend. I'm a big fan of the one-pager. So at NEDCC, we call this a panic sheet. You might be familiar with CoSA's PReP plan. It's a front and back piece of paper with your call tree and some of the most important information for response. We have a new version on the NEDCC website called the Pocket Response Resource, PRR. It's based on the CoSA PReP template, but we made it fit on letter-size paper instead of legal so that you can print it at home. It's much easier to print. And this is your third takeaway, is to have some sort of one-pager associated with your disaster plan. What we have at NEDCC... In fact, I was just at NEDCC yesterday for the first time in well over a year, but this panic sheet, this one-pager, is posted by every phone. And it has the call information.

Ann Marie:

So what I'm putting in the chat is there's the original... I want you to know about the original CoSA PReP templates. I think there's even a template for a hospital organization. And people have taken that template and run with it. The one that we developed with South Arts was geared towards performing arts organizations. So it has some different fields in it that makes sense to that community, also makes a lot of sense if you're a library that does public programming. But in any case, these are all editable. And I'm sorry that the second link I put in doesn't actually seem to be a link. But it's short enough, I think you can just type it in, or cut and paste. So I'm a firm believer that people just need to know who to call, and what the major risks are that they should watch out for. And that's what they do for the everyday stuff. When they see the leak from the ceiling, they'll just call the right people so that they can get the right advice. And that everybody, staff and volunteers alike, are aware of what the major risks are.

Ann Marie:

They should understand that when the weather is hot and humid, that's when your air conditioner condensate lines are... Well, hopefully, you've cleared them out in preparation for the season. But that's when your systems tend to get overwhelmed and there tends to be way more condensate than usual. But everybody should know that so when there's seen leaks or something a little damp maybe on the ceiling, that they're just not walking by because that's that mitigation part of the disaster

emergency response cycle. Emergency management cycle, let me call it by its property name. And everybody needs to know that there is a plan. We ask our staff members to read it through once a year. It's a nice thing to do sometimes over a quiet holiday period, or whenever the down.. If there's a little bit of a dip or a downtime in your annual rhythm of your operations, that's the time to read through the disaster plan. And just to remember what kind of information is there should you need it.

Ann Marie:

It's also important that folks understand that through that planning process, there is an order of operations, there is a hierarchy of decision-making, that really comes into play, especially in a major disaster that with the toilet overflowing, we don't necessarily set up a command center for that. But that is part of a larger response. Just people, again, they need to understand that and know that context. So speaking of expectations, here's a fourth takeaway. It's becoming more and more relevant, actually, as years go by, and as our usage of social media increases. And our whole relationship to social media has changed over the last year because sometimes it felt like one of the only ways to stay in touch with friends and family. Be sure you're very clear about who can talk to the press, and who can post to social media, because we are all super used to just snapping a picture on our phone and posting it onto Twitter. And that's not what you want in an emergency situation, even if it is just a condensate leak or something from air conditioning.

Ann Marie:

And it's particularly in a broad scale disaster. So be clear about those rules in your organization. Actually, well, I'm just thinking of some of the problems that can emerge, right? If somebody is posting on social media, it can create a security issue for your collections. If people are revealing the location of things, or they're revealing that a building is somehow insecure, or unsecure, rather, or a building or a collection storage space is unsecure because people are doing leak response, for example. I'm always using water as an example because so often it is water. And sometimes on a broad scale disaster, you've probably experienced this. If you get some sort of major impact on the library, people just start showing up and donating books or they want to volunteer and suddenly, somebody thinks it's a good idea to put it out on social media that there needs to be a disaster response, and then you have sometimes things that you weren't asking for yourself. And so I think you get what I'm talking about.

Ann Marie:

You get to manage the messaging. Everyone should know who gets to talk to the press and who gets to post on social media. Maybe if they take pictures, send them to Katie or whatever, and Katie can decide what to post. So there's a section of resources related to communication that I'm going to put in the chat box. This is associated with the... Sorry, I've just got my multiple screens going here. It's associated with the Pocket Response Resource that I gave you a moment ago, and there is a free guides and resources section. Let's link from that website, and there is a portion that's on

communication. So there's like five or six here. If you need ideas, or help related to social media policies, or language, or just some ideas, that's a good place to go. Let me just take a quick peek in the chat because it looked like there was something really good happening there. Let's see. Yay. Oh, my gosh, you all just save the chat and paste it into the back of your disaster plan note.

Ann Marie:

You want to be a little more thoughtful than that. But we are as part of the course trying to develop a list of especially statewide resources, then you've got Charleston-related resources. This is excellent because that's for you. Yeah, excellent. The Lowcountry chapter. Yeah, this is lovely. Perfect. Because, here's the thing, you do not need to reinvent the wheel. Not everybody needs to sit down and create a list of the regional, or state resources, or the Charleston resources, only one person needs to do that and share it with the rest, and that's part of what this group is for. So my takeaways for you then today are do an after-action review every time even for the toilet that overflows. It doesn't need to be super complicated and formal. Like I said, some of the models online are pretty intense. But it's definitely worth doing, worth documenting, and you can even do one now. Well, if nothing has happened recently, think back to something that did happen that several folks are familiar with, and just walk through those questions and get a feel for what it's like.

Ann Marie:

So do the after-action review, change your procedures accordingly. Second takeaway, use your disaster plan for training especially and for major emergencies. And for the day to day stuff, make sure that people have access to that one-pager so they know who to call, they know what the major everyday risks are, and they know what to watch out for. Third takeaway, oh, actually, that's funny. My third takeaway is the one-pager. I think I got my numbers off there. I'm looking at my list here and there it is again. And then so the fourth takeaway, be very clear about social media as we go into a season of, hopefully, not too many disasters. So that was what I think a solid 20 minutes of talking. I would be happy to take any questions or any other things that I can provide here. Look at all this great stuff in the chat. What's WLCC? As an outsider, I don't know.

Kim:

The Warren Lasch Conservation Center. So we are Clemson's conservation center in Charleston.

Ann Marie:

Got you. Okay.

James:

Well, I want to give everybody an opportunity to ask any questions. Does anybody have anything specific for Ann Marie?

Ann Marie:

It's okay if you don't. You know where to find me.

James:

I've got a couple.

Ann Marie:

Oh, okay.

James:

So I was curious, when you... I know there's lots of ways to do an after-action review. But for the NEDCC, what did that look like?

Ann Marie:

We've done a couple. When it's an actual, more of a disaster situation like a water leak or something, no collections were harmed, but it was an office water leak and was worth doing. It's the department heads that gather. It's a member of preservation services, usually one of my staff members, who's the facilitator. It's always good to have a slightly bigotry facilitator person. And I think we did it in like 90 minutes flat, and then the facilitator just wrote up what was said. And then at our next department head meeting, we talked about... We looked at particularly the list of things of what we would do differently next time to see if there was anything that needed to be incorporated. And that was a really good example of a disaster where it was an everyday thing and nobody used the disaster plan. So then, it was like, "Okay. Let's..." And so we ended up revising our one-pager to make it even more applicable to that kind of medium disaster.

Ann Marie:

For our COVID after-action review, we have a staff of 43 people, I think, right now. And we wanted to do the after-action review with the department heads, but we wanted input from the whole staff, but we didn't want 40 somewhat people in the room. Plus, there was a pandemic. We couldn't have 40 somewhat people in the room. Even in a Zoom Room, it was not possible based on connectivity, et cetera. Internet access, et cetera. So we put together a SurveyMonkey survey that we sent out to the staff to get their answers to these questions, and then discuss those as the department heads and then also brought in our own perspectives. And again, had a member of preservation services write that up, share, and look at what worked and what didn't for implementation. Does that help?

James:

Yeah, it is. I think it's different for every institution and depending on your size. I know, here, I try to get everybody involved in disaster review, and it's really just me putting it in everyone's faces all the time. And so that review looks like I send out an

email with a report that's basically my perspective, and then I bring it up again when we have our meetings, and then I get feedback and stuff like that. So it helps even if one person is pushing it. Eventually, everybody gets involved.

Ann Marie:

I like it and it helps that even one person is sitting down and thinking about those questions, and sharing it out. And if that's all that happens, that's-

James:

A lot.

Ann Marie:

It's a lot. Yeah. Because I'm thinking back to being in a large university. And after-action review among the immediate response team like the six people maybe who actually had hands on during the whole thing, that would be the core group I would be interested in. If we had a building fire, then eventually, the after-action review, which might be months later, I would want to involve campus security. And for something really big, you want to spread the scope wider because it's extremely interesting cross-departmentally or cross... What is that called? Anyway, cross-function, because your campus police, or your facilities personnel, they might have a completely different idea of what they thought was going to happen. And that's where some learning can really come in, because then you can clean up that part of your plan and the expectations.

James:

Cool. And then my other comment question was the NEDCC hotline, which is a resource I've used a couple of times, it's so great when you just aren't quite sure what to do. Every time I've called it, I've got your predecessor, Sean, we seem to be surprised that he was the one that got the call. So I'm wondering, how is that set up at this time with the staff changes and that kind of thing?

Ann Marie:

Yeah. So the emergency hotline, we do on a rotation basis by month, and we try not to give the same person high hurricane season every month, every year. In a particular busy hurricane season times, sometimes we end up splitting the month because that's so many calls. After two weeks, you're like, "Can somebody take the final two weeks of this month?" But it's one of us a month. And Kim O'Leary who's our technology coordinator stays on top of that and forwards the phone to the appropriate person, and sends an email reminding us that we are going to be getting the calls because we do sometimes forget to answer the phone in the middle of the night when it rings that first time that it happens that month. You're like, "Oh, right, I'm on call." So that's how that works. And when somebody leaves, we just pull them off the schedule and rework the schedule, and Kim will just move people up.

James:

Great.

Ann Marie:

We go alphabetically if he knows.

James:

And just for my own curiosity, I mean, how popular is it? If you're on, do you get 50 calls a month there?

Ann Marie:

No, thankfully, we're one of two hotlines. So the National Heritage Responders also has an emergency hotline. I don't know what their stats are like. Ours are, we get about... Okay. Well, I just ran the stats. So the last year that I ran it for the 12-month period, it was 45 disaster calls. So that averages out to three a month, but there are months that have none. So you might get five for wildfire season and five for May, quite frankly, or September, depends what's happening in terms of the Gulf and Atlantic hurricane seasons. So it's not overwhelming, it depends. If it's really widespread, we get a fair number of calls, sometimes just from individuals. I spoke to a couple of our... I'm sorry, artists in Louisiana, and oddly enough, California, and they just had their own artwork that they were trying to protect in a disaster situation. So we really never know. So it's not overwhelming. And then some people don't call the hotline, they just call the center in the daytime, and that's fine.

James:

I just found not everybody know what a great resource it is. It's not intimidating at all to call. Everyone's been great, in my experiences.

Ann Marie:

A lot of the times, people pretty much know what they're doing. It's just helpful when you're in that emergency response brain space to have somebody else say, "Yes, yes, that is what you want to do." And it's like, "Okay."

James:

That was exactly my experience. Yeah.

Ann Marie:

Yeah.

James:

Cool. Does anyone else have any questions while we have Anne Marie? Well, thank you so much. I thought this was great, and I assume people can reach out to us if you have questions and we can forward it along or however.

Ann Marie:

Yeah. Info@nedcc.org is our general question from anybody anywhere, including overseas. That's the email that you can just send us questions. We'll answer.

James:

Excellent. Thank you so much.

Ann Marie:

Yeah. I'm going to hang on for a little bit. I might turn off my camera just so I can eat a little snack.

James:

Yeah, sounds good.

Ann Marie:

Okay. Thanks, you all.

James:

You can go. All right. Well, that was really great. So we'll move into the next part of our agenda, the old business, and the review, and hopeful approval of the meeting minutes for April. Does anybody have any corrections or suggestions?

Teri Lynn:

The only corrections I saw was that it's Mepkin Abbey, and then Amanda's talk about the death map, the minutes called it the desk map. That was the only two I could figure out.

James:

Thank you for that. So with those changes, do I get approval of the minutes? You've got to raise a hand? I can't see everybody at once. We've got one. And a second?

Amanda:

I second it.

James:

Thank you. All right. So those are approved with changes, and we'll move on to new business. So we discussed, last meeting, the possibility of in-person meetings and I think we really got a sense that there are definitely people who are ready to meet in person, and there are people who enjoy meeting digitally. So, I mean, I was looking over the agenda and I thought maybe we should shoot for possibly even our next meeting being in person. Do we have thoughts and feelings? Would people come?

Teri Lynn:

Depends on parking.

James:

Parking. Okay. Yeah, that's fair. Parking. All right. Well, I think the way we'll leave it is we'll... I'm into having an in-person meeting. So we'll discuss, Chris, and Kim, and I, see if we can set up a location quickly. And if not, then I would say, definitely, the following month would we when we start. So either next month or the following. Well, does anyone have a preference there? Okay. Well, we'll be in contact shortly about that. But I think in-person meetings are coming. So I hope people are excited for that. I believe we have at least one new person. Abby, do you want to introduce yourself real quickly?

Abby:

Yeah. So I came to the meeting. I think it was back in March, I believe.

James:

Okay.

Abby:

But I'm working with Chris over at the Huguenot Society doing a lot of digitization work for their yearly transactions. So going all the way back to the society's foundings, all the way up until they picked up in, I believe, the '90s. So that's exciting. It's funny to watch them do opinions and updates on world-wide events in real time. Because when we were doing ones from like 1938, 1937, they were name-dropping Hitler, but they weren't taking him seriously. And it's almost like, "Well, that's a doozy." And when they say, "Oh, the World War is coming to an end," they're talking about World War I and it's, just wait, just it gets worse, it gets worse. But I've actually been hired on at the Huguenot Society as a digital archivist part time. So that's exciting. Great things happening over at the Huguenot society.

Teri Lynn:

Congrats.

James:

Yeah.

Abby:

Well, I think-

James:

All right. Thank you. So we'll move into institutional updates. And I think in light of our conversation, if people want, maybe share a bit about your current disaster planning state. It's our May Day meeting. So if you want to share a bit about that, that

would be pretty good. I'll start and then call people as they are in the order on my Zoom. So as far as disaster planning, it was something that we never had before. And during COVID, I took it upon myself to write this massive, unwieldy plan that tried to address everything that could ever happen. And that was interesting for me, but didn't culminate in anything useful for the staff. And then, this workshop has challenged me to really pare it down into something usable. So I said, "Okay. Let's take flood and fire." I addressed those situations. I've got all the information around there in a binder in a digital document that people can use.

James:

And we also have this salvage plan, like a grab-and-go priority collection list, which was actually the hardest part and ended up being emotional for some people. So that was interesting. And I'm one day late loading it up to the NEDCC for the workshop, but I'll do that today. And then as far as the other things that are happening here, we are beginning in-person events on a semi-limited basis. As in, we are having them more and more. And we have made our mass policy from mandatory to optional for staff and patrons. So that's interesting, that happened this week. And I think there was some hesitation from the staff, but I think everybody is on board at this point. And then the big thing at the end of this week is I'll be working with the NEDCC on the Native American event that we've been hosting that I hope Kim and Gyllian will talk about a little bit more. I want to let too much cats out of the bag before I'm supposed to.

Kim:

WLCC.

James:

Sorry, yes, WLCC. I'm working on it. I usually get it right.

Teri Lynn:

Whatever happened to the collection assessment plan.

James:

Oh, yeah, Chris was asking me about that earlier. So last meeting, I shared an ask that I was tasked with to basically create the lifelong overarching conservation plan for my entire institution within 48 hours. And it was a good exercise, essentially. I provided our development person with the general information that she needed. And I worked with our head librarian, and we developed a plan, really. It's very skeletal and it's going to be fleshed out. But we've already started and it started with collection assessment, and goes from there and covers a lot of stuff from our digitization to our conservation approach, in-house conservation, and sending it out and all sorts of stuff. So I just feel like it pushed me to get a really good grip on how we approach these things as opposed to just reacting to things as they come. It's like disaster

planning, but more policy stuff, which is cool. All right. So that's it for the Charleston Library Society. Teri Lynn.

Teri Lynn:

Nothing much is happening in the library. The library has officially closed and they've started ripping out ceilings and walls. So it's sad. We have two spaces for the students, and there's not enough space, and there's complaints that they need more places to be able to study for boards and other exams. So that's essentially where we are. The archives got successfully moved and re-situated. And most of the stuff went to storage. A lot of it's in the Warren Library where Brook hangs out now. So that's about it for MUSC. I still have some little four-inch square archival boxes to give away, probably 50 of them. And they're about an inch and a half tall and four inches square archival material. You could put artifacts in, jewelry, anything small, but anybody wants some of those, let me know.

James:

We got some of your book boxes. So thank you for that.

Teri Lynn:

Great.

James:

Kim, from the Warren Lasch Conservation Center.

Kim:

Hello. We've been very busy with a number of events going on this month. So I handle the emergency preparedness for the Warren Lasch Conservation Center. So threefold tasks on my end have been going on this month. Just because it is May Day, working on our own institutional preparedness has been a big task. So just updating our call list, making sure numbers are active. We are situated within a larger Clemson regional campus. So just even hunting down facilities, contractors has been a bit of a nightmare this year, continuing from the nightmare last year if I'm being honest. So we are in a better place than we were last year. And so I just keep telling myself that baby steps every May will eventually get us to where I'd like to be. It's not something that can all be done at once.

Kim:

And when we hit June 1st, I'm going to do my best to leave it behind and trying to refocus my brain on other things. Secondly, working as an emergency preparedness, the regional trainer for the NEDCC emergency course, so we're starting to go through plans this month and do some salvage practicing, which is great, has been really helpful to have that hands-on practice. We're also doing a department walkthrough scenario on Monday. So just a department stress test, which I'm excited to do just because I've done a lot of rejigging over the last year. So it's nice to be able to update

our department staff so that they feel comfortable responding even to something small like a water leak if no one else is in the building. So that's my big goal with that for WLCC for this month. And then finally, the Alliance for Response has well been truly kicking off.

Kim:

The event will be held. We're looking at the third week of March of 2022, will be our kickoff forum. So everyone block your dates. I hope you all can make it. So it will be a combination, basically a one-day conference that will bring together first responders, emergency managers, and heritage professionals, and help everyone create a regional network in the Low Country. So it will be Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley County-focused initially, and then maybe spread out from there. So establishing a network of support and information for everyone here. So we're looking forward to getting that going. The planning committee is now officially meeting monthly for that. So that's been a bit of an undertaking this month as well.

James:

Thanks, Kim. Amanda.

Amanda:

Hey. So this past month, we've had our internships successfully completed. She did a lot of transcription and indexing. So now there's all that to prove, which that's exciting, though. She did so much work and I'm really pleased with her progress. And I wish we had a vacancy, we can just hire her. But anyway, I've also been working to improve the return of death funding aid. If you look at it on our website now, it's missing some critical sections and there's no container list. So I've been working on a container list for that, which is quite onerous because the books are extremely heavy and I've only been able to move a few at a time just because of time constraints and so on. But when I'm finished with that, which is winding down, I'm starting to plan on boxing up the assessor's records.

Amanda:

So they'll be ready for people to use finally after all these years. That's exciting. A lot of people who come in to do preservation research aren't even aware that there are some 20th century tax assessor's records that are available here, they've just never been open for research. Some of it will still remain closed because of mold contamination. I'm not planning on cleaning that stuff until after PPE is not needed on such a grand scale somewhere in the world. I just feel guilty using it. And it's stable. So I'm just leaving it be for the time being. But most of the collection will be available, hopefully by August. And there are some librarians in administration here at the public library who are in NEDCC class. So I'm really happy that they're in the class, but I'm super jealous of them because I was not able to attend. I didn't know about it and nobody thought to tell me. So I'm very sad.

Amanda:

But I am super glad to hear what kind of things they've been talking about because that's been something that's plagued my mind for a long time here at the library and the archivist. Before me, Katie was also concerned about it. We do have the little legal-sized prep guide that Katie put together years ago, and we've updated it every year. I think Sarah has handled the last couple of updates and is super helpful. That's where she got all that information that she posted in the chat and it's really handy. And if you don't have one of those, I highly suggest you do it and it's just been so helpful. In our water emergency we had in 2018, that was the first thing in my hand and I did find it very helpful. So I second that recommendation. That's pretty much all I've been up to. So I'll pass it along.

James:

I can see from Ann Marie's face that she's happy with our current state of emergency preparedness among this group at least. So good job, everybody. Chris.

Chris:

I thought it was muted. Well, since Abby is here, I need to say how well the spring went. She was a graduate intern, working with two other interns. And the reason we've been able to hire all three of them part time into the summer and fall is because they accomplished so much, and so impressed our benefactor. So we got some more money to make that possible, and it's been going really well. It's all interrelated. They're digitizing a journal that the society has published for 136 years. A lot of what they're digitizing could have been lost in September of 2019. Hurricane Dorian took the roof off this building, which was not made for this purpose. And the room on the third floor where Abby and her fellows work, I have photos that happened before I started here, about where you could stand where they work and look up and see the sky through the roof. It was quite an adventure. And, yeah, we spent 18 months trying to recover from that.

James:

What year was that, Chris?

Chris:

2019. And we just... I wrote, I think, probably the last check for the repairs related to that in March. It's just been ongoing. And it's relevant. I signed up for the webinar series with Neil Ferguson hoping to just be a fly on the wall and listen to it like radio in the office while I got other things done. And I realized the organization is just not ready for it. We're doing a strategic plan right now, which I think will move us closer. We don't have a collection policy, we don't have... I think our storage is not up to standard. So the organization has to make some other decisions before, I think, it approaches that. So we're making progress. It's interesting. Some of you, I talked to you about this out of the meetings, and I started in July. And in many ways, the

society was founded in 1885. And in many ways, it was started the day before I got here.

Chris:

There was just not a lot happening in the past related to the kind of preservation and conservation of the collection that they ended up with almost unintentionally, lots of interesting uncommon and some one of a kind materials. James has seen some of them. And they just don't know what to do with them. So that's the conversation at the moment, rather than how to save it is where should it be and who should really be taking care of it? And they haven't committed yet to whether or not it will be the society. So ongoing. It's a soap opera, but it's interesting for everybody. A lot of these people have been involved all their lives and they really had no idea what they'd committed to care for. So they're learning about it. We're all learning about it together.

James:

Very good. Thank you, Chris. Sarah.

Sarah:

Yes. Hi. I'm also at the Charleston County Public Library. So Amanda already touched on disaster prep. And I will say some of those numbers, I try to update it every year. I highlight the whole thing and then slowly unhighlight the things after I double check. So that is from last year. And I find that it's good as numbers, especially their titles change a lot. And so anyway, so don't take the list at complete value because that was 2020's numbers. Yeah, just trying to get things updated for disaster plan. We have been open for a long time as you all know. So the mass mandate is a bit interesting for us because with the South Carolina governor review on executive order, we are still under the county administrator's mandate. So it is technically still mandated that everyone wear a mask inside our building.

Sarah:

But it's interesting explaining that to the public who believe that the governor said you don't have to wear one, but then our county manager said you do. So basically, it's ending up that we're... I mean, we still have all our signage everywhere requiring masks, but it's interesting. Otherwise, I am still working on doing uncataloged pamphlets into our collection. Again, our staff should be on OCLC soon. Apparently, our cats didn't realize it wasn't. So if you've looked for our records and they didn't show up, it doesn't mean we don't have them. It's just that apparently, our cataloging system wasn't talking to OCLC. And I am working on doing backlog catalog pamphlets, which I've done about 100 so far. I'm mostly doing this cataloging. It's a really cool stuff that we didn't have in our collection anywhere else. So I'm thankful. And I have finished the third collection vertical files.

Sarah:

I'm super excited about those. I hope that's going to be really great resource. If you haven't heard me talk about that, that is from our Dart Library, which started... Well, it's been, I think, for a lot longer. But it became the segregated branch of the Charleston County Public Library in the 1930s, and they had their own vertical file collection separate from the main libraries. And it has a lot of black newspapers like the Chronicle clippings all the way up until about the late '70s. So the majority of the collection is the '40s to the '70s. So got all those back in acid-free folders reconstituted as much as I can, and the finding age should be going online any day. Our web guy is a little backlogged. But I'm super excited about having that done and open for research. And that's all I've got.

James:

Thank you so much. Leah, it's good to see you. You're up.

Leah:

Good to see you too. Good to see you all too. It's been a while, but I'm glad to be able to be here today. So for those of you I haven't met, it might just be you, Ann Marie. I'm the project manager of the Lowcountry Digital Library and the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative here at the College of Charleston's Addlestone Library. So our disaster preparedness is largely digital. It's our rule of threes of having files and master files in three places, and having preservation files that are compatible regardless of how things change with technology. And then we do, of course, also have some... That way, when a server melts in one place, we've got things in another place. That is why we are so encouraging of partners to have everything in more than one place if it's digital.

Leah:

And then the library has a larger disaster preparedness plan that I largely just do what I'm told when there is a potential disaster, and outside of that. So I just listen to the experts in my building. The Addlestone Library is open, special collections is somewhat open, mask mandate is still going indoors. Before it was if you were on campus at all, outside or inside, you needed to have a mask on. So indoors is still required. And they are evaluating the governor's orders currently. So I assume we'll hear an update at some point, but I don't know what that update will look like. As far as institutional updates for LDHI, we published the Morris Street Business District exhibit about a month ago. We partnered with the Preservation Society of Charleston on that. They have, of course, a historic preservation focus.

Leah:

So it was focused on historic preservation while at the same time being about the history of the area they focused on, the Morris Street Business District, which if you're interested in working class history of Charleston, immigrant history of Charleston, black history of Charleston, civil rights history of Charleston, it's all in there. It's a really, really cool snippet of this working class, predominantly black neighborhood

that had various waves of immigrants come through and contribute to the business district. And there's a map you can explore that looks at different buildings and their building histories. So we were excited to have that go live. And then on LCDL side, we are getting ready. And by we, I mean me. We have lost some help with the kind of budget constraints of COVID and everything else. I don't have folks helping me anymore, which is less helpful when LCDL partners have projects that they need help with.

Leah:

So I'm working on thinking of creative ways to help partners out when they're looking for help. But we have South Carolina Historical Society, the Huguenot society, and the Historic Charleston Foundation, all have upcoming collections that need uploading that I'm getting ready to work on. And then the other big news is that LCDL, we were awarded the CLIR grant that we applied for. The southern roots of American Judaism, that begins over the summer and will run for 12 months. And will have a whole bunch of digitized collection items go up, but then will also have an LDHI digital exhibit component and some virtual roundtable, public lecture type things with it. So you can look for those hopefully in the coming year. Those will be going live as well. That's it.

James:

Excellent. Thank you so much. Gyllian.

Gyllian Porteous:

Everybody. So I'm Gyllian Porteous. I'm one of the conservators at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center, and I will be talking to you guys about the event that James alluded to when he was giving his update. So this week is a really big week for us. We've spent about a year organizing a consultation event, which then grew from just involving our institution to the Charleston Library Society as well as the Charleston Museum. So in essence, for those of you who are maybe not as familiar with the Wildlife Conservation Center, we are a center for conservation, specializing particularly in wet archaeological materials. And as a result, we were asked by the state of South Carolina to take on the conservation of a 4,000-year-old dugout canoe that was excavated about 20 years ago illegally, and had never received conservation because it was just too expensive and there wasn't an institution willing to invest in its conservation.

Gyllian Porteous:

Well, a lot has changed between now and 20 years ago. And so when we were brought on to the project, we decided to make it a goal of the project to involve whatever Native American communities wanting to be involved in the project. Because it is 4,000 years old, really, any communities in South Carolina and even beyond that can lay claim to ancestry to that canoe. On top of that, it's a really significant canoe. It's not whole, it's a fragment, but it's 12 feet. So it's still a very large fragment of what was once an extremely large dugout canoe. And because it is 4,000 years old, it is the

oldest watercraft found in the state, and one of the oldest found in the US. So because of the cultural significance of the canoe, and also our effort towards trying to decolonize some of our practices within conservation and archaeology, we reached out to all the different communities in South Carolina to ask if they would like to be involved and to have a say in the conservation plan for the canoe.

Gyllian Porteous:

So we had responses from eight communities and this Thursday is the consultation event. So the communities and their representatives are coming to the Wildlife Conservation Center to hear the conservation proposal for the canoe, for us to communicate to them all of the archaeological information we know about the canoe, which, again, is not a huge amount because of the illegal excavation. And then we are going to provide access to the canoe for the community. Yeah, and they're going to make decisions in terms of if they approve our conservation plan, policies in terms of communicating how the project goes with the communities themselves, and then also with the public, all those elements. So that's the first day which is Thursday, and then the second day is the add-on events that got started luckily when James reached out and said that Charleston Library Society was interested in perhaps collaborating with us on this.

Gyllian Porteous:

So on the second day of events, the members are going to be going to the Charleston Library Society to learn about their archival collections relating to Native American holdings. And then in the afternoon, they're going to the Charleston Museum to see their collections and also consult on some things that they would like to ask community members about. And we've been very fortunate. It's been fully funded through the South Carolina Humanities, the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, and the Garvey Family Trust fund. So we're able to compensate all of the representatives who are in attendance, compensate them for their travel, and I think it's going to be really great. And most recently, we've had interest from Clemson about managing some press for the event, which they're doing. So we may have some TV coverage on one of the days. We'll see.

Gyllian Porteous:

So you might hear about it in other forms, but that is where we are currently at with that. So my days right now are just frantically organizing and updating. And this morning was about trying to set up some virtual components for at least our part of the event, because we've had three people have to cancel because of health reasons. So we want to be able to provide them with at least a virtual component, which I need to talk to James about, anyway, if there's something we can organize for the library society, but we'll see. And that's about it, I think.

James:

Awesome. Thank you so much.

Gyllian Porteous:

No problem.

James:

So that's everybody. Anybody else have anything they want to share, last minute? Sorry, I had to sneeze. All right. Well, we're going to just wrap it up then. So we'll adjourn more or less after an hour, which I think is perfect, 11:06, and we'll be in contact soon about next month's meeting. I think I'll probably try and set up an email that goes out, asking people for volunteers on where to host the meetings in person for the second half of the year, and then also suggestions on speakers. So keep an eye out for that. Bye, everybody.

Teri Lynn:

Thank you.