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President's Page

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President's Page



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Maury White was a long-time sports columnist for the *Des Moines Register*, my home state's largest newspaper. His trademark expression—one that he frequently invoked in the opening paragraph—was, “A little bit about a lot of things.” In my boyhood during the 1960s and 1970s, I came to expect this whenever he wrote about a full plate of activity—whether state high school tournaments, college games, or the pros.

So please forgive me as I invoke Mr. White's favorite mantra as your president. MAC Council is addressing a wide range of issues, all of which are intended to improve our delivery of services and to strengthen the professional support that you need, deserve, and expect from us as your colleagues.

Membership survey. You may recall participating in our online survey in 2017, our effort to “take the temperature” of our membership. Participation was excellent—over 40 percent of you responded—and we are now compiling the data, with formal release expected in early 2018. Questions concerning diversity, professional certification, continuing education, and other aspects of our work were addressed, and we anticipate information from the survey will help inform us as part of our ongoing strategic plan initiatives.

Your feedback. In addition to the survey, your continuing feedback at MAC's spring and fall gatherings is important. You may access anonymous comments that you and your colleagues submitted by logging in at our website, clicking on “MAC Forums,” and choosing the MAC Council meeting reports of your choice. The vice president's reports contain these comments, and we on Council read them all.

At our fall Council meeting in Columbus, we noted with particular concern the responses of several attendees critical of the plenary speakers at last year's Annual Meeting in Omaha. The speakers spoke of their efforts to document Ponca Native American chief Standing Bear and the forced removal of members of his nation in the late nineteenth century.

While some attendees enjoyed the program, others criticized the talk as “tone deaf” and disrespectful with regard to indigenous cultures. As noted by Program Committee chair Harrison Inefuku in his report, “We recommend that future PCs actively recruit speakers representing underrepresented and marginalized communities to submit session proposals and to help them develop their proposals.” I regret that this occurred and that it compelled at least two attendees to walk out of the session; your feedback concerning this matter is appreciated greatly.

Dues increase proposal. In the Treasurer's Report elsewhere in this issue, Joel Thoreson outlines MAC's current financial picture and the increasing costs of providing meetings, workshops, and symposiums. For that reason, Council has approved a proposal to increase MAC's annual dues by \$10 effective October 1, 2018. Members will be asked to vote on this proposal at our Annual Meeting in Chicago. This will be our first dues increase in five years, if approved. We strive to offer opportunities in professional development at a reasonable cost while exercising fiscal responsibility. Thank you for your consideration.

Your voice matters. Please know that we are here to listen and to respond. You will find MAC leadership's contact information near the back of this issue, and we always look forward to receiving your input on any matter that concerns our profession.

President, Midwest Archives Conference