Global events this spring brought myriad swift changes in a short amount of time. Many of us left our workspaces without understanding what it would mean to work from home for an extended period, without resources that we previously took for granted. Access to collections, spaces, and daily social interactions were pulled out from underneath us like a proverbial rug. However, ARLISians sprung into action quickly, thinking about ways to continue our work to meet our users’ needs. Librarians began offering reference consultations over teleconferencing software, they shared their libguides of online resources, and the Professional Development Committee published a special bulletin called Arts Libraries Resources for Remote Teaching, Learning & Research. I had envisioned meeting with you all in St. Louis this spring, and sharing valued time with members in what for many is the only opportunity they have to socialize with their art information professional colleagues. That was not possible, and I am looking forward to future conferences where we might meet in person (with face masks, hand sanitizer, etc). I’m grateful to the conference planners for their incredible hard work, and their ability to recognize the gravity of the impending pandemic. And thank you all for your patience as my browser crashed during our virtual spring business meeting, and I worked to contact ARLIS/NA Headquarters so that they could reestablish the GoTo Meeting software session. Our meeting highlighted two important initiatives that I’m proud of.
The chapter has kick-started our mentoring program once again, under the able leadership of Jamie Lausch Vander Broek. I encourage you to sign up for the program in the future as mentor or mentee. I have found mentorship to be one of the most valuable experiences of being a member of ARLIS/NA and the Midstates chapter. Also, Emilee Mathews and Mackenzie Salisbury are working on exciting graduate school outreach programming for the fall. Please reach out to them if you would like to be involved. Thank you to Jamie, Emilee, and Mackenzie for stepping up to work on these projects this year. Finally, I’d like to encourage you to donate to the Bunce Travel Award fund this year. Due to the new bundled dues process for chapter and ARLIS/NA membership, we have seen a drastic fall in donations. In 2018 and 2019 the chapter received $405 and $445, respectively, in annual donations to the fund. To date, no donations have been made yet this year. This fund has allowed our chapter to support fifteen members financially in their professional development endeavors. If you are in a position to contribute, please use our PayPal account to make a donation. We are looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of ARLIS/NA’s founding in the year 2022 in Chicago. The anniversary will be here before we know it - stay tuned for further information as the planning co-chairs share opportunities to volunteer.

-Sarah Carter, Chair
To ensure health & safety amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Midstates Spring 2020 chapter meeting was held virtually over GoToMeeting, in lieu of in person. This posed some unique challenges, but also allowed for expanded participation.

Larissa Garcia gave a Secretary/Treasurer's Report out, noting that she has been unable to access financial accounts or chapter files due to the Illinois stay-at-home order. The chapter discussed a donation that was made for the now-canceled annual conference in St. Louis and received by ARLIS/NA. The Conference Planning Committee and executive board have encouraged chapters to allow ARLIS/NA to keep donations as part of the conference relief fund, whether or not to allow the donation to be kept will be voted on after a financial report is released.

Mackenzie Salisbury and Emilee Mathews shared their outreach to librarians and student groups from iSchools in the chapter's region, using a contact list from Basecamp to network panel events, based on a model developed by Melanie Emerson (title) from 2019.

Jamie Vander Broek shared an update on the Chapter Mentoring program. Although similar to the yearlong career mentoring program, Midstates mentors and mentees will be matched for six months and trainings will be conducted virtually. Mentor/mentee pairs will set goals, and regularly communicate and set/attend meetings, from August 1, 2020 through February 1, 2021. All members are eligible and encouraged to participate, and applications will be accepted through June 1, 2020.

Co-Chairs Rebecca Price and Doug Litts shared that a conference venue has not yet been selected for the 2022 ARLIS/NA Conference in Chicago, due to the precarity of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing protocols, but the Hyatt Regency Chicago is a top choice. Further discussion
included theme, logo, and adjusting the conference model as new information about COVID arises.

Finally, Hayley-Jane Blackstone introduced herself as the new newsletter editor, having taken over for Mackenzie, which concluded the meeting. She is excited to take on this new role and get more involved in the chapter in this rapidly changing environment.

Note: a draft of the Spring Meeting can be found here.
NEW MEMBER INTERVIEW: MEET ALEX O'KEEFE!

Welcome to ARLIS/NA Midstates, Alex! What is your current role, and at what institution?

Thank you for the warm welcome! I recently joined the John M. Flaxman Library at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as the Research & Instruction Librarian (in January 2020).

What drove or inspired you to librarianship, and what do you consider the most imperative part of this work?

When I graduated from the University of Louisville I felt I was facing a crossroads between librarianship and curatorial studies when deciding what to pursue for my masters degree. Having completed a BFA (with a focus on book arts and drawing), I knew I wanted art to continue being a primary part of my future career choice. My decision quickly became apparent as I read about art librarianship on the ArLiSNAP blog, talked with local librarians, and looked at different SIG pages from ARLIS/NA. This was clearly a community I wanted to be a part of - one that was welcoming, invested in sharing information, and in alignment with ethics I felt resonated with my own.

Through my few years of experience in the field after earning my MSLS, I would say that the most imperative part of this work remains the core goal of any information professional: creating connections between people and information and giving them the tools to assess and use it. No matter which area of librarianship I find myself in, I have kept this at my core. Prior to my position at the Flaxman Library I was the Arts Digital Projects Librarian at the Yale Haas Arts Library, and while my work was very different from my current position (primarily working with data, project management tasks, and event programming for Ensemble@Yale), I consistently kept that same thread in my work. Now in my new position focusing more on public services, I have found this manifesting in new ways in the midst of COVID-19's impact. The core goal is the same, but has taken the form of emphasizing outreach, virtual community building, and making tools to help patrons who rely heavily on physical materials navigate the digital landscape and know the library is still here to help along the way.
How did you get connected with ARLIS, and how do you see the organization as a useful tool?

While I knew of ARLIS from my tertiary research before grad school, I did not quite understand how I could play a role in it until working with Sarah Carter on my practicum project (the UofL Artists’ Books Index). She helped me understand the organization’s structure, tools, and opportunities much better than I was able to understand on my own. Thanks to her encouragement, I went to my first ARLIS/NA annual conference in New Orleans in 2017 and co-presented a poster on our project. As you all likely know, there is nothing like attending the annual conference to fully and truly understand the community and energy of ARLIS. I had the great fortune to attend the ArLiSNAP annual meeting at that conference, where I learned there was an opening for Chapter Liaison. I served in that role until becoming the 2019-2021 ArLiSNAP Co-Moderator (and I am now in the final year of my tenure).

ARLIS is of course a useful tool with its listserv and learning portal, however the real power of the organization lies in the people and the connections. I have had the great pleasure of growing my network since that 2017 conference, getting to know outstanding information professionals in the field. Our shared excitement for the arts and the energy for sharing knowledge both with patrons and each other is an endless well of inspiration to me.

How has SAIC adjusted to remote/distance learning? What projects and resources have been put in place as a result of this shift, and what was your role (if any) in implementing them?

As with many academic libraries, we have been closed and the bulk of us have been working from home since mid-March. A handful of employees have essential status and are able to return to campus for shelving and processing now that we are moving into mid-June. A number of changes have occurred as a result of being remote, but I’m happy to say that my team (Research and Access Services) and the wider Library + Special Collections team have all jumped in to help. We’ve had new or adjusted work (that I assume is similar to others) including hosting virtual instruction sessions and research consultations, working with vendors to get the temporary or expanded access being offered as a result of going remote, increasing acquisition and cataloging of new resources, working with faculty to provide materials necessary for their class electronically, and increasing our outreach
Faculty Guide for Online Teaching

Working with a newly formed Remote Learning Support group, the library was able to help organize the information, resources, and advice faculty, staff, and administrators in that group were calling for and collecting. The result was the Faculty Guide for Online Teaching and the Department Specific Ideas Google Drive. Both of which were led by my colleague, Mackenzie Salisbury. I helped plug in content for the guide and the Google Drive, as well as served on the affiliated Faculty LibGuide Working Group.

Student Guide for Remote Learning and Making

Working with the newly formed Instructional Resources and Support group, the library was able to use the faculty guide as a model in order to create the Student Guide for Remote Learning and Making. I led the project with help from my colleague, Nick Ferreira. I worked with the group (comprised primarily of staff from various departments that provide services and facilities) to gather, organize, and plug content into the guide for students navigating working and creating art while off campus.

Remote Learning with Online Library Resources Guide

Mackenzie, Holly Stec Dankert, and I collaboratively built the Remote Learning With Online Library Resources guide quickly after the move to remote learning as a single source detailing how to find electronic resources. Later, we added information about our remote services as well as access and services available from each of the Special Collections.
New permanent content on Instagram

There are three joint accounts for the Flaxman Library and Joan Flasch Artists’ Book Collection’s (JFABC) on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook (@saic_library on all three). The team typically working on social media content gathered shortly after going remote to discuss a revised strategy, and it was determined that the core group of posters (Zoi Doehrer, April Sheridan, Nick, and myself) would work on three areas of new content. Staff Share Monday (example), Free Resource Friday (example), and a new version of What’s New Wednesday focused on electronic acquisitions (example). The team has continued Throw Back Thursday content (example), and will be replacing Free Resource Friday with Digital Collections Spotlight content this summer.

How To series in Instagram stories - Passive program

Knowing much of our population is on Instagram, Mackenzie and I decided to experiment with a series of How To story slides as a passive programming initiative. Drawing inspiration from the Insta-Instructables I worked on with the social media team at the Haas Arts Library (@yalehaasartslib on Instagram) in my previous positions, these sets of story slides offer instructions on basic library search skills using a mobile device. So far we have covered using the library search off campus, connecting Google Scholar to the library, and how to explore the JFABC off campus. We have more planned for this summer revolving around our Updated Library Search.

Librarians, Live! - Active program

Drawing inspiration from the Insta Live / IGTV series Info Lit from MICA’s Decker Library (@micadeckerlibrary on Instagram), Mackenzie and I created a series, Librarians, Live!, where we interview folks who work with the library. We hope this both instills a sense of community while we can’t be remote and provides another avenue for sharing our remote resources and services. We rotate who conducts the interviews, but so far we have interviewed Mackenzie about Flaxman Library (sadly not recorded on IGTV), Wayne P. Tate, Jr. about working in the library as a student working, Grace Tenneh Kromah about working in the JFABC as a student worker, Nick about JFABC, and Emily Eddy about Video Data Bank.

Do you feel US libraries better or less equipped to help patrons, students, and researchers access resources during an emergency?

I would have to honestly say that I don’t have a global enough understanding of libraries to know if those in the United States are more or less equipped to help patrons. What I will say instead is that many of us seem to be incredibly fortunate for the advances in technology that make it possible to provide old and new services, resources, and help remotely. The bigger questions that weigh on my mind are those revolving around the digital divide. Those conversations have been ongoing for years, but even in the academic realm where the assumption of technology access is more prevalent, there are more and more discussions around the difficulties of access due to the lack of hardware, internet access, and/or restrictions for those out of country. So I believe that all libraries in the U.S. that I’ve seen are doing their best to rise to the challenges presented by this emergency, but are also mindful and concerned about those with less technological privilege as the circumstances continue to press a reliance on electronic resources for the foreseeable future.
FINANCIALS
AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2019

MIDSTATES CHAPTER
ACCOUNT BALANCE

$2595.14

-$126.27.00 Fall meeting Reimbursement
$40.00 Member Dues (Paypal)

-$2.06 PayPal Fees
$360.00 Member dues (from ARLIS/NA)
$299.00 Transfer for Bunce Award

-$599.00 Bunce Award Check

-$300 ARLIS/NA St Louis Conference Donation

AS OF MAY 1, 2020

$2266.81

BUENCE TRAVEL AWARD
ACCOUNT BALANCE

$1117.95

-$299.00 Transfer for Bunce Award

AS OF MAY 1, 2020

$818.95

MEMBERSHIP

As of May 1, 2020, the ARLIS/NA-Midstates Chapter has 30 members in good standing.

Information Submitted by Larissa Garcia, Secretary/Treasurer, larissagarcia@niu.edu