*The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository*. Christina Zamon. Chicago: Society of

American Archivists, 2012.

Lone arrangers are the sole staff of an archives, often working alone or with a staff of part-time employees, interns, or volunteers. The term originates from the Lone Ranger, the fictional masked hero who, with his Native American sidekick, Tonto, crusades against injustice in the Old West. In an archival context, lone arrangers fight for access and preservation of the world’s cultural heritage while battling budget cuts, administrative demands, and preservation problems.

With this in mind, *The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository* offers guidance and best practices on the daily challenges and work demands of small archives. Author Christina Zamon addresses a range of topics, including administration and management, budgeting, fundraising and donor relations, information technology issues, collection development, records management, preservation, reference and outreach, facility administration, disaster planning, and internship and volunteer programs. The volume’s insight is relevant to both experienced professionals and novices in religious, academic, corporate, government, library, museum, or historical society settings.

 The book exhibits a sense of humor on its cover by displaying a domino mask alongside the traditional archival accoutrements of white gloves and acid-free folders. Additionally, amusing chapter titles—“What Am I Doing Here?,” “What Is This Stuff?,” and “You Want What?,” among others—demonstrate the bewilderment some archivists experience when starting work in a small repository.

 For lone arrangers, time management and goal setting is vital. As Zamon mentions, “It is essential to take things in stride and learn to say no, while still trying your best to meet the demands of your job” (p. 128). This is especially important for archivists who tend to be perfectionists. She advises, “It is easy to focus too much on how something ‘should’ be done while we lose sight of what really ‘needs’ to be done. Look at archival standards as a goal to aim for, but don’t feel as though you have failed if those goals are not met. When it comes to managing collections, any structure is better than no structure” (p. 37). Often new archivists inherit less-than-ideal organizational systems, but as the author writes, “Leave what has already been done and start working on the big picture by defining groups of records rather than individual records” (p. 28). The recommendations offered in Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner’s influential 2005 *American Archivist* article, “More Product, Less Process,” are ideal for lone arrangers who “may need to give up the idea of fully fleshed out finding aids in favor of simpler inventories or box lists” (p. 31). Lone arrangers should first concentrate on making their archives feasible and “good enough,” then identify and prioritize projects, such as writing more descriptive finding aids for key collections, pinpointing materials with preservation or conservation issues, or digitizing fragile or historically significant items.

Reference and outreach are complicated for lone arrangers, as they must balance aiding researchers with the rest of their duties. Zamon suggests limited hours, but warns, “It is up to you to enforce your own access policy” (p. 9). She differentiates between providing reference and research services. Reference connects patrons to the information they seek and educates them on how to search for material. Research is finding the specific information for the researcher. The latter may be the more realistic option for small repositories and can be streamlined by creating vertical files of duplicates of frequently requested items, FAQs, lists of important people or events, and timelines. Equally imperative is outreach and internal advocacy activities, such as websites, exhibits, presentations, workshops, classroom use of archival materials, oral history projects, community programs, and social media.

Case studies from diverse institutions demonstrate solutions to archival challenges. Photographs of archives and lone arrangers and figures containing policies to incorporate into one’s own institution are also included; Zamon also adds a deed of gift that is too vague to be useful as an example of what to avoid. Selected readings and a resources guide of national and regional organizations append the book.

*The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository* is an excellent book, recommended for those with no formal training in managing archives. While the books in the Society of American Archivists’ Archival Fundamentals Series II provide an in-depth, theoretical understanding of archives, this book is meant as a practical resource for those with minimal time to get an archives operational. Zamon provides the essentials on how to administer an archives, and the book serves as both an introduction to how archives should function, as well as an aide memoire of archival basics for experienced professionals.

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