

# The Rocky Mountain ARCHIVIST



*McNichols Civic Center Building / photo credit: Denver Arts and Venues*

## 2017 Fall Events

### *Advocating for Archives*

October 26, 2017 (Day)

You value your profession—but you don't have the words or know how to make an impact. This course provides information on how to identify goals, develop and deliver a message, and methods to employ in advocating for archival programs and archival issues. Practical approaches, tangible models, and examples of materials needed to advocate for your archival programs and issues are offered as well.

Registration for this event will be available soon on the SRMA website:

<http://www.srmarchivists.org>

Jessie de la Cruz, Program Director

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## *Archives as Muse*

October 26, 2017 (Evening)

On October 26, the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists, in collaboration with Arthyve, is presenting a special program combining the active and talented creative community of our region with the wide variety of archives that make up our organization. Collections and creatives are matched, and work has begun.

### Public Program



The public program begins at 6pm in the McNichols Building in Civic Center Park. At this event, artists who were chosen to present their work will display or perform it during the 1 ½ to 2 hour event (with a fifteen-minute intermission). The public program will also consist of a side-by-side conversation with the artist and the archivist of the collection that inspired the artist; the two will talk about the process of working together.

The Archives as Muse program is developed with the hope that it can provide an engaging platform for archivists and artists to work together and that these conversations will contribute to a larger dialogue about archives and the creative process.

Tickets will be available soon, so check back with the SRMA Facebook page or our website for additional information as it becomes available.

## Note from the President

Greetings SRMA! I hope you are all having a wonderful summer. I am so happy to be serving as your new President. We had our first Board meeting in July followed by a meet-up in the DU area. The Board is a creative, talented and smart group. I look forward to working with them to provide exciting new programming and opportunities for SRMA members. Make sure you check out the “Meet the Board” section in the newsletter to learn a little more about what drives and inspires our archival spirit and reasons for serving on the Board.

In this issue, Scott Lawan from the Colorado State Archives tells us about a NHPRC grant project to digitize audio recordings of the Colorado General Assembly. We also have all the information about the Fall Conference “Archives: Advocacy and Promotion” and the Archives As Muse event on October 26th. I hope you can all join us for the Archives as Muse event. This event created by Jessie de la Cruz of the Clyfford Still Museum gives SRMA a unique opportunity to create a public program that brings the artistic and archival communities together. It is my hope that the event will grow and be an annual event for SRMA.



*Jamie Seemiller, SRMA President*

***“Thanks to all the folks who have thrown their hat into the ring to join us [on the SRMA board]! I do recommend it.”***

Speaking of outreach, in the past few years SRMA has been more inward focused on our members and continuing education. Somewhere outreach got lost in the shuffle. We even had a vacant Board position for years. Last year, the Board decided that we need to resurrect the Outreach Coordinator position and add a Continuing Education Coordinator in order to make sure that we could develop both areas. So please welcome Jane Thaler and Calli Force as they take the reins of these positions.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the Fall Conference and at future meet-ups. Please feel free to email me or members of the Board with any questions, comments or suggestions.

Have a great rest of your summer,

Jamie Seemiller



## Featured Collection

This is the second in our new series, showcasing new and noteworthy archival collections in the Rocky Mountain region. If you have a collection you'd like to write about for the newsletter, contact the newsletter editor at [editor@srma.org](mailto:editor@srma.org).

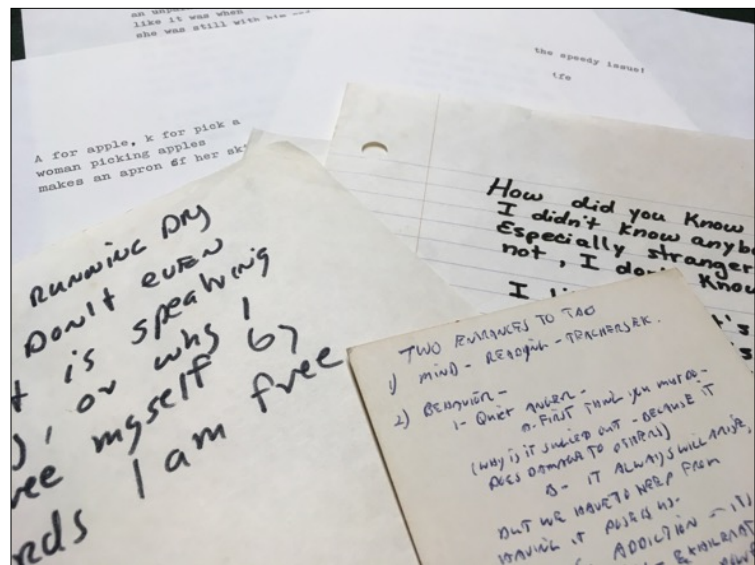
## A Zen Rabbi, Poet, and Personality: Alan Lew at CU Boulder

Post-Holocaust American Judaism Collections and CU Boulder

by Jane Thaler, Project Archivist

[jane.thaler@colorado.edu](mailto:jane.thaler@colorado.edu)

The Program in Jewish Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder, in conjunction with the University Libraries' Special Collections and Archives, is building a collection of archival holdings focused on Judaism and the Jewish-American experience from roughly the late 1940s to the present. The material collected in the Post-Holocaust American Judaism (PHAJ) Collections aims to shed light on the religious, cultural, and social movements of American Judaism as well as on the various philosophies of Judaism and Jewish organizations in the relevant period.



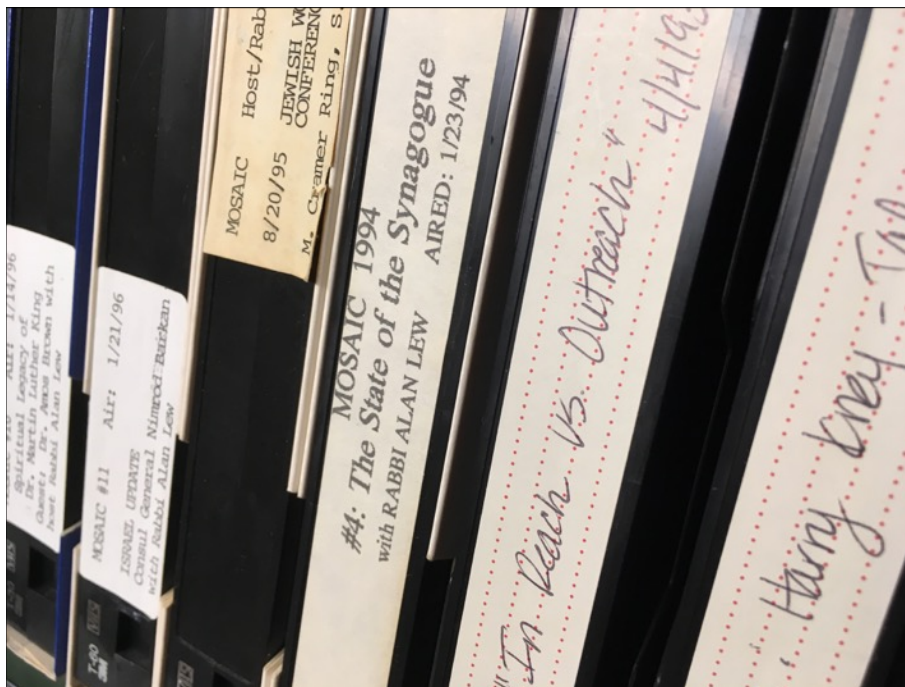
Poetry and rabbinical notes  
Alan Lew Papers  
COU:4058

The PHAJ Collections exist to document the work of the individuals and groups, who transformed and, in many cases, are still transforming the American Jewish experience in the post-World War II period, and to make that experience accessible to students, researchers, and interested parties of all kinds. As such, the collections include the papers of Jewish Renewal movement leaders such as Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi and Arthur Waskow, records from Jewish Renewal organizations like the Spiritual Eldering Institute and the Institute for Contemporary Midrash, and the vast library and archives of Harry W. Mazal, a chemist and scholar who spent his life devoted to combating anti-Semitism and holocaust denial. Along with these pillars, the PHAJ Collections also hold materials from several rabbis that lived what could be called extraordinary lives. One of these extraordinary people was Rabbi Alan Lew, whose papers were donated to the CU Boulder Archives by his wife, Sherril Jaffe Lew, in 2015.

Alan Lew (1943-2009) was, at one point or another, an aspiring Zen Priest, author, poet, television host, activist, teacher, and conservative rabbi in Northern California. Lew served as the rabbi of Congregation Eitz Chaim in Monroe, New York and as the first chaplain of the Jacob Perlow Hospice of Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City before moving to San Francisco in 1991 to lead Congregation Beth Shalom. Along with Zen Master Zoketsu Norman Fischer, Lew founded Maker Or, the first Jewish meditation center attached to a synagogue. In 2005, Lew retired from Beth Shalom to focus on promoting Jewish meditation practices at synagogues across the country.

Along with Lew's work as a Rabbi and meditational leader, Lew was an accomplished poet, author, and television host, earning an M.F.A. from University of Iowa Writer's Workshop in 1970 and publishing a book of poems in 1980 titled *8 Monologs*. In 1999, Lew and his wife published *One God Clapping: The Spiritual Path of a Zen Rabbi*, which documented the ten years he spent as a

Zen practitioner and how it led him back to Judaism. In 2003, he published *This Is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared: The Days of Awe as a Journey of Transformation*, and in 2005 he published *Be Still and Get Going: A Jewish Meditation Practice for Real Life*. Lew also served a ten-year stint as the host of CBS's weekly interfaith talk show *Mosaic* on KPIX-TV in San Francisco.



VHS of CBS's weekly interfaith talk show *Mosaic*, hosted by Lew  
 Alan Lew Papers

In 2009, while teaching conservative rabbis at the Jewish Theological Seminary's Rabbinic

Training Institute in Baltimore, Lew died at the age of 65. His papers contain materials ranging from his coursework at the Jewish Theological Seminary, his unpublished poetry and short stories dating as far back as the 1960s, early drafts and manuscripts of his published writings, materials relating to his sermons and public speaking, as well as personal correspondence and materials relating to his life as a rabbi and public speaker. Additionally, this collection contains material of years spent researching and writing his unpublished book on the history of his family, *The Life That Ran Through Me*, which he finished shortly before his death and the entire run of the *Mosaic* series.

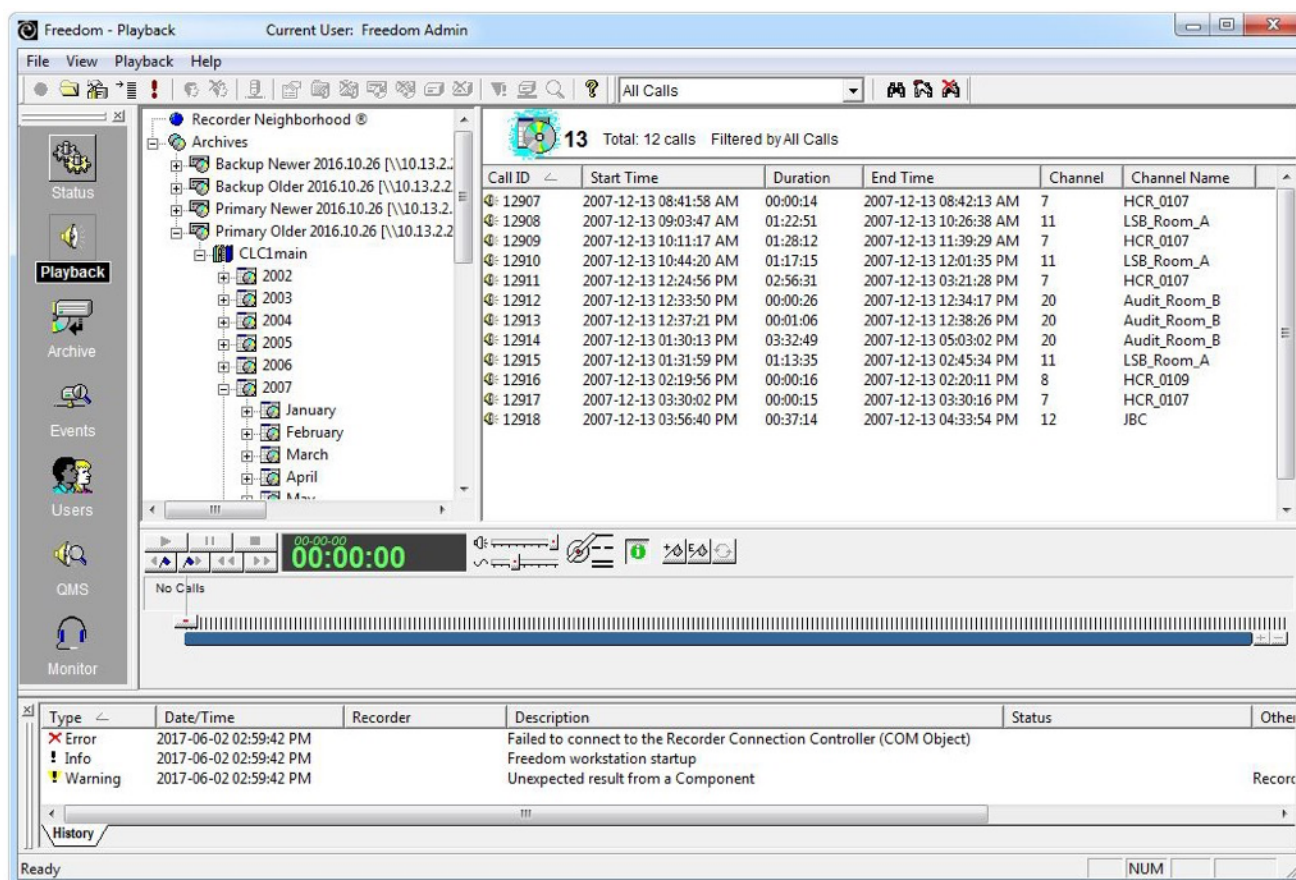
## Feature Article

# Preserving the Colorado General Assembly's Sessions

Colorado State Archives

by Scott Lawan, Digital Media Archivist

[scott.lawan@state.co.us](mailto:scott.lawan@state.co.us)



## Introduction

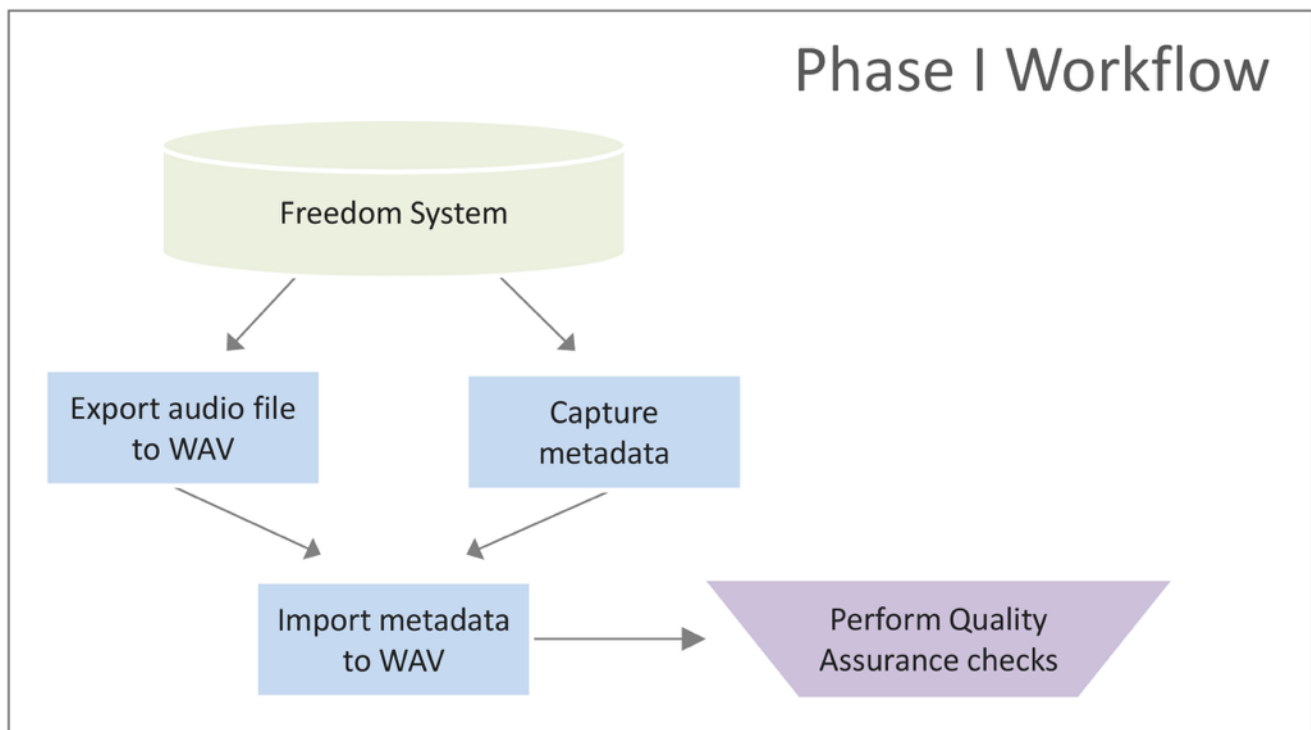
The National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC) awarded the Colorado State Archives (CSA) with a State Government Electronic Records (SGER) Grant to convert born-digital proprietary format audio recordings of the Colorado General Assembly's legislative sessions. From 2002 to 2012, these audio recordings were recorded using software developed by the Dictaphone Corporation known as Freedom System Manager (FSM). FSM is a proprietary digital audio recording system purchased by the General Assembly for the recording of legislative sessions. It was originally designed to operate in a Windows XP environment and between 2002 and 2012 it created over 180,000 compressed audio files with G.723.1 codec. These records are born digital, recorded on a voice-activated system, and represent the primary resource available for undertaking legislative historical research, particularly with reference to establishing legislative intent. In the past, FSM and its recordings were managed by the General Assembly's Office of Information Technology,

in a completely separate branch of government from the State Archives. The General Assembly's IT Department no longer supports the Freedom System and the collection has been transitioned to the control and ownership of the State Archives. This collection represents the first born-digital collection that CSA will be stewarding in a purely digital format and undergirds Colorado's ongoing jurisprudence and statutory revisions.

## Process

The greatest challenge to this project was seeking an appropriately efficient workflow that could be applied to this rather large digital preservation project which has minimal technical and developmental support. An example of this is that FSM lacks an API and thusly, all appropriate metadata associated with the audio files required manual extraction from the software interface. We cooked up a very MacGyver solution which involved capturing screenshots of the data from the FSM interface and importing them into Excel worksheets. This was collated with the inventory creation process as well and ultimately proved to be quite effective.

FSM exhibits a number of idiosyncrasies with regards to exporting files. This made some of the processes feel like wrestling a lynx or some other sort of large, feral, cat-like creature. These idiosyncrasies included; audio files exported as multiple copies, single audio files which are split into multiple files, and audio files which could not be exported altogether. In order to address these challenges, a quality assessment process was developed to best guarantee all viable FSM audio recordings were converted and preserved according to specifications we defined in procedural documentation.



## Where Are We?

As of late Spring 2017, we have completed Phase I of this project. All audio recordings have been converted to an accepted and universally accessible WAV format. We are currently in a quality control phase to ensure accuracy of associated metadata and we are working on an appropriate workflow for the cataloging and access of a dissemination file format (MP3).

This project is serving as a test bed for the creation of CSA's digital preservation policy. CSA does not currently have any official policies regarding born digital materials. Furthermore, this will also involve the development of appropriate legislative policy regarding future collections with the state legislature. Policies, procedures, and workflows developed through this project will lead to the creation of a comprehensive statewide model for the future control and guardianship of born digital materials for all state departments, municipalities, and stakeholders with statewide programs and collections.

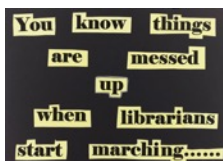
## Tips

- In this case: we developed appropriate relationships between CSA, the General Assembly, and each respective IT division in order to foster collaboration and address challenges
- A willingness to consider ridiculous and optimistic philosophies may lead to successful new approaches and workflows
- Going against your own instincts with an *aw-shucks* attitude may lead to a better solution
- Tension and dark hours are typical of such projects. Taken in stride, they will eventually lead to fulfillment in meeting goals
- Embraced the insanity and cultivate an environment of holding onto your butts and remaining patient



## Meet Your New SRMA Board Members

At the close of the May, 2017 SRMA Spring Meeting, a new board was begun. Some faces remained from the previous board, and some new. At our first board meeting last month, we decided to introduce ourselves not with a dry sentence or two, but in a more whimsical way with an archival avatar and tweet-style statement of how we view our position within the SRMA Board, without focusing too heavily on the 140-character limit. We'll introduce some of the board in this issue, and the rest in the next one. Check it out, and if you find you need more information, please don't hesitate to contact any one of us directly.



### Jamie Seemiller, President

Desire to empower SRMA to be active in community by preserving untold stories and connecting with fellow archivists. [#disabilityrights](#)



### Scott Lawan, Treasurer

Maybe working on the little things as dutifully and honestly as we can is how we stay sane when the world is falling apart—Haruki Murakami



### Jane Thaler, Outreach Coordinator

bring people & resources together / provide information & connections, faster. [#outreach](#) [#innovation](#) [#technology](#) [#community](#) [#connected](#)



### **Craig Haggit, Newsletter Editor**

I strive to keep the communication flowing by new ways and old. #gigglewater  
#knowyouronions #notfakenews



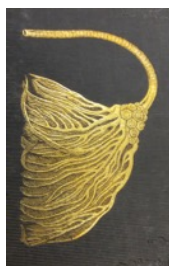
### **Nicole Becwar, Preservation Member-at-Large**

Western's time capsule (1910) represents my commitment to help SRMA members connect with the preservation tools & information they need.



### **Katie Rudolph, Society Archivist**

I will preserve the fruits of SRMA's history as your SRMA Archivist. I'll also bring out some tasty gems from the cellar for you to enjoy! #preserved #notpickled



### **Lisa Dunn, Member-at-Large**

The amazing "Golden Crinoid" reflects my goal of highlighting our Society's work through our events. Praise the Golden Crinoid.

## Next Issue We'll Introduce the rest of the SRMA Board

Allaina Wallace, Past President

Kevin Clair, Secretary

Continuing Education Coordinator

John Major, Electronic Resources/Website Coordinator

Jessie de la Cruz, Program Director

### *New Column!*

Each issue of this newsletter will now be featuring a short piece by Katie Rudolph, our SRMA Archivist, dealing with the almost 40-year history of the organization. Denver Public Library, where Katie is an Archivist/Librarian, is host to the physical SRMA archives.

## From the SRMA Archives

by Katie Rudolph, SRMA Archivist

[krudolph@denverlibrary.org](mailto:krudolph@denverlibrary.org)

Did you know that SRMA wasn't always SRMA? True story. This organization began in 1979 as the Society of Colorado Archivists and was established primarily "to promote cooperation and facilitate the exchange of information among individuals interested in preservation and use of archival and manuscript materials in the State of Colorado."



Logo of the Society of Colorado Archivists, circa 1990  
Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists Records, WH2252

In 1992, Wyoming archivists requested membership in the Society, prompting a name change to the "Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists" and a revision to membership policy as to include individuals and organizations throughout the Rocky Mountain region.

### Membership Information

SRMA membership is drawn from regular and volunteer staff at archives, historical societies, museums, businesses, government agencies, libraries, colleges and universities, religious institutions, and other persons who are concerned with the identification and care of information that documents the history of our region. Basic membership is only \$15, and you can pay online. And recruit some colleagues to join too!

Full information can be found on our web site at:

<http://www.srmarchivists.org/about-us/membership/>