

# Beyond the Bazaar

*Collectively preserving, archiving, and sharing the history and culture of the Los Angeles region*

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## Letter from the Chair, 2025

2025 was a year of challenges. Starting out with the LA fires, followed closely by the sudden loss of most of the traditional funding sources for many of our members and the need to shift gears for our yearly Archives Bazaar. However, there were great accomplishments as well, such as our success in hosting some of our membership meetings in-person and celebrating the 20th anniversary of Archives Bazaar in a wonderful new space that closed with the return of the reception. I am so grateful for the LAAS Executive Committee, the USC team and folks at Cal State LA such as Azalea Camacho, Bianca Guzman and Carlos Rodriguez, for their enthusiasm and hard work that ensured our 20th Archives Bazaar could happen. Throughout the year, especially facing the unexpected need to find a new host for the Bazaar, I asked myself and members to reflect on what the future of LA As Subject looked like. Our mission statement defines us as, "...a collaborative of organizations and individuals dedicated to improving the visibility, access, research, and preservation of archives and collections documenting the rich history of the Los Angeles region." I would like us all to continue to grow in membership; to grow the public's knowledge of the histories our many members work hard to preserve and promote; and to continue to build our community to help both new and long-lived LAAS members gain the skills and supplies needed to do their work. It is important now more than ever to support the stories held in our wide variety of repositories and collections and I truly believe that LAAS members and friends are passionate enough to keep us going for many more years to come.

Alejandra Gaeta  
*L.A. As Subject Executive Committee Chair*

## 2025 Avery Clayton Spirit Award Recipient: Mike Okamura



This year, I am excited to introduce Mike Okamura as our 2025 Avery Clayton award winner. Mike is a familiar face at the yearly Archives Bazaar and around Little Tokyo. He is fourth generation Japanese American and follows in his grandparents footsteps with strong ties to the community.

Mike was recently honored by the Nisei Week Foundation and thus I've taken the liberty of borrowing part of their summary of Mike's impact. "Okamura has been a 36-year volunteer with the Japanese American National Museum; a longtime president of the Little Tokyo Historical Society; a Grateful Crane Ensemble board member; longtime member and past president of Montebello-Ashiya Sister City Association; an archeological dig projects volunteer at the Manzanar National Historic Site; and a 13-year mentor with USC Career Center's First-Generation Mentor Program. He was also co-chair of the Nisei Week Coronation in 1999.

This is just a short summary of Mike's work. Thank you, Mike for all the work that you do and we are proud to honor you as our 2025 Avery Clayton award winner.

*Alejandra Gaeta  
L.A. As Subject Executive Committee Chair*

The Avery Clayton Spirit Award was established by the Executive Committee of LA as Subject in 2010. Avery Clayton was a long time active member of LA as Subject and founder of the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum, home to his mother Dr. Clayton's life work - a collection that preserves and shares the story of all aspects of the African-American experience. In honor of his passion and dedication, the Executive Committee created the award to highlight an individual that embodies his spirit.

## Los Angeles Archives Bazaar Celebrated 20 Years



The Los Angeles Archives Bazaar marked a major milestone last year as it celebrated its 20th anniversary, bringing Southern California's premier history event to the Cal State LA campus for the first time. Presented by the L.A. as Subject research alliance in partnership with USC Libraries, the Cal State LA University Library, and the Cal State LA Pathway Programs Office, the anniversary celebration honored two decades of preserving and sharing the region's rich and diverse past.

After 17 years at USC, the move to Cal State LA underscored the event's continued growth and its commitment to engaging communities across Los Angeles. The Bazaar featured exhibits from 80 local and regional archives and collections, along with hands-on workshops and special presentations by archivists, filmmakers, and preservationists.

Alejandra Gaeta, chair of the L.A. as Subject executive committee and archivist/librarian at the Autry Museum of the American West, acknowledged that the anniversary took place during a challenging period for the region's cultural community.

"Despite a difficult year for many of our members, the Archives Bazaar once again served as a highlight," Gaeta said. "We were grateful to partner with Cal State LA and the USC Libraries to bring everyone together for a single day celebrating the many communities and histories of Los Angeles."

Researchers, journalists, history enthusiasts, and community members explored exhibitor tables and attended programs centered on the theme of community. Highlights included a panel on archival responses to the January 2025 Eaton and Palisades fires, presentations on film and documentary projects, an advance screening of an episode of Lost LA, and a discussion on the first formal effort to archive Latinx theater in modern Los Angeles.

Held in the Golden Eagle Ballrooms, the free event drew visitors from across the region and reaffirmed the Los Angeles Archives Bazaar's role as a vital gathering place for those committed to preserving and celebrating Southern California's history.



### Are you a member in good-standing?

An L.A. as Subject member in good standing is required to participate in at least **one** of the following activities per year:

- Attend a LAAS membership meeting
- Provide content to LAAS website
- Volunteer at events in which LAAS participates
- Serve on a committee
- Lead a tour or workshop
- Host an LAAS collaborative special event or project (visit <https://laassubject.org/members area> to submit a proposal form)



## Archives At Risk Committee Report

In 2025, the Archives at Risk Committee (AARC) completed work with the fourth cohort of our self-assessment program of four participating archives. The Committee was founded in 2019 to explore sustainable ways that professional archivists and librarians can act as a peer-based sounding board to smaller archives as they make their own informed decisions related to long-term sustainability. From this exploration, the self-assessment program was created to help LAAS archive members plan and be ready for issues common to Los Angeles area archives.

In April, members of the Committee presented at the Society of California Archivists' Annual General Meeting in North Hollywood. We shared the research that led to the creation of the Committee as well as an in-depth review of how the self-assessment program works with the aim of demystifying the process so that folks in other regions might be able to do similar work in their communities.

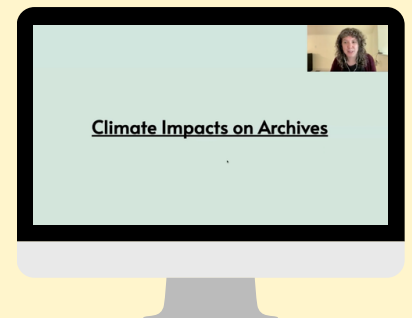
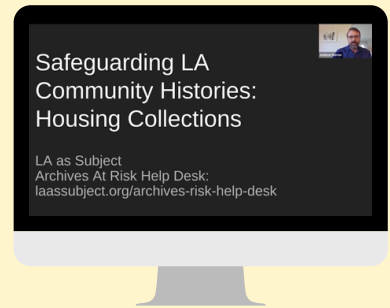
In December, we hosted our first cohort reunion as a way to foster community and knowledge sharing among previous participants in the self-assessment program. As we move forward in 2026, we will continue to explore ways to maintain a sense of community and continued support after the initial self-assessment period. We also plan to continue sharing our methods with the broader archival community. We will continue to reflect on what makes our group relevant and be thoughtful on how we can best continue to provide mutual aid and support for our local archival community. Please know that we continue to actively maintain and update the [Help Desk](#) on the LAAS website.

We look forward to launching our fifth cohort of the Self-Assessment Program in 2026! If you are interested in joining the next cohort please get in touch with us. In February, we will send out a call at the LAAS member meeting for participation in our next self-assessment survey round. If you'd like to get in touch with us in the meantime, our contact information is on our [page](#) on the LAAS website.

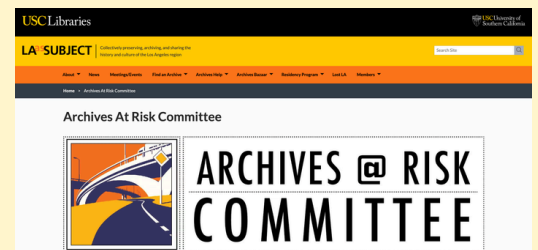
*Stella Castillo*  
Archives at Risk Committee

**Watch our latest information session today on our YouTube Channel.**

<https://www.youtube.com/@l.a.assubject4233>



**Visit <https://laassubject.org/about/archives-risk-committee> to learn more.**



### Welcome New 2025 L.A. as Subject Archive Members

- **Hermosa Beach Museum**
- **Heart of Los Angeles - MARKINGS: Indigenous Immigrant Oral Histories in Westlake**
- **Velaslavasay Panorama**
- **Legacy Library**

### 2026 L.A. as Subject General Membership Meetings

- **February 10, 2026**
- **April 14, 2026**
- **June 9, 2026**
- **August 11, 2026**
- **October 13, 2026**
- **December 8, 2026**

For more information and to RSVP, visit [laassubject.org/events](https://laassubject.org/events)

**LAAS Directory Portal features at a glance:**

Each Directory profile page provides the option to create:

- Photo galleries
- News and events
- Online exhibits
- Groups with like institutions or collections

Also try the “Find An Archive” search for easier discoverability and browsability.

**Beyond Zoom: Face-to-Face Meetings in 2025**

In 2025, L.A. as Subject coordinated several face-to-face meetings throughout the year, thanks to those members who graciously hosted us.

In February, members ventured into downtown to gather at the Los Angeles Public Library’s Central Library. Thanks to the efforts of librarians Christina Rice and Nicholas Beyelia, our members gathered for some much-needed community after the devastating fires. Following this meeting, we toured LAPL’s amazing map collection. Map Librarian Peter Hague impressed our members with highlights and stories from the library’s broad collection.



Thanks to archivist Denise McIver, the California African American Museum hosted our membership meeting in the summer, during which we discussed updates about the Archives Bazaar. Following this meeting, members walked through two of CAAM’s wonderful exhibits – “Ode to Dena: Black Artistic Legacies of Altadena” and “Awol Erizku: X.” And on a rainy October Tuesday, members joined the Archives Bazaar planning team for a meeting followed by a tour of the Cal State Los Angeles facilities prior to LAAS’ flagship event.

In December, LA as Subject partnered with the Society of California Archivists and Los Angeles Archivists Collective to share some holiday cheer at the BLVD MRKT in Montebello. About 15-20 people attended, including a number of students. Members appreciated this lovely meet up with these like-minded organizations.

We hope to continue to gather in-person in 2026!

Victoria Bernal,  
LAAS Executive Committee Membership Chair

