This past year has been an incredible one for the Library & Archives (L&A), filled with many important achievements. Because of the support of our donors, and with over 7,200 hours of invaluable assistance from our dedicated volunteers, we have made significant progress in preserving our growing collection, and in providing greater online access to the collection for researchers, scholars, educators, and students around the world.

We now reach diverse and geographically distant audiences, who have the opportunity to become familiar with our collections. Last year, there were 772,122 visits to our website, a 71 percent increase from the year before. We also significantly expanded our reach through social media. We have a presence on YouTube, Tumblr, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, and Pinterest. Our Facebook page and blogs have also enabled us to better connect with a wider community. Our social media efforts and followers have increased by almost 40 percent from the year before.

Of particular interest, over the past several years, L&A staff and volunteers have digitized over 183,000 images and placed them on Flickr.com. We believe ours is now the largest aviation related image collection on the web, and it has become quite well known among aviation enthusiasts. It is so popular, according to the Flickr.com statistics page, that our images have now surpassed 100 million views. Tens of thousands of comments and tags have been added by the public, excited to share their knowledge about our one-of-a-kind photo archive. However, we have over two million images yet to be digitized, so this ambitious project still has a long way to go. A similar response by the public can be found on our YouTube page, where thousands view our 2,000 posted videos each day.

Last year we also uploaded descriptions of more than 300 rare and unique photo albums and scrapbooks into AeroCat. The materials in these volumes document individuals, aircraft, locations, and events important to the history of aviation. Significant sections from more than fifty of these volumes have been digitized and can be viewed in Flickr.com via a link in AeroCat. As we move into the next year, we will continue our efforts to preserve the collection and increase public accessibility.

Although our focus remains the support of the Museum’s education, exhibit, and aircraft restoration programs by providing historical background, photographs, films, and documents, we also serve as an essential resource for aviation authors, historians, and researchers from around the world. We had a busy year managing several projects and initiatives, as well as an increase in the number of researchers, the addition of two full-time project staff, and a remarkable 71 percent increase in our volunteer hours.

RESEARCH

Last year, we responded to a large number of inquiries from staff members, volunteers, and the general public. We answered over 6,710 telephone, mail, and email information requests (a 51% increase from the year before) and had 95 researchers visit onsite. Our staff has also continued to support the production of various aviation and space related television documentaries, including offerings on the History Channel, the Public Broadcasting Service, the Military Channel, the Travel Channel, and the A&E Network. Last year we assisted in the production of at least nine such documentaries, providing archival information and staff and volunteer input. We also assisted a number of authors in their preparation of books and newspaper and magazine articles.
These include such renowned aviation historians as Walter Boyne, Steve Ginter, Dr. Richard Hallion and Rene J. Francillon. Over 46 authors benefitted from our input and from access to our collection last year. Their documentaries, books, and articles cover a large number of diverse topics, including Pacific Southwest Airlines; the Douglas DC-1; the Consolidated PBY and B-24; Reuben H. Fleet; Glenn Curtis; Theodore Ellyson; Charles Lindbergh; the Ryan Firebee; World War II bombers and fighters; flying cars; various Bell aircraft; Curtiss, de Havilland, Focke-Wulf, Gallaudet, Fokker aircraft and Australian aircraft; the Keystone-Loening; the Vinn Fizz; the P-51 Mustang; the SB2C Helldiver; the Boeing Stratoliner, Clipper, and 747; the F-117 and F-7U Cutlass; the Spruce Goose; and women assembly factory workers.

YouTube (along with links from the AeroCat record), and over 183,000 photographs have been digitized and are now available on Flickr.com. These online resources can all be accessed through our Museum website.

**NEW GRANT PROJECT**

We are most pleased to announce that the L&A received a two-year National Historical Publications and Records grant in February 2015 from the National Archives and Records Administration to continue our Great Explorations: Increasing Access to Our Aerospace Heritage program, specifically providing for the digitization of 50,000 Atlas missile and space launch system images. Through the digitization of these thousands of records from our one-of-a-kind General Dynamics Atlas missile and space launch vehicle collection, our Great Explorations program will greatly advance research into the history of America’s national defense, the space program, the development of the aerospace industry, and the Cold War.

We have had a record of success with similar projects. In 2012 we received an IMLS Museums of America grant to enable the development of requirements and standards for catalog record formats and metadata for archival materials, connect our library system to a digital asset management system to reduce duplicate data entry, connect other collection databases to this system and continue to add information to these systems to aid searching for both the Museum staff and general public.

Parallel to the IMLS Museums of America project, the L&A also received a recently completed two-year CLIR Hidden Collections grant to create finding guides for 189 of our most important personal and corporate special collections. The objective of this project was to improve both Museum and public access to these unique collections. Approximately 2,000 linear feet of these collections were examined, with finding guides created, and made accessible to the public through various online platforms.
We are very fortunate to have a large group of dedicated, highly skilled volunteers who will continue support of our Great Explorations effort, many of whom have been involved in our successful projects in the recent past.

RECENT GRANT PROJECTS

At the end of fiscal year 2014, we completed a two-year project funded by an IMLS Museums of America grant to develop requirements and standards for catalog record formats and metadata for archival materials, connect the Museum’s library system to a digital asset management system (DAMS) to reduce duplicate data entry, connect other collection databases to this system, and continue to add information to these systems to aid searching for both the Museum staff and general public. Virtually all activities set out to be completed by the end of Great Explorations project were accomplished. By the end of the grant period in August 2014, 230,000 assets had been digitized.

The metadata standards selected over the course of this project ensure that there was a uniform way of cataloging digital assets for the future. Digitization standards were also adopted, to insure that our assets will still be accessible, no matter what technological changes come. Also, the ability to use the DAMS as the center for metadata and digital files is incredibly valuable and avoids duplication. Now, metadata and files only need to be loaded once; and by simply clicking on an icon, those assets can be uploaded to Flickr or YouTube. In addition, the ability to automatically ingest the tags from Flickr into the DAMS ensures that the incredibly valuable information gained from crowdsourcing is quickly and permanently stored in one location.

Parallel to the IMLS project, as noted earlier, we also received a CLIR Hidden Collections grant to create finding guides for 189 of our most important personal and corporate special collections. The objective of this project was to improve both Museum and public access to these unique collections. Approximately 2,000 linear feet of these collections were examined, with finding guides created, and made accessible to the public through various online platforms.

Researchers from commonly used websites, such as YouTube and Flickr.com, are directed to the Museum’s webpage and our online catalog, AeroCat. They will then be able to search a comprehensive catalog listing, including the newly developed special collection finding guides. These finding guides will also be listed in two free public cataloging programs to further raise awareness of the importance of our collection, the Online Archive of California (OAC) and the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC). This work began in February 2013 and was completed in January 2015. To date, we now have over 230 finding guides listed online. We would like to give special thanks to Daniel Schlachet who was invaluable to the project.
COLLECTION SPOTLIGHT:
Colonel Bernt Balchen

Our collection spotlight for this issue was selected from our recently completed CLIR project: Colonel Bernt Balchen’s Personal Papers.

Colonel Bernt Balchen was America’s greatest Arctic expert. Born in Tveit, Norway, on October 23, 1899, he served as a cavalryman in the Finnish Army against the Russians during World War I. He joined the Norwegian Naval Air Force in 1921, where he acquired his initial Arctic flying experience. From 1928 to 1930, Balchen was chief pilot on Admiral Byrd’s Atlantic expedition and on Nov. 29, 1929, he piloted the first airplane to fly across the South Pole. He was made a U.S. citizen by an Act of Congress in 1931. In 1932, at Amelia Earhart’s request, he configured and tested her Lockheed Vega for her planned solo Atlantic flight, taught her to fly by the instruments and then quietly checked her out in her renovated Vega, flying her to Newfoundland where she initiated her May 20, 1932, Atlantic flight.

His career spanned 35 years, serving both U.S. and Norwegian governments in cold-weather aviation activities. His many accomplishments also included the first nonstop flight from Alaska over the North Pole to Europe; building a secret air base in Greenland; and leading rescue missions of downed planes on Greenland’s icecap. In 1943 Balchen was made Chief of the Allied Transport Command for Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and the USSR, with a secret base in Scotland. During that time, his planes flew 4,399 people from neutral Sweden to Great Britain across enemy-occupied territory. He also led highly-secret aerial missions into Norway to resupply Underground resistance forces in their operations against the Nazi invaders.

Balchen retired from the USAF in 1956. During his service, he received many honors for his contributions to aviation. Colonel Balchen passed away October 17, 1973, in Mount Kisco, New York and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery (next to Commander Richard E. Byrd) on his 74th birthday.

The Bernt Balchen Special Collection was donated to the San Diego Air & Space Museum in two parts: first in August 1995 and later in March 2002. His collection is available for research and contains numerous photographs, including those of Colonel Balchen as a child in the early 1900s, articles and letters received by his wife and family in the early 2000s, plus a variety of materials relating to his life and achievements, including his pilot license, awards, honorary degree, and federal records.

Images from the collection have been digitized and are available here: https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/sets/72157634381238098
MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS

Last year we also focused our efforts on two new book projects, *Wings of the Dragon: China’s Air Force, 1923-42*, by the late Ray Wagner, aviation historian and former Museum archivist, and *San Diego’s Milestones: A Coming of Age Celebration* for the upcoming 2015 Balboa Park 100th anniversary of the Panama-California Exposition, credited for putting San Diego on the map.

**Wings of the Dragon: China’s Air Force, 1923-42**

This publication investigates the Chinese Air Force’s role during the critical years leading to the crisis facing so many nations when the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis seemed to be winning World War II. More than any other country, China suffered from continuous warfare during the 20th century. It is due for release this year.

**San Diego’s Milestones: A Coming of Age Celebration**

This upcoming book commemorates the 100th anniversary of San Diego’s Panama-California Exposition. The publication will present a collection of one hundred significant milestones in the history of this great city. It is due for release mid-year 2015.

DIGITIZING THE COLLECTION

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, particularly Stephen Clark, digitization of the Atlas Centaur and general film collections has continued at a fevered pace. Forrest Gump once said that life is like a box of chocolates, and that you never knew what you would get when you open one. The same can be said for our film archive. We have certainly discovered some unusual items as our digitization work has progressed. For example, we digitized a film produced by the U.S. Air Force during the 1970s called “The Hang Up” which shows the perils of drug use (it can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMqLxX_M6kg) and evidently was meant to scare new recruits straight by showing what happens during a “bad trip.” It uses psychedelic music and visual effects to get the point across.

Amazingly, we were contacted by one of the young men who acted in the film who emailed us saying:
From 1967 to 1972 I was in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and from 1976-68 I was stationed in NYC. Several of us spent two days as extras, filming that “pot party” at the opening of the clip (at a fancy brownstone in Brooklyn) and at a “club” in a warehouse somewhere. We filmed these segments in 1968. I may be mistaken but as the camera pans the party goers sitting around on the floor, I’m in the foreground taking a drag on a “joint”…which was actually re-rolled Marlboros.

Needless to say, he was very surprised to see himself on YouTube after all these years. This is just one of the many stories which we have encountered through our digitization efforts. Every week, we receive emails saying they recognize a relative in one of our photos on Flickr, or they served on an aircraft featured in one of our digitized films. And each time we receive such an email, we realize that although the work of digitizing our collection is hard, it certainly is worth it. What mysteries will the next chocolate reveal?

**ONLINE EXHIBITION**

During the past year we also expanded and updated our International Air & Space Hall of Fame online exhibit. We also created a new online exhibit, *The Evolution of Balboa Park and the Rebirth of SDASM*. This exhibit explores the history of Balboa Park from 1868 to the present time. With images from our archives, *Evolution and Rebirth* documents the Panama-California Exposition; Navy usage of the Park for training sailors during World War I; and the 1935-36 California International Exposition, which kept Balboa Park from shutting down, as well as when the Ford Building was constructed. It also provides a glance at the Park today as it prepares for the 2015 Centennial. Most importantly, however, this exhibit demonstrates the deep ties the Park has to its San Diego home, and how individuals, organizations, and the community shaped the Park and San Diego Air & Space Museum to be the institutions they are today.
NEW LIBRARY & ARCHIVES PROJECT ARCHIVIST

We welcome a new library staff member, but she is certainly no stranger to the Museum. Rebecca “Becky” Conrad joined the San Diego Air & Space Museum in 2010 as Executive Assistant to the Museum President/CEO, responsible for a variety of Museum-wide administrative and project management activities. She joins the Library & Archives as the Project Archivist for the Atlas Digitization Project. She will be responsible for organizing and cataloging 165,000 Atlas negatives and digitizing 50,000 for online access.

Becky holds a B.A. in history from San Diego State University and an M.A. in history from San Francisco State University, both with a focus on early modern European history, medieval European history and religion. She also holds a certificate in grant writing from San Diego State University. Her prior professional background includes a number of administrative responsibilities at the de Young Museum in San Francisco, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, as well as the Museum of Photographic Arts in San Diego, including work in public relations, social media management and special programs.

TRIBUTE TO:
Daniel Addison “Dan” Heald III

The Library and Archives lost one of our friendliest and most accomplished volunteers, Dan Heald. Born in Orange, New Jersey, he grew up in Morristown. As a teenager, Dan designed and built many model airplanes; including amphibious designs. His designs were so good that model airplane companies bought some of the plans. Dan graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale University. While in the U.S. Army he performed rocket engineering work for the Wernher van Braun team in Huntsville, Alabama.

A true “Rocket Scientist” Dan was employed for 38 years at General Dynamics designing cryogenic propellant systems for Atlas and Centaur missiles (now being used for carrying the Space Shuttle and satellites). He also managed advanced launch vehicle concepts studies. After retirement, Dan enjoyed his ten years volunteering at the San Diego Air and Space Museum, where he got to know the most obscure parts of the Archives better than any other volunteer. A regular on Wednesdays for years, hump day will never be the same without a cheerful hello and joke from Dan. He will be truly missed.
STAY CONNECTED

Are you following us on Facebook? We are posting regularly with news, photos of the week, and special articles. Facebook is just one way the Library & Archives is sharing its collection with the community.

By becoming a fan and following our blog, you can stay up to date with the latest news, volunteer information, publications, and photos of the Library & Archives. Join us and stay connected at facebook.com/SDASMLA.

Recommend us to all your family and friends, and help spread the word about our mission to “Collect... Preserve... and Make Available” Aerospace History.

Twitter.com/@SDASM_archives
flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/
youtube.com/user/sdasmarchives

OPEN FOR RESEARCH

The SDASM Library & Archives collection is accessible for research. Staff and/or volunteers are available for assistance. Appointments should be made in advance by calling 619.234.8291 (x 125), or by emailing dseracini@sdasm.org, prior to your visit. Information can often be pulled prior to your visit if we are aware of your research request. Contact the Library & Archives staff for research rules and regulations.

HOURS OF
OPERATION

Tuesday to Friday
(10:00 am - 4:00 pm)

(Seats on Mondays, weekends, federal holidays, and for some special Museum functions)