PENN PRESS

Advancing knowledge, fostering collaboration, informing the future

Fall 2026

Penn Press Director, Editor in Chief Serving on the Board of the Association of University Presses





Mary Francis and **Walter Biggins**, respectively Penn Press's Director and Editor-in-Chief, are both serving on the board of directors of the Association of University Presses (AUPresses). Francis is the President-elect of the organization, with her term as President beginning in June 2027.

As an organization, AUPresses serves as the governing body of over 160 member presses in over twenty countries, advocating for presses in a variety of directions. The organization stewards best practices for this large body of scholarly publishers on multiple levels: peer review, engaging with host institutions, publisher/library relationships, legal guidance, and operational advice.

AUPresses serves a very broad community: large and small presses, public and private host institutions, increasingly presses around the world, all while adhering to a important shared set of core values.

Prior to serving on its Board of Directors, both Francis and Biggins had volunteered to work on the organization's committees. "My work on the Acquisitions Editorial Committee and Conference Program Committee gave me a wider understanding of the myriad ways in which university presses can operate," Biggins said. "The collaborative spirit of AUPresses's work has helped me grow immeasurably as a publishing colleague."

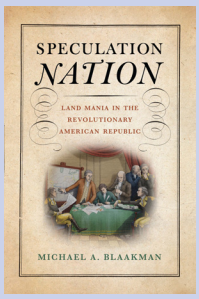
Francis commented: "It is no exaggeration to say that I have learned more from the collective wisdom of the Association members than I have from any other group of people I could name."

Both Francis and Biggins see volunteering for AUPresses, an organization that has offered so much to them professionally and personally, as a natural outgrowth of their efforts to pay it forward. "Being asked to serve as President-elect, and then President, is a great honor," Francis said. "But I also see it as a way to give back to the professional group that has shaped my career in truly rewarding ways.

Other members of the Penn Press staff have been volunteering (and continue to volunteer) their time and expertise by serving on committees that continue the work of the AUPresses. The list below, although not comprehensive, highlights some of those staff members and their service.

- Business Manager **Joseph Guttman**, Business Systems Committee, 2016–2017
- Director of Journals **Jocelyn Dawson**, Annual Meeting Program Committee, 2017–2021
- Marketing Operations Manager **Tracy Kellmer**, Library Relations Committee, 2021–2024
- Senior Editor **Elisabeth Maselli**, Acquisitions Editorial Committee, 2023–2026
- Director of Sales and Marketing **Clint Kimberling**, Marketing Committee, 2026–2029

Audiobook Highlight



Speculation Nation: Land Mania in the Revolutionary American Republic (2023), by Michael A. Blaakman

Speculation Nation was published as an audiobook by Redwood Audio. It is narrated by seasoned narrator Scot Wilcox, who has narrated and produced over 200 audiobooks. The audiobook is available from Audible.com.

Translation Highlight

The Leader's Brain: Enhance Your Leadership, Build Stronger Teams, Make Better Decisions, and Inspire Greater Innovation with Neuroscience (2020), by Michael Platt

The Korean language edition of *The Leader's Brain* was published by Hyundae Jisung, Inc. Publishing Company. Hyundae Jisung, Inc. was founded in 1982 and has grown steadily since, expanding their publishing list to include books on Business and Economics, Politics, and Art and History.

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Missives from the Field: Editors Report Back from Conferences

In this issue of the Penn Press Newsletter, Senior Editor Bob Lockhart, Senior Editor Elisabeth Maselli, and Acquisitions Editor Jenny Tan relate their experiences at academic conferences over the past six months.Watch this space for future missives from the field!

Renaissance Society of America
February 19–21
San Francisco, CA

Acquisitions Editor Jenny Tan



Of the conferences I attend, this is the one at which I see the most interest in our books, including not only my early modern list but also many books from the Early Modern Americas series, for which Bob Lockhart acquires, as well as early modern titles from the Jewish Cultures and Contexts series, for which Elisabeth Maselli acquires.

Two of our books were recognized at the RSA awards ceremony during the conference: Benjamin VanWagoner's *Imperial Ventures: Maritime Drama and the Invention of Risk* won the inaugural RSA First Book Prize and John Kuhn's *Making Pagans: Theatrical Practice and Comparative Religion in Early Modern England* was shortlisted for the Phyllis Goodhart Gordan Book Prize for best book in Renaissance studies.

I also had a number of productive meetings with potential authors, working in periods from medieval to eighteenth century and across a wide range of disciplines and fields.

African American Intellectual History Society
March 27–28
Pittsburgh, PA

Senior Editor Bob Lockhart

The African American Intellectual History Society's journal, *Global Black Thought*, is published by University of Pennsylvania Press. A poster and physical copies of the latest issue were highlighted at Penn's exhibit, and there was strong interest for copies of the journal among those in attendance, which presumably include AAIHS members, who have access to the electronic edition.

A robust group of titles were exhibited, such as those by Danielle Wiggins, Kendra Boyd, and Caitlin Wiesner, and notable visitors to our exhibit included Penn Press author, GBT editor, and AAIHS conference organizer Keisha Blain and AAIHS Vice President Shaun Armistead.

Organization of American Historians
April 16–18
Philadelphia, PA

Senior Editor Bob Lockhart



This year's OAH took place in our hometown of Philadelphia and the program included a significant amount of 250th-related public history programming. Penn Press had a prime location near the main entrance, which was conducive to regular booth traffic throughout the conference, despite the lure of all that Philly has to offer. With Acquisitions and Marketing departments helping to staff the exhibit, I was able to focus not only on the meetings I had scheduled with prospective and current authors, series editors, and manuscript readers, but also on the serendipitous encounters with prospective authors that make these conferences so valuable.

We had several new books hot off the press that we were exhibiting for the first time, including Jessica Levy's *Black Power, Inc.* and Patrick Chung's *Standardizing Empire*, as well as galleys of Tej Nagaraja's forthcoming *Troop Movements*. All three authors were on the program, participating in book-related sessions, which effectively supported our exhibiting and promotion efforts.

This year, another Penn Press book won a major award: Caitlin Reed Wiesner's book *Between the Street and the State: Black Women's Anti-Rape Activism amid the War on Crime* won the Liberty Legacy Award, which recognizes the best book dealing with the history of civil rights in the United States. This marks the seventh consecutive year that a Penn Press book has won an award from the OAH.

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Missives from the Field: Editors Report Back from Conferences, cont'd.



Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations
June 25–27
Columbus, OH

Senior Editor Bob Lockhart

The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations conference has traditionally focused on diplomatic history, but in the past 15 years or so, an increasing number of scholars doing cutting-edge work on empire, human rights, and transnational political movements have started attending. Their work initially drew me to the conference and inspired the creation of the Power, Politics, and the World series.

This year's conference marked a milestone for the Press and the series, as Joseph Parrott's *Dream the Size of Freedom: How African Liberation Mobilized New Left Internationalism* won SHAFR's Michael H. Hunt Prize for International History and received honorable mention for its Stuart L. Bernath Book Prize for best first book. Given that the series has been in existence for only four years, these accolades mark significant early progress in the development of its profile. Moreover, they generated booth traffic and interest from prospective authors. This interest was heightened by a conference panel devoted to three Penn Press books on the topic of global social movements: Jessica Levy's *Black Power Inc: Corporate America and the Rise of Multinational Empowerment Politics* and Tej Nagaraja's *Troop Movements: Labor, Race, and Global Freedom Struggles in America's World War II* as well as Parrott's *Dream the Size of Freedom*.

Society for Historians of the Early American Republic
July 16–19
Philadelphia, PA

Senior Editor Bob Lockhart

This year's SHEAR conference was back in Philadelphia for the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding. Given the occasion, attendance was robust, as was the conference exhibit. For the exhibit, we highlighted the Press's local institutional partnerships, especially our relationships with the American Philosophical Society and the University of Pennsylvania's McNeil Center. Many Penn Pess authors were on the program, including Nicholas Wood, who participated in a roundtable "Slavery and the American Revolution at 250: Situating Three New Books in the State of the Field," which served as a nice opportunity to promote his new book, *Let the Oppressed Go Free: Abolitionism in Colonial and Revolutionary America*.

American Political Science Association Annual Meeting
September 3-6
Boston, MA



Senior Editor Elisabeth Maselli

We co-displayed with Ingram this year, which allowed me to focus on meetings. The book exhibit was towards the back of the hall this year and, helpfully, next to the "APSA lounge," the only area with open seating in the vicinity. It seems like Ingram has picked this location a few times now.

I conducted about twenty-four meetings with potential authors, most of whom are working on democracy, communication and/or the intersection of religion and politics, with a fairly US-centric focus running throughout the proposals. However, the Democracy, Citizenship, and Constitutionalism series is seeking to publish work on a broader range of democracy and this year I saw more projects with an International Relations aspect.

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Penn Press Books Recognized for Excellence

A Flood of Pictures by Michael Leja received the Newman Book Award, given by the American Historical Print Collectors Society.

Atmospheric Violence by Omer Aijazi received the Bloomsbury Pakistan Book Prize, granted by Bloomsbury Pakistan.

Between the Street and the State by Caitlin Reed Wiesner received the Liberty Legacy Foundation Award, granted by the Organization of American Historians.

Cracked Foundations by Michael R. Glass received the Lewis Mumford Prize, granted by the Society for American City and Regional Planning History, and an honorable mention for the Urban History Association's Joe William Trotter, Jr. Prize.

Desert Dreams by Laura K. Muñoz received an honorable mention for the Best Book Award, granted by the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies.

Dream the Size of Freedom by R. Joseph Parrott received the Publication Award for a Senior Scholar, granted by the Ohio Academy of History.

Empire of Contingency by Jorge Flores received the Ambassador João de Deus Ramos Award, granted by the Marine Academy and the Orient Foundation.

Freedom Enterprise by Kendra D. Boyd received an honorable mention for the Jon Gjerde Prize, granted by the Midwestern History Association.

Freedom's Horizon by Isadora Moura Mota received the Antônio Cândido Prize, granted by the Brazil section of the Latin American Studies Association and the Roberto Reis Book Award, granted by the Brazilian Studies Association.

Imperial Ventures by Benjamin VanWagoner received the RSA First Book Prize, granted by the Renaissance Society of America and an honorable mention for the Shakespeare Association of America's First Book Award.

In Plain Sight by Ann E. Zimo received the Ronnie Ellenblum Best First Book Award, given by the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East.

Making Pagans by John Kuhn received the Barnard Hewitt Award, granted by the American Society for Theater Research and was shortlisted for the RSA Phyllis Goodhart Gordan Book Prize, granted by the Renaissance Society of America.

Medieval Media by Ingrid Nelson received the Best Monograph on Chaucer Prize, awarded by the New Chaucer Society.

Philadelphia by Paul Kahan received the Award of Excellence in the Large Press Publication category, granted by the American Association for State and Local History Leadership in History Awards.

Roads to Power, Roads to Crisis by Alec Zuercher Reichardt received the Professional Prize for Scholarship in Postal History, granted by the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum.

She Changed the Nation by Mary Ellen Curtin received the Liz Carpenter Award, granted by the Texas State Historical Association.

Souls in the Kalyug by Shankar Ramaswami received the C.L.R. James Award for Published Book for Academic or General Audiences, granted by the Working-Class Studies Association.

State of Shock by Lior Libman received the Korenblat Book Award for the Best Book in Israel Studies, granted by the Cherrick Center for the Study of Zionism, the Yishuv, and the State of Israel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Temptations in Ruin by Alice von Bieberstein received an honorable mention for the Wulf Kansteiner MSA First Book Award, granted by the Memory Studies Association.

The Abortion Market by Katherine J. Parkin received the Ralph Gomory Prize, granted by the Business History Conference, and was named a finalist for the Hagley Prize, granted by the Business History Conference.

The Centrality of Slavery by John Craig Hammond received an honorable mention for the Jon Gjerde Prize, granted by the Midwestern History Association.

The Invention of Rum by Jordan B. Smith received the William J. Rorabaugh Book Prize, granted by the Alcohol and Drugs History Society, and shortlisted for the Nach Waxman Prize, granted by Kitchen Arts & Letters.

The Predatory Sea by Casey Schmitt received the John R. Lyman Book Award in World Maritime History, granted by the North American Society for Oceanic History, and was named a finalist for the Frederick Douglass Book Prize, granted by Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.

The Sweet Taste of Empire by Kim F. Hall was named a finalist for the Frederick Douglass Book Prize, granted by Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.

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Penn Press in the Media: Highlights



Fuad Musallam, author of *A Break in the Future* (2025), appeared on *AnthroPod*, the podcast of the Society for Cultural Anthropology.

Contested Currents (2026) by Zachary M. Bennett was listed as one of the best nonfiction books of the Fall by *Bloomberg*.

Penn's Sylvania (2026), edited by Frederick Steiner and Ignacio F. Bunster-Ossa, was named in the *Philly Voice* as one of 8 great fall books from Philly authors. The book was also spotlighted by *Penn Today*.

Matthew Ritger, author of *Houses of Correction* (2026), was interviewed on the *New Books Network*.

Bradford A. Bouley was invited to write about his book, *The Barberini Butchers* (2026), on *Rorotoko*, a curated blog of scholars, artists, and thinkers, in their own words. Bouley was also interviewed on the *New Books Network*.

Property Disobedience as Protest (2026) by William E. Scheuerman was referenced in an *Irish Times* op-ed.

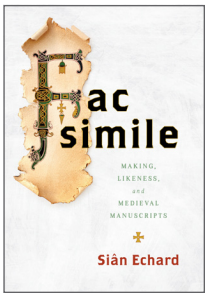
R. Joseph Parrott, author of *Dream the Size of Freedom* (2025), was interviewed on the *New Books Network*.

The Fly Room (2026) by William deJong-Lambert appeared in *Publishers Weekly*'s Fall 2026 preview of science books.

Michelle MacDonald, author of *Coffee Nation* (2025), writes "How to have a Perfect Philly Day" for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Ellen R. Welch was invited to write about her book, *Public Acoustics* (2026), on the curated blog *Rorotoko*.

Mary T. Freeman, author of *Abolitionists and the Politics of Correspondence* (2026), was interviewed on the *New Books Network*.



Facsimile (2025) by Siân Echard was reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*.

A Flood of Pictures (2025) by Michael Leja was reviewed in the *New York Review of Books*.

Sari Altschuler, author of *Before Disability* (2026), was interviewed in *Mother Jones*.

Patrick Chung, author of *Standardizing Empire* (2026), was interviewed on the *New Books Network*.

Jordan B. Smith, author of *The Invention of Rum* (2025), appeared on the podcast *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness*.

Isadora Moura Mota, author of *Freedom's Horizon* (2025), appeared on the *War of the Rebellion* podcast.

John Craig Hammond, author of *The Centrality of Slavery* (2025), appeared on the *Our Missouri* podcast.

Sarah Keyes, author of *American Burial Ground* (HC 2023, PB 2026), appeared in the CNN documentary series *This Land*, in the episode "The Golden Trail."

Alice von Bieberstein, author of *Temptations in Ruin* (2025), was interviewed on the *New Books Network*.

Jennifer Black, author of *Branding Trust* (2023), was interviewed on *H-Net*.

Cracked Foundations (2025) by Michael R. Glass was reviewed in *Choice* and Glass was interviewed for *The Metropole* blog.

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