

# ACA NEWS

Issue 35

July 1999

**Important Reminders:**

*Annual Dues - July 1, 1999*

*ACA Program at SAA,  
Pittsburgh, Friday,  
August 27, 1999*

*Annual Meeting at SAA,  
Pittsburgh, Saturday,  
August 28, 1999*

## CONFIRMATION, CONGRATULATION, AND CELEBRATION

Message from President Susan Box, CA

How time is flying! It is hard to believe that my year as President of the Academy is almost over. Yes, it was a lot of work. Was it worth it? Absolutely! The Academy of Certified Archivists is in fine shape and has a bright future.

How do I know? I have confirmation. The Academy is in the black financially – barely, but there. Re-certification con-

tinues at a steady pace each year. This confirms that archivists believe this is as important to the profession as to themselves. Candidates continue to apply to sit for the exam in record numbers. This confirms that new archivists want the validation of certification.

Further confirmation of the Academy's good health can be read inside this newsletter. Read Past-president Elizabeth Adkins' article "Looking Back – Looking Forward."

Her term as president was a year of difficult choices that resulted in the long-term improvement of the Academy's financial health. Read about the certification exam from the perspective of the Academy's professional psychometrician, Kevin Williams. He will confirm that the exam is solid and fair.

Finally, confirmation can be heard on Friday, August 27, 12:45-2:15 pm in the SAA session

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## LOOKING BACK – LOOKING FORWARD

### ACA Growing Pains: Reorganization and Implementation of Dues

By: Elizabeth W. Adkins, CA  
Vice President, 1992-1995;  
President 1995-1996

When I was elected to my first term as ACA Vice President in 1992, the Academy was three years old and had come a long way in a very short time. The Board of Regents had created an administrative infrastructure for the organization, developed an alliance with Professional Examination Services, and created the framework for a first-rate exam. Much of this hard work was done by just a few people, unknown to the vast majority of ACA members. ACA still faced two im-

portant issues: fine tuning the organizational structure of the board and fiscal stability.

With the framework for a first-rate exam in place, the next task was to address problems with the organizational structure of the Board of Regents. The structure had been created during ACA's first year. At that time the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer each served two-year terms and were assigned specific responsibilities. The Regents each served three-year terms, without specific assignments.

The Vice President was solely responsible for exam development and administration, making the position quite intimidating. Fortunately my predecessor, Deborah Skaggs, had developed a system of procedures, templates and checklists which made my job, as overwhelming as it was, much easier.

The board appointed a task force on by-laws and organizational structure, chaired by the immediate past president, Maygene Daniels. Maygene's task force did a magnificent job of proposing a revised administrative

*(Continued on page 3)*

## In Your Own Words: Comments from the 1999 Membership Survey

The 1999 Survey provided members a way to communicate to the Academy their thoughts on accreditation, the process of re-certification, what certification has meant to them, and opportunities to critique the newsletter, the survey, the Secretariat and the Academy in general. Here, in your own words, albeit anonymous ones, are sample comments:

"Believe that archivists will/should need certification in the future."

"Re-certification by petition enables one to use professional activities as a benefit."

"I remain ambivalent about certification because I know many fine archivists who are not and feel no need of it."

"I support ACA very strongly. I am proud to be a member and appreciate the efforts of those who work on behalf of the ACA."

"Certification is a benefit for consulting work and has been recognized by granting agencies which has been of benefit. It has increased my earning potential as a consultant."

"The benefit has been to distinguish my work from untrained people who call themselves archivists... As a lone arranger, certification helped me feel like I was doing things properly; helps show other professional that my field has standards..."

"The organization, while important, seems quite insular and self-protective and doesn't seem to invite or celebrate the diversity of archival experience or problems that require cooperation rather than competition."

"Consider a benefit of certification

to be an affirmation of skill and focus on archives."

"[Certification] has changed my life and empowered me professionally."

"Re-certification by petition is a more accurate and useful way to measure my activities and suitability for certification."

"I think certification should be every 10 years, not 5."

"I will be honest, I think that the benefits are not worth the fees..."

"If I hadn't been able to certify by petition (not enough points), I would have taken the exam."

"Petition was fairest way of reflecting experience, ongoing education, and contributions."

"Even without a pay increase (not even for earning my MLS), I still think certification is essential!"

"There are too few minorities in the profession; to require a CA would reduce even further those in the profession."

"Even though I am a CA by examination, my sense is that the certification process has not been successful in its most important venue: raising the esteem of archivists. Instead, the certification process seems more of a hurdle. Many if not most archivists remain skeptical, and to others it seems not to matter at all. The "CA" on my business card causes confusion, but not interest - nor respect. The goal needs to be re-examined with its ends in mind."

"I'm glad we have a certification process in this field because it indicates that an individual has achieved a certain recognized level

of expertise."

"Certification enhances credibility about archives practices in civil litigation."

"I think the Academy has done a fine job and has been a credit to the profession."

"Taking the exam and becoming certified gave me the credentials I needed to advance to assistant head of the archives in the absence of specific educational credentials... I think certification is perhaps most helpful for people like me who have not followed a traditional path to archives work. I don't think it is necessary for everyone."

"Motivated to have a credential that scientists, engineers, non-academics could accept. It is a recognition of professional level standing."

"ACA should decide whether it wants to be international or not. If so, make it less U.S. oriented."

"At a medical institution, the MD's who run it understand the concept of certification and it is therefore appropriate to be certified even though they don't require it."

"I've been slow to support ACA, but it seems the most likely mechanism to achieve increased professionalism."

"Since I hope that its value increases, I want to support certification for the profession. Clearly, though, it will take much more time before certification has a significant effect on salaries or even some individual's performance. I am very much looking forward to future improvements and believe that in the long run certification will have a

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## STRUCTURE AND FISCAL STABILITY

*(Continued from page 1)*

structure, in which Regents were each assigned a portfolio of responsibilities. Term lengths for each position were limited to two years (except for the Vice President, who serves one year as Vice President, one year as President, and one year as Regent for Nominations). The Regent for Exam Development and the Regent for Exam Administration split the responsibilities previously assumed by the Vice President. The positions of Regent for Outreach and Regent for Certification Maintenance were created, establishing leadership for these two important administrative functions. The Board and membership approved the reorganization plan. This structure has proven to be stable and is still working today.

As these problems were being addressed, however, the issue of fiscal stability remained unresolved. Every treasurer since the first (Karen Benedict) fretted over ACA's financial structure. While ACA had started with what seemed to be a huge pot of money from certification by petition fees, the Board needed more money than was available to get a reputable exam in place and to provide basic membership services, including newsletters and a membership directory. Every year since the ACA was founded, far more money was going out of its coffers than was coming in. At that time the organization's incoming revenues were limited to applications fees to take the exam and certification fees once the exam had been passed. There would not be another infusion of money until re-certification started in 1997. The Board looked for ways to cut spending, including discussing whether we could get institutional support from the employers of board members for mailings. Operating in this mode, it was impossible to explore ways of promoting the certification credential to employers or new archivists. All of our good ideas required money, and ACA did not have any to spare. In fact, despite all of the cost cutting we could muster, we were still heading toward a situation where we would run out of money in just a few years.

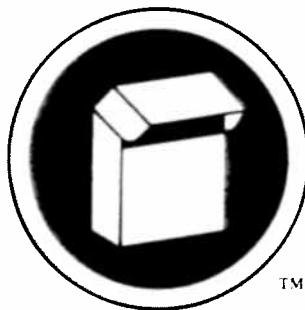
While all of the Board members were concerned about ACA's finances, three of us became consumed with finding a way to make the organization fiscally stable. Carla Summers (the Treasurer) and Claudette John (the Regent for Exam Administration) and I prepared a plan and present it to the Board. We decided that everything that could be done to cut costs had already been done, so the only

answer was to increase revenues. And since, unlike most professional archival associations, ACA could not generate revenue from registration fees for an annual meeting or the sale of publications (which require seed money which we did not have), the only choice was to implement dues. I can assure you that decision was not made lightly, and the Board questioned us closely on our proposal. In fact, they rejected our first plan for a dues structure and sent us back to the drawing board. It took many hours of discussion and debate before we finally came up with a structure that included the following features:

- Annual dues of \$50, to be rolled out to the classes of 1989 and 1990 first, each year adding additional classes until all members were paying dues.
- Reduction of certification fees, and a smaller re-certification fee than originally expected.
- The provision that anyone who refused to pay dues would remain certified for their full eight years, but could not qualify for re-certification until back dues were paid.
- An agreement that any increase in dues had to be approved by members at the annual meeting.

We expected that there would be many people who would be unhappy with our plan, and we were right. But a surprisingly large number of our members understood and accepted our explanation of the need for dues. Enough members chose to pay their dues and recertify to make the organization fiscally viable.

Even after implementing dues, we continued to find ways to reduce costs - in part by consolidating our Secretariat (formerly SAA) and exam development company (formerly Professional Examination Services) into one organization, Capitol Hill Management Services. I haven't attended a Board meeting in three years, but I'm quite sure that they continue to talk about cutting costs to this day. It's a necessity, because ACA is still spending a little bit more money each year than is available through certification fees, dues, and interest on investments. But we're very close to achieving the financial balance of costs and revenues that will ensure that ACA can grow and change for decades to come.



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**ELECTION RESULTS:**

By **Mary Wolfskill, CA** – Chair, Nominating Committee and **Charles Schultz, CA** – Regent for Nominations

A very special "thank you" is due all who agreed to run in this election. Everyone knows what a big commitment of time and energy is required to take an active role in professional associations. Upon seeing the ballot, Steve Grandin of the ACA Secretariat, commented on what an impressive slate of candidates were running, and he noted how difficult it has been for other organizations to find members willing to put themselves forward. ACA is indeed fortunate to have such generous and dedicated members.

The following are the results of this election from the 200 ballots postmarked by June 1:

**Vice President/President Elect: Patrick M. Quinn, CA** – University Archivist, Northwestern University. Patrick served on the ACA Board of Regents, 1990-1992; ACA Nominating Committee, 1992; ACA Examination Development Committee, 1994-1996; and numerous activities for the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC).

**Treasurer: Margery N. Sly, CA** – Manager of Special Collections, Presbyterian Historical Society. Margery has served on a wide variety of committees and task forces for national and regional organizations including SAA, MAC, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC).

**Secretary: Cindy C. Smolovik, CA** Archivist, National Archives and Records Administration, Southwest Region. Cindy served as ACA Secretary 1998-1999; ACA Certification Maintenance Review Team and Secretary for the Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA).

**Regent for Exam Administration: Bruce W. Dearstyne, CA** - Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Archives, Records and Information Management Program, University of Maryland. Bruce serves as Executive Director for the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) and has been very active in SAA, and the

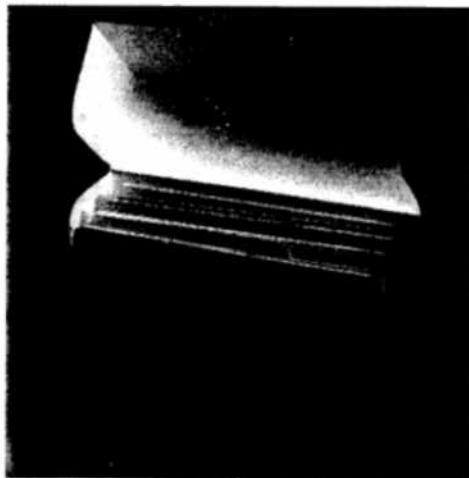
Association of Records Managers and Administrators. International (ARMA International).

**Regent for Certification Maintenance: Michael E. Holland, CA** – Director of University Archives, University of Missouri-Columbia. Michael served as Regent for Certification Maintenance for 1997-1999 and on the petition review teams since 1995, as well as, a variety of committees and other activities for a wide range of regional and national organizations.

**Nominating Committee: Connell B. Gallagher, CA** – Director for Research Collections at the University of Vermont Libraries. Connell served on the Exam Development Committee 1997-1999 and has also been active in SAA and other regional activities.

Each new member brings their special expertise, dedication and ideas to the board. (see page 15 for other board members)

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## A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE EXAMINATION FOR CERTIFIED ARCHIVIST: HOW THE EXAM IS DEVELOPED AND EVALUATED

By Kevin Williams, University at Albany, Psychometrician

To obtain the title of certified archivist, individuals must pass the Academy of Certified Archivists' national examination. A passing score on this exam signifies that the individual possesses the level of knowledge necessary to practice successfully as an archivist. But did you ever wonder how certification exams are constructed and validated? Or how associations such as the ACA can be reasonably sure that the passing score on their certification exam accurately reflects the level of knowledge necessary to be successful in the field? Such questions are important ones and are often received by ACA officers. Accordingly, I have been asked by the ACA to write a description of the test development and evaluation process for its members. I have been performing the psychometric analysis for the national certification examination for the past four years, and have performed similar services for other associations and state licensing agencies. In this article I will lay out the general strategy that is used by the ACA to ensure that the examination for certified archivists provides a valid assessment of one's capability to practice successfully in the field.

I'll begin by stating that ACA exam is constructed and evaluated according to sound scientific principles. It differs from some other examinations that I have seen in terms of its scientific rigor. The exam is based on a thorough scientific analysis of the work activities of archivists, the criterion for passing is established and validated using the judgments of subject matter experts, and the pool of test items is continually evaluated and updated. These practices ensure that the ACA exam is a valid assessment of one's ability to perform competently in the profession. A key component in this process is the ACA's Examination Development Committee. Members of this committee use their experience and expertise in steering the test validation process. In the following sections of this article, I will review (1) the objective of the examination, (2) the process by which the test is constructed, and (3) the procedures used to evaluate the test (i.e., to make sure it's

reliable and valid).

### Objective of the Certification Examination

Like all certification examinations, the ACA national certification exam assesses the competence of professionals after they have completed their professional training. The objective of a certification exam is to identify candidates who possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform entry-level work in the profession competently. This objective is different than that of other tests used by organizations, such as those used for hiring or promotion. For hiring and promoting individuals, the goal of a test is to discriminate among individuals in terms of their total capacity to perform the job in question. In other words, organizations want to be able to rank-order individuals from highest to lowest in terms of their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Organizations follow "top-down" selection procedures for hiring and promotion: positions are offered to individuals with the highest test scores, with subsequent offers extended down the list until all the available slots are filled. Certification tests, by contrast, are more concerned with identifying all candidates who pass the "threshold for competence" in a profession. From a psychometric perspective, we want to make sure that all individuals who pass the test and become certified are competent workers, and that all competent individuals pass the test and become certified. This implies that there are two errors we wish to avoid: we do not want to certify someone who is not competent (a "false positive") or fail to certify someone who is competent (a "false negative"). Such errors can be minimized by (1) ensuring that the knowledge and skills assessed by the exam are related to critical work activities of the profession, and (2) establishing a valid passing point for the examination. As you will see in the next section, considerable attention goes into developing test items and determining the pass point for the archivists' certification exam.

### The Test Construction Process

A scientifically and legally defensible examination is based on a detailed analysis of the job in question. The foundation for the exam is what is called a job analysis or role delineation study. A typical job analysis study for a national certification exam involves surveying job incumbents across the country about the specific tasks involved in their work. The survey responses provide a detailed description of the job activities of professionals. From these data, the job analyst defines the major job domains of the profession, along with the specific tasks that comprise each domain. Next, subject matter experts are consulted to help identify the knowledge and skills a worker must possess to perform each domain task competently. Knowledge statements are then written for each domain task. Together, the job domains, tasks, and knowledge statements encompass the commonly accepted duties that professionals perform in the course of their daily work and provide the blueprint for the certification examination.

In essence, the job analysis provides the test specifications for a certification examination. Using the task and knowledge statements, subject matter experts write questions for the exam. Test items are constructed to assess the extent to which people have the knowledge and skills (as outlined in the knowledge statements) required to perform the critical tasks in each job domain. For the ACA exam, members of Examination Committee write the test items, with guidance from psychometric experts. The Committee as a whole then scrutinizes all test items, again in consultation with psychometricians and other subject matter experts. This process ensures that only items that measure knowledge and competency relevant to the archivist role are selected and placed on the exam.

To make this process more meaningful, let me describe some of the specific outcomes of the job analysis for the ACA exam. The latest job analysis conducted for the ACA exam identified seven key performance domains in the archivist work role, with several critical tasks within each domain. The seven

*(Continued on page 6)*

## EXAM CONSTRUCTION

(Continued from page 5)

domains are selection of documents; arrangement and description of documents; reference services and access to documents; preservation and protection of documents; outreach, advocacy, and promotion of document collections; managing archival programs; and professional ethical and legal responsibilities. Each domain has between three and six tasks associated with it. One of the tasks within the domain of preservation and protection of documents, for example, is "analyze the current physical condition of documents and determine appropriate preservation actions and priorities." A knowledge statement related to this task is "archivists know and can apply knowledge about the causes and consequences of the deterioration of paper and other media." Thus, an appropriate item for the exam would ask candidates about factors that cause deterioration of paper.

Jobs and professions are not static, but tend to change over time because of advances in technology and changes in the social, political, and legal environments related to work. Thus, job analyses need to be conducted periodically to track changes in the work activities of a profession. For certification examinations, job analysis studies are typically conducted every five years to make sure that the exam stays current with the profession. (So, when you get the next job analysis survey from the ACA Examination Development Committee, make sure you fill it out and return it!) As you can see, developing and writing test questions is an on-going process.

After the test is constructed, one final critical step remains - the cutoff score for passing the exam must be identified. There are different methods for determining cutoff scores or pass points, all of which contain an element of subjectivity. It is crucial, however, for the cutoff or passing score to be consistent with normal expectations of proficiency for *entry-level* professionals. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for some associations to arbitrarily set a pass point (e.g., 70% correct). The ACA uses a more scientific approach to setting the pass point. Following procedures used for many licensing exams, a panel of expert judges (e.g., the Examination Committee), who are experienced in the profession, carefully examine each of the items on the test and

rate them in terms of the percentage or proportion of just competent persons that would answer the item correctly. Their ratings for all items are averaged to arrive at the pass point. The main advantage of this approach (which is the most common approach used by test developers and psychometricians) is that expert judges, rather than consultants or outsiders, use their knowledge and experience to determine minimum performance standards for the profession.

I have gone into quite a bit of detail about the content and construction of the exam because the most appropriate method for validating a certification examination is through content validation procedures. Since archivists work in many different contexts, it is practically impossible to validate test scores against a common performance criterion. Instead, psychometricians turn their attention toward the content of the exam itself and make sure that it measures the normative activities of the profession. To summarize the test construction process, a job analysis delineates the major domains of archival practice, along with specific work tasks nested within each domain. Knowledge statements are then written for each work task. Together, the domains, tasks, and knowledge statements provide the blueprint for the certification examination. Subject matter experts then write questions for the exam and define the passing score for certification.

### Evaluating the Test

After each administration of the exam, analyses are conducted to assess test outcomes and item performance. These analyses are conducted to ensure that the present test outcomes (i.e., pass/fail decisions) are fair and valid and to examine the appropriateness of test items for future exams. Analyses are conducted at both the test and item level. At the test level, the distribution of raw scores across candidates is examined and estimates of error of measurement are obtained. The distribution of raw scores for certification exams typically shows a negative skew, meaning that scores tend to bunch on the passing side of the distribution. This is because certification exams are designed to test minimally acceptable or threshold knowledge and

skill for practice. A candidate's raw test score provides a point estimation of his or her total knowledge related to the profession. Obviously, one's "true" score or knowledge may be different than the actual test score, but unfortunately we can never really know what one's true score or knowledge is for sure. There are methods, however, of estimating error in measurement. These estimates are examined after each test and if the estimates of error are large, adjustments are made to the cutoff score. Fortunately, when the item writing procedures described above are followed, error estimates tend to be low.

At the item level, analyses are conducted to ensure that each of the test items is of appropriate difficulty (not too easy or too difficult) and capable of distinguishing between high test scorers and low test scorers. Ideally, each item on the exam should discriminate between those who possess the requisite knowledge for practice and those who do not. Different analysis are conducted to determine the extent to which each item on the test does in fact differentiate between those who do well on the test (and presumably have high levels of knowledge and skill) and those who do poorly on the test. Items that are too easy or difficulty, are flagged and discarded from the examination item pool.

I hope that this overview has provided insight into the certification testing process used by the ACA. The test construction and evaluation process is consistent with the highest standards in the testing industry and safeguards are instituted to help ensure the integrity of the examination. Job analysis, item writing, and item analysis are all part of an on-going process of test construction and validation. These procedures help ensure that the test is meeting its objective - to certify individuals as competent to practice as archivists.



## COMMENTS FROM THE 1999 SURVEY

*(Continued from page 2)*

positive influence on the profession.”

“We have hired a Records Manager and the CRM was required so anticipate that the CA will be required for archivists in the future.”

“The sole testing date per year and studying are inconvenient; the traveling to take it; and the exam costs are expensive. These are the reasons why I am not encouraging my employer to make it a preferred qualification.”

“I am glad to have the certification process to protect this agency when I retire from appointing a political hack as archivist. We got state law to require the archivist to be certified because it summed up the needed background.”

“Keep up the good fight!”

“The re-certification process by petition had far too many requirements and took far too long to do. It felt like a major undertaking. I can understand this for certification but not for re-certification. Don't know that I'll recertify again.”

“Certification has helped to maintain rather than advance my career.”

“I would like to see the ACA do more of the following:

1. Ethics for archivists – I know we have done some work on this.
2. Cooperation with other professionals, including records managers; perhaps we could start by establishing mutual recognition of archival and records management work for purposes of re-certification.
3. Mentors: whether through SAA's mentoring program or in other ways, Certified Archivists should very actively seek out new people (and not so new people) in archives and related fields for sharing.
4. Changing work: Certified Archivists might take the lead in exploring new ways for archivists to work and share those methods with others.
5. These kinds of professional contributions should be reported in the newsletter.”

### ACA KEYNOTE AT THE SOCIETY OF SOUTHWEST ARCHIVISTS ANNUAL MEETING, HELD IN AUSTIN, TEXAS.

ACA President, Susan Box delivered the keynote address opening the Society of Southwest Archivists annual meeting held last May in Austin, Texas. In addition, Ms. Box participated in a panel discussion with Tom Hickerson, incoming President of the Society of American Archivists; Tad Howington, incoming President of ARMA International; David Gracy, incoming President of ACA; and Charles Schultz, immediate Past-President of ACA. The panel discussed their visions for the future of the archival profession and the role that ACA and other organizations must play. All of the panelists agreed that working together with as many allied professional organizations is essential to ensure the preservation of the records which will document our current society and culture, as well as, those which we now preserve and protect and those which we will be entrusted with in the future.



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## CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE TIP: AMIGOS SERVICES OFFER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

By Tom Claeson

The Amigos Preservation Service (APS) and Amigos Imaging Service (AIS) are non-profit, grant-funded providers of information, support, training, and consultation on preservation and imaging topics. The services offer training to archivists and librarians in the Southwestern U.S., primarily in the states of Arizona, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

The APS was established in 1991 with a grant from the Division of Preservation and Access, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Recognizing the growing need for information and education on the topic of digital imaging, Amigos established the AIS in 1998 with a grant from NEH. The services recently received a grant for funding through July, 2001.

The Preservation Service offers information/reference services, disaster planning and recovery assistance, site survey consultations, and a series of workshops, including:

- Introduction to Preservation Issues and Practices
- Emergency Preparedness and Recovery
- Basic Book and Paper Repair
- Insider Information: Environmental Monitoring and Control
- Outsourcing Preservation: Using External Services
- Advanced Book Repair Issues
- Preservation of A/V Materials

In 1999-2001, the Amigos Preservation Service plans to introduce new workshops on Archival Holdings Maintenance, Preservation of Photographic Materials, Grant Writing, Security, and Preservation Management.

The Amigos Imaging Service currently offers support and training, and currently gives two workshops: "Introduction to Imaging and Imaging Technology in Libraries and Archives," and "Preservation of New Technology/New Technology for Preservation." New AIS workshops on imaging of textual material, photographic material, and other topics are in development to be offered in 1999-2001.

For more information on these workshops, or

any aspect of the Amigos Preservation Service or Amigos Imaging Service, please visit the Amigos Web site at [www.amigos.org](http://www.amigos.org), or contact:

Tom Claeson  
Amigos Preservation Service Manager  
Amigos Library Services  
14400 Midway Road  
Dallas, Texas 75244-3509  
Phone: 800/843-8482  
Fax: 972/991-6061  
E-mail: [claesont@amigos.org](mailto:claesont@amigos.org)

ACA is interested in providing information on workshops and other services like the Amigos Preservation Services. Please contact ACA at  
Phone: 518-463-8644, Fax: 518-463-8656

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## MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL ARCHIVES CONFERENCE (MARAC) HOSTED ACA'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY

By James Byers, CA

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) hosted one of the ACA's tenth anniversary sessions on Friday, May 7, at the MARAC Conference, Pennsylvania State University.

The session was titled Archival Certification: The First Ten Years. Session presenters were Danna Bell-Russel (Library of Congress), Rosalye Settles (NARA) who is the ACA Regent for Examination Development, and Bruce Kirby (Smithsonian Institution Archives), a newly certified archivist. The session was chaired by James Byers, ACA Treasurer.

Danna Bell-Russel provided the historic background of the discussion and debate over the archival certification process that has occurred over the past several decades. Ms. Bell-Russel has done earlier research on this background in graduate level archival courses. She is considering becoming a certified archivist.

Rosalye Settles discussed the examination process, including a discussion of how the examination is created and maintained, and what evaluation occurs both before the examination is given and after it has been taken. Ms. Settles described, for example, what a psychometrician does and how that changes the structure of the examination.

Bruce Kirby took the certification examination last year. Mr. Kirby provided some thoughtful insight into the process of preparing for the examination, usefulness of the ACA examination handbook, and impressions of the examination after he finished.

The session attendees asked several questions, covering all aspects of the presentations. Feedback was quite positive about how ACA constructs and administers the examination process.

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## EXAM SITES READY FOR 1999:

1999 exam will be held at the SAA Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA; Seattle, WA; Atlanta, GA; St. Paul, MN; and a Pick-Your-Site location in Philadelphia, PA.

To order the *Handbook for Archival Certification*, send \$10.00 (US) plus \$2.50 postage to:

Academy of Certified Archivists  
48 Howard Street  
Albany, NY 12207

## FUTURE EXAM SITES:

2000 – Denver, CO (SAA Meeting Site); Los Angeles, CA; Detroit, MI; and Raleigh/Durham, NC.

2001 – Washington, D. C. (SAA Meeting Site); Chicago, IL; Phoenix, AZ; and Dallas, TX.

## CONFIRMATION, CONGRATULATIONS, AND CELEBRATION

*(Continued from page 1)*

"Reflections on Archival Certification: The First Ten Years."

Congratulations are in order to those who agreed to run for office and to those who were elected. In some organizations it is very difficult to get volunteers to run for office or to serve on committees. The Academy is clearly different. Members continually request committee-work and readily agree to run for election. In addition, Academy members vote! In this year's election, 32% of the members voted. Congratulations to all.

Finally, let's celebrate! You are invited to the Academy's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon and Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA. It is going to be held Saturday, August 28, 1999, from 12:00-2:00 pm. Your presence is requested whether or not you choose to have the lunch. It will be your opportunity to help celebrate the Academy's accomplishments, hear a brief report on the member survey, meet and congratulate new members, and meet the incoming Board of Regents. Vice President David Gracy will become President at the end of the meeting and share with us his vision and goals for the coming year. I look forward to seeing you there.

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## ANNUAL DUES TIME HAS COME AROUND AGAIN

You should have received your annual dues notice for membership year 1999/2000, the new membership year beginning July 1, 1999. The Academy will update its member database to reflect an accurate count of active membership as of the end of the current fiscal year (June 30). As of that date, any member who is over one year in arrears on dues will be removed from the list of active members.

If you have not yet paid your dues for this membership year, we encourage you to do so. If you are now overdue for this year and a prior year, please be aware that as of July 1 you will no longer be a member of the Academy.



Persons removed from the Academy membership rolls will no longer be eligible for member benefits and may not use the title Certified Archivist or the designation "CA" after their name.

Anyone dropped from our rolls may rejoin the Academy at any time by meeting the membership criteria and paying back dues.

If you have any questions, please contact our treasurer, **James Byers**, at ph: 202-314-3900, fx: 202-314-3988, email: Byersj@aaa.si.edu

## ACADEMY BOARD RESPONDS TO COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY

Some Academy members wrote comments on the 1999 Survey that seemed to be a request for comment from the Board. Member comments included ideas, observations, criticisms, critiques, and even a few direct questions. The following comments from the Board (in bold) address some of these and will hopefully clarify, instruct and otherwise explain the philosophy and administration of the Academy.

- The organization, while important, seems quite insular and self-protective and doesn't seem to invite or celebrate the diversity of archival experience or problems that require cooperation rather than competition. **Certifying associations have very single-minded mandates that might be misinterpreted as "insular."** The Academy's mission is to support and promote the highest level of professional archival practice and to take a leadership role by defining the knowledge and abilities necessary to be an archivist. It achieves these goals by certifying archivists, ensuring professional archival standards, and promoting the employment of Certified Archivists. Entry into the archive profession occurs from many diverse backgrounds, educational and otherwise. **Certification is the best tool that we have of validating archival knowledge.**
- The CA on my business card causes confusion, but not interest – nor respect. **The CA on the business card is a wonderful opportunity to explain, with pride, what it stands for. This is your**

**chance to point out other professions that are certified (CRM, CPA, PE, etc) and that your "CA" works very much the same way. It is a national standard for professional archivists that one must earn. Respect for the profession can definitely be raised in this manner. It is not up to the "Academy" to raise the esteem of archivists and to promote professional standards. It is YOUR responsibility. The Academy is YOU, its members. If you don't make it meaningful – who will?**

- It would be helpful if you conducted a salary survey in-depth. While the Academy's survey had an astounding 72% return rate, SAA's salary survey had only a 33% return rate. Both surveys received negative comments such as "another survey" and refusal to answer questions on salary, gender and ethnicity. If the salary portion had been broken down further even more people would have resisted answering the question. Look for the ACA survey report in the next newsletter.
- Most institutions now want the MLS, so it undercuts those with PhDs who have practical research and archival experience. The librarians are taking over the archive profession. The survey shows that 17.16% of the respondents have the MLS only. 21.44% have the MLS and subject masters. This means that 38.6% have the MLS. However, 32.05% have subject masters only or two subject masters, and 16.7%

**have the PhD or EdD. The BA, BS or equivalent comprise 8.13%. The above comment could possibly be qualified by putting the word "academic" in front of the institutions as librarians generally do the hiring there. In those situations, the CA can often be the difference for those with other types of degrees who are applying for jobs in these institutions.**

- Certification is of little value except as a benchmark of experience and knowledge. This is its best value and is precisely what certification does – it validates the experience and knowledge of the archive professional. The hope is that other values will follow but it takes the efforts of the entire membership to make that happen. The Academy is much stronger today than it was ten years ago and will become even more so in the next ten years.
- I would hope that the ACA will in coming years examine more closely the process utilized by the ICRM for its recertification process. The ICRM's process is easy to use, quick to respond as an acceptance or rejection of credit request and offers twice a year transcripts. **To explore these issues, the ACA Board met with the ICRM Board after its 1998 Spring meeting. Two reports on this meeting were published in the July 1998 ACA News.** Jan Hart, representing ICRM, and Jane Kenamore, representing ACA, reported

## BOARD RESPONDS

*(Continued from page 11)*

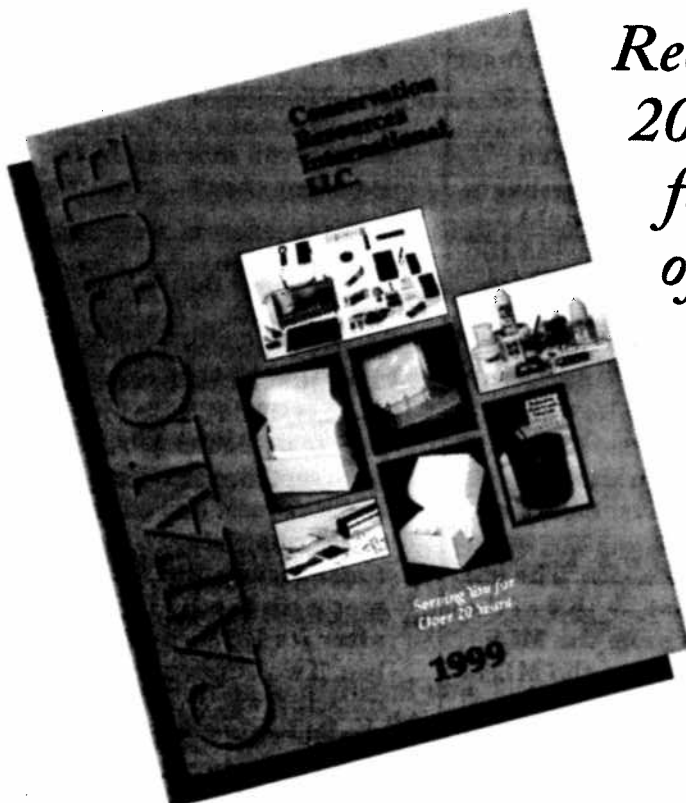
to the SAA/ARMA Joint Committee the results of the above meeting. While the meeting was both instructive and constructive, each organization came to the conclusion that the examination construction, administrative process and fees for its respective profession was appropriate.

- I would like to see a greater clarification of records management activities that apply towards ACA recertification. The Certification Maintenance Petitions Definitions and Instructions states: Records Management work and experience can be included as part of archival activities for credit but will only be counted if the petitioner also has significant work within the archival domains. Membership in the Society of American Archivists, other archival organizations, and activities, will be looked for as an indication of the petitioner's involvement in the archives profession.
- Would like to see pieces in the newsletter on proven gains through certification using specific examples of

same. The most recent newsletter had an article written by Marty Levitt about the support of the American Philosophical Society to archivists who take the exam. The survey brought in many positive experiences but they were anonymous. We welcome newsletter submissions of other real-life examples. Hopefully, the survey report itself will provide the insights you are looking for.

- Newsletter layout is inconsistent and difficult to follow. Anyone who has followed Lee Miller as an editor understands how difficult it is to turn out a perfect first attempt. ACA Secretary, Cindy Smolovik, bravely stepped up to the job and spent hours learning new software in order to get the newsletter out on time. I think you will agree that subsequent newsletters have shown that she is mastering the job. Is there a member out there who would like to volunteer to become ACA's editor?

We will continue this dialogue in the next newsletter. Please let us know if this has been useful or even if you disagree. Dialogue makes us stronger.



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## THE FUTURE OF ARCHIVAL ENTERPRISE – PROPOSAL FOR A NEW TASK FORCE

**Fact:** The future is like the weather: everyone talks about it, but no one does anything about it.

**Fact:** The Academy of Certified Archivists is arguably the largest body of the most energetic and committed members of the active archival profession.

Put those two facts together and two conclusions leap forward. *First*, the Academy as a body has much to contribute to the profession beyond establishing and maintaining its credential. *Second*, focusing attention on systematic efforts to exercise effective control over the future as it impacts matters archival would be a unique, and long and sorely needed contribution that we can make to our profession.

During its first ten years, the Academy of Certified Archivists has focused its energies on laying the foundation for its continuing existence by creating a mechanism for defining the base line of knowledge essential to any practitioner of our field. Having developed the Role Delineation and Knowledge Domain statements to succinctly identify this knowledge, an exam to test for this knowledge, and a mechanism through which members can demonstrate that they have kept their knowledge current, the Academy has made remarkable achievements during its first decade.

With the foundation laid and the basic functioning of the Academy running smoothly, it is time for us to look for ways to harness and focus the energy of our membership in the service of the profession. It is time, I believe, that the Academy actively explores ways and means that, through its members, it can contribute actively to the development and progress of the archival profession while strengthening its own primary mission.

In February, I proposed, and the Board endorsed, the idea of establishing a Commission on the Future of Archival Enterprise. The purpose of the Commission will be to issue a report in which it systematically and methodically develops scenarios for likely futures which archivists individually, archivists in their repositories, and archivists in their professional organizations can utilize to better position themselves, their institutions,

and their profession to meet and manage the demands of the coming world.

The scenarios should include possible futures for the archival profession as a whole and in as many specific realms as the Commission, and those working in the infrastructure established to support the Commission, can identify and manage. The work of developing the scenarios would draw upon two different sources of data. First, the Commission would solicit input from archivists regarding anticipations they have, anticipations based on the situations and factors affecting and evident to them. Second, the Commission would mine bodies of data that the archival profession as a whole never has utilized, such as demographic changes in the population and economic forecasts. (In Texas, for example, the population will become majority Hispanic by the year 2000. This suggests that old bases of and arguments for generating support for archival programs, among many other matters, no longer can be expected to have the same force and impact as in the past.)



Assisting the Commission in assembling the information fundamental to producing the scenarios will be a set of Task Forces charged to gather data in defined areas (such as, but not limited to, types of archival institutions, geographic areas, archival education, and economic and demographic data). In addition, and most importantly, the Commission will be assisted and guided by a professional forecaster to insure that both the methodology by which the Commission works and the sources of information on which the Commission draws are sound. Contributions would not be refused from archivists outside of our ranks. Indeed, I hope that archivists who have not yet joined their certified colleagues, seeing the industry of the Academy, will find one more, different, and compelling reason for joining and participating in our work.

Findings of the Commission stand to contribute substantively to the certification exam. After all, education must be about preparation for the future, not simply preparation for the present. And, indeed, several of the knowledge areas on the exam anticipate the future. The work of the Commission would yield to the Examination Committee concrete and highly visible material on which to draw to inform the certification

(Continued on page 14)

**TASK FORCE FOR THE FUTURE**

*(Continued from page 13)*

examination in terms of legitimate and immediate anticipations of the future course of archival enterprise.

An undertaking of this nature never is done once and for all. The scenarios, findings, and anticipations always must be revised and updated to account for the ever-unfolding progress of events. Thus, the Commission would be established as an on-going activity of the Academy, charged to continue discussions, to continue exploration of changing demographics and other factors, and to issue a revised report regularly every few years.

I invite all members of the Academy who would like to join colleagues in working on and with the Commission on the Future of Archival Enterprise to contact me. Together, we can strengthen the archival profession in yet another highly significant and on-going way

David B. Gracy II, CA  
Governor Bill Daniel Professor in Archival Enterprise  
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ACA Annual Business Meeting, in conjunction with the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Come Join Us for a Celebration Lunch:  
Saturday: August 28, 1999

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Plan to attend and bring your friends.



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**MIDWEST ARCHIVES CONFERENCE  
SESSION SUCCESS**

Jane Kenamore, CA and Diane Shannon, presented a session at the Midwest Archives Conference held May 14, 1999 in Chicago, Illinois. Jane discussed the background of ACA and exam construction. Diane discussed her experiences taking the exam. MAC members received valuable information on how to approach the exam. This session was part of this year's successful outreach to regional organizations.

Clarification: The March/April issue included names of members who recently went through the certification maintenance process either by petition or taking the exam.

This list included those who petitioned in 1998 only. There were over a hundred members who petitioned in 1996 and 1997.

## 1999 Leadership List

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### SAA Council Liaison

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You are invited to celebrate the tenth anniversary at the Annual ACA Business Meeting in conjunction with the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting. This year's meeting will be a luncheon on Saturday, August 28, 1999. Bring Your Friends.

**Additional Celebration:**

Join David Gracy, Susan Box and Frank Cook in a special session Friday, August 27, 1999 at 12:45-2:15

*ACA's success depends on our members willingness to participate. Special thanks to all members who did their part this year through presenting sessions, paying dues, running for office, serving on committees, encouraging others to take the exam or to re-certify.*