# ACA NEWS

Issue 39

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#### Our Mission:

The Academy of Certified Archivists supports and promotes the highest level of professional archival practice. The ACA takes a leadership role by defining the knowledge and abilities necessary to be an archivist. We achieve our mission by certifying archivists, ensuring professional archival standards, and promoting the employment of Certified Archivists.

# THE FUTURE IS OURS – LETS GO FOR IT! MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

#### President, Patrick Quinn, CA

It will be a great honor and privilege to serve you during the coming year as your President.

I would like to take this opportunity do two things:

- To offer a provisional balance
   sheet on the status of the ACA as it enters the second decade of its existence and
- To sketch a vision of what the ACA has to do if it is to effectively discharge its mission and fully realize its promise and potential.

A look at where we are, where have been, and where we are going:

What is the state of the ACA today? In anthropomorphic terms it is in a transition from late adolescence to young adulthood with all of the attendant growing pains and difficulties that such a transition entails. It has weathered the tribulations of birthing and survived, not unscathed to be sure, early adolescence. It is in sound financial shape, but it is imperative that it improves it financial situation. This can only be done by steady, significant growth of the membership and retention of current members. These two objectives will only be realized if the ACA truly becomes a membership-driven organization and if it proves capable of

offering something of value to archivists throughout their professional careers.

What have been the most significant accomplishments of the ACA in the first decade of its existence? The whole idea behind the establishment of the ACA was to cooperate with the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the regional archival organizations to raise the level of professional competency of the entire archival profession by identifying a core body of archival knowledge and creating a means of objectively assessing a working mastery of that knowledge, a benchmark, if you will, both at the threshold level by devising and administering the CA examination and by encouraging careerlong continuing education through the requirements of the certification maintenance process.

As an integral component of devising and revising the CA examination, the ACA identified a core body of domains of archival knowledge. Such a systematic codification of core archival knowledge had never been done before in the archival profession in the United States. This, by every measure, has been the most significant contribution to date of the ACA—a contribution that is of immeasurable value to the entire archival profession. It greatly assists archival educators in crafting their curricula and it provides a superb guide to individual archivists in acquiring archival knowledge. The ACA must build upon this rock-solid accom-

(Continued on page 2)

#### THE FUTURE IS OURS

(Continued from page 1)

plishment by continuously revising and updating the domains of knowledge to reflect new developments in archival theory and practice.

- In other areas the ACA has made slower and more uneven strides forward. As Susan Maclin informed us last year based on the survey she conducted, an increasing number of employers are requiring or preferring a CA in their position descriptions, but unfortunately this is nowhere near the level where it should be.
- Relations between the ACA and archival educators have improved, but much work needs to be done to foster better collaboration between the ACA and archival educators.
- In the area of archival education, the purpose of the ACA is not to compete with or duplicate the efforts of the SAA or the regional organizations, but to be a partner with them in a common mission—the advancement of the archival profession.
- The CA is not a substitute for obtaining an MLS or Masters in Archival Studies, nor should it be counter-posed to such degrees. Our job is to test, not teach, but that does not in the slightest mean that the ACA should not have a deep interest and involvement in archival education.

There are and will continue to be hundreds of new archivists who will enter the archival profession through avenues other than formal degree-granting archival probe their MLS or MAS. For those with advanced archival-related degrees, becoming a CA can only strengthen their credentials.

The ACA has developed a somewhat higher profile in the archival profession, but it clearly needs to have an even higher profile.

Growth in the membership is not merely a matter of ordinary recruitment, because, as we all know, all new members have to surmount a significant hurdle—the successful completion of the CA examination. Thus it is imperative that the ACA persuade many more young or newly-minted archivists to take the exam. To do so. the ACA has to move beyond altruism as a motivation both for taking the exam and remaining an ACA member throughout their entire archival careers. In a word, the ACA will have to demonstrate that taking the exam and remaining a member is not merely a matter of contributing to the common archival good. The ACA will have to be able to credibly answer a prospective member's question of "what's in it for me?"-that is, how can being a CA be of assistance in gaining promotions, obtaining new and better jobs, earning higher salaries, and furthering continuing education?

In order for the CA to play a significant role in assisting archivists in all of these areas, there will necessarily have to be many more certified archivists, many more employers requiring or preferring a CA, and many more archival educators encouraging their students to take the CA exam. So you see, the future success of the ACA is indeed a very dialectical proposition.

Over the past period the ACA has taken some significant initiatives, most notably the development of a Web site which will be further revised

grams. For them, the CA will and enhanced. We hope to publish three new brochures. The ACA newsletter is greatly improved and will become even more useful. In the coming period we can expect very positive results from Marty Levitt's Task Force on Archival Education—which we hope to transform into a standing committee—and with Amy Fischer's Task Force on Archival Employers, we hope to develop much stronger links between the ACA and employers of archivists. In terms of outreach we hope to have ACA advocates in each regional archival organization who will be able to promote the ACA. During the coming year we hope to strengthen the ACA's collaboration with archival educators and we hope to work with SAA Student Chapters to develop exam preparation workshops for those who wish to take the exam.

> What all of this means is that if the ACA is to successfully discharge its mission, it has to be a membership-driven organization—that is, ACA members will have to be proud of the ACA, defend it when and where necessary, encourage their shops to require or prefer a CA in job descriptions and encourage young or new archivists to take the CA exam. If each of us could convince just one young or new archivist to take the exam each year the ACA would be in very good shape indeed and would have the capacity to deliver the goods when asked by prospective members: "What's in it for me?"

How will we know whether the ACA has successfully made the transition from late adolescence to young adulthood? There is a turnover commencing in the archival profession in the United States. My generation of archivists, those of us who founded the ACA and became grandparented members, are already or will be retiring over the next decade. The ACA will have relatively few grand-parented members among its ranks and will be overwhelmingly comprised of archivists who earned their CA the hard way—by successfully passing the exam. At least 25% of all job listings will require or prefer a CA, and archival educators won't have to think twice about encouraging their students to take the CA examination.

The ACA is our organization. The future is ours. Let us together make the most of it.

#### OUT ON A LIMB FOR PROFESSIONALISM

By Tom Heard, CA\*

Between the time I first worked for pay in an archives (as a graduate assistant in 1994) and the time I pursued a job opening with "CA Preferred" among the list of qualifications (1999), I listened to the ongoing debates over certification, professionalism, graduate education and the like. Among colleagues, at conferences, and on the A&A listserv (who can forget the list thread on "Creeping Credentialism"!) I lurked, I attended conferences, workshops, the Modern Archives Institute. and I read professional literature and did graduate work in Public History.

I came into the field after certification was created, and felt pretty neutral about it. I knew very little about Certification but did not see its immediate benefit to me up to 1999 and did not pursue it. In fact, by 1999 I was wondering whether archival work was a vocation or an avocation for me and was considering job offers outside the field. The question put to me when pursuing a job with my current employer was "would I become certified?" my answer was of course! The professionalism of the operation I visited on my interview was obvious and Certification was part of that commitment to professionalism

I made my decision and in due time I would apply, be accepted, and prepare for the exam. This meant reading and discussing with colleagues the test questions from the ACA handbook comparing which readings we liked best, and those that seemed to be most helpful. As August approached and time for review

came I concentrated on the "highlighted" books in the three sections that would make up 60 of the 100 questions on the exam.

Test day came. With nearly a dozen others in New York I went with my #2 pencils to take the test. The quiet group of Archivists was all business that morning and had a "let's get this done" attitude. I completed the exam and felt I had very little idea how I had performed. I am no stranger to standardized tests as between 1986 and 1993 I had taken the ASVAB. PSAT, SAT, ACT-Spanish, and the GRE. The ACA exam left me the most unsure of how I had performed. I felt that 50-60 of the questions seemed useful and necessary, and among the choices I could identify one that was clearly the correct answer. The balance seemed like filler or essay questions shoehorned in to multiple choice format. Answering these my presidential voting history where I had also had to choose an option from a set where I thought all the choices were poor. As I went through the questions I was reminded of an observation one of my study partners made that even after all the reading he did, he could not easily see straightforward questions coming out of the reading.

My feelings about the exam are mixed. My feelings about Certification are not. Certification is of course about a lot more than the of pursuing Certification. exam, it's about meeting the application criteria, preparing for the exam, and maintaining professional involvement through recertification. It is also about the pursuit of professionalism and taking the risk of finding out what you

may or may not know compared to the rest of the exam candidates. The materials ACA put out about the exam in the website and handbook were well done, although a comment in the handbook about the questions being similar to GRE questions threw me for a loop. First, because I couldn't imagine which of the three GRE sections the questions might be like -Verbal, Analytical, and Quantitative. Second, because the GRE is NOT a test of specific knowledge but a test of skills that "... are not related to any specific field of study" (GRE General Test Information-GRE.ORG).

The main benefit of the exam for me was being able to do concentrated study on theory and practice after having worked in the field for a number of years. I learned in reviewing the readings that debates about the direction of the field are not new, and that difquestions was an eerie reminder of ferent authors emphasize different aspects of the history of the field; i.e. tracing the field to AHA roots versus highlighting the creation of NARA and SAA in the 1930s.

> Applying for certification is certainly a milestone in my career, pass or fail. I have grown professionally through the process and if I ever found myself in a hiring position would look favorably on a qualified CA applicant. Not so much for having passed the test, which I think needs some work, but for having taken the initiative

\*Editor's note: Tom wrote this article prior to finding out the results of his exam

#### SALUTE AND MANY THANKS TO FRANK COOK

#### ACA Founding Member Frank Cook Retires

#### By Patrick Quinn, CA President

of the University Archives at mitted by the founding generathe University of Wisconsin-Madison, who played a central Subsequently, he served as the role in the founding of the keeper of the Academy's ar-Academy of Certified Archivists, retired after a long and distinguished archival career.

Strongly committed to a vision of the role that the Academy the archival profession. Frank chaired a small committee of stalwarts who reviewed the On September 30, J. thousands of petitions to betion of Academy members. chives.

> Originally from the far western mountainous region of

Virginia, Frank did his undergraduate work at East Tennessee State University could play in strengthening before enrolling in graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to pursue a doctorate in history.

He joined the staff of the Univer-Frank Cook, longtime Director come Certified Archivists sub-sity of Wisconsin-Madison Archives as a student assistant in 1962, becoming a fulltime member of the staff in 1965. A half decade later he became Director of the University Archives, succeeding the legendary Jesse Boell, one of the founders of the modern American archival profession. In the interim Frank was awarded a PhD in history.

> During the following three decades Frank became a founding member and eventually President of the Midwest Archives Conference and a Fellow and President of the Society of American Archivists. He also served both organizations in a multitude of other capacities

> Known throughout the archival profession for his wise counsel, leadership skills and down-home good humor, Frank was a "go-to" guy. If there was a tough job that had to done, Frank was the person to do it. And do it he did--quickly, efficiently and with good cheer.

> Frank was both instrumental in getting the Academy off the ground and ardently supporting its goals during its first decade. The Academy wishes Frank and wife a long, happy and relaxing retirement.



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#### SURVIVING RE-CERTIFICATION

#### By Kim Allen Scott, CA

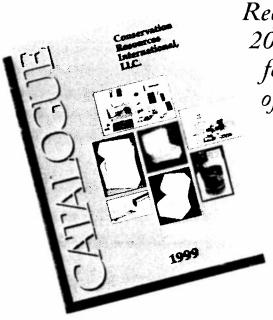
By now the comparisons between an academic tenure committee and the television show "Survivor" have become cliche. "Survivor," (just in case you have been living in a cave the last eight months) was television game show which pitted a group of volunteer castaways on a remote island who used various means to eliminate one another to gain the last remaining member a million dollar prize. The politics of the scheming players made for fascinating viewing as they would form temporary alliances to betray each other in weekly voting meetings that kicked their colleagues, one at a time, off the island and out of the game.

Tenure committees in academia are somewhat like this, with secret balloting and all the other trappings of intrigue and betrayal. What is supposed to be a dispassionate evaluation of an individual's record in order to permit him to stay on the island often degenerates into a personality critique where past misdemeanors become present felonies. But all of us who work in the ivory tower accept the system as a necessary evil, part of the merry go round we must ride before grabbing that brass ring of tenure. Since we accept the system, we have become adept at covering our.....posteriors. We document every single thing we do in the broad areas of teaching, research,

and service. For archivists, teaching documentation is usually replaced with anecdotal evidence of our effectiveness in archival management, but we still must present proof that we are paying attention to the other two legs of the academic milk stool.

That's why Re-certification is, in my opinion, such a natural for archivists who work in academic settings. When we present our dos-

(Continued on page 6)



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#### SURVIVING

(Continued from page 5)

sier for annual and tenure reviews, we document all the activity that the Academy of Certified Archivists asks for, in very much the same format. We do this as a matter of course in our profession, and its requirements are no more onerous than the other tasks we have to do for our paychecks. The advantage of presenting our dossiers to the ACA, however, should be obvious. With certification maintenance, we are judged by our peers who we do NOT work with, which eliminates the "Survivor" balloting we must endure at our respective institutions. When you submit your petition to the ACA, you are standing on your record, not your personality, and you are evaluated on your professional accomplishments alone. For me, I rather like the system and take comfort in the fact that there is no tribal council that will bring up the unpleasant memories of the last time I burned the rice.

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

The Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA) will hold its annual meeting May 24-26, 2001 in Ft. Worth. Texas. This is a perfect opportunity for ACA members to present a paper. If you are interested contact: Carol Mathias, CA,

Vice-President/Program Committee Archivist, Head of Special Collections Ellender Memorial Library Nicholls State University P.O. Box 2028

Thibodaux, LA 70310 Phone: 504-448-4621

Fax: 504-448-4925 el-cam@mail.nich.edu

For more information see SSA website: http://lib-04.lib.uh.edu/ssa/ssa.htm

Remember program participation receives points toward certification maintenance.

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# PROGRESS REPORT: TASK FORCE ON ARCHIVAL EDUCATION

The Task Force on Archival Education (TFAE) has accomplished an important part of its charge. The TFAE submitted a grant request to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) in the amount of \$25,000. If approved, this money would be used to create a system, based on the exam item bank, to identify which domains are weak in available archival literature, and then enrich that literature with a call for papers.

The papers submitted will be judged by the committee with the 'winning' paper to be published by *Provenance*. The author of the 'winning' paper will receive \$5000.00. The strength of the literature is important because

each test question must be tied to a published source.

The current members of the TFAE are Martin L. Levitt, chair, the President of the ACA (Patrick Quinn), David B. Gracy II, Charles Conaway, Jane Kenamore, David Moltke-Hansen, Connell Gallagher, Gregory Hunter, Bruce Dearstyne, and Virginia Krumholz.

Future plans include making the task force a standing committee.

#### CONTINUING WEB SITE UPDATES:

The ACA Handbook is now available in pdf format on the web site (www.certifiedarchivists.org). The Board of Regents decided at the August meeting that since the web site is more easily and affordably updated it will be the offical copy of the Handbook. Anyone wanting a paper copy will still be able to request one by contacting Steve Grandin, 48 Howard Street, Albany, NY or call: 518-463-8644

Keep checking the web site for feature updates.

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#### CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE NEWS

By Michael Holland, CA Regent for Certification Maintenance

The Certification Maintenance process has been quite successful this year. Although the number of candidates eligible for renewed certification was small this year, the process was carried out very smoothly and efficiently.

During the latest re-certification period, the Certification Maintenance Committee reviewed and evaluated 15 petitions of a total of 19 eligible members. Of the 15 reviewed, one petitioner requested conversion to emeritus status, which was granted.

Thank you to the petitioners who carefully and thoroughly documented their professional activities on their petitions

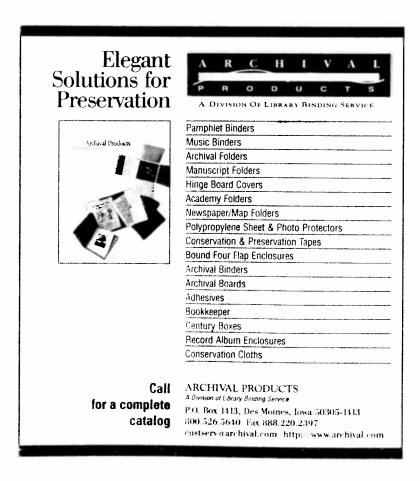
Congratulations to the following members for their successful re-certification by petition.

Cole, Bradford R. AZ
Farrolden-Fairfax, Elizabeth WA
Giles, Mary M. SC
Hodges, Ann E. TX
Hofer, James D. CA
Huggins, Marvin A. MO
Jones, Louis E. MI
Kennedy, Deborah J. WA
McClurkan, Carolyn
Perkins, Joanna M. MO
Robyns, Marcus C. MI
Shapiro, Deborah S. WI
Spectre, Miriam B. PA
Westerlin-Howell, Ann F. TX
Young, Noraleen A. IN

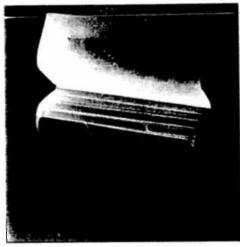
Next year there is an even smaller number of member eligible for re-certification. However, in 2002 there will be approximately 500 members eligible to re-certify by petition. The Board of Regents decided to allow members eligible in 2002 to petition in 2001. This gives archivists

who already have accrued a large number of points to get recertification 'out of the way and ease the workload for the Regent for Certification Maintenance and the review teams. Petitioning early will not change the certification period. Members taking this option will have six years before having to go through the process again in 2007.

This year's re-certification efforts were successful due largely to the hard and diligent work of the Certified Archivists who served on petition review teams. Thank you: Judy Cetina, Shelly Coteau, Ken Fieth, Gary Harrington, Beverly Robertson, Marcus Robyns, Pat Scott, Annie Tilden, Pam Miner, Willow Powers and Cindy Smolovik.



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#### **EXAM SITES:**

#### 2001

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

#### 2002

Birmingham, AL (SAA Meeting Site); Seattle, WA; Milwaukee, WI; New York City, NY; and Salt Lake City, UT

Don't forget – gather your colleagues and create your own 'Pick-your-site' location. Contact ACA for more information.

Remember you can re-certify by taking the exam if you have let your CA lapse.

#### **EXAM 2000**

The 2000 Certification Exam was given in August to 67 people at eight locations:

Denver, Colorado (SAA Site) at the Adams' Mark Hotel, proctored by Joseph Lafromboise, CA;

Detroit, Michigan at Wayne State University, proctored by William Lefevre, CA;

Honolulu at the University of Hawaii, proctored by Marie Strazar;

Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, proctored by Dr. Kenneth Klein;

Philadelphia at CIGNA, proctored by Scott DeHaven, CA:

New York City at AIG International, proctored by Kisrstan Ator;

Raleigh-Durham at North Carolina Records Center, proctored by Ed Morris, CA; and

Washington, D.C. at the University of Maryland, proctored by Vicki Reinke.

The Academy would like to thank all of the proctors for their time and the universities, business, and agencies at each site for allowing us to use their facilities.

Have you paid your dues?

If you haven't please pay NOW!!.

If you have THANK YOU!!!



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS !!!

Congratulations	Luella Kurkjian HI	Gregory Walsh Newfoundland
New members who	James Kusik NC	Bonnie Walworth MI
passed Exam 2000.	Linda Laurence HI	Carolyn Weigel PA
Mark Ames MD	Valerie Lutz PA	Ellen Zazzarino CO
Peter Bahra NY	John Martin TX	Laura Zelasnic NY
DeSoto Brown HI	Barbara Mathé NY	
Angela Curran KS	Sheila McAlister GA	Certification Maintenance By Exam
Martha Egan TN	David McCartney MD	L. Lotte Bailey ND
J. Todd Ellison CO	Melinda McMartin OH	Bradford Miller CA
Klaudia Englund CA	Lisa Mix MD	Judy Prosser-Armstrong CO
Jennifer Esposito NY	Sammie Morris TX	Margo Szabunia PA
Leslie Fields NY	Patricia Ogburn HI	
Rebecca Fitzgerald MD	Stephen Paschen OH	Pre-appointment
Anne Foster CO	Aaron Purcell KY	Elizabeth Arena NY
Nola Freeman CO	Katy Rawdon PA	Thomas Eisinger MD
Mindy Gordon NY	Marilyn Reppun HI	Stephen Janick PA
Maria Harris MI	Claudia Rivers TX	Martha Lawrenz MD
Thomas Heard PA	Barbara Rust TX	Rae Shiraki HI
Buffie Hollis LA	Edward Ryan GA	Total passing the exam
Charles Preston Huff VA	Helen Wong Smith HI	57!!!
Judith Kearney HI	Nancy Taylor PA	
Marie Keck GA	Stephen Thompson AZ	
David Kingma WA	Fran Tracy-Walls NC	

## 2000 Leadership List

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#### Regent for Examination Development (1998-2000)

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#### Regent for Outreach (1998-2000)

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# Regent for Nominations 2000-

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Library and Information Science University of Texas at Austin

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(512) 471-3892 (w)

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E-mail: gracy@gslis.utexas.edu

#### Regent for Certification Maintenance (1999-2001)

Michael Holland, CA

University of Missouri-Columbia

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E-mail: HollandM@missouri.edu

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College Park, MD 20742-4345

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E-mail: bd58@umail.umd.edu



#### Chair of Nominating Committee (1999-2000)

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#### Chair of Finance Committee (1999-2001)

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#### SAA Office Representative Susan E. Fox

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E-mail: sfox@saa.mhs.compuserve.com

### SAA Council Liaison

Susan E. Fox (see above)

#### Administrative Manager Steven Grandin

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#### ACA CALENDAR

Board of Regents and Exam Development Committee Meet – March 16-18, 2001

Certification Maintenance Notification to eligible members for 2001 and early re-certification for 2002 – April 2001

Deadline for Exam Applications – May 15, 2001

Deadline for Certification Maintenance – June 1, 2001

Board of Regents Meets – August 2001 (exact date to be announced later)

Exam – August 29, 2001

Annual Business Meeting – August, 2001 – date pending SAA Annual Meeting Calendar – stay tuned.

