

ACA NEWS

Issue 42

October/November 2001



Message from the President: Why Certify?

By Leon C. Miller, C.A.

Why should we certify, and why should we encourage others to certify?

- Because the test is about promoting fundamental archival standards.
- Because the test is a valuable self-evaluation tool.

Few professions have strong self-evaluation tools. Archivists are fortunate to have one based on consistent standards and created according to a systematic, professional, validated process. Therefore, I encourage Certified Archivists to take the exam for recertification occasionally instead of routinely recertifying by petition, be-



cause simply taking the test, seeing how it has changed since you last took it, reading new questions and thinking about what changes in technology, theory, or practice motivated those questions, are all important self-evaluation opportunities.

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...and more!!!

It's your organization...

Examination Sites for 2003 and 2004 announced

The sites for the 2003 and 2004 certification exam were set at the ACA Board meeting in Washington. Exam sites for 2003 will be: Los Angeles (SAA meeting), Philadelphia, Atlanta, St. Louis, and Houston. Exam sites for 2004 will be: Boston (SAA

meeting), Las Vegas, Chicago, New Orleans, and Pittsburgh.

As always, the "pick your own site" option will be available for any group of 5 or more who wishes to take the exam. Further information can be obtained from Marty Levitt, Regent for Exam. Administration. ■

Message From the President: Why Certify?

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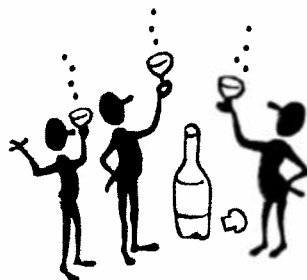
- Because simply taking the test demonstrates professional commitment and personal initiative.

Taking the archival certification examination shows someone has the personal initiative to assemble their documentation, complete the aggravating forms, mail them to the Academy offices, travel to an exam site, often at significant personal expense, and put their knowledge on the line. Even if the candidate doesn't pass the test (which isn't unusual the first time), having the self-confidence to take it shows that the candidate is someone to take seriously. What employer could fail to be impressed by the career planning, professional commitment, self-confidence, and personal initiative that expresses?

- Because certification is about bringing more people into the life of the profession, and empowering archivists around the world. ■ ■ ■

THANK YOU, PATRICK!

Patrick Quinn's term as president ended at the ACA Business Meeting in Washington. His term was marked by solid progress in a number of areas. ACA's incorporation status with the state of Illinois was restored, and its insurance was brought up to date. Working with Lee Miller, Patrick retooled the office of Vice President. With the many improvements made in the ACA web site, many questions which used to be handled by the Vice President are now either answered online or re-directed to Steve Grandin at the ACA office. This allowed the Vice President to work more closely with the President and take a two-year-long, programmatic approach to the position. Patrick's term also saw



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significant improvements in outreach - a much improved ACA website, a new ACA brochure targeted to employers, a substantial revision of the Academy's general brochure, a new poster targeted to student chapters, new label stickers which made the rounds at SAA, and bookmarks promoting the 2002 examination date and sites. During the past year, the Academy held, for the first time, an Item Writing Workshop geared toward training members to write questions for the certification exam. This is a significant outreach effort which will improve the exam in the long run.

Thank you, Patrick, for all your hard work on behalf of the Academy. ■ ■ ■

A clean stable means
somebody got dirty!



What's it like?

The Examination Development Committee

by Carole Prietto, C.A.

When I took the archival certification exam in 1992, I could not have imagined that just a few years later I would be sitting on the other side of the fence, as a member of the group which constructs the test - the Examination Development Committee (EDC). Having just completed my term on the EDC I can honestly say that:

(1) The EDC is one of the hardest-working groups I've ever been a part of, and...

(2) Serving on the EDC is one of the most intellectually stimulating things I've done in my professional life.

So how does it all work, you ask? Members of the EDC serve a three year term. The committee meets once a year, on a weekend, usually in February or March. Prior to the meeting, the domains which make up the Role Delineation Statement are parceled out among the members. For two of my three years, I had Domain 2: Arrangement and Description. For my third

year I was given Domain 3: Reference, Access and Outreach. Each member is sent a copy of the complete item bank - the database of questions from which the exam is constructed - along with guidelines for writing exam questions and a copy of the Role Delineation Statement. The knowledge and task statements which make up the Role Delineation Statement are the basis for every question on the exam. If the EDC is making up a new exam, the members also get a detailed statistical breakdown of recent tests.

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The Examination Development Committee

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Having received assignments, item bank, etc., the primary tasks are to review the questions in one's domain and to write a minimum of 5 new questions. Each question has to address a specific knowledge and task statement within one's domain and be written according to the rules of good question writing. Questions have to be supported by a citation in the literature. And they have to pass the scrutiny of everyone else on the committee. Everyone gets a copy of everyone else's questions. The majority of the meeting time is spent going over everyone's questions. Some questions are accepted; some not. Even the questions which are accepted rarely pass the committee's scrutiny without some kind of tweaking. Often the committee will re-write either the question or the answer choices so that they are as clear as the committee can make them. The committee also review citations, to

make sure that exam questions are supported by the most current work in the field.

Having one's questions looked at by so many sets of eyes can be a scary thing, especially for a first-time member. It is made easier by the fact that everyone else's questions are going through the same magnifying glass. But it's also what makes the EDC meetings such an engaging, stimulating experience - because in the course of reviewing questions, many discussions take place concerning archival theory and practice. Time and time again I found myself thinking about an issue in a whole new way as a result of simply talking through a test question with my colleagues on the EDC.

A new examination is put together every other year. In the years when the EDC isn't developing a new exam, the schedule for the weekend is: EDC get together on Friday night followed by a short meeting, then an all-day meeting on Saturday where the work of reviewing questions is done. When the EDC has

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Minutes of the ACA Business Meeting in Washington, D. C.

To be approved - Annual Meeting, Birmingham, Alabama, 2002

1. Call to Order

Patrick Quinn, outgoing President, called the meeting to order at 12:30pm and welcomed everyone to the Business Meeting.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2000 ACA Annual Business Meeting, September 1, 2000.

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes. The minutes of the 2000 Business Meeting were approved as written.

3. Introduction of New Members

Patrick Quinn recognized all of the new members and invited those who were in attendance to stand.

4. Report of the Nominating Committee

Patrick recognized Connell Gallagher for a report on election results. Connell Gallagher recognized the members of the Nominating Committee - Carol Mathias and David Gracy, Regent for Nominations. The new officers were recognized:

Vice President/President-Elect: Jane Nokes
(Bank of Nova Scotia)

Secretary: Carole Prietto (Washington University in St. Louis)

Treasurer: Margery Sly (Presbyterian Historical Society)

Regent for Certification: Judy Cetina (Cuyahoga County Archives, Cleveland)

Regent for Exam Administration: Martin Levitt
(American Philosophical Society)

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And now for something completely different...

The ACA Salutes our Regional Organizations



Each issue of your newsletter will be saluting the regional organizations that keep our profession strong and viable. Our intention is to reach out to the newsletter editors of these organizations to encourage their members to consider certification as their preferred professional credential. This issue we are pleased to recognize...

DELAWARE VALLEY ARCHIVISTS GROUP

Chair: Alison Lewis, Ph.D.
Assistant Manuscript Librarian
American Philosophical Society Library 105 S. Fifth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
215/440-3400

Newsletter Editor: Joseph-James Ahern
Library Technical Assistant, Programs Assistant
American Philosophical Society
105 S. 5th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19106



Welcome New ACA Members!!!!

Join us in welcoming the following members of the Class of 2001:

David Andrews, CA (Holland, CA (MI))
 Brett Arena, CA (North Hollywood, CA)
 Roiann Baird, CA (Greeley, CO)
 Cynthia Beck, CA (Arlington Heights, IL)
 Aimee Berry, CA (Neeses, SC)
 William Bittner, CA (Golden, CO)
 Renee Braden, CA (Washington, DC)
 Russell Castonguay, CA (Valley Village, CA)
 Garth Clarke, CA (Red Deer, AB)
 Leah Davis Witherow, CA (Colorado Springs, CO)
 Christine deCatanzaro, CA (Atlanta, GA)
 Carola DeRooy, CA (El Cerrito, CA)
 Richard Dickerson, CA (Houston, TX)
 Sandra Dion, CA (Livermore, CO)
 Stephen Doell, CA (Pittsburgh, PA)
 Suzanne Durham, CA (Petersburg, VA)
 Michael Everman, CA (St. Louis, MO)
 Joan Feezor, CA (Charleston, MO)
 Sandra File, CA (Jefferson City, MO)
 Leanne Garland, CA (Middlesboro, KY)
 Deborah Gouin, CA (Lansing, MI)
 Glenn Gray, CA (Silver Spring, MD)
 Lianne Hanson, CA (Penacook, NH)
 Kristi Henry, CA (Forth Worth, TX)
 Gerald Hirsch, CA (Jefferson City, MO)
 Ramona Hutchinson, CA (Lakewood, CO)
 Sarah Jackson, CA (Bacliff, TX)
 Christian Kelleher, CA (Silver Springs, MD)
 Kevin Kendro, CA (Irving, TX)
 Roger Kizer Ball, CA (Annapolis, MD)
 Jessica Lacher-Feldman, CA (Tuscaloosa, AL)
 Mark Meade, CA (Columbia, MO)
 Nancy Miller, CA (St. Davids, PA)
 Stephanie Mitchell, CA (Tucson, AZ)
 Michael Nagy, CA (Lilburn, GA)
 Valerie Nye, CA (Santa Fe, NM)
 Jennifer Peters, CA (Austin, TX)
 Megan Phillips, CA (Philadelphia, PA)
 JoAnn Pospisil, CA (Houston, TX)
 Jennifer Rawlings, CA (St. Louis, MO)

Jane Rosario, CA (Berkeley, CA)
 David Rose, CA (Pelham, NY)
 Melissa Salazar, CA (Espanola, NM)
 David Sharron, CA (Webster, TX)
 Daardi Sizemore, CA (Mankato, MN)
 India Spartz, CA (Fairbanks, AK)
 Karen Spiers, CA (Greenville, NC)
 Paula Stewart, CA (Fort Worth, TX)
 Helen Taylor, CA (Lansing, MI)
 Barbara Vaughn, CA (Avon, CO)
 David Warrington, CA (Cambridge, MA)
 Caryn Wojcik, CA (Lansing, MI)
 Kay Zaharis, CA (Saugerties, NY)

In addition, the following pre-appointment candidates passed the examination and are provisional members. They will become full members of the Academy after receiving one year of professional experience.

Emily Connell (Baltimore, MD)
 Martin Firestein (Skokie, IL)
 Julie Holcomb (Corsicana, TX)
 Seth Kronemer (Woodland Hills, CA)
 Gary Spurr (Arlington, TX)
 Holly Teasdale (Detroit, MI)
 Anna Uremovich (Madison, WI)

Reaching Out to Consultants

At the ACA Board meeting in Washington, it was noted that many questions are coming to the ACA office from people looking for consultants. In response to this need, the Board decided to investigate the possibility of creating a consultants referral service. If you have comments or suggestions concerning such a program, contact Steve Grandin at the ACA Office.

Item-Writing Workshop Held in Washington

By Anne Diffendal, C.A.

"It's hard to write good questions for the certification exam!" This oft-expressed sentiment of ACA Examination Development Committee (EDC) members was echoed by the participants in a recent ACA Item-Writing Workshop. Hosted by John Fleckner of the National Museum of American History, the group gathered in Washington, DC, in August to learn about the process of developing the certification exam and to write new questions for the item bank from which the test is constructed.

Certified Archivists, who had responded to a call for volunteers, drafted questions according to a 10-page "Guide to Preparing Multiple-Choice Items" developed by educational testing and measurement professionals. Working from the ACA Role Delineation Statement, they linked each item to a particular domain, task statement and knowledge statement; and provided a reference for the correct response from an authoritative source in the archival literature. Participants brought their draft questions to the workshop, which was directed by Anne Diffendal, Regent for Examination Development, with the assistance of Brenda Gunn of the University of Texas at Austin, a member of the EDC. The group reviewed the questions; rejecting some and revising others to be considered for addition to the item bank by the EDC at its meeting in March. ■ ■ ■



Participants in the ACA Item-Writing Workshop

Beth Bensman, Presbyterian Historical Society
 Preston Huff, The Library of Virginia
 Terri Herbert Johnson, Scott & White Hospital
 Stephanie Malmros, University of Texas at Austin
 Gerri Schaad, University of Texas at San Antonio
 Rob Sherer, Tulane University

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Minutes of the ACA Business Meeting in Washington, D. C.

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5. Report of the President

Patrick Quinn reported on activities of the Board of Regents during the past year:

In general, the state of the Academy is quite good. Solid progress was made in many areas. During the year, the Academy's incorporation with the state of Illinois was reinstated and the Academy's insurance was brought up to date. Patrick recognized Susie Macklin for her work in these areas. Much progress was made in the area of outreach to prospective members and employers. During the year the ACA website was re-designed, and it is now more attractive, informative, and user-friendly. Lee Miller was recognized for his fine work on the Academy's website. Also during the year, the general ACA brochure was updated and a new brochure was created which specifically targeted employers. Also, a poster was created which was distributed to student chapters of SAA.

The office of Vice President was re-structured.

There was an excellent slate of candidates for office this year and the leadership of the Academy is in excellent hands.

Certification Exam: This year 88 candidates applied to take the exam.

With the election of a new Secretary, the ACA Newsletter will be overseen by a new person.

An exam writing workshop, held for the first time this year, was a significant step forward, both as an outreach effort and a way to involve more archivists in the process of putting the certification exam together. Patrick recognized Anne Diffendal for leading the effort in this project. [For more on the item writing workshop, see Anne Diffendal's article which appears in this newsletter]

In addition, some issues did not work out as well as the Board had hoped:

The Academy's NHPRC grant proposal was not funded

Re-establishing ties to archival educators - In this area, we are at the beginning stages of a process which will be ongoing. A positive step took place this week, when officers of SAA and ACA met to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Issues for the future

Getting more members involved, especially as ambassadors of ACA,

Strengthening the Task Force on Employer Relations.

Certification Maintenance. The Class of 1989 comes up for re-certification this year. It is imperative that we re-certify as many people as possible from the Class of 1989. Patrick asked the members of the Class of 1989 who were in attendance to raise their hands. They were an overwhelming majority of those in attendance.

The Role Delineation Statement - This is one of our most important contributions to the profession. It needs to be reviewed on a regular basis, so that it continues to reflect current practice. The Academy should develop a Vision Statement and a 5-Year Strategic Plan.

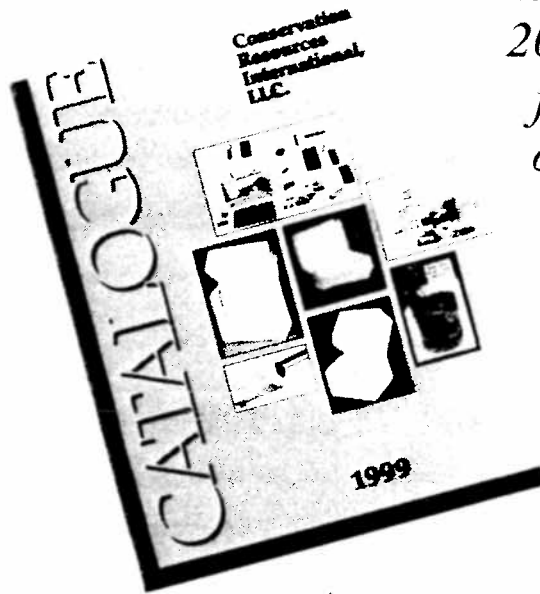
Patrick recognized Hollinger Corporation and Metal Edge, who underwrote the cost of the new ACA brochures.

Patrick recognized the outgoing officers. In particular, he recognized Cindy Smolovik for serving two consecutive terms as Secretary and for her service as newsletter editor.

6. Report of the Incoming President.

Patrick recognized the Incoming President, Lee Miller. Lee spoke about why we should certify

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The Examination Development Committee

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to construct a new exam, the question review happens on Friday and Saturday is devoted to constructing the exam. The ACA psychometrician works with the EDC throughout the whole process of constructing the exam. Selecting test questions is anything but random - there has to be a balance, both across domains and across the various knowledge and task statements within a domain. That way, the test covers the entire Role Delineation Statement.

I hope this brief introduction to the EDC's work will encourage members to serve on the EDC, or to attend the next Item Writing Workshop, to be held during the SAA meeting in Birmingham. For more on the Item Writing Workshop, see Anne Diffendal's article elsewhere in this newsletter. The EDC is hard work, but intellectually stimulating work. And it is very satisfying to play such a direct role in



the creation of Academy's most visible product: the certification exam. If you would like to serve on the EDC, contact Anne Diffendal, Regent for Exam Administration. ■ ■ ■

Minutes of the ACA Business Meeting in Washington, D. C.

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and why we should encourage others to do so. [Lee's remarks are reproduced in this newsletter as the "Message from the President"]

7. Report of the Treasurer

Patrick recognized Margery Sly, ACA Treasurer. Margery noted that ACA was \$5,285.87 in the black, largely because of good returns on invest-

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It's ten o'clock...do you know where your certification is?

Classes of 1989, 1992 and 1996 to Recertify in 2002!!!

Heads up! 2002 is a re-certification year for the classes of 1992, and 1996. In addition, because so many archivists are eligible to re-certify in 2002, the Academy will allow Charter Members (members of the Class of 1989) to re-certify one year early, thus lessing the work of the re-certification committee. Charter members who re-certify in 2001 will have six years, rather than five, to accumulate their next re-certification points. The 2002 Certification Maintenance Forms will be available for downloading from the ACA website (www.certifiedarchivists.org) after the first of the year.

You may re-certify either by examination or by petition. The deadline to apply for the examination is May 15, 2002. The deadline to submit re-certification petitions is June 1, 2002. The 2002 certification exam will be given on August 21, 2002. Exam sites are: New York, New York, Birmingham, Alabama (SAA), Salt Lake City, Utah, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Seattle, and Washington. As always, the "you pick the site" option is available for groups of 5 or more. If you are due to re-certify in 2002, begin planning now by reviewing the Certification Handbook (available from the ACA website), reviewing the application, and assembling your documentation.

For more information, contact Judy Cetina, Regent for Certification Maintenance.

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Reality Check: Some Myths of Certification

MYTH: *"No one knows who creates the archival certification examination."*

FACT: The test is peer produced by a public committee of working archivists and archival educators. An elected Regent for Examination Development leads the committee. The committee's members reflect the profession's full spectrum of institutional type, specialty, and diversity. During the past twelve years many dozens of experienced archivists from every type of archival repository as well as prominent archival educators have written all of the questions that appear on the exam. Dedicated professional archivists are also constantly revising and updating the test to reflect new archival developments and current archival practice. (see "The Examination Development Committee" elsewhere in this issue for more details)

MYTH: *"Certification is only for corporate archivists."*

FACT: A review of the Academy's membership rolls reveals Certified Archivists are employed in all types of institutions (college and university archives, government records archives, religious archives, manuscript repositories, corporate archives), perform the full range of archival work, and encom-

pass all archival specialties. If archival certification were only for corporate archivists there would be very few Certified Archivists, when in fact there are over one thousand Certified Archivists around the world.

MYTH: *"There's no point to taking the test again to recertify. It only recertifies what you've already certified."*

FACT: While Certified Archivists may recertify by petition (which is the archival profession's only system for recognizing your participation in activities that help you keep up with the field), many archivists choose to recertify by examination. That is because the certification examination is the archival profession's most important self-evaluation tool. Simply taking the test, seeing how it has changed since you last took it, reading new questions and thinking about what changes in technology, theory, or practice motivated those questions, reviewing your score report and learning in which areas you were stronger, all of those are invaluable self-evaluation opportunities. Few professions have strong self-evaluation tools. Archivists are fortunate to have one based on consistent standards and created according to a systematic, professional, validated process.

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Minutes of the ACA Business Meeting in Washington, D. C.

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ments. Copies of the Treasurer's Report for FY 2001 and the proposed budget for FY 2002 were made available to all in attendance.

8. Report of the Regent for Outreach

Phil Mooney was recognized. Phil made an appeal for a greater ACA presence at local and regional meetings.

9. Adjournment

Patrick Quinn adjourned the meeting at 1:25pm.

Respectfully submitted

Carole Prietto, C.A.
Washington University in St. Louis
Secretary, Academy of Certified Archivists

Member Responsibilities:

Please pay your dues

Please maintain your certification either by petition or re-examination

Please volunteer to serve on committees or elected positions

Please encourage your colleagues to become certified

Please encourage your employer to make certification a preferred criteria when hiring

Please send in your ballots.