



ACA News

The Newsletter of the Academy of Certified Archivists Issue 56 Winter 2007

President's Message

Cindy Smolovik, CA

National Archives and Records Administration
Southwest Region



The Secrets of Certification

As archivists we share a passion and enthusiasm for what we do, and we recognize the importance of the profession. Certification is a way to measure our knowledge and abilities and to remain current and up-to-date as our profession changes. The Academy holds a unique position among professional archival organizations because our members must renew their commitment by supporting not only ACA, but other organizations too. Certification maintenance is required and in itself requires participation in the profession not only by employment, but by membership and service in professional archival organizations and by taking workshops, seminars and other continuing education opportunities provided by national, regional and local archival organizations.

The Academy's position is also unique because it has a specific focus: to create and maintain the integrity of an exam worthy of the credential of 'Certified Archivist'. However, this focus has often been misinterpreted as secrecy. One of the main duties of the President and Vice President of the Academy is to answer questions from members, potential members, and sometimes

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detractors about the exam. Often these questions are based on the misperception that the exam is created in a vacuum and that only a privileged few members of the Academy get to be of service or get picked to be involved. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Academy has a nomination and election process just like any other professional organization. We are dependent upon our members to volunteer their time by saying 'yes' when asked to run for office, and to vote when a ballot is received. Any member, in good standing, is welcome to volunteer to run for office or ask to serve on the Exam Development Committee (EDC). In addition, there is an Outreach Committee, chaired by the Regent for Outreach. This Regent's task is to provide ways of promoting ACA. Each and everyone of us—and that includes YOU—helps with this task by using the CA credential, volunteering to provide literature at various professional gatherings, letting the board know of opportunities to share with others information about ACA, and staying knowledgeable about the Academy and its functions. To this end, I would like to share with you some answers.

The exam is purposefully balanced between each of the seven domains in the Role Delineation Document (<http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/html/RoleDelineation.html>). While we maintain confidentiality, for obvious reasons, of the test

question item bank, the questions themselves are written by members of the Academy serving on the EDC, which is chaired by the Regent for Exam Development and has, in addition to the Academy's Vice-President, six appointed members who serve for three years. The President serves as an *ex officio* member. The exam questions are written using national standards for multiple choice questions and are based on published archival literature so that the answers are verifiable and do not reflect the opinions or experiences of the question developers alone.

This leads to the question of keeping up with the literature. The requirement of a masters' degree and one to two years experience in order to sit for the exam makes it possible for the Academy to presume examinees are familiar with the breadth of available published resources and have access to a variety of instructors, colleagues, and others knowledgeable in the field. The Academy still feels it is important to provide a suggested reading list which is posted on the website. However, as indicated in the description of the reading list, it is not intended to be a complete bibliography of archival literature or the sole source for readings. As new publications are released, the Academy makes every effort to maintain an updated reading list. It is then up to the examinees to make use of whatever additional publications they see fit.

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President's Message

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The EDC annually reviews the questions in the item bank. Each item is tied directly to a bibliographic source, so when a publication is updated, or a similar source is published, items are checked to be sure the question is still relevant. In that way questions can be rewritten or discarded due to changes in accepted standard practices or where technological advances make the original question obsolete. New questions are written, evaluated, and added to the item bank on an annual basis. In many cases, but not all, new questions may be the result of new publications. However, there are certainly many questions that are still based on classic archival literature. It is a delicate balance to test established best practices and to remain up-to-date and current as new technologies influence not only how we preserve the records in our care, but also the format of the records themselves.

One constant question we hear is why certification is important and what are the benefits? The answer, I have found, is often a matter of personal commitment and choice. There is a place on the website and in this newsletter for members who wish to share their own answer to this question, and I encourage you to share your choice so that we all have the opportunity to help someone else understand what certification means.

Now, to move from the philosophical to the practical. The Board of Regents will hold its next meeting on March 11, 2007 at the brand new National Archives Federal Records Center in Fort Worth, Texas. ACA will hold its annual business meeting and reception in Chicago on Thursday evening, August 30, 2007, in conjunction with the Society of American Archivists' annual meeting. The ACA's annual meeting is open to all members. Guests and non-members are certainly welcome at both events. The deadline for those of you submitting certification maintenance material this year is June 1st—so please get your paperwork ready and retain your CA credential.

ACA is also involved internationally, and this issue of *ACA News* contains an example of these activities: an excerpt from a presentation by Jim Byers, CA, at the VII European Conference on Archives held in Warsaw, Poland in May, 2006. In an upcoming issue, we will feature excerpts from Academy member Trudy Huskamp Peterson's presentation at the 2006 Brazilian Congress on Archival Science.

In closing, let me say the Academy is only as strong as all of us who are willing to make it so. I appreciate all of you who continue to support and promote the Academy.

Cindy Smolovik, President, ACA

Certification in America: The ACA Example

This article is an excerpt from a presentation made by James Byers, CA, at the VII European Conference on Archives held in Warsaw, Poland in May, 2006. The paper on which the presentation was based provides an important history of the Academy of Certified Archivists, and it is hoped that it will be published in its entirety in the near future.

CERTIFICATION

The issue of certification within the archival community can be approached from more than one direction. Certification of individual archivists is one way to provide increased professionalism and structure to the archival profession, and this way was finally chosen by the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Other ways were considered, including both certification of educational programs and certification of practicing institutions. At a May, 1984 meeting of the SAA Council individual certification was pursued by asking the Committee on Education and Professional Development (CEPD) to report on a program of certification for individual archivists. The assumptions of this study were:

1. The purpose of the program would be to establish standards for archivists and increase incentive for individual archivists to maintain and improve their professional competency.
2. Qualifications were required in three major areas: education, experience, and written examination.
3. Persons with specified education and experience would be “grandfathered,” i.e., certified without examination.
4. Periodic recertification would be required.
5. The program would be post-employment.

Views from the SAA membership on this program

were actively solicited and a working group of the CEPD drafted a plan for the certification of individual archivists and presented it to the SAA Council in June, 1985. This plan had specific requirements for initial certification by petition, certification by examination, and recertification.

Through 1985 and 1986 the discussion continued as SAA plans were considered and revised, regional archival organizations were contacted for their input, and a membership poll was taken. In February, 1987, approval was given by SAA Council to move forward with a certification plan for archivists, and an Interim Board for Certification was established to implement the certification plan.

Certification by petition was the first phase of the certification process, enabling the new ACA to acquire a sufficient level of membership, begin operation, and staff the positions needed to carry out its business. This process followed examples of other organizations, such as the Institute for Certified Records Managers. The initial petition was implemented at the 1988 SAA annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, and was open for one year.

To meet petition qualifications involved both education and experience. The petition options were:

- A. Master’s degree including graduate study of

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archives administration and a minimum of 5 years qualifying professional archival experience; or

- B. Master's degree and 6 years qualifying professional archival experience; or
- C. Bachelor's degree and 7 years qualifying professional archival experience.

A set of guidelines was established to define these requirements. Documentation and/or evidence were required for qualifying education, coursework in archives administration, qualifying experience, and management experience.

All petitions received went through a review process by a subcommittee of the Interim Board for Certification, and an appeal process was available for rejected petitions. After the petition process closed (September 30, 1989) anyone desiring membership to the Academy had to take the examination. Approved petitions were valid for 8 years, renewal depending upon a petition or successfully completing the certification examination.

During the petition process another subcommittee of the Interim Board for Certification worked with a credentialing consultant and an independent testing organization to create the first ACA certification examination. This involved an intensive process of very specific steps, outlined below. The use of an independent testing organization was critical to constructing a valid test and providing a needed response to the critics of testing.

The first challenge was to identify what a professional archivist does. To do this, "task statements" were developed to describe tasks that archivists typically perform, such as appraisal, arrangement, and description. Information was solicited from a broad range of archivists and archival organizations nationwide to help identify archival "tasks." Documents used for this process ranged from organizational mission statements to individual position descriptions. Task statement drafts were reviewed by a nine-person panel, representative of the major groupings within the archival profession, including archival educators and practicing archivists who were authorities in major areas of the profession. The final product was the basis for future examination development. The independent testing company also reviewed this work and, in consultation with the examination subcommittee, made further changes.

Following task statements development, a separate panel working from these statements identified what an archivist must know to perform a given task: what knowledge is needed, what skills must be applied, and what attitudes (KSA's) are necessary to successful task performance.

These first two steps provided the basis for the third step, the creation of questions for the certification examination. These questions are multiple choice, each with four possible answers. In using a multiple choice examination, ACA follows a generally accepted practice within the United States for licensing and certifying examinations. This level of use and history has provided a good basis of research into how to write and score these

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examinations. When constructed properly this examination will test a range of knowledge and abilities as well as the facts, and it allows a wide range of questions covering all domains.

With test questions in place, the next step was to create a “criterion referenced cut score,” using an established testing method. Again, a panel of subject matter experts, usually archivists, was created to estimate the percentage of minimally competent archivists who can answer each item. With the first examination, the estimates were averaged for each question and then across questions to reach a pass-fail score. This step is now done by the psychometrician who enters all of these numbers into a computer to statistically

produce the pass-fail mark. This process is one of the checks and balances of the examination. It is important to note that this is an examination where the archivists are not competing with each other, as in a “curve” grading system, but are competing against an exam which is itself being rated.

This first examination, given during the 1989 SAA annual meeting, provided a good basis for the development of what is known as Role Delineation. Role Delineation describes the major responsibilities of professional archivists and what skills and knowledge are necessary to carry out those responsibilities, and consequently, the fundamental basis for the archival certification examination. Role delineation is critical to providing a viable and legally defensible certification examination.

WHAT VALUE IS CERTIFICATION?

There are two primary areas to note when considering the value of certification.

Those who have taken and passed the ACA certification examination have demonstrated that they possess the knowledge to practice as professional archivists. Certification is a benchmark of professional capability. This is being recognized by business, government, and other organizations, and some require certification, either at the time of employment or an agreed-upon post-employment date. There are still others who regard certification as a plus when considering applicants for employment. Some individuals have told me that passing the examination is a reward of accomplishment in and of itself. An equally broad-based value to the archival community is the development of Role

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**Society of
Rocky Mountain Archivists**



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Officers and Board News

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| President (2006-07) | Cindy Smolovik, CA NARA Southwest Region |
| Vice-President/ President-Elect (2006-07) | Judy Cetina, CA Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Archives |
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| Chair, Nominating Committee (2006-07) | Kristy Sorensen, CA Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary |

Contact information for the Officers and Regents is available on the ACA website (www.certifiedarchivists.org/html/contacta.html).

Report of the Regent for Examination Administration Connell Gallagher, CA

The most interesting part of the job of Regent for Examination Administration is being able to meet hundreds of people through email and through applications to take the certification exam. It was very exciting to see the variety of backgrounds and interests reflected in the 139 applications received in 2006. More than half of these folks had graduated from accredited programs with at least nine credits in archival administration, and yet they still felt the need to become certified. Others had been working in archival positions with little to no opportunity to pursue formal education, and certification offered them a credential that they could put on their *vitae*.

All of these folks saw the value in taking the exam to test the breadth of their knowledge of archival administration. They were aware that this test was created by colleagues who serve as archivists at a variety of institutions, and that all of the questions relate to the standard literature of the profession. The 2006 applicants represented all of the regions in the nation with a slight majority from the South and the Midwest, and they were able to take the exam at any of the five sites listed on the application form or at one of nine additional sites self-selected in the Pick-Your-Site program.

The backgrounds of the applicants were extremely varied. They had jobs as archivists at universities, historical societies, religious institutions, museums,

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Regent for Examination Administration

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in government and in business. Some were working as contract archivists, on grant projects or as volunteers in archives. Some were coming in from other professions, but they were working with archives in some capacity. Many had undergraduate degrees in history or English, but there were also bachelor's degrees in anthropology, art history, business administration, education, government, journalism, psychology, and divinity, to name a few concentrations, as well as graduate degrees in law, fine arts, library science, historic preservation, history and English. One applicant had a B.A. in Deaf Studies and Sign Language with an MLS and a full-time job as an archivist at a major university. Many of these applicants were professionally involved in state and regional archival organizations, and some were taking workshops and classes at local universities. A few applicants had even taken the National Archives Modern Archives Institute.

The eligibility criteria are stated in the *ACA Handbook for Archival Certification* in the chapter "The Archival Certification Examination," and under the subheading "Qualifying to take the archival certification examination" (p. 9). This year, forty-eight applicants chose Option #1 because they had a master's degree with at least nine credits of archival courses plus one year of professional experience. An additional twenty-three applicants had the educational qualifications to apply under Option #1, but they lacked the one year of professional qualifying archival experience. These

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Report of the Treasurer

Richard Dickerson, CA

University Archivist
Special Collections
University of Houston Libraries

- The finances of the Academy are in excellent condition. We have healthy checking and money market accounts for budgeted expenditures, three CDs for an operating reserve, and a combination of investment reserves that include stock accounts with two brokerage firms.
- We recently replaced one mature 1st Tennessee CD with one of similar amount (at much higher yield) at First Niagara, for a total of two at that institution. The second of those matures in February, 2007 and the second 1st Tennessee CD will mature in April, 2007. These will be renewed or reinvested at optimum yield. We have also been working toward consolidation of the mutual fund investments.
- The Finance Committee will present a proposed reserves investment strategy to the Board of Directors at Fort Worth in March.
- All bank accounts have been moved to First Niagara in Albany, N.Y.
- The arrangement to have Capitol Hill Management handle our routine banking and bookkeeping needs has been most satisfactory. We appreciate the good job being done by Steve Grandin, new bookkeeper Carla Krzykowski and the rest of the "Caphill" staff. Many thanks.

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Delineation. It provides a solid base for the certification examination, as well as a thorough description and definition of the archival profession. Nothing this complete has been done before, and Role Delineation's value extends to the entire archival profession. It is regularly reviewed and updated, providing definitive information for a broad range of purposes, from the certification examination to the establishment of a new archival position in a beginning business or other organization.

Prior to ACA's founding there was much discussion and some discord about the value of certification and any organization offering it. During the past 17 years this level of questioning and doubt has dimmed. ACA is an established, growing, and financially solvent organization. Membership is currently 856, coming from primarily the United States and Canada with a few members in other areas of the world. In 2003, for example, the certification exam was given in Hong Kong. The number of exam takers has risen steadily during the past five years, from 67 in 2000 to 133 in 2005. In 1989, the first examination was offered only at the SAA conference site. In 2005, the exam was offered in 13 locations. The certification system is established to ensure an objective examination and the ACA examination and the recertification process have never been legally or administratively challenged.

[Editor's Note: Information as to date and venue of publication of James Byers' complete paper will be noted in these pages as soon as it becomes available]

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applicants applied for provisional certification, meaning that they needed to complete the required experience within three years of passing the exam.

Forty-nine applicants applied under Option #2, requiring a master's degree in any field and at least two years of qualifying professional experience. The types and quantity of experience varied widely, and this proved to be the area of principal discussion among the members of the Examination Administration Committee. Persons with paid full-time professional archival work over the required period of time passed through easily. Most applicants had multiple part-time positions, and this was fine as long as they added up correctly. Some had qualifying volunteer work, but we did not approve internships that were counted for college credit.

The Regent is happy to provide advice to potential applicants on work and/or educational experience. Our purpose is to improve the knowledge base of the profession through study, experience, and continuing, life-long education. I look forward to hearing from potential applicants for the 2007 exam as well as those who have completed the work requirement to move from provisional to full certification.

Please contact Steve Grandin at ACA headquarters in Albany (aca@caphill.com), and he will pass your questions on to me, or you can contact me directly.

2006 was a great year for ACA, and we are looking to making 2007 even better.



Report of the Regent for Outreach

Laura McLemore, CA

Archivist

Noel Memorial Library

Louisiana State University-Shreveport

ACA Extends Its Reach

Outreach sent announcements regarding certification to the newsletters of several professional organizations this fall, including the California Library Association, NAGARA, SAA Government Records Section, SAA-LSU Student Chapter newsletter, AASLH, MAC, SAA, NEA, the Archives list and the ICA list. The Regent for Outreach is compiling a database of organizations with information about newsletters, meetings, and contacts, which will be expanded in coming months. If you know of a professional newsletter, please send contact information to the Regent for Outreach.

In addition to newsletter announcements, ACA sent promotional materials to the California Library Association, Rocky Mountain Archivists, and Tennessee Archivists meetings, and exhibits to the Northwest Archivists, NEA and MARAC meetings.

ACA needs members as liaisons to professional organizations throughout the United States. If you are able to act as liaison to a professional organization on behalf of ACA, please contact the Regent for Outreach, Laura.McLemore@lsus.edu.

Especially if you are a member of ALA, SHRM, AASLH, or a state library or human resource managers' organization, your help is needed.

Spring is always a busy time for ACA Outreach. If you are attending a spring meeting and would like

to tend an ACA booth or take promotional materials to distribute at the meeting, contact the Secretariat (aca@caphill.com) or the Regent for Outreach (Laura.McLemore@lsus.edu).

Upcoming locations for the Annual Meetings of the Academy of Certified Archivist

August 2007 -- Chicago, Illinois

August 2008 -- San Francisco, California

August 2009 -- Austin, Texas

Report of the Regent for Examination Development

Brenda Gunn, CA

Assistant Director for Research and Collections

Center for American History

University of Texas at Austin

Item Writing Workshop in Chicago

At the Society of American Archivists annual meeting in Chicago this coming August, the Academy will once again offer members the opportunity to experience the processes behind the development of the Certified Archivists examination. For many years, ACA has offered the Item Writing Workshop in conjunction with SAA's annual meeting, and interest and participation in the workshop has proven tremendous. Workshop participants are asked to develop questions, or items, based upon the domains and Role Delineation Statements created and updated by ACA. Workshop participants review questions and may recommend that the questions be forwarded to the Examination Development Committee for

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Alfred Lemmon, Director and Curator Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans

by Linda Hocking, CA

Alfred Lemmon, CA, is the Director of the Williams Research Center at the Historic New Orleans Collection, where he has worked since 1981. He was admitted to the Academy of Certified Archivists in 1989. Lemmon encourages younger archivists to pursue certification “as it implies a certain level of professionalism and acknowledges the critical need for standards.” He also encourages them to sharpen their skills through involvement in professional associations.

As an advocate for the profession, an important advantage to certification is that, “...it immediately communicates that there is a certain level of professional training and experiences required of archivists.” He explains:

As archivists we are a service profession. Our clientele will vary—one day it might be an honors high school class, another day a university class in urban studies, and so on—the critical thing is that we (at least from my point of view) clearly demonstrate that archives are repositories of highly useful information that can both solve the mysteries of the past, but help us to improve the present and the future.

Lemmon sees the biggest challenge of his position

as the collection’s relatively new status as a public institution. It has only been open for slightly over 30 years. He works with colleagues to make informed choices that “...set precedent for years to come.” While this is an arduous task, he sees it as “a very enriching experience.”

Another challenge Lemmon faces reflects the need for diversity in the archival profession. The collections for which he is responsible include materials in multiple languages (he cites French, Spanish, and German) pertaining to a variety of topics such as literary and music manuscripts and land tenure records. The staff must be able to work with these considerations, while at the same time being able to address more general issues of access, preservation, and acquisitions.

A new role for Lemmon and his institution came in the wake of Hurricane Katrina:

Our good fortune has called upon us to serve the community in more diverse ways than we anticipated previously. The experience of being part of an institution—called upon daily to supply information for the

rebuilding effort—highlights the importance of archives, libraries and museums to their communities.... At the same time, it shows the importance of an archivist, librarian, or museum curator as an “educator”—whether it be through presentations in shopping malls about how to clean family heirlooms or to give technical presentations on the topography of the region as reflected in historic maps.

Academy Profile

This feature profiles members of the Academy of Certified Archivists. If you would like to suggest someone to be featured, or if you yourself would like to appear in the column, please contact:

Linda Hocking, CA

archivist@litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org.

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Regent for Examination Development

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further review. Every year, the EDC adds to the item bank new questions originating in the workshop.

Item writing for the ACA examination is based upon standard test development practices and in consultation with ACA's psychometrician, an expert in the design, administration, and interpretation of quantitative tests. Participation in the workshop provides a greater understanding and appreciation for the complexities and rigor of test development.

If anyone is interested in being an item writer in Chicago, contact:

Brenda Gunn, CA

Regent for Examination Development

bgunn@mail.utexas.edu

Report of the Regent for Certification Maintenance

Shelly Croteau, CA

Assistant State Archivist

Missouri State Archives

Certification Maintenance: A Guide for Archivists

If you are one of the 288 archivists due for recertification in 2007, you should have received a post-card reminder that your petition for certification maintenance is due by June 1. I know some of you are thinking about the process because I began receiving regular questions regarding recertification credits in December. I applaud those of you who began the process early; this year's class is nearly seven times the size of last year's class. With that in mind, I believe an overview of the process will be beneficial.

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Upcoming ACA Events - 2007

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| March 9 - 11 | MID-WINTER MEETING NARA-Southwest Region Ft. Worth, Texas |
| March 9 - 10 | Exam Development Committee |
| March 11 | Board Meeting |
| August 27 - September 2 | ANNUAL MEETING (In conjunction with SAA Meeting) Chicago, Illinois |

Regent for Certification Maintenance
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If you have not started reviewing the credits you have accumulated over the past five years, the best place to find information on certification maintenance is www.certifiedarchivists.org, where you can download a letter from the Regent for Certification Maintenance, definitions of terms and special instructions, a petitioner's checklist, an application for certification maintenance, formatting instructions, and the petition for recertification declaration. At this time, you cannot enter your data online; you must print the forms, fill them out, and send the information to the Academy of Certified Archivists, 90 State Street, Suite 1009, Albany, New York 12207. If you cannot print the forms, contact the ACA Secretariat for a paper copy (E-mail: aca@caphill.com; Telephone: 518-463-8644; or Fax: 518-463-8656).

When you have completed the forms and are certain that you have provided documentation for all of the credits you have claimed, send the original and four copies to the Academy at the above address. Next, responsibility shifts from you to the Regent and the petition reviewers.

After a sufficient number of petitions have accumulated in Albany, they are reviewed for completeness and forwarded to the Regent for Certification Maintenance. When they arrive at the Regent's office, they are checked again for completeness and distributed to the assigned review team. Each review team consists of two certified archivists and a team leader with several

years of experience evaluating recertification petitions.

The review teams are not the "Big Brother" of the Academy; they are certified archivists who have volunteered their time to insure that credits claimed for recertification are truly earned. While they may reject some credits that they deem non-archival, frequently petition reviewers note that a petitioner has not claimed full credit for an activity. Each team must reach a consensus regarding every petition it reviews. Team members discuss each petition and document any concerns. Sometimes a team may request further information or clarification from the petitioner through the Regent.

Team decisions are reported by the team leader to the Regent, who then informs the petitioners by letter if they have maintained their certification. Occasionally a team is unable to make a decision and reports this to the Regent. If the Regent cannot help the team work through the problem petition, it moves on to the Appeals Team for final arbitration.

The Appeals Team leader is usually the immediate past Regent for Certification Maintenance, or, if that is not possible, an experienced reviewer chosen by the Regent. In addition to solving problems with regular petitions, the Appeals Team reviews petitions submitted by Academy board members or other review team members. The Regent's petition goes to the Academy board for final review.

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Regent for Certification Maintenance

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Certification maintenance is labor intensive for about three months a year, but the Regent is busy administering the Academy's Archival Recertification Credit Program (ARC) year round. This program allows organizations that sponsor meetings, seminars, workshops and other archival continuing education events to advertise the number of credits participants can earn by attending one of their events. Interested organizations complete the application found online at www.certifiedarchivists.org/html/ARC_Program.html, and send it to the Regent for review and assignment of participation credits. The Society of American Archivists has a list of workshops already pre-approved for ARCs. Programs as varied as NARA, MAC, ARMA, the Association of Moving Picture Archivists, and the Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association have applied for and received credits under Section B. (Education), on the ACA petition for

certification maintenance.

As the current Regent for Certification Maintenance, I have reaped the benefits of the hard work of my predecessors. I owe a great debt to Willow Powers, CA, Michael Holland, CA, and Judy Cetina, CA, who worked the kinks out of the certification process, allowing me to administer the ARCs and certification maintenance programs. I have focused on standardizing training for petition reviewers and developing the pool of available reviewers. Five new petition reviewers are assisting this year, and I hope we can continue to rotate new reviewers onto review teams each year. I have benefited from serving as Regent for Certification Maintenance in several ways:

- I am in regular contact with people who have questions about their applications for certification maintenance. I enjoy the one-on-one contact with other archivists and this position lets me help people with something I believe in.

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Academy Profile - Alfred Lemmon

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When reflecting on the events since the hurricane, Lemmon notes that many communities have a long way to go, and that areas hard hit by Hurricane Rita have been largely forgotten about. But he is quick to point out that in other places, progress is being made. He references American Library Association efforts to link citizens via satellite from libraries around the country to the city congress where they would be able to vote on resolutions in real time with their fellow citizens voting in New Orleans.

As for what colleagues can do, here is what Lemmon had to say:

The fact is Katrina was not the greatest natural disaster in the United States. We have a long and active history of natural disasters that have destroyed communities.... I believe one thing critical is that archivists, librarians, and museum curators realize that disasters do happen.... If they can learn lessons about how to prepare and how to respond and what to expect from the people who went through Katrina,

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Regent for Certification Maintenance

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- Because my predecessors did much of the hard work, I have been able to fine-tune the review process.
- My own recertification petition was better organized than it would have been had I not evaluated petitions, of varying quality, as a petition review team member.

If you have any questions or concerns during your own recertification process, please contact me by e-mail at shelly.croteau@sos.mo.gov or by telephone at 573-751-4303.

I would like to end with a final word of advice that will guide you through the certification maintenance process better than any other: DOCUMENT.

Certification Maintenance 2007

EXAMINATION OPTION

Application deadline: **May 15, 2007**

All necessary forms are available from the ACA website:

www.certifiedarchivists.org/html/pdf/application2007.pdf

PETITION OPTION

Submission deadline: **June 1, 2007**

All necessary forms are available from the ACA website:

www.certifiedarchivists.org/html/pdf/maintenance2007.pdf

Academy Profile - Alfred Lemmon

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it would be a tremendous “positive” to result from Katrina.

We are always taught how to respond to a disaster within the first hours. However, when it is a disaster that wipes out the entire infrastructure of thousands of square miles, such training is of basically no use. Information specialists in this region have learned a tremendous amount—whether they are records managers, librarians, archivists, or museum curators. They have a story to tell, they must tell it out of obligation to their colleagues. Their colleagues to be prepared must listen. It is not merely enough to have a disaster plan; an institution must practice their disaster plan. Institutions need to be creative and also look to the “for-profit” sector for models and adapt them to the non-profit realm of reality. Institutions need to be sure to build repositories of cultural patrimony, such as libraries, archives, and

museums intelligently, in appropriate places, and take advantage of all developments in construction techniques. So, I think if colleagues from around the country would learn from our lessons, it would give people who went through the storms a tremendous sense of pride that they helped others to be better prepared.

On a very practical level, what can individuals and institutions do? Numerous communities lost their public library systems. A public library in a neighborhood is a definite quality of life factor. If institutions or people have duplicate books, or it is simply time for someone to “weed” their personal library, consider sending them to a hard hit community. They will be very much appreciated.

More information about the Williams Research Center can be found at its web site:

www.hnoc.org/collections/research-center.php

Linda Hocking is the Curator of Library and Archives at the Litchfield Historical Society in Litchfield, Connecticut.

The Ins and Outs of Certification Maintenance

by Sharon Pullen, CA

This is an article aimed at demystifying the certification maintenance process for those members of ACA who may find the prospect intimidating. As explained on the certification maintenance page of the ACA website, there are two ways of recertifying: taking the certification exam again or recertifying by petition. There is never any fee connected with recertifying, no matter which option you choose. There are deadlines, however, and they are different depending on which option you choose.

The deadline for submitting the form to sit for the exam is the same as that for those who are certifying for the first time. Those archivists recertifying by examination are able to take the exam at any of the designated locations for that year as well as at a “Pick Your Site” location. Taking the exam again is simple, although the statement on the site that “you need only notify us” is somewhat misleading. There is, in fact, a form that must be submitted which is part of the PDF file containing the petition form.

Otherwise, the reasons recounted on the ACA website for recertifying by exam are accurate.

Minimal paperwork is certainly attractive, especially, if like the author, you find the five years between your most recent certification/recertification have magically passed and somehow all those mental notes you made (“this will be good to include on my recertification petition, I should remember I put it here so I can find it easily”) have been erased. You will need to study, since

both practice standards and the exam are constantly evolving.

Notification of your score on the exam includes a breakdown by the seven domains of archival practice as defined in the ACA Role Delineation Document, so it is a useful tool for self-evaluation. Your score may simply confirm your own estimation of where you need to increase your knowledge, but such confirmation should help in planning your continuing education. Certification maintenance by exam, while a simpler alternative on the face of things, seems to be chosen less often than by petition. Certainly, if one works as an archivist, participates in professional activities, and attends continuing education classes or workshops, the certification maintenance petition should almost fill itself out. Still, the process as well as the prospect seem to cause some trepidation among those to whom it is new. I wondered what questions may commonly occur to the prospective petitioner. As a future prospective petitioner myself, I came up with a few questions about preparation for filing a petition. Then I contacted Shelly Croteau, the Regent for Certification Maintenance to ask that she put me in touch with some archivists who had recently certified via petition. Future articles will explore the replies and strategies of these archivists.

If you would like to share your views on certification management, feel free to access the URL www.ptassociatesllc.com/survey.html to download a PDF of questions, add your answers and email them to me.

Sharon Pullen is an archivist in the Historic Documents Library in the Office of the Suffolk County Clerk, New York. She can be reached at sapullen@ptassociatesllc.com

Readings

The Myth of the Paperless Office

Sellen, Abigail J. and Richard H.R. Harper

Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2003

ISBN 0-262-19464-3

by Judith Cetina, CA, Vice-President, ACA

My work space reaffirms that the paperless office is only a myth as I gaze on a sea of printed research requests and correspondence, reports, memoranda, and county records in hard copy; and this reality encouraged me to attend a session on the topic at the 2005 SAA Conference in New Orleans. Abigail J. Sullen and Richard H.R. Harper's book, *The Myth of the Paperless Office*, was one of the recommended readings. The authors would agree with

the description of my paper-filled office, as the introduction to their book includes this admission, "As we write this book, we have paper all around us. On the desk are stacks of articles, rough notes, outlines, and printed e-mail messages. On the wall are calendars, Post-it notes, and photographs. On the shelves are journals, books, and magazines. The filing cabinets and the wastebasket are also full of paper...." The authors then proceed to study why, in an era of growth and advancement in technology and communications, people are still using paper. In the course of their book Sullen and Harper study the use of paper in different kinds of workplaces, consider whether looking at paper use can impact the design of new

What are you reading? ♦ Where are you looking for guidance, inspiration, or entertainment in the world of archival literature? ♦ Have something to write about what you read? ♦ If you feel like sharing your reading experiences with your fellow Academy members, please contact the editor at

huelsbergena@missouri.edu.

technology, and suggest where paper will be in the workplace twenty years from now. Certainly all of these issues are germane to archivists in general—and to me, as a local government archivist, in particular, as the advent of an escalating number of records in new, paperless formats, from various county offices and agencies, would mandate changes in methods of arrangement, description, and storage/preservation.

Sullen and Harper proceed with a careful and well-documented analysis of these important queries, and the two social scientists from the U.K. conclude that while paper will not disappear from the workplace—good news for the paper manufacturers they note—there will be fundamental changes in the role it plays in our lives.

They argue that in the future offices will not use, but rather keep, less paper. Although because of certain affordances, people may prefer that information for given projects be in printed format to better read, study, and edit, "the paper produced and used in the

process may be kept for the duration of the project, but when the project is over and done with, so too will be the paper." The authors add that any archiving activities will be performed in the digital realm. "The paperless office," As Sullen and Harper conclude, "is a myth not because people fail to achieve their goals, but because they know too well that their goals cannot be achieved without paper."

Editor's Endpaper

In December 2006 a question was posted to the Society of American Archivists' Archives and Archivists Listserv asking about the advantages of Archival Certification. A reply came from Mary Herbert, CA, Archives Assistant at the Sisters of Bon Secours USA Archives in Marriottsville, Maryland. Ms. Herbert's response was eloquent and heartfelt. She graciously agreed to combine her original response with a second she subsequently made "off" the listserv to another listserv member. What follows are Ms. Herbert reflections and advice, and I find them well-suited to close this particular issue of *ACA News* with its theme of certification and certification maintenance.

I sat for and passed the ACA exam in 2004. Studying for and taking the exam broadened my understanding of our profession. For me at least, day to day activities tend to expose us to opportunities for perfecting only certain aspects of the profession. Learning the seven role delineations shaped the business of archives for me and gave structure to my reports and management style.

The study material for the certification exam can seem overwhelming indeed! To prepare, I tried to wrap my head around information that would round out my knowledge base in the seven role delineations and the knowledge statements associated with them.

You will want to have at least a general grasp of the major historical events affecting the field of Archives. When I sat for the exam this meant the major events such as the Magna Carta and the French Revolution both of which moved the

process of placing historical records into public hands. Today it may include questions surrounding the destruction of records in the Middle East. For a timeline to study check out southwestarchivists.org/HTML/2007.htm (I also enjoy using the calendar trivia to raise awareness of Archives where I work.)

Don't assume because you work in a specific role that you understand the archival "rules" for that role. I had provided seven years of reference service when I sat for the exam. I thought from conferences I attended we ran a tight ship. But when I received my exam results, I had scored lowest in the area of Reference Services & Access! My colleagues laughed at the irony because they called me "Ms. Reference" and here I had all but flunked that section.

Questions I was unprepared for revolved around marketing and fundraising. It has been my experience that institutions typically have specialized staff to champion for awareness and financial needs. Some Archivists generate press releases, develop exhibits for their collections, and match potential benefactors with collection needs. However, that role had been removed from our Archives staff over the years so my actual knowledge was limited. And apparently I didn't read enough to bolster my intellectual understanding of current best practices. Many I spoke with after my exam had the same frustration.

That said, after mastering the historical groundwork for the emergence and development of our

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Mary Herbert

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profession, you will want to focus on current practices. For example, while the National Archives was instituted as an independent institution it was placed under a federal agency in 1949. But in 1984 it regained its independent status; today it remains an independent agency (c.f., www.archives.gov/about/history/). Also, preservation practices, both passive and migratory, as well as environmental, safety and security recommendations have changed dramatically over the past 25 years.

Be aware of the contemporary recommendations.

You may find it best to focus on one role delineation point per month beginning with the first domain: Selection, Appraisal and Acquisition. That way you digest and master like subject matter before moving on to the next logical step in your real life work.

Get a good night's rest before the exam. On the day of the exam, arrive with enough time to get comfortable in the exam room setting. You may find yourself pulled into conversation with colleagues. Try to take a few minutes to breathe deeply and focus, clearing your mind. Allow yourself to request of your memory the ability to sift through all you have studied so that the appropriate answers to the questions you are about to read come to the fore. Don't panic. You can sit for the exam again next year if you don't pass it this time.

My boss shared the joy my certification announcement brought me. Nevertheless, I am a lone arranger in a very small archives. Certification did not translate immediately into a

salary boost. This year it did. My boss contacted the ACA for assistance in recommending and substantiating the raise she successfully sought for me.

I cannot speak to the common concern whether certification is recognized sufficiently that it gives one an edge when applying for positions. But field certifications are recognized in many professions. I do know the process itself is worthwhile and I would recommend it regardless of immediate financial gain. The certification process and recertification practices will make you a better archivist. And that should garner you both work satisfaction and financial recognition.

I hope some small part of this helps you. With my very best wishes for the successful completion of your certification exam,

Mary E. Herbert, CA

Please send any comments, ideas, or suggestions about *ACA News* to:

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