John Nance Garner, the 32nd Vice President of the United States, once remarked that assuming the duties of the Vice Presidency was “The worst damn fool mistake I ever made.” He later went to describe his office as “Not worth a bucket of warm spit” [the last word of which was actually sanitized by reporters so they could repeat this cheery assessment in family newspapers].” Gee, what a crank! My term as Vice President and Ombudsman has been both interesting and lots of fun so far, and under the able leadership of Judy Cetina and the great advice and counsel of the Board, Officers, and Capital City Management, we’ve gotten a few things done—most of which I judge more valuable than spit, warm or otherwise.

The ombudsman duties can be pretty much characterized as a catch-all of membership questions and minor problems that need resolution. On this front, I answered a few, and referred a few to Steve Grandin, Connell Gallagher, or whomever seemed to be most in the best position to dispatch the problem with ease and alacrity. I also entered into several discussions with Judy Cetina, Cindy Smolovik, and Trudy Peterson, and other Board members, about the place of ACA in the international archival community. This is a discussion that has implications for the future of ACA, and some issue are unresolved; however, the Board and Officers of the ACA should deliberate more about what level of involvement is in the best interest of the Academy, and remain flexible in response to the overtures of our international colleagues to become more involved on the world scene.

Among the duties of the Vice President is to serve ex officio on the Examination Development Committee (EDC), ably chaired by Brenda Gunn. Even with three years experience on the EDC, its been a while, and Brenda has been efficient and helpful as I have tried to fulfill the tasks of: reviewing the items for Domain 6; improving test items recommended for re-assessment by our psychometrician; writing new questions to add to the item bank—again, for Domain 6; and finally, choosing the questions that will create the new exam. I guess its like riding a bicycle but I’m sure glad that Brenda was there for guidance, and was duly reminded of the central role the EDC plays in making ACA credible.

I served, again ex officio, on the Nominations Committee. (At least, I think I was ex officio. Maybe Cindy was just kind enough to keep me in the loop.) Anyway, here my most noticeable “contribution” was to marvel at the superb work of past-President Cindy Smolovik and her committee. I added advice when asked. The slate of candidates Cindy and her team assembled, after considerable effort and thought by them, is excellent.

I also served ex officio on the Finance Committee, under the able leadership of Treasurer Dick Dickerson. Dick made provisions to roll over the ACA CDs. The committee entered into some discussions that involved the possibility of diversifying ACA assets at some future point. However, no decisions were made other than to re-visit the issue in future committee meetings. The budget looks solid, and cash flow for this year looks typical. I was signed on as a check-writing signatory for ACA business. Dick has not received a handbook—and I wonder if we ought not to re-visit the handbook by 1.) making a census of who has what (some seem to
missing) and 2.) putting the handbooks on-line at the ACA web site so that future information transfer is facilitated as the Board changes.

Of course, the Vice President also has the duty of serving on the Exam Application Review Committee, a duty with which I feel quite comfortable. Having served as Regent for Examination Administration for 4 years, I anticipate reviewing applications for potential test-takers will be quite straightforward. Of course, the Regent for Exam Administration, Mr. Gallagher, already has two years of review under his belt and again, I expect to serve primarily as advisor-of-last-resort on unusual or hard-to-adjudicate applications. As I write this, Mr. Grandin has informed me that the first group of an anticipated 140 or so applications has been sent my way, though the biggest rush will of course be slightly before the May 15 deadline.

In the area of Certification Maintenance, I was able to recover a lost soul from the Great Beyond (vaporized as she was), and review and comment on an issue or two related to individual, specific maintenance issues. I thought I could best help out in this area by being a cheerleader, so I wrote an article called “Be a Role Model, Boomers” for the ACA Newsletter. This appeared in issue 60. In the article I took a slightly different spin on certification maintenance by appealing to those CAs approaching retirement; I hope this contribution will convince a few fence sitters to not allow their Academy member to lapse in the twilight of their careers.

In other business, I have been engaged with the executive leadership of the Philadelphia Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL). (I sit on the Executive Board of this group.) In a nutshell, PACSCL’s literature describes the consortium this way:

PACSCL is unique among library consortia in this country. It was born out of the conviction that the extraordinary collections of Philadelphia area libraries deserved greater visibility and broader support. In 1985, sixteen institutions came together to create PACSCL as an informal cooperative group with a shared agenda ranging from access to public programs and development. Now, almost twenty years later, PACSCL has grown in size to its present thirty-three libraries and evolved into a mature organization. During that period, PACSCL has compiled an impressive track record in developing projects and programs that have greatly benefited member institutions and their diverse constituencies.

My aim has been to get PACSCL to promulgate a resolution in which PACSCL endorses the CA credential as “best standards and practice” in the employment of archivists, and as a means to encouraging professional development and continuing education for PACSCL staffs with archivists. So far, the resolution was endorsed by the Executive Committee of PACSCL, but in attempting to get the resolution passed at a full Board meeting in March, there was some resistance. Nonetheless, I am hoping to re-write the wording of the resolution and present it once again at the next PACSCL Board meeting in June. If we can get the resolution passed, I think it will be something of a coup for ACA, because (optimistically) it may help to convince other consortia and regional archival organizations that it is time to follow suit.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marty Levitt
ACA Vice President