

# ACA NEWS

Issue 10

March/April 2001

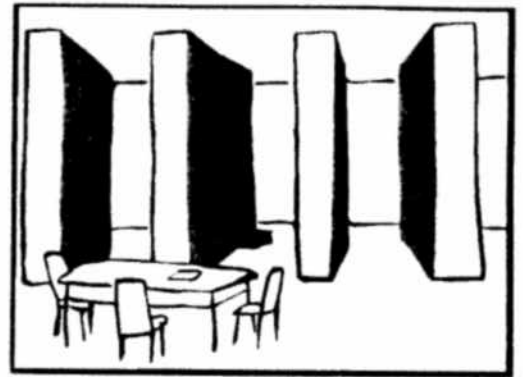


## Message from the President: The ACA and Archival Education

By Patrick Quinn, C.A.

The Academy of Certified Archivists has been concerned with encouraging the development of archival education of the highest quality from its inception. Indeed, one of the motivations for founding the Academy was to promote archival education by working with archival educators to devise a standardized test that could assess how well archivists were being trained.

A great majority of archival educators played key roles in founding the Academy and nurturing its growth through its formative years. The Academy's very first President, Greg Hunter, was an archival educator as were Presidents that followed, including Bert Rhoads, Frank Evans, David Gracy, and, having taught archival



administration at three universities for the past twenty-seven years, myself. The current ACA Regent for Exam Administration, Bruce Dearstyne, is a noted archival educator and the current chair of the ACA Nominations Committee, Connell Gallagher, has taught archival education for many years.

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<i>...and more!!!</i>	

Wherever five or more are gathered...

### Sites and Dates for 2001 Examinations Announced

The ACA will hold its 2001 examination on August 29, 2001 in Washington, Chicago, Boston, Phoenix, and Dallas. As in the past, we will hold it in any other site where five or more people request us to hold it and commit to taking it. If you are interested in getting a site added, contact Bruce Dearstyne, Regent for Examination Administration, at

[bd58@umail.umd.edu](mailto:bd58@umail.umd.edu)

The application deadline is May 15, 2001. More information and application forms are available from the ACA office in Albany or our web site, [www.certifiedarchivists.org](http://www.certifiedarchivists.org). Some of the requirements have been changed or refined this year, so be sure to check the application forms or the web site closely!

## Message From the President: The ACA and Archival Education

*(Continued from page 1)*

These archival educators readily acknowledge, as do the vast majority of today's archivists, that perhaps the most significant contribution the Academy has made to date to strengthening the archival profession has been the development of the domains of archival knowledge. This important document, which is constantly being revised and augmented, stands as a benchmark for what contemporary archivists should know and be able to apply while engaging in archival practice. Many archival educators, myself included, use the domains of knowledge document as a core component in teaching their classes.

In addition, the Academy uses its recertification process to encourage and stimulate the further development of post-appointment archival education such as that which occurs at the professional meetings of the Society of American Archivists and the regional archival organization, in workshops, seminars and other educational opportunities offered by SAA and the regionals, and most recently, through on-line archival educational offerings.

In an effort to address and fill gaps in the available archival literature, the Academy's Committee on Education, under the leadership of Marty Levitt, prepared and submitted a grant proposal to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, intended to stimulate archival research and writing that can help fill the gaps in the extant literature.

All of these endeavors notwithstanding, there surprisingly exists within the archival profession a small coterie of leading archival educators, who for whatever reasons, fail to acknowledge the key role that the Academy has played and is continuing to play in promoting archival education and accordingly do not encourage their students to sit for the ACA examination or worse, advise them not to do

so. This myopic attitude can only weaken the archival profession.

The goal of contemporary archival education should not be to develop a two-tiered approach to educating archivists which creates a class of highly educated archivists produced by fulltime professional educators in multi-course, research-based, two-year academic programs who would then serve as cognoscenti presiding over other archivists trained by adjunct faculty teaching on a part-time basis.

A much more wholly integrated approach to archival education is required—one that can accommodate the diverse aspirations and personal circumstances of all those who wish to become archivists, not all of whom will be able to enroll in one of the recognized fulltime archival education programs.

Aspiring archivists often begin their careers as paraprofessionals or are assigned archival duties, particularly in religious organizations, after working for many years in another profession such as librarianship or teaching. Because of their "day jobs" or the demands of their pre-archival careers, they cannot enroll in fulltime "day" archival education programs.

Many necessarily seek formal archival education offered by practicing archivists who also serve as adjunct faculty in academic institutions in their local areas.

As noted, archival education is a career-long endeavor in which practicing archivists' education and training is constantly being augmented and updated by attending workshops and program sessions and seminars sponsored by the SAA and regional archival organizations. The Academy's Committee on Education is engaged in efforts to support and encourage ongoing career-long education and training and its chair, Marty Levitt, has very effectively represented the ACA's perspective as a member of the Society of American Archivists' Committee on Education and Professional Development.



*(Continued on page 3)*

## Some Thoughts from One of the Easternmost Certified Archivists in North America

By Greg Walsh, C.A.

Greetings! My name is Greg Walsh from Bay de Verde, Newfoundland, Canada. In early October, I received my first issue of the *ACA News* and was quite anxious to have a look at it. After scanning the list of the 57 new Certified Archivists who passed



the 2000 exam, I saw my name in the top right hand corner - the only Canadian of the group! Although I had already received my certificate, it was seeing my name printed in the *ACA News* that made me realize I was finally a CA, and seeing the name of my province (Newfoundland) next to my own, made me realize that I am the Easternmost Certified Archivist in North America!

The province of New-

foundland is an island located on the east coast of Canada, home to some of North America's oldest settlements. I grew up in a small fishing community on the east coast of Island and had an interest in the archival profession at a very early age. After attending Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland and earning a BA in History, I travelled to Windsor, Ontario, Canada where I earned a Master of Arts (Archival Studies). This in-

*(Continued on page 4)*

*The changing of the guard*

## An Editorial Introductory

By Kim Allen Scott, C.A.

With this new issue of the *ACA News* we are trying a experiment which we hope will irritate as few readers as possible. In the past, the job of newsletter editor has been one shuttled between stalwart volunteers and, most recently, assumed by the Academy's secretary, Cindy

Smolovik. At the Academy's business lunch in Denver this past summer, I temporarily lost control of myself while filled with the zeal of archival comradeship (and a very good pasta lunch) and I volunteered to become the new editor of the *ACA* to give Cindy a break.. Even though I hold no official leadership position with the Academy, I am an

enthusiastic supporter of its goals to promote the profession and the highest standards for its practitioners. One of the things I want to do with the newsletter is add opinion pieces to stimulate discussion on topics of interest to our profession. I hope that you will enjoy the new editorial slant and will keep in touch with me as I learn this job. [aliks@montana.edu](mailto:aliks@montana.edu) ■

## Message from the President: The ACA and Archival Education

*(Continued from page 2)*

To be sure, the mission of the ACA is not to teach archival administration. That responsibility is the province of archival educators, both fulltime faculty and part-time adjunct faculty. However, the Academy, by offering a test of archival



knowledge and skills and by maintaining a rigorous recertification program, contributes much to developing and maintaining archival education and professional development of the highest quality, a worthy goal for the entire archival profession. ■

## Some Thoughts from One of the Easternmost Certified Archivists in North America

(Continued from page 3)

involved taking classes at Wayne State in Detroit, Michigan where I had the opportunity to receive instruction from several American professors, including Phillip Mason, who instilled within me and other students a strong commitment to archival professionalism. After graduating in 1999, I began work at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives at Memorial University of Newfoundland and soon after, my supervisor mentioned he had once written a Certified Archivist exam. After discussing it all with him, I had great interest in the idea and aimed to write the exam in 2000.

I was even more intrigued when I saw Detroit listed as an exam site because writing it there would allow me to see old classmates and friends. Little did I know, I would write the exam in the exact same room where Phillip Mason and others had taught us! This feeling of 'coming home' to where I had sat, listened and learned so much about the archival profession made me very comfortable with the actual exam. After travelling 1521 miles (2447) km, checking the exam over at least 5 times, I handed it to my proctor, Louis Jones. I then headed 'back to Canada' and eventually back East, to my home province of Newfoundland.

With regards to exam material, I strongly feel that as a Canadian archivist, I was at a serious disadvantage. Questions concerning Schellenberg or Jenkinson, and other universal archival issues were not a problem for me. Instead, many of the questions covering US government regulations, US federal legislation for branches of government and those that contained American terms and acronyms were questions that were completely foreign to me, being an archivist in *Canada*. On a couple of occasions, I did not know what the question was referring to, let alone what the most suitable answer should be. This was frustrating and caused me to wonder, for example, how many US Archivists could pass an archival certification exam laden with questions about the

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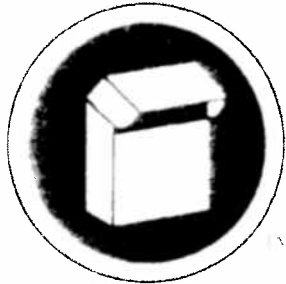
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Rules for Archival Description, the Canadian Cultural Properties Board, or the history of the National Archives of Canada. However, I gave it my best shot and drew upon my experiences of taking archival courses at an American university. While the lack of 'familiar' Canadian content was a problem for me, I must admit that finding a solution to this may prove to be difficult for exam developers. Interestingly enough, a debate recently arose in Canada about certification for Canadian archivists. Until more progress is made on this, the U.S. based Academy of Certified Archivists is the only certification option available to someone like myself.

Two months after taking the exam, I was delighted and slightly relieved to find out I had passed. In looking at the Certificate hanging on my office wall now, I ask myself: what does it mean to be the only Canadian who passed the exam this year? It means a lot to me of course. It means even more to be from Newfoundland, Canada's Easternmost province and home to only one other Certified Ar-

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#### ***Always remember, never forget!***

May 15 is the deadline for the Academy of Certified Archivists "You Pick Your Site" program. This allows you and four other archivists to take the archival certification examination in the city of your choice anywhere in the world. The Handbook for Archival Certification is available for a mere \$10. Contact the secretariat today!

## Some Thoughts from One of the Easternmost Certified Archivists in North America

*(Continued from page 4)*

chivist - Bert Riggs, my former boss and good friend who encouraged me to pursue Certification and recently started work on his own graduate archival studies degree at the University of Toronto.

I had already completed Master's level archival training and felt quite competent and confident as

an archivist in my field. I had recently been elected as President of the Provincial Archival Association and had also recently obtained a full-time position at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador and I knew I would probably never be applying for an archival position in the U.S. So, why did I take the exam? Well, like many others, I considered it as a self-evaluation tool to measure how much I had actually retained from archival course and a method to see which tasks I needed more experience with in everyday work. I wanted to challenge myself to discover if I could handle an exam designed around American archival standards and practices. There was also the ambition to acquire an additional qualification to help in my own personal professional development. For all these reasons, I was determined to succeed.



For me, the whole process of Certification and professionalization started years ago and will undoubtedly continue in the future. As for my plans to give back to the Academy, well, this article is a start. I have already begun to publicise the Academy and its work here and to encourage others to test themselves and pursue certification. They will be glad they did! ■

#### ***So, what do you want?***

This is your newsletter, and only you know what you wish to see in it. Of course we will continue to bring you the information you need regarding test sites, recertification deadlines and all, but what else would you like to see? Please let your editor know and he will do his best to provide. We can make this thing work if we work together!

*You asked this one in high school...*  
**What Should I Study for the Test?**

By **Anne P. Diffendal, C.A.**

A perennial question of all test-takers, and a question often posed to the ACA Board of Regents from archivists anticipating the certification examination, is: "*What should I study for the test?*" For several years, the Board declined to answer in particulars. The exam is, after all, a wide-ranging test of archival knowledge, based upon the Academy's role delineation statement that organizes lists of specific task and knowledge statements under several domains of archival knowledge. There are numerous publications and many avenues of education, training, and experience by which candidates could prepare to perform well on the exam. By suggesting certain publications, would the Regents thereby discourage the use of other good and useful sources?



In 1996, Board members, who had themselves sat for the examination, decided upon several means to alleviate some pre-test anxiety and to offer guidance for test-preparation. The Board charged the ACA Examination Development Committee (EDC) with reviewing the material on procedures then provided candidates for certification and with adding information on the nature of the test and suggestions for preparing to take the exam.

The committee, which writes and revises the test questions and selects items for the examination, is chaired by the Regent for Examination Development and consists of six appointed members and the ACA President and Vice-president. This group produced the Handbook for Archival Certification, available on-line at the ACA website and also in printed form. The Handbook describes the process and procedures for initial certification as well as certification maintenance. It includes the role de-

*(Continued on page 8)*

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# Important News Regarding Recertification

By Michael Holland, C.A.  
Regent for Certification Maintenance

Because of the large number of Certified Archivists due to recertify in the Summer of 2002, classes of 1989 and 1992, the Certification Maintenance Committee invites members of these classes to recertify a year early, in the Summer of 2001.

Early recertification will ease the work load of petition reviewers and extend the period between recertification petitions to 6 years. Early petitioners from the classes of 1989 and 1992 will not have to submit another recertification petition until the Summer of 2007. If you have accrued the required 100 points for recertification at the end of your fourth year of this recertification cycle, you can log onto the ACA Web site

<[www.certifiedarchivists.org](http://www.certifiedarchivists.org)>

and click on "form" under the paragraph on recertification, or contact the ACA Secretariat (518-463-8644) for a paper copy of the recertification petition.



Please remember that this early recertification opportunity is entirely voluntary, and members of the classes of 1989 and 1992 are certainly welcome to wait until the Summer of 2002 to renew their certification. If you petition for early recertification and your petition is not accepted, you are strongly encouraged to petition the following year using the added points that have accrued during the additional year of professional activity. Finally, the members of the class of 1995, are required to renew their certification in the Summer of 2001. ■



Did you know....


To simplify learning about archival certification and preparing for the examination, the Academy has created the *ACA Handbook*. The *Handbook* contains:


- an explanation of the Academy's structure
- the principles guiding the examination's creation
- the role delineation, on which the test is based
- sample questions
- a study guide
- a bibliography

...and more. In addition to being the essential guide to the archival certification examination, many archival educators have found it the *ACA Handbook* useful for classroom instruction. ■

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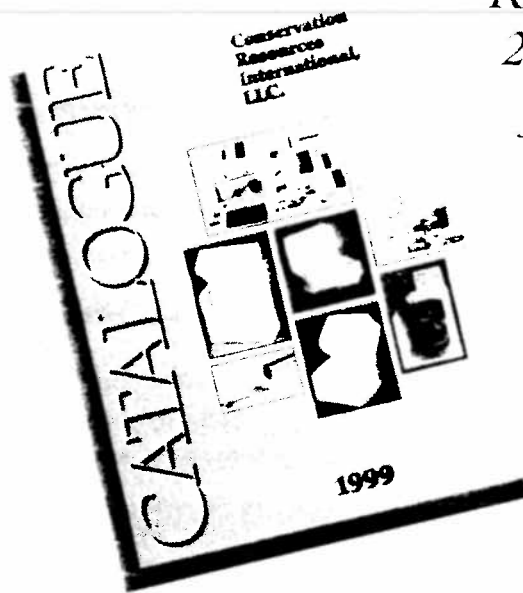


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## What Should I Study for the Test?

*(Continued from page 6)*

lineation statement, general information about multiple choice questions like those on the certification exam, a description of how test questions are written, examples of questions that have been used on the exam with an analysis of each, and a list of selected readings.

It is this last feature that has elicited the most discussion. Organized by the domains of archival knowledge from the role delineation statement, the list of selected readings also includes the categories of archival classics and general works that cover more than one domain. The major English-language journals published in North America are named and recommended as good sources for the most recent developments in theory and practice. Together with information about the nature and development of the exam, this list is intended to eliminate some of the uncertainty and mystery sur-

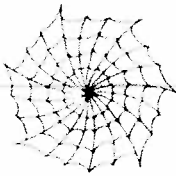
rounding the exam to the benefit of potential test-takers and the profession in general.

Introductory statements describe the nature of this list and the committee's purpose in developing it. The list of readings is not exhaustive. Reading all of the titles mentioned does not guarantee passage of the exam. The publications listed are currently recognized as significant archival literature, and certified archivists should be familiar with most, if not all, of the authors. Candidates can use the list to evaluate their readiness, particularly in domains where they feel inadequately prepared.

No reading list can fulfill all expectations. Certainly not one as highly selective as this. The EDC regularly reviews the list. Last year it recommended additional titles and will probably do so again at the upcoming meeting. Outdated references will be replaced. The list of selected readings is a continual work-in-progress, changing as new archival literature appears and as newly certified archivists report on its value to them. The EDC welcomes your comments. ■



## Caught in a Web: Access vs. Advertising



By Kim Allen Scott, C.A.

*ADVERTISING: to call public attention to; especially by emphasizing desirable qualities so as to arouse a desire to buy or patronize...*

We have all heard it said that the World Wide Web is mostly advertising. You are only a mouse click away from millions of web pages describing everything from home repair techniques to Brittany Spear's wardrobe, and almost all of them have some sort of flashing banner begging you to click to another site with your checkbook handy. We archivists, sitting in our ivory towers of information storage, usually consider ourselves above this crass commercialism. After all, we know that our use of the web is higher, purer, nobler, and so much more

altruistic than the book reviews on Amazon.com. But are we really? If you think about it, much of what archives and libraries are doing on the web differs very little from the dotcom snake oil hawking that predominates the internet.

Consider for a moment our library brethren. From your laptop anyplace in the world, you can virtually visit most libraries' OPAC and find out that the book you want to read is, indeed, at that library (even though you are not). The OPAC has "called public attention to the book by emphasizing its desirable qualities so as to arouse a desire to buy or patronize," but it does not actually deliver you the goods unless you pony up for interlibrary loan services. It really gets interesting when the library OPAC catalogs "e-journals" but doesn't allow the general public to link to the URL. Usually those links are reserved for people who have an affiliation with the library, like university students who have registered for the service. The point is that somebody has to pay for that subscription because no commercial publisher in his right mind is going to charge for a magazine on the news stand and then just and then just give it away on a TV screen.

Enough of the library dissing, let's consider our own profession. Are we not in some ways lavishing money on internet advertising? Look at all the big bucks granting agencies are dealing out to archives if they promise to implement "Encoded Archival Description." This souped-up Luke Skywalker style finding aid standard can be seen as just another format for the advertisement of information can be found within a given collection, not the information itself. What about all that money we are throwing at our scanners and scanning projects? Isn't that providing access rather than advertising? I would say no because unless you are prepared to scan ENTIRE COLLECTIONS, you are still just advertising. Our profession recognizes that we have to batch our information bearing material, that we must describe it in groups, and that we cannot possibly catalog every document within a given collection. Yet the gurus of scanning, with their byzantine requirements for the "metadata" that

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## Caught in a Web

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must accompany every individual image, are requiring exactly that: item level description. Since we can't possibly do it all, we settle for second best: scan some choice tidbits and advertise.

Do I advocate giving up on the web? Heavens no! I like to surf as much as any gnarly information seeker. I just say that we ought to recognize that our professional responsibilities of appraisal, arrangement, description, preservation, and access are all pretty much the same now as they were before Al Gore invented the Internet. We ought to all study those responsibilities before writing another grant to scan our various collections of matchbook covers. Maybe we ought to ask our users what they would like to see up on the screen, and when we hear them say "everything!" we ought to seriously consider the implications of advertising versus access.

*PLEASE NOTE: These opinions are those of Kim Allen Scott and not the those of the Academy of Certified Archivists. They are presented here for your consideration to stimulate discussion of professional issues. Your feedback is both solicited and welcome.*

## Some Dates to Consider in May and June.....

**May 2-4** Society of Florida Archivists - 2001 Annual Meeting - St. Augustine, Florida

**May 4-5** New England Archivists Spring 2001 meeting, "Archives And/In the Arts," Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.

**May 15** Deadline to apply to take the Academy of Certified Archivists archival certification examination

**May 15** "RACO 2001: Transitions and New Technology for Records Managers;" the 14th Annual NARA Records Administration Conference (RACO 2001): Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, in downtown Washington, DC.

**May 24-25** Northwest Archivists and Rocky Mountain Archivists joint meeting; Boise, Idaho, USA

**May 24-25** Society of Southwest Archivists Annual Meeting, Radisson Hotel, Fort Worth Texas

**June 1** Academy of Certified Archivists recertification petitions due

**June 1** Deadline for Academy of Certified Archivists ballots.



*Those who would lead.....*

## The slate of 2001 candidates from your Nominating Board

Your Nominations Committee (Connell B. Gallagher, Chair, David B. Gracy II, and Carol A. Mathias) have worked hard to present to you the following slate of candidates for your consideration this year. Complete information on these folks will accompany the ballot, but we felt it would be wise to let you know who these good people are in advance. Thanks each and every one of you for your willingness to serve ACA!

### ***For Vice President/President Elect:***

Jane E. Nokes  
Bank of Nova Scotia  
44 King St. West, 19th Fl.  
Toronto, ON M5H 1H1 Canada  
jane.nokes@scotiabank.com

Aimee Felker  
CIGNA Archives  
900 Cottage Grove Rd L9  
Hartford, CT 06152-0009  
aimee.felker@cigna.com

### ***For Secretary:***

Carole A. Prietto  
Washington University  
One Brookings Drive, Box 1061  
St. Louis, MO 63130-4899

Stephanie A. Morris  
Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament  
1527 Nashaminy Valley Dr.  
Bensalem, PA 19020-1230

### ***For Treasurer:***

Margery N. Sly  
Presbyterian Historical Soc.  
425 Lombard St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19147  
mslyarc@hslc.org

Kristine A. Haglund  
Denver Museum of Natural History, Library Archives  
2001 Colorado Blvd  
Denver, CO 80205-5798  
khaglund@dmnh.org

### ***For Nominations:***

R. Joseph Anderson  
American Institute of Physics  
Center for History & Physics  
1 Physics Ellipse  
College Park, MD 20740-3843  
rja@aip.org

Sheryl B. Vogt  
University of Georgia  
548 Cedar Creek Dr.  
Athens, GA 30605  
sbvogt@arches.ugs.edu

### ***Regent for Cert.***

Judith G. Cetina  
Cuyahoga County Archives  
2905 Franklin Blvd  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
(countyarchives@nes.net)

Gary L. Harrington  
Oaklahoma Dept. of Libraries  
200 N.E. 18th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
gharrington@oltn.odl.state.ok.us

### ***Regent for Exam Adm.***

Martin L. Levitt  
American Philosophical Society  
105 S. 5th street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3386  
mlevitt@aarphilsoc.org

Gregor Trinkaus-Randall  
Massachusetts Board of Library Comm.  
648 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02215-9833

## ACADEMY OF CERTIFIED ARCHIVISTS

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*We are on the Web!*  
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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 standard, and promoting the employment 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.

# Academy of Certified Archivists

### Pick your site!

You can hold the examination in any city of your choice. The only requirement is that at least five persons take the examination at the same site. Visit our web site for more information.

- **Application deadline:**  
May 15, 2001
- **Examination date:** August 29, 2001
- **Examination sites:**  
Washington, Chicago, Boston, Phoenix, Dallas, and...you pick your site!

### "Why should I certify?"

Certification validates your ability to apply the knowledge and skills you learned in college to the real world of archives. But more importantly, taking the examination proves to employers that you have the self-confidence to test your knowledge and skills against a national standard. It demonstrates your ability, initiative, and confidence to be more than just an employee, but an archivist who cares about the profession and wants to make a difference.



### "How do I qualify?"

**OPTION 1:** Master's degree with at least 9 semester (or 12 quarter) hours of graduate archival administration plus at least 1 year of qualifying experience.

**OPTION 2:** Master's degree without an archival emphasis plus 2 years qualifying professional experience.

**OPTION 3:** Persons with lapsed certification.

**PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP:** this option was created specifically for graduate students. It is the same as Option 1 but without qualifying experience, which provisional members may earn after passing the exam. Provisional membership has two benefits for students:

1. Provisional members may tell prospective employers that they have passed the archival certification exam; and

2. Provisional members do not have to pay professional fees until they have a professional job.

### "What does the test cost?"

The application fee is only \$50.

Candidates who pass the examination and demonstrate qualifying experience then pay a \$150 certification fee.

Annual dues of \$50 are payable starting July 1 of the year following certification.

### "What is the test like?"

The test is a one hundred question multiple choice test. It is based on current archival literature and tests your knowledge of archival principles and practices. Every year, a committee of professional archivists reviews and updates each question. A professional testing expert also analyses the test annually for validity and fairness.

### "How do I study for the certification examination?"

The ACA Handbook is your starting point for preparing for the exam. It contains a review of exam creation and content; suggestions for taking multiple-choice exams; sample questions and commentaries; selected readings, and more.

### Contact us

ACADEMY OF  
CERTIFIED ARCHIVISTS  
48 Howard Street  
Albany, NY 12207

Ph: (518) 463-864, Fx: (518) 463-8656  
aca@caphill.com