

ACA NEWS

Issue 41

July 2001



Message from the President: The Academy of Certified Archivists and the Accreditation of Archival Education Programs

By Patrick Quinn, C.A.

In his president's message in the May/June, 2001, issue of *Archival Outlook*, Society of American Archivists President Leon Stout discusses the current initiative of the American Library Association's Committee on Professional Education to create a separate, independent corporation to accredit educational programs in the library and information science fields.

Stout's message, entitled "Shaping Our Future through Collaboration with Allied Professionals," notes that for some time now the Society of American Archivists has "cooperated with the American Library Association in providing archival input and suggesting the names of archivists to participate in accreditation reviews



when M.L.S. or M.L.I.S. programs had a significant archival component."

Indeed, the ALA has for many years accredited library and library and information science schools. It is only to the good of the archival profession that the Society of American Archi-

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It's your organization...

How about those dues?

The ACA has sent out its annual dues reminders to one and all, and now the secretariat sits in his office patiently awaiting your checks. Of course, supporting the ACA is more than just taking a test and paying your dues. As members of a professional organization each one of us is charged to work every day towards our goal of encouraging the highest level of professional practice for archivists in the United States and abroad.



However, without taking care of the mundane tasks associated with keeping the light bill paid, making sure the trash gets taken out, and getting this newsletter in the mail, no amount of professional zeal is going to keep the ACA solvent. So please, when you get your dues reminder, get out your checkbook and renew your affiliation right away. Your prompt attention is greatly appreciated.

Message From the President: The ACA and the Accreditation of Archival Education Programs

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vists has had input in accreditation reviews of those schools that have significant archival education components.

Stout reported that the Society of American Archivists was asked to support the new accreditation initiative and has agreed to do so. He further noted that "once upon a time SAA hotly debated the relative virtues of accrediting archival education programs, accrediting archival repositories or certifying professional archivists," and that "the outcome was the Academy of Certified Archivists and its now well established program of individual certification for the profession."

In summarizing the evolution of the proposed accreditation initiative, Stout said that the new "independent body would include representatives from a broad spectrum of library, information, and related organizations . . . including ALA, the Special Libraries Associations, the organizations of law and medical librarians, the American Society for Information Science and Technology and the Canadian Library Association. SAA was invited to participate and we suggested that our Canadian archival colleagues be represented as well." For some reason, the Academy of Certified Archivists, the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA), and the Institute of Certified Records Managers (ICRM) were not invited to participate in this endeavor.

Indeed, Stout "urged the ALA committee to offer membership to ARMA International, the National Association of Government Archivists and other similar organizations," including the American Association of Museums. Hopefully he had the Academy of Certified Archivists in mind as one of the other similar organizations.

The Academy of Certified Archivists has no principled objection to strengthening programs for the education and training of archivists, and presumably

the new library and information science accreditation endeavor is intended to strengthen, among others, programs in which a considerable portion of the educational training of archivists occurs. Indeed, at the meeting of the ACA's Board of Regents in St. Louis in March, 2001, the Board authorized Vice President Leon Miller to contact the ALA committee and express the Academy's interest in the proposed initiative.

However, there remain many questions to be answered about the accreditation initiative. Although many archival education and training programs are offered within library or library and information science schools, there are a significant number of such programs that are offered within departments of history. While many academic archivists are educated in library or library and information science schools and hold an M.L.S. or M.L.I.S., a large number of archivists in other types of repositories, such as public records archives, religious ar-

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May I see your license, please.....

A Reality of Certification

By Susan Maclin, C.A.

Sometimes, in the seemingly eternal debate over whether or not to certify archivists, accredit archival educational programs or forgetting the whole thing, the facts of what is happening with certification in the world we actually work in gets overlooked. The fact of the matter is that just about every profession now has some kind of further certificate, license, board, or other designation achieved through continuing education and or/passing an exam testing sponsored by the profession and taken by the indi-

vidual over and above perhaps many college degrees.

This fact was recently brought home to me when my company announced on its intranet site that all employees must fill out an employee skills profile. I began answering the questions which included the expected ones of education, previous positions both in and outside the company, language skills, computer skills, management experience, and so forth. Then came the section called "Certifications and Licenses" and of course



"Certified Archivist" was not listed but 139 other designations

were!

I was surprised to find so many and did a quick analysis of the titles, and called Human Resources to find out about some of them and what they mean to the company and the employee. To the employee it usually means an increase in salary and the ability to move into positions of greater responsibility or a different area. To the company it

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Reality of Certification

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means it has further indication that the employee knows his/her area of expertise, that the employee has achieved some standing in his/her profession, that his/her education/training has been further validated in some way.

The reality is that these things matter in the real world. The list reveals that in my company 64 are "certified" professions, 5 use "accredited" designations, then there are "chartered", "fellow", "licensed", "member" "professional", "registered" and the best one: a Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse. Some others: Accredited Customer Service Representative, Certified Benefits Professional, Certified Insurance Data Manager, Chartered Life Underwriter, Registered Professional Liability Underwriter, Certified Document Imaging Architect, Certified Fraud Examiner, Certified Financial Manager, Certified Internal Auditor – and most have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, most have a Master's and many have Ph.Ds. I know because many are friends and colleagues.

Suffice it to say that if archivists truly desire to be a profession then they should be jumping on the bandwagon instead of trying to ignore it or jump off. It is counterproductive to a noble profession. ■

I'd rather have certification and not need it....



...than to need certification and not have it!

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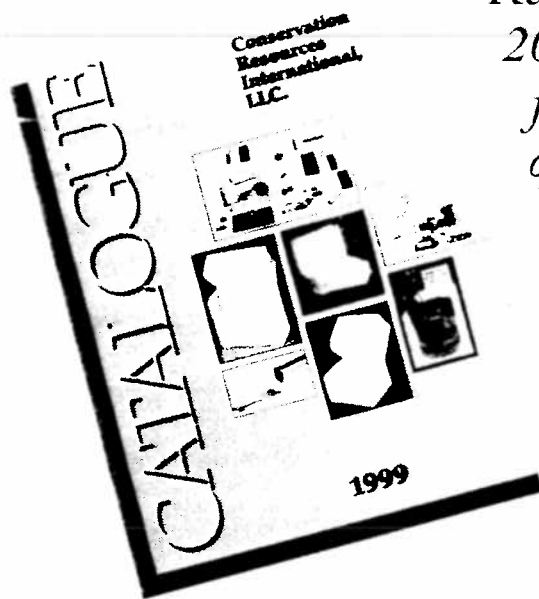
The ACA and the Accreditation of Archival Education Programs

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chives and corporate archives do not hold library or library and information science degrees, and such degrees are not required as a condition of employment. How would such non-library or non-library and information science archival education programs fit into the proposed accreditation scheme?

The fact remains that no matter what employment qualifying degree an archivist has, the only objective, empirically verifiable measure of an archivist's competence is the certification examination offered by the Academy of Certified Archivists. The examination questions are crafted by experienced practicing archivists from every type of archival repository, as well as by experienced archival educators. The examination is continuously updated to reflect the ever-changing nature of archival practice. Moreover, the Academy, through

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Some Thoughts on Attending Professional Conferences

By Kim Allen Scott, C.A.

I just got back from attending another professional conference in a distant city and find myself wondering why I feel compelled to go to these things and spend a weekend in a vastly overpriced downtown hotel. I mean, there has to be some reason more compelling than adding to my miniature soap bar collection. It sure can't be for a love of commercial airlines. After sitting for hours in a space small enough to give Stewart Little leg cramps and eating all three of the pretzels in the snack pack, travel by stagecoach begins to look pretty good to me. (I think I know why the Pope kisses the ground when he gets off the plane—after my last flight I felt like asking the ground to marry me.) Once you get to the distant city you have the ground transportation to contend with. Basically, you have three choices here. You can rent a car for



slightly less than the plane ticket cost and then drive around all the one way streets in the downtown area looking for the hotel until you get mugged; you can use the shuttle service that usually takes you on a great tour of forty other downtown hotels before it stops at yours; or you can take a cab and hope the driver wont route the drive to your hotel through Duluth for a bigger fare.

After you check in, you head down to the registration desk to check in, where the harried workers of the local arrangements committee are passing out all kinds of brochures, folders, pencils, squeaky toys, and the all-important dog tag with your name and institution emblazoned across the front. It is very important that you wear that dog tag at all times, especially when you leave the hotel and go to a nice restaurant and forget you have it on.

FIRST WAITRESS: Hey, Joe Schumaker of Aardvark University just short tipped me!

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Programs**

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its certification maintenance program, ensures that archivists, once certified, in order to retain their status as Certified Archivists must throughout their careers engage in continuing education and not simply rely for the duration of their careers on the successful completion of a threshold examination.

No matter what advanced degree an entry-level archivist may possess, such degrees are not *prima facie* evidence of archival competence, nor do they ensure that arrest on their credentials for careers.



chivists will not
qualifying degree
the rest of their

The Academy of Certified Archivists certainly agrees with Leon Stout that the strengthening of the archival profession—which, after all, is the very reason that the ACA was created and is its only *raison d'être*—must be done in collaboration with allied professionals. The question is, of course, what form should such collaboration take? The Academy's Board of Regents would very much appreciate hearing the views of ACA members on the proposed accreditation initiative prior to the Board's meeting at the end of August in Washington during the SAA Annual Meeting, where the issue will be discussed by the Board. ■

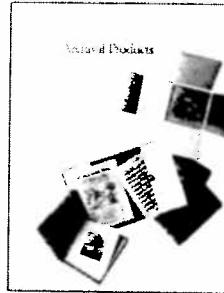
2001 Exam Sites Reminder.....

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 considered for the 2002 examination, please contact Martin L. Levitt, Regent for Examination Administration, at : mlevitt@aarphilsoc.org

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Some Thoughts on Attending Professional Conferences.....

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SECOND WAITRESS: Lets get on the Internet and find the names on his tenure committee!

The conference itself is reason enough to attend, isn't it? Deciding which one of the concurrent sessions to attend or just hanging out in the corridor waiting for the vendors to provide another snack spread for the break. You learn a lot from attending the sessions from topics generally fitting into four categories:

Collections I have processed...
Grants I have received...
Techniques I have learned...
People who disagree with me whose reputations I have trashed...

There is usually a banquet with a great entree of rubber chicken and a speaker with a twenty minute talk you can't remember, and a hotel bar afterwards that charges as much for one beer as would buy an entire keg back home.

No, on reflection, its none of these compelling reasons that keeps us going back to professional conferences. The real reason in comradarie; the chance to reacquaint ourselves with a unique population of folks that gather only once a year. We are all, to a greater or lesser degree, pretty lonesome folks where we work (those of you who are employed by a library know exactly what I mean) and for many of us the only time we even see another living, breathing archivist is at a convention. It's the reconnection with our profession that we seek as certified archivists, and the comforting reminder that we are not alone. It is, quite simply, what professionals do; gather together to swap war stories, exchange ideas, and renew friendships.

I think that is reason enough to keep going back year after year, but if its all the same to you, I'm looking into the stagecoach schedules before I call Delta. ■ ■

No dimpled chads this time...

ELECTION RESULTS!!!!

The results are in, and I think we have a very good crop of winners. Thanks go out to all who committed themselves to run for office, and thanks go out to the Nominating Committee: Connell B. Gallagher, Chair, Carol Mathias, and David Gracy, Regent for Nominations. The winners are:

Vice Pres./Pres.-elect:	Jane E. Nokes Bank of Nova Scotia Toronto
Secretary:	Carole A. Prietto Washington University St. Louis, MO
Treasurer:	Margery N. Sly Presbyterian Hist. Soc. Philadelphia
Nominations	Sheryl B. Vogt University of Georgia Athens
Regent for Certification.:	Judith G. Cetina Cuyahoga County Archives Cleveland
Regent for Exam Administration.:	Martin L. Levitt American Philosophical Society Philadelphia

If you or anyone you know is interested in serving the organization in a leadership role, please contact Carol Mathias, chair for 2001-2002.

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Annual Meeting Update

The Academy of Certified Archivists will have their annual business luncheon meeting at the Washington Hilton on Friday, August 31, 2001. Cost for the lunch is \$35.00 and it will be held from 12:00 to 1:30 pm.

Also, at the Washington Hilton, the ACA Board of Directors will meet all day in Washington on Wednesday, August 29, 2001.

The presidents of the ACA and the Society of American Archivists will also meet for discussions during the SSA meeting at Washington. Stay tuned.

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.