PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
ANDREW CHERNEVYCH, PRESIDENT

As you probably know, the recent change of provincial government has introduced some uncertainties that is directly affecting the work of ASA. AHRF funding for this year has yet to be announced, which caused disruption to our Access to Holdings grant program. Apologies to all the institutions and individuals affected by this unexpected set of circumstances. The ASA Board feels strongly about continuing to offer the grant program in the future but the extent of the program will depend on the funding available from the provincial government. The provincial budget is expected to be confirmed in the fall.

With the newly minted strategic framework and communication plan in place, the ASA is ready to focus on efficiency of service and communication. That means we double down on offerings that bring most value to the members and let go of activities that are time-consuming while less efficient in achieving our goals. Sadly, the latter includes the ASA Calendar, which was a decent – albeit expensive – promotional tool. Another major change: the ASA communication and advocacy will no longer be directed at the general public but towards the archival community and the government. The website, newsletter and the ASA listserv will be our main tools for reaching out to you.

More than ever, we may need to work together to advocate for the vital role of archives in Alberta!
FROM THE DESK OF THE ARCHIVES ADVISOR
RENE GEORGOPALIS

I am writing this after the 2019 ASA Conference. During our conference, we covered a lot of topics relevant to the time in which we are living, such as trauma in the archives, decolonization, missing records, efforts at truth and reconciliation, and various outreach projects. It was such a great way to share ideas with our peers on current issues.

A current issue that our profession is not discussing much is the climate crisis. I am wondering how many of my colleagues are also concerned. And I wonder how many of you are unsure about the meaning of this profession, of preserving records for 100 years plus when humanity may not be around for that long if we continue along our current path of unsustainability. I am personally finding more meaning in my profession regarding access to information; after all, that is the end goal for the work archivists do. We are seeing natural disasters happening more frequently – ASA helped with the 2013 floods which impacted nearly half of the province. Since then, we have seen fires and more floods and these disasters are now a part of our reality – most of us will experience a natural disaster at our archives. In the last issue of this newsletter, we heard from South Peace Regional Archives on a flood that they experienced.

I know at least some of our colleagues are thinking about it. At the ACA conference in June, one delegate asked Library and Archives of Canada if the new facility for preservation they are building, Gatineau 2, will be gentle on the earth. Apparently, energy efficiency is planned in the design, which is some effort in reducing emissions. An article on the facility can be found here: https://www.canadianarchitect.com/library-and-archives-canadas-new-preservation-centre-to-be-first-net-zero-carbon-facility-of-its-kind/?fbclid=IwAR1IOL4rshBzOG3LqAHmpHztetOLBJ2PPS2sXGUQ5N2MGVn4HDeDtlhLc

I have noticed that the Society of American Archivists, have a statement on archives and the environment, https://www2.archivists.org/statements/information-brief-archives-and-the-environment, which is interesting. What is Canada doing?

I am interested to see what our profession does about the climate crisis. We hold the records that are evidence of its occurrence and we are managing and preserving data on the government’s responses and decisions to this emergency.
ACDPS AND THE CITY OF EDMONTON ARCHIVES (PART 2)
ELIZABETH WALKER

Last fall I wrote in the ASA newsletter about the City of Edmonton Archives joining ACDPS - the Archives Canada Digital Preservation Service. At that time we were focused on our AtoM database and online catalogue: 
http://cityarchives.edmonton.ca/.

We’ve had our AtoM for almost a year now and it has been very successful. We met our target to be back up to the same number of descriptions we had in the old database (Inmagic’s Presto) in time for our launch for Archives Week in October and we’ve added a lot of new content since then.

We keep statistics and there was an immediate increase both in URL visits and pageviews. I’m happy to see the pageviews increase because it means that, not only are more people visiting the site, they’re also spending more time there. They are navigating around and looking at different descriptions, which is great! We haven’t done any formal user surveys but the feedback we have received has all been positive.

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City of Edmonton Archives’ online catalogue web traffic statistics from old (Presto) and new (AtoM) databases

It was easy to focus on AtoM, partly because there was so much work to do in a very short period, but also because we knew what we were doing. Digital preservation and management of our digital records can be intimidating and Archivematica has a steep learning curve, so it was put on the backburner. But since January I’ve been writing and testing procedures for ingest, interim storage, processing through Archivematica and transfer to repository storage. Access is in my mind but mostly in theory rather than practice right now. We have some born digital photographs processed and available online but that’s it. Access to digital material is next year’s project.

There is an online sandbox of Archivematica, which lets you try out the software and allows some experimentation. But not all the functionality is there and I wanted to experiment with our data, to see what would happen with different settings for example. Also, the sandbox resets every hour and I wanted to be able to go back and compare and contrast.
So I spoke to Artefactual (the software developers of AtoM and Archivematica) and was able to use our Archivematica as a test environment for a couple of months. Then, when I was ready, everything was erased and I started out fresh. We’ve been in a production environment since June and so far I’ve uploaded 5,403 digitized images for a total of 169 GB.

Right now I’m focusing on our digitized images. We have thousands of preservation master copies in the networked storage we have at the City. We’ve tried to increase this storage without success so moving these master copies to the repository storage provided by ACDPS will free this networked storage up. For a while, I am already filling it with born digital material that is currently sitting unmonitored and un-backed up on carriers like flash and optical disks (external hard drives and CDs/DVDs for example). The master copies are best kept in repository storage and we can download an entire transfer or an individual image as required.

Intellectual control and documentation is really important to me. I may know what I’m doing right now but I may not remember all the details six months from now… not to mention, if I win the lottery, my successors who may or may not be cursing my name after I’ve gone to live on a beach somewhere. My goal: whether they approve of my decisions or not, at least they will know what I did! I think we’ve all encountered mysteries where we have no idea what was done to a set of records. It is doubly important to document what is done to digital material so authenticity and trustworthiness is possible over time.

So, a bit about my Archivematica documentation: I created a registry system and have two workflows, one for digitized material and one for born digital.
Each transfer to Archivematica requires a name. We already use a standard for our accessions so I’ve adapted it. Each transfer is given a number starting with T and the year then a sequential number, so T2019-001, T2019-002 and so on and then the number will reset each year. I document each transfer in the registry (a basic spreadsheet) with information like the size of the transfer, who did it and when, and descriptions of the content. I’m also interested in metrics so I’m recording how long everything takes; I hope to use this information to plan and set timelines for projects in the future.

As for the workflows, first I mapped all the decision points in Archivematica (where a human needs to make a decision and tell the program what to do). I used the wonderfully detailed documentation Artefactual has online. Then I considered which decision points would be different for digitized versus born digital material. As an example of the difference, our digitized images are already in preservation formats so they don’t need to be normalized. Born digital material probably won’t be in preservation formats. So, if the images in a born digital transfer are jpegs, I want Archivematica to make tiff copies. If it’s a master copy or I happen to know the files are all in preservation formats I can skip this step.

Where the two workflows are the same I am able to put my choices in Archivematica’s settings and it is carried out automatically. Where they are different, Archivematica stops and asks me to manually make a decision.
ACDPS AND THE CITY OF EDMONTON ARCHIVES (PART 2) (CONT.)

ELIZABETH WALKER

Artefactual has been very supportive through this process: under our service contract they are available for consultation and they reviewed my workflows and offered suggestions. My experience with them has been great. I’m working on getting these workflows available publicly but for now, if you’re interested, please get in touch and I can share them/answer questions. Also feel free to get in touch if you have any questions about ACDPS. We have been building our digital program for several years and with ACDPS we have come so far over the last year!

Normalization decision point in Archivematica.

REPORT FOR THE ASA ON THE CAG CONFERENCE

SHANNON DOIRON

In March 2018, I was hired as the Archivist for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan in Grande Prairie, Alberta. As a result, I became a member of the Catholic Archivist Group, and have so far attended two of their conferences, with this year’s being held in Winnipeg.

My decision to attend the CAG’s 2019 conference, titled Community, Faith and the Future, allowed me not only see a city I had never been to before, but primarily to renew my acquaintance with the archivists who work in the same kind of environment as I do. Throughout the year, we stay in touch with one another whenever we have news to share or queries which have to do with our work. Meeting up with other archivists at the conference is therefore a great opportunity to inquire about their own archival experiences. Furthermore, some of their presentations touched on subjects similar to projects that are happening here at the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan. During these presentations, I was assigned
the role of time keeper to make sure everyone stayed on schedule. And finally, attendees of the conference were given the chance to view the archival holdings of the Centre du patrimoine, which included Louis Riel’s last letter to his family, and the St. Boniface Museum.

Overall, this was an enriching experience, which allowed me to reconnect with some old friends, and to hear about what archival projects they had been working on. I feel that coming to this conference can only be of help to my future endeavors. I would like to thank the ASA for its assistance through the PDTA grant.

ARCHIVES INSTITUTE APRIL, 2019

ASA held its 6 day intensive, introduction to archives course, Archives Institute April 8 to 13. The Institute was hosted at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and we would like to thank them for the use of the facility as well as thank all the guest instructors.

Archives Institute 2019 Participants

Back row, Left - Right:
Carla Smith, Ksenia Maryniak, Marissa Fraser, Kate Skelton, Tricia McGuire-Adams, Margaret Anderson, Carole Rowland, Samantha Nugent, Natalia Pietrzykowski, Bonnie Dahl, Jesse Carson, Ashley Halko-Addley.

Front row, Left - Right:
Susan Lacombe, Anne Penner, Amy Putnam, Rachelle Kuzyk, Nicole Ronald-Jones.
ASA’S WORKSHOP – INDIGENOUS CULTURAL AWARENESS

The ASA held its Spring workshop in Banff on May 23. The workshop was comprised of two sessions, the first being a blanket exercise and the second half being a short session on the history of the Stony Nakoda peoples who are located in the Banff area. The blanket exercise which was led by Sharon Morin provided the perspective of Métis from Treaty 6 land.

This workshop was well received. One comment from the Spring Workshop survey was: “This was the highlight of the conference for me.”

Preconference Workshop: Indigenous Cultural Awareness Workshop, Banff 2019
Mind the Gap: Digital evanescence, Cultural Diversity and the Archival challenge of Social Memory

Opening Reception
Mind the Gap: Digital evanescence, Cultural Diversity and the Archival challenge of Social Memory

Conference Sessions
ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN ARCHIVISTS CONFERENCE, TORONTO 2019

RENE GEORGOPALIS

The ACA Conference was held in Toronto this June, and its theme was Archival Origins. The program was excellent with many of the sessions examining matters such as decolonization, the holdings for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, re-readings on the development of Canada’s archival history, using linked data in descriptions, and how the lingua franca of English shapes our appraisal decisions -- to name a few topics that were covered. We received updates on the ACA as well as what LAC has accomplished over the last few years.

There were a number of ASA’s members that attended the conference including: Michael Gourlie, Jillian Staniec, Kelly Turner, Bonnie Woelk, Regina Landwehr, Elizabeth Walker, Kathryn Ivany, Kayla McAvena, John Yolkowskii, Elizabeth Cyko, Peter Houston and Collene Paull.

I had the opportunity to connect with a couple of my professors from the iSchool, former classmates as well as colleagues from outside of Alberta, and six members of the Archives Advisors Working Group. The week was a great opportunity to network and hear new things happening in our field. Although the conference was a bit sleepless due to Raptors fans celebrating for two nights near the conference hotel, it was so great to reconnect with colleagues from across the country.

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA FILM NIGHT

On Saturday, June 22, the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) hosted its annual film night at the Metro Cinema/Garneau Theatre in Edmonton. There were two films presented including Back to God’s Country, 1919, and The Lone Eagle, 1927, which are both silent films. The film received coverage by the Edmonton Journal and the CBC and the attendance was excellent for an archives event, with around 160 people. Back to God’s Country had a live accompanying pianist who improvised the music for the full length of the film. The Lone Eagle is a fragmented film and the PAA had three film makers provide variations in the ending. Congratulations to the PAA on such a successful outreach event!
ASA BURSARY

The ASA offers a bursary to support Alberta residents who are enrolled in a graduate program in archival studies. The purpose of the bursary is to encourage archival education for potential archivists who intend on working in Alberta. The bursary amount is $1500 per year and is paid in two installments; one in September and the other in January, pending confirmation of continued enrolment. The bursary can be used towards tuition, books and living.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be current ASA individual members who are resident Albertans (or those whose permanent address is in Alberta) accepted as a full-time first or second year student in a graduate program of archival studies or equivalent.

Criteria for selection:

- Academic and/or professional merit
- Potential for contributing to Alberta’s archival community
- Preference will be given to first-time applicants.

Deadline:

Applications should be received no later than July 31, 2019. Grants will be awarded before the end of September. The application for this bursary can be found on ASA's website: [http://archivesalberta.org/programs-and-services/grants-education/grants-education-bursary](http://archivesalberta.org/programs-and-services/grants-education/grants-education-bursary)
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Editor contact information: Telephone: (780) 424-2697 Email: reneg@archivesalberta.org

Individuals and institutions are encouraged to submit articles, reviews, reports, photographs or letters to the editor to the Archives Society of Alberta News, Issues #1, 2, and 3. Submissions are preferred in electronic format as Word files for textual submissions, or as JPG files for graphic submissions.

Please note: Issue #4 is reserved for Annual Reports of the Society and its committees.

The views expressed in the Archives Society of Alberta Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Archives Society of Alberta or its Editor.

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The Archives Society of Alberta membership application for the 2019-2020 year includes the following information:

Name (Institution or Individual) ____________________________
Address _________________________________________________
City __________________________ Province ___________ Postal Code _____________
Telephone ( ___________ ) _________ - ____________________________
Business Phone ( ___________ ) _________ - ___________________________
Fax ( ___________ ) _________ - ____________________________
E-mail _____________________________________________________
Voting Delegate (Associate) ________________________________
Institutional Affiliation (Individual Members) __________________________

Type of Membership

Please check:

- Archives Employee: $50.00
- Students, Volunteers, Seniors: $25.00
- Associate Institutional Member: $75.00
- Institutional Member (Please contact the ASA for further information)

Yes, I would like to volunteer for an ASA Committee

Credit Card No. ____________________________________________
Expiry _____________ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐
Card holder name (please print) ______________________________
Signature ____________________________________

Please make cheque or money order payable to the Archives Society of Alberta and mail to:
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Edmonton, AB T5N 1R5