



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

ANDREW CHERNEVYCH, PRESIDENT

The Delphic Oracle's "know thyself" applies to organizations too. Once in a while, every organization needs to pause, take a step back, and do some soul-searching. What is our purpose? What are our strengths and weaknesses? What value do we bring? Who benefits from our services? This self-examination is not just about setting new long-term goals: the process is about re-examining the mission and adjusting it according to ever-changing realities. For the ASA, these realities are the daily lives of Alberta archives, the shifting landscape of the archival profession and societal challenges, including technology, politics, and economy.

With all of this in mind, the ASA Board is embarking on its 2019 strategic planning. The recent board meeting discussions revealed a number of issues that we need to address. What kind of services should we focus on? How can we better serve our members and their communities? How can we make the ASA (and our members) more sustainable? How can we cultivate a better understanding and appreciation of archives? Many of these questions were raised during the ASA Board's Needs Assessment Survey facilitation session in November and ASA members had a chance to contribute feedback through the members' survey.

The question of understanding and appreciation, in my mind, is key. How can archives ever hope to get more support if stakeholders and funders don't understand the societal value of archives and archival services? One can blame ignorance, short-term pragmatism or economy, but assigning blame will not make things better. We need to deliver services that make tangible impact and up our advocacy game in getting the recognition. The Strategic Planning will certainly help us articulate these issues and translate them into achievable goals.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

RENE GEORGOPALIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ARCHIVES ADVISOR

Conference preparations has been a priority of mine this winter. The conference committee met mid-January and selected the program for our upcoming conference. You will see the registration and program information posted soon. It is so exciting for me to see the program come together and I am looking forward to being in Banff in May and catching up with many of you!



I can announce that we have an exciting Spring workshop for our members this year. At the Institutional Forum in June 2018, I was amazed by how many of our members are working on some kind of Indigenous project at their institutions - the majority of you are doing such projects like guides to the holdings, to re-description projects and improving your postcards in your gift shops. ASA is trying to support these efforts by offering a Spring workshop on Indigenous Awareness. I think it is a great opportunity to reflect on your projects and to support your archives with this type of work. The workshop will include a blanket exercise as well as teach you about the experiences of Stoney Nakoda from pre-contact to European contact to today. Registration for the workshop will open with conference registration!

I have been receiving grant applications in the office and have been working on editing some draft applications. We have created a new application form and updated the Terms, Conditions and Program Criteria for the Access to Holdings grant program. I am excited to see how this first round of applications with the new grant will turn out.

The Archives Institute has been planned for early April and registrations are filling into the office. Every year, I look forward to teaching and I love how the Institute is basically advising to a large

group. I always learn about archives I have not yet heard of during the course as well as new questions/challenges that some archives are facing.

Lastly, the ASA board has been working on a review of our services as well as developing a Communications Plan and a Strategic Plan. I would like to thank all of you who participated in the Needs Assessment Survey as that information will be so important for developing both a Strategic Plan and Communications Plan for our organization. We had 67% of our institutional members respond and under 50% of other members respond. From the survey, the most valued services included the Access to Holdings grants, ASA workshops and conference and the Advisory services. I am excited to see how this input from the membership will shape our future services. Also, we have yet to announce the winner of the Indigo gift certificate, but stay tuned, that information will be coming soon! We will be working on our Strategic Plan this spring so that information is forthcoming as well.

Well ASA members, I look forward to seeing many of you in May at the conference!

ASA CONFERENCE 2019

Registration Now Open! Conference Program Available!

<http://archivesalberta.org/professional-development/conference>



**Mind the Gap : Digital Evanescence,
Cultural Memory and the Archival Challenge of Social Memory.**

May 23 - 25, 2019 Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Banff, Alberta

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP: INDIGENOUS CULTURAL AWARENESS

The majority of Institutional Members at the Spring 2018 Institutional Forum reported that they are working on an Indigenous project in some form in response to the TRC Calls to Action. In order to support these projects, the ASA is offering a preconference workshop to raise awareness of Indigenous issues and culture. This course offering focuses on the truth aspect of truth and reconciliation and is an important step before delving into Indigenous-related projects in your archives.

Date: Thursday, May 23, 2019

Time: 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Location: Kinnear Centre, 101, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff

Instructors: Sharon Morin and Daryl Kootenay

This Pre-Conference workshop brings together two half-day sessions which teach the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the specific history of Treaty 7 to create better awareness and empathy towards Canada's Indigenous peoples.

In the morning, Morin will walk participants through the Blanket Exercise. This exercise is based on participatory popular education methodology and the goal is to build understanding about our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada by walking through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. Everyone is actively involved as they step onto blankets that represent the land, and into the role of First Nations, Inuit and later Métis peoples. By engaging on an emotional and intellectual level, the Blanket Exercise effectively educates and increases empathy.



In the afternoon, Kootenay will share the history of the Stoney Nakoda people and those of Treaty 7 prior to contact, during contact and up to today. A part of the session will be to encourage participants to be aware of their biases and stereotypes that might provide barriers to working collaboratively with Indigenous peoples and to consider actions to begin to work towards reconciliation. There will be an opportunity to participate in a smudge ceremony and to also learn from an Elder.

Registration information can be found here: <http://archivesalberta.org/professional-development/workshop/>.

EMERGENCY! IN THE ARCHIVES – LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2018 EVACUATION

JOSEPHINE SALLIS, ARCHIVIST, SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

In the last days of April 2018, the City of Grande Prairie evacuated Muskoseepi Park due to a flash flood risk on Bear Creek. This evacuation included the South Peace Regional Archives (SPRA), housed in the Grande Prairie Museum. On day two of the evacuation, SPRA staff was granted thirty minutes of access by the site administrator. This article will briefly discuss our response to the emergency evacuation, how our emergency planning helped with the evacuation, lessons we learned, and how we are moving forward.

After receiving permission to re-enter the building, the Director and Archivist created a list of actions for the thirty-minute time frame. Thanks to the help of three volunteers, we accomplished more than planned: we moved every item from the bottom shelves of the vault, the reference room, and the offices to the top shelves; removed items on loan as well as the accession records; returned display items to the vault; and removed vital institutional records. We deposited all the removed items at our rented off-site storage space in the downtown area. Regularly visiting our emergency plan was pivotal to our success that evening.

When I say regularly, I mean once or twice every three months- enough to allow us to report our progress to our board. We should work on our emergency plan on a more regular schedule. However, like most archives, we work with limited staff resources. Reporting deadlines help us return to important, long-term projects while we manage the pressing day-to-day work. Our emergency plan remains in a perpetual draft stage, but a draft is better than no plan at all. In our case, that draft helped us successfully manage an evacuation.

Our planning process includes the Grande Prairie Museum. We lease space at the back of their building and work regularly with the staff on programming and displays. Because we share space and resources, we discuss how to share emergency resources. The museum budgets for salvage and recovery materials that protect the building and their physical collections. We budget (read: try to get free) for materials that focus on personal safety and management, a general kit to augment museum tools and equipment, and salvage materials suitable to our holdings. It is a slow process, but every year our kits grow, and we have an itemized acquisition plan to build more.

Besides tools and personal safety equipment, two of the most important items in our kit are a map of the vault with the general locations of holdings (photographs, municipal records, personal fonds, etc.) and a priority salvage list. We know what we have and we know where we need to start. If necessary, we can direct others to remove or protect holdings for us. Even though we did not have access to these lists during the evacuation, we were familiar enough with them to create an evacuation plan on the spot. As an institutional member of the Archives Society of Alberta, we also have access to a number of valuable resources related to disaster preparedness and recovery. During our evacuation, we remained in close contact with the ASA, who provided additional support and guid-

ance. Luckily, a flash flood did not occur and these emergency items were not required after the initial evacuation. The storage tote we keep them in did provide extra seating at our off-site for the two and a half days we worked there.

This emergency created a valuable, no-harm-done learning experience. We noticed a number of missing actions required: call out lists for staff; extra keys offsite; and stackable plastic totes to remove and store items, to name a few. Of all the lessons we learned, three stand out.

First, we learned the value of an off-site location to store emergency kits and lists, and as temporary workspace. Without access to the building, we would have had nothing to get us started and nowhere to work. If the situation had been a little messier (as in, wetter), we would have needed to scrounge or purchase tools and protective gear, a waste of valuable time. We now keep our kits offsite, as well as maps and priority lists. If we did not have our offsite, we would consider investigating borrowed personal or office space from local organizations to store some of these items and potentially as temporary workspace.

Second, we really need an evacuation checklist. It might seem like a small thing but checklists keep you focused and calm...ish. Because they are a plan. Moreover, while we knew our holdings priorities, we missed a few things in the excitement, like our work calendars. Our summer student, on the ground for day three, suggested a checklist broken into possible evacuation times: five minutes to get out - ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes. We used our makeshift list to create a more formal checklist which we now store offsite.

Third, when all seems lost, all is not lost. The South Peace Regional Archives has over 6,000 digitized images available online. Our website features over 600 described fonds and collections, many with detailed histories and extensive item level lists. In our case, because we have offsite storage, we have 120 m of textual material and thousands of photographs from individuals and organizations around the South Peace. There are approximately 4m of our institutional records offsite as well as archival processing materials. We have an external back up of all our computer work and digitized collections and photographs. It would be tragic to lose all the physical holdings, but we had enough to start again, if necessary. This is essentially the work of archives: we can never save it all. We can save enough to keep society's memory strong enough to move forward. We kept this in mind as we evacuated our priority items and then watched the creek crest. It is something we keep in mind as we improve our plan.

Emergency planning is ongoing. It is never "wrapped up" partly because it tends to move to the bottom of day-to-day priority list. The emergency is not happening today, after all. Repeatedly returning to it means that even if we are not perfectly prepared, we are more prepared than we used to be. Our draft plan helped us in this incident. This incident reminded us that the continued process of emergency planning would help us in the future.

A THANK YOU TO ASA

DYLAN D. BREMNER

I'd like to thank the ASA and its membership for the Education Bursary I received for my second year in the Master's of Archival Studies program at the University of British Columbia. It has been greatly appreciated and has again allowed me to pursue and develop other interests I have had related to the archival profession. In ACA@UBC news, this year's Annual Symposium consists of speakers and events surrounding the theme of "Policy Matters." Being able to participate in these opportunities for professional development means quite a bit to me, so I appreciate the help I have had in attending these events. Although Vancouver has been wonderful these past two years, I am eager to return home and begin my career in Alberta. I hope to see many of you in the years ahead!

Thank you again.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

The City of Wetaskiwin Archives, after learning that their building is up for sale, will have a new governing structure in which they will be under the Wetaskiwin Public Library.

In November, we learned that the Glenbow Archives will be on loan to the University of Calgary Archives for 99 years. This news article on the subject can be found here: <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/u-of-c-creates-western-research-centre-to-make-glenbow-archives-more-accessible>.

The University of Alberta Archives is hiring a new University Archivist which has been a vacant position for some time.

ASA has a new full institutional member, MacEwan University Archives. We are excited about welcoming them to ASA membership!

archives

SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

The Archives Society of Alberta News is published quarterly by the Archives Society of Alberta. Submissions, questions and suggestions should be directed to the Newsletter Editor c/o:

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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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ARCHIVES SOCIETY OF ALBERTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2019 – 2020

Name (Institution or Individual)

Address

City

Province

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Business Phone (_____) _____ - _____

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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

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