PRESIDENT’S COLUMN
SHAMIN MALMAS, PRESIDENT

It has been a bit of a quiet fall with the ASA. After a year of leave and a five month transition Rene is back to full-time work.

In early September we ran our fall workshop in Calgary. The topic “Information Access and Protection of Privacy for Archives” provided an opportunity to discuss the specific provisions of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Alberta Personal Information Protection Act specifically relating to archival practices. We were happy to see so many members interested in this very important topic. As always the ASA welcomes suggestions about future workshop topics.

Archives Week was celebrated across the province from September 29 to October 6 with events taking place in several member institutions. This year’s theme “Alberta and the Great War” is a commemoration of the end of WWI and, of course, included the publication of our annual calendar. We are still in the process of distributing calendars so keep an eye out for yours in the mail.

As many ASA members are aware the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) will be hosting its annual conference in Edmonton from June 7-9, 2018. As a result the ASA has decided to delay hosting out bi-annual conference for a year. This means the next ASA conference will be in the spring of 2019. We hope that we will see many ASA members in Edmonton for the national conference. Stay tuned for information about a special grant and funding opportunities for ASA members to attend the ACA 2018 conference.
I am back working full-time at the ASA as of October. It has been great seeing many ASA members again and catching up on what happened with our community in the last year and a half. I do really miss having the Flood Team around, Amanda and Emily, but hopefully I will adjust to having a quiet office. This fall we have hired a new Administrative Assistant, Soyoung Yun. Jia Jia has left for another job, so good luck and thanks for your work Jia Jia. I have been learning about what has happened both at the office and in the community while I was away and I hope that by the Spring or earlier, I feel caught up.

For this fall’s column, I would like to discuss an advising question regarding insurance that I had, as it may be helpful for others to see the response. I received feedback from the community on what they had done in this situation. Here is my summary.

Archives and Insurance

An institutional member asked me about content’s insurance and how to place a value on their holdings. Insurance to cover the costs of equipment (like computers, scanners, printers, etc.), furniture and other facility needs is an area that this institutional member did not have difficulty in assessing. But difficulties arose when assessing the value of archival holdings for the purposes of insurance. I asked the community via the asa-l list-serv about their insurance plans for archives and here is a summary of the responses that ASA received.

Monetary Value of Archival Holdings

In my visits to archives, I find that very few archival institutions conduct a monetary appraisal of the whole of their collection. Some institutions do NAAB appraisals annually and some have never done any monetary assessment. From the list-serv responses, one
institutional member worked on evaluating the worth of the entirety of their holdings based on formulas and estimations. Another institution only added up the value of the archives that were monetarily assessed for the past 20 years and did not look at the whole holdings. There was another institution that had evaluated their archival records to the equivalent price of blank paper; for example, they valued a banker’s box of archives based upon the cost of a banker’s box size of blank paper.

Problems with a Monetary Appraisal for Insurance Purposes

Nearly everyone who responded noted that insuring based upon the monetary value of archives in the holdings is problematic since archives are irreplaceable. Additionally, the premiums for the full value of the holdings can be so high that the premiums are impossible to pay. So, institutions asked other questions.

What will the insurance cover?

A couple of institutions brought up the idea of acquiring insurance to replace their holdings by purchasing similar collections. There was generally a negative response to the idea of purchasing new holdings of a similar nature. One institution mentioned getting insurance for the costs of copying holdings in the event that other copies were found. Most respondents mentioned insuring for the purposes of salvage in the case of a disaster. They had calculated a price for needs such as freeze drying records, establishing a makeshift conservation lab, hiring staff to perform salvage work, etc.

Conclusions

There was a general consensus that potential salvage costs in the case of disaster was the best thing to insure, but the formula for that value varied depending upon individual institutions. There is not an easy way to determine the amount it would cost to conduct salvage work and the amount of money required would depend on the type of disaster that occurred, the percentage of the holdings that were effected as well as the size of the holdings. If your institution is working on a disaster plan and/or exploring insurance options, you may wish to research the costs of an offsite conservation lab, freezers, supplies and hiring conservation specialists. Please note as well, that the ASA’s Lead Team had posted a blog on the issue of insurance for holdings which may be useful: https://archivesalberta.wordpress.com/2016/07/25/cover-all-the-bases-collections-insurance/.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Soyoung Yun

I am very happy to be working with the archival community in the province. I do not have an archival background but I am excited to be involved in this new working environment as an administrative assistant for the ASA. I look forward to working with you to learn more about archives and to further the interests of the Society.
ENGAGE, EDUCATE & ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION

SHEILA WILLIS

NEWLY LAUNCHED HISTORY CHECK MOBILE APP SHARES ALBERTA HISTORY & RESOURCES

The History Check app started, in part, through my curiosity about the historical events in my local region. Athabasca Archives is the closest to my hometown and it was here that I cut my teeth in historical research. Marilyn Mol, the archivist at the time, and I had conversed multiple times on the phone and by email, so entering the archives for the first time was more like meeting an old friend.

I knew though, through online searches, that there was information I wanted at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and I made plans to go on my great adventure.

For me going to the Provincial Archives was akin to walking hallowed ground and touching the Holy Grail. I don’t know if it was movies like the Da Vinci Code and Raiders of the Lost Ark, but somewhere along the line I got the impression that only certain people were allowed in to peruse the old documents and other files.

Needless to say, I figured it out that they are open to the public, but the person I had with me at the time, kept asking if we were allowed to do ‘this’. I assured him that they had hours open to the public, so I was sure we could. He was sneaking around looking as though we were going to steal the crown jewels as the very helpful staff gave me directions on how to find and request information.

Since that day, I have had numerous people come to me for various questions about their personal history and how to find information. I often tell them to go look in archives to see if they can find information about their specific subject.

It is amazing how many times I am asked if “anyone” can go in, but then again I once asked the very same question. This leads me to the History Check mobile app and how it can be used as a tool to engage, educate and encourage exploration of archives.

If you want to attract not only the experienced researcher, but also those who are searching for more personal information and may have never considered exploring the archives, content is key.

When adding your site to History Check, don’t be shy on the content of your description. In addition to your hours or contact information add those holdings that are regional or hard to find such as:

“While you are here, read what made headlines from 1900 to 1946 in our extensive collection of the regional newspaper, the XYZ Gazette. This collection can also be found online at [insert link].”

An important feature of History Check is its search capabilities. App users can search by keywords. This search appears in a list format and at the touch of a button converts to a map. Choosing an icon or a listing takes them to the Point of Interest.

Utilize those keywords to bring attention to your archives. Standard words may include homestead records, historical photos, maps, etc. Using these keywords can bring attention to your regularly scheduled events and fundraisers. Add them to your description and, if possible, supply links.
ENGAGE, EDUCATE & ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION (CONT.)

This past summer a couple came to my area from California, retracing the steps of his grandfather. The information they had about his journey included a write up from previous local newspaper. It took several calls and a network to find where copies of that newspaper were held while it could have easily been searched on History Check. While there is not space to list your entire collection, ask what parts of your holdings are regional or rare?

It’s pretty easy to get listed on History Check and all heritage organizations get the full package at no charge. This is one way we support the heritage community overall. We ask that in return you create awareness by adding the History Check download links to your website, or social media pages and offer printed materials to your visitors.

We place sites by GPS coordinates and they can be adjusted to put people in your parking lot or at your front door. This allows users to find you through both the “Near Me” location features and through the Community Category Menu.

To get started, email us up to 3 images in JPEG format, your logo, links to your website or social media pages, and the description of your services.

We will take this information and create your site location or “Point of Interest” and add you to our community pages on www.fhnas.ca the website for our organization, Friends of Historical Northern Alberta Society.

Don’t worry about getting it perfect. We will help you and ask for any missing information. Once we edit or add a Point of Interest those changes immediately upload to History Check. We are also looking for historical sites and stories of your local region.

For now we are focused on northern Alberta but will be going province wide in the future. We also have an Affiliate Marketing Program, and planned upgrades to the app in future versions. Feel free to contact me at any time with questions or comments or to submit information for your listing. Sheila Willis 780-805-1390 or sheila.willis@fhnas.ca
International conferences are special in a way that they bring together a very diverse group of professionals who work in the same field, but often under extremely different circumstances and, at the same time, strive to achieve similar goals. They frequently serve as a source of inspiration, new ideas and perspectives, and as excellent networking opportunities. That was the case with the 2017 conference of the International Council on Archives Section on University and Research Institution Archives (ICA-SUV) entitled “Cultural Heritage Materials: University, Research and Folklore Archives in the 21st Century”, which I had a chance to attend and present at in August.

ICA-SUV is a group that aims to promote communication and cooperation between archives and archivists in universities, colleges, academies of science and letters, learned societies, and research institutions in all countries. It was established in 1992 in Montreal, and is one of the 12 sections of the International Council on Archives. The group is rather diverse with members coming from many different countries, and is very active: it holds annual conferences, develops guidelines, publishes a newsletter, maintains a blog, and runs “Who’s Who in Archives Globally” project.

I have served on the board of the ICA-SUV for over a year now. One of my first activities after joining the board was participating in the work of the conference scientific committee. I was thrilled given the
proposed theme of the conference - cultural heritage materials in archives - and my five-year experience managing such materials working in a folklore archives. The choice of location for the conference worked very well together with its theme: it took place in Riga, Latvia, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The meeting venue - the so-called Castle of Light building housing the National Library of Latvia, as well as the Archives of Latvian Folklore, was also very fitting. The conference brought together archivists, folklorists, researchers from all over the world, including Australia, Canada, Finland, Indonesia, Italy, Latvia and Turkey, to name a few.

Presenters discussed issues of identity, ethics, authenticity in archives, community engagement, digital archiving, archival description, digital curation, and a variety of other contexts: from Indigenous communities in Australia to Ugandan refugees in Canada. Papers challenged attendees to question some archival principles and to rethink how archivists approach their cultural heritage mandates. A couple of panels focused specifically on the new conceptual model for archival description developed by ICA - RiC, or Records in Context. Chris Hurley, a well known Australian archivist who introduced the concept of multiple provenance in archival theory, moderated the RiC panel and provided some insights and his own perspective on the way the development of RiC was approached, the historical background of the ISAD(G) and other ICA standards, as he was a part of the drafting Commission back in 1993.

Aside from the engaging discussion of theoretical and practical issues of archival work related to cultural heritage and folklore materials, the conference served a very important function. It gathered archivists who meet rarely, if at all, into one space including folklorists who manage traditional knowledge, folklore and cultural heritage materials, as well as archivists who are professionally trained. This oversimplified distinction is needed, as folklore archives have special needs in that, they are research archives actively collecting materials, and managed more often than not by folklorists or ethnographers and not by information professionals. Although folklore archives historically developed somewhat parallel to rather than intersecting with the professional archival world, they have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience dealing with massive audiovisual collections, they excelled in community engagement, and learned numerous lessons describing and providing access to digital collections with a high degree of detail. The conference started this conversation and there is strong hope it will continue, and result in collaborative projects, greater inclusiveness, better archival service, and a stronger profession. After all, our similarities make us strong but our differences make us stronger.
This year the ASA celebrated Archives Week September 29 to October 6. We would like to thank those institutions that participated in the week and we really hope to see more of you participate in the event next year. Archives Week is so important as we hope that through our outreach efforts we can establish the importance of the work we do with both politicians and the general public. This year’s theme was Alberta and the Great War, which commemorated the end of WWI.
ARCHIVES WEEK 2017 SPOTLIGHT: MUSÉE HÉRITAGE MUSEUM
VINO VIPULANATHARAJAH, ARCHIVIST, MUSÉE HÉRITAGE MUSEUM

The Musée Héritage Museum Archives celebrates Archives Week every year to celebrate and bring awareness to our documentary heritage. For this year’s celebrations, we had a special exhibit of First World War related archival items, including photographs, maps, reports, plaques, and certificates. We also incorporated panels from a previous exhibit created by the museum about St. Albert’s involvement during the Great War.

In addition to this exhibit, the archives department decided to do something new this year by putting out Archives Challenges. These activities asked visitors to test their interpretive skills and their knowledge of St. Albert by looking at photographs, negatives, slides, and aerials. We found these activities to be fun for visitors and managed to even stump some veteran museum colleagues!

WE ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO THIS CELEBRATION WEEK AND CAN’T WAIT TO SEE WHAT NEXT YEAR’S THEME WILL BE!
**REMEMBER: THE ASA LOAN PROGRAM**

The ASA would like to remind all Institutional Members about our loan program. We have a number of books related to disaster planning as well as equipment that might be useful for you to borrow. Please take a look at our Loan Program Guidebook for more information on the items that are available for use. For the purpose of this reminder, I will highlight a couple of items:

**Corner Rounder:** This tool is useful if you are encapsulating archival documents or making map folders. Rounded corners do not just make your folders more aesthetically appealing, it also makes it safer to handle your archives.

**Scanner:** Have you been wanting to digitize photographs but you are missing equipment? The scanner is great for digitizing images. There are trays for negatives as well.

**Elsec 765:** These tools are so useful for measuring LUX and ensuring that your exhibit or storage area has the correct lighting for your needs.

For more information on the loan program, please contact the ASA at reneg@archivesalberta.org. Additionally, please see our website for more information on the loan program: [http://archivesalberta.org/programs-and-services/loan-program/](http://archivesalberta.org/programs-and-services/loan-program/).

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**PEOPLE AND PLACES**

This fall we have some retirement announcements, and many of these announcements are overdue. We have had to see some long-standing members leave the community which is sad for us, but a positive transition for them! The list includes Lorraine Mychajlunow from the College and Association of Registered Nurses Archives, Susan Kooymen from the Glenbow, Jane Parkinson from the Banff Centre and Jane Bowe McCarthy from the United Church Archives. Enjoy your retirement! Additionally, Jennifer Rutkair has left the ASA Board as well as the Whyte Museum she is pursuing a PhD. Congratulations to Jennifer.
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: Archives Society of Alberta Suite 407, 10408-124 Street Edmonton, AB T5N 1R5

Editor contact information: Telephone: (780) 424-2697 Fax: (780) 425-1679 Email: reneal@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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**ARCHIVES SOCIETY OF ALBERTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2018 – 2019**

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**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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