



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

ANDREW CHERNEVYCH, PRESIDENT

2019 was a year of uncertainty but as the dust settles the organization is coming to terms with the new fiscal realities. A considerable effort was directed towards finding ways to save resources and make the operations more efficient.

The November and January board meetings were conducted by teleconferencing, which allowed to save some money on travel cost alone. The teleconference format is likely to be continued into the future for at least some board meetings.

By the time this issue is published, the ASA would have hopefully moved into its new office at the Prince of Wales Armouries and Heritage Centre. The new office arrangement required some immediate investments, but it will save the organization money in the long run. The ASA grateful to the City of Edmonton for making all the necessary accommodations.

I am excited to share the news that this year's Annual General Meeting will take place in Calgary. The AGM will incorporate an institutional forum and install the 2020-21 leadership team - we are holding election for President, Treasurer and Individual Member-at-Large. The AGM will provide a wonderful educational and networking opportunity in Calgary' downtown setting. Hope to see you all in Calgary!

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PROCEDURES AT ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS

RENE GEORGOPALIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ARCHIVES ADVISOR

The Archives Society of Alberta [bylaw 1.1.3](#) outlines the minimum elements needed to operate an archives according to best practice. In this column, I am discussing one requirement for full institutional membership that is stated in our bylaw:



“operating procedures consistent with generally recognized archival practices” as it is an area that could use improvement for some of our institutional members.

What is procedure?

Procedure is a similar type of a document as a manual or guideline, and it provides the roadmap for day-to-day operations at an archival institution. It is different from a policy as policy sets direction at an organization whereas procedures lay out the work at an organization, step by step. Procedures detail how policies are implemented at the operational level. Some archival institutions combine their policies and procedures and other institutions develop them as separate documents. Policies need to be approved by the parent body of an organization whereas procedures do not have that requirement.

Why have procedures?

Procedures are important as they act as a guide for everyone working in the archives. They can be used to train new staff, contractors, interns, etc. They are very useful for succession planning as it allows future archivists at your institution to understand how things were done and enables new staff to continue using the same system for work.

Having procedures can improve the quality of work and even make work at the archives more efficient. For example, when I worked at an archives, they did not have procedures for digitizing materials. Anything that was digitized was scanned at the quality for the purpose it was needed. For instance, something might be scanned at web quality but later it was needed at print quality. The lack of procedures for digitizing created unnecessary work at the archives and I was handling

PROCEDURES AT ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS (CONT.)

original materials more than necessary. Once digitizing procedures were in place, the material only needed to be scanned once as the procedure helped with workflow and digitizing specifications.

Procedures also allow staff to evaluate tasks and propose improvements on its operations.

What should be included in archival procedures?

For institutional membership, we require that your procedures mention somewhere that you are adhering to a descriptive standard such as RAD. Having a procedure for processing materials is useful and should include information on what standard is being used. The second requirement for full institutional membership is that best practices are followed for conservation and preservation. At minimum, we require that an archives follows CCA's [Basic Conservation of Archival Materials, a guide](#). Your procedures could mention that the archives follows these guidelines, at a minimum.

Although not all of these elements are required for ASA membership, your procedures could cover:

- A procedure on processing archives which includes the processes of acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, description and finding aid creation; these procedures could include directions on how to use your database, references to acquisition forms, appraisal report forms, etc. Lay out the steps taken at your organization from the donation or transfer of records to the description of the records.
- Conservation and preservation procedure. Explain how your organization cares and handles for archival materials. Please see chapter 4 of CCA's [Basic Conservation of Archival Materials](#).
- Reference procedure. This procedure could include information on how reference is carried out at the archives, how privacy requests are managed, references to reading room rules, sign-in sheets, etc.
- Digitization procedures
- Digital preservation procedures
- Emergency and Disaster preparedness

The development of procedures is unique to each organization. If you would like to see examples of procedures, ASA can provide some. Our advisory services are available to you if you require feedback for draft procedures or would like to ensure your procedures meet ASA's requirements for institutional membership. Procedures are so helpful for having your archives run smoothly.

A REVIEW OF ASA'S CAAIS WORKSHOP

MELISSA MCCARTHY, CITY OF EDMONTON ARCHIVES

The City of Edmonton Archives was pleased to host ASA's full-day Canadian Archival Accession Information Standard (CAAIS) Workshop on November 22, 2019. Led by Raymond Frogner, Chair of CCA's National Archival Accession Standard Working Group, the workshop marked the first time this new standard was presented.

CAAIS was created - and continues to evolve - to meet the need for a unified Canadian standard for handling and processing accessions. Currently there is little consistency across the country in how accessions are dealt with, particularly accessions of digital material. The standard was created with digital material in mind, but is also perfectly suited for dealing with non-digital accessions. The Working Group hopes to see CAAIS incorporated into AtoM and BagIt, making it much easier to incorporate into archival workflow. Like AtoM, CAAIS is based on the [ICA standards](#) but, also like AtoM, is equally easily used with RAD.

Implementing CAAIS is more straightforward than it may appear, because very few of the fields are mandatory. Several fields require controlled vocabularies; for each of these, the standard includes suggested lists which can easily be borrowed or adapted to reflect your institution's practice. The standard also allows institutions to decide for themselves whether appraisal is done before or after accessioning. In other words, CAAIS is not a one-size-fits-all model workflow. It also accommodates updates to existing accession records and an easy transition into writing the description of the records as they are processed.

On the whole, CAAIS is a very welcome addition to the Canadian archival standards landscape. As the City of Edmonton Archives works toward implementing CAAIS, we hope to have further updates to provide to ASA members, and hopefully a conference session as well. We're eager to use CAAIS to streamline our accession process, ensure that we're capturing all the information we need, and get ready for the appearance of CAAIS in AtoM.

A note of caution: At the time of writing, searching for "caais archives" (because searching for "caais" alone gets auto-corrected to "Calais," which reminds me to plan my vacation) provides a PDF of the Draft Consultation version - make sure you are downloading [the Final version!](#) The current version will always be available on [CCA's website](#).

ASA'S MOVING NEWS!

The ASA will be moving into the Prince of Wales Armouries Heritage Centre on May 1. We will give our member the new address closer to the date. We are very excited about the move as our rent is less expensive and we will have more space making it easier for staff. Please note that we will be without a physical office for the month of April but there should be no apparent interruption in ASA's services during that time.

ASA'S NEW MEMBERSHIP DATABASE

ASA is excited to finally have an online payment system for memberships and events like workshops and conferences. We are hoping that members are happy with the new system and find renewals more convenient. Members will now be able to log into their profile and see any receipts and invoices that the ASA has issued.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Elizabeth Walker has a new position at Yukon Archives. We will miss having Elizabeth in Alberta, but congratulations on the new job!

The new head of the City of Calgary Archives, the City Archives Coordinator is Susanne Clark. Congratulations on your new position, Susanne!

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 2020 – 2021

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..... \$60.00
- Students, Volunteers, Seniors \$30.00
- Associate Institutional Member \$90.00
- 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) _____

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Suite 407, 10408-124 Street
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