

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: ON RESILIENCE

PHILIP PYPE



The Archives Society of Alberta is a very resilient organization. One of the reasons why we have achieved sustainability is that we have a solid foundation of policies.

The ASA has spent much of the last two years focussed on governance. An organization's practices should be reviewed regularly to ensure it retains focus on its core purpose and practices while responding to the needs of its members. At almost every board meeting, there is at least one policy (often with an updated drafting) being discussed. This has not been a response to urgent issues, but a thoughtful approach to ensure good board practices. Clearly stated policies help both the current and future boards operate consistently, efficiently, and effectively.

The ASA's board membership changes regularly as we have fixed terms, helping the ASA stay vibrant. Having these documents readily available allows a new, or mostly new, group of board members to ensure that the board is being accountable and acting on the standards previously put forth. Even when people have not rotated out of the board, there is comfort in knowing there is an accessible folder holding these vital records. The fewer resources we expend on determining what we agreed to previously, the more we can spend on more 'exciting' work like supporting the development of Indigenous archives, building a strong on-line presence, and other amazing activities the ASA pursues. When the board faces a challenge, a policy often contains the answer. The board can be confident that, when following policy, we are adhering to legislation such as the Societies Act, are meeting our financial obligations, and are accomplishing objectives of the ASA.

Due to the great work done by the board and the secretariat, the ASA stands on a very solid foundation. The work is never final; ASA policies have built-in scheduled reviews so future boards are required to revisit them. They are also not restrictive as the ASA may assess policies as the environment shifts. Kathryn Ivany, our Vice President has led these efforts, drafting and presenting updated policies. All of the board has brought insight from a wealth of professional and board experience to the table. I have learned a lot from this process, and as the ASA elects new representation in May, I am confident that, because of our policies and other institutional documents, the ASA will remain strong and continue to be an innovative organization.

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Financial Coordinator
Sonia Phillips

Database Administrator
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Conference Coordinator
Ericka Chemko



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ARCHIVES ADVISOR'S COLUMN

RENE GEORGOPALIS



Advocacy and archives is a topic that has been on my mind a lot these days. Our sector has been impacted over the last many years with tightening budgets at all levels of government. The erosion of funding for archives is exhausting.

As I have travelled to many archives in our province, some of our members have shared their pain points with me, and I carry their stories and their challenges. I spend a lot of my mental energy trying to figure out ways to support those members. And, sometimes, positive outcomes to these problems unfold before me - like in 2014, when I visited Pincher Creek and they really needed archival boxes. They had materials sitting on the shelves with no enclosures. Shortly after, we received funds to support members with emergency preparedness and voila, the boxes appeared for Pincher Creek!

At present, there are a number of sites that haven't had luck. Some of our sites have experienced a reduction of staff or staff hours due to a reduction of funds. And the grants we used to have, both federal and provincial, to boost those hours are gone. Despite our exhaustion and the fact that many of us may feel overstretched because of a loss of staff time, it is more important than ever to engage in both outreach and advocacy work.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/ARCHIVES ADVISOR'S COLUMN *con't*

RENE GEORGOPALIS

The general public does not understand who we are and how integral we are as our work is in the background. We know that our work can be powerful - it can reunite people with lost roots, identity and culture, it can be a game-changer for someone going through a legal process, and it can give people some light during dark times. Recently, I have had conversations with archival users who have shared their heartfelt stories with me, and I do not even work a reference desk any longer. One archival user shared that during a time when their community was rejecting them because of their sexual orientation, that their time in a reading room brought meaning and strength into their world. Another, shared with me that doing archival research gave them an escape from the drudgery of looking for work while unemployed and struggling. Repeatedly, in advising Indigenous communities, I have been told about how archival programs in communities are empowering as archives allow culture, that was stripped away during colonization, to be returned home. We all have these stories and need to look at a way to let the general public, and especially our funders, know about our impact.

ASA's Advocacy and Outreach committee has developed some key messaging to help us translate what we do to our stakeholders. We have exciting plans for bringing our funders to our sites for Archives Week in June. Collectively, we can spread awareness and from there show our funders our value. But ASA cannot do this work alone - we need to lean on all of us, our archival community, to be effective. From this work, we will restore our grants, both federal and provincial, and build up our capacity so we can continue to do the important work that we do.



ASA BURSARY RECIPIENT

LOLA OBERHAGGEMAN



The Archives Society of Alberta Bursary allowed me to obtain my Master of Information Studies (MIST) degree at McGill University. Moving to Montreal was a big change from my hometown of Edmonton, however, the bursary helped lighten the load through decreasing my tuition costs. It is through that help that I was able to learn key archival principles and practices within my MIST degree, such as the principles of provenance and original order, and practices including digitizing a record from the Marvin Duchow Music Library. I was also given the opportunity to participate in the Practicum, where I gained experience applying what I learned in my studies as a Processing Archivist at the Jewish Public Library Archive, in which I oversaw the processing, organizing, including implementing preservation practices and rehousing material, and writing archival descriptions in AtoM of a multi-media fonds. My studies at McGill also granted me the opportunity to present in archival conferences my research on digitizing textiles in the archive, such as at the ACA/AMIA Symposium in March 2026, and the upcoming Archives Association of Ontario Spring Symposium in May. None of these experiences would have been possible without the ASA Bursary financially supporting my studies. I encourage anyone who is eligible to apply.

ASA BURSARY

Individual members of the ASA are eligible to apply for a bursary to support graduate education opportunities. The purpose of this bursary is to provide an incentive for promising Alberta students or professionals to obtain graduate education in archival studies by assisting with the cost of tuition, books, and other related expenses. \$1500.00 is available per membership year. This sum may be divided if more than one application is approved. The deadline for applications is July 31st, 2026.

For more information on eligibility and how to apply, please visit:
<https://archivesalberta.org/professional-development/bursary/>

UPCOMING CONFERENCE: ARCHIVAL SILENCE

CANMORE, AB. MAY 21-23, 2026

We look forward to seeing our members at our upcoming conference in Canmore, Alberta from **May 21-23, 2026**. This year's theme *Archival Silence* context context context. We are delighted to welcome **June Chow 周慕慈**, Archivist, Richard Charles Lee Chinese Canadian Archives Special Collections, University of Toronto Libraries as our Keynote Speaker.

As archival users sift through records held at our worksites, they may discover that the information they need is missing. In these situations of providing reference, we may feel like we have failed our users. We try to refer the users to other archives hoping another archival institution may have the information. These moments may make us remember the appraisal theories of Helen Samuels or Hans Booms and question whether or not the holdings at our institutions appropriately represent the society our archives are mandated to serve. Then, we may feel overwhelmed by not having the time to address the fact that information which should be in the holdings is not there.

For our 2026 conference, we will address the topic of missing information in the archives. We wish to explore the reasons why records are missing - poor appraisal decisions, the demographics of our profession, lackluster budgets, colonial policies, and genocide impact the records we hold, or do not hold. We will also share how we tackle these obstacles to better serve and represent our archival stakeholders.

Information on registration, accommodations and program details can be found by visiting:

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

Professional Development Support to attend the conference is available. The ASA offers a **Conference Travel Grant** to its individual members:

<https://archivesalberta.org/professional-development/asa-conference-travel-grant/>

Those participants attending from Edmonton and region may be eligible to receive a support from the **Edmonton Heritage Council**. For more information, visit:

<https://edmontonheritage.ca/grants/hcip#career-development-grant>



June Chow 周慕慈 is a settler born in Canada of immigrant parents, and was raised and educated in Vancouver. She holds a Master of Archival Studies degree from the School of Information at The University of British Columbia. She is an archivist, archival scholar, and award-winning heritage worker practicing across Chinese Canadian communities and specializing in the histories and contemporary challenges of Chinatown neighbourhoods.

LEGISLATURE DAY EVENT

RENE GEORGOPALIS



On March 23, ASA participated in the first Legislature Day for heritage. The event was organized by the Alberta Museums Association (AMA) with the support of provincial heritage organizations. The aim of the event was to showcase Alberta's unique heritage and the professionals that make the sector vibrant. ASA was one of the provincial heritage organizations featured during the day. Executive Director/Archives Advisor, Rene Georgopolis and Board President, Philip Pye attended the day-long event.



The first part of the day was held in the rotunda of the legislature and it provided an opportunity for our organizations to connect with MLA's. 9 MLAs visited the booths set-up in the rotunda. In the evening we attended the reception in the Queen Elizabeth II building. 164 people, including 16 MLAs and 4 City Councillors were in attendance. The event accomplished creating new connections, and strengthening pre-existing relationships with the goal of championing archives as an important part of the heritage fabric in Alberta.

We were delighted to meet and speak with several MLA's about the importance of archives. ASA had the chance to chat with the Minister of Arts, Culture, and the Status of Women, Hon. Tanya Fir about the importance of archives in Alberta.



The ASA was received positively, and with enthusiasm for what we do to support archives of all stripes across the province. Thank you to the AMA for inviting us to participate!

From top: Rene and Philip at ASA's table during the Information Session / Rene and the Alberta Museums Association's Executive Director, Jennifer Forsyth with Hon. Tanya Fir, Minister of Arts, Culture, and the Status of Women / Philip chats with guests at the reception. Photo credit: Adam Goudreau Photography

FEATURED ARCHIVE: SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES

LUKE HARASEN

1) What is your position, and how long have you been working at the archive?

I am the SPRA's archivist and have been in this position since September, 2025. I graduated from the University of Toronto's Master of Information program in the Summer of 2025 and moved to Grande Prairie for the position shortly after. So far I have been enjoying my time with the SPRA immensely and look forward to meeting other ASA members at the upcoming conference in May.

3) What types of records does your organization acquire?

Our archives are dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of the South Peace River region and its people; in the interest of fulfilling our mandate, we accept records from all sorts of local municipalities, organizations, and individuals in an attempt to provide a representative sample of our region's documentary history. We have textual, graphic, and audio-visual records in various formats, as well as a gradually growing born-digital collection, but one of the more unusual donations we have received included a large collection of dried plant specimens collected for a research project at the Beaverlodge Research Farm.

4) What is the physical extent of your site's holdings?

The physical extent of the South Peace Regional Archives is approximately 280 linear meters of archival records.

5) What do you think is the biggest challenge at your archives currently?

I feel that the two biggest issues that we find ourselves up against feel so pressing because both of them have a direct impact on how we are able to provide reference service to our community. The first is the ubiquitous processing backlog. As common as it is, it can still be hard knowing that the resources researchers are looking for could be just out of reach and awaiting processing. Making progress on the backlog has been one of our top priorities, but at times it can feel like a herculean feat to even keep pace with new donations.

Second, it has been difficult to reckon with the fact that our holdings continue to have significant gaps in their representation of many of the people in our community. For example, when someone contacted us asking if there was anything we could provide them with for a Black History Month project, it was incredibly demoralizing to realize that we had so few records that would be relevant. Whereas dealing with the backlog is ultimately a matter of time and resources, filling these gaps in our archives is a more challenging problem to solve. We are currently making plans to get out into the community to raise awareness about what we do in order to build connections and begin addressing these archival gaps.



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6) Which project at your site do you feel most proud of?

One way that I have been trying to tackle the backlog over the last few months has been by processing the Paul Pivert fonds. As a local photographer and business owner, Paul Pivert's records include tens of thousands of photos along with textual records and motion picture film reels. What has made this collection particularly troublesome has been its processing history. Because it was so massive and complex, none of our previous archivists were able to complete the processing on it during their tenure. As a result, the Paul Pivert fonds has been left partially processed for well over a decade, passing between different archivists, each of whom left the marks of their ideas and approach to processing it. Having worked through a number of setbacks along the way, I feel very proud to see that the Paul Pivert fonds is finally in a state where it is ready for researchers to make use of, especially considering that the fonds constitute such a rich visual record of our region.

7) What is your favorite item in the holdings?

An item that often comes to mind is this 110 film negative I found while processing the Paul Pivert fonds. With nothing like it anywhere else in the fonds, I was more than a little surprised when I spotted someone dressed as a thirteenth-century knight with a horse to match at a 1983 fair near Grande Prairie. The image is not terribly sharp given the small film format and it would have been very easy to miss, as no photos were printed from these negatives. With that in mind, I find it amusing that this item somehow managed to catch my eye out of tens of thousands of other images in the fonds. It just goes to show that you never know what you might come across while working in archives.

Find out more about the South Peace Regional Archive by visiting their website:

www.southpeacearchives.org

Or, follow SPRA on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#)

MEMBER REPORT: DIGITAL ARCHIVES WORKSHOP

JON WILD, MA/MLIS STUDENT, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

On February 6 and 9, 2026, the ASA hosted two sessions of a Digital Archives Program Workshop in collaboration with Dylan Bremner, Digital Archivist for the City of Edmonton Archives. Participants were introduced to the basics of appraisal, digitization, and migration for three common carriers: audio cassettes, optical discs, and VHS. Additionally, we gained knowledge about the foundations and principles of establishing a digital archives program for both digitized and born-digital records, with an emphasis on practical considerations like software and hardware, storage, technical knowledge, and costs. It was particularly helpful to leave the workshop with a workshop manual, which details FAQs, basic processes, and further resources to consult. This workshop was an informative and timely opportunity for archival students and workers to familiarize themselves with different carriers, digital archives, and preservation, at a time when physical media is making a comeback. As federal and provincial funding cuts to archives continue to deepen, the need for creative cross-institutional collaboration will likewise become more important for preserving and storing digital records of all sorts.



For more information on upcoming ASA workshops please visit:

<https://archivesalberta.org/professional-development/workshops/>

COMMUNITY MESSAGE BOARD

CALLS, AWARDS, JOB POSTINGS, OPPORTUNITIES

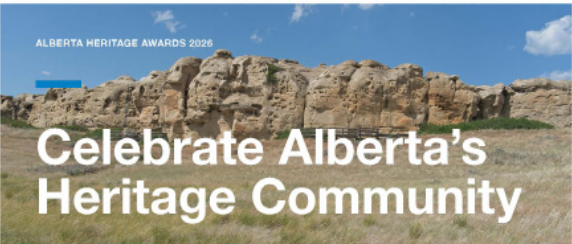
Nominations are now open for the 2026 Alberta Heritage Awards

Do you know an individual or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to preserving and celebrating Alberta's heritage?

Consider submitting a nomination in one of the three award categories or share the call for nominations with your members through your newsletters, website or social media channels. Your support will help ensure strong participation.

Guidelines and nomination form can be found here: <https://www.Alberta.Ca/heritage-awards>

The deadline for submitting nominations is June 1.



ALBERTA HERITAGE AWARDS 2026

Celebrate Alberta's Heritage Community

Nominate an individual or organization for an Alberta Heritage Award.


Let us celebrate and recognize Albertans' efforts in protecting, preserving and promoting our heritage.

<p>Heritage Conservation Award</p> <p>Recognizes projects that demonstrate excellence in the conservation of Provincial Historic Resources, Municipal Historic Resources and Indigenous Historic Places; identification, protection and management of historic places; or the protection and management of paleontological and archaeological resources. Projects must have been completed within the last three years.</p>	<p>Outstanding Achievement Award</p> <p>Recognizes an individual or organization's exemplary long-term leadership and contribution to the preservation and presentation of Alberta's history. Individuals should have a minimum of 10 years involvement with heritage in the province and have made personal contributions to the field well beyond the responsibilities of any heritage-related employment. Organizations should have a minimum of 10 years involvement with heritage in the province.</p>
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Heritage Awareness Award

Recognizes research, publications or public engagement projects that have deepened our understanding and promoted greater awareness of Alberta's heritage. Projects must have been completed within the last three years.

Nomination period is from March 1 to June 1, 2026.
An awards ceremony will be held in September.
Download guidelines and nomination form: alberta.ca/heritage-awards



PEOPLE AND PLACES

The ASA would like to welcome Amy Leigh (she/her) to the team in the role of Administrative Assistant.

Amy brings over 10 years of experience working with various Arts and Culture non-profits and Artist-run centres in Edmonton. With a background primarily in fund development, she thrives on community and capacity building. She holds a BFA from the University of Alberta, and a Diploma in Arts and Cultural Management from MacEwan University. Outside of work, she maintains an active art practice, working in printmaking, sculptural papermaking and textile-based research-creation.

Amy is looking forward to meeting our members at the upcoming conference and AGM in Canmore this May. Be sure to say hello to her at the registration table!



Please send calls, job postings, announcements of retirements, newly-hired staff, or any other personnel changes to admin@archivesalberta.org to have them included the next newsletter.

The Archives Society of Alberta Newsletter is published by the Archives Society of Alberta. Submissions, questions and suggestions should be directed to the Newsletter Editor c/o: Archives Society of Alberta Prince of Wales Armouries and Heritage Centre 216 - 10440 108 Ave NW Edmonton, AB T5H 3Z9

Editor contact information: admin@archivesalberta.org

Individuals and institutions are encouraged to submit articles, reviews, reports, photographs, or letters to the editor to the Archives Society of Alberta Newsletter.

Submissions are preferred in electronic format: as Word files for textual submissions or as JPG files for graphic submissions.

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

ASA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name (Institution or Individual) _____

Address _____

City _____

Province _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Business Phone _____

Fax _____

E-mail address _____

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

Cardholder name (please print) _____

Signature _____

Please make cheque or money order payable to the Archives Society of Alberta and mail to:

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Prince of Wales Armouries and Heritage Centre
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Edmonton, AB
T5H 3Z9