

SCAA-SCOOP

SEPTEMBER 2003

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

President's Message

The summer has just slipped by, and we are beginning to focus on the new Council year ahead. Let me say how pleased I am to be stepping in to fill Tim's shoes (large shoes) as your new President. With the assistance of Mark, Carey, Cheryl, Joe, and Cheryl, I hope to get to know more of you, your institutional needs, and your areas of interest in archives.

We have plans underway for workshops related to the preservation of photographs, and the preservation of optical and magnetic media (modern information carriers). More details on these initiatives will follow.

There are also plans to revise the Grants' Cookbook in time for the new grant writing season. Kathy Szalasznyj is busy arranging conservation assessments for the City of Regina Archives, the University of Regina Archives, and the archives in La Ronge. A reassessment of the holdings at the Saskatchewan Archives will follow later in the year.

So, if you found a few moments to dwell on archives as you sipped some cool lemonade this summer, drop us a line and let us know what you would like to see happen.



AGM barbeque at the Dief Centre. (Greg Burke photo)

We are a council of archives and archivists; your thoughts are always welcome to help us assess and achieve our provincial goals. Small or large, new to the archival scene or a seasoned archivist, we want to hear from you!

Linda Putz

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SCAA EXECUTIVE, 2003-2004

On June 27, the SCAA met for its Annual General Meeting. To start the day, a record number of members from across the province joined board members and staff of the Canadian Council of Archives for a barbeque lunch at the Diefenbaker Centre, overlooking the South Saskatchewan River. In addition to chatting informally about a range of archival issues, attendees were treated by Prof. David Kaplan to a guided tour of the Diefenbaker Centre's exhibit "Making Music: The Collections of David Kaplan (and Friends)".



Contemplating the future of archives, Graham Guest (right)

(Greg Burke Photo)

Following the AGM, a classic Saskatchewan June storm required a change of plans: instead of a tour of the U of S campus, staff of the Diefenbaker Centre led interested members on a behind-the-scenes tour of the Diefenbaker archives, museum and library collections. Truly an inspiring tour.

The new SCAA executive for this term is:

- Linda Putz, Saskatchewan Archives, President
- Mark Vajcner, University of Regina, Vice-President
- Cheryl Brown, Regina Qu'Appelle Health District, Treasurer
- Carey Isaak, City of Regina, Secretary
- Cheryl Avery, University of Saskatchewan

Institutional Member at Large

- Joe LeClair, Saskatchewan Archives
- Individual Member at Large

Education Committee: Joe LeClair (Chair), Kathy Burianyak, Maxine Holm

Other Committees:

There is still room to serve on some of our Committees, particularly, Grants, Nominations and SAIN. Also, there is some interest in establishing an Outreach/Public Awareness Committee—your thoughts on this are needed. Please get in touch with our President, Linda Putz, at 798-4018. Thanks!

BOOK REVIEW RAD Revealed: A Basic Primer on the Rules for Archival Description

WENDY M. DUFF AND MARLENE VAN BALLEGOOIE. Ottawa: Canadian Council of Archives, 2001. 133p.

ISBN 0-929115-29-5.

An invaluable item for your archives shelf is the latest RAD manual available from the Canadian Council of Archives.

It is very easy to read, opening with the foundation of RAD and why description builds on the solid work of accessioning, research and arrangement. Following this is a brisk walk through RAD and its separate parts, which cover RAD's special media chapters, the nine major areas of a RAD description, and such anticipatory data as finding the right RAD rule with a minimum of pain. All of this happens in fifteen straightforward chapters, some as short as three pages. Simple sidebars give corresponding rules as topics progress, there are relevant footnotes at the end of key chapters, with a fifty four-item bibliography to conclude the work. Examples abound, providing the picture that makes a thousand words.

Interested in a copy? Let Outreach know, and we might go for a volume discount deal. Otherwise, the book runs at \$30.

ROUND AND ABOUT...

- **The long-awaited centennial Assyrian Reunion** in North Battleford is happening September 27th, and onward. Descendants of this interesting Presbyterian "Persian" settlement from California and across the American continent will gather, with events to include a church service, the placing of a historic plaque commemorating their settlement, and banquet. It's been a long haul for the **North Battleford City Archives** and many binders full of information collected—and much good business history as well as farm history. Good stuff. Why not drop up to catch the celebration?
- At **Melfort Museum and Archives**, a regular hive of activity returns to its usual good energy, as three students hard at work on various projects, including a business history of each Melfort block, return to classes. Commendations to Francis and staff!
- **Cynthia Ball** who worked as our conservator two years ago, returns to work around the province, beginning with a conservation assessment at La Ronge, while Jane Dalley takes on the University of Regina Archives assessment.
- **Humboldt** participates in the writing of Preservation Management Guidelines specific to its museum/archives needs. A joint project with Melfort, the two archives received a conservation grant to carry out this work.
- Have you visited the "living memory— games" section of www.archives.ca? Identify the top ten defining historical moments in Canadian history and have other fun at the new Library and Archives of Canada website (of the amalgamated National Library and National Archives).

Report of the SAIN COMMITTEE

Vast Array of Virtual Exhibits on the Horizon, and More!

By Cheryl Avery, Chair

(Stats as of 25 August 2003)

SAIN Database:

19 (of 45) institutions are participating;

878 fonds-level records have been added (687 of these are public; 191 are still suppressed from public view)

243 series-level descriptions have been added (223 public; 20 suppressed)

Between April 2002 and July 2003, 303,267 search sessions were initiated on the SAIN database. The SAIN database is updated to Ottawa once a month.

Virtual Exhibits:

Our 4 current exhibits (Main Street, Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Presents: An Exhibition of Theatre and Drama; Saskatchewan in Two World Wars; Saskatchewan and the Visual Arts) have received over 624,363 "hits" or visits (we did not begin gathering these statistics immediately). The Council's 2003-2004 CAIN grant was successful, giving us funding to do several virtual exhibits as well as ensuring we have our photograph database archivist position for another full year.

We have received word of funding for an ambitious year of virtual exhibits. They will require material from as many institutions as possible, so we need your active participation:

- the 1944 CCF election;
- the introduction of Medicare;
- the Saskatchewan Landscape (using images of physical geography, flora, & fauna; together with documents and images showing how this landscape has been romanticized in literature, art and music)
- Doukhobors in Saskatchewan;
- Ukrainians in Saskatchewan;
- illustrations for the Saskatchewan History Quiz (topics will be sent out at a later date).

We took a chance that our grant would eventually be successful and hired Luke Sather over the summer to begin work on some of our projects. He has already completed two exhibits:

- "All Frocked Up," 54 images
- "Saskatchewan Wheat Pool" 395 images

and has begun work on "The Saskatchewan Landscape," currently with 562 images from the Saskatchewan Archives Board and University of Saskatchewan Archives (University of Regina Archives has also begun to look for material). We were extremely fortunate to have Luke available – he is a talented designer and has created some wonderful sites for us. We should also thank the curators for these sites: Neil Richards and Jill McKenzie, who ensured the content was interesting, the text well-written and valuable.

Some of the projects are likely to include fewer institutional participants, although relevant material from any Council member is welcome:

- Early Years of Saskatoon;
- Early Years of Regina;
- ParticipACTION;
- the Flag Debate;
- the Avro Arrow

In addition, the grant provides for educational components (teacher resource pages and citations for further resources) to be added to some exhibits, and a translation fund to ensure at least some of the exhibits are available in both English and French.

Photograph Database:

7 institutions are participating;

21,060 images have been described;

4,156 of these have scanned images available

No data yet on the extent of use for this site, although we have received e-mail from people who have used it and find it a valuable resource. The photograph database is scheduled to be uploaded once a week. As mentioned, the grant provides for the continuation of the photograph database archivist. We anticipate that Cameron will continue to assist with RAD-compliant photograph descriptions, and will begin assisting with scanning described images (that are in the public domain or copyright-cleared). All relevant images from our exhibits will also be included on the database.

There are currently 32 virtual exhibits from the Council and Council members on the SCAA web site.



the bulletin board

Appeal to All SCAA Members—Your Help and Ideas Are Sought!

The 11 remaining Virtual Exhibits that will be developed in this term need your input. Do you have a super photograph or several that might fit aptly under one of these virtual exhibit themes? Call Cheryl Avery at 966-6028.

CAIN: OUR NATIONAL STATISTICS

In three years of funding (2000-2003) the Canadian Archival Information Network has received \$4,700,000 from Heritage Canada. 238 individual grants have gone toward creating 60,000 fonds-level entries, over 208 virtual exhibits and other resources and 363,000 digitized items.



Watch your mailbox for info on ...

**AN SCAA
WORKSHOP ON
HISTORIC
PHOTOGRAPHS
COMING LATER
THIS
FALL**

SPECIAL THANKS

...is accorded the Diefenbaker Canada Centre for their grand hospitality for our AGM

...excellent facility, great staff helping to set up and clean up....digital photos taken by Greg Burke....impromptu tour of archives by archivist, Rob Paul and the Music Exhibit.

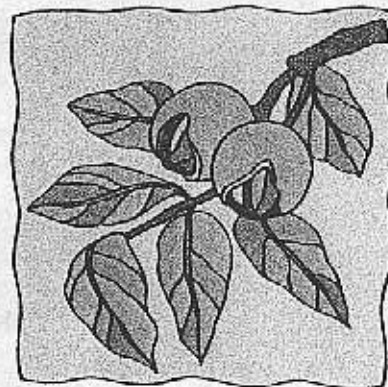
*We could not have asked for
more or better!*

M E R C I

Coming Soon!

**Report on the
Electronic
Records
Symposium
Ottawa,
September
15 -18, 2003**

Meet an archivist ...



*Cheryl Brown -
Returning to Saskatoon Roots*

It's been a long way home for Cheryl Brown, but the new Archivist/Librarian at the Local History Room, Saskatoon Public Library has found her way back to her prairie roots. Born in Quesnel, B.C., and raised in Penticton and Richmond, her studies and career have taken her far and wide. Many years ago, some of her family homesteaded in the Saskatoon area and there are family plots at the Woodlawn Cemetery, too. Working daily with the past of Saskatoon and district in Local History, Cheryl will have opportunity to explore her own prairie dimensions as well as help researchers learn more about our historical environments.

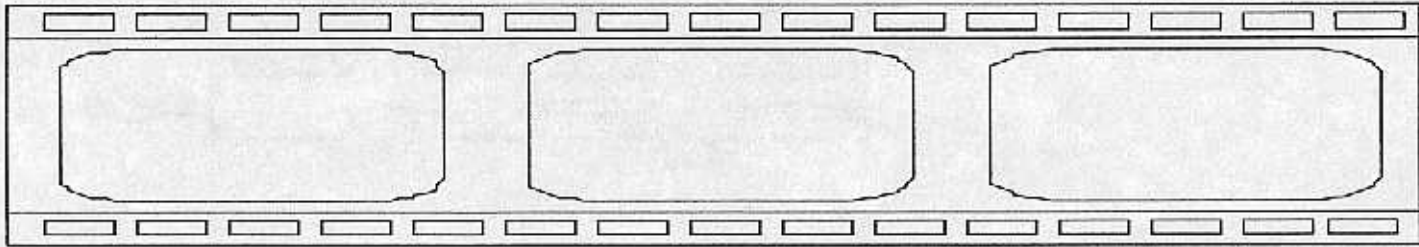
"The best way to learn about local history is to move to the community in question!" she says. There is nothing like an "immersion experience" to bring the facts to light.

A graduate of University of British Columbia, both the Masters of Archival Science and the Library programmes, Cheryl brings the Saskatchewan archival community strong experience in religious and medical archives, having spent several years with the Religious Hospitallers of St Joseph in Kingston followed by work at the Regina Qu'Appelle Health District Archives, as well as work with the City of Vancouver. She chaired RASIS, the religious archives special interest section of the Association of Canadian Archivists, and was co-chair of the Health Archivists' Interest Group (Archivists' Association of Ontario). Now she is treasurer of the SCAA for the current term.

Hobbies? Antiquarian book stores...a collector of books on world religions, modern Chinese history, Agatha Christie and P. G. Wodehouse. Crafts, genealogy and "eating my husband's cooking." Oh, and one more...she loves records management!

We welcome Cheryl's expertise, energy and humour aboard the Saskatchewan ship, *The Good Archives!!*

Drop up and visit her at the Local History Room, Saskatoon Public Library, on the second floor. Please note their special reference hours (e.g. particular evenings as well as days) or visit the LHR on the web at <http://www.publib.saskatoon.ca>



MEDIA HISTORY.....a brief history of videotape

—compliments of the Association of Moving Image Archivists

- **Developed by the Ampex Corporation in 1956, the first practical videotape recorder (VTR) was the two-inch Quadruplex. It was first used to record network television programs so that they could be re-broadcast later across the multiple American time zones.**
- **In 1969 several Japanese companies produced 1/2-inch reel-to-reel videotape recorders which adhered to the EIAJ standard, a standard developed and established by participating manufacturers. These VTRs were the first affordable recorders and they were primarily used by schools and companies as well as a few consumers. In 1971 Sony introduced the first successful cassette VTR, the 3/4-inch U-matic, which replaced the 1/2-inch reel-to-reel format.**
- **The first successful Video Cassette Recorder (VCR) for the home was the 1/2-inch Betamax, introduced in 1975 by Sony. One year later, JVC introduced the VHS format, which eventually emerged as the preferred consumer videotape format over Betamax.**
- **In the professional arena, the one-inch reel-to-reel (Type C) format was introduced in 1978 and soon replaced most Quad machines. In 1987, the D-1 digital videotape recorder was introduced. Its high cost assured that only the "high-end" market, particularly production studios, could afford to use it. By 1995 new digital videotape recorder formats were priced low enough for the general industrial and educational markets.**

**Saskatchewan
Council for
Archives and
Archivists**

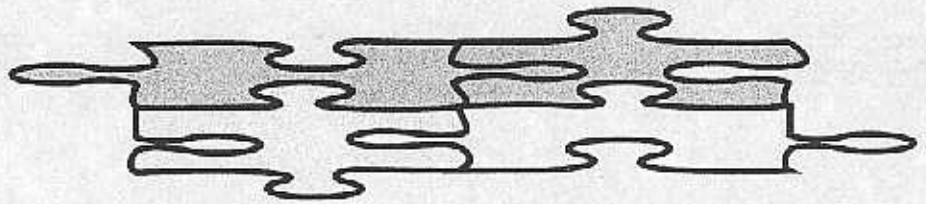
Articles, questions, comments?
Write to:

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We're on the Web

<http://scaa.usask.ca>



Solving Puzzles—Advice from Experts

(Association of Moving Image Archivists...www.amianet.org on video care)

Experts Jim Lindner and Jim Wheeler on—

To Rewind or Not—

What is the point of exercising tapes? If I have to do it, should I play the tapes, fast forward them on my machine, or buy a rewinder?

Wheeler: “Exercising tapes is a good idea provided it is done with good equipment in the correct fashion. If done with poorly adjusted equipment it is quite easy to destroy the tape. One might reasonably ask: “Why exercise tapes in the first places?” The idea behind exercising tapes is to essentially re-tension the pack of tape so that it does not develop uneven tension. It is also thought in some circles that this process allows air to be “sandwiched” in between the layers and allow out-gassing (although I have never seen any REAL research that talks about this)...Tape should be stored in a fully wound or rewound condition.”

Lindner: “If your tapes are stored in a room environment, the recommended practice is to rewind them every year or two. This is very conservative and I have been recommending five to ten years. If you store the tapes at 40 F (like I recommend) they never need rewinding. The purpose of the rewinding is to relieve the stresses in the tape pack and these stresses don't occur at low temperature. In a severe case, tapes are less likely to have pack slippage problems because of the increased layer-to-layer friction. A tape that cinched should not be run at high speed. Play it at normal play speed and leave it on the take-up hub for a few days to relieve the pack stresses. I have heard of bad experiences with tape winders.”

Vinegar Smell in the Vault

I can smell vinegar in my film/tape storage vault. Will that harm the tapes?

Lindner: “Assuming that your staff has not opened a salad bar in the vault, out-gassing or “vinegar syndrome” from old film will probably not hurt the tape but it will not help it either. The concentrations of acid in the air are very dilute and would have to be very strong for a long time to do serious damage. By the time this occurs, your film will be a solid hockey puck and you won't find a machine to play the tape anyhow.”

Wheeler: “The vinegar is acetic acid and will eventually attack everything in the vault I suggest placing the tapes in another room. The vinegar degradation of film and the hydrolysis degradation of tape are both slowed by low temperature and low humidity.”