

# Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists



## **2018 Archives Week** *Action Guide*

Continuing the excellent tradition, the SCAA and communities across Saskatchewan will be celebrating the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Archives Week in the province. On February 4-10, 2018, events will once again bring Saskatchewan's archives into the provincial spotlight as never before! Celebrity Reader events, historic film nights will be joined by countless open houses and exhibits that will focus on the abundant sources of Saskatchewan's history and heritage in archives. All across the province individual and inter-institutional displays of historic documents, open houses, tours and many more events will be conducted to "Celebrate Archives". This year, the SCAA has again put together this Archives Week Action Guide with tips on planning events, undertaking local outreach activities that engage the local media, and encouraging individual archives and archivists to make the most of this time of celebration — their way!

# Celebrate Archives Week in Saskatchewan! February 4-10, 2018

## Celebrating Archives Week (Who, What, When)

As you think of celebrating Archives Week at your archives, ask yourself three vital questions:

1. Who would you like to reach with your message?
2. What do you want to say?
3. How do you want to say it?

For instance, are you interested in reaching youth, potential donors of archival records, the media or key community leaders? Perhaps you are interested in building community relationships while having a great time underlining the value of archives. Both formal and informal approaches work. "Formal" means a direct message, such as a descriptive ad or a billboard. "Informal" means creating ambience, a "feeling for archives," that brings pleasant awareness, such as organizing a fun event. Sometimes you can creatively combine the two approaches.

### **What do you want to say?**

Some possibilities are: visit archives and use their resources; let us care for your valuable collection; archives a key to knowing ourselves. Boil your message down to a single point that your staff, Archives Week committee, etc. can work with. Make your message the kernel of your media interviews and your displays.

### **How will you say it?**

Be creative, clear; speak in terms your community will understand. There are many ways to get the message across, from displays to historic re-enactments, a feature film, a billboard, posters, a tea: the possibilities are endless, but of course, must be within the archives' means.

## Explaining Archives in a Nutshell

How can archives be explained quickly? Devise an “Elevator Speech”, if you are riding in an elevator with someone, how would you explain what you do before the ride is over? It is good to have some accurate, descriptive phrases that are easy to understand, and easy to use.

What are archives? Archives are records considered to be of enduring value that have been created by individuals, organizations and governments in the course of their daily activities. They take such forms as correspondence, financial and legal documents, photographs, digital files, videos and audio records. Archivists are persons who assess, collect, preserve, maintain control of and give access to this valuable, cached information. The places the records are kept are also called “archives.”

Archives are important because:

1. They build community memory – “who we are”
2. They add to accountability and transparency
3. They protect our rights and property
4. They make information accessible

Additional information on the work of archives and archivists in an accessible form is available at <https://archivists.ca/content/what-are-archives>

Who uses archives? Journalists and the newsmakers they report on; the municipal and social leaders in the community; teachers and students; genealogists, historians, novelists and many more. Archival records are found everywhere from postage stamps and our money to T-shirts and street murals. Be sure to use the [The Truth is in There](#) YouTube videos to help.

*“Our sense of ourselves, our hopes for the future rely on an informed engagement with the past. The ultimate source of the stories we have told about ourselves, the fashion in which we revise and amend them in future, rests on accurate archival resources....”*

***Guy Vanderhaeghe, award-winning  
Saskatchewan author***

*“Of all national assets, archives are the most precious; they are the gift of one generation to another and the extent of our care of them marks the extent of our civilization”*

***Sir Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist 1904-  
1935***

## **EVENT IDEAS**

(For your consideration but, by no means are you limited)

### **Open Houses**

Holding an Open House is a hospitable approach that lets a “picture paint a thousand words.” Invitations that bring a blend of persons to the archives for an entertaining or educational exhibit, a tour of the facility and teatime make for the building of strong networks. Offering a door prize (e.g. scrap-booking supplies, a book, etc.), musical entertainment, or having a storyteller on hand—all add to the interest. You might also have a “Treasure Hunt” Day, where archives are brought in from basements and attics in the community. Your imagination is the limit. One tip: if you are displaying photographs, put them on a long table under a sheet of plastic for the day, a great way for people to study them up close but to leave them intact. Also, consider serving your refreshments away from where the documents are.

### **Exhibit Tips for Malls, Nursing Homes, and Other Spots**

A bright exhibit with large lettering, engaging storyline and staffed by enthusiastic volunteers or staff can do a lot to promote your institution. Period dresses, music, special performances that can be announced in advance, give a ways, a youth display of art or “what archives mean to me” – all serve a good purpose. A handy tip for display is to try to “catch the corner.” Attempt to have a right-angled exhibit (tables that catch mall traffic from two directions results in twice the attention).

A Nursing Home event can be used to honor residents, generate oral history records and to stir memories. Don’t forget all of the virtual exhibits available on our website <http://www.scaa.sk.ca/> which can give you ready information and some ideas regarding photographs that exist on various subjects. Perhaps you can invite persons to bring their own photos and put them up for display?

## **Having a School Event and Engaging Youth**

Your archives might be able to dovetail a display with a part of the existing teaching curriculum, or stage a Children and Grandparents Day. You might have students visit your archives class by class, or set up an archives exhibit in a Resource Room that classes can access. A Poster Contest or “I Remember” talks by seniors can also bring youth into the Archives Week celebration. The school might well be glad for some media publicity for the event. If possible, contact the school some time in advance, so you can fit your plan into the school’s busy schedule. Youth and archives is an incredible combination as archives display their key resources and take their place as the vibrant places they really are. A poster featuring youth and archives, archives as potential career, or kids’ websites as archival resources...all of these are ways youth might be involved. You might also feature “Kids’ Stories in the Archives” (documenting the lives of children over the years) or “Archivist for a Day” (where students tour archives and must make simulated archival decisions in a round-table, will add firsthand experience of archives). Check out the document that the SCAA has developed to “talk” to youth at the webpage [Heritage Fair Participants](#). We also have some virtual exhibitions geared to younger audiences. See the “Exhibits for Kids” link at the [SCAA Virtual Displays](#) web page.

## **Finding a Treasure**

Archives are full of treasures, and new ones are appearing all the time. Stimulate acquisitions by having a Treasure Day, or featuring a “find” in the local paper. Explain why it is important; relate it to today’s world, and to events of yesteryear.

Poignant, informational, precious — treasures have emotional appeal that will keep archives in the public memory for days to come.

Visit the [Archives Week Events page](#) link to see what others have done in the past for more ideas

# PUBLICITY

## **Posters, Postcards and Bookmarks**

Posters, postcards and bookmarks for Archives Week 2016 will be available from the Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists, [scaa.advisor@sasktel.net](mailto:scaa.advisor@sasktel.net) (Cameron in Saskatoon) or [scaa@sasktel.net](mailto:scaa@sasktel.net) (Gloria in Regina). They will be mailed prior to Archives Week to SCAA institutional members. Besides copies of posters you can download, “MSWord” copies from the Public Awareness portion of the SCAA website, [Public Awareness Resources](#). These can be edited with your local event information, printed by yourself or taken to your local printer.

## **Writing a Press Release**

A press release formally declares your event. Press releases follow a particular style, given below:

First paragraph should have: primary facts of the story (who, what, when, where, why).

Keep sentences short, concise, no jargon and spell out all acronyms (SCAA –The Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists).

Double-space your work, with wide margins.

Place contact information in the lower left hand corner and the release date in the upper left hand corner or if it can be used immediately, write “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”

At the end of the release, include a sentence that explains your organization.

Try to send your release out to the media 2 weeks before your event, follow up 2-3 days before the event to ensure the press release was received.

## **Using Newspapers**

Run an ad, give a newspaper interview, submit a thought-provoking article or a “Letter to the Editor” regarding archives or a specific hook-story, like a rare archives find. In an interview, never speak off the record —assume that everything you say may appear in print. Offer information clearly. Newspaper ads cost money – perhaps consider partnering with a local business, where it can help to pay for the ad. Sometimes newspapers are willing to run them for free, as a public service. Usually you can find a Local Happenings spot in the newspaper or community paper where you might advertise your event for free. For a “press release” or “letter to the editor” template see the SCAA toolkit “Loud and Clear: Raising Archival Awareness in Saskatchewan” or [Public Awareness Resources](#) link.

## **Web It**

Can you launch a new Web exhibit on your archives website during Archives Week? Capture life stories in email form? Or use Web 2.0 tools like Facebook, Flickr or Twitter to publicize your event and Archives. Consider a Geo-cache puzzle to focus on the contents of your archives similar to Saskatoon area archives [Saskatoon geo-cache](#). Even sending out a celebratory email announcing Archives Week and inviting everyone to “do something” is publicity.

ALSO BE SURE TO INFORM THE SCAA OF YOUR ACTIVITIES AS WE WILL HELP FURTHER YOUR PUBLICITY VIA OUR WEBSITE AND OTHER MEANS! [Scaa.advisor@sasktel.net](mailto:Scaa.advisor@sasktel.net)



## **FUNDING**

### **Institutional Grants**

The SCAA is eager to help its institutional members in the effort to make Archives Week 2018 a memorable one. To achieve this, SCAA has again initiated the popular Archives Week Grant Program. Under this program, member institutions may apply for funds up to \$200 to help in the promotion and/or conduct an event at your archives during Archives Week.

There was no formal application form, but the Public Awareness Committee of the SCAA required an email with your request including:

1. The amount of your request – (up to \$200)
2. A brief description of your planned event – (Open house, reading event, special display, etc.)
3. Projected budget – (Advertising, refreshments, what will the funds be used for?)

Funds are limited, so we encourage groups to have their plans ready and apply early. We also would like to see as many SCAA Institutional members participate in this program as possible. So, if you are able to receive funds from other sources and perhaps do not need the full \$200, please think of others who may have a greater need.

## **REVIEW**

### **After Archives Week**

Evaluating how Archives Week went, sending thank you notes to those who participated, and gathering positive reactions from the community (testimonials) after the Archives Week events are useful activities. They will help you plan next year's events, too, as well as to determine the shape of future outreach work in your community. If possible, post the photos from your events on your website and share them with the SCAA at [scaa.advisor@sasktel.net](mailto:scaa.advisor@sasktel.net) as well as your experiences for others to draw from for next year!



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PROVIDED BY



**We would like to acknowledge with gratitude the value of the “Public Relations Kit” prepared by the Society of American Archivists for American Archives Month, 2006, available at <http://archivists.org/archivesmonth/ArchivesKit.pdf>**