



The Archives Re-Past

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President's Message

Happy spring!

Thanks to everyone who was involved in a very successful Archives Week 2009. Mark your calendars - Archives Week 2010 comes our way February 1st to 7th, 2010!

Please keep an eye out for one or two more surveys coming your way. Thanks to those of you who participated in the communications survey. All members will receive a "programs and services" survey - an opportunity to provide feedback on a range of Council activities. Institutional members will be asked to provide some statistics about your reference activities, programs, users, etc. These statistics will make it easier for the Council to provide SaskCulture with up-to-date information about our membership base and the broader cultural impact of archives. Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Finally, our Annual General Meeting is coming up on June 20th in Saskatoon (to be held in conjunction with the copyright workshop). This is the first year we will be able to elect two new members-at-large to the Executive, along with half of the existing Executive positions (because of the staggered terms that were approved at the last AGM). Thanks to those of you who are letting your names stand for next year's Executive; I look forward to working with a larger group and with some new people. In addition to the standing reports at the AGM, other items of interest include a proposed communications strategy and a proposed mission statement for the Council, both following up on our earlier strategic planning process. Of course, the AGM and workshops are also a good opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the province, and I hope to see many of you there. In that spirit, following up on a recommendation from the Communications Committee, we will be introducing a "member forum" - a chance to ask questions, raise concerns, share successes and challenges and more - following adjournment of the business meeting.

Tim Hutchinson, President

The New Face of Saskatchewan Archives Board

Submitted by SAB Management Committee

Over the last couple of years, the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), has undergone a restructuring into units based on the major functions mandated in its enabling legislation, *The Archives Act, 2004*. Along with a Corporate Services Unit which manages human resources, financial administration and information technology, the Saskatchewan Archives Board's major programs are managed by six units: Appraisal and Acquisition, Information Management, Records Processing, Legislative Compliance and Access, Collection Management and Preservation, and Reference and Outreach. We thought that the archival community in Saskatchewan might be interested in knowing what we do at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, and which unit manages each major function.

Appraisal and Acquisition Unit

The Appraisal and Acquisition Unit of the Saskatchewan

Archives Board is responsible for appraisals, acquisitions, donor relations and agreement negotiations for private and public records for both the Regina and Saskatoon offices. The Appraisal Archivists in the unit review disposal requests and conduct appraisals on public (government) records that have met their required retention periods to determine whether the records have sufficient historical significance to transfer to the Archives. These archivists also appraise records offered to the Archives from private individuals, associations and clubs.

Information Management Unit

The increasing volume and complexity of information created by the Government of Saskatchewan provides numerous challenges for those responsible for its management. The Information Management Unit of

the Saskatchewan Archives Board works closely with government ministries, agencies, boards, commissions and Crown corporations to improve the accountability and efficiency of the processes for the creation and management of information. The IMU provides services to government in the areas of records disposition, schedule development and records management advice. Archivists at the Information Management Unit consult with and advise government employees on a wide range of records management issues, develop records management policies and best practices and provide training to managers and employees in government.

The primary tool used in identifying and defining records and in determining how long each type of record must be retained to meet administrative, fiscal and legal requirements is the records retention and disposal schedule. The two types of schedules used by government institutions are the Administrative Records Management System 2006 (ARMS

2006) and Operational Records Schedule (ORS). The use of records schedules by government promotes greater accountability for information as required under *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* legislation. At the same time, it ensures greater efficiency and economy which is so important to the overall government strategy of reducing administrative costs.

In order to ensure that the records of government are disposed of in an accountable manner, the Saskatchewan Archives Board manages and administers the Records Disposition System (RDS). The RDS enables the Archives to receive requests for the disposal of government records. Each disposal request is reviewed to confirm that the records are related to an appropriate schedule and that the required retention periods have been met. If the records are eligible for disposal, they are reviewed by an appraisal archivist. Those records of continuing historical value are acquired and preserved by the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

Records Processing Unit

The Records Processing Unit of the Saskatchewan Archives Board is responsible for the physical processing and description of government and private records of all media acquired for our permanent collection. The Unit is addressing a significant backlog in unprocessed records description as well as managing smaller retro-description projects to bring existing records to RAD-compliant standards of description. Since the introduction of new institutional descriptive standards in October 2004, over 350 guides and 60 government agency descriptions have been added to the finding aid system in Reference. As well, the Unit prepares records and reports and manages the sessions associated with monetary appraisal for tax credit on an annual basis.

Since January 2008 Unit staff have been using our new Minisis software database "Threshold" to describe holdings. This database currently manages accession and description functions for the institution and houses records converted from fourteen

previously-existing databases. While the database is currently used internally, it is anticipated that public access through our website will be available in 2009.

Legislative Compliance and Access Unit

The Legislative Compliance and Access Unit (LCAU) is responsible for institution-wide access and privacy compliance for both the public and private records in the Saskatchewan Archives permanent collection. The unit develops policy related to access and privacy, and advises other Saskatchewan Archives Board staff on these issues.

The mandate of the Saskatchewan Archives is to preserve and make available to the public the historical records of Saskatchewan, however the Archives must also balance the public's right to access against an individual's right to privacy. The Saskatchewan Archives as a government institution is bound by the provisions of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)* and *The Health Information Protection Act (HIPA)*. The Archives also

receives formal access requests under FOIPP, but FOIPP also permits the Saskatchewan Archives to continue access procedures in place before the Act was proclaimed. In practice this means that researchers may apply for access to restricted records in the Archives' permanent collection informally without making a FOIPP request and paying the associated fees.

The Saskatchewan Archives applies the privacy and access restrictions of FOIPP, HIPA, and other applicable legislation to the records in our collection. Researches request access to the records in the Archives permanent collection, the request is the reviewed by staff in the Legislative Compliance and Access Unit. If the records contain personal information, the records may be either be de-identified, or personal information removed from the file before the researcher is granted access to the record. In some cases it is impossible to de-identify the material without compromising the integrity or context of the record. In these cases, the researcher may

be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement which allows them to access the material but prohibits the disclosure of personal information as defined in FOIPP.



*Reference archivist, Paula Rein, assisting researcher in the SAB reading room.
Photographer: Don Hall*

Reference and Outreach Unit

Operating from offices in Saskatoon and Regina, the Reference and Outreach Unit provides reference services to in-person and distance clients who are interested in researching the history of Saskatchewan using the archival records in our holdings. Our holdings include records from both government and private sources, in all media types.

The Reference and Outreach Unit also coordinates outreach initiatives such as exhibits, tours,

and special events, and manages the publication of *Saskatchewan History* magazine. The purpose of these outreach ventures is to promote the history of the province and to broaden the interest of the wider community through access to archival records.

Collection Management and Preservation Unit

The Collection Management and Preservation Unit undertakes collection and preservation management activities to protect and extend the life of the archival record and to ensure it survives for future generations of researchers. This includes monitoring and optimizing the records storage environment including temperature, humidity and archival storage containers. The CMPU micrographics section undertakes preservation reformatting of badly damaged

records. The unit is also responsible for disaster response and recovery.



Preservation Archivist, Joe LeClair, encapsulating a panoramic photograph. Photograph: Don Hall

If you have any questions about the work of these units, or about any other aspect of the work of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, please visit our website at <http://www.saskarchives.com>, or contact one of our reference desks at 306-933-5832 or info.saskatoon@archives.gov.sk.ca (Saskatoon), or 306-787-4068 or info.regina@archives.gov.sk.ca (Regina).

Ask the Expert!

Featuring Jane Dalley

We put a datalogger in our Archives this summer and have three month's worth of readings. How can we use this information?

Congratulations! Taking regular recorded readings of light, temperature and relative humidity is the first step in an environmental monitoring program. Appropriate levels of temperature and relative humidity have been shown to reduce the deterioration in artefacts. Maintaining a stable storage environment is one of the most effective global preservation actions that you can take, as it affects entire collections and not just one or two artefacts.

Three months' worth of temperature and relative humidity readings should provide some useful information. This data can be analyzed and changes made to eliminate or reduce undesirable conditions. If you keep recording, or record at the same time next year, you can compare the readings to see if your improvements have had any effect.

Look at each of the months and note the highs, the lows and the span for that month. For example, the low might be 12% RH, the high might be 37% RH and the span would be 25% (37-12). Next, note how long it takes for the temperature and relative humidity to go from one extreme to the next. Make a note of any regular fluctuations and when they occur. Is it daily, weekly or only on weekends?

In order to make sense of the trends and fluctuations, go to the Environment Canada website (http://www.climate.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/Welcome_e.html) and compare the weather records for the time period for which you have data. Seasonal weather variations during spring and fall can cause the environment inside any building to become dry in winter or humid in summer. The high relative humidity of winter air drops dramatically when it is brought inside and heated, creating a dry interior environment. Humid summer air, especially during a rainy period, can create high levels of relative humidity.

Seasonal fluctuations will be made worse by poorly insulated exterior walls or roof, and windows with a low insulation value. If the relative humidity or temperature inside your building went up when it rained or was very hot outside, it could be that your building requires upgrading. Are the windows draughty? Is the door well sealed around the doorframe, or is it left open a lot?

You can also evaluate your existing heating and cooling system to determine if it is capable of doing its job properly. How old is the equipment, and how well is it operating? Does it work 24/7 or only during weekdays? Do you have an air conditioner? Is there an adjustable thermostat? Is there an adjustable humidistat for the relative humidity? Is air flow stable and unobstructed?

Older buildings heated with a boiler or a furnace cannot cool or humidify by themselves, only heat. Modern air-conditioning systems can keep temperature levels constant and dehumidify but relative humidity levels vary according to the efficiency of the equipment, and the building's insulation value and air-tightness.

Even though the environment in some older buildings cannot easily be upgraded to the same standards as a modern purpose-built space, it is usually possible to improve conditions. Even areas with no environmental control can be improved. The first step is to monitor the existing environmental conditions over a period of time and view the changes that occur.

The SCAA's **Environmental Monitoring Kit** contains the equipment to monitor the environment using simple equipment, free of charge. The Kit contains a TRH-100 Datalogger to measure temperature and relative humidity, and a LM-81LX Illuminometer to measure light levels. The Kit is available for loans to archives throughout the province. Insured round-trip shipping costs are the only costs to the borrower. The SCAA can assist with interpretation of results.

Once you have an idea of the environment in your building, the SCAA can make suggestions to improve it, and refer you to experts in the heritage community who can assist you further.

Heritage Fair Kit

The SCAA is pleased to announce the Heritage Fair Kit is now available. This is a very handy introductory research guide for teachers and students participating in the annual Heritage Fair program. The guide explains the importance of archival records; the difference between library, museum and archival materials; and a breakdown of where to locate archives and their contact information in each of the Heritage Fair regions.

Check it out at: http://scaa.sk.ca/youth_heritage_fairs.html

Rural History and Culture Association News

The Rural History and Culture Association (RHCA), in partnership with the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society and six local partners, is staging six festivals in July and August 2009 to celebrate the North–West Mounted Police Trail that runs from Wood Mountain to Fort Walsh. The festival will include First Nations storytellers and cultural performers, stories and lore of the NWMP, historical presentations and concerts from some of Saskatchewan's most talented singer/songwriters. Preliminary information, including dates, locations and some of the festival components can be found on the RHCA website at the following link: <http://www.rhcask.ca/nwmp-trail/>

Congratulations to the SCAA!

I read the numerous web pages promoting the many events for Archives Week in Saskatchewan. Very creative and comprehensive. I hope you enjoyed great success. What a wonderful example for others to follow. Thank you for your leadership increasing public awareness about the role, value and service offered by archives in the community.

Ian Forsyth
Chair, Canadian Council of Archives

Archives Week Success Stories

Thanks to the hard work of SCAA members, archivists and volunteers across the province, the SCAA's 2009 version of Archives Week in Saskatchewan was a great success. Since the first Archives Week in Saskatchewan was celebrated in 2006, response to the SCAA's efforts to honour and celebrate Saskatchewan's history and heritage has grown by leaps and bounds.

This year's celebrations included open houses (La Ronge, Humboldt, Prince Albert), displays and exhibits (Yorkton, Swift Current, North Battleford, Lloydminster, Saskatoon), public reading events (Saskatoon, Regina, Shaunavon) and film nights (Regina and Saskatoon).



City of North Battleford Historic Archives display with Ken Holliday sharing stories with visitors.

New and inventive ways of bringing Saskatchewan's archival heritage to the people were evident this past February. In both Humboldt and La Ronge, there were displays of photographs that need to be identified. These events proved to be very popular with the local community and showed how the public at large can assist archival institutions put their historical records into context and how archives help preserve local history and cultural roots.

Popular Archives Week events from the past, like the film nights in Regina and Saskatoon, the CBC Archives Week call-in show and archival displays in various public locations, were augmented by a new Archives Week initiative from the SCAA - this being the "Saskatchewan Archives Week 2009" Facebook group. This very successful venture brought our annual public awareness efforts to a whole new audience and will no doubt become a regular Archives Week feature in the future.

The public reading events in Regina and Saskatoon showcased local celebrities reading historical documents from local archival

collections while the reading event in Shaunavon had a unique twist to it – the Virtual Volunteers Program at the Grand Coteau Heritage and Cultural Centre had a group of local amateur writers present their distinctive stories.



Saskatoon Celebrity Reading Event, Presenters: Nettie Wiebe, Ruth Horlick, John Cross, Pamela Haig Bartley, David Carpenter and MC, Jeff O'Brien. Photo by: Lucas A. Sather.

In addition, the University of Regina hosted a lecture by prominent archival educator Prof. Tom Nesmith. Nesmith spoke to a group of archivists, academics, students, and the general public about the increasing use of archives in everyday life.

Once again, the SCAA would like to thank all those involved with the planning of Archives Week in Saskatchewan 2009 events and congratulate all those member institutions for making this year's annual archives celebrations so successful.

The SCAA would like to welcome new members and thank them for their support.

Institutional Members:

First Nations University of Canada
Saskatchewan Parks & Recreation Association – Resource Centre for Sport,
Culture & Recreation
Métis Nation Saskatchewan Genealogical Centre

Individual Members:

Monique Benoit



WORKING TO PRESERVE THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE OF SASKATCHEWAN

Mark your calendars!

The SCAA will hold an **Annual General Meeting**, 20 June 2009. The meeting will be held at the City of Saskatoon Archives and will begin promptly at 2:00 P.M. More information including agenda material will be circulated in mid-May.

A **Copyright Workshop** will be held at the City of Saskatoon Archives, 19 & 20 June 2009. This workshop will be presented by Professor Jean Dryden of the University of Maryland, one of the Canadian archival community's leading copyright experts. There are a limited number of spots available so register early. The early registration deadline is Monday, June 1, 2009; after that spots will be opened up to non-members. Registration forms can be found on the SCAA's website at <http://scaa.sk.ca>



Canadian Council of Archives
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