



NEWSLETTER

June 2009

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Welcome to the May 2009 edition of the SPA Newsletter. The purpose of the Newsletter is to keep SPA members up-to-date with news on Section activities and projects and to strengthen international cooperation and collaboration between professional records management and archival associations.

New SPA President

At the SPA Steering Committee held in Stockholm on 30 March to 2 April, Henri Zuber representing the Association des Archivistes Francais, was elected President. He replaces Christine Martinez, who resigned following her appointment to the ICA Secretariat as Executive Director for Programmes.

Questions on the proposed ICA Foundation

At the recent meeting of the SPA Steering Committee in Stockholm a session was devoted to considering a document written by ICA president Dr Ian Wilson on a proposal to establish an ICA foundation.

The proposal has been made by the Vice-President for Marketing and Promotion, Abdullah A. Kareem El Reyes, Director General, National Centre for Documentation and Research, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The vision is for a foundation to operate as a branch office of the ICA in the UAE to develop a full range of ICA products and services, such as publications, standards, training and consultancies, and then market and promote them. If it succeeds, then ICA's dependency on membership dues would be significantly reduced and it would provide an assured stream of income.

An interim foundation has been established to start a pilot project and in the coming months Dr Wilson has advised that governance issues will be investigated in depth to ensure that the proposed body would operate to the maximum benefit of ICA's membership. An interim Board has been set up to oversee the project and offer guidance on policy and procedural issues.

Members will be asked to vote on the proposal at the Annual General Meeting in Malta in November 2009.

While supporting any initiative that will help the ICA financially, the SPA Steering Committee is of the opinion that ICA members need more information on a number of issues:

- First, a detailed business plan with identified targets, as well as a list of proposed products and programs, is required as ICA members need to understand what activities the foundation will undertake.
- Secondly, members need to be assured that ICA values and its multicultural nature will be represented and defended by this new body. It is essential that the highest professional standards are adhered to by the foundation in developing, releasing, promulgating and promoting its products and services.
- Thirdly, a fully developed proposal needs to be presented covering the role of the foundation, its relationship with the ICA Secretariat, and in particular, the responsibilities of the proposed new Deputy Secretary General to be based in Abdu Dhabi

- Finally, members need confirmation that governance processes, as set out in the constitution, are being followed by the ICA's elected officials in considering the proposal.

These concerns have been communicated to the ICA President. Copies of all correspondence can be obtained by emailing henri.zuber@snf.fr

This information is being sent to SPA members to assist with the debate and discussions we are anticipating will occur in the coming months when wider consultations are undertaken.

Henri Zuber
SPA President

New association guidelines now available

The following new guidelines developed by the SPA Steering Committee to assist associations are now available on the ICA/SPA website.

- *Guidelines on establishing a mentoring program* [Currently available in English at <http://www.ica.org/en/node/39326>. Spanish and French translations will be provided shortly.]
- *Guidelines on conducting an election* [Currently available in English at <http://www.ica.org/en/node/39324>. Spanish and French translations will be provided shortly.]
- *Records management guidelines for associations* [Currently available in English, at <http://www.ica.org/en/node/39322>. Spanish and French translations will be provided shortly.] These guidelines are a companion document to the Retention Schedule for associations developed last year. [The Retention Schedule is available in English at <http://www.ica.org/en/node/39028>. Spanish and French translations will be provided shortly.]

International Forum on Archives and Human Rights

The first International Forum on Archives and Human Rights was held in Mexico on 9 to 11 December 2008. The following report was prepared by Forum participants Perrine Canavaggio, from the ICA Secretariat, and Fred van Kan, Vice President of SPA.

Context

Organized by the Mexican Association for the Scientific Development of Archival Science (SDCA) and Mexico Section of Archivists without Boundaries, the Forum was supported by the Commission on Human Rights of the Mexican Senate, the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District of Mexico, and the ICA Section of Records Management and Archival Professional Associations.

The Mexican Senate hosted the event. Funds could not be obtained to support the participation of archivists from Central and Latin American countries, with the result that no archivists from the ALA region countries (other than Mexico) attended. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic of human rights, one of the organizers received a letter with death threats.

The Forum attracted 180 attendees, mainly archivists and students but also some lawyers, representatives of NGOs, anthropologists and sociologists. Guest speakers came from South Africa (1), The Netherland (1), France and the United States (5).

Program

The Forum extended over three days. Senator José Luis Garcia Salvidea, representing the Commission on Human Rights opened the Forum, followed by Fred van Kan, Vice President of SPA, delivering a welcome speech on behalf of the ICA (see <http://www.ica.org/en/node/39187> for a copy of this speech in English, Spanish and French). The first day focused on human rights from a legal and political point of view; the second day the focus shifted to the role of archivists and archives in the collection and preservation of records relating to human rights issues; and the last day was a workshop using case studies to highlight human rights and ethics issues in archives.

Outcome

The Forum was organized to support the training and education of archivists and to provide a venue for archivists and representatives of non-government organizations to meet and discuss issues of common concern. The organizers are aiming to publish the Forum papers online and they will also be offered to Comma for publication.

At the end of the Forum a declaration relating to the seizure of the archives of Memorial, an NGO in St. Petersburg, Russia, was unanimously adopted. It was also proposed that a Forum be held every two years and Fred van Kan proposed The Hague for 2010, as the emblematic city for human rights where the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, and three temporary international criminal tribunals are located. Furthermore, 2010 will be the centenary of the First Congress on Libraries and Archives, which was held in Belgium with the cooperation of Dutch colleagues.

Archival Solidarity Project

Are you involved in an international outreach project? Are you looking for funding for an international outreach project? Read On!

The Archival Solidarity Project would like to remind all SPA members that we maintain a database of current and recent international outreach projects for archives and records management. All professional associations and their members are invited to consult the database and to contribute information about current projects in which you are involved. See <http://archives3.concordia.ca/solidarity/projects.html> for this resource.

The Archival Solidarity website also has valuable information about funding for archival outreach projects. We continue to add information to the searchable database that provides access to a growing body of information on international funding sources. Please let us know about funding sources available in your home country so we can add the information to the database. You may also find useful two recent publications on European government funding. All these funding information resources are available at: <http://archives3.concordia.ca/solidarity/funding.html>

If you want to know more about Archival Solidarity, information about the project is available at: <http://archives3.concordia.ca/solidarity/>

We hope to hear from you!

Nancy Marrelli
Chair, Archival Solidarity Project

ICA Code of Ethics Questionnaire

The results of the survey undertaken by a SPA Working Group to assess the general awareness and usefulness of the ICA Code of Ethics is now available on the ICA/SPA website in English, French and Spanish.

English:

http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/Questionnaire%20on%20ICA%20Code%20of%20Ethics_Results%20and%20Recommendations%20_2_.pdf

French:

http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/French%20Questionnaire%20on%20ICA%20Code%20of%20Ethics_Results%20and%20Recommendations_FR_v3.pdf

Spanish:

<http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/QuestionnaireICAethicsSpanish%20def.pdf>

One hundred and fifty responses were received with the largest group (66%) coming from EURBICA countries. The following is a summary of responses received:

- More than 50% of respondents had faced an ethical dilemma in the course of their career.
- Most used a variety of methods to help them solve the issue. In order of preference these were: using existing laws; personal decision making; similar cases/advice from colleagues; ICA Code of Ethics; Code of their individual professional association.
- Of those who used the ICA Code and found it useful, it was because it either helped them clarify the situation and/or reinforced their original opinion.

- Of those who did not find it useful, this was because it was seen as being too general/theoretical, and especially because it could not be related to the dilemma the respondent was facing.

Ethical dilemmas faced:

- The major issues faced by the respondents related to access – providing equal access; refusal of access; journalistic pressure to allow access to closed or restricted material; depositors wishing to restrict access to named individuals, and access vs privacy issues.
- Retention/destruction issues – mostly relating to instructions to destroy material believed to be politically/personally damaging.
- Disputes between archivists, librarians and museum colleagues.
- Professional disputes over using ISAD(G) standards and over employing qualified staff.
- Creating agency refusing to deposit and/or attempting to attach unreasonable conditions to the deposit.
- Demand for restitutions on material.
- Copyright.
- Attempted bribery of an archivist to alter documents.

The Working Group considered that the Code did not need major revision as the ethical principles it lays out remain relevant. However, they did recommend that the Code could be made more useful by developing illustrative material which would allow members to see clearly how it could be applied to any individual situation. They also recommended that training courses be developed providing instructions on how to apply the Code to specific situations. The SPA Steering Committee is currently considering how to respond to the recommendations.

Universal Declaration on Archives

The draft Universal Declaration on Archives, approved by the ICA Executive Board in October, was included in the November 2008 SPA Newsletter. Currently work is progressing on developing a marketing and promotion campaign to support the formal approval and release of the Declaration at the Malta CITRA meeting. To assist this work an application for funds was made to the ICA Programme Commission (PCOM) and 500 Euros was received.

PCOM has requested that the Declaration be translated into as many languages as possible to support its distribution and acceptance. The draft is currently available in English, French and Spanish. If any member association is interested in translating the Declaration into their own language contact Colleen McEwen at tcmcewen@gmail.com

Association Survey

In January 2009 a survey was distributed to all Category B members. The aim of the survey is to develop a membership profile, seek feedback from members on the work carried out by SPA and to obtain guidance on useful projects that SPA could undertake to assist member associations. If you have not received the survey please contact Fred van Kan at f.vankan@geldersarchief.nl. Responses should be forwarded by 30 June.

Revision of ICA Category B membership fees

The February 2009 meeting of the ICA Management Committee gave approval to pilot a new fees system for Category B members proposed by SPA. Based on annual budgets rather than membership numbers, the new system allows for the possibility of associations with an income of less than 2000 Euros to either pay 50 Euros, or make a non financial contribution by providing a service to the profession. A list of services that would be accepted in lieu of paying fees has been developed, along with a set of guidelines for implementing the new system.

2010 European Conference

The 2010 European Conference will be held in Geneva between 28 and 30 April. The Conference is being co-organized by the Swiss Federal Archive, EURBICA and SPA. For more information see <http://www.bar.admin.ch/eca2010/index.html?lang=en>

Feature article on a SPA member association – Association of Swiss Archivists by Cristina Bianchi

AAS: Association des Archivistes Suisses

VSA: Verein Schweizerischer Archivarinnen und Archivare

AAS: Associazione degli archivisti svizzeri

UAS: Uniuon da las archivarias e dals archivaris svizzers

The Association of Swiss Archivists (AAS) is known under four names and acronyms, resulting from the plurilingual nature of the country. About 70% of the Swiss population speaks German, 22% French, and 7.5% Italian and some areas in the south eastern part of Switzerland still uses a very old language called Retho-Romanic (0.5%), usually more spoken than written, which is recognized as the fourth national language. During our meetings, each archivist speaks his own language, and professional publications are printed in one of the three main languages. To help understand one another, a “*Glossary of terms useful to Swiss archivists*” was published in 2002 by AAS, and includes terms in French and German commonly used to describe archives.

The Association was created in 1922 by archivists, historians, and board members of the Swiss General Society of History. Its foundations in history strongly influenced the Association, but it quickly developed and in the 1970’s turned more towards information science.

Working groups and commissions have been created since 1975, to work on important issues of interest to Swiss archivists including private and corporate archives, media, bank, municipal, ecclesiastical and digital archives, microforms and the development of standards.

The Swiss archival profession took a new direction in 1998 with the creation of three levels of information science training – an apprenticeship program; a high school specialized archives program, and, in 2006, a university level course was introduced for a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Archival and Information Science.

Since 1986 ARBIDO (AR for archives, BI for library, DO for documentation) has been published regularly as the journal of the main Swiss information science associations – the Association of Swiss Archivists and the BIS (Bibliothèque Information Suisse/Library Swiss Information).

AAS also offers regular “training days” on current subjects such as standards and e-archives, and supports specialized publications like “*Pratiques archivistiques en Suisse*” by Gilbert Coutaz and Co., published in 2007, and “*Records Management: Ein Handbuch*” by Peter Toebak, in 2008.

As Switzerland is a confederation of 26 states, there are as many different archival traditions. Since 1994, the Director of the Federal Archives and directors of cantonal archives have held regular meetings aimed at finding common ground in managing similar but diverse archives.

Today, AAS has 600 members, of which 432 are individual members and 160 institutional members, plus 8 young archivists currently in training (Switzerland has a population of 7.5 million). The Association functions with a budget of 170’000 Swiss francs.

In 2007 a woman was elected as President. Anna Pia Maissen is interested in strengthening the AAS in order to stabilize the position of archivists at both the national and international levels. She considers that archivists must build a better understanding of archives and a sound appreciation of the legal basis for the creation and management of records with the public. Anna Pia Maissen believes that more emphasis should be placed on the protection of archival memory in non institutional areas; that there should be a guarantee of free access, and that efforts should be increased towards the management and preservation of electronic records. She considers that it is also important to work with parallel associations in order to redefine the professional profile of our sector and find common solutions in the growing global world. To her, the professional knowledge of archivists is a treasure that should be used in the service of the association and the community.

Would you like to have your association featured in the SPA Newsletter? If so, please contact Colleen McEwen at tcmcewen@naa.gov.au

Academy of Certified Archivists announces its 1,000th member

On 30 April the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) announced that it has welcomed its 1,000th member.

The Academy, founded in 1989, exists to ensure that standards of expertise in the practice of archival science are maintained and promoted. Membership is restricted to archivists who qualify to sit the certification exam by virtue of their education (Masters Degree is a pre-requisite) and experience.

Members must re-certify every five years, either by examination or by accumulating credits through a combination of professional service and extracurricular activities of benefit to the profession. Member volunteerism on behalf of archival science is encouraged and rewarded under the credit system.

Members of the Academy are employed throughout North America and around the world in major archival institutions such as the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA), American Philosophical Society, McDonald's, City of Seattle and Coca Cola.

For more information about the Academy, go to www.certifiedarchivists.org.

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