



AABC Newsletter

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President's Report

Lara Wilson, AABC President

Dear colleagues,

I hope you enjoy the AABC Newsletter on the theme of sustainability. Thanks to Greg Kozak, Kelly Harms and Kelly McElroy and contributors for their work on this issue!

Sustainability is much on the mind of archivists these days: it is a component of the 2009 Association of Canadian Archivists' conference on "Rights, Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs," and the Society of American Archivists' conference next August will be wholly devoted to sustainable archives.

Here in BC, the BCAUL/ICA AtoM pilot project will assist the AABC in continuing as a vital and sustainable organization, through technical upgrade to a fully web-based, open source, free, multi-level archival description software. Beta testing is underway with software developer Artefactual Systems, Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria. More information about ICA AtoM is available at ICA-AtoM.org, including information on the international and collaborative nature of the overall ICA AtoM project. The site also includes an on-line demo (refreshed hourly) and links to the ICA AtoM users discussion group.

It's important to remember that BCAUL was the first on-line database of digitized finding aids in Canada; BC blazed the trail for the Canadian Archival Information Network and other provincial and territorial networks. Once again, BC is in the position to assist the Canadian archival community realize new goals for our national network of networks. AABC

acknowledges the innovation and work of our past members and contractors for the groundbreaking work undertaken in the 1990s. We also thank today's project funders: the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre of UBC, Library and Archives Canada, and the Direct Access Grant Program of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

I would like to thank members of the BC archival community for expressing their interest in attending the "West Beyond the West" digitization symposium, which was on held December 1st and 2nd in Vancouver. The goal of this dynamic event was for practitioners and stakeholders, in the archives, library and museum sectors, to come together to learn and discuss: what initiatives are happening provincially and nationally to support digitization of local content, heritage and educational materials; what digitization strategies and priorities are emerging here in BC; and what support and coordination of our collective efforts might be needed to take digitization activities to the next level. The symposium's outcomes will be shared with the participating communities and updated on the symposium website (<http://symposium.thewestbeyondwest.ca>).

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President's Report

Continued

Regarding the 2009 AABC conference: although we made plans to undertake a conference with the BC Library Association, due to scheduling delays we agreed with BCLA that we would not pursue a joint conference this year. We thank BCLA for their interest and look forward to working with them in the future. In the meantime, planning is underway for a workshop-centred conference (with preservation and ICA AtoM training offerings) and AGM to take place on the lower mainland. Stay tuned!

Regarding vacancies on the AABC Executive in 2009, the following positions will be open: Vice-President, Treasurer, and Individual Member at Large. You will be joining an outstanding team of executive members, committee chairs and contractors! Please contact Erica Hernandez (hernande@unbc.ca) if you would like to volunteer for AABC.

In closing, I would like to thank members of the BC archival community for all the work you do to preserve and make accessible the documentary heritage of the province for our many patrons.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for 2009!
Lara Wilson
AABC president

Notes from the Editor

Greg Kozak, AABC Newsletter Editor

This issue of the AABC newsletter was devoted to the idea of "Archival Sustainability" – a reality that archivists deal with on a daily basis.

The recent approach to sustainability has been to view the concept as an issue of ecological living and design. That is, can we live in a way that reduces our ecological footprint in terms of our built environment and our daily behaviour? We have all seen how green has become today's "new" black, which points to the growing importance of creating environmentally sustainable systems. Yet, a narrow approach to sustainability robs us of its truly holistic and nuanced meaning. Sustainability is more than just about the environment – it's about how we live with and support our society at a more fundamental level, at all levels.

As seen in this issue of the newsletter, archives and the archival profession can embody sustainability on at least four levels: social, ecological, and economic.

In Jo-Anne Allison's article on the 2008 Catholic Archives Group meeting, we see how archives deal with shifting times and contribute to the existence of the communities they support. In Leah Pearse's article on the Chester P. Lyons fonds, we see how an archives can record the life of a pre-eminent BC environmentalist. Last, we also see the results of a recent survey gauging the success of recent SLAIS graduates – and yes, it appears an MAS degree is still a good investment!

As we look to next year, hopefully there will be a strong BC representation at the ACA conference in Calgary in May. It's only about a scenic 8-hour drive from Vancouver...and if you really want to impress the hosts, just remember to memorize the words to "Hello Calgary" on the way!

Thank you to all of you who contributed to this issue, and all the best to the Newsletter readers by way of health, happiness, and success in the New Year!

2009 ACA Conference

Janet McMaster, ACA Conference 2009 Host Committee

The Association of Canadian Archivists annual conference will be held in Calgary, Alberta, from May 14th-17th, 2009. The conference is held in different locations throughout Canada each year, and this is the first time that it will be held in Calgary.

The theme for the conference is Rights, Responsibilities, Trust: Archives and Public Affairs. The Program Committee has been busy bringing together an interesting and thought-provoking slate of national and international speakers, developing 4 plenary and 21 concurrent sessions from among over 60 submissions received. The sessions include traditional presentations as well as panel sessions, focused debates, and round tables. Topics to be discussed include the role of archives in the search for truth and reconciliation in Canada; archives, sexuality and public policy; preserving the environmental record; accountability and archival description; the effect of access and privacy legislation on archives in the 21st century; policy issues related to digitization, outreach, and advocacy; archives and human rights around the world; and the role and future of the archival profession in an environment of changing public priorities. Speakers have been invited from across Canada and from England, Australia, Scotland, the Netherlands, South Africa, the United States, Sweden, and the South Pacific.

The opening reception on May 14th will be held at the CPR Railway Pavilion, preceded by a reception for first-time attendees in the Penthouse Suite. Other social events will include the traditional baseball game, the dinner and dance on the final evening, as well as special events highlighting some of our local Alberta treasures. Two local historians will conduct walking tours of Calgary's eclectic downtown area.

All conference sessions take place at the Fairmont Palliser Hotel, conveniently located in downtown Calgary and recently voted the top Calgary hotel in the Calgary Herald's Reader Choice Awards. A special ACA group rate is available for conference delegates.

A pre-conference tour to Blackfoot Crossing is planned for Wednesday, May 13, 2008. Located only an hour away from Calgary and a designated national Heritage Site, Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park is a world-renowned cultural, educational and entertainment centre of historical and archaeological significance, which promotes and preserves the language, culture and traditions of the Siksika Nation.

Additional information about the conference can be found on the ACA's web site at: <http://archivists.ca>. Check this web site regularly, as new material is being added as soon as it becomes available.

Mark your calendars now for May 14th-17th, 2009 and plan to attend the ACA conference in Calgary!



The Chester P. Lyons fonds

Leah Pearse, Co-op Student, UVic Archives

Several fonds held at the University of Victoria (UVic) Archives could be discussed in this newsletter on "The Sustainable Archives."

Environmental studies records have been a focus of the University Archives collection policy in recent years and include study documentation of environmental protection and activism, biology, and the philosophy of human ecology.

Particularly relevant candidate fonds can be found in the Environmental Sciences Archives, which the University Archives helped establish in 1996 to provide access to rare environmental material documenting the scientific examination of environmental stresses. One fonds that stands out, though, is that of Chester P. Lyons.

In 2007, UVic Archives acquired the fonds of Chester Lyons (1915-1998). Lyons was one of the first employees for BC Parks and played a vital role in the reconnaissance and planning of several of the major parks in the province, including Manning, Tweedsmuir, Wells Gray and the Bowron Lakes.

So why this fonds? I am a Master of Archival Studies candidate at the School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies, and I am working at UVic on co-op. The arrangement and description of the Lyons fonds is my major project for the term, but this choice is more than one of convenience: Lyons was a photographer and film maker who produced a large quantity of graphic material, as early as the 1930s, that extensively documents the natural beauty of the province. It also captures the spirit of environmental conservation that has led to the extensive park system that BC enjoys today, which is arguably the motivation behind Lyons life work.

This fonds consists of almost 5,500 slides, 1000 photographs, 500 negatives and 85 film reels. Lyons wrote many books on travel and the history of several regions of BC, including the Fraser Canyon, the Okanagan, and Vancouver Island. Other images were used in his popular field guides on trees, shrubs, and flowers found in BC and Washington. His moving images were transformed into the CBC-TV series *Klahanie: The Great Outdoors* and his documentaries traveled around North America on the Audubon lecture

series during the 1960s and 1970s. These introduced the province's natural wonders to a wider audience. As any archivist or layperson can tell you, the visual images available through photographs, slides, negatives, and moving images have a special way of bringing the past to life. They have also been the most challenging part of arranging and describing these records, but also the most educational and interesting part of my work with the University Archives.

Together, Lyons' work documents and promotes the province's ecosystems, plant and animal species, as well as many of BC's natural features and phenomena over the last century. The records held at UVic illustrate his passion for the environment and his role in sustaining it. It has been particularly inspiring, especially as someone new to the archival profession, to see how his passion was sustained over 50 years, as Lyons' work in conservation spanned from the 1930s to 1998. The finding aid for the Chester P. Lyons fonds will be available in early 2009.



Chester P. Lyons, 1959 (UVic Archives)

More Lyons fonds photographs on the next page

The Chester P. Lyons fonds cont...



Chester P. Lyons, Garibaldi Park, 1955 (UVic Archives)



Chester P. Lyons with moose horns, 1953 (UVic Archives)

News from SLAIS

Michelle Malette, SLAIS Student Coordinator

The School of Library, Archival & Information Studies at UBC has published the results of its graduate placement survey. The survey was conducted in the summer of 2008, and surveyed graduates from 2005, 2006 and 2007 in the Master of Archival Studies, Master of Library & Information Studies, and the Joint MAS/MLIS programs. The results are published on the SLAIS web site at www.slais.ubc.ca. In future, the survey will be conducted annually, allowing for improved tracking of trends and changes over time.

Among the survey's highlights for MAS and MAS/MLIS graduates:

- 100% degree-related employment in first position after graduation
- 56% obtained permanent employment in first position
- 90% obtained full-time employment in first position

For those who have moved on from their first position, 62% of MAS graduates and 40% of MAS/MLIS graduates earn \$50,000 or more

For MAS graduates, primary job tasks are archival functions, including records management. For MAS/MLIS graduates, reference was listed most frequently.

86% of MAS graduates and 73% of MAS/MLIS graduates would "highly recommend" or "somewhat recommend" pursuing the same degree. Just under 10% of MAS graduates would "somewhat dissuade" pursuit of the degree; the rest of the respondents were either neutral or did not respond.

Hiring SLAIS Students

SLAIS's popular co-operative education program continues to gain interest from both students and employers. The program allows students in the archival studies and the library and information studies programs to obtain degree-related paid full-time employment as part of their program of study. Work placements are four months (a term) in length and on average students earn \$13,000 during the four months. Students obtain valuable

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Religious Archives: Are they sustainable?

Jo-Anne Allison, Archivist, Diocese of Prince George

For the first time a meeting of the Catholic Archivist Group was held in the western part of Canada. Almost 60 Religious and Diocesan Archivists were treated to a real western welcome at the Providence Renewal Centre in Edmonton, Alberta.

The theme, "Beyond the last frontier: the future of religious archives" encouraged us to rethink our role as religious archivists. The main topics of discussion were about the relevance of religious records, as well as the difficulties relating to their physical maintenance. Workshops focused on how religious archives are functioning now and what they might look like in the future. This is a timely and pertinent topic given the declining numbers of parishioners in Canada and the often too-small budgets allocated to diocesan archives.

How can religious archives sustain themselves? How can we as religious archivists spread the word about the value of our collections in an increasingly secular world? In separate break-out sessions, archivists for dioceses and religious congregations wrestled with these questions.

Archivists for religious congregations participated in a discussion about options for planning with Dr Claude Roberto of the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Dr Roberto led participants through a process for deciding where records should be kept once a religious order can no longer care for them. Next, Diocesan archivists were challenged in a different direction. Eloi DeGrace, Archivist for the Archdiocese of Edmonton, spoke about how to energize preserving and organizing archival materials at the local parish level.

While the urge to acquire archival materials in a central place is the traditional approach, both workshops shifted the focus of attention to the importance of the records. In a fast paced and stimulating follow-up seminar on fundraising, given by Theresa Vogel of Victoria, we were challenged to reframe our thinking beyond a narrow religious perspective to view the significance of our materials within the larger historical context of the towns and cities in which we live.

Theresa Vogel's approach was marvellously illustrated by a visit to the Basilian Fathers Museum in rural Mundare, located just outside of Edmonton. In Mundare, CAG archivists were exposed to the possibilities that exist when religious archival materials are used both as a source of information and as an essential element in story-telling. The history of the Basilian Fathers is an integral part of Mundare's story – we were fascinated to observe the interplay between Ukrainian culture, brought to Alberta by immigrants, and the religious traditions of the Basilian Fathers, who came to serve this population's spiritual needs. The fusion of religious and secular enables a rich and multi-faceted recounting of this part of Alberta's history even as it opens up new avenues for a deeper understanding of the charism of the Basilian order, which continues to serve the community to the present day.

CAG 2008 had a very full agenda, but members made the most of opportunities for exchanging ideas. The lively flow of conversation on the bus and at meal times never stopped. Best of all, the Edmonton meeting was a great opportunity to meet new members and to renew treasured friendships. The ideas that we shared inspired us and reaffirmed our determination to get on with the job – our archives hold fascinating stories. There is no time to waste!

...News from SLAIS continued

work experience and develop a strong network of contacts while earning money to help fund their program at SLAIS. Employers benefit from highly motivated, enthusiastic graduate students studying the most recent techniques in the library, information management, and archival fields. For more information about co-op or hiring a SLAIS student, contact SLAIS student services coordinator Michelle Mallette at michelle.mallette@ubc.ca.

In Remembrance: Debra Barr

Susan Hart and Margaret Hutchison

Debra Elaine Barr passed away suddenly after a six-week illness on Monday, October 13, 2008. A Celebration of Life was held for Debra at the Quarterdeck, Royal Roads University (RRU), Victoria, BC, on Monday October 20th, and attended by approximately 300 people. The following tribute was sent to arcan-L (the Canadian archives listserv) and archives bc (the British Columbia archives listserv) on October 16th. The attached photograph was taken by Debra's partner, Ian Barclay, in England during the summer of 2008, and appeared on the cover of the program for the Celebration.

Debra was in Cougar Annie's Garden on Labour Day weekend, one of the leaders of an expedition sponsored by Royal Roads University, when she was taken seriously ill. After being airlifted to Tofino and then to Victoria, she was diagnosed with an infection to the lining of the heart. Debra had been in hospital ever since, attended by family and a few close friends, and did appear to be recovering. However on Thanksgiving weekend her blood pressure suddenly dropped, and she died Monday October 13th in the operating room during an emergency heart valve replacement operation. It was just a little before sunset.

Debra's death comes as a terrible shock and loss to all those who knew her, especially her soul-mate Ian Barclay; Ian's three sons Fraser, Malcolm, and Andrew; her mother, sisters Jan, Marna, and Cheryl, nieces Katie-Lynn and Brianne, nephew Shane, and Uncle Jim (a second father to Debra); and many, many dear friends.

Debra was always one to find significance, patterns, themes, and connections, in her extensive reading and in her very full life. It is no coincidence that she was so close to her childhood home of Tofino when she was taken ill. It is significant that she was there to educate others about this very special part of the world, on an expedition with an environmentalist theme, in company with artist Robert Bateman, biologist/activist/politician Briony Penn, and her partner Ian.



Debra Barr, 2008

Debra's role was to enlighten the group about the human and natural history of the Tofino area; anything she said would have been informed by her other life roles and interests as an archivist, genealogist (her Norwegian forebears settled in the area), birdwatcher, orienteer, and avid gardener. RRU, the expedition sponsor, was also her employer – for several years she has been the records officer and information and privacy officer there, and more recently Debra has been helping to create and curate the RRU Robert Bateman Art and Environmental Education Centre, which will house Mr. Bateman's archives and collections.

A defining role in Debra's life was as an archivist. In 1981-1983 Debra joined the first class of the very first archival studies program in Canada – the Master of Archival Studies at UBC, where she studied under Terry Eastwood and Hugh Taylor. One of Debra's first jobs after graduating was at the Anglican Diocesan Archives in Victoria (a return home, as Debra's family had moved there in her teens), and religious archives remained an abiding interest throughout her life (she guest edited *Archivaria* 30, the theme issue about religious archives, and conducted extensive research in the history of the Canadian Spiritualist movement, with various publications accomplished and planned).

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In Remembrance: Debra Barr

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Debra's next job was at the Records Management Branch, Government of British Columbia, where she worked with a few other leading lights in the Canadian archival community – Kent Haworth, Reuben Ware, and others. Debra then worked for a number of years in Toronto at the Victoria College and the University of Toronto, where various passions emerged: historical manuscripts (she arranged and described the papers of Earl Birney and Vincent Massey, among others), the concept of the fonds (her seminal and influential articles on the concepts of the fonds and provenance appeared in *Archivaria* 25 and 28, and are still well worth reading).

As a member of the Toronto Area Archivists Group, Debra helped forge the first guidelines for pre- and post-appointment archival education in Canada. In the winter of 1990/91 Debra, deep down a west-coaster, returned home to Vancouver Island, and since then has lived and worked in Victoria, where she explored other aspects of the archival profession, as a records officer and information and privacy officer, first for the Government of British Columbia, then for Royal Roads University. Privacy rights of the deceased was Debra's leading archival research interest during this period of her career.

Debra was a giving person in every possible way. She donated her time to many good causes – she was always involved in a leadership role in the archival community, not only the afore-mentioned TAAG but also the Association of Canadian Archivists, the Archives Association of BC (for which she helped plan a very successful conference in Victoria this year, jointly with ARMA Vancouver Island), and most devotedly she served on the Board of the Anglican Diocesan Archives in Victoria for many years. Debra also participated in numerous environmental groups and causes (the Victoria Orienteering Society, The Land Conservancy of BC), volunteered for the Victoria Literary Festival, and gave generously to many causes. She was very concerned about the environment and the need to preserve it. Debra always had gifts about her, little gifts of tea, herbs, flowers, and large gifts of affection.

Debra was ever one to make things grow, be it flora or fauna. She created a beautiful garden in her home with Ian, which this summer really came into its own after several years of her devotion. She worked with gardener and horticultural therapist Paul Allison to restore and research the history of the Japanese garden at RRU (they presented a session about it at the AABC conference earlier this year). When Debra travelled, she visited gardens, in France and England especially; some of us are finding memories of Debra in our cupboards, “Herbes de Provence” in her handwriting on a jar, packets of organic tea from England. Debra also cultivated fauna: budding archivists (many of us have very special memories of her mentoring role in our lives), children (nieces, nephew, step-sons – she had a wonderful story of getting all muddy rescuing Katie-Lynn from the duck pond at Beacon Hill Park), her cat Zoe, her many dear friends (she was the sort of person who remembered birthdays, and bought you a book about yurts if you fantasized about building one), and the love of her life Ian, who complemented her so perfectly and brought her great happiness.

Debra would have turned 54 on October 29. By the Greek horoscope she was a Scorpio, by the Chinese horoscope she was a horse. But really she was a golden lion, with a tawny mane, a brave, bright presence, a clear, intelligent mind, and a warm, warm heart. Memories of Debra are endless, and so, in fact, is Debra, and the fact we lost her at Thanksgiving reminds us to be thankful to have had her in our lives at all.

This short tribute has been prepared by fellow MAS graduates Susan Hart and Margaret Hutchison. A full tribute to Debra will appear in an upcoming edition of *Archivaria*.

Donations in Debra Barr's memory may be made to her designated charities:

- The Land Conservancy of British Columbia, Victoria, BC
- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Victoria Branch)
- Survival Research Institute of Canada, Victoria, BC