

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 15 – 17, 2013
Chicago, Illinois**

**Report: SAA Representative to International Council on
Archives Section of Professional Associations
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The International Council on Archives Section of Professional Associations (ICA SPA) met in Amersfoort, Arnhem, and Amsterdam, Netherlands, from April 20 to 24, 2013. I attended as a representative of both SAA and the Academy of Certified Archivists.

BACKGROUND

Prior to 2012, Trudy Peterson represented SAA and ACA for at least four years on ICA SPA. In 2012 she decided to step down from this position. Both SAA and ACA decided that they would continue to support a representative during FY2013 while they determined whether an SAA and ACA presence was desirable on ICA SPA into the future and to develop a set of criteria for choosing a representative.

In 2012, SAA and ACA recommended that I serve as the representative during FY2013, and I attended the ICA Congress in Brisbane, Australia, in August 2012 and the ICA SPA meeting in the Netherlands in April 2013. This report is of the activities that occurred during the April 20-24, 2013, meeting.

THE ICA SPA MEETING

The Steering Committee of ICA SPA is composed of representatives from Korea, Norway, Germany, Poland, France, the United States, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Brazil, Israel, China, Mexico, Spain, and Canada.

At the Brisbane meeting, the SPA Steering Committee adopted a new Strategic Plan for 2012-2016 (see attached.) The April 2013 meeting was the first in which aspects of this Plan began to be addressed. However, before that occurred, Fred van Kan, the current Chair, provided an update from the ICA Executive Board Meeting. This was followed by a discussion of the Steering Committee members' critique of the Brisbane meeting as each saw it from his/her perspective. Because a conference call with David Leitch, the Secretary General of ICA, was scheduled for later in the meeting, this discussion brought to the fore issues that would be mentioned in that call. In addition, two other items were highlighted from the Executive Committee Meeting. The first was that more translators

are needed for both ICA and ICA SPA to ensure that appropriate documents are available in as many languages as possible but at least in the six official UNESCO languages. The second was that there will be a new perspective and direction for the Program Commission (PCOM). The Executive Board wants PCOM to become a greater force in moving forward in the areas of digitization, preservation, good governance, and open government. The aim is to get all professional initiatives grouped under PCOM.

The ICA SPA meeting then began to address the components of the Strategic Plan. The first item on the agenda was to deal with the Universal Declaration on Archives. The question was that now that it has been approved by ICA and adopted by UNESCO, how do we proceed to publicize it throughout the world. A working group including members from Australia, Canada, the United States, and one or two others has been approved by the Executive Board and will be developing ideas on how to proceed. Two ideas that were brought forward were to make presentations at national associations' annual meetings and to give it to instructors in archival education programs. (*Note: A session was scheduled for ARCHIVES 2013 but because of medical issues with one of the key presenters, it has had to be cancelled.*) The principles elucidated in this document are excellent for promoting archives.

Digital preservation was the next topic to be discussed especially as more and more business is being conducted electronically. It was interesting to hear that in several countries records management and archives work much more hand-in-glove than they do in the United States. In several countries the organizations are one and the same. This was further emphasized as the discussion moved towards the necessity of being involved with both concepts right from the creation and through the life cycle of the records. Not that this is a new concept in the United States, but the convergence of the two disciplines was interesting to note. In many ways, the members felt that there was a need to address this issue through advocacy. As a result, a subcommittee will be drafting guidelines and recommendations in this area.

The discussion then turned to the relations between national archives and national archival associations and between national associations. In a number of countries it appears that there is a serious gap between the two, as was the case between SAA and NARA for years. It was felt that some of the more well-established national associations could potentially serve as mentors to some other less defined associations and provide assistance in their educational programs, in designing archives buildings, etc. The group Archivists Without Borders is sending archivists to developing nations to assist in some of these initiatives, for example.

International Archives Day, June 9, has been adopted by a number of countries. There is a movement afoot to get this approved by UNESCO. In Hong Kong, this day serves as an opportunity to bring archivists together for seminars and exhibits. In France they use the day to promote archives – similar to SAA's American Archives Month. One suggestion was to produce newspaper articles to promote the Universal Declaration on Archives and the Principles on Access. As with the UDA, it was recommended that

countries contact their delegates to UNESCO to urge them to support this effort. The ICA Secretariat will also be contacting UNESCO in this matter.

There were a number of reports from various Steering Committee members, but the one that generated the most urgent discussion dealt with proposed legislation in the European Commission to destroy personal data after a very short period of time. Apparently this legislation was originally aimed at commercial entities to fight commercial reuse of these data, but its implications for long-term research and for information being gathered in archives are significant. The Association des Archivistes Français (France) has taken the lead on protesting this action. It was emphasized that the committee that will be examining this regulation will be meeting on May 29, so gathering as many petition signatures as possible is of the utmost urgency. The Steering Committee then drafted the following statement that is being distributed to all SPA members and will be posted on the SPA website in both French and English.

“At its April 2013 meeting in Amsterdam, the Steering Committee of the Section of Professional Associations of the International Council on Archives (ICA SPA) expressed its concern about the draft European Data Protection Regulation that will result in the destruction of personal data and recommends that the members of ICA SPA promote, in- and outside their associations, the signing of a petition initiated by the French Association of Archivists AAF (<https://www.change.org/petitions/the-european-parliament-adjourn-the-adoption-of-the-regulation-about-personal-data>). ICA SPA emphasizes that archives are a unique and irreplaceable heritage and play an essential role in the development of societies by safeguarding the individual and community memory (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Archives as adopted by UNESCO in 2011).”

The French have gathered a significant number of signatures already (more than 42,000), including over a hundred from the United States. The signatories include archivists, historians, genealogists, and general citizens. However, looking at the list of American signatories, it becomes obvious that most of these people are members of the AAF and have been reached by the AAF’s publicity. **This is something that the SAA and ACA could definitely publicize immediately.**

Conversation with David Leitch: The ICA staff is currently bogged down with administrative tasks that can be contracted out, such as membership and financial matters. They are examining how they can streamline their activities so that they can be much more responsive to the member organizations and individual members. As noted above there is also a push to get documents translated into the six UNESCO languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese). There is a real focus on increasing membership. The emphasis by SPA members in this conversation was on increasing the benefits to members and to make ICA better known to the rank and file archivists in member states. One suggestion was for ICA to begin to have a booth in the exhibit halls at association annual meetings. Since David Leitch is currently planning to attend SAA in New Orleans, I made the suggestion that ICA exhibit there. As to the ICA website, David Leitch noted that they have been doing a substantial amount of work recently to

make it much more user-friendly. (In examining it subsequently, the SPA Steering Committee agreed that significant steps have been taken.) The final comment from David Leitch is that ICA is changing. There is a real and sincere push to look outward and become less bureaucratic and much more responsive to its members.

The last day of the conference was spent at the Amsterdam City Archives where we were presented with history of the Dutch Archival Association, starting in 1891, and the development of its first processing manual in 1898. In 1918 the first Dutch archival legislation was passed, and it included the requirements to be an archivist. Originally the focus was to promote archives, but it has changed to focus on the archivists themselves – collegial exchange, archival education, and the role of the archivists in society. What was particularly interesting was the emphasis now on working much more closely with records managers than in the past. At the same time, they are moving towards certification, but they are running into the same issues that American archivists did as the ACA was being created. (This is an area in which the ACA could provide some guidance.) These comments led to an interesting discussion of the relationship between records managers and archivists in various countries. For example, in France records management is included in the Association des Archivistes Français. Furthermore, as can be expected there was a long discussion on how to deal with electronic records. The three final presentations that all generated a fair amount of discussion were the European Commission's Data Protection Regulations and the French petition, verification of digital data, and archival education. Although the last presenter had to leave quite quickly afterwards, he did mention that they are re-evaluating how archivists are trained. Given the international composition of the SPA, this topic generated a fair amount of discussion since there are a number of different models in existence.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT SAA and ACA continue to support representation on the ICA SPA Steering Committee and to move forward in defining the criteria for that representative and the process for choosing that person.

Support Statement: As Council is addressing strategic directions for the SAA for the next few years, I know that the issue of SAA's continued participation in ICA SPA is one of the topics to be debated. We, in America, have had a tendency to be isolationist in many areas. Although Trudy Peterson ably represented the SAA and ACA for a number of years, SAA did not receive many reports of activities. I hope that this report will indicate that that has changed. Things are changing on the international archives front, including at ICA. The last thing that SAA and ACA need to do is to be left in the backwater as things move ahead. Moreover, we have a lot to offer other countries. Since we are one of the largest, if not the largest association, we have had to address many of the problems that other associations are facing now. We can be a strong force in moving the archival profession forward internationally. Consistently during this meeting, bring up the means by which SAA had address such-and-such an issue was an important contribution to the discussion.

This is a new SPA Steering Committee. There is a lot of energy in its members. I think that there is a real possibility that this energy will translate to changing ICA in a positive manner. Representation by SAA and ACA will be a powerful force in this activity. At the same time, there are issues, which SAA is having to address, that have come up in other countries. Some of these were touched upon at this meeting with the implication that they will be addressed more thoroughly in the future.

More to the point, I feel that it is important for SAA and ACA to continue to participate on the SPA Steering Committee for the reasons mentioned above. The fall meeting is scheduled in November 2013 in Brussels, Belgium. Were SAA and ACA to continue to participate, the spring meeting will be held in Boston, MA, hopefully in conjunction with the New England Archivists spring meeting.

Fiscal Impact: In FY2013, \$3,500 was budgeted to cover one half of the cost of travel, etc. to Brisbane, Australia and the Netherlands. (The other half was supported by ACA.) For FY14, the expense, based upon the spring meeting in the Netherlands, would be \$1,280 (one half of the total cost) for the Brussels meeting and minimal cost for a Boston meeting.



2012-2016 SPA STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND BUSINESS PLAN

The Section of Professional Associations (SPA) is a section of the International Council on Archives (ICA) established in 1976.

SPA works towards supporting a globally strong and united archival profession and helping its member associations develop their organizations and increase their influence, with a focus on promotion of and advocacy of the profession.

Aims of the Section

The aims of SPA, as set out in the SPA Constitution (Article 3), are:

- to promote closer collaboration of all records management and archival professional associations
- to gather and disseminate information about the activities of all records management and archival professional associations
- to encourage and assist the establishment of new professional records management and archival associations
- to promote and maintain the ICA Code of Ethics
- to carry out projects of professional interest.

SPA: Strategic Objectives 2012-2016

The following are the Strategic Objectives of SPA for 2012-2016, which support the *ICA: Strategic Directions 2008-2016* (see <http://www.ica.org/?lid=3667&bid=225>):

1. Assist associations promote and advocate the profession. *[Supports ICA Strategic Direction 1. Raising Awareness]*
2. Facilitate an interchange of information between professional associations and support collaboration. *[Supports ICA Strategic Direction 4. Strengthening the ICA Network]*

3. Contribute to the improvement of association products and services to member. *[Supports ICA Strategic Direction 3. Building Capacity in the Records and Archives Profession and Direction 4. Strengthening the ICA Network]*
4. Encourage and assist with the establishment of new professional associations. *[Supports ICA Strategic Direction 4. Strengthening the ICA Network]*
5. Improve the SPA governance, administrative arrangements. *[Supports ICA Strategic Direction 5. Improving the Performance and Accountability of the ICA]*

SPA activities and projects for 2012-2016

1. Assist associations promote and advocate the profession

- Develop and implement two world wide promotion and advocacy campaigns with the following themes:
 - a. Why do records matter?
 - b. What does an archivist do for you?
 - c. What does a records manager do for you?
- Together with the Human Rights Working Group, develop a set of *Principles of the Role of Archivists* and devise and implement a promotion campaign for promulgation of the Principles.

2. Facilitate an interchange of information between professional associations and support collaboration

- Maintain the directory of (member and non member) associations, in order to facilitate the interchange of information.
- Publish a biannual Newsletter in English, French and Spanish.
- Maintain the SPA web pages on the ICA website.
- Support seminars and conferences of member associations.
- Prepare a project to establish twinning arrangements between associations with the aim of facilitating mutual support.
- Support cross ICA Section collaboration.
- Monitor, discuss and share information to support cross sectoral cooperation with libraries, galleries and museums.

3. Contribute to the improvement of association products and services to member.

- Review the SPA Manual for associations and expand it by preparing the following new guidelines:
 - a. Business and strategic planning for associations.
 - b. Effectively using the assets of associations [Associations often have a many assets at their disposal which could be reused or repackaged e.g. an association journal published over many years could be republished with the aim of re-engaging the profession and raising money.]
 - c. Establishing a long and lasting relationship between a national archives and a professional association.
 - d. Conducting interviews by video to assist association members if they are being interviewed or conducting an interview.
 - e. Developing association position papers. [These papers set out a position of an association on a certain issues e.g. disposal, access, closure of an archival institution etc., that can be used as a basis of a press release, or be placed on an association’s website as a public statement about what the association views are on a particular matter. These guidelines will not be about a specific subject, but how to produce a position paper and the value of such a document to an association].

- Respond to association requests for new guidelines.

4. Encourage and assist with the establishment of new professional associations

- Develop a proposal to link associations from countries listed on the World Bank high income group to support associations from poor regions for four years.

- Continue to support the services and lieu of fees scheme.

- Continue to work on ideas for attracting new members to the Section.

5. Improve the SPA governance, administrative arrangements

- Review SPA Articles [This will include assessing the current Articles against the changes to the ICA Constitution proposed at the Brisbane AGM].

- Continue to expand the Handbook for SPA Steering Committee members

- Work with ICA Head Office to support the efficient administration of the Section.

- Review the activities of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA being the equivalent to SPA in the library world) for details about projects etc they have undertaken that could possibly be adopted by SPA.