Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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External Representative Report: International Council on Archives Section of Professional Associations
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The International Council on Archives Section of Professional Associations Steering Committee met in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Boston, Massachusetts, March 21 – 25, 2014.

BACKGROUND

As of August 2012, I have represented SAA and the Academy of Certified Archivists on the ICA SPA. The ICA SPA Steering Committee is composed of representatives from Korea, Norway, Germany, Poland, France, the United States, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Israel, Mexico, Hong Kong, Canada, and Catalonia.

When Trudy Peterson stepped down as the SAA and ACA representative to the ICA SPA and when I was appointed as the liaison, it was also determined that SAA and ACA needed to develop criteria for appointing representatives in the future. During 2013 this process has been formalized and will be employed as time moves on.

DISCUSSION

For the first time in memory the ICA SPA Steering Committee met in the United States in March 2014. In addition, the meeting was scheduled to coincide with the New England Archivists Annual Conference in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Representatives from the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, Germany, and Israel were able to attend. The representatives from France (their Annual Conference started on March 26), Poland (no funds), and Catalonia (moving their archives) responded that they would not be able to attend. No comments were received from Mexico, Brazil, Korea, or Hong Kong.

Attendance at the NEA Annual Conference was a total success. The international archivists were able to attend and participate in a number of sessions and also attended the two plenary sessions and the “Archival Jeopardy,” during which I played the role of Alec Trebeck. Besides having an opportunity to observe how an American conference was organized, SPA members also participated as panelists in “Archival Perspectives
From Abroad: Conversations with Members of the International Council on Archives Section of Professional Associations.” After my brief introduction, each panelist spent approximately 10 minutes describing the archival scene in their countries. This left approximately 30 minutes for Q & A, and it was more than filled up. The session was a success, and I was continually accosted by NEA members expressing their gratitude for having the opportunity to meet and hear from our guests.

After a day of sightseeing and a group dinner at my home, the formal meeting began on Monday morning. However, before delving into the business of that meeting, it is important to also note that we were able to arrange a reception/get-together with Simmons College archives students and faculty Monday afternoon. This session was also warmly commented upon by all who participated – SPA members, students and faculty, and we received a very warm thank you from the Simmons College SCoSAA.

The Steering Committee meeting was held at the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners facilities in Boston and began early Monday morning, March 24. The initial action was a report from Fred van Kan on the ICA Executive Board’s activities and meeting in February. The current distribution of the funds to the various groups will continue through 2014. However, at the moment, all sections and groups will only have about 75% of that amount available. Next year, there will be a new process in place. All budgeting and distribution of funds will go through the Program Commission (PCOM) so that there will be a better tracking of all funds. One of the reasons for this decision is to achieve a better allocation of funds for specific projects. Regarding SPA’s allocation, most of the FY2013 funds were used for translations into French and Spanish. The current allocation for FY2014 is €5,000, but SPA can only spend €3,750 at the moment. Also, because the ICA’s constitution has been changed (Brisbane 2012), there is a possibility that the SPA by-laws may be changed. This is an action item.

Executive Board: One of the key discussions at the Executive Board meeting was ICA’s budget. Some of the contributors have been cutting back on their contributions (e.g., NARA and other countries’ national archives). While there was some discussion of creating some new Sections (e.g. medical, legal, military archives), there was also concern about not creating too many Sections. The geographical branches were the next topic of conversation. Some are quite active, but others meet infrequently or not at all. Advocacy seems to be the focus of many national archives as well as ICA and SPA. Coordination is needed as much as possible. With this in mind, a new business plan for 2014-2018 is being developed in early April, based on the discussions in February. This new business plan will deal with ICA as a whole but also with the role of Sections. Another comment was that the Section Chairs, particularly the Section of Local, Municipal, and Territorial Archives (SLMT), are having a hard time communicating with archives throughout the world, especially when dealing with government archivists.

ICA is developing new Expert Groups that will bring in experts in specific areas beyond that which the Sections represent. One has been created on Advocacy. SPA members will be included from Girona, France, Canada, and Australia (former). Another one on
Buildings is being considered. (I informed David Leitch in our phone conversation of the SAA publications in this area.)

FIDA has been contacting national associations for contributions. More information will be included in the next SPA newsletter. The recommendation from SPA is that FIDA contact associations directly. It was also emphasized that FIDA funding is targeted directly at specific projects on non-European countries.

**Translations:** The Awards Program information has been translated into French and Spanish. All the SPA meeting minutes have been translated into French. The SPA General Assembly meeting minutes of delegates have been translated into French and Spanish. Everything that was on the list generated in Brussels to be translated has been done at the cost of €7,500. More funds will be needed for Spanish translations in FY15.

**SPA Meeting Attendance:** France, Poland, and Catalonia had informed Fred van Kan of their inability to attend and the reasons why. Mexico’s and Brazil’s members have not only not attended the past three meetings, but they have not informed anyone of their intention not to attend. As per the by-laws, non-attendance at three successive meetings is grounds for replacement. Fred van Kan will look into this to see if these countries will appoint someone else who will attend or replace them with another country. Furthermore, neither Hong Kong’s nor Korea’s delegates attended in Brussels or in Boston, so they are now on the watch list.

**Interchange of Information:** The Section for Local, Municipal, and Territorial Archives (SLMT) has inquired about the possibility of working together with SPA. Since SPA tries to work with local archivists when meeting in a locale, there will be an effort to arrange a meeting with local archivists in Girona in the fall. Various ideas for discussion were put forth for such a meeting including an English translation of Cristina Bianchi’s manual for municipal records management, the NHPRC grant being administered by Simmons College on an archives curriculum for municipal clerks, eGovernment, open government, etc.

**Conference:** Bernhard Post discussed his ideas about a conference on *Economy and Ethics and the Responsibility of Archives* (Germany). Politically this is a touchy subject since it could deal with ethical issues dealing with corporations that are or have worked with various issues such as forced labor, etc. There has not been a lot of response to this idea. He will give a short presentation to try to convince the German national association to sponsor such a conference. If it is not accepted, the question is where to go from there. Since the focus is really on corporate archives, the feeling is that this would not be under the purview of SPA. It was suggested that possibly it could occur under the auspices of the Business Archives Section. Fred van Kan will approach the Business Archives Section about possibly a joint sponsorship of a session at the 2015 Conference.

**ICA Website:** Even after discussions with David Leitch in April 2013, all the Sections are still listed under their acronyms instead of their names. Also, all the newsletters appear to be in one place, but there is no link from the Section’s part of the website.
There is also currently no information on the Girona Conference on the website. At the least there should be a link to the Conference’s website. At the most, the Conference website should be part of the ICA website. The SPA members felt that there were still significant issues with the SPA website that needed to be addressed.

**Phone Conversation with ICA Executive Director David Leitch:** The conversation began with an inquiry into the possibility of ICA facilitating archival exchanges of individuals between countries. His immediate reaction is that this is something that ICA could possibly set up on their website as a membership benefit and self-serve so that one person could post an interest in such an exchange and institutions willing to host an exchange could also post information. Next on the list was the ICA website. In addition to the information noted above, there was a request to bring all the information relating to each Section into one location. David mentioned that many of the activities are being brought under the PCOM umbrella. There will be a lot of discussion on how groups, the hierarchy, sections, and roundtables, etc., work and will work in the future. The comment was that ICA’s organization is far too complicated, and that order needs to be made of it. This will occur under the aegis of PCOM. Another discussion point was the inclusion of more records management concerns/sessions in the ICA Conference, particularly since ARMA International is mostly a North American organization, and ICA could then help address this issue in other countries. That is an issue that will be brought up at the next Executive Committee meeting. David then raised the question as to whether the ICA Conferences should have a theme or not. I gave a brief synopsis of how SAA organizes its conferences as to whether there is or is not a theme and how the program committee works. Hopefully this will be of assistance to them as they continue to experiment with the annual conference. There was also discussion about providing an opportunity for the national archivists and other archivists and national associations to meet and speak to each other. ICA, in conjunction with France and the Netherlands, is investigating the possibility of offering members of their national associations membership in ICA at a reduced rate. Stay tuned. Finally, there had been a real push to hold the 2015 ICA conference in Africa (Mozambique), but the organizers of the regional conference were unwilling to move their conference to Mozambique in conjunction with ICA. As a consequence, ICA is investigating other venues for 2015. There is definitely interest in holding a conference in Africa but not in 2015.

**Advocacy:** As both ICA and ICA SPA have decided to focus on Advocacy, the next topic of discussion was SPA’s role in doing so. Vilde Ronge discussed activities in Norway in relation to advocacy both within and beyond the national association. One of the things that they do is offer a large number of educational courses. They have also spent a fair amount of time checking the government website to learn of hearings, bills, etc. that could affect or be affected by archives and records management. Then they have drafted comments and submitted them. They have also worked on involving the press in their activities. At work Vilde and her staff have worked on thinking out-of-the-box in using humor and entertainment to gain the attention of the powers-that-be regarding both archives and records management. In the Association Vaudoise des Archivistes in Switzerland, they have developed a flyer targeted directly at younger people about archives and records management. This is hard to distribute in the corporate world, but
they are making some progress. The local association also awards a prize to the best archives student in the region. Cristina Bianchi has also written a *Manuel pratique de gestion des documents: mettre en place les principes de Records management dans les communes vaudoises*. This is a records management/archives manual targeted at those who know nothing about archives or records management. There was discussion of translating it into English. In Alberta, Canada, Claude Roberto has run a campaign based on the Kill the Rat campaign in the 1940s. It emphasizes the danger to archives and includes education, workshops, and interactions with politicians regarding the possibility of the destruction of gun applications. They have also run an annual archival photo competition to create a calendar. Canada has also emphasized the Universal Declaration on Archives (actually served as a model for the UDA) and pushing the recognition of June 9 as International Archives Day. In February they hold a Family Day at the Provincial Archives for families to visit the vault, and they conduct workshops and activities for children, including genealogical activities. That evening they run a film festival with older films and highlight items from the archives. All attendees are provided with information about the archives in the form of small booklets. There is also an emphasis on matching the social studies curriculum in Alberta. Much of this information is also put on thumb drives for people to take with them when they leave.

The discussion then moved to some golden rules for advocacy, including

1. Be clear about the message,
2. Be sure of the target group (i.e. know to whom you are speaking),
3. Do not use jargon,
4. Be focused,
5. Dare to be aggressive and assertive,
6. Do not be afraid to use humor,
7. Do not forget your partners (i.e. collaborate), and
8. Be active, not passive.

Discussion then moved on to lobbying by associations using the media (with examples), and other questions and examples were raised. These included

1. How do we get the media’s attention?
2. How do we develop projects for advocacy?
3. The need to start with what the other person does.
4. Developing Advocacy Awards.
5. The Elevator pitch.
7. Outreach to people outside the archival profession to become archivists.

The group had reviewed the *Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists in Support of Human Rights* produced by the Human Rights Section. While everyone thought that it was excellent as an archival document, there was a feeling that it should be shortened to have more impact. One thought was to list the principles at the beginning of the document and then expand upon them in the rest of the document. The question was raised as to how this was going to be publicized. It will be sent to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly at the Conference in Girona. The focal point is
definitely on human rights. Finally, one comment was as an archival document it is excellent, but if it were to include records management, it would have to be completely rewritten.

Finally there was a request for assistance in establishing a new professional association in Ukraine. The group there offered to translate documents into Russian. However, it was noted that the Russians would not accept the Russian translations unless they were done by Russians in Russia. The discussion ended there. Also France and Catalonia need to be involved in the UDA working group. REFEBAD in Senegal noted that they are doing a fair amount but cannot travel because of lack of funds. ANAI in Italy is keeping in touch but cannot attend. Finally, correspondence from the Association des Archivistes Française noted that it will be sending a letter to all the European Union candidates regarding the proposed regulations.

The meeting ended with a discussion of logistical issues. The next Steering Committee meeting will be at the ICA Conference in Girona, Spain, on October 11, 2014, from 9:30 to 11:30 am. The General Assembly will be held on October 14, 2014, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. There is also a move to meet with local archivists as well as the SPA delegates at the Conference. Next spring’s SPA meeting location is not decided yet, but options are Poland, Norway, Canada, and France, as of now. SPA will also meet at the next ICA Annual Conference, but no one knows where yet.