

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
August 17–18, 2015  
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel  
Cleveland, Ohio**

**External Representative Report:  
International Council on Archives  
Section of Professional Associations (SPA)  
(Prepared by Becky Haglund Tousey, CA)**

The International Council on Archives' (ICA) Section of Professional Associations (SPA) Bureau (previously known as steering committee) met in Warsaw, Poland, on May 18-20, 2015. I attended as a representative of both the Academy of Certified Archivists and the Society of American Archivists.

Other SPA Bureau members present in addition to me were from Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Israel, Poland, France, Norway, and Spain (Catalonia). These same countries were represented at the October 2014 meeting in Girona, Spain. But in the case of the France and Spain/Catalonia associations, a different person represented those associations at this meeting in Warsaw. Country associations again not sending a Bureau representative were Mexico, Brazil, Korea and China. So there is consistency as to which Bureau countries participate and which do not.

**SPA BUREAU MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

**Archives Tours**

Monday was spent traveling to Radom, Poland, to visit the newest (and the only purpose-built) state archives building in Poland. There are 33 state archives in Poland. We also visited the offices of the Polish archives association (SAP). SAP has 1,800 members and membership dues are very low. It creates revenue from publications and workshops. It also actually provides archives services similar to those offered by commercial service providers. We visited one of SAP's three archive repositories – the newest one – which holds 60 kilometers of records and has space for 40 kilometers more. SAP was, until a few years ago, the largest expert on archives in the country. Now they are challenged by the market with new commercial vendors entering the field, offering the same services but at a lower cost.

The National Archives of Poland consists of three central offices and we visited two of them on Wednesday: the Central Archives of Modern Records and the Digital Archives.

A significant portion of Poland's recorded heritage was destroyed during World War II. Only fragments of pre-1940 records survived – thus the name “modern archives.” The Digital Archives operations currently include the digitizing of analog (text and audio visual) records. They have only recently begun to think about how to deal with born-digital records.

I returned home on Thursday, but most of the other Bureau members stayed on to attend a two-day conference held in Warsaw titled “Archives in the Social Environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

### **Business Meeting**

The Bureau business meeting was held all day on Tuesday and Wednesday morning. The Chair is Fred van Kan from the Netherlands. Most of the meeting dealt with administrative and governance issues and reports from the chair.

**SPA Membership:** SPA currently has 72 member associations. This is down from a high of 80 members, likely due to the economic downturn. There are quite a few associations in arrears, including two associations in Brazil, China, Greece, and ARMA.

In terms of the Bureau membership, four country associations have not sent a representative to the Bureau meetings for the past two years: Korea, Mexico, Brazil, and China. Member associations participate on the Bureau for a 4-year term. So the absent country associations cannot be replaced until 2016 when the new SPA Bureau roster is appointed.

**Report on ICA Executive Board Meeting:** SPA Chair Fred van Kan reported on the ICA executive board meeting, which was held in Bali, Indonesia, in April.

- ICA President David Fricker emphasized the importance of SPA for ICA's advocacy. Government archives are not free to advocate, but associations can lobby and advocate. The French archival association (AAF) is registered as a lobbying association. AAF is working on guidelines for their lobbying positions regarding electronic data and other issues. The Bureau's AAF representative said AAF would be happy to share those guidelines once they are completed.
- ICA Section chairs unanimously submitted a resolution to the executive board asking that section funding revert back to the previous method. Starting in 2014 sections no longer received an allocation to spend as they saw fit. All requests for funding had to be submitted to, and approved by, the Programme Committee (PCOM). Sections have been very unhappy with this arrangement. Some executive board members were not supportive of the resolution, so it did not pass. However, with the encouragement of ICA President David Fricker, a compromise was reached. Starting in 2016 sections will receive an allocation, but that allocation will be less than it was prior to 2014.
- There was much discussion about the African strategy and how to get more African participation in ICA. Africa as a continent is complex – Arab countries in the north, French-speaking countries in the center, and English-speaking countries in the south.

African members point out that the ICA annual conferences discuss new developments in technology, but their African colleagues are just trying to deal with the basics of Archives. At the upcoming annual meeting in Iceland, all African members will be asked to attend a roundtable meeting, and ICA funds will help support their attendance.

- The Expert Group on Advocacy developed strategies and actions for Archives on Social Media. Their document was presented to the executive board and approved. It will be posted on the ICA website for public comment in the near future. When it is posted I will forward the link to you.
- During the executive board meeting SPA Chair Fred van Kan attended a meeting of PERSIST. PERSIST is not an official ICA working group but a UNESCO project to preserve digital heritage, and Fred reported on those discussions.  
[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/persist\\_unesco\\_digital\\_strategy\\_for\\_information\\_sustainability/#.VXXIUdJVhHw](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/persist_unesco_digital_strategy_for_information_sustainability/#.VXXIUdJVhHw)

PERSIST has two task forces – one on content and one on technology. The content task force – led by IFLA – is creating appraisal guidelines for digital heritage. The task force on technology is chaired by David Fricker, Fred van Kan as vice-chair. Their goal is to identify the types of software that need to be preserved in a global repository of software systems. They will work with Microsoft, Oracle, and other software companies to determine how to develop the repository. This is a challenging project on many levels. It will be interesting to see what types of deliverables come from this project and how scalable their recommendations will be.

- The Human Rights Working Group submitted its “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists” to the executive board for approval. It was tabled while David Fricker contacts the Working Group to ask that the text be revised to include records managers. There was some discussion about whether to bring in ARMA to offer its perspective. But ICA has an Expert Group on Records Management so the needed expertise is already available within ICA.

### **SPA Projects and Strategic Objectives: Collaboration and Advocacy:**

- As part of SPA’s focus on advocacy, we are planning a film festival - “movies on Archives” – for the ICA Congress in 2016. A call will be sent out for institutions and associations to submit their archives/records management-themed videos.
- The Norwegian archival association is asking ICA for an advocacy position paper about email and the importance of managing and archiving it. They do not want “how to” guidelines but a statement about the importance of managing email and the risks to institutions if this is not done. There was lengthy discussion about this request. Clearly every government and organization is facing similar challenges with email. Two SPA Bureau members will work on a draft statement that the Bureau will discuss at its September meeting in Reykjavik.
  - The list of SPA member websites is posted on the ICA website but needs to be updated. This is something the Secretariat must do since they have current membership records. Here is the link to that list: <http://www.ica.org/769/useful-links/links-to-spa-members-websites.html>
- On Wednesday morning we had a Skype call with Secretary General David Leitch.

- David reported that two ICA staffers are retiring so there will be a time of transition as new staff members are hired. Plans are still in place to move the ICA website to Drupal later this year.
- There was also discussion about ARMA and what role it plays (or not) in ICA, particularly related to the Human Rights document referenced above. David feels it is a strategic error to defer to ARMA on records management matters. ICA is about the life-cycle of records, not just historical archives.
- On the topic of offering combined national association dues and individual membership in ICA, the Netherlands and France archives associations piloted this initiative in 2014. In the Netherlands, 11 association members paid an additional €15 to join ICA. France's add-on cost was €10 for the first year but would increase to €30 for following years. (ICA Category D/individual annual membership is €30.) About 25 France association members paid the additional cost to join ICA. David said this is a modest start and he would like to build on it. It was not clear why the add-on cost was different for the two country associations. SPA Bureau members felt the add-on cost should be as consistent as possible across the associations. This raised the question of what national associations were charging their membership for annual dues. One SPA Bureau member will be collecting information on association dues costs via a survey tool.
- David is also trying to interest SAA and ICA in holding a joint annual meeting. But he says "there has not been much interest by SAA leadership." *[Highlight added by staff.]*
- David informed the Bureau that his term will end in September of 2016. So there will be a search for a new ICA Secretary General.
- There was lengthy discussion about the current organizational structure and governance of ICA. Improvements have been made in the past few years, but ICA's structure is still outdated, complex, and slow-moving. There are growing numbers of working groups and expert groups which overlap in scope with committees, sections, and branches. For example: SPA's focus is on collaboration and advocacy. But there is now an Expert Group on Advocacy. What should SPA's role be in relation to the Expert Group on Advocacy? How do we best determine what the interests are of member associations? There was consensus that SPA needs to clarify and refine its role with ICA. There was a recognition that it is challenging for a small volunteer committee to "move the needle" on issues faced by the national associations and the profession globally. So it is important to be focused and help associations learn from each other rather than duplicate what those associations are already doing.
- The SPA chair will investigate the possibility of increasing the number of associations represented on the Bureau for the 2016-2020 term and replacements for the Brazil, China, Mexico, and Korea associations should be identified. An invitation will be distributed to associations not already sending a rep, to gauge their interest in participating on the Bureau.

**Future Meetings:**

- 2015 ICA annual meeting will be held in Reykjavik, Iceland, September 25-29.
- 2016 Spring SPA Bureau meeting will be held in Paris, hosted by the France archives association.
- 2016 September ICA Quadrennial Congress will be held in Seoul, Korea, hosted by the National Archives of Korea. The theme will be “Archives, Harmony and Friendship.”

**FOR THE SAA COUNCIL: DISCUSSION OR ACTION TOPICS**

Publicize to SAA members the availability of the SPA Advocacy brochure:

<http://www.ica.org/16695/toolkits-guides-manuals-and-guidelines/spa-brochure-on-advocacy.html>

Publicize to SAA members the Strategy for Archives and Social Media document when it is posted for comment. I will share when available.

Publicize to SAA members any deliverables from UNESCO’s PERSIST project. I will share when available.

Gauge the Council’s interest in participating in a joint SAA/ICA membership renewal initiative once the ICA member cost is clarified.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Haglund Tousey, CA  
June 12, 2015*