



# THE BUSINESS ARCHIVIST & ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

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## The Leary Incident: The Web, Tradition, and the Ugly Archivist

By Paul C. Lasewicz, Corporate Archivist, IBM Corporation

A couple of years back, Lotus software conducted a television advertising campaign that featured comedian Denis Leary. One spot had Denis, a sarcastic Boston-area comedian, snidely strolling through a cybercafe chiding Internet users for merely "browsing." Another had Denis verbally shredding a smart-alecky teenager who had the temerity to suggest that the Web was for fun.

These commercials are a good point of departure for this article for two reasons. First, they focused on changing conceptions of the relevance of the Internet. Secondly, the reception of the commercials' in the marketplace demonstrates how even the most information savvy among us can still be guilty of tunnel vision, because while the Lotus campaign was well received domestically, it bombed internationally. Seemed Denis came across as 'The Ugly American.' Lessons drawn from both these aspects of the Leary Incident can prove valuable for archivists, for I believe as a group we could all benefit from rethinking how we relate to web technology.

I say this because I feel as a group we tend not to be terribly good users of technology. When we run across new situations, we naturally look to the past, to see what's been done before, and to try to adapt old methods to current issues. But there's never been anything like the web before, so our instinctive proclivity to look to the past may be putting us at a disadvantage. So my question is: are we, collectively speaking,

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# Editor's Note

Well, we're back again for the latest issue of *The Business Archivist & Archives Newsletter*. As co-editors, Cheryl Chouiniere and myself, Steve Hausfeld, are excited to bring you the latest updates in the world of corporate archives. We hope that you'll find this issue even more informative and enjoyable than the last; we certainly enjoyed the work involved to bring it to you. Again, this issue, we have a few people to thank for their help in bringing this together: Katie Dishman, the outgoing Section Chair; Kathleen Collins, the incoming Chair; Doug Byers of Think, Corp. who designed the layout; and most importantly, our main submitters: Paul Lasewicz from IBM, Corp., Marcia Douglas of LGS Group, Inc. and Susan Maclin of American International Group, Inc., without whom we would have had a much shorter newsletter.

Please note that we are working with new section Chair Kathleen Collins in an effort to resolve problems with our section members not receiving issues of the newsletter. If you did not receive a copy of the April 2000 issue and would like to, please contact one of us.

We are again seeking submissions for the next issue of *The Business Archivist & Archives Newsletter*. How is your archives growing, changing, being used? How is your role as archivist growing and changing? How are you connecting to your world? Email, write, or call us and tell us what exciting projects your working on. **The deadline for submissions is February 30, 2001.** Send your submissions to Steve Hausfeld (see contact information on the Leadership List).

## SECTION WEBSITE

The Business Archives Section website has been officially launched and is available to members. Please take a look at the site at <http://www.saa-businessarchives.com/>. Many thanks go to all those who were involved in the site's development to date. As you will see from the annual business meeting minutes, Section Chair Kathleen Collins will be addressing the manner in which the site is further developed and periodically updated. The co-editors plan to make additional use of the website by taking *The Business Archives and Archivists Newsletter* electronic for the next issue, which is due out in March.

# Letter From The Chair

Kathleen Collins, Corporate Archivist,  
Bank of America Corporate Archives

Today's topic is Business Archives Survival 101. We have returned from the SAA Annual Meeting in Denver motivated to do our jobs more effectively, inspired by the work of our colleagues in the profession, and better informed about all things archival. A few days or weeks later, gloomy reality sets in. How does a dedicated archivist maintain this positive momentum in the face of layoffs, budget cuts, stock-price woes, merger and acquisition uncertainties, and companies going belly-up? We probably all want to achieve excellence in our profession, but do we know how to last in our profession long enough attain these goals? Each of us must become essential to the operation of the company—and remain so—or risk being down-sized right out the door. Those of us who think that making incremental changes will keep us relevant enough to survive need to examine the pace and nature of changes throughout our companies.

Tom Peters, author of "In Search of Excellence" and many other best-selling books, made some frightening predictions at a recent six-hour presentation in South San Francisco. In what he calls "the death knell for ordinary," he predicts that 90% of white-collar jobs will be eliminated or drastically changed in the next 10 years, and that's for above-average performers. The merely average workers and companies will be trampled by automation and the internet. "Stand out—as individual or company—or get run over. At, literally, the speed of light." We

might paraphrase Tom Peters' warning: stand out as an archivist or get eliminated.

Younger workers may be more aware than those of us over forty that all jobs are now at risk. It's a rare person who will stay at the same company for his or her entire working life. Even those who find a position that lasts decades may find that the corporation's expectations have increased beyond reason. As business archivists, most of us have experienced these expectations to "build shareholder value" by doing more work, at a faster pace, with a smaller staff, and fewer funds.

To survive as corporate archivists, we have to be finely tuned into and focused on the company's shifting priorities, culture, and needs, more so than in any other archival setting. We've got to have a high profile in the company, have lots of powerful allies who will help us survive the next round of layoffs, have a compelling presence on the intranet and the company website, be an essential player in the "knowledge management" world or at least be an essential and fast source of crucial information for the company. We've got to keep adding knowledge and skills that let us function and communicate in a wired world. I'd like to see more discussion of business archives' survival strategies in a corporate world where constant departmental reorganization is guaranteed, down-sizing is a constant, and the notion of "permanence" is a relative term.

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# Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 31, 2000

Submitted by Michael R. Bullington, Assistant Archives Manager, Kraft Foods

## WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

*The meeting began at 8:07 am.*

The minutes from the 1999 annual business meeting were approved.

Section Chair Katie Dishman (General Mills) welcomed the attendees. She stated that she chaired the previous day's section discussion group due to the resignation of Craig St. Clair (formerly of Texaco), who is no longer a practicing archivist. She thanked all those who attended that discussion on "Knowledge Management." She also thanked the speakers Marcia Douglas of LGS Group in Toronto and Susan Maclin (AIG). She thanked Hal Keiner (Biltmore Company) for planning the section social that was held at the Wynkoop Brewing Company. Hal Keiner thanked the following corporations for providing financial support for the section social: Bank of America, Forbes, GAP, Procter & Gamble, IBM, Kraft Foods, Cigna, Coca-Cola, Ford, AIG, Winthrop Group, and Biltmore Company. Keiner then encouraged others to provide financial support for next year's social to be held in Washington, D.C.

## OLD BUSINESS

*Web Site*

Dishman stated that Debbie Waller (The History Factory) oversaw the development of the section business website, which is now available. The site's URL is:

[www.saa-businessarchives.com](http://www.saa-businessarchives.com).

Paul Lasewicz (IBM) stated that he had reviewed the site prior to the meeting and that it needed to be updated for style and to be added to in order to remain current. Leadership for further development of the website needs to be decided upon.

*Newsletter*

Cheryl Chouiniere (The History Factory) reported on the newsletter. She stated her regrets to the members that the June/July issue was not completed as planned. She explained that she and her co-editors had been unaware that SAA does not publish section newsletters during the month of the annual meeting. She continued that the next issue is on target and it will be sent in early October. Chouiniere solicited content from the section members. She mentioned that with the section website now available, it is possible that summaries of future discussion group or roundtable session presentations would be included in the newsletter, with full-text versions available on the website. Likewise, she commented that the hope is to move to a fully electronic newsletter in the near future, but that a committee probably needs to be formed to do this. She concluded by stating that the continuing newsletter co-editors are herself, Eleanor Fye (Microsoft), and Steve Hausfeld (The History Factory).

## NEW BUSINESS

*2001 Roundtable*

Lasewicz discussed the plans for next year's roundtable meeting. He stated that although a subject or theme has not yet been decided upon, it will be a large and ambitious endeavor. It will feature teleconferencing with Europe on a topic pertaining to business archivists or a related field in the United States and abroad. The preliminary discussion has the meeting being divided into morning and afternoon sessions—followed by the social. Lasewicz stated that costs for the teleconference might have to be born by section members. He concluded by asking for assistance in planning. Becky Haglund Tousey (Kraft Foods) introduced herself as the SAA section liaison and she inquired when the roundtable meeting would be held in 2001. Lasewicz replied that it would be held on Wednesday the week of the annual meeting.

Discussion ensued if the roundtable should be offered to all annual meeting attendees. Lasewicz stated that this is a possibility—but this full-day event would have an impact on the Program Committee. He continued that although SAA supports the section's roundtable plans, the business section would be doing a lot of work on their own. Jean Elliott (Chase Manhattan Bank) stated that perhaps the Program

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Committee might be open to offering the roundtable as part of the program sessions. Catherine May (Salt River Project Archives) said that it is difficult for many SAA members to attend the Wednesday meeting. Karen Benedict stated that it could be offered as a pre-conference workshop on Tuesday. She continued that since the roundtable was tentatively scheduled for morning and afternoon sessions, that perhaps it could be scheduled over a two-day period. Debate then commenced concerning the added costs that a Tuesday workshop would mean for section members. Thomas Connors (University of Maryland—National Public Broadcasting) stated that the two-day format would present scheduling problems for our European colleagues. Maclin and Art Ponder (DaimlerChrysler) stated that this indeed would be difficult due to European work schedules. Keiner commented that the section could lose control of the content of the roundtable to the Program Committee if it were to be held on the proposed Thursday/Friday format. Amy Fischer (Procter & Gamble) asked if the roundtable had a theme or format? Lasewicz replied that it does not at this time as it is still in the planning stages. Dishman called for a voice vote of the membership to confirm that the roundtable session be held on Wednesday. The membership voted in favor of Wednesday.

#### *2001 Program Committee*

Dishman requested section members submit business-related proposals to the Program Committee. Karen Benedict (Winthrop Group), Program Committee chair, stated that the

theme for next year's meeting is loosely Globalization of Archives and the Impact of Technology. She continued that the 2001 section roundtable plans would fit perfectly into the general theme of the meeting. Proposals are due by October 6, 2000. Several members suggested possible topics for sessions including knowledge management, legal issues, oral histories used in corporations, electronic records, copyright and the internet, and saving archives in the face of international mergers.

#### *Steering Committee*

Dishman thanked the past chair Lasewicz and the outgoing Steering Committee members Mary Edith Arnold (Motorola), Craig St. Clair, and Ed Eckert (Lucent Technologies). She then introduced the new committee members: Kathleen Collins (Bank of America) as incoming chair, Lauri Banducci (GAP), Ted Ryan (Coca-Cola), Bruce Bruemmer (Cargill) as incoming vice-chair, and Mike Bullington (Kraft Foods).

#### *Business Archives Workshop*

Keiner asked for an update on the status of the SAA Business Archives Workshop and proposed that an advanced workshop be offered. Phil Mooney (Coca-Cola) stated that the workshop was not offered this year. He stated that one is planned for next fall in Seattle and perhaps at the ARMA meeting in Montreal. He continued that a previous workshop held in conjunction with ARMA was successful. He welcomed any ideas for possible sites but stated that tours were a necessary component of the workshop. Aimee Felker (CIGNA) stated that MARAC and NEA would be meeting in Poughkeepsie, NY in October 2002.

It might be an ideal location for the workshop since the meeting's site was near New York City. Dishman thanked Elizabeth Adkins (Ford) and Mooney for their efforts with the workshop. She also stated that Mooney was being named an SAA Fellow at the awards ceremony to be held during the conference.

#### *SAA/ARMA Joint Committee*

Ed Rider (Procter & Gamble) introduced Diane Carlisle from ARMA International. He continued that the two of them had worked together for three years on a records retention program for industry, known as GRIP (Guidelines to Retention by Industry Project). Carlisle described GRIP and mentioned that it is on the ARMA website. John Zwicky (American Academy of Pediatrics) asked if GRIP included information on non-profit organizations. Rider stated that it did and that the information provided was extremely useful.

#### *Standards Committee*

Barry Malone (Wyeth-Ayerst Research) stated that he had attended the Standards Committee meeting and that they were looking for a liaison from the Business Section. Tousey stated that she was the Council liaison to the section and she would seek clarification on this. Malone continued that the Standards Committee inquired if there were any prerequisites for attending the workshops. Tousey replied that there were not many, but those that were are included in the workshop's scope note.

#### *SAA Council Members*

Dishman stated that Tousey was elected to the SAA Council and Adkins was elected as its Treasurer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 am.

# Knowledge Sharing at American International Group, Inc.: A Case Study in Participation and Perspective by the Archivist

Presented by Susan C. Maclin,  
Corporate Archivist and Curator of Special Properties  
American International Group, Inc.

American International Group, Inc. (AIG) was founded in 1919 in Shanghai, China by 27-year-old C.V. Starr, a California native. Today, AIG is the leading U.S.-based international insurance organization and the largest underwriter of commercial and industrial coverage in the United States. Its member companies (over 700) write property, casualty, marine, life and financial lines insurance and are engaged in a range of financial services and investment management business in approximately 130 countries and jurisdictions.

If it so successful, why would AIG be interested in Knowledge Sharing? Does a holding company like AIG need it? And if it does, is there a place in the effort for the archives?

The answer to the first question is "to continue to grow the bottomline." An example of why KS is needed occurred in 1967 when C.V. Starr was still in charge. A marine underwriter's conference was held in New York where Mr. Starr explained that he hoped to improve the company's poor marine experience. He felt that underwriters worldwide would improve their performance if their systems of communication on risks and conditions were pooled and made available to all offices.

KS methods would have improved the less than stellar marine underwriting division in

1967, but unfortunately with no mechanisms in place to facilitate the sharing or pooling of this information it could not be done.

Does a holding company need KS? Mr. Greenberg still thought so thirty-plus years later. In 1999 he held a meeting with four senior executives who were initially asked to design an AIG help desk that would "enable AIG employees to better direct their questions and ideas."

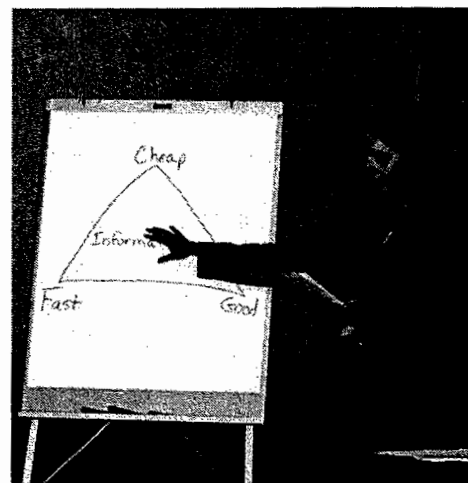
From a review of existing resources, a variety of employees were queried about their needs and two major conclusions were made:

1. Existing help-desk resources were very fragmented – employees must cope with a variety of disconnected and confusing resources.

2. Need to do a better job at capturing and sharing institutional knowledge – to identify and discuss things that work and things that don't work.

The first point on expanding the help desk would be done immediately. The second point was more formative and needed a map of AIG's culture to compare with what was already working in the marketplace.

A Knowledge Sharing Task Force was identified and approved by the Chairman. Chaired by the Senior Vice-President of Administrative Services, it included the CIO, CTO, VP of R&D, the Corporate



Susan Maclin, Corporate Archivist and Curator of Special Properties, American International Group

Archivist, the technical expert from the Training Department, and three experts from IT. With a six-month deadline, the assignment was to "submit a plan on how AIG can better capture and share its institutional knowledge."

Mapping of AIG's culture involved internal and external surveys. Internally, the single greatest frustration to the North American employees was that they "did not know what was going on" in the rest of the company. Externally, insurance buyers often cited AIG as "a confusing company." The conclusion was that current resources were fragmented and not well communicated. The goal, therefore, was "to link employees and customers to the right knowledge at the point in time when it is needed."

The recommended approach

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would be to apply a broad knowledge-sharing program in phased solutions consistent with the overall vision.

The task force was divided into several committees to do the following:

- evaluate existing "communities of practice" including apprenticeship, mentoring and succession planning programs;
- inventory existing expert networks – internal and external sites and determine their effectiveness;
- obtain case studies on "best practices" to determine what the global competition is doing;
- determine what "stories" are already available in the archives that would be applicable;
- determine which segment of the company would be an appropriate place for a pilot program applicable company-wide;
- development of and successful launch of repositories of information/technology initiatives focusing on the InfoExchange desk.

An initial audit of existing information resources at AIG was done in May 1999. It revealed over 50 internal intranet sites and over 40 internet sites representing close to 3600 web pages. One year later there are over 150 intranet sites and 65 internet sites representing over 45,000 web pages. While many of the sites are vastly improved in one year, there are still shortcomings particularly with searching mechanisms and the lack of indexing.

The archivist was assigned to the case study committee and given business specific questions that would be answered through "stories." The general perception

was that the archives held only the broad, general history of the company but nothing specific. The oral histories provided very specific answers, many from the company's most revered senior advisers. It was an eye-opener to the task force that the archives held materials that were applicable to specific projects and were especially suited to KS.

The case study committee found that these were also readily available, particularly through the "The Know Network" (see websites). The committee pulled case studies on 47 major corporations and identified companies to study further.

While the effort was an enormous amount of work, it was a tremendous learning experience for the entire task force. Such an effort never stops, is ongoing and requires constant training, updating, ownership and culture changes. In addition, there is no "quick fix" as the six month deadline quickly turned into a year.

During that year, however, many positive results were achieved to build on:

- The InfoExchange Desk is up and running in the U.S. with plans to go worldwide early next year. It has access to 600 Business Knowledge Associates (BKAs) identified around the world by senior management to "represent the business" and assist with difficult inquiries.
- A data dictionary is under construction by IT to maintain naming standards and allow better searching across the network infrastructure.
- A document management standard has now been established to build an enterprise document management system.
- A service improvement program based on Six Sigma has been

established and launched company-wide.

- The archivist will continue to be a consultant on the data dictionary, the retention schedule for the document management system, and the AIG glossary currently under construction at InfoExchange. The project allowed the archivist to meet regularly with senior management, heighten awareness of the archives and propose creative uses of its holdings.

#### *Bibliography*

*Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know* by Thomas H. Davenport and Laurence Prusak. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA. 1998.

*If Only We Knew What We Know* by Carla O'Dell and C. Jackson Grayson, Jr. with Nilly Essaides. The Free Press, NY. 1998.

*Harvesting Experience: Reaping the Benefits of Knowledge* by Jan Duffy, ARMA International, Prairie Village, KS. 1999.

#### *KM Websites*

[www.knowledgebusiness.com](http://www.knowledgebusiness.com)  
Entry to the "Know Networks" is through here. Part of it is free and part fee-based. Excellent site.

[www.intelligententerprise.com](http://www.intelligententerprise.com)  
The editorials are particularly interesting reading.

[www.kmworld.com](http://www.kmworld.com) Promotes KM technology. It current has posted an article that lists the 100 companies "that matter" in managing the thinking assets of an enterprise.

[www.knowledge-management.co.uk](http://www.knowledge-management.co.uk) Particularly worthwhile are the "editorials" and "the knowledge angle" sections. It is the online version of Knowledge Management Magazine.

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## Annual Meeting Discussion Group Presentations Continued

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### Summary

The following is a brief summary of excerpts from the presentation made by Marcia Douglas at the section discussion group on Wednesday, August 30th in Denver, Colorado. Requests from section members for an electronic copy of Douglas' PowerPoint presentation may be made to co-editor Cheryl Chouiniere (see Leadership List for contact information).

# Knowledge Management

Presented by Marcia Douglas,  
Work Management Specialist  
LGS Group, Inc.

Douglas opened her remarks with *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary's* definition of knowledge: "The fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association." She went on to share her equation for knowledge management as "Capturing the content of information resources, tacit and explicit + capturing the context surrounding information resources = innovation, information re-use, improved operations." She stated several attributes of knowledge including the fact that while the value of knowledge increases with use, it also may diminish as time passes. Douglas offered several principles of knowledge management. One is that it promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, retrieving, sharing and evaluating an

organization's information assets. Douglas offered several knowledge management caveats. The first is that knowledge management is a state of mind. Another is that technology is a small piece of the knowledge management puzzle and it's the wrong place to start.

Douglas stated that there are several things that need to be done when developing a knowledge management strategy. These include: getting commitment, creating a vision, developing a value proposition, identifying opportunities, assessing readiness, developing a business case, preparing an action plan, and knowledge management design



Marcia Douglas, Work Management Specialist, LGS Group, Inc.

and infrastructure. When creating a vision statement for knowledge management, the old standbys come into play. Be prepared to answer the who, what, when, why, and how. For the business case, consideration must be given to the one time costs (startup, replacement), ongoing costs (maintenance, depreciation), and benefits (tangible and intangible). The action plan should include objectives, scope, context, roles and responsibilities, critical success factors, deliverables, strategies, schedule and work plan, and a

communications plan. Douglas indicated that several things feed into the design and infrastructure of a knowledge management program. One of these is the tools combined to produce a knowledge environment (groupware, EDMS, Intranets, Push/Pull, portals, etc.).

In closing, Douglas gave examples of challenges and opportunities facing the archival and records management community, as well as success factors for implementing knowledge management. According to Douglas, primary challenges to knowledge management include: the fact that culture generally favors knowledge ownership instead of knowledge sharing, the need to incorporate it into daily activities, and that there many other business priorities that supercede knowledge management. Additional challenges include content management, taxonomy/indexing, scalability, security, and retention. Douglas stated that archivists, records managers, and librarians are among the very few who have the skills and experience required to develop the corporate taxonomy and standards needed. By way of opportunities, therefore, we can ensure that proper context is captured not just content, raise awareness of value of all types of "information," and move discussions from the purely technical to the cultural and business process perspective. Success factors for a knowledge management program are management support, continuous corporate funding, planned focused implementation strategy, defined and supported roles and responsibilities, cultural acceptance, personal rewards, and training.



# Member Updates

## Elizabeth Adkins

Kudos to Elizabeth Adkins, who was elected Treasurer of SAA.

## Elizabeth Arena

Elizabeth Arena joined American International Group, Inc. (AIG) in May as Archivist in the AIG Archives Department. Her primary responsibilities are for the audio/visual collections. She recently graduated with an MA in history and Certification in Archival Management and Historical Editing from New York University. Since Elizabeth has known for several years that she wanted to become an archivist, she managed both her undergraduate and graduate education with that in mind. She obtained archival experience by interning over the years in several New York repositories including NYU's university archives, the New York branch of NARA, and the American Express Corporate Archives. Elizabeth fills the position vacated by Thomas P. Heard, who is now Executive Records Administrator for the Office of the Chairman of AIG. He continues to report to the AIG Archives Department.

## William D. Caughlin

In January, William D. Caughlin joined SBC Communications Inc. to establish its national archives in San Antonio, Texas. SBC is a Fortune 15 company that provides telecommunications services through its subsidiaries: Southwestern Bell, Ameritech, Pacific Bell, SBC Telecom, Nevada Bell, SNET and Cellular One. Bill

previously worked for four-and-a-half years as the manager of corporate archives at Chicago-based Ameritech Corp. Before that, he was the project archivist and the summer intern at Kraft Foods, Inc. He holds a B.A. from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1984) and an M.L.I.S. and a certificate in archival enterprise from The University of Texas at Austin (1994).

During the summer of 1999, Caughlin and Ilana Pergam co-authored (with former intern Brian Coffey) a 192-page softcover book entitled, *Snapshots in Time: A Photographic History of Ameritech*. Through over 230 images, the work traces 121 years of communications service in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

## Joseph Ciccone

Joseph Ciccone was hired in June as the full-time corporate archivist for Merck & Co., Inc., one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies. In this position, Joe will manage the Merck Archives, which is based in the Company's corporate headquarters in Whitehouse Station, New Jersey and contains approximately 4,000 linear feet of records related to Merck and the companies with which Merck either merged or acquired: Sharp & Dohme, H.K. Mulford, Powers-Weightman-Rosengarten and Medco, to name a few. Prior to accepting this position, Ciccone had worked as the corporate archivist for Merck & Co., Inc. on a contractor basis since November 1998. Ciccone has a BA in history and political science from Southern

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## Corporate Archives Forum Meeting Update June 2000

*Submitted by Greg Hunter, Long Island University and Gord Rabchuk, Royal Bank of Canada*

The 3rd annual meeting of the Corporate Archives Forum (CAF) was held on June 22-23 in Montreal, Canada. The CAF is a small, informal group of corporate archivists who meet for in-depth discussions of topics of mutual interest. This year's topics included: knowledge sharing and knowledge management, oral history and knowledge management, fee-based strategies, Web capture, globalization of archives, Web delivery of archival content, and preserving digital information. The meeting was hosted by the Royal Bank of Canada.

The members of CAF are committed to sharing their discussions with the wider archival community in the hope that similar groups will do likewise. Additional information about CAF, along with copies of the meeting notes from the three annual meetings can be found at [www.hunterinformation.com/business.htm](http://www.hunterinformation.com/business.htm).

## Member Updates Continued

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Methodist University and an MLS with a concentration in archival management from Rutgers University School of Communication, Information, and Library Science.

### Phil Mooney

Kudos to Phil Mooney, who was inducted into the SAA Fellows at the annual awards ceremony held in Denver, CO this summer.

### Ilana N. Pergam

In June, Ilana N. Pergam became an employee of The Winthrop Group, Inc., serving as project archivist at Ameritech Corp. She reports to Bill Caughlin and is continuing work that began a year ago when she became the Ameritech archives intern. Before moving to Chicago in 1998, Ilana worked in New York City as a history teacher at the Chapin School and the Nightingale-Bamford School, as well as a desk assistant and off-air reporter for ABC News. Ilana received a B.A. from Yale University (1990) and an M.A. in American History from Loyola University of Chicago (May 2000).

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Please congratulate incoming section chair Kathleen Collins (Bank of America), section vice-chair Bruce Bruemmer (Cargill), and section steering committee members Lauri Banducci (GAP), Ted Ryan (Coca-Cola), and Mike Bullington (Kraft Foods).

## BUSINESS ARCHIVES LISTSERV

### SUBSCRIPTION INSTRUCTIONS

Address an e-mail message to [majordomo@gl.a.ac.uk](mailto:majordomo@gl.a.ac.uk). Leave the subject line blank, type "subscribe busarch" and your e-mail address into the body of the message, and send the e-mail.

### Deidre Thieman

In April, Miller Brewing Company appointed its first Corporate Archivist. Deidre Thieman holds a BA in Moving Image Arts (file and video) from the College of Santa Fe and an MLIS from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is a member of SAA, AMIA, and AFI. Prior to her official appointment, Deidre was a contract archivist for the Miller Brewing Company.

### Becky Haglund Tousey

Kudos to Becky Haglund Tousey for her election to the SAA Council.

### Steven Wheeler

Expected to be published in October by the New York Landmarks Conservancy is "Touring Lower Manhattan: Three Walks in New York's Historic Downtown", which is authored by Andrew S. Dikart and Steven Wheeler. Wheeler is the archivist for the New York Stock Exchange and co-author of an illustrated history, "The New York Stock Exchange: The First 200 Years."

## THE LEARY INCIDENT

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'The Ugly Archivist'? Are we failing to see the big picture of web technology?

In the Spring 1998 issue of the *American Archivist*, Jean Stephan Piche of the Canadian National Archives presents a cutting edge discussion of how archivists can better utilize the web. He outlines how to make appraisal more efficient and bring additional value to traditional hierarchical description by providing multiple views of the same information. But to a certain extent, Jean Stephan - by focusing on wringing the very last drops of information out of traditional archival description through a multidimensional, hyper linked portrayal of the material - is just paving over cowpaths.

And he's not alone out there. The state-of-the-art archival web technology right now is EAD ... which is essentially a tool for information delivery. Yet, one need only look at the fate of Pointcast - the one-time king of web deliverable content, since reduced to laying off half its workforce last year - to realize that information delivery is not the killer web application. What does it say about archivists when the profession's key web initiative is replicating a long-failed business model? When we are actively adding to the infoglut we complain so much about?

What we as archivists need to realize is that the web can mean so much more than mounting finding aids. Utilizing the web can mean providing unprecedented service levels to our customers by operating on a 7x24 basis. It can mean having a global reach. And most importantly, it can create

resource efficiencies, allowing us to do more with less.

But to use web technology to maximum advantage, we need to widen our minds, because web technology is a change agent that will force us to contemplate a fundamental transformation of traditional ways of doing things. The web focuses on pushing transaction-based activities to the user, and when we look at it in that light, it is clear that it has the potential to alter how we look at our materials, our clients, and our basic processes.

There are a number of archival processes that could benefit from a migration to a web environment. But for the purposes of this article, let's focus on just one - acquisitions in geographically distributed or even global organizational environments. Collecting records from distant repositories has long been an anathema for archivists, for the problems associated with distance, culture, language, and education are daunting. So daunting in fact that in the absence of effective overarching records management systems, the logistics of a system of satellite archives or the alternative of removing records from the proximity of their users and housing them in a centralized repository often prove too expensive to even contemplate, let alone implement. As a result, many archives focus on documenting what is feasible, which in practical terms often equates to that which is

local.

Web technology, however, now offers a viable, cost-effective alternative. Intranet or even Internet-mounted web forms can be crafted to manage records surveys and transfers, collecting all the information necessary about the records right from the people who know them best - the records creators or holders themselves. The data can be channeled into an archival database, automatically providing a paper trail. That same database could track who reviewed the accession, and when and how it was acted upon - for both workflow and audit purposes. The potential donor could also automatically receive an e-mail letting them know their proposed donation has been received, that it will be reviewed within a set time frame, that somebody will be getting back to them soon, and lastly, thanking them for their interest. Excellent customer service, with a minimum of effort.

The benefits to us? With such a process an archives could gain intellectual control over records it might never have otherwise acquired custody of, with very little commitment of its own resources. In addition, the records stay close to the people that understand them best and need them most.

Of course the thought of non-archivists entering data in an archival system can be discomfiting - scary, even. There's also the question of who services requests

for these off-site records. And there's the need to create back-end archival processes like review of the data entered and maintenance of relationships with these distributed records owners. But these are process-based issues which we can reasonably expect to be able to overcome.

The key point here is that with web technology logistics may no longer be the insurmountable obstacle it used to be. As the lessons of the Leary Incident teach us, this technology is a change agent that may force us to modify our traditional perspective of what is and isn't properly archival. The trick in overcoming our tendency towards tunnel vision - towards being the Ugly Archivist - lies in being able to use our professional knowledge as a guide to interacting with available organizational structures and resources, and being flexible enough to craft creative compromises that allow us to get the most out of the least. For archivists, tools like web technology provide yet another opportunity to continue to do what we've always done so well: adapt to changing conditions in order to provide rapid, cost-effective access to information the organization must have to meet its long-term business, legal, and historical needs.

## Don't Forget!

*Deadline for Submissions for the next newsletter issue is February 30, 2001.*

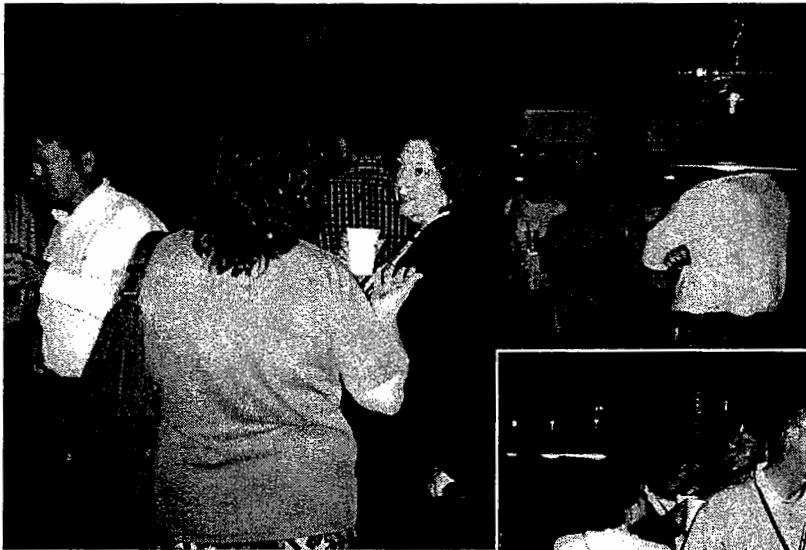
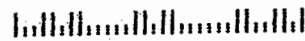


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*Section members attending the SAA Annual Meeting this summer enjoyed the section social, which was held at the Wynkoop Brewing Company in downtown Denver.*

