



# ACA News

The Newsletter of the Academy of Certified Archivists Issue 107 Fall 2020

## President's Message

Timothy A. Slavin, CA  
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs  
Dover, DE



This edition of the ACA News includes, perhaps, the most important news of the year: the list of newly Certified Archivists. I want to extend a personal welcome to each of our colleagues who have achieved this distinction and thank them for their efforts in improving our profession. And, on behalf of the ACA Board, I extend our congratulations.

Also, Lisa Lobdell, CA's article on her experiences in becoming a certified archivist provides a clear explanation of the process she undertook to achieve certification. I found Lisa's article to be an important reminder about the need to tell the story of archival certification to audiences outside of our profession. I hope that her re-telling of her archival certification inspires others to do the same, and to make a strong business case in our organizations for support of our certification (and re-certification) activities.

Mott Linn, CA's third installment on the history of the Academy of Certified Archivists is a great service to our organization and our profession. Since its inception in 1989, ACA has faced numerous challenges, including a seminal moment in 1994 when the decision to implement dues was made. The ACA Board will be reviewing the dues structure at its upcoming mid-year board meeting and will provide a report to all members on our findings and any recommendations which may come out of those discussions. ACA's modest dues structure has not been changed in more than 20 years.

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**President's Message** *(continued from previous page)*

Finally, the opportunities for service to ACA are numerous and wide-ranging, and I would encourage anyone with an interest in service to contact our Regent for Outreach, Dara Baker, CA. Dara has done a tremendous job in creating both vision and energy in her position as Regent and is always open to newcomers wanting to assist. Contact her at [outreach@certifiedarchivists.org](mailto:outreach@certifiedarchivists.org).

**Searching for a Job?**

Look at ACA's listing of job ads that are looking to hire Certified Archivists. Go to <https://www.certifiedarchivists.org/job-postings/>.

We depend on our membership to update us about recent openings that require or prefer an ACA certification. Please email [webmaster@certifiedarchivists.org](mailto:webmaster@certifiedarchivists.org) for questions, or to list/advertise a job opening that requires or prefers an ACA certification!

**Welcome New Secretariat**

Please welcome on board to ACA our new Secretariat, Michael T. Breslin. Mike has been with Capitol Hill Management as an Association Manager for over 3 years working with a number of organizations and societies. Mike brings to ACA over 10 years of experience in higher education, skills in database and membership management and data analysis. On a personal note, Mike lives in Albany with his wife and two daughters and enjoys reading, weightlifting and running. He graduated from Union College with a BS in math (how many of us CA's can say that) and earned an MBA from The Sage Colleges. We welcome Mike's analytical and problem solving skills as we move ACA in to our fourth decade.

**ACA Officers**

President (2019-2020)	Timothy A. Slavin, CA Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs Dover, DE
Vice President/ President-Elect (2019-2020)	Tomaro Taylor, CA USF Libraries Tampa, FL
Treasurer (2018-2020)	Gerrienne Schaad, CA Florida Southern College Lakeland, FL
Secretary (2019-2021)	Marie Force, CA Delta Flight Museum Atlanta, GA
Regent for Examination Administration (2019-2020)	Rosemary Pleva Flynn, CA University of North Dakota Energy & Environmental Research Center Grand Forks, ND
Regent for Examination Development (2018-2020)	Jane Zhang, CA Catholic University of America Department of Library of Information Science Washington, DC
Regent for Certification Maintenance (2019-2021)	Stephanie Bayless, CA National Archives at San Francisco San Bruno, CA
Regent for Outreach (2018-2020)	Dara Baker, CA National Archives and Records Administration College Park, MD
Immediate Past President & Re- gent for Nominations (2019-2020)	Todd Welch, CA Utah State University Merrill-Cazier Library Logan, UT

Contact information for the Officers and Regents is available on the ACA website:  
[www.certifiedarchivists.org/about-us/officers.html](http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/about-us/officers.html)

### From the Regent for Outreach

Dara Baker, CA  
National Archives and Records Administration  
College Park, MD



Dear Certified Archivists,

As the Regent for Outreach, I will be bringing to your attention news items, stories, issues, and announcements that speak to the core mission of the Academy of Certified Archivists: to provide independent verification of archival knowledge, skills, and abilities through its examination and recertification processes, which benefits archivists, the profession, and its stakeholders. This year and in the coming election cycle, we will be refocusing on the benefits of membership in the Academy of Certified Archivists to our new, renewing, and emeritus members.

ACA will have a presence at conferences across the country: the Society of Southwest Archivists, the Western Archivists joint meeting, the Midwest Archives Conference and the Mid-Atlantic Archives Conference. In addition, I hope to reach out to some local state and regional archives. Any CA can contact the Regent for Outreach and propose a CA presence, especially if you are open to hosting "Office Hours." We'd also like to reach out to our student groups across the country. If you teach in an Archives or Library Science/ Museum Studies program and plan to do outreach to students let me know! That can be counted as credit for recertification and the Regent for Outreach can provide information and tools (and swag) to help! I, myself, started as a provisional archivist, taking the exam

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**From the Regent for Outreach** (*continued from previous page*)

2 months after starting my first job. I am the first to celebrate and promote the Academy's outreach to students and new professionals of all ages!

And for those of us in the intermediate years of our careers, I would like to hear from you how the Academy of Certified Archivists can help in your career, in your job search, in your tenure campaign, and in your salary negotiation. The reasons to be a Certified Archivist can be clear: proof of knowledge, career advancement, community and professional development. More than that, being a Certified Archivist announces to the community of cultural heritage professionals that you have the ability to pass a grueling exam, have read and understood the literature in the field, and have continued to be actively engaged in the profession through work, volunteering, conference attendance, education, teaching, and writing.

In the next few months, I, and fellow CAs will be bringing some complicated issues to the forefront. You'll hear from fellow CAs on issues of accessibility and disability, on the future of the CA exam, diversity, cultural competency, inclusion and expansion. We are network and as your Regent for Outreach I want to reach beyond the exam to build the network.

I believe it is important to celebrate our members who do the work of advocacy. So this month, we're highlighting CA Lisa Lobdell of the Great American Songbook Foundation Library & Archives who posted about her experience becoming a CA in her organization's blog.

Soon, I'll be posting an article written by CA David Spreigel on his experiences recertifying for the first time which he has titled, "ACA Recertification Process From A Disabled Perspective." Think of the Certified Archivist community

as a data map (and if you have GIS experience and GIS skills, I'd love to see map of our jobs and locations and career paths over time, (just an idea, but if you're interested let me know!) so we can learn from one another and improve our interconnectedness.

As always, remember as conference season approaches there are opportunities to staff tables, teach courses, and inform students, share your experience, provide advice and support to potential CAs, provisional CAs, and those recertifying for the first or 5th time—and travel funding available to attend the Society of American Archivists conference in August 2020.

Dara A. Baker  
Regent for Outreach  
Academy of Certified Archivists

## Legacy Travel Award

You read about last year's legacy travel award winner, Berlin Loa, MA, CA, in our last issue. Now is your chance to apply for the same award!

Current CAs in good standing should consider applying for the Legacy Travel Award, an award up to \$750.00 to assist an Academy member in good standing with travel and lodging expenses related to attending the annual Academy business meeting. Applications for the awards are due May 31, 2020 at 11:59pm Eastern time.

Visit our website to learn more: [certifiedarchivists.org/members-area/legacy-travel-award/](https://certifiedarchivists.org/members-area/legacy-travel-award/) and find a Digest of Funding Opportunities to Aid Fellow Archivists here: <https://tinyurl.com/uv6wbam>.



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## In the Archives: Becoming a Certified Archivist

by Lisa Lobdell, CA GASF Archivist

In August 2018, I sat for the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) exam in Washington, DC. Archival certification is not a requirement for my position at the Songbook Foundation, but after eight years on the job, I wanted to test myself. I was one of 191 eligible archivists to sit for the exam in seventeen sites around the country and in Hong Kong. I arrived for the three-hour pass/fail exam with my identification, letter of eligibility, and three sharpened pencils, as instructed.

The ACA was founded in 1989 to establish postemployment standards for professional archivists. To apply for the exam, applicants must provide graduate degree transcripts documenting 9 credit hours of archival administration courses, an official job description, and a supervisor's letter of recommendation (Thank you, Chris!), plus have one year of qualifying professional experience. Once accepted, the fun begins.

Archival work encompasses more than one hundred commonly accepted duties and responsibilities. The ACA grouped those tasks into seven domains of professional competency: Selection, appraisal, and acquisition; Arrangement and description; Reference services and access; Preservation and protection; Outreach and advocacy; Managing archival programs; and, Professional, ethical and legal responsibilities. The 100-question multiple-choice exam tests archivists on the seven domains of the profession devoting approximately 14-15 questions per domain.

Archivists work in a variety of institutions from small, private archives with one archivist performing multiple tasks to large universities with staff performing very specialized skills. No matter the institution size, our go-to answer for any professional question is "It depends." How we manage any one of our tasks depends on staff size, staff expertise, budget, building infrastructure, collection scope or significance, or any number of outside influences. The ACA exam tests applicants only on



*Archivist, Lisa Lobdell, pictured in the Songbook Archives exploring a 1914 photo of members of The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers housed in the Gus Kahn collection.*

the standards set by the profession. I read multiple reference books and journal articles in preparation for the exam, many of which I have consulted over the years and some which I do not. Did I answer questions on types of ink used in the 18th century? Yes! Was there a single question about lacquer discs – a format I deal with daily? No! (Maybe I should join the Exam Development Committee to incorporate that into the test.)

The importance of archival certification is growing. The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the profession will grow 13% from 2016 to 2026, faster than average. Many employers are beginning to understand the necessity of hiring archival professionals with a proven mastery of skills and experience. As we embrace a born-digital culture, archivists must remain current on new methods for saving history before it disappears into the cloud. Certification forces us to stay up-to-date with new formats and methods.

Oh, did I mention I passed the exam? Just 4 ½ years until recertification!

Reprinted from <https://thesongbook.org/about/news-media/around-the-foundation-blog-items/in-the-archives-becoming-a-certified-archivist/> with the permission of the author.

**From the Treasurer**

Gerrienne Schaad, CA  
Florida Southern College  
Lakeland, FL



Report from the ACA Treasurer, January 22, 2020

We are midway through the fiscal year, and I wanted to report that the Academy is right on budget.

As of December 31, 2019

Checking account	\$ 39,670.55
Savings account	\$ 46,124.83
Paypal	\$ 897.36
	\$ 86,692.74

We are still waiting on 40 members to renew. Please remember that all membership renewal payments are due in July. If you haven't paid, or can't remember, please contact the ACA office [ACA@Caphill.com](mailto:ACA@Caphill.com).

### Calling Nominations for the Distinguished Service Award!

In 2002 the Board of Regents established the ACA Distinguished Service Award to acknowledge extraordinary services rendered to the Academy by its members.

The Distinguished Service Award consists of a plaque, a special lapel pin, and citation of the award recipient's services on the ACA website.

To make a nomination please email the Past President/ Regent of Nominations at [pastpresident@certifiedarchivists.org](mailto:pastpresident@certifiedarchivists.org). Nominations received by April 15th are eligible for consideration by the Distinguished Service Award Committee.

**Western Archives Institute**

The 34th annual Western Archives Institute will be held at San Diego State University

June 7 - June 19, 2020

(Admission to the program is by application only and enrollment is limited)

What is Western Archives Institute:

The Western Archives Institute (WAI) is an intensive, two-week program that provides integrated instruction in basic archival practices to individuals with a variety of goals, including:

- those whose jobs require a fundamental understanding of archival skills, but have little or no previous archives education
- those who have expanding responsibility for archival materials
- those who are practicing archivists but have not received formal instruction
- those who demonstrate a commitment to an archival career

The Institute also features site visits to historical records repositories and a diverse curriculum that includes history and development of the profession, theory and terminology, records management, appraisal, arrangement, description, manuscripts acquisition, archives and the law, photographs, preservation administration, reference and access, outreach programs, and managing archival programs and institutions. There will be one introductory online session prior to the start of the on-site program. For more information, visit <https://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/admin-programs/western-archives-institute/>.

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**Congratulations to the Following Newly Certified Archivists!**

Selena Aleman	Kate Fair	Stephen Logsdon	Janine Smith
Carlos Alvarado	Debra L. Feltner	Irene Lule	Nicole Sobota
Sarah Arntz	Michael Fondren	Emma Martin	Emily Sparks
Ana-Elisa Arredondo	Sarah Fry	Megan Massanelli	Brian Stauffer
Samuel Ayers	Deborah Gurt	Andrea Matlak	Jenna Stout
Laura Bell	Andrew Harman	Hillary Matlin	Elissa Stroman
Theresa Berger	Samantha Harper	Dina Mazina	Audrey Swartz
Kelsey Berryhill	Eric Hartmann	Mark C. Meade	Heidi Taylor-Caudill
Bernadette Birzer	Denise Hattwig	Madeline Moya	Hsiu-Ann Tom
Sylvia Bly	Sylvia Hernandez	Elizabeth Nichols	Venus Van Ness
Garrett Boos	Margaret Hewitt	Sarah Norris	Brian Warburton
Casey Bowser	Elizabeth Hokanson	Julie Oparka	Kathleen Washy
Amanda Brooks	Lisa Janes	Traci Patterson	Derek Webb
Franklin K. Burton	Sarah Jenkins	Kaitlyn Pettengill	
Anne Callas	Nancy Kaczmarek	Katie Phelps	
Kathleen Carbone	Jason Kaltenbacher	Deandra Portner	
Jessica Craig	Jaime Karbowiak	Rebecca Pursley	
Nathan Cross	Jason Kauffman	Lindsay Resnick	
Matthew Davis	Scott Keefer	Melanie Rinehart	
Kristin DeAnFrasio	Ayshea Khan	Katie Rojas	
Kyle DeCicco-Carey	Lou Kramer	Clayton Ruminski	
Amy Dinkins	Garfield Lam	Kathleen Seale	
Helena Egbert	Christine Liebson	Shelby Smith	

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## The History of ACA Part III

Contributed by Mott Linn, CA

ACA held its organizing meeting on October 26, 1989 where the members elected Greg Hunter, president; David Olson, vice president; Karen Benedict, treasurer; and Karen Paul, secretary. The next morning, they met for breakfast to decide on priorities for the next year and the division of responsibilities.

One unfortunate result of this scheduling was that the newly elected leaders had no time to plan before taking office. Having some time to prepare would have been helpful because despite how much the IBC accomplished, so much more needed to be done to make ACA a fully functioning organization. To help guide the new ACA officers, the IBC wrote a report that explained what they thought were the most pressing issues. Unfortunately, it stated that ACA had numerous items that it needed to do “immediately” or “as soon as possible.” Consequently, the new officers needed to do a great deal and do it very quickly to create a credible, fully functioning organization.

ACA accomplished an impressive amount during its first year. This included incorporating and filing for 501(c)(3) status, creating the original bylaws, publishing an outreach brochure and multiple newsletters, creating a member database, tweaking the examination before it was offered a second time, undertaking financial planning, auditing ACA’s finances, and discussing the future of the academy.

One of the many things that the IBC did not have time to do was to create the method of recertification. Recertification is based on the fact that professionals, including archivists, must continue to expand their knowledge, skills, and abilities to keep up with the changes in the field or they will inevitably become less effective. It helps ensure that certified archivists remain competent regardless of how long ago they became certified.

The board decided to allow recertification by either retaking the exam or by providing confirmation of

continued professional development since the archivist’s last certification or recertification. The Board of Regents approved the recertification program in 1995. A large part of this process was the creation and training of petition review teams, which exist to this day.

In 1993, the Board of Regents voted to no longer allow those with only bachelor’s degrees to take the exam after 1998; the Board later backtracked and allowed them to “petition for exception” to take the exam. The Board ended even this option after the 2005 exam because they believed it was important to base certification on three factors: completion of a graduate degree, fundamental knowledge of the profession as demonstrated by passing the ACA exam, and professional archival experience.

In 1993, ACA created an option for taking the exam provisionally. To do this, the exam candidate needed a master’s degree with at least nine semester (or twelve quarter) hours of graduate archival classes. Those who passed the exam would become provisional members of ACA, which would allow them to tell prospective employers that they had passed the exam and would be full CAs once they had one year of professional experience.

Although these advances were taking place and the membership was growing steadily, behind the scenes not all was well. In fact, ACA was in a financial fight for its young life. Although the IBC thought that they were handing over “a comfortable reserve,” within five months of ACA’s creation, Karen Benedict warned that it could run out of money in less than four years and might need to institute dues.

These fiscal problems greatly restrained ACA’s ability to take advantage of its early momentum by doing more outreach to employers and prospective members. Despite its bare-bones budget, ACA was still projecting that it would run out of money in just a few years.

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### ACA History Part 3 *(continued from previous page)*

Because ACA had already minimized expenses, the only remaining possibility was to increase revenues. However, its only viable option was to implement dues. The members at ACA's 1994 annual business meeting extensively debated the institution of dues. Most understood the situation and approved the change. Unfortunately, this resulted in the departure of many of those who had object-

ed to dues. In 1999–2000, by which time all members were paying dues, there were only 665 members, while in 1994–1995 there had been 934 members, a level that took a dozen years to re-attain. The installation of dues, however, did slowly make ACA financially sound.

Please send any comments, ideas, or suggestions about *ACA News* to:

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