



*We wait in joyful hope.*

# Archival Connections

Newsletter of the Catholic Archivist Group

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## From the Chair – Éloi DeGrâce (Archdiocese of Edmonton Archives)

The archives of religious communities and dioceses primarily contain information that documents the “official” history of these institutions. This may explain why there are not many thank you notes, congratulation letters, and Christmas cards in our archives. Once in a while I find some in the files among other more “official” papers; however, and I like finding them, as I consider these documents special because they say so much about their authors and the persons to whom they are addressed.

Thank you notes to our Archbishop and priests, especially long ones, illustrate how staff in parishes and people in the pews valued them. These hand-written notes show appreciation for something done or said by the Archbishop or a Pastor in fulfillment of a function by virtue of their office, like baptism, first communion, or confirmation, etc. They are very “personal” documents, the content of which comes from the heart for the most part. On occasion, when I wonder if the work of our clergy is appreciated, thank you notes help alleviate my doubts.



Friends and acquaintances write congratulation letters. When a bishop is appointed, a Superior is elected, or a Pastor accepts a transfer, for example, congratulation letters come to their mailbox. I like to keep this form of correspondence in our archives, especially the more informal, warm and personal ones that convey the respect for accomplishments, hard work and dedication to church ministry.

I recently read somewhere that technology may be responsible for the decline of the Christmas card. No one has noticed such a decline yet at the Archdiocese of Edmonton. Every year, I try to lay my hands on the “box” of Christmas cards our Archbishop receives in December before his Executive Secretary shreds them. In the beginning of a new year, it is not unusual that I have to search through 200 cards looking for real gems. I discard without hesitation the average Christmas cards that have nothing to say. I keep the dozen or so really meaningful ones as a reward to those who personalized their Christmas cards, who took time and effort to express their sincere appreciation to our Archbishop for what he has done for their parish, religious community, or organization. The content inside of these cards makes them keepsakes.

Thank you notes, congratulation letters, and Christmas cards may not be the most exciting documents archivists process every day, however, a careful examination of their content may prompt us to keep some of them for their informational and/or sentimental value.

Wishing you all the blessings of this wonderful season, I thank you for reading my article.

### **Conference 2008: Lessons in Planning – Lindsay Bergen** *(Conference Planning Committee)*

At the Catholic Archivist Conference in Montreal in 2007 I was asked to be on the conference planning committee for 2008. Seeing as the event was to be held in Edmonton, in my workplace, I said yes. With five of us on board the planning quickly began.



The committee was scattered across Canada from Sudbury, ON to Victoria, BC so conference calls and email were the only options for communicating. We began our planning by brainstorming possible sessions that would apply to the broadest range of Catholic archives. Once a theme was identified it became easier to narrow down the sessions. Our next step was to create a preliminary schedule and identify potential touristy activities. It should be noted that we relied heavily on the conference surveys during the initial planning in an attempt to incorporate the most common issues, concerns and likes into our plans. Having three local committee members was a huge benefit as we could personally assess each aspect of the conference from driving time, facility space and even trying the restaurants.

The first few weeks of planning were the most difficult. We sent many emails back and forth with different ideas, contacted a variety of tourist sights and researched transportation and catering options. Once the basic ideas were agreed upon we quickly delegated ourselves to different tasks: catering and banquet, transportation, accommodation and meals, promotional

items, and sessions and tours. This ensured that there was only one contact person for each task and only one person to collect all the details. While we did not all agree all the time, decisions were usually based on the majority.

Once the initial plans were set in motion we were free to develop the overall conference package. Our due date for applications was carefully considered to ensure we would have enough time to process the forms and make any necessary adjustments. Unfortunately, many people did not heed our request, making our job more difficult to juggle the ever changing numbers and details.

As the conference fast approached we were busy with all the last minutes details – ordering food trays, paying final deposits, printing nametags, etc. However, we again delegated tasks and ensured everything was in place in time for the conference. We attempted to cover every little feature to create a hassle free experience for all the attendees.

Once the conference began our jobs were not over. We spent much of our time running around to ensure everything was going according to plan and quickly adjusting when it didn't. Conference delegates said everything went seamlessly, a good sign when the humps and bumps behind the scenes went unnoticed.

Planning a conference, while a lot of work, is also fun. The gratitude and thanks you receive is extremely rewarding and I would gladly do it again in the future. It may be a little boastful, but I believe we raised the bar for all future Catholic Archivist Group conferences.



*This just in* ~ All cell phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies this month. To avoid being charged for their calls, phone **1-866-580-3624** or **1-888-382-1222** **from your cell phone** to have your phone number blocked. You can also do it online at [www.lnnte-dncl.gc.ca](http://www.lnnte-dncl.gc.ca) (National Do Not Call List).

## Our Official Logo Explained – SM Laurette Couture, CSSF (Diocese of St. Paul Archives)

Members present at our Annual Conference in Edmonton voted for an official CAG logo from among the three submissions that had been received to date. The winning logo was determined by simple majority. A graphic artist will be hired to polish it up for posting on our website, for use on the masthead of this newsletter, and on all correspondence of the CAG.



### Explanation of Logo:

The Cross is a symbol of our faith in Jesus Christ and it reminds us of his call to love to the end. The colour blue symbolizes the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the model and patroness of archivists *par excellence*, as she “treasured all things in her heart”. The four coloured squares surrounding the arms of the Cross represent the colours of the vestments used by the priest during the Liturgical Year: Purple (*Advent, Lent*); Gold (*Christmas, Easter*); Red (*Pentecost*) and Green (*Ordinary Time*). As Catholic Archivists, our lives and our work are closely intertwined with the life of the Church as we strive to preserve the precious heritage that is ours, either in Diocesan Archives or in those of Religious Congregations.

## New Photograph Database for Archives – Sr. Perpetua Kennedy, p.b.v.m.

Presentation Congregation Archives has approximately 8000 photographs and graphic materials in its collection. These images document all aspects of community life in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a special emphasis on education. For example, the class photographs are frequently the only pertinent images of many individuals in rural Newfoundland. With the financial support of the Canadian Council of Archives, National Archival Development Program (NADP), the Presentation Congregation Archives is pleased to announce the creation of a searchable, RAD-compliant finding aid and database for these photographs. Presently, the work in progress, the database, now contains 1544 photograph descriptions of this valuable collection. Through the creation of this database, the Presentation Congregation Archives is working to meet their goal of improving access to their holdings.

Supervised by Sister Perpetua Kennedy, Archivist of the Presentation Congregation, and Sister Patricia Whittle, Assistant Archivist, this portion of the project was completed by Vanessa Mackey and Catherine Rice, contract archivist. This project was also made possible through the valuable assistance of Larry Dohey, Archivist for the Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John’s, and Jessie Chisholm, President of the Archives Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Descriptive Standards Archivist for The Rooms Provincial Archives.

## RHSJ Archives Launch Nurses Alumnae Gallery – Rodney Carter (*RHSJ Archives*)

On November the 6<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of Jérôme Le Royer de la Dauversière, the founder of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, the Gallery of the St. Joseph School of Nursing, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston, was officially opened. The Gallery, located in the historic Sydenham Wing of the Hospital, is a permanent celebration of the achievement of the nearly 1700 graduates of the School and is a testament to their devotion to the sick and needy. The Gallery also honours the Directors and Instructors of the School as well as the RHSJ Sisters, Doctors and support staff, past and present, without whom the Hotel Dieu would not exist.



Sr. Loretta Gaffney, RHSJ, Rodney Carter, and Most Rev. Brendan

The Most Reverend Brendan O'Brien Archbishop of Kingston blessed and officially opened the Gallery following speeches in the Hospital Chapel by the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Hospital and by members of the Nurses Alumnae and greetings from the Mayor of Kingston and the local Member of Parliament were offered. Sister Sheila Boase, the Regional Coordinator of the St. Joseph Region, offered greetings and congratulations on behalf of the RHSJs. Mr. Paul Banfield, Queen's University Archivist and former St. Joseph Province Archivist for the RHSJs, gave a keynote address marking the occasion.

The Gallery features photographs, documents and artefacts taken from the St. Joseph Region Archives of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph. Sister Loretta Gaffney, Regional Archivist and a graduate of the Class of 1944, was a driving force in the realization of the Gallery, an idea which was first put forward in the late 1970s. Rodney Carter, Archivist for the St. Joseph Region, served as curator for the Gallery Committee, developing the permanent displays on the graduation classes and uniforms and temporary displays on the RHSJ directors of the School, on the School buildings, and on the social life of student nurses. Rotating displays on nursing and other aspects of the Hotel Dieu Hospital will be mounted on an on-going basis.

Having a public space for the displaying of documents and artefacts is a boon to the hospital, nurse's alumnae, the Congregation, and the archives. It provides a space to highlight the compassionate care given to the Kingston community in the hospital since 1845 and it emphasizes the importance of the Catholic heritage of the Hospital and the impact the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph have had – and continue to have – in the community. The Gallery allows for the celebration of nurses and nursing at a time when the health-care system is under a great deal of strain. And the Gallery gives a public face to the Archives demonstrating the importance of heritage for understanding the past challenges and achievements in order to chart a successful course for the future.

**A Music Box Called “The Regina” – Sr. Perpetua Kennedy** *(Presentation Sisters’ Archives)*



Sister Perpetua showing a disc to the tourist.

On Friday, March 28, 2008, two members of the CBC in St. John’s, NL, visited Presentation Motherhouse; they were Christine Davis, Archivist at the CBC and Scott Yates, a recording technologist. Both of these CBC representatives with Sister Perpetua Kennedy were linked via telephone to Mr. Bill Richardson at CBC Headquarters in Toronto, who broadcasts the program on CBC called “The Richardson Roundup”.

The purpose of this unique gathering was to have the CBC tape for airing some of the forty-two discs of the music box, a mechanical instrument somewhat like a gramophone. The music box, the Regina, was given to the Presentation Sisters over a 100 years ago by Reverend John Walsh who spent 40 years as Parish Priest in Renew, Southern Shore, Newfoundland.

Needless to say, the Presentation Sisters are interested in hearing this recording on CBC as soon as it is made available.

**Memories of McLennan, AB – SM Laurette Couture, CSSF** *(Diocese of St. Paul Archives)*

This summer I had the opportunity to spend a little over a month in McLennan. It was a wonderful experience, not to mention a chance to see how another Diocese “does business”. No, it wasn’t a holiday – I was there at the request of the Archbishop first to assess their archival situation, which I did during a one-week stay in May, and then in July to help amalgamate their two libraries into one to make room for more archival work space.

Of course that meant making decisions around what to keep and what to discard. I asked myself the same question with regards to every book and document I handled: “Does this have any significance for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan?” As always, I was excited to find treasures among the trash.

I am so much the richer for having had that experience – enriched especially because and I can now add that group of wonderful people to my list of friends. Thank you, Archbishop Pettipas and staff, for welcoming me into your Archdiocesan family. I do miss all of you, but I must admit I don’t miss all those stairs, though!

## Colleagues honour Sr. Gayle – (Reprinted from “Providence Pages”)

Sister Gayle Desarmia has become the first archivist from a religious order to win an award given to an individual who has made a significant contribution within the Ontario Archival community.

Elgin County archivist Brian Masschaele submitted the nomination along with research by Danielle Hughes and Tom McCarthy, both employees of the Archives at Providence Motherhouse.



Photo: Christine Ross

Danielle accepted the Alexander Fraser Award on behalf of Sister Gayle at an awards banquet held in Windsor on June 6, 2008. Sr. Gayle heard the news while out of town. Her initial reaction was “is this for real...it is a total surprise!” After some reflection, she offered these words.

“I am surprised, honoured, I thank those who nominated me. I am sorry not to be present to receive the award in person.”

When the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul transferred their many health care institutions to various catholic health care providers, Sr. Gayle travelled across the country, from Ontario to Alberta, organizing the hospitals’ archives and making arrangements for the transfer of the Sisters records to Kingston. After the transfers were completed, Sr. Gayle continued to offer her advice and expertise to the institutions. When the Women of Providence in Collaboration set up an Archives office, they called Sr. Gayle for assistance in April 2008.

Sister Gayle and her staff have been active in the Kingston community with involvement in various projects, including the annual Heritage Fair.

No project is too large for Sr Gayle who has participated in various large scale research projects, most recently for the Catholic Health Association of Canada. It required extensive research on all of the Congregation’s Hospitals across Canada.

In 2007, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul published a continuation history book of the congregation’s history from 1961 to 2006 and Sr. Gayle played an active roll on the history book committee as well as facilitated the author’s research. Within the Congregation, Sr. Gayle was instrumental in establishing and maintaining two museum facilities; the Heritage Room at Providence Motherhouse and the Printing Room Museum at Providence Manor.



*Congratulations, Sister Gayle!*



**Blessing of an Archive - Éloi DeGrâce** (*Archdiocese of Edmonton Archives*)

(Congregation of Sacred Rites on July 23, 1924)

V. **Our help is in the name of the Lord.**

R. **Who made heaven and earth.**

V. **The Lord be with you.**

R. **And with thy spirit.**

Let us pray.

Prayer

O God, Who lovest truth and justice, pour out thy blessing ✚ on this archive which has been constructed to preserve the documents of past events and the deeds of the judiciary from destruction by man or time. Let it safely withstand fire and every peril, so that all who come to it in quest of research may be intent on truth and justice, and may advance in love of thee. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

It is sprinkled with holy water.



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From *The Roman Ritual*, Bruce Publishing (Milwaukee), 1946, Volume II, page 371.

## ***Welcome to our New Members***

★ **Jeannette Béland** – Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

★ **Anne-Marie Fransoo** – Sisters of the Child Jesus

★ **Carol Hollywood** – Diocese of Calgary

★ **Carolyn Jacobson** – Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

★ **Rev. Joseph Jacobson** – Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

**Danielle Hughes – (*Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul Archives*)**

It is said that white is an unforgiving colour; a colour that shows every little speck of dirt and dust. In our case, we may wish to thank our lucky stars that the mannequin was wearing the white nurses' habit in our display case. As we were moving the mannequin to be part of another event, Tom McCarthy, our technician, noticed very tiny black specks on the top of the mannequin's white headdress. With moving and re-positioning of the mannequin it was also noticed that the tiny black specks smudged as opposed to brushed off; a little bit of a conundrum. The mannequin was brought down to the Archives for a thorough cleaning with our low-suction vacuum (please see picture). We were pleased to discover that vacuuming not only did away with the tiny black specks but it also proved effective on the smudged areas. Before returning the mannequin to her display case, we performed a detailed check of the air filtration system in our museum, had the ceiling tiles changed around the vent as they appeared to be darker than the ones further away as well as emptied the entire display case in order to clean all of the surfaces and artefacts. The check on the ventilation system did not reveal anything out of the ordinary and so we returned everything to the display case, white nurses' habit and all with staff keeping a close eye out for those tiny black specks on the unforgiving colour of white.



**From the Archivist's Notebook – Jo-Anne Allison (*Diocese of Prince George Archives*)**

Tales of plaques, retirements and meetings.

In the fall of 2007 Ron Walsh, bus driver, boiler fixer, handy man and resident historian about the Diocesan Center building (formerly O'Grady Catholic High School) retired from his job at the Diocesan Center. While cleaning out his office he found a bronze plaque which commemorates the December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1957 dedication of the Father Daly, C.Ss.R. chapel in the Sisters of Service girls' residential club by the then Archbishop William Duke of Vancouver.

Ron remembered participating in the dismantling of the chapel and he also remembers that he felt the plaque should not be left with the rubble. Why he brought it to Prince George is lost in the mists of time, however once the plaque resurfaced he was most anxious that it be returned to its rightful owners – if they could be found. Ron brought the plaque to me in the Archives and I set out to find out what I could about this interesting artefact.

Immediately after Ron brought the plaque to me I contacted Sister Patricia Burke, of the Sisters of Service Archives in Toronto. An exchange of emails and letters followed and slowly we filled in the gaps in this story. The chapel was added to the girl's residential club or house on West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Vancouver on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1957. Sister Pat told me that the chapel was quite important to the Order because it was dedicated to their founder and she forwarded a copy of a poem written to commemorate the occasion.

Sister Pat was most happy to hear about Ron's discovery and both Sister Pat and Sister Anna McNally were thrilled that I planned to repatriate the plaque, if we could sort out the details. The plaque is made of bronze and weighs over eight pounds, so shipping it through the mail was not an option. After some discussion we realized that I should hand over this precious artefact to the Sisters of Service at the next Catholic Archivist Group meeting in Edmonton. And on September 25<sup>th</sup> I did exactly that.

Were Sister Pat and Sister Anna surprised that the plaque ended up in Prince George? Well, nothing surprises an Archivist but this came very close!!



Sister Pat Burke, SOS, and Sister Anna McNally, SOS, receiving the plaque from Jo-Anne Allison, Archivist, Diocese of Prince George.

# From the editor's desk

Dropping temperatures and earlier darkness remind us that winter is here. And yet it is in this season that Jesus, the Light of the world, fills our hearts with warmth and gladness at His birth. May Advent be a time of waiting in joyful hope for His coming, and may the blessings of the Christ Child be yours this Christmas and always.



Sincere and heartfelt thanks to all who made this issue of our newsletter possible. Deadline for submissions for our February 2009 edition is January 15<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to hearing from you.

## Quotable Quotes



He started to sing as he tackled the thing that couldn't be done, and he did it.  
Edgar A. Guest (*It Couldn't Be Done*)

They are able because they think they are able.  
Virgil (*Aeneid*)

## Publication Schedule

The newsletter is published three times a year: February (*deadline January 15*), May (*deadline April 15*), and December (*deadline November 15*).

Email your news items, articles and photographs to [lcouture@mcsnet.ca](mailto:lcouture@mcsnet.ca). Please keep text to less than 500 words if possible. All submissions will be subject to editing; however final approval from the author will be obtained whenever possible.

***Kudos to M.C. Havey, our new Treasurer!***



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*Don't forget...*

**Renew your membership in January. Send dues to Linda Wicks, our Secretary.**

**Submit articles and photos for the February 2009 edition of the newsletter to [lcouture@mcsnet.ca](mailto:lcouture@mcsnet.ca) by January 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Check out our website at [www.catholicarchivist.ca](http://www.catholicarchivist.ca) for more CAG news, upcoming events, and photos.**



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*