

MAIGazine

Newsletter of the Municipal Archives Interest Group
Issue 3

August 2007



Elgin County Archives

2007 MAIG OPEN HOUSE

Sept. 22, 2007; 11:00 – 3:00...

- Brian Masschaele

We look forward to hosting this year's open house. We have an ambitious and fun-filled day planned for delegates. Elgin County Warden Lynn Acre will start us off by bringing greetings on behalf of Elgin County Council, at which time she will also thank the AAO for recognizing the archives as the 2007 AAO Institutional Award recipient. Our facilities will then be available for tours, lunch (sponsored by MAIG) and the annual municipal archives roundtable. We will then top off the day with a tour of the Elgin County Museum and a trip to Port Stanley aboard the Port Stanley Terminal Railway. Visitors can then peruse the village's many shops or walk the beach. And if you still have not had enough, we can make reservations for dinner, after which we will shuttle you back to your vehicle.

Information about the Archives and its location is available at www.elgin.ca. To help with the planning for lunch and the trip to Port Stanley please RSVP Gina Coady, gina.coady@elgin-county.on.ca, or 519-631-1460 x154. Watch the AAO Listserv for further information; we look forward to seeing you!

FROM THE CHAIR

- David Sharron

It is an honour to be the Chair of MAIG for 2007 - 2008. The most interesting things about working with municipal records are that there is always something new to learn, and, since change is inevitable, we have to always be on our toes. A municipal archivist's life is never boring.

Throughout this year, I would like to see issues and news about municipal records pushed to the forefront a little more. I encourage you to use the AAOLIST to keep us informed about your work. Sharing ideas, concerns and solutions can inspire others to greater heights or ease a colleague through a difficult situation. At times it may seem that we work in isolation, but there are knowledgeable people out there who can help.

If you have something to share and are not keen on submitting to the Listserv, contact the MAIG executive and we will be happy to pass it on.

EXECUTIVE ELECTION

During the 2007 MAIG Annual General Meeting, a new officer was elected to the Executive. Dan Zelenyj was acclaimed for a three-year term, and in 2007-2008 will act as the MAIG Vice-Chair.

Dan Zelenyj holds an M.A. (he specialized in Archives Administration) from the University of Windsor, and is City Archivist at the City of Vaughan (it's the City above Toronto). He has held various positions at the City of Vaughan Archives during the past 17 years and has also worked at the Archives of Ontario and Wayne State University Archives. He has served on the AAO Board and is a past IDC Chair. A long-standing interest (naturally) in municipal archives prompted him to take the plunge and stand for the MAIG Vice-Chair post. It is his belief that the development and expansion of municipal archives in Ontario is inextricably linked to conveying the message to resource controllers and stakeholders that municipal archives are not only cultural agencies, but principally information management business units critical to statutory/regulatory compliance, business efficiency, cost savings, and government accountability and transparency. Dan is looking forward to being Dave and Ellen's sidekick and doing what he can to assist in advancing municipal archives in the province. Dan can be found at:

Dan.zelenyj@vaughan.ca
(905) 832-8585 ext. 3129

Moving up to act as Chair is David Sharron, University Archivist at the James A. Gibson Library Special Collections and Archives, Brock University. David has been at Brock for almost a year. Although he is no longer technically a municipal archivist, municipal records are housed at Brock. He hopes that being Chair will effectively keep him in the municipal loop. David is also happy to actively contribute to the profession. He started his year as chair with

a bang by hitting a grand-slam home run during the East vs West baseball game during the ACA-AAO Conference in Kingston. Let David know of any news, comments, suggestions or concerns that you may have:

dsharron@brocku.ca
(905) 688-5550 ext. 3264

Continuing as Secretary is Ellen Millar, who has been a member of the MAIG executive since 2003. She is Assistant Archivist at the Simcoe County Archives. Ellen also edits *MAIGazine* as well as the *Directory to Municipal Archives in Ontario*. She had the distinction of being on first base when David hit his homer and would like to take this opportunity to thank him for not running her over on the way to home plate.

Contact Ellen at:

ellen.millar@county.simcoe.on.ca
(705) 726-9300 ext. 1288

Finishing her term on the executive was Anne Hepplewhite, who was presented with a certificate of recognition at the Annual General Meeting. The current Executive would like to thank Anne again for all of her work as Chair. Don't forget that Ellen Millar's term expires in 2008 and, under the terms of the MAIG Constitution, she will be unable to run for re-election. If you would like more information about serving a three-year term on the MAIG executive please contact David, Dan or Ellen.

MAIG DIRECTORY UPDATED

The *Directory to Municipal Archives in Ontario*, 3rd Edition, Revised was uploaded to the MAIG pages of the AAO Website during the summer. In addition, six copies were printed and given toCarolynn Bart-Riedstra for distribution. Thank you to everyone who participated. The next revision will be done over the course of the late winter and early spring. For more information, or to request a submission form, please contact Ellen Millar.

2007 MAIG AGM REVIEW

The MAIG Annual General Meeting was held at Queen's University, Kingston. Chair Anne Hepplewhite welcomed everyone and introduced the members of the executive. Attendees then provided information from their respective institutions or organizations.

Minutes of the 2006 Annual General Meeting and of the 2006 Open House were approved as distributed. (If you would like copies of the minutes please contact Ellen Millar.)

The **2006-2007 Financial Report** was received, and the 2007-2008 Budget approved. Please see statements printed later in this issue.

Liaison Activities, 2006-2007

During the summer of 2006, three articles pertaining to archives were published in *Municipal World*. They generated a number of calls to the Archives Advisor.

Letters were written to Perth County and to the Stratford newspaper expressing MAIG's concern over the loss of two senior archives positions.

A letter from MAIG, endorsed by the AAO, and sent over the signature of Liz Mayville, President, was sent to John Gerritson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, expressing the provincial archival community's concerns with the replacing of the term "archivist" with "person" in the Municipal Act.

MAIG's Webpages

The web pages are still stagnant, but changes to the design of the AAO website will be made in the fall, and will include updates to the MAIG section. The executive would like to see the section moved to a level of greater visibility; currently it is well buried in the website. If you would like to assist with preparing material for the site, or have suggestions for content, please contact any member of the MAIG executive.

Open House

The 9th Annual MAIG Open House will be held on Saturday, September 22, 2007, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Elgin County Archives in St. Thomas. To date the location of the 2008 Open House has not been determined. Have you been thinking about opening your archives' doors to MAIG members and friends? Now is the time to speak up! The usual order of the day is for attendees to arrive for 11:00, at which time there is a tour of the facility, followed by lunch (paid for by MAIG) and an informal business meeting that ends about 3:00. Of course, if you would like to showcase your community as well we won't refuse your offer!

Health Unit Records

A movement has recently begun to establish standards for managing the records of the province's health units.

Joint AAO-OGS Project: Seeking Ontario Municipal Records

In August 2006, the AAO entered into a joint project with the Ontario Historical Society and the Ontario Genealogical Society to seek out Ontario's municipal records. This project seeks to find the locations of all Ontario municipal records and to publish the results. It is a very large project; it would be best to do it on a county/district basis, and will probably take several years. The co-coordinators are Fraser Dunford for the OGS, andCarolynn Bart-Riedstra for the AAO. Concern was expressed at the meeting that the project could raise problems in terms of unauthorized entities providing access to municipal records. Contact Carolynn Bart-Riedstra for additional details.

Changes to the Vital Statistics Act

Anne Hepplewhite advised the meeting that changes have been made to the Vital Statistics Act, and recommended the AMCTO website as a source for additional information. AGM Review continued...

Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarking

Key Performance Indicators and providing benchmarks for measuring performance has become a hot topic at several municipalities and, by extension, at their archives. Unfortunately, marks used to measure many municipal office activities do not adequately evaluate those being done at the archives. After discussion, a motion was passed *“THAT a working group be established to investigate how municipal archivists are currently defining key performance indicators, with a view to establishing standards and guidelines for the larger municipal archives community, and that Paul J. Henry and Karen Teeple act as co-chairs of the group.”*

Certificate of Recognition

Before adjournment, David Sharron presented a “Certificate of Recognition” to outgoing Chair, Anne Hepplewhite, as thanks for the leadership, initiative and dedication she showed during her term on the executive.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2006-2007

REVENUE

Grant from AAO	500.00
Donations	<u>59.63</u>
TOTAL	<u>559.63</u>

EXPENSES

Open House	171.52
MAIGazine	<u>59.63</u>
TOTAL	<u>231.15</u>

BUDGET 2007-2008

REVENUE

Grant from AAO	<u>500.00</u>
TOTAL	<u>500.00</u>

EXPENSES

2007 Meetings	100.00
2007 Open House	250.00
Publishing/Mailing	<u>150.00</u>
TOTAL	<u>500.00</u>

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

As mentioned in the AGM Review, Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarking was a hot topic in Kingston. Not all municipalities have made performance measurement a requirement, and so the issue may be new to some, but many fellow archivists are valiantly struggling to establish useful measurements for evaluating archival practices. For them, it is an uphill battle to explain what it is that the archives’ staff does, and how his, her, or their performance can be accurately assessed. (A decrease in on-site users during January as compared to July does *not* mean the staff is performing poorly). As a result of the discussion, Karen Teeple and Paul Henry were named co-chairs of a group that will develop markers that will accurately measure the work being done in municipal archives across the province; they invite you to become a part of the process by contacting them at:

Karen: kteeple@toronto.ca

Paul: Paul.Henry@ottawa.ca

A Municipal Moment: Tax Rolls

- David Sharron

Assessment and Collector's Rolls were created by a municipality for municipal taxation purposes. They can be a valuable source of information for genealogists, historians of local architecture and many others. Information contained in these records often includes age, ownership status, occupation, the school system supported (public or separate), and even the number of dogs owned. Sometimes family members or tenants are named or referred to. One can also find data about the property including acreage, location and the value of buildings. Significant increases in the value of buildings often denote the construction of a new building or another kind of improvement to the property. Information found in Assessment and Collector's Rolls are in the public domain.

If you have a suggestion or contribution for “A Municipal Moment” please contact Ellen Millar.