

International Scene

An Introduction to *Janus*

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JANUS IS THE NAME of the Roman god who is identified with doors, gates, and all beginnings. This is an especially appropriate choice of title for a journal that conveys a sense of having great aspirations for the future. *Janus* began originally in 1982 as the published voice of the SPA (Section of Professional Archival Associations) of the ICA (International Council on Archives). In the intervening five years, *Janus* has begun representing two other ICA bodies as well: the SMA (Section of Municipal Archivists) and the CPT (Committee on Professional Training and Education). *Janus* is thus becoming the journal of a great cross section of the membership of the ICA.¹

The journal is published three times a year, with all text in English and French. Contributors are encouraged to submit articles only in those two languages. Currently, each issue contains roughly twenty-five pages of text per language with articles ranging from two to five pages in length.

About the author: Ms. Weber is currently a consulting archivist in Terre Haute, Indiana. Previously, she was Institute Archivist at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1981-86. She has been active in the SAA College and University Archives Section, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, and the Midwest Archives Conference.

¹The ICA organization consists of three sections and numerous committees and working groups. The Section of Archivists of International Organizations is not represented by *Janus*.

The editor is SPA Secretary Joan van Albada of the Netherlands. *Janus* is distributed free of charge to the ICA members it represents. Subscriptions for non-members are \$10 per year.²

As the journal has expanded its representation, the nature of the contents has changed as well. *Janus's* original function was to provide a prompt relay of news from the professional archival associations, and to be a forum for ideas, techniques, and problem solving. This distinguishes it from ICA's annual journal *Archivum*, which is unable to provide rapid transfer of international archival news. The early issues of *Janus* are, in fact, more substantive than its stated intention would imply. The December 1983 issue, for example, contains the proceedings of a 1980 workshop on nongovernmental archives as well as reports on the following: the sixth and seventh annual delegates meetings of the SPA, the 1984 International Archives Week, and a questionnaire on an audio-visual display. Another issue in 1983 contains one series of articles on archives of religious communities (Islamic, Buddhist, Jewish) and another examining family archives around the world (Europe, Southern and Eastern Asia, Islamic World).

²The subscription address is: Editor, Secretariat of ICA/SPA, Stadsarchief, POB 90158, NL5200MK, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands.

Recent issues contain a greater variety of articles. The second issue of 1986, for instance, contains articles on the Swiss Archives and on private archives in the Netherlands State Archives, abstracts from the British Archival Society's annual report, a summary of a summer training program, and notices of new publications. In other issues, typical inclusions may be the annual reports of individual national archival organizations (Israel, China, Britain), reports on training seminars, lists of noteworthy publications arranged by country, and substantive articles. Two articles found in the same issue which further illustrate the variety of topics covered are Michael Cook's "The Move toward Standards of Description and What to do with Them," and Trudy Huskamp Peterson's "Federal Records, Privacy and Public Officials in the United States."³

When the Section of Municipal Archivists joined forces with *Janus* in 1987, they became responsible for one issue of the three each year. The first issue of 1987 was produced by the SMA and contained the following articles: a preface by the president of the ICA introducing SMA to the *Janus* readers, articles on archives and public relations in Innsbruck, Austria and Freiburg, West Germany. Thus, articles of this nature might be expected in the future.

Until recently, contributions to *Janus* by

Americans have been almost nonexistent. However, this changed in 1986 with the article, "Recent Developments in Archival Education in the United States," by Mary Jo Pugh.⁴ This was followed in 1987 by Peterson's "Federal Records, Privacy and Public Officials in the United States."

As of 1985, one issue each year has been a directory. The 1987 directory contained an assortment of useful listings. Among them were a comprehensive list of *Janus* articles, 1983-87; directory information for the ICA and Section leaders; the SPA and SMA constitutions; CPT training centers; and directory information for all those *Janus* represents (SPA, SMA, CPT, and non-member *Janus* subscribers). Many of the listings had their own useful details. Data on the archival associations identify the titles of their professional journals, the dates of inception, and the number of members. One may draw conclusions from this about the relative levels of organized archival activity around the world. For instance, the Hungarian Archival Association, founded in 1981, has 290 members while the Mexican organization, founded in 1956, has 75.

Janus has clearly set its sights high. The journal continues to evolve as *Janus* expands its representation to include new spheres of the international archival community. Without a doubt, *Janus* fills a void, providing a prompt exchange of international archival information.

³Michael Cook, "The Move toward Standards of Description and What to do with Them," *Janus* (1987, no. 2): 29-32; Trudy Huskamp Peterson, "Federal Records, Privacy and Public Officials in the United States," *Janus* (1987, no. 2): 3-17.

⁴Mary Jo Pugh, "Recent Developments in Archival Education in the United States," *Janus* (1986, no. 3): 9-13.