

ASSOCIATION FOR MANITOBA ARCHIVES

Protecting Manitoba's Documentary Legacy

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Member News

CREATIVE MEMORIES

Creative Memories is a line of photograph scrapbook albums and related products that have been on the market since 1987. Their website describes "finest photo-safe materials" and tests "to ensure they meet or exceed current national and international standards for photo storage". Some archives and museums have expressed interest in purchasing this product for their collection but are uncertain about its quality. Although numerous sales testimonials proclaimed its quality, the chemical composition of this product is not publicly advertised.

The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) analyzed a Creative Memories album in 1998. They concluded that the plastic was a polypropylene without harmful additives and slipping agents. The pH of the paper was slightly alkaline and maybe not appropriate for colour photographs, but no harmful chlorides, lignin or acidic additives were present.

The Creative Memories website

(www.creative-memories.com) boasts an impressive technology section: one FAQ page on photo preservation and digital output; a Digital Imaging Center and Paper Testing Center; an in-house team of credible researchers; equipment for checking the chemical composition, aging characteristics, light stability and strength of their product. They seem to have all the areas covered except one: no Photographic Activity Test results.

A manufacturer can change the formula for a product without informing the consumer. What tested safe in 1998 may be entirely different in five years. Without a standard to measure against, there is no guarantee of quality. The Photographic Activity Test (PAT) determines the materials' inertness. This is an American National Standards Institute (ANSI NAPM IT 9.16-1993) and ISO International Standards Organization (ISO 14523:1999) requirement. It determines the chemical neutrality of enclosures, inks and adhesives. It also detects image fading resulting from harmful chemicals in enclosures and staining reactions between enclosures and gelatin. Other manufacturers display this PAT label



prominently in their sales literature since it is a recognized national and international certification. Creative Memories does not.

PAM recommends use of products which have passed the PAT for storage of photographs of archival value.

Sheila Linklater

Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies at 169 Riverton in Winnipeg held an open house on January 23 to introduce the public to its new premises. During the past summer and fall the Centre moved all of his holdings from its former basement location to another part of the building which previously housed the administrative offices of Concord College and part of the library. The second floor of the new facility (ca. 1300 sq. ft.) has four offices or study/work rooms, a central work area, a

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section housing the rich genealogical collection and the John A. Toews Mennonite Historical Collection (a library consisting of about 4,000 volumes related to Mennonite history and theology). The main floor houses the main vault in an area of about 1400 sq. ft.

The former basement location had become inadequate for a number of reasons. The space (ca. 1625 sq. ft.) was already very crowded and access was difficult. The basement location was also more vulnerable to flooding, although significant precautionary measures had been taken. The new location is more central and enables the Centre to share more services such as reception duties, copying, internet services, with the main offices of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, which are also located on the second floor of the building.

The Historical Committee which governs the Centre had conducted a major Needs Assessment in 1994 and looked at various options for the future. When Concord College moved to a new site on Shaftesbury as part of the recently established Canadian Mennonite University, it became clear that the best and most financially viable option was to move into some of the vacated space. There were some obvious benefits to being closely tied with the new university, but the problems associated with such a move were too extensive.

the move itself was a formidable task. Regular staff and other hired staff did much of the work, but many

volunteers also helped. Volunteers included several groups of high school students from the adjacent Mennonite Brethren College Institute, who contributed their services on a volunteer service day. Professional help was secured for moving the compact shelving. Some new shelving was purchased with funds from a Preservation Management Grant that was received from the Canadian Council of Archives.

It has taken a long time to return to more routine activity at the Centre, but most of the move-related tasks are now complete. The public seems to be more aware of the Centre and we believe our service has improved. The morale of staff has probably also improved now that there are some windows in the office and work areas.

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies is the official archival repository of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. As such it houses the materials pertaining to the various boards and institutions of the Canadian Conference as well as those of most provincial conferences and congregations across Canada. It also has a rich collection of personal papers, Mennonite periodicals, materials related to the Mennonite experience in Russia and the former Soviet Union, and much more. Visitors are welcome. See our Web site at <http://www.mbccnf.ca/mbstudies/index.html>.



Abe Dueck

People

Congratulations to **Sharon McCullough** who was convocated at the University of Manitoba on October 19, 2000. She received

her Master of Arts in History/ Archival Studies.

Congratulations also to **Cynthia Kent** on her appointment as the Senior Records Manager for the City of Winnipeg. We wish her good luck and send her very best wishes for this exciting and challenging opportunity.

Helpful Hints

Are you tired of leaving adhesive on your metal shelving when trying to re-label them? Here is a clever solution to your problem. Print out the identifier on a regular label that you stick onto a fridge magnet. Cut the fridge magnet down to size using scissors or a good paper trimmer. Surely you have fridge magnets at home that you are not using and what a better way to get rid of them than by re-using them at the Archives. Happy shelf labelling!

Surfing the Web

The **Preservation Section** homepage of **The Society of American Archivists** is located at <http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/saapreserv/prindex.htm>.

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