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**N E A**

# NEWSLETTER

NEW ENGLAND ARCHIVISTS



**C O V E R**—The Great New England Hurricane hit Long Island and Southern New England on September 21, 1938. This category 3 storm devastated several states, killed 700, and caused over \$300 million worth of damage. This photo shows the hurricane's aftermath on the Barrington Bridge in Barrington, Rhode Island. *Courtesy of the Department of Public Works, 2001-19 #30, Rhode Island State Archives.*

**I N S I D E**—A. Britton interviews Molly O'Hagan Hardy about a collaborative exhibition with materials from multiple repositories (page 4). Rachel M. Cohen discusses digital accessibility issues (*Who's Missing from This Table?* page 14). Maria Bernier writes about feedback, performance reviews, and other aspects of performance management (page 18). Three book reviews, along with repository, roundtable, and member updates round out this issue.

**TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE**

N E A

# New England Archivists

TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

**Milne Special Collections and Archives**  
**The University Library, University of New Hampshire**  
**18 Library Way, Durham, NH 03824-3592**  
 <[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)>

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**Dues** of \$35/year (\$45 for institutions) should be sent to: Elizabeth Slomba, Membership Secretary, New England Archivists, Milne Special Collections and Archives, The University Library, University of New Hampshire, 18 Library Way, Durham, NH 03824-3592, or join online at <[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)>.

**Notices** of archival events should be sent to: Sean Parke at <[parke.sean@gmail.com](mailto:parke.sean@gmail.com)>.

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**Articles** and **News** of interest to archivists, historical society members, historians, and other NEA members should be sent for consideration to: Sean Parke at <[parke.sean@gmail.com](mailto:parke.sean@gmail.com)>.

Contributions for inclusion on the NEA website should be sent to: <[webmaster@newenglandarchivists.org](mailto:webmaster@newenglandarchivists.org)>.

**Deadlines** for submitting materials are:

November 15 for January issue	February 10 for April issue
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## From the Editors

- Claire Lobdell

I write this column at the end of a hot, dry, violent, and politically divisive summer. In their July 2016 State of the Climate report, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (aided no doubt by a talented archivist) wrote, “For the 15th consecutive month, the global land and ocean temperature departure from average was the highest since global temperature records began in 1880. This marks the longest such streak in NOAA’s 137 years of record keeping.” It was a summer that saw mass killings in the US and abroad, extrajudicial killings of black men by police and resultant nationwide protests, and the winnowing of the field of presidential contenders to two polarizing figures. All of these situations challenge us as archivists. On the practical level, our HVAC systems are feeling the strain. On a philosophical and programmatic level, we face the challenge of documenting these times in their myriad media and voices.

If there is an overarching theme to the articles in this

issue of the *Newsletter*, it would be “Getting Along with one Another”—a theme that is especially welcome after this summer. A. Britton interviews Molly O’Hagan Hardy about a collaborative exhibition of Cape Ann, Massachusetts history that draws of the collections of multiple repositories (page 4). NEA President Jennifer King asks us to deepen our connections to places, people, and collections (page 6). “Who’s Missing from This Table?” guest columnist Rachel M. Cohen urges us to ensure that our digital offerings are accessible to people with disabilities (page 14). Maria Bernier, in her “Demystifying Management” column, writes about the importance of feedback, recognition, and evaluation in running a fair and effective workplace (page 18).

Three book reviews, by Meghan Bailey, Samuel Miles Bauer, and Maureen Jennings (page 21), along the events calendar and updates on the doings of individual members, repositories, and roundtables, round out this issue.

We hope that these offerings, in this the final issue of the *Newsletter* for 2016, will be an invigorating reminder to save and tell stories, and to get along. ■



# BRIDGING *the* GAPS

NEW ENGLAND ARCHIVISTS FALL 2016 MEETING  
October 14, 2016 | Yiddish Book Center | Amherst, Massachusetts

Come join us this October 14th for the Fall 2016 Meeting, “Bridging the Gaps,” and explore ways the archival profession can reach across divisions and work with stakeholders to expand access to collections and document underrepresented communities and issues.

Hear Yiddish Book Center founder and president Aaron Lansky speak about his ongoing work to rescue and make accessible the endangered literature of Yiddish-speaking people, attend a panel discussion on promoting access across boundaries

created by language, gender, and differing abilities, and finish up the day with a series of short presentations by NEA members.

You can also tour the Yiddish Book Center and the Hampshire College Archives and Special Collections. And this year, for the first time, NEA will offer a chartered bus to provide a greener and more affordable travel option from Boston to Amherst.

For more information about the program, how to register, and the chartered bus, see the NEA website or follow #NEAfall16.

## ARCHIVAL INSIGHT

### Planning a Cooperative Regional Exhibition in Cape Ann: An Interview with Curator Molly O'Hagan Hardy

By A. Britton

In 2018 the Cape Ann Museum in Gloucester, Massachusetts, will host a survey exhibition of archival materials culled from local collections including the City of Gloucester Archives, Sawyer Free Library, Manchester Historical Museum, Sandy Bay Historical Society, Annisquam Historical Society, Magnolia Historical Society, and Sargent House Museum. The collaborative effort is being coordinated by volunteer curator and longtime resident Molly O'Hagan Hardy, who also works as Digital Humanities Curator at the American Antiquarian Society.

#### **Q: Cape Ann has a long history. How is it documented?**

The question of documentation is a tricky one, especially as one of the aims of this exhibition is to foreground some of the lesser known histories of Cape Ann. Though the focus of the exhibition is on paper archives, we also want to be mindful of the fact that these histories do not always appear on paper. For example, the Annisquam Historical Association has arrowheads that date back to the Native American Woodland Period (2,000 to 2,500 years old), pinch pots, and peace pipes. Though these are not documents in the sense we usually think of them, these artifacts are evidence of Native Americans on Cape Ann and should be included.

Extant written documentation begins in the mid-seventeenth century. The primary source for Cape Ann's seventeenth century history is the Town Record Book at Gloucester City Hall, which dates from 1641-1715. The neighborhood historical societies have land grants and deeds: records from the end of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, the documentation becomes more indicative of the social and cultural life of the area with petitions to start schools, personal diaries and letters, and sermons. The town records themselves become increasingly colorful as we find comments on national and global events, including how supportive the people of Gloucester were of the Revolution and the local celebration when the War of 1812 ended. There are also manumission documents, and scant but important evidence of life as an enslaved person on Cape Ann, as well as of the processes involved in freeing oneself and in being freed in the 1780s. The nineteenth-century records include a lot of bookkeeping in the form of captains' log books, inventories from shops, and organizational records, including those of the various temper-

ance societies, local literary societies, lyceum records, and personal diaries. The tax abatement records from the early nineteenth century reveal the ways in which the government organized itself as an arm of charity, and the school records also reflect the values of the people of Cape Ann in the period. In summary, the many histories of Cape Ann exist in many forms, and we are organizing the exhibition thematically to highlight the breadth and the depth of these archives.

#### **Q: How did the exhibit project begin?**

The idea for the exhibition grew out of conversations among a group of volunteers and professionals who maintain and document these collections. A small but incredibly dedicated group of people work with these collections on a daily basis. We've discussed the preservation needs for these collections, and in order to bring the needed attention to them, we thought people should first know what amazing treasures these archives contain. In terms of the nation's history, the Cape Ann archives are among the nation's earliest, and we need to use them more to uncover the untold stories of Cape Ann. Moreover, these collections speak so well to each other. We wanted to bring together all the collections—those in the Cape Ann Museum and the Gloucester City Archives, and those in the smaller neighborhood collections.

I next approached Martha Oaks, curator at the Cape Ann Museum, with the idea for an archives exhibition. Part of my pitch was that I could not remember in my lifetime (and I've been coming to the museum since I was a small child) an archives-based exhibition; they've focused on the amazing art collection. In my professional life, I encounter people, both locally and nationally, who would be interest-

ed in these important collections if only they knew about them. Martha and the museum staff have been very supportive of the idea since then. We have hosted a number of meetings to bring together those who work and volunteer in the neighborhood historical societies to enlist their help.

**Q: Who is working on the exhibit project?**

I am a guest curator at the museum, but I am far from working alone. Cape Ann Museum Librarian and Archivist Stephanie Buck is my guiding light, as she has been inventorying and indexing the museum archives for over a decade. Sarah Dunlap at the City Archives has a similarly comprehensive knowledge of what is there, and she too has been incredibly generous with her time and her knowledge, as have a number of people working in the neighborhood collections, including Mary Ellen Lepionka at Annisquam Historical Society, Mary Rhinelanders McCarl at Cape Ann Museum, and Beth Welin at Manchester Historical Society.

**Q: How much of this project is dependent on volunteer/community help?**

With collections this dispersed, we are incredibly dependent on the knowledge of the people who have been stewards of these collections, often in unpaid positions, to share their expertise. The exhibition will be thematically based, and with the help of this group, we have established the following working themes: charity and welfare; education; literary and artistic life; the lyceum and library; African American experience; Native American experience;

religion; immigration; labor and economic history; technology and innovation; and last but far from least, gender and feminism.

**Q: How is the exhibit project being coordinated?**

I have created a Google Forms sheet that volunteers can fill out for any item that might be of interest to the exhibition. The form asks basic questions about what the item is, where it is housed, and which of the working themes each item might fit into. The idea here is that as we all go through the collections in our varying capacities as researchers, indexers, and organizers, we can keep our eyes out for materials that fit into one of our themes. The data in the forms can then be exported as a spreadsheet, so that I can have a bird's-eye view of what we are finding and where it is housed. This data will also form the backbone of our exhibition labels when the time for writing comes.

**Q: What challenges do you anticipate?**

Like any exhibition, the winnowing process will be the most difficult. We already have over sixty responses to the form, and we are still two years out! The digging is the fun part, though, and we are all enjoying sharing ideas and finds. The thematic framework helps to focus our searches, but we do not want to be too restrictive. We don't want to limit our searching to items listed or indexed in the uneven archival inventories that have been created for these collections. When such finding aids exist, they prove incredibly helpful, but as anyone who has worked with an archive knows, there is no substitute for sitting down with the original documents. ■



Destruction of a sea wall along Ocean Road in Narragansett. Courtesy of the Department of Public Works, 2001-19, Rhode Island State Archives.

# Inside NEA

FROM THE PRESIDENT

- Jennifer King

## Deepening Our Connections



Archivists are deeply connected with the stories, records, and memories that shape identity, influence futures, and document the day. I am reminded today of how strong our connections can become through access to the archives. This morning I am sitting in a little farm-

house on a small island off the coast of Maine, in Penobscot Bay (earlier known as Pentagoet). Over the last twelve years, I have been visiting this island's fields, forests, beaches, barns, bluffs, and waters. My connection to the island grows each year by learning about its terrain and its edible treats (chanterelle mushrooms, blackberries, and for some, clams and sea urchins, or "uni"), and even more deeply through the island's history told by the island's owners over supper or coffee in the mornings. As the years go on, my connection deepens through reading the books and papers that fill the bookshelves.

The homes—Dream House, Hogue House, and Farmhouse—are a built archive with records that include the building materials, hand-made quilts depicting the history of the island, and even size twelve footprints left in the stain on the on planks that form the ceiling. The contents of the homes—spices that include several jars of cumin, games and books that include plastic pirate ships and first editions of Robert McClosky books—have been left by the parents and the children whose childhoods ended fifty years ago and more. Watercolors of the island are thumbtacked to the walls, and if not so weathered by moist, salty air and exposure to sunlight, would look exactly (if more artistically) like the photos and the sketches we make today.

More than the stories left by the landscape are the stories found in the archives. Using the archives in Maine, Janet Rhodes wrote *Beach Island: A Light History of Penobscot Bay to 1800 and then of her Center Island* in 1992. Her published account of the history of Beach Island drew on land records and genealogical information found in small town

historical societies, interviews with descendants of island owners, and extensive research in the Maine State Library and Archives. This history was published in 2000, shortly before Janet's long life and strong knowledge of the island ended. From reading Janet's account, I know that the farmhouse I sit in once cared for two oxen, three milking cows, forty sheep, seventeen hens, and a pig, long before providing me with the most picturesque place to write a column for the New England Archivists.

As summer ends and our vacation stories make way for our working stories, I am thinking ahead to the Fall 2016 New England Archivists Meeting, Bridging the Gaps. We will gather at the Yiddish Book Center on the Hampshire College campus and talk with Aaron Lansky who founded the Yiddish Book Center at the age of twenty-four. Aaron will share with meeting attendees the story of how he managed to save Yiddish literature from erasure and remind us all how active the work of the archivist is, and how profound an impact our work can have, strengthening and deepening our connections. Looking forward to seeing you in October! ■

## Look for the NEA Board Meeting Minutes online!

NEA's Executive Board Minutes are now exclusively online at <[newenglandarchivists.org](http://newenglandarchivists.org)>.

## SAVE-THE-DATE

NEW ENGLAND ARCHIVISTS  
SPRING 2017 MEETING

*Changing Tides*



**MARCH 23-25, 2017**

Resort and Conference Center  
at Hyannis on Cape Cod

With the theme *Changing Tides*, NEA's Spring Meeting will focus on archival collaboration in a changed environment. Save the dates and look for additional information on the NEA website or by following #NEAsp17.

# News and Notes

## CONNECTICUT

### Portrait Miniature Collection Donated to Litchfield Historical Society

The Litchfield Historical Society has recently accepted the donation of a collection of portrait miniatures by famed artist Anson Dickinson, given in honor of former Bantam resident Mona Leithiser Dearborn. This donation includes eleven miniatures, nine attributed to Anson Dickinson, one attributed to Abraham Parsell, and one by an unknown artist, possibly Pierre Henri. The donor wishes to remain anonymous. At the same time, the historical society has accepted the research papers of Mona Leithiser Dearborn, which include extensive notes regarding Anson Dickinson and his work.

Anson Dickinson, considered one of the finest producers of American portrait miniatures, was born in the Li-



Anson Dickinson Miniature Collection of LHS

tchfield village of Milton in 1779. After apprenticing with Litchfield silversmith Isaac Thompson, Dickinson began work as a miniature painter in 1803. Today, the historical society's collection contains over forty miniatures attributed to Dickinson, as well as one attributed to his brother, Daniel, a fellow miniature painter and oil portraitist. For more information contact Megan Olver, Education Assistant and Visitor Services Coordinator, at <molver@litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org> or visit <www.litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org>.

### University of Hartford Acquires Alan Tompkins Artwork and Papers

The University of Hartford has recently acquired a collection of sketches, paintings, book illustrations, journals, and correspondence by artist Alan Tompkins. Tompkins became the director of the Hartford Art School in 1957, when the school merged with Hillyer College and the Hart College of Music to found the University of Hartford. Tompkins was responsible for creating the university's seal. After stepping down as its director in 1969, Tompkins continued to teach at the art school until 1974. For more information about the collection, contact University Archivist Sean Parke at <sparke@hartford.edu>.

## MAINE

### Digitization at Bowdoin College

The Oliver Otis Howard Papers Digitization Project, funded by an NHPRC grant, is in its third and final year at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Howard, a noted Union general during the Civil War, later led the Freedman's Bureau during Reconstruction and commanded troops in the West. The project's aim is to provide complete online access to the sixty linear foot collection through a stream-lined digitization workflow. The process has proved so efficient that NHPRC approved the expansion of the project's scope to include the manuscript collections of Howard's brothers, Charles and Rowland, both Civil War veterans. Project staff have scanned more than 170,000 items to date, and have established digitization standards and guidelines for use in future projects at Bowdoin. Learn more about the Howard project at <<https://library.bowdoin.edu/arch/oliver-otis-howard/>>.

Another of Bowdoin's digitization efforts, funded by the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation and in partnership with Bowdoin's Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, is to digitize manuscript items of Donald B. MacMillan and other scientists during their Crocker Land Expedition (1913-1917). The expedition, while ultimately unsuccessful, searched for land reported by Robert Peary near the North Pole. This project will provide online access to nearly 6,000 pages from the explorers' journals, travel logs, and scientific observations.

Contact Bowdoin Special Collections & Archives at <scaref@bowdoin.edu> or 207-725-3288.

## MASSACHUSETTS

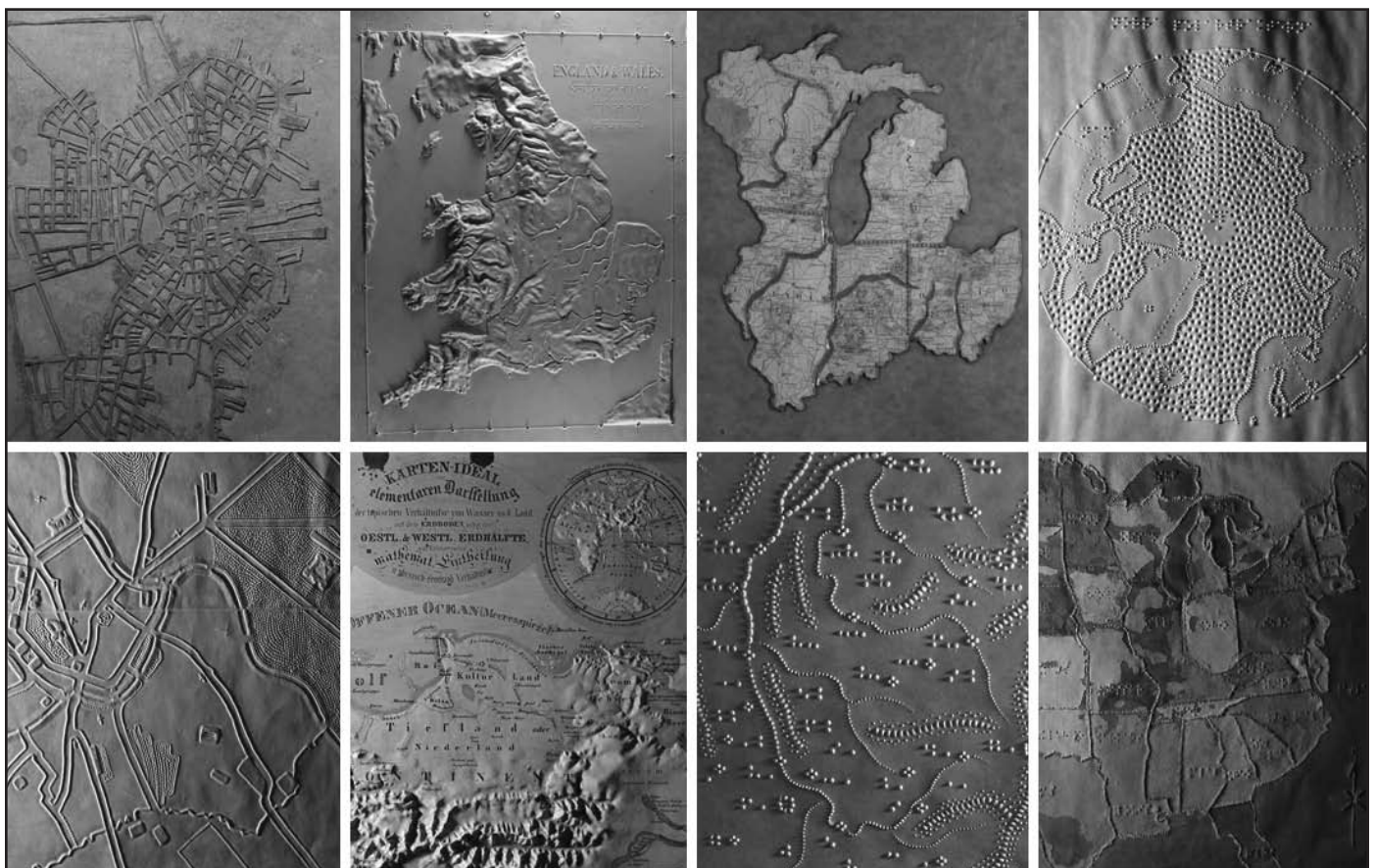
### Rex Stout Collections at Boston College

We are pleased to announce the reopening of three collections relating to American detective fiction author Rex Stout: the Rex Stout papers (1907-1980); the

Judson C. Sapp papers, a collection of Rex Stout (1914-1985); and the John J. McAleer faculty papers (1886-1995). These collections document Stout as a family man, award-winning author, and fiery political activist, from three very different perspectives: through his own words, through the eyes of a collector, and through the research of his authorized biographer and friend. Highlights of Stout's papers include manuscripts for his Nero Wolfe stories, early literary novels, and World War II radio broadcasts. The McAleer papers feature a five-year span of questionnaires mailed between Stout and his biographer, documenting the details of every phase of Stout's life, from childhood in Kansas through entertaining grandchildren at his estate in Connecticut. The Sapp papers are rich in correspondence that provides a portal into the world of collectors and the Nero Wolfe fan group, the Wolfe Pack. For more information, contact the Burns Library reference team at <Burnsref@bc.edu>.

Visit the NEA online at:

[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)



Maps from the Perkins School for the Blind's Tactile Map Collection



## Now You See Us: Improved Discoverability and Functionality of PDF Finding Aids

Until recently, finding aids from the John J. Burns Library at Boston College were trapped in a repository, discoverable through links in collection-level catalog records, and displayed through a viewer that did not work on mobile devices. For consistent presentation across legacy and newly created descriptions, these finding aids are delivered in PDF format. Through teamwork and collaboration with ArchiveGrid, staff improved the functionality and search engine discoverability of their finding aids by migrating them from the repository to a web server, embedding metadata in the PDF properties, and creating a sitemap. While moving the files and creating the sitemap were relatively simple tasks, working with the PDF properties was essential, but more complicated. A detailed working paper, "Embedding metadata in PDF finding aids to enhance discoverability," is available through eScholarship@BC <<http://hdl.handle.net/2345/bc-ir:107137>>. These finding aids, once indexed by ArchiveGrid and Google, will be easily found.

## Wellesley Historical Society Receives Grant from Community Preservation Committee

This spring, the Wellesley Historical Society received a two-to-one matching grant from the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee (CPC). The grant will make it possible for the society to process a large portion of its family and individual archival collections. We expect the processed collections to be available to the public in June 2017. To carry out the project, the society hired archivist Taylor Kalloch. Taylor recently completed processing the Margaret Urann Collection (which was also made possible by a CPC grant), and began this larger project in July 2016. For more information, contact the Wellesley Historical Society at 781-235-6690 or <[info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org)>.

## Extensive Digitization of Tactile Map Collection at the Perkins School for the Blind

Over one hundred maps have been added to the Perkins Archives Digital Map Collection. The collection documents an array of materials and approaches used to

teach geography to students with visual impairments from the 1830s to the 1960s. Maps in this collection cover everything from topographical features and political boundaries to city streets, building grounds, and floor plans. Materials used include metal, wood, plastic, fabric, and paper. Some of the maps were created for use by the blind, some were modified for use, and others are commercial products that contain tactile elements that are helpful to users with visual impairments. A few maps are Perkins student work from the turn of the century.

To read more about tactile maps and get links to the digital collection, please visit the Perkins Archives Blog: <[www.perkinsarchives.org/archives-blog/extensive-digitization-of-tactile-map-collection](http://www.perkinsarchives.org/archives-blog/extensive-digitization-of-tactile-map-collection)>.

For questions, please contact Jen Hale, archivist at the Perkins School for the Blind, at <[Jennifer.Hale@Perkins.org](mailto:Jennifer.Hale@Perkins.org)>.

## Archives at the Jackson Homestead and Museum Reopen

It is with great pleasure that Historic Newton announces the reopening of the archives at the Jackson Homestead and Museum. The Archives, which houses over four hundred years' worth of Newton History, was gutted and completely rebuilt during the past year as part of the Jackson Homestead's Museum Archives, Accessibility, and Fire Protection project. The new space contains compact shelving to increase badly needed storage and a new HVAC system now allows for better climate control. Renovations to the museum added a new ramp and entranceway to allow all visitors easy access to the first floor galleries and archives. A new fire protection system throughout the museum provides better safety for our visitors and our collections. Funding in large part was provided by a grant from the Community Preservation Act.

For more information, contact Sara Leavitt Goldberg at <[sgoldberg@newtonma.gov](mailto:sgoldberg@newtonma.gov)> or visit <<https://actionint-hearchives.wordpress.com>>.

Visit NEA online at:

<[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)>

## Andover-Harvard Theological Library Collection Featured in Latest Ken Burns Documentary

The Andover-Harvard Theological Library (AHTL) Special Collections department is pleased to announce that Ken Burns' new documentary, *Defying the Nazis: the Sharps' War* (which premiered September 20 on PBS), significantly featured materials from the library's Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) collection. This program tells the story of how the Rev. Waitstill Sharp, a Unitarian minister in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and his wife, Martha, a social worker, helped to start what became the UUSC.

During and after World War II, the Service Committee aided hundreds of displaced persons in Europe, helping them to leave war-torn Europe and establish new lives in the United States.

AHTL is the official archive for the UUSC's records and is planning a public event commemorating the Sharps' legacy, to be announced separately. For more in-

formation about this collection, please contact Jessica Suarez at <[jsuarez@hds.harvard.edu](mailto:jsuarez@hds.harvard.edu)> or visit the website, <<http://library.hds.harvard.edu/collections/digital/holocaust-rescue-and-relief>>.

## Cambridge Historical Society Offers Symposium on Affordable Housing in Cambridge

The Cambridge Historical Society is headed in a new direction in 2016 by selecting a contemporary issue impacting the people of Cambridge to shape its suite of programs. This year's housing theme asks the question, "Are we home?" CHS is offering the people of Cambridge a historical perspective on affordable housing, as well as the tools to better understand and tackle this issue, through a series of History Cafés, History Fellowships, and a fall symposium. This October and November, a symposium entitled "Housing for All?" will consist of three conversations led by affordable housing experts about the past, present, and future of affordable housing in Cambridge. Details can be found at <<http://cambridgehistory.org/calendar>>.

## Free-Speech Pioneer. Satirist. Cultural Icon. Lenny Bruce.

Brandeis's University Archives & Special Collections Department is proud to announce that Lenny Bruce's legacy will be the focus of a conference and two exhibits this fall at Brandeis. These events will mark the formal opening of the collection of archival material that Brandeis acquired from Bruce's daughter, Kitty Bruce, with a generous grant from the Hugh M. Hefner Foundation.

- **Comedy and the Constitution: The Legacy of Lenny Bruce.** To be held October 27-28 in Goldfarb Library. Conference information is available here: <[www.brandeis.edu/lenny-bruce/](http://www.brandeis.edu/lenny-bruce/)>.

- **Introducing...Lenny Bruce!** Explore the life of the legendary comedian through the materials in the Lenny Bruce Collection. The exhibit opens October 27 and can be viewed Monday–Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm, at University Archives & Special Collections, Goldfarb Library, Level 2.

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- **Listening to Lenny.** An online showcase of the audio materials of the Lenny Bruce Collection recently digitized with support from the Grammy Foundation. The URL for this site is forthcoming.

For questions, please contact the Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections at <ascdepartment@brandeis.edu> or 781-736-4686.

## Antebellum Medicine in Central Massachusetts

A new online exhibit featuring two collections relating to antebellum medicine in central Massachusetts has been launched by the Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

In conjunction with the Worcester District Medical Society, and the Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital, with funding from the New England Region of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, the collections of historical medical writings were digitized and are now accessible online.

The first collection, the Union Medical Association Papers, contains papers of a group of physicians who practiced in southern Worcester County from 1834 to 1858. The second collection is part of the unpublished papers of Dr. Samuel B. Woodward, the first superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum in Worcester which opened in 1833 and was the first publicly funded mental health facility in the United States.

The collections can be accessed at <<http://library.umassmed.edu/omha/publications/web-exhibits/antebellum-med>>. For more information, contact Kristine Sjostedt at <[kristine.sjostedt@umassmed.edu](mailto:kristine.sjostedt@umassmed.edu)>.

## 1919 Boston Police Strike Project Underway

The 1919 Boston Police Strike had lasting effects on the City of Boston and helped propel Calvin Coolidge to the presidency. Little is known, however, about the fates of the individuals who went on strike. To remedy this gap, University Archives and Special Collections in the Joseph P. Healey Library at UMass Boston, Boston Police Department archivist Margaret Sullivan, and community volunteers, are embarking on a collective research project to document

and preserve the stories of the 1,137 men who took part in the strike. Between now and September 9, 2019—the centennial of the strike—volunteers from local organizations, classrooms, and the general public will research each of the officers, searching for background information and locating census records, vital records, photographs, obituaries, and more. The eventual biographical encyclopedia and research database will be made freely available online. Organizations or individuals interested in participating in the BPStrike1919 project are invited to contact <[library.archives@umb.edu](mailto:library.archives@umb.edu)>.

## R H O D E I S L A N D

### RIJHA Unveils New Online Catalog

The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association is proud to announce the unveiling of the new online catalog for their library and archive. It is hosted on their website, <[www.rijha.org](http://www.rijha.org)>. The RIJHA chose to use TinyCat from LibraryThing to replace its outdated card catalog, which has not been up-to-date for many years. Currently, approximately two-thirds of the non-lending library is cataloged, and the catalog may later contain their extensive archival collection once the library is fully cataloged. The library and archive of the RIJHA is open to the public on a weekly basis.

In addition to the new catalog, RIJHA received two major archival donations over the summer from Professor Hilary Silver of Brown University and Temple Am David of Warwick, Rhode Island. In addition, Judge McConnell spoke at the fall meeting in September to describe his Touro Synagogue court decision.

For more information, contact Joshua Jasper, Office Manager and Librarian/Archivist at <[info@rijha.org](mailto:info@rijha.org)> or 401-331-1360.

### New Collections Available at the Pembroke Center Archives

The Pembroke Center Feminist Theory Archive at Brown University is pleased to announce that the following collections are now available for research: the Society for Women in Philosophy Records and the Papers of Louise Lamphere, renowned anthropologist and femi-

nist scholar. Thanks also to the Christine Dunlap Farnham Archive and the work of Pembroke Center Archives staff and student assistants, fifty-one oral histories were added to the website Brown Women Speak <[www.brown.edu/initiatives/women-speak](http://www.brown.edu/initiatives/women-speak)> in the past year. Topics include life on campus, gender expectations, race relations, and the Vietnam War. Contact Mary Murphy at 401-863-6268 or <[pembroke\\_archives@brown.edu](mailto:pembroke_archives@brown.edu)> with any questions.

### Rhode Island Photograph Collection Available Online

Providence Public Library in Providence, Rhode Island, has made over 6,000 images of the Rhode Island Photograph Collection available online in their digital library, <[ProvLibDigital.org](http://ProvLibDigital.org)>. The RI Photograph Collection documents the landscape and life of Rhode Islanders across the state from the mid-nineteenth century through the twentieth century. The collection had been previously partially digitized at very low resolution and published on Flickr. This new site allows users to search by keyword, date, geographic area, and more. Whenever possible, we have made it possible to download the images for personal use.

This project is partially funded by the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services through a grant to PPL, which is designated as the state's reference research center (<[AskRI.org](http://AskRI.org)>), as part of ongoing efforts to share historical collections of statewide significance. We hope that these images inspire artists, pique the curious, and spark memories. For more information, contact Stacie Parillo at <[sparillo@provlb.org](mailto:sparillo@provlb.org)>. ■



Corn shocks stand drying in a South Windsor, Connecticut field, photographed by Edith S. Watson ca. 1900. Courtesy of the Watson Family Collection, Wood Memorial Library & Museum.

## Study Archives & History at Boston's Public University



**Graduate Studies in History**  
History MA, Archives Track or Certificate in Archives

For more information visit:  
[www.umb.edu/academics/cla/history/grad/ma](http://www.umb.edu/academics/cla/history/grad/ma)

### Why UMass Boston?

- Gain hands-on training & participate in digital humanities projects
- Urban location and mission
- Close ties with archives, nonprofits & government agencies
- Cross-disciplinary archives and public history curriculum expand career opportunities
- Individualized internships add practical experience to theory



HISTORY DEPARTMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON



## WHO'S MISSING FROM THIS TABLE?

About the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, social justice, and diversity within the archives profession and NEA.

Access to the Archives for All  
By Rachel M. Cohen

Digital accessibility for people with disabilities is a subject that most people do not think of when designing digital spaces to host archival objects. Color theory or adequate captioning falls much lower down the priorities list in comparison to storage specifications and image quality. However, accessibility can and should be incorporated into the design process in order to fully embrace usability for all patrons.

According to the United Nations, approximately one billion people in the world identify as someone with disabilities. Usable accessibility is a vital yet oft forgotten element to providing for all of our users. If we wouldn't discriminate against our patrons for their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, we should also become cognizant of potential obstacles we place in front of people with disabilities.

Digitized objects in archives and special collections usually are composed of text, images, audiovisual elements, and metadata in various combinations. These objects are uploaded to web pages managed by the institution for the public and private use of these objects. Large scale digitization projects are now commonplace in the field to the point that entire jobs comprise the duration of said assignments. We assume that users can easily comprehend the object once we place it onto our platforms, and understand it through our descriptive metadata. Searchability dominates our additional effort once the file has been uploaded: patrons need a point of access to the object. The idea of adequate metadata taught in library school is to have information attached to an object that makes it searchable and somehow "usable" by the patrons. However, if the user is unable to interact with the item, are the added tags and subject fields fulfilling its mission? I would add in accessibility in a different method to have metadata and inherent structures to work well with assistive equipment so that all users can experience the information we have worked so hard to make available online. Can screen readers and text-to-speech software understand what we assume to be eas-

ily comprehensible by the vision-unimpaired human?

The World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative (see resource list) is a great tool for making both the content and the underlying code usable for all. They focus on creating a technical standard based on websites being "perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust." Its guidelines suggest various techniques that have been tested and approved by the working group for increasing access, such as adding links on every page that link back to the site's homepage, creating cognitively simple structures of information, and recommending a contrast ratio of 7:1 for text and the background.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), now twenty-six years old, was passed in 1990 as an effort to make physical spaces accessible by all people. Similar digital protocol has yet to be added onto the act except via legal interpretation. Nonetheless, multiple federal departments, such as the Department of Justice, have taken the liberty to publish guidelines for website accessibility (see resource list). These efforts may be in part to prevent future litigation. Sixteen states currently have accessibility laws on the books.

Alternative fonts and colors on digital platforms are key in ensuring that all patrons can view the media archival professionals put online. If finding aids aren't readable by all patrons, archivists are closing the doors to potential researchers. Fonts smaller than twelve point can be too taxing for the eye to decipher. Black text on a white background is easiest to read for most users. Having colors in the same color family (such as blue, green, and yellow) placed near each other could make it more difficult for a user to distinguish between the colors. Contrast is key when designing digital objects. White space helps differentiate where text is, as well as having smaller chunks of text.

A simple rule of thumb to implement on your library, archive, or museum's website and social media posts is to

describe the images attached to posts in the caption for users with vision impairment. Alternative text and in-text descriptions should become standard in any guide for posting objects online on either digital platforms or social media streams. Including an accessibility guide to your website is a simple way to direct your users how to best access your online content as well as your physical space.

Digital collections represent a section of usability where internal design structures greatly impact user experience of those with disabilities. Just as we test our website features on various browsers to simulate user experiences, we should also compare the expected experience of visiting our websites to how the site would react to various constituencies such as patrons that are color-blind, low vision, low hearing, or have motor or cognitive disabilities. Interoperability in this sense would include how the features of the digital platform interact with adaptive technology, such as screen readers, text magnification software, and similar tools.

Creating better metadata can have unforeseen benefits that can be used to pitch to higher-ups in order to justify the effort: for example, adequate descriptions and alternative text can improve search engine optimization and increase traffic to your institution's website and collections!

Doing an informal internet search of accessibility policies in libraries, archives, and museums, I found that few websites addressed digital accessibility explicitly. Writing this article inspired me to propose a new accessibility policy to my library director, with a section dedicated to archives. A lot of what I've learned while writing our own institution's policy alongside this article was to ask the people themselves; an able-bodied person cannot properly put themselves into the shoes of those with cognitive or physical disabilities. After seeing a friend post on social media asking for ways to view a popular sporting event with closed captioning (since the major network did not provide them), I realized I would not have thought of that while watching the same program. Anonymous surveys, or simply seeking out a fellow professional who identifies as a person with disabilities or works with patrons who have accessibility needs, go a long way in identifying potential obstacles. Involvement with those who have first-hand knowledge can ensure the success of your policy and practice.

If being in the library science profession is all about providing access to information, we are failing at our jobs

if we do not actively attempt to ensure all users can use our digital offerings. This article cannot adequately capture all of the issues that patrons with disabilities face when trying to access our digital offerings. Further research and discussions with those affected is needed to continue this conversation to increase accessibility. User experience isn't for a select group; it is a right for any individual to seek information in the most accessible way we can make it available.

### Sources and Where To Go Next

- Blake Relle, Louisiana State Archives, Society of American Archivists Annual Conference, 2016 Atlanta, S208, "Accessible Archives and Special Collections"
- Audio Description Project: <[www.acb.org/adp/ad.html](http://www.acb.org/adp/ad.html)>
- Society of American Archivist's Best Practices for Working with Archives Researchers with Physical Disabilities: <[www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/BestPract-Disabilities\\_Researchers\\_0.pdf](http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/BestPract-Disabilities_Researchers_0.pdf)>
- World Wide Web Consortium, Web Accessibility Initiative: <[www.w3.org/WAI/](http://www.w3.org/WAI/)>
- Making Twitter Posts Accessible: <<https://support.twitter.com/articles/20174660>>
- <[www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/legislativerecords/docs\\_pdfs/WebAccessibility.pdf](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/legislativerecords/docs_pdfs/WebAccessibility.pdf)>
- "Web Accessibility Revealed: The Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council Audit" by Marcus Weisen, Helen petrie, Neil King, and Fraser Hamilton: <[www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue44/petrie-weisen](http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue44/petrie-weisen)>
- Colorblind Web Page Filter, a tool for determining how your website appears to color blind users: <<http://colorfilter.wickline.org/>>
- Michigan State University Library's blog post on Digital Collections and Accessibility: <<https://blogpublic.lib.msu.edu/dsc-sandbox/2014/nov/digital-collections-and-accessibility/>> ■



Rachel Cohen is the Archives and Digital Communications Librarian at Mount Ida College in Newton, Massachusetts. She is a graduate of the Florida State University and Simmons College, where she earned her MLIS in Archives Management. In her spare time, she enjoys making bad puns, knitting, exploring the New England area, and playing with her small, sassy dog.

# NEA Roundtable Updates

## Records Management Roundtable (RMRT)

The NEA Records Management roundtable is now chaired by Andrea Belair, archivist at Yale University. A casual meet-and-greet will take place for those who have interests in records management on October 14, 2016 at the Moan and Dove (460 West Street, Amherst, Massachusetts) at 6:00 p.m. after the fall meeting of NEA. Are you interested in an event or workshop in your area? Please join us! Or you may contact <andreabelair@gmail.com>. Upcoming events will be posted on the NEA listserv as they are scheduled.

## Roundtable for Early Professionals and Students (REPS)

On July 9, the Roundtable for Early Professionals and Students (REPS) held its second annual TourFest. This year, REPS facilitated two tours. Our Boston Tour visited the Boston Athenæum and the Massachusetts Historical Society, while the Cambridge Tour visited Mount Auburn Cemetery and the Cambridge Historical Society. Between the two groups, we had twelve participants—both students and early professionals attend the tours. Other activities facilitated by REPS included meetups in Cambridge and at the 2016 SAA Annual Meeting. To learn more about REPS events, visit our website at <https://repsnea.wordpress.com/>.

## Roundtable for Archivists of Religious Collections (RARC)

NEA has a new roundtable! Established in July, the Roundtable for Archivists of Religious Collections (RARC) aims to connect and support archivists working with religious collections at religious institutions, academic libraries, lo-

cal history organizations, museums, and beyond. Members will discuss their various missions, scopes, and policies and procedures—everything from acquisition, appraisal, and deaccessioning to confidentiality, visibility, and access—and offer recommendations to their peers.

The Roundtable for Archivists of Religious Collections will plan meetings, speakers, and workshops based on the needs of members. To join RARC and participate in the conversation, please contact Meg Smith <mbsmith@episcopalct.org>.

## Digital Archives Roundtable (DART)

The Digital Archives Roundtable has recently elected two new co-chairs: Margaret Peachy (<Margaret.Peachy@tufts.edu>, Digital Archivist at Tufts University) and Justin Snow (<jsnow2@salemstate.edu>, Digital Initiatives Librarian at Salem State University). The DART is currently working on creating a wiki for NEA members to see what other institutions use for technology (i.e., repositories, forensic tools, workflow scripts). The goal of the wiki is to foster communication between people with questions about specific technology and others using said technology. The DART is also planning on hosting a workshop in the near future to provide hands-on experience with practical computer skills and scripting languages, such as Regex and Python. Please consider joining our Google Group at <http://bit.do/needar>.

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Issues Roundtable

On June 11, 2016, the LGBTQ Issues Roundtable joined forces with The History Project to march together in the Bos-

Continued on Page 17

### NEA Has Eight Roundtables!

Offering opportunities for members to connect over shared interests, affiliations, backgrounds, occupational categories, practices and methodologies, and more.

<[www.newenglandarchivists.org/roundtables](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org/roundtables)>



Participants on the Mount Auburn Cemetery Tour.



## People

We are saddened to announce that **Frances O'Donnell**, long-time NEA member and former Curator of Manuscripts and Archives at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library of Harvard Divinity School, passed away on April 27, 2016.

In June, **Jen Hale** was promoted to Archivist at Perkins School for the Blind. Jen came to Perkins as a student intern in the fall of 2013. She stayed on as a volunteer before being hired as the first Assistant Archivist in March of 2014. Since January of last year, Jen had also assumed the role of Assistant Research Librarian at Perkins. She is a recent graduate of Simmons College, where she received her MS in Library and Information Science. Jen has a BA in English from Fort Lewis College and a certificate in Web Design and Development from the Rhode Island School of Design.

The role of Assistant Archivist and Research Librarian at Perkins School for the Blind will be filled this fall by **Susanna Coit**. Susanna completed an advanced internship at Perkins this spring, where she digitized two extensive correspondence collections related to Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan. Susanna recently graduated from the Simmons College MLIS program and has a BA in Afro-American Studies from Smith College.

Thanks to a grant from the Oak River Foundation, the Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology at Phillips Academy Andover has hired **Irene Gates** as a one-year, full-time archivist to establish archives policies and gain intellectual control over its museum records, excavation and survey records, photographic collections, and donations of papers by academic and avocational archaeologists. The Peabody is notable for its influential past directors (Warren Moorehead, Doug Byers, Fred Johnson, and Richard "Scotty" MacNeish), for having funded major excavations such as those at Pecos Pueblo in New Mexico and in Mexico's Tehuacan Valley, and more recently, for its leading role in NAGPRA compliance and in innovative secondary school education programs. For more information about the Peabody Museum or this project, please

contact Curator of Collections Marla Taylor <mtaylor@andover.edu> or Temporary Archivist Irene Gates <igates@andover.edu> or call 978-749-4490. The museum's blog will also have regular updates on the archives project this year: <<https://peabody.andover.edu/>>.

**Stewart Adam**, of Creative Audio Works LLC, recently completed the digitization of nine hundred cassettes containing eight hundred interviews of veterans from all branches of military service for The Wisconsin Veterans Museum. The interviews were originally archived on cassettes over a ten-year period. Adam digitized each cassette and supplied master preservation files, access files, and mp3 files, as well as metadata support. ■

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From Page 16

ton Pride Parade. Despite the rain, we were met with lots of enthusiasm, and relished the opportunity to engage with the public about LGBT history. The LGBTQ Issues Roundtable was honored to join The History Project, a volunteer-driven organization focused on documenting, preserving, and disseminating the history of the Massachusetts LGBT community, and look forward to collaborating with them more in the future.

If you'd like more information on the LGBTQ Issues Roundtable, please feel free to e-mail us at <[queernea@gmail.com](mailto:queernea@gmail.com)> or tweet us @queernea. ■



Members of The History Project and the LGBTQ Issues Roundtable at the Boston Pride March on June 11.

Visit the NEA online at:

[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)



Performance Management

By Maria Bernier

As a manager, performance management is something you should keep in mind all the time, whether you call it feedback, coaching, assessment, or evaluation. It's intertwined with the concept of communication that I discussed in the October 2015 column of "Demystifying Management." You need to tell your team members how they're doing and provide them with guidance for how to go forward. You want them to grow as individuals and employees, and they need your perspective and input in order to do that.

### Giving feedback

The purpose of giving feedback is either to help your employee improve their behavior (do something differently) or to reinforce their behavior (keep doing it). Even if you really like your employee as a person and don't want to hurt their feelings, it's still your job to give feedback when they're doing something wrong. Consider that you're doing them a favor by telling them the truth and giving them a chance to change. It's better to be the honest boss who manages your staff than the nice boss who avoids conflict and problems. And in general, it's better to manage an employee and help them improve over time rather than get to the point of firing them and having to start over with a new employee.

*"I think it's very important to have a feedback loop, where you're constantly thinking about what you've done and how you could be doing it better."*

– Elon Musk, engineer and inventor

Corrective feedback can be hard to give, but waiting makes it worse and gives the problem a chance to get bigger. Always be timely with your feedback. Correct bad behavior as it happens, and likewise recognize good behavior as it happens.

When you give corrective feedback, do it in a private, neutral space. Be specific and give examples of behavior you've observed. Then be constructive and focus on how your employee can change their behavior for improvement. Always give the other person an opportunity to respond, and consider their point of view and perspective. Expect defensiveness and maybe some emotion—it's natural when we feel we're being criticized and want to defend ourselves.

On the other hand, knowing how awkward the experience can be, don't give corrective feedback when you don't need to. Before you deliver feedback, think about what you're trying to achieve and weigh it against the potential negative effects of your conversation. What are the motives behind your comments? If you're not trying to improve or reinforce an employee's behavior, then skip the feedback. Also avoid giving feedback when you don't have all the information you should, you don't have time for a real conversation, you don't have a solution or proposed change, or the issue concerns something that your employee can't control.

If you make corrective comments to one employee, be sure to make that correction to all employees who are doing the same thing, such as regularly arriving late for a desk shift or taking more time than allotted for lunch. Treat your staff equally for the same infractions. They'll notice when you don't.

Your experienced and high-performing staff need feedback too, even if they've been on the job for decades. There are always opportunities to improve or to be told we're doing something right. Feedback can also help prepare those employees for future growth and promotion.

Lastly, since you know how hard it can be to give feedback, be graceful about accepting it in return. As Bill Gates says, "We all need people who will give us feedback. That's how we improve."

### Importance of recognition

One of the fun parts of being a supervisor is that you get to acknowledge and honor the good work that your employees do. People like to receive their praise in different ways—some like it in public in front of their coworkers while others prefer a quiet, private word or email. If the good work was a team effort, credit the team as a whole. Always be sure to pass the good news upward and let your own supervisor know when your staff has done good work. Considering how easy it is (and free!), recognition should happen a lot more often in the workplace than it does.

### Annual performance evaluations

Many organizations require managers to conduct annual performance evaluations. If your organization doesn't require them, you might think you've lucked out, but you've actually missed an opportunity to provide your employees with structured assessments of their work and have conversations about how their work performance can improve and what they'd like to do next.

As the manager, you already have control of the power dynamic, so try to remove some of the stress both for yourself and your employees. If you can, find a neutral space, rather than in your office, where you can meet to discuss the evaluation. Go into the evaluation process with a positive, constructive outlook, not an "I have to do this because HR makes me" attitude.

If you have to conduct annual evaluations, you probably have a form to follow. Usually, you ask the employee to prepare their own answers to the evaluation questions on the form, you prepare your own, and then you meet to discuss them. Treat this meeting as a true dialogue and a chance for both people to be heard. Be realistic, honest, constructive, and objective. Also listen and be open to your employee's responses. They'll bring up things you missed or present their case in a different light, and you might change your opinions.

Discuss what your employee would like to work on or change over the next year and beyond, whether it's a specific work task or more general skills and traits. Also explain what you would like them to work on and how it fits into the department's and organization's larger goals. Establishing that context shows the impact of their work.

Document your discussion and the plan you agree on for next year, and note benchmarks for showing improve-

ment or change. If the employee has had any problems or shortcomings, document them as well, with a plan for correction.

Keep in mind that it's not fair to compare one employee to another. Evaluate each person on their own performance and abilities. Also recognize that performance can change from year to year for various reasons.

*"Employees who report receiving recognition and praise within the last seven days show increased productivity, get higher scores from customers, and have better safety records. They're just more engaged at work."*

— Tom Rath, author and researcher

Of course, you have 364 days in the rest of the year when you can give feedback to your employees. Don't hold all your comments for that one day of the performance evaluation, and don't spring any surprises in the annual evaluation. The topics you discuss then should have been part of your regular feedback to that employee throughout the year.

### Compensation tied to evaluation

In some organizations, raises are tied to the annual evaluation process. You might have the latitude to give salary increases within a certain range based on a good evaluation. Don't play favorites here. Reward improvement, not just peak performance. Your employees need to see that their efforts to improve are paying off, literally.

### Problem employees

So what do you do if an employee never changes or improves regardless of your feedback and evaluations? If you settle for that and ignore a poor performer or personnel problem, you run the risk of alienating your other employees. They'll wonder why that person is allowed to get away with bad behavior or why that person is getting paid just as much to do a bad job. Chances are good that you've felt this yourself at some point. A problem person is unlikely to go away on their own, however much you might wish it, and in fact might drive good employees out. It's your responsibility as the manager to handle it.

Talk to your human resources department, and follow the policies and disciplinary procedure of your organization or union. Disciplinary procedures can be progressive, with consequences for failure to comply. Document everything, including all your conversations and emails with the problem employee. Make sure you establish specific things that they need to change within a defined time period or deadline. If or when they fail to make those changes, move on to the next step in the procedure.

Sometimes, you reach the ultimate step and have to terminate an employee who refuses to improve or change. It's going to be painful and messy for you, them, and everyone else at the organization. Be sure you have all your documentation in place, your HR department on board, and your plan for continuing operations afterward.

### It's a personnel matter

As archivists, we understand the privacy and confidentiality of certain records, but sometimes we forget that these concepts also apply to our daily work lives. Personnel matters, including feedback, evaluation, and disciplinary actions, are always confidential from the manager's and organization's point of view. You should never discuss private personnel matters with your other employees, not just for ethical reasons, but also because of legal ramifications.

### Continuous management

When you're a manager with multiple responsibilities, sometimes it feels like communicating with your staff and providing feedback is taking time away from doing all the other things you really need to work on. Just remember: performance management is your job. It's something you do every day, year-round, to help your staff be more productive and make your organization better. When your employees succeed, you succeed.

### Additional resources on performance management:

- DelPo, Amy. *The Performance Appraisal Handbook*. Berkeley, CA: NOLO, 2007.
- Harley, Shari. "Giving Feedback for Strong Performance." YouTube. July 2007. <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnSE-Cuxp40](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnSE-Cuxp40)>
- Novak, David. "Recognizing Employees is the Simplest Way to Improve Morale." *Harvard Business Review*. 9 May 2016.

"If your boss thinks you're awesome, you will become more awesome"

– Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman of Zenger/Folkman

- Plachy, Kris. "Setting Expectations & Assessing Performance Issues." *Coursera*. Four-week online course from University of California, Davis.
- Pozen, Robert C. "The Delicate Art of Giving Feedback." *Harvard Business Review*. 28 March 2013. ■



Since the age of twenty-seven, **Maria Bernier** has been supervising people older than she is, and they haven't seemed to mind. She most recently utilized her management training as the assistant director of the Redwood Library & Athenaeum in Newport, Rhode Island

where she directly and indirectly managed fifteen employees as well as interns and volunteers. She now works for the Connecticut State Library.



Damage to Ward C, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, after the legendary Great New England Hurricane of September 21, 1938. This location is now the 45 Francis Street building of Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the Brigham and Women's Hospital Archives.

## Reviews

Bastian, Jeanette A., Megan Sniffin-Marinoff and Donna Webber, *Archives in Libraries: What Librarians and Archivists Need to Know to Work Together*. Society of American Archivists, 2015. 146 pages. \$69.95(SAA members \$49.95). ISBN 1-931666-87-3.

—*Meghan Bailey, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Massachusetts Boston*

It is not unusual for archivists working in libraries to collaborate with library directors and library staff on various projects ranging from instruction sessions to establishing and developing an archive.

Librarians and archivists will find *Archives in Libraries: What Librarians and Archivists Need to Know to Work Together* useful and insightful to inform how they can effectively communicate with each other in academic environments and public libraries. This book provides library directors and staff with a historical background, standard work processes, and an overview of the management of an archive while highlighting issues these professionals face. Archivists will find ways to strengthen relationships while working collaboratively in libraries or advocating for the archives profession.

Written by three Boston-based archivists steeped in the archival profession with a range of professional archival and educational experience between them, the authors use their experience of twenty to thirty years to inform the thesis of this book, backed with research written in an accessible and clear manner. The book is divided into three parts, each containing three chapters. The chapters include thoughtful and informed examples and include comments from professionals in academic and public libraries. Based on the authors' research, literature on this topic is limited and relatively new. However, each chapter contains numerous resources such as articles, studies, texts, and websites for further reading, providing a starting point for further research.

The authors examine the similarities and differences between libraries and archives using tables and illustrations to compare and contrast the different values, languages, roles, and missions of the professions, while supporting

the authors' overall argument. For example, librarians and archivists often share a similar vocabulary but have different definitions. For archivists, the term accession refers to the materials that are physically and legally transferred to the archive as a unit at a single time, while for librarians, the term refers to the process of adding a bibliographic item to a library collection. This serves as one example of the importance of educating both librarians and archivists so that they can better articulate their needs and goals. The authors indicate that the difference between the materials overseen by librarians and archivists is one explanation for their different approaches.

Archivists may find they want to skip the historical overview of archives in chapter one and the history of archival education in chapter three. However, these overviews explain the different paths of each profession, how they have come to be more closely aligned, and suggest indications for their collaborative futures together. As an archivist, I found these overviews to be a reminder that our profession needs constant advocacy and that we need to use clear language to articulate our needs, with the understanding that education on both sides goes a long way. Understanding both professions and meeting halfway is necessary for librarians and archivists to not only work together more effectively, but, in the words of the authors, to "create stronger and more durable information infrastructures for users and the institution as a whole."

Cloonan, Michele Valerie, ed., *Preserving our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age*. New York: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2015. 736 pp. Soft cover. \$110.00. ISBN 978-1-55570-937-2.

—*Samuel Miles Bauer, Harvard University Archives*

In my experience, the typical archival studies curriculum can overemphasize praxis. Processing internships, crash courses in computer programming, and homework assignments in which students write grant applications, repository disaster plans, and records retention schedules leave little room for the history and theory of archival practice, particularly with regard to the fundamental core of archives: preservation. With the publication of *Preserving our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age*, students, teachers, and professionals now have a comprehensive resource that fills in this learning gap.

*Preserving our Heritage* is an anthology of readings selected by Michèle Cloonan, dean emerita and professor of the School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. The readings themselves range from Old Testament verses to official UNESCO documents and well-known pieces of archival literature, all of which aim to provide the reader with the historical source material that is fundamental to preservation as a theoretical concept and a developed craft. Each chapter of readings begins with an essay that identifies and defines key terms, individuals, and ideas related to the topic, placing them in their historical and professional context. The particular pedagogical strength of this book is its multidisciplinary approach to the subject matter. Preservation is considered in multiple settings: libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions. Cloonan further expands the anthology's scope by including chapters on the related issues of ethics, sustainability, and multiculturalism.

As either a course textbook or a reference volume for a professional development collection, *Preserving our Heritage* is an invaluable resource for all who consider preservation among their core professional responsibilities.

Hammer, Joshua. *The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu: and Their Race to Save the World's Most Precious Manuscripts*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016. 278 pages. \$26.00 (hard cover). ISBN: 9781476777405.

—Maureen Jennings, *Head of Special Collections, Andover-Harvard Theological Library*

**T**he *Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu* tells the story of how one librarian and his collaborators outmaneuvered an oppressive political regime and risked their lives to safeguard the great literary treasures of Timbuktu. Joshua Hammer, a former correspondent-at-large on five continents for *Newsweek*, reports this story with the visceral clarity of a war journalist embedded on the front lines, yet with a sensitive eye for detail that conveys the spirit of the Malian people and their land's compelling geography. Hammer's narrative reaches back to the eleventh century with the Tuareg founding of Timbuktu as an insect-free oasis, and then interweaves the story of Abdel Kader Haidara—the “bad-ass librarian” of the title—with the unfolding of twenty-first century political events such as the fall of Muammar Al Qaddafi's regime in Libya.

While the title promises (and delivers) tales of heroic librarians, much of the book is spent detailing the historic and contemporary conditions that enabled the rise of Al Qaeda in Mali and its devastating impact on Timbuktu's bibliophile culture. In tolerant eras when the free exchange of ideas flourished, the city was known for its scholarship and religious freedom. Interspersed with these periods, however, were restrictive regimes that sought to suppress or destroy all ideas and actions not in alignment with their radical political and religious ideologies. During such times, the keepers of private family libraries protected their collections by burying them under the sand or stashing them in secret chambers in their homes.

We see Haidara's initial reluctance to assume the role of family librarian evolve into an obsessive drive to collect, document, and preserve the far-flung literary hoards dispersed throughout the area, hidden away from intolerance for generations and still vehemently guarded by suspicious family stewards. Eventually earning their trust, he then turns his attention to building a library, and finally to digitizing, preserving, and cataloging the collection. All this progress, however, is stopped cold by the arrival of Al Qaeda and the Tuareg rebels, inspiring Haidara to organize and manage the clandestine transfer of books out of the city under siege.

All readers will be relieved that the story ends with the majority of texts safely out of harm's way, but archivists will likely find themselves hungry for more details. Are they back in a climate-controlled environment? Are bibliographies available? Can the digital surrogates be accessed? Surely there's a whole other equally interesting story about the preservation and digitization workflow to tell.

Though certainly an engaging read about heroic librarians and amazing collections in exotic settings, the greater take-away from *The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu* for archivists is its power of reflecting, in an extreme way, our own quests for adequate documentation, storage, and preservation of our precious collections. ■

NEA video content now available:  
<http://vimeo.com/newenglandarchivists>

# Calendar of Events



Press releases and other announcements should be sent to Sean Parke at <parke.sean@gmail.com>. Please provide the date, time, place, a brief description of the event, and an internet link for contact information and/or registration.

**October 2016.** American Archives Month. Take this opportunity to reach out to your community to raise awareness about archives, their importance in society, and the impact they can have on your patrons. Visit <www2.archivists.org/initiatives/american-archives-month-the-power-of-collaboration> to learn more about how to raise public awareness and see what other archivists are doing this month.

**October 14, 2016; 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.** Bridging the Gaps: NEA Fall Meeting located at the Yiddish Book Center, 1021 West St, Amherst, Massachusetts <www.yiddishbookcenter.org/>.

**October 14, 2016.** Maine Archives and Museums (MAM) Fall Conference and Annual Meeting at the Collins Center for the Arts, University of Maine Orono. Register at <www.mainemuseums.org/event-2225273>.

**October 27, 2016; 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.** Council of State Archivists present a webinar on collaborative History Day projects, in which presenters will discuss the outcomes from History Day projects. Registration is required at <https://www.statearchivists.org/programs/cosa-webinar-series/>.

**October 27, 2016.** Brandeis University Archives and Special Collections opens its exhibit *Introducing...Lenny Bruce!* at the Goldfarb Library. The exhibit explores the life of Lenny Bruce through materials from the Lenny Bruce Collection. The exhibit is open Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**November 5, 2016.** NEA Roundtable for Early Professionals and Students (REPS) 3rd Annual Day of Service. For more information visit <https://repsnea.wordpress.com/>.

**November 9-12, 2016.** The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. To register, visit <www.amiaconference.net/register-for-amia-2016/>.

**March 23-25, 2017.** New England Archivists Spring Meeting 2017 - Changing Tides at the Resort and Conference Center at Hyannis on Cape Cod. NEA's spring meeting will focus on archival collaboration in a changed environment. Save the dates and look for additional information at <www.newenglandarchivists.org/> or by following #NEAsp17. ■



Cambridgeport Cycle Club, c. 1890. Central Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Credit line: Cambridge Public Library. Published in *A Photographic History of Cambridge* (Patricia Rodgers, Charles M. Sullivan, and the Staff of the Cambridge Historical Commission).

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**New England Archivists**

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## THIS SEASON IN NEW ENGLAND HISTORY



**"Sparky the Fire Dog"**

Original Sparky the Fire Dog® observes most widely used illustration of himself at the time, 1956. *Courtesy of the National Fire Protection Association Archives.*