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Lone Arrangers: The Story of an Accidental Archivist

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Disciplines
Library and Information Science

Comments
Presented at the June 2012 NYAC Conference Annual Meeting held at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY.

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New York Archives Conference Annual Meeting 2012

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Lone Arrangers

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxlulxqo2So

The Story of an Accidental Archivist

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBEd1ofEfJ4&feature=auto play&list=PL0003E3F2CCBB879E&index=17&playnext=2
How Do We Manage?

Lavery Librarians Mantra:

I. O. O. P.

I’m Only One Person
Duel Archivist/Librarians: Balancing the Benefits and Challenges of Diverse Responsibilities
Mary Manning and Judy Silva
*College and Research Libraries*, March 2012
Quotes from the survey:

I often feel pulled in too many directions, with not enough time to do any one job well.

I usually feel like I’m putting out fires all week, and many things slip to the bottom of my priority list when they really deserve to be higher on the list.
NOT TO BE ENTIRELY NEGATIVE
We Need an ...

Honest Assessment of what is and isn’t possible given the conditions under which we work!

MPLP (more product, less process)

Prioritize

Elevator Speech in 3 sentences or less!!
Fall 2007 - SAA sponsored a "Best Elevator Speech" contest

The Winning Speech:

"Archivists bring the past to the present. They're records collectors and protectors, keepers of memory. They organize unique, historical materials, making them available for current and future research."

Honorable Mention:

"Archivists acquire, manage, preserve, and help patrons identify and use historically significant collections of unique materials, such as government records, manuscripts, photographs, films, and sound recordings."
Since we must prioritize, where is the user/researcher/student/patron/faculty in the mix?

McFarland recommends the user as a basis for what we do:

- Why do researchers use the archive?
- What do they use?
- How can we facilitate that?
- Have the users’ behaviors and preferences be the driving force for priorities setting.
- Build goodwill with students and faculty.
- Remain positive under adverse conditions.
What Am I Doing Here?

- What is your position?
- What is your role?
- What are your responsibilities?
- Where do you fall within the organizational structure?
- How much support might you expect from those in authority?
- Do you report to a board, director, or president?
- Do you have volunteers and/or interns?
- What level of funding can you expect for your organization?

It is important to know the answer to these questions in order to determine your goals and priorities.

Find the right balance!
Set realistic goals!

What has worked for me, given the conditions under which I work:

One student worker during the fall and spring semesters.

- History and Museum Study students
- Highly self-motivated
- Trust is key
What has worked for me, given the conditions under which I work:

5 Circulation staff members during the summer months.

Shorter library hours = staff hours would have been cut over the summer.

Helping to process the backlog – filing, new folders and boxing, labeling, provenance investigation.
What has worked for me, given the conditions under which I work:

**Interns** from UB or Syracuse, when I can get them.

Special projects:
ID cabinets full of photographs
Removing folded school papers from a locked wooden cabinet – unfolding, sorting, interleaving, boxing, labeling
What has worked for me, given the conditions under which I work:

Help from the Systems Librarian and his staff.

Investigating and implementing new tools:
Archivist Toolkit
BePress
Contentdm

Purchasing and maintaining Hardware and Software:
External Hard Drives
Digitization needs
What has worked for me, given the conditions under which I work:

Collaborations with Academic Departments and Campus Offices:

- Anthropology and Communication Journalism – Oral Histories
- Communications and Marketing Offices
- Alumni Office – marketing to Alum
- Administrative Assistants – great source for getting materials
What has worked for me, given the conditions under which I work:

A supportive **Library Director:**

$$ for
• professional development
• archival supplies
• digitization projects
• digital asset management system
• collection development
• Student workers and interns

use of current staff during down time

Support with the administration

Someone with whom to bounce off ideas and offer advise and support
What’s Done?

• Professional Development
• Disaster Plan
• User agreements
• Collection Development Policy
• Digitization Workflows
• Some processing

What’s next?

• Session for Freshmen Seminar
• BePress Digital Commons for Online Campus Publications Access (Open Access Scholarly Publishing)
• Digitizing Projects – scrapbooks, college newspaper
• New York Heritage Digital Collections for Frederick Douglass Collection