



TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

NEA PRESIDENT | neapresident@newenglandarchivists.org

## NEA Candidate Profile and Statement

**Name:** Sally Blanchard-O'Brien

**Office for which I am running:** Representative-At-Large

### Education:

- B.A., English – Skidmore College
- M.L.I.S., focus: Archival Studies & Records Management – San Jose State University

### Employment (relevant employment history):

- University of Vermont, Howe Library – Digital Support Specialist for Digital Newspaper Project, 2011- 2012
- Vermont State Archives & Records Administration – Records Analyst II, 2012-2015
- Vermont State Archives & Records Administration – Archivist II, 2015 – present

### Service to New England Archivists:

- NEA Newsletter Committee – Editor, April 2017 – April 2020
- NEA Newsletter Committee – Co-Chair, January 2019 – April 2020
- *NEA Newsletter* – Session Reporter, July 2018 & July 2019
- *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* – Peer Reviewer, February 2019 – present
- Preservica Roundtable – Member, October 2019 – present

### Service to Archives Profession:

- My work at the Vermont State Archives & Records Administration
- Presenting through webinars or at professional conferences to help other archivists develop their skills

- Presenting at local community groups and writing for a local newspaper to promote the importance of archival records and the work that archivists do
- Serving as the meeting coordinator for the Vermont Archives Network, our local informal professional network
- Serving as a member on the Communication Committee for the National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators (NAGARA)
- Serving as a Session Evaluator for the 2020 NAGARA Annual Conference

**Candidate question: What are the major challenges facing archivists in New England and what is NEA's role in addressing those challenges over the next 3-5 years? (500 words or less)**

The archivists of New England represent a varied geographical area and range of institutions. We may have different missions for each of our “home” institutions, but are united in our purpose of preserving and providing access to information and history. Through its annual meetings, publications, roundtables, and other professional activities, NEA has played, and will continue to play, a crucial role in fostering connections between these geographic areas and institutions.

Connecting communities also means being an inclusive field, both in hiring and through engagement with the marginalized populations that are documented (or missing) in our records. NEA has set an example for inclusivity in our profession in the ways that the organization approaches its professional activities, whether through programming or policy statements, and has fostered more awareness, especially through the great work of the Inclusion and Diversity Committee. Through one of its core organizational values, “community building with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion”, NEA will ensure that the archival profession is open to all and that the profession stands for transparency in the historical record.

At the same time more content is being created digitally and is at risk of being inaccessible, there is an increased expectation of everything being available online, with search engines standing in for trained information professionals. NEA can support archivists navigating the digital world by enhancing our skill sets through education and other resources. But as people increasingly see less value in information professionals, NEA can especially help support us in the justification for our profession. This work has already begun through policy statements about job postings and discussions on unionization and institutional support. And moving forward, NEA can help us find creative ways to make ourselves visible and relevant to our users and the public at large.

We all are seeing increased complexity and demands on our jobs as archivists. NEA’s mission is to connect and support us, to help build and foster a community of talented and prepared individuals to better serve and protect the cultural heritage needs and goals of our region. Within this professional network, we can find the ways to come together and make our profession vibrant and essential in the modern world.