



TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

NEA PRESIDENT | neapresident@newenglandarchivists.org

NEA Candidate Profile and Statement

Name:

Genna Duplisea

Office for which I am running:

Vice President/President-Elect/Immediate Past President

Education:

BA (English), Bowdoin College

Certificate of Graduate Study (Nonprofit Management), University of Southern Maine

MSLIS (Archives Management), Simmons College School of Library and Information Science

MA (History), Simmons College

Employment (relevant employment history):

Archivist and Special Collections Librarian, Salve Regina University, 2014 - present

Digitization Assistant, Experimental Archives Project, Schlesinger Library, 2012-2014

Records Management Contractor, New England Botanical Club, 2014

Service to New England Archivists:

Education Committee student member, 2012-2013

Host/Local Arrangements Committee, Fall 2014 Meeting

Award Committee, 2017

Columns for NEA Newsletter:

Service to Archives Profession:

SAA Issues & Advocacy Steering Committee, 2019 - present

IYRS Maritime Library Board, 2019 - present

Rhode Island Historical Records Advisory Board, 2019 - present

SAA Mentor, 2016-2017

Coalition to Advance Learning in Libraries, Archives, and Museums' Collective Wisdom cohort member, 2016

Archivists Responding to Climate Change founding member, 2015 - present

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 ever-increasing abundance of manuscripts, records, and digital objects -- both in archival repositories and community organizations -- requires more archival labor to manage. We have more to take care of than ever before, and must do so in a world growing more fragile and uncertain due to climate change, political upheaval, and shrinking resources. Sustaining the archival profession to steward this abundance is and will be a major challenge in the coming years. Our profession should be robust and growing, but archivists struggle with job insecurity, secrecy about pay, growing student debt, and shrinking departmental resources, as evidenced by recent surveys collecting data on salaries and debt, temporary positions, and contingent labor.

The instability that comes with being an archivist impacts the makeup and character of our profession. Only a small segment of the population can incur student debt for a Master's degree, pursue unsteady employment, move around chasing term positions, and receive salaries less than commensurate to one's education and training. As a result, we are a profession with significant race, class, and cultural biases, which in turn impact how we steward records, connect with communities, and build collections. The labor concerns of the archivists therefore affect how well the profession can perform memory work.

At NEA meetings I have noticed an increasing frequency of attendees switching sessions, and I think this reflects the pressure take feasible ideas back to our institutions. So often I hear frustrated remarks of "I can never implement this" about projects in presentations that require significant institutional capacity. On NEA's part, creating session panels of archivists who perform related work at different levels of support would be one way to address this problem. As a profession we also need to be able to articulate to our organizations and communities the strategic importance of our work and the necessity of sustaining it with adequate resources. Workshops and written resources on this kind of deep, long-term advocacy would be valuable tools for NEA to develop and provide.

NEA is a nimble organization oriented to thoughtful change, and I believe in our ability to continue in this manner based on our recent actions as an organization. NEA is part of a larger movement of professional organizations that have made a stand recently in putting pressure on employers to include salary information in job positions. The Inclusion and Diversity Committee's newsletter column "Who's Missing from This Table?" has done admirable reflection on the field and changed the atmosphere of meetings through its efforts to make everyone's gender identity, social stamina, and dietary restrictions feel welcome.

In responding to these challenges, NEA will bolster its support for archival *workers* as well as archival work. It has been a surprise and an honor to be nominated to run for elected office and I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the future I hope to help shape.