

10-1-2018

President's Page

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Recommended Citation

McCartney, David (2018) "President's Page," *MAC Newsletter*: Vol. 46 : No. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/macnewsletter/vol46/iss2/4>

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October 2018

So what kind of archivist are you? Are you a snob or a distractor? A mooch or an heiress? A bureaucrat or a mensch?

According to an article that appeared recently in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (“The Delicate Art of Dealing with Your Archivist,” in the *Chronicle Review*, July 29, 2018), the many thousands of us who populate this profession fall into one or more of those six categories. The article was penned by Alice Dreger, who has since apologized for it following widespread criticism, particularly from our ranks.

Apology accepted. However, the fact that the article appeared in *CHE* to begin with disappoints me. The *Chronicle*, long regarded as a credible journal closely allied with our profession, initiated the idea for this essay; the author was quite eager to run with it. That it was intended to be humorous or was written “with affection” (as the editor put it) doesn’t minimize the fact that the essay was filled with stereotypes and maligned the essential work that we do.

This is a symptom of a larger challenge our profession continues to face. There remains a considerable misunderstanding of our calling, it seems, even among those who use our services. We may even encounter this lack of understanding among those we report to in our jobs. (Fortunately, this is not the case for me at my workplace.)

In response, we do what we can: We reach out, we educate. We make our case, we respond as needed. We rehearse an elevator talk. Following publication of the Dreger article, many of us responded; thank you.

I will paraphrase my response, which was published in *CHE*’s letters to the editor section the day following publication of Dreger’s article. In doing so, I will see her six types of archivists, and raise her seven:

The **subject specialist** has acquired a particular area of expertise, based perhaps on geographic location or discipline.

The **special collections mediator** possesses a broad understanding of the holdings in his or her department.

The **K–12 instructor and teacher’s aide** assists and supports organizers of National History Day and similar public history educational programs.

The **grief counselor** recognizes, and responds sensitively to, difficult circumstances faced by a donor.

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“From the Stacks to the Classroom”

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and students. Sessions include how to engage students with active learning, tips for growing your instruction program, ideas for using instructional technologies in the classroom, and methods for assessing instruction programs for further success. Staff and students from the University of Iowa Special Collections will also host an open house and a Q&A panel about Iowa’s effort to train graduate students in special collections and archival instruction.

Bring your questions, concerns, and instruction experiences to share at the Symposium, and we hope to see you there! Register now at <https://www.midwestarchives.org/2018-fall-symposium>.

Between-Meeting Council Actions

On June 21, 2018, Council unanimously approved the appointment of Hilary Seo, Rosalie Gartner, and Hope Bibens as cochairs of the 2020 Annual Meeting Local Arrangements Committee (Des Moines, Iowa).

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The **knowledge developer** makes the collections—and the ensuing research—possible by seeking out additions to existing holdings.

The **argument settler** tracks down information that resolves a long-standing family dispute.

The **keeper of the flame** recovers documents from disaster and ensures a future for uninterrupted research opportunities.

You, dear colleague, may well be one or all of these, and more. This list is a starting point for conversation; please add other types as they come to mind, and keep the list handy for that next opportunity to tell the rest of the world about what we do.

Results of the 2017 survey of MAC’s members—encompassing demography, our professional development interests, and more—are now up on MAC’s website. Many thanks to Alexis Braun Marks and all others who created and distributed the survey. Over 40 percent of our members completed the online survey, an excellent response rate. Thank you for your participation.

Your voice matters. Please know that we are here to listen and to respond. You will find MAC leadership’s contact information near the back of this issue, and we always look forward to receiving your input on any matter that concerns our profession.



President, Midwest Archives Conference