



February 2011 Region Message

Hello GNW Region Members,

Can you believe we are already into February **2011!** It seemed such a long way off when I was growing up. Weren't we supposed to have flying cars by now? It's funny to think about all the things that some of us remember from our childhood and how the future generations will never know them, except in a museum (or their grandparents house!). Telephones were rotary dials in my childhood, in fact, my parents still own one. They converted an antique crank phone (look it up if you don't know what that is: <http://www.antiquetelephonehistory.com/we317.html>) into a rotary dial phone. My 7 year old was fascinated with it when she was over there a few weeks ago and wanted to use it to call mom and dad. When her grandparents told her to dial her home phone number, she started to push the numbers, she had no idea that you had to move the dial. Once they showed her how to use it, she thought it was fun, but prefers just pushing the buttons because it is easier. Can you think of some other things in your childhood that will never be known by today's generation? Black and white televisions, changing the channel using the dial not the remote, roll down windows, locking gas caps, School House Rock (although it is available on DVD!), the list goes on and on.

It's almost the same way with the next generation of records managers. Thermal paper, glass lantern slides, vellum, mimeographs, nitrate negatives, these are all things that we generally only come across in either archives or older storage areas. Even fax machines, back-up tapes, typewriters and film/negatives are slowly fading out of our everyday existence. For those of us in the profession for a few years, we remember word perfect, 8 inch floppy disks, zip drives, DAT tapes, and COM. Those entering the profession today might be aware of many of these items, but will more than likely never have to deal with them. However, I'm a big proponent of history repeats itself. So to me continuing to learn about these older formats is important to learning techniques to apply to some of today's technology. And one source that I know will always be available to me no matter how things change is ARMA and the ARMA family.

ARMA is always working to assist us in the next up and coming technology, while still remaining grounded in the past and current technologies/formats. Via books, webinars, connections with vendors and sessions at the conference, they are helping us stay on top of the next generation. Microfilm is still out there and there are some great resources at the bookstore. Not everyone has scanned all their records yet, some people are just starting on large projects, there are always sessions available at conference on these topics and more. And chances are you will always find someone in your chapter who has dealt with a particular format at some point in their career.

So when you open that box and find all those Bernoulli tapes that contain Hazardous Shipping Manifests, you know, the ones that need to be kept for about 100 years? Don't panic, you have your ARMA family and friends to help you determine how best to handle them. Oh, and if you ever want to experience a hand crank telephone, just stop by my folks house. They love showing it off!

Jennifer Winkler
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