



NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT RECORDS OFFICERS

# NETWORK

[www.nyalgro.org](http://www.nyalgro.org)

Summer 2016

## President's Message

### Summer 2016



Thank you to all that attended our conference this year and helping to make it such a success. I would like to thank all the knowledgeable speakers, the wonderful vendors and the members of your Executive Board. Each of you made this conference the success that it was. I hope you enjoy looking over the pictures that appear in this newsletter and hopefully it will help you to recall some great memories.

#### Planning for 2017 Conference

In September your Executive Board members will be meeting to plan the agenda for the June 2017 conference, which will be held at the Ramada Inn in Geneva. If you have any suggestions for class topics please email them to me at [dpotvin@woodburyny.us](mailto:dpotvin@woodburyny.us). This year we are going to try very hard to offer core classes for all areas of government—schools, fire districts, colleges, cities, villages, towns, BOCES, etc. Your input is appreciated and essential to making the school great!

#### Do you know someone deserving of an award/recognition?

We are on the hunt for three deserving individuals/groups to be recognized for their achievements in Records Management at our 2017 conference. NYALGRO gives out three awards each year and we need your help with recommendations. Please review the award descriptions on our website and reach out to us with your suggestions!

#### Are you interested in serving on the Executive Board?

We hold elections every autumn. If you are interested in serving on the Executive Board please send an email to Donna Mumbulo, Nominations Chair, at [MumbuloD@dcmoboces.com](mailto:MumbuloD@dcmoboces.com).

Please feel free to call me at any time if you have any questions about NYALGRO or just to say hi! 845-928-6829, ext. 7.

—Desiree Potvin, President  
[dpotvin@woodburyny.us](mailto:dpotvin@woodburyny.us)

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# It is Hard to Say Good Bye



Gail Fischer, Regional Advisory Officer (RAO) for New York State Archives officially retired on June 29, 2016. After many years of dedicated service Gail will be missed by all who attended her wonderful workshops and received her guidance and advice on records management.

Gail came to the Archives in October 1990 from the position of Director of Records Management for the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development in the City of New York. She was hired as a Senior Records Management Specialist for Executive Branch State Agencies and then promoted to Supervisor of the Training and Technical Assistance Unit the next year. In January 1996, she began her field position with the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) program, gained the title Regional Advisory Officer and moved to Rochester from Albany. Originally, Gail's position covered eight counties in the Rochester- area Legislative District; however due to retirements in the agency she was assigned a total of 15 counties and they re-named her territory "Western New York Region." Gail's workshops are legendary; filled with humor, delicious treats and above all expert knowledge of all facets of records management and archival work. She probably instructed at least 1,000 workshops in her 21 years as RAO. They included the "catalog workshops" and "customized training" that is given on site and designed for a specific local government or organization and presentations at State-wide and regional conferences. Gail presented many workshops at the NYALGRO yearly conferences. She was a favorite presenter and her lectures were always in demand.

## Gail answered some questions about her career:

### Q. What have been the most challenging responsibilities of the job and how did you handle those challenges?

Giving life to what most people think of as an unimportant and a boring topic, I think, has been the central challenge—making managing public records and information relevant (and interesting, even). You can't develop knowledge in this field without a broader interest in society at large, and without a healthy exercise that finds connections between the world, the planet, culture, people—and how these all exist in documentation.

Trying to identify those connections between what real people really experience and how records support their values and legal protections, their inheritance, their human and civil rights, can actually make a difference. When we respect and care for recorded information on behalf of people we will never meet, for a future we can't possibly know, we automatically become greater citizens.

Okay, you're always going to lose some in government and unfortunately they are often the ones who control the finances. But we all know that it costs far more not

to manage public records and information with competence, sunlight, lots of kinds of expertise, knowledge of 21st-century technology, and personal integrity.

### Q. Tell us about one of your most memorable experiences on the job.

If I go way back, to the years when I worked in Cayuga County—at the invitation of the Town Clerk/RMO I was giving a grant start-up workshop for a small group of people in her home. After she greeted me that morning she completely disappeared. And she was the Project Director, and all of the training was essential to her working on her grant! To tell the truth I was baffled and a little miffed. Then, as I was getting in my car about to drive away, she came running out. That had been the morning she found the daughter she had given up for adoption decades before, and the morning that her birth daughter, also after searching many years, had found her.

She is still my friend, and thinking of this story brings tears to my eyes like the experience did back then.

### Q. What have been the most fun parts of this job and why?

Every time somebody laughed at one of my corny jokes during a workshop, I felt happy . . . and breathed in a sigh of relief!

Every time I threatened to create a workshop called "The Psychology of Records Management" and every person in the room nodded that they "got it," I felt I was on the right track. ("It's the people, stupid!") It's the people interacting with the records that's the real challenge—not the boxes or the paper, the CDs or floppy disks, the tapes or reels of microfilm, or hard drives, or all the photographs. You can't really educate a record.

And not to mention that I have had some totally fun and awesome field visits where we had a good time and we laughed a lot. (You know who you are!!!)

We wish Gail well in her new chapter in life and we want to thank her for kindness, compassion and her gentle manner that shone through in all her professional encounters and again for all the knowledge she has shared with us concerning records and their place in history.



*It truly is hard to say  
Good-bye.*

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Comments about the  
*"Keep the Peace" Conference*  
from some of the attendees:

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*"I really enjoyed the conference. I thought it was well organized and there were a lot of great topics. With the constant changes in litigation and advances in technology it is really important to have a conference such as this so we can stay up to date. The presentations were very good but I really got a lot out of talking to people from other agencies and hearing what they did in regards to records management. I'm looking forward to next year's conference."*

—Brian T. Hines, Records Management Officer,  
University at Buffalo

*"I love to hear from other town clerks about their experiences. I love to network with other attendees. I feel I get a lot of help from that"*

*"I learn from the people attending as much from the conference classes that I take"*

*"The Social Media Class and Email Essentials will be very helpful in my job"*

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*"Great opportunity to network with others in my field "*

*"This is the only formal conference training on records mgt. that I attend mainly due to the moderate price for everything"*

*"Having a variety of vendors is great and I feel that was shown at this conference"*

*"I like the 'hands-on' training sessions like Lillian had and would like to see more of them. Very interactive was great. Maybe hands-on in group break outs would be a good idea in the future. Like you have a problem to solve and each group has the same problem or a different one, and in so many minutes of working together in a small group they come up with some kind of resolution to share with the entire audience"*



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# 2016 Conference at Villa Roma, Callicoon, NY

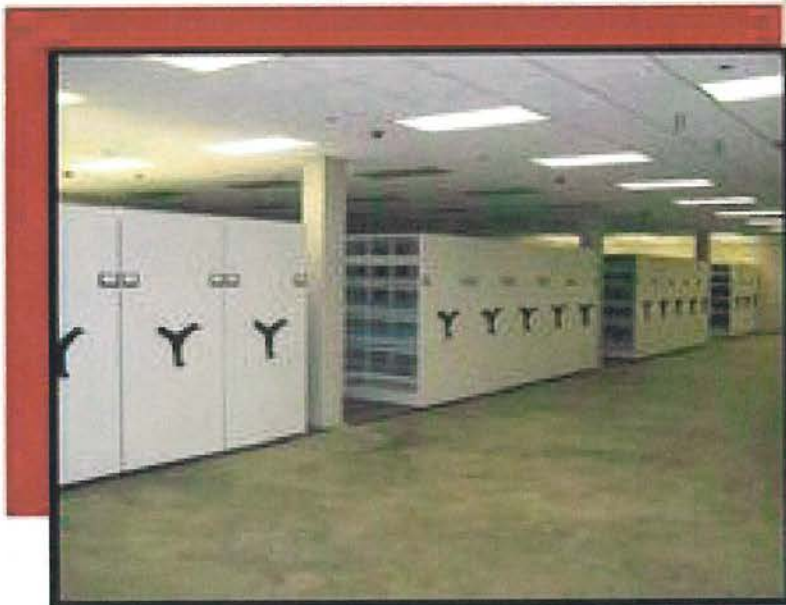
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The logo graphic consists of three overlapping, teardrop-shaped elements: a yellow one on the left, a red one on the top right, and a blue one on the bottom right.