Archives Month as a Way to do Advocacy

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Every October, Archivists across the nation celebrate and advocate for the archival field as part of American Archives Month. In 2018, the Naval History & Heritage Command (NHHC) archival staff participated in Archives Month specifically developing archives outreach that not only advocated for archival services but also as a way to foster connections, and encourage communication and collaboration within our organization.

Working at a large institution with both archival and non-archival staff, and locations spread across the country is a challenge in and of itself, let alone for fostering community engagement. Under the umbrella of Archives Month, NHHC staff planned outreach activities that sought to create and cultivate a sense of community, not only within our large organization, but also within the Navy community at large.

Inspired by MARAC Spring 2018 Session 1B, If You Plan It, They Will Come: Archives Month Event Incubator, a call for volunteers went out to establish an Archives Month Committee (AMC). The AMC brainstormed ideas, came up with 8 proposed ideas, and ultimately settled on 5 objectives.

Focusing on a series of internal and external outreach activities, NHHC staff created blogposts, participated in the DC Archives Fair and Ask an Archivist Day, hosted an information table on the Washington Navy Yard base, and generated brochures, handouts and giveaways, as well as organizing a staff webinar training day.

**Charting Course**
- AMC consisted of 5 archivists across departments planning the logistics of the objectives but all archival departments would have an opportunity to participate.
- AMC started having regular meetings in May with subsequent meetings being held more frequently as October got closer.
- The Archives Month Activity Proposal was due in June to Senior Leadership and AMC met with Senior Leadership to discuss the proposal a week after submitting. The AMC went forward with 5 of the 8 proposed activities.
- Organizing a staff webinar training day involved free webinars such as Identifying and Selecting Digital Content for Preservation, Library of Congress and Preservation for Free, FOIA Academy.
- A call for Archival Staff to volunteer at scheduled outreach activities went out in September via mass email, and meetings, signup sheets were posted on our shared drive.
- NHHC’s Communication and Outreach Division (CCD) provided some brochures and posters.
- AMC staff created Archives Branch business cards (250 Avery Printable Business Card 98).
- AMC staff purchased two sets of badge reel ($9 x 2) and badge holder ($5 x 2) as a creative away to handout our Archives Branch business cards.
- Gaylord Archival – Guide to Collections Care brochure was free. Thank you to Gaylord Archival.
- Tiny Hollinger boxes were also free. Thank you to Hollinger Metal Edge.
- AMC staff added candy and our Archives Branch business card into the boxes as well as a label on the lid.

**Underway**

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**Ask An Archivist Day**
- Archives Month across the country, including ours, has a Twitter to Twitter thread about a Archives Month event. The AMC brainstormed ideas, came up with 8 proposed ideas, and ultimately settled on 5 objectives.
- Of the 5 selected events, the AMC chose to host an information table at NHHC.
- Using Candy to aid in outreach activities. Staff added candy and our Archives Branch business card into the boxes as well as a label on the lid.
- Staff webinar training day.

**Giveaways**

**DC Archives Fair**

**Blog Posts**

**Information Table at the Washington Navy Yard**

**Moored Port Side**

- It’s important to formally elect a Captain (committee chair) someone who can keep everyone on course.
- The sooner you start, the better.
- AMC should work with managers on finding staff to write blog on specific topics.
- Ask An Archivist – Have a War Room (central location) of where all the action is happening. Need a Captain (one point of contact) fielding up questions but may also need more people to assist with questions.

**Weather Reports Indicate**

- Ask An Archivist Day – Highly successful. All hands on deck but very worthwhile.
- DC Archives Fair – Wrong audience for our objective. Audience was mostly students looking for jobs. Probably won’t attend next year. 30 people stopped by.
- Information Table at Navy Yard – Highly successful. Opportunity to reach local members of the Navy Community and to discuss the tools of the archive via mini Hollinger boxes filled with candy. Educated Navy Community on having an archives on the Navy Yard. Next year hope to do this at the beginning of Archives Month and at the end. 73 people stopped by.
- Staff Webinar Training – Professional Development Day for 3 hours showing three different trainings. Preservation, Time Management, and Navy Culture. Staff brought treats for mini Halloween/fall party. Although technological issues meant that online trainings did not load properly. Next year hope to have live speakers or make arrangements for possible field trips to other archives to learn from them.
- Give Aways – Important to get people to the table and a great way to start a conversation about archives.
- Blog Posts – Successful. This was an activity that all archival staff could participate in. More blog posts were written than could be used. All blog posts hope to be used throughout the year.

**Properly Relieved By**

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Questions? Feedback?
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