

Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

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Office of the Secretary of State

Employee Spotlight

Meet Tracy Rebstock

This month's Employee Spotlight showcases the Southwest Regional Archivist, Tracy Rebstock.

What is your role at the State Archives?

I am the Southwest Regional Archivist. I work with the nine counties in the southwest corner of the state—giving records management advice to local government agencies, picking up records, and organizing and providing access to those records. I also supervise the Research Room staff.

How were you inspired to become an archivist?

I decided to go back to school and get a Master's in Public History. I had been working with a public library and found out that in Washington it is challenging to find full-time library work.

What legacy would you like to leave at the Archives?

I would like to leave things better than when I arrived.

What's the number one mistake that even experienced researchers often make?

They often forget to document where they found a record with detail enough they could get back to it if needed.



Tracy Rebstock, Southwest Regional Archivist.



Tracy Rebstock (left), Southwest Regional Archivist.

If you could trade places with someone from your research, just for one day, who would it be, and why?

I did a lot of research on Spokane parks and really enjoyed learning about John W. Duncan—the park superintendent from 1910-1942. I think a day in his life would have been interesting.

What is the weirdest topic you have researched at the Archives?

I will say the weirdest thing was proving when a tree was planted in a housing development in Clark County.

What is the most important lesson you have learned about archives in the last year?

You will never be able to catch up. I think I spent a lot of time thinking I could, and now I have accepted that I cannot.

How do you recharge in the middle of a long day? Besides coffee.

I spend a little time breathing. There are several methods of breathing that are great to relieve stress and calm the mind.

What do you find the most challenging at the State Archives?

So much to do, so little time. It is easy to get caught up in getting things done and taking care of records as well as helping customers find what they are looking for. It is easy to forget there are only eight hours in the day, and that is okay.

Before working at the Archives, what was the most interesting job you've ever had?

The best way to respond is just to list what I have done, and you decide. I've been a paper girl, pet-sitter, babysitter, and lawn-mower, all before the age of 16. I worked as a page in a library, a ticket-taker/concession person at a movie theater, office staff for my dad's business, and at a bank troubleshooting ATM cards. I have worked for a golf supply company, as a woodcutter in an amusement park, a photographer for Sears Portrait Studio, a cashier at Hills Department Store, and I lasted two weeks as a hostess at a restaurant. I have been a nanny (five years), a student supervisor in a large university library, a staff person in a public library and a branch manager of a library. I have been a youth librarian and an adult librarian, and I have setup a small medical library in a trade school. I also lasted one week in a factory on third-shift prepping junk mail.

What is your biggest pet peeve?

I think my biggest pet peeve is people who do not take responsibility for their mistakes and it really makes me nuts if they try to place the blame elsewhere. Own up people!

Tell about a time you took a huge leap of faith.

This is challenging for me to answer. I spend a lot of time taking leaps and hoping for the best and I cannot remember something I did that was monumental. I believe that if you want to try something new or change something, just do it, don't overthink it. It tends to work out whether you succeed or fail—lesson learned.

What's your talent?

I used to be able to play the violin, now my talent is research.

Are you fueled by encouragement, or do you like to have a chip on your shoulder?

Sometimes I feel a little funny about encouragement, I tend to do better when I am proving someone wrong.

Which movie or novel is the best sequel?

There are no movies with good sequels. Novels are difficult, too. Sometimes a story is good as it ends (both movies and novels).

Are you an introvert or an extrovert?

A few years ago I would have said I was an extrovert, and in many cases I believe that to still be true, however, I have learned that I also enjoy my alone time and sometimes after being "on" I really need time to myself to recharge.

Name four individuals, living or dead, you would like to sit down with for dinner.

Linda Burfield Hazzard, Oprah Winfrey, Cyndi Lauper, and Abigail Adams

Fill in the blank: If you really knew me, you would know _____.

I love hiking.

If you could visit anywhere in the world you've never been, where would you go?

I would love to go to South America.

If you could go back in time to give advice to your 18-year-old self, what would it be?

Take a few more chances, everything will be okay.

What is your favorite family tradition?

Gathering at the Fourth of July celebration in Exira, Iowa, and staying at my grandparents' farm.



Tracy Rebstock (left), Southwest Regional Archivist.