

Message from the Great Northwest Region of ARMA Treasurer

Thank you “Ginger” for setting the stage for the theme for this year. Of course you are gorgeous my dear. Can I borrow your ballet slippers? I could use something more comfortable than I had working on the farm back home. On this three hour tour, I had come the farthest distance to be a castaway. From Kansas no less! Hopefully, you are able to guess which castaway role I was named to undertake. That’s right, Mary Ann. I am still the farthest one away, living in my hut on the beautiful southern Oregon coast, while the other leaders of the Region marooned me to be in Orlando, Florida, for ARMA’s 54th Annual International Conference which took off sailing this month.

In remembrance of the series, one issue that Gilligan’s Island brought up (with much debate) is: Would you choose to be a “Ginger” OR “Mary Ann”? Well, I am a low maintenance kinda gal as “she” is a movie star. I possess those needed domestic skills needed to survive (like the cooking and cleaning) whereas “she” is. . . well. . . she is a movie star! How can I compete with that?!

Well, putting this into records information management terms, I like to keep things easy and simple as possible to understand and follow in the overwhelming tsunami of records management tasks we have to undertake. I have found that the more you complicate the records lifecycle process to an employee, the more confused they can become. If you set up some basic processes for them to follow at the beginning of the records lifecycle (such as laying out basic filing schemes or techniques), and have them accessible in a central location for your organization, you can help keep your records managed as low maintenance as possible and increase your customer service. I am the first to admit that records management functions (such as conducting inventories and preparing listings for records disposition) are not “glamorous” but are needed skills for your organization to survive. Yet these activities sure can open up avenues of interest and creativity. I’m sure we all have done some clean up chores with our organization’s records and have been surprised at times at what has been found and also what has been done with that information. It has been proven that if you set up easy to follow procedures for filing and other basic record keeping skills that employees can use, there is a decrease in effort and time needed to maintain those records, therefore, they are more readily accessible when needed in cases of litigation or some such activity that may arise. I am a proponent in getting the experts together that creates, maintains, and ultimately dispositions specific series of records everyday to get their feedback on tailoring a record keeping system that would fit their needs. That way, you can also make the most of the newest technologies available. It was amazing what I would do with a coconut to have those great meals on the island.

“She” on the other hand, would give you procedures that take a lot of time and effort to follow and would be soooo detailed oriented to accommodate her being so particular in how things look. This can become a bit annoying right? Of course there is a time and place for the “I’s” to be dotted and the “T’s” to be crossed. Okay, there is a place for the “Ginger’s” in our RIM organization. That need is to be able to assist in compliance of adhering to the higher mandates of rules and regulations that have been put in place and to look good during those times of review and inspection. I must say that I agree, that Ginger was right in the fact that working together also makes the process more bearable and easy to follow. As an old saying goes,

“Many hands make light work.” In the end, we all need a bit of Ginger and Mary Ann in our records lives.

The castaways wanted to give you an advance notice of keeping some time aside in your calendar in April and June of 2010 open (WOW – a double wave action!) We want you to be able to come on a three hour tour to the island to celebrate a Great Northwest Region Conference and then a Great Northwest Leadership Conference. Watch this space for more details as the tour itineraries take shape. . .

Happy islanding everyone,

Cindy Fredrickson aka Mary Ann
GNW Region Treasurer