

SERA News

The Newsletter of the Southeastern Registrars Association

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State Coordinator

Cindy Gardner
Field Services Curator
Museum Division
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571 Jackson, MS
39205-0571
Telephone: 601/576-6901
cgardner@mdah.state.ms.us

Newsletter Deadlines

Summer 2008 - August 31
Fall 2008 - November 31
Winter 2009 - February 31

Contact your SERA State Representative with your latest news!

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

WARREN J. WOODS

During the past year and a half, the SERA Board has been trying to see how we can make SERA a more efficient organization. One of the areas that we see could use some tweaking is in the election of officers and a smoother transition of duties associated with those positions. Currently, the SERA Bylaws state that we will hold elections during even years (Article VII, section 1) and that the officers shall serve a term of two years (Article V, section 3). At one time, I thought that we had staggered the election of certain officers so that we would not have a clean slate of officers every time an election was held. We really feel that the SERA Board needs more continuity with seasoned officers in place along with newly elected officers. With that in mind the SERA Board proposes the following Bylaw changes:

Current bylaw: Article VII. Elections, Section 1. Elections of officers shall take place every even year...

Proposed change: Elections for the offices of Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer shall take place every odd year and the elections for the offices of Secretary, Communications Chair and Development Chair shall take place every even year. We chose this combination because it allows the Vice Chair to run for election as Chair after their term, if they are nominated and willing. This would require the membership to vote on allowing the current Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer to stay in office until next year.

Another area that could use tweaking: how do we get the elected officers to attend the annual meeting? We all know how much work is involved in the various SERA jobs and attendance at the annual meeting would be a great opportunity to recognize those efforts. Currently, only the Chair receives a travel stipend to attend a meeting. The SERA Board proposes the following Bylaw change:

Current bylaw: Article V. Officers, Section 5.4.2. Necessary and ordinary expenses incurred by SERA officers and members in the performance of their duties to SERA, including one annual AAM conference registration fee for the SERA Chair, shall be considered for reimbursement by the Treasurer from SERA funds as provided in the annual budget...

Proposed change: Necessary and ordinary expenses incurred by SERA officers and members in the performance of their duties to SERA, including one annual travel stipend of five hundred dollars (\$500) to be adjusted annually for inflation to aid the SERA Chair in attending the American Association of Museums (AAM) conference and the Southeastern Museum Conference (SEMC) annual meeting or similar meetings and including reimbursement to the six (6) SERA officers for the actual cost of the SERA luncheon/meeting at SEMC for that year. These expenses shall be considered for reimbursement by the Treasurer from SERA funds as provided in the annual budget...

As one can see, changes to the Bylaws might affect this year's election of new SERA officers. Ballots for these Bylaw changes will be sent to all current members that have their memberships paid in full at the time of the mailing. Currently, SERA has over **220 members** on its roster but only **135 have paid** their 2008 dues! If you are not sure about your status, please e-mail Treasurer Goldie Lanaux at goldiel@hnoc.org or telephone Goldie at 504-598-7159.

*Don't miss out on this opportunity to
change the world!*

Please feel free to contact me at warrenw@hnoc.org anytime.

Enjoy the summer and please vote!

Warren

SERA Officers 2006-2008

Chair:

Warren J. Woods
The Historic New Orleans Collection
533 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
Phone: 504/598-7129
Email: warrenw@hnoc.org

Vice-Chair:

Chris Goodlett
Kentucky Historical Society
100 West Broadway
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: 502/564-1792 x 4453
Email: chris.goodlett@ky.gov

Acting Secretary:

Anna Hilderbrandt
Assistant Registrar
The Historic New Orleans Collection
533 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
Phone: 504/598-7179
Email: annah@hnoc.org

Treasurer/Membership:

Goldie Lanaux
The Historic New Orleans Collection
533 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
Phone: 504/598-7159
Email: goldiel@hnoc.org

Development Chair:

Annelies Mondt
Deputy Director
Georgia Museum of Art
The University of Georgia
90 Carlton Street
Athens, GA 30602-6719
Phone: 706/542-0439
Email: amondi@uga.edu

Communications Chair:

Susan Fishman-Armstrong
Waring Archeological Laboratory
University of West Georgia
Carrollton, GA 30117
Phone: 678/839-6305
Email: sfishman@westga.edu

LETTER FROM RC-AAM

Dear SERA members:

As Chair of the RC-AAM, I am very happy to be updating the SERA membership on the recent RC activities at the AAM meeting in Denver. When Susan Fishman-Armstrong asked me to list some bullets, I thought what a novel idea – the RC chair on behalf of the board updates the regional members through their newsletter...why haven't we thought of that before!?! I will be doing it now and SERA is the first region to receive a letter from the Chair. I hope you find the information useful.

I am still trying to relax from the AAM meeting in Denver. What a huge success for the RC! We had fantastic sessions and events. The events received double the participants than expected: over 300 attendees to the business luncheon, over 125 attendees at the New Registrars Reception, and over 175 at the International and American Registrars Reception. I think we may have broken some records! Most exciting was the inauguration of the: **Reinforcement Crew - Colleagues helping Colleagues** which was voted to be an annual event before the AAM meetings, and thus the board voted to make the Reinforcement Crew event a RC Committee. The new General Facility Report (formerly the Standard Facility Report) was available for sale through the AAM Bookstore for the first time. It was a tremendous effort by a few people in just 2 years. The Code of Ethics Revision Task Force submitted the first draft of the code which will be reviewed by the board and subsequently the membership. We hope to have it finalized by the Philadelphia meeting.

In the past year, the RC Board sponsored the 2nd International Registrars Symposium in Chicago. Almost 400 registrars, collections man-

agers, insurance brokers, and shippers from over 20 countries attended the highly praised 2-1/2 day symposium. At the Denver full board meeting, we voted to establish an IRS3 Feasibility Task Force to determine when and where we do the next symposium.

A survey was completed asking the membership how they would like to receive the RC-AAM membership directory. Making it online was majority opinion. In the next year, we will be working on the next directory.

I don't want to take up too much space, but please attend your regional annual meeting and I hope to see you all in Philadelphia for the 2009 AAM annual meeting. Remember to regularly check the RC website for updates on all our activities: www.rcaam.org. If you are not a member of the RC, there is a link to the AAM website to help you in joining the AAM and the RC. We need your support! Have a terrific summer!

Jeanne

Jeanne M. Benas
Chair, RC-AAM
Registrar, National Museum of
American History

AAM SESSION PROPOSALS.

It's time to propose session ideas for the AAM 2009, annual meeting in Philadelphia. If you have ever thought "hey, this topic would make a great session" or if you have ever wanted to bring up a new idea or talk about a new experience, this is your opportunity. Proposals are due July 3rd, to have RC-AAM endorse the session.

Contact **Rosie DiVernieri**,
Collections Coordinator, Chemical Heritage
Foundation at RosanneD@chemheritage.org

**SESSION REVIEWS
AAM ANNUAL MEETING:
DENVER, COLORADO
APRIL 27-MAY 1, 2008**

**LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR
COLLECTIONS PROFESSIONALS**

Reviewed by: Melissa McCarriagher, Assistant Registrar, Center for Puppetry Arts

Presented by: Martha Morris, Associate Professor of Museum Studies, George Washington University; Carole Wharton, President, L. Carole Wharton, LLC (Washington D.C).

Do you want to be a leader in today's museum? If, like me, you answered "Yes," then Martha Morris, an Associate Professor of Museum Studies at George Washington University, and Carole Wharton, a Museum and Nonprofit Consultant and a Former Adjunct Faculty at George Washington University, have an arsenal of tools to help you build new leadership skills in project management and expand on the current repertoire.

One of the first steps to becoming a successful leader is to understand the difference between the mission of a museum and the vision of a museum. The mission is the constant, never changing, core purpose of an institution and its sole reason for existence. A vision is a long-term plan for the future, that could change if leadership changes. As the institution undergoes the quest to achieve the vision set by the director, board, or whomever, it is important to keep the museum's mission in mind.

With that said, the museum can now begin the

strategic planning process. The first step is to have a plan. A good leader does not fly by the seat of their pants and change directions with the wind. A good leader decides what needs to be done based on the facts, and then comes up with a realistic way of accomplishing it. Strategic planning is a tool to provide all of the answers to the who, what, when, where, and how of a project. A strategic plan addresses the desired goals and objectives of a vision and outlines the financial and staff resources needed, a method of implementation, and a means to evaluate if the goal was achieved.

In addition to the saying, "there is no "I" in team," there is also no "I" in "project." It is crucial to use the different skills and perspectives that a team environment provides to have a successful project. An effective team should be made up of those who have a common goal, good communication skills, discipline, and a nice balance of "leadership styles." A leadership style is the way that an individual does work and works with others. Even more important than knowing the project manager's leadership style is to understand the leadership styles of the team members. Knowing someone's leadership style will enable the individual to have an understanding of how each member approaches things, how they respond to particular situations, and most importantly to communicate with them in their own language. QM² created the leadership style assessment taken by the workshop participants. Consult their website (www.qm2.org) for more information on performing a self-assessment.

If you know your mission, have a plan, and form a well balanced team, you can manage a successful project and put yourself one step closer to accomplishing your museum's vision.

PROVIDING TRAINING FOR SMALL PRE-PROFESSIONAL MUSEUMS

*Reviewed by: Dixie Neilson, Art Care
Moderator: Laurel Casjens, Trainer I, Office of
Museum Services, Salt Lake City, UT*

*Presented by: Pamela Miller, Faculty, College
of Eastern Utah (Price, UT); Peter Tirrell, As-
sociate Director, Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum
of Natural History (Norman, OK)*

While all museums share similar functions, small museums, whose staff may consist of as little as one or two people and who may lack professional training, have their own set of challenges. These challenges may sometimes seem insurmountable, but this panel shared advice about how they may be overcome.

Pam Miller talked about how many “hats” a staff member may wear every day. One person may need to handle nearly every chore that arises. To keep these various tasks from becoming overwhelming, having good practices in place and keeping up with the workload is vital. To assist with timely processing of collections she recommended that smaller museums choose a collections software program that is easy to use and that encourages consistent data entry practices. She likes Past Perfect, but mentioned that there are several others available in various price ranges. Keeping the flow of accession related chores moving is very important. When objects become bogged down in your system many problems may result. Ownership is in limbo and without accession numbers and storage space assigned objects can become lost or damaged.

Staff training is another area where small museums may have difficulty. Fortunately, the Internet can be very helpful with information shar-

ing. Online classes can supply all sorts of professional training without the staff having to leave the museum. Finding a mentor who understands your particular needs is also invaluable, and helps avoid a feeling of isolation within your field. When possible, attendance at local, regional or national meetings can allow one person to bring back new information and practices to the rest of the staff. Scholarships and travel awards can help defray some of the expenses.

Once quality practices are developed how are they maintained, especially when there may be high turnover, or a large number of untrained volunteers? Putting your practices in writing, even developing a practical manual, will help ensure that each person knows and follows the same routines. She also suggested that a notebook be kept that holds all handouts and informative brochures collected from professional meetings. When questions arise, consult the handouts. Finally, she suggested learning effective volunteer recruitment practices to avoid high turnover, and looking to your state and local museum organization for assistance.

Peter Tirrel added other helpful ideas. Refer to AAM for help, use MAP (Museum Assessment Program) and accreditation procedures to refine your practices. Do strategic planning to know where you are headed and how to get there. Take time to plan ahead, and if a plan isn't working don't be afraid to change it.

In summary, if you are short of personnel and/or funding, look to larger professional organizations for low cost help and advice, use as many museum services as you can find, get a good mentor, and use the Internet to connect to the rest of the field.

More Than Two Men and a Truck: Planning the Successful Collections Move

Reviewed by: Maclyn Le Bourgeois Hickey, Assistant Registrar, The Historic New Orleans Collection

Moderator: Kimberly Terbush Watson, Registrar, Eclectic Electric Archives

Panelist: Michelle Gallagher Roberts, Chief Registrar at the New Mexico Museum of Art; Paul Smutko, Senior Collections Manager at Museum of International Folk Art (Santa Fe, NM); Jessica Caddell, Collections Manager at Freeport Arts Center; Suzanne Fisher, Curator of Material Culture at the Louisiana State Museum

Part 1, Planning and Implementation

Michelle Gallagher Roberts, *Chief Registrar at the New Mexico Museum of Art*, started with a quote from Alexander Graham Bell: “Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.” She suggested beginning the planning stage by answering these preliminary questions: what (are you moving?), why (are you moving?), where (are you moving it to?), who (is moving it?) and how (are you moving it?). She said some institutions use traveling shows as temporary storage, which obviously is not a good idea since it is risky to collections. She remarked that everyone needs training and supervision, even the most seasoned handlers. She noted that it is helpful to identify the type of object being moved, its condition, the packing method to be employed and how the piece would be tracked once packed. A step-by-step guide and/or moving rules would clarify most situations and procedures for staff. Objects that are exceptions to the rules need to be identified. Moving is a good time to accomplish other tasks too, if there is time, like: verifying accession number, recording location, cataloguing or condition re-

porting (they used a quick rating system for condition: 1 = exhibitable, 2 = not exhibitable). Finally a good idea is to brainstorm what may go wrong (elevator breaking, staff quitting, method not working), and employ preventative measures before the move. For instance, they had their elevator serviced before the move, but it still broke, so they hand carried everything up 2 flights of stairs. She strongly recommended having a cushion in your allotted time and budget to allow for unexpected snafus.

Paul Smutko, *Senior Collections Manager at Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico*, used barcodes to track the items that his institution moved. Barcodes do not replace accession numbers. Instead, identifying cataloguing information and accession numbers are linked in the database to the barcode. Staff printed out 3 copies of each item’s barcode which they attached to 3 separate tags for each piece: one hung on the piece, the second was in a zip lock bag attached to the exterior of box, and the third was in zip lock bag attached to the exterior of large container. He reasoned that the barcodes would simplify tracking locations and speed workflow; and they seemed an effective inventorying tool for what he was trying to accomplish. Staff members photo-documented everything and attached a barcode to the photograph in the computer system. They also hired a conservator and made a survey of the collection as it was being packed. They hired a consultant to develop packing strategies and methods, hired a packer, recruited volunteers and used barcodes to track the objects as they were moved.

Part 2, Strategies and Solutions

Jessica Caddell, *Collections Manager at Freeport Arts Center*, spoke about how collections had to be moved out of storage so the space could be renovated. They used volunteers who were asked to commit at least one four hour shift a week, because they felt less time would

be more likely to disrupt work flow. They matched volunteers with their skill set and interest. Each volunteer was trained in object handling, archival materials, condition reporting, tracking and digital photography. They turned exhibit space into a processing area and ensured that collections would not have to move far. Each item was condition reported using a rating system of 1-5 based on exhibitability, and each item was photographed. Staff used pencil and paper because they felt teaching volunteers to use the database would be too difficult and correcting the mistakes would be frustrating and time consuming. They also inspected frequently the newly renovated site to ensure the area was ready for permanent storage of collections before all was moved back in. After the project they rewarded the volunteers by asking each to pick out one item to be on exhibit, and they were mentioned in an article in the local newspaper.

Suzanne Fisher, *Curator of Material Culture at the Louisiana State Museum*, talked about the challenges faced by LSM staff after Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed the roof on the Mint building, a collections storage area. Their disaster plan went into effect, but it was impossible to communicate by phone or computer with staff, since the phone system was down, staff had evacuated from town, and there was no way to physically get to collections. Post-Katrina New Orleans was an extremely difficult environment, with no potable water, gas, phones or electricity.

Staff safety and health came first. Any willing museum staff, even those from other institutions, who were contactable, did not have family obligations, and were able to return to New Orleans, were drafted. Staff called lenders and let them know the status of loaned items. The only available storage space had no climate control and needed to be modified with shelving, pallets, and dollies and had to be monitored

constantly for bugs and leaky roofs. Fortunately for them, the unit had geckos which eat silverfish and cockroaches. They also found security personnel.

On-hand packing supplies were used and all staff had modified training, even long-time professionals. Packing was accomplished quickly. Once fragile items were packed they were color coded. Pieces that had multiple parts often became separated from their parts, because packing was so rushed. They used paper forms, not the database.

The movers had to be supervised and staff found that the best type of quick and easy inventory was simply to count boxes as they went on the truck, and count them again as they came off. Items were unpacked and placed on shelving in order to re-use the limited packing materials which were thoroughly checked to make sure nothing was caught in them.

They had plenty of time to plan for the return move, so were able to update the database, do a conservation survey, and update their on-site storage and disaster plan. Items' multiple parts are still being reunited with their host item. I admire the courage, resourcefulness and commitment of the Louisiana State Museum staff who worked so hard to protect their collections after Katrina.

I thought the presentations were all very well-organized and the speakers described their experiences clearly and straightforwardly. I would not hesitate to seek advice from anyone on the panel if I was going to plan a collections move. The speakers critiqued themselves, discussed the unanticipated problems that arose while moving, and identified what they would do differently next time. This session was helpful because the speakers were grounded in their own experience, and addressed the issue of how each museum must be prepared for the unforeseen event.

STATE NEWS

State Coordinator

Cindy Gardner
 Field Services Curator
 Museum of Mississippi History
 Mississippi Department of
 Archives and History
 P.O. Box 571 Jackson, MS; 39205-0571
 Phone: 601-576-6901
 Email: cgardner@mdah.state.ms.us

Alabama

State Representative

Pamela Bransford, Registrar
 Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
 P.O. Box 230819
 Montgomery, AL 36123
 Phone: (334) 244-5700
pbransford@mmfa.org

Tim Moon, Registrar at the Anniston Museum of Natural History, is re-housing and conducting a full inventory of the Museum's American Indian collection. The Indian stone artifact collection (over 2000 pieces) is being counted and placed in a Delta Design cabinet with pull-out drawers. As a result of this inventory, Tim will turn in a NAGPRA report on the Museum's American Indian collection.

Tim is also working on an exhibit, *Indians of North America*, which will open at the Berman Museum (next door to the Anniston Museum of Natural History) on October 18, 2008, and run through February 2009. The encyclopedic show will examine Indians before and after European contact and will feature stone tools and weapons, clothing, and moccasins from the Anniston Museum's permanent collection. One of the featured objects will be a Haida Indian 10 foot Totem Pole from Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia, Canada.

Tim will attend the Cherokee Culture and History Institute at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in North Carolina in July 2008.

Erin Schovel is now Erin Schovel Turnham. She and her husband, Chris, were married on April 5, and enjoyed a Caribbean cruise honeymoon. They recently relocated from Dothan to Montgomery for Chris's job. Erin is busy unpacking and setting up a new household as well as her contract registrar business, L.A. Art Services.

Arkansas

State Representative

Carolyn Reno, Collections Manager
 Shiloh Museum of Ozark History
 118 W. Johnson
 Springdale, AR 72764
 Phone: 479-750-8165
 Email: creno@springdaleark.org

Michele Simpson at the Historic Arkansas Museum reports that they have a new intern from UCA, **Amanda Whitley**. She is helping with various projects this summer, and they are happy to have the help!

Audra Oliver at the W. J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, says it is expected that several of the Presidential Libraries will be seeking to fill term positions specifically to assist with an inventory project. People interested in these museum technician positions should watch the federal government job site www.usajobs.opm.gov. They can be searched for by using the term "museum" or selecting the agency "National Archives and Records Administration." She said the openings will be posted soon.

Kristin Thompson at the Old State House Museum, says they just installed three exhibits simultaneously: *Circus Hitched to a Tornado: Twentieth Century Politics in Arkansas*, *Draw-*

ing on *Arkansas Politics*, and the new and improved *Pillars of Power* exhibit which now includes part of the Arkansas State Police Collection. They are preparing to receive eMuseum which will allow their collection to be placed on-line. The installation will take place in May and they hope to have their collection highlights on-line shortly thereafter.

Sarah Price says that the latest project at the Rogers Historical Museum has been to research, gather objects, and install their newest exhibit, *The Life Atomic: Growing Up in the Shadow of the A-Bomb*. Funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the exhibit offers a look back at the early atomic age ranging from the serious to the silly. From posters featuring classic B-movies to a recreation of a family fallout shelter, the exhibit explores the impact of the atomic bomb on everyday life in the 1950s and early 1960s. After its installation at the museum, *The Life Atomic* will become the newest traveling exhibition available in January 2009, with posters, panels, objects, and plans for constructing a bomb shelter recreation. The museum also received an Arkansas Museums Association award for Exhibit of the Year in 2007 for *Discovering the Bluff Dwellers*. The collections staff are now working on accessioning several new donations and will start preparing for AAM reaccreditation this fall.

Sue Trulock reports that the Pine Bluff/Jefferson County Museum has been pretty busy with changing exhibits. In putting away the former items on exhibit they found several that needed new labels—so they put new labels and new markings on garments. In the archives, they received a huge collection of letters from former Coach Alan Dunaway who was a very popular football coach in Pine Bluff. His letters to and from other high schools coaches who played ball against Pine Bluff are being read and sorted. When finished, there will be a nice

history of the years that he was coach.

Marie Demeroukas says photo library staff at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History has begun rehousing oversized photos, gathering them up from their various boxes and drawers, placing them in unbuffered folder stock, and organizing them sequentially by size. They continue to convert old catalog cards into database records. They hope to have both projects done by the end of the year.

SCHOLARSHIPS!

Are you overpaid in your job? Do you have a lot of extra money? Are you a member of the jet set? I didn't think so, me neither! In that case I suggest you apply for one of the SERA Scholarships to help fund your attendance at the upcoming SEMC Meeting, this year in beautiful Birmingham, Alabama. SERA is offering three scholarships of \$500 each to deserving members, and you could be one of them. Last year we assisted **Goldie Lanau** and **Andrea Hagy** with their trip to Little Rock and this year we helped **Melissa McCarriagher** attend AAM in Denver. Who will be next????

Deadline is August 1, see other application details at: www.seregistrars.org.

Contact Dixie Neilson if you have questions dixneilson@yahoo.com

Carolyn Reno reports that the museum collections staff and volunteers at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History have been updating location records for artifacts that were moved around in a recent reorganization of storage areas. Volunteers are going through old manuscript collections and adding box and file lists to manuscript descriptions as needed. Restoration of the museum's Shiloh Meeting Hall (formerly the Shi-

loh Primitive Baptist Church and Odd Fellows Hall) is underway; siding is being repaired, replaced, and painted; and windows and doors are being repaired and painted. The work was made possible by a grant from Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

**MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS
COORDINATOR NEEDED FOR AAM
2009.**

RC-AAM is requesting a **Marketplace of Ideas Coordinator** for the 2009 meeting. If you want to be part of the 2009 RC-AAM planning committee, are willing to contact Jan Bernstein (Denver's coordinator) for helpful hints, have contacts or know people with contacts, want to organize the floor plan for the marketplace, and want to meet leaders in the field to share ground breaking research, etc.? Get the idea?

Contact **Rosie DiVernieri**,
Collections Coordinator, Chemical Heritage
Foundation at RosanneD@chemheritage.org

Florida

NEW!!!

State Representative

Stephanie Gaub
Collections Manager
Orange County Regional History Center,
Downtown Orlando
65 East Central Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32801
Phone: 407.836.8587
Email: stephanie.gaub@ocfl.net

The Registration Department at the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida is in the midst of their NEH-funded storage renovation and is gearing up for a major construction project - the building of a new Asian

art wing. The new wing will add 22,000 square feet of galleries, offices, storage and conservation space as well as an Asian garden to the Harn's facilities. The project is funded by Dr. and Mrs. David A. Cofrin, constant and generous supporters of the museum. The department was further excited to receive two awards earlier this year: Registrar **Laura Nemmers'** application for the IMLS Connecting to Collections Bookshelf was graciously accepted and the department was the recipient of 16 helpful tomes that will assist them in better preserving and caring for their objects. Additionally, Associate Registrar **Reagan Duplisea** was awarded the Barthco International Young Professional Travel Fellowship that allowed her the first-time opportunity to attend the AAM annual conference in Denver.

VOOM PORTRAITS Robert Wilson, opened at the Bass Museum of Art on Thursday, May 1st to an eager audience. The exhibition was an extremely last-minute addition to the 2008 exhibition schedule, discovered by the sharp curatorial eye of Acting Curator in Charge, **Ruth Grim**. The exhibition consists of 26 unique portraits of actors, animals, royalty, musicians and dancers, shown on 65" plasma display panels, each with original musical scores. The works are part of a larger series of 153 portraits to date. The upstairs galleries at the BMA contain only the VOOM Portraits, while the downstairs galleries combine fine examples of seventeenth century Italian, Flemish and Dutch works and British Grand Manner portraits side-by-side with the contemporary works. Strange, but it works.

Promises of Paradise: Staging Mid-Century Miami closed at the Bass Museum of Art on Sunday April 13th, even though visitors were still flooding in the front doors. The exhibition is set to open at the Samuel P. Harn Museum in Gainesville in October. Many thanks to TK Art Services out of Delray Beach. If great packing/crating, shipping, storage services (and afford-

able?!?) is needed in the southeast area, BMA highly recommends them.

Georgia

State Representative

Kelly Woolbright, Registrar

Morris Museum of Art

One 10th Street

Augusta, GA 30901

Phone: 706-828-3809

Email: kellyz@themorris.org

Kelly Woolbright, Registrar at the Morris Museum of Art, has been busy with several major exhibitions. The museum recently organized *Pleasant Journeys and Good Eats Along the Way: A Retrospective of Paintings by John Baeder* and has sent it on the road to three venues—only two more to go! The latest exhibition, *Something to Look Forward To: Abstract Art by 22 Distinguished Americans of African Descent*, was a difficult installation requiring some extra hired help simply to move the crates. Coming up next is *Notes on the 19th, 20th, and 21st Centuries: Paintings by Jeffrey Kronsoble*. This show is organized by the museum and required some travel around the southeast to pick up the works. When not helping with installations, Kelly continues to catalog and accession artwork into an expanding permanent collection.

Christa McCay at the Marietta Museum of History has been having a very busy spring. The Museum opened with a grand gala for its new Military Gallery. Right after the opening, members of the Museum's staff picked up the largest single collection it has ever had donated. The collection contains over 2,000 dolls, advertising memorabilia, and doll accessories. This summer the Museum is lucky enough to have two interns working on cataloging all of it. They will also have two more interns working on the *Collections of Collections: Oodles of Oddities* exhibit and the other military items in the collection, which are not currently on display.

Hopefully the summer will be filled with days of cataloging and cleaning up the collections and storage.

Annelies Mondt, Tricia Miller, Christy Sinksen, Malissa Ryder, and Sarina Rousso at the Georgia Museum of Art are in the midst of a two-month long project to upgrade the sprinkler and fire detection system throughout the building. The museum is closed to the public temporarily while they move and protect the collections during the upgrade. This is the first time that the museum has been closed to the public in ten years. Plans are also underway for an addition to the building and they expect to break ground in spring of 2009. The addition will include new galleries and an expansion of art storage, as well as a renovation of the administrative offices.

At the Columbus Museum, **Aimee Brooks** and **Melda Alexander** continue to work hard on accessioning, inventorying, and photographing the collections and exhibits going in and out. Some exhibitions in the near future include *Columbus Biennial*, *The Right Chemistry: Color in Fashion*, and *Characters: Views of the Figure in Clay*. The museum is finishing its reaccreditation self-study year and will now gear up for the site visit.

Susan Fishman-Armstrong at the Antonio J. Waring Jr. Archaeological Laboratory announces the retirement of **Dr. Ray Crook** as Laboratory Director. Dr. Crook started as a student in 1969 in the Anthropology Department then returned in 2000. Dr. Crook will continue to work with the Laboratory as Emeritus Professor as he continues his research on the Georgia Coast. The Laboratory is pleased to announce the hiring of **Dr. Thomas Foster**, from the Northern Kentucky University, as the new Laboratory Director.

Kentucky**State Representative**

Barbara Lovejoy, Registrar
 University of Kentucky Art Museum
 Rose Street at Euclid Avenue
 Lexington, KY 40506-0241
 Phone: 859-257-2808
 Email: blovejoy@uky.edu

Sandy Staebell, Registrar/Collections Curator for Kentucky Library and Museum, is continuing her work on the exhibit, *A Star in Two Flags: Conflict in Kentucky*, and inventorying the collection.

Barbara Lovejoy, Registrar at the University of Kentucky Art Museum, is working on registration of a gift of 153 photographs taken by Andy Warhol, a gift from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. The museum's important Willard Metcalf painting *Giverny* has finally returned from loan for the exhibition *America! The History of Painting in the New World* in Brescia, Italy. The painting was previously included in *Impressionist Giverny: A Colony of Artists, 1885-1915* shown in Giverny, France; Montreal, Canada; and San Diego, California. Lovejoy also curated the current major summer exhibition, *From Picasso to Warhol: Modern and Contemporary Prints from the Collection* (May 25 - August 24) which includes major works by Joseph Albers, Alexander Calder, Chuck Close, Jim Dine, Jasper Johns, Yvonne Jacquette, Alex Katz, Lee Krasner, Robert Longo, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, and many other major artists.

Louisiana**State Representative**

Kathryn A. Lang, Curator
 Jean Lafitte National Historical
 Park and Preserve
 419 Rue Decatur
 New Orleans, LA 70130-1035

Phone: 504-589-3882 ext. 114

Email: kathy_lang@nps.gov

From the Historic New Orleans Collection:

Anna Hilderbrandt, Assistant Registrar, reports that the two-part exhibition *Birds of a Feather: Wildfowl Carving in Southeast Louisiana* just wrapped up. The second part of the exhibition ran from January 15 – April 20, 2008. To celebrate the culmination of the exhibition the Collection held an event called the *Day of the Duck* on Sunday, April 6th. The event brought together several of the decoy carvers featured in the exhibition to discuss and share their craft with the community. The carvers demonstrated their art and participated in a round table discussion. Now that the exhibition has come to a close, Registration has been working hard to return the two hundred plus loan items that made up the exhibition. They have also been preparing an exhibition presented in partnership with the New Orleans Museum of Art called *New Orleans: A Sense of Place*. The exhibition draws on the strengths of both institutions' collections featuring over a dozen works from each museum. This is their third exhibition with NOMA.

Assistant Registrar for Library Materials **Viola Berman** processed a recently acquired rare book, *The Navigator: or the Traders' Useful Guide in Navigating the Monongahela, Allegheny, Ohio, and the Mississippi Rivers...* by Zadok Cramer (1806). This work is the first navigational guide for the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, which were vitally important commercial arteries at the time. It is also a crucial work in helping to develop the commerce of the early United States, with a very early account of Lewis and Clark's discoveries. It is a sobering thought knowing that she had a hand in preserving this great work of history for posterity!

Goldie Lanaux, Registrar, notes that The Historic New Orleans Collection recently acquired

a newspaper, the *Louisiana State Republican*, dated Wednesday December 29, 1852. What a treat it was to look over the news from 155 years ago and catch a glimpse of the New Orleans that was. Did you know that one could buy “Fresh Pond Ice at the lowest market price”? Or sell gold dust? That you could have dentistry done “at New York prices”? Did you know that “A lump of wet salaratus applied to the sting of a wasp or bee, will stop the pain in one moment, and prevent from swelling; It is a sure remedy for rattlesnake bite, if applied immediately.” Do you know what “salaratus” is and why you would have it in your kitchen? Amusements for the week included Shakespeare’s *MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR*; an adaptation of the German play *INGOMAR, THE BARBARIAN*; grand opera at the Orleans Theatre; *ACTING MONKEYS DOGS AND GOATS* at the American Theatre; and *A MASK AND FANCY DRESS BALL* at the Armory Hall on New Year’s Eve. And national and international shipping was booming! Havana cigars could be purchased, as well as French bonnets, Mexican Mustang Linament, Boots Shoes and Brogans from the Ship Norfolk, Philadelphia wagons, French and English chemicals and perfumery, coal from Scotland, coal from Pittsburgh, German laces, Rio and Havana coffee, Boston No. 1 soap, Cincinnati starch, Boston potatoes, Virginia tobacco, New York sugar, castile soap from Marsielles, and Western butter and cheese! One could also purchase dried and green fruit, barrels of tar, linen and cotton shirts, cases of pineapple, kegs of nails, boxes of candles, wrought iron frame pianos (manufactured in New Orleans), cheap iron chests, stoves, tents, awnings, flags, earthenware, window glass, Campeachy Hats, flowers, feathers, ribbons, corsets, parasols and white kid gloves. Something for everyone. The newspaper, published every Wednesday and Saturday, was 5 cents for a single copy, or \$5 per annum.



French Market, ca. 1880, Platinum Photoprint
The Historic New Orleans Collection
Gift of Mr. Morgan Whitney
1974.63.88

Kathy Lang, Curator, reports that the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve continues to move along on the proposed new visitor center at Chalmette Battlefield. The building plans and the exhibit plans are in the schematic design phase. All 18 artifacts, once on exhibit in the Chalmette Battlefield visitor center, that were sent to Springfield Armory NHS in September 2005 will be returned to the park in the next few months. The artifacts were sent there for conservation after Hurricane Katrina destroyed the old visitor center.

The park just completed its annual inventory for FY2008. It is mandatory in the NPS to complete a controlled property inventory, random sample inventory, and an accession inventory each fiscal year. The accession inventory is only required if there are accessions that have not been cataloged or are only partially cataloged. The park’s collection is estimated at 240,749 objects, items, and specimens.

There are several current natural history projects that are generating specimens and associated documentation. One of the conditions of the permit is that the investigators must catalog the specimens collected. The data from these collections is entered into both the park’s Automated National Catalog System and in NPSpe-

cies. NPSpecies is the National Park Service's master database for documenting the occurrence and status of species in more than 270 national park units that contain significant natural resources. This enables the park to provide greater intellectual access to the park's resources.

Mississippi

State Representative

Marilynn Jones, Branch Director
Manship House Museum
420 E. Fortification Street
Jackson, MS 39202
Phone: 601-961-4724
Email: mjones@mdah.state.ms.us

Elizabeth Joyner, Museum Curator at Vicksburg National Military Park, reports that the VNMP is hosting a *Teaching with Museum Collections Workshop* during the week of June 9-13.

The purpose of the workshop is for educators to develop lesson plans to accompany images that are to be used in a virtual exhibit that is in the process of being developed for Vicksburg NMP. The addition of the lesson plans will make the virtual exhibit a tool that educators will be able to access for use in the classroom. The lesson plans will promote object based learning. The objects can be tied to events, people, and places in an effort to better teach students about the action that took place at Vicksburg during the Siege in 1863. Eight educators will be involved in this 4 1/2 day workshop.

Tommie Rodgers, Registrar at the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, is working to prepare an exhibition of Native American baskets to lend to the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Maine. Two other loans are being prepared including the painting *Dolly by the Kitchen Door* by John Sloan which will travel to The Mennello Mu-

seum of American Art in Orlando, FL. This exhibition is titled *John Sloan's America* and is scheduled for November 7, 2008 - February 24, 2009. A third important loan will be the pastel titled *Nocturne in Venice Harbor (The Little Riva)* by James McNeill Whistler to the Foundation Beyler in Basel, Switzerland. The exhibition titled *The Light of Venice* is scheduled for September 28, 2008 - January 25, 2009.

Mary Lohrenz, Curator of the Governor's Mansion, recently completed for the MS Governor's Mansion historic section and collections the annual update of the disaster preparedness plan and the annual update of the collections management manual. She has also written two articles on the care of historic textiles for the upcoming MS Department of Archives & History Web site technical leaflet series which will be unveiled in the near future.

After twelve years as director of Cottonlandia Museum in Greenwood, **Robin Person** has returned to the MS Department of Archives & History, where she formerly worked in the Museum division, to be Branch Director of Historic Jefferson College in Washington, MS.

A Michigan native, Person has successfully led the Cottonlandia Museum to a new level of museum operation. She is perhaps most proud of the success of Cottonlandia's popular summer education programs for area children.

Person is currently secretary/treasurer of the Mississippi Museums Association. She will live in the 1830's president's home on the College grounds.

Marilynn Jones, branch director of the Manship House Museum, has been busy working with staff members to update collections management and other policies in preparation for the upcoming subsequent accreditation of the Museum. Manship staff recently installed *Sum-*

mer Dress in the Museum, interpreting the Victorian practice of preparing the home for the heat, insects, and dirt of the summer months, and will next install an exhibit entitled *Manships Abroad*, interpreting travel in the nineteenth century. *Manships Abroad* includes an exhibition in the Visitors Center, and also in the historic house.

Cindy Gardner, Field Services Curator for the Museum Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, reports that things are changing at MDAH. Since Hurricane Katrina, the Old Capitol Museum of Mississippi History has been closed. The NEW Old Capitol will reopen in January 2009 and will interpret the history of the building that served as Mississippi's statehouse from 1839 to 1903, with a special focus on government in action. The NEW Museum of Mississippi History is still in the planning stages—so far, a ten year process waiting on funding from the Mississippi legislature to break ground!

Gardner also reports that she is working with **David Morgan** of the Mississippi Humanities Council to serve as “service providers” for the AASLH Standards Pilot Project. Six Mississippi museums are taking part in the pilot program where they will focus on one of five standards sections (Mission, Vision, Governance; Management; Audience; Interpretation; Stewardship: Collections) to improve their museum. Training for each of the sites has begun and will be done by the end of June. The sites will then work on specific projects to improve in their selected area. The pilot program will be complete in December. Visit the AASLH Web site to learn more.

North Carolina

State Representative

Susan Webster, Registrar/Textiles Curator
Greensboro Historical Museum
130 Summit Avenue

Greensboro, NC 27401

Phone: (336) 373-2479

susan.webster@greensboro-nc.gov

Mary Ames Booker Sheret, Curator of Collections, reports that the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibit on the latest ship named NORTH CAROLINA...the fast attack submarine USS NORTH CAROLINA SSN 777.



The submarine was commissioned into the U.S. Navy in a ceremony in Wilmington, NC, on May 3rd. The new exhibit features a portion of the bow flag from the christening ceremony, original artwork of the submarine by Stephen Rountree, and a model of the submarine made by Don Preul, curator, The Rogers Ship Model Collection, Naval Academy.



The banners and murals were created by Visual Impressions, Charlotte, NC, and the fiberglass flag mold and interpretive sign barrier were created by Truelove Fabrications, Wilmington, NC. Local graphic designer Alice Heitchue, designed the layout on the exhibit panels. The exhibit tells how the submarine was built, illus-

trates the steps to bring a ship into the U.S. Navy, and offers a glimpse into life inside a modern day nuclear powered submarine.

Terri Hudgins, Registrar, reports that many generous donors have contributed toward collections conservation efforts at Cape Fear Museum of History and Science in Wilmington, NC. Recently, an anonymous donor gave \$1,200 for the conservation of a late eighteenth century sap bucket to be displayed in the portion of their long-term exhibition, *Cape Fear Stories*, that interprets the region's former naval stores industry. Additionally, they received close to \$900 for the conservation of an 1830s side chair, still with its original finish, that was used in a local home. At present they are also fundraising for the conservation of Confederate General W.H.C. Whiting's Civil War uniform. The conservation cost is estimated at \$13,125, plus materials. So far, they have received a total of \$720.

Martha Tonissen Mayberry, Registrar, reports that Conservation Assessments seem to be the buzz words around The Mint Museum! Thanks to a grant from the NEH Preservation Assistance program, they are in the midst of a conservation assessment of their American painting collection. Painting conservator James Swope of Palm Beach, FL, is there for a week reviewing their paintings in preparation for reinstallation in the new Center City facility scheduled to open in 2010. Andrew Baxter of Bronze et al, a sculpture conservator from Virginia, will also visit to review several large scale contemporary sculptures currently on loan to UNC-Charlotte and some other outdoor sculptures that may also be installed uptown.

South Carolina State Representative

Rachel H. Cockrell

Registrar

SC Confederate Relic Room &

Military Museum

301 Gervais St.

Columbia, SC 29291

Phone: 803-737-8020

Email: rcockre@crr.sc.gov

Michelle Baker reports that the South Carolina State Museum just opened a juried art show in conjunction with their 20th anniversary of being open to the public. They have never done a juried show that was open to all mediums, so they were not sure what to expect. They were hoping for 250 artists to submit two works each and planned around that number. By the time the last day of accepting entries ended, they had over 500 artists and almost 1,000 pieces of art for the jurors.



What followed was a registration project that required all of the organizational, art handling, and volunteer management skills acquired over the past 23 years. The biggest challenge was after the jurors were finished - in two days, they had to return 870 pieces of art that would be picked up by those not included in the show. On the busiest day of pick up, Michelle wore a pedometer and walked 6.2 miles inside of the museum. Just when she thought she had done it all, this exhibit brought a new, kinda fun, opportunity which reinforces her opinion that "registration is not for sissies."

Dawn Deano Hammatt reports that the Up-country History Museum, Greenville, just

opened a temporary exhibit: *South Carolina Naturalists: Audubon in Context*. This exhibit traces the history of the naturalists that journeyed through the upstate documenting wildlife from the 18th and 19th centuries. The exhibit includes original works by Mark Catesby, William Bartram, John Abbot, and John James Audubon.

The engravings and books in the exhibit are drawn from the Thomas Cooper Library, Department of Rare Books & Special Collections at the University of South Carolina. They owe a special thanks to Dr. Patrick Scott, Director, Rare Books & Special Collections, USC, for his impressive work in putting this exhibition together. The exhibit is sponsored by the Bill and Connie Timmons Family Fund and will run through September 7, 2008.

Congratulations to **Melissa Buchanan**, Collections Assistant at the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum. Melissa received her M. A. in Public History from the University of West Georgia on May 10, 2008.

South Carolina's military history museum now has a home on YouTube, the largest video site on the internet.

Rachel Cockrell, Registrar, reports that the SC Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum's YouTube site features behind-the-scenes stories at the museum. Viewers are able to see how artifacts are prepared for display and also gain a sneak peak at items not usually available to the public for viewing.

"We are excited about giving the community a new way to meet our staff and see the many exciting artifacts and programs we have here at the museum," said Director **Allen Roberson**. "We are always looking for innovative ways to tell our story and educate the public about the rich martial history of our state." The mu-

seum's site can be accessed by visiting <http://www.youtube.com/SCCRRMM> or www.crr.sc.gov/videos. New videos will be added regularly.

Tennessee **State Representative**

Neil W. O'Brien, Registrar
The Dixon Gallery and Gardens
4339 Park avenue
Memphis, TN 38117-4698
Phone: 901-761-5250
Email: nobrien@dixon.org

Summertime is usually a very busy time at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art and **Kip Peterson**, Collection Manager, writes that this June is no exception. In addition to opening *The Prints of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* and *Memphis Collects: Around Tennessee, 1820-1920*, the traveling exhibition organized by The Brooks, *Beyond the Maker's Mark: Paul de Lamerie Silver* will close at its final venue, The Powerhouse, Sydney. As always, the registrars are trying to catch up on all of the new acquisitions while trying to make a decision (and find funding) for a new collections management software system. Throw in working on a catalogue of the artist, Carl Guthertz, and co-organizing a Canaletto exhibition with The Ringling Museum and the summer is just flying by!

The Hunter Museum of American Art in Chattanooga will soon launch a new website that will be more visually appealing and interactive than their old one. There will be more in-depth information including links, blogs, interviews, etc. Visitors will be able to access information about 55 of their collection objects. In preparation, Registrar **Elizabeth Le** and Assistant Registrar **Theresa Slowikowski** have been consumed with verifying copyright permissions, locating images, and researching documenting information.

The *Guide By Cell* program that was launched last year in their Sculpture Plaza has been expanded into their interior galleries.

Their summer exhibition, *William Morris: Myth, Object and the Animal*, will open June 23. They are looking forward to the Morris crew's arrival to install the glass exhibit. Since the artist has said that he is retiring from blowing glass to pursue other interests, this tour will be one of the last opportunities to see a large exhibit of his work in one place. There will also be an ancillary glass exhibit off the lobby titled *Contemporary Studio Glass from the Permanent Collection* featuring seven Hunter Museum works.

Virginia

State Representative

Andrea Hagy, Assistant Registrar
Art Museum of Western Virginia
1 Market Square, SE
Roanoke, VA 24011-1436
Phone: 540-224-1227
Email: ahagy@artmuseumroanoke.org

Virginia Members, please send your announcements to your state representative!!

West Virginia

State Representative

Linda Sanns, Registrar
Huntington Museum of Art
2033 McCoy Road
Huntington, WV 25701
Phone: 304-529-2701
Email: lsanns@hmoa.org

Charles W. Morris III, Director of Collections and Exhibitions, reports that the West Virginia State Museum, located in the lower level of the State Cultural Center, Charleston, is currently in phase two of the renovation project to hire a firm for the fabrication of the exhibits. The history of the state will be told in the new 23,000

square foot museum through modern exhibits that will appeal to visitors of all ages. There will be a show path, which is a chronological journey of West Virginia history, using themed settings to highlight pivotal moments. Special effects, narration, first-person accounts, surround sound, and dynamic theater lighting will help visitors experience what it was like to be a West Virginian during the most important moments in the state's history. In addition, there will be discovery rooms to provide visitors with an opportunity to learn more about the history of West Virginia. The discovery rooms will feature artifacts, works of art, stories, music, and film clips. The connections rooms will allow visitors to dig deeper into West Virginia history and culture with computer stations, and provide facts about topics not covered in the show path and discovery rooms. The last scene as the visitor exits the museum will be a slide show of sites and tourist attractions in the state and a kiosk where they can access information about sites all around West Virginia. The renovated West Virginia State Museum is slated to reopen next year.

Linda Sanns reports that during the Huntington Museum of Art's collections inventory a number of old loans surfaced, and a concentrated effort has begun to locate the lenders—which is proving to be easier said than done as she's sure most of us know. They are also dealing with found in collection objects. Hoping for some new insight, she purchased the book *Collection Conundrums: Solving Collections Management Mysteries* by Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore and attended the session of the same title in Denver at the AAM Annual Meeting which was very helpful.

Also helpful was the session on the new version of the standard facility report now called the General Facility Report. After the session she rushed to the AAM bookstore to purchase a copy, and will begin soon to complete it.

SERA

Southeastern Registrars Association

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Visit the SERA website at www.seregistrars.org

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SERA Treasurer/Membership Officer
The Historic New Orleans Collection
533 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130-2179
504/598-7159
Fax: 504/598-7108
goldiel@hnoc.org

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SERA NEWS is published quarterly by the Southeastern Registrars Association. The Southeastern Registrars Association (SERA) recognizes high standards of museum practice and fosters professional growth among museum registrars in the southeastern region of the United States. We promote the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas through education seminars, publications and other means. SERA initiates and supports activities and projects which help create an atmosphere of cooperation and communication among, and between, registrars, other museum professionals, and those in related fields, and pursues further development of professional practices in the field.

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Contact: Treasurer/Membership Chair
Goldie Lanaux
The Historic New Orleans Collection
533 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
Phone: 504/598-7159
Email: goldieL@hnoc.org

SERA NEWS

c/o Susan Fishman-Armstrong
Antonio J. Waring, Jr. Archaeological Laboratory
University of West Georgia
Carrollton, GA 30118