Greetings, SERA members! A lot has changed since the last SERA News, but so much has stayed uncertain. Some of us have returned to our offices, others have lost jobs, and some are still furloughed or working remotely. Despite the upheaval and continued stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, I’ve been so encouraged to see the museum and collections communities come together to support each other. If you know of an initiative to support museum workers or a resource for working during COVID-19 that we haven’t shared, please let us know.

That said, there’s more we can do, especially to support current and emerging professionals who identify as members of historically marginalized groups. I’m sure I’m not the only SERA member who works at a museum that is still trying to change its reputation as a museum for rich, white people. That reputation can keep people from applying for our jobs and from staying in those jobs when they have them. Also, that reputation exists for the reason that it was absolutely true for much of the museum’s existence. Changing it takes real, meaningful work and an acknowledgement of the harm that has been and continues to be done. I greatly appreciate the folks who have been willing to share their experiences and expertise in the webinars that SEMC and other groups have hosted recently.

As you probably know, SEMC has decided to replace the in-person Louisville conference with a program series in August, September, and October. The Collections/Curatorial track of sessions will be October 27-28, with the earlier tracks focused on education, DEAI, career management, and operations. I hope you’ll join us for two SERA events – a business luncheon/networking on Oct. 27 and a virtual Registrars’ Respite after sessions on Oct. 28. I wish I could send you each a beverage for the respite!

Lastly, please consider nominating a registrar or collections manager extraordinaire for the Dan Silosky Award. The deadline for applications is August 31. This person could be a great mentor, a trailblazer, a change-maker, or someone who pulled together an amazing project while working remotely. We all know someone who deserves more recognition. Think creatively!

Stay safe,
Corinne
Greetings SERA Members,

I hope you all are well as can be during these challenging times. This past quarter has been a quiet one for SERA as we position ourselves to come out of this global health crisis in relatively good financial standing. However, considering the economic challenges that many museums are now facing, as well as SEMC’s move to a virtual conference, we have seen membership renewals decrease. We are also currently working to obtain a refund for the deposit we made on the planned 2020 Registrar’s Respite event in Louisville, which should boost our bottom line. If you haven’t already (and are able to in your current situation), please renew in advance of SEMC’s 2020 virtual programming so that you continue to enjoy the benefits of a SERA membership!

As of August 7, 2020, SERA has **131 active members**, down from 135 (**-3.0%**) this time last year.

The current balance in SERA’s Chase checking account is $7,079.77. The current balance in SERA’s PayPal account is $1,004.59. The combined **total on-hand is $8,084.36**, down $1,263.79 (**-13.5%**) from the $9,348.15 on-hand this time last year.

SERA’s fiscal activity for May 5 to August 7, 2020 is outlined below. Please feel free to contact me for any additional information.

Austin J. Bell, Treasurer/Membership Chair

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**SERA Income/Expenses: May 5 – August 7, 2020**

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Membership

New*/Renewing Members

Alabama

Jennifer Watts*
Director of Museum Programs
Vulcan Park and Museum

Arkansas

Florida

Michele Dimattia*
Collections Manager/Registrar
Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art at St. Petersburg College, FL

Naomi Gerakios*
Curator of Collections
Heritage Village

Kaitlyn Hof Mahoney
Curator of Collections
Matheson History Museum

Georgia

Christa McCay
Collections Manager
Marietta Museum of History

Kentucky

Louisiana

Viola Berman
Associate Registrar
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Monica Cantin
Assistant Registrar
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Susan Eberle
Assistant Registrar
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Rachel Ford
Assistant Registrar
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Jennifer Ghabrial
Head Registrar
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Kristin Hébert-Veit
Curatorial Cataloguer
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Kelley Hines
Assistant Registrar
The Historic New Orleans Collection

Megan Valentine
Curator
Alexandria Museum of Art

Mississippi

North Carolina

South Carolina

Tennessee

Virginia

West Virginia

Kyle Bryner
Museum Specialist
NPS Harpers Ferry Center

New*/Renewing Associate Members
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Dear SERA Members,

In preparation for the upcoming election on September 7, the SERA Nominations Committee is now accepting your nominations for three SERA offices that will be coming open this year. As the heading above promises, this is a unique opportunity to actively participate in the SERA organization, network with fellow registrars, and gain valuable professional experience. You are invited to take a minute or two to consider the offices below. Would you like to join our leadership team?

This year, SERA will hold elections for the following three offices:

Development Chair
Secretary
Communications Chair

Joining SERA's board in any officer position is an effective means of becoming known in our field and can serve as a building block for leadership positions in professional organizations at the regional and national level. Service as a SERA officer also provides opportunities to develop new skills that complement and expand upon those used in one's day-to-day work. Fellow SERA board members provide a network of supportive colleagues with a valuable knowledge bank.

No previous experience as a SERA officer is required to be a nominee; one must only be a current (dues-paid) member of SERA. Former and current SERA officers are also invited to offer their nominations. However, officers may not run for more than two consecutive elected terms for currently-held offices.

The above offices are for a two-year term that begins immediately following the SERA business meeting at which the new officers will be announced, which traditionally takes place each fall as part of the SEMC annual meeting. This year's SERA business meeting may be held remotely; stay tuned to SERA communications for more info.

We look forward to hearing from you! Please email your nominations to Christy Sinksen at csinksen@uga.edu, Kimberly Terbush at kimberlyt@uncg.edu, Alyssa Magnone at AMagnone@aikencountysc.gov, or Holly Tripman Fitzgerald at hollyt24@ec.rr.com.

If you wish to nominate yourself, you need only submit your name, a brief bio, and the SERA office in which you are interested. We also welcome any questions you might have.

The deadline for nomination submissions is MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2020.

Thank you, and best wishes,

The SERA Nominations Committee
Christy Sinksen, Chair
Alyssa Magnone
Kimberly Terbush
Holly Tripman Fitzgerald
**Exhibit Highlight: Two Mississippi Museums**

*Mississippi Distilled: Prohibition, Piety and Politics* is now open at the Two Mississippi Museums! The exhibit explores Mississippi’s tumultuous relationship with alcohol, one that led to it to being known as “the Wettest Dry State.”

Visitors take a journey beginning with ancient alcohol and the science of spirits, travel through a history of its uses in the state and the social problems it fueled, culminating in the Temperance movement and ultimately state and national Prohibition.

Mississippi’s fifty-eight years of statewide prohibition are dotted with stories of moonshiners, bootleggers, lawmakers, and law enforcement officers. Over 200 artifacts highlighting these stories and the unique history of alcohol in Mississippi are on display. Stories from the current alcohol industry round out the exhibition.

The exhibit will run through December 31st.

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**Moonshine Still**

Moonshine Still—including cooker, thumper, condenser coil, barrel, funnel, and glass jar—confiscated by the Leflore County Sheriff’s Department. On loan from the Museum of the Mississippi Delta. Currently on display in *Mississippi Distilled: Prohibition, Piety and Politics* now open at the Two Mississippi Museums

Image credit: Courtesy of Mississippi Museum of the Delta

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Have an exhibit or project that you’d like highlighted? 
Submit it to the **Communication Chair**!
Alabama

Rose Wood
Registrar
Birmingham Museum of Art
Rose Wood and intern Alex Green at the Birmingham Museum of Art assisted Andy Goldsworthy by gathering red clay soil for a new art project. Andy Goldsworthy, an internationally known environmental artist, is looking at the context of flags—their inherent and potential meanings by creating flags for each of the United States in his new site-specific work, Red Flags. Goldsworthy replaces Rockefeller Center's flags with flags colored with earth gathered from each of the 50 states. His site-specific work will be displayed along with works from Ghada Amer, Beatriz Cortez, Lena Henke, Camille Henrot, and Thaddeus Mosley at Rockefeller Center from September 1 - October 2, 2020, as part of the Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center which was initially set to be displayed on during the Frieze Art Show from this spring.

Danielle Funderburk
Registrar
Jule Collins Smith Museum at Auburn University
At the JCSM, Danielle Funderburk has been working from home during the pandemic. She has been updating collections information for a database switchover to Collector Systems, which should be completed by the end of August and viewable on the museum website.

Sarah Elizabeth Kelly
Assistant Registrar
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
MMFA staff has been busy installing new sculpture in the John and Joyce Caddell Sculpture Garden.

Pam Bransford
Registrar
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
Pam Bransford and Sarah Elizabeth Kelly spent a week condition reporting 33 panels made up of thousands of tiny glass beads in the exhibition, Ubuhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence, by tediously searching each panel for missing and loose beads. The largest work is a wall installation entitled, The African Crucifixion, which consists of 11 panels with an overall dimension of 164 1/2 x 280 1/4 x 16 1/2 inches.

Nocturne 3, is composed of iron that has a rusted patina which the artist used special salts to achieve. In its outdoor setting, rain will affect its surface and stain the unsealed concrete pedestal, achieving the artist’s vision of the work responding to its environment.

Teraxacum, a loan from Alabama artist Jamey Grimes, is inspired by a dandelion seed and has an aluminum seed pod that is 10 feet in diameter. Individual aluminum seeds that have been “blown” by the wind are anchored by custom-poured concrete forms in the Garden’s pool. Another loan, Karen LaMonte’s Reclining
Arkansas

Jennifer Kick  
Collections Manager  
Rogers Historical Museum

The museum is still closed to the public and working extra hard on coming out with digital content. There is no news about when they might consider re-opening. Kick has a bit more free time with the museum being closed and has been working hard on basic collections tasks and finalizing storage move things that kept getting pushed back before.

Marie Demeroukas  
Research Librarian/Photo Archivist  
Shiloh Museum of Ozark History

I’m taking advantage of the COVID-quiet while the museum is closed by cataloging photo collections, including a set from the 1910s which feature a young school teacher and her students, happy and smiling. One is especially poignant, because she was killed not long after it was taken by a jealous suitor.

Carolyn Reno  
Collections Manager/Assistant Director  
Shiloh Museum of Ozark History

Museum collections staff, Carolyn Reno and Aaron Loehndorf have continued to work at the museum during the Covid shut down, as have about half the museum staff. Reno oversaw the repair and repainting of the museum’s historic Searcy House in May. In June, after a couple months lapse, donors began calling. The museum took in several donations. Reno met with donors using Covid protocols (masks and distancing). One collection came from a family with history connected to the Searcy House (above.)

Amanda Cheatham  
Museum Registrar  
Windgate Museum of Art at Hendrix College

Instead of having an inaugural exhibition, originally scheduled to open in October, the museum is going to a virtual format which they plan to link to the new website (still in progress) and publishing a book with many of the pieces that were going to hang. Construction has been completed on the window gallery and the museum is planning to have a Black Lives Matter exhibition hung in that space with related music, talks and films being shown online, on the campus radio station, and in outdoor settings. The museum hired an Education Curator, Sarah Donaghy, to assist with educational and other materials to accompany exhibitions. Hendrix College is still hoping to conduct in person classes beginning mid-August, but the museum will not be open to the public. Staff are still deep cleaning after the window gallery construction and are running environmental tests on the black box gallery so they can have hard data for that space to include on our General Facility Report. The museum is also in the process of hiring 6-9 student workers who will be getting their feet wet in the different aspects of running a museum: curatorial assistants, collection and exhibition design assistants and assistants managing social media, communications and website updates.

Florida

Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney,  
Curator of Collections  
Matheson History Museum

We are honored to announce that the Matheson History Museum is one of six Florida museums to be awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) CARES Act Grant!

We are grateful to the NEH for recognizing the important work that the Matheson is committed to doing in our community.

During the coronavirus pandemic and moving into the future, remote access to museum collections is increasingly important. Even once people are able to return to public spaces, there will likely be a reluctance to gather for some time.

In order to continue our mission of public service, we want to increase the availability of our collections beyond the walls of the museum. To do this, we will use grant funds to: upgrade our collections management database, hire two temporary part-time staff to update and create collection records to be shared online, and for the purchase of archival supplies to appropriately house collections as they are processed.

The two grant-funded positions are Library Manager and Collections Coordinator. We are excited to welcome Kathleen Kelly and Chloe Richardson to the Matheson team! They will work with our Curator of Collections, Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney, to inventory our collections and prepare our records to be shared online.
launch an oral history effort with StoryCorps to collect oral histories focused on the past few months. Atlanta ’96, the upcoming exhibit on the Atlanta Olympic Centennial Games, is on track to open this September. Additionally, we have started to identify items to make web ready, and with the help of a private grant for budgetary relief, hope to begin adding items to our online museum database for the first time in several years, including three House of Worth textiles (below.) While it’s been an interesting spring and summer, we are looking forward to continuing to be flexible in ways that we weren’t before.

Christa McCay
Collections Manager
Marietta Museum of History

The Marietta Museum of History reopened to the public on June 16th. Once we reopened, we modified Museum hours to Tuesday through Saturday, 11am to 4pm. This shift has allowed staff to work on refreshing exhibit spaces, including new LED lighting installation and painting of gallery walls. We have extended our photography exhibit, “The Man with the Camera: Photographs by Raymond T. Burford” through the fall. This community sourced exhibit has been one of our most visited exhibits. Lastly, I was able to finish a large-scale scanning project of over 3,300 slides from our Parks and Recreation department. These slides show programs, events, and parks in Marietta from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, including the renovation of the city’s downtown area.

Georgia
Erica Hague
Collections Manager
Atlanta History Center

The Atlanta History Center reopened on July 3rd with cuts to full and part time staff. At this time, we are open Tuesday-Sunday, and require masks to be worn inside any of our buildings. Staff is only allowed onsite half of their usual work week, on a rotating basis to limit interaction with other staff.

We’ve been working on several projects while we were working from home, one of them being the Corona Collective. This initiative was released in early April to encourage the community to share photos, videos, writings, and other forms of materials that were created during lockdown. We have several hundred entries and continue to have items trickling in related to COVID and Black Lives Matter. We hope to spend August and September arranging and preparing the digital material to be put online through ALBUM, and once the current spike has passed, to reach out to folks that would like to donate museum items. We have also been preparing to launch an oral history effort with StoryCorps to collect oral histories focused on the past few months. Atlanta ’96, the upcoming exhibit on the Atlanta Olympic Centennial Games, is on track to open this September. Additionally, we have started to identify items to make web ready, and with the help of a private grant for budgetary relief, hope to begin adding items to our online museum database for the first time in several years, including three House of Worth textiles (below.) While it’s been an interesting spring and summer, we are looking forward to continuing to be flexible in ways that we weren’t before.

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Kentucky
Anne Rich
Collections Manager
American Printing House for the Blind

The Museum of the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has remained temporarily closed to visitors since March 17, due to the coronavirus pandemic, and staff
have been working remotely since then. In July, we began a partial return to our offices, with a rotating schedule that allows for one staff member to be in the Museum each weekday.

Among the projects that we’ve been working on remotely: Museum Director Mike Hudson has cataloged numerous objects received as part of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and Helen Keller Archives, which are on long-term loan from AFB and include academic regalia of Helen Keller (shown are the orange robe worn by Keller when she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Delhi in 1955, and the hood from her 1931 honorary doctorate from Temple University); Katie Carpenter, Museum Educator, has been developing a podcast that will celebrate Helen Keller and women’s suffrage; and Anne Rich, Collection Manager, has been cataloging a collection of American Printing House for the Blind video recordings, consisting primarily of news clippings, presentations, and promotional pieces (bulk 1990s through 2009).

When we closed in March and prepared museum exhibits for a “long-winter’s nap,” some artifacts were removed to storage, which proved to be providential. A critter, or critters, began setting up house in an attic space above one of the galleries and chewed through insulation and an HVAC hose, sending water dripping down onto a gallery floor. Fortunately, the water was quickly removed, and there was no damage to the gallery. Attic and HVAC repairs have been completed, and we’re hopeful that wildlife will be more respectful of our visitor policies in the future. Please contact us if you have any questions about the museum, our programs and collections: Mike Hudson, mhudson@aph.org, 502-899-2365; Katie Carpenter, kcarpenter@aph.org, 502-899-2313; and Anne Rich, arich@aph.org, 502-899-2364.

Emily Lozon
Curator of Collections
International Museum of the Horse

We have successfully reopened the doors of the International Museum of the Horse, after a month of prep work throughout the building to keep visitors and staff safe. Due to the high number of interactives, the Arabian Galleries currently remain closed but we hope to reopen them by the end of the month.

We also recently added to our permanent exhibits. In Legacy of the Horse, we reinterpreted one section by adding three horse-drawn vehicles and new text to discuss the use of horses for travel, military, and agriculture. In Horse in Sport, Bernice Ende and her journeys on horseback across on the county are displayed in Lady Long Rider.

One of our long-term projects is the deaccession of approximately 30 horse-drawn vehicles. We are hoping to find new homes in other museums or historical societies; if anyone is interested please let us know.

Chris Goodlett
Director of Curatorial & Educational Affairs
Kentucky Derby Museum

The Kentucky Derby Museum re-opened to the public on June 8 with team members returning to the office on staggered schedules due to orders from the Governor. The immediate focus has been the 2020 feature exhibit “Right to Ride,” which tells the stories of the first generation of licensed female jockeys in the 1960s and 1970s. The layout and design is influenced by 1970s pop culture and family life. KDM had the opportunity to interview many of these women for video features that will make these stories come to life. KDM will open “Right to Ride” in the late summer/early fall of 2020. (Image Attached, Use this caption: The entry wall for KDM’s upcoming exhibit, Right to Ride, features Diane Crump, the first woman to ride in the Kentucky Derby in
The curatorial team has been working on a five-year exhibit plan which we’ll begin to implement in the fall. The primary focus of the plan is updating permanent exhibitions, many of which have reached the 10-year point and need to be refurbished or changed. The pandemic has served as one of KDM’s most active collecting periods in recent history. Among those donations received since March, 51 digital film reels spanning Kentucky Derby races from 1918-1956 and a collection of original artwork from the late equine artist Sam Savitt.

Sandy Staebell
Registrar/Collections Curator
Kentucky Museum, Western Kentucky University

The Kentucky Museum was awarded an NEH Preservation Assistance Grant in the amount of $10,000 to purchase a cabinet and preservation supplies to rehouse a collection of garments designed and made by Mrs. A. H. Taylor, owner of a Bowling Green, Kentucky, clothing factory that made garments from 1880 to 1917, primarily sold to customers living in the American South and Southwest. Her collection provides significant documentation of female entrepreneurship at the turn of the twentieth century. The grant will also underwrite the site visit of textile conservator Harold Mailand (AIC Fellow), who will provide instruction in best practices for rehousing the Mrs. A. H. Taylor Collection in the cabinet purchased as part of this grant. He will also review current storage practices for the overall costume collection and submit a report, including recommendations for best practices for rehousing it.

Katherine Steiner
Chief Registrar
Mint Museum

The Mint Museum Registration Staff, Julia Kraft, Rebecca Merriman, Eric Speer, and Katherine Steiner, have found that there’s no shortage of work even when closed to the public. The Mint has just launched a group of objects with Google Arts & Culture and Google will assist with photography and scanning of additional objects once Covid-19 is under control. In addition, after two years of work, collection images will be available starting this fall to Mint staff through Piction, a digital asset management system. Installation work continues and re-opening will give visitors a chance to see revamped American galleries, an exhibition of new and never seen pieces in New Days, New Works, and a chance to experience black basalt sculpture in a modern environment with the extension of Classic Black: the Basalt Sculpture of Wedgwood and his Contemporaries.

Corinne Midgett
Registrar
High Point Museum

As some of you may know, the High Point Museum was threatened with closure in June. Thanks to a huge and very encouraging amount of support from our local and museum communities, we were able to stay open, though several staff members were laid off. We were very sad to say goodbye to our store & visitor services manager, custodian, historical park interpreters, store assistants, and administrative assistant and SERA member, Crystal Williams. It’s a huge loss and we’re working hard to figure out how to continue without these amazing coworkers.

Earlier in the spring, we took advantage of the need for remote work and volunteer opportunities to try out a new project: crowd-sourced transcriptions. Using the website From the Page, we’ve uploaded over 300 pages of material and have had 269 pages completed by 34 volunteers. It’s been a lot of fun and we’ve gotten great feedback from members of our local community who have tried it out. Of course, this still means work for staff – scanning and uploading documents, reviewing and finalizing transcriptions, entering them in our database, and uploading the final records to our online catalog – but it’s a good way to engage people remotely and to make our archives more discoverable. You can check it out at www.fromthepage.com/highpointmuseum.

Piedmont Area Cultural Resource Emergency Network (PACREN)

Piedmont Area Cultural Resources Emergency Network (PACREN) hosted a couple of Zoom meetings early in the pandemic to talk about how we were each responding to the changes. This group normally meets about 3 times a year at a member’s institution to discuss solutions to emergency response, network, and (of course) commiserate. Loosely organized, we are comprised of registrars, archivists, conservators, and others who oversee collections care in the region surrounding Charlotte. If you’d like to know more, e-mail Katherine Steiner.
SEMC Virtual 2020 Conference
The SEMC staff and Program Committee have been hard at work developing a Virtual Program Series for Fall 2020.

Mark your calendars for these professional development days that will offer many sessions from the 2020 Annual Meeting Program.

August 25-26: Education
September 8-9: Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion
September 22-23: Career Management
October 6-7: Leadership and Operations
October 27-28: Collections/Curatorial/Exhibitions

Registration will open THIS WEEK. Look for a special E-NEWS in the next few days!