

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023

COLLECTIONS MANAGERS COMMITTEE
AN AFFINITY GROUP OF THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Howdydoo, CMC!

I have everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and enjoying the holiday season.

Join us on December 14th at 2pm for our next webinar!

Transporting a Museum Collection as presented by Amanda Cagle, Regional Collections Manager for the Texas Historical Commission at the Star of The Republic Museum State Historic Site.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86180821230>

Make sure you are following our Facebook Group Page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tamcmc>, to stay up-to-date on upcoming webinars, resources, and more!

Wishing each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year!

All the best,

Wade Dillon

TRANSPORTING

A Museum Collection

When: December 14,

2023 at 2 pm

Where: ZOOM

Amanda Cagle

Regional Collections Manager
Star of the Republic Museum
State Historic Site
Texas Historical Commission



CMC Member Spotlight

My name is Cecilia Abad, I am currently serve as the Curator at the San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield in La Porte, TX, managing a vast collection of over 17,000 artifacts. I implement weekly and monthly cleaning routines, and enhance interpretive layouts for exhibitions. Concurrently, I hold the role of Vice Chair of the Collections Management Committee affiliated with the Texas Association of Museums.



I find immense joy in crafting exhibitions and working with artifacts as it allow me to weave compelling narratives, connecting people to history. The process of curating and presenting artifacts enables me to share stories, evoke emotions, and foster a deeper understanding of the past, creating enriching experiences for diverse audiences.

Beyond my roles, I actively engage in professional service, participating as a panelist in conferences, sponsoring history clubs, and volunteering for various historical organizations. With a comprehensive background in curatorial work, collections management, and educational outreach, I enjoy working in every aspect in museums!



Have you heard?! Registration for TAM 2024 Lubbock is officially OPEN! We invite you to join us in Lubbock, where we'll convene museum visionaries in Lubbock's lively and artistic atmosphere for four days of inspirational discussions from renowned speakers on the most relevant challenges facing the museum field today.

Register today!

<https://www.texasmuseums.org/.../tam-2024-lubbock...>

Job Vacancies



The Texas State Library and Archives Commission has an opening for this full-time position: Conservator (Curator III) - \$5,235-\$5,833.33 monthly

The conservator manages the daily activities of the well-equipped book and paper Summerlee Conservation Lab at TSLAC and performs complex treatments on rare and unique archival and library materials in accordance with the AIC code of ethics. This position develops and monitors work procedures for the unit, establishes priorities, and makes treatment decisions. The conservator is also called on to assist with outreach and educational programs, preservation planning and surveys, emergency response, and environmental control. This position may also instruct and monitor interns, students, or volunteers assigned to assist with conservation tasks. Learn about the work undertaken in our conservation lab at our TSLAC Conservation blog, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/conservation/>.

To review and apply for this job posting go to <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/jobs/Conservator>.

Closing date is December 22, 2023.



The City of San Antonio has an opening for this full-time position: Librarian II - Archivist Texana Special Collections - \$52,732.94 - \$79,099.54 Annually

Under general direction, performs a wide range of professional library work independently and in accordance with general policies and accepted professional practices. Is responsible for the direct provision of library services; planning, presenting, and evaluating library programming, including providing specialized reference service, reader's advisory instruction, and assistance to researchers of local history and genealogy. Assists with management and care of archival collections, planning and preservation of the Texana/Genealogy Special Collections under the Library's Special Collections Manager. The advanced difficulty of work assignments and the greater independence with which work is performed differentiates this class from the Librarian I class. May directly supervise assigned staff.

To review and apply for this job posting go to <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/sanantoniotx/jobs/4287987/librarian-ii-archivist-texana-special-collections>.

Closing date is December 29, 2023.

“Is that Real? By Paul Spana

Have you ever had someone question the authenticity of an artifact on display? One of Space Center Houston's (SCH) most significant artifacts is the lectern used by President Kennedy when he gave his famous “We're going to the Moon” speech at Rice University in 1962. Last year, on the 60th anniversary of the speech, a JFK historian teamed up with a news reporter questioning the authenticity of the lectern. Their story claimed SCH had been misleading its guests for the last 30 years. The historian and reporter even attacked Rice University, who gifted the lectern to the space center in 1993, saying they also misled the public. The historian provided several pieces of evidence he said proved the lectern was not the one used by Kennedy. The strongest piece of his evidence was a thin line around the base, seen in historic photos of the speech. He said the line was an indication the base was comprised of two pieces. However, the line was not visible on the lectern base at SCH. Therefore, SCH decided to remove it from the gallery to address these issues.

With the lectern off display, it was easier to get a closer look at its details. Right away the collections staff could see how many of the woodgrain patterns on it matched up with patterns seen in historic photos and films of the speech. In the years following Kennedy's speech, Rice University refinished the lectern once or twice by applying two to three coats of a tinted varnish. The varnish obscured much of the woodgrain pattern. SCH hired a conservator to consult with about the lectern's authenticity and to create a conservation plan. Collections staff and the conservator decided to return the lectern to its original finish by removing the layers of varnish. With the varnish removed, the collections staff and conservator could more easily see the wood grain patterns for identification.

The lectern, made by IBM, was a state-of-the-art piece of office equipment available in the 1950s. One of its features was the ability for the speaker to raise and lower the top section with the touch of a button. A motor driven mechanism with gears allowed for the top to move up and down. The collections staff removed the lectern top in preparation for conservation work and discovered its base was in two pieces. The raising/lowering mechanism was missing a part which allowed the lectern top to drop down to its lowest position, thereby covering the line or seam on the base, which the historian said we did not have.



Photo Courtesy of NASA

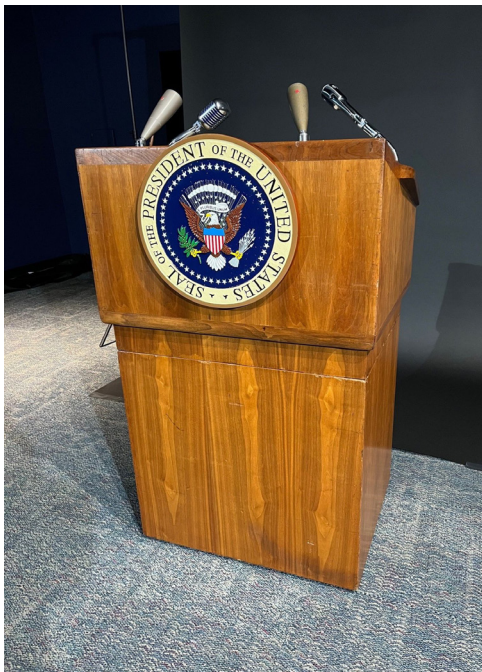


Photo Courtesy of Space Center Houston

The historian, who questioned its authenticity, also said the lectern could not be the actual one because presidents only used their own lecterns. This disputed the claim Rice University owned the lectern. The SCH collections staff and conservator spent about six months researching images of President Kennedy giving speeches prior to and after his speech at Rice University. While it may be true today that presidents travel with their own lectern, the team found no evidence of Kennedy using the same lectern when traveling around the country. Sometimes he gave multiple speeches in one city, not using the same lectern more than once. The earliest evidence of the lectern in use at Rice University is a photo of President Eisenhower giving a commencement speech in 1960. Another historical fact discovered during our research was President Kennedy used the same lectern again at a gala in downtown Houston the night before he died. The president spoke at the gala honoring Congressman Albert Thomas, the man often credited with bringing NASA to Houston.

In the end, SCH positively identified its lectern, proving it was in fact the same one used by President Kennedy to deliver his Moon speech. The conservator completed conservation work on the lectern, returning it to the way it looked that day in 1962. The conservator also made repairs to the lectern to help prevent future damage and to ensure its structure will remain stable for years to come. The collections staff installed a new replica presidential seal along with the addition of vintage microphones, which matched ones used in 1962. The lectern now resides in a new display case at the beginning of Space Center Houston's historic timeline of NASA's spaceflight.