

Collections Communique

TAM Collection Managers Committee Newsletter

Fall 2018

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UPCOMING WEBINARS AND WORKSHOPS...

Online Course: *Moving Museum Collections* \$400
September 3
Museum Study

Webinar: *Caring for Historic Cemeteries* \$40-\$65
September 6, 3-4:15pm Eastern
AASLH

Webinar: *Evaluating Collections Care Information Resources*
FREE
September 13, 2-3:30 Eastern
Connecting to Collections Care



Greetings fellow Collection Managers!

I hope everyone had a great summer and I know we are all looking forward to a much cooler start to the fall season. With education on everyone's mind as schools all over the state open their doors, this is a great time to start thinking about the

many ways that the CMC can work on our mission to educate others about the care and management of museum collections.

As our group has discussed in the past, there are many logistical and financial challenges to organizing a collections workshop. Many of these difficulties, however, can be avoided by presenting information in a webinar format. Recently, the Texas Historical Commission's Museum Services Program has been in search of a group or individuals who would be willing to present one or more webinars on collections-related topics. Each webinar involves a PowerPoint that is about 45 minutes in length, followed by an additional 15 minutes for questions at the end of the presentation. These THC seminars are typically well-attended (the most recent webinar had 65 attendees), and Museum Services is responsible for all of the technical aspects of the presentation.

Being a Museum Services webinar presenter would be a great way to promote the Collection Managers Committee to a state-wide audience while simultaneously working to share the group's knowledge with the museum community at large. If anyone is interested in participating in this educational opportunity, feel free to contact either myself or Tricia Blakistone of Museum Services at tricia.blakistone@thc.texas.gov or 512-463-5921. I look forward to seeing our group take on an expanding role in educating others and continuing to be a resource for museums in need.

All the best,
Angela Pfeiffer

If you would like to view previously recorded webinars, they can be found at: <http://www.thc.texas.gov/previous-training-webinars>

OFFICE TRASH LINERS AND SHIPPING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Chelsea Herrod, Collections Assistant at Perot Museum of Nature and Science



Office trash can liners: thin plastic sheets that protect office trash cans from daily grime. They are inexpensive and versatile. **Disclaimer, trash liners not archival due to lack of extensive testing. However, trash liners are considered safe for artifacts for short periods of time by some Science Museum Minnesota conservators and traveling exhibitors.** As long as a trash liner does not contain PVC, doesn't smell like chemicals, or is glossy, it can be used for museum collections. Kitchen bags and leaf bags are not suitable for this project. Why are office trash liners desirable? The plastic is extremely soft and less abrasive than Tyvek, ethafoam, tissue paper, or any other kind of current archival item. They're easily available and fit almost any budget. Trash liners make great peanut pillows, shipping liners, tie-downs, and more.

Peanut pillows are used to support artifacts with an irregular shape or weight distribution. Create a peanut pillow by filling a standard office trash liner half-way with foam peanuts and tie it off. The pillows create the needed structural support and cut down on the amount of mess the standard 'dump-peanuts-in-a-box' method generates. See Figure 3.

Trash liners can protect artifacts during shipping. It is common practice to create custom foam trays with a top and bottom out of thick ethafoam planks, lined with Tyvek, and put in a box. Occasionally, artifacts prove too sensitive for Tyvek, and specimen debris is left in the box. Trash liners can reduce the amount of abrasion on the specimen, because of its soft and pliable construction. To use in this way, cut the end of the bag with scissors, then cut across an edge to turn the plastic trash liner into a single rectangular sheet. Use it as a barrier by wrapping the specimen with the trash liner, or the liner can be layered over the Tyvek and folded over the specimen. If your custom foam trays only have a bottom, then the rectangular trash liner can be cut in the shape of the specimen, placed over the top, and tucked into the foam cuts originally used to hold the Tyvek. Keep tucking the plastic until it is taught but not crushing the specimen. This technique is beneficial for pottery, textiles, painted artifacts, minerals, wood, or any item too sensitive for Tyvek's texture. See Figure 2.

Tie-downs can be made from trash liners and used to hold a specimen in place for short distances. Unroll one bag and tie a knot at both ends of the bag. Use this elongated bag like a ribbon to support the specimen. Unlike cotton twill tape, packing tape adheres well to both plastic and cardboard, so use packing tape to secure the knot to the cardboard box so it supports the artifact. All these methods can be used on a case-by-case basis to make shipping collection items easier. See Figure 1.

Special thanks to Science Museum Minnesota for teaching me some new tricks.



Figure 1: Office trash can liner tie-offs.



Figure 2: Office trash can liner used as protector.



Figure 3: Peanut pillows made from liner in action!

UPCOMING WEBINARS AND WORKSHOPS...

Online Course: *Salvage & Recovery of Cultural Heritage Collections* \$400

October 1

Museum Study

Online Course: *Basics of Archives* \$85-\$160

October 15-November 16
AASLH

Online Course: *Integrated Pest Management: The Plan and Implementation* \$400

November 5

Museum Study

AAM has recorded webinars available for purchase on their website. They cover a variety of collections stewardship topics and also have webinars in other areas. Cost varies from Free to \$50 depending on membership level. Non-members are able to purchase them as well!

CONSERVATION CORNER



Dust Covers for Open Steel Shelving

Dust and artifacts do not get along.

Dust covers can be made of either clear polyethylene sheeting or unbleached cotton muslin. The polyethylene sheeting allows you to easily inspect artifacts and is a good barrier to dust and moisture. However, it is not flameproof. Cotton muslin may be flameproof but requires uncovering the artifacts in order to see them.

Attaching the covers to the shelving should not be done chemically or cause damage. The covers should also provide as complete a dust seal as possible while allowing easy access. Magnets and binder clips are easy ways to attached the dust covers to the metal shelving.

Information taken from NPS Conserve O Gram Number 4/2 July 1993.

Who's Who

Kathleen Wilson is the Assistant Collections Manager for the Quaternary Research Center (QRC) at the Lubbock Lake Landmark.

In August of 2017, she graduated with an MA in Museum Science from Texas Tech University (TTU).

While at TTU, she worked as a Student Assistant in the Anthropology Division at the Museum of Texas Tech University and as Collections Liaison at the QRC where she gained experience in collections management. She also holds an MSc in Archaeology from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland and a BA in Anthropology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She looks forward to working with everyone as CMC's incoming Membership and Finance Coordinator.



Like us on  and visit our website www.cmc-tam.org for the latest CMC information!

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

September 11-15, 2018, Mountain-Plains Museums Association Conference, Billings, MT

September 23-27, 2018, Association of Zoos & Aquariums 2018 Annual Conference, Seattle, Washington

September 26-29, 2018, American Association for State and Local History, Kansas City, MO

October 15-18, 2018, Alliance of Artists Communities Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA

November 1-2, 2018, MuseumNext USA, New York City, New York

CMC COMMITTEES

Membership Committee

Are you interested in expanding the membership of CMC and helping members stay in touch and up-to-date? Contact Kathleen Wilson at Kathleen.Wilson@ttu.edu.

Technology Committee

Are you interested in helping to develop the CMC website and exploring ways for CMC to use social media? Contact Leslie Ochoa at leslieochoa@wittemuseum.org.

Available Grants and Funding



National Endowment for the Humanities

Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections: The Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections (SCHC) program helps cultural institutions meet the complex challenge of preserving large and diverse holdings of humanities materials for future generations by supporting sustainable conservation measures that mitigate deterioration, prolong the useful life of collections, and support institutional resilience: the ability to anticipate and respond to natural and man-made disasters. Deadline is **December 12, 2018** for projects beginning October 2019. Updated guidelines for grant will be posted at least two months in advance of deadline.

Institute of Museum and Library Services

Museums for America: The Museums for America program supports projects that strengthen each museum's ability to serve the public. Projects in three categories are funded:

Learning Experiences: supports the ability of museums to empower people through experiential learning and discovery. Successful projects provide high-quality, inclusive educational opportunities that address particular audience needs.

Community Anchors: promotes the roles of museums as essential partners in addressing communities' needs. These projects strive to create a better quality of life within communities.

Collections Stewardship: supports exemplary management, care and conservation of museum collections. Projects address a clearly articulated and well-documented need and contribute to the long-term preservation of materials.

Deadline is December 14, 2018 and the grant amount rewarded is \$5,000-\$250,000.

National Leadership Grants for Museum: This program supports projects that address the critical needs of the museum field and have the potential to advance practice in the profession, so that museums can improve services for the American public. Projects in three categories are funded:

Learning Experiences: supports the ability of museums to empower people through experiential learning and discovery. Successful projects provide high-quality, inclusive educational opportunities that address particular audience needs.

Community Anchors: promotes the roles of museums as essential partners in addressing communities' needs. These projects strive to create a better quality of life within communities.

Collections Stewardship: supports exemplary management, care and conservation of museum collections. Projects address a clearly articulated and well-documented need and contribute to the long-term preservation of materials.

Deadline is December 14, 2018 and the grant amount rewarded is \$5,000-\$1,000,000.

Costume Society of America

Small Museum Collection Care Grant: A CSA Small Museum Collection Care Grant of \$1500 is intended to assist the costume and textiles collection of a small museum (including historical societies, historic houses or sites, and other similar institutions) that has a very limited budget and staff. Funding may be used to support the care, conservation, and/or exhibition of costume and textiles that have historic, regional, or other significance and are intended for preservation. **Applications due October 2018.**