

Collections Communique

TAM Collection Managers Committee Newsletter

Summer 2019

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UPCOMING WEBINARS AND WORKSHOPS...

Onsite Workshop: Collections Management & Practices \$230-\$345

June 3 - June 4, Charleston, SC
AASLH

Webinar: Creating a Community of Museum Colleagues FREE

June 5, 2pm CT
Texas Historical Commission

Onsite Workshop: Creating Programs for Teachers and Students

\$230- \$345

June 24 - June 25, Austin, TX
AASLH

Just a Note...

Greetings fellow Collections Managers!

With the recent arrival of summer storms all over the state and the approaching start of 2019's Hurricane Season, this is the perfect time for museum personnel to evaluate the risks their collections might face from an unexpected natural disaster. For the past several years, the American Institute for Conservation and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation have set aside May 1st or "May Day" as a date for museums, libraries, and archives to take time to evaluate and strengthen their organizations' emergency preparedness plans. Even if your institution missed May Day, not to worry – there are still a few steps you can take to prevent or minimize the impact of any future disasters.

- **Take a look at your museum's disaster plan** – Pick a day each year to review and make updates to your institution's emergency plan, or to create one. Always keeping your plan up-to-date lessens the chance that your museum will be caught without the appropriate supplies the next time disaster strikes. Also, be sure to update your list of emergency contacts, staff members, and other important personnel regularly so you can get in touch with the correct people quickly during a crisis.
- **Evaluate your collections area for hazards** – Perform a walk-through of your collections area to ensure that exits are easily accessible and that chemicals or hazardous materials are stored appropriately. This is also a great opportunity to identify any problem areas specific to your building, such as spaces that are prone to water leaks due to nearby pipes or improperly sealed doors, windows, or outlets. The main weather-related issue in our geographic area is flooding, so the majority of our artifacts are stored on shelving at least a few inches off of the grounds. Before we had the space for shelving, however, objects were stored on budget-friendly sealed wooden blocks. Sometimes cheap solutions can be a big help when attempting to protect your collections in a pinch!
- **Identify priority collections items** – When updating or creating a disaster plan for your museum, don't forget to evaluate which collections need evacuating during an emergency situation. Putting together a collections evacuation list that identifies objects vital to your institution's mission and includes item photos increases the likelihood that these artifacts will be found quickly and moved to safety whether or not collections staff is present. This list should be highly identifiable (i.e. in a specially colored folder) and placed in a location where staff can find it in a time of crisis.
- **Setup an emergency supply cart** – Lastly, having a cart or bucket of emergency supplies can come in handy, not just for major disasters, but for minor unexpected leaks or other maintenance issues that may occur during the year. Take stock of your supplies at least annually or after an emergency event, and be sure to reorder items well before the start of hurricane season.

For more ideas and tips on how to prepare your collection for an emergency, or for information on disaster assistance go to <https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/national-heritage-responders> or feel free to reach out to your fellow CMC members.



Angela Pfeiffer

UPCOMING WEBINARS AND WORKSHOPS...

Online Course: *Basics of Archives* \$85-\$160
July 1 - July 26
AASLH

Webinar: *Incorporating AR/VR Technology Within Your Museum: A Behind the Scenes Look* **FREE**
July 30, 11am CT
Texas Historical Commission

Webinar: *Insurance Basics for Historical Collections* **FREE**
August 22, 10am CT
Texas Historical Commission

CONSERVATION CORNER



Dusting Wood Objects

No matter which process you use to remove dust from objects there is also a possibility to damage sensitive artifacts. It is best to pro-actively prevent or limit the accumulation of dust on objects.

Before handling or dusting finished wood make sure the finish isn't flaking, cracking, etc. Wood surfaces that have splintered or have loose or lifting veneer should not be dusted. Seek the advice of a conservator when wood objects are in this condition or if you suspect the finish is original.

Removing Dust with a Vacuum

- Most effective and least damaging way to remove dust from stable surfaces (under most circumstances) and preferred method to dust unfinished wood.

- Vacuum with clean brush attachment and use micro tool adapter kits for nooks and crannies. Gently wipe the surface parallel to the wood grain.
- Use a soft artist's brush with the vacuum brush attachment when dusting delicate surfaces and where the dust is particularly abrasive and likely to scratch the polished surfaces. Hold the vacuum nozzle just above the wood surface and with the artist brush gently sweep the dust off the surface and toward the nozzle.

Removing Dust with Cloths

- Only use untreated synthetic micro-fiber dust cloths
- Have a number of clean cloths on hand. When cleaning, turn the cloth frequently ensuring you have a clean area of the cloth with each pass. If you feel the cloth snag or see fibers embedded on the surface, stop wiping and use only a vacuum and brush to remove dust.

Removing Dust with Compressed Air

- Used with a vacuum in circumstances where surfaces are not easily accessible or fragile (i. e. rush or wicker seating and deeply carved surfaces).
- Only use when compressed air pressure can be regulated and set as low as possible (limit to about five pounds)

Keep your Cleaning Tools Clean!

- Clean cloths, brushes, and brush attachments with a mild solution of Ivory Soap flakes or highly concentrated Orvus Paste and water, rinse well, and let dry completely before reusing

Information taken from NPS Conserve O Gram Number 7/5, September 2002.

MOVING AN ORNITHOLOGY COLLECTION: SPECIMENS SECURED TO THE WALLS OF A BOX



Owen Kinser, Collections Technician at Perot Museum of Nature and Science

Purpose

In 2017 the Perot Museum of Nature and Science began packing its collection in preparation for a move to a new storage facility. Packing the ornithology collection involved a number of challenges due to the unique size and shape of each specimen. Two methods were developed that allowed the swift and safe packing of a number of types of specimens, minimized accidental contact, and gave stability during the ensuing move.

Description

Ornithology specimens perched on hanging mounts were secured to the side walls of a 36”x36”x24” cardboard box. This allowed them to be secured and moved without taking the specimens off their mounts, reducing the amount of handling needed. Mounting them on the sides of the box also allowed for them to be arranged upright and in a space saving manner.

Materials, Tools, Supplies

- Wire
- Hot glue
- Wood blocks, can also be made from layered pieces of cardboard scrap
- Blue painter’s tape
- Wire cutters
- Pliers
- Ice pick or small Phillips head screwdriver for punching the holes



Figure 1: Perched specimens as they were stored prior to being packed.

Construction

1. Using your wire cutters, cut lengths of wire about to 3 inches in length.
2. With your pliers or fingers, bend the wire into staples. (Figure 3)
3. Position your specimen along the wall of the box, and with a pencil or your puncturing tool, make two marks for your holes in a vertical fashion, one above the other. Set down or hand the specimen to another person and make the holes in the box.

4. Place the specimen back against the wall of the box, and using the ring hook already present on the specimen block, secure the specimen with the wire staple. (Figure 4)
5. With the specimen held in place, twist the ends of the staple to secure it to the wall. (Figure 5) Repeat this process, working in rows, from bottom to top. This helps avoid any spacing problems.
6. Place a strip of painter's tape across a corner of the specimen block to stop any swinging or bouncing. (Figure 2)

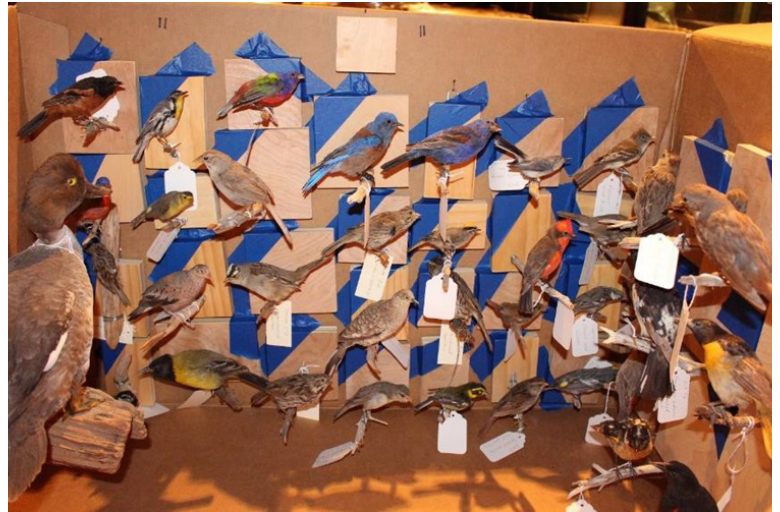


Figure 2: A full box. The lid flaps rest on the upper central block to avoid any drooping or sagging of the ceiling.

Photos - Chelsea Herrod, Owen Kinser
 Illustration - Owen Kinser

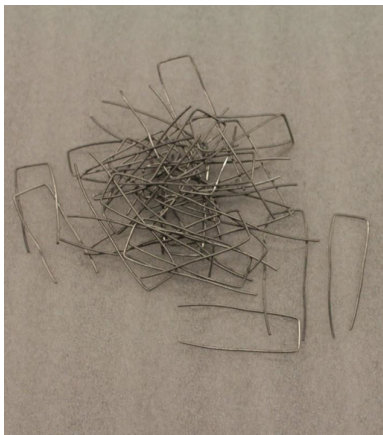


Figure 3: A pile of wire staples.

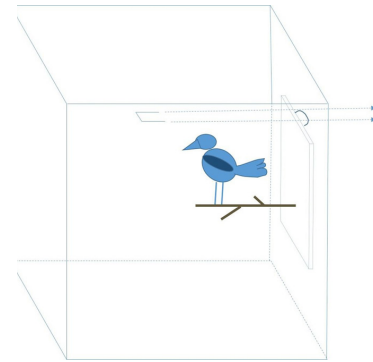


Figure 4: Secure the specimen with a wire staple.



Figure 5: Twist the wires to secure the specimen to the box. Tape over the twisted wire to avoid any snags or cuts.

PROCLAMATION

COLLECTIONS MANAGERS COMMITTEE

WANTED

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING KITS (EMKs)



BY SHERIFF STEPHANIE ALLEN-GIVENS

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES

August 28-31, 2019, American Association of State and Local History, Philadelphia, PA.

September 19-20, 2019, Council for Museum Anthropology, Santa Fe, NM.

October 2-5, 2019, Association of Midwest Museums, Grand Rapids, MI.

November 20-22, 2019, Conference of the Americas, Oaxaca, Mexico.

Who's Who

Robert Elder is the new secretary for the CMC.
Welcome, Robert!

Robert is the Collections Registrar at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. They are currently undergoing a major renovation project in the Nimitz Hotel Building. He is also working on a project of selecting and arranging artifacts for display in the new Nimitz Hotel Gallery. The remainder of the museum complex including the George Bush Gallery, the Pacific Combat Zone, the Memorial Courtyard, the Plaza of the Presidents, and the Japanese Peace Garden will remain open during the renovation project.

In his spare time, Robert enjoys photography, stargazing, hiking, and a variety of outdoor activities. For the Memorial Day weekend, Robert traveled to Brownsville and visited various museums, battlefields, state parks, the beach, and was on the look out for the Southern Star constellation.



Are you a new member to CMC? Do you have an interesting hobby or want to tell CMC members about yourself? E-mail Elizabeth at elizabeth.neucere@gmail.com and you may be featured in our next newsletter!

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.

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

Available Grants and Funding

National Endowment for the Humanities

Digital Projects for the Public: The Digital Projects for the Public program supports projects that interpret and analyze humanities content in primarily digital platforms and formats, such as websites, mobile applications and tours, interactive touch screens and kiosks, games, and virtual environments. The projects must be designed to attract broad public audiences.

Application available April 12, 2019. Deadline is June 12, 2019 with maximum award amounts of \$30,000 (Discovery grants), \$100,000 (Prototyping grants), and \$400,000 (Production grants).

Humanities Collections and Reference Resources: The Humanities Collections and Reference Resources (HCRR) program supports projects that provide an essential underpinning for scholarship, education, and public programming in the humanities. Thousands of libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations across the country maintain important collections of books and manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings and moving images, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, art and material culture, and digital objects. Funding from this program strengthens efforts to extend the life of such materials and make their intellectual content widely accessible, often through the use of digital technology. Awards are also made to create various reference resources that facilitate use of cultural materials, from works that provide basic information quickly to tools that synthesize and codify knowledge of a subject for in-depth investigation. HCRR offers two kinds of awards: 1) for implementation and 2) for planning, assessment, and pilot efforts (HCRR Foundations awards).

Application available May 15, 2019. Deadline is July 16, 2019 with maximum award amounts of \$350,000.

Public Humanities Projects: The Public Humanities Projects program supports projects that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life for general audiences through in-person programming. Projects must engage humanities scholarship to analyze significant themes in disciplines such as history, literature, ethics, and art history. NEH encourages projects that involve members of the public in collaboration with humanities scholars or that invite contributions from the community in the development and delivery of humanities programming.

This program supports a variety of forms of audience engagement. Applications should follow the parameters set out below for one of the following three categories: humanities discussions, exhibitions, and historic places.

Application available June 14, 2019. Deadline is August 14, 2019 with maximum award amounts of \$75,000 (Planning grants) and \$400,000 (Implementation grants).

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Community-Based Archives Grant: The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation invites community-based archives to submit proposals to fund one or more of the following areas of need: operational support for the organization, including general support for staff, space, and utilities; collections care, including storage, cataloging, description, and preservation; and programming and outreach activities, including collecting new materials, and exhibitions, publications, or other uses of the collections.

Deadline is July 1, 2019 and award amounts vary from \$25,000 to \$100,000 for grants of up to two years in length.