

MRC Courier

COMMITTEE

Volume 27, Number 3

Winter 2015



Goodbye
2015

Wrapping
Up
2015

It is that time of year.... We get to wrap up the last of the 2015 business and start looking forward to the opportunities and excitement that 2016 have in store. This issue of the MRC Courier will feature both, as we review the past year with our Annual Report and the last of our articles from Travel Stipend recipients. We will also look forward with the introduction of two new state representatives, information about the upcoming spring MRC elections and the first bits of news about the 2016 AMM Conference!



Hello
2016

Voting membership in the Midwest Registrars Committee is open to those museum professionals who support the objectives of the MRC, who reside in the Midwest region (including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin), and who hold positions such as registrar, collections manager, curator, volunteer, administrator, conservator, corporate registrar, or student.

A non-voting membership is available for individuals who are associated with for-profit organizations such as shipping companies, customs brokers, insurance firms, and other suppliers of materials and services, and individuals who reside outside of the Midwest region.

The membership period covers the calendar year (from January 1 through December 31). Annual dues are \$10.00 per year. For more information on the Midwest Registrars Committee or to join MRC, visit <http://midwestregistrars.org/>

Wrapping Up the 2015 Travel Stipends

The Midwest Registrars Committee, along with U.S. Art, Masterpiece International, The Conservation Center of Chicago, Tru-View, and Terry Dowd, Inc. provided generous support to help five members of MRC attend the 2015 Association of Midwest Museums Conference in Cincinnati. These two articles complete the reflections of travel stipend recipients on their experiences. Watch for more information on 2016 travel stipends in the coming months!!

2015 Annual Conference Recap

Andy Near

While “Communicating the Value of Museums” at the 2015 Association of Midwest Museums Annual Conference held in Cincinnati, Ohio, was informative, my experience was significantly enhanced as a member of the MRC. Not only was I able to enjoy myriad sessions and social activities, but also as a first year MRC member I was swept up into the web of registrars and collections managers, met many wonderful people, and realized how essential it is to get out and re/connect with peers. Thank you Masterpiece International for providing support and to the MRC for awarding me a scholarship that made my attendance to this annual meeting possible.

Like many registrars working in small institutions where having a reliable intern can feel like a luxury, I found the Annual Conference a wonderful opportunity to network and pick-up new tricks of the trade. Sessions including *Beyond Fingernail Polish*, and *Rights and Reproductions* provided refreshers and sources for up-to-date information. Especially valuable to my conference experience was the presentation by Matthew Toland, Sarah Connors, and Anna Cannizzo entitled *Collateral Damage: Are You Causing Damage to Your Collections?*

Introducing the topic, *Collateral Damage*, Ms. Connors cited the Heritage Health Index’s 2004 report that “over 4.8 billion artifacts are held in public trust by more than 30,000 archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, scientific research collections, and archaeological repositories in the United States.” The statistics from the Heritage Health Index documented the need for continued collections training, citing that over two-thirds of institutions have experienced collections damage due to improper storage, and nearly three-quarters of institutions need additional collections staff training.

Without dwelling on these somewhat bleak statistics, Ms. Connors introduced multiple professional development options. Each co-presenter described his or her career paths to illustrate how seeking professional development built their technical and theoretical skills to provide better collections care. Importantly, each pointed out how connecting with peers and experts proved beneficial when faced with a challenging situation.

Three primary avenues for professional development outside of higher education institutions include workshops, conferences, and webinars. Each of these formats for learning provides valuable advantages and carries their own set of disadvantages. Workshops are hands-on, in-depth and great for practicing skills, however can be expensive, and often require several days out of the office. Mr. Toland elaborated how the immersive environment of workshops provides excellent avenues for networking with experts as well as classmates in the field. Webinars are typically less expensive than workshops and can be free. The benefit to learning online does not involve the hassle of traveling out of the office for up to a week as a workshop or conference might. Webinars often work at the participant’s own pace, but they do not often provide the opportunity to make personal connections. Conferences vary in price-point, provide a more general overview on multiple topics, and are an excellent environment to network with peers, or as Ms. Cannizzo says, “get your museum hustle hot.”

Understanding and leveraging the big picture, as Ms. Cannizzo advocated, is crucial for making opportunities work for you. Yes, attending a workshop or webinar may provide the lynchpin needed to tackle that conundrum staring you down daily, but funding for that training is not always available. Many organizations such as

the Campbell Center or AAM offer valuable scholarships or member discounts that can reduce the cost of this needed training. Another possibility to access the needed funds is through grant writing. Does that workshop or webinar directly relate to a major project on the horizon? According to Ms. Cannizzo, including professional training into a grant project actually strengthens your proposal by qualifying the expertise of the personnel involved.

While I might be stating the obvious that professional development is beneficial to our collections, intuitions, and careers; the presenters emphasized the importance of continued learning because we invariably strengthen our community by sharing our experiences.

Session Review: Preserving Your Museum Collection's Value: Conservation and Insurance 101

Cristin Waterbury

Insurance. What a daunting subject for us collections professionals, right? Well, thanks to the expertise of three wise professionals, shared at the Association of Midwest Museums conference in Cincinnati, the topic has been demystified at least a bit.

The session began with the quote, "An ounce of preservation is worth a pound of cure." That was from Ben Franklin, but it was Terry Segal, Associate Registrar at Detroit Institute of Arts, who presented it to us that day. I'm putting that on the white board in my office.

Terry spoke about the importance of planning carefully for the transportation of collections objects, addressing such important topics as proper documentation (loan agreements, insurance certificates), and advised that donors or dealers should be responsible for the packing, shipping, and insurance for all things in transit on the way to your museum. One hilarious slide warned of the perils of packing peanuts, showing a poor kitty covered in them. I believe it looked something like this.

For us, of course, packing peanuts will cause our objects to shift down to the bottom of the box or crate, so we are better off using tissue, bubble wrap or foam instead. Cavity packing is also a great option.



On the receiving end, it's wise to inspect packing materials thoroughly upon receipt for issues such as insect activity or paint chips on the wrapping. And a picture, or plenty of digital photos, actually, really is worth a thousand words.

CEO of The Conservation Center, Heather Becker, then covered a myriad of preservation topics, beginning with disaster prevention. Some of the main culprits include acidic materials, and she showed us a perfect archival framing "sandwich" – layer of plexi, layer of acid free mat or spacer, work of art, layer of acid free backing board, and acid free tape to seal the whole package together.

Heather reviewed types of damage collections are susceptible to, from light exposure to temperature and relative humidity, and other environmental exposures, along with improper handling. Included was a sage reminder that for objects in storage, out of sight is often out of mind.

A review of disaster response guidelines followed, with reminders to keep a copy of your records offsite and that a triage approach will be necessary during initial disaster response. Afterward, further conservation analysis can be done.

Next, Eric Fischer, Senior Vice President of Willis Fine Art, Jewelry & Specie, set us at ease about the murky world of fine art insurance (well, it's murky for some of us). The term "fine art insurance" itself is a misnomer, since it's actually for anything rare and collectible. It usually has low deductibles, and costs about the same as taking on coverage to a museum's general property policy. Yet, it's more broad and flexible in the event of a claim. As a bonus, your claim adjustor, should you need one, is a specialist, not someone who adjusts auto claims all day.

I know that between this session and the great chat I had with Michael Criswell, also of Willis, during the MRC social, I am prepared to have a chat with the powers-that-be about our own insurance situation. Plus, I had a great review of plenty of important conservation topics, and learned a lot about packing collections (especially what not to do – as illustrated by that poor kitty cat). And, of course I came home with a stack of new business cards from new contacts and friends in the museum world.

Who can put a price tag on face to face contact with colleagues to share commiserations and successes? In a way, the MRC travel stipend committee, along with the sponsors of this year's awards (especially The Conservation Center, who sponsored mine), has done just that, and I'm humbly grateful for the opportunity.

Renew NOW for 2016!

With 2016 dawning bright, is time to renew your MRC membership! For an annual fee of \$10, members of the Midwest Registrars Committee receive access to a fantastic professional network of like minded professionals, workshop opportunities, funding assistance for state workshops, the opportunity to apply for travel stipends to attend the annual AMM Conference, the MRC Membership Directory and MRC's newsletter *The Courier*.

Joining is easy and can be done entirely online!

1. Fill out the Electronic Membership form. It is available from your State Representative or at the Midwest Registrars Committee [website](#). Simply fill out the fields in the PDF file and save the document. E-mail the completed form to Jennifer Noffze, MRC Treasurer, at: jenn@childrensmuseum.org
2. Pay your dues online with PayPal (if you do not have an account, it is free to sign up and takes only minutes). From PayPal's home page, click on "Send Money" and type jenn@childrensmuseum.org in the recipient field. You can pay from a bank account or credit card and you will receive a receipt when the payment is processed.

Need to mail a check or complete the form by hand? No problem! A hard copy of the membership form is available at the end of the newsletter. Simply fill it out and send along with a check payable to MRC to the address noted on the membership form.

Remember—MRC membership is not limited to registrars. Collections managers, curators, volunteers, administrators, conservators, corporate registrars, students, or other collections care professionals are encouraged to join. A non-voting membership is available for those associated with for-profit organizations such as shipping companies, customs brokers, insurance firms, and other suppliers of materials and services, and individuals who reside outside of the Midwest region.

Questions?? Feel free to contact MRC Treasurer Jennifer Noffze (jenn@childrensmuseum.org).

The newsletter of the Midwest Registrars Committee, the *MRC Courier*, is published three times a year. Members and Vendors, please submit news, articles, announcements, photographs, and ideas for future issues to Tamara Lange, Collection Coordinator/ Registrar, Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum. Phone: 920-458-1103 or Email: tamara.lange@sheboygancounty.com

Welcome New State Representatives

MRC is pleased to welcome two new State Representatives. Sarah Connors, Assistant Director at the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation, is our new Iowa Rep and Laurel Fant, Curator/ Collections Manager at the Rock County Historical Society, is our new Wisconsin Rep. Please be sure to give them a warm welcome — especially when they ask for newsletter content.



Sarah Connors

I am the Assistant Director at the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies located in Mount Carroll, Illinois. A born and raised Iowan, I currently reside in Clinton, Iowa with my husband and two dogs. I received my BA in history from Wartburg College in Waverly, IA and my MA in Museum Studies from Western Illinois University - QC, Moline, IL.



Laurel Fant

I will be filling in as MCR WI representative for the next two years. I look forward to meeting our new members and reconnecting with past members, while recruiting future members. I graduated from Eastern Illinois University in 1982 with an MA in Historical Administration. My first "official" museum job was as the first director of a small museum in Oklahoma where I discovered collections care was my preference. After several years at the Arizona Historical Society in Phoenix helping build a new facility, I returned to the Midwest. I've been at the Rock County Historical Society for 17 years, with a few years off between my first and second "tour of duty".

Nominate a Colleague

The **Dudley-Wilkinson Award of Distinction** was established in 1988 to honor Dorothy H. Dudley and Irma Bezold Wilkinson, the authors of the first three editions (beginning in 1958) of *Museum Registration Methods*. Every two years the RC-AAM presents the award to a museum professional who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to the highest standards of excellence in the profession. The winner is asked to address the RC-AAM membership at the annual spring business meeting on May 28, 2016 in Washington, DC.

Past recipients of the award include Marie Malaro, Kay Paris, Stephen Weil, Mary Case, Kittu Longstreth Brown, Cordelia Rose, Rebecca Buck, Jean Allman Gilmore, Deborah Hull-Walski, Gwen Bitz, Alice Whelihan, and Sally Shelton.

If you know someone who has contributed significantly to the field of museum registration, please consider submitting a nomination for the 2016 Dudley-Wilkinson Award of Distinction. Complete nominations should contain the person's name, contact information, a brief biographical sketch, and a cover letter outlining his or her contributions to the profession. Submissions should be sent to Rachel Vargas, Dudley-Wilkinson Award Committee Chair, at vargasr@msu.edu.

The nomination deadline is February 12th, 2016.

News From the Midwest

Missouri Stacie Peterson

National World War I Museum and Memorial, Kansas City

For the second consecutive year, the National World War I Museum and Memorial broke its annual attendance record. Through the third week of November, the Museum's attendance reached 257,830, breaking the previous record of 235,271 set in 2014.

Trip Advisor, the world's largest travel site, named the National World War I Museum and Memorial among the top 25 museums in the U.S. as part of its 2015 Travelers' Choice awards for the second consecutive year. The Museum was also named in the top 5 best U.S. Museums as rated by Yelp reviews.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

The Museum was named as the best U.S. museum as rated by Yelp reviews.

Springfield Museum of Art, Springfield

The Museum was awarded a \$24,000 Museums for America grant through the Institute of Museum and Library Services to expand its focus on art education and interactive art in the community.



Call for Candidates

In a few short months, it will be election time for the Midwest Registrars Committee! And that means opportunity is knocking on your door. Will you answer?

In 2016, the MRC will be seeking candidates for all posts, including Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. If you know

someone who would fit the bill for any of these positions, let us know. Better yet, if you are interested in becoming more involved in the MRC, now is the time.

Being an MRC officer is a tremendous opportunity to network with your peers in the region and across the country, and to build up your resume with a terrific leadership role. Not to mention having fun...and it is definitely a fun experience! So I know you all will be flooding my email inbox with notes indicating your interest in serving your peers by throwing your name (or a friend's name) into the ring.

Please seriously consider this opportunity to become more involved with MRC, network with your peers in Registrar Land, and add a great experience to your resume. **Contact me anytime for more information, to submit your own name as a candidate, or to nominate a friend.** The ballot will be compiled in the spring.

Cristin Waterbury, MRC Nominations Chair



L-R: St. Paul & the Mississippi River, Minneapolis Sculpture Garden's Spoon-bridge & Cherry against the Minneapolis Skyline, Cathedral of St. Paul



AMM is Coming to

Minneapolis + St. Paul

The AMM 2016 Annual Conference will be held July 27-30 at the historic Radisson Blu in downtown Minneapolis.

Session proposals can be submitted anytime, either via MRC Chair Rachel Vargas or directly to AMM. *Proposals are **due** February 12.*

The MRC Mighty Rescue Crew will be spearheaded by MRC's Minnesota Rep Jackie Hoff. If you have an interesting project you would like considered, please contact her at jhoff@smm.org

Watch the AMM website for more details in the next few weeks!



L-R: Walker Art Center, Radisson Blu Minneapolis, Science Museum of Minnesota



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

of the MIDWEST REGISTRARS COMMITTEE

Annual Report of the MRC Chair Rachel Vargas

The Midwest Registrars Committee: *Rachel Vargas*, Chair; *Devon Pyle-Vowles*, Vice-Chair and Travel Stipends; *Ashleigh Herrera*, Secretary; *Jennifer Noffze*, Treasurer; *Lauren Hancock*, Archives; *Terry Segal*, Development; *Cristin Waterbury*, Nominations; *Tamara Lange*, Newsletter.

State representatives: We have two new state representatives as of December 2015: *Sarah Connors*, taking over from *Teri Van Dorston* in Iowa, and *Laurel Fant*, taking over for *Elizabeth Frozena* in Wisconsin. Continuing are: *Laura McDowell Hopper*, Illinois; *Lana Newhart-Kellen*, Indiana; *Roberta Gilboe*, Michigan; *Jackie Hoff*, Minnesota; *Stacie Petersen*, Missouri; and *Robin Goodman*, Ohio.

The MRC had their 2015 annual meeting during the Association of Midwest Meetings held in Cincinnati, Ohio July 19-22. The board worked hard to have collections related sessions at the conference and we were pleased that all our submissions were accepted. Some of the collections sessions were: *Beyond Fingernail Polish: Best Practices and a New Website for Museum Marking*; *Rights and Reproductions: The Handbook for Cultural Institutions*; *Preserving your Museum's Collection Value: Conservation and Insurance 101*; and *Are your Collections Lazy? How to Kick the Freeloaders out and Make the Best Ones Work for You*, and *Collateral Damage: Are you Causing Damage to Your Institution's Collections?* Our annual meeting lunch was sponsored by Huntington T. Block and the MRC evening social was sponsored by Willis Fine Art, Jewelry & Specie.

In 2015, MRC had five travel stipend awards to support member attendance at the 2015 AMM Conference coordinated by our development chair, Terry Segal. Full stipends were generously sponsored by Terry Dowd, Inc., The Conservation Center of Chicago, U.S. Art Company, Tru-View, and Masterpiece International.

The MRC account balance remains steady, as detailed in the Treasurer's report. Income was raised through membership dues and donations, gifts for travel stipends, and newsletter sponsorships. Expenses were travel stipends, grants to state registrar organizations for events, and MRC annual meeting expenses at AMM.

Membership in the MRC remains a small, but dedicated group. We're hoping each year to increase membership by encouraging the state representatives to hold round-table sessions in their states.

Three issues of the *Courier* were edited and published by Tamara Lange for the MRC and distributed to members. Our newsletter contains special articles, information from the board along with notes from the state representatives.

Craig Hadley is our Webmaster and maintains our website: (<http://midwestregistrars.org>). Here you will find past issues of the *Courier*, contact information for the Board and State Representatives, a link to our Facebook page and under the Membership tab you'll find a Directory of current members and information regarding grants and travel stipends.

In 2016 we will soon be busy working on proposals to submit for the AMM meetings this summer in Minneapolis, July 27-30, to be held at the Radisson Blu, Downtown. The theme this year is **Innovation**. Session proposal information will be available shortly on the AMM website, with proposals due February 12th. *If you have any ideas for a session, or would like to be more involved either as an organizer or speaker at a session,*

please contact me soon and we'll see if we can't match you up with others to pull together a session if you don't have a fully formed proposal.

Jackie Hoff, our Minnesota state representative, will be heading up the Mighty Rescue Crew to be held during the summer AMM meetings. We'll post more information about this event on our website, the RC-AAM list-serve and our next issue of the *Courier*.

Thank you for your continued support of the Midwest Registrars Committee.

Annual Report of the Vice Chair Devon Pyle-Vowles

Five MRC members received travel stipends in support of their attendance at the 2014 Association of Midwest Museums Conference in Cincinnati. The stipends were sponsored by the Conservation Center of Chicago, Masterpiece International, Terry Dowd, Inc., Tru-Vue, US Art and the Midwest Registrars Committee.

The Conservation Center, Chicago—*Cristin Waterbury*

Masterpiece International—*Andrew Near*

Terry Dowd, Inc.—*Tamara Lange*

Tru-Vue—*Jennifer Amadeaus Scott*

U.S. Art Company—*Lauren Hancock*

Annual Report of the Treasurer Jennifer Nofze

Beginning Balance 12/19/2014		\$5,729.53
INCOME		
	Membership Dues/ Donations	\$789.41
	Gifts for Travel Stipends	\$3,000.00
	AMM 2015 Conference Sponsored Events	\$1,500.00
	Total Income Deposited	\$5,289.41
EXPENSES		
	MRC Chair & Conference Expenses	\$1,565.34
	State Sponsorships	\$250.00
	Travel Stipends	\$3,750.00
	Website Fee	\$56.00
	Total Expenses	\$5,621.34
Ending Balance 12/21/2015		\$5,397.60
<i>Funds held by Indiana Members Credit Union</i>		

Annual Report of the Secretary

Ashleigh Herrera

Membership in MRC remains strong at the end of 2015, with 111 current members. Heading into 2016, we still have 29 MRC members with unpaid dues. Don't forget that MRC membership dues are for the calendar year- membership for all members expired on December 31, 2015. Dues can be submitted either through PayPal or by check via this link: <http://midwestregistrars.org/membership-2/joinrenew-membership> or by visiting the "Membership" and then "Registration and Renewal" tab on the MRC Website.

Don't forget about MRC when speaking with emerging professionals as well. MRC is a great way to get involved for a nominal \$10 fee, and with many great networking and professional development opportunities!

For questions regarding membership status, please contact myself at ashleigh.herrera@wisconsinhistory.org or your state representative.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT BY STATE			
STATE	2015 CURRENT MEMBERS	2015 MEMBERS WITH UNPAID DUES	2014 MEMBERSHIP (PAID AND UNPAID)
IOWA	7	4	9
ILLINOIS	18	7	16
INDIANA	12	4	12
MICHIGAN	18	4	18
MINNESOTA	7	1	8
MISSOURI	9	4	6
OHIO	14	2	7
WISCONSIN	20	2	23
NON-VOTING	6	0	6
TOTALS	111	28	105

Annual Report of the Editor

Tamara Lange

The *MRC Courier* has continued in 2015 with the adjustments of 2014. We continued the three issue per year structure— late spring, late summer/early fall, and winter. This change seems to have been well received and works well, especially with the late spring and early fall issues approximately a month and a half before and a month or so after the AMM Annual Conference and MRC's Annual Meeting. Additionally, after generally positive feedback regarding the layout changes of the newsletter, the look of the *Courier* continued for the 2015 year.

Excellent content has been provided by MRC members from all states throughout the year! From feature articles to news bits, it is exciting to see the activities going on across the Midwest. Remember to drop your state rep a line when new exhibits open, projects are undertaken or grants are received!

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The Midwest Registrars Committee formed in 1978 to provide a forum for the exchange of information and methods among museum collections professionals and registrars in the Midwest region. The MRC fulfills this objective by promoting an atmosphere of mutual aid and cooperation and by promoting professional practices to benefit colleagues, the museum community, and members.

The MRC is affiliated with the Registrars Committee of the American Alliance of Museums (RC-AAM) and the Association of Midwest Museums (AMM).

Who can join?

Voting membership in the Midwest Registrars Committee is open to those museum personnel who support the objectives of the MRC and who reside in the Midwest region, including:

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Ohio
- Wisconsin

You don't have to be a registrar! Collections managers, curators, volunteers, administrators, conservators, corporate registrars, students, or other collections care professionals are encouraged to join.

A non-voting membership is available for individuals who are associated with for-profit organizations such as shipping companies, customs brokers, insurance firms, and other suppliers of materials and services, and individuals who reside outside of the Midwest region.

Benefits of membership

- The Courier, MRC's quarterly newsletter
- Funding assistance for state workshops
- Professional network
- Workshops
- Travel stipends to attend annual AMM Conference
- Membership directory

Membership fees

- Annual dues are \$10.00 per year
- The membership period covers the calendar year (January 1 - December 31)
- Make checks payable to:
Midwest Registrars Committee

Membership form (can type and save text)

Date: _____
 Name: _____
 Position: _____
 Institution: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
 Phone/fax: _____
 Email: _____

New (voting \$10)

Renewal (voting \$10)

New (non-voting \$10)

Renewal (non-voting \$10)

Make a difference!

Your active participation ensures the ongoing success of the MRC programs and activities. Please check the areas in which you would like to get involved:

State representative

Newsletter

Programs/annual meeting

Fundraising

Membership

NEW FOR 2013—Renew and pay online!

Follow these two steps to renew your membership electronically:

1. Simply fill out this PDF form and e-mail it to jenn@childrensmuseum.org
2. To pay for your MRC dues via PayPal, login to your account, click "Send Money", and send your dues to: jenn@childrensmuseum.org

-OR-

Send paper application and payment to:

Jennifer Noffze

MRC Treasurer

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