

# The Newsletter of the Southeastern Registrars Association

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Notes from the Chair</i>	1
<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	2-3
<i>Membership</i>	4
<i>SERA News</i>	5-10
<i>SEMC Reviews</i>	11

**SERA OFFICERS**

**Chair:**

Tricia Miller

**Vice-Chair:**

Jennifer Spence

**Secretary:**

Alyssa Magnone

**Treasurer/Membership**

**Chair:**

Miranda Helton

**Development Chair:**

Ainsley Powell

**Communications Chair:**

Sabra Gossett

**State Coordinator:**

Deanna Taylor

**Scholarship Chair:**

Elizabeth Le

**Nominations Chair:**

Christy Sinksen

Notes from the Chair

Tricia Miller

Happy Holidays SERA Members!

I hope you are looking forward to a much-needed break and some relaxing down time with friends and family. It is hard to believe that a year has gone by since I started in the position of Chair. There are many things to be thankful for as I look back over the past year.

First, thank you to the board officers and committee chairs for all their hard work not only with SERA's annual meeting and respite at the SEMC Conference, but also with all the day-to-day management of the SERA organization. We are a hard-working and effective team and I am so grateful for their input and assistance.

Speaking of SEMC, it was a fun conference with great sessions. There were so many great collections-based sessions this year and that is thanks to many of our SERA members. SEMC is a fabulous learning opportunity for both emerging and seasoned professionals, but it is only as good as the sessions proposed. So let's keep up the good work and continue to propose and present thoughtful and thought-provoking conference sessions. The 2025 conference will be in Montgomery, AL and the call for session proposals will come shortly after the first of the year. If you are new to proposing or organizing conference presentations, check out your state museum organization as well and try out a session with them.

I am also grateful for the chance to lead this organization of amazing professionals and I hope my time as Chair will have a positive impact on the collections management field. If there is ever anything more you feel that SERA might be able to do to advance collections management professionals, please feel free to reach out to me.

As we look ahead to a new year and new year's resolutions, remember to be kind to yourself, especially your professional self. Turn off the notifications at the end of your workday, try to grab a little sunlight on your face during the dark winter months, and work to live (don't live to work). All those objects will still be there tomorrow.

All my best,  
Tricia

Greetings SERA Members,

2024 has been a great year for SERA! We have seen an 8.8% increase in membership and welcomed 37 brand new members. We have also seen consistent income from sales of Basic Condition Reporting and our sponsorships.

We were able to give two travel scholarships for SEMC this year:

- Emerging Professional – Jennifer Glaze, Atlanta History Center
- Seasoned Professional – Erica Hague, Atlanta History Center

Thank you to Willis Towers Watson and TCI for their continued support of SERA with donations of \$1000 each!

Memberships (As of November 22, 2024)

- 111 total 2024 SERA Members in Good Standing (+8.8% from 102 members before SEMC 2023)
  - o 3 Associate Members
  - o 65 Individual Members
  - o 40 Institutional Members from 8 Institutions
  - o 3 Student Members
- 37 New Members in 2024
- 37 2023 Members have not renewed

As of November 22, 2024, the current balance in the Chase checking account is \$12,122.67. The current balance in the PayPal account is \$1,176.10. The combined total on-hand is \$13,298.77, up \$994.32 (+8.08%) from the \$12,304.45 on-hand reported this time last year. SERA's Year to Date fiscal activity as of November 22, 2024 is outlined below.

Please feel free to contact me for any additional information.

Miranda Helton, Treasurer/Membership Chair

## TREASURER'S REPORT

MIRANDA HELTON

## THE SOUTHEASTERN REGISTRARS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Statement of Financial Position  
As of November 22, 2024

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
BUSINESS CLASSIC (3379) - 1	12,122.67
PayPal Bank	1,176.10
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$13,298.77</b>
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable (A/R)	75.00
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	<b>\$75.00</b>
Other Current Assets	
Undeposited Funds	0.00
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$13,373.77</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$13,373.77</b>
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Total Liabilities	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	11,150.36
Retained Earnings	1,222.27
Net Revenue	1,001.14
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$13,373.77</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$13,373.77</b>

January 1 - November 22, 2024

	TOTAL
Revenue	
Donations	25.00
Sponsorship	2,000.00
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>2,025.00</b>
Membership	
Associate	50.00
Individual	1,575.00
Institutional	600.00
Student	30.00
<b>Total Membership</b>	<b>2,255.00</b>
Royalties	617.15
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$4,897.15</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$4,897.15</b>
Expenditures	
Dues, Fees, & Subscriptions	391.99
Office Supplies & Software	296.16
PayPal Fees	148.46
Reimbursable Expenses	15.00
Respite	1,244.40
Scholarships	
SEMC	1,800.00
<b>Total Scholarships</b>	<b>1,800.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$3,896.01</b>
NET OPERATING REVENUE	<b>\$1,001.14</b>

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**MEMBERSHIP**


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**New\* / Renewing Members****AL**

Megan Barnhill\*  
 Registrar, US Army Center of Military History,  
 Anniston Army Depot

Ella Sykes\*  
 Collections and Gallery Manager, Alabama  
 Museum of the Health Sciences at UAB

**FL**

Elise LeCompte  
 Registrar and Coordinator for Museum Health and  
 Safety, Florida Museum of Natural History

**GA**

Mark Janzen \*  
 Director, Center for Public History at the  
 University of West Georgia

**KY**

Mary Beth Williams \*  
 Collections Manager, American Printing House for  
 the Blind

Ashley Buzzanca \*  
 Registrar, Kentucky Historical Society

**LA**

Misty Taylor-Pride  
 Collections and Exhibitions Manager, Hilliard Art  
 Museum - University of Louisiana at Lafayette

**NC**

Christian Edwards \*  
 Assistant Keeper, UNC Wilson Special Collections  
 Library

**SC**

Melanie Sigman \*  
 Collection Manager, Aiken County Historical  
 Museum

**New\* / Renewing Institutional Members**

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum  
 Laura Dello Russo, Collections Manager  
 Conor Andrich, Registrar \*  
 Misty Snyder, Museum Assistant \*  
 Joseph Gilbert, Research Coordinator \*  
 Maria Dmitrieva, Paper Conservator \*  
 Jessica Rusch, Objects Conservator \*  
 Terry Runner, Exhibits Specialist \*

Cape Fear Museum of History and Science  
 Tess Will, Registrar \*  
 Sandra Cintron-Goitia, Manager of Exhibits and  
 Collections  
 Heather Yenco, Curator \*  
 Devin Kelly, Collections Specialist \*  
 Bethany Hewlett, Collections Assistant \*

Carolina Museum of the Marine  
 Lisa Potts, Curator\*  
 Joe Shrader, President and CEO\*  
 Ashley Danielson, VP of Marketing and  
 Development\*  
 Steve Lunsford, Operations Officer\*  
 Carlie Lee, Registrar/Historian\*  
 Kristen Honaker, Exhibit Manager\*  
 Sarah Williams, Docent Coordinator\*

## SERA NEWS

ALABAMA**Haley Aaron***Registrar***Alabama Department of Archives and History**

Haley Aaron attended the Southeastern Museums Conference in October and presented in a session titled Making Sense of Legacy Documentation along with ADAH curator Ryan Blocker and Thomasville History Center curator Ephraim Rotter. The session explored how to survey and improve access to legacy documentation, and how engaging with the limitations of legacy documentation improves the accession records we create today.

**Alex Campbell***Collections Manager***Berman Museum - Anniston Museums and Gardens**

I am officially the new collections manager at the Berman Museum! Art of the Duel opened to the public on November 16th and will be open until early May. In the lobby of the Berman Museum we will be having a new temporary exhibit open in January called Old, New, Borrowed, and Blue which shows the history of weddings through wedding dresses in the collection.

**Paula Haymon***Collections Manager and Registrar***Wiregrass Museum of Art**

Paula Haymon is thrilled to announce that the Wiregrass Museum of Art has been awarded a significant grant of \$75,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), through its Inspire! Grants for Small Museums program. WMA is the only Alabama institution to receive an Inspire! grant this year. This award will enable the WMA to undertake a comprehensive assessment of its collection care needs over a 20-month period from September 1, 2024, through April 30, 2026. This substantial grant marks a major milestone in WMA's efforts to preserve and protect the collection. In the coming months, Paula and the WMA's collections care team will work with the Museum's director and professional conservation specialists from the Atlanta Art Conservation Center to analyze the physical condition of the collection, identify immediate and long-term preservation concerns, and prioritize needs for future conservation treatments. The team will also give attention to the proper mounting and presentation of each object, including frames and pedestals, to ensure they are exhibited appropriately after treatment. This work will build on the WMA's ongoing long range preservation plan, which has included a collections-based risk assessment, participation in the Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program, the creation of a full-time Collections Manager and Registrar position, and the completion of a comprehensive inventory of the museum's collections, among others.

**Ella Sykes***Collections and Gallery Manager***Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences**

I started as Collections and Gallery Manager at the Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences at UAB this past March, and I'm excited to be part of SERA! The Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences (AMHS) began collecting in 1946 and has roughly 15,700 objects today. As evidenced by our name, the collection is primarily medical-related and includes machines,

tools, doctor's bags, manikins, nursing uniforms, and pharmaceuticals. Earlier this year, AMHS moved to a new exhibiting home, The Dennis G. Pappas Historical Collections Gallery, where we exhibit with UAB's other Historical Collections units. Upon starting the position in March, I completed a full inventory of the collection for the first time since 1997. The inventory helped me familiarize myself with the collection while also ensuring that our records are up to date. In the time since, I've begun rehousing the collection, which has included a move of 51 oversized objects down five stories and across two elevators onto newly purchased rolling platforms. It's been a promising first year here, and I'm excited to see our continued progress next year, which will focus primarily on rehousing and work within our database.

### **Rose Wood**

*Registrar*

#### **Birmingham Museum of Art**

Rose Wood has been busy organizing the exhibition and tour, Hayward Oubre: Structural Integrity. This monograph exhibition will highlight Oubre's impact on artists as a professor in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). His students include Noah Jemisin, Floyd W. Coleman, Sr., and Paul A. Gary. The exhibition opened on October 5, 2024 and will close on February 2, 2025. It will then travel to The Stanley Museum of Art in Iowa City, Iowa, the New Orleans Museum of Art, and one additional venue. Concurrently with the Oubre exhibition, the BMA is hosting *Determined To Be: The Sculpture of John Rhoden*, which the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and Art Bridges organized. The exhibition is on view from October 19, 2024 to April 20, 2025. The BMA hosted the Association of Historians of American Art Biennial Symposium from October 17-19. In preparation for the conference, the American galleries were refreshed. A team of professors and students from the University of Birmingham are on site to examine Pre-Columbian objects to determine material composition. This project is a part of an Ancient Americas reinstallation scheduled to open in September 2025. The deaccessioning project continues with seventy-five objects sent for auction and over 250 property

objects being offered for sale through a local estate service.

## **FLORIDA**

### **Sabra Gossett**

*Curator*

#### **Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum**

Sabra is currently in the middle of adjusting to her new position, and learning so much! The history on the Cape is amazing—75 years of rocketry! Humble brag—she has already met an Astronaut and the first woman in Mission Control!



In addition to acclimating, she is working on a temporary display on the Mercury 13 (if you don't know who they are, Google it! It's super interesting!). The display will go up sometime in February, to be up for Women's History Month in March, and stay up through June. Check out the Winter 2025 Newsletter for updates!

## **GEORGIA**

### **Aimee Brooks**

*Collections Manager*

#### **The Columbus Museum**

At The Columbus Museum, Aimee Brooks and Miles Kirkpatrick are gearing up for reaccreditation. The museum submitted the self-study documents this fall

and expects the site visit to happen in the spring. They are working on a post-renovation full inventory while reorganizing and rehousing some objects as they go. The collections staff is also gearing up to receive the traveling exhibition, American Made: Paintings and Sculpture from the DeMell Jacobsen Collection, which will open at the museum in March.

### **Erica Hague**

*Collections Manager*

#### **Atlanta History Center**

It's been a busy fall for AHC! We've begun implementation of our IMLS Grant project, hiring two part time inventory staff, Chelsea Trenbeath and Shon Walker, and one full time registrar, Halle Smith, to work on the inventory, database cleanup, and research items. The research and content that is produced as part of this project will go on to inform educational resources that will be provided for free on our website. This project will be ongoing through summer of 2026, so stay tuned for more! Project Registrar, Deb Wold, is nearing the halfway point on the digitization of the items that were on exhibit in Shaping Traditions, and Associate Registrar, Jen Glaze, is tirelessly inventorying and digitizing records for the 1500+ Items in our Turning Point exhibit, which will close in May 2025. With the closing of Shaping Traditions and Turning Point, both which premiered in the 1990s, we will be well on our way of completing the goal of rotating our pre-2015 galleries. With book projects, exhibits, and ongoing digitization of collections, it will be a busy 2025 for us. Wishing you all well, as we look forward to the new year, and hope to see you all at SEMC 2025 in Montgomery, Alabama!

### **Christa McCay**

*Collections Manager*

#### **Marietta History Center/City of Marietta**

The Marietta History Center has had a busy fall with a new holiday exhibit installed and replacement of 6 HVAC units in the building. The HVAC replacements is in the home stretch with 2 more to go but will be finished in early December. Christa was busy at SEMC in Baton Rouge, serving as the Co-Chair for the Program Committee. The amount of sessions for Collections was outstanding! The sessions showcased a variety

of topics and the speakers all did an amazing job. SEMC 2025 planning has already started and hopefully Collections will be represented well.

## **KENTUCKY**

### **Leah Craig**

*Deputy Director*

#### **Kentucky Historical Society**

We are bit behind in sharing the news that this summer we welcomed Ashley Buzzanca as our new Registrar and also a new curator, Jennifer Downs, who have both been wonderful additions to our team. We have been concentrating on much-needed textile rotations, especially in the Kentucky Military History Museum (part of the KHS campus). We had fun installing some special temporary exhibit displays in our Old State Capitol (also part of the KHS campus) related to holiday programming. Our October display showcased Victorian hair art, and our November-December display included fashion accessories.



### **Connor Humphrey**

*Park Museum Curator*

#### **John James Audubon State Park**

This month, John James Audubon State Park has successfully launched a new audio tour through Guide ID. Support for this project was provided by the

Friends of Audubon and aims to present a more informative and inclusive narrative about John James Audubon, as well as to showcase important items from our collection. The audio players will be available at no additional cost with every ticket purchase. Guide ID utilizes AI-generated voices, which eliminates the need for recording studios or voice actors. Additionally, all audio equipment programming and tour content can be managed remotely, ensuring that the information remains accurate and up-to-date. The audio players are simple to use and our visitors are finding them incredibly informative as they are now able to learn more about the collection than ever before!



### Jennifer Spence

*Parks Museum Curator*

### Kentucky Department of Parks

Jennifer Spence, Parks Museum Curator for the Kentucky Department of Parks, reports that Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site in Wickliffe, Kentucky, welcomed Reagan Baechle as interim Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Coordinator in October. Reagan, a former intern at the Culture and Heritage Museum of York County, South Carolina, holds a Master of Science in Bioarcheology and Forensic Anthropology and has extensive experience identifying osteological collections. Her primary role will be inventorying a substantial collection of archaeological materials for

NAGPRA compliance. As Kentucky State Parks enter the winter season, museum staff statewide are ramping up efforts to complete collections inventories. Teams at My Old Kentucky Home, John James Audubon, and Blue Licks Battlefield state parks, along with Waveland and Perryville Battlefield state historic sites, are actively conducting their annual reviews of collections.

### MISSISSIPPI

### Kathleen Barnett

*Director of Collections Management & Registration*  
**Mississippi Museum of Art**

The Mississippi Museum of Art recently opened *Of Salt and Spirit: Black Quilters in the American South*, on view November 16, 2024 – April 13, 2025. The exhibition features over 50 quilts from MMA's permanent collection, several of which were collected by American photographer Roland L. Freeman and recently acquired by MMA in 2022. Twelve photographs of quilters taken by Freeman are also included in the exhibition.

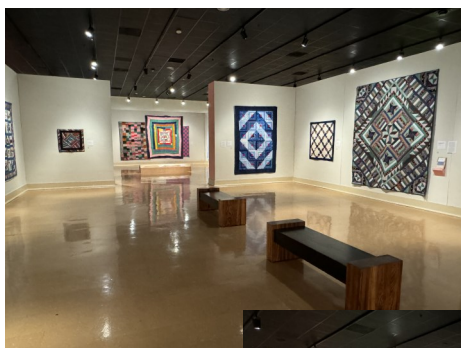
Curator Dr. Sharbreon Plummer combines thorough research, innovative interpretation, and community engagement to form a cohesive, experiential study of American art through a Black feminist lens. The exhibition seeks to illuminate the processes and practices of Black Southern quilters and demystify cultural narratives assigned to their artistry while celebrating the enduring impact of quilting on communities and generations.

*Of Salt and Spirit: Black Quilters in the American South*, a presentation in the Myra Green and Lynn Green Root Memorial Exhibition Series, is presented





with support from Henry Luce Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Art Dealers Association of America Foundation, Visit Mississippi, and Visit Jackson.



### NORTH CAROLINA

**Travis Laughlin**  
*Manager-Charlotte*  
**Atelier4**

During the most recent Southeastern Museums Conference, Jonathan Schwartz (CEO) and Travis Laughlin (Storage & Facilities Manager) of Atelier 4 had the honor of learning about Baton Rouge General Hospital's Arts in Medicine program. Since its inception in 2012, this program has enriched the experiences of patients, family members, and staff through a diverse array of creative activities including painting, drawing, arts and crafts, and music therapy. Mary Malloy leads this innovative program and offered Jonathan and Travis insight into one donation the hospital received that impacts patients, staff, and visitors on a daily basis. Mari Lyons was an American modernist artist with a career expanding sixty years. Following her passing in 2016, her family generously donated hundreds of her paintings and sketches. Her art-

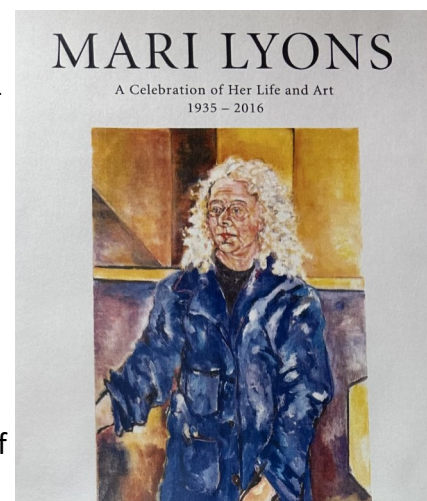
**Cheryl Waldrep**  
*Museum Curator*

### **Natchez National Historical Park**

Cheryl Waldrep, curator at Melrose, recently installed Christmas decorations at the Melrose mansion in Natchez. Decorations include a special book Kriss Kringle's Christmas Tree: A Holiday Present for Boys and Girls gifted to a McMurren grandchild on December 25th, 1845. A decorated tree is also displayed because Mrs. McMurren wrote in 1847 that "Mary is busy making up little fancy articles for the Christmas Tree."



These decorations and the book help recreate the historic interior of the mansion, but also demonstrate the stark contrast to life in the slave quarters and the fact that it was illegal for enslaved to learn to read in Mississippi.



work is currently exhibited in the cafe at the Mid-City campus, as well as in various doctors' offices, clinics, and treatment rooms throughout the hospital. The vision of Mary Malloy, the generosity of the Lyons family, and the dedication of the artists and art therapists at Baton Rouge General remind us that art has so much to offer outside traditional organizations and settings.



## VIRGINIA

### **Cathy DeSilvey**

*Registrar & Curator*

#### **Virginia Military Institute Museum**

VMI Museum System staff recently enrolled in an Inclusive History Certificate Program with VMI colleagues, including professors and the VMI Archives. VMI is a member of the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium, and this class, funded by the Jesse Ball DuPont Fund, involves designing an additive history project discussing the history of enslaved labor at VMI. We are proposing a digital archive webpage with what we know so far and wish to offer cadets future research opportunities to learn more. VMI Prof. Kevin Braun's CH492 Chemical Archeology class came to the museum to conduct follow up arsenic testing on the hide of Gen. Thomas Jackson's horse "Little Sorrel." (Jackson was a professor at VMI for ten years). Before 1980, arsenic was used as a preservative on taxidermized animals and Braun has previously tested the hide. The cadets also swabbed the saddle blanket and saddle that were displayed on Little Sorrel years ago. We are awaiting the test results!



### **Jeanne Nicolls**

*Retired Collections Manager*

#### **Loudon Museum**

Over the past year, the Loudoun Museum hosted members from a local quilt guild, visiting in small groups to examine quilts in the museum's collection. They appreciated this unique opportunity to view the historic quilts, hear what was known about their history, and learn about museum methods for quilt preservation. Based on their knowledge of quilting, members contributed comments about each quilt that were added to its catalog data. Supervised by staff, the quilters also helped photograph, refold and re-house the quilts. While this involved some time the program assisted staff with basic documentation and care of the quilt collection. The sessions created a model for possible future programs where local craftspeople could examine other objects in the collection in small group settings. A good example of community engagement, both quilters and museum staff were very pleased with the program.



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## SEMC SESSION REVIEWS

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One of the requirements of receiving a SERA scholarship for travel to SEMC is to review a session.

### **Jen Glaze**

*Associate Registrar*

#### **Atlanta History Center**

Inventory For All: Leveraging Collections Inventory to Break Museum Silos and Enact Change  
Tuesday, October 22, Sierra Polisar, Miriam Taylor, Bernadette M. Birzer

This session highlighted Newcomb Art Museum's collaborative inventory project, which generated shared responsibilities between the collections team, executive staff, the public, and cross-campus bodies such as students, professors, and the university's archive. The project goals included conducting an object count, digitizing records to promote accessibility, addressing "found in the collection" objects, and ensuring a clean legal title. Through IMLS, Newcomb obtained the necessary materials and hired three team members to focus solely on the project. This community effort, taking place during such an uneasy time (COVID), revealed some great results.

The project illustrated the importance of collection care. Nearly 700 "found in the collection" objects, each without paperwork, were identified, and many "location unknown" objects were located. The team digitized 5000 records for online use, which created educational opportunities for professors, students, and researchers. The project helped develop new connections with objects and themes for future fundraising and collections-based exhibition opportunities.

Importantly, all involved parties built trust with the public and one another through this collaborative effort. Though inventory is often quite the endeavor, it provides a foundation for our institutions, ensuring that we maintain responsible stewardship and integrity of the objects.

### **Erica Hague**

*Collections Manager*

#### **Atlanta History Center**

How Security Supports Collections Management & Visitor Experience

Monday 1:15-2:30, Carrie Heflin, Eric Drewery, Kathleen Hardin, Milagros Lilly Torres

This presentation focused on security professionals who have made changes to their teams, and how their teams interact with visitors and staff. These changes have increased visitor engagement as well as the safety and security of collections. The panelists all advocated for demilitarizing and de-siloing security staff. They focused on collaborating with other departments to ensure that security is a resource and responsibility for everyone.

The participants talked about how they started hiring people without previous guard or military experience, instead focusing on people that were interested in the mission of the institution. They then invested in infrastructure and technology, cross training their people with other departments, and strengthening relationships with collections and visitor experience teams specifically. They leaned into drills and training on security across the institution, so that there was institutional-wide buy-in for being security and safety advocates. They encouraged security staff to be ambassadors for the institution, which in turn, made the museum more welcoming, and improved morale of security and other staff.

The direct impact to collections for embracing this mindset is an increase in staff being aware of collections on exhibit and being able to leverage technology to address unplanned handling of items by visitors. As the presenters reminded the attendees, security is everyone's responsibility.



**SERA NEWS** is published quarterly by the Southeastern Registrars Association. The Southeastern Registrars Association (SERA) recognizes high standards of museum practice and fosters professional growth among museum registrars in the Southeastern region of the United States. We promote the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas through education seminars, publications and other means. SERA initiates and supports activities and projects which help create an atmosphere of cooperation and communication among, and between, registrars, other museum professionals, and those in related fields, and pursues further development of professional practices in the field.

**Membership:** Individual membership (\$25.00) is open to museum professionals who perform registrarial functions for institutions in the twelve states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Associate membership is also available to those outside the region or those employed by for-profit businesses or organizations who express interest in the objectives of SERA.

**Membership Contact:**  
SERA Treasurer/Membership Chair  
Miranda Helton