

Newsletter

Summer 2023 Volume 6, Number 1



paper | books | paintings | objects | textiles

Meet the New Board Members!!



Sara Lanham - Scholarship Coordinator

Sara Lanham joined Etherington Conservation as a book and paper conservation technician in 2021, and is working her way toward graduate study. Originally from Chattanooga, TN, she received her B.A. in Art History from Dartmouth College, where she also minored in Studio Art. During her early career, Sara worked at Crown Point Press and Arion Press in San Francisco. She also draws from professional experience in urban community farming, native plants gardening, artisan baking, and fine metalsmithing. She worked extensively with the collections of Early American Pattern Glass and European ceramics at the Houston Museum of Decorative Arts in

Chattanooga, as well as the Barry Moser archives at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In 2020, Sara began a series of pre-program placements: she interned in book and paper conservation at the Georgia Archives in Atlanta, Heller Conservation near Nashville, and the Charleston Library Society; and in sculpture conservation at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. She is an active student member of AIC, MRCG, and WCG, in addition to SERCA.

Amparo Escolano - Newsletter Editor

Amparo Escolano has been working non-stop in the Conservation/Restoration field since 1979. College trained and museum educated, she has a strong specialization in Art on Paper and Objects Conservation and Restoration. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Conservation and Restoration, a Master of Arts in Fine Arts with specialization in Conservation and Restoration, as well as a Research Proficiency Certificate after attending a Doctoral program in Conservation of Fine Arts. Nowadays she is a member of the American Institute for Conservation and belongs to the R&D group "New Alternatives to the Knowledge of Materials and Processes of Conservation and Restoration of Graphic Works of Art on Paper and Heritage Documents" with Granada University, Spain.



As per her professional experience, she owns and works as a Conservator at South Florida Art Conservation LLC. since 2009. She was an Associate Conservator of Paper at James Swope Fine Arts Conservation Inc. from 2011 to 2013 and worked from 2003 to 2009 as a Senior Conservator of Paper and Paintings at the Fine Arts Conservancy/Stoneledge, Inc. Before moving to USA she was a Professor of Art Conservation at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Granada University (1990-2002), a Paintings Conservator at the Cerralbo Museum in Madrid (1985-90), The House of Representatives, Madrid (1984-85), and Instituto de Conservacion y Restauracion de Obras de Arte, Madrid (1983-84).

Update

There will be updates coming soon regarding the restructuring of the board and topics discussed during the annual meeting.

Thank you for your patience!



Meeting Recap

SERCA 2023 Meeting Recap: Hurricane's Hardly Happen

By Veronica B. Davis

Professional Development Opportunity Grant Recipient



I feel honored and thankful that I was able to attend the annual SERCA meeting.

I have been involved in art as a conservator for over three decades now. My love and interest in art began at a very early age as my parents were both very passionate about art and art history. Growing up in Quito, Ecuador gave me the opportunity to be immersed and learn about Latin American art and their heritage from Spain and the European Masters. My passion for Art Conservation just seemed to be a natural evolution to me as part of that love of my earliest memories. With my preparation and the participation on different conservation projects with the Metropolitan Institute of Heritage in Quito, my evolution came full circle.

I have been involved in many aspects of conservation over the years; however, it was my first time attending a conference about disaster preparedness and all the procedures that are involved in the different stages.

It was so well organized and presented by SERCA and Rebecca Kennedy. Her discussion points and presentation style were educational, professional, and really allowed the listener to understand the steps and think about their individual applications in order to be better prepared for this situations in their own field of expertise and practices. Her summation of the processes allowed each of us to put the steps to actual practice in teams during the workshop portion of the presentations. This was a highlight for many of the attendees, allowing each of us to relate to the discussion points through hands-on, real-life experience as we were tasked in group teams to prepare and work on different situations and materials.

This was not only a real working evaluation and planning session but was done in a creative and fun way. We were able to network while organizing an actual disaster event scenario displaying each of our skill sets and individual talents during a stressful and time-sensitive situation. Many of us became friends, which will allow the learning and sharing to continue over our individual field work. This is the importance of these sessions and conferences. It sparks more communication long after the subject matter is presented.

For me personally, it was a valuable experience to share with a great group of professionals, having the opportunity to network, learning from each other and getting to know them in a more personal way. I am looking forward to the next meeting.

Leonora Weaver Scholarship Recipient: Sarah Bess Brown

In an alcove of the Macon Museum of Arts and Sciences, eye-to-eye with a taxidermy fox, a brush was placed into my hand and my life changed forever. Renee Stein looked at me as she passed me the brush and I genuinely couldn't believe that she was talking to me. If not for the fear of asbestos, I would have kept the brush for memories. When my assumption going into the angel project was that, at most, I was going to observe the other conservators rather than participate myself, the out-of-body experience I had is hard to put into words.

Up until I became this year's Leonora Weaver Scholarship recipient for the SERCA annual meeting in Macon, Georgia, a career as a conservator seemed nothing more than a pipe dream as I was going through the process almost entirely alone. My interest in conservation began when my teacher, Dr. Jeffery Collins, introduced me to this field when I became a student at Oglethorpe University in the fall semester of 2015. During the COVID-19 lockdown, I reflected on how I could apply my skills as an artist and my interest in art history to find a promising career. The final push for me into this field occurred during the January 6th insurrection, as I watched the capital being ransacked. It got me thinking about whose job it would be to salvage all the pieces.

This past February, I did a deep dive into the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) website to find a conservator willing to instruct me on the logistics of how to go about making my dreams a reality. I ended up finding Stephanie Watkins, who pointed me in the direction of SERCA. Without ever even meeting Stephanie, she made it her mission to help me when she was unable to do it herself. Through Stephanie, I found out about SERCA and the 2023 annual meeting. With the assistance of the Leonora Weaver Scholarship, it allowed me to go in person and experience a chance to meet the titans of the industry. On my trip to Macon, I was welcomed and given life-altering counseling on how a career as a conservator is achieved.

The focus of this year's annual meeting was the ongoing threat the southeast region faces from hurricane disasters and the effects they have on the continual survival of museum collections. Some new skills that I was introduced to over the course of the weekend included the ins-and-outs of salvage, and the importance of an emergency readiness plan and how documentation is the key to everything. Hearing stories from keynote speaker Rebecca Kennedy of past salvages and how that can better prepare us for the future, was a major highlight. The biggest takeaway from this experience was that it is never too late to begin a journey in conservation. Before this, my belief was that I was so far behind in my education that I would never catch up. Through the help of SERCA, it was brought to my attention that it is not unusual to come in to this career post undergraduate studies. Everyone's journey to conservation may take a different path, but our collective passions fuel the discoveries and innovations of tomorrow.

Health and Safety

Dont't Bump Your Head!!! Fall Protection

Although we did not clean the whale skeleton or the sculpture Gesturing Woman by Viola Frey during our annual meeting at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Macon, GA, a discussion on fall protection can be useful for all specialty groups. Falls are among the most common causes of serious work-related injuries and deaths; more than 700 workers die from falls a year. Possession of the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary for working at heights can be necessary for a conservator's tool kit.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requires personal fall protection when working above 10 feet; such protection, however, is still recommended above 6 feet. Three types of protection will be highlighted below: hard hats, safety harnesses, and steel toe boots.

If an employee (whether self-employed or institutionally employed) faces any danger of a head injury from a fall and/or falling objects, that employee must wear a hard hat, according to OSHA standards. When working at a height over 10 feet, the ideal hard hat would be a Type 2 hard hat with a chin strap. A Type 2 hard hat provides impact protection on all sides of the hat; a Type 1 hard hat only protects the crown of the head and thus only provides protection from falling objects. Your chosen hard hats do not need a brim. However, brims provide eye protection from dripping chemicals, weather, and sun and so would be especially useful for outdoor conservation activities. For most conservation activities, a Type C (Conductive) hat would be acceptable. However, if an employee is near electrical lines, a Type G (General) hard hat will provide slight electrical shielding. Much like a bicycle helmet, a hard hat should fit snuggly and not move with a head shake to provide adequate protection upon a fall.

To limit accelerated falls and impact with the floor, an employee should wear a safety harness and lines which limit free fall height to 6 feet and/or prevent the employee from touching the floor. The straps of the harness should be tightened until the harness fits snuggly but does not prevent full movement of all limbs. The harness user must ensure that all the straps lay flat and are not twisted. Safety lines should be attached at the center of the employees back and these lines must be polypropylene with an UV inhibitor. Ideally, these safety lines should be anchored independently from work platforms, such as scaffolding, and be anchored above the employee. Each worker must have their own safety line as well. All safety lines, harnesses, anchor points, and other parts, such as d-rings, snap hooks, lanyards, etc., should be rated to 5000 lbs. Use of a safety net can be considered instead of or in addition to the use of a safety harness. All parts of the harness and safety lines should be inspected prior to each use. Faulty or misused fall protection harnesses can be just as dangerous as having no fall protection at all.



Most construction (and archaeology) employees wear steel toed boots while on site. According to OSHA standard 1910.140, "The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses protective footwear when working in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects, or objects piercing the sole, or when the use of protective footwear will protect the affected employee." Not only do steel toed boots prevent foot injury from falling objects, but these boots also commonly have with sturdy treads that provide strong traction. Footwear with sturdy treads is required especially upon scaffolding to prevent slips and falls. Boots also provide ankle protection which may prevent a sprained or broken ankle upon a fall. Although work boots may not be necessary, many hiking boots come with steel toes. *Tip * Ladies, boys hiking boots tend to be massively cheaper than women's hiking boots.

Since conservation requires a fair bit of mobility, protecting yourself from severe injuries from a fall is necessary to not foreshorten your career. Acquisition and proper use of these fall protection PPEs will allow you to not 'bump your head' so you can still 'get up in the morning.'

Additional Information:

OSHA Standards 1910.136 and 140.

[Law and Regulations | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regulations)

OSHA. Focus 4: Construction Health and Safety: 'Fall' Hazards.2018.

[FallsTrainer.indd \(osha.gov\)](https://www.osha.gov/Construction/Training-and-Education/Falls-Trainer.indd)

Announcements

Jenni Krchak has a 3rd year placement at the VMFA Paper Conservation Lab for the Buffalo program.

Charlotte Starnes has an internship with Renee Wolcott at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia.



Membership

Membership Payment Online via PayPal

Renewing your membership is even easier without having to worry about mailing in those pesky checks!! You will also be able to register and pay for workshops online. Please be sure to submit **BOTH** the registration form *and* the payment. If you haven't already renewed, please

Visit our website for more details: <https://sercaconservation.org/membership/>

Newsletter Submissions

Working on an interesting project? Have an internship, job opening, or workshop opportunity to share? Let us know what's going on in your studio! Content for the newsletter should be directed to both Newsletter Editors.

SERCA's Newsletter is published three times a year in April, August, and December. Please note that content should be sent at least two weeks prior to publication. Articles should not exceed 750 words. Also, there should be no more than 4 accompanying images in jpeg format. The editors reserve the right to copy-edit in order to fit available space.

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