

SERCA

Southeast Regional Conservation Association

Newsletter

Winter 2022 Volume 5, Number 3

Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting Save the Date

We are excited to announce that the 2023 SERCA Annual Meeting Registration is now open!

You can register for the meeting by visiting the [Annual Meeting Page](#) on the website or using the [2023 Annual Meeting Registration form](#). Registration cost is \$225 for members and \$250 for non-members. We will also offer options for virtual attendance on Friday only for \$100 or in-person attendance for Friday only for \$140.



This year's meeting will be held at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Macon, GA on March 10 to 12th, 2023. Expanding on the preparedness topics covered in our last two virtual annual meetings, the 2023 SERCA meeting will look at the challenges in conservation due to increasing natural disasters and climate change. Speaker Rebecca Kennedy of Curae Collections Care will discuss evacuations, establishing roles and priorities, and cover various scenarios that we may encounter in the Southeast. As part of the meeting, Rebecca will also lead a half-day recovery workshop and we will have an Angels Project at the meeting site.

Since this is our first in-person meeting in a few years, we want members to come and enjoy the meeting and catch up with colleagues without the pressure of having to put together a presentation. Therefore, while we won't have a Call for Proposals on the meeting topic, we have included a space on the form to indicate whether or not you would like to share a tip or trick you use! Tips and Tricks is the informal Sunday wrap-up session and can be as long or as short as you would like it. We will reach out to you closer to the date to confirm the amount of time you think you will need.

Registration will remain open until February 21st, 2023. Additional details and meeting updates will be posted on the website as we get closer to March.

About this Year's Speaker, Rebecca Kennedy:

With over 15 years of experience, Rebecca Kennedy has worked with a variety of collections and cultural institutions. After receiving a MA in Museum Studies from The George Washington University, Rebecca worked in preservation and collections management at the Smithsonian Institution for 11 years. Rebecca is an instructor for the George Washington University's Museum Studies program, teaching Collections Management. She serves on committees for the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), American Alliance of Museums (AAM), and the Association of Registrars and Collections Specialist (ARCS) to support the museum field and also serves as an editor for the Collections Journal. She is also a Professional Associate (PA) of AIC for her contributions as an allied professional to the conservation community.

For more information, please visit [Curae Collections Care](#) online.



Open Board Member Positions

1. Secretary
2. Treasurer
3. Communications Coordinator
4. Membership Coordinator
5. Newsletter Co-Editors (2)

Funding Opportunities

Professional Development Grant:

Would you like to attend a workshop or conduct research which might also benefit your SERCA colleagues and the conservation community, but lack adequate funds to do so? SERCA is offering up to \$500 to support a worthy endeavor in 2023. *Please note that this grant is not applicable to the SERCA annual meeting and education program.*



To apply: by January 31, 2023, please send a brief letter of intent, explaining the intended outcomes of your project, and your need for financial assistance. Please also include a copy of your resume. Send these materials via e-mail to Julie Newton jnewt01@emory.edu with the subject line "SERCA Opportunity Grant."

The SERCA scholarship committee and board of directors will review applications and announce a recipient before March 1, 2023. The grant recipient will be encouraged to contribute a brief article about their grant experience for inclusion in the SERCA newsletter.

Leonora Weaver Scholarship:

Leonora Weaver (1957-2014) was an Atlanta-based conservator in private practice; a long-term member of SERCA; and a mentor to many students and emerging conservators across the southeast and beyond. In honor of Leonora's commitment to education, SERCA is dedicated to the maintenance of the Leonora Weaver Scholarship, which will cover registration fees and provide a small stipend for travel to SERCA's annual educational programs. To apply for a Leonora Weaver Scholarship, please send a resume and brief (one page) statement of how the topic of this year's program would benefit your long-term educational and career goals.

Please send this via e-mail to SERCA scholarships coordinator, Julie Newton jnewt01@emory.edu. Application deadline for the 2023 award cycle is January 31, 2023. The SERCA scholarship committee and board of directors will review applications and announce a recipient before March 1, 2023. The scholarship recipient will be encouraged to contribute a brief article about their experience at the SERCA annual meeting for inclusion in the SERCA newsletter.

To help maintain the Leonora Weaver Scholarship fund, please donate using the PayPal button on the [Funding Opportunities page](#) or send a check payable to SERCA for the desired amount to: Brittany Dolph Dinneen, SERCA Treasurer- Michael C. Carlos Museum; Emory University; 571 S Kilgo Circle Atlanta, GA 30322

Please note that current SERCA board members are not eligible for SERCA funding opportunities.

From the Bench of the Vice President

Eliza Gilligan Lenz

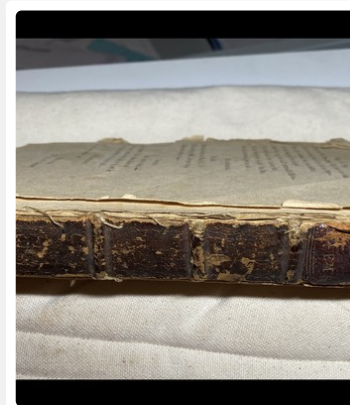
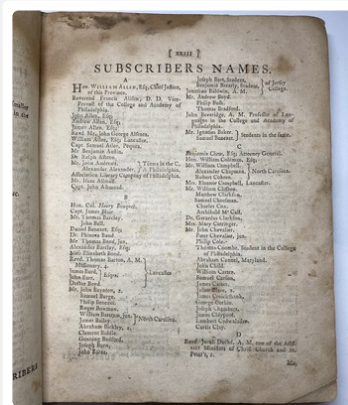
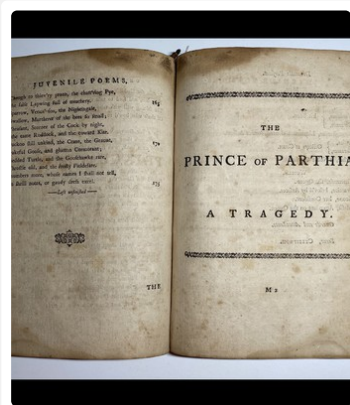
Hello! As the new Vice President of SERCA, I would like to introduce myself to the membership.

I am a book conservator in private practice in Macon, GA, having moved to the area from Charlottesville, VA in 2018. I received my formal training from the Graduate School of Information Science at the University of Texas at Austin. As a library and archives conservator, I have worked at Michigan State University Library, the Smithsonian Libraries, and the University of Virginia Library. I have set up multiple general collections book repair workflows in addition to treating special collection materials.

When I lived in Washington, DC, I was an active member of the Washington Conservation Guild, serving as a board member, Vice President, and President. During that time I worked with Michelle Savant and Larry Shutts, who also served on the board. In addition to our regular meetings and activities, the WCG Board commissioned a new logo/identity package for the Guild and hired a web designer to build a new website, both of which are still in use today. I also participated in emergency response efforts to the fire at the Georgetown branch of the Washington, DC public library, helping to coordinate the salvage of the books, paper, and artifacts from the Peabody room where their special collections were housed. I hope my experience with another regional conservation organization proves useful to SERCA.

As a further introduction, I'd like to tell you about a current project on my bench. "Juvenile Poems on various subjects. With the Prince of Parthia, A Tragedy" (Figure 1). The book was printed in Philadelphia in 1765 by Henry Miller. The author, Thomas Godfrey, had died two years prior and this collection of poems and a play were assembled by his friends as a tribute to his literary genius and a life cut short. The list of subscribers to the publication runs to four pages and includes prominent colonial Americans from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and North Carolina (Figure 2). The Prince of Parthia is believed to be the first play printed in America written by an American author. And while

Thomas Godfrey had served in the Colonial Army and identified as a loyal British subject, his friends published the book as a way of asserting the growing literary talents of colonial America.



The book has suffered significant damage since it came off the printing press. The only remnant of a once fine binding is a brown leather spine and a red leather title label with “Godfrey Poems” tooled in gold. The original boards are gone, as are the end sheets, the title page, and the last three pages of text. There is oversewing through the back shoulder and spine of the book (Figure 3), which is most likely a home-made attempt to keep additional pages from peeling off the back of the text block. The paper is soft and weathered. The staining and distortion on the fore edge of the text block speak to the heavy use this book has seen as people thumbed through the volume.

The book is privately owned and the owner has requested a new binding. New boards will be fitted once the text block has been washed, mended, and re-sewn. Period appropriate leather will be used for the covering material. Decoration of the new binding will be minimal since the remnant spine leather has no decoration aside from the gold tooled lines on the red leather title label. The improved functionality of the book will allow it to be used without creating new damage. Since the book’s owner will be using the volume as a primary source for an upcoming publication, the conservation treatment will provide much-needed durability and permanence to the book.

I first heard of SERCA when Hilary Kaplan made a visit to my graduate program at the University of Texas at Austin. Twenty-plus years later I am very happy to be part of the group!

Five Questions with Renée Stein

Director of Conservation and Chief Conservator at the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University

How did you choose conservation as a career?

My conservation courses often open with this small-world story: When I was six years old, I broke a family photograph of my maternal grandparents' wedding. My mother spent a year looking for someone to repair, not just reprint, the photograph. Through a friend with a



contact at the Smithsonian, she learned about the conservation program at the Winterthur Museum, where pioneering photographs conservator José Oracca taught. José repaired our photo when Debbie Hess Norris (WUDPAC's current director) was his student. My family had a set of Encyclopedia Americana in which the entry on Art Conservation was written by Joyce Hill Stoner. During my undergraduate studies, I phoned the Winterthur program to make some inquiries and so exasperated the administrative assistant that she put the director on the line, and I found myself talking with the lady from the encyclopedia! When I later arrived at WUDPAC for my Master's degree, I showed Debbie my family photo and, although she hadn't treated it, she recalled José's teaching about it and gave me a 35mm slide of it from her study collection. José came to speak during my first year at Winterthur; my mother flew up for the lecture to thank him for inspiring my budding career.

How did you learn of SERCA?

Many of SERCA's founding members have ties to Emory University and the Carlos Museum. I met them and was encouraged to participate. I think the first SERCA program I attended was Jim Bernstein's inpainting workshop. I still have my panel of fill material tests.

What has been your most memorable treatment?

I always find this a challenging a question. There are so many varied projects that I have appreciated for so many different reasons. I sometimes joke that my favorite project is the one I just completed. My gallery tours are constructed from stories about treatment projects – come visit!

What has been your biggest regret professionally?

I long thought that I might pursue a PhD but have never made the time for it nor been compelled by a particular topic. There are moments when I think that the experience and credential would be worthwhile. I might have engaged in more international collaborations and might yet.


What tool or supply do you still guard with your life?

I have always worked in group lab settings with shared tools. While I have preferred versions, I don't have specific tools that I cannot live without. I do feel that I can best examine an object with a fine scalpel and a good magnifier.

SERCA 2022 Professional Opportunity Grant

Mackenzie Becker, Conservation Technician, North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA)

As a recipient of the 2022 SERCA Professional Opportunity Grant, and with the cooperation and support of my mentor and NCMA co-workers, Corey Riley, Objects Conservator, and Benjamin Bridgers, Manager of Park Collections, I was afforded the opportunity to meet and learn from conservators at other institutions about new and different methodologies for treating outdoor sculptures. I was especially interested to meet with conservators who did not set out to specialize in public art treatment, but whose training as objects conservators led them to careers in managing large outdoor sculpture collections. In accepting this grant, it was my goal to connect with conservators at various institutions to establish professional connections, broaden my knowledge base and bring improved treatment methodology to my work at the sculpture park at the North Carolina Museum of Art.



My first trip took me to New Orleans, Louisiana, a city of resilience and renewal. There I visited the Besthoff Sculpture Garden at the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA), an 11-acre park and garden which features more than ninety works of art. In recent years, the garden has undergone a two-year, 6.5-acre expansion which included the installation of 27 new works. This expansive collection on its rambling site is managed by Ingrid Seyb, the NOMA Objects Conservator. I was able to spend an afternoon with Ms. Seyb, walking through the gardens and discussing upcoming treatments and condition issues. Staff limitations at NOMA have made a consistent maintenance schedule extremely difficult to maintain; Ms. Seyb described her methods as triage-based with problems handled as they arise.

Next, I traveled to the nation's capital, Washington DC, where another revitalization is just beginning. At the Hirshhorn Museum and Garden, I was able to witness the very beginning of the full revitalization of the Hirshhorn to modernize the landscape; ground-breaking began just after our visit and will take two years to complete. The project will require relocation of all 30 of the outdoor sculptures currently on-site to the museum's plaza or to be placed in storage.


At the Hirshhorn I was able to meet with Anouk Verbeek, the Sculpture Conservator. Her team is knowledgeable of the outdoor sculptures in the collection, and the Hirshhorn's grounds are maintained as an extension of the Smithsonian Gardens. In addition, they are able to work with interns and fellows to complete their annual maintenance program. Verbeek did note that it is difficult to maintain the outdoor works in such a high-traffic tourist destination, despite the presence of a permanent, on-site security guard.

In Maryland, we visited Glenstone, a private art museum which houses the largest private collection of contemporary art in the United States. Situated on private property and separated from the owner's home by a large pond, Glenstone seamlessly blends art, nature and architecture. We spoke with Sam Owens, Objects Conservator, who told us that conservators on staff work closely with living artists to use the surrounding landscape to house and enhance them, sometimes going so far as to erect custom buildings around monumental pieces and moving existing trees and plantings to meet the artists' specifications.

Although the three museums are vastly different, the landscape at each location proved to be a vital component to the success of the sculpture park. Park revitalization at NOMA and the Hirshhorn was deemed imperative to showcasing 21st-century works of art. At Glenstone, artists valued the landscape as integral to their success. Yet conservators are often at odds with landscape architects and horticulturalists, and conservators are often asked to yield when the outdoor landscape takes precedence over the needs of the sculptures. Given the emphasis placed on the environment and the sculptures' surroundings, routine maintenance is vital to the longevity of the artwork.

When we returned to NCMA, our team was invigorated by the nuances we had learned about specific treatments, the new relationships that were formed, and the need for community and holistic approaches to the treatment of outdoor sculpture, all wrapped within an ever-changing, polarizing climate. Public art won't stop climate change or end a pandemic, but it can be a source of solace and restitution for those who take the path to find it.

I am grateful to SERCA, to the members who have supported my journey as a pre-program intern and to those who trusted me with this research opportunity. At NCMA, we have built a core team; we depend on each other to be stewards of the field and we thank the colleagues at SERCA and those conservation professionals who took time away from their schedules to spend time with us and to



help with our research. I hope this will be just the beginning of a long-term research project that I can continue through and beyond my graduate school experience.

Many thanks to all of you for making that possible.

Health and Safety

All About Nitrile Gloves (Continued): Disposal

By Katie Etre

In the last newsletter, the selection of gloves was discussed. However, once these gloves are used, what happens then? How should these gloves be disposed of?

For the most part, conservators do not directly handle materials which the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) is concerned about entering the landfills. We, as conservators, rarely come in contact with contaminated blood products, radioactive waste, and arsenic and lead at high concentrations. However, we do need to be prepared in these rare cases.

Non-contaminated gloves can be disposed of in two manners. Nitrile gloves are biodegradable and can be disposed of in the trash (*How to Dispose of Nitrile Gloves*, gloves.com, 2/23/21). Although these gloves will break down in landfills, the biodeterioration of nitrile tends to be slow. To reduce conservation's impact in landfills and on the environment, nitrile gloves can also be recycled. Terracycle, Medline, and Kimberly-Clark sell recycling boxes, which are shipped back to the originating company once the recycling box is full. However, this recycling program may not be feasible for an individual institution or practice. For example, the smallest recycling box from Terracycle holds approximately 3,000 pairs of gloves. This recycling scheme may be practical for areas of larger concentrations of conservators, with multiple institutions and practices contributing to one box.

- [Disposable Gloves - Zero Waste Box™ - US \(terracycle.com\)](https://www.terracycle.com/).
- [GreenSmart Exam Glove Recycling Boxes | Medline Industries, Inc.](https://www.medline.com/green-smart-exam-glove-recycling-boxes)
- [The RightCycle™ Program | Kimberly-Clark Professional \(kcprofessional.com\)](https://www.kcprofessional.com/the-right-cycle-program).

If a conservator suspects that their gloves maybe contaminated with hazardous materials, nitrile gloves can be disposed of as hazardous waste. According to the EPA, small amounts of arsenic and lead, such as typically found on contaminated gloves, can be disposed of within the landfills. Note this statement only concerns contaminated gloves and no bulk removed hazardous materials, such as arsenic removed from taxidermy. However, in an abundance of caution and to further reduce environmental impact, contaminated gloves can be disposed of as hazardous waste.

Proper disposal of contaminated gloves should be completed in four steps:

1. Properly remove the gloves without touching the exterior of the glove with bare skin. Below is the method taught to professional rescuers through the Red Cross (American National Red Cross 2011, *Bloodborne Pathogens Training*. 1-3).

2. Place discarded gloves in a plastic bag with the top tied or in a closed container.
3. Mark on the bag or container that it contains a hazardous material. If known, note the hazardous material (i.e. arsenic).
4. Many states have facilities which can dispose of hazardous waste. See the list below for locations and for information on types and amounts of hazardous materials accepted.



Pinch glove

Pinch the palm side of one glove near your wrist. Carefully pull the glove off so that it is inside out.



Slip two fingers under glove

Hold the glove in the palm of your gloved hand. Slip two fingers under the glove at the wrist of the remaining gloved hand.



Pull glove off

Pull the glove until it comes off, inside out. The first glove should end up inside the glove you just removed.

Hazardous waste disposal:

- i. Alabama <https://adem.alabama.gov/default.cnt>
- ii. Georgia <https://epd.georgia.gov/>
- iii. Florida <https://floridadep.gov/>
- iv. Louisiana <https://www.deq.louisiana.gov/>
- v. North Carolina <https://deq.nc.gov/>
- vi. South Carolina <https://scdhec.gov/environment>
- vii. Mississippi <https://www.mdeq.ms.gov/land/waste-division/hazardouswaste/>
- viii. Tennessee <https://www.tn.gov/environment.html>

For biohazards, contact a local hospital or medical clinic.

Proper disposal of gloves will continue to protect not only a conservator's health but, at least in a small way, help to protect the environment as well.

For more information concerning hazardous waste, its definition, threshold limits for each hazardous material, and suggestions on how to further handle the hazardous waste, refer to the following links:

- [Defining Hazardous Waste: Listed, Characteristic and Mixed Radiological Wastes | US EPA](#)
- [HW Listing Reference Document - Sep 2012\(F\).pdf \(epa.gov\)](#)
- [List of Regulated Substances under the Risk Management Plan \(RMP\) Program | US EPA](#)

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 do so today. And spread the word to your colleagues!

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

Find a Conservator

If you would like to be included on the [Find a Conservator](#) page of the SERCA website, please contact: Katie Boodle, Communications Coordinator at kboodle@nedcc.org.

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! Items for inclusion in the newsletter should be directed to both Newsletter Editors:

Ephranette Brown

ephranette.brown@emory.edu

Tracey Johnson

tracey.johnson@usg.edu

SERCA's Newsletter is published three times a year in April, August, and December. Please note that articles should be sent at least two weeks prior to publication and 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.

Next issue: April 2023

Deadline for submissions: March 2023

Back Issues: <https://sercaconservation.org/serca-newsletters/>

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