

SERCA

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL
CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

paper | *books* | *paintings* | *objects* | *textiles*

ISSN: 30696623

SPRING

Volume 9

Number 1

APRIL
2026

Table of Contents

New Leadership 2

Membership 3

SERCA Newsletter Archive 3

Newsletter Submissions 3

*Beyond the Box: Stewardship
Matters* 4

*Pro tips from the Annual
Meeting* 5

*SERCA Annual Meeting
Recap* 8

*Beyond Solvents: The Role of
Biocleaning and Enzymatic
Treatments in Conservation
Practice* 9

*Another Round of
Pro Tips from the Annual
Meeting* 11

*Health and Safety Coordinator
Final Thoughts* 12

*Annual Meeting in
Images* 14



Our Annual Meeting at the Museum of the Cherokee People was a tremendous success. SERCA's Board extends its heartfelt thanks to our speakers for their insightful presentations, to all attendees for their enthusiastic participation, and to everyone who contributed to the service project for their dedication. Your energy and commitment made this gathering truly meaningful, and we are grateful to be part of such a passionate and engaged community.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Shannon Kimbro

VICE PRESIDENT

Kelly Ciociola

SECRETARY

Lucy D. Barsness

TREASURER

Brittany Dinneen

COMMUNICATIONS COORD.

Marianne Kelsey

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Amparo Escolano

HEALTH & SAFETY COORD.

Rachel Coderre

MEMBER AT LARGE

Geneva Iklé

MEMBERSHIP COORD.

Ella Andrews

NEW LEADERSHIP

Dear SERCA Members,

We're pleased to share several important updates to the SERCA Board of Directors as we move into a new chapter for the organization. Our President, Shannon Kimbro, has generously agreed to continue in her role, providing valued continuity, experience, and leadership in the year ahead. At the same time, we are excited to welcome new voices to the board: the Health & Safety Coordinator position is now held by Rachel Coderre, and the Member-at-Large role has been filled by Geneva Iklé. We are also delighted to reinstate the role of Membership Coordinator, now led by Ella Andrews, which will focus on strengthening connections within our growing community, supporting member engagement, and helping ensure that SERCA remains responsive to the needs and interests of its members.

We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to Kathryn Etre and Tahe Zalal as they conclude their terms on the board. Their dedication, time, and thoughtful contributions have helped shape SERCA in meaningful ways, leaving a lasting impact on the organization and its community. We are deeply appreciative of their service.

Please join us in thanking our outgoing board members and welcoming our new and continuing leadership as we look forward to another productive, collaborative, and inspiring year.

With appreciation,

The Newsletter Editor



Outgoing and incoming SERCA Board of Directors—honoring those who have served and welcoming those stepping into leadership.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Payments now available online via PayPal

Renewing your membership is now easier than ever—no more mailing checks! You can also register and pay for workshops online. Please remember to submit both the registration form and payment to complete your renewal. If you haven't renewed yet, take a moment to do so today—and feel free to share this with your colleagues!

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

SERCA NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

Explore our archive of past SERCA newsletters for valuable insights, case studies, and member contributions. Catch up on issues you may have missed!

<https://sercaconservation.org/sercanewsletters/>

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Got an exciting project, internship, or workshop to share? We want to see what's happening in your studio!

Please send your updates to our Newsletter Editor, at newsletter@sercaconservation.org.

We are also currently looking for a Co-Editor to join the team—if you're interested in helping shape our publication, we'd love to hear from you!

Submission Guidelines:

Deadlines: The newsletter is published in April, August, and December. Please submit your articles at least two weeks prior to the publication month.

Images: While there is no strict limit, we recommend including 4 to 6 JPEG images to accompany your story.

Editing: Please note that the editors reserve the right to copy-edit submissions for length and formatting.

TRIANGLE CONSERVATORS HAPPY HOUR

Let's make a toast to spring at the next NC Triangle Conservators Happy Hour! Join us for a relaxed and welcoming gathering where colleagues, friends, and families can celebrate the season together.

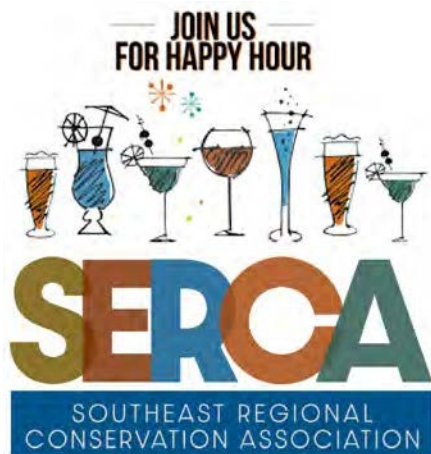
All are welcome—including those in conservation-adjacent fields, as well as professionals and enthusiasts from museums, archives, and beyond. Partners, spouses, and kids are encouraged to come along too.

When: April 7th at 5:30pm until...

Where: Boxyard RTP, 900 Park Offices Dr, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Boxyard has lots of food and drink options which you can read about [here](#).

If you would like to be included for future notifications, please add your information [here](#).



BEYOND THE BOX: STEWARDSHIP MATTERS



By Amanda Nuckles,
*Intern at South Florida Art
Conservation, West Palm
Beach, FL.
Leonora Weaver Scholarship
recipient.*

I had the opportunity to attend the SERCA 2026 Annual Meeting at the Museum of the Cherokee People thanks to the generous support of the Lenora Weaver Scholarship. As an emerging professional, having access to this gathering of conservators from the Southeast was a valuable introduction to the field I hope to grow within. The annual meeting had a unique theme of “Out of the Box”, which evoked the discussion of inspired ideas from conservators in both private and institutional practice. Being hosted at the Museum of the Cherokee People, Laura Elliff Cruz’s virtual keynote “Resonating Change Through Collections Stewardship” opened the meeting’s relevance to culturally significant collections and how conservators have an evolving relationship to practices of repatriation and stewardship. Elliff Cruz guided the attendees through the Indigenous Collections Care (ICC) guide and the practical and ethical dimensions of repatriation work, including how NAGPRA guidelines influence institutional stewardship. The Director of Collections & Exhibitions at the Museum of the Cherokee People, Evan Mathis, expanded on these guidelines and shared the museum’s ongoing efforts of repatriating culturally sensitive materials and creating an environment that genuinely reflects the values and worldview of the Cherokee people. The service project brought these conversations

into hands-on focus. Attendees were able to take part in creating individualized archival housing for objects in the museum’s storage collection; each box or tray was crafted to the individual and unique needs of specific objects. While this isn’t a novel concept in conservation, as we understand fragile or irregularly shaped objects benefit from custom support, the principle of individualized care at the Museum of



the Cherokee People extends well beyond the physical. The boxes were crafted from acid free corrugated cardboard and the objects were fitted inside with Ethafoam® lined with Tyvek®, the final touch was a window of plexiglass which allows not only for stewards to look in, but also for the objects to look out. This detail reflects an indigenous understanding of cultural objects not as inert artifacts but as living presences deserving of dignity, orientation, and awareness of their surroundings. Across many indigenous communities, objects are understood as relational and connected to the people, places, and ceremonies they originate from in ways that honor that continuity. At the Museum of the Cherokee People, this philosophy is not a curatorial feature but a foundational principle, and one that shaped



A box crafted to house a Cherokee doll

every housing decision made during the service project. As institutions move towards more culturally responsive collections care, the field is evolving in ways that reflect a genuine

willingness to center the values and voices of the communities we serve.

For those of us trained in Western conservation frameworks, this work invites a meaningful expansion of what we consider the best practice. The ICC guide and broader NAGPRA repatriation process are prompting museums and conservators alike to ask whose values are encoded in our housing decisions, our access policies, and our treatment approaches. As conservators, we are uniquely positioned to either support or hinder that shift depending on our willingness to listen, learn, and adapt. The conservation community's strength lies in this kind of exchange, and gatherings like the SERCA Annual Meeting are a reminder that evolving our understanding of cultural collections is a shared responsibility that benefits from every perspective in the room.

Again, thanks for the opportunity, SERCA! It was a great learning experience

PRO TIPS AND TRICKS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

By Stephanie Watkins,

Watkins Conservation, Paper and Photographic Materials, Atlanta, GA.

MAGNETIZED DRY ERASE BOARDS

Magnetized dry erase boards can serve as reusable white table-tops over other work areas or set on sawhorses, providing additional temporary extra work spaces for small studios.

When done, they can be stored vertically. Some have handles on the sides for easy moving.

Foldable versions are available. They have easy clean-up surfaces of water-based and some synthetic adhesives. Magnetized versions can be used for flattening using magnets, also.

SOURCES: Office supply stores. Available in

large sizes like 4 x 6 feet. Depending on size, prices range from \$50 to \$250, before tax and shipping if not purchased in-store (Feb 2026).

Idea from: Ann Baldwin, private paper conservator, CT (2024)

SILICONE RELEASE BOARDS & PAPERS

Conservators know about re-usable silicone release Mylar films and perhaps, dry mount release papers. Less well known in conservation circles are commercially made silicone-release boards. Boards are recommended for use as a cover sheet or release folder that protects a dry mount press platen from any overhang of adhesives and from plate marks when partial, sequential heating is required on oversized materials. The boards have a protective overlay

PRO TIPS AND TRICKS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING (cont.)

of a white, gray, or blue-gray paper coated with silicone on one or both sides. Like sheets, the boards can be re-used many times.

Silicone-release boards can be used in conservation (paintings, paper, photographic materials, textiles) for spraying or brushing out synthetic adhesives on boards, papers or fabrics.

Coated materials can also be left to dry flat under tension, also.

Water-soluble adhesives tend to ball up on the silicone surface. Wipe up wet adhesives or leave to dry adhesives that retain cohesiveness as a film. Once dry, peel off the residual adhesive film for future re-activation or toss.

Yet sometimes, commercial boards have a texture that is not suitable to your needs.

Consider making your own release boards to meet your specific application(s) using single-sided silicone release papers dry mounted (or otherwise adhered) to boards of your choosing. See the short article from framing and dry mount expert, Chris A. Paschke, March 2008, found here:

<https://www.designsinkart.com/library/M-InHouseBoards200803.htm>

Commercial sources for D&K products:

Available in 40"x60" as single boards and 32"x40" as 5 boards per pack. (February 2026 prices given.)

1. B&H Photo: 32"x40" 5x pack [BH # DKRB32405 MFR # SE-938] = \$122.50 + tax and shipping; \$47 for 40"x 60" board [BH #DKRB4060] + tax and shipping.
2. United Manufacturing Supplies: [Part #270] 32"x40" 5 pack = \$123.23 plus tax and shipping; [Part #271] 40"x60" single board = \$38.12 plus tax and shipping.
3. Blick Art Material: "Expressions" [23401-

1006] 32"x40" 5 pack = \$138 plus tax and shipping.

Idea from: Maybe Thomas (Tom) Edmondson, private paper and photographic materials conservator, MO (circa mid-1990's); Lyzanne Gann, private paper and photographic materials conservator, TX (2008); Commercially been used in the dry mounting sphere since introduction, circa 1970's.

DRY-ICE

Sometimes when things are adhered together you need to change the glass transition temperature of one or both of the attached materials to break the bond of attachment. Applying targeted heat often achieves this goal. Yet, the opposite, freezing, can also work.

The method of thermal/cold shock/differential expansion or contraction using dry ice over a plastic or Mylar layer has been used (at least since the 1980's) for removing glazing (glass and Plexiglas/acrylic sheeting) and plastic wrapping materials (High Density Polyethylene, Dartek) from varnishes on both painting and prints and from soft modern printing inks. Photographic materials conservator, Barbara Lemmen, experimented with this method circa



2015, yet had very inconsistent and limited success releasing gelatin photographs adhered to glazing. CAUTION: This procedure creates high shear stresses, that breaks the bond, so can cause micro-cracking of the surface in the process. This method usually works best for releasing attachments when they are NON-continuous, spots smaller than a dime or quarter, or surfaces with some texture (surface hills and valleys) like varnished canvases might have.

Instead of dry-ice, a can of Chef's Rubber Magic Freeze Spray, used by culinary chefs for releasing chocolates and pastries from molds, is an easier, safer to use alternative. Off Wikipedia: "Chef Rubber's Magic Freeze Spray formula = CF₃CH₂F [1,1,1,2 Tetrafluoroethane] is a hydrocarbon and halo-alkane refrigerant with thermodynamic properties similar to R-12 but with insignificant ozone depletion potential and lower 100-year global warming potential. Boiling point of -26.3°C at atmospheric pressure."

A clear protective inert plastic sheet (thin Mylar or other) is still required over the attached spots to ensure the coolant material physically remains isolated from the item. A barrier sheet also facilitates easier cleanup. A clear barrier layer allows visual accuracy during application. Using the spray, the location of the cooling can be pinpointed without the use of heavy gloves needed for dry ice safety, although eye and skin PPE protection are both still recommended with spray use. Use of a small plastic tube on the spray nozzle can direct the spray even more precisely.

Sources:

Dry ice is usually sold by the pound (\$1-3/lb.) at grocery stores.

<https://shop.chefrubber.com/item/703003S/Magic-Freeze-Spray/>

The spray is more expensive at about \$35 for a

15oz can plus tax and ground shipping only (from Texas or Nevada, Feb 2026). Colleagues outside North America should seek similar local products as air shipping is prohibited.

Dry-Ice Idea from: Dr. Jennifer Mass, written in an unpublished student report by Judy Dion, when a WUDPAC paintings conservation student (2002); Buffalo Art Conservation, Paintings Department, (1988). Chef's Rubber Magic Freeze Spray Idea from: NYC area: Clara Rojas Sebesta, paper conservator, Whitney Museum (2020-21); Rachel Danzing, paper conservator, Brooklyn Museum of Art (2025)



CAT WHISKERS AS MICRO TOOLS!

A naturally occurring earth-friendly material, cat whiskers are made of keratin that is finer and more flexible than other discarded keratin materials, such as porcupine quills. Cat whiskers are more robust than dog whiskers, also. Cat whiskers possess good rigidity with a little springiness, and hold their shape well. They are available in black or white (choose one with contrast to your background), and come in varying curved shapes and lengths.

PRO TIPS AND TRICKS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING (cont.)

They are about the same diameter as a small sewing needle so fit into pin vices for use.

PREPARATION: Gently wash cat whiskers with soap and water before using. Once dry, put them in a pin vise: follicle end out. While hollow, whisker exteriors have a little “grippiness”. Shape the follicle end with a micro-scalpel as needed.

USES: Cat whiskers are good for “poking” things under the microscope. Great for removing fly specs and excretions from surfaces, and also removing thin, light corrosion off soft metals. Cat whiskers are much softer than titanium, brass, or bamboo tools currently used for such work.

SOURCES:

Cat whiskers are ethically sourced from your pet cats when their whiskers naturally fall out. Alternatively, both Etsy and Ebay sell cat whiskers on line (for wiccan potions and felted

toys) for about \$10-12 for 5 whiskers including shipping, tax likely in addition (Feb 2026).

Pin vices are easily available from:

Watch and jewelry making tool sources such as Esslinger (Bergeon Swiss & Horotec);

Specialized tool distributors such as Micro-mark, Microcenter; McMaster-Carr, Starrett, Woodcraft, or Grainger;

Science equipment suppliers such as Fisher Scientific or Thomas Scientific.

Choose a pin vice that will hold something as small as a #80 micro bit, approximately 0.013 inches or 0.2 mm without the drill spinning capacity. Cost is about \$10-30 plus tax. (Feb 2026).

Idea from: Cat(herine) E. Stephens, paper, book, and photographic materials conservator, Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY, and “Barry the Cat”, AIC-BPG, May 2025: https://www.conservation-wiki.com/w/images/e/e8/Cat-Stephens_AIC2025_BPG-Tips-Session.pdf

SERCA 2026 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP



By Jacob Levan,

Conservation Technician at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC.

Leonora Weaver Scholarship recipient.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend the 2026 SERCA Annual Meeting in Cherokee, NC. This was not only my first SERCA meeting, but my first museum conference in general. It was a pleasure to meet and connect with conservation professionals from across the Southeast, many of whom I had heard of, but had not yet had the pleasure of meeting. Since the Conservation Lab at the North Carolina

Museum of Art is currently under renovation, attending SERCA provided a particularly valuable chance for me to engage directly with active treatments, research, and conversations in the field that I might otherwise be missing out on during this period.

The Annual Meeting opened with a fascinating keynote presentation by Laura Eliff Cruz, who provided an overview of the development of the upcoming Indigenous Collections Care (ICC) Guide. Her discussion emphasized the importance of collaboration with Indigenous communities and the need for culturally informed approaches to conservation practice. I found this especially meaningful, as it highlighted how conservation work extends beyond technical treatment into ethics, stewardship, and

relationship-building. I was amazed by the wide variety of projects presented over the course of the meeting. On Friday alone, I learned about treatments involving sugar-soaked canoes, stucco murals, historic globes, Thanjavur paintings, and Colonial-era furniture. Each presentation demonstrated the creativity and problem-solving skills required of conservators. I found Saturday's sessions focused on hazardous materials in collections to be particularly interesting. The cautionary stories shared by Jennifer French, including cases involving dormant Trench Foot infections and even live explosives, highlighted the importance of proper safety protocols when handling objects from museum collections – even when they may appear innocuous. The demonstrations of hazardous materials testing by Brittany Dinneen provided practical insight into identifying and mitigating risks in collections environments. These sessions reinforced how essential it is for conservators to be prepared for unexpected hazards. At the SERCA Business Meeting, I was honored to be recognized as a recipient of the Leonora Weaver Scholarship. This moment affirmed my

commitment to the field of conservation and made me feel connected to the SERCA community. I found Sunday morning's Tips and Tricks session to be both helpful and enjoyable. It was entertaining to hear presenters share their experiences, but it was also interesting to see the creative and resourceful solutions conservators have developed in response to challenges in conservation. These practical insights are something I will carry forward into my own work.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the SERCA Scholarship Committee for selecting me for this honor, as well as to those who contribute to the Leonora Weaver Scholarship. I would not have been able to attend the SERCA Annual Meeting without this support. It is incredibly meaningful to see SERCA continue to invest in emerging conservation professionals, and I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to learn, connect, and grow within this community. Thank you to all the SERCA Members that attended the Annual Meeting for welcoming me with open arms. I look forward to continuing to grow my professional network in the Southeast.

BEYOND SOLVENTS: THE ROLE OF BIOCLEANING AND ENZYMATIC TREATMENTS IN CONSERVATION PRACTICE

By Amparo Escolano,

South Florida Art Conservation, West Palm Beach, FL

Conservators can use specially selected bacteria to clean artworks, targeting residues accumulated on the surface while leaving the original material untouched.

In a process known as biocleaning, harmless microorganisms are applied to affected areas

where they selectively digest the deposited substances, without altering the artwork itself. Once the cleaning is complete, the microbes should be safely deactivated and carefully removed. The selectivity of the cleaning action depends mostly on the specific bacterial strain, the chemistry of the substrate, and the application conditions.

Biocleaning has been successfully used on

BEYOND SOLVENTS: THE ROLE OF BIOCLEANING... (CONT.)

frescoes, stone, and metals, offering a well controlled, low-impact alternative to traditional chemical cleaning.

Enzymes are also used in conservation, but there is a clear difference between biocleaning and enzymatic cleaning: the first uses living organisms, while the second uses isolated proteins without any living cells.

Biocleaning uses living microorganisms (bacteria or fungi) to remove unwanted substances. The microbes metabolize the material to be removed (e.g., nitrates, glue residues, or pollution crusts and salts). After cleaning, the microbes are neutralized and removed. On the other hand, enzymatic cleaning uses isolated enzymes (proteins produced by microbes or other organisms). The enzyme breaks down the target material chemically (e.g., proteases break down protein-based grime). There are no live cells or organisms involved, there is no growth, reproduction, or metabolism.

All biocleaning relies on microbial metabolism. Enzymes are biological proteins, but using them is not biocleaning, it is a controlled chemical alternative rather than a biological one. Conservators use enzymes when they want the precision of biocleaning without introducing live bacteria, especially in sensitive environments like museums or libraries.

Together, microbes and isolated enzymes give conservators a precise, low-impact toolkit for surface cleaning, one that works with the chemistry of the artwork rather than against it.

It is necessary to emphasize that neither biocleaning nor enzymatic cleaning should be approached without careful preliminary analysis: identifying the substrate, characterizing the contaminants, and assessing the condition of

the object. This is not a requirement specific to biological methods, but a fundamental principle of conservation that applies equally to solvents, aqueous solutions, and every other tool in the kit.

Conventional solvent and aqueous treatments remain the primary tools of surface cleaning in conservation, tried, tested, and irreplaceable for the majority of situations. Biocleaning and enzymatic approaches are valuable additions to our toolkit, but not yet a substitute. Like any other method, they carry their own risks: selectivity depends on choosing the right organism or enzyme for the specific substrate and contaminant, and incorrect applications can cause as much damage as an ill-chosen solvent. What they offer is a more targeted option for cases where conventional treatments cannot properly target the substance to be removed. They are a complement to established practice, not a challenge to it.

References:

- Pilar Bosch Roig, Jose Luis Regidor Ros, Rosa Montes Estellés, Biocleaning of nitrate alterations on wall paintings by *Pseudomonas stutzeri*, *International Biodeterioration & Biodegradation*, Volume 84, 2013, 266-274, ISSN 0964-8305, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibiod.2012.09.009>.
- Ranalli G, Zanardini E. Biocleaning on Cultural Heritage: new frontiers of microbial biotechnologies. *J Appl Microbiol*. 2021 Aug;131(2):583-603. doi: 10.1111/jam.14993. Epub 2021 Jan 28. PMID: 33404159.
- Panella, E., Giovannone, C., Bartolini, M., & Fondi, V. (2019). *Biotechnology in the Conservation Field: Removal of Sulphates Using Bacteria and Bioconsolidation of Paintings and Stuccos. Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage*, 19(1), 157–175. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1973-9494/10348>
- Cremonesi, P., Casoli, A., Enzymes as tools for conservation of works of art, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, Volume 50, 2021, Pages 73-87, ISSN 1296-2074, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2021.06.005>.
- Palla, F. (2016). *Blue-Biotechnology and Biocleaning of Historic-Artistic Artifacts. Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage*, 16(1), 185–196. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1973-9494/7169>
- Morlotti, M.; Forlani, F.; Saccani, I.; Sansonetti, A. *Evaluation of Enzyme Agarose Gels for Cleaning Complex Substrates in*

Cultural Heritage. Gels 2024, 10, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/gels10010014>

• Gherardi F, Turyanska L, Ferrari E, Weston N, Fay MW, Colston BJ. Immobilized Enzymes on Gold Nanoparticles: From Enhanced Stability to Cleaning of Heritage Textiles. ACS Appl Bio Mater. 2019 Nov 18;2(11):5136-5143. doi: 10.1021/acsabm.9b00802. Epub 2019 Nov 4. PMID: 35021456.

• Cremonesi, P., Mecklenburg, M., Charola, A.E., and Koestler, P.J., In Rigid Gels and Enzyme Cleaning / Paolo Cremonesi, 179–83. Washington DC (United States): Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2013.

ANOTHER ROUND OF PRO TIPS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

By Geneva Iklé,

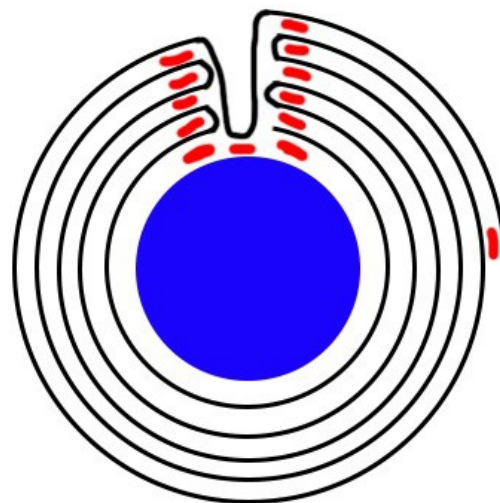
West Lake Art Conservation Center, Skaniateles, NY

POOL NOODLES: A LOW BUDGET METHOD FOR TRANSPORTING ROLLED WALL MAPS

I devised a low budget method for transporting a rolled wall map with wooden dowels and moldings that allows the client to get the map safely in the car and home where it will hang on the wall using an inexpensive, inflatable pool noodle.

Amazon sells packs of 6 inflatable pool noodles that are 59" long and 6" in diameter. Make sure to plan ahead because these aren't available during the winter months. Layers of bubble wrap are taped to the pool noodle with double sided

tape so that a recessed area is created to cradle the wooden dowel at the top of the map and then the map can be temporarily but safely rolled onto a "tube" without the wooden dowel creating an unevenness in the rolling that could distort the newly treated map. The map is interleaved in glassine and wrapped around the outside with plastic sheeting or Ethafoam and then tied with linen tape. Once the owner brings the map back home, the map can be unrolled and hung on the wall and the owner gets a free pool noodle. This can also work for tapestries on a wooden dowel as well. Here's a diagram of the cross-section of the bubble wrap around the pool noodle. The red lines are the placement of the double sided tape strips.



Blue Circle: Noodle

Black Lines: Bubble wrap snaking around the noodle

Red Lines: Double sided tape

ANOTHER ROUND OF PRO TIPS... (cont.)

USING DENTAL TOOL CODING RINGS TO CATEGORIZE TOOLS

These bands are small silicone rubber bands that come in a number of colors and were originally intended to code dental tools using various combinations of the colors to differentiate the various uses for the tool in a dental office. However, they can also be used to code or categorize the tools used by a conservator. Mostly I have used just single colors but more recently I have started using combinations of colors to identify which of my inpainting brushes I can use with solvents and which should not be used with solvents.

Picture of the set I use which I got on Amazon and some of my tools with the bands on them



HEALTH AND SAFETY COORDINATOR FINAL THOUGHTS

By Kathryn Etre,

*Mississippi Department of Archives and History,
Jackson MS*

Annual meetings, especially ones as intimate and collaborative as SERCA always encourages new thoughts and ideas. Ever since our Cherokee, NC meeting came to a close, I have been reflecting on a few health and safety tips inspired by the conference. Below are some of my take aways.

- Being surrounded by such incredible nature can do one a world of good by reducing stress hormones, restoring mental energy, boosting the immune system, and increasing creativity.
- Don't reuse gloves when handling boots full of athlete's foot because you can and will create a fungal infection on your hands.



- Conservators and corrugated board = lots of very deep paper cuts. Make sure you always

have Band-Aids available.

- Conservators can, however with caution, handle small amounts of alcohol – whether whiskey or solvent- and fire –whether fire pits or hot tools – at the same time.
- Don't play with bombs around flammable chemicals. No matter how cool this chemical/device/weapon is, bomb squad, please get the bombs far, far away from the museum building.
- Don't bring wild animals –especially elk- into your hotel rooms (as warned by my hotel staff) or your laboratory. They may be cute but are not worth the damage.
- Conservators are always looking for cool new swag/tools, even if we semi-invade the conferences for postal workers.
- No matter how clear you think instructions are you need to make certain that steps are idiot proof during laboratory construction. For example, no, fume hoods are NOT chemical storage, yes, all parts in new equipment boxes needs to be used, and yes, the fume hoods do need to actually function.
- My cats can actually be useful other than being fluffy overlords. Their whiskers can be fantastic micro-tools. Luckily, since cats naturally shed their whiskers, no blood needs to be shed in order to collect these whiskers.
- Based on the surveys, hanger is a thing. Conservators are very happy when they are well fed.

All joking aside, I have enjoyed my time as SERCA's Health and Safety officer for the last four years. This position has helped me to strengthen and grow my own Health and Safety knowledge as I prepared articles to share in SERCA's newsletter. I have been proud to contribute to the conservation field and to assist in the organization of the last four annual meetings. I thank all of you for your trust in placing (and keeping) me in this position.

However, you are all in great hands with Rachel, who will bring the Health and Safety position to new heights. Thank you again and see you at future SERCA meetings.

Best,

Katie

Feel free to come visit me in Jackson!

Cooper, L MD, 6/5/2024. Embrace the Healing Power of Nature. John Hopkins Center for Health Equity.



