



**CHARTING
THE
UNKNOWN**

**MPMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 2, 2020
ONLINE**

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TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.”

– HENRY FORD

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Welcome!

To say I am happy to welcome you to our 2020 MPMA Annual Conference, is probably the understatement of the year. I am absolutely thrilled that we are able to offer our conference in our mostly traditional MPMA style, albeit with some limitations.



Earlier this year, it was doubtful if we would be able to hold our beloved gathering. Our deliberations regarding the conference have morphed and evolved since March, ranging from the idea of holding a hybrid (in-person and online) conference, to no conference at all, and then finally to offering an online version. Our wonderful Sioux Falls host committee, led by Bill Hoskins,

graciously agreed to postpone the physical conference in their beautiful city until October 2021. We have also asked those presenters whose sessions had already been accepted to join us in Sioux Falls in 2021.

What will an online MPMA conference look like? How can MPMA possibly offer all the great educational sessions, networking opportunities, and fun that our members have come to expect from our conferences? These are questions you may be asking, and ones the board, staff, and planning committees have been exploring in great depth. After careful consideration, MPMA planners decided to adhere, as closely as possible, to the features of our in-person conference that we all know and love.

We are using Zoom for delivery, which appears to currently be the most user-friendly platform. The only other major break from tradition in format will be our use of themed days instead of a variety of types of sessions presented each day. Our themes consist of EMP, Education, Collections, and Administration. The REAL stage will be continually open to members, and is intended to function somewhat like our exhibit hall in the sense that we will do fun giveaways, feature vendors, tour virtual exhibits, and interview interesting people. Be sure to join us for our Evening Events, including; trivia, pet parades, show and tell, bingo, and 'Flabbergasting Tales of the Improbable and Unexpected'. Each day will feature a keynote session dedicated to issues and information that affect museums.

As we navigate and chart the unknown through these challenging times, I hope you will take away inspiration, hope, and reassurance from this gathering of friends and colleagues. As always, thank you for your dedication to and support of MPMA.

All my best,

Heidi Vaughn
President,
Mountain-Plains Museums Association



MPMA ONLINE 2020
SEPTEMBER 29



10:00am Conference Orientation

Featuring: The Emerging Museum Professionals Committee (EMP)

The EMP Committee welcomes everyone to MPMA's first online conference.

We will share tips on navigating the conference and ways in which you can engage your fellow attendees. This will also provide you with the opportunity to understand how to navigate the software in advance of live interactive sessions.

11:00am R.E.A.L. Stage Break

11:30am Reinventing Museum Studies Internships

Featuring: Susan Rowe, Education Program Manager, Lubbock Lake Landmark, Lubbock, TX

Heidi Vaughn, Director, Laboratory of History Museum, Edmond, OK

Due to Covid-19, many museums have had to come up with creative ways to offer internships to museum studies students. Hear from two MPMA members who had to quickly create online internship opportunities in the spring of 2020. Half of this session will be devoted to audience members sharing their strategies, including online platforms and tools that have assisted them in offering quality internships.

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MPMA ONLINE 2020
SEPTEMBER 29



12:30pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break

1:00pm Curating Your Personal Contentment

Featuring: Kristin Martin, Museum of World Treasures, Wichita, KS
Stefani S. Pendergast, Denver Museum of Art, Denver, CO
Averie Shaughnessy-Comfort, Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums

Professionals with experience in human resources work and with personal employment struggle will discuss common employee satisfaction issues and take a positive, solution-based approach to helping employees help themselves. Attendees will be presented with a worksheet to help them access multiple elements of their current situation, confront their feelings about it, and prioritize areas where they feel action will bring them further peace in their professional lives.

2:00pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break



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MPMA ONLINE 2020
SEPTEMBER 29



2:30pm

Student Poster Research Sessions

This year, we will take a slightly different approach to our annual Student Poster Session. Instead of posters, students will present short PowerPoint presentations regarding their topics. There will be an opportunity for audience Q&A at the end of the session to give our students a chance to discuss their work, as they would normally do during this session. Please plan to attend and support our upcoming museum professionals!

3:30pm

R.E.A.L Stage Break

4:00pm

Keynote: #HashtagTheCowboy: How a Global Pandemic Became an Opportunity to do Something Different

Featuring: Seth Spillman, Chief Marketing Officer for the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

Seth Spillman, will discuss how closing the museum and “handing over” social media to a complete novice created a marketing win in the midst of a global pandemic. Hear how it all started with a fun idea worth defending, how marketing has pivoted since and what takeaways could be helpful as museum marketers continue to navigate this crazy, dumpster fire of a year.

5:00pm

R.E.A.L Stage Break

6:30pm

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MPMA ONLINE 2020
SEPTEMBER 30



10:00am Roundtable Discussion: Ask an Educator

Featuring: Donna Merkt, Director of Visitor Experience, Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Museum

Welcome educators, emerging museum professionals, and those occasionally wearing the educator hat! Do you have questions about audience engagement, field trips, home school programs, evaluations, or outreach? Join us for this round table and have your pressing questions addressed by the members of the EdCom leadership team and your colleagues from tiny to large museums. Connect with other educators prior to moving through the day's sessions, build your network, and share your experiences with others.

11:00am R.E.A.L. Stage Break

11:30am Programs on a Dime

Featuring: Lauren Hunley, Community Historian, Western Heritage Center, Billings, MT and

Annie Black, Director of Programs and Volunteers, Dallas Holocaust and Civil Rights Museum, Dallas, TX

Educational programs are a key output for most museums, but how do you develop successful and engaging offerings with limited resources? Hear about proven programs produced on a budget and get some tips to create your own successful program 'on the cheap'.



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MPMA ONLINE 2020
SEPTEMBER 30



12:30pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break

1:00pm **Teaching About Difficult Topics**

Brought to you by: **condit**

Featuring: Anna Studstill, Director of Education
Edmond Historical Society & Museum, OK

Dr. Charlotte Decoster, Director of Education and Claire Robinson, Museum Educator
Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, TX

Our museums host exhibits and programs on many different subjects, and some of these topics can be uncomfortable and difficult for us to address. Join us for this session about sharing and teaching tough topics. Learn techniques and recommendations from museums around the region who teach on subjects such as the Holocaust, Segregation in a small town, and other tough topics.

2:00pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break

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3:30pm
4:00pm

R.E.A.L Stage Break

Keynote: The History Relevance Campaign

Featuring: Tim Grove, Independent Public Historian, Grove History Consulting, VA
Merilee Mostov, Director of Exhibits and Engagement, Bainbridge Island Historical Museum, WA

Dani Stuckle, Education Outreach Coordinator, State Historical Society of North Dakota, and

Allison Wickens, George Washington's Mount Vernon, VA,

The critical role that history museums can play in connecting the past to the present can present challenges and obstacles that may seem insurmountable. This session will introduce you to the tools and network created by History Relevance designed to support history and cultural institutions in making an impact in their communities.

5:00pm

R.E.A.L Stage Break

6:30pm

Trivia Night / Pet Parade

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MPMA ONLINE 2020
OCTOBER 1



10:00am Roundtable Discussion: Collections Swapmeet

Featuring: The Registrar's Committee (RC-MPMA)

Much as we wish, no one has the perfect collections storage. We all do collections storage on a budget. That budget may have been cut even more by the COVID crisis, producing a need for more creative storage ideas. Join this informal meeting to discuss your experiences and ask your questions. Share “secrets” and in-house, do-it-yourself tips. Share what has and hasn’t worked, and what you want to try. Recharge with new ideas, give new life to your collections management projects, and (re)connect with others doing similar work.

11:00am R.E.A.L. Stage Break

11:30am Advocating for Collections and Staff

Featuring: Mattie Barlow, Archives Manager & Registrar, Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Museum and
and Casey Seger, Registrar, Great Plains Art Museum, Lincoln, NE

What are some strategies to inform museum leadership and staff in departments of development, marketing, events, and public programming about the importance of caring for the museum’s collections, the time and resources needed? How can archives and collections departments collaborate with other museum departments to realize its goals of accessibility and relevancy? Outside of the museum, what are ways to educate about the importance of preserving historical and artistic museum collections to museum members, visitors, and social media followers? How do we balance the time devoted to advocacy and the time needed for collections projects? These are some of the questions about different aspects of advocating for collections and collections staff in this panel discussion.



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MPMA ONLINE 2020
OCTOBER 1



12:30pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break

1:00pm Historic House Museums in the Age of Covid

Monta Lee Dakin, Retired Executive Director, MPMA

How are the “successful” house museums profiled in the recently published book, *Re-imagining Historic House Museums: New Approaches and Proven Solutions*, doing during the pandemic? Are they still successful? We’ll take a look at how they, and other examples, are surviving today and if their success during normal times has been sustainable in this Age of Covid. We also want to hear how your museum is doing.

2:00pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break

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2:30pm

Lightning Talks

The “Lightning Talks” are our online version of traditional Poster Sessions - where we share short-form presentations with an academic or professional focus. Each presenter will make brief remarks along with an accompanying powerpoint . The format provides an introduction for people who may not have presented in this format and want to present new research.

R.E.A.L. Stage:

Behind the Scenes Virtual Edition: Collections Storage Around the Region

We are bringing back our popular RC-MPMA Behind-the-Scenes tour during this virtual conference! We have compiled several museums’ collections storage videos for you to enjoy, not just the single tour we could provide annually in our host city. Many of us love peeking behind-the-scenes at other museums so this is your opportunity to see multiple at one time! Please join us to see the creative solutions to collections storage challenges, get ideas for your institutions, and ask questions to those institutions participating. This tour is made possible by RC-MPMA.

3:30pm

R.E.A.L Stage Break

4:00pm

Keynote: Caring for Collections

John E. Simmons, Author / Museum Consultant
Caring for collections is a practice that is as old as the collecting of objects, but the way collections have been managed and has changed significantly over time. Examining the history of collections work can help us determine how museums in the future will be different and how this will affect the management and care of the objects they hold.





MPMA ONLINE 2020
OCTOBER 1



5:00pm

R.E.A.L Stage Break

6:30pm

Flabbergasting Tales of the Improbable and Unexpected

Museums are pillars of the community, proud bastions of our culture and heritage, inspiring greatness for future generations and then...some drunk person falls down the stairs...or...a kid pukes on the interactives. We all have those stories...ya know the ones...the ones that are terrifying in the moment but once the crisis has been averted, you go home with a hilarity inducing "you won't believe what happened today" anecdote. We once had a nursing home group touring the building when the power went out all over town. With the elevator no longer working, several of the ladies chose to politely wait for the handsome young firemen who showed up to carry the wheel-chair bound down the stairs. You go Granny! You got a whopper sure to leave everyone in stitches? Bring it! Join us for this evening session where you can swap yarns with your colleagues. BYOB as we kick back, relax, and chat about how not glamorous and sometimes downright bizarre the museum field can be. Best/worst...or rather, the most side-splitting tale wins bragging rights and the most sincere sympathy from your peers, as we wipe the tears from our eyes and send silent prayers thanking (whomever) that it didn't happen to us. If you can't attend the session but don't want to miss the chance to share your humdinger, submit your stories to erinbrown@okhistory.org Subject: Flabbergasting Tales and we'll share it for you. BUT, "Ladies and gentlemen: the story you are about to [share] is true. [Be sure that] Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent."

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MPMA ONLINE 2020
OCTOBER 2



10:00am Roundtable Discussion: Directors

Featuring: Steve Friesen, Director, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Retired, CO
Amy Loch, Director, Wyandotte County Museum, KS
Peter Seibert, Executive Director, Buffalo Bill Center for the West, WY
Jay Smith, Director, South Dakota State Museum, SD

Join MPMA museum directors from across the region for a candid discussion on the current state of museums and moving forward in a COVID-19 world. We will tackle tough questions facing museums in today's current climate. Bring your best questions for a lively discussion with the panel.

11:00am R.E.A.L. Stage Break

11:30am Responding to Emergencies Brought to you by: **M. CATTON & CO.**

Featuring: Jason Harris, Director, Chisholm Trail Museum, Duncan, OK
Libby Krecek, Membership Coordinator, Lauritzen Botanical Gardens, Omaha, NE
Donna Merkt, Director of Museum Experience, Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Museum

Join us for a conversation discussing emergency response to natural and people-based disasters. This panel session will explore how emergency services respond to disasters, how organizations have responded to a variety of people-based and natural emergencies, and what you can do to prepare by planning in advance.

12:30pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break

1:00pm Development 101: How to Raise Funds for Your Organization During Extraordinary Times....

Featuring: Ken Busby, Executive Director & CEO, Route 66 Alliance, Tulsa, OK

This session will discuss development best practices including donor cultivation, grant writing, board development, longer-term funding strategies, and special events, with a focus on strategies that address a challenging fundraising environment.

2:00pm R.E.A.L. Stage Break



MPMA ONLINE 2020 OCTOBER 2



2:30pm

Discussion: Memorialization Revisited

Featuring: Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr., Cherokee Nation
Jason Harris, Chisholm Trail Museum, Duncan, OK
Kevin Levin, Civil War Memory

Gain perspective from two individuals who have deep background and unique experience with the history and ramifications of confederate memorialization. Principal Chief Hoskins has dealt first-hand with the presence of a confederate monument in front of the Cherokee Nation Museum, and led the charge to reclaim the narrative of that space. Kevin Levin has spent years researching, tracking, and sharing information about the movement to memorialize the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. He will provide context for installation and an update on efforts to remove and, sometimes, repurpose those objects.

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MPMA ONLINE 2020
OCTOBER 2



3:30pm R.E.A.L Stage Break

4:00pm Keynote: Inclusive Museum Leadership

Featuring: Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Director, State Museum of Illinois

The museum field is experiencing a critical gaze that is both “of the moment” and long overdue. Museums were built as colonial enterprises and are slow to awaken to the harm caused by their actions which are not limited to the capturing and keeping of Indigenous ancestors, the exclusion and erasure of Black voices, bodies, and creativity, and the positioning of white power in the C-suite and board rooms. Collective rooms of action are heavy with museum educators, millennials and younger, and the disenfranchised; these rooms of action rarely see museum directors in the mix. Catlin-Legutko’s talk will examine this disconnect and offer practical insights from her own journey toward inclusive practice.

5:00pm Close

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