Dear GAMG Members,

As we watch events around the world unfold, we as museum professionals often recognize that political instability often contributes to artistic and cultural loss and repression. Egypt, Libya, the Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and other hotspots around the world are often at risk of losing their cultural treasures, their audiences, and their legitimacy. The Associated Press recently reported that the Egyptian Museum in Cairo is largely empty these days. The 111-year-old building near Tahrir Square has been largely abandoned by tourists concerned about the country's instability. AP reported in December 2013 that “there were few foreign visitors. There were none at its most prized exhibits of mummies and King Tut's treasures. Instead, the artifacts sat in the shadows and the dust of the museum, some identified only by handwritten notecards randomly in Arabic, English and French.” Museums have always been highly politicized spaces, and that seems to be complicated by the sheer variety and diversity of conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. As museum professionals, it is hard not to be moved by the plight of our sisters and brothers who have dedicated themselves to protecting cultural patrimony and to wish that there was a way to help protect the heritage of so many rich and ancient cultures.

The GAMG Board is in the midst of planning for the 2015 Annual Conference in Statesboro and is pleased to announce that Julia Forbes, the Shannon Landing Amos head of museum interpretation and digital engagement at the High Museum of Art, will be this year's keynote speaker. Julia brings a wealth of experience and creativity to her work at the High, and GAMG members will be awed by her generous spirit and powerful insights. Watch GAMG.org for more information about the program and special events.

We wish you a productive fall and look forward to seeing you all in January.

Best, Catherine Lewis, Ph.D.

Exec. Director of Museums, Archives & Rare Books
Michele Rodgers

When I attended the convening of State Museum Association staff members last March, one of the most popular topics of discussion at the meeting was advocacy. I can guess that many of you, like me, feel that museums are not fully appreciated by policymakers and are concerned about the challenges that nonprofits face from the aspect of changing legislation at the national level.

In the last newsletter we highlighted a campaign to invite Congress to visit your museum, and I hope many of you did just that. But it doesn’t stop there, now we need to focus on joining forces with museums and their supporters from across the country to bring a unified message to Congress about why museums are essential and how federal policies affect museums. If you want to participate, join the American Alliance of Museums for next year’s Museums Advocacy Day where like-minded museum directors, staff, volunteers, board members, and students will make the case for federal funding, federal education policy, charitable giving incentives, and recognition of the economic impact and job creation of museums. More information on MAD can be found on page three in this newsletter.

GAMG IS STATESBORO BOUND!

The GAMG Board is focused on planning the next annual meeting, to be held January 2015 in Statesboro, a unique city where Eagles soar and the town’s foundation is based on traditions that celebrate the southern lifestyle while embracing a new age energy derived from the local university and colleges. Statesboro offers something for everyone: visit the Blind Willie McTell Trail, Minehardt Vineyards and Winery, the Wildlife Education and Raptor Center, Blackwater Preserve, or the wonderful local historical, artistic and cultural offerings located within Bulloch County.

This year’s conference theme will focus on “Making Museums Matter: Innovation, Engagement, and Education,” and will feature thought provoking lectures and sessions plus hands on workshops which will give you tools to make sure your museum matters.

One workshop will be hosted by Jose Santamaria of Tellus Science Center and will focus on Exhibit Design, while a sampling of sessions includes National Trends in Historic Houses, Teaching With Primary Sources, Reflecting, Reinvesting and Revitalizing Georgia’s African American Museums, and Museum Education and Controversial Topics. In addition to more workshops and sessions, an enlightening keynote address will be given by Julia Forbes of the High Museum of Art.

While the board addresses the content of the conference, the Host Committee is planning two wonderful evenings highlighting the museums, galleries and cultural offerings of Statesboro. The Averitt Center for the Arts, Bulloch County Historical Society, Georgia Southern University Museum, Statesboro DDA and CVB, Garden of the Coastal Plain, Willow Hill Renaissance and Heritage Center, Performing Arts Center, and the Wildlife Center will all participate in welcoming GAMG attendees to the area.

Make your plans now to attend the conference. Online registration will begin October 1, but hotel registrations are being taken now, so don’t delay. The conference hotel is Holiday Inn Statesboro, 455 Commerce Drive, Statesboro, GA 30458, and can be reached at 912-489-4545. Conference rate is $84 plus tax per night, guaranteed through December 21, 2014.
October is Georgia Archives Month!

How is your organization going to celebrate? PLAN an event (exhibit, lecture, activities – let your imagination be the guide) and let the Georgia Archives Month Committee know about it and help publicize it. ATTEND the Georgia Archives Month Proclamation Signing and Photo Shoot with the Governor on September 23, 2014. SHARE our ideas with your friends and colleagues on Facebook. For more information, email archivesmonth@soga.org, phone 706-667-4904 (Carol Waggoner-Angleton, 2014 Co-Chair), or visit the website soga.org/archivesmonth. Be sure to like Georgia Archives Month on Facebook.

LaGrange College is coordinating the Georgia National History Day Research Round Up in October. For details visit www.lagrange.edu/nhd.

The National Preservation Institute has many professional training seminars in Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management scheduled during the next six months. NPI actively seeks partners to hold continuing education training seminars across the country, offering cooperating organizations' staff and students valuable education opportunities. Additionally, there are scholarships available to provide tuition assistance for NPI seminars. For more information, visit www.npi.org.

Does your community have team spirit? If so, it could be selected as one of 12 Georgia communities to host “Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America,” a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Georgia Humanities Council in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution. For a list of requirements and an application, visit www.georgiahumanities.org.

The Museum Store Association has a new blog which features tips and helpful hints for Museum Store Managers, so be sure to visit the association's website at museumstoreassociation.org. The most recent post is titled, “Eight Tips to Color Your Shop Effective!”

The Southeastern Museums Conference Annual Meeting will be held in Knoxville, on October 20-22, 2014. This year’s theme is “Appalachian Renaissance: Renewing Traditions, Rethinking Approaches. For more info visit semcdirect.net.

The 2015 National Council for History Education Conference will be held March 19-21, 2015 at Flagler College in St, Augustine, Florida. Early bird registration is now available, with rates increasing on November 1st. For more information, visit nche.net/conference/registration.

Advocacy News

The 7th Annual Museums Advocacy Day will take place on February 23-24, 2015 in Washington, DC. This field-wide event brings museum supporters together to make the case for museums on Capitol Hill. The entire museum field is welcome – and encouraged-to participate. Review the support levels on the American Alliance of Museums Advocacy website, www.aam-us.org/advocacy/museums-advocacy-day/support. Beginning in late September, conference calls with supporters and partners will be held regularly to coordinate efforts and ensure this year’s event is the best one yet. Join these calls to discuss the program, legislative agenda, the publicity toolkit and other promotional materials, Congressional Honorees, the logistics, the receptions, and how to ensure that every Congress member is reached during this event. Registration for Museums Advocacy Day will open in mid-October. For questions or more information, contact Gail Ravnitzy Silberglied (gsilberglied@aam-us.org) or Auntaneshia Staveloz (astaveloz@aam-us.org) at AAM.
UWG/AHC Museum Studies Program Celebrates 15th Anniversary

A collaborative Museum Studies program between the University of West Georgia and the Atlanta History Center celebrates its fifteenth anniversary in 2014. This vibrant program blends museum theory with real-world experience to train many of the museum professionals who now work around Georgia and the US.

The idea for this program began when University of West Georgia faculty member Dr. Ann McCleary approached the Atlanta History Center about creating a museum studies course that utilized the facilities, staff, and resources of the AHC. Rick Beard, then CEO of AHC, suggested developing a series of courses and assigned Director of Interpretation and Education Pam Meister to work with McCleary on this task. They developed a fifteen-hour, graduate-level Museum Studies Certificate that requires three museum seminars, a course in material culture, and a museum internship.

Both Meister and McCleary envisioned a program that would blend theory and practice, as did Beard. “I think it is important to make sure that the academic community doesn't teach museum studies in a vacuum: the classroom may be fine, but without exposure to a museum, I think students are being shortchanged,” Beard explained. Meister and McCleary wanted to incorporate the kinds of experience and knowledge they wish they had had before working in the museum field. They built the curriculum around a set of four seminars: Museum Administration, Museum Education and Interpretation, Museum Exhibits, and Museum Collections Management. Each class required a series of activities and exercises that students might undertake in a real-world museum environment, using the Atlanta History Center as a teaching laboratory.

While McCleary is the primary instructor of record, AHC staff members from across the institution help teach the classes. The generosity of the AHC staff members is critical to the program, and as a result, the museum staff becomes part of the students' professional network. Trey Gaines, now Director of the Bartow History Museum, appreciated the “valuable real-life projects, engaging instructors, and the opportunity to make new friends and colleagues” through the program.

In each class, students complete assignments based on the Atlanta History Center's current plans and needs. For example, students in the Museum Administration class research and write a foundation proposal, a mini-strategic plan, and a marketing plan for an upcoming exhibit or program at the AHC. Students read and lead discussions about the role of museum boards, with AHC staff involved and contributing their thoughts and experiences. Current graduate student Maria Ross writes that this class taught her about “mission statements, marketing, and much more. In each class, there is a level of real-life experience that you get.” Classes follow the advice offered for public history curriculum: students learn to write in a professional style appropriate to the museum setting, to develop executive summaries, to present their ideas to classmates, and to revise using suggestions they receive.

Many of the projects require students to work as a team, an essential skill for those in museums and public history. In the Museum Exhibits class, students develop what AHC Senior Military Curator Gordon Jones calls an “exhibit in a box” for an AHC project on the drawing board. They work as an exhibition team to create a complete proposal for AHC staff, including project management, marketing, development, curatorial research, object selection, labeling, education, and design. Ross adds, “The Atlanta History Center actually takes into consideration the work of students in the class. It makes the class feel more like a really directed job with a hovering boss guiding you along the way.” Students gain valuable experience in presenting their projects—first a preliminary draft and then a final project—to a review board of AHC staff members.

For more information about the program, please contact Dr. Ann McCleary at amcclear@westga.edu or 678-839-6141.

UWG museum studies students working with artifacts at Atlanta History Center
Projects within the classes evolve with the field. Students in the Museum Education class develop program plans for upcoming exhibits at the AHC and evaluate current educational programs, both of which are essential elements of the educator's work. Most recently, however, education students have been learning about museum theater, including the popular “Meet the Past” program at the AHC. Students worked as teams to develop, write, and present museum theater productions, stretching them to embrace new interpretive techniques and strategies.

The Collections Management class exemplifies opportunities for hands-on experience in a museum laboratory setting. After learning how to appropriately handle museum objects, students process AHC collections, from condition reporting to cataloging to inventory.

A number of students complete their internships at AHC, motivated by the opportunity to work with some staff members who come to speak in class. Current graduate student Daniel Kellogg was so impressed by what he heard about living history programs at the AHC that he decided to complete an internship with the museum’s summer camps. This experience led to “a unique chance to work in conjunction with the education department to work on my thesis project for a new historic house just recently moved to the Center's campus.”

Students are inspired by the AHC staff and appreciate their honesty about the challenges and rewards of their work. Sue VerHoef, now Senior Archivist at the AHC, appreciated the opportunity as a student “to get a real world perspective on the issues covered in class and in the text. What you read and study about museums in class is all well and good—knowing how problematic some of those issues can be in reality and seeing how museum professionals deal with that reality is invaluable.” Many are moved to pursue a certain field by a particularly inspiring speaker. Erin Brasfield Rose recalls that “the combined experience of the instructors provided examples to challenges I would face in the field. In my career as a museum educator and park ranger, I continue to go back to what I learned in that class.” Heather Shores, Director of Chiefhains Museum, writes that the program “allowed me the opportunity to find out what aspects of museum studies appealed to me most. I had no idea when I took my classes there that I would work there one day!”

Like Shores, several of the graduates have helped each courses to new students. “It is certainly a rewarding and enjoyable experience to now co-teach the Collections Management class years after completing the program,” writes AHC Collections Manager Heather Culligan. The program provided the “skill set, knowledge, and hands-on experience I needed to gain employment in the museum field.” Culligan adds that “the partnership with the Atlanta History Center provides students with an unparalleled experience to work with museum professionals on real, institutional projects that benefit both the student and the Atlanta History Center.”

“The Atlanta History Center is honored to be part of the West Georgia Museum Studies Certificate Program,” states AHC Executive Vice President Michael Rose. “The program offers students the on-site experience of learning from museum professionals in the workplace at the Atlanta History Center. Conversely, it provides the institution with outside-the-box thoughts that students bring to class projects strategically aligned with Atlanta History Center goals. And some of our best employees are graduates of the program.”

The UWG/AHC Museum Studies Certificate program is open not only to West Georgia students but also to graduate students at other universities and to those who hold graduate degrees and want to learn more about the field. For more information about the program, please contact Dr. Ann McCleary at amcclear@westga.edu or 678-839-6141.
NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS SINCE JUNE 2014

Institutional

Bandy Heritage Center
Booth Western Art Museum
Calhoun Gordon Arts Council
Coastal Georgia Historical Society
Collectible & Antique Chair Gallery
Monroe Cultural & Heritage Museum
Ocmulgee National Monument
The Marsh House Museum

Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries is comprised of more than 200 members including individuals, businesses and art, history, natural history, and science museums. We are open to all non-profit museums, galleries, history centers, science museums and museum associations dedicated to the development and implementation of professional museum practices.

If you are interested in becoming a member or are interested in the exceptional benefits GAMG has to offer, please visit: www.gamg.org for more information.