We may feel uneasy discussing the economic value of museums and galleries, because our first instinct is to think about all the value they bring to a community that transcends money. Many institutions may have a small economic impact, but as the only one preserving a particular story or providing a cultural experience to the community, their contribution is vital and not easily enumerated. But understanding museums and galleries economic impact is important, not so much on an individual institutional level, but as a whole. As the American Association of Museums has noted, museums employ more than a half-million Americans. They spend $14.5 billion annually. They rank among the top three family vacation destinations where heritage tourists stay longer and spend more than other tourists. There are many more impressive statistics, but clearly, together we are a significant economic engine. It is important to talk about, because if our legislators and others are unable to grasp this reality, I fear they may never understand our intrinsic value.

This problem became evident in the debate surrounding the national economic stimulus bill, when Representative Tom Coburn successfully added, with the support of both of Georgia’s senators, an amendment to the stimulus bill that states, “none of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used for any... aquariums, zoo..., museum, theater, [or] art center.” Although museums were eventually left out of this amendment, it is disappointing that some in Congress could be so unaware of the immediate impact of museums and galleries and how critical they could be to the economic recovery of cities and communities throughout the United States. We have an important task ahead of us to change that misperception. It is just as important, though, for our legislators and leaders to look beyond our immediate financial crisis to museums’ long-term significance, to ensure our “cultural” infrastructure. A recent ICOM paper by Carol Scott entitled “Advocating the Value of Museums” showed that even non-users of museums “still value the fact that museums exist, that the option for visiting may lie in the future and that as a society, we will have something to pass onto our children.” If museums and galleries are so misunderstood in the immediate economy, as indicated by the original Coburn amendment, then changing the long-term financial and emotional investment is an even greater challenge, one that I hope we as the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries can champion.
I would like to extend a very large THANK YOU to everyone who helped make the GAMG 2009 Annual Meeting in Marietta/Kennesaw a big success. Our Cobb County hosts were extremely gracious, the hotel was spectacular, and David Dundee was in rare form as auctioneer extraordinaire. More than 130 registrants, exhibitors, presenters and guests participated in the conference, and a good time was had by all!

Mark your calendar now for the 2010 GAMG Annual Meeting, to be held January 20-22, in lovely Thomasville, Georgia. Be prepared for a warm welcome to South Georgia and the City of Roses.

The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) has established a Collections Emergency Response Team (CERT) to respond to the needs of cultural institutions during emergencies and disasters. The program coordinates efforts with first responders, state agencies, vendors and the public. In 2007, with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, AIC trained a force of 60 “rapid responders” to assess damage and initiate salvage of cultural collections after a disaster has occurred. The participants were selected to bring expertise in a variety of specialties and were trained to a high level in emergency response procedures, damage assessment methods, salvage techniques, and the organization and management of a recovery operation. The Response Team will provide human resources and skills to cultural institutions of any size through phone support, damage assessments, and help with salvage organization.

For additional information about CERT or about other programs of The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works go to www.aic-faic.org, e-mail info@aic-faic.org, or phone 202-452-9545.
The Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries Awards Committee would like to congratulate the 2009 award recipients and thank all of you for your commitment and dedication to providing quality service, projects and installations in support of museums and galleries throughout the state of Georgia.

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GAMG 2009 Award Recipients

Museum Exhibition of the Year, Category 1
Museum of Aviation Flight & Technology, Down to Earth: The 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment & the Air Invasion of Normandy

Museum Exhibition of the Year, Category 2
Georgia Museum of Art, New Discoveries in Georgia Painted Furniture

Special Project of the Year
Gallery RFD, for creative and innovative contributions to the cultural fabric of Emanuel County and surroundings

Museum Volunteer of the Year
Ann Scoggins, Georgia Museum of Art

Museum Advocate of the Year
Georgia Department of Economic Development, Tourism Division

Museum Professional of the Year
Annelies Mondi, Georgia Museum of Art

Lifetime Achievement
Daniel O. Cox, Marietta Museum of History

Awards Committee
Jamie Credle, Chair - Director, Davenport House Museum, Savannah
Carissa DeCindio, Assistant Curator of Education, Georgia Museum of Art, Athens
Rita Elliott, Curator of Exhibits and Archeology, Coastal Heritage Society, Savannah
Robert Winebarger, Historic Site Coordinator, Barrington Hall, Roswell
Bruce Smith, director of the National Civil War Naval Museum at Port Columbus in Columbus, reports that the full scale model of a Civil War ship will be opened to the public on April 4, 2009. “This is a very faithful reproduction of the USS Water Witch, which has the distinction of serving in both the US and Confederate Navies during the war,” said Smith, “it’s 160 feet long and is a side wheel steamer, making it a period hybrid.” A special ribbon cutting is set for Friday, April 3 at 11 a.m. at which political and business community members will be present. The commissioning begins the weekend long RiverBlast event that features naval living history activities all weekend, along with a special set of period children’s activities. For more information, see the museum’s website at www.portcolumbus.org.

CIVIL WAR SHIP TO BE COMMISSIONED APRIL 4

For those of you who know Fred’s expertise in photography and photo production and his eye for design, you fully understand what he has given to GAMG. Of course, we will add this to the long list of contributions he has made to the Georgia museum community over the years.

We are truly grateful to you Fred.
More than 130 museum professionals, exhibitors and guest speakers gathered in Cobb County in January for the annual GAMG Conference. Local institutions rolled out the red carpet for fascinating tours and delicious food. Attendees visited downtown Marietta venues that included The Marietta Museum of History, Root House, Marietta Gone With the Wind Museum, Avery Gallery, Marietta Fire Museum, and the Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art.

The conference theme of “Fueling for Success in Hard Times: Recession Proof Your Museum,” provided for sessions that were timely and rich with helpful advice. Presentations on topics such as museum marketing, fundraising in a tough economy, and developing a good tourism product, were right on target for conference attendees. Conference keynote speaker, Bruce Green, Director of Tourism Product Development for the Georgia Department of Economic Development, provided an inspiring address.

The MUSE auction, hosted by Kennesaw State University’s History Museum and Holocaust Education Program, helped raise over $1,300 for consultancies. Master auctioneer, David Dundee, made sure that each item brought top dollar and that everyone in attendance had a great time.

Twelve exhibitors provided a wide range of resources to conference attendees, and Business Breakfast host, The Bentz Group, supported GAMG and its members through its sponsorship. During the Awards Luncheon, seven winners were honored, one of those, Daniel O. Cox, founder of the Marietta Museum of History, was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

As one conference attendee summed the meeting up, “Best one of the three [conferences] I’ve been to.” Next we will build on this year’s success with Conference 2010, hosted by the community of Thomasville, Georgia, January 20-22.
NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS 2009

Institutional
Allman Brothers Band Museum
Alpharetta Historical Society
Altamaha Museum of Art & History
Andersonville National Historic Site
Beach Institute/King Tisdell Cottage
Berry College/Oak Hill Museum
Booth Western Art Museum
Brenau University Gallery
Bulloch Hall
Calhoun/Gordon Arts Council
Cannonball House
Congregation Mickve Israel Museum
Dorchester Institute
Erskine Caldwell Birthplace
First African Baptist Church
Flint RiverQuarium
Fort Valley Main Street/DDA
Funk Heritage Center
Georgia Assembly of Community Arts Agencies
Georgia Agrirama
Georgia Capitol Museum
Georgia Southern University Museum
Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia
Hickory Hill
High Museum of Art
Historic Columbus
Historic Westville
Jimmy Carter Library
Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace
Marietta Museum of History
Museum of Colquitt County History
Northeast Georgia History Center
Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce
Old Courthouse, Inc.
R.M. Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
Savannah State Univ. Archives
Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum
Smith Plantation
Smyrna Historical Society
Telfair Museum of Art
The Granite Center
The Salvation Army
Thomas County Historical Society
Thronateeska Heritage Foundation
Troup County Archives
Uncle Remus Museum
Willow Hill

Individual
Andersonville National Historic Site
Old Courthouse, Inc.
Christen Clougherty
Beach Institute/King Tisdell Cottage
R.M. Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
Valerie DeWeerth
Berry College/Oak Hill Museum
Northeast Georgia History Center
Altamaha Museum of Art & History
Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce
Museum of Colquitt County History
R.M. Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
Savannah State Univ. Archives
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Smyrna Historical Society
Telfair Museum of Art
The Granite Center
The Salvation Army
Thomas County Historical Society
Thronateeska Heritage Foundation
Troup County Archives
Uncle Remus Museum
Willow Hill

Sponsor
Alexander Haas
Avient Museum Services
Creative Company
Exhibitus
Interpreting Time's Past
LaPaglia & Associates
MBA Design & Display
Milner Document Products Inc.
Southern Arts Federation
Studio Displays

The History Workshop
Ticket Alternative

Individual
Christen Clougherty
Valerie DeWeerth
Carissa DiCindio
David Dundee
Cathy Lee Eckert
Meg Goldman
Heru Iman
Wiloise Jackson
Michelle Jokay
Clarisse Keyes
Howard Keyes
Linda King
Susan Long
Steven Martin
Annelies Mendi
Saundra Murray-Nettles
Kevin Powell
Melissa Sanford
Stacey Savatsky
James Summers
Jamal Ture
Ed Weldon
Jane Weldon
Kirsten West
Darlene Wilson