National Civil War Naval Museum staff in Columbus celebrate their reopening with masks and local hand sanitizer.
Greetings GAM members.

Like many of you, I have been watching the news and reflecting over the events of the last few weeks. As museum professionals, our jobs are to fulfill the public’s trust through our mission statements and outreach to the public. Multiple surveys with the press and by colleagues in the field find that the general public perceives museums as safe spaces to exchange ideas, receive information, and are trusted sources of fact. With this in mind, have museums done enough to engage with all audiences? Has our story reflected all viewpoints? Do our exhibitions serve as welcoming bridges to allow our communities to come together?

A bigger question is: Have we also gained the public’s trust? While we sometimes focus on missions and programming, have we truly listened to what our community members are saying? Have our staffs engaged within our communities? Have we formed advisory boards or reached out to stakeholders to discuss the difficult issues we face? Has our education programming focused on ways to fill enrichment gaps in our communities?

As we all look toward reopening over the coming weeks and months, I hope that we take this moment to pause and reflect on what we can do better. I know that I will be engaging my own museums in ways in which we can better connect with our community, and I challenge each of you to do the same. 2020 has presented us all with numerous challenges, but I am hopeful that we all have a renewed opportunity to make our museums better, and to build up our communities as a whole. I am confident that we will move forward with renewed spirits and efforts to fulfill our mission statements and to serve the public. I stand with your GAM board in welcoming you to this challenge and to provide any assistance we can.

I look forward to moving forward and to the better days that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

Matthew S. Davis
President
Georgia Association of Museums
Museum Educator Spotlight

By Patty Petrey Dees

Annie Vantoghem, director of education and public programming at the Albany Museum of Art, had no idea how quickly her world would change in less than a year in her current position. “We’ve had our share of natural disasters with tornados, hurricanes and floods, but no one could have prepared for this!” she said. Facing a global pandemic in hard-hit Albany, which quickly became a COVID-19 hotspot, Annie quickly adapted programming to meet the community’s needs. She immediately started thinking about how to engage audiences through new online models. Soon, onsite programs such as Art Lovers Book Club, Toddler Takeover, Homeschool Day and Yoga in the Gallery were offered free of charge through easily accessible virtual platforms. Annie, concerned about the anxiety and stress on families during this time, also developed new programs such as a daily children’s art blog, a Sunday evening meditation program, and art contests to, as she says, “help people on an emotional level.”

As for summer camps, the Camp in a Box program ensures children can still have a camp experience at home. A closed Facebook group provides virtual interaction with other children and live instruction from Annie once a day. Recorded virtual tours and Curator Chats are next on the agenda.

Annie is looking forward to returning onsite to the museum later this summer, but she recognizes and appreciates the reach and accessibility online programming has to offer. Annie is now embracing the “new norm” with participants emailing her from as far away as Switzerland and England. Through all of the virtual interaction, however, she is most excited for the day when she can interact face-to-face with museum visitors once again.

Annie is an Albany native and graduated from Georgia College and State University in 2017 with degrees in art history and museum studies. She is married to Daniel Vanoteghem and they have an adorable 18-month-old named Cecilia.
Self-Care in the Time of COVID

Everyone has been Zooming and conference calling, making lists and making masks, and dealing with the complete upheaval of life as we know it. Museums are in a unique position: our usual method of sharing information in person has shifted dramatically in a short window of time, and as we re-open, we will have to serve audiences in different ways. But in order to make all of these changes, we also need to make sure our own well-being is being considered as well. Here’s a short list of ways you can help figure out that work-life balance.

Be social with a non-museum/coworker friend. It makes you talk about something other than work. Virtual happy hours, Zoom game nights, and quick phone calls are a great, safe way to check in with a friend.

Make plans two times a week. It makes you leave the office (or the couch). A “plan” can be as simple as going to the store or taking a walk.

Walk. Unplugged.

Practice saying no. "That's not a good choice for me right now" is a perfectly acceptable sentence.

Trust the others on your team. Let them do their jobs, and that they are doing their jobs even if you can't see them.

Plan at 80% capacity. You'll still do more than 110%, but that's better than being at 150% capacity all the time!

Recognize your ebb and flow times, and plan accordingly. If October is a jam-packed month, does November have to be?

Plan time off – “future you” will thank you.

Get a hobby that is just for fun. Have you always wanted to take up an instrument? Baking is super trendy right now. Gardening is a stress release!

What would YOU do to ensure work-life balance?
The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, and too many others, as well as the resulting mass protests, have all of us thinking about how our country must change. As museum professionals, our efforts are often outward-facing as we strive to engage, educate, and inspire our audiences. But to change the system, we must turn inward and change ourselves first.

If you are a white museum professional – and let’s acknowledge that the museum field lacks ethnic and racial diversity so there are quite a few of us – embrace this moment to start or revive an educational journey towards allyship. Allyship is an active and unconditional practice of using power and privilege to end oppression. It means not just helping others in a struggle, but taking on that struggle as your own. Here are a few behaviors I have learned and will continue to practice to stand in solidarity with Black friends, family, colleagues, visitors, and communities. This list includes suggestions and recommendations from Deitrah Taylor, a public historian and colleague from the SEMC Equity and Inclusion Action Team!

(Continued next page)
Say it loud: Black Lives Matter.

Acknowledge your privilege and hold yourself accountable. Be willing to admit mistakes.

Understand that ally is a verb, not a noun. Labeling yourself as an ally focuses on your identity rather than the action you must take to ally. De-center yourself from the conversation, but do not leave the fight.

Educate yourself and seek out resources. My current read/watch/listen list includes So You Want To Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo, James Baldwin’s The Fire Next Time, Ava DuVernay’s 13th on Netflix.

Be an active listener. Listen to the people you want to help and participate in a way that actually addresses their needs. Put it this way - if a friend cuts their arm, you don’t pat their hand. You break out the antiseptic, grab a few bandages, and help treat the wound. Intentions are meaningless. Impact matters.

Amplify Black voices and give credit. I used resources from Rachel Cargle, Ibram X. Kendi, and Brittany Packnett Cunningham to flesh out this list. Compensate creators when possible.

Be intentional about where you spend your money. Support local businesses, artists, and historians of color, as well as people in the LGBTQ+ community. If you are able to give, help financially support organizations that are doing the work to end racial injustice, combat voter suppression, and educate the public on privilege and white supremacy.

Hold friends and family accountable for problematic behavior, even when it’s uncomfortable and potentially painful. Silence = complicity.

Contact your elected officials. You can find an amazing list of Georgia resources from the Atlanta Emerging Museum Professionals group here.

Vote.

Slow down and think. Practicing allyship is a lifelong process. It requires unlearning some things and educating yourself on others. It requires doing the research, having the tough conversations, speaking out, and showing up. Avoid knee-jerk reactions and performative acts. Settle in for the long haul. Eliminating systemic racism will require everyone to do the work.
The 2020 pandemic has closed Georgia’s museums, galleries, theaters, festivals, and local arts agencies. Most cultural venues have always worked on tight budgets, but the current closures have meant a dramatic loss of income with an immediate and permanent impact on budgets, work force, and survival. It is essential that arts advocates adapt with new strategies. ArtsGeorgia, as a leading provider of advocacy resources, has collected some options for arts advocates to consider.

To help you advocate with your elected representatives, there are helpful advocacy resources and tools on the ArtsGeorgia website: [www.artsgeorgia.net](http://www.artsgeorgia.net). Here are some additional new options:

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is one of the best resources we have found. Their *Practical Advocate* states: “Arts advocates can be inventive about finding virtual ways to stay engaged with elected officials. Not only are such strategies valuable during a pandemic, they also are highly adaptable for rural states. Populations who cannot easily travel due to financial constraints or accessibility limitations may appreciate virtual advocacy strategies, too, so bringing advocacy online can make your cause more inclusive of all voices.” They offer pointers for ways that cultural advocates can transcend distance to stay in contact with their federal, state, and local officials, including virtual town halls. Please review [Virtual Advocacy](http://www.artsgeorgia.net).

For arts advocates there are many specific COVID-19 related resources with recent surveys establishing the quarantine’s impact on the arts:

**COVID-19 Resources & Information for the Museum Field** [American Alliance of Museums](https://www.aam-us.org)

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource and Response Center** [Americans for the Arts](https://arts.visit.org)

Breaking News: Georgia’s General Assembly reconvened in June and passed an FY21 budget without catastrophic cuts to the arts budget. Now is the best time to contact your state representatives with a thank you; you should also elaborate on how the pandemic has adversely affected your organization. You can find your Representative in their House Directory, you can find your Senator in their Senate Directory. Now is the time for arts advocacy action. How can we save our cultural institutions from an extinction event? Many will be lost if we don’t speak up. Make your calls! Ask your elected officials to continue supporting the arts and remind them that each of us during the days of quarantine survived on music, art, books, movies, and/or binge-watching Peak TV.
Winter Job Survey Results

By Ephraim Rotter

The Georgia Association of Museums Job Survey was conducted during the winter of 2019-2020, and sought information about museums, the people who work in them, where they are located, and what they are about - and how all of that correlates to compensation in money and benefits. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are not measured by this survey, which was completed before the virus impacted Georgia. Nonetheless, there are some salient data points which we believe remain relevant to museum workers in the state, including:

The majority of respondents work in small and medium-size history museums in suburbs.

Museum funding sources are fairly evenly split: 33% of respondents work in a fully private 501c3; 20% in public-private partnerships; 17% in university-affiliated museums; and 17% in museums that are fully publicly funded.

Less than 50% of respondents knew what their institution's annual budget is.

75% of respondents have an advanced degree in their field. The most common MA degrees reported are museum studies, public history, and art history.

70% of full-time employees are offered healthcare benefits. Although a few are paid entirely by their employer, that majority require some level of employee contribution.

70% have the option to contribute to some type of retirement plan.

The average full-time employee has been employed at their museum for eight years and has twelve years of experience; averages twenty-two paid days off per year; and is a 38-year old white female.

Less than 20% of full-time employees are offered paid parental leave after the birth or adoption of a child.

The average annual salary of respondents was $45,000 annually.
Salary Transparency

In November 2019, the GAM board voted to affirm statements made by the National Emerging Museum Professionals Network to promote salary transparency and create a more equitable museum workforce, including the following requirements for job postings:

- **Require accurate salary range:** The job hunt is time-consuming and expensive for both the employer and prospective employee. Posting an accurate salary range will help both sides avoid wasting time on jobs/candidates they cannot afford.

- **Paid positions only:** Unpaid internships are only available to those who can afford to work for free, and disqualify many people without the means from getting experience in our field.

- **Strongly encourage employers to include the name and title of the person to whom candidates should address applications:** This avoids any confusion for candidates submitting applications, resumes, and cover letters.

- **Strongly encourage employers to include interview format (group, panel, one-on-one, etc.):** This allows candidates to better prepare for an interview and reduce the stress of the unknown.

- **Strongly encourage employers to include a breakdown of the hiring process from application to training:** This offers candidates a clear picture of what to expect and gives them a better understanding of your timeline.

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**Grant Opportunity**

Georgia Humanities: Twice a year GH awards grants for a range of cultural programs, including exhibits, walking tours, and lectures, that bring the public together and strengthen communities through dialogue around humanities topics. Applications for the fall grant cycle are due September 30 for projects beginning on or after January 30, 2021. For full guidelines, visit [https://www.georgiahumanities.org/grants/](https://www.georgiahumanities.org/grants/).
New & Renewing Members
Since March 2020

Institutional
6th Cavalry Museum  Army Aviation Heritage Foundation
Augusta Canal Authority  Averitt Center for the Arts
Bartow History Museum  Bulloch County Historical Society
Calhoun-Gordon Arts Center  Cherokee County Historical Society
Chieftains Museum  Chi Phi Fraternity  City of Washington
Decatur County Historical & Genealogical Society
Elachee Nature Science Center  Elberta Depot Heritage Center
Fort Valley DDA  Funk Heritage Center  The Marsh House Museum
Thomas County Historical Society  Troup County Historical Society

Individual
Michael Lachowski

Do you have institutional news or notes on happenings in the museum field you’d like to share with fellow GAM members? Submit your items of 100-500 words to Rebecca Bush, GAM Newsletter Chair, at rbush@columbusmuseum.com.

Full-color ad space now available! Contact Administrative Director Michele Rodgers at gamg@gamg.org for pricing.
Out of an abundance of caution, the GAM board has chosen to postpone the 2021 annual conference until April 2021. We hope to be able to gather in Statesboro at that time with our great hosts at Georgia Southern University. Stay tuned for more information, including new dates and an updated call for proposals!

Join us for GAM's first-ever Zoom webinar for a conversation about reopening policies and procedures, including what works and what doesn’t. More information, including a sign-up link, will be shared via Facebook and email soon!
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