



Connecting great ideas
with great people to inspire
leadership and achievement
within the MPMA community.

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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Stephen L. Whittington

Hello Members and Friends of MPMA,

This is my first letter to you as president of MPMA, unless you count a couple of missives I sent out in the fall soliciting end-of-year donations. As you are learning, I am not shy about asking people and organizations for money. I think doing so is one of my responsibilities as president. So...if you were considering sending a donation in 2017 but time somehow got away from you, why not do it early in 2018 and cross it off your list of New Year's resolutions? You can make a donation to support MPMA operations, scholarships, or our endowment. It's [easy to do](#) and it will make you feel so good!

Looking back at 2017, it was a year of success and change for MPMA. We interviewed some great candidates at the Midwinter Meeting to follow Monta Lee Dakin as Executive Director after her retirement. The search committee decided to offer the job to Deb Arenz and there is no doubt as we approach the 2018 Midwinter Meeting that we made a fantastic hire. Among Deb's activities was to move MPMA to Nebraska after its years in Colorado.

The Annual Conference in Denver had the largest attendance ever and provided a wealth of workshops, sessions, tours, events, auctions, speeches, discussions, and parties to keep attendees from getting into too much trouble. I was pleased to be able to introduce a busload of museum folks to the extreme high country of Leadville and some of its many museums and historical sites. First-time visitors to Denver could not help but be amazed and impressed by the vibrant museum community.

I hope you will consider joining Deb and me there to meet legislators and advocate for IMLS, NEH, NEA, and other agencies that support museums.

The 2018 Annual Conference in Billings promises to be another great one. I am looking forward to visiting Montana in September, a gorgeous time to be there. Proposals for sessions and workshops are due by January 27. Scholarship applications and Board nominations will be due later in the year. Why not nominate yourself for a Board position or offer to work on the Program Committee? You get a different perspective on the Annual Conference, and MPMA as a whole, when you are a Board or committee member.

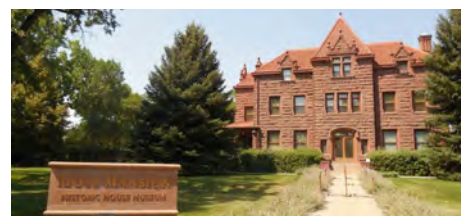
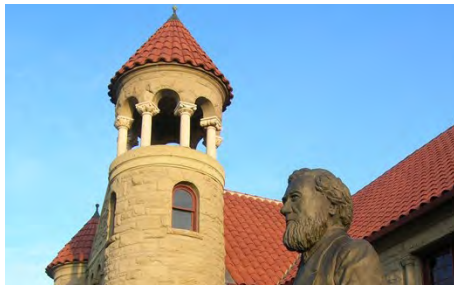
Museums Advocacy Day is coming up in Washington February 26-27, followed by the Council of Regional Associations meeting on the 28th. This will be my first time attending each and I expect to learn a lot. MPMA members can attend Museums Advocacy Day without paying the registration fee because MPMA is a supporter of the event. I hope you will consider joining Deb and me there to meet legislators and advocate for IMLS, NEH, NEA, and other agencies that support museums.

Thank you for belonging to our BIG regional association. Please feel free to contact me at director@mininghalloffame.org or Deb at director@mpma.net with your ideas and suggestions to make us even stronger.

— Steve

CONFERENCE NEWS

Mark your calendars for the **2018 MPMA Conference, Stronger Together: New Museum Solutions**, in beautiful **Billings, Montana, September 11-15**. Montana's largest city is a gateway to regional history, the arts, and the outdoors and offers a revitalized downtown, four museums and dozens of National Register properties. Less than an hour away is Pompeys Pillar, a sandstone butte with William Clark's 1806 carved signature, and Chief Plenty Coups State Park, the home of the Crow Indian leader, Plenty Coups. A mere three-hour drive over a spectacular mountain pass gets you to the geysers, wildlife, and canyons of Yellowstone National Park.



SUBMIT A POSTER PROPOSAL FOR THE 2018 MPMA CONFERENCE

The Poster Session features an exhibit of Poster Presentations with an academic or professional focus and each presenter makes brief remarks and answers questions to people circulating in the room. It's an excellent way to share your research or projects with colleagues from the region.

[Download the Call for Posters Proposal](#). The *poster submission deadline is February 16, 2018*.

EXTENTIONS FOR CONFERENCE SESSION AND WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

The deadline for 2018 conference session and workshop proposals has been extended to **January 27**. Don't delay, download the 2018 Conference [Call for Sessions/Workshop Proposals](#) and join us in Billings!



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LOOKING FOR COACHING, MENTORING, OR ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE?

Check out the Retiring Museum Professionals Program (RMP)

MPMA's Retiring Museum Professionals Program (RMP) (made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services) allows retired museum professionals to remain in service to the field by offering them opportunities to serve as mentors, coaches, and advocates to MPMA members.

Learn more about the program and sign up to be a part of it through the [RMP page on the MPMA website](#) or contact director@mpma.net

Good News! **The 2018 MPMA Purchasing Co-op list is now available.** The purchasing co-op offers discounts of up to 80% on products from companies you likely already use. The price list is available to [institutional members](#) only. [View a teaser copy of the list](#) to see the items and discounts available. To obtain the actual price list and user code, institutional members can contact: director@mpma.net

Need storage furniture? Check out the **Storage Furniture Discount Program** which offers GSA level discounts for new items and up to and over 75% off pre-owned products. [This link](#) will take you to more information and a recent testimonial from a satisfied user.

MPMA'S FIRST ASK ME ANYTHING ON REDDIT ABOUT REDEFINING HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS



Join Will Stoutamire, Director of the G. W. Frank Museum of History & Culture on the campus of the University of Nebraska-Kearney, on Tuesday, January 30, from 2-2:30pm CST for MPMA's first Ask Me Anything on Reddit. Dr. Stoutamire will be taking questions about his work at the Frank Museum and redefining historic house museums. If you can't make it for the live session, you can leave questions for Will on the Ask Me Anything thread beginning January 16.



Historic house museums celebrate the memories and accomplishments of individuals or families. Past lifeways are interpreted through period-furnished rooms with authentic furniture, decor, and objects. Founded decades ago, these institutions struggle to remain relevant in their communities. The Frank Museum in Kearney, Nebraska struggled with many of the issues facing other historic house museum in the Mountain-Plains region. Under the leadership of their Director, William Stoutamire, the Frank Museum has begun to rethink the traditional model for the historic house museum.

Working with a new advisory board, the Frank Museum has developed a new mission, vision, and name for the institution. Their goal is to create a destination for those interested in the wider history and culture of central Nebraska. This new path included restoring the original Frank house, development of new exhibits and interactive kiosks, along with a documentary and mobile app.

Find us on Reddit at reddit.com/r/MPMA/

ADVOCACY



Now, perhaps more than ever, museums must advocate on their own behalf to ensure the benefits they bring their communities are understood by elected officials. To this end, MPMA has renewed its financial commitment to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) in their efforts to organize and execute **Museums Advocacy Day**. A benefit of this partnership is that **MPMA members are able to participate in Advocacy Day for free**. Advocacy Day 2018 will be February 26-27 in Washington, D.C. To register as an MPMA member at no cost, contact director@mpma.net to receive the code. For more information, follow this link: [2018 Museums Advocacy Day](#). Also check for updates on [MPMA's advocacy webpage](#).

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE TAX REFORM LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW IN DECEMBER?

This [advocacy alert from the American Alliance of Museums](#) has a table that may answer some of them. More information on this subject will be featured in future *Newsgram* issues.

An advertisement for Dorfman Museum Figures, Inc. The background is a light green gradient. At the top left is a small inset photo of a group of people. To its right is the company name "DORFMAN" in a large, stylized font, with "MUSEUM FIGURES, INC." underneath it. To the right of the name is the text "since 1957" written vertically. Below the name are four museum figures: a Native American man in a red and white robe, a man in a dark, textured outfit with a fur hat, a woman in a black and white patterned dress, and a man in a blue military uniform saluting. At the bottom, the website "www.museumfigures.com" and the phone number "800-634-4873" are listed.

GOOD TO KNOW

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS WILL HELP MUSEUMS BETTER SERVE THE PUBLIC

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is offering professional development grants designed to help museums respond to the evolving needs of the museum profession and changes in their communities. The program, now in its second year, is a special initiative of the Museums for America grant program, which strengthens the ability of individual museums to better serve their communities.

This special initiative will support and empower museum staff to generate systemic change within their museum through professional development activities that cross-cut various departments. It provides support for professional development in four project categories:

- **Digital Technology:** for museum staff to fully explore, understand, and optimize the use of digital technology in museums.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** for museum staff to develop cultural competency and support museum relevancy in their communities.
- **Evaluation:** to expand museum staff's capacity to evaluate programs, practices, and products and determine measurable outcomes.
- **Organizational Management:** for museum staff to learn best practices in organizational management, strategic thinking, innovation and managing change.

Eligible entities for [Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff](#) are U.S. museums of all sizes and disciplines. Award amounts will either be \$5,000-\$25,000 with no cost share permitted or \$25,001-\$250,000 with at least 1:1 cost share. **The application deadline is March 1, 2018.** See the [application guidelines](#) (PDF, 415KB) on the IMLS website for details.

The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC) is accepting applications for the **2018 Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program** through February 1. The CAP program is open to small and medium-sized museums, zoos, aquariums, arboreta, and botanical gardens in the United States. Participating institutions receive funding for a general conservation assessment from qualified collections and building assessors. CAP is often a first step for small institutions that wish to improve the condition of their collections or develop a long-range preservation plan, and can serve as a fundraising tool for future collections projects. More information about the program can be found [here](#).



MPMA was a proud partner in the production of the **2017 National Museum Salary Survey** which was compiled using data from 1,060 institutions nationwide. The survey details demographic, salary, and benefit information on 52 of the most common professional positions in museums. The full report, with all 52 positions, is available from AAM for \$100. Members of AAM and of the regional and state project partner organizations can purchase the report for \$60. And new this year, segments of the full report for specific staffing categories are available as individual snapshots for \$20 each. Please contact director@mpma.net to receive the MPMA member code for the purchasing discount. Follow this [link](#) to learn more and get the survey today!

GOOD TO KNOW

CHIEF STANDING BEAR STATUE NOW IN DOWNTOWN LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

From his birth on the banks of the Niobrara River in Nebraska until his death in 1908, Chief Standing Bear spent his life in a constant struggle to gain equality and justice for Native Americans. Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca Tribe were forced in 1877 by federal treaty to leave their homeland in Nebraska for Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. The hardship of travel, illness, and the conditions of Indian Territory caused many members of the tribe to perish, including Chief Standing Bear's son. Determined to bury his son in his homeland, Chief Standing Bear led thirty members of his tribe back to their home in Nebraska. As a result, Chief Standing Bear became the first Native American to be recognized as a person in a federal court decision rendered in Omaha at the trial following his return.

In 2015, Lincoln, Nebraska native Don Campbell approached the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs and the City of Lincoln to commission a world class bronze statue to honor the story of Chief Standing Bear. This vision came to completion in October 2017 when sculptor Ben Victor's 10-foot bronze statue of the Chief was unveiled on Lincoln's historic Centennial Mall in the shadow of the state's capitol.

The Chief Standing Bear Foundation is offering 25, numbered, limited edition 24" inch tall pieces and fifteen 36" inch tall pieces for sale to museums and individuals. Proceeds of the sales will go toward Chief Standing Bear Scholarships for Native high school and college students and toward ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the Centennial Mall statue. For more info, contact the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs: scott.w.shafer@nebraska.gov



GOOD TO KNOW

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ACCEPTING PROPOSALS FOR THE SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT PROGRAM

The National Park Service, in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), is now accepting applications for \$5 million in matching grants to support the preservation of nationally significant historic properties and collections through the Save America's Treasures program.

The Save America's Treasures program is funded through the Historic Preservation Fund using revenue from Outer Continental Shelf oil releases, not tax dollars, and requires dollar-for-dollar private matching funds. The program began in 1999 and has leveraged over \$315 million in federal appropriations to attract \$377 million in private investment to help communities preserve nationally significant properties and collections across the country, creating more than 16,000 jobs along the way.

Eligible projects include the conservation of collections and physical preservation work to historic buildings. All projects must be nationally significant; meaning listed as **National Historic Landmarks** or, for collections, a case should be made for its national significance.

The deadline for applications is February 21. More information, including grant application materials, is available on the grant program website: <https://go.nps.gov/sat>

Check out the MPMA Job Bank

Need a job? Need to hire? Use the MPMA Job Bank. With well over a thousand views a month, and weekly promotions on MPMA social media platforms, the Job Bank is the place to promote and find museum jobs in our region. Institutional members can post unlimited jobs for free. Take a look: [MPMA Job Bank](#).

Let us know what you think

Please share your thoughts on a brief survey being conducted on behalf of the University of Washington's Museology program. The study is designed to better understand museum career trajectories and to assess the alignment between the goals of graduate programs and the needs of museums. The survey will be open until January 31. Begin the survey [here](#).

AWARDS / CONGRATULATIONS



In December, the National Endowment for the Humanities announced \$12.8 million in grants to humanities projects nationwide, including 35 projects in the MPMA region. The grants support the preservation of collections at small institutions, innovative digital projects for the public, and advanced humanities research. A full list of grants by geographic location is available [here](#).

Monthly Newsgram

The Newsgram will now be published monthly and will feature all the great news you've come to expect, but in a shorter, timelier format.

If you'd like to share news with MPMA members about your exhibits, programs, staff, and awards in the Newsgram, send information to director@mpma.net

Hurricane Harvey Aftermath

The **Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History**, closed since October due to damage sustained from Hurricane Harvey, has been listed as being in urgent need of repair by the Corpus Christi city council and \$500,000 has been appropriated for repair efforts. The City hopes to be reimbursed by FEMA for these costs.

COLLECTIONS

The **Carbon County Museum** in Rawlins, Wyoming's display of a pair of shoes made from the skin of the late 1800s outlaw, Big Nose George, was the subject of a recent Atlas Obscura article. The decision to display an artifact of this type is complicated and museum director, Kelly Bohanan, succinctly captures the arguments on both sides in the article: "Some people...say, 'They're shoes. They were made to look like shoes, they were worn as shoes, they are shoes.' The flip side to that is, tell that to his mother." Read the entire article here: [An Outlaw's Skin Was Made Into Shoes; Should they be on display?"](#)



HISTORY AND MEMOIRS OF VIETNAM VETERANS

The Kansas Humanities Council recently partnered with twelve Kansas organizations, including the **Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum** in Abilene, an MPMA Institutional Member, for a statewide oral history project that will collect the personal stories of Vietnam veterans. Collected oral histories and memoirs will be submitted to the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project in Washington, D. C. More information can be found [here](#).



In 2010, the Library of Congress and Twitter signed an agreement providing the Library with the public tweet text from Twitter's inception in 2006 through 2010.

Additionally, Twitter agreed to provide tweets on an ongoing basis under the same terms. Recently the Library decided to change its collection strategy for tweets, obtaining them on a selective basis under the guidance of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. Generally, tweets collected and archived will be thematic and event-based. This decision has been met positively and negatively and the Library's decision reflects ongoing issues for collecting institutions in an ever-changing digital world. Read the Library's white paper on their decision [here](#).

OPENINGS & EXHIBITS



The Steamboat Art Museum, in Steamboat Springs, Colorado celebrated the unveiling of their expanded museum with the opening of the invitational exhibit, *Imagining the West*, in December. The exhibit features more than 40 works by regional artists that are inspired by the culture and heritage of the west. The museum expansion is the result of an \$800,000 renovation of the 1920 building that has housed the museum for 11 years. The exhibition closes in April, 2018.

The exhibition *Shifting Light: Photographic Perspectives* at the **New Mexico Museum of Art**, in Santa Fe, is part of the museum's centennial celebration and offers a look at the long-term relationship the institution has had with photography. *Shifting Light* includes historic works by Laura Gilpin, Eliot Porter, Ansel Adams, and Alfred Stieglitz, as well as more contemporary images that challenge ideas of photography and suggest future directions for the evolving medium. The exhibition can be viewed through October 2018.

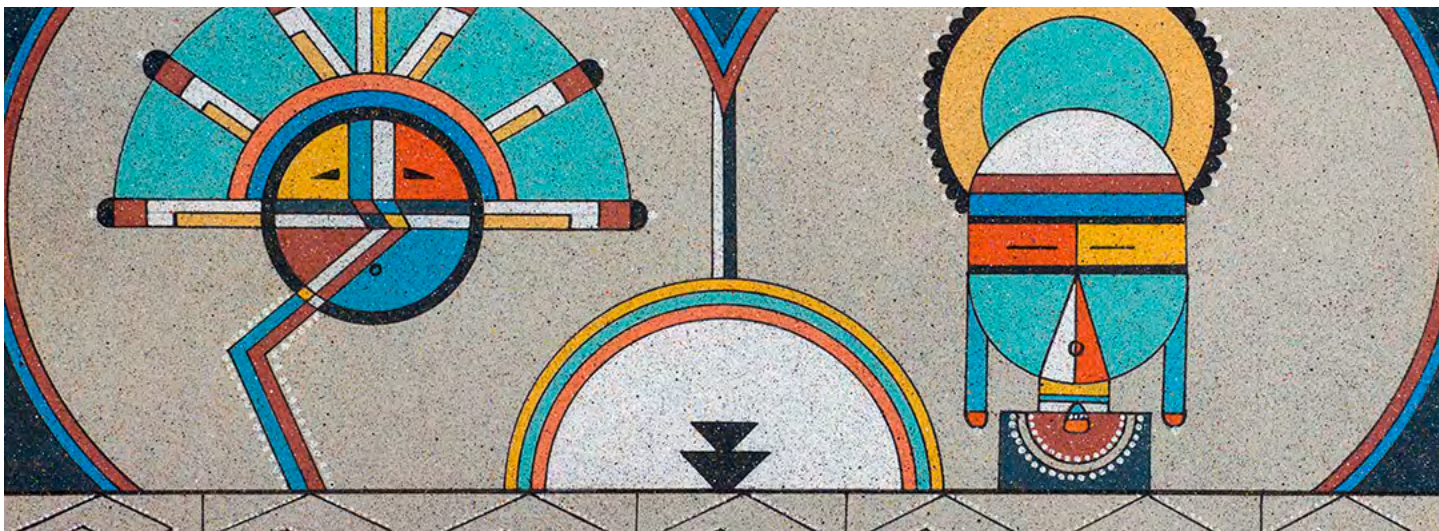


Eliot Porter: Frozen Apples, New Mexico (detail), 1966, dye transfer print



Image Courtesy of Helen Hardin #1's LLC, a Nevada Corporation

Visit the **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center** in Albuquerque, New Mexico before March 4 to experience the complete collection of first edition prints by famed Santa Clara Pueblo artist Helen Hardin in the show *Spirit Lines: Helen Hardin Etchings*. Hardin achieved fame over a decades-long career as a painter but in the last few years of her life turned her attention to copper plate etchings. She produced 23 plates from 1980 to 1984 before succumbing to breast cancer at age 41. The exhibition brings together all 23 first edition prints in a remarkable exploration of the artist's growth and struggles.



Joe Hilario Herrera (See Ru) (U.S., Cochiti Pueblo, 1920–2001); Germination, 1982; Watercolor on paper, 25¼ x 30 in.; Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art; University of Oklahoma, Norman; James T. Bialac Native American Art Collection, 2010

A first-of-its-kind exhibition honoring three generations of Pueblo artists opens this month at the **Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art** at the University of Oklahoma, Norman. *Generations in Modern Pueblo Painting: The Art of Tonita Peña and Joe Herrera* spans 65 years and reveals how a mother and son broke tradition and influenced generations of modern painters.

The exhibition documents and celebrates the art of Peña (San Ildefonso/Cochiti, 1893-1949), the only female Pueblo painter of her generation, and her distinguished son, Herrera (Cochiti, 1920-2001), and their positive influence on a younger generation of artists, including Pablita Velarde (Santa Clara, 1918-2006) and her daughter, Helen Hardin (Santa Clara, 1943-84). The exhibition opens with a public lecture and reception from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25 and runs through April 8. Further information and events can be found [here](#).

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

The **Community Museums of History Colorado** premiered a new podcast, *COauthored*, in December. The podcast features oral histories from the museums' collections. José Ortega, exhibits and collections coordinator for Community Museums led the collections work and edits and engineers the podcast and Zach Werkowitch, community relations coordinator, is the podcast host. Dozens of volunteer community historians have collected the stories that will air in each episode. New episodes will be released monthly and can be found on any podcast platform or [here](#) through Soundcloud.

PEOPLE



GABRIELA CHAVARRIA, Ph.D has been named vice president of research and collections at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Most recently, she was senior science advisor and forensic science branch chief at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Forensics Laboratory in Oregon.



SUSAN MOLDENHAUER retired as director of the University of Wyoming Art Museum in November after 26 years at the institution.



MIKE ERICKSON has been named the new education coordinator at the Byers-Evans House Museum in Denver, Colorado. Evans comes from the Molly Brown House Museum where he worked in educational and curatorial programs.



DANIEL GOODMAN has been named director of El Rancho de las Golondrinas in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Goodman previously served the museum as curator of collections and interim director.



NATALIE SHIRLEY is the new president and CEO of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Shirley previously served as president of Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City and is the first woman to serve as the president and CEO of the museum.

MPMA would like to acknowledge our business members

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