Voting membership in the Midwest Registrars Committee is open to those museum professionals who support the objectives of the MRC, who reside in the Midwest region (including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin), and who hold positions such as registrar, collections manager, curator, volunteer, administrator, conservator, corporate registrar, or student.

A non-voting membership is available for individuals who are associated with for-profit organizations such as shipping companies, customs brokers, insurance firms, and other suppliers of materials and services, and individuals who reside outside of the Midwest region.

The membership period covers the calendar year (from January 1 through December 31). Annual dues are $10.00 per year. For more information on the Midwest Registrars Committee or to join MRC, visit [http://www.midwestmuseums.org/mrc.html](http://www.midwestmuseums.org/mrc.html).
From the MRC Chair

Rachel Vargas

Happy September! With the end of summer, and my university back in full swing, it feels like ages ago that we attended the annual Association of Midwest Museum meetings in Cincinnati this past July 19-22. This issue will detail some of the information that was presented at the sessions.

The MRC board worked hard to have more collections related sessions at the conference this year, and we were very pleased that all our sessions were accepted. Some of the collections sessions were: Beyond Fingernail Polish: Best Practices and a New Website for Museum Marking; Rights and Reproductions: The Handbook for Cultural Institutions; Preserving your Museum’s Collection Value: Conservation and Insurance 101; Are your Collections Lazy? How to Kick the Freeloaders out and Make the Best Ones Work for You; and Collateral Damage: Are you Causing Damage to Your Institution’s Collections?

We had our MRC business lunch meeting at Via Vite, generously sponsored by Huntington T. Block. At the meeting we heard updates from the MRC board members and state representatives and introduced the winners of the five travel stipends awarded for the annual meeting. Each of the winners will be writing a short essay for the Courier on the meeting sessions they attended. Our generous stipend sponsors were Terry Dowd; The Conservation Center, Chicago; U.S. Art Company; Tru-Vue; and Masterpiece International. In addition to the luncheon and travel stipends, Willis Fine Art, Jewelry and Specie sponsored a MRC Social at the Palm Court Bar.

For the upcoming year, Devon Pyle-Vowles, our Vice-Chair, is working with Laura McDowell-Hopper, our Illinois representative, to complete a website for marking objects, expanding the Beyond Fingernail Polish handbook. Also, just published by AAM, edited by Anne Young, is Rights and Reproductions: The Handbook for Cultural Institutions for an amazing low cost ($4.99 or $1.99 for AAM members!!).

As always, if you have any comments, suggestions, concerns or would like to be more involved with the MRC, please feel free to contact me at vargasr@msu.edu or (517) 884-0651.

From the Editor

It is hard for me to believe summer has come and “gone” already, but according to my tomato plants this is true. It was an exciting summer around here full of joys and challenges, from my tomatoes predicted to be 3-4 feet in height quickly growing taller than I am (I think one has topped out near 7 feet) to an exciting trip to the AMM Conference in Cincinnati (long live the road trip and good traveling companions/friends). I will admit, though quietly so my neighbor doesn’t hear (we always have the summer-winter fight), I am ready for the fall chapter. Having been at my current job for nearly a decade, I know the excitement the next few months brings—hundreds of school kids a week, mad dash holiday exhibit preparation, and beautiful fall colors in the park we share. As much as I love the adventures of summer, I equally relish the routine and familiarity of fall.

There are some great things going on at museums across the Midwest. Be sure to take a few moments to share a tidbit when you can with your fellow MRC members. Inspiration may be just a page turn away!
Travel Stipends 2015

Once again, the Midwest Registrars Committee, along with U.S. Art, Masterpiece International, The Conservation Center of Chicago, Tru-Vue, and Terry Dowd, Inc., provided generous support to help five members of MRC attend the 2015 Association of Midwest Museums Annual Conference in Cincinnati. Over the next two issues, recipients will share reflections on their time at Communicating the Value of Museums. Congratulations again to:

Lauren Hancock, U.S. Art Company
Tamara Lange, Terry Dowd, Inc.
Andy Near, Masterpiece International
J. Amadeus Scott, Tru-Vue, Inc.
Cristin Waterbury, The Conservation Center of Chicago

Beyond Fingernail Polish  Lauren Hancock

I was fortunate enough to receive a stipend to attend AMM in Cincinnati this year, generously donated by US Art. I worked at the Cincinnati Museum for five years, so it was great to re-connect with former co-workers, as well as many collections professionals from around the Midwest. My favorite session this year was Beyond Fingernail Polish: Best Practices and a New Website for Museum Marking, with Laura McDowell Hopper, Devon Pyle-Vowles, and Rachel Vargas.

If you Google “museum marking,” you get around 25 million results! In addition to websites, there are guides that individual museums have created, booklets, often created at conference workshops and shared between regions, and chapters in books. The Midwest Registrars Committee is working on compiling the best of all of this information in one accessible place: a new online marking resource center that is easy to share and can be updated with the latest techniques. The goal of the website is for museum professionals to have a well planned and carefully executed numbering and marking system in place that will help identify and protect collection material for future generations.

We were lucky enough to get a sneak preview of the site and, let me tell you, it has it all! Whether you’re numbering for the first time or just looking for a new technique for something unique, chances are you’ll find it here. It begins with a “Getting Started” section with general rules and considerations, such as where to put the mark, size of the mark, and other important things to consider. The “Techniques” section has methods for both temporary marking, such as tagging, and semi-permanent marking, such as barrier coat with ink/paint, adhering labels, and Japanese tissue paper with starch paste. There’s a “Things to Avoid” section, with what not to do and things to watch out for. The “Supplies” section will have lists of both acceptable and unacceptable supplies. The site will have step-by-step instructions for how to label different materials, including plastics, textiles, baskets, leather, ivory, ceramics, glass, wood, and photographs. Just in case you still can’t find the answer you’re looking for, there is also a comprehensive “Resources” section with links to professional organizations and other online resources, a bibliography for helpful books, and information on barcoding.

So when will you be able to access this site? That all depends on you! The site needs more images: examples of the good, the bad, and the ugly and step-by-step photos showing the entire process of numbering specific materials (ideally with descriptions and supply lists), or even videos. Since this is being produced by the MRC, ideally the content will come from Midwestern museums. If you have something that you think will help, are willing to create something, or willing to help in another capacity, contact Devon at dpvowles@comcast.net.
“Subrogation,” “wall to wall,” and “deductibles,” oh my!  J. Amadeaus Scott

I would like to start with a heartfelt “thank you” to Tru-Vue and the Midwest Registrars Committee for sponsoring this travel stipend, and providing me with the opportunity to attend this year’s AMM Conference in Cincinnati. I really appreciate this opportunity.

At this year’s Conference, I was fortunate to attend the Preserving your Museum’s Collection Value; Conservation and Insurance 101 session presented by Terry Segal, Associate Registrar of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Heather Becker, Conservator and CEO of the Conservation Center, and Eric Fischer, Senior Vice President of Willis Fine Art, Jewelry, & Specie. The session began with discussion of collection loans and packing by Ms. Segal; Ms. Becker then covered a range of information on conservation methods; Mr. Fisher concluded the session with an overview on art insurance and related legal terminology. This session was particularly significant for my institution, the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology (UMMAA), as we are in the early stages of a large scale move, and our staff have been working with the University to develop more accurate insurance values for our collections.

The Art insurance section of the presentation covered key terminology and provided clear easy to understand definitions for complicated concepts, such as “subrogation” and “limits of liability”. Mr. Fisher began by explaining that Art insurance falls into the category of Inland Marine insurance, which was historically developed to provide specialized coverage for property during inland transport and for specialized types of property (including fine art, artifacts, and rare objects). He elaborated that Art insurance is different from basic property insurance, in that it covers a broader range of perils. Property insurance coverage is limited to named perils (such as floods, fire, hurricanes, etc. written directly into the policy). Art insurance policies are all-risk, so everything is covered except specific exclusions, and policies can be written to cover specific needs. Mr. Fisher also noted that art insurance covers legal liability for loans (including unwanted loans) and types of property that basic property insurance policies won’t cover. Art insurance deductibles, the amount an institution must pay up front before a claim is paid, are often small for most institutions. He suggested that contractors should have general liability coverage for themselves and also stated that institutions should foremost put their available funds into first lines of risk management (such as fire suppression, alarms, etc.) and then into insurance.

Amongst the terms discussed by Mr. Fisher were “wall to wall” and “subrogation”. The term “wall to wall” is particularly relevant for loan items, as it refers to the scope of coverage and timeline of coverage for collections - with wall to wall coverage, loaned objects are covered from the minute they are moved to be packed, up until they come to their final resting place. Mr. Fisher also explained that “subrogation” refers to the process by which an insurance company seeks compensation from any damage to insured items by an intermediate responsible party other than the insured (such as a shipping company that caused damage to items during transport). Subrogation waivers are often requested by contracted parties involved in the packing and transport of objects without a financial interest in the object.

In addition to enjoying the sessions, J. Amadeaus Scott kept busy photographing participants and sites at the conference with her Polaroid Land Camera! Andy’s article will appear in the next newsletter, but this picture was too cool not to include here!
Mr. Fisher then provided some advice regarding the claims settlement process and timeline. His first and foremost advice was to have a disaster plan in place and protect collections as much as possible, and then notify the insurance company after the collections have been protected during an incident. He did state that it is important to report a claim in a timely manner and that claims can be denied if not reported promptly. The insurance company will then likely hire an adjuster (preferably a specialist) to follow up on the claim. Total losses are easier for insurance companies to settle than partial losses, and occasionally claims may go to arbitration. Mr. Fisher concluded by noting that Art insurance claims may take a long time to reach settlement, and he gave the example that 6 months to settlement is considered fast.

As we begin a large scale move of our collections at UMMAA from 3 different facilities in conjunction with the concurrent large scale move of the University of Michigan’s other research collection museums (UM Museum of Paleontology and UM Museum of Zoology), this advice is extremely helpful to our collections staff, curators, and directors. My thanks goes out to Ms. Segal, Ms. Becker, and Mr. Fisher for their insightful presentation and practical advice.

Rethinking….. EVERYTHING!! Tamara Lange

I will open with a simple “Thank you!” Thank you to Terry Dowd, Inc. for generously providing support for travel stipends for members of MRC to attend the Association of Midwest Museums Annual Conference. Thank you to the Midwest Registrars Committee for finding me worthy of receipt of a 2015 travel stipend. Thank you to my coworkers who chipped in to cover my “days” so I could get away for an entire week! And thank you to my travel companion and friend, Anna Cannizzo, who endured a long road trip with me (and shared expenses, making this a really affordable professional development opportunity).

Upon learning I had received a travel stipend for 2015, I kicked into high gear. And by that, I mean I did the following:

1) Downloaded the conference program and poured over the various sessions being offered, determining what I might want to attend and how many of them conflict with each other. (This is inevitable, especially for me, as in addition to the registration/ collection management duties of my job, I am also our exhibit person. I have also added a chunk of grant writing and institutional planning to the docket of late.)

2) Scoped out potential places to eat and drink. I love to eat local and explore local breweries, so any trip to a new city involves copious amounts of time spent pouring over various recommendations. Plus, since I was leaving my husband at home to keep the fires burning, I knew I better find some local swag to bring back.

In the end, I was able to attend a number of really great sessions. Many have already been noted by my fellow travel stipend recipients. Choosing a favorite has been difficult for me, as almost every session had some valuable take away that will serve both the Museum and myself moving forward. The IMLS Funding session was particularly timely having just finished an NEH Preservation Assistance Grant application and knowing that we are considering an IMLS Museums for America application. The Rights and Reproductions session was a great refresher and left me excited for the new handbook. But in the end, I find myself continuing to circle back to materials from two sessions in particular and how they might even be interrelated — Welcoming All Visitors: Enhancing Access and Inclusion and Are Your Collections Lazy? How to Kick the Freeloaders out and make the best ones work for you.

Local Ohio swag that I brought home to share…. Mostly.
Welcoming All Visitors focused on ways to create accessible and inclusive environments for visitors, particularly those with disabilities. I was particularly interested in this program after recently rolling myself through our main museum in one of our wheelchairs as a reminder of varied abilities, our long partnership with RCS Empowers (a local non-profit dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities and special needs) and my personal interest in accessibility. This session had an excellent mix of information related to physical accessibility, along with means of creating access through programming, both specialized programming and simple accommodations for general programming.

Are Your Collections Lazy? centered on changing the discussions regarding collections from the amount of objects (quantity) to discussions regarding the way such items are used (quality) and how focusing just on numbers can create burdens on institutions. In many ways, this is a FUNDAMENTAL shift for collections conversations. Specific examples from the session included an institution whose change of mission should have immediately triggered a review of the collection it held (and frankly, a conscious realignment of the collection to match) and a new method of tiering collections based on mission, availability, story to tell, etc. being explored as a means of allocating preservation efforts. I felt this session was particularly pertinent to institutions such as the one I work at, a historical museum charged with collecting a variety of materials to represent a broad and diverse history of a community.

I left the Welcoming All Visitors with a few thoughts of smaller, inexpensive steps we could take to create a more inclusive environment. Sensory guest kits, including ear protection and lightly shaded sunglasses, would be easy to assemble and could make guests more comfortable as they visit the Museum. Touch bags designed to accompany particular exhibits were another idea that seemed approachable as did large print label copy (particularly since we produce our labels in house).

As I enjoyed the Are Your Collections Lazy session, my mind began to consider how items that perhaps would otherwise be dubbed as “lazy” might be used to create access and inclusion for a wider community of visitors. I know we have at least a dozen typewriters—why could one not become a piece to be used in a purposeful effort to offer an expanded experience. It would not even have to be in just a specialized programming setting—the difference between typing on a computer and typewriter is enormous, as I was often reminded when watching my former boss “hammer” away on his keyboard.

What struck me as I reflected on both of these sessions was finding ways to create more inclusive and accessible experiences in our institution may only be a few steps away from my desk. We already have a strong hands-on collection, some of which was at one time part of the Museum’s core collection. Duplication, lack of provenance and even specific acquisitions made certain objects candidates for use in our Full Day Student Education Programs that provide over 15000 hours of service each year. Using that model as a basis, we may be able to find additional ways of providing ALL of our visitors with multi-sensory visit opportunities.

While I always gain a ton of “food for thought” from the sessions of the conference, I must admit that my favorite part is the chance to talk with colleagues. As the only collection staff member of our institution, professional development opportunities and conferences are one of the critical ways that I have been able to explore and make connections with colleagues to gather great ideas on implementing projects. Discussions of the importance of professional development, translation of tools designed for archival materials to use with three dimensional material culture objects and “down in the trenches” stories peppered every day of the conference. The opportunity to reconnect face to face with many of my colleagues that I so often “see” via email was wonderful. Those Cincinnati style old-fashioneds were pretty impressive too!
News from the Midwest

Help Needed

We have had a few changes to our roster of state representatives, with two representatives stepping down from their positions: Teri Van Dorston is stepping down from the Iowa position and Elizabeth Frozena is relocating, so she will not be our Wisconsin representative any longer.

Thank you both for all of your work with the MRC!

If you are interested in being more involved with the MRC and you are located in Iowa or Wisconsin, please contact Rachel Vargas (vargasr@msu.edu or 517-884-065) with your interest in either of the positions. State representatives are encouraged to build up membership in MRC and to host local networking and informational sessions in their state, which can be sponsored by the MRC. We can also put you in touch with a current state representative if you have questions as to what is involved in taking on one of the positions.

Indiana ▪ Lana Newhart-Kellen, State Rep

2016 Indiana Bicentennial

Next year, 2016, the State of Indiana will be celebrating its bicentennial. The State has been planning for this since December 2011 when the Indiana General Assembly created the bicentennial commission. Indiana also dedicated $20 million in state funding to support the Bicentennial Nature Trust and the Lilly Endowment contributed an additional $10 million grant. This program has made it possible to increase land holdings at the state and local parks at a 1:1 match. As of January 27, 2015, nearly 6,000 acres had been added to publicly accessible green spaces.

Additionally, there are a host of events, celebrations and dedications that will be going on throughout Indiana. Nearly 100 pages of listings can be found at www.Indiana2016.org. Some institutions have already kicked off the celebration, including the Indiana State Museum exhibition of quilts from its collection in 19 Stars of Indiana’s Present and Past, open through October 4 of this year.

Conner Prairie, Fishers

At Conner Prairie, two major projects are opening in 2016. The first is a complete refreshing of the William Conner home (1823) interior. The last time the house went through this was 20 years ago. Since then, the wallpaper has faded and some of the floorboards are causing problems in the kitchen. Physically, the home will be painted, along with reinforcing the stair banister and upgrading/replacing the HVAC system and existing electrical. The interpretation of the house will also be overhauled and while the information itself will not be changing – the delivery style will.

The second project at Conner Prairie is the installation of a treehouse. This addition will allow visitors to explore the natural resources that flank the White River and address the use of those resources by the American
Indian and white settlers.

**Greentown Historical Society, Greentown**
Greentown Historical Society’s exhibit *Fashion Flashback* will end December 13. It features handmade items of the late 19th century, a display of wedding attire, children’s clothing as well as adult clothing, and other items of interest.

**Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis**
To mark Indiana’s 200th birthday, IMA will feature the exhibition *19 Stars of Indiana Art: A Bicentennial Celebration* from May 15, 2016 through January 8, 2017. This exhibition celebrates 19 artists across different media all of whom were born, raised or worked in Indiana. The exhibition will explore these artists’ impact on the regional, national or international art scene, as well as the relationship with the state and each other. Represented in the exhibition are well known Hoosier artists such as Robert Indiana, Bill Blass, and William Merritt Chase, as well as less known ones like the Overbeck sisters and William Majors.

**Johnson County Museum of History, Franklin**
*A Perfect Likeness* just ended a successful run, appealing to people of all ages and backgrounds. The exhibit focused on identifying and caring for common 19th and early 20th century photographic processes and formats such as the daguerreotype, ambrotype, tintype and carte de visite. *A Perfect Likeness* was sponsored by IHS and the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, New York.

**Peeler Art Center, DePauw University, Greencastle**
For the first time, DePauw University’s art collection is on its way to being housed in a central location at the Richard E. Peeler Art Center. Of the over 3,400 objects in the University collection, nearly one-third of the collection has been stored for over seven years in the basement of the Emison Building and Office of Admission across campus. The storage space—housing African, Asian, and contemporary works—contains a compactor unit with four carriages, five sliding painting screens, five flat files, and several countertop tables.

The summer of 2015 marked the beginning of the move out of Emison. During the months of May and June, objects were carefully removed from compactor shelves and painting screens and were packed away to anticipate the future move to Peeler Art Center. Over the course of 2015 and 2016, the compactor and painting screens will be disassembled and reinstalled in the 2,200 square foot storage space at Peeler, along with flat files and countertops. Soon, works from local Indiana artists such as Richard Peeler and Glenn Cooper Henshaw, as well as works from national artists such a Harriet Whitney Frishmuth and Andy Warhol, will finally be located under the same roof as the rest of the collection. The completion of the Emison move will mean that all of the objects will be in the same building as the gallery staff—allowing for the collection to be more easily monitored and preserved—and as a benefit to the institution, that students and faculty will have easier access to view the collection and use objects as teaching tools in the classroom.

*Do you have exhibitions, events, acquisitions, or other news to share?*
Please let your State Representative or Tamara know! See the listing of MRC Board Members and State Representatives for contact information.
Missouri ▪ Stacie Peterson, State Rep

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City
The museum recently announced the gift of the Marion and Henry Bloch Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Art to the Museum, a collection of 29 masterpieces representing acquisitions assembled by the Blochs over a period of more than 20 years. The result of careful research and consultation with curators and conservators, the collection is a balanced selection of superlative works from the seminal artists of the Impressionist and Post Impressionist periods. Among the famed pieces are Édouard Manet’s *The Croquet Party*, Vincent van Gogh’s *Restaurant Rispal at Asnières*, Paul Gauguin’s *The Willow Tree* and Paul Cézanne’s *Man with a Pipe*.

Over There: Missouri & the Great War, Statewide
*Over There* is a statewide collaborative digitization project to document Missouri’s role in World War I that recently launched its final project website. The project is a digital collection of historical documents, photographs, artifacts, oral histories and other primary source material from museums, archives, libraries, and private collections from across Missouri. Contributing Institutions have provided free online access to their collections for educational and research purposes.

*Over There: Missouri & the Great War* serves to expand scholarship, interest, and knowledge of the First World War. The project began in preparation for the war’s centennial commemoration (2014-2018). Project staff are positioned through the state to digitize materials. Currently 28 museums, libraries, and archives have contributed collections to the project.

For more information, visit [http://missourioverthere.org/](http://missourioverthere.org/).

There is still time!!

If you haven’t taken the time yet, be sure to renew your MRC membership for 2015! It is quick! It is easy! It supports a great organization!

1. Fill out the Electronic Membership form. It is available from your State Representative or at the Midwest Registrars Committee website. Simply fill out the fields in the PDF file and save the document. E-mail the completed form to Jennifer Noffze, MRC Treasurer, at: jenn@childrensmuseum.org

2. Pay your dues online with PayPal (if you do not have an account, it is free to sign up and takes only minutes). From PayPal’s home page, click on “Send Money” and type jenn@childrensmuseum.org in the recipient field. You can pay from a bank account or credit card and you will receive a receipt when the payment is processed.

If you prefer mailing a check and completing a form by hand, you can still print the form (available at the end of the newsletter), make a check payable to MRC and mail it to the address noted on the membership form. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact MRC Treasurer Jennifer Noffze (jenn@childrensmuseum.org).
The newsletter of the Midwest Registrars Committee, the MRC Courier, is published three times a year. Members and Vendors, please submit news, articles, announcements, photographs, and ideas for future issues to Tamara Lange, Collection Coordinator/Registrar, Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum. Phone: 920-458-1103 or Email: tamara.lange@sheboygancounty.com
The Midwest Registrars Committee formed in 1978 to provide a forum for the exchange of information and methods among museum collections professionals and registrars in the Midwest region. The MRC fulfills this objective by promoting an atmosphere of mutual aid and cooperation and by promoting professional practices to benefit colleagues, the museum community, and members.

The MRC is affiliated with the Registrars Committee of the American Alliance of Museums (RC-AAM) and the Association of Midwest Museums (AMM).

Who can join?
Voting membership in the Midwest Registrars Committee is open to those museum personnel who support the objectives of the MRC and who reside in the Midwest region, including:

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Ohio
- Wisconsin

You don’t have to be a registrar! Collections managers, curators, volunteers, administrators, conservators, corporate registrars, students, or other collections care professionals are encouraged to join.

A non-voting membership is available for individuals who are associated with for-profit organizations such as shipping companies, customs brokers, insurance firms, and other suppliers of materials and services, and individuals who reside outside of the Midwest region.

Benefits of membership
- The Courier, MRC’s quarterly newsletter
- Funding assistance for state workshops
- Professional network
- Workshops
- Travel stipends to attend annual AMM Conference
- Membership directory

Membership fees
- Annual dues are $10.00 per year
- The membership period covers the calendar year (January 1 - December 31)
- Make checks payable to: Midwest Registrars Committee

Membership form (can type and save text)
Date: ____________________
Name: ____________________
Position: __________________
Institution: ________________
Address: __________________
City/State/Zip: ______________
Phone/fax: __________________
Email: ____________________

- New (voting $10)
- Renewal (voting $10)
- New (non-voting $10)
- Renewal (non-voting $10)

Make a difference!
Your active participation ensures the ongoing success of the MRC programs and activities. Please check the areas in which you would like to get involved:

- State representative
- Newsletter
- Programs/annual meeting
- Fundraising
- Membership

NEW FOR 2013—Renew and pay online!
Follow these two steps to renew your membership electronically:

1. Simply fill out this PDF form and e-mail it to jenn@childrensmuseum.org
2. To pay for your MRC dues via PayPal, login to your account, click “Send Money”, and send your dues to: jenn@childrensmuseum.org

-OR-

Send paper application and payment to: Jennifer Noffke
MRC Treasurer
The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis
P.O. Box 3000
Indianapolis, IN 46206