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Big Ideas for Small Museums

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE AASLH SMALL MUSEUMS AFFINITY GROUP

Volume 7, April 2012

About Us

To view past issues, visit the [AASLH Small Museums](#) webpage.

Welcome to the Small Museums Online Community!

By Maggie Marconi, Follett House Museum/Sandusky Library and AASLH Small Museum Committee

If you're looking for a place to network with your peers, find answers to questions, explore opportunities to learn, and more, you've come to the right place. The Small Museums Affinity Group of the American Association for State and Local History created the [Small Museums Online Community](#).

This affinity group, formed in 2006, has grown by leaps and bounds. One of the committee's first activities was to assess the needs of small museums. The Needs Assessment determined that people who work in small museums need and want practical, content-based training to increase professionalism and pursue nationally accepted standards. A key need was for networking and collaboration, as well as increased knowledge about finding new and stable sources of funding. Barriers to fulfilling these needs included locating the right resources, the affordability of the resources, and that good old standby—time. In reviewing the needs assessment, the committee determined that an online community for small museums would help meet a number of these needs.

The Small Museums Online Community, or SMOC, will serve the needs of you and your colleagues. It's a true gem, so let's check it out! (If you'd like to take a brief, five-minute video tour of the Small Museums Online Community, in addition to reading about it below, please visit <http://j.mp/SMOC1stEvent>.)

It's easy to become a member of this community. Simply select a user name and a password. Once you join, you'll

Big Ideas for Small Museum is a quarterly email just for people who work in small museums. Through this publication, the AASLH Small Museums Committee shares resources that are pre-tested and approved by actual small museum professionals. The articles are brief and practical - giving you the shortcuts you need when don't have enough time, money, or people.

AASLH Resources

To sign up to receive Big Ideas for Small Museums, join the AASLH Small Museums Affinity Group. The Affinity Group is not a membership organization and there is no fee to join. Go to the [Small Museums](#) webpage and click on "Join the Small Museums Affinity Group" at the top.



become part of a growing network of small museum folks all over the nation. As a member, you can post or comment on topics in the discussion forum, comment on blog posts, and use all the features under the [Connect](#) tab to keep up with your museum colleagues.

At the [Home](#) page, you'll see the latest blog post at the top, along with a selection of recent blog posts. The authors cover timely topics pertinent to our field.

Click on the [About](#) tab, and you'll find the history and goals of the affinity group, as well as a roster of current committee members.

By clicking [Connect](#), you'll meet your small museum colleagues across the country. Here you'll find:

- [Groups](#) – You can join or create groups covering a variety of specialty subjects here. Want to find colleagues who work at, or share an interest in, railroad museums? Who's also going through the StEPS program? Do you have an idea for a group that would help you and your colleagues? Please feel free to propose a new group.
- [Member Directory](#) - You'll see here the growing number of your colleagues who have joined the SMOC.
- [Member Activity](#) - This will show you recent activity in the community and is similar to the "news feed" in Facebook or other social networks.

[Discuss](#) - This section of the SMOC is a goldmine! If you have a question – whether it's practical or philosophical – this forum is a safe environment for you to ask your peers. Please feel free to participate in these discussions. They're becoming a lifeline of information for our field.

After you've read through the latest discussion topics, click on the [Find Resources](#) tab. You'll find a number of useful items here:

- [Link Library](#) - Do you have a question? The answer may be just a click away. These online resources are organized by the main categories found in the Needs Assessment. If you know of a link that you believe would be a valuable addition to the link library, please [submit a link](#).
- [Key Small Museums Committee Documents](#) - These are some of the committee's guiding pieces, including the Needs Assessment and the committee's research in creating its definition of a small museum. You'll also find the committee's quarterly e-newsletter, *Big Ideas for Small Museums*. The back issues are here for you to read. You can also sign up to receive upcoming issues.
- [Scholarships](#) - Does a lack of funds keep you from attending AASLH's Annual Meeting? The Small

[JOIN AASLH TODAY!](#)

Not an **AASLH** member? Check out benefits that our members enjoy. **AASLH** is the **ONLY** national organization dedicated to the field of state and local history. It is a membership association - A home for institutions and people who work in the field of state and local history. AASLH provides leadership and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful.



Small Museum Toolkit now available at [AltaMira Press](#)

Upcoming AASLH Workshops

Collections Management & Practices

June 23-14, 2012 in New Orleans, LA hosted by the Historic New Orleans Collection. The cost is \$250 for members/ \$325 for nonmembers; \$20 discount if fee is received by May 16.

Participants will learn about their institution's responsibility toward its collection, the necessary policies and procedures, and the best practices of collection management. More information is available on the [AASLH Workshop](#) web page.

Museums Committee believes in the power of professional development and networking. Every year, it raises enough scholarship funds to bring at least two representatives from small museums to the AASLH Annual Meeting. Will you be one of the scholarship recipients?

[FAQ](#) – Look here for answers to many of your questions, including the committee’s definition of a small museum.

At the [Contact](#) tab, you can email us. Have a question or a concern? We’d love to hear from you!

Finally, at the [Blog](#) tab, you’ll find a complete listing of blog entries.

So, you’ve joined the Small Museums Online Community, found a few colleagues, read the latest blog, and posted a question in the discussion forum. Now what? For starters, please be sure to check out the narrow black bar along the top of the page. Here you’ll find:

- **My Account** – You can change your settings here, so you can get as many or as few notifications as you’d like. You can invite colleagues, too.
- **Notifications** – If you want to keep up-to-date on your groups’ activities, be sure to set all of the group settings to “Yes.” Under the individual group settings, please change each one from the default “No email” to “All email.”

To watch a five-minute video tour of all the additional features you can enjoy as a member, please visit <http://j.mp/SMOC1stEvent>.

Any questions *for* the community? Please post it to the forum. Any questions *about* the community? Please send us an email through the [Contact](#) tab.

We look forward to seeing you at the Small Museums Online Community!

Collections Camp: Military History

June 27-29, 2012 in Atlanta, GA hosted by the Atlanta History Center. The cost is \$280 for members/ \$355 for nonmembers; \$20 discount if fee is received by May 16.

This three-day workshop will focus on the care, conservation, and exhibition of military artifacts in museum collections, specifically from the 19th-century. [Click here](#) for more information.

Heritage Preservation C2C Online Community

Heritage Preservation has released their new schedule for C2C Chats. The new schedule topics include activities for May Day, selecting a conservator, collections security and many more. Complete details are available at the [Heritage Preservation](#).



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