

CONFESSIONS OF A MUSEUM PROFESSIONAL 3.0: *THE QUARANTINE EDITION*

Presented by the Group of Ontario Emerging Museum Professionals Committee

Panelists:

Sarah Chu, Acting Manager of Learning, Royal Ontario Museum

Stacy McLennan, Collections Curator & Registrar, Region of Waterloo Museums

Maria Piacente, VP Exhibitions, Events, & Project Management, Lord Cultural Resources

Andrea Wilson, Curator, Craigeleith Heritage Depot

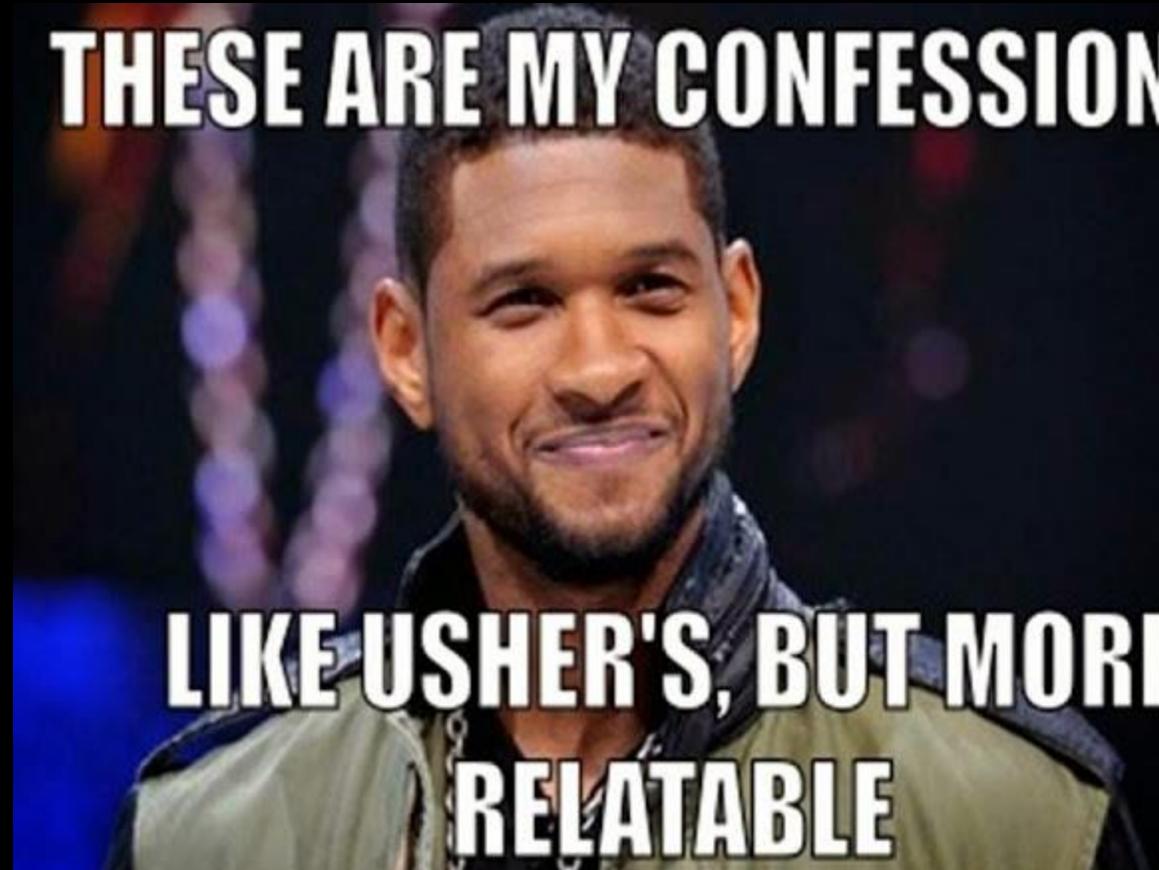
Moderators:

Diane Pellicone, Vice Chair, GOEMP Committee

Madeline Smolarz, Chair, GOEMP Committee

Introduction

THESE ARE MY CONFESSIONS...



**LIKE USHER'S, BUT MORE
RELATABLE**

Topics

- 1. Learning and Programming for Online Audience Engagement**
- 2. Collecting and Archiving During COVID-19**
- 3. How to Reopen and Recover After the Pandemic**

Today I made bread during a
department-wide Zoom update
and I didn't feel guilty.

- Anonymous

Learning and Programming for Online Audience Engagement



"I realized that you don't have to be physically IN a museum to make a positive difference in the museum world when working from home. Self-isolation has caused me to re-evaluate and reconsider my work and the sector from new angles!"

"I was always wondering how to engage people who couldn't come to the museum either because of financial constraints or physical disability. With COVID-19, I've learned that there are ways of engaging these audiences, and I want to learn more about how to do that. It's not right that certain segments of our population get left out of the learning of their history."

"Since being temporarily laid off during the current pandemic, I've been through a whole range of emotions. At once, I feel both extremely connected to our sector through social media and personal messages - but I also feel substantially disconnected, knowing that I'm unable to work on any projects or contribute anything on behalf of my institution. Some days I want to throw myself into work or personal development, and other days all I feel I can manage is getting through a day. I don't yet know what museums are going to look like on the other side of this, but the best thing we can do on a human level is lookout and support one another."

"In the past I've sometimes joked with museum colleagues, "Gee, if only there were no people in the museum, how much better it would be - we could have it all to ourselves to enjoy!" Now that they have been empty for two months, how I long to see those galleries full again (safely of course)."

Collecting and Archiving During COVID-19

LOOK AT THIS STUFF

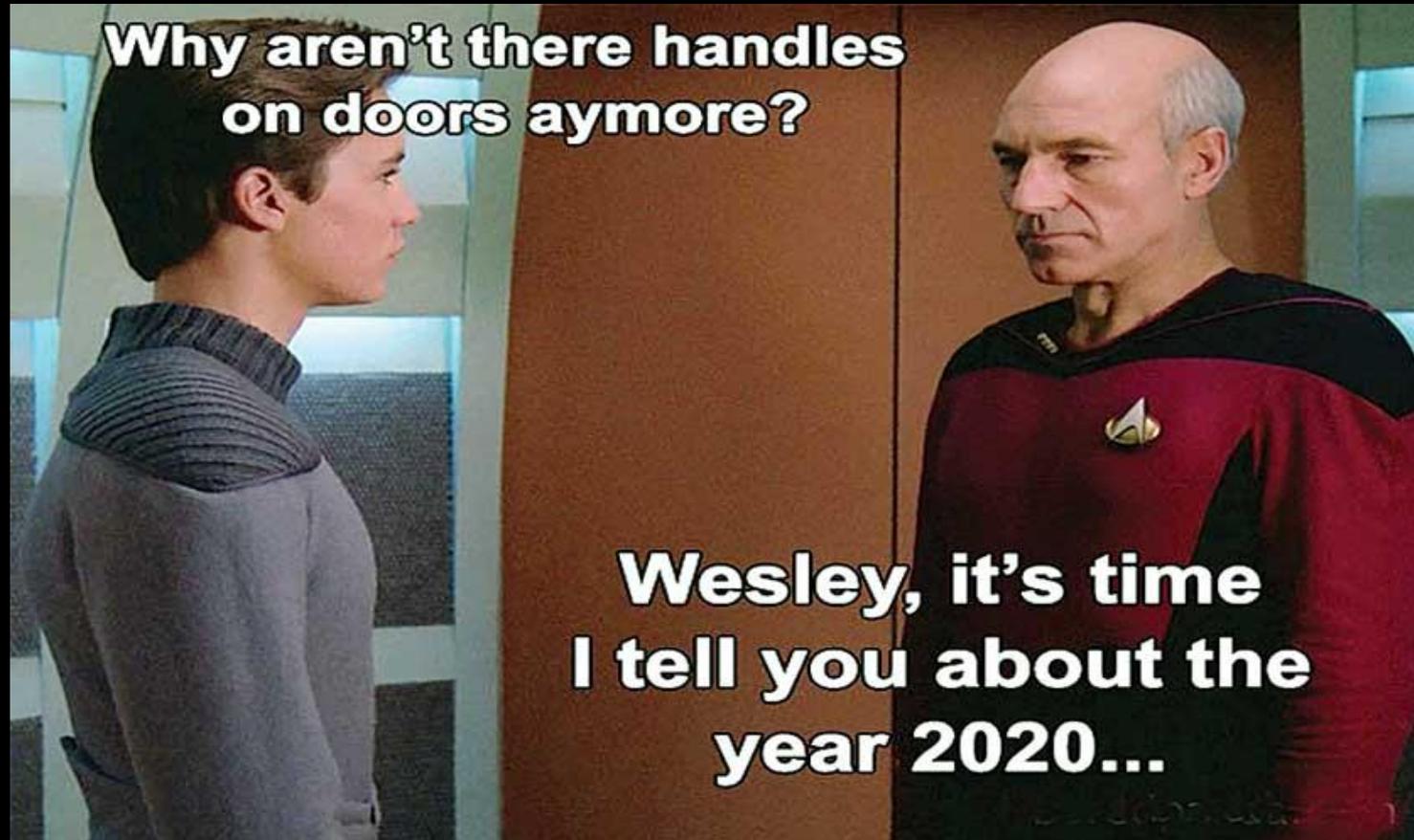
ISN'T IT NEAT?!!

Lucky enough to be a collections manager who can still go into work
- I am getting more work done during our COVID-19 closure than ever
before! No meetings, no coworkers with inane questions, just me and
the stuff.

I wonder how history will remember the COVID-19 pandemic. I keep reading about museums that are gathering objects for their own collections, that document life in real time during the pandemic. This is pretty forward thinking of them. But I suspect it is equally challenging to pick and choose the right kind of material, while smack in the middle of a global event. Not to mention the sheer volume of objects that will undoubtedly take up precious storage space!! Is now the right time to collect or should we let time do the pruning for us?

Sometimes I wake up from a bad 3AM dream imagining fires or other disasters befalling the collections and databases.

How to Reopen and Recover After the Pandemic



I think we have an opportunity to make museums better. We were forced to realize that maybe our online presence wasn't as good as it could have been. The era of the blockbuster is likely done. And museum visitors are probably going to be locals. This is an opportunity to showcase our local culture as well as our own collections. This may also be a chance to take things slower, to bring the best visitor experience to our guests. They're the ones keeping the doors open, after all!

I dream of being a permanent employee at my organization. At times, I could see it happening, but now with the pandemic I worry about the future and the availability of jobs. I have been in the museum industry for almost 10 years and I have yet to achieve that permanent unicorn job. Going forward, how will the pandemic affect contract workers? Will this further cement the gig economy in museum world? I hope not.

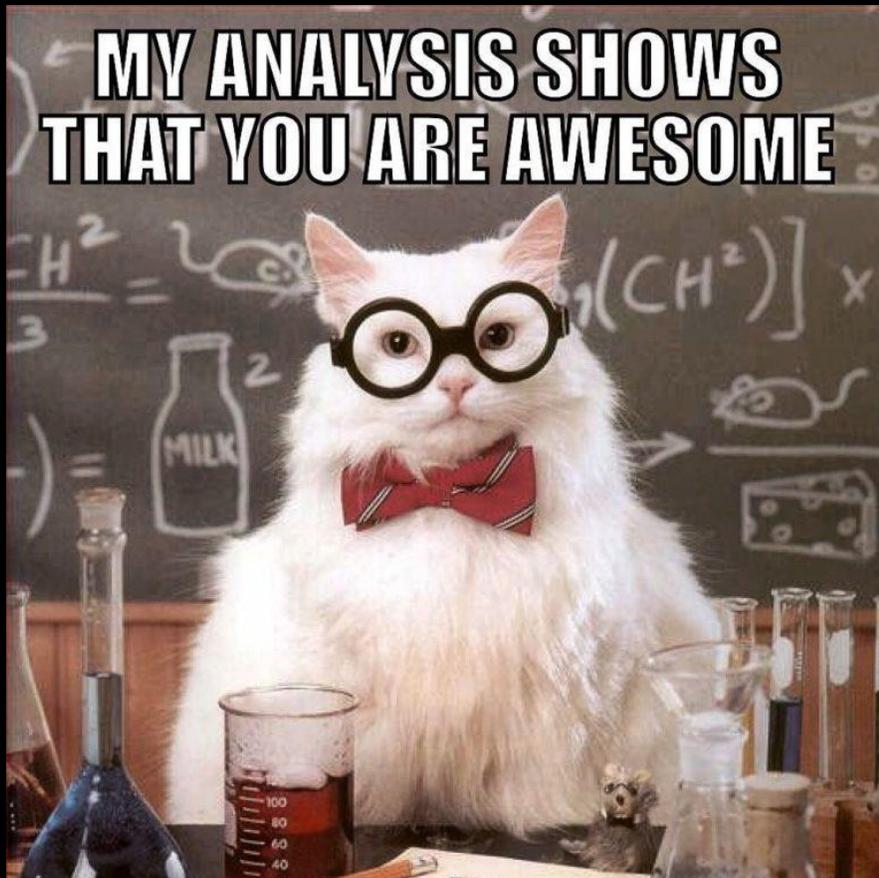
Working for a big organization and being laid off during COVID-19 has been thoroughly demoralizing. I've never felt like more of a number or statistic, a means to an end when it comes to balancing the bottom line. However, I've also never been more motivated to strengthen my connections with friends and family. Upper management would do well to

I was 100% unprepared for the level of social work and grief I would experience in this field. The volunteers at my organization are mostly seniors. Many of them live in our community, far away from their families, and we have become their support systems as they age. They are more than just volunteers – they are our friends. But I was never prepared for having to grieve their loss. I wish that when I was in school, there would have been guest speakers like grief counselors or social workers who could have addressed these aspects of working with community volunteers. I feel like that would have been helpful.

Over time, the difficult conversations become easier, and my heart heals. I am blessed with wonderful memories of so many beautiful human beings who have taught me about the joy of living. I just wish I knew how much it was going to hurt when I have to say goodbye.

- Anonymous

In Conclusion



Keep sending us your postcards at:

GOEMP (Group of Ontario Emerging Museum Professionals)
184 Humberside Avenue
Toronto, ON M6P 1K5

OR online at:

[https://goemp.wordpress.com/about/
confessions-of-a-museum-professional/](https://goemp.wordpress.com/about/confessions-of-a-museum-professional/)

And don't forget to follow us at:

 @museumconfessions

 @Group of Ontario Emerging Museum Professionals



And don't forget!

Register for tomorrow's OMA #MuseumsConnectON Member Check-in (May 27, 2020 at 10:00am).

Weekly sessions are an opportunity for museum professionals to connect with the OMA and colleagues from across the province.

This week's meeting will be co-hosted with the GOEMP Committee. We hope to continue today's discussions and talk about anything else we may have missed!



**Folks, be safe and
stay healthy out there.**

Thank You!