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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CURATOR PROGRAM AT SAMA,
JOHNSTOWN FLOOD MUSEUM TO FOCUS ON JOHNSTOWN
FLOOD OF 1889***

Loretto – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto’s *Conversations with the Curator* program will continue with programs at two venues on Thursday, June 11. SAMA Curator for Visual Arts Dr. Scott Dimond will present “Documenting Disaster: Photographers and the Great Johnstown Flood of 1889” at SAMA’s Loretto Museum and the Johnstown Flood Museum. The SAMA program begins at noon and includes a box lunch. The lecture at the Johnstown Flood Museum will be held at 7 p.m.

In “Documenting Disaster,” Dimond will discuss the catastrophic flood that destroyed Johnstown on May 31, 1889 – one of the most widely photographed events of the nineteenth century. Within a day or two after the disaster, the first of many professional photographers arrived to document the harrowing scene. Although historians have tended to dismiss these cameramen as sensation-seeking opportunists, they performed a valuable service in their efforts to derive meaning from the chaos and devastation that horrified Americans across the country. In this talk, Dimond will examine photographs of the Flood and discuss the ways in which their creators strove to tell a coherent tale of suffering, courage and redemption.

“The Johnstown Flood affected the rest of the country in much the same way as 9/11 did,” said Dimond. “It was an extremely distressing event that provoked a deep search for the meaning and significance of human life. Those who covered the Flood, whether writers, artists, or photographers, attempted to suggest answers that would help people come to terms with the disaster and its aftermath. In this lecture, I will be looking specifically at the photographers, who took in the scene of calamity and selectively chose subjects that would tell a story not only of tragedy, but also of faith, courage and remarkable resilience.”

Cost for *Conversations with the Curator* at SAMA-Loretto is \$25 per program, which includes lunch. Please R.S.V.P. to (814) 472-3920 by June 8. The next *Conversations with the Curator* program will be held September 17.

The lecture at the Johnstown Flood Museum, located at 304 Washington Street in Johnstown, is offered to the public at no charge. The Johnstown Flood Museum may be reached at (814) 539-1889.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is located on the campus of Saint Francis University. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum at (814) 472-3920 or visit www.sama-art.org.

Coordinating this event is the Cambria County Historical Society in Ebensburg, open Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call (814) 472-6674 or visit www.cambriacountyhistorical.com.