

### Greetings from your Chair!

In the November issue of *Update* you learned about the sessions that CurCom is sponsoring for the AAM Annual Meeting in Boston, in an article written by Bruce MacLeish. I would like to tell you about the CurCom events that will occur at the Annual Meeting of 2006.

First will be the CurCom Reception, held this year at the Boston Public Library at 700 Boylston St. The reception is on Thursday April 27, 6-8.30 pm; there will be tours of the Library, which is a National Historic Landmark and holds paintings by Sargent, murals by de Chavannes and Abbey, and sculpture by Saint-Gaudens. These guided tours will be arranged on the half hour, so that you can enjoy the fine, light hors d'oeuvres, a classical duet of violin and cello, and meet with friends from across the country. One complementary drink ticket for beer or wine is included, plus all soda. The reception is sponsored by Art-Care, an online conservation/appraisal group, and The Preservation Society of Newport County. Two representatives from each organization will attend the reception; plan to join all of us and celebrate! From there you can head back to the Hynes Convention Center to 'A Toast & a Twirl,' AAM's centennial celebration, from 9-11 pm. Hurry – only 75 tickets are available for the CurCom event.

The CurCom Business Luncheon will be held at the Sheraton Boston Hotel on Saturday April 29, 12:15-1:45 pm. This year we will have representatives from Art-Care as speakers, in addition to our business meeting and luncheon menu. This is a chance to get to know a smaller group of people more intimately. Officers will have annual reports to relay to attendees. The Nominating Committee Chair, Ron Potvin, will announce the newly-elected Members-at-large to the CurCom Board, and Fellowship Chair, James Burns, will introduce the two Fellowship winners.

A new brochure is available in Museum Expo, at the AAM Center. Pick one up and please do let me know if you like it.

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Linda Eppich  
The Preservation Society of Newport County

BALLOT PAPER  
ENCLOSED

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## CURATORS' STANDING PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE OF AAM

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| 2006 Nominating<br>Committee Chair             | Ron Potvin ( <i>see listing</i> )   |
| 2006 Program Co-chairs                         | Jim Hoobler ( <i>see listing</i> )<br>Bruce MacLeish ( <i>see listing</i> )   |
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Thanks to all our contributors and writers for this issue of *Update*:

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As preparations continue for the 2006 Annual Meeting, I'd like to thank so many of you for contributing to this issue of *Update*. This is the first issue in which I have received several more articles than can be accommodated. *Update* is produced on a very modest budget, and unfortunately we are currently unable to expand the publication to include additional material. However, any suggestions or practical assistance to support the further development of our publication would be gratefully received.

In the meantime, the next issue of *Update* after the Annual Meeting is going to have some wonderful articles!

I'd also like to draw your attention to the ballot paper for the CurCom Board member election on page 13 of this issue. This is the first time we've included a ballot paper which can be clipped out of *Update*. This will help to keep our mail costs down - please help to make this election a success by posting it as soon as you receive your copy of *Update*.

Looking forward to meeting many of you in Boston.

Deborah Tout-Smith

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## SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP

*Update* is the periodic newsletter distributed to members of CurCom. It is also available on-line at <http://www.curcom.org>.

CurCom (Curators' Committee) is a Standing Professional Committee (SPC) of the American Association of Museums. All SPC members must join the AAM. Dues for CurCom (\$10.00) are payable in addition to AAM dues.

Membership is obtained through:

Membership Department  
American Association of Museums  
1575 Eye St. N.W., Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005

Phone (202) 289 9132; fax (202) 289 6578;  
email [membership@aam-us.org](mailto:membership@aam-us.org).

## Institutional Member Alert!

For those institutional members who will be renewing their membership of CurCom this year, please be aware that AAM often does not have a formal name attached to your membership.

It would be helpful to AAM (and to those of us at CurCom, too) to have a name so that the newsletter can be sent to persons who will read and appreciate the *CurCom Update*. Just add the name of that person to your renewal notice, under the CurCom section.

# How to Move a Museum (and Live to Tell About It!)

Cindy Olsen, Curator of Collections and Exhibits,  
Studebaker National Museum

## New Accreditation Resource Kit Available

The completely revised third edition of the Accreditation Resource Kit is now available from the AAM Bookstore. The kit is filled with tools to provide information about accreditation standards and benefits, demystify the process, determine whether your museum is ready to apply, guide its preparation, and establish plans and goals. It is a important resource for museums interested in becoming accredited as well as for consultants, students, new museums, and any institution that wants to move to the next level of professionalization.

For more information or to order, visit [www.aam-us.org/bookstore](http://www.aam-us.org/bookstore) or contact [bookstore@aam-us.org](mailto:bookstore@aam-us.org) or (202) 289 9127.

– *Aviso*, February 2006

In March 2003, the Studebaker National Museum Board of Trustees and the City of South Bend voted final approval on a long-sought plan to construct a new museum building. The 79 year-old building that had housed the museum for 21 years lacked air conditioning, had an inadequate heating system, and flooded with each heavy rain. After working with an architect for six months to design a suitable new facility, the curatorial staff began planning its portions of the move.

Our first task was to design new exhibits to fill the 25,000 square feet of planned gallery space. The Studebaker National Museum (SNM) hired an outside exhibit design firm and the curatorial staff began writing storylines, and choosing photographs and artifacts from our extensive collections. After this process was well underway, the staff members turned their attention to the physical move of the museum's collections.

The SNM's collection consists of 25 horse-drawn vehicles dating from 1825 to 1920, 106 automobiles dating from 1902 to 2002, and approximately 4,000 non-vehicle objects ranging from a 20-seat oak boardroom table to scores of tiny lapel pins. With only five months to the grand opening, the three full-time and three part-time curatorial staff members need outside help. SNM budgeted funds to hire professional movers to assist with packing and moving the non-vehicle collection. Our dedicated volunteers donated the equipment and labor to move the vehicles.

Through careful planning and hard work, our new building opened as scheduled on November 1 2005. Now that our move is complete, I have advice to offer other museums faced with a move.

## 1. Be organized

Organization was the key our success. We had to remain aware of what was moving, when it was going, and where it belonged in the new building. I developed a master move schedule to record which volunteers and staff members were scheduled to help each day, when the movers were coming, what was being moved, and what equipment was required. We had to be sure that we had enough people on both ends to handle the outgoing and incoming items.

We have 131 vehicles to move, and because few of them

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operate, we needed trained hands to push carriages and cars into position on both ends, and to load and unload the truck in between. SNM curatorial assistants numbered each vehicle with regard to where it belonged in the new building. The cars were staged in numerical order at the old building to ensure smooth loading. The last 22 vehicles were moved in just eight hours to meet our schedule of opening events. Each vehicle had to be transported, unloaded, and placed in the exhibits without breaking the flow of the teams. Without organization this would not have been possible.

## **2. If you can afford it, get outside help**

We used what I call the 'Goldilocks' approach to finding an exhibit design firm. We interviewed three. One was too small to meet our ambitious schedule. One was too big, telling us that we would have to push our opening date back six months in order to meet our goals. (We disagreed.) The final one we interviewed was just right. Project Arts & Ideas was a smaller firm with a great deal of experience. They were accustomed to working with small staffs, big tasks, and tight deadlines. They designed our exhibits, assisted in editing text, and sub-contracted and managed the graphic design and fabrication firms necessary to create the vibrant new exhibits. Finding the right firm took some time, but it was well worth it.

SNM also hired a professional moving company. Again we did a great deal of interviewing before finding the right firm. We required our chosen company to use the same packing and moving crew every day, and the curatorial staff trained those workers in the proper handling of our collections. The curatorial staff packed the most valuable and fragile objects while the movers packed the rest. We developed a rotating schedule to ensure that at least two curatorial staff members were present during all packing. This allowed questions from the movers to be answered quickly, expediting the packing process. The attention to detail benefited both parties. SNM's collection was moved safely, and the moving company was hired to move another museum in 2006 based on their success with us.

## **3. Recruit good volunteers**

The SNM move would not have been possible without the help of a crew of loyal volunteers. They enabled SNM to move all 131 vehicles for free. The museum used its own enclosed trailer to move the horse-drawn vehicles. The automobiles were moved on rollback trucks donated for the task by volunteers. Other volunteers assisted with the loading of vehicles at the old building and unloading and placing of the cars at the new facility. Our well-trained volunteers executed

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### **Celebrate the Year of the Museum with Public Television**

To celebrate 2006 as the Year of the Museum, AAM is partnering with Great Museums Television to produce a one-hour documentary special about museums for broadcast on public television stations in markets across the country in May of 2006.

This special, 'The Museum in America: Riches, Rivals, and Radicals,' will explore the unique story of the rise of museums in America over the last 100 years. In conjunction with the broadcast of the film, museums are encouraged to develop collaborative community outreach projects with their local public television stations.

In addition, the Partnership for a Nation of Learners (PNL), a leadership initiative of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), has announced that it will sponsor a series of five monthly one-hour professional development web casts designed to help local museums, libraries, and public broadcasters work collaboratively to address local needs.

For information on the webcasts visit <http://www.partnershipforlearners.org/webcastsconf.php>.

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the process flawlessly.

#### **4. Make sure you can communicate between the two locations**

SNM staff learned this the hard way. The only way for us to communicate between the buildings was through cellular phones. Our minutes evaporated quickly! In retrospect, it would have been much simpler to have used two-way radios to monitor our progress.

#### **5. Ask the experts**

My last bit of advice is to enlist the help of your fellow curators. They can be your best source of assistance and support when undertaking such a massive project. Remember also to keep your sense of humor.

Moving a museum requires a lot of work and a few tears, but the end result is always worth the cost!

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## **AMM and CurCom to Collaborate with MRC on Workshop**

The Association of Midwest Museums (AMM) and CurCom will collaborate with the Midwest Registrars Committee (MRC) to sponsor the workshop 'Taking the Show on the Road – a Nuts and Bolts Approach to Planning and Coordinating Traveling Exhibitions'. The workshop is scheduled for Friday June 9 2006 at the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois, and will address the myriad challenges in planning and managing a traveling exhibition. The workshop is scheduled on Friday so that registrants can plan a weekend visit to the Windy City. John Russick, Curator of History at the Chicago Historical Society, will be one of the speakers.

The registration fee is \$60 for AMM, MRC, or CurCom members and \$75 for non-members. The registration fee includes a tour of the Tut exhibit (lunch not included). Registrations and tickets are limited and available on a first-come, first-serve basis!

A registration form is available to be downloaded on the AAM website, [www.midwestmuseums.org](http://www.midwestmuseums.org), or registration can be completed online at the AMM web site. For more information, contact AMM at (314) 746 4557, or email to [midwestmuseums@aol.com](mailto:midwestmuseums@aol.com). AMM is securing special rates at a hotel in Chicago for the workshop. Information on the accommodations will be made available upon a confirmed registration.

A special attraction of the workshop 'Taking the Show on the Road' will be a tour of the Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs exhibition at the Field Museum.

Robin Groesbeck, one of the curators involved in the project at the Field Museum, will discuss how the Tut exhibition became a possibility and then arrange for tours of the exhibition.

## Divide and Conquer? Sharing Building Space with Other Organizations

Nathan Stalvey, Curator of Temporary Exhibits and Graphic Design, McKissick Museum

For many museum professionals, the thought of having another organization or institution come into their building and share their space is unthinkable. Many museums already struggle with issues of storage and exhibition space. To have another organization move in, who may have a completely different mission and focus, can easily lead to lower morale and dissension, let alone reduce the importance of the museum to its visitors and/or membership. Unfortunately, the sharing of building space with other institutions is something that happens quite often. To say that there is a common answer or a simple solution to such a dilemma would be erroneous. With each museum that has to deal with this situation, their problems differ greatly depending on the kind of organization they have to share their space with and how amenable all parties in the building are to working together.

In Columbia, South Carolina, three of the city's museums share their space with other institutions, each with varying results. The Columbia Mills building houses the State Museum, the Confederate Relic Room, and the South Carolina Department of Revenue. Two of these organizations are museums which, although have different focuses, share the same goal of attracting visitors. According to Sarah Wooton, Collections Manager at the Confederate Relic Room, the experience has actually been beneficial to them.

Thus far, the experience of sharing space has been positive. The Relic Room and State Museum have a nice collaboration that offers visitors joint tickets at a discounted price. Visitors see this as a real value and we sell and continue to see an increasing number of joint tickets. Some employees at the Department of Revenue occasionally check out the SC Confederate Relic Room as a result of our mutual proximity. Our annual attendance continues to rise each year and the museum hopes this will persist as it develops more programs and exhibition offerings.'

In this case, the sharing of space has been good for all parties. The State Museum and Confederate Relic Room both work together to bring in visitors and increase attendance. Although the Department of Revenue also shares this building and, obviously, has a different mission, their primary goal is not to bring in visitors and thus does not compete with them for attendance.

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*'Many museums already struggle with issues of storage and exhibition space. To have another organization move in, who may have a completely different mission and focus, can easily lead to lower morale and dissension...'*

Nathan Stalvey

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## The Museum of Online Museums

A small Chicago design firm has established a web resource for museums. Coudal Partners' Museum of Online Museums includes links to museums that want to foster their online presence.

The web site is divided into three sections: the Museum Campus, contains links to museums with an interesting online profile; the Permanent Collection contains links to exhibits with particular design and advertising interest; and Galleries, Exhibitions and Shows provides an eclectic list of links to exhibitions and galleries, many hosted by personal web pages.

The Museum of Online Museums can be viewed at <http://www.coudal.com/moom.php>.

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But what if you are sharing space with an organization that has a different mission than your museum but also has a primary goal of bringing in visitors? Besides the tension behind the divvying of space, there is also the risk of alienating the visitor by forcing them to choose one over the other. This was certainly the case with the University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum, when the University decided that they must share their space with the University Visitor Center.

Neither McKissick nor the Visitor Center wanted to see this move happen. From the very beginning, there was tension between the two departments and a great deal of miscommunication (and often a complete lack of communication altogether). Dividing space seemed more like a country on the losing end of a war at the negotiating table. Offices were relocated, control of the auditorium went more into the hands of the Visitor Center, the largest of the galleries were lost, and the Visitor Center now controlled the front desk, thus serving as the first people visitors meet when they enter the building.

For some time, the respective staffs pointed fingers at each other when problems arose and both organizations had little to do with each other. Rarely were visitors told about the Museum and its exhibitions. Over time, however, both the Visitor Center and McKissick began to realize that, despite their differences, their goal was to bring people into the building. The move had happened and there was no changing it. Both organizations began to realize that working together would prove to be very beneficial. The Visitor Center would now have the visitation that the Museum enjoyed, and McKissick would see an increase in visitation with all of the prospective students and their families now coming through their doors. Though there is still some tension between the two organizations, both have finally taken the steps to resolve that tension and work together. Visitor Center staff have now been trained to inform visitors of the Museum and have received behind-the-scenes tours of the exhibitions and collections. Likewise, McKissick staff have made sure to inform the Visitor Center about upcoming events and exhibitions, as well as involve them in some cases.

Having to share space with another organization is a difficult situation to have to deal with. At first, no matter how much you try to work together with the other institution to ensure a smooth transition, there will ALWAYS be problems. No one likes to lose or share space, especially museums. There will always be tension when it comes to collection security, who has access to the building, visitor attendance, infighting between the staffs of both organizations, etc. The important thing to remember is that common ground can be found through compromise, even if the compromise is not everything both parties want, and finding

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how the sharing of space can be beneficial to both. To quote a line from a once popular comic strip, 'A good compromise leaves everyone mad.' By constantly trying to work together, making adjustments, and bringing in all staff members of both organizations, not just the directors, in the decision-making process, a peaceful coexistence CAN happen.

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And speaking of Expo, CurCom will not have a booth this year. But we could use some help to assist in the CARE/NAME/EdCom booths, which will feature all the entrants of the Exhibition Competition. I am staying at the Sheraton; contact me there if you can spend an hour in the booth to talk to people about the Competition, or email me in advance. Have a great Annual Meeting!

**Please do VOTE this year for the Board Members-at-large. Ron Potvin and his committee (includes Nathan Stalvey and Ellen Endslo) has the slate and ballot in this issue. This is an important facet of your membership: please do vote!**

I attended the exhibition of the Audubon elephant folio of *Birds of America* at the National Gallery of Art in DC – wonderful exhibition installation and interpretation, and one of only two of these portfolios in America. Philadelphia and the National Constitution Center are celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> birthday of Benjamin Franklin; Amsterdam and Leiden in the Netherlands have special exhibitions to celebrate Rembrandt's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday. And the music in Salsburg, Austria, should be spectacular this year as Austrians celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mozart! Jim Hoobler had a whirlwind trip to places to see exhibitions (see article in this issue).

Program Chair(s) will again be looking for session proposals for 2007 in Chicago – an early call for ideas! They can guide you through the process. I think Ellen is still looking for ideas of what you might have been doing 30 years ago; talk to her or send an email. Ask other Board Officers or Members-at-large for other information (listed in this issue).

Linda Eppich  
The Preservation Society of Newport County

### **Welcome Reception for International 2006 AAM Annual Meeting Attendees**

Meet fellow museum professionals from around the world and US museum professionals committed to including global perspectives in their own institutions' work at the first-ever International Attendees Reception at the 2006 AAM Annual Meeting in Boston.

Held 1-2 pm on April 27, the reception will provide the opportunity to network with international attendees, AAM/ICOM Board members, and participants in AAM's international programs. Everyone with an interest in international museum perspectives is encouraged to attend.

## America's Collections at Risk

According to the IMLS, roughly 190 million objects held by archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, and scientific organizations are in need of conservation treatment, according to the first comprehensive survey ever conducted of the conditions and preservation needs of our nation's collections. Conducted by Heritage Preservation in partnership with IMLS, the Heritage Health Index found that immediate action is needed to prevent the loss of millions of irreplaceable artifacts.

At a December 6 news conference in New York City, Heritage Preservation presented highlights from the survey report, 'A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections.' The report concluded that:

- 65% of collecting institutions have experienced damage to collections due to improper storage.
- 80% of US collecting institutions do not have an emergency plan that includes collections, with staff trained to carry it out.
- 40% of institutions have no funds allocated in their annual budgets for preservation / conservation.

'The collections of libraries, museums, and archives have incredible power,' said IMLS Acting Director Mary Chute. 'They can change both our minds and our hearts. They inform and inspire our children, advance scientific discovery, and help us celebrate achievement and resolve that our generation will do better. The Heritage Health Index can act as a call to action and inspire a new and renewed commitment to caring for America's collections.'

The report calls on individuals in the private sector and at all levels of government to assume responsibility for providing support that will allow collections to survive. It also calls on institutions to develop emergency plans to protect collections, to give priority to providing safe conditions for collections, and to assign responsibility for collections care to staff members.

For more survey results, including the complete report and recommendations for collection-holding institutions, visit the Heritage Health Index page of the Heritage Preservation Web site at <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/HHI>.

– IMLS press release, December 20 2005

# Some Exhibits of Note

Jim Hoobler, Tennessee State Museum

Recently I visited several very well-done exhibitions. In Chicago, the Field Museum's *Pompeii: Stories from an Eruption* was an exhibition focusing upon volcanism and the individual personal tragedies of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79.

Remarkably, it included a number of the body casts of the victims in their final moments at death. You could feel the terror and anguish felt by these people nearly 2,000 years ago. The exhibit also contained personal items from the dead at Pompeii: golden rings from fingers, bread from the ovens, and the furnishings of everyday lives. It also explored the causes and effects of volcanism. The crowds were huge, and the adults and children all seemed to enjoy the well presented exhibit.

The Art Institute of Chicago held an exhibition entitled *Toulouse Latrec and Montmartre*. It had been organized by Professor Richard Thomson of the University of Edinburgh, and opened at the National Gallery in Washington. This large exhibit looked at the environment in which Latrec lived and worked. There were segments on the various dance halls, the circus, and brothels that he frequented. The exhibit also looked at works by his contemporaries who frequented the same spots. With large photo-mural images of these locales, the design of the exhibit very much enhanced the overall ability of the team to portray the world that supported and produced these artists.

New York City had an incredibly rich exhibits season this fall and winter. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibit on Fra Angelico was only the second exhibit ever done on him. My favorite works were the altarpieces. The one from his own monastery at Fiesole was particularly of interest as the Tennessee State Museum had two pieces from it in the Rau Collection exhibit that I had worked on. The Met also showed *Vincent van Gogh: the Drawings*. This was a remarkable exhibit which included preliminary drawings and some finished canvases. Seeing the transition from one medium to another, as he worked out his design, was fascinating.

The Guggenheim featured the exhibit *Russia!*, exploring art in Russia from the 13th century to the present, including 250 works of art. To see the indigenous art of Russia, as influenced by the Byzantines, absorb and then emulate that of the west, was an interesting progression. As you spiraled up Frank Lloyd Wright's ramp, you progressed through the centuries.

The Frick Collection hosted an exhibit on Hans Memling, which focused upon his portraits. Of the 30 believed to exist, they had 20 in the exhibit. Down the street at the Met were five more, three from their collection, and two from the Morgan Library. So

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## Nominees Sought for AAM 2007 Board of Directors Slate

The AAM Nominating Committee seeks nominees for six board members at large for the 2007-2010 class of the AAM Board of Directors, as well as a nominee for Board Vice Chair, 2007-2008.

Candidates should have senior experience in museum management, governance, and ethics, and demonstrated experience as a board member of an association or other nonprofit organization.

All nominees must be individual AAM members in good standing, in any member category except Independent Professionals or Press/Public. Nominees must be willing to assume all expenses of attending board meetings.

To suggest a nominee, submit the required form to the nominating committee. The form and descriptions of each position are available on AAM's website, [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org).

Nominations must arrive at the AAM offices no later than April 7 2006.

Send completed forms to:

AAM Nominating Committee  
1575 Eye St NW, Suite 400,  
Washington, DC 20005.

nearly all of the surviving works were in the city at one time. The Neue Galerie had an exhibit of drawings by Egon Schiele.

The New York Public Library brought out Medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts from their own collection, which is the one of the largest in this country. Titled *The Splendor of the WORD*, the exhibit brought out 100 examples, most of which had not previously been exhibited. The exhibit included religious works, as well as scientific, historical, and literary manuscripts. The amazing detail, and the patience that would require, make these works a rare treat when they are exhibited. One of the most interesting, from the point of view of its being a very little understood part of history, was the New York Historical Society exhibit, *Slavery in New York*. It opened the eyes to most of New York to the fact that their city was one of the largest slave markets in this country for the importation, and sale of African slaves. In fact slavery was outlawed in New York in 1827, barely a generation before the Civil War. It was a very moving exhibit, and at the end of the galleries was a video taping booth, to record visitors' reactions to the exhibit.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art hosted the touring exhibit, *Beauford Delaney: From New York to Paris*. It should have been titled *From Knoxville to Paris*, for Delaney was born in Tennessee, studied in Knoxville, and then moved on to further his education in New York. He settled in Paris, looking for more acceptance for a gay, African American from the American south. He found some acceptance there, mentored James Baldwin, and found self-expression in his wonderful paintings. It was a real treat to see so many of his works together.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art has also purchased Edvard Munch's Mermaid painting, and built a temporary exhibition of other graphic print and painted work to celebrate their acquisition. *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape*, was a beautiful exhibition focus on the prints, and paintings of this marvelous Dutch painter.

In Pittsburgh, the Heinz History Center organized an exhibition titled *Clash of Empires: The British, French & Indian War 1754-1763*. Recently PBS affiliates have broadcast a special four-hour documentary series on this exhibit's subject, *The War That Made America*, and parts of the films were used in the exhibit. It was a very large, well-presented, and thoughtful examination of this subject.

# CURATORS' COMMITTEE

## Board Member Nomination Ballot

The election of CurCom Board Members-at-large is now underway. Voting is being conducted by mail, and must be completed no later than 30 days before the date of the Annual Meeting, which begins on April 27 2006. The successful candidates will serve a two-year term. The Nominating Committee has endeavored to identify candidates who represent every region as well as a diversity of disciplines reflecting the Committee's membership.

CurCom members are strongly encouraged to vote. The 2006 candidates are:

### **A. Bruce MacLeish, Director of Collections, Newport Restoration Foundation**

Bruce MacLeish is a museum collections manager with 30 years of experience. He has written a widely used reference for collections care and a book about Rough Point, the Newport home of Doris Duke. He has served as consultant to over 50 museums, historical societies, and professional organizations. His current employer is the Newport Restoration Foundation in Rhode Island, where he oversees a new historic house museum, a decorative arts museum, and a small park with two houses and an operating windmill. He has been on the CurCom board for one year, serving as AAM conference program co-chair, and looks forward to continuing to help CurCom organize great sessions.

### **John Mayer, Curator of Collections, Maine Historical Society**

John Mayer is curator of the Maine Historical Society where he is responsible for the care of the 1785 Wadsworth-Longfellow house, growth and management of museum collections, and development of the changing exhibit program. John served as CurCom Secretary / Treasurer from 1998 to 2005 and as Board Member at-large since 2005. John believes CurCom can and should be the voice of all curators, and can be a dynamic forum for those who are interested in exploring issues that affect our work and in finding new ways to raise the standards of our profession.

### **Jeannine Pedersen, Curator, Catalina Island Museum**

Jeannine has been employed by the Catalina Island Museum for the last eight years, and her main responsibilities include caring for the Museum's collections, creating exhibitions, research, and historical writing. She is a former CurCom Fellow and has served on the CurCom Board for the last two years. Jeannine is committed to the preservation and interpretation of history, art, and culture and is dedicated to promoting professionalism within the museum field. She hopes to continue making a positive contribution to the CurCom Board as a Member-at-large.

### **John Russick, Curator, Chicago Historical Society**

John has nearly 20 years of experience in a variety of museums. Currently he is the lead curator for both the new children's gallery and the restored diorama hall, scheduled to open at the Chicago Historical Society in September 2006. Examples of his exhibit label writing were featured in the quality label writing competition at the 2001 and 2004 annual meetings of the American Association of Museums. John is primarily interested in advancing new thinking about curatorial practice and the role of the curator in American museums.



## Voting instructions:

CurCom members can vote for up to four candidates.

Once you have voted, please clip out the ballot and post it in a business-sized envelope to the following address by 20 March:

*Ron M. Potvin, Chair of  
Nominating Committee  
John Nicholas Brown  
Center  
Box 1880  
Brown University  
Providence, RI 02912*

- A. Bruce MacLeish**  
(incumbent)  
Director of Collections  
Newport Restoration  
Foundation
- John Mayer**  
(incumbent)  
Curator of Museum  
Collections  
Maine Historical Society
- Jeannine Pedersen**  
(incumbent)  
Curator  
Catalina Island Museum
- John Russick**  
Curator of History  
Chicago Historical  
Society



## Mid-Atlantic Regional Report

Brian Peterson, James A. Michener Art Museum

### Former Museum Director Nominated for IMLS Post

Eileen Goldspiel reports in the February 2006 issue of *Aviso* that President George W. Bush has nominated Anne Radice to succeed Robert S. Martin as director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This four-year appointment alternates between individuals from the museum and library communities.

Radice has held a broad array of positions within and outside of government. In addition to curatorial experience, she recently served as chief of staff to Bush's former Secretary of Education, Rod Paige. Radice currently is acting assistant chairman for programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. She is a PhD graduate of the University of North Carolina, and is an expert in Renaissance and US Capitol art and architecture.

1. The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums' publication *FORUM* is being recreated in a new, on-line version which will include reports, articles, initiatives, etc., through this new members-only service. The Association also has recently incorporated on-line surveys for members and non-members to assist in collecting sound and current data from the museum field. The MAAM website contains a quick one-question survey that will provide MAAM museums with a snapshot of current issues and trends in the region. Association and membership surveys, program evaluations, and other surveys will all be posted to this page. Results are posted once the survey has closed.

MAAM is also launching a new series of programs that specifically feature emerging leaders and students pursuing museum careers. The new University Page features reviews, articles, and papers from the many museum graduate students in the region, with links to the new *FORUM* section of the MAAM web site. Also included are highlights of the various museum programs that are training new leaders.

2. MAAM also announces the new Resource Center on its website, where you can find out what's going on in the region as well as locate the resources you need to help your museum. The Resource Center includes:
  - Museum consultants and museum service providers
  - Traveling exhibitions
  - Job listings
  - University programs and museum associationsThis one-stop searchable directory is available to all Web site visitors. All Group Members of MAAM can add listings for free.
3. The Katherine Coffey Award is given each year by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums to an individual in the Mid-Atlantic region to recognize distinguished achievement in the museum field. The 2005 award recipient was Mary Case, a principal of the museum consulting firm QM2. The Award consists of an engraved plaque recognizing the individual's contributions to the museum field. The Coffey Award ceremony was held on Monday October 31 2005 during the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums Annual Luncheon.
4. The Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historic Organizations (PFMHO) announces its annual statewide conference: 'Changing Museums for Changing Times,' April 9-11 2006, at the Harrisburg Hilton. (See page 18 for further details.)
5. PFMHO also announces Technical Assistance Grants designed to help small historical organizations and museums acquire problem-solving skills as well as increase their level of professionalism and build their capacity to serve the public. Administered by PFMHO and funded by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the program is intended for Pennsylvania institutions with annual budgets of less than \$250,000; grants have a maximum value of \$1,500. More information can be found in the

## Midwest Regional Report

Mary Jane Teeters-Eichacker, Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites

Hamilton County Superior Court Judge William Hughes has approved an agreement reached last month between the Indiana Attorney General and the Earlham College Board of Trustees which will establish Conner Prairie as an independent museum. The museum has been owned and operated by the Richmond, Indiana, college since philanthropist Eli Lilly gifted the museum and surrounding land in 1964. This ruling brings to a close an intense governance dispute that culminated on June 11 2003 in Earlham firing Conner Prairie's President and CEO and 27 members of a 30-person Board of Trustees.

The court's approval allows for the creation of new governance. The structure, established by Attorney General Steve Carter, will include a Foundation Board to oversee assets and an Operating Board to set policy for the newly independent museum.

### IUPUI to develop online course for museum / library professionals (Indianapolis)

The Institute of Museum and Library Services has signed a cooperative agreement with the museum studies and library science programs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis for an \$883,171 online course development project.

The IUPUI units will create an online instructor-mediated course in outcomes-based evaluation for library and museum professionals and students in library and museum educational programs. Funding during the three-year project will support course development, testing, and a two-year initial deployment at no cost to course participants.

### New acquisitions

The Lakeview Museum of Arts & Sciences, Peoria, IL, is pleased to announce that noted Illinois folk art collector Merle H. Glick and his wife, Barbara, recently donated the majority of their Illinois quilt collection to the Museum.

## Dallas Museum of Art Acquires Unique Centerpiece

The Dallas Museum of Art has acquired 'Celestial Centerpiece', a unique Space Age silver object created for the International Silver Company's *Moon Room* display at the 1964 New York World's Fair (right). Designed by Robert J. King (b. 1917), the 'Centerpiece' is considered to be the most important of its type in the world.

'In 1964 the "Celestial Centerpiece" declared some of the most creative impulses within modernist silver design and continued the American silver industry's legacy of presenting luxurious, iconic works at major expositions,' said Kevin W. Tucker, the Margot B. Perot Curator of Decorative Arts and Design of the Dallas Museum of Art. 'The "Celestial Centerpiece"...unquestionably stands as one of the most significant American silver objects produced in the latter half of the 20th century.'

### 'Celestial Centerpiece' for the *Moon Room*

1964

Robert J. King, American, b. 1917

Silver, spinel sapphires

International Silver Company

Meriden, Connecticut, active 1898

– present

Image courtesy Dallas Museum of Art



## Invitation to Contribute to Appraisal Session at Annual Meeting

Sharon Theobald, chair of the double session on appraisals on Saturday April 29 at the Annual Meeting, invites curators to submit issues for discussion. Sharon is Senior Appraiser at AAI Appraisals, West Lafayette, IN.

This practical forum will explore strategic planning for appraisals as it reviews key roles in collection management. Current museum standards and practices, as well as future collection management strategies, will be covered. Sharon is seeking input from anyone who may have specific interests, questions, or situations to explore, on the topic of appraisals of collections items. Simply contact her with your comments at the email address shown at the end of this article. The key roles are:

### Future AAM Annual Meetings

**Boston, MA**  
April 27-May 1 2006  
AAM Centennial  
Annual Meeting

**Chicago, IL**  
May 13-17 2007

1. **Insurance appraisals for risk management protection for collections.** Presenters: Elin Lake Ewald, PhD, ASA Appraiser and Valerie Smith, Vice-President of Marsh Insurance Company.

**Case study A:** we will invite a staff member or a collector from one of the Louisiana museums to participate. The Wyeth Watercolor could be used as a case study to discuss diminution of value. We could introduce a questionnaire to talk about damage issues and diminution of value. How does the insurance industry respond? Their standards and practices for diminution in value for works of art on paper and for paintings will be reviewed and an outline provided.

**Case study B** relates to the identification of the client. We were called into the conservation lab to examine a work damaged by a contractor. We completed the on site work, then asked for the client's identity. Was it the museum who called us? Was it the college who owned the work? Was it the insurance company?

2. **Fair Market Value appraisals for donation to include partial gifts.** Presenter: Karen Carolan, IRS, Chief of the Art Appraisal and Art Review Panel.

**Case Study A:** The Albert Pinkham Ryder painting and the role of provenance research. We could invite the registrars from MOMA and Boston to join the discussion as we narrate the scenario and explore issues of research, due diligence and authentication, including the work of authentication expert Bill Homer. Dr Laurette McCarthy could subsequently introduce Provenance Research.

**Case Study B:** Artist Estates and the valuation of large bodies of work, and the application of the blockage discount as in the case of O'Keeffe, Warhol. Copies of the IRS 8283 forms and copies of IRS #561 will be available.

3. **Market Value Appraisal for acquisition purposes.** Presenter to be confirmed.

**Case Study A:** An anonymous collection could be used as a case study, exploring the issue of the museum as client to assess the

*Continued on page 17*

## TAKE OUT AN AD IN *UPDATE!* THE AAM CURATORS' COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

*Update* is published three times per year and reaches over 700 AAM Curators' Committee (CurCom) members with each issue. Articles in *Update* focus on curatorial issues and news, American Association of Museums (AAM) news, and AAM Annual Meeting materials. Members are from all types of museums, and most have major responsibilities either for collections and their care or for exhibitions; more than half are responsible for making decisions about purchases of their departments. There are some institutional and overseas members also.

You, as the advertiser, can design your own ad, decide on the size required, and submit it online to the Secretary-Treasurer, who will then submit it to the Board officers for approval, and finally to the Newsletter Editor for placement in a particular issue of *Update*. Both names are listed below. Payment must be in advance; prices are also listed below. When the Secretary-Treasurer has received payment for the advertisement, she will notify the Newsletter Editor and the Chair of CurCom, and your ad will be sent directly to the Newsletter Editor. You would, of course, be sent a copy of the publication.

To be a sponsor of both *Update* and the CurCom website (for one year), double your advertising and submit for both! The website address is [www.curcom.org](http://www.curcom.org). Your ad would be located in a sponsorship place on the website.

### Prices for Advertising in CurCom's *Update*

Full page for one issue and one-year sponsorship of website – \$2000.00  
Full page for one issue – \$1000.00  
Half page for one issue – \$500.00  
Quarter page for one issue – \$250.00  
One-sixth page for one issue – \$150.00

### Newsletter Editor for *Update*

Deborah Tout-Smith, Curator  
Museum Victoria  
Australia  
[dtoutsmith@hotmail.com](mailto:dtoutsmith@hotmail.com)

### Secretary-Treasurer of CurCom

Cindy Olsen, Curator  
Studebaker Museum  
South Bend, IN 46601  
(574) 235-9714  
[colsen@studebakermuseum.org](mailto:colsen@studebakermuseum.org)

*Continued from page 16*

legitimate market value of a collection, and the role of the appraiser in preparing the appraisal.

**Case Study B:** A second appraisal could be introduced, where the client and the museum agree on the purchase/acquisition and move from market value to free market value and partial gift.

#### 4. Market Value for deaccession purposes.

Presenter Vanessa Burkhart, Registrar, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Standards and practices for de-accession should be addressed. The use of funds from de-accessions should also be discussed.

**Case Study A:** The recent case study of Fisk University in their de-accession.

**Case Study B:** Public sculpture and decorative art collections. The issue here is the transfer of ownership, sculpture, site specific works, condition, scale, etc., and the difference between free market value on these works and then salvage value for de-accession purposes. The issue of volume of material and market absorption when dealing with large collections of similar decorative arts material could be considered.

#### 5. Audience Case Studies. We could invite the curators to submit cases to us through their newsletter that would be part of the appraisal session. We will review and edit and address their issues.

Questions and suggestions should be sent to Sharon at [theobald@purdue.edu](mailto:theobald@purdue.edu).

# Conferences, Meetings and Workshops

## **Before You Can Cook: Acquiring Foodstuffs and Kitchenware in Early America**

Fairfax County Park Authority & the  
Department of History, George  
Mason University  
Fairfax, VA  
March 24 2006  
[http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/  
collections/symposium.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/collections/symposium.htm)

This symposium on American social history explores the great variety of foods available in early American homes and the many different methods of acquiring them. Presentations examine kitchen utensils and cooking technology, heritage and wild plants and animals, their processing, and purchased provisions. Presenters will include specialists from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

## **'Changing Museums for Changing Times'**

Pennsylvania Federation of  
Museums and Historic  
Organizations  
Harrisburg, PA  
April 9-11 2006  
[http://www.pamuseums.org/  
Conference%20Info.htm](http://www.pamuseums.org/Conference%20Info.htm)

The meeting will focus on new technologies, cutting-edge models, and the latest ideas developed in museums and historical organizations across the state. The annual conference will offer an array of resources to help your organization take up the leadership challenge, and will provide a forum for new trends that encourage growth for PFMHO institutions.

## **'A Centennial of Ideas: Exploring Tomorrow's Museums'**

AAM Annual Meeting  
Boston, MA  
April 27 - May 1 2006  
<http://www.aam-us.org/am06/>

In 2006, AAM celebrates its centennial – an opportunity to look ahead to the future and the challenges that await us over the next 100 years.

While the world of the 21st century is vastly different from the world of 1906, many of the questions museums asked yesterday are still valid today: what must we be, for

whom, and to what purpose? What are the best ways to acquire, conserve, and exhibit? How do we educate effectively, attract new audiences, and partner with communities? What are the business plans, the financial strategies that allow us to fulfill our missions and maintain the highest professional and ethical standards? It is up to each generation to answer these questions anew.

## **'To Be or Not To Be'**

Canadian Museums Association  
Annual Conference  
Saint John, NB, Canada  
May 2-6 2006  
[http://www.museums.ca/Cma1/  
WhatsNew/conferences/  
cmaconf.htm](http://www.museums.ca/Cma1/WhatsNew/conferences/cmaconf.htm)

Museums are struggling with their role and relevance in a world of competing priorities: sustainability, culture as commodity, succession planning, accountability, revenue-generation, and community engagement. In plotting future directions, the fundamental question to address is 'To Be or Not To Be'.

## **'Exploring Dynamics: Cities, Cultural Spaces, Communities'**

Museums Australia Annual  
Conference  
Brisbane, Australia  
May 14-17 May 2006  
<http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au>

The conference aims to foster a dialogue on relevance and engagement with a wider world and the dynamics of engagement with collections within our cultural spaces. Both practical and conceptual concerns will be included.

## **'Photography and the City'**

UCD Clinton Institute for American  
Studies  
Dublin, Ireland  
June 29 – July 1 2006  
<http://www.ucd.ie/amerstud/>

This conference will examine the relationship between the city and photography. Proposals analyzing historical, cultural, socio-economic, and technical aspects of this

relationship are welcomed until 31 March 2006.

Topics to be addressed might include the photographic imagineering of city identities, photography and urban change and urban destruction, and the aesthetics of urban ruin.

## **'Genres of History'**

Australian Historical Association  
2006 Biennial Conference  
Canberra, Australia  
July 3-7 2006  
[http://histrsss.anu.edu.au/aha/  
index.html](http://histrsss.anu.edu.au/aha/index.html)

Sessions under development will focus on themes such as the historian's sources: access and management; local and global environmental history; and transnational history: meaning, achievements, and promise. The session 'A thousand words on a picture' will feature papers *strictly limited to 1000 words*, focusing on a visual image of some kind (map, portrait, news photo, building plan, you name it), and interpreting that image as a historical document.

## **'Connections, Communities and Collections'**

ICOM-International Committee for  
Museums of Ethnography (ICME)  
Miami Beach, FL  
July 10-12 2006  
<http://icme.icom.museum>

Do we find differences in how museum ethnography approaches the issues of community dialog and collecting objects? Conversely, are there any resonant themes from our 'founding fathers', which are equally relevant today?

ICME is an international committee within ICOM — the International Council of Museums.

## **'Diverse Cultures, Diverse Communications'**

ICOM-Marketing and Public  
Relations Conference  
August 7-9 2006  
Nairobi, Kenya

What role can the marketing and public relations fraternity in museums and other cultural organization play to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage?

How can they facilitate the promotion and preservation of cultural practice and traditions of the communities they represent?

For further information contact John Odhiambo, AFRICOM, Museum Hill Road, PO Box 38706, Ngara 00600, Nairobi, Kenya. Ph +254 20 3748668; fax +254 20 3748928.

### **'Taos: a Convergence of Cultures – Past, Present and Future'**

MPMA Conference  
Taos, NM  
September 18-22 2006

Further information on the Conference will shortly be available at <http://www.mountplainsmuseums.org/Conferences.php?id=1>

### **'Building Bridges (Community, Collaboration, Celebration)'**

Quad Cities, IL & IA  
September 26-29 2006  
<http://www.iowamuseums.org/>

In a unique collaboration, three museum associations will come together for a very special conference. The Association of Midwest Museums (AMM), the Illinois Association of Museums (IAM), and the Iowa Museum Association (IMA) will literally cross bridges over the Mississippi River to examine how museum collaborations can benefit institutions and celebrate communities. The conference will explore how museums engage in creative partnerships, both with other museums and other community organizations.

### **'Museums and Intangible Heritage'**

AFRICOM 2nd General Assembly & International Conference in partnership with the South African Museum Association  
Cape Town, South Africa  
October 4-6 2006  
<http://www.samaweb.org.za/conf.htm>

This conference will bring together museum and heritage professionals from Africa and beyond to discuss the management, promotion, and protection of this living heritage and the potential threats, as well as its value as an asset for the African continent. In consideration of Cape Town's rich cultural heritage, and

the hundreds of museums in South Africa, this event promises to have both stimulating academic content and exchanges as well as fascinating cultural events and experiences.

### **'Frontier Without Limits: High Desert Rendezvous'**

Western Museums Association  
2006 Annual Meeting  
Boise, ID  
October 11-15 2006  
[http://www.westmuse.org/boise\\_theme.html](http://www.westmuse.org/boise_theme.html)

Through sharing, we will relocate the keen, leading edge of our profession, whether in visitor studies, architecture, technology, exhibit design, or management. We will compare our efforts to those of our colleagues, and gain perspective.

### **'Appropriate Growth Sustaining Institutional Advancement'**

Association of Science-Technology Centers Annual Conference  
Louisville, KY  
October 28-31 2006  
<http://www.astc.org/conference/future.htm>

The Conference will consider topics such as audience development, new revenue opportunities, and the environment. Given the limited availability of resources such as money, staffing and space what criteria do we use to determine the appropriate audiences to grow? How do we calculate the risks and opportunities in implementing new, untested models? What is an appropriate amount of resources to devote to going green?

### **'Fit at 50: Grow Stronger, Live Longer'**

British Columbia Museums Association  
October 18-21 2006  
Prince George, BC, Canada  
<http://www.museumsassn.bc.ca/content/home.asp>

As museums strive to enhance and demonstrate their contributions to the health and wellness of our communities, we must reflect in our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year on our own personal, professional and organizational fitness. How fit are we? What diets and

exercise programs should we embrace to sustain ourselves, meet the demands placed upon us and take on new challenges? How can we keep our Association vigorous and healthy as we move into our next 50 years?

Join us in Prince George for Conference 2006 to compare practices with your colleagues and create new routines that build flexibility, strength and endurance.

### **'Great Expectations: What Audiences Really Want'**

2006 NEMA Annual Conference  
Hartford, CT  
November 8-10 2006  
<http://www.nemanet.org/conf06.html>

Learn from colleagues who have taken the lead in revamping membership programs and creating visitor-oriented museum experiences. Consider new models that will change the nature of your programs and exhibits, to increase access, accommodate learning styles, utilize technology, and offer audiences the choices they demand.

Help place your museum squarely in the path of audience discoveries.

### **'Museums: Fundamentals of Understanding'**

ICOM 21<sup>st</sup> General Conference  
Vienna, Austria  
August 26-31 2007  
<http://austria.icom.museum/2007/index.html>

The topic is particularly pertinent to Austria, which has a long history reaching back to Celtic and Roman times, the expansion in the early modern ages in middle Europe and the ruins of the multilingual national monarchy around the Danube, and the terrible incidents in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

CurCom Update  
c/o Valarie Kinkade  
180 Mildred Circle  
Concord, MA 01742

March 2006



# CURCOM

## UPDATE

*Please come to Boston for the springtime...\**

### TO THE AAM ANNUAL MEETING & MUSEUMEXPO™ 2006

Hynes Convention Center • Boston, MA • April 27 – May 1, 2006

Boston, a city rich in history, is the perfect place for AAM to celebrate its 100th meeting. Be there to:

- Experience more educational sessions than ever before, designed to teach solutions to real-world issues concerning the field.
- Discover the latest technologies that are bringing museums closer to their patrons.
- Network with museum professionals from around the world.

Make your hotel reservations now, through the AAM housing bureau at [www.aam/us.org/am06](http://www.aam/us.org/am06) to receive the best rates.

*\*Dave Loggins, 1972, Universal Music MCA. All Rights Reserved.*

#### Registration Deadlines and Fees

First Call Deadline – Jan. 31, 2006  
Member \$305, Non-member \$445

Early Bird Deadline – Feb. 28, 2006  
Member \$320, Non-member \$460

Advanced Deadline – March 31, 2006  
Member \$380, Non-member \$520

On-Site After March 31, 2006  
Member \$420, Non-member \$560

#### Submit your nomination for the Centennial Honor Roll

Nominate someone who has contributed to the advancement of the field. Recipients will be recognized at the 2006 AAM conference. Nominations open through Dec. 31, 2005.

Visit [www.aam-us.org/am06](http://www.aam-us.org/am06) for updates and more details.