

Greetings from your Chair!

The AAM Annual Meeting is in the past, and we are moving on. But there were some wonderful events in Denver – the reception at the Black America West Museum was lots of fun, and the Business Luncheon was very well attended, with Sandie Tropper of ASA as the speaker. I personally attended very good sessions. Keep those session ideas coming for 2009 – Ron Potvin is the new Program Chair and you have already heard from him.

There are some very important changes for this coming year, and you should be aware of them. First of all, the CurCom Guidelines have been revised – they are provided in this issue of *Update*. The document more closely follows new AAM policies regarding membership and privileges for independent museum professionals. The Secretary-Treasurer’s position has been split and is now two positions – Secretary and Treasurer. Cindy Olsen will continue as Treasurer, and we now have elected a Secretary, Wanda Edwards, in a one-year position for this year, with another election in 2009. Thanks to Jim Hoobler and his committee for working so hard on the Guidelines.

One of the most important motions that passed at the CurCom Board Meeting greatly affects the membership – and you! Remember that I have been pestering you for those email addresses? If your email address is not on the AAM membership list, NOW is the time to get it to both CurCom and the AAM Membership Department. After this issue, *Update goes electronic!*

There is a definite plus for this: *Update* can have color images, and the cost will be much less. Do the Board and yourself a favor – send an email address, if you have not. You will find other notices of this important decision within the newsletter.

John Mayer and his committee have completed a revised Code of Ethics. It will be circulated to some other groups for

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Linda Eppich
The Preservation Society
of Newport County
Chair, AAM Curators’ Committee



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From the Editor



Welcome to our last printed edition of *Update*! From our next issue, *Update* will become electronic, only available via the CurCom web site. It will continue to be formatted for easy print-out for those who prefer a printed copy. *Update* can be found at <http://www.curcom.org/newsletter.php>, together with back issues.

Since this is our last printed issue, it includes very important information for CurCom members, and I urge you to keep this issue for future reference: in particular the CurCom Code of Ethics and Operating Guidelines.

The issue also contains an announcement for an exciting new international exchange program established between CurCom and the Museum Historians' Special Interest Group of Museums Australia. I was President of that group until my term ended recently, and I have been keen to explore ways that our organizations can work together for mutual benefit. I urge you to consider applying for what promises to be a valuable professional opportunity.

I look forward to hearing from more of you in our next issue, due out in November. I will be away for all of September and October, but please do continue to send submissions to my email address below, and I will be in contact early in November.

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 (\$20.00 / \$10.00 for students) 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.

Future AAM Annual Meetings

Philadelphia, PA
April 30-May 4 2009

Los Angeles, LA
May 23-27 2010

The Code of Ethics for Curators

When the topic of reviewing the *Code of Ethics for Curators* came up at the 2006 annual AAM meeting in Boston, only four brave souls at the board meeting expressed an interest in volunteering for this task; recently a fifth volunteer was added. None of us imagined at that time the complexity of the task or the amount of time it would take. The *Code* first appeared in *Museum News* in March 1983, and was last updated in 1996, so it had been 23 years since it was written and 10 years since its last revision. Our work group determined that a complete rewrite was in order; merely tweaking a few words here and there would not do justice to the document that we believed was necessary, given the evolution in the nature and practice of the curatorial field.

When we began our work the group did not have a model to follow in conducting this revision. The work group members, all passionate about the topic of ethics, quickly became aware of the magnitude of the project and its importance to the field. Setting a high standard for our work, we sought to develop a document that people would actually use, and that could inform and inspire their work.

A Yahoo Group was established to facilitate communication between work group members and to provide a means of archiving our work, making the process as transparent as possible. We consulted numerous sources on the topic of ethics in museums, and in the non-profit world generally. During the process we had some spirited debates about the nature of curatorial work, and particularly about some of the important concepts in the conflict of interest section. Ultimately, despite the diversity of opinion among the work group, we reached a consensus.

The CurCom Board and AAM evaluated the draft *Code* and provided thoughtful and insightful feedback. Based on the comments received, we re-worked the draft, strengthening definitions and being careful not to prescribe institutional standards, something that is beyond the purview of this work group. This document is about individual behavior rather than institutional behavior, though we recognize that in some situations it can be difficult to consider them separately. At the AAM annual meeting in Denver last month the CurCom Board authorized us to circulate our draft of the *Code* to the field for review.

The full version of the *Code* has been posted on the CurCom web site www.CurCom.org along with instructions and a form to provide feedback. We encourage each of you to share your comments and questions, which can be submitted via the web site to an email address that is accessible to all work group members: curatorialethics@yahoo.com. Our goal was to create a document that is unifying, inclusive, guiding, simple — and useful. We welcome your feedback!

Work group members:

W. James Burns, Curator of History, Tempe Historical Museum

Stephanie Gaub, Collections Manager, Orange County Regional History Center

John Mayer, Curator of Museum Collections, Maine Historical Society

Brian H. Peterson, Senior Curator, James A. Michener Art Museum

John Russick, Curator, Chicago History Museum

Can you Make War Funny? The Experience of *The Traitor State: Wisconsin in World War I*

Trevor Jones, Curator of History, Neville Pubic Museum

When the Neville Public Museum's board accepted my proposal to develop an exhibit about World War I, it was pretty exciting. It wasn't until I considered the size of the task that I started to panic. I had no idea how I was going to tell the story of the world's first truly global conflict in 2,300 square feet.

Fortunately, I had some things going for me. Not only did the museum have an excellent World War I collection, but Wisconsin's role in the war provided a great way to 'hook' visitors. Wisconsin was labeled 'the traitor state' during World War I because it was thought that the state's German immigrants would sabotage the war effort. As a result, Wisconsin residents spent the war in a climate of fear and intimidation fueled by overzealous patriotism and ethnic tensions. I knew this was the story we needed to focus on, but I also wanted to use Wisconsin's wartime experience to explicitly connect World War I to contemporary events. My goal was to have visitors think about Wisconsin's experience in the war and consider larger questions that have relevance today: When is it right for the United States to enter foreign wars? Can citizens disagree with their government yet still remain 'loyal'? How should new immigrants to the United States be treated? I felt it was important that the exhibit connect the past with the present, but this was shaping up as an awfully serious exhibit.



Exhibit logo
Image courtesy Trevor Jones

The facts surrounding the War did little to relieve the gloom. World War I was a horrific struggle that killed an estimated 20 million people and created hatreds that led directly to World War II — hardly a great subject for jokes. I'm used to taking historical topics seriously, but as I planned the exhibit I felt that we needed to find a way to incorporate humor into the exhibit narrative. My aim was to use comedy to communicate some of the absurdities of the conflict, but not belittle the very serious issues the war raised. My hope was to inject occasional doses of humor to prompt visitors to laugh and learn at the same time.

Before I started writing I talked to potential visitors to learn what they knew about World War I. It was soon clear that most had only a hazy concept of how the War began, what the United States fought for, or even what countries were involved in the struggle. Although the exhibit would focus on Wisconsin, it was clear that we also needed to orient visitors to the scope and consequences of the war. This is easier said than done: World War I's causes are complex, and my first labels were long and dreadfully boring. I decided that video would be a better medium, so I wrote a light-hearted script explaining the War's major events. I had hoped to use actors to play world leaders in 1914, but I got a better idea from YouTube. I chanced across 'Why World War I Sucked,' a video created by a high school sophomore for his social studies class. The film uses animated stick figures to show the futility of frontal assaults during World War I. In the video, heroic music plays as soldiers from both sides attack and are gunned down in bloody fashion — it is funny, disturbing, and extremely effective at communicating the horrors of combat in World War I. (You can watch it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayHVaaW1a60>).

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I contacted the creator, and although he wasn't interested in making a video for us, he gave me permission to use his concept. I couldn't find anyone locally who could work within my time frame (quick) and budget (small), so I used www.ifreelance.com to find a vendor. Ifreelance is a service where you post jobs and then vendors worldwide bid on your project. I posted my draft script and job description, but I wasn't sure I'd get any takers who wanted to make this strange concept a reality. I was wrong. In only in 48 hours I had 27 bids on the project, ranging from \$200 to \$12,000. After several follow-up emails I selected a bid under \$1,000 from a vendor in Kentucky with positive feedback, and we were in business. Eventually I received 'What was WWI all about?' a three minute video that we installed at the exhibit's entrance. The film uses stick figures with outrageous accents to act out the events that began the war and explain why America entered the conflict. The response has been extremely positive, and we've had numerous teachers ask permission to use it in their classrooms. The final version is posted on our website and YouTube. (You can see the completed video at <http://www.nevillepublicmuseum.org/exhibits/the-traitor-state>).

My second attempt to put a little humor into the war involved a local collaboration. At AAM's 2007 conference, I attended a session about a pod-casting collaboration between the Chicago Historical Society and The Second City comedy troupe. In Green Bay we're also fortunate to have an improvisational group called ComedyCity and I approached them about the project. My proposal to combine the war with comedy baffled them at first, but as we talked we discovered we had lots of ideas how we could make the war funny.

My first idea was to have ComedyCity recreate a 1918 Charlie Chaplain film. During World War I, Chaplain produced and self-financed a short film called 'The Bond' to convince Americans to buy Liberty Bonds to fund the war. The promotion and sale of war bonds was *the* central patriotic event in World War I, and Chaplain used humor to show their importance

to the war effort. I first considered using the original film, but I didn't think ten minutes of a grainy silent movie would make a positive impression on a modern audience. Instead I asked ComedyCity to re-imagine 'The Bond' with dialogue and shorten it to four minutes. Chaplain's original shows several 'bonds' — the bond of friendship, the bond of love, and the bond of matrimony, before coming to the 'most important bond of all — Liberty Bonds!' ComedyCity followed the same format and kept Chaplain's physical humor, but also added comic dialogue. We installed the video in an area built to look like a theater (complete with vintage seating). Visitors can press a button to play 'The Bond' but they are first shown a short patriotic speech delivered by ComedyCity actors. The text is taken from actual speeches presented by 'Four Minute Men' during World War I. Millions of short speeches like these were given to public gatherings throughout the war to encourage patriotism, and playing the speeches before the film starts helps recreate a wartime atmosphere.

Our next collaboration was an effort to dramatically convey the climate of fear and suspicion that existed during the War. In 1917, the United States Congress passed the *Espionage Act*, followed by the *Sedition Act* in 1918. These acts made it illegal to discourage



Exhibit entrance

Image courtesy Trevor Jones

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people from enlisting in the army, or to use 'disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language' about the United States government, flag, or armed forces during the war. Both laws were used against peace activists, socialists, or just about anyone who disagreed with the government's policies; thousands of people were prosecuted nationwide. Some of the cases were fairly extreme, such as the case of a Hollywood producer who made a historical film about the American Revolution in which British soldiers terrorize Americans. Because the British were America's allies in World War I, the producer was imprisoned and fined \$10,000 because his film caused Americans to 'question the good faith of our ally, Great Britain.'

In order to demonstrate the broad legal powers of the government during the War, I provided ComedyCity with actual war-time court cases (including the Revolutionary War example) which they staged and filmed as short video playlets. Each case is filmed in a courtroom where a prosecutor tries to convince a judge that the defendant is guilty of sedition, while the defendant's lawyer pleads their innocence. The scenes use silly staging (the judge's gavel is a hammer) and the tone is very light-hearted, but the facts are real. We filmed four segments and then placed them in a touch screen kiosk under the heading 'You be the Judge!'



'You be the Judge' audio-visual
Image courtesy Trevor Jones

Visitors can select one of the vignettes from the touch screen and watch the case play out – but they do not immediately hear the final ruling. Instead each segment ends with the judge stating '...and my ruling is...' before fading to a new screen where visitors can either select 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty.' If they've guessed correctly, the judge reappears and congratulates them on their choice, but if they guess wrong the judge asks 'What are you, a Hun sympathizer? You chose incorrectly. You'd better buy more Liberty Bonds!' Visitors are then shown a tally displaying how others have voted on the verdict. This interactive has been particularly successful because although people laugh, the films still bring home the climate of fear and paranoia created by the war.

My final collaboration with ComedyCity involves live theater. Once a month throughout the exhibit run, ComedyCity performs what we call 'World War I improv.' Three or four members of the troupe come to the Museum on a Saturday to do short improvisational comedy skits on World War I themes. They play a variety of games, like 'Sit, Stand, Bend' where the actors are soldiers in a trench, but one actor must be standing, one sitting, and one bending at all times. It's all silly, but amidst the levity, the troupe intersperses serious four-minute patriotic speeches, or readings from President Wilson's 1917 war message. The group also reinforces *The Traitor State's* concepts by picking an actor with a German-sounding last name to be 'the enemy,' and encouraging the audience to boo them whenever they appear. This technique helps reinforce the exhibit's oft-repeated message that Wisconsin residents with German ancestry faced discrimination based on nothing more than their names.

The Traitor State: Wisconsin in World War I includes a whole host of other activities that don't involve comedy, but the comic elements appear to have been the ones that have resonated most strongly with our visitors.

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We've had an excellent response from both school groups and casual visitors, and we'll be conducting a tracking survey this summer to better gauge the exhibit's impact as a whole.

I don't think humor makes sense in every exhibit, and I certainly wouldn't want to use it **instead** of serious exhibit topics, but a little bit of levity can help get your message across, so I encourage you to be a just a little less serious in your next exhibit!

***The Traitor State: Wisconsin in World War I* opened at the Neville Public Museum February 9 and continues through August 17.**



ComedyCity performance
Image courtesy Larry LaMalfa

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suggestions and then sent to the CurCom membership. He hopes to have that ready for a final vote at next year's CurCom Business Luncheon.

Dues were raised in 2007, and CurCom has lost about 50-60 members. Be an advocate for CurCom; mention CurCom every chance you get...to other curators, collections managers, or museum personnel interested in collections or exhibitions. A full mailing to a list of many AAM members who list collections or exhibitions as their job has already been tried — it produced only a few new members. And it was quite expensive. We are open to your ideas — please contact any member of the Board with an idea for a membership promotion.

Each Officer and Committee Chair has information for you within this issue, so nothing more for now. We are dragging CurCom into the 21st century — electronically. 'Nuf said.

Linda Eppich
The Preservation Society
of Newport County
Chair, AAM Curators' Committee

IMLS 2009 Grant and Award Opportunities Guide

The [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS) has released its Grant and Award Opportunities Guide for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

The guide provides an overview of the institute, including programs, initiatives, research projects, publications and strategic partnerships. It also contains tips for developing competitive grant applications and staff contacts for each program. The publication is available in [PDF](#) form on the IMLS website. To receive a hard copy, e-mail imlsinfo@imls.gov.

— *Aviso*, June 2008

The Global Curator

A new international exchange program

The Museum Historians' Special Interest Group (SIG) of Museums Australia and the Curators' Committee of the American Association of Museums have joined forces to offer an exciting new international exchange program for their members: the Global Curator program.

In its first year, the Global Curator program is offering AUD \$2,000 to fund a member of the Curators' Committee of the American Association of Museums to attend the Museums Australia annual conference to be held in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, May 17-20 2009. The successful applicant will also receive free conference registration and free attendance at selected conference events. He/she will be expected to present a paper at a Museum Historians' Special Interest Group session during the conference.

In return, a fellow from Australia will come to America to attend the AAM Annual Meeting.

This funding is available to museum curators or independent museum professionals whose major job responsibilities are the care and interpretation of museum collections. Collections may be of any genre.

Applicants for the funding to Australia must be an individual member of good standing of the Curators' Committee of the American Association of Museums. They must also be currently employed by a museum in the United States or have been an independent museum professional for the past two years.

Applicants must also register and attend the 2009 AAM annual meeting, to be held in Philadelphia, and will be expected to welcome their fellow funding recipient from Australia. Applicants must be eligible for and willing to undertake travel to Australia. All arrangements for international travel, including passports, visas, and other documents are the sole responsibility of the successful applicant. No obligations rest on CurCom or the Museum Historians' SIG if the successful applicant is unable to obtain travel documents.

To apply please send:

A one page statement in answer to the following:

- a) How will participation in the Museums Australia annual conference benefit the applicant and their work in the field? How will this professional development opportunity enhance the applicant's career? How will the applicant use this experience to benefit the field? If the applicant has an institutional affiliation, please include a brief description of the institution's collections and the how collections are significant to their museum.
- b) A signed statement that the applicant will be registering for and attending the 2009 AAM annual conference, to be held in Philadelphia.
- c) A letter of recommendation and institutional support from the immediate

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supervisor. This letter should also emphasize the applicant's contribution to the profession. In the case of independent museum professionals applying, please include a letter from a senior museum colleague who is familiar with your work in some capacity. Please be sure this person includes their email address in the letter.

- d) A résumé.
- e) An abstract for a paper of approximately 30 minutes' duration on the conference's theme 'Work in Progress', with emphasis on one or more of the sub-themes 'Working Together', 'Working Hard', 'Working Differently' and 'Working New' (focussing on innovation and collaboration). Further information on the conference is available at <http://www.museumaustralia.org.au/site/pg700.php>.

Due date

All applications must be received electronically by midnight, **September 15 2008**.

Submission

Applications must be submitted **electronically** to Deborah Tout-Smith, Global Curator Australian Committee, at dtoutsm@museum.vic.gov.au. Please put the word 'fellowship' in the subject line. Applicants will receive a reply acknowledging receipt of the application.

Questions

For further information about this exchange program, please contact Deborah Tout-Smith via email at the above address. For information about the funding offered to Australian curators to attend the AAM Annual Meeting, contact Linda Eppich via email at LEppich@newportmansions.org.

Results will be announced by **November 1 2008**.

New NEH Grant Opportunity Guidelines

New grant application guidelines have been issued by the Division of Public Programs at the US National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). They are posted on the NEH web site at www.neh.gov.

The grants fund humanities projects that are intended for broad public audiences at museums, libraries, historic sites, and other historical and cultural organizations. They support interpretive exhibitions, reading or film discussion series, historic site interpretation, lecture series and symposia, and digital projects. NEH especially encourages projects that offer multiple formats and make creative use of new technology to deliver humanities content.

Planning and implementation grant applications from America's Historical and Cultural Organizations may be submitted at two annual deadlines: **August 27 2008 and January 21 2009**. Applications will also be accepted at both deadlines for Interpreting America's Historic Places grants, which promote public understanding of American history through interpretation of significant American places.

Program officers in the Division of Public Programs are available to assist you, whether it is to discuss projects or to read a draft of a proposal. You may wish to call the NEH Division of Public Programs on (202) 606 8267 or contact a program officer directly.

RFID Application in Museums

Valarie J. Kinkade, Museum and Collector Resource

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) is the way of the future for museums. Its main use to date has been in security and inventory tracking. Applications can also be imagined in interpretation and enhancing the visitor experience in museums. The real benefit may come when both approaches are combined in the same application.

RFID is an automatic identification and data capture method, relying on storing and remotely retrieving data using devices called RFID tags or [transponders](#).¹ Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) refers to the methods of automatically identifying objects, collecting data about them, and entering that data directly into computer systems without human involvement. Technologies considered part of AIDC include [bar codes](#), [RFID](#), [biometrics](#), and [magnetic stripes](#).²

An RFID tag is generally an integrated circuit (ie. microchip) that can be applied to, or incorporated into, an artifact, animal, or person for the purpose of identification using radio waves. In order to scan or read the tag, an RFID reader is used. RFID readers are also available in a variety of shapes and sizes, such as hand-held devices or devices that can be embedded into furniture such as a tabletop. Depending on the choice of reader and tag, commercial RFID tags can be read at distances ranging from a couple inches to several feet away from an object and beyond the line of sight of the reader.³

RFID's full potential in museum inventory and security has yet to be realized. Cost has been a major factor, but should come down to a manageable level. Tags cost around 25 cents at present.⁴ The potential is certainly there for RFID to diminish current cost centers in the museum. Because RFID tags can be 'seen' by a reader remotely from visual contact with the object, the handling of artifacts can be diminished. This brings down labor costs in general, significantly decreases wear and tear

on artifacts, and can improve accountability. Unfortunately, little data seems available on museum ROI (Return on Investment) in RFID technology.

Once an object has a RFID tag, any number of software applications can be written to interface with the tag's signal at the receiver's end. A visitor carrying a hand-held reader can walk up to a designated object and scan it. The computer then uses this ID to present the visitor with information that is linked to the object in the computer database, such as a still image, video, or sound. The visitor's interface device could be identical to the device collections staff uses, or equipped with additional features to enhance the encounter with the object. In addition to being presented with information about the object, the system could also suggest pathways to other objects in the collection. The reader can also remember all of the objects that the visitor viewed on that visit so it can be researched or reviewed later at home by the visitor online – or by staff involved in visitor evaluation. If the device was capable of being in a mode of constant reception, the device could also signal a visitor when a tagged object was in proximity to the visitor. This technology is already in use at Disney World with Disney's Pal Mickey device.⁵

RFID IMPLEMENTATION

Tag Size

An RFID tag or label is comprised of a chip plus an antenna. The chip itself is quite tiny – generally less than 0.001 square mm; however, the antenna for the tag is generally 1cm or larger in size, depending on the desired operating distance ('reading range') of the tag. Ideally the size of the chip label or tag has to be less than 1cm x 1cm for it to function in a museum setting. Anything larger

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will result in the risk of the tag being seen on the object (there will always be those objects which will need a paper hang tag due to size or fragility of surface). Passive chips are probably best for museum applications in that they can be smaller since there is no need to have a battery coupled with the chip. Passive RFID tags have no internal power supply. The minute electrical current induced in the antenna by the incoming radio frequency signal provides just enough power for the circuit in the tag to power up and transmit a response.



Passive RFID tag

Image courtesy Valarie Kinkade

Active tags have their own internal power source in the form of batteries.

Short-Range Versus Long-Range Passive Tags

Passive tags can be classified as short-range passive (less than 24' read distance – typically 1-4' with a handheld device) and long-range passive (which can be read at 20 inches to 4½ feet). Short range passive tags are an ideal solution when the user wants to be able to itemize or singulate a particular artifact into inventory (ie. to know exactly which item is being scanned). Because direct line of sight is not needed with RFID, requiring a very small distance from the object to the scanner helps eliminate confusion as to which item is being scanned. However, if you want to pack many objects into a box and these are small objects, you still end up with a lot of object handling because you will need to get the reader close to the desired object in order for it to be read.

Long-range passive tagging is ideal in warehouse and logistics solutions when it is not as important to know which tag you are reading, but rather that you have read them

all before they enter/exit the read point or controlled access point. Long-range passive tags are typically 1' x 1' or larger. Long-range passive is the most efficient method for inventorying large groups of objects quickly. RFID with either kind of passive chip will only help when a regular inventory schedule is followed and the system is used to update locations. Only a system using active chips will automatically update locations in real time as objects are moved. With either long or short-range passive tag systems a person must still tell the computer that the objects have been moved.

Active Tags

Active tags are those which contain an internal battery and 'broadcast' a signal. Unlike passive tags, active RFID tags are designed to be reused and will last indefinitely as long as their battery is replaced. Active chips, due to their battery requirements, are larger and considerably thicker than passive tags.

Active tags are available at all standard RFID frequencies; however, the tags operating at higher frequencies (such as 433 MHz or 2.4 GHz) have the longest range. Active tag solutions are being considered by larger museums to store/track containers. These containers may contain multiple artifacts, a specific display, or a group of loaned items. The active tag can be read up to 200'–1000' away with typical reader/antennas and now have up to 10 years of battery life. There are many applications for this technology in tracking high-value items in transit.

With active tags you can also get additional options such as motion sensing and even climate data. Motion sensing allows the tag to notify 'the system' when a particular object or container is moving (authorized or not). This can be utilized if there is a telemetry feature in the antennas. If we assume an object is generally sitting quietly on the shelf and we are most concerned about reading an object if it should leave its storage room, or

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perhaps a section of a room, then passive chips should work fine. If our concern, however, is that the objects seem to move within a room to other shelves and location changes never seem to get recorded, then active tags are the preferred solution. The main advantage of the active tag is that communications from active tags to readers are typically more reliable than from passive tags due to the ability of active tags to broadcast a signal which can reliably travel around corners and hallways in a building. Within these main types of tags are also tags which can be used in specialized applications in the museum setting. Some tags can be designated as location tags and are associated with specific shelves, drawers, or cabinetry in storage. They can also indicate particular sections in an exhibit or packing crates in the case of loan materials. When object tags are scanned the location tags would also be scanned, making the system 'location aware.'⁶ Such systems are currently being used in advertising applications, so when a person walks by a store or a billboard with a scanner attached to their cell phone, the system will automatically send information to them on their cell phone that is specific to that location.⁷

Infra-red components can also be added to the system to perform the same system awareness functions at a reduced cost.

Semi-Active Tags

Another type of tag is the semi-active tag. This tag has a battery but the battery is only activated when the reader trigger it. As a result, the tag conducts a session with the reader for a short, defined period of time then



Mobil gas speed pass with semi-active RFID tag inside. The tag works in proximity to the gas pump, allowing automatic charging. Image courtesy Valarie Kinkade

shuts off. The advantage here, of course, is increased battery life since the battery is not in constant use, and also reduced battery size.

RFID IMPEDIMENTS

Besides cost there are some impediments to implementation in an interpretive setting. Although RFID systems are designed for reading multiple objects simultaneously, the application software used must take into account all the different possible ways that a person may interact with the system. If this is not done properly, a visitor could mistakenly receive the data on a totally different object. In an interpretive setting this problem may be solved through careful placement of artifacts or artwork and selecting only some of the collection to be accessible through the software. In other words, every object in the museum might have a tag, but not every object might be represented in the version of the database a visitor can access.

In storage the problem is bleed. This occurs when objects outside a defined space are being read. This can lead to false location data. Objects might be read through walls or even floors. Depending upon the construction of the building and whether the system is location aware through location tags or infrared devices, the system might detect tags outside of the intended read zone.

Interference

Lots of things can interfere with RFID signals, such as metal in the structure of the building, a large lead object between the object you are trying to read and the reader or antenna, and the chip being paced on the side of a metal object opposite the side you are trying to read. As RFID becomes more prevalent in everything we use from computers to cows, the prospect for interference grows. A site survey to assess possible problems is necessary before implementation of any new RFID system. Museums considering new construction would be well to read up on RFID interference to optimize their new structure for the future.

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Batteries

Tags with batteries send out a signal to the receiver — as opposed to simply reflecting the signal sent from the receiver antenna. Tags with batteries would not be efficacious in museums when attached to artifacts for many reasons. Battery life on chips is now at a max of about 10 years; however, replacing batteries every 10 years is too labor-intensive and can be risky to an object if the chip is directly applied. As a result, passive or 'reflective' chips adhered to objects would work the best in a museum setting. The chemical composition of the batteries could place artifacts at risk. Until it can be demonstrated that the battery is extremely well encapsulated, and that it poses no risk to the object, the museum field should be sceptical of the technology. Active chips could be used effectively in museums for container-level control as mentioned above since they would not be in direct contact with the object.

There may be some concerns over the corrosion of aluminated printed circuits. This could happen at a rate faster than battery discharge — especially if the chip is used in a less than optimal environment. Studies will have to be done to determine what the corrosion rates may be. The museum with sufficient funds to implement an RFID system would also have a quality climate control system. Thus, the factors leading to corrosion of the chips might be moot.

Chemical Adhesion

It would be ideal if a chip could be attached to the object directly using a B-72/acrylic sandwich. This is similar to the method we now use to 'write' numbers on objects. Museums are already familiar with these chemicals, their reversibility has been studied on a number of mediums, and the chemicals are readily available. The reactivity of the chip's chemical composition and that of B-72 and acrylic has yet to be studied. Chips could be attached in an alternate way — on paper tags for instance — but then you face the same drawbacks as writing permanent

numbers on paper tags. Washi Wrap, a company out of Minneapolis, has developed a method for attaching chips directly to works of art on paper and to paintings that has passed the Photo Activity Test and is conservator-approved.⁸

Color

Color could be helpful in distinguishing the chips after they are placed on an object. The chips circuitry itself is often copper- or silver-colored. Red might be preferable and museums have used this color to mark objects for decades. If the chips could be manufactured in multiple colors it could provide museum staff with a choice when determining which color is easier to see on a given object. Some of these issues can be dealt with by using guidelines for uniform placement of the chip or encapsulating the tags in colored substrate. The reasons one still needs to be able to see the chip include the need to replace a chip, the need to conserve the object, and to confirm if a chip has been dislodged from an object or adhered incorrectly.

Disaster Recovery Applicability

Most RFID tags are waterproof. They may not work in short-range frequencies when/while wet, but typically can resume operation after they return to a dry state. This should greatly aid in disaster recovery situations. The acrylic which overlays a permanent number is waterproof, and if used to 'seal' the attached chip to the object might enhance effectiveness and keep the chip from getting wet in a water situation. This gives RFID technology a big leg-up on bar-coding. Corrosion could speed up if the chip became wet, but removal of chips might be part of any disaster recovery plan.

Proximity Card Interface

The ideal RFID system would have a proximity card interface which would be read by the same or interacting antennas placed at

'gateway locations' throughout the museum. Proximity cards (electronic ID cards) are carried by people who have authorization to move into and out of particular spaces. Proximity cards are usually active chips and thus have a battery. This is not a problem since these cards can be the size of a credit card. This technology is already in use at most secure museums with internal movement controls, but the interface of the two systems may not be standardized yet.

Reader Antennas

The reader antenna in the case of RFID can be a fixed or hand-held device. When activated the antennae sends out a radio signal which then receives a signal from the tag's antenna. The receiver antenna in turn interfaces with the middleware.⁹ The middleware then delivers only the needed data to the application. Finally the software application processes the object's number, and relevant files for that object are changed or retrieved.

Recent developments in the industry have led to hand-held readers (antennae) becoming more rugged than they were just two years ago. They are now deployed in major warehouse and distribution environments. [Wal-Mart](#) and the [United States Department of Defense](#) have published requirements that their vendors place RFID tags on all shipments to improve [supply chain management](#).¹⁰ Due to the size of these two organizations, their RFID mandates impact thousands of companies worldwide and will cause the technology to become even more 'bullet-proof.'

Due to the abuses they suffer in the retail world, barcode readers have been developed to be reliable and rugged. Most barcode readers today are either RFID-enabled for short range RFID tag reading or can have antennae added.

Antennas are an expensive and large component of RFID technology. In fact, selection of the incorrect antenna system has caused more than one RFID project to fail.¹¹ The ideal system reduces the need for too many antennas and maximizes their

effectiveness.

In a store room application this can be done by creating gateway locations which are 'guarded' by antennas. Objects moving from one major location (like a storage room doorway) to another main location (such as a gallery), can be tracked by placing 'guard' antennas at strategic locations along normally traveled routes. For example: if a painting is moved from a storage room through a doorway with an antenna, that antenna would log the movement through reading of the passive tag on the object being moved and by receiving a signal from a proximity card. Therefore, the system would log the ID number of the object moved, what time the object was moved, and the identity of the person who moved the object. A second antenna, located at the doorway to the gallery, would log the same movement. The middleware via the antenna would then interface with the collections management software to update the object data (what), the current location — and previous location (where), location move agent (who), and the date and time (when). Many RFID systems use triangulating antennas (telemetry) to monitor location on an active basis, but this can be prohibitively expensive and is probably not necessary in most museum settings.

Collections Management Software

Currently, tracking software is available from a few chip vendors for museums.¹² The best applications have a software solution based around a specific frequency with the ability to use multiple vendor tags/chips. In order to do this an independent solution provider whose application can provide a seamless transition from collections management software (CMS) to RFID is paramount. The ability to deploy various styles of receivers and tags makes the solution much easier to adapt to specific institutional needs.¹³ A good CMS with a routine written to interface with the tag middleware is critical.

Means of downloading the data collected by the tag readers to the collections management software also has to be considered. Will you

use an existing wireless network to update the location of objects as you progress through and inventory? Or will you collect the data only when a reader is cradled back at a stationary computer? If active tags are used, keep in mind the vast quantities of data collected if every tag beeps the system every two seconds. This can create a lot of data streaming over a network.

Many existing collections management software vendors will tell you their software is RFID and barcode ready. This is true to some extent, but the CMS vendor usually needs to write a routine to make the two interface. The RFID system provider will need to supply compatible middleware as well. The more demand we place on the multiple software components to work collaboratively, the more it becomes essential we confirm things like compatible platforms, capability for expansion, later data conversions, and costs over time. The importance increases another magnitude when we start to add the requirement that interpretive needs be met in a public setting as well.

Security Applications

Security applications are one area where the RFID has great potential in museums. Not only can the antenna receive data on who is moving an object (when that person is carrying a readable proximity card), but also data indicating that the object is in movement through some means without a proximity card — be this theft by the public from an exhibit, employee dishonesty, well-meaning facilities personnel, or even flood. If an object crosses the path of a gateway antenna the system can be programmed to activate an alarm (silent or otherwise). This does not stop someone from removing a tagged artifact through a portal not monitored by an antenna/alarm. It does not stop someone from removing a chip and leaving the museum with the artifact and leaving the chip behind. However, it does go a long way towards control. If such a system were in place, risk-adverse insurers would be forced to reduce rates.

CONCLUSION

While RFID has enormous potential, it still does not help in the initial inventory or cataloguing of a collection, nor does it replace the inventory or cataloguing process. It is a back-end tool which will save labor and time down the line and improve accountability and security over time. If the cost of an RFID system can be reduced to perhaps \$1/object, then this technology could be the standard for museum registration in the future. Currently, a raw RFID tag costs about 25 cents, but there are still the additional expenses of the software, antennas, encapsulation, hand-held receivers, site survey, systems integration, and implementation to consider.

Use in the realm of interpretation holds great promise for museums to capture the imagination of our visitors, and interact in new and exciting ways. The ability of RFID to aid in audience evaluation and to add to the post-museum visitor experience provides fabulous grounds for exploration. As we dip our toes into this new technology we will need to continue to look beyond the museum world to other industries applying this technology in vast swaths.

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ENDNOTES

1. Wikipedia. Accessed May 8, 2008, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RFID>.
2. Wikipedia, Accessed May 8, 2008, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIDC>.
3. Wikipedia. Accessed May 8, 2008, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrated_circuit.
4. Interview with Richard Fletcher, Vice President of Tagsense, June, 2009.
5. <http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/wdw/special/specialindex?id=PalMickeyPage&bhpc=1>
6. http://www.nje.ca/Index_RFID_Museum.htm, accessed, May 28, 2008.
7. Interview with Richard Fletcher, Vice President, Tagsense, June, 2008.
8. <http://washwrap.com/>
9. Middleware is the software necessary to deal with the huge amount of data which comes from a room full of RFID tags. Especially in a system where active tags are in use the tags can 'beep' to the receiver every

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The Curators' Committee of the American Association of Museums Board Meeting Minutes

Denver, Colorado, April 27 2008

In attendance: Linda Eppich, Ellen Endslow, Cindy Olsen, James Burns, James Hoobler, Valarie Kinkade, John Mayer, David Kennedy, John Russick, Brian Peterson, Ron Potvin, Elisa Phelps, Redmond Barnett, Rex Garniewicz, Andy Grilz, Phil Katz — AAM Liaison

I. Meeting called to order at 11:05 am

II. Chair Report — Linda Eppich

- A. Linda Eppich passed a list for updated information and informed the Committee that Bruce MacLeish and Jeannine Pederson were going off the Board.
- B. Linda passed around the Conflict of Interest forms from AAM for board signatures.

III. Treasurer's Report — Cindy Olsen

- A. Generally the overall health of CurCom is sound. Because of the increased dues from last year, CurCom is operating in the black and should come out ahead this year.
- B. Membership has dropped in the last several years, so we need to find a way to stabilize it.

IV. Vice-Chair Report — Ellen Endslow

- A. The regional reports were 12 pages long, so there will be a report on each table at the luncheon rather than one for each individual.
- B. Ellen Endslow and James Burns feel that we need to ask for regional assistance for the two regional reps. Perhaps ask for help from each state to get information to the regional reps.

V. Guidelines and Ethics Committee Report — John Mayer

- A. John Mayer presented the Code of Ethics for Curators.

- B. The Committee, consisting of John Mayer, James Burns, John Russick and Brian Peterson, has worked for two years on this project.
- C. The Committee will post the current draft on the CurCom website with a mechanism for comments.
- D. All comments must be received by September 28, 2008.
- E. After the second review the Committee would like to ask a professional (such as Marie Malaro) for additional input.
- F. James Burns stated that the Committee has worked hard to be open and inclusive with the process of creating this document.
- G. The Guidelines and Ethics Committee thanked John Mayer for his work as chair and Linda Eppich thanked the group for its time and effort.
- H. James Burns proposed the creation of a Standing Ethics Committee to help curators with specific problems.
- I. Phil Katz stated we need to be careful not to make legal adjudications with an ethics committee.
- J. John Mayer moved that we initiate the new Standing Ethics Committee. Ellen Endslow seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

VI. Report on Newsletter — Valarie Kinkade

- A. Upcoming deadlines — May 2008 for the July 2008 newsletter, mid-September 2008 for the October 2008 newsletter, February 2009 for the March 2009 newsletter.
- B. Deborah Tout-Smith suggested that we include how to advertise information on our website.
- C. Valarie suggested switching from a printed newsletter to an electronic newsletter for a tremendous cost savings. Drawback is that we are missing 62 email addresses for our members.

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- D. James Burns moved that we switch our newsletter to electronic format, printing this in our July newsletter, and making July 2008 the last paper version of the newsletter. Valarie Kinkade seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

VII. CurCom Operating Guidelines Report – Jim Hoobler

- A. James Burns moved to approve the new operating guidelines. Valarie Kinkade seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

VIII. Exhibition Competition – John Russick

- A. The exhibition competition is sponsored by four SPCs (CurCom, EdCom, NAME & CARE).
- B. There were a record number of 33 entries ranging from small museums to large museums reflecting a 40% increase over three years ago.
- C. John Russick agreed to be a judge for another year, completing his two-year term.

IX. Report on CurCom Fellowships – James Burns

- A. Seventeen strong applicants this year. It came down to who would benefit most and go back and share knowledge.
- B. Sarah Iles and Andrew Grilz were each awarded a \$1000 fellowship to attend the annual meeting.
- C. Funding for one fellowship came from Crystalization Systems.
- D. James agreed to be fellowship chair for another year.

X. Nominating Committee Report – Ron Potvin

- A. One hundred sixty-two ballots were returned this year. This year 20-25% of our membership who voted via the Internet. John Mayer and John Russick were re-elected and James Burns and Margaretta S. Frederick were elected for their first terms.

- B. Rob DeHart will be the new Nominating Chair.

XI. Report from Program Committee – Ron Potvin

- A. Ron Potvin is the new CurCom Program Chair.
- B. Session proposals are due to Ron on July 11, 2008. CurCom is guaranteed four sessions, but only allowed to promote seven sessions this year.
- C. Ron will do an e-blast and put information on the website.

XII. Old Business

- A. Linda Eppich discussed AAM's review of CurCom.
 1. Linda sent in the draft in September 2007.
 2. The AAM concerns included: CurCom board has too many history museums represented; we need to do more strategic planning; and Linda was doing the bulk of the work. AAM tabled the decision about CurCom.
 3. Linda called Mary Bowie to respond to their letter that we were ill-prepared.
 4. AAM is currently re-assessing the review process and its relationships with SPCs.
 5. Phil Katz didn't feel that it was a specific strike against CurCom, but a reflection of the new leadership at AAM taking stock. He recommends sending feedback to Mary Bowie to be passed to the AAM higher-ups. AAM is looking for SPCs that will strengthen the entire field.
 6. John Russick doesn't want us to say it's not the Board's fault. He feels we need solid unassailable documents. He feels it's not Linda's shortcoming but a shortcoming of the entire Board.
 7. Elisa Phelps felt that we should take this as an opportunity to be forward-looking.
 8. Ron Potvin asked if the rules were being changed in the middle of our review. Phil Katz responded that the rules are

- not changing but there are questions about what game needs to be played.
9. An assessment of the review process is under way. Six people are appointed from the SPC council.
 10. Linda sent out questions and only received seven responses.
 11. Nik Honeysett developed the questions. John Russick, James Burns, and Elisa Phelps expressed concern that the questions didn't get to the heart of the matter.
 12. Phil Katz stated that AAM didn't do this to make us an example. There is a new administration. Phil challenges us to make things different & better.

XIII. New Business

- A. Phil Katz reported on the AAM Membership survey.
- B. Ellen Endslo suggested that AAM increase marketing of SPCs.
- C. Discussions for an improved website were held. Stephanie Gaub has been suggested as a possible candidate to take over our e-blasts.
- D. Valarie suggested inviting AAM Board Members to our 2009 Board Meeting.
- E. A Strategic Planning Committee was

appointed. Linda Eppich will chair. Members are: Valarie Kinkade, Ron Potvin, David Kennedy, Ellen Endslo, and Redmond Barnett.

- F. The Museum Historians' Special Interest Group of Museums Australia will give a scholarship for AUD \$2000 for a CurCom board member to attend their annual meeting. They are asking for CurCom to have a similar program.
 1. Deborah Tout-Smith, Valarie Kinkade, John Russick and Allison Cywin were appointed to an International Fellowship Committee in 2006 to develop guidelines for this program. Linda Eppich chairs this committee.
 2. Ron Potvin moved that CurCom fund a fellowship of \$1500 to send a member to Museums Australia's annual meeting. Ellen Endslo seconded the motion. (Note: originally moved as 'board member', but clarified as 'member' by the Board in June 2008.) Unanimously approved. (Note: CurCom funds will actually pay the Australian fellowship winner; Museums Australia will pay the CurCom fellowship winner.)

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

- two seconds. Middleware is software that essentially looks at the end application software, notes if any change has occurred, and if none has occurred does not continue to pass 'old' information on. This leaves the memory of the end application free to conduct necessary changes when they do happen.
10. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_Frequency_Identification#History_of_RFID_tags
 11. [RFID Applied](#)
 12. Interview with Stephen A. Taylor, PhD., Chief Operating Officer, Museum Traq, LLC, Oklahoma City, OK, May 2007.
 13. Joe King, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN.

Please send us your email address!

If your email address is not on the AAM membership list, NOW is the time to get it to both CurCom and the AAM Membership Department.

There are so many reasons for us to contact you via email - including future issues of *Update!*

AAM CURATORS' COMMITTEE OPERATING GUIDELINES

Revised April 2008

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of the Professional Standing Committee shall be the Curators' Committee (CurCom) of the American Association of Museums.

ARTICLE II – Objectives

Section 1. The objectives of the Committee shall be to facilitate a dialogue on the matters of professional curatorial concern between the Board and Staff of the American Association of Museums and the membership of CurCom, and to serve the needs and promote the welfare of Curators and those performing curatorial functions in pursuing their essential duties to: exhibit, research, interpret, publish, acquire new collections, and preserve the collections under their care in museums and related institutions. In promoting these objectives, the Committee shall hold meetings, issue reports, publish papers and a website, sponsor discussions and workshops, and distribute publications and other forms of communication as required and/or desired.

Section 2. The Committee shall be national in scope, deriving its goals and plans from individual Curators, and the six regions delineated by the American Association of Museums.

ARTICLE III – Committee Membership

Section 1. The Committee shall be composed of Curators, and those performing curatorial functions, as detailed in Article II:1, and who have paid their dues to the Curators' Committee, through AAM. Individual membership in the American Association of Museums is required.

Section 2. Membership may be withdrawn by the Executive Board for due cause. Due cause shall be construed to mean the use of membership in the Committee to work for

purposes inconsistent with the aims of the Committee as set forth in Article II.

ARTICLE IV – Executive Board

Section 1. The affairs of the Committee shall be managed by the Executive Board, which may adopt rules and regulations consistent with the Operating Guidelines of the Committee and with the Constitution and Bylaws of the American Association of Museums. The Executive Board may later amend or repeal any of those rules and regulations with the approval of the membership. All its actions shall be reported to the membership at the next Annual Meeting and/or through the Committee's newsletter, *Update*.

Section 2. The Executive Board shall consist of (a) the Officers of the Committee, (b) the immediate Past Chair of the Committee, (c) the Regional Representatives, and (d) four Board Members-at-large.

ARTICLE V – Officers

Section 1. The officers of the Committee shall be: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2. Duties of the Officers shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Administrative Duties of the Chair

1. Direct the business of the Curators' Committee and all subcommittees; appoint members as subcommittee chairs and members to those committees.
2. Call meetings to order and preside over Board meetings and the Annual Business Meeting.
3. Serve on the AAM Standing Professional Committee Council, representing CurCom.

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Additional Duties of the Chair

1. Arrange for special events of the Curators' Committee – such as the Annual Meeting reception, Annual Business Luncheon, Board Meetings, and special workshops.
 - a. Complete all event forms for Annual Meeting events as required by AAM.
 - b. Schedule event at a selected site and arrange for a caterer, if necessary.
2. Serve as a fundraiser for the Committee Annual Meeting events or any other event.
3. Collaborate with Chairs of EdCom, NAME and CARE in work concerning the Exhibition Competition.
 - a. Arrange for proper advertising of the Competition.
 - b. Revise Competition guidelines and requirements as necessary.
 - c. Arrange for Exhibition Competition Marketplace of Ideas, if necessary.
 - d. Assist the Exhibition Coordinator as needed.
4. Correspond with curators in the field who request information/ideas.

Requirements for the position of Chair

1. Administrative ability and experience.
2. Contact with Board members through letters or via email – on a regular basis.
3. Knowledge of curatorial field.
4. Individual member of AAM and CurCom in good standing.

Section 3. Administrative Duties of the Vice Chair

1. Keep in contact with the Regional Representatives
2. Help the CurCom *Update* editor with generating articles from the regions
3. Collect reports from the Regional Representatives for the annual Board Meeting at the AAM meeting
4. Assist the Chair in the business of the Committee, Executive Board and Subcommittees, and act in the place of the Chair in the event they are unable to serve.
5. Recruit Regional Representatives.

Requirements for the Position of Vice Chair

1. Understand that the election to this position is preparation for the position of Chair in the future.
2. Possess all the same qualities as Chair.

Section 4. Administrative Duties of the Secretary

1. Record the Minutes of the CurCom Board meetings, distribute to the Board members via email, edit as necessary and redistribute. Publish in *Update*.
2. Record the Minutes of the Annual Business Luncheon and publish in *Update*.
3. Record Minutes of other meetings as specified by the Chair or a subcommittee chair.
4. Assist Chair with correspondence as necessary.
5. Maintain a file of correspondence, either written or electronic.
6. Assist Chair with accumulation of materials to be saved as archival records.
7. Assist Chair with AAM requirements for Annual Meeting.

Requirements for Position of Secretary

1. Individual member of AAM and of CurCom in good standing.
2. Organizational ability.
3. Good language and writing skills.

Other

1. Chair will 'cc' Secretary whenever a correspondence warrants.
2. Chair will keep Secretary informed of general CurCom business.

Section 5. Administrative Duties of the Treasurer

1. Prepare a yearly financial report for the Annual Business Meeting.
2. Forward reimbursement claims from Board members to the AAM Financial Office for payment.
3. Assist the Chair with financial planning.

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Requirements for Position of Treasurer

1. Individual member of AAM and of CurCom in good standing.
2. Organizational ability.
3. Accounting skills.

Duties of at-large Board Members

1. Serve on special projects at the Chair's request.

Requirements for Position of at-large Board Members

1. Individual member of AAM and of CurCom in good standing.
2. Organizational ability.

Section 6. Duties of Regional Representatives

1. Report at the CurCom Board meeting about news from the Regions.
2. Communicate with Curators in the region to gather news for *Update*.
3. Serve as their Region's liaison to CurCom.
4. Serve on Subcommittees when appointed.

Section 7. Duties of Immediate Past Chair

1. Upon completion of their term, the Chair shall serve on the Executive Board as Immediate Past Chair to provide for continuity from one Board to the next. The Immediate Past Chair shall serve on the Executive Committee until succeeded by a new retiring Chair.

ARTICLE VI – Subcommittees

Separate Subcommittees may be established by the Chair to focus upon specific areas of concern. The Chair, with approval of the Executive Board, shall appoint each Subcommittee Chair from the membership. Each Subcommittee Chair, with the aid of the Executive Board, shall choose the necessary members of the Subcommittee from the membership and make regular reports to the Committee and its Chair on the progress of the Subcommittee. The life of each Subcommittee, with the exception of the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee

(see VII: 1&2), shall be until its objectives have been achieved, at which time it may disband or may merge with another Subcommittee as deemed necessary by the Committee Chair and the Subcommittee Chair.

Section 1. Other Standing Assignments

Duties of Program Chair(s)

1. If at all possible, attend each AAM annual conference.
 - a. Attend initial meeting for planning the subsequent conference program.
 - b. Attend as many CurCom-sponsored sessions as possible.
 - c. Attend CurCom Annual Business Meeting.
 - d. Network with colleagues regarding sessions for the subsequent year.
 - e. Review all feedback paperwork when it is received from AAM, and send copies to session chairs as instructed. Thank chairs again for their contributions to the field.
2. Pursue session possibilities during the spring and summer.
 - a. In *Update*, summarize past sessions and seek new ideas.
 - b. Recruit and encourage session chairs who present sound ideas.
 - c. Help locate additional session speakers if necessary.
 - d. Search for session chairs to fulfill session suggestions from membership.
 - e. Organize session materials prior to meeting at AAM offices.
3. Confirm and organize sessions to be sponsored by CurCom.
 - a. Circulate session proposals to others on Program Committee.
 - b. Decide upon guaranteed sessions (usually four for each SPC).
 - c. Be ready to promote non-guaranteed sessions at the SPC meeting in August.
4. Attend planning meeting for programs at AAM offices (usually in the first week of August).
 - a. Present CurCom session proposals enthusiastically, clearly, and briefly.
 - b. Listen to all other SPC programs

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- proposals and offer CurCom co-sponsorship when appropriate.
- c. Confirm with session chairs their status with guaranteed sessions.
- 5. Help session chairs prepare for the conference.
 - a. When AAM issues program for subsequent year contact all session chairs with thanks and encouragement.
 - b. If necessary, reiterate and summarize AAM instructions for session leaders and thank all session chairs for their work.

Duties of Fellowship Chair

1. Advertise CurCom Fellowships as widely as possible.
2. Appoint two other Curators' Committee members to the Fellowship Committee.
3. Gather applications and distribute them to the rest of the Committee.
4. Review applications with the Committee and make recommendations to the Chair and Vice Chair of CurCom.
5. Notify all applicants of the Committee's decision.
6. Inform Treasurer and Website Coordinator of the winners.
7. Update fellowship announcement and criteria for evaluating applications as necessary.
8. If possible, photograph or obtain a photograph of each Fellowship recipient for submission to *Update*.

Duties of Nominating Committee Chair

1. Prepare a slate.
2. Present the slate to the membership via email or mail.
3. Tally the votes.
4. Appoint two (2) Committee Members.

Duties of Website Administrator

1. Maintain domain name and site.
2. Maintain content and update the newsletter, *Update* (one issue back).
3. Develop rapport with Newsletter Editor.
4. Maintain and update content of Board list, What's New feature, Exhibit Competition, Annual Label Writing

Competition, and Annual Conference material. These four topics only need to be edited once per year.

5. Develop with AAM staff, a Members' Only accessible area, to contain listserv materials.
6. Answer questions forwarded to site and contact appropriate board member for replies to questions. (CurCom presently has over 500 individual members and 150 institutional members.)
7. Develop rapport with website designer and maintain their support.

Position Requirements for Website Administrator

1. Individual member of AAM and CurCom in good standing
2. Some knowledge of media and website administration.
3. Ability to edit content material.

Duties of Newsletter Editor

1. Coordinates with the Chair, and the Board, content for the thrice yearly newsletter.
2. Writes articles, and solicits articles from the board membership, and the field, for the newsletter.
3. Confers with the Newsletter Coordinator the timing and distribution of the newsletter.
4. Sets deadlines for submission and publication.

Duties of Newsletter Coordinator

1. Works with the printer and mailing agent on the production and distribution of the newsletter.
2. Issues payment requests to the Treasurer for the printing and mailing costs of the newsletter.
3. Coordinates other mailings as needed.
4. Confers with the newsletter editor on the timing and distribution of the newsletter.

ARTICLE VII – Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominations for Officers and Board Members-at-large

The process for nomination of Officers shall begin in January of every third year; for nomination of Board Members-at-large, it shall begin in January of every third year. The nomination process shall be conducted by the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee and two individual members appointed by the Committee Chair. The life of the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee shall be from the close of the Annual Business Meeting in the last year in which the Chair is to serve, and continue until the Annual Business Meeting in the next three-year cycle.

- a) At least one candidate will be nominated for Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, and four candidates for Board Members-at-large. Members of the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee may not be nominated as candidates.
- b) Members may send nominations for Officers or Board Members-at-large to the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee, as appropriate to the election being held, by February 1 of each year. The call for nominations must solicit nominations for specific board positions, ie. Member-at-large or specific officer position. In years when there are no board vacancies, the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee, in consultation with the Chair of the Curators' Committee, may forgo the call for nominations.
- c) The Nominations and Elections Subcommittee will draw up a slate of candidates to be presented to the voting membership in a ballot, delivered via email, or website. The Subcommittee shall strive to identify possible nominees for Officers and Members-at-large who represent every region as well as a diversity of disciplines reflecting the Committee's membership. Ballots shall be delivered to the voting membership in a timely manner such that the voting process may be

completed at least 30 days before the date of the Annual Meeting.

- d) Those individuals elected will serve three years.
- e) The term of office of all Officers shall begin with the adjournment of the Annual Business Meeting in the year in which the election was held, provided duly elected Officers have been declared. The term of office of all Board Members-at-large shall begin with the adjournment of the Annual Business Meeting in the year in which the election was held, provided duly elected Officers have been declared. If for any reason elections could not be conducted or are not complete, the Officers or Board Members-at-large shall continue until a successor has been elected.
- f) No officer or member at large shall serve more than two full terms in the same position without being out of the office for at least one complete term. A previous officer or member at large shall be entitled to re-election.
- g) If the Chair's position becomes vacant during the designated term of office, the Vice Chair shall serve out the term of the Chair and appoint officer(s) to fill other vacant position(s).

Section 2. Appointment of Regional Representatives

- a) A maximum of two Regional Representatives from each region, as delineated by the AAM, will be chosen by the Executive Board Committee Chair on the advice or petition of regional members. They shall serve two-year terms beginning at the end of the Annual Meeting. The Executive Board may reappoint them indefinitely.
- b) Individuals accepting the position of Regional Representative must be informed of the commitment to be a member of the

Continued on page 25

national and regional organizations, and to attend the national and regional meetings.

- c) If a vacancy occurs during a Regional Representative's two-year term, the Chair may appoint a replacement with the advice of the Vice-Chair and the remaining Regional Representative.

ARTICLE VIII – Meetings

Section 1. The Committee shall hold an Annual Business Meeting each year coincident with the Annual Meeting of the AAM.

Section 2. The Chair of the Executive Board may call special meetings of the Committee with notice of same by mail.

Section 3. The Board shall hold at least one meeting each year, coincident with the Annual Meeting of the Committee.

Section 4. Each regional Curators' Committee is encouraged to hold its Annual Business Meeting coincident with its respective Annual regional meeting.

Section 5. Eight members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. The quorum for the Annual National Meeting of the Curators' Committee shall be constituted of those members present.

Section 6. Minutes of the proceedings of the Committee, the Executive Board, and the regional Committees shall be open to inspection by any member of the Committee.

Section 7. Meetings of the Committee, the Board, and the regional Committees shall be conducted according to the procedures specified in the most recent edition of **Robert's Rules of Order**, except where they may be in conflict with the established Operating Guidelines of the Curators' Committee or the Constitution and Bylaws of the AAM.

ARTICLE IX – Dues and Finances

Section 1. Annual dues shall be fixed by the Board. These monies shall only be for the use of the Curators' Committee to meet necessary operational expenses and shall not be used for purposes other than those defined in the Operating Guidelines.

Section 2. Grants and funding requests may be solicited to assist in meeting the stated purposes of the Committee. Any grant application or other request for funding must receive written approval from the Committee Chair and the Development Office of the AAM. Without this written approval, no funding requests shall carry the name of the Curators' Committee.

ARTICLE X – Termination of Existence

Should the Curators' Committee at any time terminate or cease to exist and function, the title to all its remaining assets of whatsoever kind shall be transferred to the AAM.

ARTICLE XI – Amendments

Section 1. These Operating Guidelines may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of a quorum (as defined in Article VIII:5) at any Annual Business Meeting of the Curators' Committee.

Section 2. Written notice of the proposed amendments must be sent to the membership of the Curators' Committee by email, or first class mail postmarked at least 30 days prior to such meeting or must be published on the Committee's web site prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

Conferences, Meetings and Workshops

The World of the Model T - International Conference

Dearborn and Detroit, Michigan
July 17-19 2008

<http://www.thehenryford.org/events/modelT/conferences.asp>

In 2008, the 'Car of the Century' turns 100. Celebrate this landmark event by attending The World of the Model T - International Conference, July 17-19 in south-eastern Michigan. Two full days of programming will satisfy auto historians and enthusiasts of all persuasions. Discuss, listen, and explore presentations on the impact and influence of the Model T Ford in the United States and the world. Spend a day with expert guides visiting historic sites associated with the Model T story. Enjoy a full day of presentations and programs at The Henry Ford, including a closing banquet in Greenfield Village.

'Reflect, Reinvest, Revitalize! Preserving the African American Experience'

Association of African American Museums Annual Conference
Chicago, IL

August 27-30 2008

http://www.blackmuseums.org/prodev/2008_ataglance.htm

The AAAM 2008 Annual Conference provides opportunities to reflect upon the Association's impact on the profession, reinvest in museum best practices, and revitalize the commitment to professionalism. Understanding industry parameters is a primary goal.

'Discovering the Power of Transformation'

AASLH Annual Meeting
Rochester, NY

September 9-12 2008

<http://www.aaslh.org/anmeeting.htm>

How many times in recent years have persons in public history talked about the constant bombardment of new challenges: changing demographics, the technology explosion, the tightening of financial and human resources, more competition in all shapes and sizes, and even our own 'mission creep?' The challenges are real and the very timely theme of

2007 reminded us that Relevance = The Bottom Line. With a sharp eye on the issue of relevance, the 2008 AASLH Annual Meeting will focus on the power of transformation.

In order to harness this transformative power, many of us and the institutions we serve need to revisit our approach to what we do. We must transform the nature of our profession to ensure that we are sustainable and relevant.

'Museums, Museology and Global Communication'

ICOFOM Annual Meeting 2008
Changsha, China

September 14-21 2008

<http://www.icofom.com.ar/events.htm>

The ICOFOM (International Committee for Museology) Annual Meeting will address the challenges that meet museums and museology nowadays: preserving the community's identities and cultural diversity within the context of globalization and the rapid advancement of the information and communication technologies. The debate will emphasize the social role of museums when assisting their communities to achieve these goals, based in an open and comprehensive dialogue, and interactive and respectful processes among the different cultures.

ICOFOM is an international committee of ICOM.

'Historic House Museums as a Bridge between Individual and Community'

DEMHIIST Annual Meeting 2008

Bogota, Colombia

September 21-24 2008

<http://demhist.icom.museum/conferences.htm>

The President of Columbia is scheduled to open an engaging program organized by DEMHIIST (the International Committee for Historic House Museums). Presentations will include 'Outlook of the Historic House Museums in Latin America as Institutions that Generate Identity for the

Community' by Beatriz Espinosa, President of ICOM-LAC; and a Presentation and Workshop: 'Categorization of Historic House Museums' led by Julius Bryant, Director HHM Albert and Victoria, London, Rosanna Pavoni, former DEMHIIST President and Hetty Berens, director of the Netherlands Architecture Museum.

DEMHIIST is an international committee of ICOM.

Museums Association (UK) Annual Conference and Exhibition

Liverpool, UK

October 6-8 2008

http://www.museumsassociation.org/conference&_IXMENU=conference_and_exhibition

How can museums create inclusive and accessible buildings that are welcoming and open to appropriation by a range of users? How can sites be developed so that they become integrated in local contexts and part of the social experience of communities? Engage with architects, designers, museum professionals and academics. Consider ways that museum buildings, old and new, can aid or hinder the positioning of museums as exciting and democratic social spaces.

The MA's annual conference and exhibition is the largest museum and gallery event in the UK.

'City Museums and the Future of the City'

International Committee For The Collections and Activities of

Museums of Cities (CAMOC)

Conference

Seoul, Korea

October 6-8 2008

camoc.icom.museum

The conference themes will include: working with city planners, architects and others in shaping the future of the city; city museums as centres of debate about the city, involving citizens; city museums and urban regeneration; the contribution of city museums to the sustainable city; and the future of the historic city centre.

'In the Public Eye – Science Centers at the Crossroads of Science and Culture'

2008 ASTC Annual Conference
Philadelphia, PA
October 18-21 2008
<http://www.astc.org/conference/index.htm>

For 2008, ASTC (Association of Science and Technology Centres) will explore all aspects of civic science, in addition to science center basics and fundamental professional development topics in our field. Session will contemplate, challenge, and enrich our strategic thinking in one or more of the following strands as they support the theme: research, current science, learning strategies, technology, public policy and the environment, marketing, and leadership and management.

'Meeting in the Middle'

Mountain-Plains Museums Association and Association of Midwest Museums 2008 Annual Conference
Kansas City, MO
October 20-24 2008
<http://www.midwestmuseums.org/>

'Meeting in the Middle' reflects the special nature of this year's conference, as a joint meeting with the Association of Midwest Museums to be hosted by the dynamic destination of Kansas City, Missouri. The theme speaks to the always-challenging goal of meshing theory with practice, working collaboratively, and speaking across different disciplines. The Conference will highlight collaboration, best practices, and planning for your museum's future.

'Sustaining Communities: The Power of Museums'

NEMA Annual Conference
Warwick, RI
November 12-14 2008
<http://www.nemanet.org/conf08/theme.htm>

Museums are among the most trusted sources of information cited by the general public. They loom large on the civic landscape and in the public consciousness. Museums serve as civic landmarks even for those who have never ventured inside. When a museum betrays the public's trust, it causes outrage; and when a museum disappears, for whatever reason, it leaves a void that affects everyone.

Museums sustain and engage with communities in ways that are profound and immeasurable. It is our charge to increase the momentum, to engage partners, create and share ideas, and inspire people. Let's rededicate ourselves to this endeavor.

SEMC's Jekyll Island Management Institute 2009 (JIMI '09)

Jekyll Island, GA
January 20-27 2009
<http://www.semcdirect.net/>

The Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC) proudly announces the 9th Annual Jekyll Island Management Institute (JIMI '09). Scheduled for January 20-27 2009, JIMI is specifically designed for administrators from new and emerging museums and for museum professionals with subject area expertise wanting knowledge of general museum administration and operations.

Located on historic Jekyll Island, GA, this highly successful training program provides an eight-day immersion for museum professionals seeking the opportunity to learn management, personnel, and interpretive skills from leading experts. Sessions include management styles, administration and trusteeship, fundraising and marketing, financial management, developing exhibits, public relations, collections management, disaster preparedness, education and interpretation, volunteer management, and museum ethics.

Applications are currently available, with a **deadline for submitting applications October 10 2008**.

CMA National Conference 2009

Toronto, ON, Canada
March 25-28 2009
http://www.museums.ca/en/conferences/annual_cma_conference/

Planning is underway for the 62nd Canadian Museums Association National Conference. Watch the web site for further details, available soon.

'History without Boundaries'

Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting
Seattle, WA
March 26-29 2009
<http://www.oah.org/meetings/2009/call.html>

The OAH Annual Meeting will provide an eclectic program that will highlight the use of history in research, education, the media, and public presentations. Our papers will reflect the broad chronological and subject diversity of American history, including race, gender, disabilities, political, diplomatic, and military studies, by those teaching at universities, community colleges, and secondary schools, public historians, and independent scholars. The program should feature the history of the West and borderlands, rural life, Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans, and issues of immigration and environmental policy.

NAI International Conference

Athens, Greece
May 6-10 2009
<http://interpnet.com/ic/>

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) conference will bring together delegates from 30-40 nations in an effort to create opportunities for professional development for attendees and establish a network for professional associations and individuals involved in heritage interpretation around the globe.

'Work in Progress'

Museums Australia Conference
Newcastle, NSW, Australia
May 17-20 2009
<http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/site/pg700.php>

Collecting institutions often fall into the trap of only presenting the finished product, the flawless fait accompli. The 2009 Museums Australia conference wants to turn 'How on earth did you get there?' into 'That's how we can do it.' With the four sub themes Working Together, Working Hard, Working Differently, and Working New focussing on innovation and collaboration, this conference will showcase inspirational projects from around Australia and the world.

CurCom *Update*
c/o Valarie Kinkade
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July 2008

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UPDATE