

**MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS  
REGIONAL REPORTS  
(2007-2009)**

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**CurCom Board Meeting  
at the  
American Association of Museums  
Annual Conference  
Philadelphia, PA  
2009**

**MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS  
ELLEN ENDSLOW · DIRECTOR OF COLLECTIONS/CURATOR, CHESTER COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WEST CHESTER, PA**

From the MAAM e-mails....

**Creating Exhibitions® Wrap Up**

The 2nd Annual Creating Exhibitions® Symposium ended March 31 with an excellent closing keynote address by author David Macaulay sponsored by [TruVue](#). Conference co-chair Paul Orselli summarizes the conference here:

The MAAM Creating Exhibitions conference kicked off at the Liberty Science Center (LSC) with a timely (and very funny!) keynote by Ingrid Schaffner on the role of the curator in today's museum, and how really everyone in every museum department should be a "curator." Ingrid managed to carry off her message while relating her talk to "Gilligan's Island"!

The remainder of Day One at LSC was spent enjoying a number of concurrent sessions as well as behind-the-scene tours of Liberty Science Center's facility. My favorite sessions from Day One were the "Storytelling Bootcamp" that made us all reconsider the importance of stories and storytelling as part of the museum experience, and a behind-the-scenes tour of LSC's IT infrastructure and exhibits shop. Thankfully all the sessions I attended were short on PowerPoint and long on interaction and audience participation. We ended Day One with a nice reception and informal dine-arounds.

We switched to the other side of the map on Day Two as we were able to participate in a series of "Field Trips" to interesting museums around New York City. I took part in a great tour at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum that really gave me a sense of what life must have been like for an Irish immigrant family in the 1860s. After a tasty lunch with some of my colleagues at a Lower East Side deli, we hopped on the subway to Midtown for a final keynote by author/illustrator David Macaulay at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Mr. Macaulay gave us all a peek into the process of how he researches and assembles his book projects. One of my favorite quotes was “You can’t draw with a computer. And to understand anything you have to be able to draw it.” For some reason that thought brought me back to the role of storytelling in museums. That’s the kind of conference “Creating Exhibitions” is --- an opportunity to gather with colleagues, to meet new friends, and to think deeply about how and why we create the exhibitions we do.

*Paul Orselli is the President and Chief Instigator of POW! (Paul Orselli Workshop, Inc.) and was the Program Committee Co-Chair of this year’s Creating Exhibitions Conference. You can find out more about Paul and his work via the POW! website: [www.orselli.net](http://www.orselli.net)*

### **2009 Katherine Coffey Nominations Open**

Its time once again to nominate the 2009 Katherine Coffey Award recipient. Please [click here](#) to learn more about the award and how to nominate someone special in the museum community!

### **Budget and Plan Now for the 2009 MAAM Annual Conference - October 18-21 in Saratoga Springs, NY**

The Program Committee completed its evaluation of session proposals and the conference schedule is beginning to fall into place. Do your part now to budget and plan to attend this year's annual meeting set amongs the park and spa at the foothills of the Adirondacks. Go to the [conference site](#) for more information. Registration will begin in July.

In other news....

The region continues to be filled with much cultural richness and, more recently, cultural controversy. Museums, historic sites, zoos and special libraries are experiencing the challenges of the economic downturn with which most throughout the country are contending. However, layoffs, furloughs, reduced hours, and cutbacks are only part of the story. In a number of examples, including the Chester County Historical Society, visitation has actually increased and funders continue to be supportive where possible. There is an array of exhibitions and collections care projects from large museums such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian to medium sized organizations such as the Baltimore Museum of Science and Industry and small volunteer operations such as the Conestoga Area Historical Society in Lancaster County, PA. Tourism, if it’s any indicator, in Lancaster continues to remain strong. Is there a possible marketing tool with stay-cations? And this year Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site in Philadelphia, the oldest such structure in the United States, was awarded the largest grant ever given from Save America’s Treasures of over \$500,000 to restore the roof.

Funding challenges have influenced some interesting actions by some museum leaders in the region to the extent that a bill was introduced in New York’s State Legislature in

March 2009 by Assemblyman Richard L. Brodsky, in collaboration with the New York State Board of Regents and Museum Association of New York. The bill, if passed, would prohibit museums from using proceeds from the sale of artworks “for traditional and customary operating expenses.”

According to the *New York Times*, Brodsky is quoted as saying, “the goal here is to provide a consistent process in the museum community for dealing with these difficult issues.” The National Academy Museum’s (NYC) sale of two Hudson River School paintings in December prompted this action. Also in New York state there was the proposed sale of \$2.5 million worth of artifacts at historic site Fort Ticonderoga. That proposal is now “off the table.” The proposal had, however, prompted the Board of Regents to implement temporary regulations to prohibit the use of art sale proceeds by museums for expenses. For the complete story, see *New York Times* March 18, 2009.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is facing significant financial cuts as revealed by Governor Rendell’s state budget proposal. It would eliminate the entire grants program (General Operating Support and project grants) used throughout the state. Some state historic sites may also be affected by the proposed budget changes. A public forum, for example, is being held at the beginning of May for the purpose of discussing options for the Brandywine Battlefield, located in Chester County.

Museums in the state, such as the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, are encouraging their members to support the reinstatement of the PHMC funds by asking their members to consider contacting local politicians. If you are connected to a museum in Pennsylvania, you may find it useful to consider a similar approach:

“Historical sites, museums and libraries are a powerful economic driver for Greater Philadelphia, drawing 4 million visitors each year, many of whom stay in local hotels, shop at area stores, and dine out at restaurants. The Rosenbach is an important part of this economic engine, using its amazing collections to benefit tens of thousands of people each year, from local school students to tourists around the country and scholars from around the world. An amazing 368,965 people visited the Rosenbach or used its website during the last fiscal year.

You can help make an argument to lawmakers that they should reinstate funding when they debate the budget in June. Your stories of why the Rosenbach matters really will make a difference. Being heard is as easy as clicking a few buttons-- and you don't have to live in Pennsylvania to share your thoughts.”

Make your voice heard in support of your state’s museums, special libraries and other non-profit organizations, wherever they may be. One statistic shows that non-profits as whole (including but not limited to museums) represent 11% of the economy, which is apparently greater than that of the banking and auto industry.

**Regional Reports  
2008  
CurCom Annual Board Meeting  
AAM Annual Meeting and Museum Expo  
Denver, Colorado**

**MID-ATLANTIC REGION**

BRIAN H. PETERSON MICHENER MUSEUM, DOYLESTOWN, PA

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums (MAAM) held its fourth annual *Building Museums* Symposium in Washington, D.C., February 28-March 1, 2008. The event was hosted by some of Washington's most prestigious museums—the D.A.R. Museum for Day 1, the Smithsonian's Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture for Day 2 and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate for Day 3. The Symposium was organized by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums in partnership with the Association of Children's Museums, the Association of College and University Galleries, and the International Facility Management Association.

The event was organized under three interrelated themes, and included workshops, plenary sessions, breakout sessions, and tours:

Day 1: Vision (planning your building project),

Day 2: Implementation (making your vision a reality), and

Day 3: Sustainability (“life after opening the doors”)

More information can be found at: <http://www.midatlanticmuseums.org/buildingmuseums.html>

MAAM's annual conference in 2008 will be held in Washington, D.C., October 26-29. This year's theme is *MAAM on the Mall: The Museum as Story Teller*.

MAAM's 2007 conference *Museums at the Crossroads: Confluence and Connections* was held in Pittsburgh, October 24-27. The recipient of the 2007 Katherine Coffey Award was Richard Burkert, Executive Director of the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

The Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations (PFMHO) held its 2008 conference in Pittsburgh, April 13-15: *Building Bridges: Connection Mission, Message, Medium*. There were 19 educational sessions, including a plenary session with Michael Kumer, Director of Duquesne University's Nonprofit Leadership Institute, which focused on developing leadership traits. The keynote address was given by Bill Flanagan, Executive Director of Pittsburgh 250, on the subject of the value of cultural institutions as components of community development.

PFMHO also offered several spring workshops in Harrisburg on human resources issues in museums, including a session entitled *The New Supervisor*, which featured as a presenter CurCom board member Ellen Endsloew.

PFMHO also announced a program of Technical Assistance Grants for organizations with annual budgets of under \$250,000, to underwrite registration fees for museum staff members to attend training workshops.

Conference-goers left the Upstate History Alliance/Museum Association of New York Annual Conference (MANY) (held in Albany) abuzz with ideas, challenges, and tools to make their museums, historical societies, sites, and house museums more dynamic, more meaningful, and more community-oriented thanks to a talented group of presenters and inspiring local museums that hosted receptions and workshops. 2008's meeting was the largest in the history of the UHA/MANY collaboration, made richer by the participation of many partners including the New York Council for the Humanities, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Archives Partnership Trust.

A status report about how museums across New York state are addressing issues of leadership transition and development of staff leadership through succession planning was released at the UHA/MANY Annual Conference in Albany. The report is the result of a year's worth of field research funded by the New York State Council on the Arts. Among the findings: the very term "succession planning" is almost universally not well understood; an affinity for the concept has a great deal to do with where a person is in his or her career; and since the likelihood of adding succession planning to already long "to-do" lists is slim, it must be integrated as seamlessly as possible into an organization's planning culture.

Going green isn't just for large institutions. Find out what the MANY has to offer on its resource page <http://manyonline.org/MANY-Article03.htm>.

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**2007**  
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**AAM Annual Meeting and Museum Expo**  
**Chicago, IL**

**MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS**

MICHAEL BERTRAND – NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

MAAM recently approved a new membership structure which succeeded in having less categories. The bulk of membership renews in the beginning of April each year and renewals will go out to MAAM's membership database. MAAM will also assist members with the slight increase in the dues rates by making the membership renewals for 2007 last 15 months so that next year our dues renewal coincides with the fiscal year. In this process of evaluating membership levels, the MAAM discovered that they have approximately 600 individuals in its' membership rolls and have a distribution list of approximately 1800 individuals including their members.

According to the MAAM, they held a fairly successful annual conference in Brooklyn at the Marriott Hotel. Financially, they achieved their goals, even though attendance was not what had been expected. The overall attendance was approximately 210. The MAAM has high hopes for their 2007 conference which will be held in Pittsburgh, October 24 through 27. It will be at the Marriott City Center Hotel and with room rates of \$129.00/night. The conference will be featuring several events at the historic sites Pittsburgh offers, as well as some post-conference tours.

Attendance at the "Building Museums" event held in Washington, DC was excellent. There were 373 attendees at the three-day conference of which 65 were speakers - exceeding attendance in 2006 by 120 and 2005 by 80. The venues were the National Building Museum, The Reynolds Center and The Phillips Collection. The 2008 Building Museums Symposium will be located in Washington, DC; the MAAM Board has tasked staff with exploring new venues for 2009 or 2010 either within or outside the MAAM region. The overall attendance has been quite diverse with only 1 state not represented in attendance in addition to more than 15 individuals from outside North America.

MAAM's Board of Directors has begun planning for a new Exhibitions Symposium to be launched in April of 2008. Currently, it is expected that the event will be held at selected venues in Philadelphia. This event will be similar in form to Building Museums, but with different content and mission.

MAAM's Board of Directors hired Hauck & Associates – a professional association management firm in Washington, DC - in June of 2006. Since that time, they have identified the association's areas of strengths as well as several areas for improvement. The board reports that they continue to wrestle with some organizational issues from time to time, but the association has become more consistent and capable over the last 9 months. The MAAM will be moving its' website to a

new system and has high hopes for better communications and conferences during the next year. Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums, 1255 23rd Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington D.C. 20037

**The Rare Books and Manuscript Section (RBMS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)**, a division of the American Library Association (ALA) will hold their 48th annual RBMS Preconference, entitled “From Here to Ephemerality: Fugitive Sources in Libraries, Archives, and Museums,” from Tuesday, June 19 to Friday, June 22, 2007, in Baltimore, Maryland, a short distance away from Washington, D.C., the site of the ALA Annual Conference.

This will be the first time that an RBMS Preconference will explore the theme of ephemera in libraries, archives, and museums. Ephemera collections have traditionally been neglected by institutions and have been underutilized by scholars; they provide unique challenges in cataloging, preservation, and access. The goals of the Preconference will be to examine these issues, and to uncover the value of building and using ephemera collections to their full potential. There will be five plenary sessions, encompassing: ephemerality; the scholarly uses of ephemera; dealers’ perspectives on ephemera; collecting and collectors of ephemera; and the care and management of ephemera collections in institutions. The sixth and final plenary session will be a wrap-up of the entire conference. Plenary speakers include internationally renowned scholars, collectors, and library and museum curators. In addition to the plenary sessions, there will be nine short papers further developing aspects of the theme, and nine seminars offering a more practical or case-study approach to the topic. Two full-day workshops, to be held on **Tuesday, June 19**, are also currently under consideration.

Henry Raine is the Chair of the Program Committee and can be reached with any questions or suggestions at [HRaine@nyhistory.org](mailto:HRaine@nyhistory.org).