

**WESTERN MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
REGIONAL REPORTS
(2007-2009)**

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

WESTERN MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
MARSHALL DUELL · CURATOR, OLD COURTHOUSE MUSEUM

Museums in the west have not been untouched by the economic downturn. A number of our colleagues report salary cuts, lay offs, and furloughs. In one particularly concerning development, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles was forced to lay off 20% of its workforce in early February. The Getty Trust has experienced a 24% reduction in the value of its investment portfolio and has made adjustments in operations accordingly. A number of institutions have reduced operating hours, curtailed programs and postponed capital improvement projects.

But not all the news is grim. Getty's two museums report increases in attendance. Attendance at the Getty Villa is up 16% from the previous twelve months. Registration at the recent annual meeting of the California Association of Museums, the theme for which was "Building Bridges: Collaboration, Innovation, Risk", set an all time record.

In a telling sign of the times, the exhibition *Hobos to Street People: Artists' Responses to Homelessness from the New Deal to Present* received rave reviews. The exhibition suggests that there exist striking similarities between the economic upheavals of today and those of the Great Depression. Both the artwork and the exhibition are things of real beauty. *Hobos to Street People* is on view at the California Historical Society until August 2009 and will travel to other venues.

**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>.

REGIONAL REPORTS
2007
CURCOM Annual Board Meeting
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.