

Newsletter

Autumn Issue 2002

COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE OF THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

Networking At Its BEST!

by Gabriela Truly

Collections Manager, Dallas Museum of Art

In the excitement of the last moments of AAM Conference back in May, I said I would write an article about the AAM experience. And although I now have to actually sit and write this article in the midst of a ton of work, I am glad I said I would.

Most of you are now familiar with how important networking is to our collections care responsibilities. If we spend the time to get to know people at the workshops and annual meetings, by the end of each get-together, we will have added new resources to our Rolodex.

Participating...

*is a gift of knowledge, new contacts,
unparalleled information and friends
you will never forget.*

When I was asked to be the Program Chair for the Registrars Committee of AAM 2002, I knew it would be a lot of work. Having been a member of the Program Committee for TAM four years in a row, I was well trained and ready for the challenge.

Just as with the TAM groups, I worked this past year with people from all museum departments. Even though I was working on sessions with topics mostly relevant to registrars and collections

managers, I also had the opportunity to work with visual resources people, librarians, conservators, consultants, etc.

And just like those wonderful meetings in Austin each year for the TAM program, the meeting in Washington D.C. at the AAM Headquarters to discuss the proposed sessions had people from all areas – development, security, small museums, curators, education, exhibitions, museum management, media and technology, etc. The meeting was interesting, enlightening, long and fun! It is so nice to have fun when you are working so hard.

Presenting topics that we always consider mostly relevant only to ourselves (registrars and collections managers) and listening to the rest of our colleagues get all excited about them, too – as well as give their own spin to the same topic – is always enlightening for me.

During one session, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Registrars Committee of AAM. Talk about networking at its best! To interact with people who have been in the profession for 25 years or longer and have them share information on how the group got started and how far we have come as a profession was a treasured experience. And, you know, in the end, it is a lot about who you know and how willing you are to make those calls. Tap into the knowledge others have acquired by going through the same problem(s) you

FROM THE CHAIR

Is it just me, or has this summer flown by with the speed of... well, I can't think of an accurate metaphor, but something that moves really fast?

It's been a busy summer all around. Carolyn Spears has been hard at work representing CMC on Program Committee and has put together a great slate of collections-related sessions for the TAM Annual Meeting in Houston next March.

I know from experience what hard, time-consuming work that is. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for a preview of the sessions on tap for Houston. Milly Walker continues her diligence in organizing great workshops for CMC – many thanks to Milly, Darla Harmon and the folks at the Lone Star Flight Museum, and Catherine

Campbell and the Moody Mansion, for creating an enlightening and entertaining day for us in Galveston in June.

As a special treat in this issue, Jack Linden provides us with a newcomer's perspective on the TAM Annual Meeting. Jack, a self-described newcomer to the ins and outs of museum work, was a CMC scholarship recipient to attend the Lubbock meeting this past spring. I hope most of you got the opportunity to meet him and benefit from his insights and refreshing perspective on our work.

Our next workshop will be on that perennial issue – PEST CONTROL! We will be hosted by the Dallas Museum of Natural History. See the workshop flyer insert for more information and registration.

See you there...

Megan Bryant / Chair

CMC COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE 2002-2003 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 21, 2002 – *Pest Control* at the Dallas Museum of Natural History, Dallas, Texas

JANUARY 13, 2003 – *Picking Appraisers, Conservators & Insurance* at The Witte Museum, San Antonio, Texas

Curators' Circle From McFaddin-Ward House

The Curators' Circle, a new program from McFaddin-Ward House, are quarterly events targeted at interested docents, volunteers and museum professionals. The sessions are free and open to the public and will take place at the McFaddin-Ward House Visitor Center, 1906 Calder Avenue, Beaumont, Texas.

This quarter's program is as follows:

October 24, 2002 / 7:30 PM:
Decorate Arts: Rugs, presented by Sherri Birdsong, Curator of Collections

To reserve a seat or for more information, call Debbie Gannon, Assistant Curator/Registrar at 409-832-1906.

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CMC Newsletter

is a quarterly publication of the Collection Managers Committee, a non-profit affinity group of the Texas Association of Museums. Submissions are due to the Editor by the first of March, May, August and November.

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Kandy Taylor-Hille has asked me to write a short essay on my view of my first attendance at the Texas Association of Museums Meeting in Lubbock. Being an historian, and a newcomer to the "ins and outs" of the museum and historical site administration, I frankly expected to be overwhelmed. I admit that I was, indeed, overwhelmed, although not from fear but from the encouragement, the offers of help, and the sincere appreciation for what I am trying to do.

I think it is best to begin by explaining my situation... I am currently the "curator" of a small building in the town of Seguin. I use the term "curator" very, very loosely. I inherited a building that is approximately 16' x 20' with a dugout basement, all of which is stuffed with everything from a sword from the San Jacinto battlefield to the speakers from a drive-in movie, as well as artifacts from someplace in Thailand circa the Viet Nam War. Most of the identifying tags have been eaten by silverfish, documents have been hung with anything and everything, and there is no climate control – period. Mother Nature has taken care of all that, with the wind and the rain having free access.

Therefore, in response to those that ask me, "What did you learn at the TAM Meeting?" I say, "You do not have the time." However, I shall try to bring out some of the things that I have stored in memory, rather than recite the pages and pages of instructions that were handed out or the addresses that I now have in my file. "Have patience" is probably the biggest thing that I learned. I was totally convinced that I could get this "whole thing

"'Have patience' is probably the biggest thing that I learned."

done" before the year was out if only I worked hard enough and long enough.

Having been convinced of the "patience thing" myself, I am now trying to convince my Board that they, too, must exercise patience. It is a task of diplomacy, and I think the softness of the presenters' and participants' persuasive voices showed me how best to do that.

"You can't keep everything, nor should you" was another important learning experience. I tended to be one of those who thought that "someday" we will need that. I am convinced now that many of the collectibles should be other places and that many of those items are nice antiques, which someone should have kept in their own home or

found another place for them to be domiciled.

The mechanical aspects of keeping, preserving, and displaying artifacts that were shown were vital to me. Not only do I have memory of this as something you should do, but I now have documents in my possession that will lead me to help or provide immediate assistance. This has been invaluable.

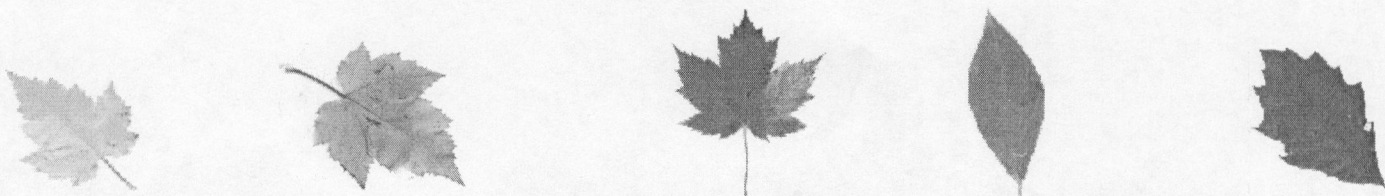
Not last, but for the sake of brevity, I learned that "you had better read, read, read and keep coming back to these conferences." One time is only the introduction to the many facets, vagaries, hardships and pleasures of being

around and part of a museum or historical site. My workload seemed to be lighter upon leaving the conference; I know that it wasn't, but the participants and presenters seemed to be saying, "Let us carry part of your load."

I thank all of you for the kind words, the encouragement and the offers of help. I especially want to thank Kandy Taylor-Hille for convincing me that I should attend and for opening as many doors for me as she did. Her efforts and help certainly exemplified what I witnessed in Lubbock.

I found the entire conference to be so enlightening, interesting and informative and the two books I brought with me to read during the "dead times" came back with me to Seguin – unopened.

A very worthwhile experience.



GALVESTON WORKSHOP

Photodocumenting Your Collection

by Milly Walker,
Dublin Dr. Pepper Bottling Co. Museum

On June 17, twenty workshop attendees gathered at the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston for muffins, donuts, coffee and juice. A tour of the facilities, museum, hangers and airplanes was narrated by Jack Leo, volunteer for the museum.

After reconvening in the conference room, Darla Harmon, Curator of Collections, discussed money-saving ideas for backgrounds and photography when using photographs

in documenting your collection. The group participated in a discussion of light and cameras. Darla's handout was from a two-part session at the Mountain-Plains Museums Association Annual Meeting of 1999 titled, "ARTIFACT

CONDITION REPORT: PHOTOGRAPHY OF PHOTOGRAPHS, TEXTILES, PAINTINGS AND FURNITURE" by David W. Hawkinson.

The group broke up for lunch, with some going to the Moody Gardens for the noon repast. The afternoon was taken up by Todd and Tracy Johnson of CIRCA, who discussed the problems found

"...the digital process can be used to restore prints and negatives for use in the museum."

in restoration of photographs and how the digital process can be used to restore prints and negatives for use in the museum (circa@vzinet.com).

The day was capped off with a reception for the attendees at the Moody Mansion Museum, which included a tour with Catherine

Campbell, Collections Manager for the Moody Mansion Museum.

The American Association of Museums Bookstore is currently carrying a book titled, INTRODUCTION TO OBJECT ID – Guidelines for Making Records that Describe Art, Antiques and Antiquities, published in 1999 by the J. Paul Getty Trust. Part I of the book is "Describing Art and Antiques Using Object ID." Part II of

the book, "Photographing Objects for Purposes of Identification," by Peter Dorrell is well illustrated. It includes an Overview, Choosing Viewpoints, Choosing Backgrounds, Choosing Lighting, and a Checklist for Photographing Objects. A Bibliography is included. For those of us looking for information about photodocumenting a collection, Part II of this book is highly recommended.

Scholarships and Awards Available From RC-AAM

The Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums (RC-AAM), as part of its mission, seeks to promote professionalism, establish high standards of practice, and foster communication among Registrars and with other members of the museum profession. To those ends, the RC-AAM offers several different travel stipend awards and one award that is a package of basic resources.

One stipend is made possible through the generous support of Crozier Fine Arts, a New York-based company specializing in crating,

transportation, freight forwarding, and storage. The Crozier Fine Arts award provides six recipients, one from each region of the country, with \$500-\$700 to help with the cost of attending the AAM Annual Meeting. For registrars or other museum professionals who perform registration duties with at least five years of experience, the Young Professionals Award provides \$500 for each of two recipients to use towards attending the annual meeting. Students and interns are eligible for another stipend, the Margaret A. Willard Memorial Award. Unlike the

other travel awards, this single \$500 stipend can be used to attend a professional meeting or workshop of the recipient's choice. In contrast to the travel stipends, the Kay Paris Memorial Award provides a recipient in each of the six regions a set of references and funds membership in both national and regional registrars' organizations.

Full details about the awards can be found at www.rcaam.org under the member benefits section. If you have any questions regarding the RC-AAM awards program, contact the Awards Task Force Chair, Holly Young, at hyoung1@ci.phoenix.az.us or 602-495-0901.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

I came to the museum field late in my career – and in quite an unexpected way. I worked my way through college as a part-time employee at Mary Kay Cosmetics in the early 1970's. I completed my teaching degree; but at that time there was a glut of teachers on the market, and I really didn't want to leave Mary Kay. We were a much smaller company, having been in business for only eight years. In my part-time position, I worked on Mary Kay Ash's personal staff, and shortly after becoming a full-time employee, I became her personal secretary. Through the years, as the company grew, my responsibilities broadened and I managed several departments in our organization, one of which was totally committed to keeping up with Mary Kay and her many projects.

Thank goodness Mary Kay was a "saver." She started a company scrapbook at the same time she started the company. She always wanted to have a Mary Kay Museum; and over the years, she would give me items to store that she felt would be great for a "future" museum. In 1993, our executive staff decided to make this dream come true for her on our company's 30th anniversary, and the Mary Kay Museum was born. Lucky for me that it became a reality! When Mary Kay had her stroke in 1996, her personal staff was disbanded and I was

appointed Museum Director. Previous to that time, there was no one assigned to the museum, so it stayed stagnant and, many times, out of date. No one was collecting for the future or taking care of the current collection, so there was definitely a need for this position.

JENNIFER COOK

*Newly Elected CMC Officer-at-Large
and Editor of CMC Newsletter
The Mary Kay Museum / Dallas, Texas*

Needless to say, I was certainly shocked to hear this news, having no previous museum experience and with no one in the company to give me any guidance on what to do.

Thankfully, there is TAM and the CMC to lead those of us who do not have previous experience or training in museum work. I also took some public history and archival classes at the University of Texas at Arlington. Since I graduated from that institution, I thought there would be no problem in getting my transcript. When I told them the date I graduated, they told me it would take several days as they would have to go down to the basement to retrieve my records!

I attended my first TAM meeting in 1997, and two of the first people I met were Kandy Taylor-Hille and Gabriela Truly. They invited me to join CMC, which has been a tremendous help to me in becoming a professional in the museum field.

Now if you happen to be driving down the North Dallas Parkway in Addison, I invite you to take the exit at The Mary Kay Building and come inside. I would love to give you a personal tour of the Mary Kay Museum. I know you would enjoy it!

NETWORKING...

Continued from Cover Page

have now. Their museum might be larger or smaller; better funded or not; have more staff or less; have a larger collection or not; it does not matter. The most important thing is that they might have the answer you seek – the name of the right vendor you now need, the same type of tissue your textiles are languishing for but you are unable to get delivered to you by tomorrow – you never know... unless you ask.

Networking... You do, indeed, have to work at it.

After many months of hundreds of e-mails, faxes and phone calls with all the Chairs for the various sessions, many of the speakers, and the AAM office, the program was completed. Out of the eleven session proposals we presented in August 2001, six made it to the final program. Working with Dean Phelus, Director of Meetings for AAM, was a delight. He has been in charge of the Program meetings and coordination for several years and does a wonderful job of keeping the group focused and moving along.

During the actual conference, I was able to attend only three sessions. The rest of my time was spent working and *networking*. I worked the Registrars Committee booth with Megan Bryant a couple of times, hosted the RC International Registrars reception, attended the RC Business Lunch to welcome all registrars and collections managers to the conference, attended the RC Board Meeting, and worked one of the tables (on international shipping) during the New World Roundtables.

I encourage each of you to get more involved. Organize a workshop, or at least help when one is scheduled locally. Contact the TAM office at 888/842-7491 or tam@io.com and find out how to get involved with the various groups that organize the annual conference. Find out how to get involved in session development with CMC for future meetings and event.

Attending the workshops and conferences is very important. Participating in their creation is a gift of knowledge, new contacts, unparalleled information, and friends you will never forget.

Get involved!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Print Clearly

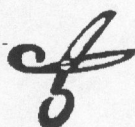
Name: _____ Institution: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code + 4: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please make checks payable to the Collection Managers Committee.
Send check and form to Rebecca Huffstutler, The Witte Museum,
3801 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209



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c/o Mary Kay Museum
P.O. Box 799045
Dallas, Texas 75379-9045

WORKSHOP ALERT

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Collection Managers Committee WORKSHOP

21 October 2002

9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Dallas Museum of Natural History, Dallas, TX

Lunch on your own

CRITTERS IN YOUR COLLECTION?

The Ins and Outs of Pest Control

Gail Elia, Entomologist and Director of Education, Texas Discovery Gardens

Michael Merchant, Urban Entomologist, Texas Cooperative Extension

Got a problem with insects and other pests in your collection? Worried about the possibility of a future problem? Then this workshop is for you! We will be joined by two entomologists who will lead the workshop in an overview of the various types of insect pests most likely to cause problems for museum collections. We'll also be learning about Integrated Pest Management – monitoring tools and methods, pest observation and identification, and a summary of a variety of products and procedures available for pest control, including non-chemical methods. Join us at the Dallas Museum of Natural History, 3535 Grand Avenue in Fair Park, on Monday, October 21, to learn all about pest management. Send in your registration today!

To register, tear off and send the reservation form below – copies accepted:

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail (for confirmation): _____

Amount Enclosed (\$25 for CMC members; \$30 for non-members): _____

CMC Dues: \$15 per year – you get a newsletter, special rates on workshops and wonderful, lifelong friends and connections. JOIN TODAY!! _____

Make checks payable to: Collection Managers Committee

Send to: Milly Walker, Dublin Dr. Pepper Company Museum, 221 S. Patrick Street, Dublin, TX 76446

Or Call Milly at (254) 445-4210

CMC Federal Tax Identification Number: 75-225-3189

