



COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER SPRING, 1990

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

It seems hard to believe that Annual Meeting is just around the corner. We have a full agenda for our Saturday morning meeting and I look forward to another full house. (Sorry about the early hour, lets see if we can reschedule next year!) You will hear about the new Membership Committee and Archives Committee and we will give you an update on the "Museum Forms Book" and the Disaster Plan. Please plan to attend and be ready to volunteer to join one of the committees or suggest the formation of another committee, one which you might be willing to chair. Most importantly, we will introduce our new officers and outline plans for activities and workshops for the coming year.

Since this is my final letter as Chair of the CMC, I want to thank all of you for the support you have given me and the other officers over the past several months. The Collection Managers Committee has become, in a very short time, a vital part of TAM. This vitality is due to the dedication and participation of our officers and membership. I would like to encourage you to continue to support this growth by becoming actively involved with CMC. Please bring your comments and ideas to Annual Meeting, I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Richard Casagrande Chair, CMC

TAM ANNUAL MEETING 1990

There are going to be many sessions at the 1990 TAM Annual Meeting in Lubbock which will be of particular interest to Collection Managers. April 4 - 7 are the scheduled dates and listed below are some of the sessions which you may want to attend.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

MUSEUM FUNDAMENTALS II: This workshop covers the four basic areas of museum operations, administration, education, development, and computerization.

CONCURRENT SESSION II

2:45 - 4:15 p.m.

COMPUTERIZATION: Our own Terry Grose will review the basic considerations that must be addressed for successful computerization of any museum function: collections, education, development, and finance.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP: The Collections Management Workshop presents a practical look at the physical preservation and storage of collections as practiced at the Texas Tech University Museum - designed for collection managers, curators, and administrators involved in planning new storage areas or looking for ways to improve their own collections management practices. Following a general orientation session for all participants, individuals may attend one of the following four sections.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND LUBBOCK LAKE LANDMARK

ART, CLOTHING AND TEXTILES, AND HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND THE RANCHING HERITAGE CENTER

MAMMALOGY, FROZEN TISSUES, AND THE NATURAL SCIENCE RESEARCH LABORATORY

THURSDAY, APRIL 5

Concurrent Sessions I

9:00 - 10:15 a.m.

ORIGINAL OR REPRODUCTION: WHICH TO USE How do we maintain historical accuracy while protecting our valuable collections? How do we insure that the reproduction materials are authentic for the desired period? Where can reproduction materials be obtained?

Concurrent Sessions II

10:30 - 11:45 a.m.

CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: A NEW IMS GRANT OPPORTUNITY CAP has been designed to assist institutions in comprehensive long range planning for conservation, providing an overview of all of the museum's collections and environmental conditions, as well as its policies and procedures relating to collections structure, and the preparation and benefits for an institutional participant.

Concurrent Sessions III

3:30 - 4:45 p.m.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE CARE OF TEACHING COLLECTIONS

Curatorial conservation standards are often in conflict with the disposable objects policies associated with education collections. Which conservation standards should apply to teaching collections? Can an object that is not of museum quality be used effectively to teach as a museum quality object? There ought be high standards for developing and using teaching collections.

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

Concurrent Sessions I

9:00 - 10:15 a.m.

TISSUES, TUNES, AND TALK: THE IMPORTANCE OF NONTRADITIONAL

COLLECTIONS How can museums properly integrate non-traditional resources, such as language, oral history, music, or even frozen tissue samples, into museum interpretation? These potentially significant primary sources are often ignored and used only as background information within exhibits. There are other ways to use these materials and this panel will present some new ideas for working with non-traditional collections.

Concurrent Sessions II

10:30 - 11:45 a.m.

NATIVE AMERICAN SACRED OBJECTS AND HUMAN REMAINS: ISSUES FOR

MUSEUMS State and national issues concerning Native American collections and sacred objects and reparation have concerned lawmakers and occupied newspaper headlines during the past year. What is the current status of some of these legislative issues and how might they affect our state's museums?

Concurrent Sessions III

3:30 - 4:45 p.m.

THE CURATORIAL CRISIS In recent years, the number of curatorial staff in the museum world has been declining. As curators are replaced by collection managers, registrars, exhibit consultants and educators, how does this affect the traditional museum responsibility of "the care and interpretation" of a museum's collections?

SATURDAY, APRIL 7

8:00 a.m.

COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE BREAKFAST

Concurrent Sessions I

9:00 - 10:15 a.m.

COMPUTERIZED COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION: A NEW ALLIANCE?

The increasing sophistication of computerized collection management systems opens the door for museum visitors to access collection records. But, is it desirable for visitors to have access to collection records? How should access be controlled? What has been the experience of museums that have pioneered in this field?

Concurrent Sessions II

10:30 - 11:45 p.m.

STATEWIDE DISASTER ASSISTANCE NETWORK PROJECT This session will present factors to consider in developing a statewide disaster assistance network, including information on workshop training sessions for disaster preparedness planning and recovery operation procedures in the event of a disaster.

DUES NEEDED!

If you have not already paid your dues, please do so by the TAM Annual Meeting in Lubbock on April 4 - 7. This will be your last newsletter if you do not join or re-join!

COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE

1990 SLATE OF CANDIDATES

CHAIR:

Sally Shelton
Assistant Conservator
Texas Memorial Museum
Austin, Texas

Susan Harwell
Curator
Institute of Texas Cultures
San Antonio, Texas

VICE-CHAIR

Terry Grose
Chief Asst. Curator
Fort Worth Museum of
Science & History
Fort Worth, Texas

Melissa Thompson
Asst. Registrar
Amon Carter Museum
Fort Worth, Texas

TREASURER

Peter Farnham
Curator of Collections
Old City Park
Dallas, Texas

Lisa Rebori
Mgr. of Collections
Houston Museum of
Natural Science
Houston, Texas

Please remember to send in your ballots to Rick Casagrande, San Antonio Museum Association, P.O. BOX 2601, San Antonio, Texas 78299-2601, post-marked by March 21.

UPCOMING WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT:

COLLECTION MANAGERS TO SPONSOR WORKSHOP ON ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

The Collection Managers Committee will sponsor a workshop entitled "ARCHIVES: THEIR ORGANIZATION AND CARE" June 23 in Midland at the Petroleum Museum. This workshop will be co-hosted by the Permian Basin Museums Institute and the North West Texas Museum Association. The speakers will be David Murrah, Director of Texas Tech University's West Texas Collection and Betty Orbeck, Archivist of the Petroleum Museum Archives. In the afternoon, Dr. Richard Mason, the director of the Haley Library, will make a presentation about the new addition and extensive renovation of their facilities. Tours of the Petroleum Museum and the Haley Library will also be offered. The chair for this workshop is John Neilson of Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. The cost of the workshop is \$5.00 for

members of the three organizations and \$7.50 for non-members. Don't miss this one!

FIRST COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE WORKSHOP A SUCCESS!

On February 10, 1990, the Collection Managers Committee offered a workshop entitled "AT YOUR OWN RISK". The meeting, hosted by the San Antonio Museum Association and organized by Kim Peel and Gabriela Truly, dealt with insurance, shipping, and related topics.

Bill Allen of Allen Insurance Associates opened with a presentation on the insurance of collections and specifically artifacts in transit. Bill provided valuable information on how insurance determines fees for coverage. He commented that the insurance premiums paid for coverage of an entire collection form a premium pool which is used by the underwriters to finance limited coverage policies like those used to insure traveling exhibits. If an organization has not established this premium pool, it is likely that insurance carriers will not be willing to provide short-term coverage at reasonable rates. One way to overcome this problem, which frequently is faced by small and medium-sized institutions, is to participate in cooperative efforts which allow several organizations to be covered by one carrier. Another way to circumvent the problem is to make use of short-term insurance that is already available to another institution (for example, policies held by a borrower of artifacts).

He also provided advice on the calculation of adequate coverage amounts. It was suggested that this be based on "probable maximum loss", calculated as the maximum value of items that would be destroyed if any one major area (exhibition or storage) was wiped out. This strategy assumes that in most disaster scenarios only one portion of a building is likely to suffer major damage. He suggested that coverage amounts be based on the fair market value of artifacts at time of loss; inflating values only serve to inflate the institution's loss ratio in the event that a loss does occur. This in turn results in increased premiums for the institution. Loan agreements governing artifacts should state that the materials are to be insured for their "fair market value" rather than a fixed rate; although an approximate dollar amount is still needed for the purpose of calculating premiums, the fair market clause can be used to cover rapid market fluctuations or exhibitions that travel for extended periods of time.

Pat Spradling of John P. Coston Customhouse Brokers introduced the audience members to the role of the customs broker in traveling an exhibit. She stated that a broker should be contacted before loans of artifacts or exhibits are negotiated because of the complexity of laws regarding duties, tariffs, and the exchange of goods across international boundaries. Several months should be allocated for the preparation of paper work and the actual process of clearing materials through customs. The broker must know the nature of materials to be shipped, as tariffs are different for different items. For example, some items such as antiques and antiquities are

duty-free as of January, 1989. This does not, however, imply that there will be no charges to introduce this material into the United States. There would still be a customs merchandise processing fee of 0.17% of value charged by the government, as well as the cost of a customs entry surety bond posted for the items.

A particularly valuable portion of Pat's talk dealt with the ATA Carnet, which combines documentation, invoice, clearance papers and bond in one instrument. This service is available for use in clearing items which transit a number of countries; further data on the ATA Carnet can be obtained from customs brokers or the United States Customs Bureau.

Crate construction and packing technique was discussed by Bob Spangler of Spangler and Ayo Art Services. He provided a detailed treatment of the rationale used in designing shipping crates for museum use; this included consideration from a conservation perspective of crating materials and methods of reinforcement for crates used with traveling exhibits. Spangler and Ayo, for example, uses 1/2 inch fir plywood in the construction of their exterior crates; although pine would be cheaper, this firm feels that the resins exuded by pine do not contribute to an acceptable environment for museum artifacts. Polyurethane varnish is used on the crate exteriors only, so that the raw wood of the crate interior can be used to absorb any excess humidity trapped in the box at the time the crate is sealed. Bob also discussed a number of options that could be used when combining sturdy exterior crating with protective interior boxing.

David Smith of Smith Kramer, Inc. Fine Arts Services provided a history of the development of his firm, which is unique in its approach to providing full service handling of traveling exhibits. Smith Kramer not only provides courier and crating services but will also aid in designing, booking, and traveling exhibits throughout the world. Although this service was originally designed for and devoted to fine art materials, the company has branched out into the realm of exhibits dealing with history and anthropology.

A wrap-up session led by Kim Peel and Gabriela Truly summarized the day's discussions and allowed attendees to question the presenters. The workshop organizers were open and candid about their experiences and their real-world observations illustrated concrete application of the general points made in the earlier talks.

The workshop was both well-attended and well-received. The audience was made up of a broad range museum and museum-related professionals. Curators, registrars, conservators, and service providers were all represented. The sessions were extremely informative and at times very entertaining. All of those in attendance appeared to share in the attitude that this workshop was a truly worthwhile experience.

Terry Grose,
Chief Assistant Curator
Fort Worth Museum of Science & History
