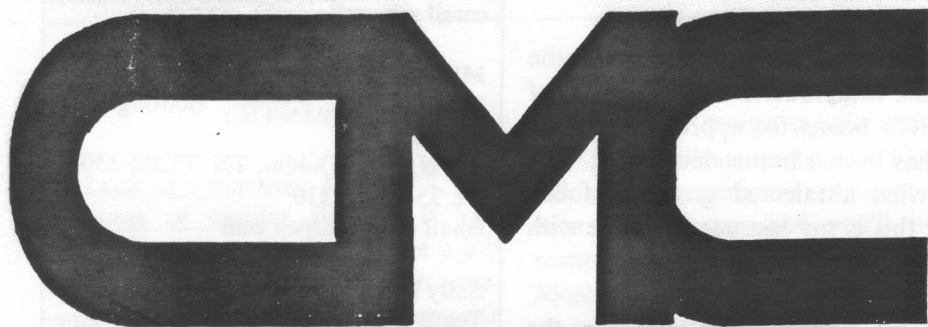


!! CONGRATULATIONS !!

Recipients of CMC Scholarships to the 2002 TAM Annual Meeting



Newsletter

Spring Issue /2002

COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE OF THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

TEXTILES:

Handling, Storage, Care,
Exhibition, Monitoring

*by Carolyn Spears,
CMC Secretary and Curator,
Stone Fort Museum
Nacogdoches, TX*

WORKSHOP REVIEW

The winter workshop of the Collection Managers Committee was held Tuesday, January 29, 2002, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Houston Museum of Natural Science. Included was a lecture tour at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston by Tina M. Llorente, Assistant Curator, Textiles and Costume, and a presentation at the Houston Museum of Natural Science by Beatrice Dodge, an independent conservator. Ms. Llorente used the current exhibit, "American Traditions: Quilts and Coverlets 1760 - 1900," to discuss exhibition techniques of textiles including preparation for exhibit and monitoring textiles while on display. Following lunch, Ms. Dodge discussed environmental concerns for the storage and display of textiles. Participants gained an understanding of the complex decisions necessary in planning for the care and use of textile collections, and learned some of the methods available for the storage and exhibition of a wide variety of textiles. Ms. Llorente began the day with a tour of the MFAH's temporary installation of quilts from primarily the Bayou Bend Collection. The quilts from this collection were prepared for exhibition using a cotton backing that was pre-washed and cut to fit each quilt.



(left) Tina Llorente, Assistant Curator, Textiles and Costumes, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and (right) Beatrice Dodge, Independent Conservator.

A velcro hanging strip was added to the backing material along one edge and the cotton backing was then 'tacked' to the back of the quilt using very long basting stitches. The quilts were then suspended by the velcro strip. Some, but not all, of the quilts received a cleaning treatment before

See TEXTILES on page 2

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear fellow members,

As I approach this TAM annual meeting it is without my usual jubilation and excitement. I love going to the annual meeting, and a big part of why I go is the people I get to see, for all of you in some part nurture my soul.

While I certainly am there to enhance skills, learn new methods, and exercise the little gray cells, what keeps me coming back is the camaraderie and fellowship of like minded individuals. I have served on CMC's board for approximately six years, and in the area of professional growth it has been a tremendous boon. The friendships formed there are truly amazing, what a talented group of folks. What's bring-ing me down is the realization that this is my last year to serve with CMC, I'll be handing the gavel over to some very lucky person.

I recently asked Lisa Rebori how she dealt with her own stepping back from the board. To quote her "I haven't." And in truth Lisa is still a very active part of many of our meetings, she offered us her home from which to have the board retreat, and still serves in an advisory capacity. I also can see in her a certain satisfaction in knowing that something she put a lot of her own personal time into is still a living growing organism. I hope to be able to emulate her service mindedness in the years to come, and I know without doubt that I will enjoy seeing this wonderful organization continue to grow and play a more and more integral role in providing training as well as fellowship for Texas Collection Managers.

*With all my best,
Kandy Taylor-Hille*

2000-2001 CMC OFFICERS

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TEXTILES ---

Continued from page 1

the backing was attached to the object. A variety of factors determined the degree, if any, of cleaning undertaken on an artifact. Museum staff and conservators considered the overall strength of the artifact, the type of dyes used in the object, other construction techniques that might effect the object's ability to withstand stress, the effect of taking no action (in other words, would more extensive damage result from taking no action), and the degree to which cleaning would improve the appearance of an object. Often, cleaning has no effect on the look of a textile, but serves primarily to stabilize the object. At the conclusion of the exhibit, the textiles will be stored with the backing in place.

As is the case with the Bayou Bend Collection, textiles rarely see the exhibition hall owing to the difficulty in producing safe mounts and the sensi-

tivity of the material to light, dust and handling. Even with best practices for controlling environmental damage, much of the preservation effort for textile exhibits relies on a short exhibition run. The MFAH exhibit is open for less than four months, and the benefits go far beyond the opportunity to share with the public a collection not previously exhibited. The exhibition created an opportunity for expanded preservation efforts on the Museum's textile collection.

SOURCE LIST

Talas
568 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
212-219-0770
talasonline.com

Museum Services Corporation
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Phone: 800-672-1107
www.museumservicescorporation.com

University Products
Phone: 800.336.4847
Fax: 800.532.9281
www.universityproducts.com

Gaylord Bros.
P.O. Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901
Phone: 800-634-6307
www.gaylord.com

Check these local sources:
Fabric stores for muslin, cotton twill tape, thread, and toile. Hardware stores for screens.

Information on HEPA filters:
AIC News, January 2002 - Article about HEPA filters for vacuums.

For Light meters:
Conservation suppliers or Grainger's

TEXTILE CARE

CLIMATE; TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

- 5-55% RH, over 60-65% allows mold to grow, and most insects that attack textiles prefer humidity.
- Keep climate stable - fluctuations in humidity causes expansion and contraction of the individual fibers.
- 70 °F, or below is best for textiles.
- Too dry or too hot - fibers dry out.
- Don't iron textiles - it speeds yellowing.
- Good air circulation reduces chances for mold growth.
- The higher the temperature the faster the collection will deteriorate.
- Use air filters to maintain clean air in storage.
- Avoid placing textiles in front of air vents as they will act as dust collecting filters.
- Dust is abrasive to fibers.

LIGHT

- Textiles are very sensitive to light.
- Sunlight, light from lamps, Ultra violet (UV) light and visible light.
- Light will quickly make colors fade.
- Explain the low light levels to the public.
- Use replicas of artifacts when possible.
- Light also ages the fibers, which tends to make the fibers brittle. This happens to all materials, but silk is the most sensitive.
- Use light meter to check light levels. (preferably 50 lux)
- Educate the public about preservation and conservation of textiles.
- Limit exhibition time as much as possible.
- If textiles on display are surrounded by brightly lit object it is harder to see the dark textile. Group light sensitive objects together, or have a low light level on everything.

INSECTS

- The main insects that are a problem for textiles are moths, silverfish and museum beetles. The moths and beetles don't do the damage. Instead, the larvae of these insects eat the textiles. They are particularly attracted to starch in fabric. The eggs may not be visible because the casing is made of the material the larvae have eaten (ie. same color).
- There are other insects, but the damage on textiles are often accidental.
- Insects are attracted to stains on textiles. Check these areas.
- Never have fresh flowers in storage area.
- Bird nests on the roof attracts insects

and makes it easier for them to enter the house.

Finding the insects:

- Inspect your collection about twice a year.
- Monitoring - Use traps and tape. Keep a record if anything is found and where.
- Inform cleaning personal and guards, and others that are around the collection a lot, how to recognize insects and their traces.
- Pick one person at the museum that everyone should contact if insects have been seen.
- Never, never spray pesticides directly on textiles, or any object for

that matter.

- Storage area can be sprayed if objects are removed first.
- Most pesticides, including moth balls, are very toxic to humans. Hire professionals.
- Be aware of objects that has been treated a long time ago, e.g. DDT (it smells).

Quarantine - a good way of avoiding infestations:

- 2 - 4 months in special area, or wrapped up and sealed in plastic.
- Isolate infested items and consult a conservator.

GENERAL HANDLING AND LABELING OF OBJECTS

- Take your time and don't be in a hurry.
- Plan ahead. Make sure there is a place to put the object you are about to move.
- Ideally, all objects should be moved without handling.
- Use trays, carts, acid free boards on the shelves. Carts also protect your back.
- Take off your sharp jewelry.
- Use gloves or wash your hands (often). Gloves can also protect you!
- Use pencils when you are taking notes around object.
- Stains are often impossible to remove! Work in a clean, safe environment
- Consistent, good labeling limits handling of material.- place labels on objects and shelves.

TEXTILE CARE

GENERAL HANDLING AND LABELING OF OBJECTS- Continued

- Attach photo image to outside of box to limit handling.
- Write with a pencil on containers, hangers, tubes and shelves.
- Use a waterproof pen on twill tape, then hand sew tape to textile.
- Don't attach sewn labels with too many stitches or stitches too tight.
- Don't use tiny stitches, a few larger stitches are better.
- Avoid pressure sensitive tape, paper clips, pins and staples.

STORAGE MATERIALS AND CONCERNS

Change tissue in storage every 5-10 years, or when discolored.

- Storage materials should be changed when they get dirty.
- When designing a housing or support, plan to support as much of the surface as possible.
- Look at where the weight will rest and consider the overall weight.
- Don't overcrowd, allow a little space for air circulation between items.
- Protect textile from dust.
- Don't unfold fragile creases and folds - fibers can easily break.
- Clean with a HEPA filtered vacuum with adjustable suction and micro tools. Use non-snagging screening between vacuum nozzle and textile.

Good materials

- Acid free; mat board, tissue and rolls
- Unbuffered - for all textiles
- Buffered - only for cellulose fibers (cotton, linen, jute)
- Washed, unbleached cotton (ex. muslin). Wash cotton at least twice.
- Tyvek (spun-bonded, non woven polyester fabric.)
- Stable plastics; Polyester (ex. Mylar type D), Polyethylene bags
- Polyester padding
- Cotton batting
- Silica Gel

Bad materials

- Metal; Paper clips, pins, safety pins and staples
- Adhesive labels and tape
- Plastic dry cleaner bags (unstable material)

Costume Storage & Display

- Construct mannequins to garment and historic period.
- Department store mannequins may have attached arms that are difficult to dress.
- Use dust covers.
- Well fitted, padded hangers
- Allow space between hangers
- Cotton twill tape support distributes weight of heavy garments.
- Access the condition of the textile to which the fastener is attached.
- Determine if it needs to be buttoned, tied, hooked, snapped.
- Loose hooks might snag.
- Protect textiles from metal fasteners with a square of tissue ripped halfway down the middle and slipped between button and fabric.

Flat Storage: Drawers, boxes, shelves

- Line shelves with acid free board, or other stable storage material. Use for transporting object to tables, etc.
- Line boxes with tissue, protects the object and the box.
- Dust cover, loosely on top - not good to tuck too much
- Avoid stacking of textiles
- Place tissue in folds of the textile.
- Tubes for rolled fabric should extend beyond edge of textile to provide space to handle without touching textile.
- Cover tube and textile, examples: tissue, muslin, tyvek
- If bleeding is a risk, use interleaving tissue.
- Lift without holding textile.

Hats, shoes, umbrellas

- Use dividers in boxes for many small items
- Small items wrapped up in tissue could get discarded by mistake.
- Construct support for hats in boxes. Don't let hats sit on the rim. Don't stuff items too hard with tissue.

Historic houses and display areas

- Try to maintain the same, stable climate as storage area.
- Rotate exhibit materials, use copies.
- Inspect mounting, look for sagging.
- Drapes: make liners or use blinds.
- Carpets: use pads, discs under furniture feet and barriers.
- Furniture: use little barrier ropes to prevent sitting and leaning.
- Covers for protection from sun.
- Never store objects directly on the floor: flooding, leaks, insects, mold
- Do not display in front of vent

Framed textiles

- Make sure acid free materials are used - replace old backings.
- Textiles should not be mounted against glass.
- Tilting frame gives more support and allows for air circulation.
- Cork can be used behind a picture, to allow some air behind the picture.
- Outside walls can be cold and damp, make sure there is air circulation behind the objects.

COMING UP IN LUBBOCK

by Megan Bryant
TAM Program Committee Liaison,
and Registrar,
The Sixth Floor Museum
Dallas, Texas

The 2002 TAM Annual Meeting is almost upon us! Hopefully by now you've all seen the Preliminary Program included in the Winter issue of Museline. Here's a rundown of some of the sessions we think will be of particular interest to CMC member.

CMC Pre-Conference Workshop Tuesday, April 9

"A Registrar's Tool Box"

A full-day workshop is planned which will address the responsibilities fundamental to collection management professionals. While designed for registrars, preparators, curators, and directors new to the museum field, the workshop should also prove to be a good refresher for all who deal directly with the care and exhibition of collections. The workshop will have an informal (and fun!) atmosphere, with discussions led by Texas colleagues to provide a basis for developing and reinforcing a strong network of resources throughout the state.

One of our goals for this workshop is to promote the highest levels of collections care and professionalism throughout the Texas museum community. Topics to be covered include: collections policies and ethics, records and documentation, loans and condition reports, labeling and marking, handling and storage, and packing and shipping. Plenty of time will be allotted for questions and discussion of your pressing concerns.

There will be lots of resource handouts, and some useful take home "tools", such as gloves, marking pens, and other registration needs.

Nicky Ladkin, Workshop Chair, Registrar, Museum of Texas Tech University will discuss professional

support opportunities available, such as TAM-CMC, RC-MPMA, RC-AAM and the RC-AAM Listserv.

Milly Walker, Curator of Collections, Dublin Dr. Pepper Bottling Company Museum will talk about numbering: how to make the number; where to put the number; what to use to make the numbers.

Other panelist will be these Texas museum professionals: **Lisa Rebori**, Director of Collections, Houston Museum of Natural Science; **Sally Baulch-Rhoden**, Collections Manager, Texas Memorial Museum; **Gabriela Truly**, Collections Manager, Dallas Museum of Art; **Richard Trela**, Conservation Center Director, Panhandle Plains Historical Museum; and **Walt Davis**, Director, Panhandle Plains Historical Museum.

Many other interesting, informative and often entertaining sessions are

also planned for your illumination during the week.

Wednesday, April 10

- ◆ Your Place on the Food Chain: How the Evolving Museum Climate Can Alter the Course of Professional Standards (double session)
- ◆ Legislative Update: Legislative Issues Affecting Museums
- ◆ Collections Insurance 101

Thursday, April 11

- ◆ Care and Feeding of Dead Critters: Recent Thoughts on Museum Taxidermic Collections
- ◆ How to Shop Around When Others Have the Stuff You Want

Friday, April 12

- ◆ Environmental Management
- ◆ Lighting 101
- ◆ Conservation Roadshow 2002

Check your conference programs or go to www.io.com/~tam/ and click ANNUAL MEETING for more information! Plan now to attend, and we'll see you in Lubbock!

Irradiated Mail of Concern

In response to the recent anthrax scare the US Post Office has been irradiating some portions of the mail. The Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education has observed several changes occurring to parcels that should be of concern to the Museum Community.

Yellowing may occur immediately or over time. Inks do not seem to change color, but this is continuing to be monitored.

to the Museum

Mechanical damage is of great concern. Temperatures of the irradiated materials may reach 130° C. Such temperatures can distort slide mounts, and cracks may occur on slide images.

Physical and chemical changes in paper result in brittleness, which is different from natural aging, and is probably due to radiation induced crosslinking. These effects have serious implications for biological specimens.

For more information see the article "Recent Examination of Some Irradiated Mail" under Press Information at the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education web site: <http://www.si.edu/scmre>

Please
Pay Your Dues

Deb's Unofficial Guide to Getting a Job in the Museum World

by Deb Fuller

Planetarium Educator,

Albert Einstein Planetarium,

National Air and Space Museum.

So you want to work in museums? Why? You think they're cool; you want to justify getting a degree in obscure pre-Celtic French impressionist painters; or you really loved going to your local museum as a kid and want to work there. Whatever the reason, the museum job hunt is challenging, demanding and ultimately rewarding. Expect your job hunt to take six months to a couple of years. Yes, people get jobs first shot, but those are the exceptions. The job hunt is like a job in itself. It will take time and effort to get where you want to be in the museum world.

1. Research museum jobs. There are many different types of positions and fields out there to go into. Museum educators, curators, registrars, development/grant writers, administration, special events, exhibits, computer specialists and volunteer coordinators just to name a few. The smaller the museum, the more areas each person will have to cover.

2. Network, Network, Network. Find museum professionals and talk to them. Find out what experiences they have and what education they got. Most museum professionals are friendly and will take time to talk to you. Ask for informational interviews. DON'T bring your resume to them. It's bad form. After you talk to someone, thank them profusely and ask them to refer you to someone else. Send them a nice note after you leave. You never know when they might call you back or pass a job lead on to you. Make a schedule of networking like one a week, every two weeks or every month. Keep it up and keep meeting people.

3. Think Small. This comes in two parts. First, don't apply for that director position straight off. Go for the executive assistant instead. Don't go for department head; go for registrar, curator or curatorial assistant. You need experience even if you are coming from another career field and have job experience.

Secondly, look at smaller, local museums. Smaller museums usually will allow you to get a lot of work experience in different areas. In a large museum, you might be stuck in one area like registrar of a certain collection. But in a smaller museum, you might be registrar, curator, lead educational programs and help coordinate volunteers.

4. Volunteer, Intern or Work Part-time. If there are no positions open or you aren't sure if you really want to work in the museum field, look at volunteering or interning or getting a part-time position. Most museums won't turn down someone who is eager to work and is willing to learn. Don't expect to come in and take over either. Again, start small. If you want to be a registrar, start out by volunteering to clean artifacts from a local archaeology dig. If you want to do museum education, volunteer to help out with summer camps. If you stick around long enough and show people that you are responsible, you will get more and more responsibilities. Larger museums usually have formal intern or volunteer programs. For the Smithsonian, Elena Mayberry is a treasure-trove of information. (I always have to plug Elena because she helped me get my first museum job.) Interning and volunteering are good ways to meet people and NETWORK.

5. NETWORK! Did I mention networking?

6. Professional Organizations. Find out what the professionals in your area

belong to and pay your dues. A good one to start out with is the American Association of Museums. Not only will you keep current on what is happening, you also can put it on your resume. All professionals should be a member of at least one professional organization.

7. Go to Professional Conferences. Have VISA will travel. Pay it off later. Take advantage of student discounts. This is probably the best way to meet people and NETWORK. A lot of conferences also have job boards and resume drops. There are usually jobs posted at these conferences that aren't listed anywhere else. Come with plenty of resumes and business cards. Thanks to inkjet printers, you too can have decent looking business cards.

8. You're competing with people with Master's degrees and 5 years of experience. Get used to it. You may be just as competent to do the job as the next guy but his MA with 5 years of experience will get his foot in the door while it slams on yours. Keep applying for jobs but volunteer, intern or work part-time to get you that experience. If you want to be a curator of pre-Celtic French Impressionist painters, you'll have to get an advanced degree in pre-Celtic French Impressionist painters. Museum educators usually have advanced degrees in either a subject area and/or education of some sort. Exhibit designers usually have degrees in architecture or design. Other fields like development or computers can have backgrounds from a variety of fields but will have experience in their area. If you only have a bachelor's degree, don't expect much. Bite the bullet, get those student loans and get an advanced degree. Regardless of what degree you end up with, you'll still need experience.

See *GETTING A JOB* page 7

Scholarship Recipients to attend TAM Annual Meeting in Lubbock

Recipients of CMC Scholarships will receive stipends to cover registration to the 2002 TAM Conference and the CMC sponsored pre-conference workshop fee. Recipients include Rebecca Huffstutler, Curator of Archives and Registrar, Witte Museum, San Antonio; Ivette Ray, Museum Curator, Log Cabin Village, Fort Worth, and Jack Linden, Seguin Conservation Society, Seguin.

GETTING A JOB --

Continued from page 6

9. Look at companies that work with museums or similar fields. If you can't get a job in a museum, get a job with a company that works with museums. There are plenty of companies that do exhibit design, artifact restoration and shipping, educational materials and bunches of other stuff. Clients with those companies are a good way to find people and NETWORK. There are also similar fields that you can go into that will give you job experience for museum work. If you want to curate, work for an auc-

tion house; if you want to do education, try libraries or local schools. Computer or design people can get a job practically anywhere. Combine similar job experience with some museum volunteering and you'll have a resume that can compete with the Masters + 5 years of experience.

10. Don't expect to get rich. Most museum salaries are in the low-20s regardless of the job or location. Some are higher, but you'll never compete with the corporate sector. A lot of times, your first museum job will pay less than your student loan debt. Be prepared to budget carefully or work another job to make ends meet. See #

9 for other job options until you get those student loans paid off.

11. Be willing to travel. There are plenty of museum jobs out there if you are willing to go for them. You might end up in the middle of nowhere starting out, but that will get you experience and a lower cost of living as well. Who knows, you might like the bucolic countryside.

All this won't guarantee you'll get a museum job, but it will increase your chances. Sometimes, all that is required is being in the right place at the right time. Good luck!!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

It took a lot of shifting around for me to come to my true calling, but the journey was worth it. An earlier life gave me the skills I needed to be Newsletter Editor, a task I have enjoyed performing for the Collection Managers Committee. As a non-voting member of CMC, I can no longer serve on the board, so I wish the new Editor lots of luck, and hope to be of service if needed.

Prior to starting my "real" career, I spent a while as a nurse in labor and delivery, and occasionally as a midwife. Then I moved into education, but ended up with a BS in geology, at a time when both petroleum and mining were in the dumps. I went to work in the newspaper business, but knew I wanted to further my education with a master's degree.

In 1987, I enrolled at Texas Tech, and took a selection of classes. The Muses must have been guiding my choices, because one was a museum studies course. I had a chat with Dr. Clyde Jones about the program, and never looked back from that point.

During that period I was lucky to be selected to attend a special course in rock art conservation sponsored by the Getty Conservation Institute. The course was held at the University of Canberra, in Australia. It added an extra year

to my master's work, but was well worth the extra pain and suffering.

After graduate school I felt fantastically lucky to land a position as curator for the National Park Service. Though only a temporary position, it was in one of the richest rock art areas of the world . . . Southeast Utah. I tried for five years to balance my interests in both collection care and rock art conservation through contract work, but contracting work wasn't for me.

KATE HOGUE

Officer at Large - Newsletter Editor

Again the Muses were with me in 1996, when I was hired as curator for the Conner Museum, at Texas A&M University - Kingsville. It was a great place to work, and gave me a well-rounded education in every aspect of museum work. Wanting the opportunity to work in a larger museum with more staff interaction led me away from Texas, and to my current position with the Museum of New Mexico, as the registrar for the Palace of the Governors. So far it is just another fabulous adventure in my "real" career.