

CMC

Newsletter
Summer Issue 2003

COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE OF THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

Workshop Overview Managing the Collection Environment

by Anita H. Bryant

At the TAM Annual Meeting this year, CMC co-sponsored the pre-conference collection management workshop on "Managing the Collection Environment." Steven Weintraub of Art Preservation Services in New York joined us in Houston to address the topic. Mr. Weintraub has served as a consultant to many premier art museums and as a specialist in lighting the 1912 Fort McHenry Stars and Stripes flag at the National Museum of American History.

The risk of gradual deterioration of artifacts may deserve our most focused attention.

Mr. Weintraub began by explaining that risk from the environment can fall into the categories of CATASTROPHIC (which rarely occurs), SEVERE (which occurs sporadically), and GRADUAL (which occurs constantly). While each of these occurrences needs to be addressed, the risk of gradual deterioration of artifacts may deserve our most focused attention as the greatest risk to an object occurs early in its life. Additionally, once damage has occurred, it may be possible to slow or halt subsequent damage; but rarely is it possible to reverse existing damage. Mr. Weintraub stressed

that there is a real difference between simply (mindless) monitoring and actual problem solving.

In addressing the matter of light, Mr. Weintraub introduced a full spectrum of light sources – the black body radiator source, incandescent, tungsten halogen, daylight, fluorescent and others. He also introduced measurements of footcandle (fc), visible light, foot lambert, and lux. He suggested the recommended light levels of 5 fc for very sensitive objects and 20 fc for moderately sensitive objects. He presented the rule of reciprocity – time x intensity = cumulative exposure. He also suggested the fc hours per year might be a reasonable approach for keeping score for an item.

Mr. Weintraub presented the subject of color temperature of light. He suggested that there is an optimum range for viewing art of 3500 to 4000 degrees Kelvin. After lunch, he presented an impressive demonstration of viewing works of art at various color temperatures. He suggests that this optimum can be achieved by mixing various light sources.

Mr. Weintraub discussed temperature and relative humidity both in micro- and macroclimates. He advocated the use of Marvelseal, gaskets, silica gel, Rhapsid Gel, and Scavengel to produce microclimates in exhibition cases and storage areas.

See Workshop on Page 3

FROM THE CHAIR

You should be receiving soon our current membership list updated to include all the new folks who have joined us in the past few months. If you were to take the time to count the names on the list (I know none of us has time to do a silly thing like that, but I did anyway), you will see that CMC now has 99 members! You can bet there'll be some sort of fanfare WHEN we get that 100th member. Our membership represents virtually all areas of the state of Texas and museums of all shapes and sizes—history, art, science, outdoor, historic houses and sites, special libraries, university museums large, medium, small, and tiny (as well as a few consultants and insurance and art handling representatives). With the wide variety of our membership, of course everyone is going to have their own specific issues to confront. However, we all share the same concerns about and commitment to collections management.

Like me, many of you are probably increasingly concerned as we hear of instances in museums throughout the country where financial problems have led to the slashing (or total elimination) of collections care

budgets and personnel. What can we do in the current economic climate to ensure that our collections continue to be preserved, protected, and properly managed? There are no easy answers, but I encourage each of you to share your experiences and exchange ideas whether in the format of an article for this newsletter, a workshop proposal, or general comments and suggestions.

We've got two great workshops coming up in the next few months. The first – on the creation of fake food for use in historic houses and exhibits – will be at the George Ranch Historical Park in Richmond on July 21. Then coming up on October 20, we'll be convening at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth to discuss the care and preservation of photographic collections. You'll find more information and registration details in the fliers elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope to see many of you in Richmond or Fort Worth!

I close this time around with a chorus you have heard from me before: CMC is your organization. Let us know what we can do to address your concerns and needs.

Megan Bryant / Chair

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CMC Newsletter

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CONGRATULATIONS

CMC would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to Milly Walker on her retirement. Milly has announced that her official retirement from the Dublin Dr. Pepper Bottling Company Museum will be effective July 3. While she will continue to work part-time with the folks in Dublin as they move towards opening their permanent museum, Milly will be returning to her home in Waco where she can concentrate on being a proud mother and grandmother.

Throughout her museum career, Milly has been an inspiration and mentor to many. She upholds the highest professional standards and time and again researched the ways and means, or meanings and ways, to identify and acquire the most current materials for the preservation storage of collections in her care. Milly is retiring after an extended period

Congratulations To Milly Walker!

of service and commitment to the forwarding of high professional standards in collections management—always with a particular love and devotion to helping small museums develop and maintain sound collections policies and practices. Milly is most of all generous with her knowledge and enthusiasm for museum work. Milly's work with CMC over the years has included serving as Vice Chair, developing and hosting workshops, and always providing a voice for the concerns of small museums.

Although 'retired' as of July 3, we will continue to count on her for advice, counsel, and professional support. Thank you, Milly – and congratulations! We all hope you enjoy this much deserved retirement.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Continued from Cover Page

On microclimates, Mr. Weintraub conveyed that using RH and temperature transmitters for your HVAC system is the most important information that can be gathered.

Mr. Weintraub quickly went over an exhaustive list of equipment used to monitor light, temperature and relative humidity. His handouts included an outline of topics discussed, an article concerning lighting in the Kimbell Museum, free samples of Scavengel and Rhapsid Gel, and product information from Art Preservation Services including price list and other blanks.

His summation was direct and significant. It stressed the need to know who was responsible for diagnosing a problem, who should be told when a problem was identified, and who was then responsible for providing and overseeing a resolution to the problem.

This last point was further addressed by additional speakers, Julie Bakke and Wayne Phelan from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in their discussion of developing, implementing, and inte-

grating environmental monitoring into organizational practice and policy. In setting up these procedures, Ms. Bakke and Ms. Phelan recommended that preventative care and the establishment of appropriate environmental conditions be considered alongside problem solving – “an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure.”

While Mr. Weintraub discussed light, temperature, and relative humidity in detail, Ms. Bakke and Ms. Phelan reminded attendees that other components of the collections environment also need to be controlled and monitored – including air quality and pests. One factor we often forget to consider directly in establishing monitoring procedures is people and our handling and maintenance procedures for storage, exhibitions, packing, transport, and use of collection objects.

The establishment of appropriate monitoring procedures will determine who does what and how – monitoring devices and methods, collections and assessments of data, and notification of problems all leading to problem-solving and solutions.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Print Clearly

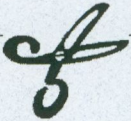
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Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

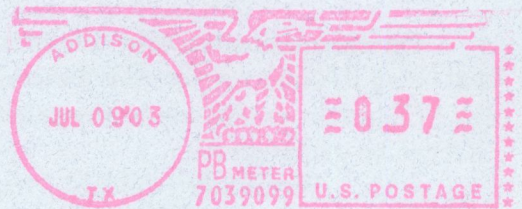
Please make checks payable to the Collection Managers Committee.
Send check and form to Rebecca Huffstutler, The Witte Museum,
3801 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209



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a non-profit affinity group of the Texas Association of Museums.
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CMC COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP

CARE & PRESERVATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS

Presented By:

John Rohrbach, Curator of Photographs, Amon Carter Museum
Sylvie Penichon, Conservator of Photographs, Amon Carter Museum

Do you have photographic collections that need attention? Do you need tips on how to properly store and protect those precious photographs? Then this is the workshop for you! The Amon Carter Museum's curator of photographs and conservator of photographs will be on hand to discuss the care and preservation of photographic collections. Specific topics to be addressed include: the identification of photographic processes, proper storage and marking methods, and issues with light exposure. A special tour of the Amon Carter Museum's new cold storage facility will be given after lunch. Bring your questions—the speakers will be sharing their expertise on these subjects and more! This is sure to be a popular workshop, so send in your registration today!

When: **October 20, 2003, 9:30am – 3:30pm**

Where: **Amon Carter Museum**
3501 Camp Bowie Boulevard, Fort Worth

To sign up, fill out the registration form below and send to:

Megan Bryant
The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
411 Elm Street, Suite 120
Dallas, TX 75202
Phone: (214) 747-6660 ext. 6619 – Fax: (214) 747-6662 – E-mail: meganb@jfk.org
CMC Federal Tax Identification Number: 75-225-3189

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

E-mail/Phone (for confirmation): _____

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

(There will be a small additional charge for a box lunch – you will be notified with your confirmation.)

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

WORKSHOP ALERT

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***** Notice of Change to June Workshop *****

Collection Managers Committee

Workshop

IS IT REAL OR IS IT FAUX?

HAVING FUN WITH FAKE FOOD HAS CHANGED!

July 21, 2003

10:00 am until 2:30 pm

The George Ranch Historical Park Visitor Center

Richmond, Texas

Fake food is an easy way to bring any exhibit to life and Jana Smith, Director of the Rosenberg Railroad Museum and Bitsy Barr formally the Education director of the Fort Bend Museum, will help to show the basics of making easy and inexpensive fake food. The supplies used in this workshop will be yours to take home.

A Must For Historic House Sites!

Join us on July 21st. We will meet at the George Ranch Historical Park Visitor Center located at 10215 FM 762 Richmond, Texas. (281) 545-9212.

Workshop Cost: \$25.00 for CMC members, \$30.00 for non-members.

Lunch Cost: \$8.00, a box lunch will be provided from Jason's Deli. Please specify any special dietary needs that you may have.

To register, cut along the dotted line and send in the below registration form :

Name: _____

Institution: _____

E-mail (for confirmation): _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

If you would like to become a member of the Collection Managers Committee, membership dues are \$15.00 per year. You will receive a newsletter, special rates on workshops and the opportunity to meet new people. JOIN TODAY! _____

Make Checks payable to: Collection Managers Committee. Send to:

Trey Reed

George Ranch Historical Park

10215-G FM 762

Richmond, Texas 77469

(281) 545-9223 x 304 – treyreed@intertex.net