



COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE
NEWSLETTER WINTER, 1989

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

Greetings and Happy Holidays. This has been a productive year for the Collections Managers Committee, and it looks as if 1990 will be even more so. I am most pleased by the fact that you can all look forward to receiving our new membership brochure the first part of January. Katy Johnson and Carolyn Spears are primarily responsible for its production, and Allen Insurance Associates in California have underwritten the costs.

We have also put together a committee to assist with editing the Collection-related forms for THE MUSEUM FORMS BOOK to be published by TAM in 1990. Lisa Rebori, Martha Lynn Hill, and Teresa Thompson will assist me with this project. Steve Mann is working on his TAM presentation on a state-wide disaster plan at the Annual Meeting. Steve will be the Committee's representative in the development of this plan.

You can look forward in 1990 to at least two more workshops and continued articles in the newsletter which will be of assistance to all of us. In fact, if you would like to author an article, please feel free to contact Kathy Roland at Fort Concho.

Thanks to all of you who have supported the Committee this year, and best of luck in 1990.

Rick Casagrande

AAM ANNUAL MEETING, NEW ORLEANS, 1989: SYNOPSIS OF SESSIONS

By Terry Grose
Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

SESSION ON "CONDITION REPORTING: TECHNIQUES, IMPLICATIONS,
ACCOUNTABILITY, INSURANCE

Chair: Priscilla O'Reilly Lawrence, Collections Manager,
Historic New Orleans Collection

Panelists: William Allen, President, Allen Insurance
Associates
David Goist, Chief Conservator, North Carolina
Museum of Art
Eloise Ricciardelli, Registrar, Museum of Modern
Art, New York

William Allen stressed the importance of condition reports

as basic documentation on the state of objects. He provided several specific points for consideration in dealing with insuring agencies. These suggestions included:

consideration of inherent vice and contingent legal liabilities on the part of the museum in such instances - he felt that in the case of loans, the lender should be asked to sign a release absolving borrowing institutions of liability for damage caused by inherent vice.

review of existing institutional insurance policies to determine if coverage is "all risk" or "named peril" - the same review should consider the need for a "fair market value" clause and whether or not loaned materials are included in standard coverage.

He also stressed that a conservator's condition report is not the same as one completed by a registrar; the conservator addresses proposed treatment while the registrar describes the actual condition of the artifact. Every time an object moves, a new condition report should be completed; its contents should be agreed upon and signed by both donating and lending institution representatives.

Eloise Ricciardelli described the procedures used by the Museum of Modern Art for the completion of condition reports. She emphasized the utility of compiling an agreed-upon glossary of terms used in-house for condition reports. She also referred to a number of potentially useful references:

THE FURNITURE COLLECTOR'S GLOSSARY by Vincent Lockwood

WHAT'S WHAT - A VISUAL GLOSSARY OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD
edited by Reginald Brogonier, Jr. and David Fisher

HOW TO IDENTIFY PRINTS by Bamber Gascoigne

A DICTIONARY OF ART TERMS AND TECHNIQUES by Ralph
Mayer

David Goist discussed condition reporting from the conservator's point of view. He mentioned the fact that the American Institute for Conservation provides guidelines for documentation, and that the Institute also provides a brochure on selecting a conservator. He also made reference to a publication that has been most helpful in the production of condition reports - BASIC CONDITION REPORTING: A HANDBOOK, published by the Southeastern Registrar's Association.

*Note - Inquiries regarding the Basic Condition Reporting publication can be directed to Priscilla Lawrence, Historic New Orleans Collection, 533 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA.

SESSION ON "CREATIVE STRATEGIES FOR INFORMATION SHARING"

Chair: Carol Nelson, Director, Louisiana Association of Museums

Panelists: Jim Blackaby, Consultant, Cabin John, Md.
Margaret Blagg, Executive Director, Texas Association of Museums
Carol Nelson, Director, Louisiana Association of Museums
Laurie Sowd, Management Assistant for Special Projects, J. Paul Getty Museum

Jim Blackaby provided an overview of the Common Agenda Database Task Force accomplishments in producing a list of suggested common data fields for use in automated cataloging. This list was scheduled to appear in the September issue of History News, published by the American Association for State and Local History. He also talked about an AAM national data collection project involving profiles of visitorship and budgets.

Margaret Blagg talked about the proposed implementation of MuseBase software at the offices of the Texas Association of Museums. MuseBase is a database package developed by the Louisiana Association of Museums. Potential applications for this software in the state of Texas include use as a source for bibliographic references, a foundation grants index, and various bulletin board functions.

Carol Nelson described the development of MuseBase and its utility, particularly in providing information on visitor statistics at member institutions (for use by state legislators).

Laurie Sowd discussed the incorporation of MuseBase at the Getty Museum for assistance in the production of publications and compilations of research findings and resource information.

SESSION ON "MANUSCRIPT COLLECTING IN MUSEUMS: ISSUES AND STRATEGIES"

Chair: Patricia Williams, Director of Accreditation, AAM

Panelists: David Gracy, Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Texas
Kristine Haglund, Archivist, Denver Museum of Natural History
Patrick Butler, Curator of History, Mary Moody Northern

David Gracy outlined the difference in philosophy and practice between archives and museums. He argued for changes by the museum community in the traditional treatment of manuscripts as artifacts; his suggestions included that museums provide at least minimal training for collection managers in archival procedures.

Kris Haglund described the particular problems of science manuscript collecting. She suggested the use of a team approach to manuscript accessioning, including curators, archivists and institutional librarians in the decision-making process. She also discussed the creation of museum archives, referring to the publication MUSEUM ARCHIVES: AN INTRODUCTION. She also mentioned a document that she has found useful in appraising scientific materials: THE APPRAISING OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS by Howes, Samuels, and Simmons. This publication is available through the Society of American Archivists.

Pat Butler provided a curatorial slant to the discussion by addressing the problem of manuscript collections found in history museums. He espoused the use of collecting rationale based on the mission of the individual museum, and advocated exploration of deaccessioning unrelated manuscript materials to archival repositories.

SESSION ON "POINTERS FROM THE PROS: HOW TO WRITE A COMPETITIVE IMS CONSERVATION PROJECT GRANT PROPOSAL"

Chair: Rebecca Danvers, Program Director, IMS

Panelists: Charles Hummel, Deputy Director for Collections,
Winterthur Museum
Lisa Mibach, Conservator, Oberlin, Ohio
Sara Wolf Green, Conservator, The Textile Museum

This session consisted of two parts, the first being an overview of the technical requirements of applications and elements of successfully completing a funded project. The second session was a group workshop on grant applications.

Charles Hummel described the steps used by IMS in processing conservation grant applications:

1. Staff review - checking application for completeness
2. Field review - review of application by professionals (usually conservators) active in the appropriate field, based on collection category and type of project. Usually two reviewers serve on an application's panel.
3. Panel review - general review by 16-member panel of information provided by field reviewers.

Mr. Hummel stressed that each application was evaluated

individually and that previous applications were not taken into consideration during the review process. He did mention, however, that previous applications were taken into consideration in reviewing the budget information provided with the application. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE APPLYING INSTITUTION IN THE PROVISION OF INTERIM BUDGET REPORTS FOR PRIOR OR EXISTING IMS GRANTS (INCLUDING GOS) WAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION. Letters of commitment from conservators are considered to be essential to the successful application, and the qualifications of key project personnel are scrutinized.

He also indicated that supporting documentation is extremely important in the consideration of proposals. The reviewers look for evidence of careful planning and forethought in a proposal, and require resumes of key personnel. Even though the grant application form states that supporting documentation is optional, Mr. Hummel felt that applicants should think of it as a required part of the application.

The conservators on the panel had acted both as reviewers and as project personnel on IMS-funded projects. They also provided useful advice for the would-be applicant; Lisa Mibach suggested that an exit interview in the form of a dinner or meeting including board members and project personnel could be most rewarding for all parties.

1. Determine your reason for applying for the grant before beginning the application process. Be specific.
2. Find qualified conservators to serve as project personnel. The American Institute of Conservation can help.
3. Interview conservators. Check their references and the status of their membership in AIC. Ask to see copies of reports and surveys that they have completed for other museums.
4. Send a copy of the grant proposal to the conservator if the application is granted.

A number of suggestions were made regarding the standard formats of survey reports and details of interfacing with conservators. Both individuals stressed the importance of involving members of the board of directors in the project.



DUES NEEDED!

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE COLLECTION
MANAGERS COMMITTEE, OR IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES.
MAKE YOUR \$10 CHECK PAYABLE TO THE COLLECTION MANAGERS
COMMITTEE AND SEND TO:

TERRY GROSE
FORT WORTH MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY
1501 MONTGOMERY STREET
FORT WORTH, TX 761078

Did you know the Collections Managers Committee is an OFFICIAL BOOSTER CLUB of TAM? Yes, it's true! To celebrate this prestigious position, we are soliciting designs for our "OFFICIAL T-SHIRTS", which will be on sale at the Annual Meeting. Please send your entries to Rick Casagrande, the San Antonio Museum Association, P.O. Box 2601, San Antonio, TX. 78299-2601. Selection for the winning design will be made on February 10, 1990, at the Workshop, by our speakers.

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SPONSORED BY COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE

Mark your calendar. There IS a workshop on shipping, insurance and related topics scheduled for February 10, 1990, at the Witte Museum in San Antonio from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., titled "AT YOUR OWN RISK!!: SHIPPING AND INSURANCE RELATED TOPICS." The workshop fee is \$15 for our committee members and \$20 for nonmembers. Co-chairs are Kim Peel and Gabriela Truly from the San Antonio Museum Association Registrars Department. Registration forms will be sent out the first week of January, 1990. Speakers are Bill Allen of Allen Insurance Associates; Bob Spangler (art handler) of

Spangler & Ayo of Houston; Pat Spradling of John P. Coston Customhouse Broker; and David Smith of Smith Kramer, Inc. Fine Art Services. There will be a question and answer period after each presentation. This workshop is open to all interested persons.

Those attending the workshop are invited to a discount showing of THE ALAMO: PRICE OF FREEDOM, at the IMAX Theatre at six o'clock that evening. After the show, participants are on their own to stroll the River Walk or get together with the other participants. Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. participants are invited to a free tour of Missions San Jose and Concepcion.

ANOTHER WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT FOR MARCH OF 1990

The American Association of Museums announces a workshop for mid-career professionals with responsibility for museum collections, called PROJECT PLANNING THROUGH PROBLEM SOLVING. To be held in Houston, Texas on March 25, 26, 27, 1990. Cost: \$295 or Two staff from the same museum, \$250 each. Send a letter of application documenting support from museum administration, resume, and description of current duties to:

MEETING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS
1225 EYE STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005
(202) 289-1818

Applications must be received by January 20, 1990. Sponsored by the Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums, Presented by Faust Management Corporation.

This workshop is designed specifically to clarify management problems associated with museum collections. This workshop will teach powerful concepts and practical tools to:

solve tough organizational problems

improve implementation

manage complex change

increase team effectiveness

ALI-ABA MEETING IN HOUSTON: THE LAW, MUSEUMS AND HOUSTON

"Must have a thorough knowledge of accepted museum registration techniques including matters relating to contracts, collections and copyrights, policies governing..."

Sound familiar? Have you ever wondered how this "knowledge of legal..." is acquired, updated and broadened? One of the best methods is to take advantage of the annual "LEGAL PROBLEMS OF MUSEUM ADMINISTRATIONS" course co-sponsored by the American Law Institute - American Bar Association (ALI-ABA) Committee on Continuing Professional Education and The Smithsonian Institution with the cooperation of the American Association of Museums. The purpose of this meeting is to provide museum personnel concerned with legal matters with an awareness of the legal problems and issues they will encounter. The level of instruction is orientation; and the objectives are to develop initial levels of competency, acquire knowledge and skills, maintain professional competence and provide information on recent legal developments. This meeting is being held in Houston, March 28 - 30, 1990.

In the December issue of AVISO, page 8, note is made of this meeting. What is not mentioned is how valuable this packed, three-day presentation of material is for Registrars and Collection Managers. Not only will you obtain a better understanding of "legal matters" but also you will have the opportunity to meet the individuals actively involved with formulating and/or interpreting legal issues as they pertain to museums and museum personnel. The contracts and insights you obtain will greatly facilitate your knowledge and understanding of legal-related collection care and handling. If you interact with donors, process any type of gift/loan/shipping contract and assist with handling and caring for museum objects, you need to attend this meeting. I have not met anyone who has attended this meeting and felt they did not benefit.

How to attend? For more information contact:

RICK WEINSTEIN
ALI-ABA
4025 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19104
800-253-6397

or contact someone who has attended and request a copy of their latest ALI-ABA update or check the December issue of AVISO. (Please note that the dates are incorrect in the AVISO --- it is the 28th through 30th of March.)

article by Kim Peel, San Antonio Museum Association