FALLOUT FROM AN ACCIDENTAL HALON DISCHARGE

Twas two days before Christmas (1987) when all through the museum, not a creature was stirring, not even the staff. The snow had fallen from night until dawn; several feet of it had accumulated on the museum's front lawn. From across the street there was heard such a clatter, our neighbor looked out to see what was the matter. Moments before, the Valdez Museum's Halon 1301 fire suppression system had released and the facility's interior became a maelstrom of objects and papers.

We were lucky, there was no fire and no one was in the museum at the time. The discharge resulted from severe AC power fluctuations and a weakness in the system's DC batteries.

Valdez, Alaska (population 3,500) is at the Trans-Alaska Oil pipeline's southern terminus. Our local history museum is a 4,750 sqft facility of which about 85% is dedicated to display space. Our staff consists of myself, and Exhibits Curator (out of State at the time) and a half-time Registrar.

The entire facility is Halon protected. The system has three discrete zones, the largest of which discharged on that December 23, 1987 morning. In all, five 300 pound bottles of Halon discharged simultaneously.

When the dust settled (literally!), we found that our actual damage was limited to broken glazing on a watercolor painting. It had been struck by a flying 6' section of two-by-four! More significantly, a uniform coating of grit covered everything from mounted bald eagles to our beautifully restored 1907 Ahrens steam fire engine.

We were not prepared for this. We had neither a disaster plan nor a conservation plan in place, and to make matters worse, there was not a museum conservator employed or residing in Alaska! We also had no contingency funds for disaster recovery other than City insurance with a $1,000,000 deductible clause.

How did we recover...where did we start? An emergency grant from the State of Alaska enabled us to import a conservator to assist. Former Alaska State Museum Conservator, Alice Hovenman (now at Redding, California) guided our cleaning procedures and also conducted a general conservation survey for us.

Thus, the Halon incident pushed us into a long ignored conservation program. We also examined our space use to see if we could make better internal use of our small facility. This resulted in creation of a discrete archival workspace and storeroom, as well as organization of an art storeroom.

The incident also focused public attention on our long stalled museum expansion program. As a result, $561,000 was appropriated by City Council for a 3,000 sqft addition and a subsequent 10,000 sqft is being planned for 1991/1992 construction.

Our post-Halon discharge operations are changed also. We now close the

CAN REGISTRATION DEVELOP INTO DEVELOPMENT?

Just when you thought it was safe to read the Newsletter...your ex-editor pops up again. I have left Registration in body but not in spirit. My shift to the Development Department last July was sudden and unexpected, however, the change has been very stimulating and I thought I might share my impressions with my good friends of many years - members of the RC-WR.

The most immediate difference in the two departments that comes to my mind is the issue of measuring success. In Registration we can feel proud of our accomplishments when we (a) deliver accurate information in a timely fashion, (b) protect art or specimens from harm, (c) meet deadlines delivered by a range of sources, (d) make complicated logisti-

Table of Contents

- Reports of Interest ............... 3
- From the Chairperson ............ 4
- Dates at a Glance ................. 5
- Positions, New Faces, Etc. ........ 6
- Reports From Our Nine States .... 7
- National/International News ....... 9
- New Reads .......................... 10
- RC-WR Officers .................... 11
FALLOUT

museum regularly for deep cleaning purposes. And, we are more conscious of materials left behind by contractors and maintenance personnel.

We also re-examined our use of Halon. Even though we installed a new state of the art control panel and detectors in our present structure, our upcoming addition will use a water deluge system for fire suppression.

Initially, the space will be used to display large transportation related objects which will not be damaged by water. Later, upon completion of Phase II construction, this will become our entry/reception area with only a few small objects displayed.

We've done this for two primary reasons: First, Halon is expensive. More importantly, however, Halon is among the agents blamed in the destruction of the Earth's protective ozone layer. [See "Halon and the Environment" by A. Elwood Willey in the Nov/Dec 1988 issue of FIREJOURNAL for the most current information regarding Halon and the environment.]

Perhaps the most significant "fallout" from this incident was our realization that we didn't have to put our facility and program back together as they had been before. The escaping Halon, thus, became a catalyst for change and improvement.

A possible lesson for all museums might be that we could all perhaps benefit from a catalytic stoppage of all ongoing work and operations to do a total program review.

I don't recommend discharging your Halon intentionally to effect this hiatus, but in retrospect, I can't think of what else would have compelled us to do so. As a result of having done so, however, we are a better museum with additional space and improved space utilization.

We have also sorted out some previously fuzzy staff functions and relationships, and we are placing greater emphasis on the conservation needs of our collections.

In light of these improvements to our program, it would be difficult to call our accidental Halon discharge a disaster; rather, it was a blessing!

Submitted by:
M. Joseph Leahy
Museum/Archive Director
The Valdez Museum, Valdez, Alaska

REGISTRATION

cal arrangements, and (e) care passionately about the art/specimens and the institutions for which we work. What way does the outside world have of measuring the success of a Registrar? You guessed correctly - when any of the above objectives fail!

Measuring success in Development is very simple. All you must do is tally the money that you have raised in a year or a month or a 24 hour period, depending upon how solvent your institution is. This is not as pleasant as measuring success in Registration but it is certainly a more direct and tangible method. I do not mean to oversimplify my new profession; however, the motivating goals seem to be more single-minded than those registration goals outlined in Dudley. (I said single-minded, not simple-minded.)

Speaking of success, I cannot yet claim that I have been wildly successful, however, registration experience has given me a few skills that I feel transfer effectively to development.

- Record keeping is a large part of the job. All those years of collecting data on estimates and manipulating it into believable and professional reports makes maintaining development records a piece of cake.

- Knowledge of the institutional goals and history of your institution is a tremendous advantage. Knowledge of the collection and ex-

hibit. Change is an important ingredient of professionalism. It is important to maintain the sense of challenge that a career should have. It is also important to widen your perspective by taking on responsibilities in other departments. The Development Department can be a stressful and demanding place. The work brings with it powerful lessons in terms of professionalization, communication skills and accountability. My job switch has confirmed my theory that development work can provide a logical "next step" for the registrar interested in administration.

Submitted by:
Paula March Romanovsky
Manager of Corporate Relations
The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

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\*This exhibit.\*
REPORTS OF INTEREST

LEGAL PROBLEMS
OF MUSEUM
ADMINISTRATION
SEMINAR

This is an annual March seminar organized by the American Law Institute-American Bar Association (ALI-ABA) and cosponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. AAM members receive yearly notices, and former attendees get ALI-ABA mail forever. There are travel scholarships to help cut the costs and a book, Course of Study Materials, is available from ALI-ABA, 4025 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104 - for money. Full of information on many topics, and updated yearly, your director will be glad to buy it. Tell him/her I said so.

Several topics this year should interest registrars. There is a new AAM ethics task force - watch for information at annual meetings, in Art Journal and Museum News.

The USA has passed legislation to implement the Berne Convention which extends a creator's copyrights internationally.

Federal indemnity can help cut insurance costs for exhibitions that include foreign loans and/or venues. For help with applying contact Alice Whelihan, Indemnity Administrator, a model of helpfulness, cheer, and patience. Also check the immunity from judicial seizure program for foreign loans.

Gifts: the best are free, clear, and total. With restrictions, strings, or partial interests the museum and its board are no longer in charge or have total control of its own collections. The book will help you negotiate restrictions and partials to better advantage.

Other articles: practical schemes for upgrading care of collections; guidelines and checklists for, say, exhibitions, visiting researches, loan requests, and managing insurance disaster claims. Repatriation - watch for reports from a 1989 National Dialogue Project at the Heard Museum, Phoenix.

Old loans - a subject near to our hearts. The book contains summaries of various "old loan" state laws. Problem - none of these new laws has been court tested, and there are no interpretations of the new provisions. One issue raised, in theory, is constitutional - would a museum in claiming title be depriving an owner of property without due process? Despite our self image as the burdened museum, courts and the public may view us as grasping institutions (e.g., see repatriation article, Harper's, Feb., 1989).

In many of the topics one rule of thumb recurs - museums, or we who run them, need to think about what we are trying to do and be! Whether the subject is gifts, old loans, or collections care, we must consider the possible ramifications, follow policies and procedures, write everything down, clearly document all transactions, and use acceptable systems of registration and control. GO, TEAM!

Submitted by:

Kittu Gates
Chief Registrar
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
(formerly RC-WR Newsletter editor)

FROM ACTS FACTS
NEWSLETTER

ART HAZARDS ACT SIGNED BY PRESIDENT

On November 18, 1988, President Reagan signed H.R. 4847 into law. This Act, which passed both the House and the Senate in October amends the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (FHSA) to require the labeling of chronically hazardous art materials. It also prohibits purchase of any art material required to be so labeled for use by children of pre-kindergarten age through grade six.

As part of the FHSA, the new law will be administered by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The method by which the CPSC will determine which materials shall be labeled will be set forth in a voluntary labeling standard developed by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM Designation: D-4236). Some modifications of D-4236 as well as mechanisms for providing further changes and improvements in the standards are described in the Act.

The Act also gives the CPSC one year to specify criteria "for determining when any customary or reasonably foreseeable use of an art material can result in a chronic hazard." Included will be criteria for determining:

- When art materials may produce chronic adverse effects in children and when chronic adverse effects are produced in adults.
- Which substances in art materials have the potential for producing chronic adverse effects and what those effects are.
- How bioavailable (capable of being absorbed into the body) these chronically hazardous substances are.
- What are acceptable daily intake levels for chronically hazardous substances.

Development of these criteria will be a difficult undertaking and ACTS suspects the task will take longer than a year. However, when the criteria are finally developed, good warning labels can be written. And even more important, this art material labeling law easily could be extended to other consumer products containing these substances.

FOUR PROVISIONS OF THE FORMALDEHYDE STANDARD STAYED (43 FR 50198-9)

The provisions of the HOCH standard which contained criteria for determining, 1) when the presence of formaldehyde constitutes a health hazard and the prescribed information that must be 2) on warning labels on containers of formaldehyde and 3) on certain formaldehyde treated products and 4) on Material Safety Data Sheets have been stayed by OSHA for nine months (until September 13, 1989)

OSHA will use this time to invite comment on suitable substitutes for these provisions such as the OSHA
REGISTRAR GIVES INSIDE VIEW AS ART COURIER

Alberto Giacometti’s Man Pointing has made its way, a solitary figure in a 48-foot, air ride suspension and climate controlled “semi”, to Washington D.C. There it is presented in a major touring exhibition beginning at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Man Pointing did not travel alone, but in the company of able helper and courier, yours truly, whose collection management responsibilities include overseeing the safe shipment of valuable works of art. The dramatic increase in special exhibitions since the late 1960’s, has resulted in an equally dramatic increase in courier traffic, aptly described as a “growth industry”.

It is rather interesting to compare the actual experience with the rather formal sounding rules outlined in a “how-to” manual:

1) Choose the drivers carefully. Easier to choose the van lines than drivers. This registrar would have preferred a man/wife team (an increasingly common occurrence), but travelled instead with two men, who claimed the only stress associated with the job was “going home”. From them I learned much about the big rigs and those monster freightliners of the highways. I discovered the world of weighing stations, truck stops, where rigs are always visible to the drivers, radar detectors for highway patrol, the squawking CB, and the very real concern a driver has for his cargo.

2) Schedule the journey so you will know precisely where you are at any given moment. Nice in theory, more difficult in practice. We travelled 24 hours straight, through cornfields, beanfields and over miles of highway. Each driver was at the wheel for four hours, then in bed for the next four. I, meanwhile, sat up for 14 hours because it was too hot in the top bunk. When I finally hoisted myself aloft, it was all I could do to keep from being thrown down. Fortunately, the art had a smoother journey than I, floating along on the air bag suspension.

3) Dress in a neat, businesslike manner. Not likely especially when you have to stretch your whole torso just to reach up into the cab, let alone launch a flying leap into bed.

Man Pointing and I got there safely. The van blocked up a whole Washington street just to get down the loading dock. The sculpture, climate-controlled, emerged safely at journey’s end. It was in all, a useful interchange of experiences between two “caretakers” of art; trucker and registrar.

Maggy Willard, Registrar
Des Moines Art Center

(Originally published in Des Moines Art Center NEWS, Fall 1988)

FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Fellow Members,

First, many thanks to RC-WR’s donors; we owe the ability to produce RC-WR Newsletter and other services to their generosity. Due to donor support, Phyllis Morgret and Dan Ratcliffe have been able to cut the cost in half from last fall’s issue, yet maintain high quality and keep up with the deadlines. Again, our thanks.

The WMC meeting to plan next fall’s conference was very productive. It is exciting that several ideas from our membership have been accepted and that RC-WR’s Lawrence Fong of Oregon and Phil Stobler of Arizona have been asked to be conference facilitators. Plan to discuss the museum board’s role, public access to museum collections, the museum’s changing role with regard to multicultural relations, museum relationships with private collectors, etc. The format of the conference is planned very differently from the past, with the goal set to initiate real discussion between all areas of the museum staff and community. It will be an experience challenging your professional input and participation.

As your representative to the AAM-RC, I am happy to say that Carrie De Cato, who is Registrar at the Walker Art Center and Secretary-Treasurer of the AAM Registrar’s Committee, has been proposed for Councilor-at-Large to the AAM Council. She has well over the 100 signatures needed to qualify as nominee by-petition. Thanks to those of you who responded so readily when called upon.

With all of your support and votes, this important position will be held by a very capable Registrar!

Also in the AAM-RC news, the final draft of the Standard Facility Report for use in all museums was published in the February, 1989 issue of RC (in case you missed it!); your proposals for the 1990 AAM Conference in Chicago is due July 1, 1989; your nominations for the 1990 Registrar’s Committee Award of Distinction to be awarded at AAM are being accepted now. Be sure to include the AAM Registrar’s Committee meeting and luncheon on June 19th in your AAM schedule.

Exciting developments have been taking place in our region with new and renewed RC involvement in State Conferences and meetings. Just as an example, Paulette Hennum in Northern California has encouraged Janice Capece to be our student liaison with John F. Kennedy University, paving the way for
DATES AT A GLANCE!!

1989

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 18-22</td>
<td>AAM Annual Meeting</td>
<td>New Orleans Hilton &amp; Towers</td>
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<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
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<td>July 28</td>
<td>MAP II Grant Deadline</td>
<td>Wight Art Gallery</td>
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<td>University of California</td>
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<td>July 28</td>
<td>Photography &amp; Paper Conservation Awareness Workshop</td>
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<td>August 15</td>
<td>DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES FOR THE RC-WR NEWSLETTER</td>
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<td>October 24</td>
<td>Pre-Western Museum Conference</td>
<td>Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona</td>
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<td>October 25-28</td>
<td>Western Museum Conference Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Phoenix, Arizona</td>
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other states to tap into university systems for an exchange in the Registration field; Judy Hauck in Alaska worked on their State Conference which centered on a five-day hands-on Collections Management program in which all participants actually input their collections information into computers; and there are more examples, just no space.

Mark this date on your calendar, thanks to Phil Stolper, October 24, 1989 for the RC-WR preconference (WMC) seminar in Phoenix!

I applaud those of you who wrote up suggestions for sessions and sent them off to WMC and AAM. Hearing from you is the best part of this job and what makes it all worthwhile. Please call on me or on your representatives if we can answer any of your questions.

Yours,

Faye Jonason
RC-WR Chairperson

SPECIAL THANKS

A big thank you to all the following members for making contributions to the RC-WR beyond their membership dues:

Robin Brown
Corinne L.L. Chun
Andrea Clark
Michale Edgington
Martha Fulton-Stout
Eddie Fumasi
Patty Gregory
Suzanne Guerra
Ann E. Kopy
Jackie Looney
Elodia A. Mascarenas
Judith Neilsen
Genevieve Prlain
Carol Rosset

And a very special thanks to our associate members for their most generous contributions:

Guy de Gramont of West Coast Keating, Inc., Los Angeles
Roy Pateman of Wingate & Johnson, London
Brian Cooke of Cooke's Crating, Inc., Los Angeles
Thomas Ollendorff of Ollendorff Fine Arts, San Francisco
Lynn Wicks of Bradywicks, Restoration and Conservation of Art, Santa Barbara
Gary E. Huneycutt of TSS Transportation, Ltd., Anaheim
Barbara S. Zenter, Museum Consultant, Eugene
Don Sanders of L.A. Packing and Crating, Inc., Los Angeles
David Epstein of W.R. Keating & Company, New York
POSSESSIONS

Registrar of Museum Collections, Museum of Texas Tech University. Large university affiliated general museum with collections in art, archaeology, clothing and textiles, biology, ethnology, history, and palentology numbering over 1.5 million objects. Candidate must have a minimum of a Master’s degree in Museum Science, Museum Studies, or area of museum specialization, three years experience as a registrar (or equivalent) in a museum with multidisciplinary collections, and thorough knowledge of accepted museum registration techniques including ethical practices as established by AAM/ICOM, legal matters relating to collections and copyrights, policies governing rights and reproductions, and records management and data processing systems (computerization). Position available September 1, 1989. Salary commensurate with experience plus benefits package. All qualified candidates are invited to submit their resume, letter of application, and the names and addresses of three references. Send to: Registrar Search Committee, Museum of Texas Tech University, 4th and Indiana, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Application deadline is May 31, 1989. AA/EOE.

Registrar, Coordinate the processing of gifts and loans for an historic site (1840 - 1920), and oversee inventory, cataloguing, photographic documentation, and conservation projects. B.A. required, plus two years of registrarial work. Computer experience desirable. Competitive salary and full benefits package. Send letter and resume to Carol Crilly, Curator, The Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, 15415 East Don Julian Road, City of Industry, CA 91745.

IN MEMORIUM


FROM THE EDITOR

Space, timeliness, and money constraints make it necessary to edit material submitted to the RC-WR Newsletter. The request for or submission of material does not guarantee its admittance in a specific newsletter. I wish this was not necessary, but I hope all of you can appreciate and understand this necessity.

If you have something of interest please send it to your state representative (see state representatives listing). We want to hear from all of you - small, medium, large (that's museum size not registrar size). Officers and state reps take note - our campus library has a fax machine so if you are late, take your information to your nearest fax machine and send it off to me. As you know this is much faster than the mail - the number is: (208) 734-2362.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES LIST UPDATE

A file listing product and service suppliers is being compiled by Betty Long, RC-WR Service/Supply Information Coordinator. The list will be cross referenced by product, supplier, and state. Betty plans to have an up to date handout at the Phoenix Western Museum Conference meeting. Send your current favorites to Betty (see officers page for address).

DISCLAIMER

The RC-WR Newsletter acts as a source of information. The printing of an article does not mean that RC-WR endorses any suggested treatment, product, or service.

CORRECTION

Editorial apologies to Joanne Avant who is the registrar at the Haggin not the Hafin Museum.
REPORTS FROM OUR NINE STATES

ALASKA

In March, 35 professionals attended the Museums Alaska, the state organization, training week on "Caring for Collections". The workshop was made possible by a grant from the Division of Alaska State Museums. Topics covered were: collection surveys, storage, exhibit conditions, computerization of collections and techniques, and environmental conditions and monitoring. (ed. - We are glad to hear that RC-WR representative Judy Hauk is on the road to recovery after several months of illness, including a stay in a Seattle hospital. Take care, Judy!)

ARIZONA

The April 8th workshop designed to help volunteers, students, and museum workers with various registrar duties was very successful. Twenty-four attended the workshop. Special thanks to the speakers, and Michelle Henry who kept the event running smoothly.

Mark Your Calendar! The Western Region-Registrar's Committee Pre-Western Museums Conference Seminar is scheduled for Tuesday, October 24, 1989, in the auditorium of The Heard Museum, Phoenix. A topic and slate of speakers will be determined later, if you have suggestions or input contact Phil Stoiber, (see address on the officers page).

AAM In New Orleans! If you are interested or use ARGUS for collections management there will be a meeting on it Sunday, June 18, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the Elmwood Room of the Hilton Hotel. Contact Phil for further information.

HAWAII

On May 16th, at The Contemporary Museum in Honolulu there will be a workshop, planned by RC-WR's two Hawaiian representatives, on "Pest Control in Hawaii Museums" the workshop will address subtropical problems with pests. RC-WR Representatives Janet Ness and Deborah Duna circulated questionnaires at the Hawaii Museum Association spring conference to learn areas of registrar interest in order to plan future workshops. Our newest representatives are very busy - they also wrote a report on the Western Museums Conference meeting for the Hawaii Museum Association newsletter. WELCOME TO THE RC-WR NEWSLETTER STAFF!

IDAHO

The annual state conference was held in Boise from April 6-8. The keynote speaker was H. "Jerry" Swinney, former director of the Idaho Historical Society, and Director Emeritus of the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, New York. His talk covered legal, ethical and practical aspects of museum work. (ed. - A big thanks for RC-WR's representative Jody Hawley who co-organized the workshop. Jody was re-elected editor of the Idaho Museum Association Newsletter, congratulations Jody!)

OREGON

Oregon is revising its state supported museum insurance policies. The revision addresses the need for all risk coverage of museum and special collections. Emphasis will be on scheduling of non-owned objects, employee negligence, recovery at fair market value, and the practice of establishing exposure limits and sub-limits. (ed. - We look forward to a report on the revisions and the impact.)

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

On Wednesday, April 5, more than 40 Northern California RC-WR members gathered for an informal-structured workshop at the DeYoung Museum. Kittu Gates, Chief Registrar, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, reported on the 1989 American Law Institute-American Bar Association (ALI-ABA) meeting. (ed. - See Kittu's report elsewhere in this newsletter.) Sara Conklin-Halaj, Registrar, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, reported on her research into historic scrimshaw (etched sperm whale teeth). For further information contact Sara at Bldg. 201, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123 (415) 356-3797. Ted Greenberg, Registrar, Fine Arts Museum, San Francisco, described the recent reorganization, movement and reinstallation of hundreds of objects in the galleries at his institution.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

On Friday, July 28, at the Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, a "Photography and Paper Conservation Awareness" workshop addressed proper handling, storage, hinging, matting, and framing of photographs and works on paper will be held. Both historic and contemporary works will be covered. If you have questions or input contact Kathy Clewell (see address on officers page).

ELECTION YEAR

1989 is an election year. (What? But I thought we got over the Bush-Dukakis melee some time ago?) No, no...the RC-WR officer's election is this year, this fall to be precise. (Do you mean we have to endure more boring debates, low blows, and mud slinging?) Of course not...these people are professional registrars and by nature are not given to pious rhetoric. They are most qualified to lead, present ideas, educate, and challenge growth. (Well, I hope that the candidates are more interesting than a Quayle debate.) That, is difficult to determine at this point. You see, no one has been nominated yet for any office. However, this is to be done in the near future. (Hey, I've always fancied that I would make a fine treasurer. Do you think I'd stand a chance of being elected?) Not if you don't participate in the election process. (What do I have to do?) First express this desire to your state representative. Information will be coming to you as to what to do. (Right...now, maybe a little hand-shaking, baby-kissing, and flag-waving)...VOTE for Lotta N. Eergy for Treasurer!

(Thanks to RC-WR Utah Representative Marcus Vincent)
COLOR. Damaged areas should be marked on the photograph (use a fine point fast-drying permanent ink marker). To eliminate complicating terminology one short term can suffice for many terms e.g., “cracking” stands for “alligator cracking, traction cracking,” etc. For exact problem locations use the nine zone grid format. The nine zones are: top left, top center and top right (TL, TC, TR); center left, center and center right, (CL, C, CR); and bottom left, bottom center and bottom right (BL, BC, and BR). Avoid other terms and marks.

Use metric measurements, going first from top or bottom, and next from right or left. If many problems of the same type occur on the same report, number damages to clarify. Reference something in the photo but do not obscure the photo.

Avoid redundancy, ambiguous phrasing, personal opinions, and possible causes. Keep it simple!

Make sure there is high quality consistent condition reporting within your museum. Follow precise directions when examining and reporting, e.g., clockwise from top left corner.

Barbara Baggett addressed condition reports as they relate to liability. For example, how many times is an object handled during a traveling exhibition. At each institution an object is handled when it is received, moved to staging area, unpacked, condition reported, moved into gallery, installed, and when removed. The process is repeated in reverse. Be sure your budget, personnel, and condition reports are adequate. Condition reports play major roles in protecting a museum’s liability.

Major points for protecting liability:
A. Selection of the object - what can and cannot travel.
B. Loan agreements should include statements with suggestions for handling after exhibition ends (i.e., do not exhibit for one year after end of tour). Address responsibility for repairs at end of tour, inherent vice, why an object might be pulled from show, and where does the museum’s liability end.

C. Formal condition reporting should be done by a conservator, the report should include objects stability, packing needs, crating, framing, etc. Use this report as a backup for pulling objects.

D. Use conservators report when arranging transportation. Talk with shipper and explain all requirements.

E. Photograph objects to document damage, and place information in reports. Photos can also be used for public relations and catalogues.

F. Registrar’s condition reports should include the conservator’s and the registrar’s reports. Note how to handle object, referencing old or new mounts, or problems. Mark on photo if necessary, and allow space for each institution’s incoming and outgoing remarks. The time to do repairs in a traveling exhibit is when it occurs. Don’t worry about who will pay, deal with that later. Report it, repair it or pull it!

A video presentation, on the woes of art shippers, by Bryan Cooke and his staff, completed the workshop. Paul Drake then responded to questions.

Drivers do brief condition reports upon picking up an object, e.g., a bill of lading is a document binding both parties, and a customer must sign off for a release value, this helps protect the art mover. Most interstate movers carry items that are crated or wrapped. Local fine art shippers deal with uncrated objects.

Condition reports can cause problems for the movers. For instance, when a problem is noted in the leader’s home the owner may try to correct it, e.g., clean it. Be sure the condition report is changed before the work is loaded on the truck.

In order to make a damaged object claim the shipment must be inspected shortly after delivery. It is suggested that the receiver write on shipper’s document “received subject to inspection within 48 hours.”

Thank you very much to the workshop note takers!

Submitted by:
Kathy Clewell, Registrar
Palm Springs Desert Museum
Southern California Representative
RC-WR
MUSEUM'S RESERVES RENTED OUT?

The City of Geneva has just started up a rental service for its works of art. With the help of a real estate firm, the City is at present offering thirty pictures of sixteen artists. This is unique in Switzerland and apparently unprecedented in the world of museums, at least in Europe.

The works being offered in Geneva belong to the MUSEE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE (ART AND HISTORY MUSEUM) which has some 4,000 pictures in its reserves. 700 to 800 are permanently exhibited and 750 are lent to institutions that the City manages.

An agreement has been signed for two years. It fixes the conditions of the loan. All the works have to be insured with the same company, the National Suisse. The loan system will be continued, possibly modified, and widened, according to the interest shown by the public. It is considered that the potential clients will be essentially companies and representatives of the liberal professions.

The MUSEE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE chooses the pictures, checks the state they are in and carries out the necessary preparations. This loan system should not provide competition with the galleries in Geneva; it does not compete with contemporary painters (only dead artists from Geneva), and the pictures can in no circumstances be sold. However, the AGGAM (Association Genevoise Des Galeries D'Art Moderne) is already expressing its reservations.

The borrowers will pay rent estimated at about 15% of the estimated value of the works. The managing company will pay the City rent to increase the acquisition funds of the Museum. A picture may not be hired for more than a year, but may be renewed for a second period of one year. At the end of each contract, the Museum will carry out an inspection to make sure that the picture is in good repair. The annual rent varies according to the picture between SF 1,200 (FF 4,800) and SF 6,000 (FF 24,000).

A balance-sheet will be drawn up by the Board of Directors in two years' time.

Reprinted from:

LA LETTRE DES MUSEES ET DES EXPOSITIONS - International news monthly for the global newsletter, December, 1988, Number 7.

GIVING SECURITY AN EXTRA DIMENSION

One of America's most prestigious art museums, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts at Richmond, has instituted two new forms of security for its collections, which are revealing unexpected benefits. In each gallery there is kept an album of color photographs of every item in the gallery. When he or she comes on duty, the attendant responsible for the gallery is required to check the exhibits against their photographs and make sure that everything is in place and undamaged. In addition to this safeguard, the Museum has two inspectors who spend the whole of their time looking at the objects on show in great detail, first, to confirm that nothing is missing and, second, to note if there has been any change in the appearance or condition of an object. Even a chip or a crack in a picture frame is reported.

The combination of these two methods of watchfulness not only allows the Museum to keep a much closer eye on its collections, but also encourages even the more humble members of its staff to take a more personal interest in what is on display and to develop a greater sense of responsibility for the collections.

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NEW READS

Computers


"Avoiding the Problems" Museum Collections and Computers. Lenore Sarasan and A.M. Neuer, pp. 33-40. Association of Systematics Collections, Lawrence, Kansas. Discusses preliminary research and how to go about defining the purpose of a computer project and data fields. Includes examples of worksheets.


Exhibitions

"Corporate Sponsorship of Museum Exhibits" Victor J. Danilou. Curator, Volume 31, Number 3, September 1988. Discusses how corporate sponsorship can help and hinder exhibitions by turning them into "Blockbusters". Mentions several corporate views on exhibits.


"Homing's Legacy Reconsidered" Michael Conforti, Art in America, June 1986, pg. 39. Discusses the issues concerning the large, incoming generating exhibition verses the demands of the permanent collection.

Miscellaneous


"L.A.'s MOCA Sued for Unauthorized use of Photograph" Jill Keeney, Photo District News, pp. 32-34. Discusses the artist's lawsuit against MOCA for use of a photograph of the new wing.


CASSETTE LENDING LIBRARY

Audio cassettes from sessions of various national and regional museum association meetings and now one video cassette are available for lending to RC-WR Members. The cassettes will be loaned for a period of two weeks to members in good standing. Return postage will be the responsibility of the borrower. Only one tape or tape set will be loaned at one time. Requests should be sent to: Louis Goldich, Registrar San Diego Museum of Art P.O. Box 2107 San Diego, CA 92112-2107

Following is a list of new additions to the cassette lending library:

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CASSETTE LENDING LIBRARY donated by Martha Fulton Stout

1984 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums

"Moving Feasts: Creating Exhibition Programs with and for America's Museums"

"Valuation: The Museum's Role in Gifts of Appreciated Property"

1986 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums

"An Interdisciplinary Discussion of the Care and Maintenance of Large Collections"

"Facilities Planning: Understanding and Controlling the Construction Process"

"Practical Ways of Implementing the 1976 Copyright Act"

Independent Productions

Talking with the One Minute Manager

OUR FIRST VHS VIDEO
CASSETTE donated by the Central Sprinkler Corporation

"Protecting Special Places" a presentation discussing the "Flow Control Sprinkler System D" manufactured by the Central Sprinkler Corporation.

OTHER NEW CASSETTE TAPES

1988 Annual Meeting of the Western Museums Conference

"Expanding Collections Care" (2 cassette set)

1988 Midwest Museums Conference and Mountain-Plains Museums Association Joint Conference

"Planning and Implementing a Collections Inventory"
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