

# RCWR *Newsletter*

## Registrars Committee-Western Region

March

1989

**"GET RID OF IT! Perspectives on Deaccessioning and Disposing of Collection Items".** A workshop sponsored by the Northern California members of RC-WR held at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, December 7, 1988.

The workshop was attended by 58 people, with 19 of them joining RC-WR for the first time.

The morning was devoted to a discussion of the numerous issues, both philosophical and practical, that must be addressed to ensure that deaccessioning is undertaken in a sensitive and ethical manner. Speakers John Z. Lofgren, Executive Director of the Sonoma County Museum in Santa Rosa, Jan Driesbach, Curator, Crocker Art Museum and Joanne Avant, Registrar of the Haffin Museum in Stockton provided thoughtful and thought-provoking insight into problems they have encountered during their involvement with deaccessioning projects.

In the afternoon, methods of disposing of deaccessioned items were explored. Paulette Hennum, Registrar, Crocker Art Museum reviewed professionally-accepted methods and the pros and cons of each. Terry Nageotte, Regional Representative, Sotheby's and Patty Long, Vice-President and Director of Marketing and Personnel for Butterfield & Butterfield of San Francisco spoke to the group regarding numerous services their companies can provide to aid museums with this part of the deaccession process. Both Ms. Nageotte and Ms. Long stressed that working with museums to acquire or to

sell works of art is a great privilege and that their firms are willing to make special provisions to accommodate the unique needs of museums.

A packet distributed at the meeting included articles on deaccessioning, sample deaccession policies, worksheets and tracking forms, donor/heir notification letters and press releases/news articles informing the public of deaccessioning activities.

**Guidelines for selecting a method of disposition for deaccessioned items,** compiled by Paulette Hennum:

1. The method of disposal should be chosen based on the benefits yielded to the institution, without compromising the institution's standards of professional ethics.
2. The method of disposal should be considered separately from the decision of whether or not an item should be deaccessioned.
3. The disposal methods available to an institution, and who has the authority to recommend the use of a given method, should be clearly stated in the Collection Management Policy.
4. The nature of the object will greatly influence the choice of method.
5. Given the complex nature of museum collections, accept that there is no uniformly-correct method.

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### FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Fellow Members,

As 1989 begins, we welcome 64 new members to Registrars Committee-Western Region. I was fortunate to meet with over half of the new members at the last two workshops. The RC-WR is enriched by their diversity of experience, interests and areas of expertise.

In addition to the many workshops available to you, three major activities are already in the works for this year's agenda. First, the American Association of Museums Conference will take place in New Orleans, June 18-22. Make your plans early and consider sharing a room with your RC-WR colleagues; most are in the same financial boat. Second, our biannual RC-WR elections take place later this year. Marcus Vincent is your Search Committee Chair. Third, a major event on our calendar is our annual meeting at the WMC in Phoenix, Arizona. Phil Stoiber has agreed to be our Program Chair and is working on a RC-WR pre-conference workshop.

Thanks to all of you who came forward with ideas for WMC sessions, with articles, notes, dates, etc., for our *Newsletter* and with hard work in official service of RC-WR. Continue writing and calling in your comments and concerns!

A happy, healthy and productive 1989 to all of you!

Yours,

**Special considerations when deaccessioned items are works of art by living artists, compiled by Paulette Hennum:**

1. When selling a work, be aware of the impact (positive or negative) the transaction could have on the value of the artist's work.
2. Remember that the terms of the California Royalty Act of 1977 must be respected. (Is there similar legislation in other states?)
3. Certain circumstances might merit the exchange of an art work with the artist (i.e., an early study piece might be exchanged for a mature work).
4. If the need to destroy a piece by a contemporary artist should arise, work closely with the artist and obtain explicit written permission from him or her before proceeding. If at all possible, this release should be reviewed by legal counsel.

Some museums simply do not deaccession works by living artists to avoid the many problems it can raise. In my opinion, it can be successfully undertaken if one proceeds with sensitivity and impeccable documentation.

Submitted by:

**Paulette Hennum, Registrar  
Crocker Art Museum  
Northern California Representative  
RC-WR**

## 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.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The next newsletter article deadline is APRIL 15. 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.

## NEW FACES

Carol Rossett is the new Registrar/Collection Manager at the Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis. Carol was formerly the Registrar for Permanent Collections at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. **Dale Gray** is the new director, and a new member of RC-WR, at the Owyhee County Historical Museum, Murphy, Idaho.

### ALI-ABA Course of Study

Legal Problems in Museum Administration

March 20-22, 1989

National Gallery of Art - Washington, D.C.

These courses are always excellent for registrars to attend.

Cosponsored by the Smithsonian Institute with the cooperation of the AAM. The scope and purpose of the course is to provide museum directors, administrators, trustees, legal counsels, and others who are concerned with museum operations with an awareness of the legal problems and issues they will encounter. Although primary emphasis is on new materials, the course is so structured that considerable familiarity with the subject matter is not required. For further information write:

Alexander Hart, Director  
Courses of Study, ALI-ABA  
4025 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

or phone:

(215) 243-1630 or  
(800) CLE-NEWS.

## MOVED BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

**Mark Cattanaach**, formerly RC-WR New Reads Assistant, has moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico where he is the Registrar at the Museum of New Mexico, Laboratory of Anthropology Museum of Indian Arts and Culture. His business address is P.O. Box 2087, Santa Fe, NM 87504.

## 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

#### 1983 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums

"Bring Your Security Problems with You"

"Personal and Institutional Liability for Defamation and Disparagement Arising out of Authentications, Appraisals and Other Opinions"

#### 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"

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# C·R·O·S·S·R·O·A·D·S

## MUSEUMS IN THE NINETIES



It's not too early to be planning ahead to attend AAM's 84th Annual Meeting in New Orleans June 18-22, 1989. The New Orleans Hilton and Towers will be the setting for this exciting meeting.

For your planning purposes, hotel rates will be as follows:

Singles: \$80 \$95 \$118

Doubles: \$80 \$115 \$138

Registration fees for New Orleans will be as follows:

Early Registration Fee \$130

Regular Registration Fee \$180

AAM members will automatically receive advance information on the meeting. Membership applications are available from the AAM, 1225 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005. (202) 289-1818.

# NEW ORLEANS

## AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

1989 Annual Meeting • June 18-22 • New Orleans Hilton Riverside and Towers

### 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) NOTE: For a complete list of all 24 cassettes available from the 1988 Annual Meeting of the Western Museums Conference, contact: Audio Archives International, Inc., 3043 Foothill Blvd., Suite 2, La Crescenta, CA 91214. Or call 818-957-0874.

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## DATES AT A GLANCE!!

### 1989

MARCH 20-22	ALI-ABA Course of Study Law Problems of Museum Administration	National Gallery of Art Washington, DC
APRIL 6-8	All Idaho Museums Conference	Idaho State Historical Museum Boise, Idaho
APRIL 15	DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES FOR THE MAY ISSUE OF THE RC-WR NEWSLETTER	
APRIL 28	MAP Grant Deadline	
JUNE 18-22	AAM National Conference	New Orleans Hilton & Towers New Orleans, Louisiana
JULY 28	MAP II Grant Deadline	

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR EIGHT STATES

### ARIZONA

**Amy Douglass**, Tempe Historical Museum, reports that their major project is an inventory of their 10,000 artifacts. Volunteers are inventorying about 1,000 every two months. They see this as groundwork for future cataloging.

**Kathy Edgar**, Mesa Southwest Museum, is using an IBM PC AT for collections management. Their software is "Data Ease", and Kathy is writing the museum's software.

**Gloria Fenner**, Curator of Collections, Western Archeological and Conservation Center, National Park Service, Tucson, announced the hiring of **Judy Hitzeman**, Registrar from Fort Davis, Texas. The center is on its third year of comprehensive cataloging, the former NPS policy was selective cataloging.

**Mary Gentry**, Collections Manager, Pima Air Museum, Tucson, reported in October that they would be moving during cooler weather. Given the record 20° on December 29, the cooler times must have arrived! The move will be done two days a week; the new library is set up with 1,000 items.

**Mary Jane Williams** announced that the Arizona State University Art Museum will open its new 37,000 square foot facility in early April. Each of the five main galleries will be 2,500 square feet.

### IDAHO

The Idaho State Historical Society, the Idaho Association of Museums, and the Idaho Working Together project will co-sponsor a conference in Boise on April 6-8 for all Idaho museums and historical societies. A partial listing of topics is as follows: starting museums, artifact preparation for exhibition and storage, legal

responsibilities of museums, planning storage facilities and exhibit design.

**H. J. Swinney**, retired director of the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, New York and former director of the Idaho State Historical Museum, will be the keynote speaker.

**Dale Gray** is the new director of the Owyhee County Historical Museum in Murphy, Idaho. His responsibilities include an inventory of the museum's collection and storing the data in a computer recordkeeping system. Knowing where to go for the best information he quickly joined RC-WR. Welcome and good luck to Dale!

### NEVADA

On February 1-3 the Third Annual Oasis Conference was held at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City. On January 30, the museum and the RC-WR for Nevada sponsored a pre-conference session on "Collections Management". The Oasis Conference

is a co-operative meeting sponsored by the Nevada Humanities Committee, the Nevada State Council of the Arts, the Nevada Department of Museums and History, and the Division of Historic Preservation. The speakers and topics for the Collections Management session were as follows: Cheryl Fox, Assistant Director, Nevada Historical Society, "Registration Methods and a Review of Chenhall's Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging"; Deborah Cooper, Registrar, The Oakland Museum, "Understanding Risk Management in a Museum"; Chelsea Miller, Curator, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, "Managing Paintings and Art Objects at Your Museum"; Robert A. Nylén, Acquisition Registrar, Nevada State Museum, "What to collect and What Not to Collect: How to Deal with Museum Donors". There was a closing panel discussion on "The Ethical Responsibilities of Collection Managers".

## OREGON

On December 5, the Oregon Museums Association meeting was held at the Natural History Museum, University of Oregon, Eugene. Staff from several historical houses, history and art museums listened as panelists addressed issues regarding museum stores and UBIT (Unrelated Business Income Tax). Of note were stores which elected to pay taxes on unrelated inventories, the IRS's opinion on advertising and recent cases involving the Smithsonian Institution. Upcoming 1989 meetings will include a session on deaccessioning, and a joint meeting with the Washington State Museums Association.

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Congratulations to Carol Rossett the new Registrar/Collection Manager, the Richard L. Nelson gallery at the University of California, Davis.

## NEW READS

The following is a list of literature on registration topics. If you would like to receive a photocopy of any of these articles, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Sharon Slanovec, Assistant Registrar, LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036.

## INSURANCE

**"Loss Control: The Museum and its Collection"** Alice Bryan. *Insurance and Risk Management for Museums and Historical Societies*, Gallery Association of New York State, 1985, pp. 4-13. Discusses controlling damage and theft of museum objects. Briefly covers traveling exhibitions, collection management, loan agreements, shipping and receiving.

**"Collections Insurance"** David Kaiser. *Insurance and Risk Management for Museums and Historical Societies*, Gallery Association of New York State, 1985, pp. 71-75. A very general discussion of collections insurance.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**"Museum Training and the Small Museum"** Emille M. Mead. *Curator* vol. 28, March 1985, pp. 183-198. Discusses methods of increasing museum employee job duty awareness.

**"Views on Museum Registration"** Registrars Report vol. 1, May 1977, pp. 1-3. Perceptions of the registrar by professionals within the museum, as well as outside the museum.

**"Moving up to Intermediate Cutters"** David Logan. *American Artist* July 1985, pp. 74, 84. Discusses different types of mat cutters and their use.

**"The Museum Planning Process"** Barry Lord, Gail Dexter Lord. *Museum Journal*, vol. 87, No. 4, March 1988.

## CONSERVATION

**"Textiles"** Marjorie Shelley. *The Care and Handling of Art Objects*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987, pp. 51-58.

**"Costumes"** Marjorie Shelly. *The Care and Handling of Art Objects*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987, pp. 58-62.

## COMPUTERS

**"Make Way for Microcomputers: How to Select a Microcomputer for a Small Museum of Historic Site"** Robert Mainfort and Mary Kwas. *History News*, March, 1986, pp. 23-28. Touches on issues to consider when selecting a microcomputer.

**"Questions to Ask About Computer Systems"** *Museum News* August 1985, pp. 5-7, 10-13, 14. Covers software and

hardware as it pertains to membership, word processing, collections, etc.

**"Information Management in a Small Collection"** Susan Wheeler. *Curator*, vol. 30, no. 2, June 1987. Example of how a small museum staff utilized a microcomputer to catalog their collection.

**"Software Needs for Collection Management"** L. Joseph Folse, Paisley S. Cato. *Curator*, vol. 28, no. 2, June 1985.

## GIFTS

**"Bequests: What Should a Museum Do To Protect Its Interests as a Beneficiary Under a Will"** Nicholas D. Ward. *Legal Problems of Museum Administration*, ALI-ABA Course of Study, March 1987, pp. 1-13. Outline and question/answer format covering types of bequests, and how to deal with them.

**"Appraisals: The Curatorial Perspective"** Patrick H. Butler III. *Legal Problems of Museum Administration*, ALI-ABA Course of Study, March 1987, pp. 25-28. Brief outline of the process for appraisals and how it relates to the IRS, the lender, and the museum.

**"How Can Museums Continue to Help Their Donors Meet the IRS Appraisal Requirements?"** D. Roger Howlett, President Child Gallery, Boston & New York, *Legal Problems of Museum Administration*, ALI-ABA Course of Study, March 1987, pp. 33, 34. Outline of the work between the IRS, the lender, and the museum pertaining to donations.

**"Restricted Gifts" A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections** Marie C. Malaro, 1985, pp. 103-109. Discusses points to consider when accepting a restricted gift. States examples of problems that have arisen at other institutions due to restricted gifts.

**"Promised Gifts" A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections** Marie C. Malaro, 1985, pp. 235-239.

Submitted by:  
Sharon Slanovec, Assistant Registrar  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
New Reads Editor RC-WR

## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING OF THE REGISTRARS COMMITTEE-WESTERN REGION

2 NOVEMBER 1988

WESTERN MUSEUMS CONFERENCE, CATAMARAN RESORT HOTEL, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Committee Chairperson, Faye Jonason, called the meeting to order.

I. **Introduction of members present.** Each of the 35 members present were asked to introduce themselves.

The 1989 WMC Annual Meeting will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, October, 25-28, 1989. A pre-conference seminar, will be held October 2-25, 1989.

The 1989 annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums will be held June 18-22 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference hotel will be the Hilton Hotel on the River.

II. **Treasurer's Report - Louis M. Goldich.** Louis Goldich reported that the committee, as of 16 September 1987, carried a balance of \$2,334.58. He reminded the members that their 1988 RC-WR dues expire in December and to mail their 1989 dues early to help the committee save on the cost of mailing reminders.

Louis proposed that the fee charged to members requesting tape rentals, photocopying of forms through the Forms Exchange, and articles be discontinued. The amount of money received by the committee is insignificant. It was moved and seconded that the RC-WR waive charges for rental of tapes and copies of forms and articles. There was a discussion of whether outside non-members could receive gratis services from the RC-WR. Several members offered their suggestions and Faye hoped the committee could arrive at an equitable solution in the near future.

III. **Secretary's Report - Martha S. Fulton-Stout.** The minutes of the 1987 Annual Business Meeting held during WMC in Portland were presented as published in the December, 1987 RC-WR "Newsletter". It was moved that the minutes be changed in the following areas: section VIII, E. Hawaii, strike Cole. The minutes were approved as corrected.

Martha discussed the "Tabulated Results of the RC-WR Member Survey" and mentioned that she answers an average of three requests per month for copies of the results and for the Expertise Lists.

Lastly, Martha presented the proposed changes in the RC-WR By-Laws as published in the October, 1988 "Newsletter". After a brief discussion concerning the reasons behind the changes a motion was made to accept the revisions; the motion carried.

IV. **Development Officer's Report - Amy Noel.** Faye read from Amy's report. Contributions to the RC-WR for the period, 9/16/87-11/1/88, totaled \$1,330.90 to date. Faye recognized each contributor and thanked them for their support.

V. **"Newsletter" Editor's Report - Phyllis Morgret.** Phyllis thanked all the contributors to the recent "Newsletter", her first issue as editor, and reminded the membership to continue to submit information of all types to her. The 1989 publication schedule is as follows: February, April, August and November. January 5, 1989 is the next deadline. Discussion was held concerning the feasibility of publishing four issues of the "Newsletter" each year. The By-laws do not dictate a quantity. Phyllis asked for volunteers to take notes from each of the sessions of importance to the members.

VI. **"Newsletter" Publisher's Report - Dan Ratcliff.** Dan also thanked everyone for their contributions to the recent "Newsletter" and for their support.

Chairperson, Faye, echoed the committee's gratitude to both Phyllis and Dan for their efforts, and she looks forward to future issues.

VII. **State Representative's Reports.**

A) **Alaska - Judy Hauk.** No report was received. Faye mentioned that the Museums Alaska meeting was held 17-21 October in Cordova. The topic for the Registrar's breakfast meeting was the general conservation survey of the collections as required by IMS for future conservation grants.

B) **Arizona - Phil Stoiber.** Phil reported on his statewide mailing in April and that there are currently 23 paid and voting members in Arizona. On May 14 a workshop was held on packing and shipping with 22 persons attending. He mentioned the computerized membership report from the RC-WR Treasurer was very appreciated and he uses the list to help him keep in touch with members who are no longer members. Phil has received one outside sponsor request for a workshop on photo archives at a pre-WMC conference workshop in Phoenix.

C) **Northern California - Paulette Dunn Heanum.** Faye reported for Paulette and mentioned the upcoming December 7 workshop on deaccessioning to be held at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento.

D) **Southern California - Kathleen Clowell.** All was quiet with the Southern California registrars until yesterday when the November 1 workshop on "Condition Reporting" was held at the San Diego Museum of Art. The workshop was a huge success. Kathy apologized for not getting information out sooner to the membership. Thirty-four new

members were added in Southern California in 1989. (ed. note: Due to the lateness of the workshop membership fees were waived for the remaining two months of 1989.) The next workshop will be on Paper - hinging, matting, handling, and storage; and will include a hands-on segment. The workshop will be at the Palm Springs Desert Museum in early 1989.

E) **Idaho - Jody Hawley.** Jody reported that Idaho has a 75% representation at WMC this year. A joint annual meeting of the Idaho State Historical Association is planned for April, 1989.

F) **Nevada - Robert Nylén.** No report was received.

G) **Oregon - Lawrence Fong.** No report was received. Martha Fulton-Stout mentioned that she and Larry have been in contact regarding the scheduling of a joint Oregon/Washington Registrars Committee workshop in 1989 which may coincide with the AASLH Annual Meeting in Seattle, 6-9 September 1989.

H) **Utah - Marcus Vincent.** Marcus reported that Utah currently has three members. The Utah Registrars Committee sponsored a May workshop on condition reporting and 15 persons attended. Other topics suggested for future Utah workshops included: copyrights, posthumous casting of objects (based on an IFAR report), and basic registration methods.

I) **Washington - Martha Fulton-Stout.** Washington's membership stands at 22 members. Martha reported that a workshop was held in Seattle on September 8 on the "1988 Unclaimed Loans and Abandoned Property Legislation". Announcements for the workshop were mailed to 85 persons and 20 persons attended the all-day session. Martha would like to pursue the possibility of a yearly meeting or workshop to coincide with the Washington Museums Association Annual Meeting in the spring. The 1989 WMA meeting will be held in Port Angeles. She and Betty Long are pursuing the possibility of a Smithsonian workshop.

J) **Hawaii - Janet Ness.** Janet reported for the Hawaii contingent pending the appointment of a RC-WR representative there. There have not been any activities of the state's registrars and a meeting of the state collections committee has not been held where registrars could also meet. The Hawaii Museum Association spring 1989 meeting will be in Honolulu, the fall 1989 meeting will be held on a neighboring island.

VIII. **New Business.** Bill Allen, Allen Insurance Associates, reported on his travels to the other regional meetings. One of particular interest to registrars was a session at the recent Mountain-Plains Museum Association

meeting on planning and implementing an inventory. Ann E. Erbacher, Registrar, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri can be contacted for information presented at this valuable session.

Faye announced the need to establish a Nominations Committee for the 1989 election of officers. Further discussion will be held at the Breakfast Meeting on Friday.

Faye thanked Louis Goldich for his efforts as the RC-WR Program Chair for this meeting of the WMC and appointed Phil Stoiber as our Program Chair for the 1989 WMC meeting in Phoenix.

A brief overview of the current status of the repatriation bill was given. Further updates will come from AAM and RC-WR once congress has reconvened.

Renee Montgomery, RC-AAM Vice-Chair, reminded those in attendance of the many activities of our parent organization, of the 1989 AAM Annual Meeting in New Orleans and of the challenge by the shippers and packers to the registrars for volleyball and softball games. The annual dinner hosted by the packers and shippers will be on June 19. AAM will meet in Chicago in May, 1990. The RC-AAM will organize a two day workshop with possible sessions on project planning, computerization, storeroom renovation, and budgeting to coincide with the Chicago meeting. The Professional Practices sub-committee will address loan fees for both lending and borrowing activities. The final version of the Standardized Facilities Report is due out soon. There will be an article in an upcoming issue of *Museum News* on this important contribution to registration. The RC is continuing to contact foreign members to attain a more global understanding of practices. The November 1988 issues of *Registrar* will cover storage and insurance topics. Also slated for future mention in *Museum News* is an article regarding Museologic services from AAM.

Mary Case, Editor and RC Education Chairperson, displayed a published hardbound copy of "Registrars on Record" to the members who answered with rousing applause and cheers. Mary briefly mentioned that the book was written for museum directors, administrators, trustees, and our parents; and she told us how to order a copy.

Scott Atthowe, Fine Art Services, mentioned that he is compiling information on toxics found in packing and crating materials, the long- and short-range effects on art work and objects that come in contact with such materials, especially foams and wood based products.

It was moved and seconded that the 1988 Annual Meeting of the RC-WR be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha S. Fulton-Stout, Registrar  
Secretary, RC-WR  
23 December 1988

## BREAKFAST MEETING REGISTRARS COMMITTEE- WESTERN REGION

4 NOVEMBER 1988

WESTERN MUSEUMS  
CONFERENCE, CATAMARAN  
RESORT HOTEL, SAN DIEGO,  
CALIFORNIA

Secretary, Martha Fulton-Stout called the meeting to order for Chairperson, Faye Jonason who was unexpectedly delayed and thanked everyone for attending this meeting so early in the morning.

I. Introduction of members present. Twenty-six members were in attendance.

II. Report of the WMC Annual Business Meeting. WMC has recently circulated a survey to its members regarding its "Newsletter". The members are encouraged to respond to WMC. WMC wants to establish itself as a parent organization to the Regional Standing Professional Committees and create a more symbiotic relationship. Suggestions for

program sessions for next year will be discussed later.

### III. New Business.

A) Appointment of Hawaii State Representatives. Deborah Dunn, Registrar/Collections Supervisor, the Contemporary Museum, Honolulu and Janet G. Ness, Acting Registrar, Bishop Museum, Honolulu have graciously agreed to serve as representatives for the RC-WR in Hawaii.

B) Nominations Committee. Marcus Vincent was appointed chair of the Nominations Committee for the 1989 election of officers. Two other members will be added to the committee and suggestions for the slate should be given directly to Marcus.

C) Financial assistance to RC-WR members. Martha suggested that a sub-committee be formed to look into this matter. During the 1987 Annual Meeting a lengthy discussion followed the mention of assistance to the membership. Parameters need to be established for the maximum dollar

amount allowed, types of activities eligible for assistance, and the procedures and mechanisms needed to set this into motion. No chairperson was selected at this time. Martha suggested that Faye might have someone in mind to assume this position.

D) 1989 Program Topics. The remainder of the meeting was taken up with a brainstorming session to collect possible topics for submission as program sessions for Phoenix. The following list is a result of that discussion:

1. Loan agreements - your legal liability
2. Registration for the common man
3. How to wear more than one hat
4. Natural history registrars vs. art/history registrars.
5. Preservation in natural history collections
6. Scientific information regarding materials used in the storage, packing, and exhibition of objects. Jet Propulsion Laboratory representative and transportation vendors.
7. Marketplace of Ideas

8. Loans
9. Deaccessions
10. Computerization
11. Conservation
12. Security specialist-what's new
13. Saving money on insurance
14. Aiding smaller museums, historical societies, historic houses
15. Conservation/environment/care for collections
16. Registration in natural history institutions-Society for Preservation in Natural History Collections
17. Group/museum consortium
18. Establishment of network for information on objects available for deaccessioning
19. Standardized condition reports
20. Legal ways to avoid insurance

E) Proposed Budget. Faye presented the 1989 Proposed Budget to the members. It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha S. Fulton-Stout, Registrar  
RC-WR Secretary  
23 December 1988

## SESSION REPORTS FROM WESTERN MUSEUMS CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 1988, SAN DIEGO

### BUILDING CREATIVE TEAM STRUCTURES.

**SPEAKER - Jeffrey Birch,**  
*Executive Director, Discovery: The  
Children's Museums, Las Vegas*

Mr. Birch spoke generally about organizational structures, creativity, and creativity in museums. He spoke specifically on the characteristics of creative teams.

Hierarchical organization works well for large groups and common-goal production. Characteristics of this structure are planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. These factors can make an organization "tall" or "flat".

Because the individuals of a group make it a creative situation a small group can often be more creative than a large one. Inventive, imaginative, innovative, and entrepreneurial creativeness happens in areas we know something about.

Characteristics of creative teams are as follows: a charismatic group leader, small team of five to six, belief in a common cause, clear reason for being, group members identify with each other in terms of the project, group is protected, group disbands at the end of the project, and the group is autonomous. (refer to: Antony Jay, "Management Machiaveli"). Capital development and starting a new museum are two reasons for developing a team.

Mr. Birch made it a point not to give numerous case studies. However, brief examples to substantiate the specific characteristics listed would have been appreciated by members of the audience.

Submitted by:

Phil Stoiber, Registrar  
The Heard Museum  
Arizona Representative RC-WR

### HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR ARCHITECTS AND CONTRACTORS

**SPEAKER - C. David Robinson,**  
*Principal, Robinson, Mills, and  
Williams Architecture and Interior  
Design, San Francisco*

Mr. Robinson presented a broad overview of how a museum staff should approach a facilities expansion or remodeling project. The two most important aspects are planning and reviewing. Planning is important because an architect cannot design a building or addition that meets the museum's needs unless he/she knows what those needs are. Reviewing means that the museum staff must maintain an active role during the design and construction phases of the project. Ideally the museum should designate a staff member, or hire an outside consultant, to serve as the museum's project director and liaison to the architect and contractor. Robinson gave some insight into how architects and contractors conduct and manage their businesses. As well as tips that will allow the museum staff to get the most from the architect and contractor.

Submitted by:

Mary Suter, Registrar  
Idaho Museum of Natural History

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## MUSEUM STORE "EXPANSION" IS MORE THAN MOVING WALLS

Speakers - **Beverly Barsook**, Executive Director, Museum Store Association, Denver;

**Shirley Phillips**, Museum Store Manager and Special Events Coordinator, San Diego Museum of Man

Ms. Barsook stated that many museum stores are currently experiencing major growth surges leading management to contemplate expansion. There are several things to seriously consider before any expansion. Barsook spoke about the perils of the IRS and the infamous Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT).

Presently, the IRS describes unrelated business income as any income derived from a trade or business unrelated to the business or purpose of the institution.

### What's related...

1. Reproductions of art objects or other objects within a collection, if there is accompanying documentation explaining its relationship to the institution.
2. Educational games or toys for children are usually acceptable, but adult items need accompanying documentation.
3. Books with subject matter related to the institution's collections.
4. Arts and crafts with accompanying documentation.
5. Reproductions of art if based on items in the institution's collections.
6. Adaptations of objects, if there is documentation explaining the relationship to the institution's collections.
7. Original art, sold by a zoo, that depicts animals is considered related.

### What's not related...

1. Original contemporary art and jewelry. The premise is that the museum is depriving the general public of the opportunity to view it by selling it to private individuals.
2. Original arts and crafts.

3. Souvenirs with the museum logo, tee shirts, ball caps, etc., because they do not enhance the educational purpose of the institution.

If you are assessed with UBIT you can appeal, but remember you are dealing with the IRS, therefore, you have to prove the items relationship to the purpose of the institution. There is a fragmentation rule protecting museums from IRS rulings that might find the entire inventory unrelated. They are required to do an item by item check. You will not lose your non-profit status because of an UBIT assessment unless you already have GROSS violations.

**Possible changes in 1989...**Based on a draft report by the Oversight Committee of the Ways and Means Committee in 1988 possible changes to the current IRS standards are as follows:

1. Museum logo items would be considered exempt if under \$15.
2. Print or poster reproductions based on museum collections are fine if under \$50.
3. Items of an educational nature are fine if there is accompanying documentation.
4. Explanatory guide books and catalogs are considered related.
5. Decorative (jewelry) or functional (plates, furniture) items will be taxable.

Barsook suggests you play by the existing rules until changes are made. Stay informed and voice your concerns to your congressperson. Categorize your merchandise, keep your inventory updated, and file your 990 or 990T on a regular basis. Barsook also stated museum shops operating mainly with volunteer labor are considered exempt, but that could change.

Ms. Phillips states that good planning is the key to gift shop expansion.

### She recommended...

1. Map out a beginning strategy.
2. Visit and talk with other museum store managers to find out what does or does not work.
3. Know and understand your museum's purpose and collections.

4. Develop a gift store mission statement and categorize your inventory.

### When you have the location...

1. Arrange merchandise so it draws people into the store. The best draws should be placed in the back of the store.
2. A well lit shop is more inviting and people can see the merchandise. Avoid track lighting.
3. Make the most of your space. Modules with room for storage are good. Place fabric on your walls, it mends easily and you can pin things to it.
4. SECURITY is essential. Avoid blind areas. Place small items near the register and expensive items in locked cases. Do your inventory in a consistent manner (for quicker checks place only one of each item on display).
5. Consider a staff increase. Train your staff on shop procedure and the purpose of the museum.
6. Advertise through newsletters, monthly meetings, and press releases. At museum banquets offer shop items as centerpieces. Always be open for museum events.
7. Look beyond the walls. When your sales peak think of ways to increase them with promotional events.

Submitted by:

**Jody Hawley**, Registrar  
Idaho State Historical Society  
Idaho Representative RC-WR

## TO ALL MEMBERS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Are there support services or businesses in your area that might benefit from an RC-WR membership? Perhaps there are professionals in your community who might have a unique approach to getting a job done, and would be willing to share their knowledge. Please forward the names and addresses of any potential members to: Amy Noel, RC-WR Development Officer, c/o The J. Paul Getty Museum, Registrar's Office, P.O. Box 2112, Santa Monica, CA 90406.

# NINTH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGISTRARS COMMITTEE-WESTERN REGION WORKSHOP AND MEETING

NOVEMBER 1, 1988

SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART

## CONDITION REPORTING

### SPEAKERS:

**James L. Greaves**, *Independent Painting Conservator, Santa Monica.*  
**Janet Ruggles**, *Director, Balboa Art Conservation Center, San Diego.*  
**Rosa Lowinger**, *Independent Objects Conservator, Santa Monica.*  
**Lella F. Smith**, *Chief Registrar, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.*  
**Barbara Baggett**, *Vango Art Coordinator, Atlantic Van Lines, Hanover, Maryland.*  
**Bryan Cooke**, *President (on video tape) and Paul Drake*, *Vice President, Cooke's Crating, Los Angeles.*

Condition reports are an integral part of every registrar's job, and many of us have had no formal training in taking condition reports. The purpose of a condition report varies as follows:

- in-house exhibition
- loan from outside
- collection survey
- consideration for purchase
- conservation
- preparing for traveling exhibition

The morning session of this workshop brought together three conservators to review the terminology used in condition reports in their specialty areas of paintings, paper and objects.

James Greaves began his presentation with recommended viewing techniques. He showed excellent slides that clearly showed the differences in what you can see when viewing a painting with different types of light.

**Racking light** - light from one side (can also be used on reverse to see imperfections).

**Reflective light** (single most useful tool) - get the light to bounce off so you can see irregularities in surface; especially useful in finding scratches.  
**Transmitted light** - light from behind (used less frequently).

**Regular light** - does work very well in finding flaws.

**UV light** - can be used to show varnish retouching, inpainting and losses.

**Magnifying glass** - can also be used to find retouching.

Mr. Greaves geared his presentation to reviewing the condition reporting terminology used in one of the registrars' most common references **A Handbook on the Care of Paintings** by Carolyn K. Keck. Again, excellent slides of the common condition problems were shown to visually clarify the differences between terms.

**Blanching** - break down of paint, whitish.

**Bloom** - clouds the varnish, haziness, bluish, turns opaque and blurs pigment.

**Cracking: 1st Form** - called crazing, just the varnish is cracked.

**Cracking: 2nd Form** - cracking of paint; traction crackle, alligator crackle, age crackle or normal mechanical crackle; caused by age and changes of temperature and humidity; very common and can be very stable.

**Cracking: 3rd Form** - cupping, paint curling up, cupped edges; less stable and can be trouble.

**Cleavage** - separation between paint and ground or between ground and canvas.

**Tenting** - paint lifts off canvas, expands and pushes against itself creating a tent effect.

**Blind cleavage** - blister of pigment that has lifted off canvas, but cannot be seen at first (can be carefully tapped lightly to hear hollow sound).

**Impact cracks and dents** - depression from being hit from the front, or coming toward you if hit from the back; also targets (concentric circles, bulls eyes) and feathering. - lines of stretcher are pressed into canvas.  
**Debris** - behind canvas, between stretcher and canvas causes bumps visible from front.

**Discolorations** - varnish discoloration or yellowing (look at cooler colors), inpainting or retouching can change

color (older resins will turn white, or sometimes darken).

**Dishing** - Canvas dished inward, pressing against stretcher bars.

**Draw** - pucker in canvas from uneven tension.

**Stretcher crease** - lines of stretcher are pressed into canvas

**Fading** - caused by overexposure to light

**Flaking** - paint lifting off (call conservator)

**Scaling** - overall flaking

**Loss** - paint has flaked off (sometimes will occur only in certain colors).

**Insect damage** - look for dust to see if they are active (put clean piece of black or white paper under it overnight and look for new dust in morning).

**Lining** - canvas attached to another for support (wax technique good ten years ago, now frowned upon). Look out for separation of lining and also for flattened impasto.

**Pentimento** - newer painting over older (done by artist), sometimes old painting shows through.

**Grime** - looks like varnish, but is sometimes cigarette smoke.

**Pressure or bleed through** - never glue labels on back of canvas or use pencils or markers on the back because the pressure will eventually go through or marker will bleed through and cause paint to life, crack or discolor.

**Stretcher** - adjustable to take care of slack in canvas; some have expansion bolts to modify tension of canvas.

**Strainer** - not adjustable.

**Patterns of losses** - may indicate canvas having been rolled or folded.

**Environmental chambers** - plex boxes around painting to create constant environment; some have small gauges in back to monitor temperature and humidity.

**Damages** - all of us are going to handle hundreds of pieces during our careers; be careful, but all of us are going to have accidents.

Janet Ruggles began her presentation with a description of the condition report form used at the Balboa Art Conservation Center. Again, excellent slides were used to show the various condition problems described.

**Accuracy can be assured by systematic examination procedures:**

*cont. page*

A. Unframe

1. Frame can obscure problems
2. Improper matting and framing can be the cause of much damage to works on paper
3. Be careful, proceed slowly
4. Inspect frame, mat and backing board

B. Inspect face of work on paper

1. Use rakings and overhead lighting and adequate ambient light
2. Place on light box so transmitted light will come through paper
3. Use magnifying glass

C. Examine verso (as above)

1. Back of works with fragile media (pastel, charcoal) must be examined with work face up

D. Problems to look for

1. Cracking and flaking of watercolor (some paint stuck to glass); support exposed
2. Inherent vice (nature of materials used)
3. Interlayer cleavage - not well bonded
4. Mechanical damages - glass breakage can cause scratching or gouging of paper, tears, folds, distortion, abrasion to surface
5. Light damage - when window mat is removed, differences in color of paper obvious.
6. Overpainting and poor restoration - sometimes done with different media (not common with works on paper)
7. Accretion - effects both design and paper
8. Brittleness, poor quality paper, cracking
9. Discoloration, stains
10. Damage by acidic mat board; mat burn
11. Foxing - degradation of cellulose by mold, rusting of iron parts in paper or other paper inclusions; mold growth sometimes active, sometimes inactive.
12. Water damage causes discoloration through paper.
13. Examine attachments; matting, mounting, hinging, safety of removing work of art from attachments

Rosa Lowinger began her presentation with the definition of "objects". In terms of materials, "objects" can include textile, paper, painting, plastic, etc., In terms of types of artifacts, "objects" can be ancient sculpture, decorative art pieces, archaeological pieces, ethnographic materials, historic materials and modern assemblages, contemporary art, etc.

Convey information on the condition of objects by description and with photographs of both the front and back of the objects. General approaches:

1. Consider the context of the artwork. Whereas rust or scratches would constitute damage on a decorative object, they would indicate marks of history on utilitarian or burial object. For example, surface accretions may need to be removed on a decorative piece, but not on an ethnographic piece. Is "damage" inherently part of the piece?
2. Different condition report formats and purpose of the condition report were discussed.
3. Is object part of a larger group? If so, certain concerns and problems may be repeated for all objects.
4. Is object unusual/unique? Photocopy of photo could be included to identify problems.
5. Loan and exhibition reports require precise language as they will be used by other people. Describe problems as clearly as possible. Divide into physical problems (breaks, chips, cracks, etc.) and chemical problems (corrosion, fluorescence, etc.)

**Guidelines for object condition reports:**

1. Stability/Instability
  - A. Instability caused by damage, routine deterioration, inherent vice, old restorations.
  - B. Manifested in an object being loose, moving, showing separating parts.
  - C. Objects composed of mixed materials (plastics and metal, other composite elements, etc.) should be

examined for the natural detachment of materials from each other. All these points of join can show weakening of the structure and must be reported before packing, and corrected or stabilized before traveling, especially when objects show crumbling, powdery surface or disintegrating parts.

- D. Inherent fragility or vice - glass (sensitive to minor stresses) or fibrous artifacts (react to heat and dryness).
  - E. Previous damage, (such as insect holes) or previous restoration can compromise the structure or result in weak points.
  - F. Attachments, extensions or protrusions (arms, fingers, wings, handles), and joints can be points of instability.
  - G. Weight of object, especially heavy or imbalanced sculpture, can be cause of instability and should be noted to reduce accidents.
  - H. Surface phenomena; consider the material; new works of art are often of experimental materials; intentionally powdery surfaces in ethnographic masks or contemporary works; chemical problems to reactive surfaces (is it patina or corrosion layer?)
  - I. Instability should be corrected or attended to before an object is moved.
2. Disfigurement
    - A. Damaging, or only aesthetic? For example, corrosion on an excavated silver bowl is acceptable, whereas corrosion on a silver bowl kept as a decorative piece poses a problem.
    - B. Sagging, warping, gouges.
    - C. Dirt, discoloration, yellowing, scratches.
    - D. Accretions, encrustations.
    - E. Fingerprints.

**Tools for condition reporting of objects:**

1. Good lighting - daylight, reflected light is good with multi layered surfaces, raking light.

2. Light tapping of object (with tip of finger or small 1/4 inch wooden dowel) can reveal potential weaknesses.
3. Carefully moving different parts of object can reveal instability.

Sample condition reports forms were presented. Ms. Lowinger prefers the blank or essay type form. A

"special care and handling" section is a good idea. Mention potentially toxic or hazardous materials requiring special precautions.

A question was asked about recognizing "bronze disease". Ms. Lowinger replied that bronze disease is very specific and hard to determine without analysis. If it is not a chloride problem, it is not bronze disease. Sulfite corrosion on bronze is alright.

The important thing is to note down just what one sees, describing it as well as possible, rather than trying to identify it as "bronze disease".

Submitted by:

**Kathy Clewell, Registrar**  
Palm Springs Desert Museum  
Southern California Representative  
RC-WR

(This report will conclude in the May RC-WR Newsletter.)

It's that time of year to renew your membership to the RC-WR! Renew your RC-WR membership now for the calendar year 1989!! The new year promises to be exciting. Your membership entitles you to receive the RC-WR Quarterly Newsletter, and

notice of Local Workshops and Regional Meetings. In addition, the RC-WR continues to maintain the Forms Clearinghouse and Computerization Information Clearinghouse. You'll also have access to RC-WR's Expertise Network, and

invaluable connection if you are starting your first inventory, deaccessioning or computerizing for the first time.

Use this handy form to renew today:

**Membership Note:** All members should have received a similar form in their January mail.

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### For BOTH Renewing and New Members...

All contributions beyond the annual \$10.00 dues are welcome and help to further the goals and programs of the RC-WR. Membership is valid for one calendar year and expires on December 31st.

Membership Dues U.S. \$ 10.00 + Contribution U.S. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = Total Amount Enclosed U.S. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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San Diego Museum of Art  
Post Office Box 2107  
San Diego, CA 92112-2107

**RC-WR OFFICERS:****CHAIRPERSON:**

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California Afro-American Museum  
600 State Drive, Exposition Park  
Los Angeles, CA 90037  
(213) 744-2023

**SECRETARY:**

Martha Fulton-Stout, Registrar  
Museum of History and Industry  
2700 24th Avenue, East  
Seattle, WA 98112  
(206) 324-1125

**TREASURER:**

Louis Goldich, Registrar  
San Diego Museum of Art  
P. O. Box 2107  
San Diego, CA 92112  
(619) 232-7931

**DEVELOPMENT:**

Amy Noel, Manager, Collections  
Management Systems  
The J. Paul Getty Museum  
P. O. Box 2112  
Santa Monica, CA 90406  
(213) 459-7611

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:**

Phyllis Morgret, Curator of  
Collections  
The Herrett Museum  
College of Southern Idaho  
P. O. Box 1238  
Twin Falls, ID 83303-1238  
(208) 733-9554 ext 355

**NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER:**

Dan Ratcliff, Assistant to the  
Registrar  
San Diego Museum of Art  
P. O. Box 2107  
San Diego, CA 92112-2107  
(619) 232-7931 Ext. 232

**COORDINATOR SERVICE/SUPPLY INFORMATION: IDAHO:**

Betty J. Long, Registrar  
Maryhill Museum of Art  
35 Maryhill Museum Drive  
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(509) 773-3733

**NEW READS EDITOR:**

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5605 Wilshire Boulevard  
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(213) 857-6062

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Judith Hauck, Acting Curator of  
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Alaska State Museum  
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Juneau, AK 99801-1718  
(907) 465-2901

**ARIZONA:**

Phil Stoiber, Registrar  
The Heard Museum  
22 E. Monte Vista Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
(602) 252-8840

**HAWAII:**

Deborah Dunn, Registrar/Collections  
Supervisor  
The Contemporary Museum  
2411 Makiki Heights Drive  
Honolulu, HI 96822-2545  
(808) 526-1322

and

Janet G. Ness, Acting Registrar  
Bishop Museum  
P.O. Box 19000-A  
Honolulu, HI 96817-0916  
(808) 848-4150

Jody Hawley, Registrar  
Idaho State Historical Society  
610 N. Julia Davis Drive  
Boise, ID 83702  
(208) 334-2120

**NEVADA:**

Robert Nysten, Acquisitions  
Registrar  
The Nevada State Museum  
Capitol Complex  
Carson City, NV 89710  
(702) 885-4810

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:**

Paulette Dunn Hennum, Registrar  
Crocker Art Museum  
216 O Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 449-5423

**OREGON:**

Lawrence Fong, Registrar  
Museum of Art  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, OR 97403-1233  
(503) 686-3027

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:**

Kathleen Clewell, Registrar  
Palm Springs Desert Museum  
P. O. Box 2288  
Palm Springs, CA 92263  
(619) 325-7186

**UTAH:**

Marcus Vincent, Registrar  
Brigham Young University  
Museum of Fine Arts  
A-410 HFAC BYU  
Provo, UT 84602  
(801) 378-2818

**WASHINGTON:**

Martha Fulton-Stout, Registrar  
Museum of History and Industry  
2700 24th Avenue, East  
Seattle, WA 98112  
(206) 324-1125

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